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## Agora I 7538: A Banquet for the ‘Majority’

LEX SACRA DE CULTU DEAE.<sup>1</sup> Ag. I 7538. Found March 1982 in wall of 19th-century flour mill just north of the Painted Stoa (K2, 3—2/16)[Daly 2022, 676-677, figs. 4-5]. Two joining fragments of a stele of white marble, broken above and below, roughly flattened in back, with heavily damaged crowning molding extending to left and right sides, h. 3.08 m., w. 0.280 m. (top), 0.285 m. (bottom), h. 0.079 m. Letters, h. 0.005-0.008 m. στοιχ. 0.0134 m. (hor.), 0.0135 m. (vert.).

Ed. K. F. Daly, A Fragmentary Ritual Norm from Athens: Agora I 7538, *Hesperia* 91, 2022, 649-691, with English translation and photographs, figs. 1-3. Non vidimus. (Figs. 1-2).

fin. s. IV - s. III a.

B

(Latus aversum)

[τ]οὺς πολλοὺς· εἰς τὰ εὐών-                    στοιχ. 21  
υμα· μυρρίνης στεφάνους ὕ  
[ἄ]ναριθμήτους, πόπανα μακ-  
[τ]ᾶ στρογγύλα, μᾶζαι, ἰχθῦ[ς],  
5 [ἔ]λαῖαι, ἄλας, πράσα ἀναριθ-  
[μ]ητα· εἰς τὰ δεξιὰ· ἄλας, π[ρ]ᾶ-  
σα, [ἰχ]θῦς, μᾶζας, πόπανα, σ[τε]-  
φάνους θαλλοῦ ἐννέα, σκ[όρ]-  
[δ]α· μετὰ ταῦτα καλεῖσθα[ι τ]-  
10 [ἦ]ν θεὸν λαβοῦσαν θαλλο[ύς]  
[ἐνν]έα, σκόρδων τρεῖς κε[φα]-  
[λάς ὄ]λας, στέμμα· ἐπειδᾶ[ν ὕ]  
[καλέσ]ηται θεῖναι τοὺς [θα]-  
[λλοὺς] εἰς τὴν θαλάμ[ην καὶ]  
15 [ἐκάστην?] κεφαλῆ[ν σκόρδων?]  
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<sup>1</sup>. This is the title which Nora Dimitrova and I initially used for our edition of this document in fascicle 8 (Leges Sacrae) of the third edition of *IG II*. Kevin Daly's meticulously researched and thoughtful edition has been of critical help to us in our effort to understand the content of this unique sacred law. On April 28, 2023 I presented this paper, there titled "The Identity of [τ]οὺς πολλοὺς in Agora I 7538," at the Attic Epigraphic and Topographic Symposium in Honor of Professor John Traill, organized by the Hellenic Epigraphic Society and held at the Epigraphical Museum in Athens. We would like to express our gratitude to Craig Mauzy and the Agora staff for sending us photographs; to Catherine Keesling for her report on autopsy of Side A of the stele; to Constanze Graml for providing her original images, published in *The Sanctuary of Artemis Soteira in the Kerameikos of Athens* (2020), for use as illustrations in this article; and to Angelos P. Matthaiou for his discussion and helpful suggestions.

Suppl. 10 in. 11 fin.-12 in. 13 in. haesitanter Daly; 1 in. 12 (ὄ]λας). 14 fin. 15 nos || 1 in. [.]ΟΥΣ Daly || 4 μάζας Daly; at vide phot. ectypi, 653 fig. 3 || 12 ἄ]λας Daly.

We have made minor changes in lines 1, 4, and 12, as well as tentative suggestions in lines 14 and 15. In line 4 Daly read the accusative μάζαν, but close inspection reveals that although it is possible to mistake marks on the stone for a nu, the squeeze shows a reasonably clear iota at the left edge of the stoichos; the nominative μᾶζαι then becomes consistent with the other nominatives in lines 3-6.

Daly dated the document by letter forms to the late fourth or third century. Its stoichedon text begins with two words that must have occurred at the end of a sentence, and this naturally raises the question, Where did the sentence begin? On a separate stele, or on the rear side of this one? Daly ruled out the rear side, which he thought was original and uninscribed. However, the photographs that the Agora sent at our request (fig. 2) revealed that the back is not original, but heavily cut and reshaped in later use, which Prof. Catherine Keesling kindly checked and confirmed. So the preserved text was written on the rear side of an opisthographic stele. As a restoration of the first word Daly thoroughly explored βούς, χοῦς, and τούς without coming to a definite conclusion. But since the wreaths and lists of foodstuffs in the next few lines concern people, τούς seems, at first sight, best.

What follows after [τ]οὺς πολλοὺς are instructions for the placement of crowns and foodstuffs (as objects of an infinitive, such as παραθεῖναι with an accusative subject, in the preceding missing text) for two groups, one on the left, the other on the right—the makings of a banquet. For the group on the right nine olive wreaths (lines 7-8) are set out, therefore for nine individuals. For the group on the left (lines 2-3), a quantity of wreaths so enormous that they are uncountable, [ἄ]ναριθμήτους—a unique prescription for a banquet, not found in any epigraphic or literary text. There seems to be no other obvious possibility but that they are somehow related to the group called τοὺς πολλοὺς, which we might take to mean "the masses." But it is hardly likely that an uncountable quantity of wreaths was being provided to the public at large or to a large number of minor members of a private association. Fortunately, a passage in the Derveni Papyrus is relevant:<sup>2</sup> ἀνάριθμα [καί] πολυόμφαλα τὰ / πόπανα θύουσιν (οἱ μάγοι), ὅτι καὶ αἱ / ψυχᾶ[ι ἀνά]ριθμοι εἰσί. ((The magoi)<sup>3</sup> sacrifice numberless many-knobbed popana-cakes, because the ψυχᾶί too are numberless.)<sup>4</sup>

Do we have here a banquet for ψυχᾶί? This would be consistent with τοὺς πολλοὺς if we take it as signifying "the majority," the perpetual plurality of the deceased in contrast to the living. Ludwig Preller stated categorically (without references), "It was customary to call the dead euphemistically τοὺς πολλοὺς or τοὺς πλείους";<sup>5</sup> Erwin Rohde, in *Psyche*, lists several examples of οἱ πλείους (evidently more common than οἱ πολλοί) referring to the deceased<sup>6</sup>— for instance, in this famous epigram of Crinagoras (Page 1975, XXXV):

<sup>2</sup> Janko 2017, 74, §17. Cf. Henrichs 1984, 261-263; Kotwick 2017, 146-147.

<sup>3</sup> The magoi here are most likely to be understood as ritual experts, not Persian priests, magicians or charlatans; cf. Betegh 2004, 78-81; Kotwick 2017, 141-142.

<sup>4</sup> On countless masses of ψυχᾶί in Greek and Roman poetry cf. Ogden 2001, 223-224.

<sup>5</sup> Preller 1894, 804 (perhaps with Eustathius' statement (below, n. 7) in mind).

