

RELIGION, MOTHERHOOD AND POLITICS IN THE HELLENISTIC WORLD: QUEEN APOLLONIS AT TEOS

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I. INTRODUCTION

ROYAL CULT AND THE RELATIONSHIPS between monarchies and Greek *poleis* are key to recent and current work on Hellenistic history, but the contribution of royal women to diplomacy and their commemoration (mainly through cults) has not been thoroughly addressed. In this paper I shall argue, using the example of one of these royal women, Queen Apollonis of Pergamon, that an analysis of the role of women in Hellenistic monarchies can significantly add to our understanding of royal cults. This article will take as its departure point an honorific decree from the Ionian city of Teos that deified the late queen after her death. This document, though incompletely preserved, reveals rich complexities in the interrelationship of religion, politics, and gender, both in discourse and practices, and in the roles played by the queen's public image and agency, particularly in the international self-presentation of the Attalids and the realm of diplomacy.

The figure of the Hellenistic “queen” (often but not always titled *basilissa*)¹ never had a clear definition, and the different kingdoms had a range of practices associated with women's *basileia*. Thus, despite similarities, the image, agency, and cult of individual royal women could in practice be very different from one dynasty to another;² there were differences as well in their effective participation in power. Apollonis, the wife of King Attalos I of Pergamon and the mother of Eumenes II and Attalos II,³ may not be seen as having been as politically active as other, better-known Hellenistic queens (such as Olympias, Arsinoe II, Cleopatra Thea, Cleopatra VII, and Laodike III). Yet, as will be demonstrated here, she was a public agent who played a significant role in the relationship between the Attalid monarchy and the cities they ruled, and was frequently honoured inside as well as outside the kingdom.⁴ In effect, her public activities can be understood as political acts if one broadens the definition of political

¹In the case of the Attalid monarchy, *basilissa* can be easily translated into “queen”; see Mirón 2021: 212.

²On the origins, meaning, roles, and image of the Hellenistic *basilissa*, see Bielman 2003; Carney 2010; 2015: 1–26; Mirón 2013; Savalli-Lestrade 1994 and 2003.

³On Apollonis, see especially Bielman 2003; Mirón 2015; 2018a; Van Looy 1976. On Attalid women, see Mirón 2021. The title *basilissa* is widely attested for her in epigraphy: *MDAI(I)* 34, 1910: no. 24; *IG II²* 3171, IX.1¹.1.179; *OGIS* 248, 292, 308; *IEphesos* 3408; *Iasos* 6; *IOlympias* 312; *TAM V*, 1 690.

⁴Allen 1983: no. 7 (Telmessos); *IG IX.1¹*.1.179 (Aetolia); *OGIS* 248 (Athens); Holleaux 1906 (sanctuary of Apollo Claros in Colophon); *TAM V*, 1 690 (Lydia); *OGIS* 292 (Pergamon); *OGIS*

beyond the narrow margins of a formal office,⁵ and recognizes that these acts had to be performed within the limits of accepted gender norms, which relegated women's agency mostly to the domestic and religious spheres.

As was the norm with other royal women, in Apollonis' case religion played an essential part of *basileia*, not only in her role as an object of divine honours,⁶ but also in her activity as a public agent. Religion was the only public venue that made power legitimately accessible to women in the Greek tradition, and even there it had to be exercised within the more or less vague and changing limits of the "feminine."⁷ While supporting gender norms, the cults honouring queens contributed to an increase in public engagement and power available to non-royal women, as new feminine rituals augmented their civic participation and the creation of new priestesses multiplied their opportunities to perform a public function. This forms a significant part of the increasing public presence and recognition of women in the Hellenistic age.⁸

II. THE TEIAN DECREE

I will begin my discussion of Apollonis' roles by looking in detail at the Teian decree honouring her upon her death, which reads as follows (*OGIS* 309):

[—ἀπ]οδεί[ξ]αντας κα[ὶ] τῶν ἐν τῷ Διο[νυσίῳ —]
 [-c. 10-]·Α τὴν ἡμέραν· συνεῖναι δὲ καὶ τὰς συναρχίας [καὶ . . . τὰς]
 [ἐργασίας πάσας] ἤματα ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ τῇ χώρῃ, καὶ εἶναι ἐχεχειρίας πᾶσι πρὸς]
 [πάντας ἐν τῇ] ἡμέρᾳ <ι> τ>αύτη· τῶν δὲ θυσίων ἐπιμεληθῆναι τὸν ἱερέα τ[ῆς]
 [Ἀφρο]δίτης καὶ θεᾶς Ἀπολλωνίδος Εὐσεβοῦς καὶ τὴν ἱερείαν αὐτῆς κα[ὶ]
 [βα]σιλίσσης Στρατονίκης καὶ τὸν πρύτανιν καὶ τοὺς ἱεροποιοὺς καὶ τὰς
 [ἄ]λλας συναρχίας· καὶ μετὰ τὸ συντελεσθῆναι τὰς κατευχὰς καὶ τὰς
 [σ]πονδὰς καὶ τὰς θυσίας, αἴσαι τοὺς ἐλευθέρους παῖδας παραβώμιον,
 [χο]ρεῦσαι δὲ καὶ τὰς παρθένους τὰς ἐπιλεγείσας ὑπὸ τοῦ παιδονόμου
 [καὶ] αἴσαι ὕμνον· ἵνα δὲ καὶ εἰς τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν παίδων αἰ-
 [δη]ται τὸ παραβώμιον, ὃ δὲ ὕμνος ὑπὸ τῶν παρθένων, συντελεῖται δὲ καὶ ἡ χο-
 [ρεία —]·μ.ω, πρ[ο]νοεῖσθαι καθ' ἕκαστον ἔτος τοὺς τιμύχους καὶ τοὺς σ[τρα]-
 [τη]γ[ο]ύς· πρ[ὸς] δ[ὲ] ταῖς ἄλλαις τιμαῖς ταῖς ἐψηφισμέναις θεᾶι Ἀπολλωνίδι κα[ὶ]
 [δρ]ύσασθαι [βω]μὸν θεᾶς Ἀπολλωνίδος Εὐσεβοῦς Ἀποβατηρίας ἐ[ν τῇ ἀγορᾷ?]
 [ἐν τῷ] ἐπιφ[αν]εσ[τάτῳ] τόπῳ καὶ συντελεῖσθαι ἐπ' αὐτοῦ [θ]υσ[ίαν —]
 [—]ετην ενε[—]θῆται [—]

