

GODS, GHOSTS AND NEWLYWEDS:
EXPLORING THE USES OF THE THRESHOLD IN GREEK AND ROMAN
SUPERSTITION AND FOLKLORE

by

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ABSTRACT

This is the first reappraisal of the supernatural symbolism of the threshold in over a century. This thesis will challenge the notion that this liminal location was significant in Greek and Roman superstition and folklore – from apotropaic devices applied to the door, to lifting the bride over the threshold – because it was believed to be haunted by ghosts.

In Part One, this thesis examines the evidence of prophylactic devices and magic spells used at the threshold, along with the potential for human burial under the doorway, and concludes that there is no evidence for such a belief. However, this thesis does find evidence for a belief in the haunting of ghosts at the equally liminal location of the crossroads.

Part Two analyses threshold rituals pertaining to the Roman marriage ceremony and uses van Gennep's tripartite framework of the rite of passage to argue that the threshold can be seen as symbolising the bride's transition to a new household. This thesis argues that this rite of passage did not only apply to virgin brides, but was also applicable to those remarrying, as the goal behind many of the rituals was to safely ensconce the bride into her new house and family.

DEDICATION

*For Matthew –
What shall we do now?!*

*For Violet –
This probably isn't the book on Romans or ghosties that you were expecting*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am been working this thesis for over a decade; as a part-time student I expected to be in for the long haul, but when I first began my research I did not envisage that I would be taking various breaks for maternity and career changes that would push the end date even further away. The finished manuscript bears little resemblance to the project that I thought I was taking on all those years ago, but that should perhaps be expected given that I have had so much time to think about it.

I give great thanks to my supervisors: Dr Niall Livingstone, who helped to shape much of the thinking behind Part One and has always been so positive and supportive about my theories; and Dr Philip Burton, who readily agreed to supervise this thesis in its final stages, and has always given me thoughtful comments and advice, despite the fact that I insisted on providing him with drafts of the entire thesis in reverse order.

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All errors, colloquialisms and terrible jokes remain my own.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AE* *L'Année épigraphique: Revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine* (Paris 1888-)
- BNJ* *Brill's New Jacoby*, ed. I. Worthington (2006-)
- BNP* *Brill's New Pauly*
- CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1863-)
- FGrH* *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, F. Jacoby (Berlin and Leiden, 1923-1958)
- ILS* *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ed. H. Dessau (Berlin, 1892-1916)
- PDM* *Papyri Demoticae Magicae*
- PGM* *Papyri Graecae Magicae*
- RE* *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, edd. G. Wissowa, E. Kroll *et al.* (Berlin & Stuttgart, 1893-1878)

CONVENTIONS

All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

The section numbering is designed to aid the reader in knowing exactly where they are in the thesis; for example §1.3.2 is Section 2 within Chapter 3 of Part 1, and §0.2.2 is Subsection 2 of Section 2 of the overall Introduction.

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**GODS, GHOSTS AND NEWLYWEDS:
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INTRODUCTION

This is the first reappraisal of the supernatural symbolism of the threshold in over a century. This thesis will summarise, address, and seek to advance our understanding of the role of the threshold in Greek and Roman superstition and folklore, in what is both a response to and updating of the 1911 article by Marbury Bladen Ogle entitled ‘The House-Door in Greek and Roman Religion and Folk-Lore’. This article features copious lists of references in Greek and Roman literature to supernatural activity at the threshold, from the bad omens caused by stumbling at it, to the prophylactics used to protect it from negative influences.¹ As such a compendium, it is still frequently cited today, when an author wishes to point their reader to evidence for the threshold being used in such a manner.² However, Ogle was not merely listing these uses of the threshold in religion and folklore, but also attempting to tie all the occurrences together under one theory behind the threshold’s importance: that the threshold was the haunt of ghosts, and that their presence there accounted for all instances of supernatural activity at that location:

¹ Stumbling: Ogle 1911: 251-254; prophylactics: 254-257. There are also lists of, e.g. uses of the threshold in medicinal lore (257-258), prophecies received at the threshold (260), and so on. I shall address this evidence throughout Part One of this thesis.

² The following is not an exhaustive list of citations, but gives a broad overview of the range of scholarship using Ogle as a reference: Meister 1925: 25 n. 1; Gow 1942: 111 n. 1; Gow 1952b: 47; Rabel 1985: 323 n. 31; Dermot Small 1986: 279 n. 6; Segal 1990: 6 n. 14; Luschnig 1992: 28 n. 23; Clausen 1994: 262; Christ 1998: 524 n. 15; Kellum 1999: 294 n. 9; DeBrohun 2003: 126 nn. 20 & 24; Maynes 2007: 62 n. 49; 63-64; 67 n. 64; O’Byrhim 2008: 192 n. 13; Robinson 2011: 364; Beacham 2013: 370 n. 18; Buxton 2013: 203 n. 8; Lennon 2014: 85 n. 168; 102 n. 60; Hartnett 2017: 154 n. 26; Faraone 2018: 397 n. 16.

A theory, then, which will logically account for the presence of these spirits should furnish a simple and sufficient explanation for the important character of the door-way in religion and folklore.³

The notion that ghosts haunted the threshold was not one unique to Ogle; it was relatively common amongst scholars of his generation, especially those operating under the comparativist theory, such as Samson Eitrem, Ernst Samter and James George Frazer;⁴ I shall discuss their work in considerably more detail in the Introduction to Part One. Ogle's work remains, however, the most thorough account based solely on the evidence found in Greek and Roman sources; it is, therefore, this article and the evidence presented therein which I shall focus on throughout this thesis.

It is not Ogle's lists of resources which I wish to update (although I do question the relevance of some of them, and argue that very few – if any – indicate the presence of ghosts at the threshold), but rather the argument that the sole 'meaning' behind the importance of the threshold in Greek and Roman superstitious thought was that the spirits of the dead were present there.

Therefore in Part One of this thesis I shall challenge the assumption that there was a belief in ghosts haunting the threshold as a matter of course. I shall argue that far from there being one definitive 'reason' for all supernatural activity at the threshold, it is actually not possible to pin down a sole 'meaning' behind such a range of occurrences. The threshold can symbolise a boundary, a new start, a liminal space betwixt-and-between; in fact, the only conclusion that I can safely

³ Ogle 1911: 251.

⁴ e.g. Eitrem 1909: 13; Samter 1911: 141; Frazer 1929a: 447.

make is that there does *not* appear to have been a belief in ghosts haunting the threshold in either Greece or Rome.

In Part Two I take a specific set of threshold-rituals – those pertaining to the Roman marriage ceremony⁵ – and argue that rather than indicating a concern about avoiding or propitiating ghosts (which was an argument made not only by Ogle, but also Samter and Eitrem),⁶ they can be seen as symbolising the bride’s rite of passage as she transitions into a new household. I use van Gennep’s tripartite structure of the rite of passage (featuring rites of separation, transition and incorporation) as a framework through which to view the wedding rituals. Traditionally, analyses of rites of passage during marriage ceremonies tend to focus on the transition of a woman from virgin to wife and mother; however, I shall argue that the Roman rituals are also applicable to those remarrying and that the goal behind a number of rituals is to safely ensconce the bride into her new house and family. Of course, I do not wish to suggest that a rite of passage is the only symbolism behind these threshold-rituals, but that they are certainly more suggestive of that than they are of the presence of ghosts.⁷

§0.1: The state of scholarship on the threshold in Greece and Rome

The flurry of activity in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries surrounding the supernatural nature of the threshold has not been repeated;

⁵ There are no threshold rituals associated with the Greek wedding ceremony, which is why my focus in Part Two is solely on Rome.

⁶ Samter 1901: 81-84; Eitrem 1909: 19; Ogle 1911: 254, 263 & 267.

⁷ There is a full breakdown of the chapters within this thesis in the Introductions to Parts One and Two.

there is a full literature review of Ogle's article and the work of his contemporary scholars in the Introduction to Part One of this thesis. As mentioned above, Ogle's article remains the most comprehensive collection of references to the threshold and supernatural activity taking place there in Greece and Rome, although very few modern scholars referencing his work address the theory that ghosts haunted the threshold.

The threshold or doorway has been a rare focus for an academic study, and no work subsequent to Ogle has concentrated on its supernatural nature. W. W. Mooney's *The House-Door on the Ancient Stage* (1914) is solely concerned with the function of the door in drama and matters connected to it, such as whether characters would knock before exiting the stage door, and whether it opened inwards or outwards. Karl Meister, in his 1925 monograph *Die Hausschwelle in Sprache und Religion der Römer*, does discuss the use of the threshold in Roman rituals – especially in the wedding ceremony – but this is to illustrate his main argument which is a linguistic one: that the word *sublimis* ('lofty') is derived from the phrase *super limen* ('over the threshold'), given that the threshold was evidently considered to be so important in Roman belief. Meister, in a brief footnote, dismisses the notion – attributed here to Samter and Ogle – that the threshold was important because it was the haunt of ghosts: 'Leider haben sie ganz verschiedenartige Sitten und Anschauungen verschiedener Völker und Zeiten aus derselben Anschauung, daß die Schwelle als Sitz von Gespenstern

gefürchtet worden sei, zu erklären versucht.’⁸ He does not, however, go into any detail as to why.

The next major work concerning the threshold does not address the idea of ghosts at all; but whereas I have suggested that Ogle did not apply enough readings to the symbolism of the door, Elizabeth Hazelton Haight’s 1950 monograph *The Symbolism of the House Door in Classical Poetry* perhaps applies too many – Haight frequently gives a symbolic meaning to a use of the door in literature where a practical one might suffice. ‘The poetry of the Door is endless’,⁹ argues Haight, and appears to consider every entrance or exit through it significant. While it is true that the door is frequently used as a deliberate image by authors, is it really possible to argue that, for example, the ‘cave door [in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*] witnessed depths of suffering, betrayal, reconciliation, and divine interpretation’¹⁰ as part of a conscious design by the playwright, or simply because much of the action of any Greek play takes place in front of the *skēnē* and any associated doors?¹¹

Thus far, discussions of the threshold have been largely based in literary depictions of it. Ardle Mac Mahon’s 2003 article ‘The Realm of Janus: Doorways in the Roman World’ therefore makes an important contribution by using archaeological remains alongside written sources to ‘explore the meaning of the

⁸ Meister 1925: 25 n. 1.

⁹ Haight 1950: 16.

¹⁰ Haight 1950: 25; of course, it is also questionable whether the opening to *Philoctetes*’ cave should rightly be considered to be a door.

¹¹ A promised sequel (Haight 1950: 152), *Aspects of Symbolism in the Latin Anthology and in Classical and Renaissance Art*, was published in 1952, covering a both poetry and artistic depictions up to a later period.

architectural symbolism of the portal and the role of doorways in ritual within the Roman empire'.¹² Mac Mahon uses extant examples from Pompeii and Herculaneum to demonstrate the significance of the doorway in Roman culture, especially given the otherwise 'stark façades' of the exteriors of domestic buildings.¹³ Mac Mahon does briefly address deities associated with the door, ritual actions that took place there, and superstitions related to it but does not touch upon the notion of ghosts haunting the threshold.

The most recent, and most thorough, analysis of the Roman threshold is the 2007 PhD thesis by Craig Marshman Maynes: 'Lingering on the threshold: the door in Augustan Elegy' (University of Toronto). This thesis is more wide-ranging than the title suggests, moving outside elegy to examine 'the social significance of doors within Roman culture' and 'the importance of doors to the expression and maintenance of Roman social ideologies.'¹⁴ Maynes' focus is, nevertheless, on the door as an elegiac trope, covering the history and use of the *paraklausithyron* motif, as well as specific analyses of the door as a character in Roman poetry. Whilst Maynes does repeatedly refer to Roman superstitions and rituals to do with thresholds, these are not the focus of his study. However, Maynes remains one of the only scholars to – albeit briefly – acknowledge the threshold-ghosts theory: Ogle's argument, he writes, 'that all Greco-Roman door superstitions arise from an otherwise unknown ancient practice of burying the dead under the threshold is not convincing.'¹⁵

¹² Mac Mahon 2003: 58.

¹³ Mac Mahon 2003: 60.

¹⁴ Maynes 2007: ii.

¹⁵ Maynes 2007: 62 n. 49.

It is not just the underlying theory of ancestor burial that is unconvincing. My own thesis addresses not only the lack of evidence for burial under the threshold, but also the reasons why other proofs offered for the presence of spirits at the threshold – from the use of prophylactics to the performance of magic rites and the function of the threshold in the Roman marriage ceremony – cannot be indicative of such a belief. In doing so I offer up a range of alternative explanations for the ‘meaning’ behind the threshold, without prescribing any one solution as the sole ‘correct’ interpretation. As I intend to show throughout my thesis, the threshold has a multi-layered essence, and – as befits such a liminal symbol – we may ultimately not be able to box it in.

§0.2: A Survey of Deities Associated with the Door

§0.2.1: Introduction

The final matter which I wish to address in this introduction is that of deities associated with the door; thus far I have explained the reasoning behind ‘ghosts’ and ‘newlyweds’ in my title – but what of the ‘gods’? For an article with ‘religion’ in the title, Ogle stays away from the notion of a divine presence at the threshold, unless the divine presence is that of a spirit of the dead, and the religion that of an ancestor cult. He offers merely one paragraph summarising the various Greek and Roman gods that have a connection to the door;¹⁶ I therefore intend the following survey to provide a fuller investigation into the divinities that the Greeks and Romans did honour at the threshold. There are plenty of deities with

¹⁶ Ogle 1911: 262.

jurisdiction over liminal areas, such as Terminus the Roman god of boundaries, or Zeus Herkeios ('of the enclosure fence'), but throughout this survey I am concerned specifically with those deities which are explicitly associated with the doorway.

§0.2.2: Greece

Maynes, in his discussion of rituals associated with the door, concludes that 'Roman doors... were associated with religion and religious ritual to a far greater degree than Greek doors'.¹⁷ This is borne out by the fact that whereas the Romans had specific deities who both embodied and protected the door, the Greeks appear concerned only with protecting the door, and assigned this function largely to facets of gods such as Apollo. There is considerable evidence of an Apollo Ἀγυιεύς, 'of the street', whose image – most likely an aniconic conical pillar¹⁸ – stood outside the doors of houses and other buildings. Apollo Agyieus is frequently greeted outside the *skēnē* doors in both tragedy and comedy.¹⁹

Additionally, two late authors mention an Apollo Θυραῖος, 'of the door':

etiam apud Graecos Apollinem Thyraeum et Antelios daemonas ostiorum praesides legimus.

Among the Greeks likewise we read of Apollo Thyraeus and the Antelii demons as presiders over entrances.

(Tertullian, *De idololatria* 15.6)²⁰

¹⁷ Maynes 2007: 62.

¹⁸ Parker 2005: 18 points out that it is unclear whether the Athenian Apollo Agyieus was the pointed pillar depicted on coins from elsewhere in Greece, or simply an altar.

¹⁹ e.g. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1081; 1086; Euripides, *Phoenissae* 631; Aristophanes, *Vespae* 875; *Thesmophoriazusae* 489; 748. It is likely that there would have been a pillar present on stage, near the *skēnē* door.

²⁰ Translation by Thelwall in Roberts *et al.* 1885. There is a practically identical sentence at Tertullian, *De corona militaris* 13.9: *si norit quantos deos etiam ostiis diabolus adfinxerit... etiam apud Graecos Thyraeum Apollinem et Antelios daemonas* ('if so be he knows how many gods the devil has attached to doors... among the Greeks, too, Apollo Thyraeus and the Antelii demons', trans. Thelwall in Roberts *et al.* 1885, adapted).

apud Graecos Apollo colitur qui Θυραῖος vocatur, eiusque aras ante fores suas celebrant, ipsum exitus et introitus demonstrantes potentem.
the Greeks worship Apollo under the name Thyraios and tend his altars in front of their doors, thereby showing that entrances and exits are under his power.

(Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.9.6)²¹

Macrobius goes on to link this Apollo Thyraios with the Roman Janus (1.9.7).

Other than a fragment of Nigidius Figulus (fr. 73), which is from where Macrobius had taken his information (1.9.6), these passages are the only references to a specific Apollo Thyraios, although Faraone reports that there is an inscription to a Hermes Thyraios at Pergamon.²²

In fact, it seems likely that the immediate outside of a Greek house could well be cluttered with statues: as well as the pillar of Apollo Agyieus, we have evidence that it was common to find *hekataia* and herms, representative of Hekate and Hermes respectively:²³

ὥστερ Ἑκατεῖον πανταχοῦ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν.
they'd [personal law courts] be on doorsteps everywhere, like the shrines for Hekate.

(Aristophanes, *Vespae* 804)²⁴

ὅσοι Ἑρμαῖ ἦσαν λίθινοι ἐν τῇ πόλει τῇ Ἀθηναίων (εἰσὶ δὲ κατὰ τὸ ἐπιχώριον ἢ ἐργασία πολλοὶ καὶ ἐν ἰδίοις προθύροις καὶ ἐν ἱεροῖς)
the stone statues of Hermes in the city of Athens – they are the pillars of square construction which according to local custom stand in great numbers both in the doorways of private houses and in sacred places
(Thucydides 6.27.1)²⁵

²¹ Translation by Kaster 2011.

²² Faraone 1992: 8.

²³ I discuss *hekataia* found at crossroads in Chapter Five.

²⁴ Translation by Henderson 1998.

²⁵ Translation by Smith 1921.

Porphry tells us that these *hekataia* and herms would be cleaned on a monthly basis (*De abstinentia* 2.16). There are no identifiable archaeological remains of any of these statues *in situ*,²⁶ but Faraone points to evidence of ‘a shallow recess off the street in front of the housedoor... [which] seems ideally suited for statuettes, presumably fashioned from perishable materials.’²⁷

The Antelii, or Anthelioi, ‘those who face the sun’, mentioned in the Tertullian extract above, may well be a collective name for any of these gods whose statues are located by the door, rather than a separate group of deities. In Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, for example, Agamemnon greets the δαίμονες τ’ άντέλιοι (519) as he approaches the palace; later in the play it becomes clear that there is at least a statue of Apollo Agyieus outside the door, since Cassandra addresses it at 1081 and 1086. This Apollo is therefore presumably part of the Antelii greeted by Agamemnon. Hesychius s.v. άντήλιοι defines them as θεοὶ οὐ πρό τῶν πυλῶν ἱδρυμένοι (‘the gods situated before the gates’).²⁸

What is clear for all of these Greek deities connected with the door is that they are not so much associated with the *door* itself, but rather with protecting those passing through it and guarding entry into the *house*. ‘Hermes’, suggests Parker, ‘promises safe journeys... Apollo and Hecate are probably there as protectors

²⁶ Parker 2005: 18. There are remains of *hekataia* (Parker 2005: 19), but not associated with doors; Jameson 1990: 105 points out that of the vase-paintings depicting herms, ‘few appear to be standing in front of houses’. However, there is literary evidence, in addition to Thucydides 6.27.1 above, that herms were also found outside doorways, e.g., Aristophanes, *Wealth* 1153, Suda s.v. Στροφαῖος.

²⁷ Faraone 1992: 8; see also Jameson 1990: 105.

²⁸ Hesychius is quoting a fragment of Euripides’ *Meleager* (fr. 538 Nauck) here.

from intrusive evil'.²⁹ 'Intrusive evil' could, of course, include ghosts, and Johnston argues that these statues 'were particularly expected to ward off unhappy souls and other demonic creatures'.³⁰ However, warding ghosts off from a door simply indicates that the door is the method by which a ghost would enter a house, not that the ghost is intrinsically connected to the threshold. The statues also protected the house from more mundane ills: Johnston also lists 'mice';³¹ Faraone suggests 'personal enemies' and 'illness';³² and an entry in the *Suda* about Hermes Strophaios ('of the hinge') states:³³

ἔπωνυμία δέ ἐστιν Ἑρμοῦ, παρὰ τὸ ταῖς θύραις ἰδρύσθαι ἐπὶ φυλακῇ τῶν ἄλλων κλεπτῶν

It is an epithet of Hermes, from the [practice of] setting [him] up by the doors to guard against the other thieves

(*Suda*, s.v. Στροφαῖος)³⁴

This entry also states that Strophaios is οὕτως ἐκάλουν τὸν παρὰ τῆς θύρας ἰδρυμένον δαίμονα ('This what they used to call the spirit who lived beside the door'):³⁵ not, therefore, a divine presence *within* the door, but one in its vicinity, offering it protection.

²⁹ Parker 2005: 20.

³⁰ Johnston 1999: 209.

³¹ Johnston 1999: 209.

³² Faraone 1992: 8.

³³ cf. Aristophanes, *Plutus* 1153, where Hermes states: παρὰ τὴν θύραν Στροφαῖον ἰδρύσασθέ με ('Enshrine me at your door as *Strophaios*', trans. Henderson 2002, adapted).

³⁴ Translation by Whitehead 2014.

³⁵ Translation by Whitehead 2014.

§0.2.3: Rome

§0.2.3.1: Janus

Perhaps the most well-known of the Roman door deities is the god Janus. Well-known, but not well-understood, and even the Romans themselves were unsure about his origins and purpose, although Ovid tells us that there was no Greek equivalent to this god (*Fasti* 1.90). There are two detailed literary descriptions of Janus: in Ovid, *Fasti* 1 and Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.9. Green tells us that

Macrobius:

bears witness to the variety of conflicting interpretations. Janus' primary duties range from lowly celestial doorkeeper (1.9.9) to powerful controller of time and beginnings (1.9.10); he may be god of gods (1.9.14) or perhaps not even an independent deity at all, but an alternative name for Apollo and Diana (1.9.5-8) or the sky (1.9.9); he is traditionally credited with two faces, but he may have four (1.9.13).[.]³⁶

It is not my role here to attempt to unravel who exactly Janus was; besides, how he originated is less important than how he was perceived, and he was certainly considered to be a god of the doorway:

introitus et exitus aedium eidem consecratos
the entrances and exits of buildings were consecrated to him
(*Saturnalia* 1.9.2)³⁷

Janus is, of course, closely etymologically related both to *ianus*, archway and *ianua*, doorway, yet even this is ambiguous: is *ianua* derived from *Ianus*, or vice versa? Frazer points to the fact that Indo-European words for door all resemble *fores*, not *Ianus*, and that the word *ianua* 'has the appearance of being an

³⁶ Green 2004: 68.

³⁷ Translation by Kaster 2011.

adjectival form derived from the noun *Ianus*.³⁸ In Ovid's *Fasti*, Janus himself implies that he is named after the *ianua*: *it, redit officio Iuppiter ipse meo./ inde vocor Ianus* ('my office regulates the goings and the comings of Jupiter himself. Hence Janus is my name,' 1.126-127),³⁹ whereas Cicero states that Janus comes from *eundum* and it is from here that *ianua* derives:

quod ab eundo nomen est ductum, ex quo transitiones perviae iani foresque in liminibus profanorum aedium ianuae nominantur.
the name [Janus] being derived from *ire* (to go), hence the names *jani* for archways and *januae* for the front doors of secular buildings.
(*De natura deorum* 2.67)⁴⁰

An issue with Janus being the 'god of the door' is that it is not very clear what this actually *means*. Orr, in a survey of Roman domestic religious shrines – despite stating that Janus' 'place at the *fauces*, the border between a Roman's public and private province, is the only area where the old god played a domestic role' – has found 'no images or epigraphical evidence to firmly place Janus in the Campanian house shrines'.⁴¹ If there were, therefore, any private worship of Janus at the *ianua* or as *numen* of it, then it was done in such a manner as to leave no trace.⁴²

However, unlike the rest of the Roman door deities I shall discuss, Janus had known temples, shrines and statues,⁴³ appeared on coins,⁴⁴ was offered cakes on

³⁸ Frazer 1929a: 92-93.

³⁹ Translation by Frazer 1931. See Green 2004: 82.

⁴⁰ Translation by Rackham 1933.

⁴¹ Orr 1978: 1562.

⁴² It is possible, of course, that he was represented by the door itself. Holland 1961: 304 suggests that Janus' 'nearest connection with the private house is that the main entrance has some resemblance to a Janus [here a gateway consisting of two posts and a cross-beam, like the doorposts and the lintel] and so is a *ianua foris*.'

⁴³ The temple of Janus in the *Forum Holitorium* was restored by Tiberius: Tacitus, *Annales* 2.49; see Procopius 5.25.20 for the Janus Geminus (= Janus Quirinus) shrine. See Green 2004: 120.

⁴⁴ Janus himself was depicted on the bronze *as signatum*; his temple with the gates closed – symbolising peace – was depicted on coins issued by Nero.

the Kalends of January,⁴⁵ and we even have extant prayers referencing him and know that he was the first god mentioned during prayers.⁴⁶ Yet none of this is to do with his connection to doors. In fact, as Graf states, Janus' 'cult is almost exclusively public and political, only two private dedications to him are extant.'⁴⁷ Perhaps the most important aspect of his state cult – and an aspect that might well relate to his role as door deity – was that the temple of Janus was used as a symbol of peace: its doors were opened during times of war and closed during times of peace; Augustus claimed to have closed the doors three times during his reign (*Res Gestae* 13).

Holland puts forth the intriguing theory that Janus was in origin a protective water deity, and that opening the *ianus* gates in time of war actually meant destroying the bridge over the river, so as to prevent the enemy from attacking the city. The simple *ianus* gates at either end of the bridge – two posts and a crossbeam, which would resemble doorposts and a lintel – would remain standing, and as time moved on and this original custom was forgotten:

it was the gate rather than the bridge which became the symbol of the god... The persistence of the connection supplies a reason for the dominant theory that he was in origin the spirit of the door or entrance[.]⁴⁸

As I mentioned above, it is far beyond the scope of this survey to attempt to discern the origins of Janus; for the purposes of this study the importance is in the fact that he *was* considered to be a god of the doorway, even if we might

⁴⁵ Festus 93L s.v. *ianual*.

⁴⁶ Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.67; Ovid, *Fasti* 1.171-174; Juvenal 6.386; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.9.9; Servius, *ad Aeneid* 1.292 & 7.610; extant prayers naming Janus can be found at Cato, *De agricultura* 134.2 and Livy 8.9.6.

⁴⁷ Graf 2006.

⁴⁸ Holland 1961: 71.

never know why. Ovid neatly sums up the dichotomy between Janus' public and private cult when he has Janus say:

pacem postesque tuebar

I was the guardian of peace and doorways

(*Fasti* 1.253)

§0.2.3.2: Limentinus, Forculus and Cardea

The genuine old god of doors, Forculus, always remained in that humble station of life to which fate or Providence had consigned him; so far as we are aware, no prayers or sacrifices were ever offered to him; and he might never have emerged from his native obscurity if it had not been for the pious zeal of Christian writers, who insisted on peering into pagan cupboards in search of skeletons hidden there from the eyes of the profane.⁴⁹

Whilst Janus may be the well-known god of the doorway, a triad of additional door deities are known to us primarily from Christian invective. These gods – Limentinus, god of the *limen* (threshold), Forculus, god of the *fores* (door-leaves) and Cardea, goddess of the *cardines* (hinges) – are mocked by Tertullian, Arnobius and Augustine for having such specific roles, and through this the pagan Romans are mocked for requiring such specific gods. We know little more about the roles of these gods in Roman religion than their names, and – thanks to the rise in the Neo-Pagan movement and the dissemination of debatable information over the internet – we are in a curious position that they may well be getting more attention now than they did in pagan Rome.⁵⁰ This is perhaps

⁴⁹ Frazer 1929a: 92.

⁵⁰ A basic internet search yields multiple modern Neo-Pagan prayers to these gods, and websites listing them as deities within the Roman pantheon; Forculus is prayed to by a character in the television show *HBO's Rome* ('Forculus, if you be the right god for the business here, I call on you to help. If you would open this door, then I would kill for you a fine white lamb, or, failing that, if I couldn't get a good one at a decent price, then six pigeons,' season one, episode one, 'The Stolen Eagle'); and the 'threshold of Limentinus' is an artefact used on the science-fiction television show *Warehouse 13*, as a magical object that will blast a hole in a wall to create an entrance.

not what Augustine *et al.* would have hoped for when they wrote about these gods with the intention of discrediting them.

Our earliest mention of these three gods comes from the Christian polemic of Tertullian, writing in the late-second and early-third centuries AD; I have listed all our known sources for these gods in Appendix One. Tertullian mentions them repeatedly, within the context of warning Christians against decorating their doors – for this would mean honouring these pagan gods. In the *Apologeticus pro Christianis* 35 (source #1.1 in Appendix One), most likely written in AD 197, he makes general warnings against decorations such as bay-garlands and lamps, implying that they make a house look like a brothel. In the *Ad nationes* (written around the same time as the *Apologeticus* – possibly before and reworked into it, possibly after and reworked from it), however, he is more specific that the dangers of these decorations are that one might accidentally worship a pagan deity of the door:

*taceo deos Forculum a foribus et Car<deam a cardi>nibus et liminum
Limentinum, siue qui alii inter uicinos apu<d uos numi>num ianitorum
adorantur.*

I pass silently by the deities called Forculus from doors, and Cardea from hinges, and Limentinus the god of thresholds, and whatever others are worshipped by your neighbours as tutelar deities of their street doors.

(#1.2: *Ad nationes* 2.15.5)⁵¹

This list of the three door deities appears a further three times in his later works:

De idololatria 15 (= #1.3 in Appendix One), *De corona militaris* 13.9 (= #1.4) and

Scorpiace 10.6 (= #1.5). Tertullian's concern primarily appears to be that

⁵¹ Translation by Holmes in Roberts *et al.* 1885.

decorating the door in any way is honouring these gods, even if one is ignorant of them and considers the decoration to be merely festive:

*Si autem sunt qui in ostiis adorentur, ad eos et lucernae et laurea
pertinebunt. Idolo feceris, quicquid ostio feceris. ... Si templis renuntiasti, ne
feceris templum ianuam tuam.*

But if there are beings which are adored in *entrances*, it is to them that both the lamps and the laurels will pertain. To an idol you will have done whatever you shall have done to an *entrance*. ... If you have renounced temples, make not your own gate a temple.

(#1.3: *De idololatria* 15)⁵²

This does not seem to be a theoretical concern: his writings are an attempt to dissuade Christians from decorating their doors, which certainly suggests both that people *are* decorating their doors and that a belief in door deities among the pagan population could still be current. Although Tertullian does not name his sources, he does refer to the fact that these gods can be found in *litteratura saecularis* (#1.3: *De idololatria* 15). Being found in books is not, of course, the same as being worshipped or honoured on a daily basis, and so this gives us no indication whether these deities were a practical or a simply theoretical part of pagan Roman religious thought.

Cyprian, or Pseudo-Cyprian, was writing a little after Tertullian, and his *Quod idola dii non sint* or *De idolorum vanitate* is largely made up from Tertullian's and Minucius Felix's works. A variant manuscript tradition lists our door deities along with other gods with similar 'speaking names', and it is clear that Cyprian evidently considers that they have been made up:

*In tantum uero deorum uocabula apud Romanos finguntur... et Forculus a
foribus et a liminibus Limentinus et Cardea a cardinibus*

⁵² Translation by Thelwall in Roberts *et al.* 1885.

To such a pass indeed do the Romans proceed in inventing the names of Gods... Forculus from doors, Limentinus from thresholds, Cardea from hinges

(#1.6: *Quod idola dii non sint* 4)⁵³

Around a hundred years after Tertullian and Cyprian, there are three references to Limentinus in Arnobius' *Adversus nationes* (#1.7: 4.9; #1.8: 4.11; #1.9: 4.12), along with Lima (who could be an additional goddess or simply a variant of the name), as the protector of thresholds. Like Cyprian, Arnobius is not so much worried that Christians might accidentally be worshipping these gods, as he is dismissive of their effectiveness or even existence:

quis Limentinum, quis Limam custodiam liminum gerere et ianitorum officia sustinere, cum fanorum <limina> cotidie videamus et privatarum domorum convelli et subrui nec sine his esse flagitiosos ad lupanaria com meatust quis curatores obliquitatum Limos

Who that Limentinus and Lima have the care of thresholds, and do the duties of their keepers, when every day we see the thresholds of temples and private houses destroyed and overthrown, and that the infamous approaches to stews are not without them? Who believes that the Limi watch over obliquities?

(#1.7: *Adversus nationes* 4.9)⁵⁴

Finally, in AD 413, we turn to Augustine, who is scathing about these gods on two occasions – and frequently about many other ‘minor’ gods with similar ‘speaking’ names – in *De civitate Dei*:

Unum quisque domui suae ponit ostiarium, et quia homo est, omnino sufficit: tres deos isti posuerunt, Forculum foribus, Cardeam cardini, Limentinum limini. Ita non poterat Forculus simul et cardinem limenque servare.

Everyone has a single doorkeeper for his house, and since he is a man, that is quite sufficient. But they put three gods there: Forculus for the doors (*fores*), Cardea for the hinges (*cardo*) and Limentinus for the threshold (*limen*). Thus Forculus was not competent to guard both the hinge and the threshold along with the door.

(#1.10: *De civitate Dei* 4.8)⁵⁵

⁵³ Translation by Charles Thornton 1840.

⁵⁴ Translation by Bryce & Campbell in Roberts *et al.* 1886.

⁵⁵ Translation by Green 1963.

Cur Forculus, qui foribus praeest, et Limentinus, qui limini, dii sunt masculi, atque inter hos Cardea femina est, quae cardinem servat? Nonne ista in rerum divinarum libris reperiuntur, quae graves poetae suis carminibus indigna duxerunt?

Why are Forculus, who presides at the door, and Limentinus at the threshold, male gods, while between them Cardea, who guards the hinge, is female? Are not these matters found in the books “On Divine Things,” matters that serious poets have judged unworthy of poetic treatment?

(#1.11: *De civitate Dei* 6.7)⁵⁶

It is from Augustine that we get our likeliest scenario that the information about this triad of door deities was originally found – by Augustine at least⁵⁷ – in Varro; Varro is perhaps also the source of Tertullian’s *litteratura saecularis* (#1.3: *De idololatria* 15).

Why was Augustine so focused on mocking these gods – was it really because they were still a divine presence in fifth century AD cult practice? Cameron points out that while the polemic ‘might seem to imply a still living and threatening target... [it] is almost entirely directed against the religion of the Roman Republic, as reconstructed from Varro and illustrated by Vergil’.⁵⁸ His intention is to puncture any religious or cultural nostalgia that might turn people away from Christianity and Varro was an oft-cited authority on pagan religious matters. To turn to Cameron again: ‘Augustine’s brainwave was to sit down and actually *read* this great authority from cover to cover, and show those who appealed to him so trustingly, whether pagans or Christians, what laughable nonsense it was.’⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Translation by Green 1963.

⁵⁷ Although we do know that he read both Tertullian and Cyprian as well.

⁵⁸ Cameron 2011: 792.

⁵⁹ Cameron 2011: 620.

Without Varro's original we have no knowledge of the context of these deities. Was he listing them as archaic remnants of early Roman religion, or was he documenting current practice? Just as with a domestic cult to Janus, there is no archaeological evidence for their existence,⁶⁰ and we glean very little from the Christian writers other than name and supposed function. Limentinus and Forculus seem to be relatively straightforward. Their names clearly derive from the objects they are said to divinely protect, and as this is in keeping with the Roman tradition of minor deities, their existence at some level seems plausible. Whilst there is no pagan evidence for them (and by this I include the lack of archaeological evidence), both Tertullian and Augustine have made some reference to pagan sources from which they have taken their information. Regardless of whether or not these gods were actively worshipped or honoured – or even for the most part considered – by pagan Romans, it seems likely that they may have been acknowledged in some way when relevant.

Cardea, the goddess of the hinge, is, however, more complicated. If, like with Limentinus and Forculus, we had only the Christian invective to serve as evidence, then we could safely tuck Cardea away with them, as a minor household god who might perhaps be called upon from time to time – if the hinges were stuck, for example, or if a new door were being installed and needed to be blessed. However, in the case of this goddess of the hinge, we also have an attestation from pagan Rome, with details of her backstory and her feast day. What should have made things clearer, however, only serves to muddy the

⁶⁰ See Orr 1978 on the evidence for household shrines in general.

waters, for Ovid – as Tertullian will also do, some 200 years later⁶¹ – names this hinge-goddess Carna, not Cardea.

§0.2.3.2.1: Cardea or Carna?

That there was a goddess Carna, who – as a name derived from *caro, carnis* suggests – was the protector of one’s vital organs and innards, is known to us from the fifth century AD pagan author Macrobius (*Saturnalia* 1.12.31-33; for the full passage see #1.12 in Appendix One). According to Macrobius: she is *hanc deam vitalibus humanis praeesse credunt* (‘thought to hold human vital organs in her power’), she is given offerings of *cui pulte fabaria et larido sacrificatur* (‘bean porridge and bacon’) on the Kalends of June – which are hence referred to as the ‘Bean Kalends’ (*Kalendae Iuniae fabariae*); historically, Junius Brutus was said to have sacrificed to her on the Caelian Hill on the Kalends (*pulso Tarquinio sacrum Carnae deae in Caelio monte voti reus fecerit*) and dedicated a temple to her (*hanc deam quae vitalibus praeest templo sacravit*).⁶²

In the *Ad nationes*, Tertullian mentions that there is a shrine to Carna (*ad fanum Carnae*, 2.9.7) which could substantiate the mention of Brutus’ sacrifice to her. A fragment of Varro partially supports Macrobius’ assertion that the first of June was the ‘Bean Kalends’, as he too states that beans were offered on the Kalends

⁶¹ Carna appears in #1.4: *De corona militaris* 13, and is a manuscript variations in some of the other Tertullian sources – see later discussion.

⁶² Translations by Kaster 2011. However, as McDonough 1997: 329 notes: ‘We cannot know whether Macrobius was drawing on older material lost to us or was instead simply speculating about Carna’s sphere of influence by extrapolating from Ovid’s text.’

of June, although he does not specify to whom.⁶³ This in turn can be supported by Pliny, who notes that bean porridge was used in religious ritual – although he does not give any more detail than that (*Naturalis historia* 18.30.118).

So far we know only that the Kalends of June were sacred to Carna, and that as beans were offered on that day it was also known as the *Kalendae fabariae* (Bean Kalends). A tombstone found in the Roman colony of Emona (now Ljubljana) in Slovenia has the intriguing, abbreviated, reference to ‘Carnar’, stating that roses are to be brought to this grave yearly on the ‘Carnar’.⁶⁴ Scholarly assumption is that this must therefore refer to the Kalends of June, or the ‘*Carnaria*’. If we only had this late evidence, therefore, we could safely assume that Cardea was the goddess of the hinge, and that Carna was the protector of innards with a feast day – perhaps known as the *Carnaria* – on the Kalends of June, or Bean Kalends, when bean porridge and bacon were offered to her. Tertullian’s reference to ‘Carna’ as a goddess of the hinge in #1.4: *De corona militaris* 13 would simply be put down to scribal error.

As it is, Ovid – our earliest source for either Cardea or Carna – writes about the two as if they were the same goddess, blending the attributes of both (#1.13: *Fasti* 6.101-182). Historically this is put down to an error on Ovid’s part; in his commentary, Frazer rather patronisingly decided that ‘Ovid, misled by the superficial similarity of their names, has confounded her with Cardea, the

⁶³ *quod calendis Iuniis et publice et privatim fabatam pultem dis mactant*, Varro apud Nonius 539L= 541M.

⁶⁴ *CIL* 3.3893 = *ILS* 7235a. Šašel Kos 2002: 137 dates the tombstone to after AD 120, based on a reference in the inscription to *denarii*, rather than the more usual *sestertii*. Littlewood 2006: 35 however (in yet another example of how nothing to do with these goddesses is straightforward), states that it dates to before AD 31.

goddess of hinges (*cardines*).⁶⁵ Littlewood, in the most recent commentary on *Fasti* 6, sees the connection between Carna and the hinge as ‘specious’, and states that ‘Outside this passage, however, Carna has no connection with *cardo-inis*.’⁶⁶ However, this assertion completely disregards the spelling ‘Carna’ found repeatedly in the manuscripts of both Tertullian and Augustine with regard to the hinge-goddess. Carna is the only spelling given in the manuscript of #1.4: *De corona militaris*, and is an alternative reading in #1.3: *De idololatria*. The surviving manuscript of #1.2: *Ad nationes* is frustratingly damaged at the key point, leaving a reading only of ‘Car’. The #1.5: *Scorpiace* features a host of alternatives, mostly masculine, such as Carnus, Barnus, Ianus and Cardus, although Cardea also features. In Augustine (#1.10 & #1.11) we find Cardea, Cardinea and Carnea in the various manuscripts. The hinge-goddess’s name as ‘Cardea’ was evidently not a settled matter.

Šašel Kos makes the point that Ovid is hardly likely to have made such a glaring error – mixing up two goddesses on the basis of spelling alone – about current practice, and that ‘certainly Ovid’s verses can by no means be considered an argument in favour of the existence of a goddess of hinges other than Carna.’⁶⁷

Ovid does state that :

*unde datas habeat vires, obscurior aevo
fama, sed e nostro carmine certus eris.*

Time has dimmed the tradition which sets forth how she acquired the powers she owns, but you shall learn it from my song.

(#1.13: *Fasti* 6.103-104)⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Frazer 1929c: 141-142; this scholarly tendency is discussed at McDonough 1997: 330.

⁶⁶ Littlewood 2006: 39.

⁶⁷ Šašel Kos 2002: 138.

⁶⁸ Translation by Frazer 1931.

This certainly suggests that there was some question and uncertainty over her origins.

Ovid then goes on to discuss the Kalends of June; he tells the story of how Carna – whom he explicitly states is the goddess of the hinge (*dea cardinis haec est*, #1.13: 6.101) – was originally a nymph called Crane or Cranae who, having been raped by Janus, was given the power to protect doors (#1.13: 6.127-130). The name Crane/ae (the manuscripts do not agree on the spelling or even the number of syllables the name should have), Littlewood suggests, ‘seems to be an Ovidian invention’,⁶⁹ but it is surely significant that it is a near anagram for Carna.⁷⁰

Ovid tells of how Cranae protects the baby Proca from the attack of *striges*, by putting up supernatural barriers at his threshold and windowsill:

*protinus arbutea postes ter in ordine tangit
fronde, ter arbutea limina fronde notat;
spargit aquis aditus (et aquae medicamen habebant)...
virgaque Ianalis de spina subditur alba,
qua lumen thalamis parva fenestra dabat.*

Straightway she thrice touched the doorposts, one after the other, with arbutus leaves; thrice with arbutus leaves she marked the threshold. She sprinkled the entrance with water (and the water was drugged)... A rod of Janus, taken from the white-thorn, was placed where a small window gave light to the chambers

(#1.13: 6.155-157 & 165-166)⁷¹

⁶⁹ Littlewood 2006: 41.

⁷⁰ Just as we see a transposition of letters in the goddess’s name, so too in the story will we see the baby Proca saved in part by a *porca* (piglet). McDonough 1997: 333 also points out the wordplay between Proca, *porca* and the similar sounds in 6.160-161: *parcite: pro parvo victima parva cadit./ cor pro corde, precor, pro fibris sumite fibras.*

⁷¹ Translation by Frazer 1931.

This all accords with her role as a door deity. It is clear, however, when Ovid continues his description both of Cranae's defence of Proca and Carna's festival on the Kalends of June, that Carna is also – as her name suggests – the goddess of innards. Thus far the protective barriers that Cranae has conjured for Proca correspond well with what we might expect from a goddess of the hinge: anointing the doorposts and threshold and using her gift from the god of the doorways himself, Janus, as a protective emblem. However, the rest of the ritual specifically involves the innards of a piglet, which are offered to the *striges* as a substitute for Proca:

*extaque de porca cruda bimestre tenet;
atque ita "noctis aves, extis puerilibus" inquit
"parcite: pro parvo victima parva cadit.
cor pro corde, precor, pro fibris sumite fibras.
hanc animam vobis pro meliore damus."
sic ubi libavit, prosecta sub aethere ponit,
quique adsint sacris, respicere illa vetat;*

she held the raw innards of a sow just two months old. And thus she spoke: "Ye birds of night, spare the child's innards: a small victim falls for a small child. Take, I pray ye, a heart for a heart, entrails for entrails. This life we give you for a better life." When she had thus sacrificed, she set the severed innards in the open air, and forbade those present at the sacrifice to look back at them.

(#1.13: 6.158-164)⁷²

And when Ovid goes on to explain what happens on Carna's feast day, it is what we will also find in Macrobius – that beans and bacon are eaten on the Kalends of June: *huic laedi viscera posse negant* ('they affirm that nothing can hurt his bowels', #1.13: 6.182).⁷³

⁷² Translation by Frazer 1931.

⁷³ Translation by Frazer 1931.

How, then, to reconcile the seemingly disparate descriptions of this goddess? McDonough points out that being a goddess with control over entrances is an integral part of Carna's ability to avert the *striges*, alongside the sacrifice of the piglet.⁷⁴ It is unlikely, therefore, that Ovid has accidentally mixed up Carna and Cardea. Whether this is a deliberate conflation for literary purposes – rather than accurately recounting religious practices – is another matter. Without further evidence it seems prudent to keep what we definitely know about Cardea separate from what we definitely know about Carna, with the awareness that there may well have been some crossover.

§0.2.3.2.2: How were these door deities worshipped?

Other than the possibility that the goddess of the hinge was celebrated on the first of June with a meal of bacon and beans, we have no information about whether these minor door deities were worshipped, never mind how, although Tertullian seems to imply that lamps and laurels crowning gates and doors would be done in their honour (*De idololatria* 15 = #1.3; *De corona militaris* 13.9 = #1.4). There have been household shrines and *lararia* found in the *fauces*, but never with an indication that these gods might be honoured there;⁷⁵ we do have information about certain types of unrelated rituals which take place in the location of the door, such as ritual purification, or prophylactic charms, but we have no evidence that these door deities were ever invoked during them.⁷⁶ These are not the only minor gods that the Christian writers were fond of mocking,

⁷⁴ McDonough 1997: 330-333; at 1997: 332 he notes that 'Carna's reinforcement of the liminal spaces of the house can be seen as a way of protecting the physical borders of the body'.

⁷⁵ Mac Mahon 2003: 67; on *lararia* in general see Orr 1978: 1575-1585, with plates.

⁷⁶ See Part One Chapters One and Two.

although they are perhaps the most frequently mentioned. It seems unlikely that every minor god would ever be formally acknowledged, but they might be honoured as and when the need arose.

Maynes has attempted to recreate door ritual from slapstick and parody found in comedy, hypothesizing that the humour in these scenes could be derived from some form of inverted ritual familiar to the audience:

Plautus' *Curculio* may provide us with some indirect evidence: Phaedromus's hymnic address to the *pessuli* of a house-door (147-152), his pouring of propitiatory libations to the door (88-89) and Laena's mock-ritual anointing of the door's hinges (158-161) certainly affect a religious tone and may well be comic interpretations of actual door rituals.⁷⁷

There are similar ideas found in Roman elegy, especially within the trope of the *paraklausithyron*, where the locked-out lover might supplicate the door itself in a manner that might be more expected for supplication of a god. Maynes points to the example of Tibullus 1.2, where the same language is used to describe the lover's propitiation of the door and his later worship at the temple of Venus, further underscoring the religious quality paid to the door.⁷⁸ These lovers, and the comic characters, however, never invoke any god; it is always the door itself or component parts of it, such as the hinge (when a being is addressed, as in Ovid *Amores* 1.6, it is the human *ianitor* rather than any divine presence). Therefore whilst we could potentially conjecture some form of ritual action that took place at the door, we are still in the dark as to what its purpose was, and which deity it was aimed at honouring. In fact, even in situations where we know that there

⁷⁷ Maynes 2007: 67.

⁷⁸ Maynes 2007: 24-25; Propertius 1.16 similarly features ritual supplication of the door.

was ritual action at the door – for example, the bride’s anointing of the door with fat and wool during the wedding ceremony⁷⁹ – there is still no evidence of any specific gods being invoked, nor is the purpose clear.

Of course we do have to consider that these gods were designed as spiritual doorkeepers to reinforce the door against supernatural attack, although as will be seen in my analysis of prophylactic charms applied to the door in Part One, outside of Carna in Ovid’s *Fasti* these deities are never invoked to lend their protection to the door. However, there is one account of gods protecting a threshold against supernatural attack which shares a number of correspondences with the actions of Carna as found in Ovid. Yet it is not the door deities who are called upon at all, but rather three different minor gods who have the attributes to defeat the attacker, rather than defend the boundary.

This striking anecdote can be found in Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 6.9 (the full passage is in Appendix One as #1.14), and describes a ritual to protect a newly-delivered mother from the god Silvanus;⁸⁰ in this we find a number of similarities with Ovid’s depiction of Carna’s protection of the newborn Proca, including the action taken at the threshold:

⁷⁹ I shall discuss this ritual in full in Part Two.

⁸⁰ Both Ogle 1911: 255 & 259 and Samter 1911: 29-30 class Augustine’s anecdote as evidence that the threshold was magically warded to protect post-partum women from the threat of spirits of the dead, but Augustine is quite clear that this threat is Silvanus: a *deus*. Ogle and Samter do not address this fact, but rather seek a comparison with the use of the broom here and ‘the custom of sweeping out a house after a corpse had been removed’ (Ogle 1911: 259). It is true that a broom is used in both rituals, and that the rituals occur after a change in make-up of the *familia*, but other than that it is hard to see the connection. The broom’s use to sweep out the house clearly has a purificatory purpose, and so perhaps this is also part of the reason why a broom is used against Silvanus (and here we might compare Carna’s sprinkling of water on the threshold in Ovid, *Fasti* 6). However, it is a stretch to make the use of a broom into an indication that there is ghostly activity involved with Silvanus.

*tres homines noctu circuire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire,
postea pilo, tertio deverrere scopis*
three men go about the thresholds of the house at night and strike the
threshold first with an axe, next with a pestle, and in the third place
sweep it with a broom

(#1.14: *De Civitate Dei* 6.9)⁸¹

There is an obvious similarity in the post-partum aspect, although Carna is protecting the child from the *striges*, whereas here it is the mother who is at risk from Silvanus. Just as Carna strikes the threshold with her branch to erect some kind of supernatural ward against the *striges*, so too do Augustine's three men each strike the threshold with domestic, agricultural tools in order to keep Silvanus out. In each case the threshold is struck thrice – thrice by an individual in Ovid; once each by three separate people in Augustine. Ovid's tale, with its goddess agent and monstrous villains, is clearly some form of fiction, but Augustine writes as if he is recounting actual cult practice – as described by Varro⁸² – performed after the birth of a child.

Importantly, the gods invoked by this ritual are not the protective gods – Limentinus, Forculus, Cardea – of the doorway that Augustine has mentioned elsewhere in the *De civitate Dei* (#1.10: 4.8; #1.11: 6.7), or even the Carna of Ovid. The gods summoned are those representing tools of agriculture, summoned by the use of those same tools on the threshold by the human agents of this ritual: Intercidona from the axe, Pilumnus from the pestle, Deverra from the broom. It seems that it is not the doorway itself which is being charmed against the invasion of Silvanus – as Carna did against the *striges* – but rather the

⁸¹ Translation by Green 1963.

⁸² Augustine makes it clear – see the full passage at #1.14 – that he is basing his anecdote on what he has found in Varro.

trio of gods are to act almost as bouncers defending the entrance which Silvanus would otherwise be able to breach. Augustine uses this anecdote to show that three pagan 'good' gods are needed to repel one 'harmful' one, as part of his general mockery for the apparent Roman habit of having a deity of each item in daily life. One might therefore have expected him to increase the number of 'good' gods to protect the threshold against Silvanus by including the door deities which we know he was familiar with.

Dorcey, in his analysis of the cult of Silvanus, notes that Silvanus appears in tripartite form in the late antique *Gromatici Veteres*, and suggests that 'the three spirits mentioned by Augustine can be thought of as opposing the Silvanus *Domesticus*, *Agrestis* and *Orientalis* of the *Gromatici Veteres*.'⁸³ Augustine does indeed tell us that *ut his datis culturae signis deus Silvanus prohibeatur intrare* ('These symbols of agriculture prevent Silvanus from entering' 6.9 = #1.14),⁸⁴ and so we may well see Pilumnus as opposing *Domesticus* (as the pestle is a domestic kitchen implement), *Deverra Agrestis* (Augustine himself notes the broom's use in harvesting grain), and *Intercidona Orientalis* (for the *Gromatici Veteres* mentions that Silvanus *Orientalis* is associated with sacred groves, to which an axe would be a threat). It is not, then, the doorway and the door gods which are the important barrier, but rather the agricultural gods who have the specific skills to oppose particular aspects of Silvanus.⁸⁵ This passage explicitly

⁸³ Dorcey 1992: 37.

⁸⁴ Translation by Green 1963.

⁸⁵ Dorcey 1992: 38 notes that this anecdote, and one other later in *De civitate Dei* (15.23), are the only instances of Silvanus being described in this negative way as a destructive force against postpartum women and their newborns (this passage) and women in general (15.23), and wonders if Augustine – or perhaps, though less likely, his source Varro – could have mixed Silvanus up with the similar god Faunus.

conjures up gods to protect the threshold against the incursion of another god. We should not take this to imply that all prophylactic amulets or charms placed on the threshold offer their protection by summoning a deity, but it certainly shows a strong connection between the threshold and the divine.

§0.2.3.3: Vesta

Given what we know about Janus, Carna/Cardea, Limentinus and Forculus, from a range of pagan and Christian literature, it is surprising, then, that the fifth-century author Servius makes four references to the threshold being sacred, not to any of these door deities, but to Vesta, goddess of the hearth:⁸⁶

dictum autem vestibulum ... quoniam Vestae consecratum est. unde nubentes puellae limen non tangunt. Lucanus "translata vitat contingere limina planta".

Moreover, it is called the vestibule ... because it is consecrated to Vesta. From which place brides do not touch the threshold. Lucan writes: "she avoids touching the threshold, lifting across the sole of her foot."⁸⁷

(Servius, *ad Aeneid* 2.469)

alii dicunt a Vesta dictum per inminutionem: nam Vestae limen est consecratum.

Others say it is named after Vesta, through a weakening, for the threshold is sacred to Vesta.

(Servius, *ad Aeneid* 6.273)

quas [sponsas] etiam ideo limen ait non tangere, ne a sacrilegio inchoarent, si depositurae virginitatem calcant rem Vestae, id est numini castissimo, consecratam.

for whom [brides] he [Varro] says don't touch the threshold, to avoid being in sacrilege, if on the point of giving up their virginity they set foot on a thing consecrated to Vesta – that is to say, the purest of divinities.⁸⁸

(Servius, *ad Eclogue* 8.29)

⁸⁶ See Ovid, *Fasti* 6.249-460 and Orr 1978: 1560-1561 for Vesta and her domestic cult.

⁸⁷ This is all that Lucan (*Bellum civile* 2.359) says on the matter – he does not mention Vesta.

⁸⁸ Ogle 1911: 253 attributes this entire comment as originally being from Varro. However, of the extant fragments of Varro that do reference the *limen* or *vestibulum*, none mention Vesta.

LIMINE IN IPSO in loco sacro, sicut supra diximus, Vestae.
BY THE THRESHOLD ITSELF in a place sacred to Vesta, just as we said
above.

(Servius, *ad Eclogue* 8.92)

Part of Servius' argument for the threshold being sacred to Vesta is that they are both linked etymologically via the *vestibulum*. Servius has two other theories for the origin of the term *vestibulum*, which are both – like *Vesta* – based around a stem beginning *vest-*: that the *vestibulum*, being like a porch, 'clothes' (*vestiat*) the door, and that the *ve-stibulum* means 'no standing', since one crosses over that area rather than waits on it, using 've-' as a negative in the way that 've-*sanus*' (mad) is opposed to '*sanus*' (sane). The ancients were fond of assigning meaning based on verbal similarity, and all three theories sound as though they could be equally implausible; in fact, it is rather a surprise that Servius has not also suggested a link between *vestigia*, footsteps, and the fact that one steps onto a threshold.

As it is, however, he seems relatively insistent upon the idea that the threshold was sacred to Vesta, and this is the only theory for which he provides additional evidence, in the form of Roman brides not touching the threshold during the wedding ceremony. This act, which is discussed in full in Part Two of this thesis, is only linked to Vesta by Servius. However, there are other authors who provide etymological connections between Vesta and the *vestibulum*, although they stop short of assigning sacredness to the threshold.

Ovid, in fact, also speculated (*reor*, he says) that the vestibulum was *named after* Vesta, although his reasoning is different to Servius' and he makes no mention of the threshold being *sacred to* Vesta:

*at focus a flammis et quod fovet omnia dictus;
qui tamen in primis aedibus ante fuit.
hinc quoque vestibulum dici reor; inde precando
affamur Vestam, quae loca prima tenes.*

But the hearth, so called by its flames and because it warms everything, which was at first at the front before the house. From this [Vesta's hearth], also, the vestibule is named, I think; hence, when praying, we first invoke Vesta, who holds the first place.

(*Fasti* 6.301-304)

We find similar ideas in late grammarians, who connect the *vestibulum* to Vesta not because it or the threshold was sacred to Vesta, but because there had perhaps been an altar to Vesta nearby:⁸⁹

VESTIBVLA quidam putant sub ea proprietate distincta, quod in primis ingressibus et in spatiis domorum Vestae [hoc est] arae ac foci soleant haberi.

VESTIBULES Some consider these under a separate meaning, because in first entrance space of houses there are usually altars and hearths of Vesta.

(Nonius, *De compendiosa doctrina* 53M)

Romanis omnibus mos est in atrio, hoc est in vestibulo, habere Vestam – quippe cum inde vestibulum nominarint –, cui sacrificium cotidie facerent, et illic ei fuerat ara collocata.

For all the Romans the custom is, in the atrium, this is in the vestibule, to have Vesta – in fact, from her the vestibule is named –, to whom they make a sacrifice everyday, and there an altar was set up to her.

(Eugraphius, *ad Terence, Andria* 726)

It is certainly plausible, therefore, that there was some form of altar or shrine to Vesta located in the *vestibulum*.⁹⁰ This could have been a throwback to an outside

⁸⁹ For Fay 1903: 64 this was a plausible suggestion for the etymology of *vestibulum*: 'it may have [been named] from the placing of an aedicula of Vesta in proximity, whether behind or before, to the entrance-door'.

⁹⁰ Orr 1978: 1560-1561 cites no evidence of this, however.

hearth, as Ovid mentions, or perhaps some way of acknowledging that once one had entered through the door into the private, domestic house, one had entered into the domain of Vesta. However, whether or not the *vestibulum* was named after Vesta, I have been unable to find any other literature – ancient or modern – which states that the *vestibulum* or *limen* was sacred to Vesta, independent of Servius.⁹¹ Whenever the consecration claim is cited elsewhere – and it is rare – the evidence trail appears to lead back to Servius; even when the source is allegedly Varro, he is mediated through Servius or some other late tradition.⁹²

There is, however, an additional connection between Vesta and door deities, in that Vesta was paired with Janus in prayer.

et ipsa et Janus in omnibus sacrificiis invocantur
 both she [Vesta] and Janus are invoked in all sacrifices
 (Servius, *ad Aeneid* 1.292)

Servius, like Ovid in *Fasti* 6.303-304 quoted above, has Vesta invoked first; most other authorities state that it is Janus who is invoked first, with Vesta being invoked last.⁹³ Juvenal, for instance, has a character in his sixth *Satire* pray to Janus and then Vesta (*et farre et uino Ianum Vestamque rogabat*, 6.386). Cicero

⁹¹ DeWitt 1920: 219, for instance, mentions that the threshold was sacred to Vesta, but the only evidence then given is Servius. I shall admit here that I have not read Angelo Brelich's 1949 book *Vesta*, based partly on its scarcity, and partly on the scathing reviews from Weinstock 1950 and Rose 1951: 107-108: 'It is invidious to have to characterize a book written with no little learning and evidently the result of much thought as entirely wrong, but... that is the reviewer's considered judgement on this monograph.'

⁹² Ramminger 1986: 483 cites two scholia on Lucan's *Pharsalia* which mention the threshold or vestibule being consecrated to Vesta, noting 'ist eine nur leicht modifizierte Übernahme aus Serv.Aen.2,469', and 'könnten wir es mit einer weitgehend entstellten antiken Erklärung zu tun haben, die auf dem selben (Varronischen) Material wie Serv. ecl.8,29 beruht.'

⁹³ This is especially curious since it is Janus who opens the first book of the *Fasti* (*Ecce tibi faustum, Germanice, nuntiat annum/ inque meo primum carmine Janus adest* 1.63-64), whereas Vesta appears in the final extant book, book six. Ovid is clearly playing here, since at *Fasti* 1.171-172 he states that offerings are given to Janus first: *mox ego, 'cur, quamvis aliorum numina placem,/ Iane, tibi primum tura merumque fero?'* Hardie 1991: 53 mentions that for Ovid 'Janus, the god of beginnings, is also the god of endings: *Ianus habet finem* (2, 1)', which might explain this ambiguity for the ordering of Vesta and Janus.

comments that Vesta is mentioned last in prayers and sacrifices (*in ea dea [Vesta], quod est rerum custos intumarum, omnis et precatio et sacrificatio extrema est, De natura deorum 2.67*).⁹⁴

One would assume that had the threshold truly been consecrated to Vesta at the time of Varro then we might perhaps have slightly more evidence for it than this. However, it seems probable that there may, at one point, have been an altar to Vesta located in the *vestibulum* of a house.⁹⁵ With this, alongside Ovid's vague assertion that the *vestibulum* might be named after Vesta (he thinks)⁹⁶ and connected to the proscription against touching the threshold for brides, it is, indeed, rather unsurprising that Servius might see the threshold as consecrated to the virgin goddess Vesta. We could potentially also add into the confusion the link between Vesta and Janus in both prayer and through their roles as protecting deities of the household as a further reason why he might attribute something related to the door to Vesta. Regardless, it would seem that there is very little evidence to firmly state that the threshold was indeed sacred to Vesta.

§0.2.4: Conclusion

As we can see, there certainly is a relationship between deities and the door for both Greece and Rome, but religious obligation alone does not seem to account for the primacy of the threshold in Greek and Roman superstitious thought, as I

⁹⁴ Ferguson 1979: 202 is happy to take Juvenal and Cicero at face value and does not mention Ovid. Holland 1961: 283-285 has a detailed analysis of the mentioning of Janus and Vesta in prayer, and states that 'to call on Janus and Vesta becomes synonymous with "to pray" in general' (283).

⁹⁵ Although Orr 1978 does not mention this.

⁹⁶ Frazer 1929c: 221 sees this as 'merely a guess'.

shall examine in Parts One and Two of this thesis. In Greece the guardian statues may be honoured but – despite a potential wealth of deities to honour at the door – there is no evidence that there would be similar physical representations of gods at the Roman door. It is possible that, as the *numen* of the door, the door itself represented the deity.

PART ONE:

CHALLENGING THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE WAS A BELIEF IN GHOSTS

HAUNTING THE THRESHOLD

INTRODUCTION

Dass die Seelen sich gerne an den Thüren aufhalten, ist allbekannt.
(Eitrem 1909: 13)

die Schwelle ist der Aufenthalt der Seelen. Die Vorstellung, daß
Geister in der Nähe der Tür weilen, ist weit verbreitet.
(Samter 1911: 141)

The references show that the most prominent belief in connection
with [thresholds] was that spirits haunted their vicinity.
(Ogle 1911: 251)

it is a common notion that the threshold is haunted by spirits[.]
(Frazer 1929a: 447)

thresholds, where gathered ghosts expelled from the house.
(Johnston 1991: 224)

The common belief [in ancient Greece] that the doorway is a
gathering place for demons and ghosts reflects the connection
between liminality and the demonic[.]
(Johnston 1999: 171)

The above quotations state the conclusions of a number of scholars regarding the supernatural nature of the threshold in ancient Greece and Rome.¹ Whilst most of the statements date to the early part of the twentieth century, we can see that

¹ Other scholars also mention these ideas in passing, such as Riess 1897: 191, in an analysis of superstitions in Greek comedy, who noted that 'At the door the souls have one of their habitual haunts, though I hardly recollect any reference to it from Greek soil.' We find similar statements in the work of the Indologist Winternitz (such as: the 'threshold is, like the cross-roads, a favourite haunt of the evil spirits' (1892: 79)), who relates the Roman practice of lifting the bride over the threshold to a similar custom in India, giving threshold-ghosts as the reason behind both traditions; I am not addressing whether ghosts were considered to haunt the threshold in other cultures. Rage-Brocard 1934: 59, basing her argument on that of the above scholars, also states that the threshold was significant in the Roman wedding ceremony because it was haunted by ghosts. I discuss the crossroads in Chapter Five, and the Roman bride in Part Two of this thesis.

these conclusions have persisted in recent scholarship. I will argue in Part One of this thesis, however, that this assumption is false, and that there is no evidence for a belief in spirits haunting the threshold in either Greece or Rome.

The argument that the threshold was considered by the Greeks and Romans to be a haunt or gathering place of ghosts or spirits certainly seems logical on the surface. The threshold is used in all kinds of supernatural situations, from folk-remedies and superstitions, to both literary representations of magic and the 'real' spells that may have been performed by those using the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*.² As a liminal location the threshold is both part and not part of the house – in the same way that marauding ghosts are considered to be stuck between the living and those who are firmly dead. The doorway is an obvious barrier against all kinds of malicious invaders, from burglars to disease to ghostly intruders. Other liminal locations such as crossroads are also strongly associated with ghosts in Greece and Rome,³ and the threshold and spirits are intrinsically connected in some other cultures.

As comparatists, Eitrem, Samter, and Frazer all listed many examples of the ghost-haunted threshold elsewhere in the world, and by extrapolation concluded that the same must have been the reason behind the supernatural nature of the threshold in ancient Greece and Rome. This methodology treated human behaviours and beliefs as one homogeneous mass, using anecdotes from disparate countries, cultures and time periods as evidence that the same thing

² I discuss folk-remedies such as prophylactic devices and medicinal lore in Chapters One and Two, and magic rites in Chapters Two and Three.

³ I discuss the crossroads in Chapter Five.

must have occurred elsewhere.⁴ References to other cultures may well concur with a belief in spirits, but there is a distinct lack of balance presented in any of the anthropological studies: no contrary examples at all are cited; such cherry-picking of positive anecdotes can lead only to confirmation bias. I shall argue that by prioritising anthropological analogy with other cultures, these early scholars have sidelined what the ancient evidence actually tells us and come to the false conclusion that Greek and Roman societies behaved just like the other societies studied.

Whilst the early twentieth century comparatist methodology has largely been discredited,⁵ the conclusions that were drawn from using it to investigate the link between ghosts and the threshold have not been addressed, despite the growth in research into Classical attitudes to the supernatural over recent decades. In fact, as we can see from the quotation that I opened with from Johnston's 1999 work *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece*, that the threshold was the haunting ground of spirits now seems to be an accepted fact about antiquity. Given the wide dissemination both online and out of copyright material – as much of Eitrem, Samter, Ogle and Frazer's work is⁶ – and the recent unedited reprinting by Cambridge University Press of

⁴ See Csapo 2005: 33 for a breakdown of how Frazer in particular would use anecdotes to construct a plausible – yet largely baseless – theory for various myths and rites.

⁵ See, for example Csapo 2005: 33-44.

⁶ Eitrem 1909, Samter 1901 and 1911, Ogle 1911 and Frazer 1919 are all freely available online, easily accessible in multiple formats. The books (i.e., all the above bar Ogle) are also available in print through small publishing houses specialising in reprinting scans of out-of-print books. Often these editions state only the date of the reprinting on the copyright page (although they do not attempt to hide that it is a reprinting), which could suggest to a casual reader that the texts have been in some way updated; e.g., Samter 1901 is reprinted by Auxo Verlag, Worpswede, with a date of 2014 on the copyright page; Samter 1911 is reprinted by Saxonia Buch, Dresden, with a date of 2015 on the copyright page.

Frazer's commentary on the *Fasti*,⁷ it is essential to challenge this assumption and the out-dated ideas behind it.

In Part One of this thesis I shall demonstrate that there is – contrary to the authors cited above – no Classical evidence for the haunting of the threshold by spirits. I shall do this primarily by examining the evidence for the threshold-ghosts theory as put forward in Marbury Bladen Ogle's 1911 article entitled 'The House-Door in Greek and Roman Religion and Folk-Lore', which remains the most comprehensive analysis of the supernatural nature of the threshold in Greece and Rome to date. The arguments made by the late-Victorian and early-Edwardian scholars are all largely similar, often citing the same examples (and each other), but unlike Eitrem, Samter and Frazer, Ogle was writing expressly about ancient Greece and Rome and their thresholds, and provides mostly Greek and Roman evidence rather than relying on anthropological studies from around the world. The article sought to analyse the various supernatural uses of the house-door in Classical literature, and from that to create a universal theory to explain the uncanny nature of the house-door throughout antiquity: that the doorway was haunted by ghosts and that this belief had evolved from ancestor burial underneath the threshold. Ogle was widely known for his work on folklore, of which this article played a part.⁸ Although a product of the methodologies of its time, this article remains for many Classical scholars the

⁷ Frazer's commentaries on the *Fasti* and Pausanias, as well as two different editions of the *Golden Bough* have all recently been republished from scans of the originals under the Cambridge Library Collection. The copyright pages state both the date of the original publication and the date of the reprinting (in the case of the *Fasti* commentary, 2015). The copyright page does state: 'This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.'

⁸ See Briggs Jr 1994: 457-458 for Ogle's biography, and for a short list of publications.

authority on the house-door in Greek and Roman religion and folk-lore, and is still cited as such in modern critical literature.⁹ It is clear, however, that Ogle is being used as a compendium of references to supernatural activity at the threshold, and the scholars citing him are not engaging with his argument about the presence of what he terms ‘evil spirits’ around the house-door originating from house-burial.¹⁰

§1.0.1: The scholarship behind the threshold-ghosts theory

Ogle writes in his article that he was inspired by H. Clay Trumbull’s *The Threshold Covenant or The Beginning of Religious Rites*,¹¹ an anthropological theological study which was published in 1896 and – rather modestly – ‘simply attempts to show the beginning of religious rites, by which man evidenced a belief, however obtained, in the possibility of covenant relations between God and man’¹² through the medium of the threshold as a universal symbol. Ogle frequently refers to Trumbull’s research undertaken on ‘primitive peoples’ and the connection between their doorways and their religion, but it is clear that Trumbull is a guide for Ogle, not a model. Trumbull’s own conclusions about the

⁹ The following is not an exhaustive list of citations, but gives a broad overview of the range of scholarship using Ogle as a reference: Meister 1925: 25 n. 1; Gow 1942: 111 n. 1; Gow 1952b: 47; Rabel 1985: 323 n. 31; Dermot Small 1986: 279 n. 6; Segal 1990: 6 n. 14; Luschnig 1992: 28 n. 23; Clausen 1994: 262; Christ 1998: 524 n. 15; Kellum 1999: 294 n. 9; DeBrohun 2003: 126 nn. 20 & 24; Maynes 2007: 62 n. 49; 63-64; 67 n. 64; O’Byrhim 2008: 192 n. 13; Robinson 2011: 364; Beacham 2013: 370 n. 18; Buxton 2013: 203 n. 8; Lennon 2014: 85 n. 168; 102 n. 60; Hartnett 2017: 154 n. 26; Faraone 2018: 397 n. 16.

¹⁰ Of the scholars who have cited Ogle, listed in the footnote above, only Meister, Maynes and Robinson mention that Ogle had argued for the presence of spirits at the threshold; all briefly dismiss the notion (Meister 1925: 25 n. 1; Maynes 2007: 62 n. 49; Robinson 2011: 364).

¹¹ Ogle 1911: 251 with n. 1.

¹² Trumbull 1896: iii.

importance of the threshold in world religions lie not with spirits, evil or otherwise, but rather with the threshold as a symbol for sexual intercourse.¹³

This theory is of course entirely unfounded and has only the one adherent in Trumbull. Ogle makes only a vague reference to Trumbull's overarching theory, in one footnote,¹⁴ and Frazer refers to Trumbull's theories as 'untenable'.¹⁵ It is clear that both later authors are using *The Threshold Covenant* as a compendium of worldwide threshold superstitions rather than for any theoretical contribution. It is perhaps telling, however, that Trumbull does not raise the notion of spirits at all, which certainly suggests that the threshold-ghosts theory cannot be as universal as the later writers claim.

I shall return to a discussion of Ogle's article later in this review, but the decade in which he is likely to have begun work on it (it was first delivered as a paper to the American Philological Association in late 1909) saw a number of books published which touch upon the idea of thresholds and spirits in Classical antiquity. Ernst Samter's *Familienfeste der Griechen und Römer* was published in 1901, and followed by Samson Eitrem's *Hermes und die Toten*, published in 1909 and reviewed by Ogle himself in 1910 for the *American Journal of Philology*; both books are cited in Ogle's article. Samter's 1911 book *Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod* is contemporary with the publication of Ogle's article and is therefore unlikely to have been read by him before publication (although its findings are largely a repeat of those in *Familienfeste* insofar as spirits and thresholds are concerned).

¹³ Trumbull 1896: 225.

¹⁴ Ogle 1911: 264 n. 5.

¹⁵ Frazer 1919: 1 n. 2.

It might not seem obvious, at first glance, why Samter's monograph *Familienfeste der Griechen und Römer* (1901) would include a discussion of thresholds and spirits, but it is more apparent when we consider that the threshold was often used in *Familienfeste*. The Roman marriage ceremony, for instance, is associated with numerous threshold rituals, which I shall analyse in detail in Part Two of this thesis. Samter provides numerous anthropological examples of similar threshold rituals in marriages in other cultures,¹⁶ as well as uses of the ingredients for the Roman ceremony in other ceremonies in other cultures.¹⁷ He suggests that they have their origins in offerings to the dead, and argues that the Roman *Lares*, the household gods, evolved from ancestral cults.¹⁸ Samter notes that 'ist dies bei den Römern wie bei den Griechen und andern Völkern in Vergessenheit geraten',¹⁹ and we must of course question this notion that it is possible to reconstruct something of which the ancients themselves were unaware.

In his 1911 work, *Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod: Beiträge zur vergleichenden Volkskunde*, Samter notes an explicit connection between the threshold and spirits, and again suggests that burial beneath the threshold is a likely cause of the link (although he does note that 'Weshalb man die Geister oder vielmehr

¹⁶ Samter 1901: 81-82.

¹⁷ Samter 1901: 83-87.

¹⁸ This sparked a long-running academic argument with Wissowa over the origin of the *Lares*, since Wissowa had argued for the *Lares* as originating from agricultural deities; Stek 2008: 126 n. 18 provides a good summary of the key texts. The question of the origin of the *Lares* is far beyond the scope of this thesis but, since in Chapter Three I demonstrate that there was unlikely to have been a tradition of house-burial in Rome, it is equally unlikely that this could have been the origin of these household gods.

¹⁹ Samter 1901: 11. Samter's evidence for the origins of the *Lares* is given in his appendix, 1901: 105-123.

eigentlich Seelen unter der Schwelle hausend dachte, läßt sich nicht mit voller Sicherheit entscheiden').²⁰ His aim in this monograph – which is in a sense a continuation of his 1901 research – is to discover the origins of a number of customs and rites performed at birth, marriage and death in antiquity, and he frequently determines that spirits are at the root cause.

Yet when one looks carefully at the evidence provided to link ghosts to the threshold, it is clear that often these conclusions are unfounded. For instance, he discusses a Roman childbirth practice which he states was performed in order to keep 'unheilvollen Geister'²¹ from the threshold, but when we look at the source (Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 6.9), the rite is specifically performed to keep out Silvanus, whom Augustine specifically refers to as *deus*: he is a god. This ritual, which features the use of a broom, axe and pestle to strike the threshold,²² triggers a series of further anecdotes from around the world – Bosnia, Borneo, Germany, and ancient Rome itself – about how a house is swept out following the death of someone inside it, and other anecdotes about sweeping away spirits more generally in places like Bulgaria and Prussia.²³ But while it may well be that Bosnians and Bulgarians used brooms against spirits, and the Romans themselves swept the spirits of the deceased from the house, this does not mean that every rite using a broom is performed against spirits – especially not when our evidence explicitly states that it was used against a deity. Additionally, one could also make the point that since Silvanus is a woodland deity, and the spirits of any deceased that need sweeping out are in the house proper, neither are

²⁰ Samter 1911: 142.

²¹ Samter 1911: 29.

²² I discussed this ritual in full in the Introduction to this thesis.

actually haunting the threshold itself: the doorway is functioning merely as an entrance or exit point, rather than a gathering place.

Like Samter, Eitrem's reasoning for a link between the threshold and spirits is also concerned with a legacy of burial in the house. The main thrust of his 1909 book is, as the title *Hermes und die Toten* indicates, that Hermes was a god of the dead: 'Hermes wird da verehrt, wo man die Toten begraben hat.'²⁴ Eitrem contends that at one stage in time the Greeks buried their dead in the house, and connects this to the herm statues placed outside the door, but the evidence that he provides for house-burial is questionable.²⁵ Chapter two concerns 'Hermes an der Thür und vor dem Thor, an den Dreiwegen und an den Landesgrenzen',²⁶ and chapter three is a more detailed look at the threshold in particular. This latter chapter opens with the statement 'Dass die Seelen sich gerne an den Thüren aufhalten, ist allbekannt.'²⁷ The evidence provided is mostly from India and Germany, with added mention of Buddhist and Scandinavian beliefs.

With regard to ancient Greece and Rome, Eitrem argues that superstitions surrounding the threshold are the result of this 'alten Totenkultus',²⁸ even if, he says, this original meaning has been lost by the time of the classical era.²⁹ In fact, his argument is that the magic performed at the threshold – and the other places

²³ Sweeping the house out: Samter 1911: 30-32; sweeping spirits away: Samter 1911: 33-34.

²⁴ Eitrem 1909: 4.

²⁵ Eitrem 1909: 4; I discuss Eitrem's evidence for house burial in Chapter Three.

²⁶ Eitrem 1909: 10.

²⁷ Eitrem 1909: 13.

²⁸ Eitrem 1909: 14.

²⁹ Eitrem 1909: 17.

that were 'ein Tummelplatz der Seelen und der Geister' such as the crossroads³⁰ – by the later Greeks and Romans is itself a remnant of this forgotten Totenkultus.³¹ Ogle reviewed this monograph in 1910, and said that he found the arguments 'in the main convincing';³² he cites the work throughout his 1911 article.

Another proponent of the theory that ghosts haunt the threshold is James George Frazer, who addresses this in his third volume of *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* (1919) and his multi-volume commentary on Ovid's *Fasti* (1929).³³ In *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* Frazer discusses the importance of superstitions surrounding the threshold in relation to the 'Keepers of the Threshold' mentioned in Jeremiah and Kings. The discussion largely supplies numerous cross-cultural anecdotes about the importance of the threshold in superstition which could then be applied to these Keepers.³⁴ Frazer devotes pages to an analysis of the threshold as the haunt of spirits around the world, but does, in a brief discussion of the Roman marriage practice of lifting the bride, allow that the threshold was sacred to some divinities in Rome.³⁵ He goes on to say that 'Elsewhere the threshold has been supposed to be haunted by spirits',³⁶ which certainly implies that he considers the Roman threshold – perhaps uniquely – to be ghost-free.

³⁰ Eitrem 1909: 41.

³¹ Eitrem 1909: 17: 'Es liegt nahe, die verkümmerten Reste des ehemaligen Totenkultus, der an der Schwelle stattgefunden hat, im griechischen und römischen Zauber wiederzufinden.'

³² Ogle 1910: 94.

³³ The commentary on the *Fasti* was republished in 2015 and so it is even more essential to note that this theory might be unfounded.

³⁴ Frazer 1919: 1-18.

³⁵ Frazer 1919: 11.

³⁶ Frazer 1919: 11.

By the time of his commentary on the *Fasti*, however, Frazer's focus for the Roman threshold has veered away from its sanctity (although he does discuss the god Janus at length) and back to the abode of spirits. He states that 'it is a common notion that the threshold is haunted by spirits', referring the reader back to the tome on *Folk-lore* (and Samter's *Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod*) for a fuller discussion, and also going on to provide numerous anthropological examples and superstitions from around the world.³⁷ While some of these examples seem to provide explicit connections between the doorway and the presence of spirits for their respective countries, cultures and time periods, their analogies do not go to prove the same situation in ancient Greece or Rome.

Like the earlier writers, Frazer's theory to explain the general connection of the threshold and spirits is that of burial beneath the threshold. He is more specific as to who was buried there, claiming that there was 'an ancient custom of burying dead infants or dead animals under the doorway' and that this itself was connected to the idea of rebirth.³⁸ However, despite arguing that the haunting of the threshold is expressly connected to the burial of bodies underneath the threshold, Frazer acknowledges that some cultures have threshold superstitions, but are unlikely to have had threshold burials: 'so far as I am aware there is no evidence or probability of a custom of burying the dead in the doorway of a tent.'³⁹ He accounts for the importance of the threshold in such places by connecting it to acts of sacrifice which his anecdotes say took place over it (a

³⁷ Frazer 1929a: 447-448. Curiously Frazer makes no mention of Ogle's article in his analysis of the threshold, despite using similar evidence and coming to similar conclusions with regard to the haunting of the threshold.

³⁸ Frazer 1919: 15; see also Frazer 1929a: 448.

³⁹ Frazer 1919: 15-16.

similar argument to Trumbull's, although without the sex), and concludes: 'All these various customs are intelligible if the threshold is believed to be haunted by spirits'.⁴⁰ As I shall argue, however, by attempting to find one universal theory to explain every superstition connected to the threshold, scholars like Frazer ride roughshod over the nuances that can be found by looking at different instances individually.

It would be easy to dismiss the works above as outdated and irrelevant (even though Frazer in particular is being reprinted by a highly respected publishing house), but we find very similar arguments about the association between ghosts, the threshold and liminality in the considerably more recent works of Sarah Iles Johnston. The subject matter of her 1990 monograph *Hekate Soteira: A Study of Hekate's Roles in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature* is largely self-explanatory, although her analysis of Hekate does not simply start with the Chaldean Oracles; ghosts are a key element of the discussion due to Hekate's association with the spirits of the dead. Johnston gives a thorough background to the history of the goddess, and argues that 'her earlier importance in traditional Graeco-Roman religion [was] as a goddess associated with liminal points (e.g., crossroads, doorways),' using the statues of Hekate erected outside doorways as evidence.⁴¹ The work is an important discussion of liminality, and Johnston argues that Hekate became associated with 'harmful spirits' because she was the goddess of liminal points, and because 'these creatures... traditionally dwelt at

⁴⁰ Frazer 1919: 18.

⁴¹ Johnston 1990: 12; see also 21. I discussed these statues in the Introduction to this thesis, and will discuss Hekate's association with the crossroads in Chapter Five.

such places.’⁴² Johnston refers the reader to her 1991 article ‘Crossroads’ for ‘discussion of the reasons these souls lingered at crossroads and other liminal places.’⁴³

The article in question is a thorough discussion of the rituals and superstitions surrounding the crossroads in antiquity – primarily in ancient Greece.⁴⁴ Johnston argues that the key to understanding these superstitions is to consider the crossroads as an important liminal location, and she divides any rituals performed there into two categories: protective rituals and detachment rituals, ‘both of which reflect [crossroads’] liminality’.⁴⁵ Johnston pays close attention to Hekate again, as goddess of the crossroads, and argues that a key feature of the goddess is ‘that of guiding individuals through liminal points and during transitions of many types’.⁴⁶

Johnston makes the argument that ghosts ‘traditionally dwelt at such [liminal] places’, but accepts that there ‘are no direct statements to this effect in Greek or Roman literature, but there is evidence that suggests such a belief was present’.⁴⁷ At this point, Johnston is discussing crossroads in particular, and I agree that the circumstantial evidence for ghosts gathering at crossroads is indeed compelling; I shall discuss this in full later in Chapter Five. However, her only reference to the threshold comes when she discusses exploitative rituals (i.e., the performance of magic at liminal points in order to exploit their uncanny nature), and states that

⁴² Johnston 1990: 35.

⁴³ Johnston 1990: 35 n. 18.

⁴⁴ I discuss crossroads in Chapter Five.

⁴⁵ Johnston 1991: 217.

⁴⁶ Johnston 1991: 218.

⁴⁷ Johnston 1990: 35 and Johnston 1991: 223.

'magic often was performed at thresholds, where gathered ghosts expelled from the house'.⁴⁸ Magic was often performed at thresholds, as I shall analyse in Chapters Two and Three, and it certainly seems logical that ghosts expelled from the house could wait outside the door trying to get back in. However, as I shall argue, there is little evidence that magic performed at the threshold is done to exploit any ghosts already present, which would be expected if ghosts were commonly thought to gather there; in fact, magic that utilizes ghosts is frequently performed at the site of the ghost's corpse – usually the grave.

Johnston's 1999 monograph *Restless Dead: Encounters Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* is a systematic study of the sort of ghosts that are thought to have dwelt at liminal points (her focus again is the crossroads) and who would form part of Hekate's band of untimely-dead souls. As mentioned above, I agree that the crossroads make a sensible and likely haunt of ghosts; thresholds, it seems, have become included in this theory due to their liminal nature: 'The common belief that the doorway is a gathering place for demons and ghosts reflects the connection between liminality and the demonic'.⁴⁹ As this statement shows, Johnston does not follow the house-burial theory behind the origin of threshold-ghosts that we saw with the earlier scholars; her focus rather is on the liminality of the threshold, the connections to deities such as Hekate who are heavily associated with the dead,⁵⁰ and – above all – analogies with the

⁴⁸ Johnston 1991: 224.

⁴⁹ Johnston 1999: 171.

⁵⁰ At Johnston 1999: 215, she asks 'But what, exactly, were Enodia and Hecate supposed to be keeping away from the *oikos* as they stood by its door?' This presupposes that the only negative influences that could enter a house and that a householder may wish to avert were ghosts. As I shall discuss in Chapter One, there is evidence that people wished to ward off all types of misfortune and disease; Hekate and Enodia could have been guarding against all manner of adversity.

liminal and ghost-ridden nature of the crossroads; I shall challenge the link between the threshold and the crossroads in Chapter Five. Johnston also notes that the use of prophylactic devices at thresholds should be taken as evidence that spirits were 'believed to congregate at entrances',⁵¹ but as I shall discuss in Chapter One, this evidence is considerably less compelling than it is presented to be.

I shall return now to Ogle and his 1911 article 'The House-Door in Greek and Roman Religion and Folk-Lore'. As mentioned above, I am focusing on the arguments made and evidence presented in this article as Ogle was specifically researching the supernatural nature of the threshold in Greece and Rome, and as such provides a large volume of references to supernatural activity at the threshold expressly in these cultures. Ogle's argument for the connection of spirits and the threshold, as set out in his introductory paragraph, can be distilled into four main points:⁵²

- a) That the threshold was important 'in the folk-lore and religion of various peoples'; he intended to discover whether it was also important in Greece and Rome;
- b) To that end he collated a list of references to threshold superstitions in Greece and Rome;
- c) He claimed that these 'references show that the most prominent belief in connection with [thresholds] was that spirits haunted their vicinity';

⁵¹ Johnston 1999: 209.

⁵² Ogle 1911: 251.

d) Finally, he wished to find a theory that would ‘logically account’ for spirits’ presence at the threshold. There is no mention of what this will be during the introductory paragraph, but later in the article he argues that this belief in threshold-haunting ghosts is a memory of the time when the Greeks and Romans allegedly buried their dead in the house, under the threshold.

