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Editorial: Volume 2

This issue maintains our mission to publish across the whole time range of Greek Archaeology, with articles from the Palaeolithic to the Early Modern era, as well as reaching out from the Aegean to the wider Greek world. Lithics and Ceramics are accompanied by innovative Art History and Industrial Archaeology. Our book reviews are equally wide-ranging. Our authors are international, and include young researchers as well as long-established senior scholars. I am sure you readers will find a feast of stimulating studies and thoughtful reviews.

John Bintliff
General Editor

Revisiting the ‘Slipper Slapper’ and other sculpture dedications in the clubhouse of the Poseidoniasts of Beirut¹

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In 1904 a team led by French archaeologist Marcel Bulard discovered a sculptural group on the island of Delos in a building owned by businessmen from the Phoenician city of Beirut (Figures 1–6; Map 1).² This work, now known as the ‘Sandal Slapper’ or ‘Slipper Slapper’, dates to c. 100 BCE. It shows Aphrodite holding up one of her sandals, Pan holding onto to her, and Aphrodite’s son Eros flying overhead. The group’s goddess is a quotation of the now-lost, late-Classical Aphrodite of Knidos by Praxiteles (fl. 364/361 BCE). In its preliminary publication, Bulard described the work: ‘Le groupe représente Aphrodite, se défendant avec l’aide d’Éros contre les entreprises de Pan.’³ This interpretation of the group’s narrative – a bawdy scene in which Aphrodite brandishes her sandal at Pan’s sexual advances – is now standard. The work is thought to be of a piece with, if



Map 1: The eastern Mediterranean with Beirut, Delos, and Knidos indicated. Map: Sveta Matskevich.

¹ A preliminary version of this paper was presented in 2015 at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America. Research was supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research. Bailey Benson assisted with the research at Boston University. Unless otherwise noted, translations are by the author.

² Excavation, reconstruction, and research campaigns were undertaken in 1882, 1904, and 1906–1910. The group’s preliminary publication is by its original excavator (Bulard 1906). The building in which it was found was published by Charles Picard (1921); see also Picard 1920. Important updates to Picard are in Bruneau 1978a–b, 1991; Bruneau and Ducat 1983: 174–178, no. 57, figs. 46, 48; Hasenohr 2007; Meyer 1988; Picard 1936: 188–198; Tod 1934; and Trümper 2002: 265–330.

³ ‘The group represents Aphrodite defending herself with the help of Eros against Pan’s advances’ (Bulard 1906: 611).



Figure 1. Slipper-Slapper group of Aphrodite, Eros, and Pan from the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse at Delos, c. 100 BCE. Athens, National Museum 3335. Marble. Ht. 1.32m without base. Photo: National Archaeological Museum, Athens, G. Patrikianos.

less successful than, the playful Hellenistic *symplegmata*, 'intertwined' erotic groups showing Pan or satyrs in sexual pursuit of nymphs, shepherds, or hermaphrodites. Sometimes the flirtatious style of these groups is described as 'Hellenistic rococo', a label which can unfairly trivialize their sophistication and religious import.⁴ In passing, some scholars scorn the Slipper Slapper, finding goaty Pan's rapturous embrace of the Aphrodite of Knidos repugnant. The work has been called 'insensitive in quality and overpowerfully vulgar' and 'technically crude but amusing;' it is 'famously disliked.'⁵ These utterances contrast the work's originality and technical accomplishment, just two

⁴ Pollitt (1986: 127–141 after Klein 1921) discusses the idea of a Hellenistic rococo and problems with its conception. See also Bieber 1955: 136–156; Havelock 1995: 111–117; Kunze 2008.

⁵ Robinson 1975: 556; Pollitt 1986: 130; and Smith 1991: 242.

REVISITING THE 'SLIPPER SLAPPER'



Figure 2: Detail of Figure 1 showing the raised sandal and the heads of all three figures. Photo: author's own.



Figure 3. Detail of Figure 1 showing Pan grasping Aphrodite and sitting on an animal skin. His *lagobolon* (hunting stick) leans up against the stump. Photo: author's own.



Figure 4. Detail of Figure 1 showing Pan's leg kicking up in the air. Although the work was not fully visible from the back, this angle shows the extent to which Pan's weight is supported by the tree stump. Photo: author's own.

of its important qualities that are highlighted in handbooks of Hellenistic Greek sculpture and discussions of artistic responses to the Knidia.⁶

Yet concern for the Knidia and interest in her ancient reception has overshadowed the function of the group at Delos within the clubhouse of the Poseidoniasts of Beirut. Off-hand responses to the work's original setting in a Phoenician complex – responses that characterize it as 'Oriental' in flavor and a 'contamination' of different themes – detract from the investigation of its socio-religious value.⁷ I have argued elsewhere that the Slipper-Slapper group is not merely a derivative genre piece riffing off the Knidia but an important dedication that appropriates the formal aspect of that famous statue along with elements of her cult and implied narrative.⁸ This article expands upon that idea to consider how the work functioned alongside other dedications in the Phoenician complex, thereby expressing its members' negotiations of social and economic power on Delos. The collection of sculptures, altars, and other dedications in the Phoenician clubhouse, and a

⁶ Havelock (1995: 55, 56): 'interesting' and 'by no means mediocre', 'nuanced'; Ridgway (2002: 212 n. 30): 'on close examination . . . the sculpture reveals itself as a work of exceptional craftsmanship and composition, certainly not a 'light-weight' trinket.'

⁷ E.g., Picard (1921: 122): 'de technique orientales'; Picard (1921: 122 n. 2 after Bulard 1906: 631): 'contamination' (critiqued in Picard 1935: 13). 'Asianism' is a term used by Bieber (1955: 71–88), though not about this work in particular.

⁸ Martin 2017: 165–167.



Figure 5. Detail of Figure 1 showing Aphrodite's hairstyle and knotted *kekryphalos* (hair scarf). Her hair and the top of the sandal have traces of paint; holes for metal straps are visible on the sandal. Photo: author's own.

consideration of their setting, enhances our understanding of the role religious imagery played in complicated 'contact zones' such as the Delos clubs.

The Slipper-Slapper group

The Slipper-Slapper group measures 1.55m at its tallest point, 1.32m without its base.⁹ It is nearly complete,¹⁰ sculpted in marble from Paros. Its oval plinth was inserted into a small base inscribed in Greek:

⁹ Athens, National Museum 3335; Bieber 1955: 147–148, figs. 629–630; Bol 2007: 301–302, 411, fig. 291; Bruneau and Ducat 1983: 72–75, fig. 47; Bulard 1906; Charbonneaux et al. 1973: 316, 321, fig. 353; Della Seta 1930: 490–495, fig. 163; Eckert 2016: 190, 192, 199, fig. 66; Fuchs 1993: 377–378, fig. 418; Havelock 1995: 55–58, 104–105, 113, 136; Kaltsas 2002: 295–296, no. 617; Karouzou 1968: 189, pl. 68; Kell 1988: 50–56, fig. 11; Krahmer 1927: 66, 89; Kreeb 1988: 25–26, 109, S 1.11; Kunze 2008: 90–91; Lawrence 1927: 38–39, 125, pl. 63; LIMC s.v. 'Aphrodite' no. 514 = no. 1353, pl. 50; Machaira 1993: 182 (see also 129–132 for semi-nude and 132–134 for nude images of Aphrodite with Eros); Marcadé 1969: 393–396, pl. 50; Moreno 1994: 680–682, fig. 827; Marquardt 1995: 227–236, no. 1, pl. 23:3–4; Neumer-Pfau 1982: 235–237; Picard 1921: 122; Pollitt 1986: 130–131, fig. 138; Ridgway 2000: 147–149; Smith 1991: 242, fig. 314; Squire 2011: 109–114, fig. 39, pl. 8; Stewart 1990: 226–227, figs. 831, 834; Stewart 2014: 170–171, fig. 99.

¹⁰ Condition: Bulard 1906: 611. Repaired: top of Aphrodite's head and some of her hair, her right arm at the bicep, upper half of her raised sandal, fingers on her left hand, right buttock, left heel, outside of her right foot and sandal, strap on her instep near her toes; Eros's wings (the entire body of Eros was detached when the work was discovered and the wings were attached later); Pan's right leg and the top of his right horn. Missing: thumb and two fingers of Aphrodite's left hand, upper right arm of Eros, part of the left horn and left ear of Pan. There is damage to Eros's head. Limestone deposits on the group's lower half could not be removed.



Figure 6. Details of Figure 1 showing the inscription naming the patron Dionysios and honoring his *theoi patrioi* (ancestral gods; top); another view shows the movement of Aphrodite's nude foot toward Pan's hoof (bottom). Photos: author's own.

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΣ ΖΗΝΩΝΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΥ
ΒΗΡΥΤΙΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΗΣ ΥΠΕΡ ΕΑΥΤΟΥ
ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΤΕΚΝΩΝ ΘΕΟΙΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΟΙΣ

Dionysios son of Zenon son of Theodoros
of Berytos, benefactor, on behalf of himself
and his children to his ancestral gods.¹¹

The inscription employs a formula typical of Delian dedications. It names the patron, Dionysios, as well as his lineage: his father Zenon and grandfather Theodoros from Beirut (Berytos in the Greek spelling). Generational ties are again emphasized in the second part of the inscription where the dedication states it was made on behalf of Dionysios's children to his ancestral gods, the *theoi*

¹¹ *IDelos* 1783.

