

BEATRICE DASKAS<sup>a</sup>

## Πτερόν, Πτέρυξ, Πτερύγιον

*A Cultural-Historical Study of a Classical Greek Architectural Term and Derivatives,  
and their Post-Classical Meaning\**

*with four plates*

ABSTRACT: *πτερόν*, *πτέρυξ* and *πτερύγιον* all stem from the same root, and their primary meaning is connected to birds: “feather”, “wing”, “shoulder blade”. The history of these words is worthy of note for they came into use in the description of Graeco-Egyptian temple complexes and in the nomenclature of Classical architecture. In order to observe the semantic import of these and related words and expressions across various cultural contexts (Graeco-Egyptian, Classical and Byzantine) this article presents and discusses a range of ancient, late antique and Byzantine literary, erudite, archaeological and iconographic sources. This study aims at giving the reader a glimpse into the Greek lexical domain of architecture, by providing insights into some of the general mechanisms of its construction, and specifically to illuminate, by way of a cultural-historical investigation of these terms, ideas of appearance and significance inherent in the Graeco-Egyptian and Classical and Byzantine worlds. This survey suggests lexical forms as a key research domain for the understanding of the intellectual, social and cultural life of societies.

KEYWORDS: Wavy Enclosure Wall, Wings of Canopus, Ptolemy, Classical Temple Pediment, Zeus Kasios, Eagle

*vocabula ex artis propria necessitate concepta  
inconsueto sermone obiciunt sensibus obscuritatem<sup>1</sup>*

*πτερόν*, *πτέρυξ* and *πτερύγιον* all stem from the same root, and their primary meaning is connected to birds: “feather”, “wing”, “shoulder blade”. The history of these words is worthy of note for they come into use in the description of Graeco-Egyptian temple complexes and in the nomenclature of Classical architecture. In order to observe their semantic import across various cultural contexts (Graeco-Egyptian, Classical and Byzantine) this article presents and discusses a range of ancient, late antique and Byzantine literary, erudite, archaeological and iconographic sources. The main purpose is to identify how, and suggest why, these terms and related ones (*i.e.* ἀ(τ)ετός, “eagle”) pertaining to the realm of ornithology were, in the Greek speaking world, originally applied to the description of Egyptian (§I–§II) and Classical temple complexes (§III)—alone, in specific topographical expressions (“Πτερά τοῦ Κανώβου”) or in metaphorical expressions (“αἰετὸς αἰθῶν”)—and, whenever possible, how their meaning was received in subsequent centuries. This study aims to give the reader a glimpse into the Greek lexical domain of architecture, by providing insights into some of the general mechanisms of its construction, and, specifically, to illuminate, by way of a cultural-historical investigation of these terms, ideas of appearance and significance inherent in the Graeco-Egyptian and Classical and Byzantine worlds.

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\* I owe a word of thanks to Rebecca Darley, Agostino Soldati and to the anonymous readers for their useful suggestions. I am most grateful to Giovanna Targia and Albrecht Berger, who provided me with bibliographic material otherwise inaccessible to me. Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Greek and Latin texts are my own.

<sup>1</sup> Vitruvius, *V Praef.* [2] (ed. V. ROSE, *Vitruvii De architectura libri decem [Bibliotheca Teubneriana]*, Leipzig 1899).

## I. TEIXOS

The use of metaphors and similes is central to ancient descriptions of buildings and places. Classical and post-Classical authors who engaged in works of this kind were required, for the sake of clarity (σαφήνεια), to find a way to deliver a coherent verbal impression of their subject matter to their contemporary audiences and future readership. For a description of a novel or unprecedented architectural sight to be intelligible, they had to base it on a common set of familiar concepts and images<sup>2</sup>, or else “the nomenclature, conceived by the special necessity of the craft, with its own peculiar wording, [would have been] obscure to sense perception”<sup>3</sup>.

In his account of the plan of the typical Egyptian temple, the Greek geographer Strabo (c. 60 BC–AD 20?) resorts to one such familiar concept, πτερών<sup>4</sup>:

μετὰ δὲ τὰ προπύλαια ὁ νεὼς πρόναον ἔχων μέγα καὶ ἀξιόλογον, τὸν δὲ σηκὸν σύμμετρον, ξόανον δ' οὐδέν, ἢ οὐκ ἀνθρωπόμορφον, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων τινός· τοῦ δὲ προνάου παρ' ἑκάτερον πρόκειται τὰ λεγόμενα πτερά· ἔστι δὲ ταῦτα ἰσοῦσῃ τῷ νεῷ τείχη δύο, κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν ἀφαστῶτα ἀπ' ἀλλήλων μικρὸν πλέον ἢ τὸ πλάτος ἐστὶ τῆς κρηπίδος τοῦ νεῷ, ἔπειτ' εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν προΐοντι κατ' ἐπινεούσας γραμμὰς μέχρι πηγῶν πεντήκοντα ἢ ἐξήκοντα· ἀναγλυφὰς δ' ἔχουσιν οἱ τοῖχοι οὗτοι μεγάλων εἰδώλων (...).

After the propylaea, one comes to the temple proper, which has a large and noteworthy pronaos, and to the sanctuary of commensurate size, though it has no cult statue nor one of human form, but only of some irrational animal. On either side of the pronaos protrude the so-called πτερά (“wings”). These are two walls, equal in height to the temple, which are initially distant from one another a little more than the breadth of the temple’s foundations, and then, as one proceeds onward, follow wavy lines<sup>5</sup> as far as fifty or sixty cubits<sup>6</sup>; and these walls have large images carved in bas relief (...).

πτερών, literally the “bird’s feather” or “wing”, won widespread acceptance in Antiquity as a term applied to buildings, though its specific meaning across the range of Classical and post-Classical sources concerned with architecture is somewhat erratic. Strabo expected his audience to gain a clearer idea of the design of an Egyptian temple complex by resorting to the zoological simile<sup>7</sup>: according to him, the word served to denote outstretching parts of its structure, particularly its enclosure wall<sup>8</sup>. Since the Late period (c. 664–332 BC) the enclosure wall had often been con-

<sup>2</sup> On a similar approach to describe places, see e.g. Pol., V 21 [5] (ed. L. DINDORF – T. BÜTTNER-WOBST, *Polybii Historiae [Bibliotheca Teubneriana]*, vol. 2. Berlin – New York 1995 [editio stereotypa], 132–133).

<sup>3</sup> See supra, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Strab., XVII 1 [28] (ed. A. MEINEKE, *Strabonis Geographica [Bibliotheca Teubneriana]*, vol. 3. Leipzig 1877, 1123, l. 24–1124, l. 2).

<sup>5</sup> The verb applies to the “waving” (or “up and down” movement imitating the nodding of the head) of the golden plumes on the crest of Achilles’ helmet (Hom., *Il.*, XXII, v. 314: καλὸν δαιδάλεον, κόρυθι δ’ ἐπένευε φαεινῇ). See *LSJ s.v. ἐπινεύω*. However, the verbal form has been the subject of other interpretations; cf. e.g. J. MCKENZIE, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, c. 300 BC to AD 700*. New Haven – London 2007, 135 (“lines travelling upwards”).

<sup>6</sup> For the dimensions and tables of conversion of the cubit across cultures, see M. H. STONE, *The Cubit: a History and Measurement Commentary. Journal of Anthropology* 2014 1–11; doi: 10.1155/2014/489757 (accessed 10 March 2021).

<sup>7</sup> On the use of animal similes in Strabo’s geographical descriptions, see D. DUECK, *The Parallelogram and the Pinecone: Definition of Geographical Shapes in Greek and Roman Geography on the Evidence of Strabo. AncSoc* 35 (2005) 19–57, esp. 40–43.

<sup>8</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup>-century historian Procopius, in his *De Aedificiis*, when describing the fortification walls of Zenobia on the Euphrates, tells us of soldiers taking “shelter” (προκάλυμμα) under a structure referred to as πτερά: Proc., *De Aed.* II 8 [14] (ed. J. HAURY, *Procopius Opera omnia [Bibliotheca Teubneriana]*, vol. 6. Munich – Leipzig 2001, 70); cf. Hesychius, who attributes to the co-radical πτέρυγες the meaning of σκέπα: *Lex* π 4208, 206 HANSEN III). Similarly to Strabo, Procopius says



structed with undulating courses of mudbricks—hence Strabo’s remark—and had alternating concave or convex sections (“pan bedding”) that, when observed from the front, show a wavy pattern (fig. 1). In Roman times such a pattern was sometimes imitated in stone or painted onto the wall’s horizontal courses of masonry<sup>9</sup>. Strabo’s use of the simile may perhaps be explained by the fact that the up-and-down movements of the bird’s wings during flight approximate the outline of the wall. In this way, the Greek geographer, following his typical descriptive method, gives his audience an idea of the general form of the architectural structure by comparing it to a well-known object. The likening of geographical and topographical features to shapes taken from nature, such as the human body, animals, plants, and astronomical figures is a common tendency in Strabo’s *Geography*. For example, when describing the outline of the Peloponnese, he compares its form to that of the leaf of a plane tree (πλατάνου φύλλον), or while conveying the impression of the Libyan territory, he relies on the image of the leopard skin to illustrate the irregular distribution across it of inhabited places surrounded by the desert land<sup>10</sup>. Strabo’s use of πτερόν in connection with “enclosure wall” is not paralleled by other sources, with the sole exception of a *scholion vetus* to the *Alexandra*, an “obscure poem”<sup>11</sup> in iambic trimeters attributed to Lycophron (fl. 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC), one of the poets of the Tragic Pleiad and scholar of the Library of Alexandria. There, the mention of the derivative πτέρυξ in the context of Cassandra’s prophecy on the coming death of her brother Hector at Achilles’s hands<sup>12</sup> elicits a comment—to the best of my knowledge not to be found elsewhere, neither in the lexicographers nor in other exegetical traditions—that illustrates the peculiar meaning of the word by referring to the same notion found in Strabo: πτέρυγα εἶπε τοῦ τείχους τὴν περίστασιν τῆς οἰκοδομῆς, “<the poet> said ‘wings’ of the wall, that which surrounds the construction”, and further, πτέρυξ δέ· τὸ τεῖχος, “the wing, a.k.a. the wall”<sup>13</sup>. Perhaps, it is not by chance that Lyco-

that these πτερά are so called because they appear to droop from the circuit-wall (ἀποκρέμασθαι τοῦ τείχους δοκεῖ). Another πτερόν belonging to circuit walls concerns the Theodosian walls of Constantinople: the identity of this structure, built to cover the northern flank of the Blachernae, from the Anemas prison to the Golden horn, is still a scholarly conundrum. On this, see B. MEYER-PLATH – A. M. SCHNEIDER, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel (Denkmäler antiker Architektur 8)*, vol. 2. Berlin 1943, 102–104; N. ASUTAY-EFFENBERGER, *Die Landmauer von Konstantinopel-Istanbul: historisch-topographische und baugeschichtliche Untersuchungen (Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. 11)*. Berlin – New York 2007, 14–15, 23–26.

<sup>9</sup> So, e.g., the undulating enclosure wall of the Amun-Re precinct at Karnak, located on the east bank of the Nile at Luxor, or that of the temple dedicated to the goddess Hathor in Dendera. In the Temple of Edfu, the wave was built into only the upper reaches of the wall above regular horizontal layers of brick, while at Philae it was above a regular stone foundation. On the subject, see A. CHOISY, *L’art de bâtir chez les égyptiens*. Paris 1904, 21–42; S. CLARK – R. ENGELBACH, *Ancient Egyptian Masonry. The Building Craft*. London 1930, 210–211. On the enclosure of the Amun precinct at Karnak see J.-C. GOLVIN *et al.*, *Essai d’explication des murs ‘à assis courbes’*. À propos de l’étude de l’enceinte du grand temple d’Amon-Rê à Karnak. *Comptes rendus de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 134.4 (1990) 905–946; on its decoration, see J. WINAND, *Le mur d’enceinte du temple d’Amon-Rê à Karnak. Isiac 1* (2006) 71–83.

<sup>10</sup> Resp. Strab., II 1 [30]; II 5 [33] (ed. A. MEINEKE, *Strabonis Geographica [Bibliotheca Teubneriana]*, vol. 1. Leipzig 1853, 110, ll. 17–18; 176, ll. 1–3); For further examples see DUECK, *The Parallelogram and the Pinecone* 42–43.

<sup>11</sup> *Suid.* λ 827, s.v. Λυκόφρων (ed. A. ADLER, *Suidae Lexicon*. 3, vol. [Lexicographi Graeci I.3]. Stuttgart 1933, 299, ll. 16–17): (...) ἔγραψε καὶ τὴν καλουμένην Ἀλεξάνδραν, τὸ σκοτεινὸν ποίημα; and, before it, *Stat. Silv.* V 3, v. 157.

<sup>12</sup> In the section of the poem in question (vv. 258–293) Cassandra laments the coming death of her brother Hector. By making a prophecy on his killing at the hands of Achilles and on the ransoming of his body by Priam, the Trojan princess projects her narration onto the death of Achilles and evokes the ransoming of his corpse by his Greek comrades, lingering upon the destiny of the Greek hero after his death, when he will descend into the realm of Hades into a Bacchic urn, with the Muses weeping for him (vv. 271–275). Cassandra, out of resentment for the killing of her brother, in an attempt to diminish its importance, foresees events that occur before it, namely the episode of Achilles at the court of King Lycomedes on Skyros (vv. 276–280) and the burning of the Greek ships by the Trojans (vv. 281–293). The metaphorical fabric of the section is centered around an avian simile (cf. *Hom. Il.* XXII, vv. 139–144; 308–11), where Achilles is treated as a raptor, who will swoop down and carry off Hector; see C. McNelis – A. SENS, *Lycophron, Alexandra* 261–2 and *Homeric ἀγκυλοχίλης. Classical Quarterly* n.s. 61.2 (2011) 754–755.

<sup>13</sup> *Schol. Lycophr.* 291a (ed. P. L. M. LEONE, *Scholiorum vetera et paraphrases in Lycophronis Alexandram*. Galatina 2002, 58); cf. also P 292: πτέρυξ δέ τὸ τεῖχος βοηθήσουσιν οὐδὲ οἱ προμαχῶνες (290 LEONE). The comment comes in the context of

phron's exegetical tradition reflects an understanding of the word similar to that of Strabo, as the body of *scholia vetera* to the poem can confidently be traced back to a Roman origin and to the commentary of Theon, a grammarian from the time of Augustus and Tiberius, almost coeval with the Greek geographer<sup>14</sup>.

At a slightly later time, Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79), in a passage of his *Naturalis Historia* concerned with another Egyptian Pyramid complex of extremely intricate structure, labeled *labyrinthus*, clarifies πτερόν in a different way<sup>15</sup>:

*Positionem operis eius singulasque partes enarrare non est, cum sit in regiones divisum atque praefecturas, quas vocant nomos, XXI nominibus eorum totidem vastis domibus adtributis, praeterea templa omnium Aegypti deorum contineat superque Nemesis XL aediculis incluserit pyramides complures quadragenarum ulnarum senas radice ἀρούρας optinentes. fessi iam eundo perveniunt ad viarum illum inexplicabilem errorem, quin et cenacula clivis excelsa, porticusque descenduntur nonagenis gradibus; intus columnae porphyrite lapide, deorum simulacra, regum statuae, monstificae effigies. quarundam domuum talis est situs ut adaperientibus fores tonitrum intus terribile existat, maiore autem in parte transitus est per tenebras. aliae rursus extra murum labyrinthi aedificiorum moles; pteron appellant. inde aliae perfossis cuniculis subterraneae domus.*

The ground-plan and the individual parts cannot be fully accounted for, because it is divided into regions and prefectures which are called “nomoi”; to each one of these, which are 21 in number, is allotted by name a vast hall. Besides, <the labyrinth> contains temples of all the Egyptian gods; and, furthermore, *Nemesis*, with 40 chapels, includes several pyramids, each with a height of 40 cubits, which occupy an area at the base of six “arourai” [*i.e.* 4 acres]. It is when he is already exhausted with walking that the visitor reaches the bewildering maze of passages. Moreover, there are rooms in lofty upper storeys reached by inclines, and porches from which flights of 90 stairs lead down to the ground. Inside are columns of porphyry, images of gods, statues of kings and monstrous figures. Some of the halls are laid out in such a way that, when the doors

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the evocation of the burning of the Greek ships by the Trojans (vv. 290–92): τὸτ' οὔτε τάφρος, οὔτε ναυλόγων σταθμῶν / πρόβλημα καὶ σταυροῖσι κορσωτῆ πτέρυξ, / οὐ γεῖσα χραισιμήσουσιν, οὐδ' ἐπάλξεις, “In that day, nor trench nor defence of naval station, nor stake-terraced enclosure nor cornice shall avail nor battlements” (Callimachus, Lycophron, Aratus, *Hymns and Epigrams*. Lycophron *Alexandra*. Aratus *Phaenomena*. Translated by A. W. MAIR, G. R. MAIR [Loeb Classical Library 129]. Cambridge MA 1921, 345 emended).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Steph. Byz. α 132 s.v. Αἴνεια (ed. M. BILLERBECK – G. LENTINI – A. NEUMANN-HARTMANN, *Stephani Byzantii Ethnika*, vol. 1 [CFHB 43/1]. Berlin – New York 2006, 96); κ 300 s.v. Κύττω (ibid., vol. 3. [CFHB 43/3]. Berlin – New York 2014, 164). On Theon's commenting activity on Lycophron see E. SCHEER (ed.), *Lycophronis Alexandra*, vol. 2. Berlin 1958, xxxiv–xxxvi; more in general, on his philological and exegetical work, see F. MONTANARI – S. MATTHAIOS – A. RENGAKOS (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, vol. 1. History: disciplinary profiles (*Brill's companions in classical studies*). Leiden – Boston 2015, 178–180 (F. Montana); 213–216 (S. Matthaios).

