BRILL'S COMPANION TO APHRODITE

Edited by
Amy C. Smith & Sadie Pickup

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On the cover: An Attic black-figure amphora, featuring Aphrodite and Poseidon, ca. 520 BC. London, British Museum B254. Drawing after Lenormant, de Witte, *Élite des monuments céramographiques. Matériaux pour l'histoire des religions et des moeurs de l'antiquité* (Paris, 1844–1861), 3, pl. 15.

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This volume emerged from the conference, *Aphrodite Revealed: A Goddess Disclosed*, which we cohosted at the University of Reading, 8–10 May 2008, under the aegis of the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology. We gratefully acknowledge support for the event from Reading's Department of Classics, the Classical Association, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, and the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies. We are particularly grateful not only to the speakers and other delegates for an enjoyable and stimulating academic gathering, but also to Nina Aitken and Jennifer Allison for help with its organization, and to two successive Heads of the Reading Department of Classics—Helen King and Barbara Goff—for their encouragement. Reading's Department of Classics, with its expertise in religion and myth, alongside its role at the forefront of reception and material-culture studies, was ideally suited to host the conference. Its Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology provided us with a stimulating backdrop, especially as it proudly displays a statue of Aphrodite from Cyrene, on loan from the British Museum since 2005. We were joined by two film directors, Mary Plant and Stavros Papageorghiou, both engaged in the documentation of Aphrodite in the film medium, with their respective productions, *About Aphrodite* (2003) and *Κύπϱις. Η Αφϱοδίτη της Κύπϱου* (2010). We also benefited from presentations by K. Bender, about his extensive Web resources on post-Classical Aphrodite / Venus, and Christine Kondoleon, curator of Greek and Roman art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, on her forthcoming exhibition, provisionally entitled *Worshipping Love: The Mighty Aphrodite*.

Aphrodite Revealed: A Goddess Disclosed explored this most ambiguous, alluring, and interesting of the Greek deities. It was consciously interdisciplinary, considering the broad nature of the goddess, from her origins to the appropriation of her persona in the modern world, and thus received interest from scholars and students of (*inter alia*) classics, literature, art history, archaeology, religion, and myth. The conference program took a thematic approach, incorporating the following topics: Aphrodite's divine companions and her syncretism with Greek goddesses as well as Eastern goddesses (day 1); her diffusion in literature and reception in visual arts and literary arts, beginning in the Roman period and continuing through to Late Antiquity, the Renaissance, and up to the current day (day 2); and Aphrodite's place in the archaeological record, including her importance at Athens (day 3). We anticipated that the synthesis of such a wide range of subject areas and methodological approaches might help to create a fundamental resource for those researching aspects of Aphrodite, who herself is an exemplar for the study of Greek goddesses. Perhaps those engaging in reception studies concerning other mythic figures might also find exempla in the methodological approaches of our Aphrodite scholars.

While this volume primarily focuses on the Classical goddess, it includes within its scope the goddess both before and beyond antiquity. Its contributions range in space and time from the Near East in the Bronze Age to France in the twentieth century; its literary foci extend from Near Eastern poetry to Roman epic; and its archaeological studies examine sites across the Mediterranean, from North Africa to Cyprus. In crossing academic, geographic, and temporal bridges, this volume stands apart from most scholarly treatments of Aphrodite, which restrict themselves to particular cultures and/or periods and limit themselves to single themes. The goddess' roots and genealogy are also considered here, when appropriate. Such matters are of course essential to our understanding of Aphrodite's role and reception, but they are only a starting point, from where the many other contributions can progress.

Aphrodite revealed herself in her many guises both at the conference and during the preparation of this volume. In the intervening time, she has presided over the creativity and collaboration inevitably involved with the preparation of a multiauthored volume, and (at least) four births and a wedding that involved our contributors. We are grateful to our editors at Brill—Becca Cain, Caroline van Erp, Irene van Rossum, and Michiel Klein Swormink—and to our contributors, for prompt, enthusiastic, attentive responses to our many demands, and for allowing us to impose and adhere to tight deadlines. We are also grateful to Katherine Harloe, Eckart Marchand, and Ian Rutherford, who have read sections of the book while it was in preparation, and especially to Elizabeth Morgan, who read it in its entirety.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	*Archäologischer Anzeiger*
ABV	Beazley, John D., *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956)
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AM	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Athenische Abteilung*
ARV^{2}	Beazley, John D., *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1963)
BAPD	Beazley Archive Pottery Database, Oxford University ⟨www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/databases/pottery.htm⟩
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*
BSA	*Annual of the British School at Athens*
CHD	Güterbock, Hans G., Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., and Theo P.J. van den Hout, eds., *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, 1980–)
CIG	*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (1825–1860)
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CVA	*Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*
FHG	Müller, C., *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* (1841–1870)
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae* (1873–)
IGRom.	*Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes* (1906–)
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zurich, 1981–)
OCD	Hornblower, Simon, and Anthony Spawforth, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1996)
RDAC	*Report of the Department of Antiquitues, Cyprus*
SEG	*Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum* (Amsterdam, 1923–)
TAPA	*Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philogical Association*

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

FLOURISHING APHRODITE: AN OVERVIEW

Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge

Over the last three decades, interest in the goddess Aphrodite has increased considerably. She has become a very popular subject amongst the Greek gods. Since 1978, more than ten monographs have been devoted to her, as have numerous articles. Conferences were not so frequent, however: I only know of two, and the mention of Aphrodite in a title does not necessarily imply that the conference addressed this issue.[1]

The editors of the present volume, Amy Smith and Sadie Pickup, kindly invited me to deliver a keynote speech at the opening of the conference they organized in May 2008. This was a good occasion to examine the reasons for this scholarly and editorial phenomenon, to which I contributed myself by publishing my PhD thesis on this subject in 1994.[2] I would like to present here the results of this bibliographical investigation, and to suggest also, along the way, some methodological issues at stake in this Aphrodite dossier. I want to make it clear that my overview attempts to be neither an exhaustive examination nor a clinical assessment of all that has been written about Aphrodite, more or less recently. For this reason, I have deliberately maintained the personal tone adopted in the original lecture.

I have started with the year 1978. I could have chosen the year 1974 and referred also to Deborah Boedeker, who, in her monograph on

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[1] For example, *Engendering Aphrodite*, a conference published by Diane Bolger and Nancy Serwint, American Schools of Oriental Research, Archaeological Reports 7, Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute Monographs 3 (2002), has the subtitle *Women and Society in Ancient Cyprus*, but that collection of essays is more interested in gendered approaches than Greek gods. A more focused conference was published in 2005, by Göta Johansson, *The Making of a Goddess: Aphrodite in History, Art and Literature* (Lund, 2005). This anthology of texts, some previously published, presents the "influential and versatile goddess" and her development from Inanna / Ishtar through to the twentieth century AD.

[2] Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque. Contribution à l'étude de ses cultes et de sa personnalité dans le panthéon archaïque et classique*. Kernos Supplement 4 (Liege, 1994).

Aphrodite's Entry into Greek Epic, argued in favor of an Indo-European origin of the goddess.[3] Two very different but significant studies appeared in 1978, however, and the contrast between them explains my chronological choice. First, Paul Friedrich published *The Meaning of Aphrodite*. Searching for *The Meaning of Aphrodite* was a huge ambition of Friedrich, who presented the figure of a liminal goddess connected with female sexuality, tenderness, procreation, and potency. The liminality of Aphrodite "rests on the foundation stone that sexual love is itself peculiarly liminal."[4] In Friedrich's book, what might be called the "archetypal interpretation" of the Greek goddesses has found one of its most significant expressions.[5] Aphrodite became a female symbol of love and sex. Her meaning is not as much connected with ancient Greek religion or worshippers as that it "may allow women to reconcile the serious fragmentation of their sensual love for other adults with their maternal love for children and lead to other essential advances in the psychology and anthropology of emotion."[6] This book is an extreme example of the use of Greek myths and literary texts for accessing supposed universal categories, without taking into account the context of their use or the nature of their performance as ritual texts. Since the nineteenth century, the figure of Aphrodite, more than other Greek deities, has been marked by a literary investigation removed from cultic realities and evidence.

Nevertheless, Aphrodite had not completely lost scholars interested in her ancient Greek worshippers. In the same year, 1978, the late Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood published a seminal paper on "Persephone and Aphrodite at Locri: A Model for Personality Definitions in Greek Religion."[7] Her methodological approach was completely different from Friedrich's in at least two ways. First, she forcefully argued against any preliminary assumptions on divine personalities, which could introduce distortions and, therefore, force the evidence into rigid frameworks. Second, the core of her investigation was twofold: a worshipping group determined by changing circumstances, on the one hand, and a local pantheon in all its complexity, on the other. Sourvinou-Inwood distinguished two levels for the representation of Greek gods: the local, *polis* level, and the Panhellenic level. Today, such a distinction is well known and has been infused into scholarship about Greek religion, as was not the case thirty years ago, especially with regard to Aphrodite. I believe it is not mere chance that Sourvinou-Inwood chose a case study of a goddess whose figure had been previously studied only from a literary point of view, and had therefore become disassociated from cultic realities.

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[3] Deborah Dickmann Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry into Greek Epic*. Mnemosyne Supplement 32 (Leiden, 1974).

[4] Paul Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite* (Chicago, 1978), p. 148.

[5] See the critical review by Nicole Loraux, in *JHS* 102 (1982), 261–263.

[6] Ibid., cover jacket. I am conscious that cover jackets are composed by publishers in order to achieve commercial purposes. But such an extreme phrasing echoes the contents of this book.

[7] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "Persephone and Aphrodite at Locri: A Model for Personality Definitions in Greek Religion," *JHS* 98 (1978), 101–121 (= Sourvinou-Inwood [1991], pp. 147–188).

Before beginning to work on the subject myself, I was conscious that two principal trends of investigation had been privileged to encapsulate Aphrodite's profile: first, the study of texts celebrating this so-called goddess of love, sex, and beauty; second, those looking for her origins (I will return in due course to the second issue). My own response was against both of these trends: I wanted to put aside the literary persona of Aphrodite and the question of her origins. Fortunately a third path of investigation was at hand, in Lewis Farnell's monumental *Cults of the Greek States*,[8] written at the end of the nineteenth century. Farnell's ideas were reinvigorated, on a stricter methodological basis, in Sourvinou-Inwood's article. She scrutinized local cults in their own Greek context without any bias inspired by literature or interpretation through a Near Eastern or Indo-European frame. My leaning towards this approach was, in part, rooted first in the consciousness that I was not competent enough to address the multicultural and multilinguistic evidence of the many places in which Aphrodite was thought to have originated. Second, my education in ancient history was fed by French-speaking scholars, such as Jean-Pierre Vernant and Jean Rudhardt, who made a strong case for an interpretation of the Greek religious system in the Greek language.[9] Walter Burkert's books were, of course, also present on my desk, and very helpful, particularly his monumental *Greek Religion*. Despite Burkert's useful investigations into the oriental background and some cultural issues,[10] I thought the question of the origins of Greek gods should now take a backseat. More urgent was the need to understand Aphrodite's cults in the Greek cities.

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[8] Lewis Richard Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1896–1909).

[9] For example, Jean-Pierre Vernant, "La société des dieux," in *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1974), pp. 104–105; Jean Rudhardt, *Notions fondamentales de la pensée religieuse et actes constitutifs du culte en Grèce classique*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1992), p. 4.

[10] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, Mass., 1985). On the oriental background, for example: Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, trans.

Writing such a monograph on a Greek goddess in the late 1980s and early 1990s was not, however, fashionable, despite its subject being Aphrodite. The contemporary trends in scholarship on Greek gods were geared towards regional studies, such as Fritz Graf's work on northern Ionian cults, Philippe Bruneau's analysis of the cults on the island of Delos, or Madeleine Jost's investigation into the religious life of Arcadia.[11] The local level of Greek religion, just as Sourvinou-Inwood had defined it, increasingly necessitated regional investigations, which took into account the nexus of the complex relation among the deities of a local pantheon. Robert Parker has also taken this approach in his second book devoted to Athenian religion.[12]

The study of a single deity does, however, risk being a deity-centered analysis that does not place the god or goddess in a plural context. Returning to this choice with a critical gaze, today, I do not regret having taken this option many years ago. First, regional works and deity-centered monographs are complementary tools that are necessary for the interpretation of Greek polytheism, even though (and here I quote Parker) "Greek polytheism is indescribable."[13] Second, I realized, while working on this keynote address, that my work had perhaps modestly contributed to the flourishing interest in the cultic dimension of Aphrodite. Even though I had had to limit the scope of my research, the book put at everyone's disposal, albeit in French, the material necessary to tackle different problems concerning this goddess. Given these sources, one might either agree or disagree with my hypotheses: scientific controversy is the most efficient fuel for scholarship!

Let us now turn to the main trends of this recent scholarship, in which I discern three tendencies: a focalization on regional contexts, a study of

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Margaret E. Pinder and Walter Burkert (Cambridge, Mass., 1992); *Da Omero ai Magi. La tradizione orientale nella cultura greca* (Venice, 1999). Several papers have been gathered recently in *Kleine Schriften* 2: *Orientalia*, ed. M. Laura Gemelli Marciano (Göttingen, 2003).

[11] Fritz Graf, *Nordionische Kulte. Religionsgeschichtliche und epigraphische Untersuchungen zu den Kulten von Chios, Erythrai, Klazomenai und Phokaia*, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana 21 (Rome, 1985); Philippe Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale*, Bibliothèque des Écoles française d'Athènes et de Rome 218 (Paris, 1970); Madeleine Jost, *Sanctuaires et cultes d'Arcadie*, Études péloponnésiennes 9 (Paris, 1985).

[12] The first was *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford, 1996), and the second, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford, 2005).

[13] Parker, *Polytheism and Society*, p. 387.

the presence of Aphrodite inside the political and military arena of many cities, and the continuing question of her origins.

Regional Contexts

In 1999, Yulia Ustinova published a book on *The Supreme Gods of the Bosporan Kingdom: Celestial Aphrodite and the Most High God*.[14] The author's command of Russian enabled her to gather the results of excavations and other archaeological research in the Black Sea region. From the available evidence, she produced a balanced evaluation of the rich interactions between Greek colonists, among whom Milesians were the most active, and their indigenous neighbors. She showed the evolution of Aphrodite's cult, and how the goddess became, during the Hellenistic period, the tutelary goddess of the Bosporan Kingdom. The leading position of the goddess in the Greek cities of this region (well studied in all its implications by Ustinova) has also been shown through the impressive results of the excavations conducted in Miletos, mother city of many colonies on the coast of the Black Sea.[15] On the modern site of Zeytintepe, an extra-urban sanctuary of Aphrodite provides a large amount of Archaic material, which, when published, will probably change our minds about the role and profile of Aphrodite in the Archaic period. This excavation is one of the most promising and exciting in the Archaic "Aphrodisian" domain.[16] Another site where Aphrodite predominates, albeit with a different chronological scope, is at Aphrodisias. Lisa Brody has presented the importance of interpreting the complex and fascinating image of the goddess Aphrodite in such a multicultural place during the Hellenistic and Roman periods.[17] Still in the archaeological domain, results from the old excavations conducted by the French School of Athens on the site of the Argive Aphrodision are now at hand.[18] Regional characteristics are also present in Rachel Rosenzweig's 2004 monograph, which redisplays the Athenian evidence for studying the worship of Aphrodite and emphasizes the available archaeological and visual testimonies.[19]

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[14] Yulia Ustinova, *The Supreme Gods of the Bosporan Kingdom: Celestial Aphrodite and the Most High God*, Religions of the Graeco-Roman World 135 (Leiden, 1999).

[15] See Alan M. Greaves, "The Cult of Aphrodite in Miletos and Its Colonies," *Anatolian Studies* 54 (2004), 27–33.

[16] Conducted by Volkmar von Graeve. Since 1989, when the sanctuary was discovered, only preliminary reports have been published in successive issues of *AA*. Cf. Reinhard Senff, "Das Aphroditeheiligtum von Milet," in *Neue Forschungen zur Religionsgeschichte Kleinasiens*, ed. Gudrun Heedemann, Asia Minor Studien 49 (Berlin, 2003), pp. 11–25, and http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/milet/in/aphrodite.htm (consulted on 23 January 2009).

[17] See Lisa R. Brody, "The Cult of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria," *Kernos* 14 (2001), 93–109.

Political and Martial Aphrodite(s)

The second trend concerns the apparently paradoxical implications of Aphrodite in the context of the political and martial enterprises of the Greek cities. Aphrodite's role as protectress of Greek magistrates was a surprising discovery in the twentieth century, reflected in an excellent corpus of epigraphic evidence coming from the whole Greek world, produced by Louis Robert, Francis Croissant, François Salviat, and Franciszek Sokolowski.[20] This corpus still generates interest, as shown by Jenny Wallensten's recent study of the material.[21] For the martial dimension of Aphrodite, we rely on some statues of Aphrodite and the implications of some of her epithets. This evidence was not really a new puzzle; ancient authors had already played on the image of Aphrodite using Ares' warlike equipment, as Gabriella Pironti and Stephanie Budin argue in divergent ways in subsequent pages.[22] The iconography of the armed Aphrodite was presented in 1991 by Johan Flemberg, who was looking for an explanation of this pictorial type in the royal prerogatives of a Mycenaean proto-Aphrodite.[23] In a more recent work, published in Spanish, Miriam Valdés has also tried to address the puzzling problem of a goddess involved in fields as different as politics, war, marriage, and initiation.[24] Much space and time would be necessary to examine all aspects of this rich book, which speculatively traces the history of Aphrodite's cults from the arrival of the goddess in Greece until her complete integration into its cities at the end of the Archaic period. One important feature of its approach, however, needs to be underlined, as it leads us to the third trend in Aphrodite studies analyzed here: the problem of Aphrodite's origin. In Miriam Valdés' book, Greek Aphrodite is a warlike goddess because she comes from the East, where the divine "Queens of Heaven," from whom Aphrodite derives, are warlike deities. These characteristics would have been well received by the aristocratic warriors, founders of the early Greek cities. Valdés supposes that later on Aphrodite's martial connotations would have lost their significance, only remaining as strange relics in some regions of the Greek world, and in the rhetorical and literary games of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. According to this argument, the figure of Aphrodite would have arrived in Athens between the years 1075 and 1025 BC.[25] This chronological hypothesis does not, however, convince me to give up my earlier opinion regarding the difficulty of reconstructing the origin of a Greek god.

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[18] Francis Croissant, "Identification d'une déesse. Questions sur l'Aphrodite argienne," in *Le donateur, l'offrande et la déesse. Systèmes votifs dans les sanctuaires des déesses du monde grec*, ed. Clarisse Prêtre and Stéphanie Huysecom-Haxhi. Kernos Supplement 23.

[19] Rachel Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite: Art and Cult in Classical Athens* (Ann Arbor, 2004).

[20] Louis Robert, "Notes d'épigraphie hellénistiques. XXXI. Inscription de Cyzique," *BCH* 52 (1928), pp. 434–438; Francis Croissant and François Salviat, "Aphrodite gardienne des magistrats. Gynéconomes de Thasos et polémarques de Thèbes," *BCH* 90 (1960), pp. 460–471; Franciszek Sokolowski, "Aphrodite as Guardian of Greek Magistrates," *Harvard Theological Review* 57 (1964), pp. 1–8.

[21] Jenny Wallensten, "ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΙ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ ΑΡΞΑΣ: A Study of Dedications to Aphrodite from Greek Magistrates" (PhD diss., Lund University, 2003).

[22] Chapters 5 and 6.

[23] Johann Flemberg, *Venus Armata. Studien zur bewaffneten Aphrodite in der griechisch-römischen Kunst*. Acta Atheniensis 8, 10 (Stockholm, 1991).

Aphrodite's Origins

The Origin of Aphrodite is the title of a book written by Stephanie Budin, who courageously addressed this old issue in 2003, by gathering much evidence from many different cultures and fields of research.[26] This study did not change my mind about the traps in this quest for the origins of a god. "Origin," as well as the all-embracing and too-feeble concepts of "influence" or "assimilation," are vague notions that do not do justice to the complexities of historical processes. Even though we are not able to define these processes we use them to explain what we do not understand immediately when we use the canonical vision constructed by two centuries of Classical scholarship. I shall return to this point, but for the moment, one controversial issue, among many others, will clearly show our differences. This also concerns the last book written by

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[24] Miriam Valdés, *El papel de Afrodita en el alto arcaísmo griego. Política, guerra, matrimonio e iniciación*. Polifemo supplemento 2 (Messina, 2005).

[25] Valdés, *El papel de Afrodita*, p. 25.

[26] Stephanie L. Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite* (Bethesda, 2003).

Jacqueline Karageorghis, in 2005, on Cypriot Aphrodite.[27] Like Budin, she puts Cyprus at the core of her reconstruction of Aphrodite's travels, and she addresses the ancient evidence in the same associative manner. There are several aspects of divergence between us.[28] The Greek *Kypris*, the "Cypriot" Aphrodite, emerged from a Greek representation of Cyprus, culturally determined by a deep ambiguity: Cyprus was both Greek *and* Eastern, inside *and* outside the Greek world. Literary evidence reflects this ambiguity, which is closely related to the construction of Greekness by means of a series of polarized oppositions of the Greeks themselves. As Cypriot literary evidence is nonexistent, analysis and interpretation rest on a culturally determined representation of Cyprus by others. The oriental origin of Aphrodite, as Herodotos and Pausanias saw it,[29] is as dependent on the imaginative register as on a hypothetical historical process of cultural borrowing, which is almost impossible to reconstruct with any certainty. Accordingly, we may subscribe to the very general idea that a goddess who was named Aphrodite by the Greeks had crystallized somewhere in the east of the Mediterranean in the early first millennium BC. This process encompassed elements from different places, such as Greece, Cyprus, and the Levantine coast. Although the more precise process will remain forever beyond our scope, I am still convinced, fourteen years after my PhD, that the oriental perspective adopted by the Greek authors speaking of Aphrodite's arrival in Greece tells us more about their vision of the Greek Aphrodite and her skills and competences than about her origin, whatever it may be.

A brief comparison with the alphabet, the most important borrowing of the Greeks from their eastern neighbors, will provide a useful analogy.[30] Around the middle of the eighth century BC, writing in a Greek alphabet begins to occur on pottery. Literacy is marked by local variations in letter forms, but it clearly adopts and adapts the forms and names from the scripts used by the Phoenicians. The Greek alphabet therefore functions differently from the Phoenician alphabet, yet Greek communities quickly adapted this wonderful tool to their own particular needs, for which its "origin" did not matter. Greek gods are cultural conglomerates that are more complicated than the alphabet, and, accordingly, caution is needed in the assessment that a deity was introduced from the Near East, which does not say anything of such complexity. Such an assessment gives the comfortable yet false impression that the very identity of a god has been established. When Jacqueline Karageorghis writes that "the Ancient Greeks saw Aphrodite as a great and powerful goddess, whose strength derived from her identity as a fertility goddess, and whose strangeness lay in her Oriental roots,"[31] for example, we might think that the Greeks associated Aphrodite with an oriental origin to justify her disturbing and potentially violent profile, connected with the violence of the sexual instinct more than with a generic concept of fertility.

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[27] Jacqueline Karagheorgis, *The Aphrodite of Cyprus: Ancient Sources and Archaeological Evidence* (Nicosia, 2005).

[28] Already presented in a review published in collaboration with Corinne Bonnet in *Gnomon* 80 (2008), pp. 664–667.

[29] Hdt. 1.105; Paus. 1.14.7.

[30] Robin Osborne, *Greece in the Making 1200–479 BC* (London, 1996), pp. 107–112.

In this respect, Pironti's work, published in 2007, addresses the potential violence of Aphrodite and her relationships with the world of the warriors seen from a Greek perspective, setting aside the question of the origins.[32] Her paper, published in this companion, is a summary of her thesis, so it would not be useful to repeat the points she herself forcefully defends. I only want to underline that this book is the first comprehensive attempt to understand both the concrete ritual manifestations of Aphrodite in the historical Greek cities and the wealthy literary persona of the goddess, in all their respective complexities. For my part, I had chosen to set aside literature in order to have a fresh look at Aphrodite's cults. Now Pironti's study of these cults opens the door for a new reading of literary texts.

Another book published in 2007, by Barbara Breitenberger, has the same aim of confronting cults and myths to grasp the goddess' complexity, considering that these two types of evidence were not separate, incompatible units.[33] The aims and methods of Pironti and Breitenberger, however, diverge. The latter attempts to analyze the interactions between Aphrodite and her train of erotic personifications, particularly Eros, considering "the relationship between myth and cult and how poets combined these in creating their mythological figures,"[34] especially in the Archaic period. Searching for the origins and nature of the goddess and her companions is seen, therefore, as the way of detecting the poetic elaboration of these figures. Accordingly, Aphrodite's oriental origins are repeatedly called to mind, but her cults and myths are finally disconnected, since "myth … features her adventurous sex-life and cult … is concerned with more serious issues such as marriage and civic harmony."[35] The differences between Eros and the other personifications in the circle of Aphrodite (Peitho and the Charites, for example) are allegedly the absence of ancient cults for the former and the cultic contexts of the latter. For this reason, the creation of Eros' personality is seen as a poetic innovation, closely related to the phenomenon of Greek homosexuality, a male "love god" being the necessary counterpart of a "love goddess." Aphrodite therefore remains a generic "goddess of love," and the powerful Eros, already present in Hesiod's *Theogony*, vanishes.[36] This study, whatever its qualities, raises a fundamental methodological problem: looking for a god's origin and nature is conceived as a premise for evaluating the myth and cult interaction without any consciousness that defining this "nature," if ever possible, should be the purpose of such an investigation, rather than its starting point.

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[31] Karageorghis, *Kypris*, p. 7.

[32] Gabriella Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre. Figures d'Aphrodite en Grèce ancienne*. Kernos Supplement 18 (Liège, 2007).

[33] Barbara M. Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros: The Development of Erotic Mythology in Early Greek Poetry and Cult* (London, 2007).

[34] Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros*, pp. 2–3. In a more traditional perspective, the literary study of Aphrodite and Eros by Ursula Bittrich has to be mentioned: *Aphrodite und Eros in der antiken Tragödie. Mit Ausblicken auf motivgeschichtlich verwandte Dichtungen* (Berlin, 2005).

Why Such Success?

Aphrodite is a flourishing topic, and the excavations at Miletos and Aphrodisias indicate that this trend will not decrease. Some hypotheses can be offered to understand this success. A first explanation may be the fact that the evidence for other goddesses—Hera, Demeter, Artemis, and Athena—is far more abundant. The evidence for Aphrodite seems, therefore, to be more easily grasped than that for other goddesses. Some PhD projects on Artemis or Demeter, for example, have been swallowed up by the huge amount of evidence necessary for a monographic perspective. Perhaps the fascination with Aphrodite's origins is more compelling than other gods. To some, Aphrodite seems to offer more certainties than do other gods. We were also quite "certain" about Dionysos, before we discovered his name in the Linear B corpus.[37] Just like Aphrodite, Dionysos was considered by the Greeks themselves as having come from elsewhere.[38] Traditionally his origin was thought to have been in Thrace or in Anatolia, but there is now general agreement that the representation of Dionysos is closely connected to his divine personality: I am talking about the "epidemic" nature of this god.[39] Aphrodite has not been found in the Linear B corpus, so scholarship has not changed in her case, although she is equally problematic.

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[35] Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros*, p. 196.

[36] Jean Rudhardt, *Le rôle d'Éros et d'Aphrodite dans les cosmogonies grecques* (Paris, 1986), is mentioned in the final bibliography but not used, in fact. The same problem arises with Claude Calame's study, *L'Éros dans la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1996). Calame does not, actually, address the problem of the "origin" of Eros, but scrutinizes his role within Archaic Greek society, on not only a mythic level but also a cultic level. Stating that "Claude Calame's monograph focuses on the literary features of Eros" (p. 3) is a reductive summary of such a fine work. The first chapter of Breitenberger's book addresses the question of the origin of Aphrodite without being conscious that Budin published a whole book on the subject four years before.

A third consideration is the ambiguity of a deity whose canonical figure of tenderness, beauty, and love does not seem to fit with other aspects of her personality. In this respect Aphrodite is not more complex than other Greek gods; all of them are complex entities, who often defy description and understanding. How should we interpret the appeal of the subject? Could it be that Aphrodite aroused erotic desire and sexual union, which seem to be so constitutive of humanity, in ancient Greece as in modern times? Have we been completely captivated and charmed by the presumed archetypal manifestation of the seductive female? I fear that the answer to both of these questions could be positive. For instance, in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, published in 2007, a first proposal included a chapter entitled "Religion, sex, and love"; Aphrodite was, of course, the best candidate for this topic.[40] This section has been amended, but it is significant that the only gods who are explicitly mentioned in the chapter titles of that *Companion* are Aphrodite, on the one hand, and Dionysos and Demeter (regarding their connection with mystery cults), on the other.

Be that fascination as it may, the profile of Aphrodite is an efficient touchstone for addressing fundamental questions on Greek polytheism and facing its "indescribability." This point will be the last part of my reflection.

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[37] On this discovery, see Louis Godart and Yannis Tzedakis, "Les nouveaux textes en Linéaire B de la Canée," *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* 119 (1991), 129–150; Louis Godart, "Dionysos e la Creta micenea," *Rendiconti dell'Accademia dei Lincei* 9, no. 2 (1991), 7–9. Cf. Richard Seaford, *Dionysos* (London, 2006), pp. 15–16.

[38] Euripides, in the *Bacchae*, describes him as a foreign god dressed in Eastern or Thracian garb. This dramatization of the mythical arrival of the stranger god Dionysos in Thebes was very influential in antiquity as well as in modern scholarship.

[39] See Marcel Detienne, *Dionysos at Large* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), pp. 3–26.

[40] Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, "'Something to Do with Aphrodite': *Ta aphrodisia* and

Searching for Polytheism: Aphrodite at Work

In my PhD I chose to follow Pausanias. As this tireless traveler did not say anything about possible visits to the islands of the Aegean or to the north of Greece, I had cast aside information on these places, preferring other pieces of evidence in producing a final synthesis. On the island of Kos, a large amount of epigraphic evidence has shed a new light on the religious life of the inhabitants. Aphrodite's cults are well attested. Two sequential inscriptions, from the beginning and the end of the second century BC, stipulate the rights and obligations of a priesthood of Aphrodite in the context of its sale. One of these inscriptions was already known by Mario Segre, and the other has been carefully edited, with commentary by Dirk Obbink and Robert Parker. The latter has also published a paper on this cult in a collection of essays offered to Henk Versnel in 2002.[41] The unique priesthood, to which these inscriptions appear to refer, presides over two cults: Aphrodite *Pandamos* ('Of all the people') and Aphrodite *Pontia* ('Of the sea'), both probably worshipped on the seashore, in a unique enclosure that included twin temples and two altars.[42] Aphrodite *Pandamos* seems to have been worshipped by all the demes of Kos on the same day in the month of Panamos, perhaps in connection with the synoecism (or coming together of the island's populace) that had taken place on the island in the year 366/365 BC.[43] Furthermore, Aphrodite received post-nuptial sacrifices from wives, regardless of their social status, in the year following their marriage.[44] Finally, sailors who served on warships sacrificed to Aphrodite *Pontia* at the end of their expedition.[45] This double cult concentrates in one location all the complexities of Aphrodite's pro-

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the Sacred," in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, ed. Daniel Ogden (London, 2007), pp. 311–323.

[41] Robert Parker and Dirk Obbink, "Aus der Arbeit der 'Inscriptiones Graecae' VI. Sales of Priesthoods on Cos I," *Chiron* 30 (2000), 419–429; Robert Parker, "The Cult of Aphrodite Pandamos and Pontia at Cos," in *Kykeon: Studies in Honour of H.S. Versnel*, ed. H.F.J. Horstmanshoff et al. (Leiden, 2002), pp. 143–160, with the English translation of the second inscription, published in the posthumous volume of Mario Segre, *Iscrizioni di Cos* (Rome, 1993), ED 178 (A). I already tackled this issue in another overview in English from which I partially borrow this part about Kos: Pirenne-Delforge, "Something to Do with Aphrodite."

[42] Parker, "The Cult of Aphrodite Pandamos," pp. 143–144, and note 4 with the references of the archaeological reports.

[43] See Parker, "The Cult of Aphrodite Pandamos," p. 153. Cf. Franciszek Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris, 1969), no. 172, commentary.

[44] Segre, *Iscrizioni di Cos*, lines 15–19.

[45] Parker and Obbink, "Aus der Arbeit," pp. 416–417, lines 5–9.

file, which is otherwise generally split elsewhere. In the city of Kos, Zeus seems to have held the role of poliadic deity (or city god).[46] Accordingly, Aphrodite does not play the same role as Athena in Athens, whose multiple functions and prerogatives might be explained by her poliadic status in that city. The probable link of Aphrodite with synoecism might imply such a position, but does not explain the complex network of her cult(s) on the seashore. Here Aphrodite displays all her potentialities.

This is a striking illustration of the complexity of divine figures in a polytheistic context. No simple, mechanical explanation can account for it, but we cannot escape the question of what unifies the activities attributed to major gods by their worshippers. As far as Aphrodite's cult is concerned, we may note that Pandamos seems to amalgamate at once a political dimension (synoecism, as at Athens) and a matrimonial one. These spheres are not conflicting.[47] An explanation can be found in a mode of intervention unique to the goddess: her powerful ability to arouse the vital impulse, unite beings, and join their bodies, as Pironti explains. At Naukratis, where Aphrodite *Pandemos* is attested from the end of the Archaic period, for example, we see that the integrative significance of the epithet *Pandemos* has a validity that goes beyond a strictly civil context. In the case of an emporion, or trading center, this power to integrate is larger than the coalescence of people in one civic body.[48]

On the island of Kos, the marine dimension of Aphrodite is conveyed by the epithet *Pontia*. She is also *Euploia* ('Of fair sailing') or *Limenia* ('Of the harbor') elsewhere or in other contexts.[49] Prominent on seafronts, she responds, with other gods, such as Poseidon or the Dioscuri, to the anxiety of sailors to reach a good port. This dimension is already present in the Hesiodic account of Aphrodite's birth, which makes her a daughter of the foam (*aphros*) of the castrated sky god and of the sea. Furthermore, in crossing from Kythera to Cyprus, the new-born Aphrodite immediately embarks upon a Mediterranean voyage.[50] These images offer an "emic" explanation of the powers of the goddess over the waves, that is, an explanation provided by the Greeks themselves. Aphrodite is daughter of the sky and the sea, and therefore she is worshipped by humans as overseer of their maritime enterprises. But the myth also speaks of sexual union. Assuming that the polytheist system is coherent,[51] therefore, we may conjecture that the image of the calmness of the sky and the sea derives from the same representational complex that constructs, from sexual union, a metaphor for the harmony of the body politic. As we saw earlier, one of the inscriptions from Kos specifies that it is the crews of warships that worship Aphrodite *Pontia* at the conclusion of their expeditions. The marine dimension is accordingly coupled with a martial dimension, which echoes what I have presented above.

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[46] A brief look at the inscription no. 151 published in Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées*, supports such an assessment.

[47] See Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros*, p. 37; Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 201–202.

[48] Andrew Scholtz, "Aphrodite Pandemos at Naukratis," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 43 (2003), 231–242.

[49] See Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 433–439.

[50] In the well-known passage of Hesiod's *Theogony* (188–206).

All these recent advances towards a better understanding of polytheism in general, and of Aphrodite's works in particular, allow us to hope that the study of the goddess' cults in regions as yet little investigated, such as Thessaly, will produce new material with which to evaluate the efficacy of these interpretative tools. In the city of Metropolis, for example, Aphrodite seems to have assumed a poliadic function. The city had already experienced a synoecism process, to which Aphrodite's principal position must be connected.[52] A deeper investigation into this issue is likely to be fruitful.

Aphrodite was not honored in a Panhellenic sanctuary of her own, but Greek poets have sung masterpieces in her honor, Greek craftsmen and sculptors have celebrated her beauty and potency in their works, and, for decades, she has been scrutinized, as reflected in this huge bibliography. I am conscious that my own interests in "gods at work," to quote Parker once more,[53] give this introduction a peculiar flavor, as I prioritize cults and myths in context above art, literature, or symbolic issues. The following collection of essays will go some way to supplement my overview of scholarship, with other perspectives on the fascinating figure of Aphrodite.

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[51] A postulate lucidly addressed and cleverly discussed by Parker, *Polytheism and Society*, pp. 387–395.

[52] Strabo 9.5.17 (C437); *IG* 9^2 1.271 (a dedication to Aphrodite, dated to the early fifth century BC and found in one of the settlements involved in the synoecism); *IG* 9^2 1.231 (a proxeny decree between Phalanna and Metropolis, dated to the second century BC: a copy must be displayed in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Metropolis). See also the coins of Metropolis with the head of the goddess: Aliki Moustaka, *Kult und Mythen auf thessalischen Münzen* (Würzburg, 1983), pp. 39–40, and plate 6 on p. 115.

[53] In Parker, *Polytheism and Society*, pp. 387–451.

CHAPTER TWO

BUDDING APHRODITE: INTO THE FUTURE

Sadie Pickup and Amy C. Smith

As with many aspects of antiquity, the more we discover about Aphrodite, the more we seek. Images of her or others in her guise are extensive; work over the last two hundred years provides important historical and archaeological contexts that connect the images with their creators and users. These contexts are now an important means of understanding Aphrodite's divine personality or role(s) in various places and times. Although ancient attestation for her is sometimes less than for other goddesses, there is certainly more post-antique evidence for her *Nachleben*—as herself, as Venus, or as an archetype or stereotype.[1] Our comprehension is nonetheless complicated by the variety of ways she is perceived and received—in cult, art, and literature—up to the present.

From the nineteenth century onwards, scholars working on Aphrodite have largely occupied themselves with the identification, categorization, and analysis of evidence. Once "understood," this data is combined or synthesized with current evaluations of antique cultures and their histories, modes of worship, and other societal predilections. As Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge emphasizes here and elsewhere, it is necessary to dispel the prejudices imposed by literary evidence, if considered in isolation.[2] Likewise, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood cautioned us to divorce modern preconceptions of Aphrodite's divine personality.[3] These doyennes of Greek religion remind us that the study of Aphrodite, as any aspect of a deity, should be on a case-by-case basis, and attention to differences amongst groups of worshippers in disparate places and times is fundamental. It is nevertheless important not to completely discount previous judgments, as they throw light on conceptions of Aphrodite from the post-antique to modern periods. These insights are valuable in reception studies. The authors of this *Companion to Aphrodite* therefore aim to present evidence for her—visual, literary, and other—throughout the Mediterranean, in antiquity, and beyond, despite and in light of previous scholarship and opinions. This introduction, meanwhile, outlines some of the new buds that emerge through the study of the goddess' persona alongside some older avenues. In short, who is she, how does she manifest herself, and how is she worshipped?

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[1] See, for example, David Bellingham's discussion of Botticelli's Venus in chapter 19 of the present volume.

[2] See Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge in chapter 1 of the present volume.

[3] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *"Reading" Greek Culture: Texts and Image, Rituals and Myths* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 147–151 and 175–178.

Coming into Being

It is not necessary or even preferable to address Aphrodite's origins when trying to answer the question, who (or what) is she? As a goddess, she is in essence a natural force. Literary and other expositions present her as the power or link between contrasts, just as her daughter Harmonia ('Harmony') represents a compromise, the result of the union between Aphrodite and Ares (or 'Love' and 'War').[4] The being known as Aphrodite is not, however, conciliatory, but rather a kind of tension. She presides over not only love but also conflict, in a personal or marital context; her erotic realm straddles the middle ground, between these extremes. She is the goddess of sex insofar as it relates to marriage as well as other, sometimes contrary, human activities. She also stands among fertility goddesses—Opora ('Harvest') and Eirene ('Peace') at the boundary between fertility and war.[5] Greek history is littered with reminders of the negative results of conflict and war for the fertility of humans (through the loss of sons and husbands) as well as the fruition of crops, often razed to the ground, as with the Spartan attacks on Athens during the Peloponnesian Wars.[6]

This view of Aphrodite as a set of polarities is also relevant to the subject of her "origins," with the presentation of contrasting genealogies enlivening this debate. Hesiod tells us she was born from the foam of the sea as it bubbled around Ouranos' genitals, severed by Kronos in the great battle of the Titans.[7] She reached land at Cyprus, her traditional home, where she was greeted by Eros and Himeros, according to Hesiod, or the Graces, her regular companions, according to other sources. This is after she approached Kythera, where her cult, according to Herodotos and Pausanias, is of great antiquity.[8] This is the derivation of her epithet *Kythereia*, as in the *Theogony*.[9] In the *Iliad*, however, Homer makes her the child of Zeus and Dione.[10] At first sight, this is a seemingly Greek interpretation of her parentage, a coupling of Zeus with a nymph whose name is a feminized form of his own.[11] Yet, later authors say Dione was herself a Titan, while Zeus was an Olympian (a few generations later).[12] The mothering scene in the *Iliad* has parallels with the epic of Gilgamesh, when Ištar seeks solace from her parents.[13] *Iliad* 5 is one of the only instances where Aphrodite has a mother, whereas she is regularly the daughter of Zeus. It is also the only book of the poem that names her *Kypris*.[14] Elsewhere Homer presents her as mother of Aineias and therefore a Venus-type figure, whose attempts to protect her son result in injury, itself the reason for her visit to Dione.[15] We cannot hope to choose among these differing lineages, but rather reconcile them. We may understand Aphrodite as born from the sky, thus essential and ubiquitous, and therefore at least from the generation of the Titans: primordial. Later in Platos' *Symposion*, she is understood as both Zeus' unruly daughter, *Pandemos*, the commoner who is among the people, and a heavenly older goddess, *Ourania*; Plato also sees this latter Aphrodite as the progeny of Ouranos.[16] Other mythic contrasts involve her connection to Eros, her son according to Simonides and later accounts, the truest love god because that is what his name means.[17] Despite their close association in art, no extant written source describes Aphrodite giving birth to Eros.[18]

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[4] Hes., *Theog.* 937.

[5] Amy C. Smith, "Political Personifications in Classical Athenian Art" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1997), pp. 101–107.

[6] Thuc. 2.19, passim.

[7] Hes., *Theog.* 191–206.

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[8] Hdt. 1.105; Paus. 3.23.1.

[9] Hes., *Theog.* 191–200. For further discussion see Martin Litchfield West, *Hesiod Theogony* (Oxford, 1966), p. 222.

[10] Hom., *Il.* 5.370–371.

[11] As discussed by Annette Teffeteller in chapter 7 of this volume.

[12] Apollod., *Bibl.* 1.1.3 and 1.3.1.

[13] Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia, Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford, 2000), p. 80; Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution*, pp. 97–99.

[14] There are five occasions; see Geoffrey Stephen Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary* 2: *Books 5–8* (Cambridge, Eng., 1990), pp. 93–94.

[15] See Jenny Wallensten's discussion of Aphrodite/Venus and Aineias/Aeneas in chapter 15 of this volume.

[16] Pl., *Symp.* 180d.

[17] Simonides fr. 575 Page.

[18] Angelos Delivorrias, Gratia Berger-Doer, and Anneliese Kossatz-Deissmann, in *LIMC* 2 (1984), 118–121, s.v. "Aphrodite," nos. 1126–1154.

In most traditions, she follows Eros into the world, whilst in Plato's *Symposion*, he is the product of a union between Poros ('Resource') and Penia ('Poverty'), born only slightly after Aphrodite, on the day of her birth.[19]

Despite Aphrodite's sea birth, and the almost universal agreement among sources that her domain is Cyprus, to many she is nevertheless a wholly Greek goddess.[20] Notwithstanding this Panhellenic goddess (worshipped throughout Greece and the Greek-speaking world, as reported by Pausanias, Strabo, and others), there are clear indications both on Cyprus and elsewhere, in art as in written (mostly epigraphic) sources, that her persona and / or cult were combined with those of Eastern goddesses: Ištar (Mesopotamia), Astarte (Assyria), Hathor (Egypt), Kybele (Hattusa), amongst others.[21] Her apparent absence from Linear B also fuels the search for her Eastern roots.[22]

So far we have prioritized the older (primarily epic) sources, although we noted some later texts and traditions, including those reflected in the text of the travel writer Pausanias (writing in the second century AD). By his time, Aphrodite had undergone many transformations, both in art and religion. Through many centuries, she had acquired new epithets that outline her sphere of influence, role, or the location of her centers of worship: Athenian examples include *Ourania* ('Heavenly'), *Euploia* ('Good sailing'), and *Limenia* ('Of the harbor').[23] She received other names, sometimes in combination with different goddesses: she was conflated with Turan in Etruria,[24] and a Roman fertility goddess by the name of Venus at Mount Eryx in Sicily (Venus *Erycina*) as at Rome (from the third century BC).[25] Venus *Genetrix*, the ancestral goddess of the Julio-Claudians, is more Greek than Roman in appearance as well as tradition.[26] She is worshipped primarily as Aphrodite throughout the Greek world, even during the Roman Empire, yet as Venus in some Latinized centers.

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[19] From Hesiod, where Eros accompanies her, straight after her birth: Hes., *Theog.* 201. Pl., *Symp.* 203b–c. See also Vered Lev Kenaan's discussion of this text in chapter 3 of the present volume.

[20] *Hymn. Hom.* 6.1–21, for example, also specifies Aphrodite's home as Cyprus.

[21] See Anja Ulbrich's discussion of many of these syncretisms in chapter 10 of the present volume.

[22] Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 152–154.

[23] As discussed by Chryssanthi Papadopoulou in chapter 12 of the present volume. For Aphrodite *Ourania*, especially in Athens, see also Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 59–81.

[24] Raymond Bloch in *LIMC* 2 (1984), 169–176, s.v. "Aphrodite / Turan."

[25] Wallensten, chapter 15.

[26] As discussed by Rachel Kousser in chapter 16 of the present volume.

Aphrodite / Venus also stands at the boundary of contrasting traditions. Her persona, as a primordial spirit whose miraculous origins play a part in cosmogonic systems, is evident from Hesiod's (seventh century BC) to Proclus' (fifth century AD) *Theogonies*, the latter being more verbose. These treatments—folktale, philosophical, or other—are to blame for Aphrodite's subsequent reputation as the goddess of love, an interpretation that now clashes with the current understanding of her polyvalence, with discrete and overlapping spheres of influence.[27] While we embrace this new multifaceted and adaptable Aphrodite in the present volume, we do not entirely abandon the traditional goddess of love, sex, and fertility, attested, for example, in the archaeological evidence of Archaic Cyprus.[28]

Aphrodite Revealed

As any deity, the perennial question arises: how does Aphrodite manifest herself? This matter follows logically from our first point, regarding her identity as a goddess at the interface of many contrasts, the spirit of the tension between seemingly contrary aspects of life. Our polyvalent Aphrodite presents herself in different guises, with various companions in different places. From her statuary we are reminded of the manner of clothing she adopts or discards. These garments and Aphrodite's disrobing are the essence of her being, certainly in the early tradition, as exemplified by the fifth *Homeric Hymn*.[29] Without her elaborate drapery, she is nude; without her exquisite jewelry and garments, vulnerable. Devoid of them, Aphrodite can give the impression of being a simple mortal, pretending to be a maiden in the fifth *Homeric Hymn*.[30] By the time of Virgil's telling of her epiphany to Aineias, in the first century BC, she fails in her disguise, specifically because she cannot shed her divine aura.[31] Yet her manifestation, as her persona, is manifold: she is represented as a rock, for example, in her home sanctuary at Paphos.[32] Does this construction symbolize her essential beauty, or does it simply remind us that she is, should be, or could be formless?

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[27] As argued by Gabriella Pironti in chapter 6 of the present volume.

[28] For example, at Achna: Jacqueline Karageorghis, *Kypris: The Aphrodite of Cyprus, Ancient Sources and Archaeological Evidence* (Nicosia, 2005), pp. 206–208. For a thorough discussion of Aphrodite throughout Cyprus see Anja Ulbrich, in chapter 10 of the present volume.

[29] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.171–175. Andrew Faulkner, *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 238–242.

[30] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.81–82. Faulkner, *Hymn to Aphrodite*, pp. 162–164.

[31] See James Burbidge's discussion of this passage in chapter 4 of the present volume.

In her continuum from voluptuous splendor to formless rock, Aphrodite becomes one of the essential beauties of the ancient world and beyond. While her power may be evoked through a rock at Paphos, commentators in the Roman Empire insist she was revered in that form in their time.[33] Her more sensual, tactile, humanized form is the more widespread and popular visualization of Aphrodite / Venus.

Aphrodite is visually identifiable as this Greek goddess from the seventh century onwards,[34] although rarely in sculpture until later, when her full-blown femininity attracts the human (particularly masculine) gaze unknown before Praxiteles' Knidian statue, in the mid-fourth century BC.[35] By the time of Praxiteles, however, the essence of her power was her nudity and sexuality. The ambiguity of his work poses some questions: does the goddess draw her towel towards her in shame, or does she draw attention to her genitalia and *aidos* ('modesty'), as the source of her power?[36] From the response to this particular statue and its derivatives, Aphrodite finally becomes the feminine and sensual beauty. Was Aphrodite's beauty, at this point, merely reduced to a common, humanized, feminine form? The answer to this question is a resounding "no"! While beauty and nudity are synonymous in some contexts, just as there are two (or more) Aphrodites, there are two or more concepts of beauty. Praxiteles' Aphrodite may well represent the more ordinary beauty, in the form of *Pandemos* ('Of all the people', also translated as 'Common' or 'Profane'), while *Ourania* ('Heavenly') Aphrodite represents the pure essence of this trait.

Aphrodite also discloses herself through her companions, be it in folktale or cult contexts. As a poliadic or city divinity, she is worshipped with or instead of Athena, Zeus, Tyche ('Fortune'), Hathor, and others.

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[32] See Vered Lev Kenaan, in chapter 3 of the present volume.

[33] Tac., *Hist*. 2.3.

[34] One of the first is a fragmentary Naxian vase from 650 BC, showing her with Ares. Naxos, Naxos Museum. Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 123–124, s.v. "Aphrodite," no. 1286.

[35] For one of the earliest instances, see: Pseudo-Lucian, *Amores* 13–14. Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 49–50, s.v. "Aphrodite."

[36] For discussion of this element of the statue, see Kristen Seaman, "Retrieving the Original Aphrodite of Knidos," *Rendiconti della classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 9 (2004), pp. 551–557.

As a goddess of (political and marital) persuasion, she is attended by Peitho (herself the goddess and personification of 'Persuasion'), Eros (the creative / generative force, who may have helped to bring about Aphrodite), and his compelling brothers, Himeros ('Desire') and Pothos ('Longing').[37] The latter two are known in Classical Athens, otherwise seldom seen, yet Erotes or Cupids, their Roman counterparts, proliferate, whether or not with Aphrodite. Are these multiple forms of Eros not contributory aspects to the love, a form of divine beauty that Aphrodite / Venus represents? The Erotes are then Himeros, Pothos, Anteros, Hermaphroditos, Priapos, and perhaps many more of their "brothers," transformed into decorative elements that hold little of their original meaning.[38]

Aphrodite is also associated with gods of creativity and craft, not least Eros, the original creative force, as noted above. She is more often (unfavorably) compared to, rather than complemented with, Athena (*Ergane* or 'Worker' in her creative persona), but their shared role as favored daughters of Zeus brings these sisters closer than most commentators realize.[39] She is also intimately connected through her husband, the smith god Hephaistos, the lame creator of a great variety of metalwares, whether for love (jewelry, crowns) or war. On this level (and perhaps this alone), he is an essential husband for her, as the goddess of love and war. In her warrior element, Aphrodite *Enoplion* also offsets Ares / Mars, and much is made of this by the Roman Imperial dynasties.[40] Finally, she is the promiscuous contrast to the virgin goddesses, not least Athena, but also Artemis and Hestia.[41]

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[37] For the association of Aphrodite with Peitho, and also *Pandemos*: Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 13–28.

[38] See H. Alan Shapiro, *Personifications in Greek Art: The Representation of Abstract Concepts 600–400 B.C.* (Zurich, 1993), pp. 43 (Anteros), and 110–124 (Himeros and Pothos). For Hermaphroditos and Priapos, see also Maurice Olender, "Aspects of Baubo: Ancient Texts and Contexts," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1991), p. 103 passim.

[39] See Kassandra Jackson's discussion of family tensions in chapter 8 of the present volume.

[40] See especially Stephanie Budin's contribution, chapter 5, to the present volume.

[41] *Hymn. Hom.*, 5.5–20, and discussion in Faulkner, *Hymn to Aphrodite*, pp. 79–101.

Aphrodite's Place

Where then does Aphrodite situate herself? In her essential form, as beauty, she must be everywhere. She is, certainly, found wherever love (Eros) and his multiples come into conflict with war, civil disputes, or even marriage. For the primordial goddess, *Ourania*, whose father(s) are the heavens, she is certainly not limited to one part of the cosmos, like her father and uncles. She is no mere sea nymph either, despite the marine *thiasos* that accompanies her in her role as *Anadyomene* ('Rising').[42] In her marine element, Aphrodite does not stay put, but journeys especially with sailors, in her role as *Euploia*, from production center to trading center, from mother city to colony.[43] Yet she is solidly grounded in the earth, particularly on Cyprus, where, according to *Hesiod*, on her arrival she causes vegetation to grow beneath her feet. As fertility divinity, presiding over vegetal and animal fecundity, as well as human sexuality and production, she might seem most appropriate as a rural spirit, yet she is primarily a city goddess throughout mainland Greece and the Near East, in places such as Athens, Corinth, or Naukratis.[44] Aphrodite is thus no rustic sister of Pan, but an urbane and civilized presence, even the symbol of a cultured Classical education, exemplified, for example, in her statuettes that form part of Late Antique dining sets.[45] Clearly, as an object of reverence, Aphrodite does not limit herself to temples. Even at her infamous sanctuary on Knidos, she may not have had her own temple until perhaps the second century BC. Before that, a simple *aedicula* was deemed suitable for her most famous sculpted manifestation. The appearance of her later temple, however, is largely (although tenuously) reconstructed through literary testimonies and an apparent replica from Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli.[46]

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[42] Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 54–56, s.v. "Aphrodite."

[43] Papadopoulou, chapter 11.

[44] For Aphrodite at Athens, see also Elisabetta Pala's chapter 10 in the present volume. For Aphrodite at Corinth, see Charles K. Williams, II, "Corinth and the Cult of Aphrodite," in *Corinthiaca: Studies in Honor of Darrell A. Amyx*, ed. Mario A. Del Chiaro and William R. Biers (Columbia, 1986), pp. 13–24; Rachel Meredith Kousser, *Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture: The Allure of the Classical* (Cambridge, Eng., 2008), pp. 17–28. For Aphrodite at Naukratis, see Astrid Möller, *Naukratis: Trade in Archaic Greece* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 168–169, 173–174, 178–179.

[45] As discussed by Anthousa Papagiannaki in chapter 17 of the present volume. In a similar vein, see Margherita Carucci's discussion, in chapter 16, of Aphrodite in the pictorial context of athletic contests.

[46] As discussed by Sophie Montel in chapter 13 of the present volume. Antonio Corso,

Similarly, the evidence for her worship in western Greece comes not from monumental structures but from votives and inscriptions.[47]

In all of these spaces—from country to sea, wilderness to city—Aphrodite and her cult are entwined with others: syncretized or merged with Near Eastern, Western, and other cultural forms from a variety of cultures and periods. She is evidenced in her own right, worshipped and honored with epithets that explain her particular persona in each cultic space; in pairs, with her husband (Hephaistos), consort (Ares / Mars), father (Zeus), or son (Eros); or surrounded by others, for example, a plethora of Nereids (sea nymphs) and marine creatures, while she accompanies the sea god Poseidon and his consort Amphitrite.[48] An equally abundant entourage is found in the so-called "Gardens of Aphrodite" that decorated pots in late fifth-century BC Athens. These gardens, the repose of Aphrodite *en Kepois* ('In the gardens') are just one class of artistic representation of a localized cult epithet of Aphrodite that comes centuries after her introduction to Greek religion, but brings us full circle to her fundamental role as the epiphany of the beauty and bounty of nature.[49]

The aim of this volume is therefore to reevaluate our appraisal of Aphrodite as the goddess of this overarching beauty in all its variants: not only love, sex, fertility, and abundance, but also work, war, craft, politics, and many others. It is not necessarily appropriate to reject traditional views of the goddess, but to read around them and then delve into aspects of her personality that are less well evidenced and understood. In some cases this may be to understand how and why the evidence displays or prioritizes these traditional roles, for example, at her home on Cyprus and in Augustan Rome, as discussed by Anja Ulbrich and Rachel Kousser.[50] In other cases we seek to understand how and why Aphrodite is presented in apparently opposing roles, as do Stephanie Budin, Gabriella Pironti, and Elisabetta Pala.[51] It is not as yet possible to make sense of all the disparate sources. As a result different scholars

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however, attributes elements of the surviving temple to the fourth century BC: *The Art of Praxiteles* 2: *The Mature Years* (Rome, 2007), pp. 33–34. On the association of the two structures at Tivoli and Knidos, see William L. Macdonald and John A. Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy* (New Haven, 1995), pp. 58–59.

[47] As discussed by Alexander Nagel in chapter 12 of the present volume.

[48] Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 131–132, s.v. "Aphrodite," nos. 1381–1384.

[49] Pala, chapter 10. See also Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 29–44.

[50] Chapters 9 and 15, respectively.

[51] Chapters 5, 6, and 10.

adopt divergent interpretations, as exemplified by Budin and Pironti. We encourage such debate which necessarily fuels scholarship.

All the characteristics of Aphrodite discussed in this introductory essay—what (who) she is; how she appears; and how (where, in what manner, and with whom) she is (worshipped)—permeate this volume, but are particularly relevant to essays in the first part of the volume, on the issue of "Aphrodite's Identity." Part two, on "Aphrodite's Companions and Relations" considers her affiliation and contrast with other deities, as evidenced primarily in early literature. "The Spread of Aphrodite's Cults in Greece," in part three, considers literary, visual, and other archaeological evidence for Aphrodite, from Cyprus to Roman Greece. Part four, "The Reception of the Goddess," investigates her dissemination through the visual sources, often under the mantel of Venus, where she traverses Roman North Africa, fifteenth-century Italy, and early twentieth-century France.[52] The chapters are thus thematically organized according to aspects of the goddess that extend across periods, places, and genres, with each section incorporating—at a minimum—both Greek and Roman material. Due to the broad and eclectic range of fields and approaches, it is fitting that there is no overarching conclusion. The authors' conclusions are as wide-ranging as the goddess herself, so we leave our readers to draw their own judgments.

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[52] As discussed in chapters 16, 18, and 19.

PART ONE

APHRODITE’S IDENTITY

CHAPTER THREE

APHRODITE: THE GODDESS OF APPEARANCES

Vered Lev Kenaan

Introduction

In antiquity, the temple of Aphrodite at Paphos (the modern village of Kuklia), was a celebrated site visited by both native and foreign admirers and devotees. With its direct view of the goddess' birthplace in the sea, the sanctuary at Paphos was striking in its presentation of Aphrodite without human form. It did not contain the common figure of the goddess as a beautiful maiden, but as Tacitus informs us, it lacked a human form altogether. It was a *simulacrum deae non effigie humana* ("an image of a goddess without a human form").[1]

Not only did the Paphian Aphrodite lack a feminine body and a beautiful face, so characteristic of ancient representations of the goddess, but it also had no figurative aspects at all; neither is it human, nor does it draw on any animal imagery. Rather, Aphrodite appears in a completely nonfigurative or aniconic manner: as a big, dark, somewhat conelike rock.

The few ancient authorities that mention the unusual appearance of the goddess express their sense of wonder, but do so without any attempt to decipher its enigmatic meaning. Tacitus emphasizes the obscure meaning of this formless object: *sed ratio in obscure* ("but the reason remains in obscurity").[2] His puzzlement is echoed in the words of the archaeologist Max Ohnefalsch-Richter, who wrote in 1893, "Let us … start from Aphrodite, the golden-haired goddess of love. No two things can be, it seems, more diverse than Knidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles and the stone fetish in the form of meteoric cone, which still in Roman times was in the sanctuary of Paphos venerated as the embodiment of Aphrodite-Astarte."[3] The tension between these aniconic and figurative representations of Aphrodite is, in my view, not coincidental. It reflects an inner complexity that is essential to the relationship between Aphrodite and the ancient problem of appearance.

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[1] Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.3. Tacitus does not give any indication of the antiquity of this image. Aphrodite's aniconic stone was certainly not a unique example but part of a wide range of cultic aniconic monuments, stones, and pillars. On aniconism in Greek art and religion, see Milette Gaifman, "Beyond Mimesis in Greek Religious Art: Aniconism in the Archaic and Classical Periods" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2005).

[2] The aniconic image of Aphrodite is also referred to by Philostratos in *The Life of Apollonios of Tyana* 3.57 AS *hedos* ('seat'), a cult monument, whose enigmatic presence is a wonder to its beholder, Apollonios. Hellenistic stamps and Roman coins that depict the shrine provide another important testimony on the Paphian aniconic stone. See John L. Myres, "The Black Stone on the Site of the Paphian Temple at Kouklia," *BSA* 41

In art history we know of two common modes of representations of Aphrodite: the dressed and the naked Aphrodite. Consider, for example, the late fourth-century BC Cypriote statue of Aphrodite holding a winged Eros (figure 9.9).[4] The figure of the goddess is fully dressed and adorned: she wears a richly decorated diadem with feminine naked figures and vegetal images, a necklace and earrings. She is dressed in chiton and himation. But, the fourth century BC is also known for its development of a new formal presentation of the nude goddess associated primarily with the famous statue of Praxiteles, the Knidian Aphrodite.[5] For students of art, the new portrayal of the naked Aphrodite opens a horizon for different interpretations: should the goddess' naked body be understood in relation to her seductive, dominantly feminine aspects?[6] Or, should

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(1946), 97–98; Franz G. Maier and Vassos Karageorgis, *Paphos, History and Archeology* (Athens, 1984). Yet, there are no ancient sources according to which an exact chronology of the aniconic stone can be provided. In reference to cult monuments of the end of the sixth century BC, Millette Gaifman argues that the choice to adopt an aniconic form could have been "a way of signaling a link with a deep past … a means of constructing antiquity" ("Beyond Mimesis in Greek Religious Art," pp. 264–265).

[3] *Kypros, the Bible and Homer: Oriental Civilization, Art and Religion in Ancient Times* (London, 1893).

[4] Said to be from Golgoi: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 74.51.2426.

[5] On the novelty of Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite, see the Plin., *HN* 34.4.20–21. In *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings* (London, 1997), p. 181, Nigel Spivey, however, does not accept the common assumption that Praxiteles was the first to make a nude Aphrodite: "The fact that sculpted female nudes from the fifth century have not survived does not mean that none existed."

[6] For Aphrodite's eroticized naked body see Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture*, pp. 173–186; See also Miroslav Marcovich, "From Ištar to Aphrodite," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 30 (1996), 43–59; Stephanie L. Budin, who shows how the Bronze Age Levantine iconography of the naked goddess gave rise to the persona of the Cyprian Aphrodite, argues that Aphrodite's nakedness is an epitome of a divine form of erotic femininity. Yet, the question of whether nudity necessarily reflects an eroticized conception of the goddess depends, according to Budin, on the specific artistic milieu: Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, pp. 31–32, 232–241. See also Andrew Stewart, *Art, Desire and the Body in*

it be understood, as Nikolaus Himmelmann argues, as an attempt to reflect a metaphysical concept of the sacred body?[7] This iconographical interpretation is influenced by Neoplatonic doctrines, which consider clothing to be a symbol of the body and nudity a symbol of incorporeal power separated from the body and its clothing.[8]

Should we understand the difference between the aniconic and the concrete figurative portrayal of the feminine figure as reflecting a passage from a primitive to a more elaborate stage in the history of this divinity? Does this development also have aesthetic bearing in delineating the passage from the crude cult images originally used in the worship of the gods, towards a more sophisticated marble statue representative of the high cultural values of the city? Should we consider the turn from a richly dressed representation to the naked figure of the goddess to reflect a new idealizing stage of the feminine?[9] How can the various typical appearances of the goddess, as an aniconic, naked, or fully dressed figure, contribute to our understanding of Aphrodite's divinity and the significance of feminine representation?

If we consider these questions in the light of Plato's *Symposion*, we see, however, that the developing notion of beauty takes an inverse course, one that privileges an abstract (aniconic) notion of beauty over its concrete forms.

Aphrodite Kale*: Plato's Ladder of Beauty*

In the few dialogues in which Plato mentions Aphrodite, I have found only one reference to the goddess' beauty: in *Symposion* 203c where Socrates cites Diotima, the priestess from Mantineia who has told him about Aphrodite's birth. Earlier in the dialogue, Pausanias and Aristo-

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Ancient Greece (Cambridge, Eng., 1997), pp. 38–39; On the political significance of the Knidian Aphrodite, see Nanette Salomon, "Making a World of Difference: Gender, Asymmetry, and the Greek Nude," in *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology*, ed. Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Claire L. Lyons (London, 1997), pp. 197–219.

[7] Nikolaus Himmelmann, *Reading Greek Art* (Princeton, 1998), pp. 191–194.

[8] Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), pp. 63–64.

[9] This is Himmelmann's view, in *Reading Greek Art*, p. 194: "Only if one grasps the remarkable development in its complete newness is its meaning comprehensible. The image of divinity had to be removed to a new idealizing sphere, so that what had been most profane could become most sacred."

phanes speak of Aphrodite but, despite their reliance on Hesiod and Homer, for whom Aphrodite's beauty is inseparable from her erotic form of divinity, they neglect to mention Aphrodite's beautiful appearance.[10] Moreover, beauty is tied to the figure of Eros, who is celebrated by Agathon as κάλλιστον ('the most beautiful').[11] In contrast to Agathon's praise of Eros as κάλλιστον, Diotima presents a radically revised notion of this god.[12] She reveals Eros' demonic essence: Eros is neither beautiful nor ugly, but an everlasting movement towards the beautiful, which is desire.[13] As such, Eros is constituted in his relationship to beauty, but is never himself beautiful. As Diotima elaborates her theory of love, she further develops the relationship between love and beauty with particular attention to the concrete spectrum of the experience of beauty. In this context, the mention of Aphrodite's beauty appears only as a specific case among three kinds of experiences of the beautiful, which together create a hierarchical order constituting Plato's ladder of beauty: As we shall see, Ἀφροδίτη καλή ('beautiful Aphrodite')[14] designates the lowest rung of beautiful, following Moira and Eileithuia, who mark the middle stage of ἡ καλλονή ('beauty'),[15] and finally, the highest stage, τὸ κάλλος ('beauty'),[16] a stage in which beauty appears in its nonconcrete form.[17] What then is Aphrodite's place in Plato's hierarchy? What role does she play in Plato's notion of beauty? Let us now consider each of the stages of the Platonic ladder of beauty.

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[10] The impact of Hesiod's description of Eros and Aphrodite in *Theogony* on Plato is apparent in the *Kratylos* (406c) where Sokrates confirms Hesiod's authority regarding the etymological explanation of Aphrodite's name as deriving from the *aphros* ('foam'). Hesiod's influence on Plato is especially evident, however, in the *Symposion*. On the primacy of Eros as an ancient god (Pl., *Symp*. 178b), Plato has Phaedrus cite the Hes., *Theog*. 116–120. Pausanias alludes to Hesiod in his reference to Aphrodite Urania in Pl., *Symp*. 180d. The Homeric Aphrodite present in Pausanias' reference to the younger goddess (Pl., *Symp*. 180d) is Aphrodite *Pandemos*, the daughter of Zeus and Dione known from *Iliad* 5. Aristophanes alludes (Pl., *Symp*. 192d) to the Homeric description of the love affair between Ares and Aphrodite (Hom., *Od*. 8.296–298), in which the goddess' appearance is dramatically employed. Yet, in Aristophanes' myth, Aphrodite's beautiful appearance plays no role in shaping the lovers' desire to become parts of the same whole.

[11] Pl., *Symp*. 195a.

[12] Pl., *Symp*. 201e.

[13] Pl., *Symp*. 201e–203a.

[14] Pl., *Symp*. 203c.

[15] Pl., *Symp*. 206b.

[16] Pl., *Symp*. 210b.

[17] Readings of the *Symposion* typically fail to recognize the role of Aphrodite and these birth goddesses in shaping Diotima's notion of beauty. For a recent discussion of beauty in Plato, which overlooks the significance of Aphrodite, see, for example, Drew A. Hyland, *Plato and the Question of Beauty* (Bloomington, 2008), pp. 27–63, 112.

The figure of Aphrodite emerges in the opening section of Diotima's speech, which examines the mythical origins of Eros. According to Diotima, it was during the celebration of Aphrodite's birth that Eros was conceived and διὸ δὴ καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀκόλουθος καὶ θεράπων γέγονεν ὁ Ἔρως, γεννηθεὶς ἐν τοῖς ἐκείνης γενεθλίοις ("because he was conceived on the day of her birth," Eros "was born to follow Aphrodite and serve her").[18] Diotima's mythical account of Eros is well aware of its uniqueness within the literary tradition. Inverting the order of Hesiod's genealogy, according to which Eros precedes Aphrodite, Plato uses Aphrodite's birth as a backdrop for discussing Eros' mythical origins:[19]

> ὅτε γὰρ ἐγένετο ἡ Ἀφροδίτη, ἡστιῶντο οἱ θεοὶ οἵ τε ἄλλοι καὶ ὁ τῆς Μήτιδος ὑὸς Πόρος. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐδείπνησαν, προσαιτήσουσα οἷον δὴ εὐωχίας οὔσης ἀφίκετο ἡ Πενία, καὶ ἦν περὶ τὰς θύρας. ὁ οὖν Πόρος μεθυσθεὶς τοῦ νέκταρος—οἶνος γὰρ οὔπω ἦν—εἰς τὸν τοῦ Διὸς κῆπον εἰσελθὼν βεβαρημένος ηὗδεν. ἡ οὖν Πενία ἐπιβουλεύουσα διὰ τὴν αὑτῆς ἀπορίαν παιδίον ποιήσασθαι ἐκ τοῦ Πόρου, κατακλίνεταί τε παρ' αὐτῷ καὶ ἐκύησε τὸν ἔρωτα. διὸ δὴ καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀκόλουθος καὶ θεράπων γέγονεν ὁ Ἔρως, γεννηθεὶς ἐν τοῖς ἐκείνης γενεθλίοις, καὶ ἅμα φύσει ἐραστὴς ὢν περὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης καλῆς οὔσης.
>
> When Aphrodite was born, the gods held a celebration. Poros, the son of Metis, was there among them. When they had feasted, Penia came begging, as poverty does when there's a party, and stayed by the gates. Now Poros got drunk on Nectar (there was no wine yet) and, feeling drowsy, went into the garden of Zeus, where he fell asleep. Then Penia devised a plan to relieve her lack of resources: she would get a child from Poros. So she lay beside him and got pregnant with love. That is why love was born to follow Aphrodite and serve her: because he was conceived on the day of her birth. That is why he is also by nature a lover of beauty, because Aphrodite herself is especially beautiful.[20]

Although Aphrodite is not genealogically related to Eros, her presence plays an important role in shaping his meaning and purpose: "And that's why he is also by nature a lover of beauty, because Aphrodite herself is especially beautiful."[21] In other words, the beauty of the goddess, her being *Aphrodite kale*,[22] constitutes as a ruling principle, the nature of Eros. Yet, the beauty of Aphrodite is not the condition for all types of desires; it provides only the necessary environment for erotic desire.

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[18] Pl., *Symp.* 203c, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis, 1989).

[19] Cf. Maximus of Tyre on Sappho: "Aphrodite says to Sappho in one of her songs: . . . you and my servant (*therapon*) Eros." Fr. 159 in *Greek Lyric* 1, ed. and trans. David A. Campbell (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).

[20] Pl., *Symp.* 203b–c, trans. Nehamas and Woodruff.

[21] Pl., *Symp.* 203c.

As Diotima moves on to explain the role that *eros*, as a creative drive, has in the quest for beauty and knowledge, she does not mention Aphrodite's name again. Aphrodite is thus excluded from the different forms of beauty that the lover desires to behold. Plato's mention of Aphrodite is only the very first stage in a discussion meant to establish the role of beauty in a lover's life. When Diotima moves on to explain the more metaphysical aspects of desire, she dwells on the relationship between beauty and divinity: "Beauty is in harmony with the divine. Hence, in childbirth, ἥ καλλονή ['the beauty'] is Moira and Eileithuia."[23] In introducing these two new birth goddesses,[24] Diotima does not leave Aphrodite behind, so much as create a new semantic field that incorporates her seductive force together with the significance of procreation, which, we know, is ascribed to Aphrodite in other literary contexts.[25]

With this new condensed image of a divine beauty, Diotima moves away from the specificity of *Aphrodite kale* towards a higher, more general presence of divine beauty, ἥ καλλονή.[26] This form of beauty is not tied to the identity of one goddess, but to a spectrum of divinity. Yet it differs from the highest form of beauty, that which is the ultimate goal of the erotic quest. Ἡ καλλονή is a rare noun, employed here by Plato in a manner that feminizes the common grammatical form of beauty, the neutral form, τὸ κάλλος. Thus, as Diotima moves on to discuss, at the highest stage in the ladder of love, in which "the lover is turned to τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος … τοῦ καλοῦ ['the great sea of beauty']," the beautiful loses the specificity of its gender, its feminine character, and is crystallized as the neuter.[27]

For Plato, Aphrodite is associated with beauty, but her specificity as a concrete persona relegates her beauty to the domain of appearances that ultimately stands in opposition to the realm of eternal forms. That is, Plato clearly separates Aphrodite's feminine beauty from what he considers to be a higher form of abstract or ideal beauty. In other words, Aphrodite embodies the kind of beauty that, according to Plato, must be transcended. This being must be allowed to show itself beyond appearances; in this philosophical epiphany, the feminine necessarily surrenders itself to the neuter.

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[22] Pl., *Symp*. 203c.

[23] Pl., *Symp*. 206d, trans. author.

[24] Moira in Hom., *Il*. 24.209, and Eileithuia in Pind., *Ol*. 6.41, *Nem*. 7.1.

[25] For the literary evidence on Aphrodite's role as a fertility goddess, see Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, pp. 20–21.

[26] Pl., *Symp*. 206d. Diotima employs a similar strategy as she describes the manner in which the lover overcomes his desire for a specific body and recognizes the beauty of the plurality of bodies. Pl., *Symp*. 210a–b.

[27] Pl., *Symp*. 210d.

'Divine Beauty': Aphrodite Dressed

The beauty of Plato's Aphrodite can only show itself under the sign of the philosophical sublimation of the feminine. But, this is, of course, not the only ancient model for the articulation of the goddesses' beauty. The Archaic literary tradition of the eighth century BC, the age of the Homeric and Hesiodic epic, was both a source of inspiration for Plato and an object for his criticism. The very ground for describing Aphrodite is the understanding that her divine beauty is essentially gendered: it is a gendered form of beauty. "In a goddess," writes Nicole Loraux, "there is both *thea* and *theos*. *Theos*: generic divinity beyond the difference in sex; the Greeks used the term *theos* in their address to both male and female gods. *Thea* designates an exclusively female divinity."[28] Aphrodite is both ϑεά ('goddess') and ϑεός ('deity'), and the particularity of her beauty unfolds precisely at the intersection of her divinity and femininity. But, what is the relationship between these two aspects? How do Aphrodite's divinity and femininity show themselves to the human viewer? How do they affect the viewer? Is Aphrodite's appearance first divine and only then feminine, or is it the other way around? What lies at the heart of the human perception of the goddess: the sight of the divine or the encounter with the concretely feminine?

A particularly useful prism for considering these questions is the seventh-century BC fifth *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.[29] The hymn is a text about seduction, and more specifically about Aphrodite as a seductress. Like its protagonist, it creates textual ambiguities: on the one hand, as a hymn it celebrates Aphrodite's divinity, praising her as a mighty goddess. On the other hand, at the same time it narrates how Zeus humiliates the goddess as he was tired of her erotic games. She forced him more than once to fall in love with a mortal woman, so Zeus punishes Aphrodite in her own erotic domain by causing her to fall in love, for once, with the mortal Anchises. From this love affair Aineias is born, whom the Romans adopted as their mythological father. In her desire to tempt the mortal Anchises, the goddess disguises herself as a human virgin. Aphrodite knows that Anchises would not be willing to make love to a goddess because of his male anxiety of impotence.[30]

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[28] Nicole Loraux, "What Is a Goddess?" in *A History of Women: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, ed. Pauline Schmitt Pantel (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), p. 17.

[29] On the date and place of composition, see Andrew Faulkner, *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite: Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 47–50.

In appearing in disguise, Aphrodite creates a complex interplay of appearances that operates through constant ambiguity. She alternates between the appearance of the divine and that of the mortal, the powerful goddess and the fragile maiden, the manipulative seductress and the inexperienced virgin. When she takes the role of a beautiful human bride, Aphrodite brings into play a deceptive illusion that stands in opposition to the real. The complexity of Aphrodite's self-presentation lies in the manner in which it deconstructs the very distinction between the real and its imitation. According to Ann Bergren,

> Aphrodite would appear here to be imitating Pandora, the prototype of the human virgin bride. But this imitation is far from simple, for what is the human bride except an imitation of Aphrodite? … Thus in imitating a human virgin bride, Aphrodite imitates an imitation of herself. In this presentation of herself to Anchises, the "real" Aphrodite comes as an imitation of an imitation of the "real" Aphrodite. Is there any way by which a man could "see through" this imitation, could know that this is "really" Aphrodite in disguise? Will such an ambiguous imitation—the *eidos* of a human virgin, but still visibly divine—not be doomed to the either / or logic of the viewer? Or can Aphrodite have it both ways?[31]

For Bergren, the form of Aphrodite's appearance is one that cannot find its place, one that disrupts any binary understanding of the visual in terms of the opposition between appearance and essence, or between illusion and truth. Bergren suggests that this effect cannot be severed from the manner in which Aphrodite symbolizes the femininity that is the essence of sexuality. In this sense, the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* may be read in terms of the manner in which it articulates the relationship among desire, the male gaze, and the appearance of feminine beauty. The latter is that which offers itself to the desiring gaze. In being this visual offering, always directed towards an external gaze, a woman's beauty is never self-contained. It is the kind of presence that can have no essence or identity, and, in this respect, it also differs from a mask that supposedly hides a core of self-sameness: "[A]ny virgin bride might be Aphrodite in disguise and no man 'seized by *eros*' for the bride can possibly know the difference."[32]

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[30] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.189.

[31] Ann Bergren, "*The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*: Tradition and Rhetoric, Praise and Blame," *Classical Antiquity* 8 (1989), 13–14.

The fifth *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* enables a reading of the goddess' beauty that associates its duality against the traditional understanding of feminine appearance as a fertile source of deceits and illusions. And yet, I do not think this is the only way to understand the meaning of Aphrodite's appearance. In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, feminine beauty is treated without attention to the distinction between its divine and human forms. At the same time, the categories of the human and the divine are clearly set apart, as can be seen by the *Hymn*'s double usage of the terms *thea* and *theos*. As *thea*, Aphrodite takes part in the field of mortal experience, the world of appearance that only bears the trace of her divinity, in the shining forth of her glimmering beauty. As *theos*, in contrast, Aphrodite becomes detached from the human realm and embodies the possibility of an exclusive and pure immortality. Accordingly, as Anchises faces Aphrodite's apparition for the first time, he addresses her as a goddess: ἄνασσα ('great lady'). Anchises cannot identify Aphrodite's specific divinity, and he locates her within the divine spectrum that includes Artemis, Leto, Aphrodite, Themis, Athena, and one of the Charites or the nymphs.[33] Aphrodite's response is significant. "I am not ϑεός," she says.[34] But this is not a sign of her reluctance to admit to her divinity. Indeed, Aphrodite refuses to reveal her specific identity, but she resists the nuances of a divinity associated with the term ϑεός. What Aphrodite denies, in other words, is the ungendered dimension of her divinity, and in this respect we may understand her as affirming her divine femininity.

How exactly does the divinity of Aphrodite reveal itself? How does the *Hymn* distinguish between the beauty of Aphrodite and the appearance of a young, beautiful, mortal woman? We see in the beautifying process that Aphrodite undergoes, in the preparation scene at her sanctuary at Paphos, that her beauty is meant to have an effect on a variety of senses. Aphrodite's shining appearance captures Anchises' eyes, her fragrant body attracts his sense of smell, and the sound of Aphrodite's jewelry, as she moves, turns Anchises into a listener. But, the principle of Aphrodite's presentation is her corporeal, sexual, presence:

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[32] Ibid., p. 41.

[33] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.92–99.

[34] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.109.

> ἐνϑ’ ἥ γ’ εἰσελϑοῦσα ϑύρας ἐπέϑηκε φαεινάς:
> ἔνϑα δέ μιν Χάριτες λοῦσαν καὶ χρῖσαν ἐλαίῳ
> ἀμβρότῳ, οἷα ϑεοὺς ἐπενήνοϑεν αἰὲν ἐόντας,
> ἀμβροσίῳ ἑδανῷ, τό ῥά οἱ τεϑυωμένον ἦεν.
> ἑσσαμένη δ’ εὖ πάντα περὶ χροῒ εἵματα καλὰ
> χρυσῷ.
>
> There she went in, and closed the gleaming doors, and there the graces bathed her and rubbed her with olive oil, as blooms upon the eternal gods, ambrosial bridal oil that she had ready perfumed. Her body well clad in all her fine garments adorned with gold.[35]

Despite the centrality of Aphrodite's corporeality, her naked body is never portrayed. It is only alluded to, indirectly, in the repeated act of cladding her skin, or *chros* ('flesh'), with golden garments, first at Paphos, and then during her intimate encounter with Anchises on Mount Ida.[36] The relationship between the dressed and the undressed body of Aphrodite is a central theme in the different stages of her appearance to Anchises. When Anchises first lays eyes on Aphrodite, who assumes the form of an unmarried girl,[37] he gazes at her with wonder:

> Ἀγχίσης δ’ ὁρόων ἐφράζετο ϑαύμαινέν τε
> εἶδός τε μέγεϑός τε καὶ εἵματα σιγαλόεντα.
> πέπλόν μὲν γὰρ ἕεστο φαεινότερον πυρὸς αὐγῆς,
> καλόν, χρύσειον, παμποίκιλον: ὡς δὲ σελήνη
> στήϑεσιν ἀμφ’ ἁπαλοῖσιν ἐλάμπετο, ϑαῦμα ἰδέσϑαι:
>
> Anchises gazed and took stock of her, wondering at her appearance, her stature, and her shining garments: for she wore a dress brighter then firelight, and she had twisted bracelets and shining ear buds. Round her tender neck there were beautiful necklaces of gold, most elaborate, and about her tender breasts it shone like a moon, a wonder to behold.[38]

Disguised as a young maiden, Aphrodite's striking appearance goes beyond the conventions of mortal beauty. The beauty of this fictitious bride has a divine aura; the Homeric and Hesiodic idiom ϑαῦμα ἰδέσϑαι ('a wonder to behold') alludes to this. Her garments and adornments shine like cosmic planets. The appearance of the disguised Aphrodite betrays the presence of her divinity.

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[35] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.60–64, ed. and trans. Martin L. West, *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

[36] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.64, 172. Homer mentions Hera's flesh as she sets about her toilette in order to seduce Zeus with the help of Aphrodite: Hom., *Il.* 14.170–177. On the gods' body, see Giulia Sissa and Marcel Detienne, *The Daily Life of the Greek Gods* (Stanford, 2000), pp. 28–38.

[37] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.82.

[38] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.84–90, trans. West.

Anchises' next moment of viewing the goddess takes place immediately after their lovemaking. This is the moment of Aphrodite's epiphany. Once again, Aphrodite appears before Anchises only after she has put on her garments and adornments. The act of dressing is that which allows Aphrodite's presence to become manifest.

> τῆμος ἄϱ' Ἀγχίσῃ μὲν ἐπὶ γλυκὺν ὕπνον ἔχευε
> νήδυμον, αὐτὴ δὲ χϱοῒ ἕννυτο εἵματα καλά.
> ἑσσαμένη δ' εὖ πάντα πεϱὶ χϱοῒ δῖα ϑεάων
> ἔστη πὰϱ κλισίῃ, κεὐποιήτοιο μελάϑϱου
> κῦϱε κάϱη: κάλλος δὲ παϱειάων ἀπέλαμπεν
> ἄμβϱοτον, οἷόν τ' ἐστὶν ἐυστεφάνου Κυϑεϱείης …
>
> Then she poured a sweet, peaceful sleep upon Anchises, while she dressed herself in her fine garments. Her body well clad in them all, the noble goddess stood in the hut—her head reached to the sturdy rafter, while from her cheeks shone a divine beauty, such as belongs to fair-garlanded Cytherea.[39]

The κάλλος … ἄμβϱοτον ('divine beauty') of Aphrodite emanates from her face, her head. It strikes Anchises as he wakes up from his sleep, fixing his eyes on Aphrodite's neck and beautiful eyes.[40] At this point, he recognizes that the beauty he sees belongs to Aphrodite. Can his glimpses at fragments of her body, her beautiful neck and eyes, provide a sufficient indication of her divinity? The enabling condition for Anchises' visual encounter with Aphrodite's divinity is her fully dressed appearance.

For Barbara Breitenberger, the descriptions of Aphrodite's epiphanies at the temple in Paphos and in front of Anchises, her lover and worshipper, reflect the *Homeric Hymn*'s awareness of the cult practice involving cleansing, anointing, and dressing the cult statue.[41] These features of Aphrodite's cult are commemorated in the first century AD by Ovid, who instructs the Roman mothers and newly married women in the context of worshipping Venus:

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[39] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.170–175. As *dia theaon*, on line 171, Aphrodite is literally the most divine goddess; see also Hom., *Il.* 18.388.

[40] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.181.

[41] Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros*, p. 56: "The adornment is a physical manifestation of the goddess' individual power and defines the goddess' specific sphere of interest and her function within the Olympic panthéon." See ibid., pp. 49–65, on the cultic significance of Aphrodite's epiphanies in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.

> *aurea marmoreo redimicula demite collo,*
> *demite divitias: tota lavanda dea est.*
> *aurea siccato redimicula redite collo:*
> *nunc alii flores, nunc nova danda rosa est.*
>
> Take off the golden necklaces from the marble neck of the goddess; take off her gauds; the goddess must be washed from top to toe. Then dry her neck and restore to it her golden necklaces; now give her other flowers, now give her the fresh-blown rose.[42]

As he explains the cult's origin, and specifically why the female worshippers dress the statue of Venus, Ovid recapitulates the story of her ascent from the sea. He depicts a primordial stage in the goddess' life, in which the newly born goddess is unaware of her nakedness, safely drying her long hair on the shore. As a group of satyrs happen to see her and she turns out to be an object of their lustful gaze, Venus can no longer remain comfortable in her nakedness, and she covers her body with myrtle.[43] The Ovidian version stipulates Venus' new awareness of her nakedness as an archetypical experience of shame. Venus regains her divine power only as she covers her nude body that now symbolizes the fragility of the human condition being forever caught in the domain of visibility.

Returning to the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, we see that the meaning of Aphrodite's nakedness is connected, as in Ovid, to a kind of fragility, typically associated with the human. This might explain why the *Hymn*, in its celebration of Aphrodite's divinity, never represents the goddess as nude. The reader's field of vision is restricted to Anchises' perspective, and he is said to see Aphrodite in her complete, magnificent female apparel.[44] Although Anchises undresses the goddess and gently removes from her the pins, twisted bracelets, earrings, and necklaces, her body is not unveiled by the text. The act of undressing only suggests the existence of a naked body. As the *Hymn* leaves Aphrodite's naked body unrepresented, it blurs the body's presence as a visual object. The *Hymn* shows no interest in visualizing the goddess' nakedness. It seems that for Anchises, however, Aphrodite's naked body does not offer itself as a source for knowing her as a divinity, and he is unable to see Aphrodite's nakedness as divine. The sight of Aphrodite's naked body leaves Anchises blind to her divinity, as the text remarks: ἀθανάτῃ παρέλεκτο θεᾷ βροτός, οὐ σάφα εἰδώς (“he lay with the immortal goddess without truly knowing”).[45] While Aphrodite’s nakedness hides her true essence, her dressed appearance reveals it.

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[42] Ov., *Fast.* 4.135–138, trans. James George Frazer, *Ovid's Fasti* (Cambridge, Mass. 1932).

[43] Ov., *Fast.* 4.140–144.

[44] Note that this apparel is appropriate for this Archaic date.

In the ancient world, however, there is more than one model for gazing at the nakedness of a goddess. The story of Aktaion—the hunter, whose chase took him, by chance, to the pool where Artemis was bathing—provides an antithesis.[46] In seeing the goddess naked, Aktaion transgresses a sacred law, and he is punished for being accidentally exposed to the forbidden sight of the divine nakedness. In sharp contrast, Anchises’ sacrilegious transgression is more radical: it is not the sight of a naked goddess and sexual intercourse with her that are a violation of the sacredness of Aphrodite, as Anchises believes. Rather, as the *Homeric Hymn* shows, Anchises sleeps with the goddess and does so without being punished. The question is, why? As we shall see, in the *Homeric Hymn*, the sight of the naked Aphrodite and the experience of making love with her are fundamental signs of the goddess’ seeming mortality.

In the *Homeric Hymn*, Aphrodite appears to Anchises before and after the sexual act. Thus, the question of her divinity surfaces in the context of Anchises’ two visual experiences of the goddess. At both times she is fully dressed and is, in fact, responsible for shaping the mode in which human consciousness experiences her. As she stands dressed in her fine garments rousing Anchises from sleep, she addresses the human lover who is struck by the wonderful shining appearance of her divine beauty:

> ὄρσεο, Δαρδανίδη: τί νυ νήγρετον ὕπνον ἰαύεις;
> καὶ φράσαι, εἴ τοι ὁμοίη ἐγὼν ἰνδάλλομαι εἶναι,
> οἵην δή με τὸ πρῶτον ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι νόησας;
>
> Be up, descendant of Dardanus, why do you slumber in unbroken sleep?
> And mark whether I look to you like I did when you first set eyes on me?[47]

In spite of the *Hymn*’s prefatory reference to the goddess’ *erga* or ‘works’ typically interpreted as lovemaking,[48] it is not through the sexual act, but through the way in which she appears to the human gaze, and the particularities of her divine apparel, that Aphrodite demands from

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[45] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.167.

[46] Paul Friedrich, in *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 136, considers the myth of Aktaion against which he singles out Aphrodite’s liminality. In sharp contrast, Aphrodite permits what other goddesses forbid: “She mediates between the human and the divine in a way that gives man exceptional intimations of immortality he can never attain.”

[47] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.177–179.

[48] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.1.

Anchises the recognition of her divinity. He responds in accordance with her demand: "As soon as I first saw you ϑεά, I realized you were ϑεός."[49] Anchises confirms that in her feminine costume Aphrodite's divinity is disclosed. His testimony gratifies the goddess. It is rather through the way in which she appears to him, through the particularities of her divine apparel, that Aphrodite wishes Anchises to recognize her as ϑεός.

The silence surrounding Aphrodite's nakedness is telling, but what is the significance of Aphrodite's covered body? Within the Archaic context of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, the goddess' nudity does not reflect the metaphysical concept of a sacred body. Consider the following detail, which portrays Anchises taking off Aphrodite's garments and jewelry, seven different items in all:

> κόσμον μέν οἱ πρῶτον ἀπὸ χροὸς εἷλε φαεινόν,
> πόρπας τε γναμπτάς ϑ' ἕλικας κάλυκάς τε καὶ ὅρμους.
> λῦσε δέ οἱ ζώνην ἰδὲ εἵματα σιγαλόεντα
> ἔκδυε.
>
> He first removed the shining adornment from her body, the dress's pins and twisted bracelets and ear buds and necklaces; he undid her girdle, and divested her of her gleaming garments.[50]

Without doubt this is one of the most beautiful and rare descriptions in Greek literature portraying an intimate situation, a private scene between two lovers.

Interestingly, the significance of this erotic scene can be illuminated further if we read it against the background of the Sumerian and Akkadian descriptions of Inanna's and Ištar's descent to the Netherworld.[51] Both Inanna and Ištar appear fully dressed as they stand at the entrance to the Underworld. They are described in the two versions of the *Descent* as putting on seven divine powers. Their admission into the realm of the dead is made possible only after the removal of the seven different items of their divine apparel from their bodies. Inanna furnishes herself with a turban for the head, twin egg-shaped beads, a pala dress, a mascara which is called "Let a man come, let him come," a pectoral which is called "come man, come," a golden ring, and a lapis lazuli rod. The seductive function of the mascara and the pectoral is evident, as these items are animated objects whose names announce their erotic functions. Likewise, Ištar's descent is permitted after she is humiliated by the gatekeeper, who removes from her body the seven divine attributes. After paying the ransom and submitting Dumuzi to the Underworld queen, Ištar's divine honors are restored to her and she leaves the Underworld. The poem describes how the gatekeeper returns the seven items to her in reverse order:

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[49] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.185–186.

[50] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.162–166. Perhaps these jewels were given to her by Hephaistos, who describes in Hom., *Il.* 18.401, how he made the twisted bracelets in Thetis' cave.

[51] For similarities between Aphrodite and her oriental predecessor Ištar-Astarte, focusing mainly on common patterns in the iconography and biography of the goddesses, see Marcovich, "From Ištar to Aphrodite"; A.S. Brown, "Aphrodite and the Pandora Complex," *CQ* 47 (1997), 26–47; Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, pp. 273–282; Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros*, pp. 45–49, 57. On the Eastern influence on Aphrodite's clothing, see Cora A. Sowa, *Traditional Themes and the Homeric Hymns* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 77–79; Charles Penglase, *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia: Parallels and Influence in the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod* (London, 1994), pp. 165–174; Martin L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 203–205; Faulkner, *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, pp. 18–22.

> When through the first gate he had made her go out,
> He returned to her the breechcloth for her body.
> When through the second gate he had made her go out,
> He returned to her the clasps for her hands and feet.
> When through the third gate he had made her go out,
> He returned to her the birthstone girdle for her hips.
> When through the fourth gate he had made her go out,
> He returned to her the ornaments for her breasts.
> When through the fifth gate he had made her go out,
> He returned to her the chains for her neck.
> When through the sixth gate he had made her go out,
> He returned to her the pendants for her ears.
> When through the seventh gate he had made her go out,
> He returned to her the great crown for her head.[52]

Ištar's jewelry lacks the explicit seductive force of Inanna's mascara and pectoral. In regard to dressing and undressing Aphrodite, the *Homeric Hymn* is closer to Ištar. Both goddesses dress themselves to be undressed by a man, and finally they put their clothes and jewelry back on again. If we look closely at the semantic level of the two paradigmatic acts of dressing and undressing in Ištar's descent, moreover, we see that, while dressed, the goddess preserves her immortality, whereas undressed she experiences death. Analogously, Aphrodite's divine presence is inseparable from her finery. She seems to be stripped of her divine essence through the erotic intercourse with Anchises that demands exposure of her body. The sexual act lets Anchises taste a sense of immortality through procreation, but, for Aphrodite, sex provides a momentary experience of death, and a taste of mortality.[53]

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[52] "The Descent of Ištar to the Underworld," trans. E.A. Speiser, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. James B. Pritchard, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1955), pp. 119–125.

Let us return to consider Anchises' response to Aphrodite's divine appearance. What is it exactly that Anchises sees when he addresses her as *theos* in his response to her dressed appearance? What does it mean for him to capture the goddess' divine essence? As Walter Burkert writes, the expression *theos* may be verbalized as, "This is a god!"—a proclamation that marks "an extraordinary moment of epiphany."[54] *Theos* is an example of a speech act operative within religious and supernatural spheres.[55] In regard to Aphrodite's epiphany, *theos* designates an utterance responding specifically to the visual field, although Aphrodite's epiphany involves other senses as well.

Aphrodite's Ornaments

What is the connection between Aphrodite's visual appearance and the specificity of her feminine appearance? Among Aphrodite's dazzling jewelry, the pectoral κόσμος φαεινός ('shining adornment') is especially interesting.[56] It is an object of art, a shining composite set of adornments placed at the center of Aphrodite's body.[57] In addition to its purpose to adorn a woman's body, this object represents the notion of order and form. With Plato, the term *kosmos* will eventually come to signify a universe and a world order. Even in this Archaic *Hymn*, Aphrodite's *kosmos* shows itself in the same manner as the phenomenal world. The *kosmos* is described as φαεινός ('bright'). The adjective derives from the verb φαείνω / φαίνω (poetical form of *phaino*), which means 'to shine and give light'. From this verb and its middle form, φαίνεσθαι ('to show itself'), the term *phainomenon* is derived. Thus the phenomenal world is a world whose phenomena show themselves, a world whose entities are visible. "The *phainomena* or '*phenomena*,'" writes Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time*, "are the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to the light, what the Greeks sometimes identified simply with *ta onta* ['entities']."[58]

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[53] Cf. Faulkner, *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, p. 161, who comments on the description of Aphrodite's clothing: "It is perhaps going too far to suggest as Sowa does that Aphrodite's later removal of her clothes before sleeping with Anchises is a symbol of her 'death', but it is possibly a symbol of her weakness (cf. on *Hymn. Hom.* 5.162–165). Conversely, like Ištar, her elaborate ornamentation here represents her strength and power as she embarks upon her sexual conquest."

[54] Walter Burkert, "From Epiphany to Cult Statue: Early Greek *Theos*," in *What Is a God?* ed. Alan B. Lloyd (London, 1997), p. 20.

[55] It is, as Burkert writes, "the annunciation and marveling designation of someone present." Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 272.

[56] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.162.

[57] Hera wears it in Hom., *Il.* 14.187, and Athena puts it on Pandora in Hes., *Op.* 76.

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Aphrodite's appearance is the one that grants the world its phenomenality. She is the first and, in fact, the only deity in the *Theogony* to have a fully concrete appearance. She is the only divinity whose birth is described in detail, accounting for the gradual process of growing into a beautiful shape from the fluidity and formless material of water and sperm:

> μήδεα δ' ὡς τὸ πρῶτον ἀποτμήξας ἀδάμαντι
> κάββαλ' ἀπ' ἠπείροιο πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ πόντῳ,
> ὣς φέρετ' ἂμ πέλαγος πουλὺν χρόνον, ἀμφὶ δὲ λευκὸς
> ἀφρὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτου χροὸς ὤρνυτο: τῷ δ' ἔνι κούρη
> ἐθρέφθη …
> ἐκ δ' ἔβη αἰδοίη καλὴ θεός.

> And when at first he had cut off the genitals with the adamant and thrown them from the land into the strongly surging sea, they were borne along the water for a long time, a white foam rose up around them from the immortal flesh: and inside this grew a maiden … She came forth, a reverend, beautiful goddess.[59]

Aphrodite's conception takes πουλὺν χρόνον ('a long time'). The goddess' appearance is not a given image but a process of gradual becoming. The text emphasizes that the appearance of Aphrodite is a dynamic movement based on growth and development. Within the cosmological poem, Aphrodite's growing into the beautiful shape of a maiden is teleological: Aphrodite becomes manifest and visible in herself and thereby brings to light καλὴ θεός ('the beautiful divine form'), which captures the essence of the cosmological coming into being.

In briefly returning to the passage from the *Symposion* with which I began my discussion, we can see Hesiod's influence on Plato. According to Plato, experiencing the beauty of Aphrodite's feminine persona constitutes a fundamental stage in the course leading to the transcendent form of the beautiful. Plato's three degrees of beauty, *Aphrodite kale*, *he kallone*, and *to kallos*, provide a philosophical elaboration, albeit an inverse one, along the erotic lines of Aphrodite in Hesiod's cosmology, beginning with the primordial Eros, then to the divine Aphrodite, and, finally, to her human embodiment, Pandora. Hesiod's erotic genealogy reflects a desire to recognize the erotic through its manifestations within the cosmological, divine, and human spheres. He creates an erotic family spanning from an abstract notion of beauty to its concrete embodiment within the divine and human spheres: Eros, Aphrodite, and Pandora together create a family resemblance based on their common beautiful appearance. Eros is one of the first four elements. He is a primal, cosmic element, whose contribution to the world is yet to be made:

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[58] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (San Francisco, 1962), p. 51.

[59] Hes., *Theog.* 188–194, trans. Glenn Most, *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006).

> ἠδ’ Ἔϱος, ὃς ϰάλλιστος ἐν ἀϑανάτοισι ϑεοῖσι,
> λυσιμελής, πάντων δὲ ϑεῶν πάντων τ’ ἀνϑϱώπων
> δάμναται ἐν στήϑεσσι νόον ϰαὶ ἐπίφϱονα βουλήν.
>
> And Eros, who is the most beautiful among the immortal gods, the limb-melter—he overpowers the mind and the thoughtful counsel of all the gods and of all human beings in their breasts.[60]

Hesiod's first characterization of Eros focuses on his beauty. Yet, at this primordial stage, there is no way his beauty could become manifest. Eros will realize his visible dimension only at a later stage of the world's development. Hesiod foreshadows what Eros is to become but is not yet, and thus he creates an abstract, intangible concept of beauty that, at best, vaguely contributes to the impregnation of the first chthonic creatures. The abstract beauty of Eros needs to be reflected in the beautiful feminine figure of the goddess in order to emanate through her. Eros' place in the world will become established only as the world's future exemplary erotic figures—the divine Aphrodite and the first woman, Pandora—are born.[61] The primordial erotic principle is formless and, consequently, invisible. Only the beautiful figure of Aphrodite makes visibility a present aspect of the erotic. In so doing, Aphrodite marks a new stage in the cosmological development. Her birth introduces beauty and visibility into the world. Her divine influence is manifest in making visibility a part of life. With the birth of Aphrodite, the world is ready to make the passage from the aniconic stage of the cosmos to the sensual stage of appearances. The divine contribution of Aphrodite to the sensual aspect is followed by the appearance of the first woman. Primarily understood as a feminine asset, sexuality grants women the predominance over the realm of phenomena, that is, the visible sphere. Under the divine influence of Aphrodite, the feminine is the mythical representative of the visible world. Femininity is, in fact, the pronunciation of the erotic phenomenon, so, the ultimate stage of the erotic process that began with the invisible force of Eros, and culminated in the maturation of the sensible world, is marked by the creation of the ultimate phenomenon, the first woman.[62]

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[60] Hes., *Theog.* 120–122, trans. Most, *Hesiod.*

[61] See Jean-Pierre Vernant, "One … Two … Three: *Eros*," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. Donald M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1990), pp. 465–478.

Pandora is similar to her divine counterpart. She appears, as in Aphrodite's epiphany, fully dressed.

> αὐτίκα δ᾽ ἀντὶ πυρὸς τεῦξεν κακὸν ἀνθρώποισιν:
> γαίης γὰρ σύμπλασσε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις
> παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἴκελον Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλάς.
> ζῶσε δὲ καὶ κόσμησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
> ἀργυφέῃ ἐσθῆτι: κατὰ κρῆθεν δὲ καλύπτρην
> δαιδαλέην χείρεσσι κατέσχεθε, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι:
> ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ στεφάνους, νεοθηλέος ἄνθεα ποίης,
> ἱμερτοὺς περίθηκε καρήατι Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.
> ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ στεφάνην χρυσέην κεφαλῆφιν ἔθηκε,
> τὴν αὐτὸς ποίησε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις
> ἀσκήσας παλάμῃσι, χαριζόμενος Διὶ πατρί.
> τῇ δ᾽ ἐνὶ δαίδαλα πολλὰ τετεύχατο, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι,
> κνώδαλ᾽, ὅς᾽ ἤπειρος πολλὰ τρέφει ἠδὲ θάλασσα,
> τῶν ὅ γε πόλλ᾽ ἐνέθηκε, χάρις δ᾽ ἀπελάμπετο πολλή,
> θαυμάσια, ζῴοισιν ἐοικότα φωνήεσσιν.
> αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τεῦξε καλὸν κακὸν ἀντ᾽ ἀγαθοῖο.
> ἐξάγαγ᾽, ἔνθα περ ἄλλοι ἔσαν θεοὶ ἠδ᾽ ἄνθρωποι,
> κόσμῳ ἀγαλλομένην γλαυκώπιδος ὀβριμοπάτρης.
> θαῦμα δ᾽ ἔχ᾽ ἀθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητούς τ᾽ ἀνθρώπους,
> ὡς εἶδον δόλον αἰπύν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν.

> Immediately he contrived an evil for human beings in exchange for fire. For the much-renowned Lame One forged from earth the semblance of a reverend maiden by the plans of Cronus' son; and the goddess, bright eyed Athena, girdled and adorned her with silvery clothing, and with her hands she hung a highly wrought veil from her head, a wonder to see; and around her head Pallas Athena placed freshly budding garlands that arouse desire, the flowers of the meadow; and around her head she placed a golden headband, which the much-renowned Lame One made himself, working it with his skilled hands, to do a favor for Zeus the father. On his were contrived many designs, highly wrought, wonderful to see, all the terrible monsters the land and the sea nourish; he put many of

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[62] On the visual significance of Aphrodite and Pandora, see Vered Lev Kenaan, *Pandora's Senses: The Feminine Character of the Ancient text* (Madison, 2008), pp. 17–47.

> these into it, wondrous, similar to living animals endowed with speech, and gracefulness breathed upon them all. Then, when he had contrived this beautiful evil thing in exchange for that good one, he led her out to where the other gods and human beings were, while she exulted in the adornment of the mighty father's bright-eyed daughter; and wonder gripped the immortal gods and the mortal human beings when they saw the steep deception, intractable for human beings.[63]

Her golden diadem is wrought with different animals metonymic of earth, sea, and sky. Pandora mirrors the world whose development the poem describes. She is the first figure to impress upon the human mind the understanding that what it perceives is the world of phenomena. Given that the appearance of the universe in *Theogony* is generally murky and dark, the feminine provides a moment of illumination, a source of enlightenment. Pandora's radiant appearance is, as the text tells us more than once, ϑαῦμα ἰδέσϑαι (a 'wonder to behold').[64] Pandora is a source of wonder, and we cannot but return to the philosophical tradition of wonder. Wonder is the feeling, or the mood, or the kind of experience, which presents the world to us in a manner calling for our reflection. For Hesiod, to see Pandora is not simply to see an object in the visual field. I suggest that the appearance of Pandora is not a visual object but a condition of the visual; she is what makes things visible. Feminine beauty stimulates the first visual experience that humans have. In fact, Aphrodite and Pandora initiate man's capacity as beholders. The appearance of the feminine thus marks a turning point in human consciousness. The shocking effect of her appearance releases mankind from its unreflecting existence in the world; it opens up the possibility for humanity to differentiate itself from the universe. The ultimate gift of feminine beauty to humanity is the gift of wonder.

Hesiod is the first poet who allows us to interpret the erotic as a creative principle of visibility, but at the same time, he is the one who forcefully articulates the concrete sexual significance of Aphrodite:

> ταύτην δ᾽ ἐξ ἀϱχῆς τιμὴν ἔχει ἠδὲ λέλογχε
> μοῖϱαν ἐν ἀνϑϱώποισι ϰαὶ ἀϑανάτοισι ϑεοῖσι,
> παϱϑενίους τ᾽ ὀάϱους μειδήματά τ᾽ ἐξαπάτας τε
> τέϱψιν τε γλυϰεϱὴν φιλότητά τε μειλιχίην τε.

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[63] Hes., *Theog.* 570–589, trans. Most, *Hesiod*.

[64] Cf. *Hymn. Hom.* 5.90, where Aphrodite's appearance is ϑαῦμα ἰδέσϑαι ('a wonder to behold').

> And since the beginning she possesses this honor and has received as her lot this portion among human beings and immortal gods maidenly whispers and smiles and deceits and sweet delight and fondness and gentleness.[65]

This joining of Aphrodite's field of responsibility, her *moira*, to a specifically feminine sexual appeal was crucial for shaping a one-dimensional image of the goddess as a seductress. Accordingly she is often called "the goddess of sexuality and love,"[66] "the divinity of sex,"[67] and her sphere of activity is referred to as the "joyous consummation of sexuality."[68]

The sexual image of Aphrodite was useful for the philosophical tradition that tends to create hierarchical dichotomies between feminine and masculine, appearance and essence, concrete and abstract, and metaphors of dress and nakedness, which stand for the opposition between lies and truth. As we have seen, however, these sets of oppositions do not hold in the case of the Archaic Aphrodite. Aphrodite's complexity escapes, thus, oppositional categories, and perhaps it is through her that it becomes possible for us to release ourselves from their domineering grip.

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[65] Hes., *Theog.* 203–206, trans. Most, *Hesiod*.
[66] Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, p. 13.
[67] Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 148.
[68] Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 152.

CHAPTER FOUR

O QUAM TE MEMOREM, VIRGO? INTERPRETING VENUS IN *AENEID* 1.314–417[*]

James Burbidge

The goddess Venus has a large role in Virgil's *Aeneid*, as the mother of the hero Aeneas and the principal divine champion of the Trojan refugees.[1] She is especially prominent in the opening book of the epic, appearing in three important scenes. At 1.223–296, the goddess tearfully complains to Jupiter about the suffering of the Trojans as they wander in search of their promised land. Soon afterwards, at 1.314–417, Venus comes in disguise to the woods outside Carthage in order to meet with and help her son. Lastly, towards the end of the book, she arranges for Cupid to make Dido fall deeply in love with Aeneas (1.657–694). Over the course of *Aeneid* 1, then, the reader has the opportunity to gain a fairly clear idea of Venus' character and motives for action in the poem.[2]

In this chapter I shall focus on the second of these scenes (1.314–417). Virgil's narrative of the encounter between Venus and Aeneas in the woods is one of the best-known and most influential literary portrayals of the goddess of desire to survive from antiquity, and the moment of epiphany at its climax (1.402–405) remains one of the most celebrated descriptions of "Aphrodite revealed" (or in this case "Venus revealed").[3] I examine how the goddess is portrayed in this scene, and how her son responds to her. I shall be particularly concerned to explore some of the ways in which Virgil allows the reader to sympathize and even to empathize with Aeneas' responses to Venus, but will begin by reviewing the content of the passage, and first of all by indicating the larger narrative context in which it appears.

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[*] I am grateful to Amy Smith and Sadie Pickup for inviting me to present a paper at the "Aphrodite Revealed" conference in 2008, and for their rigor and patience in editing this volume; and to the late Oliver Lyne, with whom I enjoyed some memorably entertaining conversations about the passage discussed here: from those discussions this piece has developed.

[1] On Venus in the *Aeneid*, see above all Antonie Wlosok, *Die Göttin Venus in Vergils Aeneis* (Heidelberg, 1967). Some recent work is listed in Niklas Holzberg's updating of Suerbaum's *Aeneid* bibliography, accessible at www.psms.homepage.t-online.de/aeneis-bib.html (section B.2, s.v. "Götter: Venus").

[2] On Venus in book 1, see Wlosok, *Venus*, pp. 11–106.

[3] I know of no survey of the reception history of Virgil's scene. Highlights in English literature include Marlowe's dramatization (*Dido, Queen of Carthage* 1.1.122–248), Spenser's imitation in book 2 of *The Faerie Queene* (2.3.21–42), and some allusions in Thackeray, on which see Stephen J. Harrison, "Sons, Mothers and Lovers in Thackeray and Virgil," *Notes and Queries* 245 [n.s. 47] (2000), 329–332. The episode has been illustrated by,

The Meeting in the Woods: Venus, Aeneas, and Achates

The opening scenes of the *Aeneid* find Aeneas and the Trojans assailed by a terrible sea storm as they make their way from the west coast of Sicily towards Italy (1.81–123). The storm has been raised by Aeolus, at Juno's instigation (1.50–80). The Trojans are only saved from destruction by the intervention of another deity, the sea god Neptune. He calms the storm and enables the Trojans to reach the North African coast, close to the site of the recently founded city of Carthage (1.124–179). Now on land, Aeneas attempts to cheer his men, with food and with words (1.180–222). At this point, Virgil cuts to Aeneas' mother Venus complaining to Jupiter about the suffering the Trojans endure (1.223–253). In lines 257–296, Jupiter assures her that Aeneas is destined to reach Italy—and that his descendants will acquire *imperium sine fine* ('power without limit'; 1.279). He then sends Mercury to ensure that the Carthaginians will not harm the newly landed Trojans (1.297–304). The following morning Aeneas heads out to explore, accompanied only by his lieutenant Achates. As the two men make their way through some woods, they come upon a figure in the following getup:

> *virginis os habitumque gerens et virginis arma*
> *Spartanae, vel qualis equos Threissa fatigat*
> *Harpalyce volucremque fuga praevertitur Hebrum.*
> *namque umeris de more habilem suspenderat arcum*
> *venatrix dederatque comam diffundere ventis,*
> *nuda genu nodoque sinus collecta fluentis.*
>
> [W]ith a girl's face and appearance, and the weapons of a
> Spartan girl—or like Thracian Harpalyce, who wearies horses
> And outstrips the swift Hebrus when she runs.

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for example, Pietro da Cortona (Aeneas Meets Venus, now in the Louvre) and Claude Lorrain, no. 1126 in Marcel Roethlisberger, *Claude Lorrain: The Drawings*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, 1968). Virgil's Venus became an emblematic figure in the Renaissance: see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (London, 1958), pp. 73–76.