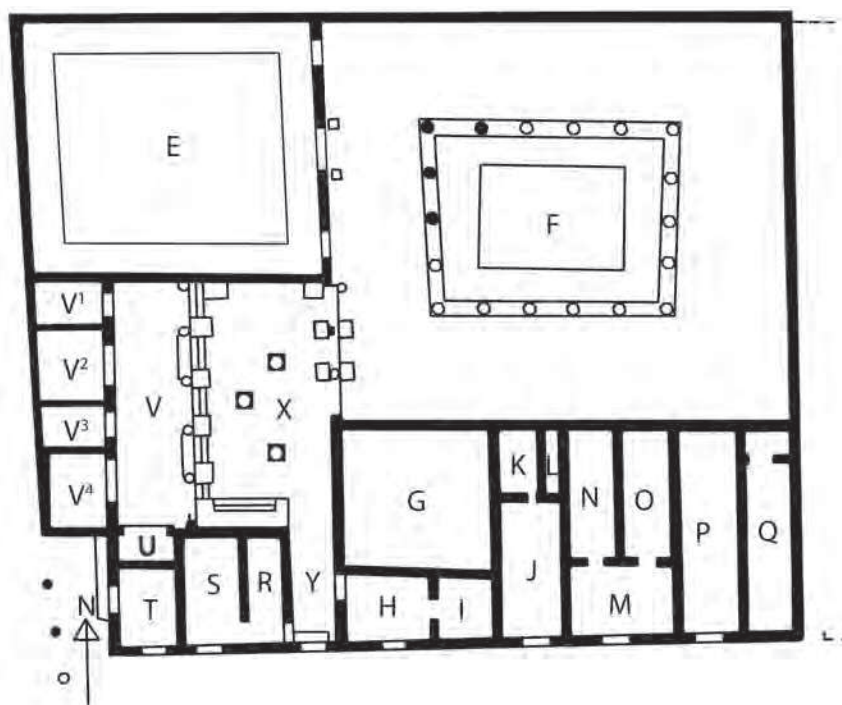


Figure 7. Plan of the final phase of the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse at Delos. Plan: redrawn by Sveta Matskevich after Bruneau and Ducat 1983, fig. 63.

patrioi. Dionysios and his family were major benefactors. Altogether, Dionysios's name appears four times in the complex: here, on what might be another statue base, and in two inscriptions for the south and west colonnades of courtyard 'F' (see Figure 7).¹² The name Zenon, son of apparently the same Dionysios, shows up on two statue bases. One dedication names his *theoi patrioi* and another names Poseidon.¹³ The letter forms of the dedicatory inscriptions suggest a date later in the second century BCE.

The Slipper Slapper is both Classical in its content and Hellenistic, which is to say modern by the standards of its day, in its composition. This combination places the work chronologically no earlier than the middle of the second century, corroborating the date suggested by the inscription. Further information regarding the group's date comes from its archaeological context. The complex in which it was found is identified by inscription on the western architrave of the peristyle in the aforementioned courtyard 'F':

ΤΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΒΗΡΥΤΙΩΝ ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝΙΑΣΤΩΝ ΕΜΠΟΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΝΑΥΚΛΗΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΔΟΧΕΩΝ ΤΟΝ ΟΙΚΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΣΤΟΑΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΧΡΥΣΤΗΡΙΑ ΘΕΟΙΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΟΙΣ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ

The association of the Poseidoniasts of Beirut, merchants, shippers, and warehousemen set up the building, the stoa, and the oracles for our ancestral gods.¹⁴

Prosopographic evidence indicates that the complex was founded by 152/3 BCE.¹⁵ The wing in which the statue was found was built around 110 BCE. Excavators believe the complex was damaged in 88 BCE during the first Mithradatic War.¹⁶ It seems to have been abandoned in 69 BCE after pirates sacked the island. There is no reason to suspect the base and image were not always intended to be together, so they must be considered contemporary.¹⁷ Since Dionysios's name shows up on structural elements in the building, on the colonnades, we can associate the statue with this

¹² *IDelos* 1772, 1784, 1785.

¹³ *IDelos* 1788, 1789.

¹⁴ *IDelos* 1774.

¹⁵ Funded in part by a Roman M. Minatius Sextus: *IDelos* 1520 = Picard 1936; Tod 1934.

¹⁶ Sacked by Archelaos, a general of Mithradates VI: App. *Mith.* 28; Florus 1.40.8; Plut. *Sull.* 11; Strabo 10.5.4. Compare Paus. 3.23.3–5.

¹⁷ Inscription: Bulard 1906: 612–14. Fit of base to group: Bulard 1906: 612.



Figure 8. Vatican version of the Aphrodite from Knidos, after a late Classical original. Vatican Museum 812. Marble. Ht. 2.04m. Photo: Art Resource, NY.



Figure 9. Venus in the Capitoline Museum, after a late fourth-century original. Rome, Capitoline Museum 409. Marble. Ht. 1.93m. Photo: Art Resource, NY.

phase of its construction. Style, epigraphic, prosopographic, and archaeological evidence offer a solid date – very rare in this period and nearly exceptional among Hellenistic erotic groups – of c. 100 BCE for the work.¹⁸

The Delos group's stage-like and frontal composition is frequently remarked upon,¹⁹ even while it is clear that the figures do not occupy a single plane.²⁰ The opposing arrangement of the protagonists' lower bodies draws them close together. From the group's mid-point upward the composition increasingly opens out. The effect is heightened by Pan's head, which is tilted back,

¹⁸ Niemeier 1985: 30–35. Marcadé (1969: 136) proposes a slightly earlier date in the third quarter of the second century.

¹⁹ E.g., Ridgway 2000: 148, 149. Ridgway (2002: 190) compares the stage-like arrangement to the Ludovisi 'Orestes and Elektra' group in the Museo Nazionale, Rome. A detailed reading of the composition can be found in Kell 1988: 50–56, fig. 11.

²⁰ Bieber 1955: 148 (who says the group should be viewed from the back and the front); Havelock 1995: 116.

his face pointed lustily at the goddess, while neither Aphrodite nor Eros look directly back at him. Eros looks out to the viewer, inviting us into the scene. Aphrodite looks past, not at, Pan, which is a formal device familiar from copies of the Knidia, the Apollo Sauroktonos, and a number of other Praxitelean works.²¹

The youthful and dimpled body of the goddess is similar to what is believed to be a close copy of the Knidia now in the Vatican (Figure 8), while her posture is similar to another Hellenistic version of the Knidia known as the Capitoline Venus (Figure 9).²² Like these well-known types, the Slipper-Slapper goddess stands in a *prudica* pose, nude except for a few accessories, her head covering and her right sandal.²³ The Slipper Slapper is the earliest extant example of the *prudica* gesture in Hellenistic sculpture, which seems to coincide with a revival of interest in the Knidia.²⁴ The Vatican Aphrodite and the Slipper-Slapper goddess have similar (though not identical) facial features, from their triangular foreheads to the fine brows, long eyes, and subtle smiles that recall the ideal feminine qualities described in Lucian's *Imagines* 6 and *Amores* 13.²⁵ The hair of the Delos goddess is sculpted in long strands parted at center with girlish curls hanging out from behind her knotted *kekryphalos* (hair scarf; see Figures 2 and 5).²⁶

Another Delian head from the theater quarter, perhaps also an Aphrodite, wears the same kind of scarf wrapped tightly about the head. The hairstyle is similar but altered in the small details. It is not swept back as forcefully from the face, and at the back the hair is drawn into a neat bun, but it does fall over the ears as on the Vatican, Capitoline, and Slipper Slapper types.²⁷ Like the Capitoline Aphrodite, the Slipper Slapper has a large bow on top of her head, a scarf here compared to the piling up and knotting of the Capitoline's own hair. Both have their hair tied up in the back with long strands extending out, hitting the shoulders in the Capitoline type. Some scholars associate the hairstyle with the representation of the *anodos* (autochthonous birth) of Aphrodite, one site of which was believed to be Beirut.²⁸ Pan is sometimes a part of *anodoi* scenes, as is Eros, Hermes, or Poseidon.²⁹ The hairstyle is not like the Knidia's, so far as coin images suggest (the Vatican type seems closer to the original). Rather, the hairstyle and the complex arrangement of the scarf are known from a few Hellenistic marble statues beginning as early as the 3rd century with most examples dating to the 2nd century BCE. It is rare on terracottas, unlike the popular melon hairstyle.

Eros is rendered as an infant.³⁰ He is attached to Aphrodite's left shoulder and Pan's preserved horn in an ambiguous pose that makes it difficult to tell whether he brings the two closer together or is about to shove Pan away (see Figure 2). His now-missing right arm was once bent upwards and might have held an attribute.³¹ He flies in the direction of Aphrodite's gaze. Pan, although seated, is noticeably shorter than Aphrodite. He is typologically similar to a Pan in another erotic group of

²¹ As Squire 2011: 113. The Apollo Sauroktonos is a bronze of c. 350 BCE (Plin. *HN* 34.69) associated with about 20 Hellenistic-Roman works in bronze and marble. The most well-known are in Rome (Vatican Museums 750 and Villa Albani 952, a bronze) and Paris (the 'Borghese copy', Musée du Louvre 441).

²² Rome, Vatican Museums 812, also known as the 'Venus Colonna': Bieber 1955: 19, figs. 24–25; Stewart 1990: 177–178, figs. 503–504; and Rome, Capitoline Museum 409: Havelock 1995, 74–80, fig. 18. For the late fourth-century date of the original on which the Capitoline Venus is based, see Stewart 2010.

²³ Sandal type: Morow 1985: 84, 93, 207 n. 25, 210 n. 17, figs. 9a, 11f, pls. 72a-b.

²⁴ Havelock 1995: 58–67. Significance of this gesture: Havelock 1995: 78–80; Seaman 2004: 551–557; Stewart 1997: 96–106. Iron Age precedents for this gesture: Böhm 1990: 56–59 (Böhm's 'Type D'), 107, 115, 137, fig. 9, pls. 20e, c. A copy of the Knidia (perhaps the earliest extant copy) found on the Antikythera shipwreck en route to Rome may have come from Delos: Bol 1972: no. 40, 43–45, pl. 23:1–3.

