

ATTIS ON GREEK VOTIVE MONUMENTS

GREEK GOD OR PHRYGIAN?

(PLATES 55 and 56)

IN THE OPEN SYSTEM of Greek polytheism many foreign deities entered the Greek pantheon.¹ Several of the non-Greek divinities known through citations in literature also appear in visual representations, including sculpture in the round, sculptured votive reliefs, and vase painting. In Greek representations, such deities are normally identified as non-Greek through a specific costume or attributes or by the depiction of a set of ritual acts directly related to their place of origin. Thus the Mesopotamian god Adonis appears on a number of Greek vases, where he is regularly shown participating in or being worshipped by a series of distinctive rituals; these involved the placement by women of short-lived potted plants, the so-called “Gardens of Adonis”, on the roofs of houses, a ceremony which replicated the rites celebrated for him in his West Asiatic homeland.² The Thracian goddess Bendis appears in both Greek sculpture and Greek vase painting and is regularly depicted wearing a costume which marks her as Thracian; she can also be accompanied by attributes such as wild animals or a bow, references to her status as a Thracian huntress.³ The Phrygian goddess Kybele was represented in numerous votive reliefs and statuettes, in at least one life-size statue placed in the Metroon in Athens, and on a fine Attic red-figured krater.⁴ In every case she is shown in a costume and pose and with attributes developed from Phrygian representations of Kybele. In this context the Phrygian god Attis is an anomaly. From his first appearance in Greek art in the 4th century B.C., he is shown with a specific costume and attributes which later became characteristic features of this deity. Yet in contrast to the iconographies of the deities

¹ For general discussions of foreign deities in Greek cult, see Burkert 1985, pp. 176–179 and Versnel 1990, pp. 102–123.

² For examples of Adonis in Greek art, see *LIMC* I, 1981, pp. 222–229, s.v. Adonis (B. Servais-Soyez). Vase representations which illustrate the Greek cult of Adonis are discussed by Roller (1988b, pp. 506–510, with earlier bibliography) and Berard *et al.* (1989, pp. 96–97).

³ Representations of Bendis in Greek sculpture: Nilsson 1942, pp. 169–188; in Greek vase painting, two Attic red-figured cups in Verona (*ARV*² 1023, nos. 147, 148) and an unattributed skyphos in Tübingen, Tübingen F 2 (*ARV*² 1023, no. 147; see p. 256 below).

⁴ Votive reliefs and statuettes: Vermaseren (1982) collects and illustrates several hundred examples; see also Naumann 1983, pp. 101–237. For the statue placed in the Metroon in Athens, see Salis 1913, pp. 1–26; Despinis 1971, pp. 111–123; Naumann 1983, pp. 159–169. There is one example in Greek vase painting, an Attic red-figured krater in Spina, *ARV*² 1052, no. 25. A scene on an Attic black-figured amphora, London B49 (*ABV*, 326), has been interpreted as Kybele standing in a naiskos, e.g., by Schefold (1937, pp. 38–39, fig. 5) and Naumann (1983, p. 117), but the standing figure is more likely to be Apollo; cf. Shapiro 1989, p. 59.

Other non-Greek deities are known to have been worshipped in Greece; literary citations mention the Thracian goddess Kotys, the Libyan god Ammon, and the Phrygian god Sabazios (for sources, see Burkert 1985, p. 179). None of these divinities was depicted on Greek monuments with the possible exception of Sabazios, who has been recognized as the companion of Kybele on the Attic red-figured krater in Spina mentioned above; cf. Simon 1953, pp. 79–87. It is equally possible, though, that Kybele’s companion on this vase may be identified as Dionysos; for a discussion of the vase, see Naumann 1983, pp. 171–174.

mentioned above, that of Attis has no direct reference to his Phrygian homeland. No god Attis appears on any Phrygian monument, and the depictions of him on Greek monuments cannot be traced to a Phrygian source. His presence in Greek art is therefore problematical.

This essay seeks to examine the origin of the representations of the Phrygian god Attis in Greek art and the implications of these representations for the status of Attis in the Greek world. My intent is to contribute to the discourse on the reception of foreign deities and their role in the Greek world, for in several instances the status of a foreign deity is closely related to Greek attitudes to the ethnic group of the deity's homeland.⁵ In this context Greek attitudes towards the Phrygians take on a special significance because of the Greeks' perception of the Phrygians as the archetype of the effeminate Oriental barbarian.⁶ The figure of Attis and the motif of castration in the mythic cycle associated with him has been considered a significant factor contributing to this perception.⁷ Yet this image of Attis is more likely to be a result of Greek attitudes towards Phrygians than a cause of them. Therefore, an analysis of the Greek monuments depicting Attis offers a valuable means not only of considering the origin and meaning of these depictions but also of making some observations about Greek reactions to Orientals in Greek society.

One of the earliest representations of Attis on a Greek monument, and the earliest securely identified by inscription, is found on a votive stele from the Piraeus, a work of the mid-4th century B.C. (Pl. 55:a).⁸ This work depicts the god with a specific costume: he wears a long-sleeved, belted tunic which extends to just above the knees, trousers, and soft boots with pointed toes. On his head is a close-fitting cap, which has a pointed tip extending up and forward; flaps hanging from the back of the cap fall over his shoulders. He has two attributes: a syrinx in his left hand and a shepherd's crook, which rests against the rock on which he sits. The costume and attributes depicted here were routinely used in later representations

⁵ Note the comments of Nilsson (1942) on the cult of Bendis and its implications for Athenian-Thracian relations.

⁶ Hall (1989) discusses Greek perceptions of foreigners with particular emphasis on Greek tragedy. For specific comments on Phrygians and effeminacy, see Hall 1989, pp. 73–74, 103, 113–114.

⁷ The principal written sources for the myth of Attis are Diodoros 3.58–59; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.221–224; Pausanias 7.17.9–12; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes* 5.5–7. All the ancient sources on Attis have been collected by Hepding (1903, pp. 5–97).

⁸ Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. 1612, Kekulé von Stradonitz 1922, p. 198. The work is illustrated by Vermaseren (1966, pl. 11), in Vermaseren 1982 (no. 308), and in Naumann 1983 (pl. 40:1, no. 552). The latter two works give previous bibliography. The inscription is published as *IG II²* 4671.

Maarten J. Vermaseren (Vermaseren and De Boer 1986) has suggested a 6th- or 5th-century B.C. date for a few other possible representations of Attis. One is a group of terracottas from Cyprus (Vermaseren 1982, nos. 695–720). There is no reason to assume that these depictions of Attis are early, however; they are of rather crude appearance, but this results from the flat linear treatment given to the drapery and the rigid frontality of the figures, characteristics of a Late Roman date, as was suggested by Lambrechts (1962, p. 45) and Naumann (1983, pp. 239–240). One early 4th-century terracotta figurine from Olynthos, *Olynthus* IV, no. 378, depicts a woman nursing a child who wears a pointed cap. Vermaseren (Vermaseren and De Boer 1986, p. 43) assumed that the child must be Attis being nurtured by Kybele, but the interpretation of the excavator, David M. Robinson, that the piece was a kourotophros is much more plausible; the nursing woman bears no resemblance to other figurines of Kybele from Olynthos (cf. *Olynthus* IV, nos. 355, 410, 411), and the child's pointed cap could denote any one of several figures (pp. 250–251 below).

to identify Attis. Within a century, depictions of Attis in sculptured reliefs and terracotta figurines had become quite common and were widely disseminated throughout the Greek world; examples are known from a number of sites, including Athens, Sicily, Amphipolis, Olynthos, and Delos.⁹ The source of these representations of Attis is as yet unclear, and one wonders why, from this 4th-century beginning, depictions of him become so widespread so quickly.

