FACES IN THE FRAME:
MASKS AND HEADS IN THE BOUNDARIES OF ROMAN ART

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Satyric and comedic masks, in addition to lively-seeming heads that could almost be masks, appear with pattern-like regularity wherever the Romans had a foothold; however, the near instinctive impulse to assign a straightforward, Hellenistically-derived Dionysiac message to the borders where these faces reside has rendered both masks and heads almost invisible to further iconographic study. The masks are more thoroughly examined as remnants of Classical theatre than in studies of antique mosaics, while the heads that supplant them are treated neither in theatrical studies nor, aside from stylistic analyses, in art historical scholarship.

The assumption that satyrs (and their depictions) in the Roman world retained the same meanings and functions that had been given to them by their Greek originators ignores fundamental distinctions between the two cultures. This study follows in the tradition of scholars who have jettisoned the belief that iconological interpretation inevitably accompanies iconographic appropriation. This study uses the distinctly Roman cultural background that led to the use of masks as border motifs in early imperial
Roman mosaics, and the ways in which that cultural heritage may have influenced the preference for more lifelike and idealized heads instead of masks, to gain insight into the role and function of the supernatural wilderness in Roman life and iconography.
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The libraries at Princeton and at Rutgers have been invaluable resources. The Rutgers Graduate School of New Brunswick’s pre-dissertation travel award provided the opportunity for me to go to Italy and see the mosaics I had only read about before, transforming my dissertation topic from a vague idea into a concrete hypothesis. The Mellon Summer Study Grant took me to Istanbul and the Great Palace Mosaic, which forms the capstone of my dissertation. Sally Stevens and Miriam Sosewitz Clarke also provided support at crucial moments, for which I cannot ever thank them enough.

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Introduction: From Masks to Heads in the Roman Wilderness

This study began as an attempt to understand the relationship between two different ways of depicting the human face in the borders of Roman mosaics: the masks, both satyric and comedic, that appear in conjunction with fantastical garlands in the borders of second- and first-century BCE **emblemata**, and the disembodied heads surrounded by elaborate acanthus-leaf scrolls or **rinceaux** that replace them in later Roman art. Investigating this relationship has led to a complex network of questions regarding frames and framing devices in the ancient world, the use of masks in Roman civilization both within and without Classical theatre, and eventually the distinctive ways in which Romans perceived and interacted with conceptions of the wilderness and its sometimes supernatural occupants. This study represents the answers I have obtained thus far, derived from sources as varied as theatre history, anthropology, and robotics, as well as from art historical scholarship.

The relationship between an artwork and its frame that is so characteristic of modern conceptions of painting has driven the majority of literature on the subject of frames and borders. Perceptions of this relationship can be found as early as the seventeenth century, in letters written by Nicolas Poussin to his patron in regards to framing his paintings, and over a hundred years later in comments made by Edouard Degas on a similar subject.¹ Both artists treat the frame as separate from the painting, although both acknowledge the frame

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as an integral part of the viewer’s experience and so a particular concern to the painter.

Immanuel Kant’s seminal *Critique of Judgement*, first published in 1890 and translated into English twenty years afterward, also treats the frame as an ornament, complementary to the object but not part of it.²

Examinations of the frame and its functionality in the twentieth century begin to challenge this perception. Heinrich Wöfflin examines the concepts of closed and open space as part of his 1915 examination of style in Renaissance and Baroque art, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, while the independent nature of the frame is emphasized in José Ortega y Gasset’s “Meditacion del Marco,” first published in 1921.³ Wöfflin explores the means by which Renaissance and Baroque artists depicted enclosed scenes, perfectly balanced within themselves, and open scenes that suggested action taking place beyond the scope of the framed picture.⁴ José Ortega y Gasset emphasizes the importance of the frame within this dynamic by treating the frame as the fundamental means by which the eye distinguishes artistic composition from ordinary space.⁵ In 1969, however, Meyer Schapiro wrote an article that challenges accepted notions of the frame altogether; he examines the development of the frame as a semiotic element of painting, seeing it finally as a culturally-determined boundary that is only sometimes associated with the edges of a specifically prepared canvas.⁶

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⁴ Wöfflin (1921), 133-166.
In his 1977 article, “Image and Frame in Greek Art,” Jeffrey Hurwit blends Wöfflin’s ideas regarding closed and open space with Schapiro’s semiotic questions regarding frames and borders, and applies both concepts to Greek vase painting.7 Hurwit identifies four different kinds of interaction between a border and its internal space, where the border becomes a fictive window-frame that either obstructs or is obstructed by the depicted scene, capable of being manipulated by the figures that it frames and sometimes becoming an active part of the scene.8 He argues that “the border is, in large measure, both the ‘scaffold’ and blueprint for the enclosed design.”9 This conception of borders and frames is repeated by Jacques Derrida, who suggests that paintings require frames to supply information that the painting itself might not display.10

The idea that borders and frames may function not just as ornamental boundaries for a painting or as guides that tell the viewer where to look, but as iconologically significant compositional elements that may enrich a viewer’s experience, forms the basis of Bente Kiilerich’s studies on late antique frames and framing devices.11 Her examination of the fourth-century mosaic depicting Achilles at Skyphos from the Villa de Pedrosa, in Olmeda, Spain suggests that the border, with its clipeate portrait busts and almost heraldic ducks and dolphins, not only provided a visual means of setting off the Achilles mosaic from the other narratives that appeared in the same room, but also

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8 Hurwit (1977), 9.
9 Hurwit (1977), 1.
enabled the patron to display his family’s piety and devotion to the heroic cult (fig. 0.1). In treating the frames of Roman mosaics as significant bearers of meaning, Kiilerich opens the door to a much broader understanding of Roman art’s propensity for elaborate borders, providing a foundation for the current study.

Garlands, populated scrolls, and theatrical and satyric masks all derive iconographically from Greek roots, as does the cult of Dionysos with which these motifs are often associated. The Roman elite were famously enamored of Greek art, but their use of it was guided by Roman principles of decorum and propriety; thus, any examination of art commissioned under Roman rule must take Roman cultural constructs under consideration.

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13 The recognition of the importance of frames as additional bearers of meaning continued into Byzantium, particularly icons; however, byzantine frames seem to have been intermediary sites for communication with the divine, and so had a great deal more significance than the frames of classical and late antique mosaics, which did not function primarily as devotional objects. See Glenn Peers. Sacred Shock: Framing Visual Experience in Byzantium. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.


seem exempt from this constraint, the probable influence of indigenous surrounding cultures upon Greek colonists cannot be ignored; Peter van Dommelen and Tamar Hodos have shown that early colonists of the Mediterranean almost immediately took on at least some of their neighbors’ traditions, particularly in funerary contexts. This study’s use of predominantly Roman sources was inspired by the recognition that the Greek origin of these motifs has, until now, overshadowed the connections to Italic and Roman traditions that a contemporary viewer might have made.

Depictions of people, whether as portrait busts, *erotes*, masks, or heads, appear throughout Italian art, and are often paired with garlands, wreaths, or acanthus scrolls. They are particularly prevalent in gnathia ware, a form of polychromatic vase-painting with its origins in South Italy from the fourth century BCE. A gnathia-ware oinchoe at the Cleveland Museum of Art, dated to the third century BCE, shows two *erotes* playing underneath a swagged girdle or fillet, with grape-vines above; they are flanked on either side by a woman’s mask, which hangs from the vines (fig. 1.12). Although many of these

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masks do not appear to reference performance, T.B.L. Webster suggests that some of them might have been associated with Classical tragedy, and Arthur Dale Trendall suggests the probability of a Dionysiac and funerary connection; further research into this early form of mask and garland iconography, particularly regarding intercultural influence between Etruscan and Greek settlements, might help uncover more regarding the referents and functionality of these early depictions of masks and garlands.\textsuperscript{18} In varying forms, swags of fabric intertwined with vegetation and \textit{erotes}, busts, or masks continued in popularity throughout the Roman period, appearing in wall-paintings from Pompeii and later imperial Roman sarcophagi as well as mosaic.\textsuperscript{19} Portrait-like busts often take on the roles of the muses, the seasons, and other aspects of the natural world.\textsuperscript{20} Masks are fundamentally different from portraits, however,


\textsuperscript{19} For \textit{erotes} and garlands in wall painting with bibliography, see Isabelle Tassignon. \textit{Iconographie et religion dionysiaques en Gaule Belgique et dans les deux Germanies}. Genève: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège 1996. For sarcophagi, see Herdejürgen (1996).

although they share defining features. Portraits are valued for depicting an individual’s identifying characteristics and, often, physiognomic personality traits; masks, on the other hand, allow people to take on a different face and thus a different personality. No matter who wears the mask, the character is the same; as a result, the mask is, in a sense, an independent entity, always imbued with the potential for interaction.

The gorgon Medusa is perhaps the most common, and is easily the most widely-recognized, of the disembodied heads commonly used in Roman art. Whether monstrous or beautiful, in relief or in mosaic, her snake-like hair and staring eyes are unmistakeable references to the woman who, cursed by Athena to turn all men who looked at her to stone, was killed eventually by Perseus, and became one of the guardians of Hades.

The apotropaic effect of the gorgon led to its use wherever unwelcome intruders might

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find an entry; it was particularly common on antefixes.\textsuperscript{25} By the time that Roman mosaics began incorporating masks into garlanded frames, however, Medusa was no longer depicted with the glaring eyes and distorted expression of archaic depictions of the gorgon; she is instead a beautiful maiden whose only reference to the gorgon lies in the snakes that often writhe around her head.\textsuperscript{26}

The glaring eyes and distorted features are, however, common to theatrical masks—particularly, in Roman art, to satyr masks. The possibility of a connection between gorgons and satyr masks is given concrete form in the first-century BCE funerary cenotaph of the Julii in Saint-Rémy (fig. 0.2). The socle of this monument is carved with narrative panels depicting a boar hunt, the death of Troilus, and two more generic battle scenes.\textsuperscript{27} Each of these panels is bounded by decorative garlands, held in place by nude figures; individuated satyr masks rest on the swags. Above each panel is an arch, and the keystone of each arch is carved with an idealized head of Medusa.\textsuperscript{28} The narratives and the gorgons are all traditionally appropriate for funerary contexts, and garlands are also common referents; the incorporation of satyr masks as well as Medusa, however, suggests a similarity in function between satyric masks and the mask of the

\textsuperscript{28} Henri Rolland. \textit{Le Mausolée de Glanum (Saint-Rémy-de-Provence)}. Supplément à "Gallia". Vol. 21, Paris: Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1969.
gorgon. Recent studies by Rabun Taylor and Stephen R. Wilk have elaborated on the apotropaic nature sometimes given to satyr masks; however, the apotropaic correlation between satyrs and gorgons needs further study to determine if there is a more significant connection.  

Satyr masks and their theatrical counterparts appear in every medium and in every context of Roman art. The publication, between 1960-62, of T.B.L. Webster’s comprehensive three-volume catalog of monuments and literature associated with ancient theatre, is one of the most valuable resources regarding the broad spectrum of art associated with actors, masks, and theatrical production in the classical world. Later additions by J.R. Green and Axel Seeberg have ensured the continued relevance of these catalogs, with the third editions of the first two volumes published in 1978 and 1996. Updates are ongoing, supported by the Institute of Classical Studies at the School for Advanced Study of the University of London.

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32 Along with updates to the previous catalogues which will appear in bulletin form, the third edition of *Monuments Illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play* is forthcoming, and will also include monuments illustrating pantomime. See “Ancient Theatre Project,” (2014): http://www.icls.sas.ac.uk/research/research-projects/theatre-archive.
The majority of depictions of theatrical and satyric masks can be associated with either the cult of Dionysos, where the roots of Classical theatre are found, or an appreciation for the entertainment value of theatre and theatrical productions. In 1911, Catharine Saunders reviewed then-contemporary literature on masks in Roman comedy, concluding that masks had begun in priestly rituals associated with Dionysos, which then migrated to Magna Graecia with Greek colonists. This theory regarding the origin of mask use in theatre remains fundamentally unchallenged; however, Harriet Flower’s work on ancestor masks in Roman religious practices, which relies almost exclusively on literary documentation due to the ephemeral nature of such objects, highlights the problems with this theory. Although imaginates may have shared some physical characteristics with Dionysiac masks, they were used for very different purposes.

Chapter One of this study explores the functionality of frames and borders in mosaic, first at Olynthos and then at Pompeii. The fifth-century B.C.E. mosaic from the andron of the Villa of Good Fortune at Olynthos acts as a case-study for applying Hurwit’s theories regarding borders and frames in vase-painting to mosaic. It also provides an introduction to early depictions of satyrs, the hero Achilles, and the Triumph of Dionysos— all subjects whose popularity continued into late antiquity. Using the mosaic from Olynthos as a model, the garlands and masks that appear in the borders of

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33 Catharine Saunders. "The Introduction of Masks on the Roman Stage." The American Journal of Philology 32, no. 1 (1911): 58-73. The question regarding the date at which masks first began being used on the Roman stage is less certain: Roman comedic masks were in use from at least the early 3rd c. BCE. See Webster (1951), 222-32.


several mosaics from Pompeii are then treated as integral elements of the composition, their functions in Roman culture used to communicate more information to the viewer than the *emblemata* themselves provide. Although the second-century Tiger Rider mosaic from the House of the Faun is the most widely recognized of these mosaics, the slightly later mosaic of the doves, from its namesake house, is equally compelling for its implications regarding the communicative potential of such borders. In the second chapter, the focus shifts to the use of masks in Roman culture.

Using *imaginés* and Roman literary traditions regarding satyrs and fauns, this chapter examines the cubiculum from the villa at Boscoreale, now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. With a complex iconographic program that incorporates many Dionysiac motifs, the villa at Boscoreale is most often read in connection with the Greek cult; however, there are a few anomalies that suggest an equal weight should be given to Roman tradition. From the earliest iconographic study by Phyllis Lehman, the satyr masks that appear as oscillæ in the cubiculum have been acknowledged as references to ritual rather than theatre. Rabun Taylor, utilizing Pliny’s *Natural History* as a guide, treats them as references to apotropaic devices. This chapter examines Roman literature that correlates with this apotropaic tradition, particularly in connection with the legendary

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37 Lehmann (1953), 92.

Faunus and the satyr Marsyas, in order to understand how, and whether, the satyr masks of Boscoreale’s cubiculum might function independently of Dionysiac ritual.

Chapter Three tests the idea that the populated scrolls and disembodied heads of later Roman *emble mata* borders were iconographic replacements for the garlands-and-masks motif, which had by then migrated into different areas of mosaic compositions. Garlands and populated scrolls share many characteristics, as both are vegetal motifs incorporating flora, fauna, and sometimes other figures, while masks are simply faces with exaggerated features and expressions. By the second century, the garlands-and-masks motif disappears from *emble mata* frames and becomes an almost purely ornamental device in the late-antique mosaics of North Africa; it often appears as a linear element in geometric patterns. In place of garlands, the borders of *emble mata*, or *emble mata-* like, mosaics in the Roman settlements of Antioch and Constantinople use populated scrolls, with animals, birds, and fruits that wander in and out of vegetal *rinceaux*—a hellenistic motif with origins in at least the fourth century BCE.

In this chapter, the changing tastes in performance aesthetics found in Lucian’s *On the Dance* are examined in light of current research on anthropomorphization in

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media and robotics. Together, these sources inform my interpretation of the changing fashions in late antique *emblemata* frames. Through mosaics from the Roman period at Antioch-on-the-Orontes, where faces not only accompany the vines and leaves of their frames, but sometimes merge with them, this chapter explores the possibility that during the second century and afterward, satyrs and fauns in Roman mosaic frames were joined by other wilderness spirits, and like actors, simply changed their masks.

Perhaps the most intriguing of these types of heads come from the seventh-century mosaic of the Great Palace of Constantinople, which is the focus of the final chapter. First excavated between 1935-38 by the Walker Trust of St. Andrews University, the Great Palace mosaic is both conventional and unusual; although each individual element of the mosaic can be found in other late antique monuments, the overall composition of the mosaic is distinctive. Constructed as a pavement for the galleries of a peristyle courtyard, a white ground serves as backdrop for multiple vignettes, separated only by space; the sole borders in the mosaic incorporate populated scrolls with evenly-distributed heads, and appear along the inner and outer edges of the peristyle. Of the three extant heads, two of them are wrapped in leaves while the third is truly foliated.

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with leaves taking the place of both beard and hair. The individuality of these faces, their
liveliness, and the technical virtuosity with which they were constructed, place them
among the most compelling faces of late-antique mosaic. From their excavation, they
were identified as individuals; although two were mis-identified as Oceanus, one was
named “the barbarian” almost immediately.\(^{43}\)

Understanding these mosaic heads, with their ostensibly Christian patronage and
their imperial setting, requires a willingness to delve into the complex nature of the early
Byzantine court. James Trilling’s thorough examination of the iconography of the
narrative vignettes and their thematic relationships to each other fully exploits the literary
and political influences that would have engaged potential viewers of this mosaic; similar
forces come into play in the border and its heads.\(^{44}\) With the conclusions and theories of
the previous three chapters to inform the discussion, Chapter Four engages with the very
real world of the Byzantine frontier: the politics, the diplomacy, and the social constructs
that influenced perceptions of the boundaries of an empire that still considered itself
Roman.

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\(^{43}\) Rice (1958), 125-6.
\(^{44}\) James Trilling. "The Soul of the Empire: Style and Meaning in the Mosaic Pavement of the Byzantine
Chapter 1: Garlands, Wreaths, and Masks
The Mosaic Doves in Pompeii

Of the many intriguing mosaics found in Pompeii, one of the more obscure is the mosaic of the doves, dated to the end of the second or the beginning of the first century BCE (fig. 1.1). Its subject, doves alighting on a bowl of water, was most famously described in Pliny’s *Natural History* as a mosaic by Sosus of Pergamon, and seems to have been widely copied.¹ Two other extant examples overshadow the Pompeiian version: an earlier, fragmentary treatment from Delos, and the more widely-known version from Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli.² The significance of the Pompeiian mosaic does not lie in its treatment of a famous subject, but in the unusual way that subject is framed: by an elaborate garland of fruits and vegetation, bound with a fillet or ribbon and punctuated at intervals by satyric and theatrical masks.

Two other mosaics from Pompeii share a similar border: a small version of the Seven Sages from the later first century CE (fig. 1.2) and the late second century BCE Tiger Rider mosaic from the House of the Faun, which is likely to be the earliest of the three (fig. 1.3). The most well-known of these mosaics is the Tiger Rider, which depicts a winged and masked dwarf holding a skyphos, astride a maned tiger whose foot holds down a *thyrsos* that extends over the edge of what appears to be a cliff. The multiple Dionysiac referents in the House of the Faun, with its entry-mosaic of tragic masks and

¹ Plin. *H.N.* 36.60.25.
garlands, its bronze statuette of a satyr, and the mosaic of a satyr and maenad, dovetail easily with the iconography in the Tiger Rider mosaic. Less well-known, but equally appropriate, is the small Seven Sages mosaic; here, the philosophical and cultural tension between Apollo and Dionysos find a clear visual expression. In comparison with these two mosaics, the genre-based subject matter of the mosaic of the Doves seems anachronistic. The pairing of the doves mosaic with a border of masks and garlands was, however, unlikely to have been chosen solely for its aesthetic or economic value; the importance of decorum in the ancient world would have induced any patron, particularly one who planned on entertaining, to carefully consider the communicative potential of any household decoration.

Interpreting the relationship between the Doves mosaic and its border requires, first, an understanding of the factors that governed the relationship between seemingly ornamental frames or borders with narrative scenes in ancient art. An early pair of mosaics from the Villa of Good Fortune, in the Greek city of Olynthos, may illustrate these factors most clearly; they utilize figural and patterned borders as both framing devices and as compositional elements. The principles that governed the integration of

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frames and borders within these mosaics can then be applied to the later Pompeiian mosaics, showing how such works reflect the cultural and political environment of the city.

The Boundaries of Narrative: the Villa of Good Fortune at Olynthos

Prior to its destruction by Philip of Macedon in 348 BCE, the city of Olynthos was one of the major socio-political powers in the Chalcidice peninsula. During the struggles between Macedonia and Athens, Olynthos played it safe by attempting to placate both sides; this strategy backfired, however, and by 349 Philip had ordered the city to be sacked and razed to the ground. The city was never re-settled; as a result, its location remained theoretical until 1928, when David M. Robinson began excavations on two flat-topped hills near the Retsinikia river in Myriophyto. The city destroyed by Philip of Macedon’s armies had been relatively new; the Bottiaean town, founded in on the site of two earlier settlements, had been sacked by Persian armies in 480/479 B.C.E., and given to Chalcidian colonists to rebuild. Because of its political and social influence, its lack of development after 348 BCE and its late date of re-discovery, Olynthos is an invaluable source of information regarding High and Late Classical Greek culture.

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9 There was a neolithic settlement, but it did not last; the second settlement has been dated to the 8th century. G. Mylonas. Excavations at Olynthus 1. The Neolithic Settlement. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1929. Also Robinson (1929), 55.
The Villa of Good Fortune, located outside the original city walls, was not excavated until 1934. Unlike its neighboring buildings, which showed signs of having been looted prior to being razed, the Villa of Good Fortune had been burned. The remains of an altar were found in its central courtyard, and two sets of paired rooms— or rather, two private rooms with attached ante-chambers— had been furnished with pebble-mosaics along the north wall (fig. 1.4). While Robinson designates the building as a villa, he allows for the possibility that it was a commercial building instead. William McDonald argues in favor of the building’s role as “a rather high-class inn,” but Nicholas Cahill advocates for the villa as a private home, and Clare F. Kelly-Blazeby suggests that it may have been a tavern and brothel.

The mosaics of the north-east chamber with its ante-room gave the house its title, as the inscriptions in them all seem to reference good luck. In the center of the north-east room’s antechamber mosaic is a four-spoked wheel, representative of the wheel of fortune; below it, in dark letters on a white ground, an inscription reads АГΑΘΗΥΧΗ.

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11 Robinson (1934), 501.

12 The majority of houses at Olynthos have only one pair of rooms organized as anteroom and private chamber, usually close to the main entrance, and the most highly decorated in the house. For further discussion of the houses and households, see Nicholas Cahill. *Household and City Organization at Olynthus*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2002.

13 Robinson and Graham (1938), 55-63.

14 For arguments that the villa was a commercial venture, see William A. McDonald. "Villa or Pandokeion?" In *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson I*, edited by G. Mylonas, 365-73. St. Louis: Washington University, 1951. Also Clare F. Kelly-Blazeby, *Casual and Commercial Wine Consumption in Classical Greece*. Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Leicester, 2006). For the villa as a residence, and an overview of the arguments with bibliography, see Cahill (2002), 80, 256.

15 Robinson (1934), 503-5.
and in the upper corner of the mosaic is a fragmentary inscription that reads ΔΙΚΑΙΩ.

Robinson interprets this inscription as “To Dikaios, good fortune,” a likely reference to a local magistrate. The mosaic of the inner chamber, at the north-east corner of the house, is also inscribed; along a wide, dark band that parallels the entry wall, the inscription reads ΕΥΤΥΧΙΑΚΑΛΗ, and in the border of a square panel, surrounding otherwise empty space in the center of the room, is another inscription, ΑΦΡΟΔΙΘΗΚΑΛΗ. These inscriptions, too, seem to reference fortune, reading “Good luck is beautiful” and, possibly, “love is beautiful.” In addition, the symbols and signs scattered, seemingly at random, throughout the mosaic reflect beliefs about ways to keep evil fortune at bay.

The north-west chamber, with its ante-room along the west wall of the building, is characteristic of an andron dining room: on the floor of the ante-room, Thetis gives Achilles the armor made by Hephaestus, and on the threshold between the ante-room and the andron a pair of fauns or satyrs peer into a calyx krater (figs. 1.5-1.6). In the andron itself, a yellow-painted cement platform surrounded the mosaic of the Triumph of Dionysos that decorated the floor (fig. 1.7). Other mosaics protected the threshold and the ante-room; the threshold mosaic depicts a pair of fauns or satyrs peering into a calyx krater, and the ante-room’s mosaic shows Thetis giving Achilles the armor made by

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16 Robinson (1934), 505.
17 Robinson (1934), 503.
Hephaestus. These mosaics all take advantage of the interactive potential between frame and image in their compositions; as a result, they provide a uniquely appropriate case-study for showing the value of reading frames, borders, and images as integrated elements, rather than separated into modern constructs of narrative scene and ornamental boundary.

The ante-room’s depiction of Thetis and Achilles is derived from book XIX of Homer’s *Iliad*, when Thetis provides her son Achilles with the armor he needs in order to join in the battle and avenge Patroclus. Up to this point, Achilles has remained on the shore near the ships, refusing to join in the fighting himself. However, once Patroclus has been killed and is stripped of the armor Achilles lent to him, Achilles determines that nothing is worth living for any longer and that a glorious death in battle is preferable to a long and obscure life. Frustrated by his inability to fight without armor, he calls upon his divine mother for aid; she goes to Hephaestus, who forges a shield, helmet, and breastplate for the hero. At dawn, Thetis returns to the shore with her attendants and the newly-forged armor so that Achilles can rejoin the battle.