²⁵ Lawrence 1927: 38, pl. 64 compares her face to a late Hellenistic or early Roman portrait in the National Museum in Athens: 'a turbaned youth who may be one of the Oriental princes that attended the philosopher's schools.' See also Niemeier 1985: 33, 34, 51.

²⁶ See Daremberg et al. 1877–1919, s.v. 'kekryphalos', figs. 4253–4260.

²⁷ Delos A 248: Chamonard 1906: 560–561, figs. 23–23 bis; Bulard 1906: 624, fig. 3; Marcadé 1969: 439–440.

²⁸ Picard 1920: 15–16. A life-sized head of an Aphrodite now at the agora at Athens (S 491) has a similar hairstyle and head covering: Stewart 2017: no. 2, 98–100, fig. 10; cf. figs. 11–12.

²⁹ Picard 1920: pl. 9:1–4.

³⁰ Bulard (1906: 611 n. 2) notes that the wings had to be reattached to two holes found in the shoulder area of Eros. The plates accompanying his preliminary publication show the Eros before the repair.

³¹ Bulard 1906: 611.

similar date in which the god teaches a shepherd boy to play pipes.³² In the Delos group he pricks up his ear(s) with interest, and leans around Eros to gain a better view of the goddess's face (see Figure 2). He smiles at her. Pan's back is all taut musculature, almost human except for his small tail that is visible only from the side and back (see Figures 3–4). His shaggy fur starts below the buttocks, recalling Plato's *Kratylos* where he is described as 'smooth' (*leios*) in his upper body, rough and caprine (*tragoeidēs*) below, physical qualities that underscore Sokrates's description of him as the 'double-natured' (*diphunēs*) son of Hermes.³³ Pan's left hoof rests on the ground, while the right leg is kicked up in the air (see Figure 4), mirroring Aphrodite's static and mobile legs, as well as her forward and backward feet, and effectively weaving the two together. Although the tree trunk support is conventional, here it is clearly functioning as a seat – thus allowing Pan to be at rest, with his hind leg free.

Key details of the group were once painted, such as the straps of Aphrodite's right sandal. Like the Knidia herself, her skin might once have been tinted, and it is possible that color was used to define her labia.³⁴ Black lines were once visible in the cracks of the bark on Pan's tree trunk support. The contours of the animal skin resting on it were emphasized with a blue-grey line (see Figures 3–4). The strut between Pan's right leg and Aphrodite's left one once had 'very clear' remains of 'sky blue' paint, used in apparent effort to lose the support in the color of the wall behind it.³⁵

The Delos clubhouse and its dedications

Already by the late eighth-early seventh century Delos' location and religious importance had put it at the center of Aegean events, political, religious, and economic.³⁶ From 314 the island was independent and began attracting foreign businessmen. Commercial activity boomed when Rome declared Delos a free port and put Athens in charge of its administration in 166. Urbanization was rapid on the very small island (about 3.5 square kilometers),³⁷ and the population may have increased as much as tenfold to 20,000–30,000 people. Navigation near the island can be difficult and natural harbors are lacking, and there is accordingly some debate about how easy it was to anchor and offload large ships there even after the construction of moles and docks.³⁸ Nevertheless, ancient sources report that the commercial slave trade was robust (and might have involved Phoenicians).³⁹ Some goods, such as perfume, were made on the island itself and exported.⁴⁰ As a center of Mediterranean commerce, Delos attracted Greeks, Cypriots, and various Near Easterners – Egyptians, Persians, Arabs, and others – with the largest foreign group, one with a clearly discernable impact on the island's art and architecture, coming from Italy.⁴¹ Interaction seems to have been routine.⁴² The importance of this site for a group of 'merchants, shippers, and warehousemen' is plain.

That Hellenistic Delos was a contact zone is evident. Ongoing negotiations between different peoples, one that can be understood to constitute a middle ground,⁴³ are explicit in its merchant confederations and art industry. Delos is the only Cycladic island with 'sustained evidence' of Phoenician religious activity, no doubt because of the role it played in maritime trade,⁴⁴ which is

³² Naples, National Museum 6329 = Bieber 1955: 147, fig. 628, possibly by Heliodoros (Plin. *HN* 36.35).

³³ Plato, *Krat.* 408d.

³⁴ Plin. *HN* 35.130–133. Recent remarks on added color: Seaman 2004; Stewart 2014: 178–179.

³⁵ Bulard 1906: 611–612, especially 612 n. 1. Bulard (1906: 611) thought he could distinguish red-brown on the head and bright red on the sandals.

³⁶ That is, from the time it became the site of the Ionian *panēgyris* (Arnold 1933).

³⁷ Zarmakoupi N.D.

³⁸ van Berchem 1991: 131–133.

³⁹ Rauh 1993: 44–46; Strabo 14.5.2 (who claims that as many as 10,000 slaves were sold on festival days); Trümper 2009.

⁴⁰ Plin. *HN* 13.4; Rauh 1993: 54–55; Zarmakoupi N.D.: 'The Quartier du Stade', nos. 20–21.

⁴¹ Paus. 3.23; Plin. *HN* 34.9.

⁴² Baslez 2002: 55–65; Tang 2005: 177.

⁴³ Martin 2017: 152–168; White 2011.

⁴⁴ Lipiński 2004, 166–169, here 166.

known to have drawn Phoenicians to a number of other Aegean economic centers.⁴⁵ Phoenicians become prominent in the fabric of Delian social life following 166 and reaped the benefits of free trade.⁴⁶ At around this time the two known Phoenician merchant groups on the island – the Herakleists of Tyre and the Poseidoniasts of Beirut – were founded, and a number of inscriptions appear naming Phoenicians as participants in the Delian games and religious activities, and in secular acts of patronage. Tyre, Arwad, Ashkelon, and Carthage are among the other Phoenician city-states mentioned. Individuals from these cities appear on epitaphs, *ephēbe* lists, dedications, and subscriptions. Jacques Tréheux's survey of the Delian inscriptions found nearly 70 different ethnics.⁴⁷ Besides Athenians and Italians, the three most common ethnics are from Antioch (68 examples), Beirut (64), and Alexandria (47), proving that Beirutis were prominent on the island. In this same period a number of new cults were added to the existing ones to Leto and her children, honoring other Greek, Italian (the *Lares compitales*), Egyptian (Isis, Serapis), and Levantine (Hadad, Atargatis, Aštar, maybe Yahweh) gods.

The Herakleists and Poseidoniasts were part of a broader phenomenon of sacred and secular merchant groups or 'clubs' of people brought together by common interests that arose outside of extant state structures.⁴⁸ Clubs could combine economic, religious, and social activities and had important roles in various Aegean networks.⁴⁹ A few Delian groups were explicitly united by certain deities or heroes – the Herakleists of Tyre and the Poseidoniasts, as well as the Apolloniasts, Hermaists, Compataliasts, and others.⁵⁰ They all required recognition from Athenian authorities to exist as legal entities.⁵¹ The language used to describe them varies. While Phoenicians never refer to themselves as a general regional collective, the Italians identify themselves as *Italici* in Latin, *Italikoi* or *Italoï* in Greek. Italians never use the terms *koinon* or *synodos* in inscriptions or the Latin equivalent *collegium*.⁵² Some clubs, including both Phoenician ones, were overseen by a chairman, identified in inscriptions as the *archithiasitēs*.⁵³ The Poseidoniasts' *archithiasitēs* was elected annually; meetings were held monthly.⁵⁴ Although most of the club members might have shared a common ethnic identity, epigraphic evidence shows that the clubhouses were important places of interaction. Financial support for clubs came from their members as well as from other prominent individuals. The honoring of Athens/Athenians and Roma/Italians was advantageous in this context for political and economic reasons.

The clubhouse of the Poseidoniasts is one of very few whose whereabouts are known and verified by inscriptions. It is located in an area of the island north of the Sacred Lake and Apollo Sanctuary, near the famous 'terrace of the lions' and 'Agora of the Italians' and adjacent to the 'House of the Diadoumenos' (see Figure 10). The building underwent a few phases of development. The Slipper Slapper belongs to its latest (third) stage. In this final iteration, the building measures over 1400 square meters (see Figure 7).⁵⁵ It has two large rooms ('E' and 'F'), the bigger ('F') with the peristyles dedicated by Dionysios. These areas were designed for circulation and should be interpreted as sites for larger gatherings, some of which included non-members. The plan of the Poseidoniasts' complex is clearly indebted to luxurious private house designs suited for entertainment, especially in having a large, uncovered courtyard with small and large rooms gathered around it, and decorated reception rooms on its lower and upper floors.⁵⁶ The courtyard area was accessed from

⁴⁵ Baslez 1987.

⁴⁶ Arnaud 2002: 190.

⁴⁷ Tréheux 1992. See also Baslez 1977: 68.

⁴⁸ Baslez 1997: 210–212; Tod and Hornblower 2005.

⁴⁹ Recent work on Aegean networks: Constantakopoulou 2007; Malkin et al. 2009.

⁵⁰ Trümper 2011.

⁵¹ Hasenohr 2007: 4.

⁵² Hasenohr 2007: 7.

⁵³ Such as *IDelos* 1519 (Herakleists decree) and *IDelos* 1520, 1778, 1779, 1782, 1796 (Poseidoniasts).

⁵⁴ Trümper 2011: 56.

⁵⁵ This section follows Trümper 2002; 2006; 2011: 53–58.

