Ephesus and Artemis – Defining Local Identity

What makes a city unique? What gives it its “local” identity? How is an element chosen to represent a culture? Is it chosen to meet the expectations or demands of outsiders? Is it chosen as a rallying point for resistance? Or chosen as an assessment from inside based on the community in question’s pre-existing local values?

The monograph of Tim Whitmarsh is very helpful as a starting point to ask these questions about Ephesus. I hope to detail in this paper how Ephesus retained (more than developed) their sense of locality by means of the ancient and enduring cult of Artemis of Ephesus.

Whitmarsh’s thesis suggests a different path to local awareness:

“The idea of the local is, after all, obviously created by supralocal perspectives…a phase of rapid globalisation will also see an intensification of consciousness of localism; and perhaps also an increased awareness of, even questioning of, the power dynamics between the local and non-local.” (Whitmarsh 2)

Whitmarsh here indicates that a consciousness of “localism” is a result of “supralocal perspectives”. The distinction between “Us” and “Them” arises only when there is contact with “Them”.

Ephesus, however, had a local flair before the Roman or even the Persian conquests. I suppose that it is true, insofar as it goes, that a consciousness of localism is enhanced by contact with the other, but that it is a very rare culture that exists in absolute and prolonged isolation. This is definitely the case for Ephesus, where its location at a crossroads guaranteed contact with the outside from the moment it had occupants.

In the previous extract, Whitmarsh also suggested that a local consciousness would be enhanced by any phase of rapid globalization (such as the formation of an empire) He develops this idea to address the local in relation to Imperialism, the local being in solution, as it were, of the other:

“As is well known, Greeks in the imperial period expressed their Greekness primarily through ‘culture’…but so far from expressing an identity discrete from Roman power … this process of self-definition actually replicates imperialist ideology. It was the Romans who first decreed that Greeks should do culture and Romans power.” (Whitmarsh.9)

Here Whitmarsh goes a step further and suggests that “localness” is produced by conquest, at least in the case of Rome/Greece. There is, he seems to say, no original local expression, since all such expressions are reactionary. These expressions are even a sort of stage play put on by locals for the benefit of the spectating “outsiders” whose expectations and applause mold the performance itself (Whitmarsh 11). The seed of this idea is in the first quote when he speaks of a heightened awareness of power dynamics between the local and the outside.

Here I must disagree more than I allow, at least in the case of Ephesus. While it may always be true that to some extent localism is a product for consumers (much in the same way that Native American “dreamcatchers” hang from many a rearview mirror of non-natives here in the United States) the product is chosen from the “authentic” corpus of local traditions. It may be selected on the basis of its marketability, but it is still a selection from a real storehouse of uniquely local “items”. This, I hope to show, is the case for Ephesus.

It might be argued that even this original core is seen only in retrospect by post-conquest historians and modern interpretations of archeological finds, but this is little more than an application of the conundrum: “If a tree falls in the forest and there is nobody around does it make a sound?” This is an unnecessary leap into epistemology and metaphysics, and leads those who fall for it into a forest with no way out, and with less and less relation to the original object of discussion. Whitmarsh and colleagues do in fact make this assertion here, citing as an example the way Pausanias interprets and supplements local traditions as guardians of local history, while noting his reluctance to commit to their veracity: “On other occasions, however, local memory can suffer amnesia, and needs supplementing from other sources (Whitmarsh 15).”

The last sentence in in reference to Pausanias’ suggestion regarding the origin, which a local cannot recall, of a *xoanon* (carved wooden statue). I grant that cultures are not static, and the local can receive and appropriate input from the outside, which may in turn modify its expression. The degree to which this happens I theorize to depend on the strength and centrality of local culture’s defining characteristics. In the case of Ephesus, the image and worship of Artemis produced enough local gravity to prevent dissolution into an amorphous syncretism, holding the core of Ephesian identity close while still allowing for a measure of syncretistic accretions to develop in the periphery of the culture.

