DI MANES, BELIEF & THE CULT OF THE DEAD

THE ANCIENT ROMAN AFTERLIFE

CHARLES W. KING

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CHARLES W. KING

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Dedicated to my wife, Kim,
and in memory of my parents,
Charles and Fenita King

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ABBREVIATIONS OF ANCIENT AUTHORS

Anth. Lat. *Anthologia Latina*

Appian

Pun. *Punic Wars*

Apuleius

De Deo Soc. *De Deo Socratis*

Met. *Metamorphoses*

Aristides

Or. *Orationes*

Arnobius

Adv. Nat. *Adversus Nationes*

Asc. Asconius

Mil. Commentary on Cicero, *Pro Milone*

Augustine

De Civ. D. *De Civitate Dei*

Cato

Agr. *De Agricultura*

Catullus

Carm. *Carmina*

Censorinus

DN. *De die natale*

Cic. Cicero

Att. *Epistulae ad Atticum*

Brut. *Brutus*

Cael. *Pro Caelio*

Clu. *Pro Cluentio*

Div. *De Divinatione*

Fin. *De Finibus*

Flac. *Pro Flacco*

Leg. *De Legibus*

Marcell. *Pro Marcello*
Mil. *Pro Milone*
Phil. *Philippic*
Pis. *In Pisonem*
Rab. Perd. *Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*
Rep. *De Re Publica*
Scaur. *Pro Scauro*
Tusc. *Tusculunae Disputationes*
Vat. *In Vatinium*
Verr. *In Verrem*
Dig. *Digest*
Dion. Hal. Dionysius of Halicarnassus
Ant. Rom. *Antiquitates Romanae*
Donatus
Ter., Adelph *Commentum Terenti, Adelphi*
Phormio *Commentum Terenti, Phormio*
Eusebius
Hist. Eccl. *Historia Ecclesiastica*
Gaius
Inst. *Institutiones*
Gell. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*
Horace
Carm. *Carmina*
Epist. *Epistles*
Epod. *Epodes*
Sat. *Satires*
Juv. Juvenal
Sat. *Saturae*
Lucan
BC. *De Bello Civili*
Lucr. Lucretius
Macrobius
Sat. *Saturnalia*
Minicius Felix
Oct. *Octavius*
Non. Marc. Nonius Marcellus, *De Conpendiosa Doctrina*
Ovid
Am. *Amores*
Ars Am. *Ars Amatoria*
Her. *Heroides*

Met. *Metamorphoses*
Trist. *Tristia*
Persius
Sat. *Saturae*
Petronius
Sat. *Satyricon*
Plaut. Plautus
Amph. *Amphitruo*
Aul. *Aulularia*
Curc. *Curculio*
Men. *Menaechmi*
Merc. *Mercator*
Mostell. *Mostellaria*
Poen. *Poenulus*
Pliny (the Elder)
HN. *Naturalis Historia*
Pliny (the Younger)
Ep. *Epistulae*
Plutarch
Rom. *Romulus*
Vit. C. Gracch. *Vita Gaius Gracchus*
Porphyrio
Epist. *Commentum in Horatium Flaccum, Epistulae*
Epod. *Commentum in Horatium Flaccum, Epodi*
Porphyry
Abst. *De Abstinentia*
Prudentius
C. Symm. *Contra Symmachum*
Pseudo-Acro
Epist. *Commentum in Horatium Flaccum, Epistulae*
Quintilian
Inst., *Prooem.* *Institutio oratoria*, *Prooemium*
Seneca (the Elder)
Contr. *Controversiae*
Seneca (the Younger)
Apocol. *Apocolocyntosis*
Ep. *Epistulae*
Servius
Aen. *In Vergilium Commentarius, Aeneis*
Georg. *In Vergilium Commentarius, Georgica*

Statius
Ach. *Achilleis*
Silv. *Silvae*
Theb. *Thebais*
Suet. Suetonius
Calig. *Gaius Caligula*
Jul. *Divus Julius*
Tib. *Tiberius*
Tacitus
Agr. *Agricola*
Ann. *Annales*
Hist. *Historiae*
Val. Max. Valerius Maximus
Varro
Ling. *De Lingua Latina*
Virgil
Aen. *Aeneid*

ABBREVIATIONS OF JOURNALS AND MODERN EDITIONS

AJPh = *American Journal of Philology*
AE = *L'Année Épigraphique*
ANRW = Temporini Hildegard, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. Ongoing publication series since 1972.
CE = Buecheler, Franciscus, and Ernestus Lommatzsch, eds. 1897. *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*. 3 vols. Leipzig: Teubner.
CIL = Mommsen, Theodor, et al., eds. 1863–1986. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin: George Reimer.
CP = *Classical Philology*
CQ = *Classical Quarterly*
EoRE = Hastings, James, John A. Selbie, and Louis H. Gray, eds. 1908–1926. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. 13 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
ILS = Dessau, Hermann, ed. 1892–1916. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. 5 vols. Berlin: Weidmann.
JRS = *Journal of Roman Studies*
OCD = *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edition. *See Bibliography under* Hornblower and Spawforth 1996.
OED = *Oxford English Dictionary*, cited here from the 2011 update of the online edition.
OLD = *Oxford Latin Dictionary. See Bibliography under* Glare 1982.
RE = Wissowa, Georg, et al., eds. *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. 1894–1978. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler.
TAPA = *Transactions of the American Philological Association*
Trans. = translation

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For proofreading and other sorts of practical assistance I would also like to thank in particular Catie Dagle, Katrina Jacobberger, Pat Kennedy, and my parents Charles and Fenita King, who sadly did not live to see the work completed.

My greatest thanks, though, must go to my wife, Kim King, not only for allowing me to pick her brain regularly on various subjects but also simply for putting up with years of me muttering arcane things about dead Romans. Her love and support are greatly appreciated.

I would also note that this book borrows various sentences scattered throughout its length from a conference paper that I published in 2009, "The Roman *Manes*: The Dead as Gods." I actually intended it to be a kind of advertisement for this book, and it is unfortunate that so many years have passed between its publication and the present volume. Nevertheless, I thank editor Mu-chou Poo for the invitation to write it originally and publish it in his book *Rethinking Ghosts in World Religions*. I note too that chapter 4 is a sequel to, and expansion of, ideas I first addressed in an article in *Classical Antiquity* in 2003, though I have tried not to incorporate the actual wording of the article here. Translations of ancient texts are my own unless otherwise noted.

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PREFACE

In the popular film *Gladiator* (2000), the fictional Roman hero Maximus participates in a cult of the dead in which he treats his dead parents as gods, worships them as individuals by name, and prays to them for assistance in preserving his life. The film, of course, is not one that viewers usually cite for its historical fidelity. Indeed, it ends with a jaw-dropping resolution to the film's political situation in which the Romans restore the Republican form of government (!) following the death of the emperor Commodus in the late second century AD. A number of other major historical errors are easy to spot. It is interesting, therefore, to note that the screenwriters were correct in their presentation of the cult of the dead, at least in some of its general features. The Romans did deify their dead, worship them as individual gods, and pray to them to extend their lives. This was the cult of the *manes*, Rome's deified dead.

A) THE AFTERLIFE: INTERPRETIVE ISSUES

The book in your hands is the product of what is now over twenty years of my research into the *manes*, their worship, and their place in Roman conceptions of their society. Despite a reasonably large number of recent publications about "Roman death," often conceived of primarily in archaeological terms as the study of graves, the *manes* have not received their fair share of attention in discussions of Roman ideas about death and the afterlife. Indeed, one can find remarkably blunt statements not only that the Romans lacked interest in the cult of the dead, but even that they were uninterested in any sort of afterlife. Thus, Walker claims that "the dead played no central role within organized religious belief."[1] Edwards notes that "there seems to have been little emphasis on the fate of the individual after death." Dowden says

that the Romans were "unworried by souls and afterlives." These generalizations are far from unusual.[2]

One should stress that the basis for these statements is not lack of evidence, for far less documented aspects of Roman culture have received more recent attention. A word search of Latin databases will show that the word *manes* appears in the writings of almost every surviving Latin author from the late Republic and early Empire and that the addition of other terms relevant to the cult of the dead (e.g., *parentare*, *umbrae*) will increase the list of citations significantly. Tombstones are also the most abundant surviving type of Latin inscription, and a dedication "to the divine *manes*" (*dis manibus*) appears on most epitaphs of Imperial date. There is also no shortage of evidence of religious activity involving the *manes*. In later chapters, I will discuss the evidence for Roman offerings to the *manes* at the funeral and festivals at which private families (the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria*) or priests (the *Mundus*) worshipped the dead. There were also shrines within the home, where the *manes* had a place with other household gods, such as the *lares*.

Nevertheless, the *manes* receive little attention in the recent (and relatively abundant) scholarly literature on Roman religion or even about Roman death specifically, and they are frequently absent altogether from discussions of "the Roman afterlife." The distance between such conclusions and those advanced in this study can be seen as a problem of categories. The difficulty comes when scholars formulate categories such as "afterlife," "gods," "humans," "spirits," or even "cult of the dead" in terms that are most familiar, for that tends to lead the reader to conceptualize the categories through a modern Judeo-Christian lens. Too often, doing so will translate into categories in which "humans" cannot become "gods," and humans becoming gods after death is not part of an "afterlife," perhaps not even part of a "cult of the dead." The *manes* force us to reexamine these categories and thereby move us away from what is most familiar and most comfortable.

Deification is a form of afterlife that places the main emphasis on the role that the dead play in the living world, rather than on where the dead reside. It is not part of the usual framework of modern Judeo-Christian thought. The Eastern Orthodox doctrine that is sometimes described with the term "deification" is actually more like Muslim Sufism in advocating a mystical union with a monotheistic deity. It does not involve the worship of dead Christians. Likewise, modern Mormon ideas of becoming more "godlike" after death are about the potential for personal spiritual development in the afterlife and, again, do not involve the living worshipping the dead. The closest Christian equivalent might be the Catholic "cult of the saints," in which a handful of special humans have posthumous influence over the living, but Catholic

theologians still distinguish between saints and the monotheistic category of "god."[3] The closest modern equivalents to Roman deification would be outside the Western religious tradition in "cults of the dead" or "ancestor cults" found in Asia and Africa, and even then sometimes with significant differences from the specific Roman practices this book will describe.[4]

Judeo-Christian scenarios of an afterlife are themselves diverse, involving both changes over time and rival sects or theologians putting forth multiple, competing models simultaneously. Allowing for variations in the details, some major features would include the idea of a "last judgment" in which the deity would judge those who are dead and assign them permanently to Heaven or Hell based on their previous conduct in life. In some versions, the place of reward would include the promise of a resurrection of the dead in new physical bodies. Christianity would also strongly emphasize the role of a savior, without whose intervention on one's behalf gaining entry into the place of reward would be difficult or impossible.[5] By contrast, Roman Pagan thought offers no resurrection of the body and no savior deity.[6] Some scholars with an overtly Christian triumphalist agenda have presented the lack of these elements as proof of the inferiority of Pagan thought or even as the reason why Pagans converted to Christianity in large numbers.[7]

To judge Pagans by Christian criteria is not satisfactory, much less to criticize them for not being more Christian than the Christians. If, for example, one is going to attach importance to the Pagan Romans lacking a "savior," one also needs to acknowledge that the idea of *needing* a savior is itself a Christian concept, tied to ideas of original sin. It is not a universal of world religion that something bad happens after death unless a deity intervenes. Likewise, it is far from obvious that resurrection of the physical body ought to be the goal of every afterlife scenario. Is being reborn in human flesh better than becoming a god after death? Why would it be so? At the least, any such argument would need to discuss deification as an alternative option for posthumous existence in Roman thought, as the scholars in question have not as yet done.

Modern Christianity most often tends to define the concept of afterlife in terms of a morally segregated home for the dead, divided into zones of punishment and reward. As the film *Gladiator* also correctly portrayed, the Romans had such models of the afterlife, which divided posthumous existence into places of reward (*Elysium*) and punishment (*Tartarus*). These models of a morally segregated afterlife derive from Greek religion and appear at first glance to provide what modern readers often seem to want, an afterlife that is "Heaven-and-Hell-ish." The resemblance is far from exact and the models far from monolithic. Greek underworld scenarios are themselves highly varied in both their details and their significance in Greek culture,[8]

and Roman literary use of them is often more complex than just a simple *Tartarus/Elysium* dichotomy and may involve multiple other scenarios in combination with those two. Still, the general resemblance of *Tartarus* and *Elysium* to Christian thought seems to entice.

Over and over again, one finds in modern scholarship those who reduce "the Roman afterlife" to *Tartarus* and *Elysium*. Peter Brown wrote that "the leading pagans of the time took the ascent of the soul to heaven for granted," which asserts not only the dominance of the *Elysium* scenario but the dominance of a relatively rare variant in which the place of reward is in the sky rather than the more traditional location for *Elysium* underground. It is not a minor point that Brown calls it "Heaven."[9] If Brown is primarily a historian of Christianity, the influence of Christian thought is also rarely far from the surface in the study of the Pagans. For example, Valerie Hope entitled her chapter on the Pagan Roman afterlife "Heaven and Hell."[10]

More subtly, to focus on *Tartarus* and *Elysium* because of their resemblance to the Judeo-Christian Heaven and Hell is to treat Judeo-Christian concepts as normative for all religions in ways that exclude other options not found in Christianity. Thus, Littlewood can describe Roman rites for the dead at the *Lemuria* as "black magic," and Hope can dismiss the importance of the cult of the *manes* by suggesting that "superstition, duty, tradition" motivated the rites.[11] The reference to duty and tradition calls to mind the discredited early twentieth-century theory of "empty cult acts," in which the Pagans supposedly practiced empty ritualism in contrast to Christianity's true religion.[12] The use of the word "superstition" is simply pejorative, and one wonders when it would ever be appropriate to dismiss the religion of another culture with such a term. To the degree that Pagan thought had negatively defined concepts of *superstitio* or magic, Pagans would not have applied them to worship of *manes* that the pontiffs mandated and which occupied multiple positions on the annual calendar of religious festivals. Only relative to the religious norms of modern Christianity would ritually interacting with the dead be a "superstition."

Another factor that contributes to the overemphasis on *Tartarus* and *Elysium* relative to the worship of *manes* is a general tendency to emphasize Greek elements in Roman religion as the only important elements, leading to scholars being somewhat dismissive of aspects of Roman religious practice that do not have clear Greek models.[13] As the *manes* have no exact equivalent in Greek cults of the dead, scholars somewhat ironically neglect the *manes* because of their originality. When J. Gwyn Griffiths insisted that it was unnecessary for him to discuss Roman ideas about the afterlife at any length because he had

just discussed the Greeks, he of course meant that he had discussed *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, not the *manes*.[14]

The tendency to focus not just on *Tartarus* and *Elysium* but on the underlying Greek sources for their underworld topography sometimes reaches odd extremes in which scholars present Platonic philosophy or even book 11 of Homer's *Odyssey*, a pre-Roman text from the eighth century BC, as the main sources to study to understand the Roman afterlife.[15] Educated Romans would have been familiar with these texts, but they are not models of Roman religious practice. Homer's dead, for example, are so detached from the world of the living that they do not know what is going on among the living and have to ask the visiting Odysseus for news. Such a scenario is incompatible with Roman ritual interaction with *manes*. Even in Virgil's *Aeneid*, a text that borrows some of its overall structure from the *Odyssey*, the Roman author deviates from the Homeric model of an afterlife on a wide range of points.[16] Likewise, *manes* had no place in the thought of the pre-Roman Greek world of the sixth to third centuries BC, and so they are going to be completely absent from the Greek philosophic traditions of Plato, Epicurus, Pythagoras, or the early Stoics. To draw conclusions about the interests of later Romans from the absence of *manes* from the writings of earlier non-Romans would therefore be a little strange.

Another approach in modern scholarship is to try to present the Romans, or at least educated Romans, as proto-Enlightenment rationalists. Christianity remains the focal point of such arguments as scholars attempt to find, and overemphasize, sources that appear to resemble later early modern or modern skepticism about Christianity.[17] The desire to cast the Romans as skeptics often leads to an assumption that religious references in Roman texts are not intended seriously, without offering a clear justification for that assumption beyond implying that it is obvious. I will return to the subject of Ovid's usefulness as a source in more detail in chapter 7.A.1, but I can say briefly here that no one is currently claiming that a text such as his *Fasti* is just a handbook on ritual procedures or denying that Ovid had a wide range of literary, political, social, and sexual interests beyond discussing Roman gods. Often, though, there is a modern assumption that goes much further and suggests that it is impossible for Ovid to be interested in worship and that this impossibility is self-evident from his texts. The implied argument seems to be that Ovid is too cynical, too interested in sexual matters, or too irreverent to have ever taken worship seriously. The implied standard for judging "irreverent" usually remains unarticulated, but it would appear to be a Christian standard of what "interest in religion" should look like, often implied

to be incompatible with sexual or other worldly concerns. Is this, though, a valid standard for a religion in which mainstream texts frequently present the king of the gods as pursuing love affairs? It is perfectly valid to debate Ovid's position, but an *a priori* assumption that he or any other Roman author is a skeptic just begs the question.

The attempt to portray Romans as skeptics also tends to dismiss the cult of the dead, privileging much rarer skeptical statements instead. Thus, for example, several scholars cite the tombstone slogan "I was not, I was, I am not, I do not care" as if it were typical of Roman thought. In fact, it is quite rare, as are any other statements that one could take as skeptical on tombstones.[18] All such sentiments are vastly outnumbered by the tens of thousands of epitaphs containing the words *dis manibus*, which overtly invoke the cult of the dead. Only a modern desire to see the Romans as skeptical would make the former appear more representative than the latter. One could of course dismiss the relevance of the *dis manibus* inscriptions on the grounds that it is impossible to know what the authors were thinking, but only if one applies the same caveat to Christian inscriptions and the references to an afterlife found there, which scholars regularly accept at face value without similar skepticism.[19] The modern skeptical dismissal of the relevance of the cult of the *manes* then leads scholars back to *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, only this time with the main focus on statements that appear lukewarm in interest or overtly skeptical about these borrowed Greek scenarios. As the scholars have already eliminated the *manes* from consideration, this leads them to the conclusion that the Romans were just not interested in the afterlife at all. The most extreme statement of that position is probably that of Jon Davies, who presents the Roman view of death as thoroughly secular.[20]

B) THE PRIMACY OF THE *MANES*

I cannot myself claim personal immunity from the seductive lure of *Tartarus* and *Elysium*. In my long ago 1998 dissertation on the Roman afterlife, I did not turn my focus primarily to the *manes* until the second half of the sixth chapter (out of nine chapters total). In the book that follows here, I will pursue the opposite approach and discuss *Tartarus* and *Elysium* only in places where they relate to the subject of the *manes*. I do this not merely because past neglect has made the *manes* more in need of a new study—though that is true—but also to make a more basic point: the cult of the *manes* was the dominant approach to the afterlife in Roman culture. In making that claim, I am not denying that afterlife scenarios such as *Tartarus* and *Elysium* were

important to some Romans, for I have argued so myself elsewhere[21] and hope to do so again in a future publication, nor would I deny the literary influence of Greek afterlife scenarios to the composition of texts such as the *Aeneid*. I will also discuss interactions between such models and the *manes* in chapter 5. Still, if one is going to ask, which scenario has more of a role in Roman religious practice, the *manes* or *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, then one must answer that it is the *manes*. The borrowed Greek scenarios of *Tartarus* and *Elysium* functioned as add-on elements, which Romans could combine with the cult of the *manes* if they wished but which were ultimately nonessential. It was the rites toward the *manes* that were the focus of day-to-day religious activity in relation to death.

Let us return to the aforementioned attempts to present the Romans as predominantly skeptical concerning the afterlife, for such arguments also assume the dominance of *Tartarus* and *Elysium* over the *manes*. What is interesting about the texts that scholars have cited to present the Romans as rejecting the afterlife is that they show nothing of the sort. They show skepticism only about the borrowed Greek models of *Tartarus* and *Elysium* but not about an afterlife that involves *manes*, whose worship the same authors often endorse.

For example, when Tacitus (*Agr*., 46) expressed hope that his dead father-in-law would reach a favorable home in the afterlife, he phrased it tentatively, "If any place exists for the *manes* of the pious" (*si quis piorum manibus locus*). Tacitus expresses doubt, but the doubt is about whether there is a special place for dead people who possess greater virtue than others, such as *Elysium*. He does not, however, challenge the existence of *manes*. The evidence for his lack of rejection of *manes* is not simply his silence here. There are a number of passages where he shows Romans praying to *manes*, swearing vows by *manes*, or attempting in some way to propitiate *manes*. The same tone of doubt is absent from those passages (*Ann*., 1.49, 3.2, 13.14; *Hist*., 3.25, 4.40). Tacitus takes the existence of *manes* for granted; *Elysium*, he challenges.

When Ovid offers a model of the underworld in the *Metamorphoses*, he does not suggest a general judgment of the dead and a segregation into *Tartarus* and *Elysium*. He seems instead to prefer a city of the dead that imitates the cities of the living world.[22] Elsewhere too, he seems reluctant to commit himself to *Elysium*'s existence. When discussing the death of the poet Tibullus, Ovid (*Am*., 3.9.59–60) says that Tibullus will be in *Elysium* "if . . . something besides name and shade survives" (*si . . . aliquid nisi nomen et umbra restat*).[23] This is not blanket skepticism about the afterlife, for even his phrasing concedes that the "shade" (*umbra*) will survive. *Umbra* is a word that Ovid uses as a synonym for the *manes* when he is explicitly describing the worship of the dead at the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria* (*Fasti*, 2.541, 5.439; see chapters 2

and 7), and he also does the same in other contexts (*Met.*, 8.488–496). Thus, there is no rejection of *manes* in his comment about Tibullus. Ovid also uses the word *manes* to describe himself when looking ahead to his own death (*Ibis*, 139–162; *Trist.*, 3.3.63–64), and he does the same for his wife (*Trist.*, 5.14. 1–14). He also describes offerings at the *Parentalia* as if from his personal experience, stressing the value of maintaining *pietas* with the *manes* (*Fasti*, 2.535–542). As a matter of self-presentation, he thus consistently depicts himself as a participant in the cult of the *manes*. Like Tacitus, Ovid offers overt statements of skepticism only in relation to *Elysium*.

Another example is Cicero. In one work, Cicero claimed that the idea of punishment in *Tartarus* was so ridiculous that it was unnecessary even to argue against it (*Tusc.*, 1.10–11 and again at 1.48). One cannot take Cicero's comment entirely at face value, for he repeatedly undercuts his own position, making the same sort of critique that he claims is unnecessary, invoking the threat of *Tartarus* in political speeches and putting forth his own afterlife scenario that includes an idea of a negative fate for the unworthy.[24] To the degree that he is rejecting *Tartarus*, though, he is rejecting only one particular scenario for posthumous punishment. What he does not do is to reject the idea of *manes*, whose worship he endorses strongly in *De Legibus* (2.22), insisting that one should never neglect rites to honor *manes*.

A word search will show that virtually every gold- and silver-age Latin author mentions the *manes*, as do most Latin tombstones of the Imperial era. It is nevertheless difficult to find authors directing overt skepticism at either the existence or the worship of *manes*. A few Roman authors who were influenced by Epicurean philosophy challenged the value of worshipping the dead along with also rejecting *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, notably Lucretius (3.41–54) and Pliny (*HN.*, 7.55.188–190). The Epicureans, though, rejected divine causation of events altogether; thus they saw little value in appealing to the aid of any god, and so they were not simply rejecting the afterlife.[25] It is difficult, however, to see how one could treat this particular philosophical strand of thought as normative for Roman culture as whole. Both Pliny and Lucretius admit that they are arguing against positions that their fellow Romans hold. Lucretius (3.41–54) notably complained that his fellow intellectuals, who claimed to be skeptical of *Tartarus*, would nevertheless pray to the *manes* when they felt in danger of death.

In contrast to the very large number of tombstones with the heading *dis manibus* ("For the divine *manes*"), there is no similar widespread endorsement of *Elysium* on tombstones. Although they do occur (e.g., *CIL,* 6.7578, 6.23295), overt epitaph references to *Elysium* are rare. If one were to try to argue that the traditions about *Tartarus* and *Elysium* were more important to

the Romans than the *manes*, then one would need to explain that absence. Tombstones do not have to invoke the afterlife at all, but the epitaphs are not silent on the subject. Over and over again they are invoking—and thereby endorsing the existence of—the *manes*. There is no reason why Romans could not have mentioned *Elysium* on tombstones, if they were so inclined. It would have been easy to invent some phrase like *In Elysio Felix Habitet* ("May he/she reside happy in *Elysium*") or something in that vein, which engravers could reduce to a familiar acronym (*IEFH*) just as they often reduce *Dis Manibus* to *DM*. No such inscriptions appear. The *manes* and not the hope of *Elysium* was the afterlife scenario that Romans wanted on their tombstones.

What then about Rome's rituals? Which scenario did Rome's ceremonial practices and religious festival calendar endorse, the deification of the dead as *manes* or the sending of the dead to *Tartarus* or *Elysium*? Ritual reinforcement in Rome for Greek scenarios of *Tartarus* and *Elysium* is minimal. Ceremonies to honor Dis and Proserpina, the rulers of the underworld, were rare, like the infrequent pre-Augustan form of the *ludi saeculares* (Val. Max., 2.4.5; Festus 479L). There was an annual rite that commemorated the story of Proserpina being carried off to the underworld, but Ceres, her mother, was the main focus of the ritual.[26] If these rites, to some extent, endorsed the identification of the Roman gods with the Greek Hades and Persephone, they still did not necessarily involve any endorsement of the idea of posthumous judgment, which is essential to the scenario of an underworld divided into *Tartarus* and *Elysium*. Likewise, the ceremony of the opening of the *Mundus* (about which, see chapter 5.A.2.a) involved opening a door to contact the *manes* in their underground home. If it endorsed the idea of an underworld, it did not require endorsing any of the specifics of *Tartarus* or *Elysium* or the idea of posthumous judgment. Moreover, since the rite invoked the power of the *manes* to help the Roman people, one can hardly treat it as an alternative to the existence and worship of *manes*.

Some Romans do seem to have taken seriously the idea that there was a better or worse location to which the dead could go. There are occasional prayers to gods to assist the newly dead find a positive berth. The gods that some of these prayers invoke, though, are the *manes*, again making it difficult to use the prayers as an alternative scenario to the cult of the dead (see chapter 5.C). Roman rituals either do not endorse Greek-style afterlife scenarios like *Elysium*, or they do so in a way that includes a role for the indigenous Roman cult of the *manes*.

In contrast to the poor support that Rome's rituals offer for *Elysium*, the *manes* are well represented in Roman worship and on Rome's festival calendar. In addition to the aforementioned opening of the *Mundus*, there was also

the *Parentalia*, a nine-day festival for the *manes* in February, and the *Lemuria*, a three-day festival in May (see chapter 7). There were also home shrines that Romans used to worship *manes*, like those that Statius describes (*Silv*., 2.7.120–131, 3.3.195–216). A wide range of texts refer to prayers to the *manes* or oaths sworn by the power of the *manes* (chapter 5). Even at the funeral itself, a major part of the ritual involves making the grave into a sacred space for the new *manes*, including the sacrifice of a pig to the dead person (chapter 6.D.2). Unlike *Elysium*, the *manes* and their power were central to the Roman rites that concerned death.

Of course, there are literary texts that present characters visiting *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, as in Virgil's *Aeneid* or Silius Italicus' *Punica*. Such texts adopt conventions of Greek epic poetry that include, as in Homer's *Odyssey*, the hero visiting the land of the dead. That Roman use of a Greek epic convention would play out using Greek-derived models of the land of the dead should probably not surprise. The *manes*, however, are also present. I am unaware of any substantive description of a Greek derived underworld from a Roman author who does not also mention *manes*. In the *Aeneid*, for example, the hero Aeneas can worship his dead father as *manes* in book 5, and then visit him in book 6, when he goes to *Elysium*. There is thus nothing to prevent Romans from combining Greek traditions with the *manes*. A Roman author could, for example, present the *manes* as operating from a base in *Elysium* near doors that lead to the living (a somewhat simplified version of Virgil's scenario).

Still, we should consider some implications. As the above discussion illustrates, there are Roman texts that combine the *manes* with *Tartarus* and *Elysium*. There are also texts that reject or doubt *Tartarus* and *Elysium* while endorsing the worship of *manes*. What is hard to find are texts that present models of *Tartarus* and *Elysium* without any mention of *manes*. Completely absent are texts that endorse *Tartarus* and *Elysium* while specifically rejecting or doubting the *manes*. The deification of the dead as *manes* was the dominant Roman view of the afterlife. The *manes*, not the borrowed traditions of *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, ran through Roman death rituals, received worship at Roman festivals, and were overwhelmingly the choice of the Romans to put on their tombstones in preference to any mention of *Elysium*.

What the borrowed tradition of *Tartarus* and *Elysium* seems to be for the Romans was an option. As I will discuss at greater length in chapter 4, the structure of Roman religion allowed the coexistence of variant beliefs without conflict, so that Romans could accept or reject additional traditions overlaid upon the cult of the *manes* as suited their individual preferences. For those interested in Greek literary traditions, attracted to the idea of an area of special reward for the meritorious, or perhaps frightened of the possibility of an

area of punishment for the wicked, the idea of combining Greek traditions with the *manes* might be appealing. One could pray to the *manes* not just for help in the living world but also for help in securing a favorable postmortem domicile (chapter 5.C). Other Romans, though, might see little attraction in such add-ons and could focus on the *manes* without reference to *Tartarus* or *Elysium* or even overtly reject *Tartarus* and *Elysium*. For them, the cult of the dead would more strongly emphasize the posthumous role of the dead in the world of the living. The common element at the core of this cluster of variations was the presence of the *manes*. *Tartarus* and *Elysium* were relatively marginal to Roman thought outside the literary context of Greek poetic epic conventions.

A study of the Roman afterlife should, therefore, place its main emphasis on the *manes* and the deification of the dead and treat *Tartarus* and *Elysium* as one of several possible variants that Romans could combine with the *manes*. My focus here will be on the cult of the *manes* in mainstream Roman Paganism in the late Republic and early Empire, roughly first century BC through the second century AD. I will also be looking primarily at the culture of the city of Rome itself. Inscriptions mentioning *manes* exist throughout the Latin-speaking parts of the Empire, but there is a significant possibility of regional and provincial variations that are beyond my scope here, and so I have limited my use of that material.[27] Even allowing for these caveats, the subject is a broad one, as the cult of the *manes* touches upon a number of aspects of Roman society. Potentially controversial, perhaps, will be my exclusion of the so-called mystery cults, some of which put forth their own versions of an afterlife. I am not denying the possibility that the mystery cults might have influenced the worship of *manes* or, as seems more plausible to me, that the widely distributed cult of the *manes* influenced the much smaller mystery cults. These are worthy subjects for future study. My concern here is not to put the cart before the horse. To assess the relationship between the cult of the *manes* and any other set of ideas requires first having a study of the cult of the *manes*. It is to fill the need for such a study that I am engaged here.

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THE ANCIENT ROMAN AFTERLIFE

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DI MANES

The Godhood of the Dead

In the period of the Empire, most Roman tombstones began their epitaph inscriptions with a dedication *dis manibus* ("to/for the *di manes*"), and the grave functioned as sacred space for acts of worship at regular intervals. This worship involved what, from the perspective of modern Western religion, seems an extraordinary willingness to treat ordinary dead persons as deities.

In the first two chapters of this study I will examine some of the implications of the term *di manes* itself. In the second chapter I will challenge the widespread assumption that the term "*manes*" always refers to collective groups of the dead and demonstrate that the Romans worshipped dead individuals as *manes*. First, though, in the current chapter I will examine the category of "gods" and the place of the *manes* within it. What did it mean that the Romans described the dead as "*di*" ("divine" or "gods")? Often scholars have failed to acknowledge the Romans' application of this divine terminology to the dead or even attempted to define the category of Roman godhood in such a way as to exclude the *manes* specifically. In this chapter I will reexamine Roman criteria for godhood and show how variant but overlapping sets of criteria could produce multiple categories of gods. Within the framework of that diversity, the *manes* did hold a place among Rome's deities.

Obviously, explaining the significance of the *manes* within Roman religion and society is the purpose not just of this chapter but of this volume as a whole, and I am unable to expand in detail upon every point simultaneously. Thus, several topics that I will raise briefly in the first two chapters are subjects that later chapters will address more fully, notably the questions of who worshipped which dead people (chapter 3), which powers the Romans invoked from the dead in their prayers (chapter 5), and how the Romans worshipped the *manes* in the context of funerals (chapter 6) and at other ceremonies and festivals such as the *Parentalia* (chapter 7). In chapter 4, I will expand upon

some of the themes raised in the current chapter concerning the coexistence of variation within Roman religious thought.

First, though, I will begin with a definition:

A) *MANES*: A GENERAL DEFINITION

Valerius Flaccus (5.82–83) says that, in the land of the dead, Fame (the goddess) by describing the actions of living young men "filled the *manes* with great praise of their sons" (*manes . . . magnis natorum laudibus implet*). The passage makes little sense if the *manes* are not the dead parents of the still-living sons whom the goddess praises. They are not some other beings separate from the human dead. Ovid treats the *manes* the same way in his description of worshipping *manes* at the *Parentalia*. He describes the *manes* as the recipients of the festival's offerings and the object of prayers ("*preces*"), but he also directly equates them with the dead.[1] *Manes* are the deified spirits of dead Romans that continue to exist once the physical bodies of those Romans have expired. The Romans referred to them as "divine" and "gods" (see below, section B), and they worshipped them both in officially scheduled festivals like the *Parentalia* and during other rituals at the gravesite or at home shrines.

Modern scholars sometimes treat texts in which the *manes* display powers as if they referred to a different sort of *manes* (i.e., to another category of underworld deities) from the *manes* in texts where the term refers to dead humans, but the Roman sources themselves make no such distinction.[2] Indeed, surviving texts that invoke the dead's power as gods often do so from specific and named dead individuals. Romans prayed to *manes* to extend their lives, advise them in dreams, enforce their oaths, and to gain other benefits (see chapter 5). Furthermore, the criteria that make a dead Roman eligible for worship as one of the *manes* depend upon models of inheritance and ideas of family loyalty in a way that is broadly inclusive of the Roman population (chapter 3). That inclusiveness stands in strong contrast to the other form of Roman deification of the dead, the *divi Augusti*, a category of godhood that Romans reserved narrowly for select members of the Imperial family. One can thus define *manes* concisely as "the Roman nonimperial deified dead."

B) THE TERM *DI MANES*

When the word *manes* appears on tombstones, it normally does so in a combined phrase with the word *di*, usually in the dative case as *dis manibus*, a

construction so familiar to the Romans that they often abbreviated it as *DM*. In literary texts the word *di* might or might not be present, and the Romans often simply wrote *manes* alone, but the sheer ubiquity of the *di* in the more formal context of inscriptions suggests that the word *manes* alone is a shorthand for the longer expression.

The exact sense of the expression *di manes* depends on what might seem an odd grammatical question: Is the word *manes* a noun or an adjective? The case for it being an adjective would be that *di* could easily be a noun, for it is a standard contracted plural of the word *deus*, "god" (*dei* > *dii* > *di*), and so *manes* could be an adjective modifying the word "gods." Moreover, the late-Republican author Aelius Stilo, as cited by Festus (132L), connects the word *manes* with the archaic Latin adjective *manuus*, "good," and says that those in the underworld "are called '*di manes*' in place of 'the good' (*pro boni*)." Modern linguists have confirmed the likelihood of an etymological connection of *manes* to the adjective *manuus*, and there is no reason to think Stilo was incorrect to say that the adjective meant "good." Several scholars have therefore treated *manes* as an adjective and translated *di manes* as "the good gods."[3]

There are, however, some difficulties with treating *manes* as an adjective. Even if the word *manes* derives ultimately from the first/second-declension adjective *manuus*, the word *manes* has third-declension forms, so it is not the same word. If one puts aside the ambiguous case of *di*, there are no examples whatsoever of the word *manes* functioning as a third-declension adjective, even though the word appears commonly in Roman literature. A Roman writing of "good laws" would never have written "*manes leges*." Even in the above quotation from Festus, the author equates the two words "*di manes*" with "*boni*," not just *manes* alone, suggesting that *boni* is there a substantive noun, "the good beings," not just an adjective, for otherwise the two words *di manes* together would have to have functioned as an adjective. It is preferable, therefore, to read *manes* as a noun and to reject the translation of *di manes* as the "good gods."

The word *di* is more ambiguous. Although it could be a noun, the plural of the word for "god," the word *di* could also be an adjective. Although the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (*OLD*) reads variant spellings like *dii manes* and *diis manibus* that appear occasionally in inscriptions as illustrating contracted plurals of *deus* ("god"),[4] they could also be noncontracted plurals of the adjective *dius*, itself a variant of *divus* ("divine"). The contraction of the adjective *dii* to the more familiar *di* of *di manes* presents no linguistic difficulties (*dii* > *di*). Thus, one can read *di manes* either as "the divine *manes*" (adjective modifying noun) or "*manes*, the gods" (two nouns in apposition). I have opted for the former translation in this study on the general grounds that an adjective

modifying a noun is by far a more common construction in Latin than two nouns, but one should acknowledge the ambiguity. "*Di*" could be a noun in apposition. Thus, I would stress that by translating *di* as "divine" rather than as "gods," I am not attempting to distinguish between the *manes* and "gods." Far from it.

One reason to stress the above grammatical points is that there is a widespread practice of translating the *di manes* of *dis manibus* in ways that fail to acknowledge the overt language of deification in the terminology. By far the most common translation of *di manes* in recent publications is simply "spirits of the dead," which is notably the preferred translation of a number of scholars who have published on other aspects of death and burial in Rome and who thus are looking specifically at Roman funerals, burials, and tombstones.[5] What is interesting about "spirits of the dead" as a rendering of *di manes* is that the Latin word "*di*" appears nowhere in the translation, which is thus a mistranslation. The word *di* cannot be translated as either "spirits" or "of the dead," and so the phrase "spirits of the dead" translates the word *manes* alone, and a translation of the word *di* is just absent.

As all the scholars in question are competent Latinists, and none of them offers a specific rationale in defense of the translation, one suspects that the choice of using "spirits of the dead" is the result of an unconscious desire to avoid the complexity of directly discussing deification. Without "*di*," it is easier to discuss Roman funerals without discussing worship, or to present Roman funerals as showing continuity with modern Christian funerals as rites simply of "commemoration," or to present the *Parentalia* as an equivalent of modern ceremonies that are not about the deification or worship of the dead, like, for example, the Mexican "Day of the Dead." It is, though, an incorrect translation, and the failure of any scholar to defend its use explicitly is also an intriguing scholarly phenomenon.

Other less common variants similarly avoid the implications of deification. In an article in which she is arguing that only Christian epitaphs have religious content, Sigismund Nielsen translates *dis manibus* as "in memory of." In a book dedication from the twenty-first century, *dis manibus* could have that meaning, but when discussing an era in which *manes* received regular rites, including multiple ceremonies on the official festival calendar, it can hardly be valid to disregard the wording of the Latin. Similarly, Veit Rosenberger eliminated *dis manibus* from consideration in a study of Roman ideas of deification by translating it as "to the gods of the dead." One could translate *manes* as "the dead," but how would one get a possessive "of the dead" from the dative plural *manibus*?[6] In a 2009 book, Ramsay MacMullen offered

"to the gods and Manes," seemingly differentiating between *manes* and gods, though there is no "and" in the Latin even when all the words appear in full without abbreviations. More recently, however, MacMullen has abandoned that translation and correctly stressed the godhood of the dead.[7]

Other texts besides the tombstone epitaphs also present the *manes* as gods. Servius, the late-antique commentator on Virgil, wrote at a time when the word "*divi*" applied only to deified emperors, but he attributes (*Aen.*, 5.45) to the late-Republican authors Varro and Ateius a broader sense of the word: "But Varro and Ateius think otherwise, saying the *divi* are perpetual gods, who are feared because of their consecration, as are the *dii manes*." In other words, *divi* and *manes* are both gods specifically because the Romans have declared them to be gods through ritual (*propter sui consecrationem*), but they are all gods nonetheless.[8]

Likewise, in both his descriptions of the *Parentalia* and of the *Lemuria*—two festivals devoted to the worship of the dead—Ovid describes the dead as *manes*, but he also separately describes them as "gods" (*dei*) in passages that do not use the word *manes*. When discussing the modest size of offerings at the *Parentalia* (*Fasti,* 2.535–536), he notes that "*manes* seek small things" (*parva petunt manes*), but then he elaborates saying, "The deep Styx does not hold greedy gods" (*non avidos Styx habet ima deos*), thereby directly equating *manes* with "gods" (*deos*). His description of the *Lemuria* twice describes the dead as *manes* (*Fasti,* 5.422, 443), but he also describes the performer of the ceremony as a man "fearful of the gods" (*timidus deorum*, 5.431).[9] Likewise Livy (8.9.4–6) included *manes* on a list of deities in a prayer seeking the "aid of the gods" (*deorum ope*). Whether the "*di*" of *di manes* is a noun or an adjective, the Romans could and did describe the *manes* as "gods" without ambiguity.

C) THE *MANES* AND ROMAN CATEGORIES OF "GODS"

Roman use of overtly deistic terminology to describe the dead is not a minor issue, for the usage distinguishes Roman worship of *manes* even from modern cults of the dead that exist in Africa and Asia, where it is rare or nonexistent for cultures so explicitly to classify the dead as divine. When comparing the modern Chinese ancestor cult to the Roman cult of the *manes*, Evans repeatedly notes how the Romans use deistic terminology in contexts where the Chinese do not. Likewise, there is a long-running anthropological debate about the exact status of the "ancestors" to whom several modern

African "ancestor cults" make offerings, a debate driven by ambiguous terminology through which the African peoples seem to distinguish between the dead and "gods."[10]

Even the ancient Greeks used less deistic terms for the dead. Sarah Iles Johnston's recent study of Athens and other Greek cities shows that, except for the special case of divinized heroes, Greek cults of the dead used terms such *daimones* to distinguish the dead from the gods as a separate category.[11] The Romans employed no "demigod" category for the *manes*. Indeed, the wide use of the term *di manes* precluded the use of such a category, for *di* is either the word "gods" or an adjective, "divine," that is visually indistinguishable from the word "gods." Even if using the word as an adjective, the Romans would hardly have chosen a term identical in form with "gods" (*di*) if they were attempting to exclude *manes* from the category "gods." It is therefore misleading to present the Roman worship of *manes* as deriving from or closely paralleling Greek practice or from some still earlier Indo-European inheritance that influenced both Greece and Rome.[12] On the contrary, the Roman cult of the dead differs even from the cults of the dead to which scholars most frequently compare it in the frequency and strength of its overtly deistic terminology.

Modern scholarship has been slow to acknowledge the deistic implications of Roman terminology, and at times scholars have ignored, or even overtly rejected, the idea that Romans treated ordinary dead persons as deities. For example, when discussing the *divi Augusti* (deified emperors), Price employed a model of Roman godhood based upon gods such as Jupiter, who supposedly lived in the sky and who received public rites from priests in temples. Basing his analysis on the degree of resemblance that various other beings held to these temple gods, he found the *di manes* less similar to the temple gods than were the *divi Augusti*, and so he excluded the *manes* from his category of "gods." When describing how the Romans performed rituals for the *manes* of the Imperial princes Lucius Caesar, Germanicus, and Drusus, he asserted that these ceremonies "were far from making them gods."[13]

Although Price is correct that there are differences between *di manes* and the deified emperors, it seems unhelpful to define godhood for the Romans in a way that excludes beings that the Romans regularly described as divine, particularly since domestic gods such as the household *lares* and *penates* would not meet Price's criteria well either. The underlying problem is the whole idea of treating "god" as a monolithic category, defined in opposition to all other categories, even if they have superhuman/supernatural components. Such a category of "god" might work well in a strictly Judeo-Christian context but is not useful as a description of Roman religion, where there were not only the

gods of the temples such as Jupiter but also household *lares* and *penates*, fates, nymphs, divinized abstract qualities (e.g., *pietas*), divinized places (Roma), divinized natural phenomena (Ocean), and multiple forms of former living humans (*manes*, deified emperors).

It is better to view Roman godhood as an umbrella category under which a small number of common features unite a cluster of distinct subcategories whose features overlap but need not all be held by each member of each category. A useful metaphor is to think of modern biological taxonomy. A broad term such as "bird" (the class *avis*) refers to a group of animals who have several features in common, but which one could nevertheless subdivide into categories with attributes distinct from one another. Just as penguins, condors, and parakeets can all be "birds," so the Roman concept of "gods" (*dei*, *deae*, *di*) similarly contained a range of subcategories that were not identical in all of their attributes.

The following tables consider five criteria by which one can group Roman deities into categories by their potential attributes in relation to four types of gods, the *manes*, the domestic *lares*, the *divi Augusti*, and "public cult deities," a term that here refers to the gods who receive public worship as individual deities in Rome's temples, festival calendars, or both (e.g., Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus). These examples will show that the attributes of the different subcategories of gods vary but also that they overlap, so that different types of gods can be grouped together in varying combinations according to different points of resemblance. Not every category of god has every potential attribute, but the different subcategories of gods form a larger category through the overlap of the attributes that the subcategories share.

EXAMPLE 1: THE GODS CAN BE DISTINGUISHED BY PLACE OF REGULAR RESIDENCE

In the Sky	*In the Human World*	*In the Underworld*
Most public cult deities *Divi Augusti* (some) *manes*	(Possibly) *lares*	Most *manes* Dis and Proserpina

Jupiter, Mars, and most of the other public cult deities were gods of the sky. Romans frequently described them as being "of the sky" (*aetherius*) or "celestial" (*caelestis*) or as "those above" (*superi*).[14] The Romans also tended to put the *divi Augusti* with Jupiter in the sky, while placing the *manes* in the underworld. The association of the *manes* with an underground dwell-

ing place was so widespread that the elder Pliny (*HN.*, 31.1.2) could describe underground mining euphemistically, saying, "We seek wealth in the home of the *manes*" (*in sede manium*). The annual ceremony of the opening of the *Mundus* (an underground shrine) also offered some ritual support to the idea of accessing the dead in an underworld (chapter 5.A.2.a). There was, though, a minority tradition that at least some specific *manes* resided in the sky, usually as a marker of special status.[15] Moreover, there were also some of the public cult deities, such as Dis and Proserpina, whom the Romans normally placed in the underworld. Thus, the locational divisions were not rigidly tied to the category of deity. The evidence for the case of the *lares* is somewhat ambiguous, but domestic gods such as *lares* and *penates* were specific to particular households, and the Romans so closely identified the *lares* with the household that they could use the word *lares* to mean "home" (Plaut., *Merc.*, 834). It is unclear that the Romans conceived of *lares* as residing anywhere else than their area of jurisdiction within the human sphere.

EXAMPLE 2: ONE COULD PRAY TO
THE GODS TO HEAL THE SICK

Yes	*No*	*Uncertain*
Some public cult deities	Other public cult deities	*Divi* *Augusti*
Lares *Manes*		

The Romans differentiated the public cult deities from each other by their specific powers, so that one might pray to Aesculapius for healing but to Neptune for something else. Depending upon the specific range of powers Romans attributed to any given god, those powers might or might not overlap with the powers of a member of a different category of deities. In the case of healing, the *lares* can aid the sick (Val. Max., 2.4.5), and the *manes* likewise can extend life and ward off death from their worshippers (see chapter 5.A). So, the *manes* and *lares* shared protective powers with the healing gods among the public cult deities but not with other public cult deities who lacked those abilities.

It is not clear where the *divi Augusti* should be placed on this chart of healing powers. Aelius Aristides wrote that people prayed to emperors for personal concerns, but he did not say which concerns, and it is possible that personal illness was not among them.[16] If one shifts from healing to a dif-

ferent power, though, one can find other examples of agreement between the powers of the *divi Augusti* and certain public cult deities. For example, a papyrus from Dura-Europus records sacrifices to various deified emperors for the preservation of the state but also to Jupiter Optimus Maximus in the same prayers, suggesting again an overlap in the range of powers of the different deistic types.[17]

EXAMPLE 3: THE GODS HAD INDIVIDUAL NAMES THAT WORSHIPPERS COULD INVOKE

Yes	*No*
Public cult deities	*Lares*
Divi Augusti	
Manes	

Public cult deities and *divi Augusti* had specific names. This was also true of the *manes*, for personal connections based on inheritance and family ties determined who worshipped which *manes* (chapter 3), and the rituals involved taking offerings to the specific graves of named individuals (chapter 7.A.2). Romans could worship *manes* as a collective group in certain ceremonies, but the ability of Romans to worship individual *manes* by name on other occasions separated the *manes* from groups of household gods such as the *penates* or *lares*. *Lares* seem to be beings in the plural (usually a pair) who do not have individual names and might at best be identified by a specified domain, like a *lar familiaris*. Even when Romans identified the *lares* broadly with the deified dead (Festus, 108L), there is no suggestion that they worshipped *lares* as individual dead in the way that they did the *manes*.

EXAMPLE 4: STATE PRIESTS INDIVIDUALLY WORSHIPPED THE GODS AT TEMPLES OR SHRINES

Yes	*No*
Public cult deities	*Manes*
Divi Augusti	*Lares*

The key term here is "individually." Priests did not lead ceremonies for domestic *lares*, but even in the case of the *lares Augusti*—the *lares* of the Imperial

household who received offerings from public priests in the Imperial cult—they were still *lares*, plural, without individual names.[18] Likewise, priests invoked the *manes* at the opening of the *Mundus* and a few other ceremonies, but those too were *manes*, plural. When individual *manes* received worship on occasions such as the *Parentalia*, they did not receive those offerings from state priests. The offerings came from individual Romans linked to those particular dead people by ties of inheritance or familial obligation (see chapters 3 and 7.A). By contrast, a public cult deity such as Mars or Venus would receive offerings as individual deities from public priests on certain annual occasions.

The worship of *divi Augusti* resembled the public cult deities, in that it included worship of individual dead emperors by public priests. When what would eventually become the Imperial cult began first with the deification of Julius Caesar, it was an innovation, a form of worship different from the traditional rites for *manes* and more like the worship of Jupiter. As such, it was initially controversial, for Roman worship put great emphasis on the need to perform exactly correct ceremonies for each god or type of gods, and the style of Caesar's worship overtly moved him out of the category of *manes* into a new form of deity, to which a different style of worship was due. That point was not lost on Cicero (*Phil.*, 1.13), who protested the voting of public rites to worship the dead Julius Caesar, claiming that it was inappropriate. He used as his example the *supplicationes* for Caesar. *Supplicationes* were normally rites in which priests invoked one of Rome's public cult deities through special worship to ward off potential danger to the state.[19] Cicero objected to the ideas

> that *Parentalia* should be mixed with *supplicationes*, that unforgivable rituals should be introduced into the state, that *supplicationes* should be voted to a dead man. . . . Yet [Cicero continues] I could not be persuaded to mingle any dead person among the rituals of the immortal gods (*di immortales*), so that someone who still has a tomb where he could be worshipped (*parentetur*) should receive public supplication.[20]

The contrast here is not between gods and non-gods.[21] Cicero is using the technical terminology of worshipping the *manes* (*parentetur*, *Parentalia*), and such worship dated from before Cicero's century (chapter 2.C). The contrast is between appropriate and inappropriate forms of worship for particular types of gods and between public and private rites. For Cicero, proper rites for a dead man would be private and located at the dead man's grave, as would be true in the annual festival of the *Parentalia*, when worshippers took offerings to graves. Public state-mandated rites were appropriate for only the individual gods who were *immortales*, that is, who had never been mortal

humans. Cicero was not denying that *manes* required worship, which indeed he specifically advocated elsewhere (*Leg*., 2.22), but rather he was asserting that it ought to be a different sort of worship from what went to the gods of the temples. He went on to argue that it would anger the *di immortales* to see the Roman people extending their style of rites to the dead.

Ultimately, Cicero failed to stop the beginning of what became the Imperial cult, but the way that cult developed tended to support the substance of Cicero's objection in that the creation of a new subcategory of deity became necessary. The deified emperors did not receive the same type of rituals as the *di manes*. As noted in example 4, *manes* received rites from state priests only in a few ceremonies in which priests worshipped *manes* in groups, not on occasions when family members worshipped them as individuals. Individual *manes* received worship, but only from private individuals, normally from the family of the deceased (chapter 7). If worshippers did not treat the deified emperors as *manes*, then, by implication, they were not *manes* but something else. Thus, by the mid-first century AD, there was a new subcategory of gods, and the adjective *divi* (as opposed to *di*) in the sense "divine" became reserved for the status of a selected group of special deified dead, a status limited exclusively to former emperors and a few of their relatives (and which was not even automatic for every former emperor). This new category of *divi Augusti* resembled the *di immortales* in receiving public rites from priests, but there were other variables under which the new *divi Augusti* resembled the *manes* more than they did the *di immortales*, as the next example shows.

EXAMPLE 5: THE GODS WERE FORMERLY LIVING HUMANS

Yes	*No*
Manes	Most public cult deities
Divi Augusti	*Lares*
A few public cult deities	
Lares	

Cicero (*Phil*., 1.13) specifically used the term *di immortales* ("immortal gods") to distinguish between gods who had always been immortals and the deified dead of the *Parentalia*, who had initially been living mortals. The context makes it clear that by *di immortales*, he means the public cult deities, for whom the *supplicatio* rituals were a traditional offering. In contrast to the always-immortal, the *manes* and *divi Augusti* share a deification after death, even if the results of that process were not identical. They were not "immor-

tal," for their apotheosis had required human death as an element of the transforming process from human to divine. Whether one groups the *divi Augusti* as being closer to the *manes* or to the public cult deities depends on which criterion of godhood one uses, for the categories overlap in different ways. As Cicero stressed in the case of Caesar, they resembled the public cult deities in their form of worship, but they resembled the *manes* in not being *immortales* from birth, even if their godhood was of unlimited duration once initiated.

Moreover, the "immortal" status of public cult deities had itself a few exceptions. The imported Greek deity Hercules had multiple temples in Rome. Although not a dead former Roman, he was a divinized Greek hero, supposedly the product of a human/divine intermarriage who was posthumously deified. Likewise, Romans worshipped Rome's legendary founder Romulus among the public cult deities, often through an identification with another god, Quirinus. If being "immortal" from birth was a frequent criterion of public cult deities, it was not unanimously so.[22]

The *lares* present an even more complex example, and they thus appear on both of the above lists in example 5. Roman authors present *lares* either as children of a particular goddess or nymph (e.g., Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.599–616) or less commonly as a form of the deified dead (Festus, 108L). The former would suggest immortality from birth; the latter would rule it out. Roman religious thought often showed an extraordinary ability to allow divergent interpretations of the same gods to circulate without apparent conflict.[23] Still, even if it represented a minority position, the idea that some Romans could view even gods as widely worshipped as the household *lares* as being formerly dead humans should caution against trying to use the lack of immortal status from birth as a criterion to exclude beings from the Roman category of gods.

The five examples above show how the Roman conception of godhood functioned as a polythetic set, that is, as a set made up of the overlap of nonidentical subsets.[24] The various categories of deities had sets of attributes—powers, residences, styles of worship—that only partially overlapped, but no one god needed to have all the traits. Of course, one could add many additional attributes to the list of five examples above, which would multiply the variables and their potential overlap even further.

Even using just the above list, one could group the *manes* with the *divi Augusti* in being formerly mortal, but against the *divi Augusti* and public cult deities in not receiving individual worship from priests, and with both the *divi Augusti* and public cult deities, but against the *lares*, in having individual names. The ability to ward off death from disease would group the *manes* with the *lares* and with some but not all public cult deities, but perhaps not with the *divi Augusti*, while an underground home would group *manes* with a few

select public cult deities, but not the majority of them, who had a home in the sky with the *divi Augusti*. Roman godhood was defined not by the attributes of any one of the subcategories of deities but rather by the overlapping aggregate of all of them, allowing for multiple types of gods whose specific attributes could differ from each other.

One could ask if there were any attributes of gods that would be true of all Roman gods in all categories of gods. There were. It was a short list, around which the more specific attributes that defined the subcategories would cluster. What was true throughout the category of "god" in all its various subdivisions was that

(a) gods were beings to whom the Romans referred as "gods" (*dei*, *deae*, *di*) and as "divine" (*di*, *dii*, *divi*).

(b) gods had the power to solve one or more human problems in ways beyond human power.

(c) gods had both the ability and the (potential) willingness to answer prayers by using their power to benefit worshippers.

(d) gods wanted to receive worship and wished worshippers to make sacrifices or other offerings as part of an ongoing reciprocal relationship.

(e) gods were capable of punishing humans for neglect or disrespectful conduct.

Much of this list is not uniquely Roman and could apply to a number of religions.[25] In Rome, these criteria formed the common ground in the overlap of polythetic categories that formed the broader category "gods" (*dei*). Within this framework, Jupiter, the dead Emperor Augustus, the *lares*, and the *manes* could all be gods without being identical in every attribute, for the Romans thought that they all shared the basic qualities of possessing power to help or harm and of being accessible through worship. It would simply be arbitrary to deny to the *di manes* the divine status that they share with other beings that the Romans could and did call *di*.

Too often scholars have rejected calling the *manes* "gods" or "divine," often without any explanation. Instead they have employed terms such as the aforementioned (and nondeistic) "spirits of the dead" or similar terms such as "ghosts." To do so disregards Roman terminology, but it also introduces a bias against attaching importance to the worship of the dead, for, in modern English, a "ghost" might be a being with whom one could interact, but it would not be an object of worship, and it is certainly not a god.[26] As so

often, English usage shows the influence of Christian theology, which views a deity as a single being who is quite different from the masses of ordinary dead people. One should be careful, though, about assuming such bias to be universal or introducing it into discussions of the Pagan Romans through incautious use of terminology. When, in the second century, the Christian Tertullian criticized Roman Pagans for not distinguishing between gods and the dead, he was displaying his position as a Christian, but his argument also concedes that the Pagans had different views.[27]

TWO

DI MANES

The Number of the Gods

In the preceding chapter I stated that the Romans worshipped *manes* as individual gods and not simply as a collective group, but I deferred the presentation of evidence to this chapter. The issue is not a minor one. The overwhelming predominance of modern scholarship treats it as self-evident that the Romans worshipped *manes* only as a collective undifferentiated group of the dead, and as a result, scholars dismiss or minimize any texts that suggest the worship of individuals. This alleged collectivity to the worship of *manes* rarely receives much specific discussion. Scholars assume it to be obvious, and they pass that assumption from one book to the next.[1] In this chapter I will reexamine the issue and show that the collectivity of the *manes* does not stand up to much scrutiny. There were ceremonies in which Romans worshipped the *manes* in groups, often with a priest as a celebrant. In ceremonies that did not involve priests, however, Romans normally directed the rituals and their prayers toward individual dead persons. Likewise, as I will elaborate further upon in chapter 3, the criteria that determined who worshipped which *manes* depended upon inheritance arrangements and specific familial ties that linked individual dead persons to specific worshippers. Even the plural-only form of the word *manes* presents no real difficulty, for Romans had other terms with singular forms that they applied to the dead, and they could even use the word *manes* itself in a singular sense, if the context required it.

A) THE PLURAL FORM *MANES*

First and most obvious among the arguments for a "collective" understanding of *manes* is the grammatical fact that the word *manes* lacks singular forms.[2] Although it may seem logical that a plural-only word refers to a plural-only concept, one has to ask if this is always true. Gildersleeve and Lodge's *Latin*

Grammar lists 83 examples of Latin nouns that lack singular forms, and that list does not even include city names such as *Athenae*, so the actual number is even higher.[3] One doubts that those who would regard the plural form of *manes* as evidence of a collective understanding of the deified dead would similarly conclude from the nouns *liberi*, *antae*, *cunae*, *indutiae*, *minae*, or *renes* that the Romans were unable to conceive of an individual "child," "doorpost," "cradle," "truce," "threat," or "kidney." The question is whether it is true of the word *manes*, as it is in the case of these other examples, that Romans had other ways of referring to singular examples. They did. Indeed, even the word *manes* itself is far from unambiguous, for the Romans could use the plural form in a singular sense in contexts that otherwise imply the need for a singular, much as they could treat the plural-only form of *Athenae*, "Athens," as a single city no different from the way *Roma*, "Rome" (singular form), was a single city.

The first point to make is that the word *manes*, even when authors use it as a true plural, can refer to specific and identifiable dead persons in the plural. If Roman authors could refer to dead Romans X and Y as the "the *manes* of X and Y," it means that the Romans could conceive of individual *manes*. One can point to several examples: When Cicero (*Pis.*, 7.16.12) accuses those who took actions against him of trying to "expiate the *manes* of the conspirators" (*coniuratorum manes expiaretis*), the word *manes* refers not to an amorphous collective group of Rome's dead but to a small group of specific dead people whose execution Cicero ordered in response to the Catilinarian conspiracy and whose names both Cicero and his audience would have known. When describing how the regal-era Roman Horatius killed two men, Livy (1.25.12) has him say, "Two men have I given to the *manes* of my brothers" (*duos fratrum manibus dedi*), using *manes* to refer to the two dead brothers whom Horatius was avenging. Silius (6.113) has a soldier suspected of cowardice in battle invoke the *manes* of his dead comrades—specific people killed in the battle of Lake Trasimene—to be his witnesses. Ovid (*Met.*, 8.488) describes how a woman named Althaea, after learning of the killing of her two brothers, directly addresses them as "my fraternal *manes*" (*fraterni manes*), referring to the dead brothers. These examples show that Roman authors could both conceive of and refer to specific dead individuals as *manes*.

How would a Roman refer to individual *manes* without using the plural form *manes*? Doing so was not particularly difficult, as there were multiple other terms for the dead, all of which have singular forms. The dead could be *umbrae* ("shades"), *animae* ("souls" [literally, "breaths"]), *mortui* ("dead people"), *silentes* ("the silent"), or *inferi* ("those below"). *Inferi* can be a bit ambiguous, as it could refer to any underworld dweller and thus include gods such as Dis and Proserpina, but the other terms refer to dead humans. All

of them have singular forms. Romans might choose one of the terms to emphasize a particular aspect of the dead, for example, using *umbrae* ("shades") to stress that the dead lack physical bodies (e.g., Silius, 13.649), but on other occasions, Roman authors could simply equate the terms and alternate them for stylistic variation. In the aforementioned passage where Ovid has Althaea address her brothers' *manes*, Ovid (*Met.*, 8.476) first refers to the dead as *umbrae* while speaking as narrator, then puts a speech into Althaea's mouth in which she addresses her brothers directly as *manes* (8.488), as *animae* (8.488), and then again as *umbrae* (8.496) in rapid succession. For the author, they are equivalent terms.

One could thus switch from the word *manes* in the plural to another term such as *umbra* in the singular, and that is what Ovid does in his description of the *Parentalia*, a nine-day festival for the *manes* in February. Using a form of *animae* ("souls"), Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.533–534) tells worshippers at the festival to "placate paternal souls" (*animas placate paternas*) by bringing offerings (*munera*) to the graves, which establishes the dead as the objects of the ritual. He then explains that the size of the offering can be small, for "*manes* seek small things" (2.535: *parva petunt manes*). This line thus equates the *manes* with the *animae* ("souls") of the previous lines as the recipients of the offerings. The words *manes* and *animae* are both true plurals here, but so are the words for the locations of the offerings at the tombs (2.533: *tumulis*; 2.534: *exstructas pyras*). Plural offerings go to multiple dead at multiple tombs.

When, however, Ovid shifts to discussing the modest contents of an individual offering, he uses yet another term for the dead, *umbrae* ("shades"), but he shifts to the singular: "The shade is placable even by these [offerings]" (2.541: *et his placabilis umbra est*). The wording (*placabilis/placate*) echoes the wording of the earlier reference to placating *animae*, while the discussion of the size of the offering expands upon Ovid's point about *manes* wanting modest gifts. The words *animae*, *manes*, and *umbrae* therefore all refer to the same beings, who are the recipients of the offerings of the ceremony. When, though, Ovid shifts from a broad generalization about offerings for the dead to the case of a specific offering at a specific grave, he also shifts (2.541) from the plural into the singular: *umbra*. For Ovid, individual offerings went to individual dead persons, and clearly he had terminology available to him to convey the singular nature of the dead recipient.

Romans could also simply use the word *manes* in a singular meaning, despite its plural form, as a passage from Ovid again illustrates. Ovid is retelling the story of Philomela, whom her brother-in-law kidnapped. Falsely believing Philomela to be dead, her sister, Procne, conducts a funeral for her (Ovid, *Met.*, 6.566–570):

> Procne tears from her shoulder garments gleaming with a wide golden hem, puts on black clothes and sets up an empty tomb. She offers sacrifices to the false *manes* (*falsis manibus*) and mourns the fate of a sister who ought not to be mourned in this way.[4]

Ovid says that Procne sacrifices to "false *manes*" (*falsis manibus*). The recipient of the sacrifice is "false" because Philomela is not really dead. The word *manes* therefore must have a singular sense. If *manes* did not refer to Philomela alone, and referred instead to some larger group of the dead that was merely associated with Philomela in some way, then Philomela's continuing life would not have rendered the existence of that larger group "false." *Manes* here is the singular *manes* of Philomela alone, rendered "false" because, as a living person, she is not yet a *manes*. It is true that the story is a retelling of a Greek myth, but the religious terminology (*manes*) is Roman, and Ovid takes his audience's understanding for granted. If it were not customary to make offerings to singular *manes*, it is odd that the author would offer no explanation at all to his readers. What the passage shows is that, despite its plural-only form, the word *manes* can have a singular meaning in passages where the context otherwise suggests that a singular reading is appropriate.