. . . exhibiting also in the temple of Dionysos . . . this day; also the colleges of officials shall assemble [. . . and all the works] in the city and in the countryside, and there shall

308 (Hierapolis); *Iephesos* 3408 (Metropolis); *OGIS* (Teos 309); Müller and Wörrle 2002: 191–235 (hinterland of Pergamon).

⁵ See the observations of Carney 2015: 1.

⁶ On cult to Hellenistic royal women, see, among others, Caneva 2012; Carney 2000; Mirón 1998.

⁷ Kron 1996.

⁸ See Bielman 2002.

be truces [for all in all] on this day; the priest of Aphrodite and the goddess Apollonis Eusebes, the priestess of the latter and Queen Stratonike, the *prytanis*, the *hieropoioi* and the other colleges of officials, shall take care of the sacrifices; once the prayers, the libations, and the sacrifices are held, the free-born boys shall sing a *parabomion*, and the maidens chosen by the *paidonomos* shall dance and sing a hymn; so that in the future the *parabomion* is sung by the boys and the hymn by the maidens, and the choral dance is performed . . . the *timouchoi* and *strategoï* shall provide for it each year; in addition to the other honours voted to the goddess Apollonis, [an altar] of the goddess Apollonis Eusebes Apobateria shall be consecrated in the most conspicuous place in [the agora?] and a sacrifice shall be performed on it . . .⁹

This fragmentary decree honouring Apollonis begins with a reference to the temple of Dionysos, whose cult held paramount importance in Teos from at least the fifth century B.C.¹⁰ and played a prominent role in the city's interactions with other political actors of the Hellenistic world, particularly in its volatile relationship with the Attalid kingdom. Dionysos was especially cherished by the Attalids, as he was by Hellenistic kings in general.¹¹ Although they did not explicitly identify themselves with Dionysos, the god occupied a central place in the Attalids' ruler cult, singularly in Pergamon as *Kathegemon* (Leader).¹² The promotion of culture, especially of theatre and music, associated with Dionysos, played a key role in Attalid euergetic and diplomatic strategy.¹³

The cult of Apollonis was related to this main cult of Teos. The decree concerning Apollonis was found near the temple of Dionysos, where it was no doubt exhibited alongside other public inscriptions, particularly those pertaining to the *asylia* and Antiochos III.¹⁴ It is possible that Apollonis also received some kind of honour in this temple, as had Antiochos' queen, Laodike, before her. Teos honoured Apollonis with priesthoods, a festival, and an altar. These honours were enacted by vote, probably in the assembly; the celebrations included the suspension of all civil activities both in the city and the territory on the day of the festival; and all the city officials were involved. The organization of the annual festival was the responsibility of the city's main colleges of officials: the *timouchoi* and the *strategoï*. This would suggest that the Teian cult of Apollonis was a local initiative, although royal involvement cannot be ruled out.¹⁵

⁹ Robert 1937: 9–20. See also Bielman 2002: 49–53.

¹⁰ On Dionysos and Teos, see especially Strang 2007.

¹¹ Cerfaux and Tondriau 1957; Scott 1928: 222–235. On Hellenistic ruler cult, the literature is nowadays immense. See also, among many others, the classic work of Habicht (1970), or the syntheses of Chaniotis (2003) and Coppola (2016).

¹² See Dignas 2012: 134–135; Hansen 1971: 451–454, 460–462; Schwarzer 1999: 265–272.

¹³ Gruen 2000. Music also played an important role in Teian diplomacy; see Perrot 2019.

¹⁴ Strang 2007: 148–149.

¹⁵ The Teians had some previous experience in granting *isotheoi timai* to kings and queens, for example, Antiochos III and Laodike III, and possibly Antiochos I and Stratonike. Cf. *CIG* 3075, a fragmentary inscription related to ruler cult by, among others, Habicht (1970: 102) and Herrmann (1965: 146–147).

III. A NEW GODDESS: THEA APOLLONIS EUSEBES

An inscription from Hierapolis (*OGIS* 308) declares that queen Apollonis Eusebes “has departed to the gods” (μεθέστηκεν εἰς θεοῦς), an expression that was a regular formula for indicating the death of the deified ruler,¹⁶ and its tone suggests that Apollonis’ death was recent. This fragmentary inscription reports a motion of the *strategoí* from which only a long and warm encomium of the deceased queen is preserved (see below, 265). The missing introduction of the Teian decree must have been similar, as encomia motivating the granting of honours are habitual in honorific decrees.

In the Teian decree Apollonis appears as *thea* and *eusebes*. *Eusebes* (“pious”) seems to have been associated with her deification after death, since it is only attested together with the epiclisis *thea*.¹⁷ This signalled her piety toward the divine as a feature that defined her, and as the one by which she deserved to be best remembered. *Eusebeia* was an important virtue in the classical world: kings and queens usually presented themselves as pious and made religious benefactions,¹⁸ and women who exhibited piety were considered to make the most desirable wives and mothers.¹⁹

At least two concrete and significant instances of *eusebeia* associated with Apollonis are known. One of them refers to an episode that took place in 183/2 B.C., when she toured her native city Kyzikos and its temples hand in hand with her sons. This display of affection was applauded by the spectators, who recalled the story of the brothers Cleobis and Biton helping their mother reach the temple of Hera,²⁰ a scene that was later represented in the temple dedicated to Apollonis by her sons at Kyzikos after her death (*Ant. Pal.* 3.18). In the second instance Apollonis proved her *eusebeia* through religious *euergesia* (“benefaction”) by enlarging the sanctuary of Demeter at Pergamon, building stoas and *oikoi*.²¹ The decree of Hierapolis also states that Apollonis had left no small proof of *eusebeia* through a “most beautiful deed” (ἔ[ργ]ωι καλλί[στω]ι).

