

Antinous: Constructed Identity and Adapted Divine Responsibility

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Antinous: Constructed Identity and Adapted Divine Responsibility

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Abstract

Art historical scholarship is no stranger to Antinous and his cult, but while there has been a great deal of serious inquiry, his role as a localized deity has rarely been taken into consideration. His death (and life) is iconic: a young provincial lover to a philhellenic emperor, Antinous drowned tragically in the Nile at the tender age of twenty. Hadrian, purportedly weeping like a woman, deified him and the rest is history. His cult, up until recently, was trivialized and considered to be the product of a forlorn emperor's lunacy, with most of his statues being dated to between his death and that of Hadrian's (130-138 CE). This, in combination with the sheer amount of Antinous portraits remaining today (third only to Augustus and Hadrian himself), has created the assumption that his portraits were simply objectification and homosexual idolatry. However, his images were far more significant and often signaled towards a local identity. This thesis will examine four primary case studies, Antinous' role at Villa Adriana, at Loukou, at Lanuvium, and at Leptis Magna. Each case presents a different context, but they are all linked through their choice of Antinous as the exemplified deity, as well as their intense adaptation of his image to serve the local needs. The key is to consider his guises as iconographical tools, used to ascribe a role to the blank slate of a new god, and through this, a small glimpse of Antinous' adaptability and significance can be obtained.

Dedication

As for everything in my life, I am eternally grateful for the friends and family that support me endlessly—editing last minute drafts, acting as sounding boards to rambling thoughts, and cooking me meals. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. I could not have done it without you.

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List of Names and Terms

Form used in this thesis:	Translation:
Antinous	Antinoos, Antinoös
Villa Adriana	Hadrian's Villa
Otium	Leisure, Luxury
Erastes	The older male in a pederast relationship
Eromenos	The younger male in a pederast relationship
Ephebe	Adolescent boy
Spolia	In this context, it is the rubble that was used to fill walls and cavities
Aegyptiaca	Intentional use of Egyptian imagery and iconography to communicate

1. Introduction

Antinous and his image are no strangers to scholarship. Since his death, his story and his visual representations have been approached by curious parties often laden with broad assumptions. The young man died in the last week of October, 130 CE. He had been traveling through Egypt with his lover, the emperor Hadrian, when he drowned in the Nile river. Almost immediately, the grieving Hadrian declared his beloved a deity, and his cult spread with great speed throughout the Mediterranean. From the second to the fourth centuries, Antinous struck a chord with many individuals and communities, resulting in dozens of images. Since then, Antinous' cult and divine identity have been attacked, celebrated, and discussed in an effort to understand how a boy from Bithynia became so popular.

While Antinous' image has been represented in almost every context with considerable variety of media and styles, his image is invariably recognizable (figure 1.1). This has been achieved through a relatively fixed and carefully constructed physiognomy and hair type. The depiction of youth was also a fixed feature of his image-type. To this core, different attributes were variously attached, depending on specific viewing contexts. Often it was the identity of another god that was superimposed, most typically Dionysos. These conflated representations convey layered identities, adding complexity to Antinous' divine persona. This thesis explores the malleable divine identity of Antinous and aims to show that it determined his role as an important and highly accessible deity in a number of different contexts.

Although the biography of Antinous could arguably be an important facet to consider, little to nothing is known about him. However, it is possible to gain an insight into the

construction of his divine identity. Even in antiquity, Antinous and his story were approached with skepticism by many authors and their suspicions illuminate that even in antiquity there was a perception of the very fundamental strange-ness of the entire affair. Perhaps less surprisingly, Christian authors, such as Origen (184-253 CE), saw Antinous as a huge threat to their own youthful god, whose story of resurrection and promise of salvation had parallels to Antinous.¹ But ironically enough, those early Christian texts, alongside other cult texts, attest to the survival of Antinous' cult far later than is often assumed by even twentieth century scholars.²

The criticisms from the Christian authors were certainly not the last words on Antinous before modern scholarship. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, large sites with Antinous statuary and iconography were being found across the Mediterranean. Renaissance Italy was fascinated with the boy-god, and it got to the point that statues were being re-cut as Antinous, to fill the demand; or contemporary statues were being sold as ancient originals.³ The Vatican was particularly active in this search, acquiring statues such as the Braschi Antinous (figure 1.2) and excavating at Villa Adriana, where some Antinous statues had been found.⁴ Antinous' images were not the only focus of the Renaissance fascination with the Greek and Roman past, but the

¹ Trevor Thompson, "Antinous, The New God: Origen on Miracle and Belief in Third-Century Egypt," in *Credible, Incredible: The Miraculous in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Tobias Nicklas and Janet Spittler (Germany: Mohr Siebeck Tübingen, 2013).

² The latest evidence for Antinous' cult is the love spell found in Egypt, imploring Antinous' assistance, from the third or fourth centuries CE.

Thompson, "Antinous," 163-164.

³ Raphael modeled his Jonah in Rome's church of Santa Maria del Popolo on Antinous' image, reflecting the contemporary fervor his portrait caused in the Renaissance.

Rosario Rovira Guardiola, "The Spell of Antinous in Renaissance Art: The Jonah Statue in Santa Maria Del Popolo," in *Seduction and Power: Antiquity in the Visual and Performing Arts*, ed. Silke Knippschild and Marta Garcia Morcillo (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 263-78.

⁴ It was acquired in 1793 by Gavin Hamilton, in a country villa in Praeneste (Palestrina). In 1844, the Vatican bought it for the Lateran Museum, and heavy restorations were applied. Despite the heavy restorations, it is agreed upon to be Antinous, with some amounts of Dionysiac and Osirian iconography. R.R.R. Smith, *Antinous: Boy Made God (Exhibition Catalog)* (Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford: Gomer Press, 2018), 82.

great drama of his story excited historians and artists. During the eighteenth century, his images maintained their enigmatic draw and scholars such as Winkelmann fell prey to his great beauty. He favored the Albani Antinous in particular (figure 1.3), holding it second only to his beloved Apollo Belvedere (figure 1.4).⁵ He was not the first, nor the last, homosexual man to find such joy in Antinous' marble image, but he was a foundational voice in the field of art history, and his appreciation of Antinous certainly helped the modern fascination with the boy-god.⁶

The two most important scholars writing in the twentieth century on Antinous were Hugo Meyer and Royston Lambert. In 1991, Meyer published the full corpus of extant Antinous' portraits.⁷ To this day it is the primary reference, although somewhat outdated by recent developments in portrait studies, as well as fresh excavations.⁸ A few years before the publication of Meyer's catalogue, Lambert's *Beloved and God. The Story of Hadrian and Antinous* was published.⁹ It is an attempt to fully reconstruct the biography of Antinous. Lambert reconstructs the life and death of the boy, highlighting what he believes to have been key events, by exhausting the ancient sources, by providing his own contextual knowledge as a historian, and by using some educated liberties. It is an extremely useful text, despite quite a number of

⁵ Smith, *Boy Made God*, 60.

⁶ There are many who see Antinous as the divinity of a gay cult, or at least as being a homosexual icon. There is also a modern cult of Antinous, whose primary focus is his role as a homosexual deity.

⁷ Hugo Meyer, *Antinoos: Die Archäologischen Denkmäler Unter Einbeziehung Des Numismatischen Und Epigraphischen Materials Sowie Der Literarischen Nachrichten: Ein Beitrag Zur Kunst- Und Kulturgeschichte Der Hadrianisch-Frühantoninischen Zeit* (München: W. Fink, 1991).

⁸ Caroline Vout, "Antinous, Archaeology and History," *Journal of Roman Studies* 95 (November 2005): 80–96, <https://doi.org/10.3815/000000005784016342>.

⁹ Royston Lambert, *Beloved and God: The Story of Hadrian and Antinous* (Great Britain: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Limited, 1984).

unverifiable details. In fact most scholars accept his work as the seminal (albeit imaginative) biography of Antinous.¹⁰

Both Meyer and Lambert are used as foundational sources in this thesis, but there is also a heavy reliance on more recent scholars. One of the most important is Caroline Vout, in particular her book *Power and Eroticism in Imperial Rome*.¹¹ Her chapter “Romancing the Stone” is used throughout the thesis, and many of the interpretations are inspired from the conceptual framework of her arguments. There is also more engagement with the catalogue published by R. R. R. Smith for the Ashmolean museum in anticipation of an Antinous show (shown September 2019-February 2019), than with Meyer's catalogue.¹² While by no means a full corpus, its critical perspective is far more updated than Meyer's. Additionally, it includes a number of statues that were found or identified as Antinous since of Meyer's publication. Thorsten Opper's 2008 catalogue meant to accompany an exhibition on Hadrian at the British Museum, similarly has provided a relatively more updated research framework.¹³ The predominant school of thought until recently has been that all Antinous statues were commissioned between 130 and 138 (between the deaths of Antinous and Hadrian) as a way of placating, flattering or supporting the emperor. Local agency was not considered to be an element of the phenomenon. However, the publications of Vout, Smith and Opper have changed the perspective and local agency can be shown to have played a critical role. Antinous

¹⁰ To gain a broader perspective on the Hadrianic period, use, however, has also been made of Mary Boatwright's now classic text, *Hadrian and the City of Rome* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University 1987).

¹¹ Caroline Vout, *Power and Eroticism in Imperial Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹² Meyer's catalogue was published before excavations at Villa Adriana, and other places, and lacks some key pieces.

Smith, *Boy Made God*.

¹³ Thorsten Opper, *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict* (London: British Museum Press, 2008).

representations were clearly not only shaped by Hadrian's patronage of his beloved, but also by the political, civic and spiritual aspirations and needs of many others.

It is obviously important to discuss Antinous' social role, as the young male lover of a Roman emperor, and the resulting implications for his statues and his cult. But it has only been recently that the erotic charge of Roman representations of young men has been discussed in a scholarly fashion. In a 2002 article Elizabeth Bartman not only coined the apt and catchy term "sexy boy" to describe these representations, but discussed their ancient reception in a nuanced fashion.¹⁴ For understanding the portrait type of a "sexy-boy," Jane Fejfer's 2008 volume *Roman Portraits in Context* has been even more fundamental.¹⁵ Fejfer's work presents portraiture as a means of communicating identity in the ancient world, and in particular, she stresses the separate yet conjoined meanings of a portrait head and corresponding portrait body. Antinous' image is discussed within these terms to come to terms with both his core portrait type and his superimposed identities. Antinous' visual identity becomes something that is much more complicated than has been traditionally assumed.

Millennia of fascination with Antinous has only handed modern scholarship confused and conflated information, with his statues being the only concrete evidence of his role as a deity in the second-century Mediterranean. Chapter Two will be concerned with the construction of Antinous' identity, as can be understood from the ancient sources but also from the perspective of modern scholarship. As mentioned, his biography as a living man is gone. But in fact, it is ultimately irrelevant to this thesis. It is his biography as a deity, and his identity as a young god that will be investigated. Additionally, Chapter Two addresses in more detail the shifts in the

¹⁴ Elizabeth Bartman, "Eros's Flame: Images of Sexy Boys in Roman Ideal Sculpture," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volumes* 1 (2002): 249, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4238454>.

¹⁵ Jane Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008).

scholarly approach to Antinous portrait statues. In Chapters Three and Four, the discussion turns to case studies. These have usually required additional site-specific research, which is briefly reviewed below. In Chapter Three, the focus is on Antinous representations in private villa contexts: at Hadrian's Villa Adriana in Tivoli and at Herodes Atticus' villa in Loukou, in the Peloponnese. Both cases allow the exploration of Antinous in an elite context and so too of elite patronage.

Villa Adriana, while long known to have been the source of some Antinous statues, has only been understood as having a temple precinct of Antinous since the turn of the present century. This discovery is entirely due to the excavations of Zaccaria Mari and Sergio Sgalambro, who published their findings in 2007.¹⁶ The Antinous celebrated at Villa Adriana was Osirantinous: the combination or conflation of Antinous with Osiris, the Egyptian divine king of the dead (figure 1.5). This Osirantinous appeared all over the Mediterranean, but his presence at Villa Adriana is especially well attested—with many pieces on view at the Vatican.¹⁸ While some scholars oppose some of aspects of Mari and Sgalambro's designation of the area excavated as an Antinoeion, their overall argument is sound and is accepted here.¹⁹ Their focus on the Egyptianizing attributes of the temple precinct also allows the chapter to examine a larger recent debate regarding Aegyptiaca in Roman art and culture by scholars Miguel Versluys,

¹⁶ Zaccaria Mari and Sergio Sgalambro, "The Antinoeion of Hadrian's Villa: Interpretation and Architectural Reconstruction," *American Journal of Archaeology* 111, no. 1 (January 2007): 83–104, <https://doi.org/10.3764/aja.111.1.83>.

¹⁸ The Vatican preserves about 15 of these statues in "Room III. Reconstruction of the Serapeum of the Canopus of Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli." <http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-iii-ricostruzione-del-serapeo-del-canopo-di-villa-adriana.html>

¹⁹ Some scholars place the obelisk as being from Antinoopolis, and brought to Rome by Elagabalus. Gil Renberg, "Hadrian and the Oracle of Antinous (Sha Hadr. 14.7); with an Appendix on the So-Called Antinoeion at Hadrian's Villa and Rome's Monte Pincio Obelisk," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 55 (2010): 159–98.

Molly Swetnam-Burland, and Caitlin Barrett.²⁰ Aegyptiaca (a modern term) refers to the Roman practice of incorporating Egyptian iconography and styles into artworks. The intention, according to the three scholars, was to convey luxury and spirituality, as well as other elements, in a representation of Roman identity. Hadrian's use of Osirantinous at his Villa may be thus be interpreted as not only an affirmation of Antinous' divine identity in Egypt (Hadrian established his cult there immediately after his death) but an affirmation of his Roman identity—as well as Hadrian's relationship to Osirantinous, as a Roman emperor.

The second case study in Chapter Three is the Antinous cult stature from the villa of Herodes Atticus in Loukou.²¹ Far from Rome, this Greek Sophist incorporated the boy-god into his villa, with his own cult room off of a peristyle garden. In this case, Antinous' image is that of an athlete, and it is arguably a guise within itself. The publications of Opper and Vout have been instrumental in coming to terms with Herodes' motivations in setting up the statue. Fejfer's approach to the heroic nude body type has also informed the discussion. Antinous' identity as an athlete is obviously very different than the Osirantinous at Villa Adriana. But like the latter, it participates in the construction of a Roman identity, with specifically Greek (or Greco-Roman) rather than Egyptian references.

