

MONSTRUM OR DAIMON

HERMAPHRODITES IN ANCIENT ART AND CULTURE

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Roman sculptures of Sleeping Hermaphrodite type in the Louvre, the Uffizi, and other European museums still have the capacity to surprise viewers (Fig. 1a-b). From the back, the figures look like sleeping women, but we realize our mistake when we move around them for a closer look and glimpse male genitals attached to slender female bodies. This interaction between the image and the viewer appears to have been an intentional, important feature of the sculpture, and a link between it and other later Hellenistic compositions. The ten replicas and variants of this Sleeping Hermaphrodite type are generally thought to derive from a single Hellenistic original, in bronze (Ajootian 1990, 276-277), and in fact, this bisexual phenomenon in ancient Greek art is usually connected with the Hellenistic period. However, while modern commentators associate ancient images of hermaphrodites with Hellenistic "genre" types like the Sleeping Hermaphrodite, or numerous Roman groups of struggling satyrs and hermaphrodites (Ajootian 1990, 277-278; Kell 1988, 21-28), the origins of this intriguing personage can be traced further back in Greek art and culture.

The earliest mention of the name Hermaphroditos in ancient literature occurs in the *Characters* of Theophrastos (370-288 B.C.). His Superstitious Man (*Characters* 14), in addition to many other compulsive acts of piety, performs special rites on the fourth and seventh days of each month by hanging garlands on Hermaphroditos. But still earlier evidence for Hermaphroditos as a god of some kind is provided by an inscribed statue base. Found near Vari in Attica, it has been dated to ca. 385 B.C. by letter forms, and bears an inscribed dedication to Hermaphroditos (Dow and Kirchner 1937, 7-8). The object supported atop this small base, in a nearly square cutting, is now missing. Another inscribed base, found on the island of Kos, dates to the third century B.C., and bears a dedication to Helios, Amera, the



Figure 1a. Florence, Galleri degli Uffizi. Inv. 343. Gab. Fotografico Soprintendenza Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze.

Horai, Charites, Nymphs, Priapus, Pan and Hermaphrodite (Brisson 1990, 36).

Our earliest physical evidence for images of Hermaphroditos can be dated least to the late fourth century B.C. The fragment of a clay mould for a terracotta figurine found in the Athenian Agora (T 1808) preserves just enough of the essential details to make the identification likely (Fig. 2). This fragment is especially important because it actually appears to be a representation of Hermaphroditos *anasyromenos* (Hermaphroditos exposing itself), the earliest example documented so far. The mould fragment was found with pottery and figurines that constitute the so-called Coroplasts' Dump, located on the north slope of the Areopagus. The date of this deposit, established by coins, must fall within the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. (Thompson 1952, 145, 162; Rotroff 1987, 184). This mould, albeit only a fragment, preserves some of the canonical features of the *anasyromenos* type, the only one in which Hermaphroditos wears more than a loosely draped mantle and the occasional short veil or sandals. In this presentation, the earliest and most widespread of Hermaphrodite images, the draped figure stands frontally, its female