First, a negative argument must be made. I have asserted that the iconography of Attis has no direct reference to his Phrygian homeland and that no representations of Attis are known from Phrygia. In response one might argue that such representations once existed but no longer survive. This, however, seems unlikely for several reasons. Representations of the Phrygian mother goddess occur frequently in Phrygia; examples include more than twenty statues and reliefs, which were exhibited in public monuments and cult shrines at various Phrygian sites.¹⁰ In addition, a number of statuettes and figurines have been found, many from household contexts suggesting private cult.¹¹ But in contrast to the many images of the goddess, no representations of Attis before the Roman period have been found in Phrygia.¹² In the few cases where small male figures appear in conjunction with the Phrygian mother goddess, the figures bear no resemblance, in costume or attributes, to Greek depictions of Attis. For example, in a well-known relief from Boğazköy the goddess is shown with two small male attendants standing on either side of her, one playing a lyre and the other a double flute;¹³ both wear loin cloths but are otherwise nude. Other small figurines of males which appear to depict attendant figures of the Phrygian goddess are known from Gordion,¹⁴ and these too have no resemblance to the Attis of Greek art. If Attis was the regular companion of the Phrygian mother goddess, as Greek art and myth seem to imply, then one would expect his image to appear in Phrygia at least occasionally in conjunction with the Phrygian goddess, as it does on the Piraeus stele and frequently in later Greek and Roman art. Yet this is not the case. The source for Attis must be sought elsewhere.

The investigation may begin with the earliest securely identified image of Attis, the Piraeus stele. Consisting of an inscribed shaft with a sculptured relief above, the stele has long been known. It was discovered in the Piraeus in illicit excavation during the 19th century

⁹ For a general summary of Attis depictions, see Vermaseren and De Boer 1986. For late 4th-century B.C. depictions of Attis in Athens, see Thompson 1951, pl. 26:b; in Sicily at Akrai, see Sfameni Gasparro 1973, pp. 269–270; at Amphipolis, see Mollard-Besques 1972, nos. D 251, D 252; and see *Olynthus* XIV, pp. 21–33 and pl. 42. For other examples from Amphipolis, Olynthos, and other sites in northern Greece, see *Olynthus* XIV, pp. 119–121. By the 3rd century B.C. and later, the type was extremely widespread; in addition to the sites listed above, examples of Attis figurines are known from Delos, *Délös* XXIII, nos. 364–369; from numerous sites in Asia Minor, Winter 1903, nos. 4, 5, 7, 10, p. 372 and Mollard-Besques 1972, D 649, D 865, D 1410, D 2291–D 2301, E 19, E 235–E 241; and from Italy, Winter 1903, nos. 1–3, p. 372, nos. 2–5, p. 373.

¹⁰ Naumann 1983, nos. 11–30, pp. 293–297; Mellink 1983, pp. 349–360.

¹¹ For examples from Gordion, in stone and terracotta, see Roller 1991, pp. 129–133.

¹² This circumstance has also been noted by a number of specialists in Anatolian studies, including Ekrem Akurgal, *apud* Mellink 1981, p. 103; Hanfmann 1983, p. 231; Naumann 1983, pp. 98–99; and John Devreker (personal communication).

¹³ Naumann 1983, pl. 7:1.

¹⁴ Mellink 1983, pls. 72, 73:2.

and was acquired by the Pergamon Museum in Berlin in the early years of this century.¹⁵ The relief, placed within a *naïskos* frame, depicts two figures, a male seated at the left and a standing female at the right. On the shaft of the stele, below the relief, an inscription is written in clear, nonstoichedon lettering. It reads: Ἀνγδίστει καὶ Ἄττιδι Τιμοθέα ὑπὲρ τῶν παιδίων κατὰ πρόσταγμα, “Timothea [dedicated this] to Angdistis and Attis on behalf of the children according to command.”¹⁶ From this text the figures can be identified as Attis, seated at the left, and Angdistis, standing at the right.

On the stele Attis is shown seated on an irregularly shaped object, surely a rock. He is represented in full profile, facing right, with his right leg and foot extended slightly, while the left leg is drawn back with the foot against the rock. He wears the distinctive costume described above. His left hand, resting on his left knee, holds a syrinx, while he extends his right hand forward in order to receive an object from Angdistis. A long curved stick, his crook, leans against the rock on which he sits.

His companion is Angdistis, the Phrygian mother goddess, addressed here not as *Matar* (mother), her Phrygian cult title, nor as Kybele, her usual name in Greece, but by the name she bore in Phrygia.¹⁷ She stands to the right of Attis and faces him. She is shown in three-quarter view, upright with her weight on her right leg, while the left leg steps back slightly. She wears a peplos, belted under the kolpos with the apodygma extending to the folds of the kolpos, while on her head is a low flat headdress with a veil extending down her back almost to her feet. The sculptor has given her a second broad belt under her breasts. In her right hand she holds a small trefoil jug, grasping it around the lower part of the body of the vase with her thumb upright along its side. She extends her right arm to hand this jug to Attis. In her left hand she holds a round flat disk, her tympanum, against her left leg.

The relief should date from the middle to the third quarter of the 4th century B.C. The pose of Attis in profile seated on a rock is paralleled by a seated Zeus on a votive relief from Kerkyra from the first half of the century,¹⁸ while the pose and drapery of Angdistis are paralleled closely by a figure on the proxeny decree (*IG* II² 130) for Lachares of 355/4¹⁹ and by a number of Athena figures on Athenian record reliefs of the middle to the third quarter of the 4th century.²⁰ This date is consistent with the lettering of the inscription, which

¹⁵ A large number of sculptures, inscriptions, and other objects related to the cult of Meter were excavated in the Piraeus in 1855, although it is uncertain whether this piece was one of these finds; see Michon 1915–1918, pp. 91–129 and Vermaseren 1982, pp. 68–69. On its acquisition by the Pergamon Museum, see Schröder 1919, no. 28, p. 109.

¹⁶ Vermaseren (1982, p. 93) reads the text as ὑπὲρ τῶν παιδῶν, but the stone is clearly inscribed παιδίων.

¹⁷ In Paleo-Phrygian inscriptions the goddess' cult title was *Matar*, or Mother; see Brixhe 1979, pp. 40–45. The Greek word Kybele is derived from a Phrygian adjective *Kubeliya*, one of two epithets attached to the goddess' name in Phrygian texts. Angdistis was apparently the personal name of the goddess in Anatolia. For examples, see Strabo 10.469, 12.567; a series of inscriptions on votive altars from the Phrygian site of Midas City, dedicated to Angdistis the Mother or Angdistis the mother of the gods, discussed by Haspels 1971, pp. 195–200, 295–301, especially nos. 6, 8, 13; and in general, Gusmani 1959. The cult of Angdistis is attested in Asia Minor in the following cities: Dokimeion, Robert 1980, pp. 221–256; Sardis, Robert 1975, pp. 306–330; and Philadelphia, Weinreich 1919; see also Barton and Horseley 1981.

¹⁸ Hausmann 1960, fig. 57.

¹⁹ Brown 1973, fig. 80.

²⁰ Meyer 1989, nos. A 91, A 92, A 93. Meyer dates these to the 340's. The similarity is enhanced by showing Angdistis grasping her tympanum in a manner reminiscent of Athena holding her shield.

uses the standard Attic alphabet of the 4th century B.C., including the four-barred sigma and the omega.²¹

While this discussion will focus on Attis, the figure of Angdistis deserves comment too. Her Phrygian name appears infrequently in Greece,²² but the goddess herself was a familiar figure, for she was the Greek mother goddess, or Meter, a deity who by the 4th century B.C. had long been a part of the Greek religious scene. Meter first appeared in Greek art during the 6th century in votive statuettes found in Greek cities of western Anatolia, where she is normally shown standing and wearing a Greek chiton and mantle.²³ These early Greek images developed directly from Phrygian depictions of the mother goddess, for in both cultures the goddess is depicted standing within a naïskos and wearing a long formal gown. By the end of the 6th century B.C., depictions of Meter had become fully Hellenized,²⁴ as the goddess now was normally shown seated on a throne, wearing a Greek chiton and mantle; she held a tympanum in her left hand, while a lion either lay in her lap or stood by her side.²⁵ This was the pose found in the most influential 5th-century representation of Meter, the statue by the sculptor Agorakritos, set up in the Athenian Agora.²⁶ Agorakritos' work was the source of the standard type of votive relief and statuette of Meter, widely dispersed throughout the Greek world. Although the figure of Angdistis on this stele differs from this standard type in that she is shown standing, not seated, her Greek costume and her tympanum place her within the Greek tradition of Meter reliefs.