> For she had a bow hanging ready from her shoulders,
> Huntress-style; she had let the winds blow her hair about;
> Her knees were bare, and her flowing dress was caught up in a knot.[4]

The reader has been told in line 314 that this figure is in fact Aeneas' mother: *cui mater media sese tulit obvia silva* ("his mother came to meet him in the middle of the wood"). This information is given to us at the earliest possible stage: *mater* ('mother') is the second word in the first line of the scene.[5] Since Venus is disguised—in the manner indicated in lines 1.315–320—her son is unable to recognize her. This remains the case for much of the rest of the episode: the goddess maintains her disguise until 1.402–405. In the meantime, she creates a false identity for herself, beginning with the speech that immediately follows the lines just quoted:

> *ac prior "heus," inquit "iuvenes, monstrate, mearum*
> *vidistis si quam hic errantem forte sororum*
> *succinctam pharetra et maculosae tegmine lyncis,*
> *aut spumantis apri cursum clamore prementem."*
>
> And she spoke first: "Hey! Chaps! Show me, if by chance
> You've seen any of my sisters roaming around here,
> Girt with a quiver and a dappled lynx-hide,
> Or shouting as she follows hard on the trail of a foaming boar."[6]

At this point, the narrator turns to Aeneas: *sic Venus et Veneris contra sic filius orsus* ("so spoke Venus, and Venus' son began his reply thus"; 1.325). The pointed juxtaposition of *Venus et Veneris … filius* highlights for the reader something that Aeneas himself does not know: he is speaking to his own mother. Our curiosity is aroused. What will the hero say?

Venus has already given her son various signals to interpret. Some of these signals are visual; others are verbal. Aeneas is able to observe Venus' outward appearance in lines 314–315 and 318–320: she looks like a girl from Sparta, and she is dressed as a huntress. The goddess herself draws attention to other aspects of her disguise in lines 321–324: she is wearing a lynx hide and carrying a quiver.[7] In those lines she also makes the verbal claim that she is out hunting with her sisters. Aeneas offers his hesitant interpretation of these signals:

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[4] Verg., *Aen.* 1.315–320. All translations in this chapter are my own.

[5] See Wlosok, *Venus*, p. 76 for further discussion.

[6] Verg., *Aen.* 1.321–324.

[7] Venus is here talking about one of her "sisters," but (in the light of Verg., *Aen.* 1.315–316, 318–320, and 336–337) we can assume that she is wearing something similar herself.

> *nulla tuarum audita mihi neque visa sororum,*
> *o quam te memorem, virgo? namque haud tibi vultus*
> *mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat; o, dea certe*
> *(an Phoebi soror? an Nympharum sanguinis una?),*
> *sis felix nostrumque leves, quaecumque, laborem*
> *et quo sub caelo tandem, quibus orbis in oris*
> *iactemur doceas: ignari hominumque locorumque*
> *erramus vento huc vastis et fluctibus acti.*
> *multa tibi ante aras nostra cadet hostia dextra.*
>
> No, I haven't heard or seen any of your sisters,
> O, how should I address you, maiden? For your face doesn't look
> Mortal, and your voice doesn't have a human ring. O, you must be a goddess,
> So are you Phoebus' sister? Or one of the family of the Nymphs?
> Show us your favour, whoever you are, and lighten our suffering,
> And please tell us what sky we are beneath, on what shores of the world
> We have been cast. We know nothing of the people or the places:
> We are wanderers, driven here by the wind and huge waves.
> In your honour, many a victim will be slaughtered by my right hand before the altars.[8]

He is not quite sure what to make of the figure with whom he is faced: *o quam te memorem …?* (1.327). He concludes that she must be a *virgo*, which would seem quite plausible, given the signs that he has been shown so far: Venus has adopted a *virginis os habitumque*, and she carries *virginis arma/Spartanae* (1.315–316). However, neither Venus' disguise nor her cover story has entirely taken Aeneas in. He doubts that this *virgo* is an ordinary mortal (1.327–328), and therefore he addresses her with, *o, dea certe* (1.328). He offers two tentative suggestions—is she Diana or one of the nymphs?—before asking for her favor (329).

Venus insists in response to this that she is not a goddess, and embroiders her cover story further, implying that she is in fact a settler from Tyre:

> *tum Venus: "haud equidem tali me dignor honore;*
> *virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram*
> *purpureoque alte suras vincire coturno."*
>
> Then Venus said: "I really don't think that I deserve such respect;
> It's normal for maids from Tyre to carry a quiver,
> And to bind our crimson boots high up on our calves."[9]

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[8] Verg., *Aen.* 1.326–334.
[9] Verg., *Aen.* 1.335–337.

She goes on to explain to Aeneas that he has come to Carthage and tells him the story of Dido's loss of her husband, departure from Tyre, and arrival in Africa (1.338–368). At the end of her speech, the goddess disingenuously asks to whom she is speaking (1.369–370). The opening words of Aeneas' reply clearly indicate that he remains unconvinced by Venus' claim to mortality: he addresses her with, *o dea* ('O goddess'; 1.372). The famously glum speech that follows (1.372–385), in which he identifies himself as *pius Aeneas* ('dutiful Aeneas'; 1.378) and laments his fate, is cut short by his mother:

> *nec plura querentem*
> *passa Venus medio sic interfata dolore est*:
> *"quisquis es, haud, credo, invisus caelestibus auras*
> *vitalis carpis, Tyriam qui adveneris urbem*;
> *perge modo atque hinc te reginae ad limina perfer.*
> *namque tibi reduces socios classemque relatam*
> *nuntio et in tutum versis Aquilonibus actam*,
> *ni frustra augurium vani docuere parentes."*
>
> Venus didn't let him continue
> Lamenting, but broke in upon his grief with these words:
> "Whoever you are, I don't think you are loathed by the gods as you breathe
> The breath of life, since you have come to this Tyrian city.
> Just keep going, and head from here to the thresholds of the queen.
> For I can report that your companions are restored, that your fleet is brought
> Back and driven to safety by the shifting North winds,
> Unless my parents taught me augury in vain and without success."[10]

With the last line here (1.392), Venus embellishes further her false identity. But the circumstantial detail is not otiose: it allows the goddess to draw Aeneas' attention to an omen. Twelve swans, attacked by an eagle, have survived and reached home: just so, she concludes, Aeneas' men are either on their way into port or already safe (1.393–400). Swans are often associated with Venus in antiquity;[11] but Aeneas seems not to suspect any intervention by his mother here.[12] It is only as she turns to leave that Venus' true identity is revealed to her son:

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[10] Verg., *Aen.* 1.385–392.

[11] See Roland G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Primus* (Oxford, 1971), p. 141 (ad 1.394).

[12] Contrast his response to the appearance of the doves that guide him to the Golden Bough at Verg., *Aen.* 6.192–193: *tum maximus heros / maternas agnovit avis* ("then the mighty hero / recognized his mother's birds").

> *dixit et avertens rosea cervice refulsit,*
> *ambrosiaeque comae divinum vertice odorem*
> *spiravere; pedes vestis defluxit ad imos,*
> *et vera incessu patuit dea. ille ubi matrem*
> *adgnovit tali fugientem est voce secutus:*
> *"quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis*
> *ludis imaginibus? cur dextrae iungere dextram*
> *non datur ac veras audire et reddere voces?"*
> *talibus incusat, gressumque ad moenia tendit.*
>
> She said this, and as she turned away she shone radiantly from her rosy neck,
> And her immortal locks breathed forth the perfume of divinity
> From her head; her dress flowed down to cover her feet,
> And in her walk she was revealed as truly a goddess. When Aeneas recognized
> His mother, he followed her as she fled with these words:
> "You too are cruel. Why do you deceive your own son so often
> With misleading appearances? Why aren't we allowed to join right hand
> To right hand, to listen to words which are true and to utter them in reply?"
> Such was his complaint, and he headed off towards the city.[13]

Aeneas is deeply unhappy with his mother's behavior. In particular, he objects to the deception she practices upon him, claiming that Venus mocks him with "misleading appearances" (*falsis/ … imaginibus*; 1.407–408) and that there is no opportunity for candid conversation (*veras … voces*; 1.409). Not only is he unable to enjoy straightforward physical contact with his own mother (1.408–409); he cannot even see her properly (1.407–408). These objections have force: we have already observed how the goddess' assumption of a false identity and her sending of misleading signals confuse Aeneas earlier in this scene.

I shall return to Aeneas' complaint below. For now, let us observe how the episode concludes: with Venus helping her son, even as she departs for Paphos, and with Aeneas and Achates approaching Carthage:

> *at Venus obscuro gradientes aere saepsit,*
> *et multo nebulae circum dea fudit amictu,*
> *cernere ne quis eos neu quis contingere posset*
> *molirive moram aut veniendi poscere causas.*
> *ipsa Paphum sublimis abit sedesque revisit*
> *laeta suas, ubi templum illi, centumque Sabaeo*
> *ture calent arae sertisque recentibus halant.*
> *corripuere viam interea, qua semita monstrat,*

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[13] Verg., *Aen.* 1.402–410.

iamque ascendebant collem, qui plurimus urbi
imminet adversasque adspectat desuper arces.

But as they went Venus wrapped them in a dark mist,
The goddess poured a thick cloak of cloud around them,
So that no-one would be able to see them or come into contact with them
Or engineer delay or ask why they had come.
She herself went away on high to Paphos, and happily returned
To her home. There she has a temple, and a hundred altars
Warm with Sabaean incense and fragrant with fresh garlands.
Meanwhile they hastened on their way, where a path pointed;
And soon they were climbing a hill which loomed large over
The city and looked down from above on the citadels which faced it.[14]

Dramatic Irony and Our Sympathy for Aeneas

I shall begin my discussion by highlighting two basic features of this passage: the pervasive presence of dramatic irony and the evocation of the reader's sympathy for Aeneas.

There is a dramatic irony operative in this scene from its very beginning almost until its end.[15] The reader knows some crucial information about the events narrated—in this case, the true identity of the supposed *virgo*—of which the character Aeneas is unaware (until 1.402–405). I shall consider the effect of this upon the reader shortly. But firstly we should note the programmatic nature of the episode.

The encounter between Venus and Aeneas is the first of the *Aeneid*'s scenes of interaction between mortals and immortals, and the gap between the reader's knowledge and that possessed by the human characters in the narrative here is something that will frequently be found in such scenes later in the epic too. In the *Aeneid*, as Denis Feeney has written,

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[14] Verg., *Aen.* 1.411–420.

[15] The term "irony" has a wide usage: see Douglas C. Muecke, *Irony and the Ironic* (London, 1982). Even the more specific "dramatic irony" has been used to describe a variety of things. Muecke (*Irony*, p. 10) regards "the spectacle of blindness" as essential to this form of irony. I shall use the term "dramatic irony" to describe the presence of "a gap in knowledge between the audience and the protagonist as to the meaning of a given situation," as does Frances Muecke, "Foreshadowing and Dramatic Irony in the Story of Dido," *American Journal of Philology* 104 (1983), 137 (see also her p. 141). For some discussion of the operation of dramatic irony, see Muecke, *Irony*, pp. 27–29, 54–55, 81–82; William B. Stanford, *Ambiguity in Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 66–68.

> The human characters show a wide variance in their knowledge and ignorance of the divine processes at work in their world, but the norm is a dismaying failure of recognition or understanding (moments when humans recognize divine action clearly for what it is tend to be moments of final catastrophe) … the reader is in a more privileged position—necessarily, for the poem's fundamental tragic irony depends precisely on the reader's knowledge.[16]

Now some qualification of this general picture is required, for at times elsewhere in the poem, Aeneas himself constitutes a partial exception to the norm of imperfect human understanding.[17] For instance, he encounters Mercury face to face twice in book 4, once while wide awake (4.265–278) and once while sleeping (4.556–570); Tiberinus in book 8 (8.31–67) and the Penates in book 3 (3.147–178) appear to him undisguised as he sleeps; and, most importantly for us, his mother Venus appears to him undisguised twice while he is awake: in the apocalyptic scene in book 2 where she reveals to Aeneas the role of the gods in the destruction of Troy (2.589–621), and in book 8 when she comes in person to deliver to her son new armor made for him by Vulcan (8.608–616). But there are moments when even Aeneas does not recognize the presence of divinity (e.g., 1.715–716; 2.604–607; 5.867–871) and, in particular, when he is unaware of his mother's (sometimes close) involvement in events: this is the case for much of our scene (1.314–401), and also at 12.411–429. Consider moreover Aeneas' complaint at 1.407–408, as Venus is revealed before him: *quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis/ludis imaginibus?* ("you too are cruel; why do you deceive your own son so often with misleading appearances?"). The hero clearly does not regard this encounter as an isolated instance of Venus toying with him. His claim that she has deceived him 'so often' (*totiens*) with misleading appearances is hard to substantiate from within the text of the *Aeneid* itself,[18] and it may contain some rhetorical exaggeration born of despair: but we should not therefore disregard it altogether.[19]

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[16] Denis C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 181 and 183. For presentation and discussion of the evidence, see Feeney, pp. 181–184.

[17] See Edward L. Harrison, "Why Did Venus Wear Boots? Some Reflections on *Aeneid* 1.314 f.," *Proceedings of the Virgil Society* 12 (1972–1973), 12.

[18] Aeneas' claim (picking up Odysseus at Hom., *Od.* 13.313?) has troubled some commentators. Richard Heinze, *Virgil's Epic Technique*, trans. Hazel and David Harvey and Fred Robertson (Bristol, 1993), p. 77, thinks that it refers to a version of Aeneas' wanderings planned by Virgil but in the end discarded, and that the poet "would have excised it once he realized that it was now irrelevant." This seems rather drastic. I find Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.408, more convincing: "we do not know the allusion in *totiens*; it is something left to our imagination, like the visions of Anchises, nowhere else mentioned, that troubled Aeneas' dreams and warned him against staying with Dido (4.351 ff.)."

So, Virgil's account of the meeting between Venus and Aeneas in the woods involves a stark dramatic irony: the reader knows that the hero is speaking to his own mother, but Aeneas does not. Similar dramatic ironies appear frequently, although not always, in scenes of interaction between mortals and immortals later in the poem; this episode is thus to some degree programmatic.[20]

The second basic feature of the passage that I shall highlight here is its evocation of the reader's sympathy for Aeneas, especially at the end of the scene, but to some extent during its earlier stages too. Our sympathy earlier on largely results from the dramatic irony that I have just mentioned—for that irony is in part a tragic irony, where the gap between the reader's knowledge and that of a character generates pathos. Aeneas' failure to recognize Venus for most of the scene evokes pity in the reader (who is well aware of the supposed *virgo*'s true identity from the very beginning). We pity the hero not only as a typically uncomprehending human being, but also as a son unable to enjoy straightforward contact with his own mother. This latter claim on our sympathy is brought to the fore at the climax of the scene, when the revelation of Venus' identity is met by Aeneas' bitter cry in lines 1.407–409: "You too are cruel. Why do you deceive your own son so often with misleading appearances? Why aren't we allowed to join right hand to right hand, to listen to words which are true and to utter them in reply?" Aeneas' frustrated longing for physical and emotional contact with his mother wins our sympathy, both as the expression of a general human need and as a response to his particular situation in the *Aeneid* (for we see him repeatedly denied opportunities to make or sustain such contact with others elsewhere in the epic).[21] Our sympathy is augmented by Virgil's mobilization of some powerful intertexts,[22] and by the physical tableau here presented: the very isolation that Aeneas laments is vividly illustrated as his anguished questions are left hanging in the air unanswered, his mother departing without a word (1.405–406, 410).

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[19] Some evidence for Venus not being entirely candid in her appearances to Aeneas in the past is provided by Verg., *Aen.* 2.589–592. There she appears to her son *non ante oculis tam clara* ("never before so clear to my sight"; 2.589), *confessa deam qualisque videri / caelicolis et quanta solet* ("revealing her godhead, and in her appearance and size just as she usually appears to the gods in heaven"; 2.591–592). The clear implication is that such a manifestation was not normal in their previous encounters.

[20] On programmatic moments elsewhere in *Aeneid* 1, see Christine Perkell, "*Aeneid* 1: An Epic Programme," in *Reading Vergil's Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide*, ed. Christine Perkell (Oklahoma, 1999), pp. 29–49.

[21] Compare especially the scenes at Verg., *Aen.* 2.790–794 (with Creusa's shade), 4.390–391 (with Dido), and 5.740–742 (with Anchises' ghost).

Dramatic Irony and Our Detachment from Aeneas

We have seen that a pervasive dramatic irony and the evocation of the reader's sympathy for Aeneas are fundamental aspects of this scene. I shall now look briefly at the relationship between these two features.

Our sympathy for Aeneas is clearly compatible with our appreciation of the dramatic ironies of the scene. Indeed, as I suggested above, this sympathy is partly due to our recognition of the tragic irony present here. But it is worth asking how deeply this sympathy is felt. For an important consequence of the presence of dramatic irony in a text tends to be a certain distancing of the reader from the character concerned. The reader knows more than the character does, and while this can generate sympathy or pity in the reader, such feelings will frequently be felt from a slightly detached position.[23] Dramatic irony thus tends to militate against the fullest form of sympathy from the reader, that is, empathy, or the feeling of sharing the experiences and emotions of a character.

This is perhaps especially true when the dramatic irony of a scene is not, or is not exclusively, a tragic irony. For dramatic irony can also take comic forms, where the gap between the reader's knowledge and that possessed by a character generates humor rather than (or as well as) pathos. There is an element of this in the Virgilian scene with which we are concerned.[24] Various features of the narrative make us laugh:

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[22] Verg., *Aen.* 1.408–409, recall the lamenting Ariadne of Catullus 64.164–166: see Wlosok, *Venus*, p. 86. The phrase *crudelis tu quoque* at Verg., *Aen.* 1.407, picks up Verg., *Ecl.* 8.48 and 50, where Venus is briefly associated with the infamously cruel mother Medea.

[23] Cf. Ian Ousby, *The Cambridge Paperback Guide to Literature in English* (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), p. 201: "Dramatic irony presents a state of affairs very different from what the protagonists think. The audience usually sees this disparity throughout and is thus, to some extent, detached from the action."

[24] Virgil's comic touches here (and elsewhere in his epic) are not always appreciated by scholars. See, however, Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.314 (and 1.392); Warren D. Anderson, "Venus and Aeneas: The Difficulties of Filial *Pietas*," *Classical Journal* 50 (1955), 233–238; Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilised Poetry* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 235–236; Charles P. Segal "Art and the Hero: Participation, Detachment and Narrative Point of View

Venus' unlikely, not very dignified, and somewhat racy appearance;[25] her brazen lies about what she is up to (even inventing a whole sisterhood of huntresses in support of her story);[26] her attempts at colloquial speech;[27] and above all, her less-than-total success in convincing Aeneas that she really is a local huntress.[28] The humor here is entirely dependent on our knowledge that this *virgo* is in fact Venus. So, the dramatic irony of the scene has its comic aspects as well as tragic ones.[29] If (as I suggested above) even the tragic irony here detaches the reader somewhat from the experiences and feelings of Aeneas, then this presence of a comic element in the irony may generate a greater distance still between reader and hero.[30]

So, Virgil narrates the encounter between Venus and her son in such a way as to invite the reader to feel not only sympathy for Aeneas but also a certain detachment from him. But this detachment should not be overstated. For as I shall show in the remainder of this piece, a number of devices in the text offer the reader the opportunity to get closer to Aeneas' experience of this meeting. For all the ironies of the scene, Virgil enables us not merely to sympathize with the hero, but to empathize with him.

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in the *Aeneid*," *Arethusa* 14 (1981), 72; Kenneth Reckford, "Recognizing Venus (I): Aeneas Meets His Mother," *Arion* 3 (1995), 1–42; Rebecca Armstrong, "The *Aeneid*: Inheritance and Empire," in *Epic Interactions*, ed. Michael J. Clarke, Bruno G.F. Currie, and R.O.A.M. Lyne (Oxford, 2006), pp. 142–143.

[25] See especially Verg., *Aen.* 1.315–320, 322–323, and 336–337. Venus' decision to disguise herself as a *virgo* opens up an amusing gap between appearance and reality: the goddess of desire is certainly not a *virgo*. The huntress element in Venus' disguise is also rather unlikely, and it may initially amuse us; but as the narrative advances, it takes on a gloomier aspect in retrospect: see Harrison, "Why Did Venus," pp. 65–68; Damien Nelis, *Virgil's Aeneid and the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius* (Leeds, 2001), pp. 125–135.

[26] See Verg., *Aen.* 1.321–324; further fictions are found at 336–337 and 392 (on the humor of the latter, see Austin, *Aeneid*, ad loc.).

[27] See Verg., *Aen.* 1.321: *heus*, with Austin, *Aeneid*, ad loc.; also Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.369.

[28] See Verg., *Aen.* 1.326–334 and 372, for Aeneas' persistent suspicion that he is talking to a *dea*, and no ordinary mortal girl.

[29] There may be a yet blacker strain to the humor of the passage, which emerges more fully when it is read against one of its main Homeric models, Odysseus' encounter with Nausikaa in *Odyssey* 6. In his first response to the supposed *virgo* (Verg., *Aen.* 1.326–334), Aeneas' words clearly recall those of Odysseus to the princess (on the parallels between the texts, see below). But whereas the Homeric hero's gentle flirting is rather well judged, Aeneas' employment of arguably similar tactics must seem to us (comically and perhaps also tragically) inappropriate: he is talking to his own mother, after all. Few critics have observed the darkness of the irony here, but see Reckford, "Recognizing Venus," pp. 12–13; Armstrong, "Inheritance and Empire," pp. 142–143.

[30] On the distancing effect of comic irony, see briefly Muecke, *Irony*, p. 47.

Interpreting Venus: Aeneas and the Reader

For much of the encounter with Venus, Aeneas faces a problem of interpretation.[31] Who is he speaking to, really? As I emphasized earlier, he struggles to read various signals given off by Venus. Some of these, if noticed and interpreted correctly, might enable him to recognize his mother—for instance, the omen of the swans (Venus' birds) at 1.390–400. But other signals are simply misleading: the goddess' virginal appearance, her hunting garb, and her increasingly elaborate cover story all distract her son from recognizing who she really is. In the face of these various signals, Aeneas becomes confused. His initial attempt (at 1.326–334) to interpret what he has seen and heard goes astray, and he remains in the dark until Venus' epiphany at the climax of the episode (1.402–410).

As we have seen, the reader is aware of Venus' identity from the very beginning of the scene, unlike Aeneas. But Virgil allows the reader to empathize with Aeneas' struggle to interpret the signals given off by Venus, I propose, by presenting him with a number of related signals in his own portrayal of the goddess. A few of these signals are directly apprehended in the text itself. In the opening description of Venus at 1.315–317, for instance, we are told that the disguised goddess has the face, appearance, and weapons of a girl 'from Sparta' (*Spartanae*; 316), and that she is "like Thracian Harpalyce, who wearies horses and outstrips the swift Hebrus when she runs" (316–317). Both pieces of information are offered by the poet to the reader; they do not seem to reflect Aeneas' thinking. Both may help us to understand why Aeneas struggles to recognize his mother, and why he will mistake her for Diana at 1.329. Sparta is a location more readily associated with Artemis-Diana than with Aphrodite-Venus,[32] and the attributes given to Harpalyce in these lines are suggestive not so much of Venus as they are of Artemis-Diana.[33] Although we know that the figure confronting Aeneas is Venus, Virgil's mobilization of these images associated with Artemis-Diana may distract us slightly from this and give us some sense of the difficulties of interpretation that Aeneas experiences here.

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[31] Aeneas will face further problems of interpretation later in book 1, especially when perusing the pictures in Juno's temple (Verg., *Aen.* 1.441–493).

[32] Particularly when alongside the duplicated *virginis* of Verg., *Aen.* 1.315.

[33] Later in the poem, at Verg., *Aen.* 7.803–807, similar attributes are given to Camilla, Diana's favorite. On the relationship between Harpalyce and Camilla, see now Nicholas Horsfall, *Virgil, Aeneid 11: A Commentary* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 316–317.

These images at 1.316–317 are directly apprehended in Virgil's text, although many of the signals that Virgil presents to us are much less direct. They rely for their effect upon the visual and literary memory of the reader. For as the narrative progresses, the text evokes a series of images from earlier visual art and poetry, Greek and Roman. Firstly I shall look at the evocations of visual art, which are fewer in number and more straightforward than the allusions to earlier literature.

Scholars have identified a number of works of visual art (sculpture in particular) that seem to be evoked in the course of this episode. Consider for instance the pose struck by Venus when Aeneas first encounters her: "[S]he had a bow hanging ready from her shoulders, huntress-style; she had let the winds blow her hair about; her knees were bare, and her flowing dress was caught up in a knot" (1.318–320). This pose has long been acknowledged as recalling a familiar statue-type of Artemis, that is, the huntress or *chasseresse* type, of which the most famous example, the Diana of Versailles, is today in the Louvre.[34] References later in the scene to Venus' quiver and especially to her footwear ("it's normal for maids from Tyre to carry a quiver, and to bind our crimson boots high up on our calves"; 1.336–337) likewise evoke the iconography of Artemis-Diana.[35] These allusions to visual art, then, bring into the reader's mind the figure of Artemis-Diana, even though we know that this *virgo* is really Venus. Virgil's evocation of such distracting visual images helps us to understand, even to share something of Aeneas' confusion when faced with the female figure in this scene. In particular, we may sympathize with his first tentative guess at her identity, in line 329: *an Phoebi soror?*

The use of visual imagery associated with Artemis-Diana is a feature of early parts of the episode (1.318–320, 336–337); it seems not to appear in later parts. But Virgil may deploy allusion there to another statue type familiar to the Roman reader. For the description of Venus' gait at the moment of her epiphany (1.404–405: "her dress flowed down to cover her feet, and in her walk she was revealed as truly a goddess") may evoke a statue type of Aphrodite-Venus popular in the first century BC–

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[34] See for instance Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.320; Harrison, "Why Did Venus," p. 20. The so-called Diana of Versailles (Paris, Louvre Ma 589) is discussed by Lily Kahil, in *LIMC* 2 (1984), p. 645, s.v. "Artemis," no. 250 (= "Artemis / Diana," no. 27); further examples of the *chasseresse* type are listed on p. 265, s.v. "Artemis," nos. 251–265.

[35] See Harrison, "Why Did Venus," p. 20 with n. 50. The commentary of pseudo-Probus on Virgil's *Georgics* says (ad *Geo.* 2.8) that statues of Diana featured *cothurni*. On Artemis' boots in art, see Wendell Clausen, *A Commentary on Virgil*, Eclogues (Oxford, 1994), ad *Ecl.* 7.32.

first century AD, in which the goddess seems to be advancing with quite some majesty.[36] This allusion to visual art must clearly have a rather different effect on the reader from the Diana allusions earlier in the scene. For the evocation of a visual image of Venus at this point does not distract the reader from the true identity of the female figure in the narrative. It may help to bring home to the reader, however, something of the power of this moment of recognition for Aeneas: just as the hero realizes that he has all along been speaking to his mother, so an impressive visual image of the goddess is brought into the reader's mind.

On a few occasions during this episode, then, Virgil deploys allusion to familiar works of visual art to allow the reader to get closer to Aeneas' experience of the situation portrayed. Something similar is also true, on a larger scale, of Virgil's use of literary allusion. In order to appreciate this, we must first consider the relationship of the scene to its main literary models. In the following pages, I indicate what those models are and very briefly discuss what Virgil owes to each.[37] Much of this material is interesting in itself, for the light it casts on Virgil's methods of composition, his creation of characters, and the nature of his Venus. But here we are chiefly interested in the effects upon the reader of Virgil's use of these models. I shall discuss these as soon as I have identified the main intertexts.

The Construction of Venus:
Aeneid *1.314–417 and its Literary Models*

A variety of models have been suggested for Virgil's narrative of Aeneas' encounter with Venus in the woods. We shall begin with some of his debts to Homer. The main structural model for the narrative of *Aeneid* 1 overall is the story of Odysseus' escape from a sea storm and subsequent arrival among the Phaiakians, as presented in books 5–8 of the *Odyssey*.[38] Within this larger Odyssean framework, the meeting between Venus and Aeneas corresponds to two particular scenes: the meeting between Odysseus and Nausikaa in *Odyssey* 6, and Odysseus' encounter with a disguised Athena at the beginning of *Odyssey* 7.

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[36] See Harrison, "Why Did Venus," pp. 12–13, for the suggestion. The statue type used to be known as the "Venus *Genetrix*"; but this identification is no longer generally accepted, and *LIMC* refers to it as the "Typus Louvre-Neapel." The most famous surviving example is indeed in the Louvre (Paris, Louvre MA 525): see Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 34–35, s.v "Aphrodite," no. 225.

[37] I do not aim to offer full documentation or discussion of their various relationships to *Aeneid* 1, partly because many of these intertextualities have been examined by other scholars, and partly because it is less the details and more the simple identification of these intertextual relationships that matters for our purposes.

Odysseus and Nausikaa (Homer, Odyssey *6)*

The correspondence with the Nausikaa scene—in which Odysseus, shipwrecked and in an unfamiliar land, is given information and practical help by the princess—is already noted by Macrobius. He observes, *Venus in Nausicaae locum Alcinoi filiae successit* (*Sat*. 5.2.13: "Venus has taken the place of Nausikaa, the daughter of Alkinoos"). The most striking parallels are those between Aeneas' first speech to Venus (1.326–334) and Odysseus' speech supplicating Nausikaa:

> "γουνοῦμαί σε, ἄνασσα: θεός νύ τις, ἦ βροτός ἐσσι;
> εἰ μέν τις θεός ἐσσι, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν,
> Ἀρτέμιδί σε ἐγώ γε, Διὸς κούρῃ μεγάλοιο,
> εἶδός τε μέγεθός τε φυήν τ' ἄγχιστα ἐίσκω·
> εἰ δέ τίς ἐσσι βροτῶν, τοὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ ναιετάουσιν,
> τρὶς μάκαρες μὲν σοί γε πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ,
> τρὶς μάκαρες δὲ κασίγνητοι·"
>
> "I beseech you, lady—are you some divinity, or are you mortal?
> If you are a goddess, one of those who hold broad heaven,
> I think you are most like Artemis the daughter of mighty Zeus
> In your appearance and your stature and your bearing.
> But if you are one of the mortals who dwell upon the earth,
> Then three times blessed are your father and your revered mother,
> Three times blessed your brothers."[39]

There are some obvious differences between the two episodes; but the existence of an intertextual relationship is clear.[40]

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[38] A full presentation of the various correspondences is found in Georg Nicolaus Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer* (Göttingen, 1964), pp. 148–173; the main structural parallels are conveniently indicated in his diagram on p. 172.

[39] Hom., *Od*. 6.149–155.

[40] Full details in Knauer, *Die Aeneis*, pp. 158–159 and 374–375; cf. Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.314, 325, 327, and 328; Wlosok, *Venus*, p. 77. Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.325, notes some of the differences between Aeneas' and Odysseus' speeches; cf. note 29 above.

Odysseus and Athena (Homer, Odyssey *7)*

The scene between Odysseus and the disguised Athena in *Odyssey* 7 is arguably the clearest Homeric model for the encounter between Aeneas and the disguised Venus. As Odysseus heads into the city of the Phaiakians, Athena first envelops him in a mist, and then appears before him disguised as a young maiden carrying a pitcher:

> καὶ τότ’ Ὀδυσσεὺς ὦϱτο πόλινδ’ ἴμεν· ἀμφὶ δ’ Ἀϑήνη
> πολλὴν ἠέϱα χεῦε φίλα φϱονέουσ’ Ὀδυσῆι,
> μή τις Φαιήκων μεγαϑύμων ἀντιβολήσας
> κεϱτομέοι τ’ ἐπέεσσι καὶ ἐξεϱέοιϑ’ ὅτις εἴη.
> ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ ἄϱ’ ἔμελλε πόλιν δύσεσϑαι ἐϱαννήν,
> ἔνϑα οἱ ἀντεβόλησε ϑεά, γλαυκῶπις Ἀϑήνη,
> παϱϑενικῇ εἰκυῖα νεήνιδι, κάλπιν ἐχούσῃ.
>
> And then Odysseus went to go to the city; and Athena, who
> Favored Odysseus, poured around him a dense mist,
> So that none of the great-spirited Phaiakians should meet him and
> Insult him verbally and ask him who he was.
> But when he was about to enter the lovely city,
> Then the goddess, shining-eyed Athena, met him:
> She looked like a young maiden, carrying a water-pitcher.[41]

She gives the hero some advice (7.28–36) and leads him, still enveloped by mist, to the palace of King Alkinoos (7.37–42). At the palace, Athena explains to Odysseus the importance of Queen Arete (7.48–55) and tells him something of the queen's background (7.56–74). The correspondences with Venus' activities in *Aeneid* 1 are clear, if by no means exact.[42] The account of Athena's departure for her cult-center Athens (7.78–81) is also a major model for Venus' departure to her cult-center Paphos at *Aen.* 1.415–417.

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[41] Hom., *Od.* 7.14–20.

[42] See Knauer, *Die Aeneis*, pp. 158–163 and 375; Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.314, 411; and Wlosok, *Venus*, pp. 77–78 (with nn. 10, 12, and 14), 89–90 (with nn. 67 and 68), 99, and 111–112. Athena is disguised as a 'young maiden' (παϱϑενικῇ εἰκυῖα νεήνιδι; Hom., *Od.* 7.20), which is appropriate since the goddess is famously a virgin; contrast the humorous incongruity in Venus' adoption of a similar disguise.

Odysseus and Hermes (Homer, Odyssey *10)*

Another structural model for *Aeneid* 1 is found in *Odyssey* 10, and in particular in the story of Odysseus' experiences on Kirke's island.[43] Within this framework, Aeneas' encounter with the disguised Venus corresponds to the scene where Odysseus is met by Hermes disguised as a youth:

> ὣς εἰπὼν παρὰ νηὸς ἀνήιον ἠδὲ θαλάσσης.
> ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ἄρ' ἔμελλον ἰὼν ἱερὰς ἀνὰ βήσσας
> Κίρκης ἵξεσθαι πολυφαρμάκου ἐς μέγα δῶμα,
> ἔνθα μοι Ἑρμείας χρυσόρραπις ἀντεβόλησεν
> ἐρχομένῳ πρὸς δῶμα, νεηνίῃ ἀνδρὶ ἐοικώς,
> πρῶτον ὑπηνήτῃ, τοῦ περ χαριεστάτη ἥβη·
> ἔν τ' ἄρα μοι φῦ χειρί, ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε·
> "'πῇ δὴ αὖτ', ὦ δύστηνε, δι' ἄκριας ἔρχεαι οἶος,
> χώρου ἄιδρις ἐών;"
>
> I said this, then headed inland from the ship and the sea.
> But as I was making my way through the sacred glens and was about to
> Reach the great house of Kirke with all her drugs,
> Then Hermes of the golden wand came to meet me as I
> Went towards the house: he looked like a young man,
> One with his first beard—when youth is at its most attractive.
> He took my hand in his, and spoke aloud to me and said:
> "You poor man! Where are you off to now, going through the hills
> On your own, with no knowledge of the territory?"[44]

This meeting takes place as Odysseus is making his way from his ship through the woods to Kirke's house, and Hermes gives him some crucial advice as well as protection via the magical herb μῶλυ ('Moly'; 10.302–306). Again the parallels with *Aeneid* 1 are clear, although they seem to have escaped the notice of most commentators and critics.[45]

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[43] The correspondences are presented by Knauer, *Die Aeneis*, pp. 173–180.

[44] Hom., *Od.* 10.274–282.

[45] Coming from ship (Hom., *Od.* 10.274): cf. Verg., *Aen.* 1.310–313. Woods (Hom., *Od.* 10.275–276): cf. Verg., *Aen.* 1.314. Advice (Hom., *Od.* 10.282–301): cf. Verg., *Aen.* 1.338–368 and 389–401. Protection (Hom., *Od.* 10.286–306): cf. Verg., *Aen.* 1.411–414. Hermes' disguise as νεηνίῃ ἀνδρὶ ἐοικώς (Hom., *Od.* 10.277–279): cf. Venus as *virgo* (Verg., *Aen.* 1.315–316, 327, 336).

Odysseus and Athena (Homer, Odyssey *13)*

The last major Odyssean model for our episode in *Aeneid* 1 is the famous encounter between Odysseus and an initially disguised Athena on the shore of Ithaka in *Odyssey* 13. Here the goddess appears to Odysseus disguised as a young herdsman:

σχεδόθεν δέ οἱ ἦλθεν Ἀθήνη,
ἀνδρὶ δέμας εἰκυῖα νέῳ, ἐπιβώτορι μήλων,
παναπάλῳ, οἷοί τε ἀνάκτων παῖδες ἔασι,
δίπτυχον ἀμφ’ ὤμοισιν ἔχους’ εὐεργέα λώπην·
ποσσὶ δ’ ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσι πέδιλ’ ἔχε, χερσὶ δ’ ἄκοντα.

And Athena came near to him
In her appearance looking like a young man, a herdsman of flocks,
One who was tender as are the sons of lords:
She had around her shoulders a finely-worked cloak with a double fold,
Sandals on her shining feet, and carried a javelin in her hands.[46]

Odysseus greets this “herdsman,” appeals for help, and asks what land he has come to:

“ὦ φίλ’, ἐπεί σε πρῶτα κιχάνω τῷδ’ ἐνὶ χώρῳ,
χαῖρέ τε καὶ μή μοί τι κακῷ νόῳ ἀντιβολήσαις,
ἀλλὰ σάω μὲν ταῦτα, σάω δ’ ἐμέ· σοὶ γὰρ ἐγώ γε
εὔχομαι ὥς τε θεῷ καί σευ φίλα γούναθ’ ἱκάνω.
καί μοι τοῦτ’ ἀγόρευσον ἐτήτυμον, ὄφρ’ ἐῢ εἰδῶ·
τίς γῆ, τίς δῆμος, τίνες ἀνέρες ἐγγεγάασιν;
ἦ πού τις νήσων εὐδείελος, ἦέ τις ἀκτὴ
κεῖθ’ ἁλὶ κεκλιμένη ἐριβώλακος ἠπείροιο;”

“My friend—since you are the first person I have come across in this land—
Greetings! Let there be no evil in your mind as you meet me:
Rather, keep these things safe—and keep me safe; for I pray
To you as to a god, and I come to your knees in supplication.
And tell me this truly, so that I may be sure:
What land is this? What region? Which people live here?
Is it some clearly-seen island? Or rather some shore of the
Fertile mainland, which lies sloping down towards the sea?”[47]

Athena explains that he is on Ithaka, and she gives him some information about the island (13.237–249). The conversation continues amicably even after the revelation of Athena's identity (at 13.287), which is an obvious difference from the meeting of Venus and Aeneas, but the two scenes otherwise have quite a few points of contact.[48]

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[46] Hom., *Od.* 13.221–225.
[47] Hom., *Od.* 13.228–235.

Minor Homeric Models

A couple of other Odyssean scenes may also be picked up.[49] Venus' observation and interpretation of the omen of the eagle and the swans at 1.390–400 owes something to Helen's interpretation of the omen of the eagle and the goose at *Odyssey* 15.171–178.[50] There is a clear correspondence between the lines on Venus' departure for Paphos at 1.415–417 and the account of Aphrodite's departure for Paphos after being freed from Hephaistos' bonds in Demodokos' song in *Odyssey* 8.362–366.[51]

The *Iliad* is much less important for Virgil's scene. It is true that Venus' concern for her son in *Aeneid* 1 owes plenty to Homer's portrayal of Thetis in *Iliad* 1;[52] but there is no real parallel for our scene in that epic.[53] Such correspondences as there are with the *Iliad* are really only correspondences of detail, albeit sometimes striking ones. For instance, the diction used of Venus' hair at the moment of epiphany—*ambrosiaeque comae divinum vertice odorem / spiravere* ("and her immortal locks breathed forth the perfume of divinity from her head"; *Aen.* 1.403–404)—may recall the sublime Zeus of *Iliad* 1, whose hair rolls forward as he gives his assent to Thetis' request that he honor Achilles: ἀμβρόσιαι δ᾽ ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος / κρατὸς ἀπ᾽ ἀθανάτοιο: μέγαν δ᾽ ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον ("The immortal locks of the lord rolled forward from his immortal head: and he shook great Olympus"; *Il.* 1.529–530).[54] Or, the mention of Venus' beautiful neck at that same point—*avertens rosea cervice refulsit* ("as she turned away she shone radiantly from her rosy neck"; *Aen.* 1.402)—may pick up a famous epiphany of Aphrodite in *Iliad* 3, where the goddess, hitherto disguised as an old wool comber, is recognized by Helen: καί ῥ᾽ ὥς οὖν ἐνόησε θεᾶς περικαλλέα δειρὴν / στήθεά θ᾽ ἱμερόεντα καὶ ὄμματα μαρμαίροντα ("and when she noticed the very beautiful neck of the goddess, her lovely breasts and her gleaming eyes"; *Il.* 3.396–398).[55] But another appearance of Aphrodite in early Greek poetry is of much greater significance for Virgil. To this we shall now turn.

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[48] See further Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.314 and 331; Knauer, *Die Aeneis*, pp. 374–375; Reckford, "Recognizing Venus," pp. 13–14. The correspondence between these episodes is not the only one between *Odyssey* 13 and *Aeneid* 1: compare the relationship between the harbor and cave used by the Trojans near Carthage (Verg., *Aen.* 1.159–169) and the harbor and cave to which the Phaiakians bring Odysseus (*Od.*, 13.96–112), on which see Gordon Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 637–644.

[49] Note also the relationships between Hom., *Od.* 9.19–20, and Verg., *Aen.* 1.378–379 (with Austin, *Aeneid*, pp. xiii–xiv), and between Hom., *Od.* 16.178–189, and Verg., *Aen.* 1.325–337 (with Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.330 and 334).

[50] Cf. Segal, "Art and the Hero," p. 83 n. 12.

[51] The correspondence is noted and briefly discussed by Knauer, *Die Aeneis*, p. 162 (with n. 2); Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.415, 416, 417; Wlosok, *Venus*, pp. 98–99; and Reckford, "Recognizing Venus," p. 15.

[52] In particular, Venus' approach to Jupiter in the scene preceding ours (Verg., *Aen.* 1.223–304) recalls the behavior of Thetis when she solicits Zeus on behalf of Achilles at Hom., *Il.* 1.493–532. On this, and on other links between Virgil's Venus and the Iliadic Thetis, see Wlosok, *Venus*, p. 110 and index s.v. "Thetis"; Marion Lausberg, "Iliadisches im ersten Buch der *Aeneis*," *Gymnasium* 90 (1983), 207. Lausberg's article touches on the Thetis-Venus parallel as part of a wider examination of the relationship between *Aeneid* 1 and the *Iliad*.

[53] The encounter between Aeneas and Venus is sometimes compared with the scene

*Anchises and Aphrodite (*Homeric Hymn 5*)*

The narrative portion of the fifth *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (lines 45–291) tells the story of Aphrodite's seduction of the Trojan Anchises, from which union Aineias was born. Aphrodite disguises herself as a παρθένος ('virgin') and presents herself to Anchises (75–90), only to be revealed in all her glory (172–183) shortly before she departs. This text is arguably the single most important literary model for Virgil's scene between Aeneas and the disguised Venus. Scholars have disagreed about the interpretation of the intertextual relationship between *Aeneid* 1 and

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in *Iliad* 1, where Thetis comes from the sea to comfort her distressed son Achilles (Hom., *Il.* 1.357–430). Whereas Thetis comes to Achilles quickly, undisguised, and full of maternal concern, Venus behaves rather differently (see Wlosok, *Venus*, p. 111). One might legitimately speak of *oppositio in imitando* here.

[54] Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.403; Knauer, *Die Aeneis*, p. 375; note the parallel.

[55] Cf. Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.402; Knauer, *Die Aeneis*, p. 375; Reckford "Recognizing Venus," p. 3.

the *Hymn*,[56] but the existence of the relationship should not be in doubt.[57] I quote two passages from the *Hymn* to illustrate it.

First is the initial appearance of Aphrodite (in disguise) to Anchises, with which the initial appearance of Venus at *Aen.* 1.314–320 should be compared:

> στῆ δ᾽ αὐτοῦ προπάροιθε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη,
> παρθένῳ ἀδμήτῃ μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ὁμοίη,
> μή μιν ταρβήσειεν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι νοήσας.
> Ἀγχίσης δ᾽ ὁρόων ἐφράζετο θαύμαινέν τε
> εἶδός τε μέγεθός τε καὶ εἵματα σιγαλόεντα.
>
> And before him stood Aphrodite the daughter of Zeus,
> Like a virginal girl in stature and appearance—
> So that he would not be alarmed when he noticed her with his eyes.
> Anchises saw her, considered her and marveled at
> Her appearance and her stature and her shining garments.[58]

Second, I cite part of Anchises' verbal response to this appearance of Aphrodite, and compare it with Aineias' response to the disguised Venus at *Aen.* 1.326–334:[59]

> "χαῖρε, ἄνασσ᾽, ἥ τις μακάρων τάδε δώμαθ᾽ ἱκάνεις,
> Ἄρτεμις ἢ Λητὼ ἠὲ χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη
> ἢ Θέμις ἠυγενὴς ἠὲ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη,
> ἤ πού τις Χαρίτων δεῦρ᾽ ἤλυθες, αἵτε θεοῖσιν
> πᾶσιν ἑταιρίζουσι καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέονται,

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[56] For a range of views, see Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, *Étude sur Virgile* (Paris, 1857), pp. 245–258; Austin, *Aeneid*, ad 1.329, 334, 335, 375, 402, and 415; Alessandro Barchiesi, "Rappresentazioni del dolore e interpretazione nell'Eneide," *Antike und Abendland* 40 (1994), 116–117; Reckford, "Recognizing Venus," pp. 16–22; Stephen J. Harrison, *Generic Enrichment in Virgil and Horace* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 225–229.

[57] The plausibility of allusion to the *Homeric Hymns* in Roman literature is sometimes questioned. But recent studies have made clear the detailed engagement with some of these hymns in Ovid: see Stephen Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone: Ovid and the Self-Conscious Muse* (Cambridge, Eng., 1987), especially pp. xii and 51–98; Alessandro Barchiesi, "Venus' Masterplot: Ovid and the Homeric Hymns," in *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and Its Reception*, ed. Philip R. Hardie, Alessandro Barchiesi, and Stephen Hinds (Cambridge, Eng., 1999), pp. 112–126. The most famous use of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* in Latin literature outside our passage in the *Aeneid* is that found in the hymn to Venus, which opens Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*: on this see Monica R. Gale, *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius* (Cambridge, Eng., 1994), p. 209; E. Flores, "La composizione dell'inno a Venere di Lucrezio e gli inni omerici ad Afrodite," *Vichiana* 8 (1979), 237–251.

[58] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.1–85.

[59] Note that in his attempt to guess the true identity of the παρθένος ('virgin'), Anchises does mention Aphrodite (*Hymn. Hom.* 5.93): contrast Aeneas at Verg., *Aen.* 1.329.

ἤ τις Νυμφάων, αἵ τ᾽ ἄλσεα καλὰ νέμονται
ἢ Νυμφῶν, αἳ καλὸν ὄρος τόδε ναιετάουσιν
καὶ πηγὰς ποταμῶν, καὶ πίσεα ποιήεντα.
σοὶ δ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐν σκοπιῇ, περιφαινομένῳ ἐνὶ χώρῳ,
βωμὸν ποιήσω, ῥέξω δέ τοι ἱερὰ καλὰ
ὥρῃσιν πάσῃσι."

"Greetings, lady—whichever of the blessed ones you are, you who come
To this house—Artemis, or Leto, or golden Aphrodite,
Or noble Themis, or shining-eyed Athena,
Or perhaps you are one of the Graces come here [the Graces who keep all
The gods company, and are called immortal]
Or one of the Nymphs who inhabit the beautiful groves
[Or of the Nymphs who live on this beautiful mountain]
And the springs of the rivers and the grassy meadows.
I will build you an altar on a peak, in a spot visible
Far and wide, and I will perform fine sacrifices in your honour
At all seasons."[60]

The importance of the *Hymn* as a model for our scene in the *Aeneid* is clear—and the correspondences we have noted are by no means the only points of contact between the texts.[61]

Apollonios' Argonautika*: Colchis and the Heroines of Libya*

Among other Greek authors' contributions to this scene, that of Apollonios of Rhodes perhaps looms largest. A number of episodes from his *Argonautika* are relevant. Damien Nelis has shown very clearly that the action of *Aeneid* 1 is modeled on Apollonius' account of the Argonauts' activities in Colchis, as well as on Odysseus' experiences among the Phaiakians.[62] Within this framework, Aeneas' encounter with Venus corresponds to Eros' encounter with Aphrodite at the opening of *Argonautika* 3: this structural correspondence is reinforced by some notable (and surprising) parallels of detail.[63] Two later scenes in *Argonautika* 3 may also contribute something to our scene in Virgil: Hera's protection of Jason as he heads into the city of the Colchians by spreading a mist through the city;[64] Mopsos' interpretation of the omen of a dove escaping from a hawk may be recalled in the omen of the swans.[65]

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[60] *Hymn. Hom.* 5.92–102.

[61] The most interesting relationship besides the two already noted is that between the moments of epiphany (*Hymn. Hom.* 5.181–190; Verg., *Aen.* 1.402–409).

[62] Nelis, *Virgil's Aeneid*, pp. 67–124. Nelis' helpful table on p. 124 gives the key structural correspondences between Verg., *Aen.* 1.157–756, and Ap. Rhod., *Arg.* 2.1260–3.395, at a glance.

[63] Nelis, *Virgil's Aeneid*, pp. 75–78, provides the details.

Perhaps the most important Apollonian episode for our scene is Jason's encounter with the so-called heroines of Libya in *Argonautika* 4.1305–1363. The Argo has been driven onto the Syrtes off the North African coast, and the Argonauts are in despair—when Jason is met by three local goddesses, στέϱφεσιν αἰγείοις ἐζωσμέναι ἐξ ὑπάτοιο / αὐχένος ἀμφί τε νῶτα ϰαὶ ἰξύας, ἠύτε ϰοῦϱαι ("dressed in goatskins from the top of their necks around their backs and waists, just like young girls"; 4.1348–1349), who offer him some cryptic advice. The geographical location, the despair of the hero, and the dress of the goddesses he encounters all find parallels of a sort in the scene in *Aeneid* 1.[66]

Ennius' Venus

Most of the literary models for the encounter between Venus and Aeneas are Greek. The influence of Roman literature is much less obvious, but at least one Latin text may make a significant contribution: Ennius' *Annales*.[67] Early in book 1 of his epic, Ennius tells of Aeneas' escape from Troy and arrival in Italy.[68] We know little about this part of his narrative (which may not have been very long), but a small number of surviving fragments seem to belong to this section of the poem.[69] Two are of particular interest for us: *transnavit cita per teneras caliginis auras* ("she passed swiftly through the yielding wafts of mist"; *Ann.* 18 Sk.), and *constitit inde loci propter sos dia dearum* ("then she, hallowed among goddesses, took her stand near to them"; *Ann.* 19 Sk.). Most editors ascribe these lines to a hypothetical episode in which Venus came down from Olympus to the world of men.[70] According to Otto Skutsch, the most likely candidates for the *sos* ('them') of *Ann.* 19 are Aeneas and Anchises: he thinks that Venus came to give them some advice.[71] He goes on to remind us of Christian Gottlob Heyne's observation that divinities in Classical poetry are usually seen undisguised by no more than one person, and he asks an interesting question: "[D]id E[nnius] break with the convention, or did he make Venus assume human guise?"[72]

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[64] Ap. Rhod., *Arg.* 3.210–212. Cf. Verg., *Aen.* 1.411–414: the parallel is discussed by Nelis, *Virgil's Aeneid*, pp. 79–80 with n. 53.

[65] Ap. Rhod., *Arg.* 3.540–554. See Nelis, *Virgil's Aeneid*, pp. 78–79.

[66] The correspondences are discussed by Nelis, *Virgil's Aeneid*, p. 123.

[67] Ennius' Venus (on whom see briefly Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, p. 125) is linked in a fairly general way with Venus in *Aeneid* 1 by, for example, Wlosok, *Venus*, p. 109 n. 8; Reckford, "Recognizing Venus," p. 9 (with n. 16). But the more specific connection between the texts, which I propose here, seems to have been overlooked.

[68] For a brief account of what we think we know about the content of book 1 of the *Annales*, see Otto Skutsch, *The Annals of Quintus Ennius* (Oxford, 1985), p. 142.

[69] In Skutsch's edition (see previous note), they are numbered frr. xii–xxvii of book 1 (= *Ann.* 14–32 Sk.).

Now, even if Venus appeared undisguised in Ennius, her encounter with Aeneas and Anchises may still have influenced our scene in *Aeneid* 1. But if she did appear in disguise, the chances of an Ennian influence on Virgil here seem much greater. Of course, in such uncertain territory it would be foolhardy to go much further than this: but the possibility of a model for Virgil's scene in the *Annales* is worth considering.[73]

Diana in Eclogue *8 and Laevius*

The final texts I shall mention here make a minor but noteworthy contribution to Virgil's scene. At 1.336–337, Venus claims that that *virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram/purpureoque alte suras vincire coturno* ("it's normal for maids from Tyre to carry a quiver, and to bind our crimson boots high up on our calves"). The diction used of her footwear in line 337 is borrowed from a description of a statue of Artemis-Diana in Virgil's own earlier *Eclogue* 7: the goddess is there promised that if the hunt is successful, *levi de marmore tota/puniceo stabis suras evincta coturno* ("you will stand, made all from smooth marble, your calves laced with crimson boots"; *Ecl.* 7.31–32). Behind both Virgilian passages seem to lie some lines from an earlier text, now surviving only as a four-line fragment (Laevius fr. 12a Courtney: but the authorship is uncertain).[74] This fragment is concerned with Diana, and its first line appears to be an address to the goddess: *et iam purpureo suras include cothurno* ("and now bind your calves with crimson boots"). The language of *Aeneid* 1.337 is then strongly suggestive of earlier texts portraying Artemis-Diana, goddess of the hunt. The significance of this intertextual relationship, and of the others noted earlier, I shall now explain.

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[70] See Johannes Vahlen, *Ennianae poesis reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1903), p. cl; and more fully Skutsch, *Ennius*, pp. 176–177.

[71] Skutsch, *Ennius*, pp. 176 (on *Ann.* 18: "Probably Venus on her way to advise Anchises and Aeneas") and 177 (the *sos* in *Ann.* 19 are "probably Anchises and Aeneas"). We have no idea of the time or the place at which any such encounter may have occurred.

[72] Skutsch ad *Ann.* 19, *propter sos*. Heyne made his observation in "Excursus 13" of his commentary on *Aeneid* 1, in Christian Gottlob Heyne, *Vergilii opera*, 4th ed., rev. Georg P.E. Wagner (Leipzig, 1830–1841).

[73] Whether the other great Republican epic, Naevius' *Bellum Punicum*, has made any contribution to our scene cannot now be known. But it is worth remembering that Naevius seems to have had a significant influence on earlier parts of *Aeneid* 1 (see esp. Naevius frr. 14 and 15 Strzelecki), and in particular that his Venus' approach to Jupiter (see fr. 14 and perhaps frr. 16–18 Strzelecki) is a key model for Virgil's scene between Venus and Jupiter at Verg., *Aen.* 1.223–296 (the episode immediately preceding ours).

Reading Venus

Virgil's literary models for this scene are then many and various. This point is of interest in itself: and further consideration of the material we have just looked at alongside our scene in *Aeneid* 1 might give us some insight into the remarkably complex process of creative imitation that lies behind Virgil's epic. But as I emphasized earlier, I want here to consider the relationship between the Venus and Aeneas episode and its models less from the point of view of the creative author and more from the point of view of the reader. How does the fact that this scene in *Aeneid* 1 imitates many of the other texts I have mentioned affect the experience of reading the episode?

Here I shall apply a reading practice that was developed especially by twentieth-century Italian critics of Latin poetry, but has been adopted by much Anglophone work. This practice regards literary imitation not as an inert feature of a text, but as a dynamic force in generating effects and meaning in that text, as Gian Biagio Conte, one of the chief proponents of the new approach, explains:

> The work of tracing "loci similes", passages in one author which recall those in another, is the bread and butter of traditional literary study. Long in the grip of a positivistic hunt for sources for *Quellenforschung*, such study has classified these literary phenomena as "influences", or more concretely as "sources" … rather than in terms of texts and the structuring of texts … My approach is quite different … I have tried to bring allusion and poetic

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[74] The fragment is quoted by Terentianus Maurus (lines 1935–1938), who attributes it to "Livius." This attribution is rejected by most scholars, and the fragment tends to be given to the (perhaps early first century BC) author Laevius. On the fragment and the problem of its authorship, see Michael Wigodsky, *Vergil and Early Latin Poetry*, Hermes Einzelschriften 24 (Wiesbaden, 1972), pp. 18–20; Edward Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 128–130.

> memory … into a functional rhetorical matrix … and thus to make them contribute to the process of poetic signification as constitutive elements of poetic discourse.[75]

This dynamic understanding of imitation sees the texts imitated being recalled to the reader's mind as he reads the new work. The memories thus evoked affect the reader's understanding of, and emotional response to, this new work.[76] If we apply such an interpretive practice to the scene between Venus and Aeneas in *Aeneid* 1, we shall see how Virgil's use of literary allusion offers us the opportunity to empathize with Aeneas' experiences during this scene.

Over the course of this episode, the female figure with whom Aeneas is faced gives off a variety of signals, and has a variety of associations: this confuses the hero. I propose that as a result of Virgil's dynamic use of literary allusion, his narrative may have an effect upon the reader akin to this effect upon Aeneas of his encounter with Venus. For, by imitating and evoking in the reader's mind a range of other literary texts, Virgil here gives Venus a range of complex, even contradictory, associations. True, some of the images from earlier poetry that we are encouraged to recall are images of Aphrodite (from the *Odyssey*, the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, and Apollonios' *Argonautika*) or Venus (from Ennius). These memories are not problematic. They serve to reinforce what we have been told at the very beginning of the scene—that this figure is in fact Aeneas' mother Venus (1.314). (They may well therefore add further to our sense of being able to see something about this "Tyrian girl" that Aeneas himself cannot. In this sense, they might be thought to contribute to the dramatic irony of the scene.) As we read we may also find ourselves recalling images of Athena or Hermes (from the *Odyssey*), or images of local goddesses of Libya (from Apollonios), or images of Artemis-Diana (from the *Eclogues* and Laevius). These memories may be more disruptive. They cannot succeed in misleading us about the identity of the female in the scene (we know that she is Venus); but they are able to disconcert us. We find ourselves thinking of some figures whom we might not have associated with Venus (Hermes, or the local goddesses of Libya) and of others whom we certainly would not have associated with her (Athena and Artemis-Diana, preeminent exemplars of chastity).[77] Insofar as it brings into our minds not only images that remind us of the female figure's true identity but also images that are at times alien to that identity and may even seem to be in conflict with it, Virgil's use of literary allusion here may enable us as readers to experience something of what Aeneas feels during the scene as he attempts to interpret the variety of signals being given off by the disguised Venus. That is, we too undergo something of a bombardment by images and signals (some of them reminding us who this figure is, others rather distracting us): and even if we do not actually share Aeneas' confusion and bewilderment here, we can at least sympathize strongly with him. When he finally cries out *quid natum totiens … falsis/ludis imaginibus?* (1.407–408: "why do you deceive your own son so often with misleading appearances?"), the frustration that he voices is a frustration that Virgil has allowed us to understand and perhaps even to feel.

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[75] Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, ed. Charles Segal (Ithaca, 1986), p. 23.

[76] Cf. Jasper Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (London, 1985), p. 197: "We do not simply enjoy the pleasure of recognition of a source, but we are guided in our emotional response by Virgil's use of that recognition"; also R.O.A.M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Vergil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 100–104.

Conclusion

In the end, any empathy with Aeneas that we may feel here must be limited: dramatic irony remains the major effect of this scene, as I emphasized earlier. I have shown that Virgil's poetic technique does offer us a way of getting closer to Aeneas' experience of Venus than might otherwise have been the case, given the distance created by the ironies of the episode. The most important of the devices by which Virgil enables us to do this is his use of allusion to earlier works of literature and visual art. By frequently evoking verbal and visual images not only of Venus and Aphrodite but also of various other figures, the poet allows the reader to experience something of the bombardment by images and signals that Aeneas undergoes during the scene. This is a clever and resourceful exploitation of the possibilities of allusion. It is also unusual, perhaps experimental: I know of no directly comparable use of allusion in Virgil.

I have focused here mainly on the consequences of this technique for the reader's response to Aeneas. But it will be worthwhile briefly to consider in conclusion how it affects our response to Virgil's Venus. For we are given the opportunity to see the goddess through her son's eyes:

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[77] It is true that in her guise as Venus *Armata*, the goddess Venus has something in common with Athena. But overall the differences between the goddesses are much more striking than anything they have in common: cf. *Hymn. Hom.* 5.8–15.

what do we make of her? Certainly she must seem to us a slippery figure. By generating a series of misleading images for the reader akin to those Aeneas complains about at 1.407–408, allusion gives us some idea of Venus' talent for disguise. This helps to prepare us for the goddess' use of disguise and deception later in the epic.[78] It may also encourage us to see Venus as an actress of sorts, who is able to play a range of parts: this would consort well with the idea of Carthage as a theatre for tragedy in the *Aeneid*.[79] Venus' employment of these talents in a meeting with her own son may, however, strike us as insensitive, even cruel: Aeneas cries, *crudelis tu quoque* ("you too are cruel"; 1.407). This will not be the only time the goddess displays unattractive qualities in the poem.[80] Perhaps more than anything, however, Virgil's technique allows Venus to retain something of her mystery for the reader. By enabling us to see something of the Venus seen by Aeneas, the poet reminds us quite how enigmatic and difficult to interpret this goddess can be for mortals—even for her own son.

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[78] In book 1 alone, she will disguise the presence of Aeneas and Achates in Carthage with a mist cloud (Verg., *Aen.* 1.411–414, 439–440, 579–587), then arrange for Cupid to disguise himself as Iulus (Verg., *Aen.* 1.657–660, 683–688). Venus is quite prepared to use *dolus* ('deception') to gain her ends: see, e.g., Verg., *Aen.* 1.673, 682, 684.

[79] The bibliography on this is extensive: see above all Harrison, "Why Did Venus"; also Mark Pobjoy, "Dido on the Tragic Stage: An Invitation to the Theatre of Carthage," in *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth*, ed. Michael Burden (London, 1998), pp. 41–64. Harrison argued that Venus' boots at 1.337 cast her as the speaker of a tragic prologue. That is possible; but might they not also encourage us to recognize her skill as an actress in this scene? (In his dramatization of Virgil's episode, Marlowe has Venus say, shortly before she encounters Aeneas, "Now is the time for me to play my part": *Dido, Queen of Carthage* 1.1.182.)

[80] On the less appealing aspects of Venus' character in the *Aeneid*, see, e.g., Lyne, *Further voices*, pp. 18–27, 35, 70–71, and 197–198.

CHAPTER FIVE

APHRODITE *ENOPLION*[*]

Stephanie L. Budin

One of the most ambiguous, confusing, one might even say daunting, aspects of the persona of Aphrodite is her relationship to the realms of warfare. On the one hand, we have Homer's famous description of Aphrodite's foray into battle in book 5 of the *Iliad*, where she is soundly thrashed by a far more martial Diomedes, and later "comforted" by her father Zeus:

> ὃ δὲ Κύπριν ἐπῴχετο νηλέϊ χαλκῷ,
> γιγνώσκων ὅ τ’ ἄναλκις ἔην θεός, οὐδὲ θεάων
> τάων αἵ τ’ ἀνδρῶν πόλεμον κάτα κοιρανέουσιν
> οὔτ’ ἄρ’ Ἀθηναίη οὔτε πτολίπορθος Ἐνυώ.
> . . .
> “εἶκε Διὸς θύγατερ πολέμου καὶ δηϊοτῆτος:
> ἦ οὐχ ἅλις ὅττι γυναῖκας ἀνάλκιδας ἠπεροπεύεις;
> εἰ δὲ σύ γ’ ἐς πόλεμον πωλήσεαι, ἦ τέ σ’ ὀΐω
> ῥιγήσειν πόλεμόν γε καὶ εἴ χ’ ἑτέρωθι πύθηαι.”
> . . .
> ὣς φάτο, μείδησεν δὲ πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε,
> καί ῥα καλεσσάμενος προσέφη χρυσῆν Ἀφροδίτην·
> “οὔ τοι τέκνον ἐμὸν δέδοται πολεμήϊα ἔργα,
> ἀλλὰ σύ γ’ ἱμερόεντα μετέρχεο ἔργα γάμοιο,
> ταῦτα δ’ Ἄρηϊ θοῷ καὶ Ἀθήνῃ πάντα μελήσει.”
> . . .
> And he [Diomedes] swung the pitiless bronze at Kypris,
> knowing her to be a god without warcraft, not of those who,
> goddesses, range in order of the ranks of men in the fighting,
> not Athena nor Enyo, sacker of cities.
> . . .

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[*] My thanks to Amy Smith and Sadie Pickup for organizing the conference at which I presented these ideas, to Jenny Wallensten for permission to quote from her paper, to Jean MacIntosh Turfa and Aislinn Melchior for feedback and commentary, and to Thomas Kiely and Christine Kondoleon for help with photo rights. As ever, many thanks go to Paul C. Butler, my husband, for artwork.

> “Give way, daughter of Zeus, from the fighting and the terror. It is
> not then enough that you lead astray women without warcraft?
> Yet, if still you must haunt the fighting, I think that now you
> will shiver even when you hear some other talk of battles.”
> . . .
> And the father of men and gods smiled and spoke
> to golden Aphrodite, calling her to him,
> “No, my child, not for you are the works of war. Rather
> concern yourself with the lovely works of marriage,
> while all these things here will concern Athena and swift Ares.”[1]

In contrast to these passages, however, are numerous apparent attestations in literature, epigraphy, and art of an Aphrodite armed for battle and / or leading the troops. Thus, Pausanias refers three times to images of Aphrodite *Hoplismenê* (‘Armed’) at Kythera, Sparta, and Corinth. Depictions of such an armed goddess have come to light at the goddess’ shrine at Etruscan Gravisca. Aphrodite bears the epithets *Strateia* (‘Campaigner’) and *Hegemonê* (‘Leader’). She is the wife of the armorer Hephaistos and the lover or wife of the war god Ares, and she also has a certain propensity for starting wars herself. Clearly, our “god without warcraft” is not quite so removed from battle as Homer might have us believe.

The question remains how to interpret and reconcile these apparently contradictory data. Aphrodite certainly was never a war goddess such as Athena or even the far more Homerically competent Hera (*Il.* 21.487–491), but she is not wholly passive either. Do her roles in the military involve active combat or simply inspiration for other fighters? How and when did this martial aspect of Aphrodite’s persona come into being?

Scholars offer a number of opinions on this final question, with the most common suggestion being that Aphrodite’s martial persona dates back to her earliest origins in Near Eastern goddesses of war and sex, such as Mesopotamian Ištar and perhaps Levantine Aštart.[2] Thus claims Johan Flemberg in his 1991 book, *Venus Armata*:

> *Wie die anderen Aphroditekulte dürfte auch dieser auf die vorderasiatische Liebesgöttin, letzten Endes auf die sumerisch-babylonische Inanna / Ištar, zurückgehen und in der mykenischen Zeit nach Griechenland gekommen sein.*[3]

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[1] Hom., *Il.* 5.330–333, 348–351, 426–430. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

[2] On the non-erotic nature of Aštart’s persona, see Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, pp. 107–108.

[3] Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, p. 114. See likewise Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 153.

> Like the other Aphrodite cults so too this one must go back to the Near Eastern Love Goddess, ultimately to the Sumerian-Babylonian Inanna-Ištar, and it arrived in Greece during the Myceanean Period.

Later, according to Flemberg, this military aspect was stripped from Aphrodite, who henceforth was simply a goddess of love and fertility in Greek religion.[4]

A contrary suggestion has recently been offered by Gabriella Pironti, in her 2007 book, *Entre ciel et guerre*, in which she claims that Aphrodite, as the goddess of passion and *mixis*, pertains equally to the domains of sexuality and violence:

> *Aphrodite a sans doute un rôle à jouer à côté des prétendants qui se disputent, au moyen d'une épreuve de force physique, le domptage de la jeune fille. On verra se nouer, sous les yeux d'Aphrodite, des liens étroits entre élan érotique et impulsion aggressive, entre virilité sexuelle et virilité guerrière.*[5]
>
> Without a doubt Aphrodite has a role to play by the suitors who vie for the conquest of young girls through physical force. We shall see, under the auspices of Aphrodite, the merging of the realms of eroticism and aggression, the realms of sexual virility and martial virility.

Likewise, *[O]n peut affirmer qu'Aphrodite préside aux forces de l'union, pourvue que l'on se rappelle que l'union, la mixis, n'est pas toujours pacifique, mais que, au contraire, elle contient la possibilité du conflit, de la violence et même de la guerre* ("One might affirm that Aphrodite presides over the forces of union, so long as we remember that 'union,' *mixis*, is not always peaceful, but, on the contrary, contains the possibility for conflict, violence, and even war").[6] As such, Aphrodite's military role(s) need not be Eastern in origin or inspiration, since it is within the goddess' Greek persona that her links with militarism lie.

The main problem with understanding the origins and boundaries, and even existence, of Aphrodite's martial persona has been the tendency to view all of the evidence on a broad, level, diachronic playing field. Different types of data from different periods are combined together to form an overarching portrait of Aphrodite the warrior, without sufficient attention to matters of chronology or even geography. This blurs important distinctions in her representation and also makes it impossible to tease out underlying causes across the historical canvas. Furthermore, as I shall show, the study of the Greek Aphrodite *Hoplismenê* ('Armed') must be separated from the study of the Roman Venus *Victrix* ('Victorious'), since otherwise data from one contaminates data from the other.[7]

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[4] Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, p. 114.

[5] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, p. 106.

[6] Gabriella Pironti, "Aphrodite dans le domaine d'Arès," *Kernos* 18 (2005), 183. See also Pironti's contribution to this volume, chapter 6.

The evidence will show that Aphrodite's martial persona might be divided into three distinct periods. For Archaic and Classical Greece, it was only in Sparta that Aphrodite existed as a warrior goddess, although it is possible that links with Sparta came to influence the goddess' cult on Kythera. In the Hellenistic age, influence from both East and West appears to have increased Aphrodite's role in matters of government, and the militia appear to have increased, although many of these data are still highly ambiguous. Finally, there was the cult of the Roman Venus *Victrix*, who existed independently of the Greek manifestation, but whose cult influenced later scholars to see martial elements in her Greek forebear.

The Evidence

What follows is a summary of the most common sources proffered as evidence for Aphrodite's martial persona. They are subdivided into two broad categories—Greek and Roman—based partially on chronology but even more so on language and *apparent* cultural affiliation. Within the Greek category, I present the data geographically, moving from east to west, south to north, beginning with Aphrodite's homeland of Cyprus. This schema does have the disadvantage of lumping together chronologically disparate materials. However, as will become evident, to divide up the data both geographically and chronologically would create a very awkward splintering effect. Chronological considerations will thus be analyzed afterwards, including an eventual relocation of some data from the Greek to the Roman category.

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[7] I am using this name somewhat generally to refer to the martial Venus, which begins to appear under Sulla, even before the epithet *Victrix* is applied.

Cyprus[8]

According to the sixth-century AD author Hesykhios, the Cypriots had an Aphrodite with a spear: ἐγχείος· Ἀφροδίτη. Κύπριοι ("Spear-bearing - Aphrodite. Cypriots").[9] In art, from Cypriot Salamis we have a fourth-century BC terracotta of a female holding a helmet in one hand while a shield leans against her opposite leg (figure 5.1).[10] Jacqueline Karageorghis identifies this image as Aphrodite, although she is quick to note that "[w]e can clearly see that by the fourth century the Cypriots had adopted the Greek iconography for their goddess."[11] This is to say, such a portrayal of Aphrodite armed was not typical of her iconography on Cyprus at any previous point in the goddess' history on that island, a history which extends back to circa 1450.[12]

Asia Minor

In the Hellenistic period (323–31), Aphrodite acquired the epithet *Strateia* in western Asia Minor. An inscription from Mylasa, dated by Fritz Graf to the Hellenistic period generally, refers to "Patrokles Demetriou of Phanios, Priest of Aphrodite *Strateia*."[13] A calendar of offerings from Erythrai, dated to the second quarter of the second century, refers three times to offerings to Aphrodite *Strateia*, each time accompanied by Aretê and Herakles.[14] The pairing specifically with Herakles, the Greek *interpretatio* of Phoenician Melqart, may indicate that an eastern, Astartean version of Aphrodite is understood. Finally, there are two Greek inscriptions mentioning Aphrodite *Strateia* from Iasos, both apparently dating from the Roman period.[15] One simply says, Ἀφροδείτης Στρατήας ("of Aphrodite *Strateia*"), the other, [Ἀ]φρο[δίτη]ς [Σ]τρα[τή]ας τράπεζα

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[8] On the evidence for a militaristic Cypriot Aphrodite, see Nancy Serwint, "Aphrodite and Her Near Eastern Sisters: Spheres of Influence," in *Engendering Aphrodite*, ed. Bolger and Serwint, pp. 341–343.

[9] Hsch. s.v. ἐγχείος.

[10] All dates in this article are BC, unless otherwise noted.

[11] Karageorghis, *Kypris*, pp. 221–222.

[12] On this topic see the article by Anja Ulbrich in this volume, chapter 9.

[13] *CIG* 2693 f. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, p. 197.

[14] Helmut Engelmann and Reinhold Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai* 2 (Bonn, 1973), no. 207.

[15] Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, p. 177.

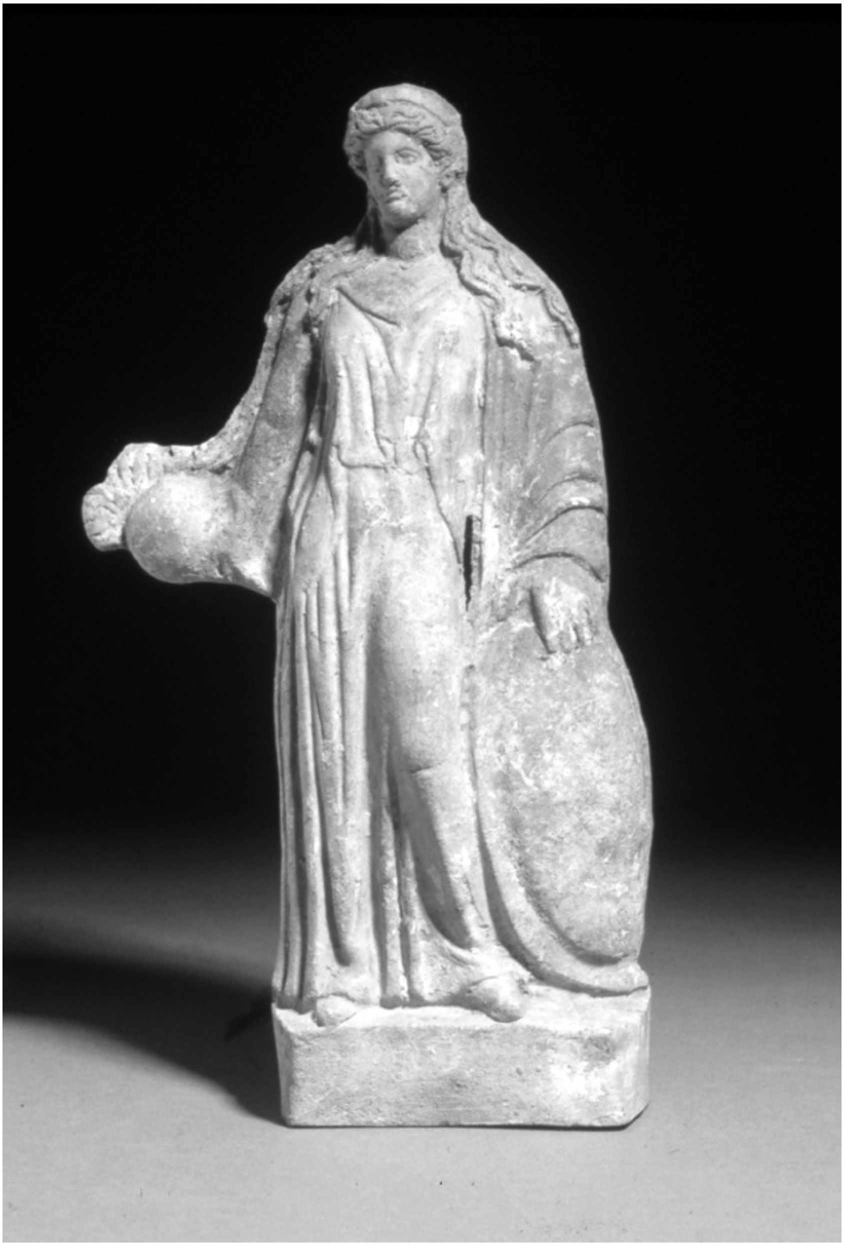

Figure 5.1. Terracotta from Salamis, Cyprus, fourth century BC. London, British Museum, A 423. Photograph by Thomas Kiely, ©The Trustees of the British Museum.

[ξε]νιϰή (“Foreign table of Aphrodite *Strateia*”).[16] The reference to ξενιϰή (‘foreign’) in the second inscription once again may suggest that an eastern manifestation of Aphrodite is understood.

Paros and Epiros

In two ancient Greek poleis, *stratêgoi* (‘military generals’) are known to have offered dedications to Aphrodite. *IG* 12^2 220 records a third-century decree by Parian generals to Aphrodite, Zeus Aphrodisios, Hermes, Artemis, and Eukleia.[17] *IG* 9^2 383 is a broken second-century decree by the *stratêgoi* of Epiros to Aphrodite, probably amongst other deities now lost.

Kythera

According to Hesiod, it was on Kythera that the newly born Aphrodite first passed by land on her way to Cyprus, and according to Pausanias this was the oldest sanctuary of Aphrodite in Greece, having been founded, according to Herodotos, by the same Phoenicians who founded her sanctuary at Paphos.[18] On telling us of the great antiquity of the Kytherean sanctuary, Pausanias also informs us that here, αὐτὴ δὲ ἡ ϑεὸς ξόανον ὡπλισμένον (“the goddess herself is an armed *xoanon*”).

Sparta

In Sparta, Pausanias recalls that ὄπισϑεν δὲ τῆς Χαλϰιοίϰου ναὸς ἐστιν Ἀφϱοδίτης Ἀϱείας· τὰ δὲ ξόανα ἀϱχαῖα εἴπεϱ τι ἄλλο ἐν Ἕλλησιν (“Behind the Bronze House [of Athena] is a temple of Aphrodite *Areia*; the *xoana* are as old as any in Greece”).[19] There is independent archaeological evidence for the cult of this Ares-Aphrodite. Excavations on the Spartan akropolis, the site of both the Bronze House and the Temple of Aphrodite *Areia*, brought to light a votive iron blade inscribed with Λυκείος Αρε[ϝ]ια[ι].[20] Lukeios, 'Wolfy' in the nominative, is the dedicator; Arewiai, in the feminine dative, is the recipient.

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[16] Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli, “Supplemento Epigraphico di Iasos,” *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene* 45–46 (1967–1968), 469, nos. 30–31.

[17] Pirenne-Delforge, *L’Aphrodite grecque*, p. 406.

[18] Hes., *Theog.* 192–205; Paus. 3.23.1; Hdt. 1.105.

[19] Paus. 3.17.5.

There is a second temple of an armed Aphrodite in Sparta. As Pausanias recounts, ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτῷ ναὸς ἀρχαῖος καὶ Ἀφροδίτης ξόανον ὡπλισμένης ("[There] is an ancient temple and a *xoanon* of Aphrodite Armed").[21] There is additional evidence for this Aphrodite *Hoplismenê*. A single statue, dating from the fourth to third centuries, shows a female in Doric *peplos* wearing a helmet and with her left arm raised as if to hurl a spear (figure 5.2). Her right arm is curved before her abdomen, and her right foot is curved upwards as if striding. In the absence of the aegis that typically identifies Athena, this may be a portrayal of an armed Aphrodite.[22]

Leonidas of Tarentum, writing in the third century, recorded,

> εἶπε ποκ' Εὐρώτας ποτὶ τὰν Κὺπριν· "Ἢ λάβε τεύχη,
> ἢ 'ξιθι τᾶς Σπάρτας· ἁ πόλις ὁπλομανεῖ."
> ἁ δ' ἁπαλὸν γελάσασα, "Καὶ ἔσσομαι αἰὲν ἀτευχής,"
> εἶπε, "καὶ οἰκήσω τὰν Λακεδαιμονίαν."
> χἀμῖν Κύπρις ἄνοπλος· ἀναιδέες οἵδε λέγουσιν
> ἵστορες, ὡς ἁμῖν χὰ θεὸς ὁπλοφορεῖ.
>
> Eurotas once said to Kypris, "Either take up arms,
> or quit Sparta, the polis mad for arms."
> She, laughing, replied, "I shall be ever unarmed."
> She said "and I shall dwell in Lakedaimonia."
> Our Kypris is unarmed. Shameful are those tale-tellers who say
> that our goddess bears arms![23]

But from Antipater of Sidon in the first century, we hear,

> Καὶ Κύπρις Σπάρτας· οὐκ ἄστεσιν οἷά τ' ἐν ἄλλοις
> ἵδρυται, μαλακὰς ἑσσαμένα στολίδας·
> ἀλλὰ κατὰ κρατὸς μὲν ἔχει κόρυν ἀντὶ καλύπτρας,
> ἀντὶ δὲ χρυσείων ἀκρεμόνων κάμακα.
> οὐ γὰρ χρὴ τευχέων εἶναι δίχα τὰν παράκοιτιν
> Θρᾳκὸς Ἐνυαλίου καὶ Λακεδαιμονίαν.

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[20] A.M. Woodward, "Sparta: Votive Inscriptions from the Acropolis," *BSA* 30 (1928–1930), 252–253; *SEG* 11 (1954) 671.

[21] Paus. 3.15.10.

[22] Isabella Solima, "Era, Artemide e Afrodite in Magna Grecia. Dee armate o dee belliche?" *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 110 (1998), 381–417. On p. 404, Solima includes a second possible portrayal of Aphrodite, dating to the sixth century, but this one merely holds apples and cannot be recognized as martial.

[23] *Anth. Gr.* 9.320.

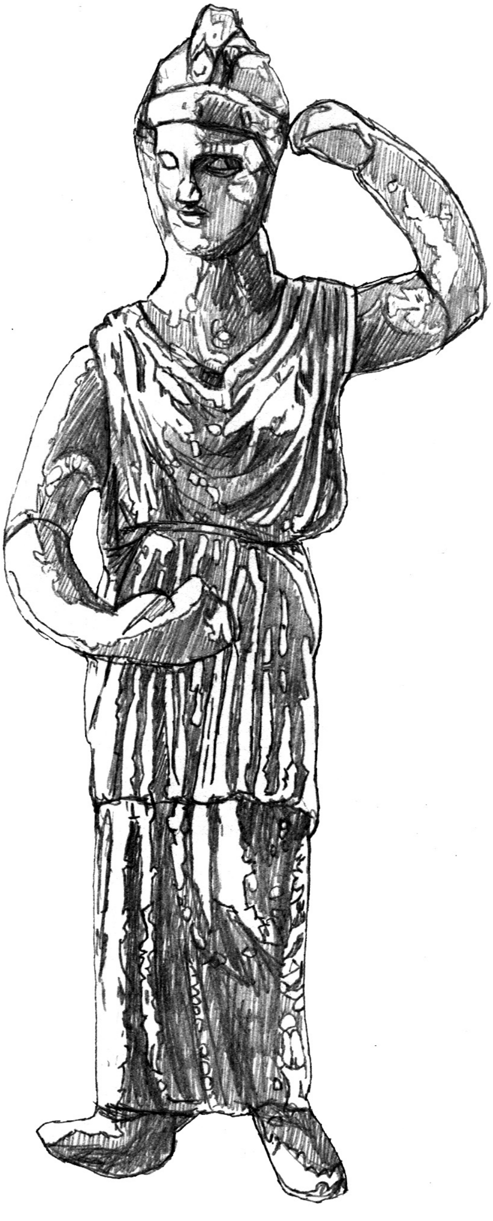

Figure 5.2. Drawing of bronze figurine excavated at Sparta, fourth–third centuries BC. Drawing by Paul C. Butler, after Solima, "Era, Artemide e Afrodite," fig. 3, used with kind permission.

Even Kypris is Spartan. She is not dressed as in other towns
in soft garments;
But in full-force she has a helmet instead of a veil,
instead of golden branches a spear-shaft.
For it is not proper for her to be without arms, the consort
of Thracian Enyalios and a Lakedaimonian.[24]

Quintilian, in his *Institutio Oratoria* of the first century AD, posed the useful and fascinating question: *Cur armata apud Lacedaemonios Venus?* ("Why is Venus armed amongst the Lakedaimonians?")[25] Plutarch apparently came up with the answer:

> Ἀφροδίτην σέβουσι τὴν ἐνόπλιον· καὶ πάντας δὲ τοὺς θεοὺς θήλεις καὶ ἄρρενας λόγχας ἔχοντας ποιοῦνται, ὡς ἁπάντων τὴν πολεμικὴν ἀρετὴν ἐχοντων.
>
> They [the Lakedaimonians] worship Aphrodite Armed, and the statues of all the gods, both male and female, they make with spear in hand to show that all the gods have excellence in warfare.[26]

Nonnos, in his fifth-century *Dionysiaka*, was slightly more paranoid, warning Ares specifically:

> μὴ Σπάρτης ἐπίβηθι, μαχήμονες ἧχι πολῖται χάλκεον εἶδος ἔχουσι κορυσσομένης Ἀφροδίτης, μή σε δόρυ κρατέουσα τεῷ πλήξειε σιδήρῳ.
>
> Don't approach Sparta, where the war-like citizens have a bronze statue of armed Aphrodite, lest she, that spear-wielding one, whack you with your own iron![27]

Finally, Julianus of Egypt tells us in his "To the Armed (*Enoplon*) Aphrodite in Sparta" (sixth century AD):

αἰεὶ μὲν Κυθέρια φέρειν δεδάηκε φαρέτρην,
    τόξα τε καὶ δολιχῆς ἔργον ἑκηβολίης·
αἰδομένη δ'ἄρα θεσμὰ μενεπτολέμοιο Λυκούργου
    φίλτρα φέρει Σπάρτῃ τεύχεσιν ἀγχεμάχοις.
ὑμεῖς δ' ἐν θαλάμοισι, Λακωνίδες, ὅπλα Κυθήρης
    ἁζόμεναι, παῖδας τίκτετε θαρσαλέους.

Always Kythereia has learned to carry a quiver
and bow, and the work of the crafty archer.
Revering the laws of steadfast Lykourgos

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[24] *Anth. Gr.* 16.176.
[25] Quin., *Inst.* 2.4.26.
[26] Plut., *Apophthegmata Laconica* 239A.
[27] Nonnus, *Dion.* 35.175–177.

> she brings charms to Sparta for those armed for close combat.
> But you in the chambers, Spartan girls, revere the arms of Kythereia,
> give birth to courageous children.[28]

The Aphrodite *Enoplios* mentioned by Plutarch (or Julianus' *Enoplos*) is also attested epigraphically in the Roman period. When, in the third century AD, the lifelong priestess Ponponia Kallistoneikê set up a dedication to Artemis *Ortheia* in Lakonia, one of Artemis' "fellow deities" was Aphrodite *Enoplios*.[29]

Argos

In Argos, according to Pausanias, the *xoanon* of Aphrodite bore the epithet *Nikephoros* ('Victory bearer') and was dedicated by Hypermnestra, the daughter of the hero Danaos, when she was acquitted of charges of defying her father by not murdering her husband.[30] On leaving Argos and heading to Manteneia, one, especially if one were Pausanias, passes the following: ἱερὸν διπλοῦν πεποίηται, καὶ πρὸς ἡλίου δύνοντος ἔσοδον καὶ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς ἑτέραν ἔχον. κατὰ μὲν δὴ τοῦτο Ἀφροδίτης κεῖται ξόανον, πρὸς δὲ ἡλίου δυσμὰς Ἄρεως ("a double sanctuary, with an entrance to the west and another to the east. In the one is a *xoanon* of Aphrodite, while the one to the west has [a *xoanon*] of Ares").[31]

Corinth

As with Kythera and Sparta, so too with Corinth: with regard to Aphrodite on the akropolis, Pausanias tells us that ἀγάλματα δὲ αὐτή τε ὡπλισμένη ("this statue is armed").[32] Such a portrayal may be reflected on the Late Archaic coinage from that city, which depicts a helmeted female head on the reverse of some of its coins around the year 500. As Peter Blomberg has argued, this female should be identified as a helmeted Aphrodite rather than Athena.[33]

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[28] *Anth. Gr.* 16.173.

[29] *IG* 5 1; *CIG* 1444.

[30] Paus. 2.19.6.

[31] Paus. 2.25.1.

[32] Paus. 2.5.1.

[33] Peter E. Blomberg, *On Corinthian Iconography: The Bridled Winged Horse and the Helmeted Female Head in the Sixth Century* BC (Uppsala, 1996), pp. 82–95.

Additional evidence comes from the realm of literature. According to both Plutarch and Athenaios, when the Persians were invading Greece at the dawn of the fifth century, the women of Corinth ran to the Temple of Aphrodite to pray for a Greek victory. Their prayers having been effective, an image of the women was set up in the sanctuary, and Simonides wrote the following epigram:

> αἵδ᾽ ὑπὲρ Ἑλλάνων τε καὶ ἰθυμάχων πολιητᾶν
>   ἐστάθεν εὐξάμεναι Κύπριδι δαιμονίᾳ.
> οὐ γὰρ τοξοφόροισιν ἐμήδετο δῖ᾽ Ἀφροδίτα
>   Μήδοις· Ἑλλάνων ἁκρόπολιν προδόμεν.
>
> These ones, for the sake of the Greeks and straight-fighting citizens,
>   stood having prayed to Kypris divine;
> For holy Aphrodite was not intending to betray
>   a Greek acropolis to bow-toting Medes.[34]

In times of war, then, the women of Corinth prayed to Aphrodite for martial assistance. This seems to have confused the later commentators. Theopompos was so perplexed by the women's choice of prayer recipient that he claimed that what the women specifically requested was for Aphrodite to instill a desire into their husbands to fight.[35] Alternatively, Khamaileon of Heraklea Pontika assumed it must have been the city prostitutes who prayed; they invoked Aphrodite because they felt particularly close to the goddess of sex.[36]

Epidauros

A marble Roman statue (figure 5.3), which was discovered at Epidauros in the nineteenth century AD, is generally accepted as being a later copy of a Greek, bronze original, probably wrought by the younger Polykleitos in circa 380.[37] The appearance of the nude breast, the baldric, and what was probably a sword in the hand has led to the suggestion that this was a statue of Armed Aphrodite.[38]

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[34] This is the version as presented in Plutarch. There are two alternate versions, each with subtle differences. For a full study of these variations both in the text of the poem and in their aetiologies, see Stephanie L. Budin, "Simonides' Corinthian Epigram," *Classical Philology* 103 (2008), 335–353.

[35] *FGrH* 115 F 285b.

[36] Ath. 13.573c.

[37] Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, p. 49.

[38] Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, pp. 46–56.

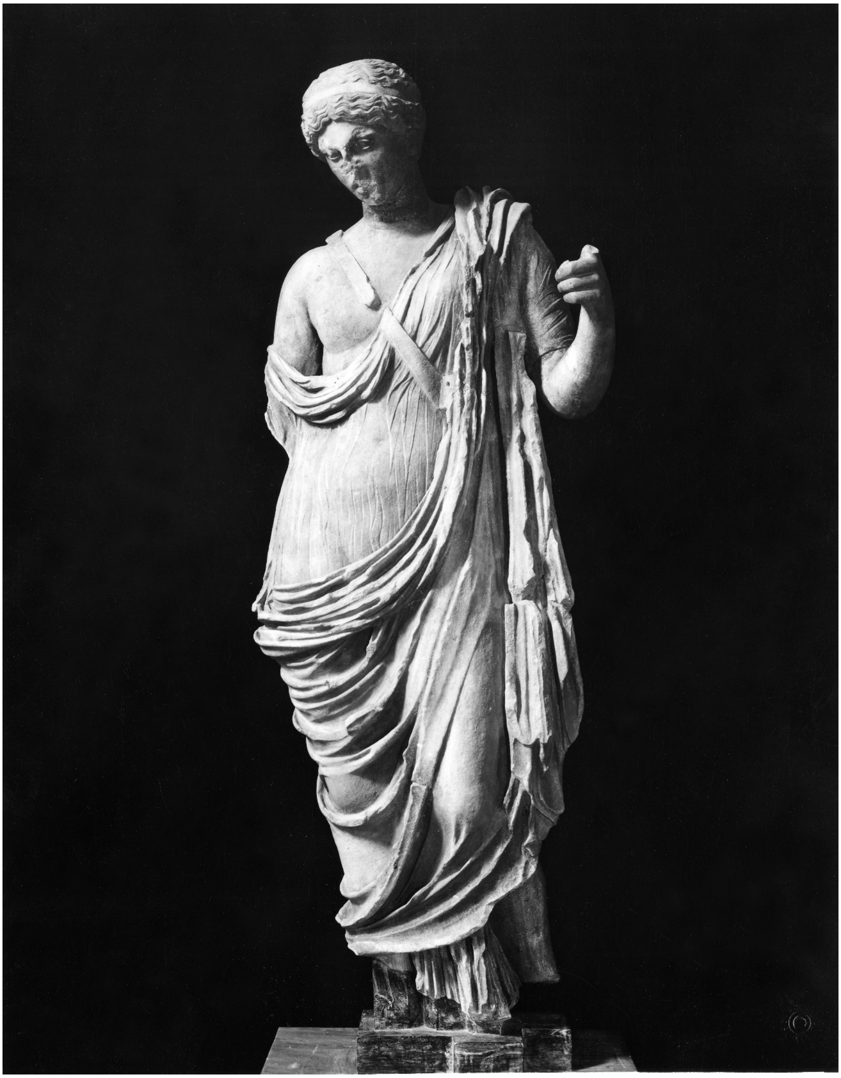

Figure 5.3. Marble statue from Epidauros, Roman.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum,
NM 262. Photo: Alinari / Art Resource, New York.

Eretria (and Syria)

The third century produced a pair of very similar gemstones depicting what may be an armed Aphrodite.[39] One (figure 5.4), from a grave in Eretria, Greece, dating to the end of the third century, is the so-called Gelon Gem, named after the artist whose name is inscribed on the surface. Here we see a somewhat crouched nude female, draped from the thighs down, holding a shield and a spear. The second gem, coming from Amrit in Syria, shows almost the same figure, although she is not quite so crouched and does not have the same coiffure. The similarities between the two images suggest that they are based on a common source, possibly a statue. However, this particular iconography is limited to these two gems exclusively in the extant record, and they are iconographically distinct from the images of Venus *Victrix* that will appear two hundred years later under Augustus (27 BC–AD 14).[40] Their prototype remains unknown.

Attika

Athens produced two known images of a martial Aphrodite. One, the black-figure Lydos Dinos from the Athenian Akropolis, dating to the mid-sixth century, shows Aphrodite, named by inscription, engaged in combat with the giant Mimos (figure 5.5). A black-figure amphora, now in the British Museum, shows Aphrodite and Poseidon together in a chariot drawn by four horses (figure 6.1). Aphrodite holds the reins and, quite unusually, wears an aegis, although not with the Gorgon face typically associated with Athena. The aegis, and possibly the role as charioteer, give a martial feeling to this depiction.

In both the Athenian Agora and at the border fortress at Rhamnous, Aphrodite had the epithet *Hegemonê* ('Leader').[41] On an altar not far from the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Ourania*, the city *boulê* ('council') in the late third century offered a dedication to "Aphrodite *Hegemonê* of the

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[39] Gisela Richter, *Engraved Gems of the Greeks and the Etruscans* (London, 1968–1971), nos. 552 and 555.

[40] As discussed below, and by Rachel Kousser in this volume, chapter 15.

[41] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 202–205.

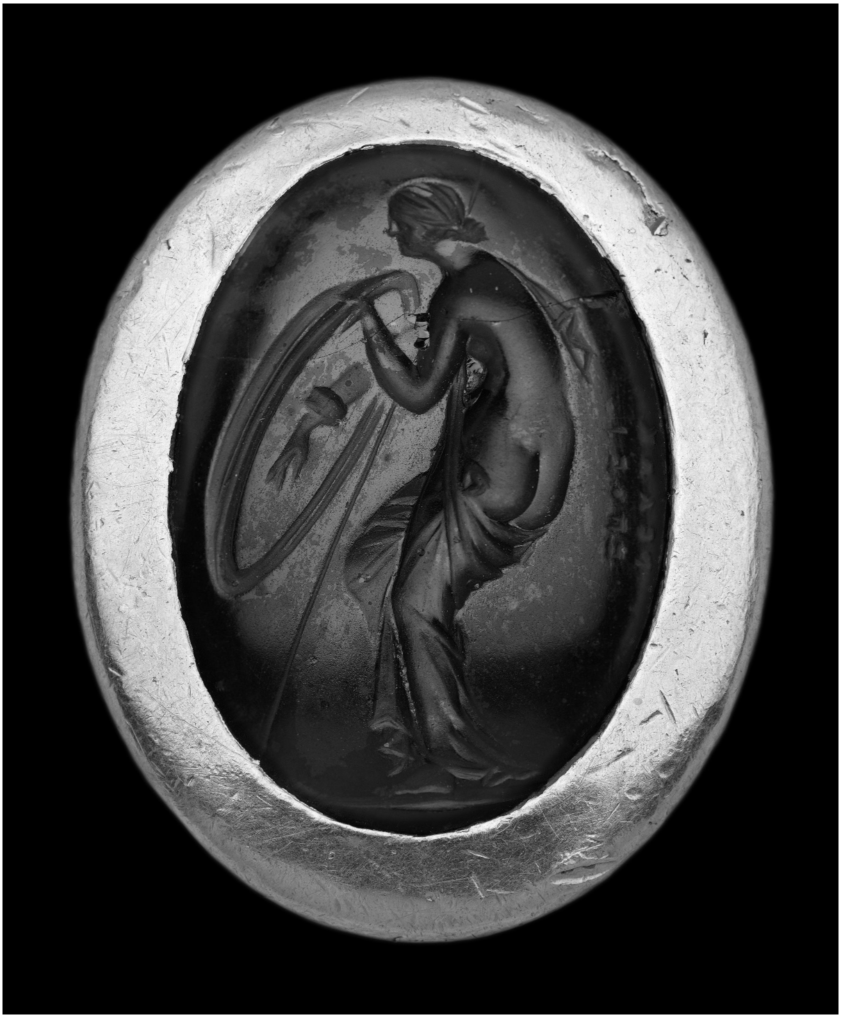

Figure 5.4. Gelon Gem, Hellenistic (ca. 200 BC). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 21.1213. Photograph ©2009 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

demos (populace) and to the Charites."[42] This epithet was confirmed by Hesykhios in the sixth century AD, who claimed that it applied both to Aphrodite and to Artemis.[43]

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[42] *IG* 2^2 2798.

[43] Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 39.

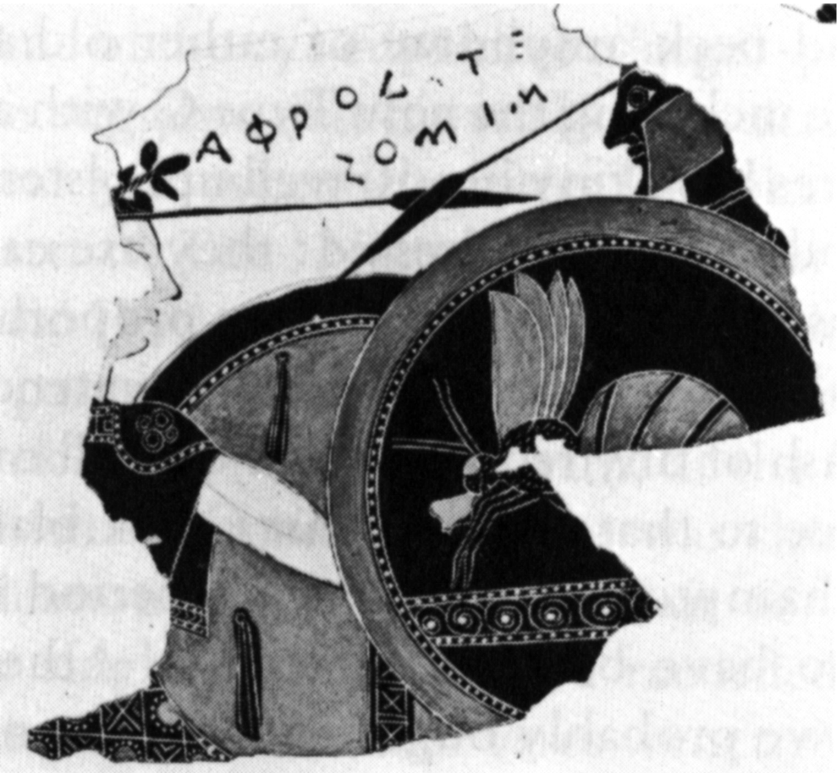

Figure 5.5. Attic black-figure dinos by Lydos, mid-sixth century BC. Drawing by Paul C. Butler, used with kind permission.

A small, late third-century sanctuary found near the sanctuary of Nemesis in Rhamnous brought to light an inscribed dedication to one Nikomakhos, son of Aineias. In honoring this former *stratêgos*, his garrison offered sacrifices to Themis, Nemesis, and Aphrodite *Hegemonê*.[44]

Naxos

There is an Archaic sanctuary and temple in Sicilian Naxos that Paola Pelagatti and Rebecca Schindler, based on the testimonies of Appian and Zenobius, attribute to Aphrodite.[45] There is abundant votive material, including seventh-century Protocorinthian wares; sixth-century Ionic,

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Rebecca Schindler, "The Archaeology of Aphrodite in the Greek West: Ca. 650–

Lakonic, and Etruscan pottery; terracotta female figurines; and, most importantly here, weapons, including daggers and spear points (wooden shafts would hardly survive, if they were also included).[46] The presence of such weaponry at a sanctuary supposedly associated with Aphrodite led Schindler to conclude that "it is certain that this was a sanctuary of Aphrodite with strong military associations."[47] Alternatively, Margherita Guarducci has suggested that the sanctuary was actually dedicated to a joint cult of Aphrodite and Ares, perhaps similar to the one in Argos.[48]

Lokris / Manella

From the Manella sanctuary of Persephone at Lokris comes a broken, unidentified terracotta figure, probably dating from the sixth century, which Schindler identifies as "Armed Aphrodite."[49] This is the upper body of a female wearing a heavy "bibbed" garment typical of Lakonian manufacture.[50] Her right arm is raised and has a hole where a spear shaft, now missing, was probably held. The left arm was probably extended out directly from the body. As the cult of Aphrodite was quite prominent in Lokris, it is possible that an image of this goddess could have been dedicated to Persephone.

Gravisca

Greek Aphrodite—as well as, later, her Etruscan counterpart Turan—was the most important deity venerated at the sanctuary at Gravisca, where some 84.7 percent of the votives unearthed were associated with her

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480 BC" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1998), p. 208; Paola Pelagatti, "Naxos—Relazione Preliminare delle Campagne di Scavo 1961–1964," *Bollettino d'Arte* 49 (1964), 154.

[46] Pelagatti "Naxos," p. 155.

[47] Schindler, *Archaeology*, p. 208.

[48] Margherita Guarducci, "Una Nuova Dea a Naxos in Sicilia e gli antichi legami fra la Naxos Siceliota e l'Omonima isola della Cicladi," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Antiquité* 97 (1985), 17–23.

[49] Schindler, *Archaeology*, p. 174.

[50] Ibid.; Achille Adriani et al., *Himera* 1: *Campagne di Scavo 1963–1965* (Rome, 1970), pp. 484–485.

sacello (‘shrine’).[51] The identity of the goddess or goddesses venerated is confirmed by inscribed votives: one Ionic cup dating from the mid-sixth century is dedicated to ᾿Ηφϱοδίτηι,[52] while a later votive in Lakonic script was given *mi Turuns* (‘to Turan’).[53]

From building gamma came two bronze figurines, both dating to circa 570 (figures 5.6–7). One is a mostly intact female warrior, wearing a helmet, and holding her damaged right arm up as if to hold a spear. Her left arm is bent and held before the body. The spear-throwing pose of the first figurine is supported by the second, which is preserved from head to waist and once again shows a helmeted woman with streaming tendrils of hair, holding up her right arm as if to throw a spear.[54] With regard to the helmet, arm positioning, and hairstyle, these two images are reminiscent of the terracotta from the Manella sanctuary mentioned previously.

Analysis

Archaic and Classical (and Hellenistic, and Roman . . .)

In spite of the apparent plethora of data listed above, careful consideration indicates that there is actually remarkably little evidence for a martial, much less personally armed, Aphrodite before the Hellenistic period. The earliest and most abundant data come from Sparta, where the Late Archaic epigraphy supports Pausanias’ claim that Aphrodite was worshipped as a feminine Ares—*Areia*. However, the manifestation of this martial persona of the goddess is unknown: we have no way of knowing if *Areia* herself was armed, was thought to go into combat, or was simply a companion to her more martial consort. Joint cults of Aphrodite and Ares in other areas of Greece and Crete, as in Argos and Sta Lenikà / Olous, have not been taken as evidence of a specifically martial Aphrodite, although none of these sites have produced iconography that would indicate a kind of Aphrodite *Hoplismenê* as described by Pausanias.

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[51] Schindler, *Archaeology*, pp. 200–201.

[52] Fabio Colivicchi, “Statuetta di Afrodite armata,” in *Gli Etruschi*, ed. Mario Torelli (Milan, 2000), p. 554, no. 42.

[53] Sibyl Haynes, *Etruscan Civilization: A Cultural History* (Los Angeles, 2000), p. 172.

[54] Colivicchi, “Statuetta,” p. 554, nos. 40 and 41; Haynes, *Etruscan Civilization*, p. 173.

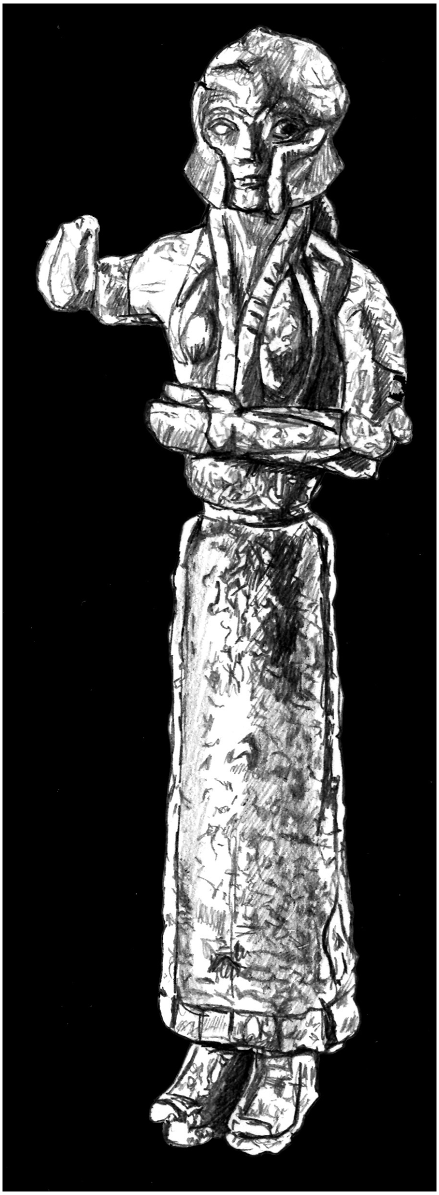

Figure 5.6. Bronze figurine from building gamma at Gravisca. Tarquinia, Museo Archeologico, 75 / 18896. Drawing by Paul C. Butler, used with kind permission.

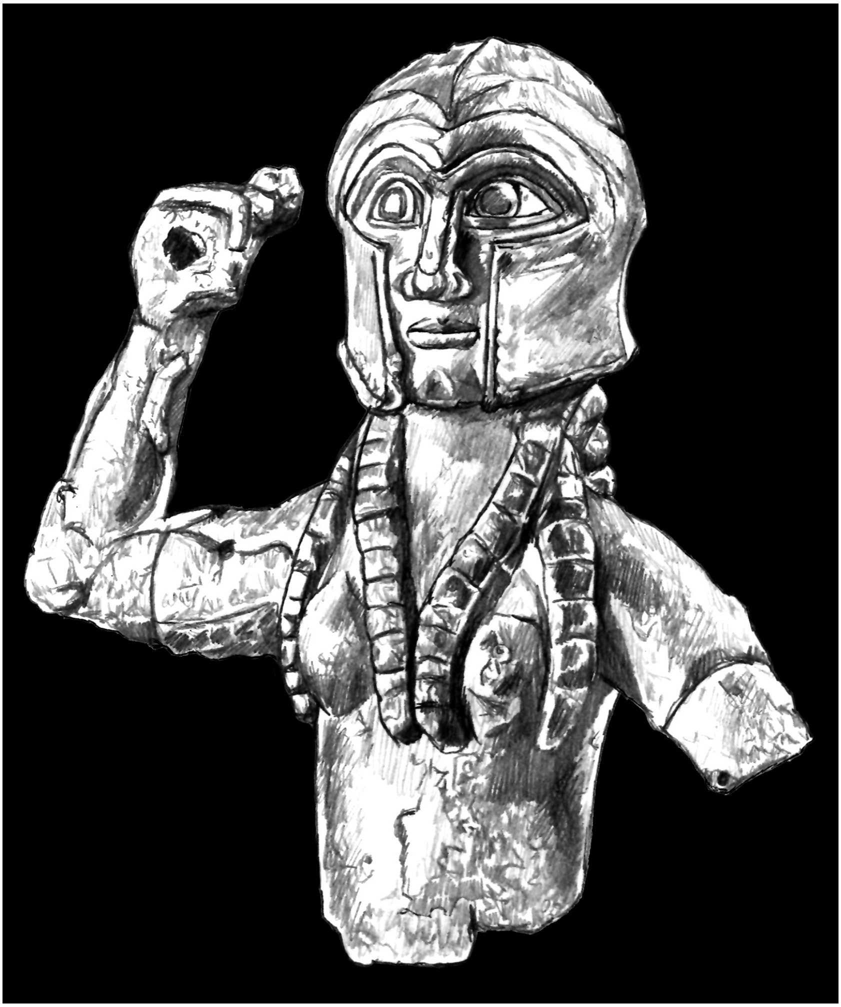

Figure 5.7. Bronze figurine from building gamma at Gravisca. Tarquinia, Museo Archeologico, 72 / 10674. Drawing by Paul C. Butler, used with kind permission.

What may appear to be the oldest iconographic depiction of an armed Aphrodite from Sparta is relatively late and ambiguous in identification. The helmeted female figurine might only be tentatively identified as Aphrodite, or as a goddess at all. The fourth- to third-century dating places this piece more in the Hellenistic age than the Classical, when it coincides better with the literary evidence as presented in the *Greek Anthology*, as noted below.

In spite of these limitations for the earlier periods, the Hellenistic evidence does suggest that there was a well-entrenched presence of an armed, martial Aphrodite by the third century. To borrow a Shakespearean turn of phrase, Leonidas of Tarentum "doth protest too much" when insisting that Spartan Aphrodite is most assuredly not armed. Such a protestation might only result from a preexisting tradition or rumor to the contrary, and thus Leonidas' negation might serve as evidence for a more popular, positive understanding. It is the Hellenistic evidence, then, that appears to indicate that Spartan Aphrodite was armed, and that this aspect of her persona was entrenched earlier. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the few instances that identify Aphrodite as martial in the *Greek Anthology* either refer specifically to Sparta or give no geographic information. It is probable, then, that this aspect of the goddess' persona was exclusive to Sparta, and was recognized as such.

The most explicit evidence for Aphrodite as bearer of arms is her designation as *Enopl(i)on*, once again in Sparta. This epithet or cult title, as it is given by Plutarch, Julianus, and in Ponponia Kallistoneikê's inscription, strongly hints at a personally armed, battleworthy goddess, and it is certainly supported by the poetry of the *Greek Anthology*. However, the earliest extant evidence for this epithet / cult title is Roman. As such, Roman influence from the cult of Venus *Victrix* may have influenced the later cult of the Greek goddess. Most likely, considering the chronology of the evidence, the earlier Spartan proclivity for an armed goddess of sex was combined rather easily with the later Roman cult of *Victrix*.

The relatively copious evidence from Sparta allows for a scant history of Aphrodite's martial identity in that *polis*. The rest of the Greek world offers no such richness of data, either in terms of persona or chronology. For example, the fact that Pausanias refers to Aphrodite's armed statue at Kythera as a *xoanon* does not indicate extreme antiquity. As Alice Donohue has noted in her extensive study of the term *xoanon* in ancient Greece and Rome, for Pausanias specifically, the word refers merely to a wooden statue, not necessarily one that is itself ancient. "The consequence is that the *xoana* of Pausanias cannot simply be assumed to be ancient, whether ancient is conceived in terms of concrete chronology or of theoretical history."[55] The *xoanon* of Aphrodite Armed seen by Pausanias, writing in the second century AD, could even be Roman in date, and he gives no indication that it is any earlier. This stands in sharp contrast to the *xoanon* of Aphrodite *Areia* in Sparta, which Pausanias specifically qualifies as one of the oldest in Greece (although not, as we have seen, actually armed)—one of only three times noted by Donohue and Florence M. Bennett that Pausanias indicates the antiquity of a *xoanon*.[56] The only suggestion that Aphrodite's martial persona on Kythera is pre-Roman comes from Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, who has proposed that the goddess' Kytherean cult may have been profoundly influenced when the island was under Spartan domination in the fourth century.[57] In the end, we have precious little information about the chronology or nature of Aphrodite's martial presence on her Greek island, save a strong suggestion that her warrior identity was, at best, rather late.

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[55] Alice A. Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* (Atlanta, 1988), p. 147.

The black-figure paintings from Athens that form our evidence appear to come from scenes of the Gigantomachy. All the gods get portrayed in militaristic fashion in such scenes. If both of these paintings might be understood as Gigantomachy, then the armed Aphrodite here has more to do with context than with persona.