<sup>6</sup> Rohde 1898, 382 n. 2: Kaibel, *Epigr. Gr.* 373-4 (= *GVI* 1668); *Anth. Pal.* 7.731 (Leon. Tar., Page 1975, LXVIII), 11.42 (Crinag.); Ar. *Eccl.* 1073; Callim. *Ep.* 4 Pf.; Polyb. 8.28.7-9. Cf. Paus. 1.43.3: ὁ θεὸς ἔχρησε καὶ Μεγαρέας εὔ πράξειν, ἦν μετὰ τῶν πλειόνων βουλευσονται. τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐς τοὺς τεθνεώτας

Εἰ καὶ σοὶ ἔδραϊος ἀεὶ βίος οὐδὲ θάλασσαν / ἔπλωσ χερσαίας τ' οὐκ ἐπάτησας  
 ὁδοῦς, / ἔμπης Κεκροπῆς ἐπιβήμεναι, ὄφρ' ἂν ἐκείνας / Δήμητρος μεγάλων νύκτας ἴδης  
 ἱερῶν, / τῶν ἄπο κῆν ζωοῖσιν ἀκηδέα, κεῖτ' ἂν ἴκηαι / ἐς πλεόνων, ἕξεις θυμὸν  
 ἔλαφρότερον.

The phrase τοὺς πολλοὺς can of course signify "the majority," as synonym of τοὺς πλείους, and, in a relevant context, "the deceased," as Eustathius noted.<sup>7</sup> Thus the uncountable myrtle wreaths in lines 2-3 and uncountable leeks in lines 5-6 must be intended for the uncountable souls who are referred to above as τοὺς πολλοὺς. But why then are the other foodstuffs in lines 3-5, seemingly, indefinite in number? How are the popana, barley-cakes, fish, olives, salt-pieces to be divided up among the uncountable souls? The list switches from the accusative plural of wreaths to the nominative plural of the foods, which is not really a problem because lists often do that. The solution must be that the nominative plural adjective ἀναρίθμητα at the end of the list in lines 5-6 applies to every nominative plural noun of the preceding series—a normal Greek construction; the adjective does not need to be repeated for each preceding member of the series. Thus there were uncountable popana-cakes, uncountable barley cakes, uncountable fish, uncountable olives, uncountable pieces of salt, and uncountable leeks—all for the uncountable ψυχᾶί. In actuality, of course, there would have been large heaps of foodstuffs, each type so large as to be not easily countable.

In lines 1-2 the term εὐώνυμα (which is otherwise unattested in Attic inscriptions) suggests that it was important to emphasize that this left side was auspicious, in view of the ghostly nature of these guests.

The myrtle crowns worn by initiates in the Mysteria would have remained with them also as ψυχᾶί in the afterlife (as we may assume was popular belief), where they would follow their leader Iakchos, also crowned with myrtle (Ar. *Ran.* 330), and take part in banquets, with myrtle crowns as insignia of their privileged position (προεδρία, [Pl. *Ax.*] 371d); here it seems to suggest an expectation that the underworld guests would be initiates.

In line 3, the countless number of popana-cakes offered to ψυχᾶί, noted in the Derveni Papyrus, is echoed in an underworld scene in Lucian's *Cataplus*, when Charon declares, "Down here, there is only asphodel and popana and libations and enagismata."<sup>8</sup>

Olives, salt, and leeks are, like barley-cakes and popana, elements of a simple meal,<sup>9</sup> but salt has a significance far beyond its use as a seasoning. According to Greek custom, sharing a meal with salt is a traditional way of establishing a bond of friendship between host and guest.<sup>10</sup>

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ἔχειν νομίζοντες βουλευτήριον ἐνταῦθα ὠκοδόμησαν, ἵνα σφίσιν ὁ τάφος τῶν ἠρώων ἐντὸς τοῦ βουλευτηρίου γένηται.

<sup>7</sup>. Eust. *Od.* A.vs.1-2, p.5.45-46 Stallbaum: ὡς δὲ καὶ νεκροῖς προσφυῆς τὸ οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ τὸ οἱ πλείους, δηλοῖ ὁ εἰπὼν τὸ ἀπελεύσομαι παρὰ τοὺς πλείονας. ὃ ἐστὶ θανοῦμαι. πλείονας γὰρ τοὺς τεθνεῶτας ἐκείνος ἔφη.

<sup>8</sup>. παρ' ἡμῖν μὲν γὰρ ἀσφόδελος μόνον καὶ χοαὶ καὶ πόπανα καὶ ἐναγίσματα. (*Catapl.* 5).

<sup>9</sup>. In sacred laws barley cakes are attested only at Delphi, as nourishment provided to pilgrims (*LSS* 38.16) (Daly). At Athens Solon prescribed them for the simple meals in the Prytaneion (Ath. 137e).

<sup>10</sup>. Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1156b.26-28; Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 224-225 (τοὺς τῆς πόλεως ἄλας περὶ πλείονος ποιήσασθαι τῆς ξενικῆς τραπέζης); Dem. 19.189, 191 (ποῦ δ' ἄλας; ποῦ τράπεζα); Orig. *c. Cels.* 2.21 = Archil. F173 West.

In general fish are very rare in Greek cults.<sup>11</sup> In Eastern cults fish were an especially striking feature,<sup>12</sup> which might suggest that the goddess here is an Eastern one, such as Aphrodite Ourania, the Hellenized Astarte of Phoenicia, some of whose sanctuaries contain remains of fish,<sup>13</sup> including at Athens a burnt fish vertebra found among the faunal remains from the altar identified as that of Aphrodite Ourania.<sup>14</sup> However, the more appropriate goddess in the context of a banquet for ψυχαί would be Hekate (or Artemis Hekate), attested as recipient of sacrificial fish.<sup>15</sup> Another, perhaps more important consideration could have been the fact that fish were, for Athenians, an enticing delicacy (ᾄψον, Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 667f), therefore especially appropriate for honored guests.

For the group of nine individuals on the right, the foodstuffs are listed in approximately the reverse order from those on the left; the crowns come at the end, along with garlic, which they receive instead of the olives given to the guests on the left. They receive garlic probably because it can also serve as an apotropaic,<sup>16</sup> an understandable precaution in the presence of such uncanny guests on the left. It is used as an apotropaic in many cultures, including modern Greece and Bulgaria; it may be compared to chewing on ῥάμνος, as is alleged during the Choes festival at the Anthesteria.<sup>17</sup> Its position here at the very end of the righthand list probably has to do with the following instruction in lines 9-15: "After this (i.e. after setting out the preceding items) she is to summon the goddess, having taken [nine] olive branches, three whole heads of garlic,<sup>18</sup> and a stemma (a fillet or wreath). After she summons the goddess she is to place the branches in the *thalame* [and each] head of garlic [. . .]." This may explain why the garlic is at the end of the righthand list: it is at the end of the table nearest the priestess as she summons the goddess.<sup>19</sup>

The most likely goddess, as mentioned above, should be one who is intimately associated with the underworld, such as Hekate: πρόπολος καὶ ὀπάων of Persephone (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 440), νεπτέρων πρύτανις (Sophron, Schol. Theoc. 2.11-13), sometimes even, it seems, equated with Persephone (Soph. *Ant.* 1199, Eur. *Ion* 1048).<sup>20</sup> After summoning the goddess the priestess deposits the nine branches somewhere in the θαλάμη, which in this context should be a statue niche,<sup>21</sup> and she places each garlic head in a specific place (mentioned in the lacuna). The explicit purpose of this entire ritual, surely for the benefit of the nine persons on the right, must have been stated in the missing text on the other side of the stele. It was presumably hoped that the goddess would bring with her, from among the

<sup>11</sup> Daly (2022, 666-667) presented a list of sanctuaries in which fish bones have been found in dining contexts.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Burkert 1997, 227-231; Lightfoot 2003, 165-172.

<sup>13</sup> Bloch-Smith 2014, 167-194.

<sup>14</sup> Reese 1989, 68.