<sup>15</sup> Plin., *N.H.* XXXVI [87]–[88]. Transl. D. E. EICHHOLZ, *Pliny the Elder Natural History*, vol. 10. Books 36–37 (*Loeb Classical Library* 419). Boston MA 1962, 69, 71 (slightly emended). Besides Pliny, several other authors described the complex, first labelled as such by Hdt., *Hist.* II [148]; Diod., I 61; 66 [3]–[6]; Strab., XVII 1 [3], [37], [42] (1098, l. 21; 1131, ll. 5–6; 1134, l. 11 MEINEKE); Pompon., *Chorog.* I 9 [56]; Maneth. hist., frag. 34, 35, 36 (ed. C. MÜLLER, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, vol. 2. Parisiis 1848, 560); Aristid., *Or.* 48 (ed. W. DINDORF, *Aristides*, vol. 2. Leipzig 1829, 437, l. 7). The site described has been identified with the pyramid complex of the twelfth-dynasty pharaoh Amenemhat III (1842–1797 BC) at Hawāra, in the southern part of the Faiyūm, not far from the Baḥr Yūsuf, an off-shoot of the Nile feeding the Birket Qārūn (a. Gr. Μοῖρις λίμνη). See W. M. F. PETRIE, *Hawara, Biahmu and Arsinoe*. London 1889, 4–8; ID., *The Labyrinth, Gerzeh and Mazguneh (British School of Archaeology in Egypt and Egyptian Research Account* 18). London 1912, 28–34; and, most recently, E. P. UPHILL, *Pharaoh's Gateway to Eternity. The Hawara Labyrinth of King Amenemhat III (Studies in Egyptology)*. London – New York 2000; I. UYTTERHOEVEN – I. BLOM-BÖER, *New light on the Egyptian Labyrinth: evidence from a survey at Hawara*. *JEA* 88 (2002) 111–120.

open, there is a frightful rumble of thunder within; however, for the most part, passing through them has to be in darkness. There are other massive edifices outside the wall of the labyrinth, which they call “pteron” (“wing”). Then, there are other subterranean halls, that one accesses through galleries dug underground.

In this context, πτερόν is said to designate “massive edifices” located outside the labyrinth’s wall<sup>16</sup>. If we follow the connection drawn by the Roman polymath between the Greek word and some feature of the compound, then it would seem that πτερόν must designate, at least in Egyptian-style complexes<sup>17</sup>, some sort of outbuildings of the temple or sacred precinct, the purpose of which, however, is left regrettably unexplained. To get a sense of what he might have had in mind when referring to these structures, one can consult a range of sources concerned with the so-called “Wings of Canopus” (πτερά τοῦ Κανώβου).

## II. ΠΤΕΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΝΩΒΟΥ

One source about the “Wings of Canopus” has attracted the attention of modern scholarship since at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the French astronomer Ismaël Boulliau published the *editio princeps* of the *Canobic inscription*, a work included in the manuscript tradition of the *Almagest*, purporting to be the transcript of an inscription made to be engraved by Ptolemy himself<sup>18</sup>. Boulliau was the first to draw attention to a passage of the commentary on Plato’s *Phaedo* by the Alexandrian Platonist Olympiodorus (*fl.* 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD), one of the few references to Ptolemy’s life that hands down to us a tradition independent of what can be derived from his own writings<sup>19</sup>:

ἐλέγετο δὲ οὗτος [*i.e.* Ἐνδυμίων] ἀεὶ καθεύδειν, διότι ἀστρονομῶν ἐπ’ ἐρημίας διέτριβεν, διὸ καὶ φίλος τῇ Σελήνῃ. ὁ καὶ περὶ Πτολεμαίου φασίν· οὗτος γὰρ ἐπὶ μ’ ἔτη ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις πτεροῖς τοῦ Κανώβου ᾧκει ἀστρονομία σχολάζων, διὸ καὶ ἀνεγράψατο τὰς στήλας ἐκεῖ τῶν εὐρημένων αὐτῷ ἀστρονομικῶν δογμάτων.

This was a man [*i.e.* Endymion] who was said to be always asleep, because he spent his life in astronomical observation in isolation, and so he was described as dear to the Moon. The same is said of Ptolemy, who lived for forty years in the so-called “Wings of Canopus”, devoting him-

<sup>16</sup> According to the description of Herodotus, the labyrinth consists of δωδέκα μὲν [εἰσι] αὐλαὶ κατὰστεγοι, ἀντίπυλοι ἀλλήλησι, ἕξ μὲν πρὸς βορέω, ἕξ δὲ πρὸς νότον τετραμμένα, συνεχέες· τοῖχος δὲ ἕξωθεν ὁ αὐτός σφεας περιέρει, “twelve roofed courts which have their gates opposite one another, six facing northwards and six south, laid out in a contiguous way; the same wall encloses them on the outside”: *Hist.* II [148], 4.

<sup>17</sup> Pliny’s famous description of a work of Classical (Ionian) Greek architecture, the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, has a different understanding of πτερόν. Indeed, in such a context, the Roman polymath makes a connection between πτερόν and the Latin *circumitus*, see Plin., *N.H.*, XXXVI [30]. The word *circumitus*, and πτερόν accordingly, is normally understood as “surrounding colonnade” or “portico”; see e.g. EICHHOLZ, *Pliny the Elder*, vol. 10; R. GINOUVÈS – M.-C. HELLMANN (eds.), *Dictionnaire méthodique de l’architecture grecque et romaine*, vol. 3. *Espaces architecturaux, bâtiments et ensembles* (*Publications de l’École Française de Rome* 84/3). Rome 1998, 45. This understanding of πτερόν (and of the co-radical πτέρωμα, lit. “plumage”) has inspired the notorious Vitruvian nomenclature of Classical architecture.

<sup>18</sup> I. BULLIALDUS, *Claudii Ptolemaei Tractatus de iudicandi facultate et de animi principatu*, Hagae-Comitis ex. typograph. Adriani Vlacq 1663; modern cr. ed. of the inscription in A. JONES, *Ptolemy’s Canobic Inscription and Heliodorus’ Observation Reports*. *SCLAMVS* 6 (2005) 53–98.

<sup>19</sup> Olimpiod., *In Phaed.* 10, [4] (ed. and transl. L. G. WESTERINK, *The Greek Commentaries on Plato’s Phaedo*, vol. 1. Amsterdam 1976, 143, ll. 11–15 [transl. slightly emended]). For ancient and medieval biographical notices on Ptolemy, among which that of Olympiodorus judged as inconsistent, see F. BOLL, *Studien über Claudius Ptolemäus. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Griechischen Philosophie und Astrologie* (*Jahrbücher für classische Philologie* 21. *Supplementband*). Leipzig 1894, 53–66.

self to astronomy, hence the stone tablets there, in which he had his astronomical discoveries engraved.

Here, the philosopher establishes a parallel between the Greek astronomer and Endymion, the beautiful Aeolian shepherd loved by the Moon (*Selēnē*), who, according to the myth, was granted eternal sleep by Zeus, so that he could remain ageless and attain immortality<sup>20</sup>. On the authority of another version of the legend witnessed by Pliny and received by Olympiodorus, he was the first human being to observe the phases of the moon, for which reason he was loved by the Greek goddess<sup>21</sup>. Hence the *synkrisis* with Ptolemy, who also consecrated his life to the study of the movement of celestial bodies<sup>22</sup>. Worthy of note for our purpose is Olympiodorus' mention of the place where Ptolemy used to live when conducting his astronomical observations and where he had his astronomical discoveries engraved in stone, namely the "Wings of Canopus". Discarding the alternative meaning of *πεπρόν* in ancient sources—the *fastigium* of ancient Greek temples<sup>23</sup>—Boulliau was the first to trace the expression "Wings of Canopus" back to the understanding reflected by Pliny,<sup>24</sup> namely *aedificia cellis templorum vel Labyrinthis apposita*<sup>25</sup>. He then interpreted the "memorial stones" or *stelae* mentioned in the closing line of the passage as a hint to the *Canobic Inscription*, which, on the authority of its manuscript tradition, was installed at Canopus, a coastal town in the suburbs of Alexandria<sup>26</sup>, home to one of the most reputed cult and healing centers of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, the *Serapeum* (Σεραπεῖον) consecrated to the Egyptian-Greek deity Serapis and to his consort Isis<sup>27</sup>. The French scholar established a connection with the sanctuary on the grounds that Ptolemy's dedication of the inscription, Θεῶ Σωτήρι ("Deliverer")<sup>28</sup>, reflected the therapeutic and thaumaturgic fame of its titular deity, Serapis<sup>29</sup>. This was a plausible inference,

<sup>20</sup> Ps.-Apoll., *Bibl.* I [56] (ed. R. WAGNER, Apollodori *Bibliotheca*. Peditasimi *Libellus de duodecim Herculis laboribus* [*Mythographi Graeci* 1]. Leipzig 1894, 22); Theocr., *Id.* 3, vv. 49–50; 20, vv. 37–39.

<sup>21</sup> Plin., *N.H.* II [43]. Transl. EICHHOLZ, Pliny the Elder, vol. 2. Books 3–7 (*Loeb Classical Library* 352). Boston MA 1942, 195.

<sup>22</sup> But cf. JONES, for whom the parallel between Endymion and Ptolemy occurs because they were both "always asleep" (Ptolemy's Canobic Inscription 62) and C. TOLSA, who thinks that the clause "poses an interpretative problem of difficult solution" (Evidence and Speculation about Ptolemy's Career in Olympiodorus, in: *Splendide Mendax: Rethinking Fakes and Forgeries in Classical, Late Antique, and Early Christian Literature*, ed. E. P. Cueva – J. Martínez García. Groningen 2016, 287–300, esp. 289).

<sup>23</sup> See *infra*, § III.

<sup>24</sup> See *supra*, pp. 4–5, Plin., *N.H.* XXXVI [87]–[88].

<sup>25</sup> BULLIALDUS, Claudii Ptolemaei *Tractatus* 211 (but with a misinterpretation of Strab., XVII 1 [28], on which cf. *supra*, pp. 2–3).

<sup>26</sup> JONES, Ptolemy's Canobic Inscription, [1], 68; [17], 76.

<sup>27</sup> Strab., XVII 1 [28]. On the sanctuary, see F. GODDIO, Underwater Archaeology in the Canopic Region in Egypt: the Topography and Excavation of Heracleion-Thonis and east Canopus, 1996–2006 (*Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology, Monograph* 1). Oxford 2007, 50–57. The architectural remains in the area of the Tewfikieh fort that were attributed to the *Serapeum* by E. BRECCIA (*Monuments de l'Égypte gréco-romaine*, vol. 1. *Le rovine e i monumenti di Canopo*. Bergamo 1926, 38–41) should no longer be considered as such. For sculptural evidence see S. KISS, Sarapis de Canope. *Städelt-Jahrbuch* n.s. 19 (2004) 387–392 (with ref.). On Serapis, see J. F. QUACK, Sarapis: ein Gott zwischen griechischer und ägyptischer Religion. *Bemerkungen aus der Sicht eines Ägyptologen*, in: *Aneignung und Abgrenzung. Wechselnde Perspektiven auf die Antithese von "Ost" und "West" in der griechischen Antike*, ed. N. Zenzen – T. Hölscher – K. Trampedach (*Oikumene* 10). Heidelberg 2013, 229–255; P. BORGEAUD – Y. VOLOKHINE, La formation de la légende de Sarapis: une approche transculturelle. *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2.1 (2000) 37–76.

<sup>28</sup> JONES, Ptolemy's Canobic Inscription [2], 68.

<sup>29</sup> BULLIALDUS, Claudii Ptolemaei *Tractatus* 206. That Canopus was a site at which Serapis cured worshippers is witnessed by Strabo: XVII 1 [17]. The memory of Serapis' miraculous healings is preserved in a number of sources for which see e.g. L. BRICAULT, Serapide, dio guaritore, in: *Cristo e Asclepio. Culti terapeutici e taumaturgici nel mondo mediterraneo antico fra cristiani e pagani* (Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Accademia di Studi Mediterranei, Agrigento 20–21 novembre 2006), ed. E. dal Covolo – G. Sfameni Gasparro (*Nuova Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose* 11). Rome 2008, 55–71, at 56–57. For the close relationship between the Canopic *Serapeum* and the one known to have existed in Alexandria cf. G. H. REN-



since the god's epiclesis is attested across epigraphic, documentary and literary sources, most of which are associated with the Alexandrian context<sup>30</sup>. Moreover, another allusion to the Canopic *Serapeum* might be detected in the attribute “dear to the Moon” that Olympiodorus applies, according to a *lectio facilior* of the syntax of his simile, to both Endymion and Ptolemy. As also occurred with Serapis, functionally associated with other Greek deities, the syncretistic tendencies of the late Hellenistic period and of the Roman era brought the Moon/*Selēnē* into close connection with the Egyptian Isis<sup>31</sup>. Thus, because of this conflation, it could be that the expression “dear to the Moon”, rather than merely being a quality of the simile, betrays a more specific reference to *Selēnē*-Isis, the other major deity worshipped in the Canopic *Serapeum*. If we had to dismiss anything about Boulliau's interpretation, it would be his imaginative theory that the *πτερά* in question should have been fashioned in a Greek-style manner, namely with columnated porticoes<sup>32</sup>, a feature unusual to ancient Egyptian temple architecture, but prominent in the Classical one, so much so as to inspire the notorious nomenclature developed by Vitruvius<sup>33</sup>.

A few scholars after Boulliau commented upon Olympiodorus' passage, some to cast doubt on the genuineness of his witness<sup>34</sup>, others to echo the scholar's hypothesis that the “Wings” were found at the *Serapeum* or another sanctuary<sup>35</sup>, others again to discard this alleged association and suggest instead a sparsely inhabited site on the outskirts of Canopus<sup>36</sup>. Yet, the fundamental question of what exactly the expression “Wings of Canopus” designates has not been addressed as yet. We will come back to Olympiodorus and Ptolemy towards the end of this section, after a discussion of a series of other sources that could help in understanding the matter.

Two other testimonia have recently been brought to the attention of scholarship about the *πτερά τοῦ Κανώβου*, which are worth examining here, in order to suggest an interpretation that may fit all the facts about these peculiar “wings”<sup>37</sup>. The first one is an early 7<sup>th</sup>-century testimony, the *Life of the Patriarch John the Almsgiver* († AD 619) by Leontius of Neapolis<sup>38</sup>:

Ἐν αὐτῇ γὰρ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, ἐν ἣ τὴν ἐνδημίαν πρὸς κύριον ἐκ τοῦδε τοῦ βίου ἐποιήσατο ὁ μακαρίτης, τις τῶν τὴν ἀγγελικὴν πολιτείαν καὶ σχῆμα μετιόντων, ἀνὴρ ἐνάρετος, Σαβῖνος τοῦνομα, ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ οἰκῶν ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις Πτεροῖς Κανώβου, θεωρεῖ τὸν θεοτίμητον τοῦτον Ἰωάννην ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου ἐπισκοπείου ἐξερχόμενον μετὰ τοῦ κλήρου παντὸς κηρία βασιτάζοντος

BERG, Where Dreams May Come: Incubation Sanctuaries in the Greco-Roman World (*Religions in the Graeco-Roman world* 184), vol. 1. Leiden – Boston 2016, 340 and n. 16.

<sup>30</sup> L. BRICAULT, *Myrionymi*. Les épicleses grecques et latines d'Isis, de Sarapis et d'Anubis (*Beiträge zur Altertumskunde* 82). Stuttgart – Leipzig 1996, 119–120.

<sup>31</sup> For Isis' specific epiclesis see *ibid.*, 64–65. More in general, for her Hellenization, thought to have occurred at Memphis, see M. MALAISE, Le problème de l'hellénisation d'Isis, in: De Memphis à Rome (Actes du Ier Colloque International sur les études isiaques, Poitiers, 8–10 avril 1999), ed. L. Bricault (*Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* 140). Leiden – Boston – Cologne 2000, 1–19.

<sup>32</sup> BULLIALDUS, Claudii Ptolemaei *Tractatus* 209–11.

<sup>33</sup> Vitr., III 2.

<sup>34</sup> BOLL, Studien über Claudius Ptolemäus, *passim*; B. L. VAN DER WAERDEN, s.v. Klaudios Ptolemaios, in: *RE* 32.3 (Stuttgart 1959) cols. 1788–1859 and 2484 at 1789.

<sup>35</sup> E.g. elevated terraces of the temple of Serapis at Canopus (G. J. ALLMAN, s.v. Ptolemy, in: *EB* 22 [New York 11911] 618–623, at 619); the entrance court of the Egyptian-style temple of Osiris at Canopus (TOLSA, Evidence and Speculation 295–296).

<sup>36</sup> This on the grounds of a peculiar interpretation of Olympiodorus, which implies that the philosopher likens Ptolemy to Endymion because they both have practiced astronomy “in isolation” (ἐπ' ἐρημίας), see JONES, Ptolemy's Canopic Inscription 63–64.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 62–63; also revisited by TOLSA, Evidence and Speculation 290–291.

<sup>38</sup> Leont. Neapol., *Vita Ioan.*, [60] (ed. A.-J. FESTUGIERE – L. RYDEN, Léontios de Néapolis *Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre* [*Bibliothèque archéologique et historique* 95]. Paris 1974, 408, ll. 4–15 = ed. P. A. CAVALLERO et al., Leoncio de Neápolis *Vita de Juan el limosnero*. Buenos Aires 2011, 452, [55]).



καὶ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα ὑπάγοντα, ὡς εὐνούχου τινός, φησίν, κουβικουλαρίου τοῦτον κελεύσαντος, καὶ μίαν κόρην ὡς ἥλιος, ἡνίκα δὲ τὸν πυλῶνα τοῦ ἐπισκοπείου ἐξεληλύθει—ὅπερ σημαίνει τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος τὸν χωρισμὸν—δεξαμένην αὐτὸν καὶ χειροκρατοῦσαν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν στέφανον ἐξ ἐλαιοκλάδων περιβεβλημένην. εὐθέως οὖν ἔγνω ὁ ὄσιος Σαβίνος τὴν μετάρθεσιν τοῦ πατριάρχου πρὸς κύριον ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ γεγενῆσθαι.