IV. MARRIAGE, MOTHERHOOD, AND FAMILY HARMONY

Apollonis most likely made the dedication at Pergamon as a gesture of thanksgiving (χαριστήριον) to Demeter and Kore Thesmophoroi in reference to her own motherhood. Being the mother of four male children, she celebrated her

¹⁶ See Allen 1983: 149; Hansen 1971: 455–456.

¹⁷ In addition to Teos and Hierapolis, Metropolis (*Iephesos* 3408).

¹⁸ Bringmann 1993.

¹⁹ Connelly 2007: 192.

²⁰ Polyb. 20.22.4–7; Suda α 3415 Adler, s.v. Ἀπολλωνιάς. On the legend, see Hdt. 1.31. On the visit and its circumstances, see Mirón 2018a: 34–35.

²¹ *MDAI(I)* 34, 1910: no. 24. See Mirón 2016 for complete references and a comprehensive discussion.

success both as a mother and as a queen facilitating the continuity of her family on the throne. Numerous literary and epigraphic sources praise her family virtues. Thus the encomium of the Hierapolis inscription presents her as an exemplary daughter, wife, and above all, mother, and as an agent of the family harmony that was paradigmatic in the Attalids' dynastic image, especially in the accord between her four sons. Polybios (22.20.1–3) highlights her goodwill and affection towards her children, which he deemed to be worthy of commemoration; the Athenians praised Attalos I and Apollonis for the excellent education they provided to their children (*OGIS* 248); and her son Attalos celebrated her affection (*philostorgia*) towards him (*IPergamon* 169). Her harmonious relationship with her sons is depicted in the decorations of her temple at Kyzikos.²² Finally, the iconographic program of the Great Altar at Pergamon celebrated the dynasty and within it the queen as mother: the frieze of the Gigantomachy, which has significantly more female than male figures, repeatedly shows children fighting alongside their mothers; in the Telephus' frieze, the mother, Auge, plays a key role.²³

Apollonis "always congratulated herself and gave thanks to the gods" (λέγουσι μακαρίζειν ἑαυτὴν ἀεὶ καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς χάριν ἔχειν, *Plut. Mor.* 480c) for the harmony and the trust that existed between her four sons. Her dedication in the sanctuary of Demeter can be seen as a clear manifestation of the pride she must have felt (or wanted to convey) about her own successful motherhood, embodied in excellent sons. Through this dedication, which probably dated back to the reign of Attalos I,²⁴ she contributed as an active agent to the creation of her own image and memory. Moreover, as the sanctuary of Demeter is also related to the Thesmophoria, a festival exclusive to free-born Greek women celebrating their usefulness to the *polis*, Apollonis' dedication also facilitated the religious expression of maternal virtues by other free-born women.

The Teian decree mentions two local priesthoods devoted to the cult of Apollonis: a priest of Aphrodite and the goddess Apollonis Eusebes, and a priestess of the goddess Apollonis and the *basilissa* Stratonike. The fact that Apollonis shared a male priest with Aphrodite suggests that this priesthood already existed at Teos²⁵ and that the cult of the deified queen was added to his functions. Indeed, the cult of Aphrodite seems to have had special significance at Teos, as the goddess appears on some coins from this city and was the patroness

²² *Anth. Pal.* 3.1–19. See Massa-Pairault 1981–82; Queyrel 2003: 24–27.

²³ See Fehr 1997; Queyrel 2005.

²⁴ Piok-Zanon 2007.

²⁵ With some exceptions, in Greek religion the gender of a deity and the person in charge of the cult were usually the same; see Kron 1996: 140. In the case of Aphrodite, priestesses were more common on the Greek mainland, but male priests predominated in Asia Minor; see Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 398–400. In the cult of Hellenistic royal women, priestesses were the norm, including occasions when they were assimilated with Aphrodite: see Robert, *BE* 65, 1952: 139 for Stratonike I at Smyrna and Ma 2000: no. 26B for Laodike III at Iasos.

of the Teian colony of Phanagoria.²⁶ The existence of this dual priesthood means that Apollonis was *synnaos* of Aphrodite in her temple at Teos,²⁷ where a cult image of the queen was probably erected.

Like the priesthoods, the association of a king or queen with a deity was a common expression of *isotheoi timai* in the Hellenistic world, royal women being most frequently associated with Aphrodite. Although this association had specific significance for some dynasties and even for some individual royal women, there are some shared elements.²⁸ Aphrodite was the goddess of sexual union, both legitimate and illegitimate. Since marriage was a sexual union, and sexual attraction and affection between husband and wife were considered necessary for procreation and marital harmony, she was also a patroness of marriage. The association of a queen with Aphrodite was often used in the Hellenistic monarchies to emphasize the love between the king and the queen, a celebration that could even have erotic connotations.²⁹ Eroticism, however, is absent from Apollonis' image; whatever her intimate relationship with her husband was, in her case conjugal love was not especially emphasized. The inscription from Hierapolis only says that her life with her husband was "magnificent" (*μεγαλοπρεπής*). Polybios says that Attalos I behaved with the utmost moderation and dignity towards his wife and children throughout his life (18.41.8), and that Apollonis became a *basilissa* and retained this rank to the end of her life "not by using the arts of seduction of a *hetaira*" (*οὐχ ἑταιρικὴν προσφερομένη πιθανότητα*, 22.20.2).