The two case studies in Chapter Four focus on public settings and bring to the fore Antinous' role as a versatile, malleable deity in localized public contexts. The first study

²⁰ Miguel John Versluys, "Making Meaning with Egypt: Hadrian, Antinous and Rome's Cultural Renaissance," in *Egyptian Gods in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean: Image and Reality Between Local and Global*, ed. Salvatore Sciascia, Supplemento a Mythos 3, 2012, 25–39. Molly Swetnam-Burland, "Egyptian Objects, Roman Contexts: A Taste for Aegyptiaca in Italy," in *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman World*, ed. P. Meyboom, Miguel John Versluys, and Laurent Bricault (Brill, 2007), 111–36, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004154209.i-562.30>. Caitlin Eilis Barrett, *Egypt in Roman Visual and Material Culture*, Oxford Handbooks Online (Oxford University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935390.013.18>.

²¹ To see this statue, refer to Smith, *Boy Made God*, 64.

concerns an Antinous-Apollo-Dionysos statue from Leptis Magna, in Northern Africa.²² This statue is nude, and participates in some of the previously mentioned dynamics that Fejfer explores. Additionally, it was placed in a public bath-house, and Bartman's identification of his role as a "sexy boy" can be fully explored. But the main framework for interpretation is from Vout who also uses this statue as a case study.²³ The Leptis Magna study is juxtaposed to one focusing on evidence from Lanuvium, just south-west of Rome and only about 40 km from Villa Adriana. This final case study is perhaps the most ambiguous and assumptive, but it secures Antinous' role as a deity capable of localization, with almost any group of people. Two artifacts were found near or in Lanuvium: an Antinous-Silvanus relief (found at Torre del Padiglione) and an inscription from a *collegium* in Lanuvium dedicated to Antinous and Diana (figures 1.6 and 1.7).²⁴ Taken together, Antinous' role as a localized woodland deity can be supposed. Moreover, the inscription secures beyond doubt the involvement of the local community in his cult. Andreas Bendlin thorough investigation, complete with translations, contextualization, and political insights, provided an effective view of the entire phenomenon.²⁵ Peter Dorsey's explanation of the indigenous Latin deity Silvanus, however, has also allowed for fresh reading of Antinous' role in Lanuvium, only adding to Bendlin's argument.²⁶

²² To see this statue, refer to Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 97.

²³ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 96-113.

²⁴ The Antinous-Silvanus relief was found buried carefully, and in a spot that probably doesn't correspond to its original location. That being said, this relief is from the area, and this thesis makes no attempts to situate it as being at the Temple of Antinous mentioned by the inscription, or any other space related to the *collegium*.

²⁵ Andreas Bendlin, "Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law: The Collegium of Diana and Antinous in Lanuvium (CIL 14.2112) Reconsidered," in *Aposteldekret Und Antikes Vereinswesen: Gemeinschaft Und Ihre Ordnung*, ed. M Öhler, WUNT 280 (Tübingen, 2011), 207–96.

²⁶ Peter Dorsey, "The Cult of Silvanus: A Study in Roman Folk Religion," *Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition* 20 (1992).

The corpus of works regarding Antinous is large, and spans large time periods. This text relies heavily on contemporary interpretation, while also including older sources for foundational information. The significance of Antinous, and his image, becomes discernable through this process and allows a nuanced reading of his rise to importance as a young deity in the second century.

2. The Construction of Antinous

The first part of this chapter is an investigation of the construction of Antinous' identity in the written literary sources and in his images, as well as in the modern interpretations of that evidence. Antinous' image cannot be separated from the often dramatic and mysterious identity he was endowed with in the course of Hadrian's reign and later; and it is important to come to terms with the main aspects of this identity before discussing individual statues. The role of Hadrian in the construction of this identity is considered, as are the religious and the spiritual motivations of other, non-imperial, patrons. The second half of the chapter focuses on Antinous' portrait-type, both in terms of its core characteristics and its iconographic fluidity. More specifically, the depiction of a sexualized youth will be considered alongside his divine guises to highlight how the identity of the Antinous portrait could function at once as an individualized ideal male divinity and as an individualized ideal male divinity with changing, adaptable identities.

The Divine Identity of Antinous

As discussed in the Introduction, scholars such as Royston Lambert have attempted to reconstruct Antinous' life and death, utilizing contextual clues, contemporary accounts, and educated leaps of faith. While this is arguably an interesting exercise in historical narrative—and it is lovely to imagine the life of the teenager Antinous as being filled with adventure—it is ultimately a moot point. The world does not and will never know for sure the events leading up to the death of Antinous. However, a number of events, as well as some of the speculative

stories, are worth examining as they do provide important insights into Antinous' posthumous construction in the second century.

During Hadrian's reign (118- 138 CE), the Roman Empire encompassed most of the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea (figure 2.1). Antinous was born in Bithynia, an important Eastern province in Asia Minor and vital for trade and movement between East and West. It seems likely that Hadrian (or at least his imperial party) first crossed paths with Antinous in the province's capital city of Claudiopolis in 123 CE. Antinous, then a boy of twelve or thirteen, is believed to have joined Hadrian's traveling entourage as it departed the city that same year.²⁷ Hadrian is then attested to be in Rome from 125 to 128 CE, although reportedly spending most of his time at Villa Adriana near Tivoli.²⁹ Lambert has posited that it was during these three years that Hadrian's and Antinous' relationship began.³⁰ He further proposes that by 128 CE, Antinous had found his way into the emperor's graces as his favorite.³¹ Certainly, he was part of Hadrian's party that set off to explore yet more of the Eastern empire in 128.³² Antinous would have been a member of the imperial traveling party, accompanying Hadrian everywhere and participating in important rites across the Mediterranean.

Very little is otherwise known about the events that unfolded on the trip between 128 and 130, the year of Antinous' death. However, Lambert's assertion that it included a visit to the sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis in 128 is precisely the kind of mythologized history that provides an insight into the Antinous construct.³³ The sanctuary at Eleusis was one of the oldest

²⁷ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 45, 60.

²⁹ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 63.

³⁰ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 63.

³¹ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 63.

³² Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 54, 61.

³³ Lambert speaks of this event with wholehearted certainty by reconstructing this visit from several sources, including Pausanias and Dio, but he does not clearly cite his sources.

sanctuaries in Greece and famous throughout Antiquity because it was the key site for the Mysteries associated with Demeter, which as Lambert puts it, were a “bridge between the old and new religions” in the constant fluctuating religious landscape of the Ancient Mediterranean.³⁴ Admittance into the Mysteries did not depend on rank, age, or sex and this model of non-exclusivity for initiates was undoubtedly one of the reasons for its popularity and longevity. The Mysteries revolved around chthonic divinities, with the myth of the symbolic death and re-birth of Demeter's daughter Persephone playing a central role.³⁵ Alongside the two goddesses was Dionysos, also associated with death and rebirth, as well as being a divine embodiment of fluctuating or shifting identities that defied normative social constraints.³⁶ While mythical reenactment and imploring the chthonic gods and their powers is usually thought to have been part of the rituals, the exact nature of the mysteries is just that, a mystery. According to Cassius Dio, Hadrian was initiated into the highest grade of the Mysteries in 123 CE.³⁷ The visit to Eleusis in 128 CE would have allowed him and any other initiated members of his party to once again tap into the deeply enigmatic, but presumably rewarding religious rituals. Lambert suggests that Antinous himself became an initiate that year.³⁸ Although Antinous' presence, like Hadrian's, at Eleusis in 128 CE cannot be verified, the possibility that the teenager was initiated fits perfectly into the construction of his post mortem identity. In fact, it is fascinating to consider that Antinous' initiation into what was arguably the most important chthonic cult in the Ancient

Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 102.

³⁴ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 103.

³⁵ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 102.

³⁶ The chthonic cults were primarily Demeter, Persephone, and Dionysos, although many other deities can be considered chthonic. These cults and their practices were earth-focused and were often concerned with the underworld, agriculture, and the interconnection between life and death.

Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 102.

³⁷ Cassius Dio, 69.10.3.

³⁸ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 102.

world was configured specifically as a prefiguration of his own death and rebirth into immortality. In any case, the fact that Hadrian was reportedly an initiate at Eleusis may well have affected his construction of Antinous' death and deification.

In October of 130 CE, Hadrian's party chose to visit the floodwaters of the Nile, despite the fear and awe that locals felt towards the river, which resulted in the authorities barring sailing during the full flood.³⁹ It was within this tense and charged context that Antinous drowned in the river. The only extant written Hadrianic source from the period, the inscription on an obelisk now on the Pincio hill in Rome (figure 2.2), declares that—Antinous sacrificed himself, either for Hadrian or upon his own initiative, having “received an order of the gods at the time of his passing.”⁴⁰ Cassius Dio, writing in the third century, claims that the “youth had voluntarily undertaken to die.”⁴¹ Aurelius Victor, writing in the fourth century, puts it more bluntly, explaining that “Hadrian was keen to live longer...[and] Antinous had offered himself.”⁴² While none of the sources provide a definitive explanation, it does seem safe to assert that, whether rooted in truth or a fabricated story, the prevailing belief that circulated in Antiquity was that Antinous sacrificed himself. It is also likely that his deification was at least in part dependent on his sacrificial death, that his sacrificial death explained his deification. At this time, it was an established custom to honor those who had drowned in the river with a small temple and cult.⁴³ Additionally, self-sacrifice by a young and good person was thought to be a solution for the non-

³⁹ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 58.

⁴⁰ This excerpt is from the East side of the obelisk. The text of the obelisk was first translated in 1896 by A. Erman, and Boatwright utilizes his further edited translations of all four sides. The obelisk will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Boatwright, *Hadrian and the City of Rome*, 244.

⁴¹ Cassius Dio, 69.11.2-4.

⁴² Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 56.

⁴³ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 125.

ideal river conditions, and many believed that the conditions only improved if one was sacrificed.⁴⁴ Antinous' cult, formed within these traditions, gains justification but the speed and magnitude at which the cult grew was unusual and calls attention to the aspects of his cult that drew people to it.

Antinous as *Eromenos* and as a “Sexy-Boy”

As it is still the case today, it was Antinous' role as Hadrian's lover that drew the greatest attention in Antiquity. It is also probably the only aspect of the entire Antinous “phenomenon” that is almost universally agreed upon as true. Additionally, Antinous' youth and death, or his youthful death, must also be considered in the context of his popularity. In fact, his youth is a key aspect of his adaptability and is one of the most recognizable traits that he maintains, in every divine guise. His youth is, in turn, is directly linked to his role as the official *eromenos* of Hadrian.⁴⁵ The role of *eromenos* is from the Graeco-Roman tradition of pederasty or boy-love and had its roots in Greek culture. The normative relationship was hierarchical: the *erastes*, the active lover, was an adult, most likely a citizen (male) and someone of political importance, whereas the *eromenos*, the beloved, was a youth who had not yet attained his citizen rights.⁴⁶ Adult citizens were not to take the role of beloved, be penetrated, and be the submissive half in the relationship if they were to publicly maintain their virile persona. The *eromenos* himself was meant to grow up out of the role, and in turn expected to find his own *eromenos* and take the role of *erastes*. Greek mythology also enshrined the practice through the myth of Zeus and

⁴⁴ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 123.

⁴⁵ Bartman, “Eros's Flame,” 249.

⁴⁶ Alternatively, the *eromenos* could be a slave or young individual not concerned with maintaining the public image of manliness (but youth was always an ideal).

Ganymede. It was popular in Greek literary sources, but especially in sixth and fifth century art, specifically on Attic red-figure vases intended for the all-male aristocratic symposia (figure 2.3).⁴⁷ Zeus was invariably represented as the adult bearded authoritative *erastes*, the active, pursuing lover, and Ganymede as the youthful sexually desirable *eromenos*, the passive courted beloved.⁴⁸

It also important to emphasize that homosexual, extra-marital, and pederastical relationships not only did not carry a stigma of impropriety or scandal in Roman society, but they were well established and hardly perceived as somehow foreign to Rome.⁴⁹ A number of Roman emperors before Hadrian were known to have entertained schools of boys and adolescents.⁵⁰ Even Trajan (98-117 CE), who devoted considerable effort in the maintenance of a public image of his imperial family, openly loved boys.⁵¹ It was a common and accepted practice in the Roman imperial court, and while it was rooted in classical Athens, it was naturalized to the Roman world. Indeed, the myth of Zeus and Ganymede itself had its place in both Roman literary and artistic production.⁵² Nor does it seem coincidental that the most notable images are

⁴⁷ In the myth, Zeus, with the boy's father's consent, takes the adolescent Ganymede to serve as the cup-bearer in Olympus. It is a highly sexualized myth, and certainly exposes the high respect and reverence that was held for these relationships. In Roman statues of Ganymede, he is shown as an adolescent, standing in contrapposto with soft limbs and long curly hair. He often interacts with an Eagle: Zeus' guise when he came to retrieve him. It is interesting to note that Ganymede, in the literature, was about seventeen, but many of the statues portray him as being even younger. See for example the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, variously date between the 6th and 4th centuries B.C. Bartman, "Eros's Flame", 261.

⁴⁸ It is vital to note that this type of relationship, while sanctioned by classical mythology, certainly had age restrictions and important boundaries to honor. These weren't always honored, but people would start to gossip once the *eromenos* had peach fuzz. Antinous was probably just about to grow out of this age. For a commentary of the active versus passive lovers, refer to Oppen, *Hadrian*, 168.

⁴⁹ K. J. Dover, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behavior," *Arethusa* 6, no. 1 (1973): 66.

⁵⁰ Oppen, *Hadrian*, 170.

⁵¹ Oppen, *Hadrian*, 170.

⁵² Ovid recounts this myth below, but it is important to note that he was a Roman author, and thus this is a Roman rendition of the myth.

2nd century statue groups (figure 2.4), depicting Ganymede as an adolescent, standing in contrapposto with soft limbs and long curly hair and a Phrygian cap to denote his eastern origins, interacting with Zeus in the form of an eagle—the guise the god was said to have adopted when he came to retrieve his Trojan boy-lover.⁵³ In this context it is interesting to note that Hadrian, especially in his travels in the East, was assimilated to Zeus, a fitting persona for the ruler of the vast Roman empire.⁵⁴ Additionally, Antinous, much like Ganymede, was an Eastern boy. When he was accompanied by Antinous, the Zeus-Ganymede reference must have been difficult for many to ignore: it was underscored in the public projection of their inter-personal relationship. The pair, as *erastes* and *eromenos*, traveled the East together for about two years, leaving a trail of restored temples, ostentatious shows of power and imperial rule, and gossip.