Ogle’s list of threshold superstitions remains the most useful part of his article – there are over one hundred and fifty references to Greek and Roman literature in the main body of the text alone – and most modern citations of the article point to it simply as a collection of resources rather than engaging with the actual argument.⁵³ I have already explained that the argument and conclusions are flawed, and will be analysing exactly why during the first three chapters of this thesis. However, even the list of references must be used with caution: not all the quotations selected are actually relevant to thresholds and very few, as I shall make clear, give any indication that spirits are in any way connected to the events or present at the door.⁵⁴

Ogle begins his article with a number of examples demonstrating that it was considered bad luck in antiquity, especially in Rome, to stumble on the threshold, and then asks:

⁵³ For a list of such citations, see footnote 9.

⁵⁴ For those that do, there is often an ulterior reason for the spirits being present, e.g., Photius *Lexicon* s.v. *Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα* writes about pitch being applied to doors as a prophylactic against spirits during the *Anthesteria* (see Chapter One); however, spirits were already considered to be abroad during that festival (see Chapter Four), and so this reference tells us nothing about the habitual presence of spirits at the door, merely that at a specific point during the year when spirits were thought to be present among the living, house-holders attempted to keep them out of their houses by applying an apotropaic substance to the door.

What, then, is the explanation of this dangerous character of the threshold, emphasized as it is by the bad omen of stumbling upon it as well as by the necessity of lifting the bride over it? In the case of other peoples the explanation is clearly to be found in the idea that spirits haunted the vicinity of the house-door; and if it can be shown that this idea was current among the Greeks and Romans also, the same explanation surely will suffice...⁵⁵

What is curious about this is that we actually have three different theories from ancient writers themselves about the 'dangerous character of the threshold' with regard to the Roman custom of lifting the bride over it, and a further one about its symbolic nature; Ogle quotes all four, and none of them touch upon ghosts or spirits.⁵⁶ Why, then, is there any need to look for a further idea? It is true that the ancient writers could have been guessing, rather than reporting accurate folk beliefs; certainly some of the writers are very late, and are Christians trying to explain pagan practice, or a Greek trying to explain foreign Roman customs. However, it seems both presumptuous and patronising to make the assumption that in every case that the ancient writers were wrong and that the only way to truly interpret their customs is by using a comparative method.

We have seen the assumption that Ogle and many of his contemporaries made that they would be able to apply an 'explanation' from one culture to another, and in this case, that 'explanation' was 'the idea that spirits haunted the vicinity

⁵⁵ Ogle 1911: 254.

⁵⁶ I discuss the lifting of the bride in Part Two Chapter Three, and all sources are provided in Appendix Seventeen; Ogle quotes them at 1911: 253. The four theories, all of which are connected to the fact that the Roman bride stepped over or was lifted clear of the threshold as she entered her husband's house, are that it could have been a bad omen to stumble at the threshold (#17.2: Catullus 61.159-161); because the threshold could be sacred to Vesta, and therefore it would be sacrilegious for brides to touch it (#17.6: Servius, *ad Eclogue* 8.29; #17.7: *ad Aeneid* 2.469; #17.8: *ad Aeneid* 6.273); because it is where doors open and close, and presumably thus could be emblematic of divorce (#17.9: Isidorus, *Etymologiae* 9.7.12); and because it could be a symbol of bride capture (#17.4: Plutarch, *Romulus* 15.5; #17.5: *Quaestiones Romanae* 29).

of the house-door'. But what is the evidence for these spirits? The paragraph of Ogle's that I quoted above continues:

... That it was, is seen from the fact that beneath the threshold, or on the door, were placed prophylactic substances to protect the house from evil spirits, and that the threshold, or the vicinity of the door, was the place for performing all sorts of magic rites, which are, in the last analysis, generally concerned with the spirits of the dead.⁵⁷

The two strands of Ogle's argument here call to mind the categorisation that Johnston applied, in her 'Crossroads' article, to rituals which took place at the crossroads:

- 1) those [rituals] in which an individual sought help and protection at an uncertain liminal point, and
- 2) those [rituals] in which the detachment of the liminal point was exploited.⁵⁸

Prophylactic devices can be categorised as protective rituals, guarding the threshold and averting negative influences, whereas magic would come under – especially with the threshold-ghosts theory – exploitative rituals. Johnston argues that both categories of rituals involve the spirits found at the crossroads, either protecting against them or utilising them in magic;⁵⁹ as I shall discuss in Chapter Five, I agree that spirits were indeed thought to haunt the crossroads. Johnston's categories therefore become a useful framework to use to consider

⁵⁷ Ogle 1911: 254.

⁵⁸ Johnston 1991: 217.

⁵⁹ Protecting against ghosts: Johnston 1991: 218-220; exploiting those same ghosts: 223-224. Note that Johnston also includes the depositing of polluted waste at crossroads as an exploitative ritual, in this case utilising the liminal betwixt-and-between nature of the crossroads, rather than any incumbent spirits.

whether or not protective and exploitative rituals at the threshold were also performed there in order to manipulate any ghosts present.

§1.0.2: The structure of Part One of this thesis

In Chapter One I shall address prophylactic devices, to see whether or not their use at the threshold is indicative of a belief that ghosts haunted it. Johnston also uses the existence of threshold prophylactics as part of her argument for the presence of threshold-ghosts, but does not provide any examples;⁶⁰ Ogle, however, lists thirty-four different references to *apotropaia* at the threshold and so these sources form the main body of my analysis. It is true that the common use of prophylactics at the threshold does indeed – to use Johnston’s framework – indicate that individuals are seeking help and protection at the threshold; however, my findings will show that it is not so much protection from ghosts haunting a liminal location that householders wish to make use of, but rather protection from any negative influence attempting to enter the house through the most logical entrance: over the threshold.

In Chapter Two I turn to the other strand of Ogle’s argument and Johnston’s categorisation: the performance of magic rites at the threshold, and whether this indicates a belief in spirits present at the threshold. Rather than take the broad approach I used in Chapter One where I analysed multiple sources, in Chapter Two I shall focus on extracts from two poems which Ogle states show ‘the

⁶⁰ Johnston 1999: 209.

necessity for [spirits'] presence that the magic rite may be effective'.⁶¹ These case studies, on Theocritus' *Idyll* 2 and Virgil's *Eclogue* 8, will look carefully at the scenes which Ogle specified indicated the presence of spirits, as well as address wider examples of magic performed either at the threshold or with ghosts from other sources such as the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*.

I continue looking at magic rites in Chapter Three, where I shall also address the question of whether there is any evidence for a history of house-burial in Greece or Rome. Burial under the threshold was given as the origin for the ghosts allegedly present there by all four of the early comparatist scholars discussed earlier; they argued that this burial apparently led to a cult based at the threshold, dedicated to these spirits, which eventually left no trace other than in the continued performance of magic rites and other rituals at the doorway.⁶² I shall address the evidence, both literary and archaeological, for the potential for burial within the house in both cultures. I shall also undertake another case study: analysing the rites of Tacita as presented in Ovid's *Fasti*. This scene depicts a woman performing magic at the threshold during a festival of the dead when ghosts were considered to be present, and again all four scholars used it as proof that it is possible to see the remnants of a spirit-cult in magical rites performed at the door.⁶³ I shall look carefully at this text to examine whether or not this potential is apparent.

⁶¹ Ogle 1911: 257.

⁶² Ogle 1911: 264-265; Eitrem 1909: 4; Samter 1911: 142; Frazer 1929a: 448.

⁶³ Ogle 1911: 268; Eitrem 1909: 18; Samter 1911: 142; Frazer 1929a: 447.

Of course, one could say that the reason there is no explicit record of a belief in ghosts haunting the threshold is because it was so common that, like many everyday occurrences that we must now infer from the evidence, it left little trace in the literary record: authors felt no need to report on it. However, as I shall discuss in Chapter Four, if this were the case then it is odd that we have so many records of much more obvious places that ghosts haunted – from graveyards to death sites to the access-points of the underworld. I shall discuss the spatial places that we do have evidence that ghosts haunted, as well as the temporal occasions when ghosts were believed to haunt the living such as the various festivals of the dead.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I shall analyse the case of the crossroads. Crossroads and thresholds, as liminal areas associated with supernatural activity, are often conflated, and evidence for the one is used as proof for the other. In her article on the crossroads, Johnston had acknowledged that the fact that ‘ghosts dwell at Greek crossroads is an assumption (which remains to be addressed completely, however) of most modern scholars’, and one can certainly say that the same assumption has been made for thresholds.⁶⁴ I shall show in this final chapter that there was indeed a cultural belief that spirits haunted the crossroads for both Greece and Rome, and explain why this belief cannot be transferred to the threshold.

⁶⁴ Johnston 1991: 223 n. 27.

§1.0.3: What is a ghost?

It is clear, especially from the context of originating from human burial, that by 'ghost' or 'spirit' the early comparatist scholars primarily meant the apparition of a dead human's form. Given that it is their arguments and evidence which I am interrogating in this thesis, this, therefore, is what I am referring to when I use the terms 'ghost' or 'spirit'. This is the predominant meaning in English behind 'ghost', and although 'spirit' can have a wider meaning, it tends to be used interchangeably with 'ghost', as Felton's definition makes clear:

While there exists no standard view among folklorists, or even among parapsychologists, as to what a ghost is, we can define ghosts very broadly as the spirits of living beings who have died.⁶⁵

As with any intangible, imaginary concept, however, the lines are not always distinctly defined. The wider application of 'spirit' can cover minor supernatural beings that have not originated from a dead person, that might otherwise in English be called 'demons'. Johnston, perhaps, goes too far the other way in classifying what are generally considered female demonic monsters, such as Lamia, Mormo and Gello, as ghosts, since they all originated in myth as dead women.⁶⁶ 'Demon', of course, is a problematic term in English to apply to antiquity, given its Christian overtones (with the added complication that a δαίμων in Greek refers to any supernatural being, from a ghost to Zeus).⁶⁷ Of course, there are plenty of other words for 'ghost' used in English. Some of these have specific meanings – a 'poltergeist' is usually an invisible force which causes physical disturbances, whereas 'soul' tends to refer to a person's life essence,

⁶⁵ Felton 1999: 23.

⁶⁶ Johnston 1999: 162.

⁶⁷ For more on this issue see Johnston 1999: 162-163.

especially in religious contexts – whereas others are simply synonyms. To avoid confusion I shall limit myself to using ‘ghost’ or ‘spirit’ in this thesis.

There is also a variety of terminology in the ancient languages; some of it can be mapped on to English relatively easily: for instance, both the Greek σκιά and Latin *umbra* can mean – like ‘shade’ – either a shadow or a ghost. Other than the above-mentioned δαίμων and σκιά, in Greek we find εἶδωλον, ‘image’, φάντασμα and φάσμα, ‘apparition’, and ψυχή, ‘soul’; words typically used for a corpse, νεκρός and νέκυς, can also be used metonymically for ghosts (much as ‘the dead’ can be used just as ambiguously in English). Ogden points out that these ‘Greek terms, for all their diverse derivations, do not appear to have distinguished significant categories within the world of ghosts’.⁶⁸

The situation is a little more complex in Rome, if only because some writers attempted to distinguish between the different terms used but without agreement as to what they meant.⁶⁹ Apuleius lists the main four Roman terms for ghosts as part of his curse against Aemilianus delivered in the *Apologia*:⁷⁰

*semperque obvias species mortuorum, quidquid umbrarum est usquam,
quidquid lemorum, quidquid manium, quidquid larvarum, oculis tuis
oggerat*
may he [Mercury] always bring the apparitions of the dead to meet your
eyes, whatever *umbrae* there are anywhere, whatever *lemures*, whatever
manes, whatever *larvae*

(64.1)

⁶⁸ Ogden 2001b: 219.

⁶⁹ For a full discussion of this topic, especially the conflation between *lemures* and *larvae*, see Thaniel 1973.

⁷⁰ Apuleius lists *umbrae*, *lemures*, *manes* and *larvae*; other common Latin terms for ghost are *animae* (‘souls’), *imagines* (‘apparitions’), *simulacra* (‘apparitions’) and *species* (‘apparitions’).

There is no explanation of how the terms may differ here, but evidently any ghosts of the four categories listed would be suitable for enacting a curse.

Elsewhere, in a long passage in his *De deo Socratis* 15.5-10, Apuleius states that *lemur* is the early Latin word for an *animus humanus* ('human spirit'), and that they are a *species daemonum* ('category of demons'). Some *lemures* become the *Lar familiaris* and look after their descendants,⁷¹ whereas others – those that require punishment due to their former lives – become *larvae*; if it is unclear whether *lares* or *larvae* is the correct category, then the terminology to use is *di manes*.

Apuleius claims that *lemures* is an old term; the earliest extant use of it that we have is found in Horace:

*somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala rides?*
Do you laugh at dreams, magical terrors, marvels, witches, nocturnal
lemures and Thessalian portents?

(*Epistulae* 2.2.208-209)

Apuleius had implied in *De deo Socratis* that *lemures* was a generic, neutral term for ghost, whereas Horace appears to be using it as something that might be scary – certainly most of the other things he lists are meant to be; this would accord with the reference in Persius to *nigri lemures* ('black *lemures*', *Satire* 5.185). Augustine, in fact, cited the passage of *De deo Socratis* above, but misinterpreted it somewhat to conclude that Apuleius had also categorised *lemures* as malevolent ghosts:

⁷¹ Note that, *pace* Samter, Apuleius does not specify that the bodies of these *lemures* which became *Lares* had originally been buried in their homes.

Dicit quidem et animas hominum daemones esse et ex hominibus fieri lares, si boni meriti sunt; lemures, si mali, seu larvas; manes autem deos dici, si incertum est bonorum eos seu malorum esse meritorum.

Apuleius indeed also says that the souls of men are demons and that, on ceasing to be men, they become *lares*, if they have deserved this reward for their good conduct, and *lemures* or *larvae* if they have been bad, while they are called *di manes* if it is uncertain whether they have behaved well or ill.

(*De civitate Dei* 9.11)⁷²

Given the evidence of Horace and Persius it could well be that Augustine is correct about the perceived meaning of *lemures* not Apuleius, especially when we add in the evidence of the Roman *Lemuria* festival of the dead; however, even this is not straightforward. During the *Lemuria*, beans are thrown to ghosts in order to expel them from the house; one would assume – given the exorcism context – that these would be malevolent ghosts which are being expelled, and there is a clear etymological link between *Lemuria* and *lemures*.⁷³ Festus states that beans are thrown to *larvae* (77L s.v. *fabam*), whereas in Nonius both *larvae* and *lemures* are mentioned (197L s.v. *lemures*). *Larva* appears to be an unequivocally negative term, and is even used as an insult in Plautus (for example, *Mercator* 981); should *lemures*, therefore, be taken as a synonym for *larvae*?

However, in our most detailed description of the *Lemuria*, *Fasti* 5.419-492, Ovid does refer to the ghosts as *lemures*, but also as *umbrae* and *manes*, and he emphasises that the ghosts in question are those of ancestors (5.426; 5.480;

⁷² Translation by Wiesen 1968.

⁷³ I discuss the *Lemuria* in greater detail in Chapters Three and Four. To go back to Apuleius' point about *lemures* being an early Latin term, Ovid argues that *lemures* comes from *Lemuria* (*Fasti* 5.483-484), and – more dubiously – that the *Lemuria* was originally called the *Remuria* (after Remus), until eventually *aspera mutata est in lenem... / littera* (the 'rough letter... was changed into the smooth', 5.481-482, trans. Frazer 1931).

5.443).⁷⁴ Augustine had used *manes* for those ghosts who are hard to categorise, but the idea of the *manes* being ancestral ghosts is supported by the fact that this is the term which appears frequently on gravestones, in the address *dis manibus* (often abbreviated to *DM*) at the beginning of the epitaph.⁷⁵ All these categories – such as they are – seem to be overlapping.

It is not my intention to attempt to reconstruct exactly what an ancient Roman (or Greek, for that matter) would have imagined for each different ghostly term – it is entirely probable that one man's benign *manes* is another man's hostile *manes*.⁷⁶ Differences of terminology may reflect important differences in understanding of what these entities were, but equally we should not assume that there was an exact correspondence between the term used and the ghostly presence envisaged. There were certain types of ghosts – or rather, the manner in which people died and thus created ghosts – that were thought to be particularly dangerous to the living, as Johnston explains with reference to Greek terminology: 'those who have not received funeral rites (*ataphoi*), the untimely or prematurely dead (*aōroi*), and those who have died violently (*biaiothanatoi*).'⁷⁷ These are the restless dead – either unable to enter the underworld in the case of the *ataphoi*, or otherwise unhappy with their lot and so aggressively envious of the living. Overall, however, for the purposes of my study, the name or even the type of ghost mentioned in the literature is not as important as whether or not it was believed to haunt the threshold.

⁷⁴ See Thaniel 1973: 183-186 for more on the terminology used by Ovid in this scene.

⁷⁵ Hope 2009: 115.

⁷⁶ These categories can vary culturally, for instance, as Felton 1999: 34 notes, 'what we consider poltergeist manifestations would have been considered portents in antiquity.'

⁷⁷ Johnston 1999: 127.

§1.0.4: The state of scholarship on ghosts

I shall make a brief note on the state of scholarship on ghosts, before I move onto the main body of this Part of my thesis. Ghosts have remained a relatively unpopular area of research; despite the increase in academic interest in the topic of magic and the supernatural over the past four decades, spirits and ghosts evidently do not have the same seductive glamour that witches and magicians do. That is not to say that ghosts have been completely ignored: both major sourcebooks on the supernatural in ancient Greece and Rome feature chapters on the spirits of the dead: Luck's 1985 *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (reissued in a second edition in 2006) and Ogden's 2002 *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook* (reissued in a second edition in 2009).

The key modern reference works on ghosts in Greece and Rome were published in a cluster around the millennium: I have already discussed Johnston's 1999 *Restless Dead*, which is a detailed study of ghosts in ancient Greece. Felton's 1999 monograph *Haunted Greece and Rome: Ghost Stories from Classical Antiquity* is primarily about the genre of the ghost story, rather than where the spirits of the dead might have been considered to haunt in antiquity, and is a thorough analysis of the haunted house trope in Roman comedy. In 2001 Ogden published both an article and a book on *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, and while the focus is on the specific practice of necromancy and the logistics required, ghosts obviously play a key part in the discussions.

Prior to these works, the primary text – for Greece at least – was Rohde’s *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (1925; originally published as *Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* in 1894), which is a wide-ranging text analysing the fate of the soul after death in Greek belief. Despite being a contemporary of Ogle *et al.*, it should be noted that Rohde does not make any argument that the house, hearth (or threshold) are the haunt of any spirits.⁷⁸

In the intervening years between Rohde and the millennium cluster we find articles on specific aspects of ghosts, such as Thaniel’s 1973 article discussing the difference in terminology between ‘*Lemures* and *Larvae*’, referenced in the above analysis, or Winkler’s 1980 article ‘*Lollianos and the Desperadoes*’ which contains a discussion on what ghosts were generally considered to look like (concluding that on the whole they were generally either dark black, pallid white or smoke-like). Similarly, there have been more recent articles, such as Felton’s 2007 contribution to the *Companion to Greek Religion* on ‘*The Dead*’ and King’s 2009 article ‘*The Roman Manes: The Dead As Gods*’.

Other than Felton 1999’s work on haunted houses, no one has delved into the locations that ghosts might be considered to haunt; certainly there has been no discussion of a connection between ghosts and the threshold (bar the brief notes in Johnston that I have already mentioned). I intend my own work to fill this gap.

⁷⁸ Rohde’s only reference to burial by a doorway is that this was usually ‘an honour given only to Heroes’ and an anecdote about men killed by lightning in Tarentum who were buried outside their doors: both unique circumstances (1925: 193 n. 68).

PART ONE: CHAPTER ONE:

DOES THE USE OF PROPHYLACTIC DEVICES AT THE THRESHOLD INDICATE THAT SPIRITS WERE CONSIDERED TO HAUNT IT?

That the inhabitants of ancient Greece and Rome made prolific use of amulets and other apotropaic devices to ward off everything from disease to bad luck to supernatural attack is undeniable. We not only have archaeological evidence of some of these objects themselves, but also written descriptions of their purpose, which provides some much needed context for the material finds.¹ Prophylactic devices applied to the door form one of the cornerstones of support for those who argue that ghosts haunted the threshold:² the large number of surviving apotropaic measures associated with the doorway are said to have been designed to prevent said spirits from entering the house. So we read in Ogle:

that spirits haunted the vicinity of the house-door... is seen from the fact that beneath the threshold, or on the door, were placed prophylactic substances to protect the house from evil spirits.³

Nearly a century later we find the same idea in Johnston:

because inhabitants vigilantly used protective devices to keep them out, these creatures [unhappy souls and other demonic creatures] were imagined to lurk near entrances, patiently awaiting those rare moments of laxity when they might dart back inside.⁴

¹ To take just one widespread example, freeborn Roman boys wore the *bullae*: we have artistic depictions of it and also extant examples; Macrobius helpfully tells us that it was an apotropaic amulet (*Saturnalia* 1.6.9; see Olson 2017: 62-65, with Figures 2.1 and 2.2). On amulets more generally see Kotansky 1991, who discusses examples from early Greece to the Roman Empire, and Gager 1992: 218-242.

² Eitrem 1909: 14 even argues that it is better to use prophylactic devices as evidence for a cult of the dead, as it would be 'einen viel prägnanteren Sinn als wenn man sie alle einfach als "apotropäisch" ansieht'. I discuss the evidence – or lack of it – for such a cult of the dead at the threshold in Chapter Three.

³ Ogle 1911: 254.

⁴ Johnston 1999: 209; the phrase in square brackets is Johnston's own from earlier in the paragraph.

Johnston does not provide any examples of these 'protective devices', other than arguing that defence against ghosts would have been a function of the statues of gods that can be found by doors.⁵ Ogle, on the other hand, gives over thirty examples of his 'prophylactic substances', from both Greece and Rome. But were these apotropaic items really designed to ward off the spirits of the dead, and can their use demonstrate that the threshold was considered to be the gathering place of ghosts?

In this chapter I shall analyse the evidence for the use of prophylactic substances applied to the door, and shall assess whether or not they were designed to prevent spirits from entering. I shall examine each of the examples that Ogle provides, looking for evidence that they were designed to ward off spirits from the doorway, and shall determine whether or not this indicates that spirits were specifically thought to be haunting the threshold. As part of this discussion I will also evaluate whether spirits were considered to have been the agents behind any misfortune that might enter a house, as well as analyse the extant apotropaic amulets that we know were intended specifically for use against ghosts (none of which were designed for use at the threshold). Above all my primary question is whether the use of prophylactics at the threshold indicates that spirits haunted it.

⁵ Johnston 1999: 209. I discussed these statues in the overall introduction to this thesis, and pointed out that guarding an entrance against the potential ingress of ghosts does not mean that ghosts are inherently inhabiting the entrance. Faraone 1992: 8 gives the statues a much broader range of protective responsibility: as a 'line of defense against thieves, personal enemies, illness, and other sorts of evil'.

As mentioned above, I shall focus my attention on the evidence that Ogle provides for his statement that 'beneath the threshold, or on the door, were placed prophylactic substances to protect the house from evil spirits'.⁶ Ogle's article is the most thorough compilation of supernatural activity at the threshold – he gives thirty-four different Greek or Roman sources just on this point – and is still cited as a resource for such references.⁷ Unlike the other scholars contemporary to Ogle who also argued for the presence of ghosts at the doorway, Ogle limits his evidence to classical antiquity, without drawing in comparative examples from other cultures, societies and eras. I do not wish to imply that Ogle was – especially given the relatively recent work by Johnston – the only scholar behind the threshold-ghosts theory, but given that his work is the most exhaustive and geographically- and culturally-relevant, it is logical for me to focus on responding to and countering Ogle's argument and evidence.⁸

However, we must bear in mind Csapo's critique of the comparative method that Ogle subscribed to,⁹ especially with regard to presenting evidence that '[relies] on suggestive and circumstantial detail [and] the tendency to persuade by

⁶ Ogle 1911: 254.

⁷ For modern scholars referring to Ogle's article see Part One Introduction, footnote 9.

⁸ I do not wish to suggest that these thirty-four sources are the only evidence for prophylactics at the threshold, but they are the ones that Ogle used to support his argument, and therefore are the ones which are most important for me to consider. There is plenty of evidence of other *apotropaia* from the threshold, from Pliny's mention that a wolf's muzzle attached to the gate counteracts sorceries (*veneficiis*, *Naturalis historia* 28.44.157), to the phalli still present above doorways in Pompeii, to 'the common formula inscribed on door lintels throughout the Greek world in the Roman period: "Let no evil enter here for the son of Zeus, Herakles Kallinikos lives here"' (Faraone 1992: 13 n. 5; see also 1992: 69 n. 39), to 'a sixth-century CE papyrus amulet used to ban scorpions... [which was placed] near the door to the house' (Faraone 2012: 13). Ogle 1911: 256 makes a brief mention of the existence of the phalli in 'the early cities of Greece and Italy... on the lintel of the city gates.' For more on threshold apotropaic devices in ancient Greece see Faraone 1992, especially 3-17 and 54-73.

⁹ Ogle 1911: 251 specifically states that he intends to show that the threshold was just as important for the Greeks and Romans as it is 'in the folk-lore and religion of various peoples'; whilst he might focus his evidence on Greece and Rome, he still uses the same technique that Csapo is describing.

suggesting a large number of alternatives, all tending in the same direction, as if exhausting the possibilities, and cumulatively overdetermining the desired connection'.¹⁰ This is certainly something apparent within the data assembled here, and we shall see that they do not present the united front with regard to warding the threshold of the house against the spirits of the dead that Ogle implies they do.

For instance, one of the first examples that Ogle gives to illustrate his statement that the threshold of the house was being protected against spirits is Columella 7.5.17 (source #2.4 in Appendix Two), which, in Ogle's words, 'advises that when a flock of sheep is suffering from disease, one of them should be buried alive in a ditch dug on the threshold, and the rest of the flock driven over it'.¹¹ But it is not the threshold of the house that Columella is referring to, but rather the threshold of the *sheepfold*, and there is no obvious mention of spirits either (unless, maybe, as the unexpressed agents of the disease). We should also consider, given that it is not explicit, the fact that the act of driving the flock over the threshold (and the interred sheep) could well be to *cure* the rest of the flock of the disease, rather than for prophylactic, i.e. preventative, purposes. This could be a good example to show the importance of the threshold as a liminal place for folk remedies or magic working, but it is clearly not a straightforward example of how to protect a house from evil spirits.¹²

¹⁰ Csapo 2005: 36-37.

¹¹ Ogle 1911: 255. The Latin is quoted at item #2.4 in Appendix Two.

¹² Given that Columella is also citing a treatise in Greek by the Egyptian author Bolos of Mendes it is questionable how relevant this source would be for Roman practice anyway.

As another example, there is an excerpt from the tenth-century Byzantine compendium of Greek farming manuals, the *Geoponica*,¹³ which says that certain things could be buried – in Ogle’s paraphrase – ‘under the threshold of the hive’ to protect bees from enchantment (15.8.1; #2.3 in Appendix Two).¹⁴ However, if we refer to the full passage then we are told that this ritual does indeed cover bees (it comes in the section about bee management), but also μηδὲ ἀγρούς, μηδὲ οἰκίας, μηδὲ κτηνοτροφεῖα, μηδὲ ἐργαστήρια (‘fields, houses, animal sheds and workshops’).¹⁵ It is odd, then, that Ogle focussed solely on the beehive when he could have explicitly quoted the house as well. I realise that this could be seen as an over-literal reading of both Ogle’s argument about the ‘house’ and the evidence supplied, but I believe that this lack of attention to detail about the nature of the examples used has led Ogle, and other writers, to make assumptions about the nature of the threshold which are not borne out by the extant literature and material evidence.

Rather than pick through each of the examples that Ogle provides, I have presented them in a table, in the order in which they appear in the original article, as Appendix Two. What may appear on the surface to be an overwhelming flood of corroborative evidence becomes, when each is individually analysed, considerably less persuasive. Of the thirty-four pieces of ancient Greek and Roman literary evidence to support the statement that ‘beneath the threshold, or on the door, were placed prophylactic substances to

¹³ See Dalby 2011: 9-10 for more on the creation and transmission of the *Geoponica*, and 12-14 on the original material that was excerpted to create it; see also Rose 1933.

¹⁴ Ogle 1911: 254. The Greek is quoted at item #2.3 in Appendix Two.

¹⁵ Translation by Dalby 2011.

protect the house from evil spirits',¹⁶ only seventeen are definitely prophylactic, with a further seven that are probably prophylactic, and one which is unknown; four are not prophylactic at all. The final five references do not refer to doors and so do not appear in the table in Appendix Two (see Appendix Three).

Only three references specify – probably – that they have the means to repel spirits; all are Greek, and refer to situations when we might expect ghosts to be present anyway. Photius gives two references to precautions taken on the *Choes*, a day during the *Anthesteria* festival when spirits were thought to be abroad, and states that doors – or houses – were smeared with pitch (#2.10: *Lexicon* s.v. Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα and #2.11: s.v. Ῥάμνος).¹⁷ The second Photius passage also states that pitch was also used in this way for driving away ghosts (τῶν δαιμόνων) during childbirth, which was a time when ghostly attack was particularly feared.¹⁸ The final relevant source suggests the use of Ῥάμνος at the door to ward off ghosts (φαντάσματα), this time while making offerings to the dead (ἐναγίσμασι) – again this is a time when one might expect ghosts to be present (#2.13: scholion on Nicander, *Theriaca* 860a). The rest of the texts refer to disease (1), murder and deceit (1), the god Silvanus (1),¹⁹ *striges* (1),²⁰

¹⁶ Ogle 1911: 254.

¹⁷ I have included #2.11: *Lexicon* s.v. Ῥάμνος as a relevant source even though it states that the pitch was smeared onto houses (τὰ δώματα and τὰς οἰκίας) rather than specifically the door, since this entry is so similar to #2.10: s.v. Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα which does state doors (τὰς θύρας). Of course, if we instead follow the Ῥάμνος entry to the letter, and use it to discredit the Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα entry, then this would indicate that there was practically no support at all for the use of prophylactics at the door to prevent the entry of ghosts. For the *Anthesteria* see Chapter Four.

¹⁸ Johnston 1999: 162.

¹⁹ #2.9: Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 6.9. The god (*deus*) Silvanus cannot be a ghost, but – given that he attacks newly-delivered women – we should note that this is a time-specific reference: the preventative measures to repel him are taken when he was anticipated to be present, rather than generally throughout the year.

²⁰ #2.14: Ovid, *Fasti* 6.155-168. Johnston 1999: 164 argues that the *strix* should be considered a form of restless spirit (due to a fusion with the myth of Gello and presumably – although not explicitly stated – based on the origin myth in which Polyphonte becomes an owl-like *strix* after

nightmares (1), fire (1), destruction (1), hail (2), and some form of enchantment (10).

This does not, on the face of it, look like overwhelming support for the idea that ‘inhabitants vigilantly used protective devices’²¹ at their thresholds in order to keep spirits out. But it is possible that these devices *were* intended to prevent the entrance of ghosts, if we consider that spirits could have been the agents of the things that the devices specify they will prevent entrance of. The god Silvanus is clearly not a spirit,²² but things like disease, potentially, and nightmares, plausibly, and enchantments, probably, could have been considered to be caused or brought into the house by evil spirits.

There are certainly cases when ghosts were used as agents of magic;²³ not necessarily every piece of magic, otherwise the scholiast on Nicander, *Theriaca* 860a (#2.13) would not mention the distinction that the *rhamnos* can ward off *pharmaka* and also (ἀλλὰ καὶ) *phantasmata*. However, our evidence gathered

death). McDonough 1997 refers to it *passim* as a ‘witch’; he notes at 1997: 317 n. 8 that it is a ‘supernatural demon and not a mortal agent of evil intent’ but later mentions ‘the belief in the *strix* as [a] transformed old woman was widespread’ (1997: 327); Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 11.95.232 says simply that it is *in maledictis*; Ovid wonders whether *striges* are born as birds or are old women transformed into flying creatures by magic (*sive igitur nascuntur aves, seu carmine fiunt/ neniaque in volucres Marsa figurat anus, Fasti* 6.141-142), which certainly implies more an assumption for Ovid here that they are owl-like creatures or witches rather than ghosts. Regardless, it is clear that the *striges* are coming for the newborn, and so even if they are to be considered ghosts, we could classify this as another time-specific reference. For more on the *strix* – including an argument that it was more likely to have been bat-like than owl-like – see Oliphant 1913.

²¹ Johnston 1999: 209.

²² Samter 1911: 29 introduces his analysis of this rite as describing it as protecting the house from ‘die unheilvollen Geister’, but Silvanus was firmly a deity (*deus*); this is yet another example of evidence being twisted to fit the theory. For more on Silvanus see Dorcey 1992.

²³ I shall discuss this further in Chapter Two.

from curse tablets and binding spells – two key categories of ‘real world’ magic,²⁴ which could well be included among the *mala medicamenta* or *pharmaka* mentioned in our prophylactic sources – shows that a magic-worker would often invoke the help of a spirit at their gravesite, and then direct them at a victim. This is usually in the form of placing a tablet in a tomb or burying it with the corpse, ‘sometimes in the skeletal hand of the deceased’,²⁵ and many tablets have been discovered in such locations.²⁶

However, it remains noteworthy that the prophylactics tabulated in Appendix Two specify that they will prevent the entrance of the *mala medicamenta* rather than any spirit on messenger duty. Two in particular (#2.17: Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 32.16.44 and #2.18: *Naturalis historia* 28.37.142) use the verb *inferre* (to bring in), which certainly implies that something – perhaps a ghost – is bringing the evil enchantments into the house; yet the prophylactics are to prevent the entrance of the *mala medicamenta*, not whatever unexpressed agent bringing them in. In fact, for some of the prophylactics described by Pliny their apotropaic function is to dissipate any magic that passes over the threshold; this could even suggest that a messenger-ghost *could* pass into the house, but the magic they are bringing with them would be neutralised. At #2.17: *Naturalis historia* 32.16.44 a starfish smeared with the blood of a fox and attached to the lintel or door with a bronze nail will prevent *mala medicamenta* being brought in, or, if they have been brought in, will render them harmless (*negant posse... certe nocere*). Likewise, at #2.21: *Naturalis historia* 28.23.85 we are told that touching the

²⁴ ‘Real world’ rather than the literary descriptions of magic (e.g. Theocritus, *Idyll* 2, Horace, *Epode* 5, etc.) which are unlikely to have been performed in reality.

²⁵ Collins 2008: 8-9.

doorposts with menstrual blood will make the arts of the Magi ineffective (*inritas fieri Magorum artes*). There is a variation of this at #2.22: *Naturalis historia* 28.27.104 where touching the door with the blood of a hyena will impair the arts of the Magi (*Magorum infestari artes*).

Johnston had argued that ‘these creatures were imagined to lurk near entrances, patiently awaiting those rare moments of laxity when they might dart back inside’,²⁷ but our extant evidence does not, in fact, imply that there was any kind of concern to prevent such a ‘moment of laxity’. What we find instead is the widespread use of personal amulets which could give their owners protection not only while at home – as a threshold-charm would do – but out and about as well.²⁸ After all, what is the use of a threshold-based prophylactic if these lurking ghosts would immediately be able to serve up their misfortune on people as soon as they stepped out of the house?

Pliny, in fact, details a number of apotropaic devices to be used specifically against spirits, but none of them require the use of the threshold. For instance, there is one against *nocturnas imagines* (nocturnal spirits):

²⁶ Gager 1992: 3. I discuss this further in Chapter Four.

²⁷ Johnston 1999: 209.

²⁸ I have already mentioned the *bullā* worn by all freeborn Roman boys (see footnote 1). Gager 1992: 218 tells of Judas Maccabees (2 Maccabees 12:34-39) who discovered that all the dead soldiers at a battle had been wearing amulets; Gager points out he probably did not check the survivors, and that they would have had them too – ‘the fact remains that in this randomly chosen sample of ancient Jews, every one wore an amulet, as did virtually every sensible person of the time.’ For more on amulets, including a range of examples, see Kotansky 1991 and Gager 1992: 218-242.

oculis eius inveteratis et cum melle tritis inunctos non expavescere ad nocturnas imagines etiam pavidos
those rubbed with an ointment of [a *draco*'s] eyes, dried and beaten up with honey, are not panic-stricken, however nervous, by phantoms of the night.

(*Naturalis historia* 29.20.67)²⁹

This *is* a prophylactic use, and *is* against spirits, but it does not use the threshold.

Here is another example of a prophylactic against spirits, which again does not use the doorway:

contra nocturnos pavores umbrarumque terrorem unus e magnis dentibus lino alligatus succurrere narratur.

For night terrors and fear of ghosts one of the large teeth [of a hyena] tied on with thread as an amulet is said to be a help.

(*Naturalis historia* 28.27.98)³⁰

It is curious that of the twelve prophylactic uses of the threshold that Ogle cites from Pliny, none are specifically about spirits; yet there *are* explicit mentions of prophylactics against spirits in the *Naturalis historia*, but none of them require the threshold. In fact, the preventatives against spirits that we see here are things which are applied *to the body* rather than *to the house*.³¹ If ghosts were generally thought to haunt the threshold seeking ingress to bring misfortune into the household, then surely we would expect the opposite to be the case.

²⁹ Translation by Jones 1963. This excerpt follows on from item #2.1 in Appendix Two, Pliny's rite for good fortune: to place the head of a *draco* underneath the threshold *and* to propitiate the gods (I mentioned in Appendix Two that this was not a good example of a prophylactic, since ensuring good fortune is not necessarily the same as preventing bad fortune). Pliny then goes on to discuss other uses of the *draco*, including ensuring success in lawsuits and access to important people, and, then as a preservative against *nocturnas imagines*.

³⁰ Translation by Jones 1963.

³¹ To this we can also add the lexical entries of Photius (#2.10: s.v. Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα and #2.11: s.v. Πάμνος): these entries note that individuals would chew buckthorn to guard against spirits at the *Anthesteria* – evidently this was functioning as a personal amulet. I discuss these rites further in Chapter Four.

Even if the Greeks and Romans *did* believe that ghosts were at the root of all magic and misfortune to enter a house, and that therefore all the threshold-applied prophylactics were to ward them off despite ghosts not being specified, this still would not indicate that the threshold itself was commonly held to be haunted by spirits. In fact, ironically, Ogle himself seems to provide the most likely explanation as to why these prophylactics were applied to the threshold:

In the case of many of these practices it may be objected that the prophylactic substance was hung before the door because through the door the powers of ill would enter no matter whence they came[.]³²

We can find similar prophylactic use applied to other entry points: the *Geoponica* suggests writing the word Ἀδάμ on the window of the pigeonhouse to keep serpents out (see Appendix Three: #3.2: 13.8.4 and #3.3: 14.5),³³ and part of Ovid's description of Carna's rite to repel the *striges* was to put a whitethorn branch in the window (#2.14: *Fasti* 6.165-166).

And even if spirits were the agents of all these misfortunes, there is no reason to believe that they were thought to be present in the threshold that they were being averted from: these prophylactic rites are all to repel *external* forces. As we saw above, if a magic-worker needs a ghost to send against a victim then they will generally seek it at its grave.³⁴ Even in those few cases of threshold-based apotropaic devices where spirits are specified, they are directed against spirits which are generally abroad during a specific time period (such as during the

³² Ogle 1911: 256.

³³ Dalby 2011: 27 n. 4: 'ADAM stands for the four corners of the world (*Anatole, Dysis, Arktos, Mesembria*: east, west, north, south).'

³⁴ I discuss the places that we have evidence that there was a belief in ghosts haunting in Chapter Four.

Anthesteria), not ones that have been conjured out of the doorway or that have been eternally lurking there.

Throughout this chapter I have shown that while the use of prophylactics certainly shows that people wished to keep malevolent influences out of their houses, the threshold itself was merely a barrier – both mundane and supernatural³⁵ – rather than a haunting- or gathering-place of ghosts. Spirits of the dead are much more likely to be found where we might expect them: at their gravesite;³⁶ from there they might be charged to take some malevolence into a victim's house and so it is sensible for a victim to take precautions against this. Potential victims cannot possibly prevent every ghost from being utilised against them, but they can put up magical barriers at their own home to stop potential entry. As for whether the spirits are always awaiting entrance outside the house it is not clear: we have very little evidence to suggest that people specifically wished to keep spirits out (rather than the negative influence they may be carrying), and I have argued that some prophylactic barriers may well allow entrance, but they neutralise the negative influence as it passes over. We also know that when people went looking for ghosts, they generally went to the location of the corpse, rather than seeking them at the threshold.³⁷ Overall, therefore, we cannot use prophylactic use at the threshold as evidence for ghosts haunting that location.

³⁵ 'Physically excluding burglars or love-struck suitors is a practical matter,' points out Maynes 2007: 64, 'but excluding sickness or misfortune is more difficult. For the latter, ritual aid needs to be enlisted.'

³⁶ I discuss ghosts haunting their graves in more detail in Chapter Four.

³⁷ For more on this see Chapter Four.

PART ONE: CHAPTER TWO:

DOES THE PERFORMANCE OF MAGIC RITES AT THE THRESHOLD INDICATE THAT SPIRITS WERE CONSIDERED TO HAUNT IT?

In the Introduction to Part One I discussed Johnston's categorisation of rituals which took place at the crossroads as either protective or exploitative of that liminal space,¹ and indicated that this dichotomy is a useful framework with which to approach Ogle's two-fold reasoning linking the threshold to the spirits of the dead. He argued that:

beneath the threshold, or on the door, were placed prophylactic substances to protect the house from evil spirits, and... the threshold, or the vicinity of the door, was the place for performing all sorts of magic rites, which are, in the last analysis, generally concerned with the spirits of the dead.²

Ogle's evidence is therefore also categorised into protective rites allegedly to repel spirits through the use of prophylactics at the threshold, and exploitative magic making use of any spirits in the vicinity.

In Chapter One I took a broad approach and analysed over thirty references to prophylactics; I pointed out that it is not spirits that they were protecting against, but rather the various misfortunes that might be brought into a house. I argued that the protective use of prophylactics at the liminal threshold – even those directed at spirits – still gives the threshold no greater meaning than that of a barrier: wishing to avert spirits from the entrance of a house does not imply that they are haunting that entrance.

¹ See Johnston 1991. I shall discuss the crossroads further in Chapter Five.

² Ogle 1911: 254.

What I shall do in this chapter is use two in-depth case studies – one on a Greek source and one Roman – to explore whether there is a connection between spirits, the threshold and magic. The threshold was used in magic, in both literary depictions of magic and the evidence we find of ‘real’ magical activity; and spirits of the dead were often called upon in magical rites. But was magic performed at the threshold in order to exploit any ghosts present there? This is Ogle’s argument, and he was not the only scholar of his time with this belief; Eitrem too stated that ‘Es liegt nahe, die verkümmerten Reste des ehemaligen Totenkultus, der an der Schwelle stattgefunden hat, im griechischen und römischen Zauber wiederzufinden.’³ Therefore I shall analyse Theocritus’ *Idyll* 2 and Virgil’s *Eclogue* 8, a pair of poems with a shared literary heritage detailing love-lorn witches performing love magic at a threshold in an attempt to bring wayward lovers back to them. They both form part of the evidence that Ogle provides to show ‘the necessity for their [spirits’] presence that the magic rite may be effective’,⁴ but there is no indication in either poems that there are any spirits in attendance.⁵

§1.2.1: Other evidence for the haunting of spirits

Before I move onto the case studies I shall briefly run through some of the other evidence that Ogle provides; I have tabulated this evidence as a series of appendices and so will not discuss every citation in depth. Alongside the *Idyll*

³ Eitrem 1909: 17.

⁴ Ogle 1911: 257.

⁵ Both poems make reference to and call upon deities throughout the spells (*Idyll* 2: the Moon [Σελάνα], Hekate, Artemis, Aphrodite; *Eclogue* 8: the Earth [*Terra*]), but not spirits.

and *Eclogue*, Ogle provides two other examples (see Appendix Four) which allegedly show ‘the necessity for [spirits’] presence that the magic rite may be effective’,⁶ neither of which – like the poems – have any explicit mention of spirits being required either at the threshold or for the efficacy of the magic. One, in fact, seems like it should be more sensibly included in the list of prophylactics: *canis numquam rabiet in domo, si pellem canis rabiosi sub limen obliges vel in porta figas* (‘a dog will never be rabid in the house, if you bind the skin of a rabid dog under the threshold or fix it on the door’, #4.3: Pseudo-Theodorus Priscianus, *Additamenta*). The other is a recipe to ‘do well at the workshop’ (#4.4: *PGM XII.99-106*) which involves burying an egg at the threshold and praying to the god Ammon;⁷ this suggests that divine intervention, not spirits, is required instead for the spell to work.⁸

There are then eighteen references which Ogle states show how ‘the threshold plays a very prominent part in medicinal lore’, and which are tabulated as Appendix Five.⁹ There is, as by now might be expected, no mention of spirits in any of them. While Ogle does refer to the recipes as ‘magical remed[ies]’ and ‘magic rite[s]’,¹⁰ we may well question whether the ancient peoples would have considered these ‘magic’ rather than simply medicine or folk remedies. Most of

⁶ Ogle 1911: 257.

⁷ This recipe is remarkably similar in format to Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 29.20.67 (#2.1 in Appendix Two), a passage which Ogle had included as prophylactic but I noted was clearly not. The egg in #4.4 is explicitly intended to be a homing beacon for the magic or good will of the gods: ‘Great God, give favor, business to me and to this place where the egg lies’ (trans. Hock in Betz 1986: 157).

⁸ Ammon is invoked along with a ‘Good Daimon’. The mention of a *daimon* here could well imply a spirit; however, the adjective ‘Good’ suggests more that this is the sense of *daimon* as a deity, rather than a spirit of the dead.

⁹ Ogle 1911: 257; some of the eighteen are not, in fact, medicinal, and some do not require use of the threshold.

¹⁰ Remedies: Ogle 1911: 257; rites: Ogle 1911: 258 n. 1.

the medical extracts quoted give instructions along the lines of *per dies continuos novem in limine stans bibe* ('drink standing on the threshold for nine days continually', #5.3: Marcellus Empiricus, 16.21). It is clear that the *limen* is important in these medical texts for some sort of supernatural or superstitious reason, but we cannot safely assume from the available material that this is due to any spirit activity.

Ogle introduces the next batch of references (see Appendix Six) with the statement that they 'clearly illustrate this idea that spirits haunted the vicinity of the threshold'.¹¹ What we actually have in the one case is magic being performed in the *vicinity* of a doorway, but the practitioner, Lucina,¹² is actually sitting by an altar, not at the door itself: *subsedit in illa/ ante fores ara* (#6.2: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.297-298). Does this 'clearly illustrate this idea that spirits haunted the vicinity of the threshold'? No; if anything it illustrates that altars might be located near doorways. Lucina is performing a form of binding magic to prevent Alcmena from giving birth – using sympathetic magic by crossing her fingers and legs to keep Alcmena's cervix closed (9.298-300) and muttering charms (*tacita... carmina voce/ dixit*, 9.300-301) – but she does not address ghosts. Lucina, a goddess in her own right, is acting upon Juno's behalf (9.295-296) and as goddesses of the upper realm neither have immediate authority over the spirits of the dead. Lucina is the goddess with power over childbirth (*diva potens uteri*, 9.315); she has no reason to need ghostly assistants to impede it.

¹¹ Ogle 1911: 259.

¹² Ogle 1911: 259 states that it is Juno who is performing the magic, but it is clear in the text that it is the goddess of childbirth, Lucina (9.294-295; 9.314-315), although she is acting upon Juno's orders (9.295-296; 9.308-309).

In another reference, #6.1: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.238-245, we see Medea performing magic to rejuvenate Aeson. Here we have a mention of a witch performing magic (*sacra facit*, 7.244) near the door (*constitit adveniens citra limenque foresque*, 7.238), but there is no explicit mention of spirits in the part of the poem that Ogle had cited. And yet, just three lines later there is a reference to Medea calling up powers which could indeed be interpreted as the spirits of the dead:

*verba simul fudit terrenaque numina civit
umbrarumque rogat rapta cum coniuge regem,
ne properent artus anima fraudare senili.*

while at the same time she uttered her incantations, called up the deities of the earth, and prayed the king of the shades with his stolen bride not to be in haste to rob the old man's body of the breath of life.

(7.248-250)¹³

What are these *numina terrena*? Medea calls them up by means of blood-filled trenches, to which she adds milk and honey (7.244-247) – this of course calls to mind the blood-filled trench, with added honey and milk (and wine and barley), that Odysseus used to make contact with the spirits of the dead when he visited the underworld (*Odyssey* 10.24-28).¹⁴ It could, therefore, be a poetic reference to the spirits of the dead. The fact that Medea then calls on the *umbrarum... regem* seems to emphasise this, but it is possible that by *numina terrena* Ovid was simply referring to Hades and Proserpina pleonastically: Medea calls them up and then makes her request.

This is our closest reference to what might be spirits of the dead present during the performance of magic located near a threshold, and – whatever is meant by

¹³ Translation by Miller 1916.

¹⁴ I discuss Odysseus' visit to the underworld further in Chapter Four.

numina – they *do* seem to be required to make Medea’s magic rite effective.¹⁵ But the fact that Ovid specifies that Medea has had to call these spirits up *from the ground* by means of a trench indicates that they are not hovering round the doorway. In fact it is not, if we are to be extremely particular, definitively clear that Medea is even near the door: depending upon whether *constitit adveniens citra limenque foresque* means that she has stopped outside the door in order to build her altar *there*, or merely that Medea stopped outside the door *rather than going inside* and stayed outside (all the better to dig a trench to access the underworld) to perform her magic somewhere else outdoors. Regardless, the ritual is not taking place right at the threshold, but at a pair of altars and trenches, and it is the blood-filled trench that is essential for raising these *numina*. The mention of the threshold here seems to function more as a symbol of the liminal magic that Medea is trying to perform: taking a man on the boundary of life and death and restoring him to youth.

Ogle makes further references to the Furies sitting at the threshold (Appendix Seven), to thresholds being purified from pollution (Appendix Eight), and even to prophecies made or received at the threshold (Appendix Nine). These categories are becoming so far removed from the realm of magic that it is clear that Ogle is attempting to shoehorn any supernatural activity taking place in the vicinity of a threshold as evidence for spirits of the dead being present. For example, with regard to prophecies at the threshold, all of the examples specify that the

¹⁵ Medea also prays to the gods of the underworld, including Hekate (this formula seems relatively close to those that we find in the *PGM* of invoking chthonic gods along with chthonic spirits); Johnston 1990: 146 states that ‘it is by Hekate and Youth that Medea calls forth from Hades chthonic *numina* to aid in Aeson’s rejuvenation; the imprecation of Youth can be explained in this case by the nature of Medea’s task; Hekate is called on because she is the goddess who releases the required *numina*.’

prophecy comes from a god (Apollo or Jupiter); yet Ogle states that these 'citations would seem to indicate that the threshold was thought to be the source of prophetic inspiration,' which he then links to 'grave-oracles' and 'the belief that the spirits of the dead foretold the future'.¹⁶ But gods issuing prophecies near thresholds proves nothing about the presence of spirits in that location. I shall not go into any further detail about these other examples that Ogle provides, but direct readers to the appendices should they wish to see a breakdown.

§1.2.2: Case studies for the performance of magic at the threshold

I shall now analyse two poems which feature magic performed at the threshold, which Ogle stated showed evidence for 'the necessity for [spirits'] presence that the magic rite may be effective'¹⁷ (see Appendix Four: #4.1 and #4.2). I shall look at the poems in detail, and also use them as springboards to discuss other relevant material such as recipes in the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*. I am primarily concerned throughout both case studies with whether or not the texts indicate that spirits were present either in the threshold or, indeed, for the efficacy of magical rites.

¹⁶ Ogle 1911: 261.

¹⁷ Ogle 1911: 257.

§1.2.2.1: Theocritus, *Idyll* 2.59-62

Θεστυλί, νῦν δὲ λαβοῖσα τὸ τὰ θρόνα ταῦθ' ὑπόμαξον
τᾶς τήνω φλιᾶς καθ' ὑπέρτερον ἄς ἔτι καὶ νύξ,
καὶ λέγ' ἐπιτρύζοισα 'τὰ Δέλφιδος ὅστια μάσσω.'
But now, Thestylis, take these magic herbs, and knead them
over his threshold while it is still dark, and whispering say,
'I knead the bones of Delphis'.¹⁸

Theocritus' third-century BC poem features a young woman, Simaetha, and her maid, Thestylis, performing a binding love spell in an attempt to bring Simaetha's errant lover, Delphis, back to her. The poem is split into two halves, each half with its own refrain: first the spell and then – once Thestylis is off on her errand to Delphis' doorway – Simaetha performs a monologue in which she tells the Moon all about her love for Delphis. The spell is complicated, with numerous steps, only one of which – the instruction for Thestylis to knead herbs over Delphis' threshold – Ogle had selected as an example of 'the necessity for [spirits'] presence that the magic rite may be effective.'¹⁹ I do not intend to analyse every stage in the spell, as I shall instead focus on those elements that could be connected to spirits, and so have detailed the various other magical acts that Simaetha and Thestylis perform in Appendix Ten.

Lines 2.59-62 (Thestylis' mission to Delphis' threshold) are, according to the commentator Gow, 'beyond the reach of a final solution':²⁰ it is not clear what exactly θρόνα are (though evidently some kind of herb-like magical ingredient), what part of the door is meant by φλιᾶς, and what action Thestylis has been told to carry out with ὑπόμαξον. Ogle translates the sense of 2.59-60 as 'the magic

¹⁸ All translations of Theocritus are from Gow 1952a. I have omitted line 61 as it is considered spurious, see Gow 1952b: 47.

¹⁹ Ogle 1911: 257.

²⁰ Gow 1952b: 46.

herbs are smeared on the threshold', but Gow argues instead that she is to *knead* them in her *hands*, standing 'before the door with hands held over the threshold'.²¹ Ogle does not explain exactly how herbs smeared on the threshold would make the magic more effective by the use of the ghosts allegedly present there, but that is his argument and given the context it would seem that the following options are most plausible:

- a) that the θρόνα are to act as a sort of offering to the ghosts in Delphis' threshold (which is why they are applied to it). The ghosts will then carry out the love magic on Simaetha's behalf;
- b) that the θρόνα themselves will enact the love magic on Delphis, but first they need to be 'charged' up with the spirit power lurking in his threshold (which again is why they are applied to it).

Gow is certainly aware of Ogle's article, as he cites it in discussion of this passage, but merely in the context of it being a repository of references to superstitions and doors.²² Gow does not address Ogle's ghosts-theory, at all, despite the fact that it would make the argument for smearing relatively straightforward. In fact, Gow's conclusion actively counters the notion that external factors such as ghosts are required for Simaetha's magic to be effective, as he points out that 'in the previous rites the effect on Delphis is to be produced sympathetically by

²¹ Ogle 1911: 257; Gow 1952b: 48. See Gow 1942 for more detail, in which he defends the correction of μάσσω from the manuscripts' πάσσω at 2.62. Gow both states, *pace* Platnauer 1942: 10 who had argued to keep πάσσω, that 'the sprinkling of Delphis's bones on his own doorstep or thereabouts seems to me as a love-charm no more likely to be efficacious than sprinkling them to the four winds' (Gow 1942: 110) and that, *pace* readings of μάσσω which interpret the verb as simply rubbing the doorway with the θρόνα, 'I do not see that to smear a man's bones even vicariously on his front door is a passport to his affections' (1942: 111).

²² Ogle's article is cited at both Gow 1942: 111 n. 1 and Gow 1952b: 47.

something done to the magic materials, not by something done with them to some other object'.²³

Throughout the spell, Simaetha has been performing sympathetic magic in an attempt to re-inflame Delphis' attractions by manipulating something that magically represents him. Her incantations sound violent, but the intention behind them is not to literally, e.g. burn Delphis' flesh in a fire by symbolically burning bay-leaves (2.26), but rather to set him alight metaphorically with love. Gow argues – quite sensibly, given the rest of the poem – that Thestylis' actions are a continuation of this sympathetic magic. Kneading the 'bones' would be to soften him up and make him more receptive to the love magic. In fact, this final instruction to Thestylis is a mirror of the first one Simaetha gave her: to scatter barley groats on the fire while saying, 'I strew the bones of Delphis' (τὰ Δέλφιδος ὅστια πάσσω, 2.21); the deliberately similar instruction at 2.62 – 'I knead the bones of Delphis' (τὰ Δέλφιδος ὅστια μάσσω) – can only emphasise that this is also sympathetic magic.²⁴

In my opinion, the only plausible scenario in which Thestylis' actions would *not* be sympathetic magic would be if she were indeed smearing (i.e. that the manuscript reading of πάσσω at 2.62 were correct), or otherwise depositing, the θρόνα at Delphis' doorway. However, this would not indicate that there were spirits already present in the threshold, but rather would signify a target to which external spirits would be attracted. As I shall discuss below, there is

²³ Gow 1952b: 48.

²⁴ Lawall 1961: 284 points out the ring composition and symmetry present in the poem, where the first act of the night's spell is for Thestylis to scatter the barley groats on the fire (introducing her) and the last is for Thestylis to go and knead herbs (dismissing her).

evidence for a number of spells – usually, as here, love spells – in which magical material is brought to or deposited by the victim’s threshold to act as a ‘homing beacon’ for the magic or for the ghosts enacting it. I believe that this is the theory behind spells to bring luck into a house, as we have already seen in Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 29.20.67 (#2.1) and *PGM* XII.99-106 (#4.4), by burying something by the threshold. In the second case study later in this chapter we will see a similar use in *Eclogue* 8, where the witch buries some of her lover’s belongings at the threshold in an attempt to draw him there.

We can see a parallel with Thestylis’ actions in a love spell (*PGM* IV.1390-1495), since part of the rite is to visit the home of the victim of the spell to deposit magical material.²⁵ The spell utilises the spirits of the violently dead and is performed ‘where heroes and gladiators and those who have died a violent death were slain’. The magic practitioner is to ‘pick up some polluted dirt from the place where you perform the ritual and throw it inside the house of the woman whom you desire’. If the spell does not work after performing it for three days then the practitioner is to perform a variation of it which includes throwing more ‘polluted dirt’ into her house and a prayer to chthonic deities to ‘Send up to me the phantoms of the dead/ Forthwith for service in this very hour./ So that they may go and attract to me, NN, her, NN’. The dirt is therefore acting as a homing beacon for the ghosts, so they will know where to go.²⁶

²⁵ The following translations are by O’Neil in Betz 1986: 64-66.

²⁶ There are similar ideas in Christian literature, although the assistants attracted to the homing beacons are here termed *daemon*. For example, Jerome describes a love spell used against a Christian virgin which caused a demon (*daemon*) to possess her. A young man, infatuated with the woman, buried bronze tablets under her threshold, and she immediately went mad. When St. Hilarion questions the demon, it states that it is trapped under the threshold, which suggests that the tablets have somehow enticed and trapped it there – it was clearly not already inhabiting the threshold (Jerome, *Life of St. Hilarion the Hermit* 21; see Ogden 2002: 230-231). Gager 1992: 261

In another love spell the magic-worker creates a statuette of an Eros which will work the love magic on the magic-worker's behalf; but before it can do so the magic-worker needs to take the Eros to the victim's house in order to show it where to go:²⁷

Go late at night to the house [of the woman] you want, knock on her door / with the Eros and say: "Lo, she NN resides here; wherefore stand beside her and, after assuming the likeness of the god or daimon whom she worships, say what I propose." And go to your / home... And send him, and he will act without fail.

(PGM IV.1855-1865)²⁸

Collins suggests that taking the Eros to the victim's door could work on two levels: letting the Eros know where to go to carry out the magical part of the spell, but also – on a more mundane level – 'the rite ensures that [the magician] may at least have an opportunity to establish contact with his beloved.'²⁹ We discover during Simaetha's monologue that Delphis is a *komastes* – an attendee of late-night drinking parties; it is not unreasonable to suspect that Simaetha is attempting to contrive another meeting between her go-between and her lover on his way home from a symposium.³⁰

We are, however, moving far beyond the text and into guesswork. If this were the intended function of the *θρόνα* then we could well assume that spirits were to be involved for the efficacy of the magic; however, these spirits would not be those

notes that 'The description of the amatory metal tablet conforms well to prescriptions in the papyri'. There is a similar story in *St Cyprian and St Justina* 4 & 6, in which a series of demons, summoned to capture a Christian woman who is refusing a man's advances, state that the magic-worker must scatter a drug on the outside of the woman's house in order for them to come and help; clearly the drug is what will bring the demons to the house (see Ogden 2007a: 106).

²⁷ A literary depiction of a similar Eros can be found in Lucian's *Philopseudes* 14.

²⁸ Translation by O'Neil in Betz 1986: 71.

²⁹ Collins 2008: 101.

³⁰ Thestylis previously acted as their go-between at 2.96-101.

already present in Delphis' threshold, but those being drawn to it from elsewhere. And in this scenario the threshold is not important because it is especially significant to spirits, but rather because this would be the best way for them to enter Delphis' house to enact the magic. We have also seen in the 'real' examples that the magic-worker generally needs to *tell* the spirits that their help will be required; Simaetha, of course, gives no such instruction.

Simaetha might not call upon spirits, but she does repeatedly invoke different goddesses throughout her spell.³¹ She prays to Hekate at 2.12-16, and appears to successfully summon her at 2.35-36; she also mentions the power of Aphrodite (2.30-31) and Artemis (2.33-34). Artemis, in fact, is entreated as she 'hast power to move Hell's adamant' (τὸν ἐν Ἄϊδα/ κινήσαις ἀδάμαντα, 2.33-34); this is in the context of her being able to move 'stubborn' things (and so if we think sympathetically, to move Delphis' affections) rather than releasing spirits from Hades. Simaetha also has a close relationship with Selene, the Moon. Simaetha first mentions her at 2.10-11, and directs her monologue in the second half of the poem to her; the Moon is called upon in every refrain in that section, as well as addressed within Simaetha's narrative.³²

³¹ There are two mentions in the text of δαῖμον, which can be used to refer to the spirits of the dead, but in both cases it is clear that Simaetha is using it in the sense of divine presence. Simaetha refers to the Moon, in her first invocation, as δαῖμον (2.11), which Gow 1952b: 38 suggests 'probably indicates that Selene is summoned not merely to light Simaetha but to obey her spells'. There is a second reference at 2.28: 'As, with the *daimon's* aid, I melt this wax' (ὡς τοῦτον τὸν κηρὸν ἔγω σὺν δαίμονι τάκω); this tends to be taken as a reference to Hekate. While *daimon* could technically refer to a spirit of the dead, if it is then it has been introduced to the poem very suddenly, and it is not mentioned again, whereas both goddesses provide constant companionship for Simaetha throughout the rite. Regardless of who or what this *daimon* is, however, it should be noted that it is not located near the threshold.

³² Refrain: 2.69; 75; 81; 87; 93; 99; 105; 111; 117; 123; 129; 135. Other mentions in the narrative: 2.79; 142; 163-166. Faraone 1995: 12 n. 39 argues that the fact that Selene is invoked at the beginning of the ritual, and that Simaetha 'bids farewell to the same goddess in the final line of the poem' indicates that the monologue should be considered as a continuation of the magical rite. Both Artemis and Selene could also be considered as aspects of Hekate.

Of course, Hekate *is* strongly connected to the spirits of the dead, and this is stressed in the poem: she is ‘of the world below’ (χθονία, 2.12) and she ‘comes over the graves of the dead’ (έρχομέναν νεκύων ανά τ’ ήρία, 2.13). However, I would argue that she is invoked in her guise as goddess of witchcraft rather than due to her association with the spirits of the dead, since Simaetha asks Hekate to bless her magical ingredients and infuse them with power, rather than requesting that she provide a ghostly agent of magic:

Χαῖρ’, Ἐκάτα δασπλῆτι, καὶ ἐς τέλος ἄμμιν ὀπάδει,
φάρμακα ταῦτ’ ἔρδοισα χερείονα μήτε τι Κίρκας
μήτε τι Μηδείας μήτε ξανθᾶς Περιμήδας.
Hail, grim Hecate, and to the end attend me, and make these
drugs of mine as potent as those of Circe or Medea or
golden-haired Perimede.

(2.11-16)

Hekate does indeed attend her, or at least attend her town. When Hekate appears, Simaetha takes immediate prophylactic measures:

Θεστυλί, ταὶ κύνες ἄμμιν ἀνα πτόλιν ὠρύονται·
ἃ θεὸς ἐν τριόδοισι· τὸ χαλκέον ὡς τάχος ἄχει.
Thestylis, the dogs are howling in the town; the goddess
is at the crossroads. Quick, clash the bronze.

(2.35-36)

Hekate – her appearance heralded by her totem animal, the dog – has not materialised in Simaetha’s magical workspace, but rather in her expected location of the town’s crossroads.³³ It is plausible that we should imagine that Hekate is attended by her ghostly retinue,³⁴ which would add more significance to Simaetha’s act of protection, but the text only mentions the goddess (and

³³ I shall discuss Hekate’s association with the crossroads in Chapter Five.

³⁴ For Hekate as leader of the restless dead, see Johnston 1999: 72-74.

dogs) as being present.³⁵ Even if we are to imagine that Hekate is present in her guise as a leader of restless dead, and that the hoard are with her, then once again we need to note that she has materialised at the crossroads, not the threshold.

The appearance of Hekate at the crossroads at 2.35-36 is noteworthy when we consider whether Simaetha's spell is effective. According to Ogle it theoretically should be because of the use of the threshold and therefore the threshold-haunting spirits. Many critics assume, however, that it is not effective; Duncan succinctly summarises this attitude to Simaetha's magic: 'it works as "ritual therapy," not as a piece of magic'.³⁶ Yet the poem finishes before we have the opportunity to see the outcome: the narrative ends the same night that the spell is performed; Thestylis has not even returned from her errand at Delphis' threshold. We cannot know whether or not it works, although we do admittedly see the 'ritual therapy' in action as, by the end of her monologue, Simaetha appears to have come to terms with her situation and moved on. Those arguing for 'ritual therapy', however, tend to suggest that Simaetha's magical rites are all play-acting, and that she is too naïve (and perhaps too realistically drawn) to be able to perform actual magic.³⁷ Nevertheless, she does seem to be capable of invoking a goddess, which would suggest that her competence at magic has been underestimated.

³⁵ For Ogden 2008: 40 the protection is from 'the awful presence of the goddess'.

³⁶ Duncan 2001: 45 with nn. 9 & 10 for a summary of other critics.

³⁷ Griffiths 1979: 82: 'The only *pharmakon* of real potency... turns out to be the catharsis of song itself as it operates on the singer'; Hopkinson 1988: 155 compares Simaetha's magic unfavourably with Medea's. We might also question why Simaetha went to other magical practitioners for a remedy for her initial lovesickness (detailed at 2.90-91), rather than trying to cure it herself.

We have seen that there is no textual evidence in the poem to suggest that there are spirits present in the threshold, or even that Simaetha wishes spirits to be present. What about the *contextual*, evidence, however, based on the magic that she is performing? Simaetha's love spell is a form of binding magic: she refers to wanting to 'bind' Delphis repeatedly (καταδήσομαι, 2.3; 2.10; 2.159). The 'real' binding magic that we have evidence for, much of which is found in the recipes gathered as the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* tends to expressly use spirits as the agents to carry out the binding.³⁸ Yet even here our evidence does not point to the use of a threshold through which to conjure up these spirits, but rather graves and tombs, or locations such as wells or springs that might be considered an access point for the underworld.³⁹

A famous example of an erotic binding spell is detailed at *PGM* IV.296-466;⁴⁰ this is a complicated, convoluted spell designed to make a woman fall in love with a man, which involves making two figurines (one male, one female), inscribing the female one all over with specific magic words and piercing it with 13 copper needles, while chants are recited; then making a lead tablet and inscribing that with a spell while reciting said spell. The tablet is then tied to the figurines using a thread that has 365 knots tied in it; and the bundle is deposited at sunset 'beside the grave of one who has died untimely or violently' along with some flowers, and while reciting a prayer. The spell, which refers to itself as a 'binding

³⁸ Of course, the *PGM* are not contemporary to the *Idyll* – they are later, and from a different geographical region; however, as examples of 'real' magic as it could have been performed in antiquity, they still provide useful parallels.

³⁹ See Chapter Four for examples of these.

⁴⁰ Translations by O'Neil in Betz 1986: 44-47. This papyrus 'is actually thought to be a fourth-century AD copy of a second-century AD original' (Ogden 2007a: 112).

spell', invokes 'chthonic gods... infernal gods and daimons, [and] men and women who have died untimely deaths'. The inhabitant of the grave, and any other local ghosts are addressed directly: 'I adjure all daimons in this place to stand as assistants beside this daimon... whoever you are, whether male or female'.⁴¹ The prayer recited over the grave names the god Horus and requests him to 'send this daimon,/ From whose body I hold this remnant in my hands,/ To her'. What makes this recipe particularly fascinating is the fact that we have evidence that it – or a spell very similar to it – was actually used: five different lead tablets have been found in various locations in Egypt which closely resemble the lead tablet described here.⁴² One of these, inscribed with practically the same wording,⁴³ was found along with a female figurine pierced almost exactly as described in the papyrus (although not inscribed). Gager tells us that the 'original location is not known, though the objects were certainly deposited in a cemetery'.⁴⁴

Simaetha's spell – equally complicated and convoluted – is a literary invention and I do not wish to imply in this discussion that Theocritus has taken it wholesale from some sort of spellbook along the lines of the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*. However, it remains a realistic-sounding rite, and shares some similarities with the basic elements of *PGM* IV.296-466 described above. For example, Simaetha narrates her actions and states their intention, just as the magic practitioner using the *PGM* is instructed to. The female figurine is to have

⁴¹ Evidently it is more important to use the grave of an untimely or violently dead, than to know the identity of the corpse.

⁴² Listed in Gager 1992: 94.

⁴³ See Kambitsis 1976: 217-219 for a comparison of the tablet with the *PGM* wording.

⁴⁴ Gager 1992: 97.

ousia, ‘stuff’ or ‘magical material’, attached either to its head or neck; Gager notes that ‘something from or belonging to the “victim” was regularly required for a binding spell.’⁴⁵ There is a clear parallel to this in the *Idyll*, when Simaetha shreds the fringe from Delphis’ cloak and burns it. There is also the question of what exactly Simaetha is doing when she ‘melt[s] this wax, so straightway may Delphis of Myndus waste with love’ (ὡς τοῦτον τὸν κηρὸν ἔγω... τάκω,/ ὡς τάκοιθ’ ὑπ’ ἔρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος αὐτίκα Δελφίς, 2.28-29); it is entirely possible that this is in fact a figurine made to represent Delphis, just like the figurines in the *PGM*, although Gow cautions that it could simply be ‘not an image at all but a symbol, like the bay and barley-groats’.⁴⁶

What we do not see in the poem is, of course, any reference to the spirits of the dead. Simaetha, like the *PGM*’s magical practitioner, addresses a chthonic deity, but the magical practitioner in the recipe is also instructed to continually refer to the spirits of the dead: general spirits in Hades, the ghost of the person in the grave that they are using, and other ghosts nearby to that location. When spells in the *PGM* do call upon spirits, they invariably do so at the location of the spirit’s corpse. Simaetha is at her home, not in a graveyard; had Thestylis’ errand been to deposit her herbs in a grave then it would be a different matter, as the context then would imply that she would be engaging spirits to enact the magic, even if this was not explicitly stated.

⁴⁵ Gager 1992: 94 n. 42.

⁴⁶ Gow 1952b: 44.

Could the fact that Simaetha does not call upon spirit helpers to make her magic efficient be indicative of her (or Theocritus', of course) naiveté in conducting magic and therefore suggest – as discussed above – that her magic could never work? Unlikely. While spirits are often used in binding spells detailed in the *PGM*, they do not appear to be essential; for instance, the 'Eternal spell for binding a lover' is a short rite as follows:

Rub together some gall of a wild boar, some rock salt,
some Attic honey and smear the head of your penis.
(*PGM* VII.191-192)

The grocery list of ingredients calls to mind the bran, barley groats and bay leaves of Simaetha. There are other love spells which do not require the use of spirits, but simply involve prayers to Aphrodite (e.g., *PGM* IV.1265-74; IV.2891-2942), to myrrh (burned while the prayer to it is recited, *PGM* IV.1496-1595), to Helios (*PGM* VII.981-93), and a curious one which involves boiling a scarab beetle and then grinding it up with some vetch (*PGM* VII.973-80).

Ogle had stated that Thestylis' actions at the threshold indicated 'the necessity for [spirits'] presence that the magic rite may be effective',⁴⁷ but as we have seen, there have been no indications in the poem of any spirit involvement. The herbs at the threshold may be the culmination of the spell that night, but Simaetha makes it clear that she will continue working magic the following day as she will be bringing Delphis 'an ill draught' (ποτόν κακόν, 2.58). We cannot, then, assume – as Ogle presumably did – that the threshold-ritual is the final act to tie together the whole rite and engage the spirits on behalf of everything else. In fact, the

⁴⁷ Ogle 1911: 257.

different parts of Simaetha's spell all demand subtly different outcomes as can be seen from the list in Appendix Ten; it may well be more accurate to see this as a series of mini-spells rather than one long one with multiple steps. If threshold-spirits were required for the efficacy of the magic then why would she not perform the whole spell at the threshold, either hers or Delphis'? In fact, one could argue that it is Simaetha's threshold that would be a more important location, since her spell is specifically concerned with drawing Delphis to her door:

χώς δινεῖθ' ὄδε ῥόμβος ὁ χάλκεος ἐξ Ἀφροδίτας,
ὥς τῆνος δινοῖτο ποθ' ἀμετέραισι θύραισιν.
And as by Aphrodite's power turns this brazen rhomb, so may he turn
about my door.

(2.30-31)

Simaetha is most likely located in a courtyard or upper room open to the elements (she can see the moon (2.10-11), hear the sea and feel the breeze (2.38)) – possibly the central area of the house, rather than a boundary point as the threshold would be.⁴⁸ Performing magic in the home does not necessarily mean that the practitioner is an amateur; Smith has collated references to performance space in the magical papyri, and discovered that 'the vast majority of rituals which give a locale are set in domestic space, in the practitioner's house.'⁴⁹ Simaetha's choice of location appears to be deliberate, then, and the 'real' parallels of the use of the house suggests that the threshold is not essential for effective magic.

⁴⁸ 'The interior of the house functions both as an actual place and as a metaphorical equivalent for Simaetha's bondage to her passion': Segal 1985: 104.

⁴⁹ Smith 1995: 23. Those performance locations mentioned as being outside include the sorts of liminal spaces such as 'a deserted place... a tomb... or by a river' (23); also such places as 'the eastern section of a village... a crossroad' (23 n.18).

Of course, Thestylis is sent to Delphis' threshold, and that location must be a deliberate choice as well, but it does not need to indicate anything about spirits. Gow points out a logical reason for performing magic at a victim's door: it is one of those 'places where one can be sure of catching those that use them.'⁵⁰ From the point of view of the narrative, Thestylis' errand also serves the function of leaving Simaetha alone to perform her monologue.⁵¹ Yet rather than simply being a blunt plot device, the image of Thestylis at Delphis' threshold marks the boundary point of the two halves of the poem: the spell is ending and the monologue beginning.

The door is an important literary image in the *Idyll*; Segal argues that '[Simaetha's] little drama can be plotted in terms of passing or not passing doors'.⁵² Doors frame this poem: at 2.6 we learn that Simaetha's motivation for performing the magic is because, over the past eleven days, Delphis 'has not once knocked at my door' (οὐδὲ θύρας ἄραξεν ἀνάρσιος); at the close of the *Idyll* she threatens that if he does not come back to her 'he shall beat upon the gates of Hades' (τὰν Ἄϊδαο πύλαν... ἀραξεῖ, 2.160). Doors also figure prominently in the story of Simaetha and Delphis' relationship: Delphis tells her that 'had your door (θύρα) been barred against me, then truly axes and torches [would] come against you' (2.127-8). Simaetha begins to narrate their first proper encounter by saying:

⁵⁰ Gow: 1942: 111. MacDonald 2005: 16 sees Thestylis' errand to Delphis' threshold as a way of 'bring[ing] these rites home to Delphis (literally)'.

⁵¹ Andrews 1996: 30 argues that Simaetha has deliberately sent Thestylis away before narrating her relationship in order to remove 'the only person who can corroborate or deny Simaetha's reconstruction of her own speech'.

⁵² Segal 1985: 107.

ἔγὼ δέ νιν ὡς ἐνόησα
ἄρτι θύρας ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἀμειβόμενον ποδὶ κούφῳ
I no sooner was aware of him stepping light-foot across the threshold of
my door...

(2.103-4)

... and then there is a pause, while she chants another refrain. She then goes on to say that she started trembling and shivering with nervous anticipation (2.106-110). It is interesting that it is as Delphis moves over her threshold that this happens to her. Simaetha says she 'becomes aware' of him; she does not say that she sees him, or hears him: she seems to sense him. As he crosses from outside into her domain, as he comes into her world she can sense it, and it has a physical effect on her.

Yet another interpretation of the threshold in Simaetha's spell comes from Burton, who argues that it is part of Simaetha 'appropriat[ing] symbols of Delphis's patriarchal world and us[ing] them against him.'⁵³ Delphis plays the role of a *komastes* (reveller) in the poem; a *komos* took place after a symposium, when the drunk male guests would leave in procession and often serenade the doorways of their beloveds as they passed.⁵⁴ By sending Thestylis to 'serenade' Delphis' doorway (she is to mutter a spell while kneading her herbs), Simaetha is adopting his role in her love magic – by this reasoning the threshold is therefore important not because of its liminal or ghostly attributes, but because of the imagery of the *komos*. I am not, of course, suggesting that the threshold should be seen exclusively as representative of the *komos* in this poem; however, it does

⁵³ Burton 1995: 65.

⁵⁴ In fact, the point at which Simaetha realises that he truly is being unfaithful to her is when she is told that he is wreathing another woman's door with roses (2.151-153) – a typical action of a *komos*.

impress upon us that there are multiple meanings of an image – especially in poetic and literary works – and that therefore any singular interpretation (such as the importance of the threshold being solely down to spirit activity) is at risk of being invalidated.

§1.2.2.2: Virgil, *Eclogue* 8.91-93

*has olim exuvias mihi perfidus ille reliquit,
pignora cara sui; quae nunc ego limine in ipso
terra, tibi mando: debent haec pignora Daphnim.*
Once that treacherous one left these clothes to me,
his dear tokens; which I now entrust at this threshold
for you, Earth: these tokens owe Daphnis [to me].

Ogle's second example of 'the necessity for [spirits'] presence that the magic rite may be effective'⁵⁵ is from Virgil's eighth *Eclogue*, a first-century BC poem⁵⁶ which features, in part, a reworking of *Idyll* 2: 'a pastoral adaptation of an urban idyll'.⁵⁷ It is structured relatively similarly to Theocritus' poem, in that it has two distinct parts each with their own refrains, but the framework of the *Eclogue* is different: the two parts are two separate songs sung as a competition between two different goatherds. The first, Damon's song, is about unrequited love, drawing on the themes in Simaetha's monologue to the Moon (*Idyll* 2.64-166) but without a magical aspect. The second – Alpheisiboeus' song, which the poet asks a Muse to recount – is much more closely related to Simaetha and Thestylis'

⁵⁵ Ogle 1911: 257.

⁵⁶ *Eclogue* 8 could date to 39 BC – see Coleman 1977: 15.

⁵⁷ Coleman 1977: 243. In the same way that Theocritus based his *Idyll* on a lost mime of Sophron, Virgil is said to have based his *Eclogue* not just on Theocritus' *Idyll*, but also on Catullus' lost translation of that same *Idyll* (Clausen 1994: 239). Minet also sees the influence of Catullus behind this *Eclogue*, arguing that the unity of the whole poem lies in it being written in homage of the epithalamium tradition (see especially Minet 2007: 418, for a discussion of how the variable lengths of the strophes in *Eclogue* 8 could be a reference to Catullus 64).

actions. It is presented in the first person in the persona⁵⁸ of a witch working with her maid Amaryllis as they prepare a spell to bring the witch's spouse Daphnis back to the house. Without the equivalent of Simaetha's monologue for Virgil's witch, we do not really learn much more about her relationship with Daphnis or her character; she is not even named.⁵⁹ I shall leave aside the first half of *Eclogue* 8, Damon's song of unrequited love, as it does not concern magic. With regard to Alphisiboeus' half, as with *Idyll* 2, I shall not analyse every aspect of magic featured, but will concentrate on those most relevant to potential spirits; I briefly run through the other magic that the witch and Amaryllis perform in Appendix Eleven.

Ogle had picked out lines 8.91-93, the burial of Daphnis' *exuviae* at the threshold, as indicating the presence of spirits during the spell. He refers to these lines as 'the corresponding passage' to the Thestylis-errand in the *Idyll*, but they are actually a conflation of two of Simaetha's magical acts: Simaetha's burning of Delphis' cloak (2.53-54) and Thestylis' kneading of the herbs over Delphis' threshold (2.59-62).⁶⁰ The threshold in question here undoubtedly belongs to the house that the witch lives in, since there is no errand to visit it (she performs the burial as she is speaking: *nunc* 8.92). Not only is it the witch's threshold, but

⁵⁸ The witch, who is not named, is a character in a song performed by Alphisiboeus, a herdsman engaged in a singing competition. As Oliensis 1997: 297 emphasises, 'In the world of Virgilian pastoral, girls are not singers; they do not perform; and while they are sometimes quoted, we never hear them speak.'

⁵⁹ The speaker of the poem repeatedly commands 'Amaryllis' to do things, in the same way that Simaetha commands Thestylis; therefore Amaryllis is most probably the name of Virgil's witch's maid. However, since this part of the *Eclogue* is actually being narrated by the goatherd Alphisiboeus in a poetry contest, it is plausible that he is directing the 'action', and so it is the witch who is Amaryllis. Coleman 1977: 243 has suggested that the witch is Amaryllis as she could be imagined as acting alone and therefore speaking to herself.

⁶⁰ Given that the witch's act is to draw Daphnis home (to his threshold), this act could also encompass Simaetha's turning of both the rhombus at *Idyll* 2.30-31 and the *iunx* in the refrain.

it is presumably Daphnis' too: she refers to him as her spouse (*coniugis*, 8.66)⁶¹ and chants in her refrain merely that he is to come 'home' (*domum*),⁶² as opposed to Simaetha who specifies in her refrain that he to come to 'my house' (ἐμὸν... δῶμα).⁶³

No doubt Ogle wished us to imagine, as with *Idyll 2*, that the *exuviae* function as some sort of offering to the ghosts in the threshold to enact the magic, but the witch actually tells us why she is burying the clothes, and to whom she is entrusting them: to *T/terra* (8.93) – regardless of whether we are to envision the goddess *Terra* (which would make a pleasing contrast with the Moon of *Idyll 2*) or merely the 'native soil'⁶⁴ – in order to guarantee Daphnis' return (*debent haec pignora Daphnim*, 8.93). This guarantee is worded as a literal warranty: Coleman points out that the 'legal metaphor is sustained through the couplet'.⁶⁵ There is a parallel for this use of legal language and a transfer to a deity – sometimes even specifically to the Earth – in binding magic, usually that aimed at recovering stolen property, as Gager explains:

⁶¹ MacDonald 2005: 17 n. 13 points out that *coniunx* is used ambiguously in *Eclogue 8* as at 8.18 the word definitely does not apply to a legal partner.

⁶² Refrain: 8.68; 72; 76; 79; 84; 90; 94; 100; 104. The final line of the poem, 8.109, is a variation of the refrain, although it does not contain *domum*.

⁶³ Simaetha has also only known Delphis for under two weeks, and so their relationship cannot be that of spouses.

⁶⁴ There is an unambiguous reference to *terra* meaning 'ground' in the first part of the poem, where the earth functions almost as a touchstone for the doomed relationship between the narrator of that part of the poem and Nysa. He first saw her, and fell in love, when he was only twelve: *iam fragilis poteram a terra contingere ramos* ('already I was able to touch a fragile branch from the ground', 8.40). If the reference at 8.93 is to *terra* rather than *Terra*, then this makes a pleasing contrast with the earlier portion of the poem, with the earth again being quite literally a grounding point for this relationship as well.

⁶⁵ Coleman 1977: 249. Williams 1979: 125 suggests that the guarantee comes more from the fact that this is part of binding magic. Other parts of the witch's spell also have a legal tone to them: Clausen 1994: 259 notes that *licia* at 8.74 is 'used in legal formulae... here first in a magic ritual.'

the client temporarily transfers ownership of the goods in question, sometimes even the culprits themselves, to the deity and thereby makes their recovery a matter of divine rather than merely human concern.⁶⁶

This format of binding spell is very common within the Bath cache;⁶⁷ one such curse tablet reads: 'I have given to the goddess Sulis the six silver coins which I have lost. It is for the goddess to exact (them) from the names written below'.⁶⁸ Another example, this time from Greece, is addressed to Earth: Earth is invoked to 'restrain... and make [the culprits] powerless and useless'.⁶⁹ There is also a parallel for a victim of love magic to be entrusted to Earth: another Greek tablet reads: 'I assign Zois... to Earth and to Hermes – her food, her drink, her sleep, her laughter, her intercourse...'⁷⁰ We do not, therefore, need to imagine ghosts at the threshold: both the witch's words and the 'real' parallels show that they are not required for the magic to work here.

The witch buries the *exuviae* at the threshold not because they are an offering to any spirits there, but because it is precisely there where Daphnis needs to return – where he is owed (*debent*, 8.93). They are therefore functioning as a magical homing beacon to draw Daphnis himself to the house. How else will Daphnis return home other than by crossing the *limen*?⁷¹ The second mention of the threshold in the poem helps to illuminate this: *Hylax in limine latrat* ('Hylax barks at the threshold', 8.107). Just like *Idyll* 2.35-36, we have the sound of a dog

⁶⁶ Gager 1992: 175; Gager goes on to say that the usual procedure would be to do this at a temple, and the culprit would need to return the stolen property to the temple (1992: 176). See also Versnel 1991 on judicial curse tablets.

⁶⁷ Gager 1992: 193 reports that 'some 130 curse tables have been excavated [from the baths at Bath] and published; many more remain unexcavated.'

⁶⁸ Number 94 in Gager 1992: 194.

⁶⁹ Number 83 in Gager 1992: 180.

⁷⁰ Number 18 in Gager 1992: 85.

⁷¹ For more on Daphnis and the *limen* see Appendix Twelve.

barking in a liminal place, but here it heralds not the appearance of Hekate, but the return of Daphnis. This – along with the altar fire spontaneously relighting (8.105-106) – is taken by the witch to mean that the spell has worked and that Daphnis is actually returning from the city.⁷² The witch, in her final refrain, acknowledges her success with a command for her spells to cease (*parcite... iam parcite, carmina*, 8.109), suggesting that all she requires for the efficacy of her magic are her *carmina* themselves; no spirits, *pace* Ogle, necessary.

In fact, the mention of *T/terra* at 8.93 is a rare reference to an external force in the *Eclogue*. Unlike the *Idyll*, which features references to deities throughout, the witch here hardly mentions any power other than her own *carmina*,⁷³ to which the refrains are addressed (*ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina*). She does not specify a source for these *carmina*, but strongly emphasises their power:

*carmina vel caelo possunt deducere lunam;
carminibus Circe socios mutavit Vlixii;
frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis.*
Spells, for instance, are able to draw down the moon from heaven;
Circe changed the companions of Ulysses with spells;
the cold snake in the fields is burst open with spell-chanting.
(8.69-71)

⁷² But is his return due to her spell? It is unclear. Unlike *Idyll 2* where Simaetha gives great detail as to how long Delphis has been away and says that she knows that he has started a new relationship, Virgil's witch – despite saying that she wishes *coniugis... sanos avertere.../ ... sensus* ('to turn aside the healthy feelings of my spouse', 8.66-67) and referring to Daphnis as *perfidus* ('treacherous', 8.91) – gives no indication as to how long Daphnis has been away for. Is he just running late?