Here Cifford Ando in the same monograph edited by Whitmarsh cautions against seeing “local as response” as “local as resistance”

 “The danger of viewing ancient (or other) societies from an uninterrogated liberal conception of social power is perhaps posed most starkly by those who would frame as autonomous all supposedly non-instrumental cultural practices, including expressions of local or ethnic particularism, and read them as resistance (Ando 23).”

I take Ando’s caution against this impulse as a caution against its universal application. When he states the danger of framing “all” cultural practices as resistance, I would agree. Ephesus had few Che Guevaras, yet somehow managed to retain its local characteristics.

Ando makes it clear that there definitely were forces of change imposed by the Imperial “outsiders”:

“In considering the politics of the Hellenistic diaspora, we would do well to recall that the Greek cities etablished by Alexander and his successors – as well as many earlier colonies whom they merely aided – were not simply sites of Hellenic culture; they were also nodal points in a political economy that worked to sujugate non-Greek peoples.” (Ando 24).”

In view of this, the retention of local expression must entail a certain amount of “resistance”, force-against-force, but not necessarily a conscious warfare. A good example in the history of Ephesus of pressure from the non-local would be the Diadochi Lysimachus’ inundation of the old city with sewage to get the locals to move into the extension he had built further up the hill. “[ἐκάλεσε](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=e%29ka%2Flese&la=greek&can=e%29ka%2Flese0&prior=a)/smenoi) [δ᾽](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=d%27&la=greek&can=d%272&prior=e)ka/lese) [Ἀρσινόην](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=*%29arsino%2Fhn&la=greek&can=*%29arsino%2Fhn0&prior=d') [ἀπὸ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=a%29po%5C&la=greek&can=a%29po%5C1&prior=*)arsino/hn) [τῆς](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=th%3Ds&la=greek&can=th%3Ds2&prior=a)po%5C) [γυναικὸς](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=gunaiko%5Cs&la=greek&can=gunaiko%5Cs0&prior=th=s) [τὴν](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=th%5Cn&la=greek&can=th%5Cn4&prior=gunaiko%5Cs) [πόλιν](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=po%2Flin&la=greek&can=po%2Flin3&prior=th%5Cn), [ἐπεκράτησε](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=e%29pekra%2Fthse&la=greek&can=e%29pekra%2Fthse0&prior=po/lin) [μέντοι](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=me%2Fntoi&la=greek&can=me%2Fntoi0&prior=e)pekra/thse) [τὸ](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=to%5C&la=greek&can=to%5C2&prior=me/ntoi) [ἀρχαῖον](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=a%29rxai%3Don&la=greek&can=a%29rxai%3Don0&prior=to%5C) [ὄνομα](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=o%29%2Fnoma&la=greek&can=o%29%2Fnoma0&prior=a)rxai=on). (Geography 14.1.21)

He got a half success here, yet without active resistance the Ephesian locals managed to stop the renaming of the city through sheer force of tradition. The force of cultural gravity which I will attribute to the idea of Ephesian Artemis provides this “resistance” for Ephesus, without being consciously revolutionary.

By first illuminating the origins of Ephesus and Artemis, and then using the testimony of three witnesses in a chronological sequence bridging about 600 years of history, I aim in the following to explore the relationship of Artemis to Ephesus; and the effect this had on Ephesus’ continuity as a distinct community.

Any attempt to discover the exact origins of Artemis worship in Ephesus will get bogged down in uncertainty, but it becomes clear that as long as there was Ephesus, there was Artemis. No one knows when this worship started, probably in pre-Ionian Ephesus, if we can rightly call a pre-Ionian Ephesus by the same name. Pausanias states simply

“τὸ δὲ ἱερὸν τὸ ἐν Διδύμοις τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστιν ἀρχαιότερον ἢ κατὰ τὴν Ἰώνων ἐσοίκησιν, πολλῷ δὲ πρεσβύτερα ἔτι ἢ κατὰ Ἴωνας τὰ ἐς τὴν Ἄρτεμιν τὴν Ἐφεσίαν ἐστίν.”(Descriptions of Greece 7.2.6)

 A number of historians credit the City’s founding to the Amazons. Strabo mentions the Amazons as both founding and naming Ephesus. (Strabo Geography 11.5.3-4; cf. 12.3.21). The later historian Pliny also mentions the founding of Ephesus by Amazons (Natural History 5.31.115), While Pausanius claims that Amazons founded the sanctuary of Artemis (4.31.8/7.2.7) without going further to say they founded the city.