Ganymede had the ambiguous reward of becoming the eternally young cup-bearer of the gods on Mount Olympos. But his myth is easily compared to those involving young men killed before their time, as almost invariably their fate was presented in the context of a sexual relationship, whether homosexual like Hyacinthus or heterosexual like Adonis.⁵⁵ In either case, the young men are involved with older and more powerful deities (Apollo and Aphrodite respectively). The parallels between Antinous and these young men, literally immortalized like Ganymede or tragically dead and "reborn" like Hyacinthus or Adonis, were drawn already in antiquity. Elizabeth Bartman designates this group as "sexy-boys," whose defining

"The King of Heaven once was fired with love of Ganymede and something was devised that Jove would rather be than what he was. Yet no bird would he deign to be but one that had the power to bear his thunderbolts. At once his spurious pinions beat the breeze and off he swept the Trojan lad; who now, mixing the nectar, waits in heaven above, (though Juno frowns) and hands the cup to Jove." Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 10.152.

⁵³ It is interesting to note that Ganymede, in the literature, was about seventeen, but many of the statues portray him as being even younger.

⁵⁴ Meyer, "Antinous and the Greek Renaissance," 160.

⁵⁵ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 100-102

characteristics often revolve around their sexualized images and stories.⁵⁶ Together these “sexy boys” participate in tradition, both visual and literary, unique to their gender, youth, and beauty.⁵⁷ Ganymede, for example, was “a god with the lovely bloom of boyhood.”⁵⁸ Indeed, the 2nd century Roman statue groups emphasize precisely that (figure 2.4). Ganymede is either almost always nude or—if clothing is depicted, it is shown in the form of revealing a mantle, loose or too small for true “modesty.” Vout ventures to say that these “sexy-boy” statues were popular because they invited “ownership,” in the sexual sense, because of their perceived receptiveness, vulnerability, and social standing.⁵⁹ In the case of Antinous, his possible status as a non-citizen may have further emphasized this, as his social standing reflected his role as *eromenos* and could, therefore imply this social inferiority innately. These “sexy boys” are passive, and attractive, much like the infamous Aphrodite of Knidos, whose nude and sensual marble form inspired a man to ejaculate on her marble thigh (figure 2.5). This can be viewed as objectification, in the purest sense of the term.

While “sexy-boys” and pederasty were certainly accepted in the Roman world, their roots in Greek culture often tinted their existence as a Greek phenomenon. Hadrian was certainly interested in the art and culture of classical Greece. Indeed he reportedly earned the name *Graeculus* in learned circles in Rome when still he was still a youth.⁶⁰ Moreover, Hadrian’s open engagement with the practice of pederasty certainly contributed to this philhellenic labeling. Yet to interpret the homosexual relationship between the emperor and Antinous solely in the context

⁵⁶ Bartman, “Eros’s Flame,” 249.

⁵⁷ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 85, 100

⁵⁸ Theogones, 1345-1350.

⁵⁹ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 105.

However, Meyer argues that there is not an overt sexual component. Rather, he believes it is simply an expression of the *ephebic* identity.

Meyer, “Antinous,” 161.

⁶⁰ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 31.

of Hadrian's philhellenism is both reductive and misleading. Hadrian's public imperial persona must be understood in the context of the vast empire he ruled over, not just one aspect of it. In fact, it is far more useful to understand the Graeco-Roman world of the second century as an amalgam of cultures, not as a series of separate traditions linked only by political rule. Hadrian himself was provincial, and it is far more interesting to understand his public representation and so too his relationship with Antinous as an engagement with the Roman empire as a whole, as will become evident when discussing the portraits of Antinous that literally fuse or "Romanize" references to both Greek and Egyptian iconographic and stylistic traditions.

The Foundation and Spread of the Antinous Cult

When in the last week of October, 130 CE, the arrestingly beautiful young man was purportedly found drowned in the churning waters of the Nile, Hadrian was reportedly overwhelmed with grief.⁶¹ The *Historiae Augustae*, in a jab at the relationship, even states that “Hadrian...wept for him in a womanish fashion.”⁶² While Antinous' life and the motivations for his death—and Hadrian's response to it—are almost completely conjecture, they are important to understand as an aspect of his role after death, whether in cult or other public, semi-public, or

⁶¹ This date, October 30th, 130 CE, is gotten from the *Easter Chronicle* (which has its own issues, as explored by Caroline Vout). However, it refers to the foundation of Antinoopolis, and Antinous' death happened sometime before. This date, however, is unknown, and so it will be generalized to be October, 130 CE.

Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 57.

Meyer, “Antinous,” 159.

⁶² This source is notoriously unreliable, but the “woman-like” grief is corroborated by the other sources. Additionally, this can be juxtaposed to the great grief presented by Achilles towards the death of Patroclus. Perhaps this “woman-like” grief had a place for men in these relationships, without damaging their *arête*.

Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 56.

semi-private contexts. Immediately after the death of his beloved, Hadrian laid the foundations for Antinoopolis, a marble-clad city on the bank of the Nile where he had drowned.⁶⁴ Hadrian is said to have personally established festivals and games in honor of Antinous and so ensured the city as the cult center for the new god in Egypt. Antinoopolis prospered at least until the fourth century, and existed in full working order until the eighth.⁶⁵ But subsequent looting and the systematic removal of the marble to build other cities along the Nile has ensured that next to nothing remains today (figure 2.6).⁶⁶ Hadrian's travels did not end in Egypt. After setting up Antinoopolis, he traveled North again, establishing cult sites along the way. One notable site is Antinous' hometown, Claudiopolis (also known as Bithynion) where Hadrian built temples to the boy-god, as well as scattering his image across the city. When Hadrian returned to Rome and, as will be discussed in the next chapter, he set up a cult to Osirantinous (Osiris-Antinous) at Villa Adriana. Local cults subsequently also sprung up in the Italic peninsula and across the Mediterranean, but seemingly without Hadrian's influence. The cult survived until the third century and into the fourth century, before Christianity slowly smothered it.⁶⁷

Part of Antinous' appeal seems to be tied to his identity as a chthonic deity or hero. His manner of death tied him to the underworld and, as Jones explains, he "acquired his own religious aura as a divinity who moved between the three realms of heaven, earth, and the underworld."⁶⁸ Similarly, Vout states that: "Antinous is a kind of 'dying and rising god' in

⁶⁴ Trevor Thompson, "Antinous," 150.

⁶⁵ David Thompson, "The Lost City of Antinoos," *Archaeological Institute of America, Archaeology*, 34, no. 1 (1981): 46.

⁶⁶ The Napoleonic army discovered Antinoopolis in ruins, but they did sketch what was left. David Thompson, "The Lost City of Antinoos," 47.

⁶⁷ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 89.

⁶⁸ Christopher P. Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity: From Achilles to Antinoos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 81.

Egypt, Greece, and Rome.”⁶⁹ He also took on the role of the psychopomp: like Hermes he lead souls to the afterlife. Antinous was also understood as a healing god and his chthonic role allowed to mediate on behalf of a person who prayed to him for his or her physical and spiritual ailments. At Mantinea and other Greek cult sites, Antinous was worshipped “in the likeness of Dionysos,” even though the extant images do not show him in the guise of Dionysos.⁷⁰ But it is true that Antinous was often worshipped or depicted in the guise of other chthonic divinities, most frequently as Dionysos and Osiris.⁷¹ Antinous, often combined with either one or both of these deities, gained their traits. Overall, it is clear that syncretism added to his inherent identity as a chthonic god.

Antinous’ Portrait

The popularity of Antinous and his cult in public, semi-public, or semi-private contexts was directly dependent on his adaptability. While his youth, beauty and sexualized identity combined with his dramatic and symbolically laden “sacrificial” death and subsequent heroization or deification were always part of his attractiveness, Antinous was also a blank slate that allowed the construction of additional layered identities to fit the needs of specific contexts.⁷² The identity of another god, one with an established mythology and identifiable characteristics, could easily be filtered on top of his beautiful and magnetic appearance. The result was often a fluid combination between the two, between a core or fixed identity and a mutable one. In portraiture, Antinous’ individualized if idealized physiognomy and sexy body is

⁶⁹ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 111.

⁷⁰ Thompson, *Antinous the New God* , 153.

⁷¹ Smith, *Boy Made God*, 31.

⁷² Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity*, 82.

always depicted, but the core identity is ambiguous or undefined enough to take on a multitude of other identities and roles. The different guises must be seen as important, even key, semantic layers, even while every portrait of Antinous retains his intrinsic identity as a deity, as the sexualized boy-god.

Portrait statues of Antinous in the guise of other divinities, manipulate the core elements through the guise itself, they pick, pull and shift it towards a specific purpose. This will be a central issue and discussion in Chapters 3 and 4, however it is worth mentioning now that many of the statues of Antinous in the guise of other divinities are often accepted as examples of cult statues. This is in part due to their often over-life size, but it is mostly dependent on the combined identity of Antinous with well-established deities. Although Ancient authors such as Cassius Dio speak of these images as objects of devotion, as if in a cult setting,⁷³ the original contexts for most of the extant works have been entirely lost. Simply put: while an Antinous statue in the guise of another deity may be seen as an image of the deity Antinous with added attributes, this does not make it a cult statue. For the sake of this discussion, this issue presents a moot point. A depiction of Antinous participated in the same dynamics, no matter its use or context.

The visual identity of Antinous' statues was ultimately dependent on the depiction of his facial features and hair—or his head. But if the head of Antinous portraits is his most clearly recognizable fixture, it is important to first understand the significance of the body types that were employed in his representations. In the ancient world, there was a corpus of body types for statues that were well-known and recognizable, with each communicating specific meanings.⁷⁴

⁷³ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 62.

⁷⁴ Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, 182.

The use of these body types was meant to communicate the character of the person depicted, rather than their actual physical appearance.⁷⁵ For example, a male athlete body-type was not meant to portray the actual, real-life physical appearance of the subject, but to convey that he embodied the youthful, competitive ethos of an ideal athlete. In this sense, the term “portrait” shifts from its modern understanding. Roman portrait-bodies are an entirely different phenomenon: they were meant to represent the public role of the person depicted and came from a set of well-established types.⁷⁶ For example, nudity was a popular portrait statue body type, but not because the men depicted in this way displayed themselves nude in the public sphere as a part of their real-life role.⁷⁷ A nude body communicated elements of heroism, strength, and divine power, as inherited from the depictions of gods, heroes, and kings of Greek art.⁷⁸ The bodies had to work in conjunction with the portrait head, but the significance of body types was so important that, to modern viewers, the two parts occasionally look very strange together, even while we must assume that they were not problematic for Romans (figure 2.7).⁷⁹

Antinous and his body are no exception to these Roman portrait dynamics. The nucleus of his recognizable identity resides in the great consistency with which his facial features and hair were rendered, no matter how the body was—albeit always youthfully—rendered. For example, Antinous-Dionysos’ body-type often echoed depictions of satyrs or Dionysos himself,

⁷⁵ Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, 182.

⁷⁶ Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, 183. Fejfer does not discuss the large corpus of extant funerary portraits, for which the context is different.

⁷⁷ Nudity in Rome was treated quite differently than in Greece and had a slightly more taboo social understanding. However, nudity in depictions could be used with a measured hand and with the direct reference to the previously mentioned meanings in the Greek context.

⁷⁸ Fejfer argues that this kind of “fabricated” nudity in Rome was seen as Greek-style, that its “foreign” identity was apparent to most viewers.

Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, 200-201.

⁷⁹ This is very evident in the so-called Tivoli General, whose senatorial, aged head is placed with a young and virile nude body.

such as the Antinous as Bacchus in the Capitoline Museums (2.8).⁸⁰ This is a fragmentary statue, with most of the arms broken off. However, the body type is still clearly visible: its nude form wears a tiny animal skin, incapable of providing any real warmth or protection. It appears the statue stood in contrapposto, with one arm raised, while the right leg steps forward, accentuating the softly ephebic V-line on the lower abdomen.⁸¹ The animal skin lays tightly against the chest, tied up on the left shoulder. The bare shoulder, and partial chest, are softly rendered but still with some musculature defined. This statue participates in the sexualized nudity identified by Bartman, especially in terms of the softly clinging drapery of the animal skin serving to sexualize or eroticize the body beneath and thereby securing the statue in the tradition Bartman identifies.⁸² It is a supple, soft, young and androgynous body from which the head turns sharply to the right and downward. The curly hair is entangled with a Dionysiac wreath, and the lock-scheme is evident as explained by Vout: “the upper curls fall forwards from the crown in a soft comma formation...[that] curve[s] for the most part to the subject’s left.”⁸³ His soft curls were rendered with great care and detail, paralleling the contemporary treatment of Hadrian’s beard in his portraits (figure 2.149). Each lock is thick and forms a large curl, expertly carved to allow the marble’s inflexible surface to look malleable. The hair, as Vout argues, is the most distinctly-Antinous aspect of any true Antinous statue.⁸⁴

Antinous’ face-type is a different matter. It is, despite variables in quality, consistently rendered, a set type. Yet, while the head is immediately recognizable, as Antinous’ it cannot be

⁸⁰ Bartman, “Eros’s Flame,” 256.

⁸¹ Bartman identifies this V-line as being that of the *ephebic* boy, before the development of the adult male body.

Bartman, “Eros’s Flame,” 255.

⁸² Bartman, “Eros’s Flame,” 256.

⁸³ Vout, “Antinous, Archaeology and History,” 85.

⁸⁴ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 77.

taken as a full mimetic likeness of the Bithynian in life. Portraits in antiquity, even when they had elements of realism and a dependable and recognizable likeness, were often carved to accentuate elements of an idealized identity, rather than realistic likeness. For example, the veristic portraiture of the Republican age often represented the subject as elderly, in extreme and unflattering detail.⁸⁵ This was meant to highlight the fact that their age was the social requirement for their participation in the Senate, and often signified greater status within the system. Much like the body types previously discussed, Antinous' youthful face and prominent straight nose communicated elements of divinity, heroism and strength (the latter as "evidenced" by the strong nose). His curly and voluminous hair participates in a tradition set by none-other than Alexander the Great, whose leonine hair has echoed through the ages as a mark of kingliness and regality (figure 2.10).

The Townley Antinous (figure 2.11) may serve as a representative example for the most popular and common depiction of Antinous' head. The Townley portrait—a bust, but originally a full statue that was cut off at the edge of the collarbones, dipping down to the sternum—is of excellent quality.⁸⁶ It depicts an Antinous-Dionysos, albeit with minimal or understated references to Dionysiac iconography. There is only the slightest hint of musculature in the chest, with the neck rising gracefully but powerfully from the highly defined collar bones. The head is turned to the left, looking downwards and so, from the front, provides a ¾ view. The cheeks are entirely smooth—no trace of carved facial hair. The nose is certainly the most prominent aspect: severe, straight, and extremely well-proportioned. The nostrils are delicately rendered, and they do not flare out, meeting the gentle skin above the lips. The lips are prominent and well-rounded,

⁸⁵ Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, 263.