The Corinthian numismatic evidence is less diagnostic than it may at first appear. Blomberg makes a good argument that the helmeted female is Aphrodite rather than Athena. However, the somewhat ephemeral helmeted iconography appears to be related to Corinth's new alliance with Athens, rather than any martial associations with the sex goddess herself. As Blomberg notes, the helmeted female appears briefly right when Corinth changed its foreign policy, favoring Athens, in the late sixth century. At the same time, Corinth changed its minting techniques, adopting the practices of its new Athenian ally.[58] The Corinthian helmeted female shares a number of iconographic attributes with Aphrodite, such as necklace, fruity jewelry, and accentuated neckline, but adopts the more Athenian helmeted look typically associated with that city's patron deity. In short, if we are to identify the helmeted female on the Late Archaic Corinthian coinage as Aphrodite, and this is likely, then her martial aspect may have had more to do with Corinth's new foreign policies than with any attribute of the goddess herself.[59]

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[56] Ibid., p. 146; Florence M. Bennett, "A Study of the Word ΞΟΑΝΟΝ," *AJA* 21 (1917), 15–16.

[57] Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 454.

[58] Blomberg, *On Corinthian Iconography*, p. 81.

[59] Ibid.

Chronological, rather than political, issues confuse the artistic evidence derived from Pausanias. We must remember that Corinth was destroyed by the Romans in 146 and only refounded by Julius Caesar in 44. Whatever Pausanias saw there is Roman in date, and thus must be considered more in terms of the cult of Venus *Victrix* than Aphrodite *Hoplismenê*.

In the end, all that gives any indication of a possible early martial identity to Aphrodite in Corinth is the prayer of the Corinthian women in the early fifth century as commemorated by Simonides. The women of Corinth may have prayed to Akropoline Aphrodite as a war goddess, or possibly just as a city goddess receptive to women and long associated with the east.

Concerning Cyprus, if Pausanias' evidence from Corinth is late, Hesykhios' reference to *Enkheios* Aphrodite is far later—Byzantine, in fact—and simply cannot be considered apart from the cult of Venus *Victrix*. There is no clear proof that the terracotta from Salamis is (a) Aphrodite, or (b) intending to arm herself. The iconography, as Karageorghis notes, appears to be Greek, where there is no comparable iconographic tradition at this time. Even the so-called Aphrodite of Epidauros is shown with baldric and sword / spear, not with shield and helmet.

The statue from Epidauros has problems in its own right. Its identification as a copy of a fourth-century Greek original is purely stylistic; attempts to identify the goddess as, perhaps, the Aphrodite of Amyklai are mostly groundless. The identification as Aphrodite is based almost exclusively on the bare breast, comparisons with much later Roman examples, and the preconceived notion that there was a martial Aphrodite worshipped in ancient Greece. Alternate hypotheses have also been proposed, such as identification as a maenad, Themis, or Dikê.[60] Personally, I also like the possibility of Nemesis brandishing a sword.

The evidence from Argos contributes little to Aphrodite's martial persona. Aphrodite *Nikephoros* is associated with marriage and law, not battle (not that these are wholly distinct categories).[61] Aphrodite's joint cults with Ares, evident in other parts of Greece such as Sta Lenikà on Crete, do not necessarily indicate a battle goddess, any more than her joint cults with Hermes make her a messenger goddess. More likely, such joint cults date back to the goddess' first arrival in Greece from Cyprus, where she was worshipped alongside a horned male deity associated with warfare and metallurgy. Apparently the Greeks could not quite decide if this was Hermes, Ares, or Hephaistos, so Aphrodite joined all of them in cult and myth throughout the Greek world. Furthermore, as Pirenne-Delforge has noted, the separate *cellae* of the deities in Argos orient their opposing characters in physical space: Aphrodite, a goddess of peace, facing the city, and Ares, god of war, facing out to the enemy.[62] If the ancient Greeks were to explain the connection with Ares, then I suspect they would offer accounts either looking at her sexual trysts with the god, consider their opposing yet complementary domains,[63] or offer more philosophical explanations (rather than that Aphrodite herself went to war) of both deities' command of uncontrollable passions.[64]

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[60] See Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, pp. 40–50, for previous scholarship to this effect.

[61] Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 453.

To the west, there is to date no definitive evidence that the sanctuary at Naxos was dedicated to Aphrodite, and only her. Furthermore, a nearby sanctuary brought to light a dedication to Enyo, the feminine counterpart to Ares Enyalios.[65] If this Enyo had been later syncretized with Aphrodite / Venus as the consort of Ares (*Areia*?), then it is possibly this sanctuary, and not the other, which was identified by later authors as the Aphrodision. There is no definite evidence that the weapons dedicated at the Naxos sanctuary are to be associated with Aphrodite especially or exclusively. This idea derives at least in part from the preconceived notion that there already was a martial Aphrodite in Greece, and that this aspect of her cult extended into the west.

The same might be said about the female warrior figurines from Manella and Gravisca. In spite of their different materials (terracotta, bronze), the iconographic similarities between these are strong, both in hairstyle and posture. All are identified as Aphrodite based on findspot—either a sanctuary of Aphrodite or a region where her cult was prominent—and, once again, the preconceived notion that Aphrodite had a martial component to her persona and cult. The fact that the images betray Lakonic influence either in style (the bibbed robe on the Lokris example), or in contemporary inscriptions (Gravisca), contributes to the idea that they may be a specifically Spartan manifestation of Aphrodite. However, when such images are found absolutely anywhere else, in any medium, they are identified as Athena. Since portrayals of deities are not limited to their own cult sites, location should perhaps not trump iconography in identification and analysis. Furthermore, there was a far stronger Phoenician presence and influence in Italy and Sicily than in Greece proper, and images of possibly divine warrior females must be considered in light of Levantine influence. Armed females may have far more to do with Phoenician Aštart than Greek Aphrodite, in spite of the partial syncretism between the two.[66] Such considerations must also extend to the sanctuaries of Naxos.

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[62] Ibid., p. 454.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, p. 106; Pironti, "Aphrodite dans le domain d'Arès," p. 183.
[65] Guarducci, "Una Nuova Dea a Naxos," pp. 7–34.

With the exception of the Spartan Aphrodite *Areia*, there is no definitive evidence from Archaic or Classical Greece that Aphrodite had a martial component to her persona, and even her manifestation as *Areia* does not necessarily indicate that the goddess herself bore arms. Such evidence comes only from the goddess' later-attested epithet *Enopl(i)on* and the various references to her as armed in the *Greek Anthology*, also only beginning in the Hellenistic period. The relatively early and exclusive reference to this specifically Lakonic armed Aphrodite suggests that there was a distinctively Spartan version of the goddess that was armed. Tellingly, the other Greeks seem quite shocked, if not dismayed, by this fact, which also suggests that this belligerent Aphrodite was hardly the norm in Classical Greek religion.

Hellenistic

New dynamics emerged in the Hellenistic Age that transformed the persona of Greek Aphrodite, and, as we have seen, much of the data that might suggest an armed Aphrodite pertains to this period. However, as with the previous period, there are also many examples that are far more ambiguous than they might at first appear.

For example, there is the cult of Aphrodite *Strateia*, attested epigraphically at Mylasa, Erythrai, and Iasos.[67] Although the epithet *Strateia* certainly invokes images of a more militaristic Aphrodite, Franciszek Sokolowski has suggested that the epithet *Strateios* is simply a Greek translation of the Carian Labraundos, the name of a sanctuary site in western Caria.[68] In this case, Aphrodite *Strateia* is not so much the

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[66] On the nature of this syncretism, see Stephanie L. Budin, "A Reconsideration of the Aphrodite-Aštart Syncretism," *Numen* 51 (2004), 95–145.

[67] I include the Roman-period data from Iasos here because of its continuity with the preceding evidence and because of the Greek language of the inscriptions.

[68] Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées*, p. 155.

"Aphrodite of warfare" as a manifestation of a specific Carian divinity. The fact that the inscriptions refer to a 'foreign' table (*xeinikê*) most assuredly bolsters this hypothesis. Furthermore, the Aphrodite *Strateia* of Caria is accompanied by a Hekatê *Strateia* of Kos and a Zeus *Strateios* also from Mylasa. Either we are dealing with a regional cult phenomenon, as hypothesized by Sokolowski, or we have to consider the idea that all of these deities were understood as being martial.

The images on the gems from Eretria and Amrit are also ambiguous. As with the figurines from Cypriot Salamis and Sparta, there is no clear evidence that these images are intended to represent Aphrodite. One can at best offer the argument that in the third century images of nude females were more likely to be Aphrodite, based on the recent precedent of Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite. The prototype of these very similar images is also unknown, so it is once again impossible to determine if a probable prototype was part of a Titanomachy or Gigantomachy scene, thus accounting for the armed portrayal. Finally, one must admit that the gems reveal a female more cowering behind her weapons than using them. They are at best ambiguous evidence for a martial, armed Aphrodite.

Far better evidence for this martial Aphrodite appears in the epigraphic repertoire. Mentioned above were the three dedications to Aphrodite *Hegemonê* made in Attika in the late third to early second centuries, and these are held up as evidence for a martial Aphrodite especially by Pironti.[69] Here we must remain cognizant that only three such inscriptions are attested. Additional references to a female *Hegemonê* in Attika are not necessarily to be associated with Aphrodite, and the epithet more commonly refers to either Artemis or, in masculine form, Hermes. Furthermore, these three inscriptions, highly localized in distribution, exist only within a thirty-year time span. Those from Rhamnous date to the years 222–220, and the one from the Athenian Agora to the beginning of the second century. Rather than any kind of Panhellenic martial Aphrodite, these inscriptions appear to pertain to a very localized and specialized manifestation of the goddess.

Finally, these references to 'Aphrodite the leader' appear just when a new player is beginning to come to the fore in Greece: Rome. By the end of the third century, it behoved the Greeks to establish warm relations with their Italic neighbors, and part of this new dynamic may have included new takes on old deities.[70] Such was certainly the case for Rome's own national mother, Venus. Jenny Wallensten rightly argues in her contribution to this volume that the play on an Ilian past makes sense.[71]

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[69] Pironti, "Aphrodite dans le domain d'Arès," pp. 175 and 178.

In such a context, it is especially amusing to note that one of the dedications from Rhamnous was specifically in honor of Nikomakhos, son of Aineias. This newly discovered interest on the part of Greek magistrates for Aphrodite might also be seen in the third- and second-century dedications by *stratêgoi* to the goddess in Paros and Epiros.

Rome

In Rome itself, associations between Venus and victory, if not necessarily military, came about in the second and first centuries, when families such as the Memmians and the Julians claimed Venus as their personal goddess of victory and divine ancestress on their coinage.[72] Unlike the Greek examples already discussed, however, weapons formed little part of this iconography, where the victorious Venus is shown either as a simple bust or in a chariot, possibly accompanied by Cupid.

The rise of a pointedly martial Venus can be dated to the political intrigues of the first century, when Sulla, Pompey, and the Julians all decided to affiliate themselves with the goddess. According to Appian, the following was once prophesized to Sulla:

> "πείθεό μοι, Ῥωμαῖε,
> κράτος μέγα Κύπρις ἔδωκεν
> Αἰνείου γενεῇ μεμελημένη. ἀλλὰ σὺ πᾶσιν
> ἀθανάτοις ἐπέτεια τίθει. μὴ λήθεο τῶνδε:
> Δελφοῖς δῶρα κόμιζε. καὶ ἔστι τις ἀμβαίνουσι
> Ταύρου ὑπὸ νιφόεντος, ὅπου περιμήκετον ἄστυ
> Καρῶν, οἳ ναίουσιν ἐπώνυμον ἐξ Ἀφροδίτης:
> ᾗ πέλεκυν θέμενος λήψῃ κράτος ἀμφιλαφές σοι."

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[70] Wallensten, "ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΙ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ ΑΡΞΑΣ," pp. 144–150.

[71] Jenny Wallensten in this volume, pp. 278–279; see also Rachel Kousser's contribution to this volume, chapter 15.

[72] Mark A. Temelini, "Pompey's Politics and the Presentation of His Theater-Temple Complex, 61–52 BCE," *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia* 7, A, no. 4 (2006), 7; Jane D. Evans, *The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus* (Ann Arbor, 1992), pp. 28–34; J.P.V.D. Balsdon, "Sulla Felix," *Journal of Roman Studies* 41 (1951), 7.

> “Believe me, Roman, Kypris has given great power,
> caring for the line of Aineias. But you to all
> the immortals make annual offerings. Don’t forget:
> Lead gifts to the Delphians. And there is someplace they go
> under snowy Tauros, a wide city
> of the Carians, who dwell there naming it for Aphrodite.
> In that place bring an axe, and you will receive power for yourself.”[73]

Sulla made the dedication at the Anatolian city of Aphrodisias, with the following inscription:

> τόνδε σοι αὐτοϰϱάτωϱ Σύλλας ἀνέϑηϰ’, Ἀφϱοδίτη,
> ᾧ ς’ εἶδον ϰατ’ ὄνειϱον ἀνὰ στϱατιὴν διέπουσαν
> τεύχεσι τοῖς Ἄϱεος μαϱναμένην ἔνοπλον.
>
> Autocrat Sulla dedicates this to you, Aphrodite,
> who saw you in a dream arranging the army in battle array
> and fighting in the panoply of Ares.[74]

Sulla even went on to give himself the epithet *Epaphroditos*, ‘The man of Aphrodite’.[75] When he returned home from the east, he dedicated a temple to Venus *Felix*, inscribing, according to Plutarch, her name beside those of Mars and Victoria.[76] Venus the war goddess had arrived.

As did Sulla, so too did Pompey. In August of 55, Pompey dedicated a theatre / temple to Venus *Victrix*, being the first to give this epithet to the goddess.[77] Both Pompey and Julius Caesar invoked this goddess before the Battle of Pharsalus.[78] And, if it was Pompey who gave Venus her martial name, it was Julius Caesar who gave her her first Roman martial iconography. Beginning in 45–44, the coins of Julius Caesar show the goddess with weapons and emblems of victory (for example, figure 15.1).[79]

You will notice that the goddess is dressed. These images are a far cry from the nude, crouched Aphrodite almost cowering behind her shield that we saw on the gemstones from third-century Eretria and Amrit. It is

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[73] App., *B Civ*. 1.97.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Balsdon, “Sulla Felix,” pp. 4–5.

[76] Plut., *Vit. Sull*. 19.9. Temelini, “Pompey’s Politics,” p. 8.

[77] Ibid.

[78] App., *B Civ*. 2.281; Plut., *Vit. Pomp*. 68.2; Pliny, *HN* 35.115.

[79] Philip J. Wise, “A Roman Gold Signet-Ring from Curdworth, Warwickshire,” *Britannia* 30 (1999), 317.

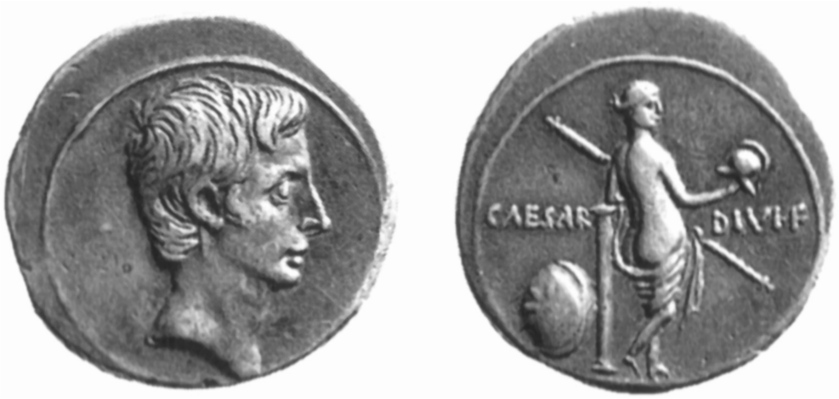

Figure 5.8. Coin of Octavian. From Forum Ancient Coins, www.forumancientcoins.com, used with kind permission.

only later, starting with Octavian in circa 30, that we begin to see coins of a different kind (figure 5.8).[80] Here the goddess is still portrayed with arms—a shield, helmet, and spear—but she is nude save for a *himation* around her lower legs, emphasizing the contours of her buttocks. Unlike the Greek examples, she is standing upright against a pedestal, has a helmet, and does not hold the shield.

It is this portrayal of martial Venus that gains the monopoly in Roman iconography, where variations on this theme and pose appear on coins, mirrors (figure 5.9), gems (figure 5.10), and large-scale sculpture (figure 5.11).[81] The primary difference between the coin imagery and the statuary is that on the sculptures the goddess is frequently completely nude save for a very consistent baldric, and she often is shown holding (the remains of) a sword. However, a statue from Rome, now in the Louvre (figure 5.12), shows just how close the iconography can be between sculpture and mirror when seen next to a bronze mirror back in Berlin (figure 5.9), dating to circa AD 150. Clearly, the imagery was well known across media.

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[80] Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, p. 111, fig. 56.

[81] For mirrors, see especially Demetrios Michaelides, "A Decorated Mirror from Nea Paphos," in *Engendering Aphrodite*, ed. Bolger and Serwint, pp. 351–363. For the other arts, see Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, pp. 44–46; Kyriakou Hadjioannou, "Aphrodite in Arms," *RDAC* (1981), 184–186; Wictor A. Daszewski, "Aphrodite Hoplismene from Nea Paphos," *RDAC* (1982), 281–282.

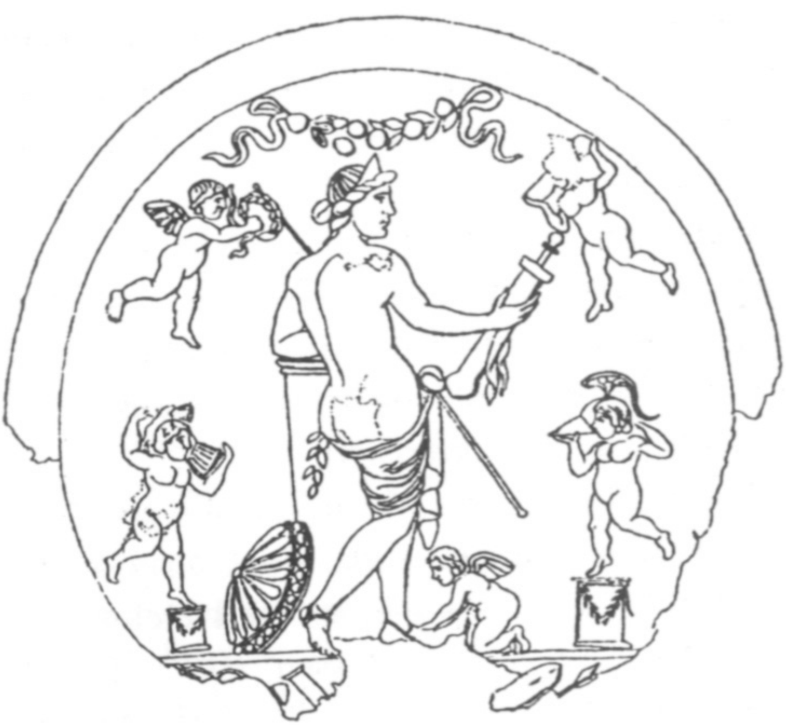

Figure 5.9. Bronze mirror back, Roman. Berlin, Staatliche Museen 7965. Image after Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, fig. 57.

Finally, I present the epigraphic evidence for Venus *Victrix*, as conveniently assembled by Michael Speidel.[82] Dedicatory inscriptions were made to this goddess from the first century in Spain, Italy, Sicily, Northern Africa, Achaia in Greece, Dacia-Romania, Pannonia-Hungary, and Dalmatia-Croatia. In several instances, especially in Dalmatia, these dedications were commemorative monuments for women. In a few cases, there is some evidence that the Venus *Victrix* in question was actually syncretized with a more eastern goddess. The Venus *Victrix* recorded in Pannonia is commemorated with Heliopolitan Jove, suggesting that what we have here is a Latin *interpretatio* of Syrian Atargatis. Michael Speidel has documented inscriptions, from Spain, to *Veneri Victrici Africae*

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[82] Michael Speidel, "Venus Victrix—Roman and Oriental," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2, 17, 4 (1984), 2225–2238.

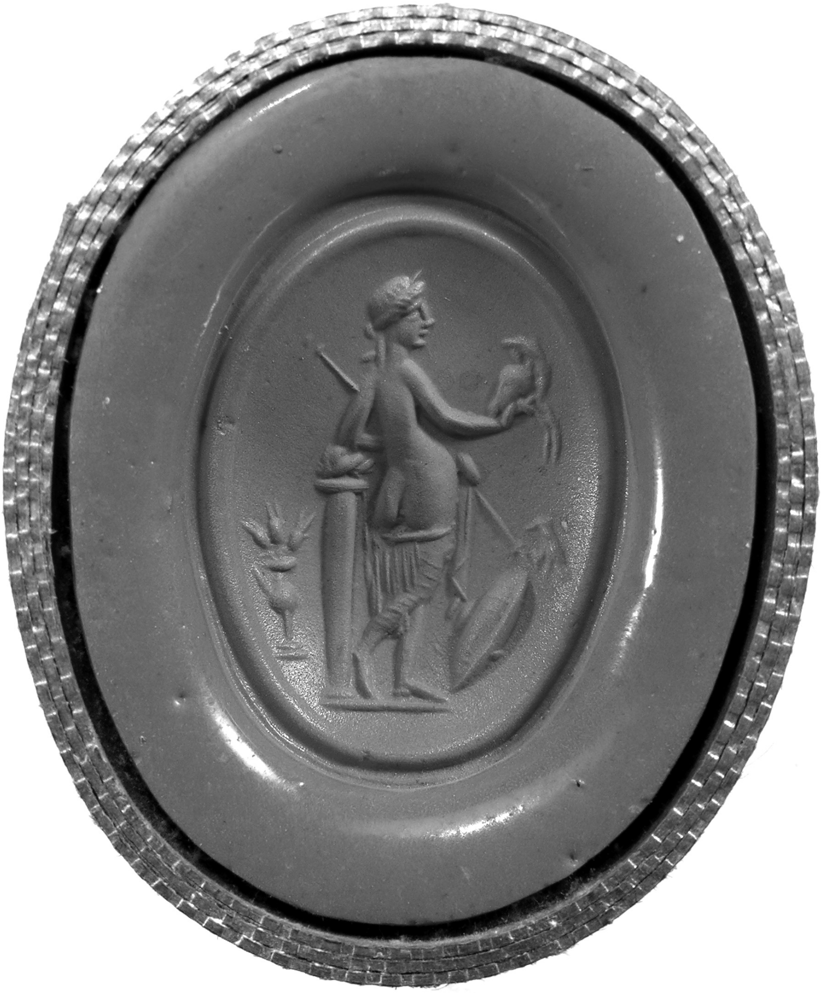

Figure 5.10. Plasma intaglio depicting Venus *Victrix*, first century AD.
Beazley Archive 280 (formerly Marlborough Collection 124).
Beazley Archive, Oxford University, www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/gems.
Photograph by Claudia Wagner, used with kind permission.

Caelesti, who could easily be an adopted Roman version of Carthagenian Tanit. This, however, is not really the norm for Venus *Victrix* cults, and the association with oriental goddesses should be seen not as the origin for this martial Venus, but a purely localized process of syncretism.

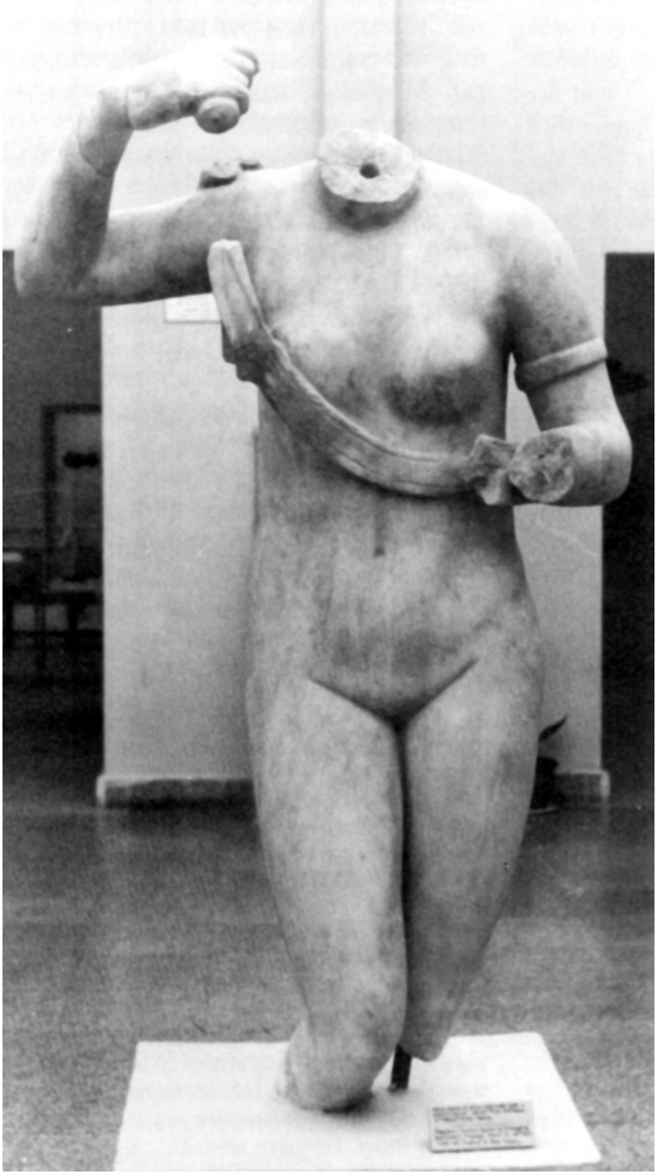

Figure 5.11. Marble sculpture of Armed Aphrodite, Roman. Pafos District Museum, FR 67/73. Permission to publish this photograph has been given by kind courtesy of the dDirector of the Department of Antiquities, Republic of Cyprus.

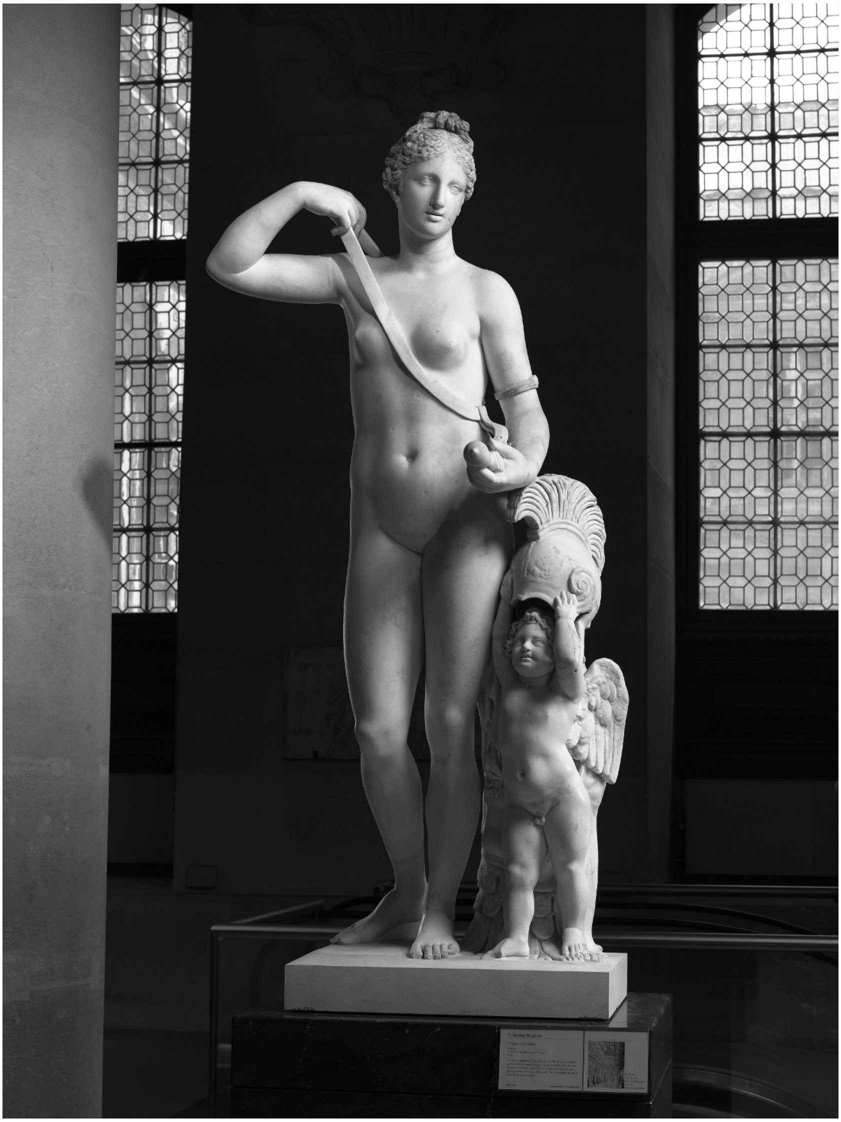

Figure 5.12. Marble sculpture of Venus *Victrix*, second century AD. Paris, Louvre Museum, MA 370. Photo: Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource / New York.

Conclusion

Rumors of Aphrodite's martial persona are greatly exaggerated. There is only one place in the ancient Greek world where the goddess seems to have had an early cult as a martial deity: Sparta. Here she was portrayed armed, had a cult as the feminine Ares—*Areia*—and sparked debate as to her persona in the *Greek Anthology*. All other evidence for her early martial persona is more imagined than real, being either Roman in date, as with Corinth; or the result of stereotyping media, as in Athens; or guesswork, as in early Italy. With a bit of ambiguous foreshadowing in the Hellenistic period, Venus emerges as a martial goddess only in the first century in Rome, and from there depictions of a nude Venus with a sword and a fabulous derrière become popular. But this Roman *Victrix* is a Roman creation, with no continuity from her Greek predecessors.

CHAPTER SIX

RETHINKING APHRODITE AS A GODDESS AT WORK

Gabriella Pironti

In order to comprehend Greek polytheism, we need to distance ourselves from the stereotypes that sometimes obviate the historical analysis of the figures constituting the divine world of ancient Greece. One of the major difficulties lies in the mistaken belief that the ancient religious *imaginaire* can be accessed directly using our own categories of thought. Only since the mid-twentieth century have students of Greek religion given attention to the mechanisms of polytheism and the specific language through which it is expressed.[1] In the same vein, we are engaged in reconsidering ways of studying the Greek gods. Mythological dictionaries—fruit of centuries of antiquarianism—have recomposed artificially the biography of each divinity and have reduced their personalities to static labels. But a god is not a person in the narrow sense, even less a personality; rather, a god is a "divine power," which is a part of a system of multiple deities, and continually reconfigures itself within both cultic contexts and narrative traditions.[2]

Nor should deities be considered arbitrary forms whose content is determined by chance and contingences alone.[3] The Greek gods are indeed plural and polyvalent, but they are not interchangeable. The Greeks did not build innumerable temples and altars, nor invent complex cultic strategies simply for decorative purposes. Even though polytheistic language is not always accessible to us, at least we should acknowledge that its articulations make sense. To neglect this language and its meaning would be a major methodological mistake of the historian.

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[1] In this regard, the contribution of Georges Dumézil is crucial. For its adaptation to the Greek world, see the works of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne. For a critical evaluation of this approach, see Marcel Detienne, "Expérimenter dans le champ des polythéismes," *Kernos* 10 (1997), 57–72; Parker, *Polytheism and Society*, pp. 387–392.

[2] On the notion of "puissance divine," see Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris, 1969), pp. 267–282; Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1974), pp. 103–120.

[3] See Ken Dowden, "Olympian Gods, Olympian Pantheon," in *A Companion*, ed. Ogden, pp. 41–55, who, while criticizing the usage of reductive labels for Greek deities, seems to reduce them to consequences of a "historical accident" (p. 47).

The language of polytheism cannot be understood on the basis of a taxonomy of rigid definitions, all the more so since polyvalence is no doubt one of the most significant traits of Greek deities. This plurality involves not only spheres of competence, but also a deity's modes of action. Through the multiple figures of a deity, a set of experiences is organized as a complex network. In order to understand the specific representations of the divine world that the Greeks have elaborated in the course of their history and reconfigured according to different contexts and ages, the historian of Greek religion must be able to access an unfamiliar organization of reality. Within such a reexamination of Greek polytheism, the case of Aphrodite is particularly emblematic.[4] I shall begin with an example of difficulty in assessing divine identification and functionality. I will then move on with a few words about methodology, and finally, I will illustrate my approach with specific examples, initially and particularly focusing on the relationship between the Greek Aphrodite and the world of war.

An Aegis for Aphrodite?

The figural decoration on an Attic black-figure amphora in the British Museum has not received the attention it deserves, but is significant with a view to "rethinking Aphrodite" (figure 6.1).[5] On one side, we see a quadriga driven by a female figure, which an inscription identifies as Aphrodite. At her side is a male figure identified as Poseidon by a second inscription. On the other side a frontal quadriga is depicted, with a charioteer and a hoplite. The association of Aphrodite with Poseidon is quite rare on Attic vase representations, where the female deities usually connected with this god are Athena or Amphitrite.[6] Since Amphitrite sometimes appears next to her divine consort on a chariot, it has been argued

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[4] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*.

[5] Attic black-figure amphora, dated to ca. 520 BC: London BM B254; *CVA* (*British Museum* 4) pl. 62, 4; *ABV* 673; Erika Simon, in *LIMC* 7 (1994), pp. 476–477, s.v. "Poseidon," no. 266. BAPD 306464.

[6] Harvey A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult under the Tyrants in Athens* (Mainz, 1989), pp. 107–109.

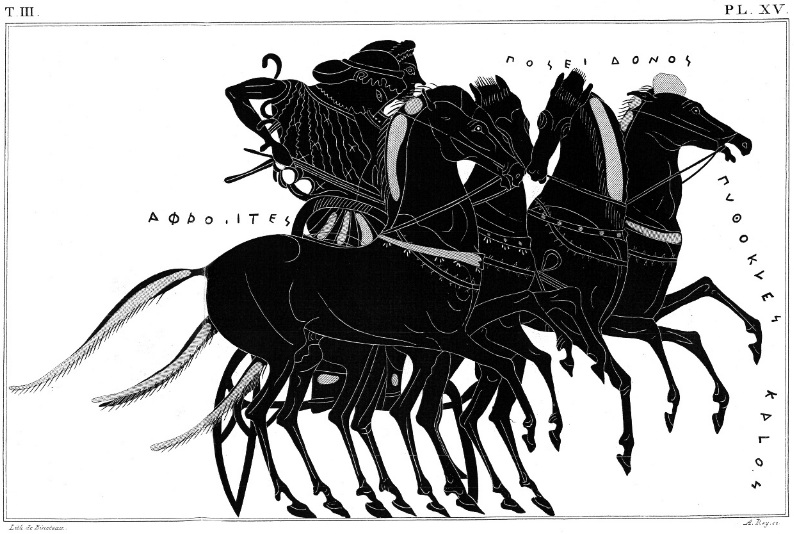
T. III.
PL. XV.
ΠΟΣΕΙΔΟΝΟΣ
ΑΦΡΟ.ΙΤΕΣ
ΠΥΘΟΚΛΕΣ
ΚΑΛΟΣ
Lith. de Bineteau.
A. Rey sc.

Figure 6.1. An Attic black-figure amphora, featuring Aphrodite and Poseidon, ca. 520 BC. London, British Museum B254. Drawing after Lenormant, de Witte, *Élite des monuments céramographiques. Matériaux pour l'histoire des religions et des moeurs de l'antiquité* (Paris, 1844–1861), 3, pl. 15.

that the vase painter in question, while meaning to represent the couple Amphitrite-Poseidon, when adding the inscription was confused by the similarity of the two female goddesses' names.[7] It would seem more reasonable to consider that some functional affinity between the two goddesses, both linked to the marine world, enables the occasional substitution of Amphitrite with Aphrodite next to Poseidon. The scene represented on the amphora in question, however, bears further elements, whereby such a hypothesis proves to be insufficient.

Aphrodite is represented while drawing on the reins, engaged in a physical effort that stretches the muscles of her arm. Not only her posture but also her clothing are unusual. Instead of a rich garment, the painter chose for her a fringed cloak, and only the absence of the

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[7] Ursula Heimberg, *Das Bild des Poseidon in der griechischen Vasenmalerei* (Freiburg, 1968), p. 33; Flemberg, *Venus Armata*, p. 46; Simon, in *LIMC* 7 (1994), pp. 476–477, s.v. "Poseidon," no. 266.

gorgoneion or head of Medusa prevents us from defining this cloak as an aegis.[8] The snake-shaped fringes along the edge of the cloak confirm that the breastplate is indeed a type of aegis. This unusual detail produces surprise and embarrassment, for the aegis is the distinctive attribute of Athena. If, on the basis of some functional affinity, the substitution of Amphitrite with Aphrodite cannot be excluded, then it would be impossible to explain how "peaceful" Aphrodite might have taken the place of "bellicose" Athena.[9] Can we really believe this Athenian painter to be so distracted as to write the name of Aphrodite next to an Amphitrite dressed like an Athena?

Amongst the explanations suggested for this surprising representation, alongside the thesis of the painter's "distraction," it is worth mentioning Lewis Farnell's suggestion,[10] according to which the divine couple on the amphora would be the protectors of the region of Corinth. If Aphrodite watches over the city from the heights of Akrocorinth, then Poseidon is indeed the god of the Isthmos, and in Corinth's harbors the goddess is far from absent.[11] One could take a step further in this direction: the political-military function of the Corinthian Aphrodite and the analogy with the most representative couple on the Athenian Akropolis, Athena and Poseidon, could have led the Athenian artist to depict Aphrodite next to Poseidon, as if she were the "Athena" of the Corinthians. The hypothesis is enticing, but also impossible to prove.

In this case our usual interpretative keys do not give us any certainty. It would not be correct to impute our own perplexity to the artist's mistake. The iconographic device had to be perfectly readable for those who were inside the system, who had, therefore, at their disposal, in their own cultural tradition, the data required to understand even the most complex and unexpected variation on a theme. Rather, the way of representing such an unusual Aphrodite can be seen as a proof that this image is not a mistake. The fringed cloak of the goddess, while resembling an aegis, is not identical to the one belonging to Athena, which is usually wider, rigid, and provided with scales. In our case, the aegis appears far lighter and does not conceal the body of the goddess. It seems almost as if the artist, while using this iconographic sign in an unusual way, chose to modify the distinctive attribute of Athena, in order to adjust it to a different deity.

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[8] The description of the vase suggested by Peter Blomberg, according to which Aphrodite would be wearing a helmet, is incorrect: see Blomberg, *On Corinthian Iconography*, pp. 90–91.

[9] Functional affinity between Aphrodite and Athena is possible, as suggested in the next pages. A relevant case is that of Sparta, on whose akropolis an Aphrodite Ἀρεία, the Aphrodite 'of Ares', was worshipped next to the Athena Πολιοῦχος ('Guardian of the city'): such a proximity is all the more significant, if we consider that Ἀρεία is usually an epithet of Athena. The two goddesses are sometimes associated also in Athens, as it is shown in their joint intervention in favor of the Athenian fleet, during the Battle of Salamis, see below. On Aphrodite and Athena, see also Kassandra Jackson's chapter in this volume, chapter 8.

[10] Farnell, *The Cults of Greek States* 2, p. 691; see also Charles Lenormant and Jacques de Witte, *Élite des monuments céramographiques*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1844–1861), pp. 146–148, in the commentary to pl. 15.

[11] Paus. 2.5.1; 2.1.6; 2.4.6. On the Corinthian Aphrodite, see below. On this goddess' cult in the city harbors, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 94–97. On the cults of Poseidon in Corinth and in the region of the Isthmos, see Joannis Mylonopoulos, *Πελοπόννησος οἰκήτηριον Ποσειδῶνος. Heiligtümer und Kulte des Poseidon auf der Peloponnes*. Kernos Supplement 13 (Liege, 2003), pp. 145–204.

Even in its iconographic implications, polytheism is not a rigid and static system, but rather an articulated and ductile language in which new sentences are always possible. Nor can one exclude the possibility that artists could play on ambiguity, one that does not require a solution, but holds a peculiar semantic charge. The attribution of the aegis to a goddess different from Athena is exceptional, and the image's meaning probably resides, at least in part, in such an exceptional representation. This figure of Aphrodite might be seen as a local feature of the deity, characterized by a stronger convergence with Athena.[12] However, the very fact that this Aphrodite wearing an aegis is next to Poseidon, a place that is usually given to Amphitrite, suggests the co-presence within the same image of multiple convergences. New and reliable hypotheses on the content of such convergences and their context could be provided in the future. For the moment, such an unusual and complex representation of Aphrodite offers a good opportunity to assess our preconceptions about Greek gods, in general, and Aphrodite, in particular.

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[12] Aphrodite and Athena's common link with Ares as an explanation of this Aphrodite wearing an aegis is offered by the military context of the scene depicted on the other side of the vase, and also by an Attic black-figure vase (Louvre F25), where a female figure and a warrior, appearing next to Poseidon, have sometimes been identified as Aphrodite and Ares. See J.D. Beazley, *Paralipomena* (Oxford, 1971), p. 62. On the armed Aphrodite in earlier representations of the Gigantomachy, and on her association with Ares in iconography, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 231–237.

Some Methodological Insights

First of all, I cannot emphasize enough that Aphrodite is not the "goddess of love." The time has come to leave such an anachronistic label aside, along with the stereotypical image it conveys, because this does not belong to Greek history but to our own. What we call "love," far from being universal, is a culturally determined idea. Its modern use is not neutral and therefore does not guarantee the objectivity required for scientific study within the field of ancient Greek religion. It is far better to examine the Greek way of referring to Aphrodite's actions and of representing her competences. Ancient evidence attributes to her the power to arouse *eros*, to "mix" living creatures, and to tame them through sexual union: ἔρως, μ(ε)ίγνυμι/μιγῆναι ('to mix') and δάμνημι/δαμῆναι ('to tame') are at the core of the Greek way of referring to Aphrodite.[13] Archaic poets also used the word φιλότης in relation to her powers, but, contrary to current tradition, which is influenced by the image of the "goddess of love," this term in the case of Aphrodite does not mean 'tenderness', 'fondness', 'reciprocity', or indeed any other element in our modern notion of romantic love. Rather, it means 'intimate relationship', or 'sexual union'.[14]

Despite the fact that τὰ ἀφροδίσια (the 'works of Aphrodite'), like the words already mentioned, refer to the realm of sexuality, the label "goddess of love" should not be replaced with that of "goddess of sexuality." At first sight, the label "goddess of sexuality" appears like a less subjective definition than the label "goddess of love." However, this label is not entirely free from anachronism either. Yet in the course of my research, I have noticed that Aphrodite's domain does not exactly coincide with what we understand by sexuality. Most importantly, her realm is a vast, varied, and tightly articulated sphere of influence, which is impossible to summarize with any such classification.

Any static definition will betray the polyvalence that characterizes the deities of a polytheistic system. There are good reasons why the Greeks did not use the formula "god of" or "goddess of" to describe their divinities.[15] The case of Aphrodite illustrates well the misunderstandings caused by this descriptive method. The canonical portrait of Aphrodite is, in fact, as reductionist as the common label of "goddess of love." I am referring to the conventional image of Aphrodite as the icon of femininity, the incarnation of love and beauty, alternatively associated with grace, tenderness, and harmony, or with seduction and deception.[16] As Nicole Loraux has said, "a goddess is not a woman,"[17] but when it comes to Aphrodite, everyone tends to forget this poignant statement.

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[13] See, for example, the images that occur in the fifth *Homeric Hymn* to Aphrodite. On Aphrodite arousing *eros* and sexual desire, see *Hymn. Hom.* 5.2.73, 143. For the vocabulary of the *mixis*, see 5.2.39, 46, 50, 52, 250, 263, 287. For the vocabulary of the taming, see 5.2.3, 17, 251. On the formula μιγῆναι ἐν φιλότητι or ἐν φιλότητι, see 5.2.150, 257, 263.

[14] On the ambiguity of the *philotês*, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 38–48.

As I noted, a deity is not, strictly speaking, a person, with a well-defined personality. Rather, a deity represents first and foremost a divine power, one which can manifest itself in nature, in society, or in an individual, without itself being any of these manifestations. The Greeks produced various representations of their gods, which have their specific place within a precise context of elaboration and communication. Let me also remark that history may play a role in this variety of representation, even though ancient evidence makes this point difficult to pinpoint. Be this as it may, multiplicity is an essential feature of the Greek god: Hesiod's Aphrodite is not identical to the Aphrodite in the *Iliad*, nor is the Aphrodite of Sparta the same as the one of Athens. Even within the same city, the goddess offers more than one facet, depending on the location of her cults and the epithet she carries.[18] Historians of Greek religion do not need to amend this multiplicity by boiling it down to a simple formula. The opposite approach seems to be effective: abandoning prior definitions of Aphrodite's domain is therefore a condition for shedding light on some aspects of Aphrodite generally obscured by the common label of "the goddess of love." The goddess that emerges from this investigation is a "plural" deity. Some recurrent and significant features of Aphrodite must be underlined, however, because the plurality of a deity does not entail senseless fragmentation.[19]

In a religion with multiple gods, a deity cannot be studied in isolation. The ancient Greek image of a deity is rooted in its relationship with other deities: we must take into account genealogical links, crossovers of competence, associations, contrasts, and proximities. This is why, in order to study Aphrodite, I chose to concentrate on her relationship with Ouranos, the primordial 'Sky', often presented as her genitor, and with her usual partner, Ares, a god linked to close combat and warrior fury.[20]

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[15] For a critique of the reduction of deities to an abstract principle, see Plut., *Amat.* 13 (*Mor.* 757b–c). For a "native" definition of Aphrodite, see Arist., *Gen. an.* 2.2.736a19–22, who uses the extremely significant expression: τῆν κυρίαν θεὸν τῆς μίξεως ("the goddess presiding over *mixis*").

[16] See, for example, Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, passim.

[17] Nicole Loraux, "Che cos'è una dea?" in *Storia delle donne in Occidente* 1: *L'Antichità*, ed. Pauline Schmitt-Pantel (Rome, 1989), p. 27.

[18] On the cults of Aphrodite, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*.

[19] See Rudhardt, *Notions*, p. 97.

If one needs to reposition each deity inside the pantheon to which it belongs, however, one should also consider that "the" Greek pantheon has no transcendental reality that might be deciphered and transcribed. Rather, there are several pantheons, each one expecting contextualization. The context can be identified with the group of cults attested in a city or in a region: Robert Parker, for example, has chosen the Attic context, in order to see the "gods at work," or, in other words, in order to study them in their concrete and historically determined manifestations.[21] Other paths are also equally valid, in an investigation of gods at work. One should not forget, for example, that polytheism is inscribed within both literary traditions and cities' cults. The divine world Hesiod depicts in his *Theogony* is indeed a pantheon, and it needs to be analyzed as such, paying due attention to its narrative articulations and to the genealogical relationships occurring among the deities constituting it.[22] Analysis can also focus on one deity alone, one that can be seen at work in different contexts (narratives, hymns, cults), in order to detect its most significant traits and understand how these interact within Greek culture.[23] In this case, it is necessary to focus on specific aspects of the deity in question, and on its most meaningful associations with other deities. This is the path I have chosen, in order to elucidate some of the countless aspects of the Greek Aphrodite.

A Goddess at Work: The Aphrodite of Ares

Now that we have left the "goddess of love" behind us, let us turn to this goddess at work. Far from being secluded in the world of women, and left out of activities that were exclusively and typically male—politics and war—Aphrodite could be called upon in the Greek cities to exercise her divine actions in favor of the entire *polis* and its institutions, even within a military framework. The cults in honor of an armed Aphrodite, and her participation in affairs of war, are Greek realities, and when scholars assign them an eastern origin, it is probably because this warrior aspect can barely be reconciled, in their eyes, with the usual image of Aphrodite as the "goddess of love." Instead of sending these armed Aphrodites eastwards, or reducing them to vestiges or paradoxes,[24] I try to understand these representations within Greek culture itself. In my view, this is an essential component of the goddess' realm, closely connected to her political prerogatives. Significantly, this is also a facet of Aphrodite that has attracted little interest and indeed a great deal of resistance from scholars.[25]

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[20] The title *Entre ciel et guerre*, "Between sky and war," refers to both relationships.

[21] Parker, *Polytheism and Society*, pp. 387–451.

[22] On the Hesiodic pantheon, see my introduction to *Hésiode. Théogonie*, Classiques en poche 88 (Paris, 2008), pp. xxx–xxxvii.

[23] See, for example, Marcel Detienne, *Apollon le couteau à la main* (Paris, 1998); Dominique Jaillard, *Configurations d'Hermès. Une "théogonie hermaïque."* Kernos Supplement 17 (Liege, 2007).

From Archaic times onwards, in both texts and images, Aphrodite and Ares were represented together. They form a couple in Hesiod, are siblings and allies in the *Iliad*, and, in the *Odyssey*, the ties binding them together are stronger than the laws of marriage.[26] This association is equally present in the city cults, and it cannot be explained without taking into account the relationship between Aphrodite herself and the world of war. Classical scholarship has merely reduced the divine couple of Aphrodite and Ares to a set of binary oppositions: love and war, woman and man, weakness and strength, and so forth. Such a reading in terms of complementary opposites, which was also favored by structuralist-inspired scholars, such as Jean-Pierre Vernant, not only presupposes the canonical portrait of Aphrodite, but also contributes to reinforcing it.[27] Yet one can demonstrate precisely the opposite, that conflict, war, virility, and physical force have a place in the world of Aphrodite, as well as that of Ares.

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[24] Similar solutions are also suggested in recent bibliography: Flemberg, *Venus Armata*; Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, especially pp. 101–102, 276–277; Valdés, *El papel de Afrodita*.

[25] This attitude is very well shown in Solima, "Era, Artemide e Afrodite," especially pp. 402–417; see also the contribution of Stephanie Budin in this volume, chapter 5.

[26] Hes., *Theog*. 933–937; Hom., *Il*. 5.355–363; Hom., *Od*. 8.266–366. See also Pind., *Pyth*. 4.87–88; Aesch., *Supp*. 664–666.

[27] See, for example, the introduction of Jean-Pierre Vernant to the collective volume *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1968), p. 15. Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, after some hesitation (see *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 450–454), then welcomed the thesis of the direct involvement of Aphrodite in the universe of Ares: see Pirenne-Delforge, "Something to Do with Aphrodite," pp. 311–323, especially p. 318.

But how do we explain the passage in the *Iliad* where Zeus assigns to Aphrodite the ἔργα γάμοιο ('works of gamos or marriage') and bans her from the πολεμήϊα ἔργα ('works of war'), reserved for Athena and Ares?[28] These verses are fundamental for the modern definition of Aphrodite as the goddess of femininity and love, whose sphere of influence would oppose the world of men and war. The inquiry into the relationship that Aphrodite had with Ares and his realm requires us to rethink both her univocal portrait and the logic of complementary opposites. These words of Homer's Zeus do not actually constitute a theological statement; they take on their full meaning once they are put back into the narrative context of the poem. The sovereign god's words reveal neither the real nature of Aphrodite, nor her exclusion from the world of war, in general, but confirm, through a commentary tinged with irony, that this goddess, allied to the Trojans, had to move away from the battlefield.[29]

A rich body of evidence emerging from several cities and different traditions shows, in fact, that the military sphere and the warlike fury were not unknown to Aphrodite, and that the goddess' domain had significant overlaps with that of Ares. I shall comment on just a few examples.[30] At the gates of the city of Argos, Aphrodite was jointly worshipped with Ares in an unusual temple, with a double *cella*.[31] Does this imply that these two distinct *cellae* corresponded to two opposing and complementary deities, one pacific and the other warlike? A similar sanctuary has been found in western Crete: it consisted of a temple with a double *cella* dedicated, in Hellenistic times, to Aphrodite and Ares.[32] A significant detail needs to be stressed: after a military victory, the inhabitants paid honor to Aphrodite and not to Ares in their dedications.[33] We can conclude that, since Aphrodite was worshipped alongside Ares, she did not stand in opposition to the world of war: the association highlights the complementary nature of their roles, and their complicity in the same domain. In the same way we can understand Aphrodite *Areia*'s cult, the Aphrodite 'Of Ares', who was worshipped, alongside Athena, on the akropolis of Sparta.[34] This Aphrodite Ἀρεία, an Aphrodite who has a part of Ares within her, rather than suggesting opposition, shows a genuine intersection between the respective domains of the two deities. An armed Aphrodite seems to have been worshipped in Sparta, as in Kythera and perhaps Corinth.[35] The poets of the *Palatine Anthology* are sometimes astonished at representations of such an armed Aphrodite; their surprise is clearly rhetorical, although they have been used as evidence that the Greeks would have honored images of an armed Aphrodite, without understanding their significance.[36] The difficulty is not the Greeks', it is ours. The images of the armed goddess are but part of a large body of evidence attesting the very presence of Aphrodite in Ares' world.[37]

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[28] Hom., *Il.* 5.426–430.

[29] On the facets of Aphrodite in the *Iliad*, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 210–231.

[30] For other examples and an opposite view on this topic, see the preceding chapter, by Stephanie Budin.

[31] Paus. 2.25.1.

[32] See Jean Bousquet, "Le temple d'Aphrodite et Arès à Sta Lenikà," *BCH* 62 (1938), 386–408. On the association between Aphrodite and Ares in Crete, see Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, "La genèse de l'Aphrodite grecque: le 'dossier crétois'," in *La questione delle influenze vicino-orientali sulla religione greca*, ed. Sergio Ribichini, Maria Rocchi, and Paolo Xella (Rome, 2001), pp. 169–187.

[33] Bousquet, "Le temple d'Aphrodite et Arès," p. 405, no. 4.

Let us take the example of Corinth, where Aphrodite has played the role of the main deity of the city, probably since Archaic times.[38] Just before the Battle of Salamis, the city organized an official supplication, in which the women of the city asked the goddess on Akrocorinth to inspire in their men the warlike fury required to confront the enemy, and save their homeland from foreign invasion.[39] Literary sources specify that the Corinthian women addressed a noble and divine prayer to Aphrodite, by asking her to arouse in the fighters the *eros* of battle.[40]

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[34] Paus. 3.17.5.

[35] Paus. 3.15.10; 3.23.1; 2.5.1. On the Corinthian Aphrodite, see Rachel M. Kousser, *Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture: The Allure of the Classical* (Cambridge, Eng., 2008), pp. 19–27, who, in line with the points made here, reexamines the image of the armed goddess, on the basis of the military competences that the Greek Aphrodite can assume. For some general considerations on this subject, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 231–237.

[36] See, for example, *Anth. Pal.* 171, 173–177. Johan Flemberg, "The Transformations of the Armed Aphrodite," in *Greece and Gender: Papers from the Norwegian Institute at Athens* 2, ed. Brit Berggreen and Nanno Marinatos (Bergen, 1995), pp. 109–122, especially pp. 120–121: "The old images survived but were apparently not understood."

[37] For the recomposition of this corpus, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 237–273.

[38] See Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 93–127. See also Williams, "Corinth and the Cult of Aphrodite," pp. 12–24.

[39] Simon. 14 Page, in Denys L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge, Eng., 1981); Plut., *De Herodoti malignitate* 39 (*Mor.* 871a–b); schol. in Pind., *Ol.* 13.32b Drachmann. A different version of the episode is offered by Ath. 13.573c–d, who recalls, in a section of his work dedicated to courtesans, the presence of the ἑταῖραι in the ceremonies in honor of the Corinthian Aphrodite. Other sources, instead, only refer to the wives of the Corinthians. For an accurate comparison between the different versions, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 104–110.

[40] Plut., *De Herodoti malignitate* 39: ἔρωτα τῆς μάχης. See also schol. in Pind., *Ol.* 13.32b Drachmann: ἔρωτα … μάχεσθαι.

The day after the victory, thanksgiving ceremonies were celebrated by the city, and an offering commemorating the supplication took place in the temple. The interpretation of this episode has long been hindered by the historiographic myth of sacred prostitution, which scholars of Greek religion have come to consider as an intrinsic part of this "unusual" ritual.[41] Myths aside, it is not inconceivable that, in the face of such a danger, all the women of Corinth, wives and courtesans alike, would have taken part in the supplication.[42] At any rate, nothing is extravagant or orientalizing in the rituals that the city of Corinth addressed to its patron divinity. Rather, the Corinthian supplication seems to be in line with Hellenic orthodoxy. The attitude of the Corinthians towards the goddess is not an isolated instance. The helpful presence of Aphrodite during the Battle of Salamis is also celebrated on the other side of the Isthmos: the day after the Greek victory, Themistocles dedicated an Aphrodision in the harbor of Piraeus, in order to thank the goddess for her intervention in favor of the Athenian fleet.[43] A century later, Konon would do the same, yet again at Piraeus, after a further victory of the Athenian fleet.[44]

By reworking the corpus of evidence regarding the relationship between Aphrodite and the world of war, and considering its wide chronological and geographical spreads, we may conclude that this relationship, far from being occasional, was an integral part of the world of the Greek goddess. In this respect, the variety of sources plays a key role. We must take into account not only the iconography of the armed goddess, but also her warlike epithets, such as *Areia*, or her military epithets, such as *Stratêgis* (‘Of the commanders’)[45] or *Strateia* (‘Of the army’).[46] Nor should we forget the numerous religious acts carried out in her cult by military personnel, whether commanders or simple soldiers, as well as the rituals performed before or after a battle.[47]

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[41] For the demonstration of the nonexistence of this practice, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 110–126, with bibliography; Pirenne-Delforge, "Something to Do with Aphrodite," pp. 319–323; Stephanie L. Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* (Cambridge, Eng., 2008), passim.

[42] Leslie Kurke, "Pindar and the Prostitutes, or Reading Ancient 'pornography,'" in *Constructions of the Classical body*, ed. James I. Porter (Ann Arbor, 1999 [2002]), pp. 101–125, is still influenced by the myth of sacred prostitution and overestimates the role of courtesans in Corinth, while Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution*, pp. 140–152, holds a more radical position and undervalues their role. More balanced is the position of Pirenne-Delforge, "Something to Do with Aphrodite," p. 320, who takes into due account Alexis, fr. 255 Kassel-Austin, on the participation of the ἑταῖραι in the public cult of Aphrodite in Corinth. On the figure of the *hetaira*, see Claude Calame, "Entre rapports de parenté et relations civiques. Aphrodite l'Hétaïre au banquet politique des *hetaîroi*," in *Aux sources de la puissance. Sociabilité et parenté*, ed. Françoise Thélamon (Rouen, 1989), pp. 101–111.

[43] Schol. in Hermog., *Rhetores Graeci* 5, ed. Walz, pp. 533–534, concerning a treatise on the altars, written by Ammonios, a contemporary of Plutarch. See also *IG* 2^2 1657 (394 BC). On the Aphrodision by Themistocles, see Robert Garland, *The Piraeus from the Fifth to the First Century* BC, 2nd ed. (London, 2001), p. 150.

[44] Paus. 1.1.3. On the different cults of Aphrodite in the Piraeus, see Garland, *The Piraeus*, pp. 112–113; Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 89–91, and Chryssanthi Papadopoulou's contribution in the present volume, chapter 11.

When we place the couple of Aphrodite and Ares within this wider context, which attests the direct implication of the goddess in the affairs of war, it becomes clear that complementary opposition is not a pertinent criterion in order to explain her association with the warrior god. Since Aphrodite is often herself linked to πολεμήϊα ἔϱγα (‘works of war’), as I noted above, it seems evident that, rather than opposing them, she actually contributes to them. The case of the Aphrodite of Akrocorinth, charged with arousing the *eros* of battle in warriors, illustrates perfectly well how the Greeks could conceive of this goddess’ intervention on the battlefield. Between this form of *eros* inspired by Aphrodite, and the warrior fury inspired by Ares, there is no complementary opposition: there is an overlap.

A Goddess at Work: The daughter of Ouranos

The polyvalence of this goddess at work leads us to consider literary evidence quite differently. Between myths and cults, a dialogue is possible, even indispensable, but it requires great care, as it must respect the specificity of each context. Indeed, the figure of Aphrodite portrayed by Hesiod in the *Theogony* is no less complex than the deity worshipped by the Greeks in their cities.

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[45] *IG* 9^2 2.256 (second / first century BC): [στ]ϱαταγοὶ [Ἀφϱ]οδίται [Στϱ]αταγίδι (“The commanders to Aphrodite of the commanders”). Also the *strategoi* of Erythrai worship Aphrodite *Stratêgis*: *SEG* 37 (1987), 937 (second century BC). For further dedications of the *strategoi* to Aphrodite, see *IG* 13 5.220 (third / second century BC); *SEG* 15 (1958), 383 (second century BC).

[46] Engelmann and Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai*, 207.9–11 (Hellenistic period). On the cults of Aphrodite Στϱατεία, see Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, pp. 262–264, and, in the same volume, *IE* suppl. 3.1 (Chios, Hellenistic period). See also Wolfgang Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Mylasa*, Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 35 (Bonn, 1987–1988), nos. 203, 5, and 204, 3 (Mylasa, Hellenistic period); Carratelli, “Supplemento Epigraphico di Iasos,” p. 469, no. 31 (Iasos, Imperial period). The inscriptions of Erythrai and Chios show that, contrary to what Sokolowski surmised in *Lois Sacrées*, p. 155, the epithet of Aphrodite Στϱατεία cannot be explained as a peculiarity of Caria.

[47] On the Aphrodite of the soldiers and her epithets, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 268–273.

The Hesiodic figure of the goddess is an Aphrodite "between sky and war": daughter of Ouranos at the beginning of the poem,[48] in times of conflict between Ouranos and Gaia, and wife of Ares at the end, under the well-established order of Zeus.[49] Far from corresponding to the stereotype of the goddess of tender love, the Aphrodite depicted by Hesiod keeps, since her birth, a close relationship not only with sexuality, seduction, and *eros*, but also with violence and conflict, as well as with male principles and generative strength. These latter elements, which are equally important in understanding the Hesiodic figure of Aphrodite, become evident if we turn our attention to the whole description of her birth, to the genealogical links, and to the narrative structure.[50] The goddess was born from the castration of Ouranos, and she thus emerged from a bloodstained conflict. At the same time as Aphrodite, the Giants and the Erinyes, figures linked to vengeance, conflict, and war, were also born.[51] Moreover, Aphrodite takes shape from the seminal foam surrounding the male organ of Ouranos. It is from this same 'foam', ἀφρός in Greek, that she gets her name.[52] This is a strange beginning indeed for the one that Classical scholarship has always considered the most feminine of the Greek goddesses: this birth, having occurred without the slightest passage through a womb, places Aphrodite wholly on the side of her celestial father, and it underlines her genealogical link with virility, the genital organs, and the semen—that is to say, with the very essence of life force. For a long time, the relationship between Aphrodite and virility has been ignored. This is all the more surprising, given her role in matters of sexuality, which is not only a woman's matter.

Τὰ ἀφροδίσια ('the works of Aphrodite') also hide a deep ambiguity. In several tragic plays, we notice the violent and authoritarian face of this goddess, who reigns over the erotic drive and sexual *mixis*, and who acts by taming and by imposing her law on all living beings.[53] The world of γάμος ('sexual union', 'marriage') is far from peaceful. The *gamos* is often marked by the constraints that the goddess imposes, as well as by competition between men who, driven by *eros*, fight over a woman's bed. In the struggles for *gamos*, we see that Aphrodite is connected with virility in all its forms, just as *eros* is with aggressive impulses.[54]

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[48] Hes., *Theog.* 188–206.

[49] Hes., *Theog.* 933–937.

[50] For a thorough analysis of the figure of Aphrodite in the *Theogony*, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 51–104.

[51] Hes., *Theog.* 173–187.

[52] Pironti, "Au nom d'Aphrodite. Réflexions sur la figure et le nom de la déesse née de l'*aphros*," in *Nommer les dieux*, ed. Nicole Belayche et al. (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 129–142.

[53] On the relationship between the gods represented in Greek tragedy and the deities of

The genealogical link between Aphrodite and the vital humors helps us to understand the role of the goddess in the physiological process, one which leads from childhood into the ἄνθος ἥβης ('bloom of youth'). It is interesting to follow Aphrodite more closely, when she accompanies the young boys, because, even from this point of view, there seems to be a place for the goddess in the Greek configuration of ἀνδρεία ('manliness'). We can thus recognize a further intersection between her domain and that of Ares, who is not Hebe's brother by coincidence.[55] Cult evidence and narratives confirm that Aphrodite is involved in the training of these young people, who are the "flower" of the city, and that she cooperates to this end with other deities. Aphrodite's association with the young boys can also take on a military angle, as is the case of Aphrodite Ἡγεμόνη ('Leader'),[56] worshipped in the fortress of Rhamnous, and perhaps also that of the Spartan armed Aphrodite.[57]

As we have seen, the cultic evidence from several Greek cities confirms that, contrary to common belief, the goddess is indeed concerned with the works of war, even in places other than Sparta. Yet, the different facets of Aphrodite, as well as the overlaps between her domain and that of Ares, lead us a step further. They enable us to understand which specific qualities Aphrodite could put to work for the armed city. They also allow a deeper understanding of Aphrodite's implication in the world of war, of which her association with Ares is an integral part.

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the city's pantheon, see Robert Parker, "Gods Cruel and Kind: Tragic and Civic Theology," in *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*, ed. Christopher B.R. Pelling (Oxford, 1997), pp. 143–160.

[54] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 135–151.

[55] Hes., *Theog*. 921–923. See also Hom., *Il*. 5.905–906.

[56] *SEG* 41 (1991), 90–91; *SEG* 51 (2001), 177 (= *BCH* 124 [2000], p. 781). On the cult of Aphrodite Ἡγεμόνη in this Attic fortress, where young soldiers were trained, see Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, "Les Charites à Athènes et dans l'île de Cos," *Kernos* 9 (1996), 195–214, especially 207–208; Vasileios Petrakos, *Ὁ Δῆμος τοῦ Ῥαμνοῦντος*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1999), pp. 131–134; Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 201–205.

[57] According to Paus. 3.15.10–11, in Sparta an armed Aphrodite and an Aphrodite Μορφώ ('Beauty') were worshipped in the same temple: most likely, the two faces of this goddess refer to her competences in, respectively, the martial education of young men, and the marital education for young women. See Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 262–263.

Actually, Aphrodite and Ares share a range of significant characteristics: more specifically, they share the sphere of *mixis*, the mixing of bodies that takes place during sexual union as well as in the fiercest of fights; their overlaps concern also close combat, the impulse towards others, taming, effervescence, and vital strength. They are both connected with *mania* and violence. In this respect, it is relevant to point out that in ancient Greek the word *eros* and the very name of Aphrodite sometimes become synonyms of "warrior fury."[58] Additionally, it is worth recalling the genealogy according to which the god Eros was the *enfant terrible* of Ares and Aphrodite.[59] This lineage achieves its full meaning in the prayer addressed before the Battle of Salamis to the Aphrodite of Akrocorinth, so that she would inspire the "*eros* of battle" in the soldiers.

Aphrodite owns other "weapons" that she can use on behalf of the city at war. One such weapon is the power of cohesion that confirms the continuity between military intervention of the goddess and her political function. Another important element is the goddess' relationship with the sphere of leadership. Furthermore, Aphrodite's connection with naval victory in Attika also reveals a convergence between the goddess who grants military success and the Aphrodite who reigns over all kinds of maritime undertakings.

Once due attention is paid to cultic evidence, very little is left of the Aphrodite who supposedly came from the East with her suite of sacred prostitutes, to be relegated to the margins of the Greek city. In local pantheons, not only is this deity in charge of marriage and women, but she is also involved in political life,[60] for example, in the context of *synoecism*, as Πάνδημος ('of the whole people'), or as guardian of the magistrates.[61] The goddess also gets a place in medical sanctuaries, next to Asklepios, by virtue of her strong link with corporeality.[62] Moreover, Aphrodite is often worshipped as a maritime deity, presiding over harbors and navigation.[63] It is clear that no definition, not even that of the "goddess of sexuality" or "the goddess of *mixis*," can possibly summarize all her facets.

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[58] See, for example, Thuc. 6.24.3; Aesch., *Ag*. 341; Eur., *IA* 808, 1264.

[59] Simon. fr. 575 Page.

[60] Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 446–450; Parker, "The Cult of Aphrodite Pandamos." See also Sokolowski, "Aphrodite as Guardian"; Croissant and Salviat, "Aphrodite, gardienne des magistrats."

[61] Cf. Wallensten, "ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΙ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ ΑΡΞΑΣ," who overstresses the influence of the Roman Venus on the relationship between Aphrodite and the Greek magistrates. This corpus, of which military dedications are a part, is inseparable from the political competences peculiar to the Greek goddess.

[62] Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 458–459; Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 186–187.

Conclusion

The case of Aphrodite is significant of a fairly widespread attitude towards the Greek gods: we think we know them so well, while in fact their polysemy largely escapes us. Retrospectively, I can say that the reexamination of the canonical figure of Aphrodite has proven to be a useful and fruitful step. I primarily meant to delve into the dark, violent, and warlike nuances, which earlier analyses had neglected. But, in so doing, I encountered other nuances such as the ones mentioned. The polyvalence of Aphrodite became the core of this research: her multiple facets appear as soon as we give the required attention to cult evidence and to her association with other divine powers. Such a plurality of aspects can be seen in narratives, as well as in the hymns in honor of Aphrodite.

A careful examination of ancient evidence forces us to rethink Aphrodite and her domain, and to include, alongside the goddess' political prerogatives, military and warlike characteristics. In order to understand this Aphrodite, who is so close to Ares, we cannot ignore her links with virility, vital strength, violence, and the physical dimension. In this regard, *mixis* and *eros* are just as important: by virtue of the polysemy that characterizes these notions in ancient Greece, the skills of the goddess who reigns over *mixis* and *eros* are not limited to the sphere of sexuality, but extend to the functioning of the entire cosmos and are equally applied to the world of the city and to the battlefield.

In order to "rethink" Aphrodite, one must also avoid organizing the multiple facets of the goddess hierarchically and / or identifying her with a single mode of action. Studying Greek polytheism challenges us to think of both polyvalence and the specificity of deities simultaneously. Each deity possesses, in fact, a specific plurality of prerogatives and modes of action. For instance, the maritime Aphrodite is not a simple emanation of the goddess of sexuality, but yet another aspect of the same divine power, which is just as important: Aphrodite uses her special powers over the fluid element and movement. In my view, what we tend to call the "domain" of a deity does not constitute a well-defined territory with a single center and clear boundaries. This is rather a sort of network or constellation. Such a network is articulated around several semantic cores, and organized in depth, through associations and concatenations of categories drawn from the cultural knowledge shared by the ancient Greeks. The plurality of divine powers does not transform a pantheon into a disorganized crowd. In the same manner, the polyvalence of a deity, both at the level of its spheres of intervention and in its modes of action, does not deprive a god or a goddess of any coherence or specificity.

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[63] See Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 433–437; see also Papadopoulou, chapter 11.

Let us briefly return to the amphora with which I opened this paper (figure 6.1). It seems to be a further confirmation that Aphrodite cannot be confined to the peaceful and static portrait of the "goddess of love." This image also illustrates how polyvalence and specificity are conflated within the Greek representation of the divine world even on an iconographic level. The name Aphrodite points to a specific deity, gathering together connected features (the association with Poseidon, the affinity with Amphitrite, the aegis and its reference to the sphere of Athena), which configure the goddess' polyvalent image.

PART TWO

APHRODITE'S COMPANIONS AND RELATIONS

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SONG OF ARES AND APHRODITE: AŠERTU ON SKHERIA

Annette Teffeteller

Among the texts found in the archives of the Hittite capital of Ḫattuša is a fragmentary account of a myth involving the West Semitic god El ('Elkuniršaʼ, that is, *El qône ereṣ*, 'El, Creator of the Earth') and his wife Ašertu.[1] We also have a Stormgod, represented by the logogram ^{d}U, though with phonetic complements showing Hittite case-marking morphology and therefore to be read, as Itamar Singer has pointed out, as *Tarḫuna*, the name of the Hittite Stormgod.[2] There is also a goddess, referred to by the logogram ^{d}IŠTAR, again with phonetic complements showing Hittite case marking and thus to be read most likely as the Hittite name *Anzili*.[3]

From the fragments that we have we can see that the goddess Ašertu has made erotic advances toward the Stormgod, which he has rebuffed, and that she is very angry.[4] When we pick up the text the goddess is speaking:[5]

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[1] E. Laroche, *Catalogue des texts hittites* (Paris, 1971), p. 342; *editio princeps* Heinrich Otten, "Kanaanäische Mythen aus Hattusa-Boğazköy," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft zu Berlin* 85 (1953), 27–38. For additional references see Itamar Singer, "The Origins of the 'Canaanite' Myth of Elkunirša and Ašertu Reconsidered," in *Tabularia Hethaeorum. Hethitologische Beiträge. Silvin Košak zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Detlev von Groddek and Marina Zorman (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 631–642. For the Hittite form of the name Elkunirša reflecting *El qône ereṣ*, 'El, Creator of the Earth', see ibid., p. 631. In Semitic literature, including in biblical texts, Ašertu is known as Asherah. In the Hittite texts the name is spelled either as ^{d}*A-še-er-du-uš* with Hittite case marking or in one of several Akkadianized forms, ^{d}*A-še-er-tum* or *ŠA* ^{d}*A-še-er-ti*: see Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., "The Elkunirsa Myth Reconsidered," *Revue hittite et asianique* 23 (1965), p. 6, n. 5. On Asherah see John Day, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Literature," *The Journal of Biblical Literature* 105 (1986), 385–408.

[2] Singer, "The Origins," p. 633, n. 15.

[3] Singer, "The Origins," p. 633, n. 15, with reference to Gernot Wilhelm, "Die Keilschriftfunde der Kampagne 2001 in Kuşaklı," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft zu Berlin* 134 (2002), 345.

> 1 [“Get behind me, a]nd [I’ll get behin]d you!”

The interpretation of this line is very uncertain but given the context and the concerns of this myth, a sense of sexual violence should not be ruled out. She continues,

> 2 “With [my] word [I] will crush [you!]
> 3 With [my] spindle I will pierce [you!]”

As so often with these texts, this interpretation, too, is by no means certain, but spindles as the standard attribute of women figure prominently in Near Eastern texts and a spindle could certainly be used as an impromptu weapon; perhaps here it is metaphorical for ‘a woman’s weapon’ (unspecified), but in this context it seems to carry overtones of violent penetration. The goddess goes on:

> 4 “[With …] I will stir you up / suck you dry!”[6]

Again, the interpretation of the verb here (*nininK*-) is very uncertain; Harry Hoffner points out that the verb means ‘to rouse, to stir up, or to muster (troops)’[7] but he rejects the meaning ‘to rouse someone (sexually)’ in this passage on the grounds that “this is a threat rather than a proposition.”[8] Hoffner speculates about possible contamination with the “near homograph *nink*- ‘to drink oneself drunk’ ” and suggests that there might be an allusion to “the cannibalistic and vampire-like traits of [the goddess] Anat.”[9] Given the context of sexuality and violence in this text, we should be prepared to entertain the possibility of a threat to drain the god of his ‘vital fluids.’[10]

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[4] Published by Heinrich Otten, “Ein kanaanäischer Mythus aus Boğazköy,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 1 (1953), 125–150; and Otten, “Kanaanäische Mythen.”

[5] The translation given here is based on Hoffner, “Elkurnisa,” with some adjustments from Singer, “The Origins,” and some additional changes by the present author; the translation in Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., *Hittite Myths*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, 1998), differs significantly in some passages; see note 13 below.

[6] See Hoffner, “Elkunirsa,” p. 7, n. 12.

[7] Hoffner, “Elkunirsa,” p. 7, n. 12. Note that this meaning is very much like the range of uses of ὀρίνω / ὀτρύνω, ‘rouse’, etc. in Homeric Greek.

[8] Hoffner, “Elkunirsa,” p. 7, n. 12.

[9] Hoffner, “Elkunirsa,” p. 7, n. 12.

[10] Cf. the fate of Ares, deprived of his ‘tendons’, discussed below.

At this point the Stormgod goes to Ašertu's husband, El, and tells him of all this:

4 The Stormgod heard (this),
5 [he] got [up], and came to the headwaters of the Mala River.[11]
6 [He] ca[me to] Elkunirša, the husband of Ašertu,
7 [and he] entered the tent [of] Elkunirša.
8 [Elkun]irša saw the Stormgod and asked him:
9 ["Why] have you come?" The Stormgod replied: "When I came to you
and into your house,
10 Ašertu sent (her) maidens to me (saying): 'Come, sleep with me!'
11 [And when] I refused, she threatened me.
12 [Thu]s she said: 'Get behind me,
13 [and] I'll get behind you!
14 With my [word] I will crush you!
15 With my [spindle I will pierc]e you!' This is why I have come, my father.
16 [...] I did [no]t come to you, (but now) I [have come] to you in person,
17 (for) [Ašertu] is impugning your virility,
18 [and although she is] your [wi]fe, she keeps on sending to me. [...."]

As Marvin Pope so aptly observes, Elkunirša's reaction to all this is "passing strange."[12] Elkunirša instructs the Stormgod to sleep with Ašertu and to humiliate her:

19 Elkunirša [said] to the Stormgod:
20 "Go, sleep with her!
21 [Lie with] my [wi]fe and humiliate her!"

Singer is surely right in his insistence that the early interpretations of the imperative *šaššumai* are correct. The verb is a *hapax legomenon* but must be, as Singer and others take it to be, related to the Hittite verb *šeš-*, 'to sleep (with).' Singer is persuasive, too, when he says that a "vulgar sense" is what is wanted in this context.[13] The verb translated here 'humiliate' has sexual overtones as well. Hoffner notes that the verb *luriyaḫ-* ('to humble') probably reflects a Canaanite verb (*ʿny*), which (as he says)

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[11] The Euphrates.

[12] Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden, 1955), p. 37.

[13] Singer, "The Origins," p. 633, n. 10: "The *Glossenkeil* imperative *šaššumai*, which is a *hapax legomenon*, must be related to Hittite *šeš*—'to sleep (with)', as conveyed in early translations. Despite the fact that later translations have preferred to interpret the term as a non-sexual humiliation ('threaten', 'reprimand', 'to make sorry', etc.; for refs. see *CHD*, Š/2: 310 f.), I still feel that a vulgar sense (e.g. 'lay her!') makes more sense in this context." Hoffner, "Elkunirsa," p. 8, has "Go, sleep with her! [Lie with] my [wi]fe and humble her!" But in his edition of the Hittite myths (Hoffner, *Myths*, p. 91) he translates "Go threaten(?) her. [... Ashertu], my wife, and humble her."

"so often in the Old Testament ... refers to the mastery which the male manifests over the female in the sexual act."[14]

So the Stormgod is instructed by El to lie with Ašertu and to humiliate her, and this appears to be just what he does. He evidently has sexual intercourse with her (the degree to which it is consensual at this point is not clear), and then he tells her that he has killed her children[15]—seventy-seven of them, indeed eighty-eight (with typical West Semitic progression in the number scheme, a form of *parallelismus membrorum*).[16] The number is particularly significant since Ašertu-Asherah is the Mother of the Gods, who are conventionally numbered at seventy:

22 [So the Stormgod] hearkened to the [wo]rd of Elkuniřša and [went] to Ašertu.
23 The Stormgod spoke to Ašertu:
24 "I have killed seventy-seven of yo[ur children], (yea) eighty-eight have I slain."

At this news, the goddess is, understandably, "grieved." She laments her children for seven years:

25 Ašertu heard [this h]umiliating report and was grieved in her mind.
26 She appointed [lame]nting women and she [began] to lame[nt] for seven years.
27 [ ] They eat and drink. [...]

At this point we have a break in the text—we do not know how long—and when the story resumes, Ašertu is soliciting her husband to allow her to take revenge on the Stormgod. Elkunirša agrees and the two of them go to bed (this is apparently the price of his agreement). A goddess, however, an IŠTAR-goddess (presumably Anzili), disguised as an owl perched on the wall of the room,[17] overhears the conversation and flies off to warn the Stormgod.

Again there is a lengthy gap and when the text resumes—in a severely damaged fragment—it seems that the Stormgod has been injured (in a very fragmentary passage there is mention of the god's "penis, tendons, muscles")[18] and has descended to the Underworld (the 'Dark Earth'). The goddess IŠTAR-Anzili is pleading with the Netherworld Gods (Anunnakū) for his release. He undergoes a purification ritual by means of which he is rejuvenated and eventually, with the help of the Mother Goddesses (DINGIR.MAḪ$^{\text{ḪI.A}}$), IŠTAR-Anzili is successful in rescuing him from the Netherworld and, now purified and revitalized, the Stormgod is restored to his proper realm.

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[14] Hoffner, "Elkunirsa," p. 8, n. 21, with reference to Gen. 34:3 and Deut. 21:14.

[15] Not only is this brutal, it is also the absolute antithesis of the expected outcome of a god's embraces; cf. Hom., *Od.* 11.248–250, Poseidon to Tyro: "Rejoice, lady, in our lovemaking; as the year rolls round you will bear glorious children, for not fruitless are the embraces of the gods" (trans. author).

[16] Hoffner, "Elkunirsa," p. 9, n. 22; the variation in the number scheme is an instance of 'parallelism' or varied repetition of different aspects of the poetic structure characteristic of Near Eastern poetry.

[17] Or on Elkunirša's shoulder: see Hoffner, "Elkunirsa," p. 10, n. 33, for a suggested emendation yielding this sense.

This story of an Ištar-type goddess (here the goddess Ašertu)[19] suffering humiliation in a sexual encounter with a type of Stormgod,[20] with the knowledge and indeed through the contrivance of her husband, offers a number of intriguing parallels with Demodokos' song of Ares and Aphrodite in Homer's *Odyssey*,[21] a narrative which delighted Odysseus and the Phaiakians but mortified the ancient moralists and has perplexed many readers of Homer down to the present day.[22] Indeed, many motifs connected with the figure of Ašertu have counterparts in the mythology and iconography of the Greek goddess Aphrodite, including attributes and epithets indicating her status as 'Queen of Heaven' and as 'The Lady Who Treads on the Sea', as well as the Olympian status of her Iliadic mother and the lameness of her Odyssean husband.

Motifs common to both stories start with sex and bondage (though not sexual bondage), and in both accounts illicit sexual relations (extramarital in both cases)[23] lead to bondage and humiliation. In the Greek story the two principals are notoriously bound together *in flagrante* by Hephaistos' magic net; in the Hittite myth the Stormgod is incarcerated in the Underworld as an eventual consequence of his sexual encounter with Ašertu, and the goddess herself is committed to seven years of lamentation for her slain children. In both episodes the central events take place in a context of sexually tinged violence and both goddesses suffer profound humiliation, visited upon them by their husbands and carried out or enabled through the agency (whether deliberately or unwittingly) of their lovers.

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[18] See Hoffner, *Myths*, p. 91. Hoffner's "filthy with excrement" is taken by Singer, "The Origins," p. 633, n. 16, as "oily," with reference to Hoffner, *Myths*, and *CHD*, Š / 1:49.

[19] In the Hittite myth the logogram ^{d}IŠTAR is used, as noted above, for (apparently) the goddess Anzili, but Ašertu also is of the Ištar type; see details in the following text.

[20] (Male) war gods are storm-gods in the Hittite pantheon, and the Greek Ares fits the type.

[21] Hom., *Od.* 8.266–369. On this episode see Walter Burkert, "Das Lied von Ares und Aphrodite," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 103 (1960), 130–144.

[22] On the episode generally see J.B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey* 1: *Books 5–8* (Oxford, 1988), ad loc., who notes (on p. 267) that Ares and Aphrodite "are associated not only in archaic literature … but also in cult."

[23] Incest in various forms occurs in both stories but incestuous relations are 'normal' in both pantheons.

Violence is explicit in the Hittite myth; Ašertu angrily threatens the Stormgod with threats that he repeats to her husband, who in turn urges the Stormgod to practice violence against her. In response, in an act of ultimate violence, the Stormgod kills Ašertu's children. The revenge she takes on him is evidently extremely violent as well; the reference to the Stormgod's injuries clearly implies sexual mutilation.[24] Moreover, implicit in the Hittite myth may be the specter of rape; as noted above, it is unclear in the text whether the ultimate encounter of the goddess and the Stormgod is consensual. Outside the specific narrative at issue here, we find violent mountain gods implicated in rape in both Near Eastern and Greek myths relating to goddesses of the Ašertu / Aphrodite type, and we have echoes of connections of these violent gods to the deities of Demodokos' song. Another Hittite myth—also poorly preserved—tells of the attempted rape of an IŠTAR-goddess by the personified mountain, Mount Pišaiša. Waking just in time to prevent the outrage, the goddess is violently angry and threatens to kill the mountain. He saves himself by falling on his knees to beg forgiveness and in an effort to mollify her tells her the story of the Stormgod's victory over the Seagod.[25] A parallel in Greek myth is found in the story of Otos and Ephialtes, essentially mountain gods themselves, as the descriptions of their prodigious size and of their exploits attest. G.S. Kirk notes that they "have much in common with the giant Ullikummi in the Hurrian-Hittite myth."[26] They offer violence against the gods, first in piling one mountain on another to reach heaven, and also in the attempted rape of Artemis by Otos and of Hera by Ephialtes.

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[24] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, emphasizes the violent aspects of Aphrodite's nature but she excludes the Near Eastern material from consideration. For a different approach, see Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*.

[25] See Ian Rutherford, "The Song of the Sea (*ŠA* A.AB.BA SÌR): Thoughts on KUB 45.63," in *Akten des IV. Internationalen Kongresses für Hethitologie, Würzburg, 4.–8. Oktober 1999*, Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten 45, ed. G. Wilhelm (Wiesbaden, 2001), p. 602; Singer, "The Origins," p. 634, with references.

[26] Kirk, *Iliad*, on Hom., *Il.* 5.385–387. In the context of comparisons with the Hittite myth in question here, it is interesting that the name Otos means 'Owl' and that in one of the versions of this myth an owl is perched on the column to which the brothers are bound in the Underworld, recalling the IŠTAR-goddess in the Hittite myth in disguise as an owl perched on the wall of Elkuniršа's bedchamber (Hyg., *Fab.* 28, although a motif appearing only in this source may reasonably be doubted). See below for the binding of Ares by Otos and Ephialtes.

In the Greek story, violence is inherent in the binding and public humiliation inflicted on the lovers by the cuckolded husband, and explicit in the language used of Hephaistos' response to the news of their deception and his plans for revenge. When Helios reveals the betrayal, the smith-god goes to his forge, angry, 'deep-building evil things in his mind,' and forges the unbreakable bonds, a 'snare for Ares.'[27] The details of interaction between the principals differ in the two accounts, and the violence in the Greek story is not that of physical injury and murder, but of verbal abuse and public humiliation; nevertheless, the same dynamics apply in both cases.

In the Hittite myth the Stormgod is bound by the Netherworld Gods, both metaphorically insofar as he is confined in the Underworld and perhaps literally. The tantalizing fragments left to us by the shattered tablets show, as we have seen, that the god is in dire straits and suffering difficulties with his penis, muscles, and tendons. This is a motif that surfaces in Greek myth in the conflict between Zeus and the serpentine monster Typhon / Typhoeus, a dragon-slayer myth as Calvert Watkins has so masterfully shown.[28] In Apollodoros' account Zeus strikes Typhon down with an adamantine sickle but the monster turns on him and, wresting the sickle from him, severs the sinews (νεῦρα) of his hands and feet. Typhon conceals the sinews, hidden in a bearskin, in the Korykian Cave along with the enfeebled god and sets a dragon-maiden to guard them, but Hermes and Aigipan steal the sinews and restore them to Zeus, enabling him finally to triumph over Typhon.[29] The prominence of the adamantine sickle in this story recalls Hesiod's account of the castration of Ouranos by Kronos.[30] When we add to this the use of the word νεῦρον / νεῦρα to mean both 'tendons' and 'penis', the crosslinguistic echoes become more insistent.[31]

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[27] κακὰ φρεσὶ βυσσοδομεύων, Hom., *Od.* 8.273; δόλον … Ἄρει, *Od.* 8.276. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are those of the present author.

[28] Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (New York, 1995), pp. 448–459.

[29] Apollod. 1.6.3.

[30] Hes., *Theog.* 176–191.

[31] For νεῦρον / νεῦρα as 'penis' see Plato Comicus, fr. 189.20 *Poetae Comici Graeci* 7, ed. R. Kassel and C. Austin (Berlin, 1989) and Gal. 8.442. Michael Hendry, "A Coarse Pun in Homer? (*Il.* 15.467, 16.120)," *Mnemosyne* 50 (1977), 477–479, sees a pun in Teukros' comment to Aias on his broken bowstring (νευρή) at Hom., *Il.*15.469, expanding on the

The detail provided by Apollodoros—that when the gods saw Typhon rushing upon heaven they took flight for Egypt and, with the monster in pursuit, changed their shapes into those of animals (an account repeated as aetiology by Ovid)—has an early parallel in the great Rigvedic dragon-slayer hymn, in which Indra slays the serpent Vṛtra and flees:[32]

> What avenger of the serpent did you see, O Indra,
> that fear came into your heart, you the slayer,
> when you crossed the ninety-nine streams,
> when you crossed the skies like a frightened eagle?[33]

Joseph Fontenrose notes that in several accounts in the Indic tradition Indra is incapacitated in various ways (as Zeus is in his combat with Typhon), indicating that this motif of the temporary ascendancy of the dragon over the dragon-slayer lies behind the brief and evidently unintegrated mention of Indra's flight in *Rigveda* 1.32: "The Vedic poets glorify Indra and only hint at his discomfiture, but they say enough to make it certain that there was a story behind their remarks."[34]

In Greek myth Ares—the war-god and therefore in terms of Hittite divine typology a type of storm-god—suffered a fate similar to that of the Stormgod in the Hittite myth, bound and confined and in peril of his life. Remarkably, this is a story told to Aphrodite by her mother Dione on Olympos: Ares was bound in strong bonds by the giant brothers Otos and Ephialtes, the sons of Aloeus,[35] and confined in a bronze jar for thirteen months, in great distress, and he would have perished had not Eeriboia, the stepmother of Otos and Ephialtes, told Hermes of his plight and Hermes stolen him away.[36] This strange account recalls the Hittite punishment of incarceration in a jar: "If a slave declares himself free from his owner, he shall go into a clay jar."[37] As Hoffner notes, most interpreters regard this "as a form of capital punishment, whether by being cooked

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view of Eustathius, followed by Richard Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary* 4: *Books 13–16* (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), ad loc., that we are to see a sexual pun in the reference to a spear at Hom., *Il.* 13.290–291.

[32] Apollod. 1.6.3; Ov., *Met.* 5.321–331; *Rigveda* 1.32.

[33] *Rigveda* 1.32.14 (translation after Watkins, *Dragon*, p. 399).

[34] Joseph Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins* (Berkeley, 1959), p. 199.

[35] The sons of Poseidon in actuality, at least according to other accounts, by Aloeus' wife Iphimedeia.

[36] Hom., *Il.* 5.385–391.

[37] Harry Angier Hoffner, Jr., *The Laws of the Hittites: A Critical Edition* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 139 (§ 173b / 58b).

in a cauldron or buried alive."[38] While cooking is a little fanciful, burial alive is a real possibility, but incarceration in a pithos-type jar would constitute sufficient punishment in itself; prolonged confinement in a severely cramped space is a well-known form of torture.[39] The extent of the torture in the present case (whether to the death or not) is likely to have been at the discretion of the slave's owner; this would accord with various other Hittite laws allowing slave owners wide latitude in dealing with their slaves.

The reason given by the scholiast for this strange story of the imprisoned god is particularly interesting in light of the Near Eastern/Anatolian parallels of episodes in the lives of Ares and Aphrodite: Ares had killed Adonis, Aphrodite's youthful lover (and consequently a child-figure standing *in loco pueri*, as it were), whom she had entrusted to the care of the Aloadai.[40] An echo of Ares' more oppressive captivity occurs in Demodokos' song: Ares in bonds, his captor solicited by a fellow god to free him, payment promised.

Supplication is a fundamental aspect of both myths: just as Poseidon supplicates Hephaistos on behalf of Ares in the Phaiakian story, so the goddess IŠTAR-Anzili supplicates the Netherworld Gods on behalf of the Stormgod in the Hittite myth. The motif of supplication occurs in the episode of Ares' incarceration as well, in the form of Eeriboia's message to Hermes on behalf of Ares.[41]

Purification, too, is crucial in both myths, providing closure to the events and restoring the principal figures (or some of them) to a state of well-being after their difficulties. In the Hittite myth the Stormgod, following his clearly serious injuries, is purified and revitalized in rites evidently involving, among other things, anointing with oil: they "re-created" him, they "made him radiant";[42] they "exorcised him and [purified him] from oath, offense, [sin, evil] word [and . . .]."[43] In the Phaiakian myth, when Aphrodite is released from her bed of shame and public humiliation, she flees to Cyprus, to her sanctuary at Paphos, where she is bathed and anointed with immortal oil by the Graces, and dressed in lovely garments.

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[38] Ibid., pp. 219–220.

[39] Cf. Martin L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997), p. 363, with reference to János Harmatta, "Zu den kleinasiatischen Beziehungen der griechischen Mythologie," *Acta Antiqua* 16 (1968), 57–64.

[40] See Kirk, *Iliad*, on Hom., *Il.* 5.385–387.

[41] Poseidon-Hephaistos, Hom., *Od.* 8.344–358; Eeriboia-Hermes, Hom., *Il.* 5.389–391.

[42] Or "made him perfect": see Hoffner, *Myths*, p. 92 and n. 3.

[43] Hoffner, *Myths*, p. 92. See Singer, "The Origins," p. 634, on the Old Babylonian *kispum* ritual in which the Royal Ancestors and the Netherworld Gods (Anunnakū) are jointly invoked to rescue a sick or a dying person.

The use of oil is ubiquitous in these cultures, of course; indeed, oil has justly been said to be "one of the minimal essentials in ancient Near Eastern life,"[44] but its prominence in the contexts with which we are concerned here still bears remarking. The Hittite texts specify oil among the items to be given to people in need. There are four things that one is expected to give to the poor, or to those in need: food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, and oil to the person who is 'dried out / desiccated' / 'chapped', a plight no doubt modeled in the first instance on the dried-out and dusty, sun-baked condition of travelers in these lands.[45] Indeed, judging from the ubiquitous use of anointing oil (and the complaints of those without it), it seems to have been considered essential for a person's general sense of well-being.[46] So here, in the Hittite myth, after his injuries and his brush with death, the Stormgod receives oil in a purification and revitalization ritual, as does the Greek goddess in the Phaiakian story, after her very public humiliation.

Elsewhere in Homeric epic, Aphrodite is granted another restoration, this one by her mother on Olympos, who consoles her when she is wounded by Diomedes, comforts her, and heals her hurt.[47] It has long been remarked that Aphrodite has a mother only here and that her name, Dione, is a feminine form of Zeus. As 'Mrs Zeus', then, Dione is 'Queen of Heaven', Hera notwithstanding.[48] Comparisons have been made and syncretisms assumed since antiquity of the 'Heavenly' Aphrodite and Asherah, 'Queen of Heaven', Mother of the Gods, and wife of the great god El (Ašertu in the Hittite myth). Herodotos refers to the very ancient temple of the 'Heavenly Aphrodite' at Ashkelon on the south coast of the Levant, and the same goddess is mentioned in the Delian dedication of Damon of Ashkelon alongside "Astarte of Palestine."[49] It looks as if the goddess who was 'Queen of Heaven' as wife of the supreme god of the pantheon has survived in Greek lands as Dione, a goddess whose role has been largely forgotten and whose place has been taken in epic by Hera, but whose history lingers in memory and surfaces from time to time, in the Mycenaean dedicatory tablets, in cult at Dodona, at home on the Iliadic Olympos, and elsewhere.[50]

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[44] Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., "Oil in Hittite Texts," *Biblical Archaeologist* 58 (1995), 108.

[45] That is, those in need of cleansing and restoring. Even today in Anatolia the traveler is offered a form of perfumed oil.

[46] See Hoffner, "Oil," p. 111; cf. Alfonso Archi, "L'humanité des Hittites," in *Florilegium Anatolicum: Mélanges offerts à Emmanuel Laroche*, ed. Emilia Masson (Paris, 1979), pp. 37–48; Itamar Singer, "Oil in Anatolia according to Hittite Texts," in *Olive Oil in Antiquity: Israel and Neighboring Countries from Neolith to Early Arab Period*, ed. Michael Heltzer and David Eitam (Haifa, 1987), pp. 183–186. Compare Odysseus' patent gratitude when Nausikaa's handmaidens give him olive oil ('liquid olive oil', ὑγρὸν ἔλαιον) in a golden flask for his river bath (Hom., *Od.* 6.215): "long indeed has oil been absent from my skin" (6.220).

[47] Hom., *Il.* 5.416–417.

[48] West, *Helicon*, p. 362 ('Mrs Zeus' is West's inspired coinage); see further idem., *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 2007), p. 192, and George E. Dunkel, "Vater Himmels Gattin," *Die Sprache* 34 (1988–1990), 1–26.

The more usual, and the more stunning, account of Aphrodite's lineage —birth from the sea foam surrounding the severed genitals of Ouranos— may perhaps be linked also to the goddess Asherah / Ašertu. Another name and epithet of the goddess is *aṯrt ym*, Aṯirat of the sea, or 'She who treads upon the sea'.[51] It appears that Aṯirat was "the goddess of the calm sea and thus the patroness of the fishermen and sailors."[52]

Finally there is the question of the lameness of the god. The first question is, why is Aphrodite married to Hephaistos? Again we have a unique situation. Just as Aphrodite has a mother only in the *Iliad*, so also she has Hephaistos for a husband only in Demodokos' song in the *Odyssey*.[53]

Hephaistos is, famously, the *lame* god. While the interpretation of ἀμφιγυήεις remains uncertain, other terminology (e.g., χωλός, 'lame, halt') and plentiful contexts confirm his lameness.[54] Is there perhaps a sexual reference lurking here, at least by innuendo in Demodokos’ song if not elsewhere? Hephaistos, it seems, is lame in the *feet* (the default sense of English ‘lame’ in any case), and ‘feet’ like ‘knees’ is a euphemism for the male genitals in Near Eastern cultures, as indeed it is in Greek. In the Hittite Myth of Succession—the ‘Kingship in Heaven’ theme—Kumarbi rebels against the sky god Anu. He dethrones him and banishes him, and in the process Kumarbi bites off Anu’s genitals and swallows them (and various gods are born from him as a result).[55] In the Hittite account the genitals are termed ‘knees’—“the common Akkadian euphemism,” Pope comments, “as the Hebrew euphemism is ‘feet’.”[56] In Greek the word for ‘joints’, ἄϱϑϱον / ἄϱϑϱα, especially ball-and-socket joints, and in particular the ankles, is also used for ‘genitals’, and the possibility of double-entendre usage of many words in Demodokos’ song relating to ‘feet’ and ‘lameness’ is striking.[57] Perhaps the theme of impotence

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[49] Hdt. 1.105; Donald B. Redford, "The Sea and the Goddess," in *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim* 2, ed. Sarah Israelit-Groll (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 830–831; cf. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 152–153.

[50] KN Xd 97; PY An 607 (*di-wi-ja*); PY Cn 1287, Tn 316 (*di-u-ja*); Hes., *Theog.* 17 ('beautiful Dione', hymned by the Heliconian Muses); *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 93 (named first among the exalted goddesses attendant upon Leto in her labor with Apollo and Artemis). For her status at Dodona see Donald M. Nicol, "The Oracle of Dodona," *Greece and Rome* 5 (1958), 128–143; Dorothy Burr Thompson, "A Dove for Dione," in *Studies in Athenian Architecture, Sculpture and Topography Presented to Homer A. Thompson*. Hesperia Supplement 20 (Princeton, 1982), pp. 155–219.

[51] Wilfred G.E. Watson, "The Goddesses of Ugarit: A Survey," *Studi epigrafici e linguistici* 10 (1993), 51 and n. 39, with references to William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, 1946), pp. 77–78, and Johannes C. de Moor, *The Seasonal Pattern in the Ugaritic Myth of Baʿlu*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 16 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1971).

[52] De Moor, *The Seasonal Pattern*, p. 145.

[53] See Hainsworth on Hom., *Od.* 8.268: "The marriage of Hephaestus and Aphrodite is scarcely attested outside the present passage … and its source is very uncertain."

[54] At Hom., *Od.* 8.311, Hephaistos characterizes himself as ἠπεδανός, 'weakly, feeble'; immediately prior to this assessment he complains that his wife scorns him and loves Ares

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because he is χωλός and Ares is handsome and ἀϱτίπος. The latter term is glossed in the lexica as ‘sound of foot’ or ‘swift of foot’; in a radically literal sense it means something like ‘with a proper, suitable foot’. The former term has been linked to χαλάω, ‘to slacken, loosen’ (Hjalmar Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* [Heidelberg, 1960–1972], s.v.). While the default sense of both terms is nonsexual, the potential for sexual reference in the usage of both is clearly very great. Compare the sexual reference in Archilochos’ use of ϑυμός and μένος in the Cologne Epode: *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* 1, ed. Martin L. West, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1989), fr. 196a. Plato uses the verb χαλάω with τὰ νεῦϱα in a completely straightforward sense (*Phd.* 98d) but, given the use within later Greek of τὰ νεῦϱα for ‘penis’ (see note 31 above), we can surely entertain the possibility of a sexual reference for the verb at any period of Greek.

[55] Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, p. 30, tentatively accepts the suggestion of Umberto Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath: Canaanite Epics of the Patriarchal Age* (Jerusalem, 1951), pp. 42–43, that a story similar to that of Kumarbi and Anu may have been told of El and Baal in the Ugaritic cycle of myths, noting that the relating of “such an episode … would explain El’s somewhat ambiguous position in the extant Ugaritic texts.” It should be noted that Ašertu is the wife of Anu in Babylonian accounts, as Akkadian Ašratum.

[56] Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, p. 30; see Hans Gustav Güterbock, “The Hittite Version of the Hurrian Kumarbi Myths: Oriental Forerunners of Hesiod,” *AJA* 52 (1948), 123–134, reprinted in *Perspectives on Hittite Civilization: Selected Writings of Hans Gustav Güterbock*, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago Assyriological Studies 26, ed. Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., and Irving L. Diamond (Chicago, 1997), pp. 39–48.

[57] ἄϱϑϱα, ‘ankles’, Hdt. 3.129; ἄϱϑϱα ποδοῖν, ‘joints / ankles of the feet’, Soph., *OT* 718. ἄϱϑϱα as ‘genitals’, Hdt. 3.87, 4.2; Arist., *Hist. an.* 504b23. Theoc., *Id.* 11.70–71 has Polyphemos say that he will complain to his mother (!) of his troubles with his throbbing ‘feet’ because of his unrequited love for Galatea. Vayos Liapis, “Polyphemus’ Throbbing πόδες: Theocritus *Idyll* 11.70–1,” *Phoenix* 63 (2009), 156–161 while seeing a general sexual reference in Polyphemos’ complaint, rejects the use of πόδες in this passage as a euphemism for ‘genitals’, regarding the actual feet as a site for the pooling of semen in ancient perception, although he notes that elsewhere πούς may possibly be used as a euphemism “for the phallus,” with reference to Jeffrey Henderson, *The Maculate Muse:*

associated with the Near Eastern god El has been transferred to the Greek god who plays a similar role in relation to his wife and her lover in the Greek ballad.

In the Hittite myth the Stormgod tells Elkuniršа that Ašertu has impugned his virility. El is an *old* god—a very old god—and with anthropomorphism taken seriously, we get issues of senility and impotence, as we can see from some lines of a poem that has been said to be "one of the frankest and most sensuous in ancient Near-Eastern literature."[58] It involves El and two females, almost certainly Asherah and Anat, El's daughters, "willing victims," as Pope characterizes them, "of El's senile amativeness."[59]

Here is a translation of part of "this intriguing text":[60]

> [El walks(?)] the shore of the sea,
> and strides the shore of the deep.
> [ ] two torches,
> two torches from the top of the fire.
> Now they are low, now they rise
> now they cry "Daddy, daddy,"
> and now they cry "Mama, mama."
> El's 'hand' grows long as the sea,
> El's 'hand' as the flood.
> Long is El's 'hand' as the sea,
> El's 'hand' as the flood.
> El takes the two torches,
> the two torches from the top of the fire,
> he takes and puts in his house.
> El, his rod sinks.
> El, his love-staff droops.
> He raises, he shoots skyward.

Obscene Language in Attic Comedy, 2nd ed. (New York, 1991), pp. 129–130 and 248. (For just this possibility I would agree with the manuscripts and give the ὁρῶ ['I see (it)'] in both 1323 and 1324 of Aristophanes' *Frogs* to Dionysos, with accompanying stage business indicating a willful misunderstanding of the question "Do you see this foot?", and a corresponding 'misidentification' of the 'foot' in question.) Liapis finds an explicit sexual reference for πούς in Theokritos' Polyphemos passage unlikely because both feet are mentioned (πόδας ἀμφοτέρως) but in a sexual context surely this would be a reference to the two testicles.

[58] Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, p. 73; see Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, p. 35.

[59] Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, p. 35. On p. 36 Pope compares Philo's account (*FHG* fr. 2.18, p. 568) of "Ouranos in exile sen[ding] his virgin daughter Astarte and her two sisters Rhea and Dione to slay Kronos by treachery." But—in Pope's words—"Kronos took and married them although they were his sisters." (Note the appearance of Dione again.)

[60] Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, p. 37.

> He shoots a bird in the sky;
> he plucks and puts it on the coals.
> El would seduce the woman.
> Lo the women exclaim:
> "O mate, mate, your rod sinks,
> your love-staff droops."
> Now the bird roasts on the fire,
> bakes on the coals.
> The women are El's wives,
> El's wives and forever.
> Lo the wives exclaim:
> "O daddy, daddy, your rod sinks
> your love-staff droops."
> Now the bird roasts on the fire,
> bakes on the coals.
> The girls are El's girls,
> El's girls and forever.
>
> Lo the women exclaim:
> "O mate, mate, your rod sinks,
> your love-staff droops."
> Lo, the bird roasts on the fire,
> bakes on the coals.
> The women are [El's wives],
> El's wives and forever.
> He bends, their lips he [kis]ses,
> Lo, their lips are sweet,
> sweet as grapes.
> As he kisses, they conceive;
> as he embraces, they become pregnant.
> They travail and give birth
> to Dawn and Dusk.
> Word is brought to El:
> "El's wi[ves] have given [bi]rth."
> "What have they borne?"
> "they have borne Dawn and Dus[k]."[61]

We hear nothing like this in the Aphrodite story (except by implication, seeing that she is not a satisfied wife) but perhaps a diffused nexus of motifs involving an impotent god, his frustrated wife, and her young lover accounts for the otherwise unaccountable marriage (again, only here in the early myths) of the goddess of love to the lame smith-god.

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[61] SS 30–53, Pope's translation, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, pp. 37–38. Pope, pp. 36–39, notes that the sexual symbolism of fire is ancient and universal and that the torches here represent a pair of passionate females, no doubt Asherah and Anat; he comments, further, that "[t]he phallic symbolism of 'hand' is patent" and that "[t]he roasting of the bird is a ritual designed to alleviate impotence."

In considering the parallels among the Hittite myth of Ašertu, the Stormgod (Tarḫuna), and Elkunirša, and the Greek myth of Aphrodite, Ares, and Hephaistos, no single detail or motif mentioned here is compelling in itself. We have only echoes, crosslinguistic and crosscultural echoes, but taken together they are suggestive of some type of diffusion of the Hittite myth (and / or its presumed West Semitic ancestor) into Greek accounts of the lives and loves of their gods.[62]

The location of the land where the epic poet tells us this song was sung to Odysseus—that is, where the poet intended, if he did intend, Skheria to be understood to be—is unknown but it is certainly east of Attika, not in the western islands where, since antiquity, some have wanted to locate it.[63] When Odysseus prepares to enter the city of the Phaiakians, Athena appears to him in disguise and leads him to the palace of Alkinoos. After giving him the lineage of the Phaiakian royal house and some sound advice, she leaves Skheria and travels to Athens by way of Marathon:

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[62] Already for the Hittite period an association of Aphrodite with the 'Stormgod of the Army' in a treaty text was tentatively suggested by Hans Güterbock, "Troy in Hittite texts? Wilusa, Ahhiyawa, and Hittite History," in *Troy and the Trojan War: A Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College, October 1984*, ed. Machteld Mellink (Bryn Mawr, 1986), p. 44, reprinted in *Perspectives on Hittite Civilization*, ed. Hoffner and Diamond, p. 227 and n. 28. Of the gods of Wilusa invoked as witnesses to the Alaksandu Treaty between Wilusa (increasingly thought to be Ilios / Troy) and the Hittite king, only three are specified by name, the Stormgod of the Army, Apollo (if the identification with Appaliunas is correct), and between them a third in a lacuna, where Ferdinand Sommer, "Aḫḫijava und kein Ende?" *Indogermanische Forschungen* 55 (1937), pp. 178–179, expected a mention of the main goddess, as noted by Güterbock, who asked, "Should we venture a restoration of ^{d}[IŠTAR-*li-iš*] as *interpretatio Hethitica* of Aphrodite?" Itamar Singer, "Purple-Dyers in Lazpa," in *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and Their Neighbours: Proceedings of an International Conference on Cross-Cultural Interaction, September 17–19, 2004, Emory University, Atlanta, GA*, ed. Billie Jean Collins, Mary R. Bachvarova, and Ian C. Rutherford (Oxford, 2008), p. 32, sees a possible reference to (a form of) Aphrodite in a Hittite oracle text: "In a well-known oracular inquiry, an ailing Hittite king (probably Hattusili III) consults the Deity of Ahhiyawa and the Deity of Lazpa [Lesbos]. This unique reference shows that Lazpa, the only eastern Aegean island explicitly mentioned in the Hittite texts, was the abode of some important deity, perhaps an early hypostasis of Aphrodite."

[63] The Korkyrians laid claim to the identity of Skheria and thereby, as Thucydides notes, to the 'naval renown' of the Phaiakians; see Thuc. 1.25.4 and 3.70.4 with Hornblower's notes: *A Commentary on Thucydides* 1: *Books 1–3* (Oxford 1991). See further Hainsworth, *Commentary*, on Hom., *Od.* 6.8: "Modern identifications range from Istria to Cyrenaica but the favourite is Corfu [ancient Korkyra]." Of course it is never made explicit in the *Odyssey* that Skheria is an island, although Nausikaa's words, οἰκέομεν δ' ἀπάνευθε πολυκλύστῳ ἐνὶ πόντῳ, 'we dwell far away in the surging sea' (Hom., *Od.* 6.204), would seem to imply an island home.

> [F]lashing-eyed Athena departed over the barren sea, and left lovely Skheria. She came to Marathon and broad-wayed Athens, and entered the well-built house of Erectheus.[64]

Skheria is the poet's island, in his imagination, but the poet may well have based its depiction on an island known to him, perhaps one in the Anatolian / Ionian sphere, perhaps an island that received and transformed Anatolian stories of the escapades of the gods;[65] the frivolous touch in the transformation—if transformation it is—is certainly in keeping with the mores of the Phaiakians as described by the *Odyssey* poet, and as generally imputed to the Ionians by later Greeks.[66]

Jasper Griffin has said of the Iliadic Helen that "[i]n terms of the story, without the gods the abduction of Helen would be what it already is in Herodotos and what it remains for Offenbach: an essentially frivolous tale of a lively wife, a lusty lover, and a cuckold. The agency of Aphrodite, her protection of the man who 'has the gifts of Aphrodite', her compulsion of Helen, make the story a significant and tragic one."[67]

It is ironic that the goddess, whose interest made the Iliadic Helen a serious figure, seems to have suffered a fate similar to that of her protégé. If her Phaiakian story did indeed have its sources in Ašertu's unhappy encounter with her own Stormgod, then the goddess herself has suffered a similar diminishment to the mere status of a lively wife bedded by a lusty lover and humiliated by her cuckolded husband—a joke of a tale for the passing amusement of the Phaiakian court and their unknown guest: Aphrodite's Skherian captivity.[68]

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[64] Hom., *Od.* 7.18–77; Athena's departure: 78–81, trans. A.T. Murray, rev. George E. Dimock, Homer, *Odyssey: Books 1–2* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995) (with spelling of names changed). As a colleague remarked when I commented on the implications of this passage, it would indeed be a very lost goddess who came to Athens from the west via Marathon.

[65] Cf. Irad Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity* (Berkeley, 1998), p. 14: "Phaiakia is indeed modeled on Ionian sites in the eastern Mediterranean." Hainsworth's commentary on Hom., *Od.* 8.298 notes a "remarkable vase fragment from Lemnos c. 550 BC (i.e. from the pre-Hellenic period) … [showing] two crouching figures, a nude goddess and an armed warrior, *apparently in fetters*." He comments that "as it stands this does not illustrate the *Odyssey*'s telling of the story, but suggests that the tale is not just an Ionian *jeu d'esprit*." Note Alkinoos' remark that some of his people have seen Euboia and they said it is the most distant of lands (τηλοτάτω, 7.321–322). Note also that at *Od.* 7.84, Odysseus at the Phaiakian court wears a purple cloak furnished by his hosts. On the importance (and the cost) of purple-dyed garments and their Eastern origins and associations see Itamar Singer, "Purple-Dyers," pp. 21–43.

[66] Starting with the accounts of Herodotos (1.43; 5.69) and Thucydides (5.9; 6.77; 8.25).

[67] Jasper Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, 1980), p. 163.

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[68] My thanks to the editors of this volume and the organizers of the conference that engendered it, Amy C. Smith and Sadie Pickup, and to the conference participants.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FATHER-DAUGHTER DYNAMICS IN THE *ILIAD*: THE ROLE OF APHRODITE IN DEFINING ZEUS' REGIME

Kassandra Jackson

Conflict is a key theme in most discussions about the *Iliad*: conflict between Trojans and Argives, conflict between mortals and their gods. There is one conflict, however, that has received little attention from Homeric scholars, namely, the ongoing competition between Aphrodite and Athena. Not only do these goddesses support different sides in the war, but Aphrodite is also the specific target of Athena's verbal and even physical antagonism.[1] Mortals often contrast the two, as does Diomedes when he mocks Aphrodite's martial efforts, saying, οὔτ' ἄρ' Ἀθηναίη ("no Athena she"; 5.333). Furthermore, Zeus displays clear favoritism toward Athena, while taking pains, as this paper shall demonstrate, to subvert and control Aphrodite's power. Homer, I argue, uses Aphrodite, particularly during her interactions with Zeus and Athena, to highlight an even greater conflict: that between Zeus and the rest of the gods.