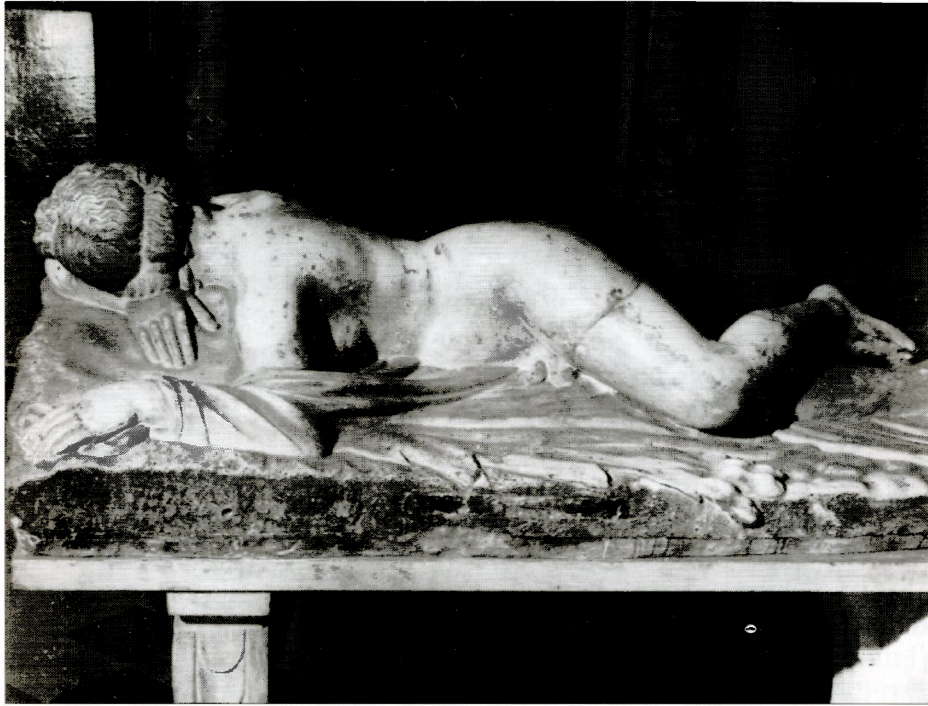


Figure 1b. Athens. Agora T 1808. American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations.

breasts clearly delineated beneath a feminine garment: one of them occasionally is exposed. The figure raises a long skirt revealing male genitals beneath. Most of these images are in small scale terracotta or marble (Fig. 3; Ajootian 1990, 274-276).

While representations of hermaphrodites were apparently new in fourth century Greece, *anasyromenos* representations of women holding aside garments to reveal their sex derive from an older tradition. In the Greek world, the most immediate precursors of our earliest hermaphrodite images can be found on Crete as early as the seventh century (Rizza 1967-1968, 237-238). At the site of Axos, northwest of Knossos, for example, where habitation began in LM III and seems to have flourished during the eighth century B.C., this exposing gesture occurs in a group of Daedalic terracotta figurines and relief plaques of women. In addition, from near one building thought to be an archaic temple to Aphrodite, a large quantity of terracotta statuettes was discovered, the earliest of them Geometric in date. In this assemblage, at least eight examples are females who part their skirts in *anasyromenos* gestures (Rizza 1967-1968, 238).

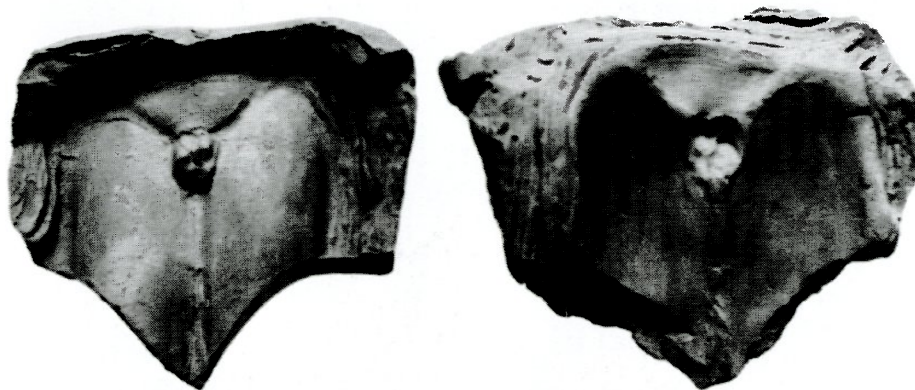


Figure 2 Athens, Agora T 1808. American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations.

Also on Crete, at Kato Syme, a terracotta relief plaque depicts a female figure in a similar pose, is dated to the seventh century B.C. (Labessi 1976, 12). Then in Greece there is apparently a gap of at least three centuries before the *anasyromenos* motif appears again. However, from a late fifth century context at Gela in Sicily comes a terracotta figurine that provides evidence for the continued occurrence of the pose. This statuette, now in the Gela Museum (inv. no. 13859), is of a woman with breasts covered, who raises her sleeved chiton (?) to expose her genitals and stomach. Her slightly bulging stomach may mean that she is pregnant. That there might actually be some connection between the earlier Cretan figures and this Geloan statuette is at least a possibility since Gela, according to Thucydides (6.4), was founded by Cretans and Rhodians in 688 B.C.