Yet, while the figure of Angdistis on the Piraeus stele is a Greek adaptation of a Phrygian depiction, the figure of Attis is not. His identity here is clear, announced by the inscription and reinforced by the characteristic attributes and costume that were to become so closely associated with the god in later Greek and Roman art. Indeed, the costume, and particularly

²¹ The lettering is very similar to that on two statue bases from the Agora published by B. D. Meritt. One, the Praxiteles base, Meritt dated to the mid-4th century B.C. (Meritt 1957, pp. 200–203) and the second, the Theoxenos base, to the third quarter of the 4th century (*ibid.*, pp. 203–206).

²² It is not unknown, however; in addition to the Piraeus stele, votive dedications to Angdistis are known from Rhamnous (p. 255 below), Methymna, and Paros; see Sfameni Gasparro 1985, p. 35. Naumann (1983, p. 242) suggested that because this votive was offered to Angdistis, not Meter, its dedicator Timothea must have been a Phrygian. Naumann cited a passage in Plutarch, *Parallel Stories* 5 (306 E–F), in which Timothea is the name of the wife of Anchuros, son of Midas, a well-known Phrygian figure in Greek myth. Yet there is no evidence that the anecdote of Plutarch preserves a genuine Phrygian myth, and the name Timothea is common in Greece but never occurs in any Phrygian text. The question of Timothea's ethnicity is better left open.

²³ Reinach 1889; Will 1960. The cult of Kybele became widespread throughout the Greek world by the end of the 7th century B.C.; note a late 7th-century inscription from Lokri (Guarducci 1970). La Genière (1985) discusses early Greek representations of Meter from the Peloponnesos.

²⁴ The process by which the Phrygian iconography of the goddess developed in Greek iconography has been well traced by Naumann (1983, pp. 101–155). See also Roller 1991, pp. 135–136.

²⁵ The tympanum first appears as an attribute of Meter in Greek depictions during the late 6th century B.C.; it never appears in Phrygian representations of the goddess (see Naumann 1983, p. 136). While the lion is one of the attributes of the Phrygian goddess, it appears less frequently than other attributes and is never automatically associated with the goddess in Phrygia, as it is with the Greek Meter. On the attributes of the Phrygian mother goddess, see Roller 1988a, pp. 45–47.

²⁶ On the statue, see Salis 1913. The work is known only through literary citations (Pausanias 1.3.5; Arrian, *Periplus* 9; Pliny, *NH* 36.17) and small copies. For an evaluation of the surviving copies of this work, see Despinis 1971, pp. 111–123 and Naumann 1983, pp. 159–169.

the cap, have come simply to be called Phrygian.²⁷ It should be recalled, however, that before the 4th century B.C., and even during that time, this costume was not automatically associated with Phrygians. Representations of individuals wearing such a costume begin in the 7th century B.C., as the costume became a means of drawing attention to the exotic, foreign background of the figure depicted. The cap with tipped point and back flap first appears on a 7th-century relief pithos, where it is worn by a Skythian archer.²⁸ In Greek vase painting of the 6th century there are several depictions of archers with the same cap, although they usually wear an outfit which appears to be a close-fitting trousered garment with long sleeves.²⁹ The long-sleeved tunic worn over trousers, which was to become the characteristic costume of Orientals, is worn by several figures on a mid-6th-century Lakonian cup illustrating the capture of Silenos; here both costume and cap are used to depict Phrygians.³⁰ The costume, either the pointed cap alone or the cap and dress together, becomes more common on early Attic red-figured pieces, especially in depictions of Amazons.³¹ The costume also appears in a number of depictions of Persians on Attic red-figured vases of the 5th and 4th centuries B.C.³²

Sculptors, too, used the costume to depict foreigners. On the Lycian sarcophagus from Sidon,³³ in the hunting scenes on the socle friezes of the Weeping Women Sarcophagus,³⁴ and in both the hunting and battle friezes on the Alexander Sarcophagus,³⁵ Persians are shown wearing a long-sleeved garment with trousers covered by a short tunic and a soft,

²⁷ To the best of my knowledge, Greek authors never used the phrase "Phrygian cap", but for the Romans the cap was a standard mark of a Phrygian: note Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.215, 9.616 and Juvenal 6.516. In the 7th century after Christ, Isidore of Spain speaks of the *pileum Phrygium* (Isidore, *Etym. libr.* 19c31). The earliest modern study of Attic reliefs, Piroli and Zoega 1808, calls the cap Phrygian as a matter of course (p. 54), a practice continued by more recent scholars, e.g., Naumann 1983, p. 241; Vermaseren 1966, p. 14; and Vermaseren and De Boer 1986.

²⁸ Pinney 1983, p. 135, fig. 9.7:a.

²⁹ For discussions of Skythian costume, see Jongkees-Vos 1963 and Pinney 1983, pp. 127–146.

³⁰ *Heldensage*³, 535 C 1; Roller 1983, pl. 2, fig. 3.

³¹ Early examples can be seen on a cup by Oltos, illustrated by Bothmer (1957, pl. 68:4 = *ARV*² 58, no. 51), and on the so-called Croesus amphora by Myson (Bothmer 1957, p. 129, pl. 68:5 = *ARV*² 238, no. 1). Bothmer illustrates several vases depicting Amazons wearing some aspect of this costume, including the cap, trousers, or the entire outfit, see, *inter alia*, pls. 69:2, 3b, and 4b, 72:7, 81:1 (cap and close-fitting trousered garment); pls. 71:1; 72:8, 74:3, 78:3, 82:1 (cap and Greek tunic); pls. 72:1, 75a, 76:1 and 2, 79:1, 81:3, 83:8 (cap, short-sleeved tunic, and trousers); pl. 73:3 and 4 (long-sleeved tunic and trousers but no cap); pls. 74:4, 80:5a, 83:1 and 2 (tunic and trousers, Greek helmet); pls. 77:3–6, 78:2 and 6, 81:2 and 6, 83:6, 84:2 and 3, 85, 86:1 and 4 (tunic and trousers, soft cap without point). There are, of course, many scenes in which an Amazon is depicted in standard Greek dress. See Shapiro 1983 on the development and ethnic identity of the Amazon costume.

³² Schoppa 1933, pp. 49–51; Bovon 1963, figs. 1–4, 10–15; Hölscher 1973, pp. 38–40. To Bovon's list should be added a red-figured rhyton published by Kahil (1972). Bovon (1963, pp. 587–590) suggests that the schema for representing Persians was in fact derived from scenes of Amazons. Interestingly, Bovon (p. 594) refers to the headdress as a "Phrygian cap", although no examples of Phrygians wearing such a cap are given.

³³ Schmidt-Dounas 1985, p. 4, fig. A3.

³⁴ Fleischer 1983, pp. 11–12.