In origin myths, such as Hesiod's *Theogony* or the fifth *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, it is not problematic that Zeus' power is at times tenuous. This is unsurprising as these tales, after all, take as their subjects the systematization of divinities within the developing Olympian pantheon, and even the highest god must overcome challenges in order to legitimize his acquisition of τιμαί ('honors' or 'offices'). Modern scholars too often assume that, by the mythic times in which the Homeric epics are set, Zeus has stabilized his reign so that his ultimate authority is universally recognized by gods and men, that Zeus is no longer compelled to prove himself. In *The Politics of Olympus*, for example, Jenny Strauss Clay asserts, "In the world of epic, the domination of Zeus remains unquestioned, and, despite occasional perturbations, the foundations of Olympus can no longer be shaken."[2] Yet, "occasional perturbations" make up a large portion of the divine action in the *Iliad*. Achilles reminds Thetis of a time when Hera, Poseidon, and Pallas Athena plotted to put Zeus in bonds (Homer, *Il.* 1.399–400); Hera suggests rebellion against Zeus at 8.202 and is only deterred by Poseidon's misgivings; at 15.113–141, Poseidon threatens to declare war against Zeus if he should renege on his promise to destroy Troy. Even Zeus himself endangers the stability of Olympian life, when he proposes saving Sarpedon first (16.431–461), then Hektor (22.177–247)—acts that would open the door to all gods intervening on behalf of their favorites and meddling with fate.[3]

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[1] Cf. Hom., *Il.* 5.131; 5.427; 21.423–433.

[2] Jenny Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus: Form and Meaning in the Major Homeric Hymns* (Princeton, 2006), p. 12. Cf. Bruce Louden, *The Iliad: Structure, Myth, and Meaning* (Baltimore, 2006), p. 95; Griffin, *Homer*, p. 185.

If Homer intended to portray Zeus' power as uncontested during this period, then why would he include such a plethora of challenges and rebellious undercurrents? It is true that, for all the verbal threats, no god takes action against Zeus. Yet the subversive elements are nonetheless present. I suggest that the *Iliad* operates in some ways like a hymn to Zeus insofar as its content aligns with the hymnic narrative structure defined by Clay. She identifies two primary elements: the acquisition or redistribution of τιμαί among the gods, and the depiction of a single event that alters the cosmic order forever after.[4] Thus, although the *Iliad* is not hymnic in form or religious function, it can be considered a hymn in that it treats the epochal "moment" of the Trojan War, an event that effectively marks the end of the heroic age.[5] It is at this cosmic turning point that Zeus, under constant pressure from his unruly family, must take steps to assert his power and entitlement to his greatest epithet: πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε ('father of men and gods').[6] While many issues arise in the *Iliad* concerning Zeus' cosmic role, such as the question of his relationship to fate, it is Zeus' self-definition as 'father of men and gods' that will concern us here.

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[3] See George Maximilian Anthony Grube, "The Gods of Homer," *Phoenix* 5 (1951), 64, for further discussion of these episodes.

[4] Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, p. 15.

[5] Clay has argued convincingly in *The Politics of Olympus*, pp. 154–201, that the fifth *Homeric Hymn* is epochal in that it treats the conception of the last hero of divine parentage, Aineias, before Zeus puts an end to the mating of gods with mortals. This would suggest that no heroes were born to replace those that died at Troy and, hence, that Troy marked the end of an age. See also John Alvis, *Divine Purpose and Heroic Response in Homer and Virgil* (Lanham, 1995), p. 3 for the Trojan War as the end of the heroic age.

[6] Elizabeth S. Greene, "Revising Illegitimacy: The Use of Epithets in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes," *CQ* 55 (2005), 343–349, has demonstrated that texts in the hymnic genre often trace the acquisition of a god's epithets, as a part of his or her attainment of τιμαί in general.

In order to better understand the implications of Homer's portrayal of Aphrodite and her relationship to Zeus, it is helpful first to examine the mythic traditions from which he most likely drew material. Although scholars such as Paul Friedrich and Deborah Boedeker stress the Indo-European and Mycenaean influences on the Greek Aphrodite,[7] the numerous and obvious parallels between Aphrodite and Near Eastern goddesses Inanna, Astarte, and Ištar, for example, are undeniable. Charles Penglase and Boedeker highlight many such correspondences.[8] The main function of these goddesses is sex. They are closely linked with symbols of abundance, such as fruit and flowers, yet are never maternal. They possess martial and astral aspects, and they are particularly beautiful—often golden—daughters of the sky god. Even Herodotos (1.105) and Pausanias (1.14.7) were familiar with the Near Eastern roots of Aphrodite, the former connecting the Cyprus cult of Aphrodite *Ourania* to Ashkelon in Palestine, and the latter claiming that the goddess was first worshipped by the Assyrians. Both Hesiod and Homer, near contemporaries in the late eighth century, adopt Near Eastern elements, such as the Succession Myth, which they use to explain Zeus' genealogy and rise to power. It is unlikely that an itinerant poet would have failed to come into contact with the Near Eastern traditions surrounding Aphrodite. Yet, Homer and Hesiod responded to and selected from this material in different ways, the primary disparity between them being their account of the goddess' genealogy: Hesiod describes her as the motherless child of Ouranos, whereas Homer makes her the daughter of Zeus and the nymph Dione. The implications of Homeric Aphrodite's genealogy can be clarified by a brief examination of the alternative, which Hesiod develops in his *Theogony*. I shall argue that, while Hesiod's and Homer's Aphrodites seem, on the surface, to be dramatically different, they actually serve similar functions in relation to Zeus.

The *Theogony* demands a comparison between Aphrodite and Athena because, in each case, her kingly father produces the goddess without the usual involvement of a female. In each case, the unusual birth establishes a powerful link between each goddess and her respective father. Froma Zeitlin has noted that the reigns of Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus can each be metonymically linked to a particular part of the body: Ouranos produces progeny from his groin (Aphrodite), Kronos from his belly (when he swallows and then vomits up his children by Rhea), and Zeus from his head (Athena).[9] Appropriately, Ouranos' reign is characterized by gross physicality; most of his children by Gaia, such as the Titans, Kyklops, and the hundred-armed Kottos, Briareus, and Gyges (Hesiod, *Theog.* 139–155) display terrible excesses or deficiencies in their physical forms. Zeus' reign, however, is one of the mind: the first adjective used to describe his daughters, the Muses, is ὁμόφρονας ('of like mind'; 60), and Athena ἶσον ἔχουσαν / πατρὶ μένος καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν ("possessing strength equal to her father's and wise counsel"; 896–897). Just as Athena takes after her father with respect to the mind, Aphrodite possesses her father's same connection to the groin. She is generative, linked to the cycles of reproduction and fertility: see for comparison ἀμφὶ δὲ ποίη / ποσσὶν ὕπο ῥαδινοῖσιν ("grass grew up around her beneath her slender feet"; 194–195). On account of this, she can be said to embody the cycle of succession that supplanted first Ouranos then Kronos, and which threatens the stability of Zeus' newly acquired kingship.

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[7] Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, pp. 9–54; Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry*, pp. 18–43.

[8] Penglase, *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia*, pp. 159–179; Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry*, pp. 18–43.

Hesiod's Aphrodite is in many ways a frightening and powerful figure. The daughter of the first ruler of the gods, she is older than Zeus, representative of a time so remote that it was profoundly unfamiliar to later Greeks. She is geographically liminal, hailing from distant Cyprus rather than mainland Greece. Furthermore, her involvement with childbirth has dangerous effects. There are only a handful of instances in Hesiod's catalogues of family trees in which he specifically describes a mother as ἐν φιλότητι … / ὑποδμηθεῖσα διὰ χρυσῆν Ἀφροδίτην (a euphemism for conception, literally, "dominated in love by golden Aphrodite"). At 962, Aphrodite in this way becomes responsible for the birth of Medea, a woman strongly associated in Classical tragedy with "the other." She also acts as midwife at the birth of Geryon (980–982), whom Zeus' son Herakles must kill. Even more significantly, she is linked to the birth of Typhon (822), with whom Zeus must engage in single combat, to prove his right to the divine throne. Thus, Aphrodite is an indirect threat to Zeus on many counts, including her temporal and geographical liminality, and her ability to initiate the production of dangerous offspring.

Aphrodite's generative power makes her a symbol of succession, and thus she is a constant reminder of the possibility that Zeus might himself be overthrown. As Norman Brown has pointed out, "the whole structure of the *Theogony* raises the question, ‘How did Zeus avoid the fate of Uranus and Cronus?’ ”[10] Zeus’ response, when faced with the threat that Aphrodite embodies, seems to have been Athena. Athena possesses all of the characteristics that a father would want in a male heir—she is wise and warlike and skilled with her hands—but because she is female, she cannot personally replace him. Nor can she produce a child to overthrow Zeus in her stead, for Athena, unlike Aphrodite, is a virgin, representing the end rather than the perpetuation of succession cycles. The way in which Zeus conceives and produces Athena is a fitting conclusion to this cycle, as it begins with the generative methods of his predecessors and finishes with his own innovative touch. Initially, it is Zeus’ first wife Metis who is about to give birth (ἔμελλε … τέξεσθαι) to Athena (888–889), having presumably become pregnant in the usual genital fashion. Before she can accomplish this, however, Zeus swallows her and puts her in his belly (ἑὴν ἐσκάτθετο νηδύν; 890) in a manner reminiscent of Kronos. Finally, he himself produces Athena from his head (ἐκ κεφαλῆς; 924), effectively asserting the dominance of the head over the groin and the belly. This captures the movement from μήδεα as ‘genitals’ to μήδεα as ‘counsels’ that characterizes his reign.

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[9] Froma Zeitlin, personal interview (Spring 2007).

While Hesiod’s Aphrodite is explicitly “other,” one of the many worthy opponents Zeus must face in order to establish himself as ruler of the gods, Homer’s Aphrodite seems to be a weak and silly creature, subordinate to Zeus, who is her father. Does Homer’s Aphrodite pose any threat to Zeus? Certainly! As noted earlier, Zeus’ reign in the *Iliad* is unstable, and I propose that the Iliadic Aphrodite threatens Zeus’ power, albeit in a subtler way than other members of the divine family. Zeus’ response to this threat is important because it will determine whether he is worthy to redefine his τιμαί and merit the epithet “father of men and gods.” Homer’s decision to portray Aphrodite not only as Διὸς θυγάτηρ (‘daughter of Zeus’) but also as the daughter of Dione (whose name itself is simply a variation of Dios) complements Homer’s agenda for Zeus within the text. This agenda involves the subversion, replacement, and assumption of Aphrodite’s power by Zeus or by the child with whom he is most closely linked, Athena.

Homer’s text limits Aphrodite’s power by three means: first, the deliberate action of Zeus; second, the narrative action involving other gods; and third, the conscious omissions on the part of the narrator. An example of the first can be found at 5.426–430, where Zeus tells the recently wounded Aphrodite, οὔ τοι τέκνον ἐμὸν δέδοται πολεμήϊα ἔργα, / ἀλλὰ σύ γ᾽ ἱμερόεντα μετέρχεο ἔργα γάμοιο, / ταῦτα δ᾽ Ἄρηϊ θοῷ καὶ Ἀθήνῃ πάντα μελήσει ("Not to you, my child, are given warlike works, but attend to the charming works of marriage; all these things shall be the concern of Ares and Athena"). This raises some questions. Why must Zeus remind Aphrodite that her sphere of influence is limited to the amatory and does not include the martial? Why, if Aphrodite has no association with war to begin with, is she so active in the initial confrontations? George Miller Calhoun maintains that Aphrodite's involvement in the battle is purely comic, but I favor Friedrich's interpretation that such scenes are "'a last gurgle' of the warlike Ishtar."[11] Homer hints at the Aphrodite-Ištar connection throughout the text. For example, the word "dog" or "bitch" is often associated with both the Semitic Ištar and the Homeric Aphrodite. The Enheduanna text (ca. 2300 BC) gives Ištar the epithet, "you who devour cadavers like a dog,"[12] and Athena mocks Aphrodite with a similar expression, κυνάμυια ('dog fly'; 21.421).[13] As the goddess of love, Aphrodite is already a highly potent deity; Zeus' authority might be at risk should he allow Aphrodite access to both the sexual and militant aspects of her Near Eastern predecessors. This scene can therefore be read as Zeus' attempt to limit Aphrodite's domain of influence to sex and marriage by cutting her off from her martial qualities.

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[10] Norman O. Brown, “The Birth of Athena,” *TAPA* 83 (1952), 132.

Hera, too, furthers Zeus' agenda in the *Dios Apate* episode (14.153–360). At the start of the episode, it appears that Aphrodite has the upper hand. Hera suspects that the only way she will be able to evade Zeus' command to stay out of the war would be to seduce him away from the scene. Seduction is Aphrodite's forté, however, and Hera must appeal to the love goddess if her plan is to succeed. Yet once Hera has acquired Aphrodite's ποικίλον κεστόν ('embroidered girdle'), the tables turn. Hera does not travel to the ends of the earth to reunite Okeanos and Tethys in love, as she tells Aphrodite she will do (14.198–210), but rather turns Zeus' postcoital slumber into an opportunity for Poseidon to assist the Argives (14.352–362), to the detriment of Aphrodite's beloved Trojans. Thus, while the *Dios Apate* scene recognizes the awesome power of love and seduction to overcome even the mind of Zeus, it simultaneously removes this power from Aphrodite's control, as her own tools are used against her.

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[11] George Miller Calhoun, "Zeus the Father in Homer," *TAPA* 66 (1978), 62. In *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, Friedrich himself asserts that Aphrodite is nonmartial, peaceful (pp. 96–97), and never warlike (p. 15).

[12] Trans. Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 15.

[13] Hephaistos calls Aphrodite "bitch-eyed" in the *Odyssey* (Hom., *Od.* 8.319), and Helen—whom West, Friedrich, and others identify as an offshoot of Aphrodite—is also compared to a dog.

Homer also takes away the power from Aphrodite's epithets. Whereas one of Aphrodite's most common epithets in Archaic literature is φιλομμειδής ('smile-loving'), in the *Iliad* she never does the smiling. Instead, she is the target not only of the condescending or spiteful smiles of the other gods (i.e., Zeus at 5.426 and Hera at 21.434), but also of their outright mockery (i.e., Athena at 21.428–433). Deborah Boedeker considers the double entendre of the word φιλομμειδής ('genital-loving' as well as 'smile-loving') and argues that the epithet is most frequently used "in contexts which explicitly (or implicitly) emphasize Aphrodite's aspect as a goddess of sexual love."[14] I would add to this interpretation that, in the *Iliad*, this epithet occurs most often when Aphrodite is being shamed or subordinated on account of her association with sexuality. Aphrodite bears this epithet five times in the *Iliad*: first, when she solicitously moves a chair for Helen, who has just chided her (3.424); second, when Zeus is speaking to her κεϱτομίοις ἐπέεσσι ('with mocking words'; 4.10); third, when the goddess is crying on her mother's lap (5.375); fourth, when she gullibly agrees to hand over her girdle to Hera (14.211); and fifth, when she is listed last in the divine battle lineup (20.40). None of these instances celebrates the power of sexual love that the epithet recalls. In contrast to her Canaan-Phoenician antecedent, Anat, a desirable goddess who "gluts her liver with laughter … for knee-deep she plunges in the blood of soldiery,"[15] Aphrodite is often the brunt of the joke. Yet, as Friedrich notes, gods and men "want to mock and humiliate Aphrodite precisely because she is the world's most potent goddess, the goddess of love and growth."[16]

Homer further restricts Aphrodite's τιμαί by failing to connect her with domains that were often associated with her Near Eastern predecessors or with Aphrodite herself in contemporary cult practice. The first of these is the goddess' astral aspect. Inanna, Ištar, and Astarte have celestial roles, as does the Aphrodite *Ourania* of Classical cult.[17] This Aphrodite shares epithets and narrative functions with both Eos and the Indic dawn goddess, Usas,[18] and her very name is etymologically linked to brightness

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[14] Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry*, p. 32.

[15] Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugarit and Minoan Crete: The Bearing of Their Texts on the Origins of Western Culture* (New York, 1996), p. 51.

[16] Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 105.

[17] Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry*, p. 5.

[18] For example, love affairs with mortals are characteristic of their myths: ibid., p. 14.

(δίτη).[19] Yet, although Homer makes Aphrodite the daughter of Dios and Dione, both of whose names are linked to the same root of 'brightness', he declines to emphasize her astral features.

Furthermore, Homer does not recognize any connection between Aphrodite and the sea. Even Archaic authors who do not follow Hesiod's genealogy of Aphrodite understand her as sea-born.[20] Her forerunner, Astarte, was revered as a goddess of navigation,[21] and the Cypriot Aphrodite at Paphos was often consulted about voyages and worshipped by seamen.[22] Much of the fighting in the *Iliad* takes place either by or on the sea, in the Argive boats, yet Homer never mentions Aphrodite in this context. Homer depicts an Aphrodite who is de-astralized, demartialized, and de-nauticized.[23]

The second tactic used by Homer's Zeus to curb the potentially excessive influence of Aphrodite is to replace her with Zeus' darling, Athena. Although Homer makes no reference to Athena's birth from Zeus' head, he makes it clear throughout the *Iliad* that Athena is Zeus' favorite and can, in some ways, be viewed as an active extension of Zeus himself. The daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus also bears an aegis into battle (see 2.446) and even dons her father's armor on two occasions (5.733 and 8.384). At 5.872–887, Ares accuses Zeus of turning a blind eye to the misbehavior of his daughter, yet Zeus is ever forgiving of Athena's wayward deeds. Even when Athena jealously believes that Zeus is favoring Thetis, she knows "the day will come when he will call me his flashing-eyed darling again" (8.373). The bond between Zeus and Athena is so strong that any τιμή Athena acquires becomes, to an extent, accessible to Zeus as well, although, as I shall explore later, this relationship is not without friction.

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[19] The precise etymology of Aphrodite's name has been a matter of scholarly contention for some time. Most seem to follow Maass' interpretation that ἄφρος + δίτη = bright foam: Ernst Maass, *Ugarit and Minoan Crete: The Bearing of Their Texts on the Origins of Western Culture* (New York, 1996), pp. 457–468. There have been a wide range of suggestions, however, ranging from "a Phrygite" with its implications of Phrygian origins (Silvio Ferri, "L'inno omerico a Afrodite e la tribu analotica deglie Otrusi," *Studi in onore di Luigi Castiglioni* [Florence, 1960], pp. 293–307) to the Etruscan "(e)prthni," meaning 'queen' (M. Hammarström, "Griechisch-etruskische Wortgleichungen," *Glotta* 11 [1921], 211–217). See Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry*, pp. 5–9, for a detailed exploration of proposed etymologies and, more recently, Gabriella Pironti, "Au nom d'Aphrodite," pp. 129–142.

[20] Cf. *Hymn. Hom*. 6.4–5, which describes her emergence from the ocean, "across the swell of the noisy sea, in soft foam," trans. Martin L. West (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

[21] Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, pp. 18–19.

[22] Ibid., p. 81.

[23] William Sale, "Aphrodite in the *Theogony*," *TAPA* 92 (1961), 512, points out that Homer also disassociates Aphrodite with birth, the product of the lovemaking that is her domain. This may be, but I understand this as a function of the genre and the subject being treated. There is little room for birth in the tale of the Trojan War.

Why might Zeus require an extension, such as Athena? As the highest of the gods, Zeus' position with regard to human activity is predominantly supervisory.[24] He is the keeper of knowledge[25] and, as such, can grant his nod or his dissent to an action, but cannot (or should not) personally instigate mortal deeds. Not once, in any Homeric text, does Zeus descend from one of his mountain sanctuaries to participate in human activity below. Even while his wife, siblings, and children are fighting hand-to-hand with mortal warriors, Zeus must remain a knowing overseer from afar. What Zeus needs, then, is someone else who can initiate mortal action on his behalf. Toward the beginning of the *Iliad*, the prime initiator in the war is Aphrodite. If we believe that Homer understood the war to have been set off by Paris' choice, then Aphrodite was largely responsible for the entire *Iliad*. Furthermore, during the first three books, Aphrodite proves to be the most active divine participant in the battle, snatching Paris away from imminent asphyxiation (3.374–389) and provoking Helen to chastise the cowardly behavior of her lover (3.413–436). At the start of book 4, Zeus draws the attention of Hera and Athena to Aphrodite's achievements, and he ridicules their own comparative laziness:

> δοιαὶ μὲν Μενελάῳ ἀρηγόνες εἰσὶ θεάων
> Ἥρη τ᾽ Ἀργείη καὶ Ἀλαλκομενηῒς Ἀθήνη.
> ἀλλ᾽ ἤτοι ταὶ νόσφι καθήμεναι εἰσορόωσαι
> τέρπεσθον· τῷ δ᾽ αὖτε φιλομειδὴς Ἀφροδίτη
> αἰεὶ παρμέμβλωκε καὶ αὐτοῦ κῆρας ἀμύνει·
> καὶ νῦν ἐξεσάωσεν ὀϊόμενον θανέεσθαι.
>
> Two of the goddesses have Menelaus for helpers,
> Argive Hera and Alalkomenean Athena.
> But while they sit apart and take pleasure in looking only,
> by that other one smile-loving Aphrodite
> is always standing, and wards off the fates from him,
> and just now has saved him, when he thought he would die.[26]

After this encouragement from her father, however, Athena begins to take over Aphrodite's role as prime initiator, first under orders from

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[24] Cf. Jasper Griffin, "The Divine Audience and the Religion of the *Iliad*," *CQ* 28 (1978), 1–22.

[25] E.g. Hom., *Il.* 15.49–77, in which Zeus verbally anticipates the remaining action of the epic.

[26] Hom., *Il.* 4.7–12, trans. A.T. Murray, rev. William F. Wyatt (Cambridge, Mass., 1999).

Hera, but eventually under the command of Zeus himself. Love and desire are powers that work their inspiration from within and, for this reason, are particularly suited to motivating humans. But Athena, too, is capable of influencing mortal decision making, her locus of control being the mind, rather than the heart. It is in this way, for example, that Athena stays Achilles' hand as he "ponders in his mind" (ὃ ταῦθ' ὥρμαινε κατὰ φρένα) whether to draw his sword against Agamemnon (1.193) and inspires Pandaros to shoot at Menelaos, having "persuaded his mind in his folly" (τῷ δὲ φρένας ἄφρονι πεῖθεν; 4.104).[27] Ultimately, Athena becomes so involved in the war that Nestor comes to credit all the Argives' major successes to the goddess (11.714–758), and several heroes pray to her foremost among the gods as the deity most likely to act on their behalf (10.460; 17.561–567).

Aphrodite, in contrast, becomes increasingly incapable of successfully completing the actions she undertakes. Apollo must finish off both of her primary interventions later in the epic, first when she saves but drops Aineias (5.335–346), and again when she attempts to protect Hektor's corpse (23.185–191). Brown has noted Zeus' tendency in the *Theogony* to replace a dangerous figure with one that comes more easily under his control, using as his example Zeus' exchange of his first wife, the volatile Metis, for the more obedient Themis.[28] Zeus appears to be taking similar defensive measures in the *Iliad*, by transferring the role of prime initiator of mortal action from a goddess who has the potential to be overly powerful, Aphrodite, to his favorite daughter, Athena.

The contrast between Athena's successes and Aphrodite's failures by the end of the *Iliad* also suggests a value judgment on their comparative methods of interacting with mortals. Friedrich has observed that, of the pantheonic goddesses, Athena and Aphrodite are depicted in Archaic literature as having the greatest physical proximity to mortals,[29] but on dramatically different levels. Aphrodite, as encapsulated in *Homeric Hymn* 5, is the lover of men and, in this capacity, has the dangerous ability to blur the line between mortals and immortals by mating one with the other to produce semidivine offspring. It is this behavior that Zeus sets out to curb in the *Hymn* by giving the laughing goddess a taste of her own medicine. In the *Iliad*, too, Aphrodite is the first point of overly intimate contact between gods and men, though this contact is of a martial nature. She is the first deity to be wounded by a mortal in battle (Diomedes at 5.330), and this transgression opens the door to further god-mortal combat, such as the faceoff between Ares and Diomedes, who is backed by Hera and Athena (5.820). Aphrodite's relationship with mortals is not one to be emulated. Instead, Zeus, through his favoritism, promotes the example set by Athena: a sister and a friend to men. She does not confound categories by mating and producing crossbreeds with humans because she acknowledges and respects her kinship relationship to them. Within the role of sister-friend, Athena is able to assist men at close range while maintaining the reserve befitting a god moving among mortals. Zeus, by belittling Aphrodite and encouraging Athena, seeks to replace Aphrodite's model of excessively intimate interaction with Athena's more appropriate model of friendship.

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[27] This theme is developed even further in the *Odyssey*, in which Athena is often described as ἐπὶ φρεσὶ θῆκε θεὰ ('putting a thought'; cf. 5.427) into Odysseus' mind.

[28] Brown, "The Birth of Athena," p. 133.

[29] Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 85.

Yet, for all Zeus' efforts to subdue and replace Aphrodite, she does not simply vanish from the text. She is too important a divinity and, despite reduced powers, still has critical roles in procreation and promiscuity that Zeus must access if he is to secure the epithet "father of men and gods." Early in his reign, promiscuity was most useful to Zeus. The *pater*, who, as Calhoun observes, affords "a far better example of absolute and unlimited power than ever did legitimate monarchy among the Hellenes,"[30] derives this absolute authority within the household from the unconditional love and sense of duty that form strong ties between kin. It follows, then, that the more "children" (or subordinate family members) a *pater* has, the more entrenched his power becomes. Aphrodite is the patron of promiscuity, and Zeus needed to be promiscuous in order to forge familial ties between himself and a significant number of gods and men.

By the mythic time of the *Iliad*, however, Zeus' focus has shifted from creating a firm filial foundation to stabilizing his "household" and asserting himself as its head. He accomplishes this in two ways: by behaving like a good father and by eliminating the competition. He handles challenges to his authority not simply by kingly mandate, but by mediating, conciliating, and occasionally shouting in a paternal manner. It is difficult for Zeus unquestionably to assert his paternity with gods such as Hera and Poseidon, who are his siblings and capable of making claims of equality. Therefore, it is through Athena and Aphrodite, his daughters most active in the narrative, that Zeus finds the best opportunities to emphasize his paternal aspect. He rebukes Athena for her willfulness, but is quick to forgive (8.426, 444), and he mediates between the two when Athena picks on Aphrodite (5.427).[31] Zeus also undermines anyone who might have a better claim to being the paradigmatic parent. As the goddess of love and procreation, Aphrodite would seem to be the logical divinity to take on that role. Yet, her attempts at good parenting in the *Iliad* are unsuccessful. At her critical maternal moment, Aphrodite manages to save her φίλον υἱὸν ('dear son'; 5.314) Aineias from death at the hand of Diomedes, only to drop him when Diomedes turns his rage against her (5.343). Even Friedrich, who contends that Aphrodite's motherliness holds only a "relatively secondary status" to her sensuousness, admits that she leaves an emotional gap that Demeter would come to fill.[32] Instead of Aphrodite *qua* mother, the *Iliad* emphasizes Aphrodite *qua* daughter. Her frequent epithet Διὸς θυγάτηρ ('daughter of Zeus') is a constant reminder that Zeus is the ultimate father, while the goddess of love is simply his child.

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[30] Calhoun, "Zeus the Father," p. 9.

Aphrodite's power, therefore, makes her both a potential threat to be tamed and a commodity to be claimed. This second aspect is particularly embodied in another of Aphrodite's most common epithets, "golden." The stem χρυς- is incorporated into the epithets of many goddesses, but Aphrodite is the only one ever referred to as purely "golden." Scholars most frequently take this epithet to be an expression of Aphrodite's beauty.[33] Yet, an analysis of the occurrences of the word χρύσεος in the *Iliad* reveals that this connection is of secondary importance to its connotation of prestige. The objects most often described as golden are elements of armor (studs, clasps, spear rings), gifts signifying ξένια ('guest friendship') between prominent families (cups, vessels, breastplates), and other symbols of power, such as Zeus' scales, Apollo's aegis, Hermes' sandals, and Athena's armor. Rather than serving as a symbol of feminine allure, the word χρύσεος in this text is charged with prestige in the male world of war and politics. Therefore, I understand "golden Aphrodite" also to be a source of κλέος ('esteem'). As the initiator of the Trojan War, Aphrodite is ultimately responsible for the κλέος that the heroes win through battle, that the gods acquire through their involvement, and that the poet himself earns by recounting the tale.[34] In *Homeric Hymn* 5, Zeus expresses concern that Aphrodite's power to mate god with mortal is causing her to boast among the Olympians (ἐπευξαμένη εἴπῃ; 48), a sign of one possessing κλέος. By the end of the hymn, however, it is Zeus who, having taken Aphrodite's power and used it against her (45), acquires the greatest prestige and authority. Perhaps the *Iliad* presents us with a parallel situation: if Zeus can not only undermine and replace Aphrodite, but also claim her as his own, then he can earn the sort of κλέος worthy of the leader of the gods and πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

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[31] The compromise between Athena and Apollo also occurs in front of Zeus' oak tree (Hom., *Il.* 7.17–42).

[32] Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 150.

[33] E.g., Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry*, p. 22; Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 79.

In conclusion, Homer's treatment of Aphrodite reveals that Zeus' regime in the *Iliad* is not stable as is often assumed. At the same time that the epic chronicles the fates and heroic acts of men, it also tests Zeus' right to his greatest epithet, "father of men and gods," an epithet he must earn by repeatedly confronting the members of his family who challenge his authority. Aphrodite's threat is subtle and revealed largely through the negative: she is mocked, belittled, and oppressed because she has the potential for great power. In order to keep this power under control, Zeus must both tame Aphrodite, by restricting her capacity and transferring some of her τιμαί to Athena, and claim her and her abilities as his own. He does so by including her in his family and regime rather than leaving her as a dangerous "other." She is a valuable resource, offering κλέος and all the power of love and seduction to those who can channel her energy. Finally, though Zeus confronts many challenges to his authority throughout the *Iliad*, he emerges successful, and the result is a more unified and systematized pantheon, bearing the seeds of Panhellenism.[35] Perhaps this is why Herodotos would come to say, "[Homer and Hesiod] taught the Greeks of the descent of the gods, and gave to all their several names, and honors, and arts, and declared their outward forms."[36]

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[34] See Ann Suter, "Aphrodite/Paris/Helen: A Vedic Myth in the *Iliad*," *TAPA* 117 (1987), 51.

[35] Even if Panhellenism was not the conscious agenda of such an early author, as noted by Clay, *Politics of Olympus*, p. 10.

[36] Hdt. 2.53.

PART THREE

THE SPREAD OF APHRODITE'S CULTS

CHAPTER NINE

IMAGES OF CYPRIOT APHRODITE IN HER SANCTUARIES DURING THE AGE OF THE CITY-KINGDOMS[1]

Anja Ulbrich

Ancient Greek and Latin literature, from Homer in the eighth century BC until Late Antiquity, unanimously celebrates Cyprus as "island of Aphrodite," to use the words of Euripides in *Bacchai*, in the fifth century BC.[2] According to Hesiod's *Theogony*, the sea-born goddess first set foot on land on Cyprus.[3] The sixth *Homeric Hymn* also informs us that Cyprus was assigned to Aphrodite as her home, by cast of lots among the gods.[4] Aphrodite's prominent role as the great goddess of Cyprus is reflected in various terms used by Greek poets. Thus, she is mostly called *Kypris*, but also *Kypria*, *Kyprogenes*, and *Kyprogeneía*.[5] She is 'Princess of Cyprus' (*Kýprou despoína*), 'Lady of Cyprus' (*Potnia Kýprou*), and 'Queen of Cyprus' (*Kýprou basilís*).[6] In such poetic phrases and in the recorded myths, Greek poets draw a rather veiled picture of a versatile and ambiguous goddess with universal power and an immense significance in Cypriot cultic life.[7]

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[1] This chapter draws on my doctoral research, in Anja Ulbrich, *Kypris. Heiligtümer und Kulte weibliche Gottheiten auf Zypern während der kyproarchaischen und kyproklassischen Epoche*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 44 (Münster, 2008), specifically chapter 4, on the iconography of the goddess.

[2] All dates in this article are BC unless otherwise noted. Eur., *Bacch*. 402–405. A complete collection of Greek sources on Cypriot Aphrodite was compiled by Kyriakou Hadjioannou, *Η αϱχαία Κύπϱος εν τὰς ελληνιϰὰς πηγάς Β* (Nicosia, 1973), pp. 2–222. All ancient Greek sources referred to or cited below were taken from this collection.

[3] Hes., *Theog*. 190–200.

[4] *Hymn. Hom*. 6.1–21.

[5] For *Kypris* see, e.g., Hom., *Il*. 5.333, 422, 458, passim. The other 140 sources mentioning *Kypris* include Sappho, Theognis, Athenaios, and Aischylos: see Hadjioannou, *Κύπϱος*, pp. 76–129. For *Kypria* see ibid., p. 144, including Pind., *Ol*. 1.75–78, and *Nem*. 8.6–7. For *Kyprogenes* see ibid., pp. 144–148, including *Hymn. Hom*. 10.1–3 and Hes., *Theog*. 199, among others. For *Kyprogeneía* see ibid., pp. 148–155, including Pind., *Pyth*. 4.213–219, Sappho, Athenaios, and Theokritos.

[6] Pindar as recorded in Ath. 13.573e–f (*Kýprou despoína*); Ar., *Lys*. 831–834 (*Pótnia Kýprou*); Ael., *VH* 3.42 (*Kýprou basilís*).

To clarify the various aspects, traits, and functions of Aphrodite in Cyprus, one must analyze the different aspects of Cypriot sanctuaries that can be ascribed to the goddess. These aspects include topography of the *temene* or sacred precinct in relation to settlement patterns and political geography, spatial organization and features of each *temenos*, evidence for ritual and cult practice, as well as the iconography of votive sculptures and terracottas.[8] This chapter focuses on the last of these aspects, namely, the iconography and meaning of images of Cypriot Aphrodite dedicated in her sanctuaries during the era of the city-kingdoms (750 to 310). Most of the images can be securely identified as those of Aphrodite, while others possibly represent the goddess.

A few general remarks on the historical, cultural, and archaeological context of those images is appropriate. For the Cypriot Archaic and Classical periods, between 750 and 310, there is archaeological evidence for more than two hundred sanctuaries on the island, spread among the thirteen (or possibly fifteen) city-kingdoms and their territories (figure 9.1).[9] The most famous Aphrodite sanctuaries in Cyprus were at Paphos and Golgoi. Her *temenos* in Paphos was regarded in antiquity as the navel of the world (like Delphi).[10] Pausanias tells us the goddess was worshipped at Golgoi even earlier than at Paphos, and before the arrival of Greek heroes on their return from the Trojan War.[11] She was also venerated on most of the promontories of the island, such as the ancient capes

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[7] For an overview on the cult places of Aphrodite attested in Greek literature, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 30–32 and 104–137 passim, listed by city-kingdom alphabetically.

[8] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, addresses all of those aspects, focusing on iconography (chapter 4) and topography (chapters 5–6).

[9] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 263–478 (catalogue), and 481–495 (sanctuaries). Figure 9.1 details the city-kingdoms, and minor cities or archaeological sites within their territories (italics), by the modern or, if known, ancient names. The status of Golgoi and Karpasia as separate, autonomous city-kingdoms is doubtful, hence the question marks behind these names. Golgoi might have belonged to the territory of Idalion, from the city of which we have a votive inscription to Golgia, meaning the goddess Aphrodite of Golgoi. For the inscription, see Olivier Masson, *Les Inscriptions Chypriotes Syllabiques*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1983), pp. 245–246, no. 219, fig. 64. Karpasia might have been a major city in the vast territory of Salamis, which reached its largest extension during the reign of Euagoras II, about 386 BC. The borders of the territories can be reconstructed on the basis of topography and archaeological evidence (for example, inscriptions and the style of terracottas and sculpture): Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 186–196.

[10] Hsch. s.v. γῆς ὄμφαλος.

[11] Paus. 8.5.2–3.

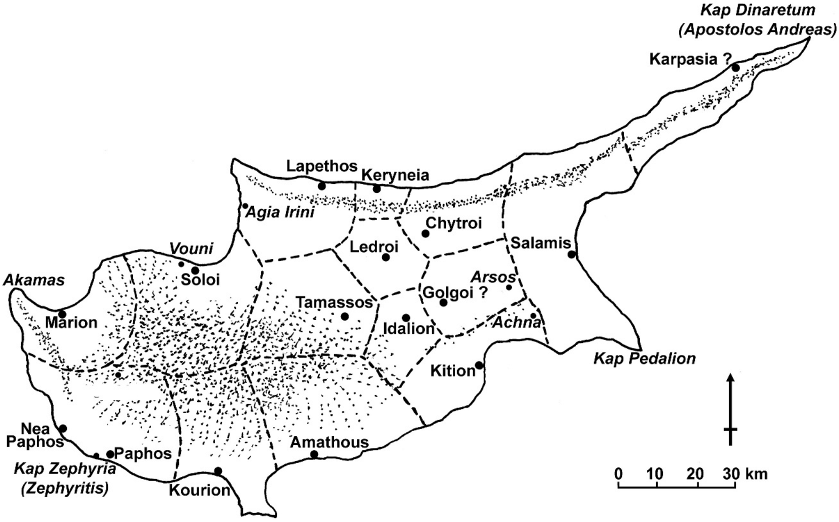
Kap Dinaretum
(Apostolos Andreas)
Karpasia ?
Lapethos
Keryneia
Agia Irini
Chytroi
Vouni
Ledroi
Salamis
Akamas
Soloi
Arsos
Golgoi ?
Tamassos
Marion
Idalion
Achna
Kap Pedalion
Kition
Nea Paphos
Paphos
Amathous
Kap Zephyria
(Zephyritis)
Kourion
0 10 20 30 km

Figure 9.1 Map of Cyprus with all city-kingdoms and other cult places mentioned in the text. Drawing Anja Ulbrich.

Dinaretum, Pedalion, and Zephyria.[12] Inscriptions to "Aphrodite Golgia" or "Golgia," from inland sanctuaries or from villages nearby such sites as Arsos or Achna, show that the goddess was also worshipped in rural areas.[13]

Herodotos (1.105.2–4), Pausanias (1.14.7), and later Lucian (*Dea Syria* 6) equate Cypriot Aphrodite with Phoenician Astarte, herself worshipped, for example, at Ashkelon and Aphaca / Afqa.[14] A few Phoenician inscriptions from the city-kingdoms of Kition and Lapethos, as well as Paphos, also attest the worship of Astarte in Cyprus.[15] At Paphos-Xylinos, a Phoenician dedicatory inscription to "Astarte of Paphos" was found alongside a Greek alphabetic dedication to Aphrodite of Paphos; both could have come from the same sanctuary in the vicinity.[16] Interestingly, the possible images of Astarte in her securely ascribed sanctuaries at Kition are identical to the certain and possible images of Aphrodite, discussed below, in her epigraphically attested sanctuaries in Amathous, Chytroi, Golgoi, Arsos, and Paphos.[17] This also supports the equation of Aphrodite and Astarte in Cypriot sanctuaries and, partially, in cult practice.

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[12] See Strabo 14.6.3, C682; Ulbrich, *Kypris*, p. 132. Her worship at Cape Zephyria is also attested by the epithet *Zephyritis*, used by Kallimachos for *Kypris*, as recorded in Ath. 7.318b.

[13] See Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 116, 305–306 (Arsos); 134, 447–448 (Achna). The inscriptions from both sites were first published in Henri Seyrig, "Inscriptions de Chypre," *BCH* 51 (1927) 151–153, nos. 8–10 (Arsos) and 503 (Achna).

[14] For the assimilation of Aphrodite and Astarte, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 42–44, 46–48, 137–139, with further references; Karageorghis, *Kypris*, pp. 227–228; Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 2–5, s.v. "Aphrodite."

[15] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 137–148; p. 338 (Kition); p. 345 (Kition, KI 1); p. 348 (Kition, KI 2); p. 371 (Lapethos); pp. 399–400 (Paphos). Those dedications found in sanctuary contexts as well as secondary contexts are published or discussed in: Maria Giulia Guzzo Amadasi and Vassos Karageorghis, *Fouilles de Kition* 3. *Inscriptions phéniciennes* (Nicosia,

Among the two hundred Cypriot Iron Age sanctuaries attested by a considerable number of votive figures in stone and terracotta, only six have yielded dedicatory inscriptions identifying them as sanctuaries of Cypriot Aphrodite. The names of the goddess in these inscriptions are as follows: "Kypria" or "Kypria Aphrodite" at Amathous, "Paphia" and "Golgia" at Chytroi, "Aphrodite" and "Aphrodite Paphia" at Paphos, and "A[...]" at Tamassos.[18] She is also "Paphia" and "Mychoia," the latter as *parhedros* ('companion') of Apollon, at an extra-urban site 3 km southeast

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1977), pp. 11–13, A 1; pp. 38–41, A 27; pp. 103–126, C 1; pp. 149–160, D 1; Corinne Bonnet, *Astarté. Dossier documentaire et perspectives historiques* (Rome, 1996), pp. 70–74; 158–159 B.E.9–10. For Lapethos see Bonnet, *Astarté*, pp. 74–75; 160 B.E.12, with earlier references for translations. For Paphos-Xylinos see ibid., pp. 75–76; 160 B.E.13–14, with references.

[16] For the Phoenician dedication from Paphos, see note 15; the alphabetic inscription is published in Terence B. Mitford, "The Hellenistic Inscriptions of Old Paphos," *BSA* 56 (1961), 12, no. 30.

[17] Compare the iconographic repertoire of votive sculptures from these sanctuaries, summarized in Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 268–271 (Amathous, AM 1), 288–289 (Chytroi, CHY 3, like CHY 1), 297–300 (Golgoi, GO 3), 305–306 (Arsos, GO 9), 341–348 (Kition, KI 1 and KI 2), 401–404 (Paphos, PA 1), 506–511. See also Karageorghis, *Kypris*, pp. 75–110 (Amathous), 199–200 (Chytroi), 165–168 (Golgoi), 140–156 (Kition, 2 sanctuaries). Not all the material compiled in Karageorghis, *Kypris*, pp. 165–168 for Golgoi is from a certain sanctuary context; the same may be said of Karageorghis, *Kypris*, pp. 199–200 for Chytroi. The disparate original publications of, in most cases, just some of the votive figures from those sites will be cited, when necessary and appropriate, in the course of the discussion of each single type below.

[18] Amathous: Marie-Christine Hellmann and Antoine Hermary, "Inscriptions d'Amathonte III," *BCH* 104 (1980), 259–266, no. 63, figs. 83–86; pp. 805–806; Olivier Masson and Antoine Hermary, "Inscriptions d'Amathonte IV," *BCH* 106 (1982), 235–242, no. 64, figs. 88–90. Chytroi: Masson, *Inscriptions Chypriotes*, pp. 259–261, nos. 234–245; p. 416, no. 250c. Paphos: Mitford, "Inscriptions of Old Paphos," pp. 10–26 and 32–34 passim. Tamassos: Hans-Günther Buchholz, "Schriftzeugniss aus den Ausgrabungen in Tamassos," in *Res Mycenaeae, Akten des VII. Internationalen Mykenologischen Colloquiums in Nürnberg 1981*, ed. Alfred Heubeck and Günter Neumann (Göttingen, 1982), pp. 73–74, figs. 8–10.

of ancient Golgoi, near the modern village of Athienou.[19] She is "Golgia" at a site near Arsos, some 8 km from Golgoi. An inscription to "Golgia" was found near Idalion, and another one to "Aphrodite Golgia" in a modern house wall at Achna.[20] The iconography of votive terracottas and sculptures from these epigraphically attested sites reveals a votive practice strongly connected to the sex and gender of the deity worshipped, as Max Ohnefalsch-Richter observed in the late nineteenth century. He noted that male deities were usually worshipped by the dedication of male iconographic types—images of votaries or the deity himself—and female deities by female types.[21] Later excavations, up to the present day, have validated this basic rule of Cypriot votive practice, at least for the Archaic and Classical periods. The votive sculptures from the Temple of Apollon Hylates, near Kourion, for example, are predominantly male; Greek alphabetic dedications from the site identify the deity as Apollon Hylates or Hylates.[22] Votives sculptures from the sanctuary of "Aphrodite Kypria" in Amathous, which has been identified by late fourth-century royal votive inscriptions to this goddess on the marble base of a treasury and a sandstone statue base, on the other hand, consist predominantly of female iconographic types (more than 90 percent).[23] Due to this gender-related votive practice, sanctuaries without epigraphic evidence can be assigned to a male and / or female deity simply on the basis of iconography, especially the proportions of male and female types, and the specific representations of the deity. More than 90 percent of the votive figures found at a sanctuary near Idalion, for example, show female iconography. Ohnefalsch-Richter therefore rightly attributed it to a goddess, whom he identified as Astarte-Aphrodite.[24] For the purely iconographic identification of the deity of a sanctuary, representations of the deity (whether possible or certain) found in context are of vital importance. In Cypriot sanctuaries, there were no actual cult statues depicting the deity worshipped, as was the case in the Greek world, for example, Athena Parthenos at Athens and Zeus at Olympia.[25] In Cyprus, there is only evidence of aniconic cult markers or "statues," such as conical stones, taking up a central or prominent place in the *temenos* like a cult image.[26] Such a cult marker was still shown on Roman coins, as a symbol of the Paphian sanctuary; Max Ohnefalsch-Richter apparently found one in the suburban sanctuary of Idalion, noted above; Luigi Palma di Cesnola recorded one from the peri-urban sanctuary of Golgoi-Agios Photios.[27]

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[19] Masson, *Inscriptions Chypriotes*, p. 283, no. 262; p. 290, no. 277.

[20] For Arsos and Achna, see note 13; for Idalion, see Masson, *Inscriptions Chypriotes*, pp. 245–246.

[21] Max Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, die Bibel und Homer* (Berlin, 1893), p. 208; see also Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 49–63.

[22] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 365–368 (Kourion, KOU 3). The latest publication on votive figures from this site is Diana Buitron-Oliver, *The Sanctuary of Apollon Hylates at Kourion: Excavations in the Archaic Precinct*. Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology 109 (Jonsered, 1996), pp. 89–149 (contributions of Nancy Winter and Antoine Hermary), with references to the disparate literature before that.

[23] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 268–271 (Amathous, AM 1). The votive sculptures and terracottas from this sanctuary are published in Antoine Hermary, *Amathonte* 5. *Les figurines en terre cuite archaïque et classiques. Les sculptures en pierres* (Athens, 2000), with photographs together with material from other sanctuary contexts in Amathous. For the inscriptions see reference in note 18 above.

Among the anthropomorphic votive sculptures and terracottas of the Archaic and Classical periods, most of which clearly represent either female or male votaries, various iconographic types can be identified as anthropomorphic images of Cypriot Aphrodite herself. All of these are attested in epigraphically identified sanctuaries of the goddess.[28] Each type appeared at a different time with some chronological overlaps. They either developed locally or were adopted from neighboring regions, and there are regional differences in the style and popularity of each type.[29] By the end of the sixth century—the heyday of Cypriot votive activity, according to archaeological evidence—many such types were dedicated in Cypriot sanctuaries of Aphrodite. Some had already been in use since the end of the eighth century, while others appeared for the first time and evolved into subtypes and variants during the fifth and fourth centuries. Most of those images clearly illustrate a prominent role, function, or character of the goddess, while some are more ambivalent. I present these types here in chronological and typological order.

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[24] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 322–323 (Idalion, ID 7), pl. 6. The only publication—far from complete—is Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros*, pp. 6–7, no. 3, pls. 7, 13–14, 16, 48–56 passim.

[25] See the discussion of both statues in Kenneth D.S. Lapatin, *Chryselephantine statuary in the ancient Mediterranean world* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 63–90, and, for a list of cult-statues in this technique, ibid., pp. 193–197.

[26] On Paphian Aphrodite's aniconic image, see also Lev Kenaan's contribution to this volume, chapter 3.

[27] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 65–66. On aniconic cult images in Idalion, see also Ohneflasch-Richter, *Kypros*, p. 56; Louis Palma di Cesnola, *Cyprus, Its Cities, Tombs and Temples* (New York, 1878; repr. Nicosia, 1991), p. 159 (Golgoi); and Karageorghis, *Kypris*, pp. 28–30, figs. 24 and 26 (Paphos).

[28] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 55–102 (including other types, such as Artemis and Athena).

[29] Jacqueline Karageorghis identifies different workshops and styles, in *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus* 5: *The Cypro-Archaic Period: Small Female Figurines* B: *Figurines moulées* (Nicosia, 1999), passim. Sabine Fourrier, *La coroplastie chypriote archaïque. Identités culturelles et politiques à l'époque de royaumes* (Lyon, 2007) is more comprehensive.

The Goddess with Uplifted Arms (figure 9.2)

This type depicts a female with both arms raised, wearing a long robe and a cylindrical headdress. The headdress can be identified as a *polos*, usually the crown of a deity, widely attested in divine iconography of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, with derivations in Graeco-Roman art.[30] Such figurines, with handmade or wheel-made bodies and hand-formed head and arms, were dedicated in Cyprus from the eleventh century onwards, first in the eastern part of the island and later in the western part. Especially in sanctuaries of Aphrodite at and around Paphos and Marion, they remain the exclusive image of the goddess until the fifth century.[31] The type was adopted and adapted from the Cretan goddess with uplifted arms, probably denoting an epiphany gesture. It could equally be interpreted as a representation of the priestess with a ritual headdress, in the shape of the *polos*, raising her arms in adoration and prayer to the goddess. With either interpretation, this type definitely refers to the goddess. It is rather generic and does not visualize any spe-

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[30] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 67–70, 511 (table 5), and pl. 10; Vassos Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus* 5: *The Cypro-Archaic Period: Small Female Figurines* A: *Handmade/Wheelmade Figurines* (Nicosia, 1998), pp. 1–17, pls. 1–10. For the provenience and meaning of the type and pre-Archaic examples, see Vassos Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus* 3: *The Cypro-Archaic Period: Large and Medium Size Sculpture* (Nicosia, 1993), pp. 58–61, pls. 27, 36–37. For the definition of *polos*, see Rolf Hurschmann, in *Brill's New Pauly: Antiquity*, ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider (Leiden, 2009), s.v. "Polos." Brill Online ⟨http: www.brillonline.nl⟩.

[31] See, for example, the iconographic repertoire from the famous urban sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos (Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 401–402, PA 1: most of the votive figures are unpublished; isolated pieces are published in various disparate articles and monographs); from a rural sanctuary at Geroskipou near Nea Paphos (ibid., pp. 409–410, PA 6; only some of the votive terracottas are published in Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, A, pp. 9–11, nos. 38–52, pls. 5.3–6.8; pp. 15–17, nos. 176–179, pls. 8.6–10.3; and Vassos Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus* 3: *The Cypro-Archaic Period: Large and Medium Size Sculpture* [Nicosia, 1993], pp. 70–71, nos. 246–249, 251, 255, pls. 49.2–5, 50.2, 51.1); and from an urban sanctuary at Marion (ibid., pp. 388–390), MA 1: votive figures largely unpublished, although some are published in Nancy Serwint, "The Terracotta Sculpture from Marion," in *Cypriote Terracottas: Proceedings of the First International Conference of Cypriote Studies, Brussels-Liège-Amsterdam, 29 May–1 June 1989*, ed. Frieda Vandenabeele and Robert Laffineur (Brussels, 1991), pp. 217–218, pls. 56d–e and 57d.

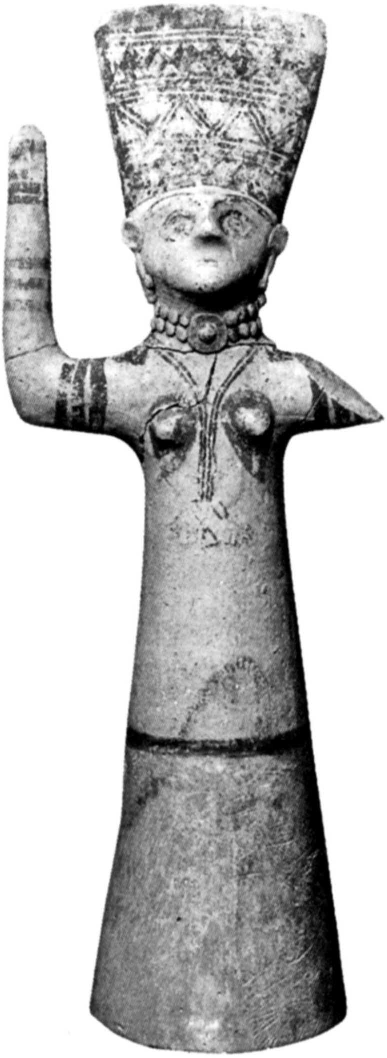

Figure 9.2. Goddess with uplifted arms, from Palaepaphos. British Museum, London, 1899.12–29.1. Image after Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus*, 5, pl. 1.1, courtesy of the British Museum, London.

cific aspect of the deity that might explain its adoption (or introduction by Greek settlers at the end of the Bronze Age), adaptation, and popularity as a suitable gift for a very versatile Cypriot Aphrodite.

Astarte Figurines (figure 9.3)

This stands in marked contrast to the so-called Astarte figurines, which depict naked females with prominently rendered breasts and pubic zone, and with their hands either touching or supporting the breasts or their arms held close along the sides of the body.[32] The type is known in the Near East from the second half of the second millennium onwards and is also attested in Bronze Age Cyprus, mostly in terracotta, but also in metal, as exemplified by the Bomford Figurine, a naked goddess on an ingot.[33] After a hiatus of almost five hundred years, the motif of a naked female reappeared first in votive sculptures in the Phoenician city-kingdoms of Kition and Lapethos, and at Amathous around 700. From there it was adopted and adapted generally into Cypriot votive sculpture, predominantly in the eastern part of the island, especially in the city-kingdoms of Tamassos, Golgoi, and Idalion. Cypriot adaptations include naked, veiled, or clothed figures with their arms pressed to their sides or supporting their breasts, sometimes also pointing to their pubic zone.[34] Endless discussion has revolved around whether this type, especially in its Near Eastern context, depicts the goddess, her priestess, or a cult prostitute. None of these options is, in my opinion, mutually exclusive. In fact, most of the figures do not show any distinctive and exclusively divine attributes. This holds true, however, for many other Near Eastern goddesses depicted naked in glyptic and other arts.[35] Some of the Cypriot Astarte figurines carry a bird, which may be interpreted either as an attribute of the goddess, a votive, or a sacrifice. Others hold a tambourine, which could also be a divine attribute or just the instrument of a musician in service of the goddess. The fact that some of the terracottas of this type are clothed, like normal votaries, in full Cypriot dress and jewelry—despite showing every curve of their body (like the type of the naked

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[32] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 70–77, 512–514 (table 6), pls. 11–12. See also Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5B, passim, with many illustrations.

[33] For Bronze Age terracottas, see Vassos Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus* 2: *Late Cypriote II–Cypro-Geometric III* (Nicosia, 1993), pp. 3–14, pls. 1–10. For the Bomford Figurine in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, see Vassos Karageorghis, *Greek Gods and Heroes in Ancient Cyprus* (Athens, 1998), p. 34, fig. 9; p. 299.

[34] For regional groups, and Near Eastern and more Cypriot variations, see Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, B, passim—especially a naked type, from Amathous and Kition (pl. 67); a veiled, clothed type from Arsos (pl. 76); and a fully clothed type, touching both breasts, from Achna (pl. 81.5–9).

[35] Christoph Ühlinger, in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 9, ed. Dietz O. Edzard (Berlin, 2001), pp. 53–64, s.v. "Nackte Göttin / Naked Goddess."

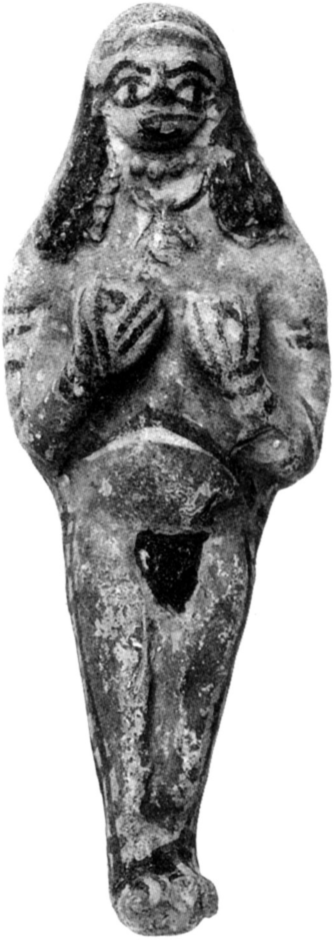

Figure 9.3. Astarte figurine, from Amathous. British Museum, London. 1876.9–9.86. Image after Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus*, 5, pl. 1.10, courtesy of the British Museum, London.

goddess)—might identify them as votaries.[36] The iconography of this type, invariably dedicated to Cypriot Aphrodite in her sanctuaries on the island, refers nonetheless to Cypriot Aphrodite, through its nakedness, prominent genitals, and gesture of touching her breasts. It seems to characterize the goddess as a goddess of eroticism and sex as well as of human fertility. The connection of the goddess with sex is reflected in the literary sources, such as Herodotos (1.105.2–3 and 1.199) and Lucian (*Dea Syria* 6), who link the goddess not only with Astarte, but also with the custom of cultic prostitution. The aspect of human or female fecundity, however, is iconographically expressed by the infants, whom some of the Cypriot variations of Astarte figurines carry or suckle.[37] Considering the large number of such small-scale figurines in Cypriot sanctuaries, these spheres of sex as well as fertility seem major aspects of Aphrodite in Archaic Cyprus; in contrast, the goddess is not known completely naked in Greece before the fourth century.[38] These mostly small and mold-made Astarte figurines seem to have been a popular votive gift, of many women and probably also men at various life stages involving sex and fertility, to the great goddess of Cyprus.

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[36] E.g., Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, B, pls. 20–21 (bird), pl. 54.5–7 (tambourine), pl. 17.8–9 (clothed but appears naked).

Dea Tyria Gravida and Kourotrophoi (figures 9.4–5)

These two types of a standing or enthroned female, pregnant and/or with a small child on her arm or lap, appear from the seventh century down to the Hellenistic period (third and second centuries).[39] The *dea Tyria gravida* type depicts a pregnant enthroned female with a peculiar veiled coiffure, originally without, but later with child; the finest, most numerous, and most typical examples of this type come from Phoenician tombs near Akhziv near ancient Tyre, hence the name, as well as from Palestinian contexts. The type is attested from the sixth to the fourth century.[40] Some *dea Tyria gravida* figurines were dedicated in Cyprus, from the late sixth to the fifth century, but in very few sanctuaries of the predominantly Phoenician city-kingdoms of Kition, Lapethos, and Amathous.[41] The geographically more restricted *dea Tyria gravida* type as

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[37] E.g., Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, B, pls. 63.7, 64.1.

[38] See Sophie Montel's contribution to this volume, chapter 13, on Praxiteles' fourth-century sculpture of a nude Aphrodite.

[39] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 77–80, 514–515 (table 7), pls. 13–14. For the type of *dea Tyria gravida*, see also Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, B, pp. 254–256, pls. 66.3–4. For *kourotrophoi*, see Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, A, pp. 28–30, pls. 16–17 (hand formed), and pp. 63–65, pls. 643–644 (mixed technique); Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, B, pp. 244–257, pls. 64–66 (mold made).

[40] The still fundamental explanation and discussion of this type is William Culican, "Dea Tyria Gravida." *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 1, no. 2 (1969), 35–50, with many figures.

[41] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, p. 344, KI 1, p. 348, KI 3 (Kition); pp. 373–374, LA 1 (Lapethos);

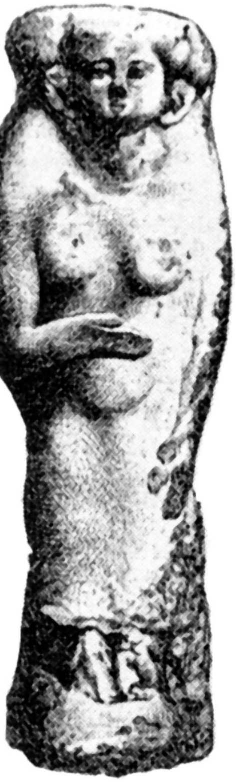

Figure 9.4. *Dea Tyria gravida*, from perhaps Kition. Louvre Museum, Paris. Drawing from Georges Perrot and Charles Chipiez, *Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquité*, 3 (Paris, 1885), p. 201 fig. 143.

well as the *kourotrophos* type—which, in contrast, was found in Cypriot sanctuaries of female deities all over the island—clearly refer to the aspect of female fecundity of Cypriot Aphrodite or her Phoenician counterpart,

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and p. 269, AM 1, p. 273, AM 3 (Amathous). Examples from Kition (KI 1) in Vassos Karageorghis et al., *Excavations at Kition* 6: *The Phoenician and Later Levels* 2 (Nicosia, 2003), p. 87, no. 1278, pl. 41; p. 94, no. 3150, pl. 58; p. 98, nos. 4039, 4049, and 4076, pl. 51; p. 126, no. 2242, pl. 75; pl. 127, no. 1520, pl. 77. Examples from KI 3 in Annie Caubet, "Les sanctuaires de Kition à l'époque de la dynastie phénicienne," in *Religio Phoenicia, Studia Phoenicia* 4, ed. Corinne Bonnet et al. (Namur, 1986), p. 161. For this type in LA 1, see Annie Caubet, "Un culte de la grande déesse à Lapithos," *RDAC* no. 2 (1988), p. 13. More figures of this type are among unpublished votive terracottas from a survey at that site, studied by the author of this paper. Examples from AM 1 in Hermary, *Amathonte* 5, pp. 102–103, nos. 689–693, pl. 45 (mostly AM 1).

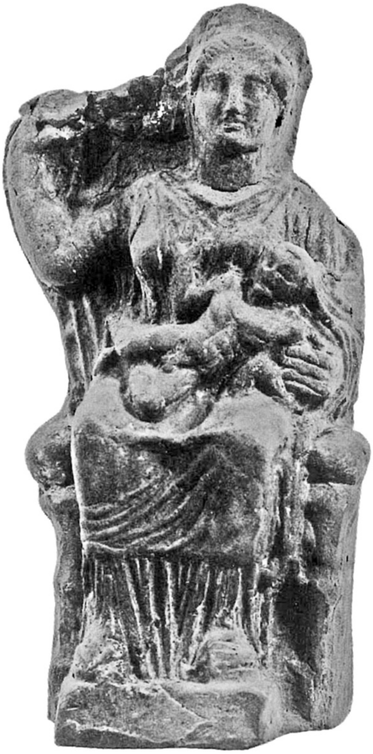

Figure 9.5. Kourotrophos from Kition. Archaeological District Museum of Larnaca, Kition 1963 / 1966, Area II / 397. Image after Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus*, 5, pl. 66.10, courtesy of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus.

Astarte (at Kition). In view of the variety of iconographic details of the *kourotrophos* figurines, some might be identified as representations of the goddess herself, while others clearly show human mothers.[42] Enthroned figures, particularly with some sort of *polos* or *stephane* ('shorter crown' or 'wreath'), such as the image from Kition (figure 9.5), can be interpreted as goddesses more readily than the small handmade figurine of a standing woman, with her infant on the left arm, from Amathous. The latter figure, moreover, raises her hand to cover her mouth, in a gesture of adoration.[43] Whatever the interpretation, the close association of this image with Cypriot Aphrodite warrants some consideration. First, Astarte figurines that point to or might depict the goddess are sometimes shown as *kourotrophos*, that is, with an infant. Second, the earliest definite Aphrodite representations from Cyprus (as discussed below) show the goddess as a *kourotrophos*, holding winged Eros on her lap or (later) on her arm (figure 9.9). Third, the motif of an enthroned figure, as *dea Tyria gravida* or *kourotrophos*, indicates the divine nature of the person. This can be deduced from the fact that in the Near East, Egypt, Anatolia, and Greece, the throne is a constitutional element of divine and royal iconography, never of merely human iconography. There are also several certain representations of deities from Cyprus, identified by other divine attributes, depicting the deity on a throne (figure 9.9).[44] Whatever the interpretation of a single figure, it is clear that the type shows female fertility and nurturing qualities as the primary functions of the goddess. This is corroborated by the fact that such figurines were dedicated in many Cypriot sanctuaries all over the island, in abundance in some places. One of the suburban sanctuaries near Idalion, for example, yielded exclusively *kourotrophoi* and temple boys, in such large numbers that we might surmise the goddess was exclusively worshipped there in her *kourotrophic* function as goddess of fecundity.[45]

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[42] Examples of mostly standing *kourotrophoi* in terracotta can be found in Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, A, pp. 28–30, pls. 16.8–17.2; pp. 63–66, pls. 43–44; and Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, B, pp. 247–257, pls. 64–66. For seated or enthroned *kourotophoi*, see Antoine Hermary, *Catalogue des Antiquités de Chypre. Sculptures*, ed. Musée du Louvre, Départment des antiquités orientales (Paris, 1989), pp. 419–438, nos. 849–904, with figs.

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[43] Karageorghis, *Coroplastic Art* 5, A, p. 29, no. 2, pl. 16.9. For the identification of enthroned figures with the goddess, see also Hermary, *Catalogue Chypre*, p. 419, who also refers to an enthroned *kourotophos* with turreted crown, ibid., p. 37, no. 899.

[44] Cp. Antoine Hermary, *Catalogue Chypre*, p. 415. For enthroned deity representations from Cyprus, see Sophocles Sophocleous, *Atlas des représentations Chypro-Archaique de divintiés* (Göteborg, 1985), pp. 11–12 (Phoenician Astarte); 58–69, pls. 13–15 (Baal-Hammon); 108–116, pls. 25–27 (Astarte; enthroned goddess). For the enthroned goddess, usually with other divine attributes, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 96–98, 523–526 (table 15), pl. 21. For early images of enthroned deities in Greece, see Helmut Jung, *Thronende und sitzende Götter* (Bonn, 1982). For enthroned goddesses on Near Eastern seals, see Urs Winter, *Frau und Göttin. Exegetische und ikonographise Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im Alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt*, 2nd ed., Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 52 (Freiburg, Switzerland, 1987), pp. 444–455, figs. 474–497.

[45] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 321–322, ID 6; Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros*, p. 19, no. 33; Cecilia Beer, "The Kourotophos Temenos at Idalion (Cyprus): New Evidence from the American Expedition 1971–1980," *Mélanges Olivier Masson*, Centre d'Études Chypriotes, Cahier 27 (1997), 47–58, pls. 13–19.

Goddess with Vegetal Crown (figure 9.6)

This type rather refers to the aspect of vegetal fertility. It shows a standing or enthroned female with a high crown made of leaves and flowers.[46] The crowns are mostly shaped like a *kalathos*, which is the Greek term for a high basket slightly splaying outwards at the top like a flower.[47] They are sometimes adorned with other divine symbols, such as sphinxes, doves (which are sacred to Aphrodite), and naked Astarte figurines.[48] This type of image appears in the sixth century in large-scale and even monumental Cypriot stone sculptures that were dedicated in sanctuaries in the fertile Mesaoria Plain, most notably around Golgoi and Idalion. It spread from there towards the coastal areas in the Eastern half of the island, particularly to Arsos, Achna, Salamis, and Kition. Numerous mold-made terracottas of this type were dedicated in various sanctuaries in the eastern half of the island during the fifth and fourth centuries.[49] There are several indications that such figures are actual images of the goddess herself. First, heads with similar crowns are depicted on the obverse of Cypriot coins of various city-kingdoms during the fifth and fourth centuries; coins throughout the Mediterranean at this time invariably show images or symbols of deities, rather than humans.[50] Second, during the fifth

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[46] On the type of goddess with vegetal crown, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 85–89, 517–519 (table 10), pl. 18. References to specific examples are given below. For the interpretation of the type as image of the Cypriot goddess, and photographs of examples, see also Hermary, *Catalogue Chypre*, pp. 398–410.

[47] See Rolf Hurschmann, in *Brill's New Pauly: Antiquity*, ed. Cancik and Schneider, s.v. "Kalathos." Brill Online ⟨http: www.brillonline.nl⟩.

[48] The dove is an animal sacred or at least closely connected to Aphrodite and her Near Eastern counterparts Astarte and Ishtar; see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 415–417, for the literary and epigraphic evidence; Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2 (1984), p. 4, s.v. "Aphrodite," with reference to Sappho.

[49] For the Louvre specimens from Golgoi and Idalion, see Hermary, *Catalogue Chypre*, pp. 401–410. On the iconographic repertoires in the territories of Golgoi and Idalion, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 296 (GO 2), 306 (GO 9), 317–318 (ID 3), 320 (ID 4), 323 (ID 7), 324 (ID 9), and passim. For Archaic stone sculptures from a sanctuary near Salamis, see Marguerite Yon, *Salamine de Chypre* 5. *Un depot de sculpture Archaïque* (Paris, 1974), pls. 5–6.12, 25, 29 (= Ulbrich, *Kypris*, p. 426, SA 4). For mold-made terracottas from Salamis, see Therése Monloup, *Salamine de Chypre* 14. *Les terres cuites classiques. Un sanctuaire de la grande déesse* (Paris, 1994), pls. 180–183 (= Ulbrich, *Kypris*, p. 425, SA 2). For an enormous number of terracottas of this type from a sanctuary at the salt lake of Kition, see Sabine Fourrier and Anne Queyrel, *L'Art des modeleurs d'Argile. Antiquités de Chypre coroplastique* 2, ed. Musée du Louvre, Départment des antiquités orientales (Paris, 1998), pp. 499–501, 509 (= Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 351–352, KI 7).

[50] See coins of Paphos and Salamis in Antoine Hermary, "Divinités Chypriotes I," *RDAC* (1982), 167–169, pls. 36.1, 36.8.

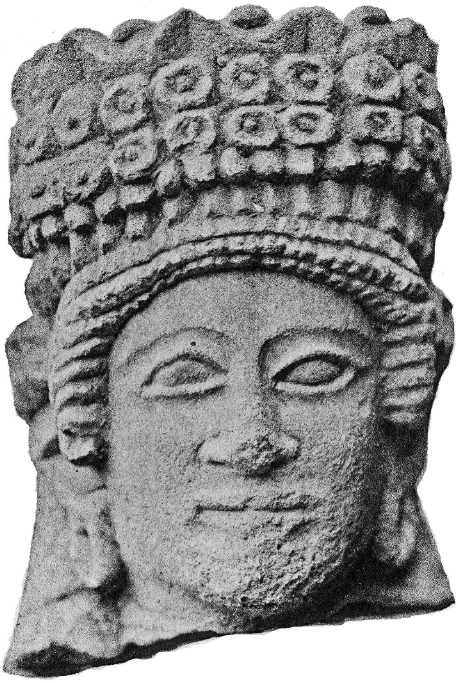

Figure 9.6. Goddess with vegetal crown, from Idalion. Berlin Museums, Antiquarium (1893), inv. M. J. 8015, 386 (in the year 1893). Image from Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, die Bibel und Homer*, pl. 55.8.

century, this type developed into the image of the goddess with turreted or mural crown, as attested also by coins and votive terracottas from the region of Salamis (see figure 9.8).[51] Third, one of the earliest Cypriot images of Aphrodite and winged Eros shows the goddess wearing such a vegetal *kalathos*, or 'crown', decorated with two Astarte figurines (figure 9.9).[52] Fourth, the crown is often embellished with divine symbols: sphinxes, doves, and Astarte figurines, as noted above, as well as griffins and Hathor capitals (on stelai as noted below). The constant element in each crown is vegetation: leaves, flowers, or even fruit.[53] The crowns clearly characterize Cypriot Aphrodite as a goddess of nature, vegetation, and the fertility of the earth. This trait, which in Greek culture is attributed to Artemis (wild) and Demeter (agricultural), is also poetically reflected in Hesiod's *Theogony* (195–197). He describes the arrival of the sea-born goddess in Cyprus, where, as soon as she steps on the land for the first time, grass starts to grow rapidly under her feet, as she is greeted and adorned with flowers by the *Horai* ('Seasons'). Another link between the goddess and vegetation is her close mythical connection to Adonis, a shepherd and vegetation god of Phoenician origin.[54] The first appearance of the goddess with vegetal crown in the sanctuaries of the fertile Mesaoria in the second half of the sixth century suggests that this type was locally developed as an appropriate image of Kypris because it showed one of her major aspects or functions, namely, the fertility of the earth that results in vegetation. This type of image, first developed in large-scale stone sculpture, points to more prosperous people introducing it at those sites. The later small-scale mold-made terracotta figurines were mass produced and show an acceptance of this type of the goddess, in all classes of society, as an appropriate votive to the goddess. Her fertility aspect could be further emphasized and / or specified by what the statue held in her hands: flowers, fruit, round cakes, or animals, particularly birds (doves?), as well as cattle, goats, and deer. They show that fertility included farmers' produce—cereal and animal husbandry—and wild animals, as well as vegetation. A poetic association of Aphrodite with wild animals is found in the sixth *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (68–74). The fertility of nature in its broadest sense was one of the essential cornerstones of Cypriot life, economy, and prosperity. It was also relevant to the welfare of the city-kingdoms. This is expressed iconographically through a combination of vegetal crown with mural crown, which is attested from the fifth century onwards, on coins as well as in votive sculptures (see below). The inclusion of wild animals in the retinue of fertility symbols, on terracottas of the fifth and fourth centuries, associates Aphrodite closely with Anatolian Kybele and Greek Artemis, goddesses of wild nature, wild vegetation as opposed to crops, and wild animals. Artemis did not receive dedicatory inscriptions in Cyprus, however, before the end of the fourth century, after which she became very popular on the island.[55]

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[51] Hermary, "Divinités Chypriotes I," pp. 69–70, pl. 37.3–4. For such terracottas from Salamis, see Monloup, *Salamine* 14, pp. 26–30, pl. 138 (= Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 424–425, SA 2).

[52] The Astarte figurines on the left and right sides of the crown in front of the veil are not visible on any of the published photographs of this statue, but I have seen these myself; they are also described in Vassos Karageorghis et al., *Ancient Art from Cyprus: The Cesnola Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 2000), p. 212, no. 341 ("nude females in relief").

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[53] For a variety of *kalathos* decorations in stone sculpture, see Hermary, "Divintés Chypriotes I," pls. 36–37. For terracottas, see, e.g., Monloup, *Salamine* 14, passim; and Hélène Cassimatis, "Quelques types de Calathoi sur des figurines provenant de Larnaca dans les Collections du Louvre," *RDAC* no. 2 (1988), pp. 45–51, pls. 15–16. For the *kalathos* adorned with Hathor capitals on stelai and dancing satyrs, see Antoine Hermary, "Un nouveau chapiteau Hathorique trouvé à Amathonte," *BCH* 109 (1985), 675, fig. 19.

[54] Gerhard Baudy, in *Der Neue Pauly*, ed. Cancik and Schneider, s.v. "Adonis." Brill Online ⟨www.Brillonline.nl⟩.

Hathor Capitals and Other Hathor Images (figure 9.7)

From the last third of the sixth century onwards, images of the multifaceted Egyptian goddess Hathor appear in certain Cypriot sanctuaries as large- or monumental-scale column capitals, each in the shape of a Hathor head crowned by a *naiskos* or architectural façade.[56] The largest of them, from an urban sanctuary at the city-kingdom of Amathous, is over 2 m high, but there are smaller ones and small-scale imitations in other media.[57] The identifying elements of Hathor are her specific wiglike coiffure with long hair rolled outwards in a loop at the ends, and sometimes cow's ears.[58] Such capitals are well known from Egyptian sanctuaries of female deities, not exclusively those explicitly dedicated to Hathor, since the second half of the second millennium.[59] The image had been adopted and used along the Syro-Palestinian coast, in association with Astarte. It found its way into the decoration of jewelry, some of which is also known from Cypriot tombs, from the fourteenth century onwards.[60] The image only makes its appearance in Cypriot sanctuaries, however, at the end of the sixth century, but then in a stunning, monumental way.

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[55] Such terracottas are found at Salamis (Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 424–425, SA 2) and Achna (ibid., pp. 447–448, SA-Achna 1). For epigraphic and possible iconographic evidence for the worship of Artemis on Cyprus, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 159–167; for Artemis images, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 89–91, 519–520 (table 11), pl. 19. For aspects of Kybele, also shared with Aphrodite and Artemis, see Erika Simon, in *LIMC* 8 (1997), pp. 744–745, s.v. "Kybele."

[56] For the multifaceted nature of Hathor, see M. Heerma van Voss, in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden, 1999), pp. 385–386, s.v. "Hathor"; Gisèle Clerc, in *LIMC* 4 (1988), pp. 451–453, s.v. "Hathor."

[57] Hermary, "Chapiteau Hathorique," pp. 657–699; Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 80–83, 516 (table 8), pls. 15–16.

[58] J. Börkler-Klähn and Peter Calmeyer, in *Reallexikon de Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 4, ed. Dietz O. Edzard (Berlin, 1972–1975), p. 148, s.v. "Hathorfrisur."

[59] Gerhard Haeny, in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 2, ed. Wolfgang Helck and Wolfhart Westendorf (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 1039–1041, s.v. "Hathorkapitell." Examples of Egyptian Hathor capitals are depicted in Eugen von Mercklin, *Antike Figuralkapitelle* (Berlin, 1962), pp. 5–13, figs. 1–39.

[60] Examples in Hermary, "Chapiteau Hathorique," pp. 677, 679.

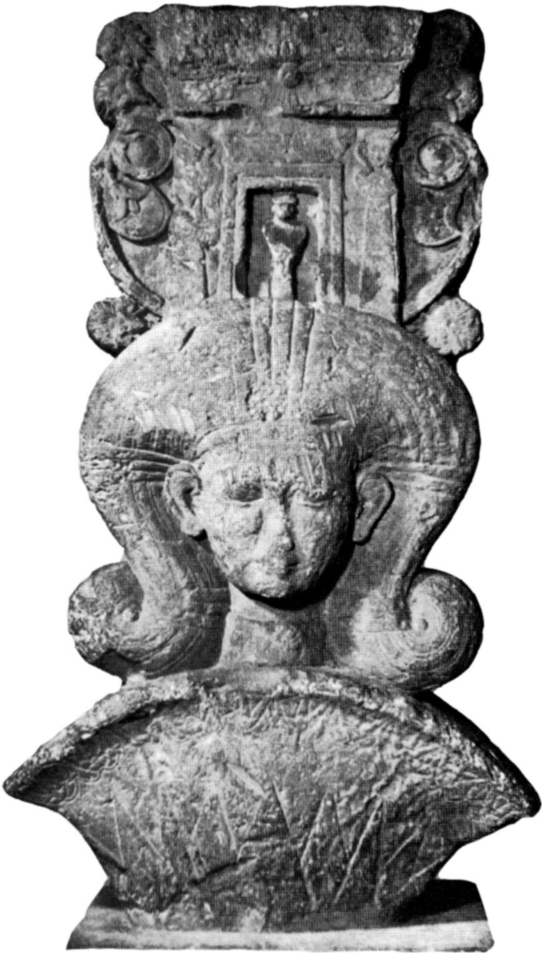

Figure 9.7. Hathor-capital, from Kition. Louvre Museum, Paris: Department of Oriental Antiquities, AM 93. Image after Hermary, "Un nouveau chapiteau Hathorique," p. 666 fig. 8.

The earliest examples are found in Kition, near an important harbor sanctuary of the Phoenician city gods Astarte and Melqart, at Kition-Bamboula (figure 9.7). In the same sanctuary, several miniature terracotta imitations of such capitals, the only ones known from Cyprus, were found near the altar.[61] The early date of the monumental Kitian capitals, their size and manufacture in Cypriot limestone, as well as their miniature variants, corroborate the assumption that the iconography and type was created and transmitted by the Phoenicians resident in Kition. In Amathous, also a city-kingdom with very strong Phoenician connections, five Hathor capitals were found in three different contexts: the main sanctuary on the akropolis of Amathous, itself dedicated to Aphrodite, the palace of Amathous, and the lower entrance to the palace area.[62] From Amathous, we also have painted vases, which show that such capitals on top of a pillar might have served as cult markers or stelai within a sacred precinct.[63]

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[61] Hermary, "Chapiteau Hathorique," pp. 666–667, figs. 8–10; p. 678, fig. 25. For the context, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 345–348 (KI 2).

Other Hathor capitals were found in the palaces of Vouni and Idalion, and some out of context in Palaepaphos and Tamassos; the motif is also known from the main city sanctuary of Aphrodite in Idalion and from an urban sanctuary at Arsos, where they are also found in small-scale imitations.[64] As far as those sanctuaries can be epigraphically and/or iconographically assigned, they were all dedicated to Cypriot Aphrodite or, in Kition, to her Phoenician counterpart, Astarte (who had adopted Hathor's iconography in Phoenicia). This and the fact that there is no evidence for a real cult of Hathor in Cyprus at the time suggest that the image of the Egyptian goddess was adopted and regarded as an appropriate image of Cypriot Aphrodite and Astarte. Hathor in Egypt and Astarte in Phoenicia were as multifaceted and universal as Cypriot Aphrodite. All three goddesses were sex, fertility, and vegetation goddesses as well as deities of life and death.[65] The palm-leaf capitals supporting the Hathor head (figure 9.7) refer to the vegetation aspect of Hathor and Cypriot Aphrodite, as do other vegetal decorations, such as rosettes and leafy twigs. The latter appear, however, only in the Cypriot representations, and they thereby underline the vegetation aspect of Cypriot Aphrodite that was usually addressed by the image of the goddess with vegetal *kalathos*.

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[62] The term "palace," in Cypriot archaeology, is used for a monumental building serving several economic functions such as grain and oil storage, olive-oil pressing, and copper smelting, all activities controlled by the Cypriot city-kingdoms or their respective kings: Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 212–218. For the Hathor capitals from Amathous, see Hermary, *Amathonte* 5, pp. 146–149, nos. 968–972, pls. 85–87 (= Ulbrich, *Kypris*, p. 270 [AM 1], 272 [AM 2], 275 [AM 5], pls. 25 and 27).

[63] Hermary, "Chapiteau Hathorique," p. 678, fig. 26.

[64] Hermary, "Chapiteau Hathorique," pp. 667–668, figs. 12–13 (Vouni, Paphos, Tamassos). For Tamassos see Hans-Günter Buchholz, "Ägyptisierendes aus Tamassos," *RDAC* (1993), 200, n. 12, pl. 54.6 (Tamassos). For Idalion see Maria Hadjicosti, "The Kingdom of Idalion in the Light of New Evidence," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 308 (1997), 56, fig. 21. For the sanctuary contexts, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 463 (SO 9: Vouni 6), 315–316 (ID 2), 472–474 (TA 1b), 305–306 (GO 9).

[65] For Hathor see also n. 56 above. For Astarte see N. Wyatt, in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden, 1999), 203–213, s.v. "Astarte." See also Mathias Delcor, in *LIMC* 3 (1986), 1077–1078, s.v. "Astarte"; and Clerc, in *LIMC* 4, pp. 451–453, s.v. "Hathor." For the complex nature of Aphrodite in Cyprus and Greece, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 309–369 and 419–454, respectively.

The monumental capitals are found invariably in the main city sanctuaries and particularly in palace sanctuaries of the Cypriot city-kingdoms. All these cult places were of great political importance and thus directly associated with the political system, the kingdoms, and their dynasties, particularly in Phoenician cities that assimilated the goddess with Astarte.[66] This suggests that it was particularly this political aspect of Egyptian Hathor—who was regarded as a mother of the king or pharaoh and, as such, his protectress and a war goddess—which triggered the adaptation of Hathor capitals in those specific Cypriot sanctuaries. Their monumentality, demanding special craftsmanship, their small number in comparison to mass-produced Astarte figurines or goddesses with vegetal crown in terracotta, as well as their exclusive dedication in sanctuaries of high political significance suggest that they might even have been dedicated by the Cypriot kings themselves in reference to Phoenician royal iconography. By such an ostentatious dedication, dominating the whole sanctuary on a special pillar, as visible on the painted vases from Amathous, those kings put themselves and all their enterprises under the protection of Cypriot Aphrodite, who thus legitimized their rule and fought their wars with them.

Goddess with Sphinxes or Lions (figure 9.8)

From the seventh to third century, isolated images of a goddess sitting on a throne, flanked by sphinxes or lions or even standing on a lion, are attested in some Cypriot sanctuaries, such as Ayia Irini, Achna, and Tamassos.[67] Those can be invariably attributed to Cypriot Aphrodite, according to the iconography of the entire corpus of votive sculptures

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[66] Clerc, in *LIMC* 4, p. 45, s.v. "Hathor."

[67] For the type see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 93–95; pp. 521–522 (table 13), pl. 21 (lions); pp. 96–98; pp. 523–526 (enthroned goddess, some with sphinxes). For the sanctuary contexts, see ibid., pp. 378 (LA 9, Ayia Irini), 447–448 (SA-Achna 1), 472–473 (TA 1b), 521–523 (tables 13–14).

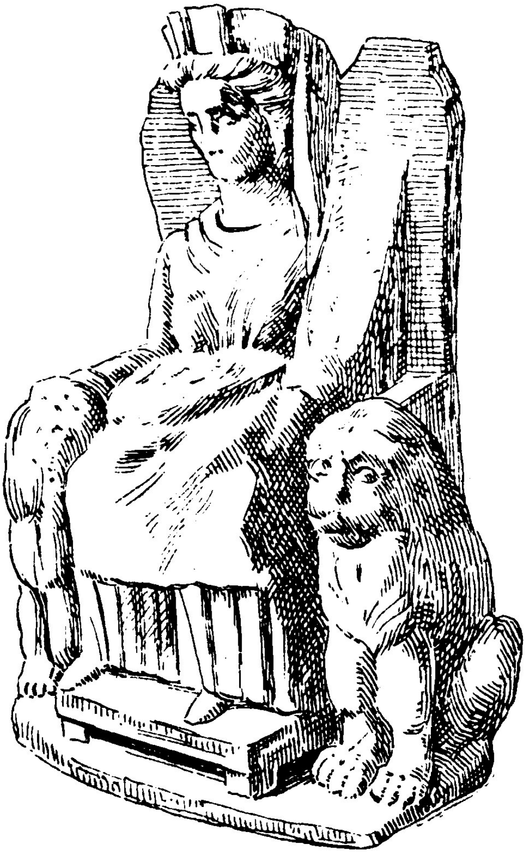

Figure 9.8. Goddess with lions and turreted crown, from Achna. Present location unknown. Drawing from Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, die Bibel und Homer*, pl. 206.6.

and terracottas from those sites, which include, for example, Astarte figurines and goddesses with vegetal crowns. The images of this type vary considerably in the combination of iconographic details. If only fragments of lions or sphinxes are preserved, it is impossible to identify them as part of the image of a goddess with those two creatures, as lions and sphinxes can be dedicated separately from anthropomorphic figures and can also be associated with the cult of a male deity, such as Zeus / Baal Hammon.[68]

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[68] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 97–98; see reference in note 70 and Sophocleous, *Atlas*, pp. 58–69, pls. 13–15 (Baal Hammon).

There are only two certain images of a goddess with sphinxes: one is a female figure on a throne flanked by sphinxes, from Ayia Irini (seventh century), and the other is a goddess on a sphinx throne, from the sanctuary of Aphrodite Kypria on the akropolis of Amathous.[69] The images of the goddess associated with lions are slightly more numerous and appear between the fifth and third centuries, specifically in the eastern part of the island. They include a Near Eastern-type goddess standing on two crouching lions, from the main urban sanctuary at Tamassos; a goddess on a lion throne, from an akropolis sanctuary at Chytroi and from an urban sanctuary at Golgoi; as well as a goddess with turreted crown on a throne flanked by lions, from Achna (figure 9.8).[70] Both the throne and the sphinxes put a woman without any divine attributes into the divine sphere, without referring to any specific feature or function of the goddess.[71] In contrast, the lion characterizes her as goddess with great strength and power who tames and is served by the strongest wild animal known and venerated in the Near East and Greece. Near Eastern goddesses are often depicted with lions, and the lion appears as a divine symbol on Cypriot coins as well.[72] The association of Cypriot Aphrodite with lions symbolizes her power over wild and destructive nature and makes her, like Kybele with the lion in Anatolia, both a goddess of wild animals and a goddess of civilization, which tames nature. Her civilizing function is expressed, for example, through the turreted crown of the goddess from Achna (figure 9.8).[73]

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[69] Vassos Karageorghis, *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus* 6: *The Cypro-Archaic Period: Monsters, Animals and Miscellanea* (Nikosia, 1996), p. 9, fig. 7 (Ayia Irini); Hermary, *Amathonte* 5, p. 127, no. 842, no date or photograph given; Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 523–525 (table 15), nos. 1 and 31.

[70] Compare to Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 521–522 (table 13), with a complete list and the respective catalogue entries for the sanctuaries CHY 1, GO 1, SA 11, SA-KA 1, and TA 1b. For the single objects, see: for Tamassos, Hans-Günter Buchholz, "Tamassos, Zypern, 1974–1976, 3. Bericht," *AA* (1978), 218, fig. 59; for Chytroi, Ino Nicolaou, "Evidence for the Cult of Cybele in Cyprus," in *Studies Presented in Memory of Porphyrios Dikaios*, ed. Vassos Karageorghis et al. (Nicosia, 1979), p. 175, no. 3, pl. 27.10; for Golgoi, Giorgios Bakalakis, *Ανασκαφὴ στό λόφο Γιόρκους βὰ τῆς Αθηαίνου, Κύπρος* (Athens, 1988), pp. 133–134, no. 5, pl. 89. For the figure from Achna, see caption on figure 9.8.

[71] See references on thrones as divine attributes in n. 44.

[72] Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, p. 4, s.v. "Aphrodite." For lions on Cypriot coins, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 504–506 (table 3).

[73] Simon, in *LIMC* 8, pp. 744–745, s.v. "Kybele"; Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 93–95, on Cypriot statuettes of the goddess with lions.

Hellenized Aphrodite with and without Eros (figure 9.9)

By the late fifth century, the first isolated images of a Greek-type Aphrodite make an appearance on Cyprus. Earlier variants of this type are initially identifiable by the presence of a winged Eros, while the later are linked to Hellenized Aphrodite images in different stages of undress without Eros.[74] They include an enthroned goddess, from a palace sanctuary at Vouni, holding a winged Eros on her lap like a *kourotrophos* or the Egyptian Isis holding Harpokrates;[75] a standing goddess with the youth Eros at her side, from a city sanctuary at Marion;[76] and the standing goddess with vegetal crown and Eros on her left arm, from a sanctuary at Golgoi (figure 9.9).[77] It can also be argued that the mass-produced mold-made terracottas of the goddess with vegetal crown (discussed above), holding a dove or a swan—both attributes of Greek Aphrodite—can be seen as Hellenized Aphrodite images, stressing the vegetation aspect of the goddess and her protective function of birds.[78] From the later fourth century onwards, small, mold-made terracottas from sanctuaries at Kition depict Greek-type images of Aphrodite with one or two bare breasts, or even an exposed upper body, and a more coquettish pose.[79] Like the early images with Eros, the personification of erotic love, these later half-undressed images stress Aphrodite's aspect of erotic love, while the early images in the *kourotrophos* type are also associated with female human fertility, as discussed above.

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[74] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 91–93; pp. 520–521 (table 12), pl. 20. References to single statuettes below.

[75] Antoine Hermary, "Divinités chypriotes II," *RDAC* (1986), 166–167, pl. 34.4–5. For the iconographic evidence from this sanctuary, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 460–461 (SO 5).

[76] Nancy Serwint, "An Aphrodite and Eros Statue from Ancient Marion," *RDAC* (1993), 207–217, pls. 56–59. For the iconographic evidence from this sanctuary, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 390–391.

[77] Karageorghis, *Ancient Art*, p. 212, no. 341.

[78] Examples in Monloup, *Salamine* 14, pp. 72–74, 90–93. For the swan and various other birds as holy (and therefore also protected) animals of Aphrodite, see Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, p. 4, s.v. "Aphrodite."

[79] Karageorghis, *Kition* 6, p. 109, no. 396, pl. 63. For the iconographic evidence from this sanctuary, see Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 343–345 (KI 1).

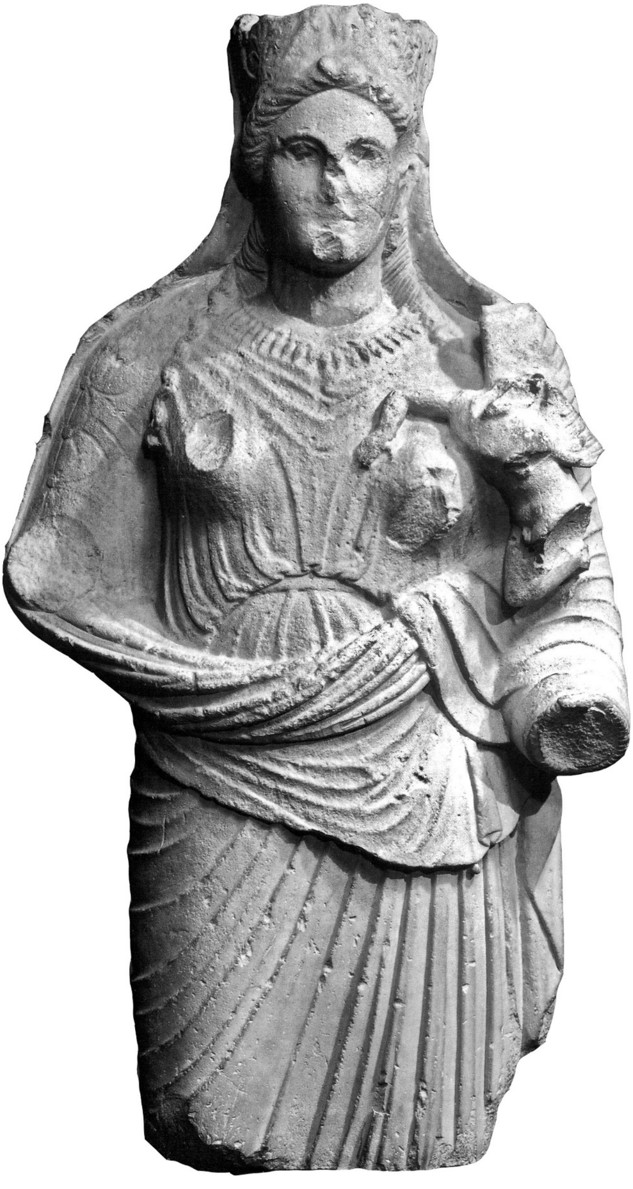

Figure 9.9. Aphrodite with vegetal Kalathos and Eros, from Golgoi. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–1876 (74.51.2464). Image ©Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Goddess with Turreted Crown (figure 9.8)

In the late fifth century, the image of the goddess with turreted crown developed out of the one with the vegetal *kalathos*, which is attested on coins as well as by votive sculptures and terracottas, as discussed above.[80] This type appeared in several Cypriot sanctuaries, particularly in the eastern part of the island. Most of the images show the goddess standing, while only a few, such as figure 9.8, are enthroned. The turreted or mural crown, known in the Near East since the Bronze Age, characterizes the goddess, like Kybele since the Hellenistic period, as a protector of the city (represented here with its walls) and therefore civilization.[81] By extension, she is also a goddess of political order, and a war goddess who defends the city. The combination of this aspect with the former aspect of vegetal fertility is expressed either by the turreted crown combined with the vegetal *kalathos*, which was common down into the fourth century, or by another attribute of the goddess, such as a flower. A statuette from Amathous, for example, shows the crowned goddess holding a dove in one hand and a flower in the other. The combination of these three attributes clearly identifies her as Cypriot Aphrodite with multiple aspects.[82]

Conclusion

The certain and possible images of Cypriot Aphrodite during the era of the city-kingdoms show an intriguing mixture of iconographic details and motifs. They not only illustrate various aspects of the goddess but also associate her with multiple functions and various multifaceted goddesses of the Near East (Astarte), Egypt (Hathor), Greece (Aphrodite, Artemis, and Demeter), and Anatolia (Kybele).

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[80] Ulbrich, *Kypris*, pp. 95–96, 522–523 (table 14), pl. 22. Examples of this type in Hermary, "Divinités Chypriotes I," pp. 169–173; Hermary, *Catalogue Chypre*, pp. 416–418; and Monloup, *Salamine* 14, p. 32.

[81] Dieter Metzler, "Mural Crowns in the Ancient Near East and Greece," in *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art*, ed. Susan B. Matheson, Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin 1994 (New Haven, 1994), pp. 76–85. Simon in *LIMC* 8, p. 745, s.v. "Kybele."

[82] Antoine Hermary, *Amathonte* 2. *Les sculpture découvertes avant 1975, Testimonia* 2 (Paris, 1981), pp. 41–42, no. 36, pl. 8.

The widest range of Aphrodite images are found in the major urban sanctuaries of the city-kingdoms, mostly on the coast. Some *temene*, such as Kition and Amathous, yielded examples of almost all types, and they therefore document the development of the appearance of Cypriot Aphrodite throughout the age of the city-kingdoms. While the earliest image, the goddess with uplifted arms, does not refer to a specific aspect, but rather adopted meaning through the intentions of the votary, the types of Astarte, *dea Tyria gravida*, and *kourotrophos* figurines refer to sex as well as female fertility or fecundity. The goddess with vegetal *kalathos* and nature attributes—flowers, birds, and animals—clearly visualizes Aphrodite's role as goddess of the fertility / fecundity of nature in the broadest sense, including wild animals (deer). The last aspect is also expressed by the goddess with lions, while the type with sphinxes just puts her in a divine sphere and is rather nonspecific. In major city and palace sanctuaries, Hathor capitals address the role of the goddess as "mother" of the Cypriot kings, thus protector and legitimizer of the dynasties as well as of the political order of the city-kingdoms, through war when necessary. Aphrodite images clearly identified through the presence of Eros only make their appearance in the fifth century, and in isolated pieces. Other Hellenized images appear only in the later fourth century.

Like Near Eastern Astarte and Egyptian Hathor, Cypriot Aphrodite was goddess of love, sex, fertility, vegetation, as well as kingship, and therefore also of war, all at the same time. It is not surprising, therefore, that other Greek deities, such as Hera, Demeter, and Artemis, do not appear in dedicatory inscriptions from Cyprus before the end of the fourth century and that there are relatively few sanctuaries of Athena in Cyprus. Cypriot Aphrodite—who was worshipped in all urban sanctuaries, most of the sub-urban and peri-urban sanctuaries, and even in many of the rural *temene* of Cyprus—covered all possible functions of any female deity of the Greek Pantheon. In this respect, Cyprus during the era of the city-kingdoms was truly an island of mighty Aphrodite.

CHAPTER TEN

APHRODITE ON THE AKROPOLIS: EVIDENCE FROM ATTIC POTTERY[*]

ELISABETTA PALA

Introduction

The goddess Aphrodite enjoyed a wealth of cults in and around Athens, not least on the Akropolis. I have chosen the Athenian fortress as the focus of this chapter because, in addition to being the real political and religious heart of Athens, it also represents a model of reference for the rest of the Attic sanctuaries. Contrary to the common trend considering Athena, the patroness of the city, as the primary recipient of votive dedications on the Akropolis, many other deities are involved in the specific cult practices that enjoy their privileged scenery on the rocky terrace. This chapter seeks an understanding of aspects of different shrines dedicated to Aphrodite on the top of the hill and on its slopes, to show how the goddess was involved in the city life. Although Athena was the main goddess of the summit of the rock, we can still affirm that the preeminent goddess of its slopes was Aphrodite. This is evidenced by the literary and epigraphic sources and especially the Athenian vases found on the Akropolis. First, I will investigate literary accounts of Aphrodite and compare them with the iconography of the goddess on Athenian pottery. Although we cannot read text and images at face value, and often records from literary sources disagree with archaeological material, this comparison will be useful to elucidate some clues about the cults of the goddess and to draw a picture of the role of Aphrodite in the social, political, and religious life of Athens. Second, I will consider the links between figured representations of the goddess and the context of her shrines on the top of the Akropolis or on its slopes. Finally, I will discuss some important Athenian festivals that involved Aphrodite on the Akropolis.

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[*] I thank Amy Smith and Sadie Pickup for the opportunity to take part in the "Aphrodite Revealed" conference at which I presented this work. Also I would like to thank Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge and Gabriella Pironti for their helpful suggestions.

Aphrodite and the Aigeus Saga

Three of the cult sites where Aphrodite was worshipped share a familial link. From Pausanias' account we learn that Aigeus, Theseus' father, founded the cult of Aphrodite *Ourania* in Athens because of his then-childless condition.[1] He believed that Aphrodite's wrath, which had befallen his sisters, Prokne and Philomela, was passed on to him and that he would remain childless until he had assuaged the anger of the goddess.[2] He decided to appease her, by establishing the cult of Aphrodite *Ourania* in the Athenian Agora.[3]

> πλησίον δὲ ἱερόν ἐστιν Ἀφροδίτης Οὐρανίας. … Ἀθηναίοις δὲ κατεστήσατο Αἰγεύς, αὑτῷ τε οὐκ εἶναι παῖδας νομίζων—οὐ γάρ πω τότε ἦσαν—καὶ ταῖς ἀδελφαὶς γενέσθαι τὴν συμφορὰν ἐκ μηνίματος τῆς Οὐρανίας. τὸ δὲ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῶν ἔτι ἄγαλμα λίθου Παρίου καὶ ἔργον Φειδίου.
>
> Hard by is a sanctuary of Aphrodite Ourania [Heavenly]. … Among the Athenians the cult was established by Aigeus, who thought that he was childless (he had, in fact, no children at the time) and that his sisters had suffered their misfortune because of the wrath of Heavenly Aphrodite. The statue still extant is of Parian marble and is the work of Pheidias.[4]

Similarly, Theseus established the cult of Aphrodite *Pandemos*, to honor the goddess' role in the *synoikismos* or unification of the Attic demes, according to Pausanias. We also know that in this shrine Aphrodite was worshipped with Peitho ('Persuasion'), the personification of a quality essential for the well-being of a democratic state.

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[1] Paus. 1.14.7.

[2] The story about the misfortune of these heroines was told in a Sophokles' lost play *Tereus* (ca. 430 BC), of which only fragments remain but which was retold by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*.

[3] On this topic, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 19–21; on the origin of the epithet *Ourania*, see also Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, "Des épiclèses exclusives dans la Grèce polythéiste? L'exemple d'Ourania," in *Nommer les dieux. Théonymes, épithètes, épiclèses dans l'antiquité*, ed. Nicole Belayche et al. (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 274–278.

[4] Paus. 1.14.7, trans. W.H.S. Jones, *Pausanias: Description of Greece* (London, 1969).

> Ἀφροδίτην δὲ τὴν Πάνδημον, ἐπεί τε Ἀθηναίους Θησεὺς ἐς μίαν ἤγαγεν ἀπὸ τῶν δήμων πόλιν, αὐτήν τε σέβεσθαι καὶ Πειθὼ κατέστησε˙ / τὰ μὲν δὴ παλαιὰ ἀγάλματα οὐκ ἦν ἐπ′ ἐμοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐπ′ ἐμοῦ τεχνιτῶν ἦν οὐ τῶν ἀφανεστάτων. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ δὲ καὶ Γῆς Κουροτρόφου καὶ Δήμητρος ἱερὸν Χλόης˙ /
>
> When Theseus had united into one state the many Athenian parishes, he established the cults of Aphrodite Pandemos [Common] and of Persuasion. The old statues no longer existed in my time, but those I saw were the work of no inferior artists. There is also a sanctuary of Ge Kourotrophos [Nurturing Earth], and of Demeter Chloe [Green].[5]

Others tell us it was Solon who erected the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Pandemos*, with the money accumulated from brothel keepers:

> Καὶ Φιλήμων δ ἐν Ἀδελφοῖς προσιστορῶν ὅτι πρῶτος Σόλων διὰ τὴν τῶν νέων ἀκμὴν ἔστησεν ἐπὶ οἰκημάτων γύναια πριάμενος, καθὰ καὶ Νίκανδρος ὁ Κολοφώνιος ἱστορεῖ ἐν τρίτῳ Κολοφωνιακῶν φάσκων αὐτὸν καὶ πανδήμου Ἀφροδίτης ἱερὸν πρῶτον ἱδρύσασθαι ἀφ′ ὧν ἠργυρίσαντο αἱ προστᾶσαι τῶν οἰκημάτων.
>
> And Philemon, in his Brothers, records incidentally that Solon, impelled by the crisis which comes in young men's lives, purchased and established wenches in houses of resort; just so Nicander of Colophon records the same in the third book of his History of the Affairs of Colophon; Nicander alleges that Solon was the first to found a temple of Aphrodite Pandemos from the profits taken in by the women in charge of the houses.[6]

In spite of the comic and perhaps polemical tone, this statement puts the same Aphrodite, who was guarantor of the unity of "all the people," in connection with prostitution.[7] This ambivalence can be explained, as Vincianne Pirenne-Delforge says, because "she is the deity of *mixis*, of the 'mixing' between creatures, that she is called upon to intervene in the cohesion of the 'body' politic."[8] It is important to emphasize that, whatever the origin of her cult and whomever its founder—Theseus or Solon—the worship of this goddess assumes an intrinsically political dimension. Aphrodite, in her peculiarity as Πάνδημος ('Common to all'), unites people and brings them together in a positive way.[9] Similarly, the anecdote of the foundation of the cult by Solon shows that the goddess played an important role in the status of young men and their passage from adolescence to adult sexuality, which is meaningful on the sociopolitical level. Another cult of Aphrodite "beside the Akropolis" was also linked to Hippolytos, Theseus' son, as told by Euripides in his drama of that name.[10] According to Euripides, Phaidra founded it on the southwest slope of the rock in memory of her doomed stepson.[11] Hippolytos' transgression against the goddess consisted in his not honoring Aphrodite, because of his chastity as a result of his devotion to Artemis. On account of his disregard for the goddess of love, he was doomed and subjugated by his team of horses.[12] We see that grandfather, father, and son are all associated with Athenian shrines of Aphrodite: Aigeus with the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Ourania*, Theseus with that of Aphrodite *Pandemos*, and Hippolytos with the site he shared with the goddess. This association of Aphrodite with the family of Aigeus was long, but not always positive. She punished anyone who violated the natural order of relationships between people by creating unholy unions of individuals. She also directed her wrath against those who, like Hippolytos, did not honor her. Regardless of whether Theseus established the shrine to Aphrodite *Pandemos* to appease the goddess' anger, this cult also recognizes Aphrodite's power over unions.[13]

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[5] Paus. 1.22.3, trans. Jones.

[6] Nicander of Colophon quoted by Ath. 13.569d–e, trans. Charles Burton Gulik, *Athenaeus: The Deipnosophists* (London, 1959).

[7] Pirenne-Delforge, "Something to Do with Aphrodite," p. 316.

[8] Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 29, 38–39.

[9] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 89.

Archaeological Evidence and the Topography of Aphrodite's Shrines

What remains of these sanctuaries to Aphrodite? I have mentioned only briefly the shrine of Aphrodite *Ourania*, located in the Athenian Agora, to demonstrate the links in Aigeus' family.[14] Here, however, I will investigate Aphrodite's Akropolis sanctuaries. A passage from Apollodoros, quoted by Harpocration, creates some problems in our understanding of the topography of the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Pandemos*:

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[10] Eur., *Hipp*. 26–33.

[11] Eur., *Hipp*. 30–33. On this topic, see Jeffrey M. Hurwit, *The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present* (Cambridge, Eng., 1999), p. 38; see also Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 84.

[12] On this topic, see Pirenne-Delforge, "Something to Do with Aphrodite," p. 314.

[13] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 89.

[14] On the location of the sanctuary, see Massimo Osanna, "Il problema topografico del santuario di Afrodite Urania nell'Agora di Atene," *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene* 66–67 (1988–1989), 73, 80–83, 87–89; see also Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 15–19.

> Πάνδημον φησιν Ἀϑήνησι κληϑῆναι τὴν ἀφιδϱυϑεῖσαν πεϱὶ τὴν ἀϱχαίαν ἀγοϱὰν διὰ τὸ ἐνταῦϑα πάντα τὸν δῆμον συνάγεσϑαι τὸ παλαιὸν ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, ἅς ἐκάλουν ἀγοϱάς.
>
> The title Pandemos was given to the goddess established in the neighborhood of the Old Agora because all the Demos gathered there of old in their assemblies which they called *agorai*.[15]

This contrasts with testimony from Pausanias, who placed it on the southwest slope of Akropolis.[16] Other sources even located it near the old Agora. According to the *Suda*,

> οὕτως ἐκάλουν τὴν ἀφιδϱυϑεῖσαν πεϱὶ τὴν ἀϱχαίαν ἀγοϱὰν διὰ τὸ ἐνταῦϑα πάντα τὸν δῆμον συνάγεσϑαι τὸ παλαιὸν, ἅς ἐκάλουν ἀγοϱάς. ἔστι δὲ τὸ πάνδημον πάγκοινον.
>
> This is what they used to call the [goddess] established near the old agora [of Athens], because of the fact that long ago the people gathered there in assemblies, which they called *agorai*. Pandemos means common to all.[17]

The studies of Georgios Dontas and Luigi Beschi, however, allow us to take Pausanias seriously and place the shrine of the goddess at the eastern extremity of the south slope, directly below the Nike Temple bastion.[18] This area of the hill was devoted to fertility cults: Pausanias mentions two other cult places near the sanctuary of Aphrodite and dedicated to Ge *Kourotrophos* and Demeter *Chloe*.[19] We are able to distinguish at least the enclosures of these three important shrines. In 1960 Dontas found, just east of the rocky terrace, some red-figure *loutrophoros* fragments decorated with scenes concerning Aphrodite and her companions, among terracotta figurines of the goddess.[20] The most important find on the terrace, however, was a pottery fragment with a dedication to Aphrodite.[21] Dontas connected these finds with other architectural and epigraphic remains from the late nineteenth-century excavations.[22] Two inscriptions found here reinforce the identification of this sacred area as that of Aphrodite *Pandemos*, Ge, and Demeter remembered in the ancient texts:[23] Εἴσοδος πϱὸς σηϰὸν Βλαύτης ϰαὶ Κουϱοτϱόφου ἀνει[μέ]νη τῷ δήμῳ ("Entrance to the shrine of Blaute and Kourotrophos that is allowed to people").[24]

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[15] Harp. 233.13–234.3, trans. R.E. Wycherley, *Agora* 3: *Literary and Epigraphical Testimonia* (Princeton, 1957), p. 224, n. 731.

[16] Paus. 1.22.3.

[17] *Suda* s.v. Ἀφϱοδίτης Πάνδημος, 175.1–3, trans. David Whitehead, in *Suda On Line: Byzantine Lexicography*, ed. Raphael Finkel et al. ⟨http://www.stoa.org/sol⟩.

[18] Georgios Dontas, "Ανασκαφή εις τους νοτιους πϱὸποδας της Ακϱοπόλεος και Σκὲψεις τινες πεϱὶ του Ιεϱοὺ της Πανδήμου Αφϱοδίτης," in *Πϱακτικὰ της εν Αϑήναι Αϱχαιολογικης Εταιϱειας του Ετους 1960* (1966), p. 4; Luigi Beschi, "Contributi di topografia ateniese," *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene* 45–46 (1968–1969), 518–519.

[19] On this topic, see also Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 26–27.

[20] Dontas, "Ανασκαφή," p. 5; Georgios Dontas, "Αϱχαιότητες Αϑηνων και Αττικης εϱευνα νοτιως της Ακϱοπόλεως κατὰ το 1960," *Αϱχαιολογικον Δελτιον* 16 (1960), 15. Beschi, "Contributi di topografia ateniese," p. 518.

What is left of the architecture—a Pentelic marble architrave with a dedication to Aphrodite—is early Hellenistic.[25] Pausanias probably interpreted this as the remains of the temple, but the cult was more ancient.[26] For the cult of Aphrodite in connection with Hippolytos we have far less evidence, but may combine hints from Euripides and Pausanias. In the prologue of Euripides' *Hippolytos*, we are told that the shrine was located near the rock of Pallas (that is, the Athenian Akropolis) and placed with a view of Troizen (Hippolytos' home):

> ϰαὶ πϱὶν μὲν ἐλϑεῖν τήνδε γῆν Τϱοζηνίαν,
> πέτϱαν παϱ' αὐτὴν Παλλάδος, ϰατόψιον
> γῆς τῆσδε, ναὸν Κύπϱιδος ἐγϰαϑείσατο,
> ἐϱῶς' ἔϱωτ' ἔϰδημον, Ἱππολύτῳ δ'ἔπι
> τὸ λοιπὸν ὀνομάσουσιν ἱδϱῦσϑαι ϑεάν.
>
> Before she came to this land of Troezen, she built, next to the rock of Pallas, a temple of Cypris overlooking this land since she loved a foreign love. After ages [they] shall name the goddess' shrine for Hippolytus.[27]

According to Pausanias, Hippolytos' Athenian *mnema* ('memorial', probably a sepulchral mound) was located on the south slope of the Akropolis, just west of the Asklepieion.[28] He also mentions a small temple to Themis (the goddess of 'What is right' or 'Law and order') nearby, and then the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Pandemos* and Peitho. Pausanias does not detail any architecture associated with Hippolytos, and neither does he specifically link its site to Aphrodite. Two inscriptions from the second half of the fifth century BC, however, identify the site as that of either Ἀφϱοδίτηι ἔπ[ι Ἱ]ππολίτου ('Aphrodite at Hippolytos') or Ἀφϱοδίτηι ἐν Ἱππολ[ύτειοι ('Aphrodite by Hippolytos').[29] It is therefore difficult to ascertain whether the shrine of Aphrodite *Pandemos* and that of Aphrodite *Hippolytos* are one and the same, named with two different epithets, or whether they are two different sanctuaries. No extant architecture can be associated with a shrine to Hippolytos, but the area on the south slope, just west of the Asklepieion, was a sacred precinct with votive niches carved into the bedrock, as at the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Eros on the north slope or the shrine of Aphrodite at Daphni.[30] A prehistoric grave, just down the slope from these niches, may have been the cult site of some hero, perhaps even Hippolytos himself. Luigi Beschi points to the literary sources, which make a clear distinction between the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Pandemos*, established by Theseus or Solon, and the shrine of Aphrodite *Hippolytos*, founded by Phaidra.[31] The epigraphic sources, topography, and scant remains (the niches and the prehistoric grave) seem to confirm his conviction.