The mosaic shows Achilles—identified by an inscription above his head—sitting on a draped length of fabric at the far left of the figural narrative. Thetis, whose name is

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21 Irving Lavin’s discussion of the mosaic program shows this unification of ideas on a larger scale, setting the figural mosaics of Dionysos and Achilles in complementary opposition to the non-figural mosaics. His analysis shows how even seemingly unrelated mosaics in the same building can be more clearly understood when seen as part of a unified artistic program. Lavin (2005).

22 Hom. *Il*. Books XIX-XXI.

23 Hom. *Il*. Book XIX.
inscribed above her feet, greets him with raised hand; behind her follow two nereid-attendants riding sea-serpents and carrying Achilles’ new shield, spear, and helmet. All of the figures are shown with their heads in profile and their bodies turned towards the viewer, including the nereids who ride side-saddle. The palmettes on either side make the central image proportionate to the room; however, they also carry meaning in their own right, as do the vegetal scroll, key meander, and waves that frame the central design and occupy the rest of the floor.

Attempts to unravel the histories and meanings of these kinds of ornamental designs were popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1891, W. G. Goodyear used contemporary scholarship to trace the palmette or anthemion motif back the lotus and to Egypt; two years later, Alois Riegl reiterated that it was a Mesopotamian device derived from the palm tree. The origin of the palmette, however, is of less significance to the meaning of the Olynthous mosaic than its reference to vegetation; ornamental though the flanking palmettes may be, they also suggest an encounter that takes place on land. A similar interpretation holds for the flowery vine-scroll that decorates the innermost frame of the composition; although the flowers themselves cannot be easily identified, these elements are suggestive of an earthly, fertile location filled with vegetation—such as the region outside of Troy.

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25 The flowers may be *diospyrus lotus*, the date plum or lotus tree; the characteristics are somewhat similar. For evidence regarding Troy’s fertility during the Bronze Age see Simone Riehl. *Bronze Age Environment and Economy in the Troad: The Archaeobotany of Kumtepe and Troy*. Tübingen: Mo Vince Verlag, 1999, 45-47.
The meander that forms the second frame incorporates flowers into the design, as does a red-figure pelike of Thetis and Achilles from Spina, dated to ca. 460 BCE (fig. 1.8). Interpretations of the meander, sometimes also called the Greek key or fret, vary widely. W. G. Goodyear saw the key motif as a relative of the swastika, relating both to sun symbolism, while John Ruskin saw it as a reference to the labyrinth of Minos, and his student William Gershom Collingwood later treated it as an obvious connection to rivers or riverbanks. The incorporation of flowers within the Olynthus mosaic’s fret aligns more closely with Collingwood’s interpretation; indeed, its appearance between the wave motif and the purely vegetal scroll seems to mediate both literally and metaphorically between the vegetation of land and the water of the sea.

The wave motif is understandably useful in images associated with Thetis and Achilles. An Apulian red-figure pelike at the Getty Villa museum in Malibu, dated between 425 and 401 B.C.E., fully exploits the design; a meander surmounted by waves forms the base for the illustration of Thetis coming to greet her son (fig. 1.9). In this depiction, the meander circumscribes the entire lower body of the vase; above it, waves of varying heights appear and disappear in accordance with the placement of the nereids and sea-creatures that accompany Thetis. Thetis herself rides a hippocampus on the vase’s shoulder, carrying the shield made by Hephaestus; her attendants carry the rest of the armor. Achilles is also placed on the shoulder of the vase, seated on a rock; the arch

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over his head is composed of waves that radiate outward, providing our only clue that the hero is not in the same environment as his mother.

Homer’s ekphrasis of the shield Hephaestus forged for Achilles takes up a large section of book XVIII in his epic poem, the Iliad, and perhaps inadvertently reinforces this interpretation of the iconography of waves and their significance. The images on the shield’s center boss and five surrounding registers outlines the characteristics of civilization and the price of war. At the edge of the shield, the location for borders and frames, he describes “the mighty stream of the river Oceanus.” The salt-water ocean was seen as the edge of the world, but Oceanus was a fresh-water deity; describing him as a river metaphorically connects him with the water required for human survival, which both limits human civilization and makes it possible. The wave motif is the most straightforward illustration of Homer’s description.

The andron’s depiction of the Triumph of Dionysos, one of the earliest mosaic depictions of the subject, reinforces the idea that borders and frames were integral to narrative compositions. In the andron mosaic, the leopard-drawn chariot of Dionysos is

28 ἐν δ᾿ ἐτιθεὶ ποταμόιο μέγα σάθεν ὦκεανοὶ ἅντογα πάρ πυμάτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο.
All round the outermost rim of the shield he set the mighty stream of the river Oceanus. Hom, Il., XVIII.607-8.
the central image, accompanied by Eros in flight and preceded by a satyr-herald; in an unusual use of a third color, the chariot-box and reins are highlighted in red. A scroll of ivy leaves separates the chariot from the surrounding border: a procession of maenads and satyrs, almost the same scale as Dionysos, who face each of the room’s four walls. The exposition of the subject seems to end with the satyrs and maenads, as the two outermost borders are comprised of ornamental patterns: a running band of palmettes surmounted by a wave motif.

In this mosaic, the integration of borders into the primary scene most obviously appears in the use of satyrs and maenads as a frieze that wraps around the central composition. In addition to framing the chariot, the frieze enriches the scene through an illustration of Dionysos’s troupe and insures that at least two figures are oriented towards each vantage point. The troupe’s procession is so integral to the iconography associated with the Triumph of Dionysos that interpretations of the mosaic that may dismiss the palmettes and waves, and even the vine scroll, do not fail to acknowledge the satyrs and maenads.\textsuperscript{32} Although it does not automatically follow that the more ornamental borders are equally important to the composition, they—like the borders of the Thetis and Achilles mosaic in the antechamber—suggest a physical setting that aligns with the theme of the Triumph. Wilderness revels and public processions were some of the hallmarks of Dionysiac practice, involving men and women in singing, dancing, and of course

\textsuperscript{32} Robinson interpreted the frieze as a border, although later analyses do not always examine the border aspect of the frieze. See Robinson (1934), 506; Picard (1952), 78; Lavin (2005), 943; Kelly-Blazeby (2006), 145.
drinking. Some of these rituals took place outside the city walls, in uncultivated spaces. The running palmette band, with its tightly-spaced leaves, provides a sense of the environment where one might expect to find the procession of Dionysos and his followers, while the wave motif— if it also references Oceanus and thus the edges of the world— can believably reference the boundaries of Dionysos’s influence, which was believed to extend everywhere.

The position and iconography of the threshold mosaic encourage the probability of a cultic function for its connecting rooms. Appropriately enough for an entrance into the realm of the wine god, the threshold mosaic is framed by a vine that begins and ends on either side of a calyx krater. Two goat-footed satyrs flank the krater, leaning inward to look inside. In Dionysiac cult practice, wine was the gateway into the divine realm; it removed the inhibitions and ‘masks’ of public identity, providing a new mask in its place— one that allowed for direct communion with the divine. An Attic red-figure pelike from the early fifth century B.C.E. illustrates the subject as well; here, a Dionysos mask atop a clothed pole overlooks a satyr who, with one arm raised in surprise, kneels beside...

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35 Dionysos as world-conqueror is implied throughout the myths associated with his birth, journey to India, and return to Greece; the seminal work on Dionysos is still Walter Friedrich Otto. *Dionysos, Mythos und Kultus*. Frankfurter Studien zur Religion und Kultur der Antike. 2d. univerè and. aufl. ed. Frankfurt am Main, V. Klostermann, 1938.

a krater and looks inside (fig. 1.10).  

In this interpretation of the Olynthus mosaic, the seemingly ornamental borders become integral to understanding the artistic program as a whole; the duplication of oceanic waves, the use of meanders, and the individual scrolls all provide a geographic setting for the narrative images, guiding the viewer between both physical and conceptual locations. The ante-room with its mosaic of Achilles and his arms references the world of politics and warfare, a treacherous and deadly place that would have been well-known to the political leaders of Olynthos; cross the satyr-guarded threshold of wine into Dionysos’s realm, however, and one enters into a divinely-ordered space where the god of wine mediates between society and the individual. Here, the vegetal motifs provide a short-hand reference to the physical setting of mythic events; however, the vine surrounding Dionysos’s chariot could also reference a garland or wreath, which holds its own significance.

The Boundaries of Sacred Space: The Garland and the Elements of Ritual

In its simplest form, a garland or wreath is formed from flowers, leaves, or other vegetation that has been gathered and bound into rope-like strands. Garlands may be draped at will and affixed anywhere, the only limitation being the length of the strand;

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37 For a fuller discussion of this pelike, see Taylor (2008), 129.
wreaths are simply smaller garlands. The wearing of a wreath could either invoke divine blessings or identify one who has been blessed by the divine; a garland extended this function to built structures as well, and both could be used as votive offerings. In Euripides’ *Erechtheus*, the citizens of Athens are roused to action by the idea of “planting a trident upright in the city’s foundations and crowning it with garlands, leaving Pallas dishonored,” with the clear implication that garlands are the physical symbol of respect, veneration, and honor. In the opening monologue of Plautus’s *Aulularia*, the Lar of the heroine’s family enumerates her virtues, which includes the offering of garlands: “She gives me incense and wine daily, always prays to me, and gives me garlands.”

Garlands appear throughout Virgil’s writings as well, particularly in connection with ritual and funerary games.

Garlands of various types were popular enough in Rome that a gardener’s green thumb could be a quick road to profit; flowers appropriate for garlands were always in demand. Physical evidence for this tradition can be found throughout the area affected by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 C.E. The small household shrines that can be found in many of the atrium houses of Pompeii, that often held bronze statuettes of family *lares* and *penates*, as well as the *genius* of the pater familias, equally often incorporate painted

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garlands into the decoration. At the House of the Vettii, one of the rooms off of the atrium holds a niche lararium, set off from the wall by relief sculpture in the form of a temple façade (fig 1.11). The painting framed by the lararium depicts two lares on either side of a central figure; the garland that shows the household’s piety hangs in swags above them, in a compositional type whose popularity throughout Pompeii clearly references normal practice.

Gnathian ware, a form of polychromatic overpainted pottery that seems to have originated in southern Italy, often combines vegetal motifs with human heads, as either busts or masks. The smaller terracotta forms used for this polychromatic style of vase-painting provided an ideal backdrop for minimalist designs, which often comprise a simple garland of flowering vines as the background for a hanging theatrical mask. An unusual third-century B.C.E. oinochoe, however, depicts a narrative scene as well (fig. 1.12). The dominant ornamentation consists of two garlands; a blossoming vine runs around of the body of the vase, and the neck of the vase is decorated with a garland of grape leaves that stops on either side of the handle, dangling down to form the upright

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frame of the picture field. Opposite the handle, a youth wearing a kilted tunic and a mantle dances while another plays the flute; a fringed and patterned textile hangs suspended from the garland above, framing the scene. Enclosed within the boundaries formed by the textile and the garland, two female theatrical masks hang from the upper garland on either side of the narrative. Another feminine mask appears in relief at the join of the handle to the lip of the jar.

In this vase painting, the grape-leaf garland acts as a border, a frame, and as the performance’s physical setting. As a border, it wraps around the vase’s neck in a reflection of the band of flowering vines below; as a frame, it provides context and limits the narrative setting. It also takes an active role within that setting; its leaves infringe on the space of the textile swag that frames the dancers, and its ends dangle to the ground-line as though it were attached to the same surface. The masks also inhabit this space, attached to the garlands with their faces in profile towards the dancers as though watching the performance. As a result, the garland not only decorates the vase, it also adds a sense of ritual dedication to the scene that it frames.

The use of garlands to delineate a dedicated, sanctified space famously appears in the Ara Pacis Augustae, dated to 13-9 B.C.E (fig. 1.13). Although Jas Elsner argues that the procession of Roman elites along the exterior “represents, defines, and enunciates the sacredness of the enclosure,” this meaning is more fully represented in the vegetal motifs that decorate the entire enclosure. On the exterior walls, an ornate vegetal scroll

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populated with animals and birds wraps around the lower register; the upper register depicts the most powerful families of Rome and the officials of the sacred rites along the two side walls, with allegorical and legendary themes at the doorways. The interior represents the traditional wooden structure of a templum, with the hanging bucraenia of former sacrifices, the patens that caught the blood offerings, and the garlands that were always part of ritual practice. A fictive railing of rectangular panels topped by a palmette frieze is seemingly supported by attached Corinthian pilasters at regular intervals, which hold up a simple entablature. In the space between the railing and the entablature, bucraenia hold up a garland made up of fruits and vegetation from all seasons of the year, punctuated by sacrificial patens (fig. 1.14).

Peter Holliday interprets the vegetal scroll as “the fertility and prosperity of an earthly paradise,” while Paul Zanker reads it as a symbol of Augustan law. David Castriota argues that the scroll references the kind of pankarpheia that characterizes cultic devotion, supporting the fertility interpretation, and incorporates the garlands into a similar construct. To Holliday, the garland's incorporation of every season sites the rituals of Augustan peace within a new eternal order that was intended to last through all of nature’s cycles. Elsner describes the garland and its pendant bucraenia as a reference

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52 Holliday (1990), 545.
to “the fruitfulness of life bought at the ritual cost of death.” In addition to these levels of iconographic meaning, the garland also functions pragmatically as a referent to both physical and temporal boundaries of the sacred space. As it follows the perimeter of the templum, it transforms the space from an enclosed, fenced area into a place of active worship; the preservation of the fruits and flowers in their freshest condition implies that the altar is in current use.

The Pompeian Mosaics: Piety, Ritual, and Cultural Change

The use of garlands and ritual implements as a means of identifying sacred or ritual space allows a more pragmatic interpretation of the garlands and masks that first appear in three Pompeian mosaics: the Tiger Rider, the Doves, and the Seven Sages. Although each border was likely constructed separately from its emblema, the tradition that transformed borders and frames into references to landscape or setting, in concert with the ritual context of such elaborate garlands, suggests that the emblemata functioned in concert with their frames. As a result, the pairing of garlands and masks in the Mosaic of the Doves is likely to have held equal significance in its patron’s eyes as the Tiger Rider mosaic or the later Seven Sages mosaic. Indeed, when the mosaic of the Doves is examined within the cultural milieu of Pompeii during the later second and early first century BCE, it becomes a potentially significant statement of Roman culture, using Hellenistic iconography, set within a Pompeian fabric.

At its foundation in the 6th century BCE, Pompeii seems to have been a small

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53 Elsner (1991), 58.
54 For the garlands as determinant of the scene’s sanctity, see Castriota (1995), 32, 54.
village of local people with a sanctuary dedicated to Apollo; after this first village’s abandonment, it was settled by Samnites in the fourth century, and soon became allied with Rome. Because Pompeii was allied to Rome rather than subject to it, its citizens were not bound to the same kinds of social restrictions that hampered Roman aristocrats in their own displays of wealth and comfort; during the economic boom of the second century, the temple of Apollo was renovated on a more extensive plan, construction began on a temple to Jupiter, and Hellenistic influences began to appear in some of the more ostentatious homes. The demotion of Pompeii from full citizenship in Rome, which it had obtained following the Social Wars of 91-89 BCE, signaled another change; the arrival of several thousand retired Roman legionnaires and Sulla’s transformation of Pompeii into a Roman administrative site in 80 BCE brought distinctively Roman characteristics into the city, including the building of a temple dedicated to Venus, Sulla’s patron deity, and the transformation of the unfinished temple to Jupiter into a temple for the Capitoline triad.

As often as Dionysiac imagery appears in Pompeiian house decoration, the only shrine to Dionysos, or his alternate titles of Liber or Bacchus, was outside the city.

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57 Descaudres (2007), 16.
walls.\textsuperscript{58} Indeed, Shelley Hale has noted that members of Dionysos’s troupe appear far more often in Pompeian art than Dionysos himself, lending weight to the possibility that the imagery often associated with Dionysos could be turned to different uses.\textsuperscript{59} Thus, while much of the decoration at the House of the Faun is clearly associated with Dionysos, the appropriation of similar imagery for other sites—such as the masks-and-garlands border of the Tiger Rider mosaic used for the mosaic of the doves or the Seven Sages mosaic—may not be tied to Dionysiac ritual or devotion, but may as easily be connected to the deities more closely associated with Pompeian ritual life—Apollo and Venus.

At the House of the Faun, a floor-mosaic on the threshold between the entry hall, or \textit{fauces}, and the tuscan atrium provided the most immediate signifier of the household’s interests (fig. 1.15). Now on display at the Archaeological museum of Naples, the wide mosaic band depicts a beribboned garland of early autumn foliage and fruit—flowering ivy, carnations, opium poppy seed-heads, pine-cones, grapes, pomegranates, pears, oak leaves, and summer wheat—punctuated by tragic theatrical masks and hoops of varying material. Tragic masks are indelibly linked to the cult of Dionysos in Athens, where performances of classical tragedy originated, and the decoration in and around the atrium bears out the Dionysiac theme: the bronze faun in the impluvium that gave the house its name, the mosaic of a satyr and maenad that decorated the first room to the right of the

\textsuperscript{58} De Caro (2007), 80.
Tuscan atrium, and the Tiger Rider mosaic itself.\textsuperscript{60}

In his analysis of the House of the Faun’s plan, Mark Grahame shows that in size, placement, and accessibility, the Tuscan atrium and its attendant rooms would have been most useful for organized or planned social interaction—events tailored for multiple visitors to the house.\textsuperscript{61} The room where the Tiger-Rider mosaic was found is often identified as a triclinium, although it may not always have served this function.\textsuperscript{62} However the room may have been used during the life of the house, the public nature of the atrium space increases the likelihood that the mosaics in each of the adjoining rooms were well-known and recognizable elements of the house’s—and therefore the householder’s—identity.\textsuperscript{63} As popular as the masks-and-garlands border would later become throughout the Roman empire, the earliest instance on the Italian peninsula appears to be at the House of the Faun; its repetition in the House of the Mosaic Doves and, later, in the Seven Sages mosaic, but not elsewhere in Pompeii, suggests that the copies were deliberate adaptations and appropriations of its meaning and function.

The Tiger Rider mosaic has defied easy interpretation.\textsuperscript{64} Thomas Henry Dyer


\textsuperscript{62} For a discussion of the problems with the assignment of specific functions to Roman house spaces, however, see Penelope M. Allison. \textit{Pompeian Households: An Analysis of the Material Culture.} Monograph. Vol. 42, Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, 2004, 62-123.


\textsuperscript{64} Erich Pernice labels it the Tiger Rider: see Pernice (1938), 158-159.
titled it “Acratus on a Panther”, in reference to unmixed wine, while August Mau labeled it the more generic “Genius of the Autumn” because of the harvest fruits in the garlanded border. Erich Pernice noted that although Dionysos is the most common rider of a great cat, the rider is winged and boy-like in proportions, and is therefore more likely to be Eros; he suggested that the piece was meant to be read allegorically. Although David Wiles suggests that the allegory is “a meditation of the power of desire, and the possibility of taming it,” the mask-like appearance of the boy’s face, in conjunction with his trance-like focus on his reflection in the wine of the skyphos, recalls the connection between reflections, masks, and divinely-inspired trance in Dionysian cult practice.

The cultic nature of this allegorical image is further emphasized by the border of garlands and masks; a similar border was used for a mosaic in the House of the Jewellery on Delos whose central narrative is likely to have focused on Dionysos.

The masks that punctuate the garlands in the Tiger-Rider mosaic are distinctively connected to classical Roman comedy; so much so, that David Wiles is able to identify not only the character types, but also the usual interactions between such characters—interactions that would have been well-known to any theatre devotee. Thus, he identifies the mask at the center of the lower border as a courtesan, and her counterpart in

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66 Pernice (1938), 159.


68 Pernice (1938), 159; Siebert, 164.

the center of the upper border as the legitimate bride; the old men in the corners are the angry father and his friend, while the men who will, presumably, be vying for the affections of the ladies are the usual opposites of the handsome, civilized youth and his less-civilized, possibly military, counterpart. Two slaves round out the cast, each one’s eyes trained on his respective master. For Wiles, the sexual tension implicit in the plot-lines of comedies that use these types of characters is the dominating message of the mosaic as a whole, but the sexual element within such productions is often the sugar that coats a more pragmatic message; there is a divine reward for those who follow the values and mores of society, and punishment for those who do not.

The ideals and values promoted in theatrical performances extended beyond the world of Dionysos, evinced by the popularity of theatrical productions in festivals associated with Apollo, Hera, and Zeus. The possibility that theatrical masks, in spite of their origin with Dionysos, could be appropriated for use by other ritual or worship traditions, is perhaps easiest to see in traditions associated with Apollo, who shared his sanctuaries at Delphi and Delos with the god of wine. Scott Scullion argues that Apollo, as the god of music and poetry, was seen as the god primarily responsible for the development of classical tragedy, although Dionysos was honored as its originator. A relief sculpture from Corinth, dated to the second century BCE, clearly illustrates the debt that Classical theatre owed to poetry and thus to Apollo; on the lower register,

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70 Wiles (1991), 83-84.
71 Wiles (1991), 85.
75 Scullion (2002), 110.
personifications of both Tragedy and Comedy join other forms of poetry to hail Homer as their originator (fig. 1.16). Other gods—Zeus, Apollo, and the Muses—make their appearance as well, but Dionysos is absent.76

Apollo and Dionysos also shared patronage of philosophy; in Plato’s ideal society, Dionysos and Apollo shared the patronage of the mature men who would be the political leaders, for Dionysos held sway over the symposium where many philosophical discussions took place.77 Indeed, although orators claimed the patronage of Apollo and actors that of Dionysos, orators sometimes borrowed gestures and movement from the Dionysian stage while actors studied the elocution connected with Apollo.78 The Seven Sages mosaics—of which there are two copies, one that G.W. Elderkin dated to the first century CE, from Pompeii, and the other a second-century copy from Sarsina—exemplify the convivial relationship between the wine of Dionysos and the philosophical conversations associated with Apollo’s wisdom.79

In the Pompeiian mosaic, the sages engage in dynamic conversation around a large globe set in a coffer. The outdoor setting is signaled by an epistyle, a tree, and a pillar sundial; a landscaped city in the background is likely Athens. The Sarsina mosaic has been simplified and altered; the tree and the landscape have been removed, and the seven sages sit quietly in contemplation (fig 1.17). The immediate connection between

77 D’Etienne (2001), 151.
79 Both emblemata likely derive from the same iconographic source, but the two are significantly different in both border and composition details. See G. W. Elderkin. "Two Mosaics Representing the Seven Wise Men." American Journal of Archaeology 39, no. 1 (Jan. - Mar. 1935): 92-111.
Apollo and the Seven Sages would have been evident to an educated observer; one legend relates that when Apollo decreed that the wisest of men should receive his tripod as a prize, the philosopher who received it gave it to one of his contemporaries, who then gave it to another, and so on until each of the sages had possessed it. Thus, any depiction of the Seven Sages immediately evokes Apollo, the earliest patron deity of Pompeii. Seeing the sages in conversation together, however, also evokes the symposium and therefore Dionysos— a connection that appears in the surrounding borders.

The Sarsina mosaic distills the reference to Dionysos into its most basic form, reducing the border to a lush grape vine. The garlanded border of the Pompeian mosaic is more complex, incorporating as it does a similar combination of fruits and masks as appears in the Tiger-Rider mosaic. If one accepts the theory that garlands and wreaths signaled devotional piety, the Seven Sages becomes a devotional reference to the original patron of Pompeii. The incorporation of theatrical masks with the garlands, apparently copying the Tiger Rider’s frame, may have been an acknowledgement of Dionysos, but stage plays were not often associated with philosophical symposia even if they shared the same patron deity. Apollo’s role as the patron of poetry could have informed this choice of border; it is equally, and perhaps even more likely that the masks reference the

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81 Elderkin (1935), 92.
82 Although philosophical discussions may not have been connected with theatrical performances, actors were often called to perform at private parties, and symposia could include impromptu or planned performances by the guests. See Eric Csapo. Actors and Icons of the Ancient Theater. Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 188-89.
theatrical productions that had become part of local festivals connected with the god.\textsuperscript{83}

With this confirmation that mosaic frames of masks and garlands could reference celebrations other than Dionysiac festivals, the Doves mosaic becomes an intriguing puzzle; although it is apparently a genre scene based on a Greek model, its elaborate border of fruited garlands and satyric and theatrical masks suggests a devotional meaning. Doves were sacred to Venus, who is sometimes connected with Dionysos, and who became the patron goddess of Pompeii following the Roman occupation.\textsuperscript{84} Sulla’s temple to Venus was built on the outskirts of the old city, and there seems to be little connecting it with the large theatre except a winding street; however, Sulla insured the theatre’s renovation, and theatre was one of his favorite pastimes.\textsuperscript{85} Many years later, Sulla’s protégé Pompey the Great would remove even the conceptual distance between theatre and the goddess in his votive temple to Venus Victrix on the Campus Martius, which famously had all the necessary accoutrements for theatrical performance.\textsuperscript{86}


The House of the Mosaic Doves, insula VIII.ii.34, was constructed along the south wall in between the large theatre and Sulla’s temple to Venus; when the Roman colonization of Pompeii eliminated the need for defensive walls, buildings along this street became particularly desirable property for their views of the Campanian countryside. In its construction and decoration, it takes its cue from earlier atrium houses in the city—particularly the House of the Faun. Like the tuscan atrium in the House of the Faun, the atrium in the House of the Mosaic Doves is flanked by three cubiculi and an aula on each side and three more rooms along the back wall (figs. 1.18-1.19). The rooms along the atrium’s back wall at the House of the Mosaic Doves quote, but do not copy, the decoration of the House of the Faun. The Doves mosaic with its masks-and-garlands border was in the left-hand triclinium, rather than sharing the Tiger-Rider’s placement in the right-hand triclinium, and the mosaic in the right-hand room in the House of the Mosaic Doves, later turned into a stairwell, appropriated its subject matter from an entirely different section of the House of the Faun; its depiction of a fight between a lion and a leopard or tiger is a direct copy of the mosaic that once decorated the room next to that of the Alexander Mosaic, which opened out to the second peristyle of the House of the Faun.