⁵⁶ Tang 2005: 63–65; Wallace-Hadrill 1997: 238–239; Westgate 2000: 425. Its plan might have some general parallels in Phoenicia (e.g., the



Figure 10. Plan of Hellenistic Delos. The Poseidoniasts' clubhouse is northwest of the sacred lake. Plan: Courtesy Claire Tuan.

the building's southwestern rooms that contain a transitional space filled with dedications ('X'), an antechamber ('V'), and a number of shrines ('V1-4'). Inscribed statue bases found in two of the shrines identify the gods honored there. The statue base in 'V2' shows that space was dedicated to Poseidon (the cult statue itself is now lost), and another in 'V1' indicates that its shrine was

¹'building with the children friezes' from the Eshmun complex at Bostan esh-Sheikh, near Sidon: Stucky et al. 2005: 165-166); the Sanctuary of the Syrian Gods on Delos has drawn similar, very tentative comparisons (Bruneau and Ducat 1983: 225-227, no. 98, fig. 79).

dedicated to the deified Rome.⁵⁷ Room 'V3' is thought to have honored Aphrodite. The precise function of the fourth room is disputed, but it does not seem to have held a cult statue. These areas formed a pathway to the building's gathering spaces that underscores the religious dimension of the club. The dedications repeatedly tie the religious to the economic.

The southeastern part of the building once had semi-private rooms. These lavishly decorated and relatively intimate spaces were referred to as the 'xenor' by Charles Picard,⁵⁸ a reflection of the now-disputed idea that the area was used primarily as sleeping quarters. Recent studies suggest some smaller rooms might have been offices or sleeping chambers ('R-T' and 'H-I'), but no part of the building seems to have been intended to function as a guest house. Because the structure was built into the slope, its plan can give the false impression that the basement rooms are on the same level as the courtyard. In fact courtyard 'F' allowed access to the room above the basement rooms 'J-P', which is called room 'Z.' (Room 'E' is usually identified as a courtyard, too, but it may have been covered and used for larger banquets.) Room 'Z' is now thought to have functioned as a banqueting space. It was large, some 140 square meters, with space enough for 15–17 dining couches. The adjacent room 'G' could have been used for dining also, or it might have served as a food and drink preparation area. The Slipper Slapper was found below room 'Z', in basement room 'N.'

Altogether the evidence from inscriptions and the building's architectural remains shows that the clubhouse functioned primarily as a place of religious and social assembly for permanent residents of the island, most but not all of whom were of Beirut descent.⁵⁹ After the building was abandoned it was looted and some of the sculpture seems to have been moved or taken away. Nonetheless,



Figure 11. Statue of Roma from the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse at Delos, c. 125–100 BCE. Delos museum E 115 (base). Marble. Ht. 1.54m as preserved. Photo: imageBROKER/Alamy.

⁵⁷ Poseidon: E 117 = Kreeb 1988: 106 S 1.2. Roma: E 115 = Picard 1921: 59–61.

⁵⁸ Picard 1921: 113–130.

⁵⁹ Trümper 2011: 55.

what was recovered gives us some insight into the quality and types of sculpted dedications.⁶⁰ Besides the Slipper Slapper, the building's best-known work is the Roma of c. 130–110 BCE found in shrine 'V1' (Figure 11).⁶¹ It was dedicated by one Mnaseas, son of a Dionysios, on behalf of the club, and is the only cult statue still preserved. The same Mnaseas paid for a stoa in the koinon in c. 150 BCE, and a sculpture of 110/9 BCE dedicated in the sanctuary of Dionysos, Hermes, and Pan southwest of the theater.⁶² The Roma was over life-sized (she stands 1.54 m as preserved) and clad modestly in *chiton* and *himation*. Presumably she was once armed.⁶³ Her dress and style are similar to the famous statue of Kleopatra from a private house in the theater quarter.⁶⁴ The Beirut statue is one of the earliest – if not *the* earliest – extant statues of deified Rome, and the only one on Delos. A second dedication to Roma, an altar of c. 130–125 BCE, was found in room 'X'.⁶⁵ These dedications prove that the Poseidoniasts' ties to Italians in this period were strengthened through religion. Possibly Roma was understood to be one of the club's *theoi patrioi*.

Although the Roma is the only preserved cult statue from the sanctuary, there are remains of a few other marble statues and terracottas in the complex. The terracottas are mostly fragmentary and include females, a comic actor, at least three Erotes, and a seated Aphrodite possibly accompanied by Eros.⁶⁶ Bases of 12 portrait statues of Greeks and Romans were found,⁶⁷ as well as several images of Herakles. A fragment probably of an offering table supported by Herakles figures was found in the shrine thought to be dedicated to Aphrodite', V3.⁶⁸ The preserved support (c. 0.35m high) is a vegetal form through which the head and neck of Herakles emerges, bearded and wearing the knotted lion skin. A weary Herakles statuette (c. 0.33m high) was found next door in shrine 'V2', which was dedicated to Poseidon.⁶⁹ Also found in this shrine was a torso of a male, probably a Herakles Epitrapezios.⁷⁰ Finally, a seated female statuette (c. 0.15m high) was found near shrine 'V2'.⁷¹ Her identity is not secure: she may be an offering or a representation of another deity. The type bears some resemblance to Kybele statues seen elsewhere on the island, but her seat – a bench rather than a throne – does not.⁷² Stylistically the statue is Atticizing; possibly she is an Eleusinian Demeter that points to relationships between Poseidoniasts and Athenians.⁷³

Three marble statues were found in other areas of the building. A triple-bodied herm of the goddess Hekate measuring around 1.3m high was found in room 'E'.⁷⁴ A half life-sized Aphrodite of the Arles type (torso 0.337m high) was found in two parts, one in the cistern and the other in the courtyard 'E'.⁷⁵ The Aphrodite is preserved from her neck to the bottom of her drapery, and her right foot has been identified, too. The arms were added separately; only the bronze pins remain. The statue is stylistically similar to a second-century Aphrodite statuette from Priene,⁷⁶ possibly another nod to the sculpture of western Asia Minor. Also found in the cistern of courtyard 'F' was the body of an under life-sized statue of a nymph (0.73m high; Figure 12), once part of a group.⁷⁷ The nymph's

⁶⁰ Kreeb 1988: 21–29, 105–119, cat. 1 with the group on p. 109 and cat. S 1.11; Marcadé 1969: 386–396; Sanders 2001: 44–49 with attention to inscriptions.

⁶¹ E 115/*IDelos* 1778: LIMC s.v. 'Roma' no. 59, 1053, pl. 701; Linfert 1976: 114, no. 450, pl. 51, figs. 268–269; Marcadé 1969: 128–133, 337, pl. 65; Stewart 1990: 58, fig. 832. Date: Trümper 2002. Inscription: Picard 1921: 59–61.

⁶² Stoa: *IDelos* 1773. Sculpture: Bruneau and Ducat 1983: 249, no. 116c, plan 6.

⁶³ Picard 1921: 62 nos. 2–3 lists visual and textual precedents, respectively.

⁶⁴ Kreeb 1988: 282–283 S 48.1–2; Marcadé 1969: 131–134, pls. 65, 66, 68.

⁶⁵ *IDelos* 1779.

⁶⁶ Kreeb 1988: 115–118. Erotes: A 3338 (Kreeb 1988: 116 T 1.9); A 3484 (Kreeb 1988: 116–117 T 1.12); A 2241 (Kreeb 1988: 117 T 1.13). Aphrodite group: A 3337 (Kreeb 1988: 116 T 1.10).

⁶⁷ Kreeb 1988: 107–112.

⁶⁸ Picard 1921: 69–70, figs. 60–61.

⁶⁹ A 3149: Picard 1921: 67–68 and n. 4.

⁷⁰ A 4163: Kreeb 1988: 106 S 1.3; Marcadé 1969: 388, pl. 62; Picard 1921: 67–68 n. 4.

⁷¹ A 5782: Kreeb 1988: 106–107 S 1.4; Marcadé 1969: 389, pl. 53; Picard 1921: 67–68, fig. 58.

⁷² Picard 1921: 68 n. 1.

⁷³ Marcadé 1969: 389.

⁷⁴ A 6022: Kreeb 1988: 112 S 1.19; Marcadé 1969: 389, pl. 59; Picard 1921: 35, fig. 28.

⁷⁵ A 4157 (total height 0.81m): Kreeb 1988: 110 S 1.13; Marcadé 1969: 389–390, pl. 53; Picard 1921: 123–124, fig. 101; Sanders 2001: 44–49.

⁷⁶ Picard 1921: 123 n. 3; Wiegand and Schrader 1904: 371 no. 1533, fig. 465.

⁷⁷ A 4156: Havelock 1995: 104–105, 114–115, fig. 14; Marcadé 1969: 390–393, pl. 25; Picard 1921: 124–125, fig. 102.



Figure 12. Nymph from the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse at Delos, c. 125–100 BCE. Delos Museum A 4156. Marble. Ht. 0.73m as preserved. Photo: Zde (Zdeněk Kratochvíl). Copyright: Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

unfinished backside suggests that it was originally set against a wall, perhaps also in room 'Z.' The head, one foot, and one arm are lost. Her male counterpart is now only preserved through his hand, which is snatching away the nymph's *himation*. Accordingly we can interpret the nymph group as another *symplegma* (intertwined erotic group). The specific type here – where the nymph is nearly nude – is not attested anywhere else, however.⁷⁸ The nymph's right arm was once extended to fend off an aggressor, and the left clings to her drapery. The arrangement is comparable to that of the Slipper Slapper.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Havelock 1995: 115.

⁷⁹ Havelock 1995: 115; cf. Picard 1921: 124.

