



Prowess and Protection: A Cultic Analysis of the “Winged Victory of Samothrace” in Ancient Greece

Citation

Pruski, Sarah. 2019. Prowess and Protection: A Cultic Analysis of the “Winged Victory of Samothrace” in Ancient Greece. Master's thesis, Harvard Extension School.

Link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:42004197>

Terms of use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material (LAA), as set forth at

<https://harvardwiki.atlassian.net/wiki/external/NGY5NDE4ZjgzNTc5NDQzMGIzZWZhMGFIOWI2M2EwYTg>

Accessibility

<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/digital-accessibility-policy>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#)

Prowess and Protection:

A Cultic Analysis of the “Winged Victory of Samothrace” in Ancient Greece

Sarah Pruski

A Thesis in the Field of Anthropology & Archaeology
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

May 2019

Abstract

The ancient Greek mystery cult and its sanctuary complex dedicated to the *Theoi Megaloi* or “Great Gods” on the remote Aegean island of Samothrace functioned as the original setting for one of the most dramatic, recognizable, and studied masterpieces of Hellenistic sculpture: the second-century B.C.E. “Winged Victory of Samothrace.” However, the monument’s modern iconic grandeur often overshadows a more complete account of the historical, religious, and geophysical contexts for her design and installation than has usually been rendered, all of which would enhance more nuanced possible interpretations of her role within the Samothracian sanctuary than are known. What were the original intentions of the monument’s dedicant and sculptor? What was an initiate’s experience of the monument following its installation within the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace and how, therefore, could it have been interpreted *in situ*? This work argues that the dedicant and sculptor of the monument intended to portray the goddess Nikē in several ways that would be recognized by Hellenistic-era initiates and would be deeply meaningful to them: first, that Nikē was representative of decisive naval prowess and triumph congruent with her historical iconography and the nature of ancient victory monuments; second, that Nikē’s portrayal as the completion of her stone ship’s vertical axis and topographical positioning at Samothrace may indicate her sculptor’s intent to mirror and complete the vertical axis of the larger “ship”: the island itself, thus invoking for the initiate the notion that Samothrace was a kind of ship; and finally, that Nikē’s iconographic portrayal as an indicator of assured naval victory could be

interpreted by initiates as a literal triumph over the risk of drowning, simply by virtue of prevailing in battle at sea.

Frontispiece



Dedication

For Kelly, the greatest joy and surprise of my life

Acknowledgments

I am eternally grateful to the incomparable Professors Kimberley Christine Patton and David Gordon Mitten, whose passion for teaching and curiosity sets a new standard for all educators, or any endeavor in which one human being seeks to support the positive growth and development of another. My journey with the “Winged Victory of Samothrace” began as a simple midterm paper in their Spring 2015, co-taught graduate seminar in classical archaeology, and naturally, could only conclude as a thesis under their auspices. Thank you for not just fanning the flames of my Victory obsession, but for enthusiastically putting on your waders to navigate me through the hell and the high water.

I would like to thank with my sincerest gratitude, the sideline cheerleading and extensive material support of Charles O. Griffin and Eleanor Mitten, as well as the motley crew of ancient Greek groupies assembled by Professors Patton and Mitten since their first graduate seminar in 2014. Your warmth, comradery, and unparalleled smorgasbords over the years will forever be my favorite part of Harvard.

I would also like to thank the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, and Treasury for regularly and somewhat enthusiastically rejecting my applications for federal employment, forcing me to retreat into the magical world of anthropology and archaeology, during which time the hypothesis presented herein was conceived.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge with the very highest-of-fives, the unwavering support and lovingly feigned interest in this endeavor of my wife, Kelly J.

Ford, and immediate family—Mary and David Pruski, as well as Gabrielle and John Mamon; my chosen families—the Solid Altos, the GrubStreet writing community, the Bystran-Sasiadek tribe; and the ridiculously talented and warm staff of Puritan & Co. and BISq. It took nothing less than a village to make it through this alive, and I’ve done so only with your humor, reassurance, and well-priced saturated fats.

Table of Contents

Frontispiece.....	v
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgments.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xi
Prologue.....	1
Introduction.....	3
Chapter I. The Mysteries of Initiation in Ancient Greece	18
The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace	23
Intensification of Principle: Samothrace as Ship	39
Chapter II. Victory Personified.....	44
Classical Nikē (500-400 B.C.E.).....	46
“Nikē of Paionios”	46
“Nikē of Sphakteria”	49
Lysander’s <i>Akroteria</i>	50
Hellenistic Nikē (323-146 B.C.E.).....	51
Demetrius Poliorketes Celebratory Coinage.....	51
Naval Monuments in Sanctuaries	52
“Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon”	54
Chapter III. The “Winged Victory of Samothrace”	59
A Bird of a Different Feather.....	64

Environmental Setting	80
Chapter IV. The Initiate Experience	87
Conclusion	107
Bibliography	114
Works Cited	114
Works Consulted.....	121

List of Figures

Figure 1. Physical map of ancient Greece and the island of Samothrace	4
Figure 2. The “Winged Victory of Samothrace”	6
Figure 3. The “Pithekoussai Shipwreck krater”	24
Figure 4. Samothracian coins.....	32
Figure 5. Samothracian iron rings.....	38
Figure 6. Porphyry rock outcroppings at Samothrace	40
Figure 7. Schematic diagrams of the reconstructed Néorion.....	41
Figure 8. Preserved marble supports of the Néorion’s votive ship <i>in situ</i>	42
Figure 9. The “Nikē of Paionios”	47
Figure 10. Schematic diagrams of the reconstructed “Nikē of Paionios”.....	48
Figure 11. Silver tetradrachm of Demetrius Poliorketes	52
Figure 12. Naval monument <i>in situ</i> on the agora at Cyrene, Libya	53
Figure 13. Eastern frieze plates of the “Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon”.....	56
Figure 14. The “Winged Victory of Samothrace” in the round.....	60
Figure 15. Right hand of Nikē from the “Winged Victory of Samothrace”	62
Figure 16. “Victory of Myrina” statuettes	63
Figure 17. Nikē from the “Winged Victory of Samothrace” isolated in the round	66
Figure 18. Nikē’s feather and fabric detail	67
Figure 19. Roman copy of the Greek “Aphrodite of Knidos”	69
Figure 20. Roman copy of the Greek “Crouching Aphrodite”	70

Figure 21. “Aphrodite” or “Venus de Milo”	71
Figure 22. “Death and Victory”	73
Figure 23. Victory’s relative scale in proportion to an average observer	78
Figure 24. Sketch plan of the area comprising the theater complex	81
Figure 25. Aerial view of the recreated modern platform bridging the central ravine	81
Figure 26. Schematic projection of ancient ground levels within the theater complex	82
Figure 27. Video pan of the Nikē precinct, capturing the upper and lower basin	82
Figure 28. Schematic diagram of the Nikē precinct and the ancient position of Victory. 83	
Figure 29. Architectural framing simulations for the Nikē precinct.....	85
Figure 30. View from approximately ten feet above the Nikē precinct facing north	85
Figure 31. Northeasterly winds striking Samothrace.....	86
Figure 32. Panoramic view of a nautical approach to Samothrace	88
Figure 33. Video pan of a nautical approach to Samothrace	89
Figure 34. Convergence of clouds above Samothrace screening Mount Fengári.....	89
Figure 35. Porphyry rock outcroppings at Samothrace within the ancient harbor	90
Figure 36. Plan of the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace	91
Figure 37. A pilgrim’s northeasterly approach toward the Propylon of Ptolemy II	94
Figure 38. Video pan tracing a pilgrim’s steep descent down the Sacred Way.....	95
Figure 39. Frieze section of dancing maidens from the Hall of Choral Dancers.....	96
Figure 40. View of the Altar Court from within the theater	99

Prologue

I don't remember the sound of the ice cracking beneath the weight of my body, but I remember the sensation. I can only think to compare it with the distinctive "tap, tap, crisp, and crack" of breaking through the caramelized sugar laminating a ramekin of crème brûlée. It replays in slow motion now, still silent, but painless. Then, the piercing water. I'd never felt anything so cold across so much of my body until that moment—a flash flood through the tiny cotton gaps of my banana yellow hoodie and distressingly pink mittens my mother knitted for me. You see, it was winter break week in Buffalo, New York, which meant two things: it was positively glacial outside, and my parents were "UP TO HERE" with my sister's and my antics in the house. "Take the ball, go outside."

We opted for the long concrete straightaway bordering our in-ground pool in the backyard, bouncing the large rubber ball back and forth in the space between us. When my all-too-uncoordinated kid motor skills failed to catch my sister's latest toss, the ball ricocheted off my mittens, and without fail, landed just out of reach on the thick sheet of ice veneering the pool's surface. When my all-too-underdeveloped kid prefrontal cortex failed to stop me stretching *just a little more* to recover the ball, I felt the unmistakable shift in my center of gravity from control to an inertia that drops the stomach and sends a single shot of adrenaline to the tips of every nerve. I don't remember seeing with my own eyes after that, but more through something like those underwater cameras capturing the epic entrance of an Olympic diver into the pool; the water's surface exploded by a plummeting body, immediately and inevitably arcing away from its entry point. Now,

deep underwater, my legs pumped as huge pockets of air fled my mouth, bursting over my face as they ascended. My arms flailed to reach toward the surface where I broke through—where I thought I broke through—but, no. My hands could only locate a blanket of solid ice above my head. A kind of heaviness seemed to constrict my chest. Trapped. The stream of bubbles rushing out of my lungs slowed and then stopped, like a faucet slowly losing pressure. My chest. Trapped. My mouth still screamed, but my lungs finally wrung themselves dry. The water seemed warmer than I remembered only milliseconds before. Milliseconds? Seconds. Minutes? Ice. Trapped. No, seconds. It's remarkable how quickly the human body metabolizes change, however severe. The efficiency of shock. It's lighter above me. Swim up, Sarah, not down. Ice. Trapped.

Then, calm. My limbs stopped their protest. I felt suspended. Calm. Then, sadness. Sadness for my sister—the ice sheet trapped her too—her silhouette imprisoned on the concrete above. Trapped. Lost.

Arms broke through overhead, extracting me by the shoulders. My father.

I don't remember the sound of the ice cracking beneath the weight of my body, but I remember the *terror*.

Introduction

“A lifeless human body is heavier than water, and the head is its densest part. Accordingly, the corpse of a drowning victim will always sink headfirst to the bottom and remain floating in that position until putrefaction produces enough gas in the tissues to create a buoyancy that makes it rise to the surface. This process takes anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, depending on the temperature and condition of the water.... [If] the body returns, it is difficult for its appalled discoverer to believe that this rotted thing once contained a human spirit and shared nature’s life-giving air with the rest of healthy humanity.”

—Sherwin Nuland¹

The fear of drowning is as common as it is ancient, perhaps even woven into our DNA by now, explicable somehow through the wonders of epigenetics. Perhaps no culture dreaded the notion of drowning, though, more than the ancient Greeks,² due to the ability of that particular form of death to leave a person permanently unaccounted for, and ultimately, without a proper burial.³

One way the ancient Greeks responded to the intrinsic uncertainty of everyday life—drowning, birth, illness, war—was to seek the protection of mystery cults, which through initiation provided the individual, as Walter Burkert writes, a “special

¹ Sherwin B. Nuland, *How We Die: Reflections on Life’s Final Chapter* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 162.

² From the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period.

³ See Homer *Odyssey* 1.234-43, 5.306-12, 24.287-96; Euripides *Hecuba* 26-54; and Synesius *Letters* 4.



Figure 1. Physical map of ancient Greece and the island of Samothrace (*black box*), and the location of the Sanctuary of the Great Gods (*inset, black pin*), 700-100 B.C.E. (Photo by author.)

opportunity for dealing with the gods,”⁴ “aiming at some form of salvation through closeness to the divine.”⁵ The ancient Greek mystery cult dedicated to the pre-Greek *Theoi Megaloi* or “Great Gods,” chthonic deities venerated on the remote and rugged island of Samothrace (Θρηϊκή Σάμος, “Samos of Thrace”) (Figure 1), promised its initiates protection and success at sea, along with moral improvement through piety. Overlooking the turbulent northern Aegean Sea, the Sanctuary of the Great Gods sits atop the jagged western ridge of Mount Fengári (“Moon Mountain”), or Mount Sàos (“Safe Mountain”) as it was known in classical antiquity, distinguished as one of the tallest mountains in the Aegean with a breathtaking elevation of 1,611 meters (5,285 feet). A

⁴ Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 277.

⁵ Idem, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 12.

geographic touchstone to sailors and a mythic realm of the gods, Poseidon the Earth-Shaker was said to have watched the Trojan War from the mountain's peak.⁶ The discovery of a vase and fragments of pottery at Mikro Vouni (located on the southwest coast) indicate that Samothrace was inhabited in the Late Neolithic period,⁷ but the date of the earliest religious activity on the island remains uncertain. Sacrificial pottery deposits discovered within the Sanctuary of the Great Gods containing Greek vessels and local handmade cups and bowls indicates that the site was already in religious use in the seventh-century B.C.E.,⁸ eventually evolving into a sanctuary complex that attracted Greek and then Roman pilgrims into the fourth-century C.E. The Sanctuary of the Great Gods was also the setting for what is arguably one of the most dramatic, recognizable, and studied masterpieces of Hellenistic sculpture, the "Winged Victory of Samothrace," (henceforth, "Victory") known for its striking depiction of the Greek goddess, Nikē, seeming to alight exultantly on the prow of a swiftly moving ship (Figure 2).

Capturing the international imagination since the 1863 discovery of her fragments within the sanctuary by French diplomat and amateur archaeologist Charles Champoiseau, today Victory stands restored and reassembled above the grandiose Daru Staircase as one of the Louvre's most prized, yet still enigmatic, possessions. Despite

⁶ Homer *Iliad* 13.10-22.

⁷ Dimitris Matsas, "The Island of Samothrace from Its Origins to the Present Day," in *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, ed. Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez (Paris: Somogy Art Publishers, 2015), 30.

⁸ Karl Lehmann, "Samothrace: Third Preliminary Report," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 19, no. 1 (1950): 8-11, doi:10.2307/146794.

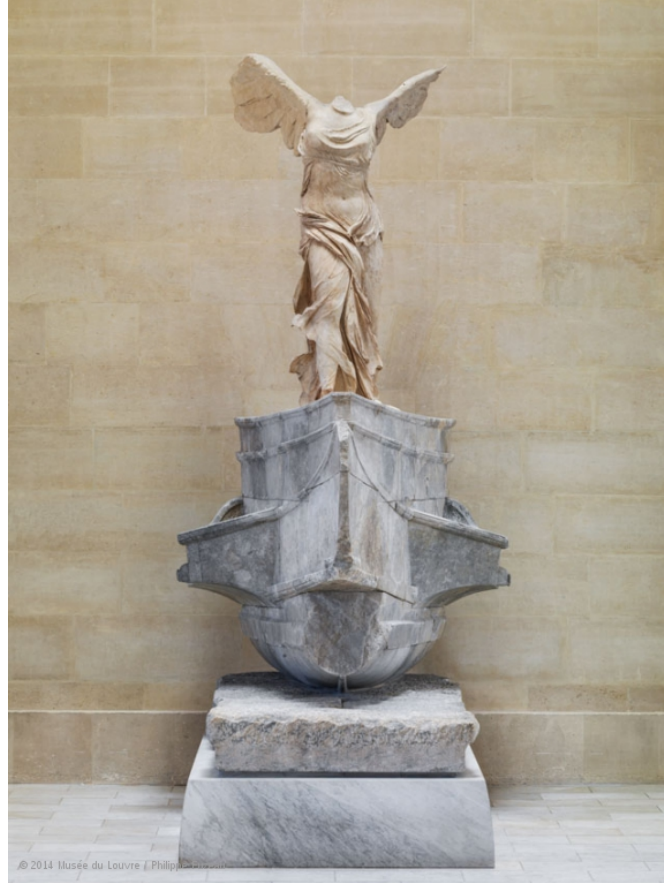


Figure 2. The “Winged Victory of Samothrace” as viewed from the front, ca. 190 B.C.E., marble, 3.28 m., MA2369. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Courtesy of Musée du Louvre / Philippe Fuzeau © 2014.)

scholarly agreement that Victory was dedicated in the second-century B.C.E. as a naval victory monument—that is, a type of public trophy erected by the victors of historic naval battles that were intended to broadcast their martial superiority and serve as thank-offerings to the god(s) for their supernatural assistance in battle—the monument’s true dedicant, sculptor, commission date, and the specific naval victory she was commissioned to commemorate are all still very much contested.⁹ Similarly, Victory’s modern iconic grandeur as an artistic *tour de force* often overshadows a more complete account of the historical, religious, and geophysical contexts for her design and

⁹ These will be discussed in Chapter III.

installation, all of which would significantly enable more nuanced interpretations of her role within the Samothracian sanctuary. What were the original intentions of her dedicant and the sculptor chosen to create her? What was an initiate's experience of the monument following its installation within the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace? How could she have been interpreted religiously by an initiate seeking the ultimate protection from the horror of a nameless death at sea?

When reflecting on this inquiry, a literary craft lesson by novelist Benjamin Percy came to mind: when a reader first picks up a story, they are “like a coma patient—fluttering open their eyes in an unfamiliar world, wondering, *where am I, when am I, who am I?* The writer has an obligation to quickly and efficiently orient.”¹⁰ Similar is the modern experience of encountering ancient artifacts in the sterile setting of a museum, alienated from their original context, each fragment an individual piece of a much larger anthropological puzzle.¹¹ According to French historian Pierre Nora, this puzzle is created by specific historical moments that cause an interruption in historical continuity, triggering a conscious break with the past and posing “the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists,”¹² or, *lieux de mémoire* (the sites of memory). Rather, this break in historical continuity causes the rupture of a collective cultural memory, facilitating the need to establish institutional

¹⁰ Benjamin Percy, “Where’s Papa Going with that Axe?” *Glimmer Train* 67, no. 8 (2012): par. 1, <http://www.glimmertrain.com/bulletins/essays/b67percy.php>.

¹¹ Felicity Bodenstein, “Framing the Artifact,” *Museum History Journal* 5, no. 2 (2012): 167, doi:10.1179/mhj.2012.5.2.167.

¹² Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7, doi:10.2307/2928520.

“sites of memory” where past lands and peoples could instead be held. Most museums endeavor to minimize the loss of an object’s original context through attempts to replicate its ancient framing or locating the artifact in relation to an iconographic or chronological series and style. Masterpieces (in other words, those artifacts that have achieved fame in their own right as celebrated objects), however, are often excluded from these display techniques, which are intended to foster close contextualization in favor of the modern aesthete—isolated, often stark and dramatic visual scenarios—marked by what Felicity Bodenstein has called the “increased valorization of the fragment.”¹³ Immanuel Kant even once stated that “[d]as Schöne ist das, was ohne Begriffe, als Objekt eines allgemeinen Wohlgefallens vorgestellt wird”¹⁴ (popularized as, “the beautiful is that which pleases without concept”), and yet, without proper contextualization, how can an artifact—beautiful or otherwise—convey its memory of people and place to take its place in that much larger, collective anthropological puzzle? Thus, while Victory’s modern significance as arguably the greatest piece of Hellenistic sculpture needn’t be questioned, I believe that her ancient significance should be interrogated in order to better understand her complete historical narrative and interpret her meaning in antiquity.

A review of prior scholarship addressing Victory can primarily be categorized into two thematic narratives: 1. artistic analyses of Victory as a technical masterpiece, spanning from her initial discovery into modern restorations, and 2. theories regarding the

¹³ Bodenstein, “Framing the Artifact,” 167.

¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft* (Berlin: Berliner Ausgabe, 2014), 39. The quote is translated directly as, “the beautiful is that which, apart from concepts, is represented as the object of a universal delight.” Idem, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James C. Meredith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 42.

historical event that prompted Victory's commissioning and installation on Samothrace. One of the works most relevant to this thesis is offered by Mediterranean archaeologist Andrew Stewart (2016), who analyzed unique artistic clues on Victory alongside what is known of the theology of the Samothracian Mysteries to propose a historical event that she could have commemorated. Before Stewart, theories of Victory's commemorative event were only superficially connected to the cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace through maritime-focused imagery and deities. Stewart instead situates his argument contextually within the cult of the Great Gods, injecting brief but critical aspects of the Samothracian Mysteries (i.e., generally known benefits of initiation and the composition of initiates, who would likely recognize and appreciate the monument's thematic reference) as an ideological framework against which he maps the historical events of the Bithynian War (156-154 B.C.E.). While Stewart makes a strong case for the historical significance of Victory's installation at Samothrace, his narrative stops short of reconstructing a pilgrim's religious experience of the statue, once it was installed, and possible interpretations of the monument within the sanctuary. It is this lacuna in the anthropology of the Samothracian Mysteries that this thesis hopes to address. Equally important to this thesis is work offered by Stanford art historian, Bissera Pentcheva (2017), who applies archaeo-anthropological methodologies to explore the ways in which the Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia (537 C.E.) engaged in multisensory performance aesthetics to afford religious participants an all-enveloping, transcendent spiritual experience.¹⁵ Pentcheva's part literary, philological, and scientific work focuses on the

¹⁵ Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017).

psychology of response—specifically, the impact of culturally and religiously conditioned polymorphy on religious observers—in an effort to recover the aesthetic intentions behind the interior art and architecture of Hagia Sophia. Critically, Pentcheva’s interdisciplinary analysis of Hagia Sophia serves as a theoretical touchstone to this thesis in its argument for centering the ritual experience of the sixth-century C.E. worshipper: a methodology resonant with my approach to a Hellenistic initiate’s experience of Victory at Samothrace.

My first cue comes from Moses Finley, writing on ancient victory monuments in Classical and later Mediterranean antiquity: “There could be no honor without public proclamation, and there could be no publicity without the evidence of a trophy.”¹⁶ Installed at the highest point of a sanctuary located on a remote and mountainous island amidst the deadly northern Aegean Sea, Victory wasn’t *really* for the public’s consumption like some of her Classical and Hellenistic victory monument counterparts; installed within sacred, but not necessarily private or cultic spaces exclusively intended for initiates. Yet, the desire to publicize a victory by sponsoring, sculpting, and installing a statue of the goddess Nikē implies the existence of an audience. To quote Stewart,

Since meaning resides in the play of difference, these differences must signify. The Nike’s uniquely stormy drapery and its outspoken rejection within the genre argue that both it and its jutting “rudder” are context-bound and deictic. Actively exploiting the island’s notorious gale-force winds, not simply reacting to them, they are attention-getters. They form a package together.... They seek to alert us to something specific and special ... to locate the action in real time and space, and to mark it.¹⁷

¹⁶ Moses I. Finley and Bernard Knox, *The World of Odysseus* (New York: New York Review Books Classics, 2002), 128.

¹⁷ Andrew Stewart, “The Nike of Samothrace: Another View,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 120, no. 3 (July 2016): 403, doi:10.3764/aja.120.3.0399.tewart.

For Victory, that audience consisted of pilgrims to Samothrace who could quickly grasp her connection to the island, its Great Gods, and the Mysteries into which they were initiated.

In this thesis, I will propose therefore that the dedicant and sculptor of Victory intended to portray the goddess Nikē in several ways that would be recognized by initiates and would be *deeply meaningful* to them. Each of these initiates brought to Samothrace both a unique personal experience as well as a shared, collective initiation experience by the time they encountered her; together these would have formed the lens through which this visually compelling figure would have been interpreted.

1. I will establish that one such representation inherent to the nature of ancient victory monuments and historical iconography associated with Nikē was the commemoration of decisive naval prowess and triumph—likely, if Stewart’s recent and aforementioned theory is correct, a victory attributed to the assistance of the Great Gods in battle as intended by her dedicant: the commander of a victorious Rhodian naval fleet fighting in alliance with the ships of Eumenes II of Pergamon against the marauding Prousius II of Bithynia, or a wealthy sailor in one of its vessels. Rhodes was a renowned center of sculptural virtuosity in the Hellenistic period, and, as Stewart has argued, the fleet may well have been manned by many who were Rhodian initiates of the mystery cult at Samothrace.¹⁸
2. Using what is known of the ancient Samothracian mystery cult’s historical theology and intent, I will argue that Nikē’s portrayal by her sculptor as alighting on the prow of a victorious galley at sea from the heavens would have provided

¹⁸ Ibid., 408.

the missing celestial or Olympian element within the monument's depicted scene. In other words, by seeming to descend from the sky or from Mount Olympus itself, the realm of the Olympian gods, Nikē completed her stone ship's vertical axis: sea, earth, and *air*. This sculptural decision, when combined with Victory's topographical positioning—that is, at the highest point within the limits of the sanctuary overlooking the theater, and in turn, the northern Aegean Sea—may have signaled the sculptor's intent to mirror and complete the vertical axis of the larger ship: the island of Samothrace itself. Thus, Victory may have invoked for the initiate the notion that the whole island, sanctified by the resident Great Gods, was itself a kind of ship; a sanctuary whose physical and sacred elements aligned in their promise for success and protection at sea. This is a metaphor suggested in one or more of the ancient texts.¹⁹

3. When analyzed through the broader religious context and purpose of the ancient Greek mysteries of initiation which bore personal eschatological significance to those initiated, I will propose that Nikē's portrayal as alighting on the prow of a ship—an iconographic indicator of assured naval victory—could be interpreted by those recently initiated as a literal triumph over the risk of drowning, just by virtue of prevailing in battle. Her installation as a thank-offering for a major naval victory above the sanctuary's theater would have visually substantiated this belief in the efficacy of the Great Gods' protection; *those who were victorious at sea in*

¹⁹ Ephorus of Cyme *FGrH* 70 F 120; Strabo *Geography* 8.3.19, cited in Nikos Skoulikidis, Elias Dimitriou, and Ioannis Karaouzas, eds., *The Rivers of Greece: Evolution, Current Status and Perspectives* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2018); and Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.55.8-9, 5.47.3-5, 5.48.4-50.1.

battle had, by definition, not drowned: the ultimate existential defeat in the Greek cultural imagination. The artistic decision to impart an exceptional sense of eroticism and theatrical gigantism in Nikē's figure—in other words, well over life-size, and thus, a colossal statue—may also suggest the sculptor's intent to capitalize upon the ancient Greek belief of triumph as a religious and thus erotic ideal, as perceived through the predominately heteronormative, male gaze of initiates at Samothrace.