So the iconographic underpinnings of a divinity apparently new in Greece are old ones, reworked sometime during the fourth century, to supply the three-dimensional manifestation of a new god. How were these *anasyromenos* figures used and what did they mean? Our earliest surviving image of Hermaphroditos, the mould fragment, is part of the fill of an Athenian well. However a few figurines of *anasyromenos* type have been found in later, but securely dated votive deposits that give some idea of the kind of widely popular cultic connections and importance Hermaphrodite might have had, both in Italy and Greece. From a votive deposit dated to the third-second century B.C. connected with the Temple of Athena at Paestum in Southern Italy, for example, comes a terracotta figurine of *anasyromenos* type (Sestieri 1955, 40), one of the few shown leaning against a bearded herm (Hermaphroditos' father Hermes himself?).



Figure 3. Athens, Agora S 1235. American School of Classical Studies at Athens; Agora Excavations.

A similar terracotta *anasyromenos* figurine in fragmentary condition was recently excavated at the Demeter sanctuary at Mytilene, also in a votive deposit dated to the late third - early second centuries B.C. (Williams and Williams 1988, 176-177).

How did Hermaphrodite function in these votive contexts? To attempt an answer to this question let us turn briefly to some of the possible origins of this *mischwesen* in Greek mythology and art. Hermaphrodite is not the only bisexual creature in the Greek mythological tradition. M. L. West has shown that in a variety of earlier Eastern theogonies — Sidonian, Zoroastrian, and Indian — one of the primordial divinities is a force identified as Time, who procreating with itself, brings forth the next, divine generation (West 1983, 90, 202-220). West proposes that some of these eastern ideas about the development of the universe found their way to Greece, and were transformed there sometime during the sixth century B.C. (West 1971, 29-36).

Pherecydes of Syros, around the middle of the sixth century, in his prose account of the creation of the universe, may be the first Greek philosopher to present a version of these eastern concepts, including the presence of a bisexual being who was able, by itself, to produce immortal offspring. Pherecydes' work survives in papyrus fragments dated to the third century A.C., and these are supplemented with the discussions of his writings by several later sources. His treatise, like the two other earliest surviving prose works from Greece, deals with the creation of the universe. According to Pherecydes, there were three primordial forces at the beginning: Zas (Zeus), Chthonie (Ge), and Chronos (Time). The first two entities mated with each other to beget divine prodigy, but bisexual Chronos did this on its own. Chronos may be associated with the earlier eastern bisexual gods and West then suggests that this concept was developed in the Orphic cosmography: the earliest Orphic poems have been dated to around 500 B.C. (West 1983, 7).

Playing a critical role in the Orphic creation of the universe is a bisexual creature variously called Protogonos, Bromios, Zeus, and Eros in different Orphic fragments (West 1983, 203). But in this scheme, Phanes is not the first link in the cosmic genealogy. Here Time in the form of a serpent mates with Ananke, producing Aither and a Chasm. In the Aither, Time creates an egg from which Phanes is born. Possessing both male and female genitals, Phanes by itself creates Night and several other divinities in the next generation. Then, mating with Night, Phanes creates Oceanus and Ge, the sun and moon, and the homes of men and gods. Zeus ultimately swallows Phanes and recreates, as it were, this early form of the cosmos, complete with deities, humankind, and the physical universe.

Empedocles of Akragas (ca. 495-435 B.C.), in his hexameter poem, *On Nature*, also mentions bisexual creatures, however these personages are not gods, but represent an early phase of mortal evolution (Wright 1981, 212-215). In this stage, unattached body parts, human and animal, combine in surprising ways, producing two-headed Janus-like creatures, individuals composed of both animal and human components, and still others in which male and female elements are fused. At a more advanced level of human development, some of these peculiar forms disappear, and the men-women are split in half.

The fate of Empedocles' bisexual creatures presages that of the most familiar — human — bisexuals in ancient literature, the spherical creatures described by Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* (189b ff). According to Aristophanes, the first human beings were globe-shaped creatures consisting variously of two male halves (progeny of the sun), two female halves (offspring of the earth), or a half male, half female variety; this last type was produced by Selene, the moon, also considered a bisexual entity here (189d - 190b). The third form, comprised of both sexes, Aristophanes calls an androgyne. Extinct in his day, Aristophanes says, it was remembered only by the name, now reduced to a term of reproach.

