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When Lived Ancient Religion and Lived Ancient Medicine Meet:

The Household Gods, the Household Shrine and Regimen

1 Introduction

Roman religion is considered to have had two fundamental features: first, that the Roman religious system was concerned primarily with the welfare of the Roman community; second, that it was a religion of place.¹ Thus the welfare of the community – both settlement and inhabitants – was ensured by a series of rituals that were performed in both public and private contexts by designated individuals, in designated ways, at designated times, at designated places in order to gain the favour – and avert the disfavour – of the gods. Festus offers a means of distinguishing between *sacra publica* and *sacra privata*: the former were performed on behalf of the entire Roman people or large sections of the Roman people and the expenses were defrayed while the latter were performed on behalf of the individual, family or *gens* and the expenses were not defrayed.² This passage has long been used as a means of explaining and justifying the division of Roman religion into the so-called ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres or domains. However, at the turn of the twenty-first century, Andreas Bendlin argued persuasively against such a firm separation of certain types of religious belief and practice, and called for a reassessment: ‘We must try to reinvestigate the traces which individual private concerns, motivations and mental states have left in our sources, as they instrumentalised a wide range of religious options and made full use of the cultic infrastructure of the city of Rome’.³ He emphasised the religious pluralism of late Republican

¹ Orlin 2007, 58. In fact, Stowers 2012, 11 describes domestic religion as ‘the ultimate religion of place’.

² *Gloss. Lat.* 245; see also Livy 1.20, 10.7; Plut. *Vit. Num.* 9; Cic. *Har. resp.* 7.

³ Bendlin 2000, 131; for more in-depth scrutiny of the nature of individual belief and practice, see Rüpke 2016a and 2016b; individuality is discussed in relation to domestic religious practice by Bodel 2012, 248–251.

Rome, utilising the same metaphor of the marketplace that has become a regular feature in scholarship on ancient medical theory and practice published over the last several decades.⁴ At first glance, the use of this same metaphor by scholars of ancient religion and scholars of ancient medicine may seem entirely co-incidental, and, indeed, perhaps it was, but in that same paper Bendlin argued that there was a link between Roman concerns about their health and well-being, on the one hand, and Roman religious belief and practice, on the other.⁵ With this in mind, in this paper I will investigate one particular aspect of the so-called *sacra privata* – which are on the whole poorly understood, and have not been subjected to the same scholarly scrutiny as the so-called *sacra publica*.⁶ I will explore the extent to which it is possible to connect ancient Roman domestic religious belief and practice with ancient Roman domestic medical practice as a means of providing an insight into both lived ancient religion and lived ancient medicine.⁷ It is worth noting that ancient Roman domestic medical practice is equally poorly understood and it is only in the last few years that this particular aspect of ancient medicine has begun to receive sustained attention from scholars, as is also the case with other aspects that have been variously described as ‘lay’, ‘popular’ or ‘folk’ medicine.⁸

2 The personal nature of Roman domestic religious belief and practice

Roman domestic religion was believed to be of great antiquity, a crucial way of maintaining contact with ancestors and ancestral values, and a means of ensuring not just the metaphysical welfare but also the physical welfare of the household and *familia*. There were

⁴ Bendlin 2000, 135; for the ancient medical market place, see initially Nutton 1992.

⁵ Bendlin 2000, 130–131.

⁶ For this view and a targeted attempt to address it, see Dorcey 1990 and 1992, case studies focusing on the private or ‘folk’ worship of one particular deity, Silvanus.

⁷ For the most comprehensive discussions on the subject of the so-called *sacra privata*, see Marquardt 1886; de Marchi 1896–1903; Samter 1901; more recently, see Orr 1978; Harmon 1978; most recently, see Bassani and Ghedini 2011; Maiuri 2013.

⁸ Nutton 2013, 254–78; Draycott 2016; Harris 2016.

important roles for individual ancestors, the cult of the ancestors, and the household gods. Just as the *imagines* were used as devices to recall the lives of specific ancestors and the desirable qualities that they had demonstrated during those lives to inspire their descendants and safeguard the family's moral standing and reputation, so were the *di manes* and the *di parentes*, and the *Lares familiares*, the *Penates*, the *Genius* and the *Juno* a means of soliciting protection both at home and abroad.⁹ Consequently, domestic religion guaranteed that not only the past and the present but also the future of the household and the *familia* were ensured, to a degree eliding them.