<sup>15</sup> Namely τρίγλη (Mullius barbatus) and μαινίς (probably a small fish such as a sprat or sardine), Ath. 325b-c, 313b; cf. F. J. Dölger, *IXΘΥΣ* 2 (1922), 317-339.

<sup>16</sup> Theophr. *Char.* 16.13 Rusten; Ar. *Pax* 500-502 (smearing it on a statue); Pers. 5.188; on its use as apotropaic in ancient and modern Greece, cf. Megaloudi 2005 and 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Phot. s.v. ῥάμνος, on which cf. Hamilton 1992, 26-27, 59-60.

<sup>18</sup> Daly restored in line 12 salt, ἄ]λας, but it seems very odd here: *whole* heads of garlic would be ritually desirable for achieving an intended effect.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the spatial disposition laid out by Daly 2022, 680, except that "left" and "right" probably should be reversed, as they are likely oriented in relation to a person facing the *thalame*, where the "divinity" ought to be located. The olive branches and stemma are presumably not listed among the righthand items because they were not intended for use by the guests during the banquet. The subject of καλεῖσθαι, most likely τῆν ἰέρειαν, modified by λαβοῦσαν, will have been expressed in the missing text on Side A (see above, p. 86).

<sup>20</sup> On Hekate as underworld goddess cf. Nilsson 1967, 723-725; Wilamowitz 1931, 169-170; Heckenbach 1912, 2770-2774; Carboni 2015, 23-31.

<sup>21</sup> On this sense in a ritual context, Robert 1969, 255; cf. Daly 2022, 674-675.

countless souls in the underworld, the souls with whom the nine hosts especially wished to establish a relationship of friendship. The priestess summoning the goddess may also have included a request for specific *psychai*, as the goddess had the power to cause souls to rise up from the underworld;<sup>22</sup> in any case, it was probably important to gain the favor of *all* the ψυχάι by inviting *all* of them, just as Odysseus sacrificed and prayed to all of them (Hom. *Od.* 11.26, 34), though he needed to consult only one of them. If the purpose was placation, a ritual similar to this one in the use of a banquet, though only figuratively, is described in the *Lex Sacra* of Cyrene (Rhodes and Osborne 2003, 111-119 no. 97):<sup>23</sup>

ἰκέσιος ἐπακτός· αἴ κα ἐπιπεμφθῆι ἐπὶ τὰν | οἰκίαν, αἴ μέγ κα ἴσαι ἀφ’ ὅτινός οἱ ἐπῆνθε, ὀνυμαξεῖ αὐτὸν προειπὼν τρεῖς ἀμέρας· αἴ δ[έ] | κα τεθνάκῃ ἔγγαιος ἢ ἄλλη πη ἀπολώλη[ι], |<sup>115</sup> αἴ μέγ κα ἴσαι τὸ ὄνυμα, ὄνυμαστὶ προερεῖ, αἴ | δέ κα μὴ ἴσαι, "ὦ ἄνθρωπε, αἴτε ἀνὴρ αἴτε γυνὰ | ἐσσί", κολοσὸς ποιήσαντα ἔρσενα καὶ θήλεια[ν] | ἢ καλίνος ἢ γαῖνος ὑποδεξάμενον παρτιθ[έ]||μεν τὸ μέρος πάντων· ἐπεὶ δέ κα ποιήσῃς τὰ |<sup>120</sup> νομιζόμενα, φέροντα ἐς ὕλαν ἀεργὸν ἐρε|[ῖ]σαι τὰς κολοσὸς καὶ τὰ μέρη.

Suppliants/Visitants sent by spells. If a suppliant/visitant is | sent to the house, if (the householder) knows from whom he came, he | shall make a proclamation and name him for three days. And if he | has died in the land or has perished somewhere else, if he knows his | name, he is to call out by name, but if he does not know (he is to proclaim): "O person, whether you are a man or a woman." He is to make | figurines, male and female, either from wood or from clay, and | give them hospitality, offering them a portion of everything. When you have performed the customary rites, carry the figurines and the portions to an unworked wood and deposit them (Trans. Rhodes and Osborne with slight modification).

By means of a symbolic banquet between a host and his visitant, represented by figurines, reconciliation is achieved and the visitant's harassment of the host ceases.<sup>24</sup> In our case the nine individuals, perhaps harassed by visitants from the underworld,<sup>25</sup> or perhaps simply wishing to be on good terms with ghosts haunting certain cemeteries, are hosting these souls in order to achieve a bond of guest-friendship through traditional ξενία of "table and salt."<sup>26</sup>

An exceptional feature in the present case is the deposition, in the statue niche, of nine olive branches, which apparently represent the nine individuals—perhaps a variation on the traditional act of a suppliant depositing an olive branch, the ἰκετηρία, on an altar;<sup>27</sup> but here the priestess deposits the branches on their behalf next to the statue in the niche, perhaps in three groups, each consisting of three small branches together with a head of garlic, thus putting the nine persons under the protection of the goddess.

Placating the countless ψυχάι with countless offerings, with popana heading the list, is a concern that appears also in the Derveni Papyrus, and therefore offers some corroboration that the rituals which

<sup>22</sup>. Menelaos, Eur. *Hel.* 569: ὦ φωσφόρ’ Ἐκάτη, πέμπτε φάσματ’ εὐμενῆ. Cf. Johnston 1999, 71-73.

<sup>23</sup>. Cf. Jameson 1994, 35.

<sup>24</sup>. Cf. Parker 1983, 346-349.

<sup>25</sup>. Johnston (2005, 285) notes the large percentage of oracles dealing with the anger of the dead. And, noting (2005, 292) that the Greeks took a dim view of benefiting from contact with the dead, they sought it nevertheless as a source of information about how to avert their dangerous anger.

<sup>26</sup>. Cf. also the ritual at Selinus for purification of a homicide by means of a meal and salt offered by a host; Jameson et al. 1993, 16 B.1-7, 40-43; Clinton 1996, 174-177; 2020, 325-326.

<sup>27</sup>. Cf. Blech, *Kranz*, 292.

the Derveni author describes with regard to souls, in cults similar to the one described here, are based on actual practice.<sup>28</sup>

In order to identify the sanctuary where this ritual took place, the sanctuary should satisfy certain requirements: 1) it should be devoted to a goddess associated with the underworld; 2) it should possess a feature that can be called a *θαλάμη*; 3) it should be a site that is likely, according to ancient belief, to attract *ψυχαί*; and 4) it should be served by a priestess. No sanctuary in the Agora seems to satisfy all these conditions. The best candidate in the general vicinity of the stele's findspot, by the NW corner of the Stoa Poikile, would be the sanctuary of Artemis Soteira, about 0.6 km. away, along the Street of the Tombs in the Kerameikos (Stroszeck 2017, foldout plan of Kerameikos, no. 17)<sup>29</sup>—an area where *ψυχαί* of the recently deceased were believed to hang out (Pl. *Phd.* 81c-d), and some wells served as corridors of communication with gods of the underworld.<sup>30</sup> In 2020 this sanctuary was fully published by Constanze Graml, in her monograph *The Sanctuary of Artemis Soteira in the Kerameikos of Athens*. According to her account of the archaeological evidence, the sanctuary was established in the Early Hellenistic period (fin. s. IV/init. s. III a.).<sup>31</sup> It was later used by an association of Soteriastai (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1343), starting in the year 42/1, when this association was founded by Diodoros son of Sokrates of Aphidna: it served as their *τέμενος τῆς Σωτείρας*.<sup>32</sup> Much earlier, in the year 248/7, it was being used by an association of thiasotai, according to a decree (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1298) set up in the "sanctuary of Artemis" (*ἱερόν τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος*, vs. 12-13), surely the one in the Street of the Tombs, the closest sanctuary of Artemis to this stele's finding place (a few meters south of the Sacred Gate in the *proteichisma* between the city wall and the *taphros*).<sup>33</sup> According to this decree Artemis was being served by a priestess in the mid third century.<sup>34</sup>