That same day, in which the blessed man made it from this life to the Lord’s dwelling, one sharing the angelic conduct and *habitus*, a man full of *vis divina* named Sabinos, who resided in Alexandria, in the so-called “Wings of Canopus”, had a vision of John, honored by God, coming out from the bishop’s residence with all the clergy holding candles; he was heading to the emperor, a sort of eunuch—he [*i.e.* Sabinos] said—, a chamberlain, had ordered him to do so; and he [*i.e.* Sabinos] <saw> a maiden, similar to the sun, and when he [*i.e.* John], going out, had passed through the gateway of his residence—which signifies the separation from his own body—<the maiden> welcomed him and reached across him to crown his head with an olive-wreath. Immediately then the holy Sabinos knew that at that same moment was accomplished the passing of the patriarch to the Lord.

The passage tells of a vision that a certain Sabinos, residing in Alexandria in the “Wings of Canopus”<sup>39</sup>, had of the holy patriarch, on the day of the latter’s passing. Sabinos, characterized as ἀνὴρ ἐνάρετος, has generally been understood as a man “of virtuous nature”<sup>40</sup>. And yet, the hagiographer evokes a context that would entertain another and more circumstantial meaning of ἐνάρετος. Indeed, the situation described conjures a typical case of divinatory dreaming “by proxy”, in which one individual obtains, spontaneously or through incubation, a dream-oracle concerning another person<sup>41</sup>. The custom of foretelling the future through dreams, along with oneiromancy, was a widespread phenomenon in Egypt, dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC<sup>42</sup>. Since the Hellenistic period, in the cults of Egyptian deities, most notably that of Serapis, there were professionals associated to sanctuaries known in Greek as ἀρεταλόγοι<sup>43</sup>. The word is a compound of ἀρετή, intended as “a demonstration or act (“miracle”) of a divine or supernatural power”<sup>44</sup>, and therefore ἀρεταλόγος would have been an interpreter of the god’s divine power, often manifested through visions

<sup>39</sup> For the first editors of Leontius’ text, the Πτερὰ Κανώβου designated “une avenue qui tourne (ou qui est coupée) en angle droit, comme font les ailes par rapport au corps” (FESTUGIÈRE, Léontios de Néapolis 625 and 274; cf. H. GELZER, Leontios’ von Neapolis *Leben des heiligen Johannes des Barmherzigen* [Sammlung ausgewählter kirchen- und dogmengeschichtlicher Quellenschriften 5.]. Freiburg im Breisgau 1893, 153–154: “τὰ Πτερὰ τοῦ Κανώβου sind demnach der angulosus procurus in östlicher Richtung, das Quartier, welches zum kanopischen Thore führt”); the idea is based on a combination of this source with Pliny’s description of Alexandria as being laid out “in the shape of a Macedonian soldier’s cape, with indentations in its circumference and projecting corners on the right and left side” (*ad effigiem Macedonicae chlamydis orbe gyrato lacinosam, dextra laevaue anguloso procurus*: N.H. V [62], transl. EICHHOLZ, Pliny the Elder EICHHOLZ, Pliny the Elder, vol. 2. Books 3–7 (Loeb Classical Library 352). Boston MA 1942, 267) and Hesychius’ definition of θεταλικὰ πτερά meaning the winged ends of a Thessalian chlamys (*Lex. θ* 421, ed. K. LATTE, Hesychii Alexandrini *Lexicon*, vol. 2. Copenhagen 1966, 317). CAVALLERO *et al.* have “Alas de Canobo” (Leoncio de Néapolis 453).

<sup>40</sup> FESTUGIÈRE, Léontios de Néapolis 522: “homme consommé en vertu”; CAVALLERO *et al.*, Leoncio de Néapolis 453: “varón virtuoso”; TOLSA, Evidence and Speculation 290: “a sort of monk”.

<sup>41</sup> RENBERG, Where Dreams May Come 2, 614–616.

<sup>42</sup> See e.g. N. SHUPACK, A Fresh Look at the Dreams of the Officials and of Pharaoh in the Story of Joseph (Genesis 40–41) in the Light of Egyptian Dreams. *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 30 (2006) 103–138, at 108.

<sup>43</sup> On the ἀρεταλόγοι as cult officials, see W. OTTO, Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus, vol. 2. Leipzig – Berlin 1908, n. 3, 226–27.

<sup>44</sup> The term may be intended as a synonym of ἐνέργεια. Cf. Arr., *EpictD.* II 16 [17] (ed. H. SCHENKL, Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae. Leipzig 1916, 172): τίς ἡμῶν φοῦκ ἐνεκοιμήθη† ὑπὲρ ἐνεργείας; “Who among us hasn’t engaged in incubation for the sake of divine action?”.

and dreams<sup>45</sup>. By extension ἀρεταλόγοι also came to designate “tellers of miracle stories” and, in a negative sense, μυθολόγους (...) τε καὶ αἰσχεορήμονας ἄνδρας, *fabulatores (...) atque turpiter-loquentes viros*<sup>46</sup>. A passage by Strabo about incubation, pertaining to the *Serapeum* at Canopus, attests the presence, at the site, of such oracles<sup>47</sup>:

<Κάνωβος> ἔχουσα τὸ τοῦ Σαράπιδος ἱερὸν πολλῇ ἀγιστεία τιμώμενον καὶ θεραπείας ἐκφέρων, ὥστε καὶ τοὺς ἐλλογιμωτάτους ἄνδρας πιστεύειν καὶ ἐγκοιμᾶσθαι αὐτοὺς ὑπὲρ ἑαυτῶν ἢ ἑτέρους. συγγράφουσι δὲ τινες καὶ τὰς θεραπείας, ἄλλοι δὲ ἀρετὰς τῶν ἐνταῦθα [ἀρετα]λογίων.

[Canopus] features the temple of Serapis, honored with much worship and specially bringing about healings, so that even the most highly reputed men have faith in it and practice incubation themselves on their own behalf, or others <do so for them>. Some prescribe also the cures, while others among the site’s *aretalogoi* <describe> the god’s prodigious actions.

It is within the variety of deified and “holy” men of the fluid and syncretic society of Graeco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt that one should seek for the ἀρεταλόγοι<sup>48</sup>, men who excelled in wisdom, strength, prestige, fame and any other desirable capacity<sup>49</sup>, possessing the human virtues to a higher degree and being gifted with powers that anybody would have wanted, namely the ability to foretell the future and prophesize. Across the centuries, as men’s notions about their gods gradually changed, and as the same gods evolved, so too did the ways in which these oracles and prophets, as *loci* of the supernatural, were thought of<sup>50</sup>. The phenomena of dreaming and incubation, which had seemed capable of enduring the centuries, proved to be resilient to cultural changes, while subject to reformulation, adaptation and, at times, contestation. The figure of the ἐνάρετος (“full of *vis divina*”)<sup>51</sup> described by Leontius, “the holy Sabinos”, with his oracle-dream, may thus be seen as part and parcel of the natural development of that society’s imaginations and concerns.

In an attempt to figure out our main problem—the πτερὰ τοῦ Κανώβου—, according to Leontius, Sabinos’ residence and possibly the place where he received his dream—we shall now have a look at the evidence tied to incubation and related customary practices at Egyptian sanctuaries. The

<sup>45</sup> S. REINACH was the first to clarify the word and determine its exact significance, on the basis of two Delian dedicatory inscriptions from a sanctuary dedicated to Serapis, where ἀρεταλόγος is associated with ὄνειροκρίτης (Les arétalogues dans l’antiquité. *BCH* 9 (1885) 257–265, esp. 260–265; see *SIG*<sup>4</sup> 1133<sub>2</sub> = *I.Delos* 2072 and *SIG*<sup>4</sup> 1172<sub>8</sub>). The explanation has been adopted, with more emphasis on the definition of “teller of miracle stories”, by F. CRUSIUS (s.v. Aretalogoi, *RE* 2.1 [1895] cols. 670–672), and it has since then been confirmed by further evidence; see W. ALY, Zum Art. Aretalogoi. *RE Supplementband* 6 (1935) cols. 13–15.

<sup>46</sup> Maneth., *Apotel.* IV (ed. H. KÖCHLY, Poetae bucolici et didactici. Paris 1862, 82, l. 445). See M. SMITH, Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretalogies, Divine Men, the Gospels and Jesus. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90 (1971) 174–199, at 176.

<sup>47</sup> Strab., XVII 1 [17] (1117, ll. 3–7 MEINEKE). According to an alternate manuscript tradition (not recorded in MEINEKE’s ed.), the closing line reads ἀρεταλογίων (“aretalogoi”) instead of ἀρετὰς τῶν ἐνταῦθα λογίων (sigla: C [Par. gr. 1393, 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> c.; *Diktyon* 51009]; D [Marc. Gr. Z. 406 (= 791), 15<sup>th</sup> c. in.; *Diktyon* 69877]; F [Vat. gr. 1329, 14<sup>th</sup> c.; *Diktyon* 67960]); see *SIG*<sup>4</sup> 1172<sub>8</sub>, comm. ad loc. See also O. WEINREICH, Antike Heilungswunder. Untersuchungen zum Wunderglauben der Griechen und Römer (*Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten* 8.1). Gießen 1909 (repr. Berlin 1969), 119.

<sup>48</sup> Whatever the extension of their significance in Antiquity, because of the similarities between the Christian material on the one hand and ancient collections of miracle stories and lives of wandering men and *Wunderpropheten* on the other, the terms ἀρετή and ἀρεταλόγος came to prominence in New Testament criticism and applied to the Gospel stories of Jesus’ miracles and to his followers. See e.g. R. REITZENSTEIN, Hellenistische Wundererzählungen. Leipzig 1906, 36, 82–83. See SMITH, Prolegomena 176–177 and *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. SMITH, Prolegomena 184.

<sup>50</sup> P. BROWN has shown well how, at the heart of the “religious revolution of Late Antiquity” lays “(t)he rise of the holy man as the bearer of objectivity in society <which> is, of course, a final playing out of the long history of oracles and divination in the ancient world. The ‘god-bearing’ hermit usurped the position of the oracle and was known to have done so”: The rise and function of the holy man in Late Antiquity. *JRS* 61 (1971) 80–101 at 93.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. the comparable adjectival construction ἐνθεός, meaning “full of” or “possessed by” a god: *LSJ* s.v., 566b.

evidence for obtaining dream-revelations at cult sites in Egypt shows two similar but not necessarily related phenomena: at certain shrines priests or other cult officials would be the ones who engaged in incubation, but it was also common for professional dreamers and interpreters (the ἀρεταλόγοι and ὄνειροκρίται) or ordinary worshippers to seek dreams for themselves or on behalf of another. However well-known all these phenomena are, there is scant information in the sources about where specifically, within Egyptian cult sites, they were practiced. In the Graeco-Roman world, priestly incubation was a practice primarily associated with Egyptian deities<sup>52</sup>. In this respect, an unplaced fragment of the Demotic *Book of Thoth*, a work belonging to Egyptian sapiential literature, includes a specific reference to a “place of dreaming” (*s.t rswy*)<sup>53</sup>. As the general context of the text makes clear, the place would have been in a special area of the sacred compound forbidden to ordinary worshippers, where priestly incubation would occur<sup>54</sup>. The *Book* contains a dialogue between a figure of uncertain identity<sup>55</sup> and a disciple “lover of knowledge”, quite likely an apprentice lector-priest<sup>56</sup>, wishing to take service in the so-called House of Life (*pr-‘nh*). This was an Egyptian institution, within the temple complex, the main functions of which were those of scribal training, *scriptorium* and repository of sacred learning (fig. 2)<sup>57</sup>. The reference is found in a passage where the disciple is questioned by his interlocutor regarding a dream he had in the “place of dreaming”: since the dialogue appears to be set in the House of Life, it is quite likely that the place had something to do with it. It appears that the institution also had an association with dream interpretation: the so-called “chief ritualist” (*hry-tp* or *hr-tb*; Bibl. *hartummīm*), a lector-priest (also equivalently translated as “magician”) often designated as “the scribe of the House of Life” (*sh pr-‘nh*), came to have an expertise in this area<sup>58</sup>, so much so that archival and literary sources attest to

<sup>52</sup> RENBERG, *Where Dreams May Come* 2, 617–620.

<sup>53</sup> See R. JASNOW – K.-Th. ZAUZICH, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth: a Demotic Discourse on Knowledge and Pendant to the Classical Hermetica*, vol. 1. Wiesbaden 2005, frag. B06, 1/14 (with commentary at 383); IID., *Conversations in the House of Life: a New Translation of the Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth*. Wiesbaden 2014, 65; for another interpretation of the phrase see J. F. QUACK, *Die Initiation zum Schreiberberuf im Alten Ägypten. Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 36 (2007) 249–295, at 252 (“Ich komme zu [...] des Traums”).

<sup>54</sup> RENBERG, *Where Dreams May Come* 2, 503.

<sup>55</sup> For JASNOW-ZAUZICH the figure is Thoth himself: *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth 3 et passim*; for QUACK “ein Abkömmling von Kundigen des Isdes”: *Die Initiation* 250–251.

<sup>56</sup> JASNOW-ZAUZICH, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth* 13.

<sup>57</sup> On the institution, see A. H. GARDINER, *The House of Life. JEA* 24.2 (1938) 157–179; A. VOLTEN, *Demotische Traumdeutung* (Pap. Carlsberg XIII u. XIV verso) (*Analecta Aegyptiaca* III). Copenhagen 1942), 17–44; N. GRIMAL, *Bibliothèques et propagande royale à l'époque éthiopienne*, in: IFAO du Caire, *Livre du centenaire 1880–1980*, ed. J. Vercoutter (*Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française de Caire* 104), Cairo 1980, 37–48; G. FOWDEN, *The Egyptian Hermes: a Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*. Cambridge 1986, 57–68; F. M. HAIKAL, *Private Collections and Temple Libraries in Ancient Egypt*, in: *What Happened to the Ancient Library of Alexandria?*, ed. M. El-Abbadi – O. M. Fathallah – I. Serageldin (*Library of the Written Word* 3; *The Manuscript World* 3). Leiden 2008, 39–54, esp. 42–44, 47–49. A description of the ideal structure of a House of Life to be built in Abydos is preserved in P. Salt 825, VI, 5–VII, 7 (Brit. Mus. 10051): P. DERCHAIN, *Le Papyrus Salt 825* (P. BM EA 10051), *rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte* (Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres, Mémoires LVIII). Brussels 1965, vol. 1: 48–61, 139–140 (text); the papyrus also contains a sketch of the building: *ibid.*, vol. 2: pl. 23, fig. XIIIb. Remnants of the building of the House of Life were discovered in the temple complexes at Tel El Amarna and Edfu: see G. BURKARD, *Bibliotheken im alten Ägypten. Bibliothek Forschung und Praxis* 4 (1980) 79–115, esp. 90–91.

<sup>58</sup> See SHUPACK, *A Fresh Look* 135–137 (with further bibl.). A memory of this would also be kept in the Bohairic version of *Gen.* 41, 8, where the wise men who failed to interpret the Pharaoh's dream of the kine and the ears of corn (LXX: τοὺς ἐξηγητὰς Αἰγύπτου) are rendered as CΦΡΑΝΩ (*sphran's*), a corruption of the Egyptian *sh pr-‘nh* (“scribe of the House of Life”): B. GUNN, *Interpreters of Dreams in Ancient Egypt. The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 4.4 (1917) 252. A view endorsed by GARDINER, *The House of Life* 175; VOLTEN, *Demotische Traumdeutung* 17; J. VERGOTE, *Joseph en Égypte. Genèse Chap. 37–50 à la lumière des études égyptologiques récentes* (*Orientalia et Biblica Lovaniensia* 3). Louvain 1959, 74, 80–94. Challenged by J. LANCKAU, *Hartummīm – die Traumspezialisten? Eine methodische Problemanzeige in der Suche nach Josefs Kontrahenten in Gen 41,8.24. Biblische Notizen* 119–120 (2003) 101–117, esp. 109–117.

him also being consulted at the royal court<sup>59</sup>. Other professionals, associating themselves with dreaming and oneirocritics—the ἀρεταλόγοι and ὄνειροκρίται—would rather perform incubation in dormitories (Gr. ἐγκοιμητήρια or ἄβατα; Dem. *n3 sdr.w*, “sleeping places”), even if soliciting a dream could also be possible in other places within the sanctuary precinct<sup>60</sup>. Most of the Egyptian documentation on these professionals comes from later periods, from Graeco-Roman times, when incubation became a popular phenomenon, especially in the *Serapea*<sup>61</sup>, thus matching the information we get from the Greek sources<sup>62</sup>.

To find out where exactly these dream-related practices were performed we have to look elsewhere. The documentary evidence on buildings designated in Greek as παστοφόρια (Dem. *s.wt <nḥ.t-ntr>*, “places <in the temple>”) presents them as mainly a complex of lodgings within the temple enclosure comprising the priests’ living quarters<sup>63</sup>, residences of other cult staff and often of occasional visitors, and, in the Hellenistic cult of Serapis, housing for long-term occupants known as ἐγκάτοχοι (*reclusi*)<sup>64</sup>. This might provide a clue to where to look for incubation dormitories. In a Demotic papyrus from Ptolemaic Pathyris<sup>65</sup>, recording a contract concerning the transfer of a portion of a *pastophorion* within the precinct of the temple of Ḥathor, there is a reference to a “house of resting, bedroom” (*p3 ʿ.wy n mn*) adjacent to the northern side of the same *pastophorion*<sup>66</sup>. The reading is reminiscent of the “sleeping places” (*n3 sdr.w*)—possibly rooms for practicing incubation—recorded on a Theban ostraca that relates a series of visions<sup>67</sup>. Besides, incubation by priests could also point to such “places <in the temple>” and specifically to the priests’ living quarters: indeed, as emerges from an interrogation report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD about the irruption of some people into the Memphite *Serapeum*, the presence of a restricted παστοφόριον τῶν ἱερέων where members of the cult hierarchy could sleep but ordinary people were forbidden to, would suggest, perhaps, that it is there that one should seek for the “place of dreaming” associated, in the *Book of Thoth*, with the dream of the novice<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> RENBERG, *Where Dreams May Come* 2, 720–721. The (good and bad) renown of Egyptians in oneiromancy is known beyond the borders of the country; see e.g. Jos., *Bell. Iud.* II [261]–[262] (ed. B. NIESE, *Flavii Iosephi Opera*, vol. 6. Berlin 1955, 204).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1: 12, 15–18. On the lack of identifiable incubation dormitories in Egyptian sanctuaries see H. VON EHRENHEIM, *Identifying Incubation Areas in Pagan and Early Christian Times. Proceedings of the Danish Institute at Athens* 6 (2009) 237–276, at 252.

