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THE CULT OF DEA SYRIA

IN THE GREEK WORLD

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
1960

Approved by

[Signature]

Adviser
Department of Classical Languages
Quanti sunt qui norint
visu vel auditu
Atargatin Syrorum?

(Tert. Ad Nationes, II, 8)
Our only extensive literary source for the cult of Dea Syria, pertaining either to Syria or to the Greek world, is Lucian's treatise Περὶ τῆς Συρίας Θεοῦ. This is a precious document, not only because it is the only work devoted entirely to the Syrian Goddess, but also because when it can be tested by archaeology and philology it is found to be a reliable eyewitness account of the religion of Hierapolis in the second century of our era. Lucian's authorship of this work has been seriously doubted and because of its peculiarities (to mention only the Ionic dialect) the question is not likely to be settled. Perhaps in their eagerness to have a source of unassailable quality, religionists tend to support Lucian's authorship; students of Lucian, on the other hand, are divided. The Question, however, has never been investigated satisfactorily, so that further pronouncements at this point would be of little permanent value. In the course of this study we shall refer to Lucian without implying a commitment, using the name merely to identify a source. On a few occasions, however, where the discussion turns upon a point of the author's early life (he claims to be "Assyrian" by

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\(^1\)Cited as D.S. (i.e. Dea Syria) in the text.
birth) but does not bear directly upon the cult of Dea Syria, we assume temporarily, argumenti causa, that the author is Lucian of Samosata.

But whether Lucian is the author of the treatise, or some other writer of the period, the work should be taken as a reliable source. The author of the treatise transmits conscientiously what he witnessed at Hierapolis, although he unquestionably stresses the marvelous and injects an occasional touch of irony. As one scholar has pointed out, however, Lucian has described the temple, the statues, some ceremonies, and a few myths—the very things which any interested tourist could have seen and learned with no difficulty.\textsuperscript{2} He makes no effort to penetrate below the surface of the myths and the ritual in order to understand their true meaning. He is superficial. On the other hand, if we may censure Lucian for leaving out so much, we have no reason on that score to distrust what he has included. Lucian's work is not the only, nor the first, ancient work devoted to the particular cults. It falls within the tradition of works such as Plutarch's essays on various religious topics—Isis and Osiris, on Superstition, on The Failure of Oracles. In fact, there is a parallel between the author of \textit{Isis and Osiris} and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{2}G. Goossens, \textit{Hiérapolis de Syrie}, Louvain, 1943, p. 19 and 16-22 for a detailed evaluation of D.S. iv]
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Lucian, for both could claim to write with special authority: the one as a priest of Isis at Delphi, the other as a Syrian born and brought up, as it were, in the shadow of the temple of Hierapolis.

For the cult of Dea Syria in the Greek islands, Asia Minor, and on the Greek mainland, the sources are almost entirely epigraphical, with only a few references in such travellers and historians as Diodoros, Polybios, and Pausanias. Because there are many inscriptions from Delos, enough to make possible a reasonable reconstruction of the history of the cult, these will be treated in a separate chapter, while the fragmentary evidence for the rest of the Greek world will be examined in another single chapter. The study of the epigraphical remains is prefaced by a discussion of the origin and nature of Dea Syria, using Lucian and the sculptural remains which have been recovered from various regions of the ancient Near East. A final chapter is reserved for some concluding remarks attempting to determine the importance of the goddess in the history of Greek religion and the depth of her penetration into the religious consciousness of Greece.
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CHAPTER I
DEA SYRIA

Origins

Ancient Syria, which included Lebanon and Palestine, was overrun by successive waves of Bedouins from the North Arabian Desert who intermittently pushed through the fringes of Syria and Babylonia in order to possess these fertile lands. In the course of millennia these Semites—Amorites, Canaanites, and finally Aramaeans—contributed to the formation of the people whom the Greeks and Romans called "Syrians." Before the middle of the second millennium before Christ the Aramaeans were already established on the banks of the middle Euphrates and by the twelfth century from their chief center, Damascus, they began to extend their influence through most of the Fertile Crescent, into Transjordan and Palestine. A study of Dea Syria must begin with the Aramaeans, for these people, by the peaceful dissemination of their culture, survived the eventual dismemberment of their kingdom and their total political eclipse. Their merchants sent caravans throughout the Fertile Crescent and as far north as the sources of


2Hitti, p. 167-68; cf. map, p. 165.

3Damascus fell before the Assyrians in B.C. 732.
the Tigris. Thus they spread their culture, religion, and especially their language throughout the area. So effectively did they proceed that by the middle of the last millennium before Christ Aramaic was the general language of commerce, culture, and government as well as the vernacular of the entire area. Under Darius the Great (521-486) it became the official interprovincial language of the Persian Empire, which made it the lingua franca of an empire extending from India to Ethiopia.

The chief Aramaean deity was Hadad, also called Adad or Addu. This god, however, is probably as ancient as the Semites themselves, for he figured in the Amorite pantheon as a minor divinity behind the great martial god Amurru, where he was also known as Rimmon, Ramman, or Rammanu, the Thunderer. Hadad "opened the reservoirs of the firmament to let the rain fall and split the giant trees of the woods with the double axe that always remained his emblem." In the first half of the eighth century B.C. the Aramaean king Panammu erected a colossal

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4 Hitti, p. 169.

5 Olmstead, p. 82, and see fig. 164 opp. p. 434, an early status and base of Hadad. Cf. also Hitti, p. 172, and René Dussaud, s.v. Hadad in Pauly-Wissowa.

6 Franz Cumont, Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism (hereafter Or. Rel.), tr. Showerman, Chicago, 1911, p. 127; Goossens, op.cit. p. 64; Carl Clemen, Lukians Schrift über die Syrische Gottin, (Der Alte Orient, 1940), p. 42.
statue of Hadad, nine and one half feet tall. The god wears a two-horned cap, rounded beard, and his arms were apparently extended in the act of blessing. Other usual attributes of the god were the bull, the axe in the right hand, the thunderbolt in the left.

One of Hadad's chief centers of worship was Hierapolis in North Syria. He was the favorite of Syria's agricultural people and for this reason his worship naturally became associated with that of the sun. At a later time he was represented with rays and worshipped in other centers of Syria under this aspect. The Jupiter Heliopolitanus of Baalbek and the Jupiter Damascenus of Greco-Roman times are to be identified with Hadad. The god's consort

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7 Olmstead, p. 434 and fig. 165; Hitti, p. 172. The inscription on the base states: May the soul of Panammu eat with Hadad, and his soul drink with Hadad, let it rejoice in the offering like Hadad.


was Atargatis, a goddess of generation whom the Greeks and Romans knew most commonly as "The Syrian Goddess."\(^{11}\) Her chief center of worship was also Hierapolis. The pair ruled from this city together, but in the course of time their cult underwent certain profound changes which are lost in the darkness of a centuries-long syncretism. By Hellenistic times the Holy City was clearly associated primarily with Atargatis, while Hadad had been relegated to an inferior position. We shall return to Hadad, but now we must turn to his consort and try to arrest the elusive essence of her character.

The name of the goddess of Hierapolis, Atargatis, is composed of two divine elements, `Atar and `Atha(h).\(^{12}\) The first element, `Atar, is the better known of the two, for it is the Aramaean form of the name which appears in Canaan as Ashtar(t), Astarte; in Assyrian and Babylonian as Ishtar; in south Arabic as Athtar; in Abyssinian as `Astar, and in Moabite as Ashtar.\(^{13}\) The element, then, represents a Semitic divinity who must have been worshiped by the Aramaeans from the earliest times. There is

\(^{11}\)I.e. Συρία Θεός and Dea Syria.


\(^{13}\)Cf. Cumont, Goossens, Paton, loc. cit.
no mention which proves conclusively whether the divinity it represents is male or female. In South Arabia, Abyssinia, and the Moab, it usually denotes a god; in Assyria and Canaan it denotes a goddess. There is no doubt that the Aramaean <Atar was a goddess.

The second element, <Ata(h), is more mysterious. As uncertain as the sex is the identity of <Ata(h). When so much doubt exists it is difficult to determine the relation of this deity to <Atar in the compound <Atar−<Atah, or how the primitive Semitic <Atar was modified by this relationship. According to a theory of Albright, <Ata(h) is a simple phonetic modification of the name Anat, a goddess extensively worshiped in Syria in the second millennium b.c.\(^\text{14}\) At the origin, then, the cults of <Atar and <Ata(h) were two distinct Semitic ones which were later amalgamated.\(^\text{15}\) The name of the new goddess came down as <Atar−<Ata(h), or in Greek transcription, Αταργάτις, possibly expressing the relationship "<Atar who possesses the attributes of <Ata(h)."\(^\text{16}\) The amalgamation took place when the Aramaeans arrived in Syria, found <Atar already


\(^\text{15}\)Hitti, p. 173, n. 1.

\(^\text{16}\)Cf. Goossens, p. 60.
established there, and saw in her a secondary aspect of their own «Atah. The names were united, and usage con­se­crated the existence of the new goddess, Atargatis. The formation was a local one and it is from Hierapolis that both the name and the cult spread to the rest of Syria and eventually to Greece and Rome. The primitive cult of the goddess must have undergone some radical changes at the hands of the Aramaeans, since as it is described by Lucian in the second century it is like the religion of the rest of Syria, that is, its general features are those of the cult of any Semitic Mother Goddess.

Character of Atargatis

A divinity of Semitic origin and one whose history belongs to the dawn of Syrian civilization, Atargatis saw her cult spread from Hierapolis to other cities of Syria, and across the seas to establish itself in the Aegean and the ports of continental Greece, and ultimately in the Ro­man capital. As we shall see later, by Lucian's time the primitive character of the goddess had developed into some­thing complex in Syria itself, but the geographical ex­pansion to the West added new functions and epithets to the deity as she was accepted by the various cities of the Greek world. The Greeks assimilated her with various god­desses with whom she had attributes in common. It is for this reason, for example, that in many histories of Greek
religion the Syrian Goddess is treated in connection with Aphrodite, as if she represented merely an aspect of this Hellenic divinity. Similarly, there is a tendency to associate a series of Oriental divinities—Atargatis, Ishtar, Astarte—as if each one did not possess a character and personality of her own.\textsuperscript{17} It seems, however, that clearer distinctions are possible between two of these goddesses who are of immediate concern to this study: Atargatis and Astarte. Both come from Syria, and as we saw earlier, the first element of the name of Atargatis, "Atar," is a dialectic variant of Astarte. In spite of this, the deities are distinct. The former is a deity from the north of Syria, the latter is worshiped in the south of Syria and Phoenicia. Both cults penetrated into Greece, but the influence of Astarte radiated from Askalon and Tyre, whereas the cult of Atargatis was brought by merchants and slaves from north Syria and Hierapolis. In Askalon Atargatis and Astarte received independent worship in different temples.\textsuperscript{18} If a certain definition of the specific attributes of each goddess is not completely feasible; if both are similar in many respects; we can nevertheless maintain, in the history of their cult in Greece, a strict distinction on the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] Cf. P. Lambrechts and P. Noyen, "Recherches sur le Culte d'Atargatis dans le monde Grec," \textit{La Nouvelle Clio}, VI (1954), 258, for a recent emphasis of the need for this distinction.
\item[18] Lucian, \textit{D.S.} 14; Herod., I, 105
\end{footnotes}
basis of geographical origin. Henceforth we shall deal with the goddess from northern Syria—Atargatis.

It is likely that Hierapolis owed its sanctity originally to the presence of a stream or pond, a source of vivifying water.\(^{19}\) One should recall that in the Near East, where rain may not always be plentiful when it is needed, the success of agriculture depends upon water from the earth than upon anything else. Some land is irrigated artificially, but that portion of the land which is naturally moist because of a stream is naturally thought to be under the special care of a beneficent god. It is because of its necessity that the water is said to be holy. In turn, however, myths about a deity are put forth to explain the sanctity of the water. As we shall see, in the myths the deity may have come from the water or have died in it. The statement of Plutarch (Crassus, 17,10) that Atargatis "is the natural cause which supplies everything and points out to mankind the sources of all blessings from water" is a philosopher's view of the question, but it nevertheless alludes to the primitive association of the goddess with water. There are also some sculptural remains which show that Atargatis was conceived as a source of life in its

many aspects, both for man and for the fields.

The earliest representations of Atargatis show her standing and holding one of her breasts in the act of offering nourishment to the world. These are the terra cotta figurines of the first half of the last millennium b.c.²⁰ which have survived in abundance from northern Syria. It may be that the breast continued to be regarded as an obvious attribute of the goddess through the early centuries of our era, for a curious hemispherical object, the cover of an alms box, has been found in Syria in recent years. Its hemispherical shape, unusual for the purpose the object was to serve, could represent the breast of the goddess for whom the coin was dropped into the box. Such an object of religious usage is not without parallel in our own Middle Ages.²¹

Representations of Greco-Roman times are quite different. A block from a frieze recovered in Transjordan (first half of the first century b.c.) shows the goddess with long wavy hair. Above the ears the hair forms a shell-like figure and falls on either side of the face in two thick braids. Over the head two fishes with mouths

²⁰ Examples may be examined in Cumont, s.v. "Dea Syria," in Daremberg-Saglio, fig. 6699, and in Paul Perdrizet, "A Propos d'Atargatis," Syria, XII (1931), 268-69, and plate 54, figs. 1-4.

²¹ Perdrizet, loc. cit., cites a mediaeval example.
meeting are carved almost in the round. The entire relief is cut in the background of a circular shell which is bordered at the four corners with stylized leaves. The shell and the wavy style of the hair probably serve to emphasize the connection of Atargatis with water. In another relief from the same place Atargatis holds over the right shoulder what may be a trident.

Another relief, from Heliopolis (Syria), shows that the throne of the goddess is supported by tritons, of which one holds a spear, the other an oar. Atargatis has the wide girdle (μεστός) which Lucian (D.S. 32) attributes to Ourania. The entire relief recalls the now lost sculpture from Hierapolis where two sirens joined their tails to form a throne upon which sat a nude woman whose arms were interlaced on either side with those of the sirens.


23Glueck, p. 369 and fig. 6; cf. Hitti, p. 385.

Now these composite figures—sirens and tritons—personify the humid principle over which Atargatis reigned. Atargatis, in fact, has this double character. She is a maternal goddess, and for this reason the votive terra cottas represented her in the act of pressing her life-giving breast. Similarly, because she is a goddess of maternity and fecundity, she presides over the humid element, without which nothing can survive.\textsuperscript{25}

As a fertility goddess, and especially as the goddess of vivifying water, Atargatis is also represented with attributes showing the fruits of the soil. Thus at Khirbet-Et-Tannûr a relief shows her as the divinity protector of wheat, her head against a background of enormous

\textsuperscript{25}The Greek Aphrodite is also responsible for everything that grows and is born (cf. Lucretius I, 1-49), but she is not usually associated with "vivifying water." In such passages as Euripides, Hipp., 447-48 (φοινικά αὖ' αἰ-θερ', ἐστὶ δ' ἐν θάλασσα(ω κλύδωνι κύπρις, πάντα δ' ἐν ταῦ-της ἥφος) Aphrodite is herself the vivifying principle, not the water. But in Aischylos (frg. 44, Nauck) Aphrodite, according to Athenaeus (XIII, 73), speaks these words:

The holy heaven yearns to wound the earth and passion seizes the earth to join in marriage. The rain, falling from the pleasant bed of heaven, impregnates the earth and brings forth for mortals the food of the flocks and the gifts of Demeter, and from the moist marriage the woods blossom forth. Of these things I am the cause.

Here the rain vivifies the world, but in the cult of Atargatis the rain is the special province of Hadad.
stalks. Again in a unique representation the sculptor had adorned her with a garland of leaves (or algæ) across her bosom and face.

In another sculpture (from Dura-Europos) we see other attributes peculiar to Atargatis. Her right hand holds stalks of grain which have disappeared except for the tips which remain in the palm. The left hand rests upon the neck of a lion which stands beside her. She wears the mural crown of the poliad divinity. The left leg rests upon the body of a nude female figure of which only the head, arms, shoulders, and breasts are visible. The left arm of this figure is extended in the motion of swimming as the right hand grasps the breast.

All the Greco-Roman monuments which we have described contained some attributes which serve to explain the character of the Syrian Goddess. She was originally solely a goddess of fertility and fecundity. Of her cult


\[27\text{Picard, loc. cit., and Glueck, loc. cit., fig. 14.}\]

\[28\text{The Excavations of Dura-Europos, 7th and 8th Seasons, New Haven, 1939, p. 261-62 and plate 34.}\]

\[29\text{The lion is common to all representations of Mother Goddesses of Asia Minor. Cf. Goossens, p. 61.}\]
at the origin we know little, for our most extensive testimonia come from the Roman age, when her relatively simple character had been altered by assuming other attributes more or less appropriate to it. First under the influence of the Seleukids and later under that of the Romans, the Syrian gods were gradually molded into the image of the conquerors' divinities. We shall see later how Atargatis was identified with various Greek deities in the course of her voyage through the Greek world. Of course the Syrian pantheon was not the only one affected by the great political tides of that epoch, as we can surmise from an interesting papyrus. This text, dating from the early second century A.D., is a long list of titles used of Isis in the various nomes of Egypt and in many other cities of the world. Here Isis is simply equated to many deities, including Atargatis: Ἐν Βαμβώκη Ἀταργάτει. The very number of divinities with whom Isis is identified shows how simple had become the association of one deity with another throughout the world.

Under the influence of such forces Atargatis became associated with many other divinities with whom

she had originally nothing in common. For instance, in the Seleukid Orient there developed the idea of a single deity who was at once the protector of the city and of the individual. The new divinity was, by her very nature, a combination-goddess of fertility and prosperity—like all mother goddesses—and of success, like the Greek Tyche. Hence the type of representation which gives the Oriental Tyche the ears of corn, the palm, and the mural crown, the emblems of wealth, power, and victory. At Dura the new Tyche was clearly identified with Atargatis who, by Roman times, had taken on the character of a goddess of fortune.

But Dea Syria's sphere of interests, under the influence of Astrology and extreme syncretism, was destined to grow to the point of becoming all-inclusive. Two later testimonials probably represent the extreme limit of this development. Macrobius (Sat. I, 19-20) takes her

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33 Walton, op. cit., p. 858.
to be a personification of the Earth:

Adargatidis simulacrum sursum versum reclinatis radiis insignis est monstrando, radiorum vir superne missorum enaschi quaecumque terra progenerat. Sub eodem simulacro species leonum sunt, eadem ratione Terram esse monstrantes, qua Phryges finxere Matrem Deum, id est terram, leonibus vehi.

In a third-century inscription from Britain the goddess has become a universal divinity, her province co-extensive with the sphere of human experience. She is "spicifera, iusti inventrix, urbium conditrix, mater divum, Pax, Virtus, Ceres, Dea Syria, lance vitam et jura pensitans."

Similarly, at Hierapolis Atargatis became a more complex divinity as time went on, as we can readily see by comparing the terra cotta representations of the goddess holding her breast and the great cult image which Lucian describes (D.S. 31-32). The goddess, made of gold, sat upon a throne flanked by two lions. To Lucian, her general appearance suggested Hera, but in detail she reminded him of Athena, Aphrodite, Selene, Rhea, Artemis, Nemesis, and the Moirai. In one hand she held the scepter, in the other a spindle, while her head was encircled with rays and adorned with the mural crown. About her waist was the wide girdle of Ourania and her garments, also of gold, were encrusted with precious stones brought from Egypt, Media, Armenia, India, Aethiopia, and Babylonia.

^CIL VII, 759.
Of remarkable splendor was the adornment upon her head, which by its effect was called λύχνις, the lamp, for at night its radiance illumined the interior of the temple.

The list of possible identifications suggested by Lucian incidentally recalls the traditional attitude of the Greeks towards foreign gods. We read in Herodotos that the Egyptian god Osiris is Dionysos (II, 42), that Amun is Zeus (ibid.), Pan Mendes (II, 46), Isis Demeter (II, 59); that the Egyptians celebrate great festivals in honor of Athena, Leto, and Ares (II, 59). Herodotos, in other words, takes it for granted that his Greek gods are in fact universal and so he is not surprised to find them also in Egypt. Of course the gods are not represented in their familiar Greek aspect but this does not disturb Herodotos for even among the Greeks the aspect of the gods varies—is not Artemis now the chaste huntress, now the Ephesian mother with an hundred breasts? Now Lucian, writing many centuries later, again readily finds equivalents for the foreign divinity which confronts him.