³⁵ Schefold 1968. The costume is not identical since the cap worn by the Persian warriors on the Alexander Sarcophagus has a soft point which tips to one side, but the general similarity of pointed cap, long-sleeved tunic, leggings, and soft boots demonstrates that it is the same costume.

pointed cap with neck flaps and a point. These 4th-century depictions of Persians in this costume may well stem from actual observations of Achaemenian dress.³⁶

Thus in the mid-5th century B.C. and later, the costume was not indicative of one specific nationality or ethnic group but rather was widely used to identify a particular individual or group as non-Greek. It usually carried the connotation of Oriental ethnicity (this costume was rarely used for Thracians, for example), but it could denote any one of several Oriental groups, both real and mythical. There is, however, no reason to assume that this was the typical dress of Phrygians. While Phrygian art has left few examples of human figures, the indiscriminate use of the costume in Greek art for a variety of different groups suggests that the Greeks were not particularly interested in presenting an accurate picture of Phrygian dress. Clearly, in the 4th century the costume worn by Attis on the Piraeus stele would not have automatically identified him as Phrygian. It would, however, have identified him as a foreigner and an Oriental.

A closer and potentially more informative parallel for both the Oriental costume and the pose of Attis on this stele can be found in depictions of Paris. The Judgment of Paris was a popular subject for Greek vase painters, first appearing in the 7th century B.C. and continuing until the late 4th century.³⁷ During the second half of the 5th century and later, Paris was routinely shown wearing this same Oriental costume, a long-sleeved tunic, trousers, and a pointed cap.³⁸ Here the Oriental costume is obviously intended to identify him as an Oriental prince, in fact, a representative of the most famous Oriental opponents of the Greeks, the Trojans.

While several episodes of the Judgment were depicted, one which enjoyed wide currency was that of Paris sitting on a rock, presumably representing Mt. Ida, surrounded by Hermes, the three goddesses, and often other divinities as well.³⁹ Paris can lean back or sit forward, but he is normally shown in a pose of studied casualness, with one arm resting on his hip or his knee. In his other hand he frequently holds a scepter, but this too is often casually balanced against his shoulder, not held upright as a mark of authority. These depictions of Paris provide the best antecedents, in pose and costume, to the figure of Attis on the Piraeus stele. A particularly close parallel appears on a late 5th-century hydria by the Kadmos Painter, formerly in Berlin (Pl. 56:a).⁴⁰ On this piece Paris, wearing the standard Oriental costume, is shown facing right, his right leg extended slightly while the left leg is drawn back with the foot against the rock on which he sits. His left hand and arm rest on his knee. This pose replicates to a large extent the pose of Attis on the stele, the only significant difference being the position of the right arm (Attis' right arm is extended out and up, while Paris' arm rests on his hip). The correspondences between the two are close enough to support

³⁶ For examples of the costume in Achaemenian art, see Sarre 1922, figs. 42, 43 and Bovon 1963, p. 593, figs. 17, 18. Greek observation of Achaemenian costume is discussed by Miller (1988, p. 87 and note 46).

³⁷ Scenes of the Judgment of Paris have been collected and analyzed by Clairmont (1951), Raab (1972), and Arafat (1990, pp. 113–134). The last-named work discusses only those scenes in which Zeus appears at the Judgment.

³⁸ One of the earliest examples may be found on a hydria by the Painter of the Karlsruhe Paris, *ARV*² 1315, no. 1.

³⁹ See the examples collected in Raab 1972, pp. 178–184 and Arafat 1990, p. 199.

⁴⁰ Berlin F 2633 (now lost), *ARV*² 1187, 32; Raab 1972, no. B 15; Arafat 1990, no. 6.3.

the assumption that the pose and costume of Attis on the Piraeus stele were adopted from representations of Paris, the Trojan prince.

This correspondence is important because it adds another element to the frequent confusion between Trojans and Phrygians in Greek literature and art. While the Trojan War cycle was regularly depicted in Greek art from at least the 7th century B.C., the Trojans were not specifically identified as Oriental barbarians until the 5th century, a circumstance which was largely a result of parallels drawn between Trojans and Persians in Greek tragedy.⁴¹ It was also during the 5th century that another shift of perception took place, for the Phrygians, a historical people with whom the Greeks had regular contact from at least the 8th century, became confused with the mythical Trojans; Aischylos, we are told, presented the two groups as equivalents on the tragic stage.⁴² Thus when Greek artists needed a model to form an iconography for the Phrygian Attis, the example of Paris, the Trojan shepherd, lay ready to hand. This visual association was a logical consequence of the conflation in literature between the Trojans of Greek myth and contemporary Phrygians.

One significant difference in the depictions of Paris and Attis, however, lies in the attributes of Attis, his pipes and crook.⁴³ Despite Paris' identity as a Trojan shepherd, he is never shown with a syrinx and crook; he most commonly holds a lyre or a staff, or both, and his pastoral character is indicated by the rock on which he sits and, in some cases, by a dog. Attis' attributes identify him as a shepherd and thus reinforce the allusion to Paris, but the specific choice of crook and syrinx may come from another source, namely, Pan, the god of pastoral life and the woodland.⁴⁴ Pan was a divinity closely associated with the goddess Meter, who, as noted above, was the Greek equivalent of Angdistis. Pan was worshipped jointly with Meter in the early 5th century B.C., when the poet Pindar established a shrine to the two divinities in Boiotia.⁴⁵ Pan is also invoked jointly with the mother goddess in Euripides, *Hippolytos* 141–144 and is depicted in this role of companion in several votive reliefs of Meter, often carrying the shepherd's crook.⁴⁶ The rock on which Attis sits alludes to a mountain and thus recalls Pan's setting; Pan was naturally associated with rocks and caves and can appear seated on a rock.⁴⁷ Thus, while there is no exact precedent for Pan in the pose of Attis on this stele, the use of Pan's attributes and mountain setting could have enhanced the appropriateness of this iconography for Attis on a Greek monument.

The source of the iconography of Attis in Greek art now seems clear. The Greek artists presented him as a Phrygian shepherd and therefore used the same pose and costume for

⁴¹ See Hall 1989, p. 102 for a discussion of Trojans in Greek tragedy. On the merging of Trojans and Persians in 5th-century B.C. imagery, see Bacon 1961, p. 101 and Hall 1989, pp. 68–69.

⁴² Schol. *Iliad* 2.862; Strabo 12.573. The ancient citations are discussed by Hall (1988).

⁴³ For other depictions of Attis with shepherd's crook, see Vermaseren and De Boer 1986, nos. 71–83; for the syrinx, see *ibid.*, nos. 56–70, 81–83.

⁴⁴ On Pan and Meter, see Brommer 1949/50, p. 12 and Borgeaud 1988a, pp. 82–83.

⁴⁵ Pindar, *Pyth.* 3.77–79 and frag. 95 (Snell); Pausanias 9.25.3. Schol. *Pyth.* 3.137–139, credited to Aristodemus. See Haldane 1968, pp. 18–31.

⁴⁶ Vermaseren 1982, nos. 66, 180, 182, 339 (from Athens), no. 279 (from the Piraeus), no. 432 (from Lebadeia). See also Borgeaud 1988a, pp. 52–53.

⁴⁷ Brommer 1949/1950, pp. 5, 30–35, figs. 44 and 45.

Attis as were used to represent another Oriental shepherd, Paris.⁴⁸ More generally, the costume identified him as an Oriental and a foreigner, which in the 4th century B.C. was the equivalent of a barbarian. In addition, the pastoral, rustic nature of Attis' attributes and setting seemed particularly suitable since the same attributes and setting were also used to depict another of Meter's pastoral companions, Pan.

While the specific sources of the iconography of Attis in Greek art can be recognized and traced, the implications of the iconography are not so clear. Attis' association with Pan was a positive one, linking him with a god who was widely accepted and respected, although outside the circle of the major Olympians. The association of Attis the Phrygian with Paris the Trojan, however, carried a less obvious but more sinister implication. As a prominent Trojan, Paris came to represent many of the negative perceptions of Orientals which the Greeks held. As Attis was visually conflated with Paris he also became heir to the negative traits of Paris, his unmanly beauty, his cowardice, and his effeminacy. These negative traits would have seemed particularly appropriate for a companion of the Phrygian mother goddess, who by the 5th century had already become a symbol of wild, un-Hellenic character in Greek cult.⁴⁹ Such stereotypes were to have a lasting impact on the perception of Attis as a god.