Aphrodite also protected motherhood, inasmuch as marital love produces legitimate children and consequently also favours family harmony. Thus, Aphrodite's areas of influence coincided to a great extent with the areas of competence and the vital goals of women. The association of queens with Aphrodite not only served to exalt marital love between the king and the queen, and hence family union and legitimacy, but also consecrated the royal couple as the producers of heirs as well as the providers of prosperity for the kingdom and its subjects.³⁰

The Teian rituals also point to goddess Apollonis as protectress of weddings and youth. These rituals included a chorus of free-born boys performing a "song before the altar" (*parabomion*) and another of maidens (*parthenoi*) singing a hymn and dancing. Since the archaic period, participation in choruses had a ritual educational function in the preparation of free-born children and adolescents for adulthood, helping them to assume their civic roles: boys as citizens, and girls as wives and as mothers of citizens.³¹ These choruses of girls were commonly

²⁶ *BMC Ionia* 81; Strabo 11.2.10. See Strang 2007: 128.

²⁷ Robert 1937: 17; Van Looy 1976: 164.

²⁸ See Caneva 2012; 2014; Carney 2000: 34–40; Gutzwiller 1992; Mirón 2012; Savalli-Lestrade 2003: 69–70. On the multi-faceted nature of the goddess, see especially Pirenne-Delforge 1994.

²⁹ Caneva 2012: 92–94; Gutzwiller 1992.

³⁰ See Roy 1998.

³¹ Calame 1977; Stehle 1997: 71–107.

under the auspices of Aphrodite alongside pre-marital and wedding rites. In this sense Aphrodite played a key role in girls' transition from maidenhood to the maturity of a wife and mother, thus assuring the continuity of both the family and the city.³²

At Teos both choruses were likely held before the altar of the sanctuary of Aphrodite, now also the sanctuary of Apollonis, where the prayers, libations, and sacrifices stipulated in the first part of the decree took place.³³ The chorus of maidens probably celebrated Apollonis as the model of married life and as the ideal of Greek womanhood to which they should aspire, and placed themselves under the protection of the deified queen. These girls were selected by the *paidonomos*, the official responsible for supervising the education of children and youth, to ensure that only girls who were well trained in singing and dancing, and likely of as faultless a reputation as Apollonis, would be chosen. The involvement of this magistrate implies that the education of girls was a main concern of the city.³⁴ The chorus of boys, on the other hand, symbolized the fruits of a fortunate and harmonious marriage. In this sense, it might not be going too far to speculate that these youths could be associated with Apollonis' progeny: while during her lifetime Apollonis was a nurturer of good kings and princes, now, as a goddess, she would help nurture good citizens.

Aphrodite also favoured extra-familial bonds of affection, such as civic harmony and political concord. This can be observed in civic cults of the goddess in some Greek cities—for example, Athens or Thebes, where she had patronage over assemblies and the education of youth—and in the frequent dedications that city officials offered to her, particularly during the Hellenistic period.³⁵ In this regard one should note the explicit relationship between Aphrodite and Peitho (Persuasion) in erotic and political contexts, as the entire community benefited from the bride's acceptance of sexuality and procreation and from the use of persuasive eloquence by public authorities in preference to coercion.³⁶

Harmony within marriage and within the civic community are thus conceptually linked, and require the correct fulfilment of gender roles. Royal families, within which political power was reproduced, could not escape this connection. The Hellenistic king, although typically endowed with civic and family virtues (highlighted in the Attalids' image), was above all a war leader.³⁷ The figure

³² Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 419–428.

³³ Robert 1937: 19–20. On the importance of performances at festivals, see Stehle 1997: 59.

³⁴ A Teian educational foundation from the late third or the early second century (*SIG*³ 578) prescribed that both boys and girls, under the supervision of the *paidonomos*, should have instruction on reading, writing, and rhetoric. See Hansen 1971: 391–392 and especially Perrot 2019. Although specific musical education was only established for boys, girls could have had basic training in music, as the choruses seemed organized at the city school; see Perrot 2019: 188–190.

³⁵ Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 403–408, 446–450.

³⁶ Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 470.

³⁷ Roy 1998. On the Attalids' image, see Gruen 2000; Kosmetatou 2003; Leschhorn 1996; Thonemann 2013; Virgilio 1993.

of the queen was not so well defined, apart from her role in the reproduction of the dynasty and hence in the continuity of royal power. Yet other functions of the queen can also be discerned. These functions are related to diplomacy, justice, and welfare, presenting the queen as a provider of common prosperity and a unifying force in her family and the kingdom.³⁸ In a certain sense, the queen's "love" embraced her entire family and extended to the kingdom and its subjects as well, and even into the areas where the dynasty intended to exert influence; this was the image that was meant to be conveyed, even when the reality was quite different.³⁹ The association with Aphrodite implied the unification, in the *basilissa's* image, of her private role as the king's wife and her public role as patroness of her subjects.⁴⁰ In this sense, the queen's image and actions could be (at least for the purposes of propaganda) complementary to those of her husband, presenting a friendlier face of royal power.⁴¹ In the case of Pergamon, the image offered by the kings was complemented by the feminine element provided by Apollonis, with the royal family appearing as a compendium of masculine and feminine virtues. What better than a virtuous queen, celebrated by her piety towards the gods and her role as unifying force, to symbolize the beneficial effects of royal power as well as to promote civic harmony?

In a certain sense, the association of royal women with Aphrodite may be placed in the context of the dichotomy between love and war, opposite but complementary and interdependent elements, with blurred boundaries. Greek mythology paired Ares and Aphrodite, and the warrior hero was usually associated with the lovely heroine.⁴² The figure of the king as the best of warriors was emphasized by pairing him with the best of women, beautiful and charming, endowed with moral virtues—just the one worthy to be loved by the best of men. Thus, if the king was a champion in war and politics, the queen was correspondingly a champion of love in its broader sense, even if sometimes queens also resorted to violence.⁴³

The condition of the king as a war-leader did not imply a parallel association with Ares. Kings preferred gods such as Zeus or, especially, Dionysos (as stated

³⁸ Savalli-Lestrade 1994.