The first thing we learn is that the founding of Ephesus was so remote as to warrant a mythical account of its origin. According to Pliny, Statues of Amazons stood in the sanctuary of Artemis from the classical age to the Roman Period (Pliny NH 34.19.53), so this myth seems to have stretched back to an era long previous to the historians who record it. Second we learn that when Pausanias does not mention the Amazons founding the city proper, that the founding of the Artemision and the founding of Ephesus may be equivalent to one another, if not in history, at least in the mind of the historian.

Before Croesus’ time, Ephesus was located in an area called Tracheia, about a mile from the Artemision. (Murphy O’Connor 68). Strabo notes that in the 4th century the Ephesians had moved from there to surround the Artemision.

“ταύτης δέ φησι Φερεκύδης Μίλητον μὲν καὶ Μυοῦντα καὶ τὰ περὶ Μυκάλην καὶ Ἔφεσον Κᾶρας ἔχειν πρότερον...ἄρξαι δέ φησιν Ἄνδροκλον τῆς τῶν Ἰώνων ἀποικίας, ὕστερον τῆς Αἰολικῆς, υἱὸν γνήσιον Κόδρου τοῦ Ἀθηνῶν βασιλέως, γενέσθαι δὲ τοῦτον Ἐφέσου κτίστην.... (Geography 14.1.3)

 Strabo’s source is Pherecydes of Athens, who is dated in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. Codrus was king of Athens in the Eleventh century B.C.E. While an eleventh century date may be a little early, an early Ionian colonization is supported by archaeology. “In the agora at least, the earliest occupation began in the seventh century B.C. as Ionian geometric pottery from the base of deep surroundings has repeatedy indicated (Gates 319).”

Excavations at the Artemesium site have revealed a temple which preceded the temple of Croesus. It is a large structure with marble roof tiles, 100 Ionic feet in length. Archaeologists found a gold statuette of goddess, indicating that it was the sanctuary of female deity, not necessarily the familiar Ephesian Artemis, the report speculates possibly Cybele/Leto (Mitchell 16)

So it seems likely that Pausanias’ statement represents fact. When the Ionians arrived, there was already some sort of worship of a female deity, which if not Artemis, was a near equivalent. Though it may be impossible to be sure what the origins of Ephesus and Artemis were historically, a later inscription tells us what the Ephesians thoughts were on the subject. Artemis is there called “η αρχηγετις” (IvEph 27.20) – the founder of the city.

Xenophon of Athens is well-suited for our purposes to be the first “witness” of Ephesus. He is an international character – an Athenian who is ostracized by Athenians, who lives in Sparta, who fights for a Persian would-be king. He is able to write favorably about Cyrus, and critically of his own land. Such a man should be able to give us some clear indications of what is distinctly Ephesian, as he has no nationalistic axes to grind. That Xenophon’s direct references to Ephesus are rare may be rather helpful, as we can assume that those mentions would be significant.

In his “Anabasis”, Xenophon measures the distance he travelled as part of Cyrus’ army from the city of Ephesus:

“ἀριθμὸς τῆς ὁδοῦ ἣν ἦλθον ἐξ Ἐφέσου τῆς Ἰωνίας μέχρι τῆς μάχης σταθμοὶ τρεῖς καὶ ἐνενήκοντα, παρασάγγαι πέντε καὶ τριάκοντα καὶ πεντακόσιοι, στάδιοι πεντήκοντα καὶ ἑξακισχίλιοι καὶ μύριοι: ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς μάχης ἐλέγοντο εἶναι εἰς Βαβυλῶνα στάδιοι ἑξήκοντα καὶ τριακόσιοι (Anabasis 2.2.6).”