The nymph is often identified as Beroē, which connects the group unequivocally to Beirut. In Nonnos's *Dionysiaca*, Beroē is celebrated in two different stories. In the first (41.13–154), Beroē is described as a primordial entity that is synonymous with Beirut. Nonnos explains that Aphrodite landed on the shore of Lebanon and there gave birth to 'Wild Eros' (41.129). Thus Beroē (Beirut) is the 'root of life' (41.143) and the oikos of Eros (41.146). The second story (41.155–229), which Nonnos claims is newer, reports that Beroē was instead Eros's sister, a child of Aphrodite and Adonis. Book 42 tells the story of Poseidon and Dionysos vying for the nymph. In lines 196–273, Dionysos commiserates with Pan, but everything he tries to woo Beroē – disguises, seduction, threats – fails. Poseidon enters the story at 42.441. Aphrodite orders the gods to fight for the nymph (book 43). The fight ends when the Nereid Psamathe beseeches Zeus to make peace, and he gives Beroē to Poseidon (43.372–374). Eros encourages Dionysos to pursue Ariadne instead.

Possibly the hand that snatches away Beroē's drapery in the clubhouse belonged to Poseidon, explicitly tying the club's principal deity to Beirut and the daughter of Aphrodite. There are a number of other potential connections between these tales of love games (and their sometimes tragic consequences), the nymph group, and the Slipper Slapper, and all of the main characters but Dionysos might be referenced by the two groups (including Adonis, as discussed below). There are some potential problems with this reading, however. Portions of Beroē's second, newer birth story seem to have been invented by Nonnos when he was writing his text in the late-fifth century CE. The author's 'unbounded faith in the civilizing mission of the Roman Empire . . . and especially in the benefits of Roman law' is thought to have encouraged him to embellish a foundation myth for the great law school of Beirut.⁸⁰ Another potential problem is the limited evidence we possess relating the statue group to this story. The Delos nymph may have been paired with an over-aroused satyr or Pan.

Erotic nymph-Pan pairings were made popular by a group called the 'Invitation to the Dance'.⁸¹ Known in over 50 copies, the original Invitation to the Dance is thought to date to around 150 BCE or later. The sudden appearance of and widespread demand for such themes in sculpture of the later Hellenistic period – themes that had long been popular in other types of art – is important evidence of a new drive to render overt eroticism, Dionysiac intoxication, and other bucolic fantasies in monumental form. This new subject matter accompanied new contexts of display in which freestanding sculpture was integrated into a sumptuous setting rich with imagery including wall paintings, floor mosaics, and, in feasting contexts, elaborate table settings, all of which might explore similar themes. This elevation of genre themes in monumental art might have been driven by Italian tastes.⁸² At the same time, as we can observe in the context of the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse, such works functioned as votives, too. The *Invitation to the Dance's* complex composition and erotic, Dionysiac theme seem to be the progenitor of all *symplegmata* including the Poseidoniasts' nymph group – foreshadowing its content – and the Slipper Slapper, which in addition to featuring Pan has a similarly playful and flirtatious relationship.⁸³

We must take notice of the general popularity of these titillating themes as well as the possible inconsistencies in the mythology. However some version of the Beroē myth was already popular enough in the third century CE to appear on coins of Beirut minted under Caracalla and Elagabalus.⁸⁴ And in Eusebius (*PE* 1.10.35) Beirut is a gift to Poseidon from El, possibly in reference to the resolution of the same tale. It is reasonable to infer some greater antiquity to the story, though the chronological gaps in our evidence are significant. We must also remember that both Poseidoniast sculpture groups

⁸⁰ Rouse 2014: xvii.

⁸¹ Bieber 1955: 139, figs. 562–567; Havelock 1995: 114; Ridgway 2001: 321–324, pls. 159–161; Stewart 1990: 214, figs. 723–726.

⁸² Kunze (2008), although he argues against the idea that sculptures on Delos – including the Slipper Slapper – are typical 'rococo' works in Klein's sense of the term (Klein 1921). Compare to the circulation of Italian Campana A ware by Phoenicians: Handberg et al. 2013.

⁸³ Charbonneau et al. 1973: 316.

⁸⁴ Picard 1921: 124–125, especially n. 2 with references

are unique. They demonstrate, along with the defied Rome, that innovation was a regular feature of the marble dedications in this space. It is possible that the nymph group, like the Slipper Slapper, was inspired by a newly-popular, transnational sculpture type, the *Invitation to the Dance*, while at the same time taking specific aim at the group's namesake and origins in Beirut.

Stylistic similarities between the Arles-type Aphrodite and the Poseidoniasts' two *symplegmata* led Picard to the reasonable conclusion that the works were contemporary. He also thought he detected a technical quirk on the nymph and the Aphrodite and Eros from the Slipper Slapper, a small diamond shape on the back of the waist. This treatment of the lower back is not uncommon, however, and can be seen on both the Vatican and Capitoline statues (to cite two examples). Altogether Picard considered the sculptural program a reflection of 'Syro-Phoenician taste' derived from Greek models. Despite the works' Greek style, he thought that the artist was 'an Oriental.'⁸⁵ Putting aside Picard's dated language, he is clearly right to highlight the neoclassical – and at times neo-Attic – thread seemingly tying together many of the dedications.⁸⁶ Two of the works point to Praxiteles's Knidia, whereas the Herakles Epitrapezios shows interest in a Lysippan type. If we follow Christine Havelock's argument that it was only 'toward the end of the second century B.C., [that] the unveiling of a woman's body – in the form of a sensuous Aphrodite – first became an unmistakably popular subject for sculpture', the sculptures were especially fashionable.⁸⁷ This does not mean that they were frivolous, however.⁸⁸

There is no basis for the claim that vague 'Asian' tastes were driving the selection of gods or types. They were, in general terms, commonplace. Aphrodite, Eros, and Herakles are the most frequently represented divinities in the preserved statuary and terracottas. A limited number of other gods and characters from Greek myth appear – Poseidon, Roma, Hekate, a nymph, and one or more Pans. Aphrodite and Eros were very popular on Delos, as were statuettes copying the Knidia herself that were made by island workshops.⁸⁹ Thus Aphrodite's frequency in the clubhouse on its own cannot indicate that she was part of a cohesive religious program. Likewise, while it is possible to connect particular representations of Aphrodite to Aštart, Poseidon to Ba'al, or Herakles to Melqart, it is not reasonable to insist on these 'equivalencies' or to assume syncretisms without some kind of corroboration.⁹⁰

What we know of Beirut religious practices in this period is informed by recent excavations.⁹¹ The harbor area was developed in the Iron Age and excavators have discovered evidence of its use through the Hellenistic period. The space was shaped by commercial activities – installations for baking and, possibly, making pottery, warehouses, etc. – and included a sanctuary built in the second century BCE (atop an earlier construction). A number of other religious spaces have been identified nearby, including a monumental temple of middle-Hellenistic date and a shrine that was remodeled in the second century. In and near these structures were found a number of critical finds such as a pit with hundreds of figurines of the type usually associated with Aštart, a fine marble statuette of an Aphrodite (a variation of the Pontia-Euploia type), and an inscription naming Aštart.⁹² Thus Hellenistic Beirut and the Delian clubhouse share an interest in Aphrodite/Aštart, and it seems possible that the frequency of Aphrodite imagery in the clubhouse was meaningful,

⁸⁵ 'C'était là la production courante de l'époque, influencée par le goût syro-phénicien, et dérivée surtout des modèles de Praxitèle, parfois aussi de Lysippe; toute la décoration sculpturale de la salle avait été confiée vraisemblablement au même artiste: un Oriental, doit-on croire' (Picard 1921: 125).

⁸⁶ Neo-Atticism: Bieber 1955: 157–166; Charbonneaux et al. 1973: 333–335; Fullerton 1998; Hauser 1889; Moreno 1994: 533–538; Pollitt 1986: 164–172; Ridgway 2002: 186–215, 226–240; Stewart 1979; Webster 1966: 168–169. '[F]lamboyant, [and] calligraphic decorative qualities' were favored (Pollitt 1986: 169).

⁸⁷ Havelock 1995: 103.

⁸⁸ Havelock 1995: 103–131.

⁸⁹ Havelock 1995: 137; Marcadé 1969: 225–245 (Knidian-type Aphrodites: 233–234, pl. 46); Stewart 1990: 226, fig. 835.

⁹⁰ Budin 2004; Nitschke 2013; Wallensten 2014.

⁹¹ Boksmati 2009 with bibliography.

⁹² Braakenburg-van Breukelen and Curvers 2000: 185–192, figs. 1–4; Curvers and Stuart 2004: 253; Martin 2017: 164.

as it referenced not only Aštar (or at least the aspects of Aštar that resonated with this kind of Aphrodite imagery), but also Beirut's sanctuaries that likewise connected the goddess and this imagery to maritime pursuits.⁹³ We can be reasonably confident that Aphrodite/Aštar was one of the club's *theoi patrioi* honored in shrine 'V3.'

Poseidoniasts are known only at Delos. While the group's name is expressly religious, interpreting it is not straightforward. In typical Phoenician onomastic practices divine names are translated when written in Greek, not transliterated. Greeks likewise rarely transliterate Phoenician names; rather they translate them to fit the name of a Greek god with similar attributes. Thus 'Aštar' is usually written in Greek as 'Aphrodite.'⁹⁴ Theophoric names are often treated similarly, so that, for example, the Phoenician name Shema'baal (*šm^cb'l*) is written in Greek as 'Diopeithes' on a late fourth-century inscription from the Piraeus.⁹⁵ The name of the Slipper Slapper's dedicant 'Dionysios' can be understood as a Phoenician rendering (in Greek) of 'Osiris.'⁹⁶ These onomastic practices do not, however, necessarily indicate that Greeks and Phoenicians were conflating or 'syncretizing' the gods. Thus even though we are aware of such conventions, what they mean regarding the perception of the gods is much debated. Was 'Aphrodite' just another word for 'Aštar', or does the translation of the name signal a shift in thinking? When the names 'Aphrodite' and 'Aštar' appear together in the same dedication, as they do several times on Delos, the question of what god or gods are being invoked becomes still more complicated.⁹⁷ The club's 'Poseidon' is usually thought to refer to Beirut's 'Ba'al of the Sea' who is seemingly referenced on second-century Beirut coins that show the trident.⁹⁸ 'Ba'al' is an honorific title in Phoenician, however, one that means 'lord' or 'master' and accordingly can refer to a number of different deities in Phoenician in addition to the chief sky god.⁹⁹ We should recall that the preserved sculpture types in Poseidon's shrine in the clubhouse (room 'V2') show Herakles, although the main cult statue is lost.