<sup>61</sup> Particularly significant is the information drawn from the archive of the priest Ḥor at the *Serapeum* of Memphis, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD; see J. D. RAY, *The Archive of Ḥor (Excavations at North Saqqara, documentary ser. 1; Texts from excavations 2)*. London 1976, 134–35.

<sup>62</sup> See *supra*, p. 9. RENBERG, *Where Dreams May Come* 2, 714–734.

<sup>63</sup> Studies of the papyrological evidence that refer to *pastophoria* are: A. PASSONI DELL’ACQUA, *Ricerche sulla versione dei LXX e i papiri. I. Pastophorion. Aegyptus* 61.1–2 (1981) 171–211; S. E. THOMAS, *The “Pastophorion”: ‘Priests’ Houses’ in Legal Texts from Ptolemaic Pathyris and Elsewhere in Egypt. JEA* 99 (2013) 155–169; *EAD.*, *The “Pastophorion” Revisited: Owners and Users of ‘Priests’ Houses’ in Ptolemaic Pathyris and Elsewhere in Egypt. JEA* 100 (2014) 111–132.

<sup>64</sup> See UPZ I, 52–77; PASSONI DELL’ACQUA, *Ricerche* 183–184. See *infra*, pp. 14–15.

<sup>65</sup> Modern day Gebelein, about 30 km south of Thebes. See B. PORTER – R. L. B. MOSS *et al.*, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings*, vol. 5. Upper Egypt: Sites. Oxford<sup>2</sup>1962, 163–164.

<sup>66</sup> The contract appears on P. BM EA 10570A, the reference at l. 5. The reading is uncertain, since the papyrus is damaged; for a detailed comment, see THOMAS, *The Pastophorion* 159.

<sup>67</sup> Ostraca Louvre ODL E 8088: *ibid.*, n. 13, 159.

<sup>68</sup> See UPZ I, no. 119 (P. Louvre 2334 = Par. 11; d. August 17, 156 AD), 555–557, at 556, ll. 24–25, and 46. ἱερέων appears *supra lineam* above the deleted παστοφόρων, a word referring to a special category of low clergy possibly involved in interpreting dreams. On the *pastophoroi*, see H. SCHÖNBORN, *Die Pastophoren im Kult der ägyptischen Götter (Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie* 80). Meisenheim am Glan 1976; with the critical review by M. MALAISE. *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 55 (1977) 201–202. On the link between *pastophoroi* and dream interpreting, see J. D. RAY, *Phrases Used in Dream-Texts*, in: *Aspects of Demotic Lexicography (Acts of the Second International Conference for Demotic Studies, Leiden, 19–21 September 1984)*, ed. S. P. Vleeming (*Studia Demotica* 1). Leuven 1987, 85–93, at 89–91; RENBERG, *Where Dreams May Come* 2, 720–721.



Now, if our guess is correct, it is among such buildings that the “Wings of Canopus”, associated by Leontius with Sabinos’s residence, might have lain. Considering that, according to Greek and Demotic papyrological evidence, *pastophoria* are frequently, though not exclusively, found ἐντὸς περιβόλου τοῦ ἱεροῦ and adjoining one of its sides (fig. 3)<sup>69</sup>, our preliminary hypothesis would be coherent with Pliny’s remarks on the Labyrinth’s πτερόν<sup>70</sup>.

If our hypothesis holds true, namely that one should look for the “Wings of Canopus” among the buildings of the sacred compound known as *pastophoria*, it is legitimate to ask why our Greek source referred to them as “Wings”. As has been observed apropos the rendition of a series of titles occurring in Demotic documents, the Greeks did not attempt to make a literal translation of them, but they invented corresponding names that drew on some relationship with the designated category of people—be it their function or some attribute or external feature (e.g. liturgical vestments, headdress, etc.)<sup>71</sup>. The same applies to the *pastophoria*: while the Egyptians chose a straightforward physical denomination (*s.wt <nḥ.t-nṯr>*, “places <in the temple>”), Greek speakers resorted to associations between the spaces and their users to denote them. From this perspective, mindful of the hypothesis, explored above, that there were sanctuary specialists having an expertise in dream interpretation—the lector-priest known as “chief ritualist”, belonging to the ranks of scribes of the House of Life—, it might be pertinent to recall how the Greeks referred to the personnel of that institution. The Greek epigraphic and textual sources generally refer somewhat indiscriminately to the priests who served, subordinately to their primary cultic function, as scholars and scribes in the House of Life, as ἱερογραμματεῖς<sup>72</sup>. More figuratively, though, the “scribes of the divine books” were baptized πτεροφόροι, because of the great feathers adorning their headdresses (fig. 4)<sup>73</sup>. The

<sup>69</sup> For references, see PASSONI DELL’ACQUA, Ricerche 191; THOMAS, The Pastophorion 160–161, 164.

<sup>70</sup> See supra, pp. 4–5.

<sup>71</sup> P. E. BRESCIANI – P. W. PESTMAN, Ricevuta, in: Papiri dell’Università degli Studi di Milano, P.Mil.Vogl. 3. Milano – Varese 1965, 181–188 (P.Mil.Vogl. III Dem. 2, from Tebtunis), at 186.

<sup>72</sup> See W. HELCK *et al.* (eds.), *Lexicon der Ägyptologie*, vol. 2. Wiesbaden 1977, s.v., 1199–1201. The specific denominations of orders within Egyptian priesthood, with reference to Greek papyrological evidence, are summarized by F. SARAGOZA, La “maison à double-carré” de Médamoud et les sanctuaires isiaques d’Égypte. *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 112 (2012) 349–370, at 361–362.

<sup>73</sup> Diod., I 87 [8] (πτερόν ἱερακος ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς); Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 4 [36].1 (ἔχων πτερὰ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς; ed. L. FRÜCHTEL – O. STÄHLIN – U. TREU, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. 2. *Stromata* Buch I–VI [GCS 52.15]. Berlin 1985, 449, l. 7); Hes., *Lex.* π 4206, s.v. πτεροφόροι. See G. RONCHI, ΠΤΕΡΟΦΟΡΑΣ (Diodoro Siculo I 87, 8). *Papyrologica Mediolanensis* II. *La Parola del Passato* 121 (1968) 290–295. In the trilingual Decree of Canopus (3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC) and on the Rosetta Stone (2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC), πτεροφόροι καὶ ἱερογραμματεῖς corresponds to *šsw md3t-nṯr*, “scribes of the god’s book”, while πτεροφόροι corresponds to *sh.w md.t-nṯr*. At Dendera their portrait in the two sacred processions represented on the walls of the eastern and western staircases of the temple is accompanied by the title of “chief lector-priest of Dendera, the scribe of the divine book of the House of Rekhyt” and “the chief lector-priest of the Great Mistress of Magic (*i.e.* Isis), the scribe of the divine book of the Golden One”. See A. H. GARDINER, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, vol. 1. Oxford 1947, 57\*; F. DAUMAS, Les moyens d’expression du grec et de l’égypzien comparés dans les décrets de Canope et de Memphis (*Supplément aux annales du service des antiquités de l’Égypte* 16). Cairo 1952, 183–184. As a mark of their importance within the priestly hierarchy, according to art. 95 of the so-called *Gnomon* of the *Idios Logos*, an epitome of an Augustan code of regulations for the Roman procurator of the ἴδιος λόγος, a fiscal official in charge of confiscation and irregular revenues due to the Roman imperial treasury, it is specified that, in the sacred processions, no priest should precede the πτεροφόροι: ἱερε[ῖ]ς οὐ κωμάζουσιν πρὸ π...οφο..ν (ed. E. SECKEL, W. SCHUBART, *Der Gnomon des Idios Logos*, vol. 1. W. SCHUBART [ed.], *Der Text [Ägyptische Urkunden aus den staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. Griechische Urkunden* 5.1]. Berlin 1919, 35, l. 214 = ed. S. RICCOBONO jr., *Il Gnomon dell’Idios Logos*. Palermo 1950, 65, l. 214: both scholars, establishing the size of the lacunas in 3 and 2 letters, print “π[αστ]οφό[ρω]ν”; but RICCOBONO, in the apparatus, also suggests, dubitatively, “π[τερ]οφό[ρω]ν”. *Ceteris paribus*, the latter restoration is equally compatible with the spaces of the lacunas, and is more logical; indeed, the restoration “π[αστ]οφό[ρω]ν” causes problems since it does not account for the fact that the *pastophoroi* belong to the low clergy and are not allowed to participate in processions, as indicated by art. 94 of the same *Gnomon* of the *Idios Logos*: SECKEL – SCHUBART, *Der Gnomon* 35, l. 213; RICCOBONO, *Il Gnomon* 65, l. 213). For an introduction to the *Gnomon* of the *Idios Logos*, see *RE* IX, coll. 882–903; P. R. SWARNEY, *The Ptolemaic and Roman idios logos (American Studies in Papyrology* 8). Toronto 1970.



symbolism associated with the feathers/wings can be easily understood: within Egyptian sapiential literature, bird imagery is used for the “sacred writings” and in particular, in the *Book of Thoth*, the “*bas* (i.e. souls) of Re” (*n3 b3.w R*’)—the standard designation of the “sacred books” (*b3.w-R*’) connected to the creator god—<sup>74</sup> are said to possess wings<sup>75</sup>. Thus, to come back to our main question, it is not improbable that with the designation “Wings of Canopus” the Greeks referred to the *pastophoria* of the Canopic *Serapeum* that comprised the living quarters of the scribes of the House of Life, drawing on their sobriquet, πτεροφόροι.

By the time of John the Almsgiver and Sabinos, early in the 7<sup>th</sup> c., the “Wings of Canopus”, must have been a special local name associated with the site where once had stood the Canopic *Serapeum*, not an instance of a common terminology applied to the topography of Egyptian sanctuaries. Though formally shut down by the age of Theodosius (end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD), during the wave of destructions that expunged ancient temples in the area from the religious landscape in AD 391–392, parts of the original complex of the Canopic *Serapeum* may well have survived into subsequent centuries, for other extra-cultic, informal uses<sup>76</sup>. Epiphanius, for example, refers to rituals still being performed at the Menouthis *Iseion*, just two miles from Canopus, bearing witness to the fact that some temples in the area might have remained active in some capacity thereafter<sup>77</sup>. Besides, the development of intellectual life and the teachings of the philosophers at the Alexandrian university engendered a critical spirit that created a solid resistance to Christianity at least until the dawn of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD, even though the new religion eventually got the better of the ancient pagan cults<sup>78</sup>. To complicate the picture, throughout its history, from its foundation till its final conquest by the Arabs in AD 642, Alexandrian society was constantly riven by conflicts among its different ethnic and religious groups. The intellectual ferment and excitement that resulted from the confrontation of rival factions and the debate among opposing theological positions profoundly affected and weakened Christianity as well. Furthermore, at the time when Leontius’ text was composed, Christians were themselves experiencing a difficult moment. Even before the advent of Islam, with the incursion of the Persians in the province of Alexandria and the takeover of the same city during the Byzantine-Sasanian conflict (AD 618–621), the new religion engaged in a struggle for survival: the protagonist of the dream related in our hagiographic account, the Chalcedonian patriarch John V the Almsgiver, was forced to flee to Cyprus and the new rulers established that nobody could be named as his replacement as long as they retained control of the region. Additionally, the existing monasteries, close to Alexandria, were pillaged and scattered by Khosrow II, who also murdered their occupants<sup>79</sup>. Yet, as we already said, despite the troubling evolution of the religious history of Alexandrian society, the phenomena of dreaming and incubation, practiced indiscriminately by Christians and people devoted to the ancient cults, proved able to endure the centuries: indeed, according to a passage found in Damascius’ 6<sup>th</sup>-century biography of the Late Platonic philosopher

<sup>74</sup> Wb. I 404, no. 1.

<sup>75</sup> The attribute is found in a passage from the Vienna fragments of the *Book of Thoth*, designated by their editors as V01 (col. 2, ll. 13–14): R. JASNOW, “Caught in the Web of Words”—Remarks on the Imagery of Writing and Hieroglyphs in the Book of Thoth. *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 47 (2011) 297–317, at 300.

<sup>76</sup> Rufin., *Hist. Eccl.* XI [26] (PL 21, 535C); Eunap., *Vit. Soph.* VI 11 [1]–[2]. On the destruction of pagan temples in the area, promoted by the then patriarch of Alexandria Theophilus, see e.g. N. RUSSELL, Theophilus of Alexandria (*The Early Church Fathers*). London – New York 2007, 7–11.

<sup>77</sup> Epiph., *De Fide* 12, 1 (ed. K. HOLL – J. DUMMER, Epiphanius Constantiensis, vol. 3: Panarion haer. 65–80. De fide [GCS 37]. Berlin 1985, 512, ll. 2–7).

<sup>78</sup> R. REMONDON, L’Égypte et la suprême résistance au christianisme (Ve–VIIe siècles). *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 51 (1951) 63–78.

<sup>79</sup> *Syn. arab.-jacob.*, 20 Kihak (Dec. 16) and 7 Țoubeh (Jan. 2), resp. *PO* 3, 491 and 11, 559. See R. REMONDON, L’Égypte et la suprême résistance 76.

Isidorus, down to his time the inhabitants of the city regularly received oracle-dreams<sup>80</sup>. Since Leontius' work dates to a time long after the Alexandrian and Canopic *Serapea* had been officially closed, it might be that dreaming, when not in a private setting, was undertaken in some surviving structures of the area that, deprived of their original function, had retained a renown for incubation, like the so-called "Wings of Canopus".

The "Wings of Canopus" turn up without further explanation in at least two other contexts. We shall now review them, to piece together the tesserae of the mosaic, starting with Olympiodorus<sup>81</sup>. Just like Leontius, the Alexandrian Platonist tells us that the "Wings of Canopus" were a place where one could dwell. Indeed, he declares that it is there that Ptolemy spent 40 years in residence, while conducting his astronomical observations. Nevertheless, as compared to the early 7<sup>th</sup> c. AD, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, when the Greek astronomer lived, the "Wings" must have functioned in their original capacity, within a regularly operative *Serapeum*. So, if our reconstruction is correct, the "Wings of Canopus" should still have housed the living quarters of the lector-priests or scribes of the House of Life. Since some *pastophoria* were subject to multiple and changing occupancy as occasional visitors, asylum seekers and other residence petitioners arrived at the sanctuary, it might be that Ptolemy was among the occupants of one of these structures at or close to the scribal quarters, which could admit other residents under special circumstances. Specific to the Hellenistic cult of Serapis were the so-called ἐγκάτοχοι, a special category of long-term dwellers in the sanctuary<sup>82</sup>. The nature and many facets of this phenomenon have been subject to long historiographical debate. The theory of religious reclusion has been the one most followed, with an emphasis on different aspects: it may have been a voluntary residence in the temple area or a permanent retreat from the world, as some sort of antecedent to Christian monasticism, or else it could have been people having taken some sort of vow that prevented them from leaving the temple premises. The idea of ἐγκάτοχοι being somehow "possessed" by a god fits within this framework, with incubation and dream interpretation practiced in the *Serapeum* also being considered related phenomena. Other theories have connected the ἐγκάτοχοι to imprisonment, slavery, ἀσυλία, and novitiate, or a combination of the above, resulting in a complex picture, which is still to be grasped in full<sup>83</sup>. Be that as it may, it is interesting to match what is known about this phenomenon from Greek and Demotic documentary and literary sources with the evidence we have on Ptolemy. First of all, if the information about the length of his residence in the temple premises is reliable, the Greek astronomer must have spent 40 years in the "Wings of Canopus", making him a long-term dweller in the sanctuary. Some premises at or somewhere adjacent to the scribes' living quarters would have constituted an appropriate residence for a savant like Ptolemy, where he could have taken advantage of a constant intellectual exchange with the highest representatives of the Egyptian scholarly élite. The scribes' wisdom and technical expertise encompassed all fields of knowledge, from medicine and pharmacology to history and philosophy, from geometry, mathematics, astronomy and geography to divination, oneiromancy and oneirocritics, astrology and the occult sciences<sup>84</sup>. In particular, the technical knowledge of Egyptian priests in matters astronomical, was often a cause for praise in the

<sup>80</sup> Dam., *V. Isid. frag.* 12 (ed. C. ZINTZEN, *Damascii Vitae Isidori reliquiae*. Hildesheim 1967, 12, 14): εἰσὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ Ἀλεξανδρεῖς ὀλίγου πάντες εὐφρεῖς τε καὶ εὐτυχεῖς ὀνειροπολεῖσθαι· καὶ τοὺς ὀνειρούς ἐκεῖνοι διὰ τοῦτο καὶ νῦν χρησμοὺς ὀνομάζουσιν.

<sup>81</sup> See *supra*, pp. 5–6.

<sup>82</sup> The only Egyptian institution where this phenomenon is also attested is the Great Temple of Abydos dedicated to Osiris. For a thorough survey of the subject, with a focus on the Greek ἐγκάτοχοι of the Memphite *Serapeum* see B. LEGRAS, *Les reclus grecs du Sarapieion de Memphis. Une enquête sur l'hellénisme égyptien (Studia Hellenistica 49)*. Louvain 2011.