There are also a number of other passages where authors refer to the "*manes* of" a specific person, where the context most logically implies that the reference is to the specific dead person named, and the only reason to think otherwise would be to insist that the plural form of the word *manes* can never have a singular sense even when the sense of the passage requires it. For example, the elder Seneca (*Contr.*, 9.3.12–13) told the story of a dispute between the orator Argentarius and his former teacher Cestius. Argentarius began swearing oaths "by the *manes* of my teacher Cestius" (*per manes praeceptoris mei Cesti*), which was an insult implying Cestius was so ineffective that he might as well be dead. The passage resembles the preceding example from Ovid in that it requires the "*manes* of Cestius" to refer to the (not really) dead Cestius alone. If *manes* referred to some broader (and therefore preexisting) group of the dead, then it is not clear how the joke would work or why swearing an oath by that group of dead persons would be inappropriate.

Likewise, Quintilian (*Inst.*, 6, *Prooem.*) swears a vow by the *manes* of his dead son that he is not exaggerating the son's abilities. Tacitus (*Hist.*, 3.25.2) has a son beg forgiveness from the *manes* of his father after he has killed the father without realizing it. Horace (*Epod.*, 5.91–96) has a boy about to be murdered swear in the first-person singular to return personally to attack his killer in her sleep, "which is the power of *manes* gods" (*quae vis deorum est manium*). Ovid (*Ibis*, 136–162) makes a similar threat to attack posthumously

an enemy of his wife. He describes himself as *umbra* (singular) but also as *manes*, again equating the terms (140). Seneca's *Troades* (31, 645, 810) similarly contains multiple examples of characters referring to the *manes* of the dead hero Hector. In telling the story of the killing of Verginia and the punishment of those ultimately responsible, Livy (3.58.11) describes how the "*manes* of Verginia, who is more fortunate dead than alive" (*manesque Verginiae mortuae quam vivae felicioris*), is now at peace. In another tale of early Rome, Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.842) has Brutus swear to avenge the dead Lucretia. He swears "by your *manes*, which will be a god to me" (*perque tuos manes qui mihi numen erunt*). Each of these examples makes best sense if the word *manes* refers to the specific dead individual whom the text mentions, for that individual is the affected or aggrieved party in each story, and there is no reason for the author to be discussing some other different group of dead persons. The final example from Ovid makes that point particularly clear when the poet directly equates the grammatically plural word *manes* with the grammatically singular word *numen* ("god" or "divine essence"). There is no collective dead there. The word *manes* has a singular sense in the context of the passage.

To defend the idea of collective *manes*, one would need to demonstrate that Romans normally or invariably differentiated between plural *manes* and specific dead persons, a point that the above examples strongly challenge. Texts that show the newly deceased interacting with *manes* in the underworld also pose no challenge for the idea of singular *manes*. One would expect there to be plural dead in the land of the dead, and a true plural sense of *manes* there does not rule out the possibility of a singular sense in other contexts. Indeed, when poets such as Virgil portray living characters visiting the underworld, they can always identify individual dead people.[5]

Even the passage in Virgil that appears most strongly to differentiate between a group of *manes* and the soul of a dead person in the context of an act of worship can be read as an example of the word *manes* functioning in a singular sense. Virgil (*Aen.*, 5.98–99) describes his hero Aeneas performing a ritual for his dead father, Anchises. He says that Aeneas "summoned the soul (*anima*) of the great Anchises and the *manes* released from Acheron" (*pateris animamque vocabat Anchisae magni manisque Acheronte remissos*). The passage appears to distinguish between the singular "soul" of Anchises and a plural group of *manes*. The difficulty with that reading of Virgil is that 18 lines earlier in the same description of the ritual, the poet has Aeneas say, "Hail again, holy parent; hail, O ashes recovered by chance and souls (*animae*) and paternal shades (*umbrae*)" (5.80–81: *salve, sancta parens, iterum; salvete, recepti nequiquam cineres animaeque umbraeque paternae*). If we say that Virgil cannot be using plural forms in a singular sense and that he is strictly differentiat-

ing between everything linked by "and," then that would require Virgil to be breaking down the individual dead person Anchises into a minimum of six parts: at least two *animae*, at least two *umbrae*, plus at least two *manes* from lines 98–99. As that extreme subdivision of the dead lacks parallels, it seems more likely that Virgil is engaging in both poetic plurals and poetic reduplication to fill out his metrical lines, so that "Souls and Shades" refers to the dead Anchises alone, expanding on the singular "parent" (*parens*) as the sole object of the ceremony. If so, it seems reasonable to think that "shade and *manes*" is the same construction, with *manes* in a singular sense. The word *manes* has no singular form, but the immediate precedent of the poetic plurals "souls and shades" would serve to tip off the reader of the singular meaning of *manes* within this context.

In support of Virgil using *manes* in a singular sense, one could cite the usages of Ovid (cited above). Ovid both used the word *manes* in a singular sense and equated the words *umbrae*, *animae*, and *manes*, and he was writing only a few decades after Virgil. More important, a singular sense is consistent with the overall thrust of the passage from Virgil. The poet is describing a ceremony for Anchises to fulfill a vow Aeneas made to Anchises (5.53). The ritual takes place at Anchises' grave, where Aeneas presents offerings. Most significant, when Aeneas offers a prayer, it is to Anchises alone, for it is Anchises in the singular who will answer it. Aeneas says, "Let him be willing that I should offer these sacred rites to him every year when my city has been founded in temples dedicated to him" (5.60: *haec me sacra quotannis urbe velit posita templis sibi ferre dicatis*). It is Anchises who will grant Aeneas the survival and success necessary to build his city and further honor Anchises within that city. If the ceremony is for one individual, and the prayer is for one individual, and one individual will answer the prayer, then what room is there in that scenario for plural *manes* as objects of the ritual? It makes far better sense to read *manes* in a singular meaning.[6]

B) THE WORSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS

As several of the preceding examples have already illustrated, there is more to the question of the number of the *manes* than just issues of terminology. The Romans prayed to, made offerings to, and expected divine responses from singular dead persons. This was not true in every situation. There can be no question that the Romans sometimes directed rituals toward groups of *manes*, and those *manes* were likely the *manes* of the entire Roman community. That is the implication of surviving variations of the *devotio* ritual, in which a gen-

eral invoked the aid of *manes* to assist a Roman army, and there was also the ritual of the *Mundus*, in which Roman priests opened an underground hole to interact with the *manes* on behalf of the community.[7] The theory of collective *manes*, though, would require that all worship focused upon plural dead, even worship conducted at graves of individual people, at ceremonies such as the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria*, or in home shrines. It would likewise require that the Romans never prayed for benefits from individual (nonimperial) dead persons, for any exception would require the deification of individuals as individual gods. The evidence simply does not support this model of exclusively or even predominantly collective rites for the deified dead, and there is much evidence to the contrary. Since I will discuss other aspects of Roman ceremonies in more detail later in this book (chapters 6 and 7), I will restrict what follows somewhat narrowly to the issue of number.

The most prominent of the annual festivals for the dead was the nine-day rite of the *Parentalia*, where worshippers took offerings to graves. I have already discussed Ovid's initial description of the festival (*Fasti,* 2.533–570), in which he switches from the plural form *manes* when making broad generalizations about the festival to the singular form *umbra* when describing a specific offering, which thus goes to an individual dead person. Ovid makes the same point again later in the *Fasti* when discussing the *Lemuria*. He argues (5.423–428) that there was once a time in the distant past when the form of the *Lemuria* was identical to the form of the *Parentalia* of his own time. Whether or not there is any truth to his story of the "original" *Lemuria*, the description does serve to illustrate how Ovid understands the *Parentalia* of his own day. What Ovid portrays is a rite in which a man directs a ritual toward his individual grandfather at the grandfather's tomb. There is no worship of the collective dead there. Cicero (*Phil.*, 1.13) gives the same impression when he contrasts the public rites for the dead Julius Caesar with the *Parentalia*, which he presents as a ritual in which one would perform *parentare* (i.e., give offerings to the dead) at the individual grave of an individual dead person.

Similarly, there are fragments of Cornelius Nepos that give the text of a letter that Cornelia, mother of the reformers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus (second century BC), wrote to her son Gaius, criticizing him for disregarding her advice. "When I am dead," she writes, "you will make offerings to me and invoke the parental god" (fr. 1.2: *ubi mortua ero, parentabis mihi et invocabis deum parentem*), an action she contrasts against his disrespect toward her in life. The verb *parentare* is a technical term for making offerings to the dead, as at the *Parentalia*, and Cornelia says that the offerings will go to her (*mihi*), not to some collective group of dead. The *deum parentem* is more ambiguous, but the gender of the "parental god" is masculine. So, it seems likely to

be Cornelia's already deceased husband—Gaius' father—for in the next line she asks if Gaius will not be embarrassed to make prayer requests "of those" (*eorum*, plural) whom he had not respected while they were alive. The beings to whom Gaius will offer prayers are notably both identified in the singular (*mihi*, *deum parentem*). The authenticity of Cornelia's letter is not beyond dispute, and some regard it as an apocryphal composition from shortly after her time.[8] Even if it is not the words of Cornelia herself, however, the text simply makes no sense if Nepos does not expect his readers to see irony in the contrast between conventional devotions for the dead and Gaius' disrespect to his mother while alive. The passage depends upon it being normal for offerings and prayers to go to named individuals after death.

Likewise, when Ovid describes the *Lemuria* of his own era, he again conceives of the individual dead as the recipients of the offerings. The poet describes how on three nonconsecutive days in May, the dead enter the home, and worshippers give them offerings of beans (*Fasti,* 5.419–492). The passage uses several terms in the plural for the dead to whom offerings will be given, *manes* (5.422, 5.443), *lemures* (5.483), and *animae* (5.483); but when Ovid presents the worshipper as throwing an offering of beans, it is an *umbra*—singular—who collects it (5.439–440). The ceremony involves multiple dead persons arriving at the house, but they receive offerings as individuals. Indeed, Ovid proceeds (5.449–484) to attribute the origins of the *Lemuria* festival to Rome's legendary founding pair of brothers, saying that the singular *umbra* of Remus requested that his brother Romulus begin holding the festival.

If, as just noted, Ovid presents the offering of the *Parentalia* as being for individual dead persons, then it is clearly relevant that the funeral ritual includes a rite to make the individual grave—the site of future offerings—sacred space (chapter 6.D.2). To whom is the grave made sacred, if not to the individual dead person who will receive offerings there at a later date? Indeed, the offerings start at the funeral. I have already quoted Ovid's story of Procne and Philomela (*Met.*, 6.566–670; see above, section A), which shows the individual *manes* of the (allegedly) dead woman receiving a sacrifice at a funeral.

Statius' collection of shorter verse, the *Silvae*, contains several poems of consolation for the dead, which contain the most detailed surviving descriptions of Roman worship of the dead at home shrines or at tombs on private occasions (as opposed to the official festivals such as the *Parentalia*). One point that is clear is that home shrines included effigies of the dead person. When Statius (*Silv.*, 2.7.120–135) poetically tells the dead poet Lucan that his widow will "worship" (*colit*) Lucan, he clearly states that she is making devotions to a statue of the dead man himself. Likewise, Statius has the mourning

son Claudius Etruscus say to his dead father of the same name, "And I will worship your effigies" (*effigiesque colam*, *Silv.,* 3.3.200). It is difficult to see how the worship of collective dead could take the form of rites that worshippers directed at images of specific dead individuals. By definition, such rites would focus on the dead person that the effigy depicted. Etruscus goes on to promise (3.3.208) regular offerings of perfume and flowers at his dead father's crematory urn, which again seems an unlikely place and manner in which to worship an undifferentiated collective mass of the dead, though it is consistent with the offerings at individual graves during the *Parentalia*.

It is true that, in the same passage about Claudius Etruscus, Statius uses the word *manes* in what might appear to be a plural. When Statius has Etruscus say, "I will hold your *manes* here, here within the house" (3.3.196: *his manes, hic intra tecta tenebo*), the line in isolation might imply the worship of plural *manes*, but that reading would oppose the overall thrust of the passage, which suggests instead the use of *manes* in a singular sense. Etruscus is stressing the immediacy of the dead father's presence within the home, and he is doing so in the second person singular. "You" (*tu*), he says in the next line, will be "guardian" (*custos*) of the home, and "all things of yours will obey you" (*tibi cuncta tuorum parebunt*, *Silv.*, 3.3.196–198). So, the dead father will be the power overseeing the house. Likewise the rituals are directed toward the individual, using his effigy as noted above, and the description of the offerings at the dead man's urn are so that the "gentlest of fathers" (*mitissime patrum*, 3.3.208) will suffer no neglect. When Etruscus prays for a supernatural benefit from the dead, it is notably from the father individually, from whom he requests advice and visitation in dreams (*monituraque somnia poscam*, 3.3.205). As both the worship and the prayer focus on a named individual, it would be inconsistent to see the rituals as focused on plural dead. The passage is again one in which the word *manes* has a singular sense that the context of singular worship makes clear.

Other texts also show Romans appealing to individual dead persons for the benefits of divine power. Silius Italicus (15.180–207) has his hero Scipio wake up from a dream in which his father appeared to him and gave advice, and then "as a suppliant, he summons his paternal *manes* by name" (*supplex patrios compellat nomine manes*) to request divine leadership in his attack on the Carthaginians. The word *manes* here is probably a true plural, for Scipio is attempting to avenge the death in battle of both his father and his paternal uncle. The plural does not, however, remove the force of *nomine,* "by name." Scipio is not appealing to some generalized group of Rome's dead; he is asking for help from specific dead relatives whom he is individually naming in the

rite of summoning. Likewise Statius (*Silv.*, 5.3.288–293) appeals for advice to come in dreams from his dead father, has Claudius Etruscus make the same request of his dead father (3.3.204), and has the widow Polla request a visitation (perhaps also through a dream) from her dead husband (2.7.120–135).

Prayers to the dead for the extension of life again appeal to specific dead people. A tombstone inscription (*CIL*, 6.30102 = *CE*, 1508) has a husband vowing offerings to his dead wife as long she keeps him alive to give them: "Spare, I ask, spare your husband, girl, so that for many years, with wreaths, he can give the due offerings that he promised."[9] Another inscription, written by a freedman, addresses a dead girl named Furcia Flavia with a similar sentiment: "Spare your mother and your father and your sister Marina, so that they can perform the solemn rites after me."[10] I have already mentioned the passage from Virgil (*Aen.*, 5.59–60) wherein Aeneas appeals to his dead father to keep him safe so that he too can perform sacred rites in the future. The Romans in these passages appeal directly to the power of dead individuals. It is not collective worship.[11]

The rules governing the obligation to worship the dead also focus on individuals. Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.22) offers a broad generalization in the plural, "Let the rights of the *manes* gods be sacred" (*deorum manium iura sancta sunto*), but when he elaborates he makes it clear that this rule is not merely part of the hypothetical law code that he was suggesting in *De Legibus* but an affirmation of an existing practice that was already in his time governed by rules from the Roman college of pontiffs, a body of priests responsible for regulating the correct ritual forms used in different rites for gods.[12] Cicero gives two versions of the pontifical rules on the obligation to worship the dead, and he says that they are rules for "perpetual rites" (*sacris perpetuis*, 2.45) and "festivals" (*feriis*, 2.47; cf. 2.57), and thus not merely for funerals. In chapter 3, I will discuss the specifics of these rules, and in section C of this chapter I will discuss their date. It is sufficient here to make one basic point: All the provisions of both sets of pontifical rules link living individuals to dead individuals, with no role for collective dead. The rules require the performance of rites for the dead from those people who have inherited significantly from the dead individual or who were his/her largest creditors at the time of his/her death. There were other criteria for obligation besides inheritance, as I will discuss in chapter 3, but the other criteria depend upon ties of familial or personal loyalty and thus also link individuals to individuals. To assert the idea that Romans worshipped the dead only in collective groups, one would have to explain how that scenario is compatible with a situation in which a son goes and makes an offering to his dead father at his father's specific grave and does so because the father has left him an estate through inheritance.

C) THE CHRONOLOGY OF WORSHIPPING INDIVIDUALS

One of the difficulties of studying the cult of the dead is that one cannot document the early stages of either its rituals or its usage of key terminology in any detail because of a lack of surviving texts from the early Republic. The familiar dedication "to the divine *manes*" (*dis manibus*) is a common feature of Roman tombstones in the Imperial age, but there are at most a handful of examples from the last decades of the Republic.[13] Is it possible that the worship of *manes* in any form was a late development in the era of Cicero? Could it be that the worship of individual dead was a late stage of what had originally been a cult of exclusively collective dead? Is it possible, as Scheid argued, that even the *Parentalia* imitated rituals to honor dead Imperial princes and that it thus postdated the beginning of the Imperial cult?[14] As intriguing as such chronological possibilities may seem, the little evidence that exists does not support them. The pontifical rules push the beginning of the worship of dead individuals back to at least the third century BC, which is well before the Imperial cult, and there is no evidence that there was ever a time that the Romans lacked a cult of the dead that included the worship of individual *manes*.

The best evidence for the great antiquity of the worship of dead individuals is Cicero's discussion (*Leg.*, 2.45–49) of the pontifical rules determining who worshipped whom and the connections of that worship with inheritance. As noted briefly above in section B (and more elaborately in chapter 3), the rules give strong evidence for the worship of individual dead persons, for they compel the living to perform rites for the dead with whom they had specific financial ties of inheritance or credit. The two sets of pontifical rules that Cicero records are both from before his time. One he attributes by name to the pontiff Scaevola, who was writing around the beginning of the first century BC or slightly before in the late second century. Cicero presents Scaevola as embellishing an earlier set of rules, which he also includes. Although Cicero does not initially identify the author of the earlier set of rules, he later repeats one of its provisions and attributes it by name to the pontiff Tiberius Coruncanius (*Leg.*, 2.52). It is therefore reasonable to conclude, as did Alan Watson, that Coruncanius is the author of the earlier rules.[15] Coruncanius lived in the third century BC. Thus, the pontifical evidence shows that the obligation to worship the individual dead goes back not only before the beginning of the Imperial cult but also as far back as contemporary written evidence allows.

It is difficult to know what source one could use to counter the pontifical evidence and show a later development for the cult of the individual dead. It proves nothing to point out that the earliest surviving use of *manes* to refer

to specific dead individuals is from Cicero (*Pis.*, 7.16.12),[16] for there are only a handful of surviving occurrences of the word *manes* in any context prior to Cicero. Certainly, there is not enough of a sample on which to base a valid argument from silence.

One might well reasonably postulate that the plural-only form of the word *manes* derived from some specific ritual in which the Romans were worshipping the dead as a group and that it only later expanded to broader usage, including singular applications. Even if true, however, such a theory would not prove that at the same time the Romans began using the term *manes* they were not already invoking and worshipping singular dead in other rituals using other terms. To demonstrate an age of plural-only worship, one would have to show that the word *manes*, in an exclusively plural sense, predates all of the other terms with which Romans could invoke the dead (*umbrae*, *animae*, *mortui*, and others). There is again no sample of literature from the early Republic that one could use for such a purpose. It would be a completely circular argument to assert, as did Dumézil, that the plural-only form of *manes* proves that it is the oldest term.[17]

Likewise, it proves little to point out that the *dis manibus* dedications do not significantly predate the era of the emperors, for tombstones with engraved inscriptions are rare in general during the Republic. The appearance of *manes* in epitaphs thus coincides with a shift in fashion toward the use of engraved tombstones. Carroll attributes the change to the increased use of marble as a material for tombstones instead of the earlier basalt stones, which are more difficult to carve. There is also no requirement that tombstones contain religious concepts of any sort, and so the shift to engraved stones does not necessarily show a change in the underlying beliefs. There is no reason Romans could not have made an oral dedication to the *manes* in the period before they put it in stone.[18]

Other written sources from before the first century BC are rare, but, to the degree that they exist, they do not contradict Cicero's pontifical evidence. The "haunted house" story of Plautus' *Mostellaria* may be played for laughs, but it depends on the idea that an individual dead person who has not received a proper funeral would demand individual propitiation. It is difficult to see a "collective" concept of the dead underlying Plautus' scenario.[19] I have already mentioned (above, section B) the letter Nepos (fragment 1.2) attributes to Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, in which she tells one of her sons that he will have to worship her after her death (*parentabis mihi*). If it is a genuine text from the second century BC, it certainly offers no support for collective worship of the dead at that time.

The surviving fragments of the Laws of the 12 Tables, from the fifth cen-

tury BC, contain several lines about funerals, but there is nothing that either confirms or challenges the existence of a cult of the individual dead. Thus, there are no relevant texts from before Coruncanius in the third century BC.[20] From earlier periods there is only archaeology, which shows grave goods in individual graves dating back to the earliest levels at Rome. Assuming religious meaning in grave goods is always problematic in the absence of texts, but at least one could say that there is nothing in the early graves that is incompatible with the idea of giving offerings to individual dead persons. There are some collective burial sites, as there are in later times too, but there is no evidence of an early age of collective-only burial. Even bodies in so-called trench burials have grave goods that appear specific to that particular body.[21]

Roman literature of later periods also shows no awareness of an era in which the Romans viewed the dead only collectively, not individually. Livy's tales of early Rome could include the *manes* in the plural at the *devotio* of the Decii (8.9.6), but he could also tell of the singular "*manes* of Verginia" (*manes Verginiae*, 3.58.11) wanting justice. Ovid (*Fasti,* 2.543–546; 5.423–428, 450–484) placed the start of the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria* at the beginning of Roman history, attributing the festivals' creation to Aeneas and the brothers Romulus and Remus. He presents the *Parentalia* as a ritual in which offerings are taken to individual graves, and he claims the *Lemuria* had a similar form in early Rome. These stories of early Rome may be apocryphal, but they show that Augustan-era authors had no concept of a Rome that had an exclusively "collective" view of the deified dead existing at any earlier point in time. There is no reason for modern scholars to assume differently.

D) THE *MANES* OF *DIS MANIBUS*

The previous sections have shown examples of the word *manes* functioning in a singular sense and examples of the worship of individuals taking place at those individuals' specific graves. We can here consider a related issue. At least in the Imperial era, when engraved tombstones were common, the single most common occurrence of the word *manes* in Roman culture was on gravestones, where one normally finds the dedication *dis manibus* ("to the divine *manes*").[22] The *dis manibus* dedications present an interesting question. Should the word *manes* in "to the divine *manes*" be read as a singular or a plural?

The most common approach has been for scholars to translate *manes* in the epitaphs as a plural, referring to a group of the dead. While such a translation is defensible, based on the plural-only form of *manes*, one has to ask whether it is the best reading in the context of an individual epitaph. The syntax of

epitaphs favors a singular reading. The dative *dis manibus* on an epitaph is normally followed by a dative singular form of the name of the deceased (e.g., *Dis Manibus T. Aelio Aurelio* [*CIL,* 6.10650]).[23] The dative form of the personal name serves as the indirect object in the inscription's main clause, that is, "[Name in the nominative] made this for . . . [name in the dative]." As *dis manibus* is also dative, it seems logical to read *dis manibus* as being in apposition to the name of the deceased and being governed by the same verb as that name, so that *Dis Manibus T. Aelio Aurelio* would read that the stone was made "for the divine *manes* T. Aelius Aurelius." Aurelius is the *manes* (singular). Otherwise, *dis manibus* would have to be an independent clause, separate from the verb governing the name of the deceased. That construction does not seem a preferable reading in the absence of any evidence for an additional verb.[24] It is true that nouns in apposition would normally agree in number, but the lack of agreement here is a logical construction when equating a personal name (which cannot be made plural) with a noun that, already before the inscriptions begin appearing, has no singular form.

The *dis manibus* inscriptions appear throughout the Imperial period and into late antiquity, sometimes appearing with minor variants.[25] The most significant variant, which is relatively common, adds the word *sacrum*, making it explicit that the grave is "sacred" space. In abbreviations, it appears as *DMS* instead of *DM*. The name then appears in the genitive case, as in *CIL,* 6.12624: *D[is] M[anibus] S[acrum] C Atili Romani*, "Sacred to the divine *manes* of C. Atilus Romanus." This alternative phrasing, though, is still consistent with the reading I am proposing, for it resembles the examples that I have already given from multiple literary sources in which *manes* + a name in the genitive refers back to an individual dead person.[26]

I should stress that my argument here applies only when the *dis manibus* or *dis manibus sacrum* formulas appear on the tombstones of individuals. There are also collective tombs governed by a single inscription on which the word *manes* might be a true plural because it refers to multiple dead persons in the tomb, for example, in a tomb whose owner includes niches for crematory urns of his freedmen. Even in the case of collective graves, though, one should not dismiss the possibility of individualized rites. There is evidence of individual observances of the *Parentalia* even in *columbaria*, where the structure has the form of stacked crematory urns in tall rows.[27] Similar observances might have been possible in collective familial tombs as well, where surely someone knew whose ashes were in each niche, even if there were no labels. It is possible, though, that sometimes a main inscription that named only the owner of the grave along with "his own" might use *manes* as true plural when writing *dis manibus*. Such tombs, though, would be a different situation.

If one accepts the principle outlined in section A of this chapter, that context determines whether one should read the plural-only form *manes* with a singular or a plural meaning, then an inscription on an individual grave that equates *dis manibus* with a name in the singular should refer to a singular *manes*. The huge number of the inscriptions in the Imperial era would thus show the singular usage to be extremely common. The *dis manibus* inscriptions, therefore, are not the invocation of some vaguely defined collective mass of Rome's dead. They represent a hope that the dead person in the tomb will live on in new divine existence as one (and only one) of the *manes*.

WHO WORSHIPPED WHOM?

One basic set of issues to consider in the Roman cult of the *manes* is to ask which Romans worshipped which dead persons and for which reasons. At one level, these issues are an extension of the concerns of the previous chapter, for what follows will again illustrate that all of the various criteria that obligated worship by private citizens linked living individuals to dead individuals, with no role for the worship of collective dead.[1] There are, however, broader issues at stake.

Unlike the worship of deified emperors, Greek hero cult, or the Christian cult of the saints, all of which focused upon a small group of special dead, one of the distinguishing features of the cult of the *manes* is the extreme inclusiveness of the worship. The criteria of inheritance and the familial and social loyalties of *pietas* created a web of obligations that included Roman men, women, and children as objects of worship and as worshippers. It linked family members to each other, but also could include nonrelatives obligated to worship by ties of property or personal loyalties of a nonfamilial sort. The overall web of connections was such that only Romans who left no property at all to anyone as inheritance, who owed no money to anyone at the time of their deaths, who had no living relatives, and who had no other close associates of any type would die without the expectation of receiving posthumous worship as one of the *manes*. The Roman cult of the *manes* was the deification of dead Romans of every sort, not just of a select few.[2]

A) THE COMPLEX LEGACY OF FUSTEL DE COULANGES

To understand the specifics of how Romans established the criteria for who would worship which dead, it will be necessary to discuss certain technicalities of Roman property law, as Romans incorporated that law into pontifi-

cal regulations about the obligation to worship. One of the greatest obstacles to understanding is the inexplicably long-term influence of a theorist whose ideas are now close to a century and half old, sociological pioneer Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges. Fustel argued that the criteria that defined who would worship the dead and which dead would receive worship were both extremely narrow, excluding even women. To the degree that the cult of the dead receives attention at all, his theories about it continue to have influence. Therefore, before I offer an alternative reconstruction, I must discuss Fustel and his legacy.[3]

Although cited here from the English edition of 1980, Fustel's famous book *La cité antique* first appeared in French in 1864. Fustel does deserve credit for acknowledging that the Roman cult of the dead was a form of worship, as many later scholars would deny, but his book offered a narrowly restricted interpretation of who was eligible to worship or to be worshipped. Fustel rejected the idea that the Romans worshipped any dead except direct male antecedents, asserting both that "the worship of the dead was nothing more than the worship of ancestors" and that the Romans believed that the dead would not even accept offerings from anyone except their closest kin. One Latin verb for the worship of the dead is *parentare*, related to *parens*, which can mean "parent," and Fustel offered this word as proof that Romans offered prayers "by each one only to his fathers." Fustel excluded even women from this worship, both as worshippers and objects of worship, insisting that only dead male heads of households were worshipped and then only by their male heirs. Thus, "the father, sole interpreter and sole priest of his religion, alone had the right to teach it, and could teach it only to his son." As Fustel believed that Romans created inheritance laws on the model of earlier religious practices (and not the reverse), he also asserted as a corollary that it was impossible for Roman women to inherit from their parents.[4]

Fustel was a pioneer in the sociology of religion, but the influence of Fustel's specific theories is peculiar, for the weaknesses of his argument are substantial. Fustel's attempt to link worship with Roman inheritance practices was doomed from the start by his substantial misunderstanding of Roman property law, not least his incorrect belief that daughters could not inherit.[5] Moreover, Fustel openly admitted that he had no Roman evidence for many of his points and instead relied on the Hindu *Laws of Manu*. Although a common Indo-European heritage could (in theory) result in some shared cultural traits, such conjecture is hardly valid in the face of surviving Roman legal texts to the contrary.[6] When Fustel did cite Roman sources, he did so in such a cavalier manner that he actually cited Virgil's account of Andromache performing the *Parentalia* for Hector as if it were a supporting example, al-

though, as a woman worshipping a spouse who left her no property, Andromache is entirely contrary to Fustel's theory.[7]

For all its problems, Fustel's reduction of the Roman cult of the dead to an exclusive pattern of worship of fathers by sons became quite influential, even among scholars outside the classical field. In 1961, Anthropologist Meyer Fortes compared Fustel's model of the Roman cult of the dead with Chinese examples and his own observations of the Tallensi people of Africa. Fortes believed that the three examples were essentially similar and put forth a general theory that "ancestor cult" *in any culture* is primarily intended to ratify property transfers between fathers and sons, with Fustel's arguments supporting his claim of cross-cultural universality. Although hardly undisputed, Fortes' theory continues to have an important place in debates about the nature of modern ancestor cults, particularly in regard to Africa, and the evidential base for the theory thus still includes Fustel and his conjectures.[8]

Classical scholars have also been attracted to Fustel's theories, even sometimes when they do not cite Fustel by name and may be absorbing his ideas through some intermediary. Franz Bömer put forth an elaborate three-stage model for the development of the Roman cult of the dead. The first stage, which he placed in prehistory, was essentially Fustel's model of the worship of ancestors by their direct descendants. He then thought that the Romans shifted to worshipping the *manes* as an undifferentiated mass of all the dead. As he was unable to part with the idea that the *Parentalia* was a ceremony for the *parentes*—defined narrowly as fathers and male ancestors—Bömer then had a third stage in which the Roman government reimposed the worship of specific (male) parents as a way of reinforcing paternal authority (*patria potestas*). To the degree that there is any evidence for the Roman cult of the dead before the Imperial period, it does not support this chronology, but it is notable that one can see the influence of Fustel in the first and third stages of Bömer's theory.[9]

Fustel's influence continues to the current day. In 2002, Hans-Friedrich Mueller asserted, "[W]e must recall basic Roman religious beliefs. A family's ancestral spirits (*manes*) could be cared for only by direct males descendants," citing Fustel as his sole support.[10] Likewise, Hugh Lindsay has revived Meyer Fortes' theory of "ancestor cult" in Rome, but Fortes modeled his theory almost entirely on Fustel, whose ideas thus reappear in Lindsay's work without any discussion of their basis. Likewise, Sabbatucci has reasserted Fustel's position that the *Parentalia* was intended to reinforce the exclusive inheritance of direct descendants, and Scheid—without even a supporting footnote—has reasserted Fustel's position that Romans excluded women from

participating in the Roman cult of the dead.[11] The evidence is long overdue for a reevaluation.

B) INHERITANCE

Let us ask anew what were the criteria that determined who worshipped which dead person. Although it was not the only criterion to obligate worship, there was a relationship between inheritance and the worship of *manes*. The rules for ritual procedure put forth by both Rome's college of pontiffs and Roman civil law asserted a connection between the inheritance of an estate and the assumption of ritual responsibility toward the deceased. The rules did not, however, exclude women, limit the ritual obligation to direct descendants, or even rigidly require that the performer of the required rites be any sort of relative. Relatives were the preferred agents of the obligation, but the rules included provisions that would have required nonrelatives to worship under some conditions. The Roman cult of the dead was not just about the worship of male fathers by their male sons.

There are two main sources of information about the relationship between inheritance and Roman rites for the dead. The first is Cicero's *De Legibus* (2.45–68). This text discusses what the pontifical rules—the collected precedents of priests on matters of religious dispute—say about the *sacra privata*, the rites owed the dead. The other source is the *Digest*, an anthology of the sixth century AD that collects excerpts from legal commentaries of the early Empire. The two sources are not always directly comparable, for the authors had different agendas in mind. For example, the material from the *Digest* is somewhat narrowly focused on property law relating to funerals, while the pontifical rules include festivals. There is, however, a fair amount of agreement. Both sources tie the obligation to perform ceremonies for the dead to inheritance, both assume relatives of the deceased to be the people most likely to incur obligation, and both pass the obligation to nonrelatives if relatives are not available. Neither excludes women from the pool of people who incur obligations.

1. Scaevola's Rules

Cicero began discussing pontifical rules when he was expanding on his own earlier statements (*Leg.*, 2.22), "Let the rights of the *manes* gods be sacred. Let them regard us as divine after death."[12] Cicero stressed that he was not

suggesting any innovation and proceeded to discuss the pontifical rules of his time and a slightly different set of rules from an earlier period. He said that he was describing "perpetual rites" (2.45: *sacris perpetuis*) and festivals (2.47: *feriis*). The wording is important, for it shows that Cicero was not referring simply to funerals but also to the recurring rites for the *manes*, such as the festival of the *Parentalia*.[13]

Cicero knew of two slightly different sets of rules set out by pontiffs concerning the *sacra*. He attributed one version to the pontiff Scaevola, who was active in the late second and early first century BC, and gave the following summary of the different categories of persons whom Scaevola's rules would obligate:

> [The requirement to perform rituals for the dead] is very just in the case of the heirs (*heredes*), for there is no person who is closer to the position of the deceased. Next, it passes to the person who, either by a death-bed bequest or a will, receives as much of the estate as all the heirs combined; for this is also appropriate according to the principle just stated. Third, if there is no heir, it passes to whichever person, through possession of its use, took the greatest share of the property of the deceased. In the fourth place, if there is no one [in the preceding categories] who took anything, the obligation passes to whichever of the creditors retains the largest portion of the estate. Finally, it passes to any person who owed money to the deceased and never paid it to anyone. Let that person be regarded as if he had taken this money from the estate.[14]

Scaevola made a distinction in the first two categories between natural heirs (*heredes*) and those who were not natural heirs but who did receive a major part of the estate. The *heredes* were those whom Roman law regarded as natural successors, that is, those who would inherit in the absence of a will.[15] Intestate succession in Cicero's era followed the paternal line of descent: for a man, to his children or relatives from his father's branch of the family (e.g., siblings); for a woman, to her nearest relatives from her father's family, unless she had a (comparatively rare by the late Republic) *manus* marriage, which would place her in her husband's family. The intestate rules included women, so that a daughter would inherit equally with her brother in the absence of a will.[16] The *heredes* seem to be obligated to perform the rites whether they were heirs by the intestate rules or by will, for Scaevola's second category refers only to a case in which someone other than one of the *heredes* inherited half the estate through a testament.

Each of the later categories in Scaevola's version of the pontifical rules

would come into use only if there was no one who qualified under the preceding categories. The third category passes the obligation to worship to those had possession of the largest portion of the estate "through use" (*usu*), even if they had not been named as heirs. The fourth gave the obligation to the largest creditor to the estate, and the fifth passed it to the person to whom the dead individual had loaned the most assets.

Without excessively belaboring a point that I already made in chapter 2, one could note briefly again that all of these rules obligate rites directed toward one dead individual, to whom the worshipper had specific financial ties. There is no collective worship of the dead here in Cicero's elaboration of the "rights of the *manes* gods" (*deorum manium iura*, *Leg.,* 2.22). Individual worshippers receive obligations to worship specific named dead persons, not some larger group.

It is also important to stress how different Scaevola's pontifical regulations are from Fustel's idea that the rites were performed only by sons for fathers. A son would normally be one of the natural *heredes* and thus obligated in the first category. Four of Scaevola's five categories, however, require non-*heredes*—and therefore someone other than a son—to perform the rites. The final categories might in some cases apply to a more distant category of relatives, but they could also refer to persons outside the family. A person who received the obligation because of being a creditor to the dead Roman, or having borrowed money from him/her, would often not be a family member. Even those who received the obligation through "use" could be outside the family (e.g., a friend or business associate of some kind). If the obligation passed to the estate's principal creditor, the duty to perform rites might pass not only to someone outside the family but to someone who, as a creditor, might not have even been on good terms with the deceased. It is simply not true that only direct descendants participated in the cult of the dead.

Scaevola's pontifical rules do not exclude women either. Indeed, since Roman women could both loan money and receive loans, even the fourth and fifth categories of the rules would include them. In the case of daughters, Roman rules for intestate succession made inheritance partible without primogeniture, so that all daughters and sons inherited an equal share in the absence of a will. A sole daughter, for example, would be the sole holder of the obligation to worship a dead intestate father. A will would have likewise allowed a woman to inherit both property and religious obligations under the first or second category of Scaevola's rules. If a couple had the most common (*sine manu*) form of marriage, which left the wife in her father's line of legal authority not her husband's, the intestate rules would have meant that spouses would not have automatically inherited from each other, nor children from

their mothers (who would be in the father's line of succession), but a written will would have allowed all of these forms of inheritance, and children could even inherit from intestate mothers in the later Empire.[17]

It is true that the *Lex Voconia* in 169 BC prohibited wealthy women of the highest census class (but only those of the highest class) from being designated as *heredes* and from receiving more of the estate than the male *heredes*, but this law probably had little effect on women's religious obligations. It did not affect intestate inheritance. More importantly, it had no effect whatsoever on most Roman women, who were below the wealthiest property class. So, most Roman women could inherit as *heredes* under Scaevola's first category. Moreover, even the wealthy women to whom the law applied could still receive legacies sufficient to obligate worship under Scaevola's second category of inheritance. The *Lex Voconia* itself became a legal dead letter at the beginning of the Imperial period, with the legalization of the *fideicommissum* form of trust, which allowed assets to be transferred to a daughter in excess of the Voconian limits.[18] It was possible for a woman to inherit a substantial proportion of an estate, or potentially an entire estate, through any of several legal scenarios and, therefore, to receive the obligation to worship as a component of receiving the estate. One cannot use inheritance as a basis for excluding women from the list of worshippers in the cult of the dead.

Women could also leave property to others, in wills or through intestate inheritance, and so one likewise cannot exclude them from the pool of Romans who would become posthumous deities. Indeed, all five of Scaevola's categories could include women, who could produce the obligation to worship in others by leaving property to *heredes*, leaving it to non-*heredes* through legacies or through use or by having debts or making loans in the absence of clear heirs. Even in a case where a woman's *tutor* guardian blocked her from writing a will—legally possible under some circumstances—she would still have heirs, for her paternal relatives would then have become her *heredes* under the rules for intestate succession.[19] As such, they would have to assume the obligation to worship the dead woman under Scaevola's first rule.

I have already given a few anecdotal examples of women treated as the posthumous objects of worship, for example, Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi (see chapter 2.B), and later chapters will offer a few more. The pontifical evidence provides a framework to establish that these examples are not isolated anomalies.[20] Women did become *manes*. The Romans did treat them as posthumous deities, for the pontifical rules on the obligation to worship made them eligible to be both worshippers and the worshipped.[21] The Roman cult of the dead was not for men only, nor was its purpose to reinforce paternal authority alone. Indeed, one could as easily argue the reverse. Would not the

worship of dead wives and of dead mothers as well as dead fathers have rendered problematic any attempt to give *exclusively* paternal authority a divine sanction?

An additional implication of the pontifical rules as they apply to women is that they suggest that husbands and wives would not necessarily owe rites to all of the same people. A woman in a *sine manu* marriage who inherited from her father's estate would owe him rites, but her husband would not owe rites to his father-in-law, and there is no reason to think that he would have acted in the place of his wife's obligation. Spouses could have "their own *manes*" in the sense that the couple's religious obligations, while potentially overlapping, would not be identical.

2. *Coruncanius' Rules*

Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.49) also reported another system for determining the relationship between inheritance and obligation, which he described as older, and which Watson has identified as the work of Tiberius Coruncanius, a pontiff of the third century BC:[22]

> One is obligated by the rites in three ways, either by being an heir or if one has taken the larger share of the property or, if the larger share of the money was left in legacies, if one took anything from there.[23]

This system has only three categories of obligation, but it does not suggest that there was a dramatic change in eligibility in the period between the two pontifical sources. The first two rules are similar to Scaevola's in giving the obligation first to the *heredes* and then to anyone outside the *heredes* who received a larger share of the estate. The third rule is the most different from the later rules. Legacies are bequests that Romans treated separately from the main inheritance that would normally go to the *heredes*, so that one could split the main estate among the official heirs (e.g., to the dead person's children) but still give individual items as legacies to other personal friends.[24] The third rule here says that if the dead person gave out more property in individual legacies than would be divided among the *heredes*, then everyone who received anything shared the obligation to worship. The omission of this rule from Scaevola's later set of rules effectively reduces the number of people who might share eligibility, for Scaevola's version would have required the legacy recipient to receive the majority of the estate before being liable to religious obligation. Coruncanius' rules meant that, if no one received the majority of the estate, even a small legacy like a drinking cup would have obligated wor-

ship of the dead person. One of the major motives for leaving legacies was to give property to nonrelatives (while close relatives would be the *heredes*). Coruncanius' third rule thus would have obligated numerous nonrelatives to worship, and it is difficult to see any trace of Fustel's vision of the cult of the dead in the text.

Cicero seems a bit scornful of the way Scaevola had changed Coroncanius' earlier rules to allow fewer people to perform rituals and, particularly, of the way Scaevola had incorporated some elements of the civil law into the pontifical rules to allow certain specific loopholes in the rules. One example that Cicero notes is that when non-*heredes* had religious obligations because they were receiving at least half the estate, they were able to accept less than half and thus avoid the obligations. Another loophole, which Cicero stressed was part of the civil law and not the earlier pontifical rules, allowed a person in the same situation to sell his inheritance to the heir. He would forfeit the inheritance and its obligations in return for a payment of the same amount from the heir. Despite Cicero's apparent disdain, it is possible that the first of these loopholes may not have been intended to help people avoid rituals so much as to prevent people from naming the wealthy as heirs solely to hold them responsible for the costs of the funeral. Less clear is why the natural heir would agree to the second loophole, which left him or her with the same amount of money and more obligations. Probably, the point was simply to insure familial control of the rites by keeping the obligations within the nuclear family.[25] Even if so, Scaevola's version of the rules continues to require multiple types of worship by nonrelatives in the absence of *heredes*. Despite putting some limits on the earlier pontifical rules, it remains quite inclusive in still holding that anyone who left any property at death would be eligible to receive worship.

3. The Digest

Cicero's discussion of Scaevola made it clear that Roman civil law also had jurisdiction over aspects of the cult of the dead in ways that overlapped with the pontifical rules but were not always identical with them, thus providing some of the tension in Cicero's account. Also, both the civil laws and the pontifical rules could change and evolve over time. Unfortunately, there is no source for the civil law that is contemporary with Cicero or the pontiffs whose rules Cicero discussed. What does exist is a section of the *Digest* (11.7) that describes the position of the civil law on the expenses of funerals and the question of who had the right to make a grave sacred (*religiosus*), the ritual procedure for which I will return to in chapter 6.D.2. Making the grave

sacred was a legal issue, because it could affect the ownership and usufruct of the land on which the grave was located. Gaius (*Inst.*, 2.6) also refers briefly to making graves sacred, confirming that changes in the religious status of graves did fall under the scope of the civil law.

The *Digest* is not comparable to Cicero's account of pontifical rules on every point, and one has to allow for the possibility that the differences reflect changes over time, or even the peculiarities of the *Digest* as a source. For example, that the *Digest* only discusses the sacredness of tombs in general terms, with no mention of *manes*, and mentions only funerals, not festivals for the dead, may reflect censorship and editing by the Christian compilers of the *Digest*, who assembled the existing text in the sixth century from excerpts from Pagan juristic writings of the second and third centuries AD. It may also be true that there was more civil litigation concerning funerals than festivals because there was more money involved. Funerals comprised the main expense associated with rites to the dead, whereas the festivals probably cost little to perform (see chapter 7).

The *Digest*'s section on funerals (11.7) is far more interested in the question of funeral expenses than in rituals as such, but one cannot fully separate the two, for the funeral itself was a major part of the *sacra* ("rites") owed to the *manes* (see chapter 6). The *Digest* also generally supports the picture drawn by Cicero's pontifical sources. The rules for inheritance might have evolved slightly in the centuries between Cicero and the second- and third-century authors of the *Digest*, for example, in the explicit inclusion of *cognati* on the list of intestate heirs (*Dig.*, 11.7.12.4), but the *Digest* shares a lot of assumptions with the pontifical rules about the assignment of ritual obligation to the dead and how it follows the flow of the estate's property.

The *Digest*'s jurists say that the persons who will take personal and financial responsibility for the funeral, and thus for the ceremonies that transform the grave into sacred space for the dead, will be *heredes*, as designated either by testament or by the rules for intestate succession, if *heredes* are available. In the absence of natural *heredes*, the responsibility for the funeral rites would go to the next eligible recipient according to standard inheritance law, passing with the property to whoever has the most legal claim to the property. Like the pontiffs before them, the jurists of the *Digest* show an initial preference for passing obligations to *heredes* and thus keeping them within the immediate family unless no *heredes* are available, but they also agree with the pontiffs in passing the obligations with the property to people who are not *heredes* and quite probably not relatives at all, if necessary. In a notable point of resemblance to the pontifical rules, those who owed money to the estate could also be held liable to perform the funeral. The similarity of the *Digest* to the

Republic's pontifical rules illustrates both the overlap of civil and pontifical regulations and a substantial continuity over time.

When combined with evidence from tombstones, the *Digest* also offers another way to confirm the involvement of women in the cult of the dead. *Digest* (11.7) says that the responsibility for erecting monuments at the tomb lay with the same persons who were responsible for performing rites at the grave. Inscriptions indicating who erected a tombstone would therefore be indicators of the obligation to perform the *sacra*. Having a tombstone was not mandatory. A range of financial, demographic, and social concerns could influence who received a stone, and so the inscriptions do not constitute a full sample of who worshipped whom. Still, even with that caveat, it would be hard to deny that women erected tombstones for dead parents, children, spouses, and other relatives—usually bearing the familiar *dis manibus* dedication—in Rome and throughout the Empire.[26] Women did accept responsibility for graves, and that included the obligation to worship.

What the official rules for ritual obligation—both pontifical and civil—illustrate is a system in which the transmission and possession of property is ultimately more important than either direct ancestry or gender as a criterion to establish who worshipped which dead persons or who was eligible to be worshipped. Anyone male or female who left property through inheritance, or even left debts at the time of death, was eligible to be worshipped. In section D below I will show that there were other criteria that also generated obligation. It is enough to note here that even the rules on inheritance alone would have obligated a high percentage of the Roman population to participate in the cult of the dead as worshippers, while also being able to look forward to having worshippers themselves after death according to the same rules.

C) INHERITANCE RULES AND THE DIVERSITY OF WORSHIP

The pontifical rules could change over time, as even Cicero's discussion shows, but there still would have been, at any given moment in time, a set of rules about who owed worship because of inheritance. As such, the application of the rules was likely one of the more standardized elements of the Roman cult of the dead, simply because there was an official position issued by one of Rome's priesthoods. Still, even the pontifical rules outlined a number of possible scenarios, and it seems reasonable to consider the possibility that the different types of relationships that a worshipper could have with the

deceased person in life could also affect the experience of worshipping that person's *manes*.

What separated the *manes* from most other Roman gods was their status as formerly living humans. Unlike deified emperors, they were humans with whom their worshippers would have had personal contact, though the nature of that contact could have varied. Even when children worshipped a dead father, they could have had a wide range of relationships with that parent in life, from warm and loving to actively hostile. They could also have an obligation to worship a parent whom they did not know at all, for example, if the parent had died when the children were quite young. Statius (*Silv.*, 3.3.205–216) presented Claudius Etruscus' ritual offerings to the *manes* of his father as the extension of what he presents as a close father-son relationship in life (3.3, passim). Might other Romans, however, have given offerings as an expression of less warm family relationships, so that, for instance, a worshipper's fear of preexisting parental disapproval might underlie the experience of presenting offerings? There is no explicit proof of it, but in light of the heavy emphasis that Roman political rhetoric placed on living up to the examples of ancestors, it is not clear that one can rule it out either.[27]

Pontifical rules characteristically defined only ritual procedure and ritual obligation, not defined the nature of the deities (chapter 4.C.3). Thus, the pontifical rules as recorded by Cicero do not explain how much of their former living personalities the *manes* might retain, and such points were largely left to the subjective view of the worshippers. To suggest the possible range of experiences, one can offer a contrast between two extremes that are both possible under Scaevola's inheritance rules. In one, a person is conducting rites for a family member with whom he or she had close emotional ties; in the other, the worshipper is linked to the deceased only because the deceased owed him/her money in the absence of a conventional heir.

One can see the former situation in Statius' *Silvae* (2.7), dedicated to Argentaria Polla on the birthday of her former husband, the poet Lucan, whom the emperor Nero forced to commit suicide several decades earlier. Although a confiscation of Lucan's assets might have been possible, there is no reference to it or any suggestion that Polla lacked assets, and Tacitus (*Ann.*, 16.17) refers to debts to Lucan's estate subsequent to his death. It seems reasonable to assume that there was no confiscation and that Polla inherited from her husband's will. Depending on her status relative to other heirs, she could therefore have had an obligation to worship according to the pontifical rules.[28] If so, Statius gives no suggestion that inheritance was important to Polla's understanding of her actions. She is focused instead on the loss of a dear spouse. The passage is interesting not merely for suggesting that wor-

ship could act as an expression of grief but for presenting two different ways in which it could so function. In the passage, Statius begins to address the dead poet Lucan directly:

> Be present shining man, and, as Polla is calling you, gain one day, I ask, from the gods of the silent. It is customary that this door be open for husbands returning to their wives. She does not clothe you [i.e., your effigy] as the figure of a false deity, brazen in deceitful Bacchic revels, but she worships your true self, and frequently turns to you, whom she has taken into her innermost being. She receives only empty solace from the face, which, sculpted in your image in gold, shines over her bed and watches over her as she is safe in sleep. Go far from here, Deaths, for here is the source of fruitful life. Let stubborn sorrow yield; keep tears of delight on your cheeks, and let your grief be festive. What she mourned before, now let her adore.[29]

Polla's actions do not seem radically separate from those found elsewhere in Statius' *Silvae*, that is, 3.3 and 5.3, where Claudius Etruscus sought messages in dreams from his dead father through worship at a shrine within his home and Statius himself sought similar messages from his own dead father. There is no reason to dismiss the passage about Polla as "secular."[30] Nor should one disregard the passage because of its literary allusions. The reference to avoiding "deceitful Bacchic revels" is a complement, comparing Polla favorably to the Greek heroine Laodicea, but the reference does not undermine the passage. Mythic allusions were a central feature of Statius' poetic style, and one would be hard-pressed to name any person that the poet described without at least one mythic comparison. The poem here is dedicated to Polla, and it hardly seems radical to suggest that the poet might be offering her advice, even if other parts of the poem are also commenting on Lucan's poetic themes.[31]

Statius' comments about Polla are not simply complimentary, for he is suggesting (gently) that she is on the wrong track. Donka Markus has collected a range of passages about grief and lamentation from the *Silvae* and *Thebaid* showing that Statius frequently endorsed the idea of giving oneself over to unrestrained grief, but the difference between those passages and this one is that the purpose of unrestrained grief was supposed to be cathartic, the first step in a process of moving beyond grief.[32] Polla is not moving at all. Statius wrote his *Silvae* in the late 80s and early 90s AD, long after Lucan's death, in 65 AD. Polla is still behaving as if her husband has just died, although he has been dead for decades.

Statius' reaction to her lingering grief is carefully worded. He praises (to

the dead husband) the sincerity of Polla's worship, while also suggesting gently (to Polla) that she is putting her emphasis in the wrong place, grieving when she should be celebrating. She ought to be getting on with her life, and Statius sees her manner of worship as a barrier to that process. The passage shows several different ways the cult of the dead could interact with an individual's grief. For Polla, her religious devotion to her dead husband seems to be an expression of her sense of loss and her desire to be once again in contact with Lucan. Statius is suggesting a different approach. For the poet, once the original period of mourning is complete, the worship of the dead should be a joyous occasion, a happy communication between the living and the dead, more like what he envisions for Claudius Etruscus in *Silvae* 3.3.

Some scholars have suggested that Polla was remarried at the time that Statius was depicting. That point is far from certain.[33] If it were true, it might provide a motive for why Statius would urge Polla to adjust her relationship with the dead husband into a more constructive form, but such conjecture is unnecessary. Even without a remarriage, Polla's unresolved grief is destructive, and Statius sees the form of her worship as merely perpetuating the problem. The dead are no longer in their former mortal state and will never be so again, and the living need to accept the change. Even the visitation that the poet requests from Lucan's spirit seems intended to urge her to move beyond the stage of grief. Statius is presenting the worship of the dead as a mechanism through which one could overcome grief, by concentrating on the adoration of the dead as deities rather than focusing on the loss of the living from their former roles.

I am not claiming that every worshipper of a dead spouse or close relative used the cult of the dead as a mechanism for expressing or addressing his or her grief, merely that it was one possible scenario. Other worshippers—regardless of a close relationship with the deceased—might focus more on the *manes* in their new state as beings of power, and ask the dead's help to keep the worshippers alive or some other practical benefit (see chapter 5). Polla is one extreme in a range of experiences that participants in the cult of the dead could have, in that her experience was built entirely around her emotional response to the deceased.

The opposing extreme was likely to have been found in the final categories of obligation in Scaevola's rules. In the absence of a conventional heir, the obligation to worship would pass to the largest creditor of the estate or the largest debtor to the estate (Cic., *Leg.*, 2.48–49). There is sadly no surviving description of such a worshipper in action, but one does not need an explicit source to see that any such worship would be very different from Polla's. Nothing resembling Polla's intensely emotional focus on separation from a

loved one would be possible in a situation where there were no preexisting emotional ties. Loans might be between friends or relatives, but a relationship built around debt could also be quite distant and impersonal, involving contact only in a strictly financial context and perhaps at infrequent intervals. A debtor-creditor relationship might also have involved active hostility between the two sides of the transaction. The loss of the money that the dead person did not pay back might have been more upsetting to a creditor than the death of his debtor, and it seems unlikely that such a creditor would employ the cult of the dead as a mechanism for addressing personal grief.

As the obligation to worship was both a mandate from the pontiffs and a requirement of civil law in the case of the funeral, there is no good reason to doubt that the creditor would have performed at least the minimal cultic responsibilities of providing a basic funeral and performing the annual *Parentalia*. The focus was likely to have been on duty to the gods rather than on the personality of the deceased. The worshipper could either perform rites as a mandatory duty, conscious that failing to meet the obligation might anger the gods and bring misfortune, or perhaps do so as an opportunity to increase his own access to divine power by praying for long life and other benefits from the new *manes* as he might for those from his own family. Either way, there would be no room for Polla's brand of obsessive grief.

In between heartbroken spouses and other relatives using rites for the dead to address their pain and the impersonal financial connections that could convert debt into religious ritual, there were doubtless a wide range of intermediate experiences for worshippers. The pontifical rules on inheritance (and their reinforcement in the civil law) were important for the cult of the dead because they mandated the worship of specific individuals by specific persons, but the rules would not have produced uniform worship, for a wide range of variables, both in human relationships and in beliefs about the nature of *manes*, could shape the experiences of worshippers.

D) *PIETAS*, AFFECTION, AND LOYALTY

The example of Polla shows that inheritance was not always the central issue for a participant in the cult of the dead, even in a case where an inheritance obligation probably did exist. One could go further, though, and note that worship occurred in cases where no inheritance took place and that inheritance cannot be considered the sole criterion for ritual obligation. Worshippers also acted out of social *pietas*, that is, as an expression of the reciprocal bonds that linked the dead to relatives and other social groupings. As *pietas*

was supposed to be a voluntary obligation in an ongoing relationship, one cannot clearly distinguish worship that *pietas* motivated from ties of affection or personal loyalty in any of many sorts, including occasionally in politics. Worship on the basis of *pietas* could express and reinforce a range of human relationships and thereby provide an obligation to worship a much broader cross-section of the Roman population than inheritance alone.

1. Familial Relationships

Pietas is the obligation to fulfill one's side of an ongoing reciprocal relationship.[34] *Pietas* meant that the members of the family were all interconnected by bonds of ongoing mutual support and that every family member owed support to every other in some manner. A favorite Roman example of the concept was a myth of a woman who prevented her own imprisoned mother from being deliberately starved to death by breastfeeding her, just as the mother had once breastfed the daughter (Pliny, *HN.*, 7.121; Val. Max., 5.4.7).

Roman legal jurists recognized *pietas* as a force that would motivate human action even in the absence of a specific legal or financial obligation. So, people without the legal right to marry (e.g., slaves or noncitizens in unions with citizens) might have an acknowledged reason for taking an interest in the well-being of their unofficial "spouses" and children, regardless of the legal legitimacy of the arrangement. Likewise a father who legally emancipated his son from his authority might still have some claim to that son's support and vice versa. Meyer Fortes thought that *pietas* applied only to duties owed by sons to fathers, but clearly the reverse was also true. Indeed, the *Digest* (42.8.19) allows a father to violate certain rules governing the use of trusts for inheritance, if the father was doing so to benefit a child and thus acting from *pietas*. Exceptions might also be made to allow a pious parent to provide a daughter's dowry.[35]

The term *pietas* could also describe the reciprocal relations between Romans and their gods. Just as humans prayed to the gods to receive benefits, so too the gods expected to receive worship and offerings. As in familial *pietas*, the idea of reciprocity did not imply equality of status. The gods held the greater power and could decline to grant prayers, just as a parent could refuse a request from a small child. Nevertheless, the interests of gods and humans were intertwined by mutual need, for a god without worshippers was nothing. So, Romans could pray to request benefits on the basis of the degree to which they had upheld *pietas* with the gods in the past, in the hopes that the gods would view their efforts as worthy of reciprocity.[36] The transformation from living human to *manes* extended familial *pietas* into religious *pietas*. The obli-

gations of *pietas* already linked the family members in life, and the death of a family member would thus extend an already established reciprocity in a new form, as the former family member became a deity.

The jurists of the *Digest* assumed that people would take responsibility for rituals on the basis of *pietas* and allowed legal exceptions based on that assumption. The jurist Ulpian (*Dig*., 11.7.14.8) ruled that performing the funeral rites for a father did not force a child to accept the inheritance, for a child would perform the rituals "because of *pietas*" (*pietatis gratia*). If the child did not want the inheritance because the debts of the estate outweighed the assets, the creditors could not claim that performing the funeral constituted the act of accepting the inheritance. Ulpian was affirming that the bonds between parent and child were natural and dependent on *pietas* rather than on transfers of property. The ruling also shows an assumption that a living child would perform the funeral rites regardless of the legal status of the estate. The rites would include transforming the grave into sacred space for the worship of the new *manes* (see chapter 6.D.2).

Pietas is also visible in the rules for agency. If the heir was not available to perform the funeral, another unrelated person might have to do it. The law would normally view such a person as an agent of the heir, meaning that he or she could sue the heir for reimbursement for any expenses. Ulpian (*Dig*., 11.7.14.7) made an exception to the rule on reimbursement "if [the person who performed the funeral] did it because of *pietas*, with no intention of recovering his expense" (*si pietatis gratia fecit, non hoc animo quasi recepturus sumptum quem fecit*). Again, the *Digest* explicitly acknowledged that there was a wider range of personal attachments within society than the inheritance rules might acknowledge. Persons might wish to perform a funeral for a dead person without necessarily being either an heir or even a member of the family.

If a woman left her property to her children through a will but nothing to her siblings, then the pontifical rules of Scaevola would not have required her siblings to worship her on the basis of inheritance. Likewise, siblings with a living father would have been under his *patria potestas* and would have had no standing to own property at all, for children had independent legal standing only at the death of their father. In other situations, close relatives might not have had property to leave or had it only through inheritance arrangements that would not have met the standard for requiring worship under the pontifical rules. Saller notes examples where a husband left ownership of the estate to his children on the condition that his widow have use of the property (e.g., the family home) for the remainder of her life.[37] Such use would not obligate worship by the widow under the pontifical rules, since the children

were the technical heirs. Still, in all of these cases, the spouses and close-kin relatives would have been tied together by *pietas*, and that could have provided a basis for worship.

Several mythological texts describe acts of worship for dead family members in contexts where inheritance was inapplicable. For example, Ovid (*Met.*, 6.566–570) told the story of how Procne, mistakenly believing her lost sister Philomela to be dead, conducts a funeral for her and makes an offering to *manes* of Philomela at her gravesite. Ovid is Romanizing an older Greek myth, with specifically Roman religious terminology (i.e., *manes*). In a Roman context, though, the inheritance cannot be Procne's, for the two sisters' father is still alive as are both of their husbands, so, whether she had a *sine manu* marriage or a *cum manu* marriage, Philomela would have been under the legal authority of either her father (*sine manu*) or husband (*cum manu*) and thus not yet in a position to leave an estate. Still, her sister offers worship to *manes*.

Likewise, Virgil's *Aeneid* presents the Trojan (and thus proto-Roman) heroine Andromache performing a ritual for her dead husband Hector. The ritual is described as "annual" (*sollemnis*) and involves the offering of food at the gravesite. It is the *Parentalia*:

> [Aeneas saw her] when, by chance, in a grove before the city near the waters of a substitute [for the Trojan] Simois River, Andromache was offering her annual meal and sad gifts to the grave and summoning the *manes* to Hector's tomb-mound, which, a cause for tears, she had consecrated, empty, made from green sod, with twin altars.[38]

Normal inheritance has no meaning in the context of this story. Andromache's husband was killed by the Greeks, her city burned, and she was carried off by a Greek warrior, only later to regain her freedom and a new husband in a new land. She did not even have Hector's actual body, much less his property. Nevertheless, she performed the rites. The story evokes an ideal of the eternal devotion and, in a ritual sense, the eternal obligation of *pietas* from one spouse to another, which, in this case, is not dimmed even by her overt remarriage. Virgil has projected the bonds of marital *pietas* beyond the grave, suggesting that they will never truly end.

Tombstones, in conjunction with the aforementioned rules about ritual obligation, also provide information about worship that depends upon ties of familial *pietas* rather than inheritance. The information on tombstones is often insufficient to determine the specifics of inheritance. One category of

tombstone, though, gives strong evidence for a pattern of ritual obligation that does not depend on inheritance, the tombstones of children whose father is still alive. The Roman legal principle of *patria potestas* held that children were under their father's legal authority and had no ability to own property or leave it to others until the father's death. Although it was technically possible for fathers to emancipate sons from their control, the usual legal pattern was for sons to have no independent right to own property while the father was alive. Daughters would be likewise under their father's *potestas* unless they had a *cum manu*–type marriage, which transferred them to their husbands' families and put them under their husbands' *manus*, which in practice reduced them to a status similar to that of a child under a father's *potestas*. Thus, one can assume that rites performed for a son with a living father or a daughter whose father and husband were both alive were not motivated by an inheritance from the deceased.[39]

For children over a year in age, tombstone epitaphs are relatively common, often with a living father listed as the commemorator. This would include not just actual juveniles (beneath the legal age of maturity, which in Rome was only 12 for girls and 14 for boys) but also physical adults who had no property rights because they were still under the *potestas* of a living father.[40] As the cost of a tomb monument falls to the person who assumes the cost of the funeral (*Dig.*, 11.7.14), and the funeral establishes the grave as sacred space (11.7.2–4), the epitaphs that take credit for erecting tombstones are markers of who will worship the deceased in the cult of the dead. The mutual ties of *pietas* did link parents to children as well as children to parents, and those ties obligated worship of the deceased even in the total absence of a relationship based on inheritance.[41]

It is true that the funerals of those who died young might have had an extra emphasis on apotropaic functions. There was a widespread view that those who died prematurely might have grievances that would make them unusually easy for sorcerers to enlist in carrying out curses (cf. chapter 5.A.3.a). They might therefore need a special class of funeral, the so-called premature funeral (*funus acerbum*), which would be carried out with greater haste or with additional apotropaic ritual elements that would ward off supernatural intervention during the delicate liminal phase of the dead person's funeral.[42] As I will note in chapter 6.D.3, though, it was the completion of the funeral that marked the dead person as one of the *manes* in active standing. Extra precautions before that stage need not have had any effect on the dead person's ultimate godhood. Indeed, the *funus acerbum* was not limited to children and could apply to adults who died young. There is no reason to think

that recipients of this style of funeral were any less *manes* than other people when the funeral was completed.

One potential objection to the idea of the Romans worshipping their dead children is that the root of the name of the festival for the dead, the *Parentalia*, is *parens*. Even some fairly recent scholars have followed Fustel in reading the sense of *parens* narrowly as "parent" or at least "direct ancestor."[43] This is too literal. Wilkinson has shown that, although *parens* sometimes means "parent," its use in inscriptions is quite loose and can refer to a wide range of family relationships, including in-laws. Slaves and freedmen can even use *parentes* to refer to their present or past masters.[44] The verb from the same root, *parentare*, can mean "worship the dead" or "avenge the dead," and, in the latter sense, one can point to examples where it refers to the relationship between spouses (Apuleius, *Met.*, 8.12) or even political allies with no family connection (Cic., *Phil.*, 13.35).

One should also not overestimate the importance of the root *parens* to the festival of the *Parentalia* or the jargon of worshipping the dead. *Parentalia* is only one of several names for the festival. The word *Feralia* appears on more of the calendars surviving from the first century AD than *Parentalia*, and only *Feralia* is on the one surviving calendar from the first century BC.[45] The modern convention of treating *Parentalia* as the correct name derives from Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.569–570), who said that *Feralia* was the name of only the final day of the festival, but Ovid himself elsewhere in the same text used forms of the adjective *feralis* to refer to the entire period of the *Parentalia*, not once but twice (*Fasti,* 2.34 and 5.486), and elsewhere he uses it to refer to the festival's offerings (*Trist.*, 3.3.81–82). One could likewise use alternative verbs besides *parentare* to express the action of worship, for example, *inferias manibus dare* ("to give offerings to the *manes*"). Suetonius (*Gaius*, 3.2) used the latter to refer to the worship of nonrelatives.