It is the latter set, the 'household gods', that I am concerned with in this paper.¹⁰ Ancient literature indicates that they were associated with the family's health and well-being in very particular ways. A number of these ways related to the acquisition, storage and preparation of food. Archaeological evidence from Campania, where the eruption of Vesuvius in CE 79 ensured the preservation of a variety of Roman residences around the Bay of Naples, supports this association: more household shrines have been found to have been located in kitchens and service areas than in any other type of room.¹¹ Michael Lipka has stated that this is entirely practical, that the kitchen makes sense as a location for domestic religious practice because it contains a hearth, ventilation and a place for the preparation of the sacrificial meal.¹² However, Pedar Foss has proposed that there is a connection between the fact that household shrines were frequently located in kitchens and the fact that the household gods were so closely associated with food.¹³ Moreover, since kitchens were the places where the household slaves prepared the household's meals, he suggests that the slaves

⁹ On the *imagines* and their distinct difference from the cult of the ancestors and the household gods, see Flower 1996, 210.

¹⁰ Bodel 2012.

¹¹ Fröhlich 1991, 28–29.

¹² Lipka 2006, 329.

¹³ Foss 1997.

can be viewed almost as proxies for the household gods.¹⁴ Yet while he notes the role that the slaves play in the maintenance of the household's physical health and well-being through their provision of food and drink, and highlights the importance of nutrition, he goes no further than this. I, however, would like to build upon his proposal and argue that there is a stronger connection to be identified between ancient Roman domestic religious belief and practice and ancient Roman medical theory and practice. I will do so by focusing my attention on a discrete corpus of archaeological evidence from sites around the Bay of Naples. Household shrines have been designated as physical manifestations of religious ideology and even superstition.¹⁵ John Clarke details how insight into personal religious beliefs, attitudes and practices can be found in the art situated in domestic contexts, which can enable us to reconstruct the perspectives of non-elite worshippers and the strategies that were utilised by these individuals, who are otherwise under-represented in the historical sources.¹⁶

In the case of household shrine wall paintings found in the kitchens of five houses from Pompeii and one villa north of Pompeii, an association between the household gods, the family's health and well-being, and food acquisition, storage and preparation is made explicit.¹⁷ Unlike the many other household shrines found in houses at sites around the Bay of Naples, the household shrine wall paintings from the House of Aufidius Primus (I.x.18), the House of Sutoria Primigenia (I.xiii.2), the House of Pansa (VI.vi.1), the House of Octavius Primus (VII.xv.12), the House of the Pork (IX.ix.3), and Villa 6 at Terzigno all include depictions of foodstuffs in prominent positions around the shrine. The fact that these household shrine paintings are so distinct from the rest while being so similar to each other is

¹⁴ Foss 1997, 199. On the slaves' divine ancestors, see Bodel 2012, 266–267.

¹⁵ Fröhlich 1991, 13, 21; Foss 1997, 197.

¹⁶ Clarke 2003, 75.

¹⁷ On the wall paintings associated with the household shrines in kitchens: Boyce 1937, 105–106; Orr 1973, 98–99; Foss 1997, 217. Household shrine paintings are generally considered to have been secondary to architectural household shrines, Bodel 2012, 265.

worth considering. Thus, I will study this sample of household shrine wall paintings with a view to assessing the significance of the foodstuffs depicted, and will explore the relationship between ancient Roman domestic religious belief and practice and ancient Roman medical practice, specifically the use of regimen for the attainment and maintenance of good physical and mental health and well-being.

3 The Roman household gods

The household gods – the *Lares*, the *Penates*, the *Genius* of the *paterfamilias* and the *Juno* of the *materfamilias* – were worshipped by the members of the household and *familia* on a regular basis, and all seem to have been associated and concerned with the family's health and well-being in very particular ways. This worship focused on the hearth, as the hearth was the heart of the home. The Latin word used to refer to it, *focus*, emphasises the fostering of the fire on the hearth and stresses the importance not only of starting, but also keeping alight the family fire.¹⁸ The Latin word used to refer to the kitchen, where the fire was generally located, *culina*, is thought to be derived from *colere*, 'to cultivate', 'to foster', 'to watch over', and also to 'revere in a religious manner'.¹⁹ The presence of a fire in the hearth was used to symbolise the occupation of the house by a living family.²⁰ The ability to control fire and by implication heat, light and the ability to cook food was considered a mark of civilisation.²¹

The importance of the *Lares* to the household and *familia* is made clear by the frequent use of the term as a metonym for the household as a whole.²² There are numerous

¹⁸ Varro quoted in Serv. *ad Aen.* 12.118, Isid. *Orig.* 20.10.