In the Sanctuary of Artemis Soteira (**fig. 3**), the sacred trapeza with a crowning slab dedicated to Artemis Soteira (*IG II<sup>3</sup>* 4, 2, 1067, s. II-I a.), the altar next to it, and an omphalos are roughly aligned with a structure that Graml refers to as a "cult niche." Graml's plan of the entire sanctuary (**fig. 6**) shows the trapeza, altar, omphalos, and cult niche at the sanctuary's northern end. The "cult niche" (**fig. 4**, upper image) contains a statue base. Such a statue niche, as Kevin Daly pointed out,<sup>35</sup> is called a *θαλάμη*, this one enclosing a base with a triangular cavity for a three-sided statue. In between the altar and *θαλάμη* is a marble omphalos (**fig. 5**); underneath it excavation in 2015 revealed a circular shaft resembling a well (**fig. 4**, lower image; Stroszeck 2015-16, figs. 4-5, 7)—a *bothros* over 8 m. deep, lined with circular tiles,

<sup>28</sup>. See above, p. 86; Janko 2017, 72, 74 §17; Kotwick 2017, 23. It is not clear whether the female officiant (presumably a priestess, see above n. 19) of the cult featured in this document could be called a *μάγος* (sometimes feminine); on *μάγος* see above, p. 86. On *mystai* making preliminary sacrifices to the Eumenides in the same way as the *magoi* according to the Derveni author, see Henrichs 1984, 266-267; but these *mystai* do not seem to be the Eleusinian ones, whose preliminary sacrifices are to Demeter and Kore; see Clinton 1988, 69-70.

<sup>29</sup>. Inscriptions have also traveled in the opposite direction, from the Agora to the Sanctuary of Artemis: *Agora XV* 275 = Graml 2020, 131-132 cat. 8; *Agora XIX* P14 = Graml 2020, 122-123 cat. 1.

<sup>30</sup>. Stroszeck 2021, 21-25, 35-39 (wells).

<sup>31</sup>. Graml 2020, 45-46.

<sup>32</sup>. *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1343.40; on the year, S. Follet, *Topoi* 8, 1998, 258-260. Graml 2020, 133-139 cat. 9, with photograph and bibliography.

<sup>33</sup>. «ἐντετοιχισμένη ἐν τοίχῳ τινὶ κακοκτίστῳ μεταξὺ τῆς πρώτης [*proteichisma*] καὶ τῆς δευτέρας [*peribolos*] γραμμῆς τοῦ ἀρχαίου τῆς πόλεως περιβόλου, τοῦ ἀρτίως φανέντος νοτίως τοῦ Διτύλου.» (Koumanoudes 1879), i.e. a few meters south of the Sacred Gate in the *proteichisma* (see plan, idem, *Praktika* 1879).

<sup>34</sup>. Nora Dimitrova and I, while editing this decree several years ago for the forthcoming *IG II<sup>3</sup>* fasc. 8, noted that it should belong to this nearby sanctuary of Artemis; see below, n. 55 and Clinton 2023, 71-73.

<sup>35</sup>. Above, n. 21.

on each of which and on the omphalos is inscribed: Ἐλθέ μοι, ὦ Παιάν, φέρων τὸ μαντεῖον ἀληθές.<sup>36</sup> The current remains of the sanctuary are dated in the first and second centuries A.D.<sup>37</sup> To date only a brief report on the excavation of the bothros has appeared.<sup>38</sup> Judging by some lunate letters that can be seen in the photograph of the mouth of the bothros, the ceramic lining would have been installed in the Roman period. However, in the preliminary reports no reason has been given why the bothros could not have been created around the same time as a similar shaft in the sanctuary, which functions as a well, that is, ca. 300 B.C.,<sup>39</sup> when the sanctuary was established. The bothros would have been last relined with tiles sometime in the first to third centuries A.D.

Now, a bothros that is created in order to obtain prophecy is reminiscent of the very first such bothros that appeared in Western literature—the one in Book 11.24-151 of the *Odyssey*, dug by Odysseus on instructions from Circe, for the purpose of receiving prophecies (θέσφατα) from Teiresias (*Hom. Od.* λ (11) 24-43):

ἐγὼ δ' ἄορ ὄξυ ἔρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ / βόθρον ὄρυξ' ὅσσον τε πυγούσιον ἔνθα  
καὶ ἔνθα, / ἀμφ' αὐτῷ δὲ χοῆν χεόμην πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι, / πρῶτα μελικρήτω,  
μετέπειτα δὲ ἠδέϊ οἴνω, / τὸ τρίτον αὖθ' ὕδατι· ἐπὶ δ' ἄλφιστα λευκὰ πάλυνον. /  
πολλὰ δὲ γουνούμην νεκύων ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα,<sup>30</sup> ἐλθῶν εἰς Ἴθάκην στεῖραν βοῦν, ἣ  
τις ἀρίστη, / ῥέξειν ἐν μεγάροισι πυρὴν τ' ἐμπλησέμεν ἐσθλῶν, / Τειρεσίη δ'  
ἀπάνευθεν οἶν ἱερευσέμεν οἴω / παμμέλαν', ὅς μῆλοισι μεταπρέπει ἡμετέροισι. / τοὺς  
δ' ἐπεὶ εὐχολῆσι λιτῆσί τε, ἔθνεα νεκρῶν, / ἔλλισάμην, τὰ δὲ μῆλα λαβῶν  
ἀπεδειροτόμησα / ἐς βόθρον, ῥέε δ' αἶμα κελαινεφές· αἶ δ' ἀγέροντο / ψυχαὶ ὑπέξ  
Ἐρέβους νεκύων κατατεθνηώτων· / νύμφαι τ' ἠῖθεοί τε πολύτλητοί τε γέροντες /  
παρθενικά τ' ἀταλαὶ νεοπενθέα θυμὸν ἔχουσαι,<sup>40</sup> πολλοὶ δ' οὐτάμενοι χαλκήρεσιν  
ἐγχείησιν, / ἄνδρες ἀρηϊφατοὶ, βεβρωτῶμένα τεύχε' ἔχοντες· / οἱ πολλοὶ περὶ βόθρον  
ἐφοίτων ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος / θεσπεσίη ἰαχῆ· ἐμὲ δὲ χλωρὸν δέος ἦρει.

This, the most memorable example of a bothros, which was intended for access to prophecy, had the side-effect of allowing ψυχαὶ to rise up through it in great swarms. Here Homer described an ideal method for summoning souls from the underworld: after digging a sizeable pit, pouring libations to *all* the deceased, and promising future sacrifices, one summons the dead with prayers while cutting victims' throats to allow their blood to flow into the pit. Surely the bothros in the Kerameikos, over 8 m. deep, could have been intended to serve also as a conduit for ψυχαὶ.<sup>40</sup> At Eleusis too, a Sacred Stone resembling an omphalos stood somewhere in the vicinity of both the Agelastos Petra<sup>41</sup> and a bothros which was probably imagined to lead to the underworld.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup>. Graml 2020, 25; Stroszeck 2015-2016, 31-36; 2017, 120-123. The bothros is labeled a "Manteion."