This passage is regarded by editors generally as an interpolation, and the narration starts from Sardis However the Persian royal road extended from Sardis to Ephesus to access the Mediterranean, as Paul Treblico notes: ”…from Ephesus one could travel to Sardis and then on the ancient Persian Royal Road which went to Susa… (Treblico18)

Xenophon at least tells us that he came by ship to join the battle. As Ephesus was the port city of choice, it would have been natural for him to come by that route. Also Tamos the Egyptian is later said to be sailing Cyrus’ ships from Ephesus (1.4.2), a possible indication that this was the initial staging point of the expedition. It is difficult to say why this small aside is considered an interpolation, except that it seems to interrupt the narrative. Yet Xenophon is writing the Anabasis after the fact, and seems to interject explanatory material of his own throughout the narrative as he sees fit.

Later artefacts reveal that in Roman times Ephesus was the starting point for measurement. R.E. Oster mentions milestones in his entry concerning Ephesus in the Anchor Bible Dictionary:

 “The fact that the Republican period milestones from Asia used Ephesus as the pint of origin for measuring distances portrays the continuing significance of this site as a travel hub at the period contemporary with nascent Christianity (543)

Considering that Roman infrastructure whenever possible made use of pre-existing roads, it seems likely that Rome only standardized an earlier practice to which Xenophon was witness.

If this section is, as I believe, native to the text, than it is witness to the importance of Ephesus as a center of trade and travel between the nations along the coast of the Mediterranean and the Persian Empire with all its eastern connections. Ephesus was a city born in a position of constant contact with the outside world, a prime candidate for formation of a “local consciousness”. At the busy juncture of two worlds, the Persian and the Greek, what would define Ephesus as a distinct locale? If it was to be a local flair concocted for the purpose of resistance, one might expect a strong identification with its Ionian heritage to be its defining reaction. But I believe that the die of Ephesus had already been cast, and these conflicts would serve to reveal, more than create, the local identity of the Ephesians – the ancient service of Artemis of the Ephesians.

Xenophon later mentions also that he banks at Artemision upon passing through the city: “τὸ δὲ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τῆς Ἐφεσίας...καταλείπει παρὰ Μεγαβύζῳ τῷ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος νεωκόρῳ (Anabasis 5.3.6).” *Megabyzoi* were the temple priests of Artemis. The term is not a name (as most English translations render it), but rather a title dating back to the time of Croesus. It is somewhat odd that Xenophon leaves out the definite article, perhaps his usage it would be better rendered “a Megabyzus” in English.

The banking function of the temple of Artemis of Ephesus is not wholly unique, as noted by Peter Temin:

“Banks were in operation in Greece before the Roman conquest and continued  after the Romans came. The most famous banks were on Delos, where there were both temple and private banks. Apollo made loans with houses as security (what we now would regard as mortgages) through his temple, a free-standing religious institution. (144).”

There does seem to be a disctinction between the banking at Delos which was general and not restricted to the temple but run by professional bankers. Ephesian banking was as ancient, but was focused at the temple & insured by the goddess.

The financial function of the temple shows both the trust placed in the goddess’ to protect vulnerable and valuable goods, her importance to the locals, and in the case of Xenophon the confidence it inspired in “outsiders” to the point they would feel comfortable leaving valuables there. Also, as Christ pointed out, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”(Matt 6:21). Money being so early associated with the worship of Artemis assured that financial concerns imposed from outside would not relocate the defining local characteristic of Ephesus.

Thanks to Croesus the Lydian king who previously ruled the area including Ephesus, coinage was associated from the earliest times with the Artemision. Croesus has been credited by ancient and modern historians as the virtual inventor of coins, and the earliest examples of the electrum “Croesids” which bear his name have been found in abundance in the strata below the foundation of the Croesus’ Artemision of the 5th century.

The age of these coins was recently confirmed by Nicholas Cahill (excavator) and John.Kroll. Since the 1980’s a growing number of historians doubted that Croesus’ Lydia was the originator of the first coins, and suggested later dates during the Persian Empire for such coinage. The excavation in 2002 resulted in the discovery of Croesids under the pavement just inside the wrecked wall of Croesus’ Sardis. This wall was destroyed as the Persians took the city, so what is beneath the wreckage is undeniably from the pre-Persian Sardis, showing that the coins were in sufficient circulation before the war to be lost along the pavement of the city. Thus, the coins beneath the Artemision foundation make it clear that it was built before the Persian conquest of the area.