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[21] Dontas, "Ανασϰαφή."

[22] Excavations near the late wall connected the *Pyrgos* with the southern tower of the *Beulé* gate (across from the Propylaia). Although the finds were not in situ, they seemed to be reused materials originally from the surrounding area, as suggested by the homogeneity of materials and strengthened by the ancient written sources.

[23] Paus. 1.22.3. See also two inscriptions: *IG* 2^2 5183; *IG* 2^2 5131. Beschi, "Contributi di topografia ateniese," p. 518.

[24] *IG* 2^2 5183, trans. author.

[25] *IG* 2^2 4596. For the reconstruction of the *aedicula* of Aphrodite *Pandemos*, see Beschi, "Contributi di topografia ateniese," fig. 9.

[26] Paus. 1.22.3. On this topic see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 27–33.

[27] Eur., *Hipp*. 29–33, trans. David Kovacs, Euripides *Children of Heracles, Hippolytus, Andromache, Hecuba* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

[28] Paus. 1.22.1–3. See also the discussion above.

It appears that on the north slope of the Akropolis, Aphrodite was the goddess par excellence. In the late sixth and early fifth centuries BC, the entire slope was apparently transformed into an open-air sacred precinct, as attested by nearly a hundred cuttings or niches for the deposition of votive objects. There must have been a wide variety of cults, although their identities are mostly lost to us. Oscar Broneer identified a sanctuary dedicated to Aphrodite during excavations of the north slope, between 1931 and 1938.[32] Two inscriptions that were found in this wide and deep precinct indicate that the goddess was worshipped here together with her son Eros. One inscription concerns a spring festival honoring Eros as a vegetal deity, on the fourth day of the month of Mounichion (April–

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[29] *IG* 1^{3} 383.234–235; *IG* 1^{2} 324.66; *SEG* 10 (1949), 227.

[30] On the shrine of Aphrodite at Hippolytos, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 44–45.

[31] Beschi, "Contributi di topografia ateniese."

[32] See Oscar Broneer, "Excavations on the North Slope of the Acropolis," *Hesperia* 1 (1932), 31–55; ibid., "Excavations on the North Slope of the Acropolis," *Hesperia* 2 (1933), 329–417; ibid., "Excavations on the North Slope of the Acropolis 1933–1934," *Hesperia* 4 (1935), 109–133; ibid., "Excavations on the North Slope of the Acropolis," *Hesperia* 7 (1938), 161–201. See also Kevin T. Glowacki, "Topics Concerning the North Slope of the Acropolis at Athens" (PhD diss., Bryn Mawr, 1991), pp. 46–64.

May): τοῖ Ἔϱοτι ἕ εοϱτὲ / τ]ετϱάδι ἱσταμέν[ο / Μονιχιὸν[ο]ς μεν[ός ("This festival to Eros we establish on the fourth day of Mounichion").[33]

Since the fourth day of each month was sacred to Aphrodite, with such festivals as the *Aphrodisia* (on the fourth day of Hekatombaion, mid-July to mid-August), it is not unlikely that this festival honoring Eros in the north slope shrine also celebrated Aphrodite. Niches are carved into the bedrock for the deposition of votive plaques, figurines, and other offerings. Many small statues, in the form of Eros alone or with Aphrodite, may be dated—on a stylistic basis—to the third century BC and are thus evidence of the vitality of the cult in the Hellenistic age.[34] Small benches or altars set at a certain distance by the rocky niches, often in front of them, and the absence of ash or any traces of burning, encouraged Broneer to suggest that some may have served for the dedication of flowers, fruits, or other bloodless sacrifices.[35] Some pebbles of oblong form, placed on the tops of these small benches, were probably phallic symbols, planted or offered as fertility symbols to the gods, for ritual reasons.[36] These and other archaeological finds, such as Hellenistic reliefs representing masculine and feminine genitals, emphasize human fertility and sexuality.[37] Analysis of this votive material and inscriptions allows us to date this cult site as early as the mid-fifth century BC, although it is probably far older.[38] I agree with Broneer that Eros was worshipped here as god of nature and vegetation.[39] Although Aphrodite is not mentioned in the inscription noted above, it seems likely that she was worshipped also at this shrine as a vegetal goddess; two deities sharing a site would have been closely joined in cult practice.[40]

Is it possible that the Aphrodite revered in the shrine on the north slope, where she shared her cult with Eros, had anything in common with the Aphrodite worshipped as *Pandemos* at the southwest of the

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[33] *SEG* 10 (1949), 27, trans. Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 36. Broneer, "Excavations (1932)," pp. 43–44, figs. 9–10.

[34] Broneer, "Excavations (1933)," pp. 416–417. Silvana Fasce, *Eros. La figura e il culto* (Genoa, 1977), p. 33.

[35] Broneer, "Excavations (1935)," pp. 130–132; followed by Glowacki, *Topics*, p. 52.

[36] Broneer, "Excavations (1935)," p. 133, n. 2; and Glowacki, *Topics*, p. 52.

[37] Cf. αἰδοῖα γυναϰεῖα ('feminine genitals') found in the shrine of Aphrodite at Daphni: see John Travlos, *Bildexikon zur Topographie des antiken Attika* (Tübingen, 1988), pp. 177–179; Glowacki, *Topics*, p. 52. Fasce, *Eros*, p. 35.

[38] Hurwit, *The Athenian Acropolis*, p. 41.

[39] Fasce, *Eros*, p. 35.

[40] Broneer, "Excavations (1932)," p. 49; followed by Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 40.

Akropolis? I think the answer to this question is affirmative. The north-slope shrine itself bears similarities to that of the *Pandemos*. Both are simple outdoor sanctuaries in natural surroundings; neither appears to have included any formal architecture before the Hellenistic period, which is consistent with the majority of Aphrodite cult sites in Greece.[41] Other clues on these similarities emerge from the iconography.

Iconography of Aphrodite on Athenian Pottery from the Akropolis

One of the most ancient representations of the goddess on pottery found on the Akropolis is a black-figure fragment from a *pinax*, or votive plaque, dated to the mid-sixth century BC (figure 10.1).[42] It is a depiction of Aphrodite with her sons, who are named Himeros and E[ros] by inscription. Both boys, shown here represented as *aptero* ('wingless'), raise their hands, as if in wonder or greeting. All three figures look in the same direction. The scene may have once continued with more figures, perhaps a procession of gods. This picture follows the belief that Eros was son of Aphrodite, as Sappho says in her poetry.[43] That conception opposes, however, the genealogy according to Hesiod, whereby Eros was a primitive divine power whose existence was necessary to establish the order of the world and to allow the installation of the Olympian gods.[44] Our *pinax* also evokes the account in Hesiod's *Theogony*, that Eros and Himeros welcomed Aphrodite on her birth and accompanied her to join the assembly of the gods.[45] On the *pinax* the perspective is inverted, however: here it is the goddess who holds her two children. As Alan Shapiro has shown, the *pinax* can help us to understand an earlier black-figure *kantharos* fragment, dated circa 580 BC, which shows a divine procession (figure 10.2).[46] Part of a female figure is preserved on this *kantharos* fragment, which also shows a child (whose legs are preserved) on the arm

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[41] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 39.

[42] Athens, Akropolis 2526: Botho Graef and Ernst Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen von der Akropolis zu Athen*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1925–1933), p. 1.246. Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, p. 121, s.v. "Aphrodite," no. 1255, pl. 126; BAPD 9017745.

[43] Sappho fr. 198. The tradition stating that Eros is son of Aphrodite is most common to other sources (e.g., Paus. 1.27.2), but they do not agree on the identity of the father.

[44] Hes., *Theog.* 120–122.

[45] Hes., *Theog.* 201–202.

[46] Athens, Akropolis 603: Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, p. 1.67–68. Shapiro, *Art and Cult*, p. 120. Lilly Kahil, in *LIMC* 2 (1984), 711, s.v. "Artemis," no. 1163, pl. 540 (= "Ismene," no. 4, pl. 527); BAPD 319.

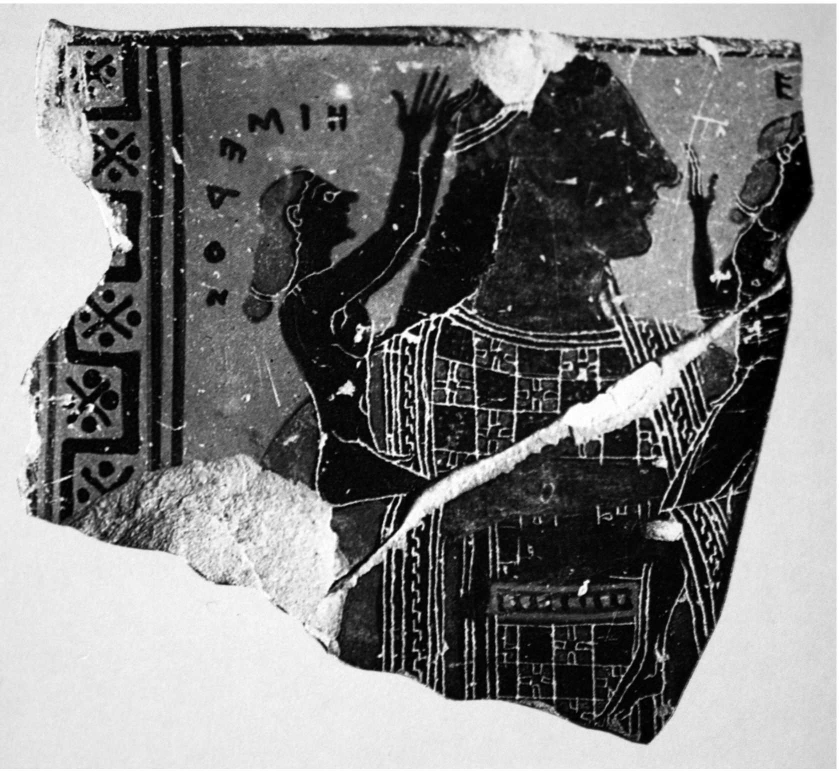

Figure 10.1. Aphrodite with Eros and Himeros, on an Attic black-figure *pinax* fragment, ca. 550 BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, Akr. 2526. Photo courtesy National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

of this figure identified by inscription as Aphrodite. As on the *pinax*, the goddess seems to hold a small child in each arm. We have here the earliest representation of Aphrodite as *kourotrophos* ('nurse of youth').[47] This epithet was attached to many goddesses—Ge, Eileithuia, Demeter, and Iphigenia—and the city patroness herself, Athena, was known as the nurse of Erechtheus already since Homer's time.[48] Even if we do not

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[47] On various implications of the epithet *kourotrophos*, see Theodora Hadzisteliou Price, *Cult and Representations of Greek Nursing Deities* (Leiden, 1978); Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, "Qui est la Kourotrophos athénienne?" in *Naissance et petite enfance dans l'Antiquité. Actes du colloque de Fribourg, 28 novembre-1er décembre 2001*, ed. Véronique Dasen (Fribourg, 2004), pp. 172–175.

[48] Hom., *Il.* 2.547. See Hadzisteliou Price, *Cult and Representations*, p. 101.

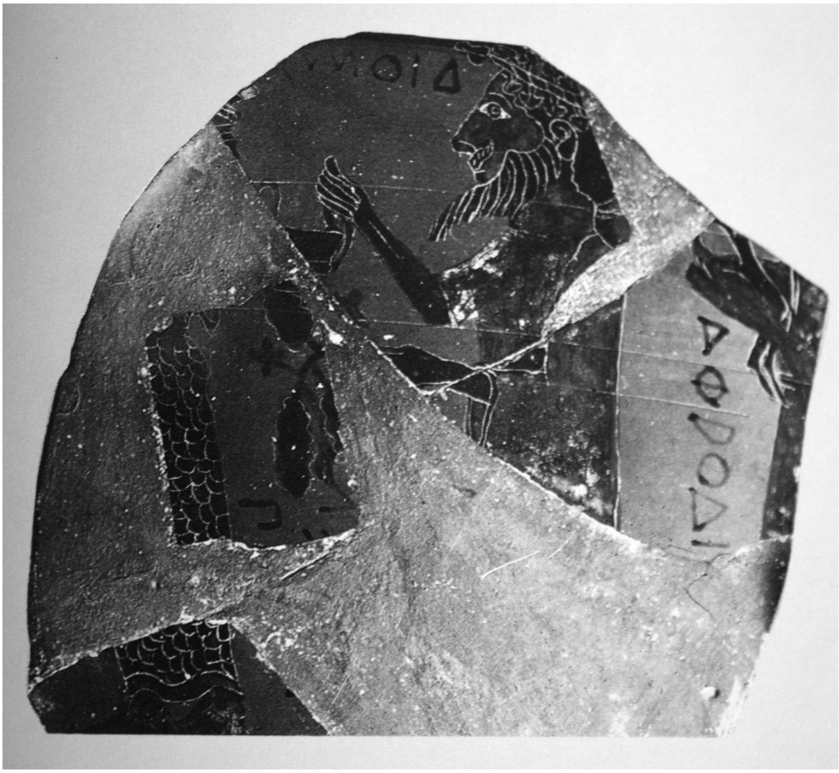

Figure 10.2. Procession of gods on an Attic black-figure *kantharos* fragment, ca. 580 BC. Athens. National Archaeological Museum, Akr. 603. Photo courtesy National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

have any literary reference to this epithet of Aphrodite, her function as *kourotrophos* is clear from Hesiod's account.[49]

The same association between Aphrodite and Eros is found on another contemporary fragment of a drinking cup, possibly a *kantharos*, from Naukratis, now in the British Museum (figure 10.3).[50] We can see again the inscription mentioning the goddess and the legs of the boy. The attitude of the *kourotrophos* and the presence of the two children (Eros and Himeros) on the *pinax* makes explicit the theme of fertility, an aspect of Aphrodite that was perhaps revered at the north-slope shrine. The two

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[49] Hes., *Theog.* 201–202. See above n. 45. See Shapiro, *Art and Cult*, p. 120.

[50] London, British Museum 1888.0601.446 (B 601.17), ca. 575–550 BC. BAPD 300742. I thank Alexandra Villing for valuable information about this fragment.

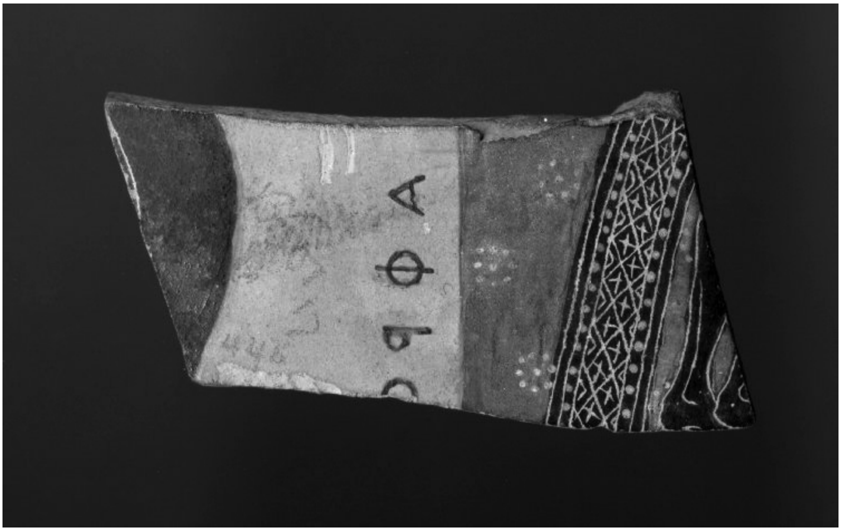

Figure 10.3. Eros and Aphrodite (?) on an Attic black-figure *kantharos* (?) fragment from Naukratis, ca. 575–550 BC. London, British Museum 1888.0601.446 (B 601.17). Photo ©The Trustees of the British Museum.

shrines of the goddess on the Akropolis slopes are therefore joined by the same conception of Aphrodite as a fertility goddess. Representations of the goddess are found on at least another *pinax* dating to the period 525–475 BC.[51] The *pinax* has a distinctly votive character, as suits the sacred context of the Akropolis (since the beginning of sixth century BC).[52] In the third quarter of the sixth century BC, Aphrodite appears in more scenes of divine assemblies, at events such as the wedding of Peleus and Thetis.[53] Many different vases from the Akropolis are decorated with this subject, the earliest—a *dinos* in the British Museum—painted by Sophilos.[54] Not much later, Ergotimos, together with Kleitias, gives us the most complete representation of this theme, on the famous François krater.[55] The most common myth that includes Aphrodite, on pottery from the Akropolis, however, is the judgment of Paris, favored by Greek artists since the Protocorinthian Chigi Vase (ca. 640 BC).[56] Through a complex nexus of metaphors, this myth recalls the absolute power of beauty and thus the strength of love, one of Aphrodite's gifts, yet it serves as a warning, because Paris' choice of Helen's love (instead of the two other gifts offered by Hera and Athena) is a cause of the Trojan War. Paris' abduction of Helen, Menelaos' wife, is also motivated by *hybris* and amounts to a violation of family law. How does this episode represent the *aition* or cause of the Trojan War? The answer to this question is offered by the meaning of Helen's character: she is endowed with a perturbing beauty, she shares the same endowments with Aphrodite, and—as queen of Sparta—she holds sovereign power. Power, fertility, and procreation together guarantee social order and stability. Without them a community falls into a crisis condition. The abduction of Helen, in fact, breaks the legitimacy of a nuptial tie, one of the basic rules that governs a civil society, and therefore causes ruin.[57]

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[51] Athens, Akropolis 2558, ca. 525–475 BC: Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, p. 1.249; BAPD 32219.

[52] Hurwit, *The Athenian Acropolis*, p. 98.

[53] Athens, Akropolis 587: Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, p. 1.64; *ABV* 39.15, 681; BAPD 305074.

[54] London, British Museum 1971.11–1.1. BAPD 350099.

[55] Florence, National Archaeological Museum 4209. BAPD 3000000.

The most ancient representation of this theme from the Akropolis' vases is on a black-figure *loutrophoros*, unattributed but datable to the time of Ergotimos and Kleitias.[58] Only a fragment is preserved, which shows Athena (named by inscription) with a wreath and a *gorgoneion*. This belongs to another fragment with an inscription, beginning with ΑΦ[...], which seems to indicate that Aphrodite was present. Perhaps Hera, Hermes, and Paris were shown on related fragments, now lost.[59] We are able to identify the same subject on a later fragmentary red-figure cup by Makron: Paris is seated on the rock, surrounded by Athena, Hera, Aphrodite with a flower, and a man, perhaps Hermes.[60] Some Erotes flying near the Trojan hero make explicit that this scene refers to the realm of Aphrodite. Aphrodite appears again on a black-figure amphora of 540–530 BC, which shows a duel between two heroes (figure 10.4).[61] The vase is broken, and only the final Σ is preserved from the inscription, so we cannot be certain about the identity of the warrior standing on the left. His identification also relies on the identity of the

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[56] Rome, Villa Giulia Museum 22679.

[57] Sabrina Batino, "Lo *skyphos* attico. Dall'iconografia alla funzione," *Quaderni di Ostraka* 4 (2002), 140–141, 159.

[58] Athens, Akropolis 604: Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, p. 1.68, pl. 29.604; Shapiro, *Art and Cult*, p. 37; BAPD 30573.

[59] Shapiro, *Art and Cult*, p. 37, n. 161.

[60] Athens, Akropolis 310: Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, p. 2.27; *ARV*^{2} 459.5; BAPD 204686.

[61] Athens, Akropolis 646: Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, p. 1.78; Fulvio Canciani, in *LIMC* 1 (1981), 384, s.v. "Aineias," no. 33; BAPD 7029.

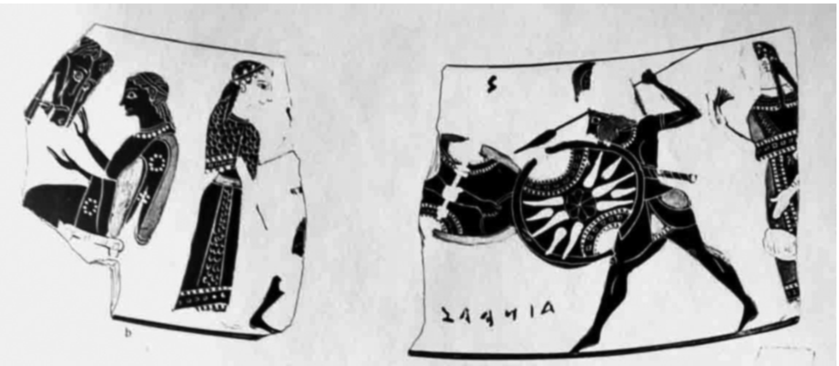

Figure 10.4. A duel between Aineias and Achilles, on an Attic black-figure amphora fragment, ca. 540–530 BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum Akr. 646. Drawing after Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, 1, pl. 42.64.

female figure behind him. Botho Graef suggests ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥ]Σ, whose mother Thetis would appear behind him.[62] John Beazley prefers ΔΙΟΜΕΔΕ]Σ, so that the goddess would be his patroness, Athena. Whatever the identity of this warrior, it is certain that the other warrior to his right, whose name is written nearby, is Aineias, and the goddess behind him is surely his mother Aphrodite, who protects or encourages her son.

Aphrodite fights, alongside other Olympians, against the Giants on Lydos' famous *dinos* on the Akropolis (figure 5.5).[63] Although the vase is fragmentary, Mary Moore's examination and comparison of the fragments with other gigantomachies, particularly some on Akropolis vases, has enabled her to make an admirable reconstruction of the whole composition.[64] Aphrodite rarely appears in gigantomachy scenes, but on Lydos' vase she fights against Mimos, whose name is written between the faces of the two.[65] Small portions of both goddess and giant are preserved. Aphrodite strides to the right, brandishing her spear, ready to thrust it at her opponent, who counters her attack. The existence of a warrior

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[62] Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, p. 78.

[63] Athens, Akropolis 607: Graef and Langlotz, *Die Antiken Vasen*, p. 1.69–71; *ABV* 107.1, 684; BAPD 310147.

[64] Mary B. Moore, "Lydos and the Gigantomachy," *AJA* 83 (1979), 79–99. See also the discussion of this vase by Stephanie Budin in this volume, pp. 92–94, fig 5.5.

[65] Moore, "Lydos," pp. 87–88.

Aphrodite constitutes a known and unequivocal reality.[66] Shapiro suggests that the iconography of Aphrodite with a spear, as on Lydos' vase, recalls one of her aspects as warrior goddess in the Near East.[67] Some then connect the identity of this Aphrodite with the debates on the origins of the goddess, treated elsewhere in this volume.[68]

From Myth to Rite: Festivals Honoring Aphrodite in Athens

Two major Athenian festivals honoring Aphrodite took place on the Akropolis: the *Aphrodisia* and the *Arrephoria*. Some similarities between Athena's and Aphrodite's festivals show that, although Athena was the official patron goddess of Athens, Aphrodite played almost as important a role. The *Aphrodisia* celebrated Aphrodite *Pandemos* and Peitho, with a bathing festival on the southwest slope of the Akropolis, on the site of the *aedicula* for these goddesses.[69] First the sanctuary was purified with the blood of a dove, one of Aphrodite's birds.[70] Then statues of the goddesses were carried in a procession to a place where they were washed, in the same manner as the sacred image of Athena *Polias* in the *Plynteria* festival.[71] Just as Athena was celebrated in the *Synoikia* festival (also in Hekatombaion) for her aid in the unification of Attika, so too was Aphrodite honored in the *Aphrodisia* festival, for her participation in the same event.[72]

Her important role in sanctioning unions between men and women is evident in her appearance in wedding scenes. Aphrodite's power of unification was called upon by politicians and members of the community (city magistrates, civil servants, merchants) as well as being crucial to the initial and continued *synoikismos* of the Attic demes.[73] In this sense weddings serve as a continuation or an expression of the unity and strength begun in the *synoikismos*.[74]

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[66] If one considers, for instance, Aphrodite *enoplion* in Sparta, mentioned by Plutarch, *Apophthegmata Laconica* 239A.5–7. On this topic, see Solima, "Era, Artemide e Afrodite," p. 408. An examination of the full range of evidence for Aphrodite as martial goddess is offered by Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*. See also the contributions by Budin and Pironti to this volume, chapters 5 and 6.

[67] Shapiro, *Art and Cult*, p. 120.

[68] See relevant bibliography in chapter 5.

[69] On the *aedicula*, see above, n. 25.

[70] We know about the rites connected with Aphrodite's festival from an inscription of the year 287/286 BC. See *IG* 2^2 659. Erika Simon, *Festivals of Attica: An Archaeological Commentary* (Madison, 1983), p. 48.

[71] On *Plynteria*, see Simon, *Festivals of Attica*, pp. 46–49; see also Pierre Brulé, *La fille d'Athènes. La religion des filles à Athènes à l'époque classique* (Paris, 1987), p. 105. On similar rituals in other Greek cities, see Herbert William Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London, 1977), pp. 152–155.

[72] On the *Plynteria*, see Phot., *Bibl.* 128.1–2; Plut., *Vit. Alc.* 34.1–2. On the *Aphrodisia*, see Paus. 1.22.3.

Was Aphrodite involved in the *Arrephoria*, the early civic celebration in honor of Athena *Polias*, a mysterious ritual mentioned by Pausanias (with its mythological *aition* or explanation about the daughters of Kekrops)? Although the *Arrephoroi*, the young aristocratic girls who assisted in the daily maintenance of the cult of Athena *Polias*, served Athena, they seem also to have had a connection to Aphrodite.[75]

In his description of the Athenian Akropolis, Pausanias relates some details of a secret ritual performed once a year by the *Arrephoroi*.[76] He tells us that the maidens made a nocturnal journey carrying secret objects in the basket upon their head; they descended into a natural underground passage in the Akropolis rock within a separate precinct (*peribolos*), "not far from Aphrodite in the Gardens." Here they left what they had carried on their heads from the Akropolis and received something else "wrapped up" and carried it back to the Akropolis. We can read in Pausanias' account that ἔστι δὲ περίβολος ἐν τῇ πόλει τῆς καλουμένης ἐν Κήποις Ἀφροδίτης οὐ πόρρω καὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ κάθοδος ὑπόγαιος αὐτομάτη, ταύτῃ κατίασιν αἱ παρθένοι ("there is in the city an enclosure not far from the sanctuary of Aphrodite called 'Aphrodite in the Gardens', and there is a natural underground descent through to it. Down this way the maidens go").[77] This ambiguous passage in Pausanias' description of the route of the *Arrephoroi* has been the subject of much speculation that is worth a brief mention.[78] The problem arises through the use of the adverb οὐ πόρρω; it is not clear, in fact, if the genitive τῆς καλουμένης ἐν Κήποις Ἀφροδίτης depends on the noun περίβολος (and the expression οὐ πόρρω stands alone) or upon this phrase, οὐ πόρρω. In the first case the passage would be literally rendered, "there is in the city a *peribolos* of Aphrodite called Aphrodite in the Gardens, not far away, and through it a natural subterranean descent.

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[73] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 102.

[74] On Aphrodite's role on the *synoikismos*, see Plut., *Vit. Thes.* 24.2; 25.1.

[75] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 46.

[76] Paus. 1.27.3.

[77] Paus. 1.27.3, trans. James George Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* (London, 1913).

[78] Paus. 1.27.3.

There the maidens go down." Such a translation is conceivable since οὐ πόρρω is used by Pausanias without a genitive;[79] but the presence of the genitive—τῆς καλουμένης ἐν Κήποις Ἀφροδίτης—makes the meaning ambiguous. So it seems that the *peribolos* is defined as belonging to Aphrodite, whereas according to the more common translation, it stands alone. There is another possible explanation: that is to say that the text, on the account of the reference to two sanctuaries of Αφροδίτη ἐν κήποις, has become corrupt.[80] A final interpretation—most probable in Broneer's opinion—is that Pausanias himself confused the two sanctuaries.[81]

Beyond the grammatical difficulties in the understanding of the passage, there is also a topographical problem about the location of the spot sacred to Aphrodite, which is said to be ἐν τῇ πόλει ('on the Akropolis'). The only known sanctuary of Aphrodite in the Gardens was outside the city walls, near the Ilissos River, and it seems quite improbable that it could have been so far away.[82]

Broneer suggests that the north-slope sanctuary could be identified with the *peribolos* mentioned by Pausanias.[83] He further reminds that there were two different sanctuaries of Ἀφροδίτη ἐν κήποις, a more ancient one, which he had just discovered on the Akropolis slope, and a later one, with a temple containing the famous statue of Alkamenes, near the Ilissos.[84] Recent scholarship focusing on the language of Pausanias' account has cast doubt on Broneer's hypothesis and called into question whether Aphrodite played any role in the ceremony, explaining that Pausanias' mention of the goddess and her garden precinct is no more than a signpost in his description of the route of the *Arrephoroi*. Broneer's suggestion has served as the basis for the interpretation of a number of works of art, however, which seem to support the inclusion of Aphrodite in the context of the *Arrephoria*.[85]

Leaving out the intricate and debated question concerning the identification of the *peribolos* mentioned by Pausanias and the topography of the shrine linked to Aphrodite *en Kepois*, we can dwell upon some

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[79] Paus. 1.8.5; 2.13.7; 2.31.4; 3.20.7; 9.10.1.

[80] This solution is offered by Hitzig and Blümner, quoted in Broneer, "Excavations (1932)," p. 50, n. 7; p. 54, n. 2.

[81] Broneer, "Excavations (1932)," p. 54.

[82] Edward Kadletz, "Pausanias 1.27.3 and the Route of the Arrephoroi," *AJA* 86 (1982), 445.

[83] Broneer, "Excavations (1932)," p. 52.

[84] Broneer, "Excavations (1932)," p. 52.

[85] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 49.

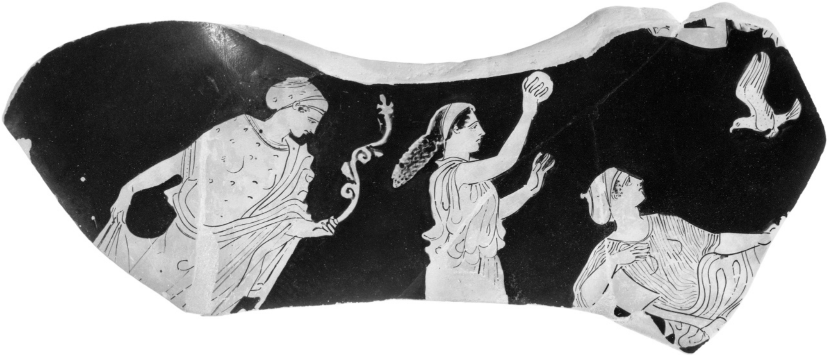

Figure 10.5. Aphrodite and the *Arrephoroi* (?), on an Attic red-figure hydria fragment, attributed to the Kleophon Painter, ca. 430–420 BC. Tübingen, Universität, Institut für Klassische Archäologie E 112, ca. 430–420 BC. Courtesy Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Tübingen.

iconographical evidence of this festival from vase painting.[86] A fragmentary *hydria*, attributed to the Kleophon Painter, shows a seated Aphrodite in the presence of young girls playing ball (figure 10.5).[87] This scene, unique in vase painting, seems to corroborate pseudo-Plutarch's statement about the House of the Arrephoroi, that it had a court attached to it for those occasions when the young girls were not performing their sacred duties.[88]

So, this vase may depict Aphrodite in the company of the *Arrephoroi*, during a period of recreation. The scene may take place in the area between the House of the Arrephoroi and the Pandroseion.[89] A squat *lekythos* by the Meidias Painter, representing the birth of Erichthonios, also locates Aphrodite in "paradise gardens," aimed to recall the sanctuary of Ἀφροδίτη ἐν κήποις (Aphrodite 'in the gardens'), according to Jenifer Neils.[90] This painted version of the rite's *aition* seems to bring the goddess into the orbit of the *Arrephoria*. Aphrodite is found in similar scenes referring to the same subject, for example, on the base of the cult statue in the Hephaisteion.[91] The presence of the goddess must have had a part in the mythical origins of the Athenian progenitor, as well as an important role in the political and social life of the city.[92] Although Pausanias does not explicitly say that the sanctuary of Aphrodite was the goal of the *Arrephoroi*, the iconographical clues suggest she was not a mere spectator in the *Arrephoria* festival but that she had a pivotal role in it, as befits a goddess concerned with gardens and vegetal fertility.

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[86] On this topic, see Kadletz, "Pausanias 1.27.3," pp. 445–446. See also Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 50.

[87] Tübingen, Universität, Institute fur Klassische Archäologie E 112, ca. 430–420 BC. *ARV*^{2} 1147.61. BAPD 215201.

[88] [Plut.], *X orat.* 2.839c. See Brulé, *La fille d'Athènes*, pp. 90–91.

[89] On this topic, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 59; followed by Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 49–50.

[90] Cleveland Museum of Art 1982.142. Jenifer Neils, "A Greek Nativity by the Meidias Painter," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 70 (1983), 274–289.

Conclusions

An iconographic analysis, together with consideration of the dates and shapes of pottery decorated with images of the goddess, suggest that Aphrodite was worshipped on the Akropolis from ancient times. Her cult of Aphrodite *Pandemos*, had Solon really established it (as suggested by Apollodoros), goes back at least to the sixth century BC. The chronological range of figured scenes on Akropolis pottery, between the second quarter of the sixth century and the first half of the fourth century BC, confirms this. It is significant that the favorite shape used for the oldest images were *pinakes*, rectangular plaques suitable as dedications. Typical wedding vases—such as *loutrophoroi* and *lebetes gamikoi*—found on the Akropolis were decorated with scenes of Aphrodite's realm. Their presence is hardly an accident, because they were connected with Aphrodite's sphere of influenced regarding marriage, specifically in the ritual bridal bath and nuptial ceremonies. There is a change over time in the iconography on black- and red-figure vases. Despite a general decrease in mythological scenes, images of Aphrodite's realm grow through the Late Archaic and Early Classical periods. Aphrodite and Eros are particularly privileged subjects on red-figure pottery, but we should not underestimate the relationship between pottery and the sacred context of the Akropolis, where it was dedicated. So, vases with links to weddings, whether through iconography or shape or both, seem to refer to

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[91] Paus. 1.14.6. Semni P. Karousou, "Alkamenes und das Hephaisteion," *AM* 69–70 (1954–1955), 79–94; Evelyn B. Harrison, "Alkamenes' Sculptures for the Hephaisteion: Part II," *AJA* 81 (1977), 265–287; Angeliki Kosmopoulou, *The Iconography of Sculptured Statues Bases in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (Madison, 2002), pp. 126–130.

[92] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 58.

Aphrodite *Pandemos* as a patroness of marriage.[93] That is particularly true of vases decorated with the judgment of Paris. So, the increase of vases showing Aphrodite is due, I think, not only to religious reasons but also to social and political dynamics, namely, the development of democracy at Athens, which gave more importance to marriage in the later fifth century, since legitimate citizenship was restricted to children born to Athenians.[94] It is therefore unlikely that such nuptial vases as *loutrophoroi* or *lebetes gamikoi* deliberately honored Aphrodite *Pandemos*, as well as Nymphe ('Bride') and other wedding goddesses.[95] Finally, the topography of Aphrodite's shrines (figure 10.6) shows that the goddess dominates the slopes of the Akropolis with three different cult places: on the north slope we have the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Eros; on the south slope there were perhaps two different shrines, those of Aphrodite *Pandemos* and Aphrodite *Hippolytos*. Despite the popularity of Euripides' drama, the second one seems not to have been a sanctuary of great importance. We could also add the shrines of Aphrodite *Ourania* in the Agora, Aphrodite *en Kepois* along the Ilissos River, and two other sanctuaries, in the Piraeus and at Daphni.[96] But we cannot exclude the existence of other cult places dedicated to Aphrodite on the Akropolis, even if we do not have any evidence of it. Memory of an Archaic sanctuary for the goddess, near the Propylaia, could have been kept where Kallias set up Kalamis' statue of the Aphrodite *Sosandra*, close to the relief of the Three Graces and Alkamenes' Hermes *Propylaios*, after his return from Persia in 449 BC.[97]

All of Aphrodite's cult places and the festivals of *Aphrodisia* and *Arrephoria* confirm the eminent role the goddess had in Athens and show the complexity of her multifaceted personality, wholly or partially revealed by her different epithets. The boundary between her specific functions seems anything but rigid, and sometimes the same goddess is worshipped by different groups of people with different purposes. The most pertinent example on the Akropolis is Aphrodite *Pandemos*, who belongs to nuptial, political, and fertility spheres at the same time. The latter aspect

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[93] See Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 24.

[94] Some interesting considerations about this topic are in Amy C. Smith, "The Politics of Weddings at Athens: An Iconographic Assessment," *Leeds International Classical Studies* 4, no. 1 (2005), 1–32.

[95] The chronology of these vases is from the early fifth to the fourth century BC.

[96] On Aphrodite *en kepois* near the Ilissos, see Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*; ibid., "Des épiclèses exclusives," p. 287.

[97] Paus. 1.23.2. Mario Torelli and Theodoros Mavrojannis, *Grecia. Guide Archeologiche Mondadori* (Milan, 1997), pp. 73–74.

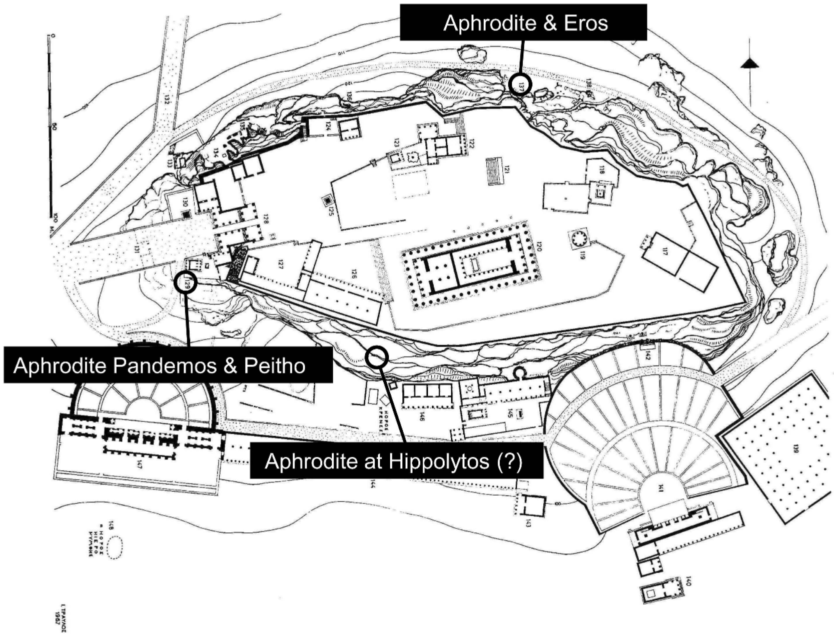

Figure 10.6. Map showing Aphrodite's shrines on the Akropolis and its slopes, after Travlos, *Bildexikon*, fig. 91.

is confirmed particularly by the location of Aphrodite *Pandemos*' shrine in an area devoted to other fertility cults, namely, Ge *Kourotrophos* and Demeter *Chloe*. At the same time, Aphrodite's nuptial dimension is unquestionable if one considers that in the Roman Imperial period the cult of Aphrodite *Pandemos* was associated with that of Nymphe, whose own shrine had gone out of use by the first century BC. An inscription on a seat in the Theatre of Dionysos, in fact, indicates that one priestess served Aphrodite *Pandemos*, Nymphe, and another deity (whose name is not preserved on the stone) that was probably also linked to the sphere of love and marriage.[98] The association between Aphrodite *Pandemos* and Nymphe indicates that the former presided over goodwill and good feeling among fellow citizens as well as between conjugal partners.[99] Since Aphrodite *Pandemos* and Peitho preside over both the union of brides and grooms and the union of families and clans within the *demos*

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[98] *IG* 2^2 5149.

[99] Matthew P.J. Dillon, "Post-nuptial Sacrifices on Kos (Segre. ed 178) and Ancient Greek Marriage Rites," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 124 (1990), 74.

('populace'), it is clear that, on a political level, weddings find their own meaning as they reaffirm the unity and strength begun in the *synoikismos*.[100] The aetiological story recalling Solon as founder of this cult also assumes a social and political dimension since the sexuality of youths became a concern of the *polis* ('city-state').[101]

Similarly, a triple dimension characterizes Aphrodite *Ourania*: she is involved again in fertility and marriage, as well as in political and social affairs; the mythical explanation surrounding the sanctuary's founder Aigeus, who calls upon the goddess for his childless condition, seems to suggest that this sanctuary had something to do with the aspect of human fertility.[102] Nevertheless, the shrine in the Agora points out another feature of Aphrodite as protectress of the *polis* whose civic associations go back to the time of the early kings of Athens.[103] Whereas, on the one hand, the Aphrodite worshipped in the north-slope shrine had a strong *kourotrophic* connotation as a fertility goddess, linked to rites of passage and status, on the other hand, we do not have enough clues to state the proper domain of the cult of Aphrodite *Hippolytos*. Aphrodite's role as fertility goddess is relevant to the goddess worshipped with Eros in sanctuaries on the north slope, as in her garden sanctuary at Daphni. The same aspect of the goddess also applies to the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Pandemos* on the southwestern slope of the Akropolis. It is likely that the Ilissos shrine (which is well attested in the literary sources although its site and its contents are as yet undiscovered) focused also on fertility, as suggested by the epithet *en kepois*, which implies vegetal fertility.[104] The political dimension of Aphrodite's cults appears in both the *Pandemos* and *Ourania* shrines. Her role as goddess of marriage is common to perhaps all of these sanctuaries, since her blessing on a relationship between a man and a woman was an intrinsic gift of Aphrodite, regardless of her epithet. Although Aphrodite's name does not have the same resonance as those of the city's other divine patrons—Athena *Polias* and Zeus *Polieus*—it is clear that she was important in the daily lives of Athenians. She is the goddess who represents the power of unification of individuals in both political and social spheres.

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[100] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 25, 103.

[101] Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 81.

[102] Paus. 1.14.7.

[103] See Shapiro, *Art and Cult*, p. 118.

[104] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 40–41.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

APHRODITE AND THE FLEET IN CLASSICAL ATHENS[*]

Chryssanthi Papadopoulou

Aphrodite's connection to the marine element is well attested in antiquity, with a series of epithets connecting her to the sea: *Pontia* ('Of the sea'), *Pelagia* ('Of the open sea'), *Limenia* ('Of the harbor'), *Epilimenia* ('By the harbor'), *Nauarchis* ('Commander of the ships'), and *Euploia* ('Of fair sailing'). Her worship was common in ports, islands, and promontories, as she was the protector of open-sea journeys and navigation.[1] Her special relationship to the sea was formed as early as Hesiodic times.[2] In the *Theogony* (188–202) Hesiod narrates that Aphrodite is the daughter of Ouranos, conceived in her father's testicles and born in the foam (*aphros*) of the sea.[3] As soon as she was born, Aphrodite embarked on a long sea voyage, from Kythera to Cyprus. This Hesiodic version of the birth of Aphrodite influenced the perception of the etymology of her name. Thus, regardless of its actual etymology, at least in the Classical period, the derivation of her name was thought to allude to the marine element.[4] Additionally, the sixth *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* begins with a mention of her journey to Cyprus and her connection to the waves and foam of the sea, implying her marine birth.[5]

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[1] Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, p. 2.634; Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 80; Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, p. 261; Karageorghis, *Kypris*, p. 130; Ehud Herbert Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter in der griechischen Kunst der klassischen Zeit* (Jerusalem, 1979), p. 61; E. Miranda, "Osservazioni sul culto di euploia," *Miscellanea Greca et Romana* 14 (1989), 131, 133; Parker, *Athenian Religion*, p. 238; Parker, "The Cult of Aphrodite Pandamos," p. 146; Erika Simon, *Die Götter der Griechen*, 3rd ed. (Munich, 1985), p. 231; Yulia Ustinova, "Aphrodite *Ourania* of the Bosporus: The Great Goddess of a Frontier Pantheon," *Kernos* 11 (1998), 221.

[2] Silvia Barbantani, "Goddess of Love and Mistress of the Sea: Notes on a Hellenistic Hymn to Arsinoe-Aphrodite (P.Lit.Goodsp. 2, I–IV)," *Ancient Society* 35 (2005), 144; Pirenne-Delforge, "Something to Do with Aphrodite," p. 318.

[3] For more on the connection between Aphrodite and *aphros*, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 61–63. She writes that Aphrodite is the goddess of *mixis*, and *aphros* is the product of *mixis* and therefore a very suitable symbol for the goddess, in accordance with Arist., *Gen. an.* 736a8–21.

The mythological tradition that connected Aphrodite with Theseus' journey to Crete further strengthened her bond with the sea.[6] Pythian Apollo advised Theseus to count on Aphrodite to accompany and guide him in his sea voyage to Crete.[7] Aphrodite also assisted in his seduction of Ariadne on Crete. As an acknowledgment of Aphrodite's protection and help, Theseus founded the cult of the goddess on Delos, on his way back to Athens.[8]

A Popular Goddess in Attika

Aphrodite was a particularly popular deity in Athens, where she had many urban and rural sanctuaries. In the fifth century she had five cult places in the *asty* ('city'): an altar and possibly a temple in the Agora, three sanctuaries around the Akropolis, and a sanctuary in the Ilissos area. According to Pausanias, Aigeus (one of the mythical kings of Athens) and his son Theseus (the Athenian hero par excellence) instituted her cults.[9] Most of the evidence for Aphrodite's cults in the Piraeus comes from the fourth century onwards. In 394/393, Konon built a sanctuary to Aphrodite *Euploia* ('Of fair sailing'), possibly on the promontory of Eetioneia, the north enclosure of *Kantharos* (also called 'Great harbor').[10] In 333 merchants from Kition acquired permission to own land and build a sanctuary for Aphrodite *Ourania* ('Heavenly') in the Akte, the southern plateau of the Piraeus peninsula.[11]

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[4] William Hansen, "Foam-Born Aphrodite and the Mythology of Transformation," *American Journal of Philology* 121 (2000), pp. 4, 6, 15–16. Socrates, in his analysis of the names of the twelve gods, said that there is no reason to doubt the Hesiodic myth regarding Aphrodite's name: Pl., *Cra*. 406c–d.

[5] Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite*, p. 58.

[6] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 74.

[7] Plut., *Vit. Thes*. 18.2.

[8] Plut., *Vit. Thes*. 21.1; Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 198–199; Erika Simon, "Theseus and Athenian Festivals," in *Worshipping Athena, Panathenaia and Parthenon*, ed. Jenifer Neils (Madison, 1996), p. 15; Henry J. Walker, *Theseus and Athens* (Oxford, 1995), p. 94.

[9] Paus. 1.14.7.

[10] Garland, *The Piraeus*, p. 112.

Apart from the evidence for fourth-century cults in the Piraeus, there is some indication that Themistokles ordered the construction of a sanctuary for Aphrodite in the fifth century. Ammonios Lamptreus wrote in the first century AD and was quoted by Hermogenes in the second century AD,

> καὶ τὰ περὶ τῆς περιστερᾶς ὅτι ἐπὶ τῆς Θεμιστοκλέους τριήρους ἐφάνη καθεζομένη, ὅθεν καὶ μετὰ τὴν νίκην ἀπαρχὰς ʼΑφροδίτης ἱερὸν ἱδρύσατο ἐν Πειραιεῖ, ὥς ʼΑμμώνιος ὁ Λαμπτρεὺς ἐν τῷ περὶ βωμῶν φησί.
>
> [A]nd as for the event about the dove that appeared sitting on Themistokles' trireme, wherefore after the victory Themistokles founded as a thanks-offering a sanctuary for Aphrodite in the Piraeus, as Ammonios Lamptreus narrated in his book on altars.[12]

A first-century inscription also implies that a sanctuary of Aphrodite existed in the largest of the ports in the Piraeus in Themistokles' time:

> [προσόντα … ἱερὸν Ἀθηνᾶς Ἑ]ρκάνης ὅ ἱδρύσατο Θεμιστοκλῆς πρὸ
> τῆς περὶ Σαλαμῖνα ναυμαχίας· ψύκτρας τὰς ἐν τῶι μεγάλωι
> [λιμένι … ἀπὸ τοῦ μέρους] τοῦ περικλεισμένου τοῖς νεωρίοις καί τῶι
> Ἀφροδισίωι καὶ ταῖς στοαῖς μέχρι τῶν κλείθρων·
>
> [pertaining to … the shrine of Athena Herkane] which Themistokles founded before the naval battle around Salamis; the parks in the great [harbor … from the section] bounded by the dockyards and the Aphrodision and the stoas up to the "keys."[13]

Another inscription, dated to 394 / 393 and found in the west tower of the Eetioneia Gate, mentions work undertaken on the harbor fortifications. It uses the Aphrodision to define the district of the gate:

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[11] Garland, *The Piraeus*, p. 109; Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 66, nn. 285, 438.

[12] Ammonios in *FGrH* 361 F. This passage was also quoted by Joannes Siceliote in the eleventh century AD.

[13] *IG* 2^2 1035.45–48, trans. Gerald Ray Culley, "The Restoration of Sacred Monuments in Augustan Athens (*IG* II^2 1035)" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1973). See also Gerald Ray Culley, "The Restoration of Sanctuaries in Attica: *IG* II^2, 1035," *Hesperia* 44 (1975), 214; Peter Funke, "Konons Rückkehr nach Athen im Spiegel epigraphischer Zeugnisse," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 53 (1983), 184; Walther Judeich, *Topographie von Athen* (Munich, 1931), p. 73.

> ἐπ᾽ Εὐβολίδο ἄρχοντο[ς]
> ἀπὸ τõ σημέο ἀρξάμε-
> νον μέχρι τõ μετώπ-
> ο τῶν πυλῶν τῶν κατὰ
> τὸ Ἀφροδίσιον ἐπὶ δεξ-
> ιὰ ἐξιόντι μι-
> σθω Δημοσθένης Β-
> οιώτιο[ς σὺν] τῆι προσα-
> γωγῆ[ι] τῶν λίθων.
>
> At the time of Euboulides, Demosthenes the Boiotian is commissioned to provide the stones starting from the mark until the front of the gates, those to the right as you exit heading for the Aphrodision.[14]

Konon returned to Athens from Knidos in the same year as this inscription was composed, so it is highly unlikely that his sanctuary was built immediately and rose so quickly in popularity, to be considered a landmark already in the year of its construction.[15] It is more likely that an older Aphrodision, that of Themistokles, was also located in the area of the Eetioneia Gate and that the later inscription refers to this earlier sanctuary.[16]

Themistokles was the prime instigator behind the transformation of the Piraeus (its fortifications and harbor facilities). He was also the general who advised the Athenians to construct a fleet with the excess income from the Laurion mines.[17] His reforms led to a series of changes in Athenian society, economy, and culture.[18] The Athenians, having constructed a strong fleet and being primarily responsible for the naval victories against the Persians, thus began to place particular emphasis on their navy. The number of people involved in the fleet was considerable, and the economic benefits resulting from it—the Delian League, the corn monopoly, and the booty from maritime expeditions—were beneficial for the whole city. Until that time, the Athenians were primarily agricultural people, but during the fifth century, they realized that they were also seafaring people. Changes in the way a community defines itself often result in changes in the community's religion.[19] Sea voyages require protection at sea.[20] The circumstances were therefore ideal for the accommodation of new nautical cults. What remains to be examined is why the Themistoklean temple in the Piraeus was dedicated to Aphrodite in particular.

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[14] *IG* 2^2 1657.

[15] Parker, *Athenian Religion*, p. 238, n. 73.

[16] Culley, *The Restoration of Sacred Monuments*, pp. 161–162; Klaus Valtin Von Eickstedt, *Beiträge zur Topographie des antiken Piräus* (Athens, 1991), pp. 115–116; Paul François Foucart, "Les fortifications du Pirée," *BCH* 11 (1887), 141–142. The Eetioneia Gate was also referred to as the Aphrodision Gate (Garland, *The Piraeus*, p. 167).

[17] Robert J. Lenardon, *The Saga of Themistocles* (London, 1978), p. 53; Richard Neer, "The Athenian Treasury at Delphi and the Material of Politics," *Classical Antiquity* 23 (2004), 71.

[18] Alfred French, *The Growth of the Athenian Economy* (London, 1964), p. 163; Garland, *The Piraeus*, pp. 18–19.

Why Aphrodite?

Aphrodite was a deity connected with all the elements suitable for the goddess of *mixis* ('fusion'). She incarnated the power of the sky, which first encompassed the sea and then the land.[21] This seaborne goddess, who sailed to the islands as soon as she was born, was therefore an appropriate divinity to watch over the Athenian fleet. Another reason for choosing Aphrodite was the extent of her dominion, which was broad and varied. In fifth-century Athens, she was the patron deity of not only marriage but also prostitution and love generally. She was the goddess of procreation and at the same time land fertility, as well as goddess of the sky (*Ourania*), yet she was also closely associated with the earth and flowers and was thus called *en kepois* ('in the gardens').[22] Additionally, she was a patron deity of democracy and, as noted above, closely linked to Theseus.[23] Her varied personality, in combination with the number of her cult places, embedded Aphrodite in Athenian life by means of her many qualities that granted her a major place in festivals, prayers, dedications, and other aspects of religious life.[24] It is therefore unsurprising that this deity was celebrated for her nautical aspect once the navy became one of the priorities of the Athenian state. A worshipping group shapes the attributes of a deity in order for the deity to bear significance in its "organic context."[25] The people involved in the navy, who were already worshipping Aphrodite in one or more of her other forms, brought her nautical attributes to the foreground, so they could also worship her while on board ship.

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[19] Sourvinou-Inwood, "Persephone and Aphrodite," p. 102; Sourvinou-Inwood, *"Reading" Greek Culture*, p. 147.

[20] Thomas Harrison, "Religion and the Rationality of the Greek City," in *Rethinking Revolutions through Ancient Greece*, ed. Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge, Eng., 2006), p. 135.

[21] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, p. 62; Simon, *Götter der Griechen*, p. 245.

[22] Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros*, p. 11; Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians*, pp. 141–142, 183; Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 28, 54; Pirenne-Delforge, "Des épiclèses," pp. 280–282; Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 40, 81–82; Simon, *Festivals of Attica*, pp. 40–46.

[23] Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros*, pp. 35–43.

[24] The frequent appearance of the goddess in comedy, due to the comic possibilities of her character, demonstrates the proximity of this deity to the people: Emmanuela Bakola, "Cratinus and the Art of Comedy" (PhD diss., University of London, 2006), pp. 227–233.

The Themistoklean Sanctuary: Location and Function

Aphrodite's nautical attributes were demonstrable in the culture of fifth-century Athens through the philosophy and function of the Themistoklean sanctuary in the Piraeus, as well as through the development of her iconography on Athenian pottery, as a response to historic events relating to the fleet. The position of the Themistoklean sanctuary on the promontory of the Eetioneia was significant (figure 11.1). In order for people to enter through the Eetioneia Gate, they would have had to exit the Piraeus *asty* from the Asty Gate, walk outside the fortification around the *Kofos Limen* ('Still harbor'), and then reenter through the Eetioneia Gate.[26] It would not have been possible for someone to walk straight from the *Emporion* ('Market') and along the inside of the walls all the way to the Aphrodision, because the stretch of land in front of the *Kofos Limen* was submerged. This eccentricity in the approach to the sanctuary suggests that its location was chosen so that it could be easily visited from the sea. Unlike the sanctuary of Zeus and Athena, possibly on the eastern side of the *Emporion*, which was an organic part of the Piraeus *asty*, Aphrodite's cult site was in a location chosen with mariners in mind (although the sanctuary could not have been restricted to mariners). Its position on the promontory would also have made it one of the most visible landmarks for any ship entering the port. The location of the Themistoklean sanctuary of Aphrodite therefore attested its nautical function.

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[25] Sourvinou-Inwood, *"Reading" Greek Culture*, pp. 147–150.

[26] That is, if the Themistoklean walls followed a similar line to that of the Kononian ones in that area: Garland, *The Piraeus*, p. 165. Even if the Themistoklean fortifications extended farther north than the Kononian ones, to visit the sanctuary by land, one would have still had to leave the *asty* and walk around the *Kofos Limen*, regardless of whether one had to walk outside the walls. The location of the sanctuary was on the side of the walls facing the water, since Paus. 1.1.3, writing about the Kononian Aphrodision, clearly stated that it was constructed on the side of the sea.

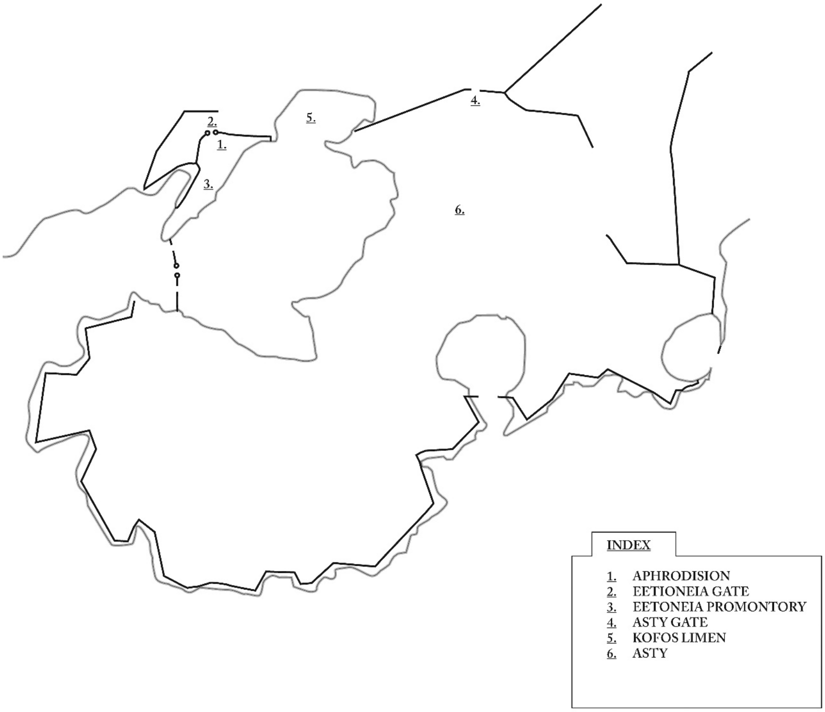

Figure 11.1. Map of the Piraeus peninsula with marked points discussed in this chapter. Map by Cixx design, after Garland, *The Piraeus*, fig. 1.

The justification of the construction of the temple, through the myth of the dove appearing in the Battle of Salamis, directly connects Aphrodite with the fleet.[27] The content of this myth was determined by the sociopolitical context in which it was conceived, by a society being reformed by the navy.[28] It may not reflect the real reason behind the sanctuary's construction, but it certainly shows a belief surrounding its construction that is equally valid. This myth indicates that Aphrodite acquired a nautical attribute in the fifth century, when she had looked after the Athenian navy.

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[27] For a connection between Aphrodite, Themistokles, and his trireme, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, pp. 246–247; also Sokolowski, "Aphrodite as Guardian," pp. 3, 6.

[28] Breitenberger, *Aphrodite and Eros*, p. 31; Robert Parker, "Myths of Early Athens," in *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, ed. Jan Bremmer (London, 1987), p. 188.

Aphrodite on Athenian Pots

The second way in which Aphrodite's nautical attribute is demonstrated in Athenian culture is through her iconography on Athenian pottery. This iconography expressed the perception of her worshipping group in Attika regarding the extent of the sphere of her influence and patronage.[29] In fifth-century Attika, the marine element suddenly infiltrated the iconography of Aphrodite, thus emphasizing the contemporary link between her and the sea. The sea was present or implied primarily in scenes of Aphrodite's birth from the sea and her travels, while seated on a swan, over water.[30]

The earliest representation of Aphrodite's sea birth on Attic pottery comes from circa 460.[31] From the mid-fifth century, there are seven known examples of this scene, on two *hydriai*, two *pyxides*, one *stamnos*, one *skyphos*, and one bell krater.[32] Five of these examples date around 450, and two are somewhat later (440–430). The iconographic motif of Aphrodite's birth from the sea seems to have disappeared after circa 430.[33] It seems that this scene both appeared and peaked, therefore, in the decade 460–450. In these scenes, Aphrodite is depicted rising or having risen from the sea, between Eros and one or more women looking at the birth of the goddess (figure 11.2). This motif is partly in accordance with the Hesiodic version of Aphrodite's birth (*Theogony* 188–204), since the poet wrote that Eros followed the deity at her birth from the sea. Despite his attendance in the Hesiodic version, Himeros ('Desire') is absent from these scenes of Aphrodite's birth. Instead, one or more women are shown, offering clothes. They could be the *Horai* ('Seasons' or 'Hours'), known from the *Homeric Hymn*, divine spirits who clothed the deity

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[29] Jeremy Tanner, *The Invention of Art History in Classical Greece: Religion, Society and Artistic Rationalisation* (Cambridge, Eng., 2006), p. 90.

[30] Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, p. 78; Ian McPhee and Elizabeth Pemberton, "Aphrodite on the Swan: A Red-Figured Vase in Avellino," in *Eumousia, Ceramic and Iconographic Studies in Honour of Alexander Cambitoglou*, ed. Jean-Paul Descoeudres. Mediterranean Archaeology Supplement 1 (Sydney, 1990), p. 129; Karl Schefold, *Die Göttersage in der klassischen und hellenistischen Kunst* (Munich, 1981), pp. 82–83.

[31] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 73.

[32] *ARV*^{2} 917.206 (BA 211143), 1041.11 (BA 213534), 899.144 (BA 211902), 924.34 (BA 211248), 1038.4 (BA 213492), 1061.165 (BA 213797), 1029.23 (BA 213405).

[33] This iconographic motif reappeared and was very popular in the fourth century. The disappearance of this particular scene is of special interest, since in the last decades of the fifth century, Aphrodite scenes in general flourish in Athenian pottery: Lucilla Burn, *The Meidias Painter* (Oxford, 1987), p. 32.

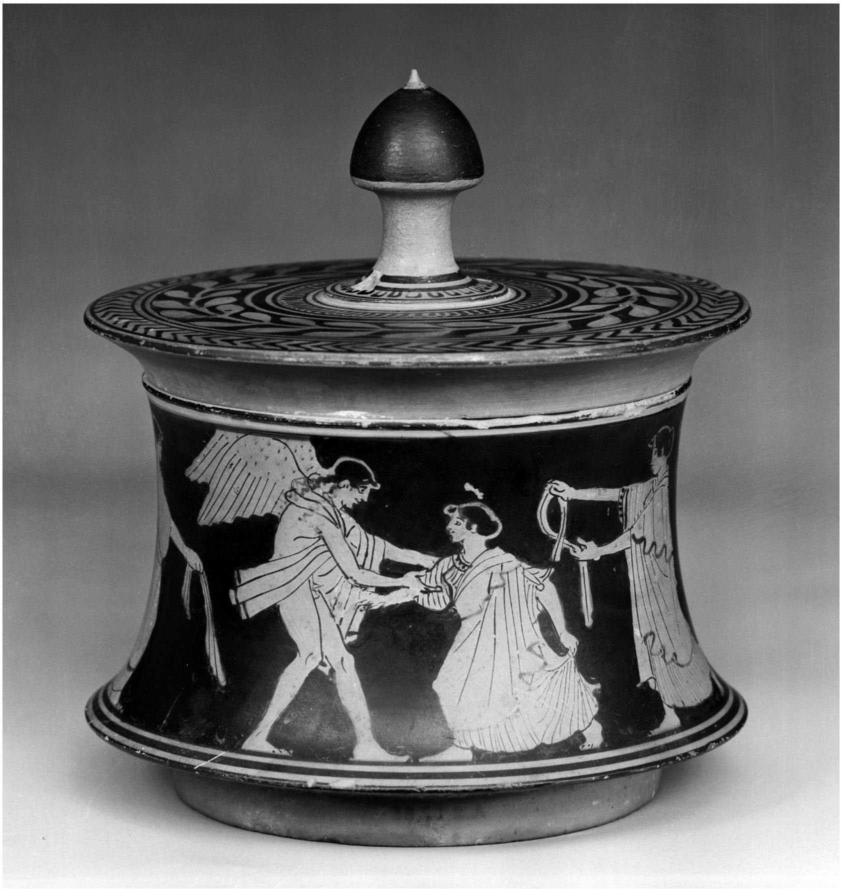

Figure 11.2. Birth of Aphrodite from the sea, on an Attic red-figure pyxis attributed to the Wedding Painter, ca. 460–450 BC. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1939 (39.11.8a, b). Image ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

after she traveled on the waves to Cyprus.[34] In these scenes the rising goddess is Aphrodite *Ourania*, since it is the daughter of Ouranos, who was born in the sea.[35] The sea is not depicted specifically, but rather implied.[36] Despite this absence, which is in line with the Attic painters' reluctance to show scenery, the marine facet played an important role, for example in the Hesiodic version of her birth, and it is essentially this version that is depicted on pottery.[37]

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[34] *Hymn. Hom.* 6.1–9.

[35] The women present at her birth could also be interpreted as the *Moirai* (fates): Erika Simon, *Die Geburt der Aphrodite* (Berlin, 1959), p. 46. Paus. 1.19.2 wrote that in the Ilissos there was an inscription saying that Aphrodite *Ourania* was the oldest

Around 460 another iconographic motif of Aphrodite's birth appeared: that of her *anodos* ('rising') from the earth (figure 11.3).[38] Aphrodite's *anodos* might allude to her chthonic qualities or to her strong connection to land, through fertility and vegetation.[39] As noted before, as the goddess of *mixis*, Aphrodite combines the power of the sky, sea, and earth, the last of which is then emphasized in these scenes. In the period between 460 and 450, there are four examples of Aphrodite rising from the ground, on one *skyphos*, one *pelike*, one cup, and one plate.[40] Aphrodite was closely connected to the earth in her three sanctuaries of Aphrodite *en kepois* ('in the gardens') at Athens, so it is significant that the depictions of her sea birth outnumber those showing her rising from the ground (five to four) in this period.[41] Naturally, the difference in the numbers is not significant enough for a firm conclusion to be drawn. Yet the respectable number of sea ascents shown in the middle of the century indicates a new emphasis on the connection between the goddess and the sea.

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of the *Moirai*. If we accept this interpretation of the women present at her birth, then the identification of the goddess as *Ourania* is strengthened: Pirenne-Delforge, "Des épiclèsis," pp. 287–288.

[36] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 73.

[37] Hes., *Theog*. 189–191.

[38] Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, pp. 89–90.

[39] Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, 2.652–653; Giorgos Kavvadias, *Ο ζωγράφος του Sabouroff* (Athens, 2000), p. 100; Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, pp. 94–97.

[40] *ARV*^{2} 888.155 (BA 211718), 1218.2 (BA 216599), 840.60 (BA 212239), 929.77 (BA 212482). Sometimes it is very hard to identify in birth scenes whether Aphrodite is shown being born from the earth or the sea: Evelyn B. Harrison, "A Pheidian Head of Aphrodite Ourania," *Hesperia* 53 (1984), 385. It is also possible that in some of the earth ascents, the goddess depicted is not Aphrodite: Pamela Gambogi, "Ancora su Eros e Anteros," in *In memoria di Enrico Paribeni*, ed. Gabriella Capecchi et al. Archaeologica 125 (Rome, 1998), 189–190. Therefore, the number of pots quoted is not absolute. Scenes that depict a cloth being offered to the deity are taken to denote a marine ascent. The cloth is presented so she can dry herself, an iconographic motif used in the depiction of the marine ascent since the Ludovisi Throne, ca. 465: Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, p. 78; Sourvinou-Inwood, "Persephone and Aphrodite," p. 118.

[41] Geoffrey Stephen Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 229; Parke, *Festivals*, pp. 141–142, 183; Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 54; Simon, *Festivals of Attica*, pp. 40–46.

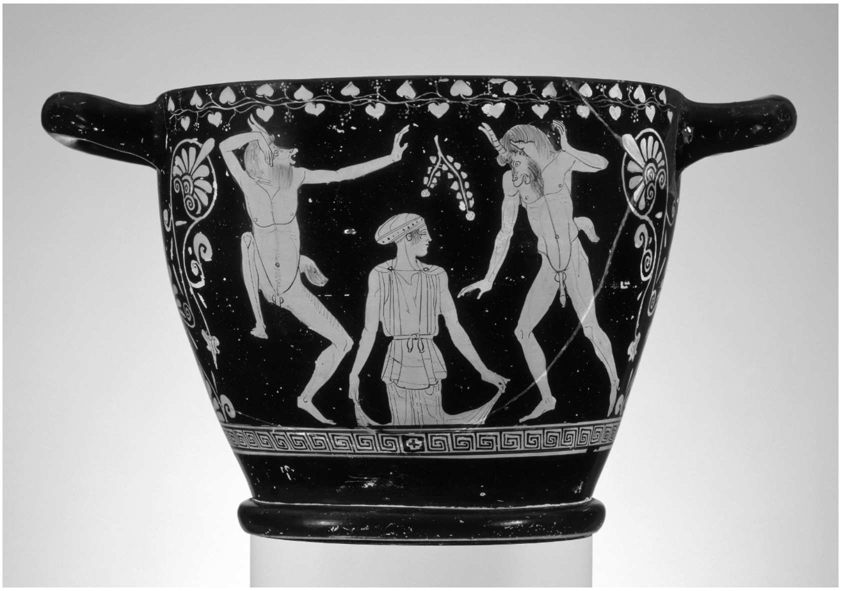

Figure 11.3. *Anodos* of Aphrodite from the earth, on an Attic red-figure skyphos attributed to the Penthesilea Painter, ca. 450 BC. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 01.8032. Photograph ©2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The sea is shown in depictions of Aphrodite riding a swan over water. On the Hermitage Stele, dating in the late second or early first century, an inscription next to the image of Aphrodite on a swan identifies her as the ruler over the Bosphorus.[42] This scene therefore draws a direct connection between Aphrodite riding over water and over the sea itself. The five known scenes of this theme in Attic art range in date from 470 to 410.[43] Aphrodite holds a scepter, which indicates royalty and may allude to her rule over the sea, on a *lekythos* dating to 450 (figure 11.4).[44] This appears as the only scene that clearly shows the sea, indicated through waves schematically drawn with red lines. One cannot tell, though, whether the fragmentary pots (three of the five) showed the sea as well. Regardless of the water being present or implied, however, the swan itself alludes either to Aphrodite's birth from the sea or to the marine element as one of the dominions of the goddess.[45] The swan is, after all, a waterbird, even if it is not normally a sea creature. Additionally, it is also one of the symbols of Aphrodite *Ourania*, since it flew her into the sky.[46] Through the inclusion of the swan, therefore, these scenes depict a deity who encompasses the power of the sky as well as that of the sea.[47]

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[42] St. Petersburg, Hermitage 1876.102. Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, p. 72.

[43] *ARV*^{2} 862.22 (BA 211350), 993.82 (BA 213903), 1283.26 (BA 216295). Two other fragments are in the Athenian Agora (BA 28621, 29611). See also Carl Watzinger, “Vasenfunde aus Athen,” *AM* 26 (1901), 52; Mary B. Moore, *Agora* 30: *Attic Red-Figured and White-Ground Pottery* (1997), 198. Ursula Knigge, “Ο αστήϱ της Αφϱοδίτης,” *AM* 97 (1982), 161; Henry Metzger, *Les représentations dans la céramique attique du IVe siècle* (Paris, 1951), p. 61.

The depiction of Aphrodite on a swan does not appear in the Athenian iconography of the last decade of the fifth century, but reappears in the fourth century. In the first two examples quoted, the animal is described as a goose and not a swan. The exact nature of the animal is debatable, but not relevant in this paper.

The Correlation of Iconography to Historic Events

There is a correlation in the fifth century between the time the maritime imagery appeared and disappeared in the iconography of Aphrodite and contemporary historic events related to the fleet. Themistokles introduced Aphrodite as a nautical deity at the beginning of the fifth century. Yet the time when the Athenians most realized the importance of their fleet, their domination over the Aegean, and thus the economic benefits resulting from the Delian League and possibly the monopoly of corn from the Black Sea, was the peak of the Delian League, in 454. In this year, the tribute reached a respectable height, and Athens transferred the money from Delos to Athens.[48] Around the same time, the Athenians suffered a blow to their fleet in Egypt and launched another construction program in order to restore their navy.[49] The defeat in Egypt was their first great maritime loss (of some two hundred vessels), so the Athenians most needed divine patronage at sea during this time. Simultaneously, Aphrodite emerges in Attic iconography as a deity closely connected to the sea.

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[44] J. Arthur R. Munro, "Excavations in Cyprus: Third Season's Work: Polis tes Chrysochou," *JHS* 12 (1891), 298–333.

[45] Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, pp. 100–101; Schefold, *Die Göttersage*, pp. 82–83.

[46] Knigge, "Ο αστήϱ," p. 164; Simon, *Götter der Griechen*, p. 252.

[47] McPhee and Pemberton, "Aphrodite on the Swan," p. 129; Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 38.

[48] Moses I. Finley, *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (Middlesex, 1983), p. 42; French, *The Growth*, pp. 89–90.

[49] David Blackman, "The Athenian Navy and Allied Naval Contributions in the Pentecontaetia," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 10 (1969), p. 210.

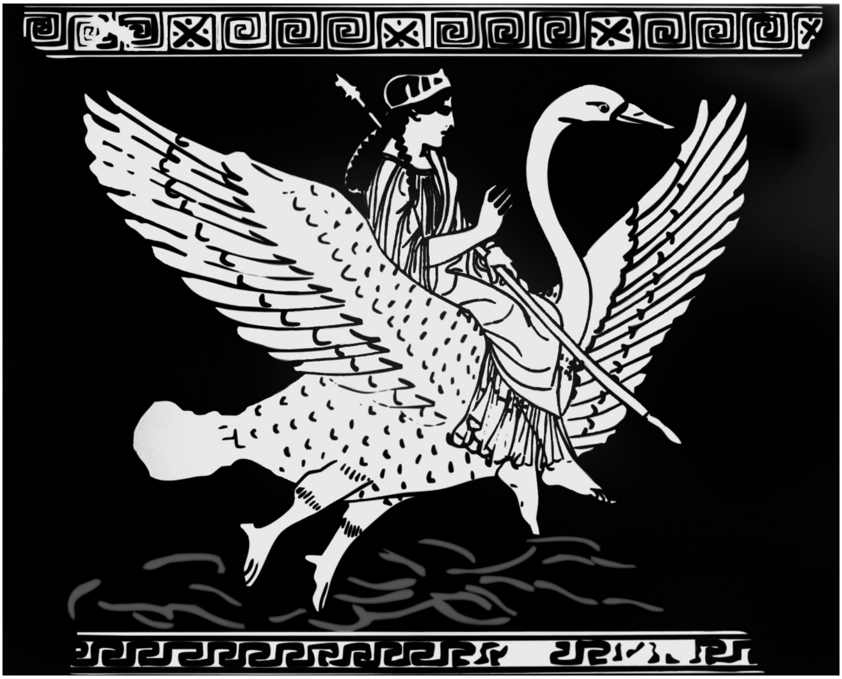

Figure 11.4. Aphrodite riding a swan over the sea, on an Attic red-figure lekythos, ca. 450 BC. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, AN1891.451. Image by Cixx design, after J. Arthur R. Munro, "Excavations in Cyprus: Third Season's Work—*polis tes Chrysochou*," *JHS* 12 (1891), pl. 13.

On the eve of the Peloponnesian War, in 431, when the scenes of Aphrodite's sea birth disappear, the Athenians realized that their fleet could also be the cause of problems. Perikles' choice of battleground, with the Athenians leaving their land and moving into the city center while their fleet was ravaging the coast of the Peloponnese, resulted in a plague that nearly depopulated the crowded city.[50] During this time the Athenians chose to eliminate the marine element from the iconography of one of their favorite deities, and in the years after the defeat in Sicily (last decade of the fifth century), they even abandoned the scenes of Aphrodite flying on the swan, since they did not want to imply this feature

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[50] Plut., *Vit. Per.* 34.

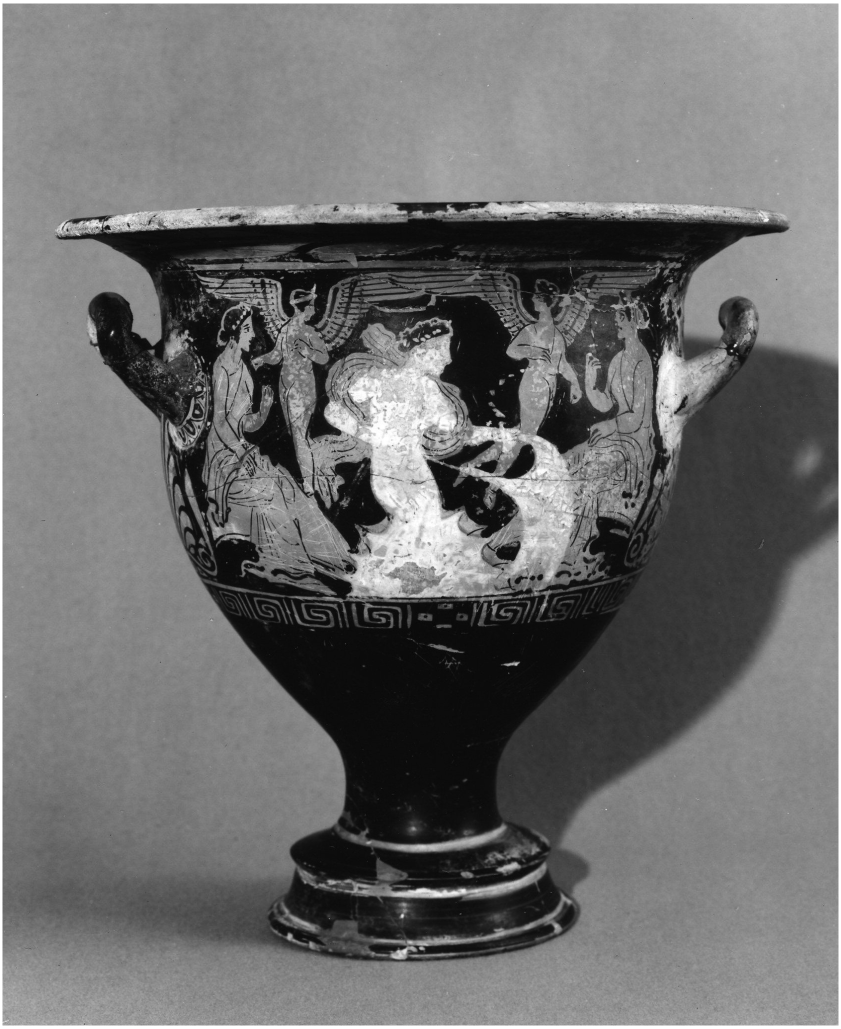

Figure 11.5. Aphrodite riding a shell, on an Attic red-figure bell krater, ca. 350–330 BC, acquired in Laurion in 1896. Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Albertinum ZV1517. Image reproduced with the kindest permission of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

as part of her cult. The presence of the sea in Aphrodite's iconography therefore seems to be connected with the rise and fall in popularity of the fleet in the minds of her worshippers.

Further support for this relationship between the Athenian fleet and the iconography of marine Aphrodite in the fifth century is provided by new motifs in early fourth-century arts. (Here I only investigate iconography in the first three decades of the fourth century as supportive evidence for the changes noted in the fifth century.) The iconographic type, identified by Ehud Herbert Loeb as Aphrodite *Euploia*, depicting Aphrodite sailing on the sea, emerges around 370.[51] A bell krater from Dresden, dating to the third decade of the fourth century, shows Aphrodite sailing on a shell over the sea (figure 11.5).[52] She holds the sail with both her hands while Erotes and seated women are watching her from either side. A similar scene is found on an Attic squat *lekythos*, now lost, dating to 370 BC.[53] Here a seated Aphrodite sails over the sea, with birds, Hermes, and Eros. This scene is similar to the previous one, which likewise shows Aphrodite holding a sail and thus sailing herself, as opposed to being carried by a swan. Both scenes draw a direct link connecting the deity, the sea, and sailing.

The type of Aphrodite's sea birth was also revived and enriched in the early fourth century. New variations in the sea-birth image ensured that the marine element would be obvious rather than implied in the iconography of the deity.[54] Specifically, Aphrodite was shown being born from a shell or from the sea with a swan, verifying the estimation expressed in the fifth-century images, that the swan could have alluded to Aphrodite's marine birth.[55] In the first decades of the fourth century, scenes with Aphrodite riding a swan over the sea also reappear.[56] These scenes emphasize the sea, through the depiction of fish, dolphins, and Nereids, or even the entire marine *thiasos*.[57]

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[51] Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, pp. 84–85; On the identification of the goddess as Aphrodite, see Claude Bérard, "Modes de formation et modes de lecture des images divines. Aphrodite et Isis à la voile," in *Actes du Colloque sur les problèmes de l'image dans le monde méditerranéen classique: Château de Lourmarin en Provence, 2–3 Septembre 1982*, ed. Henri Metzger. Archaeologica 61, ed. Henri Metzger (Rome, 1985), pp. 165–166.

[52] Dresden, Staatl. Kunstsammlungen, Albertinum: ZV1517; Bérard, "Modes de formation," p. 166; Metzger, *Représentations dans la céramique*, pp. 68–69.

[53] BA 10000. A drawing is shown in Delivorrias et al., *LIMC* 2, p. 116, s.v. "Aphrodite," no. 1187. See also Metzger, *Représentations dans la céramique*, p. 67.

[54] Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, p. 103; Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, p. 82; Metzger, *Représentations dans la céramique*, p. 70; Schefold, *Die Göttersage*, p. 84.

[55] Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, p. 103; Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, pp. 85–86; Ricardo Romera Olmos, *Catálogo de los vasos griegos del Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana* (Madrid, 1993), p. 194.

[56] McPhee and Pemberton, "Aphrodite on the Swan," p. 127; Metzger, *Représentations dans la céramique*, p. 61.

[57] For such an image, see Metzger, *Représentations dans la céramique*, pl. 2.3.

Again, it is worth considering the historic events of the first decades of the fourth century, in relation to the Athenian fleet, as they may have encouraged a revived production of maritime scenes in conjunction with Aphrodite's iconography. In 394 Konon led a great victory against the Lakedaimonians at Knidos and, upon his return to Athens, established the cult of Aphrodite *Euploia* in commemoration of that event. By 391 the fortifications in the Piraeus were complete, and once again it became a flourishing port. In the period between 386 and 378, there was a considerable increase in the Athenian triremes, when the Athenians gradually rebuilt their fleet to its fifth-century might. In 376 and 375, the Athenians accomplished a series of important naval victories in Naxos and around the Peloponnese.[58] At this time, when the Athenians redefined their naval strength and their position in the Aegean world, Aphrodite reemerged in Athenian iconography as a nautical deity.

Conclusions

The presence and absence of marine scenes in Aphrodite's iconography reflect the rise and fall of the Athenian fleet in the course of the fifth and early fourth centuries. The presence of the sea in her iconography relates to her role as one of the patrons of the Athenian fleet. The changes in her iconography, along with the function of the Themistoklean temple in the Piraeus, further demonstrate that Aphrodite acquired a prominent position among maritime deities. The examination of Aphrodite's Athenian iconography at this time also suggests there were important differences in the presentation, on painted pottery, of Aphrodite's role as a nautical deity. In the fifth century, the marine element was incorporated into the presentation of Aphrodite *Ourania*. It was implied in depictions that alluded to the Hesiodic myth or included one of the most characteristic symbols of Aphrodite *Ourania*, the swan.[59] In the fourth century, there were also alterations to scenes of Aphrodite's birth, those showing her birth from a shell or her standing on a swan. Additionally, in many of the swan scenes, the marine element had a very strong presence, with fish, dolphins, and Nereids as companions of Aphrodite. The goddess was shown in these scenes perhaps as *Euploia*.[60] So, in the fourth century, Aphrodite was a nautical deity, with an appropriate marine epithet. Fifth-century scenes, in contrast, clearly show Aphrodite *Ourania*, for whom, however, the nautical aspect is equally valid, despite the heavenly epithet.

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[58] M. Amit, *Athens and the Sea: A Study in Athenian Sea-Power* (Brussels, 1965), pp. 24–26.

[59] Knigge, "Ο αστήϱ," p. 161; Simon, *Götter der Griechen*, p. 252.

The variability in the depictions of Aphrodite as a nautical deity in the fifth and fourth centuries raises the question of the cult epithet of the newly introduced Themistoklean deity. Some scholars commenting on the Themistoklean Aphrodision assume it was dedicated to Aphrodite *Euploia*, like Konon's later Aphrodision.[61] It is reasonable to assume that a sanctuary built on top of another one would have honored the previous occupant, especially if the repair of the sanctuary was an act of respect to the original founder, as was Konon's.[62] Yet there is no evidence to support the idea that Themistokles dedicated a sanctuary to Aphrodite *Euploia*. Rather, Pausanias specifies that Konon used the *Euploia* epithet as a remembrance of his naval victory in Knidos, where Aphrodite was already celebrated under that cult name.[63] This connection was not relevant in the early fifth century. We cannot determine the epithet of Aphrodite in the Themistoklean sanctuary, therefore, either through comparison to that testified for the later temple, or through deduction from her manifestation as a nautical deity. In the absence of documentary evidence, the only way to establish her cult name, if she was indeed honored under a particular epithet in the Themistoklean sanctuary, is by close examination of her iconography, which suggests that the epithet of Aphrodite in the Themistoklean sanctuary was *Ourania*. The sea was, after all, included in Aphrodite *Ourania*'s fifth-century iconography. This conclusion is in accordance with the cult name chosen by Konon. *Euploia* was a type of *Ourania*, and therefore constructing the sanctuary of *Euploia* on top of *Ourania*'s was not disrespectful towards the deity or Themistokles.[64] It also suits the character of Aphrodite *Ourania*, the goddess of *mixis*, connected to the sky, the sea, and the earth.[65] In the center of Athens, Aphrodite was connected to the sky and earth, and in the port, she was connected to the sea.

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[60] Loeb, *Die Geburt der Götter*, p. 84; Olmos, *Catálogo de los vasos*, p. 194.

[61] Funke, "Konons Rückkehr," p. 151; Judeich, *Topographie*, p. 73.

[62] Funke, "Konons Rückkehr," pp. 181–182.

[63] Paus. 1.1.3.

[64] Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite*, pp. 60, 63.

[65] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*, p. 62.

CHAPTER TWELVE

ENCOUNTERING THE WORLD OF APHRODITE ON THE WESTERN GREEK MAINLAND*

Alexander Nagel

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general discussion of some aspects of the complex phenomenon of the cults of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland. Archaeological fieldwork carried out over the past decades has provided ample evidence relating to these cults in Aitoloakarnania and southern Epiros. Here I examine this evidence in light of recent scholarly research. In the first part, I present some introductory remarks about the growing divide between archaeology and text for our understanding of ancient Greek religions and suggest ways to overcome this for Aitoloakarnania and adjacent regions. In the second part, I examine a recently excavated figurine from Stratos and its contribution to our understanding of the cults of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland, as they are reflected in the material record: epigraphic, numismatic, and archaeological. The intention is not to provide a full overview on all cults of Aphrodite attested in the region, but to lay the ground for some future work and stimulate further discussion.

Plundering Pausanias or the (Dead) End of the Text

At some point in the late third century BC, Titus Maccius Plautus chose the festivities in honor of Aphrodite at Aitolian Kalydon, on the western Greek mainland at the north shores of the Corinthian Gulf, as the setting for one of his comedies, *Poenulus* or *The Little Carthaginian*. In this play, a prominent young Kalydonian falls in love with a beautiful maid, who is, unfortunately, destined to become a prostitute. Only when her Carthaginian father claims that she was stolen away from him, years before, is the young man able to marry his sweetheart.

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* I am deeply indebted to Lazaros Kolonas, former head and general director of the Greek Archaeological Ephoreias, Maria Gatsi-Stavropoulou, 36th Ephoreia of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Aitoloakarnania, and Franziska Lang, Technische Universität Darmstadt, for their continuing support of my work on the material introduced here. I am grateful to Petra Pakkanen for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of the paper.

Modern scholars agree that Plautus, born about 254 BC at Sarsina in Umbria, was familiar with Greek places, people, and customs, which he transferred to the Roman stage for popular amusement in this Latin city, where the belief in the supernatural was probably not much different from its Greek counterpart.[1] While he is said to have been rather generous with geographic and local descriptions, theatre audiences around the Mediterranean probably understood both the plot and the references to religious customs of the Kalydonians and the *Aphrodisia* festival that dominate the action.[2] In our comedy the maid states that she is going to propitiate Aphrodite on her special day, to which her admirer retorts that Aphrodite is already well disposed to her.[3] She explains there will be a market of courtesans by the Temple of Aphrodite. Her admirer, ready to buy her, answers that only unsalable goods need a market (line 342). We also learn about lamb offerings to the deity (line 455), among other aspects of the cult of Aphrodite, from Plautus.[4]

Poenulus may therefore help us pave the way into a discussion on the complexity of modern approaches to the cults of Aphrodite, in a region that has been relatively little explored in terms of its religious pantheon. There are, on the one hand, the complexities of the textual tradition, and on the other, those of excavated material culture. Ancient Kalydon, like many other *poleis* ('city-states') on the western Greek mainland, has only been partially excavated. What is the evidence for the cults of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland? How have modern scholars approached her cults in this region? How does the evidence fit our current understanding of the cults of Aphrodite in the wider ancient Mediterranean?

The foundation on which most modern constructions of the cults of Aphrodite rest, as do studies of ancient Greek religions, is the interpretation of texts. These are sometimes directly applied to specific archaeological contexts. The underlying assumption seems to be a conviction that the kinds of beliefs and actions mentioned in ancient texts provide us with insights and mirror realities that parallel what is written at a specific time in a specific location with a specific audience in mind, and that this textual information also reflects and fits other nearly contemporary ancient cities and contexts. Various scholars have addressed the benefits and pitfalls in the use of texts: for example, how they may mislead us or corrupt the image of the everyday life and religion of the ancient Greeks.[5] The ambiguity and complexity of studying ancient Greek religions is, however, obvious when one seeks evidence for religious customs in regions outside Athens, or those not covered by ancient authors and surviving textual traditions. These almost text-free zones have limited written evidence for religions and cultic calendars, since stratigraphical and depositional processes are often the only determinant factors to make sense of an artifact.[6]

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[1] For Plautus' life and a chronological context of the *Poenulus*, see recently Elaine Fantham, "Maidens in Other-Land or Broads Abroad: Plautus' *Poenulae*," in *Studien zu Plautus*' Poenulus, ed. Thomas Baier (Tübingen, 2004), pp. 235–251. For Plautus' familiarity with things Greek, see also papers in Erich Segal, ed., *Oxford Readings in Menander, Plautus, and Terence* (Oxford, 2006).

[2] Eckard Lefèvre, *Plautus*' Rudens (Tübingen, 2006), pp. 17–19.

[3] Plaut., *Poen*. 334–340.

[4] Plaut., *Poen*. 264–270.

In addition to an often incongruous relationship between the texts and the material evidence, one encounters other problems with using texts as testimonies for specific aspects of the cult of Aphrodite. Recent monographs on the goddess are symptomatic and sometimes reflect faulty preconceptions of the ways in which premodern religious systems worked. There are many more filters in our interpretations than we usually take into account.[7] The first part of Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge's *L'Aphrodite grecque* is, for practical reasons, organized around Pausanias, who was writing in the second century AD.[8] Despite a large chronological gap between Classical Greece and the Roman Empire, Pausanias' trail is followed in the ensuing discussion of the cults of Aphrodite in ancient Greece. *L'Aphrodite grecque* offers surprisingly little discussion on Aphrodite's cults in the western Greek mainland, with brief references to a note by Pausanias on the existence of a cave sanctuary near Naupaktos, where Aphrodite was honored in marriage ceremonies; and a dedication to Aphrodite *Strategis*, honored by Akarnanian *strategoi* ('generals') at some point in the second or first century BC, which indicates an Aphrodite cult in Akarnania.[9] There is no reference, however, to the enigmatic though important cult of Aphrodite near Aitolian Phystion, which I discuss below. In scholarship on Aphrodite, there is also the other extreme, represented by scholars whose approach could be called hermeneutic-aesthetic. They use imagery and art, including discussions of vase paintings and other material culture to interpret ancient Greek religion and understand aspects of "personalities" of Aphrodite.[10]

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[5] E.g., John Papadopoulos, "Archaeology, Myth-History and the Tyranny of the Text: Chalkidike, Torone and Thucydides," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 18 (1999), especially 383–386. See also Christopher Tilley, *Material Culture and Text: The Art of Ambiguity* (London, 1991); Victor Buchli, "Interpreting Material Culture: The Trouble with Text," in *Interpreting Archaeology: Finding Meaning in the Past*, ed. Ian Hodder, Michael Shanks, et al. (London, 1995), 181–193; John Moreland, *Archaeology and Text* (London, 2001); Thomas Harrison, "Greek Religion and Literature," in *A Companion*, ed. Odgen, pp. 373–384; Evangelos Kyriakidis, "'In Search of Ritual' and 'Finding Ritual: Calibrating the Evidence'," in *The Archaeology of Ritual*, ed. Evangelos Kyriakidis (Los Angeles, 2007), p. 3.

[6] Alexander Nagel, "Searching for the Gods at Ancient Akarnania: New Evidence from a Ritual Deposit near Stratos," *Anodos: Studies of the Ancient World* 6–7 (2006–2007 [2010]), 289–297; Alexander Nagel, "This Cult Stops Here: Interpreting a Ritual Deposit from Ancient Stratos, Akarnania," in *Defining and Interpreting Ancient Greek Cult Deposits: Proceedings from an International Workshop held at Ancient Olympia, October 24–27, 2008*, ed. Susanne Bocher, Petra Pakkanen, et al. (Athens, forthcoming [2010]).

[7] Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion*, pp. 1–13.

[8] Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 12.

It is therefore necessary to tackle the problem from another perspective, to incorporate the many more "roles" of Aphrodite noted in ancient written sources, but otherwise hard to pin down.[11] There is an urgent need to publish the vast quantities of cult pottery and other material discovered in the epigraphically attested sanctuaries of Aphrodite in the Greek-speaking world, in order to understand the specific characteristics of the devotional aspects of her cult, and to increase our knowledge of the people who honored the goddess. In my opinion, we should change the questions we ask, and not necessarily the way we look at the evidence, whether textual or material.[12] Then Aphrodite will give us many exciting new issues to think about.

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[9] Naupaktos: Paus. 10.38.12; Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 307; Akarnania: *IG* 9^2 2.256; Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, p. 404. For a possible figure dedicated to Aphrodite at Thyrreion see now M. Haake, L. Kolonas, and S. Scharff, "Fragment einer metrischen Strategenweihung an Aphrodite Stratagis aus dem hellenistischen Thyrreion," *Chiron* 37 (2007), 113–121.

[10] See, for example, Christine Mitchell Havelock, *The Aphrodite of Knidos and Her Successors: A Historical Review of the Female Nude in Greek Art* (Ann Arbor, 1995); Bernard Andreae, "Die Aphrodite von Melos," in *Meisterwerke. Internationales Symposium anlässlich des 150. Geburtstages von Adolf Furtwängler. Freiburg i. Breisgau, 30 Juni–3. Juli 2003*, ed. Volker Michael Strocka (Munich, 2005), pp. 193–201; Hans Prittwitz Gaffron, "Aphrodite von ihrer schönsten Seite," in *Mouseion. Beiträge zur antiken Plastik. Festschrift für Peter Cornelius Bol*, ed. Hans von Steuben, Götz Lahusen, and Haritini Kotsidou (Möhnesee, 2007), 255–260; Thomas H. Carpenter, "Greek Religion and Art," in *A Companion*, ed. Ogden, 398–420.

[11] Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*.

[12] With few exceptions in Asia Minor and Cyprus (e.g., Amathonte, Miletos), the small finds from epigraphically attested Aphrodite sanctuaries of the ancient Greek-speaking

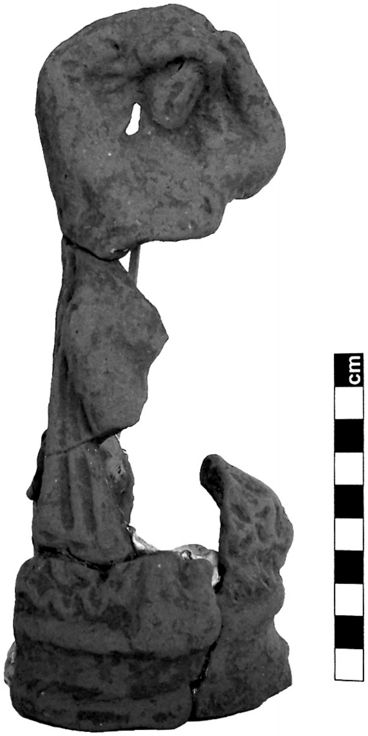

Figure 12.1. Figurine, excavated in cult deposit near Stratos in 1994. Stratos, Depot exc. no. 94B41T6. Photo: author.

Aphrodite Rising from the Sea Rising from the Earth

The clay figurine introduced here (figures 12.1–2) was found during controlled excavations on the western Greek mainland some 2 km northwest of Stratos in 1994.[13] Although it is extremely worn and broken into five preserved fragments, I recognized it as a single figurine in 2005. The

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world have never been adequately published. Such is the case for her important sanctuary in Argos (Georges Daux, "Chronique des Fouilles 1968," *BCH* 93 [1969], especially 419–430, 946–954), and in Daphni in Attika, where there is much evidence for cult activity in the fourth century BC. Schindler, *The Archaeology of Aphrodite*, pp. 223–253, counts twenty-three Aphrodite sanctuaries on the Greek mainland, the islands, Crete, and Egypt, and another fifteen Aphrodite sanctuaries in South Italy, Etruria, and Sicily; a useful map of the distribution can be found ibid., p. 288.

[13] Lazaros Kolonas, "Επιφανειακή εϱευνα στϱατικής γης," *Αϱχαιολογιϰον Δελτιον* 48 (1993 [1998]), 140–141; Nagel "Searching for the Gods."

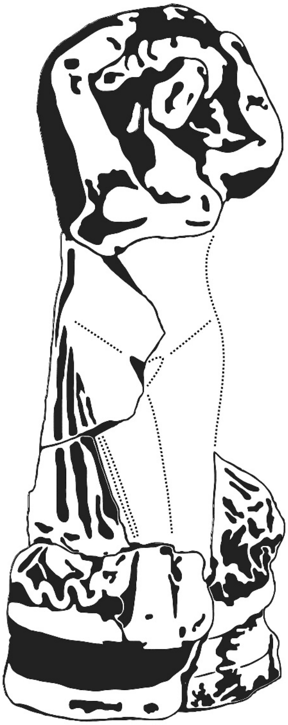

Figure 12.2. Schematic drawing of the figurine shown in figure 12.1 Drawing: author.

original figurine was some 24 cm high. One can easily identify the nude female with both arms raised over her head, probably holding on to her long hair. Her hips are slightly bent forward. Beside her right leg, the folds of her garment become visible, and, even if the figure is heavily weathered, waves are discernible on the upper part of the base. Her feet are in front of the base, making her pose awkward. No additional features are preserved that provide clues for an accompanying figurine or attribute, although the remaining lower parts of the figurine do not leave much space for such a feature.

A figurine forms only one part of an archaeological artifact assemblage and therefore should not be isolated from its context, either within the assemblage or its stratigraphy. It was found together with a great quantity of pottery, roof-tile fragments, and many other broken figurines, most made of the same local clay as our figurine and discarded in a circular stone structure measuring 3 m in diameter. The deposition is datable to the fourth century BC.[14] No remains of any monumental stone structure have been found nearby, despite intensive geophysical prospecting. The figurines found within the deposit obviously address the devotional needs of the local people: the majority depict a stereotypical female holding an attribute, such as a bird, and a male with a lyre. These types are commonly referred to as Artemis and Apollo. All figurines were probably smashed before they went into the pit, but a comprehensive analysis of the assemblage in the circular stone structure, in progress, would yield further conclusions.[15]

How should we identify and label this specific figurine? Why is this atypical object found in a context that is otherwise filled with stereotypical mass-produced coroplastic material? Even though we cannot firmly identify the figurine as a depiction of a specific deity, her nakedness and overall appearance exhibit striking parallels to a number of depictions of Aphrodite excavated in other parts of the ancient Greek world. These include the type of Aphrodite *Anadyomene*.[16] As Angelos Delivorrias has pointed out, the chronological organization of this type is extremely difficult to identify, given the number of its variations, especially in the Hellenistic period (323–31 BC).[17] Scholars have often attempted to connect it to a monumental painting by Apelles, which is dated to the end of the fourth century BC and noted in ancient literary sources.[18] Images of the Aphrodite *Anadyomene* type are especially prominent outside the Greek mainland, not only as both marble and bronze figurines, but also as depictions on coins and other materials.[19] The mythological background for this representation is Aphrodite's birth from the sea.[20]

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[14] Nagel, "Searching for the Gods"; Alexander Nagel, "Retrospectives and Perspectives: The Present State of Research on Terracotta Figurines from a Votive Bothros in Stratos, Greece," in *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée orientale grecque et romaine. Production et Diffusion, Iconographie et Fonction. Colloque international, 2–6 juin 2007 Izmir, Turquie*, ed. Ergün Lafli and Arthur Muller (Athens, forthcoming [2010]).

[15] Nagel, "Searching for the Gods"; Nagel, "Retrospectives and Perspectives."

[16] Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 54–57, s.v. "Aphrodite," nos. 423–454, especially nos. 431, 432, 437, 446; Jentel, in *LIMC* 2, pp. 159–160, s.v. "Aphrodite (in peripheria orientali)," nos. 40 and 43.

[17] Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, p. 54, s.v. "Aphrodite."

[18] Plin., *HN* 35.79. On the idea that Apelles' Aphrodite *Anadyomene* was originally intended for the temple of Asklepios at Kos, see Otto Benndorf, "Bemerkungen zur griechischen Kunstgeschichte: Die Anadyomene des Apelles," *AM* 1 (1876), 50–66; William Charlton and Anthony Saville, "The Art of Apelles," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, London* 53 (1979), 167–206.

[19] Marie Odile-Jentel, in *LIMC* 2 (1984), 156–157, s.v. "Aphrodite (in peripheria orientali)," nos. 40–66.

[20] E.g., Hes., *Theog.* 188–206.

The identification and labeling of figurines from excavations is often problematic. In 1993, Chryseis Tsouvara-Souli argued for a distinction of two separate cults of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland and used two distinctive series of figurines from Aphrodite cults to support her arguments. She distinguished an early cult of Aphrodite, attested in Ambrakia / Arta, Kassope and Dodona, and a more recent one in Leukas and Ambrakia / Arta, distinctive because of the nature of its material (though rather textual) evidence.[21] Furthermore, with a wide range of theoretical approaches to the interpretation of anthropomorphic figurines found in excavations all over the world, Naomi Hamilton and colleagues have questioned what we often take for granted, namely, that anthropomorphic figurines allow us access to the ultimate subject: the people themselves.[22] In the same volume, scholars underline the role of context, and the many possibilities for interpreting the meaning, purpose, and function of figurines. According to Hamilton, anthropomorphic figurines are especially "vulnerable" in terms of religious, anthropological, ethnographical, and gender-related issues, which can be summed up with the term "personal politics."[23] This interpretation of figurines of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland presents us with an exciting challenge. How can we imagine the life cycle of the figurine from Stratos, and what is her relationship with the other excavated artifacts?[24]

As Brita Alroth and others have shown, polytheistic devotion is a characteristic of ancient Greek religion. According to Alroth's "visiting god" phenomenon, one figurine presumably depicting one deity, found in a sanctuary complex belonging to another, cannot be the basis for identification of the sanctuary.[25] Charles Hedrick has criticized Alroth's methodological approach and her catalogue of "visiting gods," but the concept is important for Aphrodite, a goddess who frequently "visits" other deities.[26] Images representing Aphrodite figure prominently in sanctuaries at Perachora and Lindos, for example, where she is not the main resident.[27] The famous painting by Apelles of Aphrodite *Anadyomene* itself was displayed in a sanctuary of Asklepios.[28] Therefore, an identification of a single figurine depicting Aphrodite in our context does not itself indicate a cultic shrine of Aphrodite near Stratos. Given the number of excavated rural shrines and monumental temples for the worship of Artemis and Apollon in this region, however, cults of Aphrodite seem not to have featured prominently here in material culture so far.[29] This leads us to ask what further evidence we have for the cults of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland.

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[21] Chryseis Tsouvara-Souli, "Common Cults in Epirus and Albania," in *L'Illyrie méridionale et l'Épire dans l'Antiquité. Actes du IIe Colloque international de Clermont-Ferrand, 25–27 Octobre 1990*, ed. Pierre Cabanes (Paris, 1993), especially pp. 72–73.

[22] Naomi Hamilton et al., "Viewpoint: Can We Interpret Figurines?" *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 6 (1996), 281–307.

[23] Hamilton, "Viewpoint," p. 282.

[24] Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, Eng., 1986).

[25] Brita Alroth, *Greek Gods and Figurines: Aspects of the Anthropomorphic Dedications* (Uppsala, 1989), p. 65.

[26] Alroth, *Greek Gods and Figurines*, p. 111 (table 20); see also a review by Charles W. Hedrick, Jr., in *AJA* 94 (1990), 505–506.

The Many Aphrodites of Western Greece

Western Greece—Aitoloakarnania, Epiros, and the Ionian Islands—is strewn with famous sites and cultic shrines (if one is to believe the ancient literary sources) of which only a few have been excavated and adequately published. Arta / Ambrakia, Kassope, Leukas, and an often overlooked but important shrine at ancient Phystion near Lake Trichonia in Aitolia provide specific evidence for Aphrodite cults (figure 12.3). I give an overview of these sites, beginning with a description attributed to Dionysios of Halikarnassos, writing in the first century BC. This description does not give specific information about the rituals performed in honor of Aphrodite, but informs us that four sanctuaries were built for Aphrodite along the western Greek mainland coast in the times that Anchises left Troy for Italy. The first is a sanctuary of Aphrodite "which stands today on the little island between Dioryktos and the city (of Leukas)."[30] The worship of Aphrodite on the island of Leukas was for a long time known only through the literary sources, and no visible remains of her sanctuary have yet been identified. Greek archaeologists

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[27] Alroth, *Greek Gods and Figurines*, p. 110 (table 19).

[28] Plin., *HN* 35.91; Strabo 14.657.

[29] Lazaros Kolonas, "Τα αγϱοτικά ιεϱά της Αιτωλοακαϱνανίας," in *Β' Διεϑνές Ιστοϱικό ϰαι Αϱχαιολογικό Συνέδϱιο Αιτωλοαϰαϱνανίας. Agrinion 29–31 March 2002* 1, ed. Athanasios Paliouras, Monika Diamanti, et al. (Agrinio, 2004), pp. 267–292; Chryseis Tsouvara-Souli, "The Cults of Apollo in Northwestern Greece," in *Foundation and Destruction: Nikopolis and Northwestern Greece*, ed. Jacob Isager (Aarhus, 2001), pp. 233–255.

[30] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.50.4, trans. Earnest Cary, *Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities* 1: *Books 1–2* (London, 1960).

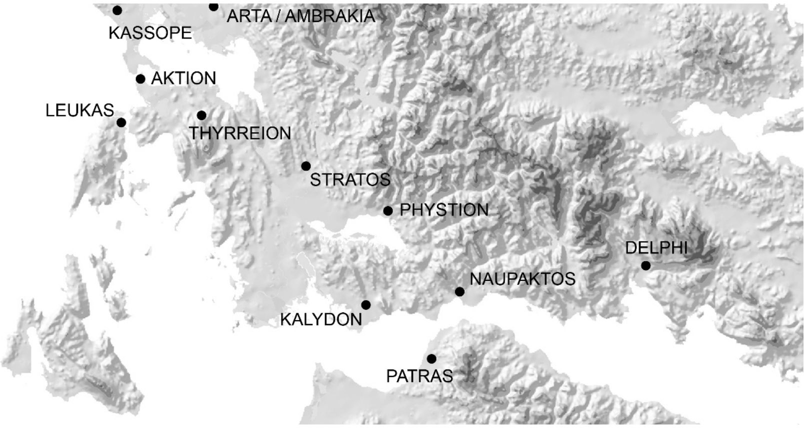

Figure 12.3. The western Greek mainland and adjacent areas with the sites mentioned in this chapter: Leukas, Aktion, Kassope, Ambrakia, Thyrreion, and Stratos, Phystion, Naupaktos, Kalydon. Drawing: Franziska Lang and Alexander Nagel.

then looked at one of the smallislands between Leukas and Akarnania for the site of this sanctuary.[31] We have, however, both epigraphic and numismatic evidence for the existence of a cult of Aphrodite on Leukas. At Peloponnesian Messene, in 1972, Anastasios Orlandos excavated the lower part of an inscribed Doric stone column for which Petros Themelis found the joining part in Messene in 1989.[32] The column lists decrees of seven cities honoring the sculptor Damophon. Among the honorands are the inhabitants of Leukas, honoring Damophon for an *agalma* ('image', 'statue') for their sanctuary of Aphrodite *Limenarchidos* ('Ruler of the shores').[33] Since Damophon is known to have worked in the late third and early second centuries BC, we can refine the chronology relating to the cult image that he created for the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Limenarchidos* in Leukas. This is not, however, evidence that the sanctuary referred to by Dionysios would be identical to the one for which Damophon created the cult image. Already in the nineteenth century, scholars argued that a Leukadian coin type of the second century BC depicting a standing female deity with a scepter and a dove was a reference to an Aphrodite on the island.[34] Epigraphic and (perhaps) numismatic evidence for Aphrodite in Leukas does not allow us, however, to speculate on the specific characteristics of her cult in the local religious pantheon of Leukas.

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[31] Ioanna Andreou, "Πολεοδόμιϰα της αϱχαίας Λευϰάδος," *Αϱχαιολογιϰον Δελτιον* 53 (1998), 147–186.

[32] Petros Themelis, "Damophon von Messene. Sein Werk im Lichte der Neuen Ausgrabungen," *Antike Kunst* 36 (1993), 24–50; ibid., "Damophon of Messene: New Evidence," in *Archaeology in the Peloponnese: New Excavations and Research*, ed. Kenneth Sheedy (Athens, 1994), pp. 24–26; ibid., "Damophon," in *Personal Styles in Greek Sculpture*, ed. Olga Palagia and Jerome J. Pollitt (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), pp. 174–176; ibid., *Heroes at Ancient Messene* (Athens, 2003), pp. 40–46.

[33] Messene inv. no. 1048; *IG* 9^2 4.1475.

The next two sites Dionysios mentions are Aktion (Actium) and Ambrakia, both on the mainland:

> Monuments … are left in both places: at Actium, a sanctuary of Aphrodite Aeneias, and near to it that of the Great gods, both of which existed even to my time; and in Ambrakia, a sanctuary of the same goddess and a hero-shrine of Aeneias near the little theatre.[35]

At Aktion no such sanctuary has been identified, nor is there any other direct or indirect evidence for a specific cult of Aphrodite. This is surprising given the prominence of Aphrodite in the Augustan ruler cult.[36]

Archaeological evidence does indicate Aphrodite's presence and aspects of her cult, however, in the Corinthian colony, Ambrakia, farther north, in southern Epiros. Chryseis Tsouvara-Souli, who has written extensively on the cults of Arta / Ambrakia, argues that most of the local cults attested might have been transferred from the mother city.[37]

Recent research indicates that the helmeted female depicted on the reverse of Corinthian staters of the Archaic, Classical, and Roman Imperial periods, was Aphrodite, rather than Athena.[38] An unhelmeted head of Aphrodite is also depicted on Corinthian drachms.[39] Furthermore, ancient texts frequently call Corinth the "city of Aphrodite," and Pausanias mentions Aphrodite cults at Corinth, including a statue of her in full armor in her shrine on Akrokorinthos, but only a few fragmentary figurines and votive pots, dating between 320 and 260 BC, are directly associated with that shrine.[40] Charles Williams offers convincing explanations for the relative lack of material evidence for a cult of

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[34] Friedrich Imhoof-Blumer, *Die Münzen Akarnaniens* (Vienna, 1878), pp. 133–134; Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, p. 2.641.

[35] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.50.4, trans. Cary.

[36] On this subject, see Jenny Wallensten's contribution in the next chapter.

[37] Chryseis Tsouvara-Souli, *Αμβρακία* (Arta, 1992), pp. 133–201.

[38] Blomberg, *On Corinthian Iconography*, pp. 67–99; Derek R. Smith, "New Evidence for the Identification of Aphrodite on Staters of Corinth," *Numismatic Chronicle* 165 (2005), 41–43. Imhoof-Blümer, *Die Münzen Akarnaniens*, p. 4, argues for Athena. For more on this subject, see Stephanie Budin's contribution to this volume, chapter 5.

[39] Smith, "New Evidence," p. 42.

[40] Paus. 2.5.1; Ael. Arist. 3.23; Strabo 8.6.21.

Aphrodite on Akrokorinthos: offerings of perishable food and cloth may have predominated, and devotees preferred to make dedications in the city of Corinth, while the construction of a temple itself acted as a dedication.[41] Already in the fourth century BC, however, we find a caricature of Aphrodite *Anadyomene* in Corinth.[42] Did the Corinthian Aphrodite serve as a main protective city goddess in Corinth and in Corinthian colonies? If the above-suggested interpretation of the helmeted female deity on Corinthian emissions as Aphrodite is right, then we must change our preconceptions of the iconography in Corinthian colonies, too. The helmeted head, depicted on the coins of Ambrakia, has conventionally been interpreted as Athena.[43] Could this head belong to Aphrodite instead?