In conversation with primary and secondary sources, my hypothesis will be tested within four chapters focusing on ancient Greek mystery cults and their respective mysteries of initiation and iconography, as well as artistic analysis of Nikē and Victory within the context of her Hellenistic sanctuary, from the time of her initial discovery through her modern restorations. My primary sources include passages from first-century B.C.E. historian Diodorus Siculus's *Bibliotheca Historica*, Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, the scholia to Apollonios Rhodios, and works by Plutarch and Strabo.²⁰ These offer first-hand accounts of mystery cults in ancient Greece, including insights about the benefits of initiation; the

²⁰ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, vol. 2: Books 2.35-4.58, trans. Charles H. Oldfather (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935); idem, *Library of History*, vol. 3: Books 4.59-8, trans. Charles H. Oldfather (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933); Apuleius, *The Golden Ass, or, Metamorphoses*, trans. E. J. Kenney (London: Penguin Books, 2004); Homer, *The Odyssey of Homer*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007); Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, vol. 1: Books 1-2, trans. C. F. Smith (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919); Scholia to Apollonios Rhodios, cited in Burkert, *Greek Religion*; Plutarch in Stobaeus *Anthologion* 4.52.49, cited in Marvin W. Meyer, ed., *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook: Sacred Texts of the Mystery Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); and Strabo *Geography* 8.3.19, cited in Skoulikidis, Dimitriou, and Karaouzas, *The Rivers of Greece*.

founding of the Samothracian Mysteries; and the ancient notion of Samothrace as a ship. Key secondary sources include the works of Walter Burkert, Kevin Clinton, Susan Cole, Marianne Hamiaux, Bonna Wescoat, Georgia Petridou, and Andrew Stewart, among others.²¹ In addition to analyzing many of the topics mentioned, they also provide historical artistic analysis of Victory herself, the classical and Hellenistic iconography of Nikē, ancient Greek naval victory monuments, and votive ships dedicated within island sanctuaries throughout the Aegean. Lastly, I intend to use the extensive and recent photographic and video archives of Samothrace and its sanctuary collected by Charles O. Griffin, a Massachusetts architect specializing in classical reconstruction, to help reconstruct a pilgrim's path through the sanctuary to where they²² would have observed

²¹ Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*; idem, *Greek Religion*; Kevin Clinton, "Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Michael Gagarin (Oxford University Press, 2010), doi:10.1093/acref/9780195170726.013.0415; idem, "Stages of Initiation in the Eleusinian and Samothracian Mysteries," in *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*, ed. Michael B. Cosmopoulos (London: Routledge, 2003); Susan Guettel Cole, *Theoi Megaloi: The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1984); Marianne Hamiaux, "The Context," in Hamiaux, Laugier, and Martinez, *The Winged Victory*; idem, "La Victoire de Samothrace: Découverte et Restauration," *Journal des Savants* 1 (2001), doi:10.3406/jds.2001.1643; Bonna D. Wescoat, "The Sanctuary and Cult of the Great Gods on Samothrace," in Hamiaux, Laugier, and Martinez, *The Winged Victory*; idem, "Thoughts on the Design of the Nike Precinct," in Hamiaux, Laugier, and Martinez, *The Winged Victory*; idem, "Coming and Going in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, Samothrace," in *Architecture of the Sacred*, ed. Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert G. Ousterhout (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); idem, "Buildings for Votive Ships on Delos and Samothrace," in *Architecture and Archaeology in the Cyclades: Papers in Honour of J. J. Coulton*, ed. Marina Yeloulanou and Maria Samatopoulou (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006); Georgia Petridou, "'Blessed Is He, Who Had Seen': The Power of Ritual Viewing and Ritual Framing in Eleusis," *Helios* 40, no. 1-2 (March 2013), doi:10.1353/hel.2013.0015; and Stewart, "Another View."

²² While inscriptional evidence implies that initiates into the Samothracian Mysteries were predominately male, as would make sense in light of its popularity with sailors, my use of "they" and "their" as gender-neutral pronouns within the context of this

the dramatic statue of Victory, highlighting the religious context in which the monument was viewed, and her significance made manifest.

Ancient Greek mystery cults and the mysteries of initiation for the cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace is the focus of Chapter I. After establishing the historical context for mystery cults within ancient Greece, I will analyze the cult's known foundational myths, deities, initiation rituals, initiate composition, and benefits of initiation into the Samothracian Mysteries, especially as they pertain to salvation from drowning. Critical to Chapter I—and arguably the crux of my argument—is an elaboration upon the ancient Greek perception of drowning, or rather, the dreaded consequences of not receiving a proper burial as a direct result of drowning or disposal at sea. The use of several well-known historical and mythological examples of peril at sea within ancient Greece from Homer's *Odyssey*, Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades*, and Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* will serve to amplify the personal eschatological stakes of initiates in the Samothracian Mysteries, as well as to contextualize the ancient notion of Samothrace as a ship. Additional analysis of the cult's theological framework alongside unique geological features of Samothrace and the existence of a votive ship within the sanctuary will further reinforce the island's ancient perception as a ship.

Chapter II will establish a critical iconographic, mythological, and cultural history of the ancient Greek personification of victory in the form of the goddess Nikē through archaeological and textual evidence, upon which the remaining chapters build. The aim of Chapter II is to establish the commonly accepted narratives and representations of

thesis leaves open the possibility of both male and female initiates; there are conflicting scholarly statements about this (these will be discussed in Chapter I).

Nikē as a response to martial and naval victories through the dedication of highly visible monuments and trophies installed in sanctuary settings, or the creation of other significant works contributing to the canon of Nikē iconography. I will analyze several renowned works—some lost, some extant—wherein Nikē served as a core symbolic element from the Classical period on, including the “Nikē of Paionios” monument at Olympia (ca. 425-420 B.C.E.); the “Nikē of Sphakteria”; Lysander’s *akroteria* (ca. 404 B.C.E.); the commemorative coinage of Demetrius I of Macedon (ca. 300-295 B.C.E.); a bronze statue dedicated within the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidaurus (ca. late-fourth-century B.C.E), as well as in the Sanctuary of Athena at Lindos on the island of Rhodes (265-260 B.C.E); and the Nikē depicted in the Gigantomachy scenes of the “Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon” (ca. 170-160 B.C.E).

In Chapter III, I will focus on a historical and artistic analysis of Victory highlighting several stylistic and technical features distinguishing Victory’s Nikē even from her closest sculptural and stylistic predecessors; in particular, I will consider Nikē’s hyperrealism, eroticism, and theatrical gigantism. Through the lens of a series of restorative efforts, beginning shortly after her discovery in 1863 and continuing into 2016, Chapter III will aim to reconstruct her ancient appearance *in situ*, as experienced by the Hellenistic observer on Samothrace. Chapter III will also consider the statue’s ancient hillside installation within the Sanctuary of the Great Gods above the theater, illuminating the relationship between the monument’s original physical environment and her technical structure. I will address the dynamic and kinetic aspects of the interlocking group—the statue, the ship, and the intended viewer—since, as I will show, the sculptor intended the ship to be moving forward into an imagined sea (perhaps in relationship to

the actual Aegean Sea, visible far below her hillside setting), and in close communication with the ritual theatrical performances within the sanctuary's theater complex.

Lastly, Chapter IV will look to tie together the aforementioned narrative threads pertaining to Nikē's iconographic and artistic history to make a case for a Hellenistic pilgrim's experience of Victory within the Sanctuary of the Great Gods and how she could have been interpreted following their initiation into the Mysteries. This final phase of analysis will propose a hypothetical path undertaken by an individual seeking initiation into the Mysteries at Samothrace, including the journey by sea to the island. In Chapter IV, I will also reconstruct an initiate's hypothetical path through the sanctuary in order to reimagine the context in which Victory would have first been seen and experienced by an initiate. By doing so, it is my hope that the possible cultic significance of this iconic statue as a visual substantiation of the Great Gods' protection and emblem of naval victory within the sequence of the Samothracian Mysteries will emerge more clearly.

Chapter I.

The Mysteries of Initiation in Ancient Greece

“I must ask the curious to forgive me if I keep silence as to who the Kabeiroi are, and what is the nature of the ritual performed in honor of them and of the Mother.”

—Pausanias²³

“The very fact that the reactions described ... are not uniform but vary between perplexity and exaltation indicates that this is ... [a] sympatheia of souls and rituals, some form of resonance which does not come in every case but which, once it is there, will deeply move or even shatter the constructs of reality.”

—Walter Burkert²⁴

One perhaps cannot get more elemental than beginning with the concept of initiation: a ritual of formalized and irreversible transition from one state or condition of being or belonging to another, a “new beginning,”²⁵ entailing, as Kaelber explains, separation

... from one social or religious status and incorporat[ion] into another. From a religious perspective, initiation may be seen as an encounter with the sacred. The transition is therefore a profound one, with the initiand emerging from the passage

²³ Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Volume IV: Books 8.22-10* (Arcadia, Boeotia, Phocis and Ozolian Locri), trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 278-9.

²⁴ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 114.

²⁵ Walter O. Kaelber, “Initiation: Men’s Initiation,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 4480, <http://link.galegroup.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/apps/doc/CX3424501514/GVRL?u=camb55135&sid=GVRL&xid=70a4ff5e>.

changed not only socially but existentially and spiritually as well ... equivalent to an ontological mutation of the existential condition.²⁶

First to use the term “rites of passage” as an analytical concept, Dutch anthropologist Arnold van Gennep presented a tripartite structure for transformative ritual initiation practices that he considered virtually universal to all societies in *Les Rites de Passage*. Van Gennep drew an analogy between the rites and the cosmic or human lifecycle—a perpetual sequence of birth, being, and death before rebirth. As such, rites of passage function to provide individuals a mechanism for separation, transition, and incorporation in order symbolically to die, be reborn, and come into a new state or status within society as an intrinsically different being.²⁷

With their roots planted firmly in early (or even pre-) history across geographies and religious traditions spanning the Mediterranean, Middle East, and North Africa, mystery cults—that is, secret societies or closed religious groups—in ancient Greece were distinguished as a private and individualistically-focused form of esoteric religion, in contrast to the decidedly public and *polis*-bound state religion that characterized Greek antiquity. Mystery cults did not exist as independent or uniquely separate religions from the state, but instead provided individuals the choice to enter a closed group whereby they could establish a special relationship with the gods “within the multifarious framework of polytheistic *polis* religion.”²⁸ The mysteries served as a popular and natural outlet for individuals with growing personal eschatological concerns that has been

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 82.

²⁸ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 277.

attributed to an Archaic period shift in social attitudes surrounding the perception of one's death from a familiar inevitability to one of great anxiety:²⁹

The discovery of the individual is the great event that is seen to occur in Greece in the seventh and sixth centuries.... Alongside participation in the *polis* festivals as fixed by the calendar there emerges the interest in something special, chosen by oneself, and hence in additional initiations and mysteries. At the same time individual death, which is built into the system of communal life as an unquestionable fact, becomes a personal problem more than before.³⁰

Responding to this “personal problem” were the mysteries, which provided the individual with a purposeful strategy to fulfill their need for security and relief from anxieties caused by the everyday unknowns in life, inadvertently hurling them toward yet another unknown in death. In the *Future of an Illusion*, Freud's theory of religious ideas as illusions³¹ helps further to illuminate the psychology behind the theological intent of the mysteries:

[T]he benevolent rule of a divine Providence allays our fear of the dangers of life; the establishment of a moral world-order ensures the fulfilment of the demands of justice, which have so often remained unfulfilled in human civilization; and the prolongation of earthly existence in a future life provides the local and temporal framework in which these wish-fulfilments shall take place. Answers to the riddles that tempt the curiosity of man, such as how the universe began or what the relation is between body and mind, are developed in conformity with the underlying assumptions of this system. It is an enormous relief to the individual psyche if the conflicts of its childhood arising from the father-complex — conflicts which it has never wholly overcome — are removed from it and brought to a solution which is universally accepted.³²

²⁹ Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, “Festival and Mysteries: Aspects of the Eleusinian Cult,” in *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*, ed. Michael B. Cosmopoulos (London: Routledge, 2003), 2.

³⁰ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 278.

³¹ Freud considered illusions as an individual's interpretation of reality that is likely incorrect, but whose main purpose is allow the individual to believe that their “strongest and most urgent” wishes have been fulfilled. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), 29.

By choosing initiation into the mysteries of one particular deity or another based on personally relevant cult characteristics (e.g., protection in childbirth for noble Athenian girls entering puberty; protection at sea for sailors), the individual reclaimed control over their feelings of helplessness using the pre-established framework of initiation to supplant the chaos. Echoing van Gennep's tripartite structure for rites of passage, Kaelber's framework for initiation into a mystery cult can be characterized by three common traits:

First ... is the structure of separation, transition, and incorporation. This scenario is frequently correlated with images of death and rebirth. Second is the disclosure of sacred knowledge, particularly mythical paradigms. Third is the performance of ritual operations on the body and the often-related presence of ordeals.³³

After first noting the likeness of the Greek verbs *teleutan* (to die) and *teleisthai* (to be initiated),³⁴ the experience of death and rebirth as directly comparable to the transformation experienced when initiated into the mysteries is noted in a literary fragment commonly attributed to Plutarch:

At first there is wandering, and wearisome roaming, and fearful traveling through darkness with no end to be found. Then, just before the consummation (*telos*), there is every sort of terror, shuddering and trembling and perspiring and being alarmed. But after this a marvelous light (*phos*) appears, and open places and meadows await, with voices and dance and the solemnities of sacred utterances and holy visions. In that place one walks about at will, now perfect and initiated (*memuemenos*) and free, and wearing a crown, one celebrates religious rites, and joins with pure and pious people.³⁵ (Plutarch *Fr.* 178)

Similar proclamations are made by Lucius, the protagonist of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*,

³² Ibid.

³³ Kaelber, "Men's Initiation," 4480.

³⁴ Clinton, "Eleusinian Mysteries," par. 4-5.

³⁵ Plutarch in Stobaeus *Anthologion* 4.52.49, cited in Meyer, *The Ancient Mysteries*, 9.

throughout the course of his multiple initiations into the cults of Isis and Osiris:

[T]he initiation ceremony itself took the form of a kind of voluntary death and salvation through divine grace. Such as might be safely entrusted with the great secrets of our religion, when they had passed through life and stood on the threshold of darkness, these the power of the goddess was to select and when they had been as it were reborn return them to a new lifespan.... I came to the boundary of death and after treading Proserpine's threshold I returned having traversed all the elements; at midnight I saw the sun shining with brilliant light; I approached the gods below and the gods above face to face and worshipped them in their actual presence. Now I have told you what, though you have heard it, you cannot know. So all that can without sin be revealed to the understanding of the uninitiated, that and no more I shall relate.³⁶ (Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 11.21-3)

This framework for initiation provided the pilgrim a central physical, intellectual, and spiritual experience mirroring the real death, rebirth, or survival narrative of the cult's mythological predecessor, as established within the cult's aetiological (αἴτιον λέγειν, “to give a reason”) myths—defined by Barbara Kowalzig in the cultic context as geographically-bound, clustered local tales or stories from the distant past “explaining the origin of specific cults, temples, [or] rites.”³⁷ The interface between a cult's aetiological narrative and its performative rituals within the initiation ceremony on the original sacred ground thus ensured that the pattern established by the mythical past repeated for initiates in the ritual present:

Mystai ... walk a sacred way, the goal of which is eternal bliss.... Knowledge and certainty of this is gained through initiation. ‘Blessed are they all by the part they have in the initiations that release them from affliction,’ is said ... in Pindar.... To the sacred way which the *mystai* walk there corresponds in this world the path to the mountain, the *oreibasias*: afterlife is repetition of the mysteries.³⁸

³⁶ Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 179-82.

³⁷ Barbara Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods: Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 24.

³⁸ Hugh Lloyd-Jones, “The Seal of Poseidippos,” *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 83, (1967): 75-99, doi:10.2307/628455; Pindar *Olympian Odes* 2.70; Tablet from Petelia B I.II, cited in Gunther Zuntz, *Persephone. Three Essays on Religion and Thought in*

The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace

No present risk was more feared in ancient Greece than that of perishing at sea. In mythology, loss at sea was attributed to a number of causes, to include human accident, war, or the angry actions of a god or demigod, interestingly described within *The Odyssey* as an overarching metaphor that the sea would “swallow,” “devour,” or “eat” them.³⁹ A Late Geometric painted krater known as the “Pithekoussai Shipwreck” (Figure 3) even turns the ingestion metaphor literal in its depiction of a large fish consuming the body of a shipwrecked individual, graphically illustrating the hazards of ancient seafaring.⁴⁰ The fear for one’s wellbeing, however, lay beyond the actual physical experience of drowning, as physiologically agonizing and psychologically traumatic⁴¹ as it is. As the sea was regarded as a place of no return, the disposal, loss, or improper burial of human remains at sea was representative of humiliation and a loss of honor, or a symbolic rejection of an individual’s socially located personhood, threatening to preclude one’s

Magna Graecia (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 277-383; and Pindar *Fr.* 131 a, cited in Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 293.

³⁹ Hilary Mackie, “No. 1663: Swallowed by the Sea,” in *The Engines of Our Ingenuity*, Houston Public Media, Houston, TX: KUHF, Aug 5, 2011.

⁴⁰ Gillian Shepherd, “Pithekoussai,” in *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 1st ed., eds. by Roger S. Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craige B. Champion, Andrew Erskine, and Sabine R. Huebner (West Sussex, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 5339-40, doi:10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah02151.

⁴¹ Even though the sensation of pain—generally defined as an unpleasant feeling in the body—is considered subjective and directly eased or exacerbated by context, both nociceptive pain (the sensation of nerves as a direct result of injury) and neuropathic pain (pain with no discernable origin, e.g., phantom limb syndrome) can be objectively categorized and measured. See Nuland, *How We Die*, 140-62, and Charles Bryant and Joshua Clark, “How Drowning Works,” in *Stuff You Should Know*, iHeartRadio, New York, NY, May 10, 2018, for excellent summary evidence on the documented physiological and psychological trauma caused by drowning (actual or fear of).



Figure 3. The “Pithekoussai Shipwreck krater” (*bottom*) and schematic illustration (*top*), ca. 725-700 B.C.E., clay, 168813. Museo Archeologico di Pithecusae, Lacco Ameno, Italy. (Courtesy of Museo Archeologico di Pithecusae / the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.)

soul from joining the land of the dead instead to wander the earth as a ghost or *revenant* (restless spirit). Ancient sources show that the deliberate denial of proper burial rites or a grave (called in both ancient and modern Greek *oikos*, “home”) by disposing of a corpse at sea was a punitive measure taken against temple-robbers and other malefactors considered particularly abominable (e.g., suicide, etc.)⁴² by the *polis*, “aim[ing], at least partly, also at denying the physical existence of these shameful persons and at wiping out the social memory of them.”⁴³ Thus, adding to the terror of preclusion from the hoped-for

⁴² See Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica* 16.35.6; Aeschines *On the Embassy* 2.142; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *On Isocrates* 5.115; and Demosthenes *Against Aristogeiton* 1 25.166.

⁴³ Astrid Lindenlauf, “Thrown Away Like Rubbish—Disposal of the Dead in Ancient Greece,” *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 12, (2001): 90, doi:10.5334/pia.161.

communal afterlife was an individual's own awareness following their death of their permanent obscurity from those still in the land of the living should they not receive proper burial rites, as illustrated within Odysseus' encounter in Hades with his friend and fellow crewmember, Elpenor. After falling off a roof and breaking his neck, Elpenor was left unburied by his crew in their haste to journey to the Land of the Dead, leaving his anguished spirit to request proper burial rites upon the Greek's return to Aiaia:

I ask that you remember me, and do not go and leave me behind, unwept and unburied, when you leave, for fear I might become gods' curse upon you; but burn me there with all my armor that belongs to me, and heap up a grave mound beside the beach of the gray sea, for an unhappy man, so that those to come will know of me. Do this for me, and on top of the grave mound plant the oar with which I rowed when I was alive among my companions.⁴⁴ (Homer *Odyssey* 11.71-8)

Similarly, when Odysseus remained unaccounted for after setting sail following the fall of Troy, his son, Telemakhos, feared a permanent obscurity for his father—a fate worse than death:

The gods have made him invisible. If he were dead, I would not grieve for him so much—if he had been killed at Troy, or died in the arms of friends after the war. Then, the Greeks would have made a tomb for him, and he would have won great glory for me, his son, as well as for himself. Instead, the storm fiends have snatched him away and left no word of him. He has perished unseen and unheard of.⁴⁵ (Homer *Odyssey* 1.235-42)

In turning to naval warfare, possession of the enemy's dead—effectively rendering an individual unaccounted for and without proper burial rites as any storm or shipwreck could—was often considered as valuable a possession as captured ships or men:

⁴⁴ Homer, *Odyssey*, 171.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 34.

Just as in land battles, possessing the field often included possessing enemy bodies remaining upon it.... Possessing the damaged ships functions in the same way possessing the dead does: if one is in control of the ships one is in control of the field.⁴⁶

Thucydides provides a case where two sides in a naval battle both claimed victory based on the joint statistic of captured ships and bodies:

Each side claimed the victory on the following grounds: the Corinthians set up a trophy because they had prevailed in the sea-fight up to nightfall, and had thus been able to carry off a greater number of wrecks and dead bodies, and because they held prisoners not less than a thousand men and had disabled about seventy ships; and the Corcyreans, because they had destroyed about thirty ships, and, after the Athenians came, had taken up the wrecks that came their way and the dead bodies.⁴⁷ (Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.54.2)

While the ships and men captured during a naval battle would likely be salvaged or used as bargaining tools, respectively, the retrieval of one's dead is an ancient, essential, and sacred custom. Consequently, it's possible to assume a factor in claiming victory following a naval battle was one side's possession of the other's dead (and thus, the battlefield itself),⁴⁸ making the threat of loss at sea even grimmer for those in ancient naval forces.

The roster of Samothracian initiates with seafaring vocations seeking protection from failure—be it drowning, shipwreck, naval defeat, and loss of cargo or crew—can hardly be surprising, then. While this gift of initiation, at least in its immediate and practical sense, was a known and well-documented benefit of initiation into the Mysteries of the Great Gods at Samothrace, Burkert, for one, does not believe that the benefits of

⁴⁶ Joe Gai, "Battlefield Trophies of Ancient Greece: Symbols of Victory" (master's thesis, California State University, Fresno, 2006), 65, ProQuest (1443538).

⁴⁷ Thucydides, *History*, 90-3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

initiation extended into the afterlife, in other words paralleling the Eleusinian Mysteries.⁴⁹

This, of course, is the effect the mysteries of Samothrace are claimed to produce first of all: salvation from drowning at sea and successful voyages. There is no mention of hopes for an afterlife. The encounter with fatal danger and the gods of death is intended first of all to protect from real death.⁵⁰

The identities of such initiates at Samothrace are available to us from three sources.

These are the literary record, Samothracian initiate lists, and dedications to the *Theoi Megaloi* discovered inside the sanctuary as well as from other areas of provenance throughout the region. Literary sources identify Philip II and Olympias, Herodotus, Antalkidas, Lysander, and Demetrios of Skepsis as initiates.⁵¹ Myth corroborates that many seafaring heroes sought initiation into the Samothracian Mysteries as a precautionary measure against drowning or shipwreck, as well as success in their naval campaigns: again, these destinies were closely linked—the ships of those who were defeated in naval battles were often destroyed and their crews left to drown:

The Argonauts en route to the Kolchis and the Golden Fleece, including Jason, Orpheus, and the Dioskouroi; Herakles (Diodoros), and by some accounts, Odysseus and Agamemnon, too, found success in their endeavors because the Samothracian gods appeared to them.⁵²

⁴⁹ The primary sources are silent on this point. However, despite the modern skepticism and ancient silence on confirming the personal eschatological hopes of those who sought initiation at Samothrace, an initiate's desire "to prevent a particular type of death that suggested a potentially awful afterlife" theoretically could imply otherwise (see Odysseus's encounter in Hades with Elpenor [Homer *Odyssey* 11.71-8]). Eleanor Mitten, "Mysteries Blog: Samothrace 1," *Mitten Mysteries Blog*, May 14, 2015.

⁵⁰ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 284.

⁵¹ Cole, *Theoi Megaloi*, 38.

⁵² Wescoat, "The Sanctuary and Cult," 44.

We learn of one such success story from the scholia to Apollonios Rhodios concerning Odysseus and a purple sash or woolen fillet an initiate into the Samothracian Mysteries would have received:

They say Odysseus, being an initiate and using Leukothea's veil in place of a fillet, was saved from the storm at sea by placing the veil below his abdomen. For the initiates bind fillets below their abdomens.⁵³

On nothing but a raft amidst a terrible storm at sea, Odysseus jumped into the sea as it “could no longer do him any harm,”⁵⁴ attesting to the primary benefit of initiation into the Samothracian Mysteries, as well as establishing the fillet as kind of initiate talisman. Similarly, the weather phenomenon of Saint Elmo's fire was considered to be a “corporeal epiphany”⁵⁵ of the powerful twin gods, Castor and Pollux (or Polydeuces), known as the Dioskouroi, and often closely equated with the Great Gods. Named after the patron saint of sailors, St. Erasmus of Formia, this phenomenon creates a discharge of bright blue or violet plasma from pointed objects in strong electric fields, appearing like a luminous ball or streaks of fire in the right atmospheric conditions. It was likely observed by sailors over their ship's mast during a thunderstorm at sea, and thus the association of the phenomenon with a physical manifestation of the Great Gods (or one's “patron saint”) was considered a good omen⁵⁶ for protection at sea in times of danger, much like the fillet.