⁸⁶ This statue was found in a wall, used as spolia at Villa Doria Pamphilj. Smith, *Boy Made God*, 78.

and as many argue, hold the nucleus of the magnetic attractiveness. The chin is narrow, and the cheeks without baby fat. The high cheekbones meet the eyes, downcast but opened wide. The eyes look off to the left with incised irises. The eyebrows meet the nose in severity, creating a strong T-shape within the face. The hair sits rather cap-like on top, covering the ears and coming down densely to just above the eyebrows, complete with the aforementioned lock-scheme. It is here, in the hair, that the Dionysiac attributes can be found; there is an ivy wreath intertwined with the hair. The leaves lay overtop the hair, very carefully rendered in full and rounded heart shapes. In short, he is beautiful, and his image remains strikingly recognizable as himself and in unity with Dionysos.

3. Antinous in the Elite Context

This chapter will examine the representation of Antinous in two villa contexts. Specifically, at Hadrian's Villa Adriana in Tivoli and in Herodes Atticus' villa in Loukou in the Peloponnese. Regarding Tivoli, the focus will be specifically on the image of Antinous as Osiris, or of Osirantinous. In Herodes' estate the focus is on a statue that depicts Antinous as an idealized athlete. Both case studies allow the exploration of Antinous in an elite context and so too an investigation of elite patronage. Furthermore, because the two representations differ considerably, they also allow a more in-depth investigation into the malleability and adaptability of the Antinous image-type.

The Egyptian Deification of a Bithynian in Rome

After Antinous' death, Hadrian's return to Italy meant the rapid conclusion of Villa Adriana's construction. Just south of Rome, Villa Adriana sprawls with the Canopus and a large extent of other structures, including the so-called Antinoeion.⁸⁷ This temple precinct of Antinous was finished in ca. 134 CE, after Antinous' death and before that of Hadrian's.⁸⁸ Due to their relationship, it is only logical to find imagery of Antinous at Hadrian's villa, but the character of the imagery makes for an exciting discussion. A statue found on site shows Antinous wearing the guise of Osiris (figure 3.1)—in a fusion of Roman and Egyptian iconography. Moreover, the

⁸⁷ For a plan of the precinct, refer to Mari and Sgalambro, "The Antinoeion," 85.

⁸⁸ Mari and Sgalambro, "The Antinoeion," 97.

temple precinct in which the statue was found hosted many statues and motifs rendered in Egyptian styles and/or appropriating traditional, albeit Romanized Egyptian motifs. This statue type is referred to by scholars as Osirantinous, with the name being derived from the inscription on the obelisk discussed in more detail below. The Osirantinous portrait-type itself is found across the Mediterranean, in consistent form and style. Although all of Antinous' guises are undeniably meant to include that chosen god's identity as filtered on top of Antinous', the Osirantinous may be understood as a self-contained deity and with it, his own independent identity and role. Understanding his representation at Villa Adriana requires a more detailed discussion of the myth of Antinous' death in Egypt and his subsequent deification, as well of the Roman use of Aegyptiaca.

While their mythologized lives differ greatly, both Antinous and Osiris died in the churning waters of the Nile river, and their apotheosis occurred as a result. Osirantinous did not exist because the two overlapped to the point of melding. Osirantinous existed because Antinous' mythology linked with that of Osiris' at a significant moment: their corpses being swept away by the Nile, while being mourned by a loved one ensured their rightful ascension to divinity. However, it must be emphasized that Osirantinous was clearly differentiated from Osiris. and that his identity as the posthumous depiction of Hadrian's deified lover was clear. In this light, Hadrian's agency is most defined in this guise, especially when considering the temple precinct at his own villa. While much of this overall discussion is concerned with non-imperial local interpretations and adaptations of Antinous, it seems appropriate to establish the role that Hadrian ascribed to him.

To discuss Osirantinous, the mythologized events surrounding Antinous' death must be explored in further detail.⁸⁹ In the year 130 CE, the Nile's flood water was floodwaters were receding too quickly and the fascinating celebrations and rites that Hadrian sought out were probably greatly subdued because of the fear of a dry year.⁹⁰ Roman emperors were hailed by Egyptians as pharaohs and were thus tied to the myth and role of the deified god of the dead Osiris and the flooding of the Nile.⁹¹ It is likely that Hadrian's visit during such a dry season fueled discontent and indeed, many blamed him for the lack of water.⁹² The local belief must have been circulating among the imperial party, that a voluntary human sacrifice in the low and receding water would restore the balance, causing the waters to rise instead, while catalyzing the deification of that person.⁹³ It was believed that "only the priests of the Nile could touch the corpses of those sanctified by drowning" and often this was followed by establishing a small cult and shrine to the victim.⁹⁴ Voluntary death and sacrifice for the greater good was understood as the main reason for these honors and the victims were understood as participating in the same honorific death as Osiris. As discussed previously, the construction of Antinous' death—at least in part—centered around his agency in his own death.⁹⁵ While the ancient explanations often lack substance, his purported suicide aligns with the Egyptian religious conceptualization. On the most basic level, his reported self-sacrifice (and its promotion) finds an authoritative explanation. Antinous' elevation into god-hood through self-sacrifice also aligns with how his cult in Egypt

⁸⁹ Once again, this information will be from Lambert's text, and while much of it can be chalked up to speculation, the mythologized context is quite important.

⁹⁰ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 127.

⁹¹ The pharaohs occupied intermediary roles—connecting the divine world to that of the humans.

⁹² Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 123.

⁹³ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 123.

⁹⁴ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 125.

⁹⁵ See Chapter Two

was shaped and organized. One can even see Antinoopolis as one of the Nile shrines honoring Antinous, as if he was understood to be one of the self-sacrificing victims. While the scale of the games and other cult celebrations for the boy-god probably exceeded some of the other cult centers of the Nile sacrificial victims, it was certainly in keeping with the spirit of the age-old tradition.⁹⁶

Deifications or the introduction of new (or previously unacknowledged) divinities were not uncommon in the ancient world and Rome certainly contributed to the phenomenon. Antinous' cult, however, grew to massive popularity within only a couple of years. Perhaps it was the clear alignment of his myth to that of Osiris and the Nile that allowed this. Arguably, it is also why the divinity Osirantinous was newly minted and spread across the Mediterranean. One could even venture to say that Hadrian presented his boy-god in this specific guise—underscored by the circumstances—to convey its authority. For an emperor to celebrate a newly deified person was not unusual, but Hadrian may have felt the need fully legitimize his boy-god, especially in Rome. By the 2nd century, the Roman Senate had a well-established deification system for the imperial family. These imperial deities, the *divi*, were unlike any other form of cult in the empire. It was an honorary designation and it could be extensive, often including family members, from empresses to prematurely deceased sons and nephews.⁹⁷ It has been argued that Hadrian's overt display of Osirantinous, so close to Rome, was meant to underscore the legitimacy of the deification, albeit by the Egyptian system.⁹⁸ The independence from the

⁹⁶ David Thompson, "The Lost City of Antinoos," 47.

⁹⁷ Refer to Hekster for an extensive discussion of imperial deification. Olivier Hekster, "Honouring Ancestors: The Dynamic Of Deification," in *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change in the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Eighth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire*, ed. O. Hekster, Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner, and Christian Witschel (Brill, 2009), 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004174818.i-380.24>.

⁹⁸ Boatwright, *Hadrian*, 251.

highly organized and ritualized Roman imperial deification system may, in fact, have “freed [Antinous] from the constraining demands of the ‘imperial cult’,” and allowed Hadrian (or any other person or organization) to honor him as he saw fit.⁹⁹

Still the situation begs the question: how could an Egyptian religious custom have combined with an "Egyptian" god legitimize the deification of a Bithynian boy in Rome? Egypt's relationship to Rome is often described in economic terms, most notably as the granary of Rome, but it was much more complicated. The Roman use of Egyptian imagery has long been relegated to a kind of inferiority-complex emulation, much like the Roman use of Greek styles. The Romans have traditionally been perceived as a hardy, down to earth, austere, steely people who had no indigenous form of higher culture. When the needs for the public and semi-public self-representation of a constantly growing, but purportedly culturally bereft, elite class came to the fore, they simply copied or "stole" from the more sophisticated cultures they encountered or conquered. However, while the use of Egyptian imagery was often related to conveying an element of internationality and luxury, the Roman people were ultimately engaging with a province in their empire, as a part of their composite identity. Egypt was acquired as a province at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE by Octavian, later known as the *princeps* of Rome and titled Augustus Caesar. His victory in this region marked his victory over political rivals, but it also brought the ancient and mysterious region into the folds of Roman thought and culture.¹⁰⁰ Since at least the Augustan period, “Egyptian” images were used in both secular and religious contexts, often with the intent of securing the *place*, not the viewers, in an “Egyptian” environment.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 114.

¹⁰⁰ Grant Parker, “Obelisks Still in Exile: Monuments Made to Measure,” in *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman World* (Brill, 2007), 217.

¹⁰¹ Molly Swetnam-Burland, “Egyptian Objects,” 123.

This was achieved by using Egyptian iconography and styles, what is now termed Aegyptiaca, in a purposeful way. In addition to its proverbial bounty of food and water, Egypt was famous in Roman times for its sumptuous luxury goods, and its wealthy and cultured elites.¹⁰² While obviously not all Egyptians were wealthy, nor was all of Egypt an idyllic land of bounty, it was a notion that held sway in Rome and even the Empire at large.¹⁰³ For the Roman elites in particular Aegyptiaca was associated with *otium*, luxury, wealth, and status. The “exotic” imagery was in fact an important element in many Roman elite and even non-elite spaces.¹⁰⁴

Yet Rome’s intentional usage of Egyptian or Greek visual culture suggests an even more nuanced understanding. Molly Swetnam-Burland defines Aegyptiaca as “artifacts displayed in new Roman contexts and Roman creations in Egyptian styles [that are] legitimate Roman cultural products.”¹⁰⁵ By this definition, to use “Egyptian” objects and symbols was not motivated by a desire to manifest a non-Roman or “foreign” identity but rather it was the purposeful inclusion of distinct symbols and iconography to validate and legitimize the inclusion of Egyptian customs and thought into the Roman system itself. This could apply to a cult context, a private home, or a public precinct. This also could apply to text, animals, stylistic choices, or manufactured environments. For example, the Iseum in Pompeii (60s/70s CE) displayed a hieroglyphic plaque that was probably just abstract symbols to most of the members of the cult, as clearly shown by the content being entirely unrelated to Isis or her cult.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² This grew to the extent that Egyptian cults in Rome began to have elite connotations.

Molly Swetnam-Burland, “Egyptian Objects,” 33.

¹⁰³ Lambert, *Boy Made God*, 113.

¹⁰⁴ Molly Swetnam-Burland, “Egyptian Objects,” 124-125.

¹⁰⁵ For a lengthy discussion of the various terms that have been used, as well as the emic/etic debate, refer to

Molly Swetnam-Burland, “Egyptian Objects,” 115-116.

¹⁰⁶ The plaque referred to another cult, and while people could have read it, it’s simple religious nature and “cryptic hieroglyphs” satisfied most viewers.

Swetnam-Burland goes as far to say that “the prominent display of the inscription [on the outside wall of the complex] acted as an advertisement of the cult’s exotic origins.”¹⁰⁷ This Egyptian goddess and her cult were advertised as such, because it was an aspect of their appeal to Romans. Romans did not use *Aegyptiaca* to try and pretend that they were Egyptians, they used because it was an integral part of their own cosmopolitan identity; while Egyptianizing spaces were distinct, they were not meant to be non-Roman. The Iseum participated in the concept that “Egypt was religion.”¹⁰⁸ They represented one of the deeply spiritual aspects of the Empire through a Roman reconfiguration of an eastern religious language.

For the newly minted Roman-Egyptian god, Osirantinous, this is perhaps best underscored by the obelisk which provides his name (figure 3.2). The debate regarding its original location—Villa Adriana or Antinoopolis—is by no means something to be ignored, but it is beyond the scope of this discussion, especially as the evidence for either site is in no way definitive.¹⁰⁹ Instead the focus will be on its text. It is clear that the inscriptions were carved by a non-native Egyptian; the hieroglyphs are awkward, suggesting that the carver did not fully understand them and probably worked from examples.¹¹⁰ On one side the inscription is concerned with Hadrian and his wife Sabina, securing the obelisk’s completion to before 136

Molly Swetnam-Burland, “Egyptian Objects,” 128.

¹⁰⁷ Swetnam-Burland, “Egyptian Objects,” 128.

¹⁰⁸ Verlsuys, “Making Meaning,” 33.

¹⁰⁹ Some scholars such as Renberg place the obelisk at Antinoopolis, fitting the understanding in older scholarship. Mari and Sgalambro provide compelling evidence for its location at Villa Adriana. From there, it is assumed that Elagabalus moved it to Porta Maggiore, to be part of the spina in a circus nearby. There, was found in three pieces, and then restored by the Barberini family and erected in Rome on the Pincio. This thesis is not concerned with this discussion, but leans towards the opinions of Mari and Sgalambro.

Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 98.

Renberg, “Hadrian and the Oracle of Antinous.”

Boatwright, *Hadrian*, 239-260.

¹¹⁰ Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 99.

CE, the year of Sabina's death, while on the other three sides the inscriptions are primarily focused on Osirantinous.¹¹¹ Osirantinous appears at the very top of the obelisk, interacting with four Egyptian deities, one on each side: Horus, Thoth, Ra, and a presumably also divine, missing figure.¹¹² Here, he is shown being welcomed to the underworld, to fulfill his role as a deity. Antinous' tomb and his entrance into the underworld, as well as his newly found divine capabilities are discussed in some detail in the texts themselves. Osirantinous' role as a chthonic deity and his role as the intermediary between worlds, as a healer of sickness, and an accessible deity for those who participate in his cult are especially emphasized. He is situated among the likes of Osiris, Hermes, Asclepius, and Dionysos: acting as psychopomp, healer, and intercessor.¹¹³

“Antinoos, who is there... He goes from his city to many temples in the whole country and he hears the requests of those who pray to him, and he heals the needy ill by sending them a dream. He completes his work amongst the living. He takes on every(?) form which his heart [desires(?)]...the true seed of the God is in his limbs...body healthy...of his mother; he was lifted up at the place of his birth by...

[Antinoos] who is there (i.e., deceased), and who rests in this place, which is in the field of the lands(?) of the master(?) of...Rome, has been recognized as(?) of God in the divine place of Egypt. Temples have been founded for him, he has been adored as a god by the

¹¹¹ Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian's Villa,” 99.

¹¹² Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian's Villa,” 91.