<sup>37</sup>. Stroszeck 2017, 123.

<sup>38</sup>. Stroszeck 2015-16 and 2017, 122-123.

<sup>39</sup>. The material and form of its mouth resemble Classical and Hellenistic examples, Stroszeck 2017, 123.

<sup>40</sup>. It is interesting that in 1972 Semni Karouzou (1972, 72) had a hunch that there was "an underground sanctuary of Hekate" in the Kerameikos: "Must there not also have been, from primitive times, an underground enclosure in the Kerameikos, perhaps on the site fixed by a base and a later relief of the second or third century A.D.?" Her footnote identifies the site as the sanctuary of Hekate, now known as the sanctuary of Artemis Soteira.

<sup>41</sup>. Clinton 1992, 121-123.

<sup>42</sup>. *ibid.*, 87-89; Mylonas 1961, 148.

Directly in front of this bothros, the statue base with the triangular cavity in the θαλάμη (fig. 4, upper image), must have held a trimorphic statue, the type called Hekataion, representing Hekate or the goddess Artemis Hekate, i.e. Artemis endowed with the powers of Hekate.<sup>43</sup> The first marble sculpture of the trimorphic Hekate, goddess of crossroads, was created by Alcamenes according to Pausanias,<sup>44</sup> though the concept of Hekate as trimorphic goddess must have been older,<sup>45</sup> and wooden Hekateia may well have been set up in front of houses.<sup>46</sup> Pausanias called the goddess Hekate Epipyrgidia, Hekate on the Tower (at the entrance to the Acropolis); in a decree of the Eleusinian Kerykes of the year 20/19, however, she is called Artemis Epipyrgidia (*I. Eleusis* 300.10-11; cf. *IG II<sup>3</sup>* 4, 3, 1910); and in the inventory of the Treasurers of the Other Gods in 429 B.C. she is called simply Artemis Hekate (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 383.125-127).<sup>47</sup> Thus the same goddess is Hekate Epipyrgidia, Artemis Epipyrgidia, and Artemis Hekate.

The area of the sanctuary of Artemis Soteira was first excavated by K. D. Mylonas in 1890 in his «ἀνασκαφαὶ παρὰ τὸ Δίπυλον»; he identified it as a sanctuary of Hekate because of the triangular cavity in the statue base.<sup>48</sup> Although Graml regarded his identification as mistaken (because the decree of the Soteriastai, *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1343, and the dedication, *IG II<sup>3</sup>* 4, 2, 1067, identify it as that of Artemis Soteira),<sup>49</sup> Mylonas was, in principle, correct: the configuration of the statue base was the correct type for a Hekataion,<sup>50</sup> and therefore indicated this must be a sanctuary of Hekate. In this case, however, it turns out to be in her guise as Artemis, as the two documents concerning Artemis Soteira reveal, i.e. Artemis Hekate. Both documents, found in this sanctuary but not precisely in situ,<sup>51</sup> suggested to Mylonas, since he had already identified the sanctuary as belonging to Hekate, that the sanctuary of Artemis was elsewhere in the area near the Dipylon,<sup>52</sup> and in this he was partially correct—it indeed was in the area

<sup>43</sup>. On Artemis Hekate, Artemis identified with Hekate, Nilsson 1967, 723-725; Heckenbach 1912, 2770-2771; Sarian 1992, 985-986; Carboni 2015, 35-40. On the Hekateion see below, n. 50.

<sup>44</sup>. Paus. 2.30.2: Ἀλκαμένης δὲ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν πρῶτος ἀγάλματα Ἑκάτης τρία ἐποίησε προσεχόμενα ἀλλήλοις, ἦν Ἀθηναῖοι καλοῦσιν Ἐπιπυργιδίαν· ἔστηκε δὲ παρὰ τῆς Ἀπτέρου Νίκης τὸν ναόν.

<sup>45</sup>. Kraus 1960, 102-112; Willers 1975, 50-51; cf. Johnston 1991; Sarian 1992, 1015 (with bibliography); Karouzou 1972, 69.

<sup>46</sup>. Simon 1985, 273; cf. Kraus 1960, 105-107.

<sup>47</sup>. [Ε]ρμῶ καὶ Ἀρ[τ]έμιδος [Ἑ]κάτες, the name she also has in the lex sacra of the deme of Erchia (*LS* 18), where she receives sacrifice in the temenos of Hekate.

<sup>48</sup>. Mylonas 1890, 24.

<sup>49</sup>. Graml 2020, 4-5.

<sup>50</sup>. The Hekataion was the characteristic (trimorphic) statue of Hekate: *Ran.* 366: κατατιλᾶ τῶν Ἑκαταίων Σ: τῶν Ἑκαταίων, ἦτοι κατὰ τῶν ἀγαλμάτων τῆς Ἑκάτης. *Vesp.* 804: ὡσπερ Ἑκαταῖον πανταχοῦ πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν. Σ: ἱερὸν Ἑκάτης, ὡς τῶν Ἀθηναίων πανταχοῦ ἰδρυμένων αὐτὴν ὡς ἔφορον πάντων καὶ κουροτρόφον. Ἑκαταῖον οὖν Ἑκάτης ἀγαλμα, *Ald.* A triangular cavity in a statue base with a dedicatory inscription to Hekate or Artemis was cut for the insertion of a trimorphic statue: examples in Sarian 1998, 146-152: *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 499 (Ἀρτέμιδι Ἑκ[ά]τη) (fig. 4); *I.Delos* 2381 (Ἀρτέμιδι ΧΑ[- - -]) (fig. 11); *I.Delos* 2374 (Ἀρτέμιδι) (fig. 12); *I.Delos* 2380 (Φωσφό[ρ]ωι Ἀρτέ]μιδι (fig. 14), perhaps a herm; *I.Delos* 2448 Ἑκ[ά]τη | Σω]τεῖρα (fig. 15). Each of these three trimorphic Ἀρτέμιδες was evidently an Ἄρτεμις Ἑκάτη, but in two cases more specific epithets were used instead of Ἑκάτη. On the fusion of Artemis and Hecate on Delos and neighboring islands see Carboni 2015, 189-199. In general it seems safe to assume that if a statue base with a dedication to Artemis has a triangular cavity for the insertion of a Hekataion, the goddess is Artemis Hekate even if not so named. Ordinarily, if an Artemis Hekate has a local or function-defining epithet whose use is deemed necessary in a particular context, Hekate's name will not also appear. If both names are used, the name of Artemis, as an Olympian, will always precede that of Hekate, the non-Olympian; cf. Parker 2005, 226.

<sup>51</sup>. Mylonas 1893, 59.

<sup>52</sup>. Mylonas 1890, 24: «Ἐκ τῆς ἐπιγραφῆς ταύτης πληροφοροῦμεθα πρῶτον σχεδόν, ὅτι ὑπῆρχε καὶ ἐν Ἀθήναις τέμενος τῆς Σωτείας Ἀρτέμιδος, κείμενον ἐκεῖ που παρὰ τὸ Δίπυλον», with n. 1: «καὶ βάθρον ἐνεπίγραφον [*IG II<sup>3</sup>*



near the Dipylon, but right there, in his own excavation παρὰ τὸ Δίπυλον—a sanctuary of Hekate and Artemis Soteira, i.e. an Artemis Hekate, like the Artemis Epipyrgidia.<sup>53</sup>

Mylonas regarded the decree of the thiasotai issued in the year 248/7, *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1298*, which was found ca. 130 m. away, just south of the Sacred Gate,<sup>54</sup> as also belonging to this same sanctuary of Artemis.<sup>55</sup> We gain from this thiasotai decree the precious testimony that the sanctuary of Artemis was being used by thiasotai in the year 248/7, therefore that this sanctuary, established around 300 B.C., was most likely established by thiasotai, whose members seem to be a cross-section of Athenian society, consisting of men and women, citizens, metics, and slaves.