This was the temple visited by Xenophon, where he deposited the money from sale of spoils of war that were dedicated to the goddess. That the money was set aside for Artemis was significant, as the majority of the expedition were not Ionian. It is plain that the money was not dedicated to Artemis in general, but Artemis of Ephesus in particular, since Xenophon deposited it in her temple, and even more obviously when we consider what he eventually did with the money, which I now turn to.

The Megabyzus of Artemis whom Xenophon left the money with happened to travel through the Greek mainland on his way to the Olympic games. He stopped by Xenophon’s property and returned Xenophon’s deposit, hurrying on to the games. This in itself is an indication that those who were closest to the heart of Ephesus did not feel threatened by the increasingly global Mediterranean of which they were a part.

In an interestng case of transplantation of the local, Xenophon uses the money to build a replica of temple at his estate in the Greek mainland.

“ἐποίησε δὲ καὶ βωμὸν καὶ ναὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀργυρίου...ὁ δὲ ναὸς ὡς μικρὸς μεγάλῳ τῷ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ εἴκασται, καὶ τὸ ξόανον ἔοικεν ὡς κυπαρίττινον χρυσῷ ὄντι τῷ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ. (Anabasis 5.3.9-12).”

Here Xenophon describes the temple he erects with the money previously deposited at the Artemision. He mentions in passing that the image of Artemis was of gold at the time that he arrived, while the image of the same temple is described by Herodotus earlier as being of wood. Perhaps the growing wealth of the city allowed for the replacement or gilding of the earlier image. However the most interesting feature of this part of the narrative is that Artemis “of Ephesus” could retain her local characteristics – that the local could be, as it were, transplanted. Interestingly Xenophon would not have been the first to transplant Ephesian Artemis on foreign soil. Strabo recounts the story of the Phocaean colonization of Iberia, an unnamed oracle told them to take a guide from Ephesian Artemis. When they stopped off in Ephesus, a highly honored woman named Aristarcha received a vision from Artemis to go with them. She brought with her a reproduction of Ephesian Artemis from the temple, and upon safe arrival at their destination, she was appointed priestess. The rites and appearance of the xoanon were kept the same in all the resulting colonies (Geography 4.1.4-5).

This shows that Ephesian Artemis had a history of both being distinctly Ephesian, (As opposed even to Delphian Apollo) and also capable of transplant while still retaining this distinction – both of which are demonstrated in further detail by Xenophon.

Xenophon builds the temple on a Selinus river near his estate, and hold yearly services there. Clearly the impression he received from his time in Ephesus must have been significant for him to so mold his private estate around the service of a “local” deity.

Our next “witness” is Paul of Tarsus. Like Xenophon of Athens, Paul is an international character, no stranger to the broader world of the Mediterranean, indeed the “of Tarsus” often appended to his name is proof that he had connections in Asia Minor, though his education was at Jerusalem. That Ephesus was no stranger to Jews at least from the times of the Diadochoi is supported by Paul Treblico while treating the text of Josephus:

In a letter to Zeuxis, the governor of Lydia, Antiochus III gave instructions for the relocation of 2,000 Jewish families from Babylonia to Lydia and Phrygia (Ant 12:148-53). The letter is probably authentic, and is to be dated sometime between 212 and 205/4 BCE (38).

(How Ephesus received these additions will be clear below when the riot against Paul breaks out.)

Unlike Xenophon, Paul has very strong loyalties to forces external to Ephesus. He is a Jew, loyal to the one Creator God, who accepts no rivals. Considering how large Artemis loomed in the mind of a visitor like Xenophon, whose response was adoption, it seems as if conflict was a foregone conclusion for a visitor like Paul, whose general response to idolatry was iconoclastic. Paul had already been in Corinth and Athens, calling their residents away from the worship of their deities. What Paul may have experienced upon first sight of the Artemision is described by Jerome Murphy O’Connor:

“For Paul it would undoubtedly have symbolized the forces he must overcome if Ephesus was to become a Christian city. While some might have been overawed, it is extremely unlikely that this made Paul down hearted. He had known the Temple of YHWH in Jerusalem, whose glory surpassed that of the Artemesion. (82).”