Inscriptions and two headless marble statuettes, recently excavated, indirectly attest an Aphrodite cult in Ambrakia. They have been found in the city's most public domains: one marble statuette was found during rescue excavations near the ancient building that probably served as Prytaneion, while the other comes from a Hellenistic house context.[44] The former, 46 cm in height, is a common type, known from a series of marble and terracotta statues that can be traced back to the type of the "leaning Aphrodite," popular in the Hellenistic period.[45] The strong presence of Aphrodite in the public domain at Ambrakia is further supported by two inscriptions, also from the Prytaneion there, in the form of dedications to Hestia, Zeus, and Aphrodite.[46] Two more inscriptions citing Aphrodite were also seen by the Italian Cyriacus of Ancona, in the fifteenth century.[47]

At a distance of 30 km west of Ambrakia, archaeologists have identified the remains of the ancient city of Kassope.[48] Sotiris Dakaris found an inscription that proves the existence of a cult and a sanctuary of Aphrodite in the city.[49] Peter Franke, in studying the coinage of ancient Kassope, suggested that a female head—wearing a wreath, elaborate earrings, and doves—proves a cult of Aphrodite as the city's protecting goddess, although this should not be taken as conclusive evidence.[50] More recent scholars suggest that an extramural temple, partially excavated northeast of Kassope, may be identified with the regional cult of Aphrodite.[51] While this seems likely, the only argument put forward by the archaeologists are the coinage and the inscriptions proving the presence of Aphrodite in the local pantheon. We need to be cautious as iconographic evidence does not prove active cults. While it is likely that Aphrodite served within the complex system of "polis religion," many of the basic characteristics of the model are still not understood.[52]

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[41] Williams, "Corinth and the Cult of Aphrodite," pp. 12–24.

[42] The figurine was found in a cistern in Corinth, where its chronological context suggests that it was abandoned around 325 BC: Gloria Merker, *Corinth* 8, 4: *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: Terracotta Figurines of the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods* (Princeton, 2000), p. 197.

[43] Oscar Ravel, *The 'Colts' of Ambrakia* (New York, 1928), p. 17, but see his footnote 32.

[44] For the Prytaneion see Nikolaos Katsikoudis, "Die weibliche Statuette im archäologischen Museum von Arta Inv. 3086," *AM* 120 (2005), 305–316. For the house context, see Tsouvara-Souli, *Αμβϱαϰία*, pp. 81–28 and fig. 28.

[45] Katsikoudis, "Die weibliche Statuette."

[46] Chryseis Tzourava-Souli, *Η λατϱεία των γυναιϰείων ϑεοτήτων εις την αϱχαίαν Ήπειϱον* 1 (Ioannina, 1979), pp. 43, 85.

[47] *CIG* 1789, 1799; Tsouvara-Souli, *Αμβϱαϰία*, p. 172.

[48] Excavations in Kassope were conducted between 1977 and 1982. See Wolfram

Probably the most puzzling evidence for a cult of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland, however, is found near Lake Trichonia in Aitolia. Southeast of the modern village of Kryoneri is Phystion, where the remnants of a number of enigmatic dedicatory inscriptions attest a lively community honoring female deities including Aphrodite *Phystis* and Aphrodite *Syria* during the Hellenistic period.[53] The site has yielded seals and several inscriptions, including a testament and two dedications:[54] thirteen inscriptions include a local variant of Aphrodite, five others refer

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Hoepfner and Ernst-Ludwig Schwandner, "Kassope. Eine spätklassische Streifenstadt in Nordwestgriechenland," in *Geschichte des Wohnens* 1: *5000 v. Chr.–500 nach Chr.*, ed., Wolfram Hoepfner et al. (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 368–383; for cults of Kassope, generally, Chryseis Tsouvara-Souli, "Λατϱείες στην Κασσώπη," in *Φηγος. Τιμητικός Τόμος για τον καθηγητή Σοτήϱη Δάκαϱη*, ed. Sotiris Dakaris (Ioannina, 1994), pp. 107–135.

[49] *SEG* 15 (1958), 383; Tsouvara-Souli, "Λατϱείες," p. 126, fig. 1 (ca. 200 BC).

[50] Peter Franke, *Die antiken Münzen von Epirus* (Wiesbaden, 1961), pp. 57–58; 322, n. 46.

[51] Hoepfner and Schwandner, "Kassope."

[52] Sourvinou-Inwood, "What is Polis Religion?"

[53] Claudia Antonetti, *Les étoliens: image et religion* (Paris, 1990), esp. pp. 231, 233–237, 266, 301; Ernst Kirsten, "Bericht über eine Reise in Aitolien und Akarnanien," *AA* (Beiblatt) 56 (1941), 101, 116.

[54] *IG* 9^2 1.95–112; Antonetti, *Les étoliens*, table on p. 322; Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, 2.731, with references; Johann von Keitz, *De Aetolorum et Acarnanum sacris* (Halle, 1911), p. 39; Henri Seyrig, "Un sanctuaire d'Atargatis dans les montagnes d'Etolie," *Syria* 13 (1932), 313–314; Günther Klaffenbach, "Neue Inschriften aus Aitolien," *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin)* 27 (1936), 358–388, especially 364–370; Pierre Lambrechts-Noyen, "Recherches sur la culte d'Atargatis dans le monde grec," *La Nouvelle Clio* 6 (1954), 258–277.

to the mother of the gods, and additional ones mention the Parthenos of Phystion and Earidai. There is little modern discussion of this site and its inscriptions, despite its implications for our understanding of the presence of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland. The only secure point on which the leading authority on Aitoloakarnanian inscriptions, Günther Klaffenbach, is certain, is the chronology of the inscriptions, which began in the third century BC and ended in the first half of the first century BC. There are, however, indications of an earlier usage of the site if we take further material culture into account. Ernst Kirsten argued that an Archaic artifact found near Phystion can be associated with the cult.[55] The epithets *Phystis* and *Syria Phystis* are not helpful in identifying specific characters of Aphrodite's cult.[56] Ernst Kirsten used them to argue that Aitolian soldiers brought the cult of Aphrodite *Atargatis*, originally a Syrian deity, to the region.[57] Tatjana Blavatskaja proposed that the inscriptions should be understood as a testimony for the existence of female slaves, who were brought from their homes and freed at Phystion, thus that the majority of these inscriptions demonstrate social relations among several houses in Phystion and attest the role of Aphrodite as protectress of or patron deity in the region.[58] Claudia Antonetti has rejected this theory, but argues for a peculiar regional cult connected to the Kalydonian Aphrodite that we found in Plautus' work.[59] Although Plautus mentions temple prostitution in *Poenulus*, Antonetti is cautious in using Plautus as evidence for sacred prostitution on the western Greek mainland. Konstantinos Rhomaios' small-scale excavations of burial contexts near Phystion, conducted in the 1930s, have never been adequately published. Reports indicate that they yielded at least two bronze statuettes, however: one of Artemis and the other of Aphrodite.[60] If we follow the argumentation proposed by Stephanie Budin—that the spread of the

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[55] Kirsten, "Bericht," pp. 116–118, fig. 8.

[56] *Phystis*: *IG* 9^2 1.97; *Syria Phystis*: *IG* 9^2 1.95, 98–104, 106, 108.

[57] Kirsten, "Bericht," p. 100, n. 3. On the Aphrodite Astarte complex, see Corinne Bonnet and Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, "Deux déesses en interaction. Astarté et Aphrodite dans le monde égéen," in *Les syncrétismes religieux dans le monde méditerraneen antique. Actes du Colloque international en l'honneur de Fr. Cumont, Rome, 25–27 septembre 1997*, ed. Corinne Bonnet and André Motte (Brussels, 1999), pp. 249–273.

[58] Tatiana Blavatskaja, *Die Sklaverei in hellenistischen Staaten im 3.–1. Jh. v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 1972).

[59] Antonetti, *Les étoliens*. For temple prostitution in Kalydon, see Fantham, "Maidens in Other-Land," pp. 240–241.

[60] Yves Béquignon, "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques dans l'Orient hellénique (1932)," *BCH* 57 (1933), 236–312.

Aphrodite cult in Greece in the first millennium BC was mainly due to intensified trade contacts among the eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus, and the Greek heartland—then the Hellenistic cult of Aphrodite *Phystis* might be understood as an older cult preserved by elite women in central Aitolia.[61]

Preliminary Conclusions: Mighty Aphrodite Little Understood

This paper has surveyed the evidence for the cults of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland and the complexities inherent in the study. The recently excavated clay figurine from Stratos suggests that local populations of rather rural areas were familiar with a wider trend in the representation of the deity elsewhere in the Mediterranean. On the western Greek mainland and surrounding regions, we meet Aphrodite in many of her facets and realms known elsewhere in the Greek-speaking world: the attested epithet *Limenarchidos* proves a cult relating to her maritime dimension (at Leukas), she is city protectress or patron deity (at Ambrakia and perhaps Kassope and Thyrreion), and she is guardian of women (at Phystion). In most cases the evidence for the specific characteristics of her cults is indirect, and the silence of ancient texts allows us to draw only general conclusions. This creates a nebulous image of the nature of cults of Aphrodite. Figurines and statuettes (Stratos, Ambrakia), coinage (Leukas, Kassope), and a cult image (Leukas, Thyrreion) attest the honors Aphrodite received from these Greek poleis, in both private and public domains. Her shrines are mentioned in both literary and epigraphic sources, even when there is no further explicit archaeological evidence for the characteristics of the cults. The present difficulties in interpreting the extant sources are exacerbated by the fact that many basic concepts of ancient Greek religious systems are not properly understood. The issue of polis religion is not easy to handle at Ambrakia or Kassope because evidence is tendentious and not conclusive. The role of Aphrodite in Phystion and its possible reference to the ancient Near East are enigmatic.

A single figurine cannot be considered conclusive evidence for the existence of a continuous cult of Aphrodite in Stratos. At the same time, if our identification is correct, then it raises questions about the reasons for dedicating such a figurine. What is needed is contextualized analysis of all material relevant to the cult of Aphrodite on the western Greek mainland at present. Whilst the above conclusions can be only preliminary, it is clear that the implications raised by the evidence from this region are fundamental for interpreting the characteristics of the Aphrodite cults of the wider ancient Greek-speaking world. Aphrodite continues to be difficult to detect in the archaeological record, but the traces of the people who honored her and the material aspects of her cults are worthy of study on their own.

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[61] Budin, *The Origin of Aphrodite*, p. 275.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE ARCHITECTURAL SETTING OF THE KNIDIAN APHRODITE

SOPHIE MONTEL

This chapter considers the architectural setting of the Knidian Aphrodite by Praxiteles. It underlines the difficulties in its discussion, since some now think the Knidian *tholos* ('round building') was not designed to shelter the famous statue. Only texts remain, and I will concentrate on them. Most date from the Roman Imperial period, and I therefore also consider the reception of the Knidian Aphrodite at this time.[1]

Knidos is located on the western coast of Asia Minor, on the peninsula of Datça (Turkey), facing the island of Kos. In his *Periegesis*, Pausanias describes the variation of the cult of Aphrodite at Knidos, where she is worshipped as *Doritis* ('The Dorian'), *Akraia* ('Of the promontory'), and *Euploia* ('She who gives a successful navigation'), in three separate temples.[2] By the second century AD, Knidian Aphrodite was known as *Euploia* by the Knidians, as in many other cities on the western coast of Asia Minor, because she protected sailors.[3] Pliny the Elder, writing in the first century AD, informs us about the purchase of the famous statue of Knidian Aphrodite:

> *Praxitelis aetatem inter statuarios diximus, qui marmoris gloria superauit etiam semet. Opera eius sunt Athenis in Ceramico, sed ante omnia est non solum Praxitelis, uerum in toto orbe terrarum Venus, quam ut uiderent, multi nauigauerunt Cnidum. Duas fecerat simulque uendebat, alteram uelata specie, quam ob id praetulerunt quorum condicio erat, Coi, cum eodem pretio detulisset, seuerum id ac pudicum arbitrantes. Reiectam Cnidii emerunt, inmensa differentia famae. Voluit eam a Cnidiis postea mercari rex*

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[1] On this statue and its reception in antiquity, see also Havelock, *The Aphrodite of Knidos*; Stewart, *Art, Desire and the Body*, pp. 97–107.

[2] Paus. 1.1.3.

[3] There is a sanctuary of Aphrodite *Euploia* in Kaunos, for example: Baki Ögün and Cengiz Işik, *Kaunos-Kbid: The Results of 35 Years of Research (1966–2001)* (Izmir, 2003), pp. 137–146. On *Euploia*, see Nils Sandberg, *Euploia. Études épigraphiques*. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis 60, 8 (Göteborg, 1954); Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 433–437.

> *Nicomedes, totum aes alienum, quod erat ingens, ciuitatis dissoluturum se promittens. Omnia perpeti maluere, nec inmerito. Illo enim signo Praxiteles nobilitauit Cnidum.*
>
> Praxiteles is an artist whose date I have mentioned among those of the makers of bronze statues, but in the fame of his work in marble he surpassed even himself. There are works by him at Athens, in the Cerameicus; and yet superior to anything not merely by Praxiteles, but in the whole world, is the Venus, which many people have sailed to Cnidus to see. He had made two figures, which he put up for sale together. One of them was draped and for this reason was preferred by the people of Cos, who had an option on the sale, although he offered it at the same price as the other. This they considered to be the only decent and dignified course of action. The statue which they refused was purchased by the people of Cnidus and achieved immeasurably greater reputation. Later King Nicomedes was anxious to buy it from them, promising so to discharge all the state's vast debts. The Cnidians, however, preferred to suffer anything but this, and rightly so; for with this statue Praxiteles made Cnidus a famous city.[4]

Pliny begins with the context of acquisition and the celebrity of the statue, for example that the Knidians preferred to keep it rather than writing off their debt. The inclusion of this anecdote, however, is a rare source concerning the cost of a marble statue. The statue is usually dated between 364–361 and 340 BC, at the peak of Praxiteles' career. The original, made in Parian marble, is now lost, but we know its appearance from descriptions in numerous texts, primarily the *Palatine Anthology*,[5] and the later authors, Pliny and Pseudo-Lucian, which I consider below.[6] We can also discern its appearance from labeled images on coins, reliefs, statuettes or figurines, as well as those of large scale (figure 13.1).[7]

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[4] Plin., *HN* 36.20–21, trans. and ed. D.E. Eichholz, *Natural History, Libri 36–37* (London, 1962).

[5] See Marion Muller-Dufeu, *La Sculpture grecque. Sources littéraires et épigraphiques* (Paris, 2002), nos. 1420–1445.

[6] Twelve works of Lucian, among them *Amores* (*Affairs of the Heart*), were relegated to the eighth volume of the Loeb edition because "there are good reasons for doubting the Lucianic authorship of some if not all of these works." Matthew Donald Macleod, trans. and ed. (London, 1967), p. ix.

[7] See, for example, the *Venus Colonna* (figure 14.1, 2.04 m high), a torso in Parian marble (Paris, Louvre Museum, Ma 2184; 1.22 m high), or the Kaufmann head (Paris, Louvre Museum, Ma 3518; 0.35 m high). On the Aphrodite statues made by Praxiteles, see *Praxitèle*, ed. Alain Pasquier and Jean-Luc Martinez (Paris, 2007), pp. 130–201. See also a statuette in Malibu (J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. 72.AA.93); two coins from Knidos showing the Aphrodite by Praxiteles are preserved in the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris (Pasquier and Martinez, *Praxitèle*, p. 53). Kristen Seaman, "Retrieving the Original Aphrodite of Knidos," *Atti della Accademia nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti Classe di scienze morali storiche e filologiche*, 15 (2004), 531–594.

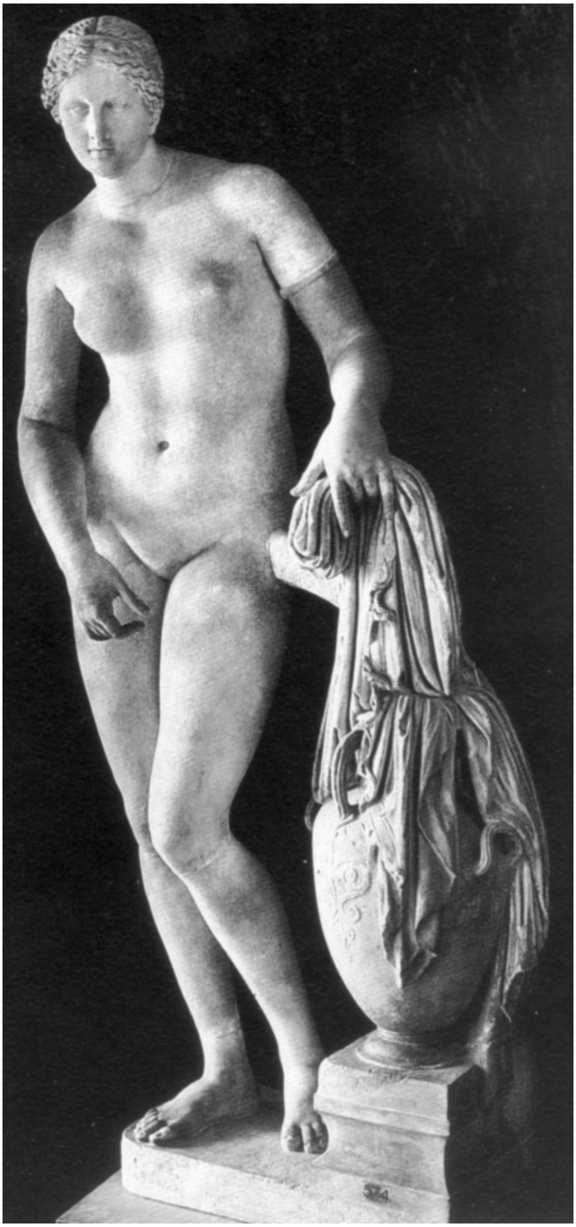

Figure 13.1. Venus Colonna statue, Roman Imperial period, made after the Knidian Aphrodite (2.04 m high without the plinth). Rome, Vatican Museum, Museo Pio Clementino no. 812. Photo: G. Becatti.

The Architectural Setting of the Statue: Two Texts, Two Buildings?

Only two surviving texts deal with the setting of the statue, whereas only one of its known replicas was discovered in an architectural environment, a *nymphaeum* or fountain building in Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli.[8] The first text is Pliny's description:

> *Aedicula eius tota aperitur, ut conspici possit undique effigies deae, fauente ipsa, ut creditur, facta. Nec minor ex quacumque parte admiratio est.*
>
> The shrine in which it stands is entirely open so as to allow the image of the goddess to be viewed from every side, and it is believed to have been made in this way with the blessing of the goddess herself.[9]

Pliny wrote his *Natural History* during the last part of his life, in the years before AD 78. It is unlikely that he went to Asia Minor, as his account of this part of the Aegean Sea is based on that of Mucianus, governor of Syria during the reign of the Emperor Vespasian (AD 70–79).[10] Mucianus traveled while in exile during the reign of Claudius,[11] when he wrote a memoir, chiefly dealing with the natural history and geography of the East. Mucianus gives no description of the shrine of Aphrodite in his account on Knidos, but recounts a story about murex shells dedicated at that sanctuary, as stated by Pliny.[12] Yet Mucianus is probably the source for the description given by Pliny.

What sort of building was this? Pliny uses the word *aedicula*, which is the diminutive of *aedes* ('a sacred, cultic place'). The word itself, however, says nothing about the architectural form of the building. I count only six other instances of it in Pliny. The first is in book 6, which deals with geography of the world: here *aedicula* designates a small temple built from only a single stone.[13] The second is in book 33, which concerns metals. Pliny uses it when he mentions a small bronze shrine above the Comitium in Rome, built with income from the fines imposed on usurers.[14] The third occurrence is in book 35, which deals with painting. Here *aedicula* designates a structure dedicated to Youth.[15] Pliny employs *aedicula* a fifth time in book 36, where he designates a structure above the arch of the Palatine. It sheltered the quadriga of Apollo and Artemis, a work of Lysias carved from one block of marble.[16] The last occurrence concerns shrines in Egypt.[17] From these passages we can conclude that an *aedicula* is a little building, sometimes in the form of a temple with columns, which may have sheltered a single statue or group of statues.

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[8] Nowadays at Tivoli a cast of this statue is on view (figure 13.5). The Roman copy is in the Museo Archeologico (Villa Hadriana). The Villa was built and embellished from AD 118 to 138.

[9] Plin., *HN* 36.21, trans. Eichholz.

[10] All the writings of Licinius Mucianus are lost; there only remain quotations in Pliny's *Natural History*. See George Williamson, "Mucianus and a Touch of the Miraculous: Pilgrimage and Tourism in Roman Asia Minor," in *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*, ed. Jaś Elsner and Ian Rutherford (Oxford, 2005), pp. 225; 249, n. 17.

[11] Tac., *Hist*. 1.10.5.

[12] Plin., *HN* 9.79.

[13] Plin., *HN* 6.204.1–2, trans. and ed. Horace Rackham, *Natural History, Libri 3–7* (London, 1961). Pliny often refers to a work of art "built only a single stone." See also the Farnese Bull group (Plin., *HN* 36.34.1–2), the quadriga of Apollo and Artemis (Plin., *HN*

Pliny emphasizes the openness of Aphrodite's shelter. What kind of building is an *aedicula* (*eius*) *tota aperitur*? *Tota aperitur* means 'entirely open, open on all sides'. I think Antonio Corso is wrong when he translates *aedicula* (*eius*) *tota aperitur* into the Italian, *Il suo tempietto è tutto fruibile*, which means "a little temple of which one could take the most."[18]

A colonnade that defines a circular or a rectangular space—what archaeologists call a *monopteros*—could easily correspond to Aphrodite's structure described by Pliny, which was probably a *monopteros* since he mentions columns. A statue positioned at the center of a *monopteros* is visible from every place. On the contrary, if the structure had a back wall and side walls, then we cannot consider the building to be an *aedicula tota aperitur*, because in this kind of shelter—like a niche—the statue is not seen on all its sides (figure 13.2).

Other literary sources may help us to understand the form of the *aedicula* mentioned by Pliny. Vitruvius also mentions a *monopteros* (figure 13.3), although only this once: *Fiunt autem aedes rotundae, e quibus aliae monopteroe sine cella columnatae constituuntur, aliae peripteroe dicuntur* ("Circular temples are also built, of which some are monopteral built with columns but not enclosing a *cella*; others are peripteral"). He opposes the *monopteros* and the *peripteros* because in the latter the

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36.37.1–5), or the Laocoon (Plin., *HN* 36.37.1–7). Neither the Farnese Bull nor Laocoon was built of a single stone. On this point, see Eugenie Sellers, *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art* (Chicago, 1976), p. 206, n. 1.

[14] Plin., *HN* 33.19.1–4, trans. Rackham.

[15] Plin., *HN* 35.108.1–3, trans. Rackham.

[16] Plin., *HN* 36.36.1–3, trans. Eichholz.

[17] Plin., *HN* 36.87.1–5, trans. Eichholz.

[18] Antonio Corso, *Prassitele. Fonti epigraphiche e letterarie. Vita e opere*. Xenia, Quaderni 10 (Rome, 1988–1990), p. 1.77, and commentary pp. 91–92.

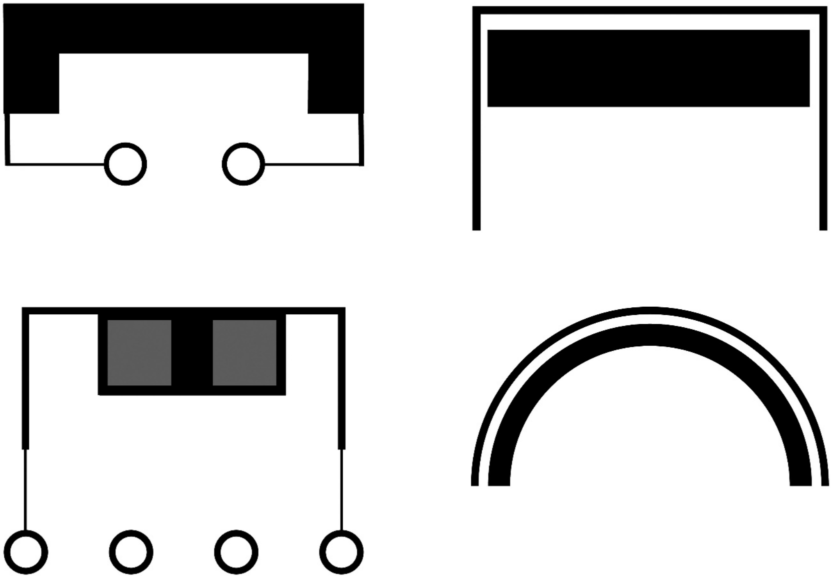

Figure 13.2. Sketches of niches and shelters with back and side walls. Drawing: C. Amourette.

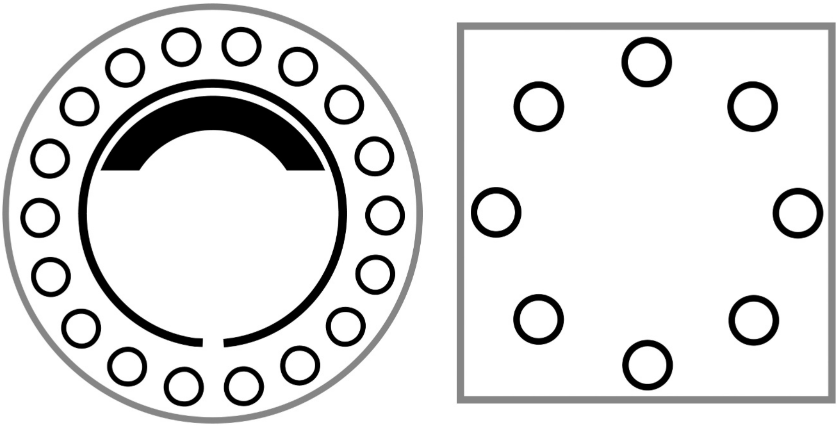

Figure 13.3. Illustration of the differences between a *tholos* (left) and a *monopteros* (right). Drawing: C. Amourette.

colonnade surrounds the walls.[19] His second use of the word *monopteros* seemingly designates the Temple of Liber Pater in Teos: *Hermogenes de aede Dianae, ionice quae est Magnesia pseudodipteros, et Liberi Patris Teo monopteros* ("Hermogenes on the pseudodipteral Ionic temple of Diana at Magnesia and the monopteral temple of Father Bacchus at Teos").[20] Here, Vitruvius seems to have used *monopteros* in the etymological sense, 'with a single row of columns', to emphasize the differences between the temple in Teos and the pseudodipteral temple in Magnesia.[21]

Few *monopteroi* are known from archaeological evidence, although some sheltered statues are known. The oldest is the *monopteros* of the Sikyonians at Delphi, built around 580–560 BC. This four-by-five colonnade surrounded a rectangular space of 12.9 m^2 where the quadriga of Kleisthenes was probably exhibited: Pausanias tells us that Kleisthenes of Sikyon won in the Pythian games of 582 BC.[22] The *monopteros*, built in Peloponnesian limestone, is famous for its metopes, now in the Delphi Museum.[23] Another rectangular *monopteros* of the Archaic period (600–480 BC) is known in the Heraion of Samos. It has three-by-five columns and was probably erected in order to shelter the cult statue of Hera after the destruction of the Rhoikos Temple, on the ruins of which it stands.[24] I know of no fifth-century examples. The next *monopteros*, chronologically speaking, is Lysikrates' Monument in Athens (ca. 334 BC). Today its intercolumniations are closed, and the monument looks like a rotunda, not a *monopteros*.[25] There is also one in the Agora of the Competaliasts, in Delos, built in the second half of the second century BC to shelter the cult statues of the Lares.[26] From the second century BC onwards, and during the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Imperial era, the *monopteros* spread throughout the Mediterranean, especially in

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[19] Vitr., *De arch.* 4.8.1, trans. and ed. Frank Granger, *On Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

[20] Vitr., *De arch.* 7, *praef.* 12, trans. Granger.

[21] In Graeco-Roman architecture, a pseudodipteral is a temple planned to be dipteral but lacking the inner range of columns. The temple of Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia was designed by Hermogenes around 200 BC.

[22] Paus. 10.7.4–6.

[23] On this building, see Jean-François Bommelaer and Didier Laroche, *Guide de Delphes. Le site*. Sites et monuments 7 (Athens, 1991), pp. 121–123.

[24] Helmut Kyrieleis, *Führer durch das Heraion von Samos* (Athens, 1981), p. 82, no. 4.

[25] Heinrich Bauer, "Lysikratesdenkmal, Baubestand und Reconstruction," *AM* 92 (1977), 197–227; Pierre Amandry, "Monuments chorégiques d'Athènes," *BCH* 121 (1997), 463–487.

[26] Claire Hasenohr, "Les sanctuaires italiens sur l'agora des Compétaliastes à Délos," *Revue archéologique* (2000), 198–202.

Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy; there are *monopteroi* in Athens, on the Akropolis and in the Agora, and in Pergamon, Termessos, Magnesia, Sagalassos, Corinth (the Monopteros of Babbius Philinus), Olympia (in the Nymphaeum of Herodes Atticus), and at Argos (a *nymphaeum* in its agora).[27] From the first century BC onwards, the *monopteros* was mainly used in funerary architecture, for example, at Saint-Rémy in Provence, ancient Glanum.[28]

The second text that describes the environment of the statue of Knidian Aphrodite is Pseudo-Lucian's description in the dialogue *Amores* (*Affairs of the Heart*) 13–14. It forms part of the story of a trip the author made with some friends. The reliability of the text is uncertain: it could be a precise description of what they saw, but it is more likely that he embellished it, to captivate his readers.

> ἐπεὶ δ' ἱκανῶς τοῖς φυτοῖς ἐτέρφθημεν, εἴσω τοῦ νεὼ παρῄειμεν. ἡ μὲν οὖν θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ καθίδρυται—Παρίας δὲ λίθου δαίδαλμα κάλλιστον—ὑπερήφανον καὶ σεσηρότι γέλωτι μικρὸν ὑπομειδιῶσα. πᾶν δὲ τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς ἀκάλυπτον οὐδεμιᾶς ἐσθῆτος ἀμπεχούσης γεγύμνωται, πλὴν ὅσα τῇ ἑτέρᾳ χειρὶ τὴν αἰδῶ λεληθότως ἐπικρύπτειν. τοσοῦτόν γε μὴν ἡ δημιουργὸς ἴσχυσε τέχνη, ὥστε τὴν ἀντίτυπον οὕτω καὶ καρτερὰν τοῦ λίθου φύσιν ἑκάστοις μέλεσιν ἐπιπρέπειν. ὁ γοῦν Χαρικλῆς ἐμμανές τι

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[27] Athens: Paola Baldassari, *Sebastoi Sotiri. Edilizia monumentale ad Atene durante il Saeculum Augustum* (Rome, 1998), pp. 45–63, 231–236; this building (8.60 m in diameter) may serve as a shelter for one or two statues, according to the dedicatory inscription, *IG* 2^2 3173. William Bell Dinsmoor, "The Monopteros in the Athenian Agora," *Hesperia* 43 (1974), 412–427. This building measures 7.17 m in diameter; we do not know its precise function. Pergamon: Franz Winter and Jakob Schrammen, *Altertümer von Pergamon 7. Die Skulpturen von Pergamon 2* (Berlin, 1908), p. 380, nn. 22–23. Termessos: Charles Lanckoronski, *Städte Pamphylien und Pisidiens 2. Pisidien, Prague, Vienne* (Leipzig, 1892), pp. 105–107, figs. 68–69, pl. 17. Both of them have a diameter of approx. 2.50 m. Magnesia: Wilhelm Dörpfeld and Friedrich Hiller von Gaertringen, "Ausgrabungen im Theater von Magnesia am Maiandros," *AM* 19 (1894), 46–47; Otto Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Meander* (Berlin, 1900), no. 216. On Sagalassos: Marc Waelkens and Jeroen Poblome, *Sagalassos 2*: *Report on the Third Excavation Campaign for 1992* (Leuven, 1993), pp. 15–16, figs. 26–27. Corinth (diameter: approx. 4.60 m): Robert L. Scranton, *Corinth* 1, 3: *Monuments in the Lower Agora and North of the Archaic Temple* (Princeton, 1951), pp. 17–32. Argos: Patrick Marchetti and Kostas Kolokotsas, *Le nymphée de l'agora d'Argos. Fouille, étude architecturale et historique*. Études péloponnésiennes 11 (Paris, 1995). Olympia: Hans Schleif, ed., *Das Philippeion. Das Nymphaeum des Herodes Attikos. Grossgriechische Daschterrakotten. Angriffswaffen. Eisengerät*. Olympische Forschungen 1 (Berlin, 1944).

[28] Henner von Hesberg, "Les modèles des édifices funéraires en Italie: leur message et leur réception," in *L'architecture funéraire monumentale. La Gaule dans l'Empire romain*, ed. Jean-Charles Moretti and Denis Tardy (Paris, 2006), pp. 17–26. Glanum: Henri Rolland and Julien Bruchet, *Le Mausolée de Glanum (Saint-Rémy-de-Provence)*. Gallia Supplément 21 (Paris, 1969).

> καὶ παράφορον ἀναβοήσας, Εὐτυχέστατος, εἶπεν, θεῶν ὁ διὰ ταύτην δεθεὶς Ἄρης, καὶ ἅμα προσδραμὼν λιπαρέσι τοῖς χείλεσιν ἐφ᾽ ὅσον ἦν δυνατὸν ἐκτείνων τὸν αὐχένα κατεφίλει· σιγῇ δ᾽ ἐφεστὼς ὁ Καλλικρατίδας κατὰ νοῦν ἀπεθαύμαζεν. ἔστι δ᾽ ἀμφίθυρος ὁ νεὼς καὶ τοῖς θέλουσι κατὰ νώτου τὴν θεὸν ἰδεῖν ἀκριβῶς, ἵνα μηδὲν αὐτῆς ἀθαύμαστον ᾖ. δι᾽ εὐμαρείας οὖν ἔστι τῇ ἑτέρᾳ πύλῃ παρελθοῦσιν τὴν ὄπισθεν εὐμορφίαν διαθρῆσαι. δόξαν οὖν ὅλην τὴν θεὸν ἰδεῖν, εἰς τὸ κατόπιν τοῦ σηκοῦ περιήλθομεν. εἶτ᾽ ἀνοιγείσης τῆς θύρας ὑπὸ τοῦ κλειδοφύλακος ἐμπεπιστευμένου γυναίου θάμβος αἰφνίδιον ἡμᾶς εἶχεν τοῦ κάλλους.
>
> When the plants had given us pleasure enough, we entered the temple. In the midst thereof sits the goddess—she's a most beautiful statue of Parian marble—arrogantly smiling a little as a grin parts her lips. Draped by no garment, all her beauty is uncovered and revealed, except in so far as se unobtrusively uses one hand to hide her private parts. So great was the power of the craftsman's art that the hard unyielding marble did justice to every limb. Charicles at any rate raised a mad distracted cry and exclaimed, "Happiest indeed of the gods was Ares who suffered chains because of her!" And, as he spoke, he ran up and, stretching out his neck as far as he could, started to kiss the goddess with importunate lips. Callicratidas stood by in silence with amazement in his heart. The temple had a door on both sides for the benefit of those also who wish to have a good view of the goddess from behind, so that no part of her be left unadmired. It's easy therefore for people to enter by the other door and survey the beauty of her back. And so we decided to see all of the goddess and went round to the back of the precinct. Then, when the door had been opened by the woman responsible for keeping the keys, we were filled with an immediate wonder for the beauty we beheld.[29]

In this text, Pseudo-Lucian uses the Greek term ναός to designate the building of the Knidian Aphrodite, as does Valerius Maximus.[30] In Greek, ἀμφί means 'on two sides, duplicate'. This would suggest that the temple had two doors, one on the façade, at the main entrance of the building, and one at the back. Once again, I do not agree with Corso, who wants to draw both texts closer: *L'aggetivo* amphithyros, *riferito al tempietto, è il corrispettivo dell'espressione pliniana* aedicula … tota aperitur.[31]

Normally there is only one central door at the front of a temple. The cult statue, situated in the back of the *cella*, would have been visible when the door was open. An ancient impression of this is found for example on a fragmentary krater in Amsterdam, on which a golden statue of Apollo is visible inside his temple.[32] Sometimes, the *opisthodomos* or 'back room' communicates with the *cella* or 'sacred room', as in the second Aphaia temple in Aigina (ca. 500 BC). Here we can talk of an *amphitryos naos* or a temple with two doors. But this kind of building is rare: most cult statues were not visible from behind. The architectural settings in the fifth century BC, in particular, emphasized the front of the cult statue for a better view by the worshippers standing in front of it in the *cella*. Several temples had fences to deter people from approaching their statue. In the Temple of Athena at Sounion, for example, iron railings were installed between the north and south walls of the *cella*, in front of the extant statue base (470–450 BC), while in the Temple of Despoina at Lykosoura (220–180 BC), a large marble fence was built 1.40 m from the statue base.[33] These examples provide interesting evidence for the frequent visits of worshippers to temples.[34] Projecting walls hindered access to Pheidias' chryselephantine Zeus in the Temple of Zeus in Olympia, whereas Pausanias was astonished that one could pass under the throne of Apollo in Amyklai.[35] The text of Pseudo-Lucian on the Knidian monument also mentions the regulations that are familiar from other sanctuaries: the sightseers had to ask permission to enter the back door. Clearly the Greeks worried about the visibility and the protection of statues. From Pseudo-Lucian's account, one gets the impression that the architectural setting of the Knidian Aphrodite was peculiar, perhaps designed to give the statue a special setting. But the texts describe two different kinds of buildings: Pliny describes a wide, opened structure, while Pseudo-Lucian suggests a confined space. The disparity in these texts makes it necessary for us to turn to the archaeological evidence, in this inquiry.

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[29] Trans. Macleod.

[30] Val. Max. 8.11, ext. 4.

[31] Corso, *Prassitele*, p. 135. In n. 831, on p. 222, Corso confesses the discovery of the building in Knidos brought nothing on this question. See below.

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[32] Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum, inv. 2579, ca. 380–370 BC. There are a lot of archaeological and literary examples. For both see Deborah Tarn Steiner, *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought* (Princeton, 2001); Jenifer Cinder Griffin Miller, "Temple and Statue: A Study of Practices in Ancient Greece" (PhD diss., Bryn Mawr, 1995).

[33] Aigina: Hans Walter, *Ägina. Die archäologische Geschichte einer griechischen Insel* (Munich, 1993), fig. 60 (temple plan). Sounion: Hans Ruprecht Goette, *Ho axiologos demos Sounion, Landeskundliche Studien in Sudost-Attika* (Rahden, 2000), pp. 37–41. Lykosoura: Edmond Lévy, "Sondages à Lykosoura et date de Damophon," *BCH* 91 (1967), 518–545; Madeleine Jost, Jean Marcadé, et al., "Rites, cultes et religion. Le site de Lycosoura," *Ktèma* 33 (2008), 93–209.

[34] I have studied those structures in Sophie Montel, "Recherches sur la présentation architecturale des groupes sculptés en Grèce ancienne" (PhD diss., University of Paris Ouest Nanterre – La Défense, Paris, 2008), pp. 543–559.

[35] Olympia: Paus. 5.11.4–5. Pausanias mentions Amyklai (Paus. 5.11.4) in comparison with Olympian Zeus.

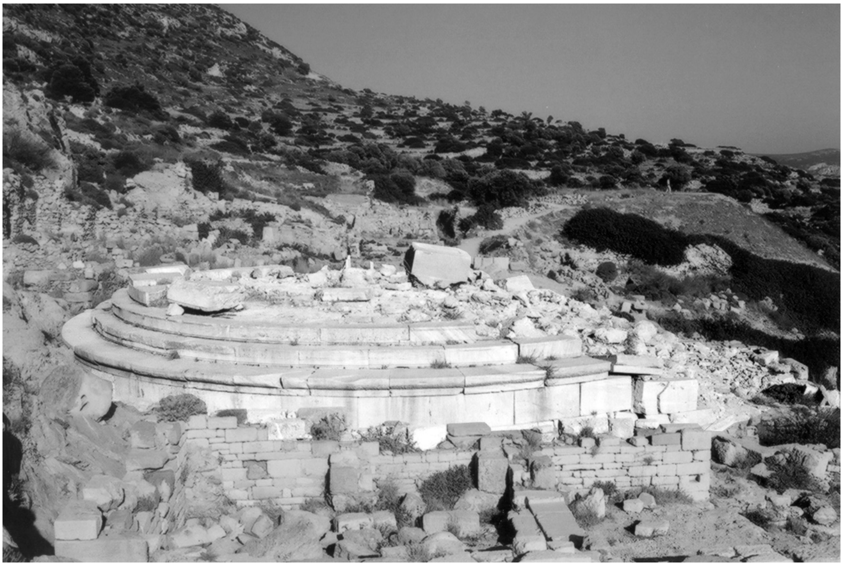

Figure 13.4. The second-century BC *tholos* in Knidos. Photo: Amy C. Smith.

Restitutions Based on the Ruins: From Knidos to Tivoli

During the American excavations in Knidos in 1969–1972, Iris Cornelia Love excavated a round structure on the northern terrace of the site, above the terrace of the Apollo Karneios sanctuary.[36] Here there are at least five treasuries oriented to the south, among other rectangular structures or large bases.[37] Love uncovered a round structure open on its east side, as are most Greek temples (figure 13.4). A staircase allows people to reach the level of the podium, where there is a three-stepped marble *crepidoma* that supported a colonnade with eighteen poros supports that Love thought belonged to the Doric order. There was no indication of a ceiling or roof. Love identified this round structure as Aphrodite's *tholos*, based on its similarity to a round structure in Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli (figure 13.5), as well as Pliny's description. The round Doric structure in

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[36] Iris Cornelia Love, "A Preliminary Report of the Excavations at Knidos, 1972," *AJA* 77 (1973), 413–424.

[37] Treasuries are small buildings in the form of a temple. Map of the ancient city: Hansgeorg Bankel, "Knidos. Der hellenistische Rundtempel und sein Altar. Vorbericht," *AA* (1997), 67, fig. 30.

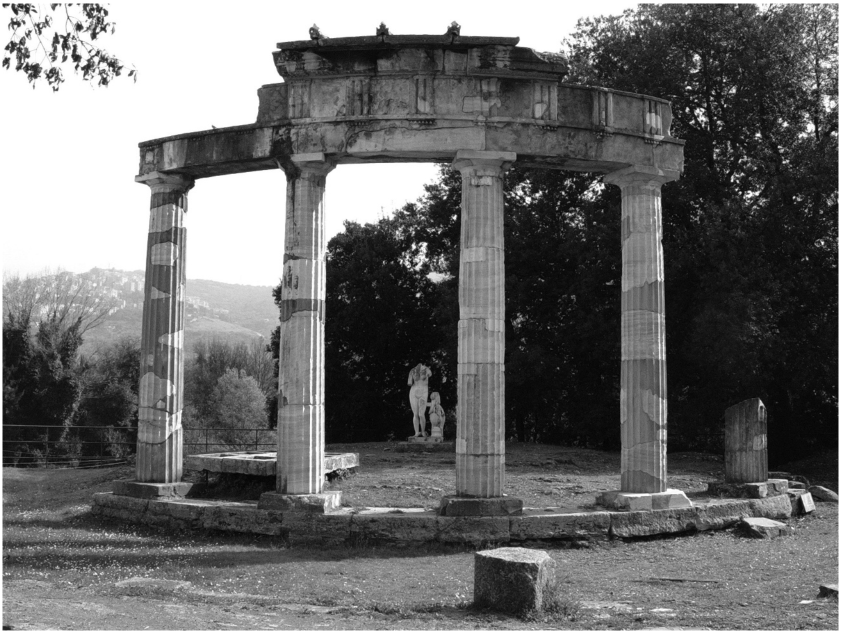

Figure 13.5. The second-century AD round structure of the *nymphaeum* in Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. Photo courtesy A. Pollini.

Tivoli forms part of a *nymphaeum* or fountain; two apses on the sides contained fountains. It is now difficult to visualize the exact plan of the *nymphaeum*, because a modern building has replaced one of the apses (figure 13.6).

The two structures had comparable diameters (the *tholos* at Knidos measures 17.30 m in diameter while that at Tivoli measures 17.10 m). That the Tivoli *nymphaeum* also sheltered a marble copy of the Knidian Aphrodite made the connection even more tempting. Finally, the letters PRAX were discovered in Knidos on an inscribed "altar" dated between the end of the third and the second centuries BC: Love suggested this was a Hellenistic "statue base" from a re-erection of Praxiteles' famous statue in the round structure that might have been a second architectural setting for the statue. Since then, the drawing of Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite at the center of a round Doric *monopteros* has circulated widely.[38] I agreed with Love that the Tivoli monument was a *monopteros*, but Giorgio

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[38] Iris Cornelia Love, "A Preliminary Report of the Excavations at Knidos, 1970," *AJA* 76 (1972), 74, ill. 9.

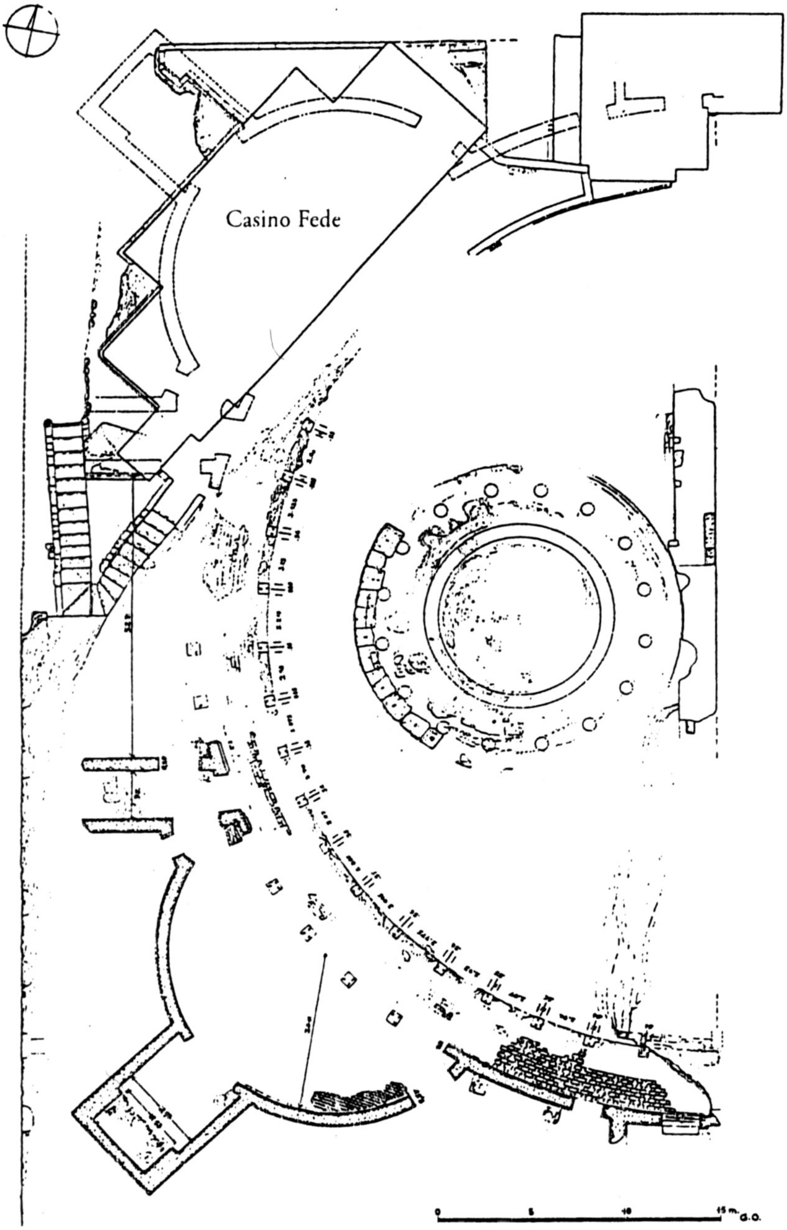
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Figure 13.6. Plan of the round building in Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, after Ortolani, *Il padiglione*, fig. 32.

Ortolani has now restored it as a *tholos*.[39] Ortolani's conclusions are in opposition, however: he sees a *cella* wall in the ruins of the Tivoli *nymphaeum*, but he maintains the identification of the Knidian round building as a place of exhibition for the famous statue.[40]

Nevertheless, Turkish excavations at Knidos under the direction of Ramazan Özgan have revealed four features that may help us to understand the round structure at Knidos.[41] First, the building has a Corinthian (not Doric) colonnade, so the parallel with the circular Doric building of Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli is no longer possible. Second, the round building at Knidos has a *cella* wall, so it is not a *monopteros* (figure 13.7). With a wall behind its colonnade, this building must be classified as a *tholos*. It was only opened by means of a door installed in the eastern part of the wall, so that a worshipper could only see the statue when the door was open. The third and most important revelation from the Turkish excavations is the identification of the goddess honored there. Two inscriptions to "Athana" were found, along with votive terracottas, near the round building at Knidos. Wolfgang Blümel has proven, moreover, that the PRAX inscription did not correspond to the sculptor, but to the name of a worshipper of Athena.[42] Thus the *tholos* must be considered as the Temple of Athena and could not have sheltered the statue of Aphrodite. Finally, these excavations also confirm the date of the round building in the second century BC, more than 150 years after the purchase of the statue by the people of Knidos. These chronological results are not, of course, conclusive in themselves, since the preserved temple could have been a second-century rebuilding of a fourth-century original structure. The results of these excavations by Özgan and by Bankel, however, indicate that the Hellenistic round temple at Knidos should not be considered the shelter for Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite.[43]

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[39] Giorgio Ortolani, *Il padiglione di Afrodite Cnidia a Villa Adriana. Progetto e significato* (Rome, 1998).

[40] He based his own restoration on ancient drawings and plans: Ortolani, *Il padiglione*, p. 98, fig. 46 (*probabile traccia del muro della cella*: "probably traces of the wall of the cella"). Future excavations may solve the problem.

[41] Özgan, "1989 Knidos Kazisi," *Kazi Sonuclari Toplantasi* 12 (1990), 57–61; Özgan, "1990 Knidos Kazisi," *Kazi Sonuclari Toplantasi* 13 (1991), 171–177.

[42] Wolfgang Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Knidos* 1. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 41 (Bonn, 1992), no. 178.

[43] Özgan, "1989 Knidos Kazisi," pp. 57–61; Özgan, "1990 Knidos Kazisi," pp. 171–177; Bankel, "Knidos," pp. 51–71.

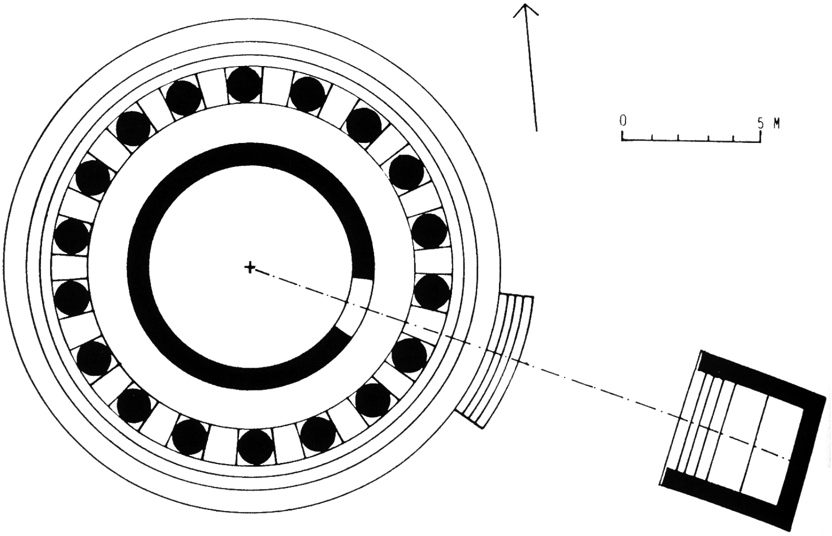

Figure 13.7. Plan of the *tholos* in Knidos, after Bankel, "Knidos," fig. 17.

Roman Taste versus Greek Architecture

So, we are no closer to understanding the Knidian Aphrodite's *aedicula*, nor its connection to the round structure at Tivoli. Although there are differences between the two round structures at Knidos and Tivoli, the similarities in their dimensions are striking. Ortolani had no access to the results of the Turkish excavations when he published his book on the round structure at Tivoli (in 1998). So, his own ideas about the building in Tivoli were influenced most heavily by the text of Pseudo-Lucian, for example, in his proposal that the building had two doors in axial position: *Pur senza alcuna prova sul terreno, ma cercando di interpretare le idee del progettista antico, si può ipotizzare la presenza di due porte assiali sulla* cella *della* tholos ("Even without any proof on the ground, but trying to interpret the ideas of the author of the ancient project, we may suppose the presence of two doors in axial position in the *cella* of the *tholos*").[44] The main difference between the two buildings is in their nature: while the Knidian building is an enclosed structure, the Hadrianic one is restored either as an entirely open building—like the shrine described by Pliny—or as a *tholos*. When one walks around the round building at Tivoli (figure 13.5), it is easy to realize the visual effect produced by such an architectural setting. If this round structure was a *tholos*, then its similarities to the Knidian building are more striking. Yet its differences are great. It has a different architectural order (Doric rather than Corinthian, as at Knidos) and function (a temple versus a decorative structure in the center of a *nymphaeum*).

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[44] Ortolani, *Il padiglione*, p. 143; p. 104, fig. 61.

We know that Emperor Hadrian (AD 117–138) had a taste for Greek architecture and sculpture.[45] His villa in Tivoli represents the empire in miniature. Buildings, filled with a lot of copies of Greek art, evoked famous sites in Greece and Egypt.[46] It would not be surprising, therefore, if he had copied the context of the Knidian Aphrodite, including her enclosure. He may also have taken inspiration from the round monuments—statue enclosures—that were popular, as I have already mentioned, in Hellenistic and Imperial periods. By his time, the Romans had developed a wide range of architectural shelters for statues: the niches and porticoes of Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli illustrate well this kind of interaction between sculpture and architecture.[47]

Similarly, Pliny and Pseudo-Lucian may have been responding to fashion in their descriptions of the exhibition of statues in the first and second centuries AD. It would be rash to discredit the ancient sources, however, despite their precision. In his story about infatuation with the statue of Aphrodite, Pseudo-Lucian seems to report a true experience.[48] The rules regarding visits to sanctuaries that are reported by his κλειδοφύλαξ ('guardian of the keys') correspond to those found in inscribed sacred laws or mentioned by Pausanias.[49]

By the fourth century BC, when Praxiteles created the Aphrodite purchased by the people of Knidos, Greek architects had already developed several forms of shelter for cultic, votive, or honorific statues. The interior colonnade, known first in the Parthenon at Athens (447–438 BC), is later developed in Peloponnesian temples at Epidauros, Tegea, and in the *tholoi* at Delphi, Epidauros, and Olympia.[50] In each case, the inner colonnade turns the internal room of the temple into an architectural feature that is an ideal enclosure for a statue. In the third quarter of the fourth century BC, the funerary *naïskos*, or temple façade, known earlier from two-dimensional stelai, developed a third dimension. The resulting deep *naïskos* provides shelter for the statues of family members among images of the deceased (figure 13.2, top right).[51] All of these architectural settings for sculpture are contemporaneous with the work of Praxiteles. Perhaps a *naïskos* or structure like a small temple served as the shelter of the Knidian Aphrodite. Taking inspiration from the text of Pseudo-Lucian, the *naïskos* would have had two doors: one regularly opened at the front and another normally closed at the back; the worshipper who desired to see the back of the statue had to ask the guardian of the keys to open the back door. The interest in Aphrodite's back is not specific to Pseudo-Lucian, but appears also in a Pompeian painting of Venus at her bath, with two Erotes as helpers. In this painting, dating to the end of the first century BC, one Eros holds a mirror that reflects the back of Venus and reveals it to the spectators.[52]

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[45] Among others: Cass. Dio and *SHA Hadr*.

[46] Monique Mosser, Henri Lavagne, et al., eds, *Hadrien empereur et architecte. La Villa d'Hadrien, tradition et modernité d'un paysage culturel* (Geneva, 2002); Thorsten Opper, *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008).

[47] For example: we usually restitute statues in the seven rectangular niches in the apsidal wall of the "room of the philosophers" (philosophers or imperial portraits); see also the statues between the columns of the Canopus (copies of famous Greek statues).

[48] The same remark is valid for Pliny's testimony: Jacob Isager, *Pliny on Art and Society, The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art* (London, 1991), p. 153, n. 538.

[49] For example: Paus. 2.10.4 (cult statue of Aphrodite in Sikyon); 7.23.9 (cult statue of Hera in Aigion); or 7.26.7 (statues of Aphrodite and a heavenly goddess in Aigeira). Many examples are in Joseph William Hewitt, "The Major Restrictions on Access to Greek Temples," *TAPA* 40 (1909), 83–91; see also Peter E. Corbett, "Greek Temples and Greek Worshippers: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London* 17 (1970), 149–158.

As Pausanias informs us, the Knidian Aphrodite was a cult statue, not a votive. For the goddess' statue, we do not have to look for a specific exhibition building: a rectangular temple could have sheltered this famous statue. The arguments developed by Corso are obsolete: we have to consider that the texts are not clear enough to give an idea of the form of the structure that once sheltered the statue of Praxiteles. It is possible that Pseudo-Lucian invented the two doors in order to introduce the story of the young man who felt in love with the goddess that comes in his next section (*Amores* 15–16). At present, however, neither ancient texts nor the ruins at Knidos or Tivoli allow us to reconstruct the original shelter of the Knidian Aphrodite with any certainty. Perhaps future excavations in Knidos will eventually reveal the location of the sanctuary of Aphrodite *Euploia*, which may well be in the lower town.

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[50] On the role of the interior colonnade, see Georges Roux, *L'architecture de l'Argolide aux IV^{e} et III^{e} siècles av. J.-C.* (Paris, 1961), p. 396.

[51] Most of them come from Attika: Christoph W. Clairmont, *Classical Attic Tombstones* (Kilchberg, 1993). See, for example, the monument of Nikeratos from Kallithea, now in the Piraeus Museum: *SEG* 24 (1969), 258 (inscription); Georgios Steinhauer, "La restauration du monument funéraire de Kallithéa," in *Colloque International d'Archéologie Funéraire (2000)*, ed. Vasilica Lungu (Tulcea, 2006), pp. 145–150. See also Diogeiton's one in Rhamnous: Vasileios Petrakos, *Ὁ Δῆμος τοῦ Ῥαμνοῦντος* (Athens, 1999), pp. 362–370.

[52] For the Pompeian painting, see Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, *Pompei, Pitture e mosaici*, 9 vols. (Rome, 1990–1999), pp. 766–780. I am grateful to Baptiste Augris (University Paris Ouest), who pointed out this painting. On the aspect of the back of the statue, see also Pasquier and Martinez, *Praxitèle*, p. 145.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INTERACTIVE APHRODITE: GREEK RESPONSES TO THE IDEA OF APHRODITE AS ANCESTRESS OF THE ROMANS

Jenny Wallensten

As is well known, the Romans considered Aphrodite to be the ancestress of their people. Augustan and Julio-Claudian propaganda transmitted this lineage widely throughout the empire and made it quite clear that the ruling dynasty held the favor of one of the mightiest goddesses in the Greek and Roman panthea. But even before this period, when Rome's supremacy was already a matter of fact, stories of Rome's Trojan connections had been circulating in the Greek cultural sphere.[1] During the Hellenistic centuries (323–31 BC), cities and other political bodies frequently used myths and legends as diplomatic tools, and as Rome entered the Mediterranean scene, Greeks as well as Aineias' Latin descendants drew upon these Trojan stories as a means of incorporating the new player—Rome—into their view of the world. On a conceptual level, among the Greeks themselves, Rome's Trojan past made her a part of their familiar present, whereas on a more practical level, such as in diplomatic exchanges, the Trojan pedigree became a concrete means of interaction between Greece and Rome: Greek cities that could claim Trojan descent or other Ilian connections deliberately exploited these to win the attention—and, it was hoped, the goodwill—of the Romans. The present chapter explores the idea that an influence of the image of Aphrodite as ancestress of the Romans can be discerned in the religious as well as the political spheres of Greek cities. Roman expansion and the accompanying propaganda affected the way the Greeks saw their goddess. In encounters between the two cultures—Greece and Rome—Aphrodite became a means of interaction: in addition to the many and varied functions Aphrodite filled in city-states all around the Mediterranean, in this new context, the Greeks could now also use the goddess to communicate an acknowledgment of Roman power.[2] This phenomenon is visible from the epigraphic sources. Here I analyze this interaction, evidenced by Hellenistic and Early Imperial inscriptions, predominantly dedications, which attest responses to a changing world.

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[1] See below, nn. 11–12.

Aphrodite was not just any other Greek goddess to the Romans. Through her son Aineias, fathered by the mortal Anchises, she was Rome's ancestral mother.[3] The first Roman emperor, Augustus, emphatically promoted this divine family tree, but he was not the first, nor the last, mighty Roman to do so. Augustus' claim to special ties with Aphrodite came through his status as a member of the Julian family (into which Augustus had been adopted by his uncle, Gaius Julius Caesar), and this clan famously traced their ancestry to the goddess not only as Romans, but also as members of this particular family. Their eponym Iulus was none other than Aineias' / Aeneas' son (Iulus was also known as Ascanius).[4] This tradition can be identified long before Augustus' reign (27 BC–AD 14), at least as early as 129 BC, when a member of the gens Julia (the Julian family) chose the image of Venus for the reverse of his denarii coins (see also figure 15.1).[5] Two mighty generals of the Roman Republic, Pompey and Sulla, also claimed Aphrodite as their special protectress, the latter with more success: Sulla referred to himself as Ἐπαφρόδιτος ('Beloved of Aphrodite').[6] Imperial generations long after the

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[2] As surely shown by this volume, Aphrodite was not only "the goddess of love" in the Greek world. Other major aspects of Aphrodite include protection at sea and protection of public officials. For a recent contribution enriching our view of the goddess, see Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*.

[3] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.45–64; Livy, *Epit.* 1.1–11; Verg., *Aen.*; Ov., *Met.* 13.623–625. For Poseidon's prophecy that Aeneas descendants will rule the Trojans, see Hom., *Il.* 20.307–308, and the comment of Dionysios of Halikarnassos, Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.53.5. For the meeting of Aphrodite and Anchises, see *Hymn. Hom. Ven.* For lost sources, see, for example, Andrew Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome: Local Tradition and Imperial Power* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 23–24.

[4] Other prominent families also claimed descent from Troy, perhaps as early as the fifth and fourth centuries BC, as noted by T.P. Wiseman, *The Myths of Rome* (Exeter, 2008), p. 21.

[5] Michael H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (London, 1974), p. 284, no. 258; Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 21.

[6] Thus, a favorite of the Greek, not the Roman, goddess. See also Arthur Keaveney, *Sulla, the Last Republican* (London, 2005), p. 135; Arthur Keaveney, "Sulla and the Gods," in *Studies in Latin literature and Roman History*, ed. Carl Deroux. Collection Latomus 180 (Brussels, 1983), pp. 44–79. See also *Aphrodisias and Rome: Documents from the Excavation of the Theatre at Aphrodisias Conducted by Kenan T. Erim, together with Some Related Texts*. Journal of Roman Studies Monographs 1 (London, 1982), pp. 3–5; and Brody, "The Cult of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias," pp. 101, 106–107.

Julio-Claudians had disappeared from the heart of power kept the Roman family pride in Aphrodite. Trajan (AD 53–117), for example, was to dedicate to Aphrodite Προμήτωρ ('first mother of a race') in the Carian city of Aphrodisias.[7]

There is no consensus as to when the idea of their Trojan roots had become a commonplace among the Romans. Our main sources for the legend come from the Augustan period (27 BC–AD 14).[8] Some scholars therefore argue that the importance of Trojan ancestry to the Romans has been overestimated and that these ideas did not become generally accepted until Augustus' propaganda.[9] Others believe the ideas to have penetrated Roman consciousness earlier. It has also been proposed that educated Romans would have been familiar with these stories in the third or early fourth century BC, or alternatively that these stories were brought to the West by the Etruscans in the sixth century BC.[10] Less often discussed, but important for the context of the present study, is however that not only the Romans thought of themselves as the progeny of Aphrodite; the Greeks also were clearly familiar with these stories that presented the Romans as stemming from the goddess: Aineias is presented as a favorite son of Aphrodite already in the *Iliad*.[11] The idea that Aineias went to Italy to become the ancestor of the Romans was known in the Greek world by the fifth century BC, according to Erich Gruen, whereas Andrew Erskine acknowledges an awareness of the traditions in the third and second centuries BC.[12] Erskine has shown, moreover, how the Greek world used the Trojan story complex to position the Roman newcomers in the framework of their Mediterranean world. It is often taken for granted that this was done by a simple dismissal of the Romans as barbarians: since the Trojans were uncultivated adversaries of the Greeks, so, by default, were the Romans.[13] Erskine has demonstrated that the stories surrounding the Trojan War, however, were not necessarily understood in this way. In the campaign against Ilion, Greeks did not fight barbarians. Heroes fought heroes at Troy, and thus later generations came to honor heroes of supposed enemies as well as those from the friendly camp.[14] In this context Troy became common ground for Greeks and Romans, as the Romans were incorporated into the Panhellenic world of Homer by tracing their ancestry to the Trojan prince Aineias. Thus, from the Greek perspective, Rome became a kindred nation.[15]

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[7] Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*, no. 55a.

[8] Verg, *Aen*.; Livy, *Epit*., 1.1.7–8; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom*. 1.45–89. See also Strabo 5.3.2; Diod. Sic. 7.4–6.

[9] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 15–36.

[10] Wiseman, *Myths of Rome*, pp. 20–21; Thomas Corsten, "Der Hilferuf des Akarnanischen Bundes an Rom. Zum Beginn des römischen Eingreifens in Griechenland," *Zeitung für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 94 (1992), 202; Erich S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca, 1992), p. 31; Arnaldo Momigliano, "How to Reconcile Greeks and Trojans," in *Settimo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano (Rome, 1984), p. 448; Andreas Alföldi, *Die trojanischen Urahnen der Römer* (Basel, 1957), 14–19. See Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 16, n. 2 for these and further references.

[11] Hom., *Il*. 5.247–248, 311–317.

[12] Erich S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Leiden, 1990), p. 11; Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 39. See also Wiseman, *Myths of Rome*, pp. 16–21.

The significance of the Trojan myth as a matter of connections between Greek states and Rome is evidenced in general as well as on local levels.[16] Pyrrhos made use of these stories in 281 BC, when he named himself another Achilles, waging war on a Trojan colony: Rome.[17] Somewhat later, in the 230s BC, Akarnania asked for Roman support in its struggle with Aitolia. Various accounts of the episode exist. In Justin's version, the Senate sent legates who demanded the removal of the Aitolian garrisons and freedom for the Akarnanians, because the Akarnanians were the only Greek people who had not dispatched contingents against Troy, mother city of the Romans. Strabo also reports that the Akarnanians evoked their lack of participation in the Trojan War as a way of gaining Roman favor, whereas Dionysios of Halikarnassos gives another reason for Roman goodwill towards the Akarnanians. He tells us that men from Akarnania assisted Aineias on his way towards Italy and says that because of this aid, Rome gave Akarnania territorial rewards.[18] These stories should perhaps not be taken at face value, but the incidental nature of this Trojan anecdote indicates that Rome had recognized a connection before the mid-third century.[19] Erskine has also suggested a "cumulative effect": despite the questionable details of the anecdotes, Akarnania did make use of the Trojan stories to establish good relations with Rome.[20]

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[13] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 6–7. The influence of Athens and her use of the Trojans as the barbarian tribe par excellence in an anti-Persian climate is surely felt here, albeit with qualifications: see Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 8, 61–92. Cf. Christopher P. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), pp. 83–84.

[14] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 9.

[15] Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy*, p. 16; Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 1. The ambiguous character of Aineias can also be noted: according certain accounts, he betrayed Troy to the Greeks, or joined Odysseus after the fall of the city. He could thus be seen as a Trojan friend of the Greeks, as well as the son of a Greek goddess (Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy*, p. 88).

[16] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 37–38.

[17] Not all scholars accept the episode as historical. Christopher P. Jones believes in its historicity, however, as does Erich S. Gruen, who points to the fact that Pyrrhos not only boasted verbally of being a second Achilles, but also minted coins picturing the hero and his mother Thetis: Gruen, *Studies*, p. 12; Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy*, pp. 46–47. The fact that Pyrrhos saw himself as a new Achilles, however, does not necessarily mean that he thought of the Romans as Trojans. Pyrrhos' family traced its descent to both Achilles and the Trojan royal house through Andromache; see Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 157–161.

Many Greek cities also claimed links to the Trojan heroes, through blood ties or friendship created in the wake of the war.[21] Diplomacy in the ancient world often worked on such terms. Claims of kinship created interstate bonds and furthered political strategies. If both sides recognized kinship ties, then they were lasting and entailed duties of possible future obligation of mutual assistance.[22] Myth was frequently called upon to establish such links, and even if the arguments supported by these stories were sometimes considered far-fetched, they still had a real impact on political decision making.[23] Thus several cities in the Troad exploited their common ground with the growing Roman realm. Lampsakos can be taken as an example. In the 190s BC, probably feeling the threat of the ambitions of Antiochos III, the city asked for Roman help and clearly stressed their kinship as an important reason why Rome should lend her support.[24] In contacts with a King Seleukos, Rome promised *amicitia* ('friendship') if the Seleukid king freed their *consanguinei* ('relations by blood'), the Ilians, of all tribute.[25] The Ilians, in their turn, because of their kinship with the Romans, interceded with Rome on behalf of the Lykians, whose own ties to Troy at the time were not perceived as influential enough.[26] Several cities in Sicily also claimed family ties with Rome: Segesta switched sides during the first Punic Wars on the grounds of a common descent with the Roman people,[27] and the city of Eryx celebrated the cult of Aphrodite *Aineias*. (In 217, the cult of Venus *Erycina*—Venus of Eryx—was introduced to the city of Rome itself.)[28]

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[18] Just., *Epit.* 28.1.5; Strabo 10.2.23, 25; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom*, 1.51.2; Gruen, *Studies*, p. 13; Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 40, 188–195.

[19] Gruen, *Studies*, p. 13, n. 36; Corsten, "Der Hilferuf," p. 202.

[20] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 189, 195.

[21] Such links can be identified already in the sixth century BC. See Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 93–127, for the case of Aineias and the city of Aineia, and other examples.

[22] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 168.

[23] Lynette G. Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationships in the Greek World, 435–323 BC* (Cambridge, Eng., 1997), p. 26.

[24] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 40, 169–172.

[25] Gruen, *Studies*, p. 14; Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 40. The episode is suspect and the identity of Seleukos not wholly clear; see ibid., pp. 172–175. Gruen (*Studies*, p. 14) believes, however, that it "enhances the impression that Roman leadership had already adopted the legend of Trojan origins." *Amicitia* was an officially recognized relationship on the diplomatic level, but it did not entail a formal treaty relationship or any legal obligations (*OCD*, s.v. "Amicitia").

In the Late Classical period (ca. 400–323 BC), a new trend in diplomatic interaction developed: the appeal to kinship as a reason for obtaining financial assistance and other privileges. Kinship diplomacy had become the way weaker parties interacted with stronger parties, "a way of converting the spiritual and emotional debt owed to founders and benefactors into material advantage."[29] The greatest popularity of this fashion occurred in the Hellenistic period. Christopher Jones refers to a veritable "traffic in kinships": it was used in diplomatic dealings of varied status and penetrated the sphere of literature and art.[30] Later, with the rise of Rome, there was a new tendency in kinship diplomacy towards an emphasis on ceremony. Now communities pointed to their mythical past and family trees for prestige instead of asking for military or financial assistance. Venerable traditions and origins grounded the status of one city vis à vis others and were used to impress the Roman rulers.[31] It is in this context that we find the first example of Aphrodite as a symbol in the dialogue between Greece and Rome.

A series of dedications presented by Greek public officials to Aphrodite includes sixty-two inscribed votive gifts honoring the goddess as their protectress.[32] It shows that this aspect of Aphrodite worship existed on a Panhellenic level. The earliest examples stem from the fourth century BC,[33] but the majority are datable to the third and second centuries BC, thus to the Hellenistic period. The objects dedicated were mainly statues. They seem to have been placed not only primarily in sanctuaries of the goddess, but also in locations connected to the professional role of the dedicators, in the agora ('marketplace') of a city, and close to the official buildings of the magistrates in question. The inscriptions rarely reveal the specific circumstances of the act of devotion. Most were however clearly made after the magistrates' time in office and thus seem to express gratitude in regard to duties successfully performed.[34]

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[26] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 176–178.

[27] Michael Grant, *Roman Myths* (Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 71.

[28] Grant, *Roman Myths*, p. 72.

[29] Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy*, p. 35.

[30] Ibid., p. 52.

[31] Ibid., pp. 63–64.

[32] On such dedications presented by magistrates to Aphrodite or dedications that invoke the goddess by epithets alluding to a magistracy (e.g., *Stratagis*, *Nauarchis*, *Synarchis*), see Wallensten, "ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΙ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ".

[33] For example, *IG* 12 5.552; Friedrich Hiller von Gaertringen, *Inschriften von Priene* (Berlin, 1906), p. 183; Jean Pouilloux, *Recherches sur l'histoire et les cultes de Thasos* 1: *De la fondation de la cité à 196 avant J.-C.* Études thasiennes 3 (Paris, 1954), p. 235, no. 25; *SEG* 17 (1960), 422.

Precise dates are not always possible, but it is clear that the majority (at least fifty-one) of the preserved magistrates' dedications to Aphrodite were made while Greece felt Rome's presence as an influential power or a de facto ruler. In this context, it was in the interest of the Greek cities to keep Rome well disposed. The friendship of Rome offered many possible benefits, whereas enmity could lead to literal destruction. From a diplomatic perspective, the epigraphic sources give ample proof of this new power balance. Innumerable Greek honorary decrees salute Roman benefactors, and individuals and states proclaim themselves φιλορώμαιος ('a friend of the Romans') or φιλοσέβαστος ('a friend of the Emperor'). Against this background, an official's decision to dedicate to Aphrodite in a public space took on a new meaning, as the historical context brought Aphrodite to the forefront as a protectress of officials. Now dedications to this particular goddess were simultaneously presented to the ancestral mother of one's masters.[35] In the context of Roman power, to celebrate this particular deity would thus have been doubly suitable. It paid homage to the Roman people and concurrently placed the dedicators under the protection of the goddess who stood firmly on the side of the mightiest realm in the Mediterranean—a forceful champion if ever there was one. The chronology is appropriate. The Rome-Troy and Aphrodite-Aineias links were in active use during the floruit of this series of dedications (third to second centuries BC). The geographical pattern of the identified dedications is likewise indicative. Certain areas of the Greek world held a better hand of Trojan traditions to use in contact with the Romans: not only the Troad, but also Sicily and the northwestern parts of the Greek mainland. Eight of the sixty-two dedications in the studied dossier come from Sicily, while five come from northwestern Greece: Ambrakia, Apollonia, Kassope, and Thyrreion. In these four cities, there were traditions of either Trojan descent (Ambrakia and Apollonia) or other involvement in the legends surrounding the war.[36]

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[34] This can be seen not only through the use of an aorist participle expressing the magistracy, but also through accompanying honorific decrees or even mention of *exiteteria*, offerings presented at the end of a term in office.

The magistrates often used only their titles to present their office in the dedications, however, so these votives might very well have been erected during the period in office as a prayer for protection during this time. The existence of magistrates' dedications expressed through a present participle might also indicate a practice of dedicating while still in office.

[35] It should be emphasized that this probably was neither the only, nor indeed the strongest, reason for magistrates to choose Aphrodite specifically as their protectress, even if the goddess' new symbolic value would have strengthened her candidature. The goddess' ability to unite (opposing forces) is often presented as the fundamental reason for her protection of officials; see, for example, Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, pp. 469–470. Gabriella Pironti has recently stressed Aphrodite's martial aspects as a reason for magistrates' devotion to the goddess: Pironti, *Entre ciel et guerre*. For a discussion of several factors contributing to Aphrodite's development into a favorite deity of magistrates in the Hellenistic period, such as the goddess' general popularity in the period in question, and a rapprochement between public and private, see Wallensten, "ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΙ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ".

In Pyrrhos' capital, Ambrakia, the Trojan legends would have been pervasive. Pyrrhos probably played on his ties to Achilles, as I noted earlier, but this was not the only connection to earlier heroic times. Epiros and the Molossian family were linked to Achilles and to the Trojan royal house already in Euripides' *Andromache*, a play probably staged for the first time in 426 BC.[37] Dionysios of Halikarnassos reports an Ambrakian cult of Aineias and a temple of the goddess Aphrodite *Aineias*.[38] In Apollonia, traditions of Trojan descent probably existed already in the fifth century BC. Pierre Cabanes has suggested that a stone fragment, inscribed with the name of Aineias and datable to the fourth century BC, was part of a monument representing Greek and Trojan heroes, a replica of a votive set up in Olympia by the citizens of Apollonia before the mid-fifth century BC. Through these monuments, Apollonia publicly manifested sympathies for her Trojan ancestors.[39]

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[36] Wallensten, "ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΙ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ", pp. 144–150; for a recent discovery, published after the finishing of this study, see now Haake, Kolonas, and Scharff, "Fragment einer metrischen Strategenweihung," 113–121.

[37] In Euripides' *Andromache*, Molossos is the son of Neoptolemos / Pyrrhos and Andromache. Virgil's *Aeneid* gives a somewhat different version. Having taken refuge in northwestern Greece, Andromache marries Helenos (the son of Priam). Pausanias refers to a complicated combination of the two stories: after the death of Neoptolemos / Pyrrhos, Andromache married Helenos. Helenos also guided Neoptolemos to the Epiros region and became himself king of a local people, Paus. 1.11.1.

[38] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom*, 1.50.4.

[39] Paus. 5.22.2–4; Pierre Cabanes, "Apollonie et Epidamne-Dyrrachion: épigraphie et histoire," in *L'Illyrie méridionale et l'Épire dans l'Antiquité 2. Actes du 2e colloque international de Clermont-Ferrand, 25–27 octobre 1990*, ed. Pierre Cabanes (Paris, 1993), pp. 146–148.

Other cities sought to establish connections to the Romans not through descent, but through friendships Aineias had made on his way to Italy. Akarnania and Delos belong to this category, and both have yielded magistrates' dedications to Aphrodite (one and nine, respectively).[40] As previously mentioned, Akarnania's nonparticipation in the Trojan War was considered a valid reason for Rome to assist her. Dionysios of Halikarnassos gives a different account for the good relations between Rome and Akarnania. He tells us that a group of Akarnanians, under the leadership of a man from Thyrreion (appropriately called Patron), escorted Aineias from western Greece to Italy.[41] Aphrodite *Aineias* received worship in the Akarnanian cities of Leukas and Aktion, as well as in Ambrakia.[42] The details of what her cult entailed are unknown, but this epithet surely refers to the relationship between Aphrodite and her son, and thereby between Aphrodite and the Romans.[43]

Aphrodite was the principal goddess in Kassope, where she also had Trojan connections. A series of Kassopean coins featuring the head of Aphrodite appeared shortly after 229 BC.[44] The odd inclusion of a squatting hound under the chin of the deity may indicate a connection with cults of the goddess in Sicily, perhaps Eryx, where hounds were sacred to Aphrodite.[45] N.G.L. Hammond argues that a wish to show the Sicilian goddess' links to Aineias lies behind the Kassopeans' choice to strike coins representing Aphrodite and the hound. Like other Greek cities, they "were anxious to stress their connection to Aineias as founder of Rome, when their turn came for diplomatic and commercial relations with the Roman republic."[46]

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[40] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, pp. 185–195. Memories of Aineias' passage also linked Rome and Delos. I do not discuss these traditions in full in the present study. Dionysios of Halikarnassos tells that there were many traces of a Trojan stay in Delos (Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom*, 1.50.1). He also states that Lavinia, Aineias' wife and eponym of Lavinium, was the daughter of the Delian king (Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.*, 1.59.3). In Virgil's version, Aineias stops at Delos on his way to Rome to consult the oracle. For a recent discovery of a second dedication to Aphrodite *Stratagis* in Akarnania, see Haake, Kolonas, and Scharff, "Fragment einer metrischen Strategenweihung," pp. 113–121.

[41] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 192.

[42] Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.50.4. This goddess was also celebrated in Sicily, on the summit of Elymos: Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.53.1.

[43] Eugen Oberhummer, *Akarnanien, Ambrakia; Amphilokia, Leukas im Altertum* (Munich, 1887), p. 234, believes this Aphrodite *Aineias* to be a marine deity. See also Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, 2.638–642.

[44] N.G.L. Hammond, *Epirus: The Geography, the Ancient Remains, the History and the Topography of Epirus and Adjacent Areas* (Oxford, 1967), p. 646. It is noteworthy that Kerkyra, who had close contacts with Kassope, also put the head of Aphrodite on their coins after 229 BC, when she came under Roman protectorate: Pierre Cabanes, *L'Épire de la mort de Pyrrhos à la conquête romaine (272–167 av. J.C.)*. Centre de recherches d'histoire ancienne 19 (Paris, 1976), p. 386; Hammond, *Epirus*, p. 645.

[45] Hammond, *Epirus*, p. 647.

The myth of Rome's Trojan origins not only was used in actual diplomatic dealings, but also figured generally in political and cultural exchange.[47] The coins associating Kassope with Eryx are a good example: they were not part of straightforward negotiations, but should be seen as part of deliberate cultural interaction. The same level of connotations can be credited to dedications to Aphrodite from Greek magistrates, when presented in a framework of Roman political dominance. Aphrodite was an excellent choice of patroness for a magistrate to select for his college. Under Roman supremacy, other reasons for choosing to honor Aphrodite—such as hopes for marine protection, a good marriage, or a peaceful term in office—were added to those of a simultaneous tribute to one's masters and the security of the protection of an obviously powerful goddess.[48] The Trojan interplay between Greece and Rome creates a conceptual arena in which we should interpret votives stemming from areas where the Trojan heritage was part of the local tradition and was a tool for diplomacy. As Erskine says, "repeatedly Troy can be seen to perform a mediating role, not in a general sense, but specifically between the Romans and those Greeks who themselves could look to some form of Trojan past."[49] It makes sense that the play on an Ilian past was most common during the third and second centuries BC. Rome was establishing herself as the major power in the Mediterranean, and the Greeks, in response, began to incorporate Rome into their conception of their world and history.[50] One part of this process can be read in Aphrodite's popularity as a magistrates' deity. The public display of many of the offerings in question, placed in the agora and in administrative buildings, should be stressed: a visiting Roman official would have missed neither the sight, nor the compliment.

One Greek response to the idea of Aphrodite as ancestress of the Romans was thus a new accent in the worship of the goddess as a protectress of magistrates. Worshippers' understanding of a familiar old deity was updated to suit the dedicators' new needs. This was one way of reacting to changed circumstances: certain characteristics of a god were highlighted or downplayed, or, as in the case of Aphrodite, a new meaning was brought with a new context. Another way of responding to the new situation was for the dedicators to actively modify the gods and the pantheon. Aphrodite, for example, received new designations, such as specifically Roman epithets, and cults of "New Gods" were introduced. Along with a broadened understanding of a god, new and more specified deities appear.

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[46] Hammond, *Epirus*, p. 647. The other peoples to whom Hammond refers were from Cyprus and Asia Minor (he does not specify which).

[47] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 38.

[48] For other reasons behind magistrates' worship of Aphrodite, see above, n. 35.

[49] Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome*, p. 11.

[50] Gruen, *Studies*, p. 1, has called this period a "pivotal and formative period of interaction between Hellenic culture and Roman values." See also ibid., p. 15.

New Gods are a certain combination of mortals and gods that become visible in the epigraphic sources in the Late Hellenistic and Early Imperial periods (first century BC–first century AD). Members of the royal or imperial houses are honored as New Gods, for example, Nero as New Apollo, Sabina as New Hera, or Caracalla as New Helios. These composite characters are not clear-cut associations between a god and a human, since the emperor or empress in question is in fact called by the name of the god; neither are they assimilations created by the fusion of a mortal and an immortal, due to the insertion of the term Νέος/Νέα ('new') between the human and divine names. This designation rather implies a replacing, if not surpassing, of the 'old' deity.[51]

Members of the Julio-Claudian family were frequently celebrated as New Deities. Thirty-four inscriptions referring to their house specify twenty-one 'new' goddesses and thirteen 'new' gods.[52] These inscriptions come from all over Greece and include evidence of worship, such as dedications and priesthoods. Athens dominates the group, but several examples also stem from the region of Mysia and Troas and the Aegean islands.[53]

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[51] I do not agree with scholars who do not distinguish between designations such as Livia Aphrodite and Aphrodite Livia—for example, A.D. Nock, "Notes on ruler-cult, I–IV," *JHS* 48 (1928), 21–43; Ulrike Hahn, *Die Frauen des Römischen Kaiserhauses und ihre Ehrungen im griechischen Osten anhand epigraphischer und numismatischer Zeugnisse von Livia bis Sabina*. Saarbruckner Studein zur Archäologie und alten Geschichte 8 (Saarbrücken, 1994).

[52] Aphrodite: Julia: *IG* 12^2 482. Livia: Terence B. Mitford, "Notes on Some Published Inscriptions from Roman Cyprus," *BSA* 42 (1947), p. 227, no. 11; Jean-Baptiste Cayla, "Livie, Aphrodite et une famille de prêtres du culte impérial à Paphos," in *L'Hellénisme d'époque romaine. Nouveaux documents, nouvelles approches (1er s.a. C.–IIIe s. p. C.). Actes du colloque international à la mémoire de Louis Robert, Paris, 7–8 juillet 2000*, ed. Simone Follet et al. (Paris, 2004), pp. 234–236. Drusilla: *PHI Troas and Mysia* 27; *SEG* 34 (1984), 180; *IG* 4^2 1.600. Amedeo Maiuri, *Nuova silloge epigrafica di Rodi e Cos* (Florence, 1925), no. 467; *IG* 2^2 172b; *IG* 12 suppl. 49; Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Meander*, no. 156; Theodore Wiegand, *Sechster vorläufiger Bericht über die von den könliglichen Museen in Miletos und Didyma unternommen Ausgrabungen* (Berlin, 1908), p. 27, no. 1. Apollo: Nero: *SEG* 32 (1982), 252 (two inscriptions); W. Peek, "Attische Inschriften," *AM* 67 (1942), 45, no. 60; *IG* 2^2 3278 (Paul Graindor, "Inscriptions attiques d'époque romaine," *BCH* 51 [1927], p. 260, no. 23); *IG* 2^2 3262 + *IG* 2^2 4725 (Graindor, "Inscriptions attiques d'époque romaine," p. 255, no. 19; Dina Peppas-Delmousou, "A Statue Base for Augustus,

Aphrodite is the most popular of the deities amalgamated with the Julio-Claudian New Gods: Augustus' daughter Julia is thus honored once, his wife Livia twice, and Drusilla, favorite sister of the Emperor Gaius (better known as Caligula), no fewer than seven times.[54] The designation *Nea* with Aphrodite is only given to the first generation of imperial women, while other New Goddesses are invented throughout the empire. The title is clearly a direct and active response, put forth by subjects in the Greek part of the empire to the self-image of divine ancestry publicized by Augustus and the following Julio-Claudian generations. Moreover, a New Ares also makes a limited appearance. Like Aphrodite,

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IG II^2 3262 + *IG* II^2 4725," *American Journal of Philology* 100 [1979], 125–132; *SEG* 29 [1979], 167). Ares: Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Mylasa* 1–2, no. 135; *SEG* 21 (1965), 702 (*IG* 2^2 3250); *IG* 2^2 3257. Charis: Drusilla: *SEG* 1 (1923), 392. Demeter: Livia: Peter Frisch, *Die Inschriften von Lampsakos*. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 6 (Bonn, 1978), no. 11; *SEG* 30 (1980), 1244; Helios: Gaius (Caligula): *PHI Troas and Mysia* 27; *PHI Ionia*, Chios 20; Nero; *IGRom*. 3 345; *IG* 7 2713 (Maurice Holleaux, "Discours de Néron prononcé à Corinthe pour render aux grecs la liberté," *BCH* 12 [1888], p. 514). Hera: Livia: Max Frankel, *Die Inschriften von Pergamon* 2. Altertümer von Pergamon 8, 1–2 (Berlin, 1890–1895), no. 385 (Julia Sebaste); Reinhold Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Assos*. Inschriften griechischer Städte Kleinasien 4 (Bonn, 1976), no. 19; Messalina (Statilia Messalina, third wife of the Emperor Nero, or Valeria Messalina, third wife of the Emperor Claudius): Warwick Wroth, *A Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum: Pontus, Paphlagonia and Bithynia* (Bologna, 1963), p. 154. Isis: Livia: *IGRom*. 1 5.1150; William Hepburn Buckler and William Moir Calder, *Monuments and Documents from Phrygia and Caria*. Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua 6 (Manchester, 1939), p. 250; *Boulaia*: Agrippina (wife of Claudius): *IG* 12^2 211. *Nikephoros*: Julia (Drusilla?): Frankel, *Die Inschriften von Pergamon* 2, pp. 497–498. *Pythia*: Drusilla: *SEG* 1 (1923), 157; Jean Pouilloux, *Fouilles de Delphes* 3, 4 (Paris, 1976), no. 257.

[53] Examples have also been found in Caria (three), Egypt (one), central and north-western Greece (two), Bithynia (one), Ionia (one), Peloponnese (one), Phrygia (one), and Pisidia (one). It should be noted that the represented islands are all located close to the coast of Asia Minor: Lesbos, Samos, Chios, and Kos.

[54] Julia: *IG* 12^2 482. Livia: Mitford, "Notes on Some Published Inscriptions from Roman Cyprus," p. 227, no. 11; Cayla, "Livie, Aphrodite et une famille," pp. 234–236. Drusilla: *PHI Troas and Mysia* 1439; *SEG* 34 (1984), 180; *IG* 4^2 1.600. Amedeo Maiuri proposed restoring the honorand as Nea Hera, but this is less probable in view of the comparanda; Maiuri, *Nuova silloge epigrafica di Rodi e Cos*, no. 467; *IG* 12^2 172b; Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Meander*, no. 156; Wiegand, *Sechster vorläufiger Bericht*, p. 27, no. 1. Ares: Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Mylasa* 1–2, no. 135; *SEG* 21 (1965), 702 (*IG* 2^2 3250); *IG* 2^2 3257.

Ares was one of the Roman ancestral deities, and like New Aphrodite, New Ares is not to be found among New Gods of later periods (with the possible exception of Geta as New Ares on a coin).[55] Ares, a war god personifying the destructive aggression of this realm, was not popular in the Greek pantheon. He instilled fright rather than respect in mortals and was marginalized in everyday religious life, honored with few cults and few temples.[56] The Roman Mars was, on the contrary, one of the empire's most prominent gods. Like Aphrodite, he counted as an ancestor of the Romans, as the father of Romulus, founder of Rome: his cult thus held a central position in Roman religion.[57] Mars' character also differed from that of his Greek counterpart; he may even initially have been a deity of agriculture rather than war.[58] He grew in importance in the last years of the first century BC, furthermore, when Augustus gave him the new title *Ultor* ('Avenger') in the aftermath of his defeat of Caesar's murderers. Augustus dedicated a temple to this god in the heart of Rome in 2 BC. Its iconography and architectural setting throughout stressed the origins of Rome and the Romans and thus, ultimately, of the dedicator Augustus. Mars and Venus figured conspicuously in the center of the temple pediment, and statues of Aeneas and Romulus adorned porticoes flanking the temple: all firmly positioning Augustus at the heart of both the Julian and the more general Roman divine pedigree.[59] When Julio-Claudian princes—Tiberius' son Drusus, and Agrippa and Julia's son Gaius—take on the title New Ares, we should probably understand it in the Roman context.[60] This New Ares is more or less a translation of

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[55] Julius Caesar is called offspring of Ares and Aphrodite in an inscription from Ephesos: Christopher Börker and Reinhold Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* 2. Inschriften griechisher Städte aus Kleinasien 12 (Bonn, 1979), no. 251. Geta: Barclay V. Head, *Historia Numorum: A Manual of Greek Numismatics* (Oxford, 1922), p. 892.

[56] Zlatozara Goceva, "Le culte d'Arès et la religion de Thrace," *Orpheus* 11–12 (2001–2002), p. 79; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 170; Parker, *Polytheism and Society*, p. 398; Fritz Graf points out that the temple of Ares erected in the Athenian Agora during the Augustan era should be understood as a temple to the Roman Mars, since it would have been unimaginable to worship Greek Ares in the marketplace, in *OCD*^{3}, s.v. "Ares." Walter Burkert even specifies this temple as that of Mars *Ultor*: Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 170.

[57] Romulus was the offspring of Mars and the mortal woman Rhea Silvia: Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 1.76–79; Livy, *Epit.* 1.3–9; Strabo 5.2.4.

[58] Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, pp. 15–16, n. 41; Valerie M. Warrior, *Roman Religion* (Cambridge, Eng., 2006), pp. 11, 20; Goceva, "Le culte d'Arès," p. 80. For a summary of the discussion of Mars as a deity of vegetation, see *OCD*, s.v. "Mars."

[59] Werner Eck, *The Age of Augustus* (Malden, 2004), p. 109.

[60] Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Mylasa*, no. 135; *IG* 2^2 3250; *SEG* 21 (1965), 702; *IG* 2^2 3257.

New Mars, and, as was the case with the designation New Aphrodite, the appearance of the title New Ares is surely connected to the celebration of the divine parentage of the Roman people.[61]

The denomination New God was already used in the Hellenistic era, but became more common in the Imperial period (from 27 BC onwards), as far as we can judge from the remaining epigraphic material. An important difference between the two periods should be noted. In Imperial times, the initiative behind the use of the title moves from the honorand himself, to the person or persons offering homage. Ptolemaios XII (ca. 116 / 108–51 BC) and Mark Antony (ca. 83–30 BC) were each known as New Dionysos, because both rulers had expressed a wish to be thus glorified. In contrast, later New God titles seem to have been chosen by Greek subjects themselves in deciding how to celebrate their Roman masters.

The initiatives behind these New God inscriptions were taken into the public sphere. Of thirteen Julio-Claudian inscriptions mentioning New Aphrodite and New Ares, seven give information about the originators of the title. Public bodies or magistrates are responsible for six of these, whereas a priestess was responsible for the seventh.[62] With these inscriptions (most of them dedications), a Greek city could thus show visiting Romans that they were well aware of their prominent family connections, and simultaneously spread to their fellow Greeks the message of imperial genealogy. As in the case of magistrates' dedications, noted above, these documents enter into the dialogue between Greece and Rome. Aphrodite is common ground in the Greek response to the self-image that the Romans projected.

The phenomenon of new epithets for Aphrodite also mirrors the interplay between Greece and Rome during the early years of the empire.

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[61] We should of course note the Athenian find context; Ares was among the deities protecting the Athenian male youth, the Ephebes. Did the Athenians find the title New Ares all the more fitting in regard to the youth of Drusus and Gaius?

[62] Public: Maiuri, *Nuova silloge*, no. 467; *IGRom.* 4 145 (two new gods); Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia*, no. 156; *SEG* 30 (1980), 1632; Frankel, *Die Inschriften von Pergamon* 2, no. 385; Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Assos*, no. 19 (this inscription possibly shows both public and private initiative, the demos ['the people'], and the Roman merchants); Wroth, *A Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum: Pontus, Paphlagonia and Bithynia*, p. 154; Frisch, *Die Inschriften von Lampsakos*, no. 11; *PHI Caria, Aphrodisias*, 306; *IGRom.* 1 5; *IGRom.* 4 1721; Frankel, *Inschriften von Pergamon* 2, nos. 497–498; Pouilloux, *Fouilles de Delphes* 3. 4, no. 257; *SEG* 29 (1979) 167; *SEG* 21 (1965), 702; *IG* 2^2 3257; *IG* 12^2 211. Priests: *IG* 4^2 1.600; *IG* 7 2713 (=*BCH* 12 [1888], p. 514). Private: *IGRom.* 3 345; Merkelbach, *Inschriften von Assos*, no. 19 (see above).

Aphrodite Γενέτειρα—a direct translation of the Venus *Genetrix* (Venus 'Mother', 'Progenitor') closely connected to Julius Caesar and Augustus through the Julian family's belief that Aphrodite or Venus was the mother of their clan—makes her appearance in at least two Greek cities, Eresos in Lesbos and Aphrodisias in Caria.[63] The dedication from Eresos is bilingual, to a certain Julia Aphrodite *Geneteira* (Γενέτειρα): the Julia in question can be identified as Augustus' daughter.[64] The epithet *Geneteira* has also been identified at Aphrodisias,[65] as has a statue base for the image of Aphrodite *Prometor* (Προμήτωρ) of the *Theoi Sebastoi*, a denomination that Joyce Reynolds has interpreted as Aphrodisias' own version of Aphrodite *Geneteira*.[66] This inscription dates to the early first century AD, as does a document from Ilion that mentions Livilla Aphrodite Ancheisias. An Augustan (27 BC–AD 14) dedication from Assos in the Troad presented to Aphrodite Julia has been said to identify Livia, here called Aphrodite Julia, with Aphrodite.[67] When gods and men are thus combined, it is, however, usually more common for the name of the mortal to precede the name of the god, almost as if turning the name of the god into an epithet for the imperial honorand. In this case, therefore, Julia is quite possibly the epithet of the goddess. Aphrodite is held forth and thus used as a mediating tool when dedicatory language enters the discourse between Greece and Rome.[68]

The Greek world reacted to the political developments of the Hellenistic era and let their goddess Aphrodite acquire an additional significance as mother of the Roman race and its mighty protectress. In the Late Hellenistic and Early Imperial periods, Greeks took action in a more overt manner, pinpointing a goddess connected to Rome through fusions with the ladies of the Imperial house and epithets alluding to the ruling powers. Aphrodite became common currency, a means of communication between Greece and Rome. In our contemporary context, the technical term for such a goddess should surely be an interactive deity.

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[63] *IG* 12^2 537; Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*, no. 54.

[64] Julia is referred to as Caesar's daughter, not Augustus'. This means that the inscription dates not much later than 27 BC; James Rives, "Venus Genetrix outside Rome," *Phoenix* 48 (1994), 305.

[65] Joyce M. Reynolds, "The Origins and Beginning of Imperial Cult at Aphrodisias," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 206 (1980), 73–74. The inscription is most probably datable to the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37).

[66] *SEG* 36 (1986), 988; Joyce Reynolds, "Further Information on Imperial Cult at Aphrodisias," *Studii clasice. Societateade studii clasice din Republica Socialista România* 24 (1986), 111. See also Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*, no. 55a.

[67] Hermann Dessau, *Inscriptiones latinae selectae* (Berlin, 1892–1916), no. 8787; Merkelbach, *Inschriften von Assos*, no. 16.

[68] It is possible that dedicators using this latter epithet were private individuals. Unfortunately, the material is as of yet too scarce for definitive interpretation.

PART FOUR

THE RECEPTION OF THE GODDESS

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

AUGUSTAN APHRODITES: THE ALLURE OF GREEK ART IN ROMAN VISUAL CULTURE

Rachel Kousser

Hellenized images of Aphrodite first began to permeate Roman visual culture in the Augustan era (27 BC–AD 14). From the elaborate state-sponsored monuments of the new regime to wall paintings in private homes, the goddess of love featured prominently in works of art whose idealized naturalism was inspired by the achievements of Classical Greece. These images, widely popular in Augustan Rome, marked a distinct break with earlier practice. They replaced the sober and imposing Venus of the Republic—divine ancestress of Rome, and victory-bringing goddess of Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar—with a more elegant, Greek-style deity. In doing so they offered a particularly vivid example of a broader cultural phenomenon: Augustan classicism.

In recent years, scholars have highlighted the moral and ethical connotations of classicism in the early empire. Drawing especially on elite literary texts, art historians such as Paul Zanker and Tonio Hölscher have characterized classicism as an elevated style appropriate for the gods, and for the new princeps.[1] For them classicism is understood not as an aesthetic choice, but rather as a semiotic one, used to convey meaning within the "visual language" of Early Imperial art. This extremely influential approach has greatly enhanced our understanding of Augustan art. Its emphasis on the semiotic character of Roman artistic styles has proven very effective in opening up new avenues of inquiry in the field. Its exclusive stress on what Zanker has termed "the moral claim of classical forms," however, seems to me problematic, as it leaves out a central aspect of what made classicism so powerful in Augustan visual culture: its sensuous pleasure, and its visual allure.[2]

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[1] Tonio Hölscher, *The Language of Images in Roman Art*, trans. Anthony Snodgrass and Annemarie Künzl-Snodgrass (Cambridge, Eng., 2004); originally published in German, as *Römische Bildsprache als semantisches System* (Heidelberg, 1987); Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor, 1988), pp. 239–263.

In contrast, this article focuses precisely on the visual attraction of classicism, as exemplified by the Hellenized images of Aphrodite so prevalent in Early Imperial art. I begin by examining the role of these images in major public monuments of the Augustan regime, concentrating on the forum of the new princeps. In the Forum Augustum, these images—generally adaptations of established Greek sculptural types—served to give an authoritative, impressive appearance to the divine ancestress of the Iulii.[3] They also functioned as propaganda, to signal the attractive qualities of the new imperial system through the metaphor of a beautiful woman's body, thus contributing very effectively to the "organization of opinion," to borrow a phrase from Ronald Syme.[4]

Public monuments do not tell the whole story. This article therefore also includes complementary works of art from the private sphere, with a focus on the wall paintings of the Villa Farnesina. In this elite riverside villa in Trastevere, we see very clearly the self-conscious evocation of earlier forms, in rooms whose decorative scheme is patterned on that of a *pinacotheca* ('picture gallery').[5] Here Aphrodite appears with her companions Peitho and Eros, in a fictive panel painting whose style recalls that of Athenian white-ground pottery of the fifth century BC.[6] As elsewhere in domestic decoration, the image functions programmatically, but in a manner very different from that seen in public monuments such as the Forum Augustum. Aphrodite at her toilet, in the Villa Farnesina, speaks of the refined pleasures of the senses; in this way, she helps create the pleasurable ambiance central to the Roman conception of *otium* ('pleasurable leisure').

This research is relevant in our understanding of both Aphrodite and Augustan art. Much of our evidence for the visual representation of the Greek goddess comes from the Roman period. The famous fourth-century BC Aphrodite of Knidos by Praxiteles, for example, is known almost exclusively from Roman coins, statues, and literary descriptions.[7] Our understanding of the goddess' cult is also fundamentally indebted to Roman authors, such as Strabo and Pausanias, who mention her frequently.[8] It is important to recognize, however, the existence and character of this Roman "filter," if we are to accurately and critically use these images and authors to reconstruct Greek monuments and cult practices. My examination here of Aphrodites from the Augustan period thus constitutes a contribution to the broader goal of reconstructing the Roman reception of Aphrodite.[9]

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[2] Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, p. 245.

[3] Tonio Hölscher, *Monumenti Statali e Pubblico*, trans. Lucia Scatozza Höricht and Franz Höricht (Rome, 1994), pp. 141–142; Paul Zanker, *Forum Augustum. Das Bildprogram* (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 18–19; Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 195–196.

[4] Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 459–475.

[5] Bettina Bergmann, "Greek Masterpieces and Roman Recreative Fictions," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 97 (1995), pp. 102–106; Irene Bragantini and Mariette de Vos, *Le Decorazioni della Villa Romana della Farnesina*, 2, 1, *Museo Nazionale—Romano: Le Pitture* (Rome, 1982), pp. 128–129; Christopher Hallett, "Emulation *Versus* Replication: Redefining Roman Copying," *JRA* 18, no. 2 (2005), pp. 433–434.

[6] See below, n. 55.

In addition to its significance for the study of Aphrodite, this research has implications for our analysis of Augustan art. As scholars have long acknowledged, a major innovation of the period is its adoption and transformation of Greek styles and visual formats to metropolitan public monuments. The prevailing explanation for this phenomenon, promoted by Zanker, stresses the moral claim of Classical forms and the control of the visual sphere by the princeps.[10] Aphrodite images, from both the public and private spheres, are useful in that they suggest different explanations for this use of Classical forms in Augustan art. What they demonstrate above all is the allure, and not simply the authority, of Greek art for the Romans. This understanding may also explain the wide-ranging scope and extraordinary longevity of the Roman embrace of Classical forms, which extended well beyond the state-sponsored monuments of the Augustan metropolis to private and provincial works of art, even in later periods.

The Background: Aphrodite in the Republic

Before examining the deployment of Aphrodite images in the Augustan period, it is useful to consider first some related material from the Republic. Augustus was by no means the first Roman leader to emphasize his ties to Venus, or indeed to Aphrodite.[11] The Late Republican general Sulla, for example, took as his Latin cognomen *Felix* ('Lucky'); it was translated into Greek, ʼΕπαφϱόδιτος ('Beloved of Aphrodite'), suggesting he enjoyed the favor of Aphrodite.[12] After his victory at Chaironeia, Sulla dedicated his trophy to Aphrodite, Ares, and Nike, proclaiming them the patron deities of his military success.[13] He also sent gifts to the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias, claiming to have seen her in a dream, fighting on his side in battle.[14]

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[7] Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 50–52, s.v. "Aphrodite," nos. 391–408; Seaman, "Retrieving the Original."

[8] These authors are central to, for example, authors such as Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*.

[9] Kousser, *Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture*, pp. 111–135; ibid., "Mythological Portraiture in Antonine Rome: The Performance of Myth," *AJA* 111 (2007), 673–691.

[10] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 245–263.

In his relationship to Aphrodite, as in many other respects, Sulla offered a useful model for other aspiring generals of the Late Republic. His one-time protégé, Pompey the Great, likewise portrayed himself as under the protection of the goddess, and he dedicated a temple within his impressive theatre complex to Venus *Victrix*, that is, Venus 'Victorious'.[15] In response, Pompey's rival Caesar insisted upon his own, albeit closer, relationship to this deity. His forum in Rome, initially vowed to Venus *Victrix*, was eventually dedicated to Venus *Genetrix*—Venus the 'Ancestress'—since he was a member of the Julian gens and therefore claimed descent from her via Aeneas and Iulus.[16] Caesar also commissioned a Greek sculptor, Arkesilaos, to create the statue of Venus to stand in the Julian Forum; he included her extensively on his coins; he also received honors as the son of Aphrodite and Ares from the Greek cities of Asia Minor.[17]

Thus in the highly competitive world of the Late Republic, Roman leaders frequently claimed Venus as a patron deity and used artistic and architectural commissions to commemorate this relationship for a broad public audience. Their emphasis was on the goddess' role in war, as an ally bringing them victory and therefore power. They highlighted her connection to Ares / Mars, with whom she shared both a concern for warfare and a role as divine ancestor of the Romans. While this emphatic association with war might seem, at first glance, out of character for the goddess of love, it is clearly attested in the written and visual sources for the Republican period, and it is best understood as a traditional Roman role for Venus, due to her connection with the military god Mars. This goes back at least to the period of the Punic Wars, when the two gods appeared on a couch together at a major religious ceremony in 217 BC.[18]—and to her status as ancestress of the (very warlike) war-loving Romans.

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[11] For an overview, see Robert Schilling, *La Religion Romaine de Vénus depuis les Origines jusqu'au Temps d'Auguste*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1982).

[12] App., *B Civ*. 1.97.

[13] Plut., *Vit. Sull*. 19.5.

[14] App., *B Civ*. 1.97.

[15] Plin., *HN* 8.20; on the theatre, see Ann Kuttner, "Culture and History at Pompey's Museum," *TAPA* 129 (1999), 343–373, with previous bibliography.

[16] *Victrix*: App., *B Civ*. 2.76.319; *Genetrix*: Plin., *HN* 35.156; on the descent of the Iulii from Venus, see Stefan Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford, 1971), p. 17.

[17] On the Arkesilaos statue, see Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, p. 86; Plin., *HN* 35.156; on the coins, ibid., pp. 99–102; the inscription is in W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig, 1915–1924), p. 760.

Furthermore, it should be stressed that the Venus of the Republic was by no means equivalent to the Greek Aphrodite.[19] While the example of Sulla illustrates how the Romans were aware of Greek Aphrodite cults, and could indeed make use of them for their own purposes, Roman images of Venus, and patterns of worship, were nonetheless distinct from those of her Hellenic predecessor. This may be demonstrated, for example, by Caesar's coins, which show a draped Venus holding a spear, with Victoria alighting on her hand (figure 15.1).[20] The effect is very different from that of contemporary Late Hellenistic Aphrodites, with their sensuous representation of the goddess' nude flesh, and attributes such as an apple or mirror.[21] It was only in the Augustan period that the representation, and to some extent the divine personality, of Venus started to approximate that of her Greek counterpart. This development is well illustrated by the public monuments of the new regime, to which I now turn.

Aphrodite in the Forum Augustum

Although Augustus was not the first Roman leader to emphasize his ties to Venus and Aphrodite, his approach differed from that of his predecessors: in the consistency and number of monuments, in taking inspiration from Classical prototypes rather than the Hellenistic or Republican

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[18] Livy 22.10.9.

[19] Schilling, *La Religion Romaine*, pp. 378–379.

[20] Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, pp. 487–495, no. 480.3–5, 8–19.

[21] On Late Hellenistic Aphrodites, see Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 60–61 and 64–65, s.v. "Aphrodite," nos. 494–496 and 533–545; Havelock, *The Aphrodite of Knidos*; Rachel Kousser, "Creating the Past: The Vénus De Milo and the Hellenistic Reception of Classical Greece," *AJA* 109 (2005), 227–250; Wiltrud Neumer-Pfau, *Studien zur Ikonographie und gesellschaftlichen Function Hellenistischer Aphrodite-Statuen* (Bonn, 1982); Hans-Hoyer von Prittwitz und Gaffron, *Der Wandel der Aphrodite. Archäologische Studien zu weiblichen halbbekleideten Statuetten des späten Hellenismus* (Bonn, 1988).

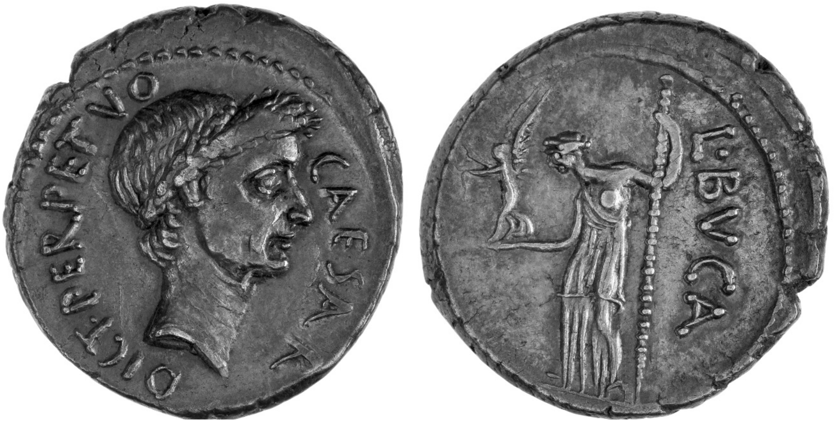

Figure 15.1. Denarius of Julius Caesar showing Venus Genetrix on the reverse, 44 BC. Photo courtesy American Numismatic Society.

ones previously favored, and in his emphasis on her embodiment of the benefits of peace rather than her patronage of war. The Augustan Forum offers the most extensive and complex example of the princeps' programmatic use of Venus and classicism to promote his new regime. Vowed at Philippi in 42 BC, it was completed some forty years later, making it one of the longest, as well as largest, building projects of the period.[22] It is also one of the monuments most closely tied to Augustus; the forum was initiated, designed, and paid for by the ruler.[23] It should thus offer us a clearer idea of how Augustus himself wished to present his ties to Venus and the Classical past, than do the other monuments set up in his honor by different patrons.

The complex featured at its centerpiece a large Corinthian temple to Mars *Ultor*, set within an elaborate two-storey portico.[24] Its plan thus emulated that of the Forum of Julius Caesar, immediately contiguous to it; at the same time, as a comparison of the two demonstrates, the Forum of Augustus was considerably larger and more complicated than its predecessor.[25] Its sculpted decoration was similarly complex and ambitious, including deliberate citations of earlier Greek works—most famously, the caryatids modeled on those of the Erechtheum—as well as portrait statues of illustrious Romans, from Aeneas and Romulus to Pompey and Caesar.[26] This historicizing iconography suited its role as a showplace of the new regime: it functioned as a meeting place for the Senate, a tribunal where the emperor sat in judgment, the depository of the Parthian standards, the setting for the manumission of slaves, and, finally, the culminating point of festivals.[27]

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[22] Suet., *Aug*. 29.2; Cass. Dio 55.10.1.

[23] Augustus, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 12.

[24] For the architectural ensemble of the forum, see the useful summary in Valentin Kockel, in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 2, ed. Eva Margarete Steinby (Rome, 1995), pp. 289–295, s.v. "Forum Augustum."

[25] See Chiara Morselli, in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 2, ed. Eva Margarete Steinby (Rome, 1995), pp. 299–306, s.v. "Forum Iulium."