But Lucian, throughout his treatise, calls Atargatis Hera,35 and appears to imply in one context (D.S. 16) that the Greeks generally share that opinion: "One opinion which pleases me and which, in many respects, conforms to the Greek opinion, is the one that the goddess is

35D.S. 1, 15, 16, 27, 31, 32, 39.
Hera." A more accurate statement appears to be that of Plutarch, that some take Dea Syria to be Aphrodite, some Hera, and others the Nature and Cause of all things (Crass. 17, 10). Our collection of pertinent inscriptions shows that the following were thought to be equivalents: at Phistyon, "Aphrodite," "Mother of the Gods;" at Thuria, Philippopolis, Beroea, Mylasa, Skyros, and Nisyros, "Aphrodite," "The Syrian Aphrodite," or simply "The Syrian Goddess." "Atargatis" was also well known throughout the Greek world, and especially at Delos. If some equation with a Greek divinity was required at all, "Aphrodite" was the likely choice. Since the identification with Hera does not appear in the inscriptions, Lucian's statement must be a personal observation that the characteristics of the Greek Hera were predominant in the statue of Atargatis at Hierapolis.

The Cult at Hierapolis

During the historical period of Semitic religion the kinship of the gods with their people was "specified as fatherhood or motherhood, the former conception predominating." In a patriarchal society the father is the natural head of the family, and so too in religion the male god predominates over the female. Where the "mother-goddess"

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notion occurs (e.g. the Babylonian Ishtar, unmarried, choosing her own consorts) the phenomenon is presumably a vestige of the cultural periods marked by polyandry and female kinship.\textsuperscript{37} At Hierapolis, by Lucian's time, Hadad had been relegated to the second rank behind his consort. He shared the cult altar, but he did not interfere effectively in the ritual. This had not always been the case, however, for there is evidence from figured monuments that he had been considered at times the master of the pair, or at least an equal partner. In the monument set up by king Panammu I (ca. 750 b.c.) Hadad is the dominant figure whereas Atargatis occupies an inferior position of small dimension on the base.\textsuperscript{38} In other full front reliefs of the first half of the last millennium b.c. both god and consort are depicted on the same plane and in the same dimensions.\textsuperscript{39} Hadad's eclipse, then, was temporary\textsuperscript{40} and local. He continued to have an independent

\textsuperscript{37} Smith, op. cit., p. 56.

\textsuperscript{38} Olmstead, op. cit., fig. 164, opp. p. 434.

\textsuperscript{39} Paul Perdrizet, "A Propos d'Atargatis,"\textit{ Syria}, XII (1931), 269 and plate 54, figg. 3-4.

\textsuperscript{40} Hadad may have taken the upper hand again in the third and fourth centuries A.D. Cf. Goossens, p. 133.
worship in other Syrian centers, at which he and Atargatis were represented in the proportions proper to their relative local importance. But it is clear that at Hierapolis Atargatis was the mistress (μυρία) both of the city and of the worshippers, who were her slaves. Lucian (D.S. 59) remarks that all Syrians tattoo a mark either on the hand or on the neck, a common Semitic religious practice. The mark shows the dependance of the subject upon the deity, and this is precisely the meaning at Hierapolis. In a Greek inscription from Kefr-Haouar we find the relationship μυρία-δούλος expressed in the dedication

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41E.g. the large second-century figure of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Heliopolitanus Conservator, where Atargatis is again relegated to the base of the statue. Cf. Dussaud, "Jupiter Héliopolitain," Syria, I (1920), plate 1.


43Lucian states that all Syrians have these marks on their wrist or neck, but he does not describe them. This has, of course, encouraged conjecture as to their form and meaning. A plausible suggestion is that they were monograms of Atargatis and Hadad. The question has been investigated especially by Franz Doelger, Antike und Christentum, II (1930), 297-300. Allusions to the religious use of marks upon the body are common in both the Old and New Testaments. E.g.: Isaias, 44, 5, "et hic scribit manu sua: Domino." 49, 16, "ecce in manibus meis descripti te." Apoca., 13, 16-17, "et faciat omnes, pulsillos et magnos, et divites et pauperes, et liberos et servos, habere characterem in dextera manu sua, aut in frontibus suis." Ad Galat., 6, 17, "de cetero, nemo mihi molestus sit; ego enim stigmata Domini Jesu in corporeporto."
of the itinerant priest Lucius: θεὸς Συρίας Ἱεραπόλεως Λούκιος δοῦλος αὐτῆς and πεμφθεὶς ὑπὸ τῆς κυρίας Ἀταργάτης.

At Hierapolis there stood on the cult altar between Hadad and Atargatis another image which Lucian describes in mystifying terms. It looks like no other image and has no particular form of its own but has the attributes of the other gods. It has no particular name and is referred to as the Συμπτού, the "symbol." Some say (according to Lucian) that it represents Dionysos, Deucalion, or perhaps Semiramis, for a dove hovers above its crest. This is the divinity which is the central figure in Hierapolis' greatest ritual manifestation, the Hydrophoria. The identity, or significance, of this Symbol is a matter of great uncertainty, but certain archaeological monuments of the Roman age show us objects which pertain to the cult of Hierapolis and which can justly be called symbols or emblems. These objects are small structures surmounted by a triangular figure above which hovers a dove. Within the triangle is a rod or staff from which

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44 Fossey, Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique (BCH), XXI (1897), 60. Cf. another example in Cumont, Syria, XI (1930), 206.

45 D.S. 33: τὸ δὲ μορφὴν μὲν ἡλικὴν οὐκ ἔχει, φορέει δὲ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν εἶδος.

46 D.S. 33, Cf. also 13, 36, 48.
emanate numerous circular symbols. In three examples the staff is surmounted by an eagle figured in conjunction with seven solar disks superimposed over the lunar crescent. Historically these emblems belong to the common symbols of Babylonian divinities, such as the star of Istar, which were executed independently of the statue and set up in temples, or carried in processions. Such appears to be the origin of Lucian's Σημήτου. On the other hand, there was a Syrian divinity, probably known at Hierapolis, whose Semitic name could be transliterated Σημεῖος. One text relates that Simi, the daughter of Hadad, was cured by the daughter of Balat with the assistance of Ate of Harran, and that at Hierapolis this Simi, by pouring water into a well, prevented an evil spirit from coming out. Another text states that the infant Semiramis had been rescued and reared by the shepherd Simma, while Syrian inscriptions reveal the presence of the name, sometime under the masculine form Σελεύς, but most frequently under the feminine forms Σελία, Σημέα or perhaps Σεμία. Accordingly certain attempts have been made to link the Semeion with this divinity, but the question appears far from settled.

47 Goossens, p. 65-76; André Caquot, "Note sur le Semeion," Syria, XXXII (1955), 64.

48 Goossens, 67-68.

49 Caquot is against the presence of Simia, believing the evidence inadequate. Clemen, op. cit. p. 43, believes Semeion is Hermes (Esmun).
In addition to the triad Hadad-Semeion-Atargatis, the god Apollo holds a conspicuous place in Lucian's account. It is Apollo who points out the time at which the journey to the sea is to take place, and all oracles are given through him (D.S. 36-37). He definitely surpasses Hadad as an active figure in the ritual, and as a mark of his importance, he is the only god--apart from the triad--whose statue Lucian describes. From the point of view of iconography this statue is interesting, for the god is represented as a mature man with thick beard, and fully clad. Lucian explains (D.S. 35) that from the Syrian standpoint to portray Apollo in the Greek manner--young, unbearded, and nude--is a mark of profound theological ignorance, for youth is an imperfect age. This Apollo is probably the survival of an earlier young god who figured in the local cult at a very remote time, but again, as in the case of Semeion, there is only doubt as to his origin or his relationship with the central figures of the cult.

Our direct information pertaining to the ritual of the religion of the Holy City is meager and is derived entirely from Lucian. We shall see in our investigation of the cult at Delos that the usual epithet of Atargatis there was Ἀγνή, the Pure Goddess. This epithet refers to the restrictions, especially of diet, to which her worshippers had to submit in order to approach her temple.
The fish and the dove were regarded as sacred and not to be eaten under any circumstances. Lucian relates that not far from the temple there was a lake which was filled with fish of wondrous size and beauty. Some had names and came when called, and Lucian himself saw one with a golden ornament in its fin (D.S. 45). According to Lucian, the Syrians abstain from fish and dove to honor Derceto, as Atargatis was known at Askalon, and Semiramis, because the first had the form of a fish and the second, at death, was metamorphosed into a dove (D.S. 14). According to the myth, Derceto loved a handsome youth. The fruit of their union was a daughter, Semiramis. Ashamed of having borne a child to a mortal, Derceto caused the youth to disappear, exposed the child in the desert, where it was found and nurtured by doves, and herself jumped into the lake at Askalon—or, in another version, tried to drown herself in the lake of Hierapolis only to be saved by the fish. In another legend it was related

50 Derceto is Atargatis, a name derived from a different transcription of the Semitic name in which the first syllable has been dropped. At Askalon Dea Syria is represented as half woman, half fish (D.S. 14).

51 As early as Ctesias the myth of Semiramis was linked with Hierapolis. Cf. Diod. II, 4, 3.

52 Diod. II, 4, 3 (after Ctesias); Eratosthenes, Cataster., 38. In Hyginus (fab. 197) an egg fell into the Euphrates, was pushed ashore by fish, and hatched by doves. "In Euphratem de caelo ovum . . . pisces ad ripam evoluerunt . . . columbae consederunt."
that Semiramis had erected the temple in honor of her mother (D.S. 14), or that she had tried to supplant the cult of the goddess. To prove the myth, a statue of Semiramis stood in the courtyard for Lucian to inspect (D.S. 39). The valid points of contact between late mythography and primitive legend are lost, but the accounts have an unquestionable relationship to the universal association of Atargatis and fish.

Such practices as abstinence from fish are usual in the Semitic world and the association with Semiramis and Derceto could be a late fiction of mythographers who sought to explain a general custom by means of local legends. One might suppose that the abstinence, in this case, was originally the result of the presence of an inedible species in local waters. In time the reason was forgotten and the practice justified by reference to legend. Lucian himself doubts the propriety of the association of Derceto with the taboo on fish, for, as he observes, "the Egyptians don't eat fish either, and they have no intention of honoring the mother of Semiramis" (D.S. 14). 53

While fish and the dove were untouchable by reason of their holiness, pork was also untouchable, by

reason of its impurity. All other animals were proper for eating and for sacrifice, and bulls, heifers, goats, and lambs were especially acceptable (D.S. 54). Children were also immolated upon occasion, and it is just possible that Lucian witnessed such acts in his youth when he went to offer the lock of his hair (D.S. 60), for human sacrifice had perhaps not yet been forbidden by Hadrian. The sacrifice of children is well known among the Semites but the method practiced at Hierapolis is unique. Lucian relates that after crowning a sacrificial beast it may be precipitated alive from the summit of the portico. But he adds (D.S. 58):

Some people cast their children from the portico as well, not as they do animals, but enclosed in a sack. The children are led to the temple by the hand and they are mocked all the way, being told that they are not children but bulls.

The desire to pretend that the child is really an animal is without parallel. There is no satisfactory explanation for the phenomenon. It is worth noting that in the sanctuary of the Syrian gods on the Janiculum a skull was found under the cult statue, to recall the foundation rite of a primitive ritual.

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55 W.R. Smith, op. cit., p. 36ff.
Death was also impure, as is common in many religions.\textsuperscript{57} When one of the Galli, the eunuch priests of Atargatis, succumbed, his confreres would remove him to a suburb of the city to deposit the coffin in which they had transported him. They did not bury him but covered the coffin with stones. After the ritual they would retire and refrain from approaching the temple under pain of grave impiety. The mere sight of a corpse made the entire day unclean and the Gallus could enter the temple only on the following day, after purification. In addition, the parents of the deceased were touched by the impurity and barred from the temple for thirty days--to enter only after shaving their heads (D.S. 52-53).

Again in keeping with the ritual purity of the goddess' worshippers, assistance at the ceremonies required that an elaborate ritual be followed to the letter. The first time a man wished to go to the Holy City he would shave his head and eyebrows and immediately proceed to the immolation of a lamb whose flesh was cut up and served at a banquet. The pilgrim would spread the fleece upon the ground, sit upon it, and draw the head and the feet of the animal over his head, meanwhile

\textsuperscript{57}E.g. It was illegal to bury the dead in the holy island of Delos. Cf. \textit{Hellenistic Religions} by H.G. Grant, New York, 1953, p. 28, for a text (unknown date) pertaining to Demeter at Cos which states that a priestess is made unclean by touching a grave.
praying to the gods to receive favorably his sacrifice and promising a more magnificent one in the future. After the communion, he would crown himself and those who were to journey with him, and depart. Throughout the journey, for drinking and for baths, he used only cold water, and at night slept upon the ground, for he might not sleep in a bed until after his pilgrimage and return. Upon arriving at Hierapolis he stayed with a host whom he did not know, one provided by the city to receive guests from his locality. According to Lucian, these hosts were known as "didaskaloi," for it was their duty to instruct their guests in all necessary matters. The initiates did not offer sacrifice in the sacred precinct, but when they had presented a live victim at the altar and poured their libations, they were free to take the animal home with them, immolate it in private, and consume its flesh in a feast (D.S. 55-57).

Lucian has reported several traditions regarding the foundation of the cult and the temple of Hierapolis, all of which are aetiological myths explaining the existence of particular ceremonies. His method in this passage is thoroughly Herodotean (D.S. 11):

In the course of my investigations about the age of the temple and the goddess to whom the people think it is dedicated, many spoke to me in mysterious language, some expressed themselves clearly; others told me fables or barbarian traditions. Other answers corresponded to Greek tradition. I shall relate all of them, although I accept none.
One account, which is the one most people supported (D.S. 12), is that the temple was founded by Deucalion. According to this version the present race of men is the second, for the insolence of the earlier generation caused it to be exterminated, in this manner. Suddenly the earth vomited great quantities of water and rain began to fall from the heavens, swelling rivers and oceans until all became water. Everyone perished in the flood except Deucalion who, because of his piety, merited to found the second generation. By means of an ark he was saved, together with his wife, their children, and the beasts of the earth. According to Lucian this is the Greek version of the myth, but the Hierapolitans, he adds, have their own sequel. They say that "in their country a prodigious fissure gaped in the earth, through which all the water was absorbed." After the event, Deucalion raised altars and the temple on the very spot, which he consecrated to Hera. Lucian inspected this fissure under the temple, but it appeared rather small to him, although, he speculated, it might have been larger at some time. A ceremony persists at Hierapolis as proof of this legend. Twice yearly water is brought from the sea to the temple, not only by Hierapolitans, but by people from the whole

of the Semitic world. The water is spilled on the floor of the temple, from which it flows into the fissure below, to be absorbed in great quantities, in spite of the small size of the opening. By this ceremony the faithful are complying with a law of Deucalion, that the usage might remain as a memorial of the wickedness of mankind and the beneficence of the gods. 59

In spite of Lucian's assertion that this is the Greek version of the Deucalion myth, it is sufficiently at variance with Greek tradition. This is rather a local version, more in keeping with the Jewish and Babylonian version than with the Greek. In the Greek account, Deucalion is not saved because of his piety, and he is alone with his wife, Pyrrha. Also, the Greeks localize the flood in Thessaly and do not generally consider it to have been universal. 60 The preservation of animals is also so alien to the Greek tradition that Ovid introduces

59 The Hydrophoria, however, may be a form of rain magic (Walton, op. cit., p. 855). At Athens the annual Hydrophoria had the same purpose as that of Hierapolis. According to Etym. Magn. s.v. ὑδροφορία, the festival was a lugubrious commemoration of those who perished in the deluge. Plutarch (Sulla, 14, 16) says this event occurred on the Kalends of March each year, while Paus. (I, 18, 7), states that in the peribolos of the Olympieion at Athens there was a temenos of Gê Olympia in which the floor gaped to the width of one cubit, and into this the water of the flood had been absorbed.

60 In Apoll., Bibl., I, 8, 2, Deucalion reigned in Phthia and was saved because he was wise enough to build a boat. Cf. Strabo, IX, 5, 6 and IX 5, 14; Pindar, Ol. 9, 43.
into his narrative a second creation. It appears that Lucian is confusing the elements of the two traditions, one of which he could have learned in Syria as a youth, the other in the course of his adult life in Greece. We have too little information about Lucian's early life to determine what role his Syrian origins and early education played in the formation of the mature, urbane, Greek, but it seems that a very close examination of the treatise on the Syrian Goddess might yield some interesting clarifications.

There are other foundation myths, but the one which is particularly distinguished by its character and its relation to the local cult is that of Attis and Rhea, coupled with the legend of Kombabos. Lucian (D.S. 15) rejects the Attis-Rhea myth as having no local application, although Atargatis and Rhea share a number of iconographic

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61 Metam., I, 416-421. Cf. on this point Strabo, Apoll., Pindar, loc. cit. Ovid is not specific about the extent of the flood but it seems to have covered a large portion of the earth in Metam., I, 318ff.

62 E. g., one might wonder in which language Lucian entertained the priests and natives whose lore he reports. He probably conversed in Greek, but he may have been able to read Aramaic (cf. D.S. 16) for he translates an inscription which he read upon a monument at Hierapolis. Certainly the voyage he describes is his second visit to the city, and an event of his later life (cf. D.S. 60).

63 Semiramis (D.S. 14, 39); Dionysos (D.S. 16).
attributes, including the mural crown, tambourine, and lion. Still, one suspects that he rejects the myth because he prefers another explanation for the practice of emasculation which is characteristic of the eunuch priests, the Galli, of both Rhea and Dea Syria.

The myth which Lucian reports (D.S. 19-26) states that Hera (i.e. Dea Syria) appeared in a dream to Stratonike, wife of the king of the Assyrians, and commanded her to build a temple at Hierapolis. At first the queen neglected to undertake the task, and so became ill. To obtain a cure, she promised to accomplish the wishes of Hera and accordingly set out for Hierapolis with an army and a treasure. The king assigned one of his favorites, Kombabos, to watch over his queen. Kombabos was a young hero of great strength and beauty. Foreseeing the responsibility which would be his through the many years required to build a vast temple, and that his position would arouse envy and cause calumny, Kombabos accepted the task with reluctance. To avoid compromising himself at any time he emasculated himself before his departure and entrusted his organs to the king in a sealed vase. In the course of the third year of building operations, the dreaded possibility which he had foreseen was realized: the queen conceived a most desperate passion for him. She
resisted temptation for a time but at length succumbed and sought, in wine, the courage to make her declarations. Kombabos refused, the queen threatened, and so the youth was forced to divulge his secret. From that moment Stratonike passed all her time with him. Detractors reported to the king that Kombabos had become the queen's lover. The king recalled him, denounced his criminal passion, and condemned him to death. Just before the execution was to take place Kombabos revealed to the king the contents of the vase entrusted to his care. Greatly moved, the king honored him for such a testimony of his devotion and ordered the execution of the false accusers. Kombabos asked to be allowed to finish the temple and passed the remainder of his life there. Friends joined him at the temple and mutilated themselves following his example. The legend explains the presence of the Galli at Hierapolis.

There may be in this legend a weak echo of an ancient local myth. Lucian (D.S. 26) suggests it but does not elaborate when he alludes to the love of Hera for Kombabos, a myth in which the goddess would have taken a more active part in the foundation.