¹⁹ Serv. *ad Aen.* 3.134.

²⁰ Tib. 1.1.5–6; Ov. *Tr.* 1.3.40–45; Ov. *Fast.* 2.563–566; during the Ferialia on 21st February, part of the Parentalia festival, fires were forbidden as the living could not co-exist with the dead.

²¹ Orr 1973, 34–37; Orr 1978, 1560–61.

²² Catull. 31.9; Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.56; Verg. *G.* 3.44; Luc. 2.331, 2.729, 5.537, 7.346; Mart. 10.61.5.

varieties, although they have in common the role of guarding and protecting their charges, usually in association with a particular physical area.²³ Certainly after the third century BCE, one key role was that of the *Lar familiaris*, the guardian spirit and protector of the household. The earliest literary reference to this is found in the prologue to Plautus' *Aulularia*, in which the *Lar familiaris* introduces itself and the other characters, as well as providing some background information:

hanc domum iam multos annos est cum possideo et colo patri avoque iam huius qui nunc hic habet. sed mí avos huius obsecrans concredidit thensaurum aúri clam omnis: in medio foco defodit, venerans mé ut id servarem sibi. is quoniam moritur (ita avido ingenio fuit), numquam indicare id filio voluit suo, inopemque optavit potius eum relinquere, quam eum thensaurum commonstraret filio; agri reliquit ei non magnum modum, quo cum labore magno et misere viveret. ubi is óbiit mortem qui mihi id aurum credidit, coepi observare, ecqui maiorem filius mihi honorem haberet quam eius habuisset pater. atque ille vero minus minusque impendio curare mínusque me impertire honoribus. item a me contra factum est, nam item obiit diem. is ex se hunc reliquit qui hic nunc habitat filium pariter moratum ut pater avosque huius fuit. huic filia una est. ea mihi cottidie aut ture aut vino aut aliqui semper supplicat, dat mihi coronas.

For many years already I've been occupying this house and protecting it for the father and grandfather of the man who lives here now. Now this man's grandfather entrusted me, on bended knee, behind everyone's back, with a treasure of gold. He buried it in the middle of the hearth, entreating me to guard it for him. When he died, he didn't even want to make this known to his own son – he was so greedy. He wished to leave him penniless rather than show his treasure to his son. He did leave him a piece of land, not a big one, though, so that he could live on it with great toil and miserably. When the man who'd entrusted the gold to me died, I began to observe whether his son would in any way hold me in greater honour than his father had. He took less and less trouble over me and showed me less respect. I returned the favour: he also died poor. He left a son behind, the one who lives here now, a man of the same character as his father and grandfather. He has one daughter. She worships me every single day with incense or wine or something else and gives me garlands.²⁴

Thus, we see the *Lar familiaris* watching over four generations of the same family and, since the daughter is pregnant, looking forward to the birth of a fifth. It guards not only the household and the *familia* but also physical objects.²⁵ If propitiated, it offers assistance to the

²³ Cic. *Tim.* 68.

²⁴ Plaut. *Aul.* 1–25, tr. W. De Melo.

²⁵ Ov. *Fast.* 5.133–142.

propitiator, but if not, it does not. However, the *Lar familiaris*' remit was not restricted to within the house: Tibullus prays to his *Lares* to ensure either that he does not have to go off to war, or, if he does, to protect him while he is away; when one returned from war, one's arms could be set down before them.²⁶ In *Aulularia*, the daughter of the house propitiates the *Lar familiaris* every day but the Kalends, the Nones and the Ides of each month seem to have been especially recognised.²⁷ Garlands would be hung on and around the household shrine, incense would be burned, a variety of different types of food and drink such as spelt, grain, fruit and wine would be offered, and on occasion animals such as cows, sheep and pigs would be sacrificed. The *Lar familiaris* also played a role in significant family occasions. When a boy became a man he would dedicate his *bullae* and *toga praetexta* and his first beard shavings to it, while when a girl was to be married and pass from the guardianship of the *Lares* of her father to that of those of her husband, she took three coins and gave one to her husband, one to his *Lar familiaris* and one to his *Lar compitalis*, and the *Lares* received wedding offerings of frankincense and floral wreaths.²⁸ Upon the death of a member of the family, the *Lares* were purified, while following the Parentalia, the festival of the dead held between the 13th and 21st of February each year during which the family would commemorate their deceased ancestors, the *Di Manes* and *Di Parentes*, the family would celebrate the Caristia on 22nd February, which served as a reunion for the living members of the family.²⁹

The origins of the Penates are, like those of the *Lares*, obscure.³⁰ Cicero equates them in importance with the *Lares*, and describes them as the gods of the ancestors and the household.³¹ However, they seem to have been particularly associated with the *penus*, the

²⁶ Tib. 1.10.15–32; see also Ov. *Tr.* 4.8.22.