<sup>83</sup> LEGRAS, *Les reclus grecs* 13–21.

<sup>84</sup> OTTO, *Priester und Tempel* 209–238. See also G. FOWDEN, *The Egyptian Hermes: a Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*. Cambridge 1986, 57–61.

Greek sources<sup>85</sup>. Their expertise was applied particularly to time-reckoning, upon which cultic practices depended, hence their specific designation as “hour-watchers” (Dem. *imy-wnwt.w*, Gr. ὠρολόγοι)<sup>86</sup>. It is interesting to notice that, among the documentation pertaining to the archives of the Greek ἐγκάτοχοι of the *Serapeum* of Memphis, was found an illustrated astronomical work, the *Ars Eudoxi*, the verso of which was re-used, around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, to record some models of letters<sup>87</sup>. One can only speculate about the audience of this text and its use among the *Serapeum*’s community of ἐγκάτοχοι, but at least it constitutes evidence of how scholarly works could circulate outside the restricted circles of the scribes and priests of the House of Life.

Greek sources describe how the ἐγκάτοχοι, as a result of some sort of vows they had taken, were not allowed to leave the temple premises, living a secluded life therein<sup>88</sup>. This information is coherent with what we can infer from Olympiodorus’ comparison between Endymion and Ptolemy: apparently, both were deemed to have conducted their astronomical observations ἐπ’ ἐρημίας, “in isolation”. In a derisory way, some astrological works from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD add negative comments about the community of the ἐγκάτοχοι of the sanctuary<sup>89</sup>. Ptolemy himself ranks these people among the bad and eccentric “born under Saturn”, alongside thieves, perjurers, murderers, eaters of forbidden foods, evildoers, homicides, poisoners, the impious, etc.<sup>90</sup> Elsewhere, they are portrayed as ragged, shaggy, as inflicting upon themselves forms of bodily abstinence, eating unlawful food and practicing heterodox forms of worship. Other authors connect them with dream interpreters and prophets, drawing them close to the ἀρεταλόγοι<sup>91</sup>. Since it is clear, from Demotic as well as from Greek documents, that the ἐγκάτοχοι encompassed a wide variety of people, one cannot exclude the possibility that Ptolemy himself could have belonged to this category of long-term dwellers in the *Serapeum*. Nonetheless, since the Greek astronomer demonstrates such a low opinion of the ἐγκάτοχοι in his writings, one might be tempted to reconsider Boulliau’s theory that he ranked, in some way or another, in the priestly hierarchy<sup>92</sup>. In this respect, it is worth recalling that Clement of Alexandria indicates as a specific competence of the ἱερογραμματεῖς πτεροφόροι astronomical studies<sup>93</sup>. In such a capacity Ptolemy would have had direct access to the scribal quarters, according to our reconstruction otherwise known as πτερά τοῦ Κανώβου.

A third and final testimony brings our argument about the “Wings of Canopus” to full circle. It is a scholion to a passage of the *Panathenaic Oration* by Aelius Aristides (*fl.* 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD), describing the impression Athens makes on its visitors while they are still approaching land<sup>94</sup>:

ὥσπερ ἐν ἱεροῖς προτελουμένη] ἀντι τοῦ μουμένη, ἵνα εἴπη προτέλεια μὲν τὰς νήσους, αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν Ἀττικὴν τελετήν. τὸ δὲ κοῦφον, ὅτι τὰ ἱερὰ εἶχόν τινα συνφοδομημένα, σημαίνοντα ὡς δεῖ μετέωρον γίνεσθαι τὸν μουόμενον. ὅθεν καὶ οἱ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τὰ πτερά τοῦ Κανώβου φασί.

<sup>85</sup> See e.g. Strabo, for whom the priests of Thebes had the renown of “astronomers and philosophers”: XVII 1 [46]. Despite the witty context, Isocrates’ declamation *Busiris* is also instructive in this respect: *Or.* 11 [23]. For the contribution of the Egyptians to the development of astronomy, see OTTO, Priester und Tempel 230–232; R. A. PARKER, Ancient Egyptian Astronomy. *Phil. Trans. Royal Soc. Lond. A* 276 (1974) 51–65.

<sup>86</sup> GARDINER, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica 61\*–62\*.

<sup>87</sup> U. HORAK, *Illuminierte Papyri, Pergamente und Papiere*, vol. 1. Vienna 1992, cat. no. 117, 238. See also F. BLASS, *Eudoxi Ars Astronomica qualis in charta Aegyptiaca superest: Praefatio*. *ZPE* 115 (1997) 79–101; LEGRAS, *Les reclus grecs* 244–252.

<sup>88</sup> UPZ I, 72.

<sup>89</sup> See F. CUMONT, *L’Égypte des astrologues*. Brussels 1937, 148–151.

<sup>90</sup> Ptol., *Tetr.* III 14 [25] (ed. W. HÜBNER, Claudius Ptolemaeus *Opera quae exstant omnia*, vol. 3.1. *Apotelesmatica (Bibliotheca Teubneriana)*. Stuttgart – Leipzig 1998, 265).

<sup>91</sup> CUMONT, *Astrologues*, n. 3–4, 150; 151.

<sup>92</sup> BULLIALDUS, *Claudii Ptolemaei Tractatus* 207.

<sup>93</sup> Clem. Alex., *Strom.* VI 4 [36].1 (449, ll. 7–10 FRÜCHTEL – STÄHLIN – TREU); see RONCHI, ΠΤΕΡΟΦΟΡΑΣ 294.

<sup>94</sup> *Schol. Aristid. Panath.*, 97, 7 (ed. W. DINDORF, Aristides, vol. 3. Leipzig 1829, 25).

Just as if <the soul was experiencing> a preliminary initiation into sacred rites”] in lieu of undergoing initiation, in order to say that the preliminary rites are the islands, while Attica herself is the ritual. The quality of lightness is because the temples had certain annexes<sup>95</sup>, which signified the need for the elevation of the one undergoing initiation. Whence the inhabitants of Egypt say: “the Wings of Canopus.

It is in the context of a comment upon the buoyant state of the soul, when introduced to the sight of the city, that the scholiast recalls the Egyptian “Wings of Canopus”: not only are they pertinently subsumed under the familiar rubric of “temples’ annexes”, but their name is explained as meaning the elevation of the one undergoing initiation, a significant detail that curiously has not elicited any comment so far. What the scholiast seems to allude to, in his comment to the passage of Aristides’ discourse, is the basic idea of an initiation, which, within the ancient mystery cults, is generally taken to be that of death and rebirth. Most telling, in this respect, is a passage of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* (2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD), later known as “The Golden Ass”. The “high priest” (*primarius sacerdos*) presents to the protagonist Lucius the rite of initiation into Isis’ mysteries in similar terms<sup>96</sup>:

(...) *nam et inferum claustra et salutis tutelam in deae manu posita, ipsamque traditionem ad instar voluntariae mortis et precariae salutis celebrari, quippe cum transactis vitae temporibus iam in ipso finitae lucis limine constitutos, quis tamen tuto possint magna religionis committi silentia, numen deae soleat elicere et sua providentia quodam modo renatos ad novae reponere rursus salutis curricula.*

For both the gates of death and the guardianship of life are in the goddess’s hands, and the act of initiation is performed in the manner of a voluntary death and of a life obtained by grace. Indeed, the goddess is accustomed to elect people who stand near the close of their lifespan, on the very threshold of the end of light, but who can be safely entrusted, nevertheless, with the mighty mysteries of the faith. By her providence she causes them, in some way, to be born again and places them once more on the course of a new life.

Lucius’ subsequent initiation appears as an approaching to the boundaries of death and subsequent return to light and to the gods above, to worship them, with the gods below, face to face<sup>97</sup>. This idea of a “state of elevation” of the faithful when associating with the god is echoed in a passage of the *Fourth Sacred Discourse* by the same Aristides<sup>98</sup>:

Λόγον δέ ποτε ἤκουσα τοιόνδε φέροντα εἰς λόγους καὶ ὁμιλίαν θείαν. ἔφη χρῆναι κινηθῆναι τὸν νοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ καθεστηκότος, κινηθέντα δὲ συγγενέσθαι θεῷ, συγγενόμενον δὲ ὑπερέχειν ἤδη τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἕξεως· καὶ οὐδέτερόν γε εἶναι θαυμαστόν, οὔτε ὑπερέχειν θεῷ συγγενόμενον οὔθ’ ὑπερσχόντα συνεῖναι θεῷ.

But once I heard the following tale, which pertained to my rhetoric and my relationship with the god. He [i.e. Asclepius] said that it was necessary that my mind be changed from its present

<sup>95</sup> But cf. JONES, Ptolemy’s Canobic Inscription 63: “structures incorporated in them”. The scholar dismisses the scholion as an untrustworthy source.

<sup>96</sup> Apul., *Met.* XI 21 (ed. and transl. J. G. GRIFFITHS, Apuleius of Madauros *The Isis-book (Metamorphoses, book XI)*. Leiden 1975, 94–95 [transl. slightly emended]). On the idea of “death and rebirth” see also W. BURKERT, *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge (MA) – London 1987, 99–100.

<sup>97</sup> XI 23 (98–99 GRIFFITHS, Apuleius of Madauros).

<sup>98</sup> *Sacr. Serm.* IV (ed. W. DINDORF, Aristides, vol. 1. Leipzig 1829, 518, ll. 18–23). Transl. C. A. BEHR, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*. Amsterdam 1968, 265 (slightly emended).



state and, having been changed, associate with God, and having associated with him, that it be superior to man's estate. And that neither was remarkable, either associating with God to be superior, or being superior, to associate with God.

It is a sort of apotheosis that concerns Aristides, which consists in a separation from the human estate and a "rebirth" in the god. As a sign of this rebirth, the orator receives a new name, Θεόδωρος ("god's gift"). Even though the cult of Asclepius did not involve any initiation as in the mystery cults, it looks as if the rhetor carried out his religious experience with the healer god in the manner of an Isiac initiation: as M.-G. Lonnoy has put it, "les analogies entre les comportements et les sentiments d'Aristide et ceux d'un initié d'Isis amènent à accorder davantage de considération qu'on ne le fait d'habitude aux références des Discours Sacrés à un contexte initiatique"<sup>99</sup>. Besides, Isis and Serapis, associated with Asclepius in his *Sacred Discourses*<sup>100</sup>, are part of his syncretic religious experience, nourished by his direct experience of the beliefs and cultic practices of Mediterranean people, especially of Egypt.

To come back to Apuleius, R. Reitzenstein was the first to establish an insightful link between the experience of Lucius the novice and that of the ἐγκάτοχοι, uncovering, in a series of textual parallels, their striking similarities<sup>101</sup>: Lucius' residence within the temple's premises during the novitiate (*aedibusque conductis intra consaeptum templi larem temporarium mihi constituo*); his full dedication to the goddess implying that it was impossible for him to leave the sacred enclosure (cf. *contuberniisque sacerdotum individuus et numinis magni cultor inseparabilis*); and his being constantly visited by the goddess in dreams and visions (*nec fuit nox una vel quies aliqua visu deae monituque ieiuna*)<sup>102</sup>. If not drawing a parallel between the novitiate and the phenomenon of the κατοχή, our scholion seems to confirm, at least through suggesting a connection between initiation and the "Wings of Canopus", that the novices were among the residents of the Canopic *Serapeum*, and in particular among the people allowed, just like the initiand Lucius<sup>103</sup>, to enter the priests' lodgings.

To sum up, according to the reconstruction proposed, it would appear that, originally, the so-called "Wings of Canopus" housed the living quarters of the scribes, otherwise known as *ptero-phorai*. They belonged to the complex of buildings within the sacred compound known as παστοφόρια. Normally clustered in groups<sup>104</sup>, the *pastophoria* comprised housing for the various orders of priesthood attached to the service of the temple or to the House of Life, for the novices undertaking the initiation to the god's mysteries, and, occasionally, for members of the heterogeneous ensemble of the ἐγκάτοχοι (*reclusi*), to whom the temple frequently afforded long-term residence and asylum. It is also among these structures that one should seek for the places dedicated to incubation, some of which were restricted to the priests, especially to dream-experts named *pastophoroi*, and to the novices ("places of dreaming"), some others to ἐγκάτοχοι known as ἀρεταλόγοι and ὀνειροκρίται, at the service of people attending the sanctuary. Early in the 7<sup>th</sup> c., deprived of their original function, the "Wings of Canopus", probably surviving in part to the late 4<sup>th</sup>-century destruction of the *Serapeum*, must have kept their special renown for incubation, enduring as places

<sup>99</sup> M.-G. LONNOY, L'expérience initiatique d'Aelius Aristide. *BAGB* 1 (1986) 41–50 at 49.

<sup>100</sup> *Sacr. Serm.* III, (500, ll. 17–19 DINDORF).

<sup>101</sup> R. REITZENSTEIN, Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, nach ihren Grundgedanken und Wirkungen (Vortrag ursprünglich gehalten in dem wissenschaftlichen Predigerverein für Elsass-Lothringen den 11. November 1909). Berlin 21920, 71–89.

<sup>102</sup> Apul., *Met.* XI 19. But cf. UPZ I, 74–75 for a more cautious position on the matter. For dreams of the initiate, cf. *supra*, pp. 10–11.

<sup>103</sup> Apul., *Met.* XI 22: (...) *ad receptaculum sacerdotis contendo atque eum cubiculo suo commodum prodeuntem continatus saluto.*

<sup>104</sup> THOMAS, *The Pastophorion* 157.



wherein people like Sabinos, fitting into the long but senescent tradition of the ἀρεταλόγοι, could dwell to perform their dream-related practices.

Interestingly enough, a cluster of *pastophoria* similar to the one we have identified as belonging to the “Wings of Canopus” is mentioned by Rufinus in his description of the Alexandrian *Serapeum*<sup>105</sup>:

*Jam vero in superioribus extrema totius ambitus spatia occupant exedrae et pastophoria (tabernacula), domusque in excelsum porrectae, in quibus vel aeditui, vel hi quos appellabant ἀγνεύοντες, id est, qui se castificant, commanere soliti erant.*

Moreover, on the upper level [*sc.* of the temple enclosure], the outermost structures of the whole *peribolos* provide space for auditoria, *pastophoria* (small dwellings) and lofty lodges, which used to house either the temple keepers (the *pastophoroi*?)<sup>106</sup> or those called *hagneuontes*, meaning those who purify themselves.

Considering that among the ἀγνεύοντες—people dedicated to various forms of abstinence—there were priests, novices and also some categories of ἐγκάτοχοι<sup>107</sup>, hence identical with the alleged residents of the “Wings of Canopus”, would it be unreasonable to entertain the possibility, though an admittedly speculative one, that because of their proximity, our sources conflated the Alexandrian and Canopus *Serapea*, speaking of one and the same *pastophoria*?

### III. ΑΕΤΩΜΑ

Another common definition involving *περὰ* and *πέρυγες*, in architectural matters, is *ἀέτωμα*, namely “gabled roof” or “*fastigium*, pediment”. This element pertains to the realm of Classical temple architecture and refers to the protruding triangular space above the epistyle of the temple’s short sides, delimited by the horizontal and raking cornices (*γείσα*). In Hippocratic exegesis, the term *ἀέτωμα* tends to be glossed over as a non-distinctive *vox*<sup>108</sup>: the physician and grammarian Erotianus (*fl.* 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD) elucidates it as ἡ στεφάνη τοῦ δώματος, “the crowning of the roof”<sup>109</sup>. That the word does not require a specific “Hippocratic” clarification is also confirmed by Galen (2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD), who has simply τὸ εἰς ὕψος ἀνατεταμένον τῆς ὀροφῆς, ὥσπερ τρίγωνον<sup>110</sup>. It is in a different

<sup>105</sup> Rufin., *Hist. Eccl.* XI [23] (*PL* 21, 530A). The heterogeneous population of ministers and other dwellers of the *Serapeum* is given in *Expos. tot. mundi et gentis*, [36]: *aeditimi enim et sacerdotes et ministri et aruspices et adoratores et divini optimi abundant*. On the various orders of ministers, see L. VIDMAN, *Isis und Sarapis bei den Griechen und Römern. Epigraphische Studie zur Verbreitung und zu den Trägern des ägyptischen Kultes (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 29)*. Berlin 1970, 48–94.

<sup>106</sup> On the significance and functions of the *aeditui* (cf. *ιεροφύλακες*, Tempelwächter), in charge of the *cura templi* (cf. Scaev., *Dig.* XXXIII 1, 20, [1]), see VIDMAN, *Isis und Sarapis* 64–65; F. CAVAZZA, *Il significato di aeditu(m)us, e dei suoi presunti sinonimi, e le relative mansioni. Latomus* 54.1 (1995) 58–61, esp. 59; K. LATTE, *Römische Religionsgeschichte (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 4)*. Munich 1967, 410–411. It seems that the function of the Roman *aeditui* could correspond, to a certain extent, to that of the *pastophoroi* of the Egyptian temples (Dem. *wn*, “opener”), who, besides being sorts of Tempelwächter (lit. “guardians of the gates”), also engaged in dream interpretation. Their function has long been debated: see n. 68 for bibliographic references.

<sup>107</sup> See F. THELAMON, *Païens et chrétiens au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle: l’apport de l’ “Histoire ecclésiastique” de Rufin d’Aquilée*. Paris 1981, 203–205.

<sup>108</sup> It appears only once in the Hippocratic corpus: *Art.*, [43]: *ἀέτωμα οἴκου* (ed. É. LITTRE, *Œuvres complètes d’Hippocrate*, vol. 4. Paris 1844, repr. Amsterdam 1978, 186).

<sup>109</sup> Erot., *s.v.* (ed. E. NACHMANSON, *Erotiani Vocum Hippocraticarum collectio cum fragmentis*. Gothenburg 1918, 54, l. 17). An introduction to ancient scholarship on Hippocrates is found in E. DICKEY, *Ancient Greek Scholarship (American Philological Association. Classical Resources Series)*. Oxford 2007, 43–45.