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89 Anthony King identifies the cats as a lion and a leopard in the House of the Mosaic Doves and a lion vs. a tiger in the House of the Faun. See Anthony King. "Mammals: Evidence from Wall Paintings, Sculpture, Mosaics, Faunal Remains, and Ancient Literary Sources." In The Natural History of Pompeii, edited by Wilhelmina Feemster, Wilhelmina F. Jashemski and Frederick G. Meyer, 401-50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 440. The lion mosaic of Teramo, which shares the masks-and-garlands border of the Tiger Rider mosaic and shares enough compositional elements with the animal fights in the other two mosaics that Marion E. Blake believes them to have been done by the same artist, has a snake as the lion’s adversary, so is more overtly Dionysian than the other mosaics. See Marion Elizabeth Blake. "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire." Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome 8 (1930): 7-159. 129, 135-136.
The mosaics in the House of the Mosaic Doves thus appear to be a conscious subversion of the Dionysian iconography in the House of the Faun. While the layouts of each house are almost identical, as are the animal hunt mosaics and the borders of the triclinium mosaics, the transformation of the Tiger Rider himself into a genre scene of doves drinking from a vessel effectively erases the Dionysian character of the mosaic. The masks of comic theatre that once belonged to the god of wine now appear in service to the goddess of love, and in the process suggest that in the Roman world, comedic masks– and by extension, satyr masks as well – might not always have been linked indelibly with the cult of Dionysos or even, perhaps, with theatre.
Chapter 2. Satyrs and Masks in Greece and Rome

In his explanation of the benefits that gardens provide, Pliny the Elder makes an intriguing, if somewhat cryptic, remark, regarding imagery associated with satyrs:

quam ob rem comitata est et religio quaedam, hortoque et foro tantum contra inividentium effascinationes dicari videmus in remedio saturica signa, quamquam hortos uttelae veneris adsignante plauto.

For this reason a measure of sanctity attends them: only in a garden or in a forum do we see satyric images, dedicated to combat the bewitchment of the envious, although Plautus assigns gardens to Venus.¹

Pliny’s use of the term *saturica signa* allows for a broad classification of objects that may be used for apotropaic purposes; there is no distinction between free-standing sculpture, painting, masks, or plaques, as long as they can be associated with satyrs. He carefully distinguishes satyric imagery from that associated with Venus, however, who is the usual patron deity of gardens, but in his statement another deity is missing. Although garden wall paintings in Pompeii abound with depictions of Dionysos, Ariadne and their troupe, Pliny’s discussion does not include the god of wine.²

A set of wall-paintings from the villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale more clearly illustrates Pliny’s comment.³ In cubiculum M, on the two facing side walls, two pairs of red-faced satyr masks appear as oscillae on the cross-beams of fictive colonnades; between each pair of masks, in the midground of the painting, a silenus mask is affixed to a simple outdoor shrine draped with a laurel garland (fig. 2.1). Phyllis

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² One of the most overtly Dionysiac garden paintings is from house VI.17.42 in Pompeii, where Dionysos and Ariadne appear as both masks and as relief-sculpture plaques. For Dionysos and his troupe in gardens as signifiers of illicit behavior, see Katharine T. Stackelberg, *The Roman Garden: Space, Sense, and Society.* New York: Routledge, 2009, 27, 88-89.
³ Although Rabun Taylor does not use this villa in his article on oscillae, the wall-paintings dovetail with his argument. See Taylor (2005).
Lehmann, whose study of the villa remains the only comprehensive study of its paintings to date, identified these masks as ritualistic and likely Bacchic; however, the apotropaic function of such masks has little apparent correlation with Bacchic or Dionysiac traditions.4

Understanding the significance of satyric masks, like those that appear in the Boscoreale cubiculum, has been hobbled by associating them primarily with the Greek-derived traditions of Dionysos and theatre.5 As influential as Greek culture was for the western Mediterranean, its domination was primarily stylistically; the Hellenism of the Roman world remained grounded in Roman ideology.6 The Roman adaptation of Greek forms need not have been limited to such public forms of art; it is possible that satyrs, as well, participated in a similar mode of assimilation and adaptation. Examining the transmission of satyr masks between Greece and Rome demonstrates that satyr masks are not solely Dionysiac or theatrical in meaning; they can also be interpreted as Hellenistic


adaptations of an indigenous tradition.  

The Theatrical Experience: from Greece to Rome

For Athenian citizens of the fifth century BCE, tragedies and satyr plays were an important part of the celebrations of the Great Dionysia. With plots and story-lines developed from mythological sources, actors dressed in large masks and dramatic costumes brought gods and heroes to life, at least in the confines of the sanctuary where the performances took place. The plays themselves acted as metaphors for current social or political issues, particularly relevant to a democratic society where the responsibility of governing the city-state devolved upon every male citizen. Through the performed narrative, audience members were expected to self-identify with the characters and situations that were presented, using their reactions to dramatic conflicts as inspiration for

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7 This is certainly evident in the differences between satyr plays in Greece and Rome. T.P. Wiseman emphasizes the distinction between the rowdy satyrs of the Greek stage and the more restrained satyrs of the Roman world in Italic satyr plays, where the separation of the Roman satyrs from Dionysiac ritual was an important aspect of the more respectable Roman version. See T. P. Wiseman. "Satyrs in Rome? The Background to Horace’s Ars Poetica." The Journal of Roman Studies. 78 (1988) 1-13.


solving personal dilemmas.\textsuperscript{11}

The plays of Athens grew in popularity over the course of the fourth century, inducing actors and acting companies to take their productions on regional and then even more distant tours throughout Magna Graecia.\textsuperscript{12} Although Dionysos became only one of many gods whose festivals began to feature competitive theatrical productions, he remained the originator and so the patron of many acting families and eventually the larger actor’s guild, the “Artists of Dionysos”.\textsuperscript{13} In the third century BCE, the popularity of such productions extended to Rome, where Latin translations and adaptations were incorporated into an already-thriving performance tradition of dance.\textsuperscript{14}

For Roman audiences, unlike the audiences of Magna Graecia, theatre was a foreign import introduced under the guise of placating and honoring the gods; perceptions and attitudes towards theatre were therefore ambivalent.\textsuperscript{15} Comedies were the most popular, with Greek scripts translated into Latin and playwrights adapting Greek themes for Roman audiences; however, tragedies were valuable as well, and with the success of

\textsuperscript{11} Aristotle’s concept of catharsis as a significant element for theatrical productions is one of the dominating theories behind the justification for primarily entertaining plays. See Easterling (1996), 39. Countering this perception, however, as a later interpretation of an already-existing tradition, is Page Dubois. "Ancient Tragedy and the Metaphor of Katharsis." \textit{Theatre Journal} 54, no. 1 (March 2002): 19-24.


\textsuperscript{13} The “Actors of Dionysos” are not to be confused with the “Parasites of Apollo,” which was, later, an association of pantomimes. See E. J. Jory. "Associations of Actors in Rome." \textit{Hermes} 98, no. 2 (1970): 224-53.

\textsuperscript{14} The earliest scripted comedies are attributed to Livius Andronicus, after whom the historian was named. See Richard C. Beacham. \textit{The Roman Theatre and Its Audience}. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991, 13-14.

\textsuperscript{15} Livy. \textit{Hist.} VII.2.1-7. For a fuller discussion, see Beacham (1991), 2-7.
seeing mythological subjects performed on the stage the adaptation of historical subjects for the Roman theatre was inevitable. Such themes seem to have been an integral part of commemorative celebrations, and Greek tragedy provided a convenient model; as a result, Greek theatre, which took mythological subjects as its primary source material, became a precedent for Roman *fabulae*. Tellingly, the most popular plays in Rome were based on myths and legends that could be directly tied to Rome, and the most long-lasting comedies were those that emphasized the rules and benefits of living in accordance with Roman morals and ethics.

Rome’s enthusiasm for theatrical productions should not be interpreted as a unilateral appreciation for the Greek tradition, however. Livy’s description of theatre’s origin in Rome carefully distinguishes the first performances from the traditions of Greek tragedy, claiming that the first *scaenici* were part of a last-ditch effort by the consuls, C. Sulpicius Peticus and C. Licinius Stolo, to placate the gods and alleviate the plague that had ravaged the city in 361 BCE and continued to decimate the city. He writes:

... ceterum parva haec quoque, ut ferme principia omnia, et ea ipsa peregrina res fuit, sine carmine ullo, sine imitandorum carminum actu ludiones, ex Etruria acciti, ad tibicinis modos saltantes haud indecoros motus more Tusco dabant.

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16 The genres of theatre in Rome were divided by origin as well as subject: the *tragoedia* or *fabula crepidata* based on Greek myth, the *fabula praetexta* which told Roman history, the *fabula palliata* for Greek comedy, and the *fabula togata* for Roman comedy. The *fabula Atellana* was a specific form of light comedy. Mimes and pantomimes were separate and had their own guilds. Gesine Manuwald. *Roman Drama*. London: Duckworth, 2010, 3-6. For the pantomime, see E. J. Jory. "The Drama of the Dance: Prolegomena to an Iconography of Imperial Pantomime." Chap. 1 In *Roman Theater and Society: E. Togo Salmon Papers I*, edited by William J. Slater, 1-25. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.


18 Beacham (1991), 119-121, 127-130.


20 Livy. *Hist.* VII.2.3.
Imitari deinde eos iuventus simul inconditis inter se iocularia fundentes versibus coepere, nec absoni a voce motus erant.

... in accordance with universal principle, this began in a poor way, and people from Etruria were brought in for the games to play the flute and dance, without any singing or acting, in the by no means indecorous Tuscan fashion. In imitation, then, certain young men in simultaneous disorder interjected themselves between them, speaking improvised facetious verses that were not out of tune with the performance.²¹

Livy’s careful separation of the classically-trained Tuscan dancers who first came to Rome from the “singing and acting” of Greek theatre, combined with his description of the teasing Roman adolescents who derailed the performance, allows him to credit youthful Roman high spirits with originating some of the most popular theatrical forms of his own time: mime and Atellan farce.²² In this way, Livy maintains the ideological segregation of Greek theatre as foreign and somewhat suspect while providing legitimacy for the popular dramatic performances in Rome.

Significantly, Livy sets the introduction of theatre within the context of the ludi. Although the ritual significance of the games has often been buried under the weight of their political value as entertainment venues, the ludi were first and foremost religious and commemorative celebrations.²³ The oldest of these celebrations may have originated in a votive offering to the gods following a general’s victory; by the late Republic, the

²¹ Livy, Hist. VII.2.4-5.
²² Livy (Hist. VII.2.11-13) writes that Atellan farce was the result of a conflation of the early mime tradition with Oscan comedies; these new farces remained the provenance of Roman citizens, so that it became they only form of drama that elite Romans could perform without penalty. For further discussion of the sources and influences on Roman comedy, see George Eckel Duckworth. The Nature of Roman Comedy: A Study in Popular Entertainment. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952, 1-7; Beacham 1991 3-6.
tradition of sponsoring games was an important element of Roman culture.\textsuperscript{24} In his election as an aedile, Cicero noted that his role would include providing for the games in honor of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, as well as games honoring Ceres, Liber, Libera, and Flora.\textsuperscript{25} By the end of the third century BCE, different celebrations were characterized by different kinds of entertainment; comedies were performed at the public \textit{ludi}, the \textit{ludi Romani} in September, the \textit{ludi Plebeii} in November, the \textit{ludi Megalenses} in July, and the \textit{ludi Apollinares} in July, while gladiatorial combat was restricted to the commemorative \textit{ludi} of funerary games.\textsuperscript{26}

The importance of narrative in the construction of Roman social identity— and the Roman audience did not differentiate between mythological and historical narrative as modern audiences might— pervaded every aspect of the \textit{ludi}. When the traditional displays of martial skill were eclipsed by gladiatorial combats, enacted by professional fighters as well as prisoners of war and criminals, the combats re-created historical battles.\textsuperscript{27} Circus races and athletic competitions had cosmological significance; from the winners of these competitions, some claimed to read the future narrative of the empire.\textsuperscript{28} By the reign of Augustus, even the public execution of criminals sometimes took a page from theatre, exploiting the roles-reversal often found in both Greek and Roman

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\begin{enumerate}
\item Cic. Ver. 2.5.36.
\end{enumerate}
comedy.\textsuperscript{29}

As popular as dramatic productions were in Rome, performances were carefully regulated. The most famous constraint placed on theatrical productions was the restriction on the sites and buildings where these performances took place; the first amphitheatres in Rome were temporary structures built from wood, easily built and quickly torn down at the festival’s end.\textsuperscript{30} The rationale behind the senate’s refusal to allow the building of permanent amphitheatres within the city walls is unclear; explanations have ranged from the desire to keep any one family from achieving such popularity with the people, to a mistrust of anything so blatantly Greek within the city of Rome.\textsuperscript{31} Whatever their reasons, it was not until 55 BCE that the senate allowed the construction of a permanent amphitheatre made of stone, and even then its origin was somewhat disingenuous.\textsuperscript{32} When Pompey the Great commissioned a great, stepped, semi-circular podium for his votive temple to Venus Victrix in the Campus Martius just outside the city walls, the open area before the podium was large enough to act as a stage, and the steps could double as theatrical seating.\textsuperscript{33}

The ambivalence of Roman attitudes towards theatre appears not only in the history of the structures themselves, but also in the social standing of the actors who


\textsuperscript{31} Holleran (2003), 49-50.

\textsuperscript{32} For the successive attempts to build a permanent theatre in Rome beginning in 154 BCE, and the political resistance to them, see Beacham (1991), 65-69.

performed in them. From the time of their introduction to Roman society, professional actors were predominantly slaves, with strong sanctions imposed for those members of the upper classes who wished to take part in public theatrical productions outside of the Atellan farces. The rationale behind this policy may have been an attempt to mitigate the powerful influence held by popular actors over their audiences and particularly their followers, which no senator wished to give to a political opponent. Actors gave voice to opinions that audiences could not always safely express independently; audiences used their enthusiasm for an actor’s performance to communicate their feelings about important socio-political issues, and popular actors were sometimes seen as dangerous rabble-rousers. However, the potential for political backlash may have gone deeper than the fear of a populist take-over of government; the traditions that had arisen around the masks that actors commonly used to disguise their faces differed significantly between Greece and Rome, providing an important key to understanding the ambivalence with which elite Romans treated the actors and productions that both educated and entertained the populace.

The Many Kinds of Masks

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35 Members of the elite were certainly capable of performing on stage, and private theatricals were popular; the same techniques and skills of performance and empathy that made a good actor also enabled good oration and rhetoric. Depending on the imperial enthusiasm (or lack thereof) for the theatre, there were some reigns—like that of Nero—where the line between public and private productions blurred almost completely, being private only in name, so as to retain the illusion of respectability. See Boyle (2006), 181-183, Holleran (2003), 50-51.
36 Boyle (2006), 153-155 references an anecdote from Cicero’s *Pro Sestio* (120-4) that illustrates the power of the actor; Aesop’s lines were considered so applicable to the current political situation that the audience asked for multiple encores, and audiences knew the lines of the plays as well as the actors and sometimes better.
One reason behind the Roman ambivalence towards classical Greek theatre, even when it had been adapted and altered for Roman audiences, may have been due to its use of masks. In the late Roman republic there were at least four different general categories of masks, any of which could be on public view at various times and the majority of which were displayed in private homes. Ancestor masks were perhaps the most common, paraded through the streets during funerals and displayed in the home at state festivals. Stylized masks depicting gods and other supernatural entities appear in both wall painting and mosaic throughout the Roman world. Theatrical and pantomime masks, seen in performance during the games, were also copied in every medium and displayed in public areas as well as in private spaces. In contrast, the Hellenistic world allowed for two kinds of masks that appeared in regular use: apotropaic satyr masks and theatrical masks.

Theatrical masks in the Hellenistic world were treated with the reverence appropriate for implements associated with cultic worship. Although there is no reason to believe that many masks did not travel from venue to venue along with the rest of an acting troupe’s paraphernalia, a win at a competition often ended in the actors’ dedication


38 Perhaps the best examples of this kind of mask are in the Room of Masks at the House of Augustus on the Equiline Hill in Rome; they are a combination of theatrical and ritual masks. See Irene Iacopi. The House of Augustus: Wall Paintings. Milan: Electa, 2008.

of their masks to the sanctuary where they had performed. These masks were retained by the patron deity for whom they had been animated, and did not leave the sanctified ground of that sacred, ritual space. As a result, the faces that had been seen to move and speak on the stage retained a supernatural, religious quality set apart from the day-to-day life of the community.

The iconography of masks in Rome seems to have been quite fluid in comparison. Although there are no known extant examples of ancestral masks, they may have been constructed in a similar fashion to other masks. Satyr masks can often be distinguished from comic theatre masks only by their pointed ears; their physiognomy otherwise compares with stock male characters from New Comedy, with exaggerated caliper and forehead lines, bulging eyes, reddened skin-tones, and open mouths. The female tragic mask, differentiated from its comedic counterpart by a tall head-dress, was naturally incorporated into the iconography of Melpomene, the muse of tragedy. Pantomime masks are in some ways the most difficult to uncover; as the narratives were danced to a musical accompaniment rather than spoken by the actor, pantomime masks were close-mouthed and their features less exaggerated, making them appear more life-like than the

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44 The distinctions between comic and satyr masks are arguably superficial at best, as performance practices of satyr plays and comedies derive from the same sources, even though satyr plays were closely linked to tragedy. Eric Csapo. "Performing Comedy in the Fifth through Early Third Centuries," Chap. 2 In *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, edited by Michael Fontaine and Adele C. Scafuro, 50-69. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
stylized forms of other theatrical masks.\textsuperscript{45}

The physiognomic similarities between these masks reflect the ideological framework behind the Roman perception of masks and those who wore them.\textsuperscript{46} The wearing of a mask both obscures and transforms the individual wearing it; with the mask as the publicly-shown face, the mask-wearer’s actions both influence and are influenced by that mask’s socially recognized character.\textsuperscript{47} However, a mask need not be a physical object made of wax, wood, and paint; one’s own face may also be considered a mask, one that is worn throughout one’s mortal existence and then discarded at life’s end.\textsuperscript{48} The idea that the face itself is a mask that can be used by others as well as by its original owner crops up again and again in Roman traditions.

Perhaps the most ambiguous example of the significance of a face’s transformation into a mask in Italic culture was the Roman triumph, where heroism was honored by acknowledging the general’s connection with the gods.\textsuperscript{49} Although this appearance was carefully staged, and although the conceit was well known to all, there could be no mistaking the general’s ostensible relationship to the divine patrons of Rome.


\textsuperscript{46} Portraits and masks derived from the same physiognomic theories, and just as individual traits found their way onto the stage via masks, the stereotypes of personality and character that were propagated by theatrical masks were copied in portraiture. Matti Fischer. "Portrait and Mask, Signifiers of the Face in Classical Antiquity." \textit{Assaph. Studies in Art History} (2001): 31-62.


\textsuperscript{48} Fischer 2001, 33.

during this public acknowledgement of his success. The victorious procession of the army, its prisoners and spoils of war, along with painted scenes narrating their exploits, allowed the spectators to re-create the war for themselves; however, the crowning moment of the procession was the appearance of the general, in the character of Jupiter himself. The divine connection was signaled by the clothing and ornaments that were given to the triumphator for the duration of the procession, and – at least in some early cases– by the color of the general’s face: a red that matched the paint that had once decorated the cult statue of Jupiter Capitolinus.

The importance of facial resemblance in connecting living individuals to culturally significant beings, whether patron deities or heroic ancestors, appears in Roman funerary traditions as well. Writing in the second century BCE, Polybius described the impact of viewing the life-like pedigree of an elite family during funeral celebrations, which were meant to encourage “an ambitious young man who aspires to


51 The ambivalence of Roman attitudes towards the concept of avataristic incarnations of the gods is well-documented in their reactions towards any general who was seen to over-step his bounds in representing the favor of the gods. There remains a strong literary tradition of divine beings taking on human shape and form, however, sometimes disguising themselves as well-known companions or leaders. Although these episodes are written with the gods as actors, using the mask and costume of mortal beings in order to interact with others, the question remains whether these identities, once discarded by the god, could ever wholly return to their prior status– or whether they afterward retained a connection to the divinity that had used them. On epiphanies, see Richard Buxton. "Metamorphoses of Gods into Animals and Humans." Chap. 4 In *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations*, edited by Jan Bremmer and Andrew Erskine, 81-91. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Also, Verity J. Platt. *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature, and Religion*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

52 Mary Beard challenges the generally accepted idea that the general’s face was painted red, although she acknowledges that it seems to have been practiced at one time. Beard 2009, 232. For arguments regarding the red being worn by both Jupiter and the triumphator, see Versnel 1970, 78-82.
excellence.” After the obligatory nine days of mourning, a public procession of the *familia* bore the deceased from the family’s ancestral residence to the forum. This procession included not only living family members, but also all deceased family members who had attained certain ranks of public service; their living presence was evoked through the use of masked and costumed actors, whose responsibility it was to imitate the deceased with as much accuracy as possible.

Far from being idealized or generic representations, these masks were derived from veristic portraits and were meant to be faithful depictions of the deceased at the height of their power. The actors who wore them had, ideally, devoted months or sometimes years to the study of the required habits of speech and mannerisms; they were clothed in the robes associated with the highest ranks these men had achieved in life, and were accompanied by all of their military honors as they processed with the living family through the streets of Rome. The spectacle of this procession, with chariots and guards and war-time trophies all moving through the streets, eventually became so lavish that the practice was censured.

At the rostra, the masked ancestors were provided with chairs so that they could be on view of the public during the recitation of all their greatest deeds. Depending on

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53 Polyb. VI.53. trans. Robin Waterfield,
54 Favro and Johanson, (2010).
56 Polybius (VI.53.5-9) notes the wearing of garb appropriate to the highest degree of status the ancestors had attained. Sumi (2002), 563.
57 Actors went through careful training to insure that they got the movements and gestures and voice as closely as possible to the deceased. Sumi (2002), 561-2.
58 Sumi (2002), 575-76.
the number of men involved, this recitation could take some time and would have
provided ample opportunity for viewing the features of each man.\textsuperscript{60} The impact of this
sight was meant to inspire awe and wonder; Polybius writes, “how could \textit{anyone} remain
unmoved by the sight of the arrayed icons, utterly lifelike, of all those famous heroes?
What spectacle could be more wonderful than that?”\textsuperscript{61} Although Polybius does not
discuss the significance of being able to see, and thus to compare, the physical features of
ancestral heroes with their descendants, the importance of this visual connection appears
in Vergil’s \textit{Aeneid}, written during Augustus’s reign.\textsuperscript{62} Vergil’s description of the funerary
games held to commemorate Anchises’ death includes a display of military exercises by
the younger generation, the boys whose education in battle tactics was now being put to
public view. The boys were understandably nervous as they took the field, but their
parents acted as parents always have:

\begin{quote}
excipiunt plausu pauidos gaudentque tuentes
Dardanidae, ueterumque agnoscent ora parentum.
\end{quote}

The Dardans welcome the anxious boys with applauses and rejoice, as they gaze,
to recognize in them the features of their departed fathers.\textsuperscript{63}

This exhibition of the boys’ training showed their readiness and their ability to carry on
the family traditions; their physical resemblance to their ancestors, however, is the visual

\begin{footnotes}
\item[60] Flower (1996), 129-130.
\item[61] Polyb., VI.53.10.
\item[62] Vergil’s last work, unfinished at his death in 19 BCE, describes the adventures of Aeneas and his fellows
following their escape from the sack of Troy; their fated mission to arrive in Italy and become the germ
for Rome is one of the dominating themes of the book. As a result, the \textit{Aeneid} acts as a window into
Roman self-identity as much as it does Roman views of history. For a review of the literature on
interpretations of the \textit{Aeneid} and a synthesizing thesis that reads the poem as an attempt to render an
objective view of Roman history, see Ernst A. Schmidt. "The Meaning of Vergil's "Aeneid:" American
and German Approaches," \textit{The Classical World} 94, no. 2 (Winter 2001): 145-71. The latin text of the
\textit{Aeneid}, with line-by-line translations, previously published translations, and study materials, is now
available online through the Vergil Project at the University of Pennsylvania: \url{http://vergil.classics.upenn.edu/vergil/index.php/}.
\item[63] Verg. \textit{Aen.} V. 575-576
\end{footnotes}
cue insuring the continuity of their families’ greatness into the future.