²⁷ Cato, *Agr.* 143.2.

²⁸ Pers. 5.31; Petron. *Sat.* 29.8; Suet. *Ner.* 12; Varro, *De vita Populi Romani* 1, cited by Non.; Plaut. *Aul.* 385–386.

²⁹ Cic. *Leg.* 2.22.55; Ov. *Fast.* 2.617–638.

³⁰ Dubourdieu 1989.

³¹ Cic. *Resp.* 5.5; *Har. resp.* 37; Bodel 2012, 252–255.

storeroom, and were thought to protect the food supply, thereby ensuring the household's means of subsistence continued.³²

The *Genius* was the guiding numen of the family, the living spirit of the *pater familias* rather than a deity in its own right, and worshipped on his birthday.³³ Consequently, it was a companion for life.³⁴ The *Juno* was the female equivalent.³⁵ Both of these were associated with generation and procreation, and these are likewise relevant for the health and well-being of the present and future members of the household, ensuring the continuity of the family line.

4 The Roman Household Shrine

While the household gods all seem to have been associated and concerned with the family's health and well-being in very particular ways, it is notable that the acquisition, storage and preparation of food is a recurring theme.³⁶ Let us take this further, and consider the connection between food and drink and health and well-being, and the concept and importance of regimen for both healthy and unhealthy individuals at all stages of their lives.³⁷ A significant amount of an individual's regimen was undertaken at home, particularly the food that he or she produced or purchased and then prepared or had prepared for him or herself.

The Roman agricultural treatises tell us exactly what was supposed to be produced on an agricultural estate and kept in the storeroom, as well as the purposes to which these items were supposed to be put by specific members of the household, such as the housekeeper,

³² Serv. *ad Aen.* 3.12. On domestic storage, see Curtis 2016.

³³ Tib. 1.7.49–54, 2.2.1–10, 3.11.8–9; Censorinus, *DN* 2.2.

³⁴ Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.187–189.

³⁵ Tib. 4.6.1; Petron. *Sat.* 25; Plin. *HN* 2.16.

³⁶ Foss 1997, 199.

³⁷ See for example Craik 1995; Bartoš 2015.

which included use in a range of medicaments.³⁸ Additionally, there is a significant amount of archaeological evidence for storage and not just from agricultural estates.³⁹ Thus it is not surprising that we should see clear connections being made between domestic religious practice, food and drink, and health and well-being within ancient Roman households.

In Pompeii and its near vicinity, six highly individualised and personalised household shrine paintings located in kitchens survive. In the House of Aufidius Primus (I.x.18), the painting depicts the *Lar familiaris*, the *Genius*, a serpent, and several foodstuffs: a hog's head, a ham on a nail, and an eel on a skewer.⁴⁰ In the House of Sutoria Primigenia (I.xiii.2), the painting covers both the north and east walls of the kitchen. The north wall contains the niche for the household shrine, and the shrine itself is surrounded by depictions of foodstuffs including a ham, cuts of meat on a skewer, an eel on a skewer, above a serpent approaching an altar with a pine cone. The east wall depicts an elaborate sacrificial scene containing the *pater familias* and *mater familias*, or perhaps their *Genius* and *Juno*, and their household flanked by the *Lares familiares*, and is unique among all the Pompeian paintings in the number of worshippers shown. In the register below the sacrificial scene are two pack-mules and a bull.⁴¹ It has been suggested that the sacrificial scene depicts the *Caristia*.⁴² In the House of Pansa (VI.vi.1), in a kitchen area in the northwest corner of the peristyle, a painting on the north wall depicts the *pater familias*, or his *Genius*, flanked by *Lares*, and in the register below two serpents approach an altar with a pine cone (see fig. 1). In the registers on either side of the scene are numerous foodstuffs: on the left, a rabbit, two selections of birds,

³⁸ Curtis 2016.

³⁹ Allison 2004; Cova 2013.