¹¹³ Obelisks, in the Roman world and as a part of the imperial tradition, were used as markers of cosmic balance, order, imperial rule, and the absorption of Egypt and its significances into the Roman system. The obelisk represented a ray of the sun, connecting the earthly world to that of the sky. It was placed either at Antinoopolis or at the Antinoeion—both significant for the boy-god. It is also important to note that the Osirantinous obelisk only *looked* Egyptian; its construction is certainly Roman, and while the text is in hieroglyphics, it is awkward and roughly hewn, as if the craftsmen did not know the meaning and were working from images, provided by someone who could understand them roughly. This obelisk is clearly meant to be “Egyptian,” and its conception and construction by Roman hands does not stand in the way of that purpose.

prophets and priests of Upper and Lower Egypt, and by the inhabitants of Egypt, all of them as there are...who is there called Osirantinoos the blessed...All gods and goddesses give him the breath of life and he breathes as one rejuvenated.”¹¹⁴

This obelisk, while situating Osirantinous among the pantheon of Egyptian deities and within their realm, also situates Antinous as inherently being a product of Aegyptiaca. The obelisk itself appears Egyptian, but its construction and decoration bears signs of Roman construction. The deity celebrated is Bithynian, overlaid with Egyptian, and yet he is a supremely Roman. The composite nature of his god-hood as represented and chosen by Hadrian enforces the importance of his Eastern identity, and the obelisk participates in a similar dynamic to that of the Iseum’s plaque in Pompeii. The roughly hewn hieroglyphics and Egyptian imagery allow Antinous to gain all of the religious significance and awe that are associated with such images, while participating in an established iconographic system set in the visual culture of Rome.

The Antinoeion

Hadrian's choice of Osirantinous at Villa Adriana should be understood both in the context of a Roman iconography of opulent *otium* and in the context of Roman religious and spiritual self-representation. In fact the excavations of the Antinoeion indicate that it fully participated in an articulate construction of Aegyptiaca.¹¹⁵ While the area has only been dubbed

¹¹⁴ Boatwright, *Hadrian and the City of Rome*, 244.

¹¹⁵ Between 1998 and 2002, excavations on the road leading towards the Canopus produced statues and fragments in an Egyptianizing style, and in combination with the previously excavated pieces in the Vatican Museums, scholars ventured to call it the Antinoeion, a temple precinct to Antinous done with Egyptian themes.

Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 83.

Antinoeion by its modern excavators it is important to note that the complex operated for a wide swath of Egyptian deities, although Antinous was in particular emphasis.¹¹⁶

The Antinoeion sits alongside the road approaching the villa, and the area is marked by several important attributes.¹¹⁷ There were water ways and fountains that ran alongside the road, culminating at the opposite end of the entrance road, towards the Canopus. To the right of the road, and the person approaching the villa, there were two temples, facing one another, leaving two travertine temple podiums today.¹¹⁸ Behind, the Antinoeion extended in an apsidal exedra, closing off the precinct. There is a third platform, between the two temples and centered in the precinct, that Mari and Sgalambro identify as the site of the Osirantinous obelisk, but could have presented a number of objects.¹¹⁹ The entire complex was small, densely decorated, and extensively irrigated, and would have met any visitor coming to the imperial villa.

From the fragments and pieces excavated in the early 21st century and the statues long held by the Vatican Museums, it is clear that there were Egyptian themes throughout the precinct. It is also evident that the Antinoeion hosted plants with “very developed root systems,” including but not limited to date palms (an iconic Egyptian plant).¹²⁰ These plants, and the fountains surrounding the precinct, were fed by pipes running throughout the entire area. Small canals that surrounded the precinct may have even been referred to as “*nilī*,” (Niles).¹²¹ In any case the water features and sumptuous greenery were intended to project an Egyptianizing image

¹¹⁶ This name, while used by other authors and scholars, is proposed and defended by Mari and Sgalambro effectively, and this thesis trusts their excavations and reflections on said excavations. Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 96.

¹¹⁷ Refer to Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion,” 85.

¹¹⁸ These temples remain anonymous.

¹¹⁹ Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 86.

¹²⁰ Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 89.

¹²¹ Barrett, “Egypt in Roman Visual and Material Culture,” 4.

of *otium* at the entrance to the imperial villa. The precinct was, moreover, not the only part of Villa Adriana that engaged with Aegyptiaca. There were, for example, crocodile statues set up beside (or perhaps in) the Canopus (figure 3.3), perhaps the most direct and widespread Roman reference to Egypt.¹²² It is quite tempting to paint the Antinoeion, and key aspects of Villa Adriana as a whole as a sort of fanciful little Egypt, catering to Hadrian's boy-god. Certainly, the Aegyptiaca at Villa Adriana was a purposeful iconographic program, meant to underscore Antinous' composite Roman identity.

While it is clear that Aegyptiaca was abundant at Villa Adriana, the corpus of statuary, particularly concerning Antinous, is complicated. In the messy and drawn-out excavations at Villa Adriana, many of the "Egyptian" artifacts were unanimously ascribed to the so-called "Serapeum" at the end of the Canopus.¹²³ While this supports the idea that Aegyptiaca was widespread at the villa, it damages the possibility of accurately reconstructing or imagining the Antinoeion. In addition, many statues, for example, the Braschi Antinous thought to have originated at Villa Adriana and still labeled as such, actually came from neighboring villas.¹²⁴ Moreover, while sixteen of the Egyptianizing statues in the Vatican Museums may not all be from that Antinous' temple precinct, it is safe to say that they are all are from Villa Adriana.¹²⁶

¹²² Crocodiles have been found in contexts ranging from private homes to public religious contexts. Barrett, "Egypt in Roman Visual and Material Culture," 4.

¹²³ Mari and Sgalambro, "The Antinoeion of Hadrian's Villa," 92.

¹²⁴ The Braschi Antinous was found in an anonymous villa at Praenaeste, but it is always labeled as having coming from Villa Adriana. It is possible that it was moved in antiquity, but ultimately, it is impossible to say with jcertainty.

¹²⁶ The pieces are put together in a small collection known as "Room III. Reconstruction of the Serapeum of the Canopus of Hadrian's Villa." The Vatican itself is aware of the misnomer -the Canopus was neither a Serapeum nor hosted all the statues on view and vaguely states that these pieces were likely from the Antinoeion.

<http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-iii--ricostruzione-del-serapeo-del-canopo-di-villa-adriana/sala-iii--ricostruzione-del-serapeo-del-canopo-di-villa-adriana.html>

From the excavations of Mari and Sgalambro, they found images of “priests or worshipers bearing offerings.”¹²⁷ Others groups include ambiguous divinities or animal figures which are also assumed to represent divinities.¹²⁸ Finally, while they do not provide exact figures, Mari and Sgalambro also argue that a “large number of statues” of Antinous located in museums worldwide without documented provenance, should be ascribed to Villa Adriana.¹²⁹ It is a difficult corpus to resolve, although the generalization that the Antinoeion was outfitted with “Egyptian” imagery is fully supported by Mari and Sgalambro’s excellently documented excavations.¹³⁰ Certainly there are a sufficient number of sculptures with a secure Villa Adriana provenance to argue for an Egyptianizing construct in the Roman villa. The Antinoeion itself may be safely described as Egyptianizing polytheistic cultic space with Antinous in particular emphasis.

The excellent Osirantinous from the Vatican Collections (figure 3.1) may serve as example of the kind of Hadrianic contribution to Aegyptiaca.¹³¹ The full figure is shown standing figure upright and dressed in a pharaonic outfit, with a short skirt and the *nemes* headdress. The headdress is distinctly Egyptian in style, without the gentle action of the cloth indicated, and rather, it sits squarely and abruptly upon the head, falling past the shoulders. It is a form fitted piece of cloth, secured with a horizontal band across the forehead. Long vertical stripes extend the length of the fabric, following as it falls towards the shoulders, to rest in two sections upon

¹²⁷ About half of these statues are now lost, and only known from drawings. The rest are housed at the Vatican Museums.

Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 91.

¹²⁸ Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 92.

¹²⁹ Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion of Hadrian’s Villa,” 97.

¹³⁰ Based on the fragments that were found in the modern excavations, it may be supposed that many more statues also existed in this precinct. The nature of previous excavations and their lack of proper documentation, makes it impossible to associate extant statues in the Vatican said to be from Villa Adriana with specific find spots in the Antinoeion or elsewhere in the villa.

¹³¹ It is doubtful that the statue served as a cult statue, as it is not quite large enough.

each breast. The stripes have turned horizontal, showing the fabric-like movement of this piece of marble. It is obviously meant to be fabric, and the details such as the stripes secure it as so, but it lacks the soft and flowing movement that the Classical Greek style treasured immensely.

The only other clothing that is worn is the short skirt, and much like the headdress, the fabric is not rendered as flexible, and it falls in stiff layers. The skirt is secured by a band just below the navel, and it extends in two parts. The first layer seems to be a half oval, and the two ends are secured just below the navel, exposing the lower layer in a triangle shaped space of the pubic area. The second layer is a small piece of cloth, obviously meant to cover this area left bare. Although it is not a nude statue, there is a suggestion of Antinous' nudity in the protrusion of his genitals beneath the stiff fabric.¹³²

The statue stands with the distinctly Egyptian stiffness of limbs typical of Egyptian portraits (figure 3.4), and while the body remains a set of horizontal planes (hips, shoulders, and feet), one leg does step forward. The chest is large, emphasized by the thrown back shoulders, and the arms extend stiffly next to the torso, clutching ceremonial objects in both hands. The legs are muscular and one foot steps forward, providing a little bit of movement to the otherwise stiff body. The face stares straight ahead, opening direct interaction with the viewer. The lips are pursed, and the brow even and heavy above the eyes. The characteristically voluminous hair is tucked underneath the pharaonic headdress, and only appears in two small curls, each one rendered flat against the temples. This statue seamlessly brings together Egyptian iconography and symbolism with Roman rendering, and the two form the Osirantinous identity on top of his simple facial portrait. Hadrian presents his boy-god in this guise to legitimize his deification and

¹³² It is interesting to note that Osiris, in his mythology, was castrated and remains so after his apotheosis. This suggestion of the sexual members is almost certainly solely upon Antinous' identity. Antinous' nudity, in most of his statues, is quite important and emphasized.

provide a role for him, as well as cultivating Aegyptiaca to further contextualize the deity and creating *otium* for his villa.

It is important to understand the great significance of this guise, as it speaks to Hadrian's own intentions and agency in deifying his lover. As previously discussed, Egypt was the "granary of hungry Rome," whose massive river Nile and its yearly flooding supported the empire, and supported empires before it.¹³³ It is entirely logical then that Egyptian mythology would grow intertwined with this river, as food and simple survival were dependent on the floods being large and strong. The floods brought death and decimation, without a guarantee of resurrection, if the water was not enough or receded too quickly. The season was fraught with anxiety, and the myth of Osiris ran parallel to the entire phenomenon.¹³⁴ The myth is centered around the month of October, peak flood, and follows the dismemberment of Osiris by a rival, who throws the bits into the river.¹³⁵ His wife Isis frantically searches for his limbs, and collects everything but his genitals, which have been eaten by fish. It is then that she creates a phallus to complete his body and Harpocrates is born from this union. While he is quite literally deposed, Osiris becomes the king of the underworld, and his role is entirely chthonic. It is very important to note, however, that in his act of post-death procreation, his role rests between life and death, sparking Harpocrates' life and yet Osiris is fully dead and dismembered. Likewise, the water decimated any farmland in its path, but if the water was enough, the following year would be prosperous and opulent. It was a time of great worry and, with luck, a great celebration. If the story of self-sacrifice is to be trusted, Antinous is seen as having provided the means for an

¹³³ Lambert, *Beloved and God*, 115.

¹³⁴ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 58.

¹³⁵ It is important to note that Plutarch was a Roman author, and that this version of the Osiris story is the Roman version. This is applicable because this thesis is more concerned with the Roman interpretation and understanding of Egypt. Plutarch V.18.

opulent growing season to feed the whole of Rome. Osirantinous represents all of this, and Hadrian's boy-god becomes a larger symbol of composite Roman identity.

Antinous' identity at Villa Adriana is deeply intertwined with Osiris'. It is clear that this was a manner of securing his deification as being justified, as well as allowing Hadrian's boy-god to gain significance by way of Osiris' inherent importance. The Antinoeion hosted his image to venerate him amongst the pantheon of Egyptian Gods, participating in the deeply Roman use of Aegyptiaca. The full implications, and roles gained, will be discussed in reference to the obelisk, but it is clear that Osiris' myth provided a base upon which Antinous' divine identity could be built.

Antinous as an Athlete, at Loukou

While there are many examples of Antinous statues found at villas, few have history or names attached, leaving the statue from the villa of Herodes Atticus as an ideal case study. Herodes Atticus was a Sophist and Greek politician whose villa is known to have Antinous depictions.¹³⁶ While honoring Antinous was probably partially motivated by a desire to honour Hadrian, it is important to note that this statue was found in his villa in the Peloponnese, far from the emperor's eyes. Additionally, Herodes Atticus' celebration and designation of the Antinous cult was wholly independent of Hadrian's influence, clearly shown in the manner of depiction, as there is not a single reference to Osiris or Dionysos. This statue presents him as an athlete, in the classical pose of tying his fillet.¹³⁷ It is a large acrolithic statue, with only the chest, left arm, and head surviving. The legs were probably in a wooden material, and the other pieces are simply

¹³⁶ Opper, *Hadrian*, 188-189.

¹³⁷ To see this statue, refer to Smith, *Boy Made God*, 64.

missing.¹³⁸ In the cult statue Antinous takes on a classical representation of young men, and he gains multiple levels of significance, independent from Osirantinous and Hadrian.

Much like that of Hadrian's, Herodes Atticus' image of Antinous fits both the cultural requirements for deification but also supplies great honor specifically to the villa. This honor, in turn, can communicate with viewers in Atticus' peristyle garden as they wander through, passing the private cult room for the boy-god.¹³⁹ The origin of the peristyle garden is significant, as they grew out of the *stoai* located at the *gymnasia*.¹⁴⁰ These *stoai* were a space to think, converse, and move outside of the main exercise areas. Peristyle gardens, in villas, sought to provide the same type of space for those enjoying them. In addition, peristyle gardens were also heavily inspired by "Roman pleasure gardens" that took Persian and Egyptian elements of luxury (*Aegyptiaca*)—waterworks, sumptuous vegetation, and well-executed decoration—and placed them into the center of a porticoed area.¹⁴¹ Peristyle gardens combined these elements to create a "domesticated...pleasure garden:" a pleasant place to walk, discuss, and admire cultural and learned concepts.¹⁴² Antinous' placement within this environment, as an athlete, is an understandable and significant action. He, in his *ephebic* guise, is enabled as a divine being to participate in the activity of this villa and its interior garden.

