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T. Thykier Makeeff, *Do satyrs wear sneakers? Hellenic polytheism and the reception of Antiquity in contemporary Greece—a study in serious play*, Lund University 2019. ISBN 978-91-88899-36-1.

<http://lup.lub.lu.se/record/edcbc1ea-f586-4cf9-8e36-4ac41726e888>

This dissertation investigates the reception of ancient Greek religion (and to some extent also renaissance Platonism) among contemporary Pagans in Greece—a phenomenon the author refers to as contemporary Hellenic polytheism. The study looks at how and why historical narratives and notions of Hellenicity are constructed by contemporary Hellenic polytheists. Furthermore it describes the contemporary Hellenic landscape, introducing more than ten religious communities in Greece, which have not been studied previously, and provides an overview of the most central ideas and practices of contemporary Hellenic polytheists. The author describes contemporary Hellenic polytheist rituals and discusses how, and why, they are designed and performed.

Throughout the discussion of groups and practices, the author analyses how contemporary Hellenic polytheist identities are balanced against the practical circumstances of (urban) life in the 21st century. In Song One the author introduces a fieldwork methodology based on Renato Rosaldo's method of Deep Hanging Out and provides an extensive background to, and innovative development of the Ludic Theory of Johan Huizinga. In Song Two the author addresses the question of how historical narratives and notions of Hellenicity are constructed by contemporary Hellenic polytheists and shows that despite being a religious minority in Greece, their basic his-

torical outlook is the product of the same historical factors that have influenced the construction of majority narratives about history, national identity and Hellenicity in modern Greece. Discussing the contemporary Hellenic landscape the author argues that there is a huge variety of receptions and reinterpretations of the role and relevance of ancient Greece in contemporary collective and individual identity constructions. Verse two in Song Two shifts the perspective from a bird's-eye view of the landscape, to eye-level and discusses a selection of representative concepts, things and practices. The author shows that contemporary Hellenic polytheist theologies vary, to a point that warrants the question if they are in fact polytheistic at all. The author discusses material culture and texts and shows how the meaning of altars, food, texts and paraphernalia is negotiated through practice and how they are partially cleansed of their ancient Greek meaning and reinscribed with new and often more fluid content, effectually becoming palimpsests and analyses the role of practices such as music, dance, theatre and therapies, which all play with interpretations of antiquity and constitute subcultures that offer sensory immersion that facilitates identity play and time-travel. Song Three contains a further elaboration on Ludic Theory and presents two cases that analyse specific rituals. The author underlines the importance of understanding ritual as play, but often serious play, and emphasises the importance of religious musicality and improvisation as a key to understanding the dynamics of ritual and ritual change. In the discussion of cases the author shows how particular rituals selectively forget and remember elements of their ancient Greek "counterparts." Finally, the author summarises and discusses the results of the dissertation, presents potential suggestions for further research, and answers the title-question of the dissertation.

L. Webb, *Gloria muliebris. Elite female status competition in Mid-Republican Rome*, Gothenburg University 2019.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2077/60216>

Elite status competition permeated mid-Republican Rome (264–133 BCE). Struggles for superiority in status among the senatorial elite catalysed social growth and conflict in the *res publica*: competition and the desire for glory suffused elite society. Such competition was fostered by the ascendancy of the patrician and plebeian senatorial elite in the late fourth through early third centuries. This competition occurred during a period of increasing status differentiation between senatorial and non-senatorial equestrians and was funded by an influx of resources from warfare, trade, and agriculture in the third and second centuries. The practice of elite status competition encompassed capital conversions and conspicuous displays of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital in various interacting and overlapping domains. These resources and domains supplied the means and opportunities for status comparison and differentiation. Prior studies have focused almost exclusively on status competition among elite men, illustrating its domains, its resources, and the often-ineffective legislative and censorial regulation thereof. By contrast, in this study, a compilation thesis of four articles, I reconstruct the dynamics of elite female status competition by rendering explicit some of its domains, resources, and regulation.

Article one highlights the interacting and overlapping domains of elite female status competition, namely sacerdotal public office, public religious rites, transport, adornment, religious instruments, retinues, family, patronage, houses and villas, banquets, and public funerals, many of which were similar to those for elite men. Article two and Article three show that elite women benefited from, and were integrated into, two domains of elite male status competition, namely magisterial public office and warfare, by virtue of their associations with the elite male status symbols of ancestor masks and triumphs. Article four underscores the importance of the domains of transport and adornment for elite women by focusing on their successful lobbying for the repeal of the *lex Oppia* in 195.

Elite women had access to various resources for status competition, particularly wealth, a social network, and status symbols. Article one and Article four emphasise the wealth available to elite women in their dowries, inheritances, personal effects, and other forms of property. This wealth could be mobilised and converted into other forms of capital for and during conspicuous displays. These two articles underline the importance of the order of married women for elite female status competition, a social network of wealthy senatorial and non-senatorial equestrian married women with its own hierarchies and status

symbols. These status symbols included the two-wheeled carriage, four-wheeled carriage, earrings, fillets, gold trimmings, purple clothing, and possibly funerary orations. Article four also indicates that elite women had access to gold rings, senatorial status symbols they shared with elite men and which differentiated them from non-senatorial equestrians. Article two and Article three illustrate how elite women were closely associated with and benefited from ancestor masks and triumphs, particularly through the inheritance and marital transfer of patrilineal and matrilineal ancestor masks, funerary processions, elite female presence in the triumphal chariot, and triumphal names, among other associations.