⁵³ Scholia to Apollonios Rhodios 1.917-8, cited in Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 283.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 213.

⁵⁶ Laurence Bergreen, *Over the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), 89-90.

Archaeological excavations of the sanctuary have uncovered dedicatory inscriptions⁵⁷ recorded on the walls of buildings listing the names of initiates in Greek and Latin from throughout the Mediterranean,⁵⁸ ranging from titled public officials to soldiers, sailors, average citizens, and slaves beginning in the second-century B.C.E. through the first-century C.E., indicating that the appeal of the Great Gods thrived far from the shores of Samothrace. On the issue of initiate gender at Samothrace, Cole writes that

... [a]lthough the lists record citizens, freemen, and slaves, there are very few women on either the Greek or the Latin lists. It is not surprising to find that so many of the Samothracian initiates are men. The nature of Greek society was such that few women would have had the opportunity to seek initiation. The inconvenience of the site meant that many of the people who came to Samothrace were sailors, and there is some indication that soldiers made a special effort to be initiated. Further, all of the *theoroi* recorded at Samothrace are men. Nevertheless, although so few women appear on the initiate lists, it should be remembered that two of the major building in the sanctuary were donated by women and that Olympias was one of the traditional initiates.... In addition to the titled Roman officials already mentioned, one finds groups of soldiers, sailors, family groups, and freedmen. Women and slaves are never listed alone, but are always part of a

⁵⁷ See James R. McCredie, "Samothrace: Supplementary Investigations, 1968-1977," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 48, no. 1 (1979): 17, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147800>; Friedrich Hiller von Gaertringen, ed., *Supplementum*, vol. XII.8 of *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978), viii-247; Carl Fredrich, ed., *Inscriptiones insularum maris Thracici*, vol. XII.8 of *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), xi-217; P.M. Fraser, *The Inscriptions on Stone*, vol. 2.1 of *Samothrace* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), xiii-163; James R. McCredie, "Samothrace: Preliminary Report on the Campaigns of 1962-1964," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 34, no. 2 (1965): 115, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147020>; and Salviat François, "Addenda Samothraciens," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 86, no. 1 (1962): 268-304, doi:10.3406/bch.1962.2313. For the entire body of literary and epigraphical evidence regarding inscriptions at Samothrace, see Nora M. Dimitrova, "Theoroi and Initiates in Samothrace: The Epigraphical Evidence," *Hesperia Supplements* 37 (2008): III-280, <http://www.jstor.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/stable/27759913>.

⁵⁸ See Cole, *Megaloi Theoi*, 57-86, 170-86 for a full list of sites.

larger group. Roman women appear with their husbands; female slaves with their owners.⁵⁹

Similarly, Jan Bremmer remarks that

... [f]rom the inscriptions and buildings we can see that men as well as women, slaves and freedmen as well as high officials and royalty were admitted. In fact, Philip II of Macedonia and his later wife Olympias [(parents of Alexander the Great)] were said to have met during the initiation ceremony, and women initiates dedicated votive statuettes to commemorate their initiation.⁶⁰

What of the deities who superintended the Samothracian Mysteries? Unlike other mystery cults of ancient Greece, we do not have a firm grasp on the true identities or even the count of the Great Gods in the Samothracian Mysteries. Samothrace's Olympic lineage was established with the primordial union of Zeus and the Titaness Elektra (daughter of Atlas), producing the foundational Greek mythic family of Iasion (or Aetion), Dardanus (or Dardanos, forefather of the Trojan people, and whose son, Aeneas, of the Roman people), and Harmonia.⁶¹ The Great Gods have been identified as and associated with various deities (individually or collectively) for centuries: the aforementioned Dioskouroi, Castor and Pollux; "Kabeiroi" or "Cabiri" (Semitic for "mighty-ones") of Thebes, Lemnos, and Thessalonica (defined, as Burkert says, by "their

⁵⁹ Ibid., 42-96.

⁶⁰ Jan Bremmer, *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2014), 23-4. Regarding Philip and Olympias, Bremmer cites Plutarch *Alexander* 2.2, though this is doubted by Cole, *Megaloi Theoi*, 17; but see William Greenwalt, "Philip II and Olympias on Samothrace: A Clue to Macedonian Politics during the 360s," in *Macedonian Legacies: Studies in Ancient Macedonian History and Culture in Honor of Eugene N. Borza*, ed. Timothy Howe, Jeanne Reames, and Eugene N. Borza (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2009), 79-106; and Sheila Dillon, "Marble Votive Statuettes of Women from the Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace," in *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie*, ed. Olga Palagia and Bonna D. Wescoat (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 65-172.

⁶¹ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 284.

chthonic origins, their duality ... their ithyphallic nature, and their connection with the sea”⁶²), with ancient sources sometimes identifying Dardanus and Iasion as the Kabeiroi,⁶³ as well as the Kyrbantes, Corybantes, Couretes and Idaean Dactyls (Strabo 7 *Fr.* 50); and the secret, possibly pre-Greek names that may have been remembered in cult (Axiéros [perhaps the Anatolian Great Mother and her Phrygian and Trojan forms], Axiokersa, and Axiokersos (Mnaseas *FGrH* 546 F 1b), assimilated to the Eleusinian triad of Demeter, Persephone, and Hades, respectively (with Hermes added occasionally as a fourth,⁶⁴ representative of Kadmos). Similarly, only a Kybele-like Great Mother goddess (Figure 4, *middle left, reverse*) along with Hermes (through his symbols, the caduceus and ram) (Figure 4, *right, reverse*) are depicted with any consistency on Samothracian coins.⁶⁵

As such, we are left only to approximate and reconstruct some of the cult’s aetiological myths, which, we assume from parallels elsewhere, served as the performative ceremonial model for initiates at Samothrace, ultimately sealing the guarantee of the ritual’s effectiveness. One such cultic *aition* from Ephorus of Cyme (*FGrH* 70 F 120) tells of Kadmos of Phoenicia (also referenced as Cadmus, Kasmilos, or Kadmilos), who, upon initiation into the Samothracian Mysteries in the sanctuary, saw

⁶² Matsas, “The Island of Samothrace,” 37.

⁶³ Hugh Bowden, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 63.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁶⁵ Archaeological evidence indicates that Samothrace began minting bronze (and later, silver) coins as early as the late-sixth-century B.C.E. “Coins from the Eastern Hill,” *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog), accessed January 12, 2019, <https://samothrace.emory.edu/coins/>.



Figure 4. Samothracian coins with bust of Athena wearing Corinthian helmet (*left, obverse*), Great Mother seated, holding phiale and scepter (*middle left, reverse*), ca. 200-100 B.C.E., bronze, 20 mm., 6.69 g., 66.182; Bust of Athena wearing Corinthian helmet (*middle right, obverse*), Ram's head and Hermes' caduceus (*right, reverse*), ca. 300-200 B.C.E., bronze, 13 mm., 1.66 g., 66.697. Archaeological Museum of Samothrace, Samothrace. (Courtesy of the American Excavations on Samothrace © New York / Samothrace.)

Harmonia, “and with Athena’s assistance carried her off”⁶⁶ in “a sacred abduction.”

Elaborating on Ephorus, Clinton suggests that this myth inspired the incorporation of a

search for Harmonia into the cult’s Dionysia (an annual festival held in honor of

Dionysus on Samothrace) and initiatory rites of a pilgrim, stating that “the *mystai*

evidently wandered in the dark in search of a goddess ... [with the result as] the union of a

divine bride and divine groom, identified in local myth with Harmonia and Cadmus.”⁶⁷

Clinton suggests,

If we recall that ... [the Great Gods] were savior gods who came to the rescue of people in peril, especially initiates in peril at sea, it may be reasonable to speculate that in the cult they performed their salvific function by bringing back “Harmonia,” and they then made an epiphany with her and presumably also “Cadmus.”⁶⁸

Thus, Harmonia’s rescue at sea directly ties one of the Mysteries’ aetiological myths to

its promised gift of protection through rites of initiation. Additionally, we hear of another

foundational narrative, supported by Strabo, as well as two others from Diodorus Siculus

⁶⁶ Clinton, “Stages of Initiation,” 69.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 67-8.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

performing a similar ‘myth to gifts’ function, all of which portray the island of Samothrace as an ancient safe haven from a great flood or storm at sea. First, we learn of an ancient flood in which Dardanus was cast as protagonist:

It is mentioned that during that time a catalyst took place that had as a consequence to inundate the plains of Arcadia [(the birthplace of Dardanus)].... Because of the flood, all the residents had to move uphill to the mountains. However, as the mountains could not cover the dietary needs of the people ... only the son of Dardanus, Dimas, with some of the residents remained in Arcadia, whereas Dardanus and Iasion, with the rest of the residents left and moved to the island of Samothrace.⁶⁹ (Strabo *Geography* 8.3.19)

Similarly, Diodorus Siculus’s first foundational narrative references a catastrophic flood affecting the Black Sea:

[T]he Samothracians have a story that, before the floods which befell other peoples, a great one took place among them.... For the Pontus, which had at the time the form of a lake, was so swollen by the rivers which flow into it, that, because of the great flood which had poured into it, its waters burst forth violently into the Hellespont and flooded a large part of the coast of Asia and made no small amount of the level part of the island of Samothrace into a sea.... The inhabitants who had been caught by the flood ... ran up to the higher regions of the island; and when the sea kept rising higher and higher, they prayed to the native gods, and since their lives were spared, to commemorate their rescue they set up boundary stones about the entire circuit of the island and dedicated altars upon which they offer sacrifices.⁷⁰ (Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica* 5.47.3-5)

While cataclysmic events are commonly integrated into the mythologies of ancient civilizations, intriguingly, there is a wide variety of geological evidence (including sediment and sea level analyses, seismic profiles, and dating of drill cores from the Black Sea) indicating that there were at least three catastrophic floods recorded during the prehistoric era of Greece, the earliest of which very likely inspired Diodorus

⁶⁹ Skoulikidis, Dimitriou, and Karaouzas, *The Rivers of Greece*, 10-4.

⁷⁰ Siculus, *Library of History*, 3: 228-31.

Siculus's geomythical flooding account: the Deucalion Flood (ca. 1529 B.C.E.), Ogyges Flood (ca. 1796-2136 B.C.E), and the Dardanus Flood (ca. 5600 B.C.E.) affecting Samothrace and the Black Sea—predating even the most popular cataclysm, Noah's Flood, by thousands of years.⁷¹ As the southern margin of Samothrace is clipped by the active North Anatolian Fault zone, the island was subject to semi-frequent and violent earthquakes resulting in the vertical upheaval of the sea floor, often precipitating catastrophic flooding in the region. While Diodorus Siculus's specificity and estimated time period of the flood affecting the Euxinos Pontos (the ancient Greek name for the Black Sea, which at the time was a lake) is astonishingly similar to details confirmed by the physical-geological evidence of the Dardanus Flood, Diodorus Siculus's version of the flood is thought to be in reverse from the actual events. Geophysicists William Ryan and Walter Pitman explain that

... [a] Black Sea lake filled with water to a level well above the Aegean, bursting through into the Bosphorus and flooding the island...is not plausible.... It seems more likely that the ancestors of these people had originally lived by the Black Sea lake shore or in the Bosphorus Valley itself and had witnessed the breaching of the Bosphorus dam and the rush of water from the ocean into the Black Sea. Their fields and homes were inundated, and they fled, eventually settling on Samothrace.... Like almost all people with strong oral traditions whose history is recorded in myths, they would come to identify their origins with this island, claiming they had always lived there, that they had "sprung from the rock." So the legend of their flood, accommodated to their presumed island origin, was inverted, and the water instead of flowing into the Black Sea, was somehow remembered by them to have flowed outward, flooding their Samothrace home ... indelibly implanted in their oral history.⁷²

Diodorus Siculus also forwarded the narrative of Myrina, the legendary queen of the

⁷¹ Skoulikidis, Dimitriou, and Karaouzas, *The Rivers of Greece*, 9-14.

⁷² William Ryan and Walter Pitman, *Noah's Flood: The New Scientific Discoveries About the Event That Changed History* (New York: Touchstone, 2000), 251.

Amazons, who was said to have founded the sanctuary to the Mother of the Gods at Samothrace following her salvation at sea when she was caught in a storm:

[A]fter [Myrina] had offered up prayers for her safety to the Mother of the Gods, she was carried to one of the uninhabited islands; this island ... she made sacred to this goddess, and set up altars there and offered magnificent sacrifices. She also gave it the name of Samothrace, which means, when translated into Greek, 'Sacred Island'.... However, after the Amazons had returned to the continent, the myth relates, the Mother of the Gods ... settled in it certain other people, and also her own sons, who are known by the name of Corybantes ... and she established the mysteries which are now celebrated on the island and ordained by law that the sacred area should enjoy the right of sanctuary.⁷³ (Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.55.8-9)

It's clear here that the notion of earth at Samothrace is critical to the notion of its role as sanctuary at and from the sea. It was the island itself that provided these mythic heroes the original safe haven and sanctuary from deadly waters, serving as the very literal physical manifestation of the Mysteries' salvific function and the basis for its sanctification to the Great Gods. When considered in the context of a Diodorus Siculus reference (*Bibliotheca Historica* 5.48.4-50.1) to Elektra presenting the sacred rites of the "Great Mother of the gods"⁷⁴ at the divine wedding of Harmonia and Cadmus on Samothrace, Myrina offering up prayers for her safety to the "Mother of the Gods," and the consistent depiction of a Kybele-like Great Mother on Samothracian coins, one cannot avoid an association of this Mother presiding over Samothrace with Gaia, Mother Earth, Demeter, Kybebe and Kybele, and the Phrygian goddess of Asia Minor: the view of earth as divine existing within the complex, overlapping traditions of the cult of the Great Mother goddess, Meter.⁷⁵ The myth of the divine marriage connects the cult of

⁷³ Siculus, *Library of History*, 2: 258-61.

⁷⁴ Clinton, "Stages of Initiation," 67.

Meter to Samothrace further with Iasion's seduction of the earth goddess, Demeter, causing Zeus to strike and kill him with lightning.⁷⁶ Burkert elaborates:

The sacred marriage with fatal consequences recalls Ishtar and Meter mythology and may be indicative of unspeakable sacrifice. Others held that it was Dardanos who killed his brother ... [and] fled from the sacred island on a raft, on the occasion of a flood, as is usually noted; he landed on Mount Ida⁷⁷ and ... installed the cult of *Meter Idaie*.⁷⁸

Harkening back to Odysseus' salvation at sea during the tempest, the alternative theory for Iasion's death at the hands of Dardanus and his subsequent flight⁷⁹ to Mount Ida

⁷⁵ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 177.

⁷⁶ Interestingly, no heroic tomb has been discovered on Samothrace, though archaeologists discovered what's been nicknamed, the "Samothracian enigma"—an apparent entrance to a Bronze Age tholos tomb built within a retaining wall near structures previously identified as ritual dining rooms (Figure 36, #8, #10), complete with rough Cyclopean masonry, a large fieldstone lintel, and a relieving triangle formed by two sandstone blocks. Further investigation revealed that no tomb lain within and the "tholos" instead belonged to the Hellenistic era (ca. 350-250 B.C.E). The dating and style of this "Mycenaeanized" entrance has become closely associated with Iasion, leading James McCredie to suggest that the monument served as the cenotaph of Iasion, who was vaporized by a thunderbolt from Zeus and thus did not require a proper tomb. James R. McCredie, "A Samothracian Enigma," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 43, no. 4 (1974): 458-9, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147491>; idem, "Recent Investigations in Samothrace," ed. Ulf Jantzen, in *Neue Forschungen in Griechischen Heiligtümern. Internationales Symposium in Olympia Vom 10. Bis 12. Oktober 1974 Anlässlich Der Hundertjahrfeier Der Abteilung Athen Und Der Deutschen Ausgrabungen in Olympia, proceedings of International Symposium in Olympia, Greece* (Tübingen, Germany: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1976), 98-9; and Susan E. Alcock, "The Heroic Past in a Hellenistic Present," in *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography*, ed. Paul Cartledge, Peter Garnsey, and Erich S. Gruen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁷⁷ Here the reference is to Mount Ida in the Troad.

⁷⁸ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 284.

⁷⁹ The story of Odysseus evidently became closely associated with the Samothracian Mysteries, revealing a striking analogy to Dardanus in their respective departures from islands on rafts at the time of great floods with the protection of the Great Gods.

threads together two of the three central details known about the elusive Samothracian initiation rituals:

First, the priest asks the initiand what is the worst deed that he has ever committed in his life. This question is intended, it seems, not so much to elicit a confession of sins as to establish complicity, thereby securing unbreakable solidarity. Second, the initiates wind a purple sash around their bodies; this presupposes undressing and probably a bath.... [Accordingly,] the man who has committed the most abominable crime becomes the one who is saved from the flood ... [recalling] the strange question asked at the initiation on Samothrace, and also the saving of Odysseus, thanks to his raft and the veil of Leukothea.⁸⁰

Contrary to Burkert's disbelief that this question was about soliciting a confession of sins, it seems more likely that this was precisely its purpose. Despite the aforementioned openness of the mystery cults in ancient Greece to individuals from all backgrounds, there were exceptions: "so long as a person had the ability to understand Greek and did not carry the stain of murder on his or her hands, he or she was welcome at Eleusis."⁸¹ Should this rule apply outside of Eleusis to other mystery cult centers at the time, it follows that the question posed to religious pilgrims at Samothrace was precisely to confirm that they were not murderers, and potentially, in sacred reflection of the crime committed by Dardanus against his brother. Critically, the third central detail known about the elusive Samothracian initiation rituals was the gift of magnetized iron rings (Figure 5)—mined and made on Samothrace from the island's iron ore deposits—worn by initiates to connect them with the power and divinity of the Great Mother goddess (Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 6.1042-55). This detail of the rites actually grounds us in the

⁸⁰ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 283-4.

⁸¹ Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination* (West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 109.



Figure 5. Samothracian iron rings, ca. 100-200 C.E., iron, 2.6 cm. x 0.9 cm. x 0.8 cm., 65.1026 (*left*); 1 cm. x 0.6 cm. x 0.7 cm., 70.0860 (*right*). Archaeological Museum of Samothrace, Samothrace. (Courtesy of the American Excavations on Samothrace © New York / Samothrace.)

physical—the subterranean earth of the island—as sacred within the Samothracian Mysteries. As Cole construes this relationship,

There is a tradition that there was a loadstone [a naturally magnetized piece of the mineral magnetite] at Samothrace.... Loadstones were believed to be endowed with magic or divine power. The stone found at the bottom of the *bothros* in the Anaktoron may have been meant to represent a loadstone, symbolizing the power of the divinity whose strength was transmitted to initiates by the iron rings which they wore. In fact, a demonstration of magnetism may have formed one of the secret rites of *myesis* when the initiate acquired an iron ring.... If a loadstone had been discovered at Samothrace in early times, its apparently magic power could be explained only by assuming that it was divine. If the rock itself were considered to be inhabited by a divine power, this might explain why the whole island was considered sacred, and it would also explain why certain rocks, placed at the bottom of the various *bothroi*, one of them located in the southeast corner of the Anaktoron itself, were the objects of special libations. An iron ring, magnetized by the force of the divine loadstone, symbolized the power of the divinity. The initiate who wore the ring ... maintained direct contact with the power of the goddess after leaving Samothrace, and the ring became a token of the protection conferred on the initiate by his initiation.⁸²

In other words, the magnetization of an initiate's iron ring quite literally pulled them physically toward the divine loadstone on Samothrace (in which the Great Gods

⁸² Cole, *Megaloi Theoi*, 30.

dwelled), and also, as Cole observes, metaphorically by signifying the spiritual connection between initiate and the Great Gods.

Intensification of Principle: Samothrace as Ship

With their first step onto Samothrace at the island's harbor, pilgrims would have immediately spotted a wall of immense porphyry rock outcroppings (Figure 6, *top*; Figure 35) jutting out of the banks ahead, echoing the jagged face of Mount Fengári above them and underscoring the earthly element of the all-powerful chthonian *Theoi Megaloi*; additional outcroppings could be found perched majestically on the sanctuary's highly visible western hill (Figure 6, *bottom*), as well as within the Altar Court serving as a sacrificial, monumental altar in the Archaic period.⁸³ Thus, for pilgrims, the promise of sanctuary from the sea was initially experienced upon their safe arrival onto the sacred earth of the island, and their subsequent journeys through the initiatory rites within the Sanctuary to the Great Gods secured each of their fates as one that would not end at sea, but *in the earth* with proper burial; a reminder reverberating through porphyry rock outcroppings seemingly at every turn, and one they could wear on their hand, forged from the divine magnetic ore coursing through the veins of the sacred island. Thus, like the ship upon which these pilgrims arrived, an island represents an anchored existence amidst water, providing security to its passengers through its principal function as stable earth surrounded by volatile waters. Taken together, the vessels and fates of Harmonia, Dardanus, Odysseus, and Myrina established a “root metaphor”—rather, as Stephen Pepper defined, “an area of empirical observation which is the point of origin for a world

⁸³ Karl Lehmann, *Samothrace: A Guide to the Excavations and the Museum*, 6th ed. (Thessaloniki, Greece: Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1998), 89-91.



Figure 6. Porphyry rock outcroppings at Samothrace as visible within the ancient harbor (*top*) and on the sanctuary's western hillside (*bottom*). (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)

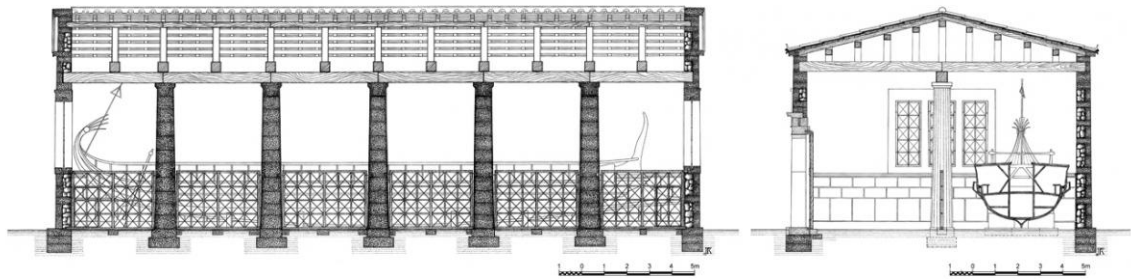


Figure 7. Schematic diagrams of the reconstructed Néorion. A colonnade and wooden grill divided the rectangular building longitudinally into a south aisle, where the ship was displayed, and a north aisle, where visitors could admire the entire length of the vessel. (Courtesy of the American Excavations on Samothrace © New York / Samothrace.)

hypothesis”⁸⁴—within the Mysteries whereby the ancient perception of Samothrace may very well have been that of a ship; a consecrated sanctuary towering above the water promising safety to those who took refuge there.

The ancient perception and metaphor of Samothrace as ship is further reinforced by the 1986 American Excavations discovery of the Néorion (ca. 275-250 B.C.E.), a large dedicatory building designed to prominently display a votive ship (Figure 7). Ancient religious pilgrims would have entered the Néorion through a pair of doors on the building’s long north side to observe the length of the entire vessel, which given the building’s interior dimensions (allowing for an object up to 27 meters (ca. 88 feet) long and no more than 4 meters (ca. 13 feet) wide due to the longitudinal chambers) would likely indicate a smaller warship (such as a *hemiolia* or a *lembos*), but the possibility of other vessel types are not ruled out. Seven Thasian marble supports forming a cradle held the ship, with the central supports still *in situ* (Figure 8), and those supporting the stern and prow are preserved elsewhere. This immense thank-offering stood in close proximity

⁸⁴ Stephen C. Pepper, *Concept and Quality: A World Hypothesis* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1967), 3.



Figure 8. Preserved marble supports of the Néorion's votive ship *in situ*. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)

to the heart of the Samothracian sanctuary and is thought to have been dedicated by Antigonos Gonatas after the victorious naval Battle of Kos in the third-century B.C.E.⁸⁵ As the building was situated on a north-facing terrace, at the time of the building's construction a Hellenistic observer would have had an unobstructed view of the northern Aegean from the Néorion's promenade. This visual presence of a votive ship near the heart of the sanctuary and against the Aegean was likely to invoke the salvific power of the Great Gods at sea for an observer, reinforcing the island's central metaphor as a ship and the original sanctuary. While stone forms supporting ships were located on the island of Thasos and in the Sanctuary of Hera on the island of Samos, the only other known building specifically designed to house and display an entire votive ship is the Monument of the Bulls discovered in the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delos.⁸⁶ While scholars have offered conflicting opinions regarding the exact type of ship displayed within the

⁸⁵ Wescoat, "The Sanctuary and Cult," 57.

⁸⁶ Idem, "Buildings for Votive Ships," 153-72.

Monument of the Bulls, most agree that it was an ancient galley dedicated as a thank-offering to Apollo following the 306 B.C.E. victory of Demetrius I of Macedon (also known as Demetrius Poliorketes) over Ptolemy I at Cypriote Salamis. Despite the rarity of these buildings and of votive ships themselves, it's imperative to note that all three were discovered on islands within the Aegean, each with historical religious traditions honoring various assimilations of the Kabeiroi, Dioskouroi, Kybele, and the Samothracian *Theoi Megaloi*.

Chapter II.