Recent scholarship shows that the 'paysages religieux' (to borrow Corinne Bonnet's phrase) of Hellenistic Phoenicians were very complex.¹⁰⁰ Their lived religious experiences are not neatly divisible between the 'Greek' and the 'Phoenician' in a way that fits the usual, and flawed, understanding of these cultural terms as semi-stable and independent. Moreover, Bonnet has shown that the mixing of Phoenician and Greek traditions did not only lead to 'mixtures.' Rather, religious innovation was a real phenomenon of these times, one in which ties could be made through the reinterpretation of the past. Such ties were usually negotiated on the level of the city-state. The Herakleists of Tyre provide a Delian example. Melqart was the chief deity of Tyre, making the use of 'Herakles' in the Tyrian club's name appear to be a straightforward translation of Melqart's name. Even if other Delians understood that this naming practice was conventional, and not a declaration that Melqart and Herakles were interchangeable, the fact that the club went by the name of a Greek god means that Herakles was a part of its social identity, too. In such scenarios it is possible that 'Herakles' served as a mediating figure who effectively functioned as the name of both gods.¹⁰¹ This example allows us to imagine how Beirutis in Delos might have understood 'Poseidon' as another kind of bilingual phenomenon that was simultaneously Beirutis and Delian.

⁹³ See Wallensten 2014 for a recent discussion of Aphrodite Aštar inscriptions on Delos.

⁹⁴ There are exceptions. In *IDelos* 2101 and 2132, to cite two local examples, Aštar is transliterated; see also Ach. Tat. 1.2. For Aštar see Bonnet 1996.

⁹⁵ Piraeus Inscription: Paris, Musée du Louvre AO 4827 = *KAI* 60 and *IG* II-III 2, 2946.

⁹⁶ Bonnet 2015: 506.

⁹⁷ E.g., *IDelos* 1719, 2132 (discussed below), and 2305. See *SEG* 26, 758 for a bilingual inscription from Kos in which 'Aphrodite' appears in Greek, 'Aštar' in Phoenician (Wallensten 2014: 10 n. 32 for additional examples, including another bilingual inscription from Kos in which the 'Aphrodite' is written in Nabatean as 'Ba'ala').

⁹⁸ Bonnet 2015: 496. See n. 66 for references to these coins. The worship of Poseidon: Fenet 2016: 181–182 (on Delos), 186 (by Phoenicians). In *Diod. Sic.* 5.58.2, Kadmos establishes a sanctuary to Poseidon at Ialysos on Rhodes.

⁹⁹ Xella 1991. See also Eckert 2016: 430–432.

¹⁰⁰ Bonnet 2015.

¹⁰¹ Malkin 2005.

Poseidon, like the sea itself, tied together Greek-speaking Beirutis, Italians, Athenians, and others. As we shall see, Aphrodite served similar roles.

The setting and function of the Slipper Slapper

We can be reasonably confident that the Slipper-Slapper group's find spot in basement room 'N' means it once stood above in dining room 'Z.' This dining area was lavishly decorated. Fragments of a mosaic floor made in *opus vermiculatum* were found in rooms 'G-I', corridor 'Y', and, apparently, in basement room 'N.' One *vermiculatum* fragment (inv. no. 1654) has glass in white (possibly degraded green), yellows, and blues. Another fragment (inv. no. 1389) has tesserae in green, grey, black, and pink-red. One design seems to be vegetal, possibly a rosette.¹⁰² Remains of stucco colonnettes, architectural moldings, and colored stucco were also found in the basements. They show that some of the walls in room 'Z' were black (or very dark) while others were decorated with green foliage on a blue ground as well as yellow and red courses.¹⁰³ Because of the 'sky blue' paint observed on the Slipper Slapper's horizontal support, it is likely that the group stood in room 'Z' in front of the painted foliage on blue ground. The foliage sets the encounter between the gods in the wilderness. With that setting in mind, we can consider the work again.

Aphrodite is of course often shown with Eros. She is known to keep other 'mixed company',¹⁰⁴ but this trio is uncommon. There are a number of Aphrodite Hegemone-type statues accompanied by Eros, two examples of which include Pan as well.¹⁰⁵ Aphrodite, Pan, and Eros are found in a different, playful arrangement on the inner lid of a bronze mirror said to come from Corinth.¹⁰⁶ It shows Pan and Aphrodite in a game of knucklebones while Eros looks on; Pan seems to be instructing or admonishing Aphrodite. Pan and Eros are sometimes seen together elsewhere, too, as when they are shown fighting on Hellenistic wall paintings.¹⁰⁷ None of these examples offer a clear precedent for or explanation of the grouping, however. Much of the attention paid to the Slipper Slapper, as its nickname suggests, focuses on the transformed gesture of the appropriated Knidia, the brandishing of her sandal. The sandal has been well-studied, and a number of connections have been proposed to sacred prostitution, to a pun on the Greek word for sandal, *blautē*, and more.¹⁰⁸ To cite one example, Vinciane Pirenne – following Waldemar Déonna and others – argues for the existence of a *blautē* cult in which the sandal had overt religious meaning. Pirenne suggests the choice to brandish the sandal 'n'est peut-être pas tout à fait innocent' and points out connections between the *blautē* cult and the cult of the *kourotrophos* in which gods or goddesses cared for children.¹⁰⁹ These ideas have some implications for the reading of Eros in the group, less so for Pan. Vassiliki Machaira argues, moreover, that a *kourotrophos* cult of Aphrodite is mostly speculation, while Stephanie Budin has laid to rest the myth of sacred prostitution in Greece as well as its alleged Near Eastern precedents.¹¹⁰ In the end, none of the symbolic interpretations of the sandal are especially convincing.

More troublesome is the conceptual problem posed by the sandal in readings that see it as an erotic lure. If the sandal was associated with *enticing* people into sexual encounters, it is not clear why Aphrodite would use it to *ward off* Pan's lechery. But although Pan has grabbed ahold of Aphrodite,

¹⁰² Bruneau 1972: 144, 146, nos. 42–43, fig. 40; Picard 1921: 119–120 (on 121 he mentions the mosaic fragments in basement 'N').

¹⁰³ Bulard 1906: 610; Picard 1921: 120–121, fig. 98.

¹⁰⁴ Havelock 1995: 105.

¹⁰⁵ Stewart 2012: 292–293, fig. 27 (cf. 298, n. 75). One is a statuette from Megara. The other – an art market find, now lost – shows Eros at Aphrodite's shoulder; a diminutive Pan stands at her feet. Stewart (2012: 298; cf. 293, n. 58) notes the popularity of this type on Rhodes and other islands where Aphrodite had maritime associations (about which, see below).

¹⁰⁶ London, British Museum 1888,1213.1–2; Bieber 1955: 148, fig. 632. See Marquardt (1995: 236–244, nos. 2–11, pls. 24:1–2) for other Pan-Aphrodite types.

¹⁰⁷ Bieber 1955: 147.

¹⁰⁸ Among others: Boardman et al. 1978: 91; Bonnet 2015: 357, 497; Charbonneaux et al. 1973: 316 (calling the gesture 'vague' and 'perfunctory'); Déonna 1936: 11–12; Elderkin 1941; Fauth 1985/86.

¹⁰⁹ Pirenne 1987: 153–156.

¹¹⁰ Budin 2008; Machaira 1993.

it is a mistake to see him as the instigator of the encounter. Pan is plainly shown at rest on the tree stump (see Figures 3–4). His *lagobolon* (hunting stick) leans up against the stump where he placed it, and he is seated comfortably on the animal skin with only one hoof on the ground for balance. Although the stump has a practical function, supporting the marble figure, the only possible conclusion one can take away from these critical details is that the standing and flying figures, Aphrodite and Eros, have approached Pan in his milieu, the wilderness. Now the sandal gesture fits: Aphrodite has initiated the encounter. Pan grasps her, but not roughly, and the goddess reacts with flirtation.¹¹¹ This proper interpretation of events is seen in glimpses in earlier readings. Bulard noted that Pan is seated and that Aphrodite's 'gesture singularly lacks energy.'¹¹² A.W. Lawrence got the reading half right when he said that 'Pan has been seized, literally and metaphorically, by Eros (typifying the emotion inspired by his mother), but since Aphrodite threatens him with her slipper, he is obliged to try more persuasion than is his habit.'¹¹³ Truly Aphrodite has removed her sandal to tease Pan with feigned offense, while her now-nude foot comes forward to caress his hoof (see Figure 6, bottom).¹¹⁴ Eros enjoys the titillating spectacle, and spurs the couple on.

The Slipper Slapper is doing more than playing with the Knidia's pose; it is making one possible interpretation of her narrative explicit.¹¹⁵ The Knidia's copies indicate that the original work was reacting to one or more implied character(s), someone that drew her attention, as indicated by the turn of her head, and made her body respond with the ambiguous covering/pointing *pudica* gesture. The Slipper Slapper reminds us that at least some viewers understood the Knidia's expression was a happy, anticipatory one. The viewer was a witness to Aphrodite's bath in preparation for a sexual encounter, perhaps with her beloved Adonis, the hunter whom the goddess seduced.¹¹⁶ Adonis was perceived by Greeks as fundamentally Eastern. The name seems to be Phoenician, or at least Semitic, in origin – 'dn, meaning 'king, father.'¹¹⁷ The cult of Adonis, popular in the Hellenistic period, was important in Phoenicia, especially Byblos, where it apparently had connections to the Egyptian dying god Osiris and to the Mesopotamian god Tammuz. There Astart was associated with both Aphrodite and Isis, connections to which we will return.¹¹⁸ We also possess a late-fourth century inscription from the Piraeus that seems to name Phoenician men worshipping gods called in Greek Aphrodite and Adonis.¹¹⁹ In Greek myth the Aphrodite-Adonis pairing has a certain importance in Beirut, where their union leads to the birth of the nymph Beroë.