Article four uncovers forms of legislative and censorial regulation that directly affected the practice of elite female status competition: the *lex Oppia* of 215–195 and a censorial action of 184. The *lex Oppia* restricted the conspicuous display of the two-wheeled carriage for secular purposes, gold heavier than a *semuncia* (half an ounce), and purple clothing for twenty years, while in 184 the censors increased census assessments tenfold on expensive jewellery, female clothes, and vehicles and determined a threefold tax liability thereon for at least five years. Both regulations restricted and/or punished conspicuous display in the domains of adornment and transport and some of the status symbols of the order of married women. These regulations temporarily curtailed some domains and resources for elite female status competition and thereby some opportunities and means for status comparison and differentiation. The repeal of the *lex Oppia* in 195 after the public lobbying of women and support of some elite men testifies to elite female and male investment in status competition, its domains and resources.

This study demonstrates that elite status competition was a cooperative endeavour for members of an elite family and *gens*: an integrated, intergenerational family enterprise. During a period of increasing status differentiation, elite men and women mobilised, displayed, and expended natal and marital resources in various domains to compete, obtain competitive advantages, and attain, enhance, retain, and reproduce status, and deployed numerous strategies to do so. Both elite men and women sought glory.

The domains and resources of elite male and female status competition were integrated and mutually supportive, affording elite families a variety of opportunities and means for status comparison and differentiation. Regulation failed to dampen their desire for glory and to curtail their competition indefinitely. Elite female conspicuous displays advertised personal, familial and gentilician capital, accruing benefits for their male relatives and vice versa. Without such competition, elite families could not compare and differentiate their status. An elite family rose or fell together: the struggles vital to the *res publica* were equally the struggles of elite women.

More broadly, this study illuminates the remarkable publicity and visibility of elite women: these were no self-effacing, reserved women confined to marital subservience or producing wool. Elite women were prominent and visible.

I. Selsvold, *Pagan pasts, Christian futures. Memory manipulation and christianisation in the cities of Western Asia Minor*, Gothenburg University 2019.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2077/60340>

Religion has always impacted how we structure the physical world around us, and the Roman world was no exception. Roman cities were constructed and shaped around religious life and religious practices. Religious art was omnipresent, and religious architecture monumental. When Christianity displaced all traditional cults and became the primary state religion in the Roman Empire during Late Antiquity, religious life and religious practices changed significantly. This study investigates how changed religious life and religious practices in Late Antiquity reshaped Roman cities in Western Asia Minor, concentrating on the three cities Ephesus, Aphrodisias, and Hierapolis.

Written sources from Late Antiquity—laws and saints' lives—can create the impressions that pagan material culture was violently destroyed, and that pagan statues and temple buildings were the main foci of Christian destruction. The fate of pagan material culture during the Christianisation has traditionally mainly been investigated using textual rather than archaeological sources. This has led to a persistent view of the religious transformation as characterized by polarisation, violence, and intolerance. Further, investigations have focused mainly on the types of material culture most frequently described in these texts: pagan temples and statues. The present study falls in line with several recent critical studies arguing that the Christianisation process was more complex and dynamic, and that the rapidly growing archaeological record should be used to reassess and nuance persisting narratives of destruction and decline.

The study analyses how material culture can be used as agents of societal change, and what part pagan material culture played in the religious transformation in Late Antiquity (c. 350–620 CE). The analytical concept *memory manipulation* is employed in order to 1), reassess Christian responses to pagan material culture that are established in scholarly debate, such as conversion and destruction, and 2), reassess the categories of pagan material traditionally associated with the Christianisation, such as temple buildings and imagery. Rather than destroying pagan material culture, memory manipulation entails altering how material things are perceived and how material things interact with their surroundings

through small and large alterations. Ultimately, memory manipulation alter how material culture is remembered by a society. By employing the concept of 'memory manipulation', the Christianisation process can be understood as constructive and future-oriented rather than expressions of intolerance and anger.

Beyond temple buildings and statues, the study encompasses a wider range of material manifestations of cult than the traditional foci, and included monuments, sacred spaces, imagery, and inscribed materials in the public areas of the cities in the analysis. The study considers removal, mutilation, spoliation, disposal, appropriation, and reconfiguration as memory manipulation strategies in addition to destruction and conversion.