The thoroughly Hellenic character of Attis' iconography, however, raises a more immediate question, namely, why did the Greek artists feel the need to create a visual image of Attis? A partial answer to this has already been suggested: Attis was never represented on Phrygian monuments, and so when the Greeks wished to depict him as the companion of Meter, they had to draw on Greek, not Phrygian, sources. Yet this conclusion raises additional questions in turn. Why does Attis appear on Greek votive monuments if he was not represented in Phrygia? Did he have any Phrygian background at all? What was his role in the cult of Meter? It will be important to consider what caused Attis' rise to prominence in Greek cult and why the costume in which Attis is regularly depicted in Greek art, if not specific to him during the 4th century B.C. and earlier, became such a characteristic feature of the god later.

Attis was certainly at home in Phrygia but not as a god. The most frequent use of the word "Attis" was as an ordinary name, for it is one of the most frequently attested personal names in Phrygia, its usage significantly exceeding that of almost all other common masculine names.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ This blending of images eventually ran full circle, as the costume and attributes of Attis came to be used to represent another Trojan shepherd, Ganymede, in later Greek and Roman art; see *LIMC* IV, 1988, pp. 154–169, *s.v.* Ganymede (H. Sichtermann).

⁴⁹ Hall 1989, pp. 153–154.

⁵⁰ Note the numerous citations of Zgusta 1964, nos. 119-1 through 119-21, a total of ninety-three citations of the name from central Anatolia. The Gordion excavations have yielded several more examples among the graffiti on Phrygian pottery; see Brixhe and Lejeune 1984, nos. G-107, G-118, G-119, G-120, G-123, G-124, G-128, G-148, G-221, G-224, G-234. Note also the comments of Robert (1963, pp. 528–530). The high frequency of the occurrence of the personal name Attis in Phrygia forms a sharp contrast to that of other personal names, most of which are attested only by a single example. This fact should be kept in mind when evaluating occurrences of the name Attis in Greek texts in contexts unconnected with the myth of Kybele, e.g., Herodotos 1.34–35 and Theopompos frag. 27 (ed. Kock I, p. 740). Often the name Attis in a Greek text may mean nothing more than a Greek author's choice of a typical ethnic name to give an Anatolian "flavoring" to a particular episode being recounted, much as an Englishman might use the name Paddy in a story about an Irishman. See Boardman 1970, p. 21 for a similar suggestion on the use of the Lydian name Manes.

There are a few instances, however, where the name occurs in the context of Phrygian cult, suggesting a connection with the Phrygian mother goddess. In the form *Ates*, the name is that of the dedicator in the inscription on the magnificent rock façade at Midas City, probably of the 7th or 6th century B.C., a façade which would have framed a cult statue (now missing) of the Phrygian mother goddess.⁵¹ Such a large and impressive monument was surely made under the influence of a rich and powerful individual, perhaps a member of the Phrygian ruling family. The dedication of this façade by an Attis suggests that Attis was a name which may have occurred in the Phrygian royal family, as it did in the ruling dynasty of Lydia.⁵² Two other dedicatory inscriptions that use the name Attis, variantly spelled Ates and Atas, are known; both are found on 6th-century B.C. Paleo-Phrygian rock inscriptions,⁵³ and while neither text can be fully translated, both use phrases that parallel the language of other dedications to Matar, the Phrygian mother goddess, and provide further evidence for the appropriateness of the name in a cultic context.⁵⁴

A clue to the identity of this Attis (in whatever spelling) is suggested by the surviving correspondence between the priests of the Phrygian shrine of the Mother at Pessinous and the kings of Pergamon, dating from the mid-2nd century B.C.⁵⁵ In these letters the chief priest of Pessinous is consistently addressed as Attis. This, however, seems to have been a title, not a personal name, as is indicated by one of the letters in which the personal name of the priest's brother is given: Aiorix, a Galatian name, which implies that the priest, too, would have been a Galatian, not a Phrygian. This suggests that by the 2nd century B.C. (if not earlier) Attis was the title assumed by the Mother's chief priest and that this custom survived even when this individual was not a Phrygian. Another example of Attis as a priestly title is furnished by an incident which took place in 189 B.C., described by Polybios (21.37.4–7) and Livy (38.18.9–10). They record that the Roman army, encamped near Pessinous, was met by the priest from the Phrygian mother goddess' shrine, who predicted a Roman victory; this priest was also called Attis. Thus it seems probable that the earlier occurrences of the name Attis in Paleo-Phrygian religious texts refer to a prominent member of the Phrygian ruling class, perhaps the king himself, who would have been the principal religious official responsible for the veneration of his kingdom's chief divinity. This custom, that a king performed an important priestly function as well as a political and military function, was common among ancient Near Eastern rulers, including the rulers of the Hittite kingdom,⁵⁶ the predecessors of the Phrygians in central Anatolia; it would not be surprising if the practice continued during the centuries of Phrygian hegemony. As Phrygia came under the control of the Lydians, Persians, and Greeks, successively, the political and military role of the king would have disappeared, but his priestly function may have survived, commemorated by the use of the royal name Attis as the title of the mother goddess' chief priest in her Phrygian shrines.

⁵¹ For the façade, see Haspels 1971, pp. 73–77; for the inscription, see Brixhe and Lejeune 1984, no. M-01a. On the date of the monument, see DeVries 1988, pp. 54–57.

⁵² Attis is found in the compound names Alyattes and Sadyattes, both 7th-century B.C. kings of Lydia.

⁵³ Brixhe and Lejeune 1984, nos. W-08 and W-10.

⁵⁴ Note the commentary of Brixhe and Drew-Bear (1982, pp. 70, 83).

⁵⁵ Welles 1934, nos. 55–61, pp. 241–253; the letter which mentions Aiorix is no. 56. See also Virgilio 1981, pp. 20–34.

⁵⁶ Macquene 1986, pp. 109–136.

Thus the name Attis in the context of Phrygian cult seems to have been used not for a god but for the mother goddess' principal religious official. The use of "Attis" as a title of a cult official of the Mother was also known in Greece. It is attested in an inscription of the 1st century B.C. from Athens, describing the cult of Angdistis at Rhamnous.⁵⁷ One of the principal attendants of the cult held the title of ἄδάμνα, which the lexicographer Hesychios defines as an alternative form of "Attis".⁵⁸ Here the title is held by a woman, a native of Miletos. A hymn to Attis preserved by Hippolytos indicates that "Attis", here in the form ἄδάμνα, was also a priestly title in Samothrace.⁵⁹ One interesting aspect of the Rhamnous text is that the title Attis was connected with the worship of Angdistis, thus pointing to familiarity with the Anatolian cult name of Meter. Yet all the religious officials mentioned in this inscription have Greek names and Greek city affiliations, indicating that knowledge of Angdistis and her priestly attendant Attis had been assimilated into the Greek world. Taken together, the Phrygian evidence and that from Rhamnous and Samothrace suggest that Attis entered Greek cult as the title of the principal attendant of the mother goddess. Attis fills this role on the Piraeus relief, for here Attis seems to function as an honored companion of the goddess Angdistis, accompanying her as might a human priest Attis. The position of Attis on the stele suggests that his role as chief attendant of the mother goddess has caused him to be worshipped as a deity along with her.