³⁹ Despite the beneficent self-presentation of Attalid kings, they did get involved in the many wars of their time and in practice often relied on compulsion, as was experienced by the Teians; see Ma 2013.

⁴⁰ Savalli-Lestrade 1994: 426.

⁴¹ Bielman 2003: 56–59; Mirón 2011; 2013; Ramsey 2011.

⁴² Iriarte and González 2008.

⁴³ For the war-related connotations of Aphrodite, see Iriarte and González 2008; Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 450–454. For her status as a grantor of power and of victory in battle, especially present in some cults in Asia Minor and particularly in her worship as Aphrodite Ourania, see Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 208–209, 450–454. While these warlike attributes had been observed at Pergamon (see Kuttner 2005: 161–16 and Queyrel 2005: 143–144) and could also be found at Teos, they seem to be absent in her association with Apollonis.

above, 263). The association of kings with Dionysos frequently paralleled the association of royal women with Aphrodite, as happened at Teos; these deities were complementary and often associated with each other in the Greek world. Both favoured fertility and sexual potency, and both enjoyed great popularity in the Hellenistic period.⁴⁴ Dionysos also matched the Attalids' image as having sons who loved their mothers. One of the decorations of the temple of Kyzikos recreated the apotheosis of Semele, Dionysos' mother, in a scene that evokes Auge's apotheosis on the Telephos' frieze, and is undoubtedly related to the actual divinization of Apollonis by her sons.

Even though Apollonis' association with Aphrodite at Teos is clear, she was not explicitly identified with the goddess; they did, however, share cults and attributes. This assessment may also be applied to the other honours Apollonis received at Teos.

V. APOBATERIA: ROYAL VISITS AND THE PROTECTION OF SAILING

The last preserved lines decree the building of some kind of monument (most likely an altar, as a sacrifice is stipulated) to *Thea Apollonis Eusebes Apobateria*. Thea Apollonis Eusebes was the official name of the new goddess, but Apobateria is only documented at Teos, so it seems to refer to specific local circumstances.

The epicleris *apobateria* associates Apollonis with sailing: its literal meaning is "she who disembarks," and it is related to the offerings performed by sailors upon landing (*apobaterion*).⁴⁵ As an epithet for divinities, it designated them as protectors of landings, and was applied to Zeus, Artemis, Apollo, and Asklepios, among others.⁴⁶ Scholars have linked this epithet to Apollonis' association with Aphrodite,⁴⁷ since the goddess had a close relationship with the sea in Greek myth and cult. She often received epithets related to the sea and to navigation, and her temples were frequently located in ports or other places next to the sea, where she was worshipped mostly by seafarers and women, including sex workers, married women, and marriageable girls.⁴⁸ Therefore, navigation and sexual encounters (legitimate or not) were conceptually linked. Other goddesses of love and marriage (mainly Hera) had similar roles, acting as protectors of relationships with foreigners and as mediators between the city and the outside world, marriage in this case representing a balanced exchange between strangers.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Le Guen 2001: 2.86–87; Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 385–388, 459–460; Scott 1928: 233–234.

⁴⁵ Romero 2000: 84, 95.

⁴⁶ Robert 1963: 314–316.

⁴⁷ Firstly by Hasluck (1910: 176). See also, among others, Barbantani 2005: 144; Massa-Pairault 1981–82: 165–167; Robert 1963: 315.

⁴⁸ Demetriou 2010.

⁴⁹ Polignac 1997: 118. Also, marine divinities could become protectors of marriage; see Romero 2000: 117.

In the case of Hellenistic queens, Arsinoe II is a significant precedent. She was assimilated with Aphrodite as a patroness of marriage, exalting her union with her brother-husband Ptolemy II, as well as a patroness of seafaring, in connection with the Egyptian maritime empire. Some Egyptian ports were renamed after her and a temple was dedicated to her in connection with Aphrodite Euploia (“of fair sailing”) at Cape Zephyrion; there, Arsinoe Aphrodite attended to the prayers of men who laboured at sea and to those of women, especially marriageable girls.⁵⁰

However, the altar of Apollonis Apobateria was a separate honour from Apollonis’ association with Aphrodite in the goddess’s shrine and the rituals stipulated above, since the decree clearly states that it is to be set up “in addition to the other honours.”⁵¹ When applied to rulers, *apobateria/los* was related to ruler cult and royal visits, with epicleseis such as *kataibates* (“he who descends”), *epibaterios* (“he who embarks”), or *embaterios* (“he who marches in”). For example, among the divine honours bestowed by the Athenians upon Demetrios Poliorketes, an altar was erected to Demetrios Kataibates at the spot where he first descended from his chariot.⁵² This practice was echoed in Roman imperial cult, with emperors becoming protectors of disembarkations, especially in connection with imperial visits.⁵³

Thus, Apobateria alludes most probably to an actual visit of Apollonis to Teos. Her participation in royal visits is attested at least once, in the example of Kyzikos referenced above, and reveals her active engagement in Attalid diplomacy. Royal visits were extraordinary opportunities for publicity and self-representation, both for the city and for the royal visitors. They entailed great pomp, with the whole community, including women and children and sometimes even foreign residents, led by representatives of the main priesthoods and local officials, coming out to receive the visitors.⁵⁴ They were also a valuable instrument of diplomacy, inasmuch as personal presence favoured bonds of political friendship and loyalty, and often involved members of the royal family other than the monarch, for example, queens.⁵⁵ Two sons accompanied Apollonis to Kyzikos; she most probably went to Teos with Eumenes and perhaps some of her other sons, if not all of them.