⁷³ There are two indirect references to gods in the poem; the witch exhorts Amaryllis to tie three cords of different colours into three knots while saying *Veneris... vincula necto* ('I weave the chains of Venus', 8.78); this could well be an homage to *Idyll 2.30-31* which references Aphrodite's power. There is also a mention of a generic *deus: numero deus impare gaudet* ('the god delights in an unequal number', 8.75). This generic reference seems to recall the δαίμονι of *Idyll 2.28*. Coleman 1977: 246 translates *deus* either as 'a deity' or 'divine spirit', but Servius was more specific, suggesting that it was probably a reference to Hekate (*aut quicumque superiorum, aut Hecaten dicit, cuius triplex potestas esse perhibetur*, Servius, *ad Eclogue 8.75*). In my discussion of the δαίμονι of *Idyll 2.28* I dismissed the possibility that it could be a reference to a spirit of the dead. There is no possibility of that here: *deus* is far too associated with divinities, and those *superorum*, as Servius would say, to evoke the notion of a ghost.

The witch even puts spells on a par with the authority of the gods when she says that *nihil ille deos, nil carmina curat* ('[Daphnis] does not attend to the gods nor spells', 8.103).⁷⁴

There is perhaps a hint of a ghostly manifestation when the witch warns Amaryllis *nec respexeris* ('don't look back', 8.102). This is part of the next magical act after the burying of the *exuviae*, and Amaryllis is to go outside and throw ashes into the river.⁷⁵ Clausen notes that 'looking back could be dangerous and was commonly forbidden in Greek and Roman ritual',⁷⁶ and this could be seen as the equivalent to Simaetha exhorting Thestylis to protect them both from Hekate by sounding the gong (2.36). Ogle claims that the 'warning "Look not behind you" is an invariable sign of the presence of spirits',⁷⁷ and it is true that there is strong evidence that one was not supposed to look back at spirits. For example, Ovid tells us that part of the ritual of the *Lemuria*, a festival in honour of the spirits of the dead, was to be done *aversus* 'while facing away', and that ritual words were to be spoken *nec respicit* 'not looking back' (*Fasti* 5.437 & 439).⁷⁸ We must remember, of course, that Amaryllis is not to look back at the river – even if spirits had materialised in the water where the ashes were thrown, this is not evidence for their presence at the threshold.

⁷⁴ *Carmina*, which I am translating here as 'spells', can also of course mean 'poetry', and Garson 1971: 203 sees it as 'in keeping with the "emotive power of song" theme recurrent throughout the Eclogues.'

⁷⁵ Given the Theocritean origins of much of the material in the *Eclogues*, especially this one, it is most likely that the model for this line is Theocritus' *Idyll* 24.91-96, part of Teiresias' instructions to Alcmena for how to purify the house after the goddess Hera has sent serpents to attack the infant Hercules, which involves burning the snakes and throwing the ashes into a river without looking back (*Idyll* 24.91-96). In *Idyll* 24 this act is part of a purification ritual, but Alcmena is ridding the house of divinely-sent snakes, not ghosts.

⁷⁶ Clausen 1994: 264.

⁷⁷ Ogle 1911: 258; curiously he does not cite *Eclogue* 8 as evidence of this.

⁷⁸ I discuss the *Lemuria* further in Chapters Three and Four.

There is, however, an explicit reference to the spirits of the dead in the *Eclogue*, but it is not in the context of the witch's spell. Virgil's witch introduces the magician Moeris – her supplier of *has herbas atque... lecta venena* ('these herbs and selected poisons', 8.95) – by saying that he can *saepe animas imis excire sepulcris* ('often rouse souls from the deepest graves', 8.98).⁷⁹ Moeris, it is clear, can perform higher-level magic than the witch – he can turn into a wolf (8.97) and transfer crops from one field to another (8.99);⁸⁰ she would not speak so admiringly of his magical prowess, or appeal to his magical authority, if it were equal to hers. The fact that she mentions that Moeris *can* deliberately rouse souls certainly suggests that she herself cannot.⁸¹ And of course the souls in question are located in their graves, not at the threshold.

Once again, this poem gives us no indication at all that spirits are necessary for the efficacy of the magic, or that they are present at the threshold.⁸² As with *Idyll* 2, there are numerous reasons as to why the witch, or rather Virgil, may have used the threshold as a location for her magic. On a practical level, she wishes to draw Daphnis home, and so drawing him to the entrance is perfectly logical. The threshold is not part of the *urbs* where Daphnis currently is, obviously, but it is also not fully part of the *domus* – as a boundary marker it is the perfect liminal

⁷⁹ This was common claim of magical practitioners in Roman poetry: see also Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.490; Tibullus, 1.2.45-46; Horace, *Epode* 17.79; Ovid, *Amores* 1.8.17; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.206. There is perhaps a parallel with the statement that Hekate 'comes over the graves of the dead' (ἐρχομένην νεκύων ἀνά τ' ἥρῳ) at *Idyll* 2.13.

⁸⁰ This magical act was forbidden by the Twelve Tables: fragment 8 (Ogden 2002: 277); see Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 18.8.41-43.

⁸¹ We should compare this triptych of Moeris' achievements with the triple list of the power of *carmina* at 8.69-71, discussed above.

⁸² Clausen 1994: 262 – in the most recent commentary on the *Eclogues* – refers to Ogle's article on the general point that the 'door or any part of it was efficacious in ancient magic', but does not engage with the article any more than that.

spot both to enact the magic and to see it fulfilled. From a literary point of view, the fact that this poem is a reworking of a poem which itself included a magical act at a threshold is of utmost importance.⁸³ Segal points to the importance of the threshold in the *Eclogue* as being ‘where the speaker shifts her view of Daphnis and the point where she receives an answer to her prayer’,⁸⁴ and Minet argues that the poem as a whole functions as an epithalamium and that the threshold is part of the wedding symbolism present in the poem.⁸⁵ Just as we saw with the *Idyll*, to reduce the threshold down to a single, limited, interpretation removes much of the nuance from the text.

§1.2.2.3: Conclusion

The fact Ogle cites two poems which do not mention spirits at all as evidence for ‘the necessity for [spirits’] presence that the magic rite may be effective’⁸⁶ is particularly telling: there are no better examples. These poems are excellent examples of magic being performed at the threshold (at least in literary depictions), and there are plenty of other examples in both literary fiction and the ‘real’ accounts from the papyri of ghosts being used in magic. There does not

⁸³ Graf 1997: 38 argues that since ‘Virgil is echoing the second *Idyll* of Theocritus... the learned Roman poet introduces not Roman practice, but Greek literature.’ However, this statement ignores the fact that there are multiple examples of specifically Roman magic in the *Eclogue*: the snake-blasting (8.71) was thought to be practised by the Italian Marsi (Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 28.4.19); crop transfer (8.99) was specifically forbidden by the Twelve Tables (fragment 8; see Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 18.8.41-43) and even the threshold-burial itself (8.91-93) features Roman legal language, and – as I discussed above – we see similar examples of this in curse tablets from Roman Britain.

⁸⁴ Segal 1985: 107. Segal 1985: 107 n. 9, incidentally, cites Ogle for ‘ancient traditions of magical lore about doors’; he does not engage with the spirits theory.

⁸⁵ Minet 2007: 427.

⁸⁶ Ogle 1911: 257.

appear to be, however, any reference that can triangulate the points and show a link between magic, the threshold and ghosts.

PART ONE: CHAPTER THREE:

EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE FOR A CULT AT THE DEAD AT THE THRESHOLD

The previous two chapters have shown that there is plenty of evidence for supernatural activity at the threshold – especially with regard to *apotropaia* and magical rites – but I have argued, *pace* scholars from Eitrem to Johnston, that this does not actually imply that there was a belief in ghosts *haunting* the threshold. Johnston’s argument was largely based on the use of ‘protective devices to keep them out’,¹ as I discussed in Chapter One. However, the earlier scholars had a different theory, that – in Ogle’s words – ‘Many of the practices connected with the house-door seem to point to a cult which was originally no doubt directed to the spirits that were always near by.’² To what extent could this have been the case?

In this chapter I shall examine this claim, and discuss whether there is any evidence for a cult of the dead at the doorway. I shall do this by challenging two main claims of the scholars who argue for this cult: first, that there was an early tradition of burial under the threshold, thereby giving rise to these ghosts, and second, that remnants of such a cult exist in descriptions of magical rites taking place at the threshold. House- and, particularly, threshold-burial are given as the origin for this supposed cult, yet there is little evidence even for a *belief* that house-burial may have occurred, never mind documentary evidence that it took place. With regard to vestiges of this cult remaining in magical rites, I shall

¹ Johnston 1999: 209.

² Ogle 1911: 263.

analyse Ovid's description of the rites of Tacita (*Fasti* 2.571-582), in which magic rites are performed at the threshold during a festival of the dead, as a case study to examine whether we really can see any remnants of cult practice aimed at spirits.

§1.3.1: Is there evidence for a tradition of burial under the threshold?

That a cult of the dead developed from burial at the threshold was the central argument behind Ogle's collation of supernatural activity focussed on the doorway:

to explain the general belief in the sacredness of the threshold, and to account for the superstitions connected with it... can only be accounted for, it seems to me, by the wide-spread custom of burying the dead under the threshold or before the door, – a custom which, I think, can be shown to have prevailed among the ancient Greeks and Romans.³

Ogle was not the only scholar of his generation with this belief.⁴ Eitrem mentioned the idea of 'die Vorfahren vor (hinter) der Thürschwelle zu begraben';⁵ Samter, who admitted that the matter 'läßt sich nicht mit voller Sicherheit entscheiden', linked it to 'einer einstigen Bestattung unter der Schwelle';⁶ and Frazer even went as far as suggesting that in Rome the dead in question were specifically 'dead children buried in the doorway' awaiting reincarnation.⁷ However, how far was this a circular argument? Scholars interpreted threshold-superstitions as evidence that ghosts were thought to

³ Ogle 1911: 264-265.

⁴ Of course there were also opponents to this theory; see, for instance, Marquardt 1878: 296 and Warde Fowler 1897. I discuss this later in this section.

⁵ Eitrem 1909: 4.

⁶ Samter 1911: 142.

⁷ Frazer 1929a: 448.

haunt the threshold; decided that ghosts were present as bodies had been buried there; and concluded that it would only be expected that there might be ghostly activity around a threshold due to the bodies. We can see how this circular reasoning could feed into the threshold-ghosts theory clearly in Ogle:

The custom, indeed, of burying substances under the threshold must have originated in the idea that they were offerings to the dead, and it was because they were offerings and satisfied the needs of the spirits that they came to be considered prophylactic.⁸

These writers all take a comparative anthropological approach and cite instances of threshold burial in other cultures and customs, but what was the evidence that the Greeks and Romans had a tradition of burying the dead at the doorway?

§1.3.1.1: Greece

The primary evidence for burying the dead in the house in Greece is from pseudo-Plato's *Minos*:⁹

οἱ δ' αὖ ἐκείνων ἔτι πρότεροι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔθαπτον ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοὺς ἀποθανόντας· ἡμεῖς δὲ τούτων οὐδὲν ποιοῦμεν.
Then again, a yet earlier generation used to bury the dead where they were, in the house: but we do none of these things.

(315d)¹⁰

The *Minos* is a dialogue in which Socrates and his interlocutor discuss the fundamental nature of law, and whether there are underlying certainties across mankind. The interlocutor points out that different nations have different laws, and the Greeks of the past had different laws to the Greeks of the present. Rohde

⁸ Ogle 1911: 268.

⁹ This reference is found in all four of the scholars I mentioned above: Eitrem 1909: 4; Samter 1911: 142; Ogle 1911: 265; Frazer 1898d: 591; Frazer 1929a: 467. It was also widely cited in other scholarly literature at the time, e.g. Dennis 1848: 385 n. 6.

¹⁰ Translation by Lamb 1927.

saw the quoted statement as ‘a dim memory of the time when the body of the dead was buried inside the house, which thus became the immediate centre of his cult’, and states that to ‘raise doubts on this point is mere perversity’.¹¹ And yet it is not so easy to accept the statement at face value.¹² For a start, Rohde appears to be imagining a single burial within the house – perhaps that of the head of the household – in order to start a ‘cult’. But pseudo-Plato does not give us this distinction and the plural use of τοὺς ἀποθάνοντες implies rather that it was *all* dead who were buried in the house. One must ask at what point, if this were the case, the house became ‘full’, and what happened to the dead when it did.

Socrates’ interlocutor gives us no further information. What we have provides us with the safe assumption that, by the time of the *Minos*, burial in the house did *not* take place and was not sanctioned by *nomos*; as Malkin states, ‘by the 3rd century B.C. even burial inside the city’s limit was regarded as an abomination and a serious infraction of religious law.’¹³ It cannot, however, prove that at a previous time it *did*. At the turn of the twentieth-century, however, scholars believed they did have further grounds to back up the *Minos*: a series of excavations in various places around Greece provided evidence of burials within houses.¹⁴ Unfortunately, decades later, further analysis showed these finds to be

¹¹ ‘dim memory’: Rohde 1925: 166; ‘mere perversity’: 1925: 193 n. 66. It should be noted that Rohde does not make any argument that the house, hearth (or threshold) are the haunt of any spirits. His only reference to burial by a doorway is that this was usually ‘an honour given only to Heroes’ and an anecdote about men killed by lightning in Tarentum who were buried outside their doors (1925: 193 n. 68): both unique circumstances.

¹² Felton 2007: 88, in a recent overview of Greek burial practices, does not even raise house-burial as a possibility.

¹³ Malkin 1987: 200.

¹⁴ See Eitrem 1909: 4; Samter 1911: 142; Ogle 1911: 265; Frazer 1898a: 533; Frazer 1898d: 525; Frazer 1898d: 591; Frazer 1929a: 467-468; Frazer 1933: 18. Rohde cites epigraphical evidence

misinterpretations of the archaeology. Roncoroni reports, for example, that at Thorikos the graves found in houses had been dug 'after the settlement was abandoned', and in similar sites elsewhere in Greece the graves 'belong to earlier periods than the houses'.¹⁵

The *Minos* is the only unambiguous, extant Greek reference to burial within the house as a matter of course. Eitrem, Ogle and Rohde therefore use as additional evidence the case of Phocion, sentenced to be cremated outside the boundary of Greece, whose bones were secretly buried under his wife's hearth (Plutarch, *Phocion* 37); yet as soon as Phocion was back in public favour his bones were reinterred in the family tomb.¹⁶ Phocion's hearth-burial was a mere stopgap; it is hardly proof that house-burial was commonplace. And regardless, the hearth is practically the polar opposite of the threshold; being buried in the house is not the same as being buried at or under the doorway.

As for the evidence that bodies were actually buried under the *threshold*? This is even shakier: Ogle states that 'we must conclude [this] from the following evidence: Neoptolemos was buried under the threshold of the temple at Delphi (Scholion in Pindar, *Nemean Ode* 7.62).'¹⁷ This is a problematic statement on

of a grave of a wife buried in her husband's house, although this is hardly conclusive (1925: 552 n. 9), and makes reference, without further evidence, to 'the oldest custom of all, that of burying the master of the house in his own home' (1925: 194 n. 70); see also 1925: 166; 1925: 173.

¹⁵ Abandoned settlements: Roncoroni 2001: 110 n. 42; earlier period: 2001: 116 n. 87.

¹⁶ Eitrem 1909: 4; Ogle 1911: 265 n. 3; Rohde 1925: 193 n. 66, who claims that this is evidence that 'the most ancient resting place of the head of the house must have been placed' by the hearth. None of these scholars make reference to the later reinterment of the remains in the tomb.

¹⁷ Ogle 1911: 265. Eitrem 1909: 10-11, Frazer 1898b: 468 and Frazer 1929a: 447 also cite Neoptolemus' burial as evidence.

which to hang an entire theory of ancestor burial, not least because the scholion – a fragment of Asklepiades of Tragilos – actually states:

ταφῆναι δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὑπο τὸν οὐδὸν τοῦ νεώ, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα
Μενέλαον ἐλθόντα ἀνελεῖν καὶ τὸν τάφον ποιῆσαι ἐν τῷ τεμένει.
and that he was buried at first at the threshold of the temple, and that
after this, Menelaos came along and took him up, and put the tomb in the
sacred precincts

(*BNJ* 12 F 15)¹⁸

Just like Phocion, it would seem that an abnormal location for burial tends to be a short-term measure.¹⁹ But a single – temporary! – burial of a mythological character cannot be used to indicate that burial under the threshold was, in Samter's phrase, 'ein weitverbreiteter Brauch'.²⁰

Eitrem and Ogle also discuss the tomb of King Proteus, placed by the palace entrance by his son Theoclymenus:²¹

ὦ χαῖρε, πατρὸς μνημ'· ἐπ' ἐξόδοισι γὰρ
ἔθαψα Πρωτεῦ σ' ἔνεκ' ἐμῆς προσρήσεως·
ἀεὶ δέ σ' ἐξιῶν τε κάσιων δόμους
Θεοκλύμενος παῖς ὄδε προσεννέπω, πάτερ.
Tomb of my father, greeting! I have buried you near my gates, father
Proteus, so that I may greet you: I, Theoclymenus, always have a word for
you as I go in and out of my house!

(Euripides, *Helen* 1165-1168)²²

¹⁸ Translation by Asirvatham 2014. Perhaps a better scholion to have used to prove this point would have been that to Euripides' *Orestes* 1655 (= *BNJ* 3 F 64a), a fragment of Pherekydes (and the only other reference to Neoptolemus and the threshold) which does not go on to mention Menelaus and a subsequent reburial. However, another fragment of Pherekydes simply states that Neoptolemus was buried ἐν Δελφοῖς ('in Delphi', *BNJ* 3 F 64b = scholion on Euripides' *Andromache* 1240), with no further information as to where exactly.

¹⁹ Woodbury 1979: 97 n. 7 and 102 n. 18 suggests that the original threshold burial could have been 'where he fell' and that the threshold burial could therefore be related to a Hero cult for Neoptolemus.

²⁰ Samter 1911: 142.

²¹ Eitrem 1909: 10; Ogle 1911: 265. Rohde 1925: 155 n. 136 mentions this action of Theoclymenus as part of a wider discussion of 'a frequent custom to place a Hero's shrine before the house-door where he might give a special protection to his neighbour' (1925: 137), but draws no conclusions about burial or literal haunting from it.

²² Translation by Kovacs 2002.

But this is a play, not documentary evidence for the location of the tomb, and it is beholden to the practicalities of the Greek theatre: the *skēnē* would represent the palace, and the tomb is by necessity near the door to the palace-*skēnē*. Besides, the implication within the play is not that the tomb has been placed here because it is normal, but because Theoclymenus wishes to pay his father extra devotion; the fact that he has to explain this for the sake of the audience implies just how uncommon it would be.²³

Similarly, when we hear of bodies buried under or above gates (the thresholds of a city) these are always under unusual circumstances. In Pausanias 5.4.4 a corpse is buried in a gate in accordance with an oracle: being demanded by an oracle indicates that it was not normal practice.²⁴ Another oracle required Laomedon's body to be – according to Servius – entombed above Troy's Scaean gate to provide protection to the city as long as the gate remained undisturbed.²⁵ Eitrem and Ogle even reach out to Babylon, where Queen Nitocris designed her own tomb to be built above one of the city's main gates (Herodotus 1.187). But it is clear that not only was this an unusual thing to do, but a later king, Darius, even refused to use that gate as he did not want to drive under the body.²⁶ If

²³ And besides, whilst the play is produced and performed in Greece, it is set in Egypt.

²⁴ Cited by Frazer 1898b: 468; Ogle 1911: 265 n. 5. Frazer 1898b: 468 suggested that this may well have been done as the 'spirit of the dead man was probably expected to guard the gate against foes', but this anecdote only goes to prove that it is the exception to the rule: burying your son in a gate is not normal practice. Frazer also speculates that the burial could be a remnant of human sacrifice performed to bless the building of the gate, but even if that were the case it would again underline that gate-burial was only performed in extreme circumstances.

²⁵ Servius, *ad Aeneid* 2.13, 2.241, 3.351; cited by Frazer 1898b: 468; Eitrem 1909: 11.

²⁶ Eitrem 1909: 11; Ogle 1911: 265 n. 5. For more on this incident, see Dillery 1992, especially 34-37. Note that Eitrem misidentifies the queen as Semiramis (another Babylonian queen mentioned by Herodotus at 1.184); Dillery 1992: 30-31 comments on the two queens' suspicious similarity, but they are different people.

anything, these examples should be used to indicate that bodies were *not* customarily buried around or in gates.²⁷

§1.3.1.2: Rome

In the case of the Romans, Ogle admits that ‘we have to rely chiefly upon analogy, for literary evidence is scanty and by no means convincing’.²⁸ This is a sentiment we find in other scholars, such as Samter who discusses the evidence offered by Pseudo-Plato for Greece and states ‘Da diese Sitte also für die griechische Vorzeit vollkommen beglaubigt ist, so liegt kein Grund vor, die gleiche Nachricht aus Rom... für unrichtig zu erklären’,²⁹ and Frazer: ‘What is true of ancient Greece may well have been true of ancient Rome.’³⁰

It is important to note that burial within the city of Rome, never mind a house, was forbidden by the Twelve Tables, as Cicero reports:

“Hominem mortuum,” inquit lex in duodecim, “in urbe ne sepelito neve urito”

“A dead man,” says a law of the Twelve Tables, “shall not be buried or burned inside the city.”

*(De legibus 2.23.58)*³¹

The Twelve Tables date to around 450 BC,³² and Cicero does address the fact that some burials have subsequently taken place within the city, stating that

²⁷ Dillery 1992: 37 even argues that as the Greeks ‘evidently thought that the earth was the appropriate place for the disposal of a person’s remains... bodies above the earth constituted a desecration’, suggesting that ‘the idea of bodies suspended above the earth may well have been an even stronger source of anxiety.’

²⁸ Ogle 1911: 266.

²⁹ Samter 1911: 142.

³⁰ Frazer 1929a: 468.

³¹ Translation by Keyes 1928 = T. X. fr. 1 (Goodwin 1886: 63).

³² Watson 1975: 3.

those who have received this honour are from families where such burial is hereditary, or due to their own merit (2.23.58). This is for burial within the wider *city*, of course;³³ Cicero does not mention any sort of burial within the house.

The only textual evidence for Roman house-burial is late:³⁴

sciendum quia etiam domi suae sepeliebantur: unde orta est consuetudo, ut dii penates colantur in domibus.

It is known because also they used to be buried in their own home: from where the custom arose, that the Penates are worshipped in the home.

(Servius, *ad Aeneid* 5.64)

apud maiores, ut supra diximus, omnes in suis domibus sepeliebantur, unde ortum est ut lares colerentur in domibus

Among our ancestors, as we said above [*ad Aeneid* 5.64], everyone used to be buried in their own homes, from where it arose that the *Lares* were worshipped in the house

(Servius, *ad Aeneid* 6.152)

Prius autem quisque in domo sua sepeliebatur. Postea vetitum est legibus, ne foetore ipso corpora viventium contacta inficerentur.

In earlier times, however, each man was buried in his own house. Later this was prohibited by law, so that the bodies of the living would not be infected by contact with the stench.

(Isidorus, *Etymologiae* 15.11.1)³⁵

³³ Three identical boundary stones from first-century BC Rome (*CIL* 6.31614; 6.31615; 6.40885) support the regulations in the Twelve Tables with an inscription that states: *L(ucius) Sentius C(ai) f(ilius) pr(aetor?) / de sen(atus) sent(entia) loca / terminanda coer(avit) / b(onum) f(actum) nei quis intra / terminos propius / urbem ustrinam / fecisse velit nive / stercus cadaver / iniecisse velit* ('Lucius Sentius, son of Caius, praetor, has made regulation, by decree of the Senate, about the siting of graves. For the public good. No burning of corpses beyond this marker in the direction of the city. No dumping of dung or of corpses', trans. Hope 2007, adapted). Added beneath the inscription on *CIL* 6.31615, someone had graffitied in red letters: *stercus longe / aufer / ne malum habeas* ('Take dung further on, if you want to avoid trouble', trans. Hope 2007, adapted).

³⁴ As well as implying that analogy with Greece is sufficient, Eitrem 1909: 4, Ogle 1911: 266 and Frazer 1929a: 467 n. 1 & Frazer 1933: 17-18 cite these Roman sources. Samter does not appear to, focusing instead on equivalence with Greece: 1911: 142.

³⁵ Translation by Barney *et al.* 2006, adapted.

As with pseudo-Plato's *Minos*, there is not much to go on. Widespread (Servius: *omnes*; Isidorus: *quisque*) house-burial in the form of inhumation does seem unlikely, for matters of space if nothing else. We should remember, though, that 'burial' could also refer to the burial of bones and ashes remaining after a cremation.³⁶ However, Isidorus' mention of a stench (*foetore*) certainly implies the full inhumation of a corpse rather than a burial of cremated remains.³⁷

We cannot substantiate much of what Servius and Isidorus relate. There is no known law prohibiting burial for hygiene reasons as Isidorus claims; Cicero had interpreted the law of the Twelve Tables as a fire preventative, but had not commented on reasons for the prohibition of burial (*De legibus* 2.23.58). Servius' assertions that house-burial led to the development of the *Lares* and *Penates* as a form of ancestor-worship sound plausible, given that these gods were indeed worshipped within the home, but this was not the only origin story for the household gods, and Roncoroni notes that there is no archaeological support for Servius' statements.³⁸

As far back as 1878, Marquardt argued against the notion that it was a custom to bury the dead in the house, and called Servius' testimony 'unverbürgte'.³⁹ His

³⁶ Johanson 2008: 183 n. 27 in fact thought that the subject of *sepeliebantur* in Servius, *ad Aeneid* 5.64 could well be *pulveres* (ashes), rather than a generic 'they'.

³⁷ While both Cicero (*De legibus* 2.22.56) and Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 7.54.187) recorded that the early Romans buried their dead rather than cremated them, Toynbee 1971: 39 notes that there is evidence for both forms of disposal from around the eighth century BC onwards, and we have already seen above (*apud* Cicero, *De legibus* 2.23.58) that the Twelve Tables refers to both burial (*sepelito*) and cremation (*urito*); see also Hope 2009: 81.

³⁸ Roncoroni 2001: *passim* but especially 109. The origin of the *Lares* was the subject of a long-running feud between Samter (arguing for ancestor-worship) and Wissowa (arguing for agricultural deities); see Stek 2008: 126 n. 18 for bibliographic details. It is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis to go further into this matter here.

³⁹ Marquardt 1878: 296.

analysis was soon reflected by Warde Fowler's 1897 comment that 'the statements of Servius and Isidorus are probably guesses suggested by the domestic worship of the Lares', and that – in the context of the exorcising ritual carried out during the *Lemuria*, which I shall discuss below – 'I doubt in fact whether any amount of evidence for the practice of getting rid of ghosts from a house can be taken to prove that men were once buried there.'⁴⁰ In 1920 Rose stated that he was 'still of the opinion that the original place of burial was often the house',⁴¹ but in 1941 he stated that 'it is quite untrue that the dead were ever buried in it [the floor of the Roman house]'.⁴² Rose does not explain his change of heart (although Halliday had publicly critiqued Rose's earlier work, providing further archaeological arguments against house-burial),⁴³ but in any case, he now believed that the 'statement of Servius... that the dead used to be so disposed of is contradicted by all archaeological evidence for Italy.'⁴⁴ Bömer seems to have had the final word in 1958: 'Keinesfalls ist die Schwelle, wie neuerdings oft erörtert wird, Sitz der Toten: Hausbestattung gab es nicht'.⁴⁵

There is some limited archaeological evidence, however, for *infant* burial within Roman *settlements*,⁴⁶ but within a settlement does not imply within the house proper, and infants are a mere subset of Servius' *omnes*. To this we can add the

⁴⁰ Warde Fowler 1897: 35.

⁴¹ Rose 1920: 144.

⁴² Rose 1941: 93.

⁴³ Halliday 1921; Halliday was building on Warde Fowler's earlier arguments.

⁴⁴ Rose 1941: 93 n. 9.

⁴⁵ Bömer 1958: 152. In fact, the matter of alleged house-burial is rarely addressed in more recent literature, and there is no reference at all to the idea of primitive burial in the house in any key works on Roman death and burial: Toynbee 1971; Davies 1977; Hopkins 1983; Hope 2007; Hope 2009. Lindsay 2000: 169 mentions Servius' claims, but dismisses them by referring to Cicero, *De legibus* 2.23.58, quoted above.

⁴⁶ Carroll 2018: 157; Pearce 2001; Roncoroni 2001: 116-117.

testimony of Fulgentius, an early sixth-century AD author who wrote a treatise in which he explained what obscure words meant:

[*Quid sint suggrundaria.*] *Priori tempore suggrundaria antiqui dicebant sepulchra infantium qui necdum quadraginta dies impleissent, quia nec busta dici poterant, quia ossa quae conburerentur non erant, nec tanta inmanitas cadaveris quae locum tumisceret; unde et Rutilius Geminus in Astianactis tragoedia ait: 'Melius suggrundarium miser quereris quam sepulchrum.'*

[What *suggrundaria* are.] In former times the ancients called the burial places of infants who had not yet lived 40 days *suggrundaria*, because they could not be called graves since there were no bones to be cremated nor a big enough corpse for a mound to be raised. As Rutilius Geminus says in his tragedy *Astyanax*: 'You would do better to look for *suggrundaria* than a grave.'

(Fulgentius, *Expositio sermonum antiquorum* 7)⁴⁷

This is the only extant reference to *suggrundaria* and, other than being some form of burial place, there is no indication of exactly what a *suggrundarium* would look like. *Suggrundae* are eaves, and so Lewis and Short suggest 'a niche in a wall, covered by a projecting roof or eaves', using *columbaria* – communal burial of urns in dovecote-style niches – as a model. Archaeologically, no standard form of neonatal burial has been found; Pearce notes that while infants have been exhumed from settlements, the bodies are 'not always immediately beneath the eaves or around houses and were often older than 40 days'.⁴⁸

However, Wiedemann appears to use Fulgentius as evidence for threshold burial: 'children under 40 days of age were normally buried... under the

⁴⁷ Translation by Pearce 2001: 126, adapted. Fulgentius' text is often conflated with the testimonies of Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 7.15.72) and Juvenal (15.138-140) that infants were buried not cremated, with some scholars reporting that it is Pliny who states that neonates were buried in *suggrundaria* (e.g. Watts 1991: 40-41). Beach 2015 has tracked this error down to a misreading of an 1810 commentary on Juvenal, in which a comment about *suggrundaria* written by the editor in Latin has been subsequently erroneously attributed to Pliny by later scholars.

⁴⁸ Pearce 2001: 127.

threshold or foundations of a wall of the house'.⁴⁹ Wiedemann had cited Cuq, who had interpreted Fulgentius' text as burial 'sous l'auvent (*sub grunda*) de la porte donnant sur la cour'⁵⁰ and Bremmer, who had merely referred to burial 'in a niche in the wall of the house'⁵¹ but whose own references included an article in which King translated *subgrundarium* as 'buried under the eaves overlooking the court of the dwelling-house'.⁵² Cuq and King's descriptions of *suggrundaria* are considerably more specific than Fulgentius', perhaps based on a gloss of the word *grunda* as *tectum super [h]ostium*;⁵³ but the eaves of a porch do not equate to the threshold.

§1.3.1.3: Conclusion

Burial within the house, in either Greece or Rome, therefore, seems to have been considerably unlikely, other than in extreme circumstances. Importantly, at no point is burial under the *threshold* specified in either society. Pseudo-Plato, Servius and Isidorus – if we are to accept their doubtful testimony – all simply state 'the house', and if a location is mentioned, such as in Plutarch's *Phocion*, it tends to be the hearth.

⁴⁹ Wiedemann 1989: 179. Wiedemann has subsequently been used as an authority on this topic, e.g. Soren *et al.* 1999: 478: 'Infants under 40 days of age may have been buried... under house thresholds or walls at the edge of the house in Rome.'

⁵⁰ Cuq 1896: 1393.

⁵¹ Bremmer 1983: 98.

⁵² King 1903: 84. Ogle seems to have followed King, interpreting *suggrundaria* as 'under the eaves of the house on the yard side' (1911: 266). None of the other scholars contemporary with Ogle that I have been discussing appear to refer to Fulgentius, which is especially surprising for Frazer, given that he repeatedly makes the case for infant burial at the threshold in Rome, but uses analogy with Russian and Indian practice instead: Frazer 1929a: 447 & 467. Given Frazer's extraordinary output, it is entirely possible I have missed a reference, but I have been as thorough as possible.

⁵³ See *Glossaria Latina* 5: 258.

§1.3.2: Does ritual activity demonstrate evidence of the remnants of a spirit-cult at the threshold?

The conclusions reached above make it all the more strange that these scholars considered evidence of ritual action at the doorway as proof that a cult of the dead existed. After all, if it were actually house- or hearth-burial which led to the formation of these ghosts, then why would the magical or supernatural activities in their honour take place at the threshold? If we return to Ogle, he states:

There are, moreover, convincing evidences that the cult which... was connected with the threshold and door, can have been concerned, in origin, at least, only with the spirits of the dead.⁵⁴

These evidences, however, are merely circumstantial. For instance, he cites the Roman bride's anointing of the doorposts with wool and oil, noting that wool in other instances was used in rites associated with the dead, and that gravestones were anointed with oil; or that lamps were both placed on graves and before doors.⁵⁵ I shall address the Roman bride's use of wool and oil thoroughly in Part Two, but it shall come as no surprise that I find no ghostly connection. One can also think of numerous reasons why lamps might be found at doors without resorting to the assumption that thresholds are graves.

And yet, ritual action taking place at the doorway is seen as further evidence that there was a cult of the dead based there. Eitrem, Samter, Ogle and Frazer all

⁵⁴ Ogle 1911: 267.

⁵⁵ Ogle 1911: 267.

point to an extract of Ovid's *Fasti* as providing key traces of a cult of the dead at the door. For Ogle:

The custom, indeed, of burying substances under the threshold must have originated in the idea that they were offerings to the dead... Nothing could speak more eloquently for the truth of this statement than the words of [Ovid], in his account of Tacita.⁵⁶

Eitrem saw the use of incense in this rite – which is placed under the threshold – as ‘der kümmerliche Rest eines ehemaligen vollständigeren Opfers, den Toten dargebracht’, and this idea is also echoed by Samter and Frazer.⁵⁷

In this passage Ovid describes how an old lady performs magic at a threshold, in the name of a goddess of the dead, at a specific time when ghosts were considered to be abroad. If there is going to be any connection between the threshold and spirits then we will – our Edwardian scholars insist – find it here. We must, therefore, look carefully at these rites of Tacita, to see if they do in fact indicate a connection between the threshold and the dead.

§1.3.2.1: Case study: Ovid's rites of Tacita

*Ecce anus in mediis residens annosa puellis
sacra facit Tacitae (vix tamen ipsa tacet),
et digitis tria tura tribus sub limine ponit,
qua brevis occultum mus sibi fecit iter:
tum cantata ligat ter⁵⁸ fusco licia plumbo, 575
et septem nigras versat in ore fabas,
quodque pice adstrinxit, quod acu traiecit aena,*

⁵⁶ Ogle 1911: 268.

⁵⁷ Eitrem 1909: 18; Samter 1911: 142; Frazer 1929a: 447; in fact, these spirits are, in Frazer's opinion, those of dead children awaiting rebirth, although he makes no mention of *suggrundaria* and gives no Roman evidence for either burial at the threshold or an expected reincarnation of infants buried thus.

⁵⁸ The manuscripts read *tum cantata ligat cum fusco licia plumbo*, but I am following Robinson 2011: 366, who prefers Shackleton Bailey's suggestion of *ter* for *cum*, as 'the text then has three repetitions of the 'three', in three different forms (*tria, tribus, ter*), and the word adds some more 'magical' alliteration to the line.'

obsutum maenae torret in igne caput;
vina quoque instillat: vini quodcumque relictum est,
aut ipsa aut comites, plus tamen ipsa, bibit. 580
'hostiles linguas inimicaque vinximus ora'
dicit discedens ebriaque exit anus.

Look! An aged old woman, sitting down among girls,
 performs the rites of Tacita (however she herself is scarcely silent),
 and with three fingers she deposits three lumps of incense under the
 threshold,
 where a little mouse has made a secret path for itself:
 then she ties enchanted threads thrice with dark lead
 and rolls seven black beans in her mouth,
 and she burns the sewn-up head of a fish in the fire
 which she bound fast with pitch and pierced with a bronze needle:
 she also drips wine on: whatever wine is left behind,
 either she or her companions drink, however she has more.
 'We have bound hostile tongues and unfriendly mouths,'
 she says, departing, and the old woman exits drunk.

(Ovid, *Fasti* 2.571-582)

In this eleven-line, self-contained (*Ecce anus... exit anus*) sketch, Ovid is
 describing the otherwise unattested rites of the goddess Tacita (*sacra... Tacitae*),
 which are taking place on the *Feralia*, the final day of February's festival of the
 dead: the *Parentalia*.⁵⁹ Ghosts were considered to be abroad, Ovid tells us in the
Fasti, during the whole festival: *nunc animae tenues et corpora functa sepulcris/
 errant* ('now the insubstantial ghosts and bodies satisfied with tombs wander',
 2.565-566). The old woman is performing what is clearly binding magic, and it
 would certainly make sense to be doing this on a day when ghosts were known
 to be present, since – as we have seen in previous chapters – ghosts were
 frequently used as agents to perform binding magic. The link between this
 binding magic and Tacita, whom Ovid later refers to as *dea Muta* ('the silent

⁵⁹ I discuss the *Parentalia* and *Feralia* at length in Chapter Four.

goddess', 2.583), is the purpose of the spell: *hostiles linguas inimicaque vinximus ora* ('we have bound hostile tongues and unfriendly mouths', 2.581).⁶⁰

We have no other source for these rites, and they 'are a long way from the official *sacra* of the Roman calendar'.⁶¹ To what extent would the average Roman have done this sort of thing during the *Feralia*? While Robinson suggests that the 'actual circumstances of the scene may have been more obvious to Ovid's readers, whether through art or experience, than it is to us',⁶² there is certainly no suggestion that a rite like this was a regular and official part of the *Parentalia* or *Feralia*. McDonough points out that 'scholars of religion generally do not accept' that 'the hag's spell... has any basis in actual religious practice',⁶³ and Miller states that it is 'as if Ovid wishes to present as a permanent feature of the day's activities what else is apt to occur during February's festival of the dead'.⁶⁴ McDonough proposes instead that the entire sketch, centred as it is around the liminal point of a threshold, functions more as a literary transition between the *Parentalia* and the *Caristia*: 'a pointed entr'acte between the festivals devoted to the dead and those dedicated to the living.'⁶⁵ Robinson notes that it 'introduces the theme of silence that underpins the remaining narratives of the second book'.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Tupet 1976: 410 points out the redundancy of this tautological phrase, and suggests that it is deliberate: 'le désir de n'oublier aucune des victimes à bâillonner'.

⁶¹ Robinson 2011: 356.

⁶² Robinson 2011: 359.

⁶³ McDonough 2004: 355.

⁶⁴ Miller 1991: 105.

⁶⁵ McDonough 2004: 357. The passage indeed comes across like a mini-performance, bracketed by stage directions (*Ecce anus... exit anus*).

⁶⁶ Robinson 2011: 356.

If we are searching for a connection between the dead and the threshold in these rites, then we must look closely at what the *anus* is doing throughout the scene, or rather as closely as we can, given that the abbreviated nature of the description leaves us with more questions than it does answers. Ovid's vignette shows us an *anus* and a group of *puellae*; who the girls are we are not told, although they seem to be watching the *anus* rather than assisting her. The *anus* does the following:

- Uses three fingers (*digitis... tribus*) to tuck three lumps of incense (*tritura*) into a mousehole under the threshold (*limine*);
- Binds (*ligat*) enchanted threads (*cantata... licia*) together with dark lead (*fusco... plumbo*);⁶⁷
- Rolls (*versat*) seven beans (*septem nigras*) in her mouth;
- Takes the head of a small fish (*maenae*), which has been
 - sewn-up (*obsutum*),
 - bound (*adstrinxit*) with pitch and
 - pierced (*traiecit*) with a bronze needle⁶⁸
 and begins to burn it (*torret*) in the fire;
- Drops (*instillat*) wine onto the fish head⁶⁹ (she and her group drink the rest of the wine);

⁶⁷ Note that it is not clear whether the *anus* has previously enchanted the threads, or whether she recites an incantation to do so at this point.

⁶⁸ I understand the woman to have performed three separate actions on the fish head (the number three forming a pleasant counterpoint to *tria* and *tribus* (and perhaps also *ter* – see footnote 58 above)): sewing it up, putting pitch on it, and piercing it with a needle (which, if we follow the models of the *PGM* figurines, would remain in the fish head). Bettini 2006: 158 however, sees the bronze needle as being the needle used to perform the sewing; Littlewood 2001: 922 also makes a brief reference to the needle being used for sewing, but Dickie 2001: 189 sees it as piercing the fish.

⁶⁹ Bettini 2006: 159 sees this as a sacrificial act.

- Says ‘we have bound hostile tongues and unfriendly mouths’ as she leaves.

What does she do with the beans? Or the thread-bound lead? Is the lead a curse tablet? Could it be a lead figurine which is bound?⁷⁰ Where is the fire? Is it by the threshold or do they all have to move after depositing the incense? Why did she not burn the incense? Whose threshold is used? Whose are the hostile tongues and unfriendly mouths? Who is the old woman? Or the girls? What is their relationship?⁷¹ Is the performance of this rite on the *Feralia* significant? What is the role of the goddess Tacita? Is this a real ritual or did Ovid make it up? And is this a binding spell at all, or is it an elaborate offering to the dead under the threshold as our scholars would have us believe? With so many unanswered questions it seems unlikely that this passage could – as Ogle put it – ‘speak... eloquently for the truth’⁷² of any statement, much less one about a heritage of buried bodies and threshold-based ghosts. But what *can* the passage tell us?

⁷⁰ Frazer 1929a: 448 considered that the lead would be a figurine gagged by the threads, thus reflecting the purpose of the spell; that the lead could be a figurine is also raised as a possibility in Robinson 2011: 365. However, Gager 1992: 252 n. 27 sees it as a ‘clear reference to spells on metal tablets, namely, *defixiones*.’

⁷¹ See Robinson 2011: 359-360 for a summary of recent analyses of this passage and different theories between the relationship between the *anus* and the *puellae*. Dickie 2001: 185 sees the *anus* as a *lena* and the girls as the prostitutes who work for her, based on their drinking of the wine at 2.579-580. Ovid makes no explicit reference to this, but Dickie maintains that this is the subtext that a Roman reader would have understood. I find Dickie often too quick to assign prostitution to female literary magical characters (e.g. Simaetha in *Idyll* 2, 2001: 103), but must admit that Ovid was not unfamiliar with this subtext. The drunken *lena* as a witch was a common trope in Roman elegy, and such a character appeared in Ovid’s *Amores* 1.8.

⁷² Ogle 1911: 268; the full quotation is cited above.

§1.3.2.1.1: 'Realistic' elements of the rite

For a rite that is supposed to hold a remnant of a spirit-cult, it has more in common with what we know of magic than what we know about honouring the dead. The dead were honoured, primarily, at their tombs: there was a feast held there nine days after burial, 'the first formal occasion on which the grave was visited, the dead honoured and the living entertained',⁷³ and annual offerings were brought to the gravesite during the *Parentalia* and other festivals such as the *Rosaria* and *Violaria*.⁷⁴

It might not compare with what we know about celebrating the dead, but we certainly see enough elements of both literary and 'real' binding spells to make the rite seem realistic, even if it is an invention of Ovid. Robinson runs through the short list of deviations from our extant binding spell knowledge: the beans 'cannot be paralleled in [either] literary [or] papyrological texts', fish and wine are not usually used in the literary examples, and incense tends to be burned rather than left as a lump.⁷⁵ Ovid's wording, with frequent alliteration and repetition calls to mind sounds and rhythms of both literary and 'real' spells.⁷⁶ In my analyses in the previous chapters of just a few literary poems and *PGM* spells we have seen the use of the number three, binding with threads, binding a lead tablet with threads, and piercing a magical object with a bronze needle. I focused, in Chapter Two, on binding magic for the purpose of love, but there are also many extant examples of spells with the purpose of binding hostile tongues (the

⁷³ Hope 2009: 87.

⁷⁴ Hope 2009: 99. I cover these festivals in detail in Chapter Four.

⁷⁵ Robinson 2011: 358 n. 53.

⁷⁶ e.g. the rhythmic chant at Virgil, *Eclogue* 8.80, or the incantation at Cato, *De agricultura* 160.

context usually being the law courts).⁷⁷ There is even a comparable use of an animal head with its mouth stopped up used as sympathetic magic to bring about the same effect in the victim:⁷⁸ in the fourth century AD Libanius, after suffering headaches, general malaise and becoming unable to lecture, discovered a chameleon hidden in his classroom:

καίτοι χαμαιλέων ἀναφανείς, οὐκ οἶδ' ὀπόθεν, ἐν τῷ τῶν λόγων χορῷ,
πολὺς μὲν τούτῳ τῷ χαμαιλέοντι χρόνος καὶ μηνῶν ὁ νεκρὸς οὐκ ὀλίγων,
πόδων δὲ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ὀπίσω κειμένην ἔωρῶμεν τὴν κεφαλὴν, τῶν δὲ
ἐτέρων ὁ μὲν ἦν οὐδαμοῦ, τὸ στόμα δὲ ἄτερος εἰς σιωπὴν ἔκλειεν.
However a chameleon turned up in the classroom from somewhere or
other. It was an old specimen and had been dead for several months, and
we saw the thing with its head tucked in between its hind legs, one of its
front legs missing, and the other closing its mouth to silence it.

(*Orations* 1.249)⁷⁹

Once the gagged chameleon was discovered, Libanius recovered.⁸⁰ Perhaps the reason why the *anus* burns the sewn- and sealed-up fish head is to prevent it being found and the magic negated.

There are, however, three key elements of the *anus*' ritual that could be connected to a cult of the dead: Tacita herself, potentially a goddess of the dead; the use of beans which were used as offerings to the dead and spirits during the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria* festivals; and the incense, which our scholars had singled out especially as being a spirit-offering. I will, therefore, consider this interplay

⁷⁷ See Gager 1992: 118-119.

⁷⁸ Bettini 2006: 158-159 suggests that the *maena* fish was specifically used as it 'assumait précisément la fonction de substitut symbolique de la personne humaine', recounting the story of Numa offering it to Jupiter in place of a human sacrifice. Obviously Libanius' chameleon post-dates Ovid, and we have no knowledge about whether the use of it would have been directly or indirectly influenced by the *Fasti*. See Bonner 1932 for more on this passage, and Swist 2017: 435-437 for Libanius' interactions with magic elsewhere in his works.

⁷⁹ Translation by Norman 1992.

⁸⁰ Ogden 2002: 260 points out that the 'mutilations are particularly appropriate to the binding of speech... The missing forelimb was doubtless the "right arm" with which an orator would gesticulate'.

of magic, the threshold and the ghosts of the *Feralia*, by focussing on these three aspects of the rites.

§1.3.2.1.2: Invoking Tacita

We must note immediately that the *anus* does not call upon any ghosts to assist her,⁸¹ although Ovid claims that Tacita herself was some sort of chthonic deity.⁸² Directly after this scene, Ovid explains that this *dea muta*⁸³ (2.583) was originally the nymph Lara who angers Jupiter, has her tongue ripped out in punishment, and is sent away (or killed?) to become an *infernae nympa paludis* ('nymph of the infernal marsh', 2.610).⁸⁴ This is not much to go on, but if Tacita were indeed considered to be an underworld goddess then this would give her a connection to the dead.

However, rather than looking for any chthonic correspondences, there is likely to be a simpler – and stronger – connection between a goddess named 'Tacita' and a spell to bind the tongues of enemies: silence. There is even an extant counterpart of 'real' magic, invoking Tacita – or some variation of her – for the

⁸¹ Tupet 1976: 411 notes that invocations could be suggested by the line *uix tamen ipsa tacet* (Robinson's edition) / *nec tamen illa tacet* (Tupet's rendering) at 2.572. This line is usually interpreted to indicate that the *anus* is overly chatty, but this could well be a blinkered stereotype.

⁸² Of course the *anus* does not appear to call upon Tacita either; it is Ovid's external narrator who tells us that the rites are in her honour.

⁸³ McDonough 2004: 359 n. 5 raises the issue that Ovid would have written *DEA MVTA*, and so we do not actually know whether he meant a mute goddess (i.e. Tacita), or some other goddess called *Muta*. See also Robinson 2011: 376-377.

⁸⁴ Other than this enigmatic description, the only other mention of Tacita is a brief one in Plutarch, that she was one of the Muses and that Numa introduced her worship to honour the concept of silence (*Numa* 8.6). See Robinson 2011: 362 and 376-377.

purpose of silencing someone: a lead curse tablet, thought to date from around the mid-first century AD, inscribed to MVTAE TACITAE:⁸⁵

*Mutae Tacitae! ut mutus sit
Quartus, agitatus erret ut mus
fugiens aut auis aduersus basyliscum.
ut e[i]us os mutu[m] sit, Mutae!
Mutae [d]irae sint! Mutae
tacitae sint! Mutae!
[Qu]a[rt]us ut insaniat,

Ut Eriniis rutilus sit et
Quartus Orco, ut Mutae
tacitae ut mut[ae] sint
ad portas aureas.⁸⁶*

mutae tacitae <Goddesses of silence?>!
So that Quartus might be mute,
that he might wander, frenzied, like a fleeing mouse, or like a bird against
the basilisk,
that his mouth might be mute, mutae!
Let the mutae be fatal!
Let the mutae be tacitae!
mutae! So that Quartus might go mad,
so that Quartus might be <rushed? dug up?> by the Erinyes and Orcus.
So that the mutae tacitae
might be mute at the golden gates.⁸⁷

The tablet has the same end goal as Ovid's rite: to silence someone, in this case one Quartus. A mouse appears in both texts, and McDonough also sees a parallel between the golden *portas* in the tablet and the *limen* of the *Fasti*.⁸⁸ The tablet even bore 'des traces de mortier' when discovered, which suggests that it had been immured⁸⁹ – perhaps in a wall, but perhaps under a threshold? But we must remember that Ovid's *anus* places *incense* under the threshold; we do not

⁸⁵ *AE* 1958 150: 37; the tablet was discovered in 1953, in Kempten (Germany), and the dating is based on the handwriting. Gager 1992: v points out that '*defixiones* survived because they were actually put to use by individual clients': this tablet is a 'real' magical artefact.

⁸⁶ *L'année épigraphique* 1958 150 = Chapot & Laurot L78; note that the final four lines were written on the reverse of the tablet. An illustration of the tablet can be seen at [http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=\\$Pfahl_00593.jpg](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?bild=$Pfahl_00593.jpg)

⁸⁷ Translation by McDonough 2004: 356.

⁸⁸ McDonough 2004: 356. The golden gates could also be considered the Gates of Hades.

⁸⁹ *AE* 1958 150: 37.

know what happens to the dark lead, other than it being bound with threads.⁹⁰ Regardless, as Robinson notes, 'On the assumption that the writer of this tablet has not been influenced by Ovid, this provides a striking parallel'.⁹¹ There is no explicit mention of ghosts, but the tablet does refer to both the Erinyes and Orcus, deities associated with the underworld who frequently appear on curse tablets, often invoked to compel the dead to act. And of course there are the MVTAE TACITAE, whoever they are.⁹²

Ovid's rites being in the name of Tacita, therefore, do not seemingly provide us with any evidence for cultic practice at the threshold. Tacita does have a potential link to spirits via her alleged underworld connection, but there is no obvious reason why she would be honoured via the threshold. It seems more straightforward to assign her use in these rites as being the appropriate deity for a binding spell involving silence.

§1.3.2.1.3: Beans

Whilst Tacita's connection with spirits is a tenuous one, the *anus'* use of beans is not: beans do not appear in other depictions of magic, but they are linked with the dead in Roman thought. Pliny, Plutarch and Festus all report the use of beans as a sacrifice to the dead, especially during the *Parentalia*:⁹³

⁹⁰ Tupet 1976: 409-410 & 412 hypothesises that the girls could go to deposit the lead in a grave.

⁹¹ Robinson 2011: 369.

⁹² Robinson 2011: 376-377 points out that these words 'could refer to *mutae Tacitae*, *Mutae tacitae*, or *Mutae Tacitae*'.

⁹³ There are other connections between beans and the dead: Plutarch also says that the names of some beans sound like the names of places in the underworld (*Quaestiones Romanae* 95), and as we see in the quote following, Pliny suggested that the souls of the dead (*mortuorum animae*) could be within beans (*Naturalis historia* 18.30.119). For more on the folkloric tradition with beans, and prohibitions against them, see Andrews 1949 and Scarborough 1982.

ut alii tradidere, quoniam mortuorum animae sint in ea, qua de causa parentando utique adsumitur.

as others have reported, because the souls of the dead are contained in a bean, and at all events it is for that reason that beans are employed in memorial sacrifices to dead relatives.

(Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 18.30.119)⁹⁴

Ἡ ὅτι πρὸς τὰ περίδειπνα καὶ τὰς προκλήσεις τῶν νεκρῶν μάλιστα χρῶνται τοῖς ὀσπρίοις;

Or is it because they make particular use of legumes for funeral feasts and invocations of the dead?

(Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 95)⁹⁵

quod ea putatur ad mortuos pertinere. Nam et Lemuralibus iacitur larvis, et Parentalibus adhibetur sacrificiis

because it is thought that they are connected to the dead. For they are thrown to the *larvae* at the *Lemuria*, and used for sacrifices at the *Parentalia*.

(Festus 77L s.v. *fabam*)

Festus here mentions the *Lemuria*, the other major Roman festival of the dead, at which ghosts appear to have been expelled from the house, partly by having beans thrown at them.⁹⁶ Ovid also describes this festival in the *Fasti* and given the interplay of beans and ghosts, we must look carefully at what happens:

*vertitur et nigras accipit ante fabas,
aversusque iacit; sed dum iacit, 'haec ego mitto,
his' inquit 'redimo meque meosque fabis.'
hoc novies dicit nec respicit: umbra putatur
colligere et nullo terga vidente sequi.*

he turns, and first he receives black beans and throws them away with face averted; but while he throws them, he says: "These I cast; with these beans I redeem me and mine." This he says nine times, without looking back: the shade is thought to gather the beans, and to follow unseen behind.

(5.436-440)⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Translation by Rackham 1950.

⁹⁵ Translation by Cole Babbitt 1936.

⁹⁶ I shall discuss the *Lemuria* in detail in Chapter Four.

⁹⁷ Translation by Frazer 1931.

We do not know what the *anus* does with her beans, other than roll them (*versat*) around in her mouth as she performs her rite. The *paterfamilias*, according to Ovid, throws them (*iacit* 5.437).⁹⁸ Bizarrely, since this passage of the *Fasti* is our primary piece of evidence for the festival,⁹⁹ there is a widespread assumption that the *paterfamilias* spits out the beans, which he has first placed in his mouth.¹⁰⁰

Where did this notion that the *paterfamilias* spits out the beans come from? And why?¹⁰¹ The Latin text says that he *accipit* ('takes/ receives', 5.436) the beans, and then simply *iacit* ('throws', appearing twice at 5.437) them. Whilst *accipio* can refer to things received into parts of the body other than the hand, these parts tend to be expressed, and besides *iacio* has no sense of 'spit'. Ovid's *paterfamilias* says '*mitto*' as he describes what he does (5.437); this can mean 'throw' or 'cast', but not 'spit'. There are two other brief references to beans at the *Lemuria* in extant literature, one using *iacio* and one *iacito*:

Nam et Lemuralibus iacitur [faba] larvis
For at the *Lemuria* the bean is thrown to the *larvae*
(Festus 77L s.v. *fabam*)

⁹⁸ It is a common assumption that the performer of this ritual, whom Ovid simply refers to as *ille* (5.431), is the *paterfamilias*; Meadows 2014: 117.

⁹⁹ Meadows 2014: 113; it is also listed in official calendars.

¹⁰⁰ e.g., Warde Fowler 1899: 109; Rose 1941; Scullard 1981: 118.

¹⁰¹ In fact, none of the major commentaries address this issue; Frazer 1929c, Bömer 1958 and Brookes 1992 do not discuss it. Frazer, who one would have assumed would have gone into detail on this matter in his five-volume commentary on the *Fasti* is strangely silent. He evidently did not even consider that it was an issue: in his introduction to this passage, in which he discusses bean superstitions at length, he mentions that the beans are thrown as if it were a simple fact worthy of no further comment (Frazer 1929c: 36 & 38). As for his commentary, he skips straight from line 433 to 441, evidently considering the analysis of beans in the introduction to this section to be a sufficient examination of 5.436-438. What is doubly surprising is that Frazer references Warde Fowler 1899, who interprets the *paterfamilias* as spitting. Perhaps Frazer considered it too minor a consideration to discuss. Warde Fowler gives no suggestion as to why the *paterfamilias* might do this, and makes no reference to the Latin or any other text in his discussion.

*quibus temporibus in sacris fabam iactant noctu ac dicunt se lemures domo
extra ianuam eicere*

at which times, in sacred rites, they throw a bean at night and say that
they cast out the *lemures* from the house beyond the door

(Varro *apud* Nonius 197L=135M s.v. *Lemures*)¹⁰²

Even the context makes the idea of spitting them out unlikely: *iactit* beans while *aversus* (5.437) – that is, while facing away from them; Ovid emphasises this with the phrase *nec respicit* ('and he doesn't look back', 5.439). It is hard to spit something out whilst simultaneously averting your face; it is much easier to *throw* something away while turning your face from it.¹⁰³ Rose, one of the exponents of the 'spit' theory, suggests that the *paterfamilias* could take the beans out of his mouth in order to throw them,¹⁰⁴ but then we are inventing yet another action for Ovid's *paterfamilias*: to put beans in his mouth, and then to take them out again; Ovid merely tells us that he gets some beans and then he throws them.

Rose was so insistent that the beans went into the *paterfamilias*' mouth because he argued that this was to '[make] them more tasty... so that they shall have the flavour of man'; this was in part so that the ghosts might think that they have eaten the *paterfamilias* himself.¹⁰⁵ The *paterfamilias* does state that by throwing them '*his... redimo meque meosque fabis*' ('with these beans I redeem me and mine', 5.438), which is indeed suggestive of some sort of exchange or bribe – the

¹⁰² Lindsay's text gives *elicere* with *eicere* as a variant reading; I prefer *eicere* since it mimics the action with the beans, but *elicere* is also plausible if we are to imagine the ghost chasing after the bean. Varro's mention of the *ianua* here emphasises merely that the *lemures* are properly ejected beyond the boundary of the house; there is no indication that they are inhabiting the *ianua*.

¹⁰³ Here we might draw parallels with Virgil's witch's instructions to her maid to throw the ashes into the river and not look back in *Eclogue* 8.101-102.

¹⁰⁴ Rose 1941: 90.

¹⁰⁵ Rose 1941: 93.

ghost takes the beans rather than family members.¹⁰⁶ But we have seen above that beans were already connected to the dead in Roman thought as an offering, so we should not need to add an extra requirement to make them ‘more tasty’.¹⁰⁷

I wonder whether the *anus* from *Fasti* 2 is actually the culprit behind this erroneous interpretation of the *paterfamilias* spitting out the beans in *Fasti* 5, because while we are not told anything about the location of the beans at the *Lemuria*, we are told that the *anus* at the *Feralia* has them in her mouth: *in ore* (*Fasti* 2.756).¹⁰⁸ Could the two passages, with their similarity of setting and use of beans have been conflated in the minds of those interpreting the later passage?¹⁰⁹

There is, therefore, a clear connection between beans and the dead, both in their use as an offering at the graveside and as some form of tool in an exorcising ritual. But the *anus*’ use of the beans here does not seem to fit with either of

¹⁰⁶ See Frazer 1929c: 38. There was potentially a similar sort of exchange performed at the crossroads festival of the *Compitalia*, which I shall discuss in Chapter Five.

¹⁰⁷ Rose himself was writing in order to correct a perceived flaw in Frazer’s analysis of the phrase *manes exite paterni*, which the *paterfamilias* is said to utter as he drives out the ghosts, and he does not acknowledge the fact that Frazer says that the beans are thrown (Rose does not give any references either for the spitting, or for the theory about the beans taking on ‘the flavour of man’).

¹⁰⁸ These vague descriptions of what both the *anus* and the *paterfamilias* are doing with their respective beans are perhaps something that a Roman would readily have understood, and would explain why Ovid felt under no compulsion to give a detailed account.

¹⁰⁹ The Lemurian rite even seems to have more in common with the Tacitan magic than standard state religious rituals; see Meadows 2014: 112 for a list of correspondences. If we consider the scheme of the *Fasti* in its current state then books 2 and 5 balance each other in ring composition, and Littlewood 2001: 916 notes that the two passages ‘invite comparison through their complementary themes and their parallel descriptions of black magic’ (leaving aside the issue of whether the *Lemuria* rite, presented as it is as a standard part of the Roman religious calendar, should be considered ‘black magic’ or not; King 2009: 102 gives a number of reasons why it should not be). Tupet 1976: 411 points out that the Tacitan rite shares many links with religious practice, such as ‘L’encens, les libations de vin, l’holocauste, même les fèves noires’, and that the *anus* is not secretly hidden away as we might expect a magical practitioner to be, but rather in view outside the house with a sizeable audience; if anything, the *paterfamilias* – who acts alone at midnight – in the Lemurian rite is more furtive.

these models. If this were to be some form of offering to a cult of the dead then we would expect an actual offering: the *anus*, in fact, seems to keep the beans in her mouth and we are not told how else she uses them in her ritual.¹¹⁰

§1.3.2.1.4: Incense

If the beans are not an offering to ghosts under the threshold, then could the incense be, since the *anus* carefully tucks it there? It was this aspect of the rites that Eitrem, Samter, Ogle and Frazer focused on as showing the remnants of a spirit-cult.¹¹¹ Bader sees the threshold in the poem as ‘la limite entre la terre et les Enfers’,¹¹² to which the mousehole affords an entrance, but this symbolic boundary of the living and the dead does not need to literally refer to dead bodies buried in the vicinity.

Frazer in fact, using the analogy of alleged practice in contemporary Russia and India, argued that the incense was intended to ‘propitiate and so hasten the

¹¹⁰ Bettini 2006: 168 argues against a link between the *anus*’ beans and ghosts, since her ritual is for the purpose of binding tongues rather than any explicit connection to spirits (although this idea dismisses the connection of spirits as agents of binding spells in the *PGM*). Instead he posits a rather unique theory, based on what he terms ‘homéophonique’ (rather than the more familiar homoeopathic or sympathetic) magic, and a link between *rumor*, *ruminere* and the chewing action that *versat* at 2.576 implies: ‘Elle représente magiquement les bouches qui ruminent leurs potins malveillants, ceux que le rituel en l’honneur de Tacita entend bloquer.’ Elaborate wordplay is a feature of curse tablets, from *voces magicae* to the ‘disappearing triangles’ discussed by Faraone 2012, and even the interplay of *mutus*, *ut* and *mus* in the MVTAE TACITAE tablet quoted above, but Bettini’s suggestion is perhaps a little too much of a stretch, given that neither *rumor* nor *ruminere* appear in the text.

¹¹¹ Eitrem 1909: 18; Samter 1911: 142; Ogle 1911: 268; Frazer 1929a: 447. Robinson 2011: 364 does mention Ogle’s article in his recent commentary on *Fasti* 2, but rejects his theory that the incense is an offering to spirits, citing the earlier commentary by Bömer, that ‘Keinesfalls ist die Schwelle, wie neuerdings oft erörtert wird, Sitz der Toten’ (Bömer 1958: 152).

¹¹² Bader 1992: 218.

rebirth of dead children buried in the doorway.¹¹³ This seems a stretch too far, even setting aside the lack of evidence for threshold-burial as discussed above. Yet the role of the incense here remains a curious act; we might expect, were this a ‘real’ binding spell, that it would be either the thread-bound lead or even the sewn-up fish head that would be deposited under the threshold (especially if it were the threshold of the victim); the incense does seem therefore to act more like an offering – but why has it not been burned? During the *Parentalia* incense was burned at tombs to honour the dead,¹¹⁴ and so it is particularly odd that unburned incense might be offered to ghosts. McDonough saw the *anus*’ use of incense particularly as marking out ‘her rites as marginal’;¹¹⁵ Samter posits the suggestion that the incense is actually an offering to Tacita herself, as a ‘Totengöttin’,¹¹⁶ but this still does not explain why an offering to her would be pushed into a hole under the threshold. Tupet briefly considers the idea of the incense being an offering to ghosts – ‘ce qui est acceptable’ – but dismisses it as being irrelevant in the context of the poem.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Frazer 1929a: 447-448. Rather oddly, as mentioned above, Frazer makes no mention of Fulgentius’ testimony for infant burial under the eaves, which is perhaps the closest we get to evidence for domestic burial. And yet, as I discussed above, there is no definite suggestion that *suggrundaria*, if indeed they are places connected to the eaves, were domestic.

¹¹⁴ Dolansky 2011: 139.

¹¹⁵ McDonough 2004: 367; this is especially in contrast to the festivals which bookend these rites of Tacita in the *Fasti*, the *Parentalia* and the *Caristia*.

¹¹⁶ Samter 1911: 142. Tupet 1976: 411-412 also sees the fish, since it is burned in holocaust, as a sacrifice (and wonders why Ovid’s *anus* has done this partway through the ritual rather than at the beginning); Dickie 2001: 185 instead sees the wine that is dropped onto the fish at 2.579 as being a libation.

¹¹⁷ Tupet 1976: 412, citing Frazer 1929a: 447. Tupet 1976: 409-410 envisages the *puellae* going to a cemetery, under the guise of leaving offerings for the *Parentalia*, to deposit the enchanted lead in a grave or tomb (‘probablement même auprès d’un membre de sa famille défunt’), in order to get a ghost to enact the binding spell and ‘préservé contre les attaques des mauvaises langues pour l’année à venir’; it is clear, therefore, that whilst she might potentially appear to support the threshold-ghosts theory, she does not in practice. I agree with Dickie 2001: 349 n. 159 that visiting the cemetery is ‘an element that has no warrant in the text’, but it is certainly plausible given our knowledge of binding spells, and provides a logical conclusion for the purpose of the lead.

There is, then, little support for ideas of offerings, spirits inhabiting the threshold, worshipping interred ancestors and reincarnation. Why else might incense be placed under the threshold, in the context of a *binding spell*? The intention behind it depends upon whose threshold it was. If it were the threshold of the person against whom the hostile tongues were aimed then the incense could well act as a prophylactic – as a ‘force field’ keeping any malicious gossip away from the inhabitants of the house, like the apotropaic devices discussed in Chapter One. If instead it were the threshold of the bearers of the hostile tongues, then it is presumably to act as a ‘homing beacon’ – like the magic described in Chapter Two – for the spirits enacting the binding spell to find and apply the magic, or else it itself embodies the intention of the spell and would ‘infect’ the household with the magic.¹¹⁸ Regardless of whose threshold the spell is being carried out at, these interpretations would fit more closely to our existing evidence of prophylactic devices and binding magic than reading the use of incense here as being a spirit-offering.

§1.3.2.2: Conclusion

Ovid’s sketch, of magic performed at a threshold on a day of the dead, might have provided conclusive evidence that this was to take advantage of the spirits which haunted the threshold. Instead, I have shown that this is not the case, and that once we take a closer look at what is happening in the poem we realise that, rather than representing an ancient form of spirit-offerings, it fits into the

¹¹⁸ Dickie 2001: 188 sees the women as being ‘outside the door of a rival’, although there is nothing in the text to indicate this. Dickie presumably understands the spell as aggressively targeting the hostile tongues, rather than merely protecting against them.

existing models that I have analysed in previous chapters of threshold magic – regardless of whether the purpose of the spell is prophylactic or aggressive – and does not imply anything about the presence of spirits. The rites of Tacita had been presented by all our scholars as the *pièce de résistance* of an argument for the existence of a cult of the dead based at the threshold, which had allegedly developed from the practice of burial there; as I have shown throughout this chapter, these claims have no basis. The notion of threshold-ghosts is a seductive one: it neatly explains away all supernatural and ritual action at the doorway, but it was precisely by looking for a neat solution that led scholars into the trap of only being able to see ghosts as an explanation.

PART ONE: CHAPTER FOUR:

WHERE DID THE GREEKS AND ROMANS BELIEVE THAT GHOSTS HAUNTED?

Throughout the preceding chapters I have shown that there is little evidence to indicate that there was a widespread belief among the Greeks and Romans that their thresholds were haunted by the spirits of the dead. The various references in literature, artefacts and cultural practices which give the impression of being associated with ghostly activity at the threshold have been shown not to support this theory. Yet one cannot prove a negative, and so an easy counter-argument could be that this notion was so everyday and elementary that there was no need to record it, thereby leaving little trace for us to see. Nevertheless if that were the case, it is surprising that there are a plethora of explicit references for both Greece and Rome, in literature, artefacts and cultural practices, to other places that spirits *could* be found, or were thought to haunt, especially when some of these places seem so obvious. It seems odd that we would have such unequivocal evidence of the belief that spirits haunted such self-evident places like graveyards, battlefields, access-points of the underworld, crossroads, and even houses, and yet nothing about their haunting of doorways. In this chapter I shall analyse the places that we *do* know that people believed that ghosts haunted. The subject of the crossroads – a haunted liminal location which is often used to support the threshold-ghost theory – shall be discussed in the next chapter.

§1.4.1: Burial sites

§1.4.1.1: Cemeteries, graves and tombs

An obvious place to find a ghost was the burial site or location of its corpse; even Plato's Socrates refers to the ψυχῶν σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα ('shadowy apparitions of souls') which are seen περὶ τὰ μνήματά τε καὶ τοὺς τάφους ('among the tombstones and graves', *Phaedo* 81c-d).¹ Graveyards are a place where the living and the dead meet, forming a liminal space between life and death. In both Greece and Rome graveyards are literally a liminal space as they tend to be located just outside the walls or boundary of a town.² From both cultures we have plenty of examples of a belief in ghosts haunting their gravesites, from literary depictions of necromancy taking place at the tomb,³ to artistic depictions of ghosts hovering over tombs,⁴ historical magical handbooks instructing the reader to seek out a ghost at its tomb,⁵ and archaeological artefacts indicating that people did just that – either to use the ghost for magical purposes by depositing curse tablets, or to honour and celebrate the ghost of an ancestor by feasting with them or making offerings at their tomb.

¹ Translation by Emlyn-Jones & Preddy 2017. Over five centuries later, the Christian Lactantius indicates that some people (presumably here pagans) still have these beliefs: *vulges existimat, mortuorum animas circa tumulos et corporum suorum reliquias oberrare* ('people imagine that the spirits of the dead ramble around their tombs and the remains of their bodies', *Divinae institutiones* 2.2).

² Greece: Johnston 1999: 89 & 96; Rome: Hope 2007: 129: 'the Roman cemetery was in many respects a dynamic space, one of change and development, a marginal but still-active zone, a place that could be neglected, but by its presence, hugging the roads, one that could not be completely over-looked.' See also Hope 2009: 155.

³ For example, Atossa's evocation of Darius in Aeschylus' *Persians*, or Canidia and Sagana's raising of nameless ghosts in Horace's *Satire* 1.8. I discuss tomb-based necromancy in full below.

⁴ See Oakley 2004: 145-214 with plates.

⁵ I discuss examples from the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* spellbooks later in this section.

In both Greece and Rome feasts took place at the gravesite on the day of the funeral, and then some days later.⁶ Additionally there were annual festivals at which further offerings and libations were brought to tombs, such as the Attic *Genesia* or Roman *Parentalia* and *Feralia*.⁷ There were other dates at which the dead might be honoured: for example, some Roman inscriptions state that feasts should be held at other festivals such as the *Rosaria* and *Violaria*, or on the birthday of the deceased.⁸ Even into the Christian period some form of food and drink offering was delivered to the dead at the grave, as Augustine relates that his own mother did so at the tombs of martyrs.⁹

Archaeology provides concrete evidence of these offerings and feasts: some Roman tombs feature kitchens and dining rooms to hold feasts with the dead,¹⁰ and there are numerous inscriptions showing that it was common for the deceased to leave a legacy to fund these feasts in the future, or to stipulate them as a condition of the will.¹¹ The very fact that offerings to the dead at the gravesite were such an integral part of honouring one's ancestors indicates, as Burkert puts it, that the 'cult of the dead seems to presuppose that the deceased is present and active at the place of burial' in order to receive these offerings.¹²

⁶ In Rome this took place on the day of the funeral and then nine days later: see Robinson 2011: 339-340 and King 2009: 105. In Greece this took place on the day of the funeral, three days later, nine days later, and thirty days later: see Burkert 1985: 194.

⁷ One of the more widely used derivations of *Feralia* by the Romans themselves was from *ferre* 'to bring': I discuss this, along with these festivals, in the section later in this chapter.

⁸ Hope 2007: 70; Dolansky 2011: 134.

⁹ Augustine, *Confessions*, 6.2.

¹⁰ Toynbee 1971: 37; Hopkins 1983: 233; Hope 2007: 116 on the archaeological remains of food from graves; Hope 2009: 86; Hope 2009: 174 on the archaeological remains of kitchen and dining structures.

¹¹ Hope 2007: 70; Dolansky 2011: 134-135.

¹² Burkert 1985: 194.

Offerings to the ghosts could also be delivered directly into the tomb: 'holes were pierced and pipes provided so that the offerings and portions allotted to the dead could penetrate to the burials'.¹³ This certainly implies that those using the offering pipes expected the spirits of the deceased to be in some way present to accept them. These offering tubes could also be misused by those wanting to place curse tablets in graves: Gager reports that a curse tablet was found 'in a closed grave where it had been inserted through a pipe'.¹⁴

Johnston asserts that 'the great majority of tablets during the classical and Hellenistic periods were deposited in or near graves,'¹⁵ but not all were pushed maliciously through an offering pipe. In other situations, a magician might dig down to an inhumed body, or attempt to place some magical item in the coffin; a binding spell, for instance, was found by the right hand of a skeleton in a fourth century BC grave in Pella.¹⁶ Faraone has catalogued thirty-four ('all [those] known to me') individual or groups of 'voodoo dolls' from across the ancient world which were likely to have been used in binding spells.¹⁷ Of the fourteen

¹³ Toynbee 1971: 37. See Plate 7 in Hope 2009: A pipe for libations leading to a cremation grave protected by tiles. Hopkins 1983: 211 notes that cremated ashes could sometimes be buried in emptied wine jars, 'their necks projecting above the ground, both to mark the grave and to serve as a funnel, down which the bereaved could pour libations to the dead'; see also Hopkins 1983: 233-234. Dolansky 2011: 133 and 135-137 suggests that one reason why tombs were often richly decorated was for the benefit of the living who would be spending time there with their dead relatives.

¹⁴ The tablet dates from the second-century AD and was deposited in a grave in Messina, Sicily; see Gager 1992: 214 and Figure 26 for a drawing of this pipe in the tomb.

¹⁵ Johnston 1999: 71.

¹⁶ Voutiras 2015: 408.

¹⁷ Faraone 1991: 189. These dolls – effigies usually made from wax or clay – were not, of course, used for Voodoo or Vodou purposes; however, the term 'voodoo doll' tends to be applied to them as that is what they most resemble in Western popular culture; see Faraone 1991: 166 n. 4. Unlike modern 'voodoo dolls', in which pins are inserted into a doll in order to cause corresponding pain in the victim, these ancient dolls were primarily used for erotic or binding magic, with pins inserted being used to symbolise the binding of the victim, rather than any pain.

that are listed with their place of discovery, eight were found in graves, tombs or cemeteries.

Often it is clear that the magical material has been placed in the tomb or with the corpse as a means of getting these items to the ghost of the deceased, so that the ghost can carry out the magic. For example, a recipe (*PGM* IV.2006-2125) details how to summon a ghost in order to make it be the practitioner's assistant: write *voces magicae* on the hide of an ass, spread it under a corpse (or place it in a grave alongside one): by the time the practitioner returns home the ghost will have appeared. A recipe for a binding spell (*PGM* V.304-369) has the practitioner prepare a tablet, bury it in 'the grave of someone untimely dead', and say 'Spirit of the dead, who[ever] you are, I give over NN to you, so that he may not do NN thing'.¹⁸ A very short erotic spell (*PGM* XIXb.4-18) states that one is either to dedicate to or deposit with¹⁹ 'one who has died a violent death' a papyrus on which has been written '[I adjure you] by the [*voces magicae*]; you, who are able, / [raise] your body and go [to her, NN], until she is [willing]'.²⁰

Not all such magical materials had to be buried or concealed within the tomb – as Johnston observes, 'in other cases they are found near the top of the grave, and textual evidence suggests that they often were not buried at all.'²¹ Plato mentions waxen images left on tombs which make the superstitious think that they have been cursed (*Leges* 933b). We can also see this in *PGM* CXXIV.1-43, wherein a

¹⁸ Translation by Smith in Betz 1986: 106-107.

¹⁹ O'Neil in Betz 1986: 258 n. 3 has translated 'dedicated to', but notes that 'Preisendanz understands this as "deposit with"'.
²⁰ Translation by O'Neil in Betz 1986: 258.

²¹ Johnston 1999: 121.

ghost at a tomb is addressed by the magical practitioner, but the magical material is simply placed on and around the tomb rather than within it: 'Crush rhododendron plants with some vinegar and sprinkle the entrances to the tomb. Take a garland made from the plant, and while pronouncing the formula, attach it to the tomb'.²²

In addition to graveside magical activity, the tomb is a primary site for necromancy – Ogden refers to it as the 'conceptual home in the Greek and Roman worlds' for this type of divination.²³ This demonstrates that there must have been a strong belief that the tomb was an obvious place at which to consult the ghost of the deceased. The earliest extant literary depiction of necromancy taking place at a tomb is from Aeschylus' *Persians* (598-851), where the Persian queen Atossa calls up the ghost of her husband Darius from his grave. The tomb is part of the staging of the play, since Greek tragedies could rarely accommodate scene-changes, and so is a constant presence throughout the drama. Aeschylus has Atossa perform the necromantic rite at Darius' tomb as that was presumably the most logical place through which to contact him.²⁴

In *Satire* 1.8 Horace depicts a perversion of the necromantic rite found in the *Odyssey*:²⁵ the witch Canidia and her friend Sagana are seeking both magical ingredients and conference with ghosts in the Gardens of Maecenas on the

²² Translation by Kotansky in Betz 1986: 321.

²³ Ogden 2001b: 3.

²⁴ The tomb could also have been considered a convenient access point to the underworld – Darius implies at 697 that this is where he has come from, and that he will return to at 839. I discuss the underworld later in this chapter.

²⁵ I discuss the *Odyssey* scene in the underworld section below.

Esquiline, which had been built over an old cemetery for paupers (1.8.7-16).²⁶ Odysseus sailed to the edge of the Ocean in order to perform his necromancy; these Roman witches have to make do with a rather more local location, but they have chosen a sensible place where ghosts are likely to be. The witches dig the earth with their nails, whereas Odysseus used his sword, and they sacrifice a black sheep by ripping it apart with their teeth (1.8.26-28). They are performing their rite *ut inde manis elicerent, animas responsa daturas* ('that there-from they might draw the sprites, the souls that would give them answers', 1.8.28-29),²⁷ and we later see Sagana conversing with the ghosts that they have raised (1.8.40-41). The witches also appear to perform an erotic spell with a pair of dolls (1.8.30-33), and so may have chosen to execute this additional rite on this site in order to call upon the ghosts to assist with this act as well.²⁸ While the witches seem to burn at least one of the dolls,²⁹ they could well have buried the other one with the corporeal remains of the ghosts in the cemetery.³⁰

It is, in fact, a common trope in Roman literature to list witches' magical achievements, and to describe their skill at drawing ghosts from tombs as part of this. For example: Tibullus' 'honest witch' (*verax/... saga*, 1.2.41-42) can *cantu... manes... sepulcris/ elicit* ('with chanting draw out ghosts from tombs', 1.2.45-46); Ovid's bawd-witch Dipsas *evocat antiquis proavos atavosque sepulcris* ('summons

²⁶ See Hopkins 1983: 209-210 on the modern excavation of this cemetery. Ritner 1995: 3350 points to the use of abandoned or ruined cemeteries found in the Demotic magical papyri as yielding potent ghosts: 'spirits whose tomb offerings, and pleasant disposition, had long vanished.'

²⁷ Translation by Fairclough 1926.

²⁸ As Ritner 1995: 3368 notes, love spells in the *PGM* and *PDM* 'rely on invocations to the angry dead'. Ogden 2008: 47 on the fact they are probably using the same ghosts.

²⁹ At 1.8.30 we are told that one of the dolls is made of wax, and at 1.8.43-44 they burn *imagine cerea* 'a waxen image'.

³⁰ Numerous magical dolls have been discovered in graves, see Faraone 1991: 200-205.

forth from ancient sepulchres the dead of generations far remote', *Amores* 1.8.17);³¹ Virgil's witch in *Eclogue* 8 says that she has often seen Moeris – an interesting counterpoint to this trope since he is a male practitioner – *saepe animas imis excire sepulcris* ('oft call spirits from the depth of the grave', *Eclogue* 8.98).³² Horace's Canidia, whom we have already seen raise ghosts from a paupers' cemetery, claims that she can go one step further and *crematos excitare mortuos* ('raise the cremated dead', *Epode* 17.79).

As we have seen, whether for the purposes of honouring the spirit of an ancestor, or seeking out a ghost to use for magic or divination, there is plenty of evidence that both the Greeks and Romans believed that they could go to the gravesite to find and commune with the spirits of the dead. That such a plethora of evidence exists to support such an obvious point only serves to support my argument that a belief in ghosts haunting the threshold was unlikely given the lack of confirmation in that case.

§1.4.1.2: Haunted houses

Haunted cemeteries are perhaps to be expected; we might be more surprised to discover that stereotypical modern-day ghost stories about haunted houses have their origins in Greek and Roman antiquity, rattling chains and all. With a house we are moving closer to the idea of a haunted threshold, but these haunted house stories depend more upon the fact that the corpse of the ghost has been buried –

³¹ Translation by Showerman 1914; cf. Ovid, *Remedia amoris* 253-254.

³² Translation by Fairclough 1916. The Massylian witch, who assists Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid*, *nocturnosque movet Manis* ('stirs the nocturnal ghosts', 4.490); although here we do have to assume that it is from their grave that she disturbs them.

usually after being murdered (this is not ancestor burial) – within the house proper, rather than any notion that the ghost has somehow come from the threshold.

The earliest extended account we have of a haunted house dates to the second century BC and comes from the Roman stage – although it is likely to be based on a Greek original.³³ Plautus' *Mostellaria* is not really about a haunted house – the ghost is a ruse invented by the cunning slave Tranio to keep his master Theopropides out of the house – yet within the story that Tranio weaves to convince Theopropides that there is a ghost, we see elements that must represent 'realistic' Roman beliefs about haunted houses in order to draw humour from the audience's expectations. Of course we cannot divorce stage conventions from this dramatic story: the basic set for the original play would have featured the doors to Theopropides' house and his neighbour's house, and all the action therefore must take place on the street outside these doors. When Tranio warns Theopropides that by knocking on the doors to his house then he is likely to have angered the ghost inside and that he and his family could well now be in mortal danger (453-469; 519-521), this does not need to reflect a specific focus on doors in Roman superstition about haunted houses: for the sake of the narrative Theopropides needs to be convinced that he cannot enter, or knock at, the house, and for the sake of the audience all the action must take place outside anyway.

³³ See Felton 1999: 50 and Ogden 2007a: 205 & 220 n. 3 for earlier Greek comedies (the *Phasma* of both Philemon and Menander) which may have dealt with similar topics, but which are now in a fragmentary state. As well as being our earliest haunted house story, Toynbee 1971: 34 notes that the *Mostellaria* is 'our chief literary authority' for Roman ideas about the afterlife from before the first century BC.

However, the backstory that Tranio invents for his ghost may well have reflected contemporary Roman belief about how houses became haunted; it certainly becomes the norm for the origins of a haunted house in later centuries, as I shall discuss below. Tranio's cover story is that the ghost appeared to Theopropides' son Philolaches in his sleep (490-496) one night when Tranio had forgotten to put out the lamp (487) and reported:

*“ego transmarinus hospes sum Diapontius.
hic habito, haec mi dedita est habitatio.
nam me Accheruntem recipere Orcus noluit,
quia praemature uita careo. per fidem
deceptus sum: hospes me hic necauit isque me
defodit insepultum clam [ibidem] in hisce aedibus,
scelestus, auri causa. nunc tu hinc emigra.
scelestae [hae] sunt aedes, impia est habitatio.”*

“I am a guest from overseas, Diapontius. I live here, this dwelling place has been allotted to me: Orcus did not want to receive me into the Underworld because I lost my life before my time. I was deceived in violation of the obligations of hospitality: my host murdered me here and he secretly put me underground in this house without due rites, for the sake of gold, the criminal. Now move out from here. This house is under a curse, this dwelling place is defiled.”

(497-504)³⁴

Here we see that as one of the untimely dead, especially one who has been violently killed, Diapontius³⁵ is a restless ghost, unable to enter the underworld. He is therefore haunting the place which doubles as his place of murder and where his body has been buried.³⁶ The ghost, of course, does not exist (the noises heard from inside the house are actually Philolaches who is holding a party) and

³⁴ Translation by de Melo 2011.

³⁵ Claiming that the ghost was called Diapontius and had come *transmarinus* ('across the sea') indicates that Tranio is perhaps having to think on his feet rather too quickly as he comes up with his tall tale. Felton 1999: 50 suggests that details like this, which show that Tranio is making up the story as he goes along, are part of 'Plautus's way of characterizing Tranio and creating dramatic tension' as to whether Theopropides will realise that it is all a lie or not.

³⁶ Felton 1999: 57 notes that Tranio is on dangerous ground with this part of his story, since Theopropides could easily suggest that they exhume the corpse and rebury it properly in order to exorcise the ghost.

Tranio's trickery gradually begins to unravel. However, the fact that Theopropides was initially deceived about a ghost haunting the house, and the circumstances that led to it, certainly indicates that this would have been a recognisable idea to the contemporary audience. Indeed, Felton notes that '[Tranio's story's] effectiveness would have depended in part on the audience's familiarity with haunted-house stories.'³⁷

Pliny the Younger, in a letter to Licinius Sura dated to AD 102,³⁸ describes a number of ghost stories and asks Sura whether or not he believes in ghosts (Pliny himself, he reports, *ego ut esse credam in primis eo ducor*, 'I personally am encouraged to believe in their existence', *Epistulae* 7.27.2).³⁹ The longest, most detailed, story that Pliny recounts – 'probably the single most famous ghost story from antiquity'⁴⁰ – is that of a haunted house in Athens and the philosopher Athenodorus who bought it and laid the ghost (7.27.5-11).

³⁷ Felton 1999: 50. Haunted-house stories certainly stayed a familiar part of literature – I have already commented upon their similarity to modern day scary stories, and below will discuss similar tales in Pliny and Lucian. In fact, a story similar especially to Pliny's rendering can even be found in the fifth-century AD *Life of St Germanus* by Constantius of Lyon, in which St Germanus spends the night in a haunted house, invokes the name of Christ upon seeing the ghost, and the following day buries the bodies of two criminals discovered within the house (2.10); a century later Gregory the Great's version of the *Life* changes the ghost into a demon or the devil: see Ogden 2007a: 210.

³⁸ Ogden 2007a: 208.