The excessive pride of these globe-shaped creatures caused Zeus to have them cut in half, and later other surgical adjustments were made by Apollo to allow the severed halves to mate with each other, ensuring a supply of mortals to worship the gods (190c). After this punishment, the severed halves, according to Aristophanes, were driven by Eros always to seek their lost complements (192c-d). In the earliest of these appearances in Greek cosmographies, the bisexual entity plays an essential role in the creation of the universe. Aristophanes' *androgyne*s produce mortal offspring whose main function is to sacrifice to the gods. Plato takes considerable care to describe physically a phase of human development which in Aristophanes' scheme no longer exists, and is in reality a concept, an motivation for the behavior of contemporary mankind. Perhaps the ideas about personages possessing characteristics of both sexes that had been current in Greek thought at least since the sixth century then made their way into a more popular level of cultural expression may all, in some way, be the predecessors of a daimon called Hermaphrodite that makes its first appearance in Greece early in the fourth century B.C.

Hermaphroditos shares with these earlier personages a role in generation and renewal. This function as an agent of fertility is more clearly expressed in a group of later representations, which we may mention here because of the light they shed on the earlier figurines from votive contexts, and on their function in general. These

compositions depict Hermaphroditos carrying or nursing infants. At least two Roman sculptures are actually of *anasyromenos* type, where the lifted folds of drapery form a cradle for the infants (Stuart Jones 181, pl. 42). In addition to these *anasyromenos* figures of Hermaphroditos, another Roman type also emphasized the divinity's maternal aspect. Some of these sculptures were significantly altered by their modern owners. The original state of one of these works, now a reclining, half draped female, is known only from an early nineteenth century sketch that shows its male genitals, and a baby nursing at its breast, with two more infants by its side (Howard 1968, 405-420).

Returning to the earlier *anasyromenos* figurines from deposits dedicated to Hera, Athena, and Demeter, it is possible that their presence in these assemblages may be explained in terms of their function as divinities who oversee fertility and childbirth. While this nurturing role only survives in Roman imagery, it should be noted here that Hermaphroditos itself is often depicted as a young, immature male, with undeveloped musculature and female breasts, or with the body of a young woman, with male genitals appended. Ovid's Hermaphroditos, as we will see, is a fifteen year old. Perhaps, since it consistently was depicted as a young person, Hermaphroditos was considered a patron of the young. In contrast to its precursors, Hermaphroditos did not, at least to the surviving testimonia, produce offspring or act as a critical link in the evolution of the cosmos. However, the archaeological evidence suggests that Hermaphroditos did preside over fertility and human creation: Hellenistic votives from sanctuaries of Athena at Paestum and Demeter at Mytilene support this interpretation, and as we have just seen, some Roman sculptures even depict the creature holding or nursing a baby.

So the earlier Greek literary evidence establishes bisexual creatures as essential links in the evolutionary chain and the considerably later visual record supports a procreative and nurturing function for Hermaphroditos. In the fourth century B.C., we get our earliest physical evidence not only for the existence of a bisexual deity, but also one for whom votives are appropriate. Why, sometime during the fourth century B.C., and possibly in Attica, does Hermaphroditos appear to have come into its own as a divine personage worthy of votive offerings, with an established iconography? What was the impetus that generated the first three dimensional images of a divine personage possessing both male and female elements? While it is not necessary or advisable always to draw a direct connection between historical events and the development of cults, we may at least observe that the social and religious climate in Greece, and especially in Attica at the end of the fifth century encouraged the introduction of new divinities and new forms of worship.