The exact circumstances of Apollonis’ visit to Teos are unclear,⁵⁶ but it was considered significant enough by the Teians to deserve commemoration even

⁵⁰For references and discussion, see Barbantani 2005; Carney 2013: 95–100; Stephens 2005: 243–248.

⁵¹Robert 1937: 20.

⁵²Plut. *Demetr.* 10.4. See Scott 1928: 164–166; see also Strooman 2007: 298–301.

⁵³Robert 1937: 20; 1963: 314–316; Scott 1928: 165.

⁵⁴On royal visits: Robert 1985: 469–474; Strooman 2007: 289–298.

⁵⁵Especially attested for Ptolemaic queens; see Clarysse 2000.

⁵⁶Robert (1985: 476) dismisses her arrival as a bride from Kyzikos, since it meant a long and unnecessary tour.

years afterwards. Arguably, the aftermath of the Peace of Apamea should be considered for this royal visit, as this period was crucial to the relationship between Teos and Pergamon. The city had just come under Attalid rule, losing its independence, and, at first, distrust must have dominated. A visit by Eumenes was advisable, especially recalling the visit made by Antiochos III in 204/3, after he liberated Teos from Attalid rule. On that occasion, Antiochos was probably accompanied by the *basilissa*, Laodike III; now Eumenes could have brought with him the Pergamene *basilissa*, in this case his mother. In a context where relations between city and monarchy were still difficult and fragile, the mediating presence of a role model who espoused gentler virtues than the king and his army was required.

This was also precisely the period when the association of Dionysiac *technitai* of Ionia and the Hellespont was combined with that of Dionysos Kathegemon.⁵⁷ The occasion undoubtedly merited celebration: one may guess the first formal performance of the artists of the unified associations, perhaps coinciding with the great festival of Dionysos at Teos. Religious gestures were essential in royal visits, more especially in this case, as Teos was already an important religious center and now was going to become one of the main centers of Attalid ruler cult. Undoubtedly, royal attendance at the main festival of the city would have powerfully contributed to underscoring its importance and thus also to easing the relations between the city and the monarch. The presence of Apollonis, renowned for her *eusebeia*, would have been beneficial for a positive perception of the Attalids by the Teians, and it is not improbable that she made gestures of religious piety. She could have therefore played a significant role in the creation and maintenance of a friendly relationship between the Attalid monarchy and the city.⁵⁸

Apollonis' origins could also have been useful for Attalid diplomacy, especially in the dynasty's relations with Ionian cities. Kyzikos, Apollonis' native city, was a colony of Miletos and, thus, Ionian (Strabo 14.1.6). The Attalids took advantage of this connection. We know of at least one piece of evidence in which it is stated explicitly: a letter of Eumenes II to the Ionian League, where he mentions his kinship with the Milesians through Kyzikos (*OGIS* 763, l. 65; *RC* 52). In the light of Teos being both an Ionian city and the headquarters of the Ionian and Hellespontic association of *technitai*, Apollonis' Ionian/Hellespontic origins can also be seen as significant.

At Teos, Goddess Apollonis became a protectress of the city and a patroness of marriage and of work at sea (important in a coastal site).⁵⁹ Here again

⁵⁷This unification has been dated in the aftermath of Apamea; see Aneziri 2003: 105–106; Le Guen 2001: 1.236–237, 2.29–30.

⁵⁸See Mirón 2018a for a global approach to Apollonis' role in Attalid diplomacy.

⁵⁹While this maritime area is not free from weather hazards, the greatest threat to sailing in those times were pirates, especially those installed in Teos' vicinity, namely at Korykos and above

her origins could come into play, since Kyzikos was also a maritime power.⁶⁰ Through this honour, the Teians entrusted symbolically to the divine queen the material protection they likely expected from the king of Pergamon, recalling her goodwill towards them in the past. In this sense, she was surely much more than a token in the relationship of the Attalids with the Ionian cities, perhaps echoing Arsinoe II's role in the Ptolemaic maritime empire. In any case, Apollonis' visit to Teos was relevant enough to remain alive in the collective memory through the years, fixed in the civic memory of Teos by both rituals and monuments.

We do not know whether Apollonis Apobateria was in practice worshipped as patroness both of navigation and marriage, nor whether private individuals made offerings on her altar, as in the case of Arsinoe II. The only certainty is that an official sacrifice was performed there, probably annually, but this does not imply that it took place the same day as the festival stipulated in the first part of the inscription. Yearly festivals honouring a king or queen usually were held on his or her birthday or on the anniversary of his or her death. While the latter date is perhaps more suitable for Apollonis' festival, given that her death was also the occasion of her apotheosis, the sacrifice to Apobateria may have been held on the anniversary of her first arrival in Teos.⁶¹

As for Apollonis Apobateria's altar (different from the altar where the *parabomion* was sung, which may have been placed in Aphrodite's shrine), the decree states that it should be set up "in the most conspicuous place" of a location that could be interpreted as the agora by analogy with the fountain the Teians previously dedicated to Laodike III.⁶² The location of both the altar and the fountain was initially interpreted as the agora of the port, where visitors disembarked,⁶³ but the archaeological evidence indicates a single agora at Teos, not far from the southern, most important, harbour of the city. A fountain house has been found north of the agora, close to the *bouleuterion*, but there is no architectural epigraphy linked to it, as is also the case with the remains of a temple, dated to the second century B.C., found on a terrace in the middle of the agora, and interpreted as a possible shrine of Aphrodite and Apollonis,⁶⁴ although the evidence is not conclusive. On the other hand, it is also possible that the altar was erected

all Myonnesos; see Strang 2007: 173–207. In fact, Teos suffered a major pirate attack in the third century B.C. (*SEG* 44.949, 49.1535) and Livy (37.27) reports the presence of pirates at Myonnesos in 190 B.C. When the *technitai* of Dionysos left Teos in the middle of second century B.C., they settled at Myonnesos under the auspices of the Attalid king (Attalos II or Attalos III), but Rome intervened and they finally settled at Lebedos (Strabo 13.1.29). This fact may indicate that by then the people of Myonnesos had adopted a more peaceful way of life; see Strang 2007: 198. One may wonder whether the Attalids were actually responsible for the "pacification" of the Myonnesians, and whether this fact was related to the granting of the *epiclesis apobateria* to Apollonis at Teos.