About the only support one could cite for limiting *Parentalia* to the parental implications of its root would be a section of Quintilian's *Institutes* (8.6.34–35), where the author warns, as a matter of good style, against using words in ways that contradict the implications of their roots. He criticizes a line from an unidentified poem: *Aigialeo parentat pater* ("His father worships Aigialeus"). The verb *parentare* struck Quintilian as inappropriate because its root implies that it is an action directed toward a *parens*, not a child. Obviously, though, the unknown author whom he was quoting disagreed about the usage. Moreover, Quintilian was not rejecting the idea of treating children as deities, just rejecting the choice of wording when there were other ways to say it. Quintilian himself elsewhere presents his own dead nine-year-old son

as a god, swearing a vow by his *manes*, "by those *manes*, my sorrow's deity."[46] There is no reason to limit the dead worshipped at the *Parentalia* to those compatible with its "parental" etymology. The Romans could and did worship dead children, just as spouses could worship each other without necessarily having a tie of inheritance.

Newborn infants might have been a (partial) exception, for a number of texts suggest that very young infants did not receive standard rites, and they are likewise rarely recipients of tombstones.[47] As I will discuss in chapter 6, a funeral appears necessary for *manes* to be fully functional as gods, and so lack of standard rites could mean that Romans excluded newborns from the cult of the dead. Maureen Carroll, however, has pointed to archaeological evidence for some actual funerals of infants less than a year in age, including grave goods and other conventional elements, although such burials are numerically underrepresented for the likely occurrence of child mortality. Her argument suggests that even if there was some custom of excluding infants from standard burials, and perhaps by extension from the cult of the dead, there was no hard and fast rule. If parents wished to treat newborns as they would older children, they could do so.[48]

2. *Extensions of One's Family*

It is not clear that every relationship that might be lumped together under the heading *pietas* actually inspired ritual devotion, even if *pietas* did support the option of doing so. The pontifical rules and their corollaries in the civil law codes mandated the worship of specific individuals. The bonds of *pietas* were less formal, and even when mentioned in the *Digest*, they constituted the voluntary assumption of obligation. In practice, there was likely a fair amount of variation that would have allowed families to define their own priorities.

Even if, as seems probable, public opinion about "what was proper" provided unofficial reinforcement of "pious" worship in the case of close-kin relationships, there still would have been room for individual worshippers or families to choose how they defined *pietas* in cases where it might extend beyond the circle of their closest blood relatives. The author of the *Laudatio Turiae* praises his wife for her superior *pietas* in treating his parents like her own, but the very fact that this action would be singled out for praise in a panegyric suggests that not everyone thought that familial piety extended to in-laws.[49]

Part of the social value of worshipping on the basis of *pietas* was exactly its quality of moving beyond the minimum. It was a way for individuals (or

families) to reaffirm which relationships were so important to them that they would perform the rites even when it was not technically required by pontifical rules or the civil law. Romans could emphasize the close bonds of family whether or not inheritance was a factor, but they could also include other types of relationships. The Latin novelist Petronius has his character Trimalchio stage a pseudo-funeral at a banquet, at which Trimalchio says, "Imagine that you have been invited to my *Parentalia*."[50] The wording suggests that one's circle of friends might well have joined in the annual rituals as an expression of their social rather than familial ties.

A few examples will illustrate the way irregular or extra-familial relationships could find expression in the rites for the dead. First, an unusual inscription casts a quasi-familial relationship in terms of worship:

> For the divine *manes* Furcia Flavia, well-deserving *filiastra*, mistress, and patroness, Aurelius Festus [dedicated this stone]. While I am alive I will worship you. After death, I do not know. Spare your mother and your father and your sister Marina, so that they can perform the solemn rites after me.[51]

The dead girl's parents are both still alive, and, more revealingly, there is no mention of a husband in a culture where girls normally married in their teens. Furcia Flavia is thus likely a child, whereas the erector of the stone, Aurelius Festus, expects to die before either of Furcia's parents and so may be elderly. What is Festus' relationship to Furcia? The words "Mistress and patroness" (*domine et patronae*) are a common formula for a freedman to address a former master, but since Furcia is a juvenile, Festus is probably a family freedman, that is, a former slave of one of Furcia's parents.

Festus describes Furcia as a *filiastra*. This word (*filiaster* in its masculine form) appears only on inscriptions, not in literature, and there is a long-running debate about whether it should be read as "stepdaughter," like its modern Italian cognate *figliastra*, or as "illegitimate daughter."[52] Neither reading works well here. Furcia is said to have a living mother and father, and so it is hard to see how she could be the biological daughter of Festus (regardless of legitimacy). Watson argued for reading *filiastra* here as stepdaughter, but doing so requires disregarding the usual sense of "mistress and patroness." Otherwise, it would imply that Furcia's mother divorced her still-living husband (Furcia's father) so that she could marry her own former slave.[53] That arrangement seems a rather unlikely one to commemorate in stone, as it would not have been good for the mother's reputation. Simpler and more probable is

that Furcia's parents remained married to each other and that Festus was just a former slave of Furcia's parents who had close contact with Furcia, perhaps in a child-care or pedagogical role.

When speaking in general of the masculine form *filiaster*, Watson says that the basic sense of the term is "sort of son," and the problems disappear if one makes a similar reading of this inscription.[54] *Filiastra* is not a technical term; it is a term of endearment. It means "girl who is like a daughter to me." If it could, in some other context, mean "stepdaughter," here it is just Festus' statement that he views Furcia as if she were a daughter. So, he performs the rites for her as a vehicle for his affection. It is *pietas* by declaration, on the model of familial *pietas*.

That Furcia's parents and sister will worship her is also notable, since she would have been under *potestas*, and thus none of them could have inherited from her. They too acted out of *pietas*. The wording might suggest that they would not start worship until after Festus died, but it seems odd that the family would delegate worship to a freedman and take it up only after his death. Probably, it means that all of them worshipped, but Festus expects the parents and sister to outlive him and therefore worship longer. Note too the invocation of the power of the *manes* to extend the worshippers' lives (see chapter 5.A). Just because the worshippers were reinforcing social relationships does not mean that it was not also worship in the sense of appealing for the aid of divine power. The two were deeply intertwined in the cult of the dead.

Another example is a series of poems that Martial wrote about a favorite slave girl named Erotion, who died quite young. One of them (5.37) makes it clear that she was a slave, but it also describes her as "my love" (5.37.17: *nostros amores*, poetic plural), and as a "joy" (*gaudium*), and rebukes a man named Paetus for mocking the author's grief at her death. It is possible that Erotion is the illegitimate daughter of the author by a slave mother, but he does not say so, not even in another poem (5.34) where he asks his own dead parents to look after Erotion when she arrives in the underworld. Perhaps the author was simply fond of a girl who had grown up in his household. Whatever the details, inheritance from a juvenile slave girl would be impossible. Nevertheless, Martial not only implies that he has worshipped her at her grave shrine but asks a future owner of the plot of land where the grave lies to continue the worship:

> Here rests the hurried shade of Erotion, whom her sixth winter killed in a crime of Fate. Whoever after me will be the ruler of my field, give the annual just offerings to her little *manes*. Thus, with an everlasting home and

> a safe household, may this stone be the only thing on your land worthy of tears.[55]

Martial's quasi-parental relationship leads him to perform the annual *Parentalia* and to ask that future owners do the same, again invoking the protective power of the *manes* with the hope that the future owners will be "safe" (*sospite*) in their worship. To expect others to take on the worship of someone else's slave, though, was likely asking a lot. The later owners would have no obligation to do it, and they would have their own dead to worship. There is no evidence that masters routinely worshipped the *manes* of slaves, and an annual festival by priests to the *manes* of Rome's slaves suggests they did not, for otherwise there would be no reason to give slave *manes* a special collective worship as a group (Varro, *Ling.*, 6.24). Martial's point was that he thought worshipping this particular slave was unusually important, and his request shows his desire to keep the worship alive as long as possible, extending his quasi-parental *pietas* beyond his own death.

3. The Political "Family"

Slaves and freedmen were at least members of the household, and thus of the *familia* in the broadest sense of that term, but the idea of selecting *manes* to worship as a gesture of loyalty to the deceased could extend well beyond the household even into the political sphere. When, for example, senators killed the would-be reformers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus in the late second century BC, some of their supporters offered daily sacrifices to the dead brothers. Plutarch (*Vit. C. Gracch.*, 18) says that people visited statues of the Gracchi as if visiting temples. Supporters of the dead leaders offered worship as if the Gracchi were members of their own families.

Plutarch suggests that the worship of the Gracchi was unusual in its fervor and scope, but the basic idea to show political support through the cult of the dead was not unique to the case of the Gracchi. Lucan, who was strongly critical of Julius Caesar, suggested (*BC.*, 8.851–864) that those who visited the grave of Caesar's rival Pompey in Egypt would naturally prefer to worship there than at any altar erected (in the Imperial cult) for Julius Caesar. Likewise, earlier, when defending Lucius Flaccus, who was charged with corruption in 59 BC, Cicero (*Flac.*, 95) denounced the accusers of Flaccus as men who had gathered to perform rites at the graves of participants in the earlier conspiracy of Catiline and had thus shown their allegiance to traitors. Even if the specific accusation was false, that Cicero could make it casually suggests that the idea of using the cult of the dead to express political allegiance

was familiar to the jury. A decree of *damnatio memoriae*, in which the senate voted to condemn someone's memory, included restrictions on rites for the dead.[56] The point may have been to ward off similar use of the rites to express solidarity.[57]

Even participation in the funeral itself could be a gesture of political support. The most extreme example came after the murder of the popular Republican leader Clodius in 52 BC. A mob of his plebeian supporters carried his body into the senate house and cremated it there, burning the building in the process (Asc., *Mil.*, 30–42). Clodius' bitter enemy Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.42) would later present this action as one that merely denied Clodius a proper funeral, but it is unlikely that the people who performed the cremation would have seen it in that light. On the contrary, they gave their fallen leader a funeral pyre such as Rome had never seen, and they did so in a way that both allowed large numbers of people to participate in the cremation and served to spite Clodius' senatorial enemies. In effect, it was a symbolic mass adoption of Clodius by his followers, who cremated him as a family should.

A much subtler political use of the cult of the dead came in the reign of Tiberius, when the Imperial prince Germanicus still appeared to be a likely heir. Germanicus, "whenever he came upon the tombs of illustrious men, would give offerings to their *manes*."[58] As this line comes from a description of Germanicus visiting federate towns in Italy, the *manes* that Germanicus worshipped were likely associated with the important families who ruled those towns. It was just a single act of worship in each case, part of a onetime visit to the town, but it sent a message from the Imperial family to its prominent subjects that they could all be linked, if only for a moment, as if they were one big family.

The worship of *manes* could therefore function as an expression of a range of relationships. It could and did reinforce the transmission of property linking worshipper and worshipped through ties of inheritance, but, beyond that, it could also affirm a broader range of familial ties, bonds of friendship and affection, and even (at least occasionally) the loyalties of politics. Such functions do not mean that the Romans were not also engaging in worship to access the supernatural power of *manes*, for even some of the examples in this chapter refer to that power. There is no need to distinguish between the social ties and the power those ties could generate. The special nature of *manes*, as the formerly living, was to be deities with which one had a preexisting relationship. If the pontiffs insisted on the primacy of relationships based on inheritance, worshippers had a certain freedom in deciding which other relationships they would call upon when praying to the deified dead.

E) CONTEMPORARY FOCUS (AND ELITE EXCEPTIONS)

As long as the memory of the deceased person's life remained, it seems unlikely that many Romans would have entirely lacked worshippers willing to honor their obligations from either inheritance or *pietas*. The issue of the deceased surviving in living memory, however, does raise an interesting point. The various relationships that motivated worship were overwhelmingly contemporary with the worshipper. Worship on the basis of inheritance linked one to the immediately preceding generation or even to one's own generation, in the case of inheritance from siblings or spouses. The pontifical rules would not require the worship of earlier generations who left no property to worshippers. Likewise, rituals that acknowledged connections of *pietas*, affection, or political loyalty would mainly be contemporary with the worshippers, since they depended on preexisting personal connections. The cult of the dead focused on recent dead. Certain families, particularly within the political elite where specific genealogies could enhance status, would likely have included some notable distant ancestors, but doing so was only a supplementary option that they could choose to exercise. The primary criteria determining who worshipped which dead would have emphasized contemporary dead. Those were the *manes* that most Romans would have worshipped by name in the cemeteries on the *Parentalia* or in home shrines.

The cult of the dead's contemporary focus is supported by the only surviving complete list of whom an individual Roman worshipped at the *Parentalia*, the poem entitled *Parentalia* by the fourth-century poet Ausonius.[59] Because of the poem's late date and the author's ambiguous religious status as a nominal Christian who still participated in the Pagan cult of the dead, I have not mentioned the poem previously, but it does support the portrait drawn from earlier evidence. Ausonius' list of dead includes his parents, from whom he presumably inherited some estate, but it also includes his dead wife, siblings, children, and even his grandchildren and certain in-laws. Ausonius also lists his grandparents, but there are no earlier generations on his list; no distant ancestors at all.

The reason for such a pattern was logistical. As the inheritance rules did not require the worship of early ancestors, one would offer it only out of familial *pietas*. As the memory of earlier generations would fade, so too those dead's relevance to the current worshippers would fade, to be replaced by new and contemporary *manes* with more connection to the lives of the worshippers. However important a dead nine-year-old daughter might have been

to her parents, one wonders if the child would have still received individual worship a century later, when no one really remembered her.

The *Parentalia* involved offerings taken to individual tombs of named *manes*, and shrines within the home to certain *manes* also existed (chapter 7.C.1). There was a finite number of graves one could visit, though, and newer obligations to recent dead would marginalize older generations. Likewise, Statius' description of the home shrine to Claudius Etruscus (*Silv.*, 5.3) suggests the shrine was to that one man alone. The limited focus of home shrines gets some archaeological support from the small size of the shrine that Amedeo Maiuri attributed to the *manes* in Pompeii's "House of the Menander," for the shrine seemed to contain only five effigies, and there would not have been room for many more.[60]

It is unlikely that the earlier ancestral *manes* went completely unworshipped, for to allow the worship of gods to be neglected would invite divine retaliation, particularly since the Romans sometimes appealed to the power of Rome's *manes* as a group, as in the opening of the *Mundus*. Jack Glazier, when discussing the Mbeere people of Africa, noted that the Mbeere distinguished between recent ancestors, who they would give offerings by name, and more distant ancestors who were not named and treated only as a group. Evans noted a similar pattern in modern China.[61] It seems likely, as Evans cautiously suggested, that the Romans adopted a similar strategy, worshipping the dead who were most relevant to their lives by name at the tomb or in the home, but making some general offering to all other dead as a group. There is no explicit reference to such a sacrifice, but Ovid's description of the *Parentalia*—the fullest we have—covers only a fraction of the nine-day period when the dead were supposedly wandering the city, and other observances could have included a general offering to the dead, who were no longer named and whose graves no one visited individually anymore. Such a general offering would have prevented neglect of earlier dead, who would still be included as part of the community of the *manes*, while allowing families, in practice, to focus intensively on the most recent dead.

Where Romans chose to draw the line between the dead whom they worshipped by name and those they did not likely reflected their particular circumstances. Bömer and Bettini attempted to find evidence of the Romans limiting their worship more strictly to specific generations in a passage of Festus (247L) that defines *parentes* as father, grandfather, and great-grandfather and their wives. Although Bömer and Bettini interpret Festus' statement as a reference to the deified dead, the passage does not mention worshipping *parentes*. Festus says rather that it is "legal experts" (*prudentes iuris*) who apply the term strictly to these three generations, suggesting a specific legal context,

even if Festus does not identify what that context is. It cannot be who worships whom, for the passage would flatly contradict the pontifical rules for worshipping the dead, which mandate a broader range of obligations based on inheritance (see above, section B). Likewise, as noted above, Wilkinson has shown that the word *parentes* had a much broader range of meanings—even on tombstones—than this single passage of Festus implies. Festus was not describing the limits of worship in the cult of the dead.[62]

Probably it is a mistake to assume that there was some automatic cut-off point for individualized worship when one reached a particular generation relative to one's worshippers. More likely, the decision about whom to worship would have varied family to family. Whether families included in their worship any named ancestors from generations before living memory would have depended on the nature of the family and the importance that they placed on genealogy. A family that placed great significance on the prestige of its heritage probably worshipped the ancestors from whom that prestige derived, but, in other cases, distant ancestors may have been irrelevant. Ausonius' father was a doctor from Gaul, and Ausonius' reputation as a poet does not seem to have been dependent on his ancestry. He was almost seventy years old and had outlived his own children and even some of his grandchildren. It is dead descendants who dominate his list, and perhaps distant ancestors just did not seem important to someone in his position.

The picture might have been quite different to a member of the ruling Roman elite in the late Republic and early Principate. A noble lineage was a source of pride and status, and some Romans clearly compiled extensive genealogies. Elite Romans painted family trees for display in their homes and likewise displayed wax masks (*imagines*) of their most prominent ancestors. Actors would wear these masks in funeral processions for the family's dead, reminding all present of the prestige of the family's lineage. Likewise, the wealthy might erect lavish tomb monuments in the cemeteries along the roads outside Rome, again attracting attention to the noble dead of their family. This focus on genealogy and the advertisement of ancestors was a vehicle for promoting the prestige of the current generation and was thus important to the social and political aspirations of the living.[63]

The public displays were also important for the cult of the dead, for just as these displays of lineage were reminding outsiders of the family's illustrious lineage, so too they were reminding the family themselves. It is difficult to imagine an occurrence of the *Parentalia* in which a Roman senator would walk out of his home past the masks of his illustrious consular ancestors in his own atrium, then go out to the cemetery by the city's main road and walk past the large elaborate tomb built by one of those ancestors to advertise the

family's glory, and then not leave an offering. The focus on lineage would encourage an understanding of familial *pietas* that included the notable dead of previous generations. The monuments and *imagines* kept the earlier dead relevant, and it was the relevant dead who would receive worship by name.[64]

A desire to live on forever in the eyes of the living does not necessarily require a religious motive or any motive except egoism. Nevertheless, the Romans creating these masks and building these monuments were living in a culture in which individual dead persons were worshipped as gods, and that worship was heavily dependent on preservation of the memory of the individual. The masks do not seem to have been used directly as objects of devotion in the cult of the dead,[65] but they may have nevertheless played a role in maintaining the worship of certain individuals, as did the tombs. The display of the masks at the funerals of the family's more recent dead and the continued visibility of tombs to the prominent earlier dead assured that new dead did not obscure the memory of the old. There is no intrinsic conflict between the idea of attempting to preserve and glorify the memory of the dead among the living through monuments and the concept of worshipping the dead. Both depend upon preserving the memory of the dead and the relevance of the dead to each new generation of the living.

These mechanisms had limitations as devices for maintaining memory. They were strategies that only the wealthiest Romans could afford. Moreover, the masks were images only of men with political careers, whose records would be useful to later political aspirants, and they did little for the memory of women and children. Flower has suggested that the late Republic brought an increased tendency to remember the accomplishments of women in elite genealogy, but that was still only a small group of women. The tomb monuments might have been a bit more inclusive; certainly, a number of elaborate tombs were dedicated to women.[66]

Although newborns were a special category who rarely received monuments, older children did. Diana Kleiner has noted that a majority of the surviving examples of tomb altars with portraits are dedicated to dead children and that there are likewise more altars dedicated to dead wives than to dead husbands. Kleiner explains the latter point by suggesting that men simply had more money to build elaborate monuments, but the same argument does not account for the abundant examples of other types of monuments to dead men that line the roads outside Rome. Some Romans may have felt that women and children were in more need of the type of overtly religious reminder that the altars constituted. Surely, nothing is a clearer reinforcement of the idea that religious obligations are due than to build the funerary monument in the shape of an altar.[67] Martial's poem about Erotion (10.61, quoted above) is

another example of the idea that the worship of a child might require some reinforcement to sustain it over time. It was too easy for the memory of lost children to disappear with the passage of generations.[68]

Expensive grave altars and tomb monuments were not the exclusive possessions of Rome's traditional elite, for some wealthy freedmen put up monuments on the same model, but the cost would have restricted the option to a small minority.[69] The recollection of older generations would have been, for most Roman families, a matter of personal memory by the living. It seems likely that, in practice, the worship of most Romans as named individuals faded after the death of the last worshipper who had known them personally. Whether Romans in general perceived this change as a problem is a complicated question.

No explicit evidence exists of how Romans viewed the possibility of passing with time from the category of individually worshipped dead to that of being one of the community's group of dead, and one can offer only conjecture. One possibility would be that Romans would fear the change as a step down in status. The way the elite funeral monuments evoke the cult of the dead with tomb altars, tombs in the shape of temples all suggest an overt attempt to sustain worship beyond immediate living memory. It could be, though, that the aforementioned social and political advantages of stressing genealogy influenced the worship patterns of elite families (and those attempting to emulate elite families) in ways that might not have been typical.

Another possibility, which would be consistent with modern cults of the dead like that of the Mbeere,[70] would be that the Romans simply viewed the afterlife as a multistage process, in which a period of intensive worship by one's surviving contemporaries was only the first stage. Presumably, one of the attractions of the idea of becoming one of the *manes* was the idea that one could continue to interact with and protect the persons to whom one was closest in life (see below, chapter 5). The need and opportunity for such interaction would diminish as the passage of time meant that one's worshippers would die and thus become *manes* themselves, who could look after their own contemporary generation of worshippers. The earlier *manes* could then move on to a new status. This would not be the end of their posthumous existence, for they would be part of the community's *manes* whom Romans invoked on such occasions as the opening of the *Mundus*, still existing but now in the company of the *manes* of their former worshippers.

In support of such a view, one could note again a point that I have just made, that it is extremely unlikely that a family could publicly stress a genealogical connection to an important person in the past without including that person among the dead whom the family worshipped by name. This

connection has an interesting implication. Families tried to improve their genealogical associations by pushing their family trees backward, so that there was an ongoing process of defining the history of families for their own self-promotion. Cicero (*Brut.*, 62) claims that some embellishment and even fiction went into such efforts. Indeed, the claims could be extreme. Julius Caesar claimed descent from King Ancus Martius on his mother's side and from the goddess Venus, by way of the hero Aeneas, on his father's side (Suet., *Jul.*, 6). Any effort to trace a family back to such distant/legendary figures from early Rome would have to trace first the more recent (and easier to document) ancestors to establish a route back through the family tree to the sought-after distant connection.

In other words, Romans would have been able to revive a focus on previously neglected (and thus, not currently worshipped-by-name) ancestors to establish a genealogical path to some more famous earlier figure. Again, it seems unlikely that a family could publicly emphasize a connection to a previously obscure ancestor without including that person among the dead they worshipped by name. This process of employing new explorations of genealogy for familial self-promotion requires an underlying model of the *manes* in which even *manes* whom a family no longer worships by name nevertheless retain some degree of connection with their formerly living identity. If the family's current needs required it, they could rejoin the *manes* whom the family worshipped by name at the *Parentalia*.

This scenario receives some support from literary models of *Elysium*. As I discuss more fully elsewhere (in the preface and chapter 5.C), some Romans combined Greek models of existence in *Elysium* with the cult of the *manes*, while other Romans seemed uninterested in doing so. For those attracted to this combination, one of the points may have been the reinforcement that literary portrayals of *Elysium* gave to the idea of eternal individual identity, even when among the mass of one's fellow *manes*. When poets present heroes going to the underworld, those heroes can identify other individual dead persons. In book 13 of Silius' *Punica*, Scipio Africanus, the hero of the Second Punic War, visits the land of the dead and can easily identify a range of persons who lived well before his time, including the wives of both Aeneas and Romulus and Brutus, the founder of the Republic. Time in the land of the dead does not erode the connection to a specific formerly living identity.

I will show in chapter 5.A.1.b that Roman thought offered varying answers to the question of how similar a deified dead person was to his/her formerly living self. It is not clear that the revival of worship-by-name for genealogical reasons always endorsed as humanlike a model of *manes* as the poets portraying *Elysium* envisioned. What genealogical uses of the dead do share with the

portrayals of the underworld, though, is the basic premise that something *specific* survives death that is not just absorbed into an amorphous mass of the dead, even if centuries pass or the person's descendants no longer worship that *manes* by name.

F) INCLUSIVENESS

The rules and customs that governed which dead persons a family would worship as *manes* are most remarkable for their inclusiveness. Any Roman who wrote a will or even just legally possessed property that would pass on through intestate inheritance would have generated the obligation to worship in his or her heirs or even in nonfamilial creditors. Moreover, familial and social ties based on *pietas* would have linked even those who did not or could not generate obligations based on inheritance to potential worshippers, drawing on additional ties and loyalties ranging from familial duty to personal affection to political adherence. Although families could select which forms of *pietas* they wished to emphasize through their worship, and thus might fail to act on every potential obligation, the social ties of *pietas* created a web of connections that linked Romans to multiple relatives and associates beyond the narrower criterion of inheritance. To have died without the expectation that one would receive posthumous worship would have required dying without possessing any property, any close familial ties, or even any friends willing to take on the obligation. Few Romans could have been so isolated from society. The Roman deification of the dead was broadly inclusive of almost every member of the Roman population.

FOUR

THE *MANES* IN THE CONTEXT OF ROMAN RELIGION

Beliefs and Variations

Paul Veyne wrote this about the Roman afterlife:

> No generally accepted doctrine taught that there is anything after death other than a cadaver. Lacking a common doctrine, Romans did not know what to think; consequently they assumed nothing and believed nothing.[1]

This quotation from Veyne raises several issues that are worthy of further consideration, including that ideas in Roman sources about the afterlife (and the *manes* specifically) show a great deal of variation—even contradiction—in their details. The variations become particularly evident once one moves beyond widely asserted points such as the basic idea that the *manes* existed and that legal and social formulas determined the obligation to worship. Veyne's argument that the Romans "believed nothing" depends upon defining "belief" in such a way that belief must take the form of theological doctrine in a manner characteristic of Christianity. Other scholars have used a similar definition to argue that "belief" has no place in discussions of Pagan thought at all.

Thus, my study here of beliefs (and their variations) in the cult of the dead needs to elaborate on several points to justify its methodological assumptions: (1) The abundance of variation in Roman beliefs about the afterlife is not specific to the afterlife alone, and similar levels of variation are common in other aspects of Roman religious thought. (2) The definition of the word "belief," even as defined in standard dictionaries, does not require a meaning as narrow as that Veyne used to dismiss Roman beliefs or that others have used to question the relevancy of any beliefs to Roman thought. (3) Variants in beliefs could coexist because the Romans possessed specific conceptual mechanisms that accommodated the existence of variation without generating conflict,

and (4) there are ways to generalize about Roman beliefs that do not require resorting to the type of negative conclusion that Veyne's argument asserts.

A) VARIATION: A CHALLENGE TO INTERPRETATION

First, we can return to the above quotation from Veyne, and note that, up to a certain point, his argument draws on a valid observation. There is a great deal of variation in Roman statements about the afterlife and the cult of the dead. This volume's preface noted one example: Roman authors could combine the *manes* with borrowed Greek scenarios of *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, but they could also choose not to do so and reject the relevance of the Greek underworld models in their worship of *manes*. Other examples will follow. The powers that Romans attributed to *manes* spanned a diverse range, from helping armies at war, to protecting grain, to witnessing oaths, with variations in the details. For example, some Romans believed the dead could extend the life of the living under the dead's own power; others believed that they needed assistance from other deities (chapter 5.A.1.b). Burying a coin with the dead could be essential for transmission to the afterlife for some Romans but not for others (chapter 6.C). Some Romans viewed the *lemures*, the dead that Romans worshipped at the *Lemuria,* as being the same as the *manes*; others thought differently (chapter 7.B). The *larvae* were a form of the deified dead, except when they were not (appendix 1). Likewise, some Roman authors present the household gods known as *lares* as children of a single goddess, but others present them as a form of the deified dead (below, section 4.C.1). Some of these variations are not minor points and affect the basic definitions of what, for example, *lares* and *lemures* were in Roman culture. They would therefore produce different interpretations for worshippers about what they were trying to accomplish at a given ceremony such as the *Lemuria*, even perhaps when they were all performing the same ceremony in terms of the ritual form.

Moreover, this broad diversity was not in any way limited to the cult of the *manes* but could also appear in Roman religion in relation to any Roman god or divine action. The attributes and even biographical details that Romans credited to a god could vary widely and might depend on incompatible premises. For example, Romans could identify multiple different deities—Pan, Inuus, and others—as the object of the annual ceremony of the *Lupercalia*, although these different gods have a variety of distinct attributes.[2] Romans could both celebrate ceremonies based on the myth of Proserpina marrying

the king of the underworld and hold other ceremonies based on a variant myth, in which it was her mother Ceres who married the underworld king.[3] Participants in the annual festival for the deity Pales, the *Parilia*, could disagree about whether the festival was about agriculture or urban life, or even about whether Pales was a male god or a goddess.[4] It would be possible to add many additional examples. The tendency of Roman religion to manifest itself through a profusion of variant beliefs is a general feature of the Roman community's religious practices. The question of how to interpret the coexistence of variation is thus a significant issue.

Veyne's own solution was just to equate variation with indifference, and thus he rejects large numbers of diverse texts with the same blanket dismissal, which is hardly satisfactory. Again, however, his rationale is worthy of note for its relevance to other debates. Veyne's argument depends on the idea that belief can exist only if it has a consistency relative to some authorized doctrinal position. It is "common doctrine" that the Romans lack, and therefore they lack belief. Veyne's position assumes belief is not relevant if it does not take a form like that of a Christian creed, where some authority would require consistent adherence to central tenets as part of valid participation. Although Veyne's statement concerns only the afterlife, his argument about belief relates closely to the even broader arguments of scholars who wish to banish the term "belief" entirely from discussions of Roman religion, or even from discussions of any religion, on the grounds that belief is intrinsically Christian.

In the rest of this chapter I will consider the definition of the word "belief" and the weaknesses of recent objections to its application to Rome, by showing that the term is neither intrinsically Christianizing nor anachronistic to the Roman era. The issue of definition is not an esoteric point. Only by establishing the range and flexibility of the concept of belief is it possible to discuss how variations in beliefs could exist without the framework of consistent dogma that Veyne assumes to be necessary. By examining these issues it will be possible not only to explain the peaceful coexistence of seemingly contradictory beliefs in Roman society but also to suggest strategies for the study of Roman religious variation, which in later chapters I will then illustrate in the case of the *manes*.

b) The Debate over Defining the Word "Belief"

In the field of classics, the scholarly controversy over the use of the word "belief" began in particular with the influential work of the late Simon Price,

though he was drawing on aspects of earlier work by anthropologist Rodney Needham.[5] For Price, belief is "profoundly Christian" and "forged out of the experience which the Apostles and Saint Paul had of the risen Lord," and it is therefore "Christianizing" to attribute beliefs to the Pagan Romans. This dismissal of the relevancy of "belief" has become, in the words of Edward Bispham, "an 'orthodoxy' represented in almost any book on Roman religion written since the early 1980s." Others, such as Jason Davies, while still presenting belief as intrinsically Christian, put their emphasis on presenting "belief" as part of an intrinsically modern discourse and therefore "anachronistic" to apply to Rome.[6] There are also those who have disagreed, though not always using the same rationale.[7]

The immediate issue is one of terminology. What does the word "belief" mean? As the debate is about the applicability of using the term "belief" in modern scholarly analysis, one should stress that it is the *modern meaning* of the term that is at stake. If it were actually true that any use of the word "belief" by a current scholar in an English-language publication would be intrinsically "Christianizing," then that would require "belief" to have Christian associations in modern English *in every case without exception*. Otherwise, Christian uses of "belief" would just be one of several usages of the word, which would not prohibit applying the term outside of Christian culture. The same is true of arguing that the term is intrinsically modern and anachronistic. One would have to show that this is *always* the case, not merely that it was one of several possibilities; otherwise, there would be no difficulty in applying the nonanachronistic sense of the word to the Romans.[8]

Underlying the question of defining the meaning of the word "belief" is a broader issue. What sort of religious mentality is it valid to attribute to the Romans? If it is not a "belief" when the Romans say that their gods exist and can perform acts of power, then what is it? If one accepts that the Romans have no beliefs at all, then one would also have to develop entirely separate terminology to explain what the Romans are doing when they assert or assume the existence of gods who can affect the material world, make decisions, and answer prayers. For example, a votive inscription thanking a god for performing an act of power would have to make sense without reference to the Roman believing that a god existed and performed an act of power. Such alternative terminology could not consist simply of substituting euphemisms whose meaning overlaps with the dictionary definition of belief (i.e., substituting "thinking" or "assuming" or having an "opinion" or having a "viewpoint") but would have to be something else entirely.

Some have suggested substituting "symbolism" or "ritual" as the basis of analysis, but these options have their own problems. To explain Roman state-

ments about gods solely in terms of either symbolism or ritual would require an *a priori* assumption that the Romans never mean what they say. So, for example, a ceremony accompanied by a prayer to heal the sick or a votive inscription thanking a god for having already healed the sick would never actually mean that Romans believe that a god with healing powers exists or that the Romans are appealing overtly to the power of that god. Instead, one would need one of two options. The symbolic interpretation requires that the ceremony would have to be *invariably* symbolic of something other than healing, so that healing would not actually be the goal of the ceremony, even though the participants are claiming otherwise. The ritual option would require that the ceremony's healing take place as a result of the ritual action alone, without the prayer content, the god, or later statements of thanksgiving directed to that god being relevant in any way to the healing outcome. To make that argument, though, one would have to explain why those elements would be present with such consistency.[9] It might be better to ask whether such radical substitutions for "belief" are really necessary. Is it actually impossible for the term "belief" to apply validly to Roman statements about gods?

Those rejecting the use of the word "belief" often treat the idea that "belief" is Christianizing, anachronistic, or both as self-evident. Needham presents what he claims is a history of the development of the concept of "belief," but his historical model considers no evidence from outside the Judeo-Christian tradition, and so his argument that the idea is narrowly Christian relies on completely circular logic.[10] Price never offers an actual definition of the word "belief" beyond declaring it to be "Christianizing," but he dismisses using it as "nonsense" and "deeply misguided."[11]

In addition to the aforementioned classicists, the objection to using the term "belief" on the grounds that it is a Christianizing term has found supporters in anthropology, who wish to remove the word "belief" from the study of religion in general. The argument is quite similar to that in the above quote from Veyne. It depends on defining "belief" in an extremely narrow manner as it would apply to a Christian creedal formula or official Christian theological statement. In particular, the argument requires "belief" to function only in formulations such as "I believe X, and therefore I am a member of group Y," in which adherence to beliefs held in common define group identity, with the additional implication that there is some official mechanism to assert correct beliefs and try to standardize them. A Christian example would be, "I believe in Jesus and therefore I am a Christian," defining identity by standardized belief.

So, for example, when describing the worship of spirits in a Chinese village, Catherine Bell rejected the value of studying beliefs because the villagers

did not believe in spirits "the way Christian colleagues believe in a central theology" and because there was no "systematic coherence."[12] Different villagers asserted many different things about the same spirits, making no effort to agree on a single interpretation. Bell equates the lack of enforced consistency with the lack of belief, calling to mind Veyne's complaint about the Romans lacking "common doctrine." Similarly, Tooker observed that Burmese Ahka villagers attributed to a particular ceremony the power to remove rats, but she insisted that no belief was involved because the Ahka tolerated several different theories about how exactly supernatural power performed the action, in contrast to Christians who would have asserted an official theological position. Other scholars have cited similar patterns to reject the value of studying beliefs in Sri Lanka and Madagascar.[13]

Arguments specific to Rome follow the same pattern. Price's characterization of "belief" as a "participant category" of Christianity suggests that he had a similar objection in mind, although he did not elaborate. Even the relatively subtle discussion of Denis Feeney defines "belief" in terms of Christian doctrinal consistency, "We should ... bear in mind that not all religions place as high a value on belief in key dogmas as does modern Christianity," and he therefore argues that it is inappropriate to ask, for example, whether the emperor Augustus believed in the gods he worshipped.[14] Why, though, would belief require taking the form of "key dogmas," a formulation that clearly uses Christianity as a model? Both Feeney and Jason Davies quote for comparison a modern Shinto priest's comment, when asked why a ceremony took a certain form: "There are many theories ... but we are not sure which of them are true." Both scholars take the lack of a single self-consistent doctrinal explanation as proof that it is inappropriate to discuss the situation in terms of belief. Davies claims that doing so would lead to the conclusion that "some section of the movement was consciously and deliberately engaged in a huge deception."[15] Why, though, would "deception" be the only alternative to a Christian-style doctrinal organization of ideas? Would it not be at least as logical to conclude that the example shows that multiple beliefs could coexist without a mandate to choose formally between them?

So, we need to ask the question: What does the word "belief" mean? Definitions can be proscriptive, that is, saying what someone thinks a word *ought to mean*, or they can be descriptive, that is, saying what a word means in actual usage. Lest I be accused of circular argumentation, I will turn here to the definitions of the English language's most authoritative source for descriptive definitions, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, where every definition derives from actual documented usage. The *OED* offers seven definitions of the verb "believe" and eight for the noun form "belief."[16]

In the case of all the *OED* definitions, the usage could be (or has been) applied in a Christian context. A few of the definitions also specifically refer to Christian ideas or creedal formulations, and so the noun "belief" can be "the Christian virtue of faith" and "a formal statement of doctrines believed, a creed." No one, though, is denying that Christian ideas and creeds could be examples of beliefs. The question is whether the meaning of "belief" and "believe" is so narrow that only Christian ideas and creeds would be examples. The answer is, "No." The first *OED* definition of "believe" is "to have confidence or faith in, and consequently to rely on or trust to, a person or (Theol.) a god." The inclusion of "a person" as well as "a god" shows that the definition is a general idea of having confidence in the capacity of some being, human or not, to perform some action, and the wording "a god" rather than "the god" does not limit it to the Christian deity.

Other *OED* definitions of "believe" pose even more difficulty for those who would restrict the verb to Christian actions. To prove that "believe" applies only to Christian ideas, one would have to prove that only Christians can "have confidence in the truth or accuracy of a statement," or "have confidence in the genuineness, virtue, value, or efficacy of (a principle, institution, practice)," or "have a particular (good, bad, or other) opinion of a person or thing," or "trust or accept the assertions or opinions of [someone]," or prove that only a Christian could hold a belief in the sense of an "assent to a proposition, statement, or fact, esp. on the grounds of testimony or authority, or in the absence of proof or conclusive evidence." In short, to demonstrate that the terms "believe" and "belief" are intrinsically and invariably Christian in their meanings, one would have to demonstrate that the majority of the definitions that the *OED* offers are fundamentally incorrect. Likewise, to claim that application of "belief" to the Romans was anachronistic would similarly require demonstrating either that the dictionary meanings are wrong or that only people of the modern era could, for example, "have a particular opinion." To date, no one has demonstrated such a point.[17]

What the *OED* definitions suggest is that "to believe" is not a narrowly Christian or a narrowly culture-specific action, even if one has the option of applying it in a Christian context. The core meaning is to have confidence in the truth of an idea. The *OED* breaks that down by context, so that having confidence in the capacity of person, and the truth of a statement, and the truth of an opinion become three definitions, but the core idea of endorsing the truth of a concept is common to all the variations. Likewise, there is an implication that the "confidence" in question exists apart from direct verification. Sometimes that point is explicit, "in the absence of proof or conclusive evidence," but even when it is not, it is implied. To have confidence in

the truth of an opinion or even a statement is different from having verified proof of the truth of an opinion or statement. I therefore offered in 2003 my own one-sentence definition, which I intended to be summary of the common ground within the *OED* definitions, "Belief is a conviction that an individual (or group of individuals) holds independently of the need for empirical support."[18] Even disregarding my wording, though, and working directly from the *OED*'s definitions, one can still define the meaning of "believe" as accepting the truth of an idea without explicit verification, for that is intrinsic to the dictionary's definitions.[19]

It would be difficult to argue that the ability to accept the truth of an idea is not a universal capacity of humans. In that regard, one could also note the theories of Donald Davidson. Davidson argued that human communication depended upon belief, for it would be impossible to speak or write to a person with whom one had not communicated previously without the belief that speech or other media of communication could accurately translate one's thoughts. In other words, one cannot communicate without the belief that communication is possible.[20] Similarly, one could note the growing field of cognitive interpretations of religion, which hold that evolution predisposed humans to have a capacity to accept the existence/guidance of higher powers. Although it is not necessarily the point that the cognitive scholars wish to emphasize, one corollary of such theories is, again, that a capacity for belief would be universal, even if the beliefs themselves vary culture to culture.[21]

Another implication of the *OED*'s definitions is that, while Christian creeds would be beliefs, beliefs do not have to take the form of Christian creeds. There is no need for an "I believe X, therefore I am in group Y" type of formulation. Indeed, there is no need to use the word "believe" at all, for any assertion of the truth of an idea could assert a belief. The Romans could say, "I believe X," for the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*'s definition of the verb *credo* closely resembles the *OED* definition of "believe" and even offers "believe" as a definition.[22] Even in English, though, the actual use of a verb "believe" is not necessary for a statement to be an example of the process of believing as defined in the *OED*. One does not have to say "believe" to believe. Thus, any argument that tried to deny that the Romans had religious beliefs by counting occurrences of the verb *credo* (and thereby insisting that the verb has to be present for a belief to be present) would be missing the point of the *OED* definitions entirely. An example of belief would only have to be a statement asserted to be true (or reflects an inner conviction that the statement is true). Thus, without the verb "believe," one could have a Christian belief ("Jesus is God"), a secular belief ("The president will handle it"), a philosophic belief ("Reason is superior to belief"), or a belief involving a non-Christian god

("The *manes* will protect you"). The last example falls comfortably under the scope of the *OED*'s first definition of belief, to have confidence "in a god" (i.e., confidence in the capacity of a god to do something).

Before moving to the question of what belief without Christian formulations would look like, one final variation of the attacks on belief deserves note, which Clifford Ando has put forth in 2008.[23] Like several predecessors, Ando dismisses "belief" as being intrinsically Christian without ever offering a specific definition of the term. What is new is that he offers a contrast between Christian "belief" and Pagan "knowledge." He suggests that Pagans had superior certainty in the efficacy of their rituals based upon empirical observation that their ceremonies produced favorable results and that they therefore "knew" that their rituals would work without any need for belief, while the Christians only had belief, which Ando implies involves an intrinsic lack of commitment to the truth of their own ideas.

Ando's contrast involves many difficulties. His suggestion that "belief" is intrinsically lacking in commitment simply contradicts the *OED*, which consistently defines believing as having "confidence" in the truth of ideas, and one could likewise cite common expressions such as "unshakeable belief." It is also unclear why Pagans would have any more reason to think their rituals would have favorable results than Christians. Does Ando mean that Pagan prayers received a favorable response more often than Christian ones? Why would that be true, and how could one know if it was? Even if he means only that Pagans had more confidence in a favorable result, it is hard to see how one could measure the relative confidence of two large populations at the distance of 15 to 20 centuries. There is nothing intrinsic to the idea of belief that requires lack of confidence.

Ando also claims that Roman rituals are "empiricist" in nature and based solely upon observation of the results of rituals, but that is exactly what Roman rituals were not. There is no empirical connection whatsoever between a ritual, for example, sacrificing a pig, and a result that is not part of the ceremony itself, for example, the recovery of a sick person. The connection between ceremony and result depends upon the assumption of an invisible, unverifiable, superhuman agent who will bring about the requested result in response to the performed ceremony. It is not logically valid to classify the invoking of invisible supernatural agency as "empiricist." Moreover, the Romans did not just imply, but overtly identified, the supernatural agency. Surviving Roman prayers, descriptions of prayers, hymns, vows, and descriptions of rituals normally identify the agent as one or more gods who have specific names.[24] Ando's theory of distinctive Pagan "knowledge" does

not in practice add anything to the standard *OED* definitions of "believe," for example, to have confidence in "a god" and in the "efficacy of a practice."

It is thus untenable to suggest that attributing beliefs to the Roman is intrinsically Christianizing or intrinsically anachronistic. Each Roman prayer or vow or hymn or description of ritual assumes the existence, power, and decision-making capacity of invisible, unverifiable, superhuman beings and assumes the need to beseech the aid or placate the anger of those beings. The performance of these prayers depends upon beliefs that these superhuman beings (the gods) possess power and have both the ability and the inclination to respond to human action. To deny the Romans the capacity to believe misrepresents what the Romans were doing, misrepresents the standard meaning of the term "believe," or both, and ultimately leaves the modern scholar without adequate terminology for analysis of Roman statements about gods.

C) ROMAN IMPLICATIONS OF NONDOGMATIC BELIEF

It is time now to return more specifically to the Romans and examine the implications of the preceding discussion of "belief" for the interpretation of Roman religion and its multitude of variations. The advantage of using the term "belief" as a term of analysis, but doing so in a way that acknowledges the range of the word's dictionary meanings, is that it allows one to attribute to the Romans the broader and more universal human capacities among the *OED* definitions without requiring one to invoke all of the narrowly context-specific usages. In other words, one can credit the Romans with the capacity to accept the truth of something without verification, have confidence in a god's capacity, or give assent to a proposition, without requiring one to claim that doing so requires the use of Christian creedal formulas. The result is a framework for describing a society that could accommodate enormous variation in beliefs.

Christian creedal formulas emphasize "orthodoxy," the correctness of officially approved sets of beliefs and the use of such sets to define group identity. Christianity makes frequent use of such formulations, and variant sects of Christianity could put forth opposing official sets of beliefs in opposition to each other, with each sect also possessing a central authority capable of defining the correctness or incorrectness of any given belief relative to that sect's creedal formulations.[25] As the adjective "orthodox" often applies to just one of Christianity's subsects, in this study I will refer to beliefs in a creedal

formulation as "dogmatic beliefs," that is, defining identity with mandatory dogmas. The Romans could and did have beliefs *without* a dogmatic creedal formulation.

Thus, for example, a Roman votive inscription in which a woman is thanking a deity (e.g., Venus) for an act of power (e.g., healing the sick) would assert or imply a range of beliefs: that the goddess Venus exists, that she is capable of healing the sick, that she wishes to have the offering promised in the vow, that she is capable of responding to a vow, that she is willing to respond to this particular vow and has done so, and that she has already (at the time of the inscription) performed the requested act of power, and so it is appropriate to put up an inscription thanking the goddess. All these are acts of believing according to any of several of the *OED* definitions, but it is not necessary for every variation of the *OED* definitions to apply to every belief, and so no creedal formation is necessary. Thus, the woman's beliefs about her vow to Venus would not commit her to additional beliefs about Venus as defined by some religious authority. Lack of a dogmatic framework meant that even another Roman performing a similar vow or erecting a similarly worded inscription could have substantially different beliefs about the nature of Venus, the process of healing, or both. There was no religious authority that required the Romans to agree with each other about the details.

What would a society look like if its religion was marked by a nondogmatic structure of beliefs? Ironically, some of the best answers come from the aforementioned anthropological attacks on the use of the word "belief," for those attacks equate "belief" with a dogmatic Christian-style creedal structure. What they are portraying, though, is nondogmatic beliefs. Thus, we can return to Catherine Bell's portrait of a Chinese village and the villagers' beliefs about spirits. For Bell observes that although the villagers attributed supernatural actions to spirits, but did not agree on the details, this variation was in no way a problem. Instead, they were "very aware of the number of possible opinions and thus have located their own position . . . as a matter of some choice." The attribution of powers to invisible superhuman beings is well within the scope of the dictionary definitions of "believe." What the villagers lack is not belief but what Bell calls "central theology," that is, a dogmatic structure for organizing beliefs vis-à-vis some central religious authority. So, different beliefs could simply coexist without conflict. The same pattern is visible in Tooker's portrait of the Ahka of Burma, who all agree that a given ceremony removes rats, but they are willing to entertain as equally valid several theories about how the supernatural forces function to perform that task. The absence of dogmatic belief allows the coexistence of a multitude of variations in specific individual beliefs.[26]

If these nondogmatic patterns of belief were found also in Rome, then one would expect to find similar patterns of diverse or even contradictory beliefs coexisting at Rome without apparent conflict. As I have already noted in section A of this chapter, that is exactly what one finds. Thus, Romans could have a lack of agreement over the gender of the deity Pales, over the identity and attributes of the god worshipped at the *Lupercalia*, or over aspects of the cult of the dead, such as whether *lemures* and *manes* are terms for the same beings or whether *lares* are a form of the dead at all. This diversity was not accompanied by conflict. There were no accusations of heresy or any factional strife with one group disputing the nature of a god with another. The Roman Pagans lacked the dogmatic structure of mandatory creeds and centrally asserted theology that made such conflicts possible in Christianity.

Furthermore, Pagan Rome did not just lack the dogmatic organizational structure that characterizes Christianity; it had alternative structures of its own that served to facilitate the coexistence of beliefs. One can refer to these structures as polymorphism, *pietas*, and orthopraxy.

1. Polymorphism

A factor in the Roman ability to accommodate variation in religious beliefs was what one can call here polymorphism, the belief that gods could possess more than one form and that the different forms could possess distinct attributes, even some whose details were incompatible with each other.[27] It is a useful conceptual device for understanding, for example, how the category of *manes* could include the *lemures* for some Romans but not others (see chapter 7.B.2). A Roman god, at the moment that he or she performed an act of power, possessed a particular identity and persona—a name, a set of attributes, and a propensity to influence certain elements of human life. Roman authors did not limit their gods to one such persona, and they regularly equated several deities with different attributes as forms of the same deity. The god one prayed to in a particular situation, and under a particular name, could be the same god to whom one prayed under a different name in a different context. Likewise, one Roman author could present a god as having substantially different attributes from those another author attributed to the same god under the same name, for any god could have multiple distinct forms.

To illustrate how polymorphism worked, we can first look at the example of several Roman goddesses, some (but not all) of which have associations with death and the afterlife.[28] This example is useful because it illustrates the wide range of equations that were possible and shows that polymorphism was a broader phenomenon than just the cult of the dead. Polymorphism allowed

different authors to equate different deities with each other, but not always in the same groupings. Statius (*Ach.*, 1.344–348) equated the goddess Diana with the goddess Hecate, but Varro (*Ling.*, 5.68–69) had earlier equated Diana with Luna (the moon), Juno Lucina (goddess of childbirth), and Proserpina (queen of the underworld). Augustine (*De Civ. D.*, 7.24) cites another passage of Varro from a lost work that equates Proserpina with the hearth-goddess Vesta, with Ops (goddess of plenty), and with Tellus (Mother Earth). Varro (*Ling.*, 5.67) also equates Juno, wife of Jupiter, with Tellus, whom he has elsewhere equated with Proserpina, whom he has equated with Diana. Likewise, Varro quotes lines by Ennius equating Ops with both the earth and with the agricultural goddess Ceres (*Ling.*, 5.64). As Varro had also equated Ops to Proserpina, he thus equated Ceres with Proserpina; that is, he equated a mother-goddess with her own daughter.

It is true that some of Varro's equations come from his book about the etymology of words, but others are fragments from Varro's lost book about Roman religious rituals and worship, and one certainly cannot present Varro as uninterested in the proper manner to worship gods. Even if Varro were merely reporting diverse views that he collected from earlier writers, he still notably seems untroubled by the casual equation of powerful goddesses in different combinations, and he does not feel a need to assert that some equations are more correct than others.

These sorts of equations are not limited to encyclopedic writings such as Varro's and appear elsewhere, for example, in a poem that Catullus (*Carm.*, 34) wrote to be performed by a chorus in honor of the goddess Diana. The occasion is unclear, but Catullus' own wedding poetry (*Carm.*, 62) shows that Romans could use choruses in private ceremonies, and there is no reason to assume either that the poem was part of some public festival or that it was a purely literary composition that no one ever performed.[29] The poem again shows the casual equation of several deities with each other. The poet equates Diana with the goddess of childbirth, Juno Lucina; with the goddess of the crossroads, Trivia; and with the moon-goddess Luna, who measures out the months for farmers. He also says, "May you be hallowed by whatever name pleases you," allowing for the possibility that the goddess has other names. Catullus does not wish to offend the goddess by assuming he knows which identity she prefers, but he can nevertheless worship at least four goddesses, whom other Romans might treat as separate beings, as forms of a single goddess.

The goddesses whom these authors identify with each other have not simply different names but distinct personas and attributes. When Varro links Diana and Proserpina, he is equating a virgin goddess with a goddess married to the ruler of the underworld. The addition of Vesta (another virgin)

and Juno and Ceres (other wives, with children, and thus incompatible with virginity) only raises the level of complications, as does the mother-daughter equation of Ceres with Proserpina.

The social value of polymorphism was that, if gods could have multiple different identities, then one could equate beliefs that were distinct or even contradictory directly with each other. One could explain any resulting logical inconsistency by the belief that the gods could possess multiple, nonidentical personas. Polymorphism provided a way to interpret variations in belief that could accommodate the endorsement of multiple possibilities by multiple believers. It therefore served as a safety valve. There was no reason to argue about differences in beliefs about the *manes* or any other god, even when the beliefs in question seemed incompatible, for all the variants could be true. A Christian-style creedal framework of mandatory dogmas was a device for limiting acceptable variation in beliefs by establishing officially imposed correct answers to religious questions. The Romans, through polymorphism, possessed a framework for doing the reverse, accommodating vast amounts of variation. If gods could have multiple forms, even multiple forms with incompatible attributes, then any question about the nature of a god could have more than one equally valid answer. There was just no reason to argue.

Even Rome's festivals could embrace these contradictions by endorsing multiple scenarios through different ceremonies. Romans celebrated an annual festival devoted to the mother-daughter bond of Ceres and Proserpina, built around the story that the underworld god Dis carried away Proserpina to be his bride.[30] Nevertheless, Servius (*Georg*., 1.344) mentions another ceremony called the "Wedding of Orcus," which commemorates the marriage of Ceres (not Proserpina) to the ruler of the underworld; it suggests an identification of the two goddesses to such a degree that one could substitute Ceres for Proserpina, as does an earlier reference by Statius (*Theb*., 4.459–460) to the goddess of the underworld as "Deep Ceres" (*profunda Ceres*), not Proserpina.[31] One could contrast this Pagan tolerance of multiple incompatible scenarios with the centuries of hair-splitting Christian debates over the nature of the Trinity, in which none of the debating factions was willing to accept that different interpretations could simply coexist.[32]

There were also no official rules dictating which goddesses or gods should be equated, and so variations abound. If Romans could equate Diana with Juno Lucina, the childbirth goddess, as Catullus (*Carm.,* 34) said, that does not mean that Juno Lucina was always a form of Diana.[33] There is nothing in the context, for example, to indicate that Ovid (*Fasti,* 3.167–258) had an equation with the virgin-goddess Diana in mind when he equated Juno Lucina with Juno Regina (wife of Jupiter and mother of Mars). His context was the

Matronalia (on March 1), which was a festival of motherhood and not connected to Diana. As there were no rules, and no creedal formulations to insist that one identification was more correct than another, the Romans could have simply made identifications that seemed appropriate within a given act of worship. If one wished to invoke Diana's power to help with a birth, then she could be Juno Lucina. In another context, perhaps an association with Proserpina (a chthonic deity, but also associated with agriculture) might have seemed more useful to the worshipper. Tacitus (*Hist.*, 4.84.5) described how different Romans equated the Egyptian god Sarapis with different Roman gods (Aesculapius, Jupiter, Dis). The choice of identification depended on how the Roman worshipper viewed Sarapis, and clearly the choice was that of the individual worshipper to make.

As the Sarapis example also illustrates, at the Imperial level polymorphism manifested itself in the so-called *Interpretatio Romana*, the conscious identification of Rome's gods with the gods of their provincial subjects such as the Greeks, Egyptians, or Celts. The *interpretatio* was a complex phenomenon "with which Romans and their subjects negotiated cultural difference."[34] It doubtless played out in a variety of ways in different times and places, and it is not at all clear that the provincials themselves viewed these identifications in the same way as the Romans. Jane Webster has rightly stressed, though, that the *interpretatio* as it appears in surviving sources is overwhelmingly a phenomenon that Romans initiated for Roman purposes. Considered in that light, one can see it as a form of polymorphism.[35]

The *interpretatio* allowed Romans to combine and redistribute the attributes of deities, so that Romans could coopt what they found attractive from provincial deities onto their own. The heavy Roman borrowing of Greek myth is the most obvious example. Polymorphism also once again served as a safety valve for potential tension. In theory, the Romans always had the option of forcing provincials to adopt the specific gods of Rome, but why should they? If one could identify provincial gods as forms of Roman gods, then the Romans could still view a non-Roman ceremony to a non-Roman god as an expression of maintaining *pietas* with Rome's gods, whether or not the provincials viewed it the same way. There was no reason to force local peoples to change their way of doing things. It is quite possible, as Hitchner suggested for North Africa, that the wide distribution of tombstones mentioning *manes* may reflect in some places the equation of Rome's deified dead with local cults of the dead. Even in the provinces, the Romans still had no reason to argue about the nature of gods.[36]

To turn more specifically to the cult of the dead among the Romans, the most striking example of polymorphism is perhaps the question of whether

the *lares*, the localized protective gods worshipped in every home and other contexts, were the same as the *manes*, the deified dead. What were *lares*? Ovid (*Fasti,* 2.597–616) presents *lares* as all being the children of a single superhuman being, the nymph Lara, which would seem to rule out the possibility that they were the deified dead. Nevertheless, Festus (108L) describes them as deified dead spirits—a significantly different scenario, for it is hard to see how dead Romans could all be the children of a single divine mother. Still, the contradiction did not lead to conflict. The Christian Arnobius (*Adv. Nat.*, 3.41) complained that Varro listed both options for *lares* in his works, and several others as well, including polymorphic equations of *lares* with several categories of Greek deities, the Samothracian *digiti,* and the Idaean *dactyli*. Varro gave the mother of the *lares* the name Mania, different from Ovid's Lara, but showing the same idea of a single mother. The Arval Brethren made an annual offering to the mother of the *lares*, but that again did not seem to remove (for other Romans) the possibility that the *lares* were deified dead.[37]

The traditional approach to the *lares* has been to assume the existence of doctrinal consistency so that the *lares* can only be one thing or the other, but not multiple possibilities simultaneously. Thus, scholars have disagreed about whether the *lares* are gods protecting places or groups of people and whether they are the dead, always presenting these as strict either/or possibilities. In the latest discussion, Harriet Flower adopts a similar line, insisting that *lares* are gods protecting places, not people, and that that one should never associate them with the dead.[38] These issues are not so simple. When, for example, Tibullus (1.10.15–32) calls upon the *lares* of his family's home to protect him on the battlefield far from the home's location, it is difficult to see how the prayer would be for the protection of a place, not the person praying. At the same time, there is no reason to doubt *lares* protected places in various contexts. Only the modern desire for doctrinal consistency requires the *lares* to do only one thing. Flower likewise overstates her contrast between *lares* and chthonic gods on several points.[39] Still, her generalization that Romans did not associate *lares* with *manes* is true more often than it is not in surviving sources. The point is that "more often than not" is not the same as saying there was a rule, or that there was any Roman religious authority capable of issuing such a rule, or that any Roman (as opposed to modern scholar) felt that consistency on the issue was essential.

Varro could equate the *lares* with the dead as one of several interpretive options without choosing between those options. Festus could say the same thing several centuries later, suggesting that some minority strand of thought existed for them both to draw upon. There is nothing to suggest that either Varro or Festus thought it necessary to defend their assertions, for what au-

thority could say they were wrong? Just as Diana could be a virgin in one form and a nonvirgin simultaneously in another, so the *lares* could have a form in which they were the deified dead and also, in a different form, be the children of a single goddess, who might herself have more than one form under different names. Romans could worship *lares* at their home shrines or a ceremony such as the annual *Caristia*, without agreeing about their specific nature, because *lares* could have more than one nature.

Polymorphism did not mean that every deity was a form of every other deity or that any attribute applied to any god. Catullus' "by whatever name pleases you" implies that the goddess would not wish some names. Polymorphism in mainstream Roman Paganism was not endorsing the idea that all gods were manifestations of a single underlying god, an idea that could be found in the Roman world in the cult of Isis, in certain philosophical traditions, and in the modern world in religions such as Hinduism.[40] Roman gods could have many forms but not an unlimited number. The specific number or identity of all the forms that any given god possessed would, however, be unknown, for there was no official list of equations issued by any religious authority, and individuals could have their own interpretations. Thus, polymorphism removed the need to assert a single correct version of each deity's form, and it did so in a way that did not challenge the strength with which any individual might believe in a particular interpretation. It was simply that other interpretations could also be right.

2. Pietas*: Collective and Individual Relationships*

The conceptual diversity that polymorphism facilitated was only one part of Roman accommodation of variation. There was also *pietas*, whose collective form relieved individual Romans of the responsibility to worship all of Rome's gods personally. Paganism had no organization for participants to join, and no public ceremonies or community gatherings where attendance was at all mandatory. Although the Romans as a group invoked the support of numerous gods, Roman individuals had no mandate to worship all of them personally, and they could focus on the gods most relevant to their particular situations. That Romans could worship different gods from their neighbors without conflict shows not only the lack of dogmatic theology but also the presence of another Roman conceptual device: *pietas*. *Pietas* was a way of conceiving of relationships with gods as being based on reciprocity on the model of relationships between family members. Because *pietas* could apply to the community's collective relationship with a god as well as an individual relationship, *pietas* served as a device to remove the responsibility for worship-

ping all of Rome's gods from any one individual, thereby allowing Roman religion's aggregate of separate acts of worship for varying gods to be for the overall benefit of the Roman community.[41]

As I have already discussed in chapter 3.D, to have or uphold *pietas* is the duty to fulfill one's own part in an ongoing relationship of reciprocal obligation with another party. Romans used the term to describe relationships between members of the same family, between citizens and governments, but also between worshippers and gods. Just as both children and parents had obligations toward each other, so, too, the ongoing interaction between worshippers and gods flowed both ways. Gods could use their superhuman powers to benefit worshippers, but the idea of *pietas* meant that the gods also wanted or needed things that worshippers could supply. Thus, while making a sacrifice and asking the god Mars to protect his farm, Cato (*Agr.*, 141) can tell the god to "be increased" (*macte*) by the sacrifice. One should not, however, confuse this reciprocity with a basic quid pro quo exchange. The gods held the dominant power and could still refuse to answer any given prayer even if a worshipper made an offering, just as the obligations of parenthood do not require a parent to indulge every whim of a child.[42]

Moreover, beyond simply emphasizing reciprocity, *pietas* also subtly allowed Romans to conceptualize religious obligation in such a way that they could present a broad range of independent acts of worship as benefiting the community as a whole. *Pietas* could link an individual god in a reciprocal relationship with an individual human but also with multiple humans grouped as a unit. Thus, a relationship of *pietas* existed not just on a one-to-one basis between an individual worshipper and a deity (as a Christian would likely define a religious relationship) but also between the deity and the community as a group. Any member of that group could perform the worship that would maintain reciprocity on behalf of the group, but not every member of the group needed to do so.[43] The cult of the dead provides a particularly good example of this. The obligation to worship any individual dead person fell on relatively few worshippers with specific ties to the dead person (chapter 3), but they also participated in helping the community by warding off, through their individual worship, the collective danger that the dead could have posed if they felt neglected and threatened the community as a group (Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.547–555).

Pietas therefore explains what might at first seem to be a paradoxical element of the Roman religion. On the one hand, Roman authors insist that gods should never be neglected and even explain Rome's success as an empire by claiming that the Roman people were more diligent than other peoples in making sure that they left no obligation to the gods unfulfilled (Val. Max.,

1.1.8–15). Likewise, Romans attributed real and potential disasters to their own neglect of the gods, including, according to Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.547–556), their neglect of *manes*. Correcting the neglect and reassuring the gods of their ongoing loyalty were the ways to restore Rome's success and safety.[44]

The collective sense of *pietas* meant worship of various different gods by different Romans would uphold the *pietas* of the community with all the gods. For individuals, worship was frequently on a need-to-pray basis. Worshippers went to sacrifice to ward off specific problems in their lives or in the hope of realizing specific opportunities as they arose. Even though individuals personally maintained *pietas* only with the gods whom they believed would impact their specific lives, the aggregate of all their worship maintained the community's *pietas* with all the many gods who were relevant to all of their respective situations. One would not want to push the comparison too hard, but a possible analogy would be Adam Smith's famous eighteenth-century description of an economy as a large number of independent self-interested acts that added up to an overall pattern of interaction. For example, any given individual would likely worship a god of weddings infrequently, but weddings took place all the time, and so the Roman community as a whole was worshipping the wedding gods regularly and maintaining *pietas* thereby.

One might ask how the Romans thought they knew whether the amount of worship they were offering was sufficient to please the gods. They depended on an idea of maintaining the *pax deorum*, the "peace of the gods." If there was a problem or a perceived failure of the gods to assist their worshippers, then that was evidence that the gods were angry because there had been neglect.[45] Romans could address the problem by increasing ritual activity or correcting errors in ritual procedure, thereby restoring the peace. A major disaster such as the Roman defeat at Cannae in the Second Punic War (Livy, 22.57) could lead to a state-sponsored investigation of possible neglect or impiety. If, however, there was no perception of overt divine displeasure, then Roman worshippers could assume that the gods were satisfied and that they were doing enough to fulfill *pietas* and to achieve the desired "peace" with the gods. As all individual worship could contribute to the community's overall peace with the gods, one could see Rome's vast diversity of worship as part of system to benefit the Roman people as a group.