³⁹ Translations of this *Epistula* are from Radice 1969. In addition to the haunted house tale, Pliny details the story of Curtius Rufus, who apparently saw the ghost of a large woman who was the representation of Africa and who foretold his future (7.27.2-4; this story is also found in Tacitus, *Annales* 11.21), and a story about ghosts giving haircuts in the middle of the night (which Pliny himself vouches to be true because it happened to one of his freedmen and one of his slaves, and which he took to be an omen about his own personal security: 7.27.12-14). Felton 1999: 62 suggests that these stories, since they contain elements of oral tradition, could well have been 'circulating regularly in society', but notes that 'Pliny also implies that Sura might not have heard these particular stories before.'

⁴⁰ Felton 1999: 65.

Athenodorus has heard about this haunted house – previous occupants reported that at night they heard a slowly-approaching clanking, before the ghost would materialise as an old man with chains on his arms and legs (7.27.5) – and decided to rent it. He deliberately waited for the ghost as night fell, reading by lamplight.⁴¹ He soon heard the clanking, but he ignored it and carried on with his work:

Tum crebrescere fragor, adventare et iam ut in limine, iam ut intra limen audiri.

Then the noise grew louder, came nearer, was heard in the doorway, and then inside the room.

(7.27.8)

Pliny's story emphasises the threshold, but the ghost has not come from it; it has come from an area beyond the threshold, paused on the threshold, and then passed into the room where Athenodorus is. It does not even spend much time waiting by the threshold: Athenodorus looks round to see the ghost, but continues to ignore it. It therefore moves forwards, closer to him again, and rattles its chains over his head to try and get his attention (7.27.9). The threshold here, therefore, is a narrative tool used to heighten suspense and horror, as the reader or listener imagines the slow forward movement of the ghost into the space that Athenodorus is occupying, heralded by its clanking chains. For Felton the threshold 'also signals the ghost's movement from the realm of the imagination into the realm of reality', as well as reflecting 'the marginal status of the ghost'.⁴² But what the threshold is explicitly not, is the home or haunt of this ghost.

⁴¹ Here we might remember that Tranio had also left a lamp alight when the ghost allegedly appeared to Philolaches.

⁴² Felton 1999: 95.

The story has a happy ending. Athenodorus stops his work and follows the ghost, which leads him *in aream domus* ('to the courtyard of the house', 7.27.10) – a liminal location in that it is both within the house and yet also outside – and disappears at a particular spot, at which, when excavated:

Inveniuntur ossa inserta catenis et implicita, quae corpus aevo terraque putrefactum nuda et exesa reliquerat vinculis; collecta publice sepeliuntur. Domus postea rite conditis manibus caruit.

There they found bones, twisted round with chains, which were left bare and corroded by the fetters when time and the action of the soil had rotted away the body. The bones were collected and given a public burial, and after the shades had been duly laid to rest the house saw them no more.

(7.27.11)

The house is, of course, the site of the ghost's burial, and presumably also its death,⁴³ which would explain why it has manifested there. Once the remains of the corpse are discovered and given proper burial rites – therefore laying the restless ghost – it no longer haunts the house.

Like Pliny's letter, Lucian's *Philopseudes* – which probably dates to the late AD 160s⁴⁴ – contains multiple ghost stories among its tales of the supernatural, but whereas Pliny claims to be reporting anecdotes privately to a friend, Lucian's stories are more consciously literary.⁴⁵ Lucian writes of a haunted house, in a

⁴³ The chains could imply an executed criminal, but a secret house burial is more suggestive of a murder victim.

⁴⁴ Ogden 2007a: 3.

⁴⁵ For instance, there is the tale of how Demaenete appeared to Eucrates in their home on the seventh day after her cremation, angry that he had missed one of her gilt slippers when he burned her belongings with her on the pyre; this is undoubtedly a parody of Periander's wife Melissa being consulted through the necromantic oracle at Acheron as to the whereabouts of misplaced treasure, as reported in Herodotus 5.92. See Felton 1999: 79 and Ogden 2007a: 196-197 for discussions of the key differences between the tales of Eucrates and Periander. Eucrates was reading Plato's *Phaedo* when Demaenete appeared, which may well be an homage to Athenodorus' philosophical readings when he encountered his ghost in Pliny's story, as well as an in-joke about the soul or spirit. Eucrates finds and burns the sandal, and Demaenete is presumably satisfied, as this is where the story ends (*Philopseudes* 27-28). Another story is primarily about a young man who employs a Hyperborean mage to conduct a love spell for him, but part of the mage's rite is to evocate ghost of the young man's father. In a scene which

strong homage to Pliny's earlier tale.⁴⁶ This time the house is in Corinth, belonging to Eubatides, and the Pythagorean Arignotus – our narrator – is the one who claims to have exorcised it (*Philopseudes* 30-31). Like Athenodorus, Arignotus heard about the haunted house and decided to stay there; he was reading at night – again, by lamplight – when the ghost appeared to him. Here is where the narratives deviate somewhat, as this ghost seems much more malevolent than Pliny's, turning into various vicious animals and attacking Arignotus (31).⁴⁷ Arignotus uses magic against the ghost, which eventually disappears. When Arignotus and Eubatides arrange to exhume the area where the ghost had disappeared, they again find νεκρὸς ἔωλος μὸνα τὰ ὀστᾶ κατὰ σχῆμα συγκεείμενος ('a mouldering body of which only the bones lay together in order', 31);⁴⁸ the body is duly reburied with the proper rites, and the house is not troubled again.

As we have seen, the bare bones of the haunted-house story found in Plautus are picked up by later writers: the ghost, usually malevolent, has been buried in the house, often presumed murdered and buried *in situ*, and typically appears to the hero of the story at night by lamplight.⁴⁹ Tranio's ghost did not actually exist (or

certainly calls to mind part of Pliny's story, the mage digs a pit in the courtyard (*Philopseudes* 14) and from here he calls up the ghost. Ogden notes that the courtyard is 'an emphatically untypical place for the summoning of ghosts', and raises the possibility that, by analogy with Pliny's tale, the young man could have murdered his father (Ogden 2007a: 118 & 119).

⁴⁶ See Felton 1999: 81, who summarises critical literature on Lucian's borrowing from Pliny here, and at 1999: 82 charts the similarities and differences between the tales.

⁴⁷ Felton 1999: 86 wonders whether 'the shape-shifting ability of this ghost may help further identify it as an evil daimon rather than the ghost of an individual.'

⁴⁸ Translation by Harmon 1921.

⁴⁹ The ghosts which appear in the stories reported by Pliny and Lucian also appear at night by lamplight, although it is only Philolaches who is asleep at the time. Felton 1999: 55 observes that Tranio's mention of the lamp is odd, since the ghost is appearing to Philolaches in a dream; there are, according to Felton, 'no other instances of dream-ghosts appearing by lamplight... Tranio in his haste seems to have conflated two different types of ghost-lore', and in the case of a haunted house it would make more sense for the ghost to appear in person to an inhabitant of the house,

‘exist’), but in stories which report a ‘genuine’ ghost, the solution to the haunting is to find the hidden body and rebury it according to custom. These ghosts, then, are intrinsically connected both to the location of and the treatment received by their bodies; they are not found in the house because of a fundamental connection with the threshold.

§1.4.2: Death sites

The ghosts in the haunted house stories are haunting not only their place of burial, but also their place of death (certainly in the case of Tranio’s ghost; presumably for Pliny’s and Lucian’s). This is not a phenomenon restricted to houses: Plutarch mentions the ghost of Damon which can be seen and heard in the bathhouse where he met his end.⁵⁰ The local population eventually wall up the door to the baths, although:

μέχρι νῦν οἱ τῷ τόπῳ γειτνιῶντες οἴονται τινὰς ὄψεις καὶ φωνὰς
ταραχώδεις φέρεσθαι.
to this present time the neighbours think it the source of alarming sights
and sounds.

(*Cimon* 1.6)⁵¹

In Horace’s fifth *Epode*, witches are starving a boy to death, in order to use his desiccated marrow and liver in a love potion, by burying him up to the neck in what is presumably the *atrium* of their own house (and here we might compare

rather than in a dream. It was very common for ghosts to appear to people in their sleep; see Felton 1999: 19.

⁵⁰ This is an example of what Felton 1999: 36-37 refers to as a ‘recording-type’ of haunting, as if the ghost has been ‘recorded’ onto that location and is ‘replayed’, often repeatedly, in future.

⁵¹ Translation by Perrin 1914. A *PGM* recipe (II.1-64) is to draw magical figures on papyrus, wrap it in a piece of clothing from a murder victim, and throw it into the furnace of a bathhouse. Ogden 2001b: 22 notes that curse tablets have been found in bathhouses, which ‘were often haunted in their own right, the ghosts being delivered into them by the underground waters on which they drew’. I discuss the haunting of water further, below.

Athenodorus' courtyard). The fact that one of them is sprinkling water from Lake Avernus all around the house (*per totam domum*, 5.25-26) while another is digging the hole (5.29-32) certainly suggests that they are in an open-air domestic setting rather than in an outside location such as a field or cemetery.⁵² The boy, then, will die in their house, although it is not clear what the witches will do with the remaining corpse once they have dug it up to eviscerate it; perhaps they will rebury it in the convenient hole, or perhaps they will dump it elsewhere. What is important for our purposes is the boy's final curse to the witches: he promises that he will return to haunt them (5.86). Even though he does not know what will happen to his corpse, he seems confident that his ghost will be able to return to the site of his death in order to attack the witches:

*nocturnus occurram Furor
petamque vultus umbra curvis unguibus,
quae vis deorum est Manium*

I shall haunt you by night as a Fury; my ghost will attack your faces with its hooklike claws—such a power belongs to the spirits of the dead.
(5.92-94)⁵³

The boy goes on to say that elsewhere a crowd will stone the witches (5.5.97-98) and wolves and carrion birds will scatter their bones on the Esquiline (5.99-100). Evidently, then, other agents will be hounding the witches outside the house, and the boy's ghost will be haunting the witches at night (in their dreams?), in their home where he died.⁵⁴

⁵² Mankin 1995: 119 suggests that Veia could be digging in 'the soil in the *impluuium*' of Canidia's house (see Mankin 1995: 109 for Canidia's house).

⁵³ Translation by Rudd 2004.

⁵⁴ Mankin 1995: 109 points out that the witches' spell will therefore have backfired: instead of turning the boy into a love potion, he is 'transformed into a supernatural force of vengeance.' Ogden 2008: 48 confirms that the 'curses of the dying were regarded as particularly powerful, since they could be enacted directly by the curser's ghost as it was released', and here we might compare Dido in *Aeneid* 4.607-665, who curses Aeneas as she kills herself.

It is not only restless ghosts (as murder victims would certainly be) that might haunt their place of death. In exile, Ovid worried that his ghost would be stranded in the Pontus, even if his bones were returned to be buried at Rome:

*atque utinam pereant animae cum corpore nostrae,
effugiatque avidos pars mihi nulla rogos!
nam si morte carens vacua volat altus in aura
spiritus, et Samii sunt rata dicta senis,
inter Sarmaticas Romana vagabitur umbras,
perque feros manes hospita semper erit.
ossa tamen facito parva referantur in urna:
sic ego non etiam mortuus exul ero.*

O that our souls might perish with the body and that so no part of me might escape the greedy pyre! For if the spirit flits aloft deathless in the empty air, and the words of the Samian sage are true, a Roman will wander among Sarmatian shades, a stranger forever among barbarians. But my bones—see that they are carried home in a little urn: so shall I not be an exile even in death.

(*Tristia* 59-66)⁵⁵

We can therefore see a clear belief in the haunting of a death site by a ghost, regardless of where the body itself has been deposited.

§1.4.2.1: Battlefields

An obvious death site that could be haunted for both the Greeks and Romans was the battlefield, where countless men were killed by violence and may also have remained unburied – they would thus become potent ghosts, and Ogden observes that it is for this reason that battlefields were ‘a suitable place for the

⁵⁵ Translation by Wheeler 1924. In *Epistula ex Ponto* 1.2.107-112 Ovid again expresses the wish that he might be buried back in Rome; he adds to this the hope that *et ne, si superest aliquis post funera sensus, terreat et Manes Sarmatis umbra meos* (‘and if there be some feeling that survives after death, that no Sarmatian shade terrify even my spirit’, 1.2.111-112, trans. Wheeler 1924), which implies that the ghost might be able to follow the remains back to their new place of burial. Ogden 2001b: 101 maintains that ‘a ghost did have the ability to haunt at once both the place in which its body lay and the place of its death.’

deposition of curse tablets'.⁵⁶ Felton notes that stories about 'ghostly armies were frequent in antiquity', either as unique incidents or as a 'continual apparition' where the battle was replayed repeatedly by the ghosts of the combatants.⁵⁷ Pausanias, writing some six hundred and fifty years after the battle of Marathon, reported that ἐνταῦθα ἀνὰ πᾶσαν νύκτα καὶ ἵππων χρεμετιζόντων καὶ ἀνδρῶν μαχομένων ἔστιν αἰσθῆσθαι ('here every night you can hear horses neighing and men fighting', 1.32.4);⁵⁸ if you are there by accident the ghosts will leave you alone, but not if you go there deliberately. These apparitions appear to have happened spontaneously, but an oblique anecdote in Herodotus implies that it was possible to deliberately call up a ghostly army: when travelling past the site of Troy, the mages of the Persian king Xerxes pour libations to the dead heroes, and the Persian army spends the night in terror (7.43); the frightened human army is evidently worried about the ghostly consequences of this action.⁵⁹

Perhaps the most famous literary account of a ghost appearing on a battlefield is in Lucan's *Bellum civile*. A ghost army, like the one at Marathon, appears as a portent of war early in the poem:

⁵⁶ Ogden 2001b: 12. As well as soldiers dead by violence on a battlefield, magical practitioners could exploit the ghosts of gladiators who died in the arena. *PGM* IV.1390-1495 is to be performed 'where heroes and gladiators and those who have died a violent death were slain'. This spell could also, given the wording used, be used with the ghost of any murder victim, which was evidently considered to haunt its place of death, as the stories in Plutarch and Horace discussed above also indicated.

⁵⁷ Felton 1999: 36.

⁵⁸ Translation by Jones 1918. Felton 1999: 111 n. 60 points out that there is no evidence in Herodotus, our main source for this battle, for the use of cavalry.

⁵⁹ Ogden 2001b: 130 argues that Herodotus is 'exercising his familiar reticence in matters of the supernatural' here, which is why the implication of the mages' actions are so vague. Here we might compare the story in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* that Apollonius visited the site of the Trojan War and spent the night at Achilles' burial mound; he had called up the ghost of Achilles by praying to him and politely requesting his presence. Achilles agreed to grant Apollonius five questions about the Trojan War, and disappeared at dawn when the cocks began to crow (4.11-16).

*Tum fragor armorum magnaue per avia voces
Auditae nemorum et venientes comminus umbrae.*

The crash of arms was heard also, and loud cries in pathless forests, and the noise of spectral armies closing in battle.

(1.569-570)⁶⁰

The ghost in question, however, is not a mere manifestation, but a revenant summoned by the witch Erictho. In an extended necromantic episode (6.413-830), Sextus Pompeius deliberately seeks out the Thessalian Erictho – rather than a traditional divine oracle – having heard rumours of the accuracy of her prophecy and her magical skills.⁶¹ As a witch, Erictho is a liminal figure; Graf describes her portrayal as ‘fill[ed] with all the features characteristic of extreme marginality’.⁶² She resides in the liminal locale of the cemetery – the outskirts of habitation⁶³ – squatting in deserted funeral pyres (*deserta... busta*, 6.511), and *tumulos expulsis obtinet umbris* (‘haunted graves from which the ghosts had been driven’, 6.512).⁶⁴

So far, then, ghosts according to Lucan can be found around their tombs or where they died on the battlefield. When we look carefully, however, at how Erictho performs her necromancy, it becomes apparent that the ghost of the dead soldier that Erictho wants to use is not currently present, but must be pulled back from the underworld; in fact Erictho addresses Charon as being

⁶⁰ Translations of *Bellum civile* are by Duff 1928.

⁶¹ Faraone 2005: 272 argues that Sextus’ deliberate rejection of the normal, sanctioned forms of divination in preference for necromancy is indicative of ‘the role of Roman authorities in curtailing graveside necromancy’.

⁶² Graf 1997: 190.

⁶³ Not just a symbol of the marginality of the dead: it was a legal requirement for corpses to be burned and buried outside the walls of a Roman town or city; see Hope 2007: 129 and Hope 2009: 154.

⁶⁴ A *tumulus* was a burial mound and/or the accompanying monument; a *bustum* was the place where a corpse was burned before being buried *in situ*. See Hope 2009: 82 and 191. That Erictho dwells among the graves and tombs is reinforced at 6.519-520: *tunc Thessala nudis / Egreditur bustis* (‘then she issues forth from rifled tombs’).

lassate ('weary' 6.705) of rowing dead souls back across the Acheron, suggesting that such necromancy is a frequent task for her. Erictho will not talk to the insubstantial ghost itself during her necromancy; instead, she will perform a ritual to reanimate the corpse and force the ghost to re-enter the body in order to speak.⁶⁵

Erictho selects a freshly-killed, unburied,⁶⁶ corpse from the battlefield so that its speech will be easier to understand,⁶⁷ and demands

modo luce fugata
Descendentem animam; primo pallentis hiatu
Haeret adhuc Orci
but for some soul that is just going down and leaving the light behind him;
he still lingers at the entrance of the chasm that leads to gloomy Orcus
(6.713-715)

We see here the liminal imagery that is often associated with the spirits of the dead. The ghost that Erictho wants is on the threshold of the underworld as it has not yet been long on its journey to Hades (also, as an unburied corpse it might not be able to pass any further). A dead soul at the threshold of the underworld is, of course, completely acceptable, and this image should not be applied to the threshold of the house.

⁶⁵ Faraone 2005: 273 sees parallels in Erictho's summoning of a spirit here with 'many of the details [in] the recipes of the Greek magical papyri, which invoke the gods of the underworld to send up a spirit.'

⁶⁶ At 6.626 we are told that these soldiers have been thrown out and denied tombs (*corpora caesorum tumulis proiecta negatis*) – this confirms that these corpses would make doubly special ghosts as they are dead by violence and unburied. It is not clear by this phrase whether the survivors of the battle have deliberately left the bodies to rot, or whether there were other circumstances which meant that they were unburied.

⁶⁷ Its voice box will not be dried up; otherwise, it would squeak: 6.619-623. We have been told earlier (6.513-515; and will be again later at 6.700-701) that Erictho herself can understand the speech of ghosts, so this is perhaps so that Pompey can understand the prophecy too.

Erictho drags the corpse off the battlefield to a deep, dark cave; it is, says our narrator, *maestum mundi confine latentis/ Ac nostri* ('the gloomy boundary between the unseen world and ours', 6.649-50). The ghost is called back, reluctant, from the underworld, gives the prophecy, and then Erictho fulfils her promise that the ghost will never be used in necromancy again by burning the corpse. This act of burial would therefore ensure the ghost's entrance to the underworld proper: it would no longer be one of the restless dead.

§1.4.3: Underworld

In the analysis above I touched upon the underworld. Burial sites and death sites are very much places where a ghost might haunt in this world, especially if it were unable to enter fully into the underworld. In fact, even those spirits of the dead which *were* considered to have crossed the river to the underworld – and from as far back as our earliest literary attestation, Homer, the underworld has been considered the final resting place of the majority of the souls of the dead – might also be thought at times to be present at their tomb. It is quite common for the living to be unconcerned at the contradiction in assuming that a spirit of the dead might be both present at the grave in order to receive offerings (for an ancestor being honoured on feast days) or to be exploited (in the case of the restless dead), *and* resident in the underworld. This is apparent in a love spell in *PGM* IV.296-466, which is to be performed by 'the grave of one who has died untimely or violently' whilst holding part of the corpse. The ghost is evidently to be considered present in the vicinity of the tomb, and an initial invocation is to 'all the daimons in this place to stand as assistants beside this daimon'; yet later

on, the final part of the ritual is a prayer for a god to search out the daimon in question in the 'regions of the dead' and send it to carry out the spell.⁶⁸

The underworld, being essentially a repository of the dead, is therefore an obvious place for the living to seek spirits, whether for magical purposes, necromancy, or other reasons. But how do the living access the realm of the dead? This is obviously something that is easier for literary or mythological characters to literally do, despite Cicero accusing Vatinius of being accustomed *cum inferorum animas elicere, cum puerorum extis deos manes mactare soleas* ('to evoke spirits from the underworld, and to appease the infernal deities with the entrails of boys', *In Vatinium* 6.14).⁶⁹

Homer's *Odyssey* features our earliest extant necromantic scene, in which Odysseus consults with the dead prophet Teiresias and other ghosts from the underworld. Bremmer describes this scene as a 'somewhat uneasy combination of a necromancy proper and a descent into the underworld',⁷⁰ and there does remain some question over whether this is a *katabasis* (descent to the underworld) on Odysseus' part or not.⁷¹ Circe had given Odysseus directions εἰς Ἄϊδεω... δόμον εὐρώεντα ('to the dank house of Hades', 10.512),⁷² which certainly suggests that Odysseus is to literally enter it. However, during the consultation the ghosts come to Odysseus rather than him going to them: they

⁶⁸ Translation by O'Neil in Betz 1986: 44-47. For more on this aspect of this spell in the *PGM*, see Graf 1997: 150.

⁶⁹ Translation by Gardner 1958.

⁷⁰ Bremmer 2002: 72.

⁷¹ Burkert 1985: 196 notes the contradiction inherent in the Homeric poems, in that 'in the *Odyssey*, the kingdom of the dead is located far away at the edge of the world beyond the Oceanos, and sometimes, as in the *Iliad*, it lies directly beneath the earth.'

⁷² Translations of the *Odyssey* are by Murray 1919.

rise up out of the underworld to meet him, gathering by the libation- and blood-filled trench which he has dug in the earth.

Attracting whichever dead are available with a blood-filled trench is not quite what we might imagine when we think of necromancy; there does not seem to be the same deliberative purpose on the part of the practitioner (here Odysseus) on calling up the specific ghost that he wishes to consult (here Teiresias) as there is in later descriptions of necromancies – be it the invocation-fuelled summoning of Darius or Erictho’s detailed reanimation rituals. Johnston, who argues that the scene is not necromantic, takes particular issue with the fact that Ajax refuses to speak to Odysseus: ‘proving Odysseus a poor necromancer by the standard meaning of the term.’⁷³

There are, however, some hints within the text that Odysseus could well be in the underworld proper during his adventure, even if there is no explicit indication that he moves far from the trench. The ghost of Achilles asks πῶς ἔτλης Ἄιδόσδε κατελθέμεν (‘How did you dare to come down to Hades’, 11.475). For Achilles, Odysseus has indeed entered the underworld. Odysseus later reports on the sights and heroes that he sees in various places around the underworld which suggest that he must be in there in order to experience these scenes. Heracles even makes the assumption that Odysseus is performing a *katabasis* just like Heracles himself once did (11.616-619).⁷⁴ And once Odysseus has returned to

⁷³ Johnston 2005b: 288-289.

⁷⁴ See Johnston 2005b: 289 on this interaction and Felton 2007: 94-95 on Heracles’ *katabasis*.

Circe's island, Circe greets him and his crew as men οἱ ζῶντες ὑπήλθετε δῶμ' Αἴδαο ('who have gone down alive to the house of Hades', 12.21).

The ambiguity of the situation, of course, adds to the overall eerie and mysterious atmosphere. De Jong has suggested a sensible compromise, that Odysseus has not descended *into* the underworld, but has performed his trench ritual at the *entrance*, at which some ghosts can visit him, and he can see others within.⁷⁵ Achilles' and Heracles' words, therefore, could be some form of *totum pro parte*, in which Odysseus' lingering by the entrance is considered a visit to the underworld proper. The liminal setting would thus reflect Odysseus' liminal position as a member of the living interacting with the dead.

Ultimately, for our purposes, regardless of whether we are supposed to imagine that Odysseus literally went to the underworld, the important point is that Odysseus needs to consult a ghost – in this case Teiresias – and the underworld is where the ghosts are. Even Elpenor, who has only just died (he fell off Circe's roof on that morning and therefore is currently unburied) is already in Hades by the time Odysseus arrives, much to Odysseus' surprise. We might have expected Elpenor's ghost to be stuck haunting Circe's house, but in fact ψυχὴ δ' Ἄιδόσδε κατήλθεν ('his ghost went down to the house of Hades', 10.560), although he begs Odysseus to ensure that he is buried properly once Odysseus returns to Circe's island.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ de Jong 2001: 271.

⁷⁶ The murdered suitors in *Odyssey* 24 are also taken straight down to the underworld by Hermes.

Odysseus' need to consult a spirit of the dead, and his subsequent underworld experience is used as a model by Virgil in *Aeneid* 6, who has Aeneas descend – in this case it is an unequivocal *katabasis* – to the underworld in order to see his father Anchises again. Rather oddly, Aeneas is informed that he needs to visit his father in the underworld by his father's ghost itself, which visits him at night (presumably in a dream) to pass on the message (5.722-740); evidently the ghost requires a longer meeting. Aeneas is even near where his father was buried (5.55) and so we could expect a necromantic scene at the gravesite, but instead he travels to an access-point of the underworld at Cumae and descends with the aid of the Sybil. Once again, what we see is that if someone needs to consult a ghost, then they go to where the ghosts are likely to be found.

In fact, even restless ghosts – those we might assume are stuck haunting the living – can be found in the underworld, in both the Greek and Roman traditions. Elpenor's unburied nature means that he and other categories of restless ghost including those untimely dead and those dead by violence are flocking near to the entrance (*Odyssey* 11.36-41). It is likely that they cannot enter the underworld proper without a formal burial, but they are still within its environs.⁷⁷ Virgil gives us a detailed map of the locations of different types of ghost in his version of the underworld, and here we see, in Ogden's words, that for Virgil 'all categories of the restless dead remain liminal.'⁷⁸ Those who are unburied are stuck on the far side of the Styx (*Aeneid* 6.305-330), and those who have died untimely are located just inside the entrance (6.426-449). It is true

⁷⁷ Patroclus' ghost in *Iliad* 23.73-74 says he must be buried to enter Hades.

⁷⁸ Ogden 2002: 148.

that these ghosts are at the threshold, but it is the threshold of the underworld, not that of a house.

§1.4.4: Oracles of the dead

While necromancy was a popular literary trope for both Greeks and Romans – we have already seen examples of necromancy taking place in cemeteries, on battlefields, and in the underworld proper – there is less evidence that it was practised in reality. It appears to have been more of a Greek phenomenon, and Ogden points out that the ‘Latin necromantic tradition as we have it follows on all but seamlessly from the Greek.’⁷⁹ While there exist some relatively ‘historical’ mentions of necromancy in literature, such as Herodotus’ account of Periander’s evocation of Melissa at the *nekuomanteion* (‘oracle of the dead’) at Acheron in Thesprotia (5.92) or Plutarch’s mentions of Pausanias doing the same to Cleonice at the Heracleia Pontica *nekuomanteion* (*De sera numinis vindicata* 12 and *Cimon* 6), Ogden notes that the ‘the sole direct “documentary” evidence for the practice of necromancy in antiquity’ is not a verifiable account or the archaeological remains of consultations at *nekuomanteia*, but that found in the Pityis spells in *PGM* IV.⁸⁰ These recipes require a skull or corpse to divine information, and Faraone has used them to argue that necromantic rituals are found in disguised form in the *PGM*, with words like ‘cup’ used instead of ‘skull’.⁸¹ However,

⁷⁹ Ogden 2001b: xxii; see also Ogden 2001a: 168 for a linguistic analysis on the relevant terminology used, which draws the same conclusions.

⁸⁰ Ogden 2001b: xxxi

⁸¹ Faraone 2005. Bremmer 2002: 81 sees the difference between the evocative literary portrayals in which a ghost is consulted, and the skull in the Pityis spells which functions instead as ‘the medium for the questions’ (rather than ‘the object of the enquiry’) and concludes that this demonstrates ‘the difference [between] the necromantic practices of the Archaic and Classical periods.’ Graf 1997: 199 states instead that the use of a skull in the Pityis spells indicates that ‘this is not necromancy. The skull functions as a magical essence’. He argues at 1997: 200 for an

Johnston maintains that ‘although the Greeks liked to entertain the idea of necromancy in their imaginations, in reality they shunned it, as they shunned most forms of contact with the dead’, and argues that necromancy – including for the most part that allegedly performed at *nekuomanteia* – remained a fictional, fantastical notion.⁸²

Nevertheless, there was a tradition that there were four main *nekuomanteia*, at which one could visit and commune with the dead; there is no catalogue from antiquity, but four names recur:

Acheron in Thesprotia, Avernus in Campania, Heracleia Pontica on the coast of the Black Sea, and Tainaron at the tip of the Peloponnese’s Mani peninsula.⁸³

To Bremmer, such a list ‘suggests that consulting the dead at a specific oracle was not uncommon in the Greek world’,⁸⁴ and certainly the handful of references we do have present the consultation of ghosts at the various *nekuomanteia* in a matter of fact manner, in much the same way as a consultation with Apollo at Delphi or Zeus at Dodona might be represented. Ogden argues that the likely method of consulting the dead in these places was through incubation: in a dream as the consulter slept at the oracle.⁸⁵ Archaeologists have attempted to

alternative reference to necromancy in the papyri at *PGM* IV.2164-2166: one is to write 3 lines from the *Iliad* onto an iron lamella: ‘Attach it to a criminal who has been executed, speak the verses in his ear, and he will tell you everything you wish’ (trans. Martin in Betz 1986: 76).

⁸² Johnston 2005a: 22. See also Johnston 2005b: 292: ‘Even if some of these *nekuomanteia* were real, functioning sites, they have not left such evidence as to persuade us that they wielded significant influence or attracted much of a clientele’, and Johnston 2008: 98.

⁸³ Ogden 2001a: 168-169.

⁸⁴ Bremmer 2002: 73.

⁸⁵ Ogden 2001b: xxv; incubation is only one suggestion, though it remains the most realistic notion. See Ogden 2001b: 18 for the discounted theory of elaborate puppetry performed by priests to trick consulters into thinking that they had seen ghosts. Johnston 1999: 84 notes that it is not clear, for *nekuomanteia*, ‘whether the dead were imagined to appear to the questioners or the questioners were imagined to descend to them’.

find the *nekuomanteia*, based on literary descriptions, and while the alleged sites of Acheron and Avernus have been discredited, Ogden makes the claim that for Heracleia Pontica and Tainaron, ‘the literary evidence for them, although limited, leads us fairly directly to the sites in question.’⁸⁶ However, that being said, it is wise to heed both Johnston’s warnings mentioned above, and Ogden’s own admission that:

No ancient account of a consultation of a *nekuomanteion* retains the appearance of historicity after scrutiny. Not even the most miserable piece of epigraphy can be associated with a *nekuomanteion*.⁸⁷

Whether necromancy was actually carried out at these oracles or not, the important point to note is that people evidently *believed that* it was, or could be, and that these sites had a reputation for it. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, warned Christians to avoid ἡ λέβητα Θεσπρωτίου (‘the Thesprotian cauldron’, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 2.1). I have already mentioned Herodotus and Plutarch’s references to Acheron and Heracleia Pontica respectively, and Plutarch is additionally a source for the oracle at Tainaron, at which Corax allegedly sought peace from the ghost of Archilochus (*De sera numinis vindicata* 17). Cicero makes a scornful reference to Appius performing necromancy and then mentions *in vicinia nostra Averni lacus* (‘Lake Avernus in our neighbourhood’, *Tusculanae disputationes* 1.16.37), quoting an unknown poet’s verses about ghosts rising from the mouth of the Acheron river.⁸⁸ Once again, as is the theme of this chapter, we see that if one wishes to consult a ghost then one

⁸⁶ Ogden 2001b: 29. For the alleged site of Acheron, discovered by Sotirios Dakaris, see Ogden 2001b: 19-21; for Avernus, discovered by R. F. Paget, see Ogden 2001b: 21-22. Hardie 1969 argues that the site at Avernus was unconnected to the *nekuomanteion* but served a mystery cult instead; see the appendix at Hardie 1969: 32-33 for more on the potential for a *nekuomanteion* in the vicinity.

⁸⁷ Ogden 2001b: 22.

⁸⁸ Translation by King 1927. See Horsfall 2013: 80-81 for a full list of references to Avernus.

must go to a specific place where the ghost is likely to be: in this case, a *nekuomanteion*.

These sites had such easy access to ghosts as they were considered to be access-points of the underworld.⁸⁹ Both Heracleia Pontica and Tainaron, for instance, claimed to be the location where Heracles exited the underworld with Cerberus.⁹⁰ Johnston highlights the liminal nature of these sites, their ‘foreignness and uncanniness’, since they are on the margins of the Greek world.⁹¹ This liminal geography is further reflected by the topography of the sites, with the Heracleia and Tainaron oracles situated in caves, and Acheron and Avernus by the sides of lakes (probably in precincts – Avernus’ potentially in a nearby cave but Acheron’s simply by the lakeside – according to Ogden).⁹² The Acheron *nekuomanteion* is famously located at the confluence of the River Acheron and another stream which Pausanias named the Cocytus; Pausanias suggested that Homer had visited the area and used it as a model for his own description of Odysseus’ visit to the underworld (1.17.5). Bremmer, discussing the potential location of the Acheron *nekuomanteion*, argued that its remoteness would have been part of the lure of the site: ‘This appearance of inaccessibility will have prevented the idea that the dead could freely arise from the underworld to swarm over the land.’⁹³ As underworld access-points, *nekuomanteia* would be, as Johnston observes, ‘places where the upper and

⁸⁹ See, e.g. Johnston 1999: 84-85; Ogden 2001b: xxv; Bremmer 2002: 73.

⁹⁰ Heracleia Pontica: Ogden 2001b: 29; Tainaron: Ogden 2001b: 34.

⁹¹ Johnston 2005b: 291. Avernus was on the far side of Italy, Acheron near the northern Greek borders and Tainaron right at the southern point of the mainland, with Heracleia Pontica on the border of the Black Sea.

⁹² Ogden 2001a: 167 & 169; Ogden 2001b: 17-18.

⁹³ Bremmer 2002: 74.

lower worlds were closer together than normal':⁹⁴ ideal locations to speak with the dead.

An addendum to this discussion of the *nekuomanteia* is the notion that ghosts could haunt bodies of water. We have seen that the Acheron and Avernus oracles were based at lakes, and in Aristophanes' *Aves* Socrates is mocked for performing necromancy at a lake (1553-1564).⁹⁵ A number of curse tablets addressed to ghosts have been discovered in water, especially underground sources.⁹⁶ A binding spell (*PGM* VII. 429-58) requires a plate to be deposited in 'river or land or sea or stream or coffin or in a well',⁹⁷ and another (*PGM* III.282-409) can be performed either at a deep river or a tomb.⁹⁸ Propertius, in a list of types of prophecy, refers to *umbra... quae magicis mortua prodit aquis* ('the dead shade who comes forth from magic waters', 4.1.106), which again implies that ghosts could be found in, and necromancy carried out at, a source of water.⁹⁹

§1.4.5: Festivals of the dead

So far, the spirits of the dead have been tied somewhat to specific locations: mostly their place of burial, or death, or the underworld itself. However, there were certain times of the year when ghosts were considered to move more freely

⁹⁴ Johnston 1999: 84.

⁹⁵ Bremmer 2002: 76 states that this was 'probably Lake Avernus'.

⁹⁶ See Ogden 2001b: 48 n. 21 for a detailed list, which includes the large corpus of tablets found in the spring at the baths in Bath (some of which are translated in Gager 1992).

⁹⁷ Translation by Smith in Betz 1986: 130.

⁹⁸ Note that this part of the text is fragmentary.

⁹⁹ Translation by Goold 1990. Ogden 2001b: 68 notes that the 'key term here is contrived to be ambivalent between necromantic lecanomancy and lakeside necromancy.'

among the living – for the Athenians there was the *Anthesteria*,¹⁰⁰ and the *Genesia*, ‘a festival at which the whole citizen body honored the souls of the dead’.¹⁰¹ In Rome we saw in Chapter Three that there was an annual expulsion of ghosts from the house during the *Lemuria* and that – as explained above – families honoured their dead during the *Parentalia* and *Feralia*; there was also the opening of the *mundus* which occurred three times a year.

§1.4.5.1: Greece

§1.4.5.1.1: *Genesia* and/or *Nemesia*

We know little about the Greek *Genesia*. Herodotus mentions it very briefly, as an analogy for the Issedones’ annual celebration of the dead:¹⁰²

παῖς δὲ πατρὶ τοῦτο ποιέει, κατὰ περ Ἑλληνας τὰ γενέσια.
Every son does so for his father, just like the Greeks in their *Genesia*.
(4.26.2)¹⁰³

This suggests that however the *Genesia* is celebrated, it is a pan-Hellenic festival, and one in honour of dead family members (potentially just a private celebration performed by an heir for his father); the name *Genesia*, with its stem ‘*gen-*’, ‘race’ or ‘family’, supports this notion. But in a later fragment of Philochorus, the *Genesia* is now an Athenian state festival, of unspecified purpose, celebrated on

¹⁰⁰ Although as Johnston 1999: 63 notes our information about the *Anthesteria* is primarily from Athens, it was also celebrated by the Ionians.

¹⁰¹ Felton 1999: 12.

¹⁰² The Issedones were a Central Asian people.

¹⁰³ Translation by Godley 1921, adapted.

the fifth of *Boedromion* (late September).¹⁰⁴ Hesychius clarifies that this Athenian festival is a festival of the dead:¹⁰⁵

ἑορτὴ πένθιμος Ἀθηναίοις. οἱ δὲ τὰ νεκύσια. καὶ ἐν ἧ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ γῆ θύουσι.
a festival of mourning for the Athenians. Others say the *Nekusia*. And on
this day they make sacrifices to Ge.

(Hesychius s.v. Γενέσια)¹⁰⁶

Sacrificing to Ge, as earth, the abode of the dead, at a festival of the dead is logical,¹⁰⁷ and Pollux also gives *Nekusia* as an alternative name for *Genesisia* (*Onomasticon* 3.102).¹⁰⁸

Other than, potentially, sacrifices to Ge, and some kind of duty performed by a son for his dead father, we have no further information about what might have happened. Jacoby argues that Solon took a private, family-based festival celebrated on an individual's death-day, and changed it into an annual festival when all of the region's dead were honoured on the same day.¹⁰⁹ Parker thinks this polarisation between public and private celebration 'tendentious'¹¹⁰ and wonders, if this were the case, whether individual celebrations could still have occurred on the anniversary of individuals' deaths as well as at the annual festival.¹¹¹ Felton suggests that Solon could have created a public festival like the modern British Remembrance Day 'on which the state of Athens recognized its

¹⁰⁴ Philochorus, *FGrH* 328 F168 = *Antiatticista* s.v. Γενέσια; see Harding 2008: 187.

¹⁰⁵ Jacoby 1944: 75 suggests that the reason why the excerpt in the *Antiatticista* does not mention specifically that it was a festival of the dead is because it 'has fallen a victim to the progressive abbreviation by the excerptors.'

¹⁰⁶ Translation by Donnison 2009: 69-70

¹⁰⁷ See Parker 2005: 28.

¹⁰⁸ All evidence for the *Genesisia* is given in Jacoby 1944 (*passim* and in the appendix).

¹⁰⁹ Jacoby 1944: 70.

¹¹⁰ Parker 1996: 49 n. 27.

¹¹¹ Parker 2005: 28. Especially since a family could presumably only visit one graveyard on 5th *Boedromion*; if their ancestors were buried separately then they would have to choose whom to visit on the day of the *Genesisia* proper.

debt to the dead, mainly their sacrifice in battle', but this is obviously speculation.¹¹² Burkert and Parker use analogy with similar festivals elsewhere to suggest that offerings and libations could have been made to the dead of 'barley broth, milk, honey... wine... oil... the blood of sacrificed animals',¹¹³ and that the dead could have been 'called upon three times' in order to request them to 'send up good things hither'.¹¹⁴ Johnston urges caution at attempts to recreate ritual, given that 'there is no direct evidence for libations to the dead', but agrees that 'it is probably fair to assume this'.¹¹⁵

We also have a casual reference, in Demosthenes, to a festival named the

Nemesia:

τὸ δὲ τελευταῖον εἰσενεγκούσης τῆς ἐμῆς γυναικὸς εἰς τὰ νεμέσια τῷ πατρὶ μνᾶν ἀργυρίου καὶ προαναλωσάσης, οὐδὲ ταύτης ἀξιοῖ συμβαλέσθαι τὸ μέρος

And finally, although my wife advanced a *mina* of silver and expended it on her father's behalf for the feast of the dead, the defendant [Spoudias, another son-in-law of the speaker's wife's dead father] refuses to contribute his share even of this

(Demosthenes, *Orations* 41.11)¹¹⁶

From this scant reference we can presume that the festival was one of the dead, since we know that the speaker's wife's father has died;¹¹⁷ the money in question must have been intended to provide some sort of offering to him. Parker suggests that this reference to the *Nemesia* in Demosthenes is 'an early textual

¹¹² Felton 2007: 89.

¹¹³ Burkert 1985: 194.

¹¹⁴ Parker 2005: 28.

¹¹⁵ Johnston 1999: 44 n. 24.

¹¹⁶ Translation by Murray 1939.

¹¹⁷ *Oration* 41 concerns a dispute over inheritance between the husbands of Polyuektos' – the dead man – two daughters; see MacDowell 2009: 60-63 on this oration.

corruption for *Genesisia*'.¹¹⁸ There is no other evidence for a *Nemesia* in Athens so this is certainly plausible, although the ancient commentators on this passage only refer to it as the *Nemesia*.¹¹⁹ Harpocration reports, tentatively, that μήποτε ἑορτή τις ἦν Νεμέσεως, καθ' ἣν τοῖς κατοικομένοις ἐπετέλουν τὰ νομιζόμενα ('perhaps it was a festival of Nemesis at which they performed the customary rites for the dead', s.v. Νεμέσεια).¹²⁰ Evidently whatever these 'customary rites' were, families were expected to contribute money towards them.¹²¹

§1.4.5.1.2: *Anthesteria*

We saw one definite link between spirits and the threshold in Chapter One in the analysis of prophylactic devices: at the *Anthesteria* in Athens, when the spirits of the dead were likely to be at large, and people would anoint their doors with pitch to guard against them. The *Anthesteria* was a three-day Athenian festival celebrated during the month of *Anthesterion* (late February),¹²² and appears to have been a rather bizarre and eclectic mix of a wine festival, a festival of the dead and other elements such as a marriage of a human woman to Dionysus, a

¹¹⁸ Parker 1996: 247 n. 101.

¹¹⁹ MacDowell 2009: 62 n. 12. Johnston 1999: 46 n. 2 sees this theory, however, as 'only a distant possibility.'

¹²⁰ Translation by Parker 2005: 476. Harpocration is our earliest commentator, from the second century AD, so any corruption must have happened before then. This same sentence is found in Photius, *Lexicon* and the *Suda*, both s.v. Νεμεσία, which both contain an additional identical paragraph, reiterating that the *Nemesia* was a festival of the dead, as it is in honour of Nemesis. Parker 1996: 247 n. 101 explains away these comments in the scholia and lexicographers about Nemesis as 'simply guesses based on this single passage'.

¹²¹ Johnston 1999: 46 states that a scholion on Demosthenes 41.11 reports that the *Nemesia* 'lasted all night'. I have been unable to track this scholion down; it does not appear to be in the main scholia (Dindorf 1851 and Dilts 1986), the Patmos scholia (Sakkelion 1887), the Didymus papyrus (Pearson & Stephens 1983 and Gibson 2002) or the manuscript lexicon (Kazazis 1986).

¹²² Burkert 1983: 213 notes that 'the name of the month Anthesterion is attested for the entire Ionian region', as well as numerous other places across the Greek mainland and islands, and the coast of Asia Minor, suggesting that the festival was widespread. Our evidence, however, is primarily Athenian.

rite of passage for toddlers who receive their first wine tasting, and young girls swinging from trees. Parker sees it as ‘a festival of oppositions and of paradox’,¹²³ much of which is still debatable or based on questionable evidence – in fact, there is an argument over whether there was even a festival of the dead included as part of the celebrations.¹²⁴ It is far beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt a reconstruction or discussion of the parts of this festival that do not concern the dead, but to give a brief overview of the generally accepted format of the festival: on the first day, known as *Pithoigia* (‘jar-opening’), the wine pressed the previous year was opened and offered to Dionysus; on the second day, *Choes* (‘drinking cups’), there were drinking games; and on the third, *Chytroi* (‘pots’), offerings of *panspermia* were made.¹²⁵

Our key evidence for the presence of the dead at the *Anthesteria* comes from the ninth-century writings of Photius, who explicitly mentions them in two different entries in his *Lexicon*:¹²⁶

έν τοῖς Χουσίῃσιν Ἀνθεστηριῶνος μηνός, έν ώί δοκοῦσιν αἱ ψυχὰί τῶν τελευτησάντων ἀνιέναι, ῥάμνωι ἔωθεν ἔμασῶντο και πιττηι τὰς θύρας ἔχριον.

at the *Choes* at Athens in the month Anthesterion, in which the souls of the dead are believed to come up, they used to chew buckthorn from morning and anoint their doors with pitch.

(Photius, *Lexicon* s.v. Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα)¹²⁷

¹²³ Parker 2005: 313.

¹²⁴ See Burkert 1983: 213-230, Bremmer 1983: 109-123, and Robertson 1993 who argue against all evidence purporting to show the presence of ghosts at this festival. I discuss this below.

¹²⁵ On the *Anthesteria* in general, see Parke 1977: 107-124; Burkert 1983: 213-247; Robertson 1993; Parker 2005: 290-326.

¹²⁶ Photius makes an additional mention of buckthorn and pitch being used as an ἀλεξιφάρμακον, ‘antidote against poison/evil’, during the *Choes*, for which we can assume that ghosts were meant (*Lexicon* s.v. Ῥάμνος). A scholion on Nicander, *Theriaca* 860a refers to ῥάμνος being hung on the front of doors during offerings to the dead, in order to ward off φαντάσματα. I discussed these passages in Chapter One.

¹²⁷ Translation by Parker 2005: 294. There is a fragment of Sophron which also refers to chewing ῥάμνος at dawn, although there is no further context (F 166).

τινὲς δὲ οὕτως τὴν παροιμίαν φασί: Θύραζε Κῆρες, οὐκέτ' Ἄνθεστήρια·
ὡς κατὰ τὴν πόλιν τοῖς Ἄνθεστηρίοις τῶν ψυχῶν περιερχομένων.
But some give the proverb in this form 'Outside, Κῆρες, it's the *Anthesteria*
no longer', on the grounds that souls roam around the city at the
Anthesteria.

(Photius, *Lexicon* s.v. Θύραζε Κῆρες, οὐκέτ' Ἄνθεστήρια)¹²⁸

Other pieces of more circumstantial evidence in favour of the presence of ghosts include the fact that we know that the temples were closed, or roped-off, on the *Choes*, meaning that 'no oaths could be witnessed, no business transactions completed, no wedding ceremonies performed';¹²⁹ we will see a similar list of prohibitions, below, during Roman festivals of the dead. Hesychius, writing a couple of centuries earlier than Photius, also makes mention of the dead abroad during the month of *Anthesterion* – although unlike Photius he does not specify a day or say that it was during the festival proper.¹³⁰ There are also some fragments of Theopompus which give an *aition* for the rituals held on the third day of the festival, based on survivors from the flood appeasing Hermes Chthonios on behalf of the dead, which leads to the presumption that the *panspermia* offering is connected with the dead.¹³¹

What we have, from this tentative evidence, is the notion that during the *Anthesteria* – perhaps even for the whole month – there were ghosts abroad in the city. On the *Choes* in particular people would take precautions against them: personally (chewing buckthorn), domestically (painting the house or door with

¹²⁸ Translation by Parker 2005: 297, adapted. I shall discuss this proverb and its variant (Θύραζε Κῆρες) further, below.

¹²⁹ Bremmer 1983: 111. Temples closed: Phanodemus, *FGrH* 325 F11 *apud* Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 437c-d; temples roped-off: Pollux 8.141

¹³⁰ Hesychius s.v. Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα.

¹³¹ Theopompus, *FGrH* 115 F347a, *apud* scholia on Aristophanes, *Acharnenses* 1075 and F347b, *apud* scholia on Aristophanes, *Ranae* 213-219.

pitch) and civically (the roping-off of temples). At some point the ghosts were exorcised or chased away, possibly with a ritual phrase,¹³² and possibly after an offering of *panspermia*.

Taken as a whole, this seems plausible. However, some scholars interpret the evidence differently and argue that none of it indicates anything to do with ghosts, and that the festival was mostly a wine festival. Robertson, for example, argues that the flood offerings of *panspermia* are actually from 1st *Anthesterion* (the *Anthesteria* being 11th-13th),¹³³ and states that this was the time that Hesychius meant when he said that the dead were abroad during *Anthesterion*.¹³⁴ Robertson continues that the temples are roped off merely because on the *Choes* people are supposed to celebrate at home, and that therefore the pitch mentioned by Photius is painted on the door to indicate that people are indeed at home.¹³⁵ Burkert sees the pitch as being a social form of festive decorating (with, apparently, the added benefit of waterproofing the door): ‘when all the doors of the city shone, sticky and black... it was a most striking expression of a *dies ater*’.¹³⁶ Photius’ buckthorn is, accordingly, chewed not against the dead, but to either cleanse the palate for the wine-tasting, or as ‘cathartic preparation’ for the

¹³² It is important not to read too much into the proverb (Parker 2005: 297 disregards it entirely, which is perhaps overzealous). Felton 1999: 12, for instance, tells us that at sunset, ‘the master of the house went through the rooms shouting, “Away, Spirits; Anthesteria is over”’. The proverb, even if it does read Κῆρες rather than Κἄρες (which I shall discuss below), comes to us with no context: no mention of who said it, of where it was said, of what purpose it had, or even if it was indeed a ritual phrase. The Κἄρες variant forms an iambic trimeter, and as such was likely to have been a verse from a comedy, not a formal part of the festival. Felton’s rendering of the scene reads more like a description of the Roman *Lemuria* as found in Ovid’s *Fasti* (on which see below), than anything that we can reconstruct from Photius.

¹³³ Parke 1977: 107.

¹³⁴ Robertson 1993: 199-203.

¹³⁵ Robertson 1993: 206-208.

¹³⁶ Burkert 1983: 219.

ritual drinking.¹³⁷ Bremmer does raise the sensible objection to the buckthorn being used as a prophylactic against ghosts, that ‘it is less clear why it was chewed only in the morning, whereas the ghosts supposedly roamed the city for the whole day.’¹³⁸ Finally, the proverb is seen as erroneous – which it may well be, especially given that *Kḗρες* refer to evil spirits, rather than the ghosts of the dead. Photius records two variants of the proverb in his *Lexicon* entry, one addressed – as quoted above – to the *Kḗρες*, whereas the other is: *Θύραζε Κᾶρες, οὐκέτ’ Ἀνθεστήρια* (‘Outside, Carians, it’s the *Anthesteria* no longer’).¹³⁹ This version, thought to refer to sending Carian slaves back to work, is attested much earlier than the other as it was also recorded by Zenobius (4.33) in the second century AD.¹⁴⁰

These are all plausible counter-arguments, yet none of them address the fact that Photius specifically says – twice – that ghosts are present during the festival. It seems odd that, for example, Burkert should state that it is ‘unambiguous’ that the *Choes* is a day of pollution, or that there is a ‘clear indication’ that it was the *Choes* not the *Chytroi* that was the polluted day, and then disregard the mention of ghosts from the very same extract of Photius!¹⁴¹ Parker concurs, with regard to the counter-arguments, that ‘none of [them] shows anything wrong with Photius’ view’.¹⁴² If we take Photius at face value then what we have is a specific situation at which ghosts were considered to be abroad, during which

¹³⁷ Palate-cleanser: Robertson 1993: 208; catharsis: Burkert 1983: 220.

¹³⁸ Bremmer 1983: 111.

¹³⁹ Translation by Parker 2005: 297.

¹⁴⁰ Burkert 1983: 226-230; Robertson 1993: 203-205.

¹⁴¹ Burkert 1983: 218 and 218 n. 11.

¹⁴² Parker 2005: 294-295 n. 25.

precautionary measures were taken. This strongly indicates that there was less of a threat from ghosts at other times in the year.

§1.4.5.2: Rome

§1.4.5.2.1: *Parentalia* and *Feralia*

An equivalent time of year in Rome when ghosts were considered to be abroad was during the festival of the *Parentalia*,¹⁴³ a nine-day long festival culminating in a final day known as the *Feralia*, which was ‘devoted to the worship of the dead observed by families rather than by the civic body as a collective.’¹⁴⁴ Ovid, who provides the most detailed description of the festival, tells us that:

nunc animae tenues et corpora functa sepulcris errant, nunc posito pascitur umbra cibo

Now do the unsubstantial souls and buried dead wander about, now doth the ghost batten upon his dole.

(*Fasti* 2.565-566)¹⁴⁵

We are told that there are various prohibitions during this time, but there does not seem to be the danger that is suggested at the *Antheateria* as we do not hear of any personal protective devices that the public need to make. The – admittedly late – sixth-century writer John Lydus tells us that magistrates were to dress as private citizens during the festival (*De mensibus* 4.29) and Ovid states that

¹⁴³ I discussed the *Parentalia* and *Feralia* both earlier in this chapter and also in Chapter Three, where I analysed the magical rites performed by an old woman at the *Feralia* (which I shall not address again in this section). See Appendix Thirteen on the dating of both the *Parentalia* and the *Feralia*.

¹⁴⁴ Dolansky 2011: 128. Dolansky argues against ‘a limited meaning of *parentes*... it is clear that the *Parentalia* concerned a spectrum of kin, and honoured both vertical and horizontal bonds’ (2011: 130). Robinson 2011: 334 points out that *Fasti* 2.533 confirms that Ovid is discussing benign ancestral spirits rather than dangerous ghosts, and at 2011: 351 notes that the spirits here ‘seem less malign’ than those at 2.551-554.

¹⁴⁵ Translation by Frazer 1931.

weddings are not permitted and temple doors are closed (*Fasti* 2.561-563). There is nothing that needs to be applied to these doors, as the Athenians do their pitch; they merely need to be closed. And it is not all doors which need to be kept shut, only those of the temples. Is this to keep the ghosts out, or merely to hide either the gods from the ghosts or the ghosts from the gods? It could, of course, simply be a poetic way of saying that the temples are closed during the festival.

The *Parentalia* seems to have been a blend of both a public ceremony and a private familial commemoration, since it is likely that on the first day of the festival 'a Vestal Virgin performed the rituals for the dead',¹⁴⁶ and on subsequent days families visited the graves of their ancestors with offerings. This is what a number of scholars assume that the Attic *Genesia* could have been like, following Solon's reforms:¹⁴⁷ an annual festival in which family members visited ancestral tombs and made offerings to the spirits of those deceased.

Ovid's *Fasti* provides a lot of our evidence for what happened during this festival, and he describes people bringing gifts to the graves of ancestors: *parva... in exstructas munera ferte pyras* ('bring small gifts to the tombs erected to them', 2.534), which should be offered along with prayers, since *parva petunt manes: pietas pro divite grata est/ munere* ('Ghosts ask but little: they value piety more

¹⁴⁶ Beard, North and Price 1998: 50. The calendar of Philocalus gives *Virgo Vesta(lis) parentat* ('the Vestal Virgin makes a sacrifice in honour of an ancestor') for this date; see Scullard 1981: 75.

¹⁴⁷ For example: Jacoby 1944: 67: '[the *Genesia* would have been] not *Natalicia* but *Parentalia*'; Parker 1996: 49 n. 27 uses the analogy of the *Parentalia* as a festival of the dead which had both public and private rites. The description in Burkert 1985: 194 of what he terms the Greek 'days of the dead' is clearly a conflation of *Genesia*, *Anthesteria* and funeral rituals, and taken as a whole sounds more like what we read in Ovid's description of the *Parentalia*.

than a costly gift', 2.535-536).¹⁴⁸ The bringing of gifts is a common theme for our sources on the *Parentalia* and *Feralia*, many of them being concerned with the etymological origin of the term *Feralia* and connecting it to *ferre*.¹⁴⁹ The archaeological record suggests that families would feast at the tomb-side.¹⁵⁰ It seems unlikely both that families would spend the *entire* festival period at the tomb, and also that the *only* day for bringing offerings was the *Feralia* itself. Ovid states that the *Feralia* is the last day for performing these rites (2.569), which implies that they could take place on any of the preceding days of the *Parentalia*; presumably families visited on whichever day was most convenient.¹⁵¹

Ovid tells us that ghosts were considered to be abroad throughout the festival, as they consume the offerings left for them (*Fasti* 2.565-566, quoted above). One could argue that this is mere poetic fancy rather than a literal belief that spirits were present – especially since Ovid also relates a clearly fictional anecdote about a time when the *Parentalia* rites were neglected and so the dead swarmed from their tombs, attacking the living until the offerings were reinstated (2.551-554).¹⁵² However, the precautions taken by the populace during the *Parentalia* –

¹⁴⁸ Translations by Frazer 1931.

¹⁴⁹ Etymologies for the *Feralia* connect it to *ferre* and the bringing of offerings to the tombs, or to *infern*, the underworld's dead, which both affirm a connection to the festival as a whole. Etymologies: from *ferre*: Ovid, *Fasti* 6.569 and Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.4.14; from *ferre* and *inferi*: Varro, *De lingua Latina* 6.13; from *ferre* and *ferire* (suggesting the sacrifice of an animal at the *Feralia*): Festus 75L s.v. *Feralia*.

¹⁵⁰ For more on families feasting by the tomb, and for offerings poured into the tombs, see earlier in this chapter.

¹⁵¹ This would also allow families to visit more than one graveyard if their ancestors are buried separately; something that Parker 2005: 28 notes would not have been possible for Athenians on the one day of the *Genesia*.

¹⁵² Robinson 2011: 344 refers to these lines as adding 'a sinister aspect to the *Parentalia* that is strikingly alien to what we know of the festival; it is an aspect that would be more naturally associated with the *Lemuria*'. Hopkins 1983: 234, however, notes that 'If offended or deprived, the spirits of the dead could turn nasty'. For Robinson's discussion of Ovid's interrelation of the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria* see 2011: 329-330.

mentioned by both Ovid and Lydus,¹⁵³ cited above – indicate that there was indeed a widespread notion of the presence of the dead. Ovid might be our only explicit mention of ghosts being abroad, but the prohibitions – plus the fact that offerings were being left for ghosts to consume – certainly imply that this was an accepted belief.

§1.4.5.2.2: *Lemuria*

Like the *Parentalia*, the *Lemuria* took place over a number of days, but these days were not consecutive: May 9th, 11th and 13th.¹⁵⁴ It is listed as a festival in inscribed *fasti*, showing its nature as a public festival, but the only evidence for ritual practice centres around a private rite.

The 74-line description of the *Lemuria* in Ovid's *Fasti* 5.419-492 forms our primary evidence for the festival. Ovid repeatedly refers to it as an old festival (e.g. *ritus... veteris* at both 5.421 and 5.31). According to him, back when the Roman calendar was only ten months long (March-December, the remaining days of the year being a generic 'winter') the *Lemuria*, in May, was the time when families visited the tombs of their ancestors to honour them (5.423-426). With the addition to the calendar of January and February, and thus February's *Parentalia*, some of the May rites either transferred over to February, or dropped

¹⁵³ Lydus states that this would happen ἀπό ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας... πρὸ ὀκτῶ Καλενδῶν Μαρτίων. 'from this day [the Ides]... until the eighth day before the Kalends of March' (4.29, trans. Hooker 2017), which quite categorically covers the entire period of the *Parentalia* (and potentially also the *Caristia*).

¹⁵⁴ Ovid states that the festival is three days long, on non-consecutive days (*Fasti* 5.491-492), starting from the 9th (5.419-421); the *Lemuria* is listed in some inscribed *fasti* for the three dates given above, e.g. *Antiares maiores*. I discussed the *Lemuria* in Chapter Three.

out of the May ritual. The rite that Ovid describes for the *Lemuria* he says *partem prisci nunc quoque moris habet* ('still retains part of the ancient custom', 5.428),¹⁵⁵ but this is no longer a visit to an ancestral tomb to place offerings, but rather what appears to be an exorcism of the family home.

It is not clear whether the rite described in detail by Ovid, and briefly by Varro and Festus, was to be carried out on each day of the *Lemuria*, on one set day, or on a day of the family's choosing. Ovid explains that a man (*ille*, 5.431) – usually assumed to be the *paterfamilias* – gets up at midnight. He is barefoot, silent, and makes a sign with his fingers to ward off any ghosts he might meet during the ritual. After washing his hands he takes black beans and throws them over his shoulder, with his face averted, saying *haec ego mitto, / his... redimo meque meosque fabis* ('These I cast; with these beans I redeem me and mine', 5.437-438). He repeats this nine times, washes his hands again, and clashes bronze. Then he says *Manes exite paterni* ('Ghosts of my fathers, go forth!', 5.443) another nine times. Varro and Festus both support the throwing of beans to ghosts at the *Lemuria*.¹⁵⁶

Where did the ghosts come from? None of our sources provide any help for this. A plausible situation could be that the ghosts are in some way released by or attracted to the living on the first day of the festival, and then sent back using this ritual on the last, but Ovid's description for the rite is logged on the first day. Given the focus on ancestral ghosts, perhaps these are the spirits that were

¹⁵⁵ Translations of the *Fasti* by Frazer 1931.

¹⁵⁶ Varro, *apud* Nonius s.v. *lemures* 197L=135M (quoted below); Festus 77L s.v. *fabam*. I discussed this ritual in detail in Chapter Three.

propitiated at the *Parentalia*, became too attached to their living counterparts, and need to be encouraged to resume their proper abodes.¹⁵⁷ Perhaps the exorcism is merely performed as an annual precautionary measure, in case the house has become haunted since the last *Lemuria*. The same prohibitions that Ovid had listed for the *Parentalia* apply to the *Lemuria*, indicating that ghosts are generally abroad: temples are to be closed (5.485-486) and marriages for both virgins and those remarrying are not recommended (5.487-490). In fact, Ovid here says that May should be avoided as a whole for weddings.

In the *Lemuria* we can see echoes of the exorcism of a haunted house, although of course these ghosts have not come from murdered corpses buried inside. The ghosts are present in the house in general rather than haunting the threshold specifically. The one mention of a doorway that we have in this context is from Varro, and his description of events at the *Lemuria* confirms that the ghosts are within the house, with the doorway used to describe the barrier that they are ejected beyond:

quibus temporibus in sacris fabam iactant noctu ac dicunt se lemures domo extra ianuam eicere.

at which times, in sacred rites, they throw a bean at night and say that they cast out the *lemures* from the house beyond the door.

(Varro *apud* Nonius 197L=135M s.v. *lemures*)¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ As with the ancestral ghosts at the *Parentalia*, Ovid is clear that these are the spirits of the family dead, referring twice to grandfathers (*avi*, 5.426; *avis*, 5.480) and, of course, the exhortation for the *manes... paterni* to leave. Rose 1941: 93 argues that Ovid has either made a mistake by using *manes... paterni*, or that the *paterfamilias* is being euphemistically polite to malevolent *lemures* (so-called at 5.483), but this interpretation ignores the earlier references to grandfathers.

¹⁵⁸ I also discussed this passage in Chapter Three.

§1.4.5.2.3: *Mundus*

The *Parentalia* and the *Lemuria* were not the only instances in the Roman calendar when ghosts might officially be abroad and so prohibitions might be in place: there was also the thrice-yearly opening of the *mundus*:

unde et Varro ita scribit: "mundus cum patet, deorum tristium atque inferum quasi ianua patet. propterea non modo proelium committi, verum etiam dilectum rei militaris causa habere ac militem proficisci, navem solvere, uxorem liberum quaerendorum causa ducere religiosum est."
Hence Varro too writes: "When the *mundus* is open, it is as though the doorway of the baleful gods of the underworld is open: for that reason it is taboo not just to join battle but also to conduct a military levy, to set off on campaign, to set sail, and to take a wife for the purpose of procreation."
(Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.16.18)¹⁵⁹

Festus has a number of entries concerning the *mundus*. He supplies the dates on which the *mundus* was opened: August 24th, October 5th, and November 8th (126L & 144L s.v. *mundus*),¹⁶⁰ and confirms that there were prohibitions assigned to these days.¹⁶¹

It is not obvious *why* the *mundus* was opened.¹⁶² Festus tells us that it was kept closed all the time, except for the dates listed above, at which point it was judged acceptable for the ghosts to be brought out *in lucem* ('into the light', 144L & 146L

¹⁵⁹ Translation by Kaster 2011.

¹⁶⁰ The dates are also given in Paul's *Epitome* of Festus at 145L s.v. *mundum*.

¹⁶¹ Festus 144L & 146L s.v. *mundus* and 145L & 147L s.v. *mundum*.

¹⁶² We are not helped by the fact that some sources, like Varro *apud* Macrobius and Festus above, discuss the *mundus* as a portal to the underworld, whereas others – Ovid, *Fasti* 4.820-824 and Plutarch, *Romulus* 11 – describe the *mundus* as a trench filled with first fruits dedicated and sealed by Romulus at the founding of the city. The picture is further muddled by a first-century BC inscription found in Capua set up by a *sacerdos Cerialis mundalis* (CIL 10.3926 = ILS 3348) and a reference in Festus to the *mundus Cereris* as being the same *mundus* that is opened thrice a year on the dates specified above (126L s.v. *mundus*), indicating a potential link between the *mundus* that is opened to let the ghosts out, and the *mundus* that contains the first fruits of the harvest.

s.v. *mundus*).¹⁶³ Opening it, therefore, seems to be a deliberate releasing of the ghosts. It is plausible, then, that it acted as some sort of ‘release valve’ for the underworld, but why such a thing would be needed is unclear. We have no indication that offerings were made, or even of the method by which the ghosts were returned into the *mundus*.

Festus also writes about a *lapis manalis*, which he refers to as the *ostium Orci, per quod animae inferorum ad superos manarent* (‘the gateway of Orcus, through which the souls of those below flow to the world above’, 115L s.v. *manalem lapidem*).¹⁶⁴ Unsurprisingly, there is a temptation to connect this to the *mundus*, with the stone functioning as a ‘lid’ which is removed in order to open the *mundus*.¹⁶⁵ However, there is no mention of the *mundus* here, nor is there any reference to such a stone in the *mundus* entries elsewhere in Festus.¹⁶⁶

Despite Festus’ assertion that the *mundus* needs to be shut in order to keep the ghosts in, the opening of it is evidently not the only opportunity for ghosts to be abroad, since we know that they were also considered to be present during the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria*. As well as this inherent contradiction, Scullard notes that, ‘no calendar includes the “*mundus patet*” ... 24 August was marked as a business day (*comitialis*)’.¹⁶⁷ It is therefore uncertain to what extent this truly

¹⁶³ This information is also given in Paul’s *Epitome* of Festus at 145L & 147L s.v. *mundum*.

¹⁶⁴ Festus states that this thereby gives an etymology for *manes*.

¹⁶⁵ e.g. Hope 2007: 232; Hope 2009: 98-99.

¹⁶⁶ The reference to *manalem lapidem* is only in Paul’s *Epitome* of Festus, and it is theoretically possible that Festus’ original could have mentioned the *mundus*. However, there are two separate references to *mundus* in Festus’ original text (124 & 126L, and 144 & 146L), neither of which mention the *lapis*.

¹⁶⁷ Scullard 1981: 181.

was a part of the religious year, or indeed at what point any ritual ceremony dropped out of fashion.¹⁶⁸

§1.4.5.3: Festivals: Conclusion

Regardless of the origins or original purpose of the *mundus*, it – like the *Antheateria*, *Lemuria*, and other similar festivals – are the exceptions that prove the rule that ghosts were generally thought to be at the gravesite or in the underworld, or perhaps at some specifically uncanny location like the crossroads (see Chapter Five). The precautions that people took – from protecting themselves and their homes to closing up the temples – certainly imply that ghosts were abroad *at these specific times*. As Johnston notes, ‘the dead were imagined to wander freely in the upper world during the *Antheateria*, released from the bonds that normally held them close to their graves. Anyone, anywhere, was at risk of being attacked.’¹⁶⁹ The fact that these precautions were not carried out every day of the year strongly suggests that generally people were *not* at daily risk of ghostly attack.¹⁷⁰

§1.4.6: Conclusion

What we have seen throughout this chapter is that, in Greek and Roman belief, ghosts tended to ‘live’ in the underworld (or perhaps at their tomb), but that

¹⁶⁸ Hope 2009: 98-99.

¹⁶⁹ Johnston 1999: 64.

¹⁷⁰ That is not to say that ghosts were not considered to be present during the rest of the year: we have seen that restless ghosts especially were not necessarily tied to one place, and ghosts could certainly be sent around by magicians to enact spells, but clearly people’s general prophylactic amulets were considered enough protection for most of the year.

there were key locations where one might be able to communicate with them – at their site of death or burial, or at more official locations such as *nekuomanteia*. Ghosts could also, of course, wander freely: they were not permanently tied to one location – the ghostly agents of magicians were obviously imagined to be able to carry out their duties as and when they needed to. However, when locations in which one might find a ghost are mentioned, they are never thresholds.

If we take, for example, the necromantic scenes in the *Odyssey*, Horace's *Satire* 1.8, and Lucan's *Bellum civile*: in each someone summons the dead, and in each the dead are found somewhere other than a threshold or a doorway – at the end of the world in the underworld, in an old cemetery, and at the site of a battlefield. If there were a wide-ranging belief that the threshold was the haunt of spirits then we would expect to find considerably more evidence than we have – in fact, the passages discussed above provide us with more evidence that the courtyard would be haunted than the threshold was.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Pliny, *Epistulae* 7.27; Horace, *Epode* 5; Lucian, *Philopseudes* 30-31.

PART ONE: CHAPTER FIVE:

THE EVIDENCE FOR A BELIEF THAT GHOSTS HAUNTED THE CROSSROADS

Throughout Part One of this thesis I referred to the fact that crossroads, like thresholds, have been strongly associated with the spirits of the dead by scholars writing about Greece and Rome. As liminal locations, the threshold and crossroads are often treated as an identical pair, as if what can be shown for one will mean the same for the other; we see this in Ogle, for example, who notes ‘an evident connection between the threshold and the cross-roads, which are also the common haunt of spirits... in Greek and Latin lore’.¹ More recently Johnston argues for the same connection because ‘doorways [and] crossroads are perceived as dangerous places precisely because they are liminal... and thus come to be viewed as just the sorts of locations where demons gather and lurk.’²

But what is it about the crossroads that makes them liminal? After all, they are not a *limen* and do not act as a boundary between two areas like a threshold does. It becomes more clear when we consider that a threshold, as well as being a boundary, is a space in its own right: a space that is not part of the house, and yet also not part of the outside. In the same way, the crossroads – being an intersection of roads – are not part of each individual road that converges at this spot; liminality as intermediary space, so to speak.³ If we turn again to Johnston, who has written the most influential article about the supernatural nature of the crossroads to date, she considers the crossroads to be ‘liminal points or

¹ Ogle 1911: 262.

² Johnston 1999: 171.

³ See Aguirre 2004: 11-14 for a theoretical breakdown of what could constitute a liminal space.

transitional gaps between defined, bounded areas, that is, between roads or between the areas of land that roads define.⁴ I agree with this interpretation, especially as it gives the crossroads an element of being a No Man's Land which can be exploited, in Aguirre's terms, 'to constitute a site for the Other'.⁵

The threshold and the crossroads may share the factor of being liminal, then, but they are not entirely identical; we should not automatically apply the same conclusions to both if there is only evidence for one. Johnston states that the fact that 'ghosts dwell at Greek crossroads is an assumption (which remains to be addressed completely, however) of most modern scholars'.⁶ I have already addressed the same assumption made about the threshold, and now I intend to take up Johnston's proffered baton and discuss the relationship between the crossroads and ghosts – for both Greece and Rome. Whereas I have found no evidence for such a belief connected to the threshold, I will argue throughout this chapter that the circumstantial evidence for the crossroads is very compelling.

As with the alleged haunting of the threshold, there is no explicit reference in Greek or Latin literature which states that ghosts were considered to haunt the crossroads;⁷ however – unlike the threshold – even without such a direct statement there is strong evidence that ghosts were intrinsically linked with the crossroads in common belief. For example, in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* we see a clear assumption that crossroads would be the haunt of ghosts. The kidnapped young woman Charite, attempting to escape brigands along with Lucius-as-an-

⁴ Johnston 1991: 217.

⁵ Aguirre 2004: 12.

⁶ Johnston 1991: 223 n. 27.

⁷ Felton 1999: 5.

ass is recaptured in the middle of the night *ad quoddam... trivium* ('at a certain crossroads', 6.29). Not only are some of the brigands at this point *in Lemures reformati* ('costumed as ghosts', 4.22), which is presumably their disguise when they go on raids,⁸ but one of them mocks Charite by saying *quorsum istam festinanti vestigio lucubratis viam, nec noctis intempestae manes larvasque formidatis?* ('Where are you going at such a fast pace on this road, travelling by night? Aren't you afraid of ghosts and demons in the deep of the night?', 6.30).⁹ Here we see the expectation that one should fear that ghosts could be abroad at the crossroads, and Winkler suggests that the bandits are deliberately 'rely[ing] on the power of popular superstition' in their behaviour.¹⁰

In this chapter I shall set out the evidence that I have found which is indicative of a link in popular belief between ghosts and the crossroads in both Greece and Rome. We saw in Chapter Four that ghosts could be expected to haunt the location of their corpse; in the first section of this chapter I shall show that there is evidence, especially from Rome but also from Greece, that corpses were deposited at the crossroads. It only seems logical, then – if we can apply logic to superstitious belief – that if there were corpses at the crossroads then their associated ghosts would be considered to linger there too. This is not the only indication that the crossroads were likely to have been considered to be haunted: the goddess Hekate was strongly associated with both the crossroads and with ghosts, and I shall discuss the implications of this especially with regard to the 'Hekate suppers' which were left as offerings at the crossroads in Greece.

⁸ See Winkler 1980: 157-159, who notes that the brigands keep up this ghostly pretence even further by hiding their booty in tombs at *Metamorphoses* 4.18 & 4.21.

⁹ Translation by Hanson 1996, adapted.

¹⁰ Winkler 1980: 159.

In Rome the festival of the *Compitalia* took place at the crossroads and eerie puppets were strung up in a fashion that some ancient writers such as Festus took to imply was to ward off ghosts. Finally, I shall discuss the use of magic at the crossroads which, unlike magic performed at the threshold, often explicitly required the assistance of spirits present in the location. This all serves to build a picture of a belief in crossroads-spirits that is simply not there when we look for a similar thing at the threshold.

§1.5.1: The state of scholarship on the crossroads

The supernatural nature of crossroads has received more recent scholarly attention than that of the threshold although, as explained above, no one has yet fully addressed whether there actually was an ancient belief that ghosts haunted the crossroads. Large-scale works about both the threshold and the crossroads in ancient Greek and Roman religion, magic, superstition and folklore were published in 1911: for the threshold this was Ogle's article, and marks the most recent significant account of the supernatural nature of the doorway; for the crossroads there were two entries in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. One, by MacCulloch, discussed the crossroads in general, taking a comparative anthropological approach with anecdotes from various cultures around the world, including ancient Greece. MacCulloch does seem more willing than other writers of his era, such as Ogle and Frazer,¹¹ to present conflicting traditions, rather than attempting to discover one universal theory which could account for the significance of the crossroads throughout the world. For example, while he

¹¹ Frazer discusses crossroads traditions from around the world at 1929a: 458-465.

does state that 'cross-roads are universally believed to be the common resort of evil spirits' (with the evidence largely being the practice of burial at the crossroads in places like India, Hungary or – in the case of a suicide – England), he also discusses the association between the crossroads and divinities (including a long section on Hekate).¹² A more up-to-date successor to this article can be found in Puhvel's 1976 piece 'The Mystery of the Crossroads': another general overview of the crossroads in Western culture and folklore.

The second entry in 1911's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* is specifically about the crossroads in ancient Rome. This article, by Wünsch, has as its focus the haunting of spirits and the uncanny deities – Hekate, and the *Lares Compitales* – that might be found at the crossroads. However, Wünsch's origin story for the presence of ghosts at the crossroads is rather dubious: he argues that the agricultural ritual of the *suovetaurilia* was performed in order to exorcise ghosts from the fields; the exorcised ghosts were then considered to haunt the roads surrounding the fields, and hence travel along the road to the crossroads.¹³ The *suovetaurilia*, which was described by Cato, was purificatory in purpose, but it is rather a stretch to see it as the origin of ghosts haunting the crossroads. Cato states that the rite performed is for the purpose of ensuring good harvests and health to the household, and also:

*uti tu morbos visos invisosque, viduertatem vastitudinemque, calamitates
intemperiasque prohibessis defendas averruncesque*
that thou keep away, ward off, and remove sickness, seen and unseen,
barrenness and destruction, ruin and unseasonable influence
(*De agricultura* 141)¹⁴

¹² Evil spirits: MacCulloch 1911: 331; divinities: MacCulloch 1911: 332.

¹³ Wünsch 1911: 335-336.

¹⁴ Translation by Hooper & Ash 1934.

Whilst all these things could potentially be caused by ghosts and so the rite could be aimed at expelling them, there is no clear indication that it was the *suovetaurilia* which specifically led to the belief of the haunting of crossroads.

In 1939 Hopfner contributed a piece about crossroads to the *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* which was, until Johnston's 1991 article discussed below, the major analysis of the crossroads in Greek and Roman belief. Hopfner was very much of the opinion that the crossroads were haunted by malignant spirits in both cultures, and this notion permeates his report. His theory for the origin of the uncanny nature of the crossroads, however, is rather more mundane: that as the crossroads represented the possibility of going the wrong way (especially at night), a traveller in this situation 'mußte er sich von boshafte Dämonen irregeführt fühlen'.¹⁵ Hopfner sets out the evidence that Hekate was connected with the crossroads, and that she was connected to the spirits of the dead, and I shall discuss both of these factors in full below.¹⁶ He also mentions that ghosts could have developed from the corpses of those who had been executed or murdered and left at the crossroads, and discusses the magic that took place at the crossroads which was likely to depend upon the assistance of spirits of the dead;¹⁷ again, I shall analyse these factors more fully below.

¹⁵ Hopfner 1939: 162. We see this confusion at *Fasti* 5.1-4, when Ovid compares his ignorance at not knowing the derivation of the name of the month of May to the uncertainty of a wayfarer at a crossroads; Plato *Leges* 799c-d uses a similar analogy to express taking caution before choosing a way forward. Puhvel 1976: 168 and 168 n. 3 points out that taking the wrong road must have been a common occurrence due to the lack of signage, and that accidents and arguments over rights of way would have been more common at a crossroads than anywhere else on the road. Here, of course, we can compare Oedipus' murder of Laius at a place where three roads meet; for more on this see Halliwell 1986.

¹⁶ Hopfner 1939: 162-163.

¹⁷ Corpses: Hopfner 1939: 162; magic: Hopfner 1939: 163

Deities, ghosts, superstition and the crossroads in Rome are also covered in Meuli's 1955 article 'Altrömischer Maskenbrauch', which examines a passage from the *Georgics* in which Virgil discusses the rustic origins of drama (2.380-396). This scene includes the crossroads, people wearing masks, and some form of amulets called *oscilla* hanging from trees. Meuli argues that these *oscilla* are actually the *pilae* used as offerings during the *Compitalia*, which Virgil must therefore be describing.¹⁸ He maintains that there were two reasons to hang such *oscilla* or *pilae*: as part of the *Compitalia* as offerings to the *Lares*, or as a form of sympathetic magic where like cures like (since the ghosts of those hanged are particularly malevolent, the *oscilla* would protect the person hanging the offerings from harm from any such ghosts).¹⁹ Meuli draws a connection between Virgil's masks, ghosts, and the *Lares Compitales* who were present at the crossroads via the word *larva*: Virgil does not use *larva* in this passage, but Horace has used it to mean 'mask', and its main usage is, of course, 'ghost'.²⁰ Meuli points out that some Roman grammarians connected *Lares* etymologically to *larvae*, just as they connected *manes* to the mother of the *Lares*, *Mania*,²¹ and that this leads to a conclusion, along with the masks and the mention of the crossroads, 'für die Deutung des Vergilischen Festes als Larenfest, als *Compitalia*.'²² It is, however, by no means certain that Virgil is describing the

¹⁸ Meuli 1955: 215-216; see 218-219 for his correspondences between Virgil's description and the *Compitalia*.

¹⁹ Meuli 1955: 215-216; Faraone 1992: 38 supports this idea of 'the early Roman use of *oscilla*, "little faces," to keep away ghosts, nightmares, and other supernatural attacks; in some cases the same Latin words for the unwanted supernatural visitants (*larvae*, *maniolae*, or *maniae*) could be used to describe these ugly masks suggesting that here, too, we have a case of like banning like'. Arignotus in Lucian's *Philopseudes* 29 mentions a hanged man as being one of the more restless ghosts who cannot find peace in the underworld. Thomas 1988: 228, however, argues based on *Georgics* 2.390-392 that the purpose of the masks here is for fertility.

²⁰ Horace, *Satire* 1.5.64; Meuli 1955: 216-218.

²¹ Meuli 1955: 217-218.

²² Meuli 1955: 218.

Compitalia here; Thibodeau notes that the ‘mention of “crossroads” (*compita*, 382) and the atmosphere of license may bring to mind the Italian *Compitalia*, but that holiday was celebrated in the depths of winter, rather than the warm season implied here.’²³ However, Meuli’s article remains an important account of the *Compitalia* and a potential connection with ghosts. Stek also writes about the *Compitalia* in a 2008 article, although the focus here is on the development of the *Compitalia* from an urban festival to a rural one (rather than the other way around, as is traditionally thought), rather than discussing any crossroads-related superstition to do with this festival.²⁴

The most thorough analysis of the ancient Greek crossroads is Johnston’s 1991 article ‘Crossroads’,²⁵ which classifies ritual activity that took place at the crossroads into two different categories: that designed to protect the practitioner (or here the traveller) from any dangers associated with crossing a liminal point, and that designed to exploit this liminal point.²⁶ Johnston argues that the deities associated with the crossroads, primarily Hekate, would therefore be propitiated at the crossroads in order to provide assistance with the first category of ritual, including protecting the traveller from any ghosts present, whilst the second category specifically took place at the crossroads in order to utilise these ghosts. Both categories, Johnston argues, ‘ultimately grew

²³ Thibodeau 2011: 94; additionally, Mynors 1990: 149 points out the discrepancy of the *Compitalia* being in honour of the *Lares*, whereas Virgil’s festival is in honour of Bacchus. Thomas 1988: 226 is more hesitant in discounting the *Compitalia* link, suggesting instead that Virgil has ‘grafted’ two festivals together.

²⁴ Stek 2008: 118: ‘actual evidence for such a development from rural to urban is absent. It should be stressed that nowhere explicit mention is made of the *Compitalia* as an exclusively rustic cult.’ Stek does not cite Meuli.

²⁵ There is a slight mention of Rome, but Johnston mostly refers the reader to Meuli’s article discussed above.

²⁶ Johnston 1991: 217.

from the liminal nature of the crossroads, but in opposing ways.²⁷ This is a key development in crossroads studies, which until this point had generally conflated all rituals performed at the crossroads, and thus diminished the role of Hekate, seeing her solely as something that one must be protected from, rather than as a protector herself. Johnston's arguments for the presence of ghosts are largely based on the fact that Hekate was associated with the spirits of the dead, and due to the liminal nature of the crossroads.²⁸

It is important to note here that I do not agree with Johnston that ghosts were associated with the crossroads simply due to their liminal nature. The threshold is, of course, the *limen* par excellence, and yet, as I have thoroughly shown, it did not have the same associations with the spirits of the dead that I shall demonstrate that the crossroads do. However, I concede that it is likely that the liminal nature of the crossroads encouraged a belief in ghosts there, especially as it is this liminality which led to customs such as the depositing of corpses and polluted material at crossroads, which would naturally be assumed to attract ghosts.

²⁷ Johnston 1991: 224.

²⁸ We also see these arguments presented in Johnston's books *Hekate Soteira* (1990) and *Restless Dead* (1999), for example: *Hekate Soteira*: Johnston 1990: 26, which talks about the liminal nature of the crossroads causing them to become 'the realm of ghosts', and 1990: 34-35 and 144-146 which discuss the Hekate connection; *Restless Dead*: Johnston 1999: 60-61 and 72 for Hekate and ghosts, and 1999: 171 for the liminal connection. In both of these texts Johnston refers the reader to the 1991 article (evidently in press at the same time as the 1990 book) for further discussion of the link between ghosts and crossroads (e.g. 1990: 35 n. 18; 145 n. 9; 1999: 171 n. 23).

§1.5.2: The evidence for corpses at the crossroads

For the scholars writing early last century, the main argument behind the theory of the threshold being haunted by ghosts was that these ghosts were some form of vestige of a tradition of bodies being buried at the threshold.²⁹ We have seen in Chapter Four that ghosts were indeed considered to haunt their places of burial – but we have, of course, also seen in Chapter Three that there is very little evidence from Greece or Rome to indicate that there was a widespread custom of the disposal of bodies in the house, never mind at the threshold. When we turn to crossroads, however, the situation is very different, and we find textual evidence in both cultures to support the connection between bodies – usually deposited there unburied³⁰ – and the crossroads.

§1.5.2.1: Greece

Plato, when planning his ideal state, came up with the following punishment for parricides which would also serve the purpose of cleansing the State from any pollution:

οὐ μὲν τῶν δικαστῶν ὑπηρέται καὶ ἄρχοντες ἀποκτείναντες εἰς τεταγμένην τρίοδον ἔξω τῆς πόλεως ἐκβαλλόντων γυμνόν, αἱ δὲ ἀρχαὶ πᾶσαι ὑπὲρ ὅλης τῆς πόλεως, λίθον ἕκαστος φέρων, ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ νεκροῦ βάλλων ἀφοσιούτω τὴν πόλιν ὅλην, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο εἰς τὰ τῆς χώρας ὄρια φέροντες ἐκβαλλόντων τῷ νόμῳ ἄταφον.

²⁹ e.g., Eitrem 1909: 4; Samter 1911: 142; Ogle 1911: 264-265; Frazer 1929a: 448. Johnston did not make this argument, reasoning instead that it was the liminal nature of the threshold which attracted ghosts (Johnston 1999: 209).

³⁰ Some writers (e.g. MacCulloch 1911: 331; Frazer 1929a: 458-459; Puhvel 1976: 173) mention burial – especially of suicides – at crossroads; however, this is usually part of a general history of the supernatural nature of the crossroads, rather than a specific discussion of ancient Greece and Rome.

the officers of the judges and magistrates shall kill him and cast him out naked at an appointed cross-roads outside the city; and all the magistrates, acting on behalf of the whole State, shall take each a stone and cast it on the head of the corpse, and thus make atonement for the whole State; and after this they shall carry the corpse to the borders of the land and cast it out unburied, according to law.

(Plato, *Leges* 873b)³¹

What we see here are multiple steps to the disposal of the body, each associated with a liminal area. It would seem that the actual 'sentence' for the convict is that, after execution, their corpse will be cast naked, unburied, outside the borders of the State.³² Before the body can be dumped at the frontier, however, there is a ritual stoning of the corpse by representatives of the State, which will take place at the intermediary liminal location of the crossroads.³³

Why have two locations rather than simply performing the stoning at the border before dumping the body? At a practical level the requirement for the magistrates to be present for the stoning indicates that the location for it should be convenient for them, and that place would be near the city, rather than at the border. But why specifically should this expiatory part of the proceedings be carried out at the *crossroads*? Johnston suggests that this is due to the crossroads being a convenient location for polluted material; the ritual stoning would therefore cleanse the State of either the guilt of execution or the pollution caused by the parricide's actions, and that pollution could remain at the crossroads.³⁴

³¹ Translation by Bury 1926.