⁴⁰ *Not. Scavi* 1934, 343–344, fig. 38; Boyce 1937, 29, n. 60; Fröhlich 1991, 257, l. 18, n. 26.3; Giacobello 2008, 150, n. 22.

⁴¹ Orr 1973, 161–162, n. 33; Orr 1978, 1584; Jashemski 1979, 118–119; Fröhlich 1991, 261, l. 29, n. 28.1–2; Giacobello 2008, 156, n. 28.

⁴² Carratelli and Baldassarre 1990, 876–880; Jashemski 1979, 118–119; Bernstein 2007, 534.

a pig, and a plate of fruit or possibly bread; on the right, an eel on a skewer, a ham, a rack of ribs, and a hog's head.⁴³

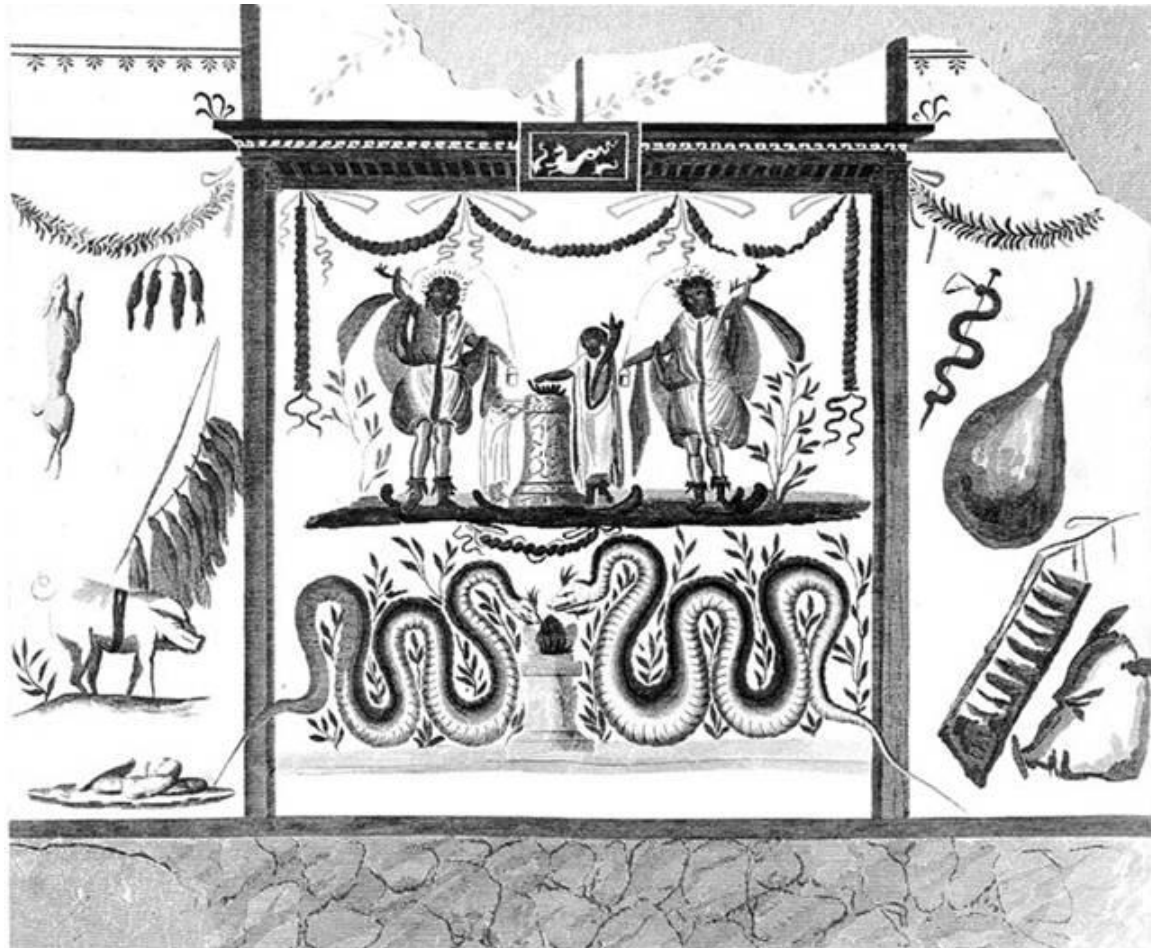


Fig. 1: Household shrine painting from the House of Pansa (VI.vi.1). After Mazois, François 1824. *Les Ruines de Pompei: Seconde Partie*. Paris: Imprimerie et Librairie de Firmin Didot. Plate XLV, 2.