Pietas has another implication that is important to the study of the cult of the *manes*. The need to maintain *pietas* and the ability to distribute that obligation among the community of worshippers set up an inverse relationship between the strength of obligation on an individual and the number of worshippers otherwise available to maintain *pietas*. When only a few worshippers existed who owed obligations toward a given deity, the obligations on

those few worshippers would be stronger. Thus, although, the major temple gods such as Jupiter might have theoretically been the most powerful gods, the obligation personally to worship would have been stronger in the case of household gods such as the *manes*, *lares*, and *penates*. A Roman had the option to worship a temple-god such as Jupiter, but he or she did not necessarily need to do so, for the responsibility to maintain *pietas* did not rest with that individual alone. Large numbers of other worshippers with personal needs would assure that the god received regular worship, as would official priests. Domestic gods that were specific to households or narrowly defined groups, however, would lack the large pool of persons with whom one would share the obligation to maintain *pietas*, and so the obligation would fall much more strongly on the individuals in the family if they were to avoid divine anger.[46]

The same principle applies to the cult of the *manes*. There were several criteria to determine who had obligations to worship which deified dead persons (chapter 3), but the total number of obligated worshippers would be small, and the individual mandate to act to maintain *pietas* would be correspondingly strong. Thus, individual Romans would have had more obligation to devote personal energy to worshipping familial gods, including the *manes*, than the gods of Rome's major temples, whom any member of the larger community could worship. It would therefore be misleading to discount the worship of the dead as marginal to the religious experience of Roman individuals.

3. Orthopraxy

Although the Romans did not have any priests who issued judgments on the correctness of beliefs, they did have priests who defined the correctness of ritual procedures. To the degree that any officially mandated element of Roman religion could serve as a basis for group identity, that element was ritual procedure. Participants in the Roman religion were those who performed the rituals of the Roman people for their gods. The focus on correctness of rituals (orthopraxy) rather than correctness of beliefs (orthodoxy) meant in practice that the same rituals could accommodate variations in beliefs about the nature of the Roman gods. As only the rituals had official endorsement, orthopraxy served as yet another device to allow the coexistence of variant beliefs without conflict.

One must use the term "orthopraxy" with caution, for scholars have used it in several ways, some of which are not compatible with the thesis advanced here. For example, Ando used "orthopraxy" to mean that rituals were a substitute for beliefs, that is, that the Romans lacked beliefs entirely and substituted knowledge of rituals instead.[47] This same use of "orthopraxy" has also

appeared in the works of scholars studying religion more generally, either because they wanted to deemphasize beliefs or because they wished to stress beliefs and therefore rejected the use of the term "orthopraxy."[48] For these scholars, "orthopraxy" means that beliefs are absent. In the above discussion of "belief" I have already noted the difficulty with applying such a view to the Romans. Surviving Roman prayers and vows consistently attribute acts of power to supernatural agents whom the prayers and vows invoke.[49] Moreover, these agents have decision-making capacity. An offering to fulfill a vow, for instance, is based upon the premise that the god could have refused to grant the worshipper's request, and the offering thanks the god for his or her decision in favor of the worshipper. One cannot therefore present the Romans as viewing the benefits of religion as something that occurred automatically from rituals without reference to the existence of gods and their powers, and so beliefs in the existence of gods cannot be irrelevant. Even Pliny (*HN.*, 28.10) noted that sacrifices without accompanying prayers were useless.

For the purpose of studying ancient Rome and its religious diversity, James Watson and Evelyn Rawski have provided a more useful model of "orthopraxy" from their research on late-Imperial China.[50] In their formulation, orthopraxy is not about the presence or absence of beliefs but only about the method used to define group identity. Just as an orthodox system uses dogmatic sets of beliefs to define group identity (i.e., "We believe X and Y and are therefore in group Z"), an orthopratic system uses rituals instead ("We perform ceremonies X and Y and are therefore in group Z"). Orthopraxy does not diminish the importance of beliefs to individuals; it offers only a different focus for religious self-definition from what would be found in a system of dogmatic beliefs.

Watson noted that there was an extraordinary diversity of beliefs found in late-Imperial China but that this diversity did not lead to attempts to standardize beliefs into some sort of orthodox creed. Instead, the priests concentrated on defining standard ritual procedures that the members of the community would perform. Thus, "correctness" in religion for the community reflects correctly performed rituals, not the need to correspond to a dogmatic set of beliefs. The priests were experts in ritual procedure, not in defining the correctness of beliefs.

Rawski rightly noted that Watson's model of orthopraxy does not remove the importance of beliefs, for the rituals were still dependent on beliefs that the gods existed, had power, and wanted certain things. What orthopraxy did was to limit to certain areas the range of beliefs that priests *officially* asserted. The priests could explain in detail what the gods wanted in terms of ritual. They did not attempt to assert what the gods were. Thus, a population

holding a broad diversity of beliefs about the gods needed to agree on only a limited range of points, that the gods existed and wanted particular rituals, while disagreements about any number of other details were perfectly acceptable, because they did not violate "correctness" as the priests were defining it. Thus, the system "allowed for a high degree of variations within an overarching structure of unity."[51] That unity manifested itself in the correct performance of rituals in common under the guidance of the priests. Religious participants could all perform the same rituals and view themselves as part of a community defined by those rituals, even though they might disagree about many other points about the nature of gods.

Watson and Rawski's models of orthopraxy work well for Rome, where both a similar diversity of beliefs and a priesthood focused on ritual procedure were present. As Beard has shown in an important study, Roman priesthoods were extremely diverse in their areas of expertise, and one cannot group them into an overall hierarchy of authority, except that they were all responsible to the senate (in the Republic) and later to the emperor.[52] What the priesthoods had in common was that they asserted expertise in ritual procedure, not dispensed sets of dogmas about the nature of gods that all members of the Roman community had to endorse. Beard, North, and Price surveyed a broad range of Roman religious conflicts, but they found none for which the central issue was a dispute over the nature of the deities. There were conflicts over jurisdiction between priesthoods, disputes over religious procedure and who had the right to define it in a given context, and accusations of ceremonies performed incorrectly, but no debates over doctrine.[53]

The study of Roman religion in recent decades has involved debates between those who think that study should focus primarily on public worship, priests, and festivals, a position sometimes called "*polis*-religion," and those who wish to focus more on individual religious experiences or to accommodate both public and private worship in a broader model.[54] One could note that the Watson/Rawski models of "orthopraxy" offer a formula for finding middle ground in this debate. They acknowledge an element of *polis*-religion in stressing the official role of priests in defining ritual forms but also allow room for personal beliefs, including the beliefs that might motivate an individual to perform a particular ritual in the first place. Their models thus have applications well beyond the immediate purposes of this study.

In regard to the *manes*, though, the most important priests were the members of the Roman college of pontiffs, who essentially served as experts for any ritual that was not under the authority of another priesthood. They could advise the senate on public rituals, but private rituals were also under their jurisdiction, and so they were responsible for defining funeral rituals and

ceremonies in the cult of the dead (Livy, 1.20.5–7). Cicero (*Leg*., 2.48–57) does not give a full account of the rules regarding rituals for the dead, but the material that he relates (mostly about funerals, but including festivals on some points) shows the rules to have been detailed. Thus, even in the case of a ceremony such as the *Parentalia*, which was performed for the *manes* by individuals and families at specific graves, there was still an officially endorsed way to perform the ceremony and rules about who was obligated to participate. There was not, however, an official definition of what *manes* were like or, for instance, an official position about how much humanity the deified dead retained. The pontifical rules assumed the *manes* existed, that they had power that Romans could invoke, and that they wanted offerings of particular types in particular contexts of worship. Other beliefs were up to the worshipper, as long as the worshipper performed the ceremonies in the specified manner.

Orthopraxy complemented polymorphism and *pietas* in accommodating the coexistence of variant beliefs. If gods could have an unknown number of alternative identities, each of which could have separate attributes, then it was best for the priests to concentrate on defining rituals that would please the deities regardless of variant attributes. Some Romans claimed that the *lares* were the deified dead, and many did not. Those variations might well have had a significant impact on how Romans understood what they were doing at a festival such as the *Caristia*, which was a festival in honor of the *lares* that followed immediately after one of the main festivals for the dead, the *Parentalia*. For those, like Ovid (*Fasti,* 2.617–638), who did not present the *lares* as a form of the dead, the *Caristia* was a celebration of family life that followed interaction with the dead, and thus the two festivals offered a contrast with each other. Ovid offers clear transitional language, shifting from the dead to the living (2.617–622). Those who identified *lares* with the dead might, however, have viewed the *Caristia* simply as a continuation of what preceded it. Both groups, though, could perform the standard rituals of the *Caristia*, as defined by the pontiffs. Whatever else they might have thought about *lares*, they could all agree that *lares* were powerful and wanted particular forms of worship. As long as they did not stray too far from the standard ritual forms when they did perform ceremonies, individual worshippers could tailor their worship to conform to their individual beliefs and agendas.

D) AN INTERPRETIVE MODEL: BELIEF CLUSTERS

The mechanisms by which Roman religion could accommodate diversity of belief pose an obvious problem for scholars in how to generalize about such

beliefs. On the one hand, it would involve too extreme a form of particularization to treat each reference to the cult of the dead (or to the worship of any other Roman god) as if it were an entirely self-contained variant, for it is implausible that there would be no sharing of ideas within the community. On the other hand, the Roman mechanisms for accommodating diversity in belief make it impossible to study the Roman religion in terms of official doctrine, in the way that one could study Christian theology (at least of a particular Christian sect at a particular moment in time). The simultaneous existence of variation, combined with the limitations of our source material, also makes changes in beliefs over time difficult to identify. A more viable method of approaching Roman religion is to do so in terms of belief clusters, where one gathers variant beliefs and examines them both for common assumptions and for areas where they do not agree. This method allows for generalizations to be made on the basis of the distribution of ideas held in common, rather than on some comparison with a nonexistent dogmatic standard of the correctness of beliefs.

Attempts to identify changes in Roman beliefs over time face significant and (normally) unacknowledged obstacles. Roman sources give religious interpretations at different time periods, and there is a temptation to attribute variation to sequential change, but one must be cautious. The evidence for simultaneous variations is extensive, but our sources are never full enough to identify with certainty the full range of variations at any one moment in time. Thus, an impression of a change in beliefs over time may be an illusion caused by the lack of source material to document simultaneous beliefs. If, for example, one wanted to argue that beliefs about *manes* changed between the time of Cicero and Virgil (or any other pair of authors), one could not merely identify some difference in interpretation and take that as proof of evolution. Neither author was a theological spokesman for his era, and Roman religious thought could accommodate vast diversity. There is simply no way to prove that a difference between any two authors represented an actual change, as opposed to them drawing upon different parts of the diverse pool of beliefs present at any given moment.

If, for example, we did not possess the works of Horace, then one might look at Persius' dismissal (*Sat.*, 5.185) of the *lemures* as ridiculous boogeymen as being a change from Ovid's equation of the *lemures* with the *manes*, but, before both of them, Horace (2.2.209) presented *lemures* in a manner similar to Persius, showing that the variations had to have been simultaneous in Ovid's time (see chapter 7.B). Likewise, in the aforementioned case of the *lares*, Varro said both that *lares* were the children of a single mother and that they were the deified dead, and so, again, one cannot attribute the differences on these

points between Ovid and Festus to chronological change. If, however, Varro's testimony (surviving only in a paraphrase by the Christian author Arnobius) had been lost, then a more sequential approach to the evidence might have appeared misleadingly valid.

One can document the first and/or last occurrence of beliefs in our sources, but given the potential for simultaneous variation, the lack of an official theology, and the potential conservatism of ideas within Roman familial traditions, it is difficult to see how one could prove that one idea actually replaced another, if by that one means that one of the ideas ceased to be present in Roman culture at all. At most, one can occasionally show that a ceremony ceased to exist after a given period, as seems to be true of the *Lemuria* (see appendix 2), which would at least remove ritual reinforcement for certain beliefs about the need to worship a given deity. Even then, Romans could have continued to believe whatever they wished about the deity in question. Thus, while one cannot dismiss the possibility of change over time, one also cannot prove it in most cases, and it is potentially misleading to assume it *a priori*, since the above examples show variants coexisting over lengthy periods.

What is needed is a way to think about variations within a given block of time and to do so in terms of groups of beliefs, so that one could acknowledge that a particular belief appears more widespread than another, without either defining the more widespread belief as the "correct" belief or denying that other variant beliefs exist or are important to their holders. Set theory provides models for such a formulation. Consider first a somewhat simplified model of the distribution of beliefs possible in the Pagan nondogmatic aggregate of beliefs. Let us say that three Romans are discussing god X. The conversation makes it clear that the Romans do not all hold the same views of X. One Roman holds beliefs A, B, C, D; the second holds B, C, D, E; the third holds beliefs C, D, E, F. None of the three Romans has the same exact beliefs as any other, and the first and third differ on multiple points. If this was a diagram of beliefs within a Christian dogmatic formulation, it would represent a serious problem. If, for example the first Roman held the set of beliefs that his sect had officially endorsed, then the other Romans would be showing increasing degrees of error. In a Pagan nondogmatic framework, however, there is no officially approved set of beliefs, and all these sets could just coexist, aided in their coexistence by polymorphism and the other conceptual devices discussed above.

The resulting model of the three Romans is a polythetic set, that is, a set made up of the overlap of multiple, nonidentical sets. Only beliefs C and D are common to all three Romans, but there are also differing overlaps of other beliefs, with two of them sharing belief B and two (but not the same two)

sharing belief E. Romans could share beliefs with other Romans in varying patterns of overlap, since there were no mandatory elements in their respective sets of beliefs that they all had to share. If my simplified model shows a mere three Romans and only four beliefs for each, one must consider that the total variation possible in Roman religion would be vastly greater, for it would involve hundreds of variant beliefs about hundreds of gods that applied to hundreds of diverse situations and acts of worship. The variation possible in the cult of the dead is thus only a fraction of the much greater pattern of polythetic variation possible at Rome.[55]

Still, the question of how to study such beliefs remains. One reason for invoking set theory here is that it suggests an approach for studying the Romans in terms of clusters of beliefs. Technically, the model presented above for Pagan beliefs is not just a polythetic set but a "fuzzy" polythetic set. A pure polythetic set treats all variations as equally likely to occur. A "fuzzy" or "graded" set assumes the probability that some elements will appear more commonly than others in a series of overlapping sets.[56] Such a model fits the Roman situation better, for it is implausible that there was a lack of consensus within the Roman community on any point. The orthoprax focus on rituals would reinforce certain basic beliefs connected to rituals, for example, that the gods existed, that they could perform an action that a particular category of prayer requested, and that the gods wished certain rituals to be performed. Other beliefs lacked such reinforcement, but, even there, communication between neighbors would likely lead to degrees of consensus on at least certain points about the powers of the gods. One would thus expect some beliefs to have wider distribution than others.

Eleanor Rosch used the term "cue validity" to refer to the probability that a given item would be present within a fuzzy set.[57] One could see the contrast between Christianity and Roman Paganism as being about differing approaches to cue validity. Christianity offers stark contrasts, investing some mandatory beliefs with the highest possible cue validity ("Jesus is my savior"), while rejecting others from the set entirely ("Neptune is my savior"). Paganism avoids such extreme contrasts of cue validity. Some beliefs may appear more frequently than others, but all are acceptable within the community's set of beliefs, for there is no mechanism either to mandate beliefs or to forbid them.[58]

One can thus analyze beliefs in terms of clusters of related variations. If one can demonstrate that multiple specific beliefs all show a dependence on another belief, then one can say that the belief held in common has higher cue validity within the set of the Roman community's beliefs than the variants based upon it. Looking for common ground within belief clusters allows one

to establish a hierarchy of cue validity based simply on distribution, not on any implied standard of greater correctness. One can thus distinguish generalizations between beliefs that are more or less widely present in our sources, without denying or ignoring the importance of variants in particular contexts.

In this book, I have already offered one extended example of such a belief cluster (chapter 1.C), where the subject was the Roman definition of godhood. As that discussion showed, the Romans attributed a variety of different and even contradictory criteria for their gods, so that, for example, gods might live in the sky, or not; might have individual names, or not; and so forth, but the variant types of gods also shared common elements such as the ability and willingness to answer prayers and the desire to receive offerings from humans. It is thus possible to construct a general model of Roman godhood, while still acknowledging the importance of the variations within particular contexts and particular subcategories of gods.

In the chapters that follow I will offer further examples of belief clusters. In chapter 5, I will show that the considerable diversity of contexts in which Romans invoke the help of the *manes* depends on a small group of general beliefs about the powers of the dead. The subsequent chapters about rituals for the dead will include further examples of how clusters of beliefs could surround particular ceremonial actions. Whether one is talking about the *manes* or some other deity, the examination of Roman religious beliefs in terms of clusters shows further that it is not necessary either to dismiss Roman beliefs from one's analysis or to treat Roman variation as inaccessibly confused. Scholars should instead embrace Roman diversity and look for patterns within it.

FIVE

THE POWERS OF THE DEAD

When discussing issues of religious obligation or the number and divinity of the *manes* in previous chapters, I have briefly touched upon a number of passages that portray Roman prayers to the dead. It is time now to return to this material and examine Roman beliefs about the powers of *manes*. When and for what purposes did Romans pray to *manes*, and what range of powers did they attribute to them?

To the degree that modern scholarship has acknowledged the worship of *manes*, it has tended excessively to emphasize apotropaic functions, that is, scholars have insisted the primary purpose of the cult of the dead was to keep the dead dormant and keep the dead's power away from the living. This is at best an oversimplification.[1] There are particular contexts in which it might be appropriate to stress an apotropaic motive, but apotropaism is insufficient to account for the context or content of most known Roman prayers to the *manes*. A desire to keep the dead dormant and away from the living world would not explain why Roman armies appealed to the power of the *manes* for assistance, for example, or why some Romans called upon the *manes* to witness oaths, or why Statius (*Silv.*, 2.7.120–135, 3.3.197–202) portrayed several worshippers attempting through ritual to attract *manes* into their living spaces. The *manes* were a resource that Romans could invoke in many contexts, and making use of their power was a more productive goal than keeping it at a distance.

Without any orthodox doctrine at Rome that would have established decisively which powers any given deity possessed, one can talk only of a range of powers that Romans attributed to the dead. Doubtless, worshippers brought with them a cluster of cultural associations about the dead that would have created variations in how they chose to interpret the powers of the dead. Some of these variations are visible in surviving sources, but others may not be, and one must always include the caveat that the evidence is unevenly preserved

and may not contain the full range of variations in Roman beliefs on the subject. Still, within the available evidence, it is possible to identify patterns.

The model of the "belief cluster" (chapter 4.D) will be useful here to illuminate these patterns. Although Roman sources show worshippers invoking the power of *manes* in a variety of contexts to address a range of specific situations, one can establish a hierarchy in which specific variations assume a smaller number of underlying and more general beliefs about the dead's powers. The variations depend upon—or extrapolate from—three basic beliefs. These beliefs are the following:

(1) The *manes* have control over the duration of life and the conditions under which death occurs, so that they are able both to prolong life through their protection and to initiate death at their discretion.

(2) The *manes* are able to monitor the actions (including future actions) of living persons and can intervene throughout the world of the living to employ their power in relation to those persons.

(3) The *manes* can secure for their newly deceased former worshippers a favorable location or situation in the underworld community of the dead.

The first of these powers is the most distinctive. Normally, it would involve control over the timing and circumstances of the moment of death for the living. The second power, to monitor the living, is widely true of Roman deities in general but is nevertheless worth emphasizing so as to avoid the implication that the dead could affect the world of the living only during religious festivals in their honor such as the *Parentalia* or only in the physical vicinity of their graves. As military rituals such as the *devotio hostium* will illustrate, some contexts might involve the invocation of Rome's *manes* even at a location far from Rome itself. One could see the third power as an extension into posthumous contexts of the first power's protection of their worshippers' lives, but it differs from both of the first two powers in not primarily involving the exercise of influence in the living world.

A) POWER OVER LIFE AND DEATH

If we begin with the idea that the *manes* had power over life and death, we can see a cluster of variant applications in which the *manes* could either extend life or bring about premature death in different ways and in differing contexts.

Increasing the range of variation are differences in the nature of the ritu-

als that invoked the dead's power. There were private rituals, in which individuals would pray to benefit themselves or their families, but there were also public rituals, in which Roman priests would invoke the *manes* on behalf of the Roman community and its interests. The latter could extend the range of applications of the *manes*' power to the community's agricultural produce or to the life spans of Rome's enemies. Even the private prayers could have a subtype in the form of curse tablets, which Romans would normally conceal from their neighbors. What follows will therefore discuss the power of the dead first to extend life and then to end it, in each case dividing the examples between individual and public benefits.

1. Guardians of the Living—Benefits for Individuals

A. THE EXTENSION OF LIFE

Ovid's descriptions of the festivals for the dead present the rituals as part of an ongoing pattern of ritual exchange. At the *Parentalia*, the worshipper will "placate" the dead (*animas placate*) with offerings of food and wine (*Fasti*, 2.533), but when that is done, the worshipper can "add prayers" (*adde preces*, 2.542), requesting new services from the *manes*. The annual repetition of the ritual would thus create a cycle of reciprocity. The deities would have a regular expectation of an offering and thus a reason to be responsive to prayers, but the formula of adding new prayers for the following year would also create indebtedness to the *manes* whom worshippers asked to deliver blessings in advance of the promised offerings for the following year. Thus, it was necessary to "placate" any suspicion of ingratitude by making the annual offering faithfully, which would begin the cycle anew. The *Lemuria* seems based upon a similar premise of fulfilling a preexisting obligation. "I redeem me and mine" (*redimo meque meos*) says the worshipper while giving an offering of beans to the "paternal *manes*" (*manes paterni*) at what is again an annual festival (*Fasti,* 5.429–444; cf. chapter 7.B).

What is it that the worshippers believed they could receive from the dead that they would then need to repay through regular offerings? There could be several answers, depending on the worshippers, but we can note first a type of prayer that is attested in multiple texts in multiple genres from the first and second centuries AD and requests a service from the *manes* that both fits the pattern of an annually renewed contract and is central enough to the worshippers' survival to warrant the regular reinforcement of multiple ceremonies: the worshippers would pray for an extension of their own life spans.

One can see this idea in a passage from the lexicographer Festus (132L), who was citing as his source Stilo, from the first century BC. When deriving

the word *manes* from the archaic Latin adjective *manuus,* "good," he says that *manes* are referred to as good "by those venerating them as suppliants because of a fear of death."[2] The *manes* thus must provide some alternative to a fear of imminent death.

The idea that *manes* could extend the life of the living appears in a variety of other sources and in works belonging to several genres. In a poem of consolation, Statius (*Silv.*, 5.1.247–262) describes how the actions of Priscilla, the dead wife of the Imperial secretary Abascantus, will intervene from the underworld to see that her husband, who is a "young man" (*iuvenis*) at the time of her funeral, will live to be an "old man" (*senex*). Statius refers to the same power in another poem (*Silv.*, 3.3.28–30), in which he portrays the dead father of Claudius Etruscus in the afterlife arranging the extension of his own son's life.

Likewise, a tombstone (*CIL,* 6.30102 = *CE,* 1508) portrays a husband addressing his dead wife, whose name is now lost. The husband vows to give offerings to the wife for as long as she will sustain his life: "Spare, I ask, spare your husband, girl, so that for many years, with wreaths, he can give the due offerings that he promised."[3] This prayer is a *votum*, a form of conditional vow in which the deity will receive the promised offering if and only if the deity grants the prayer. The ability of the worshipper to fulfill the vow depends entirely on the dead wife granting the extension of her husband's life span, and so the *votum* format is a way of suggesting to the god that granting the prayer and keeping her former husband alive is in her own interest.[4]

Similar formulas appear elsewhere. An inscription that a freedman erected to a dead child of his former master's family tells the dead girl to "spare" her sister and parents, so that they can give her offerings in the future.[5] Even Virgil put such a prayer into the mouth of his hero, Aeneas, the legendary ancestor of Roman society. Aeneas does not just promise to give annual offerings to his dead father, Anchises, but prays that Anchises "be willing that I may offer these sacred rites to him every year" (*Aen.*, 5.59–60: *haec me sacra quotannis . . . velit . . . sibi ferre*). The meanings of the verb *velle*, "to want" or "to be willing," show that Aeneas' capacity to fulfill his vow to sacrifice annually depends on the wishes of the dead man, without whose protective power Aeneas would not live to complete the task. Such a formulation is consistent with Ovid's presentation of the *Parentalia* as a festival at which the worshipper both fulfills a preexisting obligation by making an offering and makes new prayers for the future. Each year the worshipper could pray to be allowed to live to make an offering again the following year.

Roman authors presented various powers as responsible for the occurrence of death. Tombstones sometimes present the rulers of the underworld, Dis

and Proserpina, as the instigators of death, but it was more common to attribute death to some embodiment of the idea of fate such as the goddesses *Fata* or *Fortuna*, or the fates plural, sometimes under the variant name *Parcae*, who determined the length of one's life.[6] The *manes* had the power to intervene in this process and postpone one's allotted death. Thus, one inscription calls the *manes* "the controllers of the fates" (*CIL,* 6.13377: *fatorum arbitris*). One implication of the *manes* controlling fate is that the *manes* could take over the function of deciding the appropriate moment for their worshippers to die. Thus, it is not surprising to find inscriptions that present death as the process of being carried off by the *manes* themselves.[7] Ending life and postponing death were two sides of the same coin.

Neglect of worship of the dead would remove the *manes*' protection and thus hasten death. That all the worshippers—faithful or not—eventually died might therefore seem to present difficulties, but probably it did not. Clearly, everyone died eventually. The power of the dead as "controllers of the fates" was the power to postpone death, not to grant immortality in the bodies of the living. As *eventual* death was inevitable for all, the death of dutiful worshippers need not mean that the *manes* had failed to grant their worshippers' prayers, merely that they had reached the limit of the period during which they were able or willing to postpone deaths beyond what fate had decreed. Remember that there is no way to test for divine intervention. However prematurely people might seem to have died, one could always believe that they would have died even sooner were it not for the *manes* responding to their worshippers' prayers.

Death would lead to the transformation of the worshipper into one of the *manes*. Such a potential would not necessarily remove fears of death (any more than Christian ideas of Heaven remove those fears), but it would offer consolation in the hope that death ended only one's physical existence. Still, to a worshipper who viewed his or her physical mortality with alarm, the prayer to extend life would have been a major concern, for life itself would be central to any future plans the living worshipper might hold. It is thus misleading to suggest that the worship of the *manes* was marginal to Roman religious life, that interaction between the living and the dead was limited to the duration of the annual festivals, or that Romans thought that *manes* lacked influence over the day-to-day lives of their worshippers.[8]

The premise that the *manes* kept their worshippers alive would require them to monitor any and all potential causes of death that their worshippers might encounter. This scenario requires that the dead, even if they might have a home in the underworld or some other place beyond human existence, could nevertheless exert their power into the human world at will to ward off

death. Thus, to say that "dead people did not return" or that "the road to the underworld ran only one way" would be true only in the narrow sense that when the dead returned to take action in the living world, they no longer needed visible or physical flesh and could exercise their power from a base in a supernatural home elsewhere.[9] One should remember that the exercise of long-range divine power without the need for human flesh was true of Roman gods in general. The *manes* were no exception.

A recent immigrant from Africa once explained the cult of the dead in his own tribal religion to an acquaintance of mine. "My ancestors," he said, "are always with me and they look after me."[10] Although a Roman might well have disagreed with many of the specific details of how this man defined his cult of the dead, his statement nevertheless applies well to Roman beliefs about the *manes* as the controllers of the duration of life and the postponers of death. The dead watched over their individual worshippers and protected them.

B. CLUSTERS WITHIN CLUSTERS

Before proceeding to other applications of the *manes*' power over life and death, it will be useful to consider further the examples already given in terms of the model of the "belief cluster," for the details illustrate further levels of variation and clusters within clusters. Different Roman authors could present basic situations such as a dead wife extending the life of a husband or a dead father extending the life of a son in ways that reflected variant understandings of what *manes* were and how they functioned.

Both the poet Statius and the unknown author of a lengthy tombstone inscription credit dead wives with the ability to extend the lives of their surviving husbands, but the scenarios they present are not identical, and the differences illustrate the variation possible within a Roman "belief cluster." Statius' text (*Silv.*, 5.1) is a poem of consolation for the dead Priscilla addressed to her surviving husband, Abascantus, who was the secretary *ab epistulis* (somewhat like a modern secretary of state) for the emperor Domitian.[11] The poem includes a panegyric of the dead woman, stressing her loyalty and assistance to her husband during life and the close emotional bond that supposedly existed between the two spouses, and so Statius presents the death of Priscilla as leaving Abascantus distraught with grief. Whatever the truth of the actual relationship between the couple, the poem is presenting it as a model of an ideal marriage, and the posthumous aid that Priscilla will offer Abascantus thus becomes an extension of that ideal into the afterlife.

Statius describes how the dead Priscilla, in her role as *manes*, from *Elysium* will help her still-living husband:

> There [in *Elysium*] with a suppliant right hand she prays to the Fates for you [Abascantus], and for you she placates the rulers of sad Avernus, so that when you complete your span of life, you, as an old man, may leave your lord [Domitian] still young and engaged in giving peace to the world. The unfailing Sisters [the Fates] swear to grant her prayers.[12]

The insertion of a prayer to extend the emperor's life complicates the image slightly, but this is primarily a description of what Priscilla will arrange on behalf of Abascantus. Statius (*Silv.*, 5.1.247) has just finished describing Abascantus as a "young man" (*iuvenis*) at the time of his wife's funeral. Here, the dead Priscilla appeals to the beings that govern the human life span, the fates, and to the rulers of the underworld (i.e., Dis and Proserpina) that Abascantus may continue in the Imperial service until he is an "old man" (*senex*). There is also a prayer for the emperor himself to remain young and vibrant. Priscilla is unfailingly persuasive, and the Sisters—that is, the fates—swear to fulfill her prayers. Thus, Priscilla could deliver a long life and a successful career for her husband.

Statius here stresses the continuity of Priscilla's personality after death. The author assumes throughout the text that she had a benevolent attitude toward her husband in life and that it would continue. Notably, Priscilla does not seem very powerful in her own right. She is able to intervene to postpone a death over which the fates had jurisdiction, but she achieves these results by appealing to other, stronger superhuman beings: the fates themselves and the Lords of the underworld. This manner of visualizing the dead Priscilla as an intercessor in the afterlife preserves her living role. She is still a good wife and still supporting her husband.[13] When describing Priscilla's earlier life, Statius had emphasized her prayers on behalf of her husband while she was still alive, actually suggesting that Abascantus' political success in the court of Domitian was due primarily to her prayers (5.1.69–75). Now Abascantus (and even Domitian himself) will enjoy the patronage of the gods, just as Abascantus earlier enjoyed the patronage of the emperor, in both cases because of his wife's prayers.

Priscilla's need to appeal to other chthonic powers (and thus, her lack of intrinsic power) is in keeping with the emphasis on the reciprocal *pietas* of marriage. Her husband also prayed to the gods to insure her a place in Elysium, and his erection of a statue to her in the image of a goddess foreshadows future religious offerings to her (5.1.185–196, 227–233). Her appeals on his behalf and his future offerings to her thus appear somewhat complementary.

If Statius presented Priscilla as too powerful, it would destroy the image

of a marriage that survives unchanging into the afterlife by upsetting the balance within the relationship. In a marriage, as conventional Roman rhetoric would portray marriage, the bulk of the power should not rest with the wife.[14] A relationship between a man and an extremely powerful superhuman *manes* would be more like a relationship between that man and Proserpina (or even Jupiter). It might be *pietas*, but it would not resemble marriage. The desire to emphasize continuity between the living and dead forms of Priscilla influences the presentation of Priscilla as a relatively weak, but benevolently motivated, superhuman being, who gives aid through intercession with greater powers.

One can, though, see a much different type of relationship and a different type of *manes* in an inscribed epitaph that another widower (unidentified because the opening lines are missing) erected for his (also unidentified) wife. It reads:

> Although her superb beauty captured many, she remained chaste, joined to her charming husband, who now because of her merits worships as an anxious man the divine essence (*numen*) of the deserving one and her chaste corpse, which he was able to deny to the flame [and which is] richly supplied with ointment, unguent, and roses.
>
> Spare, I ask, spare your husband, girl, so that for many years, with wreaths, he can give the due offerings that he promised, and the lantern will always stay lit with scented oil.[15]

The inscription seems to start off in the same vein as Statius' poem, praising the wife's virtue and loyalty during life, but these themes do not develop with the same emphasis on the continuity of life into death. Statius assumed that Priscilla would naturally want to give posthumous aid to her husband, but that assumption is not present here. If anything, the husband seems a little afraid of his wife. The choice of verb, *parcere*, "spare," implies that he needs to placate her. Moreover, the husband's argument appeals to the self-interest of the deity, not to her status or duty as a former wife. The reason the wife should keep her husband alive is so that he can continue to perform ritual offerings. What is at issue is his ability to be a good worshipper, not her willingness to be a good wife. There is also no trace of an intercessory role. The wife herself holds the power of life or death over her former husband. She is the god who decides his future, and there is no suggestion of a role for other powers.

Statius' poem about Priscilla and this inscription reflect different aspects of the same situation. Both texts depict a wife becoming a type of goddess;

both assume the goddess can extend the husband's life in some manner; and both married couples lived in a culture in which mainstream conventions would assume the husband to be the dominant partner in marriage. I suggest that both texts are attempting to put forth the first two of these points, while avoiding a challenge to the third. The main variable is the strength of the deity. Statius conceived of the *manes* as weak, and so he can present Priscilla in a role similar to that which she held in life, a helper to her husband who appeals on his behalf to more powerful deities. The inscription's author views *manes* as quite powerful. He avoids the problem of a too powerful wife by deemphasizing her humanity. There is no embarrassment in being subordinate to a powerful goddess. She was a loyal wife. Now she is something *much different*, and he will win her over with offerings, just as he would a god like Jupiter. Thus, the general point that the dead can extend life, or even the more specific point that a dead wife can extend her husband's life, can in practice play out in multiple and significantly different scenarios.

One can see a similar disparity when comparing Statius' poem about the dead father of Claudius Etruscus (*Silv.*, 3.3.28–30) to Virgil's epic narrative about Aeneas and his father, Anchises (*Aen.*, 5.42–103). Virgil is retelling Rome's foundation myth, and so the dead Anchises is not merely the father of Aeneas but the ancestor of the entire Roman people. Aeneas' prayer to him asks not merely for his own life but for the success of his voyage to Italy. That voyage will lead to the construction of the city from which he will worship the dead Anchises, a city (Alba Longa) that is also a stage in the process toward creating Rome itself. The emphasis on Anchises as a force shaping Roman destiny, and not just that of his son, requires him to be powerful. Thus, when Aeneas asks for the extension of his life, his appeal suggests that Anchises could grant this himself and do so without intercession to other powers (5.59–60).

When describing Claudius Etruscus and his dead father (of the same name), Statius again prefers weaker *manes* and a more intercessory process. A deified father did not pose the same potential challenges to the status quo as a deified wife like Priscilla, for the Roman legal concept of *patria potestas* concentrated vast paternal authority over children in the hands of the father.[16] Nevertheless, stressing the inferiority of the child to the father is not the model of parenthood that Statius wishes to invoke. Instead, he stresses the close emotional ties of father and son, the father's generosity on behalf of his son, and he says that the elder Etruscus held his son "always by an embrace . . . and never by the power to command" (*Silv.*, 3.3.151–152: *amplexu semper . . . et imperio numquam*).

Like the poem about Abascantus and Priscilla, this poem also stresses that

the advancement of careers comes from the favor of an emperor, Vespasian in this case. Thus, when Statius (3.3.28–30) has the dead Etruscus appeal to the "silent Lord" (*silens Dominus*) of the underworld (i.e., Dis) asking for additional years of life for his surviving son, his intercessory appeal to a stronger power extends into the afterlife both the idea of appealing to the patronage of a monarch (as in life) and a parental model of a father who strives to help his son without lording it over him with displays of power.

The preceding examples show how even a specific scenario — such as a dead wife preserving her husband's life or a father doing the same for his son — could in practice lead to a cluster of significant variations. The texts differ on the question of how similar the deified dead remained to their earlier living incarnations, and the Roman religion had no mechanism for asserting a single dogmatic answer. Thus, a wide range of social and cultural agendas could help shape variations.

One should not, however, see the existence of variants as diminishing the acts of worship, for variation was a constant of Roman Paganism, and an individual worshipper could endorse any particular scenario when worshipping, whatever his or her neighbors might do (chapter 4). There is no reason to doubt that the author of the inscription pledging offerings to his dead wife actually planned to deliver those offerings. Nor is there any good reason to question that Claudius Etruscus planned to make offerings to his dead father, as Statius has him promise (*Silv.*, 3.3.195–216), or to deny that Abascantus, who erected a statue of his dead wife in the form of a goddess (*Silv.*, 5.1.227–223), planned to offer her worship. Nor need we doubt that all of the above men, while making such offerings, hoped to benefit from the power of the dead, as the texts claim.

It is true that Statius was using his poetry to put words into the mouths of the dead persons' surviving relatives, but he dedicated the poems to those same survivors, and one may reasonably assume that Statius would have known what sort of sentiment they would have wanted his poetry to express. Indeed, the very fact that Statius is presenting an idealized portrait of the worship of the dead as an extension of family life suggests that he expected his readers to agree that such worship represents an appropriate ideal. The same could be said for Virgil's portrayal of the legendary Aeneas. There is nothing self-evident in the idea of praying to the dead to extend the life of the living, but Virgil offers no explanation for an action that he is presenting as a natural role for a proto-Roman exemplar such as Aeneas.

2. *Guardians of the Living—Benefits for the Community*

If we return now to the broader cluster of variations about the powers of the *manes*, we can note additional applications of the *manes'* ability to guard and extend life. The contexts here did not affect only individuals but a broader population and therefore involved public ceremonies: the opening of the *Mundus* and the *Lupercalia*. Both are examples of rituals in which the celebrants were priests, and the *manes* were the dead of the whole community, not only of an individual. The examples are also interesting as variations in another sense. Both imply that the protective role of the dead could begin prior to conception, and thus involve warding off death from a future potential life span.

A. THE *MUNDUS*

The *Mundus* was an underground cult site where Roman priests could open a doorway to the underworld and invoke the help of the dead (together with the goddess Ceres and/or Dis and Proserpina). Unfortunately, the details of this ceremony come to us mainly from brief comments and quotations in the works of Roman lexicographers, and many points remain unclear. What information is available suggests that the ceremony invoked the aid of the dead in protecting the seed corn on which Roman survival depended.

Festus (144L) quotes Cato as describing the *Mundus* as an underground chamber in which there was another lower chamber—perhaps just a pit in the floor—that was unsealed during the ritual. He also attributes to Cato the statement that the *Mundus* was in the shape of "the sky," which is another meaning of the Latin word *mundus*. It is unclear what this statement means. One interpretation is that the ceiling of the main underground chamber had a vaulted roof. H. J. Rose and the later archaeologist Filippo Coarelli promoted this theory, and some reference books treat it as an established fact, but the failure of archaeologists to locate such a distinctive structure undercuts this confidence.[17] Another earlier theory was that of Warde Fowler, who thought Cato's reference was to the inner pit, which he suggested was a bowl-shaped hole and thus the shape of the sky *inverted*.[18] The latter view would mean that the outer underground room had no vaulted roof and might be more of a nondescript basement. Perhaps archaeologists should reconsider Warde Fowler's theory when they search for the *Mundus*, but, at present, its location is unknown, and the question of its exact shape remains unresolved.

Romans opened the *Mundus* on three nonconsecutive days: August 24, October 5, and November 8. Varro (quoted by Macrobius, *Sat.*, 1.16.18) says that the *Mundus* was "like a doorway for the sad and infernal gods" (*deo-*

rum tristium atque inferum quasi ianua). Cato (quoted by Festus, 144L) says specifically that the *Mundus* was sacred to the *di manes*. That Varro uses his equivalent expression *di inferi* in the plural shows that Cato's use of the word *manes* is a true plural. The ceremony was directed toward the dead of the whole community, to whom the opening of the *Mundus* provided a doorway to and from the underworld.

Cato (quoted by Festus, 144L) describes a ceremony "at which time the things that were of the covered and hidden religion of the *di manes* were brought up and exposed as if in a certain light" (*quo tempore ea, quae occultae et abditae religionis deorum manium essent, veluti in lucem quandam adducerentur et patefierent*). Although this description falls far short of the clarity one might wish, it does suggest the performance of one main ceremonial action in which a celebrant would formally open the *Mundus* and bring out sacred objects temporarily, presumably accompanied by the *manes* themselves through the "doorway" that Varro mentioned. The idea of a single ceremony at a single location suggests that a priest or priests carried it out, not private individuals, and that would be consistent with the invocation of the dead as a group. It is also possible that the cover to the inner pit of the *Mundus* that was removed in the ceremony was the *manalis lapis*, which Festus (= Paulus, 115L) described in similar terms as a "door of Orcus, through which the souls of those below, who are called *manes*, flowed to those above" (*ostium Orci, per quod animae inferiorum ad superos manarent, qui dicuntur manes*).[19]

The dead were not the only deities the Romans invoked. Festus (126L) also refers to the *Mundus* as "the *Mundus* of Ceres," and there is a surviving epitaph of a priest of a "Cerial" *Mundus*.[20] Ceres was a major goddess of agricultural fertility but also associated with the *manes* in rituals of purification at the funeral (cf. chapter 6) and in a rite called the *porca praecidanea*, which involved purifying a farmer from any neglect of the *manes* before the beginning of an act of farming (Gell., 4.6.8).

Varro (quoted by Macrobius, *Sat.*, 1.16.18) also says the *Mundus* is sacred to Dis and Proserpina. He might mean sacred to them in addition to the *manes* and Ceres, for the *Mundus* was a gateway into the realm of Dis and Proserpina, but it is also possible that the statement complements the connection with Ceres by way of a polymorphic equation. There are texts (including by Varro himself) that equate Ceres with Proserpina or that present Ceres rather than Proserpina as the goddess married to the ruler of the underworld. Thus, Ceres carried both associations with fertility and with the dead, and Romans could equate her with the queen of the underworld.[21]

What then was the point of the "*Mundus* of Ceres," in which the Romans opened a doorway to the *manes*? Warde Fowler's interpretation of the purpose

of the ceremony is now seldom cited, but, with some modifications, it still has much to recommend it. The strength of Warde Fowler's theory is that he accounts effectively for the dates of the festival in a way that also illuminates its connection with the goddess Ceres. The timing of the ceremonies suggests an agricultural purpose.[22]

Warde Fowler noted that the first of the three dates for the opening of the *Mundus* was August 24, three days after the festival of the *Consualia* (Aug. 21) and one day before the *Opiconsivia* (Aug. 25). The former was a festival in honor of Consus, the god who watches over storage bins for harvested grain; the latter was in honor of Ops ("Plenty") and also appears to be concerned with storing seed corn for the next year's planting. The last of the three openings of the *Mundus* was on November 8, one day before the date that several Roman authors give as the beginning of the planting season for wheat. One exception to the November planting for wheat was a particular variety of wheat known as *far*, which was used only in religious ceremonies. Romans planted *far* in October, and the middle date for opening the *Mundus* was October 5.[23] The dates connect the openings of the *Mundus* to the storage of wheat seed in preparation for the planting season and thus suggest that the purpose was to ensure the safety of the seed for a successful planting (and subsequent harvest).

A valid objection to Warde Fowler's theory (and, indeed, to his whole approach to Roman religion) would be that he was attempting to reconstruct the original form of Roman religion and thus focused only on the possible origin of ceremonies. This approach has serious weaknesses, as the lack of evidence makes the ultimate origin of the *Mundus*, and a wide range of other ceremonies, both unknown and unknowable. Still, the issue is not what the *Mundus* might have meant in the Regal period, six centuries earlier, but rather what it meant in the time of the late-Republican and early-Imperial authors who mention it, and an interpretation that links the *Mundus* to seed corn works well in that context.

Few subjects would have been more important to the urban population of the city of Rome than the stability of the food supply. The later Republic was punctuated by the urban poor's agitation for the relief of food shortages, and notable politicians who tried to build support for themselves through measures to address the shortages included Gaius Gracchus, Pompey, Clodius, and Caesar. The emperor Augustus would later regularize a monthly grain dole for the urban population that would be among his most long-lasting legacies, and the operation of that dole also provided significant urban employment.[24] Augustus also used the imagery of agricultural abundance as a major motif in his visual propaganda, often specifically invoking Ceres, and

similar images appeared on coins throughout the empire.[25] A ceremony that ensured the survival of Rome's seed corn and thereby assured the stability of the food supply would have been important to Rome's population in any period, while potentially even increasing in importance to Rome's leaders as they began to intervene more and more directly in the city's food supply.

Warde Fowler thought that the Romans actually stored the seed corn in the *Mundus*.[26] That is implausible, as the space could not have been large enough, and it would have been reckless to store all the community's seed in only one room. What is more likely is that the *Mundus* is another example of the power of the *manes* to extend life and postpone death, but this time the power focused upon the grain. The Roman priests invoked Ceres, the goddess of agricultural fertility, to bring actual life to the still-dormant seeds, but they also invoked the *manes* to sustain life once plant growth began and/or to preserve the latent seeds themselves from destruction. The act of doing so would provide food for the Romans and thus help preserve the lives of the humans as well. The priests conducting the ceremony could appeal to Rome's dead as a group to preserve the health of the community, much as individual worshippers could pray to their own specific dead to preserve themselves. Such an interpretation seems preferable to the alternative theory of Magdelain, who views the *Mundus* ritual as intended to predict the future of the harvest.[27] *Manes* do have associations with prophecy (see below, section B.2), but it seems less useful to pray for a prediction about the harvest than to pray for protection of the grain itself, particularly in a rite directed to deities associated with postponing death.

Like the *Parentalia*, the opening of the *Mundus* was also a regularly scheduled opportunity to reaffirm the ties of the living and the dead, in this case the dead of the whole community and not merely of an individual family. Spaeth has emphasized the role of the goddess Ceres in ceremonies to aid people through periods of liminal transition within the life cycle—birth, marriage, death—and her participation in the opening of the *Mundus* is a further extension of that role.[28] As a protector for those who were passing between states of existence, she was the appropriate goddess to invoke when performing a ceremony that involved actually standing in the doorway to death, without crossing over.

What did the Romans offer the dead at the opening of the *Mundus* as an incentive to watch over their grain? Again, the surviving texts do not say. Spaeth and Chirassi-Colombo present the invitation to enter the world of the living, as opposed to just projecting their power into it, as the Romans' enticement to the dead.[29] They may be correct, but one should stress the lack of evidence. The dead entered the world of the living in two other festivals,

the *Parentalia* and the *Lemuria*, and in both cases the Romans offered them food. Moreover, it is not clear that the gateway to the dead connected to the *Mundus* was open for any time longer than it took to perform a single ceremony, as opposed to the nine consecutive days the dead could wander Rome during the *Parentalia*. It may be that the mysterious act of bringing "things of the religion of the divine *manes*" into the open (Festus 144L) was itself supposed to please the dead. There is not enough evidence to be certain, but the parallel with other rites for the *manes* suggests there was likely some additional type of offering.

One should also distinguish the opening of this *Mundus* from other uses of the term, for the word *Mundus* seems at times to have been used for other underground altars. There is, for example, an inscription about a "*Mundus* of Attis," which is probably unconnected to the *Mundus* I have just discussed.[30] There is also a story by Plutarch (*Rom.*, 11.1–2) about the founding of Rome in which Romulus dug a trench (*bothros*) called a *Mundus* around what would become the *comitium* in the Roman Forum and placed an offering of first-fruits into it as part of the ritual for founding the city. This again seems sufficiently different that is unlikely to be intended as a reference to the *Mundus* of Ceres and the *manes*. Indeed, it may be purely legendary, and Ovid's version (*Fasti*, 4.819–830) does not use the word *Mundus* or even place Romulus' sacrifice underground. If there is any connection at all to the historical festival, it may be just a similar invocation of the idea of praying for the sustenance of life that is still latent. Plutarch's Romulus makes an offering on behalf of Rome before the city has even begun, when any protective benefit must lie in the future and pertain to the city and its people as they will later exist.[31] For Rome of the historical period, though, the opening of the *Mundus* was a ritual in which priests requested the help of the *manes* of the community to sustain that community's future food supply.

B. THE *LUPERCALIA*

Another item in our cluster is again a ritual involving public invocation of the *manes* of the community, but the objects of the dead's protection are not agricultural; they are rather the products of human fertility. The *Lupercalia* was not primarily a festival for the dead. Participants directed their main offerings to a male god of sexual energy and fertility. The Romans' habit of making polymorphic equations of one god with another meant that different sources give variant names for the god—Faunus, Lupercus, Inuus, Pan—suggesting a cluster of beliefs about the god's exact attributes beyond the unifying connection with fertility.

The ceremony began with multiple sacrifices at the Lupercal, a cave west

of the Palatine hill where a she-wolf supposedly raised Romulus and Remus. The offerings included goats, a dog, and special cakes prepared by the vestal virgins. Then, mostly naked priests known as *Luperci* ran about through the spectators striking the women with thongs made out of the bloody skin of the newly sacrificed goat. Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.425–452) emphasized that the purpose of the ritual was to encourage fertility in the women struck by the thongs, and he presented it as the most effective ritual for that purpose.[32]

What places the *Lupercalia* in the sphere of the dead's power is its timing. It took place on February 15, during Rome's most prominent festival for the *manes*, the *Parentalia*, which ran from February 13 to 21. During the *Parentalia* the *manes* were supposed to wander the city while their worshippers gave them offerings, that is, the *manes* were present in the world of the living, not merely projecting their power into that world. During the festival, the Romans put many other religious activities on hold.[33] Ovid (*Fasti,* 2.559–566) notes that Rome's temples were closed during the *Parentalia* to keep the dead out of them, showing a fear that the dead could disturb or ritually pollute the temples of other gods. The Romans also banned weddings during the *Parentalia* as being ill-omened.

Nevertheless, in the middle of the *Parentalia*, with the dead supposedly in the city, there was a festival to promote the fertility of women. It seems peculiar to hold a fertility festival at a moment when marriages were taboo or to hold a ritual in honor of any god at a time when the Romans had locked the temples because of the dead's presence. The timing suggests that the *manes* had a role in the *Lupercalia*, even though they were not the main deities who received the offering.

At the least, the *Lupercalia* brought together all of the Roman community: past, present, and future. The living performed and watched the ceremony, the dead of past generations were there as witnesses, and the nature of the fertility ceremony looked forward to a future generation. In light of the *manes*' association with extending life, however, it seems likely that they were more than just witnesses, and the Romans were calling upon the *manes* to protect the next generation as they protected the current one and thus ensure that the *manes* would have future worshippers. The Romans were already giving the dead offerings during the *Parentalia* and adding prayers, as Ovid described (*Fasti*, 2.542). It would be easy to add prayers to extend the lives of future members of the family as well as current ones.

The timing of the *Lupercalia* was thus a kind of efficiency. Participants asked a fertility god to bring about pregnancies, and, if the god granted that prayer, the worshippers would have already solicited the power to extend and protect that new life span from the *manes*. In a premodern society where there

would have likely been a very high rate of infant mortality and miscarriage, there was no time to waste in securing divine protection. The Romans during the *Parentalia* would appeal to the *manes* to protect a child before that child's birth or even conception, at a moment when that child was simply a potential benefit that worshippers were requesting from another deity.[34]

3. Bringers of Death

In the cluster of beliefs about the *manes*' power of control over life and death there were also variations in which the Romans were not appealing for the preservation of life. If *manes* could control the context of death, then Romans could also invoke their aid to kill enemies. As in the case of preserving life, this aid could benefit individuals, but Romans leaders could also appeal to the dead to help Rome against enemies in war.

A. INSTRUMENTS OF VENGEANCE

The summoning of *manes* to deliver death was potentially a darker side to their capacity to intervene in the living world, for Romans could invoke the help of the dead in settling scores and eliminating personal enemies. Romans could use curses to summon the dead to wreak vengeance on others, either by persuading the dead to help or by binding the dead to a course of action through spells. The *manes* were not the only gods that Romans invoked in this manner, for many Roman gods had the power to destroy, but the association of *manes* with death made them a logical choice to invoke.

Before considering the *manes* as tools of the vengeance of others, we might ask first if the dead wished to settle their own grievances. The idea that the *manes* might want vengeance is built into the verb *parentare*, which can mean "to worship the dead" or "to take vengeance on behalf of the dead."[35] Such ritualized vengeance, though, would use the living as the dead's agent, not the reverse. The degree to which Romans believed that *manes* were themselves likely to initiate vengeance for the grievances of their own former lives is unclear.

The idea does exist in Roman literature. Horace (*Epod.*, 5.83–102) presents a boy who is about to be murdered swearing to return to punish his attacker; the empress Agrippina haunted the sleep of her son and murderer, Nero (Suet., *Nero*, 34); and Ovid (*Ibis*, 139–162) presents himself as planning posthumous retaliation on a man who is harassing his wife during Ovid's exile. The vengeance in these passages seems curiously weak, however, as the *manes* will only disturb the sleep of their enemies, not stop their hearts. The sample of sources is limited, and quite possibly other Romans thought the dead

could settle their grievances in a more direct and more fatal manner. Even if so, though, there is nothing in the extant sources to suggest that Romans thought it was usual for *manes* to make direct attacks against the living to revenge grievances from their former lives. Even some of the above examples suggest that it was only unusually strong grievances—like matricide or the murder of a child—that could bring retaliation, so that the authors' use of the motif in a less lethal context (as in Ovid's *Ibis*) might be intended as a marker of the severity of the grievance to the author.

Why are there not more stories of *manes* avenging grievances from their former lives? One can only conjecture that the Romans may have found the thought of a supernaturally powered vindictive relative too troubling to view it as a normal aspect of the dead's behavior. Many family relationships would have fallen short of the ideal bliss portrayed in the consolatory poems of Statius. The idea that a dead and now divine spouse could chop years off one's life due to an old argument about which color to paint the bedroom (or some such domestic dispute) may have been so disturbing that Romans would have preferred to believe that transformation into *manes* put the dead above all but the most extreme grievances from their former lives. There were no fixed rules, though, dictating how much of their human personas the *manes* retained, and doubts about the dead's capacity to avenge grievances might have added a certain incentive to those who were preparing a nice offering for the *Parentalia*.

One reason why the possibility of angry *manes* might have been an object of concern was that there were contexts in which some Romans did assume the *manes* could perform acts of vengeance, not to avenge the *manes*' own grievances but to serve as the instrument of another's hostility. The Romans, like the Greeks, had an extensive tradition of placing curses upon each other by calling down the wrath of supernatural powers onto their enemies. These curses often summoned death or grievous bodily harm onto the person being cursed, which the curse sometimes described in lengthy and graphic detail. These curses appeared on curse tablets (*defixiones*) that were sometimes buried in tombs or even engraved more publicly on the tombstones themselves. The *manes* are among the powers that writers of curses invoked against their victims.[36]

One should emphasize that *manes* are by no means the only powers that Romans invoked in curses. Many gods appear in such texts. Often they have some connection with the underworld, such as the Furies or Hecate, who are often portrayed as living in the underworld; or the rulers of the underworld Dis/Hades and Proserpina/Persephone; or Mercury/Hermes, who guides the dead to the underworld. Other gods with fewer chthonic associations also ap-

pear, such as Jupiter or Minerva, whom cursers perhaps invoked simply because they are powerful deities associated with destructive force (as war gods, for instance) or because of an association with wisdom or justice. Romans seem to have invoked the Sun on the grounds that he is all-seeing and thus knows the grievances. Some curses request the help of these gods; others demand it, "binding" the gods with spells to ensure their assistance.[37]

When curses specifically mention *manes*, the cursers summon them to inflict damage on the object of the curse. On curse tablets, they might be mentioned as one of a group of deities being invoked, or even as an option in a type of multiple choice. Versnel cites a tablet that invokes the "*manes* or celestial gods" (*manes vel di caelestes*), apparently either rather than both.[38] On curse tablets it is usually impossible to tell why the curser is summoning the *manes* and not some other power. Curses involving *manes* that are engraved on the tombstones themselves are usually clearer. They are mainly curses against any future desecrator of the tomb itself, and the *manes* would be an interested party in protecting their own sacred space.[39]

Those placing curses on others might have sometimes invoked specific *manes* whom they thought were interested parties in the curse. One text that hints in that direction is an epitaph (*CIL,* 6.20,905) on the tomb of an eight-year-old girl named Junia Procula. The epitaph (like most epitaphs) is dedicated to the divine *manes* of the deceased, and she is the only deity mentioned. The inscription contains a curse on a freedwoman named Acte, who was the mother of the dead girl and who ran away from her patron (former master) with another man, apparently liberating some other slaves in the process. The curse asks the *manes* to hang Acte and sear her heart with burning pitch. It is not clear whether the patron (who wrote the inscription) blames Acte for the child's death, but at least the dead child Junia shares in the grievance of being abandoned by her mother. Thus, the curse invokes the *manes* of Junia to take action in a case where she herself has an interest, though that formulation also has the interesting implication that the *manes* would not have acted alone and needed to be prompted by a curse.

Another possible scenario is that the person cursing would call upon the power of *manes* with whom he already had a ritual relationship. One example of that latter is a tablet (in Greek, but referring to Rome) in which a man invokes the help of his own dead brother to stop another man from leaving Italy.[40] Why not call upon the dead to whom one would be sacrificing anyway as part of one's family cult? As curse tablets tend to be terse, and often do not identify either the *manes* or the motive for the curse, it is difficult to know how common these scenarios were. Another possibility, since Romans often

buried curse tablets in graves, is that the dead person whose grave contained the tablet was the *manes* whom the curse invoked, whether or not that dead person had a preexisting connection with the curser or the object of the curse.

One subgrouping of curses might have provoked particular worry: those that bound the dead involuntarily to obey the will of a sorcerer. In such a case, it would not matter if the dead person had a stake in the curse or not, only whether the curser had spells strong enough to manipulate the dead. Apuleius (*Met.*, 9.29–31) portrays a witch summoning the spirit of a dead woman to attack the man in the form of a *larva*, one of a subgroup of the dead who were inhuman in appearance, who had no preexisting ritual relationship with the humans they encountered, and who often functioned as agents of another party's vengeance.[41] That such an attack could come from an unknown quarter involving unknown dead would make a defense difficult to prepare.

Still, there were some countermeasures. In Ovid's description of the last day of the *Parentalia*, when the dead were in the city to receive offerings, he says that women said prayers to Muta Tacita, the silent goddess (*Fasti*, 2.571–582), so that they could say, "We have restrained hostile tongues and unfriendly mouths" (2.581). As the women are concerned about binding hostile words and not binding the dead, the action is defensive. They are invoking the goddess to protect against hostile spells involving the dead, most likely the sort that could bind the dead to use them against the living.[42] Such rituals show a concern about the possibility of being cursed and of having the dead invoked as the instruments of that curse.

Certain categories of the dead appeared more susceptible to binding spells. In Greek culture and throughout the ancient Mediterranean region a strong tradition held that the dead most likely to be used in hostile binding rituals were those who had died by violence (*biaiothanatoi*), who died prematurely in their youth (*aôroi*), or who lacked proper burial (*atelestoi*). Certainly by the historical period, if not much earlier, the Romans had absorbed and endorsed these ideas. The *larva* of Apuleius' story was a murdered woman, for example, and other texts suggest that such dead were of special concern as potential dangers.[43] As sorcerers could employ binding spells on even the most powerful gods, such as Jupiter, the point is probably not that the dead in these categories were weaker and less able to resist manipulation but, more likely, that they were thought to be predisposed to lash out because they had their own grievances. When striking out at another in anger, it made sense to enlist the dead who were already angry. The object of the curse might not be the source of the dead's grievance, but that is where the binding spell came in, redirecting the fury of the dead toward some new target of the sorcerer's

choosing. The power of the *manes* over life and death would make them seem to be useful weapons to direct against opponents.[44]

B. DESTROYERS OF ARMIES AND CITIES

The subcluster of *manes* as the bringers of death includes also public rites and military applications, which, among other things, differed from the private curse tablets in their degree of social respectability. For a Roman to summon *manes* to attack an enemy by means of a curse tablet was a private and possibly hidden activity, which under some circumstances Roman law could define as a criminal activity.[45] Nevertheless, it would be misleading to bracket off such curses entirely as a category like "magic," separate from the rest of Roman religion, instead of just being a religious variation with some distinctive (and potentially illegal) attributes of form and context. The Roman state itself could also conceive of calling upon the power of *manes* to strike down its enemies, and it would do so through a formal public ritual that a general would conduct and which lacked the negative connotations of the curse tablets. There were, though, similarities. The ritual of the *devotio hostium* took place infrequently and did not involve the distinctive "binding spell" found in some curses, but many surviving curses also lacked "binding" wording and merely requested the dead to harm enemies. When compared to such nonbinding curses, the main surviving text for the *devotio hostium* shows significant overlap with the assumptions of the authors of the curses that the *manes* could and would deliver lethal force against enemies in return for a promised offering.[46] The power of the *manes* was a potential weapon that Roman commanders could invoke against Rome's military opponents.

The ritual summoning of death to take one's enemies, however, still illustrates the inseparable nature of the powers of destruction and preservation, as extending or ending life were complementary functions. In war, the instrument of the enemy's destruction would be the successful functioning of the Roman army in combat, killing the enemy. For gods to bring about victory in battle would require their subtle guidance of the Roman soldiers' swords and shields as they fought, so that the same divine power would preserve Roman lives while taking those of the enemy.

As with the deities invoked in curses, the Romans had numerous gods to whom they could pray for military support, including such prominent deities as Mars and Jupiter. It is unlikely that Roman leaders intended the military prayers to the *manes* as a substitute for invoking the major war gods so much as they were a supplement. The question is why Roman commanders would invoke the *manes* in some contexts, but not others.

There were two military situations that involved an appeal to the *manes*, both called *devotio* but somewhat different from each other, as Versnel has shown. One was the *devotio ducis*, in which a general appealed to the *manes* for aid against an enemy while offering the sacrifice of his own life as well as the lives of the enemy. The other was the *devotio hostium*, in which the Roman army planned to destroy completely (rather than capture) an enemy city and enlisted the *manes* by offering the enemy and their city as a sacrifice.[47]

It is not clear that the *devotio ducis* ever actually took place outside of legend, for it is found primarily in the stories of three generals named Decius who all supposedly used the ritual to give their lives for Rome at battles in 340, 295, and 279 BC. These stories may just be apocryphal exemplars of self-sacrificing valor.[48] Nevertheless, it is significant that Livy (8.9, 10.28–29) credits the *manes* with a central role in the process. The general called upon a wide range of gods to witness his oath to sacrifice himself, but the pledge of a sacrifice (*devotio*) itself was offered to "the divine *manes* and Tellus" (*deis manibus Tellurique*) in each case. Tellus, "Mother Earth," is likely invoked because the earth holds the underworld, to which the general is going or possibly as a polymorphic equation with the underworld's queen, Proserpina.

The *manes* are acting in concert with a goddess and not alone, but still it is notable that the general does not direct the *devotio* to war gods such as Mars, nor to Dis and Proserpina alone. Livy stresses the involvement of the *manes* by the repetition of the prayer formula (8.9.8, 10.28.13, 10.29.4). Whether or not the ritual ever really took place, this emphasis on the *manes* shows that, for Livy, the range of the *manes*' powers included the capacity for military intervention. He offered no special explanation of the role of the *manes* that would suggest that he expected his readers to find their involvement surprising or inappropriate.

Why *manes*? Livy portrays the *devotio ducis* as taking place in a military crisis, when presumably the general would have already appealed to the familiar gods of war and needed a supplement. The *manes* were gods who could regulate the end of life and thus could be bringers of death to the enemy, but they were also notably well suited to appreciate the general's self-sacrifice. Romans prayed to the *manes* to extend life, so a pledge of self-sacrifice was a voluntary offer to forfeit a protection that the same general might otherwise have prayed to the *manes* to obtain. Who better to appreciate and reward the value of death than the gods who ward it off?

There was no guarantee of a positive response, though, and that is what made the *devotio ducis* particularly heroic. Versnel makes a distinction between two types of Roman prayers: the *votum*, a conditional vow to make a sacrifice at a future time if, and only if, the deity grants some request; and

the *consecratio*, an unconditional offering of a sacrifice in the hopes of winning the deity's favor.[49] The *devotio ducis* contains an element of *votum*, for the general also pledges the lives of the enemy as a sacrifice, and he could not fulfill that pledge without the requested victory. Still, for the general, this was a *consecratio*. He had to commit himself to a suicidal military charge with no guarantee that the *manes* would grant his prayer. The dead could, for whatever reason, turn the general down. Note that in 279 BC the Romans lost the battle of Ausculum, the third alleged *devotio* of the Decii. If indeed the *devotio ducis* ever took place in real life, one can understand why it was not a popular option among Roman commanders.[50]

Much safer for the general was the *devotio hostium*, in which the commander pledges only the enemy and not himself as a sacrifice. It is also more credible as a historically occurring ceremony, even though only Macrobius in the fifth century AD provides a description.[51] Macrobius (*Sat.*, 3.9.6–13) relays what he says is the text of the prayer that the Roman commander used prior to the Roman attack on Carthage in 146 BC, during the Third Punic War, and he describes the prayer as part of a ritual of *devotio* used in situations—like Carthage in 146—when the Romans aimed at destroying rather than capturing the city.