Funerals were not the only time when these masks were made available for view, merely the most public; Polybius also notes that they were stored in shrines placed in the most public area of the house, that would then be opened and decorated for festivals.64 Anyone who visited the domus, which could include all of the family’s clients, friends, and extended family, would thus have ample opportunities to view the features of famous or renowned citizens, whose influence thus continued to be felt in the life of the city.65 These masks, so intimately engaged with family and individual identity, suggest that similar concepts would be implied in the depiction, construction, use, and storage of any other kind of mask.

By the fifth century CE, the conception that constructed effigies—whether masks or other kinds of effigies—could substitute for people had been institutionalized in such festivals as the Saturnalia, whose origins were recorded by Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius in his work of the same name.66 Although much of the work is devoted to Vergil as the pre-eminent epic poet of the Roman world, the first book is dominated by a discussion of the calendar: times, seasons, and rituals.67 In this discussion, the philosopher Ettius Agorius Praetextus provides several different origins for the

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64 Polyb, VI.53.4-6
67 This section of the book sets the stage for the discussion that will follow: introducing the background history of the Roman calendar and the reason for the Saturnalian symposium, the characters, and the dominant subject for the rest of the work. For further discussion of the structure of the Saturnalia, see Kaster, Robert A. "Introduction." In Macrobius: Saturnalia, edited and translated by Robert A. Kaster, xi-lxii. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011. xxiv-xxxvi, il-liii.
Saturnalia; the origin that he— and therefore, likely, Macrobius— believes to be most accurate involves Hercules and human heads.68

Praetextus attributes the story to Varro, a late-republican writer whose prolific literary output has, for the most part, been lost.69 In this version, the Saturnalia was instituted when the exiled Pelasgi finally landed near Italy and, honoring the prophecy that had helped them arrive at their new home, instituted a yearly festival in honor of Saturn and Dis Pater where human sacrifice played a central role.70 As part of this celebration, a man was sacrificed to Saturn, and Dis received men’s heads.71 When Hercules stopped in Italy during his monumental cattle-drive, he was dismayed by the practice and suggested an alternative to the crime of killing men; reading the oracle himself, he noted that one could offer “humanam effigiem arte simulata”— artfully simulated effigies of human heads, rather than actual heads— to Dis Pater, and candles to Saturn, since the word φωτα could mean “light” instead of “man”.72 With the idea that represented faces are just as acceptable to the gods as real ones, the delineation between living, or once-living, heads and constructed masks becomes even more diffused.

The importance of physiognomy to the Roman perception of self and his/her role within the community cannot be understated; even without the customs surrounding


70 Macrobr. Sat. I.7.31

71 Macrobr. Sat. I.7.31

72 Macrobr. Sat. I.7.31
ancestral masks, the tradition of veristic portraiture insured that family traits could be seen to continue through the generations, thus depicting the stability of the family line and, by inference, the continuity of the traditions that kept Rome safe. Physical characteristics communicated personality traits, active ability, and family connections; thus, portraits may not always have been empirically accurate. As a result, the masks of Greek theatre– even satyr masks– could not function the same way in Roman culture as they did in Greek culture; indeed, considering the cultural melange that was hellenistic southern Italy, it is unlikely that even the culturally Greek colonies perceived masks in quite the same way as their ancestral homeland.

A wall-painting fragment from Herculaneum, now at the Naples museum, provides an intriguing clue to the use of masks in every-day life (fig. 2.2). In this fragment, an actor dressed in white robes with a broad yellow band across his chest sits in a chair, holding a staff surmounted by a gold statuette in his right hand. To his left, a young woman kneels before a table, on which is an open cabinet that has been draped in

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75 As closely tied to their Greek roots as the colonies of Magna Graecia may have been, the inter-cultural exchange between the colonists and the indigenous peoples is likely to have influenced at least some aspects of society and ritual life. Archaeological evidence for migration throughout the Mediterranean suggests that the first colonists seem to have arrived in small groups that were largely assimilated into local culture, before the larger-scale establishments. That even larger-scale colonies almost immediately appropriated at least some local customs is evident in funerary practices. Peter van Dommelen. "Colonialism and Migration in the Ancient Mediterranean." The Annual Review of Anthropology (2012): 393-404. Tamar Hodos. "Colonial Engagements in the Global Mediterranean Iron Age." Cambridge Archaeological Journal 19, no. 02 (June 2009): 221-41.
lengths of white fabric. Inside the cabinet, framed by the open doors, is a mask with the high hair usually associated with tragedy. Another man stands behind the table.

Although the actor takes pride of place within the composition, his gaze, as well as the servant’s, focus on the kneeling girl whose attention in turn issues bound up in viewing the mask, which seems to look back at her.

The storage of the mask in this painting is almost entirely opposite from those found in a contemporary mosaic depicting actors preparing for their roles, from the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii (fig. 2.3). In the mosaic, one actor in the rough loincloth of a satyr has shoved his mask up over his head, while another actor, in the process of getting dressed, has left his mask upon the table. Two other masks, one a pale-faced tragic mask and the other a senex mask, have been stored together in a box at the feet of the oldest actor, who holds the tragic mask by its head-dress. Although these masks have much of the same iconography as that in the Herculaneum painting, they are clearly made for use rather than for display.

The relief of Menander from the first century, now at the Vatican, may illustrate both modes of display (fig. 2.4). In this relief, Menander sits at a table covered with theatrical masks. On the wall above and behind him is a painted garland, and in front of the garland hangs a wooden cabinet that seems to be closed. The shutters of the nearby window are wide open, and the muse stands in front of the window gesturing to the masks on the table. The cabinet on the wall is similar in shape, if not in proportion, to the mask from the Herculaneum wall painting, while the display of the theatrical masks more readily ties with the mosaic. Should the cabinet be of the kind that held ancestor masks,
its closure signifies that the scene takes place outside of the festival season; such a display would be singularly appropriate for a playwright whose work of contemplation and writing needed to be completed prior to the festivals where his plays would be performed.

The wall painting from Herculaneum is described as depicting an actor who has just won the competition for his role as a king, sitting in his dressing room; however, this interpretation is inadequate. The young woman kneeling at the feet of the mask seems out of place, if the actor is the primary subject of the piece; nor is her presence in his dressing room appropriate, if she truly is the modest young woman her dress proclaims her to be. Although any alternate interpretation must be treated with care, it is possible that this painting depicts an actor in preparation, rather than in victory, and that the role he will be playing is that of the young woman’s ancestor, as for a funerary procession. This interpretation provides an explanation for the young woman’s attention to the mask rather than the actor, for the direction of the actor’s and servant’s gazes, and even for the fillet that has been draped on the cabinet, similar examples of which appear in Etruscan tomb paintings.

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77 Her hairstyle and her clothing both suggest that she is an unmarried woman of status. Were this a place outside the woman’s own home, she would have been accompanied by a chaperone at the very least. Unmarried young women, particularly those in a large household such as can be inferred from this painting, faced a strict regime prior to marriage; belief that a woman’s sexual appetite required outside control resulted in careful control over social interaction. Mary Harlow and Ray Laurence. *Growing up and Growing Old in Ancient Rome: A Life Course Approach*. New York: Routledge, 2002, 56-61.

The possibility of interpreting this painting as a reference to a funerary procession rather than a theatrical performance, where the only anomaly is in the construction of the mask’s headdress, shows the malleability of Roman iconography. If a mask with all the characteristics of tragedy can be placed in a scene more applicable to domestic cult, then masks that more usually reference the comic stage may be equally malleable. In this cultural context, understanding the role of satyrs in Roman culture is vital to recognizing the potential functions of their masks.

**Fauns and Satyrs**

Satyrs, at least in the satyr plays of Athens, are the backwoods rubes of Hellenic culture, the comic figures whose reactions to civilized life provided sometimes biting social commentary for the audiences who watched their staged escapades. Just as later theatrical productions could be dedicated to gods other than Dionysos, however, satyrs interacted and associated with gods beyond the forests. In Aeschylus’s *Theoroi*, the satyrs determine to place their newly painted portraits in the temple of Poseidon, to frighten travelers. The mythical satyr Marsyas ran afoul of Athena and Apollo; his story, which also explains the origin of the Marsya River, provides an important bridge between satyrs in Greece and satyrs in Italy.

Jocelyn Penny Small has noted that in all of his characteristics, Marsyas shows himself to be far different from the comical bumpkin of the satyr plays. He is a genius

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musician whose ability matches – and technically exceeds – that of Apollo, for which Apollo flays him alive. His torture is mourned so greatly that the tears of nymphs, satyrs, and woodland creatures mourning his passing forms a river, and even Apollo repents his bad tempered outburst. Although this is the end of his story in the Greek tradition, Romans gave him an alternate history: one that highlights his role as a wise counsellor, not just a musician.

In Rome, Marsyas was believed to have found his way to Rome during his flight from Apollo; he was credited with founding a city, teaching augury to the local populace, and seems to have been connected with the Marsii family, who were hereditary augers. He was the augur who interpreted the natural signs that told Romulus where to found Rome and insured the site’s freedom from other supernatural entanglements– a significant worry, as the inappropriate dedication of a site could cause the resident spirits to sabotage any other endeavors surrounding the site. By the late republic, a statue of Marsyas in the Forum commemorated his service to the city and symbolized the site’s freedom from supernatural entanglements.

The statue of an aging, potbellied satyr, no longer extant but visible on coinage and in copies, showed him wearing his traveling boots and equipped with a wineskin, examining the birds’ portents. Later, both in the Roman forum, and eventually in fora

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83 For attempts to use rivers called Marsyas in and around what is now Turkey as a means of locating the origin and source of the myth, see van Keer (2004), 22.
85 Small (1982), 78-80.
86 Small (1982), 78-79.
throughout the Roman empire, Marsyas became a symbol of freedom to speak, loyalty to Rome, and the power of the Roman empire.\textsuperscript{88} This satyr, then, differs quite significantly from the satyr whose primary function in art seems to be as an exegesis on Dionysiac ritual: his role as an augur, not his role as a companion to the god of wine, is what gives him importance, and his interpretations of the signs in the heavens and in the earth communicated the boundaries, both literal and metaphorical, of appropriate behavior.

In his ability to interpret the oracles given by signs in the heavens and the earth, Marsyas echoes another legendary character from Roman mythic history: Faunus, the grandson of Saturn and a mythical king who reigned prior to Aeneas’s landing on Italic shores. Vergil’s \textit{Aeneid} illustrates Faunus’s attributes through the story of Lavinia, who was affianced to Turnus prior to Aeneas’s arrival.\textsuperscript{89} Her pedigree was impeccable: as Aeneas was descended from Venus, she was descended in a direct line from Saturn.\textsuperscript{90} Saturn, conflated with the Greek Chronos, arrived in Italy following his exile from Olympus; his reign was the Latin golden age.\textsuperscript{91} His son Picus– a name synonymous with the woodpecker– gave birth to Faunus, whose son Latinus was the founder of the city of Laurentium and Lavinia’s father.\textsuperscript{92}

Lavinia’s story begins with a pair of omens. First, a swarm of bees lands on the upper branches of a laurel tree, the religious center of the city dedicated to Apollo. Second, when Lavinia stokes the ritual hearth-fire, sparks from the fire wreathe around

\textsuperscript{88} Small (1982), 92.
\textsuperscript{89} Verg. \textit{Aen.} VII.50-55.
\textsuperscript{90} Verg. \textit{Aen.} VII.48-50.
\textsuperscript{91} This perception of Saturn is implied in the \textit{Aeneid}; the legend itself is stated more clearly in Macrobi. \textit{Sat.} I.7.19-24
\textsuperscript{92} Verg. \textit{Aen.} VII.46-50.
her and highlight her coronet and jewels. The court’s augur interprets these signs as a herald of Aeneas’s arrival and of Lavinia’s role in the war-fare that will follow before Aeneas gains control of the region; on hearing this interpretation of the omens, Latinus determines to learn more and goes to visit his father Faunus and the other prophetic spirits that can be found near the fountain of Albunea.93

In this episode, Faunus appears as a supernatural being who communicates with his descendants only after the proper rituals have been performed. At the fountain, Latinus acts as priest and sacrifices one hundred sheep— an extravagant holocaust— to the spirits of the place before lying down on their skins so that his dreams might lead him to his ancestor and give him the information he requires. Faunus’s response is immediate; he acknowledges Latinus as his descendant, then tells him Lavinia’s fate; she is to marry Aeneas. The war that follows results from Juno’s futile attempt to prevent Aeneas, as a Trojan, from marrying his destined bride.

The legendary king descended from Saturn is not the only supernatural being called “faun” to have a place in Italic cosmology. Vergil’s relation of the first inhabitants of Italy states that fauns as a race were among them, and describes their original territory:

haec nemora indigenae fauni nymphaeque tenebant
genesque uirum truncis et duro robore nata.

Once these groves were the fauns’ and nymphs’ indigenous holding
And a class of men that had sprung from trunks and the stubborn oak.94

Fauns, as a particular class of male supernatural beings, with their female counterparts the nymphs, thus pre-date the arrival of civilization in the form of Saturn, who brought

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93 Verg, *Aen* VII.81-105.
agriculture and ritual order to Latium. The pairing of fauns and nymphs in these verses is in keeping with Etruscan cosmology, which treated every supernatural force as having a masculine and a feminine element.\(^{95}\)

Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* lists other supernatural beings in addition to fauns and satyrs, who are demigods but not accorded a place on Olympus: “the spirits of the wilderness, nymphs and fauns and satyrs and mountain-ranging silvans.”\(^{96}\) In the Roman tradition of being all-inclusive, Ovid names as many beings as he knows, whether or not they communicated often with the mortal world; the dangers of overlooking any supernatural power were well known to Roman folklore.

In the ritual world of the *Fasti*, Ovid provides further information regarding Faunus and connects him with Pan. The poet credits Evander with conflating the two deities, describing Pan as originally associated with the pine-forested mountains and with cattle, mares, and sheep, while Faunus was a woodland god first and native to Italy.\(^{97}\) His descriptions of Faunus and Pan share some characteristics; both may be *bicornis* or two-horned\(^{98}\), *cornipedi* or hooved,\(^{99}\) and in the introduction to Book III, Faunus is *pinigerum*, or pine-covered.\(^{100}\) For Ovid, Faunus was a knowledgable but elusive being; he describes Numa’s introduction to the demigod through a trap laid by Numa’s wife, who taught him how to capture both Faunus and his father Picus, engaging their help in assuaging

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97 *Ov. Fast.* II. 2.268.
98 *Ov. Fast.* II.2, 268.
100 *Ov. Fast.* III.1.84.
Jupiter’s rage. Obtaining their help required going into their own territory and, rather than simply offering them sacrifices of sheep and wine as he would later do, waiting and capturing them when they were sleeping off their meal.

Nowhere in these narratives is Dionysos— as Liber, Bacchus, or as his attribute, wine— more than an ancillary figure. Indeed, Dionysos would have been a singularly unhelpful deity to propitiate in any circumstance where portents and omens required interpretation; although he and Apollo shared many characteristics, the prophetic attributes of Dionysos were associated with ecstatic madness, not with studious examination of the natural world. In their roles as legendary or divine ancestors, in their abilities to interpret supernatural signs and, as in the situation that led to Numa’s introduction to Faunus, their ability to intercede actively on the peoples’ behalf, the demigods of the Italic wilderness were independent, powerful beings whose presence, advice, and aid could bring good fortune and avert evil.

In a cultural context where portraits and faces provided valuable evidence for and ties to one’s ancestors, and where masks allowed the temporary resurrection of those ancestors as part of the ritual and historical life of the community, the masks of satyrs and fauns in late Republican and early Imperial wall-painting and mosaic cannot be dismissed as primarily Dionysiac in either reference or function. They must instead be acknowledged as representations of indigenous and powerful spirits, still at least theoretically capable of active protection and aid for those who could enlist their services,

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102 For the madness of Dionysiac prophecy, see Otto (1967), 97, 144-145. For oracles, see Marcel Detienne. “Forgetting Delphi Between Apollo and Dionysos.” Classical Philology 96:2 (Apr. 2001), 147-158.
whose faces have been given a Hellenistic, theatrical veneer.

The Satyrs of Boscoreale

Wall-paintings from the villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale are among the most intriguing in the Campanian region, at least partly because of the site’s excavation history. The only extant records from the dig are from Felice Barnabei’s report to the Ministro dell’Istruzione Pubblica in 1901 and A. Sambon’s sale catalog from 1903; following the excavation and removal of its most collectible artifacts, including the majority of its extant wall-paintings, the villa was re-buried. The paintings and artifacts were sold piecemeal and went to several different museums, making an exhibition of the entire villa’s decoration difficult. As a result, although several of the painting programs have been examined individually, they have rarely been treated as part of a unified whole. Phyllis Lehmann’s landmark 1953 study is an exception; in spite of her more controversial interpretations, her treatment of the entirety of the villa has been one of the most valuable references for scholars interested in the villa’s iconographic program.


104 The pieces are divided between the Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museo Archaeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Villa Kérylos at Beaulieu-sur-Mer, the Musée Royal de Marie-mont, Morlanwelz, Belgium, the Musée de Picardie, Amiens, the Allard Pierson museum in Amsterdam, and other sites. For a review of the literature, see Bettina Bergmann. “New Perspectives on the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale.” In Roman Frescoes from Boscoreale: The Villas of Publius Fannius Synistor in Reality and Virtual Reality, 11—32, 11-12; Phyllis Lehmann. Roman Wall Paintings from Boscoreale in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Cambridge, Mass.: Archaeological Institute of America, 1953.
Throughout the villa, satyr masks and garlands, either separately or together, form much of the painted decoration. As part of the recent restoration of the pieces in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection, King’s Visualisation Lab constructed a computerized, virtual reconstruction of the villa incorporating both images of all extant wall-paintings and extrapolations from what is known about the villa decoration at the time of excavation. The catalog of this virtual reconstruction also provides a comprehensive overview of the villa’s history, excavation, and preservation, allowing for as nearly complete an experience of the villa as is currently possible. The ability to view artworks at least virtually in situ re-aligns the significance of artistic elements that have been perhaps disproportionately highlighted by scholarly debate.

The excavated portion of the villa contained a peristyle garden with rooms on three of its four sides and part of another colonnaded space (fig. 2.5). The walls of the peristyle were painted with hanging garlands anchored by fictive columns that matched the real columns bounding the garden, and with trompe l’oeil still-lifes within the intercolumnations. At the southern end of the peristyle was the entry to the secondary colonnaded space, and at the north end were the majority of the highly-decorated rooms for which Boscoreale is so well-known: room L, an exedra where the garland motif is altered by additional satyric elements, room H, with its intriguing and controversial figural artistic program, and the architectural landscapes of rooms G and M.

Room L opens into the large peristyle courtyard. Here, the exterior space of the

gardens has been exchanged for a clearly interior space, its perimeter marked by painted
garlands along the walls from which satyr masks hang suspended by red cords (fig. 2.6).
With its decoration of bells, drums, and a serpent emerging from a *cista mystica* as well
as satyrs, the reference to a ritualized Dionysiac context is unmistakeable. The much
larger and more elaborately decorated room H provides the strongest evidence for ritual
space in the rooms bordering the peristyle; although recent scholarship has marginalized
its ritualistic aspects in favor of a more politicizing interpretation, the virtual
reconstruction of the villa reinstates the cultic nature of the room.

As reconstructed from Felice Barnabei’s account of the paintings before their
transport to various museums, room H would have been saturated with cultic referents.
Its entry was flanked by two winged figures, one a young man with furred, sharply-
pointed ears holding an empty patera, and the other a young woman with no other overt
non-human characteristics carrying a loaded plate (fig. 2.7). The dominant image framed
by the doorway, taking pride of place along the center of the back wall, was a painting of
Aphrodite with Eros. On the left panel was a painting of Bacchus, a common companion
for the goddess, with a woman who is usually identified as Ariadne; on the right panel

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107 A relief now at the Museo Nazionale Romano shows a maenad and a satyr dancing, a pair of masks
between them, an altar beside the maenad and a basket with an emerging snake beside the satyr, under
whose feet lie a set of pan pipes. The reference to Bacchic cult is unmistakeable. Paul Zanker and
Björn Christian Ewald. *Mit Mythen leben. Die Bilderwelt der römischen Sarkophage.* Munich:

108 Mario Torelli and R.R.R. Smith have both interpreted the program as politicizing. Mario Torelli. "The
Frescoes of the Great Hall of the Villa at Boscoreale: Iconography and Politics." In *Myth, History, and
Culture in Republican Rome: Studies in Honor of T.P. Wiseman*, edited by David Braud, Christopher
Land at Boscoreale: On the Royal Paintings of a Roman Villa." *Journal of Roman Archaeology-

109 As there were no reliable excavation reports or notes, Felice Barnabei’s report to the Ministry is the only
available information on original locations and placements for these works. He labels this room the
“grand triclinium”. Barnabei (1901), 53-55. For the reconstruction, see Bergmann (2010), 22-23.
were the three Graces who often appear as Aphrodite’s companions. The megalographic figures were set along the side walls, viewable through windows into the room on either side of the winged couple flanking the door. A satyr mask was painted on the interior lintel of the doorway, facing the depiction of Aphrodite and Eros.

If room L was open to the peristyle, the winged couple flanking the doorway of room H would have provided a visual connection between the celebratory implements of the exedra and the ritual aspects of its adjoining room. Although, with their wild appearance, they share some similarities with satyrs and maenads, figures like these appear in Etruscan tombs of the third century BCE at the tombs of the Aninas and the Caronti. A similar composition frames the entrance of both tombs, although the tomb of the Aninas has the larger and more elaborate depiction (fig. 2.8). On the right side of the door, a winged man identified as Charun carries a mallet; on the left of the door, his companion Vanth carries a torch. Charun’s face is caricature-like, with wild hair, pointed ears, a large nose and pointed chin, while the woman Vanth is more generic in her appearance. Both wear knee-length tunics; Charun’s is red with parallel white stripes down either side, while Vanth’s brown-and-white tunic is draped around her waist leaving her upper torso bare, except for a girdle that crosses her chest.

At the villa, the figure corresponding to Charun is younger; it is his torso, rather

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110 Fragments of the Aphrodite image remain; however, the paintings of Dionysos or Bacchus and the three graces did not survive. Barnabei (1901), 54.


112 In such funerary contexts, these “daimons” are sometimes labeled with epithets describing their roles as underworld guides and guardians, although little else is known regarding their functions. Simon (2006), 57-8, 61.
than his female companion’s, that is bared, and he carries an empty platter rather than a mallet. However, certain physical traits are impossible to ignore; both men have disheveled hair and pointed, furred ears, along with the wings that signify their otherworldly abilities. The women differ more strongly, in that the villa’s depiction shows a woman dressed in white with an ivy girdle, carrying a platter filled with fruit. These differences in iconography between the two pairs, however, harmonize with the differences in their locations; Charun and Vanth, in their roles as guardians or guides for the afterlife, would require very different tools from their counterparts watching over the doorway into a living space.

These doorway guardians suggest that any interpretation of the room behind them needs to be interpreted in light of Roman religious practices rather than Hellenistic traditions, with the result that a purely Dionysiac reading for the nearby exedra comes into question as well. The majority of scholarly research on the megalographia associates the side panels with Alexander the Great, whose conquests forever associated him with the ambitious goals of Roman statesmen and generals, although Lehmann suggested that the entire room should be more accurately associated with the Adonis cult. The panels on the back wall provided a divine complement to these historical images, and the central painting here was not Dionysos or Bacchus, but Venus.

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As a result, it appears that the masks and implements of Dionysiac worship have been placed at the service of the patron goddess of Rome, rather than solely in reference to the god of wine. As with the doves mosaic from the House of the Mosaic Doves in Pompeii, the determining factor in determining the programmatic interpretation of the space is not the deity most commonly associated with the ritual implements depicted, but the deity who is actually depicted in the dominant location.\textsuperscript{115} That the deity should be Venus is unsurprising; her role as the divine ancestor of Aeneas and the early Roman kings, the correlation between love-making and wine-drinking in the real world, and the mythological association between satyrs and the goddess of love all combine to make her appropriation of Dionysiac ritual almost inevitable.\textsuperscript{116}

In room M, the cubiculum now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, satyr masks become \textit{oscillae} in a fictive garden dedicated neither to Venus nor to Dionysos, but to Diana/Hecate (fig. 2.1).\textsuperscript{117} The two long walls are predominantly symmetrical, both depicting the same villa complex with a walled garden surrounding a statue of the goddess on one side and what may be a votive offering or a priestess on the other.\textsuperscript{118} A post-and-lintel shrine called a \textit{syzygia} frames each statue; its timbers are draped in garlands, and a silenus mask on the lintel glares out at the viewer. The entire scene is framed by a fictive portico; three additional masks have been painted on the eave, their eyes looking towards different points within the room. These masks with their carefully delineated grimaces and their wide glares are clearly apotropaic, activating the space in a

\textsuperscript{115} See Chapter 1 above.
\textsuperscript{117} Bergmann.(2010), 11-32, 31.
\textsuperscript{118} Lehmann (1953), 110.
way that the architectonic elements and even the cult statues do not.