Victory Personified

“The best of artists has that thought alone,
Which is contained within the marble shell;
The sculptor’s hand can only break the spell,
To free the figures slumbering in the stone.”
—Michelangelo⁸⁷

The iconographic personification of victory as a divine, winged woman is perhaps one of the greatest legacies of Greek art and sacred architecture. The earliest literary reference we have of the Greek goddess Nikē comes from Hesiod, where she is introduced as the daughter of the Titan Pallas and Styx, goddess of the river marking the boundary between earth and the underworld, and the youngest sister of Kratos (Strength) Bia (Force), and Zelos (Rivalry). The preface of Gaius Julius Hyginus’ (64 B.C.E.-17 C.E.) *Fabulae* also states that Pallas fathered Scylla, Fontes (Fountains), and Lacus (Lakes) with Styx, giving Nikē and her siblings a deep affiliation with bodies of water, the earth, and the boundaries between life and death. According to later myth (Hesiod *Theogony* 383), Styx brought her daughters into Zeus’s service at the start of the Titanomachy, appointing Nikē his charioteer and a sentinel of Zeus’s throne along with her sisters. Nikē is most closely associated with Athena (the ancient Greek goddess of wisdom, handicraft, and warfare), briefly merging into one figure, Athena Nike, prior to the fifth-century B.C.E. However from the fifth-century B.C.E. on, Nikē reemerged as an

⁸⁷ Michelangelo, cited in René Dubos, *A God Within: A Positive Philosophy for a More Complete Fulfilment of the Human Potential* (New York: Scribners, 1972), 10.

independent identity from that of Athena,⁸⁸ though she coexisted with Athena Nike, patron deity of the Athenians and honored within the Temple of Athena Nike (427 B.C.E.) at the Acropolis.⁸⁹ Friezes on the outer architraves of the Temple depict battle scenes from the Peloponnesian Wars (ca. 431-404 B.C.E.), the land battle of Marathon (490 B.C.E.), and the decisive Greek victory at Plataea over the Persians (479 B.C.E.). As battles that epitomize Athenian and Greek military dominance in the ancient world, depictions of Nikē came to exemplify martial victory, and sculptors attempted to portray her alighting from the sky from the Classical period on; as one author put it, Nikē was in the air both literally and figuratively.⁹⁰ By 470 B.C.E., Nikē was also portrayed in vase paintings and by poets as the divine bestower of victory in athletic and artistic competitions at the Panhellenic festivals encompassing art, music, and poetry, and victory odes from Pindar (ca. 480 B.C.E.) and Bacchylides (ca. 475 B.C.E.) describe Nikē as one who assists Zeus in the judgment of *aretē* (excellence) for gods and men. Consequently, regardless of the artistic medium and its public or sacred installation setting, ancient Greek depictions of Nikē all culminate in a singular motif—indisputable victory—and in regard to sculpture, the techniques with which she was modelled and erected ever-

⁸⁸ E. E. Sikes, “Nike and Athena Nike,” *The Classical Review* 9, no. 5 (1895): 281, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/693294>.

⁸⁹ Nikē was predominately characterized as the “winged victory” goddess. As a statue of Athena Nike in the Temple’s *naos* was absent wings, Athenians came to call her *Apteros Nike* or “wingless victory,” and stories told that the Temple’s statue was deprived of wings so that she could never leave Athens. Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Volume II: Books 3-5 (Laconia, Messenia, Elis 1)*, trans. W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 538-41.

⁹⁰ Tonio Hölscher, “Die Nike der Messenier und Naupaktier in Olympia. Kunst und Geschichte im späten 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.,” *Jdl* 89 (1974): 90.

evolved to become more dynamic, imposing, and realistic: an overwhelming “creature of flesh, drapery and air solidified into marble.”⁹¹

Classical Nikē (500-400 B.C.E.)

“Nikē of Paionios”

Nikē first appeared as naval victory personified in Paionios of Mende’s renowned “Nikē of Paionios” monument at Olympia (ca. 425-420 B.C.E.), erected as a trophy by the Messenians and Naupaktians for their victory as Athenian allies in the Battle of Sphakteria (ca. 421 B.C.E.) on the southwest corner of the Peloponnesus—of which the naval battle was widely considered to be the lynchpin (Figure 9). As the individual or collective memory of any event is arguably malleable, public victory monuments were erected not only to commemorate a historic event, but also unequivocally to solidify the event’s outcome into the collective memory of Greek society. Accordingly, the Greeks went to great lengths to quantify their naval victories with tangible monuments and trophies less vulnerable to degeneration than the human mind: these were physical summations inscribed in stone, bronze, and clay of martial prowess ensuring honor to the victors, and conversely, disgrace to the defeated. Like votive ships, these trophies were also intended as thank-offerings to the god(s) credited with assisting the victors in battle and were regularly installed along sacred ways or centrally within the aiding deity’s

⁹¹ Kristian L. Lorenzo, “Ancient Greek and Roman Naval Victory Monuments” (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011), 93, ProQuest (3488555).

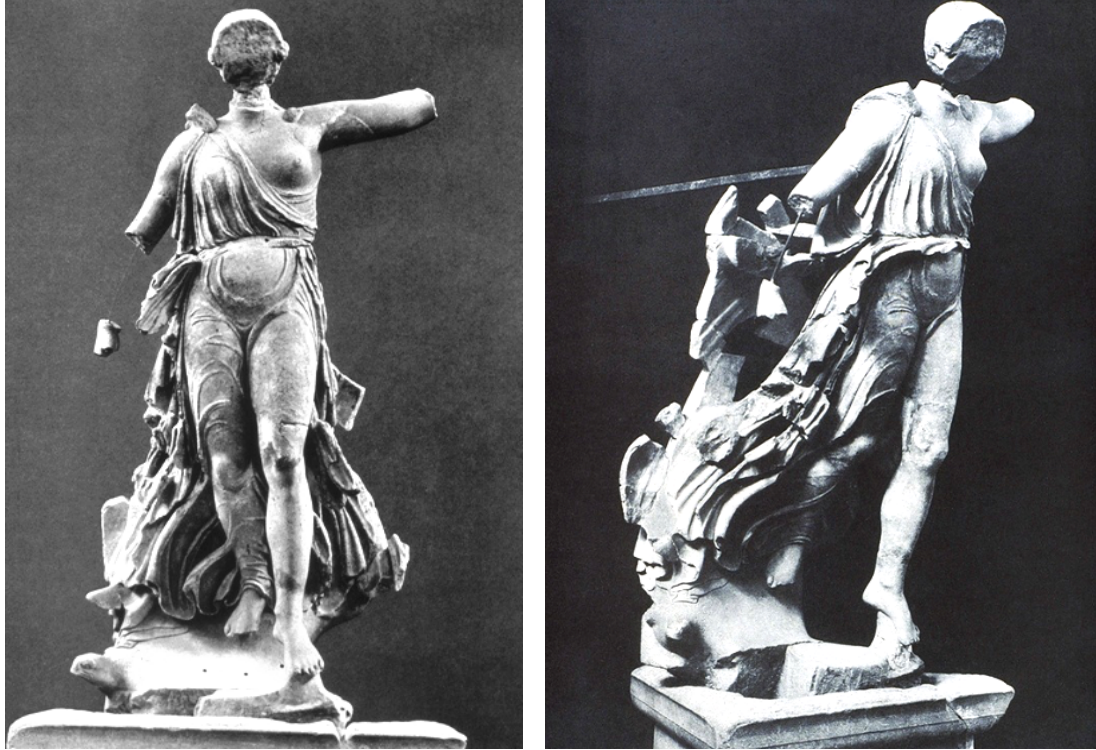


Figure 9. The “Nikē of Paionios” in anterior (*left*) and three-quarter (*right*) views, ca. 425-420 B.C.E., marble, 2.16 m., 159. Archaeological Museum, Olympia, Greece. (Courtesy of ARTstor, Inc.)

religious sanctuary,⁹² guaranteeing visibility, prestige, and a union between martial might and divine space. Thus, much like the mystery cults of ancient Greece, a major function of victory trophies and monuments within sacred settings was to provide a tangible and direct connection between a dedicant and the divine powers responsible for its existence, and to appropriate these divine powers to garner the favor of the gods.

Keeping with these traditions, the “Nikē of Paionios” was constructed using the spoils of war, and scholars consider her placement just east of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia (historically Spartan ground) is considered by scholars as an emphatic act of

⁹² Ibid., 69-182. Five of six naval victory monuments in the Archaic period were in sacred settings; twenty-eight of thirty-six in the Classical period; and six of twelve in the Hellenistic period.

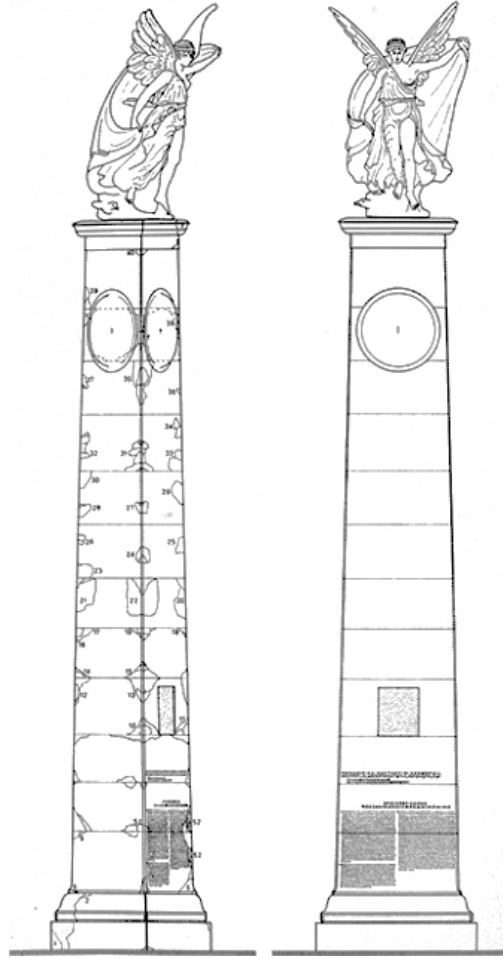


Figure 10. Schematic diagrams of the reconstructed “Nikē of Paionios” and inscribed base. Archaeological Museum, Olympia, Greece. (Courtesy of ARTstor, Inc.)

dominance.⁹³ Represented as descending from the heavens in flight, Nikē is perched above a triangular column upwards of thirty-feet high, seemingly all but independent of any additional support to crown Paionios’s masterpiece (Figure 10). Nikē alights upon the column with her left foot forward in an atypical contrapposto stance,⁹⁴ uneven yet perfectly balanced, surmounting an eagle—Zeus’s animal attribute—at her feet in a mid-air encounter, creating a powerful visual shorthand for the symbolic synthesis of divine

⁹³ Charles Walston, *Alcamenes and the Establishment of the Classical Type in Greek Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁹⁴ Hölscher, “Die Nike der Messenier,” 89-92.

aid from above and victory. The goddess wears a *chiton* (a sewn tunic; here, originally thought to be painted red) that's pinned over her right shoulder, belted at the waist, and lifted slightly by her raised left arm to expose her left breast (Pausanias *Description of Greece, Volume II* 5.26.1). True to her intended scene at sea in forward-moving flight, Nikē's garment appears wet and windswept against her body; the white, fine-grained and diaphanous Parian marble both magnifying the paper-thin effect created where fabric meets flesh and augmenting the weight of the up-curving drapery folds cascading down her back, swirling and suspended in the wind behind her. While Nikē's wings, face, neck, and forearms remain missing (amongst other small pieces), her reassembled figure nonetheless conveys a sense of buoyancy, power, and a seemingly effortless grace. One can only assume that in completed form, soaring thirty-feet above the ground, the "Nikē of Paionios" simply overwhelmed her ancient observer with what Lorenzo calls, "the indelible impression of the onrush of [v]ictory, inevitable and irresistible."⁹⁵

"Nikē of Sphakteria"

The Athenians also dedicated their own monument commemorating the Battle of Sphakteria, known as the "Nikē of Sphakteria," a bronze statue now since melted down. However, using the late-fifth-century B.C.E. sculptural evidence and inscribed decrees of the Nikē in Athena Parthenos's right hand, the Nikai adorning the Temple of Athena Nike, and the eight gilded Nikai situated on the Acropolis, Lorenzo has forwarded a possible recreation of her physical appearance:

The Nike of Sphakteria ... can be reconstructed as a [life-size or over life-size] figure floating forward in a frontal and rigid composition with both arms bent at the elbow, one hand holding an *akroterion*. Like her golden counterparts on the

⁹⁵ Lorenzo, "Naval Victory Monuments," 292.

Acropolis she was fully draped and adorned with a fillet, a *strophion*, bracelets, necklaces, earrings and ornamental pins. Muted in pose but ostentatious in personal decorations, the Nike of Sphakteria presented a conservative traditional image to the viewer, especially since the *stephanos* and *akroterion* she held had been symbols of victory for many years.⁹⁶

Interestingly, the potential depiction of an *akroterion* (defined here as the figurehead of a ship) would serve as the main iconographic indicator of a naval victory versus the potentially ambiguous use of a *stephanos* (a wreath or garland crown awarded to a victor, or representative of a victory more generally). With few extant *akroteria* preserved today, the symbolic importance of displaying a conquered enemy's *akroterion* is nonetheless attested by Plutarch (*Life of Alcibiades* 32.1) and Herodotus (*Histories* 8.121) in their accounts of Greek victories, emphasizing their exhibition as a definitive broadcast of the victor's naval prowess over the defeated. While impossible to know for certain, Lorenzo's approximation of the "Nikē of Sphakteria" as a synthesis of the Nikai found on the Acropolis seems to resonate with the symbols, images, and motifs of naval victory during the Classical period.

Lysander's *Akroteria*

The third classical naval monument where Nikē served as a core element is Lysander's *akroteria* (ca. 404 B.C.E.), is widely considered to have co-opted the visual of Paionios's Nikē. Erected by Sparta's most accomplished admiral to commemorate 'his' (versus Sparta's) victories at the Battle of Notion (406 B.C.E.) and Aigospotamoi (405 B.C.E.), the monument is composed of two *akroteria*, each containing a Nikē

⁹⁶ Ibid., 91. See Lorenzo, "Naval Victory Monuments," 293-7 for a more detailed analysis of the sculptural evidence and inscribed decrees leading to Lorenzo's fusion of the Acropolis's Nikai for an approximation of the "Nikē of Sphakteria."

surmounting Zeus's eagle. Lysander's choice directly to lift imagery from the communal Messenian commemorative monument at Olympia for his own personal dedication on the Spartan acropolis—a deeply religious setting with great cultic significance—was as bold a statement as they come, stridently announcing Sparta's naval superiority over Athens and its allies:

His victory at Notion cancelled Athenian plans for recovering their lost allied cities in Ionia and eventually led to Alcibiades's voluntary exile on the Gallipoli peninsula. His victory at Aigospotamoi shattered the Athenian navy and led to the city's surrender after a prolonged siege. What was once an image of the triumph of the transplanted Messenians over their long-hated Spartan oppressors became one of the many memorials to the defeat of the Athenians and their allies, including the Messenians.⁹⁷ (Pausanias *Description of Greece, Volume II* 3.17.1-6)

Lysander's *akroteria* reclaimed the anti-Spartan imagery of Paionios's Nikē twenty years earlier, transforming it into an anti-Athenian symbol that nonetheless perpetuated the overall visual message of irrefutable victory at sea with divine aid from above.

Hellenistic Nikē (323-146 B.C.E.)

Demetrius Poliorketes Celebratory Coinage

The iconography of Nikē in the Hellenistic period continued to evolve with the first image of her blowing a horn on a ship's prow in triumph on Demetrius I of Macedon's celebratory silver coinage (Figure 11), minted for his naval victory over Ptolemy I at Salamis near Cyprus in 306 B.C.E.⁹⁸ Demetrius I ruled Macedonia from

⁹⁷ Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Volume II*, 102-9.

⁹⁸ Colin M. Kraay and Max Hirmer, *Greek Coins* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966), 174, 574.



Figure 11. Silver tetradrachm of Demetrius Poliorketes with Nikē alighting prow with trumpet (*obverse*) and Poseidon wielding a trident (*reverse*), ca. 300-295 B.C.E., silver, 17.210 g., 1873.0803.1. British Museum, London. (Courtesy of Bibliothèque Nationale de France © Paris, BNF.)

306-283 B.C.E., and who along with his father, Antigonos I, fought in the wars for control over Alexander the Great's empire, earning him the moniker "the Besieger." Renowned from a young age for his naval superiority against rivals in the struggle for power within the Eastern Mediterranean, Demetrius' celebratory silver tetradrachm series features Poseidon, the ancient Greek god of the sea, with trident in hand on one side, and on the other, Nikē alighting the prow of a victorious warship with a trumpet in her right hand and a ship's *stylis* (mast) in her left. Nikē's right leg extends forward in a frontal pose with a slight forward inclination of the body, and her left leg, arm, and wings extend behind her. The goddess wears a *chiton* and *himation* (a cloak wrapped around the waist or hips), whose fabric presses and swirls against her right leg before cascading to her feet, further emphasizing her forward-moving flight atop the prow at sea. Together with Poseidon on Demetrius' celebratory coinage, Nikē's newfound depiction as alighting victoriously on a warship once again creates a powerful symbolic shorthand for divine assistance and victory at sea.

Naval Monuments in Sanctuaries

Around the same time as when Nikē appeared on Demetrius' coinage, we find



Figure 12. Naval monument *in situ* on the agora at Cyrene, Libya. (Courtesy of Creative Commons, Pilar Torres.)

marble fragments of the first fully-sculpted ship's prow carrying a bronze statue dedicated within in the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidaurus (ca. late-fourth-century B.C.E), as well as a relief at the Sanctuary of Athena at Lindos on the island of Rhodes (265-260 B.C.E).⁹⁹ While some have theorized Nikē, Athena, a personification of Demos, or a naval commander¹⁰⁰ as the figure crowning the ship at Lindos, Lorenzo noted that "there is no evidence that the depiction of Nike on a ship's prow or its sculptural

⁹⁹ In addition to the realism created by the sculpted prow fully in the round, we see the integration of imitation wave carvings on the lower-most stone course of the foundational blocks and the ship itself at Epidaurus and on the base of the relief at Lindos, respectively, further creating a sense of movement and forward-momentum at sea.

¹⁰⁰ Olga Palagia, "The Victory of Samothrace and the Aftermath of the Battle of Pydna," in Palagia and Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections*, 159.

counterpart existed before the last decade of the 4th century, or that an example of this imagery was ever made totally out of bronze.”¹⁰¹ Similarly, the stone prow of the naval monument in the agora at Cyrene (ca. 246-221 B.C.E) (Figure 12) carries the statue of a *peplophoros* in a frontal pose with her right leg forward, wearing a *chiton* belted under her breasts and a *himation* wrapped around her left arm and right thigh. However, surviving elements of the statue reconstructed by an Italian excavation team beginning in 1957 make the figure’s direct identification as Nikē unlikely in favor of Athena (as indicated by the remains of a helmet neck-guard as well no indication for wings on the figure’s back), or as principal Italian archaeologist S. Stucchi alternatively forwarded, an Athena Nike.¹⁰² Thus, despite the handful of comparable stone ship monuments stylistically similar to Victory within the Hellenistic period—the monument at Cyrene, arguably the best parallel—none can definitively prove they carried Nikē.

“Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon”

Helping to anchor us stylistically even closer in time to Victory is the “Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon” (Figure 13). Constructed on a terrace of the Pergamene Acropolis in the first half of the second-century B.C.E. by King Eumenes II of the Attalid dynasty, the Pergamon Altar is the structure *par excellence* of the Pergamene school of Hellenistic

¹⁰¹ Lorenzo, “Naval Victory Monuments,” 133.

¹⁰² S. Stucchi, *Cirene 1957-1966: Un Decennio di Attività Della Missione Archeologica Italiana a Cirene* (Tripoli, Libya: N.E., 1967), 84-93. The figure surmounting the monument was originally discovered by an American expedition in 1910, and the location of the base discovered later by the Italian team established that the figure belonged to the same monument. Richard Norton, “The Excavations at Cyrene: First Campaign, 1910-11,” *Bulletin of the Archaeological Institute of America* 2, no. 4 (September 1911): 141-63, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.fl17a7>.

sculpture. Alternatively referred to as “high Pergamene” or, more commonly, as “Hellenistic baroque,” the style is marked by a high degree of subject naturalism and the theatrical representation of, and emphasis on, drama, crisis, and an emotional intensity which creates a vivid sense of reality for the observer.¹⁰³ Further, J. J. Pollitt has described the style as the first and most earnest attempt in art to “probe, capture, and express ... the inner workings of the human mind,”¹⁰⁴ conveying a fascination with the “actions and expressions which accompany the changing psychological states of people who are excited by some strong stimulus.”¹⁰⁵

As such, the Altar is best known for its compelling and dynamic high-relief marble frieze depicting the Gigantomachy—a mythological, primordial battle between the Giants and the Olympic gods for supremacy of the cosmos—stretching nine feet high and three hundred and seventy feet around its base. These massive tableaux come alive with Giants and Gods locked in mortal combat, with details carried to “an unparalleled extreme in order to convey the tension of a cosmic crisis”;¹⁰⁶ highly animated gestures and poses, undulating surfaces and textures, and pronounced musculature, facial, and garment details accentuating a range of emotions (spanning fury, anguish, pain, and fear) from its subjects—barely restrained by the marble walls. As Burkert sees, the “Gods are no longer fixed and motionless objects of veneration; they are drawn into the hurly-burly

¹⁰³ J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 111.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.



Figure 13. Eastern frieze plates of the “Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon” depicting the Theomachia scenes, ca. 170-160 B.C.E., marble, 34.2 m. x 36.8 m., Inv. AvP.III.2, Pl.16.1-16.5. Antikensammlung, The Pergamon Museum, Berlin. (Courtesy of ARTstor, Inc.)

of mythical action.”¹⁰⁷ While the frieze successfully avoids any direct references to specific military campaigns in its depiction of Zeus’s victory over the Giants, some scholars believe that it represents the second-century B.C.E. Attalid victories against the Galatians and Macedonians, and for others, the fifth-century B.C.E. triumphs from Athens.

Of the estimated sixty gods and goddesses that have been identified on the walls,¹⁰⁸ Nikē appears on the right side of the East frieze among the central group of Zeus, Athena, Heracles, and Gaia—mother of the Giants and of the earth. This first and

¹⁰⁷ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 123-4.

¹⁰⁸ Brunilde S. Ridgway, *Hellenistic Sculpture II: The Styles of ca. 200-100 B.C.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 54.

most famous encounter of the frieze includes the critical battle between a winged Giant (usually identified as Alkyoneus) and Athena, patron goddess of Pergamon,¹⁰⁹ who breaks the Giant's contact to the earth. According to legend, Alkyoneus was only immortal so long as he had contact with the ground where Gaia's power could flow through him. An anguished Gaia rises from the earth below and to the right of Athena to touch her robe in supplication for her son, Alkyoneus. Nikē flies diagonally above Gaia to crown the victorious Athena; Nikē's diagonal figure line mirrors that of Gaia and Alkyoneus across the scene, but interestingly, thematically opposite in pathos. Despite the regrettable loss of both Athena's and Nikē's heads, paradoxically, it may be their very absence which heightens the level of emotion conveyed in their figures, intensifying the supernatural drama of the scene—arguably in a way that the presence of the heads could not, similar to the Nikē on Victory. The modelling and exquisite detail of Nikē's wings on Victory are stylistically identical to the wings of Nikē crowning Athena, as well as those belonging to Alkyoneus. Many of the figures (including Athena and Nikē) demonstrate centrifugal torsion, mimicking the complicated forces of movement that create twists, bending torque, tension, and thrust, comparable to the opposing diagonals created by Nikē on Victory, known as conflicting spirals.¹¹⁰ Similarly, there is a fluent

¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, there was a Hellenistic festival at Pergamon recorded in an inscription known as Nikephoria, celebrating Attalid naval victories. Eumenes II reorganized the Nikephoria as a Panhellenic festival in 181 B.C.E. Elizabeth Kosmetatou, "Eumenes II," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 1st ed., eds. Roger S. Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craige B. Champion, Andrew Erskine, and Sabine R. Huebner (West Sussex, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 2557, doi:10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah09108.

¹¹⁰ Rhys Carpenter, *Greek Sculpture: A Critical Review* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 201.

sculptural translation of weathering elements on clothing, and subsequently, the effect of weathered garments against flesh on many of the Great Altar's figures; notably, the force of wind against the deep and shallow folds of drapery, with meticulous modelling of the naked body through seemingly semi-transparent fabric.

Chapter III.

The “Winged Victory of Samothrace”

“Samotraki, April 15, 1863

Monsieur Marquis,

While searching today, I just found a statue of the Winged Victory (according to its appearance), in marble and with colossal proportions. Unfortunately[,] I have neither head nor arms, unless I can find pieces by rummaging in the surrounding area. The rest, that is to say the part between the bottom of the breasts and feet (2.10m) is almost intact and treated with an art that I have never seen surpassed in any of the beautiful Greek works that I know; even by the reliefs of the Wingless Victory or Caryatids of the Erechtheion at Parthenon. The draperies are just what one can dream of more than beautiful: it is the marble chiffon stuck by the wind on living flesh; all without the shadow of a hyperbole.”

—Charles Champoiseau¹¹¹

Following her initial discovery in April 1863, Victory’s assembly, restoration, and historical interpretation amidst unfolding archaeological discoveries and technological advancements has been a slow, incremental process for over one hundred and fifty years (Figure 14). When several of Champoiseau’s workers were charged with excavating an upper terrace toward the southwest corner of the Samothracian sanctuary in April 1863, they discovered the marble sections of a woman’s torso, legs, and several smaller fragments of what appeared to be feathers. Despite the workers’ unsuccessful attempts to locate the woman’s head, arms, and feet after digging further into the terrace,

¹¹¹ Handwritten letter excerpt from Champoiseau to Marquis de Moustier, the Ambassador of France in Constantinople. Hamiaux, “La Victoire de Samothrace,” 155.