So it is quite possible that a Phoenician viewer of the Knidia would understand that the goddess was reacting to Adonis. But what about Pan in the Slipper Slapper? While the two males share one clear common trait, hunting, their different physical features – one young and beautiful, a paragon of male attractiveness, and the other rough and at times grotesque – stand out, especially to a modern audience conditioned by the representation of Aphrodite/Venus and Adonis in western art. The differences in the Beirut group – the inclusion of a laughing Eros and Pan for *kalos Adōnis*,¹²⁰ as it were – are significant and reinforce the idea that the Slipper Slapper group is doing more than appropriating Praxiteles's Knidia. The group seems to be humorously confounding expectations. Instead of Aphrodite pursuing Adonis or Ares, or Pan pursuing Aphrodite, the goddess seduces the

¹¹¹ Havelock 1995: 56; Squire 2011: 113.

¹¹² '[L]e geste manque singulièrement d'énergie, et la déesse ne semble guère émue' (Bulard 1906: 611).

¹¹³ Lawrence 1927: 38.

¹¹⁴ Kell (1988: 50) does not go far enough when he notes that Aphrodite's foot is 'between' Pan's hooves.

¹¹⁵ See Corso (2014, 2015) for an overview of bathing Aphrodites. Corso considers the different narratives that might be associated with the main bathing types.

¹¹⁶ Stewart (2014: 179) proposes Ares. Corso (2014: 60–62; 2015: 164–166) suggests instead that the Knidia is shown in preparation for the Judgment of Paris. The fullest version of the Aphrodite-Adonis myth is in book 10 of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*.

¹¹⁷ Bonnet 2015: 160, and see Attallah (1966: 303–308) for a critique of other views concerning the etymology of Adonis. Athenian perspectives on Adonis's origins: Reitzammer 2016: 27.

¹¹⁸ Bonnet 2015: 171–191; Lipiński 1995: 90–105; Reitzammer 2016: 27–29, 120–121; Ribichini 1981: 80–86.

¹¹⁹ IG II2 1261, which mentions a group of Aphrodite worshippers who honored Adonis with sacrifice and procession *kata ta patria* – 'according to ancestral (practice)'. It is not stated where the men come from, but in another Piraeus inscription (IG II2 1290, dating to the mid-third century) the group of males honoring Adonis is thought to be Cypriot. See Reitzammer 2016: 28.

¹²⁰ A repeated phrase in Bion's late Hellenistic *Adonis* (Reitzammer 2016: 57).

coarse goat god. The statue's placement in Room 'Z' enhances this narrative choice, as the romantic encounter unfolds in a verdant setting reminiscent of the abduction/seduction locales of maidens in literature.¹²¹ One wonders if Eros once held a nuptial crown in his missing hand to amplify the group's comic effects.

At the same time, in the context of the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse we can conceive of a number of possible connections between the figures shown in the Slipper Slapper and Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian gods. Aphrodite – especially in her maritime roles – can be related to Beiruti Ašart and to Isis, the latter a popular deity on Delos.¹²² It is also possible to find connections between Pan and goat-horned deities in the Near East, such as Ba'al-Hammon. In this context we should recall how Plutarch explains Aphrodite's epithet Epitragia (On the Goat) by connecting Theseus's successful voyage to Crete with Aphrodite's patronage and the sacrifice of a goat.¹²³ On his return trip, Theseus thanks the goddess by founding her cult on Delos, dedicating an image, and performing the Crane Dance around an altar of horns.¹²⁴ We know that Eros, too, was linked to the idea of navigation in Greek sources. He might be related to Phoenician Eshmun (as Adonis sometimes is) or Egyptian Horus the Child, the latter making a number of appearances on Delos with his mother Isis. We can also recall that in the *Dionysiaca*, Eros is connected to Beirut.¹²⁵ But there are no clear Beiruti or Phoenician precedents for a sculpted 'triad' of Ašart, Adonis/Ba'al-Hammon, and Eshmun, meaning that it is impossible, given what evidence we have of Phoenician religious beliefs, to make perfect sense out of the choices made here (for which see also *IDelos* 2132, below). While we can be reasonably confident that Aphrodite resonates with Ašart, and also Isis, there are no easy, one-to-one correlations between the remaining gods of the Slipper Slapper, Greek mythology, and the Phoenician gods known to us. The work is wholly original. Nevertheless these figures must either represent the *theoi patrioi* named in their accompanying inscription or honor them in some other way.

Later Hellenistic and Roman small-scale works seemingly responding to the group's Aphrodite/Ašart, sometimes with Eros, are found in the Near East and Asia Minor, suggesting that the theme endured and traveled back to Phoenicia.¹²⁶ A number of bronze and terracotta statuettes show Aphrodites/Venuses in a similar pose, sometimes in a variant in which the goddess holds her *strophion* (breast band).¹²⁷ A more significant implication of the Slipper Slapper is that the response to the Knidia results from a deep understanding of Aphrodite as a patron of seafaring.¹²⁸ We have evidence that Phoenicians in the Hellenistic and Roman eras honored her in this way, such as the aforementioned statue of Aphrodite Pontia (Of the Sea) from Beirut. Another important example is the bilingual inscription from Kos dedicated by one '-timos' son of king Abdalonymos of Sidon, the latter thought to be the same Abdalonymos who was appointed king of Sidon by Alexander.¹²⁹ The Greek inscription honors Aphrodite as protector of 'those who sail', and the Phoenician text honors Ašart.¹³⁰ Further support comes from coins of Sidon first minted under Antiochos VII Euergetes (r. 138–129), which show on their reverse a goddess, identified as Ašart, standing on a prow and holding an aphlaston or naval standard. These coins are minted into the first century BCE.¹³¹

¹²¹ Reitzammer 2016: 106–108.

¹²² Barrett 2011; Bonnet 2015: 506–507; Bonnet and Pirenne-Delforge 1999; Bruneau 1961; Budin 2004; Sugimoto 2014.

¹²³ Plutarch, *Theseus*, 18 (Demetriou 2010: 81–82; although see Wallensten 2014: 6).

¹²⁴ Plutarch, *Theseus*, 21 (Eckert 2016: 188; Papadopoulou 2010: 218; Pironti 2007, 198–199).

¹²⁵ Picard 1935.

¹²⁶ Picard 1921: 122 and n. 2; Ridgway 2000: 149.

¹²⁷ See, e.g., a bronze statuette of Aphrodite and Eros on a base thought to be from Egypt, second-first centuries BCE: Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 57.AB.7.

¹²⁸ Baslez 1986; Eckert 2011, 2016; Fenet 2016: 114–115, 123–124, 132–135, 208–209; Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 433–437; Papadopoulou 2010; Pironti 2007; Pirenne-Delforge and Pironti 2012: 147–151.

¹²⁹ *SEG* 36.758, discussed in Parker (2002: 147) as part of his overview of two late-second century BCE inscriptions naming cults of Aphrodite Pandamos (Of All the People) and Pontia from Kos; the cults shared a priestess and might have been located in a seaside shrine with twin temples (Eckert 2016: 218, 220, 222, 231, 233, fig. 81; Parker 2002: 144–146). See also Martin 2017: 144.

¹³⁰ Compare Ach. Tat. 1.2. Parker (2002: 147–150) weighs the evidence of Ašart as a marine deity; he does not cite Brody's fundamental work on Phoenician maritime religion (Brody 1998). See also Baslez 1986; Culican 1976: 119; Eckert 2016: 430–440, figs. 201–212; Fenet 2016: 135.

¹³¹ Hill 1910: cviii, 163–164 nos. 128–136, pls. 22: 7–10, 16. Tyche appears on the obverse. Cf. the related obverse design: Hill 1910: 170



Figure 13. View of the Hellenistic 'round temple' of the Aphrodite of Knidos down to the harbor. Photo: Ihsan Gercelman/copyright: https://www.123rf.com/profile_igercelman'>igercelman / 123RF Stock Photo

Denise Demetriou's recent article on maritime cults of Aphrodite explores how the goddess was celebrated in the Hellenistic period for her assistance in naval victories, safe passage, and income earned from sea trade. Demetriou's survey of Hellenistic textual evidence – mostly epigrams, but also literary references and epigraphy – shows that these honors to Aphrodite were explicitly tied to her role as the deity of love, desire, and sexual encounters. A telling example is an early first-century BCE epigram of Meleager that 'uses the metaphor of the sea of love and relates it to Aphrodite's guidance to safe harbor.'¹³² The poem refers to Aphrodite as the ship-owner (*nauklēros*) and to Eros as 'the guardian of the helm, who holds with his hand the rudder of his soul, as he is

nos. 169–70, pl. 23: 2.

¹³² *Anthologia Palatina* XII, 157; Demetriou 2010: here, 83. In addition to Euploia and Pontia, Aphrodite's maritime epithets included Einalia (Of the Sea), Epilimēnia (On the Harbor), Galēnaia (Calmer), Nauarchis (Ruler of the Ships), Pelagia (Of the Open Sea), and Pontia kai Limēnia (Of the Sea and Harbor).

storm-tossed at sea.¹³³ The term *limēn* ('harbor') can even act as a metaphor for female genitalia.¹³⁴ In a number of the examples Demetriou cites, an image (statuary) of the goddess in proximity to the sea was part of the honors to Aphrodite.