Several commentators have noted that the political and social disruptions caused in Athens during the second half of the fifth century B.C. by the Peloponnesian War and the two outbreaks of plague that overwhelmed Athens from 430 to 425 B.C. (Thucydides 2.47-54; Morens and Littmore 1993, 271-304) coincide with an Athenian preoccupation with foreign divinities (Mikalson 1984, 217-225; Camp 1979, 403-404). Thucydides (2.47) asserted that during the plague years there was a general feeling among Athenians that the gods had deserted them, or were powerless against the disease. It was at this time in Athens, distressed by plague and possibly an earthquake in 426 B.C. (Thucydides 3.89; Rotroff and Oakley 1992, 51-57), that people may have resorted to extreme religious measures. After an apparent hiatus in religious building activity throughout Attica between 430 and 426 B.C., this situation changed, as several recent studies of late fifth century Attic building projects have shown (e.g. Miles 1989, 228-235). Directly related to the plague and its aftermath was the introduction of the cult of Asklepios to Athens in 420 B.C. (Travlos 1971, 127-128). Amphiaraos, another healing divinity, was established at Oropos by the early fourth century B.C. (Travlos 1988, 301-318). The development of the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron has also be attributed to Athenian concern about the plague (Travlos 1988, 55-82). Other divinities, foreigners like Isis, Cybele, Attis, Adonis, Sabazios and Bendis entered Athens late in the fifth century, although not all of these gods can be clearly connected with reactions to the devastation of disease and warfare (Simms 1985).

The evidence, though admittedly sparse, suggests that Hermaphroditos *anasyromenos* might be an Athenian development. It is at least an intriguing possibility such three dimensional images developed in Athens, sometime early in the fourth century B.C. Perhaps the first images of Hermaphroditos were the products of a local cult in the city itself, or possibly in the Attic countryside. Possibly, the cumulative losses of life suffered in thirty years of warfare and four years of plague may have decreased the Athenian population to the extent that the guardianship of a figure like Hermaphroditos, who apparently served in the capacity of a fertility figure, might have been sought. While the population in 415 B.C. was apparently adequate to support the Syracusan expedition, only a few years later evidence suggests that there was a shortage of manpower (Strauss 1986, 70-86; Gomme 1933, 6-8).

However, while cult activity involving a divinity called Hermaphroditos appears to have developed in Greece at least by the early fourth century B.C., human beings who possessed elements of both sexes were treated quite differently — in Rome. What may have become of such individuals in the Greek world is less clear, although

Diodoros Siculus (32.12.2-3) provides some evidence. He discusses the case of a woman outside Rome who developed male sexual features, and who was brought before the Roman Senate by her husband. The Senate, following the advice of Etruscan seers, had her burned alive. This event, according to Diodoros Siculus, occurred at the beginning of the Marsian War (91-87 B.C.). Soon after, Diodoros tells us, a similarly afflicted woman in Athens was burned alive.

More precise evidence for the treatment of persons with abnormal sexual features is restricted to the Roman world, where androgynous infants and miraculous sex changes, along with other sexual anomalies cited by Pliny and Phlegon (Mirab. 6 = *FGrHist* IIB), were considered prodigies, at least from the late third through the early first centuries B.C. (MacBain 1982, 126-135). Livy and Julius Obsequens report a series of androgynous births occurring in Rome and elsewhere in Italy between 209 and 92 B.C. At least sixteen of these infants, considered *monstra*, and sinister portents, were identified and drowned at sea or in a river in the course of rituals that required joint action by both the Roman decemviri and the haruspices.

The earliest recorded occurrence of such an androgynous birth, in 209 B.C. at Sinuessae, was reported by Livy (27.11.1-6): *natum ambiguo inter natum ac feminam sex infantem*. A special expiation was apparently not carried out at this time, but two years later, when another infant, *incertus mas an femina esset*, was born, the haruspices drowned it at sea in a wooden chest. This drastic measure was followed by further expiatory rites that included the presentation of a gold bowl at the Temple of Juno in Rome, also a feature typical of these expiations, in addition to a procession of virgins to her temple on the Palatine, and a sacrifice of two white cows (Boyce 1937, 157-171). As MacBain has pointed out, political and historical events in Italy appear to have triggered the occurrence of these abnormal phenomena. The spring of 207 B.C. was a time of tension and danger for Rome as news of the Carthaginian invasion spread. This critical period coincided with the earliest appearance of androgynous infants and other ominous signs that called for special actions by an indigenous body of magistrates and the services of the Etruscan haruspices (Dumezil 1966, 606-610).

Although these *monstra* are described as being of indeterminate sex, no more specific details of their condition are provided, and it is not clear exactly what physical abnormalities may have been present. In nature, cases of children born with uncertain sexual characteristics do occur (Mittwoch 1986; Austin and Short 1982; Dewhurst and Gordon 1969), resulting from genetic, endocrine, gonadal, or hormonal abnormalities, so it is possible that such individuals may actually have been born in Rome and been viewed there as portents.