On the other hand, it has been said that when Lucian seeks to explain by the voluntary mutilation of

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64 Opinion of Goossens, p. 35-36.
Kombabos, the sacrifice which other young men have made of their virility and finally the order of eunuch priests, he is adapting a widespread legendary motif to justify a local rite. To attach artificially the adventures of Kombabos to the foundation of the cult at Hierapolis shows only that at the time of the Seleukids the theme of the voluntary castration of a royal minister had become so popular as to appear as a human replica of the mutilation of Attis and to justify the institution of sacred emasculation. Out of this context the myth has no relation to Hierapolis. Benveniste would seek the origin of the myth in the Persian court romance, "dans l'ambiance des récits mèdes et perses d'Hérodote et de maintes romans persans ou arabes, où le confident intègre finit par triompher des plus singulières épreuves qu'inventent le caprice d'un despota et la cabale des jaloux." Accordingly one might suppose that the story of the minister who sacrifices his virility to fulfill his mission originated in the

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66 Stratonike is commonly identified with the wife of Seleukos I (ca. 170 b.c.). Cf. Benveniste, p. 249, and Goossens p. 189-92.

67 Benveniste, p. 256.

68 Benveniste, p. 257-58.
confines of the Iranian world. In Persia and Media the theme was linked with history, to be repeated over and over again, adjusted to different figures, wherever the prestige of Iran radiated. 69

Should we admit that the origin of this legend is to be found in the Persian court romance, we must nevertheless make allowance for another rapprochement. The name of Kombabos is known only in the Greek transcription from a Semitic word—a transcription which could be rather remote from the original. It is possible that the group *mb* represents a dissimilation of a primitive redoubled *b*, which would have given *Kobbabos*. Now the Greek form *Kυβήβος* is known from Hesychius, who defines the term as *δ κατεχόμενος τη μητρι των θεων*. Another text speaks of a god Cybebus: *Alma Cybebe, a Cybebo Phryges, qui primus ei sacrum instituit* (Serv. ad Aen. X, 220). The result is that a relationship between the story of Kombabos and the Phrygian myth of Attis is inevitably suggested. 70

In Lucian's time the Galli formed a minor clergy at Hierapolis and were not even admitted inside the temple, although they were present at the various ceremonies within

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69 Benveniste, p. 258; cf. parallels cited p. 252ff.
70 Goossens, p. 35; Benveniste, p. 251; Cleman, p. 39.
the temenos (D.S. 51). The manner in which Galli were created is graphically described by Lucian, and the passage is well worth quoting (D.S. 50-51).

On specified days the people assemble at the temple, including a considerable number of Galli and men "consecrated to the gods," of whom I have already spoken, in order to celebrate the mysteries. They make incisions on their elbows and strike each other on the back. Musicians who are standing hard by play the flute, beat the drum, all the while singing inspired verses and hymns. These ceremonies take place outside the temple, for those who participate in them do not enter within the temple. It is on those days that Galli are created. When the flutes have played and the rites have been celebrated, a divine possession overtakes many of those who are present. They run toward the goddess in great numbers and act as I shall relate. The young man whose turn has come advances through the crowd with great shouting and tears off his garments. With one hand he seizes the knife which, it seems to me, has served for the purpose for many years, and with the other his genitals, which he forthwith cuts off. Holding what he has amputated in his hand, he runs through the city throwing it from house to house. From the houses where he has done this he receives women's clothing and all the ornaments of this sex.

In keeping with the scholarly inclinations of his age, Lucian offers an explanation for the fact that the Galli wear women's clothing. The cause is attributed to Kombabos. As it happened, upon his return to finish the temple, a woman who had come to participate in one of the solemnities saw him in male clothing and, having found him handsome, conceived a tragic passion for him. When informed of Kombabos' infirmity she took her life in despair.
Transfixed with grief, Kombabos immediately assumed fe­male garments to prevent any recurrence of such a disas­ter (D.S. 27). One must agree with Goossens, however, that that this explanation is not really an explanation and simply ignores the problem. The real cause is as yet uncertain, but it lies in sexual psychology and trans­vestism. 71

Above the Galli was ranked the higher priest­hood which insured the worship of the goddess. The priests were numerous, for Lucian records that over three hundred assisted at the sacrifices. As in most cults or reli­gions they were divided into several classes--sacrificers, libation pourers, fire bearers, and "assistants at the altar" (D.S. 42), of whom only a very few, the δαγχ{Θεος}, entered the holy of holies (D.S. 31). The priests were dressed entirely in white and wore the πιλος. 72 A high priest, elected for one year, presided over the entire corps, and he alone wore purple and a gold tiara (D.S. 42).

The functions of the priests consisted, as usual, in seeing to the performance of the prescribed sacrifices

71 Goossens, p. 37: "et à ce point de vue ... l'importance des galles dans le monde antique devait être assez proche du pourcentage d'uraniste dans la société mo­derne."

and libations of the cult. But one of their specific
duties was consulting the will of the god Apollo, which
was manifested in various ways. The statues sweat, move
themselves, and render oracles. When the temple is closed
a voice is heard from the interior (D.S. 10). Lucian
comments that there are many oracles in Greece, Egypt, and
Libya, as well as in Asia, but the gods of those countries
speak only through the mouths of their priests or prophets,
whereas the Apollo of Hierapolis publishes his own pre-
dictions. When he wishes to deliver oracles he begins by
agitating himself upon his throne. Immediately his priests
lift him up and remove him. Should they fail to do this
he would begin to sweat and to agitate himself again. The
priests raise him upon their shoulders. The god leads them
about, causing them to go back and forth and pass from one
place to another. At last the archpriest approaches to in-
terrogate him about the matter at hand. If the god appro-
vies he moves forward, or backward if he disapproves, lead-
ing his bearers as if by reins (D.S. 36).

All priests assist at the sacrifices which are
performed twice daily in honor of Hadad and Atargatis.
Doubtless, too, they officiated at the various other ce-
renonies which Lucian describes—the Hydrophoria (D.S. 13,
33, 36, 48), the Descent to the Lake (D.S. 49), and the
ascent of the great phalluses in the courtyard to pray for
Syria and her people (D.S. 28, 29). The scene at the time of prayer must have been one of tumult and splendor. Ceremonies were attended frequently by flutists, pipers, Galli, and "possessed women" (D.S. 43). The character of this divine possession is uncertain. It appears that sacred prostitution had no part in the ritual of Hierapolis. The hysteria was probably sympathetic and related to the bloody ritual at which the Galli were created.

**Diffusion of the Cult**

We must close with a few considerations regarding the scope and method of the dissemination of the cult of Atargatis from Hierapolis to other cities of Syria and into the Aegean. In Syria her worship was not confined to the holy city. She was adored at Heliopolis (Baalbek), at Damascus, at Palmyra, in Transjordan, at Dura-

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73 Cumont, s.v. "Syria Dea" in Daremberg-Saglio, IV, 3, 1595.
75 René Dussaud, "Le Temple de Jupiter Damascénien," Syria, III (1922), 220.
Europos,\textsuperscript{78} and at other centers in Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Phoenicia, and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{79} As we shall see in the following pages, to the West the cult spread from the coast of Asia Minor as far as Syracuse. Such a wide diffusion cannot be completely explained, but there are a few indications of how it came about.

It is likely that Oriental slaves in transit through Greece on their way to Rome were in large measure responsible for the establishment of the Syrian Goddess in Greece.\textsuperscript{80} During the Republic the slave population of Rome and of Italy was increased in order to meet the requirements of the latifundia, mining, building, and public works.\textsuperscript{81} Through Diodoros (frg. 34, 2, 5) we learn that the disastrous slave revolt of Sicily (134 B.C.) was

\textsuperscript{78}M. Pillet, The Excavations at Dura-Europos, third season, New Haven, 1932, p. 10. Cf. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 121-123.


\textsuperscript{80}On this subject cf. Cr. Rel, p. 104ff.

\textsuperscript{81}A.M. Duff, Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire, Oxford, 1928, p. 11f.
begun by a slave from Syrian Apamea, a worshipper of the Syrian Goddess, who, feigning divine madness, called his companions to arms, saying that he was obeying the orders of the Goddess. This text incidentally lets us surmise how many Semites must have been in the work gangs of the fields of Sicily.

Closely related to slave-trading is the pursuit of orthodox commerce. Both the domestic and foreign trade of Syria were important to the Seleukid kingdom and its population. The Seleukid policy was to attract to the borders of their kingdom the trade of Arabia, Central Asia, and India, both for their own consumption and for transit to the West. The commerce followed both land and sea routes and it consisted of industrial and agricultural products. In the second and third centuries of our era Syrian merchants had undertaken, so to speak, a colonization of the West, pushing as far as the Rhône. Such intense commercial activity is responsible, at least in part, for the dissemination of the cult.

The slave population of the West and the commercial activity of the Syrians were assisted in the dis-

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82 Cf. Strabo, quoted below (ch. 3 ab. init.), who says that Delos handled 10,000 Syrian slaves a day.
83 Hitti, p. 270.
84 Or. Rel., p. 107.
semination of the cult by a third factor, the warfare which was waged in the East first under the Successors of Alexander, and later under the Romans. As always in foreign wars, great numbers of soldiers visit distant lands and return bringing with them new wives and new gods. We shall see an instance of this later. Another factor remains to be considered, namely, the active proselyting by the priests of the Syrian Goddess. These priests wandered about the Mediterranean begging for the goddess' temple and ministering to the needs of the faithful. As occasion arose, they would utter an obviously appropriate prophecy for a price. Polybius relates that two Galli approached the encampment of the consul Manlius, beyond the Sangarius, declaring that the goddess had foretold his impending victory. They received a cordial welcome at his hands (Polyb. XXI, 37, 5). Doubtless, too, the mendicants performed (or reported) miracles which were attributed to the goddess. The confession of sins

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86 I.e., galli of Cybele. Such mendicants were a feature of many Eastern religions, as shown by the formations of ἀγύρτα. Cf. Pollux, 7, 188, ἀγύρτα, and ἀγύρτα, priests of Mên and Cybele respectively.

was practiced in the religion of Atargatis, sins against the taboos of food and place. On their missions of propaganda the priests confessed their transgressions publicly, moving their hearers to compassion by the acts of humiliation and chastisement they imposed upon themselves.\footnote{R. Pettazzoni, "La Confession des Pêchés en Syrie," in Mélanges Dusaud. p. 198, 200.}

One statement leads us to believe that nomadic priests such as these roamed the world in considerable numbers. In the \textit{Laws} (II, 40) Cicero does not tolerate the presence of any of them, with the exception of the priests of Cybele, explaining that the activities of these priests foster superstition and "empty houses," alluding to the rapacity of the race. The missionaries of Cybele, on the other hand, will be acceptable, for their activities are conducted and completed all in the space of a few days.

Both Lucian and Apuleius have left us, in fact, a most unedifying account of the wandering Galli of the Syrian Goddess. Led by an old eunuch, a crowd of painted young men marches along the highways leading an ass with a picture of the Goddess upon its back. As they come to a village or town they go through their ceremonies. To the sound of the flute they spin round and round, their heads thrown back, till the peak of frenzy renders them insensible. Then they flagellate themselves with swords and sticks, shedding their blood before the crowd which
presses close. They confess infractions of the sacred law, to the accompaniment of more laceration of the arms and back, and conclude with a profitable collection of wine, cheese, vessels, and money—which disappears into the capacious folds of their garments. As necessity impels, they are found to be not above clever larceny. 89

It is impossible to believe that all the priests of Atargatis were thieves and charlatans. In reality they served the spiritual needs of the many Syrian slaves throughout the ancient world.

The presence of the Syrian Goddess in the Greek world is known to us principally through inscriptions. This epigraphical record, however, is far from extensive and not always explicit. As will become evident in the following pages, the cult of Dea Syria is well attested for certain areas, but the documents raise perhaps as many questions as they solve. In other instances our evidence defies commentary, for the inscriptions, now undated, now of unknown provenience, do little more than assure us that the Goddess was known in this or that island or port. In the following pages we shall examine all the evidence pertaining to the Syrian Goddess on the Greek mainland and in the islands. We would like, of course, to be able to bring all these documents into a meaningful relationship and so produce a veritable history of this cult in Greece—a narrative, that is, which emphasizes relationships of cause and effect so as to reveal a continuous development. But the documents available for the study vary so greatly in origin, date, and value, that such a goal is not feasible. And yet, it would be unfortunate to approach each inscription as a document entirely unrelated to the
next, for each text contributes to answering some of the basic questions which guide our inquiry, such as the name under which the Goddess was worshiped, the date and duration of her cult, her importance in the Greek community, association with other deities, and peculiarities of her ritual.

One of the earliest and important centers of the worship of Dea Syria in Greece was Phistyon, in Aetolia. It is at first sight strange to find the divinity established deep in the mountains of Aetolia, far from the coast, where she might have been introduced by Syrian merchants attached to one of their many factories. Given the large number of mercenaries which Aetolia furnished, however, it is probable that Atargatis was introduced to the country by them—just as an Arab slave mentioned in one inscription from Phistyon was probably brought to Greece by a returning soldier.¹ An analogous situation is shown by a papyrus which states that a Macedonian soldier founded a sanctuary of the Syrian Goddess in the Fayoum in 222 b.c. The foundation is better explained by the fact that the Macedonian's wife is named Asia, and must have been brought by her husband from an Asiatic campaign.²

¹IG IX 12, 101, line 5.
²H. Seyrig, Syria, XIII (1932), 313-14.
Eighteen inscriptions have survived to show that at Phistyon Atargatis was considered not merely as another foreign divinity in the local pantheon, but rather one integrated into the life of the city and the consciousness of its inhabitants. The inscriptions, all dated from the middle of the third century to the beginning of the first century B.C., and all conceived in the same terms, are official acts of manumission at the temple of the goddess. In these transactions Dea Syria takes the part of the chief witness and guarantor of the manumission. This passage, to illustrate, is typical of the form and content of all the inscriptions:

\[\text{στραταγέωνος Στράτωνος 'Αρσινόος μηνύς Δίον ἀπέδοντο Φιλοξένος 'Αρσινοεῖς συμευδοκε-}
\[\text{ύσας τὰς ματέρας Κλαρχλος ΙΕΜΝΑΥΤΟΣ.' Ιδαίος τάì Αφροδίταινα Συριά τάì, ἕν 'Ιερίδα χῆ σῶμα γυναικείον ἀì όνομα Σωτεία τῖ-}
\[\text{μάς ΜΜ ἔφ' οì εἴλευθέραιν εἴμεν καì ἀνέφαστον ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου καì ἀφορολογήτου ν ιì δὲ τίνα πάθη Σωτεία καì καταλότη Καì}
\[\text{αύτῆς γενεάν τὰ καταλείφθητα ὑπάρχουται ὧ νδ Σωτείας τῶς γε-}
\[\text{νεᾶς ἑστώ, ηì δὲ μηì εἴη γεναίì ἐκ Σωτείας Φιλοξένου καì}
\[\text{Σκορπίονος ἑστώ καì τῶν τούτων ἐπὶ νόμων.}

The text shows that the owners are selling a female slave to the Syrian Goddess for the sum of two minae,

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3IG IX 12, 95-110, and G. Klaffenbach, "Neue Inschriften aus Aetolien," Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1936, p. 364-70. The two inscriptions published by Klaffenbach are (1) a manumission of the second half of the second century B.C. and (2) a badly mutilated legal document of some kind found in the temple of Atargatis.

4IG IX 12, 96a.
in consideration of which the slave is to be free. In some of the inscriptions the conditions of freedom are made explicit. In this instance there are to be no limitations upon the freedom, either with respect to the manumitted or to her direct descendants, except in the case of no issue. Should this situation develop, the property of the _libertae_ will revert to her former owners upon her death (5-9).

This form of manumission begins by the creation of the fiction that the Syrian Goddess is buying a slave. The device serves a useful purpose, for in some of the inscriptions we find that there is question of a kind of "manumissio sub condicione." This means that the freedom is not to be complete, nor immediate, but is to be recognized by law after compliance with the restrictions specified in the contract. Assuming the good will of all concerned, the manumission is carried out to "maturity" in due course, without difficulty. But the system can also lead to abuse of the conditions of freedom so as to limit or conceivably cancel the guarantees of liberty which a freedman was supposed to possess. It is easily understood, then, that a freedman desired all possible guarantees that his status, often acquired after much diligence and hardship, could not be violated. Accordingly, the temple of the goddess,

5 E.g. IG IX 12, 95.
and the very presence of the deity, would seem to be the most promising circumstances for the conclusion of the important act. The transaction, though legally binding in itself, was rendered yet more inviolable by virtue of its being placed directly into the hands of the Goddess. In turn, she guaranteed the freedom, either outright, or after the fulfillment of the conditions of the contract, as the case may be. The Goddess invested nothing in the transaction, her sole purpose being to act as intermediary between the slave and his master. The slave himself paid from his peculium the sum agreed upon with the master. This form of manumission by self-purchase of their freedom by slaves is of course well known from the many records of such transactions which have survived from Delphi, where Apollo is the guarantor.6

At Phistyon, then, Dea Syria is not merely a foreigner domiciled in a Greek city for the spiritual comfort of her compatriots, a deity of concern only to a portion of the alien population. Rather her status is assured by the service she renders the community at large. In fact, the name under which the Goddess is worshiped is sufficient to indicate that she was considered to be the patron divinity of the city: The Syrian Aphrodite of

Phistyon. Three times she is called "The Syrian Aphrodite of Hiaridae." Hiaridae indicates Phistyon, since it is the name of the inhabitants of the suburb of Phistyon where the temple was located.

But another designation found in the inscriptions causes some difficulty. Three times we find the title; 

\[ \tau\alpha\iota \mu\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\iota \tau\omega\nu \theta\varepsilon\omega\nu \kappa\alpha\iota \rho\alpha\theta\epsilon\varepsilon\nu\omicron \Phi\imath\iota\sigma\nu\iota\delta\alpha\iota\varsigma \] or some variation of the formula. The meaning of the invocation is open to question, for if it refers in fact to the Mother of the Gods, it is the first evidence of her worship in Aetolia. The identity of "Parthenos" is also

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7 Αφροδιται Συριαί Φιστυέδων IG IX 12 95, 98-104, 106, 108.
8 Ibid. 96a, 97, 109.
10 IG IX 12 105, 96b, 110b.
considered doubtful by some. Wilamowitz and others believe that this divinity was added to the Great Mother upon her arrival in Phistyon.\footnote{Wilamowitz apud Klaffenbach, IG IX 12, 96.} Nock states that this "Aphrodite (i.e. Dea Syria) was worshiped in a temple which she appears to have shared with μητήρ θεῶν καὶ πάρθενος the latter perhaps a younger consort given on the analogy of Persephone's relation to Demeter."\footnote{A.D. Nock, Conversion, 1933, p. 282.} But this proposed analogy is far from satisfactory for at least the reason that, as is well known, the associate of Cybele is Attis and not a "parthenos."\footnote{For Attis and Cybele cf. Nilsson p. 614.} The simpler and more satisfactory explanation is that at Phistyon Dea Syria was at times invoked under the names μητήρ θεῶν and Parthenos.\footnote{Nilsson, p. 124: In Phistyon wurde die Syrische Göttin μητήρ θεῶν und Parthenos zubenannt. Cf. also p. 122, n. 11: Diese beiden sind sicher nicht, wie Latte, Gnomon IX, 1933, 409, will, Demeter und Kore; Parthenos ist vielmehr der Name einer Syrischen Göttin.} Lucian is a witness to the confusion which existed between Cybele and Atargatis, even at Hierapolis, as a result of the various attributes they shared (D.S. 15):

There is another sacred story which a learned person related to me. The Goddess is Rhea, and the sanctuary is the work of Attis. Attis was of Lydian
origin, and he was the first to teach the rites of Rhea. All the rites which the Phrygians, the Lydians, and the Samothracians perform were taught them by Attis. As soon as Rhea had emasculated him he renounced the masculine life, took on the appearance of woman and donned their garments. Wandering through the world he celebrated the orgies, retelling his experiences and glorifying Rhea. In the course of his travels he came to Syria. Since the inhabitants beyond the Euphrates had accepted neither himself nor his rites, he established a temple in this country. The proof of this is the fact that the (Syrian) Goddess possesses most of the attributes of Rhea. She is in fact supported by lions, carries a tambourine, and wears the turreted crown—just as the Lydians represent Rhea.