For the ritual described in Agora I 7538 foodstuffs and wreaths were laid out to the left and the right, perhaps on the trapeza and altar, or on tables to the left and right of them; the priestess, standing next to the bothros, summoned the goddess, and then she took 9 olive branches and 3 heads of garlic, and placed them in the θαλάμη, the statue niche. The numbers, multiples of 3, suggest a possible relation to the trimorphic statue: 3 branches and a head of garlic on each of the three sides.

In the second half of the first century, evidently after the association of thiasotai ceased to exist, a new private association, the Soteriastai, occupied the sanctuary. It was most likely under their control when the bothros was relined with circular tiles, displaying an invocation summoning Paian to come and bring an oracle true—a ritual different from (but not unrelated to) a banquet for the ψυχαί, perhaps also performed ever since the sanctuary was established (see below, pp. 94-95).

There is a further feature of the sanctuary that is of interest. Mounted on the front side of the altar is a reused relief on a stele showing a sacrificial scene (**fig. 7**); it illustrates the function of this structure.<sup>56</sup> On the path to the well in the southern area of the sanctuary there is a reused relief of a water-carrier (hydrophoros) (**fig. 8**), obviously indicating that the path is leading to the well in this area.<sup>57</sup> The administration of the sanctuary apparently liked to reuse images obtained from *spolia* to illustrate, or point the way to, features within the sanctuary.

They did this also with a reused relief that they set up at the entrance to the sanctuary (**fig. 9**). It has been called the Charon Relief ever since its excavator in 1863 so identified a boatman rowing his boat in this scene,<sup>58</sup> and so it has come to be known in the Kerameikos, as Alfred Brueckner insisted in *Der Friedhof am Eridanos* in 1909.<sup>59</sup> Although there have been dissenting views,<sup>60</sup> in the latest Guide to the

4, 2, 1067] οὐ κατὰ χώραν καὶ τοῦτο, ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ περίπτῳ θέσει εὐρεθὲν, ἀναφέρεται εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν θεάν»; cf. Mylonas 1893, 60. As Mylonas' text makes clear, Graml (2020, 5) is incorrect in stating that Mylonas assigned these two documents to the Sanctuary of Ariste and Kalliste.

<sup>53</sup>. Wilhelm (1905, 240-242) pointed out that the triangular cavity in the statue base indicated "in all probability" that the deity worshipped in this sanctuary was Artemis; and he hoped that others would study the history and construction of the sanctuary in more detail; but it took over a century until his wish was fulfilled, with the excellent publication of the sanctuary by Graml (2020).

<sup>54</sup>. See above, p. 90.

<sup>55</sup>. Mylonas (1893, 59-60), as we too realized a couple of years ago, in our edition for *IG II<sup>3</sup> fasc. 8*. Clinton (2023) 71-73 explains why associating this decree with the sanctuary of Kalliste, located on the road to the Academy, is impossible. In short, the Kalliste sanctuary is a state sanctuary and is served by a priest, while the Artemis sanctuary of *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1298* belongs to a private association of thiasotai and is served by a priestess. Furthermore, Pausanias was wrong in asserting that Kalliste and Ariste in the former sanctuary were epithets of Artemis; all preserved documents refer to this sanctuary as that of Kalliste or Kalliste and Ariste, with no mention of Artemis: in Athens an Artemis with the epithet Ariste or Kalliste is unattested.

<sup>56</sup>. Graml 2020, 21-22, 146-148.

<sup>57</sup>. Graml 2020, 33, 144-146.

<sup>58</sup>. Rhusopoulos 1863, 295-296.

<sup>59</sup>. Brueckner 1909, 27-28, 84-85.

Kerameikos, of 2017, Jutta Stroszeck, director of the excavations, regards it as, probably, a relief of Charon on the River Styx.<sup>61</sup> It shows a group of men and women sitting at a banquet table,<sup>62</sup> and below them Charon is rowing his boat.<sup>63</sup> In the relief's reuse here, Graml points out that it may have functioned as an entrance marker (fig. 6).<sup>64</sup> Indeed, the banquet scene, with an apparent depiction of Charon in his boat, represents the type of activity that takes place within the sanctuary: a banquet somehow connected with the underworld. Set up at the entrance to the sanctuary, it looks very much like an effort to advertise it (fig. 10). It would have served as a helpful signpost for those looking to find this extraordinary sanctuary of Artemis, with its extraordinary rituals, along the Street of the Tombs.

### The Bothros ("Manteion")

In the absence of a detailed report on the excavation of this structure I present here some preliminary thoughts.<sup>65</sup> The inscription on the circular tiles lining the bothros—Ἐλθέ μοι, ὦ Παιάν, φέρων τὸ μαντεῖον ἀληθές—does not look like an invocation addressed to Apollo. "Come to me" expects the one summoned to come in person. But in his great oracular sanctuaries Apollo inspires *directly*, through a material medium, such as vapors at Delphi, or through drinking from his spring, as at Claros; he does not function like a courier who arrives, bringing (φέρων) something. In this case the divine courier is to bring an oracle from the underworld, the source implied by the repetition of the invocation on every ring of tiles all the way to the bottom of the bothros.<sup>66</sup> However, Hades is not a region where Apollo abides and from which he can be summoned. A more appropriate figure to address in Hades would be Teiresias, whose θέσφατα Odysseus sought by means of a bothros, in the first recorded consultation of this type (Hom. *Od.* 11.23-149),<sup>67</sup> and who Athena proclaimed would be the greatest by far of prophets: "... I shall make him a prophet, famous among posterity. Indeed greater by far beyond the others. He will know birds: which is auspicious, which fly without significance, and whose flights are not well-omened. Many prophecies to the Boeotians, many to Cadmus will he give, and later to the mighty Labdacids. I shall also give him a great staff, which will direct his feet as necessary; I shall also give a limit to his life that is very long, and alone, when he dies, he will go sentient among the dead, honored by the mighty Leader of Men (Hades)" (Callim. *Hymn* 5, trans. S. A. Stephens). In Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the chorus advise Oedipus (284-286):

ἄνακτ' ἄνακτι ταῦθ' ὀρώωντ' ἐπίσταμαι / μάλιστα Φοῖβω Τειρεσίαν, παρ' οὔ

<sup>60</sup>. Scholl 1993, 354-355, with n. 2.

<sup>61</sup>. Stroszeck 2017, 223.

<sup>62</sup>. In the relief's original location in the cemetery the banqueters must have represented family members, probably Skythian metics according to Scholl (1993, 369-373; so also Stroszeck (2017, 223), perhaps members of an association of sailing captains (*naukleroi*) taking part in a funeral banquet (Scholl 1993, 369-372).

<sup>63</sup>. Scholl (1993, 362-368) argued that the relief almost certainly did not depict Charon, who is usually shown not sitting but standing, directing his ferry with a pole, but rather the deceased captain in his *kaiki*. Polygnotos, however, depicted Charon propelling his boat *with oars* (Paus. 10.28.2).

<sup>64</sup>. Graml 2020, 45-46.