⁶⁰ See Sève and Schloser 2014.

⁶¹ On the celebration of festivals on the anniversary of birth or death, see Habicht 1970: 17. On yearly celebrations on the anniversary of king's return, see Robert 1985: 468–471.

⁶² Ma 2000: no. 18, l. 67–68.

⁶³ Robert 1937: 20; *BÉ* 1969, 501.

⁶⁴ Kadioğlu 2012: 17; Strang 2007: 87–88.

where she actually landed upon her arrival, i.e., the port, a very fitting location for a divinity who is a protector of disembarkations.⁶⁵ In the absence of further archaeological data one can only speculate. However, the commemoration of Apollonis' visit through the erection of a monument expressed, at least at that time, the Teians' wish to maintain lasting friendly relations with the Attalids, under the protection of the "Queen Mother."

VI. COMPETING MEMORIES: APOLLONIS AND LAODIKE

Through the creation of religious institutions (priesthoods, a festival, an altar), Apollonis became part of Teos' civic memory, and competed with other queens, mainly Laodike III, wife to Antiochos III. Apart from their cult statues in the temple of Dionysos, the Teian decree of 204/3 granted Laodike and Antiochos other joint honours, such as the creation of a festival, the building of altars by each symmory, and the performance of private sacrifices by resident foreigners in their homes. Honours offered to Antiochos alone were centred on the *bouleuterion*, with an *agalma*, annual sacrifices on the common hearth of the city, similar sacrifices by the ephebes upon graduation into adult status, the crowning of the king's *agalma* by Teian athletes victorious in pan-Hellenic games, and the offering of the first fruits of the harvest. To Laodike an eponymous fountain was built in the agora, where water would be drawn by priests and priestesses for libations, by citizens for offerings, and by brides for the bridal bath.⁶⁶ These honours reveal an interesting differentiation of genders and of the public and domestic realms. While the king's honours are especially addressed to the functional spheres of male citizens (politics, education, agriculture), the queen's honours are mostly related to civic and private religious life, as well as to the protection of marriage.⁶⁷ Thus, ruler cult embraces both the public and the private spheres,⁶⁸ as the royal couple become protectors of the city and of each household within it.

These honours also have parallels at Iasos, where a decree instituted a priestess of Aphrodite Laodike, an annual procession on the queen's birthday with the participation of marriageable women, and the offering of a sacrifice to Aphrodite Laodike by newly-wed couples.⁶⁹ This was the response of the Iasians to the queen's *euergesia*. The city had been seriously damaged by an earthquake, and Laodike, eager to contribute to its reconstruction through the regeneration of its people, created a foundation to provide dowries for poor girls.⁷⁰ As for Teos, she could have visited the city along with her husband, as the Teian decree honoring the royal couple mentions her *euergesia*,⁷¹ and a fragmentary letter from Laodike

⁶⁵ On seaside altars of divinities protectors of navigation, see Romero 2000: 82–86.

⁶⁶ Herrmann 1965: 33–42; Ma 2000: no. 17 and 18, l. 70.

⁶⁷ Caneva 2012: 91; Strang 2007: 124.

⁶⁸ Ma 2000: 220–224.

⁶⁹ Ma 2000: no. 26B.

⁷⁰ SEG 26.1226; also Bielman 2002: no. 30; Ma 2000: no. 26A.

⁷¹ Ma 2000: no. 17, l. 39.

to Teos⁷² evokes the language she used when announcing her benefaction to Iasos. This language suggests that Laodike likely offered her *euergesiai* on her own account at Teos, possibly favouring marriage.⁷³

Laodike's role as wife and mother was stressed elsewhere. Sardes dedicated a festival to her that included a sacrifice to Zeus Genethlios ("of the birth") on her family's behalf.⁷⁴ Antiochos praised her publicly for her love (*philostorgia*) and solicitude (*kedemonia*) towards her husband, as well as for her *eusebeia*,⁷⁵ the same quality that the Teians ascribe to her.⁷⁶ Thus, the honours granted to Laodike had an ideological background similar to those granted to Apollonis. In this sense the Attalids interacted with *poleis* in a similar manner to Antiochos III, and this also included the queen's role.⁷⁷

In Teos, the honours awarded to Laodice and Apollonis resemble each other, not only in nature but also in language,⁷⁸ as both Laodike's fountain and Apollonis Apobateria's altar are decreed to be set up in a central place. It is also possible that both queens acted similarly in regard to Teos, perhaps through diplomatic or beneficent actions, in a manner not unusual for a Hellenistic queen.⁷⁹ Yet, Apollonis and Laodike had apparently substantial differences in image and agency. For example, although she had seven children, Laodike was not distinctively praised for her motherly virtues⁸⁰ as was Apollonis, and her status as a mother was not central to her royal self-representation. Apollonis, unlike Laodike and most Hellenistic queens, had no royal blood, but was a citizen (*demotes*, Polyb. 22.20.1–2) of an independent *polis*, a fact that would reinforce her image as a model of citizen virtues. Whereas queens with royal blood would be perceived as being set apart from other women, Apollonis could have represented a credible ideal to free-born Greek women. Since she was born to an elite family⁸¹ and her marriage had political motivations,⁸² she fit into upper-class ideologies (especially gender ideologies) and the custom of arranged marriage. Thus, the virtues held by Apollonis and her family would have appealed to those who held certain values, particularly elite citizen values. Ultimately, her citizen status was likely useful to the Attalids, especially in for-

⁷²Ma 2000: no. 19D; also Bielman 2002: no. 13. The fragment of a letter from Laodike or Antiochos III to the *technitai* is preserved in the same stone; Ma 2000: no. 19E.