An inscription from the theater of the Syrian sanctuary at Delos, however, cannot be used as evidence that Atargatis-Cybele was an identification known there.16 As Roussel correctly remarks, this text, which belongs to the third century, cannot refer to the worship of Atargatis, which flourished much later (128/7 B.C.). The inscription is properly assigned to the Metroon, which various texts allow us to locate in the vicinity of the Syrian temenos.17 Nevertheless, it is certain that Cybele was readily identified with many deities, of whom Dea Syria was but one. Isis, for example, was known at Delos under

16 IG XI4, 1293: Ἀναξαρέτη Τιμησιδήμου μητρὶ θεῶν.

the names Aphrodite, Astarte, Hygieia, Nemesis, Dikaiosyne, Tyche Protageneia, and Mother of the Gods. Similarly, at Krokodilopolis, in the Fayoum, Queen Berenike II was worshiped as "Isis Mother of the Gods." We are able to say, then, that the designation of Atargatis as Mother of the Gods is not an isolated phenomenon at Phistyon. And there is not enough evidence to support the hypothesis that two divinities shared a temple there. Again, the Parthenos of Phistyon is Dea Syria. The term is an epithet of Atargatis, who is represented locally as a virgin mother. We have at hand a perfect parallel for this in the cult of the Goddess in Macedonia. At Berosa, in two texts the Goddess is known simply as θεὸς Συρία Παρθένος.

Thuria, Messenia

One of the two inscriptions from Thuria which pertain to the Syrian Goddess shows that her temple enjoyed some prestige in the city. At the beginning of the second century before Christ Thuria became involved with Megalopolis in a boundary dispute. The inscription with

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18 Roussel, p. 251.
19 Nilsson, p. 34 and p. 317.
which we are dealing narrates the prelude to this conflict.\textsuperscript{21} The Synedroi of Thuria decree that a delegation (syndikoi) will proceed to Patrae, the city chosen as site for the arbitration of the dispute, on the twelfth day of the twelfth month, to state their grievances against Megalopolis. The question is an important one, for the delegation is to be accompanied by all the synedroi as well as by all other persons who wish to go (8-10). The secretary of the assembly will record the names of all those in attendance at Patrae (10-11), and if the Thurians should prevail in the dispute, he will inscribe their names with patronymics "upon a stele of stone in the temple of the (Syrian) Goddess" (11-14).

The temple at Thuria is known also through a mention by Pausanias (IV, 31, 2). Pausanias, however, states that the temple was located on the Acropolis, and that it was all that remained of the ancient high city after its destruction about the time of the conflicts between Octavius and Antony. If the temple was on the Acropolis and the stone was erected there, obviously only a theory of its later removal could explain that it was found in the plain. But Valmin believes that the stele was too heavy to be transported. Furthermore, the depth of

five feet at which it was found, and the other objects recovered in the vicinity, cause him to mistrust the hypothesis that the stones of the temple were transported to the plain. Accordingly, Pausanias either confused the temples of Athena and Atargatis, or he did not visit Thuria. 22 Pausanias, in fact, does not mention Athena, although we know that her priests were eponymous at Thuria, for the inscription in question is dated ἐπὶ Ιερέως τῶν Ἀθηνῶν Δαμιᾶνος (1). 23

But for the nature of the worship of Atargatis in this locality we must turn to the second inscription, a decree inscribed on the reverse of the same stele at the temple. Its date is considerably later than the first (first half of the second century b.c.), and is placed by palaeographical indications within the years 50 b.c. - 50 a.d. 24 The decree is in honor of a certain Spartan benefactor, Damochares. The importance of this text is so great as to warrant an extensive citation:

(14-36) . . . for all these reasons the archons and the people have resolved to praise him, for all the reasons written above, and to grant him citizenship and the proxeny and the other privileges and honors which pertain to our citizens; they have likewise resolved that he shall have the proedria and the

22 Valmin, p. 118.
23 Cf. also a similar dating in an ephebic list from Thuria, IG V, 1, 1384.
24 Valmin, p. 126.
propompeia on the days of the mysteries together with our religious magistrates and that he shall participate in all the privileges. And whereas, in honor of the cult of the Syrian Goddess and of our city he promises for the rest of his life to furnish the oil on the days of the mysteries, let the ephors, colleagues of Menestratos, place a painted image of him in the temple of the Syrian Goddess with the inscription: The city of the Thurians to Damocharis the Lacedemonian, son of Timoxenos, for his personal merit and the good will he continues to display in behalf of the city. Similarly, let the monographoi, colleagues of Nikon, compose a letter to this effect, urging him to maintain the same friendship and good will toward our city and our citizens, for our city will not fail in its appreciation. Let the ephors, colleagues of Menestratos, engrave upon a stele of stone this decree, which they will place before the temple of the Syrian Goddess.

The significance of this inscription is immediately apparent for it contains the only specific mention of mysteries, anywhere, in the cult of Atargatis. Lucian does not mention mysteries in his description of the ceremonies at Hierapolis (a point to which we shall return), and all the inscriptions of the Greek world are mute on the subject. On the other hand, it is not impossible that some kind of dramatic representation, perhaps of some myth connected with Atargatis, or at least a sacred banquet, had a place in the ritual, either in Syria or in Greece, or both. A ritual banquet in itself is not sufficient to make a cult a "mystery religion," for banquets are common to a great number of ancient religions, and the meaning underlying them is universally the same. It is the desire to identify one's self with the divinity in
order to acquire the special virtue which it possesses. This may be accomplished merely by coming into contact with the divine object or by consuming what is taken to be closest to, or the embodiment of, the god. In the religion of Atargatis this would be the eating of the sacred fish which are her constant companions. This type of communion serves an immediate purpose. The worshiper must acquire the strength, swiftness, or wisdom of the god. His success, or even his life, depends upon it. The mystery religions, on the other hand, are quite different. The end served there is not primarily immediate. A mystery religion is one which through initiation, communion, and rule of life, offers salvation after death. The question to be answered, therefore, is did the Greeks turn the cult they accepted from Syria into a mystery religion, or was it already such in Seleukid times? This is the most difficult of all the questions concerning the cult of Atargatis. From Syria there is hardly any conclusive evidence either way. We shall therefore leave this aspect of the question to the Orientalists, who are more competent to form a judgment. In Greece the mention of mysteries is made only once--again hardly adequate evidence to support a very valuable pronouncement. One would even hesitate to speak of "Mysteries of Atargatis at Thuria," on the basis
of this mention alone, meaning thereby that Thuria was
the site of a continuing mystery religion, just as Eleu-
sis was for Demeter. We shall, however, point out what
appears to be particularly Greek in the proceedings at
Thuria.

First, the proedria is the place of honor at a
theater or some similar installation. Accordingly, our
text means that Damocharis will have the place of honor,
presumably at the theater, for the celebration of the mys-
teries. Second, there is evidence (though not from Thu-
ria) that sacred fish, which were kept in pools, usual
adjuncts of any shrine of Atargatis—Hierapolis, Delos,
Rome, were consumed at religious banquets.

According to Plutarch (De Superstitione, 10), the
superstitious worshipers of the Syrian Goddess believed
that if they ate sprats or anchovies she would gnaw through
the bones of their shins, inflame their bodies with sores,
and dissolve their livers. Athenaeus (VIII, 346, D-E) has
an explanation for this taboo:

The Stoic Antipater of Tarsus says, in the
fourth book of his work on superstition, that it
is asserted on the part of certain authorities
that Queen Gatis of Syria was such a lover of fish


that she published an edict forbidding anyone to eat fish "apart from Gatis" (Ἄτερο Γάτιδος). Not understanding this phrase, the masses call her Atargatis, and abstain from fish. But Mna-seas, in the second book of his work on Asia, says: In my opinion Atargatis was a cruel queen and ruled the people harshly, even to the extent of forbidding them to eat fish; on the contrary they must bring them to her because of her fondness for that food. For this reason the custom still holds that whenever they pray to the Goddess they bring her offerings of fish made of silver and gold . . .

Significantly Athenaeus adds:

But the priests bring to the Goddess, each day, real fish which they have fancily dressed and served on the table. They are boiled or baked, and the priests of the Goddess, of course, consume the fish themselves.

We are fortunate to have an inscription to support the passage from Athenaeus. This is the serene epitaph of Gaionas, found at Rome.  

The interpretation of this text is certain and clear. Gaionas declares that he is "owed in no way to death." That is to say, he has escaped the fatal law of destruction which is the common lot of mankind. The expression was translated by Horace: Debelur morti nos nostraque. 28

The idea is the popular notion that life is a loan which

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27 CIL VI, 4\(^2\), 32316.
28 A.P. 63
at death man returns to Nature; natura dedit usuram vitaeae tanquam pecuniae nulla praestituta die. But, to speak like another inscription, a person initiated in the mysteries was exempted from the lot of death: sorte mortis eximens in templa ducis ... cunctis imbuor mysteriis. Thus Gaionas, by his piety, has become a soul free and light: Gaionas animula.

He obtained his immortality by some religious practice. He states that he "judged" at the banquets where the faithful assembled in pleasure. Now we know from Athenaeus that the sacred fish, not to be touched by the people, were consumed by the priests, and, we may add, by the initiates. Through the mysteries and the mysterious virtue of this food the faithful were raised to the level of the gods and assured that they would prolong beyond the fatal term of death their life of bliss. Gaionas was Deipnokrites at these banquets. His function was probably analogous to that of the "magistri cenarum" who presided at the banquets at Lanuvium. It may also be, as the title indicates, that he judged which of the neophytes had

29 Cicero, Tusc., I, 39, 93.
30 CIL VI, 1779.
31 Cumont, op. cit., p. 282, who cites a passage from Julian.
32 CIL XIV, 2112.
received sufficient preparation for admission.\textsuperscript{33}

We are thus virtually assured that the cult of Atargatis at Rome included a sacred banquet. According to the text from Thuria, mysteries were celebrated there on various days. At Delos, the sacred theater and the cistern will suggest similar activities, although the abundant inscriptions make no allusion to them. But we may wonder how much of this belonged to the cult of the Syrian Goddess originally, and how much was the result of Greco-Roman influence upon the transplanted foreign cult. This influence is difficult to assess, but the decree in honor of Damocharis contains a few indications. The Spartan is honored for his benefactions to Thuria, which include the following: He assists the ambassadors of Thuria at Sparta (2-5); helps the Thurians before the courts of Sparta (5-10); living now in Thuria, he has somehow arbitrated a conflict which involved many people (10-15). Finally, and most important, because of his devotion to the Syrian Goddess and to the city, he promises to furnish oil for the mysteries for the rest of his life (22-24). Now in Greece and Rome oil was used after baths. It is important to note that our elogium of Damocharis was found hard by a Roman

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{This interpretation of the epitaph is taken from Cumont's "Gaionas, le Deipnokrites," Comptes Rendus de l'Acad. des Inscr., 1917, p. 275-84.}
bath and that traces of an edifice are visible all around the bath—an indication that both structures probably had provision for easy communication.\textsuperscript{34} We know that in Greek religion the bath was closely linked with certain ceremonies and was often a necessary prelude to admission. In the worship of the Carian Zeus Panamaros\textsuperscript{35} the priest inaugurated his functions by a gymasiarchia. In other terms, he furnished the oil for the public baths and for the athletic contests. The Panamareia, in fact, were occasions of great liberality for the priest, who distributed oil, perfumes, money, provided a banquet, and even distributed edibles for the journey from the festival.\textsuperscript{36}

As we can see, the use of oil in connection with religious ceremonies is a Greek practice. For this reason we may suggest that the mysteries of Atargatis at Thuria are probably not originally germane to the cult, but rather the result of a close association with Greek religious practice. Fortunately, the association is not far to seek. In the first of the inscriptions from Thuria which we discussed, the names of the syndikoi were listed below the text of the decree. Many of these names could be identical

\textsuperscript{34} Valmin, p. 135.


\textsuperscript{36} Stele of T. Fl. Aenasas and Flavia Paulina, dated ca. the time of M. Aurelius, in BCH XI, 1887, p. 375; cf. also p. 384-85 for another similar text.
with those found on inscriptions from neighboring Andania. This city was well known for its mysteries of Demeter and Kore, as we know from a long inscription which has survived in a marvelous state of preservation. On the basis of the similarity of the names from Thuria and Andania, Valmin tentatively suggests that the proedria of Damocharis may refer to the mysteries of Andania. But, as this scholar himself points out, one can wonder whether Thuria could have exercised such an influence over Andania as to award to its honorary citizen the proedria in another city. The hypothesis is especially difficult in view of the mention: μετὰ τῶν διμετέρων ἱαρομμαθῶν (20-21). 38

But there is no cause to doubt. It is because of his devotion to the Syrian Goddess—not to Demeter and Kore—that Damocharis offers the oil. And it does not seem strictly logical that Thuria should have any influence upon the mysteries of Andania. The opposite is far more likely. The inscription from Andania (line 7ff.) states the rules for bathing and the use of oil in the

37 IG V, 1, 1390.
38 Valmin, p. 131-32.
mysteries there, and, as we have seen, such things are matters of Greek religious usage. Hence, if any influence was operative, it was that of Greek ritual upon the Oriental cult, not the opposite. In fact, the proximity of the two cities makes likely an important adaptation, at Thuria, of the practices of Andania.

Piraeus

It should come as no surprise that the Syrian Goddess was eventually established at the Piraeus, perhaps the most frequented port of ancient Greece. And yet the texts pertaining to her cult there are less satisfactory than those from any other area. Their study establishes little more than the certainty of her presence. On the other hand, the texts afford us the opportunity to distinguish clearly between the various Asiatic divinities which generally go under the name of Aphrodite in the Greek world, and also to discuss the legal status of foreign cults in Attica. But, as if the confusion of deities of Syrian origin were not sufficient, our problem is further complicated by the apparent association of these with the Attic cult of the Mother of the Gods. All we can hope to do in the present state of our evidence is attempt to draw the necessary distinctions and state the problem as it is presented by our documents.
The first inscription which we need to consider is the record of the deliberations of the Boule pursuant to the request of the merchants of Kition (Cyprus) for permission to erect a temple to Aphrodite at the Piraeus. The inscription is in two parts and belongs to the year 333 B.C.:

"Επὶ Νικοκράτους ἄρχοντος ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀιγείδος πρῶτης πρύτανείας, τῶν προέδρων ἐπεψήφισεν Θεόφιλος Φη-γούσιος, ἐδοξεὶ τῇ βουλῇ, \"Ἀντίδοτος Ἀπολλοδόρου Συν-παλήττιος εἶπεν. Περὶ ὧν λέγουσιν οἱ Κιτιεῖς περὶ τῆς ἱδρυσεως τῆς \"Αφροδίτη τοῦ ιεροῦ, ἐψηφίσθη τῇ βουλῇ τοῖς προέδροις οἱ ἀν λάχωσι προεδρεύειν εἰς τὴν πρώτην ἐκκλησίαν προσαχαγείν αὐτοῖς καὶ χρηματίσαι, γνώμην δὲ ἐξυμβάλλεσθαι τῆς βουλῆς εἰς τὸν δῆμον ὅτι δοκεῖ τῇ βουλῇ ἀκούσατα τὸν δήμον τῶν Κιτιείων περὶ τῆς ἱδρυσεως τοῦ ιεροῦ καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ Βουλησίου, βουλεύσαται ὅτι αὐτῷ δοκεῖ ἀριστον εἶναι."

The first paragraph shows that the Boule does not act upon the request but refers the entire question to the people. The latter portion shows that the people have voted favorably upon the request and states the authorization "to erect a temple of Aphrodite just as the Egyptians built a temple of Isis." The text of our inscription is the summary of the deliberations carried out at different times.
times by two distinct agencies of the State, and the information it reveals was inscribed upon a single stone by the care of the petitioners, for a reason which is not far to seek.

No authorization was required from the Polis to form an association in Attica. The law of Solon even recognized the legality of contracts negotiated between members of any association. But all these associations could become illegal by introducing a foreign religion. It was not the intention of Athens to forbid the numerous foreigners within her borders to practice their national religions. In the Athenian mind, each nation had its gods which were not the gods of other nations, and all were real and powerful. It was not the place of the State to contest their existence or their power, but it reserved the right to exclude them from her territory, just as it might exclude any foreigner. To erect a temple to a foreign god on Attic soil, then, an authorization was required from the Boule and Demos. The request of the merchants of Kition appears to have followed the usual channels. First the Boule was consulted; this body, at the suggestion of one of its members, decided to refer the matter to the Ekklhesia. In the Ekklhesia, one month later, the people heard

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40 Gaius, XLVII, 22 (De Collegiis et Corporibus), cited by P. Foucart, Des Associations Religieuses chez les Grecs, Paris, 1873, p. 47ff.
the petition of the Cypriots, and the request was granted on the grounds that it contained nothing contrary to the laws: ἑδοξαν ἐννομα ἰκετευεὶν (17 above).

These considerations explain nicely why our decree has come down with a record of the deliberations conducted one month apart. By itself, neither section could have supported a court test. The latter section, which contains the authorization to build a temple, is issued in the name of the Ekklesia (15). It does not show, however, that the question had previously been considered by the Boule—an indispensable preliminary to the legality of any decree. Hence the merchants of Kition insured their rights by juxtaposing both the record of the preliminary debate and that of the final authorization. 41

Because of the legal proceedings surrounding the admission of the Cypriot Aphrodite, we are assured that this goddess was not considered to be a native deity. Indeed, it can be shown that this Aphrodite is the Syrian goddess commonly known in Greece as "Ourania," the epithet by which the goddess of Askalon can most readily be distinguished from the patroness of Hierapolis—Dea Syria. We have a short inscription, also found at Piraeus and belonging to the same period, in which a woman of Kition

expresses her dedication in these terms: 'Αριστόκλεα
Κιτίας Αφροδίτη οὐρανία εὑξαμενε ἀνέθηκεν. Now the
Aphrodite of Kition was Astarte, the goddess of Askalon
and South Syria. In fact, the worship of this divinity
was brought to Cyprus at a very early time by the Phoeni-
cians, as Herodotos informs us (I, 105, tr. Rawlinson):

When they had reached Palestine, however, Psam-
metichus the Egyptian king met them with gifts and
prayers, and prevailed on them to advance no further.
On their return, passing through Askalon, the city of
Syria, the greater part of them went their way with-
out doing any damage; but some few who lagged behind
pillaged the temple of Celestial Aphrodite. I have
inquired and find that the temple at Askalon is the
most ancient of all the temples of this goddess; for
the one in Cyprus, as the Cyprians themselves admit,
was built in imitation of it; and that in Cythere
was erected by the Phoenicians who belong to this
part of Syria.

Another text, from Delos, confirms the equation Aphrodi-
te Ourania--Astarte: Δι' Οὐράνιω καὶ Ασταρτη παλαιστινη
Αφροδίτη οὐρανία θεοίς ἐπίκουοις. Accordingly, the de-
dication of Aristoklea shows that the Aphrodite estab-
lished at Piraeus in 333 b.c. is the Phoenician-Syrian
Astarte.

On the other hand, a text of a much later date
shows that the Syrian Aphrodite of Hierapolis--Dea Syria--
was established at Piraeus by 97/6. It is not possible

42 IG II², 4636.
43 Ins. de Délos, 2305.
to date precisely her arrival; no decree has come down to relate the deliberations of the Polis in her favor. It seems safe to say, however, that her acceptance in Attica occurred about 128/7, the year in which her cult was authorized for Delos. Ferguson may be correct that it was hardly possible for her to be recognized at Delos without having achieved that status at Athens. Whatever the case may be, the presence of Dea Syria is assured by a single document, from which we quote the pertinent portions:

The inscription is a decree, passed by the Orgeones of the Mother of the Gods, in honor of Nikasis the Corinthian, priestess of the Syrian Goddess, for the "sacrifices she offered to the Syrian Aphrodite and the other gods." With this as the only text upon which to base a discussion of Atargatis at Piraeus, we are necessarily limited in the facts we can bring to light. The first point


45 IG II², 1337, 3-7.
to consider is the fact that the priestess of the Syrian Goddess is being honored in a decree published by the Orgeones of the Mother of the Gods. We saw earlier that at Phistyon Dea Syria was at times worshiped under the name of Mother of the Gods. The identification was easily explained by the similar attributes shared by the divinities. Also, there was no evidence that the Mother of the Gods was worshiped in Aetolia. But at the Piraeus her cult was well established by 97 B.C.—a fact which seems to mean that the situation there was the opposite of the condition prevailing in Aetolia. Foucart proposes that the divinity of the Orgeones was one goddess of whom the Mother of the Gods and Atargatis represented two aspects. There is some support for this hypothesis, of course, for the reason we have just stated, namely that the deities, by their similarity, are easily confused. But in the second and third centuries Atargatis was a well known deity in the Greek world, one with too distinctive a personality to be worshiped by the same orgeonic cult with the Mother of the Gods. Dea Syria carried her own rites with her from Hierapolis to Delos and to Athens.