<sup>110</sup> Gal., *Hippoc. explic.*, *s.v.* *ἀέτωμα* (ed. D. C. G. KÜHN, *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia*, vol. 19. Leipzig 1830, 70).

context, the corpus of *scholia vetera* to Aristophanes<sup>111</sup> that we have the association of ἀέτωμα with πτερά, πτέρυγες and a related term, ἀετός (“eagle”). The famous metaphorical line by the Athenian playwright τὰς οἰκίας ἐρέψομεν πρὸς ἀετόν, “with an eagle we shall crown your dwellings” (Ar. Av. 1110), elicits the following comments:

*schol. vet. Ar. Av. 1110a, 170 HOLWERDA: ἐρέψομεν REΓ πρὸς ἀετόν R] διὰ τὰ ἐν τοῖς ναοῖς ἀετώματα. ἀντὶ τοῦ “στεγάσομεν πρὸς ἀέτωμα.” RVEΓMLh*

*ἐρέψομεν πρὸς ἀετόν:* on account of the gabled roofs in the temples. In lieu of “we shall erect a gable”.

*schol. vet. Ar. Av. 1110b, 170 HOLWERDA: τὰς γὰρ τῶν ἱερῶν στέγας πτερὰ καὶ ἀετούς καλοῦσιν, ὡς φησιν Ἴων ἐν Ἀγαμέμνονι. RVEΓ*

They call the roofs of the temples πτερά (“wings”) and ἀετοί (“eagles”), as Ion says in the Agamemnon (?).

*schol. vet. (?) Ar. Av. 1110c, 170 HOLWERDA: πρὸς ἀετόν] κατὰ μίμησιν αἰετοῦ. Γ<sup>2</sup>*

*πρὸς ἀετόν:* in imitation of an eagle.

Not only is the gabled roof of the temple assimilated to “wings”, but also to “eagles”. In Byzantine times, the same passage is glossed over by Tzetzes (*fl.* 12<sup>th</sup> c. AD), who specifies that it is the temples’ roof trusses that are referred to as πτερά:

*schol. rec. Ar. Av. 1109, 1152 KOSTER: (ἱεροῖς ÷) διὰ τὰ ἐν τοῖς ναοῖς ἀετώματα· τὰ εἰς τὰς στέγας γὰρ ξύλα πτερὰ καὶ ἀετούς καλοῦσιν.*

*ἱεροῖς* is on account of the gabled roofs in the temples: the wooden trusses on the roofs are called πτερά (“wings”) and ἀετοί (“eagles”).

The complete ancient compendium of ornithological similes applied to Classical temple architecture merges into the lexicon composed by the Alexandrian grammarian Hesychius (*fl.* 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> c. AD)<sup>112</sup>:

*lex. π 4190, 205 HANSEN III: πτερά· πτέρυγες ἢ οἰκοδομήματα ἱερῶν ἐκ λίθων.*

*πτερά:* wings or stone structures of temples.

*lex. π 4211, 206 HANSEN III: πτερύγιον· ἀκρωτήριον, πτέρυξ.*

*πτερύγιον:* apex (*vel* acroterion), shoulder blade<sup>113</sup>.

<sup>111</sup> These scholia depend on a multilayered tradition going back to the beginning of Alexandrian scholarship in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC (Callimachus, Lycophron and Eratosthenes of Cyrene). The first continuous commentary on his plays was produced by Euphronios, the teacher of Aristophanes of Byzantium. The work of these and other scholars was merged into a single commentary, between the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, by Didymus Chalcenterus (on him see also *infra*, n. 120). Convenient introductions on ancient scholarship on Aristophanes are found in J. W. WHITE, *The Scholia on the Aves of Aristophanes*. Boston 1914, ix–xxvii; N. DUNBAR, *Aristophanes Birds*. Oxford 1995, 31–49; DICKEY, *Ancient Greek Scholarship* 28–31.

<sup>112</sup> For a characterization of Hesychius’ lexicon and his dependence on earlier material, see *ibid.*, 289 (with further *bibl.*).

*lex.* α 2651, 126 CUNNINGHAM I: ἀκρωτήρια· τὰ ἐπάνω τῶν ναῶν ζώδια ἀνατιθέμενα. Δωριεῖς.

*ἀκρωτήρια*: the small figures set on top of the temples. Dorians.

*lex.* α 1819, 86 CUNNINGHAM I: αἰετὸς αἴθων· ὁ ἔνθερμος, καὶ πυρώδης, καὶ ξανθός ἢ καὶ τὸ πτηνόν. καὶ ὄροφος. καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ τῷ γείσῳ κυμάτιον.

αἰετὸς αἴθων (“burning eagle”): the hot, the fiery, the blonde ἢ and the winged animal; and the roof, and the cymatium above the cornice.

Besides the *περὰ*, which are simply referred to as stone structures of the temples, it appears that the diminutive of *πτερυξ*, *πτερύγιον* (“shoulder blade” but also “apex”), technically applies to the acroteria, the small apical figures put on top of the temples’ pediments. Another metaphorical expression to be connected to the upper part of the temple’s façade is *αἰετὸς αἴθων*: originally an epithet of Hector in the episode of the Trojans setting the Achaean ships on fire (Hom., *Il.* XV 690), in rigorous architectural terms, the phrase designates the curved molding above the cornice of the temple, otherwise called the cymatium. By the middle-Byzantine epoch precise track of this detailed metaphorical nomenclature of Classical temple architecture is lost. Middle-Byzantine lexicographers and commentators are mainly aware of the figurative way of referring to the *ἀέτωμα*—i.e. *ἀετός*, specifically inflected in *ἀετὸς τῶν οἰκοδομημάτων*<sup>114</sup> (“gabled roof”) and *ἀετὸς προτύλαιος*<sup>115</sup> (“*fastigium*/pediment”). Along with it, what is retained is the semantic ambivalence of some bird-related terms. For example, the co-radical *πτερύγιον* and *πτερόν*, the ambiguity of which constitute an occasion for an extended digression in Photius’ *Amphilochia* that appears like a *tour de force* of Byzantine erudition on ornithological and lexicographical cognate matters, saying little about temple architecture<sup>116</sup>:

Αὐτίκα τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ·<sup>117</sup> τὸ δὲ πτερύγιον, οἷς μέλει τῆς Ἀττικῆς γλώττης, οἱ μὲν ἀετόν, οἱ δὲ καὶ ἀέτωμα καλοῦσιν, καὶ στέγασμά φασιν εἶναι τοῦτο τῶν ἱερῶν οἴκων τῷ σχήματι τὴν πτησιν τοῦ ζώου μιμούμενον· ὁ δὲ καὶ πτερόν ἐνιοὶ καλοῦσιν. οἱ δὲ διαστέλλουσι τὸ πτερόν καὶ τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ἀετοῦ τε καὶ τοῦ ἀετώματος· φασὶ γὰρ εἶναι τὸ δηλούμενον ὑπ’ αὐτῶν τὸ πρὸ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐκ λίθου πρὸς ὕψος ἀνατεινόμενον μᾶλλον κατεσκευασμένον οἰκοδόμημα. πλὴν ἀλλὰ γὰρ εἴ τις προτείνας τὸ πτερύγιον διερωτῶν πότερον ἐξήπλωτο τῷ ἀέρι καὶ ὑπηρετεῖ κινούμενον τῷ ὄρνιθι τὴν πτησιν ἢ συνέσταλτό τε καὶ συνεπτύσσετο καὶ εἰς τὸ σχῆμα τῶν

<sup>113</sup> “Shoulder blade”: cf. Poll. II [177]: τὰ δ’ ἐκατέρωθεν ὁμοπλατῶν πτερύγια (ed. E. BETHE, *Pollucis onomasticon*, vol. 1 [*Lexicographi Graeci* 9.1]. Leipzig 1900, 137, l. 22.); Hes. *Lex.* π 4211, 206 HANSEN III; cf. Philostr., *Gymn.* [30]: ὄμων πτέρυγες (ed. C. L. KAYSER, *Flavii Philostrati Opera*, vol. 2. Leipzig 1871, 276, l. 30).

<sup>114</sup> *Suid.* α 576, s.v. ἀετὸς τῶν οἰκοδομημάτων· τὸ κατὰ τὸν ὄροφον, ὃ τινες ἀέτωμα καλοῦσιν (ed. A. ADLER, *Suidae Lexicon*, vol. 1 [*Lexicographi Graeci* 1.1]. Leipzig 1928, 59), based on Harpocr., *Lex.*, s.v. ἀετός· τῶν οἰκοδομημάτων τὸ κατὰ τὸν ὄροφον, ὃ τινες ἀέτωμα καλοῦσιν. Αριστοφάνης Ὀρνισι “τὰς γὰρ ὑμῶν οἰκίας ἐρέψομεν πρὸς ἀετόν” (ed. I. BEKKER, *Harpocration et Moeris*. Berlin 1833, 7, ll. 5–7). On Harpocration’s lexicon, one of the earliest glossaries preserved (2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD), see DICKEY, *Ancient Greek Scholarship* 94 (with further bibl.).

<sup>115</sup> *Lex. Seg.* s.v.: τὸ νῦν λεγόμενον ἀέτωμα ἢ δέλτα (ed. I. BEKKER, *Anecdota Graeca*, vol. 1. Berlin 1814, 202, ll. 20–21). Both meanings are recorded in: Phot. *Lex.* α 426, s.v. ἀετός (ed. C. THEODORIDIS, *Photii patriarchae Lexicon*, vol. 1 [A–Δ]. Berlin – New York 1982, 50); *Suid.* α 578 s.v. ἀετώματα (59 ADLER I). On the three middle-Byzantine lexicographic works, see Brill’s *Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship* 331–337 (Photius), 354–55 (Suda) [F. M. PONTANI]; DICKEY, *Ancient Greek Scholarship* 90–91, 101–102.

<sup>116</sup> Phot., *Amphil.* 24 (ed. L. G. WESTERINK, *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia*, vol. 4. [*Bibliotheca Teubneriana*]. Leipzig 1986, 92, ll. 238–252).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Phot., *Lex.* π 1473 s.v. πτερύγιον· ἀκρωτήριον (intended as ὑψηλὸς τόπος; ed. C. THEODORIDIS, *Photii patriarchae Lexicon*, vol. 3 [N–Π]. Berlin – New York 2013, 295) = *Suid.* π 3019 (ed. A. ADLER, *Suidae Lexicon*, vol. 4 [*Lexicographi Graeci* 1.4]. Leipzig 1935, 253).

ἡρεμούντων τὸ πτηνὸν συνῆγεν, οἶμαι ἂν ἀντὶ τοῦ λύσιν αἰτεῖν τῆς ἀπορίας γέλωτα παρασχεῖν· καίτοι γ' ἂν ἴσως καὶ ἐπινεωτερίσαιτο, ὡς ὀπότερον ἂν τις δοίη, ἀδύνατα λέγων φωραθήσεται· οὔτε γὰρ ἐκτεταμένον τὸ πτερύγιον ὄγκον σώματος καὶ βάρος ἐπιβαῖνον ἀνέχειν δύναται οὔτε τὴν κατὰ συστολὴν θέσιν ἔχον πολλῶ μᾶλλον οὐδὲ τὴν ἐπίβασιν ὄλως παραδέχοιτ' ἂν.

For instance, the *pterygion* of the temple: for anyone who cares about the Attic language, some people call the summit <of the temple> *aetos*, some others *aetōma*, and they say, indeed, that, for its configuration, the roof of the temples imitates the outspread wings of the animal [*i.e.* the eagle, *aetos*]. Therefore, several call it also *pteron* (“wing”). The latter distinguish the *pteron* and *pterygion* both of the eagle and of the pediment. For they say that the object implied by these <words> is the structure in stone on the façade of the temples, which lifts up or better extends in height. Except that, if anybody asks, when adducing the word *pterygion*, if it stretches out in the air and the bird needs it for motion during flight, or else if it shrinks or folds together so that the winged animal can assume the pose of those at rest, I believe that one would laugh instead of asking about the solution of the puzzle. To tell the truth, if equally one were to propose a change <in this respect>, about which of the two <meanings> one should give, inadmissible things would be said. For it is not possible that the outspread *pterygion*, while going up, lifts the volume and weight of a body, nor is it totally admissible for it to have a downsloping or an ascending arrangement.

The same sources record a reason for calling the ἀέτωμα, pediment, ἀετός (“eagle”), namely that its configuration imitates the outspread wings of the bird<sup>118</sup>. Yet an older source, a passage of Pindar’s *Olympian* 13 and the relative *scholia vetera*<sup>119</sup>, would seem to suggest a different etiological explanation for this association:

*Schol. Pind. Ol.* 13.29a, 363–364 DRACHMANN I: ἡ θεῶν ναοῖσιν οἰωνῶν βασιλέα δίδυμον] τὸν αἰετόν· φησὶ δὲ τὸ κατὰ τοὺς ναοὺς τῶν θεῶν ἀέτωμα. τίς οὖν, φησιν, ἐν τοῖς ναοῖς τῶν θεῶν τὸν βασιλέα τῶν ὀρνίθων ἐπέθηκε, τὸ λεγόμενον ἀέτωμα; δίδυμον δὲ φησιν, ὅτι διπλᾶ τὰ ἀετώματα, ὀπισθεν καὶ ἔμπροσθεν, διὰ τὸ ἐξ ἑκατέρων τῶν μερῶν κατασκευάζεσθαι αὐτά. BCDEQ

ἡ θεῶν ναοῖσιν οἰωνῶν βασιλέα δίδυμον (v. 21). “τὸν αἰετόν”, it is said so about the pediment on the temples of the gods. In fact, someone, they say, has set in the temples of the gods the king of the birds, the so-called ἀέτωμα; “twin”, it is said, because double are the pediments, at the back and at the front, since they are furnished on both sides.

*Schol. Pind. Ol.* 13.29b, ll. 1–6, 364 DRACHMANN I (= 174 BRASWELL): ἄλλως· οἰωνῶν βασιλέα: ὁ ἀετὸς οἰωνῶν βασιλεύς ἐστὶν ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν τιθέμενος. τινὲς δὲ τὸ ἀέτωμα λέγουσιν, EQ ὡς φησι Δίδυμος παρατιθέμενος Τίμαιον λέγοντα (*FGrHist* III.B, 566, frag. 145)· BEQ “καὶ τοῦτο ἐν ταῖς οἰκοδομαῖαις αὐτῶν εὕρημα”, ταύτην ἀποδοὺς τὴν ἐξήγησιν τῶν προκειμένων. BCEQ

<sup>118</sup> Phot. *Lex.* α 426, s.v. ἀετός (50 THEODORIDIS I); Eust., *Comm. Il.*, Ω, vv. 317–9 (ed. M. VAN DER VALK, *Eustathii arch. Thessalonicensis Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*, vol. 4. Leiden – New York – Copenhagen – Cologne 1987, 911): Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἀετοῦ τοῦ ζώου καὶ μέρος τι τῶν ναῶν οὐ μόνον ἀέτωμα ἐλέγετο ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰετοί, διὰ τὸ εὐοκέναι, φασί, πτέρυξιν ἀετοῦ.

<sup>119</sup> Exegetical activity on Pindar flourished from the Hellenistic age on and continued down to Imperial times. Codicological evidence permits identification of a core of definitely ancient material, which constitutes the basis of A. B. DRACHMANN’s critical edition of the *scholia vetera*: *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina*, vol. 1–3 (*Bibliotheca Teubneriana*). Leipzig 1903–1927.

Otherwise <said> “king of <the> birds of omen”: the eagle, king of the birds of omen, is the one put upon the temples. Some people affirm it is the pediment (gable), as Didymus says citing Timaeus who says: “and this [*i.e.* αἰετός], in the buildings, is an invention of theirs [*sc.* the Corinthians]”. This is the explanation he gives of what precedes.

Pindar’s ode is dedicated to the τρισολυμπιονίκας (“thrice victorious at Olympia”) Xenophon of Corinth (464 BC), who achieved the singular feat of winning both the Stadion and the Pentathlon in the same Olympiad. The poet elaborates the motif of this unprecedented victory by paralleling it with the inventiveness of Corinthian people, credited with the discovery of three things: dithyramb, the appliances for harnessing and driving horses, and temple pediments. The scholia correspond to vv. 21–22, [ἦ] θεῶν ναοῖσιν οἰωνῶν βασιλέα δίδυμον / ἐπέθηκ; (“who then added the twin king of birds to the temples of the gods?”), and the exegete characteristically points to αἰετόν, “eagle”, and explains how the Greeks identify the pediment with the animal. He surmises that the sobriquet is applied to the architectural structure because the eagle is the only one, among the birds of omen, placed “on/upon the temples”. Worthy of note is that this statement is traced back to the Alexandrian Didymus Chalcenterus (*fl.* 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC / early 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD), whose commentary, in the Antonine period, served as the basis for the compilation of the old scholia<sup>120</sup>. I will come back to this in due course.

Two possible readings of Pindar’s verses could be implied in the scholiast’s statement that the αἰετός is the only bird placed “upon/on the temples”: either the Corinthians were the inventors of the pediment itself—the αἰετός—on either side of the temple<sup>121</sup>, or else, they had inaugurated an iconographic solution, namely the eagle as a decorative motif for pediments<sup>122</sup>. The second interpretation, which some savants have endorsed, is more problematic, considering extant archaeological evidence of Archaic and Classical Greek pedimental decoration. Iconographic evidence that has never been called into question could play a role in strengthening this interpretation and thus support a different etiological explanation for the connection between the eagle and the pediment.