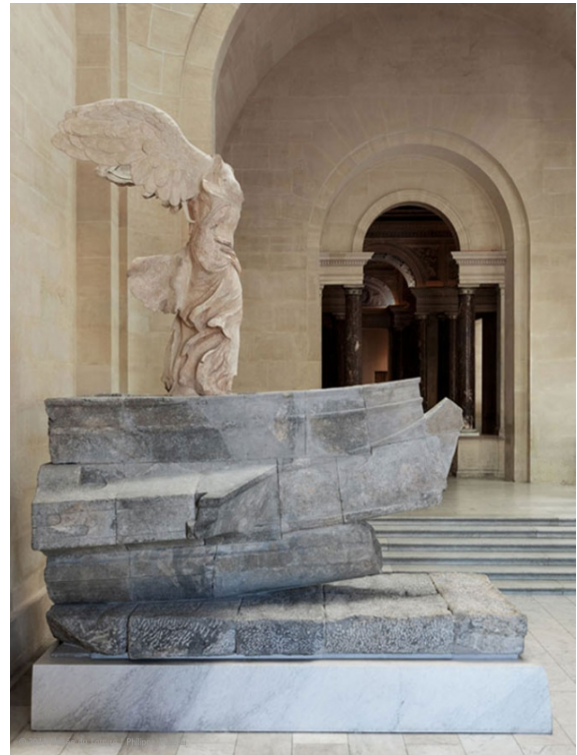


Figure 14. The “Winged Victory of Samothrace” in the round as viewed from the left (*top left*), three-quarter left (*top right*), front (*bottom left*), and right (*bottom right*). (Courtesy of Musée du Louvre / Philippe Fuzeau © 2014.)

Champoiseau knew enough to identify the fragmented statue as a second century B.C.E. representation of a winged Nikē. While there is no firm evidence as to when the monument collapsed, there is general consensus that it was around mid- sixth-century C.E. following a catastrophic earthquake, along with the rest of the sanctuary's structures.¹¹² Beside the statue, Champoiseau also noticed what appeared, potentially, to be the ruins of a small building and a pile of large, grey marble blocks. Thinking they were part of a tomb, he left them in place and sent the main corpus of the discovery to the Louvre Museum in Paris for intensive restoration and reassembly. An Austrian architect working in the sanctuary in 1875 later pointed out Champoiseau's initial misidentification. After analyzing casts of the monument sent from Paris for a better understanding of Victory's initial assembly, the architect compared the positioning of Nikē's upper torso and other body fragments against the victory scene depicted on Demetrius I of Macedon's 306 B.C.E. celebratory silver coinage (Figure 11). Taking the coinage as a model for Victory, the Austrians produced a small-scale version of the monument, concluding that when properly reassembled, the marble blocks appeared to form the prow of a ship, upon which the Nikē statue may have alighted as part of a larger naval victory monument. The Austrian prototype also modelled Nikē blowing a trumpet in her right hand and clutching a *stylis* with her lowered left hand, again, mirroring Demetrius' coinage. Alternative theories were raised that had Nikē's right hand holding a *stephanos*, though the discovery of her right elbow joint and fragmented right hand (Figure 15) during an excavation in 1950 at Samothrace narrowed the possibilities of the

¹¹² Karl Lehmann, "Samothrace: Fourth Preliminary Report," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 20, no. 1 (1951): 12, doi :10.2307/146903.



Figure 15. Right hand of Nikē from the “Winged Victory of Samothrace” in anterior (*left*) and posterior (*right*) views, ca. 190 B.C.E., marble, 28 cm. x 17 cm., MA2369bis/ter. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Courtesy of ARTstor, Inc.)

arm and hand’s final orientation to a raised greeting or announcement.¹¹³ While Nikē’s head, (the majority of her) right wing, left shoulder, and arms have never been located, an intriguing connection back to Myrina—the legendary queen of the Amazons featured in Diodorus Siculus—may offer the closest approximation to Nikē’s original pose. Taking its name from the Amazonian queen, the ancient Greek city of Myrina on the coast of modern-day Turkey has become famous for its Hellenistic terracotta figurines of winged and alighting Nikai, which date from the second century B.C.E. (Figure 16). Given Myrina’s geographical proximity to and mythological connection with Samothrace, it follows that Myrina’s earlier Nikai terracotta statuettes may have served as the inspiration for Victory’s pose and overall visual composition; or perhaps the later ones reflected her.

The impressive Nikē figure of “Winged Victory of Samothrace” by herself

¹¹³ Idem, “Samothrace: Third Preliminary Report,” 20.



Figure 16. “Victory of Myrina” statuettes, ca. 190-180 B.C.E., clay, 25 cm. (left), 27.8 cm. (right), Myr 171. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Courtesy of Musée du Louvre / Erich Lessing © 2018 / ARTstor, Inc.)

measures 2.75 meters (ca. 9 feet), with the monument’s cumulative height increasing to a breathtaking 5.57 meters (ca. 18 feet) when placed upon the prow of her ship and base, dwarfing her restoration team on the landing of the Daru Staircase during her 1883 public unveiling. Created out of several separate blocks prior to her final assembly, Victory’s boat and base were sculpted from a distinctive grey-blue and grey-white-veined Lartos (Rhodian) marble; the warmly-toned white Parian marble was used for the figure of the goddess herself. Like her Classical and Hellenistic counterparts, the Nikē on Victory stands draped in a long and fluttering *chiton* descending from her left shoulder, fastened twice: once visibly by a belt just beneath her breasts, shortening the garment slightly, and once again, invisibly, around her hips (Figure 17). Nikē also wears a *himation* that clings to her right hip and leg: one end of the fabric overflows the contours of her right leg to meet her left, with the other fabric end suspended behind her in the wind like a rudder.

Alterations of heavy and paper-thin drapery were rendered in wrinkles and folds across her abdomen, thigh, and legs, with the fabric slipping to expose the figure's left leg and hip. Nikē's striking pose is elevated by a robust sense of motion and force created by her right leg in its iconic forward stride within natural contrapposto, dynamically complimented by the conflicting spirals created by the opposing diagonals in her wings, legs, and torso. Nikē alights the deck of a triangular and narrow warship known as a *trihēmiolia* trireme,¹¹⁴ complete with oar boxes, oar slots, and an upward-facing battering ram at the front of the prow. Similar to her Hellenistic predecessors, Victory's six foundational slabs are decorated with the rippled pattern of waves, many which show indications of once-attached bronze ornaments, perhaps representing sea life and landscape elements.¹¹⁵ Scholars have debated the warship's exact type, but due to extensive deterioration as well as the limited segment of the ship presented within the totality of the Victory scene, most scholars have settled on the *trihēmiolia* trireme (a lightweight warship common to the Hellenistic period and geographical location of Samothrace), though there is still dissent.¹¹⁶

A Bird of a Different Feather

Despite select iconographic and stylistic similarities with her sculptural predecessors as outlined in Chapter II, several artistic and technical features distinguish

¹¹⁴ Stewart, "Another View," 407.

¹¹⁵ Lauren Kinnee, "The Nike of Samothrace: The Next Generation Attalid Victory Monument?" *Hey! Zeus!* 40, Winter (2002): 43, <http://www.yale.edu/heyzeus/winter2002/nike.pdf>.

¹¹⁶ Stewart, "Another View," 407.

the Nikē on Victory even from her closest Hellenistic counterpart—the renowned Nikē on the Pergamene Altar (Figure 13)—each element exemplifying nothing short of hyperbole, despite Champoiseau’s remark to Monsieur Marquis in his 1863 letter. One such distinguishing feature includes the depiction of compounded environmental forces exerted upon Nikē from multiple axes. As a sizeable creature with forward-flying momentum completing her aerial descent to a forward-sailing ship, several details appear to be a contextual response to the turbulent waves and strong head-wind jostling the ship upon which she alights in the scene: the breadth of Nikē’s stride forward, the shift of her hips and upper body, and the partial extension and orientation of her wings for balance (Figure 17). The compounded forces on Nikē’s composition are particularly evident when examining the size, hyperrealism, and orientation of her wings (Figure 18, *top*). Using feather fragments from her left wing, modern restoration has helped recreate how Nikē’s full wingspan may have looked *in situ*. While her right wing is a mirror-image cast of the left, two surviving fragments from the right wing possess telltale angles that indicate the wing was elevated, slanting upward and outward to reflect the scientifically demonstrated angle of a bird landing from flight:

[Nikē’s] wings seem an enlarged copy of real bird wings, from their curved crests to the joint midway through, to their outspread, textured feathers. However, the feathers lack the regular, fan-like arrangement found in real birds. Instead, they are arrayed at odd and overlapping angles to one another, much like the folds of the drapery. The wings are in use in a real-life situation, thrown out against the real wind ... to affect an imminent landing. This combination of naturalism and exaggerated irregularity in the statue gives it a breathtaking sense of urgency and actuality: this Nik[ē], with her very corporeal body and realistic, non-ideal wings may be an unearthly being, but she is made of the stuff of this world, and the viewer can relate to her here and now.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Kinnee, “The Nike of Samothrace,” 41.



Figure 17. Nikē from the “Winged Victory of Samothrace” isolated in the round as viewed from the left (*top left*), three-quarter left (*top right*), front (*bottom left*), and right (*bottom right*). (Courtesy of Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Thierry Ollivier © 2014.)



Figure 18. Nikē's feather and fabric detail on left wing (*top*) and garments (*bottom*). (Courtesy of Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Thierry Ollivier © 2014.)

These hyperrealistic details continue through the rippling and transparent fabrics sensually clinging to Nikē's muscular, yet voluptuous, physique, as though windblown and wet from the powerful headwinds at sea (Figure 18, *bottom*). While the Nikē on Victory is the epitome of the fully mature, Hellenistic baroque sculptural style, it's clear her sculptor took the Hellenistic depiction of the nude feminine ideal to a new level, imparting an exceptional dimension of eroticism in her overall composition. This detail, again, is conspicuously and progressively distinct from even her closest Hellenistic counterpart—the renowned Nikē on the Pergamene Altar (Figure 13)—as well as the canonical Hellenistic sculptures of goddesses (most commonly, Aphrodite) that developed the nude or semi-draped female body as an erotic, aesthetic ideal—that is, as perceived by a predominately male, heterosexual gaze. This sculptural trend is generally attributed to a shift in the social order of women following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E., which, through the breakdown of colonial influences and the collective pursuit of an ideal city-state, afforded Hellenistic women greater participation (though, not necessarily greater equality) in society, and thereby a new kind of visibility in art.¹¹⁸ This increased visibility went beyond the artistic exploration of the feminine beauty ideal alongside that of the male ideal, to a complete shift in the erotic object of desire from male to female—from homoerotic to heterosexual—as reflected in many of the era's most renowned sculptures. One such work includes the fourth-century B.C.E. “Aphrodite of Knidos” (or Cnidus) by Praxiteles of Athens (Figure 19), credited as the first large-scale sculpture of a nude female as well as the first to depict self-conscious

¹¹⁸ R. R. R. Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture: A Handbook* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014), 75.



Figure 19. Roman copy of the Greek “Aphrodite of Knidos”, ca. 350-330 B.C.E., marble, 2.04 m., Inv. No. 812. Pio Clementino Museum, Vatican City. (Courtesy of ARTstor, Inc.)

female nudity (as expressed by Aphrodite’s right hand positioned over her pubis).¹¹⁹

Positioned in a leaning contrapposto, Praxiteles’s Aphrodite places her *himation* upon a *hydria* (water pitcher) in preparation for a ceremonial bath to renew her virginity, and the slant of the figure’s hips not only creates a sense of equilibrium contrasted by her shoulders, but also emphasizes the sensuality of the goddess. Praxiteles’ sculpture

¹¹⁹ Praxiteles’s Aphrodite was originally commissioned by the island of Kos, but they were so shocked by the goddess’ nudity upon receipt that the work was rejected in favor of a fully clothed version of Aphrodite (Pliny *Natural History* 36.20); the nude sculpture was instead accepted by the city of Knidos, located on the Datça peninsula of southern Turkey.



Figure 20. Roman copy of the Greek “Crouching Aphrodite”, ca. 250 B.C.E., marble, 0.71 m., MA53. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Courtesy of ARTstor, Inc.)

simultaneously portrays an accessible and humanizing view of Aphrodite within an everyday situation, but he is careful to balance the composition with the depiction of a powerful divinity in the process of a ritual act; each perspective seems to render the other erotic due to the goddess’ perceived awareness of spectators to her nudity, suspended in the male gaze. Another Hellenistic Aphrodite type following the Praxitelean nude motif is the “Crouching Aphrodite” (ca. 250 B.C.E.) typically attributed to the Bithynian sculptor, Doidalsas, depicting a nude and voluptuous Aphrodite in a bent position, enabling the goddess to pour water over her back during a ceremonial bath (Figure 20). Doidalsas’ use of a rather unwieldy pose for the goddess, along with the hyperrealistic rendering of fleshy folds around Aphrodite’s midriff, suggest an accessible and



Figure 21. “Aphrodite” or “Venus de Milo”, ca. 130-100 B.C.E., marble, 2.02 m., MA399. Musée du Louvre, Paris. (Courtesy of Musée du Louvre / Anne Chauvet © 2010.)

humanizing view of the goddess like Praxiteles’ Aphrodite,¹²⁰ which is similarly balanced by a power intrinsic to his depiction of her ritual act. While Aphrodite is portrayed as unaware of any spectators, the goddess is not free from the male gaze, as the sculpture’s overall composition still strongly promotes the nude female form as an erotic ideal, just within a naturalized setting. The most eroticized and celebrated of the Hellenistic Aphrodite sculptures, however, is the now-armless “Aphrodite,” better known as the “Venus de Milo” (ca. 130-100 B.C.E.), attributed via its inscribed base to Alexandros of Antioch and popularly thought to depict a semi-nude Aphrodite¹²¹ (Figure 21). Notably

¹²⁰ Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 102.

¹²¹ Discovered on Melos, there is some debate as to whether the sculpture depicts Aphrodite or Amphitrite, the Greek sea goddess venerated on the island and the bride of Poseidon.

classicizing in style, the enigmatic statue portrays a sensual, curvaceous, and elongated topless goddess with a baroque-style *himation* sliding over her hips. Comparable to her nude Aphrodite counterparts, the “Aphrodite of Milos” is independent of other figures with the sculpture’s scene, though hardly independent of the male gaze. Twisted and standing in contrapposto, the goddess simultaneously embodies an air of aloofness, as well as divine power, and the sculptor’s exquisite modeling of her polished flesh starkly contrasts with the depth and folds of her finely detailed drapery. Arguably, Alexandros’s Aphrodite best exemplifies the Hellenistic perception of the nude and divine female form as the erotic ideal, and, as such, is perhaps the closest in composition and style to the level of eroticism, power, and elegance captured in the Nikē on Victory. Nonetheless, one must consider the artistic rationale behind each of these works and the intentions of their sculptors to capture or capitalize upon an intrinsic pathos belonging to the figures they depicted; rather, the artistic decision to epitomize a heterosexual, erotic ideal within a nude or semi-draped rendering of Aphrodite—the ancient Greek goddess of love, beauty, pleasure, and procreation—is perhaps a natural and expected one, and arguably far more so than a highly-eroticized rendering of a fully-clothed Nikē.

However, the artistic rationale behind Victory’s hypersexualized Nikē and the possible intentions of her sculptor to depict her as such becomes clearer when examined more fully through the interface between an erotic archetype and a religious ideal. Lacking a true iconographic and stylistic sculptural comparand for the Nikē on Victory, consider instead what may be her descendant almost two millennia later—John Singer Sargent’s “Death and Victory” (1922): a two-paneled mural commissioned for the stairway of Harvard University’s Widener Memorial Library to commemorate alumni



Figure 22. “Death and Victory”, John Singer Sargent, 1922 C.E., oil on canvas, 439.4 cm. x 186.7 cm., L109. Widener Memorial Library, Harvard University, Cambridge. (Photo by author.)

who fought and died in World War I (Figure 22). Suspended center in the mural’s left panel hangs a mortally wounded male soldier, fervidly clutching an ascendant and winged victory with his right arm as his left clasps a shrouded figure of Death, choking the soldier. Beneath the soldier’s feet lies the body of a slain German private on the battlefield, and above the central group, angels blow trumpets in exultation. Draped only in a baroque-style *himation* caught by her hips shifted in contrapposto, Sargent’s winged victory floats bare-chested, raising a palm branch—a historical motif of martyrdom—in her right arm, arching backwards seemingly in ecstasy. Interestingly, while the face of Death is hidden, the figure’s rather somber and chilling depiction is balanced by the borderline euphoric expressions exhibited on the winged victory and the dying soldier

pressed against her chest. Rendered in luminescent golds, Sargent's winged victory appears in stark contrast to the predominately muted blue and brown tones comprising the two-panel mural, inevitably drawing the observer's eye directly to her figure and the power she holds in the scene. In its totality, the crux of the mural's message lies not just in Sargent's eroticization of the winged woman, but in the direct eroticization of the soldier's death in the pursuit of victory, further encapsulated by Sargent's caption engraved below the mural: "Happy those who with a glowing faith in one embrace clasped death and victory." Thus, given the mural's title, caption, iconographic and stylistic similarities, and the chronological proximity between the mural's debut in 1922 and Victory's 1883 public unveiling at the Louvre in Paris—a cultural epicenter of the Western world—it's possible Sargent used the representation of Nikē on Victory as a direct inspiration for his eroticized winged woman.

This linkage of women with sexuality, and female sexuality with death is an ancient and virtually ubiquitous concept across cultures, beginning with earth's identification as female; the womb through which all life is birthed, and to which all things return in death (the prelude to rebirth). This cyclical association fundamentally denies the permanence of death, and in ancient mythology, is explicitly connected with the winged goddesses of the ancient Near East, such as Inanna/Ishar, as well as Isis, the winged goddess who resurrected her husband and divine king of Egypt, Osiris. As Serinity Young elaborates in her 2018 book, *Women Who Fly: Goddesses, Witches, Mystics, and Other Airborne Females*:

In [Isis] we find the earliest articulation of the powers and features of winged goddesses: they can resurrect the dead and grant immortality; they travel to and from the Land of the Dead; they form relationships with particular men (kings or heroes); they confer sovereignty; and they protect children and therefore fertility.

Near Eastern winged goddesses are sexually active, and their celestial nature, combined with their earthly appearances, enabled them to mediate between divinities and humans, transforming the latter into the former through immortality.... [Isis] could grant immortality first to nobles who had received the proper funerary rites and ... funeral rites were—and continue to be—linked with fertility, the denial of death, and the affirmation of new life.... It is women who bring one to life and women who prepare one to leave it; ... an assertion of women's knowledge and control of these transitions.¹²²

The winged or flying war goddess motif linked with death and immortality is also present within the cultural traditions of the Nordic Valkyries as well as the Hindu and Buddhist *apsarās*, *yoginīs*, and *ḍākinīs*, each often portrayed as complex figures who protect warriors and confer victory while “demonstrating their powers of fertility through sexual relationship with kings and warriors.... [They encompass] the two forms of potential disorder and violence—sex and war.”¹²³ Sargent's eroticized rendering of his winged victory, in relation to the martyred soldier who grasps this voluptuously rendered figure, perfectly captures this connection in its depiction of the chivalric or noble victim of war, commonly glorified within the Indo-European and Christian ideological traditions. In stark contrast to this sociopolitical eroticization of victory in death, though, is the ancient Greek perception of death as examined in Chapter I. Representative of disorder, chaos, and a severe pollution of the existential condition, the notion of death in ancient Greece was the very antithesis of erotic. Given the direct and enduring link between the power of divine women over sexuality and death in religious traditions, it follows that the power of those goddesses would actively be curbed within a culture that views the association as

¹²² Serinity Young, *Women Who Fly: Goddesses, Witches, Mystics, and Other Airborne Females* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 30-3.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 36-8.

problematic within the context of their religious values. Like Isis and the other winged women of the Near East, Young remarks that

... [t]he ancient Greeks had equally complex winged females linked with the dead such as the vengeful Furies, the terrifying Gorgon Medusa, the melodious Sirens, the life-snatching Harpies ... the riddling Sphinx ... the war goddess Athena, the love goddess Aphrodite, and the fertility goddess Artemis, all of whom had ancient avian attributes. Over time, the original animal forms of deities were changed into anthropomorphic images; in the case of avian deities, wings were added to their humanized forms. Later iconography dropped the wings, though avian characteristics were remembered through epithets, such as “owl-eyed Athena”.... Underneath the mythologies of classical Greece are archaic, often Minoan or Asiatic, forms of female divinities that became problematic as the religious values of Greek culture evolved in favor of patriarchy. Like Istar, their powers would be contained. *With the exception of Nike, who primarily served patriarchal military ends and the athletic contests that were their training ground, the male defeat or rejection of ancient aerial females is a ubiquitous theme in Greek mythology.*¹²⁴

As the goddess charged with judging the aforementioned notion of *aretē*, closely accompanied by the concept of *agōn* (struggle, contest, and competition)—each were considered essential and idealistic components of all spheres in ancient Greek life, be it war, sport, or art—Nikē exemplified triumph: namely, the greatest height to which mortals could aspire via *aretē*, as extolled by Pindar in his victory odes, and an ideological purpose worthy enough to avoid domestication and keep her wings within the patriarchal Greek pantheon. As the embodiment of the ancient Greek triumph ideal and in conjunction with Nikē’s chthonian roots, the depiction of the Nikē on Victory actually works in tandem with the ancient association of female sexuality and death, as her eroticization is directly representative of her divine power to confer victory, and therefore, to *deny death*—both in the immediate and physical sense, as well as the long-term with an assurance that one’s reputation would be forever renowned in memory—

¹²⁴ Ibid., 41-2, emphasis added.

klēos (glory, reputation, or immortal remembrance). Further, when considered within the eschatological context of the mysteries of initiation and where she would have been observed *in situ* at Samothrace, Nikē's portrayal as alighting on the prow of a ship—again, an iconographic indicator of assured naval victory—could be interpreted by those recently initiated as a literal triumph over the risk of drowning, simply by virtue of prevailing in battle: *those who were victorious at sea in battle had, by definition, not drowned*. Accordingly, the representation of Nikē on Victory personifies the very antithesis of the ancient Greeks' two greatest, personal existential defeats in the cultural imagination—death in general, and death by drowning in particular—thereby capturing the very pinnacle of eroticism from the perspective of the predominately male, heteronormative gaze of initiates into the Mysteries at Samothrace: certain triumph.

The artistic hyperbole demonstrated in Nikē's figure continues with her sculptor's use of relative scale. A 1982 reconstruction of Nikē's ship base by André Sleeswyk indicated that Victory's warship is approximately one-fifth the true size of a *trihēmiolia* trireme, which, if imagined at full-size, would scale the already massive nine-foot marble Nikē to a towering forty-five foot high goddess in the flesh within the nautical setting depicted by the monument.¹²⁵ The unnatural ship-to-goddess ratio thus creates a visual discrepancy that adds to the "spectacle" value of the monument, simultaneously enhancing her otherworldliness, while counteracting the effects of foreshortening—rather, "the distortion that is seen by the eye when an object or figure is viewed at a

¹²⁵ André W. Sleeswyk, "The Prow of the 'Nike of Samothrace' Reconsidered," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 11, no. 3 (1982): 238, doi:10.1111/j.1095-9270.1982.tb00083.x.



Figure 23. Victory's relative scale in proportion to an average observer. The cement block between Nikē and her ship—inserted during a 1930s restoration effort for better visibility from the bottom of the Daru Staircase—was removed during the 2013-14 restoration. However, to maintain proportional accuracy, a marble base slab comparable in height to the cement pedestal was placed under Victory's original base block in 2014. (Courtesy of Creative Commons, Thomas Ulrich.)

distance or at an unusual angle”¹²⁶—as experienced from an observer's perspective at ground or eye-level, looking skyward. Because an observer inevitably perceives the scale of a sculpture and its features against their own physical dimensions, the emotional and visceral impact of an immense figure versus one proportionally in scale to the human figure is very different (Figure 23). Similarly, as a monument intended for observation in the open air and against the sky, Victory's sculptor must also have considered the relative scale of the monument's surroundings against those of Nikē's figure itself. As a goddess appearing to conclude her descent from the heavens, to an observer on the ground, Nikē

¹²⁶ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Foreshortening,” accessed August 25, 2018, par. 2, <https://www.britannica.com/art/foreshortening>.

must be closer in scale proportionally to the breadth of the sky than with her ship or observer in order to successfully visually integrate within the monument's vertical axis. Further, according to the hierarchical principle of sculptural design, the relative scale of a figure within a sculpture's composition is often determined by its importance to the overall scene; Nikē's hyperbolic measurements relative to the ship she blesses emphasize that without her divine assistance, there would have been no naval victory, and consequently, no commemorative monument. Sleeswyk's reconstruction also demonstrated that, while too narrow to be a functional warship, Victory's prow was instead deliberately tapered and pitched at a slight upward angle for two purposes: first, to give the observer a dynamic sense of quasi-interactive experience with the forward motion at the ship's theoretical waterline,¹²⁷ and second, to help counterbalance the weight in relation to Nikē's position on the prow. Workers first discovered the criticality of Nikē's mathematically precise size-to-placement ratio on her twenty-three-block base (seventeen ship blocks standing on a rectangular pedestal of six adjoining base slabs) at Victory's first full reassembly in the 1879 Louvre courtyard:

[A] gap at the back of the [monument's] top level ... housed a large block weighing slightly over two metric tons, left in Samothrace, with a cavity into which the [monument] was slotted. When the block was in place, it acted as a counterbalance for the oar boxes extending from the sides of the ship.... [Nikē's size and placement on this particular block] thus played an essential role in maintaining the balance of the work as a whole. It could not be shifted without the entire front of the ship collapsing.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Sleeswyk, "Nike of Samothrace" Reconsidered," 238.