Within this large, high-profile structure, Venus and Venusian imagery were very prominent. Officially, the design centered around Mars, and specifically the temple vowed to him in his capacity as *Ultor* ('Avenger'), in the lead-up to Augustus' battle with the assassins of Caesar at Philippi.[28] Venus and her descendents were also extensively honored in the forum. We know the goddess appeared on the pediment of the temple, which is replicated on a relief from the so-called Ara Pietatis Augustae of the Claudian period, AD 41–54 (figure 15.2).[29] Imposing and heavily draped, Venus has a scepter and diadem to enhance her regal appearance. At the same time, her association with love and beauty is signaled by a tiny figure of Cupid, who perches on her left shoulder. Typological analysis is tenuous with so small a figure, but the rendering of Venus here recalls mid-fifth-century BC Greek prototypes. The triangular mantle, in particular, resembles those on statues such as the Velletri Athena.[30]

Other images of Venus from the Forum can be more securely and closely associated with Classical precedents. Whereas the cult statue group from the temple, for example, featured a novel sculpted image of a bearded, armed Mars, a deity rarely depicted in Classical Greece, the Venus in this group followed prototypes of the late fifth century BC (figure 15.3).[31] The bare left shoulder, seductive hip-shot pose, and seemingly transparent drapery of the chiton all find parallels in the art of the Peloponnesian War era; useful comparisons might be the so-called

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[26] For the forum's sculpture, the most useful treatment is that of Eugenio La Rocca, "Il Programma Figurativo del Foro di Augusto," in *I Luoghi del Consenso Imperiale. Il Foro di Augusto, Il Foro di Traiano* 1, ed. Lucrezia Ungaro, Eugenio La Rocca, and Roberto Meneghini (Rome, 1995), pp. 74–87.

[27] Ibid., pp. 74–75.

[28] Suet., *Aug.* 29.2.

[29] Joachim Ganzert and Valentin Kockel, "Augustusforum und Mars-Ultor-Tempel," in *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik* (Mainz, 1988), pp. 171–172.

[30] Pierre Demargne, in *LIMC* 2 (1984), p. 980, s.v. "Athena," no. 247.

[31] Zanker, *Forum Augustum*, pp. 18–19.

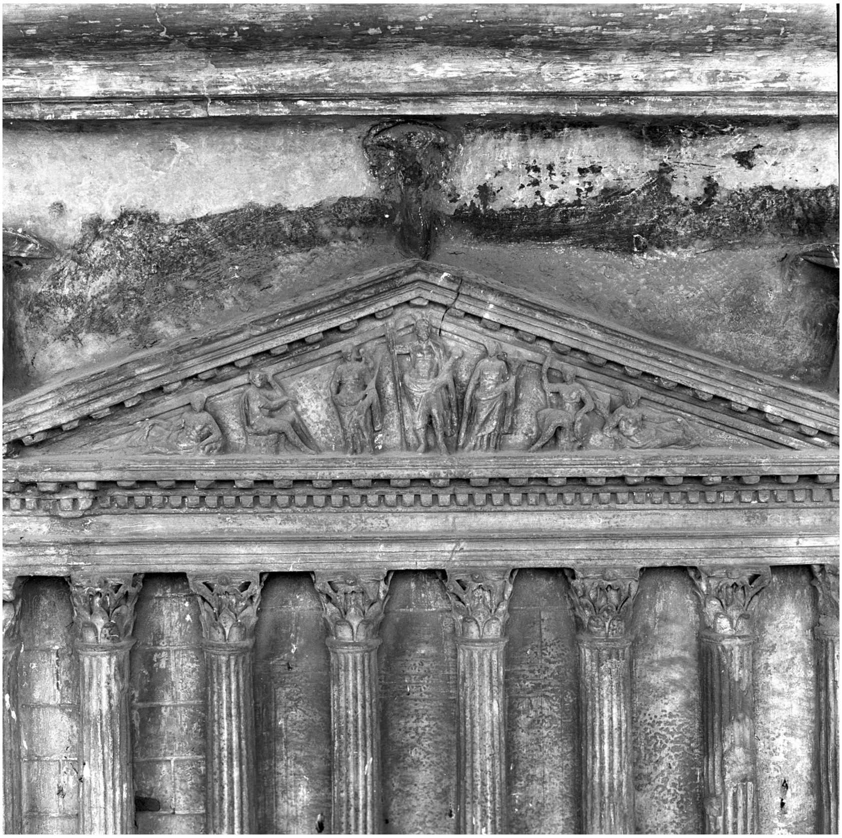

Figure 15.2. Julio-Claudian relief showing pedimental statues from the Temple of Mars *Ultor*. Villa Medici, Rome, ca. AD 41–54. Photo courtesy Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik, Cologne.

Hera Borghese type, or the Aphrodite in the Gardens from Daphni.[32] There is no secure evidence that the Roman cult statue replicates precisely a specific Classical original. It may instead have functioned as an eclectic fusion of several earlier sculptural types, in order to create a new work of art appropriate to its display context, the princeps' forum.

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[32] On the Hera Borghese, see Angelos Delivorrias, "Der Statuarische Typus der sogenannten Hera Borghese," in *Polykletforschungen*, ed. Herbert Beck and Peter Bol (Berlin, 1993); on the Daphni Aphrodite, "Die Kultstatue der Aphrodite von Daphni," *Antike Plastik* 8 (1968), 19–31.

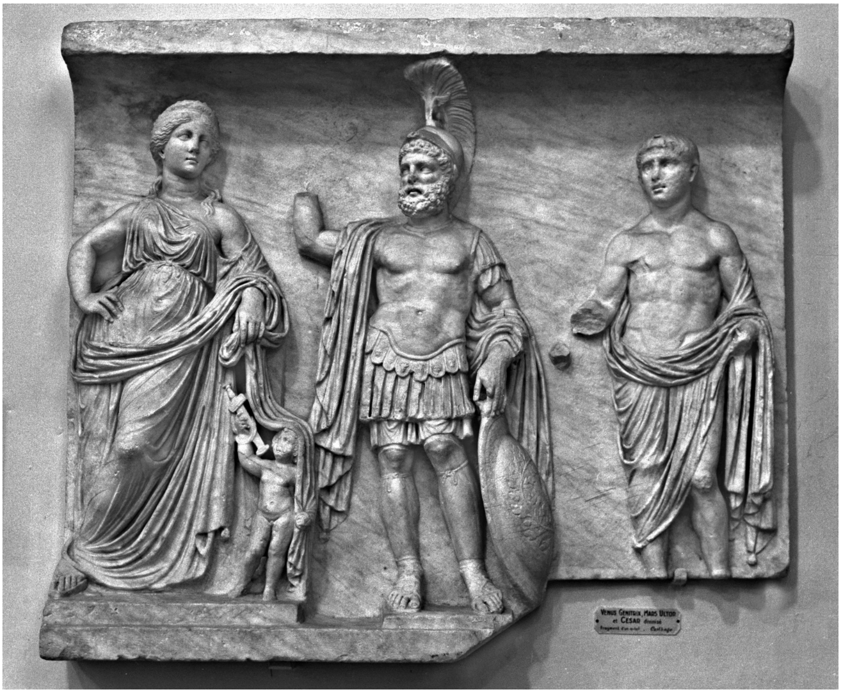

Figure 15.3. Julio-Claudian relief showing cult statues from the Temple of Mars *Ultor*, ca. AD 41–54. Archaeological Museum, Carthage. Photo courtesy Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik, Cologne.

The cult statue of Venus also departed from any Classical precedents (all conceived as independent figures) in that it formed part of a larger group, which included Cupid and Mars as well.[33] Although Mars and Venus are physically isolated from each other and do not touch, they are nonetheless visually connected by the figure of Amor, who holds out to his mother the war god's sword. They also turn and look towards each other in a manner that encourages an allegorical interpretation of the group as a scene of Mars disarmed through his love of Venus.[34] Such allegorical scenes were familiar from the late fourth century BC onwards, as for instance with Aetion's famous painting of Alexander the Great overcome with love of his eastern bride, Roxana.[35] In the forum's cult statue group, the sensuous visual appearance of Venus helps to explain—even to motivate—the allegorical narrative. At the same time, her pacific, seductive appeal serves to counterbalance the aggressive force of Mars, for an audience all too familiar with the violence and human cost of war, and appreciative of the benefits of peace.

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[33] Hans Günter Martin, "Die Tempelkultbilder," in *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik* (Mainz, 1988), pp. 256–265; Zanker, *Forum Augustum*, pp. 18–19; Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 196–197.

[34] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 196–197.

The manner in which the Venusian images of the Augustan Forum work—both as cultural allusions to the Classical past, and as allegorical representations of the attractive qualities of the new imperial system—is best illustrated by a third sculpture, a group of Mars and Venus set up within the temple (figure 15.4).[36] The original statue group is only fragmentarily preserved, but can be reconstructed through comparison with a series of later versions of the type. These sculptures, highly consistent in their scale and iconography, also provide useful evidence for the reception of Augustan state imagery in the private sphere.[37] Indeed, the history of the Mars-Venus group type in the Augustan period and thereafter offers a very effective demonstration of how allusion and allegory could be misunderstood, particularly at a time when the visual language of imperial art was still in the process of formation.

One should first consider the visual format of the original Augustan sculpture. Venus, half-nude, with a mantle draped about her hips, turns towards and embraces Mars, her left arm encircling his neck and her right hand on his chest. The war god is here a youthful nude figure, very different from the cuirassed cult statue; he likewise turns to his consort, gazing at her and receiving her embrace. Both figures are based on well-established Classical statue types, the late fifth-century Ares Borghese type for Mars, the mid-fourth-century Aphrodite of Capua type for Venus.[38] The group thus constitutes another of those eclectic fusions of earlier precedents, as posited above for the cult statue.[39] It imbues the

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[35] Lucian, *Her. sive Aetion* 4–7; Andrew Stewart, *Faces of Power* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 182–190.

[36] Hans Peter L'Orange, "Le Statue di Marte e Venere nel Tempio di Marte Ultore sul Foro di Augusto," *Symbolae Osloenses* 11 (1932), 94–99; Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 197–198.

[37] Kousser, "Mythological Portraiture."

[38] Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 66; Naples, Museo Nazionale, inv. 6017.

[39] On the Classical precedents for the sculptural group, and Augustan eclecticism, see Kousser, *Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture*, pp. 47–50; Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 197–198.

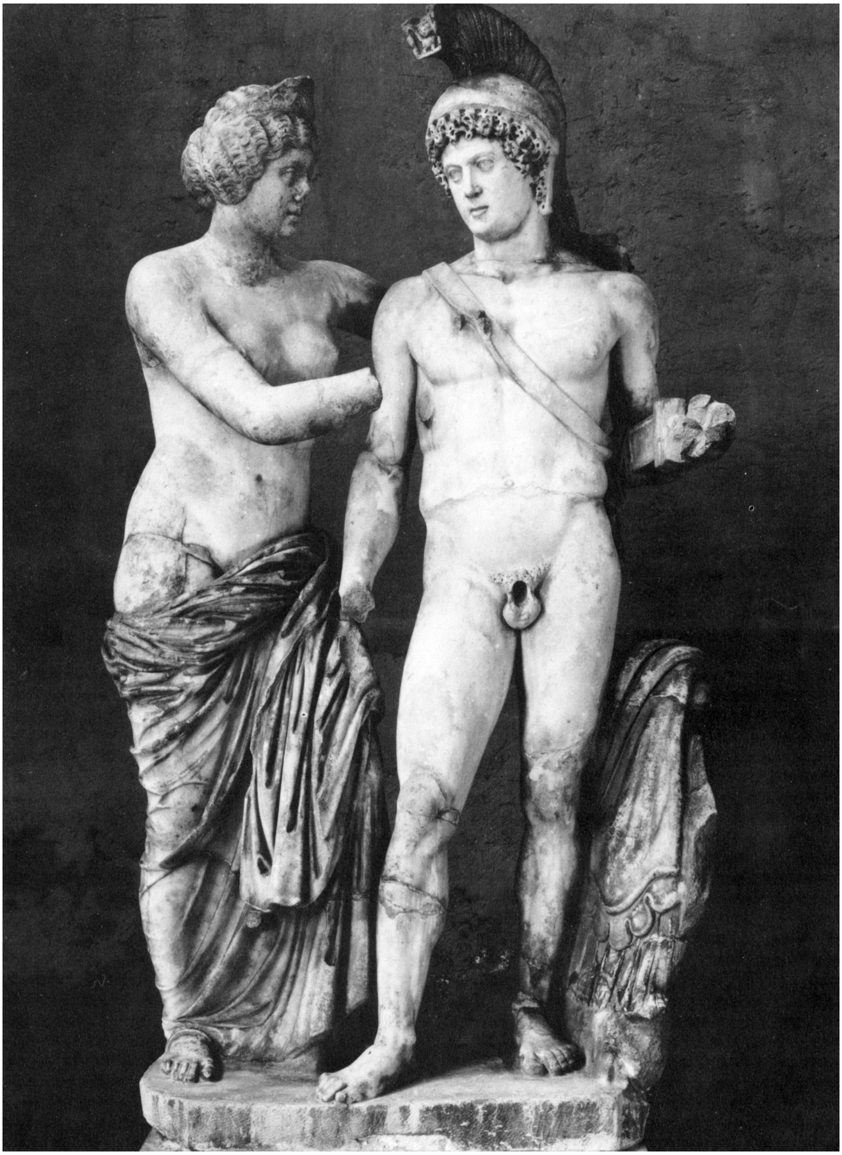

Figure 15.4. Sculptural group of Mars and Venus with portrait heads, Ostia, Late Antonine (ca. AD 180). Rome, Museo delle Terme 108522. Photo after G. Moretti, 1920 "Ostia," *Notizie degli Scavi*, 17, pl. 11.

protagonists—Mars, ancestor of the Roman people by connection with Romulus, and Venus, ancestress of the gens Iulii through Aeneas—with the authority and majesty of Greek art.

The sensuous and erotic appearance of the sculpture is undeniable. The Mars-Venus group is a sophisticated classicizing work of art, but it is also an appeal to the senses, a visual essay on the delights of seeing and touching. The gods themselves both gaze and caress, encouraging the viewer to imagine doing likewise. For the mythologically informed viewer, the group's narrative background—the love affair of Ares and Aphrodite, celebrated from Homer's *Odyssey* onwards—would heighten the gods' sensuous appeal.[40]

The story of Greek mythology's most famous adulterers was widely popular in contemporary private art, as in Augustan literature—for example, works by Propertius and Ovid.[41] At least some viewers made the connection between the statue group and the myth, to judge from an intriguing passage from Ovid's *Tristia*. In it, the poet imagines a woman visiting the great landmarks of Rome—the Forum Augustum, Circus Maximus, and so on—and interpreting them in a distinctly inappropriate manner:

> *venerit in magni templum, tua munera, Martis,*
> *stat Venus Ultori iuncta, vir ante fores.*
>
> Should she come into that temple of great Mars, your own gift,
> Venus stands joined to the Avenger, her husband before the doors.[42]

This is not to suggest that such intimations of adultery would have been perceived by all viewers; nor is it likely that they were intended by the patron or artist. Instead, the seductive visual appearance and Classical form of the sculptures might have been misinterpreted by viewers such as Ovid, who were familiar with the myth of Ares and Aphrodite as represented in Greek literature and in contemporary private art. Instead of reading the statue as an attractive allegorical image of war disarmed by the ancestress of the princeps (as perhaps Augustus intended) they might have read the group in a more literal fashion, as a depiction of erotic love. The afterlife of this image, which appeared very infrequently in later public art, but had an extensive career in the private sphere (on gems, *objets d'art*, and sarcophagi), suggests this interpretation.[43]

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[40] Hom., *Od.* 8.266–366.

[41] *Prop.* 2.31.33–34; Ov., *Am.* 1.9.39–40; ibid., *Ars am.* 2.561–592.

[42] Ov., *Tr.* 2.295–296, trans. author.

[43] Kousser, "Mythological Portraiture."

In Augustan public spaces like the princeps' Forum, Greek-style Aphrodite images evoked the attractive qualities of the new regime. Thus they were an important component of Augustus' public self-representation. These images were liable to misinterpretation precisely because of their sensuous and attractive appearance, especially at a time when the visual language of the principate was new and unfamiliar to viewers. The seductive Aphrodite images of the private sphere, which had a very different range of functions and meanings, were more familiar to Augustan spectators. These private images thus tended to contaminate, as it were, the interpretation of Augustan public monuments and therefore deserve our scrutiny.

Aphrodite in Augustan Private Art: The Pleasures of the Senses

In the wealthy homes of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, Aphrodite had long been a familiar presence. On Delos and Kos, for example, scores of Aphrodite statuettes were produced for the purposes of domestic decoration; there they might have been seen by Romans as well as Greeks, since both islands had a strong Italian trading presence from the second century BC onwards.[44] So, too, the Aphrodites found in the Mahdia and Antikythera shipwrecks—reduced in scale, and modeled on famous types such as the Aphrodite of Knidos—likewise testify to the popularity of such images as imports to the Roman market in the first century BC.[45] While the statuettes of the love goddess from Pompeii and Herculaneum are more difficult to date closely, it seems likely that some, at least, were made during the pre-Augustan period.[46]

Prior to the Imperial period (starting in 27 BC), few painted Aphrodites are preserved in the archaeological record. This is not surprising, given that most Republican wall painting is architectural in character. That they do occur is surprising: we have, for example, Aphrodite and Eros peeking out the door of a wall painting of circa 50 BC from the House of M. Fabius Rufus.[47] They become much more frequent with the advent of mythological imagery in the Augustan era.[48]

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[44] Kousser, *Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture*, pp. 34–36; Vassiliki Machaira, *Les Groupes Statuaires d'Aphrodite et d'Eros* (Athens, 1993); Jean Marcadé, *Au Musée de Délos* (Paris, 1969), pp. 225–245.

[45] For the Antikythera statue, see Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, p. 51, s.v. "Aphrodite," no. 398; Peter Bol, *Die Skulpturen des Schiffsfundes von Antikythera* (Berlin, 1972), pp. 43–47; for Mahdia, (Musée National du Bardo, Tunis, inv. No. C1183), see Hans-Hoyer von Prittwitz und Gaffron, "Die Marmortondi," in *Das Wrack. Der antike Schiffsfund von Mahdia*, ed. Gisela Hellenkemper Salies (Cologne, 1994), pp. 303–305.

[46] Angelika Dierichs, "Auf den Spuren der Venus: Bilder der Liebesgötten aus Pompeji (Teil 1)," *Antike Welt* 29 (1998), p. 294, fig. 23; p. 296, fig. 24.

The frescoes of the Villa Farnesina, generally dated in the last decades of the first century BC, offer an early and particularly high-quality example of the use of Greek-style Aphrodite images in Augustan painting.[49] Their good preservation throughout the decorative ensemble makes them more useful for analysis than the frescoes of many houses at Pompeii, where the mythological panels were cut out and brought to the Naples Museum. The Villa Farnesina paintings thus allow us to see how images of Aphrodite functioned within a larger decorative context, useful for reconstructing more fully their functions and meanings. As comparisons with Pompeian houses show, the Farnesina paintings were not unique, but rather exemplify, in a particularly clear and elegant manner, the significant role played by Aphrodite in the decoration of Roman homes.

An overview of the topographical context and patronage of the Villa Farnesina is warranted. The riverside villa boasted an enviable site, across from the Campus Martius between Trastevere and the Vatican.[50] It has frequently been associated with Agrippa, who had large holdings in the area; the presence in its decorative scheme of a stucco image of Mercury that seems to resemble Augustus has encouraged this interpretation.[51] Such a hypothesis is difficult to prove. Rather than insisting upon a precise identification of the patron, we should instead see the house as exemplary of the elite culture of early principate. The patron's wealth and cultivated tastes are in any case suggested by the paintings: they are of a high quality and refer to a range of mythological and art-historical references. The scale of the villa and its innovative and complex plan also suggest wealth and taste.

The site and plan of the Villa Farnesina, furthermore, indicates its purpose as a suburban pleasure villa. It stood well outside the pomerium, the ritual boundary of the city; it has a wealth of rooms, which are oriented towards the Tiber River, with views across to the scenic Campus Martius.[52] In this respect it is much closer to the new seaside villas around the Bay of Naples than to the old-fashioned townhouses exemplified by, for example, the House of Augustus on the Palatine.[53]

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[47] Ibid., p. 285, fig. 8.

[48] Jürgen Hodske, *Mythologische Bildthemen in den Häusern Pompejis* (Ruhpolding, 2007), pp. 143–154.

[49] The best introduction to the paintings is Bragantini and Vos, *Le Decorazioni della Villa Romana della Farnesina*, with abundant previous bibliography; Maria Rita Sanzi di Mino, ed., *La Villa della Farnesina in Palazzo Massimo alle Terme* (Rome, 1998) is also useful.

[50] Bragantini and Vos, *Le Decorazioni della Villa Romana della Farnesina*, pp. 17–21.

[51] On the issue, see the judicious summary in Bergmann, "Greek Masterpieces and Roman Recreative Fictions," p. 102.

The fictive *pinacothecae*, seen in two of the *cubicula* ('bedrooms'), have "antique" panels, elaborate frames, and fantastic stands that are all illusionistically rendered in fresco.[54] Especially noteworthy are the white-ground panels, which in style and technique recall the achievements of fifth-century Greek art.[55] The ancient literary sources suggest that a similar style was deployed in monumental Greek wall paintings, although we have no major preserved examples dating to the fifth century BC; it is more likely that the Villa Farnesina paintings imitated them rather than vases.[56] As in the Augustan Forum, here we see the use of earlier styles for expressive purposes. The decoration here also assumes a cultivated viewer, one able to recognize and appreciate these references to earlier styles. In contrast to the Forum, the excellent preservation of this context means that we can observe how carefully these images in classicizing style are presented in the Villa Farnesina as different, set off from their surroundings by framing devices.

In their display context, these classicizing Aphrodites of the Villa Farnesina differ from their public counterparts. This is suggested, at any rate, by the appearance of the images, as well as their juxtaposition with other motifs. In *cubiculum* B, where a white-ground painting of Aphrodite, Eros, and Peitho is the central feature of the south wall, the goddess is shown in a very different milieu from that of the Augustan Forum (figure 15.5). Seated on an impressive throne, with an ornate headdress, Aphrodite gazes downward at a beautifully detailed flower

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[52] For the plan and location, see di Mino, ed., *La Villa della Farnesina in Palazzo Massimo alle Terme*, pp. 9–13.

[53] On the House of Augustus, see Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 280–281; for seaside villas, see Stefano De Caro, "The Sculptures of the Villa of Poppaea at Oplontis: A Preliminary Report," in *Ancient Roman Villa Gardens*, ed. Elisabeth MacDougall (Washington, D.C., 1987), pp. 79–133.

[54] Bergmann, "Greek Masterpieces and Roman Recreative Fictions," pp. 102–106; Hallett, "Emulation Versus Replication," pp. 433–434.

[55] On the panels, see especially Bergmann, "Greek Masterpieces and Roman Recreative Fictions," pp. 103–104. The closest preserved parallels are Athenian white-ground vases, particularly lekythoi, on which see John Oakley, *Picturing Death in Classical Athens: The Evidence of the White Lekythoi* (Cambridge, Eng., 2004).

[56] Plin., *HN* 35.31–32; Cic., *Brut.* 18.70.

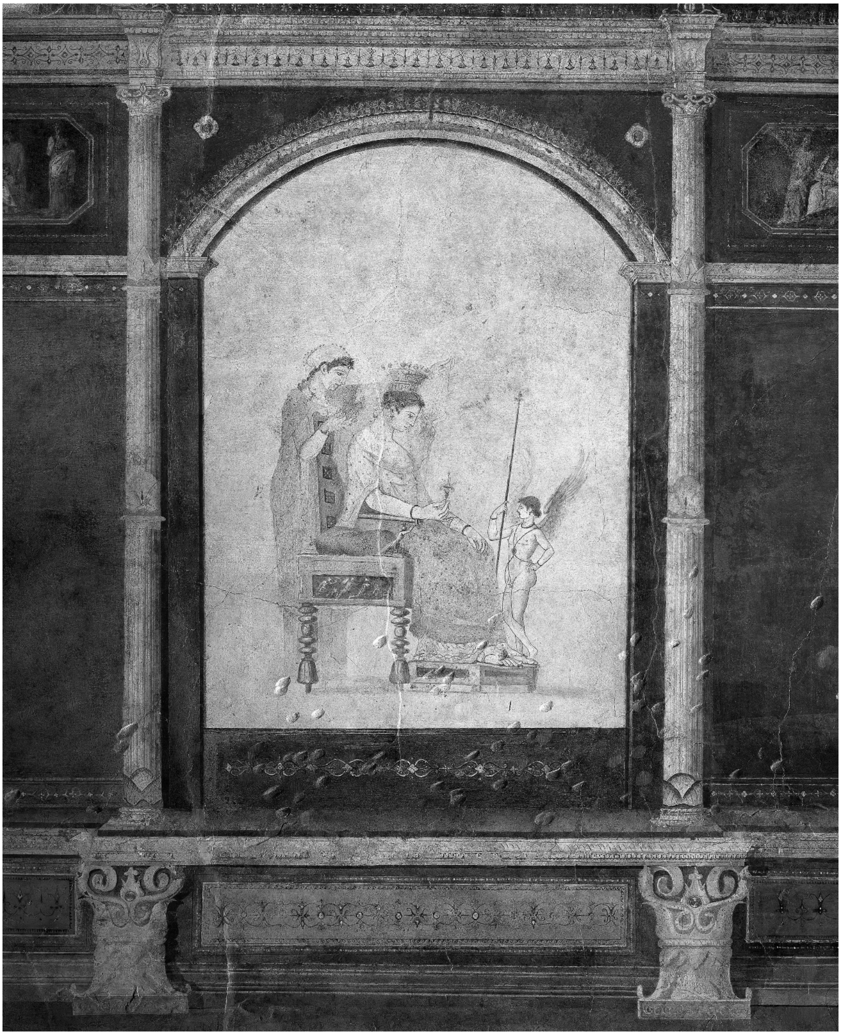

Figure 15.5. Frescoed wall of *cubiculum* B, from the Villa Farnesina, Augustan (ca. 20–10 BC). Detail showing Aphrodite with Peitho and Eros. Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano (Palazzo Massimo alle Terme). Photo courtesy Scala / Art Resource, NY ART343367.

in her right hand. Her son, Eros, is a fully formed but petite winged youth, whose intimate connection to his mother is shown as he stands on her footrest, while their legs touch. Peitho, by contrast, is a full-size young woman, whose costume and gesture, as she leans over the back of the throne, assimilate her to the figure of an attendant or maid. The ambiance of the scene appears more sensuous than erotic. Its mood and iconography resemble scenes of women's life from late fifth-century BC vase paintings, such as red-figure scenes attributed to the Meidias and Eretria Painters.[57] Just as those scenes appear very frequently on vases made for women, so here one might see the decoration as appropriate for a woman's bedroom.[58] Aphrodite is an imposing model for the mistress of the house.[59]

Other paintings from the room reinforce the culturally sophisticated atmosphere of the *cubiculum*, as well as its emphasis on women's lives. On the west wall, several small white-ground panels display scenes of women making music (figure 15.6). As with the Aphrodite panel, the absence of men seems to locate the depictions within the women's quarters. Indeed, this was a favorite subject of late fifth-century BC vase painting; musical soirées were evidently the sort of elegant pastime considered appropriate for the wealthy women of Classical Athens.[60] The central panel of the west wall likewise depicts a characteristically feminine activity; here we see a nymph nursing the baby Dionysos, perhaps a prototype for the motherly activities of the room's inhabitant. The panel constitutes a stylistic departure from those considered above. Not linear but painterly, it finds its best parallels in Late Classical works such as the mourning Demeter figure from the Tomb of Persephone at Vergina.[61] The same style is deployed in the other small narrative panels—which show scenes of erotic play and the theatre—and in the single mythological figures incorporated into the room's decorative scheme, which include Isis as well as Venus.

The ensemble of wall paintings in *cubiculum* B draw on a range of classicizing styles (from the late fifth to fourth centuries BC), juxtaposed so as to highlight, not obscure, stylistic contrast. What unifies the paintings despite these disparate visual choices is, I would argue, their concern with

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[57] Burn, *The Meidias Painter*; Adrienne Lezzi-Hafter, *Der Eretria-Maler. Werke und Weggefährten*. Kerameus 6 (Mainz, 1988).

[58] Rachel Kousser, "The World of Aphrodite in Late Fifth Century Vase Painting," in *Greek Vases: Images, Contexts, and Controversies*, ed. Clemente Marconi. Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition (Leiden, 2004), pp. 97–112. See also the contribution to this volume by Elizabetta Pala, in chapter 10.

[59] Bragantini and Vos, *Le Decorazioni della Villa Romana della Farnesina*, pp. 128–129.

[60] Claude Bérard, "The Order of Women," in *A City of Images: Iconography and Society in Ancient Greece*, ed. Claude Bérard et. al. (Princeton, 1989), p. 91.

[61] J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge, Eng., 1986), pp. 185–209; Manolis Andronikos, *Vergina* 2: *The "Tomb of Persephone"* (Athens, 1994), pls. X–XII.

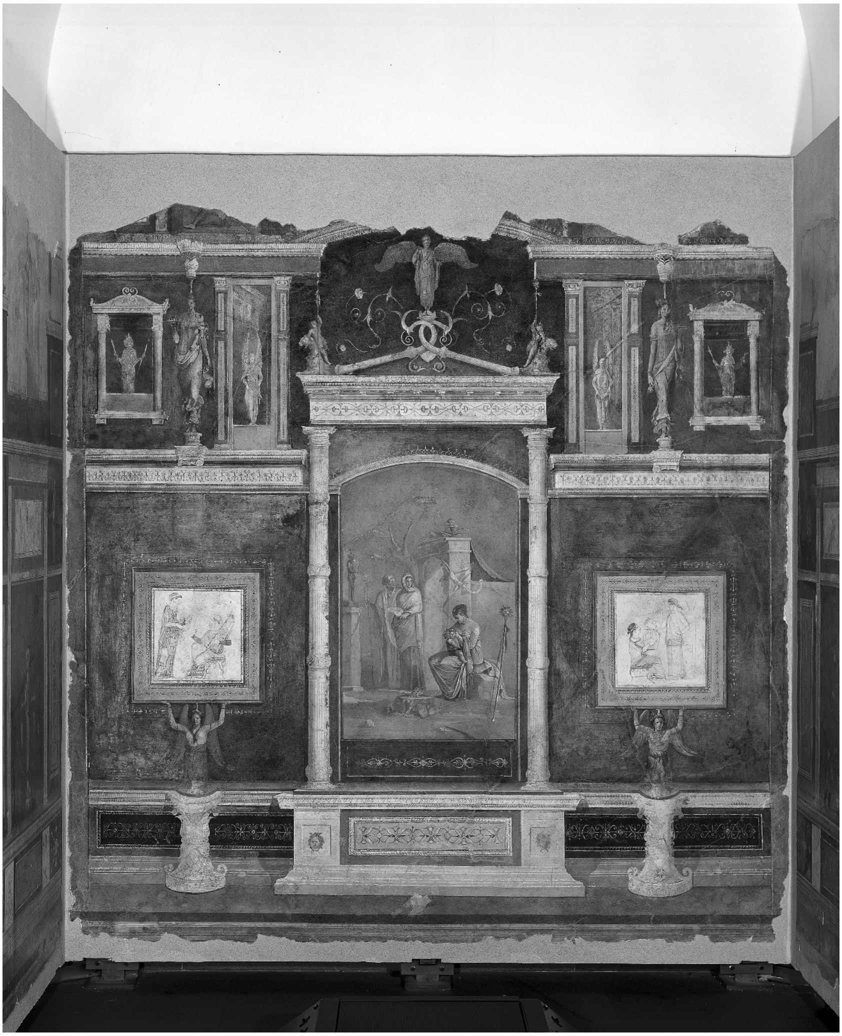

Figure 15.6. Frescoed wall of *cubiculum* B, from the Villa Farnesina, Augustan (ca. 20–10 BC). Detail showing nymph nursing the young Dionysos. Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano (Palazzo Massimo alle Terme). Photo by Luciano Romano, courtesy Scala / Art Resource, NY ART343438.

women's lives, as the goddesses and mythological figures depicted offer idealized paradigms of behavior for the cubiculum's inhabitant. Together, they offer a vision of her experience of sensual pleasure: not only of looking, of course, but also of hearing (the musicians), touching (the baby nursing), and even scent (the flower Aphrodite holds). They move comfortably between what we might call the literal and allegorical levels of interpretation, as Aphrodite, accompanied by love and persuasion, is put next to scenes of amorous couples. Nor is this juxtaposition unique to the Villa Farnesina. It is found frequently in Pompeii, for example at the House of Caecilius Iucundus, where a scene of erotic play featuring mortal protagonists is depicted in close association with a mythological panel of Mars and Venus.[62] Given these associations in art from the private sphere, it is perhaps not surprising that viewers of Augustan public art were inclined to read images like the Mars-Venus group literally, having been conditioned to do so by the walls of their own homes.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have examined classicizing images of Aphrodite in Augustan public art, particularly the Forum Augustum, and contrasted them with the similarly classicizing, but otherwise quite different, Aphrodites of the private sphere, exemplified here by the Villa Farnesina. My emphasis has been on analyzing the visual form, styles, and contexts of the monuments in order to appreciate more fully what they meant to their first viewers, and to understand their sudden widespread popularity in the Augustan era. In Augustan public art, they served metaphorically to represent the attractions of the principate. In the private sphere, however, they functioned more literally, as alluring, idealized paradigms of behavior for the villa's inhabitants.

These conclusions offer an implicit challenge to the current general interpretation of Augustan art. Recent scholars have emphasized the control of the visual sphere by the princeps and have tended to assume that his interpretations of images prevailed.[63] My sense is that the actual situation was more fluid, and the princeps' control less absolute, than this hypothesis suggests. This is particularly the case because the hypothesis focuses on the creation, rather than the reception, of images; there is little discussion in such work of the horizon of expectations that viewers brought to these new images, or of the ways they were conditioned to understand them.[64] The possibility of viewers misunderstanding an image is never entertained, but it seems plausible in the case of the Mars-Venus group. Here I have sought to analyze images from the private sphere as autonomous works of art in their own right; this serves as a useful corrective to previous interpretations, where they seem to function too much as reflections of public monuments and symbols of political allegiance.[65]

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[62] John R. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art, 100 BC–AD 250* (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 158–161.

[63] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 245–263.

My focus on the autonomy of images from the domestic realm, and on the specifically private meanings they might have, is also useful for another reason. It helps to explain why classicizing mythological images had such a hold on Roman viewers, so that they filled their homes, their gardens, and eventually their tombs with Aphrodite, Dionysos, and other Greek deities. For such viewers, classicism offered not simply an impressive, politically acceptable visual style, but a seductive and compelling manner with which to represent their hopes and aspirations. Surrounded by these figures from Classical mythology, they could imagine themselves leading a more attractive and exalted existence, beyond the realm of the everyday. A history of Augustan classicizing art that focuses on the role of the princeps ignores too much; we need to incorporate these private patrons and viewers who, with their paintings, their statuettes, and their gems and jewels, testify so emphatically to both the power and the allure of the Classical.[66]

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[64] On this issue, the critique of Paul Zanker's *The Power of Images* by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Rome's Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989), p. 162, is particularly acute.

[65] E.g., Paul Zanker, "Augustan Political Symbolism in the Private Sphere," in *Image and Mystery in the Roman World*, ed. Janet Huskinson, Mary Beard, and Joyce Reynolds (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 1–13; Zanker, *The Power of Images*, pp. 265–295.

[66] For a more extended argument along these lines, see Kousser, *Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture*, pp. 74–80.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

APHRODITE AND THE SPECTACLE OF THE AMPHITHEATRE IN ROMAN AFRICA

MARGHERITA CARUCCI

Introduction

> *Super has introcessit alia … designans Venerem, qualis fuit Venus, cum fuit virgo, nudo et intecto corpore perfectam formonsitatem professa, nisi quod tenui pallio bombycino inumbrabat spectabilem pubem.*
>
> After these another girl made her entrance … representing Venus as Venus looked when she was a virgin. She displayed a perfect figure, her body naked and uncovered except for a piece of sheer silk with which she veiled her comely charms. (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 10.31)[1]

The image of Aphrodite / Venus has enjoyed great popularity in Western art since ancient times. Thousands of paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings depict this goddess whose image is still present in contemporary iconography, in both art and popular culture.[2] Despite her varied representation, in a range of replicas and derivations, Venus is mostly represented naked or half-draped, which emphasizes her role as goddess of love, beauty, fertility, and sexuality. This nude Venus is a symbol of ideal feminine beauty, but its association with activities apparently unrelated to the sphere of love and sexuality, such as its occurrence on a third-century AD floor mosaic in Thuburbo Maius, Roman Africa, can cause some uncertainty (figure 16.1).[3] The panel of this mosaic, from an

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[1] Apul., *Met.* 10.31, trans. and ed. J. Arthur Hanson (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p. 93.

[2] Göta Johansson, *The Making of a Goddess: Aphrodite in History, Art and Literature* (Lund, 2005).

[3] Margaret A. Alexander et al., *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie* 2, 4: *Thuburbo Majus. Les mosaïques de la region est. Mise à jour du catalogue de Thuburbo Majus et les environs. Les mosaïques de Ain Mziger, Bir Chana, Draa Ben Jouder et Zaghouan* (Tunis, 1994), pp. 90–94, no. 413, pl. XLIV, with previous bibliography; Christine Kondoleon, “Timing Spectacles: Roman Domestic Art and Performance,” in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, ed. Bettina Bergmann and Christine Kondoleon (Washington, D.C., 1999), p. 330, fig. 14.

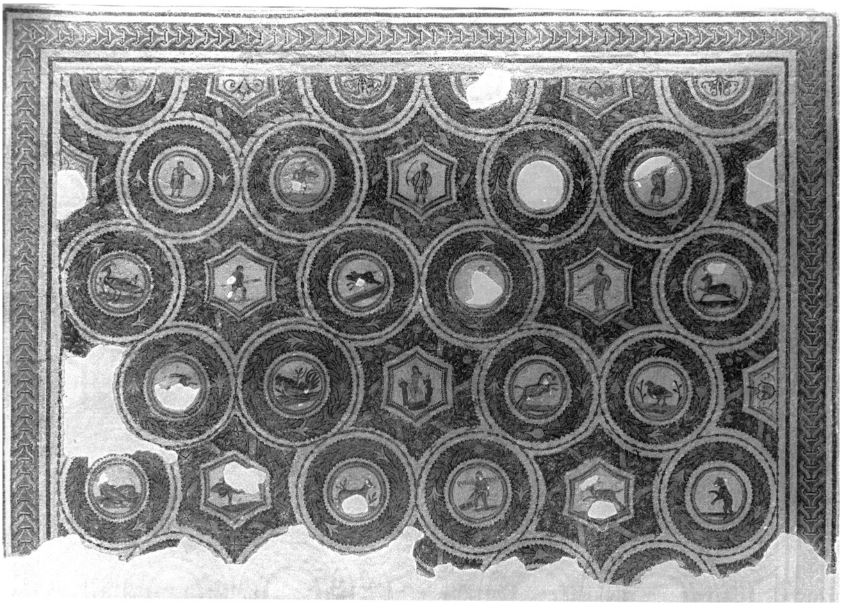

Figure 16.1. Mosaic from Thuburbo Maius, illustrating Venus and the spectacles of the amphitheatre. First half of third century. Musée National du Bardo, Tunis 2790. Photo: Matthew Nicholls.

unidentified building, depicts a field of laurel-framed medallions including wild beasts and male figures, musicians, a gladiator, a *venator* (a hunter who fights with wild beasts in the arena), and an athlete; in a central panel, amid these motifs related to the realm of the amphitheatre, is a naked Venus. The association of this goddess with such spectacles is not attested in other visual forms from Imperial times, although she is not unknown from other mosaics in this region, and the absence of any image may be due to the poor chance of survival. Nevertheless, this representation raises interesting questions about the meaning and perception of Venus in Roman Africa. How can an image of a naked goddess evoking beauty and pleasure be associated with the violent spectacles of the amphitheatre? How might the ancient viewer perceive this mosaic and make sense of Venus' inclusion? The representation of a naked female body among clothed male figures from the amphitheatre seems to suggest that the content of the African mosaic is connected with the concepts of gender, sexuality, and power in Roman society. How is sexual difference communicated in art? How does the iconography of this mosaic construct and maintain gender identities and relationships? In order to answer these questions, the African mosaic will be analyzed in the context of modern feminist theory on visual pleasure. In fact, in connecting ways of looking at the female body with power, feminist approaches to visual art suggest interesting ways of analyzing the interplay between sex and gender and between female body and male power.[4]

A Mosaic from Thuburbo Maius

The mosaic from Thuburbo Maius represents Venus naked except for a necklace as well as pendant and bracelets ornamenting the upper part of her arms and her ankles. She stands on her right leg and lifts her left foot to remove her sandal, while she rests her left arm on a high support decorated with a dolphin; to her right, a pedestal supports a basket laden with roses. These accompaniments identify the figure as Venus: the dolphin refers to her marine birth, the roses and jewelry are symbols of her beauty, evoking an atmosphere of pleasure and sensuality, appropriate to the goddess of love. This image recalls the Hellenistic statue type known as the Aphrodite adjusting her sandal, found widely in marble, bronze, and terracotta, and on coins and gems.[5] In Africa too, this type

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[4] The application of feminist theory to ancient art has recently generated a number of publications. The ones that have provided me with important background for analyzing gender relationships in Roman society are the following: *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power and the Body* (Baltimore, 2002), ed. David Fredrick; *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology* (London, 1997), ed. Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Claire L. Lyons; *I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome*, ed. Diana E.E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson (New Haven, 1996); *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, ed. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin (New York, 1993); Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (New York, 1992); Page DuBois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago, 1988).

[5] Dericksen M. Brinkerhoff, "The Identification of the Venus Who Binds Her Sandal and Related Works of Hellenistic Sculpture," *AJA* 62 (1958), 222; Ernst Künzl, "Venus vor dem Bade, ein Neufund aus der Colonia Ulpia Traiana und Bemerkungen zum Typus der sandalenlösenden Venus," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 170 (1970), 102–162; Henner von Hesberg, "Archäologische Denkmäler zu den römischen Göttergestalten," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2, 17, 2 (1981), 1120–1121; Ernst Künzl, "Aphrodite Untying Her Sandals: A Hellenistic Terracotta and a Roman Alabaster Statuette," *Sefunim* 8 (1994), 35–44; Havelock, *The Venus of Knidos*, pp. 83–85; Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 57–59, s.v. "Aphrodite," nos. 462–481; Schmidt, in *LIMC* 8, pp. 210–211, s.v. "Venus," nos. 182–191.

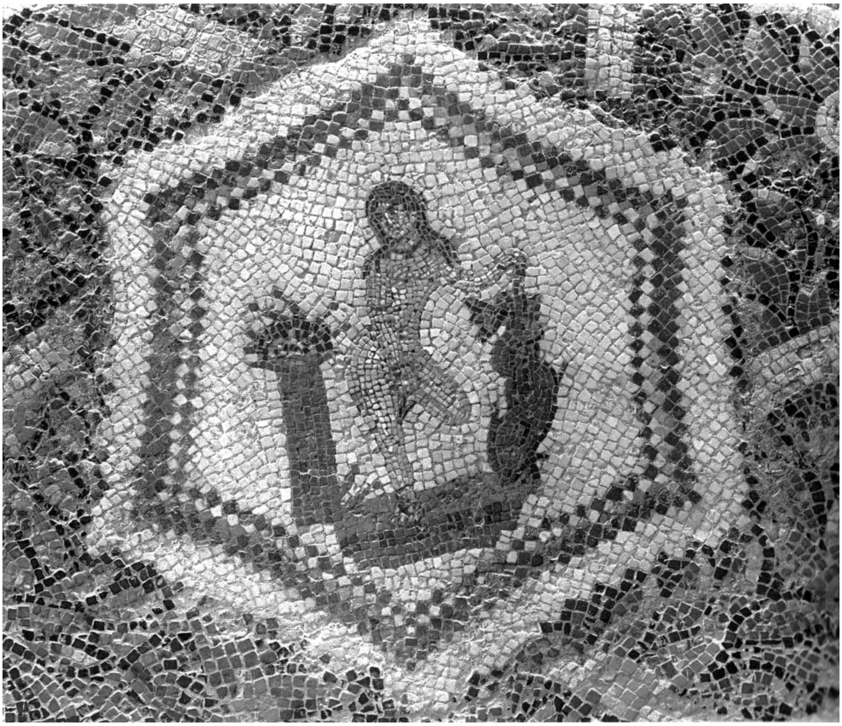

Figure 16.2. Mosaic from Mactar, Maison de Vénus basin, showing Venus, adjusting her sandal, with Erotes. First half of the third century. Museum of Mactar. Photo: author.

was adopted for small statuettes, such as those from Volubilis,[6] Caesarea,[7] and Tripoli.[8] As the find contexts of these statuettes are unknown, it is difficult to ascertain their function, although their small dimensions suggest they may have been used as offerings in the goddess' temple, decorative elements in a domestic context, or apotropaic objects kept by mariners.[9]

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[6] Francois Braemer, *L'art dans l'occident romain* (Paris, 1963), p. 153, no. 728; Christiane Boube-Piccot, *Les bronzes antiques du Maroc* 1. *La statuaire* (Rabat, 1969), p. 219, no. 241; Künzl, "Venus vor den Bade," p. 155, B58.

[7] Georges Doublet, *Musée d'Alger* (Paris, 1890), pl. 14.5; Künzl, "Venus vor den Bade," p. 146, B2.

[8] Franz Winter, *Typenkatalog der figürlichen Terrakotten* 2 (Berlin, 1903), p. 207; Simone Mollard-Besques, *Catalogue raisonné des figurines et reliefs en terre-cuite grecs et romains* 2: *Myrina* (Paris, 1963), p. 20, no. LY 1586; Künzl, "Venus vor den Bade," p. 157, no. S.11.

[9] Rivka Gersht, "Aquatic Figure Types from Caesarea Maritima," *Studies in Art History* 6, B (2001), p. 65.

A similar representation appears on another third-century AD mosaic from an apsidal basin of the Maison de Vénus at Mactar, in modern Tunisia (figure 16.2).[10] Again Venus adjusts her sandal, but in contrast stands on her left leg, wears a robe covering her groin, and holds a branch in her right hand. On either side of the goddess, a winged Eros carries a basket laden with plants. Roses are scattered over the ground. Although there is no iconographic detail suggesting the act of bathing, as with the dolphin on the mosaic from Thuburbo Maius, the location of this mosaic in a basin clearly suggests an association with water.[11] It is difficult to construct a narrative for these representations of Venus, as the action of the goddess adjusting her sandal is quite vague. Is she about to bathe, or has she bathed? What is she doing with her sandal? Is she taking it off, putting it on, or adjusting it? Although answers to these questions would be helpful to the viewer, they would not add to their understanding of the essence of her representation, as Venus clearly indicates an atmosphere of beauty and sensuality.

On the Thuburbo Maius mosaic, Venus is surrounded by a number of figures, evoking the spectacle of the amphitheatre. These figures are accompanied by the standard decorative repertory of birds, a peacock, a gazelle, and a fish. The games of the amphitheatre were a very popular decorative motif in Roman Africa, providing an opportunity for a patron to display his munificence for the arrangement of these events and his participation in this social ritual of Roman life. Rarely is an association of these games with a divinity attested, although on another late third-century AD mosaic from Thuburbo Maius, a pattern of floral compartments containing wild beasts and a gladiator surround a central panel of Diana riding a deer.[12] It is less surprising to find Diana, the patron deity of the hunt, alongside beasts and fighting. This association occurs again on a third-century AD mosaic from Smirat, in Tunisia.[13] Here Diana is represented with Dionysus amongst combatants of named *venatores* and leopards. The presence of these deities as the triumphant tamers of wild beasts implies their patronage. The association of Venus with similar events of the amphitheatre may be an allusion to the feast celebrated in honor of the goddess, where fantastic displays (of beasts) would be given.[14] However, such an interpretation excludes the question of why this figure of Venus was chosen, and what its effect may have been on her viewers. The representation of the naked goddess caught in a moment of private activity contains no detail that suggests the performance of the amphitheatre games during Venus' festival, nor does it imply any relationship of her with the scenes represented in her surroundings. By contrast, a mosaic from the Maison du Char de Vénus at Thuburbo Maius shows, in the central medallion, Venus on a small chariot, drawn by four Erotes with the reins tied across their chests.[15] The chariot perhaps alludes to games. Here the goddess wears a necklace, bracelets, diadem, and a halo on her head. This image recalls the schema adopted for the representation of the victorious charioteer, the goddess herself possessing the gift of giving good luck to racehorses and therefore guaranteeing their victory.[16] This mosaic therefore alludes specifically to the games of the circus. In the first Thuburbo Maius mosaic, however, the iconography of the goddess does not recall any schema adopted for the representation of the games of the amphitheatre. Such an unusual representation of Venus within this bloody context of the arena nevertheless suggests a number of possible interpretations.

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[10] Gilbert Charles Picard et al., *Recherches archéologiques franco-tunisiennes à Mactar* I: *La maison de Vénus* 1: *Statigraphie et etude des pavements* (Rome, 1977), pp. 18–23 (Museum of Mactar).

[11] As Jasper Griffin shows, in Latin poetry the motif of water is often associated with pleasure, beauty (especially naked beauty), and sexuality. See Jasper Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (London, 1985), pp. 88–111.

[12] Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 65; 274, no. 6 (Tunis, Museé du Bardo, inv. 2816).

[13] Dunbabin, *Mosaics of Roman North Africa*, pp. 67–69; 268, no. 1.

One possibility is that the whole scene may recall a mimic performance given during the games, with Apuleius telling us that a show in the arena was preceded by an elaborately staged pantomime representing the judgment of Paris.[17] The African writer's description of Venus as beautiful and naked recalls a number of visual representations of her, perhaps intended to induce a sexual thrill in the reader. On another level, Venus and the players in the arena may personify, respectively, love and fighting, which were often associated in Roman erotic elegy.[18] As any image, this African mosaic is open to a number of levels of interpretation, depending on the strategies of viewing employed by the viewers. The gaze of any viewer is not just the simple act of looking, but also constitutes and is influenced by the values, expectations, and emotions of the viewer. In this sense the act of viewing and the dynamics of gaze may provide a further tool for investigating the Thuburbo Maius mosaic and suggest an alternative reading of the scene.[19]

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[14] Kondoleon, "Timing Spectacles," p. 330.

[15] Margherita Carucci, *The Romano-African Domus: Studies in Space, Decoration, and Function* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 66–67 (Musée du Bardo, inv. 2789).

[16] Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, "The *Victorious Charioteer* on Mosaics and Related Monuments," *AJA* 86 (1982), 69–89, 71–72, n. 55.

[17] Apul., *Met.* 10.31; Picard, *Mactar*, p. 22. See also a discussion of Late Roman mimes in Anthousa Papagiannaki's contribution to this volume, chapter 17.

[18] See, for example, Ov., *Ars am.* 1.35–36; Ov., *Am.* 1.9.

Visual Pleasure and the Dynamics of Gaze

The starting point of my investigation of the gaze, as it relates to this mosaic, is a photograph by Helmut Newton, *Self-Portrait with Wife June and Models* (Paris, 1981), which shows that a multiplicity of perspectives is available to a viewer.[20] At the first level, there are the external viewers who are standing in front of the photo: through the mirror they can see the scene from a number of perspectives. At the second level, there are the internal viewers inside the photo, who are also part of the work of art. They are the photographer and his wife, who direct the gaze of the external viewer onto the model standing in the foreground. The gaze of the former focuses on the naked body of the woman and mingles with that of the external viewer, as both are in a privileged position to look at the model from both sides. In the background behind her, we see the legs of another woman, and through a window looking onto the street, we see a car and its driver, who are therefore both internal viewers and viewed objects within the scene. In this photo, points of view, both external and internal, cross one another and together make sense of the picture. Such interplay between viewed objects and viewers also occurs in the first Thuburbo Maius mosaic showing Venus and the figures from the sphere of the amphitheatre. Although this mosaic does not illustrate a specific situation among characters of a certain story, as does the photo, the relation of the portrayed figures to one another causes similar dynamics of gaze. Here the images, each represented within a separate frame, are not depicted with movement but instead frozen in mid-action, projected into the viewer's space. In their relation to one another, each of the figures recalls another unseen viewer: the patron who commissioned the mosaic, the potential viewer looking at the mosaic scene, and the spectators of the plays watching the performance of gladiators and beasts in the arena. They all act as both the external spectators of the mosaic scene and as the internal, invisible spectators from the perspective of the modern external viewer.

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[19] Allison R. Sharrock, "Looking at Looking: Can You Resist a Reading?" in *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power and the Body*, ed. David Fredrick (Baltimore, 2002), pp. 265–295.

[20] Illustrated in Victor Burgin, "Perverse Space," in *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (Princeton, 1992), fig. 1.

Besides the visual perspectives, the photo by Newton suggests further ways of seeing and reading the African mosaic. As John Berger points out, "we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves."[21] The presence of the photographer inside the space of the model and the domain of the visible makes him a voyeur.[22] In his ability to identify with the view of the photographer, the external onlooker is also a voyeur; in his position outside the illustrated scene and in his action of looking, however, the external viewer also becomes a fetishist. On this point Laura Mulvey's ideas about the gaze are instructive. Although her analysis focuses on modern cinema, she provides a model for the avenues of male escape that can be applied to the scenes from ancient art as well.[23]

The starting point of Mulvey's analysis of the vision of the (male) viewer—one of the most influential pieces of contemporary theory—is her description of the patriarchal society as phallocentric.[24] The phallus is a powerful means of giving order and meaning to the world. Its complementary image is the powerless woman, who lacks a phallus and, without this male organ, thus symbolizes a lack of power and status. She therefore embodies the male fear of castration. Mulvey also asserts that in cinema there are two "looks" or "gazes" that allow the male viewer to avoid castration and to protect his own authority. The first is fetishist scopophilia, where the viewer focuses his attention on the exaggerated female body parts (hair, buttocks, and breasts), therefore splitting up the woman into idealized fragments. Thus the viewer escapes from the danger of confronting the full complexity of the woman and becomes more powerful than the parts he admires on the screen. The second is sadistic voyeurism, which treats sexual difference as a guilty offence. Here the viewer watches the film to see if the woman will be punished or forgiven for her sexual difference.

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[21] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London, 1972), p. 9.

[22] Burgin, "Perverse Space," pp. 218–240.

[23] For the application of Mulvey's theory to Classical studies, see Diana Robin, "Film Theory and Gendered Voice in Seneca," in *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, ed. Rabinowitz and Richlin, pp. 102–121; Charles Segal, "Philomela's Web and the Pleasures of the Text: Reader and Violence in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid," in *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature*, ed. Irene J.F. DeJong and John Patrick Sullivan (Leiden, 1994), pp. 258–280. More specifically for the analysis of Pompeian wall paintings, see David Fredrick, "Beyond the Atrium to Ariadne: Erotic Painting and Visual Pleasure in the Roman House," *Classical Antiquity* 14 (1995), 266–287; Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, "Violent Stages in Two Pompeian Houses: Imperial Taste, Aristocratic Response, and Message of Male Control," in *Naked Truths*, ed. Koloski-Ostrow and Lyons, pp. 243–266.

[24] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975), 6–18.

In the layout of the mosaic panel from Thuburbo Maius, the viewer's attention is immediately drawn to Venus, shown as a passive naked woman, in isolation from the other active, dressed, male figures. The only naked male figure, an athlete holding a palm branch, is a stock figure from the traditional repertory of athletic male youths, who symbolize an idealized humanity defined as male, youthful, and heroically nude. The nudity of the goddess is on display to the male viewer, who enjoys the elements of the female beauty as a fetishist. The viewer can also move the story forward and enjoy with sadistic pleasure the possible violation of the female figure. The turn of Venus' head to the right acknowledges that a viewer has intruded into her private act of bathing and suggests her possible violation. Seeing a god when he or she does not want to be seen is a potentially dangerous experience for the mortal viewer. Eurimanthos and Teiresias were punished with blindness for having seen, respectively, Aphrodite and Athena bathing;[25] Aktaion was torn into pieces by his dogs, because he had seen Artemis naked.[26] The potential danger of the gaze is inherent in the viewer's pleasure when looking at the naked body of the divinity and hence inciting the desire of possessing it. The mortal viewer thus becomes a voyeur whose desirous gaze gives him a sense of power over the spectacle he beholds.[27] However, as the mythological stories show, the desirous gaze does not lead to sexual possession, but to destruction and death. The visual representations of these mythological stories serve as a reminder to the viewers of the transgressive, violent power of the voyeuristic gaze.[28] The Thuburbo Maius mosaic, by contrast, does not contain any warning of the dangers of the desirous gaze. The external viewer of the mosaic would have felt safe from any punishment that seeing a naked Venus might bring, since the goddess turns her head to one side. Eurimanthos, Teiresias, and Aktaion were punished not just because they saw what they should not have seen, but also because they were caught in the act of viewing. The spectators of the Thuburbo Maius mosaic are in a position of visual authority: unlike the invisible internal viewer of the naked Venus, the external viewers can indulge in the contemplation of the divine body and be fueled by the voyeuristic desire to behold the naked goddess, without falling prey to the dangers of viewing itself. One may argue that ancient viewers would have expressed feelings of devotion and worship toward the goddess of beauty rather than act as voyeurs. Nevertheless, in the anthropomorphic pantheon of Greco-Roman society, gods had their own specific functions and attributes, which were drawn upon to humanize their nature, and in this sense Venus represented some aspects of female character and behavior.

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[25] Eurimanthus: Ptolemy Hephaestion, *Nova Historia 1.306. Teiresias*: Callim., *Hymn* 5; Apollod., *Bibl.* 3.6.7; Nonnus, *Dion.* 5.337–353.

[26] Callim., *Hymn* 5.70–84; Nonnus, *Dion.* 5.287–336.

[27] For the analysis of the power of the spectator as a voyeur in the cinema, see John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema: Television: Video* (New York, 1992), pp. 45–61.

[28] The dangers of voyeurism as the main motif of a group of mythological tableaux from Pompeii are analyzed by Verity Platt, "Viewing, Desiring, Believing: Confronting the Divine in a Pompeian House," *Art History* 25 (2002), 87–112.

In the description of their lovers' naked bodies, Latin poets of the Late Republican and Early Imperial times often mention or allude to visual representations of Aphrodite / Venus.[29] In Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, Lucius' encounters with the maid Fotis are described with lascivious detail and eroticism, enhanced by the comparison of the girl with famous images of Venus.[30] It was also customary at this time to commemorate deceased matrons with statues combining the naked body of celebrated statuary types of Venus with portrait heads. In her analysis of these types, Eve D'Ambra shows that Romans worshipped Venus as the mother of the Julian line, and thus a guardian of the genesis of the state. Her naked and eternally youthful body symbolized the productive sexual capacity of women. As the role of any woman was mainly that of wife and mother, female sexuality and fertility were intended as a service for husbands and fathers. Nevertheless, as the number of ancient literary descriptions of female beauty show, the appearance of the female body as naked and youthful generated erotic desire in male viewers before this sexual thrill was subsumed by the implications of a productive sexual capacity.[31]

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[29] See, for example, Ov., *Am.* 2.17.

[30] Apul., *Met.* 2.17.

[31] Eve D'Ambra, "The Calculus of Venus: Nude Portraits of Roman Matrons," in *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, ed. Natalie Boymel Kampen (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), pp. 219–232. The representation of the female upper class of Roman society with the attributes of Venus is analyzed also by Gian Luca Grassigli, "Belle come dee. L'immagine della donna nella *domus* tardoantica," in *L'image antiqué et son interpretation*, ed. Françoise Hélène Massa Pairault (Rome, 2006), pp. 316–339.

The voyeuristic or fetishist gaze of the man upon the woman as a passive object is a marker of sexual difference and a mechanism through which men reinforce their sense of power (and avoid castration). As Ann Kaplan suggests, "men do not simply look: their gaze carries with it the power of action and possession that is lacking in the female gaze."[32] In this action of male dominance, there is no space for any female spectator who can cast a male penetrating gaze. On the African mosaic, Venus' look at the possible intruder carries with it a sense of fear and disturbance on the part of the goddess. Such negation of the female gaze is also evident in Robert Doisneau's 1948 photograph, *Un regard oblique*. It shows a man and a woman standing in front of the glass window of what seems to be an art gallery. While the woman looks downwards at a picture, the man glances to the other side of that frame, at a picture of a seminaked young woman. Mary Ann Doane remarks that the sense of the scene derives from the gaze of the man upon the nude female body. The object of his gaze becomes the object of the gaze of the external male viewer, with the result that the viewer within the image, in fact, reflects the external viewer and therefore draws one into the scene there represented. The photo thus creates complicity among the female nude, the man, and the external viewer from which the woman (in the center of the photo) and her look are excluded.[33]

When applying Mulvey's approach to the Thuburbo Maius mosaic, the sense of power that the male viewer perceives from his scopophilic gaze at the naked Venus is reinforced by the symbolism of the surrounding male figures from the realm of the amphitheatre. Gladiators are thought to demonstrate moral quality or *virtus* in the form of strength and bravery, discipline and training, representing contempt for death, love of glory, and a desire to win. These are all qualities identified with masculinity.[34] Whereas animals and executioners demonstrate the power of the male and his ability to maintain law and order within society by punishing those who were thought to threaten them, the games of the amphitheatre provide the necessary framework for social control and interaction. The spectators entered, sat, and exited according to a strict hierarchy that separated people by sex and status.[35] Games also functioned as a display of the social power of the male upper class that funded these spectacles as a means of enhancing their status and reinforcing their political power.[36] It is therefore evident that the African mosaic was primarily directed at its predominantly male audience. Though the context of this mosaic is uncertain, it probably decorated the reception area of a wealthy house. In Roman Africa, in fact, the arena motif was mostly chosen to ornament courtyards, dining rooms, and other kinds of reception rooms—that is, the domestic areas designed for male activities, to enhance the owner's reputation and his self-presentation.[37]

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[32] E. Ann Kaplan, "Is the Gaze Male?" in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York, 1983), pp. 322–323.

[33] Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1991), p. 40.

[34] For the social and psychological role the figure of the gladiator played in the minds of Romans, see Carlin A. Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster* (Princeton, 1993).

In the choice of subject for its message of control on the part of male viewers and for their pleasure, this mosaic emphasizes social differences between women and men. The unbalanced relationship between the sexes is underscored by other iconographic details in the mosaic.[38] For instance, the weapons worn by the male actors in the arena games immediately emphasize their different gender. Weapons are tools of violence, and as symbols they define males in their capacity for fighting, self-assertion, and domination. Weapons are also a metaphor for the phallus, with a wide range of terms for sexual activity based on the semantic field of beating, striking, and other actions that overlap into violence and male domination.[39] In the mosaic, the actions of the male figures display aggression and domination, in contrast to Venus' defenselessness, exhibited through her nudity. Her crouched body language, the covering of her pubis, and the turn of her head to one side mark her out from the surrounding characters and thus show her as a sexually vulnerable woman, albeit a powerful goddess of love.

The idea of the woman as the passive female recipient of the male gaze is also suggested by another modern photo that shows strong similarities with the Thuburbo Maius mosaic, in terms of design and motif. It

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[35] Magnus Wistrand, *Entertainment and Violence in Ancient Rome: The Attitudes of Roman Writers of the First Century A.D.* (Göteborg, 1992).

[36] These elements emerge in a description of a rich man's preparation of the arena games, in Apul., *Met.* 4.13. On the social meaning of the arena and its representations in domestic mosaics, see Shelby Brown, "Death as Decoration: Scenes from the Arena on Roman Domestic Mosaics," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed. Amy Richlin (Oxford, 1992), pp. 158–179.

[37] Carucci, *The Romano-African Domus*, pp. 95–104.

[38] See John Berger's analysis of the unequal gender relations implied by a dominant male way of seeing, in *Ways of Seeing Based on the BBC Television Series* (London, 1972), which has had a strong impact on feminist thinking.

[39] James N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London, 1982), pp. 145–149.

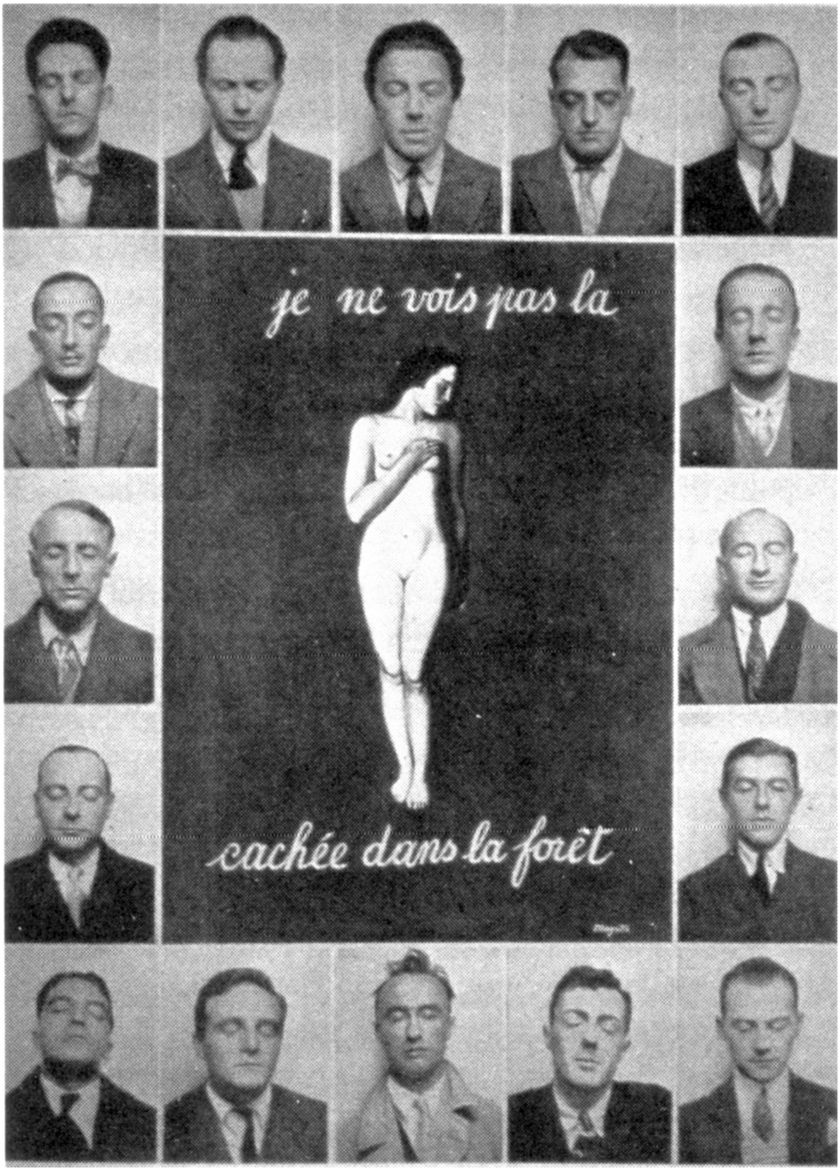
je ne vois pas la
cachée dans la forêt
Magritte

Figure 16.3. Photomontage by René Magritte published in the last issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (no. 12, December 1929). Photo showing men around a naked woman, © ADAGP, Paris, and DACS, London 2010.

appeared in the last issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (no. 12, December 1929) and shows a nude woman surrounded by sixteen passport-type photographs of men, all with their eyes shut (figure 16.3). This scene is usually interpreted as the visual expression of the surrealistic debate on allegorical love: the woman, portrayed in the pose of Venus, is the allegorical figure for love. This form of love remains beyond "sight" in the imagination of the men, who fantasize about the object of their desire (the woman depicted) with their eyes closed.[40] Despite the subliminal position of the woman in this surrealistic debate, she is assigned the place of object and remains the recipient of male desire.

Conclusions

This analysis of the Thuburbo Maius mosaic within a theoretical feminist framework advocates that the thematic link between the motif of the arena games and the image of the naked Venus is an idea of the male power. It represents male pleasure in controlling and displaying power within the context of the amphitheatre, and the anxiety of losing power through Venus. In such a reading of the mosaic, feminist theory provides new interpretative tools to aid our understanding and helps us think in different ways about gendered bodies and sexual differences, often not fully explored in traditional research. There are, of course, methodological pitfalls in relating the approaches of a modern, capitalistic, and technologically advanced society to the Roman Empire, and these may cause some consternation to ancient historians, but the parallels are provocative and suggest different "ways of seeing" ancient art.

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[40] David Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent* (London, 2004), pp. 145–171.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

APHRODITE IN LATE ANTIQUE AND MEDIEVAL BYZANTIUM

Anthousa Papagiannaki

A pagan goddess in the Christian Late Roman and Byzantine Empire (AD 324–1453) might sound like a paradox, particularly if that goddess is Aphrodite, Venus to the Romans.[1] Both names, however, Aphrodite and Venus, continued to be used in Late Antiquity, referring to the same deity.[2] As a deity associated with sexuality, a vice much hated by the Church Fathers, not only because of its strong association with pagan cults and rites, but also because it went against the idea of sexual purity that the church was trying to promote.[3] Despite the agenda of the official church, however, descriptions of statues of the goddess survive in literary sources from the Christian Empire, primarily in the imperial capital of Constantinople, as well as a number of representations in mosaics and portable works of art, albeit on a limited scale. Here I will survey the statues and portable works of art depicting the goddess from Late Antiquity and medieval Byzantium, with a view to understanding the phenomenon across the empire and in the transition to Christianity.[4] For the statues, I will be looking at their descriptions and the reactions they provoked. As far as portable works of art are concerned, Aphrodite was predominantly associated with women and their world, especially marriage, adornment, and prostitution. It is not surprising, therefore, to find images of the goddess on artifacts associated with these activities, such as jewelry, toiletries, or caskets. I will argue that the imagery of Aphrodite in Late Antiquity may also reflect theatrical plays and thus throw more light on a less well-known dimension of daily life. I will look at the period between the fourth and tenth centuries, in both the public and the private spheres. For my purposes, the public sphere is defined as nondomestic, and the private sphere as the strictly domestic environment.

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[1] All dates in this chapter are AD, unless otherwise noted. I would like to thank David Gwynn for his feedback on this chapter.

[2] In the Middle Byzantine period the only name used in literary sources and artistic media is Aphrodite.

[3] The subject of sexuality in Byzantium and the church's position is expressed very well through the numerous lives of saints. For examples, see Harry J. Magoulias, "Bathhouse, Inn, Tavern, Prostitution and the Stage as Seen in the Lives of the Saints of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," *Ἐπετηϱίς Ἐταιϱείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 38 (1971), 233–252; Catia Galatariotou, "Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 9 (1984–1985), 55–94; and Alexander Kazhdan, "Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990), 131–143. Patristic puritanism targeted musicians and dancers in particular, not only because of their close association with pagan worship such as that of Kybele and Rhea, both deities related to fertility, but also because of their association with sexual license. On these topics see James McKinnon, "The Meaning of the Patristic Polemic against Musical Instruments," *Current Musicology* 1 (1965), 69–82; and Ruth Webb, "Salome's Sisters: The Rhetoric and Realities of Dance in Late Antiquity and Byzantium," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (London, 1997), pp. 119–148.

Aphrodite in the Public Sphere

In order to better understand the presence of pagan Aphrodite or Venus in Byzantium, we should look briefly at the transition from paganism to Christianity. Constantine the Great (306–337) was the first Roman emperor to accord Christianity legal status. The emperor Theodosius I (378–395) proclaimed it as the official religion of the empire.[5] In the Theodosian Code, a collection of Roman law edicts under the Christian emperors from the fourth and fifth centuries compiled under Theodosius II (408–450), we find laws proclaiming sacrifices illegal and closing pagan centers of worship.[6] Given that paganism was still resilient to Christianity until at least the late sixth century, one effect of this legislation was that attitudes towards anything that could be construed as pagan became more aggressive, at least in the public sphere. From the

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[4] Earlier scholarship on Aphrodite from this period has been limited to Egypt in Late Antiquity (330–640). See, for example, Lila Marangou, "Ὀστέινο ἀνάγλυφο Ἀφϱοδίτης ἀπό τήν Αἴγυπτο," in *Κέϱνος. Τιμητιϰή πϱοσφοϱά στόν ϰαθηγητή Γεώϱγιο Μπαϰαλάϰη* (Thessaloniki, 1972), pp. 84–95; Elisa Buono, "From Goddess to Virgin: Transformations in the Eastern Empire," in *The Survival of the Gods: Classical Mythology in Medieval Art, An Exhibition by the Department of Art, Brown University Bell Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island, February 38–March 29, 1987* (Providence, 1987), pp. 85–95. Neither of these sources covers the Middle Byzantine period, nor do they explain the presence of the image of the goddess in Christian times.

[5] *Cod. Theod. Novellae Constitutiones. Constitutiones Sirmondianae* 16.1.2, ed. and trans. Clyde Pharr (Princeton, 1952); Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge, Eng., 2004), p. 111.

[6] *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 17, 19, 25.

Lives of Saints, we hear about the destruction of pagan symbols, including Aphrodite. For example, in the *Life of Bishop Porphyrios of Gaza*, Mark the Deacon tells us of a nude statue of Aphrodite that stood on an altar at the center of Gaza. He says, Ἐφήμιζον γὰρ περὶ αὐτῆς ὅτι χρηματίζει κατ’ ὄναρ ταῖς βουλομέναις προσομιλῆσαι γάμῳ (“it was venerated mainly by women, who hoped to receive from the goddess dreams with advice on their marriage prospects”).[7] The Bishop of Gaza and a Christian mob destroyed this statue in 402. Mark the Deacon attributes its doom to the demon that inhabited her statue and offered bad advice, since all couples who sought advice ended up divorced. Being unable to bear the sign of the cross, the demon left the statue, throwing it from its pedestal and breaking it into many pieces. In another example from a text in Syriac, we are told that in Memphis, Egypt, at the end of the fifth century, a large number of idols from the Temple of Isis (a goddess associated with Aphrodite) were hidden in a pagan’s house behind a false wall.[8] They were statues of animals and deities, including one of Aphrodite. The Christians found them, loaded them onto twenty camels, and took them to Alexandria, where they were publicly ridiculed and destroyed. When Severus, a converted pagan who became Patriarch of Antioch, publically ridiculed the statues, he introduced Aphrodite’s statue by emphasizing the relationship between the goddess and prostitution. The source offers no description of it, but suggests that the reason for the destruction of this and others was that their imagery was not Christian.[9]

Yet not all pagan imagery was destroyed in Late Antiquity. Constantine the Great and his *curatores* decorated the city of Constantinople, founded in 324, with pagan imagery and artworks collected from across the empire.[10] The Christian author of the *Vita Constantini*, Eusebius of Caesarea, could explain this decoration only as a public display of ridicule of the pagan gods.[11] Later, as the meaning of such images and their origins faded, statues of pagan deities were attributed with supernatural powers. The people of Constantinople believed that those decorating the city were animated, either inhabited by demons or endowed with malevolent and prophetic powers.[12] This is clear in a set of patriographic works—the eighth-century *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*[13] and the tenth-century *Patria Constantinoupoleos* (into which the text of the *Parastaseis* was incorporated)—that catalogue Constantinopolitan monuments and recount their history.[14] Ecclesiastical opposition to this type of imagery also continued, underlined by the proscriptions of canonists, who forbade the depiction of pagan images: ὥς ϰαταγοητεύοντα ἤτοι ἀπατῶντα τὴν ὄϱασιν … ϰαὶ διαφϑειϱόντων τὸ ϰατ’ εἰϰόνα Θεοῦ (“because they bewitch and deceive the sight, and … corrupt what is in the image of God”).[15] Constantine the Rhodian, a tenth-century poet and courtier, in his *Description of the Statues and Tall Columns of Constantinople*, adopts Eusebius’ point of view that the pagan images in the city were a public display of ridicule, so the people of Constantinople could look at them and laugh.[16] At the same time, accusations of idolatry were still hurled against political enemies in both the ecclesiastical and court environments. Leo Choirosphaktes, a successful diplomat in the tenth-century Byzantine court, was accused, among other charges, of paganism.[17]

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[7] Marcus Diaconus, *Vita Porphyrii* 59, ed. Henri Grégoire and Marc-Antoine Kugener (Paris, 1930), p. 48. For an English translation see *The Life of Porphyry Bishop of Gaza by Mark the Deacon*, ed. and trans. G.F. Hill (Oxford, 1913), pp. 69–71. For a discussion see Cyril Mango, “Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963), 56.

[8] Marc-Antoine Kugener, ed. and trans., *Vie de Sévère*. Patrologia Orientalis 2 (Paris, 1907), pp. 27–46; Mango, “Antique Statuary,” p. 56. For the relationship between Isis and Aphrodite, see Jentel, in *LIMC* 2, pp. 154–170, s.v. “Aphrodite (in peripheria orientali).”

[9] See *Vie de Sévère*, p. 35.

[10] Mango, “Antique Statuary,” p. 56; for a different explanation of the presence of pagan architecture and sculptural installations in Constantinople, see Bassett, *Urban Image*, p. 50.

The city of Constantinople was extensively decorated with pagan and historical figures. Pagan deities who remained visible in Constantinople included Aphrodite, whose image was represented in the form of statues.[18] Unfortunately, none of the statues in question has survived from

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[11] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantinii*, 3.54, ed. Ivar A. Heikel (Leipzig, 1902–1926), p. 101; Mango, “Antique Statuary,” pp. 56–57, 67.

[12] Mango, “Antique Statuary,” p. 56; Eunice Dauterman Maguire and Henry Maguire, *Other Icons, Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton, 2007), pp. 42–43.

[13] *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, ed. and trans. Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin (Leiden, 1984).

[14] *Patria Constantinoupoleos*, in *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. Theodorus Preger (Leipzig, 1901; repr. 1989).

[15] Trans. Henry Maguire, in *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–1880), p. 137, 861C; Maguire and Maguire, *Other Icons*, p. 107.

[16] Émile Legrand, “Description des ouvres d’art et de l’église des Saints Apôtres de Constantinople, poème en vers iambiques par Constantine le Rhodien,” *Revue des études grecques* 9 (1896), 32–65; Glanville Downey, “Constantine the Rhodian: His Life and Writings,” in *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of A.M. Friend, Jr.*, ed. Kurt Weitzmann (Princeton, 1955), pp. 214–221; Mango, “Antique Statuary,” p. 67.

[17] Downey, “Constantine the Rhodian,” p. 213.

[18] The sculptural decoration of the city of Constantinople included a wide variety of

Byzantium, and our knowledge of them comes from sparse references in the written sources. The Egyptian poet Christodoros, who was active in the capital under the Emperor Anastasius (491–518), for example, tells us of three statues of Aphrodite that stood in the Baths of Zeuxippos, in the center of the city.[19] Constantine the Great decorated the building with freestanding sculpture in both marble and bronze, but, as the baths were burned down in 532 during the Nika riots, our knowledge of the collection is limited to Christodoros' *ekphrasis*. The eighth-century text of the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, noted above, mentions that a statue of Aphrodite also stood outside the Senate building in the Forum of Constantine, alongside a bronze sculptural group depicting the judgment of Paris, which was melted down by the Crusaders after the sack of the city in 1204.[20] The *Patria Constantinoupoleos* attributes supernatural powers to statues and informs us about another statue of the goddess located apparently in the Augusteion. Justinian I (527–565) had it removed together with others in order to create space for the building of Hagia Sophia, although to where it was taken remains unknown.[21] The same source narrates a story concerning a further statue of Aphrodite in Constantinople, at a place called the Zeugma on the Hill, where there was a brothel. This statue of Aphrodite could expose unchaste women, married or not. Unfortunately for the statue, it was destroyed on the orders of the (unnamed) sister of the Empress Sophia, wife of Justin II (565–578), because the statue had exposed her as an adulteress, thus the magical or demonical power of it barred her from imperial banquets and life in the court.[22]

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statues, depicting not only pagan deities such as Zeus, Asklepeios, or Helios, but also heroes, poets, philosophers, Roman emperors, and animals, that once stood in the city. See the text of the *Parastaseis*, as well as the *Patria*, as noted above. For a recent list of those statues based on numerous written primary sources, as well as a discussion on their function, see Sarah Bassett, *Urban Image*, pp. 139–249.

[19] Christodoros of Thebes, "Description of the Statues in the Public Gymnasium Called Zeuxippos," in *Anth. Gr.* 1.2.59–91, trans. William Roger Paton (New York, 1916–1918); Mango, "Antique Statuary," pp. 57–58; Bassett, *Urban Image*, p. 165. In 1928 part of the baths was excavated, and amongst the finds were two inscribed statue bases with the names of Hekabe and Aischines, both of which are mentioned in the poem by Christodoros. See Stanley Casson, *Second Report upon the Excavations Carried Out in and near the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 1928 on Behalf of the British Academy* (London, 1929), pp. 16–21; and Mango, "Antique Statuary," p. 58.

[20] *Parastaseis*, pp. 184–186; *Patria* 2.96; Mango, "Antique Statuary," p. 57; Bassett, *Urban Image*, p. 188. Nicetas Choniates, *De Signis*, ch. 3, ed. Ottavio Morisani, Fernando Gagluolo, and Alfonso de Franciscis (Naples, 1960), p. 18; Mango, "Antique Statuary," p. 68; Bassett, *Urban Image*, p. 205.

[21] *Patria* 2.96; Bassett, *Urban Image*, p. 146.

[22] *Patria* 2.65; Mango, "Antique Statuary," p. 61; Bassett, *Urban Image*, p. 244.

The most famous ancient statue of Aphrodite transferred to Constantinople was to be found in the Lausus Collection, which was destroyed in a fire in 475. Lausus was the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* ('great chamberlain') of Theodosius II (408–450), also known as the patron of the Lausiac History, a collection of stories about holy men and women of the Egyptian desert. He was a Christian, but a member of a social elite who defined themselves not by religion but by their Greco-Roman *paideia* ('education').[23] His collection consisted of a large number of antique masterpieces known to us from two medieval literary sources, the eleventh-century *Synopsis Historion* by Georgios Kedrenos and the twelfth-century *Epitome Historion* by Ioannes Zonaras.[24] The Theodosian Code allowed the removal of antique pagan images from the ancient temples, provided qualified officials supervised the removal.[25] Given Lausus' position in the court, it goes without saying that his access to ancient images was probably unlimited. At the same time, by removing them from the original sacral context, they were deconsecrated and thus could be viewed as works of arts, and that is precisely what the Christian imperial authority decreed.[26] As a result, they became an object of aesthetic admiration for a Christian viewer such as Lausus and his peers.

As far as the condition of those statues in Late Antiquity is concerned, Michael Vickers and Eric Francis have suggested that at least the chryselephantine statue of the Olympian Zeus and the golden Lindian Athena had probably lost their gilding by the fifth century AD.[27] They base this suggestion on the text by Kedrenos, which describes the statue of Zeus as made of ivory, and that of Athena of emerald stone.[28]

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[23] On the education of the elite in Late Antique and medieval Byzantium, see Henri I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'education dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 1965); Robert Browning, "Homer in Byzantium," *Viator* 6 (1975), 15–33; Alexander P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 133–141, with references; Cyril Mango, "New Religion, Old Culture," in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford, 2002), pp. 101–103.

[24] Georgios Kedrenos, *Historiarum Compendium* 1, ed. Immanuel Bekker (Bonn, 1838–1839), pp. 564, 616; Ioannes Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum* 3, ed. Theodorus Büttner-Wobst (Bonn, 1897), p. 131; Mango, "Antique Statuary," p. 58; Cyril Mango, Michael Vickers, and Eric D. Francis, "The Palace of Lausus at Constantinople and Its Collection of Ancient Statues," *Journal of the History of Collections* 4 (1992), 89–98; Bassett, *Urban Image*, pp. 232–233.

[25] *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.18.

[26] *Cod. Theod.* 16.18.8.

[27] Mango, Vickers, and Francis, "The Palace of Lausus," pp. 94–95.

[28] Kedrenos, *Historiarum*, p. 564.

What did the statues of Aphrodite look like? The only one of the goddess for which there might be surviving clues as to its appearance is Lausus' fourth-century BC statue of the Knidian Aphrodite, known to us from coin issues and later copies (figure 13.1).[29] Kedrenos describes the statue in the Lausus Collection as follows: καί ἡ Κνιδία Ἀφροδίτη ἐκ λίθου λευκῆς, γυμνή, μόνην τήν αἰδῶ τῇ χειρί περιστέλλουσα, ἔργον τοῦ Κνιδίου Πραξιτέλους ("the Knidian Aphrodite of white stone, naked, shielding with her hand only her pudenda, a work of Praxiteles of Knidos").[30] Later copies depict the goddess naked in a *contrapposto* pose, with her left leg slightly bent. Her right hand shields the pudenda, while her left is raised at the elbow holding a piece of drapery that falls onto a vessel.[31] We have no further information on the iconography of the other Aphrodites that stood in Constantinople, beyond the general descriptions by Christodoros for those in the Baths of Zeuxippos:

> Ἄγχι δὲ Κύπρις ἔλαμπεν, ἔλειβε δὲ νώροπι χαλκῷ
> ἀγλαΐης ῥαθάμιγγας· ἀπὸ στέρνοιο δὲ γυμνή
> φαίνετο μέν, φᾶρος δὲ συνήγαγεν ἄντυγι μηρῶν,
> χρυσείῃ πλοκαμῖδας ὑποσφίγξασα καλύπτρῃ …
> ἄλλην δ' εὐπατέρειαν ἴδον χρυσῆν Ἀφροδίτην,
> γυμνὴν παμφανόωσαν· ἐπὶ στέρνων δὲ θεαίνης
> αὐχένος ἐξ ὑπάτοιο χυθεὶς ἐλελίζετο κεστός
> … καὶ τριτάτην θάμβησα πάλιν χρυσῆν Ἀφροδίτην,
> φάρεϊ κόλπον ἔχουσαν ἐπίσκιον· ἀμφὶ δὲ μαζοῖς
> κεστὸς ἕλιξ κεχάλαστο, χάρις δ' ἐνενήχετο κεστῷ.
>
> [A]nd near shone Cypris, shedding drops of beauty on the bright bronze; her bust was naked, but her dress was gathered about her rounded thighs and she had bound her hair with a golden kerchief … and another high born Aphrodite I saw all of gold, naked, all glittering; and on the breast of the goddess, hanging from her neck, fell in coils the flowing cestus … and there was a third Aphrodite to marvel at, her bosom draped: on her breasts rested the twisted *cestus*, and in it beauty swam.[32]

Regarding the statue of Aphrodite in the Constantinian Forum, Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin have suggested that it could actually have been of a different figure.[33] A twelfth-century manuscript illumination, currently in the Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos, could possibly depict this particular statue, together with a statue of Artemis that stood nearby. The miniature illustrates the Epiphany homily of Gregory of Nazianzos, a fourth-century Church Father, which addresses the evils of idolatry and depicts crowds venerating Aphrodite and Artemis.[34] Each statue is shown crowned, dressed in a full-length garment thrown over the left forearm, with one breast exposed, and holding branches. These images are not unique in their representation of nudity for pagan figures in a text with ecclesiastical content. In the eleventh-century manuscript Coislin 239, currently housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which contains the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos, Isis is also depicted in a long garment thrown over the left forearm, leaving her breast exposed.[35]

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[29] For the image of Knidian Aphrodite depicted on Roman coins see Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, p. 52, s.v. "Aphrodite," with a list of bibliographical references.

[30] Kedrenos, *Historiarum*, p. 564.

[31] Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 50–52, s.v. "Aphrodite," nos. 391–408; Bassett, *Urban Image*, p. 233.

[32] Christodoros of Egypt, *Description* 78–81, 99–101, 288–290, in *Anth. Gr.*, trans. Paton.

The nudity of these statues in an ecclesiastical text is not accidental, and not uncommon. For example, it can also be seen in an eleventh-century manuscript in the Esphigmenou Monastery on Mount Athos, illustrating a homily possibly by John Damascus on the birth of Christ. The text of the homily refers to a temple of Hera built by the Persian King Cyrus and decorated with idols, which are shown either naked or half-naked.[36] Cyril Mango has suggested that this iconography for pagan statues was current in manuscript illumination in the medieval Byzantine period.[37] It should be noted, however, that the official church did not approve of their nudity. This is clear in the *Life of Bishop Porphyrios of Gaza*, discussed earlier, where Mark the Deacon comments on the nakedness of the statue of Aphrodite, calling it shameful:

> στήλη ἵστατο ἀπὸ μαϱμάϱου ἥν ἔλεγον εἶναι Ἀφϱοδίτης, ἧν δὲ ἐπάνω βωμοῦ λιθίνου, ὕπῆϱχεν δὲ τὸ ἐκτύπωμα τῆς στήλης, γυναικὸς γυμνῆς ἐχούσης ὅλα τὰ ἄσχημα αὐτῆς φαινόμενα.

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[33] *Parastaseis*, p. 184.

[34] Kurt Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art* (Princeton, 1951), pp. 52–54.

[35] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cod. Coislin 239, fol. 122^v. For an image of this illumination, see Mango, "Antique Statuary," fig. 18.

[36] Mount Athos, Esphigmenou Monastery, MS 14, fol. 399^r. For this illumination, see Stylianos Pelekanides et al., *The Treasures of Mount Athos* 2 (Athens, 1975), p. 376, fig. 374. Also, on the subject of nudity in Byzantine art, see Maguire and Maguire, *Other Icons*, pp. 97–134.

[37] Mango, "Antique Statuary," p. 74.

> [T]here stood a marble statue, which they said to be of Aphrodite, and upon a stone pedestal was the statue of a naked woman having all her shame uncovered.[38]

Nicetas Choniates, in his lamentation of the fate of Constantinople and its treasures at the hands of the Crusaders, also expresses his admiration for the bronze statue of Athena that used to stand in the Forum of Constantine, because the goddess was depicted fully clothed, and thus not immodestly.[39]

Members of the elite like Lausus who, despite his strong faith, collected antique statues, however, do not appear to have shared the same agenda as the official church. Vickers and Francis suggest that the description by Kedrenos may report the actual order in which the statues in the Lausus Collection were displayed: Lindian Athena, Knidian Aphrodite, Samian Hera, Eros (from Myndos holding a bow), Olympian Zeus, the personification Kairos, animals, and mythological creatures. They try to read this version of the statue display, however, as Christian in concept.[40] Sheila Bassett, in contrast, prefers to look at it in terms of art and aesthetics.[41] We cannot be sure how the Lausus Collection was displayed, but, as mentioned earlier, what defined Lausus and his peers was their Classical *paideia*. Unlike the majority of the population in the capital, Lausus not only appreciated but also, because of his position in court, acquired antique statuary. For all we know, the acquisition and display of these statues may have been a demonstration of this *paideia*, an ostentatious display of luxury, or a combination of both.

Aphrodite in the Private Sphere

Our evidence for the enduring presence of Aphrodite is more fruitful in the private sphere than in the public. Images of the goddess, datable mainly to Late Antiquity (324–642), have been preserved through a small number of metal, ivory, or bone objects, all of which were used in everyday life. These include dining and toilet sets, personal ornaments such as hairpins, jewelry, caskets, and boxes.[42] The most popular type of Aphrodite found on these objects seems to be the *Anadyomene* ('Rising from the sea'), which depicts the goddess as a nude or half-nude figure, with one hand twisting or arranging locks of her hair.[43] This type is clearly seen on a gold and lapis lazuli pendant datable to the early seventh century, potentially from Egypt, and currently in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection.[44] As *Pudica* ('Modest'), another popular type, the goddess is depicted nude, with her right hand held below the left breast, her left covering the genitals, and in this instance, a peplos above her head.[45] Another type of Aphrodite seen in the domestic environment is the goddess at her toilet, which is sometimes combined with the marine *thiasos*, a group of Nereids, putti, and sea monsters, who carry toilet implements and assist the goddess in her adornment (figure 17.1). This type recalls a description of Aphrodite in one of Lucian's dialogues, where the goddess, reclining on a shell, is carried by two Tritons, amid putti, Nereids, Poseidon, and Amphitrite, who accompany Zeus and Europa on their journey to Crete: ἐπὶ πᾶσι δέ τὴν Ἀφϱοδίτην δύο Τϱίτωνες ἔφεϱον ἐπὶ ϰόγχης ϰαταϰειμένην, ἄνθη παντοῖα ἐπιπάτουσαν τῇ νύμφῃ ("to cap all, two Tritons were carrying Aphrodite reclining on a shell, and sprinkling all manner of flowers over the bride").[46]

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[38] *Vita Porphyrii*, pp. 47–48.

[39] Jan-Louis van Dieten, ed. *Nicetae Choniatae Historia* (Berlin, 1975), p. 558.52–55.

[40] Mango, Vickers, and Francis, "The Palace of Lausus," pp. 95–96.

[41] Bassett, *Urban Image*, pp. 98–111.

[42] For examples of hairpins clearly depicting Aphrodite, see Ormonde M. Dalton,

Excavated dining and toilet sets offer interesting insights into the original contexts in which the image of Aphrodite was used. Such sets—of dishes, washing basins, ewers, spoons, strainers, pins, cosmetic implements, containers, and other items—define specific uses for artifacts and thus an important context for decorative images on these artifacts. The findspots of these sets provide further contextual evidence for the environments in which these images of the goddess were used. Two

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Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum (London, 1901), p. 37, nos. 232–233.

[43] Delivorrias, in *LIMC* 2, p. 54, s.v. "Aphrodite."

[44] For the pendant, see Marvin C. Ross with an addendum by Susan A. Boyd and Stephen R. Zwirn, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection* 2: *Jewelry, Enamels, and Art of the Migration Period* (Washington, D.C., 2005), pp. 18–19, col. pl. C; see also Buono, "From Goddess to Virgin," p. 90.

[45] Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, p. 49, s.v. "Aphrodite." For an image see Lila Marangou, *Bone Carvings from Egypt* 1: *Graeco-Roman Period* (Tübingen, 1976), pl. 43b, no. 127.

[46] Lucian 7.15.3, ed. and trans. Matthew Donald Macleod (London, 1909). For the appearance and evolution of the theme of the marine *thiasos* accompanying Aphrodite as documented on mosaic pavements, see Dunbabin, *Mosaics of Roman North Africa*, pp. 154–158.

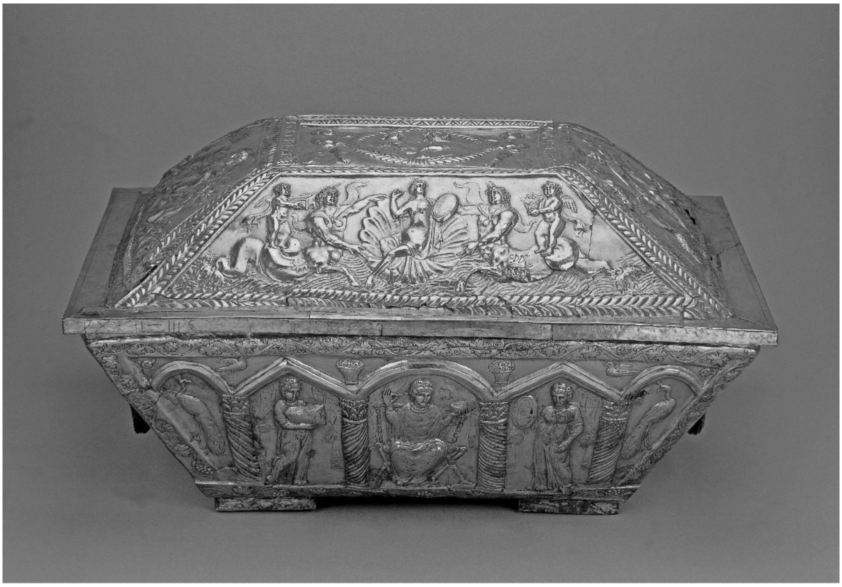

Figure 17.1. Projecta Casket from the Esquiline Treasure, late fourth century. London, British Museum 66.12–29.1. Photo ©Trustees of the British Museum.

dining sets, the so-called Kaiseraugst and Daphne Treasures, are both datable to the fourth century, and both include a statuette of Aphrodite. The Kaiseraugst Treasure was buried in a chest within the walls of the Late Roman fortress at Kaiseraugst, near Basel in Switzerland, in 350–351.[47] It was found between December 1961 and January 1962 and consists of 257 silver items: luxurious tableware, toilet implements, one of which bears a Christogram (possibly implying Christian ownership), and 187 silver coins and medallions, currently in the Römermuseum in Augst.[48] One of the most striking pieces is the silver statuette of a nude Aphrodite on a solid base (figure 17.2). The hair of the figurine is gilded; she holds a braid in her left hand, and a mirror in her right. The silver Daphne Treasure is modest in size compared to the Kaiseraugst, since it consists of only four objects, but one is a hollow-cast, silver-gilt statuette of Aphrodite in the type of the Roman Venus *Genetrix* ('Progenitor'), currently in

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[47] Elisabeth Alföldi-Rosenbaum et al., *Der spätrömische Silberschatz von Kaiseraugst* (Derendiger, 1984), pp. 318–321.

[48] Ibid.

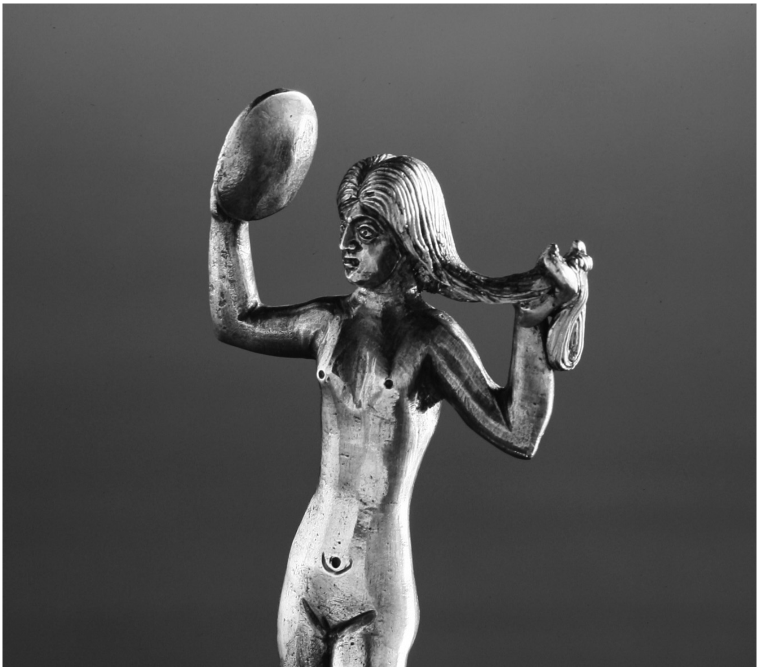

Figure 17.2. Silver statuette of Aphrodite from Kaiseraugst, 350–351. Augst, Römermuseum 62.59. Photo ©Augusta Raurica, Switzerland.

the Hatay Archaeological Museum in Antakya.[49] The treasure was named after Daphne, the suburb of Antioch where it was excavated in April 1939 in the *triclinium* or dining area of the House of Menander, a large villa. Unlike the Kaiseraugst statuette, the Daphne goddess is fully dressed and stands with her right leg bent. In her left hand, she holds what appears to be a pomegranate, while she raises her right hand in front of her breast and wears a diadem (figure 17.3).[50]

The excavators of the Kaiseraugst Treasure have suggested that statuettes, such as that described above, were used as table decoration, and the depicted deity was participating in the dinner.[51] In the case of the Roman fort at Kaiseraugst, a male-dominated environment, it is not surprising to find Aphrodite, in her traditional guise as the goddess of love and sexual pleasure. Even though the owners of the Kaiseraugst Treasure were most likely Christians, her presence in the same treasure testifies to the continuation of certain social habits during the transitional period from paganism to Christianity. The same conclusion can be drawn from the statuette in the Daphne Treasure. The difference here, though, is that the Daphne Aphrodite comes from a domestic environment, demonstrated not only from its archaeological context, but also its iconography: Venus *Genetrix* was a maternal or household goddess overseeing the birth and education of children.[52]

The fourth-century silver Projecta Casket (figure 17.1) clearly demonstrates the survival of the iconography of Aphrodite within a Christian context. This object was part of the so-called Esquiline Treasure, found in the remains of a Roman house on the Esquiline Hill in Rome, in 1793. The treasure originally comprised more than sixty items, most of which are now in the British Museum.[53] The casket is decorated with toilet and bathing scenes and is inscribed *Secunde et Projecta vivatis in Christo* ("Secundus and Projecta, may you live in Christ"). On the top of the lid, a portrait panel depicts a man and a woman, usually identified from the

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[49] Marlia Mundell Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986), no. 98.

[50] For images of this type, see Schmidt, in *LIMC* 8, pp. 133 and 149, s.v. "Venus," nos. 23, 236, and 243.

[51] Alföldi-Rosenbaum et al., *Kaiseraugst*, p. 321.

[52] Mundell Mango, *Kaper Koraon*, no. 98.

[53] Kathleen Shelton, *The Esquiline Treasure* (London, 1981); also *Wealth of the Roman World: AD 300–700*, ed. John P.C. Kent and Kenneth S. Painter (London, 1977), nos. 88–98.

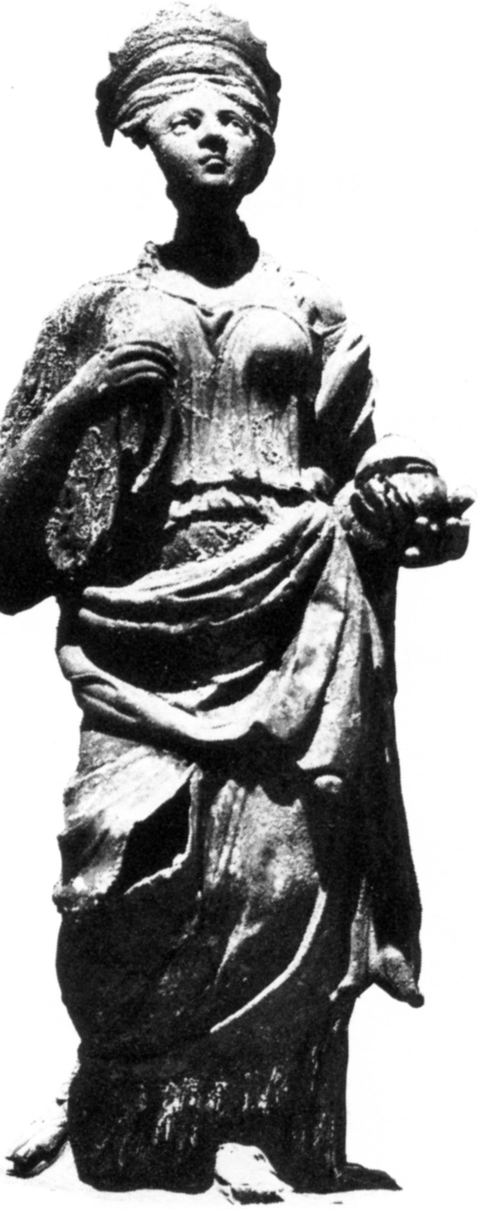

Figure 17.3. Silver gilt statuette of Aphrodite from Antioch, fourth century. Antakya, Hatay Archaeological Museum. Photo courtesy of Marlia Mundell Mango.

inscription as "Secundus" and "Projecta,"[54] while on the front panel of the lid, we see the toilet of Aphrodite or Venus, a scene also reflected on a silver patera from the same treasure, currently in the Louvre, Paris.[55] The front panel of the body of the casket depicts a woman at her toilet, Projecta, situated immediately below the image of the goddess.

Comparisons between Aphrodite and Projecta have inspired a number of interpretations of the casket's iconography and function. Kathleen Shelton suggests that both the inscription and the imagery are marriage centered and that the casket could be a wedding gift.[56] The absence of any illustrations of children produced by the couple has alternatively encouraged Jaś Elsner to propose that the casket depicts the processes that will create the desire that underlies procreation, namely, adornment, bathing, and beautification. As a result, Projecta is the Venus of Secundus.[57] Following this line of interpretation, Elsner further suggests that, in effect, the image of the pagan nude Aphrodite or Venus unites the image of the wife with the image of carnal desire,[58] as the image is juxtaposed with the inscribed invocation for a shared life in Christ. The Projecta Casket is itself unique, but the presence of a sexy pagan goddess is found elsewhere within a Christian context. In the contemporary panegyric composed by Claudian for the wedding of the young Christian emperor Honorius to Maria, the daughter of Stilicho, in 398, Venus appears in her palace in Cyprus:

> *caesariem tunc forte Venus subnixa corusco*
> *fingebat solio . . .*
> *. . . speculi nec vultus egebat*
> *iudicio; similis tecto monstratur in omni*
> *et rapitur quocumque videt, dum singular cernit*
> *seque probat.*

> Venus was seated on her glittering throne, tiring her hair . . . Nor did her face lack the mirror's verdict; her image is reflected over all the palace and she is charmed wheresoever she looks. While she surveys each detail and approves her beauty.[59]

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[54] For example, see Alan Cameron, "The Date and Owners of the Esquiline Treasure," *AJA* 89 (1985), 135–145.

[55] For the patera, see *Wealth of the Roman World*, ed. Kent and Painter, no. 94.

[56] Shelton, *Esquiline Treasure*, p. 31; see also Jaś Elsner, "Visualising Women in Late Antique Rome: The Projecta Casket," in *Through a Glass Brightly: Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology Presented to David Buckton*, ed. Chris Entwistle (London, 2003), pp. 30–31.

[57] Elsner, "The Projecta Casket," p. 31.

[58] Elsner, "The Projecta Casket," p. 32.

[59] Claudian, *Epithalamium of Honorius and Maria* 101–111, trans. Maurice Platnauer,

Here the goddess and her companions are called upon to bless the imperial union and pray for its fruitfulness, despite the Christian convictions of the emperor and his bride. The poem thus strikes a potential balance between the pagan imagery and Christianity, or in the rhetorical context of Claudian's poem, a literary topos in comparing the beauty of the bride to the beauty of Aphrodite.[60]

Another set of objects from the private sphere, of interest, are Late Antique serially produced ivory and bone caskets, mainly of Egyptian provenance, datable between the third and seventh centuries AD.[61] The images of Aphrodite that decorate a number of these plaques can be divided into two main iconographical types, the *Anadyomene* and the *Pudica*.[62] Others show the goddess with a shell, or accompanied by a dolphin or Eros, examples of which can be found in the Benaki Museum Collection.[63] Alternatives depict her gazing at her reflection in a mirror as she arranges her hair, probably after bathing, as on a plaque currently in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection.[64] At least one bone plaque in the Benaki Museum appears to show Aphrodite covering her pudenda with a shell (figure 17.4).[65] This is a seemingly unique instance of this imagery on carved bone ornaments. Lila Marangou has proposed that the image of Aphrodite and a dolphin on the bone carvings probably derives from the so-called Aphrodite of Cyrene, a sculptural group in marble depicting the goddess with Triton and a dolphin, the original of which is believed to be a Hellenistic work probably originating from Alexandria.[66] Similarly,

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Claudian (London, 1922). See also Alan Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 93–102; Udo Frings, *Claudius Claudianus: Epithalamium de nuptiis Honorii Augusti, Einleitung und Kommentar* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1975), pp. 56–61; Elsner, "The Projecta Casket," p. 32.

[60] The art of comparison was an integral part of Late Antique rhetoric and its panegyrics. It was part of rhetorical education and the subject of school exercises in its own right. See Henry Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium," *Art Bulletin* 70 (1988), pp. 88–99.

[61] Good collections of these loose plaques, the majority of which are said to have come from Egypt, are found in the Benaki Museum, Athens, and the Archaeological Museum, Cairo.

[62] Marangou, *Bone Carvings*, pp. 39–42.

[63] Marangou, *Bone Carvings*, pp. 110–111, pl. 36a, no. 137, and pl. 39a, no. 132, respectively.

[64] Aikaterini Loverdou-Tsigarida, *Οστέινα Πλακίδια. Διακόσμηση ξύλινων Κιβωτιδίων από την Χριστιανική Αίγυπτο* (Athens, 2000), pp. 92–93, pl. 18, no. 49.

[65] Marangou, *Bone Carvings*, p. 112.

[66] Marangou, *Bone Carvings*, pp. 41–42; Loverdou-Tsigarida, *Οστέινα Πλακίδια*, p. 179; for the marble sculptural group of "Aphrodite of Cyrene" in general, see

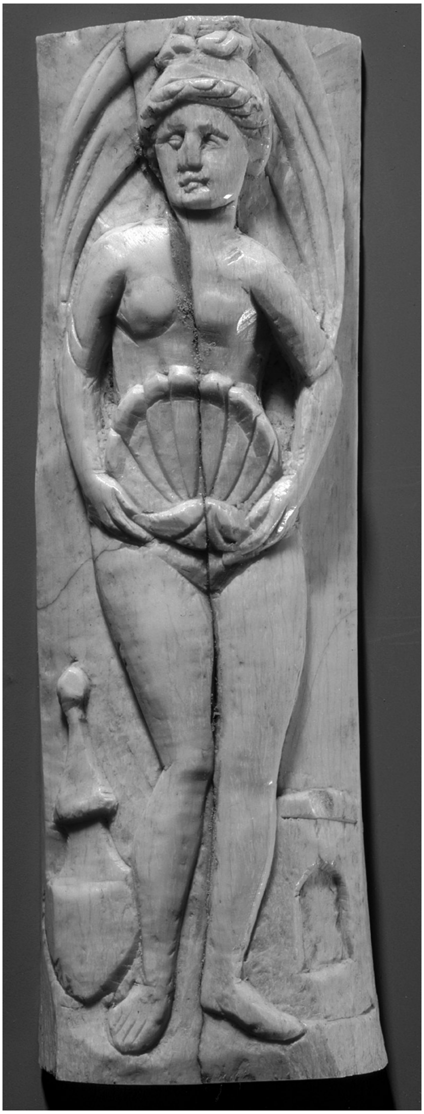

Figure 17.4. Bone carving of Aphrodite covering her pudenda with a shell, second or third century. Athens, Benaki Museum. Photo ©2010 Benaki Museum, Athens.

A.L. Pietrogrande, "Gruppo statuario cirenaico di Aphrodite con Tritone," *Africa Italiana* 2 (1928–1929), pp. 173–186.

a number of individual plaques may be part of the greater ensemble following the theme of Aphrodite and the marine *thiasos*.[67]

The presence of Aphrodite on these Late Antique bone carvings might be explained by the popularity of her cult in Egypt, the echo of which survived in secular art in Late Antiquity.[68] From a marriage contract, again from Egypt, of the second century AD, we learn that an image of Aphrodite was amongst the bride's dowry, thus emphasizing the relationship of the goddess with marriage imagery.[69] As we have already seen, this relationship is apparent on the Projecta Casket, a specially commissioned object, possibly intended as a wedding present (figure 17.1).[70] Drawing an analogy between the marriage contract and the Projecta Casket, it is not illogical to suppose that the bone caskets decorated with the iconography of Aphrodite were used as marriage gifts.

Yet not every image of Aphrodite is related directly to marriage, as evidenced by the dining sets. An ivory pyxis in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, from the sixth century, depicts the judgment of Paris (figure 17.5).[71] One side of this cylindrical box shows the banquet of the gods, where a nude Eris (Discord) prepares to throw down the apple of the Hesperides.[72] The other side shows Hermes awarding the apple to Aphrodite, who is standing in the *Anadyomene* pose, naked except for a cloak on her shoulders, crowned, and accompanied by Hera and an armed Athena. The relevant entry in the *Byzantine Women and Their World* exhibition catalogue suggests that this pyxis, like such vessels in

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[67] Loverdou-Tsigarida, *Οστέινα Πλακίδια*, p. 153, pl. 19, no. 53.

[68] For a discussion on the relationship between the depiction of Aphrodite on bone carving and the goddess' cult in Egypt, see Lila Marangou, "Οστέινο ανάγλυφο," pp. 84–95. Marangou gives a general chronology for bone carvings in the second and third centuries AD. Since the publication of this article, archaeological finds have prompted scholars to reevaluate the chronology of those objects, and currently a date from the third to seventh century is commonly accepted. See Elżbieta Rodziewicz, *Bone and Ivory Carvings from Alexandria: French Excavations 1992–2004* (Cairo, 2007).

[69] Carl Wessely, *Corpus Papyrorum Raineri archeducis Austriae* 1: *Griechische Texte* (1895), no. 27, pp. 138–139; Marangou, "Ὀστέινο ἀνάγλυφο," p. 95.

[70] Shelton, *Esquiline Treasure*, p. 31; Buono, "From Goddess to Virgin," p. 91.

[71] Wolfgang F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz, 1976), no. 98; Kurt Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality, Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), no. 115; Richard H. Randall, Jr., *Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery* (Baltimore, 1985), no. 170; Ioli Kalavrezou, ed., *Byzantine Women and their World* (New Haven, 2003), no. 148.

[72] A version of this myth has been preserved in the sixth-century *Chronicle of John Malalas* 5.92–93, for which see *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys et al. Byzantina Australiensia 4 (Melbourne, 1986).