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46 Priestesses are rare in the cult; for two others cf. Eunapius in F. Hist. Gr. (Muller), IV, p. 54, and IG IX 12, 110, line 8 (Phistyon).


Our decree suggests some association between cults which are elsewhere distinct, but the degree and manner of association must remain unsettled. We cannot say whether the goddesses shared one temple—the Metron—at Piraeus. Such a situation is possible on the basis of our knowledge of the cults. The worshipers of Atargatis, perhaps unable to have their own temple in Attica, could have associated their goddess with the Mother of the Gods and eventually, by accommodation, have shared a temple with the Orgeones. Yet we must caution that association does not mean identification. Our decree shows that Dea Syria was served by her own priestess, a fact which shows that the two cults were not completely fused into one.

**Smyrna**

We have a law from Smyrna, regarding the care of some sacred fish, which is the only document presumably referring to the cult of Atargatis in that city. No divinity is named in the inscription, but commentators are generally inclined to ascribe the text to the cult of Atargatis, on the grounds that fish are inseparable from her worship both in Syria and in the Greek world. In addition to this, the diffusion of centers of worship of

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Atargatis throughout the Aegean allows one to admit the possibility of her establishment at Smyrna as well as anywhere else.

On the other hand, the identity of the divinity in question should not be asserted on the grounds of such plausibilities. The fact is that fish were considered sacred not only in the cult of Atargatis but in many ancient religions. In the Greek world itself we find multiple examples of this. Thus, according to Diodoros (V, 3, 5), both in ancient times and in his own day, large fish in great numbers were to be found in the fountain of Arethusa. These were sacred to Artemis and not to be touched by man, for the goddess would visit with great suffering any man who dared eat them, even in the stress of war. Pausanias relates (III, 21, 5) that in Laconia, at Aegiae, there is a lake of Poseidon in which "they are afraid to fish, saying that in these waters a fisherman turns into a fish called 'the fisher.' " At Pharae, in Achaia, there is a water sacred to Hermes where, similarly, no fishing is allowed because the fish are considered sacred (Paus. VIII, 22, 4). In Attica (Paus. I, 38, 1) the streams called Aheiti are sacred to Demeter and Kore: only the priests of the goddesses may catch fish in them. Examples of similar practices can be multiplied, but these may be sufficient to guard against too hasty appli-
cation of the law of Smyrna to the cult of Dea Syria.
The provisions could very well apply to Atargatis, but there is no proof.

Nevertheless, the text is notable in its own right. It forbids anyone to molest the fish or to defile their precinct or to steal them. Whoever shall be guilty of such acts should be ruined "by utter destruction" and thrown to the fish to be eaten alive. Here is the text in its entirety:

\[
[l]χθύς ἕρωδς μὴ ἄδικεῖν
μηδὲ σκέφτοσ τῶν τῆς
θεοῦ λυμαίνεσθαι, μηδὲ
[ε]κφέρειν ἐκ τοῦ ἕροῦ ἔπι[ι]
κλοπήν. ὃ τούτων τι ποιῶν
κακὸς κακὴ ἕξωλελα ἀπὸ-
λοιτο, ἡθυομπρωτος γενό-
μενος. ἐαν δὲ τῆς τῶν ἱχθύ-
ων ἀποθάνῃ καρποῦσθω
ἀὔθημερόν ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ
tοῖς δὲ συμφυλάσσουσιν
καὶ ἐπαύξουσιν τὰ τῆς
 nike τίμια καὶ τὸ ἱχθυο-
τρόφιον αὐτῆς βλού καὶ
ἐργασίας καλῆς γένουτο
παρὰ τῆς θεοῦ ὀνησίς.
\]

The sentence of death by devouring recalls a particularly Greek sentiment of horror at the thought of death in the sea without burial, of which we find several echoes in Homer. Thus Achilles apostrophizes the mutilated corpse of Lykaon (II. XXI, 120f.):

\[50\] Sokolowski, no. 17, p. 49.
Odysseus utters a similar sentiment (Od. XIV, 135f):

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η τοῦ γ' ἐν πόντον φάγαν ἰχθύες ὅστεα αὐτοῦ
κεῖται ἐπ' ἡπείρου ψαμάθῳ εἰλιμένα πολλῇ
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Again in the Odyssey (XXIV, 290f.):

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...δὺν ποὺ τῆλε φίλων καὶ πατρίδος αἵνες
ἡ ποὺ ἐν πόντῳ θάγαν ἰχθύες, ἦ...`
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**Philippopolis**

The inscription found here in northern Thrace marks the farthest point North to which Dea Syria is known to have penetrated. In the text, the priest of Atargatis offers an altar to Apollo Kendrisios:

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Ἀπόλλωνι
Κενδρισῳ Βίθυς
Κοτυος Ιερείς
Συρίας θεᾶς
δῷρου ἄνε-
θηκεν
```

**Aegieira**

Although no inscriptions from this Achaeian port have been found, the worship of the Goddess is assured by a passage in Pausanias. The city worshiped Ourania particularly, according to Pausanias, but there was also a temple of Atargatis. The temple was opened only on

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51 *Revue des Études Grecques*, XV (1902), 32, an undated inscription.
certain days and the worshipers had to submit to customary purifications before entering, especially in the matter of diet, a point which we shall discuss later in the cult at Delos.

Beroea, Macedonia

Although we are at the mercy of Fortune for the ultimate value of our epigraphical treasure, we could hardly have fared better, in the case of Beroea, had some benevolent worshiper of Dea Syria taken care to insure the preservation of the important inscriptions. Only three have survived pertaining to the Goddess, but taken together they reveal an unique history.

The first text is the simple dedication of an altar, belonging to the end of the third century b.c.

The epithet Σωτείρα is unique:

'Απολλωνιᾶς Δεξιλάου ἱερείς
'Αταργάτει Σωτείραι

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52 Paus. VII, 26, 7. Cf. IX, 25, 3, where Pausanias states that the temple of the Great Mother Dindymene is accessible only once each year (Thebes).

53 The inscriptions are available only, as far as I am able to find, in A.K. Orlandos, Βεροϊς Ἐπιγραφοὶ Ἀνέκδοτοι, Arch. Delt., II (1916), 144-47, no. 1, 2, 3.

54 Orlandos, no. 1, p. 145.
The second inscription appears just below the dedication of Apollonides. The text is as follows:

Έτους ΑΟΣ Εσβαστοῦ τοῦ καὶ ΖΗΤ πανύμου ᾿Κορυφλᾶ Δίωνυσία ἑχοῦσα τέκνων δίκαιον ἑστηκογράφησα τῇ θεῷ Σύρᾳ Παρθένῳ κοράσιον μου δύοματί Σωτηρίαν, ὡς ἐτῶν τριάκοντα, οἱ κογενὲς.

This inscription, as well as the third found at Beroea, shows that the temple of Dea Syria was the scene of manumissions, as at Phistyon. Judging from these few texts, however, the manumission ritual probably simply took place before the Goddess for there is no trace of the fiction of actual purchase by the Goddess. This method of manumission, as we pointed out earlier, is a Greek practice, but it is referred here and at Phistyon to an exotic divinity perhaps by reason of the nationality of many of the slaves. Aetolian and Macedonian soldiers returning from the East brought back with them numbers of slaves who, by their numerousness, in time doubtless gave the servile population an Oriental complexion.

Both manumissions preserved were initiated by women—a fact which is not unique but remarkable. The phrase ἑχοῦσα τέκνων δίκαιον (2-3 above) is included in both texts to show that the woman had the right to

55 Orlandos, no. 2, p. 145.

56 And Orlandos, no. 3, p. 147, lines 4-5.
perform a legal act. The phrase is the technical one which corresponds to the more familiar "jus trium liberorum" of Roman Law. Under the **Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibua** and the **Lex Papia Poppaea**, a free woman acquired the "jus liberorum" after giving birth to three children; a **liberta** after four. This distinction gave its holder the power to act alone, without the "auctoritas" of her guardian, and, quite as important, the liberty to dispose of her property by will.\(^{57}\)

Of course the especial value of this assortment of inscriptions is that they show that the cult of Dea Syria endured longer in Beroea than anywhere else on record in the Greek world. According to the peculiar Macedonian calendar, Ἔτους ΑΟΣ Σεβαστοῦ καὶ ΖΙΤ refers to the year 271 after Actium (31 b.c.) and the year 387 after Macedonia's capitulation before Rome (148 b.c.), or, in our reckoning, 239 a.d. The third inscription belongs to the year 293 a.d., by a similar explicit statement.\(^{58}\) The cult of Dea Syria in Beroea, then, endured through at least five centuries, to the end of the third century of our era.

\(^{57}\) Cf. Edouard Cuq, s.v. "Liberorum jus," in Daremberg-Saglio.

\(^{58}\) Orlando, p. 147, no. 3: "Ἐτόους ΝΩ Σεβαστοῦ.
The epithet **Soteira** which we encountered in the first inscription from Beroea deserves a word of commentary. In no other inscription do we find this epithet, but we may wonder if it is a mere coincidence that in the second inscription from Beroea (cited above) the name of the slave girl is Soteira. The name is not common, though not unique. Could the girl have been so named by a devout mother in honor of Atargatis-Soteira? The epithet Soter (Soteira) is applied to many gods throughout Greek literature, especially to Zeus, and refers to the god's ability to save the worshiper from danger—drowning, injury, etc. The transcendental use of the word is Christian. Although the epithet applied to Atargatis is unique here, we know that the Goddess, both in Syria and in Greece, was believed to have the power to protect. Lucian (D.S. 28) relates that a priest ascends the great phalluses in the courtyard of Hierapolis to pray for Syria. This act in itself implies that the protection of the deity is available. At Delos, again, we shall see many dedications made in thanksgiving for some unspecified gift from the Goddess, among which protection might certainly have been included.
Astypalaea

At the end of the third century B.C. Atargatis was worshiped at Astypalaea by a community organized in a thiasos: 59

ἐπὶ λείψεως Ὀφελίωνος τοῦ Ἑνατίωνος καὶ ἐπὶ στρατεύοντος Σύρου τοῦ ΒΙΕΤΤΟΥ ἔδοξε ταί θεάι τάς Αταργατί καὶ τῇ κοινῷ τοῦ θιάσου τῶν πατρίων θεῶν. Ἑπείδη Ὀφελίων Ἑνατίωνος ἀποδείχθηκε ὑπὸ τάς θεοῦ δίᾶ τοῦ κλάρου λαρεῖς τῶν πατρίων θεῶν ἀνήγαθος ἑγενήθη καὶ πᾶσαν σπουδὰν καὶ φιλοδοξίαν ἑπείδειξαν περὶ τῆς λειτουργίας τῶν θεῶν καὶ περὶ τῇ κοινῷ τῶν ......

This inscription brings up several facts which will be considered at greater length in our study of the cult at Delos. We shall see that the Delian priests of Atargatis were perhaps selected by lot, although none of the Delian texts mentions the fact explicitly. This follows easily from the phraseology employed in designating the incumbent priest and from our understanding of the complex system of official priesthoods at Delos.

The text from Astypalaea (δὲ τοῦ κλάρου 5 above), which is the only specific declaration on the subject, tends to confirm our speculations about Delos. The phrase ἔδοξε ταί θεάι (2 above), similarly, is the counterpart of the common κατὰ προστάγματα of the Delian inscriptions. 60

59 IG XII 3, 178.
60 Cf. ch. III, p. 90.
Both phrases show that the Goddess had ways of making her wishes known and carried out. At Delos she visited her worshipers in dreams and visions as they reclined in one of the many exedras in the temenos. At Astypalaea the will of the Goddess was expressed by the falling of lots.

The date at which Dea Syria made her appearance in Astypalaea is not known, but it could be that her worship lasted for many centuries. Another inscription, which cannot be dated with precision, but which appears to belong to the second century of our era, shows that her shrine was frequented well into Christian times:

\[ \text{Αντιοχος καὶ Ευπορος Αταργατει[τι] ἀνέθηκαν} \]

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61 Cf. ch. III, p. 121 f.

62 IG XII 3, 188. The editor of IG XII 3, F. H. de Gaertringen, comments, "litteris alterius a. Chr. n. saeculi," citing also the statement of C. Rayet, BCH, III (1879), 406, "l'inscription est en caractères du II\textsuperscript{e} siècle de notre ère." The discrepancy of four centuries seems not to have disturbed the editor of IG, since he does not take issue with Rayet. I suggest that IG could have a typographical error at this point and should read "alterius p. Chr. n." rather than "alterius a. Chr. n."—this suggestion being offered as the simplest possible correction. On the other hand, (1) Antiochus is a Hellenistic name and (2) the writers on Dea Syria unanimously place the cult at Astypalaea ca. 200 B.C. and fail to allude to these conflicting dates. Cf. Cumont in Darenberg-Saglio (op. cit.), 1592; Goossens, p. 97, n. 4; Walton, op. cit., p. 856.
Further perigrinations of the Syrian Goddess are known by a few texts scattered from Sicily to Asia Minor. By their reticence, however, these testimonia discourage commentary. Some are undatable and tell us no more than that the Goddess left her mark. We shall simply quote these texts and indicate their origin.

**Mylasa**

This single text is preserved from Mylasa, not far from the coast in southern Asia Minor: 63

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[ΔΙΟ]
μυσίον άλεθής
Αφροδείτης τής
Συλ'ρίας τήν πα-
[ρ]αστάδα
διεθηκεν
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**Skyros** 64

Κρατήσιον Συρία θεω.

**Nisyros**

This text is preserved within the body of a longer inscription which incidentally states that the subject of the decree, because of some valorous acts, will also receive some crowns from the worshipers of Dea Syria, who were united, at Nisyros, in a body of Aphrodisiasts: 65

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χρυσέος στεφανοίς καὶ ἑπάτης \'Αφρο-
δίσιον τάν Σύρων . . . . .
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63 *Ath. Mitt.*, XV (1890), 259.
64 *Ath. Mitt.*, LVIX (1934), 72.
65 *Ath. Mitt.*, XV (1890), 134.
Uncertain date and Origin

ΔΕΙΣΥΡΙΧΑΤΡΑΓΑΕΣ
ί.ε. δεια Συρία Αταργαετις

Sicily

A passage from Diodoros (frg. 34, 2 Dindorf) tells that the Sicilian slave revolt of 134 b.c. was led by a slave of Apamea, Syria, worshiper of the Syrian Goddess.

Syracuse

The original inscription is now lost, but we have a translation of it made by Cajetanus, which reads in part: Dum esset sacerdos Syriae Deae Tiberius Tiberrii . . . (names of Romans follow). 67

Aegina

Goossens, in his learned book, 68 believes there was probably a cult at Aegina, on the basis of this text: 69

Αγαθόκλεα
Ἀντιπάτρου
Ἱεροπολέτῃς χρηστῇ
χαίρε

The monument is a funerary stele which names a woman from Hierapolis. This alone, it seems to us, is hardly evidence of an established cult.

66 CIG, 7064; BCH, III (1879), 407.
67 IG XIV, 9.
69 IG IV, 74.
It may be helpful to conclude with a summarization of the facts revealed by our review of all these inscriptions from the Greek world. The earliest evidence of Atargatis comes from Phistyon, in Aetolia, and dates from the middle of the third century before Christ. The latest inscription (from Beroea), on the other hand, is precisely assigned to the year 293 a.d. Our texts, therefore, show that the Syrian Goddess was worshiped at various places in Greece during a span of five centuries. Although the inscriptions are too rare to prove that the cult endured without interruption in any one place for the entire span of five centuries, our evidence suggests that this may have been nearly the case in several instances: Beroea, from the end of the third century b.c. to the end of the third century of our era; at Phistyon, from the middle of the third century b.c. to the beginning of the first century b.c.; at Thuria, from the beginning of the second century b.c. to perhaps about the middle of the first century a.d.; at Astypalaea, from an unknown date into Christian times.

Atargatis was known under her Oriental name at Beroea (with the epithet Soteira) and Astypalaea, but the Greeks readily identified her with their own Aphrodite. Thus at Phistyon, Piraeus, and Nisyros we hear of "The Syrian Aphrodite" or of the worshipers as the "Syrian
Aphrodisiasts." At Thuria, Philippopolis, and Beroea we also find the simple designation Syria Theos, sometimes coupled, as in the last two localities, with the epithet Parthenos. At Phistyon Atargatis is also called Mother of the Gods as well as Parthenos, a fact which reveals a local conception of the Goddess as both virgin and mother. At Piraeus Atargatis was associated again with the Mother of the Gods, but the precise relationship is not made explicit by the single text preserved. Whereas there is no evidence for a cult of Cybele in Aetolia, this goddess had long been established at Piraeus when Atargatis was introduced there, sometime before 97/6. Cybele and Atargatis are similar in many respects and this explains partly why in our single text the divinities are associated. But there is no evidence to help us define the relationship. In fact, we can say little more than that even if the goddesses were associated, even to the point of perhaps sharing a temple, their cults were not yet completely fused into one, for the Syrian Goddess was served by her own priestess.

Although there is nothing in the history or the mythology of Atargatis to suggest that she is in any way associated with the preservation of civic records, it is a curious fact that in three instances in the Greek world
she acts as a custodian of public documents. At Phistyon and Beroea her shrine is the scene of official acts of manumission. At Thuria, on the other hand, the temple of the Goddess is selected to be the repository of the text of an important treaty between the Thurians and the Megalopolitans. These three cases show most clearly that the Syrian Goddess was able to win the reverence of entire Greek communities. Athena was probably the chief divinity of Thuria for, as we know, her priests were eponymous there, but at least in this instance Atargatis shared civic honors with the Greek poliad divinity par excellence.

Concerning the specific ritual of the cult of Atargatis in Greece our texts prove to be particularly deficient. A sacred law (from Smyrna) which is ascribed to the cult with the greatest reservations, since in fact it does not name a specific deity, concerns the protection and disposition of some sacred fish. This could well refer to the Syrian Goddess, of course, whose association with fish is very well known. Finally, a Thurian inscription speaks of the "proedria" and "mysteries"—something unique in the cult of the Goddess, either in Greece or in Syria. We shall return briefly to this question in the following discussion of the cult at Delos.
CHAPTER III

DELOS

We are able to say—with our advantage of hindsight—that if any single place in the Greek world of the latter half of the second century b.c. was perfectly suited to become the most important center of the worship of the Syrian Goddess, such was Delos. As Strabo declares (X, 5, 4), in a statement which historical investigation can only amplify, "Delos lies favorably for those who are sailing from Italy and Greece to Asia." This is the reason for the prominence of the island throughout most of antiquity, for it possessed no great culture or industry of its own.

Delian bronze was famous as far away as Rome, and it was appreciated for its special elegance by Cicero and Pliny. Yet the Latin writers speak of Delian vessels (Deliaca) much as we would speak of silk from modern Lyons. The manufacture of this product and the fame of the city which produces it rest upon the enterprise of only a few members or families of the community. By their limited scope, these activities do not account for the material welfare of the population at large. The situation could not be otherwise at Delos since the island did not have the

1Cicero In Verr. II, 2, 83; Pro Rosc. Amer. 133; Pliny, H.N. XXXIV, 9.
resources of area and of population to become more than a convenient stopping-place. Cicero is typical of the ancient traveler to Delos, for he visited the island on his journey to Rhodes, but delayed there only until he could "see all the weather-vanes in favor" of his departure (Attic., V, 12).

On the other hand, the Delian community prospered toward the end of the second century as a result of a combination of historical events. This was the destruction of Corinth by Rome in 146, and the subsequent transfer of that city's commerce to the island, which Rome declared a free port. Naturally "merchants resorted there, induced by the immunities of the temple."² A period of great wealth, construction, and change ensued, without doubt the most eventful years of Delian history. The abundance lasted nearly seventy years, and would doubtless have lasted more, had not the lot of Corinth in turn fallen to Delos. A fulcrum between the great powers of the East and the West, Rome and Pontus, the island was reduced to relative insignificance by the events of a single day of the year 88, its temples sacked, its population decimated, at the hands of Mithradates.

² Strabo, loc. cit.
Concerning the character which Delos acquired as a result of its several generations as a world port, one modern historian has written that "the chief language was Greek and the chief costume was the tunic but a little of everything might be heard and seen on Delos and the second speech was undoubtedly Latin and the second dress the toga."  

Romans, Campanians, and other Italians, however, were not the only ones to furnish a large element of the Delian population. It is idle to try to arrive at a numerical expression of the importance of the Orientals, but we may put to use, to derive an indication, one important inscription. There is preserved for the year 119/3 a complete list of the ephebes at Delos in that year, from which one statistic will suffice for the present purpose. In addition to the Athenians and the Romans, and the youths of other Greek cities, the catalogue enumerates persons from the following Oriental cities: Antioch (7), Tyre (3), Ptolemais (1), Arados (2), Hierapolis (2), Berytos (2), Sidon (2), Anthedon (1), Laodicea (1). The Orientals number twenty-one out of a total of forty-one ephebes. In

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3 W.S. Ferguson, Hellenistic Athens, p. 407.

addition to the established families which these young men represent, we must include the countless Orientals of low or servile condition of whom, or of whose children, there is likely to be no epigraphic record. However a passage from Strabo does not allow us to underestimate their numbers: "The exportation of slaves induced them (i.e. Cilician pirates) most of all to engage in their evil business, since it proved most profitable; for not only were they easily captured, but the market, which was large and rich in property, was not extremely far away, I mean Delos, which could admit and send away ten thousand slaves on the same day; whence arose the proverb 'Merchant, sail in, unload your ship, everything has been sold.'" \(^5\) It is true that Strabo speaks of slaves in transit from Syria and other Eastern countries to the West, especially to the Roman latifundia, but such vast numbers of slaves received and dispatched in a single day presupposes the facilities and the numerous personnel required to insure the efficiency of the traffic. It comes as no surprise, then, to find the Syrian Goddess the object of a prospering, fully organized, worship at Delos.

\(^5\) XIV, 5, 2, tr. H.L. Jones. Westermann, Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, p. 37, believes Strabo's figure of ten thousand is fantastic. Delos must have been an important slave market, but one might wonder if it was physically possible to accomplish the feat claimed by Strabo.
The mere number of souls attached to her by reason of national origin caused her introduction to the island; the heterogenous character of the population insured her welcome and firm establishment.

Before investigating the origin, growth, and nature of the worship of the Goddess, however, we shall describe the nature of the evidence available for the study. The excavations of the site of the temenos of Atragnatis were accomplished by the Ecole Francaise, and the results published intermittently from 1882 to the end of the second decade of the present century. Publication of the final results of the undertaking, although promised these many years, has not yet appeared. What is available is nevertheless sufficient to enable us to recreate the appearance of the sanctuary with reasonable accuracy. But the most abundant source of information is to be found in the inscriptions which have been recovered in quantity. In all they number over eighty: dedications of entire temples, porticos, or mean ex-votos, for the most part; several

6 Reports in Bull de Corr. Hell. (BCH), especially vols. VIII and XXXI; in Delos, Colonie Athénienne, by Pierre Roussel, Paris, 1917 (hereafter DCA); in Comptes Rendus de l'Acad. des Inscr. (CRAI), 1910. The inscriptions are published in vol. 5 of Inscriptions de Délos, 1937, by P. Roussel and Marcel Launey. All references to this work are indicated simply by an arabic numeral (e.g., 2220).

7 Reported in progress in BCH, 1951, 187 and 1950, 373.
catalogues of benefactors, but with a few inscriptions of more than prosopographic interest, including a curse and a ritual interdiction.

The dedications, by their very nature, tend to find expression in the stereotyped phraseology which is illustrated by this example:

Achaios of Hierapolis, son of Apollonios, elected priest in the year of the archonship of Dionysios, in the year after the archonship of Lykiskos, in honor of Hadd and Atargatis, his national gods, in behalf of himself and his wife Eubole, their children Apollonios, Dionysia and Protagenes, Achaios and Lysimachos, in behalf of his brothers Apollonios, Lysimachos, and Protagenes, caused to be erected this temple and the adjacent structure and set up the altars of the temple.

A word should be added concerning the appearance of the inscriptions and of the seat of worship of the Goddess in general. The inscriptions were often poorly carved. They were meant to serve as material proof that a command of the divinity had been obeyed or that a

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8 2226. The inscription is "translated-out" with complete literalness in order to preserve the order of the elements which are typical of all the dedications.

9 E.g. 2277, 2285, 2294; well executed letters: 2227, 2240, 2252; traces of paint: 2226.

10 The phrase ἐπὶ προσόγυμα occurs frequently: 2220, 2264, 2278, 2280, 2281, 2284, 2294, 2303.
prayer had been heard. Similarly, the structures within the temenos were often of mediocre construction and materials. Thick coats of stucco concealed the roughness of the masonry; the use of marble was very limited, and generally reserved for the dedicatory plaque, which was incorporated into the masonry. The final impression after considering the material remains is one of poverty coupled with religious fervor. The bulk of these inscriptions commemorates the devotion of the many faithful of low station who could do little more than offer a drachma or two to have their names scratched upon a stone, to insure for themselves and their families the good will of the Syrian Goddess.

**History of the Syrian Sanctuary**

According to the letter of the epigraphical evidence, the year 128/7 marks the beginning of the public worship of Atargatis at Delos. In that year Achaios was elected priest for one year, whereupon he dedicated to Hadad and Atargatis, his national gods, a temple, an "oi-

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11 χαριστήριον cf. 2228, 2231, 2235, 2240, 2241, 2251-53, 2255, 2258, 2263, 2265-74, 2295; also 2301 where bronze ears are a symbol of the deity's attention to prayers.

12 DCA, p. 260; CRAI, 1910, p. 300.

13 εὐχήν 2257, 2260, 2282, 2285, 2287, 2289, 2290.
kos," and some altars, in behalf of himself, his three brothers, his wife and their five children.\textsuperscript{14} It is not possible to identify the temple dedicated by him.\textsuperscript{15} Another inscription (2247) belonging to the same period, but from which the name of the donor and presumably that of the archon have disappeared, shows that another naos was built under the priesthood of Seleukos, also an Hieropolitan. The inscription can be dated only approximately, since we are deprived of the valuable synchronism which might have been offered by the name of the archon, but it is nevertheless certainly ascribed, by the nationality of the priest, to a time before 118/7, since after that year the priesthood of the Syrian gods was assumed and held henceforth by Athenians. Accordingly, it is not possible to determine whether the naos in question, built under Seleukos, antedates that of Achaios, although there is reason to believe it does not. The phrase "in behalf of the people of Athens and the people of Rome" (2247, 2-5) suggests a date after 128/7, for it frequently appears\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] 2226. Date established by the archon Dionysios, cf. Dinsmoor, \textit{The Archons of Athens}, Cambridge, 1931, p. 223. Length of term proven by names of priests known to have held office in successive years: 108/7, Nikostratos (2250); 107/6, Aischrion (2232); Zoilos, 106/5 (2234).
\item[15] \textit{DCA}, p. 256.
\item[16] E.g. 2227-28, 2230-31, 2248, 2250 etc.
\end{footnotes}
in the texts positively dated after 118/7, but is unique here in the inscriptions which belong to the period of the Hierapolitan priests. Now the reason why Athens had chosen to assume the direction of the worship in 118/7, or even before, is not clearly understood. It is possible to see from the results, however, that the proceedings at Delos must have been under the constant scrutiny of the owners of the island from the start, until the decision was taken to manage affairs directly, through a priest officially appointed by the metropolis. For this reason, the inclusion of Athens and Rome in the donor's intentions would be particularly appropriate at a time when the cult had lost its original national character, had made its appeal to other elements of the Delian population, and was, in short, about to come under the protection of Athens. The inscription contains another phrase (2247, 12-14) which leads to similar conclusions. The naos was dedicated at the time when a certain Aristarchos had been elected ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπισκευήν. If we are to take ἐπισκευή in the usual sense of "repair,"17 the text means that Aristarchos was in charge of overseeing the reappointment of the structure or structures already in existence within the limits of

17 Demosthenes, De Corona, 329; Thuc., I, 52.
the sanctuary. The only edifice known to have existed at this time is the naos of Achaios. Hence 128/7 may stand as the date of the first temple in the sanctuary of the Syrian Goddess.

It has been suggested that the cult of Atargatis in Delos may date to the period of Delian independence (314-166), when it was practiced privately and supported by voluntary donations. This hypothesis must be modified. Its admission implies the existence of a restricted society, a "koinon," of worshipers organized with enough solidarity to insure the perpetuation of the cult over a long period of time. If such an association ever existed, it has left no traces. This is not to say that Syrian merchants were unknown in Delos several generations before

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18 Th. Homolle, BCH, VIII (1884), 112.

19 The economic activity of Hierapolis has long been recognized by scholars. Cf. W. Robertson Smith, English Historical Review, II (1887), 315: "Hierapolis was never the seat of a great monarchy, but it was a great meeting-place of trade, where the waterway of the Euphrates was intersected by the road from Coelo-Syria to upper Mesopotamia and the farther East." On Delos before 128/7: "Delos war schon vor der athenischen Besitzergreifung im j. 166 kaum ein Gemeinwesen im gewöhnlichen Sinne . . . sondern ein grosser Händelplatz, wo Leute aus den verschiedensten Ländern zusammenstromten," Nilsson, p. 115.
the date at which their traces can be recovered, but the 
existence of a number or even a community of Syrians at 
Delos does not necessarily imply the existence of a place 
of worship or a religious association, however informal. 
In view of the lack of positive evidence, it is not pos­
sible to assume, before 128/7, more than private devotion 
at the hearth addressed by the Syrians to their national 
Goddess.

The Syrians established their sanctuary original­
ly where it now stands, to the East of the Inopos, on the 
land which borders the northern limits of the Egyptian 
sanctuary. Access was gained by a long stairway, built 
during the period of the Hieropolitan priests, which led 
up from the eastern bank of the Inopos. It is not like­
ly that the Syrians selected for any particular reason a 
site in this area, adjacent to the Egyptian sanctuary.
The two cults are clearly distinct. There are no inscrip­
tions to show that the various divinities were in any way 
associated. Hauvette has tried to establish a close rela­
tionship between the gods, while admitting that no inscrip­
tions name both Isis and Atargatis. The impression was 
the result of the fact that the first inscriptions found

\[20\] Cf. plan of the excavations, CRAI, 1910, p. 
289; also DCA, p. 255.

\[21\] 2283. CRAI, 1910, p. 301; DCA, p. 255.
were scattered among the dedications made to Isis. Allowance being made for the confusion of a later epoch, Hauvette nevertheless concluded that a close association had existed at the origin. The contrary seems to be the case, however. To the north of the "chapel of Isis" there is a complex of structures which apparently did not communicate with the buildings to the south. Furthermore, the new inscriptions, found after Hauvette, were not discovered pell-mell. Those in honor of the Egyptian gods were discovered in the southern part of the excavations, whereas the dedications of the Syrian Goddess were found to the north. Also, as Hauvette recognized, the Egyptian and Syrian gods did not share a common priest, as is shown by the inscriptions which mention specifically the "priest of Sarapis" or the "priest of Hagne Aphrodite."