¹²⁸ Cécile Dégremont, "A Closer Look at the Victory of Samothrace," Musée du Louvre, last modified 2008, par. 22-3, http://musee.louvre.fr/oal/victoiredesamothrace/victoiredesamothrace_acc_en.html.

Environmental Setting

Further examination of Victory's structural and artistic details strongly indicates that her sculptor also considered the natural environment of her larger setting at Samothrace. Hellenistic observers would have had an unobstructed view of the northern Aegean from various points inside the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, to include within the Nikē Precinct—Victory's ancient installation location—topographically situated at the highest point within the sanctuary. The precinct itself is located in the southwest corner of the sanctuary, overlooking the theater and Altar Court immediately ahead and below it, creating an architectural, unified building complex acting as “a type of lynchpin that pivots away from the central sanctuary and towards the western hill”¹²⁹ (Figure 24). The recent discovery of an ancient platform between the theater and the Altar Court bridging the sanctuary's central ravine (Figure 25) indicate the two structures were originally at about the same ground level (Figure 26), suggesting close communication between the structures, particularly due to their chronological and topographical proximity¹³⁰ to and orientation with each another and the Nikē precinct.¹³¹

Set into a rock architectural dugout of a hill, Victory's precinct consisted of two adjacent rectangular basins (Figure 27); the lower and smaller basin contained large

¹²⁹ Jess Paga, “Why Did the Initiate Cross the Ravine? Understanding the Altar Court and Theater,” *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog), accessed August 25, 2018, par. 4, <https://samothrace.emory.edu/2471-2/>.

¹³⁰ Maggie L. Popkin, “Samothracian Influences at Rome: Cultic and Architectural Exchange in the Second Century B.C.E.,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 119, no. 3 (July 2015): 363, doi:10.3764/aja.119.3.0343.

¹³¹ “Altar Court (14),” *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog), accessed August 25, 2018, <https://samothrace.emory.edu/altar-court/>.

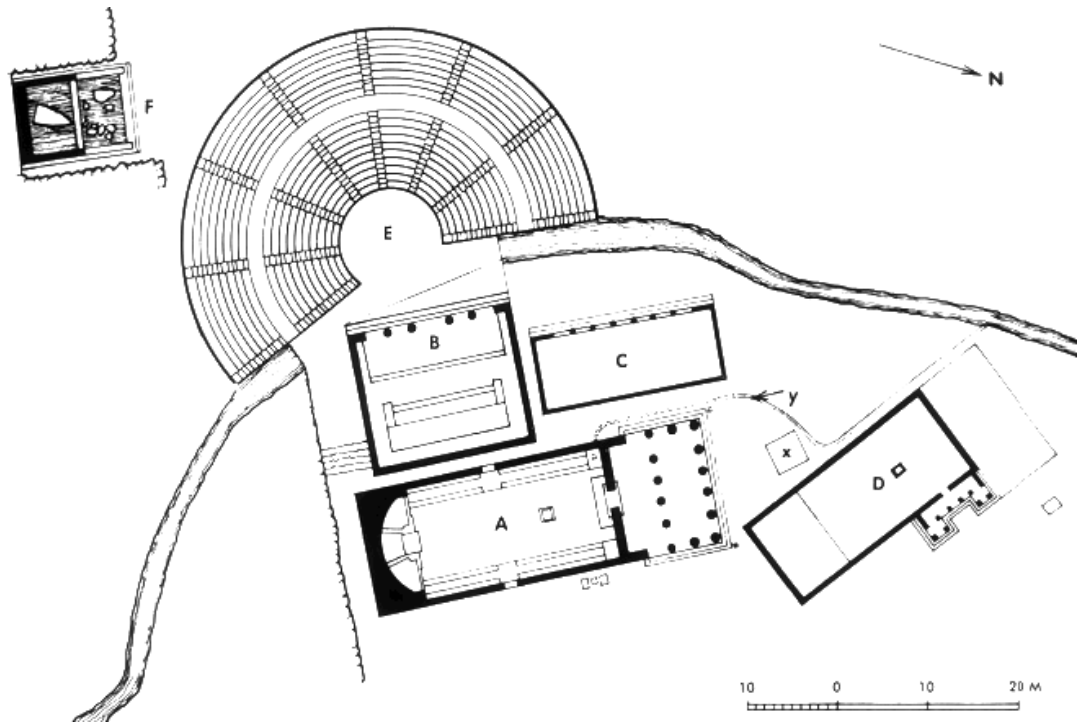


Figure 24. Sketch plan of the area comprising the theater complex within the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace in the late second-century B.C.E.: A, Hieron; B, Altar Court; C, Hall of Votive Gifts; D, Hall of Choral Dancers (western chamber); E, Theater; and F, Nikē precinct. (Courtesy of ARTstor, Inc.)



Figure 25. Aerial view of the recreated modern platform bridging the central ravine to connect the Altar Court and theater. (Courtesy of the American Excavations on Samothrace © New York / Samothrace.)

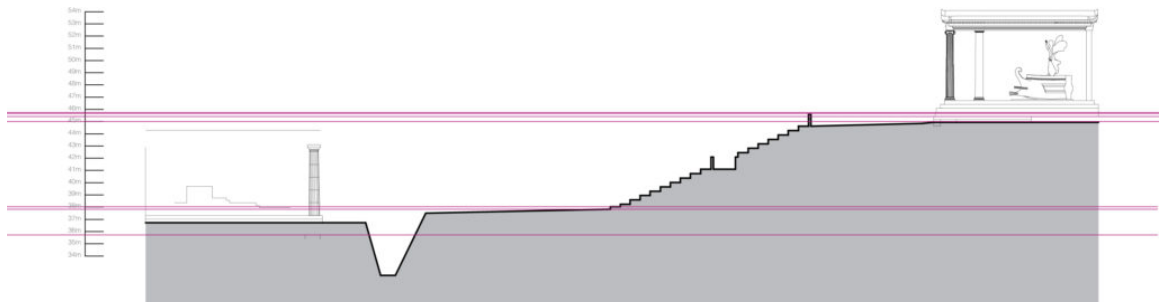


Figure 26. Schematic projection of ancient ground levels within the theater complex. Projections indicate that ground levels in the second-century B.C.E. (*pink lines*) were well above modern day due to erosion from seasonal flooding on Samothrace. (Courtesy of Chase Mitchell Jordan / the American Excavations on Samothrace © New York / Samothrace.)



Figure 27. Video pan of the Nikē precinct, capturing the upper and lower basin, with the latter's large boulders visible in the foreground. Video can be viewed externally at vimeo.com/286928438. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)

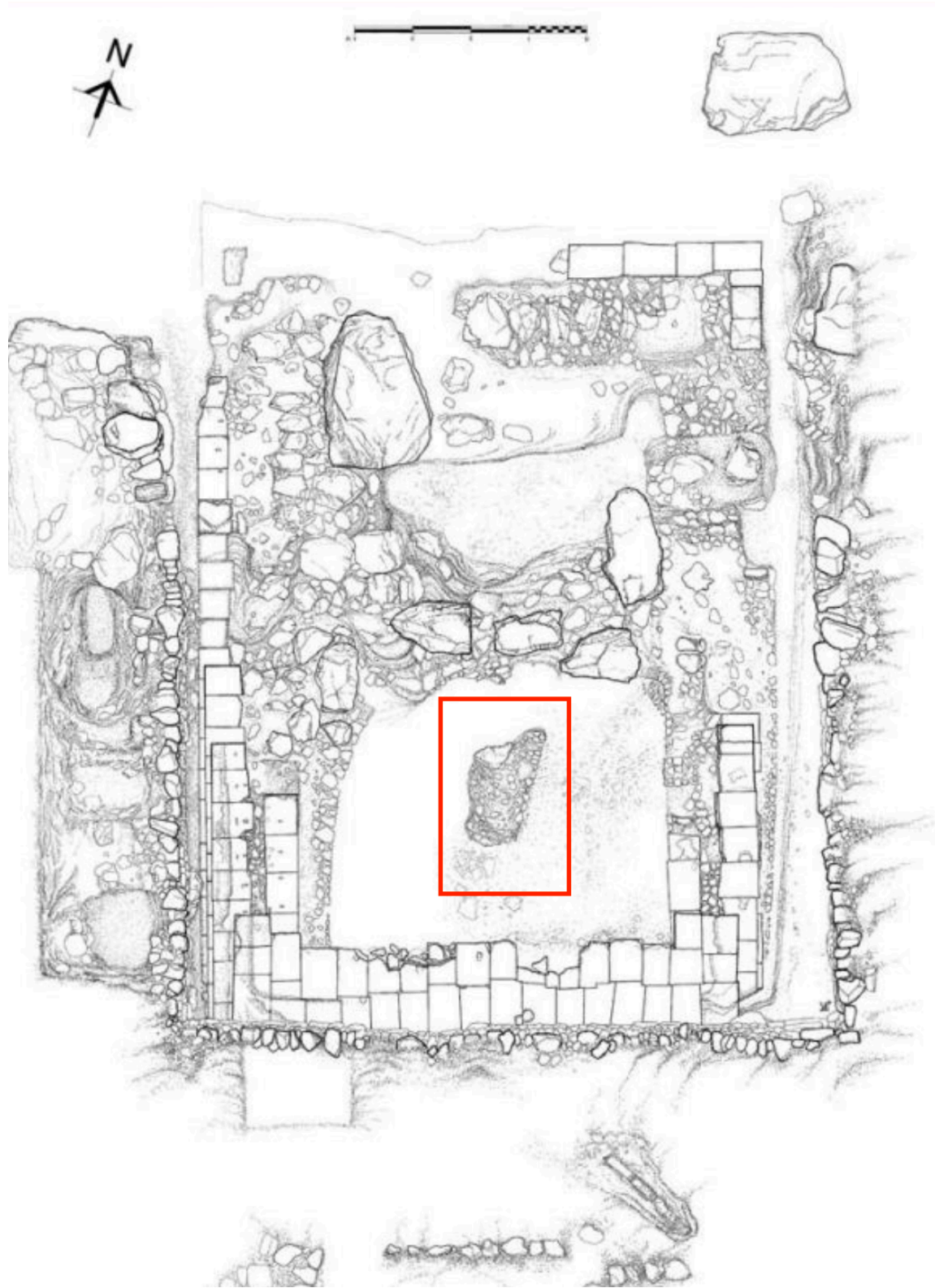


Figure 28. Schematic diagram of the Nikē precinct and the ancient position of Victory (*red box*). (Courtesy of the American Excavations on Samothrace © New York / Samothrace.)

boulders, while the upper and larger basin contained Victory within a horseshoe-shaped alcove, erected at an oblique angle to point true north (Figure 28).¹³² The angled placement made Nikē's left side, or her three-quarter view (Figure 17, *top right*), the primary and ideal viewpoint of the monument, as the statue's granular detail is viewed most clearly from one side. Given the exceptional state of the monument's surface marble combined with the discovery of simple ashlar, the remains of various corner plaster, a plaster ovolo (a type of cornice) and ornamental fragments, and several pieces of blue/white plaster shaped with drafted margins,¹³³ archaeologists have suggested that Victory may have been set within a covered *naiskos* (Figure 29, *right*) versus framed by an open *peribolos* (Figure 29, *left*). Towering eighteen feet above her precinct, not only would Victory have had a crystal-clear view across the Aegean (Figure 30) (and possibly visible from the sea to incoming ships), but also she would have been subjected to the near gale-force winds (Figure 31, *right*), regularly pounding the island from the northeast (Figure 31, *left*). Critically, while Nikē, her ship, and its foundational slabs point true north, her *himation* clings unfastened to her *right* side from a northeastern angle, pressed and immobilized against her figure by the strength of the wind alone (Figure 14, *top right*). Consequently, while current archaeological evidence supports either the *peribolos*

¹³² Following Karl Lehmann's re-excavation and graphic reconstruction of Victory and her precinct in 1973, it was hypothesized that the lower basin contained a fountain-like structure over which the monument appeared to sail from the upper basin, though recent studies have definitively ruled out this possibility. Hamiaux, "The Context," 166.

¹³³ Wescoat, "Thoughts on the Design," 177. Interestingly, Wescoat notes that the most suggestive evidence of a *naiskos* are the blue and white plaster fragments (shaped with a technique generally reserved for interior design), though, none of the plaster remains have proven decisive in determining which architectural framing theory is correct.



Figure 29. Architectural framing simulations for the Nikē precinct modeling the *peribolos* (left) and *naikos* (right) theories. (Courtesy of Chase Mitchell Jordan / the American Excavations on Samothrace © New York / Samothrace.)



Figure 30. View from approximately ten feet above the Nikē precinct facing north. The top of Victory would have soared another eight feet higher than this perspective captures, as well as had an unobstructed view of the Aegean in Hellenistic times. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)

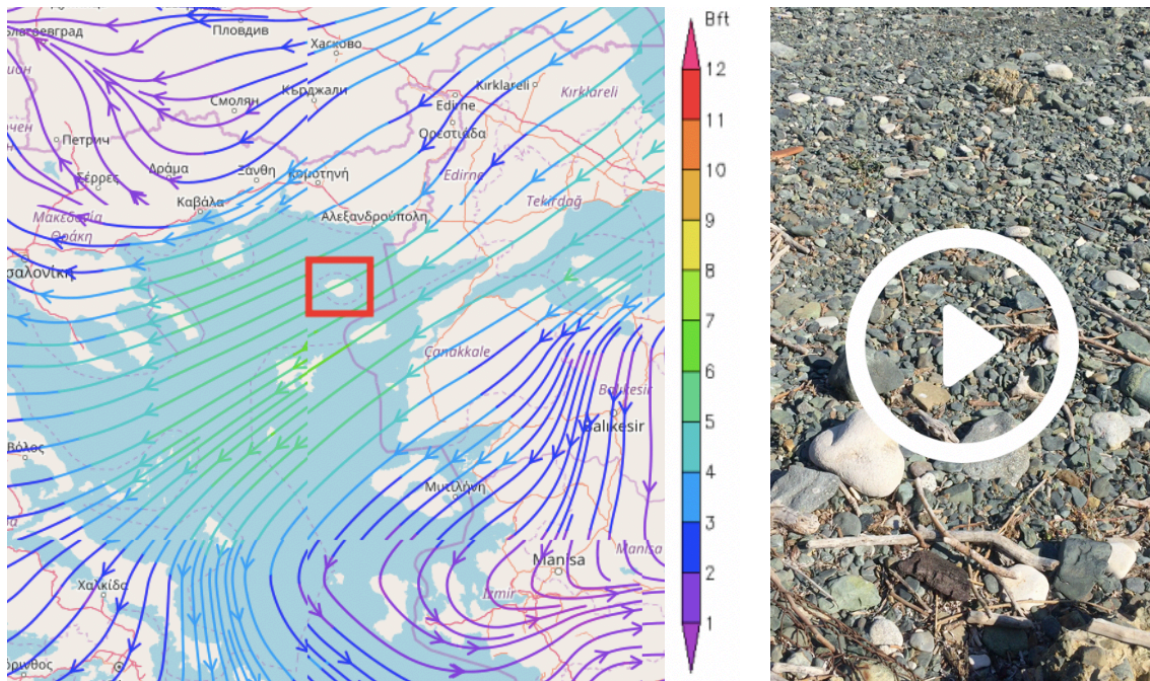


Figure 31. Northeasterly winds striking Samothrace (left, red box) as illustrated on a meteorological pattern map of the Aegean (left) and as captured on video (right). Video can be viewed externally at vimeo.com/286931647. (Courtesy of OpenSeaMap and Charles O. Griffin.)

or *naiskos* architectural framing theory within the Nikē precinct,¹³⁴ given the level of context-based artistry demonstrated on Victory, I believe it's more likely that her sculptor intended her to be viewed in the open, and in direct conversation with her natural surroundings, as made possible by the *peribolos* model. Taken collectively, these feats of artistry, geophysical engineering, and environmental dependencies are clear indications that Victory's sculptor purposely took into account the eschatological concerns and gendered, almost certainly predominately male demographic of the monument's expected audience, as well as the unique environment and installation location on Samothrace: indications that Victory, the hillside on which she was installed, and the specific gaze of her Hellenistic observer *in situ* were ultimately intended to function as an indivisible structure within a complete scene.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Chapter IV.

The Initiate Experience

“Γιατί τα σπάσαμε τ’ αγάλματά των
γιατί τους διώξαμεν απ’ τους ναούς των,
διόλου δεν πέθαναν γι’ αυτό οι θεοί.
Ω γη της Ιωνίας, σένα αγαπούν ακόμη,
σένα η ψυχές των ενθουμούνται ακόμη.
Σαν ξημερώνει επάνω σου πρωί αυγουστιάτικο,
την ατμοσφαίρα σου περνά σφρίγος απ’ την ζωή των,
και κάποτ’ αιθερία εφηβική μορφή,
αόριστη, με διάβα γρήγορο,
επάνω από τους λόφους σου περνά.

That we’ve broken their statues,
that we’ve driven them out of their temples,
doesn’t mean at all that the gods are dead.
O land of Ionia, they’re still in love with you,
their souls still keep your memory.
When an August dawn wakes over you,
your atmosphere is potent with their life,
and sometimes a young ethereal figure,
indistinct, in rapid flight,
wings across your hills.”

—Constantine Cavafy, “Ionian Song”¹³⁵

Before they even departed their homes, pilgrims undertaking the journey to Samothrace were forced to face the very fear they were travelling to assuage—the threat one would perish at sea. Of a seafaring profession or not, every individual seeking initiation into the Mysteries of the Great Gods at Samothrace had to endure the dangerous journey across the Aegean to their intended destination, just as their cultic heroes had

¹³⁵ J. Phillipson, *C.P. Cavafy Historical Poems: A Verse Translation with Commentaries* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2013), 5.



Figure 32. Panoramic view of a nautical approach to Samothrace. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)

done previously during the storms and devastating floods in antiquity. One may recall that a critical component of Kaelber's tripartite framework for initiation into a mystery cult in Chapter I included ritual operations on the body and the presence of ordeals,¹³⁶ which in the case of the Samothracian Mysteries arguably included the voyage to Samothrace:

The physical and mental preparation for [the journey] ... along with its dangers, pleasures, and difficulties, was as significant as the sacred event ... [they] had set out to witness.¹³⁷

Approaching the island from a distance (Figure 32, Figure 33), Samothrace towered above the seemingly endless miles of rough water and strong winds encircling their ships, grounding them visually with the imminent promise of safety on the earth. Further, according to Clinton, the Roman scholar Varro "assigns to Samothrace the union of Earth and Sky, who are, he says, *Dei Magni*, Great Gods"¹³⁸ (Figure 34). Comparably, the

¹³⁶ Kaelber, "Men's Initiation," 4480.

¹³⁷ Petridou, "Power of Ritual Viewing," 315.

¹³⁸ Marcus Terentius Varro, *De Lingua Latina Libri* 5.57-8, cited in Clinton, "Stages of Initiation," 68.



Figure 33. Video pan of a nautical approach to Samothrace. Video can be viewed externally at vimeo.com/286932849. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)



Figure 34. Convergence of clouds above Samothrace screening Mount Fengári as seen from a nautical approach. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)



Figure 35. Porphyry rock outcroppings at Samothrace within the ancient harbor. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)

resemblance of the island's silhouette to a ship is unmistakable; the island appearing to float upon the water's surface with the sky soaring above it, providing an earthly deck upon which its inhabitants sailed.

Stepping into the harbor at Samothrace, prospective initiates would have immediately spotted and been dwarfed by the aforementioned wall of porphyry rock outcroppings (Figure 6, *top*; Figure 35) projecting from the hillside preceding them: they were an immediate and powerful visual reminder of the all-powerful, chthonian *Theoi Megaloi*. Despite the sanctuary's relatively close proximity to the ancient harbor, after completing the first leg of an arduous journey at sea, pilgrims had to prepare themselves for the second onerous stretch on foot from the harbor to the sanctuary's entrance. Nestled at the convergence of three deep mountains, access to the sanctuary required pilgrims first to navigate several plunging hillsides before entering on an eastern plateau

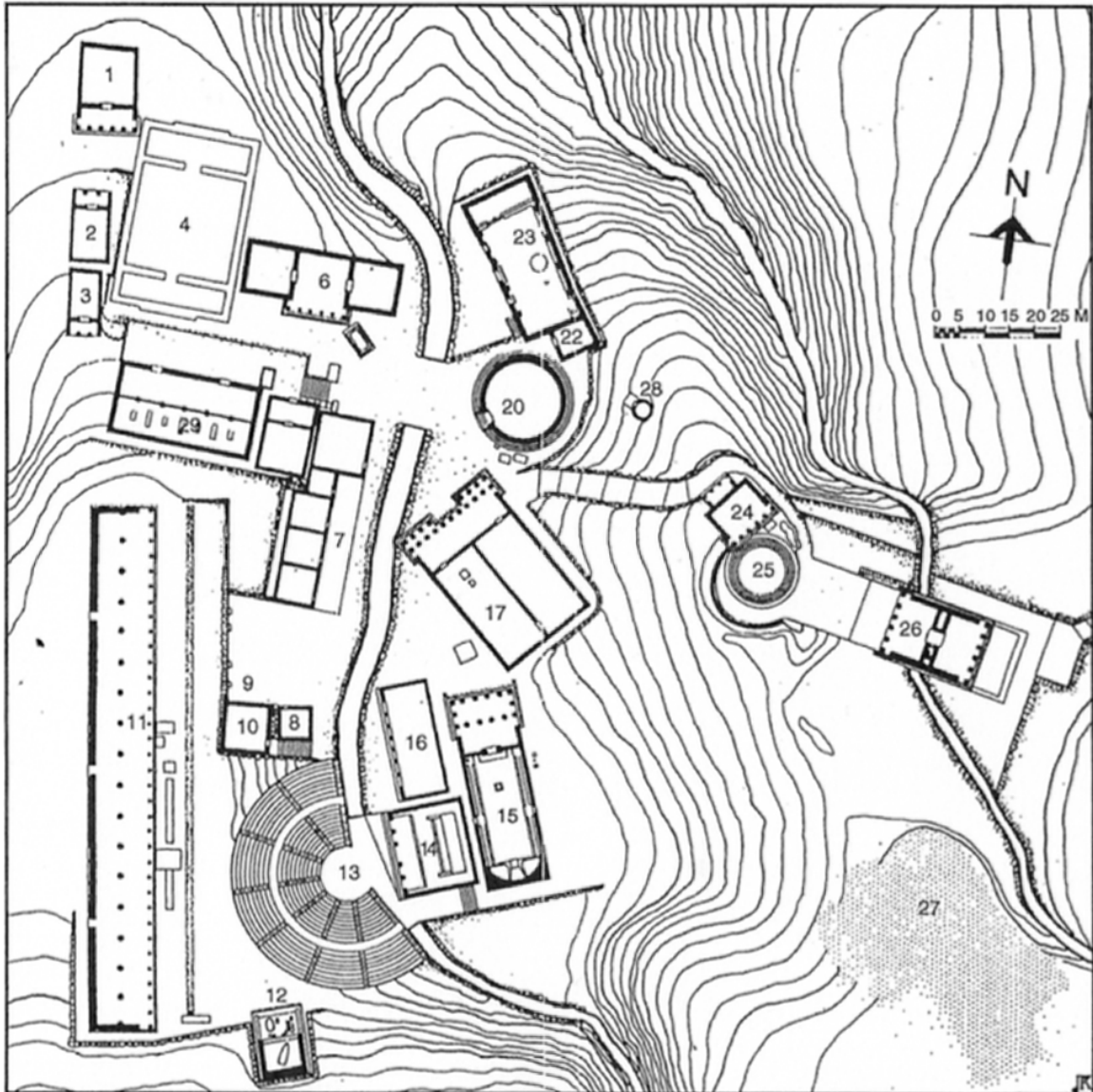


Figure 36. Plan of the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace. Some of the assigned names are modern, and the precise function of many are not clear. 1–3, Unidentified late Hellenistic buildings; 4, Unfinished early Hellenistic building; 6, Milesian Dedication; 7, Dining halls; 8, 10, Unidentified rooms; 9, Archaistic niche; 11, Stoa; 12, Nikē precinct; 13, Theater; 14, Altar Court; 15, Hieron; 16, Hall of Votive Gifts; 17, Hall of Choral Dancers; 20, Rotunda of Arsinoë II; 21, Orthostate Structure; 22, Sacristy; 23, Anaktoron; 24, Dedication of Philip III and Alexander IV; 25, Theatral Circle; 26, Propylon of Ptolemy II; 27, Southern Necropolis; 28, Doric Rotunda; and 29, Néorion. (Courtesy of ARTstor, Inc.)

through a propylon dedicated in the early third-century B.C.E. by Ptolemy II, the Macedonian king of Egypt (283-246 B.C.E.) (Figure 36, #26). A prospective initiate's passage through the Propylon of Ptolemy II appropriately framed their transition from the secular space to the sacred, made all the more evident by a deliberate and progressive

narrowing of physical space from the gateway's broad marble forecourt to the Propylon's entrance—a single doorway through which only two pilgrims could simultaneously pass abreast; as Wescoat notes, “pilgrims gathered in community to take part in the mysteries, but they passed into (and out of) the sanctuary singly.”¹³⁹ As is characteristic of ancient cultic sanctuaries, every element leading into the heart of the sanctuary—topography, passages, buildings, monuments—were deliberately manipulated, choreographed, and sequentially revealed to (or concealed from) the pilgrims as they underwent secret rites, heightening the sacred spiritual experience from the physical and audiovisual perspective—“each edifice built on these ideas and thus refined and sharpened the visitors' experience ... [emphasizing] interior space, elegant decoration, inventive use of order, and technical virtuosity.”¹⁴⁰ At Samothrace, architects capitalized upon the rugged topography, deep ravines, and active streams to naturally create specific areas or pockets within the sanctuary in which the ritual activities would unfold as the pilgrims moved in sequence through the sanctuary's features. This topographical progression commonly mirrored the nature of the sanctuary's resident deity, and in the case of Samothrace, the sanctuary's kinetic energy progressed on a chthonic trajectory through key loci, literally progressing the pilgrims deeper into the cultic experience. Further still was the fact that initiation into the Mysteries at Samothrace took place at night,¹⁴¹ indicating that upon

¹³⁹ Wescoat, “The Sanctuary and Cult,” 50.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁴¹ *Idem*, “Coming and Going,” 95. Ancient literary references to torches as indicators of a nocturnal ceremony come primarily from Nonnos *Dionysiaca* 3.124-79, 3.38-51, 3.77-96, 4.183-5, 4.4-15, 13.393-40, 14.17-22, 29.193-6, 29.213-14; and in an account of Philip and Olympias at Samothrace, a night ceremony is also suggested by the mention of “nuptial fire” (Himerius *Orationes* 9.12). Similarly, the discovery of several

their arrival to the sanctuary, the pilgrims entered this sharply graded and intentionally circuitous place in relative darkness with seemingly incessant and powerful winds rolling off of the Aegean (Figure 31). Conceptually, this physical and audiovisual progression also echoes sentiments expressed earlier in Apuleius and Plutarch¹⁴² around the initial stages of an initiation experience—“winding and wandering,” “full of fear,” and progressing “into darkness” toward a ritual death.