The statue today is fragmentary, but its pose is clear. The torso is muscular, with a clearly defined V on the lower abdomen, but the muscles are still soft. It is clearly an ephebic body, but one that is getting closer to adulthood. The canonically-Antinous face looks downward, and the tousled hair is contained neatly underneath the fillet, assuming a cap-like appearance. There is a

¹³⁸ Smith, *Boy Made God*, 65.

¹³⁹ To see this layout, refer to Smith, *Boy Made God*, 65.

¹⁴⁰ Zarmakoupi, "The Architectural Design of the Peristylum-Garden," 620.

¹⁴¹ Zarmakoupi, "The Architectural Design of the Peristylum-Garden," 624.

¹⁴² Zarmakoupi, "The Architectural Design of the Peristylum-Garden," 626.

fabulous neat row of curls extending from underneath the fillet, framing the face. The hand reaches to the back of the head, and one finger is left extending to tie it. The statue is nude, and while it reflects the athlete categorization, his nudity is also significant. His body is emphasized, and the nudity become his costume, or his guise.¹⁴³ This can be contrasted to another statue found at this villa: a bust of Hadrian in cuirass, with Antinous' face in the place of the Gorgon on the breastplate.¹⁴⁵ It is a frontal view of his face, and while the curls are distinctly his, there are a set of wings extending from his brow, referencing Hermes (another psychopomp and popular guise). In this statue, his link to Hadrian is irrefutable and he is even portrayed as a protecting force for the emperor, personally. In the larger and presumably cult statue, Antinous is an ephobic athlete whose image recalls his role as *eromenos*, but is not visually linked as such.

The statue from Loukou is from ca. 140-160 CE, and while on one hand it proves the long stay of Antinous past the death of Hadrian (138 CE), it also holds important and nuanced significance for Herodes Atticus' personal connection to the god, versus the emperor.¹⁴⁶ There is obvious honor to Hadrian, but the acrolithic statue of Antinous by himself suggests an individual devotion to the boy-god, past his role as the dead imperial *eromenos*. It must be remembered that Antinous' deification, and Hadrian's representation of him as the boy-god, participated in the Egyptian tradition.¹⁴⁷ This, in its own right, validated the whole affair and provided a basis upon which the Osirantinous cult could grow. In Mantinea and Asia Minor, Osiris may not have been as relevant, and but his role as Antinous-Dionysos situates him there, in that local context and

¹⁴³ Sculptural nudity, in the ancient world, was important and signified elements of masculine strength, power, and in some cases, social standing.

Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, 200.

¹⁴⁵ Opper, *Hadrian*, 188.

For this image, refer to Smith, *Boy Made God*, 67.

¹⁴⁶ Smith, *Boy Made God*, 65.

¹⁴⁷ Even Antinous as Dionysos can be seen as participating in this, because Dionysos has long been seen as the Greek equivalent to Osiris, in mythology and cultural understanding.

understanding. In the Peloponnese, Antinous as an athlete speaks to the honor and the veneration of idealized young male bodies. These bodies, especially in the classical period, emphasized and provided a visual understanding of the *ephebe*: “the free-born youth on the verge of coming of age.”¹⁴⁸ Antinous’ image was highly contemporary and was aligned with the social dynamics of young men in the second century, especially in the East.

The gymnasium, the natural environment for the athlete, was the core social and educational space for young Greek men, and much like pederasty, it was seen as essential for their growth into proper citizens. Athletes had their own set of honors and depictions, but there is no doubt that Antinous as an athlete is also Antinous as an *ephebe*. This is reinforced by Antinous’ role as *eromenos*, of which being an *ephebe* is inherent. There are numerous examples of young people, especially men, dying before their time and their loved ones erecting statues and cult settings in their honors.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, athletes were venerated greatly for their idealized male beauty, physical skill, and their victories by gaining hero status, often in death.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, nude bodies were not only meant for athletic connotation, and held importance as a symbol of “the supernatural strength and power of the gods.”¹⁵¹ Antinous, at the villa of Herodes Atticus, does not fit into either category neatly but it is the combination of his young death and perceived ideal beauty that allow his image to be nested comfortably inside that of an athlete.

Antinous’ malleability allowed Atticus to make him his own, adding to the aura and luxury of his villa. Herodes Atticus’ Antinous was private, and the luxury of his villa was

¹⁴⁸ Meyer, “Antinous,” 161.

¹⁴⁹ This was typically through dream visitation, which is a major theme in the death of Antinous. Supposedly, Antinous visited Hadrian and it was the catalyst of Antinoopolis’ construction. Renberg, “Hadrian and the Oracle of Antinous,” 162.

¹⁵⁰ Refer to Christopher P. Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity: From Achilles to Antinoos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/johncabot/detail.action?docID=3300852>.

¹⁵¹ Fejfer, *Roman Portraits*, 200.

emphasized by the inclusion of this *ephebic* boy-god into an area reserved for conversation and discussion. For Herodes Atticus, his small cult room was on one level a symbol of his connection to the emperor, but it also provided a personalized cult unlike any other. He chose the representation of this god, and with that, the elements of the divinity that were important to him. Antinous' identity, or lack thereof, allowed his cult and image to be layered with contextual and localized meaning, and in the case of these two villas, participated in the cultivation of luxury.

4. Antinous as a Means of Localization

In this chapter, we turn to non-elite contexts. There are two case studies—the Antinous-Apollo from Leptis Magna in Northern Africa and objects indicating the presence of an Antinous cult in Lanuvium, just south of Rome. In both cases, the inclusion and addition of Antinous among the native deities can certainly be tied to Hadrian's role as emperor, and as a part of the local agency in appealing to and honoring him. However, both cases had layered intentions and purposes for the boy-god and his image, extending beyond a sign of imperial loyalty. The presence of Antinous among the non-elite, and in the public image, can be discussed through these case studies and provide important interpretations for his significance.

Antinous as Apollo, Leptis Magna

Leptis Magna was a significant city in the ancient world—and one that would later father Septimius Severus (145-211 CE), an iconic Roman emperor from the turn of the third century. While it would still be several decades before imperial favor was heavily placed upon Leptis Magna, it was an important trade center, and one that certainly participated in the international community of the Roman empire. Accordingly, an Antinous-Apollo statue was found in the 2nd century baths.¹⁵³ The figure was found in fragments, along with the removed head of Apollo.¹⁵⁴ The statue is a Classical Apollo type: Antinous-Apollo stands contrapposto, leaning up against the Delphic tripod, intertwined with a snake and an eagle. While this is certainly Antinous-

¹⁵³ To see this statue, refer to Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 97.

¹⁵⁴ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 96.

Apollo, the hair is intertwined with an ivy branch, and the arm is raised up above the head, producing “the visual shorthand for Bacchus [Dionysos].”¹⁵⁵ By this time, Dionysos’ imagery had become thoroughly intertwined with Antinous, and the people in Leptis Magna may have included the Dionysiac attributes as attributes of Antinous himself.¹⁵⁶ While one might be tempted to call it Antinous-Apollo-Dionysos, it is more interesting to focus on the re-cutting of the Apollo statue.

As is the case with any portrait re-cutting (in this case, a skilled removal and head substitution), it is important to first discuss the statue itself.¹⁵⁷ The figure stands in contrapposto, leaning upon a tripod intertwined with a snake. One arm is raised to the head, and the other rests its elbow on the tripod. The contrapposto and the upheld arm emphasize the gentle musculature of the figure, whose body is clearly defined with clean muscle lines (such as the V on the lower abdomen) but without the fully rounded character that is often found in mature male statues. The raised arm rests upon the top of the head, while looks blankly out at the viewer. The hair is intertwined with vines, and the face is distinctly Antinous. As it is a re-cut statue, it is important to understand the body as separate from the face and capable of adding further significance to Antinous.

This statue type is a Lyceian Apollo, which can be contrasted to the Apollo Kitharoidos that was commonly used to convey *otium* through the inclusion of lyre with his figure (figure

¹⁵⁵ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 97.

¹⁵⁶ There are several statues that include Dionysiac elements, in addition to the chosen guise. The Braschi Antinous is an excellent example of this, although it is not known the extent of the restoration and liberties that may have been taken in reconstructing what may have existed before.

¹⁵⁷ Refer to Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 97.

4.1).¹⁵⁸ Instead, the Lyceian Apollo was an “overseer of the gymnasium,” and was depicted in a moment of rest, still nude, but no longer active.¹⁵⁹ While this statue was not placed in a gymnasium, it must be remembered that baths were also places of relaxation, rest, and nakedness. In addition, it is known that Dionysos statues were also commonly found in bathhouses, often displaying him in moments of rest.¹⁶⁰ Antinous as Lyceian Apollo is Antinous at rest, and his Dionysiac attributes verify his god-identity while also further securing him in the bathhouse environment.

Apollo was one of the most important gods in the ancient world, not least because of his oracular function at the cult site of Delphi. Antinous, it must be noted, was thought to deliver oracles as well.¹⁶¹ While Apollo was not a common guise for him to wear, Antinous was venerated at Delphi, directly behind the major temple to Apollo (figure 4.2).¹⁶² The oracular element in the Antinous-Apollo is further emphasized by the inclusion of the tripod and the snake—essential symbols of the oracle at Delphi. His oracular abilities are certainly a strong connection between Antinous and himself and additionally, Apollo is the classically *ephebic* young god. Apollo (and his sister Artemis) are considered to be the youth in the Olympic council, whose myths and images often revolve around this core attribute.

¹⁵⁸ Lyres were meant to accompany songs, which were integral aspects of a learned and luxurious environment. Lyres, as well as the poems that accompanied such musicians, were often celebrated in symposia as well as in religious festivals.

Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 97.

¹⁵⁹ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 98

¹⁶⁰ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 99.

¹⁶¹ Antinous’ deification was preceded by his appearance in a dream of Hadrian’s, and he gained an oracular element.

Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 108.

¹⁶² For the layout of Delphi, and the location of Antinous’ cult room, refer to R. R. R. Smith, *Boy Made God*, 46-47.

“Head on Local Shoulders”

The Apollo-Dionysos attributes related towards the local cults in Leptis Magna, and on one level, putting Antinous’ head on this statue may be said to have been “put[ting] his head on local shoulders.”¹⁶³ Leptis Magna was founded in 600 BCE by the Phoenician people, with their own indigenous deities.¹⁶⁴ While Apollo himself was important in Leptis Magna, the Phoenician deity named Echmoun was known to have Apollonic (as well as Dionysiac) attributes, as well as being the son of Apollo himself.¹⁶⁵ Echmoun had a chthonic role, and his identity as a youthful and beardless god was often emphasized, especially in relationship to his divine lover, the goddess Astronoe.¹⁶⁶ While this statue was certainly Antinous-Apollo, it would have participated with Echmoun’s image through his explicit youth and relevancy in Leptis Magna.¹⁶⁷ Much like Antinous, his role as intercessor and psychopomp was emphasized because of his youth, and close association with the beautiful mythic young men, dead before their time, all who had significant chthonic significance.¹⁶⁸ In addition to being a “sexy boy,” the snake itself was known as a symbol for Echmoun.¹⁶⁹ Antinous’ association with Echmoun is logical and not a far stretch in the imagination. Antinous, in Leptis Magna, related both to local deities that by extension localized him, such as Echmoun, as well as to larger and universally significant deities such as Apollo, who in turn emphasized his larger capabilities as a deity such as oracles.

¹⁶³ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 109.

¹⁶⁴ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 108.

¹⁶⁵ To see a coin that portrays Echmoun with Dionysos, refer to Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 109.

¹⁶⁶ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 109.

¹⁶⁷ The Dionysiac elements in combination with the Apollonic secures him as being related to Echmoun, who regionally participates in the depictions of both gods.

Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 108.

¹⁶⁸ Echmoun, Attis, Adonis, and Osiris were all seen this way.

Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 110.

It Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 109.

Because one is tempted to dismiss this statue as the actions of a city clamoring for Hadrian's approval, it is the significance and tradition of the statue's re-cutting that must be emphasized.¹⁷⁰ Image and statue re-use was common and important, reflected in the fact that "ancient authors repeatedly play[ed] with the dual identity of re-cut sculpture, stressing how much of the image's power stems from its prior identity."¹⁷¹ Re-cutting emphasizes the intentional double use of material, as a means to communicate something beyond the practical re-use of precious and rare marble. In some cases, like that of the colossal Constantine statue in the courtyard of the Capitoline museums in Rome, the re-cutting was meant to emphasize his rightful ascension to the imperial position, literally erasing his predecessor and main competitor, Maxentius, while also emulating the emperor (coincidentally Hadrian) whose portrait originally was carved there (figure 4.3).¹⁷² This was a careful and thought-out process with heavy cultural significance, and the re-cutting of the Apollo for Antinous is no different. The pure effort and manual work that went into such a careful and expert de-capitation of Apollo and attachment of Antinous' head must be emphasized, as that only speaks to the great importance of such an act. In the case of Antinous-Apollo, the guise is not layered on top of Antinous; his head is literally transplanted onto the body of another god and gains Apollo's realm of power, in addition to the association with Echmoun.

¹⁷⁰ Supposedly, Hadrian was due for a visit to Leptis Magna prior to the erection of this statue. Many of the sources treat this as the sole reason for this statue's placement and erection in the Hadrianic Baths, and while that may be true, it is worth discussing the deeper relevancies of such an image.

¹⁷¹ Vout, "Damnatio Memoriae," 85.

¹⁷² The colossal "Constantine" statue—currently in the courtyard of the Capitoline Museum—was re-cut after Constantine's victory in Rome. It was positioned within the Basilica Nova, a building that had also been taken over and adapted from Maxentius.

Refer to Vout, "Damnatio Memoriae."

Antinous as an Erotic Symbol

Antinous' resting Apollonic form conveys an immense amount about his role in this particular public setting. Public bathhouses were considered to be an acceptable setting for erotic statues and decoration. Antinous-Apollo's nude body would have appealed to this dynamic, and participated in the "eroticism of bathing."¹⁷³ Here, he is a "sexy boy" and his body is meant to be on display. The statue was placed in niche above a pool, looking downwards into it and at any viewer beneath.¹⁷⁴ This is reminiscent of the Aphrodite of Knidos, whose marble form inspired flesh and blood sexual attraction (figure 2.5). In addition, the position suggests a Narcissistic relationship between Antinous and the water, suggesting the danger waiting in his inescapable beauty.¹⁷⁵ Vout goes as far to speculate that this is an image of Antinous *before* his death, contemplating the water and the metaphorical churning current beneath him.¹⁷⁶ Regardless, the statue's nudity and position above the water seems to suggest his role as an objectified sexualized body, standing over the men and women who may have admired his body and may gotten aroused.