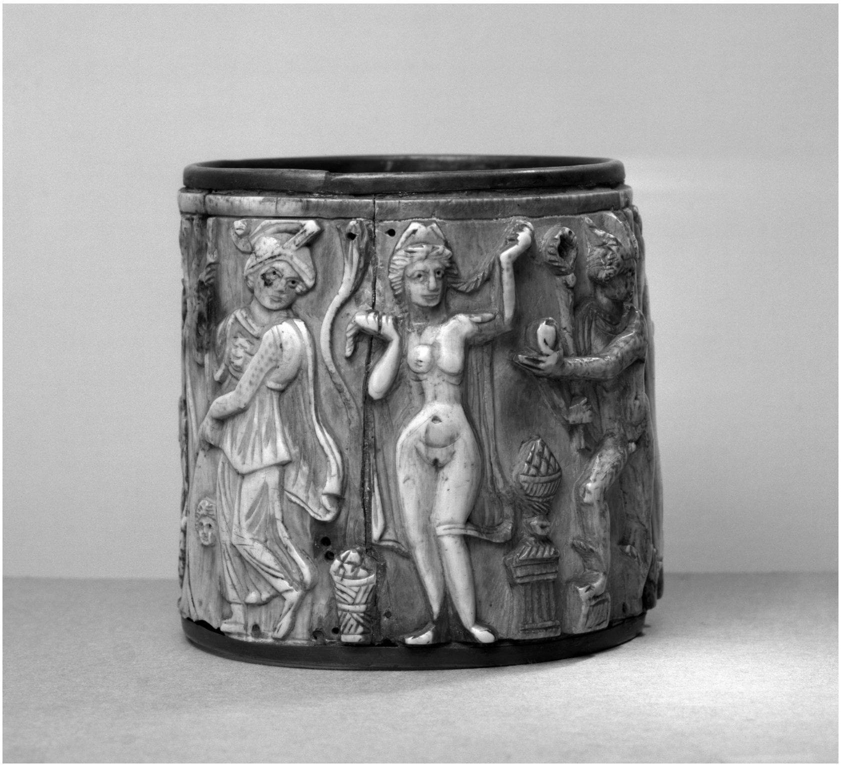

Figure 17.5. Circular pyxis, fifth to sixth century. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum 71.64. Photo ©The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

antiquity, may have been used to store cosmetics or jewelry.[73] This supposition is a distinct possibility because pyxides were usually part of a woman's toilet, and in this case the imagery may reflect the desire of its owner to be as beautiful as the goddess. Indeed, silver cylindrical boxes used for storing oils and perfumes were found inside the Muses Casket from the Esquiline Treasure, and the Malalas version of the judgment of Paris myth emphasizes the goddess as embodying desire.[74]

What makes this artifact even more interesting is that it exemplifies the ongoing popularity of images from Classical myth, well after the sixth century. Their usage went beyond the narrow limits of the elite culture of the Projecta Casket. Despite the exotic provenience of ivory itself, ivory pyxides were serially produced and, as such, marketed to a wide audience that did not necessarily learn of Classical mythology through a literary education.[75] I suggest that at least some of the images depicted on such objects as the Walters pyxis and the medieval ivory and bone caskets, including those of Aphrodite, may instead reflect scenes from plays.

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[73] Kalavrezou, *Byzantine Women*, p. 246.

[74] Shelton, *Esquiline Treasure*, pp. 75–77, pl. 17; *Chronicle of John Malalas* 5.92–93.

Mythological subjects were already the main themes of mimic plays in Early Imperial Rome.[76] Among the reliefs decorating the stage platform of the second-century theatre at Sabratha are the judgment of Paris, together with the Muses and the three Graces. All these subjects correspond closely to a contemporary account by Apuleius of a theatrical program presented in Corinth.[77] In his description, Apuleius tells of a three-day event with *venationes*, acrobats, and a reenactment of the judgment of Paris myth.[78] The same myth is also depicted on a third-century mosaic from the island of Kos, which also shows acrobatic hunters. Christine Kondoleon suggests that the mosaic reflects theatrical performances.[79]

Despite the morality championed by the Church Fathers, the people of Late Antiquity and medieval Byzantium continued to enjoy frivolity and a good show. Mimic plays were very popular in Late Antiquity and, as Mango notes, this was the main dramatic genre that survived into the medieval period.[80] However, he recognizes that we cannot be certain of the form mimic plays assumed in the medieval period and whether they incorporated elements from other genres.[81] Mimic plays initially relied on mythology,[82] and so it would only be natural for mimes to perform in antique disguises and for artists to also depict them in an antique style.

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[75] Even though ivory is the product of long-distance trade with Egypt and India, making it an exotic and consequently luxurious ware, it was not a rare commodity in Late Antiquity. The dimensions of ivory artifacts from that period suggest that ivory was in abundance. From Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices, dated to 301, we learn that the price of ivory in the fourth century was lower than other precious and equally exotic materials such as silk: see Siegfried Lauffer, ed., *Diokletians Preisedikt* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 148–149.

[76] Christine Kondoleon, "Timing Spectacles: Roman Domestic Art and Performance," in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, ed. Bettina Bergmann and Christine Kondoleon (Washington, D.C., 1999), p. 323.

[77] Apul., *Met.* 2.10.29–39, ed. and trans. Arthur Hanson (Cambridge, Mass., 1989). For the Sabratha reliefs, see Giacomo Caputo, *Il Teatro di Sabratha e l'architettura teatrale Africana* (Rome, 1959), figs. 58–83.

[78] Apul., *Met.* 10.29–33.

[79] Christine Kondoleon, *Domestic and Divine: Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos* (Ithaca, 1994), pp. 282–285, 307–310.

[80] Cyril Mango, "Daily Life in Byzantium," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31 (1981), 341–344.

[81] See note 80.

[82] John Chrysostom, *Hom. in. Tit.* 5.4: *Patrologia Graeca* 62.693.

Later, mimes also drew on contemporary political situations and Christian topics, such as the rite of baptism. In most cases the plot exploited sexual conflict and desire.[83] This offered John Chrysostom, one of the Church Fathers, ammunition for his attacks against theatrical spectacles as a cause of sexual immorality.[84] From the material in Sabratha and Kos, as well as from literary sources, such as Apuleius and the homilies of John Chrysostom, it seems correct to place images such as the judgment of Paris on the Walters pyxis within this context of theatrical spectacles.

This line of argument, that images of Aphrodite may also reflect scenes from theatrical plays, can be further pursued if we look at another iconographical type, that of Aphrodite and a young male lover, perhaps Adonis. This image survives on a number of objects from Late Antiquity such as a fifth- or sixth-century ivory pyxis, currently in Zurich.[85] The identification of the male figure on these artifacts as Adonis is largely based on a number of mosaic pavements, most of which are contemporary with the Zurich pyxis, either illustrating the farewell of Adonis, or depicting the goddess with her lover.[86]

On the Zurich pyxis (not illustrated here), Aphrodite is seated naked in the *Anadyomene* pose, with her legs crossed—a posture that is unique amongst the ivory and bone carvings, and perhaps new in the repertoire of *Anadyomene* images. On her left, a naked putto holds a garland and stands on a basket; seated to her right is a male figure, holding a spear, next to a figure leading a horse. At the back of the pyxis are two female dancers holding a wreath and a musician playing the flute. Certain elements of this artifact suggest a theatrical environment. To begin with, the presence of musicians, and particularly flute players, is attested in theatrical performances of Late Antiquity.[87] The dancers and naked putto holding a garland may reflect mimes similar to those depicted on the contemporary consular diptychs of Areobindus and Anastasius,[88] recalling at the same time the Graces and Seasons scattering flowers, as mentioned by Apuleius.[89] Finally, the unique and suggestive posture of the goddess herself, sitting with her legs crossed on what could be a bed, brings to mind the props mimes used, which John Chrysostom mentions in his homilies and which bring to mind his warnings of the immorality of the theatre.[90]

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[83] See note 82.

[84] For example, see John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Matt.* 37.6: *Patrologia Graeca* 57.426. For a general overview of the position of the church, and of John Chrysostom in particular, towards theatrical performances and entertainment in general, see Blake Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives: John Chrysostom's Attack on Spiritual Marriage* (Berkeley, 2001).

[85] Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, no. 98. Other artifacts with this decorative motif are a silver plaque from a casket, datable to the fourth or fifth century AD, currently in the Virginia Museum of Arts in Richmond; a silver dish currently in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; and a bone comb, probably from Alexandria, currently in the Virginia Museum of Arts in Richmond. Both the silver dish and the bone comb are datable to the fifth century AD. For these objects, see Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, ed., *The Survival of the Gods*, no. 37: *Splendeur de Byzance: 2 octobre–2 décembre 1982, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire* (Bruxelles, 1982), p. 137, pl. O.6; Jannic Durand et al., *Byzance, L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises, Musée du Louvre, 3 novembre 1992–1 février 1993* (Paris, 1992), no. 55; and Lafontaine-Dosogne, ed., *The Survival of the Gods*, no. 35, where Syria is indicated as the provenance; but Anna Gonosová and Christine Kondoleon, in *Art of Late Rome and Byzantium in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* (Richmond, 1994), pp. 208–209, no. 69, suggest an Alexandrian provenance.

[86] Such mosaic pavements were unearthed in Antioch. See Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1952), pp. 24–25, 80–82, pls. II.a and XII.b, respectively.

The iconographic type of Aphrodite with a male lover survived well into the medieval period and is particularly prominent during the Macedonian Renaissance of the ninth and tenth centuries, which saw a revival of Classical and Late Antique artistic motifs.[91] Aphrodite and her lover can be seen on several ivory and bone objects from the tenth century, most notably the Veroli Casket, currently in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (figure 17.6).[92] Unlike the majority of surviving me-

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[87] John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Matt*. 48.4: *Patrologia Graeca* 58.645.

[88] Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, pl. 5, nos. 9 and 11, pl. 8, nos. 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21; For a more recent iconological study of the consular diptychs, see Cecilia Olovsdotter, *The Consular Image: An Iconological Study of the Consular Diptychs*, BAR International Series 1376 (Oxford, 2005).

[89] Apul., *Met*. 10.29–33.

[90] John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Matt*. 73: *Patrologia Graeca* 58.676.

[91] For the Macedonian Renaissance as a cultural phenomenon in general, see Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology*; ibid., "The Character and Intellectual Origins of the Macedonian Renaissance," in *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, ed. Herbert L. Kessler (Chicago, 1971), pp. 176–223; Anthony Cutler, "The Mythological Bowl in the Treasury of San Marco at Venice," in *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honour of George C. Miles*, ed. Dickran K. Kouymjian (Beirut, 1974), pp. 235–254; repr. as Study IX in *Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art* (London, 1992); ibid., "On Byzantine Boxes," *Journal of the Walterts Art Gallery* 42, no. 3 (1984–1985), pp. 32–47; repr. as Study XVI in *Late Antique and Byzantine Ivory Carving* (London, 1998); Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Cup of San Marco and the 'Classical' in Byzantium," in *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Kunst 800–1250: Festschrift für Florentine Mütherich zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Katharina Bierbrauer, Peter K. Klein, and Williband Sauerländer (Munich, 1985), pp. 167–174; Henry Maguire, "Epigrams, Art, and the 'Macedonian Renaissance'," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 48 (1994), 105–115.

[92] For the Veroli Casket in general, see John Beckwith, *The Veroli Casket* (London, 1962); Cutler, "Byzantine Boxes," pp. 32–47; Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, *The*

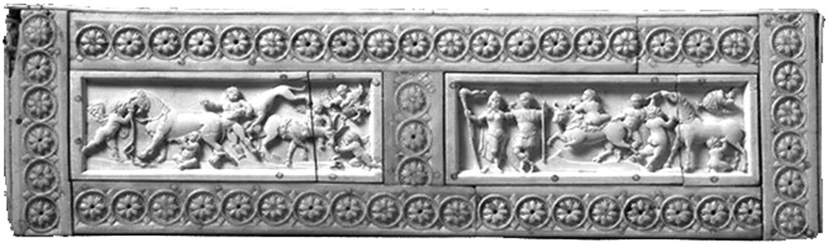

Figure 17.6. The Veroli Casket, tenth century. London, Victoria and Albert Museum 216–1865. Photo ©V&A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

dieval ivory and bone caskets, this one appears to have been specially commissioned.[93] It consists of ivory plaques and bone strips attached to a wooden core, and it is decorated with mythological subjects, among which there is little apparent coherence. The lid depicts the rape of Europa accompanied by stone-throwing youths, an orchestra, and dancers. On the right plaque of the back panel, we find Aphrodite with her lover, Adonis. Aphrodite's lover touches her face. She stands behind him, naked, but with a cloak over her shoulders, and she holds a lit torch in her right hand and a long rope of hair in her left. They are surrounded on this panel by a naked putto, pretending to be Europa, and images of bestiality. In general the images deliver to the beholder a sense of farce.[94]

A second image on the Veroli Casket is more puzzling. The left plaque on the front panel depicts a putto holding a mask in front of his face, through which he gazes at a young woman (figure 17.7). The mask represents a bearded old man with a closed mouth. Below, on the same panel, a second putto has been interpreted as drawing a thorn from the woman's foot. The woman seems to have a garland on her head and is half-naked, with a billowing mantle behind her shoulders, while next

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Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era AD *843–1261* (New York, 1997), p. 230, no. 153; *Byzantium 330–1453*, ed. Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki (London, 2008), no. 66.

[93] The average dimensions of the medieval ivory and bone caskets do not exceed 27 cm × 22 cm. The dimensions of the Veroli Casket are much larger—L. 40.5 cm × W. 16 cm × H. 11.2 cm—and thus suggest a special commission. For a detailed discussion on the medieval Byzantine ivory and bone caskets, see Anthousa Papagiannaki, "The Production of Middle Byzantine Ivory, Bone, and Wooden Caskets with Secular Decoration," 3 vols. (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2006).

[94] Cutler, "Byzantine Boxes," pp. 44–45.

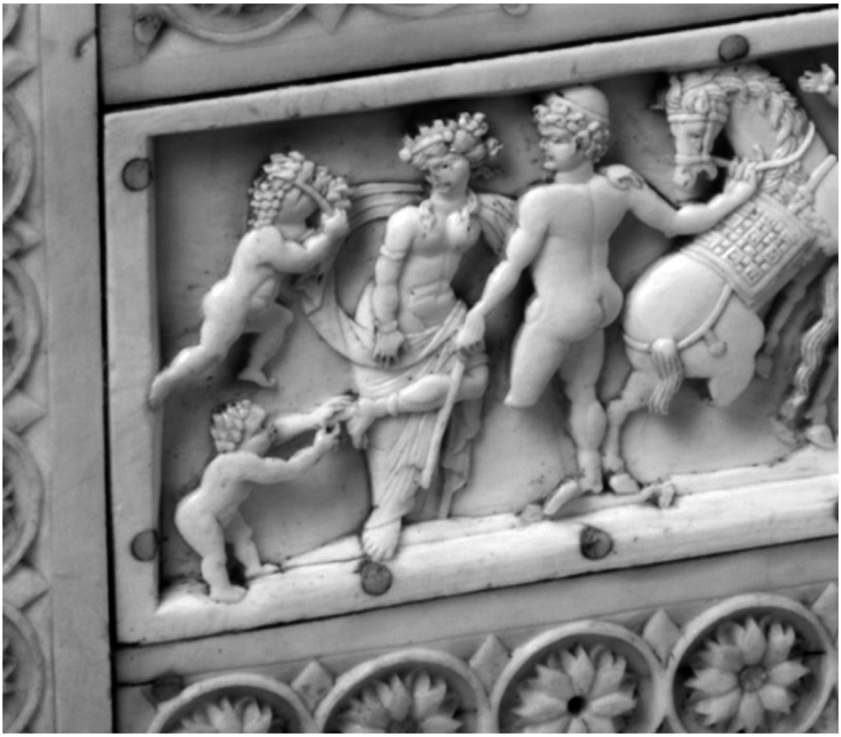

Figure 17.7. Aphrodite and lover, detail from the Veroli Casket, tenth century. London, Victoria and Albert Museum 216–1865. Photo ©V&A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

to her a male figure holds the reins of a horse. John Beckwith admits that the woman's posture recalls Aphrodite loosening her sandal, but has called the male figure Kastor or Hippolytos. Thus, the female figure could be either Helen or Phaidra, but he does not, however, provide convincing evidence for such identification.[95] At the same time, Kurt Weitzmann prefers him as Hippolytos and his companion as Phaidra from the Euripides play *Hippolytus Crowned*, an interpretation accepted by Erika Simon, who comments, however, that a different reading of the female figure could be that she is Aphrodite.[96] The question, though, remains: whom does this figure depict? The depiction of the female figure recalls elements found in the iconography of Aphrodite: her posture is generally reminiscent of the iconography of Aphrodite loosening her sandal, and her half-draped body places her within the tradition of half-draped images of the goddess as described in the *ekphrasis* of Christodoros of Egypt.[97] Therefore, she could also be Aphrodite.

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[95] Beckwith, *The Veroli Casket*, p. 14. For the type of Aphrodite loosening her sandal, see Delivorrias et al., in *LIMC* 2, pp. 57–59, s.v. "Aphrodite," nos. 462–474.

[96] Beckwith, *The Veroli Casket*, p. 14; Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology*, p. 174; Erika Simon, "Nonnos und das Elfenbeinkästchen aus Veroli," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäo-*

It is clear that modern scholarship on the Veroli Casket has used Classical mythology to identify these figures without, however, taking into consideration how a medieval Byzantine audience might have understood them. Leaving aside all the above speculation on the sources of this particular scene, a simpler explanation might be that the figures are masquerading as characters from Classical mythology. Instead of depicting specific characters, they play at being mythological characters.[98] The flower garland on the woman's head could be an element denoting a theatrical play, where the figure plays at being "Aphrodite." After all, as noted earlier, garlands were among the props used on staged mimes. It is, in my opinion, exactly this farcical element—the Aphrodite imagery included—that unites the images that otherwise appear to be unrelated.

The nudity of the figures on the Veroli Casket, as well as the lack of inscriptions identifying the figures, has led Henry Maguire to claim that this iconography is intended to mock those images and thus avoid charges of idolatry.[99] This argument draws on the opinions of Eusebius and Constantine the Rhodian, cited earlier, that the antique imagery in Constantinople was meant to be ridiculed. As we saw earlier in the case of Leo Choirosphaktes, in the tenth century, idolatry was a serious accusation that could be leveled against anyone. By not attaching names to the images, the identity of the figures is not defined, and thus pagan imagery is not highlighted as such. If the Veroli Casket and other medieval images represent mimes, then it would be natural for artists to depict their figures in an antique style, because the mimics performed in antique disguises. As for the lack of inscriptions, we should keep in mind that the masses did not have the education of the upper echelons of Byzantine society, and therefore they could not necessarily identify a goddess like Aphrodite from writing. They could identify her image,

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logischen Instituts 79 (1964), 324–330, where she mentions that if it was not for Weitzmann's identification of the female figure as Phaidra, which she accepts, then the young woman's figure could be compared to Aphrodite.

[97] See note 93 above; Christodoros of Egypt, *Description*, vv. 78–81.

[98] Cutler, "Byzantine Boxes," pp. 32–47.

[99] Henry Maguire, "Other Icons: The Classical Nude in Byzantine Bone and Ivory Carvings," *Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 62 (2004), 14.

however, through recognition learned from mimic plays in the Hippodrome. Viewers could identify the spectacle and the characters involved, without recourse to inscriptions.

Conclusions

Aphrodite remained a continuous presence in both the public and private spheres from Late Antiquity well into medieval Byzantium. As Late Roman and Byzantine society evolved from pagan to Christian, so the image of Aphrodite adapted over time. This pagan goddess, once worshipped with her own cult in Classical antiquity, gradually lost her antique religious connotations. Her image could be viewed by both pagans and Christians as a symbol of an ancient past, inhabited by malevolent and hidden powers, as revealed in later attitudes towards antique statuary. Aphrodite could also balance Hellenistic culture with Christianity, as on the Projecta Casket. This goddess of love and beauty remained as an appropriate symbol of love and marriage. If we look beyond this traditional interpretation, in the realm of theatre, where she holds the part of the temptress, we find further explanation for her survival into medieval times. It is likely that images of this goddess from mimes survived as late as the tenth century and appeared in art, as on the Veroli Casket. Here again Aphrodite remains a symbol, but of a past now understood by the masses primarily through plays. It is clear that throughout the Christian centuries, Aphrodite still made her presence felt in more ways than one.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

APHRODITE DECONSTRUCTED: BOTTICELLI'S *VENUS AND MARS* IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

DAVID BELLINGHAM

Aphrodite / Venus appears regularly in the Renaissance literary and visual arts.[1] Patrons and artists found the image of this goddess of female beauty, fertility, and sexuality invaluable, not only as a fashionable mythological referent, indicative of their humanist interests in Classical antiquity, but also as a convenient excuse to introduce tabooed female nudity into their highly Christianized European culture.[2] Aphrodite's appearance in art, however, is somewhat paradoxical: on the one hand, she is the marginalized object of the male gaze in a culture that privileges the male as both producer and consumer of art; on the other hand, she is a goddess, deeply rooted in western civilization, who empowers the female. She therefore has the potential to become the privileged partner within the male / female binary opposition.[3] Images of Aphrodite are therefore of special interest in our postmodern age, with its poststructuralist love of texts containing ambiguous signs allowing for the interplay and

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[1] The titles "Aphrodite" (Greek) and "Venus" (Roman) should be read as interchangeable for the purposes of this paper, although Venus is mainly used because of the Italian context. The Renaissance preferred her Roman name, because of the revival of *romanitas* in Italian culture, but their understanding of the nature of the goddess was drawn from both Greek and Roman literary sources: from Homer and Plato, as much as from Virgil and Ovid.

[2] For a diachronic survey of Aphrodite, from antiquity to modernity, see Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image* (Harmondsworth, 1991). For her appearances in both visual and literary sources, see Jane Davidson Reed, *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300–1990s* (Oxford, 1993). See also K. Bender, *Identification of Artists, Types of Artworks and Lotka's Production Law in the Iconography of the Italian Venus from the Middle Ages to Modern Times* (www.lulu.com, 2008), especially figs. 1 and 2.

[3] For recent readings of Aphrodite / Venus as a multisemantic literary and visual sign and signifier of empowered female sexuality, see Theresa Tinkle, *Medieval Venuses and Cupids: Sexuality, Hermeneutics, and English Poetry* (Stanford, 1996); and Patricia Rubin, "The Seductions of Antiquity," in *Manifestations of Venus: Art and Sexuality*, ed. Caroline Arscott and Katie Scott (Manchester, 2000), pp. 24–38.

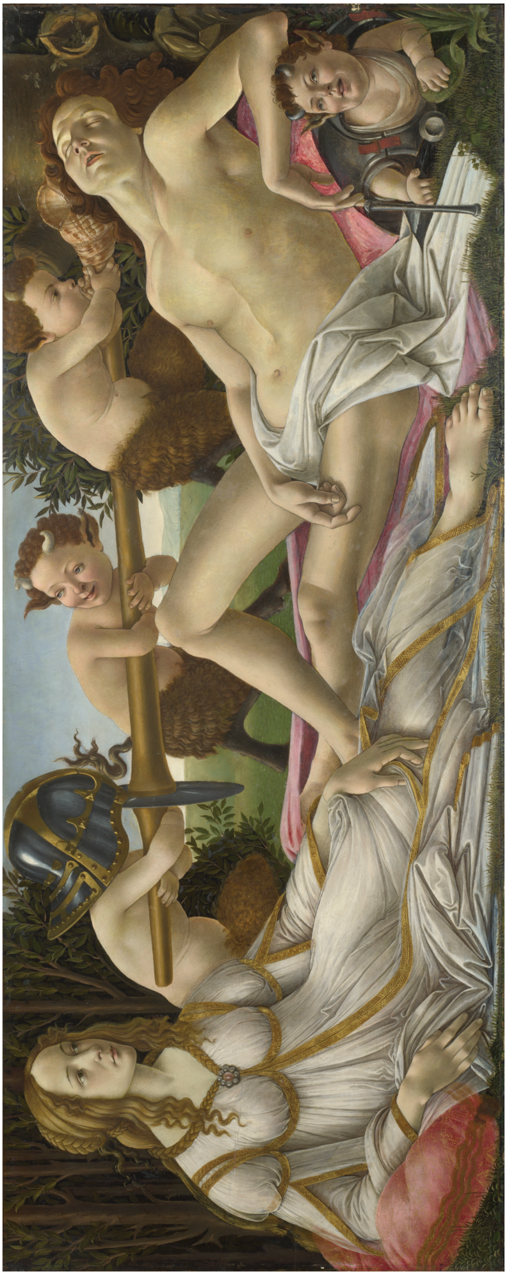

Figure 18.1. Sandro Botticelli, *Venus and Mars*, ca. 1483. Photo ©The National Gallery, London.

interchange of binary opposites. Sandro Botticelli's *Mars and Venus* or *Venus and Mars*—this gender-related interchange of titles appears throughout its modern documentation—now in the National Gallery, London, is therefore a perfect example of such a slippery visual text (figure 18.1).[4] *Venus and Mars* is also the earliest extant post-antique panel painting of the pair of lovers.[5] It is clear that Botticelli had no received tradition of iconography and was thus able to create an entirely new visual text.

The Medici, Botticelli, and Neoplatonism

The strategy of this chapter is not to deconstruct the painting, so much as to demonstrate how it deconstructs itself by means of its inherent ambiguity. I will argue that this ambiguity is not so much the result of the conflicting and competing readings of scholarship, but rather a deliberate ambiguity permeating the work itself. Textual ambiguity was the fundamental intention of the painter and his cultural circle. Botticelli's major patrons, the Florentine Medici family, were steeped in the revived Classical philosophy of Neoplatonism. The family tutor was Marcilio Ficino (AD 1433–1499), author of the most important Neoplatonist Renaissance writings: these texts constituted a revival and revision of ancient Platonic ideas adapted for the Christian theology of the Renaissance.[6] An essential and dynamic feature of Neoplatonist teaching was its encouragement to perceive a number of different layers of meaning within a single text, whether literary or visual. The practice of this multisemantic analysis of the text, it was believed, would lead the mind / soul of the reader / perceiver from the base natural world of materials and the (corrupt) senses to higher and heavenly spiritual planes.[7] Plato's theory of ideas was thus adapted to the Christian spiritual journey to God, which Ficino referred to as "Cosmic Love": thus he perceived "Platonic Love" as equal to "Christian Love."[8] As a corollary of this Platonic / Christian strategy for the consumption of texts, the Neoplatonic philosophy also encouraged the production of literary and visual texts that contained several different layers of meaning relating to the antique, biblical, and contemporary worlds.[9] As these texts were intended for the private consumption of the sophisticated humanist circle of the Medici family, it is not surprising that their layers of meaning tend to remain hidden from the modern viewer. It is also probable that they were deliberately constructed as hermetic texts: in other words, that hermeneutics, the very act of reading them and puzzling over their meanings, was part of the process towards Platonic / Christian enlightenment.[10] Ernst Gombrich was one of the first to identify this process: "To them [Florentine Neoplatonists] the myths were not only a mine of edifying metaphors. They were in fact yet another form of revelation … The pagan lore properly understood could only point towards the same truth which God had made manifest through the Scriptures."[11]

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[4] Preference is for *Venus and Mars*. The painting itself privileges the female by placing her on the left, thus the viewer is encouraged to read her image first, and most modern interpretations agree that she is the dominant partner in one way or another.

[5] According to K. Bender, *Identification of Artists*, there are no surviving images of *Venus and Mars* before 1450, and only five from between 1450 and 1500, of which the Botticelli is the earliest individual panel. Ercole de' Roberti includes the pair as a detail amongst many other figures in his *Month of September* fresco (ca. 1472) in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara. This predates the Botticelli by about ten years, but it is unlikely that the Florentine painter would have seen it. Reed, *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology* 1, p. 196, attributes the de' Roberti fresco to his colleague Francesco della Cossa.

[6] All dates in this article are AD unless otherwise noted. Liana Cheney, *Quattrocento Neoplatonism and Medici Humanism in Botticelli's Mythological Paintings* (New York, 1985), provides an excellent introduction to the influence of Marsilio Ficino on the Medici circle in general and Botticelli in particular.

Identifying Venus

The Florentine artist Sandro Botticelli (ca. 1445–1510) highlights the goddess Venus in some of his most renowned secular paintings. These include *Primavera* (ca. 1482) and *Birth of Venus* (ca. 1484–1486), both now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, and *Venus and Mars* (ca. 1483), now

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[7] Cheney, *Quattrocento Neoplatonism*, p. 22.

[8] For discussions of "Cosmic Love" see: Marcilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, trans. Sears Jayne (Dallas, 1985), p. 11; and Cheney, *Quattrocento Neoplatonism*, ch. 3.

[9] For the similar Neoplatonic aims of Botticelli and the Medici poets and philosophers, see Arnolfo Ferruolo, "Botticelli's Mythologies, Ficino's *De Amore*, Poliziano's *Stanze per la Giostra*: Their Circle of Love," *Art Bulletin* 37 (1955), 17–25.

[10] Tinkle, *Medieval Venuses*, pp. 1–8, argues that this process was already underway in the late medieval period.

[11] Ernst H. Gombrich, "*Icones Symbolicae*: The Visual Image in Neoplatonic Thought," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948), p. 169.

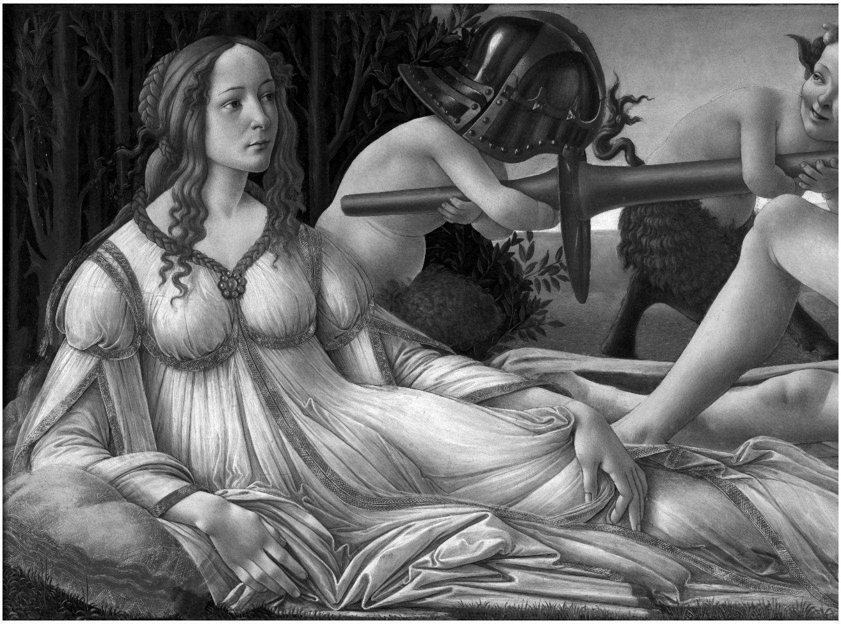

Figure 18.2. Detail of figure 18.1, showing Venus. Photo ©The National Gallery, London.

in the National Gallery, London.[12] To the classicist, the identification of Venus in *Birth of Venus* is indisputable: her nudity and her scallop-shell support are common attributes of the goddess in ancient art, and they are (literally) centralized in Botticelli's painting, thus creating an unambiguous iconic image of Venus' birth. In *Primavera* she is modestly draped with a white gown under a purple robe. Ronald Lightbown argues that, when draped, Venus signifies the "goddess of love and marriage" or "nuptial Venus," as opposed to "the goddess of lust" when depicted naked.[13] The absolute identification of Venus in *Primavera* and in *Venus and Mars*, however, is far from certain and has been openly challenged by some.[14] Venus' identification in *Primavera* is only by association with

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[12] Ronald Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli: Life and Work* (London, 1989), pp. 122–145, pl. 54 (*Primavera*); pp. 152–163, pl. 56 (*Birth of Venus*).

[13] Lightbown, *Life and Work*, pp. 127 and 164.

[14] Thus Venus in *Primavera* has been reinterpreted as Isis: Jean Gillies "The Central Figure in Botticelli's 'Primavera'," *Woman's Art Journal* 2 (1981), 12–16. Venus in *Venus and Mars* has been interpreted as a nymph: Paul Holberton, "Botticelli's *Hypnerotomachia* in the National Gallery, London: A Problem of the Use of Classical Sources in Renaissance

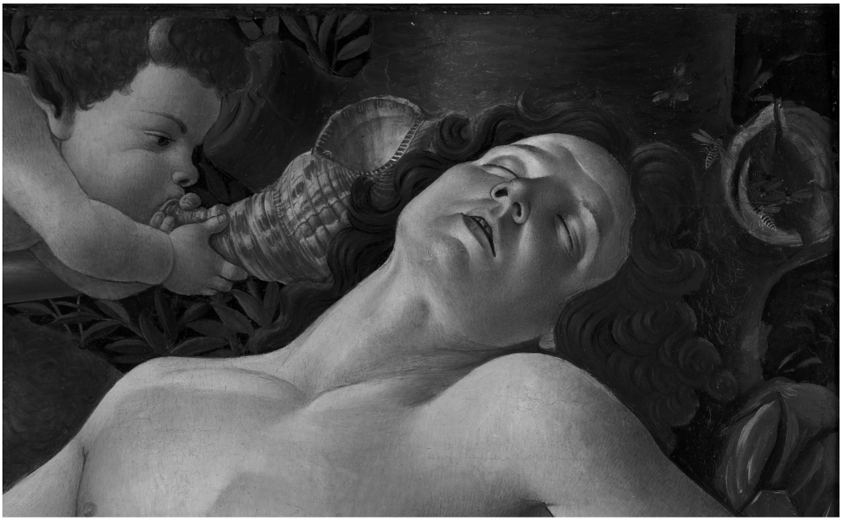

Figure 18.3. Detail of figure 18.1, showing Mars. Photo ©The National Gallery, London.

other aspects of the painting, such as the three Graces, who stand to the left, and her sacred myrtle plant, which forms a framing backdrop to her image.

In *Venus and Mars* she is once more draped, though now in a white robe without the purple gown (figure 18.2). Arnolfo Ferruolo argues that the three paintings present a sequence—in parallel to events in Poliziano's contemporary poem, *Stanze*—in which Venus develops from naked goddess of beauty (*Birth of Venus*) to purple-robed goddess of love (*Primavera*), to white-robed goddess of enlightened love here in *Venus and Mars*.[15] As in *Birth of Venus*, the myrtle backdrop that partially frames the female identifies her as Venus. Her identification as Venus is also suggested by association with the other figures in the painting, which include the diminutive Pan / Satyr-like creatures playing with the armor of a sleeping young man, usually interpreted as Mars, her lover (figures 18.3–4).[16] Here there are further problems for the classicist. In

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Art," *Illinois Classical Studies* 9 (1984), 149–182; and Rubin, "The Seductions of Antiquity," pp. 37–38.

[15] Ferruolo, "Botticelli's Mythologies," pp. 23–25.

[16] For a select bibliography and brief synopsis of scholarly interpretations before 1978, see Lightbown, *Botticelli*, pp. 56–58. Later interpretations include Holberton, "Botticelli's *Hypnerotomachia*"; Lightbown, *Botticelli*, pp. 163–170; Rubin, "The Seductions of Antiquity"; Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill, 2001), especially

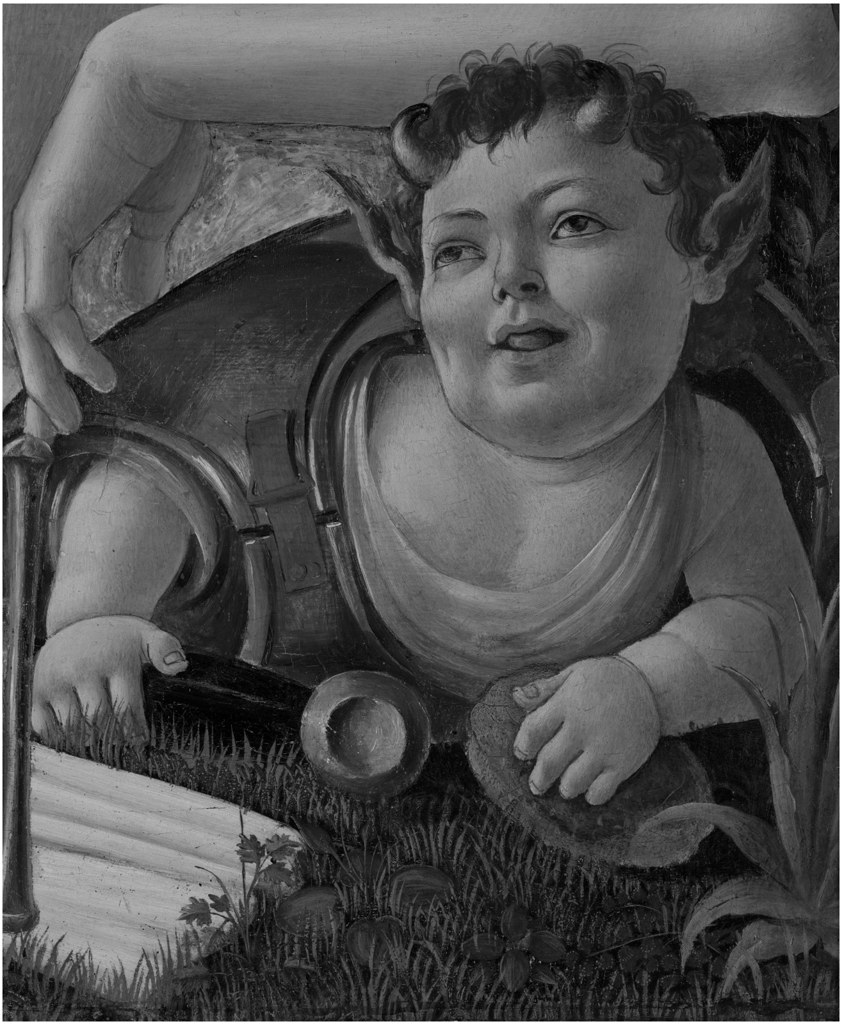

Figure 18.4. Detail of figure 18.1, showing Pan / Satyr inside the cuirass of Mars. Photo ©The National Gallery, London.

ancient images of Mars and Venus, it is the *Erotes* ('Cupids'), the winged putti of Renaissance art, and the offspring of Venus herself, who play with Mars' armor; and Mars is depicted as a mature, bearded man, with red

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pp. 119–129; David L. Clark, "Botticelli's Venus and Mars and Other Apotropaic Art for Tuscan Bedrooms," *Aurora: The Journal of the History of Art* 7 (2006), 1–18; and Hans Körner, *Botticelli* (Cologne, 2006), pp. 266–274.

flesh, signifying his role as the god of war and the color of his celestial planet.[17] In Botticelli's image he is depicted as a youthful, ideal male: clean shaven, with flowing locks and pale flesh.

The exact subject of *Venus and Mars* has always been uncertain: there are no contemporary accounts of the painting, nor have modern scholars ever been able to entirely agree on who or what is represented. This last statement is true of most of Botticelli's secular paintings (and indeed of some of the religious ones), but *Venus and Mars* remains particularly enigmatic. The modern title, itself a nineteenth-century fabrication, may not accurately reflect how Botticelli and his quattrocento patrons intended the image to be read. This deliberate mix of meanings, inherited from late medieval writers, is one of the factors that increase the ambiguity of such texts, making them so difficult to read and interpret. Theresa Tinkle argues this in relation to Venus and Cupid, who "appear often and prominently in medieval literature, but, as they transform with each new setting, they resemble less a certain antique couple than a motley horde of 'fabulous personages.'"[18]

It would have been essential to Botticelli and his Neoplatonist patrons that he avoid an overcentralized iconic image that might encourage a simplistic and two-dimensional reading. The very act of making it difficult to identify individual characters, as well as to understand the interplay between them, encouraged the multisemantic readings so beloved of the Neoplatonists and propagated biblical, mythological, and contemporary meanings within a single literary or visual text. These meanings appear most obviously in the visible surface narrative, which lends itself to the modern title, *Venus and Mars* (or *Mars and Venus*). The reasoning for this title is as follows: at textual surface level, the two figures appear to be idealized and are therefore gods; they also appear in an intimate situation and are therefore likely to be the divine lovers Aphrodite and Ares (*Venus and Mars*); finally, the presence of armor as an attribute strengthens the likelihood that the male is Mars. Alternative meanings also appear subtextually, however, in the metaphorical language of that very surface narrative. The metaphors themselves are slippery and can deconstruct and recombine into other metaphors, producing other layers of meaning.

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[17] See, for example the, painting of Mars and Venus from The House of Mars and Venus in Pompeii (vii.9.47), now in Naples Archaeological Museum, cat. 9248: Ludwig Curtius, *Die Wandmalerei Pompejis* (Leipzig, 1929), fig. 149, pl. 1. A virtually naked Venus reclines in a draped Mars' lap; however, she holds his spear, whilst her winged *erotes* play with his helmet and sword. There are thus remarkable parallels with Botticelli's image, in spite of the fact that he could not have witnessed the painting, excavated centuries later. Many mythological Roman wall paintings such as this were probably replications of earlier Classical and Hellenistic easel paintings.

[18] Tinkle, *Medieval Venuses*, p. 1.

Text and Context

The attempt to identify and interpret layers of meaning in an art object is more or less obstructed by several factors: the passing of time (in this case some 525 years), lack of original provenance, and the modern positioning within a museum. A problem with "the project of art history," as Stephen Melville states, is that "precisely because the becoming available of art is the story of its detachment from context, there will be a deep tension within the art-historical project between the historicity of its object, the rhythms that organize art as art, and the history in or through which works were lived."[19] Before attempting a deconstruction of the imagery and meanings of *Venus and Mars*, therefore, it is essential to try to resolve this "deep tension" by recontextualizing the painting within (at least something like) its original location.

The original physical location and thereby the context of Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* are unknown. It only reemerged into the art market in the nineteenth century, when it acquired its modern title: I will show that this title is oversimplistic and even misleading.[20] The wooden panel painting now hangs as an apparently portable easel painting in the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery, where it is presented within the broader strategic framework of the museum as part of a canonical series of familiar masterpieces by some of the greatest Renaissance artists.[21] In this art-historical setting, the original function and viewing context remains obscure to the modern viewer, although some attempt at displaying it in its original context has been made by describing it as a *spalliera*

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[19] Stephen Melville, "The Temptation of New Perspectives," *October* 52 (1990), p. 6.

[20] The modern provenance history is relatively recent, which compounds problems of original context and meaning. The painting was purchased in Florence circa 1868 by Alexander Barker, who subsequently loaned it to South Kensington (Victoria and Albert Museum), where it was referred to as "*Mars Asleep*" (*The Athenaeum* [30 October 1869], p. 568). In 1871 it was sold at Christie's to the National Gallery for £ 1,050 (Christie's, 6–8 June 1874, lot 88).

[21] For a critique of the "still-Vasarian" canon of art as propagated by the museum, see Philip Wright, "The Quality of Visitors' Experiences in Art Museums," in *The New Museology*, ed. Peter Vergo (London, 1989), especially pp. 122–123.

(‘wall panel placed at shoulder height’) and positioning it above a *cassone* (‘wedding chest’) in a room themed as “the patrician Palazzo.” Although traditional scholarship has always discussed the painting in the topographical context of Florence (Botticelli’s birthplace) and more specifically within the ambience of the Medici (Botticelli’s major patrons), hard evidence of exact provenance remains unknown, and analysis of the object is necessarily based on a hypothetical patron as well as original function and location. Likewise, the painting lacks a signature or any other empirical documentary evidence of the artist or date of production. In spite of this, it exhibits such strong affinities, in terms of both content and style, with well-documented paintings by Sandro Botticelli, that no one has ever seriously doubted its authorship or its Florentine provenance.[22]

As the result of its lack of absolute provenance, there are particular problems involved in rediscovering the original function of *Venus and Mars* and thereby resolving the significance of the image within its pristine spatial context; however, the internal physical properties of the painting itself offer valuable clues as to its original function and context. It is painted in egg tempera and oil on a prepared panel of poplar wood, measuring 69.2 × 173.4 cm. The highly unusual format, scale, and media of *Venus and Mars*, when compared with other examples of this type of painting, suggest two possible functions: it was either the front panel of a *cassone* or, as most scholars have argued, a *spalliera*.[23] The latter is more likely: painted *cassoni* were declining in fashion at the time of its production, and no surviving *cassoni* are above 60 cm in height.[24] If it were part of a *cassone*, by definition its location would be at the foot of the bed in the marriage chamber and, if a *spalliera*, its erotic subject matter would equally strongly suggest the walls of such a bedroom. In either case, therefore, it is reasonable to accept the marriage chamber as a likely context, and this is broadly accepted by scholarship.

The exact date of production of *Venus and Mars* is also unrecorded. Scholarly dates, all based on iconographic arguments and / or stylistic proximity to dated works, vary between 1475 and 1486.[25] This ten-year date span, although imprecise, is nonetheless significant because this was a time when domestic, as opposed to public and / or sacred, consumption of mythological art such as *Venus and Mars* was beginning to proliferate in the Italian cities. It is also interesting that by this period, responsibility for decorating the marriage chamber had passed from the bride's family to that of the groom.[26] This might imply that the imagery of such decorations as *Venus and Mars* is authorized by the male and therefore ideologically weighted more towards the male than the female gaze; however, analysis will show that this gender bias would seem to be absent from the painting.

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[22] Although one of its earliest modern commentators suggested that it was not made but only “influenced” by Botticelli (*The Athenaeum* [30 October 1869], p. 568).

[23] For a recent discussion of the painting’s function, see Hans Körner, *Botticelli* (Cologne, 2006), p. 274. For changing fashions in marriage-chamber furniture, see, most recently, Caroline Campbell, *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence: The Courtauld Wedding Chests* (London, 2009), pp. 12–27.

[24] Körner, *Botticelli*, p. 273.

Composition and Syntax

The painting exhibits a classicizing tripartite composition, which relates to Platonic aesthetics of proportion. It is divided into three sections both horizontally and vertically. The horizontal sections are divided by the jousting lance and the left leg and taut military cloak of Mars. The vertical sections are formed by the backdrop of foliage and its central aperture. The symmetrical balance of the two reclining figures is also a signifier of classicism. Everything about the composition and its syntactical arrangement is fashionably *all'antica* ('in the ancient fashion').

It was suggested above that the object was probably a *spalliera* painted for a marriage chamber and placed on the walls of the room as part of the wainscoting, at shoulder height. The composition and syntax, moreover, suggest that the painting would have been particularly effective as the headboard of a bed.[27] The figures are close to the picture plane and would therefore have appeared to be lying on the actual bed, there being no foreground, and the background enclosed by dark laurels, apart from a central break of innovative aerial perspective. Linear perspective tends to distance the viewer from the image. Here nothing comes between the viewer's gaze and the image, a device used for similarly erotic purposes by later Rococo painters: in this respect Botticelli is using "progressive" formal ideas.[28] Yet the "unnaturalistic" lack of developed chiaroscuro and severe outlines of the figures, apart from projecting the figures into a dark or lamp-lit bedroom, paradoxically offers a physically remote and idealized effect with which both wife and husband could empathize.

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[25] Lightbown, *Botticelli*, p. 56.

[26] Campbell, *Love and Marriage*, p. 15.

[27] David Clark's identification of this panel as the headboard for Lucrezia de' Medici, the oldest daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici, and Jacopo di Giovanni Salviati, and subsequent redating of the panel to the time of their marriage—1487 or 1488, rather than 1483—is unfortunately unfounded, as he relies on a nonexistent doctoral thesis on "Sandro Botticelli" by Simone Reinhardt (Bonn University, 2001), which is, in fact, an unavailable MA thesis: Clark, "Botticelli's Venus and Mars," p. 1, n. 1.

The Surface Text

The two figures of Venus and Mars are set within a contemporary landscape, with contemporary attributes (figure 18.1). In the distance, viewed across the flat fields of the plain of the River Arno, is the city of Florence. Though deliberately indistinct because of the artist's (relatively pioneering) employment of aerial perspective, behind the medieval towers and Brunelleschi's recently completed dome can be seen the foothills of the mountains on the northern side of the river.[29] The setting would therefore appear to be several miles to the south of Florence. In the fields between the city and the evergreen hedge in the foreground, three small curvilinear objects are visible. These are indistinct but would appear to have been intentionally painted because they diminish in scale in accordance with perspective. Close viewing of the painting in situ suggests that these are men working the fields with plowshares. Plowing, together with the total lack of flowers on the various plants in the painting, might indicate the season of late Autumn / Winter. The absence of flowers would appear to be meaningful because Botticelli includes flowers and colored fruit in both *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus* as signifiers of both Spring and the fecundity of Venus. Their absence might therefore imply that Venus' mundane fertility is not the most important signifier in this scene. Patricia Rubin convincingly argues that

> [t]he nymph, or Venus, of the painting can be construed as a specific type of viewing object: her beauty provokes a gaze which inspires the desire for love. The concupiscence of this sort of love is not lust but a spiritually ennobling force. As seen and as seeing (and hence the importance of her open eyes and steady gaze) she has the potential to influence the subjectivity of her beholder. Conversely, the viewer's subjectivity is constructed

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[28] Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, Eng., 1981), p. 92.

[29] Lightbown, *Botticelli*, p. 164, sees this more generically as "a walled town"; most scholars make no mention of it.

> by the nature of the gaze: if lustful and carnal, it is bestial; if loving and enlightened, it is human and humane. This would be the case whether the actual spectator were a man or a woman.[30]

Rubin's understanding of the gaze of Venus and of both the male and the female viewer makes sense if the painting functioned as the headboard of the marriage bed. Rubin's analysis also implies an "ethics of the gaze," which would have been of great importance to the Neoplatonist viewer. As Pierre Bourdieu comments, "Only pure pleasure—ascetic, empty pleasure which implies the renunciation of pleasure … is predisposed to become a symbol of moral excellence and the work of art a test of ethical superiority."[31] In this respect Venus functions (and not only in this painting) as a powerful ambiguous visual sign that challenges our aesthetic morality.

The sleeping figure of Mars is depicted *all'antica*, as noted above (figure 18.3). The beardless, youthful male figure of Mars is remarkably similar to Botticelli's images of the adult Christ. The dead Christ in *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* (ca. 1490–1492), now in Munich, could be from the same model.[32] Both Mars and Christ exhibit the toned gymnastic physique of idealized ancient statues of youthful gods and victorious athletes; indeed, their pale flesh suggests the white marble of antique statues rediscovered in the Renaissance. This would be a visual parallel of the humanist theological tendency to link the pagan and Christian worlds. His military cloak, positioned to preserve his modesty, is colored with the warmest pigment in the painting. The pink / red color signifies both the power of the ancient *generalissimo* (the color was reserved for the *Imperator*) and also the contemporary Florentine fashion, whereby pink cloth was the most popular color for gentlemen in the Medici circle.[33] The physiognomy of his head and his hairstyle are less idealized than the body: he has a frown line on his forehead, and his high forehead, long nose, and round, deep-set eyes are close to the features of Botticelli's portrait of Giuliano de' Medici (ca. 1476–1477), now in

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[30] Rubin, "The Seductions of Antiquity," p. 37.

[31] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London, 1984), pp. 489–491.

[32] Lightbown, *Botticelli*, pl. 80.

[33] For pink as a fashionable color, see Gene Adam Brucker, *Florence: 1138–1737* (London, 1983), p. 164. For the use of this color and a similar military cloak in Renaissance images of *generalissimi*, see Piero della Francesca's painting of Christ in the guise of victorious emperor in the *Resurrection* in the Museo Civico, Sansepolcro, Italy: Carlo Bertelli, *Piero della Francesca* (New Haven, 1982), pp. 198–201, pl. 11.

Washington, D.C.[34] Likewise, his armor is typical of the contemporary Italian warrior and / or jouster. This is likely to be a deliberate signifier of the contemporary world, because Botticelli and his contemporaries must have had abundant antique sculptural sources for Classical armor. The *sallet* ('helmet') humorously appropriated by the leftmost satyr appears to be both decorative and of heavy design, indicating a jousting rather than a battlefield function (figure 18.2). The cuirass (humorously inhabited by one of the satyrs) and the sword (clutched in the right hand of the same satyr) are further objects of armor associated with the joust (figure 18.4). The jousting equipment and the similarity of Mars' head to that of Giuliano de' Medici might indicate a link to Giuliano's famous participation in the Florentine joust of 29 January 1475, recorded in the celebrated classicizing poem of the Medici's poet Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494), *Stanze per la Giostra*.[35] The Autumn / Winter setting of the painting provides a suitable frame for the January date.

Venus and Simonetta Vespucci

The figure of Venus is the least classicizing of the figures in terms of her body, dress, and hairstyle: as Venus she is somewhat concealed rather than revealed (figure 18.2). Neither is she depicted with any of the usual attributes of the goddess: there are satyrs but no *erotes*.[36] She sports an expensive contemporary nightgown with gilded borders. Its pure whiteness is significant because it provides a visual mirror of Poliziano's description of Simonetta Vespucci (ca. 1453–1476) as a nymph: "She is fair-skinned, unblemished white, and white as is her garment, though ornamentedf with roses, flowers, and grass; the ringlets of her golden hair descend on a forehead humbly proud."[37] The absence of the floral decoration in Botticelli's rendering is in concordance with the lack of flowers throughout the painting, a signifier of Autumn / Winter, as argued above. Although modestly ankle-length, her robe is somewhat translucent, its thin material unashamedly displaying her bodily contours and its borders modeled to emphasize her bust. Her left hand parts the material just above the knee to reveal a diaphanous tunic. Her elaborate coiffure is in a style fashionable amongst wealthy quattrocento Florentine women, and this, together with her physiognomy, bears a close resemblance to Botticelli's own (supposed) portraits of Simonetta Vespucci (ca. 1453–1476).[38] Simonetta had famous emotional ties to Giuliano de' Medici (1453–1478), younger brother of Lorenzo (*Il Magnifico*) de' Medici (1449–1492). Although Simonetta was married to another man, Giuliano had become her chivalric (or Platonic!) lover, and he represented and fought for her in the Florentine joust of 1475. Wilhelm von Bode persuasively argued in 1926 that Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* represents Giuliano and Simonetta.[39] Since then scholarship has tended to avoid and / or reject this interpretation in favor of more allegorical Neoplatonic figures, or other married couples. The physiognomic similarity of the two adult figures to Giuliano and Simonetta, however, must have remained striking to Botticelli's contemporaries, and it seems perverse to avoid reading the *Venus and Mars* as being, at least on one level, an intentional representation of the famous lovers. This Neoplatonic image is potentially multisemantic; therefore the employment by Botticelli of recognizable portraits does not necessarily mean that the two figures only represent Giuliano and Simonetta: they could equally signify both the mythological *Venus and Mars* and the historical Alexander and Roxana (as I will discuss below).

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[34] Lightbown, *Botticelli*, pp. 1–2, B20, pl. 18, pp. 30–31; Lightbown, *Life and Work*, pl. 24.

[35] Angelo Poliziano, *The Stanze*, trans. David Quint (University Park, 1993).

[36] A generation later (ca. 1505), Piero di Cosimo painted the far less ambiguous *Venus, Mars (and Cupid)* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) in which the Venus is furnished with her associated attributes of Cupids, doves, and rabbits.

[37] Poliziano, *Stanze*, p. 23.

Two further visual signs appear to connect the painting with Giuliano and Simonetta. The flora and fauna in Botticelli's paintings are rarely otiose, and they are regularly used as a kind of internal frame for his icons and narratives, influencing their readings with their significance. Here the framing devices consist of a backdrop of an evergreen plant, variously interpreted as laurel (*laurus nobilis*) or myrtle (*myrtilis communis*) (figures 18.1–2). Its identification would be easier if the plant were in flower. Commentators who argue that the female is indeed Venus prefer myrtle because it is the sacred plant of the goddess.[40] Close inspection of the trunks, branches, and leaves of this plant strongly suggest, however, that it is laurel (figure 18.2). Myrtle has a less stocky trunk, and much smaller leaves, which emerge in symmetrical pairs, whereas here the leaves are not paired, as is the case for the laurel. The laurel was regularly employed by Lorenzo de' Medici as a verbal and visual signifier of his family—Italian *lauro* being a partial homophone of Lorenzo.[41] The plant is therefore a fitting framing device for his brother, Giuliano. It is possible that a small amount of myrtle also appears to the right of Venus, between the lance vamplate or hand guard, and the leg of the left-hand satyr; here the leaves appear to be the more delicate and paired ones of the myrtle (figure 18.2). It is interesting that Lorenzo de' Medici pairs laurel with myrtle in one of his own poems, *Ambra*: "Among the leafless trees, the verdant laurel stands alongside the fragrant Cyprian myrtle." An explicit link to Aphrodite is made here also by means of her epithet, Cyprian.[42] Therefore Botticelli, like his patron Lorenzo, has in fact paired the signifiers of both Venus and Lorenzo de' Medici, as he does in *Primavera*, where Venus is framed by her myrtle, and Zephyr and Aurora are framed by the stockier branches and larger leaves of the laurel.[43]

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[38] The identification of Simonetta Vespucci remains hypothetical because no authenticated portraits of her survive. See Lightbown, *Botticelli*, p. 2, C3, C4 and C5, pp. 116–118. For the coiffure, see Émile Bertaux, "Botticelli Costumier," *Revue de l'art Ancien et Moderne* 21 (1907), pp. 269–286 and 375–392. Bertaux demonstrates that such hairstyles were idealizations, but his argument that they were never actually worn by quattrocento women remains hypothetical.

[39] Wilhelm Arnold von Bode, *Botticelli* (Berlin, 1926), p. 22.

[40] Lightbown, *Botticelli*, p. 164.

The conch shell blown by one of the satyrs, who appears to be attempting to awaken Mars with its blast, is associated with Venus, as well as with female genitalia (figure 18.3).[44] In *Primavera*, Venus is depicted standing on a scallop shell: the Greek word κτείς can be translated as both 'scallop shell' and female 'genitalia.'[45] The combination of the phallic lance with the shell is a blatant metaphor of the sexual aspects inherent in the painting, and both objects are significantly turned against Mars to enhance Venus' dominance in the painting.[46] This gender role reversal conforms to the writings of Botticelli's Neoplatonic contemporaries. Thus Marcilio Ficino argued from astrology that "Venus dominates him [Mars] … But Mars never dominates Venus."[47]

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[41] *Risorgimento della Poesia Italiana dopo il Petrarca, ovvero Saggi di poesie toscane del secolo di Lorenzo dei Medici*, ed. L. Nardini and B.S. Buonaiuti (London, 1813), p. 279.

[42] Lorenzo de' Medici, *Selected Poems and Prose*, trans. Jon Thiem et al. (University Park, 1991), p. 139.

[43] Lightbown, *Botticelli*, p. 140.

[44] See note on Martial's *Epigram* 2.47.2 in Martial, *Epigrams, Book 2*, trans. Craig A. Williams (Oxford, 2004), pp. 170–172. James N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London, 1982), p. 82, discusses the verbal association between shells and female genitalia.

[45] LSJ s.v. *κτείς*. Baring and Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess*, p. 356.

[46] See Rubin, "The Seduction of Antiquity," p. 35.

[47] Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's* Symposium, p. 97.

The wasps that appear to emerge from a hole in the tree trunk in the top right corner of the painting offer another example of Botticelli's significant use of fauna (figure 18.3). *Vespe* is the Italian word for wasps, and, as many scholars have argued, their presence in *Venus and Mars* is actually a clever *rebus* ('coat of arms') that points to a member of the Vespucci family, either as the actual patron, or at least implicated in the iconography of the painting, as Simonetta would appear to have been.[48] This powerful Florentine family had connections with the Medici, and Botticelli had received several private commissions for paintings to decorate the residences of both families.[49]

As I noted above, von Bode has argued that this painting depicts Simonetta Vespucci and Giuliano de' Medici in the allegorical guise of *Venus and Mars*.[50] According to this hypothesis, Giuliano / Mars, exhausted after his jousting victory, has fallen asleep, and Simonetta / Venus magically appears to him in his dream as his victory prize, dressed in the festive robes of the jousting ceremony; the teasing satyrs are present only to remind the spectator that Giuliano's vision is but a dream. An alternative interpretation is based on the literary description of Giuliano's jousting standard in Poliziano's poem, and on the possibility that *Venus and Mars* is Botticelli's painted version of the same standard.[51] In Poliziano's poem Simonetta appears to Giuliano in a dream (2.28–32).[52] She is dressed in a white gown but is wearing Minerva's armor to protect her chastity; Simonetta is subsequently stripped of her armor, and Giuliano wears it into battle. Just as he is crowned with the laurel and olive of victory, however, Simonetta is taken from him in death. Gombrich is dismissive of this hypothesis:

> That Giuliano de' Medici … should have been portrayed in such a shape, and that Poliziano's poem should have been illustrated on this type of panel, would be without any documented parallel in the *quattrocento*.[53]

He ignores the possibility that Poliziano and Botticelli were themselves creating the precedent for such an image, and that the painting, as an allegorical commemoration for the recently deceased Simonetta (d. 1476) and Giuliano (d. 1477), was for a private not public context. Bode's reading, however, makes a lot of sense in terms of the iconography of the painting. In this reading, Venus becomes Simonetta / Minerva, and Mars becomes Giuliano.[54] Minerva's armor is stripped from Simonetta, leaving her in her white robe; the armor is carried towards Giuliano by the satyrs, who urge him to wake by sounding the conch shell in his ear, so that he can don the divine armor and head for battle. Simonetta dies in the poem, just as she had died of consumption in real life in 1476, aged about 23. Giuliano, also aged 23, was stabbed to death during the Pazzi conspiracy the following year.[55] On this level, Botticelli's painting becomes a moving allegorical commemoration of the hapless chivalric / Platonic lovers.

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[48] For arguments that this refers to the Vespucci, see Ernst H. Gombrich, "Botticelli's Mythologies: A Study in the Neoplatonic Symbolism of His Circle," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 8 (1945), 49, n. 2.

[49] Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth, 1965), p. 225.

[50] von Bode, *Botticelli* (Berlin, 1926), p. 22.

[51] Gombrich, "Botticelli's Mythologies," p. 50, n. 1; Lightbown, *Botticelli*, pp. 61–65.

[52] Poliziano, *Stanze*, pp. 80–85.

[53] Gombrich, "Botticelli's Mythologies," p. 50.

The Ancient Literary Source as Inspiration

As shown above, modern scholars have attempted, with varying degrees of success, to link *Venus and Mars* to several different literary sources, both contemporary and antique. Only one of these, from the ancient writer Lucian, is an indisputable source for the painting:

> But why need I mention those old sophists, historians, and chroniclers when there is the recent story of Aëtion the painter who showed off his picture of *The Marriage of Roxana and Alexander* at Olympia? Proxenides, one of the chief judges there at that time, was delighted with his talent and made Aëtion his son-in-law.
>
> You may well wonder at the quality of his work that induced a chief judge of the games to give his daughter in marriage to a stranger like Aëtion. The picture is actually in Italy; I have seen it myself and can describe it to you. The scene is a very beautiful chamber, and in it there is a bridal couch with Roxana, a very lovely maiden, sitting upon it, her eyes cast down in modesty, for Alexander is standing there. There are smiling Cupids: one is standing behind her removing the veil from her head and showing Roxana to her husband; another like a true servant is taking the sandal off her foot, already preparing her for bed; a third Cupid has hold of Alexander's cloak and is pulling him with all his might towards Roxana. The king himself is holding out a garland to the maiden and their best man and helper, Hephaestion, is there with a blazing torch in his hand, leaning on a very

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[54] Rudolf Wittkower, "Transformations of Minerva in Renaissance Imagery," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2, no. 3 (1939), 202–203, demonstrates that the Renaissance iconography of Minerva sometimes overlaps with that of Venus *Victrix* ('Victorious').

[55] Lightbown, *Botticelli*, p. 72.

> handsome youth—I think he is Hymenaeus (his name is not inscribed). On the other side of the picture are more Cupids playing among Alexander's armor; two of them are carrying his spear, pretending to be labourers burdened under a beam; two others are dragging a third, their king no doubt, on the shield, holding it by the handgrips; another has gone inside the corset, which is lying breast-up on the ground—he seems to be lying in ambush to frighten the others when they drag the shield past him.
>
> All this is not needless triviality and a waste of labour. Aëtion is calling attention to Alexander's other love—War—, implying that in his love of Roxana he did not forget his armor. A further point about the picture itself is that it had a real matrimonial significance of quite a different sort—it courted Proxenides' daughter for Aëtion! So as a by-product of his *Alexander's Wedding* he came away with a wife himself and the King for best-man. His reward for his marriage of the imagination was a real-life marriage of his own.[56]

Botticelli's paintings contributed to a Renaissance tradition of works based on ancient literary accounts of lost Classical paintings. Like his fellow humanists, he used Classical texts as a quarry for contemporary ideas: his *Birth of Venus* and *Calumny of Apelles* were based on Pliny the Elder and Lucian, respectively, and he clearly attempted to reconstruct works by the famous ancient painters. Apelles was the sole court painter of Alexander the Great, a position to which Botticelli aspired in relation to the courts of both the Medici and the Vespucci: indeed, contemporaries referred to Botticelli as a "second Apelles."[57]

The new Classical subject matter demanded new iconography: a mixture of antique models, contemporary religious iconography, or even dance choreography could be adapted to the new setting.[58] Thus in *Venus and Mars*, Botticelli might have borrowed the iconography of an ancient Roman sarcophagus, available to view in the Vatican; this included the reclining male and female protagonists, as well as attendant Cupids.[59] The artist clearly adapted this iconography to Lucian's description of a painting by the Greek artist Aëtion.[60] This literary *ekphrasis* depicted the marriage of Alexander and Roxana, in which *erotes* played with the great general's armor. This iconography was itself most probably intended as a parody of Greek mythological paintings of Mars and Venus. In these the gods are depicted in an intimate embrace whilst *erotes* play with Mars' armor. Thus Aëtion's painting was a version of a traditional image of Mars and Venus, in which the gods are replaced by the historical figures of Alexander and Roxana. The visual metaphor implies the quasi divinity of the Hellenistic royal couple, a metaphor that Alexander himself propagated throughout his life by assuming himself to be the son of Zeus.

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[56] Lucian, "Herodotus or Aëtion," in *The Works of Lucian* 6, trans. K. Kilburn (London, 1959), pp. 145–149.

[57] Lightbown, *Botticelli*, pp. 14 and 73: Ugolino Verino's Latin poem *Carliades* refers to Botticelli as "the successor of Coan Apelles."

[58] Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford, 1972), p. 78.

[59] Gombrich, "Botticelli's," pl. 13b. This iconography was also reflected in a mirror frame with reliefs of *Venus and Mars and Putti*, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; see Richard Stemp, *The Secret Language of the Renaissance* (London, 2006), p. 43.

[60] A codex of Lucian dated to 1425 existed in the library of Lorenzo de' Medici.

By re-creating Aëtion's painting and replacing Alexander and Roxana with figures who appear to be members of the contemporary Florentine elite, Botticelli has created a multilayered image that references Classical mythology, Hellenistic history, and his own world. The leonine hair of Mars and his youthful, gymnastically toned body are simultaneous referents to Alexander the Great, the young Giuliano de' Medici, and even Christ himself (figure 18.3). The subtextual metaphorical implication is that the two contemporary figures, Simonetta Vespucci and Giuliano de' Medici, are the equals not only of the pagan divinities Venus and Mars, but also of the historical Queen Roxana and King Alexander. Simultaneously, through visual similarity of the Giuliano / Mars figure to Christ, as noted above, the image deconstructs itself into a Christian text, with Venus as a Mary Magdalene figure contemplating Mars as Christ deposed from the cross.[61] This Christian referent would relate the pagan significance of the adulterous, lustful relationship between Venus and Mars (Venus was married to Vulcan) with the (potential, though apparently never fulfilled) relationship between the "prostitute" (as she was characterized by some Church Fathers) and Christ. In this Christian context, Venus can equally easily undergo deconstructive reversal from Magdalene into the oppositional virginal sign of Mary the mother of Christ.[62]

There is a highly significant alteration in Botticelli's version of Aëtion's painting. In place of the winged and childlike *erotes* of the sarcophagus and the literary text, Botticelli substitutes wingless but equally child-

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See R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge, Eng., 1954), p. 480.

[61] For images of Mary contemplating the dead Christ, see Lamentation over the Dead Christ (ca. 1490–1492) now in Munich; Lightbown, *Botticelli*, pl. 80.

[62] For iconographic connections between Venus and Mary, the mother of Christ, see note 61, where various "Marys" are responding to the dead Christ, and note 88, where Minerva deconstructs into Mary as well as Venus.

like Classical Pans / satyrs. These figures have been variously interpreted as Pans or satyrs / fauns by scholars; Renaissance literary descriptions suggest that they could be either.[63] Once again, the figures were probably intended to be deliberately ambiguous. Certainly, their portrayal as children would indicate that Botticelli wished the spectator to see and interpret them as directly oppositional to the *erotes* of Aëtion's painting: as *satyrini* ('little satyrs') versus *amorini* ('little loves'), and as mischievous children versus innocent children. Likewise, Pan is oppositional to Eros / Cupid: Natale Conti asserts that "*Fama est hunc cum Cupidine aliquando fuisse colluctatum, et victum*" ("It is rumoured that this [god Pan] once fought with Cupid, and was defeated").[64] Most sources, like Conti, tend to refer to Pan in the singular and satyrs in the plural, so the latter identification is preferred.

The presence of the satyrs in Botticelli's painting is a referent to the bestial nature of the love affair between Venus and Mars. Liana Cheney refers to three types of love, as discussed by Ficino. The first, *amor divinus* ('divine love'), is manifest when Venus *Celeste* ('Celestial Venus') is accompanied by her son Eros / Amor and involves contemplation of the spiritual world; the second, *amor vulgaris* ('human love'), is manifest in the physical world when *Eros / Amor* is accompanied by Venus *Volgare* ('Human Venus'); whilst the third, *amor ferinus* ('bestial love'), is manifest as "destructive and debauched because it resides in the lower order of the physical world and does not have a Venus (intelligence) to control or guide it."[65] Botticelli appears to have adopted Ficino's ideas in *Venus and Mars* by means of the replacement of the *erotes* (signifying 'divine / human love') with bestial satyrs (signifying 'bestial love'). Thus one of the painting's moral purposes is to demonstrate the spiritually damaging effects of lust. As Eugene Cantelupe states, "Often the legends of Venus … helped Renaissance man dignify passions that were once considered shameful, even depraved."[66]

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[63] Natale Conti, *Mythologiae* 5.6, pp. 138–141, in a facsimile of the 1567 reprint (London, 1976): "De Pane" ('Concerning Pan') and "De Satyris" ('Concerning Satyrs'). Conti quotes Homer's *Hymn to Pan* as describing Pan as *capripedem … deinde bicornem* ("goat-footed and two-horned"), whilst satyrs are described as *cornua habere in fronte, cum pars extrema similis esset caprarum* ("having horns on the forehead, and the lower body similar to goats"). All translations are by the present author unless otherwise noted.

[64] Conti, *Mythologiae* 5.6.14.

[65] Cheney, *Quattrocento Neoplatonism*, p. 23.

[66] Eugene B. Cantelupe, "The Anonymous Triumph of Venus in the Louvre: An Early Italian Renaissance Example of Mythological Disguise," *The Art Bulletin* 44 (1962), p. 242.

Venus as Eve

So far it has been argued that there are four possible readings of the man and woman in Botticelli's painting: Venus and Mars (mythological), Alexander and Roxana (ancient historical), Simonetta Vespucci and Giuliano de' Medici (contemporary historical), and Mary, mother of Christ, and / or Mary Magdalene with the deposed Christ (Christian). There is at least one more famous pair of lovers to be discovered beneath the surface image. This also involves the fauna (satyrs) and the flora. Scholarship has hitherto either disregarded or misinterpreted the full significance of the satyrs and the fruit held in the left hand of the satyr hiding in the cuirass of Mars / Alexander / Giuliano. The deliberate substitution with satyrs by Botticelli of the original winged *erotes* in Lucian's account of Aëtion's painting is highly curious, and the artist and his patron(s) must have intended some major alteration in the meaning of the original Greek painting. Charles Dempsey suggests that the Pans (as he interprets them) are present in order to induce a nightmarish panic into Mars.[67] Unlike *erotes*, Pans / satyrs are not associates of Venus. As powerful but sinister creatures of wild nature, they are in binary opposition to *erotes*: satyrs might indeed have suggested biblical devils within the Christian context of Botticelli's contemporaries. Botticelli's creatures are in fact highly reminiscent of the biblical devils employed in the artist's own illustrations for Dante's *Inferno*.[68] This iconographic connection with images of Satan's evil henchmen prompts a review of the other characters and objects in the painting.

Their apparently playful assault on Mars is actually sinister. As evil creatures, in binary opposition to the loving *erotes* of Aëtion's antique painting, they recontextualize *Venus and Mars*, prompting yet another way of reading the image. If the metamorphosed *erotes* signify the presence of Satan, then the reframed image is Christianized again: Venus becomes Eve, and Mars becomes Adam. The spectator is reminded that the love of *Venus and Mars* was adulterous. Eve's gaze becomes the gaze of knowledge: once she has tasted of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Eve has offered the fruit to Adam, who himself has fallen into sinful dreamings. The clothing of both figures now becomes a sign of their fall and their guilt. Eve's drapery, on other levels a sign of modesty, now comes to signify her own recently discovered sexuality: the fingers of her left hand are stroking drapery folds arranged in the form of a vulva (figure 18.2).[69]

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[67] Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, pp. 119–121.

[68] Kenneth Clark, *The Drawings by Sandro Botticelli for Dante's Divine Comedy* (London, 1976), pp. 57, 59, and 69 cites examples of Pans as devils.

The Forbidden Fruit

The careful placement of Adam's drapery signifies his newly discovered modesty, in more orthodox paintings represented by a fig leaf. A fig leaf might have nailed the image too firmly into a one-dimensional biblical context and would thus negate its Neoplatonist strategy. For the same reason, Botticelli may have resisted inclusion of the apple, which is so important an attribute of Adam and Eve in standard late medieval and Early Renaissance iconography. Instead he places a curious fruit beneath the left hand of the satyr hiding inside Mars' cuirass (figure 18.4). The correct identification of this fruit has to date eluded scholars.[70] Close observation reveals that the fruit is green in color and ovoid in shape, with a crease running from top to bottom, and a prickly surface. The centrality of the crease indicates that there must be three other creases at ninety degrees to the one visible on the paint surface, thus creating a four-sectioned fruit containing four seed chambers. This, together with the prickly rind, identifies the fruit as that of the *datura stramonium* plant, most commonly known as thorn apple (figure 18.5).[71] The plant was known in antiquity. According to Theophrastus,

> Of the plants called *strychnos* one induces sleep, the other (thorn-apple) causes madness … The kind which produces madness (which some call *thryoron* and some *peritton*) has a white hollow root about a cubit long. Of this three twentieths of an ounce in weight is given, if the patient is to become merely sportive and think himself a fine fellow; twice this dose if he is to go mad outright and have delusions; thrice the dose, if he is to be permanently insane …; four times the dose is given, if the man is to be killed.[72]

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[69] Körner, *Botticelli*, p. 269, points out how her garment opens below the knee, and the border opens as a vulva.

[70] Holberton, "Botticelli's *Hypnerotomachia*," p. 169, suggests that the fruit is a "squash or a citrus," and again, in note 67, that it might also be "a 'cedro', or 'zucca' or fig."

[71] For a historical review and description of the plant with illustrations, see Amos G. Avery, *Blakeslee: The Genus Datura* (New York, 1959), pp. 3–21, and figs. 1–3. See also, more recently, *Poisonous Plants: A Handbook for Doctors, Pharmacists, Toxicologists, Biologists and Veterinarians*, 2nd ed., ed. Dietrich Frohne and Jürgen Pfänder, trans. Inge Alford (London, 2005), pp. 361–364, and fig. 254.

[72] Theophr. *Caus. pl.* 2.9.11.5–6, trans. Arthur Hort (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), p. 273.

The plant is a member of the Solanaceae, or the nightshade family, which includes other narcotic plants such as mandrake, belladonna, and tobacco. It produces its fruit, often known by the common name thorn apple, in late summer and autumn.[73] One of its effects is to induce the patient to intoxication, hallucination, drowsiness (including fitful sleep), and a recumbent posture; the drug can also cause the desire to remove clothing.[74] The type of intoxication has been compared with that produced by "opium, alcohol, and some other stimulants" and can include psychogenic symptoms.[75] All of these symptoms appear in the recumbent swooning pose of Mars.

One of the *datura* fruit's other common names is devil's apple, and it is also known as angel's trumpet, devil's trumpet, devil's weed, and *herbe-du-diable*.[76] This nomenclature becomes highly significant in the context of Botticelli's image because the fruit is held by one of the satyrs / devils. The natural fruit is quite small, growing to about 5 cm in diameter.[77] Its apparently large size in the painting is in proportion, however, to the diminutive satyr. In placing the fruit close to the picture plane, where it is presented to the viewer's imminent gaze by the only character looking out towards the viewer, Botticelli emphasizes its significance within the visual narrative: it is no less than the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. The mischievous smile of the satyr suggests that Mars / Adam has been drugged with this highly narcotic fruit. It is also significant that this satyr is on his belly, reminding the viewer of God's punishment of Satan for tempting Eve with the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: "[U]pon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."[78] The biblical account never actually names the type of fruit.[79] Its identification as an apple is an apocryphal medieval tradition, based on a misreading of the Latin for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, *lignumque scientiae*

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[73] Samuel Cooper, *A Dissertation on the Properties and Effects of the Datura Stramonium or Common Thorn-Apple and Its Use in Medicine* (Philadelphia, 1797), p. 9.

[74] Cooper, *Dissertation*, pp. 21 and 25. See also, more recently, Frohne and Pfänder, *Poisonous Plants*, p. 363.

[75] Cooper, *Dissertation*, pp. 42–43.

[76] Jesse D. Wagstaff, *International Poisonous Plants Checklist: An Evidence-Based Reference* (Boca Raton, 2008), p. 121.

[77] Ulrike Preissel, *Brugmansia and Datura: Angel's Trumpets and Thorn Apples* (Willowdale, 2002), p. 108.

[78] Genesis 3:14 (King James Version).

[79] Genesis 3:3. The original Hebrew word for fruit is *p'ree*. The Latin Vulgate translates this as *fructus*. Commentators—most recently Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis* (Cambridge, Eng., 2009), otherwise meticulous in detail—fail to mention it.

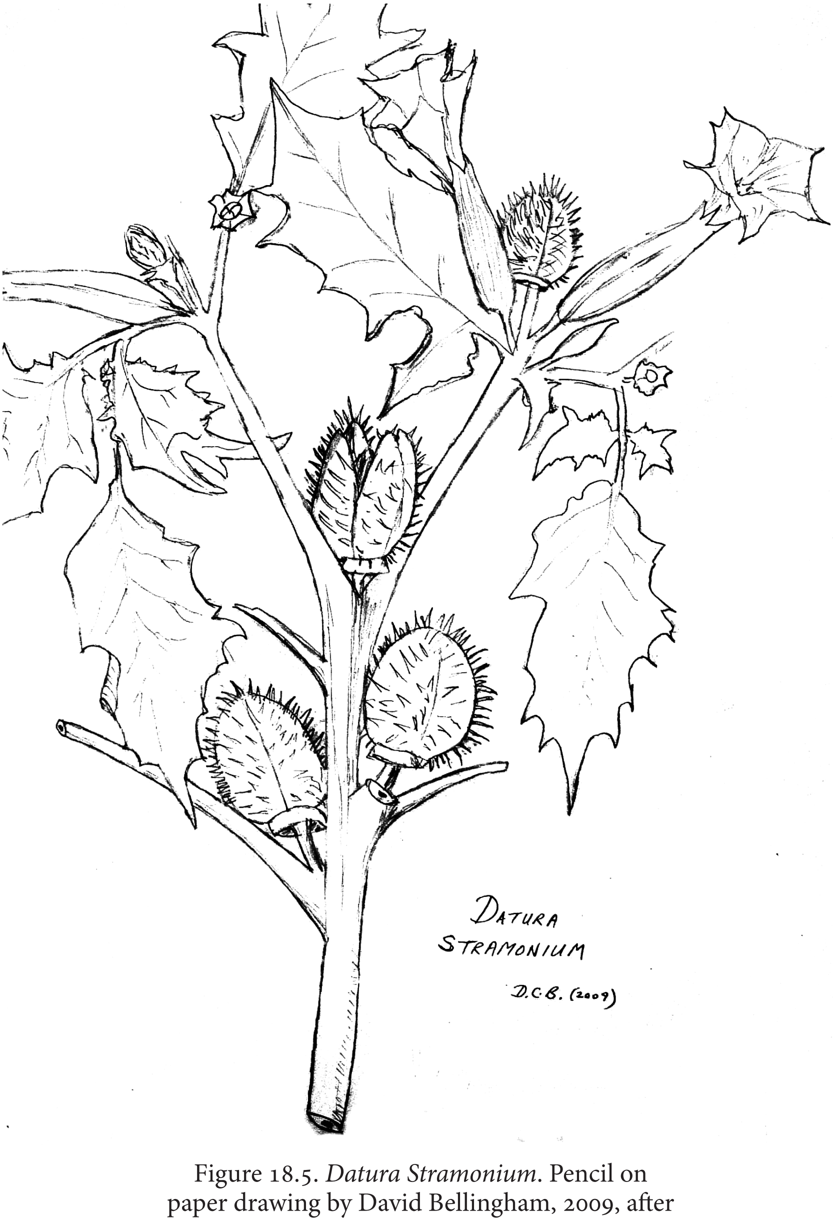
Datura
Stramonium
D.C.B. (2009)

Figure 18.5. *Datura Stramonium*. Pencil on paper drawing by David Bellingham, 2009, after Basilius Besler, 1613. Drawing ©David Bellingham.

boni et mali, where *malum* can mean both 'evil' and 'apple'.[80] Some artists selected fruits other than apples: in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, for example, Michelangelo's choice is the fig.

The dead tree against which Mars rests his head is also highly significant in relation to Adam and Eve (figure 18.3). Renaissance literary and visual texts refer to the withering of the Tree of Knowledge following the eating of its fruit. Botticelli's painting is particularly reflective of Dante:

> "Adam," I heard all of them murmuring,
> and then they drew around a tree whose every
> branch had been stripped of flowers and of leaves …
> "Blessed are you, whose beak does not, o griffin,
> pluck the sweet-tasting fruit that is forbidden
> and then afflicts the belly that has eaten!"[81]

Thus a further way of viewing Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* may indeed have been as a humanist revision of the medieval generic tradition of Adam and Eve.

Another significant plant, just to the right of the thorn apple, has also eluded scholars (figure 18.4). This is an example of the *aloe* species in its early stages, without flowers as is the case with the other plants in the painting.[82] The *aloe* has thick and hardy, sap-filled, pointed leaves that tend to spread horizontally at the base and grow erect in the central growth point.[83] These are the essential features of Botticelli's plant. The *aloe* is significant in this context, because of its juxtaposition with the *datura* fruit. The two plants present yet another binary opposition within the painting: poisonous and satanic (*datura*) versus healing and apotropaic (*aloe*). Whereas the devil's apple is categorized by botanists as poisonous, the healing and medicinal properties of the *aloe* have been recorded from the Classical period.[84] Not only was the plant used as a general medicine for both external and internal maladies, including as a gastrointestinal laxative, but it also had a reputation for being "endowed with power against evil spirits."[85] There is an interesting similarity between the two plants, however: *aloe*, like *datura*, has sometimes been used "to enhance sexual excitement."[86] The medicinal properties of both plants emphasize both the erotic and the visionary themes of Botticelli's painting.

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[80] Genesis 2:9.

[81] Dante, *Divine Comedy: Purgatory*, Canto 32, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (Berkeley, 1980–1982), vv. 37–39 and 43–44. See also Lorenzo de' Medici's own reference to the "leafless trees" and the laurel in his *Ambra*, note 42 above. In the visual arts, see Petrus Christus, *Our Lady of the Dry Tree* (ca. 1450), now in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid.

[82] Tom Reynolds, ed., *Aloes: The Genus Aloe* (Boca Raton, 2004), col. pl. 1, and fig. 9.1, p. 210.

[83] Eric Judd, *What Aloe Is That?* (Cape Town, 1967), especially pl. 1 (*aloe integra*), and pl. 7 (*aloe immaculate*).

[84] Reynolds, *Aloes*, pp. 9–12, and 209–238.

The singular reading is never the strategy of the Neoplatonist patron / artist or reader / spectator. Botticelli's genius lies in creating a multisemantic visual text in which meanings remain constantly slippery, so that reading the image becomes an exercise in Neoplatonist hermeneutics, the very process of which can lead to divine love. As Liana Cheney has argued of the Neoplatonists,

> A Christian interpretation could be given to themes by combining the subject matter of poems or paintings with Christian-Platonic ideas. For example, the pagan, the astrological, cosmic and mythological love story of Mars and Venus was interpreted in the Christian fashion as spiritual love triumphing over erotic love.[87]

In his multisemantic presentation of *Venus and Mars*, Botticelli involves the spectator in the contemplation of a constantly changing interplay of meanings on the theme of earthly lust and spiritual love: from the mythological adulterous love affair of Venus and Mars, through the historical dynastic marriage of Roxana and Alexander, to the contemporary tragedy of the Platonic courtly lovers, Simonetta Vespucci and Giuliano de' Medici, and the Christian redemption of Magdalene by the sacrifice of her beloved Jesus. Botticelli's final layer of meaning is the biblical temptation of Eve and Adam, perhaps the greatest tragic love story of them all.

Within the probable context of the marriage chamber, this complex Neoplatonic image would have been intended as a visual morality poem aimed at both husband and wife. With its mixture of Classical and Christian referents, the *spalliera* would have been highly suitable for a dynastic marriage between two Florentine humanist families. Rudolf Wittkower has stated, "In the process of free adaptation of ancient mythological figures the artists of the Renaissance did not confine themselves to attributing new meanings to fixed types. If occasion required, they freely combined elements from different sources."[88] This is nowhere more apparent than in Botticelli's *Venus and Mars*, where Venus deconstructs into Roxana, Simonetta Vespucci, Minerva, Mary Magdalene, and Eve.

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[85] Reynolds, *Aloes*, p. 212.
[86] Reynolds, *Aloes*, p. 229.
[87] Cheney, *Quattrocento Neoplatonism*, p. 26.

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[88] Wittkower, "Transformations of Minerva," p. 202. On pp. 202–205, Wittkower links Minerva not only to Venus, but also to Mary, the mother of Christ.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

REFLECTIONS IN A MIRROR: BONNARD'S APHRODITE

Anna Gruetzner Robins

My title refers to a group of three pictures by Pierre Bonnard, all painted in 1908, and known as the bathroom pictures. In each of these, a female model is reflected in a mirror, in a pose taken from Greco-Roman sculpture. The reflection of these female nudes is both a partial view of a living model and a quotation of a fragment of an Aphrodite. Bonnard turned to Greco-Roman sculpture as a source for his female nudes after painting a group of women, dressed and undressed, in naturalistic poses. A photograph of 1905 shows twelve of these pictures, tacked up on Bonnard's studio wall, of women sitting, standing, bending, and lying down, on chaise-longues, beds, and comfortable chairs in domestic / studio settings.[1] Bonnard abandoned this naturalist style, which dominated his figure work of around 1905, and returned to a tradition of painting and drawing the nude based on studying casts of complete Greco-Roman sculpture. As a student at the École des Beaux Arts, Bonnard was well rehearsed in this tradition, where drawing a female model, in a pose borrowed from antique sculpture, was an essential part of an artist's training. The reflections in Bonnard's 1908 bathroom pictures do not represent complete figures like the ones that dominated the extensive canon of Classical nudes that proliferated nineteenth-century academic painting. They are reflections of partial figures—fragments, if you like—of Greco-Roman sculptures.

The antique fragment had an enduring importance for Bonnard. In a photograph of Bonnard's last studio, tacked to the wall—together with a Japanese print, and a postcard of Gauguin's *Vision of the Sermon*, and a tattered map of the south of France where Bonnard lived, at Le Cannet, and some sweet wrappers, and several other postcards—is a postcard of an unidentified fragment of a variant of the Venus de Medici.[2]

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[1] The photograph is reproduced in Timothy Hyman, *Bonnard* (London, 1998), p. 69.

[2] The photograph is reproduced in Sarah Whitfield and John Elderfield, *Bonnard* (London, 1998), pp. 11, 32. Although Whitfield identifies some of the images, including

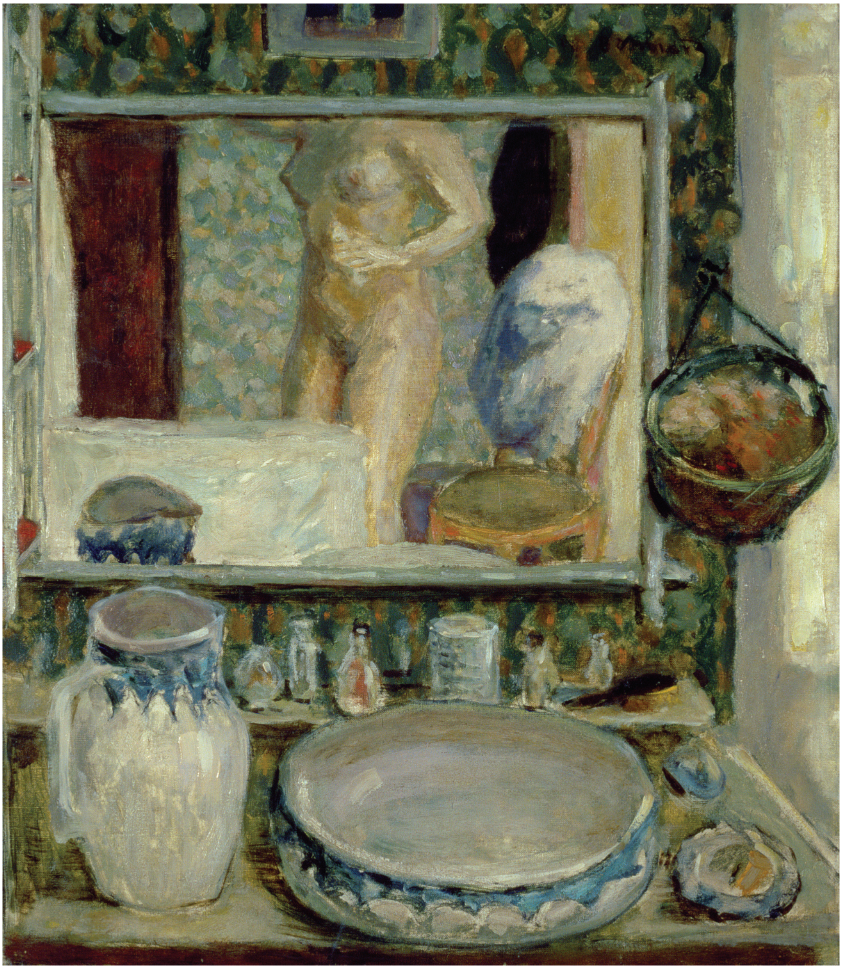

Figure 19.1. Pierre Bonnard, *The Wash Stand*, or *The Mirror* (1908). Photo ©Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

The Japanese print and the Gauguin are iconic images of modernist painting, seminal works for sending off the notion that painting should give the illusion of three-dimensional space and instead should treat the canvas as a flat, painted surface. Bonnard would subsequently reinvent the possibilities for depicting pictorial space, yet those flat pictures had an enduring importance.

Seurat's *Bathers*, a reproduction of a recent Picasso, and a Monet in this important photograph, she does not mention the postcard of Aphrodite.

The postcard in Bonnard's studio of a fragment of the Aphrodite has an equal iconic significance for Bonnard's painting, and its importance needs to be considered.[3] A liking for the antique might connect Bonnard to a die-hard rearguard (*arrière-garde*) painting and the "return to order" movement, which "gathered momentum during the First World War in France and Italy."[4] As I will argue, however, Bonnard had a different, more radical purpose for using the antique.

I have spent a fair amount of time trying to track down the Aphrodite in Bonnard's postcard. Whatever its location, wherever it was when someone thought to photograph it for a postcard, it has not been easy to trace the sculpture. It was only on a recent visit to the Prado while looking at a fragment of a variant of the Venus de Medici that entered the museum in 1944 that I realized that my ambition to identify the Aphrodite on Bonnard's postcard was fairly futile.[5] If the moment came, it would either be a case of serendipity, or the result of an unending and time-consuming trawl through various collections. The fragment of Aphrodite, like the one in Bonnard's postcard, acquired a new value in the twentieth century as hordes were brought from Italy to be dispersed in private and public collections. The fragmented female nudes in Bonnard's bathroom pictures connect not only to this moment but also to what was a well-established modernist tradition, which valued "the fragment as a metaphor of modernity."[6]

At one point I was convinced that I could connect Bonnard's postcard to *Self-Portrait: The Painter in His Studio* (1907), by Walter Richard Sickert, which depicts a fragment of an Aphrodite.[7] The Aphrodite sculpture in Sickert's picture is grouped together with a cast of the flayed man attributed to Michelangelo, and a cast of Michelangelo's dying slave. All three are positioned in real space, in front of a large mirror in which we see a reflection of Sickert, standing resolute, with a palette and brushes in his right hand. Sickert referred to all three sculptures as casts, although it seems unlikely that there would have been a cast of a fragment of a relatively inauspicious copy of Aphrodite. More than likely Sickert used a photograph, possibly even a postcard, as an aide-memoire when painting the Aphrodite torso. There is more than a touch of painterly license about the large-scale sculpture, perched against a large mirror. The artist has exaggerated the broken edges of this fragment and given the smooth marble a roughly worked, painterly quality. The pose, the break of the right arm below the shoulder, and the position of the left arm, fractured just above the wrist, however, suggest that the Aphrodite in Sickert's picture is more or less the one in the postcard. My research would have been made easier if Bonnard's postcard had been kept for the archive and the flip side had revealed the location of this particular sculpture. I might have hoped to find a message from Sickert saying something like "Meet me at the Hôtel du Quai Voltaire, October 1906," because Sickert was staying there that autumn, using his hotel room as studio to paint a series of female nudes. Sickert and Bonnard were close around that time; they shared the same Paris dealer, Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, and they were in the habit of making critiques of each other's pictures.[8] It would have been satisfying to discover that the sculpture in Bonnard's postcard was the broken statue of Aphrodite of the Capitoline Type in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, one of the many works acquired for the collection by Edward Perry Warren.[9] The importance of Warren's large-scale purchases of Greco-Roman antiquities—both for his own collection and for some of the great public collections—and the impact these acquisitions had on the contemporary art world need a scholarly study. Sickert had a direct connection with Warren through John Fothergill, one of the "bachelors of art" who gathered at Warren's home in Lewes in Sussex.[10] Fothergill frequently acted as a go-between for Warren on buying expeditions to Italy. In 1898, he became the first director of Carfax Gallery, on Ryder Street,

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[3] Antoine Terrasse, *Bonnard Nus*. Petite Encyclopédie de l'art 97 (Paris, 1970), was one of the first to point out that many of Bonnard's nudes reflect the poses of antique sculpture. *Bonnard*, ed. Sasha Newman (Washington, 1984), pp. 11, 16, 114, identified several antique sculptures in the Louvre as sources for Bonnard.

[4] Elizabeth Cowling, "Introduction," in Elizabeth Cowling and Jennifer Mundy, *On Classic Ground: Picasso, Léger, de Chirico and the New Classicism 1910–1930* (London, 1990), p. 11.

[5] A dealer sold the sculpture in 1943 to Maurius de Zayas, Château de Rivoiranche, Monestier de Clermont near Grenoble, who gave it to the Prado Museum.

[6] I take this phrase from Linda Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity* (London, 1994).

[7] Walter Richard Sickert, *The Painter in His Studio* (1907), Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. There is a good color reproduction of the picture in Anna Gruetzner Robins and Richard Thomson, *Degas, Sickert, Toulouse-Lautrec: London and Paris, 1870–1910* (2005), p. 175. For Sickert see Wendy Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings* (New Haven, 2006).

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[8] For further discussion of Bonnard and Sickert, see Anna Gruetzner Robins, "Sickert and the Paris Art World," in *Degas, Sickert, Toulouse-Lautrec*, ed. Gruetzner Robins and Thomson, pp. 169–171.

[9] Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 99.350; bought from Warren in 1899. I am grateful to Christine Kondoleon for her help with my query about this sculpture.

[10] For a discussion of this circle, see H. David Sox, *Bachelors of Art: Edward Perry Warren and the Lewis House Bachelors* (London, 1991).

St. James, London, which Warren helped to finance. The Carfax represented British and French modern artists, including Sickert, although Fothergill also used its premises as a store for Warren's purchases. It exhibited a mix of antique sculpture, Early Renaissance painting, and modernist works. As far as I know, this is one of the first instances of a gallery planned to cater simultaneously to the appetites for contemporary art and the antique, on the same premises. Indeed, Warren's own collection reflects this new trend—he collected Augustus John[11] and owned several works by Auguste Rodin, whom the Carfax Gallery represented, including a marble version of the *Kiss* and a bronze version of *Iris*. The gallery also served as an intermediary between Warren and Rodin when the sculptor tried unsuccessfully to buy the Aphrodite head (known as The Warren Head),[12] which he saw at an enormous exhibition, *Greek Art*, held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, London, in Spring 1903.[13] The exhibition marked "a new era for Greek art" that was receiving "attention from the smart ladies of at least two capitals" as Cecil Smith wrote in the *Burlington Magazine*.[14] Smith's dismissive comment that the surface of Head of a Girl from Chios, now known as The Warren Head, looked like "partly melted loaf sugar," precipitated a heated dispute that culminated when Rodin wrote an appreciative essay in *Le Musée, Revue d'Art Antique*, a new review, founded (1905) with the purpose of publishing articles by archaeologists and practicing artists.[15] Rodin was one of the first to argue for an aesthetic connection between Classical art and contemporary practice. Referring to The Warren Head, he explained that he was not like an archaeologist who dealt with "science and classification," but an artist who could appreciate the visual appeal and artistic value of the rough edges and worn, damaged surface of this fractured piece of a whole sculpture. The fascination with a fragment rather than an entire sculpture reflects a modernist temperament that put increasing value on carved fragments that appeared to palpitate with energy or, in the words of Rodin, the "power contained within a fragment."[16] As way of contrast to Rodin's thought-provoking phrase, I offer Cecil's Smith description of the broken pieces of sculpture in the 1903 London exhibition, which he said were "flotsam relics of antiquity."[17]

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[11] I am grateful to Anne Helmreich for this reference.

[12] The sculpture, accession no. 13.4502, was given to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1913.

[13] For a discussion of Rodin's unsuccessful attempt to purchase the head which Warren eventually gave to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, see Bénédicte Garnier, "The Sculptor, the Collector and the Archaeologist: Auguste Rodin, Edward Perry Warren and John Marshall," in *Rodin: The Zola of Sculpture*, ed. Claudine Mitchell (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 121–134.

[14] Cecil Smith, "The Exhibition of Greek Art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club," *The Burlington Magazine* 2 (1903), 236.

[15] For a discussion of Rodin's article, see Claudine Mitchell, "Rodin on Classical Art," in *Rodin*, ed. Mitchell, 135–143, where she publishes two of Rodin's texts in translation: "La leçon de l'Antique," *Le Musée, Revue d'Art Antique* 1 (1904), 15–18, as "The Lesson of Antiquity"; and "La tête Warren," *Le Musée, Revue d'Art Antique* 1 (1904), 298–301, as "Reflection on the Head of a Goddess from Chios, in the Warren Collection."

My purpose so far has been to locate the Aphrodite sculpture in Sickert's picture, within a particular art practice and culture, at a moment when Greco-Roman art is written into a modernist aesthetic and becomes a source for contemporary artists. Tracking the ways in which this new way of thinking about the antique fragment entered modernist practice is beyond the scope of this essay. What follows is a series of points and questions to be considered. Rodin had a significant collection of Greco-Roman sculpture largely consisting of fragments of torsos, heads, and hands. There are obvious connections with his own sculptural practice. To what extent were the collection and Rodin's thinking about it an inspiration for other artists, including Sickert, who would visit Rodin in his Paris studio? Was the mix of antique sculpture and modern art that Fothergill sold at the Carfax Gallery a catalyst for rethinking the modernist aesthetic? In what ways were new acquisitions by museums inspirational? The crouching bather in Degas' *Woman in a Tub*[18] is a modern Aphrodite rising from her shell, and it was only when I was researching the Greco-Roman collection in the Louvre that I realized that Degas' pastel bather is a quotation from the clay Crouching Aphrodite from Myrina, discovered by the French School at Athens in 1883.[19] Illustrations in the periodical literature were another important source. Bonnard must have seen an illustrated article in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, on Archaic Greek sculpture, published in 1909, because an accompanying photograph of an Archaic Greek statuette, now known as the Lady of Auxerre,[20] which was discovered in Auxerre Museum in 1907, and is now in the Louvre, is the undisputable source for the figure of the young girl in *The Bowl of Milk*, (1919), now in the Tate.[21] It may be that Degas sent Bonnard to study the Greco-Roman sculpture at the Louvre; visiting these galleries became a lifelong practice for Bonnard. One of Bonnard's earliest female nudes—*Siesta* (1900)[22]—is an echo of the marble Hermaphrodite Asleep in the Louvre, as André Gide first pointed out.[23] Here Bonnard is quoting from a complete sculpture; he ultimately never lost his liking for this kind of quotation.

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[16] For a discussion of Rodin's use of the antique, see Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, "Rodin: 'The Lesson of Antiquity,'" in *Rodin*, ed. Mitchell, 145–159. Ibid, p. 126.

[17] Smith, "The Exhibition of Greek Art," p. 244.

[18] Degas, *Woman in a Tub* (1883), pastel on paper, Tate, TO3563.

[19] Louvre, Myr 18: Crouching Aphrodite from Myrina, second century BC, excavated by the French School at Athens in 1883.

[20] Louvre, M93098: Lady of Auxerre, Daedalic style, second half of the sixth century BC. The statuette was given to the Louvre in 1909 in exchange for a landscape picture by Harpignes. Of course, Bonnard would have known it in the Louvre.

The three bathroom pictures of 1908 depict the dressing table in the bathroom of Bonnard's apartment on the rue Lepic. All three pictures were bought by Bonnard's dealer, Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, in 1908.[24] *Nude Against the Light* or *The Dressing Room with Pink Sofa*[25] shows a living model, Marthe de Méligny, Bonnard's lifelong companion, and a reflection of her.[26] She stands, foot outstretched in the sort of academic pose that a model would take in a teaching studio, evoking a memory of Bonnard's academic training at the École des Beaux Arts. Natural light streams through the lace curtain at the window and bounces off the four mirrors in the room—the small folding mirror on the wall; the large, framed mirror to the far right; the dressing-table mirror; and the reflective surface of the water—making a shimmering, iridescent surface of soft pink, yellow, and blue color. In *The Dressing Room with Pink Sofa*, why did Marthe take the sort of academic studio pose adopted by models in a traditional art school like the École des Beaux Arts? It follows a period (around 1905) when Bonnard made an intense study of models in naturalistic poses that left him with a fairly unsatisfactory group of pictures.[27] He decided that he found working from the model a distressing experience, preferring the familiar presence of Marthe, whose never-changing youthful self would slide in and out of his painting for the rest of his life. The depiction of the fully bodied, living Marthe in *The Dressing Room with Pink Sofa* is quite different from the disembodied reflection in the tilted mirror. Sasha Newman was the first to point out that the reflection is a quotation from the pose of a fragment of the Venus de Medici, and only in the most general sense, a reflection of the real Marthe standing in the sunlit studio.[28] Drained of its rosy-pink color, the exuberant corporality of the flesh of the reflected figure takes on the cold whitish color of carved marble. Two different viewpoints—of the living model and its reflection—defy every rule of perspective, so that the living model of the everyday present is represented with a reflection that takes us back to its Classical past. The conflation of past and present can be connected to Henri Bergson and his concept of duration, which had a seminal influence on the Paris avant-garde, and it may have encouraged Bonnard to import the Classical past into these representations of the everyday.[29] He could reconfigure the living model as Aphrodite without losing touch with the ordinary space of the dressing room, and at same time he could give the reflected figure an enduring greatness.

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[21] I am referring to its presentation in Salomon Reinach, "Courrier de l'art Antique," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 1 (1909), 183–203. Whitfield and Elderfield, *Bonnard*, p. 122, suggests that the preparatory sketches for *The Bowl of Milk*, which she illustrates, clearly show the figure of the young woman dressed in the manner of a kore, and uses the example of *Kore*, circa 530 BC, Akropolis Museum, Athens, to illustrate her point. While suggesting that the illustration in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* is the most likely source may seem pedantic, I make this point simply to show that more work needs to be done with the antique in the context of the early twentieth-century visual field.

[22] Bonnard, *Siesta* (1900), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

[23] Louvre, MR 220. André Gide, "Promenade au Salon d'Automne," *Gazette des beaux arts* 34 (1905), 482.

[24] *The Dressing Room with Pink Sofa* (bought by Bernheim Jeune, 1908); *The Dressing Table* (bought by Bernheim-Jeune, on 6 March, 1908); and *The Bathroom Mirror* (bought by Bernheim-Jeune, 8 September, 1908).

[25] Bonnard, *Nude Against the Light* (1908), Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels, 6519.

[26] Marthe de Méligny (1869–1942) was born Maria Boursin. She first met Bonnard in 1893 and married him in 1925.

In *The Bathroom Mirror* (1908)[30] Bonnard took a viewpoint closer the dressing table, cluttered with the objects of female toilet including a hanging basket filled with sponges, eliminated the living figures, and represented a reflection of a clothed Marthe, drinking a cup of tea, and a cropped back view of a nude female model. The transformation of the living model into a whitened alabaster-like torso, with corpulent buttocks, in the reflection, echoes the back view of the well-formed Capitoline Venus.[31] By adopting a viewpoint close to the mirror, Bonnard eliminated the living model, whose presence, as I mentioned, Bonnard found very distressing ("*très gênante*").[32] The absence of the living model makes the transformative function of the mirror, as a vehicle for spatial ambiguity and the imaginative representation of a real figure, the focus of *The Bathroom Mirror*.

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[27] See n. 1.

[28] *Bonnard*, ed. Newman, p. 114.

[29] For a discussion of Bergson, see Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton, 1993).

[30] Bonnard, *The Bathroom Mirror* (1908), Pushkin, State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

[31] Sickert's *The Studio: The Painting of the Nude* (private collection), with its image of the rear view of the model, reflected in a second mirror, may have been the starting point for Bonnard. The model in both pictures has a similar physique, suggesting that the two artists may have used the same model. Sickert's picture is reproduced in Gruetzner Robins and Thomson, *Degas, Sickert, Toulouse-Lautrec*, p. 171.

I began this essay by drawing attention to a postcard of an unidentified Aphrodite sculpture in Bonnard's studio and suggesting that the same sculpture appears in Sickert's picture. It took me a while to realize that the Aphrodite sculpture on Bonnard's postcard is probably the source for the reflected figure in *The Wash Stand* or *The Mirror*, in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris (figure 19.1). There is no mistaking that slender right thigh. Suspending the fractured shorter left leg of the Aphrodite sculpture was a pictorial impossibility. Bonnard solved the problem by including the indistinct, flat, rectangular wedge of a towel hung over the open towel rack that blocks our view of the shorter fragment of the right thigh in the reflection. After being scrupulous about his source when depicting the bottom half of the figure, Bonnard played Pygmalion, animated the upper half of the figure, added a hand to the longer right arm, and changed the position of the remaining broken stub of left arm so that it extends beyond the frame of the mirror. The relationship between the Aphrodite sculpture in the reflection of the female nude is complicated because the borrowing is both overt and also more interventionist. The broken edges of Sickert's Aphrodite, in *The Painter in His Studio*, dissolve in a fuzz of paint, suggesting that the severed limbs have succumbed to the ravages of the archaeological past. In the timeless imaginative spaces, in *The Wash Stand*, the extended arm of the sculpted Aphrodite, making it a living thing so that the reflected figure echoes the past, present, and future.

With the exception of a few interviews, an unpublished diary, and some brief epigrammatic diary entries written the last twenty years of his life, Bonnard left few clues about what he was thinking. There is no concrete evidence that he read Rodin's writings on the antique, but when we consider Bonnard's keen interest in Greco-Roman sculpture, it would seem more than likely that he would have known Rodin's writings in a journal that linked the antique and modern art. Take, for example, Rodin's comment that an artist should start by studying "face to face with Nature," and after he excels at working from life, then "the Antique will then become a source of new energy for him."[33] Making drawings of plaster casts of Greco-Roman sculpture would have been part of Bonnard's early academic training, a necessary prerequisite to working from the model. The living model in *The Pink Sofa*—a piece of nature—is replaced by the antique, thus reversing the tradition of academic study.

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[32] Bonnard's diary note, "Boucher, Ingres, premiers artisans modernes," published in Antoine Tériade, ed., *Verve* 5, nos. 17–18 (n.p., 1947); Michel Anthonioz, trans. and ed., *Verve: The Ultimate Review of Art and Literature (1937–1960)* (New York, 1988), p. 170; cited in Whitfield and Elderfield, *Bonnard*, p. 19.

There is a lingering aura of the ancient world in all of the reflected fragments in Bonnard's pictures, which Bonnard—with his Classical education and "fascination for Greek thought which [has] never left him," as Antoine Terrasse explained—sought to evoke.[34] The Aphrodite on Bonnard's postcard is no Venus de Medici. It had probably only recently reentered the culture arena where archaeologists and suspect go-betweens—in addition to legitimate collectors and dealers such as Warren—were filling museums, exhibitions, and learned journals with their recent finds. So, while it looks back to an idealized past it also takes its place in an archaeological learned present. I should say here that I may have suggested that *The Dressing Table* was the third in a sequence of three 1908 pictures. Alternatively, it may have been painted first, which would make it the inspirational point of reference for all three reflected fragments. The Aphrodite on Bonnard's postcard was a real fragment with a relative ordinariness—at least compared to the Medici Venus—an everyday quality that must have appealed to an artist who preferred the unobtrusive and commonplace. This everyday quality was part of Bonnard's modernity, and, despite all its ties to the past, he manages to persuade us that we have caught a glimpse of a real woman in her dressing room. Bonnard said that he wanted presence and absence when painting the female figure, indicating that what could be construed as an accident of sight, a coming across a fleeting pose, filtered through the reflective surface of the mirror, could bring together a confluence of time past and the transient present in a constant state of flux.

There's a difference here between the avant-garde classicism of Bonnard's reflected, partial views of the female nude, which hover between the everyday and the antique, and the invented corporal figures of the neoclassical painting of Bonnard's longtime associate Maurice Denis. Both were members of the Nabi, the name they took for their youthful group that met in the early 1890s, but there were big political differences between them. As early as 1899, Denis, who later gave his support to Georges Sorel's noxious cultural program, was dividing these symbolist artists into "Semite" and "Latin," with Bonnard in the former and himself in the latter.[35] After 1900, these differences escalated as Denis became increasingly entrenched in the reactionary far right that connected neoclassicism with intensely nationalist values, as revealed in Denis' writings, which celebrated the Mediterranean as the birthplace of Aphrodite, and saw an imagined Classical world as the political ideal.

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[33] Auguste Rodin, "The Lesson of Antiquity," in *Rodin*, ed. Mitchell, p. 141.

[34] Whitfield and Elderfield, *Bonnard*, p. 31, n. 100, recorded this comment in conversation with Terrasse in May 1997.

As "Semite," Bonnard was closer to an anarchist circle including Paul Signac, and his dealer at Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, Félix Fénéon, the critic-turned-gallery director who had been imprisoned for his anarchist activities.[36] Bonnard never openly expressed an affiliation with them, yet he continued to give his support to his anarchist friends.

I want to conclude by suggesting that Bonnard's reflections of Aphrodite could be construed as an anarchist act, a protest against the commercial exploitation of the goddess of fertility and sexuality. By the end of the nineteenth century, Aphrodite had secured a place in the popular male imagination as a common prostitute. Images of fully formed, corpulent Aphrodites made up a significant part of the exhibits that graced the annual Paris Salon exhibitions where they paid a covert nod to the erotic fantasies of their male spectators, offering a space, as T.J. Clark so aptly put it, "in which woman's body could be consumed without too much (male) prevarication."[37] The passive excess of female flesh in these pictures verges on the pornographic, and yet their tenuous connection to Greek myth gave them an unquestioned acceptability and made them popular purchases for museum collections. Bonnard's bathroom pictures are different from these pictures.

In the early twentieth century, when photography became a cheaper and more accessible form of imagery, the appetite for modern-day Aphrodites was served by publications devoted to female nudes posed as Greco-Roman sculptures. These books of photographs were marketed as an aid to artists, but were, in fact, consumed by a wider audience.[38] Within the tradition of avant-garde painting, beginning with Edouard Manet's *Olympia*, critics and artists unquestioningly accepted the implicit connection between an image of a female nude in a modern setting and commercial sex.[39] There is little hint of a reference to debased sex in Bonnard's pictures. Indeed, one of his earliest pictures of the nude, *Man and Woman* (1900), an intimate portrait of Marthe and a self-portrait of himself, postcoitus, celebrates an anarchist ideal of physical love without moral constraint.[40] It could be argued also that, by using the Louvre Hermaphrodite as a source for the naked Marthe, snoozing on a rumpled bed, in *Siesta*, Bonnard was making a subtle reference to his absence and presence in the picture.

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[35] For further discussion of this point, see Mark Antliff, *Avant-Garde Fascism: The Mobilization of Myth, Art, and Culture in France, 1909–1939* (Durham, 2007), p. 101.

[36] For Fénéon's anarchist activities, see Joan Ungersma, *Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 241–279.

[37] T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (London, 1985), p. 123. For illustrations of these corpulent, Classical nudes, see ibid., pp. 118–127.

The Wash Stand is a pictorial and visual fiction. The implied presence of a real woman performing the rituals of her daily toilet resonates with the memory of an ancient Aphrodite, although the absence of the presumed viewer and the model from the picture denies the implicit association with common prostitution that circulated around most current images of the female nude. The partial reflection of a living model becoming Aphrodite offers the viewer a self-contained entity and has an essential eternal femaleness that can only exist as a dream state.

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[38] For a discussion of these publications, see James D. Herbert, *Fauve Painting: The Making of Cultural Politics* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 65–72.

[39] For further discussion of this point, see Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, p, 86; Herbert, *Fauve Painting*, p. 66. For further discussion of Aphrodite and the erotic in a modern context, see Caroline Arscott and Katie Scott, in *Manifestations of Venus*, ed. Arscott and Scott, pp. 11–23.

[40] Bonnard, *Man and Woman* (1900), Musée d'Orsay, Paris. For a brilliant analysis of Bonnard's later depictions of Marthe see Linda Nochlin, *Bathers, Bodies, Beauty. The Visceral Eye* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006) , pp. 134–145.

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PERIODIZATION OF ANTIQUITY

Late Bronze Age	1600–1100 BC.
Archaic	700–480 BC.
Classical	480–323 BC.
Hellenistic	323–31 BC.
Late Republican	146–31 BC.
Roman (Empire)	27 BC–AD 330
Augustan	27 BC–AD 14
Early Imperial	27 BC–AD 200
Late Imperial	AD 200–330
Late Antiquity	AD 324–642

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