Emerging from the Propylon of Ptolemy II, prospective initiates proceeded down a steep, stepped ramp to cross a deep ravine (Figure 37) and arrive at a circular gathering space bordered by a hexastyle Doric building and a set of five, concentrically arranged rows of steps. Known as the Theatral Circle (Figure 37 (*middle left*); Figure 36, #25), here, prospective initiates were thought to participate in initial sacrificial offerings or receive sacred instructions in preparation for their progression toward the cult buildings below guided only by torchlight. Pilgrims exited the Theatral Circle via a narrow pathway that skirted the rim of the ravine to the right of the Dedication of Philip III and Alexander IV (Figure 36, #24), before again rapidly descending down the sharply graded Sacred Way (Figure 38) to arrive at the lowest portion of the sanctuary. The prospective initiates then continued through a tapered passageway between the Rotunda of Arsinoë II (Figure 36, #20) and the Hall of Choral Dancers (Figure 36, #17) to arrive in the heart of

lamps found near the floor of the Theatral Circle where pilgrims initially gathered upon entry to the sanctuary are strong indicators that the area was used at night (see James R. McCredie, “Samothrace: Preliminary Report on the Campaigns of 1965-1967,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 37, no. 2 (1968): 69e, 232-33, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147692>).

¹⁴² See Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 179-82; and Plutarch in Stobaeus *Anthologion* 4.52.49, cited in Meyer, *The Ancient Mysteries*, 9.



Figure 37. A pilgrim's northeasterly approach toward the Propylon of Ptolemy II with a deep ravine below their pathway. The stepped rows of the Theatral Circle are visible (*middle left*) just across the ravine. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)

the sanctuary on the valley floor. This narrow central valley contained densely grouped cult buildings that were “canalized and likely covered (at least for significant stretches) in order to allow pilgrims to proceed from one building to the next.”¹⁴³ Given the lack of inscriptions on the buildings as well as the sheer number of them (there are more cult buildings than known stages of initiation for the cult¹⁴⁴) it's unclear in which location the next stage of initiation took place; however, archaeological evidence suggests either the Anaktoron (Figure 36, #23) or Hieron (Figure 36, #15), each of which contained interior seating and altars suggestive of initiation ceremonies.¹⁴⁵ As inscriptional evidence

¹⁴³ Ibid., 52.

¹⁴⁴ Bremmer, *Initiation into the Mysteries*, 26.

¹⁴⁵ Cole, *Theoi Megaloi*, 26-7.



Figure 38. Video pan tracing a pilgrim's steep descent down the Sacred Way. Video can be viewed externally at vimeo.com/285150980. (Courtesy of Charles O. Griffin.)

indicates that there were two separate stages of initiation at Samothrace, *mystai* and *epoptai*, there is general consensus that each stage took place in separate buildings.¹⁴⁶ Cole believes that the first state of initiation was relegated to the Anaktoron and its connected Sacristy (Figure 36, #22) due to the discovery of an inscription at the door of the Hieron prohibiting the entry of anyone who had not undergone *myesis*.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 47. Dated inscriptional evidence also indicates that a pilgrim could undergo both stages of initiation in one night at Samothrace, however, *epoptai* account for only eighteen (twelve Greek and seven Roman) out of the over one-hundred initiate inscriptions.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 26-7.



Figure 39. Frieze section of dancing maidens from the Hall of Choral Dancers, ca. 340 B.C.E., marble, 162.1 cm. x 32.4 cm. Archaeological Museum of Samothrace, Samothrace. (Courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Samothrace.)

Archaeological evidence also indicates that three buildings, comparable in size and shape (and thus, likely in purpose), successively occupied the same general area of the Anaktoron between the first half of the fourth-century B.C.E. and early first-century B.C.E., further suggesting that the location and nature of this twice-rebuilt structure was significant to *myesis*.¹⁴⁸ As such, it's likely that prospective initiates would have turned right to proceed north toward the Sacristy, where Karl Lehmann suggests they received a change of clothes and a lamp before continuing to the Anaktoron's main chamber for a ceremony in which sacred objects were revealed.¹⁴⁹ Following their departure from the Anaktoron, pilgrims likely proceeded south to the Rotunda of Arsinoë II for additional rites prior to entering the Hall of Choral Dancers, so named for its illustrious and continuous frieze of dancing maidens (Figure 39) that encircled the entire building. As the earliest (ca. 340-330 B.C.E.) and largest, first entirely marble structure in the sanctuary, the Hall of Choral Dancers consisted of two deep chambers connected by an Ionic porch. Excavations in 1993 and 1994 revealed that the building's western chamber expanded upon an earlier, Archaic structure containing an *eschara* (a hearth for

¹⁴⁸ "Anaktoron (23)," *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog), accessed August 13, 2018, <https://samothrace.emory.edu/anaktoron/>.

¹⁴⁹ Lehmann, *Guide to the Excavations*, 56-72.

sacrifices) and a *bothros* (a pit for libations). It's thought that the style and "circular movement of the procession around the building ... may allude to a long tradition of choral dancing on the site ... suggestive of the legendary wedding of Kadmos and Harmonia,"¹⁵⁰ and a possible indication of the building's designated ritual purpose for pilgrims.

Upon exiting the Hall of Choral Dancers to continue further down the central plateia, the now likely initiates could observe the impressive Hieron in the southern end of the valley, all but completely obscured from view by the Hall of Choral Dancers in their initial descent into the valley. As one of the sanctuary's most elaborately embellished structures, the Hieron contained rich sculptural pediments including *akroteria* adorned with floral and Nikai motifs, coffered ceilings (some of which were crowned with prancing centaurs), and two long rows of marble benches supported by elaborately sculpted lion legs. Like the Hall of Choral Dancers, the discovery of a small *eschara* and *bothros* inside the Hieron's deep cella suggests that this building was connected with some of the most sacred parts of initiatory rites for *myesis* and/or *epopteia*.

While primary sources are unable to confirm with any specificity at what hour sacred rites at Samothrace commenced aside from a prerequisite for darkness, depending on such timing, it's likely that initiates emerged from the Hieron in daylight. Doing so would bookend the preceding mystery initiation experience descriptions in literary evidence—"an unmistakable focus on the movement from both literal and metaphorical

¹⁵⁰ "Hall of Choral Dancers (17)," *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog), accessed August 14, 2018, <https://samothrace.emory.edu/hall-of-choral-dancers/>.

darkness to both literal and metaphorical light”¹⁵¹—to complete their progression from ritual death into rebirth as initiates within the Mysteries. Their path out of the Hieron would thread them between the building’s western wall and the Hall of Votive Gifts (Figure 36, #16) to a small set of steps just south of the Altar Court (Figure 36, #14). Ascending the four stairs, initiates passed in front of the Altar Court to arrive at the base of the theater (Figure 24, E; Figure 36, #13) atop a platform bridging the sanctuary’s central ravine (Figure 25)—*alive and furious* with water cascading down Mount Fengári and through the sanctuary as a result of the island’s regular flooding.

From the floor of the theater, the new initiates’ eyes had nowhere to go but up: up and over the steps of the theater’s broadly curved *koilon*, over the rim of the sanctuary’s southern-most hillside, and up to where the light of the sky pushed itself against the only form commanding and sharing in its space—a winged Nikē, magnificent and triumphant, soaring eighteen feet in the air to alight upon the prow of her stone warship, sailing clear at them, deep in the heart of the sanctuary. Ascending the theater’s limestone and dark red porphyry steps, the initiates began to invert the sanctuary’s earthly and chthonic kinetic energy, moving toward Victory and her precinct (Figure 36, #12): skyward and Olympic. Turning around near the top of the steps, the initiates shared in the same clear and majestic view of the Aegean as Nikē (Figure 30) above them. Illuminated by the light of day, all that was hidden from them in shadow within the valley just hours before, now laid open for them to behold. Immediately below, the torrent in the central ravine separating the central valley from the western hill they sat upon flowed directly under the theater’s orchestra, framed by elaborate metal grills traversing the columned façade of the

¹⁵¹ Petridou, “Power of Ritual Viewing,” 317.

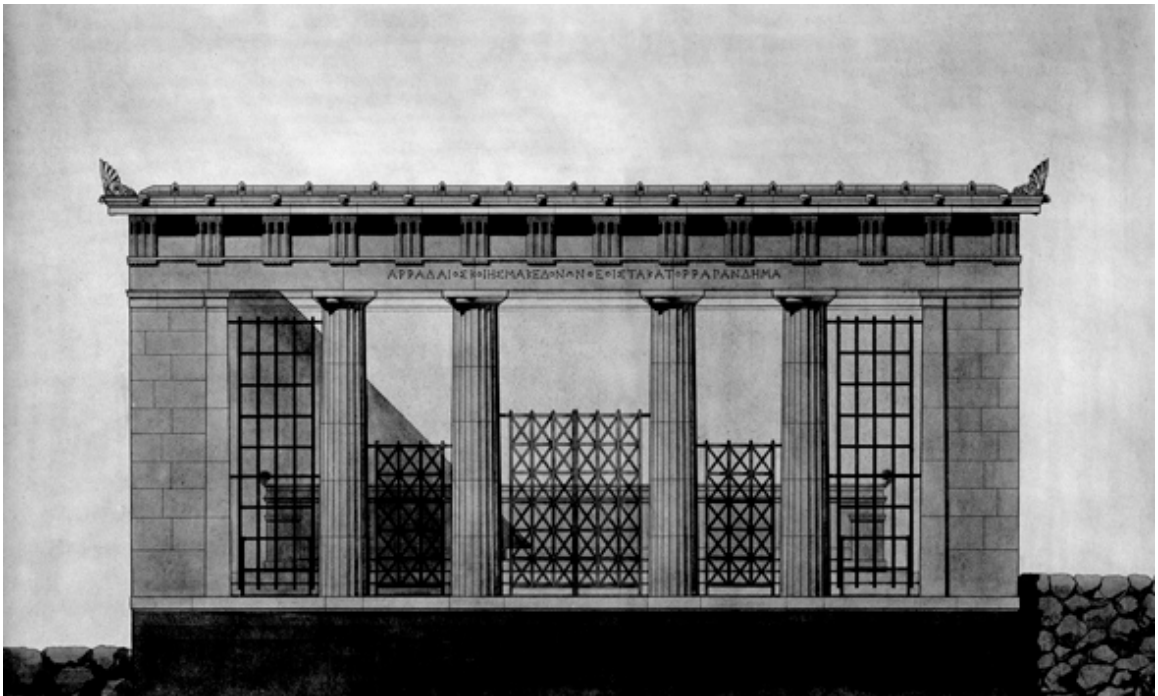


Figure 40. View of the Altar Court from within the theater (*top*) with a schematic representation of the restored metal façade (*bottom*). (Courtesy of the American Excavations on Samothrace © New York / Samothrace and ARTstor, Inc.)

unroofed Altar Court just behind (Figure 40); a *skēnē* for the imminent theatrical performance of ritualistic dramas retelling the sacred foundational narratives of the island and the sanctuary. Inscriptional evidence at Samothrace records at least three honorific decrees conferred on Hellenistic poets for their dramatic works associated with the legendary mythical traditions of the island and its cultic heroes.¹⁵² Two of these honors were bestowed upon Dymas of Iasos by Samothracian authorities sometime around 200 B.C.E. for his “account ... of the doings of Dardanos in the form of a drama—the greatest memorials.”¹⁵³ Herodes of Priene received the third honor, dated around 100 B.C.E., “reproduc[ing] a Samothracian decree honoring Herodes, son of Poseidonios from Priene who wrote an epic poem for the sanctuary concerning Dardanos, Action (i.e. Iasion), Kadmos, and Harmonia.”¹⁵⁴

However, before continuing our proposed narrative of the initiate experience at Samothrace within the theater, it’s critical first to pause and expand upon the interaction of myth and ritual from Chapter I through its performative component as framed by “ritual-centered” or “ritual sensitive” visuality, introduced and defined by Georgia Petridou as

The putting aside of the normal identity and the acquisition of a temporary cult-generated identity, or as the surrendering of individuality to a more collective form of subjectivity constructed and controlled by the sacred site, or as the

¹⁵² “Theater (13),” *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog), accessed August 16, 2018, <https://samothrace.emory.edu/theater/>; and Ian Rutherford, “Theoria and Theatre at Samothrace: The *Dardanos* by Dumas of Iasos,” in *The Greek Theatre and Festivals: Documentary Studies*, ed. Peter Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 279-80.

¹⁵³ *I.Iasos* 153, 19-20, cited in Rutherford, “Theoria and Theatre,” 279.

¹⁵⁴ *I.Priene* 68, cited in Rutherford, “Theoria and Theatre,” 280; and Cole, *Theoi Megaloi*, 4.

provision of a deity as a vessel into which individual pilgrims can pour their devotions and aspirations.... [This] posits a possibility for sacred vision, which is by definition more significant since it opens the viewer to confronting his or her god ... in a highly charged spatiotemporal context of mortal-immortal communication such as that of sanctuary or sacred festival.... [Thus,] in ritual-centered viewing, the grounds for a direct relationship have been prepared. The viewer enters a sacred space, a special place set apart from ordinary life, in which the god dwells. In this liminal site, the viewer enters the god's world and likewise the deity intrudes directly into the viewer's world in a highly ritualized context. The reciprocal gaze of this viscosity is a kind of epiphanic fulfillment.¹⁵⁵

In other words, ritual-centered viewing lays the physical, spiritual, and emotional groundwork for a profound initiate experience to occur within the actions of ritual performance, which Joannis Mylonopoulos believes were aimed at heightening the overall effect of the ritual actions on cult participants.¹⁵⁶ He observes that an individual's participation in the actions of ritual performance needn't exclusively be "active," but could also include passive involvement, such as listening to oral revelations or choral presentations, as well as watching sacred cult dramas or plays.¹⁵⁷ The active and/or passive participation in the performative component of ritual actions "permitted every cult participant, no matter what level of education ... to experience religious content in a type of passive communication without the 'burden' of an intellectual, theological and theoretical superstructure."¹⁵⁸ The critical interaction of cult myth and ritual, thus, lies squarely in its non-intellectual, performative aspect: "rituals are felt and experienced, not

¹⁵⁵ Petridou, "Power of Ritual Viewing," 310-27.

¹⁵⁶ Joannis Mylonopoulos, "Greek Sanctuaries as Places of Communication Through Rituals: An Archaeological Perspective," in *Ritual and Communication in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. Eftychia Stavrianopoulou (Liège, Belgium: Centre International D'étude De La Religion Grecque Antique, 2006), 92.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 92-3.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 103.

understood.”¹⁵⁹ In her work analyzing the performativity of the sixth-century C.E. Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia, Bissera Pentcheva explored the aesthetic, multisensory phenomenology behind the way light, sound, and space affected a participant’s ritualistic experience. One such performative component includes what Pentcheva calls “aural architectural”—an auditory experience created between the sung ritual liturgy and the extremely reverberant acoustics of the church’s architecture—creating a kind of spiritual transcendence for worshippers and opening their imagination to the sounds of angelic choirs.¹⁶⁰ Pentcheva also provides an analysis of the church’s textured gold and marble surfaces to link sound and sight, arguing that the liquid-like behavior of sound and

... [the] aural perception of ‘wetness’ ... is visually substantiated by the wavelike patterns of the marble revetments and by the shifting intensity of sunlight, which causes stone to appear incandescent at certain moments of the day and to take on the appearance of rivers of molten metal.... [This] confuse[s] the perception of what is solid and what is liquid.¹⁶¹

The performative nature of the church’s design was thus revealed to worshippers when light and shadow triggered the kinetic polymorphy of its revetments, complimenting the aural architectural. These dynamic exchanges between light, sound, and space at Hagia Sophia coalesced into a multisensorial, heightened religious experience for the worshippers, resulting in a performative paradigm—that is, “the closer gradation of sensual perception reaches to the spiritual, the more, paradoxically, it strives toward

¹⁵⁹ Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods*, 47.

¹⁶⁰ Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia*, 75-120.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

greater bodily investment ... sustain[ing] this interaction between the real, the perceived, and the imagined.”¹⁶²

Similar ritual-centered visuality and multisensory performances can be seen in the Eleusinian tradition, whereby pilgrims experienced strategic alterations between the deprivation and then bombardment of sound and light, ultimately leading to an encounter with Demeter, Korê (or Persephone), and the underworld in the form of visually assimilated members of the cult’s priests. Accordingly, it was this climatic expectation of a mimetic encounter with the resident deities at Eleusis—effectively, a performed, ritual rehearsal for what they could expect after death in the underworld—that shaped the initiate’s ritual-centered visuality, laying the groundwork for that encounter to concretely manifest through the dramatic ritual performance: “hopes and expectations create focus, and focus creates reality,”¹⁶³ or to paraphrase the anthropologist Stanley Tambiah, ‘the medium itself becomes the message.’¹⁶⁴ Similarly, performative rituals associated with the initiation rites of young girls and women at the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron included singing, dancing, and running nude; each performative component aiming to activate a sense of ‘wildness’ associated with their initiation experience. This wildness was created by the peripheral geographical placement of Artemis’ sanctuaries from known centers of power in ancient Greece, subsequently placing some of the most vulnerable Greek citizens—young girls and women—in the most perilous locations.

¹⁶² Idem, “Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics,” *Gesta* 50, no. 2 (2011): 106, doi:10.2307/41550552.

¹⁶³ Idem, *Hagia Sophia*, 317-8.

¹⁶⁴ Stanley J. Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 120.

Another performative ritual in the Attic tradition at Brauron was the initiation rite of the *arkteia*, where young girls were dressed in saffron robes (*krokotoi*) and were to serve Artemis by “playing the bear” (being disguised as a bear) in a mimetic performance of the cult’s aetiological myth.¹⁶⁵ It is the use of simultaneous and redundant modes of communication diffusing the same message¹⁶⁶—from music, poems, and plays to the geographical placement and topographical manipulation of a sanctuary’s geophysical features and architecture—that provides the critical hinge upon which the sacred mythical past enters an initiate’s ritual present.

At Samothrace, the initiate experience of Victory from within the theater complex was framed by this totality of their ritual-centered visuality: each journey began individually over the rough waters of the Aegean, but collectively, all led to their current seat on the western hill, straddling the interface between the narration of their mythical past in the ritual performance of the present. Below, the primordial story of Dardanus, the Great Flood, and his salvation by the all-powerful, chthonian *Theoi Megaloi* at Samothrace possibly played out dramatically within the orchestra¹⁶⁷—the area itself seeming to straddle the past and present with its mimetic, audiovisual reminder of the Great Flood created by the rushing water within the ravine. Soaring above them, a breathtaking and semi-nude denier of death: Nikē. Wet and windswept, the goddess

¹⁶⁵ Christopher A. Faraone, “Playing the Bear and Fawn for Artemis: Female Initiation or Substitute Sacrifice?” in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. David B. Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (London: Routledge, 2012), 43-61.

¹⁶⁶ Kowalzig, *Singing for the Gods*, 47.

¹⁶⁷ *I.Iasos* 153, 19-20, and *I.Priene* 68 cited in Rutherford, “Theoria and Theatre,” 279-80.

concluded her descent from the heavens atop the prow of her exultant fleet manned by initiates like them, to whom divine aid was guaranteed by *Theoi Megaloi*; a recent memory of undeniable prowess and triumph at sea now solidified in front of eyes well-calibrated to recall it and hear the message Victory broadcasts over the hills of Samothrace: we prevailed in battle, *we did not drown, nor will you*. She was a rapturous vision unto herself: *curves*, as elegant as they were intoxicating, enveloped in a hypnotic, indelible onrush and vow of power—of unbridled supremacy—of *aretē* and of *klēos*. Both chthonian and Olympian pantheons were invoked and activated, as the earthly and the mortal merged with the heavenly and the divine. Initiates were suspended in a semiotic synergy created between the same cultic promises being performed at the bottom of the theater, as those that were sculpted into the naval victory monument at the top.

From her perch overlooking the sea and the initiates in the theater below, Victory seemed to be a polestar crowning the prow of the larger ship sanctified by the Great Gods and upon which they all sailed: the island of Samothrace. Nikē and her warship became projections from a plane outside of themselves, her ship now seemingly poised to emerge from the monument to sail clear through the sanctuary and confidently into the turbulent waves of the blue Aegean. Like a crew manning a victorious galley at sea, Nikē alighted their Samothracian prow in the earthly performance of an ancient drama. Just as Dardanus and Myrina in antiquity, these pilgrims to Samothrace landed at the harbor of the island whose physical and sacred elements aligned in a promise of protection to all who took refuge and sought initiation into the Mysteries of the Great Gods: a promise to safeguard their present marine lives, and therefore also safeguard their future membership

in the community of the properly buried, cultically tended dead; a promise of safety from the existential terror that permeated the waking hours of every ancient Greek traveler, tradesman, sailor, or warrior at sea—that of permanent exclusion, an “invisibility,” and an existence “unseen and unheard” for the soul that perishes at sea—a promise epitomized in Victory.

Conclusion

“Unlike the physical world of the city where the same space cannot have different contents, nothing is allowed to perish in the transparencies of the mind, and everything may be preserved simultaneously and brought back under the right conditions.”

—Fikret Yegül¹⁶⁸

If, as cited in the introduction, Kant is right—if beauty is just “that which pleases without concept”—one needn’t move beyond the frontispiece of this thesis to recognize on a visceral level the artistic magnificence of the “Winged Victory of Samothrace.” Perhaps, though, it is that which is capable of holding both pieces of the past and the present simultaneously in a kind of timeless continuum which could be considered the *most* beautiful, driving one beyond the aesthetic pleasure of the moment, and into the stratosphere of an enduring masterpiece. For the ancient Greeks, nothing escaped proper contextualization: every myth, ritual, space, and artifact aimed to correlate pieces of their collective past to the puzzle of their present reality. It is in this same spirit that I hope to have successfully argued for a more complete account of the contexts for Victory’s design and installation within the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace, and then made the case for a Hellenistic pilgrim’s meaningful experience and varied interpretations of the monument following his/her/their initiation into the Mysteries.

¹⁶⁸ Fikret Yegül, “Metaphor and Meaning in the Cities of Asia Minor in Romanization and the City: Creation, Transformations and Failures,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series*, no. 38 (2000): 153.

To do so, I proposed that the dedicant and sculptor of Victory intended to portray Nikē in several ways that would be recognized by and be incredibly significant to initiates on an eschatological level, the first of which argued that Victory may have invoked for the initiate the notion that the island of Samothrace was itself a kind of ship, as is suggested in ancient narratives. After broadly establishing the historical context for mystery cults within ancient Greece, I analyzed the known tenets of the Samothracian Mysteries, especially as they pertain to the ancient Greek perception and dreaded eschatological consequences of not receiving a proper burial as a direct result of drowning or disposal at sea. Analysis of the cult's theological framework, geological features of Samothrace, and the sanctuary's Néorion aimed to highlight and reinforce the island's central metaphor and ancient perception of it as a ship. This root metaphor further established a vertical axis to the island at sea for an observer similar to that of a ship—sea, earth, and air—making Nikē's portrayal on the monument and its lofty topographical positioning within the heart of the sanctuary a closely related sculptural decision: that is, Nikē's depiction as alighting upon the prow of a galley at sea provided the missing aerial element to complete her stone ship's vertical axis, signaling her sculptor's intent to mirror and complete the vertical axis of the larger ship: the island of Samothrace itself.

I also argued that another representation of the Nikē on Victory was the commemoration of decisive naval prowess and triumph. To do so, I established commonly accepted narratives and representations of the ancient Greek personification of victory in the form Nikē as a response to martial and naval victories through the dedication of highly visible monuments, trophies, and other artistic mediums. Several

renowned works wherein Nikē served as a core symbolic element were analyzed from the Classical period on to highlight a critical mythological, iconographic, and stylistic history of Nikē as victory personified. Consequently, regardless of the artistic medium and its public or sacred installation setting, my analysis indicated that ancient Greek depictions of Nikē all culminate in a singular motif—indisputable victory: a representation inherent to the nature of ancient victory monuments and congruent with Mediterranean archaeologist Andrew Stewart’s view of the historical significance of Victory’s installation at Samothrace, based on his commemorative event theory proposed in 2016.