In the House of Octavius Primus (VII.xv.12), an altar in relief has a *Lar familiaris* painted on the left-hand side, and two hog's heads and an eel on a skewer painted on the right-hand side.⁴⁴ In the House of the Pork (IX.ix.3), the northwest corner of the kitchen, on the west

⁴³ Boyce 1937, 46–47, n. 156; Fröhlich 1991, 276, l. 61, n. 35.1; Giacobello 2008, 172–173, n. 50.

⁴⁴ Boyce 1937, 72–73, n. 334; Fröhlich 1991, 290, l. 93; Giacobello 2008, 195, n. 82.

wall is a depiction of the *pater familias*, or *Genius*, sacrificing at an altar, while on the north wall is a depiction of two *Lares familiares*, one on either side of an altar, and below them are two snakes, one on either side of an altar with a pine cone, while to the right is a range of foodstuffs: a selection of birds, sausages, a hog's head, meat on a skewer and an eel on a skewer.⁴⁵ In Villa 6 at Terzigno, an altar jutting out from the wall, surrounded by snakes, is incorporated into a large painting depicting the *pater familias*, or *Genius*, sacrificing with a *Lar* on either side, and a niche to the right is surrounded by an eel on a skewer, a boar's head, meat on a skewer, and a ham.⁴⁶

A wide range of foodstuffs is depicted in these paintings. How to explain this surfeit of animal products? Considering that the paintings are thought to have served religious purposes, providing a place of worship for the slave members of the households in which they appear, it is possible that the reason for including these particular products was likewise religious. Pigs were regularly utilised in Roman religious practice, particularly in cases of expiation and funerary rituals, and a number of paintings from elsewhere in Pompeii depict pigs being led to the altar.⁴⁷ Pigs were also utilised for particular occasions in the context of Roman domestic religious belief and practice, and sacrificed to the *Lares*.⁴⁸ It is also possible that families personalised their offerings to a degree, which could account for the eel.⁴⁹ The process of sacrificing an animal involved it having its throat cut and its entrails examined in order to confirm that the deity in question approved of and accepted the offering of the *exta*, the vital organs. Then the animal was divided up, with the deity's share being roasted on a spit before it was sprinkled with *mola salsa* and wine and deposited in the sacrificial fire

⁴⁵ *Not. Scavi* 1889, 130; Boyce 1937, 93–94, n. 468; Fröhlich 1991, 297–298, l. 108, n. 12.1–2 and 13.1; Giacobello 2008, 214–215.

⁴⁶ Vanacore 2005.

⁴⁷ Scheid 2007, 264. For depictions of pigs being led towards altars in Pompeian art, see for example a fresco of a pig being offered to Priapus in the Villa of the Mysteries; see also Pompeii VIII, insula 2 or 3.

⁴⁸ *Hor. Sat.* 2.3.164–165, *Carm.* 3.23.4; *Tib.* 1.10.26–27; *Plaut. Rud.* 1208.

⁴⁹ Scheid 2007, 264.

which burned on the altar. If the deity was aquatic, the offerings were plunged into water, while if the deity was chthonic, the offerings were thrown on the ground and cooked on the earth or in a ditch until burned up completely, as the living could not share food with the dead.⁵⁰ Since the deities worshipped in private contexts could be an eclectic mix, any and all of these different types of sacrifice could have taken place at the six household shrines in question.⁵¹ The breed of pig that seems to have been preferred for sacrificial offerings was large and fat to start with but was also probably kept in stalls and hand-reared, rather than left to range free and forage, so as to fatten it as quickly and effectively as possible.⁵² It is possible that larger specimens were preferred due to the religious and social implications of such an offering. Additionally, such an offering would produce a considerable amount of meat for both divine and human consumption.

Alternatively, we could interpret these paintings as having some sort of economic symbolism, as there are certainly examples of Pompeian household shrines referring to the business interests of the household and *familia*, such as that in the House of the Sarno Lararium (I. xiv.7) which depicts scenes of work taking place on the River Sarno.⁵³ If we consider the contents of the paintings in this light it becomes appropriate to consider the position of these foodstuffs, particularly pork and fish, in the Roman diet, whether consumed during the course of a religious ritual, or otherwise. Pork was the most common sort of meat consumed in Roman Italy, eaten by the rich and the poor alike, and while fish is harder to pin down as far as levels of consumption are concerned, since Campania was a significant centre for the production of pigs and pork products, and Pompeii in particular was an important centre for the production of salt-fish products, it is likely that both foodstuffs were readily

⁵⁰ Scheid 2007, 266.