This religious similarity between Jerusalem and Ephesus is another thing that makes Paul a unique witness. The relatively rare word for priests or temple keepers, “νεωκόρος” is common to both cities.

 “The city of Ephesus used the term νεωκόρος to describe her bond with Artemis. The word is found on a coin minted during Nero’s reign, almost certainly with reference to Artemis, in Acts 19:35, and on two coins of the Domitianic period the Ephesians called themselves “twice νεωκόρος” that is, of Artemis and of the Sebastoi.. (Treblico, 29)”

Paul came from a city where the neokoroi were the keepers of the temple in Jerusalem (Josephus, Jewish Wars 7.1.153), a temple even grander than the Artemision.

The city’s loyalty to their central image had not changed since Xenophon’s visit over 400 years earlier. When Tiberius became emperor, the Senate opened court to standardize the rights of worship through their territories. Tacitus tells us: in his *Annales:* “Primi omnium Ephesii adiere, memorantes non, ut vulgus crederet, Dianam atque Apollinem Delo genitos (3.61).” As there were many sites with duplicate names, there were many competing sites for any given mythology. However the Ephesians, Strabo tells us, were the first to appeal, to the empire to recognize their right to what they thought most important – their goddess.

These same factors which had allowed Ephesus’ defining local icon to loom large were what made it such an attractive city for Paul’s purposes. Upon his arrival, he establishes base for evangelization of Asia. Once he parts ways with the local synagogue, he rented out a space in the “meeting hall of Tyrannus” and from there preached the gospel to the ebb and flow of Asia which passed through Ephesus. -This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.-(Acts 19:10)

Over the course of these two years, he seems to have met with substantial success, to the point that the resultant conversions caused a scare among some of those intimately involved with the worship of Artemis. A silversmith named Demetrius calls a meeting of the other members of his guild- And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. (Acts 19:26)

It seems that Paul did little to explicitly call in to question the legitimacy of Artemis of Ephesus by name. His tact in Athens and elsewhere suggest that he purposefully avoided direct conflict along this line, although considering the totality and universality of the monotheism he preached, no other conclusion would present itself to his hearers. Here the perceived threat is voiced by Demetrius:

And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”(Acts 19:27)

Note that though an economic concern is the first mentioned, it is mentioned in contrast to a more dramatic concern: the deposing of the goddess worshipped by Demetrius and his fellow artisans. If he were speaking to move a less financially involved populace into action, we might suspect that this reasoning was a device; however, considering that this was a meeting between the members of a specific trade, and the financial issue is one that draws them together initially, it seems unlikely that Demetrius would use inflammatory rhetoric like this insincerely. He seems to feel a genuine loyalty to the goddess which he assumes his fellow tradesmen share.

Demetrius’ designation of the goddess as “she whom all Asia and the world worship” while dramatic, was not necessarily an exaggeration at this point. One of the contributors to Whitmarsh’s “Local Knowledge” Simon Goldhill, writing about Pausanias’ treatment of the local, devotes a page to Diana of the Aventine in Rome, noting that she was derived from Ephesian Artemis, says the following about Ephesus’ goddess:

“Not for nothing, it seems, was an inscription put up in Ephesus by the Proconsul L Popillius Carus Pedo – in Greek – in 163 B.C.E. which talks of Artemis’ clear epiphanies in cult all over the Greek and barbarian world: she is indeed ἐπιφανεστάτῃ (65).”

Goldhill concludes from this that in the case of Ephesian Artemis “what was local had become something else” (65) What this something else is, he does not say. Considering that even abroad Artemis tended to keep her city’s name and association, I venture to call that “something” *transplantation* of the local. Stephen Mitchell (in his contribution to Whitmarsh’s volume) uses the term “transplantation” more generally in reference to the myth of Tantalos feasting with the gods, which he notes was brought by the Greeks to Paphlagonia and there spliced with the the pre-existing tradition of mountaintop shrines. (102-3). Unlike the cases of transplantation involving Ephesian Artemis, the myth of Tantalos was adopted by the Paphlagonians as exclusively their own, and its Greek origin was no longer recognized. It is transplantation, but not of anything that retained its original “local” character. In that respect, Artemis of Ephesus appears to be unique.