³² The borders are of course liminal due to their nature of being a threshold.

³³ Hopfner 1939: 162 seems to read this as the body lying unburied at the crossroads, which would give rise to a restless ghost there, but Plato is clear that the body would be dumped at the border. Hopfner may simply be referring to the fact that the body has been at the crossroads for the ritual stoning, and so the ghost may have been left behind there.

³⁴ Johnston 1991: 222.

It was relatively common for Greeks to leave polluted items, including the remains of purification ceremonies as this ritual stoning would be, at the crossroads. For instance, the remains of the piglet used to purify the Athenian council and assembly were dumped at a crossroads,³⁵ and the vessel used in household purificatory ceremonies could be discarded at the crossroads.³⁶ In Lucian's *Dialogi mortuorum*, Menippus is told to go to the crossroads and bring back ὠὸν ἐκ καθαρσίου ('eggs from sacrifices of purification', 1.1),³⁷ and Plutarch makes reference to items ἀποτροπαίων καὶ καθαρσίων ('that avert and expiate evil', *Quaestiones Romanae* 111).³⁸ Further confirmation that polluted items were left at the crossroads can be found in various lexica which attempt to define the term ὄξυθύμια; while there is clear confusion over what this word could mean, the possibilities include refuse, purificatory refuse left at the crossroads, purificatory offerings to Hekate left at the crossroads, and a wooden gallows (in a parallel to Plato, the hanged body is then to be removed outside of the borders).³⁹

Johnston states that the crossroads were the ideal local dumping ground for polluted material 'precisely because they were unclaimed "nowheres," [and so] were among the few appropriate places to leave materials expelled from

³⁵ Demosthenes 54.39: Demosthenes accuses Conon of stealing and eating these along with Hekate suppers; the reference to the Hekate suppers – which I shall discuss below – locates the anecdote at the crossroads. For more on this particular purification ceremony see Parker 1983: 21 and 21 n. 12.

³⁶ Scholion on Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* 97.

³⁷ Translation by MacLeod 1961. For eggs as a common ingredient for purification see Parker 1983: 230. There is another reference to τὰ ἐκ τῶν καθαρσίων ὠὰ in Lucian's *Cataplus* 7 which are again assumed to be at the crossroads as there is a reference to Hekate being nearby. See the following sections of this chapter for more on Hekate and the crossroads.

³⁸ Translation by Cole Babbitt 1936.

³⁹ See the *Suda*, Harpocration, Photius and the *Etymologicon Magnum*, all s.v. ὄξυθύμια.

society.⁴⁰ The body of Plato's parricide itself needs to be removed further, into another's territory, but the ghost could well remain at the crossroads along with the rest of the pollution. Whilst we cannot guarantee that Plato's account is representative of actual Greek practice, Halliwell states that '[this] legislation certainly follows Attic law and thinking'.⁴¹

§1.5.2.2: Rome

In Rome we have a series of clear references to corpses being found at the crossroads, and the writers do not appear to expect their readers to find this surprising or out of the ordinary. In Petronius' *Satyrica*, dating to around the 60s AD, an old witch Proselenos insults Encolpius as follows:

Quae striges comederunt nervos tuos, aut quod purgamentum [in] nocte calcasti in trivio aut cadaver?

What *striges* have eaten your nerve away, what foul thing or corpse have you trodden on at a cross-road in the dark?

(Petronius, *Satyrica* 134)⁴²

The fragmentary nature of the text makes it difficult to know exactly what Proselenos is accusing Encolpius of, although at this point in the narrative he is suffering from impotence. Regardless, clearly treading on a corpse causes an equivalent bewitchment to having *striges* devour your nerves, and the place where one might accidentally step on a corpse is *in trivio*, 'at the crossroads'.

⁴⁰ Johnston 1991: 220.

⁴¹ Halliwell 1986: 188. It is safe to assume that Plato intended his *Leges* to be seen as rational and logical, and so he could have based them on existing ideas; exile beyond the borders of one's state was certainly a common punishment as the comment 'according to law' implies. Some scholars do take Plato's account here as evidence of this as a historical punishment, e.g., MacCulloch 1911: 331. Johnston 1991: 223 n. 25 makes the tentative suggestion that Polyneices' body in Sophocles' *Antigone* has been left in its unburied state at a crossroads, since the Messenger reports that Creon prays to *ἐνοδίαν θεόν* ('the goddess of the crossway', *Antigone* 1199, trans. Lloyd-Jones 1994) to atone for his inappropriate treatment of the corpse. I discuss the connection between Enodia and Hekate further below.

This offhand reference certainly implies that it was relatively normal to encounter corpses at the crossroads. In this context the corpse could be the body of a criminal sentenced to lie there, or perhaps even a cadaver used for magical purposes.⁴³

Suetonius – writing around 60 years later than Petronius – records a body at a crossroads as part of a list of the various omens which Vespasian took to mean that he would become emperor:⁴⁴

Prandente eo quondam canis extrarius e trivio manum humanam intulit mensaeque subiecit.

Once when he was taking breakfast, a stray dog brought in a human hand from the cross-roads and dropped it under the table.

(Suetonius, *Divus Vespasianus* 5.4)⁴⁵

Suetonius – or his source – here assumes that the hand had come *e trivio*, ‘from the crossroads’; another casual reference to the fact that decomposing bodies could be readily found at the crossroads.⁴⁶ It would not be every crossroads of course, and we may well think about Plato’s reference to ‘an appointed crossroads’. Hopfner suggests that the hand could have come from ‘eines Hingerichteten oder am Kreuzweg Ermordeten’,⁴⁷ and it was common for crucifixions to be carried out on major roads which would certainly include

⁴² Translation by Heseltine & Rouse 1913, adapted.

⁴³ The fact that Proselenos also refers to *purgamentum*, ‘refuse’, at the crossroads calls to mind the Greek habits of leaving polluted material there and suggests that the same custom could apply in Italy – although it is important to note that this scene is set in the southern, i.e., Greek, part of Italy. The next examples that I give are more firmly Roman.

⁴⁴ The omen is the wordplay on the idea of *manus*: not only a literal hand, as Vespasian discovered under his breakfast table, but a metaphorical hand which wields power. Braithwaite 1927: 33 states in the commentary that ‘the hand is the natural symbol of power: *manus* indeed is frequently used in this sense’.

⁴⁵ Translation by Rolfe 1914.

⁴⁶ Suetonius also tells us that Nero’s horse was startled *ex odore abiecti in via cadaveris* (‘by the smell of a corpse thrown out into the road’, *Nero* 48); of course, we are merely told that this corpse was in the road, not necessarily at the crossroads.

⁴⁷ Hopfner 1939: 162.

intersections;⁴⁸ evidently in this case the crossroads had to be located somewhere within a dog's-walk of Vespasian's breakfast table.

Ausonius gives an example of a skull found at the crossroads: *abiecta in triviis inhumati glabra iacebat/ testa hominis* ('the bare skull of an unburied man lay cast away where three roads met', *Epigram* 24.1-2).⁴⁹ The epigrammatic form gives us no further details, but the notion of a skull at the crossroads certainly calls to mind a number of spells in the *PGM* (which I shall discuss below) in which a magical practitioner is directed to conjure a ghost at the crossroads by using the skull of a corpse.

§1.5.3: The association of Hekate with the crossroads in Greece & Rome

In the introduction to this thesis I discussed the divinities who were associated with the door; there were also gods associated with the crossroads and one of them in particular – Hekate – was also intrinsically connected to ghosts in a manner in which the door deities were not.⁵⁰ We can see this in Euripides' *Helen*, when Menelaus discovers a woman who looks suspiciously like Helen in Egypt; as the couple recognize each other, there is the following exchange:⁵¹

⁴⁸ Johnston 1991: 223 n. 25, however, feels that 'the "appointed crossroads" for executions must have been, at the very least, outside of heavily travelled areas where a decomposing corpse would cause offense.'

⁴⁹ Translation by Evelyn-White 1921.

⁵⁰ Hekate was also honoured outside the door, as I discussed in the introduction.

⁵¹ As the recognition scene unfolds it turns out that Helen did not go to Troy at all, but was spirited away to Egypt by the gods, who then sent an *eidolon* ('image') of her to Troy. Ironically, of course, Menelaus is unaware that he has in fact spent the past seven years with an apparition: Allan 2008: 211.

MENEΛΑΟΣ

ὦ φωσφόρ' Ἐκάτη, πέμπε φάσματ' εὐμενῆ.

ΕΛΕΝΗ

οὐ νυκτίφαντον πρόπολον Ἐνοδίας μ' ὄρᾳς.

MENELAUS

O Hecate with your torches, send me kindly visions!

HELEN

It is no phantom attendant of Enodia that you see here.

(Euripides, *Helen* 569-570)⁵²

Here we see the connection between Hekate, ghosts (φάσματα) and the crossroads, since the epithet Enodia, meaning 'in the road', was used to describe her from at least the fifth century BC onwards:⁵³

"Enodia" expresses Hekate's connection with roads – specifically places where three roads meet. Another adjective frequently used with Hekate's name is τριοδίτις; she is often described in other ways, too, as dwelling at the crossroads. In Rome she became identified with Trivia – representing the crossroads (*trivium*) themselves.⁵⁴

What we have, therefore, is a triangular set-up with Hekate at the apex: Hekate is linked to ghosts, and Hekate is linked to crossroads. This applies to both Greece and Rome as we find a statement similar to Menelaus' about Hekate Enodia in Apuleius about her Roman guise of Trivia: he refers to her as *manium potens Trivia* ('Trivia the ruler of the shades', *Apologia* 31);⁵⁵ *trivium* is, of course, Latin for 'crossroads'. It would seem logical, therefore, to draw a line at the base of our triangle and connect ghosts to crossroads.⁵⁶ In fact, for some scholars Hekate's association with ghosts came about precisely because she was located at the crossroads; one strand of Johnston's argument for Hekate's connection to spirits,

⁵² Translation by Kovacs 2002.

⁵³ Johnston 1990: 23. Hekate is described as τῆς εἰνοδίας Ἐκάτης and also associated with the ἱερὰς τριοδούς in fragment 535 of Sophocles' *Rhizotomoi*.

⁵⁴ Johnston 1990: 24.

⁵⁵ Translation by Jones 2017.

⁵⁶ As, for instance, Felton does at 1999: 5.

for example, is that 'her role as a goddess of crossroads... brought her into contact with these creatures, who traditionally dwelt at such places.'⁵⁷

It is certainly true that, as we have already seen, ghosts could already have been associated with the crossroads because corpses were deposited there, but it seems odd that this would be the main reason why Hekate was associated with ghosts, especially as Johnston herself gives a much stronger link:

Hekate was a goddess of birth and a goddess of death, accompanying souls across the greatest boundaries they crossed. Those who were not permitted to complete these transitions were fated to wander with her in a sort of Limbo.⁵⁸

I take the position that both the association of Hekate with ghosts (as a goddess of the dead) and the association of the crossroads with ghosts (due to their use as a dumping ground for polluted bodies) could have arisen independently, and Hekate's link with the crossroads would then have reinforced both ghostly traditions.⁵⁹

Hekate was worshipped in Greece at the crossroads, and statues known as *hekataia* were put up there in her honour.⁶⁰ It is possible that similar statues existed in the Roman world, as Ovid appears to refer to one in the *Fasti: ora vides Hecates in tres vertentia partes, servet ut in ternas compita secta vias* ('Thou seest Hekate's faces turned in three directions that she may guard the crossroads where

⁵⁷ Johnston 1990: 35. We see a similar attitude in Hopfner 1939.

⁵⁸ Johnston 1990: 35; see 144-145 for a similar sentiment.

⁵⁹ This explanation also avoids the 'chicken or egg' situation, wherein ghosts are associated with crossroads because of Hekate, but associated with Hekate because they were already in the crossroads.

⁶⁰ Johnston 1991: 219. *Hekataia* could also be found outside the door, as I discussed in the overall Introduction to this thesis.

they branch three several ways', 1.141).⁶¹ As a goddess of traversing liminal points she could assist with travel across metaphorical *limina*, as mentioned above, and also the more mundane liminal areas such as the crossroads: 'Hekate traditionally was supplicated at the earthly crossroads to insure [*sic*] safe transition through an uncertain point'.⁶² As a goddess with control over the restless dead, restless dead who might be considered to inhabit the crossroads, it becomes even more clear why she might be propitiated at the crossroads by anxious travellers.⁶³

§1.5.4: Offerings brought to the crossroads in Greece known as Hekate Suppers

There is evidence from Greece that Hekate was propitiated monthly at the crossroads: offerings, known as *deipna* or suppers, were left for her there (and these were sometimes eaten – unsurprisingly – by the poor):

φησὶ γὰρ αὐτῇ
τοὺς μὲν ἔχοντας καὶ πλουτοῦντας δεῖπνον προσάγειν κατὰ μῆνα,
τοὺς δὲ πένητας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρπάζειν πρὶν καταθεῖναι.
She'll [Hekate] tell you that every month the wealthy set out a meal for
her, and that poor people snatch it up before it's even put down.
(Aristophanes, *Plutus* 595-597)⁶⁴

Eating Hekate's suppers is one of the crimes that Demosthenes accuses Conon of, although here it is to demonstrate Conon's contempt (*ὀλιγωρίαν*) for the gods rather than due to poverty (*Orations* 54.39). Confirmation that these suppers

⁶¹ Translation by Frazer 1931.

⁶² Johnston 1990: 74.

⁶³ MacCulloch 1911: 333; Johnston 1991: 218.

⁶⁴ Translation by Henderson 2002. The suppers are also mentioned at Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 111, although Plutarch here confuses the contents of the suppers with polluted purification items (a common error, which I discuss further below).

were left at the crossroads – and further indication that they would be stolen – is found in Lucian, when Diogenes leaves instructions for Menippus to come εὔροι ἐν τῇ τριόδῳ Ἑκάτης δεῖπνον κείμενον ('with... any meals dedicated to Hekate he finds at cross-roads', *Dialogi mortuorum* 1.1).⁶⁵ It is presumably someone stealing or eating (there is a lacuna in the text at this point) a supper which

Theophrastus' superstitious man stumbles across at the crossroads:

κᾶν ποτε ἐπίδῃ σκορόδῳ ἐστεμμένον τῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς τριόδοις < >
ἀπελθὼν κατὰ κεφαλῆς λούσασθαι καὶ ἱερείας καλέσας σκίλλη ἢ σκύλακι
κελεῦσαι αὐτὸν περικαθᾶραι.

If ever he observes a man wreathed with garlic < > the offerings at
the crossroads, he goes away and washes from head to toe, then calls for
priestesses and tells them to purify him with a squill or a puppy.

(Theophrastus, *Characteres* 16.14)⁶⁶

The superstitious man, ever one to err on the side of caution, is evidently so horrified by what he sees that he must halt his journey immediately and undertake a lengthy purification process. Diggle suggests that the perpetrator is wearing a garlic wreath as an apotropaic measure as protection from the wrath of Hekate, since they would be her offerings.⁶⁷

What were these suppers for? There has been a long tradition in scholarship of assuming that these suppers were merely polluted items discarded at the crossroads;⁶⁸ for example, Halliday saw feeding the poor as the purpose of the offering, with the rather malevolent intention of 'transfer[ring] the ills of the

⁶⁵ Translation by MacLeod 1961. Menippus confirms that he has the supper at 2.3; Lucian also mentions a Hekate supper at the crossroads in his *Cataplus* 7.

⁶⁶ Text and translation by Diggle 2004. Diggle takes τῶν to refer to offerings, rather than simply the wreathed man (as the translation by Rusten & Cunningham 2003 does, for example), on the basis that the 'man must be doing something unholy, and what he is doing must be stated explicitly' (Diggle 2004: 372); the lacuna would therefore cover a verb such as eating or otherwise destroying the offerings.

⁶⁷ Diggle 2004: 371.

⁶⁸ See the discussion above for more on the discarding of polluted items at the crossroads.

household from which the Hecate's supper emanated to the eater'.⁶⁹ Yet careful analysis of the evidence shows that one can find Hekate suppers *and* polluted items at the crossroads, not that the suppers *are* the polluted items. For instance, in Lucian Menippus' instructions are to bring any Hekate suppers that he finds at the crossroads or (ἢ) eggs from sacrifices of purification (*Dialogi mortuorum* 1.1), and Demosthenes accuses Conon of stealing both (θ') Hekate suppers and (καὶ) the testicles of the piglets used as purificatory sacrifices (*Orations* 54.39).⁷⁰

Johnston has been fundamental in arguing for the separation of the polluted waste from the Hekate suppers, and she maintains that the suppers were instead placatory offerings.⁷¹ This certainly seems plausible, especially given the superstitious man's reaction to seeing something happen to them, and Demosthenes' use of them to blacken Conon's reputation. Interestingly, Plutarch refers to the suppers as dedicated both to Hekate and τοῖς ἀποτροπαίοις (*Quaestiones convivales* 709a); Johnston notes that '*hoi apotropaioi* surely refers here to the dangerous ghosts of the dead.'⁷² Bearing this in mind, the suppers certainly seem intended to be, in Johnston's words, 'a prophylaxis against such

⁶⁹ Halliday 1930: 150.

⁷⁰ The Cynic philosopher in Lucian's *Cataplus* 7 who died after eating a Hekate supper was said to have eaten both the supper καὶ τὰ ἐκ τῶν καθαρσίων ῥᾶ ('and the lustral eggs', trans. Harmon 1915), which again implies that this latter food was found nearby rather than as part of the supper.

⁷¹ Johnston 1991: 221: 'In late antiquity, ὄξυθύμια and other polluted remains became confused with Hekate suppers, which, as I indicated above, were taken to the crossroads to encourage Hekate's aid'; see 1991: 221 n. 22 for more detail. Hopfner 1939: 164 certainly seems to have conflated them, since he refers to the suppers as containing eggs, which are the polluted remains in Demosthenes or Lucian.

⁷² Johnston 1999: 60-61. We perhaps see this in Athenaeus, who mentions that some guests leaving a dinner party cleaned themselves with pieces of bread before making libations, and took the bread away with them; we do not know what they did with the bread, but since we are told that this ritual was τοῦτο ποιοῦντες ἔνεκα τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀμφοδοῖς γινομένων νυκτερινῶν φόβων ('because of the frightening events that occurred in the streets at night', *Deipnosophistae* 4.149c, trans. Douglas Olson 2007), it is possible that they left it at any *hekataia* they passed as an offering for their safe journey home.

ever-present and abundant sources of potential danger as the souls of those who had died young (*aōroi*),⁷³ and so these suppers, too, can be seen as evidence that ghosts were considered to haunt the crossroads as this is where they needed to be propitiated.

These suppers could be taken to the crossroads as frequently as every month on the new moon.⁷⁴ We saw in Chapter Four that the Athenians would protect their doors from ghosts once a year during the *Anthesteria*, by coating them with pitch, and I pointed out that this implied that there was evidently no real need to keep ghosts out of the house, or away from the door, for the rest of the year. However, since the Hekate suppers can be offered monthly, this certainly suggests that there is a more constant ghostly presence at the crossroads.

§1.5.5: The *Compitalia* crossroads festival in Rome

There does not seem to be any evidence that the Romans took Hekate suppers to the crossroads, although – as shown above – it seems likely that they did worship Hekate there as Trivia. However, they had their own crossroads festival which some ancient writers connected with the ghosts of the dead. The *Compitalia* was an annual Roman festival held at the *compita* of each neighbourhood in honour

⁷³ Johnston 1999: 61.

⁷⁴ Athenaeus tells us that the suppers were left on the 30th of the month, which is the point at which the month changes to the next month at the new moon: ταῖς τριακάσι δ' αὐτῇ τὰ δεῖπνα φέρουσι ('people bring her dinner on the 30th day of the month', *Deipnosophistae* 7.325a, trans. Douglas Olson 2007); Johnston 1990: 26 refers to this as 'a temporal *limen*', and given Hekate's association with liminal places we should certainly not discount this time as insignificant.

of the *Lares Compitales*.⁷⁵ *Compita* can refer to both the crossroads and the shrine that was located at this point,⁷⁶ although Gradel points out that some *compita* shrines in Pompeii are found ‘merely on the pavement at the side of main streets’ rather than at the crossroads proper.⁷⁷ Certainly, however, the expected location for the shrine was at the crossroads, as we see from Varro’s brief description of the *Compitalia*: *ideo ubi viae competunt tum in competis sacrificatur* (‘therefore where the highways “meet,” sacrifice is then made at the *compita*’, *De lingua Latina* 6.25).⁷⁸

We know that the *Compitalia* was a neighbourhood festival under the control of the *magistri* of the *vici*; it was a movable feast and took place shortly after the *Saturnalia*, with the date being announced by the praetor eight days in advance.⁷⁹ There were meals, and possibly strolls – depending upon how we read Cicero⁸⁰ – and games known as the *Ludi Compitalicii*.⁸¹ Farmers may have used this occasion to dedicate yokes at the *compita*.⁸² Later, under the empire, the

⁷⁵ Stek 2008: 117 provides evidence that the *Compitalia* was being celebrated by the second century BC; the festival was stopped in the late Republic, and reintroduced by Augustus (which I shall discuss below).

⁷⁶ Stek 2008: 119. See Gradel 2002: 120-121 figure 5.1 for photos of two Augustan compital altars.

⁷⁷ Gradel 2002: 121; see also Stek 2008: 119 who argues that even if the shrine was not at the actual crossroads, ‘they were in any case located at a central point, for they served as a meeting place for the inhabitants of a local group of people.’

⁷⁸ Translation by Kent 1938, adapted. Varro says here that the *Compitalia* was in honour of the *Lares Vialibus*, the *Lares* of the road; we might compare the Greek conflation of all the Apollos that Faraone 1992: 9 lists.

⁷⁹ Gradel 2002: 117; Stek 2008: 112.

⁸⁰ Cicero is certainly planning to stroll with Atticus on the *Compitalia* in 60-61 BC; whether this was a one-off, a habit for this particular pair, or reflected a common traditional activity (like our ‘Boxing Day walks’ nowadays in the UK) is unclear (*Epistulae ad Atticum* 2.3.4).

⁸¹ Gradel 2002: 117; Stek 2008: 112.

⁸² As we read in Persius 4.28: *quandoque iugum pertusa ad compita figit* (‘When he hangs up his yoke at the perforated crossroads shrine’, trans. Braund 2004). Stek 2008: 120 notes that a ‘scholiast on Persius explains that it was the custom that farmers fixed broken yokes to the *compitum* as a sign of completed agricultural labour, or because the instrument was considered sacred.’

Compitalia was one of the festivals which Augustus re-established; Suetonius tells us that:

Nonnulla... ex antiquis caerimoniis paulatim abolita restituit, ut... Compitalicios... Compitales Lares ornari bis anno instituit vernis floribus et aestivis.

he... revived some of the ancient rites which had gradually fallen into disuse, such as... the festival of the *Compitalia*... He provided that the Lares of the Crossroads should be crowned twice a year, with spring and summer flowers.

(Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 31.4)⁸³

Gradel suggests that this happened around 7 BC.⁸⁴ Stek observes that ‘the *compita* were effectively used [by Augustus] to disseminate the emperor cult over a wide and specifically popular audience.’⁸⁵ But what concerns us here is the custom wherein woollen effigies were hung on the *compitum* (or the door, or both), which some Roman writers assert were linked to ghosts or human sacrifice (which could itself yield ghosts). Our references to the puppets postdate the Augustan reformation, which would certainly imply that they remained (or perhaps became?) a part of the festival.

Festus, writing in the second century AD, tells us:

laneae effigies Compitalibus noctu dabantur in compita, quod lares, quorum is erat dies festus, animae putabantur esse hominum redactae in numerum deorum.

Woollen effigies were given at the *Compitalia* by night at the *compita* because the *Lares*, whose day it was that was sacred, were thought to be the spirits of men admitted to the rank of the gods.

(Festus 108L s.v. *laneae*)

⁸³ Translation by Rolfe 1914.

⁸⁴ Gradel 2002: 116. Ovid’s *Fasti*, published in AD 8 makes reference to the fact that Augustus added his own *genius* to the *compita* (5.145-146). Gradel 2002: 117 argues that ‘the new cults [had] little resemblance to their republican precursors. The two *Lares compitales* of the republic were henceforth unanimously termed *Lares augusti*, and with them entered the worship of a new and third god, the *Genius Augusti*.’ However, see Gradel 2002: 127 for the dedication to ‘the [a]jug(ustis) laribus from 59 BC’, which would suggest that this term is not a new one for these *Lares*.

⁸⁵ Stek 2008: 112.

pilae et effigies viriles et muliebres ex lana Compitalibus suspendebantur in compitis, quod hunc diem festum esse deorum inferorum, quos vocant Lares, putarent, quibus tot pilae, quot capita servorum; tot effigies, quot essent liberi, ponebantur, ut vivis parcerent et essent his pilis et simulacris contenti.

Balls and male and female effigies made from wool were suspended on the *compita* at the *Compitalia*, because they think that this day was the feast of the lower world gods, whom they call *Lares*, to whom they placed as many balls as heads of slaves; as many effigies as there were free people in order to spare the living and be content with these balls and likenesses.

(Festus 273L s.v. *pilae et effigies*)

Stek reports that wall-paintings in Pompeii feature ‘representations of puppets hanging from the altars’, and so it seems likely that these balls and puppets hung on the *compita* were a genuine part of the festival.⁸⁶ For Festus, the purpose of the effigies were to protect people from the dangerous nature of the *Lares Compitales*, who will presumably take or attack the puppets and balls instead of the people themselves, and Festus refers to these *Lares* as both *dei inferi* and *animae hominum* – gods of the underworld, and the spirits of the dead who have become deified. The ‘true’ origin of the *Lares Compitales* (if it can ever be discerned⁸⁷) is not actually relevant here. What is more important is that, at least by the second century AD, there was a notion that the purpose of the *Compitalia* was to appease deities with an underworld and ghostly connection.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Stek 2008: 114, see figures 1a and 1b.

⁸⁷ The issue of whether or not the *Lares Compitales* were the deified souls of ancestors, or agricultural deities (as Tibullus 1.1.19-24, for example, suggests), was the cause of a long-running argument starting at the turn of the nineteenth century between Wissowa and Samter, with Samter arguing for the former and Wissowa the latter origin. See Stek 2008: 126 n. 18 for bibliographic information.

⁸⁸ It is presumably this connection which led Hopfner to say that the *Compitalia* was celebrated in honour of the *manes* (Hopfner 1939: 165). Festus, however, is clear that the festival is carried out for the *Lares Compitales*, not the *manes* in general. Frazer goes one step further – and, I would say, one step too far – linking Festus’ comments about the origin of the *Lares Compitales* in with what we know about other goings-on at the crossroads: ‘we may reasonably suppose that the *Lares Compitales* which haunted the cross-roads were the spirits of persons who on account of their crimes, misfortunes, difference of social rank, or for any other reasons, had not been accorded the ordinary rites of burial’ (Frazer 1929a: 463). While it is true that the *Lares* in Festus’ account do appear to be dangerous and malignant, it was a god’s prerogative to act in that

Macrobius, writing three centuries after Festus, has a slightly different interpretation: that the *Compitalia* had its origins in a rite started by Tarquinius Superbus, who had reinstated the games (tradition holds that the *Compitalia* had originally been founded by Servius Tullius) following an oracle of Apollo which demanded child sacrifice to Mania, the mother of the *Lares*, as part of the festival. After the fall of the kings, Junius Brutus substituted garlic and poppies for the children (1.7.35) thus fulfilling the oracle's desire for 'heads' without resorting to human sacrifice. Macrobius then goes on to describe the use of effigies at the *Compitalia*:

factumque est ut effigies Maniae suspensae pro singulorum foribus periculum, si quod immineret familiis, expiarent, ludosque ipsos ex viis compitorum in quibus agitabantur Compitalia appellitaverunt.

So it came to be that likenesses of Mania hung before each household's door to avert any danger that might threaten the household's members, and the games themselves came to be called the *Compitalia*, from the crossroads in which they were celebrated.

(Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.7.35)⁸⁹

The effigies as described here are not of the householders themselves, as Festus had implied, but rather of Mania, the mother of the *Lares*, and they are not hung on the *compita*, but rather they are hung on each individual household's front door.⁹⁰ Macrobius states that their purpose is to avert *periculum*, 'danger', and it is possible that this danger would come from Mania herself. The effigies could be part of the faux sacrifice, but if that were the case then it is odd that they would

way, and if an origin story for the *Lares* indicates that they are deified ghosts, then they are always the deified ghosts of ancestors, rather than unburied criminals.

⁸⁹ Translation by Kaster 2011.

⁹⁰ A possible explanation for this discrepancy could be found in Faraone 1992: 49 n. 17, who tentatively suggests that the effigies hung on the crossroads at the *Compitalia* could 'also appear as protective devices on individual husedoors at other times of the year.'

be in the likeness of Mania.⁹¹ They could instead have been designed to protect the householders *from* Mania, should she discover that the sacrifice is of plant heads rather than human: a form of sympathetic magic would be to make an apotropaic device in the form of the danger that it was intended to protect from.⁹² Whilst Macrobius' account is relatively dense and convoluted, we again have a situation where this crossroads festival is associated with death and so it is feasible that an association between ghosts and the crossroads could have manifested.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus – writing before Festus and Macrobius in the Augustan era – makes no mention of puppets (he tells us that families are required to contribute a honey-cake to the shrine, *Antiquitates Romanae* 4.14.3-4) but does raise the interesting idea that the original purpose of the festival was about neighbourhood cohesion and, by analogy with his later description of the *Paganalia* at 4.15.3-4, acted as a census.⁹³ Under this theory the honey-cakes would be counted to give an idea of how many families live in each *vicus*.⁹⁴ However, an effigy for every free man and woman and a ball for each slave would give a more accurate breakdown of the population than one honey-cake per household. If this were the original intention of the festival,⁹⁵ then it is easy to

⁹¹ Meuli 1955: 215 n. 32 sees the puppets of Festus as 'beruht auf eben dieser Menschenopfertheorie und ist nicht ernst zu nehmen'.

⁹² Faraone 1992: 36-53 discusses apotropaic devices that 'fight fire with fire', so to speak.

⁹³ Stek 2008: 114. At the *Paganalia* men, women and children all had to contribute a different type of coin: by counting these coins it was possible to get a breakdown of the population.

⁹⁴ Stek 2008: 113.

⁹⁵ Dionysius suggests that this administrative function of the festival was original, but we have no evidence either way. While we have archaeological evidence of *compita* going back to the second century BC (Stek 2008: 117), Stek 2008: 126 n. 32 stresses that 'it is in no way clear that this practice [the hanging of puppets and balls] goes indeed back to archaic times, as often seems to be assumed, apparently on the grounds that it appears as a very ancient custom, also present in other Indo-European cultures'.

see how puppet effigies hanging from shrines in the dead of winter (the *Compitalia* took place shortly after the *Saturnalia*) would be considered eerie and unnerving, and could give rise to the idea that they were replacement sacrifices or some other kind of offering or apotropaic device against ghosts or underworld gods – especially considering that the uncanny location of the crossroads was already rich in folklore and superstition connecting it with ghosts.⁹⁶

The *Compitalia* is not an explicit link between the crossroads and the spirits of the dead in the same way that I have shown the Hekate suppers or bodies disposed at the crossroads to be. However, even the tenuous link between the supposed origins of the *Lares Compitales* and the puppets, or of human sacrifice and the puppets, is more than we have found that would connect the threshold and the spirits of the dead.

§1.5.6: The performance of magic at the crossroads

The fact that magic was performed at the crossroads need not indicate anything about the location of ghosts – after all, as I argued in earlier chapters, there is no evidence that the magic performed at the threshold meant that ghosts haunted it. However, in the case of the crossroads, it becomes more apparent that at least some of the magic performed there is designed to take advantage of ghosts that might be in the environs.

⁹⁶ Of course, the reverse could also be the case: that administrators later saw counting the puppets as an ideal way to conduct a census.

For example, a love spell (*PGM* IV.2943-66) instructs the practitioner to create a model dog from dough or wax, add some other magical ingredients to it including a papyrus strip, and then ‘deposit it at a crossroad after you have marked the spot so that, should you wish to recover it, you can find it’.⁹⁷ The spell to be written on the papyrus strip is addressed to ‘you’, and this ‘you’ must be the ghost which is to carry out the spell; the ghost is threatened by an invocation of Hekate and Kore, and their roles as goddesses of the crossroads is also emphasised.⁹⁸ The spellcaster, then, is to leave instructions for a ghost at the crossroads and to threaten said ghost with the goddess of the crossroads; there is certainly a strong implication that the ghost is to be *found* at the crossroads.⁹⁹

It is not just the conjuring of ghosts at the crossroads that magic could be used for. A cure for fever found in Pliny – if of course it is indeed magic, rather than medicine – claims that *ranae in trivio decoctae oleo abiectis carnibus perunctos liberant quartanis* (‘Quartans are cured... by rubbing with the grease of frogs

⁹⁷ Gager 1992: 250 n. 16 wonders whether this wax model deposited at the crossroads could be suggestive of the wax images that Plato says can be found at the crossroads (*Leges* 933a-b): ‘The papyrus is, of course, much later than the time of Plato, but many of the practices involved in these rituals appear to have survived over long stretches of time.’

⁹⁸ Translation by O’Neil in Betz 1986: 94. Presumably this connection to Hekate is also why the model is of a dog, since the dog was sacred to Hekate.

⁹⁹ Ogden 2001b: 213-214 reports a series of Byzantine necromantic recipes which, whilst strictly outside the geographical bounds of this study, are worth considering as they have strong resemblances to those that we find in the *PGM* and *PDM* and as such suggest a shared tradition. Two are to summon a ghost at the crossroads, and a third is to summon demons at the crossroads. The procedure is similar for all three: take the skull of a corpse (‘preferably one killed by violence’), perform certain rituals over it, and then place it at the crossroads and speak the formula that will summon the ghosts or demons. The implication is evidently that these beings are summoned at the crossroads because this is the most logical place to find them. There is a *PGM* recipe which allows to the spellcaster to create a magical assistant known as ‘Apollonius of Tyana’s old serving woman’ (*PGM* XI.a 1-40). It is not entirely clear who this woman is; she is created out of an invoked goddess, but is a separate entity to the goddess – it is possible then, that she is the ghost of the original serving woman. This seems more likely when we realise that the spell recommends that the procedure, which – just like the Byzantine recipes – involves using a skull, be carried out at ‘a suitable place, by a river, the sea, or at the fork of a road, in the middle of the night’ (trans. Martin in Betz 1986: 150.) We saw a connection between necromancy and

boiled in oil at a place where three roads meet, the flesh being first thrown away', *Naturalis historia* 32.38.113).¹⁰⁰ Johnston interprets the throwing away of the flesh (*abiectis*) as the frogs being buried at the crossroads, 'perhaps [acting] as an amulet to keep pinned to the crossroads the troublesome spirits imagined to bring disease'.¹⁰¹

Of course, not all magical or folkloric rituals and remedies performed at the crossroads were necessarily to exploit any ghosts there. For instance, a recipe to remove enchantments (*PGM* XXXVI.256-64) involves 'a three-cornered sherd from the fork of a road – pick it up with your left hand – inscribe it with myrrhed ink and hide it'.¹⁰² We might expect a ghostly helper to be required, but there is nothing obvious in this spell that the location of the crossroads is anything other than a generic 'magical place' for the finding of key, charged ingredients.

Nonetheless, the fact that there *are* spells which seem designed to exploit ghosts at the crossroads certainly goes to reinforce the link between this place and the spirits of the dead.

§1.5.7: Conclusion

As I have shown, evidence from both Greece and Rome strongly implies that ghosts were believed to haunt the crossroads. We might not always be able to discern the origin of this belief, but the evidence of ritual and magical practice

bodies of water in Chapter Four, and we have seen throughout this chapter that a belief in a connection between ghosts and the crossroads seems very likely.

¹⁰⁰ Translation by Jones 1963.

¹⁰¹ Johnston 1991: 224.

¹⁰² Translation by Smith in Betz 1986: 275. Johnston 1991: 223 implies that the sherd is hidden again at the crossroads.

that took place there certainly supports it. We do not have anything like this for the threshold; in what can be seen as a straightforward parallel, the *hekataia* that I mentioned above which were located at the crossroads could also be set before the door¹⁰³ but there is no evidence of Hekate suppers – which, if we remind ourselves, ‘asked for the goddess’s protection against the dangers inherent in the crossroads’¹⁰⁴ – being brought to the *hekataia* at the threshold.

Plato linked doors, crossroads, and graves together when he mentioned that wax images might be left at those locations to make people think that they had been cursed:

ἄν ποτε ἄρα ἴδωσί που κήρινα μιμήματα πεπλασμένα, εἴτ’ ἐπὶ θύραις εἴτ’
ἐπὶ τριόδοις εἴτ’ ἐπὶ μνήμασι γονέων αὐτῶν τινές
if they happen to see images of moulded wax at doorways, or at points
where three ways meet, or it may be at the tomb of some ancestor
(*Leges* 933b)¹⁰⁵

Plato’s anecdote certainly suggests that these three locations were commonly targeted for the prominent display of magical items, but was this due to a belief that they were all haunted by the ghosts who would carry out the magic? I have shown over the past two chapters that there was indeed a belief that ghosts would haunt both graves and crossroads, however, we should not assume that – by analogy – the same applies to the doorway. Ultimately, we do not know why the poppets have been left in these places; I demonstrated in Chapter Two that magical items might be left at thresholds to act as ‘homing beacons’ to attract malevolent ghosts, and so it is entirely possible that this would be the intention

¹⁰³ See Faraone 1992: 8-9; Aristophanes makes a reference to shrines of Hekate being placed before doorways at *Vespae* 804; I discussed these in the overall introduction to this thesis.

¹⁰⁴ Johnston 1991: 219.

¹⁰⁵ Translation by Bury 1926.

behind leaving a poppet at the door. We should also consider the fact that the wax images have been left out in plain sight and that Plato mentions them in the context of things that the state should ban since, even though he himself does not believe in magic, seeing such a sight πείθει... τοὺς δ' ὡς παντὸς μᾶλλον ὑπὸ τούτων δυναμένων γοητεύειν βλάπτονται ('convinces... their victims that they certainly are being injured by those who possess the power of bewitchment', *Leges* 933a).¹⁰⁶ It is possible that poppets were left in these prominent locations to scare the victims of the spell into *thinking* that they have been cursed, rather than any 'real' attempt at magic.¹⁰⁷

The evidence connecting spirits and crossroads is much stronger than the dearth of support for the connection with the threshold. We saw direct evidence, for example, that into the late first century AD corpses were sometimes disposed of at crossroads, whereas there is no evidence for burial underneath the threshold. The magic we find taking place at the crossroads has a stronger emphasis on the use of ghosts than that at the threshold. Even the patron deities of the crossroads and the festivals that took place there are intrinsically connected to the spirits of the dead in a way in which we cannot say for the threshold.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Translation by Bury 1926.

¹⁰⁷ See Gager 1992: 250. The fact that a doll might be left on the tomb of one's parents is particularly suspect when it comes to utilising a ghost for magic, as 'in cases where we can estimate the age at death of those corpses found with curse tablets, they were almost always young' (Johnston 1999: 79 n. 132). This concurs with what we know about the use of ghosts that had died untimely (i.e., young) and by violence (which also implies relative youth compared to someone who might have died of natural causes).

¹⁰⁸ While there is some evidence for Hekate to be goddess of the door as well, she is more associated with crossroads, and the connection with the dead cannot be said for any of the Roman deities of the door, from Janus to Forculus and Limentinus.

There are a number of rational reasons why unease and superstition may have grown up around crossroads – the ease with which you can get lost, or have a negative interaction with another traveller would already begin to build dread, and that is before the site is used for the dumping of polluted remains, corpses, or offerings to infernal deities.¹⁰⁹ As Johnston explains, this ‘is not to imply, of course, that all crossroads, at all times, were believed to be fraught with active ghosts... [but if] one sought contact with the unquiet dead, then a crossroads was the place to look.’¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Puhvel 1976: 168 & 175 n. 3; Hopfner 1939: 162.

¹¹⁰ Johnston 1991: 223-224.

PART TWO:
THE THRESHOLD AS A SYMBOL OF THE RITE OF PASSAGE FOR THE BRIDE
IN THE ROMAN WEDDING CEREMONY

INTRODUCTION

The Amalgamated Roman Wedding as Presented in Handbooks and Roman Literature

In almost any textbook on ancient Rome, you can find what has become, over the years, the standard description of the Roman wedding: on the day of her wedding, a Roman bride was assisted by her female relatives as she donned her elaborate coiffure (hair parted into six locks, perhaps by a spear) and costume (*tunica recta*, shoes, veil [*flammeum*], flowers). Then, ritually torn from the embrace of her mother, she was escorted through the streets by children and torchbearers [in a procession called the *deductio*] to the accompaniment of a wedding hymn, bawdy verses and the throwing of nuts; along the way, she may have sacrificed coins to the Lares [at the crossroads]. When she arrived at her groom's house, she anointed the doorposts, [was assisted or lifted over the threshold,] was presented with fire and water and spoke the words, "*Ubi tu Gaius ego Gaia,*" and then the couple grasped each other's hands to show consent. Guests feasted with the bridal couple, and then the couple departed to their bedchamber.¹

In Part One of this thesis I discussed the problems behind the notion that the threshold was important in Greek and Roman folklore, superstition and culture only because ghosts allegedly inhabited it. I demonstrated that there is little evidence to show that there was such a belief, and also suggested that by focussing on spirits, these scholars had reduced the importance of the threshold

¹ Hersch 2013: 223; note that I have added some clarifications to the text in square brackets, including the lifting of the bride over the threshold which Hersch has omitted. I shall argue below for a different ordering of events at the groom's threshold, with the offering of fire and water being the final ritual. Hersch mentions here the *dextrarum iunctio* handclasp, but – since she herself notes (2013: 226) that it was unlikely to have actually occurred – I do not refer to this act again in this thesis. Her previous monograph explained that 'the tide of scholarship has turned in favor of the *dextrarum iunctio* as a visual representation of marital harmony, not the moment that the spouses became man and wife in a wedding ceremony' (Hersch 2010a: 41).

down to a single issue – thereby ignoring the wealth of other symbolic functions that it could have. We saw that the threshold’s liminal status, doubling both as a no-man’s-land and a boundary, served to explain much of its use in superstitious rites, rather than any connection to spirits.

What I wish to discuss now in Part Two is use of the threshold as a symbol of a new start and therefore as a representation of a rite of passage. I shall use the figure of the Roman bride as a case study to address these uses, as the doorway and threshold of the marital home feature strongly in accounts of Roman weddings. The ancient Greek wedding differed from that of the Romans, without the same focus on threshold rites, and so my focus throughout shall be on Rome.²

The Roman bride walked in a procession – known as the *deductio* – from her parents’ house to her new home: the groom’s house; the symbolic beginning of her new life with her new husband was the threshold of her new house. A number of rituals – anointing the doorposts with fat or oil and wool, assisting or lifting the bride over the threshold, speaking key ceremonial words, giving a ceremonial offering – took place at or near this entrance.

These rituals were used as part of the evidence that ghosts haunted the threshold. Samter had argued that the *Lares* had their origin in a household cult to dead ancestors, and so he connected the bride’s anointing of the doorposts to these spirits. He provided accounts of brides in other cultures, countries and time periods smearing substances on a door or threshold as well: often some

² On the ancient Greek wedding see Redfield 1982; Oakley & Sinos 1993; Ferrari 2003; Larsson Lovén & Strömberg 2010; Cox 2011; Glazebrook & Olson 2014.

form of fat, like the Roman bride, but sometimes honey.³ He argued that as honey was an offering to the dead in ancient Greece then this meant that the actions of the bride anointing the threshold with honey in as diverse places as Crete, Bulgaria and Herzegovina were also connected to making offerings to the dead.⁴ Eitrem wrote that 'Das Salben der Thürpfosten wird aber schon an und für sich ein dem Totenkultus entnommener Ritus sein,'⁵ although his evidence for this was limited to the ritual anointing of grave stelae with water by the *archon* in parts of Greece – the only obvious correspondence between these two ritual actions being that of anointing. Ogle echoed the connection between the anointing and the dead: he claimed that the use of wool and fat in this rite was connected to 'a cult which was originally no doubt directed to the spirits that were always near by',⁶ since these substances were apparently 'used frequently in purificatory and other rites connected with the dead'.⁷

It was not just the ritual anointing of the doorposts by the bride that was seen as connected to the haunting of ghosts in the wedding ceremony: Ogle also discussed the bad omen for Romans of stumbling at the threshold, and used the lifting of the bride over it as the culmination of this examination. He determined that 'upon the threshold lurked some danger to the bride, danger which she could escape by not treading thereon',⁸ and concluded that the danger was not connected to avoiding a mis-step in a symbolic new start, or even to avoid

³ Samter 1901: 81-82.

⁴ Samter 1901: 84.

⁵ Eitrem 1909: 19.

⁶ Ogle 1911: 263.

⁷ Ogle 1911: 267; he does not, however, offer much evidence to support this last statement. See Ogle 1911: 267 nn. 4 & 5.

⁸ Ogle 1911: 254.

desecrating a sacred object (which is the reason given by Servius), but rather to avoid the ‘spirits [which] haunted the vicinity of the house-door’.⁹ This was his springboard for looking for spirits in the door in general.

One of the problems with the ghosts theory, as I argued in Part One, was the fact that those supporting it were looking for a single universal explanation of the significance of the threshold. This means that anything that does not precisely fit this schema tends to be marginalised or otherwise twisted – one size usually therefore ends up fitting none. Consequently, instead of shoehorning the wedding rituals into a wider, implausible, theory about ghosts, we must look elsewhere. Given that there were up to four rituals that could take place at the threshold, the Romans evidently – either consciously or unconsciously – assigned it some significance.

The significance that I would like to discuss now is that of the wedding ceremony as a rite of passage for the bride – especially in her first marriage but also applicable to any future remarriages – with the *limen* representing both her transfer from maiden to *matrona* (at a first marriage) and her integration into the groom’s household (for all marriages). In fact, it is not just the ritual actions at the *limen* that indicate that she is undertaking a rite of passage: the basic structure of the ceremony falls comfortably into the tripartite pattern of rites of passage – ‘separation (*séparation*), transition (*marge*), and incorporation

⁹ Ogle 1911: 254. Servius says the threshold is sacred to Vesta, as I discussed in the Introduction to this thesis: *ad Eclogue* 8.29; *ad Aeneid* 2.469; *ad Aeneid* 6.273. Rage-Brocard 1934: 59 accepts the arguments of Eitrem, Samter, Frazer and Winternitz, and states that the threshold was a significant location in the Roman wedding because it was haunted by ghosts; I discuss Rage-Brocard further below.

(*agrégation*)¹⁰ – as proposed by van Gennep at the turn of the twentieth century, and still in use as a methodological framework.¹¹ The Roman bride is ritually separated out from society by dressing as a ‘Bride’, she transitions – literally – from her parental home to her husband’s house, and is then ritually reincorporated as she enters her new marital home.

I therefore intend to use this tripartite structure as a framework within which to analyse the Roman wedding ceremony as a rite of passage for the bride. My focus is primarily on the threshold-based incorporation rites, but I shall cover the bride’s entire journey from betrothal onwards in order to make the full pattern of the rites of passage obvious and to situate the threshold rituals in context. In Chapter One I shall discuss Rites of Separation, which I argue take place at the bride’s house, before she leaves for the *deductio*. I shall also analyse other pre-marriage rituals, such as betrothal rites and the potential for girls’ puberty rites. Chapter Two covers the Rites of Transition, which the *deductio* – taking place in the liminal space between the bride’s former and future houses – clearly functions as. Finally in Chapter Three I shall analyse the Rites of Incorporation taking place at the groom’s house. This is the point at which up to four different threshold-rituals could be performed, and I shall discuss the important symbol of the *limen* as the bride begins her new role in a new household.

¹⁰ Kimball 1960: vii-viii.

¹¹ For instance, in the introduction to a series of papers examining initiation in ancient Greece, Dodd 2003: xv wrote that ‘it seems for the most part that Van Gennep’s theory alone has been good for classicists to think with.’ Dolansky 2008 likewise uses the tripartite structure within which to analyse the Roman boy’s rites of assuming the *toga virilis*, ‘despite its shortcomings’ (2008: 60 n. 6). Of course, I do not wish to use van Gennep’s structure uncritically, as I detail below.

§2.0.1: Models of Rites of Passage: van Gennep, Lincoln and Turner

Van Gennep was an ethnographer writing in 1909,¹² who argued that practically all forms of initiation ceremony – *rites de passage* – fall into a tripartite structure: the person undergoing the rite of passage is ritually separated from society to take on the status of ‘initiate’; they then enter a transitional state where they no longer belong to their original status but are not yet part of their new status, before being ritually incorporated back into society as a newly transformed member. Whilst van Gennep is somewhat guilty of the universalising tendencies that I discussed for his contemporaries in Part One, he does note that his schema is a general one, and that different ceremonies may emphasise certain parts of the pattern at the expense of others:

although a complete scheme of rites of passage theoretically includes preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation), in specific instances these three types are not always equally important or equally elaborated.¹³

It is clear from this terminology that van Gennep was using the symbolism of the threshold, the *limen*, to elucidate his concept; ‘to cross the threshold’, he wrote, ‘is to unite oneself with a new world. It is thus an important act in marriage, adoption, ordination, and funeral ceremonies.’¹⁴ This suggests that van Gennep saw the threshold as symbolising the rites of incorporation; however, he specifically saw the threshold as representing transition:

¹² While the English translation gives an original publication date of 1908 (van Gennep 1960: xxi), scholarly consensus is that it was published in 1909 (see, for instance, Dodd & Faraone 2003: *passim*).

¹³ van Gennep 1960: 11.

¹⁴ van Gennep 1960: 20.

The rites of the threshold are therefore not “union” ceremonies, properly speaking, but rites of preparation for union, themselves preceded by rites of preparation for the transitional stage.¹⁵

This is my point of disagreement with van Gennep, as I interpret the threshold-rites in the Roman wedding as indeed symbolising the union of the bride and groom, and her incorporation into his house and household. I shall go into this in more detail below, but it is evident from the structure of the Roman wedding ceremony that the threshold rites bring the liminal *deductio* to a close as the bride transitions into her new house, and as such I believe that they should be viewed as rites of incorporation.

Van Gennep’s structure is not without further criticism. Lincoln has objected to van Gennep’s schema as being irrelevant for women’s rites of passage, particularly because of van Gennep’s focus on a territorial transition during the liminal phase. Van Gennep had claimed that ‘this symbolic and spatial area of transition may be found in... all the ceremonies which accompany the passage from one social and magico-religious position to another.’¹⁶ Bowie succinctly summarises Lincoln’s argument against this notion:

When compared to male initiation, the emphasis on territorial passage is absent or much reduced. Women usually remain in or near their domestic dwelling throughout the period of the ritual.¹⁷

It is clear, however, that Lincoln’s spatial view of women’s rites of passage does not apply to the Roman bride, given that she travels from one house to another. Granted, she may well stay relatively local to her parents’ house, depending on whereabouts the groom lives, but she cannot be said to remain in her domestic

¹⁵ van Gennep 1960: 20-21.

¹⁶ van Gennep: 18.

¹⁷ Bowie 2000: 172.

dwelling for the marriage ceremony. Most importantly, I will argue in Chapter Two that her visit to the crossroads during the *deductio* symbolises van Gennepe's wider territorial passage, as she moves into a specifically liminal space during the procession and back out again.

Lincoln developed his own schema for women's rites of passage: a pattern which he labelled 'enclosure, metamorphosis (or magnification), and emergence', as 'the nature of her activity is changed, not her spatial locus.'¹⁸ Lincoln used the imagery of the butterfly in his book *Emerging From the Chrysalis* to reflect this pattern,¹⁹ but rather than comparing women to insects we could instead relate it to the process of a woman giving birth: the confinement of labour, the metamorphosis or magnification inherent in the biological process of giving birth, and the subsequent emergence as a mother. A rite of passage in which a young woman becomes a wife could be seen as emblematic of this 'evolution', but to what extent does the structure of the Roman wedding ceremony reflect Lincoln's schema? It is perhaps possible to see some shape of this in the use of the *flammeum* veil. The bride is enclosed in it as she walks from house to house; this would presumably give her the opportunity to reflect on her changing status – a mental metamorphosis, if you will – and she emerges at the end of the *deductio* as a wife. However, unlike the Greek wedding with its ritual of unveiling the bride before the groom (*anakalypteria*), we do not have any evidence of a

¹⁸ Lincoln 1991: 101.

¹⁹ In the Afterword to the second edition, written ten years after the original publication, Lincoln 1991: 110-111 discussed the fact that he was now uncomfortable with using this image, since it 'effectively misrepresents a social and cultural process as if it were something natural', and goes on to accept that the outcome of an initiatory ritual on the initiand is something determined by societal pressure.

Roman ritual unveiling to remove the *flammeum* and display the new *uxor*.²⁰ Instead, we have a series of threshold-rites at the end of the *deductio* which quite clearly incorporate the bride into her new house and new family. I therefore believe that this – along with the spatial passage that I shall argue in Chapter Two is made to the crossroads – indicates that van Gennep’s schema is more relevant in this particular female context than Lincoln’s.

Similar criticisms of male-centric ritual theory were made against Turner, who adapted van Gennep’s theory in the 1950s and 1960s and especially developed the liminal phase. Whilst the *deductio* makes van Gennep’s tripartite structure and labelling relevant to the Roman bride, it is clear that Turner’s concept of *communitas*, which he argues characterises the liminal phase, does not apply. *Communitas* is Turner’s term for the communal bonding that initiands undergo whilst they transition, but here we see that that is a male-centric view of rites of passage ceremonies. Bynum’s critique of Turner’s theory of liminality is that his ‘ideas describe the stories and symbols of men better than those of women’,²¹ and Lincoln, noting that women tend to be initiated individually, points out that ‘whereas group solidarity... is ritually constructed for [men] in the course of their collective initiation, the corresponding rituals for women most often atomize the initiands’.²² Although the bride is accompanied by a raucous crowd as she walks from house to house, she undergoes her rite of passage on her own – she does not even share the *deductio* with the groom, who most likely travelled

²⁰ For the *anakalypteria* see Redfield 1982: 192; Oakley & Sinos 1993: 25; Ferrari 2003: 28.

²¹ Bynum 1992: 32.

²² Lincoln 1991: 117.

separately in order to arrive before her to greet her at his house.²³ Being swathed by the *flammeum* veil also serves to isolate her from the crowd and mark her out as the sole focus for the rite of passage. For this reason I am not following Turner's model of the rite of passage or using his concept of *communitas*.

I do not wish to suggest that the Roman wedding ceremony was ever deliberately planned out as a rite of passage, complete with intentionally symbolic use of the threshold. However, with the benefit of van Gennep's work, and with an overall view of a 'complete' ceremony (which, it is true, may never have been carried out in full by any Roman bride) it is possible to see how it falls into the same schema. It is also important to explicitly note that I do not wish to imply that the wedding ceremony only functioned as a rite of passage. It is quite clear that different elements had other functions, such as symbolising a bride's chastity, or as a charm to bring fertility to the couple, or even as apotropaic devices to protect the bride or groom as they transitioned to a married state.²⁴

²³ In Catullus 61 the groom appears to be processing along with the bride when the poet directs Fescennine verses at him (61.134-141), but then when she arrives at the house he is already in the atrium (61.164-166). Calpurnius Flaccus states of the groom that *fescennina cecinerit* ('he will have sung the Fescennines', *Declamations* 46); Treggiari 1991: 166 therefore suggests that there would be two processions: 'since it would be a melancholy business to sing solo, he too must have been accompanied by a noisy crowd of friends and attendants.'

²⁴ This is something that van Gennep also acknowledged, and noted that 'all these ceremonies have their individual purposes [...which] occur in juxtaposition and combination with rites of passage – and are sometimes so intimately intertwined with them that it is impossible to distinguish whether a particular ritual is, for example, one of protection or of separation': van Gennep 1960: 11-12; see also 117.

§2.0.2: To what extent was the Roman wedding a puberty rite for girls?

The fact that young Roman women who died before they were wed were sometimes buried with marriage symbols or referred to as ‘marrying Death’ implies that marriage was a rite of passage that all girls were expected to go through, one way or another, and that therefore marriage signified a girl’s transition to adulthood.²⁵ Boys had their own rite of passage through puberty as teenagers, when they put aside their childhood *togae praetextae*, donned their *togae viriles* and processed down to the Forum to symbolise their new role as adult citizens.²⁶ Scholars often write that there is no ‘equivalent’ puberty ceremony for girls, and that they have to ‘make do’ with getting married.²⁷ Frascchetti, in his article on rites of passage for ‘Roman youth’, allocates only one paragraph to girls, which is a description of the marriage: ‘the rite that introduced them to youth corresponded to their social function of reproducing the civic body’.²⁸ It is true that boys had a separate puberty rite and marriage rite, but it is also the case that our male-centric record of history may well have left us no trace of female puberty rites, especially those that took place privately, with only female accompaniment. I shall discuss in Chapter One our scant

²⁵ Carroll 2006: 175 reports that ‘a widely dispersed group of graves in western Europe of girls between the ages of 5 and 20’ contain items such as bridal jewellery, spindles and distaffs (which were carried in the *deductio* procession during the wedding (see Part Two Chapter Two), and dolls (which may usually have been dedicated by a bride-to-be before her wedding, see Part Two Chapter One). See Pliny, *Epistulae* 5.16, who laments over the untimely death of a young girl who was about to be married; Pliny states that her father Fundanus will now have to spend the money that he was going to spend on her marriage on her funeral; cf. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.33.

²⁶ For more on this rite for boys see Dolansky 2008.

²⁷ Boëls-Janssen 1993 is the main exception to this. Dolansky 2008: 47: ‘There is no evidence for a comparable ceremony at the end of girlhood, and a distinct celebration aside from marriage probably did not exist for freeborn girls.’ Frascchetti 1997: 61 and 69-70 suggests that there were ‘archaic rituals that had taken place under the sign of Juno Sororia’, using the *tigillum sororium*, which fell out of use, but does not go into any detail about what these might have been. See Caldwell 2015: 9-10.

²⁸ Frascchetti 1997: 69-70.

evidence that girls dedicated childhood items – clothing, dolls – to the gods before marriage; we have no firm indication that this actually happened, never mind its purpose, but it is entirely possible that this was a puberty rite that girls went through, perhaps on menarche.

One problem with considering the marriage ceremony as a puberty rite for girls is that it is likely that most young women married for the first time at least a couple of years after they passed biological puberty. While age at first marriage could be from as young as twelve, many girls did not marry until their late teens.²⁹ However, Parkin points out that ‘a woman’s life course is marked by particular events relating to her status (as a daughter, a wife, a mother, and a widow) and to her status in relation to the men in her life’,³⁰ and Frascchetti notes that Roman women were classified not by age, but by their social role and relation to men: *virgo, uxor, matrona*.³¹ An unmarried young woman, therefore, might be considered socially in the role of a child, even if she were long past puberty.

There are strong parallels between the boy’s *toga virilis* ceremony and elements of wedding ceremony that applied to the bride;³² in short, both boy and bride

²⁹ Shaw 1987: 39: argues that at first marriage most girls in the western Roman empire ‘were probably in the late teens’.

³⁰ Parkin 2011: 280.

³¹ Frascchetti 1997: 63, who is using *matrona* here as *mater* to signify the production of children; he notes that only with *anus* does an age-related term come into use, although this would seem to ignore the use of *puellae* for female children.

³² That the Romans themselves saw the rites as equivalent rites of passage is strongly suggested by the fact that Suetonius reports that Augustus, if someone left him an inheritance in their will, would donate it back to their children *die virilis togae vel nuptiarum* (‘on the day that they assumed the *toga virilis* or married’, *Augustus* 66.4). This is supported by a second-century AD will (*CIL* 10.6328) reported by Carroll 2006: 43, which bequeathed alimony payments to underprivileged boys and girls ‘until they reached the age of 16 and 14 respectively, the age at which boys were to... don the adult toga... and at which girls were expected to marry’.

potentially put aside childhood items, both wore the same sort of tunic (the *tunica recta*), and both were conducted in a procession.³³ The boy is brought to the forum, the Roman home of law and business, whereas the bride is brought to her husband's house: we see how both *deductiones* are explicitly gendered in assigning their participant to the expectations of their future life.³⁴ A boy, however, does not marry; only those who have assumed the *toga virilis* – men – marry.³⁵ The fact that the groom's role in the marriage ceremony is minor only serves to emphasise that the ceremony's focus is upon the bride and the transition that she is making.

Something that I wish to make clear, which often gets overlooked in the identification of the bride's rite of passage as that of girlhood to womanhood, is that this is not the only transition that the bride is making in the wedding ceremony. As I shall argue, she is also moving from one house to another, from one household to another, from one set of household gods to another, and – in the forms of Roman marriage known as *cum manu* – from the authority of one *paterfamilias* to another. In short, by focussing on the marriage as a puberty rite of passage, scholars have missed out on these other momentous changes that are happening to the bride.³⁶ Van Gennep wrote that 'rites of incorporation [are prominent] at marriages',³⁷ and this is certainly the case in the Roman ceremony,

³³ I shall discuss this further in Part Two Chapter One.

³⁴ George 2001: 184 points out that girls 'looked forward to an adult public identity which was tied to a single dimension, motherhood, and to one sphere of influence, the *domus*'.

³⁵ Harlow & Laurence 2010: 57-58.

³⁶ It is true that marriage also extends the groom's family, but he does not move house, nor does his status or *paterfamilias* change on marriage.

³⁷ van Gennep 1960: 11.

where up to four different rituals took place at the groom's house to symbolise the bride's incorporation into that household.

Viewing the marriage ceremony as a rite of passage to bring the bride into a new household also allows us to include in our discussion those brides who are remarrying. A young virgin marrying for the first time is in a completely different situation to a divorced or widowed woman, who perhaps might already have children, who is remarrying; it is clear that the marriage acts as a rite of passage from *virgo* to *matrona* for the former, but the latter has already made this transition at her first marriage. Ferrari, in her article questioning 'What kind of rite of passage was the Ancient Greek wedding?', pointed out that rites of passage are often used as synonyms for 'initiations', but that whereas one cannot be repeatedly initiated into the same institution (a true initiation being one which causes an irreversible change in status for the initiate), it is possible – and indeed was regular practice in antiquity, as it is today – to remarry repeatedly.³⁸ With every new marriage, however, a bride is incorporated into a new house and a new household, and the importance of the rituals to ensure that this transition goes smoothly should not be underestimated. It is unfortunate that we do not know whether certain rites from the wedding ceremony took place at only first marriages; if we did then this would be a strong indication that these rites were to induct the girl into womanhood, while the rest would incorporate her into her new house and family.

³⁸ Ferrari 2003: 27. See Glazebrook & Olson 2014: 79 for a list of reasons why remarriage was frequent in Roman society.

§2.0.3: The state of scholarship on the Roman wedding

The notion that the wedding ceremony might act as a rite of passage for a Roman bride has been mentioned in brief by various different scholars, and in detail as an example of women's religious life in one particular case, but has rarely received a detailed analysis for its own benefit;³⁹ my intention is to fill this gap. Historically, the trend – within English-language publications at least – was to focus on the legal aspects of Roman marriage. Ritual features were, until relatively recently, neglected, or treated only in shorter form, such as an article or part of a larger scale study of the legal or social implications of marriage. In recent years the spotlight has turned to the analysis of the various ritual elements of the marriage ceremony, although the notion of the wedding as a rite of passage has remained overlooked.

§2.0.3.1: Studies on the legal and social aspects of marriage

The first major English work centred on Roman marriage was published in 1930:⁴⁰ Corbett's *The Roman Law of Marriage*. This book was, as its title suggests, focused on the legal aspects of marriage, from betrothal through to divorce and remarriage. Corbett does not cover any ritual aspect of the wedding, except in the rare case where it might have a bearing on a legal interpretation: 'these

³⁹ Rage-Brocard 1934 discussed the wedding ceremony as a rite of passage, but her arguments are frequently flawed and depend for a large part on comparatist examples; I shall discuss this text further, below. For the example of women's religious life see Boëls-Janssen 1993. For examples of brief mentions that the wedding was a rite of passage for the bride see: Rose 1924: 104-105; Treggiari 1991: 180; La Follette 1994: 54; Sebesta 1994: 47; Treggiari 1994: 311; Hersch 2010a: 10 & 294-295; Caldwell 2015: 25 & 139.

⁴⁰ Corbett 1930: v.

ceremonies were in great part legally indifferent'.⁴¹ Since then there have been a number of other studies which discuss the legalities of marriage, or the social implications of marriage for women and the Roman family, or both. Gardner's book *Women in Roman Law & Society* (1986), for example, aimed to address the fact that 'there has been no detailed study of Roman law relating to women',⁴² and as such has a more wide-reaching focus than solely that pertaining to marriage. Academics such as Dixon, Rawson and Evans Grubbs have published widely in these areas since the 1980s, but ceremonial matters are rarely discussed, if at all.

Perhaps the most wide-ranging analysis of Roman marriage is Treggiari's 1991 monograph *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*, covering the beginnings of marriage in betrothal, right through to divorce, widowhood and remarriage. Treggiari's aim was to 'attempt to understand how the marital relationship worked in the late Republic and Principate' and to 'explore the interaction of law and reality'.⁴³ Whilst her primary focus is on the intricacies of the legalities of marriage (as the sources named in her title imply), she does include a succinct discussion of wedding ritual and even made the brief conclusion that the 'wedding itself acted as *rite de passage* for the bride, who set aside childish things when she dedicated her toys to the household gods and became a *matrona*'.⁴⁴ Treggiari made more of a foray into ritual in her 1994 article 'Putting the Bride to Bed'. This article makes a

⁴¹ Corbett 1930: 68.

⁴² Gardner 1986: 1.

⁴³ Treggiari 1991: vii & viii.

⁴⁴ Treggiari 1991: 180.

passing reference to the *deductio* being the bride's rite of passage,⁴⁵ but focuses on the ritual behaviour around the wedding night for the couple.⁴⁶

The modern trend for 'Companion' handbooks has reached those areas concerned with marriage; there is a summary of both the Greek and Roman weddings in Blackwell's 2014 *Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities* ('Greek and Roman Marriage' by Glazebrook and Olson). Blackwell's 2011 *Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds* features a chapter by Dixon, 'From Ceremonial to Sexualities: A Survey of Scholarship'. Dixon does not – despite the title – broach the topic of marriage ritual, but instead provides an account of how scholarly interest in Roman marriage has changed through the years, and also discusses how Roman marriage itself evolved over time. After all, 'the term "Roman marriage" covers a huge number of people over more than a millennium, from the theoretical foundation of Rome in 753 BCE to the end of the sprawling Roman Empire.'⁴⁷

§2.0.3.2: Studies on the ritualistic aspect of the wedding

To turn to those works which focus on a discussion of marriage ritual. Rage-Brocard's 1934 text *Rites de Mariage: La deductio in domum mariti* in fact covers the entire wedding ceremony, not just the *deductio*. It is in two parts: the wedding rituals of both the Romans and comparative examples of other cultures, and the *deductio* and the formation of Roman marriage law. It is the first part which is of most interest here, since Rage-Brocard uses van Gennep's tripartite

⁴⁵ Treggiari 1994: 311.

⁴⁶ I explain in Part Two Chapter Three why I consider the wedding night a separate ceremony to the wedding itself.

⁴⁷ Dixon 2011: 247.

schema to structure her analysis; she does not, however, make this structure clear in the main body of her text. Her index indicates the tripartite structure, listing *rites de séparation, de marge* and *d'agrégation* with relevant page numbering, yet these terms are not used in the text proper, and there is often little indication (other than the reader referring to the index) that one has moved from one type of rite to another. In the first section Rage-Brocard recounts the Roman marriage ceremony, and in the second she uses the structure of a bride leaving her parental home, making a procession, and formally entering her marital home, to gather similar examples from other countries in a comparative study. It is not until the third section, *Explication sociologique des rites*, that the phrase *rites de passage* is used and there is some analysis of the ceremonies listed.

There are some major flaws in this analysis. Rage-Brocard argues that a lot of the symbolism of the wedding is evocative of bride-capture, even whilst acknowledging that there is little support for this idea: 'Malgré les objections très fortes adressées à la théorie du rapt, l'idée en est tellement naturelle'.⁴⁸ More significantly, she argues that the wedding ceremony, and thus the rite of passage inherent within it, only applies at Rome to virgin weddings: 'Tout ce cérémonial est hors de cause quand il s'agit du mariage d'une veuve ou d'une divorcée'.⁴⁹ This argument is based mostly on the fact that the remarriage of Cato and Marcia in Lucan's *Bellum civile* 2.350-373 does not have most of the usual trappings of the wedding; however, as I shall demonstrate in the section below, this is

⁴⁸ Rage-Brocard 1934: 61. Rage-Brocard 1934: 59 also accepts the threshold-ghosts theory and uses this as part of her analysis for the significance of the threshold in the wedding ceremony; I have found no evidence for ghosts being relevant to these rituals – see Part Two Chapter Three.

⁴⁹ Rage-Brocard 1934: 57.

unlikely to be due to the fact it was a remarriage, and in fact there is other evidence of these ceremonial rites at other remarriages.

As I have already made clear, and shall argue throughout the rest of Part Two, the Roman wedding ceremony acted as a rite of passage for all brides, regardless of whether they were virgins or whether it was a first marriage. The bride is transitioning not only to the new state of *matrona* (for a first marriage), but also into a new household and family (for all subsequent marriages), and a number of the Rites of Incorporation make this evident.

The next major analysis of a wedding ritual comes in the form of a 1958 article by Williams, 'Some Aspects of Roman Marriage Ceremonies and Ideals', which centres on trying to establish whether or not the *pronuba* in a marriage ceremony would speak ritual words to the bride as she crossed over the threshold into the groom's house – and that if this were the case, then whether Plautus' *Casina* would feature a parody of this.

In her 1993 work on the religious life of women in Rome, *La vie religieuse des matrones dans la Rome archaïque*, Boëls-Janssen argues against the commonly held view that marriage was the only possible rite of passage for Roman girls (at least in the archaic period): 'mais il devait sans doute y avoir d'autres coutumes, dont la religion classique n'a pas conservé le souvenir parce que le mariage était devenu le seul rite de passage féminin'.⁵⁰ She breaks the wedding ceremony down into four sections: the *toilette* of the bride, the nuptial ceremony, the

⁵⁰ Boëls-Janssen 1993: 475.

deductio and the events at the groom's house, and devotes a chapter to each. Boëls-Janssen argues that the wedding ceremony symbolises the transition between a bride's girlhood and her new status as adult *matrona*, and she views the wedding as an initiation for women. My own view of the wedding as a rite of passage is that initiation is not always the best model to use, especially when we consider remarriage, and it should be noted that van Gennep applied his tripartite structure to initiation ceremonies and marriage ceremonies separately: rites of passage are not automatically initiations.

Hersch's 2010 monograph *The Roman Wedding: Rituals and Meaning in Antiquity* is a comprehensive analysis of the ritual aspect of the wedding, taking each possible element of the marriage ceremony and investigating it step by step.⁵¹ Almost uniquely among studies of the Roman wedding, Hersch uses some material culture to accompany the literary and legal texts that are usually used as evidence for the ceremony. However, whilst the Greek wedding is illustrated relatively frequently on vases, Roman archaeological evidence for marriage amounts mainly to the carvings on sarcophagi showing scenes from the deceased's life, and it is never clear whether these are displaying a 'snapshot' of the wedding ceremony proper, or a composite ideal image of married life; Hersch tends to favour the latter. Hersch touches upon the fact that the ceremony could be a rite of passage for the bride, but – like most of our authors – does not go into detail.

⁵¹ I do, however, take issue with a number of Hersch's points, especially her suggestion that the threshold-rituals took place at the groom's bedroom door. I shall discuss this in detail below.

Hersch has also written a number of articles about the Roman wedding, one of which ('The Woolworker Bride') appears in a 2010 edited collection entitled *Ancient Marriage in Myth and Reality*. This compendium of articles, edited by Larsson Lovén and Strömberg, covers a range of diverse topic including mythological representations of marriage as historical exemplars, the legal nitty-gritty of marriage contracts, the role of the household gods in the wedding and marital ideals as shown on funerary monuments. Harlow and Laurence's contribution, 'Betrothal, Mid-Late Childhood and the Life Course', discusses the fact that betrothal itself could act as a rite of passage for both of the betrothed pair. This attention to the groom (or rather here the *sponsus*) is important as the usual focus for rites of passage for boys and men is that of the *toga virilis*.

Most recently, Caldwell has written on the topic of *Roman Girlhood and the Fashioning of Femininity* (2015), and includes within her study an analysis of the pressures that elite Roman girls would face to marry promptly and marry well. Caldwell was particularly interested in the experiences of these young elite women, who were likely to have married earlier than those of lower social strata (in their early to mid teens),⁵² and how their lives might have been shaped to prepare them for these early marriages. As well as analysing this long build-up in education and socialisation to a girl's first marriage, Caldwell also discusses the wedding itself, with a detailed discussion of the Fescennine verses that took place during the *deductio*.⁵³ Caldwell's work discusses the 'transition from daughter to wife to mother',⁵⁴ but as her analysis is restricted to girls marrying

⁵² Caldwell 2015: 4-5.

⁵³ Caldwell 2015: 134-165.

⁵⁴ Caldwell 2015: 14.

for the first time,⁵⁵ she does not consider the role or symbolism of the wedding ceremony for those older women who were remarrying.

§2.0.4: The Roman Wedding Ceremony

§2.0.4.1: What do we mean by ‘wedding ceremony’?

Modern accounts have to be pieced together from a miscellany of passing comments made by various authors in different periods, or from descriptions of specific events. From such evidence, how can we tell what was typical of the very different social strata in Roman society? How can we trace, let alone explain, detailed changes in practice, expression and belief among different groups of the Roman population over long periods of time? The simple answer is that we cannot, or not with any certainty. The best we can hope for is an impressionistic sketch, a collage. For better or for worse, we have to make do with an artificial, almost timeless composite, inset with illustrative vignettes.⁵⁶

Hopkins, in the excerpt above, is writing about Roman funerary practice, but his words are equally applicable to Roman wedding ceremonies. We do not have a detailed account from antiquity of exactly what took place in a Roman wedding ceremony. While there are copious legal documents detailing and discussing the legalities of Roman marriages, they make scant reference to the ceremonial rituals that might take place during the wedding ceremony.⁵⁷ Therefore we have to rely more on literary accounts of the wedding ceremony, with all their vagaries, abstractions, and artistic licence, and I certainly heed Treggiari’s warning that with literary texts one must be ‘alert to the danger of mistaking

⁵⁵ Caldwell 2015: 134-135.

⁵⁶ Hopkins 1983: 203.

⁵⁷ There are some brief references to the rites occurring, e.g. Scaevola mentions fire and water (*Digest* 24.1.66). Evans Grubbs 2002: 82: this was ‘both because they were not relevant to the legal validity of a marriage, and because the late Roman compilers of classical law would have deleted any reference to pagan rituals.’ We must also bear in mind the fact that legal documents and the law necessarily dealt with extreme and unusual cases, and that it is hard to reconstruct ‘normal’ marriage from legal texts alone.

norm for practice, the ideal for the real.⁵⁸

Equally, this composite nature of the source material means that it is drawn from both a considerable geographic area and time period, from the late Republic to the late Empire. In Chapter Three, where I have provided the relevant sources as appendices, I have listed the sources in chronological order where possible, but even so it is often hard to pinpoint a specific ritual to a specific era or to see how it might have developed through time. An additional issue is that some of our later evidence may be reporting customs from an earlier era: much of our evidence for most parts of the wedding comes from the second-century AD Festus, who used Augustan source material for much of his work. It is possible that customs did not change that drastically, and that a bride and a wedding from the time of Cicero would still be recognisable to someone of Festus' era; certainly the *flammeum* veil features in literature from the full expanse of the time period.

We should also consider whether it would even be possible to know *exactly* what took place in a Roman wedding ceremony; in the same way that modern couples do not incorporate every aspect of what we nowadays consider a 'typical' wedding, so too we cannot expect ancient accounts of Roman 'typical' weddings to create a coherent blueprint of every Roman wedding. A wedding ceremony was not actually required for a Roman marriage to be considered valid (the groom himself did not even need to be present)⁵⁹ which further suggests that the various rituals might be mixed and matched according to the preferences and

⁵⁸ Treggiari 1994: 313.

⁵⁹ Evans Grubbs 2002: 82.

means of the couple and their families, rather than according to a specific tradition – and some couples may not have had a ceremony at all. Elements of the tripartite structure are visible in single accounts of weddings, however, which suggests that some form of separation, transition and incorporation was likely to occur. For instance, in Catullus 61 the bride wears the *flammeum* and is torn from her mother (separation), processes in a *deductio* (transition), and is helped over the threshold (incorporation). Lucan mentions the *flammeum* (separation), the Fescennine verses (transition), and both the anointing of and the lifting over the threshold (incorporation; *Bellum civile* 2.350-373).

It is possible that first marriages were treated with more pomp than remarriages, but there is no indication, *pace* Rage-Brocard, that these ceremonies did not apply to remarriages.⁶⁰ This argument was based mostly on the fact that the remarriage of Cato and Marcia in Lucan's *Bellum civile* 2.350-373 does not have most of the usual trappings of the wedding; however, at no point does Lucan imply that these are absent because it is a remarriage. If anything, the fact that this is expressly commented on as unusual indicates that these items and rituals *should* be there; the narrator implies that they are missing mostly because it is wartime and due to the couple's Stoic attitude. This argument also ignores the fact that the widow Violentilla's remarriage in Statius, *Silvae* 1.2 *does* feature many of the usual ceremonial elements, or that the widow Pudentilla chose not to have a public ceremony for her remarriage to Apuleius because she did not want the expense (and they were chastised for it, *Apologia* 87). It is true that Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 105 states that widows are

⁶⁰ Rage-Brocard 1934: 57.

permitted to remarry on days prohibited to virgin marriage, but this need not indicate anything about the types of ceremonies that would be performed, merely that they might be on a smaller scale.

It goes without saying that all of our Roman writings about marriage are by men, and we therefore cannot truly know how a woman felt about the marriage process, or indeed what it symbolised to her. Much of our evidence comes from the elite – Harlow and Laurence refer to wedding ceremonies as ‘part of the ostentatious upper class Roman life’⁶¹ – and so it is less clear whether any of these customs would be carried out by those lower down on the social ladder.⁶² One might assume that any wedding would be the cause of a feast or party, however simple, and some sort of decoration at a minimum. The bare bones of the *deductio* – the bride processing from one house to the other – sounds like it would be free and so available to all, but such a public ceremony may well have become increasingly expensive (especially for those who wanted to show off to the neighbours) once the torches, attendants, and associated trappings are factored in.⁶³ But since the bride would have to get to the new marital home somehow, it is likely that unless the couple were already cohabiting then some form of *deductio* would have taken place.

⁶¹ Harlow & Laurence 2002: 62.

⁶² See Dixon 1985: 356.

⁶³ One of the reasons that Apuleius gives for his private wedding to Pudentilla is that she had already spent a large amount of money on her son’s wedding, and did not want to have to do the same for her own. They married in the country rather than the town, *ne cives denuo ad sportulas convolarent* (‘so that the citizenry would not flock there again in hope of wedding favors’, *Apologia* 87.10, trans. Jones 2017).

§2.0.4.2: The different types of Roman marriage

There was more than one type of marriage throughout the Roman period, with different legal meanings – the key difference was whether the bride stayed under her own father's or *paterfamilias'* authority (or, in fact, her own if she was *sui iuris*, i.e. emancipated or independent)⁶⁴ after marriage, or whether she transferred to that of her husband. The former was referred to as marrying *sine manu* ('without *manus*', i.e. without the power or authority of the husband over the wife), and the latter marrying *cum manu* ('with *manus*') or *in manu*. A wife marrying *cum manu* would hold the same legal status as a daughter of her husband, and he would now hold all responsibility over her, and own all of her property. The trend seems to have been for marriages originally to have been largely *cum manu*, and to gradually have switched almost entirely to marriages *sine manu* by the end of the Republic, a move which Treggiari estimates 'seems to have taken place between about 200 and 100 BC'.⁶⁵ This is likely to have been partly due to the women's families wanting to keep property within the family, and partly due to the women themselves – especially those *sui iuris* who may not have wanted to have given up what legal independence they had.

In order to marry *sine manu*, all the couple seem to have required was *conubium*, which is the 'legal capacity' to marry, and to have consented to the marriage.⁶⁶ A couple married *sine manu*, however, would automatically switch to a *cum manu*

⁶⁴ Note that 'independent' is somewhat of a misnomer, since women *sui iuris* were still beholden to their guardians; see Cantarella 2005: 30.

⁶⁵ Treggiari 1991: 21.

⁶⁶ *Conubium*: Treggiari 1991: 43; this usually means that both members of the couple were free citizens who were not close relations. Consent: Treggiari 1991: 54.

marriage if they cohabited for more than a year (in a process known as *usus*); the wife could avoid this by staying elsewhere for three nights a year.⁶⁷ If the couple wanted to marry *cum manu* then rather than waiting a year, another way to bring about a *manus* marriage was to perform a *coemptio* ceremony, which could take place during the wedding or at any point after it. Treggiari describes this as ‘the acquisition of *manus* by a formal purchase’; the purchase in question was a symbolic one by the husband of the wife.⁶⁸

The third method of marrying *cum manu* was known as *confarreatio*: a religious wedding ceremony under the auspices of Jupiter Farreus involving a series of special rituals, which was a simultaneous activation of both marriage and *manus*. It is likely that *confarreatio* was only open to patrician couples since Servius tells us that the ceremony was presided over by both the *flamen dialis* and the *pontifex maximus* – officiants who were presumably less likely to be readily available for weddings of the lower classes.⁶⁹ The parents of the *flamen dialis*, as well as some of the other chief priests in Rome, had to be married by *confarreatio*, as did the *flamen* himself; by the emperorship of Tiberius the number of individuals with parents married by *confarreatio* was so few that it was a struggle to find someone to fill the role of *flamen*. Tacitus suggested that couples wanted to avoid the complicated ceremony, and also that women preferred to marry *sine manu*, and so some of the rules – especially those applying to the *flamen’s* wife, the *flaminica*, were relaxed.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Treggiari 1991: 17-21.

⁶⁸ Treggiari 1991: 25.

⁶⁹ Servius, *ad Georgics* 1.31.

⁷⁰ Tacitus, *Annales* 4.16.

We know that there were some rituals that were exclusive to the *confarreatio*, but we do not know if the ‘regular’ wedding ceremonials would also take place during this type of marriage. Gaius tells us that ten witnesses are required and a rite is performed *cum certis et solemnibus verbis* (‘with prescribed and solemn words’, 1.112). He, Pliny and Festus all mention a cake or loaf made of the ancient grain *far*, from which the ceremony derives its name, and which Pliny tells us *novae... nuptae farreum praeferbant* (‘newly married brides used to carry in their hands an offering of wheat’, *Naturalis historia* 18.3.10).⁷¹

Unfortunately the ambiguity of *praeferre* does not allow us to know whether she carried it in a procession (a *deductio*?) or made an offering of it; Treggiari suggests it could even have been carried in front of her by attendants.⁷² There may also have been a sacrifice of a sheep, and the couple may have sat on the sheepskin.⁷³ I shall not be referring to *confarreatio*-specific rituals for two reasons: because we have very little evidence to go on, and because these rituals would have applied to a small minority of weddings.

Except in the case of the *confarreatio* rituals, our extant evidence does not indicate whether certain rites took place only for certain types of marriage;⁷⁴ however, the rituals that I shall discuss are seen by Dixon as generic ‘wedding’

⁷¹ Translation by Rackham 1950. See also Gaius 1.112; Festus 78L s.v. *farreum*.

⁷² Treggiari 1991: 22.

⁷³ Plutarch tells us that καὶ τὴν νύμφην εἰσάγοντες νάκος ὑποστρωννύουσιν (‘When they lead in the bride, they spread a fleece beneath her’, *Quaestiones Romanae* 31, trans. Cole Babbitt 1936), and Festus says that *in pelle lanata nova nupta consedere solet* (‘the new bride would sit together [presumably with her husband] on a sheepskin’, 102L s.v. *in pelle lanata*), both of which imply that this was a common ritual. Servius, *ad Aeneid* 4.374, however, refers to it as something that the *flamen* and *flaminica* specifically would do during their own *confarreatio* wedding. See also Treggiari 1991: 22.

⁷⁴ Cicero suggests that the speaking of Gaius and Gaia took place during *coemptio* marriages (*Pro Murena* 27), whereas Quintilian implies rather that it was part of *confarreatio* (i.e., religious) ceremonies (*Institutio oratoria* 1.7.28); this indicates perhaps that it was used in all types of marriages.

rituals that would occur regardless of the type of legal marriage conducted: ‘the formalities of a particular marriage form... are to be distinguished from the religious and social ritual which would accompany virtually any wedding’.⁷⁵ I shall refer throughout this piece to ‘Roman wedding’ or ‘Roman marriage’, as a convenient shorthand, although I do not by any means intend to imply that all Roman marriages or weddings were uniform.⁷⁶

§2.0.4.3: At which door did the threshold-rituals take place?

In the summary of the various wedding ceremonials that opened this Introduction, I implied that the threshold rituals at the groom’s house all took place at the threshold to his actual house, at his front door. This is the assumption made by almost all modern analysts of these rituals, and translations of the relevant Latin text often indicate or imply the front door as well, even if it is not explicitly noted in the Latin.⁷⁷ However, Hersch has raised objections that a number of these threshold-rites are so obliquely described by Roman writers that they could well refer to a different threshold within the groom’s house – especially that of his bedroom.⁷⁸ Hersch’s uncertainty is echoed by Oakley in his

⁷⁵ Dixon 1992: 135.

⁷⁶ I do not wish to attempt to recreate every aspect of the wedding ceremony (especially since this has recently been ably accomplished by Hersch 2010a), but rather my focus is on those rites that could be related to the rites of passage schema.

⁷⁷ For instance, Bostock & Riley’s 1855 translation of Pliny adds ‘of her husband’s house’ to each mention of the bride anointing the doorposts; some translations of Plutarch add it in for the lifting over the bride even when the Greek specifies the bedroom; I shall discuss this below.

⁷⁸ Interestingly, Hersch makes no objection to the speaking of Gaius and Gaia taking place outside the house door, whereas one of the earlier writers about Roman wedding ritual, Rose 1924: 102, stated that it took place at the bride’s house before the *deductio*. Rose provides no evidence for this statement, and our ancient sources would show him to be wholly incorrect in this assertion. Plutarch tells us that the bride was encouraged to speak these words by those εἰσάγοντες (‘leading her in’, *Quaestiones Romanae* 30), which must refer to the groom’s house, which she is entering, rather than the bride’s house, which she is leaving. The *Liber de praenominibus*, of unknown authorship, states that this ritual takes place *ante ianuam mariti* (‘before the door of

review of Hersch's book,⁷⁹ and so before I move on, I wish to address this issue. It is my belief that it was indeed the front door to the groom's house that was the focal point of these threshold-rites, and so I shall discuss each of Hersch's objections in turn.