⁵¹ See Peterson 2012, 331 for the suggestion that after the earthquake in CE 62 households incorporated a multiplicity of gods into their shrines as a means of enlisting extra protection.

⁵² MacKinnon 2001, 665. For archaeological evidence of this type of pig husbandry, see Ricci 1985.

⁵³ Clarke 2003, 78–81.

available to the residents of these five houses, whether fresh or processed and preserved.⁵⁴

The manner in which pork and fish were processed is particularly worth examining, considering the variety of ways in which pig and fish products are depicted in the six household shrine paintings.

Pork is considered an ideal meat for processing, since not only is it relatively easy to process, but it can also be shipped long distances and subsequently stored for significant periods of time once it reaches its destination. It is nutritious, and it yields useful by-products such as lard.⁵⁵ The process of slaughtering swine was similar whether the context was religious or alimentary: the animal was stunned and then ‘stuck’, and then suspended from its hindquarters in order to drain the blood as quickly as possible, so as to avoid tainting the meat.⁵⁶ The butchery of the animal involves the removal of the hide, the guts, and the fat, and then the carcass is split in half and the head, shoulders, rump, and belly separated. The head of the pig was considered a particular delicacy.⁵⁷ The hams and the flitches were the two cuts of meat most commonly dry-cured by the Romans.⁵⁸ Additionally, the leftovers could be used up by being made into sausages and the addition of herbs and spices as flavourings had the additional benefit of aiding the preservation of the meat.⁵⁹ All of these different cuts of meat are depicted in the household shrine paintings.

Fish can likewise be preserved, and was processed into three different products: salt-cured fish (*salsamenta*), fish sauce (*garum* and *liquamen*), and fish paste (*allec*). All three were manufactured together, and there is a significant amount of literary and archaeological evidence for this industry at Pompeii, although the installation itself has not yet been

⁵⁴ On pigs in Roman Italy, see King 1999; MacKinnon 2001. On fish, see Curtis 1991, 148–158.

⁵⁵ Thurmond 2006, 210.

⁵⁶ Thurmond 2006, 211.

⁵⁷ Dalby 2003, 174.

⁵⁸ Thurmond 2006, 216.

⁵⁹ Thurmond 2006, 220; Frost 1999; Frayn 1979, 1975.

excavated.⁶⁰ The processing of salt-fish is described by Manilius.⁶¹ Once processed, it was cut into cubes, squares, triangles, or irregular shapes, and such things are depicted in the household shrine paintings.

It is notable that fishing and pig slaughtering were seasonal activities and, perhaps as a result of this, considerable effort was expended to utilise basically all of the pig and the fish. While some pork and fish products could be consumed fresh, for the most part they were preserved and stored, ensuring provisions for the future. Thus these seem particularly suitable foodstuffs to depict in a household shrine painting.

5 Regimen

Although regimen is referred to by a variety of authors in the Classical period, it is in the treatises of the Hippocratic Corpus that the concept is explicated most fully.⁶² Ideas concerning the validity of regimen for the attainment and maintenance of health are found in a number of its treatises, notably *On Regimen*, *Airs Waters Places*, *On Regimen in Health*, *On the Nature of Man*, *On Regimen in Acute Diseases* and *On Ancient Medicine*. At its most basic, regimen refers to food and drink, food being solid and drink being liquid.⁶³ However, there is also an intermediate stage for the sick, halfway between solid and liquid, that is created by adding liquid to solid in order to dilute the solid and produce gruel.⁶⁴ Thus food, drink and gruel serve as the primary elements of regimen, but there are also other things, secondary elements, such as exercise, bathing, sleep and sexual activity. So regimen

⁶⁰ Plin, *HN* 31.94–95. Curtis 1991.

⁶¹ Manilius, *Astronomica* 5.656–681. See also Columella, *Rust.* 12.55.4.

⁶² Alc. 61.12; Pind. *Ol.* 265 and *Pyth.* 1.93; Aesch. *PV* 490; Soph. *El.* 1073 and *OC*, 352, 751; Eur. *fr.* 21.4, 812.6, 525.5, 759.2, 917.2; Ar. *Vesp.* 624, *Eccl.* 673, 1103, 1112, *Pax* 572, *Av.* 413, *Ran.* 114. On ancient dietetics, see Edelstein 1967; Smith 1978; Craik 1995; Bartoš 2015.