The inscription which reveals the priesthood of Achaios and his dedication of the first temple has two crowns carved below the text. The crown to the right is

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22 "Il est important d'abord de déterminer les relations d'Isis et d'Aphrodite Syrienne à Délos. En effet, si le temple des dieux étrangers n'est pas un sanctuaire unique et fermé . . . si les différents dieux honorés dans ce temple ont un culte distinct, il n'en est pas moins vrai qu'ils sont unis entre eux par des liens étriers et des relations intimes qu'il ne faut pas méconnaître." BCH, VI (1882), 471.

23 CRAI, 1910, p. 293.

24 On the names of Atargatis at Delos cf. p. 120.
accompanied by the words ἡ πόλις Ἑἰροπολειτῶν. The inscription of the crown to the left has disappeared, but it most certainly read ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ἀθηναῖων. The presence of these crowns throws some light upon the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the cult. In 128/7 the Hierapolitans of Delos obtained authorization from Athens to build and open a temple. A person was appointed by Athens to oversee the new sanctuary and at the same time to become priest of the new divinities. As such he received one priestly crown as the appointed representative of Athens, and the other as representative of the mother-city of the cult. The presence of Athens is easily explained by the fact that anyone would have needed the permission of the owners of the island before appropriating land to build a sanctuary and introduce a new cult.26

We know the names of four Hierapolitans chosen to succeed Achaios in the years before 118/7.27 Their administrations saw the community increase in size and the place of worship grow in prosperity.28 Nor were the Syrians

25 2226. BCH, VI (1882), 486. DCA, p. 253, n. 4.
26 Cf. the deliberations about Astarte at Piraeus, IG II2, 337, and p. 63 ff. above.
27 Seleukos (2247), Marion (2257), Antaios (2280), Sarapion (2283).
28 Within ten years: two naoi (2226, 2247); one oikos (2226), altars etc. (2226, 2257, 2259, 2280, 2281-82).
the only benefactors; the names of Antioch, Laodicea, and Rome figure in the inscriptions. Athens is likewise represented by Kleostratides, whose interest in the Syrian Goddess dates from this early period. Later this same person will appear prominently as an important donor for the construction of a theater at the shrine. It is apparent that the Goddess had an appeal for the devout of all lands, but it may well be that this popularity was the chief cause of the event which determined the future of the cult in the island—the appointment of an Athenian priest. This event occurred in 118/7, or probably a few years earlier. The question must remain unsettled since it is not possible to date precisely the years of office of Achaios' successors. Consequently it is neither possible to state whether the Hierapolitans kept the priestly functions until 118/7. Whatever the case may be, the first Athenian priest inaugurated a program of continued expansion and embellishment, worked out over a period of nearly thirty years, by his gift of a third naos. In all, the dedicatory plaques of five of these structures have been preserved. Their very number suggests that they were

29 Gifts of Kleostratides: 2252, 2258, 2628, 1. 18 and 37.
30 2227. On the Athenian origin of this priest, whose name is lost, cf. DCA, p. 257.
31 2221, 2226, 2227, 2237, 2247.
not temples of very great size or magnificence, but rather small chapels which were not destined to accommodate all or even great portions of the community at one time.

Several years later (ca. 113/2) a terrace was built by means of fill and retaining walls to the north of the original courtyard. Up to this time access to the sanctuary was gained only by the great stairs built in the period of the Hierapolitan priests. Reaching the summit of the stairs the visitor would turn to the right to enter the large courtyard which was and remained the holiest part of the sanctuary. Turning to the left, he could now enter the new terrace from its southern limit. In time the terrace was delimited by structures of various descriptions.

An inscription belonging to the year 112/1, found at the northern extremity of the terrace, contains the dedication of the first exedra to be built in the temenos. These edifices, small rectangular buildings closed on three sides, are built on the analogy of the small oratories common at Oriental sanctuaries. The examples at

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2626. A text known only through a Ms. in the Bodleian (Misc. 163, 18th. century). Cf. DCA, p. 258.

2248; also 2253, 2255, 2266.

Cf. DCA, p. 259 and refs.
Delos probably contained cult statues, but they also had another purpose to which we shall return. Improvements continued (ca. 110/9) when the left side of the new terrace was delimited, for almost its entire length of nearly three hundred feet, by a portico built mainly at the expense of the priest Theodotos. The poros columns, with Doric capitals of marble, were offered by the faithful, either at the time of construction or later. One donor, a Roman, substituted a shaft of marble for the poros (probably at a later date) and took care to commemorate the fact in his dedication (2269): ἄυιλ τοῦ πορίου.

The greatest works of construction and beautification were carried out in 110/9. There is preserved for this year a fragmentary list of subscribers to the "decoration of the temple ... and of the porticos" (2627). The improvements were financed by the many faithful of small means, who, among other things, saw to the gilding of the throne of the Goddess (2627, 1. 7). In reality, the advances of the year are chiefly due to the efforts of two men: the priest Demonikos, and the Athenian Governor (Epimelētes) of Delos, Dionysios. The former dedicated the

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35 The work was actually begun earlier but the dedication occurred in 110/9. Cf. 2228.

36 2267-2273.
propylaea which served as the northern entrance of the new terrace (2230). The large door, opening directly onto the street, adorned with a marble sill which was found in situ, was the gift of a woman otherwise unknown, Apollonia daughter of Eukleon (2293). In addition, Demonicos caused to be built a house styled "oikesis," supplying also, as the inscription asserts, the materials necessary for its construction (2231). Dionysios (with his wife Artemisia), on the other hand, gave what appears to have been the most considerable temple in the sanctuary, a naos with pronaos. The identification cannot be made. To the same year belongs an official donation of undetermined nature, by the people of Athens (2220).

"According to the commands" of the Goddess, a theater was added in 108/7, approximately half way up the terrace on its eastern side (2628). It was made possible, again, by the small gifts of the faithful and dedicated by their priest Nikostratos. Kleostratides adorned the theater with parastades and statues of Eros (2251-52). Two years later (106/5) Midas of Heraclea dedicated the exedra thereafter identified by his name (2253). The richness and beauty of this exedra far surpasses that of all

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2221. Cf. 2222 where Dionysios is associated with the "therapeutai", probably in commemoration of the same event.
analogous structures. The entrance, in the Corinthian order, opening onto the portico, faced the theater across the terrace. It was preceded by a vestibule whose floor was covered by a fine mosaic. In the part of the portico which corresponded with the entrance of the exedra an Athenian, Phormio son of Nikias, set down a mosaic of far inferior quality. To the north of the theater a large cistern was added, probably in 106/5 under the priesthood of Zoilos. An inscription (2234) bearing his name has been found in the cistern, although there is no certainty that this was meant to commemorate its construction. One would of course expect to find a lake or pond, or some receptacle, to provide for the sacred fish, at any shrine of Atargatis. Farther to the north a Roman, P. Plotius, dedicated another exedra about 90 b.c. (2255). The last of these structures to be built, and probably the last significant addition to the sanctuary, was completed about the same time and has been tentatively identified to the south of the theater.

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38 DCA, p. 259.
40 2266. The exedra was offered by P. Aemelius Lucius, a Roman.
The epigraphical evidence fails after the year 90/89, for the unrelenting progress of the Syrian Goddess was suddenly and violently checked; in a day her achievements were razed to the level of the ground. The cataclysm which fell upon Delos during the troubles which arose between Athens and Rome, on the one hand, and Rome and Mithradates, the "enfant terrible" of the East, on the other, has been recorded by Appian and Pausanias:

Archelaos, sailing thither with abundant supplies and a large fleet, conquered by force of arms Delos and other strongholds which had revolted from the Athenians. He slew twenty thousand men in these places, most of whom were Italians, and handed the strongholds over to the Athenians.41

The notice of Pausanias is more instructive, but the disagreement among the ancient authors concerning the name of the commander cannot be resolved by reference to other ancient authors. Nevertheless, the two accounts supplement each other to confirm the suddenness and violence of the destruction.

Delos was then a Greek market, and seemed to offer security to traders on account of the god; but as the place was unfortified and the inhabitants unarmed, Menophanes, an officer of Mithradates, attacked it with a fleet, to show his contempt for the god, or acting on the orders of Mithradates; for to a man whose object is gain what is sacred is of less account than what is profitable. This Menophanes put to death the Delians themselves, and after

plundering much property belonging to the traders and all the offerings, and also carrying women and children away as slaves, he razed Delos itself to the ground... But neither Menophanes nor Mithradates himself escaped the wrath of the god. Menophanes, as he was putting to sea after the sack of Delos was sunk at once by those of the merchants who had escaped; for they lay in wait for him in ships. The god caused Mithradates at a later date to lay hands upon himself, when his empire had been destroyed and he himself was being hunted on all sides by the Romans. 42

The date of the catastrophe is not certain, but it probably occurred in 88 b.c. To judge from the subsequent history of the island, the city was not razed to the ground, but there are traces of destruction by fire and violence. The concurrent failure of our epigraphic evidence suggests that the worshipers of the Syrian Goddess were unable to recover from this blow which must have annihilated their labors of over forty years. 45 They did not disappear from the island entirely, however. Ferguson has pointed out that the sacristan (zakoros) of the Syrian Goddess before 88/7, a certain Euodos, appears in the same capacity in the dedications of the adjacent Egyptian establishment after the destruction of Delos. The duplication had not occurred before 90 b.c., since the Egyptian sanctuary had its own sacristan at the time,

Kroisos. Ferguson concludes "that after the catastrophe the two precincts were merged," The suggestion has the merit of plausibility, for the establishment of the Egyptians is likely to have suffered as much as that of the Syrians, so that both might have been able to carry on together, although not individually. On the other hand, there is no way of demonstrating that the person Euodos, so well known at the Egyptian sanctuary, is the person of the same name at the temple of Atargatis, since in all instances the name occurs without patronymic or demotic.

Officials of the Cult

The priest and his assistants.—The person ultimately responsible for the worship of the Syrian Goddess was, of course, the priest. His interest in the cult, however, could be both accidental and temporary. The reason for this is twofold and results from the very nature of the priesthood of all deities whose worship was officially accepted by Athens. First, the priest was an elected Athenian official who was not likely to be attached to the foreign god by reason of nationality; secondly,

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44 W. S. Ferguson, Klio, 1909, p. 333.

45 For Kroisos cf. 2210; Euodos, 2087, 2160-61, 2205, 2212 (all from the Sarapieion), from the Syrian precinct, 2263. In support of Ferguson, however, I find three inscriptions which indicate that some probably extensive renovations were undertaken ca. 88 at the Sarapieion: 2617-19.
the priest did not choose the cult he was to serve. Again, as a public servant, he had functions, responsibilities, and prerogatives which were explicitly delimited within the larger sphere of administration of sacred property throughout the island of Delos. The care of temple property was vested in a board of four "Custodians of Sacred Treasures." These officials had charge of all sacred property on Delos. Each temple or precinct had the right to keep and use the wealth it acquired, but the temple property and its contents was carefully inventoried under the scrutiny of the Custodians, at regular intervals. The results of the inventories were inscribed upon stones and preserved as official records.

The Custodians were assisted in the details of their work by the board of the priests of the official cults, who, attached one to each establishment, looked after their several interests. Each priest dated by his name the various porticos, statues, chapels, and exedras which were offered and built during his incumbency, and for the privilege of the renown which this afforded him, he

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46 The subject is fully treated by Roussel, DCA, ch. 2, sec. 2-3. The board was actually composed of two colleges of two members each, called οἱ ἐπὶ τὴν φυλακὴν τῶν ἱερῶν χρημάτων, οὗ ἐπὶ τὰ ἱερά.
took upon his shoulders the responsibilities of all matters pertaining to the ritual and sacrifices of worship. The priest was elected by lot, as is indicated by the usual phrase accompanying his name in the inscriptions: ἱερεὺς ὁν or ἱερεὺς γενόμενος. In the case of Achaios, however, the specific term χειροτονηθεὶς was employed—{2226}. The exception causes no difficulty, for we can easily surmise the circumstances surrounding the selection of the first priest. Achaios was appointed by Athens, not by lot, but after he was chosen from among the number of his fellow countrymen to inaugurate the worship of their Goddess.

Although the priests were chosen by lot, it is clear that not every Athenian male was eligible. During the Hierapolitan period the matter of choice must have been a relatively simple matter, since the only persons acceptable were men of that city. The candidate was in all probability a person of means—a peer of Achaios, a man

47 Whether the selection was done in Athens or in Delos is uncertain. The prerogatives of the Delian assembly composed of Athenian cleruchs, vis-à-vis the Athenian Boule, are not always clearly discernible. Cf. Ferguson, Hellen. Athens, p. 322: "The priests were designated by lot—in Athens probably, though candidates from the island were so often successful as to suggest a doubt." Roussel, DCA, p. 203, "n'aboutit à nulle solution précise... Mais à toute époque, le choix des prêtres dépend de la métropole; c'est d'elle qu'ils reçoivent l'âlôga au sortir de charge."
of sufficient substance to erect at his expense an entire temple. A study of the names of the Athenian priests, however, suggests that the eligibility of candidates was so controlled as to restrict the office to a relatively small number of persons—citizens of wealth. We have a record of nineteen Athenian priests, of whom ten are known to have made offerings, often of considerable value, at the approximate time of their term of office, according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priest</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Object, Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Athenian</td>
<td>118/7</td>
<td>naos, statue, 118/7</td>
<td>2227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodotos</td>
<td>ca.113/2</td>
<td>stoa, 110/9</td>
<td>2228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodoros</td>
<td>112/1</td>
<td>arcades, 112/1</td>
<td>2229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonikos</td>
<td>110/9</td>
<td>collonade, oikesis, 110/9</td>
<td>2230-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikostratos</td>
<td>108/7</td>
<td>donor for theater, 108/7</td>
<td>2628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aischrion</td>
<td>107/6</td>
<td>two altars, 107/6</td>
<td>2232-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoilos</td>
<td>106/5</td>
<td>TONEIGAN, 48, 106/5</td>
<td>2234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diophantos</td>
<td>103/2</td>
<td>(block of marble), 103/2</td>
<td>2235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philokles</td>
<td>ca.100-98</td>
<td>naos, thuromata, 100-98</td>
<td>2237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaios</td>
<td>ca.96-94</td>
<td>TON NAMARAN, 49, 96-94</td>
<td>2240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48 Oriental word of unknown meaning.

49 Cf. n. 48 and DCA, p. 421.
cinct, is otherwise well known at Delos; priest of the Egyptian gods (2067); priest of Zeus Kynthios and Athena Kynthia (1878); named in a catalogue "magistratum et sacerdotum stipes Apollini Pythio conferentes." Menodorus, priest soon after 118/7, is recorded elsewhere in a catalogue of undetermined character. The remaining priests are otherwise unknown.

It is obvious that the office of priest made considerable financial demands upon its holders. Of course they received no remuneration for their services, so we may take as an additional indication of their high social standing the multiple priesthoods of Theobios and others.

Two inferior ministers are known from the inscriptions, both again taken from good families. The Kanephoros is mentioned three times, and the post is filled, as

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50 IG II², 2336, col. 1, line 31; col. 2, 215.
51 2260; cf. 2630.
52 Seleukos (2263), Philoxenos (2224), Alexandros (2289), Stratios (2243), Poplios (2225), Sosibios (2266), Menelaos (2241).
53 In 95/4 Diophantos is priest of Zeus Kynthios, cf. DCA, p. 136. In 98/7 he is "Custodian of Sacred Treasures"—a post second only to the governorship of Delos, cf. DCA, p. 145. Gaios, priest ca. 96-4, is also priest of Sarapis and of the Great Gods, cf. DCA, p. 232.
usual in Greek worship, by a young girl.\textsuperscript{54} The person-
age known as \textit{Kleidouchos} occurs five times,\textsuperscript{55} and may have been elected to office for one year.\textsuperscript{56} There is no evidence as to his duties, beyond what his title suggests.

Other attendants and employees.—A person with the title \textit{Zakoros} is well known from our texts. Hesychios defines the term as \textit{νεόκορος ἱερεύς}. παρὰ τὸ τὸν ναὸν φαρεῖν. In other words, this personage is the Delian counterpart of the modern sacristan, whose function it is to see that the place of worship and the accoutrement of ritual are kept in good order. At the Syrian sanctuary he serves also as ornament-bearer in the processions.\textsuperscript{57}

The first person known to have held this post is Alexandros, very likely the son of Menodoros, priest soon after 118/7 (2260). After this time, however, the post was relinquished to persons of lower station, for a reason which is unknown. The names of subsequent \textit{Zakoroi}

\textsuperscript{54} Zoila, 2232, 2249, 2628 A 40; Dorothea, 2234, also for Isis, 2115; Nympho, daughter of the priest Dionysios of the Egyptian gods, 2057.

\textsuperscript{55} Apollonios, 2228, son of the priest Theodotos; Eukleon, 2248, son of Theodoros; Heraios, 2221-22, 2228; Zeno, 2232, 2249, stemma 1885; Diognetos, 2234, otherwise unknown.

\textsuperscript{56} As at the Egyptian precinct. Cf. DCA, p. 250.

\textsuperscript{57} 2628, col. 3, 24, Gorgias, mentioned as \textit{Zakoros} at 2288.
are given without patronymic or demotic—a clear indication of servile or at least low station. Further, there is reason to believe that the man who held these functions was a paid employee of the temple who might be perpetuated in service, or leave to take a similar position at another temple. Euodos, who, as we pointed out earlier, may be the person exercising similar functions at the Syrian sanctuary, is mentioned in an inscription from the Sarapieion as holding his office for the eighteenth time (2205). Isidoros was also employed successively at both sanctuaries (2253, 2156). We conclude that a person who spent eighteen years of his life at the same post must have received a means of support therefrom. The very fact that the zakoros is mentioned in so many inscriptions, however, indicates that his association with the sanctuary is not simply that of a paid servant. Gorgias is a donor for the sacred theater; Dionysios offers

58 Antiochos Philadelphus is the exception (2255).
59 Cf. above p. 104 f.
60 Hauvette, BCH, VI (1882), 477-78, believes the zakoros replaced the neokoros who received 120 drachmas for his services during Delian independence.
61 2288, 2628, col. 3, 24.
a phallus in the year of his service, and later dedicates a mosaic (2243-44). This last dedication is especially interesting because the donor offers the mosaic "in behalf of himself and the threpsantôn." It may well be that Dionysios was himself a threptos (verna), a slave born and brought up in the household. 62

Two other functions are known. A certain Philippo is designated Archizapphas, upon four occasions. 63 The appellation is completely enigmatic. Finally, the Demosios, unquestionably a slave, completes the list of personnel at the sanctuary. The nature of his functions is not certain. At the temple of Apollo, a demosios was elected to serve as clerk and recorder, but there is no evidence that the demosios of the Syrian shrine acted in a similar capacity. 64

Worshippers of Atargatis as a Community

The worshipers of the Syrian Goddess, both individually and as a group, were known as Therapeutai. The term assumed greater inclusiveness as the cult permitted

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62 At the Egyptian temple the zakoros was not a slave. Cf. DCA, p. 250.
632628, A, 17 and 33; 2224, 2253, 2274.
64DCA, p. 138. At p. 262, n. 5, Roussel insists upon a clear distinction between the Demosioi of Apollo and Dea Syria.
its original national character to vanish. Dedications were made by individuals who could append this designation to their names (e.g. 2224), but more frequently the word appears as a collective which refers to all the communicants, as in the case of the inscriptions which commemorate the larger and more costly undertakings of construction. Thus Dionysios, Governor of Delos in 110/9, is associated with the therapæutai in an inscription which probably commemorates the naos and pronaos dedicated by him in the same year. The construction of the theater required the greatest effort of everyone associated with the sanctuary, and we have a striking proof of the solidarity which united the therapæutai in the inscription which immortalizes the names of nearly an hundred of them who, in great or small measure, contributed to its realization (2628). Yet another text shows the therapæutai associated for another purpose—out of a less salutary nature. Here a wronged member of the group calls upon the body of his co-religionists to hurl its most effective collective curse against the faithless woman who

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65 2222. Similar associations at 2229, 2240.

66 No distinction was made, apparently, between men and women in any aspect of the activities of the cult. The names of women are about as numerous as those of men in the theater inscription (2628).
has defrauded him of his hard-won savings (2531).

One further text shows the worshipers of the Goddess grouped in a thiasos with a synagogesus at their head, apparently a native of Alexandria (2225, undated). There is only one mention of this particular association, which may be of a later date.

One should not be surprised to find that the nucleus of the Syrian religious community of Delos was composed of persons of Oriental origin. The sanctuary was called into being to serve the religious needs of these people who formed a considerable proportion of the population of the island. It is certain that they, at the core of the community, insured the perpetuation of the cult, although it is equally certain that Atargatis was not a divinity of interest to Orientals alone. A tabulation of the names of donors shows that the combination of Athenians, Romans, Italians, and others, outnumbers slightly those from Oriental cities. In itself the statistic means little, since allowance must be made for the fortuitousness of archaeological discovery, but it does serve to put in relief the individual attitude of those who by their

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67 Ten Romans (2253-55, 2257, 2265-66, 2269, 2288-89, 2302); twenty-two Athenians (2220-22, 2227-31, 2234-42, 2250-52, 2258, 2274); twenty-six Orientals (2224-26, 2232, 2245-47, 2256, 2259, 2261-64, 2267-68, 2270, 2276, 2280-81, 2285-87, 2296-97); undetermined (2243-44, 2246, 2248-49, 2260, 2271-72, 2275, 2277-78, 2282-83, 2290-91, 2293-95, 2298).
nationality were associated with the Goddess.

The Hierapolitans grouped themselves originally around their national gods, Hadad and Atargatis. However they would not or could not restrict their religion to themselves. Thus we see that in the very first years of the cult—a Roman, an Athenian, a Laodicean, and an Antiochian are making offerings as full members of the community. The generosity of the non-Syrians continues throughout the history of the sanctuary. There was formed, then, a religious body whose principle of unity was worship of the Goddess, without regard for questions of national origin. This is a trait peculiar to the cult of Atargatis, even as it was practiced in its native Syria. Lucian (D.S. 10) relates that the treasures of the temple of Hierapolis are brought by Arabians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Cilicians, and Assyrians. Again, at the great feast of the Hydrophoria, twice yearly, "not only priests, but all Syria and Arabia and people from beyond the Euphrates go to the sea" taking part in the worship of the Goddess (D.S. 13).

The proselyting by the Hierapolitans is in contrast to the practice of the other ethnic groups at Delos. The Italians and Romans early formed a colony at

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68 Cf. 2257, 2258, 2259, 2280.

69 E.g. 2221, 2232, 2245, 2261, 2265, 2285.
Delos which flourished and left as material proof of the close association which existed between persons of Italian origin the so-called "Agora of the Italians."\(^{70}\)

The merchants of Tyre were among the first to associate themselves, before 153/2, in a "Society of Tyrian Merchants and Shipowners, Worshipers of Heracles."\(^{71}\) Again, at the fringes of society, slaves, joined by some freedmen of small fortune, formed a society which insured the worship of the Roman Lares Compitales.\(^{72}\) The society of the merchants of Berytos is especially well known. Under the designation "Society of Berytian Merchants, Shipowners, and Innkeepers, Worshipers of Poseidon," they saw to both their commercial interests and the worship of their gods Poseidon, Aphrodite, and probably Heracles.\(^{73}\) The character of this group is best summed up in the words of Homolle: "On dirait d'un club ou d'une église, ouverts à tous les gens de même nationalité, de même profession et de même culte, qui demeurent ou qui passent, à charge de payer leur quote-part des frais généraux."\(^{74}\) No prosely-

\(^{70}\) DCA, p. 79; built ca. end of the second century.

\(^{71}\) DCA, p. 89.

\(^{72}\) Members known as Kompitaliastai, cf. DCA, p. 82.

\(^{73}\) DCA, p. 90.

\(^{74}\) BCH, VIII (1884), 111.
ting was undertaken in support of the gods of Berytos and the organization therefore remained a kind of guild. In contrast to all these groups the Hierapolitans vulgarized their religion, and in so doing lost whatever solid basis they may have had upon which to found an association of their own people. Rather they appealed to the Italian colony early in their history, as well as to all segments of Delos' cosmopolitan society.

The intrinsic universality of the cult of Atargatis may be made to account, at least in part, for its early achievement of official status. The policy of Athens towards foreign associations and religions on her soil is fairly well known. The right of association was granted to foreigners at Athens with the restriction that they could acquire property for religious purposes only with the approval of a public vote, as we saw earlier in the case of Astarte at Piraeus. Roussel believes, with likelihood, that Athens sought to give to all religions which were not strictly of a national character an official status. The merchants of Berytos, for example, preserved their integrity unthreatened, whereas their neighbors of Hierapolis quickly fell under the direct control of Athens, as an organization whose appeal to society at large could prove undesirable or harmful.