<sup>65</sup>. Currently only the brief treatments by Graml (2020, 25) and Stroszeck (2015-16, 2017, 120-123) are available. Dr. Stroszeck has kindly informed me that her report on the Manteion will appear in *AM* 2023.

<sup>66</sup>. The invocation requesting a delivery of an oracle, in this case in person, is rather similar in a general way to a prayer in the magical papyri, requesting from Hermes delivery of an oracle, apparently mentally, e.g. *PMG* VII 678-680, which begins, δεῦρο, μάκαρ ("Come here, blessed one"), and ends, μαντοσύνην <τὴν σὴν> ἔκτεμψον ἀληθῆ ("Send your truthful prophecy!"). In some magical prayers Hermes is praised as a healer and prophet (cf. Graf 1997, 191-193), thus cannot be ruled out as the divinity addressed by the prayer on the bothros.

<sup>67</sup>. See above, p. 91.

τις ἄν / σκοπῶν τὰδ', ὦναξ, ἐκμάθοι σαφέστατα.

I know that Lord Teiresias is most like Lord Apollo in seeing the same things, and from him  
(Teiresias) he who inquires about these things, my lord, might learn them most clearly.

In prophecy Teiresias is essentially Apollo's equal; the juxtaposition of ἄνακτ' ἄνακτι is particularly striking. As they both can be addressed as Lord, it should be no surprise that both could be called Paian, "healer, deliverer, savior."<sup>68</sup>

In the ritual at the bothros, which served as a conduit for souls, the priest's exclamation, Ἐλθέ μοι, ὦ Παιάν, φέρων τὸ μαντεῖον ἀληθές, should be the culmination of a prayer for the *eidolon*, the ghost of Teiresias, to appear and provide an answer to a question presented to him by the priest (or other religious professional) who has the ability to perceive him.<sup>69</sup> This is a very rare example of a ritual of necromancy actually practiced according to archaeological evidence.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>. Later Oedipus acknowledges that Teiresias has the powers of a healer, to diagnose and cure the disease that besets the city (*OT*, 300-304): ὦ πάντα νωμῶν Τειρεσία, διδακτά τε / ἄρρητὰ τ' οὐράνιά τε καὶ χθονοστιβῆ, / πόλιν μὲν, εἰ καὶ μὴ βλέπεις, φρονεῖς δ' ὅμως / οἶα νόσῳ σύννεστιν· ἧς σὲ προστάτην / σωτήρᾳ τ', ὦναξ, μοῦνον ἐξευρίσκομεν. On παιάν cf. Beekes 2009, 1142; Aeschylus, metaphorically, ὦ Θάνατε Παιάν (F 399 Mette).

<sup>69</sup>. The ghost of Hermes is also a possibility; see above, n. 66.

<sup>70</sup>. In fact, if Friese's claim (2018, 234) that "no archaeological material, inscriptions or dedications demonstrate an active necromantic sanctuary" is correct (cf. Ogden 2001, 22: "Not even the most miserable piece of epigraphy can be associated with a *nekuomanteion*), this would be the only one, functioning in Athens in the first century B.C. and beyond, possibly earlier as well. Bremmer (2015) in his study of the literary evidence makes a strong case that necromancy was a regular practice in antiquity. On necromancy cf. also Graf 1994, 190-200; Ogden 2002, 179-205; on prayers requesting divination from Hermes, Graf 1997, 191-194.

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Agora I 7538: A Banquet for the 'Majority'



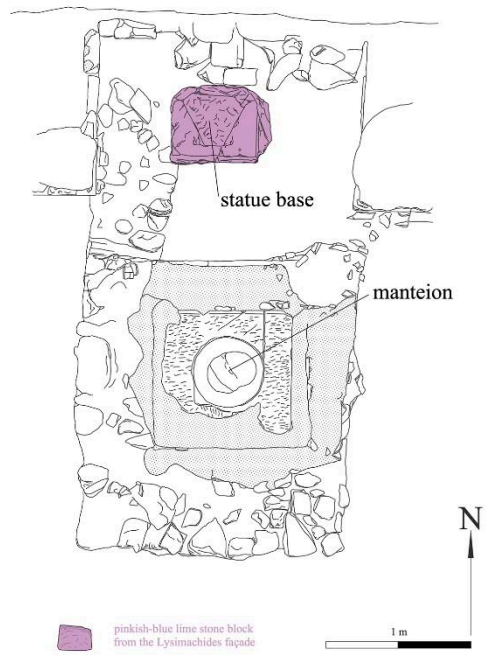
1. Agora I 7538, Side B  
(Photo C. Mauzy; courtesy Agora Excavations)



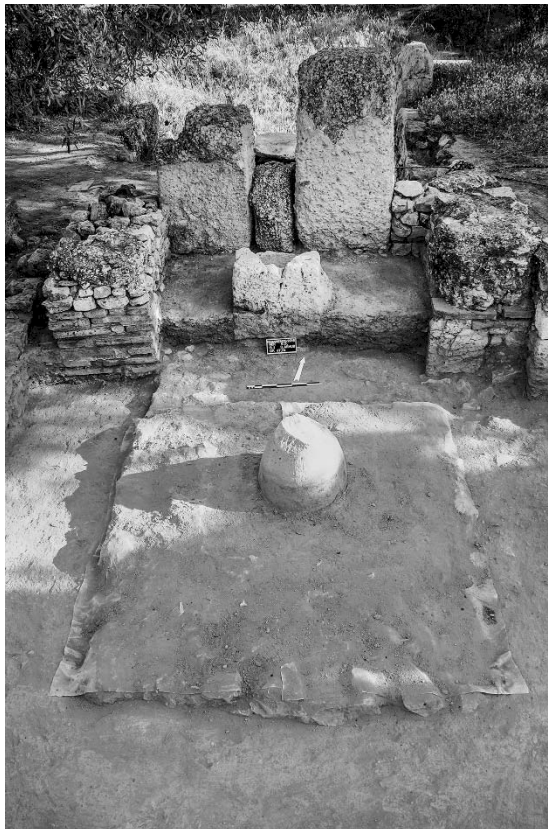
2. Agora I 7538, Side A  
(Photo C. Mauzy; courtesy Agora Excavations)