Latte dismissed the passage as an invention of Imperial times.[52] Even if that were true, the text could (like Livy's stories) still be of interest for the attitudes it reveals about views of *manes* in the Imperial era, but one should not dismiss the authenticity of the text so lightly. Macrobius says that he is quoting the Severan-era author Sammonicus Serenus, whom Caracalla executed in 212 AD, and that Serenus had claimed to be relying on "the very old book of Furius" (*Furii vetustissimo libro*). Although we cannot identify this Furius with certainty, there are some grounds for thinking he was Lucius Furius Philus, consul in 136 BC and a contemporary and friend of the general who destroyed Carthage, Scipio Aemilianus. Versnel also notes that, of the names on the list of cities where Macrobius claims the ritual was performed, all whose fate is now known were completely destroyed (not captured) in or before the second century BC, which is consistent with the scenario for the assault on Carthage. If the text is a forgery, it is a surprisingly well-researched one, and it seems reasonable to accept it as genuine.[53]

The prayer for the *devotio hostium* at Carthage in 146 BC invokes the power of the *manes*, together with the ruler of the underworld, *Dis Pater*, and another little-known chthonic deity, Veiovis, who had a temple on the Capitoline hill.[54] Although the initial recitation of the prayer was accompanied by a sacrifice of three sheep, this prayer is a primarily a *votum*. The lives and city of the enemy are the main offerings the general pledges, and he does not

have them in his possession to give at the moment of the prayer. The general can provide the offering only through the requested victory, and so the gods in effect have to provide their own offering. It is in that sense a cleverly worded prayer:

> Father Dis, Veiovis, the *manes*—or by whatever names you wish to be called—all of you fill that city Carthage, the army that I choose to designate, and those who carry arms and weapons against our army and legions with an urge to flee, with dread and with terror, so that you may carry away this army, these enemies, these men, their cities, and their fields and those who live in these places and regions and fields and cities and deprive them of the light of the upper world, and [do the same to any] enemy army, cities and their fields that I choose to designate, in order that you may have these cities and fields and the status and lives of these people vowed (*devotas*) and consecrated as offerings according to the rules by which at any time enemies are precisely vowed. I give and vow (*devoveo*) them as substitutes for me, my fidelity and magistracy, the Roman people, and our armies and legions, so that you allow me and my fidelity and my authority and legions and our army who are engaged in these matters to be well and safe. If you do these things in this way so that I know and perceive and understand it, then whoever makes this vow and wherever he makes it let him make it correctly with three black sheep. Mother Tellus [i.e., Mother Earth] and you Jupiter I call as a witness.[55]

The prayer's very legalistic formulation allows for the possible appearance of additional foes and a range of other contingencies, and so a favorable response to the prayer would bring total victory and not some lesser goal. Such provisions make a subtler point as well. The prayer takes for granted that the *manes* can monitor events and intervene in reaction to multiple variables at a location that is both within the living world and far from their Roman graves. The prayer makes no distinction between the *manes* and *Dis Pater* in regard to the gods' abilities to take action in a foreign combat zone.

The requested action is for the chthonic powers to destroy the enemy's city and citizens, and the Romans offered both to the gods as a sacrifice, as if the city and its population were an offering of grain to be burned upon an altar. It is likely the finality of what the Romans were planning for the city that led to the specific invocation of the *manes*. The *manes* could control the incidence of death. Whatever the ultimate survival of the spirit in the afterlife, death served to remove a person physically from the living world, and that is precisely what the prayer requests, the physical removal of the city of

Carthage and its forces from the world of the living. It was time for Carthage to die—not just its soldiers but the city itself—and the Romans were summoning the bringers of death. The prayer also presents this offering of death as a replacement (*pro ...*) for the lives of the Romans, over which the *manes* had influence. The extension of Roman lives and the annihilation of others went hand in hand.

The *devotio hostium* also showed the power of the *manes* when they acted collectively. They could threaten whole cities. Such power raises the questions of whether the Romans feared that the *manes* might turn this collective strength against them and whether they took specific actions to ward off such a threat. The neglect of any god could bring a negative reaction, and the *manes* were no different. Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.551–556) presents the worst-case scenario of a situation in which the dead, when completely neglected by the Romans, might threaten the city with harm.

There is no indication of any possibility that the rites for the dead were in danger of being neglected in Ovid's era, but the military invocation of the dead's power suggests that a certain fear of angering them would have seemed prudent. It was for this reason that the division between public and private rituals for the dead was never absolute. Public priests and magistrates could make offerings to the *manes* as a group in rites such as the *devotio* and *Mundus*, and private persons would make offerings to individual dead on occasions such as the *Parentalia*, but even the latter was also under the general jurisdiction of Rome's priests. Livy (1.20.7) says that the pontiffs had authority over the rituals that would placate (*placare*) the *manes*, and the pontiffs both scheduled the annual festivals for the dead and established the correct form of rituals for individual worshippers to employ. Thus, while private worshippers might be praying to the *manes* for their own concerns as they made offerings, the need to see that the Roman people in general gave offerings to the dead was a matter for public concern, and it was the duty of the pontiffs to see that Rome fulfilled its obligations to the community's dead, whose power could help—but also potentially harm—the city.[56]

Another public ritual may show an even more overtly apotropaic purpose. Varro (*Ling.*, 6.24) notes that near (*ibi prope*) the supposed tomb of Acca Larentia, the legendary nurse of Rome's founder, Romulus, the *sacerdotes* also make an offering to the "divine slave *manes*" (*diis manibus servilibus*). Varro gives no further details, and so one can offer only conjecture, but, as Bodel rightly stresses, the name implies that the priests are sacrificing to Rome's dead slaves as a group. There are various reasons why they might do so. Slaves might not receive proper funeral rites or posthumous offerings from masters.[57] Bodel suggests that it was priests who were making the offering, be-

cause they wished to preempt prayers from the slaves' still-enslaved relatives, which he calls "characteristic of the strategically dehumanizing way that the Roman institution of slavery denied familial ties to the enslaved." For public priests to assume control over the worship of the slaves' *manes* was thus, at the least, an expression of the control of the free population over the slaves.[58] One might wonder, too, if there was not concern about power of these *manes* to act on grievances against the masters, whether the grievances were those of the dead slaves themselves or of their still-enslaved living relatives. The offering by priests on behalf of the city could thus have functioned to propitiate the dead slaves, so that they would not consider turning their force against the free and slave-owning population. In light of the *manes*' powers to initiate death, and their seeming willingness to do so in certain contexts, Rome's priests would not have wished to allow rituals invoking slave *manes* to be left in the hands of slaves.[59]

B) THE POWER TO MONITOR THE LIVING

As I have illustrated in this chapter so far, the idea that the *manes* had a power over life and death played out in a variety of ways. The variants form a cluster of differences not only in the context and motives for worship but even at times in the understanding of what *manes* were, how they accomplished their tasks, and whether they acted alone or in concert with other gods. If we turn now to a second power of the *manes*, the ability to monitor the living, we will see further variations.

Moreover, there will also be interaction between the cluster of applications of this second power and that of the power over life and death, so that the clusters overlap but are not identical. The *manes* could not intervene to protect the living, strike down their worshippers' enemies, or help Roman armies in the field without being able to monitor the situations in which the living were participants, even far from Rome. The two powers therefore interact in a complementary manner. Still, there were situations in which the ability of the dead to observe the living would be the main focus of their worshippers' interest.

1. *Guardians of Oaths*

When swearing vows, some Romans would call upon the *manes* to serve as witnesses to the oaths, a function that stressed the *manes*' power of observation. By watching over the participants in the vow, the dead could guarantee

the honesty of the statements made or ensure the fidelity of the parties to a given contract or treaty. The theory was that invoking a god as a witness obligated the god to ensure the fidelity of the oath. Violating such an oath would be a direct insult to the god, and the deity would take revenge accordingly.

As in the case of curses or of appeals to gods for military aid, the *manes* were far from the only deities that Romans might invoke, and they might also call upon any of the gods of Rome's temples. For example, Livy (1.24.7–8) portrays a Roman treaty ceremony that includes a sacrifice to Jupiter. The Roman priest tells the deity to strike down the Roman people if they ever violate the treaty, "just as I will strike this pig today" (*ut ego hunc porcum hic hodie feriam*), showing that the god was not merely a witness but an enforcer. Such oaths were important in a culture that depended heavily on verbal agreements and commitments, for they helped to reinforce the importance of fidelity.

Polybius, a Greek historian of the second century BC, testified to the importance of divinely enforced oaths when he noted that Roman magistrates were more likely than their Greek equivalents to fulfill oaths, a state of affairs he attributed to Roman "ideas concerning the gods and punishments on behalf of those in Hades" (6.56.12: *tas peri theôn ennoias kai tas huper tôn en Haidou dialêpseis*). That Polybius connects divine retaliation to the dead is notable, but his phrasing "on behalf of those in Hades" is ambiguous. It is not clear whether the punishments would take place in the underworld after death or happen in the world of the living, being merely prompted by the grievances of the dead. Despite Polybius' lack of clarity, the passage remains crucial testimony to the importance that Romans placed on the role of gods as witnesses and enforcers of oaths, for Polybius lived in close association with some of Rome's most prominent families for years, and one should not dismiss his observations casually. It did matter even to Rome's ruling elite that the gods could punish the breaking of oaths.

Although Polybius may not have been limiting his scenario to oaths that were sworn specifically "by the *manes*," the invocation of *manes* to witness oaths was one of the options available to a Roman, as several examples show. I have mentioned some of these examples before in other contexts. Silius (6.113) describes a soldier after the disastrous Roman defeat at Lake Trasimene who fears an accusation that he survived the battle through cowardice. He swears by the *manes* of his fallen comrades that he had attempted to battle on to the death and survived only by chance. When retelling the legend of the rape and suicide of Lucretia, Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.841–847) has Brutus swear by her *manes* that he will avenge her. After asserting his dead son had been a budding literary prodigy in life, Quintilian (*Inst.*, 6, *Prooem.*) swore by the son's *manes* that he was not exaggerating.

The content of these oaths likely also explains why the swearers chose to invoke the *manes* and not some other deity. The oaths were statements or promises that concerned the *manes* themselves. What better witness to an oath of revenge than a deity who was once the victim of the crime in question? Who better to guarantee the truth of a statement than deities who witnessed the events in question while they were mortal? As Romans could invoke a multitude of powers to witness oaths, the choice of the *manes* in a particular instance likely reflected an assumption that the *manes* in question would have some special knowledge or interest in that particular oath.

The frequency of oaths by the *manes* is unknown, but one text suggests it was relatively common. The Elder Seneca (*Contr.*, 9.3.12–13) recounts a conflict between the orator Argentarius and his former teacher Cestius, whom Argentarius thought was past his prime. Argentarius took to swearing oaths, "by the *manes* of my teacher Cestius" (*per manes praeceptoris mei Cesti*), although Cestius was still alive. This was an insult, suggesting that Cestius was so ineffective that he might as well be dead. For the joke to work, the idea of swearing oaths by someone's *manes* would have to be commonplace, both to Argentarius' listeners and to the readers of Seneca's account.

The act of swearing oaths by the *manes* specifically calls upon the dead to function as monitors of living activity, but the power over duration of life is not absent from the equation. To be effective as enforcers of oaths and to inspire a fear of divine wrath sufficient to promote honesty, the *manes* would need to be able to punish violators, and their power to bring death (or at least withhold their power of postponing death) would seem formidable enough for that purpose. The powers of the *manes* work hand in hand.

2. Voices from Beyond

Another potential role of the *manes* that depends upon the ability to monitor the living was the dead's capacity to provide guidance, either by appearing in dreams or after a summons through some variety of necromantic ritual. The idea of receiving (or even soliciting) messages from the dead is of course widespread, and one can find it in many cultures, even well outside the Mediterranean region.[60] Within a Roman context, though, the ability of the dead to advise the living is another extension of the idea that the *manes* could monitor the lives of their worshippers. It notably also extends the parameters of the dead's monitoring to include future as well as present events. For the advice of the *manes* to provide guidance divinely would require them to have a clearer view of the future, and which human actions would be successful in that future, than the living worshipper possessed.

The role of the *manes* as advisors to the living has less obvious overlap with their power over life and death than their roles as enforcers of oaths, but that role still had connections to their worshippers' safety. If the *manes* could postpone deaths decreed by the fates, then they must both know what the fates had planned and be able to alter (at least to a degree) the details of that plan. Thus, Lucan (6.774–784) has a sorceress summon a dead spirit specifically to give a voice through which the fates would speak. The dead man provides the requested information, but he attributes it not to personal contact with the fates but rather to his contact with other *manes*, who have (through an unstated mechanism) knowledge of what the fates are planning. The idea that the *manes* possessed knowledge of how to postpone death would likely have given the living an incentive to try to encourage messages, but that need not have been the only subject on which worshippers sought guidance.

Clearly there were different contexts in which Romans could appeal to the knowledge of the dead. There were private prayers to one's own *manes* to send guidance in the form of a dream, but there were also (at least allegedly) other, more sinister or politically oriented rituals whose form would be less socially acceptable or even legally actionable, and so the general idea of using ritual to contact the dead could itself have significant variations. Elizabeth Rawson found it strange that Cicero could strongly denounce his political opponent Vatinius for necromancy, while also rather casually attributing rituals to contact the dead to his own friend Appius Claudius.[61] There is really no contradiction. Claudius was performing a conventional ritual, which harmed no one. Cicero seems personally skeptical that divination involving the dead worked, and Claudius clearly disagreed, but there is no moral criticism in Cicero's comments. By contrast, the story about Vatinius involved murder and human sacrifice and was therefore an atrocity. It did make a difference when the alleged ritual involved the murder of children (Horace, *Epod.*, 5) or the desecration of the bodies of Roman soldiers on the battlefield (Lucan, 6.413–830). A socially acceptable ritual could not involve conduct that would be a crime in Rome under any circumstances. Likewise, one could not legally try to contact the dead to find out politically dangerous information about the death date of a Roman emperor, an action that emperors harshly discouraged. That again was a special case; a prophecy of an emperor's death could inspire would-be assassins and rebels to stage attacks on the emperor in the hope of fulfilling the prophecy.[62]

In the case of the alleged atrocities involving ritual murder, it is not clear that any such ceremonies ever took place outside of literature and rumor, for the surviving accusations serve a variety of functional purposes ranging from character assassination (Cicero's attack on Vatinius) to emphasizing the

breakdown of moral standards in a civil war (Lucan's battlefield story). The frequency with which Romans attribute extreme rituals to women might also be a literary reflection of a male fear of powerful women,[63] and Christian authors such as Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.*, 7.10 and 8.14) would later find their own use for the motif, employing it to denounce Pagan emperors as monsters. As always, the truth of the stories is highly questionable. It would certainly be a mistake to suggest that the sort of surreptitious murders denounced in these atrocity stories were a regular occurrence.

Wrong too would be to suggest that Romans in general rejected the idea of attempting to contact the dead ritually, as long as it took a more standard and nonviolent form. Varro (cited by Augustine, *De Civ. D.*, 7.35) attributed the origin of necromancy to Numa, the legendary founder of the Roman religion. Likewise, Roman poets have no hesitation to credit Roman heroes such as Scipio (Silius, 15.202–207) or even Aeneas (Virgil, *Aen.*, 6.243–267) with rituals to contact and consult the advice of the dead. These attributions place attempts to contact the dead in the mainstream of Roman religious practices.

Statius provides several passages that show that an appeal for advice from the dead could simply be part of an ongoing pattern of worship of the *manes*. The first is from his poem (*Silv.*, 3.3) written to console Claudius Etruscus for the death of his father (of the same name). The poem is mainly about the elder Etruscus, who rose from being a slave to being an Imperial freedman under Nero and finally to being enrolled in the Equestrian order by the emperor Vespasian. There is a section about the offerings his son will give his dead father, including mention of a prayer: "From that source [his father's effigy], I will ask for a guide for my conduct, assessments of my long life, pious discourse, and counseling dreams."[64] The poet has Etruscus connect the act of worshipping the dead man directly with the hope of receiving advice from him in the form of dreams. Statius expanded on this idea in another poem, wherein he addressed his own dead father:

> Yet, may you come from there [*Elysium*], where the better horn gate surpasses the spiteful ivory one, and in the image of a dream teach what you were accustomed to. So the gentle nymph in the Arician cave taught Numa sacred things and rites to be worshipped; so it is believed by Ausonians that dreams filled with Latian Jupiter guided Scipio; so Sulla was not without Apollo.[65]

Statius is speaking about his own father here, not putting words into someone else's mouth as in the passage about Etruscus. Earlier in the same poem (*Silv.*, 5.3.47–52) he expressed his wish to build an altar to his father's *manes*,

so again the relationship is not merely son to father but worshipper to deity, and the hope for messages connects to the worship. Note also that Statius equates the type of message he wants to receive with the type of messages that great Roman generals received from other types of gods such as Jupiter and Apollo. The ability to send such a message was among the attributes of the dead, but it was also a power that they shared with other gods, a point Statius wishes to emphasize.

When Statius (*Silv.*, 2.7.120–135) presents Lucan's widow, Polla, as begging a visitation from her dead husband, the mechanism for the visit was likely also supposed to be a dream, an idea that can also be found in a rather elaborate epitaph (*CIL,* 6.48847). Likewise, Silius Italicus (15.180–207) has his hero Scipio first receive a warning from his dead father and uncle in a dream and then proceed to make an offering and request their further guidance, *supplex patrios compellat nomine manes* ("as a suppliant, he summons his ancestral *manes* by name"). As in Statius' poems, the advice could be an ongoing process, advanced through multiple dreams, and Silius has Scipio seek it from specific dead persons.[66]

The ability of the dead to send messages through dreams is again an expression of their godhood. Gil Renberg has collected and analyzed the surviving 1,300 Greek and Roman examples of what he calls *viso/iussu* inscriptions, that is, inscriptions that say that the worshipper performed some action in response to a command from a god that came in a dream. The collection includes a group of Roman inscriptions that explicitly mention appearances by the dead, but that is just one segment of a much larger collection of similarly worded inscriptions that mention appearances by a wide range of other deities, from Jupiter Optimus Maximus to little-known Celtic gods. The *manes* could send dream messages, just as other gods did.[67]

The idea that Romans, as a practical measure, might expect advice from the dead in dreams is also not as strange as it might sound. Dreams tend to reflect the concerns of the dreamer, and there would be nothing strange in someone dreaming about a dead relative. In his study of reactions to death in modern England, John Bowlby found that half of all widows and widowers have vivid dreams about spouses still being alive, which "in a majority of cases are experienced as comforting." He also noted that mourning relatives among the native people of Tikopia island reported dreams that "differ not one whit from the feeling and behaviour depicted in the mourning dreams of Western peoples."[68] The occurrence of the dreams is not culturally specific, and there is no reason to think the Romans did not have them as well, even if they *interpreted* them in the light of different religious concepts.

The interpretation of dreams (like the interpretation of other omens) is a

subjective art and need not conform to any external standard of logic or coherency. If the Romans could find elaborate (and specific) messages in the flight of birds or the entrails of animals, then they could do the same with a dream in which a dead relative appeared and performed some conventional action like combing his hair or fastening his sandals. The perception of divine action derived from the occurrence of the dream, but the actual message lay in the interpretation that the dreamer chose to place upon it. Propertius (4.7) dreamt of his dead love Cynthia appearing to him as an individual *manes*. He declares the dream to be proof of an afterlife, but he also takes it as a promise of an eventual reunion of the lovers in that afterlife.

Could one also request a visitation in someone else's dreams? A curious variation on the idea of a dream-message appears in a poem by Tibullus (2.6.29–42). The poet is trying to win the love of a man named Macer. Not having much success, he threatens to go to the grave of Macer's dead sister and beg her to send dreams that will drive Macer in the poet's direction. The whole "threat" may be intended tongue-in-cheek, but, at the least, Tibullus is playing with a variation on an established idea. The dead were supposed to be able to send messages into the dreams of their worshippers, and the living were supposed to listen to the messages. Here, Tibullus claims he will pray to a relative of Macer, a person to whom Macer ought to owe ritual obligations in the cult of the *manes*. By enlisting the aid of one of Macer's own family *manes*, Tibullus supposedly will end up with Macer in his bed. The idea that one could influence other people's dreams by praying to "their" *manes* is an intriguing notion but also a logical extension of the idea of divine dream-messages. The *manes* were gods, who might listen to any petitioner, and the idea of enlisting their aid through dream-visitations is similar to the logic of the curse tablets where the living would summon the dead to act against someone else in the world of the living. Even if Tibullus was merely joking, it is quite possible that other Romans would have found the idea of trying to influence other people's dreams to be well within the realm of what was possible for *manes*.[69]

c) PROTECTORS AFTER DEATH

The third major power of the *manes* is the ability to secure a favorable position for their worshippers in the community of the dead. In other words, the earlier dead could help the newly deceased. This belief involves considerable overlap with the first two powers I have discussed above, for one could see it as an extension of the protective aspects of the power over life and death into

the posthumous sphere. Furthermore, any conception of a newly deceased person deserving special treatment would involve judgment of that person's life and thus the power to monitor lives. I have myself in the past classified it as just an extension of the first two powers.[70] Upon further reflection, however, the ability to intervene on behalf of the newly deceased has several qualities that warrant treating it as a separate third power, even though it is also the least commonly invoked of those powers. It is the only situation in which the beneficiary of the *manes*' power is also deceased. It also involves frequent invocation of the borrowed Greek models of *Tartarus*, *Elysium*, and posthumous judgment. These models tend otherwise to be marginal to the cult of the *manes* and beliefs about their powers. The role of the *manes* in assigning places in the afterlife also lacks a component of public worship of the sort the other two powers possess. Like the other powers, though, it does have a cluster of variations in the specific details of how the concept plays out in different texts. This cluster is at times interwoven with other clusters of variations about the borrowed Greek scenarios of posthumous judgment.

The idea of posthumous judgment often involves some degree of endorsement of borrowed Greek ideas that there is a place of reward (*Elysium* or Elysian Fields) and a place of punishment (*Tartarus*). That endorsement was sometimes explicit, with heavy borrowing from Greek literary portrayals of the underworld. Other times, it appears to be only a very general endorsement of the idea that there could be a positive or negative location to go after death, without the poetic trappings. As I noted in the preface, not all Romans wished to combine the cult of the *manes* with Greek ideas of posthumous judgment. Indeed, it seems to be a minority tradition, with Roman rituals for the *manes* offering little reinforcement to the hope of reaching a better location, and tombstone epitaphs only very rarely mentioning the possibility of entering *Elysium*. The cult of the *manes* focused more on the actions of the dead in the world of the living. The extension of the power of the *manes* into scenarios of posthumous judgment is thus a kind of point of interaction between a major belief cluster about the powers of the *manes* and a minor cluster about Greek scenarios of posthumous judgment in a Roman context.

When the Roman poets chose to portray the underworld where the dead lived, they did so with the trappings of the underworld of Greek religion and mythology. As these poetic models are not my main subject here, it is enough to note that Roman authors arranged, varied, and rearranged the borrowed Greek elements to produce a great abundance of diversity. It is not an exaggeration to say that no two literary models of the underworld are exactly identical to each other, and one could say the same of the many Greek literary models from which the Romans drew their material, which are themselves ex-

tremely diverse. These literary models of underworlds often contain divisions into places of reward for the dead (*Elysium*) and of punishments (*Tartarus*), but again they do so with a great diversity of details about the organization of these segregated zones and the process of posthumous judgment and may include other zones for specific categories of dead that do not fit into the *Elysium/Tartarus* dichotomy.[71]

At the core of these clusters of variations is the basic idea that the afterlife contained both a favorable and an unfavorable place for the dead to reside and that placement in one zone or the other depended in some way on earlier conduct while alive. Although the Romans could and did express this idea through the borrowing of elements of the Greek scenarios of *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, the basic idea does not require endorsement of any of the specific details from poetry. One would not, for example, have to accept any of the specific underworld model of Virgil merely to believe that it was possible for there to be a good and bad place to reside after death and to wish to reside in the former. One can thus differentiate between levels of Greek influence, from the highly explicit to the very general.

The following quotation is useful to illustrate several points. It comes from Suetonius' biography of the emperor Tiberius and describes a public demonstration that followed the emperor's death in AD 37:

> The people so rejoiced at his death, that, at the first news of it, some ran around shouting, "Tiberius into the Tiber"; others prayed to Mother Earth and the divine *manes* that they should not give any home to the dead man except among the impious.[72]

Suetonius was describing a spontaneous demonstration, seemingly of non-elite Romans, for there is no suggestion that prominent people participated. Some shout to dishonor Tiberius' corpse by throwing it in the river, thus denying him a funeral (and, by extension, posthumous worship). Others beseech the *manes* and Mother Earth to deny the dead Tiberius any "home" (*sedes*) "except among the impious" (*nisi inter impios*). The latter prayer depends upon a belief in a morally segregated afterlife, insisting that the gods should place Tiberius in the unfavorable section as a punishment for his conduct in life.[73]

The passage is interesting for several reasons. First, it is a good example of a very general endorsement of posthumous judgment without overt Greek mythological details. Although Suetonius gives the dead a pair of dwelling places, one favorable and one not, he does not make any overt reference to *Tartarus* and *Elysium* and simply divides the home of the dead into zones

for the impious and (by implication) for the pious. The reference to Mother Earth (Tellus) could perhaps be a polymorphic equation with Proserpina (see chapter 4.C.1), but placing the dead in the earth's jurisdiction could also just be a way to place the dead's home(s) underground. Note that the combination of the *manes* with Mother Earth is the same that Livy invoked in his prayer for the *devotio ducis*, and thus has clear grounding in established Roman tradition (see above, section A.3.b). The passage illustrates that Romans could put aside the more elaborate poetic trappings of the underworld, as recounted by poets like Virgil and Silius Italicus, in favor a much simpler but still posthumously segregated scenario.

The other interesting point about Suetonius' story is of course the presence of the *manes*. It is the *manes*, working in some way together with the goddess, who will determine where the newly deceased emperor will reside. The *manes* thus appear to have a role in judging the merits of newly arrived dead, or at least to have the ability to influence the process of judgment. If, though, the existing *manes* can ensure that a newly dead person has some form of unfavorable placement, then, by extension, they must also be able to secure the reverse, a home among the pious.

Of the relatively small number of texts that seem to take seriously the idea of a favorable (or less favorable) home after death, other authors employ more Greek poetic jargon than Suetonius, suggesting that there were clusters within clusters concerning how many of such details to incorporate in a given scenario. Again, though, even with more overt invocations of "*Elysium*," one can still find texts that introduce *manes* into the scenario. One way to make such a combination was to treat the *manes* as having control over subdivisions of the underworld, allowing one to appeal to the *manes* to help secure a berth in the favorable zone, whether or not one chooses to call that zone *Elysium*.

Tombstones mentioning any sort of *Elysium* scenario are rare but still sometimes interject the *manes* into that scenario. In the following inscription, for example, a mother offers this appeal on behalf of her dead eight-year-old daughter, phrased in terms of going to the Elysian Fields:

> Secure peace of the shades and you, souls of the pious who have been praised, show reverence for the places that are sacred in Erebus, lead innocent Magnilla to your home (*sedes*) through the groves and straightaway to the Elysian Fields.[74]

The dead here are *animae laudatae*, the dead who "have been praised" by the living. Reciprocal piety comes into play. The living pay homage to the dead, and the dead can return the service by shepherding those who

praised them (or in this case their child) to paradise when they die. Ogilvie has noted that reminding gods of past devotion is a standard feature of Roman prayers.[75] The word *laudatae* served that function in this poem, reminding the dead of past piety by the child's living family. The family can thus call upon the dead whom they have honored with offerings in the past to protect one of their own, even after death.

Another similar example is in the lengthy Augustan-era inscription known (commonly but incorrectly) as the *Laudatio Turiae*, which contains an unusually lengthy panegyric of an (unnamed) dead wife by her (unnamed) husband. The author ends the inscription with this line:

> *te di manes tui ut quietam patiantur atque ita tueantur opto*
> I pray that your *di manes* will grant you rest and thus protect you.[76]

Unlike the preceding example, in which the dead person was a child, the dead wife here had lived a full life and was thus more than old enough to have engaged in rites for the *manes* herself. Moreover, the varying ties of inheritance and familial *pietas* that determined who worshipped which dead persons would have made it likely that the dead for whom she performed rituals were not entirely identical to those whom her husband worshipped (see chapter 3). The reference here to "your *manes*" thus likely means that they are hers in the sense that they are the *manes* to whom the wife herself had made offerings, even if the author of the inscription (her husband) did not worship all the same dead himself. As Cumont long ago suggested, these are the dead with whom the wife had established ritual bonds of *pietas*. Her husband thus invokes "her" *manes* on her behalf, asking them to protect her after death.[77]

An inscription from Numidia shows that these ideas were not limited to the city of Rome. For the dead person to achieve posthumous peace, the inscriber requests, "Let the ancestral *manes* be good."[78] Again, the fate of the newly deceased person depends on assistance from the already existing dead. These are specifically the *parentes manes*, the "parental/ancestral" *manes*, and thus again dead persons who would have received offerings from the dead person, her family, or both. Assisting the newly dead to a better world was one of the services that the Romans could request from the *manes* they worshipped regularly, assuming of course that they were also endorsing the existence of a morally segregated afterlife, itself a variant.

The *manes*' power to monitor the living also was relevant to scenarios of posthumous aid. Models of segregated zones in the afterlife, both good and bad, imply that people must possess some criteria of merit to deserve the more favorable placement, just as Suetonius' demonstrators claimed that

Tiberius did not. As usual, there are variations. Whether the *manes* are themselves the judges, or only influencing some other underworld power who judges, any such role would require knowledge of the conduct of the newly deceased's action in life.

Some of the more elaborate poetic underworlds give the dead an explicit role in judging the dead. Propertius (4.11.41–42) has the dead woman Cornelia testify before a jury of dead Roman matrons, including her own ancestors, that "our hearth did not blush due to any disgrace of mine" (*neque ulla labe mea nostros erubuisse focos*).[79] Who better to judge the truth of her statement than the familial dead, who watched over her in life? Virgil (*Aen*., 6.432–433) makes Minos the judge of newly arrived souls, but he gives him a jury of the dead (*silentes*) in his underworld court. The same idea may also underlie Virgil's famously obscure statement that "each one of us endures his own *manes*" (6.743: *quisque suos patimur manis*). If so, *suos manis* ("his own *manes*") would refer to those dead whom a person worshipped, who could now pass judgment upon that person in death.[80] Knowledge of the living person's actions prior to death, including but not limited to that person's record of worship of the *manes*, would be knowledge that the *manes* could employ to help secure a favorable home for newly dead worshippers, or at least knowledge that would give them incentive to wish to do so.

Ideas of posthumous judgment and *Tartarus* and *Elysium* appear, in general, to be marginal to Rome's rituals concerning death. It is also unclear how frequently Romans were interested in combining these elements with the cult of the *manes*, but one should not discount the possibility that some Romans took the combination of elements seriously, including the ability of the *manes* to intervene posthumously. Lucretius (3.41–54) describes men who had previously claimed to be skeptical about the idea of posthumous punishment but then were subject to the stress of becoming exiles. The men's reaction to the exile was to sacrifice to the *manes*. Why the *manes*? The men are endorsing not just the (borrowed Greek) scenario of posthumous punishment but the Roman variant in which the *manes* can control the placement of the dead in the underworld. Having apparently lost a battle in a court of the living, they are demonstrating *pietas* to the *manes* so that they can hope to do better in another (posthumous) courtroom.

D) POWERS AND WORSHIPPERS

The above discussion is sufficient to demonstrate that Roman beliefs about the powers of the dead contained significant variations that clustered around

a relatively short list of basic powers. By implication, worshippers also sought one other thing when they prayed to the *manes*: power for themselves when it was time for them to die. To accept any part of any of Rome's various models of the power of the *manes* was to believe that one could share that power. To believe in any definition of the nature of the divine *manes* was the same as believing that one could join the *manes* eventually oneself. To worship them was to believe that one would receive worship.

Scholars have often emended one of the bluntest statements of this idea. The manuscripts of Cicero's *De Legibus* (2.22) read *deorum manium iura sancta sunto; nos leto datos divos habento* ("Let the rights of the divine *manes* be sacred; let them regard us as divine after death"). Since the edition of J. Davies in 1727, editors have altered this text, usually changing *nos* to *suos* or the pseudo-archaic *sos*, that is, "let them regard their own as divine after death." The main rationale for this change seems to be an attempt to prevent the famous intellectual Cicero from claiming that he personally wanted to become a god, which is somehow unacceptable to modern rationalism.[81] The emendation would not really change the scenario, though, for Cicero would still have been wishing to be included as divine in the eyes of "his own." More importantly, the emendation misses Cicero's point. A later passage (2.49–62) makes it clear that the *iura* in question were the traditional Roman rites for the dead, not some innovation that he was suggesting. Cicero was already part of this ritual system as a worshipper, and, when composing his hypothetical law code, he wished to ensure that the system would remain in place so he and his friends would receive the same worship they once offered to other *manes*, just as he once insisted that Julius Caesar should be worshipped at the *Parentalia* rather than at some new ritual (*Phil.*, 1.13).

Although one must always be cautious about taking Cicero's philosophy as normative, on this point it seems likely other Roman worshippers of the dead would have shared his interest in becoming divine. One of the main values of Roman tombstones as evidence for ideas about the afterlife is to demonstrate exactly that point. Tens of thousands of tombstones—the majority of epitaphs of Imperial date—contain the dedication *dis manibus* ("for the divine *manes*") or some slight variation such as *dis manibus sacrum*. The stones only rarely contain any further information about the afterlife, and so it is not possible to know exactly which powers the authors envisioned for the dead, but the inscriptions also cannot be dismissed as irrelevant. Intrinsic to this brief dedication is the assertion that the dead were *di* ("divine" or "gods").

To dismiss *Dis Manibus* on epitaphs as "formulaic" would in no way explain the wide use of the formula. It took time and it cost money to engrave words—even abbreviations—on stone, and one could reasonably assume that

Roman engravers, like their modern equivalents, charged by the word or by the letter. Why then would so many Romans, not just at Rome, but over a broad geographic area and over a time period of more than five hundred years, pay to have *Dis Manibus* engraved on their tombstones? The simplest explanation is that the widespread dedication of the tombstones to divine *manes* reflects a widespread belief in the existence of divine *manes*.[82]

The tombstones also suggest the participation of a broad cross-section of the population. It is true that not everyone received a tombstone. The tombstones, like the literary sources, disproportionately overrepresent those who were at least relatively wealthy. If it is therefore untenable to suggest, as did Veyne, that the cult of the dead or perhaps even the Roman religion in general was a superstition of interest only to the Roman poor,[83] the tombstones also caution against suggesting the reverse scenario: that the deification of the dead was only an elite concept. Even if the poorest Romans lacked tombstones, the inscription *Dis Manibus* can be found on thousands of tombstones by Romans of relatively moderate means, including shopkeepers, freed slaves (particularly from Rome itself), and soldiers who were likely drawn from the rural poor.[84] Thus, the stones support the impression given by the modest scale of offerings at festivals such as the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria* that most of the rites for the dead were affordable by all. There is no reason to assume that the poor did not participate in the cult of the dead.

As with the authors of other texts that I have discussed in this chapter, the erectors of the tombstones probably held a range of views about the exact nature and powers of the *di manes*. Still, underlying the variant clusters of beliefs about the power of *manes* was the even more basic belief in the existence and divinity of *manes*. The tombstones—and the occurrence of festivals such as the *Parentalia*—testify to a widespread Roman belief that one could become a god at death and that worshippers would someday receive the same type of worship for themselves that they offered to their dead. Roman religion did offer an afterlife of ongoing existence and strength to its worshippers.

SIX

THE *MANES* IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FUNERAL

In recent decades, no subject that this volume touches upon has received more scholarship than the Roman funeral. Scholars have approached the funeral through examinations of the practical aspects of the rituals themselves, through the physical remains of the tombs, or through a focus upon the literary depictions of Roman reactions to death, grief, or the ceremonial spectacle of the funeral itself.[1] Discussion of religious aspects of the funeral, however, have tended to focus on rituals intended to dispel death pollution from the living participants in the funeral. With only rare exceptions, the cult of the dead has not attracted much interest in relation to funerals, and, as a result, discussions of funerary rituals often do not mention the *manes* at all, or only in passing.[2] I will suggest here that the *manes* play a much greater role in the funeral procedure than scholars generally acknowledge.

There are multiple elements to a Roman funeral. Some sections of the proceedings, particularly in the initial stages such as the wake, focus primarily on the grief of the survivors and the memory of the human life that they have lost. Other actions are focused on removing the pollution deriving from contact with a physical corpse from the funerary participants and the house of the deceased. The third element, though, is the initiation of the worship of the newly dead person as *manes*, including the dedication of the grave as sacred space. This third element dominates the ceremony after the period of the actual cremation, so that the funeral as a whole builds toward a climax of worshipping the new deity.

A) RITUAL CONSERVATISM AND THE POTENTIAL FOR GENERALIZATION

One must first ask whether it is possible to generalize about Roman funerary rituals at all. Can one say whether there was a "standard form" of a Roman funeral, and if so, of what would it consist? The assumption that it is possible to generalize is common to all reconstructions of Roman funerals, including both those whose details I will dispute in this chapter and those that I will offer myself. Is it valid, though, even to attempt a reconstruction of "a Roman funeral" in this manner?

Ian Morris has criticized attempts to reconstruct rituals from limited literary evidence. He divided modern reconstructions into those that form a composite form of a ritual from many sources and those that use one occurrence of the ritual to stand for many. He argued that neither approach necessarily reconstructs a typical ritual and that the composites suffer, furthermore, from a tendency to combine sources from different periods, obscuring the occurrence of change.[3] There is some undeniable validity to these objections, but there is also a danger of taking them to such an extreme that they lead to analytical paralysis. Even an anthropological description of a modern people's funerary practices would have to rely on either a single representative example or a composite of several, for it would normally be impossible to witness and describe every funeral in a given culture, much less to do so over a lengthy period of time. Thus, even modern observers of living cultures would be dependent on analyzing what their sources treat as typical, rather than defining typicality solely through their own observations. Moreover, if one limited the study of ritual exclusively to rites in which the scholar's sample included a high percentage of all occurrences of the rite, even most rituals of the most recent fifty years would be impossible to study, and one could basically say nothing about rituals prior to living memory.

Although Morris is not rejecting all use of literary sources, he would prefer analysis based primarily on archaeological samples of graves. Sarah Bond calculates that between 100 BC and AD 200 there would have been 12 million deaths in the city of Rome. One could thus ask first whether the much smaller available samples of surviving graves are actually large enough to be any more statistically valid than the literary sources relative to the total Roman population. Even putting that issue aside, though, there is still a basic difficulty in terms of reconstruction. As Morris himself notes and Ortalli has recently reaffirmed, many important aspects of the ceremonies would leave little or no archaeological trace.[4] It is also extremely difficult to reconstruct abstract conceptions such as religious beliefs from artifacts alone, as Hawkes pointed

out long ago in his classic study of archaeological analysis.[5] Morris' solution is to bracket off religion from his study of graves and concentrate on other topics such a social hierarchy. There is nothing wrong with studying graves in this manner, but it is also not sufficient to do so exclusively. Funerals were not secular events, and to ask what funerals meant to the Romans, one must consider religious issues along with other factors. Thus, the problem of generalization does not go away.[6]

There are reasons, though, to think that it is possible to generalize about the content of "standard" Roman funerary rites. I should stress that by "standard" I mean ritual forms that acknowledge the *relevance* of a standardized model, which is different from defining "standard" to mean that all forms are actually identical. No one would seriously suggest that all occurrences of rites for the dead were identical, either in Rome or in any other culture. The question is whether the Romans possessed the *ideal* of a standard form of a ritual in such a way that it would act conservatively to restrain the range of variation when ritual participants compared their actions to that ideal form of the ceremony. Such an ideal ceremonial form could come from the mandates of official priests or less officially through popular usage, for the ability of community members to observe each other and discuss what was appropriate could lead to a loose consensus. Both patterns were likely at work in Rome.

The official direction of ritual forms would have come from the college of pontiffs. As already noted, Rome's priests in general, and the pontiffs especially, were focused on orthopraxy, the promotion of correct rituals, not correct beliefs. The pontiffs had jurisdiction over rites for *manes*, as Livy (1.20.6–7) notes, and they generally regulated matters relating to tombs and burial.[7] The full range of pontifical regulations has not survived, but Cicero's *De Legibus* (2.19.48–2.23.58) lists pontifical rules on who should perform ceremonies, what to do if the body was lost, where graves can be located, and other issues that suggest the pontifical guidelines were fairly detailed.

The pontiffs themselves could alter the pontifical rules, innovating when a situation lacked a precedent or required the clarification of an ambiguity, but still, frequent innovation would have been counterproductive. As Gordon pointed out, the authority of the priests derived from their role as the preservers and guardians of knowledge that would otherwise have been forgotten. To have innovated frequently would have diminished the very foundation on which their high status rested.[8] The pontifical rules would thus have provided a standard form for the rituals at any moment, while serving to slow innovation by emphasizing the long-term authority of pontiffs' own ritual formulas. To judge by the material that Cicero records, the focus of the pontifical rules was on establishing the minimum ritual action necessary to

avoid impiety, for example, in a case where the corpse was lost at sea (*Leg.*, 2.22.57). As such, the rules would have allowed a large amount of variation in other areas as long as those minimum elements were also present.

Another factor, however, that would have at least set a range for variation would have been the popular ideal of a standard form. To illustrate what I mean, consider the stereotypical form of a modern American wedding: the bride wears a white dress; the groom wears a tuxedo; there are bridesmaids with matching dresses; the wedding takes place in a church; the bride marches down the aisle accompanied by her father; music plays in the procession, often "Here Comes the Bride" (i.e., the "Bridal Chorus" from Wagner's *Lohengrin*) or one of other familiar tunes; the ritual includes an exchange of rings and vows; the ceremony ends with the couple kissing; there is a reception at which food or at least drinks are served, often with dancing; the couple then leaves on a honeymoon (an outing together, usually at least overnight if not longer); they leave in a vehicle that the bridal party has decorated to indicate that the occupants are newlyweds. Not every wedding will include all these elements—my own did not—but the stereotype that these elements form a "proper" wedding is culturally strong enough that it would be a really unusual wedding not to include any of them. Even a minimal "justice of the peace" wedding might have the wedding dress, the rings, kiss, and perhaps some of the other elements. One could think of the Roman funeral as depending on similar cultural stereotypes of an ideal form. Perhaps not every element would actually appear in every funeral, but the sources we have can nevertheless invoke the *ideal* that a funeral would include certain elements.

There is evidence of a similar stereotypical form for Roman funerals. For example, Cicero refers to the length of the period of mourning and to four rituals held by the grave: a sacrifice to the *lar*, the reburial of the bone, the sacrifice of a sow, and the consecration of the grave as sacred space. He does not elaborate on most of these. Instead, he introduces the list with "It is not necessary that it be fully explained by us ..." (*Neque necesse est edisseri a nobis*), that is, his readers should need no explanation of commonplace funerary elements. Some of the items on the list, such as the consecration of the grave, may have come from the pontifical rules, but it is still notable that Cicero can invoke them as if they would be completely familiar to his readers. In the same way, Persius (3.103–105) can create the image of a funeral by just listing elements of a funeral procession without explaining any of the references. He expects his audience to know what he is talking about. Somewhat differently, Polybius (6.53–54) does explain elements of an elite Roman funeral to his non-Roman Greek target audience, describing the procession, the wearing of wax masks, and the eulogy from the *rostra* (a public podium other-

wise used for political speeches). Nevertheless his argument that elite funerals served as regular devices to install patriotism and to advertise the virtues of major families would make no sense if the conventions were not regularly occurring ones. Polybius had lived in Rome for years and was in a position to know. Indeed, Polybius' description also illustrates the conservatism of funerary conventions over time, for Cicero (*Mil.*, 33 and 86) could also invoke the wearing of wax masks, a procession, and a eulogy as standard elements of an aristocratic funeral, much as Polybius did a century earlier. Such elements could change over time of course, but, as this example shows, one should not assume *a priori* that change was rapid. The stereotype of the ideal form was itself a conservative force.

One should emphasize, though, as the analogy of a modern American wedding again could illustrate, the stereotype of an ideal ceremonial form allows variation within the paradigm. Romans could scale funerals to fit personal tastes, the financial constraints of varying levels of income, and the social standing of the deceased. If, as seems likely to be true, only prominent people would get a eulogy from the *rostra* in the Forum, a eulogy does not itself cost anything, and lower-class funerals could still adopt the conventions of having a procession and a eulogy, merely moving the latter to another location, probably the pyre, the grave, or both. One should not therefore assume that only the wealthy performed funerary rituals, merely because our descriptions of them are from upper-class sources.[9]

B) THE FUNERARY RITUAL: EARLY STAGES THROUGH THE CREMATION

I cannot, for reasons of space, discuss every aspect of funerary ritual or every modern controversy relating to it. What follows will primarily focus upon aspects of the funerary procedures that have direct relevance to the cult of the *manes*. In a compact summary of the early stages of the multiday rite I will illustrate how the funeral procedure as a whole builds up to the rites at the tomb that Romans directed toward the deified dead. The early stages focus in particular on the grief of the mourners and the loss of the human individual.

The standard view of scholars is that the funeral took up two consecutive nine-day periods, the nine days of the funeral itself, leading up to the ninth day, on which the cremation, burial of the cremains, and the funerary feast took place, and then a second nine-day period after the burial, culminating in an additional ceremony and feast.[10] As I am planning a separate study arguing at length against the existence of the latter, I will restrict my comments here

to noting briefly that there is not much evidence to support the existence of a rite on the ninth day following burial. Either the various references to nine-day periods that scholars cite in support of it mention a nine-day period but do not specify that it begins at the burial, or they do not suggest a regularly occurring rite.[11]

The evidence is better for nine days being the standard length of a funeral. It is true that the most explicit statement of the length comes from two sources from quite late in the fourth century AD. Donatus (*Phormio*, 40) mentions nine days as the total length of the funeral (*funus*), and Servius (*Aen.* 5.64) attributes to his Roman "ancestors" (*maiores*) a style of funeral that takes nine days, seven for the wake and one each for the cremation and funeral. Servius elsewhere again gives the length of the wake as seven days (*Aen.*, 6.218). No other source puts the cremation and burial on separate days, and Servius was writing after cremation ceased to be a standard practice, and so he may just be making a false assumption that the cremation required a day separate from the burial. Nevertheless, both Servius and Donatus agree on the overall nine-day length. The seven-day length of the wake probably shows that the Romans were dating the nine days inclusively from the day of death, that is: day of death + seven-day wake + cremation and burial day, much as Romans dated other nine-day periods on the Roman calendar, such as the *nones* and the *nundinae* market days, inclusively to include their starting point in the nine days.[12]

One is not dependent solely on late sources, though, for Horace (*Epod.*, 17.48) provides confirmation in a passage where he portrays a witch performing a ceremony using human remains, which he calls *novendiales pulveres*, "ninth-day ashes." In other words, the witch is taking ashes straight from the pyre at the cremation on the funeral's last day, which confirms the nine-day length of the total rite. Archaeology shows that the gathering of ash for burial often left quite a bit on the pyre, and so the witch could have gathered it even after the mourners had moved on.[13] Doubtless, special circumstances might require some modification for particular funerals, but Horace confirms that the ninth day was the standard day for the cremation and burial.[14]

The funeral observances would begin at the death of a person, and preparations might have begun earlier if illness made the death expected. Although the rhetorical nature of our sources can obscure genuine statements of grief, there is no reason to think Romans grieved any less sincerely than other people.[15] The first stage of the funeral was the wake, which, as noted, seems to have lasted seven days after the day of death. The upper class traditionally held the wake in their atriums, though presumably any space available would do in the case of less affluent mourners. The wake was an act of collective

mourning for the family and perhaps sympathetic friends. The wake included activities that prepared the corpse for later stages of the funeral. Mourners washed and dressed the body; anointed the body with scented oils, floral garlands, or both; wrapped it in a funeral shroud; and burned incense around it.[16]

The main concern of the wake was to lament the family's loss of the life that had been. Several sources describe the action of the wake with the verb *conclamare* ("to cry out together").[17] The ritualized grief included mourners of both genders, but men and women seemed to have employed different styles of grief, as one can see in Statius' formula "the laments of the sisters and the groans of the brothers" (*Silv.*, 2.6.5–6: *lamenta sororum et fratrum gemitus*), though details are limited.[18] At the end of the main period of the wake, the funeral party would have removed the body from the house to transport it to the area of cremation. Probably at this point, when the funeral party first removes the corpse from the dwelling, a ritual sweeping of the house takes place to purify the house (*purgatio quaedam domus*; Festus, 68L, entry on "*everriator*"), so as to leave the house unpurified for the shortest amount of time.[19]

A procession (*pompa*) to carry the body to the place of cremation would follow on the day of the cremation and burial. It would have started early in the day. The distance could be considerable. Cemeteries were outside the city walls, along the roads. My wife and I walked from a location near the Forum to the graves on the Appian Way in 2012, and the distance was around seven miles. The procession would be accompanied by singers called *praeficae* performing funerary songs called *neniae*. The *praeficae* continued to sing throughout the procession and the whole multihour process of the cremation.[20] There were also frequently performances on musical instruments, sometimes starting at the wake, though mourners presumably adjusted the scale of such accompaniment to fit their budgets.[21] In the procession, mourners in dark clothing would carry the body on a couch that the cremation fire would later consume with the corpse. This couch would be surrounded by torches that had also been around the corpse at the wake.[22]

For elite and politically important families the procession would detour to the Forum for a eulogy delivered from the *rostra*. The second-century BC Greek historian Polybius (6.53–54) has left a famous description, showing how the Roman elite could use the occasion for theatrical social and political self-promotion that went well beyond the minimum.[23] The eulogy would praise the entire family's history of accomplishments, not just those of the dead person. In the *pompa* and at the eulogy, actors would wear wax masks (*imagines*) that depicted both the person being buried and the prominent dead of the family, making sure that all of their best representatives—living

or dead—would be present at a eulogy that praised the merits of the family's history.[24] Only persons who had held high office could have such masks representing them at a funeral, and the families would also display them in the home for further visual self-promotion. Flower has shown that the wax masks were separate from the effigies used in the cult of the dead and that no surviving text (out of a fairly large sample of 106 surviving references to the masks) shows the masks used directly as the objects of acts of worship. The distinction between the masks (for social display) and the effigies (for worship) would also be consistent with the idea that only a small number of former office holders could display the masks, as opposed to the broader participation in the cult of the *manes*.[25]

The actual cremation was a lengthy process. It took place on a pyre made of alternating layers of logs. Cremation on an open wood-burning pyre would not be as hot or as fast as a modern furnace. The fire might take as long as six to eight hours to consume the body, and there would therefore be a significant interval between the beginning of cremation and the burial rites. Probably, the funeral began in the morning to allow time for completion of the cremation and subsequent rites. Cremations would take place at an area near the cemetery set aside for the purpose, called an *ustrina*, though they may have sometimes cremated the bodies on the gravesite itself. Paid professionals could perform both the actual cremation and the physical burial, though it is unclear whether all Romans used (or could afford to use) those services.[26]

At least some of the time, mourners would burn grave goods and food offerings along with the body on the pyre. These might constitute offerings in the cult of the dead, though it is not clear how commonly they occurred.[27] Did the burning of the body itself have religious significance? It would seem not. Cicero states explicitly (*Leg.*, 2.57) that the pontifical rules did not require cremation, and not cremating was always a possible option. Several texts mention prominent families that rejected cremation as a personal option before it was a common choice in Rome, but none of the texts presents that decision as an act of impiety, only as an unusual preference. One also cannot link the shift from cremation toward inhumation in the second century AD to the rise of Christianity or to any other religious change. It appears primarily to be a change in fashion.[28]

The long duration of the cremation would have required the participants to fill the time in some way. Presumably, preparations for the later funerary feast were going on, and, at least at elite funerals, the aforementioned *praeficae* would have continued to sing. For nonelite funerals, where a eulogy from the *rostra* was not an option, the heirs would likely have delivered a eulogy

during this time, much as Statius (*Silv.*, 5.3) presents himself as honoring his father by reciting poetry before the actual burning pyre at the funeral. Several of the rituals that Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.55) presents as standard parts of funerals likely took place during this lengthy period. These would include a sacrifice to a *lar*, though it is unclear if Cicero means a household *lar familiaris* or a *lar* that watches over the land of the grave, the pyre, or both.

There were also two purificatory rituals intended to remove death pollution, the contamination that came from contact with a corpse. One was the sacrifice of a female pig (*porca*) to the goddess Ceres, who often had associations of purifying families at moments of transition such as births, marriages, and deaths. Festus (296–298L), citing a Republican-era source, says that this sacrifice took place in the presence of the corpse, and so placing it within the long crematory period seems a reasonable inference.[29] Cicero also refers to the reburial of a bone, which appears to be the *os resectum*, a bone severed from the main corpse for a ritual that Varro (*Ling.*, 5.23) says was "for purifying the family" (*ad familiam purgandam*). Small bones found in pottery jugs inside graves near the church of San Cesareo on the Appian Way in Rome may be evidence of this custom.[30] These small bone fragments were kept separate from other remains. They appear to be scorched as if put into a fire, but not left to be consumed by that fire. That suggests that the rite involved fire as a purifying agent, and again that it would be a convenient ritual to perform while next to a funerary pyre, where fire was easily available to employ in a separate ritual, and the funeral party likewise had a period of time to fill. Placing the *os resectum* ritual during the cremation seems superior to the alternative suggested by Graham that the fire in question is that of the *suffitio*. The *suffitio* was the final purification ritual at the end of the funeral after the funerary feast, in which worshippers jump through steam created by dripping water on coals before returning home. As Lennon pointed out, it would reintroduce impurities into a post-burial purification rite to insert a dead body part into it, for the participants would otherwise be done interacting with the corpse at that point, and so that does not seem persuasive. The cremation fire—intended by function to consume a corpse—poses no such difficulty, as contact with the corpse would not yet have ended for the participants prior to the later burial.[31]

When at last the cremation ended, the funeral participants put out the fire and gathered the cremains in an urn. Funerary participants would then bury the ashes.[32] It is at the actual grave that the most overt invocations of the cult of the dead took place. The grave itself became sacred space, a place for future worship.

C) THE AFTERLIFE IN THE EARLY STAGES

Before discussing the rites at the tomb, we might stop and ask whether any of the rites in the preburial early stages of the funeral overtly anticipate an afterlife. As I have shown in the above discussion, the main focus is on mourning in the wake and eulogy, while periodic purificatory ceremonies also cleanse the funerary participants, a process that continues through later purifications all the way to the final *suffitio*. One can say that there are at least hints of an afterlife to come.

One idea with which we can safely dispense is the theory of Onians that, at the moment of death, a final kiss captured the escaping soul of the dead person in the body of the kisser. This theory has no basis, as Onians created it by combining references to last kisses with different texts like those of Ovid (*Met.*, 15.878) that talk about the survival of memory through orally transmitted reputation. There is nothing there about the movement of souls.[33]

Better documented, though subtler, is the symbolic foreshadowing through the olfactory treatment of the corpse with perfumed scents and incense. Perfumed fragrances were associated with, and common offerings toward, gods in general and appear specifically in descriptions of the *Parentalia* festival for the *manes*. Indeed, pleasant fragrances also have associations with *Elysium*.[34] The burning of incense around the corpse, the anointing of the body with scented oils, and the garlanding of the body with flowers all had a practical function in countering the smell of decay, but it was also the way one adorned temples and cult statues of gods. Doing all this in the context of the wake and procession meant treating the corpse like a cult statue shortly before the funerary rites at the tomb, where worshippers would offer a sacrifice to that same newly dead person. One could see the fragrances, therefore, as one of several stages building toward more overt rites of deification.

Another possible reference to the afterlife was in the placement of a coin in the dead person's mouth, which could be an endorsement of the Greek legend about the underworld boatman Charon, who needed payment in the form of a coin to transport the dead. Several Roman texts refer to a need to pay Charon, and coins appear in some graves. The archaeological evidence, though, is inconsistent. Even allowing that the evidence is disproportionately from provincial graves and that only in the case of later inhumation burials is the exact location of the coin relative to the body possible to determine, there are still notable variations. In cases where one can determine the position of the coin, it is only in the mouth around half the time, according to Lisa Brown's British sample of evidence. Other graves lack coins altogether.

It is also possible that some coins reflect conventional grave goods (i.e., in the form of coins) or even pre-Roman provincial religious practices.[35]

These variations are unsurprising when seen in the light of two points this study has already made. First, Romans could combine the cult of the dead with Greek scenarios of an underworld, like that including Charon, but there is nothing intrinsic to the rites for the *manes* that requires such a combination of traditions, and so other Romans could reject it (preface and chapter 5.C). Second, the lack of a dogmatic theology means that differences in beliefs could coexist without conflict (chapter 4). As there is nothing to connect "Charon's Obol," as the coin is sometimes called, with the rules of the pontiffs, it could simply be an option that different Romans could endorse or disregard as they saw fit.

These variations would thus work well in the framework of the "belief cluster" model. One can see clusters within clusters. Those who accepted the belief that burying the dead with coins somehow aided their entry into the afterlife might nevertheless disagree on the specifics of how that aid worked. Some would see a need to pay the boatman Charon, and others would merely find the offering of gifts in the form of coins pleasing to the dead. Both of these options were compatible with the cult of the *manes*, and thus they could both be part of a larger cluster of those who believed offerings to be important to the dead but who might or might not view coins specifically as an appropriate offering. That larger cluster would include Romans who would not place any coin in the grave.

D) AT THE GRAVE: RITES OF WORSHIP

1. Dis Manibus Sacrum*: A Point of Terminology*

As we turn now specifically to the rites at the tomb, one of the functions of those rituals was to establish the grave itself as sacred space. Roman terminology of sacredness requires a bit of clarification. There were two adjectives that one could translate as "sacred" in relation to graves, *sacer* and *religiosus*. Although it is possible to make a distinction between them, that distinction seems in practice to be relevant mainly in legal texts and contexts where it became necessary to define distinctions between public space and religiously protected space. Other usage, including on tombstones, ignores the alleged difference.

In a discussion of consecrating temples, Scheid argued that the legal distinction between the two terms was that *sacer* meant that one of Rome's priests had formally consecrated something with a particular ritual, whereas

religiosus was a category of sacredness that did not involve a priest's formal ceremony of consecration. Thus, the jurists of the *Digest* properly use only *religiosus* to refer to graves, which become sacred through a private ceremony. The jurist Gaius (*Inst.*, 2.1.2) goes so far as to say, "*sacer* things are those that have been consecrated to the gods above; *religiosus* things are those that were relinquished to the *di manes*."[36]

The problem with this distinction is that it does not agree with actual Roman usage. Roman tombstones rarely if ever use the term *religiosus*, but they frequently say *dis manibus sacrum*, "*sacer* to the divine *manes*." Nor do other texts show a consistent pattern of endorsing the juristic distinction in uses apart from graves. Virgil (*Aen.*, 2.265) can refer to temples not as *sacer* but as *religiosa deorum limina*. Cicero (*Verr.*, 2.4.57) can use *religiosus* to refer to a statue of Jupiter or even use both terms to refer to the same objects: *sacris et religiosis* (*Leg.*, 3.13.31). Likewise, because it contains the *Parentalia*, Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.52) can refer to February as the month *qui sacer est imis manibus* ("which is *sacer* to the *manes* below"). The use of *dis manibus sacrum* on tombstones is therefore not an isolated exception to the alleged rule. Jurists often make narrow distinctions of terminology that apply only to legal contexts, and this would seem to be a good example. The reasonable conclusion to draw is that, in general usage, *sacer* and *religiosus* are basically synonyms, and I will therefore treat them as such. When applied to places, both adjectives indicated that a ceremony had designated a particular space as sacred to, and thus a possession of, a particular god. Any violation of the space would offend the god in question. In the case of graves, that violation would incur legal as well as religious penalties.[37]

2. *Creating Sacred Space and Offerings to the* Manes

To make the grave a sacred space required ritual action. The grave would then be the site of worship, including postfunerary rites for the *manes* at the annual *Parentalia* and on other occasions. As just noted, some tombstones even declare the grave to be "sacred to the divine *manes*." Establishing the sacredness of the grave is therefore a central focus of the funerary process. The ritual completes the transformation of the dead person from former human to a god with his or her own worship space and in the process transforms the mourners into worshippers.

When pointing out that cremation was not an essential part of funerals, Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.57) noted that the mere presence of the cremains was not enough. The two elements for making a grave sacred were the sacrifice of a male pig (*porcus*) and the heaping of earth on the grave. He presents the

heaping of earth as the minimum necessary element without which the grave would not be sacred (*nihil habet religionis*), even in a case where the grave is also the point of cremation. Varro (*Ling.*, 5.23) also mentions the throwing of earth, as does Horace (*Odes*, 1.28.23–24, 35–36), who implies that three handfuls of earth was the minimum necessary. Such a simple ritual doubtless was useful to accommodate unusual circumstances, including those when full ceremonies were impossible. Germanicus and his soldiers raised a mound over the dead of Varus' legions deep in enemy territory (Tac., *Ann.*, 1.62), and laying a light cover of earth seems to have been the only ceremony that took place at the intentionally minimal first funeral of Caligula (Suet., *Calig.*, 59), though he later received a more elaborate rite. The ease of the heaping-on-of-earth ritual meant that it was accessible to all and could adapt to a number of conditions.

The other element of making a grave sacred that Cicero mentions is the sacrifice of a *porcus*, a male pig. Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.55) also mentioned the sacrifice of a sow, the aforementioned rite offered to Ceres, and that seems to have created a modern perception that there was only one pig, despite the change in gender. Scheid equates the *porca* with the *porcus*. Other scholars simply note one pig sacrifice without acknowledging the problem of the gender. Cicero is not, however, the sort of author who loses track of the gender of his nouns.[38] Moreover, when he refers to the ritual of the *porca* (*Leg.*, 2.55) it is part of a list of funerary items, and making the grave sacred is a separate item on the list, but it is in regard to the latter that he later mentions the *porcus*. Harmon is right to stress that there are two pigs, male and female.[39]

If the sacrifice of the *porca* was an offering to Ceres, to which god was the male *porcus* offered? The most likely candidate is the new *manes*, that is, the dead person at whose grave the mourners offered the sacrifice. The heaping of earth marked the grave as sacred space, suitable for worship, and the sacrifice of the *porcus* initiated the pattern of worship of the new *manes* that would continue on later occasions like the *Parentalia*.

The mere fact that the sacrifice of the *porcus* is for the purpose of making the grave sacred space should itself imply that the dead person is the object of the sacrifice. I am unaware of any other Roman ritual that establishes a particular space as sacred to a god that does not involve an offering being made to that god. If the sacrifice of the *porcus* is part of the process of making the grave sacred, and the grave is sacred to the *manes*, then the Romans offered the *porcus* to the *manes*. For the buried individual, the ceremony initiates the cult of the dead, which will continue in postfunerary rites. Lepetz notes that an abundance of pig bones has been found at graves and pyres. Although he notes that it is difficult to distinguish between sacrificial animals

and those eaten at the feast later, the bones offer at least possible confirmation of Cicero's pig sacrifices. Romans often consumed sacrificial animals, and so there may be no need to separate the two categories of pigs.[40]

Several texts confirm the idea of a sacrifice to the dead person at the funeral. One of them, Porphyrio's third-century commentary on Horace, has not been recognized as even referring to a funeral because of attempts to read it as referring to a rite on the ninth day after the burial, a point that requires some examination. I have already noted above the absence of unambiguous references to a "ninth day" rite after the burial. When explaining the word *novendiales* in Horace's *Epodes* 17.48, Porphyrio says: *novendiale dicitur sacrificium quod mortuis fit nona die qua sepultura est*. Translating this text raises several issues. Marquardt in 1886 asserted that one should emend the text to read *quam* (in the sense of *postquam*) instead of *qua* and that the text refers to a rite conducted "on the ninth day after" the burial.[41] If, for the sake of argument, one accepted the existence of a ritual on the ninth day after burial, that would be a moment when the ashes would be buried underground and there would allegedly be people on the surface gathered for a ceremony and therefore present to prevent anyone from digging up the cremains. That seems a much less plausible scenario for obtaining ashes than that Horace's sorceress, in the guise of a mourner, simply snatches a handful of ash off the pyre while it was still accessible on the surface on the day of the cremation. As I have already noted above, Horace's text makes more sense if it refers to the ninth day of the main funeral. So, there is no *a priori* reason based on the text that Porphyrio is glossing that would make one expect Porphyrio to be referring to events after the day of burial. Moreover, Marquardt's emendation is unnecessary, for it depends on the idea that *sepultura* is a participle, when it could just be a noun, "burial," and all the verbs would therefore be present tense. So, without emending the text, it says, "A sacrifice is called 'ninth-day' which is made to dead men on the ninth day, when the burial is." The text thus confirms the idea of a sacrifice to the dead person on the day of the funeral. Porphyrio is making a broad statement about funerals in general (and thus the plural "to the dead men"), but that the dead are the recipients of the sacrifice is unambiguous.

Further evidence comes from another text I have discussed (and quoted) before: Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* 6.566–570, in which Ovid retells the story of Philomela, who was kidnapped by her brother-in-law. Falsely believing Philomela to be dead, her sister, Procne, conducts a funeral for her and "sacrifices to the false *manes*." I mentioned this passage in chapter 2 as an example of the use of the word *manes* in the singular. *Manes* must refer to the allegedly dead Philomela alone, for no other *manes* would be rendered "false" by Philomela

still really being alive. The same logic, though, requires that Philomela be the recipient of the sacrifice. Procne sacrifices to the deity who does not actually exist because Philomela is still a living human, not yet a *manes*. By implication, a true *manes*, that is, of a truly dead person, would deserve the sacrifice.

In addition to the pontifically mandated rituals of the *porcus* and the heaping of earth, Romans seem to have offered their own more irregular offerings in the form of grave goods. One must of course be cautious about assuming *a priori* that grave goods have religious meaning.[42] In the context here, however, in which the Romans were sacrificing to the dead person at the tomb and would return to the tomb to make further offerings at the *Parentalia* and on other occasions, one may reasonably assume that other items presented at the grave were intended in part as offerings, even if they also had other meanings for participants.