⁶³ Hippoc. *Acut.* 38; Hippoc. *VM* 3.

⁶⁴ Hippoc. *VM* 5.

comprised a personal plan involving diet, physical and mental exercise, and personal hygiene. Such a plan was devised specifically for someone in order to balance their body. Followed diligently, it would ensure and preserve good health and prevent ill health but, in the event of illness, yet another specially devised plan would succeed in restoring the former state of good health, upon which the original plan would be reverted to. For success to be assured, a plan required that the patient be considered as an individual with a unique body, mind and spirit, as whatever was making them ill was a result of an imbalance causing disharmony and the aim of the treatment was to restore balance and ensure harmony.

The inhabitants of Pompeii were fortunate in that they lived in an area that was served by both the terrestrial resources of a fertile agricultural hinterland and the marine resources of the Bay of Naples, and in addition that they had access to the imports arriving into the port at Puteoli. The organic remains recovered from Pompeii and Herculaneum indicate that the inhabitants of both towns had access to a variety of foodstuffs and that their diet was better than the ancient literary evidence suggests it should have been.⁶⁵ As discussed above, both pork and fish were readily accessible to the inhabitants of the Bay of Naples, and there is a considerable amount of archaeological evidence for their consumption. A total of 19 taxa of fish and shellfish have been identified in deposits recovered from Pompeii.⁶⁶ A total of 43 taxa of fish and shellfish have been identified in deposits from the *Cardo V* sewer in Herculaneum, the largest range of fish species recovered from a single site in the Vesuvian area.⁶⁷ The presence of otoliths in these deposits indicates that the majority of these fish were consumed fresh.⁶⁸ Ancient medical and dietary treatises record the observations of physicians regarding the healthful properties of pork and fish, so it is reasonable to assume that at least one of the motivations for individuals choosing to consume them was their perceived

⁶⁵ Rowan 2014a, 42.

⁶⁶ Nicholson 1997; Locker 1999; Reese 2002.

⁶⁷ Nicholson 1997; Rowan 2014b, 67.

⁶⁸ Rowan 2014a, 19.

healthfulness. Both were recognised as being nutritious. Pork in particular was considered to be beneficial to individuals at all stages of life.⁶⁹ Salted pork and fish were considered to be drying and consequently promoted the appetite, aided digestion and stimulated the bowels.⁷⁰ Thus they could be utilised as part of a preventative regimen for a healthy person, or a therapeutic regimen for a sick person. Certainly, there were a number of physicians practising medicine in Pompeii who could have prescribed such a regimen.⁷¹ Equally, individuals could have developed their regimen themselves.⁷²

6 Conclusion

It is clear that there is a direct link between Roman domestic religious practice and Roman domestic medical practice through the association of the household gods with the preservation of the health and well-being of each member of the household and *familia*. More specifically, the *Lares*, *Penates*, *Genius* and *Juno* each contributed to the health and well-being of the household and *familia* through the provision of foodstuffs.

If household shrines are to be considered as highly individualised and personalised objects, potentially extremely informative regarding elements of the religious beliefs and practices of non-elite Romans and preserving information that is otherwise lost to us, it is worth considering those household shrines that are particularly unusual for what information they can provide about that particular household and *familia*. The general connection between domestic religion and domestic medicine is emphasised and clarified in six household shrine paintings, located in kitchens near the hearth where meals and, potentially, medicaments were

⁶⁹ Gal. *Alim. Fac.* 3.

⁷⁰ Curtis 1991, 27–37; see also Curtis 1984.

⁷¹ Bliquez 1994.

⁷² Draycott 2016.

prepared, by the depiction of particular foodstuffs around those household shrines. These foodstuffs could be eaten fresh but could also be stored for long periods of time, thus ensuring access to nutritious food even when the household was experiencing straitened circumstances. Additionally, the foodstuffs depicted could be used for both food and medicine, ensuring that the household was equipped for both preventative and therapeutic regimen. If an additional function of the household shrine was ensuring that slaves felt not only included in the household's devotions but also invested in the household itself, highlighting their role not only in the provision of food but also in the provision of medicine made perfect sense. Consequently, slaves not only had a stake in the short and long-term survival of the household and *familia*, but were the means of ensuring it both on a daily basis when everyone was in good health and on those rarer occasions when individuals were in poor health and so required more targeted attention.

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