⁷³Ramsey 1011: 514–515.

⁷⁴Ma 2000: no. 2.

⁷⁵OGIS 224; Ma 2000: no. 37.

⁷⁶Ma 2000: no. 18, l. 73.

⁷⁷Ma 2000: 248–249; also 228–240. On the self-representation of the Seleukids as a harmonious family, see also Carney 2010: 205.

⁷⁸As noted by Herrmann 1965: 61–62.

⁷⁹On royal women's euergetism, see Mirón 2011; Savalli-Lestrade 1994.

⁸⁰See Caneva 2014: 42–45; Mirón 2018b: 162; Widmer 2008.

⁸¹Seve 2014: 155–156; Van Looy 1976: 151–155.

⁸²I.e., a valuable and lasting alliance between Pergamon and Kyzikos, as has been noted by Seve (2014: 154–157), convincingly refuting the tendency of modern historians to consider it a non-political marriage, even a love match (for example, Ogden 1999: 201; Thonemann 2013: 38).

eign policy, when they presented themselves as champions of Hellenism and protectors of cities.⁸³

Laodike had an active, visible public role. She intervened directly in the relationships between the monarchy and the *poleis* by receiving embassies, corresponding with citizen authorities, and making benefactions.⁸⁴ Similar activity by Apollonis is not explicitly attested in documents, and modern historians usually see her as a passive figure, intelligently used by the dynasty for the purposes of royal propaganda.⁸⁵ But there is some evidence pointing to her agency in the diplomatic realm. Her participation in royal visits was a diplomatic act, regardless of her specific activities in their course; even if one believes that she was there just to be exhibited, her presence had symbolic value. In Athens, however, the decree honouring the Attalid family specified that a copy should be sent to her (*OGIS* 248, l. 56–57), indicating an awareness of her importance. As we have already seen, she demonstrated her capacity for *euergesia* in Pergamon; it is plausible that she acted similarly elsewhere. For example, in a letter from a Carian city, Eumenes II is called *euergetes* “like his ancestors” (*progonoi*) immediately after being identified as the son of King Attalos and Queen Apollonis (*Ilasos* 6; *RC* 49).

Thus there were clear similarities between Apollonis’ public actions and image and those of Laodike, raising the striking possibility that Apollonis’ role might have been a conscious reconstitution of her predecessor’s. In Teos, the cults of Apollonis could have been modeled in part upon those of Laodike, and both were honoured with statues and monuments that provided the materiality for creating a lasting memory. Laodike had a statue in the temple of Dionysos, and it is probable that Apollonis was honoured in the same way, in the same place or at the temple of Aphrodite. In this manner the Attalid queen was equated with the Seleukid queen, even replacing her in her role as protectress of the city. The stone blocks with the decree honouring Antiochos and Laodike were removed and left on the margins of the sacred precincts of Dionysos.⁸⁶ And the question arises whether the fountain of Laodike was deprived of its name, or the altar of Apollonis became more conspicuous than the fountain in the topography of the city.

VII. CONCLUSION

Apollonis’ deification, as was reflected in the Teian decree, exalted her motherly and religious qualities. She was not only a model of femininity but also a

⁸³ On Attalid Hellenism, see Gruen 2000; Kosmetatou 2003: 166–173; Virgilio 1993: 29–65. Nevertheless, Asiatic elements are also noticed; see Kuttner 2005.

⁸⁴ Ramsey 2011.

⁸⁵ For example, Ogden 1999: 201–202; Thonemann 2013: 30–44; Vatin 1970: 100–107; Virgilio 1993: 44–52.

⁸⁶ Herrmann 1965: 31–32. See also Chaniotis 2007: 171; Ma 2000: 249–250. Interestingly, although some private cults of Seleukid kings could still survive in Teos in the mid-second century, queens are absent; see Mastrocinque 1984.

protectress of domestic excellence in other women. As the royal family encompassed the domestic sphere, so the domestic affairs of each family also affected the state and its wellbeing, since just and harmonious government relied on the harmony and virtues of the governed families, which were in turn based on the proper observance of gender order.⁸⁷ Honours such as those decreed at Teos show that the continuity of royal power and the continuity of the city were seen to be intimately connected. This aspect was an essential part of the way the Attalids ruled cities, and at the same time shows how cities related to royal power, how they perceived it, and how they integrated it into their own ideological, cultic systems according to their own traditions and interests. Thus, gender norms played an integral part in both royal and city politics.

The image of the virtuous Apollonis and her united family was likely very attractive to Greeks, and undoubtedly the Attalids made a generous and conscious use of it for political and diplomatic purposes. Apollonis, however, was no mere token, but rather an active agent both in Attalid propaganda and in the relationship between the monarchy and the cities, as her participation in royal visits and euergetic activities show. Through the cults dedicated to her, the Teians were not only expressing their loyalty to the Pergamene kings but also commemorating Apollonis' personal goodwill towards them.

By focusing her activities on religion, Apollonis channeled her royal power into areas of participation and influence that were acceptable for a Greek woman of her era. Being associated with a goddess like Aphrodite (a feature she shared with most influential Hellenistic queens, even those with some direct, formal political power) imbued her with a certain power, but it was a type of authority that, dressed in feminine garb, could be well contained within the bounds of the traditional gender order.⁸⁸ In this sense, Greek citizen women could have found in Apollonis (and also in her immediate predecessor, Laodike III) an attractive model for feminine public action.

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⁸⁷ As stated by, for example, Aristotle *Pol.* 1260b.

⁸⁸ See further Mirón 1998; 2012; also Carney 2000.

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