It must be not forgotten that Antinous' role in life, as *eromenos*, was intrinsically one of sexual receptiveness and dependency on his *erastes*. His youthful form, even in death, stays within that role, but now his body and identity was available for any person to venerate. Perhaps this objectification allowed one to view Antinous as Hadrian did, and thus take on the role of emperor, as an *erastes*, for a fleeting moment.¹⁷⁷ In this bathhouse, Antinous does not have a

¹⁷³ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 99.

¹⁷⁴ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 99-100.

¹⁷⁵ For an excellent discussion of the mythic young men Antinous was compared to, refer to Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 101-104.

¹⁷⁶ This recalls Narcissus, whose doom was his own admiration of his reflection in a pool of water. Bartman, "Eros's Flame, 249.

¹⁷⁷ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 106.

private room or precinct. He is not venerated as the chthonic god, walking the line between life and death and assisting humans on those matters. Antinous-Apollo is venerated for his sexualized identity and youthful body, and so his role as *eromenos* is emphasized. At the baths of Leptis Magna, the boy-god is passive and receptive, and his power and legitimacy stem from that. In this case, it is his identity as a youthful deity that allowed these layered identities to co-exist and manufacture an entirely new version of Antinous.

This sexualized form and position, inherent to a number of Greek and Roman depictions, served to entice viewers and objectified the figure depicted. Additionally, it must be noted that during the second century, production of these “sexy-boy” types of works was extremely popular, and that it would have been entirely on-trend for depictions of Antinous to take part.¹⁷⁸ Vout suggests that part of the popularity of Antinous was propelled by the elite classes’ desire for works emulating this enigmatic energy in their private villas.¹⁷⁹ Leptis Magna’s baths may be understood as an extension of the elite mindset, by means of public benefaction. The baths, and their decorations, would often be patronized by a local elite and were meant to represent their own investment in the city, their role as an elite, and their own relationship to the local deities. Although it unknown who the patron was, Antinous-Apollo, both of which could be associated to Echmoun, participated in this dynamic through the means of being an erotically charged and highly local image.

¹⁷⁸ Bartman, “Eros’s Flame,” 271.

¹⁷⁹ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 105.

Antinous as Silvanus, in Lanuvium

Just south of Rome, the ancient city of Lanuvium formed their own cult of the boy-god. There are two objects that provide evidence for this cult: the relief of Antinous-Silvanus (figure 4.4) and the inscription describing the by-laws of the *collegium* dedicated to Diana and Antinous (figure 4.5). This *collegium* may have had a temple attached, or celebrated their rites within a pre-existing public temple to Antinous.¹⁸⁰ These two cases, while they may not have been a part of the same building or venerated by the same group of people, existed in relatively close proximity to one another and are a good example of Antinous' versatility and varying use, even in a small area. The Antinous-Silvanus relief stands 1.43 meters tall, and was done in low relief, depicting Antinous as a country deity tending to an altar. This relief was found in the ruins of Torre del Padiglione, in close proximity to Lanuvium.¹⁸¹ The inscription, on the other hand, was found much closer to the city and refers to its own location within. This inscription is a large chunk of text, detailing the legal by-laws of this association and it presents Antinous as being in conjunction with Diana, a significant deity in the area. This thesis does not attempt to link the two objects, but it does take the information presented by both to signal towards a larger communal relationship to Antinous, and will juxtapose the two different presentations of the boy god.

The relief is finely wrought, and clearly presents Antinous as Silvanus (figure 4.4).

Antinous stands, looking to the left of the viewer, between an altar with a pinecone, a dog, and

¹⁸⁰ While it would be exciting to discuss an entire temple devoted to Antinous, there is absolutely no evidence for its existence. In fact, the inscription was found on a road leading towards the city, also with evidence of baths, but with no discernable evidence for the exact location despite the inscription placing it close by.

Colburn, "Civita Lavinia," 29-30.

¹⁸¹ Bendlin, "Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law," 282.

beneath grape vines laden with clusters of grapes. The pose is contrapposto, and he wears a wreath of pine wrapped in the gently articulated hair. It is a profile view, with the eyes looking gently out over the altar. The relief shows the full body, and while the form is *ephebic*, it does wear a one-shouldered tunic. The dog looks up longingly at the figure, as Antinous-Silvanus' hand reaches with the *falx*, or a small scythe, towards the grapes above. This hand is above the altar, on which sits a pine cone and some fruit. One can imagine that the grapes will be cut, and placed there, with the dog looking on in hunger. Antinous-Silvanus attends to his altar, in this image, and participates with canonical iconography meant to represent both local deities as well as Silvanus specifically.

Silvanus was an important Roman god in the second century, whose conception probably dates to the pre-Roman period in the Latin countryside.¹⁸² His main domain was the *silvae* (the woods), hunting, and farming (fields, sheep, and general farm work).¹⁸³ It is interesting to note that there is another relief, in the Capitoline Museums, that is strikingly similar: it depicts Silvanus, holding the *falx*, standing between a dog and an altar (figure 4.5).¹⁸⁴ The pinecone or pine wreath, dog, and *falx* are considered to be the core attributes of the god, securing his role as a humble and country-bound deity.¹⁸⁵ He was a local god, with established visual iconography, and one that most if not all Roman viewers would recognize.

Despite the stark similarities between these two reliefs (figures 4.4 and 4.5), there is a significant difference. This Latin god of the *silvae* was almost always shown bearded and

¹⁸² He supposedly assisted in the Roman victory over the last king, Tarquinius Superbus, and was included in the mythological founding of Rome.

Dorcey, *The Cult of Silvanus*, 7.

¹⁸³ He was often called upon in combination with Diana.

Dorcey, *The Cult of Silvanus*, 19.

¹⁸⁴ This signals to an established visual tradition, of which the Antinous-Silvanus relief is participating in.

¹⁸⁵ Dorcey, *The Cult of Silvanus*, 18.

somewhat scruffy.¹⁸⁶ In traditional scholarship, the Antinous-Silvanus relief has been seen as one of the few Silvanus depictions that is beardless, with the double identity as an explanation being ignored.¹⁸⁷ In antiquity, a beard was a significant symbol of manhood and social status, with youth symbolically ending once one's beard started to grow in. The clean face may have had a very practical purpose: Antinous, canonically, maintains his face (and hair) as his core identity, with the guises shifting everything else. It may serve to be a clear statement of his identity, and signal that while the relief appears very similar to others of Silvanus, he is still Antinous. Additionally, much like the Antinous-Apollo from Leptis Magna, this localizes Antinous and allows his divine agency to be backed up by a local and pre-existing god.

It is impossible to reconstruct a context for the relief, but a tentative situation can be proposed by comparing other placements of Silvanus images, in and around Rome. Bendlin this suggests that the clear and recognizable agricultural attributes could place this relief as belonging to an agricultural context and referring to the context's agricultural practices, perhaps a villa.¹⁸⁸ This is corroborated by Silvanus depictions often being in grain mills or distribution centers, watching over the agricultural practices.¹⁸⁹ It seems unlikely that this relief existed anywhere but an agricultural setting, but its close proximity to Lanuvium adds an interesting layer to the understanding of this relief. Antinous' term as a deity had only just begun, and he was by no means a local to Lanuvium. His combination with Silvanus probably served to concretely tie him to the Roman countryside, and while Antinous was not combined with Silvanus in the collegium,

¹⁸⁶ There are exceptions, but he is canonically bearded.

Dorcey, *The Cult of Silvanus*, 11

¹⁸⁷ Scholars have classically categorized this as an outlier in Silvanus' corpus, which supports this interest in his beardlessness. Perhaps it is Antinous' attribute that Silvanus wears here, if one were to flip the approach.

Dorcey, *The Cult of Silvanus*, 18.

¹⁸⁸ Bendlin, "Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law," 282.

¹⁸⁹ Dorcey, *The Cult of Silvanus*, 20.

this detail cannot be ignored. Additionally, it must be mentioned that this relief is always ascribed the dates ca. 130-138 CE, but it is interesting to think of it as being created in conjunction with the collegium, whose dating will be discussed in the following pages. Perhaps Antinous was a deity that the community itself started to celebrate, and his role as Silvanus helps secure Antinous as a larger phenomenon in Lanuvium and not limited to one group of people.

Antinous' Collegium

While there is no statue or figurative representation directly from the *collegium*, the massive marble inscription can provide an interesting interpretation of Antinous' cult in Lanuvium, quoted in part below (figure 4.6).

“In the consulship of Lucius [Ceionius] Commodus and Sextus Vettulenus Civica Pompeianus {136 CE},⁹ on June 9, {I.1} [at Lanuvium] in the temple of Antinous...the birthday of Antinous on [November] 27...the consulship of [Marcus Antonius Hiberus] and Publius Mummius Sisenna {133CE}, on January 1, the salutary collegium of Diana [...] and Antinous was established...May this be [favourable, propitious, happy] and salutary to the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus and to the entire [domus Augusta], to us, to ours, and to our collegium; and may we have entered into an opportune and diligent agreement so that we may escort with honour the departure of the deceased...Sequence of dinners...November 27, on the birthday of Antinous; August 13, on the birthday of Diana and the collegium...Likewise, it was agreed that on the solemn days of his terms of office the quinquennalis shall conduct worship with [incense] and wine and perform his other duties clothed in white, and that on the [birthdays] of Diana

and Antinous he shall supply oil for the collegium in the public bath before they banquet.”¹⁹⁰

This inscription, it must be noted, does not consider Antinous as Silvanus. It treats Antinous as his own deity, in combination with Diana.¹⁹¹ It is clear that there was a “temple of Antinous” for this *collegium*, although no archaeological evidence of said temple has been found.¹⁹² What the text does supply, however, is evidence of Antinous’ cult having a public role and an understanding of Antinous’ cult being brought into the Roman cult system.

It is unclear what the full function of the *collegium* was, but it is obvious that it had a funerary, religious, and social function, as well as adhering to the senatorial and legal structure for such a group.¹⁹³ Its patron was Lucius Caesennius Rufus, a local elite in the Lanuvium municipality and someone with influence over the region.¹⁹⁴ The *collegium* was founded on January 1st, 133 CE, and was dedicated only to Diana. This is obviously after Antinous’ death and deification, but before the approximate completion date of the Antinoeion at Villa Adriana.¹⁹⁵ On June 9th, 136, the *collegium* is re-dedicated, adding Antinous as the second deity. This is certainly ratified by the Senate, but it brings up a strange dynamic. As previously

¹⁹⁰ Bendlin’s own translation.

Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 213-215.

¹⁹¹ Diana was popular especially in the countryside as the patroness of hunting and wild animals, and her popular cult site at Nemi was nearby.

¹⁹² Bendlin speculates this temple may have been a public building dedicated to the god.

Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 278.

¹⁹³ There are many interpretations of this *collegium* described in detail.

Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 217.

¹⁹⁴ It is important to note that this patron may have had severe personal interest, and that in the inscription, his family’s birthdays are the first feast days mentioned, even out of order. This *collegium* may have served to honor them, first and foremost, with Antinous and Diana acting as justification for the activity of the group. While certainly important and venerated, it is possible that the *collegium* was more interested in honoring the family of this man, and perhaps by extension, positioning himself and his family among the imperial cult, and the gods.

Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 270.

¹⁹⁵ The Antinoeion is dated to being completed in 134 CE, due to the brickstamps.

discussed, he was not deified by their structure, and it is understood to have caused a rift between Hadrian and the Senate. Bendlin ventures to say that the senatorial ratification and approval of the *collegium* secures their inadvertent support of Antinous.¹⁹⁶ While Antinous was never made into a member of the *divi*, as he was neither blood nor married to Hadrian and not voted in, it is obvious that Antinous' cult and image thrived, even in Rome.¹⁹⁷ Perhaps the Senate treated Antinous as an extension of the non-elite devotion to Hadrian, and their support of this *collegium* would not mean more than supporting proper imperial veneration.¹⁹⁸ In this light, this inscription can secure this cult as participating in the reconciliation and careful allowance of Antinous and his cult by the Senate, as it was obvious that the god was growing in strength and popularity.

The *collegium* was obviously interested in Hadrian, exclaiming their “salutary to the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus and to the entire [domus Augusta].”¹⁹⁹ This term, “salutary,” refers to a type of organization called a “*collegia salutaria*,” one that was given the right to gather, socially and religiously, and pay honors to the emperors, deified or alive.²⁰⁰ These people were often freedmen or slaves, and living in dependence or in relation to the imperial family. Thus, it is likely that the Lanuvium *collegium* was populated by slaves and freedmen.²⁰¹ The Lanuvium *collegium*, while not expressly related to Hadrian by way of ownership or patronage, relate themselves to these organizations to appeal to the emperor's

¹⁹⁶ Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 257.

¹⁹⁷ Images and dedicatory inscriptions to Antinous were found in centrally important Roman cults spaces such as the Serapeum.

Mari and Sgalambro, “The Antinoeion,” 96.

¹⁹⁸ Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 284.

¹⁹⁹ Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 213-215

²⁰⁰ Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 220.

²⁰¹ Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 279.

favor, and choose his newly venerated boy-god (whose temple complex at Villa Adriana had just been completed) to join Diana as divine dedicatee. Bendlin suggests that this *collegium* is trying to secure themselves “within the imperial matrix” by imploring the emperor, the imperial cult, and the boy-god that does not fit into said cult but still is venerated by Hadrian.²⁰² However, two occurrences of this same deity in this small area of the countryside betrays a communal inclusion and adaptation of Antinous, beyond their *salutarii* to the imperial family.

The divine pairing must be delved into, as Antinous’ malleable role is inherently influenced by the figures that he is placed with. Diana, ancient goddess of the hunt, the wild, female virginity, and female youth, was placed next to Antinous, the new boy-god whose significance was deeply chthonic, youth based, and often sexualized. Both deities represent the youth of their gender, but Artemis’ role was female piety and virginity pushed to an extreme, and was often the unattainable example for young women who wished to defy social norms. If one chose to live like her and her nymphs, she was seen as heretic and dangerous. In contrast, Antinous’ youth is often expressly sexualized, as his role as *eromenos* is contingent on it. Moreover, the Antinous-Silvanus must be remembered, and his localized identity should be understood. He, like Diana, participated in the woods and hunting, in this region. Antinous-Silvanus situates him in a realm similar to that of Diana’s and perhaps it is this type of Antinous that this *collegium* intended to convey.