It is well known that, in Ancient Greek culture, raptor birds were associated with prominent Olympian deities: if the falcon and raven were the messengers of Apollo as a god of prophecy and the owl was the eponymous bird of Athena, the eagle had a distinctive relationship with Zeus. Eagles were the herald of the god’s will and his special envoys, and they also acted as his emissaries in establishing the supremacy of the oracle at Delphi<sup>123</sup>. The place of the eagle as an attribute of Zeus is well attested in literary texts and reflected in the figurative arts, from the waning of the Archaic period: for instance, in his first Pythian ode (c. 470 BC), Pindar describes an eagle perched on top of Zeus’ scepter<sup>124</sup>, while Pausanias refers to a statue of the god carved by the Aeginetan Aristonous for his sanctuary at Olympia, in which Zeus is seized in the very moment of hurling a bolt, while holding an eagle in his right hand (*Z. Keraunios*)<sup>125</sup>.

<sup>120</sup> On the Pindaric scholia, see J. IRIGOIN, *Histoire du texte de Pindare (Études et commentaires 13)*. Paris 1952, 67, 102–104. On Didymus and his exegetical work on Pindarus, see B. K. BRASWELL, *Didymos of Alexandria Commentary on Pindar (Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 41)*. Basel 2013, 113–121.

<sup>121</sup> See e.g. G. GRUBEN, *Il tempio*, in: *I Greci. Storia Cultura Arte Società*, vol. 2. *Una storia greca*. 1. *Formazione*, ed. S. Settis. Turin 1996, 1–47, at 24.

<sup>122</sup> See e.g. S. REINACH, *Aetos Prometheus. Revue archéologique* 4e sér. 10 (1907) 59–81, esp. 59–65 (with further ref. to other advocates of the theory); and, more recently, H. S. ROBINSON, *Excavations at Corinth: Temple Hill, 1968–1972. Hesperia* 45.3 (1976) 203–239, esp. 236 n. 103. The same is also implied by BRASWELL, *Didymos, Schol. Ol. 13.29a–b comm. ad loc.*, 175–176.

<sup>123</sup> For the foundation myth of the Delphic oracle see Pind., *frag.* 229 (*ap.* Strab., IX 3 [6]; ed. A. TURYN, *Pindari Carmina cum fragmentis*. Leipzig 1952, 369).

<sup>124</sup> *Pyth.* 1, vv. 9–11.

<sup>125</sup> Paus., *Descr.*, V 22 [5].



Among the written sources offering a glimpse into the iconography of Zeus, there is a passage in Aristophanes' *Birds*, in which he recalls an unusual representation of the god (vv. 514–515): ὁ δὲ δεινότατόν γ' ἐστὶν ἀπάντων, ὁ Ζεὺς γὰρ ὁ νῦν βασιλεύων / αἰετὸν ὄρνιν ἔστηκεν ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς βασιλεύς ὢν, “and what is the most dreadful thing of all, is that Zeus, who is king now, / is shown standing with an eagle on his head because he is king.”<sup>126</sup> Because of its apparent oddness, this representation did indeed elicit a reaction among the old scholiasts, who came to the conclusion that it must have been an Aristophanic *lapsus* (i.e. ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς *pro* ἐπὶ τοῦ σκήπτρου)<sup>127</sup>. Evidently, they were not able to associate it with any familiar images of the god. And yet, an aniconic type of Zeus known as *Kasios*, represented in the form of a baetylus<sup>128</sup>, may be paralleled with Aristophanes' description<sup>129</sup>. In particular, one of the iconographies related to this type, preserved on coins from the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, consists of a stone erected into a tetrastyle Corinthian temple, with an eagle as acroterion on top of the pediment's peak (fig. 5)<sup>130</sup>. The origin of his cult has been traced back to the archaic Syrian / Commagenian cult of the Hurrian god Ba'al-zaphon<sup>131</sup>. The diffusion of Zeus *Kasios*' worship across the Mediterranean is attested from the Archaic epoch<sup>132</sup>. Such diffusion might have been prompted by his function as a protective deity of seafarers, as witnessed by archaeological evidence related to him, particularly dedications on anchors, where the name of the god is engraved on the lead stock, often in conjunction with the name of another sea goddess, Aphrodite<sup>133</sup>. Corinth fits well into such a picture of maritime mobility and trade networks: even in the absence of any monumental remains that could confirm the reception of his cult in the area, one cannot exclude, *a priori*, that a basic knowledge of this manifestation of the god and of its morphological features could be possible, considering the city's ties with places where the worship of Zeus *Kasios* was specifically attested<sup>134</sup>. Such ties might have facilitated the migration and reception of motifs related to his iconography, such as the eagle on top of the pediment of a Corinthian temple, and prompted, if any, Pindar's comment—“who then added the twin king of birds to the temples of the gods?”.

Another way to look at the topic would be to study the criticism of Pindar's line as a cultural historical phenomenon, in other words as an erudite instance reflecting old or current iconographic or monumental practices familiar to the scholiast or to his reference context. As already noticed,

<sup>126</sup> Translation A. H. SOMMERSTEIN, *The Comedies of Aristophanes*, vol. 6: *Birds*. Warminster 1987, 75.

<sup>127</sup> *Schol. Ar. Av.* 515a 87 HOLWERDA.

<sup>128</sup> On the cult of sacred stones, supposedly meteors, dedicated to the gods or revered as their symbols see e.g. Plin., *N.H.* XVII 9; Phot., *Bibl.* 242; Eus., *Praep. Evang.* I 10.

<sup>129</sup> There is no apparent reason to exclude the possibility that Aristophanes is referring to an aniconic version of Zeus (the “head” could well be a metaphorical way to indicate the upper end of the stone). On the iconography of Zeus, see E. PARI-BENI, *s.v.* Zeus, in: *EAA* VII (1966) 1254. On Zeus *Kasios* see A. ADLER, *s.v.* *Kasios*, in: *RE* 10.2 (1919) 2265–2267; C. BONNET, Typhon et Baal Saphon, in: *Phoenicia and the East Mediterranean in the First Millennium B.C.* (Proceedings of the Conference held in Leuven, November 14–16, 1985), ed. E. Lipinski (*Studia Phoenicia* V; *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 22). Leuven 1987, 101–143, at 125–132; A. MASTROCINQUE, Zeus *Kretagenes* seleucidico. Da Seleucia a Praeneste (e in Giudea). *Klio* 84.2 (2002) 355–372, esp. 363–371.

<sup>130</sup> See e.g. W. WROTH, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Galatia, Cappadocia and Syria*. London 1889, pl. XXXIII, no. 4. For Roman examples, replicating the old iconographic scheme, see V. TITO, Zeus *Kasios*. Un culto montano a tutela della navigazione, in: *Tradizione, tecnologia e territorio*, vol. 1 (*Topografia Antica* 2). Acireale – Rome 2012, 81–105, at 90.

<sup>131</sup> BONNET, Typhon et Baal Saphon 125.

<sup>132</sup> The evidence and bibliographic references are conveniently pulled together in TITO, Zeus *Kasios* 83–85.

<sup>133</sup> P. CHUVIN – J. YOYOTTE, Documents relatifs au cult Pélusien de Zeus *Casios*. *Revue archéologique* 1 (1986) 41–63, at 59–61; M. ROMERO RECIO, Inscripción a Zeus *Casio* y Afrodita sobre ancla de plomo hallada en 1905. *Ostraka* 8.2 (1999) 541–549; TITO, Zeus *Kasios* 81–82.

<sup>134</sup> Among others, the island of Kerkyra. The veneration of Zeus *Kasios* is attested on numismatic evidence: a late striking (AD 48–138) from the island, bearing on the reverse the legend ZEYS [KASI]OS, was found in the southwest forum of the city of Corinth: see J. E. FISHER, *Coins: Corinth Excavations, 1976, Forum Southwest*. *Hesperia* 49.1 (1980) 1–29, at 5–6, 19 (note that the iconography is different from that under discussion; digital image at: <http://corinth.ascsa.net>, search: *Corinth Coin: 1976 71* (accessed 05.01.2021)).

the comment “the royal eagle is, among the birds of omen, the one put upon the temples” is attributed to the Alexandrian scholar and grammarian Didymus Chalcenterus, who flourished during the reign of Augustus as a teacher in his own native city, with ties to the Roman capital<sup>135</sup>.

A rapid survey of the occurrence of the eagle-on-the-pediment motif in the Roman imperial age yields interesting results. Most of the material comes from indirect iconographic documentation as extant monumental evidence is relatively scant. It appears that, among the multiple manifestations of the “Greek” Zeus, the one with epiclesis Kasios had relative success in that period. The Christian apologist Lactantius (*fl.* 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> c. AD) bears witness to the late endurance of the god’s cult as *Iuppiter Casius*<sup>136</sup>. Imperial bronze coinage confirms the persistence of his memory, if not devotion, across the Roman world up until at least the end of the Severan dynasty, in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD. Generally, the issues under discussion, with the legend ZEVS KACIOC, preserve the typical iconography of the conic stone erected in a temple/aedicula with an eagle on top of the pediment<sup>137</sup>. A series of silver *denarii* produced in Rome at a slightly earlier date, during the late Republic (mid-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC), which feature, on their reverse, a tetrastyle temple façade with apparently a bird acroterium on the pediment’s peak, might well document an early iconographic conflation and coalescence between the Greek archetype of Zeus Kasios and one of the hypostases of his Roman *alter ego* Jupiter in that context (fig. 6a). The moneyer of these *denarii* is P. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus, a descendant of Claudius Marcellus, the famed Roman military commander who defeated the Insubres at Clastidium (222 BC). On the obverse, these issues bear the scene of Marcellus’ dedication of the so-called *spolia opima*, the most glorious military trophy one could aspire to. This honor fell to a Roman commander who was able single-handedly to kill the enemy chief and the dedication ceremony consisted in bringing the armor of the conquered, attached to an oak trunk, into the temple of Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitol<sup>138</sup>. The dedication scene on this type of coin surely features the representation of this building, which is reminiscent, in the detail of its bird acroterium, of the temple iconographically associated with Zeus Kasios. Another image of the shrine of Jupiter Feretrius is perhaps to be found on a silver skyphos from the treasury of Boscoreale now at the Louvre, the so-called cup of Tiberius (end of 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC–first half of 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD) representing a sacrifice scene with people in armor, celebrated before a tetrastyle Corinthian-style temple elevated on a platform of masonry (fig. 6b)<sup>139</sup>. The likeness of the temple, with an eagle on a globe in the pediment’s field, most probably corresponds to novelties introduced by the Augustan restoration: the ruined temple of Jupiter Feretrius was indeed rebuilt by Octavian before the Battle of Actium, at the suggestion of P. Atticus<sup>140</sup>. The apparent iconographic contamination between the two hypostases of the god—Kasios/Casius and Feretrius—might have been prompted by the association of both with the military. Zeus Kasios was indeed known not only for his connection to maritime matters, as indicated above, but also as the protector of the imperial army: this aspect of his worship is at-

<sup>135</sup> Even if there are no extant sources that document a stay in Rome by Didymus, his fame reached the Roman capital and his pupils, who were active there, kept supporting him against his adversaries: see e.g. *Suid.*, η 463, s.v. Ἡρακλείδης (ed. A. ADLER, *Suidae Lexicon*, vol. 2 [*Lexicographi Graeci* 1.2]. Leipzig 1931, 582).

<sup>136</sup> Lact., *Div. Inst.* I 22: *sic constituta sunt templa Ioui Atabyrio, Ioui Labrandio. Atabyrius enim et Labrandius hospites eius, atque adiutores in bello fuerunt. Item Ioui Laprio, Ioui Molioni, Ioui Casio, et quae sunt in eumdem modum.*

<sup>137</sup> See TITO, Zeus Kasios, figs. 13–14, 90. But see also the Gadarene issues (2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD), with the iconic version of Zeus enthroned in the temple: Paris, BNF, 288 (RPC Online, no. 6659: <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/6659> [accessed 05.01.2021]); see N. RIEDL, Zeus on Decapolis city coins: merely a local issue? *ARAM* 23 (2011) 347–365, at 347–348 and 358, 363 fig. 1.

<sup>138</sup> On the *spolia opima* see e.g. H. I. FLOWER, The tradition of the spolia opima: M. Claudius Marcellus and Augustus. *Classical Antiquity* 19.1 (2000) 34–64. On Jupiter Feretrius see G. WISSOWA, s.v. Feretrius, in: *RE* 6.2 (1909) 2209–2210.

<sup>139</sup> A description and novel interpretation of the cup is found in F. DE CAPRARIIS, Druso, Giove Feretrio e le coppe “imperiali” di Boscoreale. *MEFRA* 114.2 (2002) 717–737 (with discussion of previous bibliography).

<sup>140</sup> DE CAPRARIIS, Druso, Giove Feretrio 724; P. ZANKER, The power of images in the age of Augustus (Jerome Lectures; 16<sup>th</sup> series). *Ann Arbor* 1988, 56.

tested in a series of epigraphic documents<sup>141</sup> and in an epigram of the *Palatine Anthology* referring to Trajan, who is said to have propitiated his imminent campaign against the Parthians (AD 115–117) with conspicuous offers to the god on his eponymous mountain<sup>142</sup>. An identical iconographic concretion occurs between the archetype of Zeus Kasios and another manifestation of his Roman counterpart, also of Commagenian origin, namely Jupiter Dolichenus (fig. 7). In a way similar to Zeus Kasios and Jupiter Feretrius, Jupiter Dolichenus is seen as a god of military character, worshipped above all by the Roman army<sup>143</sup>.

A further contamination of the cult of Zeus Kasios is attested in the scholiast's cultural milieu, Lower Egypt. This area counted, since the beginnings of the Ptolemaic epoch, two important cult sites of the god, identified by M. J. Clédât in the area north of the Isthmus of Suez<sup>144</sup>. Close to the one located at the ancient city of Pelusium, in the eastern extremes of the Nile Delta (c. 30 km southeast of the mod. Port Said), a Roman military camp was found. The written sources indicate that it was in the vicinity of this temple that Titus stationed his army before his attack on Jerusalem (AD 70), confirming that there was an elective affinity of this manifestation of the god with the martial sphere<sup>145</sup>. Following his migration and relocation in the “fluid” Egyptian religious landscape, Zeus Kasios reshaped his original form and adopted new iconographies borrowed from other local deities with whom he was conflated<sup>146</sup>. For example, the type associated with Pelusium was not the Greek archaic aniconic baetylus, but rather a “Harpocratic” version of him, beardless and young, holding a pomegranate in one hand<sup>147</sup>. In this specific context, literary and epigraphic sources, combined with iconography, hint at an overlap between the cults of Zeus Kasios and the Pelusian Horus-Harpocrates expressing the dynamic polytheism of Graeco-Roman Egypt<sup>148</sup>.

Late epigraphic finds confirm Zeus Kasios' coexistence with divinities from the Egyptian pantheon. A piece studied by P. Roussel in his work on the cult of Egyptian deities at Delos, dated between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, serves as evidence for the syncretic association, within the context

<sup>141</sup> See TITO, Zeus Kasios 95.

<sup>142</sup> *Anth. Pal.* VI 332 (ed. H. BECKBY, *Anthologia Graeca*, vol. 1, Buch I–VI. Munich 1957, 638–640).

<sup>143</sup> See e.g. a limestone relief from a sanctuary of Jupiter Dolichenus found in the former Roman province of Noricum (Lamprechtshofen, Austria), now at Klagenfurt, Landesmuseum für Kärnten (acc. no. 152), where Jupiter Dolichenus together with Juno, is represented in a Corinthian-style temple with an eagle with outspread wings in the pediment: *CCID* 347. On Jupiter Dolichenus and the Roman army see M. P. SPEIDEL, *The religion of Iuppiter Dolichenus in the Roman army (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain* 63). Leiden 1978, 38–45 and *passim*.

<sup>144</sup> The preliminary findings about the temple at Mahemdiah are summarized in a letter by Clédât to his master Ch. Clermont-Ganneau (Oct. 8, 1905), reproduced in R. CAGNAT, *Le Casios et le lac Sirbonis. Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 49.6 (1905) 602–611; see also M. J. CLEDAT, *Recherches et fouilles au Mont Casios et au lac Sirbonis. Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 53.10 (1909) 764–774; on the temple at Pelusium, see ID., *Le temple de Zeus Cassios à Péluse. Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 13 (1914) 79–85; A. SALAC, ΖΕΥΣ ΚΑΣΙΟΣ. *BCH* 46 (1922) 160–189, esp. 166–167; BONNET, *Typhon et Baal Saphon* 128.

<sup>145</sup> *Bell. Iud.* IV [661] (433 NIESE): *δυσὶ δ' ἡμέραις ἐνταῦθα τὴν στρατιὰν ἀναλαβὼν τῇ τρίτῃ διέξεισι τὰς ἐμβολὰς τοῦ Πηλουσίου, καὶ προελθὼν σταθμὸν ἓνα διὰ τῆς ἐρήμου πρὸς τῷ τοῦ Κασίου Διὸς ἱερῷ στρατοπεδεύεται (...)*. The temple is also mentioned by Strab., XVI 2 [33] (1060, l. 10 MEINEKE); Plin., *N.H.*, V [68]; Lucan., *Phars.* VIII, v. 808. See CLÉDAT, *Le temple de Zeus Cassios* 81.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. for similar cases of association of Greek deities with the Egyptian Isis, L. BRICAULT, *Isis Pelagia: Images, Names and Cults of a Goddess of the Seas* (2006), transl. from the French by G. H. Renberg (*Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* 190). Leiden – Boston 2020, 2 and *passim*.

<sup>147</sup> The appearance of the cult statue is described by Achilles Tatius towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD: *Leuc. Clit.*, III 6. The iconography is attested on coins of the area and gems: for ref. see CHUVIN – YOYOTTE, *Documents*, n. 11, 43; C. BONNER, *Harpocrates (Zeus Kasios) of Pelusium. Hesperia* 15.1 (1946) 51–59. This “Harpocratic” form undertaken by the Egyptian Zeus Kasios, follows a typical pattern among the gods of the region: in fact, “chaque dieu d'Égypte, aux époques récentes, était susceptible de revêtir au moins trois formes, celle d'un adulte plein, celle d'un beau jeune homme, celle d'un bambin. La période qui court de 1000 av. J.-C. à l'époque perse voit se constituer puis croître en importance, dans les systèmes théologiques locaux et les dévotions populaires, les figures de dieux-fils—‘les Horus’—et de dieux-bambins—‘les Harpocrates’” (CHUVIN – YOYOTTE, *Documents* 44).