The trade of Demetrius’ guild suggests that this transplantation of the local which took place in Iberia and which Xenophon enacted in the Greek mainland had reached a new level. That small statues of Ephesian Artemis were in circulation is clear from a recent archeological find in Athens. The artifact was a “statue of Ephesian Artemis in white marble, h. 9cm. (Evely 5)”

Even a skeptical reading of the record should allow that this element of the narrative had a basis in fact. A fabrication of such a guild by the author of Acts would be a risky act, since its existence could easily be verified or falsified by his early readers. Yet the local here has not come into being in contrast to the global, but rather as a shared commodity to which they have a primary right.

The reaction of Demetrius’ fellow craftsmen (“When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"-Acts 19:28) and the echoing cry of the crowd which Demetrius and his friends form among the residents of Ephesus shows a sincerity which seems at odds with a local identity “put on” for an outside audience. Once the mob had reached the theatre, some Jewish element of the city, apparently fearing this aggression to be directed towards them, sent a representative named Alexander out to calm the crowd. The reaction was not what they had hoped:

But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"-Acts 19:34

Apparently the Ephesian populace already had some measure of aggression towards this monotheistic element in their city, who did not respect their goddess. The resulting cry makes it clear that it is not just Artemis, or polytheistic forms of worship in general they are defending, but specifically Artemis of the Ephesians.

When the town Clerk emerges, his recorded response is informative, as it displays a strong confidence in the lasting esteem of Artemis.

“And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash (Acts 19:35-36).”

He notes that there is no one who doesn’t know that Ephesus is Artemis’ “temple keeper” “νεωκόρος”, and there is a singular reference (not mentioned in any earlier documents) to an associated stone fallen from heaven. He points out that as these things are so universally recognized, there is little danger of Paul’s activity posing a serious threat to Ephesian goddess, and Ephesian local identity.

Yet the severity of this disturbance prompts Paul to move elsewhere & leave Asia in the hands of other workers. – “After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia (Acts 20:1).”

Paul’s successful work in the city for a period of two years would not be so quickly abandoned, unless he perceived that his own presence would hinder, rather than further, the work of the gospel. It is telling that the hostility directed at him was not a result of persecution from his fellow Jews passionate for the law, but rather from zealots of another kind, Ephesian locals jealous for the honor of their goddess. That he perceived the issue to be one not easily worked-over can be surmised from his hesitancy to return to Ephesus later on. The author of Acts records that he stopped in Miletus rather than Ephesus, and feels compelled to offer an explanation: “For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16).”

While it may be true that part of Paul’s reasoning was to avoid long stays at the houses of friends in Ephesus, his solution involved calling a meeting of Ephesian elders to him at the Milesian port, a day’s journey, where he spoke to them at length. It seems that expediency cannot have been his only concern, unless he means he did not want to be further detained in Ephesus by less friendly elements.

Murphy-O’Connor’s discussion of Paul’s interaction with Artemis worship, in contradistinction to the idolatry he worked against elsewhere, reads like a summary of my main points:

“Unlike these others, her religion had not been imported by any foreigner, whether Greek, Roman, or Egyptian. Her indigenous origins went back to the dawn of the world. She was local. She had been born there before the Greeks arrived, and her prestige was intertwined with the development of the city throughout all its history. If she was worshipped as far west as the limit of the known world, it was because Ephesians had brought her there (200).”

Xenophon of Ephesus, our third “witness” to the distinctly Ephesian, differs from our previous two in that he was (as his name makes obvious) Ephesian. Perhaps the best testimony to what is important to a locale is a local, so it seems fitting to complete this survey with this later Xenophon. He was a novelist of the second century, whose only extant work is a romance titled appropriately for our purposes *The Ephesian Story*.