The study demonstrates that Roman cities in late antique Asia Minor actively used pagan material culture to shape Christian presents and futures. Memory manipulation strategies were not restricted to temple buildings and sanctuaries, but were performed in the entirety of public space. Material culture from sanctuaries were moved into the cityscapes, and into Christian buildings. As a result, memory manipulation reached a larger audience than if manipulation had been restricted to the confines of the sanctuary *temenos*. Imagery, smaller monuments, and gates in public spaces were subject to Christian manipulation alongside the material culture in the sanctuaries. Streetscapes, thoroughfares, and necropoleis were likewise important arenas for memory manipulation.

The aim of the religious transformation in Late Antiquity was to establish Christianity as the only religion, through making paganism and pagan cult practice a thing of the past. In social memory, the purpose of the past is to identify a group, define their past, and their aspirations for the future. An important issue during Christianisation was therefore to establish how paganism and pagan cult practice should be remembered, and how it could be used to define and realise a Christian future. Individual images, monuments, and environments played different roles in the social memory of the three cities Ephesus, Aphrodisias, and Hierapolis, and the same was true for the pagan cults and pagan practices they were associated with. Therefore, the social memory of each of the three cities differed from the others.

The present study provides a foundation for the continued analysis of how material culture affected and shaped societal change in Late Antiquity. The concept 'memory manipulation' is a fruitful and stimulating concept that highlights the complex and changeable relationship between humans and material culture in the past. The study has shown that the entirety of our material surroundings is imbued with meaning, and that they are vital to our understanding of late antique attitudes towards the past. Future meanings are founded on material pasts.

O. Linderborg, *Herodotus and the origins of political philosophy. The beginnings of Western thought from the viewpoint of its impending end*, Uppsala University 2018. ISBN 978-91-506-2703-9.

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-350646>

This investigation proposes a historical theory of the origins of political philosophy. It is assumed that political philosophy was made possible by a new form of political thinking commencing with the inauguration of the first direct democracies in Ancient Greece. The pristine turn from elite rule to rule of the people—or to *δημοκρατία*, a term coined after the event—brought with it the first ever political theory, wherein fundamentally different societal orders, or different principles of societal rule, could be argumentatively compared. The inauguration of this alternative-envisioning “secular” political theory is equaled with the beginnings of classical political theory and explained as the outcome of the conjoining of a new form of constitutionalized political thought (cratistic thinking) and a new emphasis brought to the inner consistency of normative reasoning (‘internal critique’). The original form of political philosophy, Classical Political Philosophy, originated when a political thought launched, wherein non-divinely sanctioned visions of transcendence of the prevailing rule, as well as of the full range of alternatives disclosed by Classical Political Theory, first began to be envisioned. Each of the hypotheses forming the theory—the hypotheses concerning the Ancient Greek beginnings of a “secular”-autonomous political rationale, political theory and political philosophy—is weighed against central evidence provided by the *Histories* of Herodotus. The passages thus given new interpretations are the Deioces episode in Book I, the Constitutional Debate in Book III and Xerxes’ War Councils in Book VII. Aside from the Herodotean evidence, a range of other relevant Greek literary sources from the archaic and classical ages—e.g. passages from Homer, Hesiod, several pre-Socratic thinkers, Plato and Aristotle—are duly taken into consideration. Included is also a reading of the Mytilenean Debate of Thucydides’ Book III, which shows how the political thought of the classical democracies worked in practice. Finally, the placing of the historical theory against a background of contemporary relevance provides an alternative to all text-oriented approaches not reckoning with the possibility of reaching historically plausible knowledge of real-world events and processes.

A. Pontoropoulos, *Erotic language and representations of desire in the philostratean Erotic Letters*, Uppsala University 2019. ISBN 978-91-506-2781-7.

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-389980>

This doctoral dissertation focuses on a corpus of seventy-three prose letters from the Imperial period, titled *Erotic Letters* and attributed to Philostratus. In this letter collection, different anonymous letter writers address male and female recipients who are mostly anonymous. I contextualize the Philostratean erotic discourse in terms of Greek Imperial literature and the rhetorical culture of the Second Sophistic. Unlike the letter corpora of Aelian and Alciphron, the Philostratean *Letters* take a strong interest in ancient pederasty. Furthermore, the ancient Greek novel provides a fruitful comparison for the study of this particular letter corpus. The Philostratean erotic discourse employs a series of etiquettes and erotic labels which trace back to earlier (Classical or Hellenistic) periods of Greek literary history. In this sense, the Philostratean *Erotic Letters* situate themselves in a long-standing Greek erotic tradition and draw from the prestigious classical past. In the context of individual Philostratean letters, pederastic motifs are often employed in heterosexual narratives and subvert the expected erotic discourse. Heterosexual motifs (e.g. feet) are also employed in pederastic contexts thus creating a literary discourse, according to which there are all kinds of erotic possibilities and literary scenarios. The *Letters* construct the identities of the senders and the receivers as the Greek *pepaideumenoi* of the Imperial period. In this context, the erotic experience emphasizes the idea of literary and cultural *paideia* as being sexually stimulating. In the end, *paideia* is deemed worthier than actual sex. In all these respects, the letter corpus of the Philostratean *Erotic Letters* presents the reader with a unique and open-ended literary discourse, which equally juxtaposes different representations of erotic desire.