A Bacchic interpretation of these masks allows for very little connection between the masks and the depicted space beyond its stylistic derivation from theatrical sets. Phyllis Lehmann’s belief that these masks are Bacchic but not theatrical appears in subsequent interpretations of the cubiculum as well, but further readings of the painting have, for the most part, restricted themselves to stylistic analyses.\textsuperscript{119} Indeed, the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s 1988 Bulletin argues that the painting of the cubiculum is without any true religious feeling, being “more concerned with displaying emblems of wealth than in appeasing gods”.\textsuperscript{120} However, when the masks are interpreted in keeping with the Italic conception of fauns and satyrs, the painting of the cubiculum has a surprisingly clear and focused program.

Lehmann’s analysis of the the shrine panel of each side wall, where the statue of Diana/Lucina stands beneath a suspended silenus mask, references Horace’s dedication of a fir-tree at his villa to the goddess who was “guardian of hill and grove, protector of women in travail”.\textsuperscript{121} The Italic tradition connecting satyrs or fauns with gardens, groves, and wilderness spaces transforms the pairing of Hellenistic goddess statue and Italic demi-god mask from an obscure reference to rural cult into a clever depiction of Roman tradition. The masculine and feminine duality suggests the Etruscan belief that all deities had a counterpart of the opposite gender— a notion reinforced by poetic references to

\textsuperscript{119} For a full discussion of the theatricality of the cubiculum, which is the most common means of addressing the decoration, see H. G. Beyen. "The Wall-Decoration of the Cubiculum of the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor near Boscoreale in Its Relation to Ancient Stage-Painting." \textit{Mnemosyne, Fourth Series} 10, no. 2 (1957): 147-53.
\textsuperscript{121} Lehmann 1953, 98.
“fauns and nymphs” rather than one or the other, as well as by Varro’s belief that the fauni were both masculine and feminine. In its composition, this panel references both the Greek tradition, in the Hellenistic statue, and the Italic tradition, in the silenus mask. Both the goddess and the faun inhabited the “hills and groves” of Horace’s dedication, a dwelling-place illustrated on the back wall of the cubiculum; the most intriguing aspect of this pairing, however, lies in Lucina’s role as guardian of childbirth, and the possibility that the satyr might somehow complement this duty.

In spite of attempts to encourage a more rational and logical approach, the realm of childbearing was perhaps least amenable to the agnostic leanings of Roman elite culture. Each stage of the process, from conception through pregnancy and into childbirth, was fraught with uncertainty and danger. Difficult pregnancies and miscarriages were common, and death rates were high for both mothers and children. Medicinal practices could only partially address these vital, life-and-death concerns; as a result, beliefs that might be dismissed in public as ignorant superstition were always prone to being resurrected in private.

In his role as augur and protector from evil, the faun or satyr would be a legitimate and valuable ally in the perilous domain of childbearing. Although fauns were not at first associated with childbirth itself, they were able to interpret the circumstances

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122 Varro, Ling. 6.55, 7.36
125 The relationship between religion and magic seems primarily to hinge on perception and motive; religion is publicly sanctioned, or least acknowledged, while magic is performed in private, often to coerce behavior or events. Unauthorized access to supernatural powers, as may happen when one belief-system supercedes another, also becomes “magic”. Liebeschuetz 1979, 126-139.
surrounding the birth that would determine the child’s fate.\textsuperscript{126} Writing in the first century BCE, Varro claimed that the name of fauns derived from their oracular ability, stating that male fauns spoke to men and female fauns to women.\textsuperscript{127} By the time Macrobius wrote his \textit{Saturnalia}, Faunus’s female counterpart Fauna was associated with the nurturing role of motherhood.\textsuperscript{128}

This understanding of the wilderness and its supernatural inhabitants explains the cubiculum’s decorative intent. The depiction of outdoor space, from the walled villa gardens on the side walls to the artful grove painted on the back wall, transforms the space into a site where the oracular and protective characteristics of satyrs and fauns can be fully present. The directed gaze of each mask provides evidence of its intended guardianship; the silenus mask in the \textit{syzygia} looks directly at the center of the room, and the opposing pairs of old and young satyr masks on the eaves look into the room as well, protecting the central space.

Each location within the room references the child-bearing cycle. Lehmann believed that, when used as a bedroom, the bed would have been placed along the back wall; her reading of the \textit{tholoi}, painted on the sections abutting the back wall, advocates their function as temples to Venus, thus referencing the role of the goddess of love in conceiving the child.\textsuperscript{129} The center of the room, which receives the majority of the directed gazes, is a reasonable site for the birthing chair during labor; under the

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\textsuperscript{126} Hugh C. Parker. "Romani Nume Soli: Faunus in Ovid's Fasti." \textit{Transactions of the American Philological Association} 123 (1993): 199-217. Here, Parker examines the careful respect with which Ovid treats the Roman deity, in spite of the potential for comedy inherent in the stories he tells.

\textsuperscript{127} Varro, \textit{Ling.} VII.36

\textsuperscript{128} Macrobi. \textit{Sat.} I.12.27

\textsuperscript{129} Lehmann (1953), 98.
\end{flushleft}
protection of Diana/Lucina and the satyrs or fauns, the midwife and her assistants would have space for supporting the mother-to-be. The references to a blessed, fruitful and prosperous posterity may be subtle, but in this context they are unmistakeable.
Chapter 3: From Masks to Heads

In the art of both Pompeii and Boscoreale, garlands punctuated by masks reference the boundaries of a site dedicated to the gods. The comic and satyric masks depicted at these sites are similar in both style and iconography; theatrical masks, however, allude to cultic ritual that could apply equally to Dionysos or to any of the other gods whose worship included theatrical or spectacular performance, while satyric imagery often refers specifically to the powerful and independent demigods of the Roman wilderness. The distinction is important; theatrical masks, at least in early Roman mosaics, seem not to have carried the affective weight of satyr masks, being more referential rather than functional in their own right.

The straightforward nature of these early mask-and-garland framing devices becomes more complicated in the second and third centuries. Geometric mosaics make up the bulk of excavated pavement decoration in North Africa and in Antioch; although masks and garlands sometimes appear within these pavements, particularly in North Africa, they are less functional than ornamental.\(^1\) Only one of Antioch’s excavated mosaics unmistakably references the original iconography of the masks-and-garlands motif: the border of the mosaic of Europa and the Bull, from a triclinium in the third-century House of the Boat of Psyches (fig 3.1).

The frame that surrounds Europa and the Bull embodies the blurred distinction between masks and heads in late antiquity. The lower band of the frame is missing; the

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remaining three sides take their inspiration from the traditionally Roman design combining masks with beribboned garlands. However, the style of this mosaic differs significantly from its predecessors at Pompeii. The frame is strongly architectonic, mirroring the appearance of ionic dentils in a crown moulding, surrounding a painted ceiling; from the moulding, six covered ledges seem to protrude from at regular intervals. Simple depictions of ribbons and garlands connect the ledges, which support female heads that have neither the individuality of portraits nor the strong stylization of masks; instead, they appear to reference gorgoneia. The generic appearance of these heads may not be deliberate, however; the tesserae used to construct this mosaic are too large to incorporate the details that would ordinarily identify significant features.

The iconography of garlands and heads clearly derives from earlier Roman tradition, but the female heads are a conundrum. Although, as women, the female heads are suggestive of the always-apotropaic gorgon Medusa, Medusa’s snakes are nowhere in evidence, and these female heads are missing the large, outward-staring eyes that would identify them as apotropaic images; their eyes look to each other or to the narrative panel, not outward into the room. The ledges that display each head appear to reference the display of ancestral images, but there is not enough individuality in their faces to identify them as either ancestors or as theatrical masks.²

The anachronistic elements in the frame of Europa and the Bull become more significant when placed beside other mosaics excavated from the region surrounding Antioch. Of the extant figural mosaic panels, three continue the tradition of surrounding

a narrative panel with a frame of vegetal forms and human faces rather than busts: the second-century *Judgement of Paris* from the House of the Atrium (fig. 3.2), *Echo and Narcissus* from the severan-era House of the Buffet Supper (fig. 3.3), and the hunt mosaics from the fourth-century Constantinian Villa. In their use of acanthus scrolls or grapevines rather than garlands, these mosaics bear a greater similarity to the Hellenistic tradition than the Roman; however, the scrolls are punctuated with idealized, disembodied heads that are neither Greek theatrical masks nor Roman portrait busts, despite sharing similarities with each.

The transformation of satyric masks into idealized heads and the more common use of vegetal scrolls instead of garlands in these later mosaics illustrate a significant shift in the iconographic tradition, a shift that may have begun with the development and popularity of pantomime. The differences in how classical masks and idealized heads encourage viewer interaction, in addition to the ways in which these framing devices function within their associated artistic programs, provide important insight into the relationship between Romans and the supernatural world. Perhaps just as importantly, however, these framing devices act as windows into the political and cultural controversies that took place in Antioch during the centuries when paganism and Christianity, Rome and Persia, warred with each other for dominance over the region.

**Masks as Ornaments: Pantomime, Theatre, and Constructs of Beauty**

The declining use of classical masks as major elements in mosaic pavements corresponds to the decline in popularity of Classical theatre. By the second century,
public performances of classical tragedy seem to have been limited to dramatic segments or readings rather than full-scale productions, and the classical Roman comedies performed to a much smaller selection of devotees. The prevailing forms of narrative entertainment were now pantomime for tragic and historic subjects, and the ever-popular comic mimes; their rejection of the trappings of Classical theatre made them at once more accessible to the common people and even more unpalatable to the conservative elements of elite society, for whom even Classical theatre was occasionally suspected of being overly lascivious. Pantomime’s broad appeal, which ensured its survival into the Christian era in spite of continuing and occasionally vitriolic disapproval, provides a touchstone for understanding the heads that appear in mosaic frames not only because of what pantomime was, but because of what pantomime was not.

The characteristics that made pantomime such an attractive form of entertainment also make its productions in some ways impossible to recover, because the core of pantomime was its choreography. The actor’s movements and actions drove the narrative, enriched by— but famously not dependent upon— the music and poetry that accompanied it. The second-century work De Saltatione or “On the Dance,” written by Lucian of Samothrace, provides the most detailed extant description and defense of pantomime. In his defense of the story-telling capacity of pantomime actors, Lucian tells a story of Demetrius the Cynic who at first believed music and poetry to be the primary

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elements in these performances; when Nero’s pantomime silenced his musicians and performed without any accompaniment, Demetrius declared himself to be in the wrong.\textsuperscript{7}

The physical demands of pantomime performance drove its costuming; flowing robes allowed for freedom of movement and could become expressive elements in their own right, and smaller, less cumbersome masks could be easily removed to allow for instant changes in character.\textsuperscript{8} Because the pantomime did not speak, there was no need for the distorted open mouth of comic and tragic masks; as a result, the pantomime mask was close-mouthed.\textsuperscript{9} In addition to its smaller size, the closed mouth of the pantomime mask significantly changed the iconography associated with theatrical– and therefore mythological and historical– characters most commonly depicted on the stage.\textsuperscript{10}

Lucian’s comparison of classical actors and pantomime actors may exaggerate the downfalls of the classical costume for rhetorical effect, but provides a carefully flattering description of the pantomime’s mask: “I need not tell you how decent, how seemly, is the dancer’s attire. . . . His very mask is elegant, and well adapted to his part; there is no gaping here; the lips are closed, for the dancer has plenty of other voices at his service.”\textsuperscript{11} The more beautiful a mask was, the better it could serve its primary function– which was to encourage enthralment in the audience.\textsuperscript{12}

The sympathetic quality of beautiful and idealized faces may have been the

\textsuperscript{7} Luc. \textit{Salt}. 63.
\textsuperscript{9} Luc. \textit{Salt}. 29.
\textsuperscript{11} Luc. \textit{Salt}. 29.
\textsuperscript{12} Lada-Richards (2007), 93-94.
catalyst that encouraged audiences to connect more viscerally with pantomime performances—sometimes to excess. As current research continues to confirm, the human reaction to exaggerated and abstracted facial features differs markedly from its reaction to the idealized or beautiful. Although perceptions of beauty are to some degree culturally defined, certain elements of physical attraction seem to be universal—so much so that even infants look longer at faces that adults identify as “beautiful.” The consequence of this innate preference appears in social behavior as well as in emotive responses. Exaggerated or asymmetrical features often elicit an immediate and instinctive aversion. Symmetrical and smooth faces, as well as healthy-seeming coloration, are perceived more sympathetically, even when other features might deviate from the norm; culturally desirable traits are more often attributed to beautiful faces, and physically attractive people tend to receive aid or assistance more quickly when needed.

The same rationale might apply to the changes that appear in second-century floor mosaics, where the meticulous detail once given to classical masks has been transferred to realistic, often somewhat idealized, faces that blur the line between mask and head. Even masks that continue to hold abstracted or exaggerated features often have the “beautiful” characteristics of symmetry and the appearance of health, making them more intriguing than grotesque. However, the same elements that make such faces more

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13 Webb (2008), 59.
15 Karl F. MacDorman, Robert D. Green, Chin-Chang Ho, and Clinton T. Koch. “Too real for comfort? Uncanny responses to computer generated faces.” *Computers in Human Behavior* 25 (2009) 695-710. This aversion is much less when the entire figure is somewhat abstracted; then the strangeness is acknowledged as simply part of the technique of representation.
16 Green et al. (2008), 2458.
visually appealing and sympathetic also eliminate much of their immediate apotropaic functionality, as becomes apparent in two floor mosaics from Thysdrus, now El Djem, in Tunisia.

The carpet mosaic from room A of the House of the Dionysiac Procession (mid-2nd c. CE) exemplifies the expansion of the garlands-and-masks border into an entire composition (fig. 3.4). A personification of the year as the bust of a young man wreathed in fruits and grains occupies the central roundel, which is framed by a garland wreath of leaves and fruit. The majority of the pictorial space is taken up with stylized acanthus scrolls with embedded depictions of busts, masks, and nude figures in a carefully symmetrical pattern. Masks of Oceanus anchor each side of the composition, while each corner is decorated with a diagonally-placed figurine, above which is a bust personifying one of the seasons and, surmounting the whole, a small nude figure within an acanthus-leaf arabesque. These figural images effectively divide the mosaic into four equilateral triangles, each personifying the offerings and characteristics appropriate to each season of the year.

This composition bears some similarity to earlier mosaics in that busts and masks are each ways of depicting faces; however, the busts encourage little viewer interaction beyond an iconographic analysis of the seasons they represent. The masks of Oceanus, placed in the center of each border, have an equally limited iconographic function. The iconography of Oceanus as a mask can be found in mosaics from Ostia to Zeugma, a personification emblematic of the world-bounding sea.\textsuperscript{17} Here, the god’s head is almost

\textsuperscript{17} Oceanus is considered the father of rivers. Hesiod’s \textit{Theogony} describes him as being born as one of the Titans, an elder brother of Chronos. (Hes. \textit{Theo}. 2.134)
pyramidal, with a wide lower jaw and beard narrowing to a comparatively small forehead crowned by lobster claws; however, this shape is the only abstract element in the depiction of the face. The texture of the skin, the hair, and the eyes that look towards the central roundel rather than towards the viewer have all been carefully idealized, making the masks appear more ornamental than functional.

Another seasonal mosaic from the late 2nd century, now housed in El Djem’s Archaeological Museum, reflects the linear outlines of an elaborately decorated domed ceiling, incorporating multiple figures and narrative panels (fig. 3.5). This compositional framework immediately sets the figural imagery at one remove from the viewer; instead of illusionistic depictions of a potentially real space that play with the concept of illusion and reality, the mosaic transforms the outlines and decorations of an architectural space into geometric and figural patterns. A depiction of Ganymede and the eagle framed in a wreath of laurel occupies the central roundel, representing the apex of the dome. Radiating from the roundel to the corners, full figured personifications of the four seasons stand in opposing symmetry to each other. The four arches supporting the dome have been outlined by garlands, with pairs of masks set at the springing of each. Below the masks, pairs of snakes are coiled, their attention riveted on small gryphons that face them on either side. A decorative square in each corner completes the diagonal symmetry of the composition.

Each archway becomes a frame, as well, for a narrative and for geometric panels. Fillets appear in each fictive arch, tied in swags along the garlands, and the narrative panels appear suspended from the center, oriented outwards. Among the narratives are
depictions of Leda and the swan, satyrs and maenads, and a cloaked figure on a hill. The balance of the mosaic is taken up with panels of flowers, birds, and scroll work. A geometric frame of crosses and semi-circles binds the entire mosaic together, bounded in its turn by a series of stylized vegetal scrolls.

In this mosaic, the masks are only one element in a composition where narrative, pattern, and personification blend together. While the rendering of these faces allows them to be identified with pantomime and comedy, tragedy, satyrs, or maenads, the iconography is minimal and the characterizations more referential than illusionistic. In addition, the arrangement of the masks and the overall symmetry of the design negate any numinous potential; as a result, the masks seem primarily to represent genres of performance, rather than individual characters. Although it is possible that each genre could be aligned with a season, the incorporation of not just one but four narrative panels and an emblematic roundel in addition to the seasons and the multiple genres of theatre make the masks— and to a degree, the entire composition— appear as little more than glorified holiday decorations.

Satyric Imagery: from Pompeii to Antioch

Although the satyr masks of Boscoreale’s wall paintings most clearly demonstrate the apotropaic nature of satyric imagery in the first century, the oscillae depicting more idealized faces, both masculine and feminine, depicted in Pompeiian wall paintings of gardens can be interpreted in similar fashion. These disembodied heads, which often

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18 see Chapter 2.
bear only a slight resemblance to masks, encourage Dionysiac interpretations even though their functionality derives from traditions that have little, if any, connection to the cult of Dionysos. Recognizing the continuation of these Roman influences in later art of the expanded empire becomes invaluable when examining the mosaic borders of Antioch, where heads and vegetation not only share the same space but sometimes merge into hybrid forms, human faces peering out like buds from enclosing leaves.

The multitude of floor mosaics that have been excavated from the Roman era of Antioch provide an unparalleled glimpse of late antique house decoration from a wealthy city famed for its cultural heritage. From the time of its foundation in 300 BCE until the disasters that decimated its population in the early seventh century, the city of Antioch on the Orontes River was one of the most important urban centers of the eastern Mediterranean. Its location had been carefully chosen to take advantage of the fertile land and fresh water near the site, in addition to the trade roads that spanned the country; although it was not originally intended as a capital, its natural advantages soon made it the preferred residence for political and intellectual luminaries of the Seleucid and then the Roman empires. Under the Roman Empire, Antioch – along with its equally well-known suburb, Daphne – was not only famous for its wealth and luxury, but also as an important center for the controversy between pagan philosophy and Christian theology.

The fourth-century sophist Libanius was an important figure in this controversy, being a staunch pagan whose defense of the old ways provided support for Julian the

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Apostate’s attempts to reclaim the glories of the early empire even as some of his students, including John Chrysostom, became devout Christian theologians. His love of the city appears in many of his extant writings, which provide the most important source for the city’s history. Libanius records the legend that associates the site with Alexander the Great, who purportedly dedicated an altar to Zeus Bottaios near a fountain; when Seleucus the Conqueror, one of Alexander the Great’s generals, was founding his great cities in the region, an eagle flew down and took the sacrificial meat from an altar in Antigonia to the altar dedicated by Alexander.22

Although Zeus was the most important figure of the city’s foundation, several other gods were given prominence as well. Seleucus counted Apollo among his ancestors, and the nearby settlement of Daphne gained its name from the nymph who, in order to escape Apollo’s amorous advances, had been transformed into a laurel tree; the oracular temple to Apollo in Daphne honored the legendary site of the transformation.23 Io, too, whom Hera had transformed into a cow, was connected with the region, as the town of Iopolis on Mt. Silpius had been founded where she was believed to have died. The nearby town of Herakleia was named for the children of Herakles who had settled there. By the time Rome conquered the region, Antioch already had temples dedicated to Io, Kronos, Zeus, Zeus Epikarpios, and Zeus Keraunios, as well as to Apollo and to Tyche, the Fortune of Antioch.24

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21 Downey (1959), 653.
22 Lib. Or. XI.71-77. Downey (1959), 662.
24 Downey (1961), 51
The numerous floor mosaics that came to light during the excavation programs of the early twentieth century validated Libanius’ claims regarding the splendors of the late-antique city. The artistic programs of these decorative floors vary widely, ranging from simple patterns to complex geometric forms and pictorial motifs of both still-life and mythological subjects. Although walls were few and far between, and damage from earthquakes and flooding had sometimes eliminated even the outlines of building plans, the quality and quantity of the excavated mosaics provide ample evidence of Antioch’s wealth and power, particularly during its Roman occupation.

The House of the Atrium was built somewhere between 85 and 115 CE on the island quarter of Antioch, a later Roman expansion of the city. Its plan, like many of the excavated houses of Antioch, follows a pattern that combines Hellenistic and Roman elements; its north-south oriented courtyard is bordered by cubiculi on both sides and a portico on the north end, behind which were three larger rooms in accordance with Roman fashion, but the nymphaeum directly opposite the triclinium is unusual outside of Antioch (fig 3.6). The easternmost of these rooms held a series of mosaics depicting subjects connected to Dionysos and to Aphrodite (fig. 3.7). At the entry, a satyr and a maenad flanked an illustration of the drinking contest between Hercules and Dionysos.

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26 Although records of payments given to mosaicists show that they were paid less than painters and sculptors, the amount of work involved in laying mosaics suggests that they were not inexpensive. Katherine M. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World.* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1999), 326.


29 The mosaics are now divided between the Louvre, Baltimore, Worcester, and Princeton.
The center of the room was decorated with a rendition of the Judgement of Paris, framed by grape-vines and two heads (fig. 3.2), and Aphrodite with Adonis, surrounded by a floral border (fig. 3.9).\(^{30}\)

Physical evidence from the mosaics shows that the frames were constructed before the narrative panels, although the narrative panels seem to have been manufactured on site rather than being true *emblemata*.\(^{31}\) The careful joins of the different panels, along with the expertise involved in the construction of the mosaic program as a whole that would have involved several masters with different specialties, suggest that every aspect of the artistic program was carefully considered before its realization. As a result, the mosaics are better interpreted as an integrated artistic program, than as independent and unrelated elements.\(^{32}\)

The narratives of Aphrodite and Adonis and the Judgement of Paris would have been the most visible to guests during dinner. The subjects of these mosaics not only reference two of the most significant of Rome’s imperial patron deities, but also suggest at least one subject for meal-time conversation: the perils of interactions between mortals and gods.\(^{33}\) Just as Heracles was made foolish by wine, interactions with Aphrodite resulted in Adonis’s death and caused the Trojan War. These narrative connections alone would have given clever people the opportunity of displaying their education and rhetorical skills, and in the light of traditional iconographic interpretation the frames and

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\(^{30}\) Levi (1947), 24.


\(^{32}\) Levi (1947), 15.

\(^{33}\) Becker and Kondoleon (2005), 29.
borders of both mosaics merely emphasize the idealized golden age of the gods that responsible citizens strove to emulate.\footnote{Becker and Kondoleon (2005), 29.}

The significance of the frames as part of the artistic program appears in the heads of the grapevine-laden frame of the Judgement of Paris. The lush vines, with their population of animals and their reference to a golden age of plentiful grape harvest, clearly reflect Dionysiac sensibilities, and the accompanying heads— one a bearded and mature man, the other younger, clean-shaven, and somewhat androgynous— peer out from behind the vines as though they, too, are part of the wildlife connected with the vine.\footnote{Becker and Kondoleon (2005), 24-25.} In their relative size, the liveliness of their expressions, and the realism of their depictions, these faces engage with the viewer on an immediate, instinctive level, suggesting a potential for immediate communication unmatched elsewhere in the artistic program of the triclinium. Although they have been identified as a silenus and a maenad, and so part of the troupe of Dionysos, they have not been substantively included in any interpretive analyses of this depiction of the Judgement of Paris, the mosaics of the triclinium, or the artistic program as a whole beyond the acknowledgement that Dionysos is often associated with symposia and therefore triclinium decoration.\footnote{Kondoleon (2005), 65; Paul Zanker, \textit{Mit Mythen leben. Die Bilderwelt der römischen Sarkophage}. (Munich: Hirmer, 2004), 150-151; Levi (1947), 16-24; Becker and Kondoleon (2005), 28}

The traditional use of frames as a place for emphasizing a narrative’s location or setting does not at first seem to apply to the legend regarding the Judgement of Paris, which has little overt connection to the realm of Dionysos. One of the few references that joins the two together derives from a fifth-century BCE papyrus fragment
referencing a work by Cratinus (454-423 BCE), which provides a summary of the comedy *Dionysalexandros*; here, Dionysos takes Paris’s place in the Judgment and, choosing beauty and attraction over tyranny and war, insures that the course of history takes place anyway. Other evidence, however, is sparse; although the original narrative was popular enough be translated into pantomime and appears in wall-paintings, mosaics, and funerary monuments, clear associations with Dionysos or his cult are difficult to discern.