However, just at the time when individuals of a certain physical type were considered dangerous portents in Rome, representations of beings clearly possessing both male and female sexual features were being produced, in both Greece and southern Italy. No connection is made by Livy or Julius Obsequens between Hermaphrodite the divinity, images of this personage, and the actual appearance of similar phenomena in nature.

Diodoros Siculus, however, writing in the middle of the first century B.C. (4.6.5-7) was apparently aware of this duality. His is the earliest surviving genealogy for Hermaphroditos, as the offspring of Hermes and Aphrodite. In addition, Diodoros articulates a distinction between Hermaphroditos the divinity and humans with physical abnormalities, considered by some, he says, to be monsters. Pliny the Elder also acknowledges this bifurcation. He probably alludes to the expiations of supposedly androgynous infants at 7.34: *Gignuntur et utiusque sexus quos Hermaphroditos vocamus, olim androgynous vocatos et in prodigis habitos, nunc vero in deliciis*. Like Diodoros Siculus, Pliny records a transition in the popular perception of such individual, in earlier times considered threatening portents, and later on, physiological oddities. Pliny notes an accompanying shift in vocabulary, from the use of "androgynous" to "hermaphrodite," but this change is really not borne out by surviving textual and epigraphical evidence. The name Hermaphroditos, as we have seen, first appears in a Greek inscription of the early fourth century B.C., and is mentioned by the late fourth century Greek writer Theophrastus. However, the distinction in vocabulary noted by Pliny might actually reflect the differences between human and divine manifestations of the bisexual condition. By Pliny's day, apparently, the dangerous potential of persons possessing features of both sexes had been diffused.

Where the divine and the dangerous overlap is in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (4.274-391). Ovid's account provides an etiology for Hermaphroditos, but also an explanation for the apparently well known enervating properties of the spring Salmacis, first noted by Strabo (14.656) as having a weakening effect on any many who entered its waters. In Ovid's story Hermaphroditos starts life as a male, the son of Hermes and Aphrodite. He is transformed into a bisexual being in the subsequent narrative, and his story is intertwined with the history and the peculiar properties of the spring Salmacis. Hermaphroditos took his name from his parents. Ovid tells us, and in his face both of them could be recognized: *cuius erat facies, in qua materque paterque/cognosci possent*. According to Ovid, Hermaphroditos was brought up by nymphs in a cave on Phrygian Mount Ida. When he was fifteen, he left this home to travel through Asia Minor. In Caria, Hermaphroditos discovered a spring called

Salmacis, the home of a nymph. Ovid sets the scene at an existing Carian site: his nymph and spring share the name Salmacis with an actual ancient place not far from Halicarnassus (Bean 1971, 103-104, 110-112).

As a nymph, Salmacis, according to Ovid, is an anomaly. Although encouraged by her companions, she refuses to follow Diana in the hunt and spends the days bathing in the spring, admiring her reflections in its waters, combing her hair, or gathering flowers. One day, thus occupied, she spots Hermaphroditos and falls in love with him. Her attempt to seduce the boy (4.320-328) has been noted as a parody of Odysseus' address to Nausikaa in the *Odyssey* (2.8.11-12). Ovid's ironic manipulation of the Homeric scene and its characters, along with his use of heroic epithets and similes to develop Salmacis' erotic nature, gives the episode a slightly threatening tone (Galinsky 1986, 398-399). Salmacis is distanced from chaste Diana, but rather than being the victim of prying strangers, as is more usual, in this story, she is the aggressor.

As Hermaphroditos swims in the spring, Salmacis dives in too and surrounds the boy in an inextricable embrace, entreating the gods as she does so that the two may never be parted. They grant her prayer: boy and nymph are fused, creating a new, bisexual persona. The imagery of their struggle is violent: Salmacis is like a snake twining herself around an eagle, or like a sea polyp gripping its prey in its tentacles (4.360-367). That Hermaphroditos retains something of his previous masculine nature, however, seems clear as he prays to his parents (4.383-386) that the waters of the spring Salmacis thereafter debilitate any man who enters them.