§2.0.4.3.1: The bride anointing the doorposts

When the bride reached the groom's house she, as briefly outlined above, anointed the groom's doorposts with some mix of fat and wool; I shall discuss this entire ritual act in detail later in Chapter Three. Hersch claims that 'we cannot know where the anointing takes place',⁸⁰ and suggests that the doorposts of the groom's bedchamber could be the site of this ritual, citing the ambiguity of a line from Ausonius' fourth-century AD *Cento Nuptialis* which refers merely to the bride and groom being brought to a 'threshold' (*limina*): *tum studio effusae matres ad limina ducunt* ('then eagerly pressing forth, the matrons lead the pair to the threshold', 67).⁸¹ Yet the *Cento Nuptialis* does not refer to the anointing, nor any of the other door-rituals, and so this text seems a bizarre one on which to raise this objection. It is true that this line is the first in the part of the poem entitled *Epithalamium Utrique*, and this – along with the context of the surrounding lines – certainly suggests that we are supposed to consider the relevant action as taking place before the *thalamus*. But the line merely states

the husband', 7). I discuss these sources further in Part Two Chapter Three, and argue that this phrase acts as a clear rite of incorporation in which the bride is consenting to her integration with the groom and his household; for the reasons that I shall outline above, these threshold rites of incorporation make most logical sense when performed at the threshold to the house door.

⁷⁹ Oakley 2011.

⁸⁰ Hersch 2010a: 178.

⁸¹ Translation by Evelyn-White 1919.

that mothers eagerly lead something – one would presume the happy couple, or perhaps just the bride⁸² – to the threshold; there is no mention of anointing the doorposts, and so there is no reason to consider this as an indication that the anointing could have taken place at the bedchamber.

Additionally, Ausonius was constrained by the fact that – as is the nature of the cento – all his lines were made up of parts of lines of Virgil. The first half of his line 67 about the mothers is part of *Aeneid* 12.131 and actually describes mothers eagerly rushing forth to get the best vantage point to watch an upcoming battle; the second part of Ausonius' line is from *Aeneid* 10.117 and refers to the gods escorting Jupiter to a threshold. There are five door-references in the *Cento Nuptialis*, only four of which we should take at face value⁸³ and of those four all appear to describe mundane, expected usages of doors as entrances and exits rather than any ceremonial behaviour.⁸⁴ There is scant exposition surrounding these references which gives us very little to work with to try and reconstruct any use of the threshold or door at the wedding. We should therefore be wary of assigning too much to Ausonius; this poem is very much more of an intellectual exercise with the goal of rearranging Virgil into a new work, than it is an accurate depiction of the wedding ceremony.⁸⁵

⁸² Treggiari 1994 discusses the fact that the bride may go to the bedchamber first.

⁸³ The *limen* is referred to in the *Imminutio* section of the text where it undoubtedly should be taken as a euphemism.

⁸⁴ At the end of the feast at the bride's house the guests leave over the *limen* (28); the groom is described as stepping out through some *fores* (46) and moving towards a *limen* (54); then the couple are ushered to a *limen* (67), as discussed here.

⁸⁵ In fact, should we even understand from the *Cento Nuptialis* that there was a Roman wedding ritual wherein mothers (*matronae* in general, or the actual mothers of the bride and groom?) led the nuptial couple to a threshold?

No writer unambiguously mentions which doorposts the bride anointed. As with so many aspects of daily life, this lack of detail as to what precisely was going on is presumably down to writers assuming that the reader will be *au fait* with such common practice, and will therefore not need an explicit description. Pliny, for instance, writing at a time when some form of these wedding ceremonies was no doubt a common sight, makes three references to the bride anointing the doorposts (*postes*) with wool or fat (*Naturalis historia* 28.135.37; 28.142.37; 29.30.9). There is nothing specific in any of these references to any location – not even to a specific house – except perhaps the word *intranter*:

certe novae nuptae intranter etiamnum sollemne habent postes eo attingere.

At any rate brides even today touch ritually the door-posts with it on entering.

(28.135.37)⁸⁶

Pliny does not, of course, tell us exactly where the bride is entering, but I believe that the use of the word *intranter* is certainly suggestive of her entering the groom's house for the first time – presumably as the *domum deductio* draws to a close – through the front door.

When writers do specify a location, they tend to simply state that it is the door or threshold 'of the husband':

ut... simul venissent ad limen mariti, postes antequam ingrederentur... ornarent laneis vittis... et oleo ungerent...⁸⁷ ii... tradunt, cum nova nupta in domum mariti ducitur, solere postes unguine lupino oblini

that... as soon as they had come to the threshold of their husband, before they entered... they decorated the doorposts with woollen fillets... and anointed them with oil... They hand down that, when a new bride is led into the house of her husband, the doorposts are accustomed to be daubed with wolf's fat.

(Servius, *ad Aeneid* 4.458)

⁸⁶ Translation by Jones 1963, whose full translation is 'on entering their homes'.

⁸⁷ These lines are also cited by Isidorus, *Etymologiae* 9.7.12.

id est quod cum puellae nubent, maritorum postes ungebant ibique lanam figebant.

It is because when girls marry, they used to smear the doorposts of their husbands and fix wool there.

(Donatus *ad* Terence, *Hecyra* 1.260)

nisi postes virorum adipali unguine oblinerentur ab sponsis... di nomina non haberent?

Would the gods not have names if the doorposts of their husbands were not smeared with greasy ointment by brides?

(Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 3.25)

These writers are later and often Christian, and so the added detail may well indicate that they expect their readership to be less familiar with the ritual in question. Obviously, both the door to the husband's house and the door to his bedchamber could be termed 'of the husband', but it seems likely that if it were the door to the bedchamber then these writers would also add in the additional detail.

No extant text explicitly states that the ritual takes place at the doorway of the bedroom. However, if we take the lack of a connection to the bedroom, along with Servius' mention of the bride being led *in domum mariti* (into her husband's house), of her decorating the doorposts *antequam ingrederentur* (before they entered), and couple these with Pliny's reference to brides performing the ritual *intrans* (while entering), then it seems likely it was indeed the front door of the groom's house which received this ritual decoration.

§2.0.4.3.2: The bride being lifted over the threshold

As with the apparent ambiguity of the location of the anointed doorposts, Hersch sees a similar one over the location of the threshold that the bride must carefully step (or be lifted) over. Again, this is usually considered to be the threshold to the groom's house, but Hersch states that 'we cannot be certain whether the threshold was that of the groom's house or bedchamber',⁸⁸ reasoning that 'Plutarch specifies the threshold of his house, but we have seen that Catullus claimed that children accompanied the bride to her bedchamber.'⁸⁹

The reason for Hersch's caution in assigning the front door to this rite is these lines from Catullus:

*mitte bracchiolum teres,
praetextate, puellulae:
iam cubile adeat viri.*

Let go, young boy, the smooth arm of the damsel, let her now come to her husband's bed.

(61.174-176)⁹⁰

On the face of it, it is hard to see what Hersch's objection is; Catullus does indeed mention a young boy, a *praetextatus*, accompanying the bride to the bedchamber, but he says nothing about what the boy is to do and no lifting is mentioned.⁹¹

Festus tells us that three *pueri praetextati* took part in the *deductio*: one carried a torch made of whitethorn (*spina alba*) and the other two *tenent nubentem* ('hold the bride', 282L s.v. *patrimi et matrimi*); it is plausible therefore that these

⁸⁸ Hersch 2010a: 182.

⁸⁹ Hersch 2010a: 182 n. 208.

⁹⁰ Translation by Cornish *et al.* 1913.

⁹¹ Fordyce 1961: 251 sees 'no difficulty in the singular *praetextate*: the command is addressed to each... at the same time'.

children helped the bride over the threshold, and so presumably Hersch considers this to be this *praetextatus*' purpose in accompanying the bride here to the bedchamber.⁹² However, there is nothing in any of our other evidence to suggest that her attendants leave the bride at the threshold once she has been helped over it, and so it does not seem, to me, to be a contradictory message in having children accompany the bride further into the house. Additionally, there is no mention of a threshold at this point in the poem, and Catullus gives no further instructions to either the *praetextatus* or the bride about how she should enter the room. We cannot, therefore, make any conclusions about whether the bride was lifted into the bedroom from these particular lines.

In fact, it is rather odd to cite this poem as suggesting evidence for the lifting of the bride over the bedchamber's threshold, since fifteen lines before the bride reaches the bedchamber she has already been admonished by Catullus to lift her feet carefully over a threshold which must be that of the house itself. At 61.149-150 the bride sees her new house, and subsequently we have the instruction:

*transfer omine cum bono
limen aureolos pedes,
rasilemque subi forem.*

Lift across the threshold with a good omen your golden feet, and
enter within the polished door.

(61.159-161)⁹³

⁹² Fedeli 1983: 116 argues that the *praetextati* should have transferred the bride into the care of the *pronuba* at the entrance to the house (after helping her in) and that the *pronuba* should assist the bride into the bedroom. Treggiari 1994: 321 also states that it was the *pronuba* who 'led the bride into the bedroom', which would further indicate that the boy's presence here should not be taken to imply that he is to assist the bride over the threshold of the bedroom. Hersch 2010a: 191, however, explains that our evidence for the *pronuba* is slight and that her role cannot be guaranteed. It is significant that Fedeli sees this line as Catullus 'alter[ing] the course of events in the ceremony' for poetical purposes, rather than that the line should be taken at face value to indicate that she was helped over the threshold of the bedroom.

⁹³ Translation by Cornish *et al.* 1913.

The bride is then, at 61.164-165, afforded her first glimpse of the groom, who is presumably waiting inside in the *atrium*.⁹⁴ It is true that Catullus is not explicit about the location of any of these events, but the text strongly suggests that the bride sees the house as her *deductio* approaches, enters the house over the threshold with her entourage, and sees her husband-to-be *intus* (61.167) – that is, can see through the *fauces* to where he waits in the *atrium*. She is then conducted to an inner-room, the *thalamus* (61.188) and she then awaits him; this would be in accordance with what Treggiari terms the ‘usual pattern... that the bride entered the bedroom first and awaited the bridegroom.’⁹⁵

What is perhaps even more strange about Hersch’s objection here is that there is actually a mention of the bedroom associated with this ritual, and it is, in fact, in Plutarch. Hersch had stated that Plutarch tells us explicitly that the threshold is that of the house, which he does in the *Quaestiones Romanae*:

Διὰ τί τὴν γαμουμένην οὐκ ἔωσιν αὐτὴν ὑπερβῆναι τὸν οὐδὸν τῆς οἰκίας,
 ἀλλ’ ὑπεράρουνσιν οἱ προπέμποντες;
 Why do they not allow the bride to cross the threshold of her home
 herself, but those who are escorting her lift her over?
 (Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 29)⁹⁶

However, in his *Romulus* (written after the *Quaestiones Romanae* since he refers the reader back to it for more information on this topic), Plutarch states:

⁹⁴ Assuming a rich house with the traditional villa layout, of course. I make the assumption that he is in the *atrium* as the purple couch that the groom is reclining on at 61.164-165 implies he could be on the *lectus genialis*, which was traditionally said to be located in the *atrium* (I will discuss this matter further below).

⁹⁵ Treggiari 1994: 322. Riggsby 1997: 37 discusses the euphemism of a bride entering the groom’s *cubiculum* for the consummation of the marriage, but notes that since the groom usually joined the bride then perhaps the *cubiculum* in question ought to be considered ‘hers or, perhaps better, theirs’ (1997: 37 n. 8).

⁹⁶ Translation by Cole Babbitt 1936. Plutarch’s reasoning for the purpose of lifting the bride is that it is in some way symbolic of marriage by capture, and so he compares this Roman rite to one from Greece which clearly takes place before the house door, wherein the axle of the cart that the bride arrived in is burned, so that she has no means to leave the marriage home.

διαμένει δὲ μέχρι νῦν τὸ τὴν νύμφην αὐτὴν ἀφ' αὐτῆς μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν τὸν οὐδὸν εἰς τὸ δωμάτιον, ἀλλ' αἰρομένην εἰσφέρεισθαι
And it continues to be a custom down to the present time that the bride shall not of herself cross the threshold into [the bedroom], but be lifted up and carried in

(Plutarch, *Romulus* 15.5)⁹⁷

Curiously I have found no scholarship on this inconsistency; Rose highlights no discrepancy between the two texts in his commentary; even the English translations of the *Romulus* that I have found translate it as 'the threshold of the house' and make no reference to the bedchamber. Indeed, Plutarch himself evidently saw no disagreement in what he had written in the *Romulus* and the *Quaestiones Romanae*, since he cross-referenced the latter in the former. I believe that the force of the εἰς must be taken to indicate that there are two separate locations being implied here: not that the bride is lifted over the bedchamber's threshold *into* the bedchamber, but rather that the bride is lifted over the threshold of the house *towards* the bedchamber.⁹⁸

As it is, there is no other mention of a *thalamus* or *cubiculum* associated with this ritual in extant literature. In fact, in Plautus' *Casina*, which features a mock wedding (the 'bride' is a man in disguise), we see the lifting happening at a front door (813-819), and the bride is later taken into the bedroom with little ceremony (881-884). Servius suggested that bride is lifted as the threshold is sacred to Vesta (*ad Aeneid* 2.469; *ad Eclogue* 8.29), arguing for etymological

⁹⁷ Translation by Perrin 1914, with my correction; Perrin had translated τὸ δωμάτιον as 'her new home'.

⁹⁸ This idea comes through most strongly in Flacelière *et al.*'s French translation of the *Romulus*, which is the only text that I have found which mentions the bedchamber: 'c'est que l'épousée franchit pas d'elle-même le seuil *pour se rendre à la chambre nuptial*, mais qu'on l'y porte en la soulevant' (my italics: 'in order to go to').

similarities between Vesta and *vestibulum*;⁹⁹ this suggests that the ‘sacred’ threshold would be the one closest to the *vestibulum*: that is, the house door. Most modern critics assume that it was the threshold of the house-door; Treggiari even wrote an article solely about the bedding of the bride, and yet concluded that the lifting took place at the ‘threshold of the bridegroom’s house’.¹⁰⁰ For Treggiari, the lifting of the bride at the front door is the culmination of the *deductio*, and any rituals following her entry past the house-door are a separate matter; I agree that the ritual of lifting the bride over the threshold of the front door is a fitting finale for the pomp of the *deductio*.

§2.0.4.3.3: The offering of fire and water

The third objection that Hersch raises to the assumption that the wedding rituals take place at the front door concerns the rite of fire and water, which is usually presumed to be offered by the groom to the bride at the house door: ‘Varro explained that the two are used at the threshold at the wedding; we are not told which threshold (of the groom’s house or bedchamber?), nor to whom fire and water were given.’¹⁰¹ It is true that Varro’s statement – the earliest mention of fire and water used at weddings – is brief: *ea [ignis et aqua] nuptiis in limine adhibentur* (‘these [fire and water] are used at the threshold at weddings’, *De lingua Latina* 5.61). From other authors we might build a tentative composite

⁹⁹ This argument is dubious, as I discussed in the overall introduction to this thesis.

¹⁰⁰ Treggiari 1994: 311; this idea is reiterated at 1994: 314. For a selection of other authors see also Rose 1924: 102: ‘arriving at the house, the bride was lifted over the threshold’; Williams 1958: 16: ‘performed as the bride was about to cross the threshold into her new home’; Boëls-Janssen 1993: 186: the threshold in question is that ‘Avant de pénétrer dans la maison conjugale’; Glazebrook & Olson 2014: 77, who mention both the anointing and the lifting as taking place at the house-door.

¹⁰¹ Hersch 2010a: 183.

picture of who does what: Festus and Plutarch says that it is the bride who receives or touches fire and water, while Servius says that the groom brings them to her.¹⁰²

This line of Varro is the only mention of a location for this ritual; it is true that the context of this statement is procreation (he is discussing the theory that maleness (and semen) was 'fire' and that femaleness was the 'moisture' in which an embryo develops), which could well suggest that the threshold is that of the bedroom. However, both Ovid and Festus contrast the bride receiving fire and water at her wedding with an exile or condemned man being denied it:

*an, quod in his vitae causa est, haec perdidit exul,
his nova fit coniunx, haec duo magna putant?*

Or, did they deem these two important because they contain the source of life, an exile loses the use of them, and by them the bride is made a wife?

(Ovid, *Fasti* 4.791-492)¹⁰³

Aqua et igni tam interdici solet damnatis, quam accipiunt nuptae

Fire and water – just as they are forbidden to those condemned, so brides receive them.

(Festus 3L s.v. *aqua et igni*)

If an exile is condemned to be publicly cast out of society and therefore refused fire and water (the symbols of life), then it would certainly make sense that the opposite idea – a bride being brought in and offered fire and water – would also take place publicly at the threshold of the house.

¹⁰² Festus 3L s.v. *aqua et igni*; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 1; Servius, *ad Aeneid* 4.103, 4.167, 4.339. In Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 8.243-246 it is Pollux who proffers fire and water to Jason and Medea at the altar, but these are characters from Greek myth and the wedding takes place whilst they are sailing home after escaping the Colchians, and so it is unclear how much we should assume it reflects contemporary Roman practice.

¹⁰³ Translation by Frazer 1931.

From a legal standpoint, the receipt of fire and water is also the point at which the jurist Scaevola stated that a couple were considered to be married (*Digest* 24.1.66.1).¹⁰⁴ Since two other jurists, Ulpian and Pomponius, stated that a legal marriage began once the bride had been led to the house of the groom,¹⁰⁵ then it is certainly tempting to see Scaevola as elucidating the point at which the *deductio* were considered complete: when the bride arrives at the house and the groom offers her fire and water at the first threshold that she meets – that of the house door.

§2.0.4.3.4: The door: conclusion

If there were a room which was obviously intended to be the couple's permanent bedchamber, then it would be understandable that there might be ritual activity associated with the bride passing safely over that room's threshold; we might especially think of the anointing of the doorposts, which may well have had some sort of apotropaic function (I shall discuss this more thoroughly in Chapter Three). But there is little evidence for a 'master bedroom' in the manner we would consider it today. Roman *cubicula* (usually translated as bedrooms) could be used for any sort of intimate activity – from those usually associated with the

¹⁰⁴ *priusquam ad eum transiret et priusquam aqua et igni acciperetur, id est nuptiae celebrentur* ('before she passed into his control and was received under the rite of fire and water, that is, before the marriage was celebrated', trans. Watson 1998b). This idea is perhaps reflected in Ovid's comment that *his [ignis et aqua] nova fit coniunx* ('by these [fire and water] a bride becomes a wife', *Fasti* 4.792).

¹⁰⁵ Ulpian in *Digest* 35.1.15: *ducta est uxor* ('she is led as wife'); Pomponius in *Digest* 23.2.5: *si in domum eius deduceretur* ('if she is led to his house', trans. Watson 1998b); the full quotations are given in Part Two Chapter Three footnote 10. These statements might be seen as contradicting the fact that Roman marriage was based on the consent and desire to be married (e.g. Ulpian, *Digest* 24.1.32.13); however, as Hersch 2010a: 52 notes, 'while a bride and groom may experience *affectio maritalis* privately, they must pledge it publicly.'

bedroom, to private business transactions.¹⁰⁶ More importantly for our current consideration, Roman *cubicula* were not necessarily allocated to distinct members of the household in the way that our modern bedrooms are, and there could be a fluidity of occupants.¹⁰⁷ Getting the bride safely into the house itself, however, seems much more sensible, and she and the groom can then choose whichever room they wish, secure in the knowledge that the necessary rituals have been applied to the house as a whole. While the *limen* to the *thalamus* might be movable, the door to the house was a fixed point, and as we saw in Part One, the house door was a common location for apotropaic devices.

At this juncture I should mention that there is a school of thought that believes that the *lectus genialis* – the marriage bed: either the bed proper or a symbolic representation of it – was located in the *atrium*.¹⁰⁸ In Catullus 64.48 the marriage bed (*geniale*) is being made up *sedibus in mediis* ('in the middle of the house'), and Horace mentions that *lectus genialis in aula est* ('the marriage bed is in the hall', *Epistula* 1.1.87). However, as Treggiari points out, references to 'the consummation of a marriage mention a bedroom, not the atrium', but concedes it is possible that 'in archaic times the *paterfamilias* rich enough to have an atrium... would have slept there with his *materfamilias*.'¹⁰⁹ If it were indeed the

¹⁰⁶ See Riggsby 1997, who breaks down the key areas of activity into rest, sex, adultery, the display of art, murder and suicide, and the reception of guests.

¹⁰⁷ Treggiari 1994: 321.

¹⁰⁸ See Treggiari 1994: 317-321, especially 317 n. 23, for a discussion of the scholarship on this matter.

¹⁰⁹ Treggiari 1994: 319 and 320. For the consummation taking place in the bedroom, we might immediately think of Cicero's condemnation of Sassia, who married her son-in-law and whom Cicero accuses of not even fearing *limen cubiculi* ('the threshold of the bedroom', *Pro Cluentio* 15) to go ahead with this act. Here we should assume that Cicero mentions the *limen cubiculi* not because it was the centre of ritual activity, but because of its symbolic nature: once crossed, it is apparent that Sassia will be consummating this new marriage. Brides were traditionally, and ideally, supposed to show some reluctance here; see Treggiari 1994: 324 for references.

case that some form of the marriage bed may have been set up in the *atrium*, even if in later times only as ritual decoration for the ceremony, or just in miniature as Rose suggested,¹¹⁰ then this indicates that the *atrium* could stand as a symbolic bedroom.¹¹¹ The door to the *atrium* is, of course, the house door, and so this is another suggestion that the ritual activity took place here rather than an internal bedroom doorway.

A Roman wedding was a public occasion, with the *deductio* through the streets – which must have attracted an uninvited crowd of curious by-standers – a prominent custom that some jurists indicated was legally required in some form;¹¹² Hersch notes that ‘community, although sometimes a nameless throng, was an integral part of the Roman wedding.’¹¹³ A public display was an important aspect of ensuring the legality of a marriage: one of the charges that Apuleius had to defend was why he had married his bride privately (*Apologia* 87). As such, it makes the most sense for the bride to perform the door-related rituals at the front door to the groom’s house, in full public view.¹¹⁴ In fact, Hersch herself seems to slightly contradict her reference to these potential ambiguities over location when she says: ‘much of what the bride may have accomplished was clearly, because it was visibly, connected to domestic and

¹¹⁰ Rose 1924: 102 thought that it would be ‘a small couch, intended, not for the use of the mortal pair, but for their spirit-doubles, the man’s *genius* and the woman’s *iuno*’; Treggiari 1994: 321 finds this idea ‘doubtful’.

¹¹¹ Hersch 2010a: 216 raises the possibility that the *lectus* could be moved from the *atrium* (if it were indeed there) to the bedchamber for the actual consummation.

¹¹² See footnote 105.

¹¹³ Hersch 2010a: 141.

¹¹⁴ Hales 2003: 2 states that ‘the house itself announced the event... The threshold advertised the news to the outsider.’

public worship: if she sacrificed coins to *Lares*, she did so openly at a shrine; her anointing of doorposts must have been in full view'.¹¹⁵

In discussing various threshold rites, van Gennep concluded that 'only the main door is the site of entrance and exit rites... The other openings do not have the same quality of a point of transition between the familial world and the external world.'¹¹⁶ I would maintain that this is certainly applicable to the Roman wedding ceremony. I shall argue in Chapter Three that the threshold rites are the final part of the tripartite rite of passage: the Rites of Incorporation. The threshold rituals, therefore, represent the bride's integration into a new house and household, whether that be by a symbolic lifting over the threshold or the offering of life-nourishing substances. The bride has completed her liminal transition, symbolised by the *deductio*, and is being welcomed to her new life at the point at which she is starting it: the threshold of her new home.

It is true that the writers who left us with evidence for these rituals did not leave clear and indisputable directions for any part of the Roman wedding ceremony, but the snippets that we do have, along with careful use of frameworks such as van Gennep's *rites de passage* and Roman apotropaic ritual, certainly give a strong indication that the *limen* of the house door would be the location for the threshold rituals. I do not deny that the threshold of the bedroom could also have been considered a challenging transition for the bride, especially in her first

¹¹⁵ Hersch 2010a: 224.

¹¹⁶ van Gennep 1960: 25; he continues: 'These practices are intended to prevent the pollution of a passage which must remain uncontaminated once it has been purified by special ceremonies. Spitting or stepping on it, for instance, are forbidden'; this at once calls to mind both the lifting ritual and the anointing one.

marriage, but there were other rituals associated with assisting the bride at this point. Treggiari, for instance, discusses the role of the *pronuba* in preparing the bride for bed and the participation of the guests in escorting the bridegroom, or perhaps even the couple, to the bedroom.¹¹⁷ The consummation of the wedding was not a legal requirement for a marriage to be valid, although it was presumably the expected culmination of the festivities for bride and groom.¹¹⁸ Yes, the bedroom represented the change in status from virgin to *mulier* for the ideal first-time bride, but we must remember that the marriage itself represented a huge change of status, as *uxor* and *matrona* – perhaps even *materfamilias* and eventually *mater* – for the bride, as well as a change in living accommodation, best symbolised by the *limen* of her new marital home.

¹¹⁷ Treggiari 1994: 321-322 and 321 n. 31 (*pronuba*); 323 (bridegroom put to bed by guests).

¹¹⁸ Ulpian stated that *nuptias enim non concubitus sed consensus facit* ('For it is not sleeping together, but rather agreement, that makes a marriage', *Digest* 35.1.15, trans. Watson 1998c).

PART TWO: CHAPTER ONE:
AT THE BRIDE'S HOUSE: RITES OF SEPARATION

Van Gennep stated that the first stage of his rites of passage schema was 'separation from a previous world'.¹ In this chapter I shall discuss the various acts which could make up rites of separation for the bride, beginning with the betrothal of the couple, and the possibility that at some point before the wedding the bride dedicated her childhood toys or clothes. Immediately before the ceremony the bride dressed in an outfit which marked her out as enacting the role of 'Bride'; it is possible that the bride was ritually torn from her mother's embrace before the *deductio*, which would serve to sever her from her birth family. Finally I shall discuss whether or not ritual activity took place at the bride's threshold.

§2.1.1: Betrothal

The rites of separation for a bride marrying for the first time could well have begun some time – possibly even many years – before the wedding itself: at her betrothal (*sponsalia*) to her fiancé when she became a *sponsa* and he a *sponsus*.² Within the wider context of marriage, betrothal acts as a rite of separation to move the parties out of their current state of childish 'free agents', so to speak, and into a state of pre-marriage. It can also be a liminal period for the engaged

¹ van Gennep 1960: 21.

² Betrothals could theoretically take place when the parties were infants, although the *Digest* (23.1.14) gives a minimum age of seven; Augustus changed the regulations around betrothal ages and lengths, as men were betrothing themselves to young girls in order to circumvent the marriage laws: see Cassius Dio 54.16.7; Suetonius, *Augustus* 34.2; Treggiari 1991: 153; Caldwell 2015: 118. See Harlow & Laurence 2010 on the betrothal as acting as a rite of passage for men.

pair as they await their marriage – they are currently neither married nor unpromised.³

Legally in Rome, betrothal was contracted between men – usually the *sponsa's* *paterfamilias* and the *sponsus* or his *paterfamilias*⁴ – and the *sponsa's* role was merely to consent to, or perhaps rather, to not disagree with, the arrangement.⁵ There does not appear to be anything official that the *sponsa* had to say or do; in fact, Ulpian states that the potential couple did not have to be there at all when the contract was made.⁶ Plautus records a verbal formula which appears to seal the engagement: the potential groom asking *spondesne?* ('do you promise?') and the *sponsa's* father replying *spondeo* ('I promise').⁷ It is likely that the betrothal agreement was celebrated with a party to announce the engagement, especially

³ van Gennep 1960: 11, writing primarily about first marriages, saw betrothal as the intermediary time 'between adolescence and marriage'.

⁴ Usually but not always: Tullia's third marriage, to Dolabella, appears to have been arranged by someone other than her father; Cicero refers to Tullia's engagement with Dolabella having been 'made' (*factis sponsalibus*) before his letter suggesting Tiberius Nero as an alternative suitor reached her (*Epistulae ad Atticum* 6.6.1=121.1); clearly *factis* here refers to something binding that Cicero did not feel that he could disrupt.

⁵ The *sponsa* did have the right to refuse a man of poor character: Ulpian in *Digest* 23.1.12: *sed quae patris voluntati non repugnat, consentire intellegitur. tunc autem solum dissentiendi a patre licentia filiae conceditur, si indignum moribus vel turpem sponsum ei pater eligat* ('But if she does not oppose her father's wishes, she is held to consent. A daughter can only refuse to give her consent where her father chooses someone who is unfit for betrothal because of his bad behavior or character', trans. Watson 1998b); see Caldwell 2015: 118-119. While consent was required for the betrothal to be binding, it could be made simply between *patresfamilias*: Ulpian in *Digest* 23.1.4: *sufficit nudus consensus ad constituenda sponsalia. denique constat et absentem desponderi posse, et hoc cotidie fieri* ('Agreement alone is sufficient for betrothal. It is agreed that betrothal can take place in the absence of the parties, and this is quite common', trans. Watson 1998b).

⁶ Ulpian in *Digest* 23.1.18: *in sponsalibus constituendis parvi refert, per se (et coram an per internuntium vel per epistulam) an per alium hoc factum est: et fere plerumque condiciones interpositis personis expediuntur* ('it does not matter much whether this is done by the parties themselves (in person, by sending a messenger, or by letter) or by someone else. The conditions in the marriage contract are nearly always settled by intermediaries', trans. Watson 1998b). See also Ulpian in *Digest* 23.1.4 (quoted in footnote 5 above).

⁷ *spondesne? spondeo* exchanges appear at *Aulularia* 256, *Poenulus* 1157 and *Trinummus* 1157-1158. Treggiari 1991: 142 argues that it 'seems likely the verbal contract had gone out of use during the second century.'

among the upper classes.⁸ This public acknowledgement of the betrothal would have further marked out the *sponsa* and *sponsus* as beginning the transition to marriage.

We also have evidence that the *sponsus* would send or give the *sponsa* a ring: whether this happened in private or public, at the time the betrothal was agreed or sometime after, we are unsure.⁹ Pliny tells us that:

etiam nunc sponsae muneris vice ferreus anulus mittitur, isque sine gemma.
even now an iron ring and what is more a ring without any stone in it is sent as a gift to a woman when betrothed.

(*Naturalis historia* 33.12.4)¹⁰

Pliny does not specify who it is that 'sends' the ring, and the use of *mittuntur* certainly does not suggest that it was given to the *sponsa* in person. *Mitto* is also used legally when Paul discusses the following situation:

Sponsus alienum anulum sponsae muneri misit et post nuptias pro eo suum dedit

A man sent a ring belonging to someone else as a gift to his betrothed and after the marriage gave her one of his own instead.

(*Digest* 24.1.36)¹¹

Here it is at least clear that it is the *sponsus* who sends the ring to the *sponsa*.

Tertullian also suggested that a gold ring – which he refers to as an *anulus*

⁸ This party, like the betrothal itself, was known as a *sponsalia*. Pliny refers to a *sponsalium cena* (*Naturalis historia* 9.117.58), which certainly implies that there could be some form of feast or banquet. Cicero makes a reference to holding a *sponsalia* for Tullia's second husband, Crassipes (*Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem* 2.6.2), whereas Claudius was unusual in that he only had a small, private ceremony for his daughter's *sponsalia* (Suetonius, *Divus Claudius* 12.1). Other authors imply that attending *sponsalia* was a regular occurrence in certain circles (Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 1.9.2; Seneca the Younger, *De tranquillitate animi* 12.4), and Suetonius reports that even Augustus did his best to attend them (*Divus Augustus* 53.3).

⁹ It is possible that there was some form of formal kiss (*osculum*), although there is scant evidence for it until the time of Constantine; see Treggiari 1991: 149-152 and Hersch 2010a: 43.

¹⁰ Translation by Rackham 1952.

¹¹ Translation by Watson 1998b.

pronubus – was provided by the *sponsus* (Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 6.4).¹² The ring acted as a symbol that the *sponsa* was promised to a *sponsus*: not only is she now unavailable on the marriage market, but she has taken her first steps towards the rite of passage that is the marriage. Harlow and Laurence point out that this betrothal ring ‘marked the *sponsa* out as still a virgin, but... neither a child nor a married woman’.¹³ In this way she is separated from her un-engaged peers for the period of the betrothal, however long that might be.

§2.1.2: Dedications before the marriage ceremony

There is some tentative evidence that girls dedicated dolls (*pupae*) and their childhood *toga praetexta* to certain gods at some point around puberty, which a scholiast on Persius states happened *antequam nubarent* (‘before they married’, *ad Satirae* 2.69, #14.3 in Appendix Fourteen).¹⁴ If this did happen immediately before marriage, then it would be a clear rite of separation as the girls put aside symbols of their childhood – either toys, or typical child’s clothes, or both – in order to assume their new role of *uxor* and *matrona* on marrying.

The references, which are tabulated as Appendix Fourteen, are vague and often contradict each other; the obscure nature of these sources means that our knowledge of what actually happened here is limited, especially with regard to

¹² Tertullian disagrees with Pliny’s assertion that the ring was made of iron, but, of course, customs could well have changed between the times of Pliny and Tertullian. Tertullian makes another, very brief, reference to a ring at *De idololatria* 16.

¹³ Harlow & Laurence 2010: 66.

¹⁴ A fragment of Varro suggests that girls also dedicated to the *Lares* the *reticulum* hairnet that they wore to bed the night before the marriage, along with other items (possibly including dolls). However, there is no context given with the fragment, and it seems to be the reference to the *reticulum* that has led scholars to assume that it refers to wedding dedications. I discuss this matter further in Appendix Fourteen (#14.7: Varro *apud* Nonius 863L=538M and 869L=542M).

timing and purpose.¹⁵ Could 'before they married' merely be shorthand to indicate that these are unmarried, but presumably pubescent girls? Was this an official puberty rite of which all girls partook? If so, when – at a certain age, or on menarche?¹⁶ Or was it more a personal choice, perhaps as thanks for a safe childhood?¹⁷ Or could it have been something that a family would pressurise a maturing girl to do? If it were a ritual related to marriage then was this something that happened on betrothal, regardless of when the marriage would take place? Or did an engaged girl make the dedications in the days leading up to her marriage? It is relatively common for modern scholars to state that this happened on the day before the marriage,¹⁸ but unfortunately – as we can see from Appendix Fourteen – the sources are not this specific.¹⁹

¹⁵ Does the lack of concrete evidence indicate that these dedications did not commonly take place, or simply that the (male) writers of our surviving texts either did not know about them (if they were, perhaps, restricted to female members of the family) or were indifferent, as George 2001: 189 n. 22 suggests: 'when faced with feminine and childish activities which did not directly impinge (as marriage did) on the male world'.

¹⁶ Sebesta 1994: 47 implies that the dedication of the *toga praetexta* happened on menarche, as this 'signified for the girl that she had safely survived the weakness of childhood and was now sexually mature', but as can be seen from Appendix Fourteen, no sources specify menstruation as a deciding factor. Sebesta is perhaps using the parallel with boys, who tended to assume the *toga virilis* at around fifteen which could well coincide with puberty, but as Dolansky 2008: 48-49 notes, 'it was not necessarily a celebration of the onset of puberty'.

¹⁷ Dolansky 2008: 57 – in discussing boys' assumption of the *toga virilis* which tended to happen at around fifteen – points out that this age is the point at which 'prospects for life expectancy actually increased dramatically... it seems that Romans understood that surviving childhood was an achievement of considerable significance that merited celebrated and thanksgiving.' Varro stated that the first *gradus aetatis* ('stage of life'), being a *puer*, lasted until fifteen (*apud* Censorinus, *De die natali* 14).

¹⁸ For example: Rawson 2003: 145: 'On the day before their marriage they dedicated dolls and toys to their household gods or to Venus'; Littlewood 2006: 173: 'the *togulae* traditionally offered to Fortuna Virgo on the eve of marriage by Roman girls'; Olson 2008b: 142, who also states that the togas were dedicated 'on the eve of her marriage'.

¹⁹ If anything, the fragment of Varro (#14.7: *apud* Nonius 863L=538M and 869L=542M) stating that *reticula* were dedicated to the *Lares* would suggest – if this text did indeed refer to pre-marriage dedications – that the dedications took place on the morning of the wedding, since the girl cannot dedicate her *reticulum* before she wears it to bed the night before the marriage. I discuss the Varro fragment further in Appendix Fourteen, and the *reticulum* in Section 2.1.3, below.

It was not uncommon for girls who died unmarried to have dolls buried with them,²⁰ and scholars have used these finds as further evidence that a girl's dolls would be dedicated on her marriage, as the unmarried girl is buried with them to symbolise her aborted future.²¹ This would concur with the scholion on Persius, which states that the girls dedicated to Venus *virginitatis suae dona* ('gifts of their virginity', #14.3: *ad Satirae* 2.69): the would-be bride is preparing to give up her virginity and may well require the assistance of Venus; the prematurely deceased virgin takes her virginity – and her dolls – with her to the grave.

Propertius (#14.1: 4.11.33-34) certainly suggests that upon marriage a girl would start dressing differently, and would style her hair differently as well.²² We know that during the male rite of passage ceremony boys put aside their own *togae praetextae* in order to put on the *toga virilis*; they dedicated their *bullae* to the *Lares* at the same time.²³ A similar ritual act for girls would form a pleasing parallel,²⁴ and for it to take place before marriage would be a logical step if the *matrona* would dress differently to the *puella*.²⁵ There is a huge emphasis in the literature about what a bride wore during the wedding ceremony, and so some

²⁰ Carroll 2006: 175: 'a widely dispersed group of graves in western Europe of girls between the ages of 5 and 20 contain (bridal) jewellery and items of costume, spindles and distaffs, and mirrors, but also dolls (usually ivory) and miniature objects and amulets'. With regard to the spindles and distaffs, which were carried in the *deductio* procession during the wedding (see Part Two Chapter Two), Carroll continues 'these never-to-be brides were given this equipment, although it would not be used'.

²¹ Caldwell 2015: 102; Hersch 2010a: 67-68.

²² Caldwell 2015: 52.

²³ See Dolansky 2008 and Frascchetti 1997: 65-66.

²⁴ Pseudo-Acro, in fact, draws this exact parallel between boys and their *bullae* and girls and their *pupae*, both of which, he says, are dedicated to the *Lares* (*pueri bullas donabant Laribus, puellae pupas*, #14.4: *ad Horace, Satirae* 1.5.65-66).

²⁵ It is unclear how differently women would dress from girls; see Caldwell 2015: 52. Olson 2008b: 150 argues that 'there seems to have been no "costume" belonging to a Roman girl... [they] were not as visually distinct from their older counterparts as certain authors (both ancient and modern) would have us believe.' However, an adult woman could not continue to wear a *toga*: George 2001: 184 reminds us that the *toga* as worn by women was 'a symbol of shame as the *toga muliebris*... the garment of the adulteress and prostitutes.'

form of ritual removal of childhood clothes, in order to be dressed as ‘A Bride’ certainly seems plausible.²⁶ This would form an act of separation for the bride from her previous life, as she prepares to wear the clothes that will symbolise her transition to *matrona*-hood.

§2.1.3: The bride’s dress and toilette

Hersch wonders whether ‘because a woman was a “bride” for only one day, did her clothing bespeak liminality alone?’, or whether it might symbolise all three stages of the rite of passage.²⁷ I would argue that the bride’s costume actually acts most as a rite of separation to isolate her from the rest of society and to label her as ‘bride’. There is, of course, some crossover in this isolation between segregation and liminal transition, and this can be seen perhaps most strongly in the bride’s veil, as I shall discuss below.

I shall not go into detail about the minutiae of the bride’s nuptial dress and toilette as this has been documented in detail by La Follette, Olson and Hersch.²⁸ As with every part of the wedding ceremony, we have no top-to-toe detailed account of exactly what the average bride would wear, and so must piece together an image of her from multiple sources. It is likely that this composite picture would never have existed, but it is apparent from our accounts that the

²⁶ Note that Sebesta 1994: 47 raises the point that a girl ‘did not assume her final adult garments, however, until she passed through one additional stage, that of the bride’. If there were a gap in time between the dedication of the *togae* and marriage, then girls would have an additional liminal period in which they could not yet dress as *matronae* but were no longer able to wear their childhood *togae praetextae*. This could well indicate that the dedications of the *togae* happened shortly before the wedding.

²⁷ Hersch 2010a: 70.

²⁸ La Follette 1994: 54-65; Olson 2008a: 21-25; Hersch 2010a: 69-114.

costume of 'a bride' would have been recognisable and distinct from the daily wear of women.

While the dress might be the focus of a modern, Western bridal outfit, we have little information about what the actual clothing that the Roman bride wore under her enveloping veil looked like.²⁹ Pliny and Festus refer to her as wearing a *tunica recta*, which she herself was supposed to have woven especially for the ceremony at an upright loom, and which she put on the night before the ceremony for good luck.³⁰ Caldwell suggests that if this were true then it would be 'a convenient way to keep a daughter busy and at home in the time before marriage.'³¹ Wearing a hand-woven garment, especially for an upper class girl who would otherwise have had access to bought fabrics and clothes, or had her own slaves to make them, would in itself be a ritual act celebrating the time, effort and skill that had gone into it.³²

²⁹ I discuss the *flammeum* veil in detail below.

³⁰ Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 8.74.194, who states that the *tunica recta* was worn by both young men and brides (*tirones induuntur novaeque nuptae*) and was first woven by Gaia Caecilia, or Tanaquil; I discuss Gaia Caecilia further in Part Two Chapter Three. The detail of the bride weaving the tunic at an upright loom and wearing it to bed is from Festus 364L s.v. *regillis tunicis* (*regillis tunicis, albis, et reticulis luteis utrisque <re>ctis, textis susum versum a stantibus, pridie nuptiarum diem virgines indutae cubitum ibant ominis causa; ut etiam in togis virilibus dandis observari solet*). It should be noted that Festus does not explicitly state that it is the bride herself who is the person standing to weave the tunic, but this is an accepted assumption by scholars (e.g., La Follette 1994: 55; Olson 2008a: 21; Hersch 2010a: 106; 108 (expressing caution)). Festus also discusses the *tunica recta* at 342L s.v. *rectae*, where he reiterates that it was woven by those standing, and that it is worn by boys for a good omen (*rectae appellantur vestimenta virilia, quae patres liberis suis conficienda curant ominis causa: ita usurpata quod a stantibus et in altitudinem textuntur*).

³¹ Caldwell 2015: 137. Rose 1924: 102-103 saw the importance of the *tunica recta* in that it was new, and therefore 'free from the pollution of hostile magic'.

³² Larsson Lovén 1998: 88-89 notes that even by the second century BC, 'the manufacture of textiles was partly on a large scale and partly done by professional workers', and that a vast range of garments would have been available for sale; see also Hersch 2010b: 124-126. I discuss the connotations between women's wool work and the ideal woman further in Part Two Chapter Three.

Intriguingly, the *tunica recta* was also said to have been worn to bed by boys the night before they took part in their rite of passage ceremony, that of assuming the *toga virilis*.³³ The change of clothes took place at home, but the boy and his family and friends would then publicly process down to the forum, a *deductio in forum*, which Frascchetti refers to as ‘a true initiation into public affairs’ and ‘the essential moment in a young Roman’s introduction to the life of the community.’³⁴ The parallels between boys and girls of the removal of the *toga praetexta* (which I discussed above, for girls), and the wearing of the *tunica recta* the night before a public *deductio* when the young person processes to their new adult life (either their marital home or the symbolic home of adult law and business) certainly suggest that the marriage should be seen as equally indicative of a rite of passage for girls that the *toga virilis* ceremony would be for boys.

Other items that the bride would potentially wear include yellow slippers,³⁵ a yellow *reticulum* which may have been a hairnet,³⁶ and a belt tied with a special

³³ Boys are said to wear the *tunica recta* by Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 8.74.194, Festus 342L s.v. *rectae* and Festus 364L s.v. *regillis tunicis*. It is the latter text which strongly implies that boys wear the tunic to bed, just like brides did (see footnote 30, above, for quotations). For more on boys transitioning to the *toga virilis*, see Dolansky 2008.

³⁴ Frascchetti 1997: 65.

³⁵ Our sole evidence for these slippers is Catullus 61.10 where the god of the wedding, Hymen, is wearing *luteum pede soccum*. The fact that Hymen is also wearing a *flammeum* (61.8) implies that he is dressed as a bride, and that therefore his other accoutrements are also bridal.

³⁶ Festus 364L s.v. *regillis tunicis* tells us that the *reticulum* was *luteum*, woven at an upright loom along with the *tunica recta*, and worn by the bride the night before the wedding (see footnote 30, above for quotation). Varro and Nonius – who make no mention of brides – tell us that a *reticulum* was a hairnet or other form of head-covering for women (Varro, *De lingua Latina* 5.130; Nonius 869L=542M s.v. *reticulum*), but it is hard to see how our known Roman hairnets would have been woven on looms (see Croom 2002: 106, figure 49.3); Hersch 2010a: 107 wonders whether it could have been an undergarment instead. A fragment of Varro (*apud* Nonius 863L=538M s.v. *strophium* & 869L=542M s.v. *reticulum*) states that *reticula* were dedicated to the *Lares*, and it is plausible that this happened before the wedding ceremony, but there is no firm context for the fragment; see discussion in Appendix Fourteen.

knot.³⁷ She had a special hairstyle, known as the *seni crines*, which was worn only by brides and Vestal Virgins.³⁸ Her hairstyle would have been tied with fillets and topped with a crown or garland.³⁹ These items were all in some way special or unique to brides, and so would have functioned, therefore, as an Othering device, setting the bride apart from the rest of society. This would have affected both how others viewed her and how she viewed herself while wearing this outfit. These preparations and bedecking may well have been ritual acts in and of themselves:⁴⁰ some authors state that the bride's hair was parted using a special spear called the *hasta caelibaris*,⁴¹ and it is obviously tempting, therefore, to see this spear's use in creating the *seni crines*.⁴² The theories behind the use of the spear lie in marital unity, fertility or apotropaic rites,⁴³ but it is also possible to

³⁷ Festus 55L s.v. *cingillo* gives us our most detailed description of this belt with the *nodus Herculaneus*, and tells us that this knot was supposedly to be untied by the groom once the couple were alone in their marital bedchamber. Other authors mention brides wearing belts (usually as a symbol of their chastity), e.g. Catullus 61.51-53 (*zonula*) & 67.27-28 (*zonam*); Ovid, *Heroides* 2.115-116 (*zona*).

³⁸ Our only source for this hairstyle is Festus 454L s.v. *senis crinibus*.

³⁹ Fillets: Propertius 4.3.15 & 4.11.33-35; crown/garland: Catullus 61.6-7; Festus 56L s.v. *corolla*; Hersch 2010a: 92-93 correctly demonstrates that the suggestion of a scholion to Lucan 2.358 that the bride wore a turreted crown is a misreading, and that the scholiast meant to identify the *pronuba*; it is likely that the bride wore a crown of flowers.

⁴⁰ Hersch 2010a: 71-72 suggests that the bedecking would ideally have been performed by the bride's mother, and notes that literature often connects the adorning of the bride with that of adorning the corpse of an unmarried girl for her metaphorical marriage to death.

⁴¹ Ovid, *Fasti* 2.560; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 87, *Romulus* 15; Festus 55L s.v. *caelibari hasta*; Tertullian, *De virginibus velandis* 12; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 2.67; Claudian, *Epithalamia* 10.284-285.

⁴² Rose 1924: 101 n. 1 argues that 'the name *hasta caelibaris* or bachelor's spear, seems to me rather to indicate that the rite was performed at the bridegroom's house.' We have no evidence either way, but presumably if the spear were not used to create the hairstyle at the bride's house, then it could be used to deconstruct it as she is prepared for bed at the groom's house. Rose later suggests (1924: 103) that the spear could have been used to 'threaten her' as a symbol of marriage by capture; this seems very implausible given the references we have to the spear's use as only parting the bride's hair.

⁴³ Unity: Festus 55L s.v. *caelibari hasta* makes the unique claim that the spear must be one that has been torn from the corpse of a gladiator: *ut, quemadmodum illa coniuncta fuerit cum corpore gladiatoris, sic ipsa cum viro sit* ('so that, in the same way that it had been joined together with the body of the gladiator, so she herself would be with her husband'); Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 87 has a different suggestion: Ἡ τὴν διάστασιν αἰνίττεται τὸ γιγνόμενον, ὡς μόνω σιδήρῳ τοῦ γάμου διακριθησομένου; ('Or does this procedure hint at the manner of their separation, that with steel alone can their marriage be dissolved?' trans. Cole Babbitt 1936). Fertility: Hersch 2010a: 84 suggests that if the spear had come from a gladiator, as Festus suggested, then this

see it as a rite of separation, in which the bride is symbolically cut from her previous life – perhaps her childhood, or perhaps her family.⁴⁴

I must reiterate what I said in my introduction, that I do not wish to pigeonhole any individual item or act as solely indicating or ‘meaning’ the rite of passage.

The *seni crines*, a hairstyle connecting brides and Vestal Virgins is rather obviously symbolic of chastity and virginity. Individually, rites and items may have other important symbolic values; indeed, as Hersch notes, ‘Roman authors noted that the symbolism of the components of the bride’s costume is multivalent – symbols of virginity, marriage, fertility, ethnicity, and even love were carried by one person.’⁴⁵ Taken as a whole, however, we see the full schema of the rite of passage laid over the top of these discrete ritual acts in the wedding ceremony.

What appears to be the most important symbol of the bride’s costume – it is certainly the most well-attested⁴⁶ – is the fact that the bride was veiled. The very word *nubere*, ‘to marry’, used to describe the act of marriage from the point of view of the bride, literally means ‘to veil oneself’.⁴⁷ This veil, known as the *flammeum*, was brightly coloured – probably egg-yolk yellow – and it is this

would have been considered ‘a powerful love-charm, as well as betokener of fertility’. Apotropaic: Rose 1924: 103, who saw the various rituals throughout the marriage ceremony as primarily apotropaic or performed to generate good luck, sees the importance of the hairstyle as ‘shaking all possible pollution out of [the hair]’.

⁴⁴ Hersch 2010a: 82 reports that in the nineteenth century Rossbach had argued that the *hasta* ‘represented an earlier and discontinued custom of cutting the bride’s hair’; there is, of course, no evidence that the bride’s hair was ever cut.

⁴⁵ Hersch 2010a: 113.

⁴⁶ Hersch 2010a: 95 notes that it ‘appears in fragments from the very dawn of Roman literature to the very late epithalamium of Claudian.’

⁴⁷ Festus 174L s.v. *nuptias*; to marry from the point of view of the man is *uxorem ducere*: ‘to lead a wife’.

above all which marked out the woman as a bride.⁴⁸ The *flammeum* is used as a *pars pro toto* for the bride herself – Catullus, for example, simply writes at 61.114-115 that the *flammeum* is coming; when writers wish to summarise a wedding quickly by mentioning a few key points, they almost always mention the veil as one of them. Just as brides shared the hairstyle of Vestal Virgins, they shared the *flammeum* with the *Flaminica*, the wife of the *Flamen Dialis*. Festus suggested that it would therefore act as a charm against divorce, as the *Flaminica* was unable to divorce (79L s.v. *flammeo*).

Donning this veil is an obvious act of separation.⁴⁹ It provides a literal barrier between the bride and those around her, marking her out as a ritual player and giving her her own portable transitional space.⁵⁰ There is no obvious unveiling ceremony in the Roman wedding, like there is in traditional modern Western weddings, or during the ancient Greek formal unveiling of the bride

⁴⁸ To provide merely a small sample of references: Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 21.22.46; Juvenal 6.224-226, with scholia *ad loc.*; Suetonius, *Nero* 28.1; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.33; Festus 79L & 82L s.v. *flammeo*.

⁴⁹ Sebesta 1994: 48 points out that while Roman *matronae* veiled themselves with their *pallae* in public, *puellae* did not cover their heads. For a bride marrying for the first time, therefore, this was likely to be the first time she wore a veil. See also La Follette 1994: 55 on this, and the fact that the Romans – both men (with a fold of their *toga*) and women – veiled their heads during religious ceremonies such as sacrifices.

⁵⁰ Literary evidence strongly suggests that the bride's face and head was completely concealed by the *flammeum*, and probably her body as well: the scholiast on Juvenal 6.224-226 states that *flammea genus amicti quo se cooperiunt mulieres die nuptiarum* ('*flammea* are a type of wrap with which women cover themselves completely on their wedding day'). In Plautus' *Casina* the 'bride' is a man in disguise and so his face must have been obscured, and Lucan mentions that *velarunt flammea voltus* ('*flammea* veil faces', *Bellum civile* 2.360-361). Hersch 2010a: 100-102 notes that material evidence always shows the bride with the *flammeum* drawn back off her face (if indeed these are brides with *flammea*, rather than *matronae* wearing *pallae*), but that this is likely to be a convention of sculpture to show the individual features of the person being portrayed. Croom states that the *flammeum* 'was worn in the same way as the *palla*' (2002: 112), and that the *palla* 'covered the body... to knee or lower calf' (2002: 89). Artistic depictions vary greatly in how they show the wearing of the *flammeum*, but the veil in them often covers the woman's torso, falling to mid-thigh; in some cases it is floor-length at the back; in the Aldobrandini fresco it entirely covers the bride's body (see Croom 2002: 91: figures 41.1-3 & 2002: 113 figure 55.1; Hersch 2010a figures 1-7).

(*anakalypteria*).⁵¹ The bride certainly wore it throughout the *deductio*, the liminal phase of her rite of passage, and may well have kept it on until she was undressed for bed in the groom's bedchamber at the end of the ceremony. As well as symbolising the bride's separation and transition, it is likely that the veil had some apotropaic function in protecting her during this spiritually dangerous time.⁵²

Hersch wrote that 'If clothes make the ritual, then the clothing of the wedding proclaimed to onlookers that the wedding was a religious ritual for the woman and a party for the man.'⁵³ There is no detailed list of various different garments and ritual items which the groom wore to his wedding: a clean toga, a shave and a garland seem to have sufficed.⁵⁴ This focus on the special costume of the bride certainly underscores how the ceremony was seen as more important for her than it was for him, something that we shall see repeated throughout the rest of the ceremony as the bride performs most of the ritual acts. In her careful toilette, the bride marks herself out as exactly that: a woman on the cusp of joining a new family and – especially if it is her first marriage – of becoming a *matrona*. This rite of separation through dress prepares her for the liminal period to come, both by isolating her and by providing her with apotropaic devices, such as the *flammeum*, to protect her during her liminal period.

⁵¹ For the *anakalypteria* see Redfield 1982: 192; Oakley & Sinos 1993: 25; Ferrari 2003: 28.

⁵² Ferrari 2003: 35, in her analysis of the Greek wedding as a rite of passage, states that 'In the donning of the wife's mantle I would identify the liminal phase of some kind of rite of passage', but does not go into any further detail. I agree that the *wearing* of a veil symbolises liminality, but the actual *donning* of it is an act of separation.

⁵³ Hersch 2010a: 69.

⁵⁴ Toga: Plautus, *Casina* 446 & 767-768; shave: Lucan notes that Cato refuses to shave for his remarriage to Marcia at *Bellum civile* 2.372-373; garland: Plautus, *Casina* 767-768; Statius, *Silvae* 1.2.22-23; Plutarch, *Pompeius* 55; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.27; Tertullian, *De corona militis* 13.

§2.1.4: The bride may have been ritually seized from her mother

It is possible that there was a literal act of separation to remove the bride from her natal family, as Festus states:

rapi simulatur virgo ex gremio matris, aut, si ea non est, ex proxima necessitudine, cum ad virum traditur

The maiden pretends to be seized from the bosom of her mother, or, if she is not there, from the closest female relation, when she is handed over to the groom.

(364L & 365L s.v. *rapi*)

Festus does not tell us who seizes the bride. Both Catullus and – much later – Claudian feature similar acts in their poetry, but in each case the person seizing the bride is a god; in Catullus the god then hands the bride over to the groom (*iuveni*).⁵⁵ It is also not clear at what point this act happened; I have placed it at the bride's house (where the groom would have been present before the *deductio* set off) as it is an obvious act of separation from the bride's family, and it links in with the bride's show of reluctance to leave the house which we find in some texts.⁵⁶

We see this reluctance in Catullus, who says of the bride that *flet, quod ire necesse est* ('she weeps, because she must go', 61.81), and the poet-narrator spends the next forty lines or so trying to convince her to leave. This is usually interpreted as an act demonstrating the bride's chastity by her unwillingness to lose her virginity,⁵⁷ but especially for a first marriage for a young teenager (or for any

⁵⁵ Catullus 61.56-59: Hymen; Catullus 62.20-24: Hesperus; Claudian 25.124-125: Venus.

⁵⁶ Caldwell 2015: 142: 'The shy and uncertain bride who lingers at the threshold was a figure whose appeal is suggested by its adaptation in the epic poetry of both Vergil and Ovid, where the gesture of hesitation is used to describe Dido and Myrrha, respectively.'

⁵⁷ Hersch 2010a: 144; Caldwell 2015: 143.

woman whose father had arranged the marriage and was unfamiliar with her new husband) the reluctance may well have been genuine.

§2.1.5: Did ritual activity take place at the bride's door?

I explained in the Introduction to Part Two that there were up to four rituals that could take place at the threshold to the groom's house-door. As we shall see in Chapter Three, such a focus has strong connotations of symbolising the third stage in the bride's rite of passage: rites of incorporation. But what about her starting point: her parents' house⁵⁸ – was there any ritual action that took place around that door that might embody a rite of separation from the bride's old life, and start off her transitional, liminal, *deductio* procession to the groom's house?

If there was then Catullus is perhaps our only evidence for it. When the bride was getting ready to leave in Catullus 61, his poet-narrator, acting almost as a master of ceremonies, cries:

claustra pandite ianuae!
virgo, adest!
Throw open the bolts of the door!
The bride is coming!

(61.76-77)⁵⁹

⁵⁸ The bride was usually living with her parents, especially if she were a young teenager marrying for the first time (Treggiari 1991: 410); divorced or widowed women would have to leave the marital home (Treggiari 1991: 466) and usually returned to their father's house (Cantarella 2005: 30), and so would start any remarriage off from there. There were always exceptions, of course; below I discuss the case of Violentilla, who was living in her own house before her marriage to Stella in Statius' *Silvae* 1.2.

⁵⁹ I follow Fordyce's emendation to *adest* from *ades* (Fordyce 1961: 245), which was supported by McKay 1967: 193-194; *pace* Fedeli 1983: 62.

Do these lines indicate that there was a ritual displaying of the bride, in all her nuptial garb, to the family and friends who are gathered for the ceremony? In the poem the wedding party is clearly waiting outside the bride's parental home, ready to take part in the *deductio*⁶⁰ which suggests that the bride's door was the gathering point for well-wishers and those who were to escort the bride to the groom's house. In this address to the unnamed parties to open the door (or an address to the doors to open themselves⁶¹), Catullus is beginning the wedding hymn proper – the first 75 lines were a *hymenaeus*, an invocation of the god of the wedding, Hymen. These lines are therefore designed partly as a poetic opening of the next part of the poem, and so we cannot rely on them to suggest that there was a formal, ritual opening of the doors to the bride's home before she exited, but they are suggestive of one.⁶²

The bride's door does feature in the parody of the wedding in Plautus' *Casina*, in which the bride is a male slave in disguise. As the 'bride' exits 'her' house onto the stage, she is instructed to lift her feet carefully over the threshold (815) – a practice usually performed at the threshold to the groom's house as the bride enters.⁶³ Should this scene be taken as evidence that the bride's threshold was

⁶⁰ There is a reference to the torches that the wedding party are holding later in 61.77 which they will use as part of the *deductio*.

⁶¹ Fedeli 1983: 64 argues that *ianuae* is a vocative, not a genitive, citing Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* 2.4-8 as a possible source for Catullus; McKay 1967: 194 also made this suggestion.

⁶² The opening of the door to display the bride is reflected at the close of the poem, after the ceremony, when the poet-narrator gets ready to leave the couple: *claudite ostia, virgines:/ lusimus satis* ('Close the doors, maidens: we have sported enough', 61.224-225). Whereas the *ianua* at 61.76 was clearly the house-door, these *ostia* could be the doors to the bedchamber, and Treggiari 1994: 323 uses these lines as evidence that the bride's maiden attendants would ritually close the bedroom door on the couple at the end of the ceremony. The exhortation to open the door is also found in Statius' epithalamium to Stella and Violentilla: *pande fores!* ('throw open the doors!', *Silvae* 1.2.17), although here it is the door to the groom's house, as the bride is arriving at the completion of the *deductio*.

⁶³ I shall discuss this act in full in Chapter Three.

subject to the same ceremonial acts as the groom's? It is unlikely: a number of marriage rituals are inverted in this scene, which would have added to the comedy value.⁶⁴ It is also a theatrical scene: the characters need to be present on the stage in order to perform it; if the 'bride' were to follow the usual course of the ceremony she would be lifting her feet carefully over the threshold as she exited the stage (to enter the groom's house). For dramatic purposes, therefore, Plautus has shifted the threshold-ceremony to the bride's house, and there is no reason to give it any further significance.

In fact, there is very little evidence surrounding any aspect of the bride's house – even whether or not it was decorated for the occasion.⁶⁵ Mentions of the bride's house being decorated in literature tend to be in some way unusual or exceptional.⁶⁶ In Statius' *Silvae* we can be most sure that we have a reference to the bride's house being decorated:

*Vixdum emissa dies, et iam socialia praesto
omina, iam festa fervet domus utraque pompa.
fronde virent postes, efulgent compita flammis,
et pars immensae gaudet celeberrima Romae.*

⁶⁴ See Williams 1958: 18, who sees this as 'Plautus... simply adapt[ing] the ritual to his own comic ends.'

⁶⁵ Treggiari 1991: 163 gives seven references to support her assertion that the 'houses of bride and bridegroom would have doorway and vestibule garlanded with green boughs and flowers, the façade decorated with hangings', but five of these are to the groom's house (Juvenal 6.51-52, 6.79 (which may actually refer to the couple's house on the birth of their child, although a scholiast states that it is decorated for a wedding), 6.227-228; Lucan 2.354-355; Catullus 64.293), and the final two are to the unusual circumstances that we find in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.26 (which I discuss in footnote 66, below) and Statius, *Silvae* 1.2.231, which I discuss further, below.

⁶⁶ For example, Andromeda and Perseus' wedding in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* takes place at the palace, Andromeda's family home, and we are told that the roof is garlanded (4.760). But Perseus has been promised the kingdom, and therefore the palace: it is both the bride's house and the groom's house (oddly, this passage is cited by Hersch 2010: 139 n. 14 as an example of the decorating of the groom's house). Again, in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* we have an unusual situation in that the bride and groom have been living in the same house, the bride's family home, for many years. We are told that the house is covered in laurels (4.26), but given that the couple both live in the house already, this cannot be used to say anything specific about individual brides' and grooms' houses.

Scarce was day sent forth and already omens of union are to hand, both houses are alive with festal show. The doorposts are green with foliage, the crossroads ablaze, and the most crowded part of measureless Rome rejoices.

(1.2.229-232)⁶⁷

Here *both* houses (*domus utraque*) are described as part of the scene, although Newlands argues that the attention which Statius pays throughout this poem to the house of Violentilla, the bride, is unusual.⁶⁸ There is, of course, the possibility that the strong pause at 1.2.230, rendered as a full stop in modern editions, could imply that while both houses are bustling, only one has decorated doorposts, but the references to the crossroads and surrounding streets which the bride will pass through during the *deductio* imply that Statius is describing the entire scene, from house to house. This is our strongest evidence that the bride's door was decorated in honour of the occasion.

It seems likely that the bride's parental home and doorway was decorated. As we see from Catullus 61, the *deductio* started from the bride's house, and the wedding party – along with curious onlookers – would gather outside.

Decorating the bride's door, therefore, would act as a signal that a celebration is taking place and that a *deductio* is about to occur; Maynes remarks that 'ritualized decoration permitted a household to advertise its current social circumstances through the house door'.⁶⁹ The bride's family would have wanted to show off their involvement with the celebration, and so decoration would be

⁶⁷ Translation by Shackleton Bailey 2015.

⁶⁸ Newlands 2002: 94; Violentilla was a widow who is remarrying, and her house is her own house, not that of her parents.

⁶⁹ Maynes 2007: 61.

indicative of this: 'the marriage of a daughter was very important in the life of her parents, particularly her father'.⁷⁰

What the lack of written description shows, however, was that the bride's house was not important for writers; it was the groom's house and threshold which was the focus of the ceremony. From the point of view of a rite of passage for the bride, this would imply that it did not matter where she had come from; the importance for the ritual would be for her new beginning in entering her married home to be successful.

§2.1.6: Conclusion

It certainly seems logical that there would be some sort of ritual preparation for marriage, especially for those marrying for the first time. Caldwell writes that 'prenuptial rituals focusing on sexuality and fertility might have provided a welcome orientation for girls to the role they were to assume in the ceremony and after',⁷¹ but, as we have seen, the evidence that these existed is weak and vague. Van Gennep does state that rites of separation might be less important in wedding ceremonies than rites of incorporation.⁷² We have seen that the bride undergoes rites of separation as she dresses for her wedding, as her hairstyle and veil mark her out as a bride. The veil quite literally separates her from others: she is both uniquely dressed and partitioned from the rest of society by the fabric of the *flammeum*. She may well have begun the rites of separation

⁷⁰ Harlow & Laurence 2002: 64.

⁷¹ Caldwell 2015: 137.

⁷² van Gennep 1960: 11.

before the wedding ceremony at her betrothal or if she dedicated her childhood symbols to the gods; and she may have literally been ritually separated from her maternal family. We can summarise the bride's rites of separation, therefore, as helping her to let go of her past and prepare herself for her future.

PART TWO: CHAPTER TWO:
***DEDUCTIO*: RITES OF TRANSITION**

One might assume that the threshold rites of the wedding ceremony would symbolise the bride's liminal phase, but, as I shall explain in Chapter Three, the *limen* functions as the site of the bride's rites of incorporation. It is the *deductio*, when the bride is literally in transition from one house to another, one family to another, that represents the liminal phase of the bride's rite of passage as she moves from *sponsa* and *nupta* to *matrona*.

I explained in the Introduction to Part Two that I am not applying Turner's concept of *communitas* to the bride's liminal phase. *Communitas* describes Turner's theory that during the liminal phase initiands would band together in their liminality.¹ For the solitary figure of the bride, however, this notion does not apply. I also do not agree that Lincoln's critique of van Gennep is relevant. Lincoln had argued that women do not make a territorial passage and that therefore van Gennep's liminal phase cannot apply to them,² but as I shall demonstrate below, the bride's processional journey from one house to another was thought to take her past the crossroads, and she dedicated a coin to the *Lares* at the *compita* shrine there. As I argued in Part One, the crossroads are a liminal location, and therefore the bride's journey via the crossroads fulfils van Gennep's territorial passage.³

¹ Turner 1969: 96-97.

² Lincoln 1991: 101.

³ van Gennep 1960: 18.

The *deductio*, a rowdy procession lit by torches from the bride's house to the groom's, is perhaps the most recognisable element of the Roman wedding, and seems to have been – along with the *flammeum* – the bare minimum required for a wedding ceremony. Just as the word for a woman to marry is *nubere* ('to veil oneself'), so the phrase for a man is *uxorem ducere* or *in matrimoniam ducere*: 'to lead a wife [into marriage]'. Some jurists seem to imply that the *deductio* was required in order for a couple to be considered married,⁴ and it certainly acted as a public notice that a wedding was in progress. As with the bride's costume, there are a number of different elements that make up the *deductio* (and I am not, of course, implying that all *deductiones* would feature all elements), and whilst individually we might divine various different 'meanings' behind their symbolism, taken as a whole we see the procession functioning as a liminal rite for the bride as she makes her transition. In this short chapter I shall focus on two key elements of the *deductio* that emphasise this liminality: the Fescennine verses – bawdy jokes aimed definitely at the groom and probably at the bride – and the bride's visit to the crossroads to dedicate a coin.

Of course, there were plenty of other elements that could be part of the *deductio*; these have recently been analysed in detail by Hersch, and so I shall limit myself

⁴ Both Ulpian and Pomponius state that a marriage has taken place once a woman has been led to the groom's house: Ulpian in *Digest* 35.1.15: *ducta est uxor* ('she is led as wife'); Pomponius in *Digest* 23.2.5: *si in domum eius deduceretur* ('if she is led to his house', trans. Watson 1998b); the full quotations are given in Part Two Chapter Three footnote 10. However, Apuleius and the widowed Pudentilla do not appear to have had a *deductio*, or if they did, it was a private one at their country villa with no guests to witness it, *ne cives denuo ad sportulas convolarent* ('so that the citizenry would not flock there again in hope of wedding favours', *Apologia* 87.10, trans. Jones 2017). There is also no *deductio* mentioned in the fictional account of Cato and Marcia's remarriage in Lucan's *Bellum civile* 2.350-373, although this austere wedding is missing most of the customary ceremonial trappings.

to a brief summary of them here:⁵ the *deductio* would start from the bride's house; Plutarch tells us that there were five torches carried by members of the procession;⁶ nuts were thrown to the crowd;⁷ a spindle and distaff would be carried in the procession;⁸ and participants would make ritual chants of *Talassio*.⁹ A man might be said to *uxorem ducere*, but there is little evidence that he did, in fact, do the leading. Festus tells us that the bride was escorted by children, one of whom held one of the torches.¹⁰ The groom seems to have gone on ahead, so that he could already be in his house when the bride arrived; whether he travelled in a separate *deductio* before the bride set off, or whether he was simply at the front of the procession and the bride towards the back, is less clear.¹¹

⁵ Hersch 2010a: 140-144; 148-177.

⁶ Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 2. References to torches at a wedding are plentiful, especially in literary accounts as a symbol of the marriage; a brief selection: Catullus 61.14-15, 61.77-78, 61.117; Propertius 4.11.33; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.758-759, 6.430; Seneca, *Medea* 838-839; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 4.35. See also Varro *apud* Nonius 157-158L=112-113M; Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 16.30.75; Festus 77L s.v. *facem*; 282L & 283L s.v. *patrimi et matrimi*; 364L & 365L s.v. *rapi solet fax*.

⁷ Catullus 61.129-133; Virgil, *Eclogue* 8.29-30 with Servius, *ad Eclogue* 8.29; Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 15.24.86; Festus 179L s.v. *nucēs*. Festus' text could be taken to imply that the nuts were thrown at the moment of the bride entering the house (*ut novae nuptae intranti domum novi mariti secundum fiat auspiciū*), but Pliny states that they are *nuptialium Fescenninorum comites* ('companions of the nuptial Fescennines').

⁸ Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 8.74.194.

⁹ Key sources explaining this chant: Livy 1.9.12-13; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 31; Plutarch, *Romulus* 15.2-4; Festus 479L s.v. *Talassionem*; Servius, *ad Aeneid* 1.651. It is plausible there were also cries of *feliciter*, but the evidence is vague, see Hersch 2010a: 148 & 150-151.

¹⁰ Festus 282L & 283L s.v. *patrimi et matrimi*; Varro refers to bridal attendants called *camilli* who carry a box of the bride's possessions (*De lingua Latina* 7.34), and Festus also refers to these at 55L s.v. *camelis virginibus*.

¹¹ In Catullus 61 the groom appears to be processing along with the bride when the poet directs Fescennine verses at him (61.134-141), but then when she arrives at the house he is already in the atrium (61.164-166). Calpurnius Flaccus states of the groom that *fescennina cecinerit* ('he will have sung the Fescennines', *Declamations* 46); Treggiari 1991: 166 therefore suggests that there would be two processions: 'since it would be a melancholy business to sing solo, he too must have been accompanied by a noisy crowd of friends and attendants.'

§2.2.1: Fescennine verses

The Fescennine verses were a series of bawdy jokes, songs and insults which seem to have been aimed primarily at the groom by the participants in the *deductio*. Seneca, for example, points out that a freedman would be goaded about being an ex-slave in the Fescennines (*Controversiae* 7.6.12), and Lucan mentions that *soliti... sales* ('customary witty jokes') and *convicia festa* ('festive abuses') aimed at the groom are yet another thing missing from Cato's wartime remarriage (*Bellum civile*, 2.368-369). In Catullus 61, which Caldwell describes as 'the lengthiest testimony to the practice of ritual humor in the wedding',¹² the groom is teased about having a male concubine whom he will have to give up now that he is getting married (61.122-146).¹³

However, despite this emphasis on the groom, the bride does appear to have been present for the Fescennines, and even to have had some aimed at her. Directly after teasing the groom about his sexual past, for example, Catullus' poet-narrator warns the bride not to refuse her husband, *ni petitem aliunde eat* ('lest he go elsewhere to find it', 61.149).¹⁴ This concurs with Festus who states that *nubentibus... a multitudine puerorum obscena clamentur* ('obscene things are shouted at brides by a crowd of boys', 282L s.v. *praetextum sermonem*).¹⁵

¹² Caldwell 2015: 146.

¹³ Caldwell 2015: 148 n. 52, while discussing Martial 11.78 (which takes this idea from Catullus 61 of a groom being warned off his previous male conquests now that he is getting married), notes that 'in the Fescennine joking the focus is on the shift from the sexual freedom of the young male to the more restricted behavior expected after the marriage commitment.'

¹⁴ Translation by Cornish *et al.* 1913. Caldwell 2015: 149 interprets this, however, not as mockery but as 'advice on sexual behavior and married life.'

¹⁵ As does John Chrysostom's late Christian condemnation of the fact that it is permitted βάλλειν τοῖς σκῶμμασι καὶ τὸν νυμφίον καὶ τὴν νύμφην ('to throw jests at the groom and bride', *Patrologiae Graecae* 54.488).

There seem to be two main interpretations concerning the purpose of the Fescennines: one is that they are some form of rustic fertility charm, and the other is that they help to ward off the evil eye that might affect the bride or groom.¹⁶ The latter idea can be found in Festus, who states that *Fescennini versus, qui canebantur in nuptiis... quia fascinum putabantur arcere* ('the Fescennine verses, which used to be sung at weddings... because they are thought to keep off the evil eye', 76L s.v. *Fescennini versus*)

Hersch used the Fescennines to tentatively suggest that therefore 'the wedding did indeed mark an exceptional change in the life of a young man'.¹⁷ Of course, a marriage would affect the groom as well as the bride, and would represent another stage in his life course. However, one must keep in mind Caldwell's warning – based on her reading of the Fescennines in Catullus 61 – that 'the transition for the groom [here] is not from childhood to adulthood but from youthful attachment to the concubine to legitimate marriage.'¹⁸ The groom had already had his own adulthood ceremony when he donned the *toga virilis*, possibly a decade before his first marriage if we consider the average ages of grooms.¹⁹ The fact that it is the bride who must move into his domestic sphere, and that her sexual experience will have been considerably more limited than his, certainly implies that the overall transition is greater on her part.

¹⁶ See Hersch 2010a: 152 for an analysis of the various regional possibilities for the origin of the Fescennines. Van Gennep 1960: 117 had pointed out that 'marriage ceremonies also include protective and fertility rites', and so we should not expect to be able to assign something completely into one category.

¹⁷ Hersch 2010a: 155.

¹⁸ Caldwell 2015: 148.

¹⁹ Boys tended to assume the *toga virilis* at around fifteen (see Dolansky 2008: 48), whereas Saller 1987: 29-30 has hypothesised that men tended to marry for the first time in their mid-to-late twenties, or early-to-mid twenties for the elite.

And of course it was not just the groom who was subjected to the Fescennines – as shown above, the bride probably was too. Van Gennep suggested that being insulted by one’s childhood companions helps to cut the initiand off from their normal society and move them into the liminal phase.²⁰ These bawdy insults help to confirm that the bride is moving through liminal space where the normal rules of society do not apply.

§2.2.2: The bride dedicates a coin at the crossroads

A key part of the liminal phase for van Gennep was that the initiand made a territorial passage;²¹ I argued in the Introduction to Part Two that the Roman bride makes this passage, as there was a custom for her to visit a crossroads during the *deductio*. I made the case in Part One Chapter Five for the crossroads as an important liminal space, and demonstrated that it was clearly thought of as such by the Romans. The bride therefore moves in her *deductio* from her father’s house to an archetypal liminal spot, and then transitions back to her new husband’s house.

Our source is a fragment of Varro, which states that the purpose of visiting the crossroads was to dedicate – in some way – a coin:

²⁰ van Gennep 1960: 130.

²¹ van Gennep 1960: 18 & 192.

*NUBENTES veteri lege Romana asses III ad maritum venientes solere pervehere atque unum, quem in manu tenerent, tamquam emendi causa marito dare, alium, quem in pede haberent, in foco Larium familiarium ponere, tertium, quem in sacciperione condidissent, compito vicinali solere † resonare*²²... quos ritus Varro... diligentissime percucurrit.

By an old Roman law that brides coming to their husband were accustomed to carry three asses, indeed one, which they would hold in the hand, they gave to the husband as if for the purpose of buying him; another, which they would have on their foot, they placed on the hearth of the *Lares familiares*; the third, which they had carried in a purse, they were accustomed to chink at the neighbouring crossroads... Varro went through these rites most conscientiously.

(Varro, *De vita populi Romani* 1.25 *apud* Nonius 852L=531M)

The text is uncertain right at our key point, but ultimately it does not matter for our purposes exactly what the bride does with the coin at the crossroads, merely that she visits the crossroads at all. This visit to the crossroads is supported by Statius, who describes the *deductio* from house to house, via the *compita*:

*fronde virent postes, efulgent compita flammis,
et pars immensae gaudet celeberrima Romae.*

The doorposts are green with foliage, the crossroads ablaze, and the most crowded part of measureless Rome rejoices.

(*Silvae* 1.2.231-232)²³

Hersch suggested that if the *Lares Familiares* mentioned by Varro were those of the groom's house – which does seem to be the most plausible interpretation – then the *Lares* at the *compita* shrine, the *Lares Compitales*, could be 'her own *Lares*', and that therefore the bride was making an offering to both sets of household gods on a day when she was moving from one to the other.²⁴ This seems less likely to me: why would the bride not offer a coin to both sets of *Lares*

²² The text's *resenare* is most commonly emended to *resonare*, which I follow here along with others such as Frazer 1929a: 465 n. 1, Rage-Brocard 1934: 27 n. 1, and Hersch 2010a: 176 n. 180. *Resonare* might make more grammatical sense than *resenare*, but still does not really help us to understand what she is doing. Frazer gives other plausible suggestions of *sacrare* and *reservare*.

²³ Translation by Shackleton Bailey 2015.

²⁴ Hersch 2010a: 177; Hersch 2010a: 279 also proposed that the dedication to the *Lares Compitales* in particular could represent a public acknowledgement of the validity of the marriage.

Familiares at their respective hearths if this were the case? The *Lares Compitales*, as neighbourhood or district gods, could also represent the groom, if he happened to live locally; there is no indication that they would be unique to the bride. Stek suggested that this rite was to underline social cohesion, which would be represented by honouring the neighbourhood gods.²⁵

If we see the crossroads visit as part of the wider scheme of the bride's liminal journey, however, then I believe that this coin – whether actually deposited or simply chinked at the shrine – could be seen as payment for her safe passage through the *Lares Compitales'* dangerously uncanny realm, as detailed in Part One Chapter Five. The coin even underscores the fact the visit to the crossroads acts as her territorial passage, as van Gennep stated that:

Among the ceremonies of territorial passage... include the depositing of various objects (stones, bits of cloth, hair, etc.), offerings, invocations of the spirit of the place, and so forth.²⁶

§2.2.3: Conclusion

That the bride was in a vulnerable position during the *deductio* is in no doubt. Scullard points out that she has 'left the protection of her father's house', and not yet reached that of her husband's;²⁷ Scullard was referring to the protection of household gods, but in the case of a *manus* marriage this exposed position would be more accentuated for a bride who had left her father's authority as *paterfamilias* and was not yet under her husband's. The fifth-century writer Martianus Capella suggested that there was a Juno Iterduca and Juno Domiduca,

²⁵ Stek 2008: 126 n. 40.

²⁶ van Gennep 1960: 22-23.

²⁷ Scullard 1981: 18.

and that *mortales puellae debent in nuptias convocare, ut earum et itinera protegas, et in optatas domos ducas* ('mortal girls ought to call upon you at their weddings, that you protect them on their journey and lead them to the homes they long for', *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* 2.149);²⁸ admittedly, this is a late text but it does indeed suggest that brides were in need of supernatural or divine protection during the liminal *deductio*. That this was a dangerous transitional period is also symbolised by the bride's wearing of the *flammeum*, and the Fescennine verses, which could both have had apotropaic purposes; her dedication of a coin at the crossroads can be seen as an offering for safe passage throughout her liminal travels: both literally from house to house and metaphorically from daughter to wife.

²⁸ Translation by Treggiari 1994: 316.

PART TWO: CHAPTER THREE:
AT THE GROOM'S HOUSE: RITES OF INCORPORATION

The *deductio* led the bride to the groom's house, which would become the couple's marital home. This house, and especially its door, would have been decorated with foliage and greenery.¹ Lucan implies that this would have been a normal part of the festivities, since he highlights it as something missing from Cato and Marcia's wartime remarriage (*Bellum civile* 2.354). Rather than look to a superstitious or folkloric tradition behind this décor – although these are undoubtedly present in some form concerning greenery and fertility – I prefer to consider a mundane reason. The outer façade of a typical Roman house was blank;² only the door served to inject any personality to the space.³ It was therefore not only the obvious thing to decorate, but also the only thing that *could* be decorated on the external façade of many houses. The wedding ceremony was a public celebration, with a procession through the streets from one house to another, and the decorated doorways helped to indicate to passersby that something special was occurring for those who lived there.⁴

¹ There is a focus on the doorway itself being decorated: see Juvenal 6.51-52 (*postibus... limina*), 6.79 (*postes... ianua*; note that this line may actually refer to the couple's house on the birth of their child, although a scholiast states that it is decorated for a wedding), 6.227-228 (*fores... limine*); Lucan 2.354 (*limine*); Catullus 64.292-293 (*vestibulum*); Statius, *Silvae* 1.2.231 (*postes*); Claudian, *De raptu Proserpina* 2.320-321 (*limina*). I demonstrated that the bride's house was likewise decorated, in all probability, in Part Two Chapter One.

² Here I mean the typical élite *domus*, of course.

³ As Hales 2003: 104-105 points out, the outer wall was considered public property, and was frequently graffitied by members of the public (especially with electoral slogans); only the front door, 'as the only possible method of direct ingress, was the one component of the exterior façade that could be seen by passers-by as linking with the interior... The threshold to the private was marked with great pomp in the realm of the public.'

⁴ Hersch 2010a: 141; see also Hersch 2010a: 177 who notes that 'No Roman author attached any particular significance to this décor: it is purely festive'. Hales 2003: 2 and Maynes 2007: 46-47 discuss the threshold as acting – in Maynes' words – as a 'social advertising medium' for events, such as births, marriages and funerals, within the household.

However, when it comes to the other uses of the door, there were up to four different wedding rituals that could take place at the groom's threshold. The sheer quantity certainly suggests that this location held some special significance, and I shall demonstrate in this chapter that these threshold-rites symbolised the bride's rites of incorporation as she completed her rite of passage.

§2.3.1: Threshold rituals at the groom's house

We saw in Part Two Chapter One that there is no evidence for any ritual activity at the bride's threshold during the wedding ceremony, although there may have been a ceremonial opening of the doors to display the bride to the *deductio* crowd. There is, however, plenty of evidence for four different rituals that could take place at the groom's threshold:

- The bride anoints the doorposts with fat and/ or wool.
- The bride says 'Where you are Gaius, I am Gaia'.
- The bride is lifted, or advised to step carefully, over the threshold.
- The groom offers the bride fire and water.

I argued in the Introduction to Part Two that all four were intended to take place at the threshold of the front door: these acts were a public part of the wedding ceremony.

Would every bride perform all four rituals? We cannot ever be sure, and we do not have a clear, documentary description of what happened for each. Cicero implied that the speaking of Gaia would only take place during *coemptio*-type

marriages (*Pro Murena* 27), whereas Quintilian implies that it would be part of religious – that is, *confarreatio* – ceremonies (*Institutio oratoria* 1.7.28);⁵ perhaps this indicates that it could be used in all types of weddings. Plutarch mentions each ritual in his *Quaestiones Romanae*, but each is a separate question and he does not cross-reference between them.⁶ Servius discusses most of the rituals at various points in his commentary on Virgil, but does not pull them together into one description.⁷ There is no literary account that covers all four together. Catullus, for instance, advises the bride to step carefully over the threshold at 61.159, but mentions no other rituals; Lucan also refers to the bride being assisted over the threshold and presumably alludes to the anointing of the doorposts when he mentions that there is no wool to decorate them, but does not refer to fire and water or speaking the phrase about Gaia (*Bellum civile* 350-373).

If all four rituals could take place at the same wedding, then we do not know what order they would take place in. It seems logical that the bride would anoint the doorposts before going through them,⁸ and we are told that she says that she is Gaia *ante ianuam* ('before the door', *Liber de praenominibus* 7), but at what point would she be offered fire and water? Varro says that it was *in limine* ('at

⁵ See Treggiari 1991: 27 for a discussion of why Cicero's claim would be unlikely. I analyse these statements by Cicero and Quintilian in the later section on the speaking of Gaius and Gaia.

⁶ Plutarch was very taken with a number of the Roman marriage rituals. He queried the use of fire and water (*Quaestiones Romanae* 1); the use of five torches (2); the lifting of the bride over the threshold (29); the speaking of 'Gaius' and 'Gaia' (30); the singing of 'Talassio', which he discusses alongside the anointing of the doorposts (31); and the parting of the bride's hair with a spear (87).

⁷ Servius' references are to: anointing: *ad Aeneid* 4.458; lifting: *ad Eclogue* 8.29, *ad Aeneid* 2.469, *ad Aeneid* 6.273; fire and water: *ad Aeneid* 4.103, *ad Aeneid* 4.167, *ad Aeneid* 4.339.

⁸ This is confirmed by Servius, who says *simul venissent ad limen mariti, postes antequam ingrederentur... ornarent laneis vittis... et oleo ungerent* ('as soon as they had come to the threshold of their husband, before they entered, they decorated the doorposts with woollen vittae and smeared them with oil', #15.8: *ad Aeneid* 4.458).

the threshold', *De lingua Latina* 5.61), but was this before or after she crosses it? I see a reasonable sequence being that which I listed above: she anoints the doorposts, announces her consent to be married with the phrase about Gaius and Gaia (perhaps acting as a symbolic passphrase into her new house?), crosses the threshold (but remains by it), and finally accepts the proffered symbols of life and procreation from her new husband – an act that perhaps confirms his consent through the offering and hers through the receipt.

The jurist Scaevola saw the fire and water as signifying the point at which the marriage began, determining that a gift given to a bride before she was married was not part of her dowry, and in this case the gift was given:

priusquam ad eum transiret et priusquam aqua et igni acciperetur, id est nuptiae celebrentur
before she passed into his control and was received under the rite of fire and water, that is, before the marriage was celebrated
(*Digest* 24.1.66.1)⁹

Ulpian and Pomponius, however, claimed that marriage began when the bride was led to the groom's house – that is, when the *deductio* ended.¹⁰ These two legal interpretations need not be at odds: if the offering of fire and water is the final threshold ritual and takes place just after the bride has entered the house, then the offering of fire and water also represents the end of the *deductio*.

⁹ Translation by Watson 1998b. It is possible that *id est celebrentur* is an interpolation (Hersch 2010: 185 n. 217), but this would not change the interpretation of Scaevola's ruling.