An interesting discussion rises once the Antinous-Apollo from Leptis Magna is placed in juxtaposition. Apollo was the twin brother to Diana, and they were often depicted together. It has already been determined that Antinous has Apollonic attributes, such as the oracular capability and concern towards death and burial. This *collegium*, while serving several purposes, certainly

²⁰² Bendlin, “Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law,” 222.

had a funerary function.²⁰³ Antinous in juxtaposition to Diana in Lanuvium may have forced a viewer/cult member to recall Apollo by association, and with him, his role in funeral rites. In addition, Apollo was an extremely important deity for the imperial line, as Augustus himself dedicated a major temple to him on the Palatine.²⁰⁴ While Antinous in Lanuvium was not Antinous-Apollo, his juxtaposition to Diana could have linked the two, at least in agency and cultural significance.

While it certainly is speculation, there is a possibility for a public and popular cult to Antinous in Lanuvium, aided by his syncretism to a locally important god. This dynamic is similar to that in the villa contexts, discussed in the previous chapter, and his adaptability is blaringly obvious. Antinous' youth, lack of biography, and link to the imperial power, promoted his cult as an adaptable and locally relevant phenomenon. This appealed to elite people, non-elite people, and went as far as to be a widespread occurrence across the Mediterranean.

²⁰³ Dues-paying members' funerals would be facilitated by the collegium, ensuring proper burial (within certain parameters).

Bendlin, "Associations, Funerals, Sociality, and Roman Law," 250.

²⁰⁴ Refer to Wiseman for a full discussion.

T.P. Wiseman, "The Temple of Apollo and Diana in Rome," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 33, no. 3 (2014): 327–88.

5. Conclusions

Antinous' popularity and relevance in the second century was entirely dependent on the flexible nature of his image and godhood, allowing his divine identity to become localized in a plethora of contexts and allowing his relevance to extend to every corner of the Roman Empire. The grieving Hadrian—either by intention or mistake—managed to construct a popular and versatile cult in the last years of his life, securing his paramour as one of the last significant additions to the pantheon of pagan cults in Rome. Antinous' image, finely wrought and carefully carved, quickly became an iconic phenomenon and the vast corpus of his images remain today as a testament to his popularity.

The boy-god rose to divinity in the last moments before Christianity gained significant power over the pagan deities, and his unique malleable attributes allowed him to survive for a spell of time despite this. This certainly contributed to the fervor with which his image was simultaneously celebrated and reviled through the ages. His image cannot be left with only that—Antinous appealed to people and communities on a deep level and while modern scholarship is quick to dismiss his true lasting relevance, it cannot be understated. While foundational deities such as Zeus and Demeter transcended cultural bounds, finding new forms with every new culture they encountered, Antinous alone maintained his core identity, borrowing elements from local gods but never losing his own. Perhaps it can be attributed to his quintessential handsome nature and blank mythology, but it would be a shame to not explore the significance of the syncretisms themselves.

While it is impossible to say why Antinous and his images rose to such heights of popularity and veneration, it is clear that his relevance tapped into a deeply understood cultural phenomenon. His images, regardless of their use in a secular or religious context, participated with contemporary and regional trends, allowing him to permeate almost every level of society. While it is a broad statement—and by no means meant to be definitive—chthonic deities in the Mediterranean were so central and universal in their capabilities that Antinous, despite his lack of divine mythology, could inherit some of these responsibilities through his syncretisms. From the great breadth and variety of his guises, it becomes obvious that the core aspect of each syncretic deity is that core Antinous identity, even in the cases of well-established and specific deities like Apollo. When combined with Antinous, Apollo's oracular function and connection to Delphi, symbolized by the snake, is emphasized. This promotes Antinous' oracular and chthonic roles. In the case of Lanuvium *collegium*, Antinous' juxtaposition to Diana would recall these elements of Antinous-Apollo, despite the clear lack of Apollonic attributes, as well as the beardless Antinous-Silvanus. Furthermore, the athletic Antinous in Loukou, while not recalling Apollo, would have reminded the viewer of the "sexy-boy" category that Apollo himself falls into, and therefore includes Antinous in a shared dynamic.

Using Apollo and his attributes as the filter upon which to see Antinous is a purposeful choice, and the same concepts can be applied to a number of deities, including Dionysos. One can see Dionysos in the raised arm of the Antinous-Apollo and in the woodland-nature of Antinous in Lanuvium, as well as in a large number of Antinous' portraits. With this lens, his natural role is emphasized, as well as his adaptability and his ability to exist as a sexualized deity. This is ultimately the crux of the issue—Antinous' innate role was that of malleability

whether he wears a guise or not. This is entirely understandable and fitting for a second century deity, whose entire world was composite and influenced by a large swath of cultures.

While most of Antinous' images participate in the aforementioned dynamic, Osirantinous exists as a sort of special case. Hadrian's unique agency provides a level of intentional guising, with the purposeful choice of a deity that allows Antinous to occupy a space amongst the pantheon of "foreign" gods in Rome. It is arguable, in contrast, that most of Antinous' guises were from local inspiration and intent, with the purpose of securing Antinous locally.

Osirantinous secured Antinous within Roman Aegyptiaca, allowing him to take part of the imperial Roman world without transgressing his role as non-citizen and *eromenos*. Furthermore, his association with Osiris is entirely the justification for his deification in the first place.

Hadrian's version of his paramour must be addressed and put aside into its own category, as his personal relationship and concerns were certainly reflected.

In the larger context, Antinous' significance stems from his simple lack of it—without a divine role and responsibility, people could ascribe what they needed to his role. The boy-god was without mythology, family legacy, or cultural definition. The highly composite nature of the second century Roman empire allowed him to exist as a purely Roman god, despite all this, and perhaps he is the definition of a Roman deity. A Bithynian, deified by an Egyptian system, was celebrated all across the Mediterranean in localized and yet clearly ascribed guises. It is self-defeating to depend upon Hadrian's intentions, but it is remarkable that his young lover rose to this massive status. The agency cannot be placed upon imperial will, but it is obvious that the highly public event of his death and Hadrian's mourning promoted Antinous. Something intrinsic to his story and role allowed local divinity and significance to exist alongside his own

identity, putting his “head on local shoulders.”²⁰⁵ Antinous, and his guises, reached levels of visual popularity only rivaled by Augustus and Hadrian himself, signaling his great importance. His identity as a deity was certainly a major aspect, but it is obvious that Antinous, his story, and his image appealed to the breadth of the Roman empire and his wholly malleable nature allowed him to exist in highly localized forms without losing his core character.

²⁰⁵ Vout, *Power and Eroticism*, 109.

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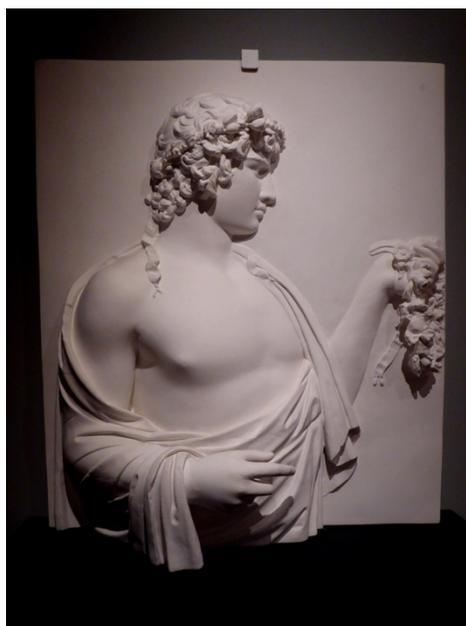
Appendix 1: Images



1.1—Townley Antinous



1.2—Braschi Antinous



1.3—Albani Antinous (Cast)



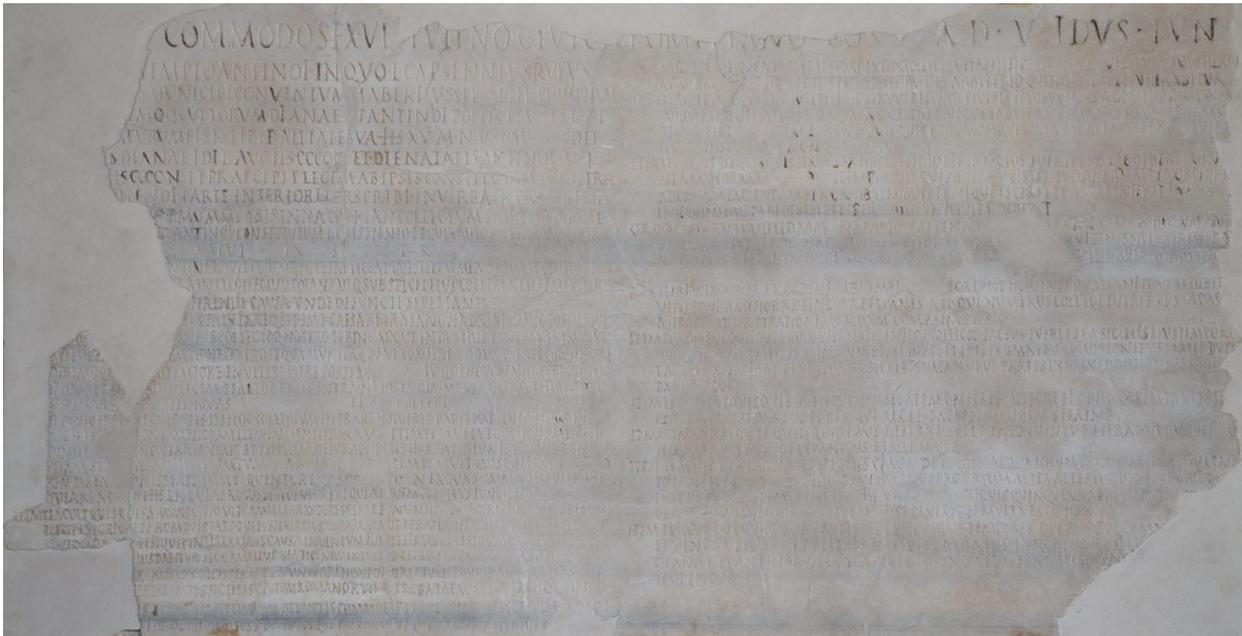
1.4—Apollo Belvedere



1.5—Osirantinous



1.6—Antinous-Silvanus



1.7—Antinous and Diana Collegium Inscription



2.1—Map of Mediterranean under Hadrian, 125 CE



2.2—Osirintinus Obelisk



2.3—Attic Vase Showing Zeus and Ganymede



2.4—Zeus-Ganymede Statue Group



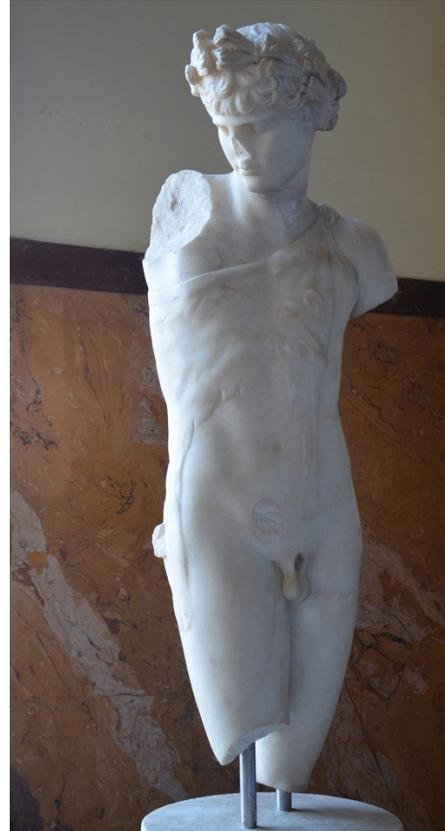
2.5—Aphrodite of Knidos



2.6—Napoleonic sketch of Antinoopolis



2.7—Tivoli General



2.8—Antinous-Bacchus in Capitoline.



2.9—Hadrian Portrait



2.10—Alexander the Great Portrait



2.11—Townley Antoninus



3.1—Osirantinous



3.2—Osirantinous obelisk



3.3—Canopus Crocodile



3.4—Egyptian Kouroi



4.1—Lyceian Apollo



4.2—Antinous at Delphi



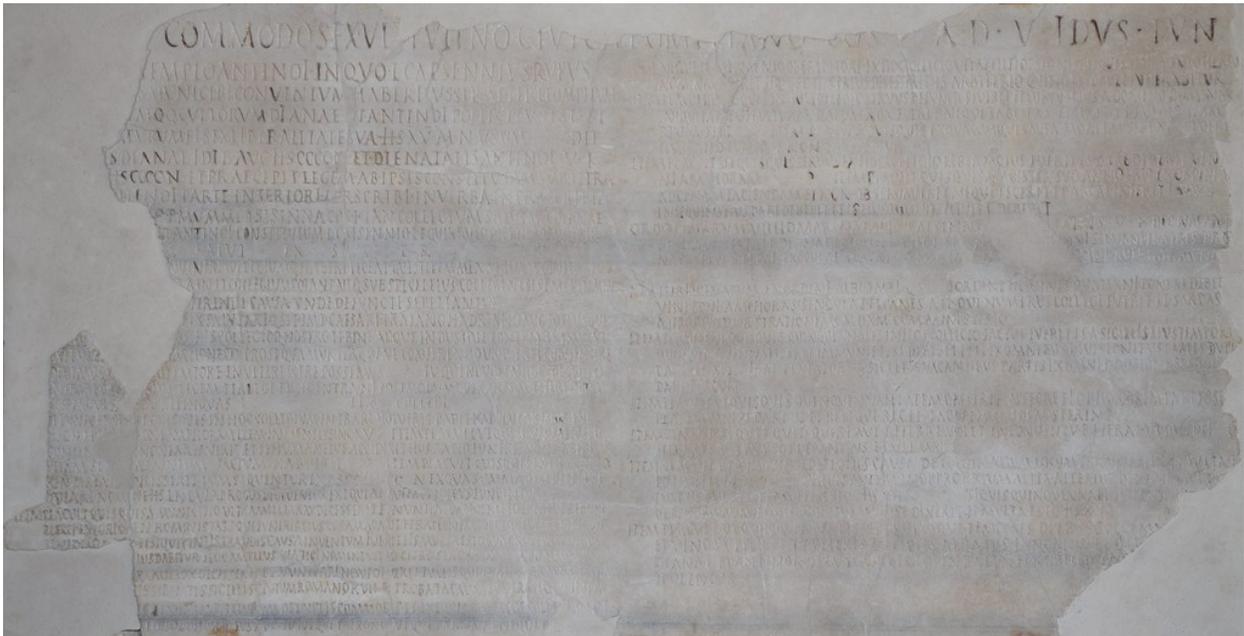
4.3—Hadrian-Maxentius-Constantine Portrait



4.4—Antinous-Silvanus



4.5—Silvanus



4.6—Antinous and Diana Collegium Inscription

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