In this context, connecting the frame with its narrative requires treating the motif as a compositional choice that either bends the traditional link between frame and narrative or references an obscure connection that only knowledgable viewers would have understood. However, the temptation to suggest that the traditional relationship between frame and narrative may no longer apply is belied by the border of the neighboring Aphrodite and Adonis mosaic, where elaborate flowered scrolls, without any human referents at all, clearly illustrate the bowery site of the goddess’s tryst with Adonis. This allusion to physical location provides the necessary insight for understanding the relationship between the border and narrative of the Judgement of Paris, particularly when the cultural and political environments of Antioch itself are applied to the artistic program.

The mythically-laden region surrounding Antioch was not content with being the site for Apollo’s final loss of Daphne, Io’s death, and the settlement of the Heracledae. By the fourth century, Libanius could contend that Mount Silpius, rather than Mount Ida,

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was the location of the Judgement of Paris, as well.\textsuperscript{38} This interpretation appears in the earliest readings of the mosaic following its excavation, where the Judgement of Paris mosaic is interpreted as a visual celebration of Antioch’s legendary past.\textsuperscript{39} Even though this reading ignored the possibility of a thematic connection with other mosaic narratives in the triclinium, its significance gains ground when the frame is incorporated into the program as a physical referent, rather than a cultic or simply ornamental device.

During the century that saw Antioch become a Roman province, members of the Julio-Claudian family dedicated several buildings and temples in the city. Julius Caesar built a basilica, the Kaisarion, which was finished under Augustus. Tiberius, Augustus’s nephew, dedicated several new temples to emphasize Rome’s control of the city during the early first century; they were dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus, Dionysos and the Dioscuri, and Pan.\textsuperscript{40} The temple to Dionysos was built toward the mountain, and the sanctuary to Pan behind the theatre, which was also near the mountain.\textsuperscript{41} As a result, the urban landscape of Antioch towards the end of the first century placed the site of Paris’s choice into the care of the wilderness gods that Roman emperors had given prominence in Antioch—Pan and Dionysos.\textsuperscript{42}

In such an environment, the mosaic of the Judgement of Paris at the House of the Atrium can easily be read as a visual metaphor for Antioch’s claim to being the physical

\textsuperscript{38} Downey (1961), 19.
\textsuperscript{40} Downey (1961), 83-84. Tiberius also renovated the temple to the “Dionysiac Triad” in Rome, dedicating it in 17 CE.
\textsuperscript{41} Downey (1961), 83-84. Malalas discusses the sanctuary of Dionysos. LX.303
\textsuperscript{42} The role of Dionysos as a god who traveled between the wilderness of the exile and the structured hierarchy of urban life is perhaps his most archaic attribute. Cornelia Isler-Keränen, "New Contributions of Dionysiac Iconography to the History of Religions in Greece and Italy." In *Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia*, edited by Giovanni Casadio and Patricia A Johnston, 61-72. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009, 63-64.
setting of the myth; the vines of Dionysos and the satyric faces are clever referents to the Roman appropriation of the local wilderness. This reading of the mosaic also suggests another theme for the triclinium, less overt than that depicting the dangers of interacting with gods but equally apropos: Rome’s domination of the East. With Dionysos as a patron of the Roman emperor, the entry’s illustration of the drinking contest between Heracles and Dionysos now not only references the dangers of over-indulgence in alcohol but also Rome’s pre-eminence in the region of Antioch, which had included the early settlement of Herakleia. In addition, the union of Aphrodite– or, in a Roman context, Venus– with the Mesopotamian Adonis could be read as a metaphor for the union of the Roman empire with the easternmost territories once conquered by Alexander.43

The subtle reference to topography that appears in the frame of the Judgement of Paris mosaic would become more openly depicted in later framing devices. Perhaps the most famous of these mosaic borders comes from the Megalopsychia mosaic, a fifth-century mosaic excavated from Daphne (fig. 3.10). The frame of this mosaic, surrounding the central panel as, earlier, garlands might have done, depicts the topography of Antioch in such conspicuous terms as to render it almost a guide-book illustrating the monuments and buildings that could be seen on a walk between Antioch and Daphne.44 The narrative panel depicts six huntsmen and four beast combats, all surrounding a roundel bust of Megalopsychia, for whom the mosaic has been named.

The hunters are labeled Actaeon, Narcissus, Tiresias, Meleager, Hippolytus, and Adonis, which is somewhat unusual. While Actaeon, Meleager, Hippolytus, and Adonis are all traditionally associated with hunting, Narcissus is not usually depicted as a hunter even though Ovid describes him as one, and Tiresias is more often associated with seership than with hunting; before he became a seer, however, he was also a huntsman.\footnote{Ov. Met. Book III. Tiresias is more difficult to place, but a hymn to Athena references his blindness arising from coming on the goddess unawares while hunting and his transformation into a woman, which took place upon separating two snakes in the wilderness. See Callimachus, The Fifth Hymn.}

The unusual combination of names may have contributed to early interpretations of this mosaic, which associated the depiction of the hunt with gladiators and the games. Glanville Downey interpreted the narrative panel as a reference to an alternate definition of *megalopsychia*, the Stoic quality of rising above one’s circumstances and accepting one’s life whatever it may bring.\footnote{Downey (1941), 370.} In his reading, prey animals are hunted by predators who are hunted in their turn by heroes who themselves become subject to unhappy fates by the gods, but the virtue of greatness of mind allows the heroes to accept their fates.\footnote{Downey (1941), 370.} Downey’s interpretation ends before including a rationale for such a program’s inclusion of the cityscape of Antioch; this oversight was remedied later by John Matthews, who interpreted the mosaic together with its frame as a reference to the virtues of Antioch’s elite as an important source of Antioch’s greatness, as displayed by the monuments depicted in the frame.\footnote{Matthews (2006), 81.}

Listening to the Wilderness
Perhaps the most disconcerting element of the satyric heads in the *Judgement of Paris* frame is their apparent ability to communicate with the viewer. Their slightly-turned faces and outward-looking gazes evince a liveliness that encourages a response from the viewer beyond simply looking; these attributes mimic the visual cues that lead to interaction among people, with the result that conversation with these faces seems at first not only possible but imminent.\(^{49}\) In portraiture and in depictions of theatrical masks, such characteristics enhance the mimetic quality of the artwork; both portraits and masks reference individuals or characters who were, or had once been, capable of interaction.\(^{50}\) The heads of the *Judgement of Paris* frame, however, are neither portrait busts nor theatrical masks; their referent lies elsewhere, in the depictions of human faces conflated with aspects of the natural world.

Although masks combining human and non-human features appear throughout Roman art, as in depictions of Oceanus whose human face is often combined with lobster claws and seaweed hair (fig. 3.11), the vegetation-framed faces that begin appearing in the borders of mosaic pavements during the early part of the third century share more similarities with the disembodied heads of the *Judgement of Paris* mosaic than with such mask-like depictions. The frame of the *Narcissus* mosaic from the House of the Buffet Supper, dated to the late second or early third century, depicts pairs of flowers alternated with idealized human heads surrounded by petals and leaves (fig. 3.3). These heads, even

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less connected with masks or portraits than the satyric heads of the \textit{Judgement of Paris},
give human faces to vegetal forms in a manner that would become as popular as, earlier,
the iconographic motif of theatrical masks and garlands had been; an analysis of the \textit{Narcissus} border, when placed in context with that belonging to \textit{The Judgement of Paris},
clarifies the role played by these kinds of faces in mosaic frames.

The story of Narcissus was a popular subject for house decoration in Daphne,
which had been named for another victim of love and transformation; the mythological
laurel tree that had once been the nymph Daphne was the heart of the community’s shrine
to Apollo.\textsuperscript{51} This part of the Mt. Silpius region was also famous for its springs and
fountain, and as a mountain pool had been the catalyst for Narcissus’s infatuation and
eventual transformation into a flower, the myth’s popularity is unsurprising.\textsuperscript{52} Four
mosaics from the Antioch excavations in Daphne depict Narcissus; of these the
pavements from both the House of Menander and the House of the Buffet Supper have a
vegetal frame, but only that from the House of the Buffet Supper incorporates human
heads.\textsuperscript{53} The mosaic from the House of Narcissus, dated to the first half of the second
century and the earliest of the four, frames the narrative panel with a meander; at the
House of the Red Pavement, the frame is made up of diamonds.\textsuperscript{54}

At the House of the Buffet Supper, the Narcissus mosaic was laid in one of two
rooms that flanked a central apsidal room, directly across the peristyle from the

\textsuperscript{51} Downey (1963) 19.
\textsuperscript{52} Hérica Valladares. "Fallax Imago: Ovid's Narcissus and the Seduction of Mimesis in Roman Wall
\textsuperscript{54} Christine Kondoleon. \textit{Domestic and Divine : Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos}. Ithaca: Cornell
45+47-57, 55.
nymphaeum, a location that would have reinforced the myth’s connection with pooled water. The mosaics in the neighboring apsidal room depict the fowls and dishes of a sumptuous feast, surrounding a roundel depicting Ganymede giving water to the eagle: all are commonly symbolic of generous hospitality. The mosaic from the other side room was almost entirely destroyed, but the extant design is compositionally similar to that framing the *Narcissus*.

The pavement depicts Narcissus sitting on a rock wearing a wide-brimmed *kausia* with a sword at his side and a spear in his hand, his legs draped with cloth. Echo, dressed for the hunt with her skirt kilted up, holding a spear of her own, stands to one side, while Eros with his bow flanks Narcissus on the other side, holding a torch down to illuminate the water. Echo’s identity and that of Narcissus are confirmed by the careful inscription of their names, clearly labeling her in case an unwary viewer should be tempted to identify her as Artemis, the virgin goddess of the hunt. Although this depiction follows the tradition of earlier wall-paintings and mosaics in emphasizing the Narcissus’s discovery of his own face in the pool, the addition of Echo as a dominant character is unusual. The frame is also different, being figural rather than geometric; confronted acanthus plants are accompanied by white and yellow narcissi, punctuated by human heads that have been covered and framed by leaves.

Interpretations of Narcissus iconography in Roman art from the Renaissance forward primarily emphasize the mimetic nature of Narcissus’s love, and the way in

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56 Levi (1947), 136-137.  
which the viewer’s experience of seeing the illustration replicates and problematizes the concepts of emotional engagement in reflection and depiction. The depiction of Echo in the House of the Buffet Supper, uncommon in its depiction of the nymph as a huntress, works with the border to suggest a different and personalized emphasis for this mosaic, one which focuses as much on an anthropomorphized conception of the wilderness as it does on Narcissus’s tragedy.

The potential for translation between human and non-human states of being pervaded Greek and Roman religion and literature, with Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* as perhaps the most popular literary collection of these often-tragic transformations. Modern readings of Ovid’s work have examined the ways in which his use of metaphoric language reinforces the indeterminate line of metamorphosis from human into plant, stone, or animal; the use of similes and metaphors to describe an individual’s personality foreshadow the transformation, after which the simile becomes the reality and the humanity remains only in simile. The blurred distinctions between humanity and the natural world appear elsewhere in the text, as well, particularly in the story of Orpheus where his attentive audience of animals and trees are described in terms associated with people.

Ovid’s narratives often emphasize the significance of discerning transformed humans from their naturally-derived counterparts. In the story of Adonis’s birth,

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Myrrha’s transformation into a tree renders her incapable of giving birth to her son; only when Lucina recognizes the tree’s appearance—“like a woman in labor, curved and groaning and wet with falling tears”—as being characteristic of a woman in labor, can the boy be brought into the world, thus rescuing both tree and infant.\textsuperscript{61} Ignoring even subtle clues led to tragic consequences; the story of Dryope moralizes on the importance of knowing which plants could be harvested, and which to leave alone. Her punishment for unwittingly picking fruit from a tree that had once been the nymph Lotis was to be transformed into a tree herself.\textsuperscript{62} Her last admonition to her son was that he should be careful of all wilderness places, and to believe that every tree was a deity, to forestall being given a similar fate.

At first, the border of the Narcissus mosaic encourages a similar reading for the boy and his eponymous flower; white narcissi spring from the roots of the acanthus scrolls in the frame, and the faces with their leafy caps may reference the flower that grew up after Narcissus died. However, the transformation of Narcissus into a flower is not the focus of Ovid’s story; rather, the moral circles around Narcissus’s reflection in the pool. His inability to tear himself from the love that he may or may not recognize as being himself, and Echo’s love for him expressed only in mimicking his cries, are easily interpreted as warnings against pride, vanity, and— in Echo’s case— gossip. In addition, both Narcissus and Echo act as examples of artistic mimesis: one through seeing, and in a sense constructing, a representation of a person through his reflection, the other through

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Nitenti tamen est similis curvataque crebros dat gemitus arbor lacrimisque cadentibus umet.} Ovid, \textit{Met.} X.508-509.

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Stagna tamen timeat nec carpat ab arbore flores, et frutices omnes corpus putet esse deorum} Ovid IX. 380-81.
speaking someone’s else’s words, in someone else’s voice. The final transformation of both individuals involves their dissolution: Echo retains her speech, but her body dissolves and her bones become a rock, while Narcissus dies of starvation. The flower that blooms among his bones is more commemorative than truly metamorphic; Narcissus next appears, in death, sitting by the river Styx still gazing at his own reflection.

The multiple layers of Ovid’s narrative have encouraged an extensive bibliography from both ancient and modern sources engaged in re-telling and interpreting the myth from psycho-analytic, mythological, and poetic perspectives as well as artistic. These interpretations thematize issues of self-love, rejected love, divine retribution, connection and disconnection as well as artistic mimesis, most often primarily in reference to Narcissus. Echo’s role in the narrative is rarely emphasized; however, her tragic metamorphosis is at the heart of the concept of the speaking, sentient wilderness. Anne-Emmanuelle Berger’s analysis of Echo’s role in Ovid’s story and in other myths shows the significance of Echo’s connection to the forests and mountains, particularly the curious nature of her transformation— a wasting away into air and rock, with her voice as the sole reminder of her humanity.

In similar fashion to some Ovid’s other transformed nymphs, Echo’s final metamorphosis allows her to retain something of her previous nature; as the myrrh tree continues to weep, and as the tree Myrrha became retained enough semblance of the woman she had once been to make her recognizable to a passing goddess, Echo retains

her voice—albeit in a form that prevents her from doing anything but repeat what others say. This echo, however, is not solely repetitive; once Echo receives the sound, she may choose which sounds, words or tunes, to repeat back and so communicates her own wishes and desires rather than solely those of the person she imitates.66 The transformation of Echo’s bones into rock is almost an afterthought; she herself becomes one with the wilderness in which she resides, and so is capable of being anywhere and everywhere—potentially seeing and hearing everything.67

Extant depictions of Echo and Narcissus often reference her connection with the wilderness, but the signals are not as obvious as in the Antioch mosaic. Examples from Pompeii often show Echo wreathed with leaves and holding a reed in her hand; when she does not hold a reed, she holds a hydria.68 In one Pompeian painting, she is depicted with a flute—a reference to her other mythological counterpart, Pan, whose music she imitated.69 The hydria emphasizes her significance to the Narcissus story and connects her to water-nymphs: in a relief from Copenhagen, the water where Narcissus sees his reflection is poured from a hydria held by Echo, who sits underneath a pine tree.70 Although all of these examples site Echo in the woods and forests, none of them depict her in the way that the Antioch mosaic does, as a huntress.

Echo’s apparel in the Antioch mosaic associates her with other female protagonists in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, not only Artemis but also Atalanta and even

Aphrodite. Aphrodite’s love of Adonis, which lured her into the wilderness where he preferred to roam, also transformed her behavior and appearance:

\[\text{Hunc tenet, huic comes est; adsuetaque semper in umbra indulgere sibi formamque augere colendo per iuga, per silvas dumosaque saxa vagatur fine genu vestem ritu succincta Dianae hortaturque canes; tutaeque animalia praedae, aut pronos lepores aut celsum in cornua cervum, aut agitat dammas: a fortibus abstinet apris raptoresque lupos armatosque uenguibus ursos vitat et armenti saturatos caede leones.}\]

Here she stays, here she is Adonis’ companion; and the shade where she was used to indulge herself, and cultivate her beauty, she trades for the woods, for thorns and rocks, with her knee-baring robes made short like Diana’s, and exhorts the hounds; she hunts the prey, whether rabbits or antler-crowned stags, or startled does; she refrains from the strong boar and the ravenous wolf, the claw-armed bear and the bull-satiated lion.

Venus’s appropriation of Diana’s usual garb would be the only practical way for her to roam through the uncivilized wilderness favored by hunters like Adonis, thus enabling her to be as comfortable as her companion. The Antioch mosaic’s depiction of Echo thus clearly displays the nymph’s native habitat; even before her encounter with Narcissus, Echo is rarely found in the cultivated spaces of the world, but is always most at home in the wilderness and forest.

The human heads with their leafy caps that punctuate the frame at regular intervals clearly act as an anthropomorphic rendering of the natural world. Whether this rendering is intended as a purely ornamental motif associated with either Echo’s continuing presence in the forests or Narcissus’s commemorative flower, or whether it illustrates a complex ideation of the natural world in traditional Roman cosmology, can be discerned through examining the effect of a depicted human head or face on its

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\(^{71}\) Ov. *Met.* X.533-541.
viewers. Disembodied heads like those in both this mosaic and that of the Judgment of Paris are not busts, which would associate them with portraiture, apotropaic gorgons like Medusa, nor theatrical masks. As a result, their functionality depends entirely on the viewer’s instinctive reaction to seeing human features within a non-human context, a reaction that has been extensively studied in modern research regarding computer media, robotics, and human-machine interaction.

**Anthropomorphization and Communication**

With current technological advancements in virtual reality and robotics, the need for understanding how people communicate—both verbally and non-verbally—has come to the forefront of media research. In examining the most effective human-machine interactions, researchers have gained important insights into the mechanics of human interaction with non-human objects or beings, and the effects of anthropomorphization on such interactions. One of the most influential concepts for current research has been the Media Equation, developed by Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass, which states that people have a tendency to use the same principles of social interaction with media technology as they do with other people. 72 Experiments with various media and observations of cultural practices involving anthropomorphized creatures have shown that instinctive responses can be manipulated to influence people’s perceptions of the inanimate and un-human, either encouraging or discouraging interaction.

Through several years of experimentation, Reeves and Nass discovered that

people tend to default to interpersonal skills both when using computers—which communicate in human language, whether verbal or written—and when viewing pictures, either static or moving, on variously-sized monitors and screens. People tended to spend more time and focus analyzing close-up shots of faces than they did on full-body depictions, whether or not they intended to do so, and reacted to these images in much the same way as they did in real-life social interactions. Intriguingly enough, high quality images were not required for this reaction to take place; low-resolution images and high-resolution images both gained similar responses.

Further studies into this phenomenon suggest that the primary reason for this automatic response is not based on an instinctive anthropomorphization of objects, nor is it an in-absentia reaction to the human creator of those objects, but an unconscious response to human-seeming stimuli: a response Nass labeled “mindlessness.” In an experiment with subliminal responses, Reeves and Nass determined that the appearance of a happy face or a sad face flashed across a screen influenced the viewer’s perception of every image that followed; the “mindless” reaction that automatically and instinctively treats the depiction of a human face as another person also influenced subsequent emotional perceptions, requiring a conscious effort to react differently.

Although human faces elicit more immediate responses from people, faces are not always necessary or even desirable for encouraging human-object interaction. Working

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73 Reeves and Nass (1996), 5-7, 38-51.
74 Reeves and Nass (1996), 38-51.
75 Reeves and Nass (1996), 204.
77 Reeves and Nass (1996), 134-5.
at about the same time as Reeves and Nass, Lee Sproull et al. determined that the use of an animated, talking human face on a computer screen was more effective, but less comfortable to use, than a text-based display in their study of human-computer interactions.78 The automatic response towards a human face attributed more human characteristics to the computer, with the result that users attributed a greater degree of authority and judgement to the face, and so presented themselves in a more culturally-acceptable light, than they did when the display was text-based.79 However, this response is not always problematic; in environments where the need for ease of communication is paramount, the ability to interact with an object as though it were another person, but more particularly a physically non-threatening person, can encourage experimentation that might otherwise be overly intimidating.80

Hirotaka Osawa et. al. examined the effectiveness of anthropomorphization in introducing people to a new object, using an industrial printer at a trade show: while a robot spokesperson beside the printer drew people to the display, the transformation of the printer itself into a communicative entity through the addition of LED eyes and constructed arms, along with a vocal component, proved more effective in teaching people about the printer’s functions and capabilities.81 In other experiments regarding human interaction with simple machines, the most valuable mechanism for encouraging

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79 Sproull et. al. (1996), 99-100.
interaction with a mobile cart was to give it a voice.\textsuperscript{82}

The instinctive and automatic tendency to attribute human characteristics to something that has human features, and more importantly a voice, clarifies the connection between people and the wilderness that appears in the \textit{Echo and Narcissus} mosaic. Echo’s presence suggests that communication between the supernatural world and the mortal world is not only possible, but commonplace; every echo one hears in the woods is Echo herself, communicating in the only manner she has left. The conflation of human faces and leafy forms reiterates this concept, encouraging its viewers on a subconscious level to acknowledge the sentience and humanity of the same wilderness; the sounds of trees and flowering plants, as Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses} often shows, could be the verbal expression and communication of the mythological world.

\textbf{Defending Roman Tradition: \textit{Europa and the Bull}}

The mosaic border of \textit{Europa and the Bull} from the House of the Boat of Psyches is an anachronism within the excavated corpus of Antioch mosaics (fig. 3.1). Instead of utilizing acanthus scrolls or vine rinceaux, it more faithfully copies earlier Roman patterns of beribboned garlands; however, these garlands are punctuated by idealized female heads, rather than satyric or theatrical masks, and set within a clearly architectonic framework. That heads should replace theatrical or satyric masks in such a compositionally elaborate rendition of traditional Roman design strengthens the conception of masks and heads as interchangeable, at least in certain contexts; even more

\textsuperscript{82} Osawa et. al. (2012), 345-358
significant are the ways in which this mosaic frame departs from earlier iconography. In its referential, yet somewhat distanced, interpretation of the masks-and-garlands motif, *Europa and the Bull* appropriates what was by then an antiquated form, for what may have been a distinctively contemporary purpose.

In its broad reference to the iconographic elements of earlier Roman mosaics, but– in spite of its elaborate architectonic framework– without the identifying details of earlier ritual garlands, this mosaic border appears neither traditionally functional nor solely decorative. The heads, in spite of their visual similarity to those at the House of the Atrium or their compositional similarity to theatrical masks, share little of the purpose of either. Any potential for communicating with or for warning the viewer is negated by the gazes of each head; the faces look towards each other or to the center panel, rather than outward at the viewer. Nor do they overtly reference the supernatural wilderness, as in the House of the Boat of Psyches; indeed, there is nothing to clearly identify them with any specific cult or belief. The garlands are as impressionistic as the heads, with only the suggestion of fruit and leaves rather than the carefully delineated forms of earlier mosaics. The presence of a bird in one corner provides the necessary wildlife element, but seems more a nod to tradition than an independent, meaningful part of the composition.

Like the frame of the *Judgement of Paris* mosaic, the border of *Europa and the Bull* – in spite of its lack of technical detail– conspicuously illustrates the household’s religious and political ties in a decorative scheme that is otherwise somewhat generic. The majority of the mosaics in the House of the Boat of Psyches are geometric, although
the figural mosaics are devoted to ocean themes.⁸³ The triclinium’s threshold is guarded by busts of Oceanus and Thetis, in addition to the central mosaic with Europa and the Bull. Of themselves, the mosaics provide relatively generic variations on decorative themes common throughout the Mediterranean world; it is the frame of Europa and the Bull in the triclinium, with its unmistakable reference to Roman traditions, that provides an overt affirmation of Roman cult practice. In this setting, the impressionistic nature of the mosaic could have been a benefit rather than a hindrance; the garlands and heads can be applied to any aspect of ritual Roman house decoration.

The cultural environment of the Roman Empire in the third century suggests a potential rationale for this kind of pavement composition: throughout the empire, a religious divide was growing between the ancient, polytheistic religions and newer mystery cults like Christianity and Mithraism. In Antioch, where Christians first got their name, the controversy appears in the writings of some of the most important apologists for both paganism and Christianity.⁸⁴ Some of the clearest visual depictions of this divide appear in funerary art, as in the inscription from another early third century mosaic, this one from a tomb in Edessa, depicting Orpheus taming the animals. Translated, it reads, “I Papa son of Papa have made this resting room for me and for my children and for my successors. Let him be blessed who sees it and prays.”⁸⁵ The wording suggests that its

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patron recognized that visitors could no longer be assumed to have a cultural understanding of what was appropriate behavior on viewing these kinds of mosaics.