With this evidence in hand we can infer that Aphrodite's dual role as a goddess of the sea and sex was an important aspect of the imagery in the Poseidoniasts' complex and that this connection between the two spheres was most explicitly invoked by the Slipper Slapper goddess in its reference to the Knidia's cult of the *euploia*.¹³⁵ Eros would have strengthened the maritime connection, as might have Pan himself in his role as the guardian of the shore, capable of controlling the sea breezes.¹³⁶ When the Slipper Slapper was made, Knidos had been a free port for about a generation. After Rome decreed its new status in 129, Knidos, like Delos before her, became, a bustling commercial site.¹³⁷ More than ever, traders like the Poseidoniasts would have encountered the Knidia in her protective role overlooking that harbor (Figure 13).¹³⁸ The Knidia's cult of the *euploia* would have complemented the worship of Poseidon; both could calm the seas, and Poseidon could also agitate them.¹³⁹ The combination fits this religious club composed of 'merchants, shippers, and warehousemen' whose homeland shore sanctuaries honored Aphrodite Pontia as well as Aštart. Sea shells excavated in the complex might have been deposited intentionally, as offerings to these maritime gods.¹⁴⁰

Direct evidence of the *euploia* cult on Delos is limited but compelling. Two inscriptions associate it with Isis who was another patron of navigation on the island.¹⁴¹ One of these (*IDelos* 2132), an inscription from Serapieion C that dates probably to the early first century BCE, is a dedication by one Andromachos Phanomachou in honor of a divine pair – a goddess by the name of Isis Soteira Aštart Aphrodite Euploia Epēkoos and a still more confounding god named Eros Harpokrates Apollo:

ΙΣΙΑΙ ΣΩΤΕΙΡΑΙ ΑΣΤΑΡΤΕΙ ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗ ΕΥΠΛΟΙΑΙ ΕΠ[ΗΚΟΩΙ] ΚΑΙ ΕΡΩΤΙ ΑΡΦΟΚΡΑΤΕΙ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙ . . .

To the savior Isis Aštart Aphrodite Euploia Epēkoos and to Eros Harpokrates Apollo . . .¹⁴²

Although the inscription does not of course come from the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse, it corroborates the Phoenician practice seen in the Kos inscription of translating divinities for an audience composed primarily of Greek speakers.¹⁴³ *IDelos* 2132 proves that the goddess of the Slipper Slapper – whether she was understood to represent Aphrodite, Aštart, or some combination thereof – could be associated with the *euploia* cult by Delians. Further, *IDelos* 2132 pairs the Isis Aštart Aphrodite goddess with Eros Harpokrates Apollo, another transnational string of divine names that resonates to some extent with the Eros figure in the Slipper Slapper (it is unclear how 'Apollo' relates to the other male divinities, however). Yet neither this inscription nor the Slipper Slapper group are proof of widespread 'syncretisms.' Instead both dedications underscore how religious mixtures, especially those involving Aphrodite,¹⁴⁴ reflect the experiences of individual patrons.

¹³³ Demetriou 2010: 83.

¹³⁴ As in the final line of Philodemos 8 (Demetriou 2010: 84).

¹³⁵ Corso 2007: 23–25, 29–32 with extensive bibliography on the *euploia* cult; Fenet (2016: 132–133) discusses the ancient sources.

¹³⁶ Anth. Pal. 10.10; Theoc. Id. 5.14. He is also associated with the defeat of the Titan Typhoeus (e.g., Nonnos, *Dion.* 1.368–369, 27.295–300).

¹³⁷ Havelock 1995: 134.

¹³⁸ Excavator Iris C. Love believed the 'round temple' above Knidos' harbor housed Praxiteles' statue (Love 1970, 1972a–b, 1973). Several of her claims have been challenged by subsequent excavations: summarized in Montel 2010.

¹³⁹ Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 434–437; critiqued in Parker 2002: 151–152. See also Fenet 2016: 171–187.

¹⁴⁰ Fenet 2016: 504.

¹⁴¹ *IDelos* 2132 and 2153. See Bruneau 1961 for these inscriptions and the nautical imagery of Isis Pelagia.

¹⁴² Bonnet 2015: 506–507; compare Wallensten 2014.

¹⁴³ Scholars disagree on Andromichos's origins, but the mention of Aštart (without an epithet) suggests he was Phoenician (Wallensten 2014: 5–6, 8–9).

¹⁴⁴ On Aphrodite as the goddess of *mixis* see Ponti 2007.

Sculpture dedications and the aspirations of the Poseidoniasts

The Slipper Slapper is an unusually informative monument. We know its archaeological setting in a good deal of detail. We have its inscription, which lets us know that it was a religious dedication to the *theoi patrioi* of its Beirut patron. And thanks to the extensive archaeological investigation of Delos, we can understand how it relates to other dedications inside and outside of the clubhouse. This information allows us to appreciate that the goddess of the Slipper Slapper looked like the Knidia even while it functioned in a manner particular to its setting. It may make a reference to the foundation of Beirut itself through the pairing of Astart and Adonis-as-Pan or, if we understand that Aphrodite and Pan appear here as advisors and observers of the love triangle, to Poseidon's pursuit of Beroë. Its relationship with the decorative scheme of room 'Z' – likely arranged in front of a painted floral wall that set the encounter in the wilderness – confirms that it was integrated into the function of the room, an Italian-influenced arrangement that balanced individual expression with the group's business concerns. The Slipper Slapper strengthened ties to Greek members of the club, too, Athenians and possibly guest merchants from coastal Asia Minor, just as the dedications to Roma in the building's more public rooms reinforced Italian networks. Subtle elements, including Aphrodite's facial style, hairstyle, and head covering, highlighted these references. As is evident in inscriptions such as *IDelos* 2132, the dedications in the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse made conscious use of different visual and linguistic tools, thereby 'communicating in terms to be intelligible to as many as possible, gods and humans alike.'¹⁴⁵

The Poseidoniast clubhouse and the numerous dedicatory inscriptions naming Beirutis show that these people belonged to one of the more prominent groups on the island. The Slipper Slapper's fashionable qualities fit not only the inventive context of the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse, but also Delos as a whole, where, in the same period, new sculptural types appeared regularly and novelty was valued for the development of social personae.¹⁴⁶ Patrons seemed to have played an important role in this process, which strengthens the claim that Dionysios was responsible for the particular assemblage of characters. His personal familiarity with the Knidia – either by witnessing her on Knidos or seeing copies of her on Delos – seems all but assured.¹⁴⁷ Just as social competition drove innovation in the island's robust portrait industry, appropriating a famous work of art and changing its composition made a big statement.

Yet for all of its social, economic, and religious ambition, the Slipper Slapper is not necessarily a monument with *cultural* aspirations. Like the clubhouse itself, the group offers us specific, material evidence of the way that art and religion in the Hellenistic era might transcend national identity. How we choose to frame this evidence is consequential. There is a lot happening in the Poseidoniasts' clubhouse that is absolutely typical of an increasingly interconnected society: its plan, decorative scheme, portraits of important Greeks and Italians, assorted dedications to Aphrodite, Eros, Herakles, and Hekate, and use of Greek in all of the inscriptions. Yet a careful reading of the Slipper Slapper shows that its response to the interaction of people and ideas is not well-served by approaches that emphasize its cultural stakes, for these seem to be mostly Greek (and in that sense it is rather different from the way portraits of Italians on Delos are usually interpreted). Rather the monument is pointedly reimagining the Knidian cult statue as Astart with the effect that the Knidia herself is claimed as an image of a Beirut ancestral god. In doing so, the Slipper-Slapper group either reflects or consciously forms connections between Dionysios's *theoi patrioi*, Aphrodite, and the cult of the *euploia* and between the religious and economic forces that drew the Poseidoniasts together at Delos. The sculpture thus embodies the same personal, social, religious, and economic networks that encouraged the creation of merchant clubs and, indeed, is a kind of physical manifestation of such clubs' ambitions that are at once narrow – Beirutis united

¹⁴⁵ Wallensten 2014: 10.

¹⁴⁶ Dillon and Baltes 2013: 239; Marcadé 1988.

¹⁴⁷ Havelock 1995: 56–57.

on Delos by the worship of Poseidon and Aphrodite – and transnational in the sense of joining together the ports of Delos, Knidos, and Beirut through a reimagining of Praxiteles's cult statue.

The nymph group found in the clubhouse might be another creative reinterpretation of an existing type. Possibly it was a modification that aimed to relate a popular *symplegma* more directly to a Beirut myth, the tale of Beroë and Poseidon, even if our best-preserved version of the story is late. It is not known where the nymph group once stood, as it was clearly found out of context, but it would have been a fitting accent to room 'Z.' Displayed together with the Slipper Slapper and, possibly, the Arles-type Aphrodite, the works would have offered the kind of conversational fodder popular in sumptuous Hellenistic feasting. They were carefully curated, meant to work together and with the room's decorated walls and floors to create a splendid context for dining. The sculptures would have invoked aspects of the Astart cult in Beirut where the economic and religious were likewise deeply intertwined and which resonated with Aphrodite as a goddess of the sea. Their eroticism was certainly meant to elicit pleasure, and in the case of the Slipper Slapper humor as well, but we must understand that these pleasures were socially important – not merely a sign of decadent, 'rococo' behaviors – and bound up with the way that Hellenistic Greeks and Phoenicians alike understood these goddesses' maritime powers. Thus the statuary honors the Beirut *theoi patrioi* and Aphrodite as patron of navigation with an Italian-influenced, integrated decorative scheme. Even if we cannot detect a religious 'program' in the club's dedications, we can see a clear pattern of using Greek-style sculpture, especially sculptures of Aphrodite, to represent Phoenician gods. The dedications demonstrate that members of this club had a taste for works of art that were both chic and socially expedient, motivated by the same blend of religious, communal, and economic concerns that encouraged the formation of Hellenistic clubs themselves.

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