¹⁰ Ulpian in *Digest* 35.1.15: *cui fuerit sub hac condicione legatum 'si in familia nupsisset', videtur impleta condicio statim atque ducta est uxor* ('Where a legacy is left to a woman under the condition, "if she marries within the family," the condition is treated as satisfied as soon as she is taken to [literally: 'led as'] wife', trans. Watson 1998c). Pomponius in *Digest* 23.2.5: *mulierem absenti per litteras eius vel per nuntium posse nubere placet, si in domum eius deduceretur... deduction enim opus esse in mariti, non in uxoris domum, quasi in domicilium matrimonii* ('It is settled that a woman can be married by a man in his absence, either by letter or by messenger, if she is led to his house... she must be led to her husband's house, not her own, since the former is, as it were, the domicile of the marriage', trans. Watson 1998b).

Scaevola's ruling is also interesting due to his use of *transiret*: could this be a reference to the bride being lifted over the threshold?¹¹ If it were then it would certainly suggest that the fire and water takes place after the bride crosses over the threshold.

Despite the fact that the literal *limina* might be suggestive of the liminal phase, it is clear that these threshold-rites are rites of incorporation. The use of the threshold here, at the bride's new marital home, symbolises her integration both back into society and into her new role and household, following her liminal transition. By crossing this threshold she is completing her rite of passage and becoming a married woman (and potentially *materfamilias*) of a new household; no wonder there was so much attention to this particular *limen* and the bride's safe crossing of it. I shall now discuss each threshold-rite one by one.

§2.3.1.1: The bride anointed the doorposts of the groom's house

I argued above that the logical order of events is that the bride anointing the doorposts would be the first threshold-rite that might take place once the *deductio* arrives at the groom's house. Our earliest extant sources for this ritual, Pliny and Lucan, date to the first century AD, although Pliny refers repeatedly to this being an ancient custom. We have no pictorial evidence to represent it, and written descriptions still leave much to the imagination. Pliny, for instance, makes three references in the *Naturalis historia* – which can be found in full in

¹¹ None of the sources which detail the bride lifting her feet over the threshold (see Appendix Seventeen) use *transire*, although Catullus 61.159 and Lucan, *Bellum civile* 2.359 use *transferre*.

Appendix Fifteen – to the bride anointing the doorposts with fat or wool (never, interestingly, both at the same time), and each time it is not entirely clear what she is doing. In the first extract (source #15.2 in Appendix Fifteen: 28.37.135) the bride is touching (*atingere*) the doorposts (*postes*) with pig's fat (*adipi... suillo*); in the second (#15.3: 28.37.142) she is smearing (*perungere*) the doorposts (*postes*) with wolf's fat (*lupino adipi*); and in the third (#15.4: 29.9.30) she is again touching (*atingi*) the doorposts (*postes*), but this time with wool (*lanis*).

Smearing is perhaps self-explanatory, especially within the context of a fatty substance, but the notion of 'touching' is more ambiguous. Pliny twice uses the verb *atingere* to describe what the bride does, both with the fat and the wool; is she actually *applying* the substances to the doorposts, rubbing them on and leaving them stuck on there, or is she merely *touching* them (perhaps striking or brushing the doorposts with the substances)? Lucan does not mention any fat in his description of the meagre remarriage of Cato and Marcia, but does say that *non.../ infulaque in geminos discurrit candida postes* ('a white woollen fillet does not run to and fro on the twin doorposts', #15.1: *Bellum Civile* 2.354-355). What should *discurrit* mean in this context? It almost implies that the wool was stranded back and forth across the doorway from doorpost to doorpost like a web, but if this were the case then how would it be applied? And how would one enter through it? Since doorposts are not isolated poles but are attached to the wall, then it would be difficult – if not impossible – to entwine the wool *around* the posts. If we take *discurrit* to mean merely that there were strands or locks of wool *all over* the doorposts, then we could certainly envisage the wool being

stuck on with the greasy, sticky fat. This perhaps helps to account for the use of both substances.

Plutarch, writing only slightly later, does not mention fat but does say that the bride ἐρίῳ δὲ τὴν θύραν περιστέφει τοῦ ἀνδρός ('wreathes her husband's door with wool', #15.5: *Quaestiones Romanae* 31).¹² How does one wreath a door? Does the bride make a literal wreath of wool and hang it on the door? Or should we take περιστέφει more in the sense of crowning and imagine that she has perhaps tucked it on top of the lintel? She could even have wrapped it around the door itself. Regardless of what the door and the wool would have looked like after this ceremony, both Lucan and Plutarch's statements suggest that the wool was left on the door, rather than simply touched against it as we might have taken from Pliny.

The remainder of our sources on this topic are all much later, and tend to be either commentators or Christian writers, who may well be describing the rites for an unfamiliar audience. The scholiast Donatus derives *uxor* from *ungere* and refers to the anointing of the doorposts (or of the husband himself, after the bride has bathed him) by the bride (#15.6: *ad Terence, Hecyra* 1.260). He does not specify a type of fat, although the fact that one has been used is inherent in the verb *ungere*: to anoint or smear with oil or grease. He makes two references to putting wool on the doorposts, using the same verb each time: *figenda lana* and *lanam figebant*. The wool, therefore, according to Donatus, is somehow affixed or fastened to the doorposts. Servius and Isidorus reflect this idea when

¹² Translation by Cole Babbitt 1936.

they both use the same phrase to describe the wool: *ornarent laneis vittis* ('they would decorate [the doorposts] with woollen fillets', #15.8: *ad Aeneid* 4.458 and #15.10: *Etymologiae*, 9.7.12).¹³

Donatus' assertion that *uxores* are so called due to their anointing of the door is also repeated by Servius and Isidorus, both referring here to simple *oleum* rather than animal fat, and using the verb *ungere* to stress the alleged etymological connection to *uxor* (#15.8: *ad Aeneid* 4.458 and #15.10: *Etymologiae*, 9.7.12).¹⁴

Servius also states later in the same passage that brides *solere postes unguine lupino oblini* ('are accustomed to smear the doorposts with wolf's fat'), which picks up the language that Arnobius uses: *postes virorum adipali unguine oblinerentur* ('they smear the doorposts of their husbands with greasy fat', #15.7: *Adversus nationes* 3.25). Isidorus, who was writing in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, refers to this as *moris... antiquitus* ('an ancient custom', #15.10: *Etymologiae* 9.7.12).

What was the bride actually doing? The fat, whether wolf's, pig's, or just oil, was evidently smeared onto the doorposts. It is less obvious what happened to the wool, but again it seems that we should discount Pliny's use of *attingere* for the wool just as we have for the fat. The bride is not simply touching the wool to the doorframe and moving on, but she is somehow leaving it attached to the doorposts or door; there is no indication in any of our sources that it is left there permanently: rather it is fastened on temporarily as part of the wedding

¹³ Of course, it is most likely that Isidorus was using Servius – or Servius' sources – to write his own account.

¹⁴ Martianus Capella also uses this verb, in a brief reference to the rite: *postes ungant* (#15.9: *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* 2.149).

ceremony. It is not clear whether this rite is made up of one ritual action or two: do the fat and the wool go together (does, in fact, the fat stick the wool onto the doorposts?), or are they two separate actions that have become conflated due to the fact that they are happening to the same doorposts?

This ritual seems to have been an old and long-lasting Roman tradition: Pliny says that currently brides use pig's fat, but they *used* to use wolf's fat; Servius, refers both to wolf's fat and to oil – perhaps by the time he, or his sources, was writing, the use of actual fat had been replaced with simple oil. Some of our later writers, as we saw above, seem to focus on the fat or oil in this rite, as they tend to mention it in the etymological context of *uxor*, which they allege derives from *ungere*: to apply grease. Regardless of the validity of this, it certainly suggests that this ritual was commonly held to have been customary for brides to do.

The anointing was evidently a familiar enough wedding-rite to be mocked by Arnobius in the fourth century; he connects the anointing to a goddess named Unxia – her name is clearly derived from *ungere* – although we are not informed whether the rite was in honour of her, or whether she was called upon to assist the bride with whatever ceremonial purpose the anointing had (#15.7: *Adversus nationes* 3.25). We must, however, bear in mind that while Christian writers were fond of listing minor gods of all sorts of mundane acts of daily life by which to ridicule the Roman pagans, many of these gods appear only in these tracts; there must therefore hang some question as to whether or not the average

Roman really would be aware of them, never mind worship them.¹⁵ Unxia is mentioned merely thrice in extant literature: twice in Arnobius and once in the later Martianus Capella who attributes 'Unxia' to an epithet of Juno.¹⁶

Juno was a goddess of marriage, and so a Juno Unxia does sound plausible, yet none of the pagan writers mention her or, in fact, any other deity in conjunction with this ritual. Indeed, Pliny tells us that wolf's fat was used to anoint the doorposts *ne quid mali medicamenti inferretur* ('to keep out all evil drugs', #15.3: *Naturalis historia* 28.37.142).¹⁷ This does not appear to be in honour of a goddess, and this is corroborated by Boëls-Janssen in her account of Roman women's religious ceremonies, who sees the absence of any named deity at this point of the ceremony as significant (clearly she too has discounted Unxia): 'il ne s'agit donc pas d'un rite religieux, mais d'un procédé de type magique'.¹⁸

I believe that as the first stage in the bride's rites of incorporation, the anointing of the doors acts as some sort of charm to protect the bride as she passes through them. This could work either as a prophylactic to prevent harm from touching the bride as she completes the dangerous transitional phase of her rite of passage, or as a reinforcement of her chastity and virtue. We saw the former idea in Pliny, quoted above, who states that the wolf's fat is used *ne quid mali medicamenti inferretur*. We are, of course, veering relatively close to the theory of ghosts haunting the threshold that I dismissed in Part One, and writers such as

¹⁵ I discussed this in conjunction with the alleged door deities Limentinus, Forculus and Cardea in the Introduction to this thesis.

¹⁶ See #15.9: *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* 2.149.

¹⁷ Translation by Jones 1963.

¹⁸ Boëls-Janssen 1993: 187.

Ogle did indeed use Pliny here as support for their concept.¹⁹ Ghosts could be, of course, the agents of spells, but as I demonstrated, erecting supernatural barriers at the threshold to keep them out of the house does not imply that they were haunting or inhabiting it.

The wolf had a history of use as an apotropaic device at entrances. Pliny again tells us that:

Veneficiis rostrum lupi resistere inveteratum aiunt ob idque villarum portis praefigunt.

Sorceries are said to be counteracted by a wolf's preserved muzzle, and for this reason they hang one up on the gates of country houses.

*(Naturalis historia 28.44.157)*²⁰

Servius suggests that the fat of a wolf was used at the wedding *quod huius ferae et unguen et membra multis rebus remedio sunt* ('because both the fat and limbs of this beast are used as a remedy for many things', #15.8: *ad Aeneid* 4.458).

Boëls-Janssen suggests that the wolf-fat was therefore a form of sympathetic magic where like cures like: 'C'est un procédé magique courant que d'utiliser les forces maléfiques en les retournant contre les dangers extérieurs. Le loup est particulièrement indiqué pour ce rôle'.²¹

It is presumably the wolf's identity as a dangerous predator that Boëls-Janssen has in mind here, to symbolise the equally dangerous supernatural threats that might attack the bride. Perhaps the wolf came to be used specifically because of

¹⁹ Ogle 1911: 254-257. This excerpt of Pliny is also source #2.18 in Appendix Two.

²⁰ Translation by Jones 1963; this anecdote is not cited by Ogle.

²¹ Boëls-Janssen 1993: 187. Boëls-Janssen also discusses other magical instances of ingredients being rubbed or hung onto a door for apotropaic purposes, but does not cite Ogle at all.

the bride's association with wool and the wolf's natural prey: the sheep.²² Of course, this is not the only symbolic use of the wolf: as I have said throughout, I do not wish to imply that there was one universal 'meaning' behind any aspect of the wedding ceremony. I would imagine that there were even a number of brides who were carrying out some of these rites simply because they were traditional, or because everyone else was doing them, without any conscious knowledge of the meanings that the antiquarians, or indeed us modern scholars, would deduce for them. In fact, Servius also talks about the wolf as a symbol of fidelity and suggests that the bridal custom could have been instigated by Romulus in honour of the wolf that nourished him as a baby (#15.8: *ad Aeneid* 4.458).

The wolf's fat, therefore, could potentially symbolise marital fidelity, the origins of Rome (and perhaps act as a reminder of the role of the Sabine women as the first wives) and also function as an apotropaic device to protect the bride. The chronology of unguents, from wolf's fat to pig's fat to oil, could well simply be due to cost: wolf's fat presumably became more and more rare the more urban the city became, and pig's fat too would have come at a greater cost than humble olive oil. Our writers give no further thought to either pig's fat or oil, although Hersch suggests that the pig's fat – through correlation with pig sacrifices to Ceres – could have symbolised fertility.²³

What of the wool? Ogle, in fact, expressly linked the use of wool here by the bride to 'a cult which was originally no doubt directed to the spirits that were always

²² Hersch 2010a: 180 points out the interesting dichotomy here that the sheep is merely shorn for the wedding *vittae*, whereas the predator wolf is killed for its fat.

²³ Hersch 2010a: 179.

near by.²⁴ The argument is not clear, but it seems to revolve around the fact that the poppets that may have been made for the *Compitalia* and attached to the door were also made of wool, and ‘evidently originated as a substitute for human sacrifice to these spirits’.²⁵ Regardless of the veracity of this claim of the woollen poppets representing human sacrifice,²⁶ we cannot assume that just because wool had one connection in one context, that it keeps that same association in all other contexts. Servius was the only author to attach any meaning to it, and he makes no mention of spirits, or draws any association to the *Compitalia*. Pliny had simply said that it had a vague *auctoritatem... religiosam* (‘religious importance’, #15.4: *Naturalis historia* 29.9.30), but for Servius it symbolised both the bride’s chastity and her skill in woolworking.²⁷ As symbols of what the bride is bringing to the groom (and one could argue that chastity, rather than virginity, is also applicable to those who are remarrying), the public anointing of the marital doorway with wool is another important part of the incorporation of the bride into her new household.

Assuming that we can discount, to a large extent, the presence of evil spirits to be pacified, why was this rite performed at the doorway? Boëls-Janssen sees importance in the fact that it was the *doorposts* which were anointed, and not the door itself. This suggests to her that ‘l’*épousée franchira le seuil, mais avec des*

²⁴ Ogle 1911: 263.

²⁵ Ogle 1911: 263.

²⁶ I discussed this in detail in Part One Chapter Five.

²⁷ *propter auspiciam castitatis... ut sciret se puella domum religiosam ingredi: simul lanam ferens lanificium promittebat* (‘because of giving a sign of her chastity... so that she might know she is entering a sanctified house, and at the same time carrying wool she was promising woolworking’, #15.8: *ad Aeneid* 4.458).

précautions';²⁸ anointing the door, as we do see in some other preventative rites,²⁹ would certainly serve to keep something out – but it would also keep the bride out. In order to admit the bride, the door needs to be open, and so one could see the anointed doorposts as forming a protective portal through which the bride can safely cross over the threshold. This would protect the bride, as well as the house itself, from any dangers – perhaps the *mali medicamenti* of Pliny – from entering with her as she transitions out of the liminal space of the *deductio*.

Hersch has a slightly different suggestion, that the anointing could function as an offering or blessing to the household gods of the groom.³⁰ Boëls-Janssen had considered that the substances used could reflect offerings to agrarian deities, but dismissed this, as noted above, since there is no specific deity mentioned in any of the sources who could be the recipient of these offerings.³¹ Hersch's proposition that the gods in question could be more generic 'household gods' could explain the lack of a named divine recipient.³² We saw in Chapter Two that there was a tradition of the bride offering a coin to the *Lares* of a local crossroads, and also to the *Lares* of the groom's house,³³ and so the idea of appeasing the household gods is not without precedent. Hersch's reasoning that

²⁸ Boëls-Janssen 1993: 188-189.

²⁹ See Part One Chapter One and Appendix Two for examples of prophylactic rites in which ingredients are smeared on or applied to the door.

³⁰ Hersch 2010a: 180. This view seems to derive – in English-speaking scholarship at least – from Warde Fowler's 1899 *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, and can be found in, e.g., Scullard 1981: 18 and Mac Mahon 2002, both of whom acknowledge their debt to Warde Fowler. The latter scholars see the groom's *Lares* as potentially hostile to the incoming bride.

³¹ Boëls-Janssen 1993: 187.

³² Rose 1924: 103 n. 5 raised the possibility that 'the intention was to offer a propitiatory sacrifice to the Ianus of the door', but considered it 'rather less likely' than the idea that the anointing acted as a prophylactic.

³³ See Varro *apud* Nonius 852L=531M; a third coin was given to the groom.

the anointing could serve ‘to assuage the anger of the household gods whose sacred space she had invaded; gifts in hand, the bride came as suppliant’³⁴ is not mutually exclusive to the idea of protecting the bride from an external dangerous entity. Performing it at the doorway before entering would mean that the *Lares* were appeased right from the bride’s first entrance to the house, and that her all-important first step over the new threshold was blessed.

If we view this rite through the lens of the rites of passage schema, then this act of anointing the doorposts clearly belongs to the rites of incorporation. We have seen that it could serve as a preparatory rite to supernaturally fortify the portal of the doorway against any malevolent forces as the bride transitions over the threshold into her new role and household. It could also operate as a rite of incorporation in its own right, if we view the substances as offerings to the household gods to accept and bless the new member of their *familia*. Servius did note that the anointing of the doorposts served to show *ut sciret se puella domum religiosam ingredi* (‘that she knows that she is entering a sanctified house’, #15.8: *ad Aeneid* 4.458), which certainly supports this idea.

§2.3.1.2: The speaking of ‘Gaius’ and ‘Gaia’

Plutarch asks:

Διὰ τί τὴν νύμφην εἰσάγοντες λέγειν κελεύουσιν, ὅπου σὺ Γάιος, ἐγὼ Γαῖα’;

Why do they, as they conduct the bride to her home, bid her say, “Where you are Gaius, there am I Gaia”?

(*Quaestiones Romanae* 30; source #16.3 in Appendix Sixteen)³⁵

³⁴ Hersch 2010a: 180.

³⁵ Translation by Cole Babbitt 1936.

There are five sources which mention ‘Gaia’ in the context of the wedding (presented in full as Appendix Sixteen), but this is our only mention of a ceremonial phrase allegedly uttered by the bride. Plutarch was writing in Greek and so it is unknown what the formula would have been in Latin; the ambiguity of ὅπου, which can mean both ‘since’ and ‘wherever’, gives plausible translations of both *ubi tu Gaius, [ibi] ego Gaia* and *quando tu Gaius, ego Gaia*; the former tends to be preferred in modern scholarship.³⁶

Plutarch goes on to suggest that brides said this either to show that the husband and wife were equal,³⁷ or to link the bride to an example of a virtuous wife from Roman history: Gaia Caecilia. Plutarch says that she was the wife of one of Tarquinius Priscus’ sons, but Festus says that she was Priscus’ own wife, otherwise known as Tanaquil.³⁸ He states that brides use her name as a link to Tanaquil’s fame as a virtuous woolworker, and *ominis boni causa* (‘for the purpose of a good omen’, #16.4: Festus 85L s.v. *Gaia Caecilia*). The context implies that it would be a good omen for the bride’s future wool-related chores in her new household.

³⁶ Forsythe 1996: 240; Cantarella 2005: 26.

³⁷ Plutarch suggests that the phrase could mean ὅπου σὺ κύριος καὶ οἰκοδεσπότης, καὶ ἐγὼ κυρία καὶ οἰκοδέσποινα (‘Wherever you are lord and master, there am I lady and mistress’, #16.3: *Quaestiones Romanae* 30, trans. Cole Babbitt 1936). This interpretation, however, seems to be at odds with his assumption elsewhere (see Appendix Seventeen, sources #17.4: *Romulus* 15.5 and #17.5: *Quaestiones Romanae* 29) that the lifting of the bride over the threshold was a reference to the unequal practice of bride theft.

³⁸ Hersch 2010b: 127-130 discusses this curious focus on the Etruscan Tanaquil as virtuous woolworker, given that her primary characteristic that we know from Livy is her prophetic power; she concludes that archaeological evidence showing the primacy of Etruscan women’s woolwork, along with a possible conflation of Tanaquil with the *Parcae* spinner, could account for it. Forsythe 1996: 240 suggests that ‘Gaia Caecilia’ was invented by ‘Roman antiquarians’ in order to try and explain this marriage phrase.

The only other connection of Gaia Caecilia to this rite is in the anonymous *Liber de praenominibus*;³⁹ here she is once again the wife of Priscus and a role-model for the new bride. This text also clarifies the rather vague assertion of Plutarch that this ceremonial phrase was uttered εἰσάγοντες, by specifying that it took place before the husband's door:

ut novae nuptiae ante ianuam mariti interrogatae quatenus vocarentur Gaias esse se dicerent.

that new brides before their husband's door, asked what they are called, say that they are Gaia.

(#16.5: *Liber de praenominibus* 7)

There seems to be little other reference to this custom and the origin and meaning of this ritual had evidently become obscure by the time of the late Republic. Cicero – our earliest source for it – lambasts lawyers who:

quia in alicuius libris exempli causa id nomen invenerant, putarunt omnes mulieres quae coemptionem facerent "Gaias" vocari

because in someone's works they had met that name used in a formula, they think that all women who went through this form of marriage were called "Gaia"

(#16.1: *Pro Murena* 27)⁴⁰

This would imply that this ritual was only used for the *coemptio* type of marriage, but Treggiari points out that 'No one apart from Cicero links this ceremony especially with *coemptio*.'⁴¹ In fact, Quintilian appears to expressly contradict the idea of *coemptio*: while discussing the fact that a backwards C represents a woman on inscriptions, he refers to the use of 'Gaia' in *nuptialis sacra*: *quia tam Gaias esse vocitatas quam Gaios etiam ex nuptialibus sacris*

³⁹ This short work *incerti auctoris* was appended to a ninth-century manuscript (*Vaticanus Latinus* 4929) of Julius Paris' *epitome* of Valerius Maximus' *Facta et dicta memorabilia* as its tenth book. It is also known as *De nominibus epitome* and *De praenomine*; there are no indicators as to who its author might have been, nor its date.

⁴⁰ Translation by Macdonald 1976, adapted.

⁴¹ Treggiari 1991: 27.

apparet ('for we see even in the marriage ceremony that Gaia as well as Gaius was a familiar name', #16.2: *Institutio oratoria* 1.7.28).⁴² Treggiari takes this to mean 'religious ritual' which she states therefore cannot be a *coemptio* marriage.⁴³ Perhaps one or the other author has made an error; or perhaps these seemingly contradictory sources simply indicate that the phrase could be spoken at any type of marriage. As with Cicero and Festus, Quintilian does not place the ritual at any particular location.

The vague consensus in our five extant sources would appear to be, therefore, that brides utter this phrase in order to associate themselves with the virtue and industry of Gaia Caecilia/ Tanaquil. It would appear that she, and her association with spinning and weaving, could have been especially important to the ideal image that the bride projects on her wedding day of the skills and reputation that she would be bringing to her new household; Pliny tells us that the *tunica recta* which the bride was said to have worn was also originally woven and worn by Gaia Caecilia/ Tanaquil (*Naturalis historia* 8.74.194). We saw above that the wool used in anointing the doorposts could have symbolised the bride's abilities in these crafts. Woolworking was considered to be such an important part of a woman's life that it was frequently mentioned in funerary inscriptions:

lanificium ('woolworking') or *lanam fecit* ('she made wool').⁴⁴ This was used not

⁴² Translation by Russell 2002.

⁴³ Treggiari 1991: 27; Forsythe 1996: 241 takes Cicero rather more seriously, but does not address Quintilian's contradictory testimony. Corbett 1930: 74 appears to interpret Quintilian's *nuptialis sacra* specifically as a *confarreatio* marriage.

⁴⁴ For example, *lanificium*: *CIL* 6.1527 = *ILS* 8393: the so-called *Laudatio Turiae*, an Augustan eulogy historically thought to be addressed to Turia (*lanificii*); *CIL* 6.10230 = *ILS* 8394: the *Laudatio Murdiae*, another Augustan eulogy, this time to Murdia (*lanificio*); *lanam fecit*: *CIL* 6.15346 = *CIL* 1.1211: epitaph to Claudia, which Larsson Lovén 1998: 88 dates to the second century BC.

only as a literal description of a woman engaged in traditional wifely pursuits, but also served as a shorthand to indicate her virtue as a Roman *matrona*.⁴⁵

We could perhaps also see, in the comparison with Gaia Caecilia, that the bride is not only linking herself to a successful woolworker, but also to a woman who is known to us because she is a wife. Caldwell, who focuses her analysis on a young woman's first marriage, points out that the bride is 'a figure in transition from presexual to sexual status'.⁴⁶ We might then expect that the bride would wish to align herself with someone who has already successfully undergone this experience.

Taking the bride's words as associating her with Gaia Caecilia, however, cannot fully explain the full ritualistic wedding formula, since it does not account for the references to the bride calling her husband 'Gaius'. Plutarch may be our sole source for the full phrase, but Quintilian – who makes no allusion to Gaia Caecilia or woolworking – also mentions that men are called Gaius during the wedding ceremony. Gaia Caecilia's husband was *Lucius* Tarquinius Priscus, and so she cannot be behind the use of Gaius.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Larsson Lovén 1998: 88-89 points out that it is unlikely that upper class women spun and wove all their own household fabric, or even a majority of it, but that the view of a woolworking woman as a virtuous one persisted. That some women may have made clothes for their husbands or fathers, as the women in Augustus' family were said to have done for him (Suetonius, *Augustus* 73), or a soldier's wife in Propertius 4.3 who makes her absent husband a number of cloaks, suggests that these garments were made precisely as a symbol of wifely virtue, rather than from necessity. See also Hersch 2010b: 124-126.

⁴⁶ Caldwell 2015: 135.

⁴⁷ Even Priscus' sons, if we are to follow Plutarch's assertion that she was a daughter-in-law of Priscus, are not named Gaius: the various names attributed to them are Lucius, Arruns and Gnaeus.

Again, this is where the lens of the *rites de passage* can assist: this is a clear rite of incorporation in which the bride assumes a new – if perhaps only symbolic – identity, linking herself to her new husband. This idea comes out in Plutarch, who suggests that this statement that the bride will be a female equivalent of her husband could indicate that they are *συνάρχειν* ‘to rule [the household] jointly’ (#16.3: *Quaestiones Romanae* 30). Mommsen had suggested that ‘Gaius’ could be a *nomen* rather than a *praenomen*, and that therefore the bride could be stating that she is now a part of the groom’s *gens*;⁴⁸ Treggiari notes that ‘for the bride to claim that her name... is now the same as the husband’s would be appropriate if she was joining his family through *manus*.’⁴⁹ There is no evidence, however, that women did actually change their names on marriage (either to Gaia, or to the feminised form of their husband’s name), and Forsythe argues that the Gaius and Gaia in the phrase were not originally names at all, but rather were obscure forms of adjective derived from *gaudeo* ‘I rejoice’.⁵⁰ The formula would therefore mean ‘where you are happy, I am happy’, but it is clear that if this were the case then this meaning had become corrupted and later Romans and their commentators assumed that it was some form of name. Either way, we see the bride giving what became to be thought of as an assumed name linking her intrinsically, if symbolically, to her husband. Boëls-Janssen sees an explicit link here with initiation rites, noting that ‘il est fréquent que l’initié abandonne son nom... et qu’il adopte un nouveau nom, signe qu’il entre dans une nouvelle vie.’⁵¹

⁴⁸ Mommsen 1864: I. 11; Rose 1924: 183 sees this as ‘almost certainly the right explanation... the bride means “to whatever family or clan you belong, I also belong to it”.’

⁴⁹ Treggiari 1991: 27.

⁵⁰ Forsythe 1996: 240, who suggests that this interpretation of the phrase could have dropped out of use as early as the third century BC.

⁵¹ Boëls-Janssen 1993: 183.

That this happens at the threshold, before the bride enters the new marital home, reinforces this idea. This is where she has to make the final decision to cross over the threshold to start her married life, and so the statement that she and her new husband are two sides of the same Gaian coin, so to speak, underlines her commitment to and acceptance of her new life. This phrase as preserved in Plutarch is the only verbal statement associated with the wedding ceremony, and as such it could well be seen as the bride offering her consent to the marriage (perhaps echoed by the groom offering her fire and water once she crosses over the threshold).⁵² We ought to note, however, that Plutarch tells us that κελεύουσιν ('they order') the bride to speak this phrase, which Hersch suggests might therefore make the statement as consensual as 'the nodding of a mute beast assenting to its own sacrifice'.⁵³ Regardless, the significance of making an assertion incorporating oneself with one's new family like this at the very threshold – both literal and metaphorical – of a new undertaking cannot be underlined enough.

§2.3.1.3: The bride was assisted – in some way – over the groom's threshold

The earliest threshold-rite that we have evidence for is that the bride would have been exhorted to step carefully – it was unlikely that she was bodily lifted, but she could have had assistance lifting her feet up – over the threshold so that she did not touch it; the sources are given in Appendix Seventeen. Plautus mentions

⁵² Forsythe 1996: 241, who follows Cicero in assuming that this phrase was used during *coemptio* marriages, suggests that it 'would have therefore signified the woman's acknowledgement of her new legal status'. Even if the phrase is not connected to the transfer of *manus*, it can still relate to her consent to be marriage and acknowledgement of her transfer into a new household.

⁵³ Hersch 2010a: 190.

the rite, albeit as a parody rather than a straightforward report, which indicates that it was part of the wedding ceremony as far back as the second century BC (*Casina* 813–822; source #17.1 in Appendix Seventeen). We also have evidence that it was a long-lived rite: Plutarch, three hundred years later, refers to it as a custom that διαμένει δὲ μέχρι νῦν ('continues... down to the present time', #17.4: *Romulus* 15.5),⁵⁴ and Servius – another three centuries after Plutarch – uses the present tense to refer to it (#17.7: *ad Aeneid* 2.469), which could imply that it was still in practice at his time.

In Plautus' comedy *Casina*, our earliest source, characters fight over who will get to marry the beautiful female slave Casina and eventually a mock wedding is staged in order to trick one of the would-be grooms. 'Casina' (the male slave Chalinus in disguise) is carefully led out of 'her' house, and warned against treading on the threshold:

Sensim supera tolle limen pedes, mea nova nupta;
Raise your feet above the threshold gently, my new bride;
(#17.1: 815)⁵⁵

Of course, this passage could be taken as evidence that this caution with regard to the threshold took place at the exit of the bride from her house, rather than her entrance of the groom's. However, Plautus has had to make this switch for dramatic purposes, otherwise 'Casina' would no longer be present on stage, having exited into the groom's house.⁵⁶ The reversal of the usual rite would also add to the comic effect of the parody. In fact, Williams wondered whether the speech itself could have been based on perverting actual ceremonial words given

⁵⁴ Translation by Perrin 1914.

⁵⁵ Translation by de Melo 2011.

⁵⁶ I also discussed this point in Part Two Chapter One.

to the bride by the *pronuba* as she helped her over the threshold of the groom's house.⁵⁷ There is, unfortunately, no further evidence of any words – ritual or otherwise – spoken at this point and so this must remain a theory.

Despite the Greek setting of the play, Williams noted that this ritual 'is never mentioned in connection with Greek ritual and is discussed by Plutarch as Roman Question XXIX.'⁵⁸ Plutarch also mentions the lifting of the bride in his *Romulus* (15.5), where he suggests that this custom dates from Romulus' treatment of the Sabine women. In both the *Romulus* (#17.4) and the *Quaestiones Romanae* (#17.5) Plutarch states that the bride was physically lifted over the threshold; oddly, given his allusions to Romulus and the Sabine women, he says that it was the bridal party who do this, not the groom.

Was the bride physically lifted over the threshold as Plutarch asserts? In Plautus, as we have seen, the 'bride' is simply chided to step carefully over the threshold, and this is echoed in Catullus with the exhortation to the bride: *transfer omine cum bono/ limen aureolos pedes* ('lift, with a good omen, your golden feet across the threshold', #17.2: 61.159-160). Lucan bemoans the lack of a *pronuba* at the remarriage of Cato and Marcia who would have been there to prevent the bride *translata... contingere limina planta* ('touching the threshold as she carried over her foot', #17.3: *Bellum civile* 2.359).⁵⁹ Servius twice refers to brides 'not touching' the threshold, once citing this very line of Lucan (*unde nubentes puellae*

⁵⁷ Williams 1958: 18. This speech is attributed to a slave, Pardalisca, in the manuscript, but is nowadays usually given to the matron Cleustrata who is considered to be acting as a *pronuba*.

⁵⁸ Williams 1958: 16.

⁵⁹ The *pronuba* is the woman referred to in the previous line as *turrita... premens frontem matrona corona* ('a matron covering her forehead with a towered crown', *Bellum civile* 2.358), *pace* the scholiast who said that this referred to the bride. It would be odd to refer to a bride as *matrona*, and there are no other references to brides wearing a *turrita corona*.

limen non tangunt, 'hence brides do not touch the threshold', #17.7: *ad Aeneid* 2.469), and the other – using Varro as the authority – saying that *quas... limen ait non tangere* ('he says that they do not touch the threshold', #17.6: *ad Eclogue* 8.29). These sources give no further detail as to how the brides 'do not touch the threshold', but 'not touching' sounds more like a reference to stepping carefully, rather than being carried over. Either way, evidently it was important that the bride did not touch the threshold – whether she took care not to do so herself, or whether her assistants physically lifted her over it.

Why is there such an emphasis on the bride avoiding the threshold? Lucan gives no reason for the ritual, and Plautus' is satirical: that 'Casina' lifting 'her' foot up would represent *uti uiro tuo/ semper sis superstes* ('so that you will always stand above your husband', #17.1: 816-817). Plutarch, who considered the bride to have been bodily lifted into the house, saw the lifting as representing either actual kidnapping, or a mock-abduction, so that the bride would not appear too eager to leave her family home to be married. The late antique Isidorus gives the intriguing – if baffling – explanation:⁶⁰

quae ideo vetabantur limina calcare, quod illic ianuae et coeant et separentur

And they would avoid stepping on the thresholds, because at that place the doors both come together and separate.

(#17.9: Isidorus, *Etymologiae* 9.7.12)⁶¹

Ogle was convinced that she could not touch it as there was some 'danger to the bride' lurking within the threshold, which he attributed to evil spirits.⁶² No extant ancient text links any kind of ghost to the marriage threshold, or even any

⁶⁰ Presumably a reference to marital harmony, and the wish to avoid a symbolic separation, or divorce.

⁶¹ Translation by Barney *et al.* 2006.

⁶² Ogle 1911: 254.

particular notion of 'danger'.⁶³ Maynes notes that 'As far as our sources allow us to tell, the only threat posed by the threshold is in its capacity as a source of negative omens',⁶⁴ and we see this in Catullus who suggests that avoiding the threshold would be a good omen (#17.2: 61.159). We can connect this to the simple theory that stumbling at the start of a new enterprise such as a marriage would be a bad one; I shall explore this superstition further below.⁶⁵

However, Servius does actually suggest that there is some kind of personified force present in the threshold: but it is not an evil spirit, it is the goddess Vesta:

quas etiam ideo limen ait non tangere, ne a sacrilegio inchoarent, si depositurae virginitatem calcant rem Vestae, id est numini castissimo, consecratam.

he [Varro] says that they don't touch the threshold, to avoid being in sacrilege, if on the point of giving up their virginity they set foot on a thing consecrated to Vesta – that is to say, the purest of divinities.

(#17.6: *ad Eclogue* 8.29)⁶⁶

Was the threshold sacred to Vesta? If it was then we have very little evidence for it, and the evidence that we do have is largely based on the rather dubious etymology of Vesta and *vestibulum*,⁶⁷ as I discussed in my analysis of door-deities in the Introduction to this thesis. Hersch makes the tentative suggestion that this idea of desecration could have been one of the reasons behind the care taken by the bride not to stumble on, stand on or kick the threshold:

⁶³ Rose 1924: 106 listed 'the sacrilege of treading on any spirits, as yet strange to her, who may live under it' as one of the potential reasons for this rite, but then admitted (1924: 106 n. 12) that there are 'not many traces in Rome' for this idea.

⁶⁴ Maynes 2007: 72.

⁶⁵ Ogle 1911: 254 does relate this custom to the stumbling superstition, but he sees the wider issue of stumbling as one connected to disturbing the spirits in the threshold.

⁶⁶ A similar sentiment is expressed at #17.7: Servius, *ad Aeneid* 2.469. Ogle 1911: 253 attributes this entire comment here as originally being from Varro. However, of the extant fragments of Varro that do reference the *limen* or *vestibulum*, none mention Vesta.

⁶⁷ Ernout & Meillet 1959: 729; Maltby 1991: 641.

Although no ancient evidence demands such an interpretation, surely one reason the bride must take care in entering her new household is to avoid any suggestion that she does not respect the new family, her new home, and its gods.⁶⁸

The idea here seems to be that the household gods would not take kindly to their new household member disrespecting their home, no matter how accidentally. As Hersch concedes, however, this is speculation; but if we couple it with the idea of Vesta as the goddess of the hearth then it is just possible to see the threshold as demarcating the edge of Vesta's domain, and that an ill-timed stumble could be seen as insulting.

Was this ritual merely to prevent the bride from stumbling, either in general or on a sacred object? For Maynes, the bride's avoidance of touching the threshold is indeed 'related to Roman opinions about stumbling' there.⁶⁹ It is quite clear from our surviving evidence that the Romans considered it bad luck to stumble at the threshold,⁷⁰ and that this misfortune would affect whatever it was that the stumbler was on their way to do. We have already seen Catullus' comment that for the bride to step carefully over the threshold would be to do so *omine cum bono* ('with a good omen', #17.2: 61.159) and we see the opposite of this in Ovid's *Heroides* when Protesilaus stumbles on the threshold which *offenso... signa dedit* ('gave an ill sign', 13.85). Elsewhere, when Ovid's poet-lover *persona* receives inauspicious letters from his paramour, he accuses the maid of having stumbled on the threshold as she went to collect them (*Amores* 1.12.3). Both Protesilaus and Ovid's maid were setting out on their journey when they

⁶⁸ Hersch 2010a: 182.

⁶⁹ Maynes 2007: 71.

⁷⁰ Ogle 1911: 251-253 gives a detailed list of sources related to stumbling at the threshold.

stumbled, and in both cases it was their subsequent quest which became ill-omened.⁷¹ I do not wish to imply that the majority of our evidence comes from Ovid; this superstition appears to have been a widespread folk belief, as both Cicero and Pliny – as educated, sceptical thinkers – refer to it scornfully as a trifling matter that should not be given as much credence as it is (Cicero, *De divinatione* 2.40.84; Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 2.5.24). The implication for the bride is clear: that to stumble at the start of a new venture – never mind one’s new house, new relationship and new life – would be incredibly unlucky.

The idea of avoiding bad luck at the wedding is not without precedent. Auguries were taken to check for favourable omens at the bride’s house before the *deductio* set off, although Hersch notes that they do not appear to have been an essential part of the ceremony and may have been restricted to patrician weddings.⁷² More commonly, there were superstitious restrictions on the day to marry, as Scullard summarises:

The *Kalends*, *Nones* and *Ides* were avoided for marriages, because the following days were unlucky days for brides to start their married lives; it was also thought unlucky to marry in May or in the first half of June.⁷³

The restriction on the *Kalends*, *Nones* and *Ides* can be connected to the superstition against stumbling: both ideas want the couple’s new marriage to start off well. If we consider this ritual to be part of a bride’s rite of passage from a girl to a *matrona*, then the avoidance of stumbling takes on more significance

⁷¹ Connected to this idea of starting out on the right foot, so to speak, Petronius’ Trimalchio even has a slave stationed by the threshold of his dining room to quite literally warn diners to enter *dextro pede* (*Satyrice* 30).

⁷² Hersch 2010a: 115.

⁷³ Scullard 1981: 46.

for her. It is not just about avoiding a bad omen for the start of the marriage, it becomes part of the successful transition to adulthood for the bride.

But what we see throughout all the references quoted here is that the ritual was not just to prevent the bride from *stumbling* on the threshold, it was to prevent her touching it *at all*. There might be no explicit indication that the Romans considered the threshold sacred to Vesta (other than Servius and his sources), but it is clear that there was something about being a bride that meant that the threshold should not be touched. With this in mind, the deliberate tread of Catullus' mistress on the threshold of the house that they had booked for an assignation takes on a deeper meaning. The fact that this is an adulterous wife – who will have been through the marriage ceremony and therefore should know that a bride must not touch the threshold (just as we have seen Catullus exhort the bride in 61 not to do) – suggests that this is a deliberate reversal of the wedding ceremony:

*quo mea se molli candida diva pede
intulit et trito fulgentem in limine plantam
innixa arguta constituit solea*

Thither my fair goddess delicately stepped, and set the sole of her shining
foot on the smooth threshold, as she pressed on her slender sandal
(68B.70-72)⁷⁴

At this point the poem breaks off with a mythological excursion about the doomed relationship of Laodamia and Protesilaus, leaving the mistress (usually taken to be Lesbia) paused on the threshold. This emphasises just how transgressive it is, and links stepping on the threshold with unchaste behaviour. There is no suggestion of Vesta, or an explicit mention that this step was

⁷⁴ Translation by Cornish *et al.* 1913.

unsuitable behaviour, but the fact that Catullus describes this action three times (*se... pede/ intulit; trito fulgentem in limine plantam/...constituit; innixia arguta... solea*) shows that he clearly wished to draw attention to it. For this to resonate with the Romans then it must have been recognisable as a deliberate reversal of a marriage ritual.⁷⁵ If treading on the threshold is unchaste, then avoiding touching it must be a signifier of chaste behaviour suitable for a new bride.

Van Gennep suggested that the stepping over of an object by the bride specifically (rather than the couple) during a wedding 'may be a fertility rite'.⁷⁶ The folklorist Crooke, a contemporary of van Gennep, discussed various worldwide marriage traditions in which the bride was lifted, or the couple jumped together, over certain objects; he too suggested it could be a fertility charm, although he went on to say that 'it may have [also] been intended to protect the bride from some contamination, or to avoid ill-luck.'⁷⁷ It is possible therefore that the Roman bride could have been simultaneously displaying her chastity whilst evading any threat to her fertility by avoiding touching the threshold.

⁷⁵ O'Bryhim 2008: 193 notes that Myrrha commits a similar transgression in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: *thalami iam limina tangit* ('now she touches the threshold of the *thalamus*', 10.456). This is the latest in a long stream of breakings of marriage taboos, including Myrrha stumbling thrice during what could be considered a *deductio*, which is being performed without torches by an aged female slave, who then also takes the role of the *pronuba*. As with Catullus 68B, Ovid is clearly indicating that this is the beginning of an inappropriate relationship, by the use of the deliberate tread on the threshold. This line should not be taken as evidence that the threshold that the bride was lifted over was that of the *thalamus* during an actual wedding ceremony. This is not actually a marriage: Myrrha is infatuated with her father and her nurse has encouraged her to act on this rather than commit suicide. The inverted wedding symbolism is Ovid's way of indicating just how disastrous this will be.

⁷⁶ van Gennep 1960: 131.

⁷⁷ Crooke 1902: 242.

Van Gennep also argued that a lifting rite was part of the transitional phase if the individual is raised and held above something:

at the moment in question the individual does not belong either to the sacred or to the profane world; or, if he does belong to one of the two, it is desired that he be properly reincorporated into the other[.]⁷⁸

In our context, however, there is no indication that the bride is held *above* the threshold, merely that she is either lifted or assisted *over* it, but continues her forward movement in her new house. As such, it is another rite of incorporation, bringing the bride safely across the threshold, from her liminal space of the *deductio* into the home that she will occupy with her new husband. This act also represents the moment when the bride and groom are reunited, as they had travelled separately from the bride's house and the groom arrived first to greet her.

§2.3.1.4: The offering of fire and water

The final door-related marriage ritual is when – as far as we can reconstruct – the bride could be offered fire and water by the groom. There are eleven references to this rite (see Appendix Eighteen), but Varro is the only author who mentions a location for it. He tells us that *ea nuptiis in limine adhinentur* ('these [fire and water] are used at the threshold in weddings', #18.2: *De lingua Latina* 5.61.);⁷⁹ it is less clear as to whether this takes place *before* the threshold, or just

⁷⁸ van Gennep 1960: 185-186; this statement represents the rare occurrence of van Gennep setting out what he lambasted his contemporaries for doing: attempting to find one universal theory to explain a rite that is used in multiple different circumstances.

⁷⁹ In Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* 8.243-246 (source #18.4 in Appendix Eighteen), Pollux offers fire and water to the bridal couple, Jason and Medea, in the vicinity of an altar outdoors. However, given that this is an unusual wedding, technically a mythological Greek one, in a literary depiction, we should not take it to indicate usual Roman practice. Jason and Medea then turn round in a circle, and we have no evidence for that happening in either Greek or Roman weddings.

after the bride has actually entered the house. I argued in the Introduction to Part Two that this threshold had to be that of the house-door, and since the groom awaited the bride inside the house it seems to make the most sense that he would offer these items to her once she had crossed over the threshold to join him inside.

I discussed in the Introduction to Part Two the fact that fire and water were important symbols of life for the Romans, and were expressly denied to exiles;⁸⁰ this offering by the groom to his new bride is therefore perhaps the most obvious rite of incorporation. The bride arrives at what will be her new home and new *familia*, and is offered life-sustaining substances by her new husband. This is also an example of the fact that the rite of passage for the bride is not just transferring her from *virgo* to *matrona* – especially in the case of remarriage when the bride has already held the status of *matrona* and it would not be expected for her to be a virgin – but transferring her into a new household and a new relationship. Van Gennep suggested that within the context of a marriage, certain rites of incorporation between the couple could be seen as ‘rites of union,’ and he included this sort of offering from one to the other as one of these.⁸¹

I am, of course, making the key assumption that the groom offered the bride fire and water, and that she in some way accepted it. This is the assumption of most

⁸⁰ See Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum* 6.44; Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares* 325.2 = 11.1; Cicero, *Orationes Philippicae* 6.4.10; #18.3: Ovid, *Fasti* 4.791-792; #18.6: Festus s.v. *aqua et igni* 3L; 2-3M; 2-3Th; #18.7: Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 2.9; Servius, *ad Aeneid* 12.119.

⁸¹ van Gennep 1960: 132.

modern scholars,⁸² but Hersch cautiously notes that ‘we cannot be sure who gave them, and to whom’.⁸³ I believe that it is possible to make the case that it is the groom who presents the bride with fire and water, and that she accepts it. Servius, in fact, even tells us that *Varro dicit ‘aqua et igni mariti uxores accipiebant’* (‘Varro says: “husbands used to receive their wives with water and fire”’, #18.9: *ad Aeneid* 4.167). Hersch is right to point out that our extant excerpts of Varro do not provide this level of detail,⁸⁴ but we have lost so much of Varro’s works that we cannot know whether or not he did make this statement elsewhere. It is true that *De lingua Latina* merely notes that fire and water *adhibentur* (‘are used’, #18.2: 5.61),⁸⁵ but a fragment of Varro’s *De vita populi Romani* mentions the bringing forth of fire and water in the context of the husband: *a novo marito... adlata esset* (‘[they] had been brought... by the new husband’, #18.1 2.79 *apud* Nonius 268L=182M). There is no mention of the bride here, but Festus states that *accipiunt nuptae* (‘brides receive’, #18.6: 3L s.v. *aqua et igni*) fire and water, and this vocabulary is also used in Scaevola’s judicial ruling: *aqua et igni acciperetur* (‘she was received with water and fire’, #18.11: *Digest* 24.1.66.1), although the use of the passive here could give a slightly different emphasis. Plutarch asks *Διὰ τί τὴν γαμουμένην ἄπτεισθαι πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος κελεύουσι*; (‘Why do they bid the wife to touch fire and water?’, #18.5: *Quaestiones Romanae* 1).⁸⁶ This is, admittedly, frustratingly vague with regards to who is doing the bidding (or whether others bid her to touch the items that

⁸² e.g. Treggiari 1991: 168. Cantarella 2005: 29 states that the bride ‘offered up water and fire to the gods’, citing Plutarch (#18.5) and Scaevola (#18.11), but as we have seen neither source is this specific.

⁸³ Hersch 2010a: 186.

⁸⁴ Hersch 2010a: 184.

⁸⁵ Servius echoes this language at #18.8: *ad Aeneid* 4.103: *ut aqua et igni adhibitis*.

⁸⁶ Translation by Cole Babbitt 1936.

the groom is holding), but taken with the rest of the evidence the notion of the groom making this offering to the bride makes logical – as well as ritual – sense.

We also see from Varro the idea that fire and water represent maleness and femaleness and hence the future children of the couple (#18.2: *De lingua Latina* 5.61). Plutarch takes up this idea, along with a couple of other reasons, such as indicating that the bride is pure and clean, or to symbolise the union of the pair as equal opposites. He even suggests that the fire and water, as the basic necessities, could represent the unwavering commitment of the new couple to each other: *κἄν ἄλλου μηδενὸς ἢ πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος μέλλωσι κοινωνεῖν ἀλλήλοις* ('even if they are destined to have nothing other than fire and water to share with each other', #18.5: *Quaestiones Romanae* 1).⁸⁷

As symbols of the new life that the couple will share, it seems fitting that the offering and receipt of fire and water could indicate the bride's acceptance into the groom's house. I have argued that it would have been the final of the four threshold-rituals (if indeed all four were carried out), and as such would symbolise the bride's reintegration into society following her transitional period.

§2.3.2: Events following the threshold-rites

The offering of fire and water does not end the festivities. Once the bride is inside the marital home the wedding party continues and it is likely that there would

⁸⁷ Translation by Cole Babbitt 1936. Treggiari 1991: 10 saw this as representative of 'the sharing of natural resources' between husband and wife.

have been a feast, and the couple may have reclined together on a sheepskin.⁸⁸

The culmination of the day, of course, was expected to be the consummation of the marriage and Treggiari – in her article about the rituals surrounding the bedding of the bride – refers to this as the ‘climax of the wedding’.⁸⁹

Consummation was not, however, required for the validity of the marriage:

Ulpian writes that *nuptias enim non concubitus sed consensus facit* (‘for it is not sleeping together, but rather agreement/consent, that makes a marriage’, *Digest* 35.1.15). Hersch, in fact, argued that this meant that the wedding night ‘should not be considered part of the wedding ceremony’,⁹⁰ especially as it is clear from writers such as Livy that the couple were considered married before they reached the bedchamber.⁹¹

It might not have been part of the ceremony to create the marital union, but should the consummation of the marriage be considered part of the bride’s rite of passage? Is it, in fact, the ultimate act of incorporation? I believe that while it is a rite of passage especially for a virgin bride, it is a separate transition to that of marriage itself. It is the marriage which moves the bride from one house to another, one family to another,⁹² and from the status of *virgo* or *nupta* to *uxor*, *mulier* or *matrona*. Consummation is what gives her the potential to become

⁸⁸ Plutarch tells us that καὶ τὴν νύμφην εἰσάγοντες νάκος ὑποστρωννύασι (‘When they lead in the bride, they spread a fleece beneath her’, #15.5: *Quaestiones Romanae* 31, trans. Cole Babbitt 1936), and Festus says that *in pelle lanata nova nupta consedere solet* (‘the new bride would sit together [presumably with her husband] on a sheepskin’, 102L s.v. *in pelle lanata*), both of which imply that this was a common ritual. Servius, *ad Aeneid* 4.374, however, refers to it as something that the *flamen* and *flaminica* specifically would do during their own *confarreatio* wedding.

⁸⁹ Treggiari 1994: 311.

⁹⁰ Hersch 2010a: 220.

⁹¹ Hersch 2010a: 216: ‘At least in the estimation of Livy [30.12.21], reclining on the *lectus* [during a feast with guests] was the sign that the couple was already married.’

⁹² Even if the woman marries without *manus* she is still now part of a new family.

mater,⁹³ and whilst this might be in some way dependent upon the initial marriage, it is not the driving force behind her new change of status that marriage brings.

The same applies to the sacrifices and offerings that the bride makes the following day. Macrobius tells us that *postridie... nuptam in domo viri dominium incipere oportet adipisci et rem facere divinam* ('on the following day the bride must begin to exercise her authority in her husband's household and offer sacrifice', *Saturnalia* 1.15.22),⁹⁴ and these sacrifices are generally taken by modern scholars to be to the groom's household gods, or even his *genius*.⁹⁵ This too could be another act of incorporation, but again I see it as separate to the central rite of passage symbolised by the *deductio* and the threshold-rites.

I may well, therefore, be guilty of Treggiari's accusation that scholars 'tend to desert the bride at the moment when she is lifted over the threshold'.⁹⁶

Nonetheless I do believe that it is with the threshold rites (I have, of course, argued that the fire and water, not the lifting, would be the final one) that the bride's rite of passage comes to a close. That is not to say that another one does not immediately begin as the couple are led to the bedchamber, but it is outside of the scope of the present analysis.

⁹³ George 2001: 184 states that women's 'adult public identity... was tied to a single dimension, motherhood'.

⁹⁴ Translation by Kaster 2011.

⁹⁵ Treggiari 1991: 169; Hersch 2010a: 219 n. 352.

⁹⁶ Treggiari 1994: 311.

§2.3.3: Conclusion

That a wedding ceremony might act as a rite of passage for the bride from girlhood to *matrona* status is perhaps unsurprising. The various rituals discussed here show clear signs of rite of passage symbolism individually, and taken in combination they show that the Romans were very keen to ensure that the bride's transition was enacted smoothly, with as much preventative superstition as possible. As we have seen, Boëls-Janssen argued that there would have been other rites of passage for women, but that these fell out of use until 'le mariage était devenu le seul rite de passage féminin'.⁹⁷ The ceremony is less important for the groom (who has a relatively minor role in the proceedings, and could even be absent) as he had already been through a relatively long transitional stage, beginning with donning the *toga virilis*, in order to move from a boy, through to being a youth and then a man.⁹⁸ It was the bride on the wedding day who was 'in a liminal position or in personal need of charms to ward off envy or ill luck'.⁹⁹ The bride had just this one opportunity to ensure a smooth passage to become a *matrona*: no wonder there was such an emphasis on getting it right.

If we refer to van Gennep's tripartite rite of passage structure, we can see that the format of the 'composite' ceremony falls into the triple schema of separation, transition and incorporation. The rites of separation may have begun well before the wedding ceremony with a betrothal, and the bride may also have dedicated some childhood items to the gods. This dedication could perhaps be seen as an

⁹⁷ Boëls-Janssen 1993: 475.

⁹⁸ Harlow & Laurence 2002: 67.

⁹⁹ Hersch 2010a: 222.

emotional and intellectual separation, whereas the *deductio* procession from the bride's family home enacts a physical separation, and begins her liminal stage. During her transition she undergoes the 'ordeal' of bawdy jokes whilst protected and secluded by her veil. The *limen* itself at the groom's house shifts her out of the liminal phase and the rites of incorporation begin. The fact that there was more than one ritual that could be carried out at the groom's threshold indicates not only that the Romans recognised the importance of this location at this stage in the proceedings, but that the doorway clearly did signify the change in status for the bride.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, there are enough different rituals that even a pared down ceremony would probably be able to incorporate at least one threshold ritual.¹⁰¹

Will we ever know exactly what each of these rituals really meant to the Romans? As we have seen, they themselves were unsure as to what *ubi tu Gaius, ibi ego Gaia* actually meant – and how many people in today's West know why there is a tradition for the groom to carry the bride over the threshold? Rituals to ensure fertility sound plausible, as do the theories that there could be some representation of the chastity of the bride; Hersch summarises this succinctly: 'at her wedding a girl was poised on the threshold between virginity and fertility and the rites of the ceremony include an obvious focus on both.'¹⁰² We also should not discount the avoidance of stumbling in order to avoid starting the marriage on the wrong foot, so to speak, and incurring bad luck; and the notion that the bride could be making an offering to the household gods of the groom,

¹⁰⁰ Boëls-Janssen 188-189: 'Le franchissement de la porte est le rite de passage par excellence: c'est lui qui demande le plus de précautions parce que c'est lui qui est le plus dangereux.'

¹⁰¹ Although Cato and Marcia's in Lucan's *Bellum civile* did not appear to.

¹⁰² Hersch 2010a: 147.

either as a blessing or as bribe, is equally valid.¹⁰³ In addition we might look to the fact that these rituals actually existed in the first place. As Harlow and Laurence affirm, 'All these symbols associated with the transition from girl living in her father's house to that of a matron and wife living in her husband's house highlight the centrality of marriage to a woman's life.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Hersch 2010a: 180.

¹⁰⁴ Harlow & Laurence 2002: 63.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the uses of the threshold in Greek and Roman superstition and folklore by pulling together three strands of analysis: whether religious obligation could account for the primacy of the threshold in Greek and Roman superstitious thought, whether the threshold was considered to be the haunt of ghosts, and whether the threshold could symbolise a rite of passage for a Roman bride.

My survey of door deities is the first full investigation of divinities honoured at, or associated with, the door in either Greece or Rome. My research strongly suggests that while there were deities that could protect the door, deities that had statues or other representations located near the door, and even deities 'of the door, there is no evidence that the door or threshold itself was considered to be a sacred object or altar, nor that the protective deities were doing anything other than guarding the house via the most obvious means of ingress. Evidently the threshold's significance in superstitious thought could have been enhanced by, but was not due primarily to, any divine associations.

With this foundation set, I turned to other interpretations of the threshold. In Part One I set out to debunk the notion that the threshold was culturally important in Greek and Roman thought solely because it was considered to be the haunt of spirits; this was an idea that was so prevalent in early scholarship that it appeared to have become received wisdom by the end of the twentieth

century, but had not yet been rigorously challenged.¹ Trying to reconstruct ancient beliefs about ghostly activity is not straightforward. As Johnston explains:

Much of our evidence for what people really believed about the dead... comes in bits and pieces from lexicographers, scholiasts, and the offhand remarks of ancient authors who are discussing something else. This sort of information, of course, is very much at the mercy of chance.²

Yet even bearing this in mind, I have found no evidence that a belief in haunting was associated with the threshold in either Greece or Rome. I carefully reanalysed the evidence that other scholars have used to support – in Ogle’s words – ‘a simple explanation for all the folk beliefs and practices connected with the house-door’,³ and demonstrated that this evidence cannot, in fact, be taken to support such a statement. I performed a wide-ranging analysis of the evidence, considering prophylactic devices used around the threshold, magic rites performed at the threshold in both literary depictions and ‘real life’ magic as documented in the magical papyri, and whether there was a basis in the notion that there could have been primitive threshold-burial which would have led to a belief in ghosts haunting this location. I found no compelling evidence for a belief in ghosts being located at the threshold in any of these circumstances. By way of control I looked into the evidence for where there *was* a belief in haunted sites, including writing the first detailed analysis of the crossroads as a haunted liminal location.

¹ This scholarship is discussed at length in the Introduction to Part One.

² Johnston 1999: 225.

³ Ogle 1911: 270.

But I did not want to focus solely on what the threshold is 'not'; I also wanted to explore uses of the threshold that were unrelated to hauntings, and to discuss other potential connotations. After all, assigning merely one 'use' (haunted by spirits) to the threshold had severely limited scholarship into other interpretations for the threshold in superstition and folklore. Therefore in Part Two I chose as a case study the Roman wedding ceremony, given that there were up to four different rituals that could be carried out at the door; clearly, these were not associated with ghosts (despite what the early scholars argued),⁴ and I established that there is little evidence that these customs were associated with any deity. I therefore decided to focus on analysing the threshold here as a symbol for incorporating the bride into her new house and family. My analysis of what this use of the threshold could represent differed in an important way from conventional interpretations of a rite of passage, as I argued that this symbolism would be applicable both to virgin brides – those who are traditionally considered to be the ones going through a rite of passage – and those remarrying.

The threshold was clearly an important location – both literally and symbolically – in Greek and Roman thought, and the interplay between the three strands of my title (gods, ghosts and newlyweds) is an essential part of the conclusions that I have detailed throughout this thesis: that by focusing on haunting, and in trying to distil everything into 'a simple explanation', scholars like Ogle denied the richness of the threshold as symbolic of a rite of passage, as a literary image, as a

⁴ Samter 1901, Eitrem 1909 and Ogle 1911 all made this argument, as I detail in the Introduction to Part Two.

focus for superstition, as well as just an everyday boundary – be it one against mundane or supernatural incursions. Ultimately, the importance of the threshold is that as a liminal barrier its ‘meanings’ are multivalent, and as such should not be restricted.

**APPENDIX ONE:
REFERENCES TO LIMENTINUS, FORCULUS AND CARDEA**

#	Reference
1.1	Tertullian, <i>Apologeticus pro Christianis</i> 35 <i>cur die laeto non laureis postes obumbramus nec lucernis diem infringimus? Honesta res est solemnitate publica exigente induere domui tuae habitum alicuius novi lupanaris!</i>
1.2	Tertullian, <i>Ad nationes</i> 2.15 <i>Taceo Ascensum <ab ascensibus>, et <C>liuicolam a cliuis; taceo deos Forculum a foribus et Car<deam a cardi>nibus et liminum Limentinum, siue qui alii inter uicinos apu<d uos numi>num ianitorum adorantur.</i>
1.3	Tertullian, <i>De idololatria</i> 15 <i>Sed luceant, inquit, opera uestra. At nunc lucent tabernae et ianuae nostrae. Plures iam inuenias ethnicorum fores sine lucernis et laureis, quam Christianorum. De ista quoque specie quid uidetur? Si idoli honor est, sine dubio idoli honor idololatria est. ... Alioquin quid erit dei, si omnia Caesaris? Ergo, inquis, honor dei est lucernae pro foribus et laurus in postibus? Non utique quod dei honor est, sed quod eius, qui pro deo eiusmodi officiis honoratur, quantum in manifesto est, salua operatione, quae est in occulto, ad daemona perueniens. Certi enim esse debemus, si quos latet per ignorantiam litteraturae saecularis, etiam ostiorum deos apud Romanos, Cardeam a cardinibus appellatam et Forculum a foribus et Limentinum a limine et ipsum Ianum a ianua: et utique scimus, licet nomina inania atque conficta sint, cum tamen in superstitionem deducuntur, rapere ad se daemona et omnem spiritum inmundum per consecrationis obligamentum. Alioquin daemona nullum habent nomen singillatim, sed ibi nomen inueniunt, ubi et pignus. Etiam apud Graecos Apollinem Thyraeum et Antelios daemona ostiorum praesides legimus. Haec igitur ab initio praeeuidens spiritus sanctus etiam ostia in superstitionem uentura praececinit per antiquissimum propheten Enoch. Nam et alia ostia in balneis adorari uidemus. Si autem sunt qui in ostiis adorentur, ad eos et lucernae et laureae pertinebunt. Idolo feceris, quicquid ostio feceris. Hoc in loco ex auctoritate quoque dei contestor, quia nec tutum est subtrahere, quodcumque uni fuerit ostensum utique omnium causa. Scio fratrem per uisionem eadem nocte castigatum grauiter, quod ianuam eius subito adnuntiatis gaudiis publicis serui coronassent. ... Accendant igitur quotidie lucernas, quibus lux nulla est, affigant postibus lauros postmodum arsuras, quibus ignes imminent; illis competunt et testimonia tenebrarum et auspicia poenarum. Tu lumen es mundi et arbor uirens semper. Si templis renuntiasti, ne feceris templum ianuam tuam. Minus dixi: si lupanaribus renuntiasti, ne indueris domui tuae faciem noui lupanaris.</i>
1.4	Tertullian, <i>De corona militaris</i> 13.9 <i>At enim christianus nec ianuam suam laureis infamabit, si norit quantos deos etiam ostiis diabolus adfinxerit: Ianum a ianua, Limentinum a limine, Forculum et Carnam a foribus atque cardinibus, etiam apud Graecos Thyraeum Apollinem et Antelios daemona.</i>

1.5	Tertullian, Scorpiace 10.6 <i>Christiano caelum ante patet quam uia; quia nulla uia in caelum, nisi cui patet caelum; quod qui attigerit, intrabit. Quas mihi potestates ianitrices adfirmas iuxta Romanam superstitionem, Cardeam quendam et Forculum et Limentinum? Quas a cancellis ordinas potestates?</i>
1.6	Cyprian, De idolorum vanitate = Quod idola dii non sint 4 <i>In tantum uero deorum uocabula apud Romanos finguntur, ut sit apud illos et Viduus deus, qui anima corpus uidet, qui quasi feralis et funebris intra muros non habetur, sed foris conlocatur et nihilominus, quia extorris factus, damnatur potius Romana religione quam colitur. Est et Scansus ab ascensibus dictus et Forculus a foribus et a liminibus Limentinus et Cardea a cardinibus et ab orbitatibus Orbona.</i>
1.7	Arnobius, Adversus nationes 4.9 <i>quis Limentinum, quis Limam custodiam liminum gerere et ianitorum officia sustinere, cum fanorum <limina> cotidie videamus et privatarum domorum conuelli et subrui nec sine his esse flagitiosos ad lupanaria commeatust quis curatores obliquitatum Limos...?</i>
1.8	Arnobius, Adversus nationes 4.11 <i>Quid dicitis, o patres novarum religionum, quid potestatum? hoscine a nobis deos violari et neglegi sacrilego clamitatis queritamini que contemptu, Lateranum genium focorum, Limentinum praesidem liminum, Pertundam Perficam Noduterensem? et quia non supplices Mutuno procumbimus atque Tutuno, ad interitum res lapsas atque ipsum dicitis mundum leges suas et constituta mutasse?</i>
1.9	Arnobius, Adversus nationes 4.12 <i>Sed sint, ut adseritis, verae: unde tamen facietis fidem, Melloniam uerbi causa vel Limentinum inserere se fibris et ad rerum quas quaeritis significantias aptare?</i>
1.10	Augustine, De civitate Dei 4.8 <i>Unum quisque domui suae ponit ostiarium, et quia homo est, omnino sufficit: tres deos isti posuerunt, Forculum foribus, Cardeam cardini, Limentinum limini. Ita non poterat Forculus simul et cardinem limenque servare.</i>
1.11	Augustine, De civitate Dei 6.7 <i>Cur Forculus, qui foribus praeest, et Limentinus, qui limini, dii sunt masculi, atque inter hos Cardea femina est, quae cardinem seruat? Nonne ista in rerum diuinarum libris reperiuntur, quae graves poetae suis carminibus indigna duxerunt?</i>
1.12	Macrobius, Saturnalia 1.12.31-33 <i>non nulli putauerunt Iunium mensem a Iunio Bruto qui primus Romae consul factus est nominatum, quod hoc mense, id est Kalendis Iuniis, pulso Tarquinio sacrum Carnae deae in Caelio monte voti reus fecerit. hanc deam vitalibus humanis praeesse credunt. ab ea denique petitur ut iecinora et corda quaeque sunt intrinsecus viscera salva conservet, et quia cordis beneficio, cuius dissimulatione brutus habebatur, idoneus emendationi publici status extitit, hanc deam quae vitalibus praestitit templo sacravit. cui pulte fabaria et larido sacrificatur, quod his maxime rebus vires corporis roborentur. nam et Kalendae Iuniae fabariae vulgo vocantur, quia hoc mense aduetae fabae diuinis rebus adhibentur.</i>

1.13

Ovid, *Fasti* 6.101-182

*Prima dies tibi, Carna, datur. dea cardinis haec est:
numine clausa aperit, claudit aperta suo.
unde datas habeat vires, obscurior aevo
fama, sed e nostro carmine certus eris.
adiacet antiquus Tiberino lucus Alerni:
pontifices illuc nunc quoque sacra ferunt.
inde sata est nymphe (Cranaën dixere priores)
nequiquam multis saepe petita procis.
rura sequi iaculisque feras agitare solebat
nodosaque cava tendere valle plagas.
non habuit pharetram, Phoebi tamen esse sororem
credebant; nec erat, Phoebe, pudenda tibi.
huic aliquis iuvenum dixisset amantia verba,
reddebat tales protinus illa sonos:
“haec loca lucis habent nimis et cum luce pudoris:
si secreta magis ducis in antra, sequor.”
credulus ante ut iit, frutices haec nacta resistit
et latet et nullo est invenienda modo.
viderat hanc Ianus visaeque cupidine captus
ad duram verbis mollibus usus erat.
nympha iubet quaeri de more remotius antrum
utque comes sequitur destituitque ducem.
stulta! videt Ianus, quae post sua terga gerantur:
nil agis, et latebras respicit ille tuas.
nil agis, en! dixi: nam te sub rupe latentem
occupat amplexu speque potitus ait:
“ius pro concubitu nostro tibi cardinis esto:
hoc pretium positae virginitatis habe.”
sic fatus spinam, qua tristes pellere posset
a foribus noxas (haec erat alba), dedit.
sunt avidae volucres, non quae Phineia mensis
guttura fraudabant, sed genus inde trahunt:
grande caput, stantes oculi, rostra apta rapinis,
canities pennis, unguibus hamus inest.
nocte volant puerosque petunt nutricis egentes
et vitiant cunis corpora rapta suis.
carpere dicuntur lactentia viscera rostris
et plenum poto sanguine guttur habent.
est illis strigibus nomen; sed nominis huius
causa, quod horrendum stridere nocte solent.
sive igitur nascuntur aves, seu carmine fiunt
neniaque in volucres Marsa figurat anus,
in thalamos venere Procae. Proca natus in illis
praeda recens avium quinque diebus erat,¹⁴⁵
pectoraque exsorbent avidis infantia linguis;
at puer infelix vagit opemque petit.
terrata voce sui nutrix accurrit alumni
et rigido sectas invenit ungue genas.*

	<p> <i>quid faceret? color oris erat, qui frondibus olim esse solet seris, quas nova laesit hiems. pervenit ad Cranaën et rem docet. illa "timorem pone: tuus sospes" dixit "alumnus erit." venerat ad cunas: flebant materque paterque: "sistite vos lacrimas, ipsa medebor" ait. protinus arbutea postes ter in ordine tangit fronde, ter arbutea limina fronde notat; spargit aquis aditus (et aquae medicamen habebant) extaque de porca cruda bimenstre tenet; atque ita "noctis aves, extis puerilibus" inquit "parcite: pro parvo victima parva cadit. cor pro corde, precor, pro fibris sumite fibras. hanc animam vobis pro meliore damus." sic ubi libavit, prosecta sub aethere ponit, quique adsint sacris, respicere illa vetat; virgaque Ianalis de spina subditur alba, qua lumen thalamis parva fenestra dabat. post illud nec aves cunas violasse feruntur, et rediit puero, qui fuit ante, color. pinguia cur illis gustentur larda Kalendis, mixtaque cum calido sit faba farre, rogas? prisca dea est aliturque cibis, quibus ante solebat, nec petit ascitas luxuriosa dapes. piscis adhuc illi populo sine fraude natabat, ostreaque in conchis tuta fuere suis. nec Latium norat, quam praebet Ionia dives, nec quae Pygmaeo sanguine gaudet avis; et praeter pennas nihil in pavone placebat, nec tellus captas miserat ante feras. sus erat in pretio, caesa sue festa colebant: terra fabas tantum duraque farra dabat. quae duo mixta simul sextis quicumque Kalendis ederit, huic laedi viscera posse negant.</i> </p>
<p>1.14</p>	<p> Augustine, De Civitate Dei 6.9 <i>Quale autem illud est quod, cum religiosum a superstitioso ea distinctione discernat ut a superstitioso dicat timeri deos, a religioso autem tantum vereri ut parentes, non ut hostes timeri, atque omnes ita bonos dicat ut facilius sit eos nocentibus parcere quam laedere quemquam innocentem, tamen mulieri fetae post partum tres deos custodes commemorat adhiberi, ne Silvanus deus per noctem ingrediatur et vexet, eorumque custodum significandorum causa tres homines noctu circuire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire, postea pilo, tertio deverrere scopis, ut his datis culturae signis deus Silvanus prohibeatur intrare, quod neque arbores caeduntur ac putantur sine ferro, neque far conficitur sine pilo, neque fruges coacervantur sine scopis; ab his autem tribus rebus tres nuncupatos deos, Intercidonam a securis intercisione, Pilumnum a pilo, Deverram ab scopis, quibus diis custodibus contra vim dei Silvani feta conservaretur. Ita contra dei nocentis saevitiam non valeret custodia bonorum, nisi plures essent</i> </p>

<p><i>adversus unum eique aspero horrendo inculto, utpote silvestri, signis culturae tamquam contrariis repugnarent. Itane ista est innocentia deorum, ista concordia? Haecine sunt numina salubria urbium, magis ridenda quam ludibria theatrorum?</i></p>

**APPENDIX TWO:
OGLE'S REFERENCES TO PROPHYLACTICS AT THE THRESHOLD**

#	Reference	For the purpose of	Action/ ingredients	Prophylactic?	Connected to spirits?
2.1	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 29.20.67 <i>caput eius [draconis] limini ianuarum subditum propitiatis adoratione dis fortunatam domum facere promittitur</i>	Making a house (<i>domum</i>) fortunate/ lucky (<i>fortunatam</i>).	Place the head of a <i>draco</i> (a serpent or dragon) under the threshold of the door (<i>limini ianuarum</i>), after propitiating the gods (<i>diis</i>). ¹	No (this is for generating good fortune, rather than averting bad fortune).	No. ²
2.2	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 30.24.82 <i>fel canis nigri masculi amuletum esse dicunt Magi domus totius suffitae eo purificataeve contra omnia mala medicamenta, item sanguinem canis respersis parietibus genitaleque eius sub limine ianuae defossum.</i>	Making an amulet (<i>amuletum</i>) against all evil drugs/ enchantments (<i>omnia mala medicamenta</i>).	There are multiple options to achieve this; one is to bury the genitals of a male black dog under the threshold of the door (<i>sub limine ianuae</i>).	Yes.	No.

¹ This is very similar in concept and purpose to a spell (*PGM* XII.96-106) to 'do well at the workshop': 'On the egg of a male bird write [a number of magical words] and then bury the egg near the threshold where you live'. A prayer to recite is also included, which is addressed to 'Great God... Good Daimon... You are the great Ammon, who dwells in heaven' (trans. Hock in Betz 1986: 156-157). I discuss this spell further in Chapter Two, and it is source #4.4 in Appendix Four.

² Ogle 1911: 254 n. 3 states that 'By "*dis*" we are to understand chthonic powers, if Pliny did not', but this understanding can only be based on the assumption that the threshold was intrinsically connected to spirits, and by extension the underworld. As I am demonstrating throughout this thesis, this was not the case.

2.3	<p>Geoponica, 15.8.1-2 Μελισσῶν σμήνη μὴ φαρμακοῦσθαι, μηδὲ ἀγρούς, μηδὲ οἰκίας, μηδὲ κτηνοτροφεία, μηδὲ ἐργαστήρια. Λεοντίνου. Ὅνου μέλανος ὀπλήν τοῦ δεξιοῦ ὤμου κατόρυξον ὑπὸ τὸν οὐδὸν τῆς εἰσόδου, καὶ ἐπίχεε ῥητίνην πιτυϊνήν ὕγρὰν ἄπυρον (αὕτη δὲ ἐν Ζακύνθῳ γίνεται ἐκ τῆς λίμνης ἀναφερομένη, ὡς ἡ ἄσφαλτος ἐξ Ἀπολλωνίας τῆς κατὰ Δυρῶνάχιον ἐκ τῆς λίμνης ἀναβάλλεται) καὶ ἄλας, καὶ ὀρίγανον Ἑρακλεωτικόν, καὶ καρδάμωμον, καὶ κύμινον. ἄρτου ψωμούς, σκίλλης, στέμμα ἐρίου λευκοῦ <ῆ> φοινικοῦ, ἄγνον, ἱερὰν βοτάνην, θεῖον, δαδία πεύκινα, καὶ ἀμάραντον τὸ ὑπέρυθρον κατὰ μῆνα τίθει, καὶ ἐπίχωση, καὶ πανσπερμίαν ἐπιβαλὼν ἄφες.</p>	<p>Warding off enchantment (φαρμακοῦσθαι).</p>	<p>Bury a right hoof of a black ass under the threshold of the entrance (ὑπὸ τὸν οὐδὸν τῆς εἰσόδου) and pour on a number of other ingredients such as resin, salt and spices; once a month, add more ingredients, such as wool, sulphur and πανσπερμίαν,³ and leave it all there.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>No.</p>
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³ Dalby 2011: 306 n. 7: 'A ritual mixture of "all seeds", or, at least, all that were useful to humans.'

2.4	Columella, <i>De re rustica</i> 7.5.17 <i>ut... confestim scrobem defodiamus in limine stabuli, et vivam pecudem, quae fuerit pusulosa, resupinam obruamus patiamurque super obrutam meare totum gregem, quod eo facto morbus propulsetur.</i>	Warding off (<i>propulsetur</i>) a disease (<i>morbis</i>) of sheep (<i>erysipelas</i>).	Dig a trench at the threshold of the sheepfold/ stable (<i>in limine stabuli</i>) and bury alive, on its back, the sheep that was diseased/ covered in pustules and drive the rest of the flock over it.	Possibly (the interred sheep is the first found to be afflicted, which could suggest this remedy wards off the disease from the rest of the flock rather than cures them).	No.
2.5	Aristophanes, <i>Danaids</i> fragment 266 = fr. 255 Kock, <i>apud Suda</i> α 4443 παρά τὸν στροφέα τῆς αὐλείας σχίνου κεφαλὴν κατορύττειν	Unknown; the note in Henderson's edition states it is to 'keep evil forces out of a house', ⁴ but no further information is given as to how this conclusion was reached; perhaps due to analogy with other references to squills (see #2.6, #2.7 and #2.8 below).	Bury a squill-head by the hinge of the front door (παρὰ τὸν στροφέα τῆς αὐλείας).	Unknown.	Unknown.
2.6	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 20.39.101 <i>Pythagoras scillam in limine quoque ianuae suspensam contra malorum medicamentorum introitum pollere tradit.</i>	Exerting power (<i>pollere</i>) against the entrance (<i>introitum</i>) of evil drugs/ enchantments (<i>malorum medicamentorum</i>).	Hang up a squill at the threshold of the door (<i>in limine... ianuae</i>).	Yes.	No.

⁴ Henderson 2008: 235 n. 76.

2.7	Dioscorides 2.202 [Περὶ Σκίλλης.] ... "Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἀλεξιφάρμακον ὅλη πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν κρεμαμένη.	Making an antidote against poison (ἀλεξιφάρμακον).	Hang up a whole squill before the door (πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν).	No (antidote implies a cure for existing poison).	No.
2.8	Geoponica 15.1.31 ὁ κουράλιος λίθος κείμενος ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ πάντα φθόνον καὶ ἐπιβουλήν ἐλαύνει. τὰ αὐτὰ δὲ ποιεῖ καὶ τὰ κάρφη τῆς ἐβένου, καὶ αἱ ῥίζαι τῆς ἀσπαλάθου, καὶ ἡ εὐώδης ἀναγαλλίς βοτάνη, καὶ ἡ σκίλλα ξηρανομένη, καὶ ἐν τῷ προθύρῳ τῆς οἰκίας κειμένη.	Keep away (ἐλαύνει) all murder and deceit (πάντα φθόνον καὶ ἐπιβουλήν).	Put a dried squill in the doorway of the house (ἐν τῷ προθύρῳ τῆς οἰκίας) (other items such as coral have the same effect, but it is not specified whether they should also be put in the doorway).	Yes.	No.
2.9	Augustine, De civitate Dei 6.9 <i>tamen mulieri fetae post partum tres deos custodes commemorat adhiberi, ne Silvanus deus per noctem ingrediatur et vexet, eorumque custodum significandorum causa tres homines noctu circuire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire, postea pilo, tertio deverrere scopis, ut his datis culturae signis deus Silvanus prohibeatur intrare</i>	Preventing the god Silvanus (<i>Silvanus deus</i>) from entering and mistreating (<i>ingrediatur et vexet</i>) a woman who has just given birth.	Three men go round the thresholds of the house (<i>limina domus</i>) at night; first they strike the <i>limen</i> with an axe (<i>securi</i>), then a pestle (<i>pilo</i>) and then sweep it (<i>deverrere</i>) with a broom (<i>scopis</i>); this, Augustine goes on to say, invokes the gods Intercidona, Pilumnus and Deverra as guardians. ⁵	Yes.	No.

⁵ I discussed this passage and the three gods invoked in it in my survey of door deities in the Introduction to this thesis.

2.10	<p>Photius, <i>Lexicon s.v. Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα</i> Μιαρὰ ἡμέρα: ἐν τοῖς Χουσίῃν Ἀνθεστηριῶνος μηνός, ἐν ᾧ δοκοῦσιν αἱ ψυχαὶ τῶν τελευτησάντων ἀνιέναι, ῥάμνῳ ἔωθεν ἐμασῶντο καὶ πιττηὶ τὰς θύρας ἔχριον.</p>	<p>We are not explicitly told, but the implication is that it is in some way to protect against the spirits of the dead (αἱ ψυχαὶ τῶν τελευτησάντων).⁶</p>	<p>Anoint (ἔχριον) the doors (τὰς θύρας) with pitch; they also chew buckthorn at dawn.</p>	<p>Probably.</p>	<p>Yes – specifically on the <i>Choes</i> (ἐν τοῖς Χουσίῃν), part of the <i>Anthesteria</i> festival.</p>
2.11	<p>Photius, <i>Lexicon s.v. Ῥάμνος</i> Ῥάμνος: φυτὸν δὲ ἐν τοῖς χουσίῃν ὡς ἀλεξιφάρμακον ἐμασῶντο ἔωθεν· καὶ πίττη ἔχριοντο τὰ δώματα.⁷ ἀμιαντος γὰρ αὕτη· διὸ καὶ ταῖς γενέσεσι τῶν παιδίων χρίουσι τὰς οἰκίας εἰς ἀπέλασιν τῶν δαιμόνων.</p>	<p>For an antidote against poison/ evil (ἀλεξιφάρμακον), and to drive away ghosts (τῶν δαιμόνων).</p>	<p>Chew (ἐμασῶντο) buckthorn (ῥάμνος) at dawn for the antidote; also they anoint (ἔχριοντο) their houses (τὰ δώματα) with pitch on this day, and pitch is also used on houses (τὰς οἰκίας) during childbirth to drive away (ἀπέλασιν) τῶν δαιμόνων. N.B. I have included this source in this appendix despite it referring to the house rather than the door, due to the obvious similarity with #2.10, above, in which the door is the part of the house specified for the pitch.</p>	<p>Two claims are made in this passage. One is not prophylactic (creating an antidote with buckthorn, see on #2.7 above), but the use of pitch on the house is prophylactic.</p>	<p>Yes – specifically on the <i>Choes</i> (ἐν τοῖς Χουσίῃν), part of the <i>Anthesteria</i> festival or during the time of childbirth (γενέσεσι τῶν παιδίων).</p>

⁶ Eitrem 1909: 22 wondered whether the pitch was essentially to serve as a sort of spiritual fly-paper.

⁷ The σώματα of the manuscripts has been emended to δώματα.

2.12	Dioscorides 1.119 [Περὶ Ῥάμνου.] ... Λέγεται δὲ καὶ κλῶνας αὐτῆς θύραις ἢ θυράσι προστεθέντας ἀποκρούειν τὰς τῶν φαρμάκων κακουργίας.	Driving away (ἀποκρούειν) the wickedness of magicians (τὰς τῶν φαρμάκων κακουργίας).	Twigs (κλῶνας) of buckthorn placed in doors or windows (θύραις ἢ θυράσι).	Yes.	No.
2.13	Scholion on Nicander, Theriaca 860a Ἄλλως· ἀλεξιάρης δὲ ῥάμνου, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἀπαλέξειν ἐστὶν ἀγαθὴ ἢ ῥάμνος εἰς φάρμακα, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς φαντάσματα, ὅθεν καὶ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἐν τοῖς ἐναγίσμασι κρεμῶσιν αὐτήν... μέμνηται δὲ τῆς βοτάνης καὶ Εὐφορίων ἄλεξίκακον φύε ῥάμνον'	Warding off (ἀπαλέξειν) magic drugs (φάρμακα) and ghosts (φαντάσματα).	Hang buckthorn in front of doors (πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν).	Yes.	Yes, when offerings are made to the dead (ἐναγίσμασι).
2.14	Ovid, Fasti 6.155-168 <i>protinus arbutea postes ter in ordine tangit/ fronde, ter arbutea limina fronde notat,/ spargit aquis aditus (et aquae medicamen habebant)/ extaque de porca cruda bimestre tenet,/ atque ita noctis aves, extis puerilibus'</i>	Preventing <i>striges</i> from entering and attacking the newborn boy Proca.	Carna/ Cranaë (whom Ovid says is Cardea, the goddess of the hinge) ⁸ touches the doorposts (<i>postes</i>) and the threshold (<i>limina</i>) three times with an arbutus leaf, then sprinkles the entrance (<i>aditus</i>) with	Yes.	No.

⁸ I discussed the interplay between Carna and Cardea in the survey of door deities in the Introduction to this thesis.

	<i>inquit/ 'parcite: pro parvo victima parva cadit./ cor pro corde, precor, pro fibris sumite fibras:/ hanc animam vobis pro meliore damus./ sic ubi libavit, prosecta sub aethere ponit,/ quique adsint sacris respicere illa vetat:/ virgaque Ianalis de spina subditur alba,/ qua lumen thalamis parva fenestra dabat./ post illud nec aves cunas violasse feruntur,/ et rediit puero qui fuit ante color.</i>		drugged water. She then sacrifices a piglet, stating to the <i>striges</i> that this is on behalf of the child; leaving the sacrifice out in the air, she forbids those present to look back. Finally, she takes a 'rod of Janus' (<i>virga... Ianalis</i> ; whitethorn) and puts it in the window.		
2.15	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 18.73.303 <i>sunt qui rubeta rana in limine horrei pede e longioribus suspensa invehere iubeant.</i>	Unclear: evidently for protecting grain, or ensuring its safe storage, ⁹ but no indication what it is prophylactic against.	Hang up a bramble frog from its longer foot on the threshold of the granary (<i>in limine horrei</i>).	Probably.	No.

⁹ The frog is mentioned in the middle of a series of generally more sensible pieces of advice about the building of the granary, pest avoidance and the best time to harvest the grain. Pliny does not expand upon what exactly the frog would be for; given the context it seems likely that the frog is to act as a supernatural prophylactic against any kind of pest or disease for the stored harvest.

2.16	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 29.26.83 <i>tradunt et de vespertilione... amuletum esse, privatimque ovilibus circumlatum totiens [ter] et pedibus suspensum super limen.</i>	Making an amulet (<i>amuletum</i>), although no information about what the amulet is to protect against. ¹⁰	Carry a bat three times around the sheepfold then hang it up, by its feet, above the threshold (<i>super limen</i>).	Probably.	No.
2.17	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 32.16.44 <i>mala medicamenta inferri negant posse aut certe nocere stella marino volpino sanguine inlita et adfixa limini superiori aut clavo aereo ianuae.</i>	Preventing evil enchantments/ drugs (<i>mala medicamenta</i>) from being brought in (<i>inferri</i>), or from doing harm (<i>nocere</i>) if they do enter.	Smear a starfish with the blood of a fox and fix it to the lintel (<i>limini superiori</i>) or the door (<i>ianuae</i>) with a bronze nail.	Yes.	No.
2.18	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.37.142 <i>Masurius palmam lupino adipi dedisse antiquos tradit. ideo novas nuptas illo perunguere postes solitas, ne quid mali medicamenti inferretur.</i>	Preventing evil enchantments/ drugs (<i>mali medicamenti</i>) from being brought in (<i>inferretur</i>).	A new bride anoints the doorposts (<i>postes</i>) with wolf's fat.	Yes.	No.

¹⁰ This anecdote comes in a list of things that Pliny considers to be the *exempl[a] magicae vanitatis* ('example[s] of the fraud of magicians', *Naturalis historia* 29.26.81). The bat is also an amulet if carried three times round the house and fixed on over the window upside down: *si ter circumlatus domui vivus super fenestram inverso capite adfigatur* (*Naturalis historia* 29.26.83).