\[\text{DCA, p. 201}\]
The Character of the Cult at Delos

The cult of Atargatis at Delos does not reflect or give the least suggestion of the tempestuous and barbaric splendor of which the Goddess was the object in her native temple. "The priests are admitted to the sanctuary in great numbers," according to Lucian (D.S. 42-43), "some to immolate the victims, others to pour the libations; still others are called 'fire-eaters' and 'assistants at the altar.'" In Lucian's presence over three hundred assisted at the ceremonies: "Their garments are all white and they wear the pilos. Each year brings a new arch-priest, who is the only priest to wear purple and a tiara of gold. There is also a multitude of persons attached to the cult: flute players, pipers, and the Galli, and frenetic women." The remains at Delos fail to evoke the image of similar festivities. As we have shown, the administration of the sanctuary was in Greek hands and carried out in a thoroughly Greek manner, through officials common to all temples or precincts at Delos. There was no professional clergy in the island; the priest was a public official whose duty consisted in performing the sacrifices and purifications proper to the deities to whose service he had been elected. His official character was nowhere more clearly marked than in his rendition of accounts. Only the lowest officials were perpetuated in
service—a nucleus of personnel to insure the continuity of liturgical and administrative procedures.

If the clergy serving the Goddess at Delos resembles in no way its counterpart in the native temple, the deity herself is not without the marks of a long voyage from a distant land. Indeed, her original name, in time nearly forgotten, was perhaps unknown to those of her subjects who claimed no ethnic connection with the East.

The Syrian gods originally worshiped at Delos were known as Hadad and Atargatis. Achaios dedicated the first naos to them, and both names appeared regularly in the dedications of the Hierapolitan period. The male deity is mentioned first, although, judging from the subsequent eclipse of Hadad, the order has no hierarchical significance. Even during the first decade, however, Hadad begins to recede and we find the first dedication made to the Goddess alone, under the name by which she will be most frequently known thereafter: Hagne Aphrodite. Only slight variations occur in the name after the

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76 Cf. 2226, 2247, 2258, 2259, 2283; later the original names are used usually by Orientals, cf. 2285, 2261, 2264.

77 The order is reversed once: 2283.

78 Cf. 2220. The priest is officially known as "Priest of Hagne Aphrodite."
cult achieves official status. In the Greek mind Atargatis became completely identified with the Hellenic Aphrodite, and we have a clear indication of this fact in Kleostratides' gift of figures representing Eros (2251-52). Even where the original pair of gods is invoked we find the striking association of "Aphrodite and Hadad." In the minds of the Oriental worshipers, however, the Goddess, under her original name, was inseparable from her consort. On the other hand, to what appears to be a significant portion of the community, the male deity was not sufficiently important to warrant mention in their dedications. As we saw in the case of Hierapolis, Hadad, though always present and even originally predominant, according to the earliest evidence, tended to be effaced by his associate. This is the situation at Hierapolis in the lifetime of Lucian, and we find it repeated exactly at Delos. If the official title of the priest were not sufficient to indicate the relative importance of the gods,


80 Goossens statement, p. 96, n. 2, "parfois ... on identifie la déesse à Aphrodite," is not precise. In the inscriptions Dea Syria is identified with no other Greek deity.

81 2237, also 2255, 2266.
we could point to the fact that only two major dedications are made in honor of both deities. Therefore it is surprising to find one dedication to "Zeus-Hadad," with no mention of the Goddess (2266). The example is unique, although the identification is of course common elsewhere. Similarly, one of the few bits of sculpture found in the shrine at Delos is a fragment of a sitting god, bare to the waist, draped below, which is a Hellenized Syrian Baal.

Upon a number of occasions Hadad and Atargatis are linked in a triad with Asklepios. The fact reflects the Oriental tendency to form triads of divinities, for at Delos the third member is not, in the minds of the dedicants, the Greek god of healing. He is, rather, the Oriental Eschmun, invoked under the appropriate Greek name.

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82 The exedra of Leukios (2266) and that of Plotios (2255).
83 Lucian, D.S. 31, calls Hadad simply Zeus.
84 CRAI, 1910, p. 305 and fig. 8.
85 Cf. 2224, 2248, 2261, 2264. The association is always made by Orientals.
The Goddess herself, however, had healing powers. The multiple exedras of the precinct, it will be remembered, were small chapels to be used for private devotions. Three of the inside walls of the exedra were bordered by a wide podium which was covered over with stucco. It appears that the purpose of the podium was not to sit, but to lie upon. The fact indicates that incubation was practiced at the sanctuary. Indeed, the suggestion accords well both with the presence of Asklepios and with several other indications that Atargatis was not indifferent to matters of health. First, the priest Aischrion, in 107/6, dedicates an altar Υγεία, which we may take as an epithet of Atargatis, or simple as meaning "for health." Secondly, there have been found, at the Syrian sanctuary, examples of the bronze ears commonly offered as symbols of a deity's interest in, and ability to hear, prayers, including of course prayers for one's physical well-being. In this connection it is interesting to note that the number of healing divinities at Delos created such a competition that the ancient temple of Asklepios fell out of

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87 CRAI, 1910, p. 523; DCA, p. 259.

882233. The editors suggest the epithet by their punctuation.

89 At Delos bronze ears were found at the temple of Atargatis (2301), Apollo (2365), Aphrodite (2394-95), Aphrodite Peistiche (2396-98), Hydreios (2160), Isis (2173).
favor and was gradually abandoned after the middle of the second century, although its ministers continued to be elected for the remainder of the century. In fact, in the inscription relating to the theater (2628, col. 1, 24), one priest of Asklepios, Sostratos, figures among the therapeutai of Atargatis.

The very number of inscriptions from Delos, and the recovery of the site of the Syrian precinct by archaeology, one might have hoped, would reveal important facts affecting our understanding of specific matters of ritual. But, as students of religion have often remarked, the ancient sources are deplorably inadequate in this respect. The case of the Syrian Goddess at Hierapolis is no exception, even with Lucian's treatise. Lucian, priceless for what he has preserved of accurate information which cannot be recovered from other sources, is nevertheless superficial. One suspects that the satirist recorded the picturesque and the novel, that he did not know or care to know the deeper significance of the strange religious practices which he witnessed. Similarly, of the divine sacrifices, the libations, the processions which must have been of daily occurrence at the Delian precinct, there is not a word. One is dependent solely upon the dedications, which

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90 DCA, p. 239.
are all similar, upon the plan of the excavated ruins, and upon the few inscriptions of a special nature which have come down, to derive all that can be known by inference.

First, it appears that the plan of the temenos was favorable for long processions by great numbers of persons. The original courtyard, to the right of the primitive stairway, was suitable for such manifestations. The gradual development of new areas to the north doubtless made possible activities of yet greater scope. The excavation of a large cistern at the northern extremity of the new terrace was the final addition which made possible, at Delos, a ceremony such as Lucian witnessed at Hierapolis (D.S. 47):

At the edge of this lake great ceremonies are solemnized. They are called "descents to the lake," because on those days all the statues go down to the lake. But among all of them, that of Hera arrives first, because of the fish—to prevent Zeus from seeing them first. Should this happen, it is said the fish would perish. Nevertheless Zeus does come to see them, but Hera places herself before him, prevents him from approaching, and after much insistence sends him away.

At Delos the cistern may have been provided at the limits of the precinct as the result of a similar ritual necessity.

The cistern contained the sacred fish of Atargatis, whose abomination of ichthyophagy is, of course,
famous. But the pool could have served for purificatory ablutions as well—both usages are suggested by an unique inscription. This document, a ritual interdiction, was placed at the entrance of the sanctuary to insure that the faithful might not commit, even unwittingly, infractions of the sacred law. The text sets forth the following conditions which govern access to the precinct: the devout may enter on the third day after eating fish; on the third after sexual relations; on the seventh after giving birth; on the fourth after a miscarriage; on the ninth after the menses; immediately after eating pork, with a purification (2530).

The restrictions are strictly of an alimentary and sexual character. It is not necessary to suppose a high standard of personal morality imposed upon the faithful as a result of restrictions of this type; nor by the customary epithet of the Goddess. Hagne simply refers to the ritual purity necessary to approach the deity. The restriction against fish is to be expected, in view of the prominent place fish hold in the cult universally. On the other hand, we can see in the relaxation of the rule of

91 Cf. DCA, p. 269.
total abstinence from fish a concession to an insular population. The restrictions placed upon women are fairly severe, but similar regulations which impose a longer delay in attaining agneia are known in other cults.93

Although the Goddess' requirements regarding ritual purity do not imply a correspondingly high personal moral code, there is no evidence to suggest that what transpired within her temenos was in any way less sedate than what one could expect to see at any Greek temple. The phallus, which holds such a conspicuous place in Lucian's account (D.S. 28-29), appears to have had little significance at Delos. One such object was found in the course of the excavations (2243). Its presence does not

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93In the cult of Mên: after menses, 7 days (IG III, 74, 5-6; IG III, 73, 2); after miscarriage, 40 days (IG III, 74, 7; IG III, 73, 22; IG XII, 5, 646; IG XII, 1, 789). In the cult of Artemis at Delos: complete abstinence from sexual intercourse and fish (2367); cf. also Gustave Fougeres, BCH, XI (1887), 257; P. Roussel, BCH, L (1926), 313. Regulations regarding the offering of pork are common in cults of Oriental origin; thus in the cult of the Thasian Heracles, cf. Picard, BCH, XLVII (1923), 243 (an inscription belonging to the end of the sixth century b.c.). In the cult of Zeus Curios and Palestinian Astarte at Delos, likewise, pork may not be offered (2305), but in the cult of Heracles and Hauronas at Delos all flesh is proper except the goat (2308).
allow us to suppose that the members of this cult engaged in activities of a licentious character. In fact, analogous objects of religious usage are far from uncommon in Greece itself, and they are attested at Delos in the worship of Dionysos. In view of the official status achieved by the religion of Atargatis and the close surveillance under which all religious associations were kept by Athens, it is likely that the Syrian cult had been cleansed of its gross, tempestuous traits before its admission to the Delian community. Certain it is that the castrations and mutilations practiced by the Galli and the itinerant priests would have done little to commend the religion to the finer Greek sensibilities.

Another inscription of a different character reveals a further attribute of Atargatis. Here the Goddess, associated with Helios the Avenger, is implored as the author of justice. In a text remarkable both for the sincerity of its appeal to the throne of justice and for the fullness of its legalistic jargon, Theogenes begs Helios and the Holy Goddess to visit with lifelong punishment the woman who has deprived him of the peculium which

94 R. Vallois, BCH, XLVI (1922), 94 ff. believes the "agalma" of Dionysios is a phallus. Cf. DCA, p. 235.
95 2531. Cf. above, p. 113 ff; other curses from Delos: 2532-34.
he had entrusted to her care. He prays that she may not escape the might of the Goddess and the curse of all her subjects. Above the inscription is carved a pair of hands, palms turned outward, as a symbol of the invocation of divine assistance.  

The presence of a theater at the sanctuary has caused some students to conclude that mystical representations were a part of the worship of Atargatis there. The authority of Nilsson, and others, is not to be taken lightly.  

E. Will, charged with the final examination of the precinct and with the publication of the volume devoted to the Syrian domains in Exploration Archéologique de Délos, has announced similar conclusions. This scholar has recently excavated the southern portion of a horse-show-shaped structure which surrounds the theater. This is apparently a large portico, analogous to the one bordering the terrace on the opposite side, whose principal function seems to have been to shield the sacred ceremonies from the indiscreet gaze of passers-by along the eastern limits of the temenos. During the excavations it came

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96 Upon funerary steles the symbol is an "apotropaion."

97 Nilsson, p. 613; Goossens, p. 135.

98 BCH, LXXV (1951), 187-88.
to light that the newly discovered structure surrounded the theater on the north, the east, and the south. Its floor level corresponds to the highest tier of seats in the theater. The excavator concludes that in fact the portico was meant to isolate the theater. "L'importance du théâtre dans le culte de la déesse syrienne se trouve ainsi clairement souligné et l'ensemble retrouvé donne à Délos le plus important théâtre sacré actuellement connu." 99

The testimony of this recent discovery tends to confirm the hypothesis that some kind of dramatic representation of esoteric character existed at Delos. But again we must approach the suggestion with diffidence for, as we pointed out, it is impossible to prove that "mysteries" had any part in the cult of Atargatis except where the direct influence of Greek mysteries can be established, as at Thuria. A similar influence might be alleged for Delos, to be sure, and some support would be afforded by the multiple examples of this influence in other connections—as with the statues of Eros offered by Kleostratides, and the very Hellenization of the name of the Goddess. This explanation would be more satisfactory if we could demonstrate the source of the influence and its results.

99 BCH, LXXIV (1950), 373
Obviously, when we are confronted with indications of "mysteries" in the worship of the Syrian Goddess, the surprise is so great that we are not eager to venture an explanation of their presence. It may be an achievement, then, to conclude our discussion of them by summing up the question and defining precisely what we should mean by "Mysteries of Atargatis." The presence of the theater at Delos, the inscriptions of Thuria and the Janiculum—clearly all point to some kind of sacred banquet or drama. Yet these indications are late and they come from places which had been under the direct influence of Greek religion for considerable lengths of time. Accordingly we may infer a considerable syncretism, an influx of Greco-Roman ideas and practices, according to the religious tendencies of the times. That the cult at Hierapolis contained no mysteries is suggested by two facts. First, the authority of Lucian. Nowhere in his treatise does he mention or allude to mysteries—or even to a sacred banquet or drama. We cannot assume that this is an ordinary case of omission or forgetfulness. We have his explicit statement of what he will include in his essay (D.S. 1):

I shall speak of the city and all it contains. I shall speak of the laws which regulate its holy ritual, and of the sacrifices performed there, and of the festivals. I shall report as well all that is alleged about the founders of the temple and how it was built. I write being myself an As-
syrarian, and what I relate I have learned, on the one hand, by seeing with my own eyes, and I have been informed, on the other, by the priests in the matters I shall expose which were before my time.

In view of this declaration, it is inconceivable that our chief authority should fail to mention what the Delian and other monuments suggest was an important part of the cult. Secondly, had mysteries been considered an important part of the cult, it seems that soon after the foundation at Delos some provision would have been made for their celebration. On the contrary, however, the theater was built twenty years after the foundation, and ten after the Athenians had assumed the direction of the worship.

We must conclude, accordingly, that if there were mysteries associated with Atargatis, beyond the nearly-universal sacred banquet, their form, if not their origin also, was of Hellenic (and Hellenistic) origin. In reality, however, our evidence is so meager that the final excavation of the Delian theater cannot but be eagerly awaited. Tituli desunt.
CONCLUSION

The Greek world knew Atargatis under the form and with the cult proper to her at the time of the Seleukids. Under the influence of Hellenistic syncretism she was closely associated with Rhea or Aphrodite, hence her occasional titles "Mother of the Gods" and "Syrian Aphrodite." At Delos she was accompanied by her consort Hadad. In certain localities she became the protective divinity of slaves and guaranteed their manumission. The Athenians, in keeping with the legalism which characterized their approach to religion, conferred a legal status upon her cult at Delos and entrusted her priesthood to Greeks elected annually.

The earliest inscriptions belong to the middle of the third century before Christ, the latest to the end of the third after Christ. Those of the Christian era, however, do little more than prove that the cult survived at least five centuries, or, as is more likely, even longer. In the second and third centuries of our era the

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1 But the first allusion to Atargatis in Greek literature is Aischylos, Suppliants, 553-555:

καὶ βαθύπλουτον χόνα καὶ τὰς Ἀφροδιτας πολύπορον αἰαν ... 

Aischylos' allusion is the more interesting because it shows that even as early as his time Dea Syria was identified with Aphrodite. Cf. Paul Perdrizet, "A Propos d' Atargatis," Syria, XII (1921), 272 ff.

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Syrians undertook a veritable colonization of the Mediterranean world. The old Phoenician traits of industry, energy, shrewdness, adaptability, love of trade, and ability to conclude small and large "deals" were reactivated. Syrian settlements spread all along the coasts of the Mediterranean. In the islands, Delos and Sicily were seats of strong Syrian colonies. Naples, Ostia, and Spain were occupied. The Syrians penetrated inland to Pannonia by the Danube, to Lyons by the Rhône. As importers they succeeded in monopolizing a great portion of the trade of the Latin provinces with the East. As bankers they had no equals.\(^2\) It is not rash to say, then, that our lack of evidence of the spread of the cult in this period is due to the incompleteness of the archaeological record. It is certain that these merchants established their gods wherever they went. The Syrian gods, in fact, were showing their durability at this very epoch in the battle against Christianity, just as earlier they had resisted effectively the Gospel of Hellenism. The fact is that the Hellenic Orient was an artificial creation, for Baalism and Judaism continued to flourish. Local cults were adopted in hellenized form by the Seleukids, most of whom showed respect for the local gods. The wife of one

\(^2\text{Cf. Hitti, op. cit., p. 246 ff.}\)
of them, as we saw, rebuilt the temple of Atargatis at Hierapolis. Now again, at the time of the renewed Syrian commercial activity in the second and third centuries, the native gods showed their vitality, for Christ himself found serious rivals in Syria. The most important of these was Hadad, metamorphosed into Zeus of Damascus, of Heliopolis, of Hierapolis. Atargatis became a rival of Isis and the Virgin Mary. We also know from two late authors, Lucian and Apuleius, that the eunuch beggar priests were making their rounds of Syria, Greece, and Italy, in quest of souls by means of prophecy, confession, and mortification, at the same collecting pious alms for the great sanctuary of Hierapolis. For these reasons we may surmise that the Syrian Goddess continued to flourish in the Greek world beyond the limit set by our epigraphical evidence.

The cult of Hierapolis retained, even in Lucian's lifetime, the remnants of ancient barbarism. The Galli abounded there, although reduced to the rank of inferior priests who were not allowed inside the temple. Yet by their association with it they made the religion barbaric because of the mutilations they practiced. Human sacrifice was offered, perhaps even during Lucian's lifetime. In Greek religion of this period there is no trace of such atrocities. Of course Greek religion, like all
ancient religions in their primitive stages, was not always free from inhumanity in the name of God, but such sanguinary practices had disappeared many centuries before imperial decree attempted to eradicate them from Syria. Even in the classical period of Greece there are but faint echoes of earlier bloody rites—as when Solon forbids female mourners to persist in the ancient custom of lacerating their bodies. It is apparent, therefore, that Greek sensibilities would not tolerate the excesses which tend to characterize Eastern religions. Aversion to such manifestations took root in the quietist philosophy of the Seven Sages: ἡ ἔγνω ἤγαν. Greece accepted a purified Syrian cult.

Of the particulars of the cult in Greece we know little. The ancient association of Atargatis with water and with sacred fish persisted, as we saw by the presence of the pond in the temenos at Delos, as well as by the sacred law of Smyrna.

The question we should like to be able to answer is to what extent the Syrian Goddess penetrated the religious consciousness of the Hellenistic non-Asiatic Greeks. But as with many important questions in ancient religion, the evidence is really not adequate to allow a formulation of valid judgment. It is plain that Atargatis flourished mainly because of the Orientals living in the West. This population, both free and servile, must have been enormous.
Our inscriptions reveal many names which are unquestionably Greek, but it would be significant to know how many of these represent former slaves or persons with some connection with the Near East. The fact that the cult was given official status at Athens, Delos, and perhaps elsewhere, is not significant in this connection, for it was the policy of the poleis to survey closely all foreign groups, and especially foreign religious associations, within their borders. They accomplished this by making the several cults part of the official state religion. We shall venture to say that whatever may have been the extent of the acceptance of Dea Syria by the Greeks, the evidence we have examined suggests that this Eastern cult did not enjoy the prestige accorded some other importations from the fringes of the Greek spiritual empire. For instance, the temples dedicated to Isis and Sarapis are far more numerous than those to Dea Syria.3

But the Syrian Goddess had something to offer to Hellenistic Greece. The Hellenistic age was a period of history based upon the realization of manifold failure. With the polis crushed by semi-barbaric military monarchies, the Greeks threw themselves upon their own souls and

3 T. A. Brady, "The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks (330-30 b.c.)," U. of Missouri Studies, X (1935), appendix 1, 44 ff.
emotions, upon the pursuit of holiness in mysteries and revelations, upon the neglect of this transitory world. We recall that Atargatis was the Pure Goddess who was wont to visit her worshipers in dreams and visions as they slept in the exedras of the Delian sanctuary. The bankruptcy of the state religion, in fact, caused men to turn either to gross superstition or to the new and vigorous divinities introduced from abroad. The goddess of Syria, then, must have satisfied some of the doubts tormenting the soul of that time. Her priests were not all charlatans. Those closest to her were educated men who devoted their days to prayer, meditation, and expiation. They expatiated upon the doctrines and modified their spirit in order to make them more useful to the aspirations of a more advanced age. They had their sacred banquet and their initiates to whom they revealed the wisdom that was above the vulgar beliefs of the masses. They could offer the new eschatology derived from Chaldaean astrology, according to which the soul would return to live—escaping the limits of time—among the bright bodies of the sidereal gods. We have a bare shred of evidence that this religion could satisfy the Hellenistic seeker of religious truth. There is no evidence that the cult of Hierapolis included mysteries, beyond a sacred
banquet, a ritual common to many ancient religions. But in accepting the cult it may be that the Greeks changed it in this important respect: the evidence of Delos and Thuria suggests that in keeping with the tendencies of the age, it may have become a mystery religion.

Our understanding of Atargatis is as yet far from perfect, both as regards her native Syria and Greece. This century has produced some notable attempts at explaining the religion of Hierapolis, and the most remarkable and valuable of them is Godefroy Goossens' "essaie de monographie historique" Hiérapolis de Syrie. The author of this monograph states in his preface that no historian of contemporary or mediaeval Europe would attempt to compose a local history with such meager documentation as is available for Hierapolis. Yet the result is a basic book for the study of Atargatis—and of all Semitic religions—for the author has brought together the pertinent texts and cited the hypotheses proposed up to his time. Of course, just as the study of Eastern religions as a whole is advanced by such a work as this, so too can the study of Dea Syria gain by future investigations of other Semitic religions. Atargatis is related to, is a particular manifestation of, the mother goddess of Asia Minor and the Near East. Consequently some interesting clarifications are promised by further study of the relationships of the area of Hierapolis with Asia Minor, Phos-
nicia, Babylonia; of the relationship with earlier peoples who occupied the land or made their influence felt there, such as the Hittites and the Hurrians. It is to be hoped that ultimately it will be possible to write a definitive commentary upon Lucian's De Dea Syria, for, in the final analysis, this is the only ancient document, literary or otherwise, of sufficient scope and substance to act as a trunk upon which to fasten the findings of philology.

Concerning the cult of Atargatis in the Greek world we are of course at the mercy of archaeological discovery for any great advances to be realized. One of the striking deficiencies in our materials is the almost total lack of figured monuments, for aside from the fragmentary Hadad of Delos, we have nothing. But the most pressing question is that of the theaters and mysteries which we encountered at Thuria and Delos. The long promised excavations at Delos, if completed, will probably throw some new light upon this intriguing question. But this, in turn, is linked with the complex problem of Hellenistic syncretism. It has been suggested that during Hellenistic times a syncretism of Phoenician agrarian rites and similar Greek practices was officially encouraged in Phoenicia, from which there resulted a Phoenician assimilation.

of Dionysiac mysteries. This could help explain the origin of the mysteries in the cult of Atargatis, but also, allowance must be made for a further syncretism once the cult was established in a particular Greek locality and began to develop in its new environment. We saw that at Thuria the cult was very likely subjected to a strong influence from the Greek mysteries of Andania. Finally, it remains to be shown what was the ultimate effect upon the Syrian Goddess of the tendency of the age to identify all deities with one another and to combine their cults. For any advance in this direction the comparative method can be of some benefit, but we must depend ultimately upon the discovery of new epigraphical evidence.
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