The grave goods likely show another facet of the dual nature of the dead person as both former human and future god. The pig sacrifice was an offering of a sort that would be given to a god, but not a living human. The more personalized grave goods could please the new deity as offerings but also serve at the same time to commemorate aspects of the dead person's living identity. Toynbee's list of items that archaeologists have found in graves includes articles that either reflected the status of the dead person in life (e.g., military weapons and insignia) or were items that brought the dead person pleasure in life (e.g., jewelry, perfume, children's toys, gambling dice, and various eating and drinking vessels that may have contained food when they were buried). These items were individually tied to the dead person's identity and presumably could still please the new *manes* after death, but they also—through their association with the dead person's earlier life—gave physical expression to the mourners' memories of the deceased.[43]

One should not take too literally the idea that the dead would actually use the physical grave goods. Some items seem to have been burned on the pyre with the body. Toynbee draws attention to a tomb where the gifts were painted rather than physical; Rushforth notes lanterns were sometimes carved on cinerary urns rather than placed in the tomb; Caseau suggests that some empty perfume bottles found in tombs may have never contained scent. To paraphrase a modern cliché, it was the thought that counted. The grave goods were a gesture of worship but also of respect and affection from the mourners to the dead.[44]

More overtly religious was the frequent equipping of graves with access points for future offerings. In particular, there was a tendency to equip graves with tubes through which liquid offerings, perhaps wine but also maybe per-

fume, could flow. That these tubes were part of the original burial shows again the sense that the funeral was establishing the grave as worship space, to which the surviving family would return with future offerings.[45]

3. The Liberation of the Dead

The ritual at the grave established the dead person as a fully functional *manes*. Functionality is the key. The mere survival of some kind of spirit after death appears to be an automatic process, but, without the funeral, that spirit was trapped in the vicinity of its physical remains. Only the completion of the funeral rites could move the dead person to a fully active status as one of the divine *manes*. Thus, the exiled poet Ovid (*Trist.*, 3.3.45–46, 59–66) can envision a fate in which he would be trapped forever among the Sarmatian shades of Pontus if he should lack a proper funeral and tomb (*sine funeribus . . . sine honore sepulchri*). Other stories of spirits trapped near their corpses recur in various contexts in Roman literature, and those stories also say that a funeral would liberate them (Pliny, *Ep.*, 7.27; Plaut., *Mostell.*). Although it is interesting to compare these stories to modern ghost stories (as Felton has done), one should also keep in mind the different religious context.[46] The modern stories are not part of a framework in which there is an ongoing cult of the dead where surviving relatives offer prayers to the dead. Not being able to move freely would affect the dead's ability to answer prayers.

Scholars sometimes assume that the occurrence of rites for the dead in the cemetery at the *Parentalia* means that the dead reside permanently in their original graves, or even that the purpose of posthumous rites was to keep them there.[47] Given the amount of variation possible in Roman religion, one cannot of course rule out the possibility of individuals who thought the dead resided in the cemetery. Still, if one is going to suggest that it was the predominant Roman view that the dead resided in their graves, then there are many difficulties. The evidence of Rome's postfunerary rites for the dead actually suggests the exact reverse. Even in the *Parentalia*, when worshippers took offerings the grave, Ovid (*Fasti,* 2.563–566) stresses that the dead were wandering the city, which is why it was necessary to close the temples. Moreover, Virgil (*Aen.*, 3.301–305) says Andromache summoned (*vocabat*) her husband's *manes* to the grave for an annual ceremony at the tomb that appears to be the *Parentalia*, suggesting the dead man resides elsewhere. The ceremony of the opening of the *Mundus* likewise involves opening a door that is not in a cemetery, and using the door to interact with Rome's dead in an underground home (chapter 5.A.2.a). The *Lemuria* involved the dead coming to

their worshippers' house (below, 7.B), and a home shrine like the one that Statius (*Silv.*, 3.3) credits to Etruscus is again about the *manes* coming from elsewhere to the house but clearly not being limited to the grave.

The argument that the *manes* would be restricted to their graves also tries to use a handful of additional pieces of evidence. There are tombs in the form of houses. There are also tombstones that refer to the grave as an "eternal home" (*domus aeterna*), and certain tombstones that contain the phrase "Let the earth be light for you" (*sit tibi terra levis*), both points Lattimore has emphasized.[48] None of this is very compelling.

Even Christians could talk about "resting in peace" and "eternal peace" in death without that constituting either a denial of an afterlife elsewhere or a statement that the soul was resting eternally in the remains of the corpse. One should therefore avoid excessive literalism or the assumption that Roman Pagans were more prone to literalism than other groups. Wallace-Hadrill has shown that the symbolic associations of the so-called house-tombs are extremely complex and likely show a desire to represent symbolically as domestic space the point of interaction between the living family and the dead. It need not therefore be read simply as a literal statement that the dead need a physical house in the cemetery. Such tombs are also fairly rare.[49]

Likewise, saying that a tomb was an eternal home (*domus*) shows only that the grave was the possession of the dead person. Even in Roman law, one could own a *domus* without it being one's only or even primary place of domicile.[50] The physical body too was already in the form of ashes and protected from the outside soil by the urn, and so it seems unlikely that Romans intended "let the earth be light for you" literally to mean that the soul, trapped with the cremains, might be under physical pressure. It seems far better to take it loosely as a wish that the dead person would have a favorable afterlife. In love elegy, for example, poets could use the phrase to express the idea that a true love will never forget the dead person, and so it has a sense of being free from worry, not literally free from the pressure of the soil.[51]

The suggestion that Romans usually thought that the dead resided permanently in their graves is thus unnecessary and incompatible with Roman texts about *manes* and their worship. As I showed in the discussion of the powers of the dead in chapter 5, the *manes* needed to be able to intervene in the lives of their worshippers. Their sphere of influence could not, therefore, be restricted to the immediate vicinity of their physical remains, any more than a god of the sky such as Jupiter was restricted to the immediate vicinity of his temple in Rome. The funerary rite of laying earth upon the grave seems to have completed the movement of the dead person into a secure status as fully functional *manes*, while the mourners had likewise become worshippers.

4. After the Sacrifices

The final acts of the funeral were a feast and final ceremonies of purification, of which the feast was itself purifying. The feast, known as a *silicernium*, seems at least sometimes to have taken place at the tomb, though it is not clear that was always the case. Presumably the meal included meat from the just-completed sacrifices and perhaps other food prepared before or even during the long crematory period. There was one specific item on the menu, a type of blood sausage also known as *silicernium*. Paulus' epitome of Festus (377L) says that "family was purified" (*familia purgabatur*) by the *silicernium*.[52] Although Paulus/Festus mentions only the *familia*, there is no reason to think Romans would have excluded participants from outside the *familia* (even in the broadest sense of the word *familia*). Varro (quoted by Nonius, 68L) seems to include all participants and also explicitly places the meal after the completion of the burial: *funus exequiatis laute ad sepulchrum antiquo more silicernium confecimus* ("for those who had celebrated the funeral with praise we carried out the *silicernium* to the tomb in the ancient manner"). The funerary banquet appears to be at the tomb itself and to include the whole funeral party, not just the *familia*. Indeed, when Cicero (*Vat.*, 30–32) criticizes Vatinius for being inappropriately dressed at a funerary feast for Quintus Arrius, he says explicitly that thousands were present, an exceptional number perhaps but clearly not limited to the dead man's household.[53] Varro's comment about "the ancient manner" might mean that such banquets were no longer held at the tomb, but it might also refer only to some (otherwise unspecified) manner in which participants carry the sausage to the tomb. Apuleius' *Florida* (20.6) later presented a funeral feast at the tomb, as did Petronius (65–66).

The funeral banquet brought together various themes of the funeral. It was purifying, but it was also a social gathering in which family and friends of the dead person could gather, talk, and remember the dead person's life. Moreover, it could be seen as an offering to the *manes* as well, with the dead enjoying the festivities in their honor. That point is explicit in the fourth-century commentary of Donatus (*Ter., Adelphi*, 587), who says that mourners offered the *silicernium* to the *manes*. If he meant exclusively, that would contradict earlier sources, but it probably means just that the dead person was offered a portion at the banquet at which he or she was the guest of honor. Feasting in honor of gods was itself a well-established Roman tradition. Thus, the celebration of the lost life, the honoring of the *manes,* and the purification of the family were all present.[54] Following the feast was the aforementioned rite of the *suffitio*, another purification, after which funerary participants went home.

In theory, later funerary observances could take place at a distance from the funeral proper, though that would have been according to budget. The wealthy could build elaborate tomb monuments, install tomb gardens that would need to be tended in the future, or even hold observances such as gladiatorial games to honor the deceased.[55] None of this was mandatory. I will return to the postfunerary festivals for the dead in the next chapter.

E) THE *MANES* AT THE FUNERAL

One possible way to measure the "importance" of religious ceremonies in a culture is by the scale of participation in them. By that standard, Roman funerals would rank highly. Many of Rome's so-called festivals in honor of gods involved only small groups of people or even just a single priest in a minor temple.[56] An individual funeral might involve only a small segment of the population, but the sheer size of Rome' urban population, and its consequent rate of mortality, would have required multiple funerals to take place daily. Bodel estimated that a city of Rome's population would produce an average of 80 deaths per day. An individual Roman would therefore likely participate in several funerals in a lifetime and would witness certain aspects of funerals, such as the processions taking the bodies from residential areas to the cemeteries, on a frequent or even daily basis. Participation in a funeral would vary according to one's relationship to the deceased, and one could simply witness some or all of the proceedings as a nonfamilial mourner, but Roman priests did not serve as funerary celebrants, and every family would suffer deaths eventually. The number of Romans who personally took part in rites such as sacrifices to the *manes* would have been very high. Few other aspects of Roman religious ritual could claim such a significant rate of active involvement. Ramsay MacMullen referred to the cult of the dead in Roman religion as the "best attested practice." The sheer number of Roman funerals would have made that true.[57]

There is also no reason to think that only the upper class participated. Many of the basic elements of the funeral—a wake, a procession, a eulogy—could cost little. Of the rites specifically for the *manes* at the funeral, the sacrifice of a pig might be relatively costly, but Romans clearly recognized the need to scale sacrifices down to fit their budgets.

Although it is not specifically about funerals, an important text is Propertius (2.10.24), which called incense a "pauper's offering," that is, a lower-cost alternative to animal sacrifice. Incense was itself an important part of the funerary rituals, and so its affordability is significant. More important, though,

is the suggestion that it was acceptable to scale down the cost of standard sacrifices to fit one's budget without offending the gods. So, the burning of incense, or perhaps a libation of wine or some other offering, could substitute for a more expensive animal sacrifice. For those who could afford some type of sacrifice, Tibullus (1.1.19–24) similarly suggests that it would be acceptable to substitute a less expensive animal for a more expensive customary sacrifice. Poorer families could thus have upheld Cicero's outline of offerings due to different gods, but just substituted less expensive offerings.

Graham likewise offers an interesting survey of archaeological evidence for modest graves. She notes several types, but one of the more common would simply have a buried receptacle for the cremains with an amphora above it. The neck of the amphora would extend out of the ground. The amphora marks the location of the grave, but it could also serve as an access pipe for liquid offerings. The latter point is important as it suggests that even persons too poor for a tombstone would engage in postfunerary rites such as the *Parentalia* and thus participate in the cult of the *manes*. Graham's work more generally has challenged the idea that the Roman poor did not hold funerals or that they regularly abandoned bodies to pauper's pits.[58] As I will show in chapter 7, the offerings required in postfunerary rites for the *manes* were also modest. The ceremonies thus reinforce the implications of chapter 3 that participation in the cult of the *manes* would have been widespread.

Arnold van Gennep famously portrayed funerals as "rites of passage," in which both the dead person and the survivors are in a state of transition. A change in life status such death (or birth or marriage) brings about shifts in social categories for all concerned. During the transition, affected parties would be in an unstable, liminal state, that is, between conventional categories. The ceremonies serve as a mechanism to restore equilibrium and affirm the completion of the transition for both the dead person and the survivors into a new status.[59] The Roman funeral helped the family and the community adjust to the loss of a member through ritualized mourning, and it helped move the mourners through a state of death pollution to restored purification. Within the specific context of Roman religion, though, one could take this transition further. The funeral moved the dead person into a new state as fully active *manes*, the grave into a new state as sacred space, and the survivors into a new role as worshippers of the newly created deity. That this was among the most common of all Roman religious ceremonies is therefore evidence of its centrality to Roman religious culture.

SEVEN

FESTIVALS, CEREMONIES, AND HOME SHRINES

The worship of the *manes* that began at the funeral continued in a range of contexts throughout the year. The most visible would have been the festival of the *Parentalia*, in February, which took place in public cemeteries with mass participation, but there would also have been the more private festival of the *Lemuria*, within the home, in May. A range of other observances also took place at home shrines or graves. Collectively, these ceremonies would serve to maintain *pietas* with the deified dead and thereby maintain their worshippers' access to a potential source of divine aid.

The festivals and at least some of the private rituals would have had an official ritual procedure as defined by the college of pontiffs, but, even in the ceremonial forms, there was some room for variation, concerning, for example, the size of offerings. In the usual manner of Roman orthopraxy, the ceremonies could also serve as a common focal point for participation by persons who held a cluster of different views of the nature of the deities for whom they were performing the rites (chapter 4.C.3). The *Lemuria* in particular seems to have inspired multiple interpretations, but even the *Parentalia* and the home shrines would have left it to the worshipper to decide many details of how to view the nature of the *manes* beyond their need for offerings. Common to all the interpretations, though, was an assumption that the deified dead existed and had power over the living. Performance of the ceremonies provided the living with a means to tap into that power and apply it toward the worshippers' needs on an ongoing basis.

A) THE *PARENTALIA*

1. Ovid as a Source

Any modern description of the rituals of either the *Parentalia* or the *Lemuria* involves heavy reliance on the information in Ovid's lengthy poem about the religious calendar, the *Fasti*, which is the most detailed source for both festivals. The *Fasti* is also a source that has provoked many controversies, not all of which I have space to address here. The most basic problem is that early twentieth-century scholarship tended to treat the poem as if it was handbook on religious procedure. A counter-reaction then has tried to emphasize every theme *except* religious worship when discussing the poem, as if it was obvious that worship did not interest the poet at all. A middle-ground position would be preferable. One must recognize that the *Fasti* is not a procedural handbook and that of course the poem illustrates a broad range of Ovid's themes and interests, including his views of gender, familial relationships, and politics. It also shows the poet's desire to interact with, expand upon, and subtly comment upon the works of earlier poets in a variety of ways.[1]

Too often, though, recent scholarship just takes it as a given that Ovid has no actual interest in worship and that scholars who imply otherwise are "simplistic" or "lacking in nuance." As I have suggested already in the preface of this book, the basis for the alleged obviousness of this position tends itself to derive from unexamined assumptions that derive from modern religious thought. If one takes it as self-evident that Ovid is, for example, too worldly, too cosmopolitan, or too interested in sex as a subject to be interested in religious worship, then what standard of reference is being applied if not a model of what "interested in religion" should look like in a modern Judeo-Christian context, including its strong opposition between spirituality and the concerns of flesh? Is that opposition really a part of Ovid's Pagan culture? Likewise, adopting a modern secularized stance that treats "sophisticated" and "religious" as antonyms only begs the question of what "sophisticated" would mean to an educated Roman who participates in Pagan ceremonies. As C. R. Phillips rightly stressed, there is no reason to assume *a priori* that Ovid had no interest in the festivals he described or no belief in the gods whose worship he depicted.[2] He is a part of Roman culture, not an outside observer.

In addition to his descriptions of the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria* in the *Fasti*, Ovid elsewhere discusses both his own death (*Ibis*, 139–162; *Trist.*, 3.3.63–64) and that of his wife (*Trist.*, 5.14.1–14) in terms of *manes*, and he peppers his mythological stories in the *Metamorphoses* with references to *manes* as well (e.g., 6.566–570, 8.488–496). In none of these passages is he overtly attacking the idea of *manes*, expressing skepticism about it, or playing it for laughs.

Even if one were going to say that Ovid is only adopting the persona of a participant in the worship of *manes* as a matter of self-presentation, one could still note, at the least, that it is a remarkably self-consistent presentation over multiple poems in multiple subgenres of poetry. It was likewise a presentation where he expected his audience to know the conventions, so that he does not, for example, have to explain why Procne would be making a sacrifice to the *manes* of her sister in the *Metamorphoses*. Is there, though, any compelling reason to think that it is only a posture on Ovid's part? Why could Ovid not genuinely be interested in the idea of an afterlife? That Ovid has other additional sociopolitical interests is not sufficient grounds to deny the possibility that the afterlife that he referred to so often is one of his interests.

Suggesting that Ovid is not merely posturing does not require returning to the paradigm of treating the *Fasti* as if it were intended to be a reference book. One can acknowledge the subjective decision making in Ovid's presentation of the festivals and distinguish between ritual forms and Ovid's particular interpretation of them. What is not plausible, I would argue, is to say that an author who would write such a lengthy poem about rituals would not take the time to learn the correct ritual procedures. That would be especially true in the case of festivals such as the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria,* which were active rites in Ovid's time, for Ovid's audience would have known if he presented the ritual form incorrectly. One must, though, distinguish between the basic outline of ritual details, which Ovid is unlikely to misrepresent, and the interpretations that Ovid adds. Writing about the *Fasti* as a whole, John Scheid has stressed that Ovid is probably the inventor of some of the mythological stories that he uses to illustrate the festivals, or at least that this material reflects just one of several associations that the festivals could have in Roman society.[3] Ovid is giving us his personal interpretation of the meaning of rituals. As usual, though, Roman rituals could serve as cores for clusters of beliefs, and so one cannot assume Ovid's view to be the only interpretation if there is evidence of variations. The discussion of the *Lemuria* below will illustrate that point in particular, but even the *Parentalia* could have accommodated a variety of views about the nature of *manes* within the framework of the same ritual forms.

2. *The Ceremony*

The *Parentalia* was a nine-day festival in which Romans took offerings to the *manes* at their graves. Unlike either a funeral, which was a one-time event for any dead person, or the rituals at home shrines, which could take place at a worshipper's discretion, festivals such as the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria* were

annually recurring rites whose date was set by the official festival calendar of the college of pontiffs. As such, the festivals held a curious intermediate place between the categories of public and private rituals. They were private ceremonies in the sense that priests did not conduct the rites, but the fixed and recurring timing also meant that they were actions of the Roman people as a whole, performed by the community on behalf of the community's dead. This communal nature would be particularly true of the *Parentalia*, whose main ritual action occurred in the public cemeteries. Cicero (*Scaur.*, 11) refers to a moment when the whole population of the town of Nora in Sardinia was in the cemetery outside the town, performing the *Parentalia*. Rome had a much larger population, and there is no record that the ceremonies had to be performed at particular hours, and so likely there would have been a steady stream of participants going to and from the cemetery throughout the nine-day festival.

At any given moment, however, and particularly on the last day, when Ovid says an offering was customary, many Romans would have been engaging in the ceremony simultaneously. The festival was thus a collective gesture toward Rome's *manes* made up of a multitude of individual acts of worship. Dolansky has emphasized that the collective participation of the rites also would provide a forum for personal and familial display, since Romans would be watching what their neighbors did and how they conducted the rites.[4]

This format of familial worship, as opposed to having a priest as celebrant, might appear to be challenged by an entry on the *Parentalia* in Filocalus' "Codex Calendar of 354," which says that a vestal virgin performed a sacrifice on the first day of the festival. Prudentius (*C. Symm.*, 2.1107–1108), another fourth-century author, mentions a vestal sacrificing to the dead in an underground chamber, probably a reference to the same custom.[5] In 1893, Mommsen and, more recently, H. Lindsay suggested a link between Filocalus' reference and a ceremony for Tarpeia, a figure from early Roman legend, but that link is tenuous. Although other sources suggest Tarpeia was a vestal, they do not mention a ceremony associated with Tarpeia, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus' reference to the ceremony for Tarpeia (*Ant. Rom.*, 2.40) mentions neither the vestals nor the *Parentalia*. It might be unconnected to either, for it is not clear why Tarpeia, a figure legendary for being a traitor, would have a special role at the *Parentalia*. The argument is not improved by Takács' suggestion that the vestal was propitiating the dead of criminals executed at a site named after Tarpeia, the Tarpeian rock. It is just not clear why the Tarpeian rock would be connected to the *Parentalia* at all or to the vestal order of much later eras than the disgraced and possibly fictional Tarpeia.[6] Latte proposed that Filocalus' and Prudentius' vestal was worshipping the ancestors of

Rome's kings. Wildfang and DiLuzio have suggested—more plausibly to my mind—that she was worshipping the dead of the vestal order because vestals lacked familial descendants to carry out the worship.[7]

The more important question, though, is whether the vestal's action was part of the ceremony in the period of this study's focus, and it is unlikely that it was. Consider again Cicero's opposition to public rites for Julius Caesar (*Phil.*, 1.13, quoted in chapter 1.C). His argument contrasts public rites conducted by a priest for a dead person with what he regards as proper rites for a dead individual, the *Parentalia*, which he presents as a private ceremony at a grave. It would have seriously undercut his position if a public priestess was initiating the *Parentalia* rituals in his time.

The vestal's sacrifice was likely a late addition to the tradition, and the classic form of the *Parentalia* was a festival with private celebrants, primarily but not exclusively relatives of the dead persons toward whom offerings were directed. As I emphasized in the discussion of who worshipped whom in chapter 3, the patterns of inheritance and *pietas* that motivated worship could have included some participants outside the family, and so participants would not have been exclusively direct descendants of the deceased, though direct descendants might have been the most common worshippers. Those patterns of religious obligation would also have applied to both male and female worshippers, and there is no basis for asserting that only male heads of household performed the ceremony.[8]

The *Parentalia* lasted nine days, from February 13 to 21, a period during which Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.557–566) says the dead wandered the city, the temples of the other gods were closed to keep them out, and marriages were not held. Ovid (2.569–570) says that the word *Feralia* was properly the name of the last day of the festival, and some scholars have tried use that passage as a basis for treating the *Feralia* as if it were a separate festival from the *Parentalia*, but it is more likely that the words are just synonyms. Even Ovid himself is not consistent and refers to the whole period using forms of the same word, as "*Feralis* days" (2.34) and "*Feralis* time" (5.486). Some surviving calendars also record the name of the festival only as the *Feralia*.[9] Probably, *Feralia* and *Parentalia* are just different names for the whole nine-day festival, and Ovid, who wants to derive the word *Feralia* from the verb *ferre* ("to carry") is just trying to stress that carrying offerings to the grave was a standard feature of the last day of the festival.

Ovid's derivation of *Feralia* from *ferre* (2.569), which Varro (*Ling.*, 6.13) had also earlier asserted, is not etymologically correct, but both authors present the etymological conjecture as deriving from the action of the festival, not the reverse. It is implausible that either Varro or Ovid was incorrect in

saying that Romans took offerings to the tomb, as both authors would have seen the festival and most likely participated in it year after year. It is therefore untenable to try to separate the *Feralia* from the *Parentalia* as if they were separate festivals or to use the incorrectness of Ovid's and Varro's etymology as evidence of that point.[10]

Ovid's emphasis on the importance of the final day might mislead one into thinking that Romans made offerings only on the final day, but careful attention to Ovid's chronology shows otherwise. When Ovid discussed how the temples in Rome were closed and marriages were prohibited during the festival, he said, "Now the shade is fed by the food that has been put out" (*Fasti*, 2.566: *nunc posito pascitur umbra cibo*). Dolansky takes the "now" of this line to refer to only the last day of the festival, but Ovid has not yet begun his description of the last day.[11] He has been discussing (in the present tense) the whole period of the festival, when the temples are closed (2.557–565). Then comes the line just quoted, and only after that does Ovid make a transition to the subject of the final day of the festival: "Still, these things (*haec*) do not remain longer than there are as many days remaining in the month as my poems have feet. This day . . . they call *Feralia*" (2.567–569: *nec tamen haec ultra, quam tot de mense supersint luciferi, quot habent carmina nostra pedes. Hanc . . . dixere Feralia lucem*). The *haec* ("these things") in line 567 refers to the actions that were brought to an end by the festival's final day and so refers back to the preceding lines, including the "now" (*nunc*) of line 566. Ovid's usage is completely consistent. He is saying that, "now," during the period when the temples are closed, that is, the entire festival, food offerings had been put out (*posito*). There was a special offering at the grave to end the festival, but worshippers brought food earlier as well, so that the dead had offerings available to them throughout the *Parentalia*.

The total number and sequence of offerings during the nine-day period is unknown, for even Ovid does not describe the events day by day. In addition to simply bringing offerings to the graves, one can suggest two other possible activities that might have taken place. One possibility, although it is nowhere explicitly attested, is an offering to the family's dead in general, that is, as opposed to rites at individual graves. I pointed out in chapter 3 that worshippers mainly concentrated on bringing offerings to the dead from the current or immediately preceding generation, but there must have been a practical limit to how many graves one could visit to perform rituals. The number of dead family members would grow geometrically over the space of several generations. As the Romans also performed certain ceremonies, such as the opening of the *Mundus*, that involved interaction with the community's *manes* as a group, it would seem odd if there was not some way of including and honor-

ing the dead whose graves worshippers did not specifically visit. There is thus an *a priori* reason to think a general rite for the dead might have accompanied the more personalized grave visitations.

One hint that such a rite took place may be found in the presence of the fertility festival the *Lupercalia* within the period of the *Parentalia*. If, as I already suggested (chapter 5.A.2b), the timing was intended so that the collective dead of the community could witness and/or participate in a ceremony to bring fertility to the next generation, then such a moment would have been a logical time for a general ritual to honor each family's dead as a group and not just the named individuals that family chose to emphasize in its rituals.

A second possibility for the use of the multiday festival, which does not preclude the occurrence of the first, would be that worshippers could combine the rites for the dead with broader social gatherings in which friends of either a given deceased person or the living performers of the ceremony would be present to participate in or at least witness the ritual. When examining evidence for the social display of status at the *Parentalia*, Dolansky draws attention to several inscriptions from Rome or nearby towns that explicitly mention meals served (e.g., the *cena parentalicia* of *ILS,* 6468) and even a feast with an annual display of wrestlers in a tomb garden (*AE,* 2000.344b).[12]

These inscriptions may record exceptional instances, at least in their scale, but a suggestion that there was a regular practice of social visitation to the graves of others can be found in Petronius' *Satyricon* (78.4), where Trimalchio, while staging a sort of mock funeral, tells his guests to behave as if they had been invited to his *Parentalia*. That Petronius offers no elaboration on this reference to an invitation implies that he thought his readers would find the idea of an invitation to the *Parentalia* to be familiar enough for the author to use it as a metaphor. Likewise, the Christian *Tertullian* (*De Anima*, 4) complains of worshippers returning drunk from the tomb, suggesting some sharing of wine was being done with more than just the dead. The latter passage is not unambiguously referring to the *Parentalia*, and there were other occasions for libations at the tomb, but it could be the *Parentalia*.

Dolensky also rightly notes that the monuments that some wealthier families erected, which are preserved at locations such as Pompeii and the *Isola Sacra* cemetery near Ostia, would lend themselves well to gatherings that involved more than a handful of familial worshippers. There are cemeteries with communal kitchens and tombs with features such as ovens; benches; stone couches modeled on the sort of couches used for social dining in Rome (*triclinia*); and gardens that, while also decorative, could serve as locations for social interaction near the tomb.[13] All these sites could have been used for

other postfuneral observances, such as visiting the grave on the dead person's birthday, but when these features are combined with the other evidence discussed above, one can reasonably conclude that there was a pattern of social visitation combined with the *Parentalia*.

Ovid portrays the final day of the festival as one on which the families went to multiple graves to worship their dead. During the previous eight days, however, they could have gradually visited the various graves to place the offerings that Ovid said were put out before the final day, while inviting visitors to join in the rituals and to share wine and perhaps food with the worshippers. There were eight days, and the Romans would not have been performing rites simultaneously. It would therefore have been possible to space out one's own familial rites in such a way as to accommodate visitors (without conflicting with the visitors' own rites), while also allowing time for visits to the graves and tomb rituals of friends performing their own rites. Thus, closely affiliated families could exchange visitation to each other's gravesite rituals, allowing both an exchange of respect and perhaps an opportunity for mutual social display, particularly among the elite. One should caution, though, that joining together at a grave to participate in rites for a dead friend is not itself expensive and does not require built-in stone *triclinia* or gardens. There is no reason the poor could not have joined in this pattern of visitation with each other.

For the rites at the tomb, the fullest account by far is that of Ovid, though other texts confirm some details. This is Ovid's account, adopting—and there is no good reason to challenge it—the stance of a past participant in the festival:

> There is honor also for the tombs. Placate the paternal souls (*animas paternas*) and convey small gifts into the pyres that have been erected. The *manes* seek small things: *Pietas* rather than a costly gift is pleasing. The Styx below does not hold greedy gods. A tile wreathed with offered garlands, scattered grain, a small morsel of salt, bread softened in wine, and loose violets are enough. Let a potsherd that has been abandoned in the middle of the road hold these things. I do not forbid greater offerings, but the shade is appeasable with these. Add prayers and their own words (*sua verba*) to the altars that have been set up.[14]

As I discussed already in chapter 2, Ovid is describing rites for individual dead persons. In a later passage (*Fasti,* 5.423–428), Ovid claims that the *Lemuria* once had the same form as the *Parentalia* does in his own time, a form de-

fined as taking an offering to a specific grave. The plurals in the quotation here (*tumulis*, *pyras*, and *focis*) show that it was not just one grave, but several. Each grave gets its own offering, and so there would be multiple small ceremonies.

In his 1929 translation, unchanged on this point in Goold's 1989 revision, Frazer interprets the reference to putting an offering on a potsherd *media relicta via* as meaning the offering was left on the road. If so, that would have to be separate from the offerings on the graves, perhaps, as I suggested earlier, a general offering to dead who were not honored individually. It is simpler, though, to read it in the way I translated it above, as indicating only the source of the potsherd, which the worshipper can find "abandoned in the middle of the road" and then take to the grave to use in the ritual. Thus, the passage merely expands Ovid's point about the acceptability of a humble offering. There was no offering made in the road itself.[15]

That participants place offerings "into the pyres that have been erected" (*in exstructas pyras*) suggests that some portion of the offering was burned, perhaps using the aforementioned potsherd as a base for the kindling material. It is unlikely that every part of the offering was burned, though, as one may reasonably assume that the more decorative elements such as flowers and garlands would be left on site to adorn the tomb, like decorations in a temple. Worshippers may have also brought some kind of brazier out to the grave for burning incense. A tombstone (*CIL,* 6.10248) specifically requests incense on the *Parentalia*. Likewise, there are references to lanterns being set up at the tombs.[16]

Even Ovid's own posture of giving advice on the size of offerings suggests that there was no one standard form of offering. The pontifical rules may have specified only the procedure for presenting the offerings at the tomb, allowing the participants to choose the specific offering or they specified only a category like "an offering of food."

An obvious question is whether we can trust Ovid's emphasis on the humbleness of acceptable offerings. It is tempting to compare Ovid's advice on giving inexpensive offerings to the dead with his thoughts on giving inexpensive gifts to women (*Ars Am*., 1.399–436) and conclude that the poet was just cheap, but most other references to the offerings confirm Ovid's portrait of the *Parentalia*. The same tombstone that mentions the incense (*CIL,* 6.10248) also requests violets, one of Ovid's offerings. Festus (77L) refers to offerings of beans at the *Parentalia*. I translated Ovid's word "*fruges*" as "grain," but it could refer to any agricultural product, including beans. Plutarch (*Crassus*, 18) confirms the offering of salt. Propertius (3.16.23), Pliny (*HN*., 21.11), Pseudo-Virgil (*Copa,* 35–36), and the Christian author Minicius Felix (*Oct*., 12.6) all attest to the practice of placing some kind of wreath or

garland on Pagan graves. Varro (*Ling*., 6.13) says the Romans took "meals" (*epulas*) to the tomb on the *Feralia*. Clearly, Ovid's advice on offerings was within the range of mainstream practice.[17]

Festus (75L) attempted to derive the etymology of the word *Feralia* "from carrying meals or from sacrificing cattle" (*a ferendis epulis vel a feriendis pecudibus*). The etymologies are dubious, but his second option suggests that Festus associated animal sacrifice with the festival. In the aforementioned inscriptions collected by Dolansky that contain references to feasts on the *Parentalia* most also mention sacrifice, suggesting that the sacrificial meat would be served to guests.[18] Animal sacrifice could thus be a variation of the rite at the tomb that accompanied some upper-class celebrations of the festival.

One should be cautious, though, about assuming that animal sacrifice was a typical offering even for the wealthy. Meat from animal sacrifice was certainly not the only food that could have been shared at graveside gatherings, and sacrificing animals would have involved more inconvenience for the worshipper to perform. Note that when Cicero (*Leg*., 2.54) said that Decimus Brutus performed the *Parentalia* with the "largest sacrifices" (*hostia maxima*), he was listing ways in which Brutus' religious practices were unusual. Likewise, when Juvenal (5.84–85) complains about a small portion at a banquet, he compares it to a meal for the dead, which makes sense only if food offerings to the dead were normally modest. The other authors that I have cited above (Varro, Pliny the Elder, Propertius, Plutarch) were hardly the voices of the poor, and yet they portray offerings similar to those Ovid mentions, and he was not poor himself. Even if there were some individual exceptions, Ovid's presentation of the small size and the types of the offerings appears to be generally correct. That is not a minor point, for both the modest scale and the apparent freedom of participants to choose the exact form of the offering would have made the ceremony quite accessible even to quite poor Romans.

An interesting question is how the Ovid's model of the *Parentalia* might have changed in cases that did not fit Ovid's example of individual graves laid out in a cemetery. There were a variety of group tombs, both the *columbaria* of the early first century and a range of other familial collective burial arrangements. One can envision a situation in which a single collective rite covered a grouping of dead within a single space, but it is not clear whether that was actually the case. Borbonus' study of *columbaria* notes evidence of individual rites at individual crematory niches and concludes, "During the nine days of the *Parentalia*, for example, a *columbarium* with several hundred burials would have been a busy place."[19]

The dead in a *columbarium* were not all from the same family. In a familial tomb with multiple niches for urns, the family might possibly have performed

a single rite for all the familial dead in the tomb, but it is not clear whether that was the standard practice or even whether there was a standard practice in such situations. Some of the chamber tombs also included niches for the family freedmen or even slaves. Would these servile dead have received worship, and if so from whom? Again, there is no clear answer. Bodel has argued in general for a pattern of trying to subordinate slave worship to the interest of the masters,[20] but how that would play out in practice during the *Parentalia* at a collective tomb remains uncertain, and these questions await future research by archaeologists.

Another ceremony that Ovid mentions is possibly not part of the pontifically mandated *Parentalia*, but some Romans might nevertheless have thought it an important companion ritual to the ceremony. Ovid describes an old woman surrounded by younger girls, and she is performing a ritual that involves putting seven beans in her own mouth while burning a fish whose mouth she has tied shut (*Fasti*, 2.571–582). At the end of the ritual, she declares, "We have bound hostile tongues and enemy mouths" (*hostiles linguas inimicaque vinximus ora*). The ritual was dedicated to the goddess *Muta Tacita*, the silent goddess.

Because Ovid places this passage immediately after mentioning offerings for the dead on the last day of the *Parentalia* (the day he calls the *Feralia*), scholars have assumed that the ceremony to Tacita was only on the same day, or they have even tried to disassociate the ceremony from the cult of the dead altogether.[21] Neither conclusion is necessary. Ovid never says the fish-binding ceremony has to be on any particular day. He has, though, a compositional reason for placing its description on the border between the *Parentalia* and the next festival on his calendar, the *Caristia*, for he is using it as a bridge to link the two festivals. The *Caristia* was in honor of the *lares*, and Ovid was making a polymorphic equation of Tacita with the mother of the *lares*, thus using Tacita as a transitional element to connect his descriptions of two festivals that follow each other in sequence.[22]

The old woman's ceremony is a fairly straightforward curse-binding ritual.[23] The binding of the fish's mouth binds—by extension—the mouths of those who are hostile. The point is probably more than just fear of gossip, as Littlewood suggested.[24] The *manes* were one of the powers that Romans invoked when they composed curses to harm others (chapter 5.A.3.a). During the nine days of the *Parentalia*, the dead were somehow supposed to be present in the city, as opposed to merely projecting their power into the world of the living. What better time to make a request? The prayer that would benefit one person might harm another, though, and a prayer to Tacita could silence hostile prayers. Ovid may disapprove of the rite, for he describes the old

woman as drunk (2.582), but there is no reason to doubt such prayers existed or to limit them to the last day, when any time in the nine-day festival would seem equally appropriate. If anything, a preemptive strike at the beginning of the festival might make more sense than waiting to the end when warding off harmful curses.

In Ovid's interpretation of the *Parentalia* as whole, he stresses (2.535) that *pietas* is what the *manes* want. In Ovid's presentation, the reciprocity of *pietas* is built into the festival. The annually scheduled offerings set up an ongoing pattern of gifts from the living to the dead, but the living would also "add prayers" (*adde preces*, 2.542), requesting new benefits for themselves from the dead. Thus, the offerings would "placate" (*placare*, 2.533) the *manes*' expectation of an offering in return for their services for the previous year, while requesting new benefits for the following year, for which worshippers would make offerings at the next year's festival. At the least, the reference to "prayers" precludes presenting the *Parentalia* as being simply an act of commemoration of the dead with no element of worship.

At the same time, though, there was an element of remembrance. One of the other things that Ovid says the worshippers do at the *Parentalia* is to offer "their own words" (*sua verba*). As the verbs in the passage are in the second-person (imperative) form, the third-person adjective *sua* should refer back to the dead. Probably, the idea is to use the dead person's name, and perhaps other personal references to the dead person, as a way of emphasizing that he or she has not been forgotten. How much emphasis participants put on the aspect of remembrance as opposed to worship likely varied according the preferences of those participants.

The postfuneral festivals held more ambiguity about the nature of the dead than the funeral alone. The funeral had a sacrifice to the *manes*, celebrating the new god, but the funeral also overtly emphasized the living personality and actions of the dead person through devices such as the eulogy. If the funeral balanced the human and the god, the *Parentalia* was weighted toward the god. The main ceremonies were offerings and prayers at locations that were now sacred space, much as one could do in any temple. If one wished to view the *manes* in terms of their former living personas, one could do that and emphasize elements of remembrance, but the rituals would also support a view of posthumous godhood that primarily stressed the transformation of the dead and the potential power of their new form. Both views existed in the Roman population (cf. chapter 5.A.1.b).

Still, even the most transformative interpretation, deemphasizing the former living persona, could not entirely put aside the legacy of that persona. The reason for worshipping particular *manes* and not others depended

on inheritance and other sorts of familial and personal ties, as I discussed in chapter 3. What the *Parentalia* and other postfuneral ceremonies did was to extend ties that predated the existence of the god. Whether the *manes* still had the same personality or whether they now became very different, they were gods with whom their worshippers had an inside track. The *manes* were *their* gods in a way distinctive to that group of worshippers, and Romans would worship them during the *Parentalia* in the company of neighbors who were doing the same with their own gods.

B) THE *LEMURIA*

A second major festival for the dead was the *Lemuria*, which, unlike the *Parentalia*, took place within the family home. The dead supposedly visited the house, and the family gave them an offering of beans. The festival took place on three nonconsecutive days: May 9, 11, and 13. It is not clear whether the offering of beans was repeated each day or only on the last day, but the nonconsecutive nature of the festival days might make it more likely that the whole ritual was repeated on each of the three days. In contrast to the *Parentalia*, which is still listed in the calendar of Filocalus in 352 AD, the *Lemuria* seems to have ended and become a subject for merely antiquarian interest before the late second century AD, a point I discuss in appendix 2. Thus, many of the "primary sources" are nothing of the sort, and those who are speculating about the *Lemuria*'s meaning should keep in mind that the sources from the later empire are likely doing the same.

The *Lemuria* presents unusual interpretive problems. Is it essentially an extension of the *Parentalia*, a further communion between the family and its dead within domestic space, or is it something different? Is the word *lemures* simply a synonym for the *manes* as they appear in the context of the festival, or do the words *manes* and *lemures* refer to different categories of dead? Although there have been exceptions, notably Danka and Phillips,[25] the general trend among scholars has been to assert extreme differences between the ceremonies and their respective dead. Unlike the *Parentalia*, the *Lemuria* allegedly involves "black magic" and "a strong streak of superstition." Supposedly, the *lemures* are "supernatural vermin," "hungry ghosts," and "beyond doubt . . . noxious spirits."[26] Modern conjectures too often exceed any ancient support in their attempts to portray *lemures* in negative terms. Ogden asserts that the *lemures* "looked to steal away the living from their homes," though no source says so, and Takács claims that they were "bloodthirsty and stupid."[27] If so, no Romans offered blood to these allegedly bloodthirsty *lemures,* and instead

they gave them beans. To the degree that there was a blood offering, in the form of animal sacrifice, it went to the *manes* at the funeral and at least occasionally at the *Parentalia*, not the *Lemuria*.

Considered more broadly, and even putting aside some of the bolder conjectures above, studies of the *Lemuria* show several problems. There is a tendency to interpret the ceremony through the lens of a Christianized demonology as "exorcism" or something in that vein. There is also a tendency to privilege the testimony of late authors such as Pseudo-Acro and Nonius Marcellus, who wrote after the festival disappeared, over that of earlier writers. The most serious difficulties, though, derive from the twin assumptions (1) that there ought to be a single, dogmatic answer to any religious question, and so that there should be a single explanation to account for all references to *lemures*, and (2) that two different words (*manes* and *lemures*) must in all cases represent two different concepts. Thus, from early studies like those of Warde Fowler to recent work by Dolansky, scholars have labored to produce a unified theory that would distinguish clearly between the dead worshipped at the *Lemuria* and at the *Parentalia*, while reconciling the longest surviving description of the festival, that of Ovid, with all other surviving sources.[28]

A single, self-consistent dogma is not necessary to produce, however, when such dogma is untypical of Roman religion, and the sources in question show considerable diversity (cf. chapter 4). It is more useful to consider the ritual form of the ceremony as the central axis of a cluster of beliefs about the nature of the dead involved. Ovid represents one view, but there are surviving traces of other views. We will begin with the ritual form, as Ovid portrays it.

1. The Ritual Form

Ovid provides more detail than any other source. As in the case of the *Parentalia*, there is no *a priori* reason to think that Ovid would not correctly know the details of a ritual that was active in his time and for which the pontiffs would have formulated procedural rules. Ovid describes a single male worshipper performing a rite located within the home and taking place late at night. The male head of household might well have normally performed the ceremony on behalf of the whole household. One should remember, though, that Ovid is giving an example of someone performing the ceremony, not writing a rule book of who was allowed to do so. As I noted in chapter 3, one must be cautious about concluding that women could not perform ceremonies. Women did participate in other parts of the cult of the dead, and nothing in this passage suggests that a woman could not have done the rite. Indeed, there would have been some households where there was no male

head of household, or he would have been absent for any of several reasons at the time of the ceremony.[29] Even Ovid does not say the man is acting alone. He says that the worshipper "receives beans and then throws them," which suggests that someone else is there helping. The passage reads:

> When the night is half past and it offers silence for sleep, and the dog and all you various birds have become quiet, that man arises, a recaller of the ancient rite and one fearful of the gods. His two feet have no restraints, and he makes signs with his thumb between his joined fingers, lest an insubstantial shade should rush toward him while he is silent. After he has washed his hands pure in spring water, he turns and first receives black beans and then throws them with his back turned. While he throws, he says, "I send these things; I redeem me and mine with these beans." He says this nine times and does not look: The shade is thought to pick them up and to follow behind without anyone seeing. Again he [the worshipper] touches water and clashes Temesan bronze and asks that the shade depart from his home. When he has said nine times "paternal *manes* depart," he looks (behind him) and thinks that the sacred rites were done purely.[30]

Both Varro (quoted by Nonius, 197L) and Festus (= Paulus 77L) confirm the use of beans as the offering to the dead, and it is the only offering that any source mentions.[31] It is unclear why the Romans gave beans alone on the *Lemuria*, but beans were only one of several options for the *Parentalia*. A gift of beans to the dead in any context reflects their status as food with associations of death. Even if one puts aside the alleged Pythagorean idea that beans contained souls (Pliny, *HN*., 18.118), which may or may not have influenced Roman practice, the beans had the look of death.

Ovid (*Fasti*, 5.436) noted that the beans in the ceremony were black. Romans had a tradition of giving black offerings such as black-colored sacrificial animals to chthonic deities because the color black held associations of death and the underworld.[32] Beans are one of the only agricultural products that can be black in a fully edible state (and thus represent life in the clothes of death). Even lighter-colored beans might carry similar associations. Festus (= Paulus, 77L) says that the bean was connected with death because "the signs of mourning seem to appear in its flower" (*in flore eius luctus litterae apparere videntur*), and Pliny the Elder (*HN*., 18.119) made the same assertion. Light-colored fava beans have flowers that are white with a black "eye" in the center of the flower. Thus, they seem to be dressed for mourning and they too are suitable for an offering to the dead.[33]

Those arguing for a sharp distinction between the *Parentalia* and the *Lemu-*

ria normally look to the final request that the dead depart as evidence that the *Lemuria* is about repelling sinister powers. So, Littlewood calls it "black magic" and an "exorcism." Rose and Bömer likewise argued that Ovid's portrayal of the worshipper telling the dead to go was the proof that the dead were undesirable and thus different from the *manes* of the *Parentalia*.[34] The point is not so simple. To the degree that the Romans had a concept of "black magic," it applied to private curses, and it is hard to see how it could apply to a festival on the official calendar.[35]

Ovid's worshipper merely asks (*rogat*) the dead to leave and calls them "paternal *manes*," which is not obviously drawing a contrast with the *manes* of the *Parentalia*. Both the wandering of the dead in the city during the *Parentalia* and the opening of the *Mundus* (see chapter 5.A.2.a) also rely on a premise that the dead have a regular home elsewhere to which they would return at the closing of the *Mundus* and after the final offering at the *Parentalia*. Thus, it is not clear that the end of the *Lemuria* is any more an "exorcism" than the end of the *Parentalia*. Indeed, Frazer noted the similarity of a ceremony in Japan, the *O Bon*, in which families invite their dead into their homes for three days, offer them food, and then send them away by waving sticks in the air. It is not disrespectful to send the dead back to their proper home once they complete their ritual interaction with the living. As Goss and Klass explain, "The periodic merging of the two worlds strengthens the sense of continuity of the house and reassures the dead of the living's concern for their well-being.... And then the spirits return to their own realm." The same logic might apply to the ritual of the *Lemuria*, or, indeed, the *Parentalia*.[36]

Warde Fowler noted that surviving calendars mark the *Lemuria*, but not the *Parentalia*, as *N(efasti)*, which he thought marked a day of ill-omen, but Michels has shown that the designation *Nefasti* marked only days on which the praetor did not hear legal actions and that such days did not correlate with days of ill-omen.[37] Indeed, Ovid (*Fasti*, 2.557–564, 5.485–490) presents the two festivals as having similar rules prohibiting marriage during the ritual period. He also says that there was once a time when the temples closed during the *Lemuria*, but in his time they only closed during the *Parentalia*, which hardly shows that Romans viewed the dead at the *Lemuria* as having greater negative potential.

Ovid's description of the *Parentalia* does not depict the exact moment of presenting an offering. It may well be true that the *Lemuria*'s timing late at night and within the worshipper's own home, with the dead supposedly following behind the worshipper, made the encounter with superhuman powers a little more intimidating than at the daylight and public *Parentalia*. When Ovid describes the Lemuria worshipper as "fearful," however, he says he is

"fearful of the gods" (*timidus deorum*, 5.431), as worshippers should be. Note too that Ovid's description of the *Parentalia* (2.547–556) also mentions the potential of the dead to attack if neglected, and he says worshippers should "placate" (*placare*) the *manes* (a verb that Livy [1.20.7] uses similarly of the *manes*).[38] In both ceremonies, the dead expect offerings and could be dangerous if disappointed. Ovid's depiction of the ceremonial form does not, therefore, require the dead of the *Lemuria* to be more hostile or dangerous than the dead of the *Parentalia*. It also does not necessarily rule out such an interpretation. I will argue here that there is evidence of differing views among Roman authors about the relationship between *manes* and *lemures*, the dead of the *Lemuria*.

2. Belief Cluster: Manes *and* Lemures

The strong *a priori* assumption that *lemures*, the word that refers to the dead in the specific context of the *Lemuria*, must refer to a different group of dead than the *manes* of the *Parentalia* underlies most modern discussions of the *Lemuria*, and has led to a variety of arguments attempting not only to establish that difference but to reconcile all Roman references to the *Lemuria* into a single scenario. The sources, however, do not lend themselves to such a neat dichotomy. What one can see instead is a belief cluster in which the ritual form of throwing beans to the dead could accommodate several views of *lemures* and different levels of distinction between *lemures* and *manes*. One view appears in Ovid's account, which treats *lemures* and *manes* as synonyms, and the *Lemuria* and *Parentalia* festivals as equivalent. Other views, though, in Horace and Persius, with possible support from other texts, suggest viewing *lemures* in more negative terms.

Scholars have often attempted to force Ovid's text into agreement with sources that make more distinction between *manes* and *lemures*, but Ovid does not distinguish between the two terms. When Ovid portrays the *Lemuria* he uses the word *lemures* to refer to the dead only once (5.483), whereas he calls them *manes* twice (5.422 and 443) including the famous send-off line "paternal *manes* depart" (*manes exite paterni*, 5.443). For Ovid, *manes* and *lemures* appear to be synonyms, just as he also uses *umbrae*. For those wanting to distinguish *lemures* from *manes*, Ovid's vocabulary is extremely inconvenient. Warde Fowler suggested that Ovid referring to *lemures* as *manes* was a euphemism; Rose that Ovid was "inadvertently guilty of an inaccurate expression;" while Toynbee insisted that "Ovid's assertion … must be wrong."[39] Accusing Ovid of error depends upon the idea that there must be a single, dogmatic Roman belief about *lemures*, but Roman religion did not work that way.

As Danka (1976) and Phillips (1992: 67) noticed, Ovid's use of parallel vocabulary did not stop with the word *manes*. The parallelism is systematic, so much so that it cannot be "inadvertent." In both discussions, Ovid describes the dead as *manes* (2.535, 570; 5.422, 443); *paterni*, "paternal" (2.533, 5.443); *animae*, "souls" (2.533, 565; 5.483); *avi*, "grandfathers" (2.552; 5.426, 480); *umbrae*, "shades" (2.541; 5.439, 451); *taciti*, "silent" (2.552, 5.434); and of course *dei*, "gods" (2.536, 5.431). Almost every descriptive term that Ovid applied to the dead in either passage, he used in both descriptions.[40] In particular the duplication of *paterni* and *avi* suggests that Ovid sees the *lemures* as familial dead, as at the *Parentalia*.

Ovid also recounted a myth of a prehistoric form of the *Lemuria* in which even the form of the ritual was the same as that of the *Parentalia* in Ovid's day. Even though the year was shorter,

> nevertheless, they [the Romans] then carried their gifts to the ashes of the dead, and the grandson propitiated (*piabat*) the grave of his buried grandfather. It was the month of May (*Maius*), so-called from the name of the ancestors (*maiores*), which now still holds a part of the ancient custom.[41]

Whatever the actual prehistory of the *Lemuria* might have been, this passage shows that Ovid is not only equating the dead of the two festivals but presenting the festivals as equivalent and thus equating their purpose. Just as the *Parentalia* was about bringing offerings to the graves of specific relatives, Ovid can here present the offerings of the *Lemuria* as similar—differing in format in Ovid's era, but once identical even in that. The grandson at the grave here "propitiated" (*piabat*) his grandfather, but that does not seem clearly distinct from Ovid's instruction for the *Parentalia*, "Placate the paternal souls" (*Fasti,* 2.533: *Animas placate paternas*).

To explain further the origin of the *Lemuria*, Ovid derives the name from the word *Remuria* and tries to connect it to the legendary figure of Remus who, in Ovid's story, returns after death and appears to his brother, Romulus, to request the festival. The etymology is false, and the origin myth may be Ovid's own invention, but it shows how Ovid interprets the festival, and it is notably a story of *pietas*. It is significant that Ovid's version of the death of Remus is quite different from that of Livy (1.6–7), which put the blame for Remus' death squarely on his brother, Romulus. Ovid's version in the *Fasti* (4.807–862) acquits Romulus of responsibility for his brother's death and shows him mourning his loss. Thus, Remus' appearance to request the *Lemuria* festival from his brother (5.469–474) does not support the idea of *lemures* being menacing, for Ovid's dead Remus is in no way hostile or threatening

to Romulus. His speech asks for sympathy and for the creation of a new ceremony for him. The focus is on *pietas*. Ovid had Remus stress that Romulus' *pietas* was equal to his own (5.471: *pietas equalis est*) and that Romulus should establish a day in his honor (5.474: *nostro . . . honore*). To worship the dead out of *pietas* in Ovid's era would be a standard motive for participating in worshipping the dead—including siblings—at the *Parentalia* and other occasions. Ovid earlier stressed (2.535) that what the *manes* want from the *Parentalia* is *pietas*. Ovid's origin story for the *Lemuria* presents in both its story of Remus and the story of the ancient form of the festival a similar image of a *Lemuria* that focuses on *pietas* with familial dead.[42]

If we return now to the idea of a belief cluster, however, one can show that Ovid's close identification of the *manes* and *lemures* (and by implication of *Parentalia* with *Lemuria*) was not a universal Roman view. Evidence of a different tradition appears in two authors who wrote a few decades before (Horace) and a few decades after (Persius) Ovid's first-century date. When asking whether a friend has acquired a series of what he considers meritorious qualities, Horace (*Epist.*, 2.2.209) includes on the list whether "you laugh at nocturnal *lemures*" (*nocturnos lemures . . . rides?*). He is presenting *lemures* as something a sensible person would not take seriously, but it is important to stress that he has no objections to *manes*, which he mentions casually himself even in the preceding poem in the same collection (*Epist.*, 2.1.138). So, to Horace, and unlike Ovid, *lemures* and *manes* are not the same. One gets the same impression from another author a few decades later, Persius (*Sat.*, 5.185), who includes "black *lemures*" (*nigri lemures*) on a list of things he finds ridiculous, and thus he too seems to see them as negatively defined boogymen.

More possible support for a hostile non-Ovidian view of *lemures* appears in a line of Varro from the first century BC, prior to Ovid, as quoted by the fourth-century antiquarian Nonius Marcellus (197L). Varro says that the *Lemuria* was an occasion when worshippers "throw a bean by night and say that they are ejecting the *lemures* from the house out the door" (*fabam iactant noctu ac dicunt se Lemurios domo extra ianuam eicere*). Clearly a verb like *eicere* is a lot stronger than Ovid's statement that the worshipper "asks" (*rogat*) the dead to depart. If Ovid is emphasizing the familial connection to paternal *manes*, Varro seems to have a more adversarial scenario in mind, and, by implication, more hostile *lemures*.

When glossing the aforementioned quote from Varro, the fourth-century author Nonius Marcellus (197L) describes *lemures* as "nocturnal *larvae* and the terror of images and beasts" (*larvae nocturnae et terrificatione imaginum et bestiarum*). As the *Lemuria* ended in the second century, this late testimony has little independent value, but the equation of *lemures* with *larvae* has

some earlier support. When Paulus' epitome of Festus (77L) talks of throwing beans in the *Lemuria*, he says the beans were thrown to *larvae*. Paulus' text is an eight-century epitome of Festus' second-century work, but fragments of the original show that Paulus often preserved Festus' wording closely. Festus himself drew heavily on a lost Augustan-era lexicographical work by Verrius Flaccus.[43] So, there is a chain of evidence that allows the possibility that the reference to *larvae* reflects a tradition that went back to the days when the *Lemuria* was an active festival and that involved a different and more threatening form of *lemures* than Ovid's.

The equation of *lemures* to *larvae* is particularly intriguing. As I will discuss at greater length in appendix 1, *larvae* were a special category of dead in relation to any person they encountered. They were the unknown and unrecognizable dead. They were not intrinsically evil but were potentially dangerous, for one would not have the protection of having worshipped them by name. They often acted as the agents of another god or human's vengeance, and thus one might have a reason to fear encountering one. To equate *lemures* with *larvae* would thus make the *lemures* more threatening.

There seems therefore to be a true cluster of views about *lemures*. Ovid presents them as identical to the *manes* of the *Parentalia*, as does, for example, Apuleius (*De Deo Soc.*, 15) who treats *lemur* as a term for any dead person. Other alternative interpretations made more distinction between *lemures* and *manes*, presenting the *Lemuria* as a more adversarial ritual than Ovid did, identifying the *lemures* with the formidable *larvae*, or viewing them as both. For holders of such views, assuming they were not dismissive in the manner of Horace, the *Lemuria* would have had a rather different and much more apotropaic quality than Ovid's version, apparently representing nights when, for whatever reason, unidentified and potentially dangerous dead gathered in the city, and one performed a ritual to expel them from the home until the following year. One can conjecture that the point of the festival may have been to be a preemptive strike, preventing these more hostile dead from arriving unexpectedly on some different date by summoning them and dealing with their threat in the context of the festival.

The same ceremony could thus accommodate different interpretations and agendas. The only part of Ovid's ritual form that would not lend itself to an apotropaic rite is the single reference to "paternal *manes*." Any definition of the *lemures* as familial dead (and therefore identifiable dead) raises serious questions about how or why they would be hostile, wandering, or unfamiliar (and therefore *larvae*), and why the family would not take steps to address those issues more permanently in the case of dead family members.

Still, those favoring a different belief could have simply changed the refer-

ence to "paternal *manes*," while otherwise retaining the format of the bean-throwing ceremony. Even if Ovid's line was part of a pontifically endorsed ritual formula, the *Lemuria*, unlike the *Parentalia*, took place in the home in the middle of the night, and the pontiffs held no real enforcement mechanism for their ritual recommendations, especially not for a private ceremony within the home. If families wanted to adapt the ritual to fit a slightly different view of *lemures*, they could have done so without necessarily changing the main ritual action of throwing the beans to satisfy the dead. They would have just had differing views about which dead they were satisfying.

Unfortunately, scholars have traditionally resisted the idea that differing Roman ideas about the *Lemuria* could simply coexist in a cluster and have instead attempted to find arguments by which one could reconcile Ovid's account of the festival with the other texts I mentioned above. This normally involves an attempt to assert a definition that distinguishes unambiguously between *manes* and *lemures*, but the attempt to reconcile such definitions with Ovid is often a problem. It is worth discussing some of these attempts, so as to better illustrate why the "cluster" approach that I have adopted, and which does not require such a reconciliation, is preferable.

One such attempt came from Warde Fowler, who argued that *lemures* were the unburied dead, whereas the dead of the *Parentalia* had funerals.[44] In another, Sabbatucci argued that the dead of the *Parentalia* were only direct male ancestors, while the dead of the *Lemuria* were all the other Roman dead.[45] In another, Littlewood, followed by Dolansky, asserted that the dead of the *Lemuria* were familial dead who died prematurely or through violence, as opposed to the rest of the familial dead whom Romans worshipped at the *Parentalia*.[46] All these scholars cited Ovid for support, but the same small group of passages from Ovid's *Fasti* offer challenges to all three of these theories.

Even the non-Ovidian sources do not say *lemures* lacked funerals. Certainly, it is an odd argument to try to base on Ovid, who equated the *Lemuria* with a grandson visiting a dead grandfather at his grave (5.423–426), had Remus request the festival after his funeral (5.451–454), and, when giving his origin myth for the festival, just flatly says that Romulus named the day *Remuria* (later changed to *Lemuria*) "on which just things are carried to buried grandfathers" (5.480: *qua positis iusta feruntur avis*). The same passages pose problems for Sabbatucci's claim that direct male ancestors were worshipped only at the *Parentalia*, not at the *Lemuria*. Why then would Ovid use the word for "grandfather" to describe the dead of the *Lemuria* twice in the same short passage and call them "paternal manes" (*manes . . . paterni*, 5.443)? Sabbatucci's theory depends on reviving the nineteenth-century theory of Fustel de

Coulanges that only direct male ancestors were worshipped in the cult of the dead and only by direct male descendants. I have already shown in chapter 3 that such theories are untenable in the face of the pontifical evidence and that the Romans restricted the categories neither of living worshippers nor of the worshipped dead to men alone or even to relatives in a direct line of descent.

Littlewood and Dolansky's theory that the dead of the *Lemuria* were people with violent or otherwise premature deaths requires reading such a rule into the presence of the murdered Remus in Ovid's origin story. I have already noted in the above discussion that Ovid's version of the Romulus and Remus story focuses the *Lemuria* and the *Parentalia* upon fraternal *pietas*, and the violence of Remus' death is therefore not his only possible symbolic association. Again, Ovid's multiple uses of *avus* ("grandfather") to refer to the *Lemuria*'s dead is a problem, for it seems a particularly inappropriate term to use if Ovid's purpose was to refer to the prematurely dead. It is also a term Ovid (2.552) applies to the dead of the *Parentalia.* Another problem with trying to use violent or premature deaths as criteria to distinguish between doing so requires explaining why Romans would exclude people who died prematurely or violently from the dead of the *Parentalia*. Certainly, there is no source that implies such an exclusion. As I showed in chapter 3, the regular criteria defining obligations to worship *manes* depended on inheritance and *pietas*, and it is unclear why they would not apply regardless of age or the circumstances of death. Note that Cicero (*Phil.*, 1.13), when naming the appropriate ceremony to perform for the murdered Julius Caesar, specifies the *Parentalia*, not the *Lemuria*.

The only source that describes *lemures* in terms of premature death is from the fifth century AD, Pseudo-Acro's commentary on Horace (*Epist.*, 2.2.209), which describes *lemures* as "the terrible shades of men dead by violence" (*umbras terribiles biothanatorum*). Pseudo-Acro is glossing Horace's line (*Epist.*, 2.2.209) asking if "you laugh at nocturnal *lemures*" (*nocturnos lemures . . . rides?*), but that line offers no support for "dead by violence." Neither does the third-century commentary on Horace by Porphyrio, on which Pseudo-Acro often relies. Porphyrio (*Epist.*, 2.2.209) glosses *lemures* to mean "shades of dead men wandering before day" (*umbras vagantes hominum ante diem mortuorum*), which might refer just to the *Lemuria* being at night, and Porphyrio otherwise draws his information from Ovid's *Fasti*.[47] Pseudo-Acro was writing three centuries after the *Lemuria* ceased to be an active festival (see appendix 2). Thus, it is possible that Pseudo-Acro's definition of *lemures* is another variant to be added to the cluster of variations I have discussed above. It is also possible that it is simply a conjecture—like modern conjectures—written by

an author writing long after *lemures* ceased to be a religiously important term. Either way, it would not be valid to try to read Pseudo-Acro's definition into the much earlier text of Ovid.

Littlewood also tried to argue that Ovid was making a politically themed contrast between the two festivals, in which he was equating Romulus with the emperor Augustus and then identifying Romulus with the *Parentalia*, in contrast to Remus, whom he identified with the *Lemuria.* So, the alleged dichotomy of Romulus/*Parentalia* and Remus/*Lemuria* would allow symbolic commentary on the emperor.[48] Although it might be possible for Ovid to use Romulus as a metaphor for Augustus in some other context, the contrast of the festivals does not work here. Ovid does not disassociate Romulus from the *Lemuria* as Littlewood's theory requires. Romulus may take action in response to a visit from the spirit of Remus, but Romulus is the human creator and first performer of the *Lemuria* ceremony in Ovid's story, and Romulus gives the festival its name.

It is from the *Parentalia* that Ovid disassociates Romulus. He gives two different origin dates for the *Parentalia*. In one version, Ovid has Aeneas create the *Parentalia* (2.543–546), placing the date well before the time of Romulus. In the other, the *Lemuria* existed before the *Parentalia*, which had to await a subsequent calendar reform (5.423–424). As Romulus is part of the *Lemuria*'s origin story, Ovid's second chronology thus puts the beginning of the *Parentalia* well after Romulus' time. The two versions are contradictory in their dating, but what they have in common is that they both exclude the possibility that Romulus created the *Parentalia*. As Ovid never connects Romulus to the *Parentalia* in any way, or mentions him in connection with the festival, it is impossible to sustain Littlewood's contrast.

Thus, despite more than a century of effort by multiple scholars and a fair amount of ingenuity, none of the above theories successfully establishes that Ovid was attempting to make a distinction between *manes* and *lemures*, nor do they identify a formulation that would allow one to reconcile Ovid's version of *lemures* with other texts that present them in a more negative light. The best reading remains that Ovid's close identification of *manes* with *lemures* is one of a cluster of views about *lemures* and, by extension, about the *Lemuria* festival. Some Romans seem to have viewed the *lemures* in more negative terms than Ovid, and they would have therefore seen the *Lemuria* as more apotropaic and less similar to the *Parentalia* than did Ovid.

There are reasons, though, to think that Ovid's view of the *Lemuria* was the dominant one within the cluster of variations. When Cicero defined obligations for "festivals" for the dead, he did so in terms of family inheritance, and the logical inference of "festivals," plural, is that it included all of them,

which would support Ovid's "paternal *manes*" as applying to the *Lemuria* (cf. chapter 3.B). Moreover, the mere fact that the *Lemuria* disappeared in the second century, while the *Parentalia* survived, tends to support the dominance of Ovid's view. In Ovid's view, the two festivals were essentially the same in function. One of them therefore was redundant, and the Romans could eliminate it without loss of *pietas* with the dead. If, however, the dominant tradition distinguished strongly between *manes* and *lemures*, then eliminating one of the festivals would be a problem, for it would mean neglecting the worship of a category of dead different from the *manes* of the *Parentalia*. The disappearance of the *Lemuria* thus suggests that Ovid's view of the *Lemuria* being a festival to express *pietas* with the *manes* was more widespread than the alternative theories in circulation.

C) PERSONAL OBSERVANCES

The *Parentalia* and the *Lemuria* were the main Roman festivals for the dead in which non-priests performed the rites, as opposed to ceremonies such as the opening of the *Mundus*, where, as I discussed in chapter 5, the celebrants were priests. The two multiday festivals were not, however, the end of possible occasions or venues for the worship of *manes* by Roman non-priests. Home shrines allowed for worship at times of the worshippers' choosing, and further rites also took place at the grave, either for formal occasions such as birthdays or for less formal occasions as part of a pattern of personal visitation to the gravesite. Even services to the dead, like vengeance of a dead person's grievances, could be presented as an offering to the *manes*. The cult of the dead was thus not limited to the major festivals and could extend throughout the whole calendar year.