The creation of a new image of a god is unusual but not unparalleled in Greek cult. An important first stage of the process is indicated by the first mention of the name Attis in a Greek source in the context of cult; this occurs in Demosthenes *On the Crown* 259 and 260, in which we are told that the Athenian initiates of mystery cults cry out the words εὐοῖ σαβοῖ and ὕης ἄττης ἄττης ὕης during their rites.⁶⁰ The first phrase seems clearly to be a cry of the god's name, Sabazios,⁶¹ and the implication is that the second cry also was the name of a god. The next stage was to personify this previously unknown figure. A parallel situation may be observed in the Eleusinian mysteries where the cry of "Iacchos" by the initiates seems to be the source of a minor divinity, Iacchos, who first appears in Greek art and cult in the 4th century B.C.⁶² A similar case may be that of Hymenaios. The word was originally a cry shouted at weddings, but the concept became personified in the form of a god who presided at weddings.⁶³

If, as seems likely, the Piraeus stele is one of the earliest depictions of a god Attis, we might expect to see some indication of his transitional status between Anatolian and Greek cult practice within the relief, and this, I think, we do, in the attributes and gesture of Angdistis. The goddess carries her tympanum, one of the most common attributes of Meter, but also

⁵⁷ Roussel 1930, pp. 5–8; Vermaseren 1982, no. 245.

⁵⁸ Hesychios, s.v. Ἀδάμναι. See Roussel 1930, pp. 6–7; Kern 1926, p. 142.

⁵⁹ Hippolytos, *de refutat. omn. haeres.* 5.8.9; 5.9.1–11; Wilamowitz 1902, pp. 329–332; Vollgraf 1921, pp. 286–294.

⁶⁰ Note also Strabo 10.3.18, where it is stated that the cry was also characteristic of rites for Meter. For a discussion of the cry and its relationship to Attis, see Sfameni Gasparro 1985, p. 25, note 24.

⁶¹ On Sabazios in Athens, see Aristophanes, *Wasps* 9; *Birds* 876; *Lysistrate* 388–389.

⁶² On the cry, see Herodotos 8.65; Aristophanes, *Frogs* 310, 316. On the god, see Strabo 10.3.10; Hesychios, s.v. Ἰακχος; *Etym. mag.*, s.v. Ἰακχος.

⁶³ On the cry, see Aristophanes, *Peace* 1334–1335, Catullus 61.4. On the god, see Roscher 1886–1890, pp. 2800–2804, s.v. Hymenaios (Sauer).

holds one attribute elsewhere unparalleled in Greek Meter votives, a small trefoil jug, which she grasps in her right hand by the body of the vessel.⁶⁴ The jug links this relief directly to Anatolian representations of the Phrygian Matar, as was noted by Friederike Naumann, who drew attention to the similarity between this vessel and one held by the Anatolian goddess in early Phrygian reliefs.⁶⁵ A good parallel is furnished by a 7th-century B.C. Phrygian relief from Ankara, in which the goddess is shown holding a small jug against her breast (Pl. 55:b). The shape was a common one in Phrygian ceramics,⁶⁶ where such a jug was normally a small drinking vessel from which the user would sip through the spout, not a large container for pouring liquids such as a Greek oinochoe. The jug in the Piraeus relief seems to be a small object, one more suitable for drinking, and so the choice of this vase shape here may have been a deliberate reference to a Phrygian vessel. In Phrygian reliefs of Matar, the purpose of the small jug is to indicate that the divinity will drink from it, that is to say, the divinity will be the recipient of votive offerings.⁶⁷ In the Piraeus relief Angdistis does not drink from the small jug she holds but rather, by handing it to her companion Attis, indicates the suitability of his receiving votive offerings also. In other words, the gesture confirms his status as a divinity. A similar gesture, and one which carries a similar connotation, can be noted on a late 5th-century Attic red-figured skyphos in Tübingen, in which Themis is shown handing an offering basket to the Thracian goddess Bendis.⁶⁸ This has been interpreted as a gesture of acceptance by the Attic deity Themis, who is welcoming the foreign goddess to a position in Attic cult.⁶⁹ On the Piraeus stele Angdistis makes the same gesture to Attis, welcoming him to her cult.

This hypothesis on the origin of a god Attis offers an explanation for the paradox of the silence concerning Attis in Greek sources, both written and visual, before the 4th century B.C., as opposed to the frequent occurrence of monuments depicting him after that time. Some scholars have assumed that the cult of Attis must have existed earlier and cite as proof an incident described by Plutarch (*Nikias* 13.2), an episode of self-castration in the Athenian Agora before the Sicilian expedition in 415.⁷⁰ This interpretation, however, is unlikely to be correct. Plutarch's statement makes no mention of either Meter or Attis, and his context suggests not a religious cult practice but rather the unusual action of one psychologically disturbed individual, the impact of which was enhanced by the subsequent Sicilian disaster.⁷¹ Other scholars have assumed that the absence of Attis before the 4th century B.C. results from

⁶⁴ This object, called a flower by earlier commentators on the relief (e.g., Kekulé von Stradonitz 1922, p. 198 and Nilsson 1967, p. 642), was correctly identified by Vermaseren (1966, p. 22), although he did not grasp its meaning.

⁶⁵ Naumann 1983, pp. 240–241. For the 7th-century relief of the Phrygian Mother found in Ankara, see Temizer 1959, pp. 179–187; Mellink 1983, pl. 71:1; Naumann 1983, pl. 5:2 and 4.

⁶⁶ Winter 1984, pp. 170–172.

⁶⁷ Mellink 1983, p. 351.

⁶⁸ Tübingen F 2, unattributed but mentioned in *ARV*² 1023, no. 147. On Bendis in Attica, see Nilsson 1942.

⁶⁹ Simon 1953, pp. 25–26.

⁷⁰ This interpretation was first suggested by Foucart (1873, pp. 64–65) and has been followed by Burkert (1985, pp. 177–179), Garland (1987, pp. 130–131), and Versnel (1990, p. 107).

⁷¹ Burkert (1979, p. 105 and 1985, p. 159) stressed that the use of a stone for self-castration in Plutarch's report must mean that the incident was connected with the cult of the Mother, noting the use of a stone in Roman narratives which relate quite clearly to Attis, e.g., Catullus 63.3 and Ovid, *Fasti* 4.237. This, however,

the Greeks' rejection of his cult because they found the god too "barbaric" and "repulsive".⁷² (The question of why, if this were so, Attis suddenly became acceptable during the 4th century has not been considered.) A more likely explanation is that a god Attis did not exist in earlier Greek cult, and it was only during the 4th century and later that dedications to the god began to be made.

The reasons for the appeal of Attis as a cult figure are hard to see in retrospect, given the powerful image of Attis as the castrated lover of Kybele, but the inscription on the Piraeus stele offers a suggestion. In private cult the Greek mother goddess was a helpful figure, much sought after for her maternal patronage. This beneficial aspect can be seen in votive inscriptions from the Piraeus dedicated to Meter, which supplicate the goddess for help in childbirth,⁷³ and in votive statuettes from different parts of the Greek world which depict the goddess Meter on her throne with lions, but holding a child, in the pose of a *kourotrophos*.⁷⁴ One example from Argos, perhaps a cult statue, was placed in a sanctuary of Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth.⁷⁵ This function of the goddess Meter as a helpful deity is strongly implied by the inscription on the Piraeus stele: the dedicator Timothea makes an offering to these divinities "on behalf of her children, in fulfillment of a vow." The phrase *κατὰ πρόσταγμα* (or a variation of it) is most frequently used on votives that record a very personal involvement, often personal thanksgiving, of the dedicator with the deity,⁷⁶ and the implication here is that Timothea is offering Angdistis thanks for help rendered by the goddess to her children. Timothea also acknowledges Attis' divine status as the goddess' companion and thanks him too.