The frame of the *Europa and the Bull* mosaic, with its incorporation of overtly traditional Roman iconography, may be an equally blatant illustration of the household’s religious practices. The use of garlands instead of rinceaux makes the religious nature of the mosaic clear; by now, vegetal motifs often referred to the untamed wilderness instead of a religious dedication, but garlands—particularly when used in their traditional fashion, framing the *emblema* in a fictive wreath—are unmistakable in their function. In a similar fashion, the manner in which the masks are displayed hearkens back to the display of ancestor masks; however, although their idealized and feminine faces echo the maenads and faunae of traditional satyric imagery, not to mention gorgoneia, there is nothing to confirm any of these identifications. Nevertheless, there is a potential interpretation: while satyrs, maenads and faunae have little correlation with Europa and the Bull, classical vases from the Black Sea region show nereids as protectors and escorts for Europa while Zeus swims with her to Crete.86 Their protective function may be the referent that justifies the depiction of nereids as mask-like heads.

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Chapter 4: The Great Palace Mosaic of Constantinople

The Great Palace Mosaic of Constantinople has intrigued scholars since its discovery during the 1935-53 excavations on part of the site of the imperial palace complex in Istanbul. Although the techniques and style of the mosaic align with early Byzantine art, the majority of the extant artistic program consists of vignettes of rural and wilderness subjects more characteristic of pagan late antiquity. The program juxtaposes whimsical scenes with violent ones, scenes of ordinary rural life with mythological allegories, all placed on a white ground and bounded by a wide acanthus scroll border that runs along the edges of the peristyle (fig 4.1). This border, populated by birds and flowers, is also punctuated at intervals by male heads encircled in leaves.

From its confusing barrage of iconographic themes to its location in an ambiguous peristyle courtyard, the Great Palace mosaic has eluded ordinary interpretations. No framing devices provide a thematic break to separate the narrative scenes from each other, and the narratives themselves are confusingly divided between violent scenes and scenes of recreation, between genre and allegory and myth. The only borders within the entire mosaic are found along its edges, and although these borders are technically on par– and in some cases superior– to anything in the central field, they have been studied

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more for their characteristic style, rather than for the ways in which they inform the meaning of the mosaic as a whole. As a result, their contributions to the artistic program have gone un-noticed.

The technical superiority with which these heads were constructed, particularly in comparison with the rest of the mosaic, hints at the significance of the border within the artistic program. The extant face from the outer border (fig. 4.2), with its hair and beard formed from leaves, is one of the most carefully composed elements within the extant mosaic fragments, and the faces from the inner border (figs. 4.3- 5) are equally compelling in their portrayal of the by-now traditional image of the head framed by leaves. In their unique renditions of what could be considered decorative elements, these heads not only provide cues for reading the mosaic, but also illustrate the ways in which early Byzantine art manipulated its late antique heritage for political purposes.

Locating the Great Palace Mosaic


The history of the imperial palace complex at Constantinople follows the history of the Byzantine empire. First constructed under Constantine, renovations and expansions of the complex followed the needs and requirements of its inhabitants for almost a thousand years.\(^5\) Fires and changing tastes led to its eventual abandonment; it was in ruins by the twelfth century, and with the Ottoman conquest of 1453, the palace complex— with the exception of Hagia Sophia, which was transformed into a mosque—became little more than a convenient stone quarry for other buildings.\(^6\) Before the building of the railway in 1870, Hagia Sophia was the sole intact remnant of the Byzantine palace complex, although fragments of the hippodrome could still be seen.\(^7\) Further archaeological research was, and continues to be, restricted by the Sultanahmet Mosque and its surrounding neighborhoods; possibilities for excavation depend on alterations made to the contemporary urban landscape.

Of the literary sources that discuss the palace’s workings, perhaps the most important is the *Book of Ceremonies* by the tenth-century emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, although some chronicles from the fifth century onward have also been helpful.\(^8\) In his attempt to codify everything of significance about imperial ritual traditions, Constantine VII often references sites within the palace complex, perhaps

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inadvertently providing at least a conceptual layout of the palace during his reign.

Reconstructions of the palace complex depend on these descriptions of the various building programs, spaces, and their associated ceremonies, particularly as the continuous occupation of the site prevents much excavation of the physical palace foundations.  

Improvements to the city’s infrastructure provided some of the first clues regarding the palace’s physical appearance. The building of a train line through the old city during the late nineteenth century uncovered some of the ancient foundations, granting the Greek scholar Alexander Georgios Paspates temporary access to analyze them for the first time. A German expedition in World War I discovered substructures in the north-east of the palace area, providing physical evidence of the palace structure. The seating rows of the hippodrome and the remains of the Zeuxippos baths were discovered during the construction of the Istanbul sewage water system in the late 1920s, and a fire in the Sultan Ahmet region led to the Walker Trust’s excavation efforts in 1931-33, which uncovered the peristyle courtyard and its mosaic. After the start of World War II,

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10 Paspates (1893), 21-41; Mango (1959), 14-15.
11 Paspates (1893), 19.
occupying British forces contributed to the further excavation of the hippodrome, but financial and political issues prevented the return of the Walker Trust excavation team until 1951, at which time they discovered the apsidal hall. Further discoveries have appeared as renovations and other building programs uncover more evidence, so that at least some of the sites mentioned in imperial literature can now be definitively located (fig. 4.6).

Unfortunately, none of the literary descriptions of the palace describe the atrium space of the imperial palace mosaic, making identification difficult. After the first excavation, Gerard Brett believed that the space might have been the Heliakon of the Pharos, but with little solid evidence to support his hypothesis. Following the discovery of the apsidal hall during the second excavation, David Talbot Rice refused to speculate on the building’s function. Bardill has incorporated literary evidence, prior hypothetical reconstructions incorporating the extant topography, and the layout of the Flavian palace of Rome—after which the Great Palace may have been modeled—to identify the hall and courtyard as the Augusteus of the Great Palace, although this identification may not have

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13 Rice (1958), 121.
16 Rice (1958), 49.
been the site’s earliest function.\textsuperscript{17} Other interpretations include identifying it as the Apsis, at the cross-roads of palace progressions, or– at least during Heraclius’s reign– as a site for meeting with the circus factions.\textsuperscript{18}

The archaeological history of the mosaic and its attendant hall begins with the construction of terraces on the hillside that supported the architectural growth of the palace complex; these terraces enabled expansion of the palace complex without sacrificing accessibility.\textsuperscript{19} The courtyard and the peristyle mosaic date to a later renovation campaign, although there has been much debate about which emperor was responsible. Based on the excavation reports and literary records of renovations, Cyril A. Mango attributes it to the reign of Tiberius (578-582), but Werner Jobst argues for Justinian (527-565) based on evidence uncovered during his fifteen-year program of restoration and preservation.\textsuperscript{20} Stylistic evidence leads James Trilling to advocate for an even later date, in the early years of Heraclius’s rein (610-641).\textsuperscript{21} Jonathan Bardill’s extensive research into brickwork techniques and stamping in Constantinople, which includes evidence from unpublished excavation records and new findings, aligns with the latter theory, suggesting that the mosaic and its attendant building can be associated with


\textsuperscript{19} Bolognesi (1996), 134. Rice (1959), 22.

\textsuperscript{20} For Mango’s suggestion that the patron could be Tiberius (578-582), see Mango and Lavin (1960), 70. For the argument in favor of Justinian, see Jobst (2005),1083-101.

Maurice (582-602) at the earliest, and at the latest Heraclius (610-641).\textsuperscript{22}

The mosaic was part of palace decoration for no more than a century, and possibly less. Sometime before 700 the western side of the mosaic was demolished in order to transform that area of the peristyle into a gallery.\textsuperscript{23} The rest of the mosaic was covered with marble— a more hard-wearing substance, certainly, and easier to maintain than the decorative pavement that had already required repair.\textsuperscript{24} Theories regarding the site’s function that depend primarily on post-eighth-century sources, therefore, cannot be relied upon for their applicability to the time-period when the mosaic was on display, although they may be suggestive of the perceived nature and quality of the site.

Reading the Mosaic

The artistic program of the Great Palace mosaic reflects the continuing influence of the ancient world in late antiquity.\textsuperscript{25} Animals, both domesticated and wild, feature in the vast majority of these scenes, both as actors in the hunt or arena combat and as participants in pastoral events. Along the border, the foliated heads that either grow leaves or are encompassed within them evidence the enduring popularity of the ancient semi-divine denizens of the wilderness. In an intriguing nod to the earliest renditions of this kind of frame, the small band between the dominant field and the populated scroll

\textsuperscript{23} Bardill (2004), 141-2.
\textsuperscript{24} Bardill (2004), 141.
\textsuperscript{25} Brett (1947), 93-7; Rice (1958), 127-148; Mango and Lavin (1960), 72-73; Trilling (1989) 36-54; Parrish (2005) 1109-1117. The continuing influence of pagan gods appears also in connection with the circus, as can be seen in a 6th-century curse tablet from Antioch that invokes most of the gods in the pantheon in order to prevent the Blue team from winning. See Alexander Hollmann. "A Curse Tablet from the Circus at Antioch." \textit{Zeitschrift f"ur Papyrologie und Epigraphik} 145 (2003): 67-82.
holds a ribbon with ivy leaves growing improbably from its selvages (fig. 4.3).

Outside the broad thematic strokes of hunting, combat, and the rural life, few visual cues guide the viewer’s experience of the vignettes that make up the majority of the mosaic’s program. The broad white background and the populated border that surrounded the perimeter of the pavement as a whole suggest that the entire mosaic should be considered as a single composition, as was common in late antique mosaics depicting arena combats, for example; however, the vignettes and scenes within the mosaic have little of the cohesive narrative quality that ordinarily appears in such programs. In his preliminary article to the excavation reports, Brett suggests that the program may represent apotropaic themes, as well as a romanticized view of the countryside; Irving Lavin confirms this suggestion, which Trilling utilizes to help determine the dating of the mosaic.

Trilling’s exhaustive study of the mosaic’s iconography brings together stylistic, historical, and narrative analyses of the entirety of the mosaic’s illustrations for thematic elements and presents a detailed analysis of the mosaic’s iconography as a political message of order and chaos, violence and control, and the tight-rope ledge between the two that a ruler had to navigate. David Parrish continues the stylistic analysis, sets the narratives of the Great Palace mosaic beside other early Byzantine artworks, but concludes that in its use of rural and allegorical subjects, the mosaic “does not project an

26 See particularly Trilling (1989), 36-54; Parrish (2005).
27 Brett’s discussion was published, with extensive editing, prior to the first excavation report; it provides context regarding possible iconographic origins in calendrical, pastoral, and hunt genres. This discussion is expanded in Lavin and Trilling. See Brett (1942), particularly 37, 41; Mango and Lavin (1960), 72; Trilling (1989).
idealitical program.” Thus Parrish unfortunately relegates the Great Palace mosaic to the realm of pure decoration in spite of its definite, albeit somewhat obscure, elements of meaning.

Trilling’s reading is perhaps overly dependent on the assumption of erudite intellectual associations between literary sources and the mosaic program, but his argument provides valuable cultural context that would have been well-known to the early Byzantine court. He associates the pastoral depictions with the Farmer’s Law, a 7th-8th century legal text for freeholders living in Anatolia; although the mosaic vignettes are patterned after conventional idealized representations of peasant life, rather than the every-day challenges represented in the Farmer’s Law, these conventional depictions would have been easily recognizable references to a world that city-dwellers knew more by reputation than by experience. In the mosaic’s juxtaposition of combative and idyllic scenes, Trilling sees a moralizing theme regarding the dangers that seek to destroy civilization and the responsibility of leadership. Hunters and sheepdogs work to safeguard communities from predators, albeit with limited success, and in the wilderness snakes are targeted by deer and eagles.

Trilling also notes the prevalence of protective allegories in the artistic program—including the two identifiable mythic narratives, Samson and Bellerophon. While he refuses to attribute a similar mythological designation for the depiction of Pan carrying a

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29 Parrish (2005), 1117.
33 Trilling (1989), 58.
child on his shoulders, located just above the least-complete face and forming part of
what may have been a Dionysiac procession, the apotropaic connotation is apparent (fig.
4.7).\textsuperscript{34} The conflation of Pan with satyrs and silenoi in late antiquity suggests that this
image refers as much to the relationship between the guardian Silenus and the child
Dionysos as it does to Pan’s traditional role as protector of the countryside.

His interpretation concludes with the 7th-century poet George of Prisidia, and the
belief that animalistic and barbaric nature, outside the bounds of the civilized world,
allowed evil to enter society; these tendencies needed to be restrained and conquered in
the righteous ruler.\textsuperscript{35} In this final conception of the mosaic as a depiction of the
continuing battle between good and evil, fought not only in the countryside of the
Byzantine empire but also within the emperor’s own self, Trilling constructs a
masterpiece of careful interpretation. Unfortunately, the intricate nature of his analysis
elides the ways in which less literate people, or people from less-latinized educational
backgrounds, might have read the mosaic.

In examining the popularity of the mosaic’s narrative illustrations, Parrish’s
reading provides the necessary contextual framework; nevertheless, his interpretation also
falters, in disavowing any intended program for the mosaic at all.\textsuperscript{36} The overt references
to Roman antiquity in the borders of the site’s artistic program not only reflect the
decorative elements Parrish’s reading advocates, but also the iconographic continuity

\textsuperscript{34} The iconography of a child on Pan’s shoulders, while often associated with the young Dionysos, is
sometimes also connected to Komos. See Amy C. Smith, “Komos Growing Up among Satyrs and
Children”, \textit{Hesperia Supplements}, 41, \textit{Constructions of Childhood in Ancient Greece and Italy} (2007)
153-171.

\textsuperscript{35} Trilling (1989), 65, 69.

\textsuperscript{36} Parrish (2005), 1117.
suggested by Trilling’s interpretation.\(^{37}\) Although the precise location of the peristyle courtyard may be controversial, its likely function as a space where the emperor could meet with select people from outside the palace, and the evidence of its heavy use, suggest that the iconography of the mosaic would be intended for both audiences. There is another way in which every interpretation of the mosaic falters; none of them take into consideration the garden that formed the centerpiece of the space.

Nothing is known about the plantings and ornaments that once occupied the central garden.\(^{38}\) Nevertheless, the fact that it was a peristyle garden, bounded by colonnaded galleries decorated with both narrative and symbolic imagery, immediately evokes the artistic programs of early imperial villas.\(^{39}\) Recent digital reconstructions of the imperial palace underscore the significance of the courtyard garden as the primary focus of the space (fig. 4.8). In these reconstructions, the mosaic takes a clear second place to the central field, transforming the imposing mosaic into a monumental border for what existed in the central garden. As a result, even the most generic conception of the space needs to acknowledge that, no matter how complex its program, the entirety of the

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\(^{37}\) Trilling’s analysis of the borders solely concerns itself with identifying the historical and stylistic precursors for the mosaic as a whole, rather than the possibility of the border being used to add meaning to the mosaic. See Trilling (1989), 39.

\(^{38}\) The second excavation report notes only the presence of “soft, dark earth”, which is consistent with garden spacing; however, the area had been frequently disturbed in subsequent searches for (presumably) building material, making any knowledge of the plantings impossible. Rice (1958), 10; Antony R. Littlewood. “Palatial Gardens as Symbols of Imperial Power.” in The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönjl Byzantine Studies Symposium., edited by Ayla Odekan, Nevra Necipoglu and Engin Akyürek, 63-66. Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2013.

mosaic acted as a frame for the garden in its center.

Gardens, particularly the structured and planned spaces of peristyle gardens, held an important place in Roman culture that continued into the Byzantine world.\textsuperscript{40} In Roman tradition, the \textit{hortus} had served both a practical and an ideological function. As a farmed space, it held connotations of the earliest land-grants given to Roman citizens, and allowed urban land-owners the illusion of a country life with all the mythological and literary perceptions attached to elite villa culture.\textsuperscript{41} The liminal nature of gardens also encouraged the blurring of social convention, with a reputation for romantic assignations and philosophical discussions alike; in addition, gardens were also connected with ritual and religious devotion.\textsuperscript{42} The connection with devotional metaphor would continue into the later Byzantine and Islamic traditions.\textsuperscript{43}

The mosaic would have directed the visitor’s reaction to and interpretation of the garden, just as the garden’s plantings and ornaments would have given further insight into the narratives and vignettes depicted in the mosaic. Without the garden itself, little can be done in this regard; however, the mosaic does hold one immediate, overt element that directs the viewer toward a particular understanding of the garden space. The populated scroll, with its leaf-covered heads, on the inner border of the mosaic— that once abutted


\textsuperscript{41} von Stackenburg (2009), 10.

\textsuperscript{42} von Stackenburg, (2009), 15.

\textsuperscript{43} The bibliography on Islamic gardens is extensive, and recent studies are expanding our understanding regarding the importance and significance of these spaces. Two recent publications are valuable resources: D. Fairchild Ruggles \textit{Islamic Gardens and Landscapes} (2008) and Michel Conan, ed. \textit{Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity}, (2007). Reviewed by Anthony Welch, \textit{Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians}, Vol. 68,3 424-426.
the garden colonnade—harks back to the traditional masks-and-garlands motif that once
signified protected, sacral space and was found so often in similar locations at earlier
Roman houses (fig. 4.9).44

The heads found along the inner acanthus-scroll border can be easily read as an
ornamental rendition of Pliny the Elder’s satyric images, originally meant to protect the
domus from the evil eye.45 The lively nature of these heads prevents them from being
dismissed as mere nods to ancient tradition, however; their individuality and the quality
of their execution suggests that they were meant to be read as an integral part of the
artistic program. Thus, as the nature and quality of its guardian gives a visitor some hint
as to the nature and quality of the thing being guarded, so a careful reading of the mosaic
heads within their liminal setting may provide valuable answers regarding the overall
artistic program of not only the mosaic, but the peristyle as a whole.

Three heads were uncovered during the first excavation, two on the inner, garden
border of the north-east side and one on the south-west outer border.46 A fourth was
discovered during the second excavation, also on the garden border of the north-east
side.47 The face from the outer edge has a full beard and hair all made of leaves in an
elaborate conflation of human and vegetal features (fig. 4.2). The other three faces, all
from the garden-facing border, have human facial hair although leafy hoods cover their
heads. One is almost entirely undamaged, and immediately became an object of
scholarly interest; its iron-grey mustache and lively expression make it appear almost

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44 For a discussion of garlands, see Chapter 1, 12-16. For masks, see Chapter 2, 34-35.
45 Chapter 2, 34-35.
46 Brett (1947), 66-67.
47 Rice (1958), 125.
portrait-like (fig. 4.3). The head with blond hair– even more unusual than its mustache– is equally lively, although it is marred by a large crack through the center (fig. 4.4). The third head was too fragmentary to identify (fig. 4.5).

Although descriptions of the fully foliated head identify it with Oceanus, the sea-god is not the only divinity whose iconography incorporates vegetation. None of the heads share the lobster or crab claws associated with Oceanus, and although the sea-god’s attributes include a full beard and lengthy hair, usually grey but sometimes– particularly in late antiquity– seaweed-like, any similarity to the heads in the Great Palace mosaic ends there. In color and style, the foliated head’s leafy hair and beard are more easily associated with deciduous forests than sea-weed.

The mustaches on the faces from the inner border provide the most important evidence for the more-than-decorative nature of these heads; the leafy head-covering may have been a popular motif in depicting the inhabitants of the supernatural wilderness, but the styling of facial hair is anachronistic and immediately identifies the heads with cultures outside the Roman empire. The conflation of iconography associated with the supernatural wilderness and barbarian physiognomy suggests that the meaning and functionality of these heads link directly to concepts and perceptions of barbarians in

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48 Rice immediately noted the similarities in style between this head and barbarian precedents, a similarity Trilling and Parrish both note in contemporary sculptures. See Rice (1958), 130; Trilling (1989), 39; Parrish (2005), 1104-5.

49 Although Oceanus’s head often uses seaweed instead of hair, and so is perhaps the most obvious correlation, there is some evidence to suggest that foliage was used as hair for other deities as well. An early example appears in the House of Augustus, in the Room of the Masks. Irene Iacopi. The House of Augustus: Wall Paintings. Milan: Electa, 2008, 20, 26. Rice (1958), 130; Brett (1942), 36. In defense of the Oceanus-style designation, see Trilling (1989), 39-40.

50 Trilling sees a North African influence on the style as well as some of the narratives within the Great Palace Mosaic, including what he describes as the Oceanus heads, which is one reason for his determination that Heraclius was the most likely patron. As the son of the Exarch of North Africa, Heraclius would have been familiar with the Roman traditions that continued in Carthage and the surrounding region. Trilling (1989), 39-40, 68-9.
early Byzantine culture.

The Emperors, the Military, Barbarians, and the Palace

The achievements and failures of Justinian’s reign (527-565) dominated the political and artistic framework of Europe in the sixth century. His efforts to return the Roman Empire to its Constantinian glory included his determination to re-conquer the western half of the Mediterranean, defend the eastern Empire against inroads by Slavic and Persian forces, and renovate or rebuild the monuments that had fallen into disrepair under his predecessors. His military and building campaigns are attested by the numerous churches and monasteries that can be attributed either in whole or in part to Justinian’s patronage. However, Justinian’s success was tenuous at best; at his death, the provinces he had regained for Byzantium still required a strong military presence, which continued to drain resources from a treasury that had already been bled dry, and his expansive building projects contributed to a bankrupted treasury that would affect his successors for decades to come.

As a symbol of imperial prestige, the palace at Constantinople now became a statement of the stability and power of the empire, in addition to being the emperor’s

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54 Sarris (2002), 51. For how Justinian’s programs were received by at least one of his biographers, see James Allan Evans. "Justinian and the Historian Procopius." Greece & Rome, Second Series 17, no. 2 (1970): 218-23.
means of communicating his personal intentions and objectives for his reign.\textsuperscript{55}

Descriptions of the palace in late antiquity rarely fail to note the endless succession of wealth in ornamentation: mosaics, textiles on both walls and floors, and expensive furnishings all provided the sense of opulence required of the self-titled “Emperor of the World”.\textsuperscript{56} Procopius’s \textit{De aedificiis}, which catalogues Justinian’s buildings, and Corippus’s \textit{In laudem}, regarding Justin II’s coronation, both describe the palace in terms of its awe-inspiring decoration; however, neither of them concern themselves with enough details of the interior to allow for concrete identification.\textsuperscript{57}

The primary concern for these authors was to link the imperial palace, with all of its antique associations, to Christianity– an iconography that depended on transforming the ekphrastic palace of Hellenistic Greece and early imperial Rome into a reflection of the heavenly court of Christian theology.\textsuperscript{58} As the imperial court had become the model for depictions of the heavenly court, so the earthly palace acted as a concrete illustration of the Heavenly Jerusalem for its Christian apologists; in such a literary construct, the conspicuous displays of elite craftsmanship in textiles and mosaics, as well as the wealth implicit in the lavish use of precious metals and gems, were not only appropriate but necessary.\textsuperscript{59} The details of palace decoration seem to have been less important to these authors than their overall effect, however, perhaps because those details–as the Great Palace mosaic suggests– may have had little, if any, overt relationship to Christian

\textsuperscript{55} Carile (2012), 12, 14-15.
\textsuperscript{56} Carile (2012), 1-5, 21-25.
\textsuperscript{57} Procopius does describe the \textit{Chalke}, and states that the rest of the palace is on an equally grand scale; Corippus describes the palace as being similar to Olympus, but gives no particulars. Proc. \textit{De Aed.} I. 10.10-20; Cor. \textit{In Laudem}, 178-200.
\textsuperscript{58} Carile (2012), 168-170.
\textsuperscript{59} Carile (2012), 35-47.
theology.\(^{60}\)

The literary tradition aligns with the Byzantine court’s emphasis on Roman and Christian heritage and orthodoxy; however, the emperors of Byzantium often had their roots in the military, and the military had its own concerns. Although soldiers of the Republic had originally been recruited from land-owning citizens, by the second century BCE the amount of land required was dropped to facilitate greater recruitment.\(^{61}\) By the Augustan era, the large scale of military campaigns led to an opening of the military ranks to all freeborn men, with only the legions and the Praetorian Guard continuing to be restricted to citizens.\(^{62}\) After the incorporation of Goths into the empire, the levy of men required from larger landowners could be commuted into a cash payment for Gothic substitutes.\(^{63}\)

In the later Empire, there were three methods of military recruitment; inheritance, which often was used for officers, volunteering, and the draft.\(^{64}\) The draft became a common tool to insure stability in recently conquered regions, as the removal of fighters and warriors prevented successful rebellions.\(^{65}\) Soldiers and military leaders alike were valued primarily for their skills and their diplomatic networks, not for the antiquity of

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\(^{63}\) Wesch-Klein (2007), 435.

\(^{64}\) Wesch-Klein (2007), 437.