The bisexual metamorphosis of Hermaphroditos, according to Ovid, thus threatens masculinity, and there is really no indication in this account of Hermaphroditos' role as a divinity, although he is born of divine parents. The Ovidian tale highlights the loss of Hermaphroditos' manhood and the subsequent dangerous powers of the fateful spring, Salmacis. The darker aspect of Hermaphroditos' character that we see here may reflect a surviving concern with such sexual *mischwesen* in nature, but also emphasizes another facet of Hermaphroditos' divine persona as a protective or prophylactic entity.

With its exposing *anasyromenos* gesture, Hermaphroditos may be wielding the same kind of apotropaic power displayed by Priapus and other figures whose male genitals are exhibited and accentuated in some way, and thus afford protection against the evil eye. Some of the most convincing evidence for such an apotropaic function comes from Delos. The island has yielded a relatively large number of Hellenistic representations of Hermaphroditos *anasyromenos*, both reliefs and figures in the round, and provides some clues to the possible function and placement of these images (Marcadé 1973, 342-347). Some items

in this group were found during the excavation of the Maison de Fourni, an extensive structure on the south edge of the site, dating to about 100 B.C. (Bruneau and Ducat 1983, 260 - 262, no. 124).

One well preserved relief slab depicts Hermaphroditos *anasyromenos* garbed in the usual high belted chiton covering its breasts, with both hands raising its skirt, a mantle draped over its shoulder and tucked between its arms and sides (Marcadé 1973, 342, fig. 15). The relief, with a small shelf projecting at the bottom edge onto which Hermaphroditos' feet extend, is 0.345 m. high by 0.22 m. wide at the base. On the back of the slab is a boss which might have aided its insertion into a wall. A similar relief plaque of almost identical size was also discovered at this site, but this one depicts a standing, frontal Herakles holding a club (Marcadé 1973, 336-338, fig. 11; Bruneau 1964, 159-168). On Delos, images of Herakles or of his club alone have been found carved on blocks set into the exterior walls of houses and are thought to have served as protective agents for the house and its inhabitants against the Evil Eye (Marcadé 1973, 338-339). The Herakles relief from the Maison de Fourni may well have served a similar purpose, and the Hermaphroditos *anasyromenos* relief that matches it in size could also have functioned as a household guardian.

The bisexual god possibly shared with the androgynous prodigies of second and first century Rome their portentous quality, but as a divinity, perhaps its power was considered less a threat to mankind's welfare than a force that could be channeled constructively. It is likely that all the images, Greek or Roman, whether set up in a garden, a private domestic area, a bath, or a gymnasium, were considered guardians of these areas. Public baths and gymnasia, in fact, were considered especially dangerous places, where naked bodies were exposed and vulnerable to the envious gaze of the Evil Eye, and this may be why statues of Hermaphroditos were apparently appropriate decorations in such settings (Dunbabin 1989) . Images of Hermaphroditos in the home, like the one possibly in the house of Theophrastus' Superstitious Man, may have served a similar use. This protective function is suggested by the relief plaques at Delos bearing images of Hermaphroditos *anasyromenos* that may have adorned exterior walls of houses near their entrances. A few terracotta figurines of Hermaphroditos have been recovered from Hellenistic Greek and Alexandrian graves, perhaps suggesting another aspect of this divinity's role as a guardian of the dead (Ajootian 1990, 273 no. 19; 273 no. 26).

The cultic and iconographic development of Hermaphroditos as a divine personage then, appears to have begun in Greece, perhaps even in Athens, sometime in the fourth century B.C., to judge from archaeological and literary evidence. The ambivalence between human beings possessing physical features of both sexes and a divine

entity transcending both genders is tackled most clearly by Diodorus Siculus in the first century B.C., but by the early fourth century, Aristophanes, in Plato's *Symposium*, already had alluded to this ambiguity. Returning finally to the evocative Roman replicas of so-called Sleeping Hermaphrodite type, it is certain that these figures, along with other Hellenistic "genre" works depicting hermaphrodites must have had specific, serious meanings, even though they engage the viewer in ways that may seem manipulative or frivolous to modern eyes. That many of these images, the *anasyromenos* types exposing themselves, the erotic struggling groups of satyrs and hermaphrodites, the seductive sleeping hermaphrodite, seem humorous and even titillating, should not detract from the power of their function as promoters of fertility and protectors of both the living and the dead.

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