In establishing Nikē’s representations in relation to martial victory iconography, my analysis also sought to highlight several stylistic and technical features distinguishing Victory’s Nikē even from her closest stylistic predecessors to argue my third point. Attention was given to the hyperrealism, eroticism, and theatrical gigantism of Nikē, particularly in relation to the ancient association of female sexuality and death, as her eroticization likely signals her magnetic, deeply Greek power to confer victory, and therefore, to deny death. Analysis of Victory’s stylistic and technical uniqueness also included consideration of her larger environment at Samothrace. I proposed a reconstruction of Victory’s ancient appearance *in situ*, as well as her hillside precinct overlooking the sanctuary’s theater and the Aegean Sea, illuminating the dynamic relationship between the monument, the ritual theatrical performances in the theater below, and her initiate observers. Thus, when considered within the eschatological context of the Mysteries of Initiation at Samothrace, Victory’s unique place within the iconographic canon of works featuring Nikē, and how Victory was observed *in situ*, Nikē’s portrayal on Victory could be interpreted by those recently initiated as a literal

triumph over the risk of drowning, simply by virtue of prevailing in battle.

Lastly, I looked to tie together the aforementioned narrative threads of the monument to propose a Hellenistic pilgrim's imagined journey to Samothrace, through the sanctuary, and finally to where he or she would have first experienced the dramatic statue of Victory following initiation into the Mysteries. This reconstruction aimed to highlight both the individual and collective religious context in which the monument was viewed by the newly initiated at Samothrace, and thus her cultic significance as a multifaceted visual substantiation of the Great Gods' protection made apparent. Echoing Bissera Pentcheva's theoretical approach to centering and analyzing the phenomenology of a worshipper's experience at Hagia Sophia, this reconstruction similarly sought to emphasize how the phenomena of cultic myth, ritual, space, and artifact worked together to culminate in a complex, multisensory religious experience for initiates at Samothrace. In other words, to hearken back to Kant, it was this final phase of analysis in which I sought to stress that the monument's commanding beauty was *because* of the deeply meaningful context in which she was seen. In tracing this hypothetical initiate path to Victory at Samothrace, I am reminded of a sentiment expressed by Georgia Petridou in her examination of the power of ritual viewing and framing at Eleusis, particularly in relation to the ritual impersonation of Demeter and Korê:

[E]motional involvement with the ritual and the deities was a *sine qua non* in the process of creating the strong emotional experiences of the μύσται.... The minimum that can be established ... is that Demeter and Korê's divine epiphanies were part of the sacred drama of Eleusis.... The question is, [w]hat made the initiates ready to believe that they were encountering two deities instead of two of their fellow human beings? The easy way out is to claim that the representational strategy, whereby a human being is assimilated to the god or his statue as his facsimile and the living embodiment of his power.... There is something missing, however, in this sort of interpretation. We are still not fully answering the question of why initiates would be ready to believe they were confronting the

divine when all that stood before them was yet another human being. How were these performers different from the performers they may have seen in the theater? “How could the initiates *look at* mortals and *see* immortals?” A far more interesting question to ask would be, “How could they not?”¹⁶⁹

The ancient initiate experience of Victory was far greater than any casual appreciation of masterful artistry or an incidental interaction with yet another piece of marble ‘sanctuary furniture’—yet another naval victory monument. To again amplify Stewart, everything about her design, installation, and the role her dedicant and sculptor intended her to play within her hillside precinct were utterly “context-bound and deictic ... alert[ing] us to something specific and special”;¹⁷⁰ everything about her was intended to reverberate within the very core of an ancient pilgrim’s identity and assuage their deepest anxieties.

Having embarked on an arduous and dangerous journey across the turbulent Aegean on nothing but planks of wood between their bodies and a dreaded ocean floor—having traversed the violent waves and at last spotted the island’s breathtaking peak where Poseidon once stood piercing through the sea and haze before them—having finally stepped onto the stable and consecrated earth of the island sanctuary as their heroes who sought refuge from the seas did before them—winding, climbing, having entered, descended into, and woven through the most ancient and hallowed of spaces—having seen, having heard, having now left behind a darkness and a blindness—having felt the primordial and semiotic synergy of their mythical past and ritual present collide in the theater’s timeless cluster—having emerged an initiate—*protected*—enveloped in the incessant rush of the island’s winds surging skyward to press against a towering and

¹⁶⁹ Petridou, “Power of Ritual Viewing,” 328-9.

¹⁷⁰ Stewart, “Another View,” 403.

triumphant Nikē overlooking them in her descent from the heavens to alight upon the prow of her victorious galley of initiates—how could an initiate not feel as though they were standing on the deck of a Samothracian ship, sailing out from the heart of the sanctuary and into the Aegean? How could an initiate not feel the weight of the promise for triumph at sea standing beneath an eighteen-foot tall, physics-defying, thirty-ton simulacrum of their victory goddess heralding an indisputable triumph at sea due to the divine assistance of the Great Gods? How could an initiate not believe that this journey they completed secured their fate as one that would not end on the ocean floor, but in the earth with proper burial? How could an initiate not see and recognize in Victory the antithesis of all they feared, and the epitome of all they desired?

Today, from her modern perch atop the Daru, Victory still watches the pilgrims ascend the marbled steps below her just as they once had in the ancient theater at Samothrace. With each step we take in approaching her new precinct, Nikē shall ever remain that overwhelming “creature of flesh, drapery, and air solidified into marble.” My only hope is that after considering what I’ve learned and attempted to convey here, we, in ascending and standing before Victory today, may finally see her now as they saw her then.



© 2014 Musée du Louvre / Philippe Fuzeau

Bibliography

Works Cited

- Alcock, Susan E. "The Heroic Past in a Hellenistic Present." In *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography*, edited by Paul Cartledge, Peter Garnsey, and Erich S. Gruen, 20-34. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- "Altar Court (14)." *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog). Accessed August 25, 2018. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/altar-court/>.
- "Anaktoron (23)." *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog). Accessed August 13, 2018. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/anaktoron/>.
- Apuleius. *The Golden Ass, or, Metamorphoses*. Translated by E. J. Kenney. London: Penguin Books, 2004.
- Bergreen, Laurence. *Over the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2005.
- Bodenstein, Felicity. "Framing the Artifact." *Museum History Journal* 5, no. 2 (2012): 167-86. doi:10.1179/mhj.2012.5.2.167.
- Bowden, Hugh. *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Bremmer, Jan. *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2014.
- Bryant, Charles and Joshua Clark. "How Drowning Works." *Stuff You Should Know*. iHeartRadio. New York, NY, May 10, 2018.
- Burkert, Walter. *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- . *Greek Religion*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Carpenter, Rhys. *Greek Sculpture: A Critical Review*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960.

- Clinton, Kevin. "Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries." In *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, edited by Michael Gagarin. Oxford University Press, 2010. doi:10.1093/acref/9780195170726.013.0415.
- . "Stages of Initiation in the Eleusinian and Samothracian Mysteries." In *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*, edited by Michael B. Cosmopoulos, 50-78. London: Routledge, 2003.
- "Coins from the Eastern Hill." *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog). Accessed January 12, 2019. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/coins/>.
- Cole, Susan Guettel. *Theoi Megaloi: The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace*. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1984.
- Cosmopoulos, Michael B., ed. *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Dégremont, Cécile. "A Closer Look at the Victory of Samothrace." Musée du Louvre. Last modified 2008. http://musee.louvre.fr/oal/victoiredesamothrace/victoiredesamothrace_acc_en.html.
- Dillion, Sheila. "Marble Votive Statuettes of Women from the Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace." In Olga Palagia and Bonna D. Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie*, 165-72.
- Dimitrova, Nora M. "Theoroi and Initiates in Samothrace: The Epigraphical Evidence." *Hesperia Supplements* 37 (2008): III-280. <http://www.jstor.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/stable/27759913>.
- Dodd, David B., and Christopher A. Faraone. *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Dubos, René. *A God Within: A Positive Philosophy for a More Complete Fulfillment of the Human Potential*. New York: Scribners, 1972.
- Faraone, Christopher A. "Playing the Bear and Fawn for Artemis: Female Initiation or Substitute Sacrifice?" In *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, edited by David B. Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone, 43-68. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2013.
- Finley, Moses I., and Bernard Knox. *The World of Odysseus*. New York: New York Review Books Classics, 2002.
- François, Salviat. "Addenda Samothraciens." *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 86, no. 1 (1962): 268-304. doi:10.3406/bch.1962.2313.

- Fraser, P.M. *The Inscriptions on Stone*. Vol. 2.1 of *Samothrace*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1960.
- Fredrich, Carl, ed. *Inscriptiones insularum maris Thracici*. Vol. XII.8 of *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of an Illusion*. Edited by James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961.
- Gai, Joe. "Battlefield Trophies of Ancient Greece: Symbols of Victory." Master's thesis, California State University, Fresno, 2006. ProQuest (1443538).
- Greenwalt, William. "Philip II and Olympias on Samothrace: A Clue to Macedonian Politics during the 360s." In *Macedonian Legacies: Studies in Ancient Macedonian History and Culture in Honor of Eugene N. Borza*, edited by Timothy Howe, Jeanne Reames, and Eugene N. Borza, 79-106. Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2009.
- "Hall of Choral Dancers (17)." *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog). Accessed August 14, 2018. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/hall-of-choral-dancers/>.
- Hamiaux, Marianne. "The Context." In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 164-72.
- . "La Victoire de Samothrace: Découverte et Restauration." *Journal des Savants* 1 (2001): 153-223. doi:10.3406/jds.2001.1643.
- Hamiaux, Marianne, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, eds. *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*. Paris: Somogy Art Publishers, 2015.
- Hiller von Gaertringen, Friedrich, ed. *Supplementum*. Vol. XII.8 of *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1978.
- Hölscher, Tonio. "Die Nike der Messenier und Naupaktier in Olympia. Kunst und Geschichte im späten 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr." *Jdl* 89 (1974): 70-111.
- Homer. *The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by Richmond Lattimore. New York: Harper Perennial, 2007.
- Iles Johnston, Sarah. *Ancient Greek Divination*. West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley Blackwell, 2008.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik der Urteilkraft*. Berlin: Berliner Ausgabe, 2014.

- . *The Critique of Judgement*. Translated by James C. Meredith. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Kaelber, Walter O. "Initiation: Men's Initiation." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., edited by Lindsay Jones, 4480-4. Vol. 7. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. <http://link.galegroup.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/apps/doc/CX3424501514/GVRL?u=camb55135&sid=GVRL&xid=70a4ff5e>.
- Kinnee, Lauren. "The Nike of Samothrace: The Next Generation Attalid Victory Monument?" *Hey! Zeus!* 40 (Winter 2002): 38-62. <http://www.yale.edu/heyzeus/winter2002/nike.pdf>.
- Kosmetatou, Elizabeth. "Eumenes II." In *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 1st ed., edited by Roger S. Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craige B. Champion, Andrew Erskine, and Sabine R. Huebner, 2557-8. West Sussex, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, 2012. *Wiley Online Library*. doi:10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah09108.
- Kowalzig, Barbara. *Singing for the Gods: Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Kraay, Colin M., and Max Hirmer. *Greek Coins*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966.
- Lehmann, Karl. *Samothrace: A Guide to the Excavations and the Museum*. 6th ed. Thessaloniki, Greece: Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1998.
- . "Samothrace: Fourth Preliminary Report." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 20, no. 1 (1951): 1-30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/146903>.
- . "Samothrace: Third Preliminary Report." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 19, no. 1 (1950): 1-20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/146794>.
- Lindenlauf, Astrid. "Thrown Away Like Rubbish—Disposal of the Dead in Ancient Greece." *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 12, (2001): 86-99. doi:10.5334/pia.161.
- Lloyd-Jones, Hugh. "The Seal of Posidippus." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 83 (1963): 75-99. doi:10.2307/628455.
- Lorenzo, Kristian L. "Ancient Greek and Roman Naval Victory Monuments." PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011. ProQuest (3488555).
- Mackie, Hilary. "No. 1663: Swallowed by the Sea." *The Engines of Our Ingenuity*. Houston Public Media. Houston, TX: KUHF, Aug 5, 2011.

- Matsas, Dimitris. "The Island of Samothrace from Its Origins to the Present Day." In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 28-41.
- McCredie, James R. "Samothrace: Supplementary Investigations, 1968-1977." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 48, no. 1 (1979): 1-44. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147800>.
- . "Recent Investigations in Samothrace." Edited by Ulf Jantzen. In *Neue Forschungen in Griechischen Heiligtümern. Internationales Symposium in Olympia vom 10. bis 12. Oktober 1974 Anlässlich der Hundertjahrfeier der Abteilung Athen und der Deutschen Ausgrabungen in Olympia*, 98-99. Proceedings of International Symposium in Olympia, Greece. Tübingen, Germany: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1976.
- . "A Samothracian Enigma." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 43, no. 4 (1974): 454-9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147491>.
- . "Samothrace: Preliminary Report on the Campaigns of 1965-1967." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 37, no. 2 (1968): 200-34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147692>.
- . "Samothrace: Preliminary Report on the Campaigns of 1962-1964." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 34, no. 2 (1965): 100-24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147020>.
- Meyer, Marvin W., ed. *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook: Sacred Texts of the Mystery Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Mitten, Eleanor. "Mysteries Blog: Samothrace 1." *Mitten Mysteries Blog*, May 14, 2015.
- Mylonopoulos, Joannis. "Greek Sanctuaries as Places of Communication Through Rituals: An Archaeological Perspective." In *Ritual and Communication in the Graeco-Roman World*, edited by Eftychia Stavrianopoulou, 69-110. Liège, Belgium: Centre International D'étude De La Religion Grecque Antique, 2006.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*." *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7-24. doi:10.2307/2928520.
- Norton, Richard. "The Excavations at Cyrene: First Campaign, 1910-11." *Bulletin of the Archaeological Institute of America* 2, no. 4 (September 1911): 141-63. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.fl17a7>.

- Nuland, Sherwin B. *How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.
- Paga, Jess. "Why Did the Initiate Cross the Ravine? Understanding the Altar Court and Theater." *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog). Accessed August 25, 2018. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/2471-2/>.
- Palagia, Olga. "The Victory of Samothrace and the Aftermath of the Battle of Pydna." In Olga Palagia and Bonna D. Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie*, 154-64.
- Palagia, Olga, and Bonna D. Wescoat, eds. *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010.
- Pausanias. *Description of Greece, Volume IV: Books 8.22-10 (Arcadia, Boeotia, Phocis and Ozolian Locri)*. Translated by W. H. S. Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.
- . *Description of Greece, Volume II: Books 3-5 (Laconia, Messenia, Elis 1)*. Translated by W. H. S. Jones, H. A. Ormerod. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.
- Pentcheva, Bissera V. *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017.
- . "Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics." *Gesta* 50, no. 2 (2011): 93-111. doi:10.2307/41550552.
- Pepper, Stephen C. *Concept and Quality: A World Hypothesis*. LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1967.
- Percy, Benjamin. "Where's Papa Going with that Axe?" *Glimmer Train* 67, no. 8 (2012). <http://www.glimmertrain.com/bulletins/essays/b67percy.php>.
- Petridou, Georgia. "Blessed Is He, Who Had Seen': The Power of Ritual Viewing and Ritual Framing in Eleusis." *Helios* 40, no. 1-2 (March 2013): 309-41. doi:10.1353/hel.2013.0015.
- Phillipson, J. C.P. *Cavafy Historical Poems: A Verse Translation with Commentaries*. Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2013.
- Pollitt, J. J. *Art in the Hellenistic Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Popkin, Maggie L. "Samothracian Influences at Rome: Cultic and Architectural Exchange in the Second Century B.C.E." *American Journal of Archaeology* 119, no. 3 (July 2015): 343-73. doi:10.3764/aja.119.3.0343.

- Ridgway, Brunilde S. *Hellenistic Sculpture II: The Styles of ca. 200-100 B.C.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000.
- Rutherford, Ian. "Theoria and Theatre at Samothrace: The *Dardanos* by Dumas of Iasos." In *The Greek Theatre and Festivals: Documentary Studies*, edited by Peter Wilson, 279-93. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Ryan, William, and Walter Pitman. *Noah's Flood: The New Scientific Discoveries About the Event That Changed History*. New York: Touchstone, 2000.
- Shepherd, Gillian. "Pithekoussai." In *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 1st ed., edited by Roger S. Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craig B. Champion, Andrew Erskine, and Sabine R. Huebner, 5339-40. West Sussex, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, 2012. *Wiley Online Library*. doi:10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah02151.
- Siculus, Diodorus. *Library of History, Volume II: Books 2.35-4.58*. Translated by Charles H. Oldfather. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.
- . *Library of History, Volume III: Books 4.59-8*. Translated by Charles H. Oldfather. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933.
- Sikes, E. E. "Nike and Athena Nike." *The Classical Review* 9, no. 5 (1895): 280-3. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/693294>.
- Skoulikidis, Nikos, Elias Dimitriou, and Ioannis Karaouzas, eds. *The Rivers of Greece: Evolution, Current Status and Perspectives*. Berlin: Springer, 2018.
- Sleeswyk, André W. "The Prow of the 'Nike of Samothrace' Reconsidered." *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 11, no. 3 (1982): 233-43. doi:10.1111/j.1095-9270.1982.tb00083.x.
- Smith, R. R. R. *Hellenistic Sculpture: A Handbook*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2014.
- Sourvinou-Inwood, Christiane. "Festival and Mysteries: Aspects of the Eleusinian Cult." In *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*, edited by Michael B. Cosmopoulos, 25-49. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Stewart, Andrew. "The Nike of Samothrace: Another View." *American Journal of Archaeology* 120, no. 3 (2016): 399-410. doi:10.3764/aja.120.3.0399.
- Stucchi, S. *Cirene 1957-1966: Un Decennio di Attività Della Missione Archeologica Italiana a Cirene*. Tripoli, Libya: N.E., 1967.
- Tambiah, Stanley J. *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985.

- “Theater (13).” *The American Excavations on Samothrace* (blog). Accessed August 16, 2018. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/theater/>.
- Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War, Volume I: Books 1-2*. Translated by C. F. Smith. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919.
- Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Walston, Charles. *Alcamenes and the Establishment of the Classical Type in Greek Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Wescoat, Bonna D. “The Sanctuary and Cult of the Great Gods on Samothrace.” In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 42-59.
- . “Thoughts on the Design of the Nike Precinct.” In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 174-7.
- . “Coming and Going in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, Samothrace.” In *Architecture of the Sacred*, edited by Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert G. Ousterhout, 66-113. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- . “Buildings for Votive Ships on Delos and Samothrace.” In *Architecture and Archaeology in the Cyclades: Papers in Honour of J. J. Coulton*, edited by Marina Yeloulanou and Maria Samatopoulou, 153-72. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006.
- Yegül, Fikret. “Metaphor and Meaning in the Cities of Asia Minor in Romanization and the City: Creation, Transformations and Failures.” *Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series*, no. 38 (2000): 133-53.
- Young, Serinity. *Women Who Fly: Goddesses, Witches, Mystics, and Other Airborne Females*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Zuntz, Gunther. *Persephone. Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

Works Consulted

- “3-D Walkthroughs.” American Excavations Samothrace. October 07, 2018. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/3-d-walkthroughs/>.

- Avramidis, Stathis. "Drowning in Ancient Greek History and Mythology." *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education* 3, no. 4 (2009): 422-31. <http://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ijare/vol3/iss4/9>.
- Borza, Eugene. "Samothrace." In *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed., edited by Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow. Oxford University Press, 2012. doi:10.1093/acref/9780199545568.013.5690.
- Clinton, Kevin. "The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis." In *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches*, edited by Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg, 110-24. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Connelly, Joan B. *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Cosmopoulos, Michael B., ed. *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Dowden, Ken. *Death and the Maiden: Girls' Initiation in Greek Mythology*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Eliade, Mircea. "Initiation: An Overview." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., edited by Lindsay Jones, 4475-80. Vol. 7. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. Gale Virtual Reference Library. <http://link.galegroup.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/apps/doc/CX3424501513/GVRL?u=camb55135&sid=GVRL&xid=5e8fb5e4>.
- "Field Seasons." American Excavations Samothrace. October 04, 2017. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/field-seasons/>.
- Hamiaux, Marianne. "The Description of the Monument." In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 142-63.
- . "The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Discovery and Restorations." In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 72-89.
- Hamiaux, Marianne, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, eds. *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*. Paris: Somogy Art Publishers, 2015.
- Herodotus. *The Persian Wars, Volume IV: Books 8-9*. Translated by A. D. Godley. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925.

- Hesiod, and Homer. *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and Homerica, with an English Translation*. Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Ibled, Daniel, Anne Liégey, and Ludovic Laugier. "The Restoration of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, 2013-14." With contributions by N. Bruhière, C. Devos, P. Klein, B. Lafay, V. Picur, and V. Pillard. In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 104-25.
- Kahil, Lilly. "Mythological Repertoire of Brauron." In *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography*, edited by Warren G. Moon, 231-44. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. "Samothrace." In *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, edited by Michael Gagarin. Oxford University Press, 2010. doi:10.1093/acref/9780195170726.013.1116.
- Kearns, Emily. "The Nature of Heroines." In *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*, edited by Sue Blundell and Margaret Williamson, 96-110. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Koob, Stephen P. "The Conservation Program in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace." In Olga Palagia and Bonna D. Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie*, 199-210.
- Ladreit de Lacharrière, Marc. "The Restoration of the Winged Victory of Samothrace: A High Point in the Historic Partnership Between Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière and the Department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities." In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 11.
- Landauro, Inti. "The Louvre's 'Winged Victory of Samothrace' is Set for a Restoration Next Month." *Wall Street Journal*, August 22, 2013. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-louvres-winged-victory-of-samothrace-is-set-for-a-restoration-next-month-1377209886>.
- Laugier, Ludovic. "Evidence of the Cult of the Great Gods in the Louvre Collections." In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 62-7.
- Lawrence, Arnold W. "The Date of the Nike of Samothrace." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 46, no. 2 (1926): 213-8. doi:10.2307/625309.

- Lehmann, Karl. "Documents of the Samothracian Language." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 24, no. 2 (1955): 93-100. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/147262>.
- . "Samothrace: Sixth Preliminary Report." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 22, no. 1 (1953): 1-24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/146785>.
- . "Samothrace: Fifth Preliminary Report." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 21, no. 1 (1952): 19-43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/146936>.
- Lehmann, Phyllis W., and Karl Lehmann. *Samothracian Reflections: Aspects of the Revival of the Antique*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.
- Lincoln, Bruce. "Initiation: Women's Initiation." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., edited by Lindsay Jones, 4484-4488. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. <http://go.galegroup.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=camb55135&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CCX3424501513&asid=e9b89030d3055cc2e740c6fb130b22bb#.WVpIrPagI3M.link>.
- Maniatis, Y., D. Tambakopoulos, E. Dotsika, B. D. Wescoat, and D. Matsas. "The Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace, Greece: An Extended Marble Provenance Study." In *Interdisciplinary Studies on Ancient Stone. Proceedings of the IX ASMOSIA Conference (Tarragona 2009)*, edited by Anna Gutiérrez García-M., Pilar Lapuente Mercadal, and Isabel Rodà de Llanza, 263-78. Tarragona, Spain: Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica, 2009.
- Marconi, Clemente. "Choroi, Theōriai and International Ambitions: The Hall of Choral Dancers and its Frieze." In Olga Palagia and Bonna D. Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie*, 106-35.
- Martinez, Jean-Luc, and Ludovic Laugier. "The Restoration of the Winged Victory of Samothrace and the Daru Staircase: The Project in Outline." In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 17-23.
- Matsas, Dimitris. "Problems in Island Archaeology: Towards an Archaeology of Religion on Samothrace." In Olga Palagia and Bonna D. Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie*, 33-49.
- Morton, Jamie. *The Role of the Physical Environment in Ancient Greek Seafaring*. Leiden, Holland: Brill, 2001.

- Neils, Jenifer. "Nike of Samothrace." In *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome*, edited by Michael Gagarin. Oxford University Press, 2010. doi:10.1093/acref/9780195170726.013.0866.
- Osborne, Robin G. "Brauron." In *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed., edited by Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow. Oxford University Press, 2012. doi:10.1093/acref/9780199545568.013.1163.
- Pagès-Camagna, Sandrine, and Ludovic Laugier. "A Scientific Study of the Winged Victory of Samothrace." With contributions by P. Blanc, A. Blanc, E. Lambert, A. Maigret, J. Marsac, and G. Verri. In Marianne Hamiaux, Ludovic Laugier, and Jean-Luc Martinez, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*, 90-103.
- Pedley, John G. *Sanctuaries and the Sacred in the Ancient Greek World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Plutarch. *Lives, Volume IV: Alcibiades and Coriolanus. Lysander and Sulla*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.
- Pounder, Robert L. "An Inscription on Roman Samothrace." In Olga Palagia and Bonna D. Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie*, 193-8.
- "Research." American Excavations Samothrace. August 30, 2016. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/research/>.
- Scavitto, Denise. "To the Victor the Spoils? The Complicated Nature of Cultural Property." Master's thesis, Dartmouth College, 2013. ProQuest (1550562).
- Schachter, Albert. "Evolutions of a Mystery Cult: The Theban Kabiroi." In Michael B. Cosmopoulos, *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*, 112-42.
- Strabo. *Geography, Volume IV: Books 8-9*. Translated by Horace L. Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927.
- . *Geography, Volume III: Books 6-7*. Translated by Horace L. Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924.
- "Visualizing the Sanctuary." American Excavations Samothrace. June 24, 2016. <https://samothrace.emory.edu/visualizing-the-sanctuary/>.