2.19	<p>Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.37.135 <i>Proxima in communibus adipi laus est, sed maxime suillo, apud antiquos etiam religiosius. certe novae nuptae intrantes etiamnum sollemne habent postes eo attingere.</i></p>	<p>Not stated here, but elsewhere (see #2.18) Pliny tells us that this rite (with wolf's fat) is to prevent evil drugs/ enchantments (<i>mali medicamenti</i>) from entering.</p>	<p>A new bride touches the doorposts (<i>postes</i>) with pig's fat.</p>	<p>Probably.</p>	<p>No.</p>
2.20	<p>Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 34.44.151 <i>prodest... et praefixisse in limine evulsos sepulchris clavos adversus nocturnas lymphationes</i></p>	<p>Preventing nightmares (<i>nocturnae lymphationes</i>).</p>	<p>Fasten nails torn out from graves/tombs into the <i>limen</i>.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>No.</p>
2.21	<p>Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.23.85 <i>id quoque convenit, quo nihil equidem libentius crediderim, tactis omnino menstruo postibus inritas fieri Magorum artes, generis vanissimi, ut aestimare licet.</i>¹¹</p>	<p>Making the arts of the Magi (<i>Magorum artes</i>) ineffective (<i>inritas</i>).</p>	<p>Touch the doorposts (<i>postibus</i>) with menstrual blood.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>No.</p>

¹¹ It is rather peculiar that Pliny both states that the Magi are liars – which implies a disbelief in their ability to perform magic – and that menstrual blood will neutralise their magic; see also item #2.22 in the table.

2.22	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.27.104 <i>eodem [sanguine hyaenae] tactis postibus ubicumque Magorum infestari artes, non elici deos nec conloqui, sive lucernis sive pelvi sive aqua sive pila sive quo alio genere temptetur</i> ¹²	Impairing (<i>infestari</i>) the arts of the Magi (<i>Magorum... artes</i>), so that they cannot invoke (<i>elici</i>) or speak to (<i>conloqui</i>) gods (<i>deos</i>) through various methods.	Touch the doorposts (<i>postibus</i>) all over with hyena's blood.	Probably.	No.
2.23	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.29.117 <i>intestina et fartum eorum [chamaeleonis], cum animal in nullo cibo vivat, simiarum urina una inlinitur inimicorum ianuae odium omnium hominum his conciliare</i>	Bringing about (<i>conciliare</i>) the hatred (<i>odium</i>) of all men to your enemies (<i>inimicorum</i>).	Smear the doors (<i>ianuae</i>) of your enemies with the intestines (and their contents) of the chameleon, together with the urine of monkeys.	No.	No.
2.24	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.23.86 ¹³ <i>ex homine siquidem resigmina unguium e pedibus manibusque cera permixta ita, ut dicatur tertianae,</i>	Cure (<i>remedium quaeri</i>) a fever (<i>febri</i>) in one person (presumably by transferring it onto someone else).	Mix toenail and fingernail clippings from the infected person with wax. Before the sun rises, fix this mixture to someone else's door (<i>alienae ianuae</i>).	No.	No.

¹² Pliny goes on to say that *excrementa sive ossa reddita, cum interematur, contra magicas insidias pollere; fimum quod in intestinis inventum sit arefactum ad dysintericos valere, potum inlitumque cum adipe anserino toto corpore opitulari laesis malo medicamento* ('excrement or bones, voided when the beast is being killed, can prevail against the insidious attacks of sorcerers; that dung found in the intestines is, when dried, excellent for dysentery, and, taken in drink and applied with goose grease, gives relief anywhere in the body to the victims of noxious drugs', *Naturalis historia* 28.27.105, trans. Jones 1963).

¹³ This extract follows on from item #2.21.

	<i>quartanae vel cotidiana febris remedium quaeri, ante solis ortum alienae ianuae adfigi iubent ad remedia in his morbis</i>				
2.25	Geoponica 13.15.8 ¹⁴ ἢ γράψον ἐν τῇ ἐξωτέρῳ θύρῳ μηδενὸς εἰδότος, πρὸ εἰδῶν Μαΐων ... ¹⁵	Do something (presumably prevent their entrance) to fleas.	Write something on the outer door (ἐξωτέρῳ θύρῳ), while no one is looking, before the Ides of May.	Probably.	Unknown.
2.26	Festus 17L s.v. arseverse ¹⁶ <i>ARSEVERSE averte ignem significat. Tuscorum enim lingua arse averte, verse ignem constat appellari. Unde Afranius ait: "Inscribat aliquis in ostio arseverse."</i>	Averting fire (<i>averte ignem</i>).	Write 'arseverse' on the door (<i>in ostio</i>).	Yes.	No.
2.27	Apuleius, Metamorphoses 3.23 <i>Quid quod istas nocturnas aves, cum penetraverint larem quempiam, solliciter prehensas foribus videmus</i>	Prevent the destruction (<i>exitium</i>) of a household caused by the unlucky flight (<i>infaustis volatibus</i>) of an owl into the house.	Fix the owl to the doors (<i>foribus</i>) – its suffering will expiate the threatened destruction of the household.	Yes.	No.

¹⁴ Ogle 1911: 256 states: 'On the door, too, were written magic verses to keep out weasels (*Geoponica*. 13.15.8)'. 13.15 is actually about fleas; weasels are covered by 13.3, but there is nothing about magic verses, or doors.

¹⁵ The text breaks off here; Dalby 2011: 279 n. 1 reports that it is 'missing from all manuscripts.'

¹⁶ Ogle 1911: 256 gives no reference for 'the words "arse verse" to protect the house from fire [were written on the door]', but this excerpt of Festus must be the source. See van der Meer 2014 for more on this curious charm; this may well be what Pliny was referring to when he wrote *etiam parietes incendiorum deprecationibus conscribuntur* ('On walls too are written prayers to avert fires', *Naturalis historia* 28.4.19, trans. Jones 1963).

	<i>adfigi, ut, quod infaustis volatibus familiae minantur exitium, suis luant cruciatibus?</i>				
2.28	Palladius 1.35.14 <i>Grandini creditur obuiare, si quis crocodili pellem uel hyaenae uel marini uituli per spatia possessionis circumferat et in uillae aut cortis suspendat ingressu, cum malum uiderit imminere.</i>	Preventing hail (<i>grandini... obuiare</i>).	Carry the skin of a crocodile, hyena or seal around the grounds and then suspend it from the entrance (<i>ingressu</i>) of the villa or court.	Yes.	No.
2.29	Geoponica, 1.14.5 Πάλιν ἐὰν ἐν τῷ χωρίῳ περιελάττει ὑαίνης ἢ κροκοδείλου ἢ φώκης δέρμα, καὶ τοῦτο πρὸ πυλῶν τῆς οἰκίσεως ἀναρτήσης, οὐ πεσεῖται χάλαζα.	Preventing hail from falling (<i>οὐ πεσεῖται χάλαζα</i>).	Carry the skin of a hyena, crocodile or seal around the grounds and then hang it from the gates of the house (<i>πρὸ πυλῶν τῆς οἰκίσεως</i>).	Yes.	No.

**APPENDIX THREE:
NON-THRESHOLD BASED PROPHYLACTICS IN OGLE**

Missing from Appendix Two are the following references, which appear to be based on misreadings, and are too far removed from thresholds and doorways to be relevant:

#	Reference	Analysis
3.1	<p>Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.77.247 <i>carnes lupi edisse parituris prodest, aut si incipientibus parturire sit iuxta qui ederit, adeo ut etiam contra inlatas noxias valeat.</i></p>	<p>Ogle writes that ‘at the time of child-birth... danger was feared from [spirits]’¹ and, in a note, supplies the references to Augustine’s <i>De civitate Dei</i> 6.9 (#2.9, although note that the danger is feared from the god Silvanus) and Pliny’s <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.77.247.² Pliny’s text is a prophylactic against <i>inlatas noxias</i>, for pregnant women who, when near delivery (<i>parituris</i>) should eat wolves’ flesh; in early labour they could instead be near a person who has done so to receive the same benefits. There is no mention of a door, nor an explicit mention of any spirits.</p>
3.2	<p>Geoponica 13.8.4 ὄφεις δὲ περιστερεῶνι οὐκ ὀχλήσουσιν, ἐὰν ἐν ταῖς τέτρασι γωνίαις ἐπιγράψῃς Ἀδάμ· ἐὰν δὲ ἔχη θυρίδας, καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς.</p>	<p>Ogle continues: ‘On the door, too, [was] written... the word Ἀδάμ to keep serpents away (<i>Geoponica</i>. 13.8.4; 14.5)’.³ These two passages from the <i>Geoponica</i> are practically identical; the word Ἀδάμ is to prevent serpents from entering the pigeon-house,⁴</p>
3.3	<p>Geoponica 14.5.1 Ὀφεις περιστερεῶνι οὐκ ὀχλήσουσιν, ἐὰν ταῖς τέτρασι γωνίαις τοῦ περιστερεῶνος ἐπιγράψῃς Ἀδάμ· ἐὰν δὲ ἔχη θυρίδας, καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς.</p>	<p>but it was to be written ‘on the four corners and the window’, if there is one, not the door.</p>
3.4	<p>Columella, <i>De cultu hortorum</i> = <i>De re rustica</i> 10.346-350 <i>utque Iovis magni prohiberet fulmina Tarchon, saepe suas sedes praecinxit vitibus albis. hinc Amythaonius, docuit quem plurima Chiron,</i></p>	<p>Ogle writes: ‘So the ill-omened birds that fly in the night were hung on the door to protect the house from lightning (<i>Columella. de cultu hortorum</i> 346; <i>Palladius</i> 1.35.1)’.⁵ Line 346 in <i>Columella</i> is indeed about protection from lightning, but not necessarily for the house, and not – in this immediate instance – by using owls (or doors); owls are mentioned a few lines later, but there is still no mention of</p>

¹ Ogle 1911: 255.

² Ogle 1911: 255 n. 3.

³ Ogle 1911: 256.

⁴ Dalby 2011: 27 n. 4: ‘ADAM stands for the four corners of the world (*Anatole, Dysis, Arktos, Mesembria*: east, west, north, south).’

⁵ Ogle 1911: 256.

	<i>nocturnas crucibus volucres suspendit, et altis culminibus vetuit feralia carmina flere.</i>	doors. Palladius does concur with Columella in that owls were used as a prophylactic against inclement weather, but in this case it is hail, not lightning. Not only is there no mention of doors, but the ground is here specifically mentioned as the location for the owl-amulet.
3.5	Palladius 1.35.1 <i>Contra grandinem multa dicuntur ... noctua pennis patentibus extensa suffigitur</i>	

**APPENDIX FOUR:
PRESENCE OF SPIRITS REQUIRED FOR MAGIC TO BE EFFECTIVE**

‘In the following examples, however, there is no question of the spirits entering the house, but only of the necessity for their presence that the magic rite may be effective.’¹

#	Reference	Purpose	Use of the threshold or doorway	Spirits mentioned?
4.1	Theocritus, <i>Idyll</i> 2.59-62² Θεστυλί, νῦν δὲ λαβοῖσα τὸ τὰ θρόνα ταῦθ’ ὑπόμαξον / τᾶς τήνω φλιᾶς καθ’ ὑπέρτερον ἄς ἔτι καὶ νύξ, / καὶ λέγ’ ἐπιτρύζοισα ‘τὰ Δέλφιδος ὅστια μάσσω.’	Love spell: to ‘soften up’ the victim’s feelings to the magical-worker. ³	Knead (ὑπόμαξον) herbs (θρόνα) while standing over the threshold (φλιᾶς) of the victim at night and say ‘I knead the bones of [NN] (τὰ [NN] ὅστια μάσσω)’.	No.
4.2	Virgil, <i>Eclogue</i> 8.91-93 <i>has olim exuvias mihi perfidus ille reliquit, / pignora cara sui; quae nunc ego limine in ipso/ terra, tibi mando: debent haec pignora Daphnim.</i>	Love spell: to force the victim to return to the magical-worker. ⁴	Bury (‘I entrust to you, Earth (<i>terra, tibi mando</i>)’) dear tokens (<i>pignora cara</i>) belonging to the victim by the threshold (<i>limine in ipso</i>) to which you wish the victim to return.	No.
4.3	Pseudo-Theodorus Priscianus, <i>Additamenta</i>, p. 281, 22 <i>canis numquam rabiet in domo, si pellem canis rabiosi sub limen obliges vel in porta figas.</i>	Prophylactic: to prevent a dog (<i>canis</i>) being rabid (<i>rabiet</i>) in the house (<i>domo</i>).	Bind (<i>obliges</i>) the skin of a rabid dog (<i>pellem canis rabiosi</i>) under the threshold (<i>sub limen</i>) or fix it on the gate (<i>in porta figas</i>).	No.

¹ Ogle 1911: 257.

² Note that line 61 is omitted as it is considered spurious, see Gow 1952b: 47.

³ This is the most plausible interpretation of these lines, which are discussed in full in Chapter Two.

⁴ This passage will be discussed in full in Chapter Two.

4.4	<i>PGM XII.99-106</i>	To do well at the workshop⁵	Bury an egg near the threshold, having written <i>voces magicae</i> on it. Pray to the god Ammon and the 'Good Daimon' for assistance.	Unlikely. ⁶
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⁵ Translation by Hock in Betz 1986: 156-157.

⁶ The mention of a *daimon* here could well imply a spirit; however, the adjective 'Good' suggests more that this is the sense of *daimon* as a deity, rather than a spirit of the dead. This spell is very similar to one recounted by Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 29.20.67 = #2.1 in Appendix Two.

**APPENDIX FIVE:
THE THRESHOLD IN MEDICINAL LORE**

'Hence the threshold plays a very prominent part in medicinal lore... The hinge, also, and other parts of the door were used in similar practices.'¹

#	Reference
5.1	Marcellus Empiricus 2.4 <i>emicranium statim curant vermes terreni pari numero sinistra manu lecti et in limine cum terra de limine eadem manu triti et cum aceto optimo eadem manu fronti vel temporibus inliti, cum dolor urgebit.</i>
5.2	Marcellus Empiricus 14.66 <i>picem mollem cerebro eius inpone, qui uvam dolebit, praecipe, ut super limen stans superiori limini ipsam picem capite suo adfigat.</i>
5.3	Marcellus Empiricus 16.21 <i>Feniculi radicem viridem nitidam in pila lignea contunde atque eius sucum ieiunus cum vino vetere per dies continuos novem in limine stans bibe, validissime adversum tussem quamlibet molestam tibi proderit; itidem proderit et pulvis ex eadem radice sicca factus similiter epotus.</i>
5.4	Marcellus Empiricus 23.35 <i>ebuli radicem, quam sine ferro evellas, aridam contusam et pollinis modo cribratam repones, inde cocliaria tria ex vini cyathis tribus in limine stans contra orientem per triduum bibito ieiunus, sed omnino observa, ne ebulum ferro contingatur aut ne ipse, dum remedium accipis, ferrum tecum habeas.</i>
5.5	Pseudo-Theodorus Priscianus, Additamenta p. 324, 5 <i>ebuli radicem contunde et in pulverem redactae coclearia III ex vini cyatis III in limine stans per triduum bibat, et ebulum sine ferro collectum secum portet.</i>
5.6	Marcellus Empiricus 4.27 <i>Porriginem potentissime hac potione purgabis: rosmarinum teres succumque eius vino vel aqua scripulis tribus dabis potui, sed qui sumit supra limen adsistat idque triduo faciat.</i>
5.7	Pseudo-Theodorus Priscianus, Additamenta, p. 345, 14 <i>item ut cito pariat mulier, scribes in limine superiore ostii Oceanum interea surgens Aurora reliquit.</i>
5.8	Pseudo-Theodorus Priscianus, Additamenta p. 323, 27 <i>lacertam viridem in vase fictili novo mittes, et per medium limen pendeat, ubi spleniticus manet, et condes. dum exit sive ingreditur, idem vas tangat, mox ab eo morbo liberabitur.</i>
5.9	Marcellus Empiricus 1.65 <i>glebulas de limine vel ipso cardine erasas cum aceto simul permisce eoque luto frontem inline, quo caput confestim gravissimo dolore relevabis.</i>
5.10	Pliny, Naturalis historia 28.12.49 <i>aiunt cardinibus ostiorum aceto adfusus lutum fronti inlitum capitis dolorem sedare</i>

¹ Ogle 1911: 257-258.

5.11	Marcellus Empiricus 28.37 <i>ad ventris dolorem remedium efficax sic: sordes de cardine ostii tolle digitis duobus, pollice et medicinali, et super umbilicum laborantis adpone.</i>
5.12	Marcellus Empiricus 17.48 <i>in pila, in qua frumentum tunditur, quantulumcumque sordium aut pulveris inveneris collige itemque in eo loco vel foramine, in quo ianuae pessuli descendunt, quidquid reppereris collige et in unum permisce et tacite vel occulto loco in potionem aut cibum vulsi laborantis insperge; continuo malum dolorque sedabitur.</i>
5.13	Geoponica 1.14.6 Εί δὲ καὶ κλειδιά πολλά διαφόρων οἰκημάτων κύκλω τοῦ χωρίου ἐν σχοινοῖς ἀπαρτήσεις, παρελεύσεται ἡ χάλαζα.
5.14	Homeric Hymn to Hermes 145-149 Διὸς δ' ἔριούνιος Ἑρμῆς / δοχμῶθεις μεγάροιο διὰ κλήϊθρον ἔδυνεν / αὔρηι ὀπωρινῇ ἐναλίγκιος, ἡὔτ' ὀμίχλη, / ἰθύσας δ' ἄντρου ἐξίκετο πίονα νηόν / ἦκα ποσὶ προβιβῶν·
5.15	Pseudo-Apuleius, Herbarius 7.1 <i>si quis devotatus defixusque fuerit in suis nuptiis sic eum resolves; herbae pedis leonis frutices numero septem sine radicibus decoque cum aqua, luna decrescente, lavato eum, et te ipsum qui facis, ante limen extra domum prima nocte, et herbam incende aristolochiam et suffumigato eum et redito ad domum et ne post vos respiciatis, resolvisti eum.</i>
5.16	Pliny, Naturalis historia 20.3.6 <i>putant... adiuvari... partus vero, si in arietis lana adligatum inscientis lumbis fuerit, ita ut protinus ab enixu rapiatur extra domum.</i>
5.17	Philostratus, Vita Apollonii 3.39.2 τὸν ἄνδρα ἐκέλευσεν, ἐπειδὴν τίκτηι ἡ γυνή, λαγῶν ὑπὸ κόλπῳ ζῶντα ἐσφέρεσθαι οὗ τίκτει, καὶ περιελθόντα αὐτὴν ἀφεῖναι ὁμοῦ τὸν λαγῶν, συνεκδοθῆναι γὰρ ἂν τῷ ἐμβρύῳ τὴν μήτραν, εἰ μὴ ὁ λαγῶς αὐτίκα ἐξενεχθεῖν θύραζε.
5.18	Augustine, De Civitate Dei 6.9 <i>tamen mulieri fetae post partum tres deos custodes commemorat adhiberi, ne Silvanus deus per noctem ingrediatur et vexet, eorumque custodum significandorum causa tres homines noctu circumire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire, postea pilo, tertio deverrere scopis.</i>

**APPENDIX SEVEN:
FURIES AT THE THRESHOLD**

'just as the threshold was the proper seat in Hades of the Furies, so when they visited the living, they took their seat upon the threshold'.¹

#	Reference
7.1	The Dirae in Virgil, Aeneid 4.471-473 <i>aut Agamemnonius Poenis agitated Orestes, armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris cum fugit ultricesque sedent in limine Dirae.</i>
7.2	Allecto in Virgil, Aeneid 7.341-343 <i>Exim Gorgoneis Allecto infecta venenis principio Latium et Laurentis tecta tyranni celsa petit, tacitumque obsedit limen Amatae</i>
7.3	Tisiphone in Ovid, Metamorphoses 4.481-486 <i>Nec mora, Tisiphone madefactam sanguine sumit inportuna facem, fluidoque cruore rubentem induitur pallam, tortoque incingitur angue egrediturque domo. Luctus comitatur euntem et Pavor et Terror trepidoque Insania vultu. limine constiterat:</i>
7.4	Statius, Thebais 5.68-69 <i>et saeva formidine nupta repleret limina nec fidi populum miserata mariti.</i>

¹ Ogle 1911: 260.

**APPENDIX EIGHT:
THE THRESHOLD PURIFIED FROM POLLUTION**

'When there was danger of pollution, too, the threshold was washed with water'.¹

#	Reference
8.1	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 6.155-157 <i>protinus arbutea postes ter in ordine tangit fronde, ter arbutea limina fronde notat; spargit aquis aditus (et aquae medicamen habebant)</i>
8.2	Propertius 4.8.83-84 <i>dein quemcumque locum externae tetigere puellae, suffiit, ac pura limina tergit aqua</i>
8.3	Horace, <i>Satires</i> 1.5.97-100² <i>dein Gnatia lymphis iratis exstructa dedit risusque iocosque, dum flamma sine tura liquescere limine sacro persuadere cupit.</i>

¹ Ogle 1911: 260.

² This passage is of course not about purifying a threshold with water, but Ogle lists it straight after #8.1 and #8.2 as a further example of the threshold being sacred, and it makes sense for me to include it here rather than list it in its own appendix.

**APPENDIX NINE:
PROPHECY AT THE THRESHOLD**

‘These citations would seem to indicate that the threshold was thought to be the source of prophetic inspiration, and we may compare the familiar grave oracles... and the belief that the spirits of the dead foretold the future’.¹

#	Reference	Prophecy received from
9.1	Virgil, Aeneid 3.154-155 <i>quod tibi delato Ortygiam dicturus Apollo est, hic canit et tua nos en ultro ad limina mittit.</i>	The god Apollo, via a visitation from the Penates, which appear to Aeneas in his sleep.
9.2	Virgil, Aeneid 3.369-373 <i>hic Helenus, caesis primum de more iuencis, exorat pacem divum vittasque resolvit sacrati capitis meque ad tua limina, Phoebе, ipse manu multo suspensum numine ducit, atque haec deinde canit divino ex ore sacerdos:</i>	The god Apollo, via his priest Helenus.
9.3	Virgil, Aeneid 6.45-46 <i>ventum erat ad limen, cum virgo, “poscere fata tempus” ait: “deus, ecce, deus!”</i>	The god Apollo, via his priestess the Sibyl.
9.4	Virgil, Aeneid 6.115-116 <i>quin, ut te supplex peterem et tua limina adirem, idem orans mandata dabat.</i>	Aeneas requests a prophecy from the Sibyl, a priestess of Apollo.
9.5	Virgil, Aeneid 6.151 <i>dum consulta petis nostroque in limine pendes.</i>	The Sibyl, a priestess of Apollo.
9.6	Ovid, Fasti 3.355-358 <i>discedunt dubii, promissaque tarda videntur, dependetque fides a veniente die. mollis erat tellus rorata mane pruina: ante sui populus limina regis adest.</i>	The people are awaiting an omen of Jupiter.
9.7	Homer, Odyssey 8.79-81 ὥς γάρ οἱ χρείων μυθήσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ, ὅθ’ ὑπέρβη λάινον οὐδὸν χρησόμενος·	The god Apollo.

¹ Ogle 1911: 261.

**APPENDIX TEN:
THE MAGIC PERFORMED IN THEOCRITUS, IDYLL 2**

- Simaetha calls for bay-leaves (δάφναι) and her φίλτρα (2.1);¹
- issues an instruction to Thestylis to ‘wreath (στέψον) the bowl (κελέβαν) with fine crimson wool (φοινικέω οίος άώτω) that I may bind a spell (καταδήσομαι) upon my love’ (2.2-3);
- calls on the Moon (Σελάνα) and Hekate to attend (όπάδει) her (2.10-14), and for Hekate to make her drugs (φάρμακα) ‘as potent as (ξρδοισα χερείονα μήτε) those of Circe or Medea or... Perimede’ (2.15-16);
- tells Thestylis to scatter (έπίπασσε) barley groats (άλφιτά) on the fire (πυρι), ‘and say the while, “I strew the bones of Delphis” (τὰ Δέλφιδος όστία πάσσω)’ (2.18-21);
- burns (αίθω) the bay-leaves, ‘so (οϋτω) may the flesh of Delphis waste in the flame (ένι φλογι σάρκ’ άμαθύνοι)’ (2.22-26);
- burns (θυσω) bran (πίτυρα) and calls upon Artemis (2.33);²
- at this point orders Thestylis to ‘clash the bronze (τὸ χαλκέον ως τάχος άχει)’ because ‘the goddess is at the cross-roads (ά θεός έν τριόδοισι)’ (2.36);
- then melts (τάκω) wax (κηρόν), ‘so straightway may Delphis of Myndus waste with love (τάκοιθ’ ύπ’ έρωτος)’ (2.28-29);
- whirls a rhombus (δινεϊθ’ όδε ρόμβος), ‘so he may turn (δινοϊτο) about my door (θύραισιν)’ (2.30-31);

¹ Φίλτρα is a rather vague term which tends to be taken as love potion, but can also be used for any type of magic charm.

² Note that I am following Gow’s ordering of verses, which places lines 28-32 between 42 and 43; see Gow 1952b: 40.

- makes libations (ἀποσπένδω) and cries out (φωνῶ) three times (τρῖς), so that he might forget (ἔχοι λάθας) any current paramour (2.43-46);
- uses ἵππομανές,³ ‘so like one maddened (μαινομένῳ) may he come to this house’ (2.48-51);
- shreds (τίλλοισα) and burns (ἐν πυρὶ βάλλω) the fringe (κράσπεδον) of his cloak (χλαίνας) (2.53-56);
- throughout all this she is turning her ἵνγξ wheel, to ‘draw to my house the man I love (ἔλκε τὸ τῆνον ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἄνδρα),’ which she mentions in each refrain in the first part of the poem.⁴
- She states that the following day (αὔριον) she will perform yet another magic act: ‘I will bray (τρίψασα) a lizard (σαύραν), and bring him an ill draught (ποτὸν κακὸν)’ (2.58).
- She then sends Thestylis out to knead (ὑπόμαξον) herbs (θρόνα) at Delphis door (φλιᾶς) and say ‘I knead the bones of Delphis (τὰ Δέλφιδος ὅστια μᾶσσω)’ (2.59-62).⁵
- With Thestylis away on her errand, Simaetha is left alone; she takes the opportunity to ‘lament [her] love (τὸν ἔρωτα δακρύσω)’ (2.64) and

³ The *hippomanes* is a common magical ingredient of ambiguous form. Sometimes it is derived from a horse, but here Theocritus states that it is φυτόν, a plant from Arcadia (2.48).

⁴ 2.17; 22; 27; 37; 43; 32; 47; 52; 57; 63; the line numbers are out of order due to variations in the manuscript tradition; for more on this see Gow 1952b: 40 and Lawall 1961, who disagrees with Gow’s structure. For more about the *inyx* in this poem see Gow 1934 and Segal 1973. Ritner 1995: 3368 uses the *inyx* as an example of the specifically Greek magic found in this poem, and refers to it in contrast to the ‘invocations to the angry dead’ that are usually found in the erotic magic of Egypt; this of course implies that the dead are not a part of Simaetha’s magic.

⁵ A coda to Thestylis’ errand with the herbs is the fact that the scholia state that Theocritus has taken it, and the name Thestylis, from a mime of Sophron; we also know that Sophron had written a mime known as Ταὶ γυναῖκες αἱ τὰν θεόν φαντι ἐξελαῖν (‘The women who say they will expel the Goddess’, trans. Hordern 2002: 170) – critics have understandably connected the two. Gow 1952b: 33 notes, however, that ‘the evidence is insufficient to determine [the mime’s] subject or even the meaning of its title’, but even so, Hordern 2002: *passim* has made a strong case for both, and argues that purificatory practices – as found in the Sophron fragments – could certainly be performed as part of the sort of erotic magic we see with Simaetha.

performs a monologue, addressed in every subsequent refrain to πότνα Σελάνα, explaining how she fell in love with Delphis (2.64-156).

- At the very end of the poem, Simaetha reaffirms her intention to bind Delphis with magic (τοῖς φίλτροις καταδήσομαι), but also states that she has evil drugs (κακὰ φάρμακα) which she learnt about (μαθοῖσα) from an Assyrian stranger (Ἀσσυρίω... ξείνοιο) and which she could use to make Delphis 'beat upon the gates of Hades (τὰν Ἄϊδαο πύλαν... ἀραξεῖ)' if he vexes her (λυπῆ) (2.159-162).

**APPENDIX ELEVEN:
THE MAGIC PERFORMED IN VIRGIL, *ECLOGUE* 8**

- The witch commands Amaryllis to bring water (*aquam*), wreath (*cinge*) the altars with a soft band (*molli... vitta*) and burn (*adole*) rich vervain (*verbenas... pinguis*) and 'male' incense (*mascula tura*) (8.64-65), 'so that I may attempt to turn aside the healthy feelings of my spouse with sacred magic (*coniugis ut magicis sanos avertere sacris/ experiar sensus*)' (8.66-67);
- she ties round (*circumdo*) an image of Daphnis (*tibi*; the effigy is explicitly referred to in the next verses) three different threads (*terna... diversa.../ licia*) which have a three-fold colouring (*triplici... colore*) (8.73-74);
- then leads this effigy (*effigiem*) three times (*ter*) around the altars (8.74-75);
- instructs Amaryllis to weave (*necte*) three colours (*ternos... colores*) into three knots (*tribus nodis*) and to say 'I weave the chains of Venus (*Veneris... vincula necto*)' (8.77-78);
- she puts mud (*limus*) and wax (*cera*) into the fire (*igni*), so that they respectively harden (*durescit*) and melt (*liquescit*), 'so Daphnis does with our love (*sic nostro Daphnis amore*)' (8.80-81);
- orders Amaryllis to scatter grains (*sparge molam*) and burn brittle bay with bitumin (*fragilis incende bitumine laurus*) (8.82) and states 'I burn this bay against Daphnis (*ego hanc in Daphnide laurum*)' (8.83);
- buries ('I entrust to you, Earth (*terra, tibi mando*)') the dear tokens (*pignora cara*) – clothing (*exuvias*) – which Daphnis left her, by the

threshold (*limine in ipso*) because 'these tokens owe Daphnis [to me] (*debent haec pignora Daphnim*)' (8.91-93);

- states that she has herbs and poisons from the Black Sea (*herbas atque... Ponto... venena*) which were given to her by Moeris, a magic-working werewolf (*lupum fieri.../ Moerim.../ ... vidi*) (8.95-99);
- orders Amaryllis to take the ashes (*cineres*) outside (*foras*) and throw them over her head (*trans... caput iace*) into the flowing river (*rivo... fluenti*), without looking behind her (*nec respexeris*) (8.101-102);
- says that she intends to approach (*adgrediar*) Daphnis with some unspecified spell ingredients ('these', *his*) (8.102-103);
- throughout all this she is chanting the refrain: 'lead him home from the city, my spells, lead Daphnis (*ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim*)'.¹
- At this point the witch notices that the altar has spontaneously caught alight (*corripuit tremulis altaria flammis/ sponte sua*) (8.105-106);
- her dog, Hylax, then barks at the threshold (*in limine latrat*) (8.107);
- the witch takes these happenings as signs that her magic has worked, and changes her refrain for the final line of the poem: 'cease, now cease, spells, Daphnis comes from the city (*parcite, ab urbe venit, iam parcite, carmina, Daphnis*)' (8.109).

¹ 8.68; 72; 76; 79; 84; 90; 94; 100; 104. See Coleman 1977: 244-5 and Clausen 1994: 237-8 for further details of the rhythm and 'numerology' behind the refrain.

**APPENDIX TWELVE:
DAPHNIS AND THE *LIMEN* IN VIRGIL'S *ECLOGUES***

The word *limen* only appears thrice in Virgil's *Eclogues*, and in each instance it is connected to a character named Daphnis:

*Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi
sub pedibusque uidet nubes et sidera Daphnis.*
Radiant Daphnis wonders at the unfamiliar threshold of Olympus,
and, under his feet, sees clouds and stars.
(5.56-7)

*has olim exuias mihi perfidus ille reliquit,
pignora cara sui, quae nunc ego limine in ipso,
Terra, tibi mando; debent haec pignora Daphnin.*
Once that faithless one left these cast-offs to me,
his dear tokens, which now, by the threshold itself,
I entrust to you, Earth; these tokens owe Daphnis.
(8.91-93)

nescio quid certe est, et Hylax in limine latrat.
It's certainly something, and Hylax barks at the threshold
[as Daphnis is potentially returning home].
(8.107)

In *Eclogue* 5 Daphnis is deified, and he stands radiant (*candidus*) at the threshold of Olympus. In *Eclogue* 8, however, Daphnis is faithless (*perfidus*): he has deserted his lover, a witch, and she is performing a spell to bring him back to her home. Part of the spell involves burying Daphnis' effects at the threshold, and at the end of the poem the witch suspects that the spell has worked and that Daphnis is returning, because the dog Hylax barks at the threshold.

Alpers asserts that it 'is indisputable that the *Eclogues* are highly organized',¹ with the poems placed by Virgil in the order that we have them now, and this

¹ Alpers 1979: 107.

view remains unchallenged.² As Clausen observes, the ‘main design of Virgil’s book is evident because Virgil took pains to make it so.’³ Is it mere coincidence, then, that Daphnis is connected to these three *limina*, or is there a deeper meaning that can be unearthed? As Volk notes, however, ‘the ability to produce divergent readings is... an intrinsic feature of Vergil’s poetry,’⁴ and before we can begin to analyse Daphnis at the *limen* there are two potential problems – the possibility that not all of these thresholds are indeed *limina*, and whether the figure of Daphnis himself can be analysed as a coherent character across multiple poems.

There was a Roman superstition that it was bad luck to stumble upon the threshold,⁵ and – unfortunately – stumble we must at the first *limen* of Daphnis. Modern editors and commentators give *limen Olympi* at 5.56 with no variation offered,⁶ and as Westman notes, ‘Das Wort ist nicht nur bei Vergil einstimmig überliefert, sondern auch Servius gebraucht es beim Zitieren unseres Verses zu ecl. 2,46.’⁷ However, there is a variant reading, recorded by Heyne-Wagner and Ribbeck in the nineteenth century but not since, that is derived from a further passage of Servius, *ad Eclogue* 7.5, which quotes line 5.56 as *candidus insuetum*

² See, for example, Berg 1974: 108 & 113; Rudd 1999 [1976]: 92; Lipka 2001: xi; Breed 2006: 122.

³ Clausen 1994: xxii.

⁴ Volk 2008: 2.

⁵ I discuss this further in Part Two Chapter Three.

⁶ Mynors does not give *lumen* as a variant. Lipka 2001: 17-18 lists all 12 words in the *Eclogues* which end in *-men*; *lumen* is not one of them.

⁷ Westman 1980: 116. As well as Servius there is further testimony given by Porphyrio *ad Horace Epode* 3.4. See Ribbeck 1894:27.

miratur lumen Olympi.⁸ For Westman, ‘die Existenz einer (wenn auch nur einmal) von Servius bezeugten Lesart *lumen* reizt zu weiterer Untersuchung.’⁹

Westman’s ‘Untersuchung’ takes the form of analysing whether the adjective *insuetum* is more commonly applied to *limen* or *lumen* in poetry, and whether the *lumen Olympi* is more common in other poetry than a *limen Olympi*. He finds evidence for all four possibilities, but comes down on the side of *lumen*: arguing that perhaps in some cases – although all are late, Christian texts – the appearance of *lumen Olympi* or *lumen caeli* especially could be traced back to an original reading of *lumen* in the *Eclogues*.¹⁰ As well as looking at later material that might have been based on the *Eclogues*, one must consider the potential source material. A likely source for 5.56-57 is Lucretius 3.18-27, with, as Lipka notes, a Virgilian take on the ‘general idea (view from Mt Olympus), the perspective (standing above and looking down) and the vocabulary (*sub pedibus* at the same position in the line)’.¹¹ There is no threshold or door mentioned, but *lumine* does appear at 3.22.

Does this, therefore, validate Westman’s thesis? I do not believe this to be the case. Clausen, who has written the most recent commentary on the *Eclogues*, published almost fifteen years after Westman’s article, makes no reference to *lumen* at 5.56 and gives two potential sources for a *limen Olympi*:

⁸ Heyne-Wagner 1830: 160; Ribbeck 1894: 27.

⁹ Westman 1980: 118.

¹⁰ Westman 1980: 121-122.

¹¹ Lipka 2001: 73.

Hom. *Il.* 1.591-3 (Hephaestus)... 'from the threshold of the gods... I fell upon Lemnos', Accius, *Philocteta* 525-6 R.³ 'Lemnia praesto/litora', 529-31 'Volcania iam templa sub ipsis/ collibus, in quos delatus locos/ dicitur alto ab limine caeli'.¹²

It would appear that we are at a stalemate. Westman has found evidence for both *insuetum limen* and *insuetum lumen*, along with other references to both *limen Olympi* and *lumen Olympi*. Whilst he ultimately concludes that 'dass die Lesart *lumen* besser angebracht und ernsthaft zu erwägen ist',¹³ there do not appear to be any other critics in the nearly forty years since his article was published who accept – or who even acknowledge – this variant reading. Westman argues that 'Tatsächlich könnte Daphnis streng genommen noch nicht *candidus*... sein, bevor er die Schwelle (die er selbstverständlich von aussen betrachtet) überschritten hat.'¹⁴ However, the imagery of Daphnis stood at the threshold of the Olympus reflects his liminal status here – a herdsman who has become a god, on the cusp of being made divine – and I have found no evidence of other critics being troubled by this; indeed for many the threshold marks one of the stages in Daphnis' deification.¹⁵ This is perhaps a more likely reading than Westman's assertion that the light of heaven would be more unfamiliar to a mortal than its threshold.¹⁶ If we are to continue down this presumably fruitless route of attempting to guess what might be both more *insuetus* and subject to wonder to a newly deified fictional character, then it would arguably be the threshold –

¹² Clausen 1994: 167. The Homeric passage is also acknowledged by Westman; Clausen notes the reference to Lucretius, but only lines 3.27-28 as a comparison to 5.57-58.

¹³ Westman 1980: 125.

¹⁴ Westman 1980: 123-124.

¹⁵ e.g., see Putnam 1970: 183, Perret 1970: 63-64 – both admittedly published before Westman's article (although note that the variant reading has been around since at least the time of Servius); Saunders 2008: 22-25.

¹⁶ Westman 1980: 124.

acting as *pars pro toto* for his new abode and therefore confirmation of his new divine status¹⁷ – that would cause him the most *mirari*.

If we can assume that it is safe to let the reading of *limen Olympi* stand, what to do about the fact that unlike in Theocritus, where names are generally only used for one character in one poem,¹⁸ names in the *Eclogues* – such as Daphnis – are reused with seemingly reckless abandon, and it is clear that figures who share the same name across poems are not necessarily to be thought of as being the same character.¹⁹ Although Kollmann notes that the ‘essential function of a name is to identify a known subject’,²⁰ the general scholarly consensus is that ‘the use of proper names... is characterized by an interplay of continuity and change. They recur regularly, but... the identity of the individuals to whom they refer is systematically blurred.’²¹ However, as Kollmann reminds us, ‘Proper Names are thus one of the most powerful and efficient means a poet can use in order to transfer information or to awaken emotions’,²² and it is hard to believe that an auteur such as Virgil would have reused names without there being some significance behind this.

¹⁷ As Saunders 2008: 24 notes, ‘Daphnis’ ascension to heaven breaks new ground: he “marvels” at the “unaccustomed threshold.” This is not a sight available to most.

¹⁸ Rumpf 2008: 76-77; as well as his using individual names for individual characters, Kollmann 1975: 107 notes that the ‘percentage of Proper Names in Theocritus’ poems is far below that of the *Eclogues*.’ Oddly, given its subject matter, Kollman’s article does not consider whether the characters sharing the same names in the *Eclogues* should be thought of as being part of the same personae.

¹⁹ Rumpf 2008: 74.

²⁰ Kollmann 1975: 98.

²¹ Rumpf 2008: 65. See also, e.g., Coleman 1977: 25; Lipka 2001: 171-172.

²² Kollmann 1975: 99.

For Rumpf, this is Virgil's way of leaving the reader with 'unanswered questions',²³ but for Breed the recurrence of names is to give the reader a continuity of the *Eclogues* as a book of poetry, if not continuity of the characters themselves:

Virgil's cross-references, the ways he links one *Eclogue* to another by shared language and shared character names, do not so much proclaim that the individual poems join together to create a unified picture of an imagined world as they join together to proclaim 'this is a book'.²⁴

There never appears to be any question over the character in *Eclogue* 5 being a Daphnis. Even though Virgil's herdsman of *Eclogue* 5 is not an exact match for the Theocritean precedent, the poem 'presupposes... in particular the lament for Daphnis in *Idyll* 1, and, even more, certain features of *Idyll* 7 [which also mentions Daphnis]',²⁵ and the assumption appears to be that this character fits into the continuum of the idea of the pastoral 'Daphnis'. It is the Daphnis of *Eclogue* 8, the errant lover upon whom a witch enacts a binding spell, who seems the most divergent from the mould of the traditional Daphnis, and – importantly – 'hard to unify with Daphnis' appearance as the pastoral god of *Eclogue* 5.²⁶

Eclogue 8 is based on Theocritus' *Idyll* 2, where the errant lover is named 'Delphis' – but why did Virgil change the name? Servius suggested it was due to the etymology of *Daphnis* and the *laurus* which the witch burns against Daphnis during her spell at 8.83 – this in itself goes back to the δάφνη which Simaetha

²³ Rumpf 2008: 76.

²⁴ Breed 2006: 69.

²⁵ Lee 1977: 62.

²⁶ Breed 2006: 122-3.

calls for in the first line of *Idyll 2*, and then burns against Delphis at 2.23.²⁷ A number of modern commentators seem to seek no further reason than this.²⁸ Others see the change in name from Delphis to Daphnis merely as part of Virgil's pastoralisation of one of Theocritus' urban mimes, and this extends to the figure of the maid as well: Theocritus' non-Bucolic Thestylis finds her counterpart in Virgil's Amaryllis.²⁹

However, even the argument that 'Daphnis' is 'just' a bucolic version of 'Delphis' can be more nuanced than it might initially appear. By changing the Theocritean Delphis to Daphnis and Thestylis to Amaryllis, Coleman points out that these names in Virgil's poem now 'recall *Idd.* 1 and 3 respectively, and so link the magic rites more closely to the theme of Damon's song;³⁰ Damon's song being the first half of *Eclogue* 8. It is the unnamed herdsman in Damon's song – a sufferer of unrequited love who plans to commit suicide – who is closer in characterisation to the traditional figure of Daphnis than the character named 'Daphnis' is.³¹

However, for Berg, the character named Daphnis in *Eclogue* 8 is also, in fact, a continuation of the mythological character of Daphnis:

As the ideal beloved, Daphnis... plays a rôle which he had often assumed in the Greek erotic-epigrammatic tradition, that of the absent lover... by changing the name to 'Daphnis', the Roman poet gives the enchantress the best of herdsmen to love.³²

²⁷ Servius, *ad Eclogue* 8.83.

²⁸ e.g., Putnam 1970: 284; Coleman 1977: 248; Lipka 2001: 181.

²⁹ e.g., Coleman 1977: 245; Clausen 1994: 256; Fantuzzi & Papanghelis 2006: viii.

³⁰ Coleman 1977: 254.

³¹ See Coleman 1977: 28-29 and Breed 2006: 122-3.

³² Berg 1974: 121.

This is similar to Breed's argument that '[the witch's] lover's very name, Daphnis, predestines him to a lack of responsiveness. The Theocritean Daphnis refuses to give in to love'.³³ Heyworth also sees a connection to the model of the Theocritean Daphnis: 'This [*Eclogue* 8] is the first time the city has appeared since poem 1, and it is a shocking indication that we are nearing the margins of pastoral, especially as the figure who has abandoned the countryside (even if temporarily) is Daphnis, the model herdsman of Theocritean *Idyll* 1.'³⁴

If Virgil had not wanted to draw parallels between all the Daphnides, then it is odd that Daphnis is so emphasised in *Eclogue* 8. As Putnam notes, 'Virgil's heroine draws attention to the fact that her lover is none other than Daphnis by putting his name in the refrain and thus making it a necessary part of the incantation.'³⁵ The refrain in Theocritus merely refers to 'the man' (*ton andra*), and so there was no precedent for using the name of the beloved as such an integral part of the spell.

The use of Daphnis' name as part of the refrain perhaps gives us the biggest clue as to the presentation of 'Daphnis' by Virgil: Daphnis only exists as a figure within the narratives of the *Eclogues* as told by other characters. The name 'Daphnis' is mentioned in six of the ten *Eclogues*, but each time his appearances in the poems are couched under layers of narrative – who actually is the narrator in the second song of *Eclogue* 8, for example, in which Daphnis features so heavily? The words are those of a witch, but they are relayed by the herdsman

³³ Breed 2006: 39.

³⁴ Heyworth 2007: 153-154.

³⁵ Putnam 1970: 280.

Alphesiboeus, whose song itself is told by a Muse, all within the frame of an external narrator who is setting the scene (and all this is, of course, before we step out even further to find Virgil himself writing the poem).

This pattern is repeated (although without quite as many layers as in *Eclogue 8*) in the other poems in which Daphnis appears. At 2.26-27 Corydon's song – told by an external narrator – mentions Daphnis as a paragon of beauty; in 3.12-13 Damoetas reminds Menalcas of the time he broke Daphnis' bow and arrows; in *Eclogue 5* Daphnis' story is sung by both Menalcas and Mopsus as part of a competition; Meliboeus recounts a conversation he once had with Daphnis at 7.1-13; and 9.46-50 tells part of another song – this time Lycidas is reminiscing with Moeris about verses he'd heard Moeris sing about Daphnis.

This observation perhaps indicates why 'Daphnis' is such a changeable figure from poem to poem. It does not even take into account the allusions to a 'Daphnis' figure in other characters, such as Gallus in *Eclogue 10*,³⁶ Meliboeus and Tityrus in *Eclogue 1*,³⁷ or the unnamed herdsman in the first part of *Eclogue 8*. Ultimately all of the Daphnides are Daphnis and yet are not Daphnis. Each one can be seen as a different facet of the being that is 'Daphnis'. Breed draws a similar conclusion: "Daphnis" is perhaps better seen as a marker that attaches to different figures at different times over the course of the book.³⁸ They are not the Theocritean Daphnis: 'the Vergilian Daphnis is clearly distinguished from his

³⁶ e.g., Berg 1974: 186; Breed 2006: 116.

³⁷ Breed 2006: 110.

³⁸ Breed 2006: 122-3.

Theocritean predecessor';³⁹ and if Theocritus' Daphnis was one step removed from the mythological Daphnis,⁴⁰ then this places Virgil's Daphnides one step further away from the Daphnis tradition. We should not, then, be surprised that the Daphnis whom we find in Virgil is not the Daphnis whom we might expect, and Breed emphasises that there is a 'fluid significance of Daphnis in the book'.⁴¹

If 'Daphnis' takes on a different role for each narrator within the *Eclogues*, then can any real interpretation be given to the move from Daphnis *candidus* at the *limen* in *Eclogue 5* to *perfidus* at the *limina* of *Eclogue 8*? I believe that this switch is part of the deeper symbolism in both poems of the reversals and stoppings of the natural world. When seen as part of the imagery of a topsy-turvy world, the idea of a liminal figure such as Daphnis being used in both poems is no longer so hard to unify.

The idea of Daphnis being connected to nature gone awry appears in Theocritus:

νῦν ἴα μὲν φορέοιτε βᾶτοι, φορέοιτε δ' ἄκανθαι,
ἃ δὲ καλὰ νάρκισσος ἐπ' ἀρκεύθοισι κομάσαι,
πάντα δ' ἀναλλα γένοιτο, καὶ ἃ πίτυς ὄχνας ἐνείκαι,
Δάφνις ἐπεὶ θνάσκει, καὶ τὰς κύνας ὄλαφος ἔλκοι,
κῆξ ὀρέων τοὶ σκῶπες ἀηδόσι γαρύσαιντο.
Now violets bear, ye brambles, and, ye thorns, bear violets,
and let the fair narcissus bloom on the juniper. Let all be
changed, and let the pine bear pears since Daphnis is dying.
Let the stag worry the hounds, and from the mountains let
the owls cry to nightingales.

(*Idyll* 1.132-136)⁴²

³⁹ Leach 1974: 186; see also Lee 1977: 62; Coleman 1977: 158-159.

⁴⁰ Clausen 1994: 152 n. 9; see also Berg 1974: 12.

⁴¹ Breed 2006: 155.

⁴² Translation by Gow 1952a.

This is picked up by Virgil in *Eclogue* 5, where a repeated mention of violets, thorns and the narcissus bring the connection to the forefront of the intertextuality between the poems, and as Garson notes, the ‘reversal of nature which Daphnis called for, perhaps figuratively, in his last words [in *Idyll* 1] is a *fait accompli* in Mopsus’ song’:⁴³

*grandia saepe quibus mandavimus hordea sulcis,
infelix lolium et steriles nascuntur avenae;
pro molli viola, pro purpureo narcisso
carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis.*

Often in the furrows, to which we entrusted the big barley grains, luckless darnel springs up and barren oat straws. Instead of the soft violet, instead of the gleaming narcissus, the thistle rises up and the sharp-spiked thorn
(5.36-39)⁴⁴

This motif of stopped and reversed nature is also found in *Eclogue* 8 – twice. The first comes in the first few lines of the poem:

*Pastorum musam Damonis et Alphesiboei,
immemor herbarum quos est mirata iuuenca
certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces,
et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus
Damonis musam dicemus et Alphesiboei.*

To the muse of the shepherds Damon and Alphesiboeus –
at whose competing the heifer wondered, forgetful of the grass,
at whose song lynxes were stunned,
and streams, having changed, stayed their courses –
let us dedicate to the muse of Damon and Alphesiboeus.

(8.1-5)

The name Alphesiboeus previously occurred in *Eclogue* 5, and he too has undergone a transformation: a mere dancer accompanying the singing of others in *Eclogue* 5 has now become a singer extraordinaire in *Eclogue* 8.⁴⁵ Vocabulary

⁴³ Garson 1971: 197.

⁴⁴ Translation by Fairclough 1916.

⁴⁵ cf. 5.73 (*saltantis satyros imitabitur Alphesiboeus*) with the opening lines of 8.1-5, which praise the wonder of Alphesiboeus’ singing.

such as *mirata* (8.2) also serves to bring to mind the earlier poem, as Daphnis *miratur limen Olympi*.⁴⁶

There are further reversals in both Damon's song and Alpheisiboeus' song – which Saunders sees as part of the 'conjunction of, and to some extent tension between, the still and the moving'⁴⁷ – uniting both the two halves of *Eclogue* 8 in their shared topsy-turviness and further reinforcing the connection to *Eclogue* 5. This connection is especially strong in the song of Damon, with the repetition of the name Mopsus; now no longer the singer of Daphnis' death, but rather the lover who has stolen the *puella* of Damon's Daphnis-esque unnamed herdsman, triggering further reversals of nature:

*Mopso Nysa datur: quid non speremus amantes?
Iungentur iam grypes equis, aeuoque sequenti
cum canibus timidi ueniet ad pocula dammae.*

Nysa is given to Mopsus: what should lovers not hope for?
Already griffins are united with horses, and in the following lifetime
the timid deer will come to drink with the dogs.

(8.26-28)

The culmination of these stoppages and reversals – prompted thus far by the death of the pastoral poet Daphnis, the wondrous songs of the herdsmen, and the loss of a love – appears in the song of Alpheisiboeus as he recounts the love spell of the witch:

*Carmina uel caelo possunt deducere lunam;
carminibus Circe socios mutauit Vlix;*

Spells, for instance, are able to draw down the moon from heaven;
Circe changed the companions of Ulysses with spells.

(8.69-70)

⁴⁶ Saunders 2008: 158 n. 50.

⁴⁷ Saunders 2008: 52.

Here the witch 'boasts of the capacity of song to reshape the literary and cosmological universe alike by drawing down the moon from the sky'.⁴⁸ Again, the vocabulary used refers back to earlier reversals – just as Circe can *mutavit* people with her spells, so we saw the 'final effect of Damon and Alpheisiboeus' songs on the world of nature... *et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus*.⁴⁹

If the witch can *deducere* the moon from the sky, what is to stop her from being able to *ducere* a star – if we think of Daphnis *ad astra* (5.51 & 52) – from heaven? As Putnam notes, the 'bringing of the moon down from the heavens (*deducere*) parallels her command to the songs to charm Daphnis back from the city (*ducite ab urbe*).'⁵⁰ And charm Daphnis back the witch does. The final line of the poem, a modified version of the earlier refrain, calls the songs and spells to a halt:

parcite – ab urbe venit – iam parcite, carmina – Daphnis.
Cease, now cease, spells, Daphnis comes from the city.
(8.109)

If we were in any doubt as to the name of the witch's lover, its placement as the final word the poem cannot but emphasise that it is indeed Daphnis. The ordering of the words in this final refrain is, as Nisbet notes, 'highly mannered, but at the same time it indicates the excitement of the speaker and produces a climax with the lover's name.'⁵¹ The first word of *Eclogue 8* is *pastorum*, which Clausen sees 'noticeably insistent... as if to assert the pastoral character of the poem as a whole in anticipation of the reader's response to the unpastoral Muse

⁴⁸ Saunders 2008: 50.

⁴⁹ Putnam 1970: 281. Magic stopping and changing streams is also a common claim for witches. There are further parallels with the opening lines; the heifer in 8.2 is unmindful of the grass because of the stupefying poetry she hears; in the witch's song the heifer forgets to go home.

⁵⁰ Putnam 1970: 281.

⁵¹ Nisbet 2008: 55.

of Alpheisiboeus'.⁵² Does the name Daphnis simply give credence to this pastoral adaptation of an urban mime, as was suggested earlier, or do the framing words of *pastorum* and *Daphnis* indicate more that this instance of 'Daphnis' should not be seen as isolated from the other Daphnides, but as intrinsically connected to the Daphnis of pastoral? Here a liminal figure with connections to the city, but with his heart in the country.

To be part of the pastoral world is to be part of a liminal space: not the city, and not quite the wilderness: for Skoie, 'this juxtaposition of natural and civilized elements contributes to place the pasture on the threshold between the city and the country'.⁵³ This liminality is even more heightened for the figure of Daphnis: a man who is yet not a man; different as the usages of the character by various authors may be, a common thread running through the interpretations is Daphnis' connection to the supernatural – sometimes a son of Hermes, often the lover of a nymph, perhaps even a representative, sociologically, of 'male initiands, who symbolically "died" when they ceased to be one of the young shepherds before officially gaining the status of an adult farmer'.⁵⁴

As a liminal figure we should be unsurprised that Daphnis moves from threshold to threshold in the *Eclogues*. The threshold is unfamiliar in 5.56, but it is an indication of his deification and so we should expect that 'Daphnis' ascension to heaven breaks new ground'.⁵⁵ In *Eclogue* 8, however, we should perhaps assume that the threshold is, in fact, rather more *adsuetus* than *insuetus*. Unlike *Idyll* 2,

⁵² Clausen 1994: 233.

⁵³ Skoie 2006: 301.

⁵⁴ Baudy & Höcker 2006.

⁵⁵ Saunders 2008: 24.

where it is clear that Delphis and Simaetha live apart, it is not stated in the *Eclogue* whether Daphnis and the witch cohabit or not. I believe that there are a number of indications that they do, and that the thresholds mentioned in *Eclogue* 8 should be seen as his familiar, domestic *limina*: first, the witch refers to Daphnis as her *coniunx* (*coniugis* 8.66), which implies a more permanent relationship than the brief liaison between Delphis and Simaetha.⁵⁶ Second, Simaetha, during her refrain, stipulates that Delphis (or rather, ‘the man’) is to be drawn specifically to *her* house (ἐμὸν... δῶμα), whereas Virgil’s witch chants that Daphnis is to come ‘home’ (*domum*) – the implication being that ‘home’ is a shared place for both of them.

There is also the fact that the action of the spell incorporates the threshold of the house that the witch is currently in. The use of the present tense during the spell and the word *nunc* at 8.92 – as well as the potential success of the spell during the witch’s monologue – imply that she is in the process of burying Daphnis’ effects at the threshold at 8.91-3, rather than planning to do this at a future occasion, and so that threshold is most likely to be the threshold to their own home.

Why does the witch bury Daphnis’ *exuviae* in the earth at the threshold? For

Putnam the important thing is the fact that the *exuviae* are buried in the earth:

‘There is some intrinsic force in nature itself which is of special value in bringing

⁵⁶ Lipka 2001: 128: ‘one may point to the poetic *coniunx*, which – characteristically of the bucolic world, where “married women” were generally absent – appears only in the two “magic” songs of *Ecl.* 8.’

Daphnis back.⁵⁷ Putnam, along with other critics,⁵⁸ highlights the connection between Virgil's witch burying Daphnis' *exuviae* and Simaetha burning the fringe of Delphis' cloak at *Idyll* 2.53-54, but the location of this burial at the threshold appears to be of secondary importance; Perret goes as far as to say that the witch's ritual is 'Sans équivalent chez [Theocritus]!'⁵⁹ Yet it is clear that in this one ritual action Virgil has combined the two instances from the Theocritean model to make a unique ceremony for his witch: the burning of Delphis' cloak, and the instruction for the maid Thestylis to go and rub herbs onto Delphis' door (2.59-62).

The fact that the threshold is an intrinsic part of the spell to draw Daphnis home is emphasised by the fact that the indication that Daphnis *ab urbe venit* (8.109), comes from the dog barking *in limine* (8.107). Is Hylax simply living up to his name with this welcome, or does the barking suggest that that while this final *limen* is the familiar, domestic one, it is Daphnis himself who is *insuetus*, unfamiliar, who has changed? In this topsy-turvy world Daphnis has been shaken down from the *limen Olympi* and placed in the city, away from the pastoral roots of the shepherd poet – 'he does not care for the gods or songs' (*nihil ille deos, nil carmina curat* 8.103) states the witch, just before she chants the final refrain of the spell which triggers the return of Daphnis.

We should not be surprised that the Daphnis we have in *Eclogue* 8 is not the same as the Daphnis in other poems. Mopsus has changed; Alphisiboeus has

⁵⁷ Putnam 1970: 287.

⁵⁸ Putnam 1970: 287; see also Coleman 1977: 249; Williams 1979: 125; Clausen 1994: 262.

⁵⁹ Perret 1970: 94.

changed; Daphnis has certainly changed. The changes continue into the next poem and the final mention of Daphnis in the *Eclogues*:

*Quid, quae te pura solum sub nocte canentem
audieram? numeros memini, si verba tenerem.
"Daphni, quid antiquos signorum suspicis ortus?
ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum,
astrum, quo segetes gauderent frugibus et quo
duceret apricis in collibus uva colorem.
insere, Daphni, piros; carpent tua poma nepotes."*

[Lycidas is speaking to Moeris:]

What of the lines I heard you singing alone beneath the cloudless night? The tune I remember, could I but keep the words. "Daphnis, why are you gazing at the old constellations rising? See! the star of Caesar, seed of Dione, has gone forth—the star to make the fields glad with corn, and the grape deepen its hue on the sunny hills. Graft your pears, Daphnis; your children's children shall gather the fruits you have sown."

(9.44-50)⁶⁰

Moeris, a werewolf in *Eclogue 8*, has changed: he is now merely a man, a tired victim of land taking who has forgotten many of his songs and is worried that his voice itself is weakening – perhaps caused, he muses, by the superstition of having seen a wolf (*lupi Moerim videre priories* 9.54). But no matter, say Moeris, if Lycidas wants to hear more songs like the one he remembers about Daphnis, then all he need do is ask Menalcas to remember them (*sed tamen ista satis referet tibi saepe Menalcas* 9.55): songs like the one about Daphnis at the *limen Olympi* that Menalcas sings in *Eclogue 5*, perhaps? The reference to *Caesaris astrum* certainly calls to mind the earlier deification.⁶¹ It would appear that our topsy-turvy world is not only righted, but has turned full circle back to the story,

⁶⁰ Translation by Fairclough 1916.

⁶¹ There is an argument that Daphnis is symbolic of Caesar in *Eclogue 5*.

the death and deification, of Daphnis; back as far even, perhaps, as the first *Idyll* of Theocritus and the beginnings of pastoral.⁶²

⁶² The mention of the pears particularly calls to mind 'the pine bear pears since Daphnis is dying' at *Idyll* 1.134-135 (trans. Gow 1952a). And who are the descendants of Daphnis? Why, there is Gallus in the next and final poem, *Eclogue* 10, who resembles Daphnis most strikingly.

APPENDIX THIRTEEN: THE START AND END DATES OF THE *PARENTALIA*

The Roman festival of the *Parentalia* probably started on the Ides of February (13th). There are three late sources for the *Parentalia* starting on the Ides: the calendar of Philocalus, from AD 354, which states that *VIRGO VESTA[LIS] PARENTAT* ('a Vestal virgin makes a sacrifice in honour of ancestors') on the Ides, which is perceived as being the official 'opening' of the festival;¹ the calendar of Polemius Silvius from AD 448/449, states that *parentatio tumulorum in[cipit]* on the Ides; and finally the Late Antique John Lydus gives the relatively straightforward statement that:

Εἰδοῖς Φεβρουαρίαις· ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας ἀπὸ ὥρας ἕκτης διὰ τὰς τῶν κατοικομένων χοὰς τὰ ἱερὰ κατησφαλίζοντο, καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες ἐν σχήματι ἰδιωτῶν προήεσαν ἄχρι τῆς πρὸ ὀκτῶ Καλενδῶν Μαρτίων.

On the Ides of February. From this day, from the sixth hour, they would make the sacred things secure by means of drink-offerings for the deceased, and the magistrates would go out in the guise of private persons until the eighth day before the Kalends of March.

(*De mensibus* 4.29)²

Ovid, who provides the most detailed description of the festival, does not give a starting point, but it is clear that the *dies Parentales* that he is describing at *Fasti* 2.533-570 cover a period of time. Ovid uses the term *Feralia* but not *Parentalia*.³ He refers to the period as the *dies ferales* (*Fasti* 2.34) and *dies parentales* (2.549). This mimics what we find in general, whereby '*Feralia*' is commonly attested in both *fasti* and literary sources whereas '*Parentalia*' is not used in extant *fasti*.⁴

¹ Beard, North and Price 1998: 50.

² Translation by Hooker 2017.

³ *Parentalia* can be found as a term elsewhere in literature, for example: Cicero, *Pro Scauro* 11 and *Philippic* 1.6.13; Petronius, *Satyrical* 78.4.2; Augustine, *Confessions* 6.2; and of course it is the title of Ausonius' *Parentalia*.

⁴ Dolansky 2011: 129 n. 13 provides a list of the *fasti* which mention the *Feralia*: *Antiates maiores*, *Caeretani*, *Maffeani*, and *Verulani*. To these we can also add the late *fasti* of Philocalus and

The most sensible end to the festival is the day known as the *Feralia* – which Ovid specifically names as the final day at 2.569-570 – which is dated in inscribed *fasti* to February 21st (*a. d. ix Kal. Mart.*). However, as we have seen above, the late Lydus stated that the festival went on ‘until the eighth day before the Kalends of March’, which would be 22nd February: a family festival known as the *Caristia* or *cara cognatio*, which focuses more on celebrating living family members than deceased. Lydus does not name the festival, however, and so it is plausible that he made an error, substituting ‘eighth’ for ‘ninth’.⁵

Ovid *probably* dates the end of the festival to the 21st (the ninth day before the Kalends), but he expresses the date in such a poetic manner that there has long been a question over exactly what he meant:

*nec tamen haec ultra, quam tot de mense supersint
 Luciferi, quot habent carmina nostra deas.
 hanc, quia iusta ferunt, dixere Feralia lucem;*
 But this only lasts until there remain as many days of the month as there
 are feet in my couplets. That day they name the *Feralia*
 (2.567-569)

The final word in the first couplet, *deas*, a suggestion made by Winther, reiterated by Rüpke and accepted by Robinson, refers to the nine Muses, implying that the *Feralia* was the ninth day before the Kalends:⁶ 21st February.

Polemios Silvius. For the *Feralia* mentioned by name in literature, see for example: Varro, *De lingua Latina* 6.13; Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 8.14.1; Livy, 35.7.3; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.4.14; Festus 75L s.v. *Feralia*.

⁵ Incidentally if one does not count inclusively, then February 21st would indeed be eight days before the Kalends.

⁶ The ninth day counting back from the end of February, rather than the first day of March, because Ovid’s reference to ‘dawns remaining in the month’ is also ambiguous. See Robinson 2011: 353 for references to Winther and Rüpke.

This fits with our calendrical information.⁷ The most common manuscript reading of the couplet, however, is *pedes*, suggesting that Ovid is once again punning on the number of feet – eleven – in an elegiac couplet. This, however, would give a date for the *Feralia* of 19th February, whereas the inscribed *fasti* are quite clear on the *Feralia* being the 21st. Regardless of the exact date, Ovid certainly states that the final day of the *Parentalia* is the *Feralia*, and goes on to discuss the *Caristia* as a separate festival (2.617-638). Robinson reports that Radke has tried to reconcile the two with an assumption that the *Feralia* would have started at midday on 21st, and thus gone on until midday on 22nd.⁸

⁷ Cicero uses *Feralia* as a shorthand to refer to the date (much as we nowadays might say 'Christmas' or 'Boxing Day' instead of their respective dates), which certainly implies that it must have been fixed (*Epistulae ad Atticum* 8.14.1).

⁸ See Robinson 2011: 355 for reference to Radke.

**APPENDIX FOURTEEN:
THE DEDICATION OF CLOTHES AND DOLLS BEFORE MARRIAGE**

It is not clear whether the final two sources in this table do refer to pre-marital dedications; see discussion below.

#	Reference	Item being dedicated	Dedicated to	Time indicated
14.1	Propertius 4.11.33-34 <i>mox, ubi iam facibus cessit praetexta maritis, vinxit et acceptas altera vitta comas</i>	Toga praetexta (<i>praetexta</i>)	unknown	Implication that it happens before marriage: the toga 'gives way' (<i>cessit</i>) to the marriage torches (<i>facibus... maritis</i>).
14.2	Persius, <i>Satirae</i> 2.69-70¹ <i>dicite, pontifices, in sancto quid facit aurum? nempe hoc quod Veneri donatae a virgine pupae.</i>	Doll (<i>pupae</i>)	Venus	The donator is a <i>virgo</i> , which gives us a <i>terminus ante quem</i> of immediately before marriage, but could indicate any time before then.
14.3	Scholion ad Persius, <i>Satirae</i> 2.69 <i>solebant virgines antequam nubarent quaedam virginitatis suae dona Veneri consecrare.</i>	Gifts/ offerings (<i>dona</i>) of their virginity; given the context this is likely to refer to dolls	Venus	Before they married (<i>antequam nubarent</i>) – but there is no limit as to exactly how far 'before' <i>antequam</i> indicates.
14.4	Pseudo-Acro ad Horace, <i>Satirae</i> 1.5.65-66 <i>solebant pueri, postquam pueritiam excedebant, dis Laribus bullas suas consecrare, similiter et puellae pupas... quia pueri bullas donabant Laribus, puellae pupas.</i>	Dolls (<i>pupas</i>)	Lares (<i>dis Laribus</i>)	After they pass out of childhood (<i>postquam pueritiam excedebant</i>), which could be any time within adolescence. There is no mention of marriage.
14.5	Arnobius, <i>Adversus nationes</i> 2.67.3 <i>puellarum togulas Fortunam defertis ad Virginalem?</i>	Toga praetexta (<i>togulas</i>)	Fortuna Virginalis	The donators are <i>puellae</i> , which certainly implies some time in childhood, before marriage.

¹ Lactantius quotes Persius at *Divinae institutiones* 2.4.10.

14.6	<p>Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 6.569-570 <i>Lux eadem, Fortuna, tua est auctorque locusque;</i> <i>sed superiniectis quis latet iste togis?</i></p>	<p>Whilst this appears to refer to togas dedicated to Fortuna, Littlewood warns of the ambiguity in this couplet. There is no mention of marriage here, and there was also a tradition that there was a statue of Servius Tullius in Fortuna's temple, which was draped with a toga that was supposedly woven by his wife Tanaquil;² this is mentioned by Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 8.194.74. It is possible, therefore, that this extract is irrelevant to pre-marriage dedications.</p>
14.7	<p>Varro <i>apud</i> Nonius 863L=538M s.v. <i>strophium</i> and 869L=542M s.v. <i>reticulum</i> <i>Varro Sesqueulixe (463):</i> <i>suspendit Laribus † marinas mollis pilas,</i> <i>reticula ac strophia.</i></p>	<p>Varro's text is so fragmentary, and makes no reference to marriage, that we simply cannot be secure in using it as evidence for the dedication of anything by those about to marry. Even the gender of the person hanging up the items is ambiguous, although the references to <i>reticula</i> (hairnets) and <i>strophia</i> (breastbands) imply that the dedicator is female. However, this text is used by a number of scholars as evidence that the bride dedicated her <i>reticulum</i> (which Festus 364L s.v. <i>regillis tunicis</i> tells us she wore to bed the night before her wedding) to the <i>Lares</i>, presumably on the morning of her wedding.³ Additionally, Caldwell and Rawson both cite this passage as stating that dolls are dedicated to Venus [<i>sic</i>], and give the text as follows: <i>pupas, manias, mollis pilas, reticula, strophia</i>.⁴ <i>Manias</i> is indeed a variant reading of <i>marinas</i>, but the text makes no mention of <i>pupas</i>. This confusion has possibly come from Harmon, whose list of the various items that could potentially be donated, gathered from a range of sources, appears to have been taken as a direct quotation.⁵ In fact, the list, featuring both <i>manias</i> and <i>pilas</i>, being 'hung up for the <i>Lares</i>' also calls to mind the <i>Compitalia</i> and the hanging up of effigies and balls made of wool (that is, those that are <i>mollis</i>).</p>

² Littlewood 2006: 173.

³ For example, Olson 2008a: 21; Olson 2008b: 142; La Follette 1994: 55.

⁴ Caldwell 2015: 102 n. 95; Rawson 2003: 145 n. 34.

⁵ Harmon 1978: 1598: 'the bride-to-be would dedicate those objects which symbolized girlhood (*pupas, manias, mollis pilas, reticula, and strophia*) to the household gods (Schol. Cruq. ad Hor. Sat. 1.5.69, Varro in Non. 863.15L) or to Venus (Persius 2.70).'

**APPENDIX FIFTEEN:
THE BRIDE ANOINTING THE DOORPOSTS**

#	Reference
15.1	Lucan, <i>Bellum civile</i> 2.354-355 <i>... non...</i> <i>infulaque in geminos discurrit candida postes</i>
15.2	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.37.135 Proxima ... adipi laus est, sed maxime suillo, apud antiquos etiam religiosius. certe novae nuptae intrantes etiamnum sollemne habent postes eo attingere.
15.3	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 28.37.142 Masurius palmam lupino adipi dedisse antiquos tradidit. ideo novas nuptas illo perunguere postes solitas ne quid mali medicamenti inferretur.
15.4	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i> 29.9.30 <i>lanis auctoritatem veteres Romani etiam religiosam habuere postes a nubentibus attingi iubentes</i>
15.5	Plutarch, <i>Quaestiones Romanae</i> 31 καὶ τὴν νύμφην εἰσάγοντες νάκος ὑποστρωννύασιν· αὐτὴ δ' εἰσφέρει μὲν ἡλακάτην καὶ τὴν ἄτρακτον, ἐρίῳ δὲ τὴν θύραν περιστέφει τοῦ ἀνδρός.
15.6	Donatus, <i>ad Terence, Hecyra</i> 1.260 <i>ut ad pauca redeam tamquam multa sint, quae de Pamphili amore dici possint. ut ad pauca redeam praeceptum oratorium in longa narratione pro veritatis inquisitione; reddit enim acriorem auditorem, quem spes finis reficit fatigatum. uxorem ducit domum uxor dicitur vel ab ungendis postibus et figenda lana, id est quod cum puellae nubent, maritorum postes ungebant ibique lanam figebant; vel quod lotos maritos ipsae ungebant. cuius rei Ennius testis est 'exin Tarquinius bona femina lauit et unxit'.</i>
15.7	Arnobius, <i>Adversus nationes</i> 3.25 Unctionibus... superest Unxia... O egregia numinum et singularis interpretatio potestatum: nisi postes virorum adipali unguine oblinerentur ab sponsis... di nomina non haberent?
15.8	Servius, <i>ad Aeneid</i> 4.458.6-10 & 14-24 <i>moris enim fuerat, ut nubentes puellae, simul venissent ad limen mariti, postes antequam ingrederentur, propter auspiciam castitatis, ornarent laneis vittis: unde ait 'velleribus niveis': et oleo ungerent, unde uxores dictae sunt, quasi unxores...</i> <i>ii tamen, qui de nuptiis scripsisse dicuntur, tradunt, cum nova nupta in domum mariti ducitur, solere postes unguine lupino oblini, quod huius ferae et unguen et membra multis rebus remedio sunt. alii hoc Romuli dicunt temporibus institutum, quod Romulus et Remus lupino lacte nutriti sunt. dicitur etiam lupam in concilio multorum eiusdem generis sociari marito, eamque amisso eo nulli alteri post iungi, quod ipse subiecit "non licuit thalami expertem sine crimine vitam degere more ferae", id est lupae. haec ergo ideo a nove nuptis fiebant, ut sciret se puella domum religiosam ingredi: simul lanam ferens lanificium promittebat.</i>

15.9	<p>Martianus Capella, <i>De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii</i> 2.149 <i>At ubi in conspectum nubentis diva pervenit, atque, ut mos virginis erat, litavit aromatis, deam talibus deprecabatur: Juno pulchra, licet aliud nomen tibi consortium coeleste tribuerit, et nos a juvando Junonem, unde et Jovem dicimus, nominemus; sive te Lucinam, quod lucem nascentibus tribuas, ac Lucetiam convenit nuncupari; nam Fluoniam, Februalemque ac Februam mihi poscere non necesse est, quum nihil contagionis corporeae sexu intemerata pertulerim; Iterducam et Domiducam, Unxiam, Cinxiam mortales puellae debent in nuptias convocare, ut earum et itinera protegas, et in optatas domos ducas, et quum postes ungant, faustum omen affigas et cingulum ponentes in thalamis non relinquis;</i></p>
15.10	<p>Isidorus, <i>Etymologiae</i> 9.7.12 <i>Moris enim erat antiquitus ut nubentes puellae simul venirent ad limen mariti, et postes, antequam ingrederentur, ornarent laneis vittis et oleo unguerent. Et inde uxores dictae, quasi unxiores</i></p>

**APPENDIX SIXTEEN:
THE SPEAKING OF GAIUS AND GAIA**

#	Reference
16.1	Cicero, <i>Pro Murena</i> 27 <i>ut, quia in alicuius libris exempli causa id nomen invenerant, putarent omnis mulieres quae coemptionem facerent "Gaias" vocari.</i>
16.2	Quintilian, <i>Institutio oratoria</i> 1.7.28 <i>Nam et 'Gaius' C littera significatur, quae inversa mulierem declarat, quia tam Gaias esse vocitatas quam Gaios etiam ex nuptialibus sacris apparet</i>
16.3	Plutarch, <i>Quaestiones Romanae</i> 30 "Διὰ τί τὴν νύμφην εἰσάγοντες λέγειν κελεύουσιν, ὅπου σὺ Γάιος, ἐγὼ Γαῖα;" Πότερον ὡσπερ ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς εὐθὺς εἴσεισι τῷ κοινωνεῖν ἀπάντων καὶ συνάρχειν, καὶ τὸ μὲν δηλούμενόν ἐστιν "ὅπου σὺ κύριος καὶ οἰκοδεσπότης, καὶ ἐγὼ κυρία καὶ οἰκοδέσποινα"; τοῖς δ' ὀνόμασι τούτοις ἄλλως κέχρηται κοινοῖς οὖσιν, ὡσπερ οἱ νομικοὶ Γάιον Σήιον καὶ Λούκιον Τίτιον, καὶ οἱ φιλόσοφοι Δίωνα καὶ Θέωνα παραλαμβάνουσιν. Ἡ διὰ Γαῖαν Καικιλίαν καλὴν καὶ ἀγαθὴν γυναῖκα, τῶν Ταρκυνίου παίδων ἐνὶ συνοικήσασαν, ἧς ἐν τῷ τοῦ Σάγκτου ἱερῷ χαλκοῦς ἀνδριάς ἔστηκεν; ἔκειτο δὲ πάλαι καὶ σανδάλια καὶ ἄτρακτος, τὸ μὲν οἰκουρίας αὐτῆς, τὸ δ' ἐνεργείας σύμβολον.
16.4	Festus 85L s.v. <i>Gaia Caecilia</i> <i>Gaia Caecilia appellata est, ut Romam venit, quae antea Tanaquil vocitata erat, uxor Tarquinii Prisci regis Romanorum, quae tantae probitatis fuit, ut id nomen ominis boni causa frequentent nubentes, quam summam asseverant lanificam fuisse.</i>
16.5	Incerti auctoris, <i>Liber de praenominibus</i> 7¹ <i>Ceterum gaia usu super omnes celebrata est: ferunt enim Gaiam Caeciliam, Tarquini Prisci regis uxorem, optimam lanificam fuisse et ideo institutum, ut novae nuptae ante ianuam mariti interrogatae quaenam vocarentur Gaias esse se dicerent.</i>

¹ This short work *incerti auctoris* was appended to a ninth-century manuscript (*Vaticanus Latinus* 4929) of Julius Paris' *epitome* of Valerius Maximus' *Facta et dicta memorabilia* as its tenth book. It is also known as *De nominibus epitome* and *De praenomine*; there are no indicators as to who its author might have been, nor its date.

**APPENDIX SEVENTEEN:
THE ASSISTING OF THE BRIDE OVER THE THRESHOLD**

#	Reference
17.1	<p>Plautus, <i>Casina</i> 813-822 OLYMPPIO <i>di melius faciant! sed crepuit ostium, exitur foras.</i> LYSIDAMUS <i>di hercle me cupiunt seruatum.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">PARDALISCA <i>iam oboluit Casinus procul.</i> <i>sensim super attolle limen pedes, mea noua nupta;</i> <i>sospes iter incipe hoc, uti uiro tuo</i> <i>semper sis superstes,</i> <i>tuaque ut potior pollentia sit uincasque uirum uictrixque sies,</i> <i>tua uox superet tuomque imperium: uir te uestiat, tu uirum[de]spolies.</i></p>
17.2	<p>Catullus, 61.159-161 <i>transfer omine cum bono</i> <i>limen aureolos pedes,</i> <i>rasilemque subi forem.</i></p>
17.3	<p>Lucan, <i>Bellum civile</i> 2.359 <i>translata uitat contingere limina planta;</i></p>
17.4	<p>Plutarch, <i>Romulus</i> 15.5 διαμένει δὲ μέχρι νῦν τὸ τὴν νύμφην αὐτὴν ἀφ’ αὐτῆς μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν τὸν οὐδὸν εἰς τὸ δωμάτιον, ἀλλ’ αἰρομένην εἰσφέρεισθαι, διὰ τὸ καὶ τότε κομισθῆναι βιασθείσας, μὴ εἰσελθεῖν.</p>
17.5	<p>Plutarch, <i>Quaestiones Romanae</i> 29 "Διὰ τί τὴν γαμουμένην οὐκ ἔωσιν αὐτὴν ὑπερβῆναι τὸν οὐδὸν τῆς οἰκίας, ἀλλ’ ὑπεραίρουσιν οἱ προπέμποντες;" Πότερον ὅτι καὶ τὰς πρώτας γυναῖκας ἀρπάσαντες οὕτως εἰσήνεγκαν, αὐταὶ δ’ οὐκ εἰσήλθον; Ἡ βούλονται δοκεῖν εἰσιέναι βιαζομένας οὐχ ἔκούσας, ὅπου μέλλουσι διαλύειν τὴν παρθενίαν; Ἡ συμβολὸν ἔστι τοῦ μηδ’ ἐξιέναι δι’ αὐτῆς μηδὲ καταλιπεῖν τὴν οἰκίαν, εἰ μὴ βιασθεῖν, καθάπερ καὶ εἰσήλθε βιασθεῖσα; καὶ γὰρ παρ’ ἡμῖν ἐν Βοιωτίᾳ καίουσι πρὸ τῆς θύρας τὸν ἄξονα τῆς ἀμάξης, ἐμφαίνοντες δεῖν τὴν νύμφην ἐμμένειν ὡς ἀνηρημένου τοῦ ἀπάξοντος.</p>
17.6	<p>Servius, <i>ad Eclogue</i> 8.29 <i>quas etiam ideo limen ait non tangere, ne a sacrilegio inchoarent, si depositurae uirginitatem calcant rem Vestae, id est numini castissimo, consecratam.</i></p>
17.7	<p>Servius, <i>ad Aeneid</i> 2.469 <i>‘vestibulum’ est prima ianuae pars. dictum autem vestibulum vel quod ianuam uestiat, ut uidemus cameram duabus sustentatam columnis: vel quoniam Vestae consecratum est. unde nubentes puellae limen non tangunt. Lucanus “translata uitat contingere limina planta”. singula enim domus sacrata sunt diis: ut culina penetibus, maceries, quae ambit domum, Herceo Ioui. sane uidetur vestibulum et limen pro una re dixisse.</i></p>

<p>17.8</p>	<p>Servius, <i>ad Aeneid</i> 6.273 <i>VESTIBVLVM ut Varro dicit, etymologiae non habet proprietatem, sed fit pro captu ingenii: nam vestibulum, ut supra diximus, dictum ab eo, quod ianuam vestiatur. alii dicunt a Vesta dictum per inminutionem: nam Vestae limen est consecratum. alii dicunt ab eo, quod nullus illic stet; in limine enim solus est transitus: quomodo vesanus dicitur non sanus, sic vestibulum quasi non stabulum.</i></p>
<p>17.9</p>	<p>Isidorus, <i>Etymologiae</i> 9.7.12 <i>quae ideo vetabantur limina calcare, quod illic ianuae et coeant et separentur.</i></p>

**APPENDIX EIGHTEEN:
THE OFFERING OF FIRE AND WATER**

#	Reference
18.1	Varro, <i>De vita populi Romani</i> 2.79 <i>apud Nonius</i> 268L=182M <i>contra a nouo marito cum item e foco in titione ex felici arbore et in aquali aqua adlata esset.</i>
18.2	Varro, <i>De lingua Latina</i> 5.61 ideo ea nuptiis in limine adhibentur, quod coniungit<ur> hic, et mas ignis, quod ibi semen, aqua femina, quod fetus ab eius humore, et horum vinctionis vis Venus.
18.3	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 4.787-792 <i>an, quia cunctarum contraria semina rerum sunt duo discordes, ignis et unda, dei, iunxerunt elementa patres, aptumque putarunt ignibus et sparsa tangere corpus aqua? an, quod in his vitae causa est, haec perdidit exul, his nova fit coniunx, haec duo magna putant?</i>
18.4	Valerius Flaccus, <i>Argonautica</i> 8.243-246 <i>inde, ubi sacrificas cum coniuge venit ad aras Aesonides, unaque adeunt pariterque precari incipiunt, ignem Pollux undamque iugalem praetulit, et dextrum pariter vertuntur in orbem.</i>
18.5	Plutarch, <i>Quaestiones Romanae</i> 1 "Διὰ τί τὴν γαμουμένην ἄπτεσθαι πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος κελεύουσι;" Πότερον πούτων ὡς ἐν στοιχείοις καὶ ἀρχαῖς τὸ μὲν ἄρρεν ἐστὶ τὸ δὲ θῆλυ, καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀρχὰς κινήσεως ἐνίησι τὸ δ' ὑποκειμένου καὶ ὕλης δύναμιν Ἡ διότι τὸ πῦρ καθαίρει καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ ἀγνίζει, δεῖ δὲ καθαρὰν καὶ ἀγνὴν διαμένειν τὴν γαμηθεῖσαν; Ἡ ὅτι, καθάπερ τὸ πῦρ χωρὶς ὑγρότητος ἄτροφόν ἐστι καὶ ξηρὸν τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ ἄνευ θερμότητος ἄγονον καὶ ἀργόν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν ἀδρανὲς καὶ τὸ θῆλυ χωρὶς ἀλλήλων, ἡ δὲ σύνοδος ἀμφοῖν ἐπιτελεῖ τοῖς γήμασι τὴν συμβίωσιν; Ἡ οὐκ ἀπολειπτέον καὶ κοινωνητέον ἀπάσης τύχης, κἂν ἄλλου μηδενὸς ἢ πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος μέλλωσι κοινωνεῖν ἀλλήλοις;
18.6	Festus 3L s.v. <i>aqua et igni</i> <i>Aqua et igni tam interdici solet damnatis, quam accipiunt nuptae, videlicet quia hae duae res humanam vitam maxime continent. Itaque funus prosecute redeuntis ignem supergradiebantur aqua asperse; quod purgationis genus vocabant suffitionem.</i>
18.7	Servius, <i>ad Aeneid</i> 4.103 <i>quae conventio eo ritu perficitur, ut aqua et igni adhibitis, duobus maximis elementis, natura coniuncta habeatur: quae res ad farreatas nuptias pertinet, quibus flaminem et flaminicam iure pontificio in matrimonium necesse est convenire. sciendum tamen in hac conventionem Aeneae atque Didonis ubique Vergilium in persona Aeneae flaminem, in Didonis flaminicam praesentare.</i>

18.8	<p>Servius, ad Aeneid 4.167 <i>fulsere ignes Varro dicit "aqua et igni maritiuxores accipiebant": unde hodieque et faces praelucent et aqua petita de puro fonte per felicissimum puerum aliquem aut puellam, interest nuptiis, de qua nubentibus solebant pedes lavari. alii 'fulsere' pro malo omine positum volunt. cum enim ait fulsisse ignes, infaustum conubium videtur ostendere, quia actio perimitur, cum de caelo servatum est. et bene hoc totum ad Iunonem refertur, quia aer esse dicitur; unde aquas cum ignibus dedit.</i></p>
18.9	<p>Servius, ad Aeneid 4.339 <i>PRAETENDI TAEDAS probat non esse matrimonium: quia illa dixerat 'per conubia nostra'. et est quasi status finis latens: quid sint legitimae nuptiae. et hic Aeneam inducit agentem nullo se matrimonii iure posse constringi, qui neque confarreatione Didoni coniunctus fuerat, ut flamine ac flaminicae convenit: ait enim 'nec coniugis umquam praetendi taedas, aut haec in foedera veni'. et 'taedas' quidem quantum ad ignem pertinet, per quem mos confarreationis firmabatur, dixit: scilicet ne aut legitime iugatam contra fas reliquisset videretur, aut foedus, id est fidem rupisset perpetuae castimoniae, quia cum fuissent iuncti, scirent tonuisse: quae res dirimit confarreationes: dixerat enim Iuno 'et tonitru caelum omne ciebo' et paulo post 'insequitur commixta grandine nimbus'.</i></p>
18.10	<p>Scaevola, Digest 24.1.66.1 <i>Virgini in hortos deductae ante diem tertium quam ibi nuptiae fierent, cum in separate diaeta ab eo esset, die nuptiarum, priusquam ad eum transiret et priusquam aqua et igni acciperetur, id est nuptiae celebrentur, optulit decem aureos dono: quaesitum est, post nuptias contractas divortio facto an summa donate repeti possit. respondit id, quod ante nuptias donatum proponeretur, non posse de dote deduci.</i></p>

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