3. Trapeza, Altar, Omphalos, Cult Niche  
(Courtesy C. Graml 2020, pl. 54, below)



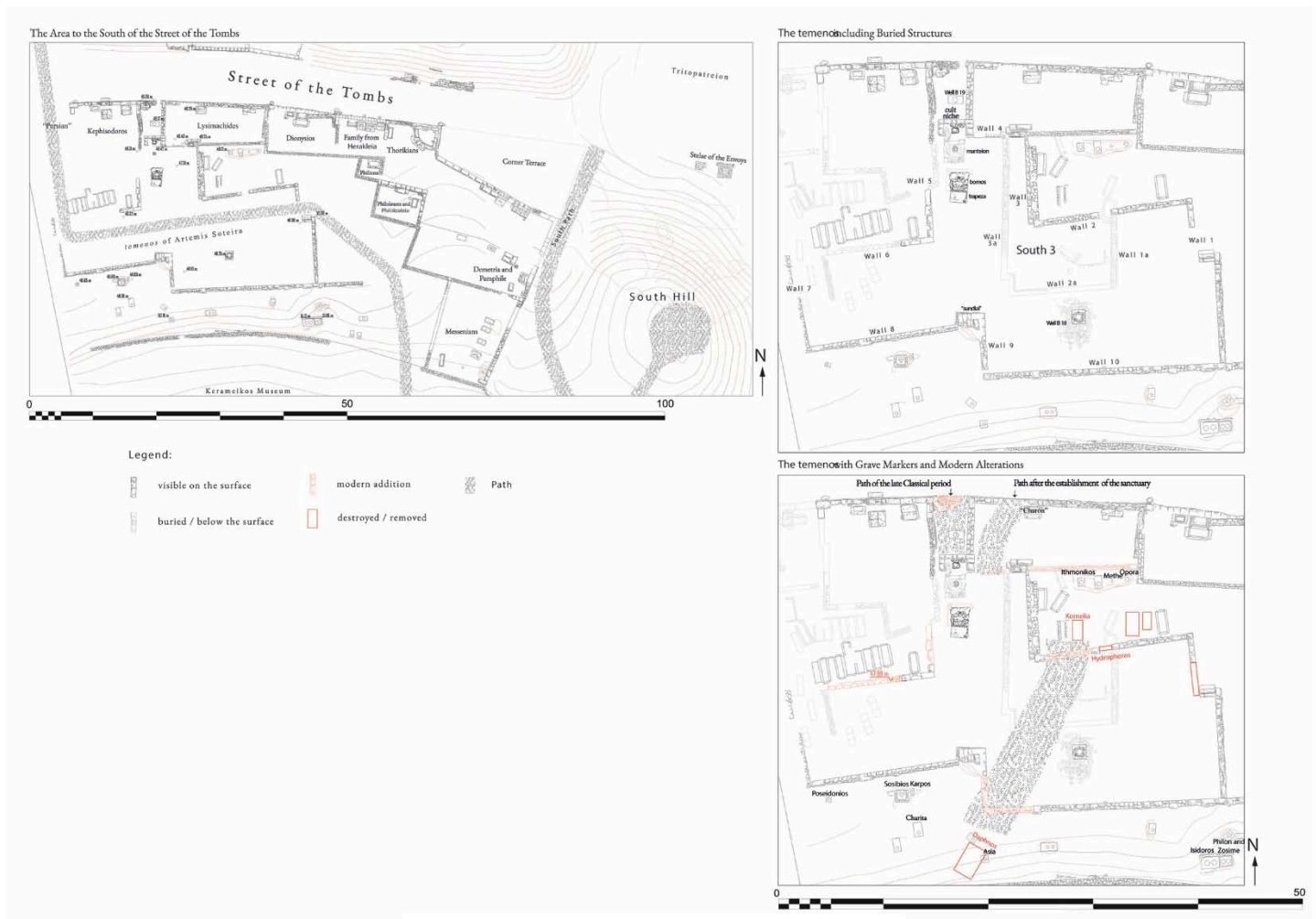
4. Cult Niche (above), Manteion (below)  
(Courtesy C. Graml 2020, pl. 57)



5. Omphalos and Cult Niche with statue base  
(Courtesy C. Graml 2020, pl. 56)



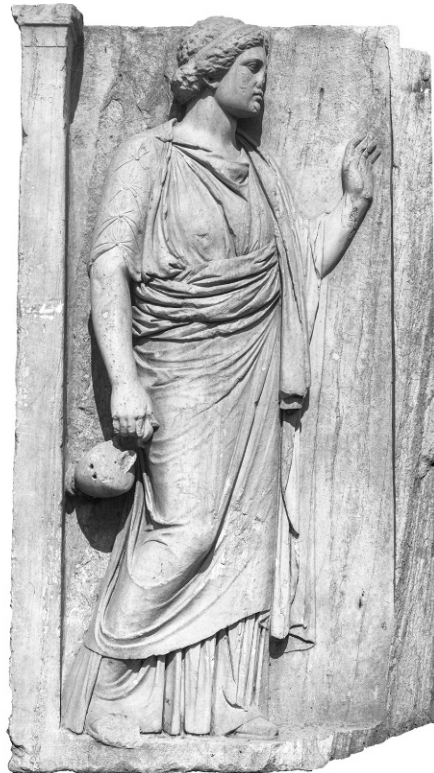
Agora I 7538: A Banquet for the 'Majority'



6. Plan of sanctuary of Artemis Soteira  
(Courtesy C. Graml 2020, Attachment G)



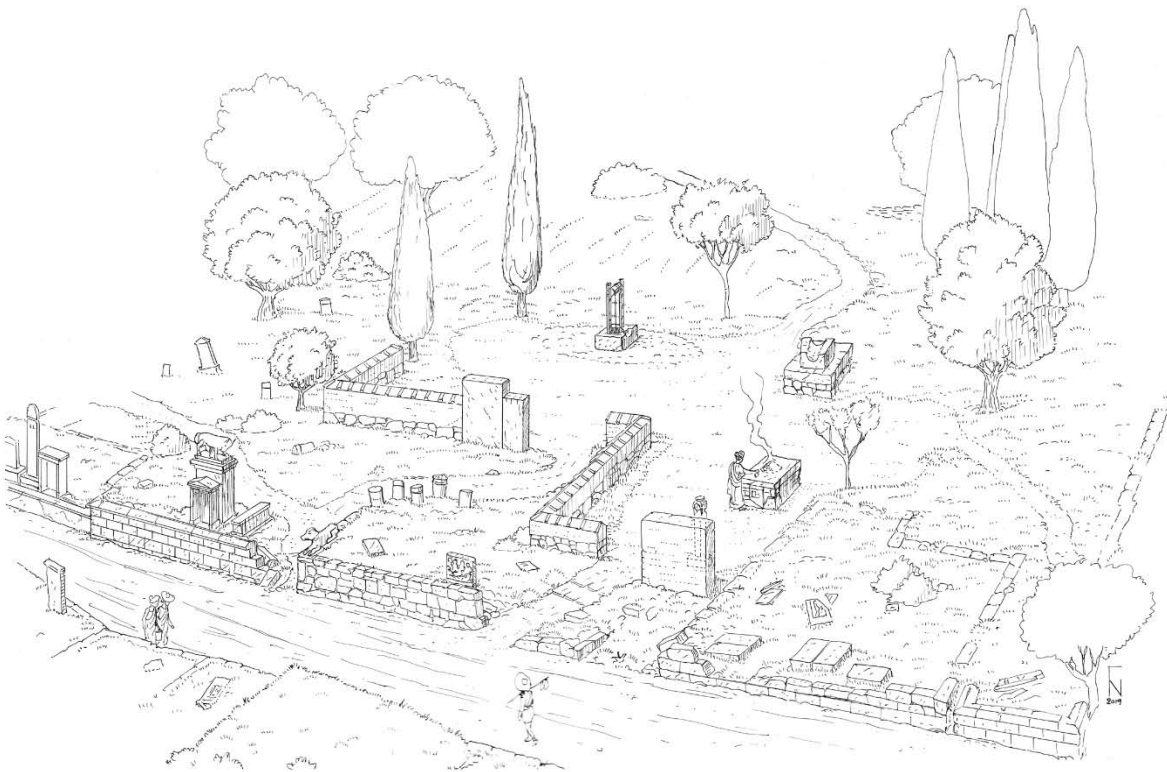
7. Altar, north side  
(Courtesy C. Graml 2020, pl. 54, above)



8. Hydrophoros  
(Courtesy C. Graml 2020, 145, Cat. 19.2)



9. Charon Relief  
(© Giovanni Dall'Orto  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:0926>)



10. Reconstruction of the sanctuary of Artemis Soteira at the time of its establishment  
(Courtesy C. Graml 2020, Attachment I)