<sup>148</sup> BONNET, *Typhon et Baal Saphon* 128.

of the Delian *Serapeum* A, between Zeus Kasios, Isis Ταχγήνις<sup>149</sup> and a Θεὸς Μέγας, namely Serapis<sup>150</sup>. The dedicator of the inscription, a devotee of the Pelusian Horus-Harpocrates, serving as ἐπιμελητής of the *Serapeum* under discussion, placed under the tutelary triad Serapis, Isis and Horus-Harpocrates, refers to Zeus Kasios as an equivalent of Horus-Harpocrates<sup>151</sup>. This epigraphic document bears witness to a conflation between Zeus Kasios and Harpocrates-Horus of the type occurring in the Pelusian milieu.

Whether or not associated with Horus-Harpocrates or with the same Serapis, whose image Greek and Latin sources portray as a chthonic Zeus (*Iuppiter Dis*)<sup>152</sup>, it is in the context of representations of the Isiac family or of Serapis alone in a temple setting that the motif of the eagle in the pediment reappears. Such is the case, for example, of a bronze plaque now at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, featuring Serapis, Isis and their son Harpocrates within a tetrastyle Corinthian temple with its pediment decorated by an eagle (fig. 8)<sup>153</sup>. This iconographic attribute, although commonly explained as a survival of an ancient Egyptian monumental practice<sup>154</sup>, is quite certainly to be viewed as a reflection of the association between Zeus Kasios and either a member or the whole of the Isiac family, probably deriving from any of their shared areas of competence, most notably the maritime and military spheres<sup>155</sup>. Taking into account our previous reconstruction concerning the iconographic concretion between the Greek and Roman martial manifestations of Zeus/Jupiter, it seems preferable to interpret in the same way the visual documents under consideration, and therefore envisage the migration of the eagle-in-the-pediment motif on account of a connection with the martial sphere, even without being able, for the time being, to determine the background of this migration further.

That the eagle in the pediment is a motif firmly attached to martial sphere is also confirmed by gravestones commemorating or dedicated by Roman soldiers (fig. 9)<sup>156</sup>. This iconographic pattern surely reflects the use of the raptor bird as the main emblem of the Roman legions<sup>157</sup>. It is, however,

<sup>149</sup> On this obscure epiclesis of Isis, associated with the goddess on Zeus Kasios' eponymous mountain, see BONNET, Typhon et Baal Saphon, n. 161, 129.

<sup>150</sup> The inscriptions come from the *Serapeum* A: I. Delos 2180 and 2181 (copy of the preceding; resp. Delos, Archaeological Museum A 3033; A 3029); P. ROUSSEL, Les cultes égyptiens à Délos du III<sup>e</sup> au I<sup>er</sup> siècle av. J.-C. (Annales de l'Est, 29<sup>ème</sup> et 30<sup>ème</sup> années), Paris – Nancy 1916, nos. 16–16bis, at 95–97. See also CHUVIN – YOYOTTE, Documents 52; BONNET, Typhon et Baal Saphon 129–130. A comparable blend is to be found in a Greek fragmentary inscription of the late Roman Imperial period (c. mid/end 3rd c. AD) found in Athens: SIRIS 30; SALAČ, ZEYΣ ΚΑΣΙΟΣ 184–187.

<sup>151</sup> BONNET, Typhon et Baal Saphon 130.

<sup>152</sup> On this, with reference to textual sources, see BORGEAUD – VOLOKHINE, La formation de la légende de Sarapis 39–41.

<sup>153</sup> Other examples include a now lost engraved carnelian, showing an enthroned Serapis into a Corinthian-style temple with an eagle in the pediment. The plaster cast of the gem was executed by Tommaso Cades (1772–1840), an engraver whom the German Archaeological Institute in Rome hired to carry out an encyclopedic record of ancient gems known to be in existence at the time (published in 75 volumes between 1831 and 1868): T. CADES, Collezione di impronte in stucco cavate dalle più celebri gemme incise conosciute che esistono nei principali musei e collezioni particolari di Europa, vol. 2. Rome 1832, no. I A 176 (image at: <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/C0ACFFDF-02AD-4816-B943-1CCAFEA4D782> [accessed 05.01.2021]). Along with it we have a Roman lamp fragment found during the excavations of the Athenian agora again showing an enthroned Serapis with a standing Isis into a temple with a now almost vanished eagle in the pediment (inv. no. L 4274; image at: <https://agora.ascsa.net>, search: Agora Object: L 4274 [accessed 05.01.2021]).

<sup>154</sup> A traditional way to justify the presence of the eagle in the pediment is to recall the ancient Egyptian custom of carving, on the roofs of the entrances to the temples, the wings of vultures, the symbol of Isis. Cf. Ael., *De nat. an.*, X [22] (ed. M. GARCÍA VALDÉS – L. A. LLERA FUEYO – L. RODRÍGUEZ-NORIEGA GUILLÉN, Claudius Aelianus *De natura animalium* [Bibliotheca Teubneriana]. Berlin 2009, 243, ll. 9–12): Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ (...) τοῖς τῶν προπυλαίων ὀρόφοις ὑπετόρευσαν γυπῶν πτέρυγας.

<sup>155</sup> BRICAULT, Isis Pelagia 232–276 and *passim*.

<sup>156</sup> See e.g. CIL<sup>3</sup> Suppl. 2, nos. 3979, 15205d; CIL<sup>3</sup>, fasc. 2, nos. 5329, 5332; other numerous examples (with images and bibl.) at <http://lupa.at>: nos. 1801, 1890, 1891, 1896 et *passim* (accessed 05.01.2021).

<sup>157</sup> At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, the Roman general Gaius Marius designated the eagle as the emblem of the Roman army: Plin., *N.H.* X [5].



difficult to define whether and to what extent there was a direct link with the iconographic motif belonging to Zeus Kasios/Jupiter Feretrius.

At the end of this rapid survey of the occurrence of the motif of the eagle-on/in-the-pediment, we shall now come back to where we started, namely the etiology of the connection between the pediment (ἄετωμα) and the eagle (ἄετός), and in particular, to the theory that Pindar's line, "who then added the twin king of birds to the temples of the gods?", and its relative scholia, might have been influenced by iconographic rather than mere lexicographic practices. In the light of the iconographic evidence discussed, it is difficult to conclude anything about the actual Corinthian origin of the motif. One can hardly distinguish certain tenuous links between the city and other maritime places where the worship of Zeus Kasios—more often than not tied to the iconography of the eagle on the pediment—was specifically attested. The same is also true if one prefers to consider as the origin of the theory in question the criticism attached to Pindar's line—"the royal eagle is, among the birds of omen, the one put upon the temples"—rather than the line itself. Our knowledge of the diffusion of the iconographic motif in Roman imperial times, in Alexandria and elsewhere, is unfortunately biased: the randomness of the indirect evidence at our disposal for analysis, although not negligible and somehow coherently pointing to a military background, constitutes an uneven corpus (coins, metalwork objects, reliefs) and the lack of surviving monumental evidence poses a methodological problem which is difficult to overcome. Should we therefore conclude that the etiology in question is to be discarded? Perhaps not. Even in such circumstances, it would seem possible to discern a more or less intended iconographic association of the eagle-in/on-the-pediment motif with a Corinthian-style temple, which would allow one to justify, at least on such grounds, the link established by the poem's verse and its criticism of the Corinthian people and the invention of the decorative motif. But, until the missing pieces of this mosaic are found, this will be among a few logical conjectures, besides the one on lexicographical grounds, to be allowed with regard to the association between the pediment (ἄετωμα) and the eagle (ἄετός) in the Greek-speaking world.

#### IV. SUMMARY

In this study I have attempted to understand better the meaning of a series of Greek terms and expressions pertaining to the realm of ornithology, metaphorically applied to architectural descriptions. For the Greeks all these words and expressions impinged on their cultural roots and on their empirical understanding of the world and of its phenomena. To successfully decode their complex and culture-specific meanings, the investigation has proceeded by analyzing a conspicuous documentation, of written and iconographic nature. The investigation has focused on each words' emergence in individual textual contexts, on the other hand, and on the other looked at their use across the whole textual dossier. Several points have emerged from the study of our corpus of sources throughout the geographical and chronological spans considered.

πτερόν, the "bird's feather" or "wing", has proven to be the most challenging to understand, due to its lack of a unitary culture-specific meaning within the Greek-speaking milieu. Strabo's use of the term in the guise of a simile to describe the wavy "enclosure wall" (τείχος) of the Egyptian temple looks like an authorial choice which reflects his idiosyncratic rhetorical technique and world of associations as well as the expectations of his audience, assuming that the bird simile is part of a shared language and set of ideas. Lycophron's exegetical tradition, closer in time to the Greek geographer, might be an instance of such sharing of language and a set of ideas. By contrast, Pliny the Elder's understanding of πτερόν in Egyptian-style complexes betrays a different pattern: well aware of the nature of his subject matter, the Roman polymath applies it to designate outbuildings of the sacred precinct of the complex he describes, using the word in a "technical" sense, devised by Greek speakers for the purpose at hand. Our reconstruction has then explained the origin of this meaning, how and why it was put there, thanks to an investigation of a related topographical

expression, *περὰ τοῦ Κανώβου* (“Wings of Canopus”). Through an analysis over time of the changing functions of this space belonging to the Canopic (or Alexandrian?) *Serapeum*, we have identified what the word *περόν* might possibly designate within Egyptian-style sacred compounds: from our reconstruction, it appears that we should look among the buildings known as *pastophoria*, mainly lodgings within the temple enclosure comprising the scribes’ living quarters, residences of other cult staff and often of occasional visitors, and, in the cult of Serapis, housing for long-term occupants known as *ἐγκάτοχοι* (*reclusi*), to find them. Specifically, it seems that *περόν*, and the related *περὰ τοῦ Κανώβου*, specifically refer to the scribal lodgings, a denomination reflecting the scribes’ sobriquet, *περοφόροι*, attached to them by the Greeks because of the feathers adorning their headdresses. Among the residents of the *περὰ τοῦ Κανώβου* the Greek sources indicate the astronomer Ptolemy: one may speculate why he would have had direct access to the scribal lodgings, and one of the reasons may be that he belonged, in some way or another, to the priestly hierarchy.

Another meaning of *περόν* and of its co-radical *πέρυξ* has been detected in the description of Classical-style temples: in this context, *περά* (or *πέρυγες*) refer to the temple’s roof, and more specifically they designate, according to a Byzantine source of the 12<sup>th</sup> c., temples’ roof trusses. Other ornithological cognates are consistently applied, at least in literate and erudite contexts, to the description of Classical temple architecture: the *περύγιον* or “shoulder blade” to the acroteria, the small apical figures put on top of the pediments; the *α(ι)ετός*, the “eagle”, to the pediment; the *αιετός αἶθων*, literally the “burning eagle” to the roof and the curved molding above the cornice of the temple, otherwise called cymatium. Similarly to the “Graeco-Egyptian” *περόν*, *α(ι)ετός* has deserved further investigation to understand how and why this designation came into use for the Classical temple pediment. Our starting point, a line in Pindar’s *Olympian* 13 and the related *scholīa vetera* have led us into an exploration of iconographic practices related to the eagle-in/on-the-pediment motif. This motif, the invention of which our poetic and erudite sources apparently trace back to the Corinthians, had originally been identified as a peculiar trait of Zeus Kasios, a Greek deity of Commagenian origin combining maritime and military functions. The military sphere of competence might have prompted the conflation with other deities in the Roman world (Jupiter Feretrius, Jupiter Dolichenus) and the association, in the Egyptian context, with the Isiac family, with the related migration of the iconographic attribute of the eagle in/on the pediment, a motif firmly attached to the martial sphere. In the end, even if a conclusive statement about an actual connection between the pediment (*ἄετωμα*) and the eagle (*ἄετός*) based on iconographic rather than lexicographic grounds cannot be formulated, the analysis of our conspicuous dossier of sources has shown how erudite interpretations of these words are able to create entirely new meaning systems within and across the high culture of literacy, all together establishing an enduring mode of discourse. By presenting the results of a cultural-historical approach to a set of case studies, this survey suggests lexical forms as an important research domain for the understanding of the intellectual, social and cultural life of societies<sup>158</sup>.

<sup>158</sup> I. BERLIN, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas*. London 1976, 51.

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Fig. 1: Temple of the goddess Hathor, east mudbrick enclosure wall, Dendera (Tentyris)

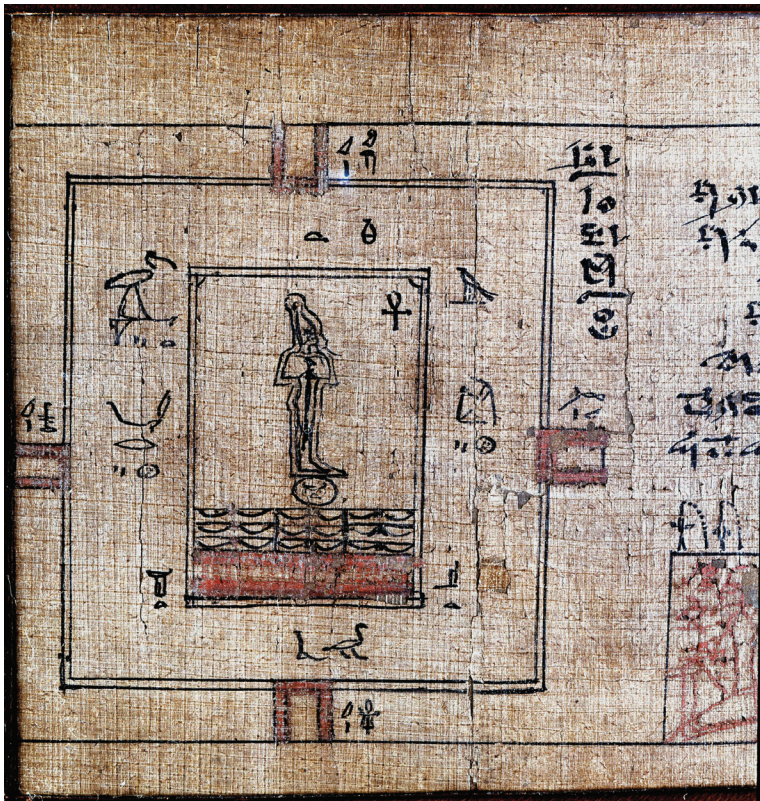


Fig. 2  
Papyrus Salt 825  
Hieratic text  
London, British Museum (reg. no. EA  
10051.5)  
House of Life (det.)



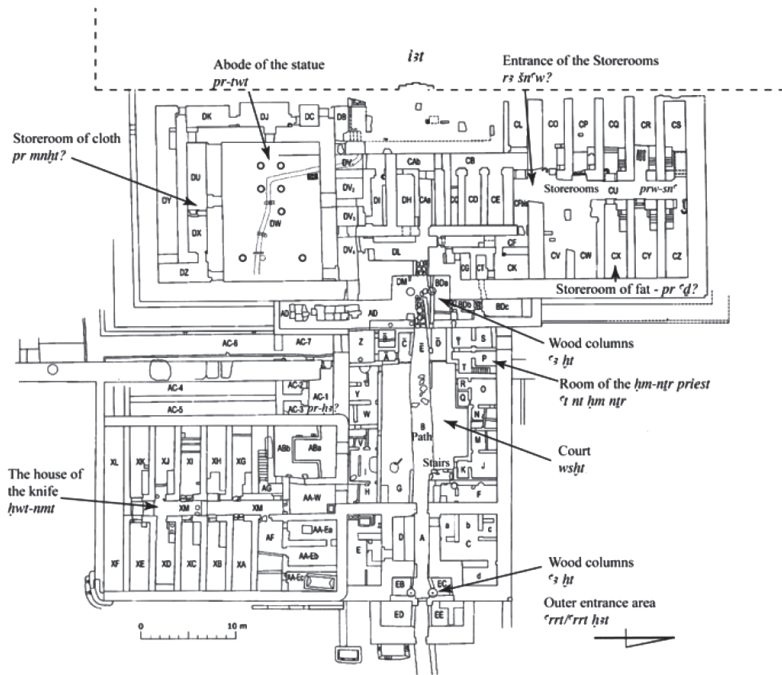


Fig. 3  
Plan of the Raneferef Pyramid temple. Detail: secondary “houses” occupying the court of the pyramid temple with labels of parts reconstructed thanks to textual information in the Raneferef Papyrus archive



Fig. 4  
Roman fresco depicting a sacred scribe (περοφορας). From Pompei, temple of Isis, northern portico Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale (reg. no. 8925)



Fig. 5  
Copper alloy coin of Trajan. Mint: Seleucia in Peirra. Reverse: sacred stone of Zeus Kasios within a tetrastyle shrine with pediment surmounted by an eagle London, British Museum (reg. no. 1844,0425.837)



Fig. 6a  
Silver denarius of P. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus. Mint: Rome. Reverse: M. Claudius Marcellus carrying the spolia opima into the temple of Jupiter Feretrius London, British Museum (reg. no. 1867,0101.1212)





Fig. 6b  
Silver skyphos, treasury of Boscoreale. Triumph of Tiberius and scene of preparation of a sacrifice  
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Fig. 7  
Limestone relief representing Jupiter Dolichenus and Juno Regina in a Corinthian-style temple with an eagle in the pediment  
Klagenfurt, Landesmuseum für Kärnten, Rudolfinum  
(reg. no. 152).





Fig 8  
Bronze plaque representing a Corinthian-type temple with  
an eagle with outspread wings in the pediment.  
Inside, from left to right, Isis, Serapis, and Harpokrates (?)  
standing on top of a base  
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art  
(reg. no. 04.2.522)



Fig. 9  
Gravestone of the magister legionis Victor  
Klosterneuburg, Stiftsmuseum, Lapidarium  
(LUPA no. 1890)