1. Home Shrines

Were Roman rites for the dead mainly reserved for the cemeteries? Philippe Ariès and Peter Brown have both asserted that one of the major differences between the Pagan cult of the dead and the Christian cult of the saints was in the use of sacred space. The Pagans supposedly kept their dead and their worship in the cemeteries outside the city, whereas the devotion to the saints was focused on relics within the city walls around which Christians buried their dead. Ann Marie Yasin has recently shown that the Christian transition to burial within the cities was more gradual, more complex, and perhaps less connected to saints than Ariès and Brown imply, but there can be no ques-

tion that, in terms of the placement of the human remains, Christianity did ultimately bring about a transition to burial in churchyards within the city, whereas Pagan burial sites had normally been outside the city walls.[49]

One should, though, be careful not to overstate the Pagan side of this alleged external/internal dichotomy. The Romans built their city walls in the fourth century BC, and so by the late Republic, housing had moved beyond the walls. The boundary between living space and burial space was therefore not really clear-cut.[50] It is also untrue that the Roman Pagans kept their worship of the dead out of their city or their living space. The opening of the *Mundus* took place within the city (chapter 5.A.2.a), the *Lemuria* happened in the home itself, and even during the *Parentalia* the dead supposedly wandered the city. The worship of the dead within the home on a regular (nonfestival) basis should therefore come as no surprise. Why not worship the dead in the very sphere where a family was seeking their assistance?

Statius' *Silvae* is the main source of evidence for the domestic worship of the dead. Statius provides three examples: Lucan's widow, Polla, worshipping a statue of her dead husband located next to her bed (2.7.120–131), the son of the Imperial secretary Claudius Etruscus worshipping effigies of his dead father (3.3.195–216), and Statius' description of the ideal devotion he would like to offer his own dead father (5.3.41–60). Of these, I have already discussed the passage about Polla (chapter 3), which does not give many procedural details. Statius' comments about his father's shrine are somewhat hypothetical, that is, describing the optimal form of a shrine that he would build if he had more money.

The passage about Etruscus is the most informative. Statius portrayed the son (also named Etruscus) addressing his dead father as the father's ashes were still smoldering on the pyre, focusing on future worship within the family home. I have already discussed (chapter 2.B) the grounds for reading the word *manes* as a singular in this passage, referring to the dead Etruscus:

> You are the guardian and lord of the home; everything of yours will obey you. Always lesser and rightfully second, I will offer ever-present meals and drinks to your sacred *manes* and worship your effigies. Shining stone and lines of ingenious wax recall you to me; now ivory and yellow gold will imitate your features.[51]

Obviously, Etruscus was extremely wealthy to afford ivory and gold effigies, but there is no reason that poor families could not have had effigies of less expensive materials such as wood or wax. Presumably the poor could not

have afforded actual identifiable portraiture of the sort that Etruscus' effigies possess, but simple figurines could have served the purpose, perhaps personalized a bit with some slight decoration. The family would know who it was supposed to represent. Even in the case of the sort of upper-class effigies that Statius is describing, it is not clear exactly what they looked like. If Amedeo Maiuri was correct in identifying the plaster casts that he made at Pompeii as being the effigies of the dead, then that would suggest facial portraits,[52] but Statius' description of Polla (*Silv.*, 2.7.124–125) seems to imply a full-figure statue that she could dress. There was probably no standardization. Indeed, there was no specific iconography of *manes* in Roman sculpture, and so any existing portrait might have served the purpose.[53]

As Statius presents it, the worship that Etruscus gives his father seems similar to the type of offerings that Ovid described for the *Parentalia,* except for their indefinite scope. Etruscus will give "ever-present meals and drinks" (*assiduas … dapes et pocula*). Later, Statius says Etruscus' altars will never lack the scent of flowers (3.3.211). Thus, the worship seems to involve a perpetual display of offerings that would have to be regularly replenished and freshened. Offerings attracted the attention and therefore the power of deities. Constant offerings meant constant divine attention. "Here I will hold your *manes*, here within the house" (*hic manes, hic intra tecta tenebo*), Etruscus tells his father. Festivals such as the *Parentalia* might be sufficient to fulfill one's obligations to most of the dead, but if one wanted to maintain especially close relations with a particular *manes*, then correspondingly intensive devotions were necessary.

The intensiveness of the worship combines with Statius' description of the multiple images of stone, ivory, gold, and wax to illustrate another point. The younger Etruscus was channeling a great number of resources into the worship of just one dead individual. There is no hint that the elder Etruscus was one of several *manes* that his son worshipped in his home. He seems rather to have had special status, the "guardian and lord of the home" (*custos dominusque laris*). Likewise, Statius' description of Polla presented her worship as intensively focused on her husband, with no mention of there being any other effigies of the dead in her bedroom next to the statue of her husband.

These examples offer some support to a point I raised in chapter 3. The Romans focused their worship most intensively on those dead persons whom they regarded as most relevant to their lives. Some dead might possibly have been neglected and lose worshippers, but the opposite side of that coin was that some dead would receive disproportionately intensive worship as a result of the close personal ties they formed while alive. Notably, the altar niche in the "House of the Menander" in Pompeii, which Maiuri identified as a

shrine for the dead, contains only five statues, and neither it nor other domestic shrines in Pompeian houses are large enough to contain many more.[54] The Romans may have worshipped a much broader range of dead during the *Parentalia*, but they were selective about which *manes* they worshipped within their homes.

One implication of the home shrines, therefore, is that they likely reinforced the idea of the dead retaining continuity with their former living personas, for it was on the basis of the emotional ties relating to those personas that Romans would select certain dead for intensive home worship beyond the annual festivals. Also possible, though, is that the emphasis placed on a handful of special dead in home shrines might have included a corresponding deemphasis of other dead, who would receive worship only at the festivals. It is unfortunate that there are not more sources about the home shrines and their worship. At the least, the shrines offered a venue for intensive worship of dead relatives whom the family regarded as particularly significant. As in the *Parentalia*, the worshippers could appeal to the dead person's power, while reaffirming the familial ties that had existed in life.

2. *Further Offerings at the Tomb*

Families could bring offerings to tombs any time they wished. Likely, they did so in ways that overlapped with sentimental gestures toward the dead. There is no reason to think that Romans did not visit the tombs of dead relatives as an expression of their emotional ties to those relatives, just as modern Christians might do, but any offering of flowers or other items at the tomb would have religious connotations for the Romans that their modern counterparts would lack. The grave was sacred space; any gift was an offering to a god, whatever other meanings it might carry.

Religious devotions to the dead could involve specific promises of offerings beyond the minimum required by the festivals. A tombstone (*CE,* 1508; quoted in chapter 5.A.1.b) promises a dead woman that her husband will keep a lantern burning forever with scented oil to honor her. Such devotions could take place in home shrines, at the tomb, or both. Statius' poem about Etruscus does not just show Etruscus pledging domestic worship to his dead father but also stresses that rites will take place at the grave too:

> And a final farewell to you, who, as long as your son is safe, will never endure sad obscurity and the neglect of a sad tomb. Your altars will always breathe the fragrances of flowers, and always your happy urn will drink Assyrian perfumes and tears, which are the greater honor.[55]

The reference to "altars" likely includes the home shrines, but may also refer to altars at the tomb.[56] The rest clearly refers to the grave, which will be on the family estate (*Silv.*, 3.3.214). The reference to the urn "drinking" likely refers to the interesting practice of outfitting graves with resealable pipes, so that Romans could pour liquid offerings directly into the grave long after the funeral.[57] The tomb, like the altars within the home, will receive regular attention and offerings.

In addition to purely individual occasions for worship at the tomb, there may have been other festival-like opportunities, which just happen to be less documented than the *Parentalia*, for example, the *Rosalia* that some inscriptions mention. A variety of religious observances involved flowers to which this term could refer. Some of these do not pertain to the dead, but one form of *Rosalia* involved taking flowers to the graves.[58] It was not part of the official Roman festival calendar. Lattimore has pointed out that the distribution of the inscriptions suggests that the *Rosalia* was primarily a festival in northern Italy, but a few inscriptions from Rome suggest that some Romans engaged in it as well.[59] Some of the inscriptions mention serving food as well as flowers, but there are not enough data to know if Roman participants viewed the festival as something distinct from the *Parentalia*. Like the informal offerings at tombs, participation in what was not an official ceremony could simply have been another voluntary act of maintaining *pietas* with the *manes*.

The even less well-documented *Violaria* seems to have involved a similar kind of action, adorning the tomb with flowers, in this case, violets. It too is not part of the surviving festival calendars at Rome and may be an unofficial rite or local ritual from elsewhere imported to Rome. A few inscriptions mention it, and it seems to have been at the vernal equinox. Fiscelli suggests that it may have celebrated the flowers themselves as a symbol of spring. If so, then offerings to the dead could have been a sidenote. Perhaps the idea was that a flower, as a symbol of the annual seasonal renewal of life, was also a symbol that death was not truly the end.[60]

Familial milestones may have also led to worship at the tomb. For example, the family might take offerings on the dead person's birthday or perhaps the anniversary of his death, as Virgil has Aeneas do for his father (*Aen.*, 5.45–71), though it is not clear how widespread such customs might have been. Likely, there was a good deal of variation from one family to the next. The dead might arrange their own occasions for offerings before they died. There are epitaphs that specify that offerings should be brought on the Kalends, Nones, and Ides of each month as well as on the dead person's birthday—that is, 37 times a year.[61] Again, there is no way to know if that was typical. The inscriptions are rare, but similar practices could have existed without being inscribed on

stone. If, for example, a dead person's will set some kind of schedule of this type, then offerings might have been quite regular. Otherwise, it was up to the family's initiative. As the *manes* were gods, and one could pray to them to address problems, the perception of a problem likely intensified the offerings, much as it would for other types of gods, but emotional attachment and grief might motivate visits to the grave and the bringing of offerings. Each family's experience was likely somewhat different, but there is simply not enough evidence to address the timing of offerings more precisely.

3. Lifestyle and Nonritual Offerings

One of the most basic powers that Romans attributed to the *manes* was the ability to monitor the actions of their living worshippers, and Romans also prayed specifically for the dead to send them advice and guidance through dreams (see chapter 5.B.2). Thus, the worship of *manes* incorporated the idea that the *manes* cared how the living behaved. Some passages suggest that Romans could offer services to the *manes* through their actions or lifestyle that would please the dead, even beyond the conventional rituals.

Rome was a society that attached great importance to status, both individual status and the collective status attached to groups (families, clans, orders). For the elite, one marker of that status was the display of genealogy and of the wax masks of their most prestigious ancestors. One strain of Roman rhetoric involved invoking the dead as role models, asking people whether they were living up to the examples of their dead family members.[62]

The *manes* that Romans worshipped were primarily their dead relatives, and when that point is combined with both the rhetoric about maintaining a family's status and the idea that the dead monitor the living, there is an implication that the *manes* should want the status of their family increased or at least maintained and that they would be displeased if it decreased. Several passages illustrate this. Propertius (4.11) has the dead Cornelia testifying in the underworld before a panel of dead female relatives, insisting that her conduct has never lowered their reputation. When Ovid (*Trist.*, 5.14.1–2, 11–14) consoles his wife for her lack of wealth, he says that possessions lack value because they cannot accompany her to the *manes*, but he also insists that a favorable reputation is different. Likewise, Valerius Flaccus (5.82–83) could write that Fame (personified as a goddess) flew to the underworld and "filled the *manes* with great praise of their sons" (*manes . . . magnis natorum laudibus implet*). Clearly, the *manes* cared. Thus, one could present a lifestyle that promoted one's family's status as a service to the *manes*, without any specific ritual involved.

A more intriguing example of nonritual service to the dead is revenge. The verb *parentare* normally means "to perform religious devotions for the dead," but it can also refer to performing a specific type of service for a dead person, revenging that person's death.[63] Thus, a *parentatio* could be an act of vengeance, not just a performance of the *Parentalia* festival. When Dolabella, a commander in the Roman civil wars, killed his enemy Trebonius, Cicero (*Phil.*, 13.35) could present both that act and Antony's killing of Decimus Brutus as acts of *parentare*, intended to revenge the death of Julius Caesar. Justin (39.3.12) used the same sort of overtly religious terminology, "He offered *parentatio* to the *manes* of his wife" (*uxoris manibus parentavit*), to describe how a Greek king of Syria executed the murderer of his wife.

Although Roman authors rarely presented the *manes* as taking action with divine power to avenge personal grievances from their former lives (chapter 5.A.3.a), nevertheless avenging the former grievances of *manes* was a service the living could perform to honor them. An unresolved grievance might in some cases prevent the dead from resting comfortably in the afterlife,[64] but carrying out an act of revenge was also something that the survivors could believe would please the deified dead person. It was also specific to the needs of that individual deity, not some general type of sacrifice. More literally, vengeance was a form of blood sacrifice to the dead. Apuleius (*Met.*, 8.12–13) told the story of a woman who attacked her husband's murderer, cut out his eyes, and presented them as an offering to her husband's *manes* at his tomb. The verb Apuleius uses to describe this action is again *parentare*. Apuleius' character notably does not kill her victim, only mutilate him, showing that vengeance would not have to be fatal to serve as an act of *parentatio*.

The idea of vengeance being a religious offering was something of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, if it were used to justify private feuding, as in Apuleius' story, it could be a threat to social order. Cicero invoked that fear several times in his orations. When prosecuting Piso (*Pis.*, 16), he accused Piso of plotting against him as an offering to the *manes* of the dead traitor Catiline, whom Cicero had attacked. He raised the same accusation again when defending a man named Flaccus (*Flac.*, 95), asserting that the accusations against Flaccus were simply retaliation for Flaccus' earlier actions against Catiline. Convicting Flaccus would therefore constitute an offering to the *manes* of a traitor. Cicero also clearly disapproved of the idea of private feuding when he used the verb *parentare* to describe the killings by Dolabella and Antony (*Phil.*, 13.35).

On the other hand, the idea of vengeful *parentatio* could be highly useful to the state as a motivating tool for military or political action. Remember that the military ritual of the *devotio hostium* involved pledging the lives

of the enemy to the *manes*, and so the basic idea of human sacrifice to the *manes* already had official sanction in certain contexts (chapter 5.A.3.b). The addition of a revenge motif merely enhanced its motivational value. Cicero himself, when prosecuting the corrupt governor Verres (*Ver.*, 2.5.113), called upon the *manes* of Verres' victims as witnesses to the justness of his prosecution. The dead demanded vengeance, and that demand could be presented as divine reinforcement for the rightness of a prosecution or even a war. Florus (2.5.4) claimed the Romans through their victory over Illyria and the execution of the Illyrian rulers "made offerings to the *manes*" (*manibus litavere*) of Roman legates whom the Illyrians had killed. Florus (4.6.2) also asserted that the future emperor Augustus made war on Cassius and Brutus because the lack of vengeance disturbed the *manes* of Augustus' adoptive father, the murdered Julius Caesar.

The concept of the vengeful *parentatio* could also be a valuable part of military rhetoric, providing religious reinforcement for the idea of fighting on after some initial reversal. The dead of the earlier losses cry out to be avenged through further combat. Livy (1.25.12) portrayed a soldier fighting a battle in which two of his brothers had already fallen. The soldier rallied to victory in combat with three foes. "Two I have given to the *manes* of my brothers," he said, before killing the third of his opponents.[65] Silius (15.10–15) described the Roman general Scipio Africanus as eager to avenge his dead father and uncle, both killed in earlier battles with the Carthaginians. Silius said Scipio wanted *piare manes* ("to propitiate their *manes*"). Scipio then defeated Hannibal and the Carthaginians. Private vendettas were acceptable as long as they were channeled against a legitimate enemy of Rome such as the Carthaginians. The validity of vengeful *parentatio* was thus rather like the idea of a "just war." It depended a lot on whose side one was on. Despite the potential of the idea of vengeful *parentatio* to promote private feuding, Roman leaders could find the concept quite acceptable when it enhanced their own agendas.

Both the belief that *manes* wanted worshippers to avenge them and the belief that *manes* wanted the status of their families upheld implied that the *manes* retained a fair amount of their former human personas, at least enough to still care about some of their living agendas and grievances. As always, there is no clear statement of exactly how much the *manes* resembled their former living selves, and Romans could hold different views, but endorsing the idea that *manes* wanted vengeance or familial status at least leans toward the side of continuity rather than discontinuity with the *manes*' former living personas.

D) RITUALS: CONCLUSIONS

The Roman funeral initiated the worship of the *manes* and a pattern of ongoing *pietas* in which the regularly recurring future rituals by the living were supposed to inspire the reciprocal intervention of the *manes*' power on the lives of the worshippers. The rituals for the dead stretched throughout the year, including the festivals of the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria*, possibly supplemented by the observance of the anniversary of the dead person's death and burial and by regional festivals such as the *Rosalia*. The existence of home shrines, and the ability of Romans to take offerings to the gravesites at any time, means that scholars should be cautious about assuming that the festivals were the main expression of the cult of the dead simply because they were the most official and most public. Home shrines would have kept the *manes* perpetually in front of their family's eyes as deities whose powers they could invoke.

The festivals and other private rites for the *manes* also reinforce another point: the accessibility of the cult of the dead to the whole Roman population. Although it was true that elite participants could worship in grand style, sacrificing animals at the *Parentalia* and building lavish facilities and gardens for rites at the tomb, none of that was actually essential to participation. Humble and affordable offerings were appropriate for the major festivals, and Romans could scale down rites at the grave or within the home to fit a modest budget. It was not just that most Romans would have been theoretically eligible to participate (under the criteria described in chapter 3) but that their practical ability to participate was similarly inclusive.

EIGHT

CONCLUSION

What I have described is the sense of interesting *as trivialized in common discourse. However, there is another understanding, one closer to the original meaning of the word. . . . For, in this understanding, things that are interesting, things that become objects of interest, are things in which one has a stake, things which place one at risk, things for which one is willing to pay some price, things which make a difference. When a book, an idea, an object is found to be interesting in this sense, it is not because it titillates, but rather because it challenges, because it exacts some cost. Ultimately, it is interesting because it challenges the way in which one has construed the world and because, therefore, it may compel one to change.*

JONATHAN Z. SMITH[1]

When, back in the 1990s, I first began looking at the *manes* and their worship, what excited me about the subject was the perception that they were interesting in exactly the sense that Smith would later capture in the above quotation. The *manes* were a challenge to conventional (modern) categories, making the boundary between human and god porous, not just for some select few or members of the Imperial family but for the Roman population as a whole. They also represented an entirely different vision of what an afterlife could be than Judeo-Christian thought could comfortably accommodate, and it was a specifically Roman (as opposed to Greek) vision. I wanted to know more about these *manes*. I hope that you the reader have found my explorations in the field worthwhile and again, *interesting*.

Despite the length of this study, there were many topics that I simply could not include for reasons of space, or which are perhaps more properly the field of specialists in subdisciplines other than my own. Still, I offer a few suggestions—not of course a complete list—of additional ways in which the *manes* might be "interesting," again in the sense of challenging conventional views.

I have not, for example, devoted any space to the subject of mystery cults in these pages, but, for those studying them, one could ask what insights the cult of the *manes* might offer in defining the context in which those cults developed. When discussing the mystery cult of Isis, for instance, John North minimized the importance of the afterlife among the benefits that the cult of Isis offered participants, arguing that benefits in the afterlife were incompatible with the claim that Isis would extend the human life span.[2] A comparison with my own chapter 5, however, would show that the cult of the *manes* could offer both extended life span to the living and various powers and benefits in the afterlife, and so these are not contradictory benefits to worshippers. By placing the cult of the *manes* in the broader discussion of other afterlife scenarios in the ancient Mediterranean there are doubtless many other fascinating comparisons to be made and illuminating conclusions to be drawn.

Likewise, for those studying early Christianity, the study of *manes* would help add perspective to arguments about the intellectual context of Christianity's spread. If, to give just one example out of many possible, one wished to examine the argument of M. David Litwa that some pre-Nicaean Christians viewed Jesus' resurrection as a form of apotheosis, then surely it would be valuable to assess his model of "Mediterranean" deification in a way that included the Roman *manes*, as he does not. It is not enough to look merely at the Imperial cult when assessing Roman thought on the subject.[3]

At the least, the existence of deification as a Pagan option for the afterlife should caution against making triumphalist claims that Christianity offered a self-evidently superior afterlife that would have led Pagans to convert. My own opinion would be that the afterlife is probably not a major factor in motivating conversion to Christianity, but even those who may disagree would need to approach any comparison of Pagan and Christian thought with more nuance than scholars have shown in the past. It is necessary to fully acknowledge the implications of having *manes* as an afterlife scenario competing with Christian ideas. If doing so challenges some conventional thinking, then that of course would be *interesting*.

Within mainstream classical studies and archaeology, more direct engagement with the cult of the *manes* could likewise offer new worlds to explore, presenting, for example, new ways to read texts in which authors mention *manes*. Archaeologists and art historians likewise might find that the study of *manes* opens up new lines of research or reinforces some existing ones. Among scholars studying Roman sarcophagi, for example, there has been debate about whether to view sculptures depicting a dead person as an Olympian god as a claim of deification, as Wrede suggested, or whether it is better to see other social and artistic agendas at work in such imagery, an approach

favored, for example, by Koortbojian and Birk.[4] My research here aids the latter interpretation, for if the deification of individuals is a regular part of the cult of the *manes*, then it would be redundant to sculpt an elaborate work of art simply to acknowledge that point. Thus, the study of the *manes* points in the direction of exploring other interpretations of these pieces of art.

I list these few examples not merely to illustrate that there is more research to be done—though that is true—but also to suggest that the implications of the cult of the *manes* have long coattails. If this study has, as I hope, restored the *manes* to their proper place as a central component of Roman domestic religion, doing so has the potential to challenge a wide range of other accepted paradigms about Roman culture and history and even potentially to open up new interpretations in the broader scope of ancient Mediterranean society and religion. That is what makes the *manes* so *interesting*.

THE *LARVAE*

The Romans used the term *larvae* to refer to the dead, but they often seemed to treat them as a category distinct from other dead. Who then were the *larvae*? Surviving sources almost always present *larvae* as dangerous (or at least potentially so), but the contexts of that danger vary, and it is too simplistic to say that they were in general malevolent. *Larvae* seem rather to be dead persons who are unrecognizable to those with whom they interact and who are pursuing agendas of retribution and punishment, though they are doing so in the service of other powers rather than avenging their own personal grievances. Through polymorphic equation, the term *larvae* also seems at times to include categories of demons who are not the dead but who share the quality of representing an unknown punitive power.

Surviving sources often associate *larvae* with two things, madness and retribution, with the former sometimes the vehicle for the latter. The plays of Plautus, from the second century BC, make several references to people who are *larvati*, afflicted by *larvae*. Plautus uses the term to mean "insane," but the plays do not elaborate on the nature of *larvae* or the process of creating insanity.[1] Over three hundred years later, though, the connection between *larvae* and madness remained. Apuleius (*Met.*, 9.26–31) told a story about a wife whose husband caught her in an act of adultery and divorced her. She carried out her revenge by enlisting a witch to summon a *larva* to kill the husband. The exact details are a bit vague, but the *larva* clouded the man's mind, and he either hanged himself or allowed someone else to hang him without offering any resistance. Either way, the *larva* was connected to the loss of the victim's coherent thought, leading to his death. Although a private and unjust act in context of the story, the killing was also an act of revenge.

The idea of the *larvae* as a force of retribution has other contexts, in which the *larvae* appear to be enforcing divine justice against wrongdoers. This avenging role is significant, for it shows that one cannot characterize the *larvae* as being in general "evil," even if there were contexts (as in Apuleius' story) where someone could enlist them for an evil purpose. Their function as instruments of just punishment appears in the underworld. Pliny the Elder tells a story about Asinius Pollio, who wrote a series of attacks on his rival Plancus but planned not to release them until Plancus was dead and could not respond. When Plancus heard of this plan, he dismissed it with an aphorism, saying that "only the *larvae* wrestle with the dead."[2] Pliny regarded this line as a devastating rejoinder. For it to be so requires that its audience (and Pliny's audience) share an assumption that the *larvae* be located

among the dead and capable of harming them (as the living could not). Seneca showed a similar assumption when he fantasized about the gods denying Imperial deification to the emperor Claudius (*Apocol.*, 9). The gods not only regard Claudius as unsuitable for godhood but find him worthy of punishment. Janus suggests giving the dead emperor to the *larvae* so that they could beat him like a "new gladiator." The latter story in particular shows an assumption that *larvae* could be tools of divine justice, posthumously punishing those who had misbehaved during life.

In his story about the witch sending a *larva* to kill the husband, Apuleius (*Met.*, 9.29) also calls the *larva* "a shade of a murdered woman" (*umbram violenter peremptae mulieris*), but that does not seem to be a general definition of what a *larva* is, for there is no pattern in surviving sources of using *larvae* as a term for those killed through violence (like the Greek word *biaiothanatoi*), and the term *larvae* is notably missing from Roman stories of spirits pursuing their own violent grievances.[3] Apuleius offers this definition elsewhere:

> Many refer to this sort [of beings] as *larvae,* who indeed, because of adverse demerits from life, are punished by having no dwelling places and by an uncertain wandering like a kind of exile. They are an empty terror to good men but harmful to the bad.[4]

Here the issue of retribution appears in a different form. The gods seem to be punishing the *larvae* themselves for former misdeeds in life, but the punishment is an assignment to wander the earth punishing the living. Thus, they are a genuine danger to the bad but not to the good. The *larvae* appear here to have the role of Furies, who also both punish wrongdoers in the underworld (cf. Virgil, *Aen.*, 6.570–574) and pursue them in the living world. One could argue that this definition contradicts Apuleius' own story about the witch sending a *larva* to make an unjust attack on a woman's husband, but the author may simply be making a distinction between what he views as a *larva*'s conventional role and the way a powerful witch could redirect a *larva*'s avenging power toward another end.

The idea that *larvae* were themselves being punished might have been Apuleius' own theory, but their association with punishing others has support elsewhere, not only in the aforementioned passages about the underworld but also in a text referring to the living world. Festus (114L) equates the *larvae* with the *maniae*, whom he says nurses use to frighten children. Roman wet nurses also functioned as nannies, and, presumably, the reason childcare workers would invoke supernatural beings to frighten children is to encourage obedience, that is, "behave or the *maniae* will get you." Thus, *maniae* were dispensers of punishment, and that tradition may be linked to the *maniai* that Pausanius (8.34) says were a form of the Furies worshipped in Arkadia. Festus' equation of *maniae* with *larvae* thus reinforces the association of *larvae* with Fury-like punishments of the living.

Festus' passage is worth quoting, as it illustrates several points. Festus attributes his information to Aelius Stilo, an author of the first century BC, well before Apuleius:

> Aelius Stilo says that certain things molded from grain meal into the figures of men are called *maniae*, because they were made hideous. Others call these *maniolae*.

> [Stilo says], moreover, that the *maniae*, with which nurses frighten little boys, are the *larvae*, that is, the *manes* gods and goddesses, either because they proceed out from those below (*inferi*) to those above (*superi*) or because Mania is their aunt or mother. For there are authors of both opinions.[5]

Here again, one can see the way Roman categories can overlap and how the basic principle of polymorphism allows gods to have multiple forms with incompatible attributes. Thus, the *larvae* can be both the dead (*manes*) and the children of a single goddess (Mania). I have already noted (chapter 4.C.1) a similar polymorphic combination of elements in the case of the links between the *lares* and the dead. As "Mania" is also the Greek word for insanity (and sometimes a goddess of insanity), the linkage with the goddess Mania likewise reinforces the association of *larvae* with madness.[6]

When the word *larvae* referred to the dead, it referred to the dead in a specific role as punitive enforcers, but Festus' passage shows that the term could also, by association with the *maniae*, refer to other punitive deities (or demons), who were not the dead. When the context did not clarify the form of the *larvae*, there must have been some ambiguity even for the ancient Romans, and there might have been variations of belief in the Roman community about the nature of the *larvae* in some contexts. Modern scholars should be cautious, therefore, about asserting a dead/not-dead distinction when it is not stated. Otto and Thaniel took the references to *larvae* inflicting punishments in the underworld as proof that those *larvae* were non-dead demons.[7] There were, though, texts in which the dead functioned in the underworld as jurors or intercessors for the newly deceased.[8] The idea of the dead as jailers does not seem too radical an extension of the idea of them as jurors. For instance, an anonymous poem (*Anth. Lat.* 183 = 173 Bailey) portrays a master recommending a dead slave—called a *larva*—for a job as a doorkeeper at the house of Dis in the underworld. There is no good reason to distinguish *a priori* between the disciplinary *larvae* of the underworld and the dead.

In addition to an association with retribution and punishment, the *larvae* had one other basic feature that set them off from other dead in Roman texts. They were unrecognizable in appearance. Normally in Roman literature, the dead are recognizable when they appear to the living. Conversations with the dead are a common feature of drama and epic poetry, but whether the dead appear in the living world or the living visit them down below, the dead are identifiable. Likewise, Roman prayers that request that dead relatives appear in dreams surely require that the dead person would appear in a recognizable form (chapter 5.B.2). Although the Romans borrowed Greek conventions of portraying the dead as visually distinct from the living by being either much paler or much darker than living humans, those differences were mere markers of being dead and did not impair identification. Silius (13.408) may call the underworld the "pale kingdoms" (*regna pallentia*), Virgil (*Aen.*, 6.401) may have pale "bloodless shades" (*exsanguis umbras*), and Statius (*Theb.*, 8.4–8) may say that the dead in the underworld were blackened by the pyre, but the living characters in these stories have no difficulty identifying dead relatives and acquaintances.[9]

Descriptions of *larvae* are consistent in suggesting a much more radical change in form. When Apuleius (*Met.*, 1.6) has one character describe another as looking like a *larva*, he

means the man is unrecognizable due to a substantial change in appearance. The same author's story (*Met.*, 9.30) of a witch sending a *larva* on an attack presents the *larva*'s face as pale, deformed, and concealed under long hair, and so not identifiable. The *Priapea* (32.12) has a similar view of a gaunt *larva*-like appearance. Seneca (*Ep.*, 24.8) and Petronius (*Sat.*, 34) go even further and associate *larvae* with a skeletal appearance, no longer resembling a living human at all. Some surviving artistic representations of skeletons may depict such *larvae*.[10] On the opposing color scheme from whitened bone, the *Anthologia Latina* (183 = 173 Bailey) describes a slave appearing in the town of his former master. The slave was of African origin (Garamantian) and thus already dark in color, but death made him appear much darker still. When he appeared, his master viewed him as a *larva* and a *monstrum* ("apparition") and was frightened until the dead man spoke and calmed fears by identifying himself. Clearly, he was not visually identifiable.[11] It is revealing too that the use of the word *larva* to mean "mask" — common in Medieval Latin — appears as early as Horace (*Sat.*, 1.5.64).

That the *larvae* were unknown and unrecognizable dead strengthened their fearsome qualities. If one encountered them either acting as Furies in the living world or punishing the dead in the underworld, one could not appeal to their mercy on the basis of preexisting relationships, as one could for ordinary *manes*, for one could not know if such a relationship existed unless the *larvae* revealed it themselves. The idea that hostile witches and sorcerers could redirect *larvae* against people to settle their own scores made the concept of powerful unidentified dead only more disturbing.

If we return to the subject of the *Lemuria* festival, I have already noted that Roman authors seemed divided between those who identified the *lemures* (the dead who appeared at the festival) with the *manes* of the *Parentalia* and those who identified *lemures* with the *larvae*. I have elsewhere given my reasons for thinking the former view to be stronger than the latter (cf. chapter 7.B.2 and below, appendix 2), but for those who did see the *Lemuria* as being about *larvae*, it would have been a ritual to ward off the power of unidentified dead persons who were seeking retribution for the grievances of gods or sorcerers. Why such dead would appear only on the three days of the festival is not explained in any extant text, but the festival was perhaps intended as a preemptive summoning to prevent them from appearing unexpectedly at other times.

THE DECLINE OF THE *LEMURIA*

It is often difficult to know either when Roman festivals began or when they ended. For festivals that began prior to the first century BC, origins are often completely obscure, or our sources attribute them to legendary founding figures such as Romulus and Remus, to whom Ovid credited the *Lemuria* (*Fasti,* 5.455–484). Such stories tell us little except that an Augustan-age author thought the ceremony was very old. Records of the official end of festivals may be slightly better but are still often accidents of preservation. Many ceremonies simply vanish from the sources with no record of exactly when they ceased to take place. The *Lemuria* fits the latter pattern, but there are some indications that at least can establish a chronological range for its disappearance, which most likely took place in the early second century AD. By contrast, the *Parentalia* lasted into late antiquity.

At what point did authors cease to write about the *Lemuria* as if they expected it to be familiar to their readers? Porphyrio, the author of the early third century AD, wrote a commentary on the works of the poet Horace. In his *Epistles* (2.2.209), Horace refers briefly to *nocturnos lemures*, which Porphyrio explains as follows:

> Nocturnal *lemures*: Shades of dead men wandering before day, and thus to be feared. And they think that they were called *lemures*, as if *remules*, from [the name of] Remus, whose brother Romulus, when he wished to placate the shades of the dead man, instituted the *Lemuria*, that is, the *Parentalia*, which used to be celebrated in the month of May before the month of February was added to the calendar. Because of this matter, it is inauspicious to marry in the month of May.[1]

Much of the passage seems to draw its information from Ovid's description of the ceremony, which I discussed in chapter 7. The differences between Ovid's and Porphyrio's presentation are revealing. Ovid (*Fasti,* 5.421–428) also presented the *Lemuria* as an early form of the *Parentalia*, but Ovid was contrasting a prehistoric form of the *Lemuria* that resembled the *Parentalia* to the different form of the *Lemuria* that existed in his time, in the early first century AD. Porphyrio just said that the *Lemuria* was the *Parentalia* that existed before the current calendar came into use. Although he uses a present-tense verb, *celebrari solent*, he specifies a time frame for the verb's action in the distant past before the month of February existed, marking the verb as the historical present. Unlike Ovid, he makes no

contrast between an ancient and a current form. The *Lemuria* is just a form of the *Parentalia* that existed in much earlier Rome. Only the prohibition of marriage in May clearly pertains to his own time, and such a prohibition could have survived as a tradition about "bad luck" without the festival itself.

Much more significant than Porphyrio's specific wording is his giving a definition at all. Several genres of Roman literature offer definitions of Latin words. One must distinguish Porphyrio's purpose from that of an author such as Festus. Festus was writing an etymological dictionary, and thus he included entries on the origins of common words such as *deus* or even *Roma*. By contrast, Porphyrio was attempting to explain to his contemporaries unusual word usages from a two-hundred-year-old poem. If the word *lemures* had a contemporary meaning and the *Lemuria* was an active ritual celebrated each year, then why is Porphyrio explaining them to his readers as if he expects them to be unfamiliar with the words? The festival appears to have faded before the early third century.

This impression is confirmed by a slightly earlier source, Apuleius, the author of the late second century AD. In *De Deo Socratis* (15), Apuleius paused in a discussion of what the word "daemon" meant in Plato's *Apology* and gave the definitions of a series of words relating to the dead. He presented *lemures* as a term for the souls of the dead in general. The definition is less revealing than the way Apuleius introduced it:

> And in a second meaning, the human soul is a form of *daemon*, renouncing its own body when its term of life has expired. I found in the ancient Latin language that this [soul] was called a *lemur*.[2]

Just as in the case of Porphyrio, Apuleius did not appeal to his audience's existing knowledge about *lemures*. When he wanted to refer to *lemures* as the spirits of dead humans (as Ovid used the word), Apuleius had to turn to the "ancient Latin language." It was not a contemporary usage. There is no surviving reference later than Apuleius and Porphyrio that clearly assumes its audience has contemporary knowledge about either *lemures* or the *lemuria*. St. Augustine (*De Civ. D.*, 9.11) cited Apuleius' discussion of the subject as an example of Pagan immorality, but he discussed only Apuleius, and nothing in the passage suggests that he was reacting to any current usage. Other, later references come from texts of the sort that Porphyrio wrote, glossaries of unusual words.[3] By the late second century, and certainly afterwards, *lemures* was a word of merely antiquarian interest.

By contrast, Persius (*Sat.*, 5.185), the poet of the first century AD, could simply include the word *lemures* on a list of supernatural phenomena without any explanation whatsoever. It was clearly a word he expected his readers to know, suggesting the festival was still active. Persius died in 62 AD, in the reign of Nero. If we assume that several decades would need to pass between the end of the festival and the time when authors such as Apuleius and Porphyrio could treat the *Lemuria* as ancient history, that would leave a range of possible dates for the end of the festival that stretches from the Flavian period of the late first century AD through the first half of the second century. As the Flavian period is much better documented than the reigns of the Ulpian/Antonine emperors, the silence of the sources likely makes the early second century the better possibility. Clearly the festival calendar

was not static in that period, and, for example, Hadrian seems to have changed the name of the *Parilia* to the *Romaia,*[4] though there is no particular reason to think that Imperial intervention rather than just fading interest would have led to the decline of the *Lemuria*.

The end of the *Lemuria* was by no means the end of the cult of the dead, and the *Parentalia* survived with greater vitality. Even in the passage on *lemures* quoted above, for example, Porphyrio assumed that his audience knew what the *Parentalia* was. He defined the *Lemuria* as having been like the *Parentalia*, but he did not define *Parentalia*. Authors used more familiar and more current terms to define less familiar and archaic ones. Porphyrio used *Parentalia* to define *Lemuria* the same way that a modern writer might use the word "x-ray" to explain the meaning of "roentgenogram."

Unlike the *Lemuria*, the *Parentalia* survived through the fourth century AD. The calendar of Filocalus, produced in 354 AD, lists the *Parentalia* as an active Roman festival, but not the *Lemuria*.[5] The fourth-century poet Ausonius likewise wrote a lengthy poem about the *Parentalia*, describing, as did Ovid, going to graves to pay homage to the dead. Ausonius was not engaging in an act of antiquarianism. He gave the names of the members of his own family for whom he personally had performed the ceremony.[6] The *Parentalia* thus survived into late antiquity, though official permission to conduct it likely ended after the Christian emperor Theodosius banned Pagan rites in 391 AD. Even after that, individuals might have continued to observe it privately in some fashion.

It is unclear how much the final officially endorsed stages of the *Parentalia* resembled Ovid's form of the ceremony. Filocalus refers to the vestals' participation in the late form of the rite, and so there were likely some new elements (cf. chapter 7.A.2). The details are uncertain. Ausonius' poem could be taken to mean that the ceremony had become primarily oral, that is, with no physical offerings, but the poem may be the poet's personal take on the ceremony as someone who particularly valued words. The complaints of Christian leaders about their congregations participating in the cult of the dead are all focused on presenting offerings, and it seems unlikely that the Pagans would have abandoned that aspect of the *Parentalia* while the ceremony was still legally permitted.[7] The prohibition of animal sacrifice that began with the emperor Constantine might have stopped the pig sacrifice at funerals, but that ban should not have affected the traditional offerings of food and wine at the *Parentalia* before the stronger bans of Theodosius.

As to why the *Lemuria* disappeared when the *Parentalia* did not, I have already suggested (chapter 7.B.2) that the best explanation is redundancy. There were several Roman interpretations of what the *Lemuria* represented, but one of those saw the *Lemuria* as essentially similar to the *Parentalia* in function. If that viewpoint predominated, then it would have been easy to eliminate the duplicate ceremony without in any way jeopardizing Rome's *pietas* with its dead. Rome's *manes* would still have the *Parentalia*.

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NOTES

PREFACE

1. Walker (1985: 13). Jon Davies (1999: 140) quotes the line with approval.

2. Quotes: Edwards (2007: 13); Dowden (1992: 8). Other works that deny or minimize the Roman afterlife, or the cult of the *manes* specifically, are Warde Fowler (1922: 390–391); Ogilvie (1969: 86); Macdonald (1977); E. Rawson (1985: 300); Price (1987); Champlin (1991: 180–182); Beard, North, and Price (1998: 1: 31); Jon Davies (1999: 139–154). Even Bömer (1943) is largely devoted to explaining away the abundant evidence. Latte (1960: 98–103) and Dumézil (1970: 364–369) present Roman festivals for the dead as solely apotropaic, intended only to keep the dead in their graves and away from the living, which would make *manes* marginal to day-to-day religion. Cf. chapter 5.

3. See P. Brown (1981) on saints; N. Russell (2004) and Finlan and Kharlamov (2006) on Orthodox "deification"; Eyre (1991), Birch (2010), and Litwa (2013: 190–204) on Mormon ideas. Litwa (2013 and 2014) offers a big-tent definition to deification in which he does not distinguish between forms of deification that lead to the worship of the dead and those that are about only posthumous spiritual improvement of the deceased, but, oddly, it still does not include the *manes*. The presence or absence of worship, though, seems to me to be a critical distinction. The *manes* had worshippers while the dead Mormons do not.

4. For modern non-Western cults of the dead, see Pauw (1975); Newell (1976); Bloch and Parry (1982); Janelli and Janelli (1982); Glazier (1984); Watson and Rawski (1988); and the convenient overview of Hamilton (1998: 19–31).

5. On Heaven and Hell, including Jewish thought, see Himmelfarb (1983); Bernstein (1993 and 2017); J. B. Russell (1997); Segal (2004); Moreira (2010); and Moreira and Toscano (2010). On the Last Judgment and ideas of resurrection, see Daley (1991); Longenecker (1998); and Wright (2003).

6. On the words "Pagan" and "Paganism" and the convention I have adopted here of capitalizing them, see C. King (2018).

7. Schaff (1910: 2: 589–599); Bolt (1998); Riley (2001: 170–201); Wright (2003: 32–84).

8. S. I. Johnston (1999); Edmonds (2004); Stilwell (2005); C. King (2013a).

9. P. Brown (2015: 10). On the relative rarity of afterlife-in-the-sky scenarios, see C. King (1998: 135–151). Even odder is Brown's statement that in Christianity alone, people

"prayed intently to be remembered *by* the dead" (2015: 38), which would seem to reject the basic premise of the Pagan cult of the dead that it was possible to attract the dead's attention through prayer.

10. Hope (2009: 97–120).

11. Hope (2009: 115); Littlewood (2001: 925).

12. On "empty cult acts," see the criticisms of Phillips (1986: 2697–2711). Likewise, the once-popular idea that Roman religion underwent a significant decline in the late Republic has been rightly challenged, perhaps best by Beard, North, and Price (1998: 1: 114–156).

13. Most bombastically, Rose (1959: 157) described the Romans as a "slower-witted people" relative to the Greeks, but it is surprisingly common to find similarly condescending contrasts, even about the afterlife specifically, e.g., Cumont (1922: 173); Wagenvoort (1956: 283); Macdonald (1977: 36). Phillips (1992: 60–63) makes valuable comments.

14. Griffiths (1991: 95).

15. Emphasizing Homer are Bolt (1998); Riley (2001: 171); Klauck (2003: 68–80); and Wright (2003: 32–84). Cf. Longenecker (1998: 5) on Plato, "The most prevalent non-Christian view of death in the Western world had its origin in the teachings of the Greek philosopher Plato."

16. See the concise contrast of Bernstein (1993: 23–33 and 61–73), and on Virgil's eclectic borrowing from many sources, Zetzel (1989). Cf. chapter 5.C.

17. Cf. Phillips (1986: 2700, note 64, and 2707–2709), who rightly complained that the excessive overvaluing of philosophic testimony has created a distorted view of the Roman religion, in which the most skeptical/agnostic/antireligious Roman philosophical texts have been invested with a normative value that they cannot possibly possess. On philosophical skepticism more generally, cf. Thaniel 1973a.

18. Champlin (1991: 180): *non fui, fui, non sum, non caro*. Champlin insists that, among tombstone sentiments, "nihilism is easily the most common." Cf. MacMullen (1984: 11; though MacMullen offered a very different view later: 2014, 2017); Riley (2001: 159); Casey (2009: 78). On the rarity of the "I do not care" formula, Carroll (2006: 135). When Tolman (1910: 116–120) and Lattimore (1962: 78–86) collected examples of overt skepticism on tombstones about the afterlife, the numbers of examples they cite are in the dozens, not thousands, and one could question the skepticism of some of those. I do not think one can include epitaphs that simply refer to "eternal sleep" or about ending up as bones or ashes, for such statements might refer only to the physical body, just as similar statements, such as "rest in peace" or "ashes to ashes," are compatible with Christian ideas of Heaven.

19. E.g., Carroll (2006: 260–282). She also (2006: 275) asserts that Pagan Romans had "no profound concept of life after death" specifically in contrast to Christian ideas.

20. Jon Davies (1999). Cf. similarly Edwards (2007: 13–18); Casey (2009: 65–89).

21. Briefly in C. King (2013a); more fully in C. King (1998: 115–223).

22. *Met.*, 4.432–445. The dead all live together in a city. It is true that Ovid does include traditional stories of the punishment of famous mythological criminals like Tantalus in the underworld (4.456–464, 10.40–44), but like Homer's *Odyssey* and unlike Virgil's *Aeneid*, these punishments seem restricted to exemplary criminals of the Greek heroic age, not applied to the dead in general.

23. Tibullus (1.3.57–58) was less reluctant to place himself in *Elysium*. On the two poets, see further in F. Williams (2003).

24. After saying that it is unnecessary to argue against posthumous punishment, Cicero then proceeds to do exactly that (*Tusc*., 1.36–38) and then returns later to attack the idea that the dead can have any sensation (*Tusc*., 1.82–88) as punishment would require them to have. His own theory of ascension to the divine seems to allow for a negative fate for the unworthy (*Rep*., 6.29). In speeches, he was inconsistent. *Pro Cluentio* (171) dismisses posthumous punishment as "foolish stories" (*ineptis fabulis*). In *Philippics* (14.32), when speaking before the senate, he divides the dead of the civil war armies into those who will be punished and rewarded in the underworld, seemingly endorsing in a public forum the ideas he rejected in his philosophic writings.

25. On Epicureans in general, see Long (1986: 14–74); on Lucretius, see Stork (1970) and Wallach (1976).

26. Spaeth (1996: 103–119). On the *ludi saeculares*, Val. Max., 2.4.5; Festus, 479L.

27. E.g., Hatt (1951); Black (1986); Hitchner (1995); Carroll (2006: 91–97 and 133–136). One should be particularly cautious about archaeological material from the era of inhumation (i.e., after the main period of this study) that is also provincial in origin. There is no particular reason to assume, for example, that late-antique British Romano-Celts had the same religion as Cicero. At the least, one would need to demonstrate that point.

CHAPTER 1: *DI MANES*

1. *Fasti,* 2.533–570. For a more a detailed discussion of this passage and Ovid's terminology, see chapter 2.A. See further chapter 7.A on the *Parentalia* and, more generally, on the use of the *Fasti* as a source for Roman religion.

2. There are texts that distinguish between particular groups of *manes* and a specific dead person, but those texts do not say that the *manes* in question are themselves something other than the dead. On passages where earlier *manes* assist a newly deceased person in the underworld, see chapter 5.C. On passages where the word *manes* should have a singular sense despite its plural form, see chapter 2. For some ambiguous examples, see chapter 2, note 6.

3. Linguists: Walde and Hofmann (1954: 2: 26–28); Ernout and Meillet (1967: 383–384). For variations of the "good gods" reading: Carter (1908: 462); Galletier (1922: 21); Dumézil (1970: 365); Liou-Gille (1993: 108); MacMullen (2017: 111).

4. *OLD* (1982: 534).

5. E.g., Erasmo (2012: 114); Hope (2009: 115); Dufallo (2007: 6); Carroll (2006: 251), sometimes writing it with slight variations such as "spirits of the deceased" (Flower [1996: 209]; Koortbojian [2013: 5]) or "spirits of the departed" (Hope 2007: 53).

6. Sigismund Nielsen (2001); Rosenberger (2016: 118).

7. MacMullen (2009: 76) The evolution of MacMullen's thought on the subject is interesting. In an earlier article (C. King 2009: 98), I noted that MacMulllen (1981: 53–58) had denied Roman interest in the afterlife, defining "afterlife" in Christianized terms and

not mentioning the *manes*. It was a fair criticism of his 1981 book when I made it, but since then he has made a remarkable transition to focusing on the cult of the dead as a form of worship. Cf. especially MacMullen 2014 and 2017, though even in the latter he uses the translation "good gods" for *di manes*. Cf. my discussion above.

8. *Sed Varro et Ateius contra sentiunt, dicentes divos perpetuos deos qui propter sui consecrationem timentur, ut sunt dii manes*, text of Thilo and Hagen (1961 [= 1881]) except that I adopt the punctuation of Heyman (2007: 77), which agrees better with the preceding passage. Heyman also rightly rejects the reading of Gradel (2002: 66–67), who interprets the text to mean that Servius is claiming that *divi* are not deified.

9. On the complex relationship of the terms *manes* and *lemures*, see chapter 7.B.2.

10. Evans (1985). On Africa, Hamilton (1998: 19–31).

11. S. I. Johnston (1999).

12. Indo-Europeanist Roger Woodard (2006: 87, 141) repeatedly asserts that *manes* are equivalent to the *piteras* of the *Vedas*, but he does not address the unusually deistic terminology of the Romans, and even the ceremonies that he cites do not seem that similar to Roman usage. One should treat the alleged equivalency with caution.

13. Price (1987; quote from 70). In the same vein are Scheid (1993) and Dufallo (2007: 112).

14. For a sizable number of examples, see entries on "*aether*," "*aetherius*," "*caeles*," "*caelestis*," and "*superus*" in the *OLD* (1982: 74–75, 251, 1880). Note the broad range of authors and contexts, which makes it difficult to dismiss the idea of gods living in the sky as some sort of poeticism. Cf. Levene (2012: 66–69). Ando (2003b: 239) suggests that the Roman Pagans, in contrast to Christians, had difficulty visualizing their gods as being separate from the centers of worship in their temples, but for gods to have a "house" is not the same thing as for them to be restricted to that house. Ando does not address the widespread references to the gods being "of the sky" or "above," and his reliance on the *penates* as an example may be misleading, for the *penates* were household gods and thus intrinsically localized.

15. *CE,* 1535A; Lucan 9.1–4. More generally, see C. King (1998: 135–151).

16. Aristides (*Or.*, 26.32 Keil). Another problem is that Aristides is describing the worship of living deified emperors, who were worshipped in Eastern provinces but not in Rome itself, where deification took place at death. Price (1984: 232–233) is skeptical of the whole idea of personal prayers to emperors, citing a lack of confirmation from the inscriptions of one town in Asia Minor, but inscriptions may not record the full range of religious activity. If one compares the citations about *lares* that Vitucci (1942) collected from inscriptions with the citations about "Lares" that the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* gathered from literary sources, the inscriptions are mostly about public worship of the emperor's *lares*, whereas the literary sources show a much broader range of domestic religious activity.

17. See Fink, Hoey, and Snyder (1940). There is a convenient translation in Beard, North, and Price (1998: 2: 71–74).

18. See Flower (2017).

19. Scheid (2003: 109).

20. *Phil.*, 1.13, my trans. from text of Fedeli (1982): *ut parentalia cum supplicationibus*

miscerentur, ut inexpiabiles religiones in rem publicam inducerentur, ut decernerentur supplicationes mortuo … adduci tamen non possem, ut quemquam mortuum coniungerem cum deorum immortalium religione, ut, cuius sepulcrum usquam extet, ubi parentetur, ei publice supplicetur.

21. Although Dufallo (2007: 57–66) makes a number of interesting points about the political and rhetorical context of Cicero's first *Philippic* and this passage specifically, he tries excessively to make the religious issue one of treating non-gods as gods. See also his p. 112, where he distinguishes between *manes* and "full apotheosis," relying on Scheid (1993).

22. On temples to Hercules, Richardson (1992: 185–189). Cf. Dumézil (1970: 2: 433–439) and likewise on Romulus/Quirinus (1: 246–249). In the debate between Gradel (2002) and Levene (2012) about human-to-divine transformations, Levene makes the better case that the Romans viewed such changes as a substantial alteration of the former human, but, as he himself points out, that is not the same as saying that the Romans thought such transformations were impossible or incompatible with all forms of godhood.

23. C. King (2003). See also chapter 4, where this example receives further discussion.

24. In general, see Needham (1975); for applications of polythetic and fuzzy sets to religion, see Poole (1986); Smith (1990: 36–53); and C. King (2003), where I also used the metaphor of birds as an example.

25. See Stark and Bainbridge (1987: 81–85) and, on "superhuman beings," Spiro (1966: 96–103).

26. Among recent examples, the use of the term "ghost" might be appropriate to the purposes of Felton (1999), who is comparing narrative patterns of ancient "ghost stories" (like Pliny, *Ep.*, 7.27) to those found in later folklore, as long as one is careful not to limit the attributes of Rome's dead *a priori* to those found in modern ghost stories. Ogden (2001) is more problematic in using "ghost" to refer to the dead invoked in a wide range of Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern rituals. Beyond the intrinsic problems of the word "ghost," such usage also begs the question of whether all of these cultures viewed the dead similarly.

27. *Apologeticus*, 13.7, my trans. from text of F. Oehler in the edition of Glover (1931): "Do you do anything at all to honor them [the Pagan gods] that you do not also confer on your dead? The temples are the same; the altars are the same. So are the clothes and insignia on the statues. As was the age, art, and business of the dead man—the god is just the same." (*Quid omnino ad honorandos eos facitis quod non etiam mortuis vestris conferatis? Aedes proinde, aras proinde. Idem habitus et insignia in statuis. Ut aetas, ut ars, ut negotium mortui fuit, ita deus est.*) The mention of temples may be a reference to the worship of deified emperors, though there were some elaborate nonimperial tombs in the shape of temples. See Toynbee (1971: 130–132).

CHAPTER 2: *DI MANES*

1. See Carter (1911: 11–12); Wissowa (1912: 238–239); Cumont (1922: 72 and 1949: 57); Warde Fowler (1922: 341); Pascal (1923: 69–70); Rose (1926: 27, 59); Laing (1931: 80–81);

Bömer (1943: 48–49); Latte (1960: 100); De Visscher (1963: 30); Dumézil (1970: 365); Toynbee (1971: 35–36); Scullard: (1981; 18); Hopkins (1983: 227); Nielson (1984); *OCD* (1996: 916–917); Flower (1996: 209–210); Beard, North, and Price (1998: 1: 31); H. Lindsay (2000: 168); Ando (2003a: 366); Bodel (2004: 492); Thomas (2005: 290). Some of them, such as Nielson and Bodel, concede a late stage when the term *manes* could refer to singular dead, but they still treat collective worship as the normative usage, from which singular implications would be a variant.

2. There are some, such as Pascal (1923: 69–70), who at least recognize that the singular implications of some texts represent a problem.

3. Gildersleeve and Lodge (1895: 35).

4. My trans. from text of Anderson (1972):

velamina Procne
deripit ex umeris auro fulgentia lato
induiturque atras vestes et inane sepulchrum
constituit falsisque piacula manibus infert
et luget non sic lugendae fata sororis.

5. Other examples include Suetonius (*Tib.,* 75) and the *Laudatio Turiae* (right column, 69), which invoke existing *manes* to arrange a favorable or unfavorable home for the newly deceased in the afterlife. See chapter 5.C.

6. The late antique commentary of Servius (*Aen.*, 3.63) claims that Virgil uses the plural of *manes* to mean that each person has a pair of *manes*. De Marchi (1906: 1: 68, note 64), accepted the statement, but there is no parallel in Republican or early-Imperial literature for the idea that *manes* come in pairs. As I note in chapter 4, variations abound in Roman thought, so Servius may record a late variant, but it seems simpler to take it as another example of equating the *lares*, who normally came in pairs, with the deified dead, about which see the discussion of polymorphism in chapter 4.C.1. Another ambiguous passage is Seneca, *Contr.*, 7.2.5: *Di manes Popilli senis et inultae <te> patris, Cicero, persecuntur animae* (text of Håkanson 1989). If one takes *animae* as a singular genitive, then it is potentially distinguishing between plural *manes* and a singular *anima*, but the point is not clear. *Animae* could just be a singular genitive noun in apposition to Popilli, that is, "Cicero, the *di manes* of Popillus, the soul of the old and unavenged father, pursues you," which would be an example of the "*manes* of [a singular person]" construction I have already noted. *Animae* could also be a plural in a singular sense, that is, plural in form to agree with the plural-only form of *manes* in apposition: "*di manes*, the *animae* of Popillus," which would be another variant of the same "*manes* [of a singular person]" construction. That the editor had to insert the word *te* suggests corruption in the text, and one would not want to put too much weight on any choice of reading.

7. On both, see chapter 5, which suggests adding the *Lupercalia* to the list.

8. Snyder (1989: 124–125) is inclined to accept the text as authentic. Instinsky (1971) is not but thinks it may date to near Cornelia's time.

9. *parcas, oro, viro, puella parcas,*
ut possit tibi plurimos per annos
cum sertis dare iusta quae dicavit.

10. *CIL,* 6.13101: *parce matrem tuam et patrem et sororem tuam marinam ut possint tibi facere post me sollemnia.*

11. These passages will be discussed further in chapter 5.

12. On pontiffs in general, see Beard (1990); R. Gordon (1990); the discussion of orthopraxy in chapter 4; and C. King (2003).

13. Lattimore (1962: 90, note 25) lists *ILS,* 880 as the earliest example.

14. Scheid (1993). Even without endorsing the chronological implications of Scheid's theory, scholars of the Imperial cult have a notable tendency either to ignore the possible influence of the cult of the *manes* on its development (e.g., Taylor [1931] and Gradel [2002]) or overtly to dismiss it (e.g., Price [1987]).

15. A. Watson (1971: 4).

16. As does Nielson (1984: 200–201).

17. Dumézil (1970: 1: 365). Also unsatisfactory is Cumont (1922: 72), who endorsed the idea of the early collective conception of the *manes*, while simultaneously arguing that belief in the individual survival of the dead within individual tombs predated the idea of a collective underworld (pp. 48, 70). It is hard to see how one could reconcile the two positions.

18. Carroll (2006: 61). Cf. Cannon (1989), who, although not concerned with the *dis manibus* inscriptions specifically, offers a useful discussion of the need to consider issues of style and fashion when assessing changes in funerary practices, rather than assuming that all changes represent an underlying religious or ideological shift.

19. Felton (1999: 50–61).

20. Some might object that I am omitting from this statement a law that Festus (260L) attributes to the regal period that says that a child who strikes a parent shall be consecrated to the *divos parentum*. These words, though, need mean no more than "gods of the parents" and thus might have nothing to do with the dead (Wagenvoort 1956: 290–297). If, on the other hand, one wishes to take the words as equivalent to *di parentes* ("divine parents"), then *di parentes* still has a singular form, *dius parens*, and thus offers no support to the idea of collective dead. Bömer (1943) attempts to contrast *di parentes* (which appears occasionally on Imperial-era tombstones) with the allegedly collective *manes*, but no Roman text makes such a contrast.

21. For early graves at Rome, see Holloway (1994: 20–36, 120–122, 156–164, 168–171); Cornell (1995: 48–53, 81–85, 105–108). There were chamber tombs and apparent groupings of the graves of particular families next to each other, but one can find examples of that in the Imperial period (Hope [1997b]). There was no trend of having collective tombs to the exclusion of other burial patterns. Holloway's illustrations (for example, p. 30) make it clear that bodies received grave goods individually even when buried as part of a larger "trench" formation. Both Cornell and Holloway also point to alternating patterns of abun-

dant and nonexistent grave goods over several centuries, which they interpret in terms of changing patterns in status-enhancement strategies. In general for problems in interpreting grave goods, see Morris (1992).

22. Or possibly "to the *manes* gods." See chapter 1.B on the dual possible translations of *di* as adjective or noun.

23. Similar examples can be found on virtually every page of the epitaphs in *CIL*, e.g., *CIL,* 6.7780: *D[is] M[anibus] C Hirtilio Secundo*.

24. There is also no evidence for additional conjunctions. Carroll (2006: 52 and 201) translates the combination of *dis manibus* plus the name of a deceased person as two items in a sequence by inserting "and of" into her translation, i.e., "To the spirits of the dead (and of) Gaius Apronius Raptor." There is no "and" in the Latin even when all the other words are written out in full without abbreviations.

25. A comprehensive epigraphic survey of variants is beyond my scope here. The charts compiled by Hatt (1951: 43–84) suggest what might be possible, but his sample is only from Gaul. On the inscriptions more generally, see discussions in Tolman (1910); Galletier (1922); Marbach (1928); Brelich (1937); Bömer (1943); Cumont (1949); and Lattimore (1962), none whom would have been sympathetic to the reading I am suggesting here, but they make other points of interest.

26. In the case of female names (e.g., *CIL,* 6.11361: *D[is] M[anibus] Albia P[iae]*), it is difficult to determine whether the name is dative or genitive, though the preponderance of dative forms in the standard formulation without the word *sacrum* in the case of masculine names suggests that the dative is more likely. On the sense of *sacrum*, see chapter 6.D.1.

27. Borbonus (2014: 54–55).

CHAPTER 3: WHO WORSHIPPED WHOM?

1. I say "private citizens" to exclude the handful of ceremonies performed by priests to groups of dead. See chapter 5.

2. Because of the range of criteria for religious obligation, I have generally in this book preferred to use the term "cult of the dead" rather than "ancestor cult" on the grounds that the latter term—although popular in anthropology—excessively privileges direct ancestry as a sole criterion.

3. As I am presenting a rather negative view of Fustel, I should also note that he had an important influence on the development of ancient social history and religious sociology as fields of study, and the cult of the dead was not of course his only subject. See the assessments of Momigliano and Humphreys in their introductions to Fustel (1980) and Sharpe (1986: 83).

4. Fustel (1980: 26–31, 41–45, 66–71).

5. See, in general, Gardner (1986: 163–203) and further discussion in section B of this chapter.

6. Fustel (1980: 66–67): "The rule for the worship is that it shall be transmitted from

male to male; the rule for the inheritance is that it shall follow the worship.... Such is the ancient principle; it influenced equally the legislators of the Hindus and those of Greece and Rome.... As to Rome, the provisions of primitive law which excluded the daughters from the inheritance are not known to us from any formal and precise text...." For skepticism about the value of Indo-European parallels in Roman family history, see Crook (1967a). Humphreys (1993: 79–134) noted that Fustel's theories do not work well for ancient Athens either.

7. Fustel (1980: 11, note 8); Virgil (*Aen.*, 3.300–305).

8. Fortes' 1961 essay is cited here from its reprint (1970: 164–200). Fortes actually compounded Fustel's misunderstandings of Roman culture by implying that primogeniture was the usual inheritance pattern for Roman males, which it was not. On his questionable use of the Latin word *pietas*, see Saller (1988) and C. King (2003). On Fortes' prominent place in the debates about African ancestor cult, see the overview and bibliography of Hamilton (1998: 19–31). Newell (1976: 20–21) disputed Fortes' view of China but seemed to accept his view of Rome, again citing Fustel alone.

9. Bömer (1943: 1–49). On the chronology of the worship of *manes*, see chapter 2.C. Bömer relies heavily on a circular method in which he arbitrarily declares texts from the Imperial era to be vestiges of early-Republican thought, dates the alleged vestiges in a chronological sequence that agrees with his theory, and then uses the agreement of the alleged vestiges with his theory as proof of the correctness of the theory.

10. H.-F. Mueller (2002: 83–84). Mueller later (2011: 231, note 12) recommended Fustel's "succinct overview" of the Roman cult of the dead, with no caveats about Fustel's accuracy. What makes the endorsement of Fustel in the latter article so odd is that the article is about texts that portray women as *manes*, and Fustel's theories assert that female *manes* are impossible. The article also cites my dissertation (C. King 1998) without mentioning that I argued that the Romans *normally* treated women as *manes*, which seems an odd omission in light of the article's topic.

11. Sabbatucci (1988: 48–49); Scheid (1992a: 378–379); Lindsay (1996). Scheid may be extending to the *Parentalia* the overall thesis of his article that Roman women were not allowed to perform any sacrifices, but that thesis is itself highly questionable. See the discussion by Schultz (2006: 131–137).

12. *Deorum manium iura sancta sunto. Nos leto datos divos habento*. This is my trans. from text of Powell (2006), except that I restore the manuscript reading *nos* where he has *suos*. On the superiority of the manuscript reading, see the discussion in chapter 5.D.

13. Evans (1985: 136–137) is one of the few to stress the importance of this passage for the Roman cult of the dead. He also notes parallels in Chinese customs.

14. *De Legibus*, 2.48–49, my trans. from text of Powell (2006):

> *Heredum causa iustissima est; nulla est enim persona quae ad vicem eius qui e vita emigrarit proprius accedat. Deinde qui morte testamentove eius tantundem capiat quantum omnes heredes: id quoque ordine; est enim ad id quod propositum est adcommodatum. Tertio loco, si nemo sit heres, is qui de bonis quae eius fuerint cum moritur usu ceperit*

plurimum possidendo; Quarto, si nemo sit qui ullam rem ceperit, qui de creditoribus eius plurimum servet. Extrema illa persona est, ut si quis ei qui mortuus sit pecuniam debuerit, nemini eam solverit, proinde habeatur quasi eam pecuniam ceperit.

15. When presented from the perspective of the male head of household, the term is often written *sui heredes* ("his own heirs").

16. On the Roman concept of *heredes*, see Crook (1967a: 118–120). Cf. A. Watson (1971: 4–7) on Cicero's rules and 175–187 on intestate succession. See also Dyck (2004: 381–388) and Robinson (1975). For an overview of legal issues related to tombs and the financial responsibility for them, De Visscher (1963).

17. Crook (1967a: 118–123); A. Watson (1971: 175–187); Gardner (1986: 163–203); Saller (1994: 165–166).

18. Crook (1967a: 125–127; 1986: 65–67), A. Watson (1971: 35–39, 163–174); Gardner (1986: 170–178). On the trusts, D. Johnston (1988); Saller (1994: 161–180).

19. On guardianship for women, see Gardner (1986: 14–29).

20. *Contra* Mueller (2011).