Interestingly, even Xenophon of Ephesus (like Xenophon of Athens or Paul of Tarsus) may not have had permanent residence in the city whose name he bears. That he felt the need to append his home-city’s name to his own would be odd if he lived in that city when he wrote his novel. That his protagonists spend a very significant amount of narrative time in Egypt, particularly Alexandria, paired with an intimate knowledge of that area (“the author's knowledge of the delta region is quite accurate.” Nimis 46) suggests that he lived in Alexandria. If this is the case, it proves that not only can Artemis be Ephesian outside of Ephesus, so can her citizens. That Xenophon’s appellative was not an accident of his birth but rather an expression of his Ephesian solidarity should be fairly obvious by the importance of that city in his narrative.

His literary heroes, Habrocomes and Anthia, begin their adventures with Artemis festival, “There was a *local* [ἐπιχώριος] festival of Artemis going on.” (1.2.2, emphasis mine).

This festival is identified by Irene Ringwood Arnold as the *Artemisia*. These festivals were “not only held in all parts of the Greek world, but were observed with special magnificence by the Ephesians.”(18). Though these dramas involving a procession of the image of Artemis through the city brought spectators from the surrounding world, they were important to Ephesian life and identity. The future generations of Ephesus owed their existence to betrothals made there (Ephesian Story 1.2.3) – these were not merely shows put on for tourists.

There is an undeniable degree of syncretism in the narrative, as Anthia is dressed more like Greek Artemis than Ephesian when she is mistaken for one of the goddesses’ ἐπιφανής while seen in costume in the temple (1.2.6-7). Also, during the misadventure which brings her to Egypt, Anthia appeals to the Egyptian goddess Isis and is rescued from a series of men who wish to rob her of her virtue. When rejoined in Rhodes with Habrocomes, both of them speak to Isis in that goddess’ temple, referring to her in terms which (if Artemis’ worshippers were monotheists) would be shocking:

 “The two got up and went to Isis’ temple. They said “Greatest goddess [ὦ μεγίστη θεά], we are grateful to you for saving us. Through you, goddess most honored of all by us, we’ve been reunited” (5.13.4)

This can be partially explained by the fact that at this period, Isis was increasingly associated and confuted with Artemis of Ephesus. To call Isis “greatest goddess” may have been to say the same of Artemis by association. Reginald E. Witt covers this subject thoroughly, and says regarding the timeline for the association “There can be no doubt that well before the beginning of the Christian era the assimilation between Isis and Artemis had been achieved.” (145)

At the conclusion of the story, the reunited Heroes arrive back home, were it is instructive to note they waste no time in acknowledging Artemis of Ephesus in her own right, not by proxy of Isis

“…when they disembarked, without further ado they immediately went to the temple of Artemis and offered many prayers…most notably they dedicated to the goddess the written account [γραφῇ] of all they had experienced and done”  (5.15.1-2)

That Xenophon begins and ends his story with Ephesians at Artemis of Ephesus’ temple is telling to what an “Ephesian Story” means, but most interestingly perhaps is his mention that the most notable of the offerings presented to that goddess was the story itself. Perhaps Xenophon is not so subtly dedicating his novel vicariously to his city’s goddess, as it is that very story which his characters offer up. If so, it seems that even an Ephesian in a foreign land thinks primarily of Artemis when he is compelled to write of his “local” home.

This completes the survey of our three witnesses. In Xenophon the importance of Ephesian Artemis’ temple to the city’s economic life was clearly seen, as well as the importance of the city in the Classical era. The reaction to the threat of opposing religions and the genuine and enduring loyalty of Ephesus’ citizents to their goddess is seen in Paul, and the continued centrality and indelibility of Artemis to Ephesian local identity is made plain in Xenophon of Ephesus. It is plain that this pairing, the city of Ephesus with its goddess Artemis, is neither a creation of its conquerors or a rebellion against them. Rather, Artemis formed a core for Ephesian identity from the earliest times, and the longevity of the relationship bears witness to it being something that -while doubtless clarified by supralocal encounters- was an assessment from *inside* of the only element of Ephesian identity which could really define them locally, because it always had.

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