The definition of Attis as the companion of the mother goddess, protector of children, is consistent with the epigraphical testimonia on the cult of Attis from the Piraeus, where by the 3rd century B.C. Attis had become an integral part of the cult of Meter and also had his own festival, the Attideia.⁷⁷ This position of respect may seem an odd one for the eunuch Oriental of later Greek and Latin literature, but it is important to emphasize that there is little evidence from Greece to support the standard modern picture of the cult of Attis, which places emphasis on the more disturbing practices of frenzy and self-mutilation among

ignores the fact that numerous descriptions of the Attis cult state that a different instrument was used, either a metal weapon (Lucretius 2.621; Lucian, *Dea Syria* 51) or a pottery sherd (Pliny, *NH* 35.165; Juvenal 6.514).

⁷² Kern 1935, p. 232; Ferguson 1944, pp. 110–111; Versnel 1990, pp. 107–108.

⁷³ Vermaseren 1982, nos. 273, 275, 276: three inscriptions which address the goddess as "gracious midwife".

⁷⁴ Price (1978, pp. 64–65) gives examples from Athens, Kyme, and Argos (on the last, see note 75 below). Note also a relief from Venice (Pl. 56:b), a dedication by mother and daughter, which contrasts with a parallel votive relief by father and son dedicated to Herakles (Linfert 1966, fig. 1.)

⁷⁵ Charitonidis 1954, pp. 414–415, 425, fig. 1. Charitonidis assumes that the child on the goddess' lap must be Attis, but the figure shows no trace of the costume of Attis.

⁷⁶ A similar phrase, *κατ' ἐπιταγήν*, is found on another dedication to Meter from the Piraeus, *IG II² 4038*. Straten (1976) suggests that this phrase might mean that the dedicator received the command in a dream. He cites several votives dedicated to Meter in which the text specifically mentions that the dedicator received instructions through a dream (Straten 1976, pp. 21–27): from Thasos (no. 4.32), Epidauros (no. 4.22), Kyzikos (no. 1.9), and the Phrygian sites of Uşak (no. 8.7), Ayazviran (no. 9.5), and Himmetli (no. 12.39).

⁷⁷ For epigraphical sources on Meter in the Piraeus, see Ferguson 1944, pp. 107–115, esp. p. 108; Garland 1987, nos. 80–98, pp. 235–237; and Vermaseren 1982, nos. 258–266, pp. 68–70. Rites for Attis are mentioned in Vermaseren 1982, nos. 262, 263 I, and 265, although little information is given other than a reference to "both Attideia".

his priests and followers. This concept is drawn almost exclusively from Roman sources, especially Catullus' poem 63.⁷⁸ The evidence which can be securely connected with Attis in the Greek world indicates only that he was regarded as the companion and attendant of Meter. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the concept of a god Attis evolved in Greece for several reasons: it results from Greek ignorance of Phrygian cult practice, where Attis was not worshipped as a god, and it reflects the needs which caused people to turn to a mother goddess in Greece, where she was essentially a deity of private cult, needs which may well have been different from those of the people of Phrygia, where the mother goddess was a deity of the state.

Once Attis became an accepted figure in Greek cult in the train of the Mother, he became as widely represented a cult figure as she. A narrative cycle about Attis, in which the mother goddess' love for him results in his castration and death, was recorded by Greek authors.⁷⁹ This narrative seems to combine two originally unrelated factors. The first places the Attis myth in the broader framework of a mythic type comprising the tale of a powerful goddess who destroys her mate, of which the best known example is the myth of Adonis.⁸⁰ The second rationalizes the cult practice of ritual castration, a practice followed by the goddess' Anatolian priests, but which clearly seemed bizarre, even threatening, to the Greeks.⁸¹ Along with the myth, the iconography of Attis was created under the influence of Greek art, particularly Attic vase painting, as described above. In some representations, such as a late 3rd–early 2nd-century B.C. relief of Attis with Meter in Venice, of unknown provenience (Pl. 56:b), and a relief in Athens, Attis is shown as the partner of Meter, their equal sizes indicating equal status.⁸² The god was also depicted as a separate entity, apart from Meter, in numerous

⁷⁸ Catullus 63 is the earliest mention of Attis' castration. On the castrated priests of the mother goddess, see Lucretius 2.598–643; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.221–222; Juvenal 6.511–514, and the full testimonia in Hepding 1903. In his discussion of the Piraeus cult of Meter, Ferguson (1944, pp. 112–113) noted the omission of any reference to castration in the cult of Attis, although he took its existence in Greek cult for granted despite the lack of evidence.

⁷⁹ For the sources, see Hepding 1903, pp. 5–97. For a discussion of the Greek character of the myth of Attis, see Borgeaud 1988b. As Borgeaud notes, none of the written sources on the myth of Attis can be traced to a time before the early Hellenistic period.

⁸⁰ On the myth of Adonis, see Ribichini 1981, pp. 21–27 (with earlier bibliography).

⁸¹ Evidence for eunuch priests of the Phrygian mother goddess within Anatolia is rare, but note a silver statuette of a eunuch which may well represent a priest, found in a Phrygian grave together with a statuette of the goddess (Özgen and Özgen 1988, no. 41, p. 38). The Megabyzoi, the eunuch priests who served Artemis at Ephesos, described in Strabo 14.1.23, may be part of the same tradition.

To take up the meaning of ritual castration in the cult of Meter would require a much fuller discussion than can be given here, but the evidence from Phrygia suggests that chastity, rather than sexual perversion, was the motivating factor. On chastity in the cult of the Phrygian Mother, see Barton and Horsley 1981, pp. 19–22. On ritual castration in the ancient Mediterranean world, see Rousselle 1983, pp. 156–165 and Brown 1988, p. 19 (castration as a choice of strength and empowerment), and pp. 168–170 (castration as a mark of chastity in the early Christian church).

⁸² On the relief in Venice, see Linfert 1966, fig. 2. Here Attis appears as an intermediary between Meter and her human worshippers. For the relief in Athens in the collection of the French School, see Holtzman 1972, no. 9, pp. 94–96, fig. 11. Holtzman identified the attendant of Meter in the relief as Hermes, but the costume and peaked hat seem more appropriate for Attis. Hermes is normally shown in Meter reliefs wearing the petasos, e.g., Naumann 1983, nos. 479, 483.

figurines, which begin in the late 4th century B.C. and continue through the Roman period. Many of these show him dancing and playing music, as if participating in the goddess' cult rituals, a circumstance which reinforces his status as her attendant.⁸³ These reliefs and figurines support the epigraphical evidence from the Piraeus and from Rhamnous that Attis filled a dual role in the cult of Meter, as a priestly attendant of the goddess and as her divine companion.

At the same time, however, Attis shared in the mixed reactions of the Greeks to the public image of the Phrygian mother goddess and in the Greek perception of the Phrygians as an inferior people. As noted above (p. 253), Meter was already an ambiguous figure in the Greek world, on the one hand a helpful deity, on the other hand the symbol of unrestrained and un-Hellenic emotional behavior in Euripides, *Bacchae* 78–80. A similarly negative perception of Attis is evident in the earliest citation of his name in Demosthenes' speech *On the Crown*, in which the followers of Phrygian rites are accused of conducting nocturnal ceremonies and public processions complete with wild cries and snake handling, in general indulging in the type of ecstatic behavior of which Demosthenes clearly expects his audience to disapprove. The unattractive image evoked by the orator accords well with the negative Greek stereotype of the Oriental. The questionable associations present in Attis' visual image would have reinforced this stereotype. The visual portrait of a foreigner, originally neutral, increasingly acquired connotations of weakness and inferiority. When Greeks looked at an image of Attis they saw an Oriental figure, similar in appearance to the Trojans and the Persians, who had become the antithesis of the positive qualities of Hellenism. The god's dress and attributes strengthened the image of Attis as an Oriental god, a figure with exotic qualities outside the mainstream of Greek experience.