\(^{65}\) Wesch-Klein (2007), 437.
their Roman pedigree or their socio-economic status; the latter requirements belonged to the bureaucratic aristocracy. The social and political relationships formed as a result of these connections, particularly through intermarriage, led to a powerful cohort of military families with kinship ties to aristocracy both within and without the Empire, who exerted considerable influence over imperial politics and foreign policy.

As a result, military culture was even less monolithic than the court, for orthodox Christians from Byzantium worked, fought beside, and married people of many ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. It is unsurprising, then, that the visual language of the “pagan” Roman empire retained its popularity, and that the ancient gods and goddesses continued to represent the forces and ideals that they had once presided over. In spite of efforts by Christian theologians, the old traditions were popular into the ninth and tenth centuries among people of all classes, as witnessed by the prevalence of amulets and charms to safeguard against illnesses and events that ordinary faith and science could not prevent.

Another result of the ethnic variety within the military was its effect on imperial iconography— and, as a result, on Christian iconography as well. Soldiers whose

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pedigrees and loyalties lay with the military instead of with the Byzantine court were less liable to be swayed by the machinations of the senatorial aristocracy; although they soon became entrenched in the aristocracy themselves, their original outsider status rendered them seemingly incorruptible, and thus the perfect bodyguards for the Emperor.\textsuperscript{70} When state depictions of the throned emperor began to depict these “barbarians” as imperial guards, the pattern was set; young, blond warriors became the standard iconography for the emperor’s ever-present companions.\textsuperscript{71} Inevitably, these young men also began appearing in Christian art, as archangels appropriated the stereotypical physiognomies, costumes, and props of their mortal counterparts.\textsuperscript{72}

When Heraclius (610-641) began his power-play against the usurper Phocus in 609, the ideal of Roman ancestry that was so theoretically important to courtly life had long been more idealistic than factual.\textsuperscript{73} Heraclius’s father, the Exarch of North Africa, was likely from Armenia; his mother was probably Cappadocian, and his first wife hailed from Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{74} Descriptions of the Emperor emphasize his blond hair, ruddy skin, and blue or grey eyes—characteristics that clearly marked his foreign antecedents and


\textsuperscript{71} Kenfield (2009). Whitby (1987), 484.

\textsuperscript{72} Kenfield (2009).


\textsuperscript{74} Kaegi (2003), 31.
therefore his military background, appropriate for his war-focused reign.\textsuperscript{75} Although Heraclius was less overtly Roman than the nobles at the Byzantine court might be, his education was likely to have been more traditional than many of those who spent their lives in Constantinople; his father’s position as Exarch and Heraclius’s resulting experiences in Carthage exposed him to the Latin heritage of the Empire, and during his reign he emphasized the fundamentals of classical education—including astrology, which the emperor was said to have employed on more than one occasion.\textsuperscript{76}

This coloring of the imperial circle provides a cue for reading the mosaic border, and the heads within it, that echoes the application of the classicizing elements in the narrative field to contemporary issues. The masks of early imperial borders had transitioned from apotropaic satyrs into idealized faces referencing other supernatural inhabitants of the liminal spaces between civilization and the outer world; now they had been transformed once again into individualized barbarian faces, who could be associated either with the peoples who lived outside the borders of the empire or imperial soldiers who often had foreign pedigrees. The more ancient interpretation aligns with the army’s role in defending the borders of the Empire from foreign invaders; the leafy covering of the heads, however, derives from more contemporary iconography, and imbues these heads with a somewhat supernatural character.

The conflation of the military with mystical elements disappears in the outer border of the mosaic. The foliated head of the outer border is one of the most technically

\textsuperscript{75} According to Leo Grammatikos, Heraclius was “robust, with a broad chest, beautiful blue eyes, golden hair, fair complexion and wide thick beard”. See Leo Grammatikos, Hist., ed. I. Bekker (CSHB, Bonn, 1842) 147. Trans. by Constance Head, “Physical Descriptions of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing,” Byzantion 50 (1980) 230-231. See Kaegi (2003), 31.

\textsuperscript{76} Kaegi (2003), 31, 59, 194.
adept depictions in the entire program. Its size, liveliness of features, and careful
delineation of leafy forms, all contribute to a compelling rendition of sentient, personified
nature that does not merely surround the face in leafy scrolls, as in the heads of the
garden border, but conflates the two. Although this head bears a greater superficial
similarity to Oceanus than the heads of the inner border, its iconography is identical to
that found in a mosaic from the third-century city of Zeugma, now Belkis, in Turkey: that
of Eros and either Psyche or Ariadne, from the house of Poseidon (fig. 4.10). These
mosaics may be significantly earlier than the Great Palace mosaic, but they point to
another transmutation of the mask tradition, one clearly known to the artisans at
Byzantium.

In 1976, Belkis was recognized as the ancient city of Zeugma, which had been
destroyed and burned in 256 by Sassanid armies. The Gaziantep Museum began
excavations on the site, joined by international teams when rescue excavations began in
1995, and continued in 2000, as the site was slated to be flooded as part of a reservoir
building project. Several series of floor-mosaics from the 2nd and 3rd centuries have
been uncovered as part of these excavations; the mosaic of Eros and Psyche/Ariadne
forms only one part of a large series at the house of Poseidon. Another mosaic, from
the house of Zosimos depicts a scene from Menander’s “Synaristosai”; this scene of

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breakfast between three women has a border punctuated by eight evenly-spaced heads (fig. 4.11). These two mosaic borders exemplify the ways in which the Hellenistic border style depicting masks connected with thin vines correlated with the Roman tradition that replaced vines with garlands.

The border of the mosaic from the house of Zosimos combines acanthus scrolls with laurel leaves, with Erotes and great cats occupying the roundels (fig). In each of the four corners, a stylized old man’s head breaks the scroll, his long hair and beard parted down the center; the acanthus scrolls visually link to the sides of the head, so that each face acts as a corner join for the border. The center of each register is occupied by a youthful head covered in grey, similar in execution to the hair of the old men but apparently a textile rather than hair. The erotes and the cats that so often accompany the god of wine and the patron god of actors emphasize the mosaic’s reference to Dionysos, although the idealized heads bear little resemblance to the masks of the Roman theatre or to the satyrs and silenoi of Dionysiac ritual.

The mosaic border from the House of Poseidon’s mosaic of Eros shares only a few of the same iconographic elements in the border, although Eros has become the dominant character in the narrative field. The acanthus roundels depict vegetation instead.

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81 For the stylistic similarities between the two mosaic borders, see Abadie-Reynal, Darmon, and Maniere-Lévêque (2003), 92-95.
82 see chapter 2 above, 9-18.
of animal life: grapes, quinces, pears, and pomegranates rather than cats and erotes. There are only two heads, at the top and bottom of the mosaic, and they are functionally identical. The beards themselves, split in the center as in the “Synaristosai” mosaic, are clearly made of green leaves, as is the hair, and the faces are less idealized than their counterparts. As a result, the Eros mosaic frame bears a greater similarity to that of the Judgement of Paris mosaic at Antioch (fig. 3-3) than it does to the local mosaics; both share a focus on the grapevines of Dionysos, with heads that are more directly incorporated into the composition.  

Although both houses share ostensibly Dionysiac elements, the artistic programs are significantly different. Mosaics from the House of Poseidon are almost entirely dedicated to varying aspects of the cult of Dionysos. Although many of the mosaics are clearly labeled or illustrate unmistakeable myths, the mosaic depicting Eros does neither. In it, Eros as a winged adolescent sits on a couch beside a clothed woman; to his right, on a table, is a calyx krater. When read as an independent narrative, separate from the rest of the building’s mosaics, the only easily-read aspect of the scene is Eros, the winged boy. The woman could be either Psyche, if the mosaic is read as a double-portrait, or Ariadne, if the mosaic is read as a cultic image. Although the first interpretation is perhaps the simplest for modern viewers, when the mosaic is set in the context of the house’s artistic

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83 see chapter 3 above, 12-14, 18-19.
85 For the argument in favor of Eros and Psyche, see Darmon (2004), 1296-97, Önal (2009), 28.
program the woman is clearly Ariadne; the bride of Dionysos more closely aligns with
the initiation rites that appear to be referenced throughout the rest of the mosaics in the
house.  

Although the quality of the border in the Zeugma mosaic is coarser than the
Judgement of Paris mosaic from Antioch, it clearly derives from the same satyric
referents. In their substitution of leaves for hair and beards, the heads of the *Ariadne
and Eros* mosaic depict a more strongly realized anthropomorphization of the natural
world than the heads of the Antioch mosaics, whose faces are merely encased within
vegetation. While the heads of the mosaic border may not reference Dionysos himself,
they are hardly likely to represent Oceanus; to interpret them as anything other than as
representations of the supernatural wilderness, often associated with Dionysos, ignores
the lengthy tradition of satyric imagery, which by this point had been almost entirely
incorporated into Dionysiac iconography.  

The foliated head of the Great Palace mosaic (fig. 1) is perfectly aligned with this
by-now ancient iconographic tradition. Although its connection with harvested fruit
might be more generic than the grapes with which Dionysos, and the heads of the Eros
mosaic at Zeugma, are specifically associated, the foliated head of the Great Palace
mosaic nevertheless appears to share a similar function: a personification of the fertile but
untamed wilderness. This baroque descendant of the early Imperial garlands-and-masks
motif still references its antecedents: the head, a representation of the beings that mediate

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87 Abadie-Reynal, Darmon, and Maniere-Lévêque (2003), 95.
88 See Chapter 3 above, 11-15.
between the supernatural realm and the realm of mortal civilization; the acanthus scroll with its enclosed fruits and animals, a reference to the fertility of the natural world; and the ivied ribbon, binding the whole into a symbolic threshold between civilization and chaos.89

A Roman Garden in a Byzantine Palace

Justinian’s renovation of the palace at Constantinople set a precedent for his successors, each of whose additions and alterations to the palace emphasized the current emperor’s vision for his reign.90 As shown above, the inspiration for the peristyle garden and its attendant mosaic, by one of the last emperors to emphasize traditional Roman culture and education in Byzantium, derives from the early Roman empire—a clear representation of the focus and drive of its imperial patron. Although Heraclius’s reign marked the turning point that transformed Constantinople from a late-antique city to a Christian capitol, his personal attention centered around the classical ideals that had founded the empire and the military that protected those ideals, as well as the physical borders of the empire.91

The mediated nature of garden spaces enhances the probability that the peristyle was used as a location for meetings between the Emperor and selected people from outside the Byzantine court.92 The composition of the mosaic would have been valuable

89 see Chapter 1 above, 18-28.
90 Carile (2012), 21-23.
91 The military focus of Heraclius’s early reign was required by the instability that had resulted from Phocas’s reign and the civil war that put Heraclius on the throne; his diplomatic mediations in the theological controversies of the time were only partially effective, and he resorted to military solutions. Haldun (1997), 43-47, 49-50.
for a space that would have been most prominently on display when the pavement itself
would have been at least partially obscured, as when used for these kinds of meetings.
Our ability to read the mosaic program from its remaining fragments demonstrates that
the frame-like nature of the mosaic, with its multiplicity of vignettes, does not require its
viewer to examine each scene in order to understand the thematic construct of the whole,
while the individuality of each vignette and the faces in the frames would also insure that
no matter how often a visitor might circulate through the peristyle and glance
downwards, there would be the possibility of seeing something new.93

The fundamental role of a border or frame is to provide the context for viewing
the thing that it holds.94 While the context is often relatively simple when framing a flat
work such as a painting or a mosaic, the three-dimensional space of the great palace’s
peristyle courtyard was a set-piece, a constructed framework in which the spectacle of
imperial rule played out between the emperor and his subjects. The central narrative of
the peristyle mosaic was, as Trilling has argued, neither the garden itself nor the
sometimes-confusing welter of narratives within the white ground of the mosaic, but the
emperor— or rather, the political and diplomatic pageantry of the Roman Empire,
personified by the emperor.95 There is only one element of Trilling’s argument that does
not meld with the imagery of the mosaic: his conclusion that the combats and battles
depicted in the mosaic reference the conflict between divine reason and bestial passion
inside the Byzantine empire (and perhaps the Emperor himself), and between civilized

93 Trilling (2989), 68.
94 See “Introduction,” above, 2-4.
Rome and its barbarian invaders.\textsuperscript{96}

George of Pisidia’s salutation of Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople, found in the \textit{Hexameron}, equates Persians with barbarians, and elsewhere he credits barbarians with all of the flaws and none of the virtues of the animal kingdom.\textsuperscript{97} Trilling suggests that the equation of barbarians with beasts informed the allegorical nature of the narrative scenes in the mosaic, as Heraclius was close to the Patriarch, who was regent of Constantinople, and the emperor was the ultimate symbol of militant victory over all enemies, whether physical or supernatural.\textsuperscript{98} The mosaic itself, however, contradicts this xenophobic perception of those who lived outside of Byzantium’s borders; although the “barbarians” illustrated in the populated scroll are unmistakably extra-Byzantine, the iconography of the frame treats them as allies rather than enemies.

The apotropaic referents implied by the barbarian heads of the inner garden border, with their connection to traditional satyric imagery, insure that any inherent violence in extra-Byzantine ethnicities would be turned towards the empire’s– and the emperor’s– enemies, rather than against the empire, thus eliminating them from the list of uncivilized antagonists. The foliated head on the outer border, being wholly pagan in its iconography and compositionally in the uncivilized wilderness space of the mosaic, is the strongest candidate for depicting Trilling’s animalistic barbarians. In its appropriation of Dionysiac forms, however, the foliated head also suggests a beneficial aspect to the inhabitants beyond the empire’s borders.

\textsuperscript{96} Trilling (1989), 69.
\textsuperscript{97} Trilling (1989), 69.
\textsuperscript{98} Trilling (1989), 69; Glanville Downey, "The Pilgrim's Progress of the Byzantine Emperor." \textit{Church History} 9, no. 3 (Sept. 1940): 207-17, 216.
In addition to being wild and unpredictably murderous, Dionysos was often associated with the east, having begun his conquest of the Hellenistic world on his return from India. The pagan god of wine was also associated with reconciliation and with renewal, with fertility and with the harvest, and the members of his troupe – all connected with the wilderness – were often possessed of supernatural wisdom and knowledge. Obtaining the assistance of these beings may have required bribery or guile, or sometimes appropriate sacrifices, but their guidance was fundamental to the mythology of the founding of Rome. The depiction of such an entity in the frame of the mosaic conflates the world of early Byzantium with that of the first Roman kings, a world where supernatural assistance had insured Rome’s victory in every arena.

In this strongly traditional rendition of the allegory of imperial rule, the Great Palace mosaic serves a dual purpose. The narratives of combat and the hunt may reference the emperor’s continual vigilance against the foes of the empire, but the heads along the border remind viewers that the emperor does not face these enemies alone; physical dangers are warded off with the help of military allies, and unknown, supernatural dangers may be averted by equally supernatural forces. As a border surrounding a garden in a setting meant for public interaction with the imperial court, the mosaic border also acts as a reminder that no matter how cultures and ethnicities had

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100 Chapter 1 above, 21-25.
changed over the course of centuries, no matter whether the capital was in Rome or in Byzantium, the Roman empire of the later sixth and early seventh centuries in Constantinople was built upon the same foundation that had characterized the first Rome.
Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been two-fold: first, to reiterate the importance of including borders and frames in the interpretation of ancient art objects, and second, to explore the meaning of satyric imagery within these borders and frames. In using primarily Roman sources to inform my interpretations, I have shown that the lengthy tradition of populating mosaic borders with the heads and masks of satyrs, fauns, and other members of the troupe of Dionysos can be, and in many cases should be, read independently of Dionysiac ritual and cultic practice. Although the god of wine can never be far away, the inhabitants of the supernatural wilderness are powerful beings in their own right, with an influence that spreads far beyond the boundaries marked by traditional Roman religion.

The monuments examined in the first two chapters of this study were chosen for their display of the fluidity of theatrical iconography, particularly comic and satyric masks. The first chapter shows how the spread of theatre in Magna Graecia and its diffusion into celebrations honoring all of the Olympian gods broadens potential interpretations of the comic masks in mosaic borders, from Dionysiac references to a more general category of theatrical patronage. The second chapter examines these masks through a mythological lens, using Augustan literature to interpret the satyric imagery at Boscoreale in a way that, while acknowledging the influence of the cult of Dionysos on the artistic program, nevertheless retains the possibility for independent, Roman-centered interpretations.
The last two chapters deal with the late antique world, when classical masks had lost much of their significance outside of historicizing entertainment. In Chapter Three, I have shown how the success of pantomime, with its distinct iconographic elements, correlates to the changing iconographic tastes that seem to have given rise to the preference for disembodied heads instead of comic masks to depict satyrs, fauns, and other supernatural denizens of the wilderness. Chapter Four delves more deeply into the anthropomorphizing tendencies that appear in these later mosaic frames, particularly in the great palace mosaic of Constantinople, and the ways in which the communicative properties inherent in masks can be transmuted into foliate heads.

The foliate head from the outer border of the great palace mosaic in Constantinople acts as a linch-pin between late antiquity and the medieval world, resonating with both the pagan past and the medieval future. Although the focus of this study has been to examine the influence of satyric traditions on the masks and heads of mosaic borders in late antiquity, it is impossible to conclude without addressing the spread of foliate heads in the art of medieval and early modern Europe. Many of these heads have been catalogued by folklorists interested in studying the so-called “Green Man”, a term coined by Lady Julia Raglan in 1935. She interprets these heads as manifestations of beings from English folklore, particularly Robin Hood; William Anderson extends this interpretation, arguing for a more animistic interpretation connecting people with all of nature, while Kathleen Basford sees the image as a

memento mori. Each of these interpretations, however, derives from an enthusiast’s visceral reaction, rather than from a scholarly examination of the subject; such a study may be long overdue.

The ease with which satyric imagery can be read when viewed through the lens of Roman sources suggests that other depictions of satyrs, maenads, and wilderness beings may benefit from a similar revisitation. Certainly, the visual similarities between Etruscan daimons and Roman satyrs suggests a correlation that should be explored further. The apotropaic role of satyric masks might also aid in informing our understanding of the lares, those most elusive of Roman household deities. This study, limited as it is in scope, hopefully provides a foundation for further exploration of the independent significance of these often-marginalized characters in Roman art and decoration.

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## Classical Sources and Abbreviations

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<td>Lib. Oration.</td>
<td>Libanius. <em>Oration</em></td>
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<td>Luc. Salt.</td>
<td>Lucian of Samosata. <em>De saltatione</em>.</td>
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<td>Plin. HN.</td>
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Fig. 1.1  Mosaic of the Doves. From the House of the Mosaic Doves (VIII.i.34), Pompeii. late 2nd-early 1st c. B.C.E. From the Mus. Arch. Napoli. image © Jackie and Bob Dunn www.pompeiiinpictures.com

Fig. 1.2  Seven Sages Mosaic. From Torre Annunziata, Pompeii. Mid-1st c. B.C.E. From the Mus. Arch. Napoli. Photo Branislav Slantchev.
Fig. 0.1. Achilles at Skyphos. From the Villa Pedrosa de la Vega. Olmeda, Spain. 4th c. CE. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Roman_Mosaics_Villa_Romana_La_Olmeda_000_Pedrosa_D e_La_Vega_-_Salda%C3%B1a_(Palencia).JPG

Fig. 0.2. Mausoleum of the Julii (Glanum Cenotaph). Saint-Rémy. 1st c. CE. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glanum#/media/File:Glanum-mausolee.jpg
The Tiger Rider. From the House of the Faun (VI.xii.2), Pompeii. Late 2nd - early 1st c. B.C.E. From the Mus. Arch. Napoli. 
Fig. 1.4 The Villa of Good Fortune at Olynthos. Plan. From Robinson (1934), fig. 1.
Fig. 1.5
Thetis bringing armour to Achilles. From the Villa of Good Fortune, Olynthos. Pebble mosaic. 479-438 B.C.E.
From Robinson (1934), plate XXX.
Fig. 1.10  The Louvre Painter. Satyr looking into a krater. Attic red-figure pelike. Early 5th c. B.C.E. Paris, Louvre G 238. Photo: Dist. RMN / C. Les frères Chuzeville.

Fig. 1.11  House of the Vettii. Lararium. Wall painting and stucco. Photo Patricio Lorente.
Fig. 1.6  Satyrs and a Krater. From the Villa of Good Fortune, Olynthos. 479-438 B.C.E. Robinson (1934), fig. 3.

Fig. 1.7  Triumph of Dionysos. From the Villa of Good Fortune, Olynthos. Pebble mosaic. 479-438 B.C.E. Robinson (1934), Pate XXIX.
Fig. 1.8  Thetis bringing armour to Achilles. Apulian red-figure pelike from Spina. 460 B.C.E.  LIMC.

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Fig. 1.15 Fauces mosaic from the House of the Faun. 2nd–1st c. B.C.E. Photo Matthias Kabel.

Fig. 1.16 Relief of Archelaos. ("Apotheosis of Homer") 2nd c. BCE. British Museum 1819,0812.1. http://en.academic.ru/pictures/enwiki/65/Apotheosis_Homer_BM_2191.jpg

Fig. 1.17 Seven Sages Mosaic. From Sarsina. 1st c. B.C.E. - 1st c. CE. Elderkin (1935), plate XXIIb.
Fig. 1.18  Plan of the House of the Faun. The Tiger Rider mosaic was found in room F, and the lion mosaic in room I. (August Mau, 1902. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/42715/42715-h/images/fig137fs.jpg)

Fig. 2.9  Plan of the House of the Mosaic Doves (Audra Mayhan after Baldassare 1995, 264.) The doves mosaic was found in room n, and the lion mosaic in room o.
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Fig. 2.1. Detail: Cubiculum (room M) from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale. 1st c. BCE. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
fig. 2.3 Choreographer and actors, House of the Tragic Poet. Pompeii. 1st c. CE. Museo nazionale di Napoli. Erich Lessing Culture and Fine Arts Archives/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.

fig. 2.4. Menander with his muse. 1st c. BCE. Relief sculpture. Vatican museum. Zanker (1995), fig. 74.
The villa at Boscotrecase, like the villa at Boscoreale, was organized around a central peristyle (B) with paintings of columns behind actual columns; this part of the villa may have been completed shortly after that of Boscoreale. The servants' entrance was at the southeast part of the excavated remains. A lararium, or household shrine, stood to the left of the entrance. The servants' quarters lay to the east. These included an atrium and fountain basin. A kitchen storeroom decorated with paintings described by the excavator as in the Fourth Style; these included an image of Apollo stringing his lyre. A bathroom, accessible by ramp from 13. The Black Room, the easternmost room, is for the most part preserved at the Metropolitan (see figs. 47-50). Preserved in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. Exedra 18. This bedroom was decorated with a frieze of garlands on the west wall was a panel with Polyphemus and Galatea; on the east wall were depicted Andromeda and Perseus (see figs. 54, 55). The White Room. Only two panels from this bedroom are preserved in the Metropolitan (see figs. 51-53). Opposite: Mask of Medusa from the west wall of the Black Room at Boscotrecase.
Fig. 2.6 The Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale: room L fragment. From the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Fig. 3.1. Europa and the Bull. Triclinium mosaic, the House of the Boat of Psyche, Antioch. 3rd century. Baltimore Museum of Art. Photo by author.
Fig. 2.7. The Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale: reconstruction of peristyle fragments. From Bergmann et. al. (2010), figs. 34-36.
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Fig. 3.6. House of the Atrium, Antioch: Plan. From Stillwell (1961), fig. 1.
Fig. 3.7. Computerized reconstruction of the triclinium of the House of the Atrium, Antioch. Reconstruction by Wes Chilton and Victoria I. From Kondoleon and Becker (2005)-2, fig. 1.
The third picture panel, at the rear of the Atrium House dining room, shows two large seated figures who faced the diners—a draped Aphrodite on the left beside a nude Adonis (Fig. 14). The long spear he holds and the hound in the foreground identify him as a hunter. Because the upper half of the figurative scene was destroyed by the construction of a later wall, it is difficult to discern whether the gathering of drapery beside Aphrodite belongs to a standing figure now lost or to a curtain in the room. However, a photograph from the Princeton Archives of the panel in situ makes clear that there was an arm and hand (pale skinned, probably female) emerging from a cloak, seemingly offering something to Aphrodite (Fig. 15). A female servant can be found on sarcophagus reliefs representing a similar scene in which the goddess sits beside her lover and tries to warn him of impending doom.

The lovers are shown at a moment of languid repose before Adonis departs for the fateful hunt. The foliate scroll surrounding Aphrodite and Adonis differs from the Judgment border. The tendrils unfurl in circles and are punctuated by pink flowers against a black ground.

Although this mosaic is dated to the early decades of the second century B.C., its sharing a scene with the Atrium House Triclinium mosaic and the Princeton University Art Museum, Wellesley College Museum, and Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

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Fig. 3.8. Drinking Contest between Hercules and Dionysos. House of the Atrium, Antioch. 2nd century. Worcester Art Museum. From Kondoleon and Becker (2005)-1, fig. 10.

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