In sum, Attis entered Greek art and Greek cult as the companion of the mother goddess, a deity who retained strong ties with her Phrygian origins. Attis himself had been a very different figure in Phrygia, a human attendant of the goddess, not represented on Phrygian monuments. The visual image of Attis was a Hellenic creation, formed in imitation of other Oriental figures in Greek art to enable the Greeks to worship him in conjunction with Meter. Just as the mother goddess was an ambivalent figure in the Greek world, popular yet potentially frightening, so Attis evoked mixed sentiments. In the case of Attis, this ambivalence was reinforced by depictions of him, the source of which lay in Greek depictions of foreigners, especially Oriental figures such as the Trojan shepherd Paris. This blending of visual images appears to have both resulted from and contributed to the sense of syncretism between Trojans and Phrygians that developed through their presentation on the tragic stage. As a result, Attis came to be associated with all the negative images that the Greeks had of Phrygians and also became the heir to the Greeks' perception of Trojans as inferior Orientals. Thus, as the partner of the goddess Meter, Attis became prominent as the companion of a helpful deity. At the same time he was the representative of the unpleasant stereotypes of barbarism and effeminacy that often characterized Greek attitudes towards their Eastern neighbors, attitudes which were to influence subsequent perceptions of him, both ancient

⁸³ Attis dancing, Vermaseren and De Boer 1986, nos. 240–278, and playing an instrument, *ibid.*, nos. 56–70. For evidence of music and dance in the cult of the mother goddess, note the Attic red-figured krater from Spina mentioned above, note 4.

and modern. For a figure who originally had no Phrygian image at all, this is a remarkably enduring legacy.⁸⁴

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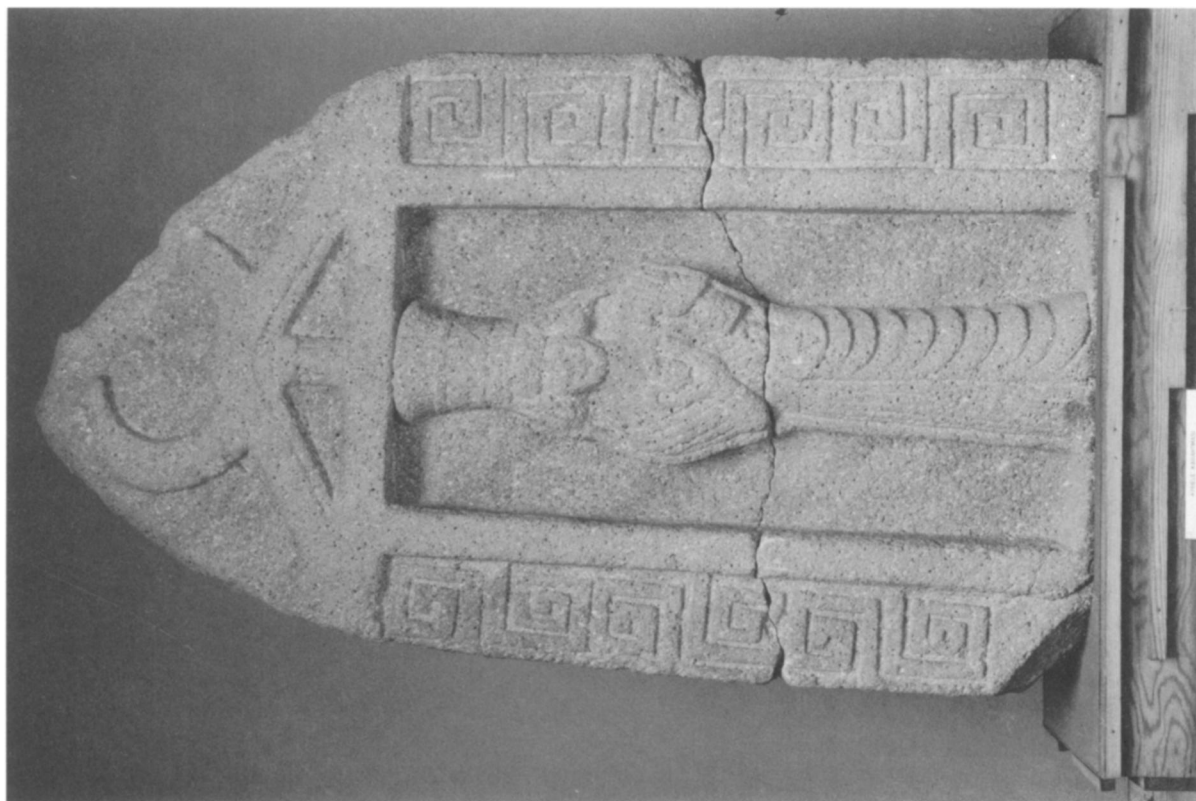
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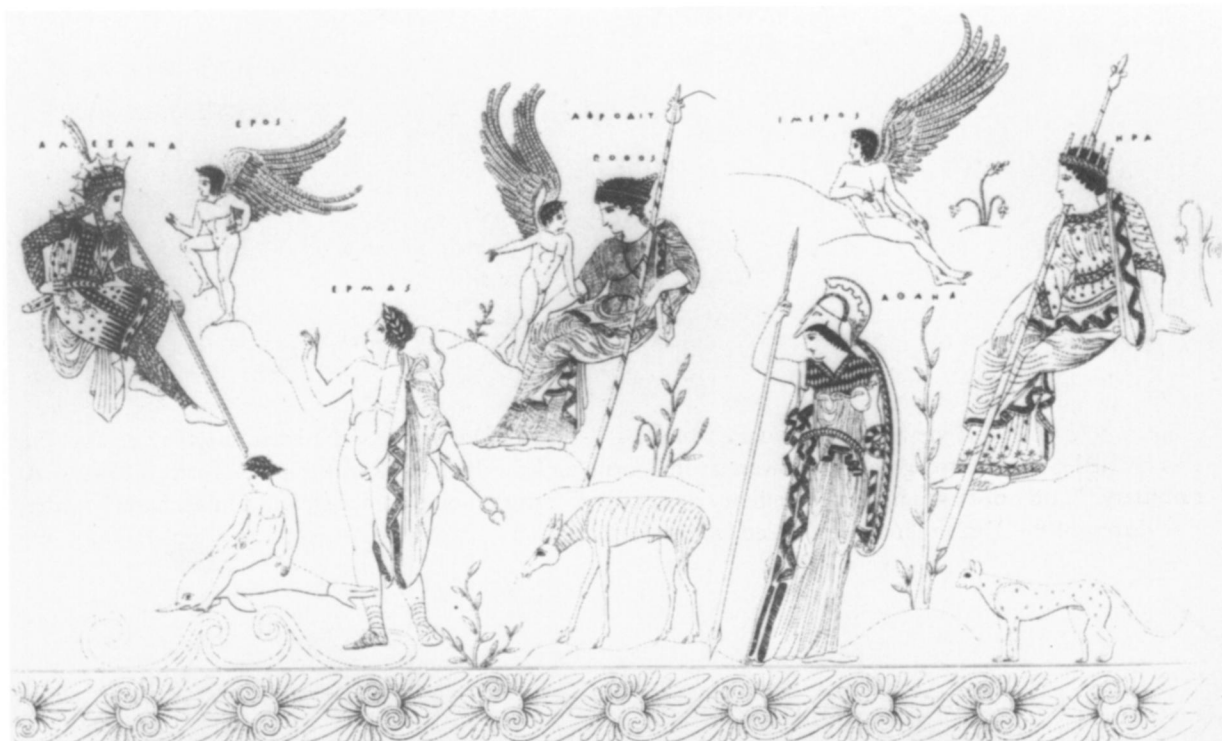
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a. Marble relief of Attis and Angdistis from the Piraeus (Vermaseren 1982, fig. 308)



b. Relief of the Phrygian Mother from Ankara/Bahçelievler, in Ankara



a. Detail from an Attic red-figured hydria by the Kadmos Painter (after Arafat 1990, fig. 6.3), once Berlin



b. Relief of Meter and Attis, provenience unknown, in Venice