21. There is also no evidence at all to suggest that women could not participate at the *Parentalia,* perform rituals for the dead at home shrines, or conduct funerals, just as Cicero portrays a woman holding a funeral for her dead son (*Clu.*, 28). The only private (non-priestly) ceremony for which one could make an argument is the *Lemuria*, as portrayed by Ovid (*Fasti*, 5.429–444), but even that merely shows an example of the ceremony conducted by a man. It is not a rule book prohibiting women. See further in chapter 7.B. For a related discussion of evidence for women and *manes* on tombstones, see Tantimonaco (2015).

22. A. Watson (1971: 4). See also chapter 2.C.

23. *Tribus modis sacris adstringi aut hereditate aut si maiorem partem pecuniae capiat aut si maior pars pecuniae legata est, si inde quippiam ceperit.*

24. Crook (1967a: 123–124).

25. *Leg.*, 48–53. The arrangement may also have allowed the heir to do a favor for the legatee who was selling the inheritance. A legacy without religious obligations seems to have been regarded as a proverbially good thing, in effect, "money for nothing." See A. Watson (1971: 4–7).

26. Saller and Shaw (1984: 147–155) compiled statistics of tombstone commemoration by various categories of people, including daughters and wives. On the more general complexities of who received a tombstone, see Meyer (1990); Shaw (1991); Sigismund Nielsen (1996); Hope (1997a); Carroll (2006). Shaw (1984: 467–471) noted that overt identifications of who paid for tombstones tended to disappear from the specifically Christian stones of the late Empire. One wonders if that was not a product of the decline of the Pagan cult of the dead.

27. On rhetorical invocations of ancestors, see Flower (1996); Doonan (1999).

28. There might have been an official heir other than Polla, but even then she might have received enough in legacies to qualify for religious obligation, and so her status is unclear. Tacitus (*Ann.*, 16.17) presents Lucan's father, Annaeus Mela, as aggressively attempt-

ing to collect debts owed to Lucan's estate. That Lucan had an estate while his father was still alive might imply that he had been emancipated from his father's *potestas* and that his estate was not confiscated, though this passage might also suggest that his father was the principal heir. Tacitus adds that Mela himself was soon forced to commit suicide, complicating the financial picture further.

29. Statius (*Silv.*, 2.7.120–135), my trans. from text of Courtney (1990):

adsis lucidus et vocante Polla
unum, quaeso, diem deos silentum
exores: solet hoc patere limen
ad nuptas redeuntibus maritis.
haec te non thiasis procax dolosis
falsi numinis induit figura,
ipsum sed colit et frequentat ipsum
imis altius insitum medullis;
at solacia vana subministrat
vultus, qui simili notatus auro
stratis praenitet incubatque somno
securae. procul hinc abite, Mortes:
haec vitae genitalis est origo.
cedat luctus atrox genisque manent
iam dulces lacrimae, dolorque festus,
quicquid fleverat ante, nunc adoret.

Malamud (1995: 17–18 and 29, note 29) prefers a different punctuation, placing a period after *somno* in 2.130. This produces the reading *securae . . . mortes*, which she translates as "carefree deaths" and takes as a reference to Lucan. Note, though, that even she seems to take *securae* with the previous sentence when she interprets "*somno/securae*" as a reference to Lucan's *securos somnos* (*BC.*, 3.25). If she is right about the allusion, would it not therefore make more sense to take *securae* as a reference to Polla, secure in sleep?

30. As does Nisbet (1978: 9).

31. On Laodicea, cf. Ovid (*Her.*, 13.151–158); more generally on allusions, Malamud (1995).

32. Markus (2004).

33. Nisbet (1978) and Weaver (1994: 362–363) want to identify Argentaria Polla (Lucan's widow from *Silv.*, 2.7) with another Polla mentioned in *Silv.*, 2.2, who is overtly married to Pollius Felix, but the identification is far from obvious. Statius is presenting Argentaria Polla's grief as so excessive that he has to counsel her to redirect it. That is surely a very different scenario than the other Polla, whom Statius says is notable for her worry-free union with her current husband (2.2.147–155).

34. Saller (1988); C. King (2003).

35. Saller (1988; 1994: 105–114). Cf. Fortes (1970).

36. King (2003: 301–307); below, chapter 4.C.2.

37. Saller (1994: 174).

38. (Virgil, *Aen.*, 3.301–305), my trans. from text of Mynors (1969):

sollemnis cum forte dapes et tristia dona
ante urbem in luco falsi Simoentis ad undam
libabat cineri Andromache manisque uocabat
Hectoreum ad tumulum, uiridi quem caespite inanem
et geminas, causam lacrimis, sacrauerat aras.

I translate *cineri* as "grave" because it is obvious even from this quote that Andromache does not actually have Hector's "ashes." On twin altars in Roman rituals, see Rüpke (2007: 141).

39. Crook (1967a: 103–113; 1967b).

40. Cf. tables of Saller and Shaw (1984); Saller (1994: 48–65).

41. The best-documented parental worshipper is perhaps Cicero, who has left us numerous letters about his complicated attempts to purchase land for an elaborate "shrine" (*fanum*) that he wanted to build and "consecrate" (*consecro*) for his dead daughter, Tullia, though Tullia is also probably not a very typical example. Cicero makes it clear that he is planning a shrine that is grandiose well beyond the norm. Cf. Cicero, *Att.*, 12.18 (from which the quoted words were drawn) and 12.19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 37a, 38, 40, 41, most of which have to do with Cicero's attempt to purchase land for the project. Ironically, none of the letters makes it clear whether Cicero ever finished the shrine.

42. Boyancé (1952); Néraudau (1987); B. Rawson (2002).

43. Sabbatucci (1988: 164–166); Bettini (1991: 179–180).

44. Wilkinson (1964).

45. Scullard (1981: 259).

46. *Institutes*, 6, *proem*, 10, my trans. from text of Winterbottom (1970): *per illos manes, numina mei doloris.*

47. On tombstones, see Shaw (1991). A law (*Fragmenta Vaticana* 321) that set periods for formal mourning said that children under 12 months should receive no mourning at all; Juvenal (15.139–140) mentions that there are children who were too young to be cremated. Pliny (*HN.*, 7.72) noted that Romans did not cremate people unless they were old enough to have teeth. Carroll (2012: 48) claims that Pliny asserts a firm rule that babies do not cut their teeth before an age of six months, but in fact Pliny himself (7.68) mentions exceptions, so his age criteria are unclear. In Roman law, a child's membership in a family technically began at birth (*Dig.*, 40.4.29; Saller [1991: 39–40]), but, in practice, Romans could expose newborns as a form of family planning (Boswell [1988]), and both Scott (1999: 1–2) and Norman (2003: 38) note how Romans seem to distinguish between newborns and older children. Cf. similarly Beryl Rawson (2003: 279–285).

48. Carroll (2011 and 2012: 42–45, 50–54). One could perhaps offer some skepticism toward her certainty that one can reliably date cremated infant remains to the exact month of life. See also M. King (2000), who makes a strong argument against the idea that high child mortality meant that Romans did not mourn their dead children.

49. *Laudatio Turiae* (1.31–32), text of Wistrand (1976): "[Why should I talk about your con]cern [for your relatives], and your familial *pietas*, [w]hen you rever[ed] my mother and your parents equally?" *[Cur dicam de tuorum cari]tate, familiae pietate, cum aeque matrem meam ac tuos parentes col[ueris]*. The reconstruction of the opening clause [*Cur*...] follows the model of the preceding sentence, where the *cur* is extant. The sentence refers to the period of the couple's marriage. The wife's parents were killed before the marriage, and presumably the husband's parents were dead before the end of the marriage, since it lasted forty years. The verb *colo* thus probably refers at least in part to reverence in the cult of the dead, though it is possible that it also includes conduct by the wife while the in-laws were still alive.

50. Petronius, *Satyricon*, 78.4, my trans. from text of K. Mueller (1995): *"Putate vos," ait, "ad parentalia mea invitatos esse."*

51. *CIL,* 6.13101: *D M Aurelius Festus Furciae Flaviae Filiastrae benemerenti et domine et patronae; quam dius vivo colo te post morte nescio; parce matrem tuam et patrem et sororem tuam marinam ut possint tibi facere post me sollemnia*.

52. P. Watson (1989), with bibliography.

53. Watson (1989: 538–539).

54. Watson (1989: 548).

55. Martial, 10.61, my trans. from text of Bailey (1990):

Hic festinata requiescit Erotion umbra,
crimine quam fati sexta peremit hiems.
quisquis eris nostri post me regnator agelli,
manibus exiguis annua iusta dato:
sic lare perptetuo, sic turba sospite solus
flebilis in terra sit lapis iste tua.

56. Flower (1996: 23–31; 2006).

57. The idea of *damnatio memoriae* could imply a denial of all funerary and postfunerary rites and thus exempt the deceased from the cult of the dead. Cf. *Digest,* 11.7.35, which says that Romans have no obligation to mourn or perform rituals for traitors or people who killed their own parents or children. If such rules set up a framework in which it would be possible to deny deification to particular criminals, doing so would require the cooperation of everyone who would ordinarily perform the rites. Cf. Lucan (2.139–171), who described how the dictator Sulla slaughtered people he proclaimed to be traitors and left their heads to rot in a public place, but the poet also noted that parents of the victims sneaked the heads away and gave them funerals.

58. Suetonius (*Gaius*, 3.2); my trans. from text of Ihm (1973): *Sicubi clarorum virorum sepulcra cognosceret, inferias manibus dabat*.

59. Cf. the discussion of this poem by Dolansky (2006: 97–103) and the commentary by Lolli (1997). On the poet, see Langlois (1969); and, on his context, Sivan (1993).

60. Maiuri (1933: 1: 98–106). The effigies did not survive, but a rough impression of their shape was recovered by pouring plaster into the volcanic ash where the effigies had

once stood. Flower (1996: 42–46) likewise sees these busts as intended for devotional use in the cult of the dead and distinguishes them from the wax masks of ancestors that the ruling elite kept in their atriums. Foss (1997) attributes various household shrines to the cult of *lares*, but it is possible that some of them are for *manes* instead. Sadly, it is often hard to tell.

61. Glazier (1984: 144); Evans (1985: 133–134).

62. Bömer (1943: 6); Bettini (1991: 179–180). Cf. Wilkinson (1964).

63. On tombs by the roads, Purcell (1987); S. L. Dyson (1992: 147–152); and Gee (2008). On the masks and their many applications, Flower (1996); Doonan (1999); Sumi (2002); and Pollini (2007). On funerals and tombs as social advertising, see also Toynbee (1971); Kleiner (1977; 1987); Ochs (1993); Erasmo (2008); and the discussion of funerals below, in chapter 6.

64. Pollini (2007: 243–245) makes a similar point about the ancestral masks of politically elite families being able to reinforce the cult of the dead within the home. It is not necessary in such an argument for the masks themselves to be the cult objects, only that they reinforce the living family members' awareness of dead persons of importance.

65. Flower (1996: 209–211). The evidence seems abundant enough for an argument from silence to have weight. Flower (1996: 281–325) quotes 107 passages referring to the masks (*imagines*).

66. Flower (2002), and cf., for example, Toynbee (1971, plates 40, 51, 84), and Statius' description (*Silv.*, 5.1.221–241) of the elaborate tomb that Abascantus built for his wife, Priscilla.

67. Kleiner (1987: 46–51). On grave altars more generally, see also Altmann (1905); Wrede (1981: 67–73, 125–131); Boschung (1987); and von Hesberg (1992: 171–181).

68. The same sentiment may underlie an unusual tombstone that challenges passersby to join in the worship of two sisters, aged nine and fifteen, and thereby test the usefulness of their powers. The point may be just to sustain worship of the girls after the erectors of the stone had themselves died: "You, who read this and doubt that there are *manes*, invoke us after you have made a vow and you will understand" (*tu, qui legis et dubitas Manes esse, sponsione facta invoca nos et intelleges*, *ILS*, 8201a, my trans.). I am unaware of a clear parallel.

69. D'Ambra (2002).

70. Glazier (1984).

CHAPTER 4: THE *MANES* IN THE CONTEXT OF ROMAN RELIGION

1. Veyne (1997 [1985]: 219).

2. Wiseman (1995a).

3. Spaeth (1996). For the Ceres variant, Wagenvoort (1980: 137–140).

4. On the festival, Beard (1987); on the gender, cf. Ovid's goddess (*Fasti*, 4.744–746) with Caesius' male god (cited by Arnobius, *Adv. Nat.*, 3.41).

5. Price (1984: 10–11); Needham (1972). On Needham's argument and some objections to his logic, see C. King (2003: 277–278).

6. Bispham and Smith (2000: 15); Jason Davies (2004: 1–12 and 2006).

7. The list includes me (2003); Rives (2006); Levene (2012) and Champion (2017). Rives and Levene both include Feeney (1998), though, as the main chapter discusses, he defines "belief" in terms of Christian creedal formulations and so sees a fairly limited application to Rome.

8. It is thus contradictory for Jason Davies (2006) to say that "belief" *always* has a specific anachronistic sense when applied before the early modern period and to say that the word has many different definitions. One or the other could be true, not both.

9. Price (1984: 7–11) advocates substituting symbolic interpretations of ritual for belief. He endorses the work of Geertz (1966) and Sperber (1975), but note that the two theorists employ the word "symbol" in incompatible ways, so that endorsing them both is a contradiction. Also, neither of them is suggesting a contrast between Christian belief and non-Christian symbolism. For problems with Sperber's position, see C. King (2003: 280–282); on Geertz, see Frankenberry and Penner (1999); on symbolic interpretations of religion, see more generally Penner (1986). On the problem of defining the word "ritual," see Goody (1977). A strong theoretical voice in favor of separating ritual actions in religion from a motive of beliefs is Bell (1992), but cf. the interesting experiments that Lawson (2002: 117–128) described, which tested how (modern) participants assessed efficacy in rituals and showed a strong correlation between the asserted presence of superhuman agents and a perception of superior efficacy.

10. Needham (1972: 40–50).

11. Price (1984: 10–11); likewise Davies (2006), who characterizes employing the word "belief" as "anachronistic to the point of being a prejudice" but again does not offer a clearly stated definition of "belief."

12. Bell (2002: 110–111).

13. Tooker (1992) on Burma; Lopez (1998) on Sri Lanka; Bloch (2002) on Madagascar.

14. Feeney (1998: 13).

15. Feeney (1998: 32) and Jason Davies (2004: 8).

16. They are quoted here from the online version of the dictionary (2011 update).

17. Jason Davies (2006) argues that the word "belief" is a product of early modern debates that contrasted belief with the rationality of science and did so in a way that ranked belief as inferior. Thus, for Davies, the word "belief" is intrinsically pejorative in that attributing belief to another person or group implies that the other is lying, insincere, or irrational. None of the *OED* definitions supports this idea of an intrinsically pejorative sense, which appears at best to be a minor tangent of the word's meaning from a particular early modern context. Suggesting, as Davies does, that it applies universally to modern scholarship has no basis that I can see and would require proving the dictionary wrong.

18. C. King (2003: 278–279). Cf. the recent definition offered by Champion (2017: xiv): "a genuine, collective conviction on the part of governing elites that Roman success, and indeed the city's very existence, depended on maintaining correct relations with

the gods through orthopraxy, or exactingly accurate performances of religious ceremony, ritual and sacrifice." Defining belief as "genuine conviction" would be consistent with my definition and those of the *OED*, though it seems arbitrarily narrow to restrict belief to "governing elites."

19. North (2010: 36, note 3) accuses me of offering a redefinition of "belief" that is "so radical that the term will necessarily continue to confuse those without expert knowledge of the subject." Again, though, comparison with the above *OED* definitions will show that my definition is consistent with the standard definitions in the dictionary, and no expert knowledge is necessary.

20. Davidson (1974).

21. Boyer (2001); Whitehouse (2004).

22. *OLD* (1982: 455–456).

23. Ando (2008: 13–14), drawing some on Linder and Scheid (1993).

24. Hickson Hahn (2007); Rüpke (2007: 154–167).

25. For a history of early Christian doctrinal battles, see Frend (1984).

26. Bell (2002: 110–111); Tooker (1992).

27. I first used the term in this manner in C. King (2003).

28. Some but not all of these examples, I used in C. King (2003: 292–297).

29. Whether or not one endorses his specific interpretation that the poem was performed in a ceremony connected with the island of Delos, Wiseman (1986: 96–99) is right to suggest that modern scholarly attempts to dismiss the work as a purely literary composition have no clear basis. See his notes for more literature.

30. Spaeth (1996: 103–119).

31. Wagenvoort (1980: 137–140) notes the existence of Greek parallels to this same type of dual scenario, i.e., the Greek god Hades marrying Demeter and not, as more frequently stated, Persephone.

32. Frend (1984: 473–785).

33. As Green (2007: 137) asserts, treating the identification as a fixed constant, "when women cried out to Juno Lucina it was Diana that they meant."

34. Ando (2005: 5).

35. Webster (1995).

36. Hitchner (1995).

37. See Bodel (2012: 268), who wants to identify the mother of the *lares* with Acca Larentia, who also received a rite. The idea seems plausible, but it would itself be another example of polymorphism and thus not exclude other identifications like that of Ovid's Lara.

38. Flower (2017: passim but especially 6–17). She offers a good bibliography on earlier debates.

39. The existence of home shrines to *manes* undercuts her *manes* outside/*lares* inside dichotomy. See chapter 7.C.1. It is also not true that *lares* had no role in the funeral. Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.55) mentions a sacrifice to a *lar* as a standard element. Romans could pray to either *lares* or *manes* to preserve their lives. See chapters 1.C and 5.A.1.

40. The idea that all gods, male and female, were forms of a single goddess can be found

in the cult of Isis as Apuleius presented it (*Met.*, 11.5), but equations outside Isiac contexts are never as comprehensive, and gender seems to be a divider. In other words, one could equate a string of agricultural goddesses (Terra Mater, Ceres, Ops) or male agricultural deities (Quirinus, Mars) but not equate Ceres with Quirinus. The idea of there being a single divine intelligence underlying polytheistic plurality can also be found in the context of so-called philosophical monotheism (Athanassiadi and Frede 1999), but as such ideas are limited to narrowly philosophical (Platonic and Stoic) contexts, one should again be cautious about implying they are normative, as they are in some forms of Hinduism (Sen 1961: 20–21, 37–38).

41. C. King (2003).

42. C. King (2003: 301–307). Cf. Saller (1988).

43. C. King (2003: 301–307).

44. Potter (1999: 128–134). For various examples: Livy (22.57); Cicero (*Marcell.*, 18 and *Verr.*, 4.114); Horace (*Carm.*, 3.6); Val. Max. (1.1.16–21).

45. Linderski (1993); Potter (1999: 128–134). Some examples: Livy (1.31.7, 6.12.7); Plaut. (*Curc.*, 270–271); Cic. (*Rab. Perd.*, 2.5); Lucr. (5.1228–1229).

46. A well-known example is Plautus (*Aul.*, 1–27), who has a *lar familiaris* describe his relationship with three generations. The grandfather and granddaughter worshipped faithfully and were rewarded, but the *lar* was punishing the intervening father for neglect.

47. Ando (2008: 13–14; 2003a: 11). Similar but not quite identical is the formulation of Scheid (2003: 95–96): "The kernel of the rite of sacrifice may be seen as a 'credo' expressed in action rather than words. This 'credo' was neither explicit nor prior to the ritual action itself; it was rather inherent in the ritual and proclaimed solely through a sequence of ritual actions. . . . And the prayers that accompanied the actions of the *praefatio* added nothing to the homage expressed by the rituals." If, though, there were no Roman beliefs that a god existed or could perform acts of power before the actual performance of a ceremony, then why would they decide to perform the ceremony at all, much less prepare for hours, days, or sometimes even months in advance to perform it? Likewise, if the prayers "add nothing," why are they there?

48. Deemphasizing belief, Staal (1979); deemphasizing "orthopraxy" to focus on belief, Penner (1995: 243).

49. Hickson Hahn (2007); Rüpke (2007: 154–167).

50. Watson (1988) and Rawski (1988).

51. Watson (1988: 16).

52. Beard (1990). See also R. Gordon (1990) and Potter (1999: 134–144).

53. Beard, North, and Price (1998: 1: 99–108, 211–244). Even the suppression of the Bacchiants in 186 BC, and the persecution of the Christians later were attempts to stamp out alternative forms of religious authority more than disputes over beliefs (North [1979]), though in both cases the (relative) newness of the challenge seems to have spurred action. When non-Roman priesthoods were supported by long tradition, for example, in the case of the Jews, the Romans generally did not bother them unless religious activity became the focal point for political insurrection.

54. Price (1984) and Beard, North, and Price (1998) are definitely in the *polis*-religion camp. For attempts to accommodate elements of the *polis*-religion position into a broader model that also includes room for personal beliefs and the individual choices of worshippers, see the various publications of Andreas Bendlin and Jörg Rüpke, to which Bendlin (2000 and 2001) and Rüpke (2007) are good introductions.

55. For a more precise definition of polythetic sets with additional literature, see C. King (2003: 282–292). On the history of the concept, Needham (1975). Note that there is some variation of the terminology in modern scholarship. The classic formulation of the polythetic model is that of Beckner (1959: 22–23), but he prefers the term "polytypic." Other scholars discuss similar models as "family resemblance."

56. Again, for more details and application to the Romans, consult C. King (2003: 287–292); for religious applications more broadly, Poole (1986). The pure polythetic or "polytypic" derives from biological taxonomy (i.e., Beckner [1959: 22–23]). The "fuzzy" or "graded" set comes not from biology but from experimental psychology (Rosch [1978]) and mathematical logic (Zadeh [1965]), though there are not enough data to convert the Roman religion into the sort of precise equation that Zadeh envisions.

57. Rosch (1978).

58. The polythetic/fuzzy-set model has been applied even to the variations possible within Christianity by Poole (1986: 413–23) and several studies by J. Z. Smith (1982, 1990, 2004). I would reiterate, though, that while some variation is possible within Christianity, there is a significant difference in the scale of variation possible, for the Christian dogmatic organization of beliefs places severe controls on variation. Within a Christian sect, one might find several slight variations in understanding the Trinity, but one could not substitute "Neptune" for "Jesus" and remain within the Christian fold. In the context of polymorphism, though, Pagans could do exactly that, assert the equivalency of divine beings different from those their neighbors chose to equate.

CHAPTER 5: THE POWERS OF THE DEAD

1. Some examples of the apotropaic view: Carter (1908: 463); Strong (1915: 116–117); Warde Fowler (1921: 747); Frazer (1929: 2: 434–435); Alcock (1980: 50); Ariès (1981: 29); North (1988: 998); Turcan (1989: 148); and Wildfang (2001: 230). Discussions of the *Lemuria* in particular tend to present apotropaic interpretations, e.g., Warde Fowler (1899: 108–109); Rose (1941); Scullard (1981: 118–119); and Sabbatucci (1988: 164–166). Such views, however, depend upon a distinction between the dead of the *Parentalia* and the dead of the *Lemuria* that is quite problematic. See Danka (1976); Phillips (1992); and below, chapter 7.B.

2. My trans. from text of W. M. Lindsay (1913): *a suppliciter eos venerantibus propter metum mortis*. On *manuus,* cf. Varro (*Ling.*, 6.4); Walde and Hofmann (1954: 2: 26–28); and Ernout and Meillet (1967: 383–384). Note again, though, my caution (chapter 1.B) that this passage's linkage of *manes* and *manuus* does not prove that the word *manes* itself is an adjective, only that it is derived from one.

3. *parcas, oro, viro, puella parcas,*
ut possit tibi plurimos per annos
cum sertis dare iusta quae dicavit. My trans.

4. On the Roman *votum* in general, though not aimed at *manes* specifically, see Rüpke (2007: 154–167).

5. *CIL,* 6.13101. On this text, see also chapter 3.D.2.

6. See Tolman (1910: 61–62, 68–75).

7. *CE,* 1034, from Rome. Likewise, from elsewhere in the empire, *CE,* 1224 and 1572.

8. Cf. Latte (1960: 100): "In general, they [Rome's dead] did not have influence on people's lives" (*In das Leben der Menschen wirken sie im allgemeinen nicht herein*); or Dumézil (1970: 364): "The dead are essentially outside of man's present concern." Likewise C. B. Pascal (1959: 78), rejecting the idea that anyone would pray to *di parentes*: "This implied invitation to the dead ancestors to participate in the solution of human problems is strange … [and] it runs counter to what is known of the Roman attitude for the dead."

9. Quotes from Wright (2003: 34, 81).

10. I am grateful to Elizabeth Hoffman for repeating this conversation to me.

11. On Abascantus, see Weaver (1994).

12. *Silvae*, 5.1.258–262, my trans. from text of Courtney (1990):

ibi supplice dextra
pro te Fata rogat, reges tibi tristis Averni
placat, ut expletis humani finibus aevi
pacantem terras dominum iuvenemque relinquas
ipse senex! certae iurant in vota sorores.

13. P. Brown (1981: 5–6) insists that one of the major differences between the Pagan cult of the dead and the Christian cult of the saints was that only the saints functioned as intercessors, but clearly that is not always true. Another Pagan example is the inscription *CE,* 1165 = *CIL,* 6.21846.

14. Treggiari (1991).

15. *CE,* 1508 = *CIL,* 6.30102, my trans.:

… *multos cum caperet superba forma,*
blando iuncta viro pudica mansit.
qui nunc pro meritis bene adque caste
corpus, quod potuit negare flammae,
unguento et foleo rosisque plenum
ut numen colit anxius merentis.
parcas, oro, viro, puella parcas,
ut possit tibi plurimos per annos
cum sertis dare iusta quae dicavit,
et semper vigilet lucerna nardo.

Both orthography and syntax are a little irregular. The author's dislike of cremation is also interesting. It may have simply been a personal idiosyncrasy. That he would draw attention to it as if it were unusual suggests that the inscription was written before inhumation replaced cremation as the most common type of Roman funeral in the late second century AD. Abascantus also disliked cremation, a position that Statius (*Silv.*, 5.1.226–227) presented as an eccentricity in the late first century. It may be that this inscription is from the same period.

16. Crook (1967b), though cf. Saller (1994: 102–153).

17. Rose (1931); Coarelli (1976). Cf. Richardson (1992: 259–260); *OCD* (1996: 1000).

18. Warde Fowler (1899: 211).

19. If not, then the *manalis lapis* is part of another otherwise unknown ceremony that seems to rely on the same general premise of opening a doorway to the dead. See Wissowa (1894–1897a); Warde Fowler (1920: 30–31); Eliade (1958: 232–233). Rose (1931: 123–124) was skeptical of the connection with the *Mundus*, but I see no grounds for his assertion that Festus invented an association of the dead with the *manalis lapis* out of thin air.

20. *CIL,* 10.3926: *Sacerdos Cerealis Mundalis*, though this is from Capua, and it is possible that it refers to some local rite there and not the *Mundus* in Rome.

21. For citations, see the discussion of polymorphism and the Ceres/Proserpina equation in chapter 4.C.1. Cf. Wagenvoort (1980: 137–139). For more extensive discussion of Ceres, see Le Bonniec (1958); Chirassi-Colombo (1981); and Spaeth (1996).

22. Warde Fowler (1920).

23. Warde Fowler (1920: 25–30). Cf. Warde Fowler (1899: 206–209, 211–214) and Scullard (1981: 177–178, 180–181).

24. Rickman (1980).

25. Zanker (1988). On coins, Rickman (1980: 257–267).

26. Warde Fowler (1920).

27. Magdelain (1976: 109).

28. Spaeth (1996: 51–79).

29. Chirassi-Colombo (1981: 418–420) and Spaeth (1996: 63–65).

30. Solin (1981: 47–49).

31. See also Weinstock (1930); Rose (1931); Magdelain (1976); Castagnoli (1984).

32. The best introduction to the complexities of the *Lupercalia* is probably Wiseman (1995a). Earlier studies include Warde Fowler (1899: 310–321); Wissowa (1912: 208–219); Rose (1933); Michels (1953); Holleman (1973); Palmer (1974: 84–85); Scullard (1981: 76–78).

33. See the further discussion in chapter 7.A.

34. Michels (1953), endorsed more recently by Takács (2008: 36), would rather see the *Lupercalia* as a purification ceremony to ward off the dead. Purification is compatible with an agenda to increase fertility, but Michels' theory overlooks the possibility that Romans did not view the dead as hostile. It seems completely illogical to have a ceremony intended to keep the dead away from the living placed in the middle of the *Parentalia*, when the Romans were inviting the dead to wander through the city for the specific purpose of ritual interactions with the living.

35. See chapter 7.

36. Gager (1992: 12) lists *manes* as among the most common powers invoked in Latin-language curses, though that point is sadly not well illustrated by the otherwise fine selection of texts that he collects and translates. He does offer (pp. 243–264) an interesting collection of texts testifying to the widespread Roman fear of curses and belief in their efficacy. For more in general, see Ogden (1999; 2001; and 2002); R. Gordon (1999); and the studies collected in Faraone and Obbink (1991). There is more emphasis on Greece than Rome in most of these works.

37. Faraone (1991); Versnel (1991); Gager (1992: 12–14); Ogden (1999).

38. Versnel (1991, 97, note 47).

39. Lattimore (1962: 118–125).

40. *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum,* 14.615; translation in Ogden (2002: 216) and also in Gager (1992: 171–172), who places it in the third century AD.

41. On this definition of *larvae*, see appendix 1.

42. See discussion by McDonough (2004), who quotes in full (p. 356) a seeming parallel in a curse tablet from first-century Germany that mentions *mutae tacitae*. He takes the words as nominative plural, but, like *dis manibus* on tombstones, it could be a dedication in the dative, "to mute Tacita," which would make the parallel to Ovid even stronger. See also Frazer (1929: 2: 446–452); Gager (1992: 251–252); R. Gordon (1999: 182); and Ogden (1999: 27). Wiseman (1995b: 70–71) tries to argue that the *Feralia*, the word Ovid uses to refer to the festival's final day, was only about Muta Tacita and not about the dead at all, but even Ovid uses *Feralia* to refer to the whole festival of the *Parentalia*, which undercuts the basis of Wiseman's argument. On this point, see the further discussion in chapter 7.A.

43. Tertullian (*De Anima*, 56); Porphyry (*Abst.*, 2.47.2). Cf. Cumont (1922: 128–147); Boyancé (1952); Néraudau (1987); R. Gordon (1999: 176–177); and Ogden (2001: 225–226); and for the Greeks, S. I. Johnston (1999: 127–199). Frazer (1933–1936: 3: 103–283) collects a large number of parallels from well outside the Mediterranean area—from Sub-Saharan Africa, from Northern Asia, and Native American societies.

44. Quercia and Cazzulo (2016) discuss the possibility that tombs in Northern Italy where nails were found in burials are attempts to restrain "unquiet" dead, who were thought prone to negative action, but they do not reach definite conclusions, stressing the need for more research.

45. Phillips (1991); Gager (1992: 23–24); R. Gordon (1999: 243–266); Rives (2003).

46. Compare Macrobius' prayer for the *devotio* (*Sat.*, 3.9.6–13, quoted below, in main text) with the elaborate curse invoking Proserpina (Warmington [1940: 280–285]), which both contain a very detailed and thorough description of exactly what damage the divine power is supposed to inflict.

47. Versnel (1976). Versnel's notes contain citations to earlier studies, the most important of which are those of Wissowa (1903) and Deubner (1905), which together set the pattern for most discussions before Versnel.

48. Livy (8.9 and 10.28–29); Cicero (*Fin.*, 2.68); Dion. Hal. (20.1). On the complexities of Livy's early history and the problem of his sources, see, in general, Cornell (1995).

Janssen (1981) seems too optimistic in treating Livy (8.9) as a straightforward record from 340 BC. Even Livy makes it clear that he regards the *devotio ducis* as something that occurred only in much earlier times than his own (8.11.1).

49. Versnel (1976).

50. Livy (8.10.11–12) says there was a variant in which a general could devote one of his soldiers instead of himself, seemingly without the man's consent, but Livy gives no examples.

51. Cameron (1966) dates Macrobius' *Saturnalia* to around 430.

52. Latte (1960: 83, note 4).

53. Versnel (1976: 379–388), citing also several stylistic arguments in favor of the text's authenticity. On Furius, see E. Rawson (1973) and Beard, North, and Price (1998: 1: 111).

54. There is little evidence about the worship of Veiovis, and most of what scholars have written is highly conjectural. See Latte (1960: 79–83) and Palmer (1974: 153–171), whose theory of Celtic origin Beard, North, and Price doubt (1998: 1: 89).

55. My trans. from text of Willis (1963):

> *Dis pater Veiovis manes, sive vos quo alio nomine fas est nominare, ut omnes illam urbem Carthaginem exercitumque quem ego me sentio dicere fuga formidine terrore compeatis quique adversum legiones exercitumque nostrum arma telaque ferent, uti vos eum exercitum eos hostes eosque homines urbes agrosque eorum et qui in his locis regionibusque agris urbibusque habitant abducatis, lumine supero privetis exercitumque hostium urbes agrosque eorum quos me sentio dicere, uti vos eas urbes agrosque capita aetatesque eorum devotas consecratasque habeatis ollis legibus quibus quandoque sunt maxime hostes devoti. eosque ego vicarios pro me fide magistratuque meo pro populo Romano exercitibus legionibusque nostris do devoveo, ut me meamque fidem imperiumque legiones exercitumque nostrum qui in his rebus gerundis sunt bene salvos siritis esse. si haec ita faxitis ut ego sciam sentiam intellegamque, tunc quisquis votum hoc faxit recte factum esto ovibus atris tribus. Tellus mater teque Iuppiter obtestor.*

On the prayer's status as a *votum*, see Versnel (1976: 369–375), *contra* Wissowa (1903). I translate *capita* as "status" not only because *capita aetatesque* otherwise seems redundant but because the sacrifice of the Carthaginians was not entirely a sacrifice of their lives in the most literal sense. Appian (*Pun*., 130) says the Romans took 50,000 slaves. Apparently, the Romans deemed loss of freedom sufficient to fulfill the vow.

56. The idea of placating a whole community's dead may also be present in the *evocatio*, the ritual for winning over an enemy people's gods to the Roman side of a war, as Bernstein (1993: 102–104) asserted. One could object that he is applying Macrobius' prayer for the *devotio hostium* to the *evocatio*, for which Macrobius offers a separate prayer that does not explicitly mention the *manes*, but Bernstein's point is supported by a different text. The Christian author Minicius Felix (*Oct*., 6.2–3) unambiguously included the *manes* on a list of gods that Pagan Romans have summoned from enemy cities. Cf. Basanoff (1947) for other features of the *evocatio*. Note too that the term *evocatio* could also refer to the summoning of individual *manes* for necromancy. Cf. Ogden (2001: 163–190).

57. Bodel (2012: 267). Hopkins (1983: 215) notes that Roman burial clubs allowing slave members made special provisions for performing ceremonies in cases where an owner refused to turn over the slave's body for the ceremony, but it is hard to know how widespread the refusals might have been or exactly what the owners' rationale was.

58. Bodel (2012: 267).

59. Although it does not mention *manes*, an interesting testimony to the power of slaves to menace a community is provided by an inscription (quoted by Gager 1992: 246–247) that thanks Jupiter for relieving the town of Tuder (in Italy) of the dangers created by a curse tablet that a slave had written. Cf. Ogden (1999: 69–70).

60. Ogden (2001) focuses particularly on Greek necromancy but collects many Roman parallels. On broader cross-cultural patterns, see Sullivan (1989, especially 74–77).

61. E. Rawson (1985: 310). Cf. Cicero (*Vat.*, 14) and (*Div.*, 1.132; *Tusc.*, 1.37).

62. Ogden (2001: 156).

63. R. Gordon (1999: 204–210); Ogden (2001: 139–148).

64. *Silvae*, 3.3.203–204, my trans. from text of Courtney (1990):

Inde viam morum longaeque examina vitae
Adfatusque pios moniturque somnia poscam.

On the use of *manes* in a singular sense throughout this passage, see the discussion in chapter 2.B.

65. *Silvae*, 5.3.288–293, my trans. from text of Courtney (1990):

Inde tamen venias melior qua porta malignum
cornea vincit ebur, somnique in imagine monstra
quae solitus. sic sacra Numae ritusque colendos
mitis Aricino dictabat Nympha sub antro,
Scipio sic plenos Latio Iove ducere somnos
creditur Ausoniis, sic non sine Apolline Sulla.

66. Other texts that portray dream-messages from the dead are Propertius (4.7.1–12); Suetonius (*Otho,* 7.2); and Horace (*Epod.,* 5.83–102). For a different type of message from the dead, cf. Lucan (1.564–574), who takes sounds heard in a cemetery as an omen.

67. See Renberg (2003: 310–315, 591–592) for examples from tombstones. Mainly they suggest that the erector of the stone did so after an appearance by the dead person. As some of them imply the passage of substantial time between the person's death and the erection of the monument, Renberg plausibly argues that the inscriptions depict a scenario in which the dead person received some type of burial initially but complained in a dream that it was insufficient, leading to a subsequent and more elaborate monument.

68. Bowlby (1980: 96–100, 133–134; quotes from 97 and 134).

69. Cf. Ogden (2001: 150), who implies that the night terrors that Cicero (*Cael.*, 36) claims drove Clodius to incest might be implied to have been sent through a necromantic spell, though the text does not say so explicitly.

70. C. King (2009; 2013b).

71. In general, with a focus on the Greeks, S. I. Johnston (1999); Edmonds (2004); Stilwell (2005); C. King (2013a). C. King (1998: 167–223) discusses some categories of variation in Roman models. For the complex layers of borrowing and allusion in even a single text, see, for example, Zetzel (1989).

72. Suetonius (*Tib.*, 75), my trans. from text of Ihm (1973):

> *Morte eius ita laetatus est populus, ut ad primum nuntium discurrentes pars: "Tiberium in Tiberim," clamitarent, pars Terram matrem deosque manes orarent, ne mortuo sedem ullam nisi inter impios darent.*

73. On the use of *pietas* as a criterion for Romans to divide the underworld into zones of punishment and reward, see further C. King (1998: 187–223). I am planning to address the topic further in a future publication.

74. *CE,* 1165 = *CIL,* 6.21846, lines 1–4, my trans.:

> *Umbrarum secura quies animaeq. pior(um)*
> *laudatae colitis quae loca sancta Erebi,*
> *sedes insontem Magnillam ducite vestras*
> *per nemora et campos protinus Elysios.*

The actual author was quite possibly a poet on commission rather than the grieving parent herself, though for a verse epitaph this elaborate (12 lines total), it seems unlikely that the parent did not approve the content prior to the expense of engraving it on stone.

75. Ogilvie (1969: 30).

76. *Laudatio Turiae*, right column, 69, my trans. from text of Wistrand (1976). See his p. 9 for a discussion of the name *Laudatio Turiae*.

77. Cumont (1949: 392–395).

78. *CIL,* 8.2185: *parentes m(a)nes estote boni ut Martis in pace bona quiescat*. The top of the inscription, with the usual identification of the deceased, is missing. The apparent reference to being "in the peace of Mars" is unusual, as Mars does not usually have a posthumous role, but it may just refer to a death resulting in some way from warfare. In any event, the appeal for the aid of the *manes* is clear enough.

79. On Propertius 4.11, see further Camps (1965: 153–167); Curran (1968).

80. The passage follows immediately after a reference to posthumous punishment, so the interpretation of the dead as jury seems apt, though I stress that this is only one possibility of several that scholars have suggested. The fourth-century commentary of Servius, followed by that of Norden (1926, Virgil, Aen., 6.743), tries to connect the line to the Greek philosophical notion of a personal *damôn*, but Austin rightly objects (1977: 228) that this theory "imports into Virgil's use of *manes* a conception that has no parallel elsewhere in the *Aeneid*." Austin favors the view, asserted by Warde Fowler (1922: 386), that the phrase means, "Each individual of us must endure his own individual ghosthood," that is, it refers to a process of personal purification. Rose (1944) thought that *manes* in this line referred

to the whole underworld and that the sense was that each person's experience of death is what he makes of it. Note Austin's comment (1977: 227): "If one single phrase had to be chosen from the whole *Aeneid* to illustrate the elusiveness of Virgil, it might well be this."

81. See, for instance, the defense of the reading *sos* by Bömer (1943: 6–7) and of *suos* by Dyck (2004: 320), neither of whom regards the manuscript reading as a possibility worthy of serious consideration. The text of Powell (2006) reads *suos*. Büchner (1973) reads *sos*. Urlichs (1878: 155) suggested the alternative emendation *bonos*. De Plinval's Budé text (1959) has *humanos*.

82. Some might argue that the *dis manibus* formula was meaningless by citing the existence of some late-Roman tombstones that combine the invocation with overtly Christian sentiments. A good example is the well-known tombstone of Licinia Amias (Friggeri [2001: 164 with a good photo) where *DM* precedes a Christian fish image. Modern anthropology, though, has noted examples of nominally Christianized peoples who in practice hold on to their cults of the dead and who perceive no contradiction between doing so and their Christianity. See, for example, Pauw (1975) on the Xhosa people. These late-Roman "Christian" tombstones are likely a similar phenomenon, as is the poem that the nominally Christian poet Ausonius wrote about his observance of the *Parentalia*. One should not backdate the strict divisions between monotheism and polytheism from modern Western Christianity to the Roman era, when many Christians were new converts, and the boundaries were more fluid than Christian theologians would have liked. See MacMullen (2014) on Christian attempts to incorporate parts of the cult of the dead into theoretically Christian observances.

83. Veyne (1997: 215–223).

84. For more details on the eccentricities of surviving tombstone samples, see Lattimore (1962); Hopkins (1983: 226–232); Saller and Shaw (1984); Shaw (1991); Morris (1992: 156–173); M. King (2000); Carroll (2006). The stones are overwhelmingly Imperial in date, but more precise dating is sometimes impossible. MacMullen (1982) argues that the surviving stones are mostly from the second and third centuries AD, but the argument is somewhat circular, as it assumes that the smaller quantity of stones with explicit dates is representative of the larger quantity that does not, which surely is the point that needs to be proven. Many stones are undatable, or datable only in a vague way. See also A. Gordon (1983: 38–42).

CHAPTER 6: THE *MANES* IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FUNERAL

1. See, e.g., monographs by Flower (1996); Rebillard (2009 [2003]); Carroll (2006); Graham (2006b); Dufallo (2007); Edwards (2007); Erasmo (2008 and 2012); Hope (2009); and portions of volumes edited by Struck (1993); Bergman and Kondoleon (1999); Oliver (2000); Hope and Marshall (2000); Pearce, Millet, and Struck (2000); Mustakallio et al. (2005); Suter (2008); Brink and Green (2008); Carroll and Rempel (2011); Whittaker (2011); Hope and Huskinson (2011); Carroll and Wild (2012); Baltussen (2013); Car-

roll and Graham (2014); Devlin and Graham (2015); and Pearce and Weekes (2017); plus a sourcebook edited by Hope (2007). There are also specifically art-historical approaches (e.g., Koortbojian 1995 and 2013; Birk 2013) and studies of particular cemeteries (e.g., Baldassarre et al. [1996]; van Andringa et al. [2013]; Campbell [2015]) or of particular types of graves (e.g., Borbonus [2014]). This list is far from exhaustive.

2. On pollution, Maurin (1984); H. Lindsay (2000); Graham (2011a); Lennon (2014); Bond (2016). Exceptions that do discuss the cult of the dead include MacMullen (2014 and 2017) and occasional archaeological searches for evidence of rites, e.g., in Lepetz, van Andringa, et al. (2011); Lepetz (2017); Ortalli (2017).

3. Morris (1992: 10–13).

4. Morris (1992: 13); Bond (2016: 66); and Ortalli (2017: 62–63).

5. Hawkes (1954). Forcey (1998: 88) dismisses Hawkes as "fetishism of modern western cultural categories," but when Forcey tries to offer a counter-example, he proves Hawkes' point by repeatedly relying on written sources, not artifacts alone, to interpret ancient religion, e.g.: "Mercury/Hermes was often invoked in curse tablets throughout the Roman Empire, in which we find victims typically devoted 'to the demons of the underworld . . .'" (p. 91).

6. Morris (1992: 15–17). The need not to neglect "ideological" (including religious) themes in analysis of graves is one of the main points of criticism from the "postprocessual" school of archaeology associated with Ian Hodder against the earlier "processual" school associated with Lewis Binford. On the debate, with bibliography, Trigger (1989: 348–357, and, on Binford's "New Archaeology," 294–303).

7. In general, see chapter 4.C.3 and C. King (2003). On the pontiffs specifically, Beard (1990). On rules, both civil and religious, concerning graves, De Visscher (1963); Robinson (1973 and 1975).

8. R. Gordon (1990). Cf. North (1976) on the revision of pontifical rules.

9. As Graham (2006a: 70) put it, "It can no longer be assumed that the economic and social constraints imposed on life at the lower end of the social scale led to the urban poor formulating radically different attitudes towards life, death and disposal. . . . [T]hey were subject to the same demands pressures, beliefs, fears and hopes as the rest of the urban community." Cf. Graham (2006b).

10. Among others: Marquardt (1886: 378–380); Carter (1908: 463–464); Cumont (1922: 53); Latte (1960: 102); Dumézil (1970: 617); Toynbee (1971: 50–51); Harmon (1978: 1600–1603); Maurin (1984: 210); Treggiari (1991: 493); H. Lindsay (1998: 72–73 and 2000: 166–167); Scheid (2003: 168–169); Bodel (2004: 491); Corbeill (2004: 98–99); Carroll (2006: 4); and Graham (2011a).

11. The only scholarly works of which I am aware that have doubted the postfunerary ninth-day ritual are my dissertation (C. King 1998: 412) and two works that cite it, Stirling (2004: 430, note 9) and Yasin (2009: 55, note 18). The alleged testimony of Porphyrio (*Epod.*, 17.48) will be discussed below in the context of the sacrifice at the tomb.

12. On the calendar's dating, with an emphasis on inclusive numbering, see Holford-Strevens (2005: 29).

13. McKinley (2000).

14. I cannot endorse the view of both Toynbee (1971: 289–390, note 129) and Flower (1996: 93), who cite Cicero (*Clu.*, 27–28) to claim that much shorter funerals were common. Actually, Cicero there treats a one-day funeral as so unusual as to be evidence of murder. Flower also claims that the Mediterranean climate would cause odors that would prevent a funeral from lasting as long as nine days, but anthropology provides far more nostril-taxing examples of funerary rites. For example, Metcalf and Huntington (1991: 93) describe how a widow of the Berewan people in tropical Borneo spends eleven days in a small hut next to the corpse of her husband before the funeral. On interacting with odors as a component of the funerary experience, cf. Graham (2011b).

15. On grief, see Treggiari (1991: 483–489); Wilcox (2005 and 2006); Baltussen (2009a and 2009b); the works collected in Baltussen (2013); and cf. Hope (2007: 172–210 and 2009: 121–149). More generally, Edwards (2007) examines a wide range of material from Roman literature about the motif of people dying (as opposed to the afterlife or the funeral). Treggiari (1991: 484–485, notes 6–11) collects citations to deathbed gestures such as final kisses.

16. Pers. (3.104); Juv. (4.108–109); cf. Toynbee (1971: 44); Harmon (1978: 1601); Graham (2011b). The perfumed oil was also flammable and would have pervaded the funeral shroud, contributing to the cremation (Mitschke and Paetz gen. Schieck 2012).

17. Lucan (2.23); Livy (4.40.3); Statius (*Silv.*, 2.6.5–6); and two late sources: the Scholiast on Lucan (2.23) and Servius (*Aen.*, 6.218).

18. On gendered observances, Corbeill (2004: 67–106); Šterbenc Erker (2011); Richlin (2014 [2001]).

19. Lennon (2014: 143). Lennon is, however, probably mistaken to take Ovid (*Fasti,* 2.23–26) as a reference to the same custom. Ovid is describing uses of the word *februa*, not funerals, and his reference to lictors makes it more likely to pertain to the ritual sweeping of the dining halls of the *Curiae*. See C. J. Smith (2006: 358).

20. On the timing, H. Lindsay (2000: 155). On *praeficae*, see Dutsch (2008).

21. For sculptural depictions of funerals that include musicians, see Toynbee (1971: 44–47); Flower (1996: 93–95); Bodel (1999); Hope (2007: 100–101); Dutsch (2008: 259–260). Propertius (2.13.19–24) lists trumpets among elements missing from poor funerals, but that may just mean the poor used less expensive music. Dutsch (2008: 259) draws attention to Ovid's implication (*Fasti,* 6.667–668) that it would have taken an unusual circumstance for a funeral procession to lack flute music and singing. Cf. Persius (3.103–106) and Quasten (1983: 149–177) on Christian complaints about music at Pagan funerals.

22. Noy (2000b: 39–40). As Scheid (1984: 122–127) and Ochs (1993: 90) suggest, the torches were probably intended to mark the boundaries of ritual space around the corpse, rather than to indicate literally that the ceremonies took place at night, which seems unlikely, or to be primarily apotropaic; *contra* Boyancé (1952), who thought the torches would be used only in the funerals of people who died young and that the purpose was apotropaic. Cf. also Maurin (1984: 198); Rose (1923); H. Lindsay (2000: 155).

23. Note that Polybius discusses only the public and politically charged aspects of the

ceremony and passes over the rites accompanying the actual burial with a terse "after doing the customary things." One should thus be cautious about arguing for change over time by contrasting Polybius with later texts that focus on different parts of the rituals.

24. Flower (1996: 91–158); Sumi (2002). Pollini (2007: 240) raised the question of how fragile wax masks could survive such an active role in the funeral and suggested that they were hardened with uric acid. The low temperature at which wax melts, however, would probably have made it impossible for the masks to be present at the cremation. On fragments of funeral orations, Vollmer (1891); Kierdorf (1980). More generally on the genre, Ochs (1993). On the theatricality of elite funerals, Dufallo (2007); Erasmo (2008). On display of the masks within homes, Flower (1996: 185–222); Doonan (1999).

25. Flower (1996: 209–211). Her appendix, 281–325, translates the 106 passages. On the issue of who was entitled to display them, see 32–59. There is no basis for adopting the stance of Hugh Lindsay (1996), who equates the funeral masks with "ancestor cult" to such a degree that he believes that the Romans excluded nonaristocratic dead from worship. One has only to look at the vast corpus of *dis manibus* tombstone epitaphs—including the tombs of shopkeepers, freed slaves, etc.—to see that such a limitation is impossible. Cf. chapter 3.

26. On the procedure and location of cremation, McKinley (1989, 1994, 2000, and 2017); Pearce (1998); Noy (2000a and 2000b); Polfer (2000); Weekes (2005); and the passages collected by Hope (2007: 111–115). On the types of wood, see Kreuz (2000). On the cremation's effect on human tissue, Ubelaker (2015). On specialists to perform burial/crematory functions, Bodel (1994 and 2000); Bond (2016: 59–96).

27. McKinley (1994); Hope (2007: 113–114); Lepetz, Van Andringa, et al. (2011).

28. Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.56–57) mentioned that the Cornelian clan practiced inhumation into the last century of the Republic; Tacitus (*Ann.*, 16.6) says the emperor Nero embalmed his wife rather than cremating her; and Statius mentions that Domitian's Imperial secretary Abascantus preferred not to cremate his wife (*Silv.*, 5.1. 225–231). On the switch to inhumation, Nock (1972 [= 1932]: 277–307). For various other theories about the change, which are not necessarily incompatible with each other, Morris (1992: 42–69); Christ (1996); Counts (1996); and Graham (2015). One could note too that the switch would have removed the period of 6–8 hours of the cremation from the length of the final day of the funeral, a notable convenience for participants.

29. On rituals to Ceres, Le Bonniec (1958); Spaeth (1996). The surviving text of Festus, 296–298L leaves the term for the rite fragmentary, "the sow is called "presan. . . . " (†*Presan*†...*porca dicitur*) The editor W. M. Lindsay (1913) is right to reject the text of Thewrewk de Ponor (1889), which expanded †*presan*† to *praesentanea*, an emendation that lacks manuscript support, parallel usage, or even full agreement with the surviving letters in the manuscript. There was a rite called the *porca praecidanea*, but it was a postfunerary rite in which worshippers at a later date offered a sow to Ceres to atone for any failure to perform properly the rituals for the dead (Varro in Non. Marc., 163L; and Gell., 4.6.8); cf. Spaeth (1996: 53–56). For death pollution in Roman thought, see Lennon (2014); H. Lindsay (2000); Maurin (1984). For comparison, see Parker (1983) on Greece and Bloch and Parry (1982: 155–186) on China.

30. Carroll (2006: 66–68); Graham (2011a).

31. Before offering her *suffitio* theory (2011a), Graham herself had earlier (2006b: 107) suggested that the burning of the bones was done during the cremation period. Cf. Lennon (2014: 145). *Contra* Graham's attempt to move the *suffitio* nine days after the burial, Festus (= Paulus, 3L) says that the participants in the *suffitio* are those "returning having attended a funeral" (*funus prosecuti redeuntes*), which would place the rite immediately after the main funeral, not after regathering at a later date. On the *suffitio* ritual, Fiscelli (2004: 92–93). Hugh Lindsay (1998: 73) points to Paulus' use (3L) of the imperfect tense and suggests that the *suffitio* was no longer done in Festus' time, but Paulus' epitome of Festus is from the eighth century, and fragments of Festus show that he regularly changes verb tenses to past.

32. Toynbee (1971: 45, 49–50); Noy (2000a and 2000b); Graham (2006b: 102–105).

33. Onians (1951: 172–173).

34. Caseau (1994: 197–200, 218–222, 252). Cf. on scents to honor gods more generally, MacMullen (1981: 45); Rüpke (2007: 69–74).

35. On Charon in general, Terpening (1985). Roman texts mentioning the coins: Plautus (*Poen.*, 70–71); Juvenal (*Sat.*, 3.265–268); Propertius (4.11.7–8). On the coins and their distribution, L. Brown (2008); Stevens (1991); Alcock (1980: 57–59); Morris (1992: 106).

36. *Sacrae sunt, quae diis superis consecratae sunt; religiosae, quae diis manibus relictae sunt.* My trans. from text of Seckel and Kuebler (in Gordon and Robinson [1988]). Cf. Scheid (2003: 23–25) and the *Digest,* e.g., 11.7.

37. De Visscher (1963: 49–60); Robinson (1973; 1975); Ducos (1995); Cancik-Lindemaier (1998: 422–423).

38. Toynbee (1971: 50); Scheid (1984: 128–129); Cancik-Lindemaier (1998: 421); Dyck (2004: 397–399). Some might object that, when Cicero is later describing a different ritual, for when the corpse has been lost (*Leg.*, 2.57), he uses *femina porcus*, "female pig," as a synonym for *porca*, but that merely proves my point. Cicero may shift from "sow" to "female pig" as a stylistic variation, but he carefully clarifies his gender when he does. Would he need to do so if it was obvious that *porcus* and *porca* referred to the same animal? There is no *femina* when he is talking about the *porcus* at the regular funeral.

39. Harmon (1978: 1602–1603).

40. Lepetz (2017).

41. Porphyrio (*Epod.*, 17.48, text of Holder 1967 [1894]). Cf. Marquardt (1886: 1: 379, note 4).

42. Ucko (1969); Morris (1992: 103–108).

43. Toynbee (1971: 52–54).

44. Virgil (*Aen.*, 6.224–225); cf. Rushforth (1915); Toynbee (1971: 53–54); Caseau (1994: 192); McKinley (1994); Noy (2000b: 41–44).

45. Wheeler (1929); Wolski and Berciu (1973); Monsieur (2007); Lepetz, Van Andringa, et al. (2011).

46. Felton (1999).

47. Evans (1985: 124–125); Dupont (1989: 401–402); Davies (1999: 149); Thomas (2005: 208); Carroll (2006: 4).

48. Lattimore (1962: 19 and 167); on house-tombs, Toynbee and Ward-Perkins (1956: 113–114).

49. Wallace-Hadrill (2008).

50. Saller (1994: 88–89).

51. Propertius (1.17.19–24); Tibullus (2.4.45–50). Houghton (2011) discusses a number of literary variations.

52. Klotz (1927); McCracken (1949: 2: 609, note 69).

53. *Contra* Yasin (2009: 54), who doubts those outside the *familia* participated in the feast.

54. On feasts for gods, Rüpke (2007: 140–145). On meals with the dead more generally, including some postfunerary occasions, see Alcock (2002); Dunbabin (2003: 103–140); H. Lindsay (1998); Graham (2005a); Gee (2008).

55. On monuments, see Kleiner (1977 and 1987); Boschung (1987); von Hesberg and Zanker (1987); Morris (1992: 42–47); von Hesberg (1992); Koortbojian (1995); Carroll (2006: 30–58, 86–125); Graham (2006b: 6–27); P. Davies (2010); Birk (2013); and Botturi (2016). The building of lavish tomb monuments diminished in Rome itself in the Imperial period to avoid competition with the emperors (Purcell [1987]; Bodel [1999]), but continued widely elsewhere, as one can see in the lavish graves of Pompeii (Campbell [2015]). On tomb gardens, Jashemski (1979: 141–153); Campbell (2008); Brundrett (2011). On funerary games, Dyson (1992: 170–172).

56. Rüpke (2007: 190–191).

57. Bodel (2000: 128–129); MacMullen (2017: 111).

58. Graham (2006a and 2006b: especially 85–109).

59. Van Gennep's *Les rites de passage*, first published in 1908, is cited here from its English translation (1960: 146–165). Other statements of liminal theory are Hertz (1960 [originally 1907]) and particularly Turner (1967: 93–111), though cf. the cautions about Turner's method by Penner (2002: 155) and, somewhat differently, Metcalf and Huntington (1991: 11).

CHAPTER 7: FESTIVALS, CEREMONIES, AND HOME SHRINES

1. For good introductions to these issues, Miller (1991); Herbert-Brown (1994 and 2003); Newlands (1995).

2. Phillips (1983: 807).

3. Scheid (1992b).

4. Dolansky (2011).

5. On Filocalus, Salzman (1990). For the text, see Mommsen (1892–1898: 1: 19–29) or Degrassi (1963: 237–262).

6. Mommsen (in *CIL,* I: 309); H. Lindsay (1998: 75); Takács (2008: 35–36).

7. Latte (1960: 111); Wildfang (2001: 225–230); DiLuzio (2016: 213–214).

8. As, for example, Danka (1976) takes for granted.

9. Scullard (1981: 259).

10. Wiseman (1995b: 70–71) tried to argue that the *Feralia* is completely separate from ceremonies for the dead and relates instead to the story of a wolf raising Romulus and Remus, claiming that the "natural meaning" of *Feralia* is a derivation from *fera*, "wild beast." This etymology has little support. Michiel de Vaan (2008: 211–212) argues for the word's derivation from **fēs-o-* ("divine") and that it is therefore related to the word *feriae* ("festivals"). Earlier both Ernout and Meillet (1967: 226) and Walde and Hofmann (1954: 1: 479–480) suggested a connection between *feralis* and two words for "ghost" from later Indo-European languages, Lithuanian *dvâse* and Middle High German *getwas*. None of the linguists suggested a connection to *fera*. Even if Wiseman's etymology was more defensible, etymology alone is insufficient to discount Varro's and Ovid's observations of a festival active in their time, for they would have been able to see and/or participate in the ceremony themselves. See also chapter 5.A.2.b on the *Lupercalia*.

11. Dolansky (2006: 111, note 43).

12. Dolansky (2011: 134–137, 140–142).

13. Dolansky (2011: 135–137). On tomb gardens, see Jashemski (1979: 141–153); Campbell (2008); Brundrett (2011); on eating facilities, artwork, wells, and other structures or items that are located at tombs, see Toynbee (1971: 97); Baldassare et al. (1996: 38–39, 89–92); Dunbabin (2003: 103–140); Carroll (2006: 42 and 71). There is a growing literature on "eating with the dead," some of which is focused on the funeral feast itself, but much of which applies to later occasions. See Lindsay (1998); Alcock (2002); Graham (2005a); Gee (2008); Erasmo (2012: 121–132).

14. *Fasti*, 2.533–542, my trans.:

Est honor et tumulis. Animas placate paternas
parvaque in exstructas munera ferte pyras.
parva petunt manes: pietas pro divite grata est
munere; non avidos Styx habet ima deos.
tegula porrectis satis est velata coronis
et sparsae fruges parcaque mica salis,
inque mero mollita Ceres violaeque solutae:
haec habeat media testa relicta via.
nec maiora veto, sed et his placabilis umbra est:
adde preces positis et sua verba focis.

The name of the goddess Ceres seems to be nothing more here than a poetic synonym for bread. Otherwise, it is hard to see what "Ceres softened in wine" might mean. The translation follows the Teubner text of Alton, Wormell, and Courtney (1988), except that it follows the text of Goold in the edition of Frazer and Goold (1989), and other earlier editions, in reading *placate* and *ferte* in lines 533–534, where Alton et al. have *placare* and *ferre*. This variation does not affect any of the arguments here. Goold's text reads *est* instead of *et* as the first word of line 538, but that appears to be a typo, not a variant.

15. Even though I ultimately reached a different conclusion, my thoughts on this subject benefited from an email correspondence with Kathryn Fiscelli in 2000–2001. Fiscelli

was making the argument that she later included in her dissertation (2004: 34–36) that there was a ritual involving the pottery that took place in the road and that it commemorated dead people who lacked proper graves. At the time, I objected that there were other ways to address the lack of burial, like the ritual that Cicero (*Leg.*, 2.57) mentions for a funeral when the corpse was missing, but I did not dispute the possibility of a ceremony in the road. Upon reexamination of Ovid, though, it seems to me that such a rite is just not required by the text and that my current translation is therefore preferable.

16. Rushforth (1915).

17. This paragraph shows my debt to the extensive list of citations compiled by Joachim Marquardt (1885: 3: 312–313). Fiscelli (2004) offers a lengthy discussion of the significance of roses, violets, and laurel garlands as Roman religious offerings.

18. Dolansky (2011).

19. Borbonus (2014, quote from 54–55); cf. Sigismund Nielsen (1996); Hope (1997b); Bodel (2008).

20. Bodel (2012).

21. Frazer (1929: 2: 446); Scullard (1981: 75). Attempted disassociation, Wiseman (1995b: 70–71).

22. For more implications of the transition, see McDonough (2004). Cf. chapter 4.C.1 on polymorphism of deities.

23. Frazer (1929: 2: 446–452); McDonough (2004); and more generally Ogden (1999).

24. Littlewood (2001: 922).

25. Danka (1976) and Phillips (1992).

26. Quotes, in order, Littlewood (2001: 925); Scullard (1981: 119); Rose (1941: 93); Toynbee (1971: 64); Thaniel (1973b: 184).

27. Ogden (2001: 76); Takács (2008: 47).

28. Warde Fowler (1899); Dolansky (2006).

29. Saller (1994: 1–69) presents a demographic model for Rome. Many women would have outlived both fathers and husbands. Moreover, the male head of household might simply have been away on business or some other routine absence on the days of the festival.

30. *Fasti*, 5.429–444, my trans. from text of Alton, Wormell, and Courtney (1988):

nox ubi iam media est somnoque silentia praebet,
et canis et variae conticuistis aves,
ille memor veteris ritus timidusque deorum
surgit (habent gemini vincula nulla pedes)
signaque dat digitis medio cum pollice iunctis,
occurat tacito ne levis umbra sibi.
cumque manus puras fontana perluit unda,
vertitur et nigras accipit ante fabas,
aversusque iacit; sed dum iacit, 'haec ego mitto,
his' inquit 'redimo meque meosque fabis.'
hoc novies dicit nec respicit: umbra putatur

colligere et nullo terga vidente sequi.
rursus aquam tangit, Temesaeaque concrepat aera,
et rogat ut tectis exeat umbra suis.
cum dixit novies 'manes exite paterni,'
respicit et pure sacra peracta putat.

31. Caseau (1994: 187) asserts that "fragrances played an important role" in the *Lemuria*, but she offers no supporting evidence, and I know of none.

32. E.g., Val. Max. (2.4.5); Lucr. (3.51–52); Censorinus (*DN*., 17.8).

33. I am grateful to Kimberly King and Alice Christ for information about bean flowers. For more on beans, possible parallels to their use, and their role in other myths, see Frazer (1929: 4: 38–40); Danka (1976: 263–264); Mcdonough (1997); Ogden (2001: 79).

34. Littlewood (2001: 925); Rose (1941); Bömer (1943: 38–39).

35. On magic, Phillips (1991); R. Gordon (1999: 243–266); Rives (2003).

36. Frazer (1929: 4: 41); Goss and Klass (2006: 85). There is also no reason to think that Romans derived the *Lemuria* from the Greek *Anthesteria* festival, as Bömer (1943: 38–39) asserted, noting that the Greek festival also supposedly ended by asking the dead to depart. Bömer cites as support Rohde (1925: 198, notes 99–100), but Rohde merely lists the *Lemuria* as one of a number of festivals from around the world that resemble the *Anthesteria*, and he does not assert that the Roman festival derives from the Greek one. Indeed, unlike the *Lemuria*, the *Anthesteria* is primarily a festival to honor Dionysus, and the role of the dead in it is somewhat controversial. The resemblance to the *Lemuria* is thus at best quite distant. See Burkert (1983: 213–247; 1985: 237–242); S. I. Johnston (1999: 63–71).

37. Warde Fowler (1899: 107–108); Michels (1967: 36–83).

38. *Contra* Dolansky (2006: 153), who asserts that the *Lemuria* but not the *Parentalia* was about appeasing the dead.

39. Warde Fowler (1899: 109, note 3); Rose (1941: 89); Toynbee (1971: 296, note 263).

40. Danka (1976); Phillips (1992: 67).

41. *Fasti*, 5.425–428, my trans. from text of Alton, Wormell, and Courtney (1988):

annus erat brevior, nec adhuc pia februa norant,
nec tu dux mensum, Iane biformis, eras:
iam tamen exstincto cineri sua dona ferebant,
compositique nepos busta piabat avi.
mensis erat Maius, maiorum nomine dictus,
qui partem prisci nunc quoque moris habet.

42. Thus, I cannot accept the argument of Sabbatucci (1988: 166) that Romulus was acting out of fear of an avenging ghost. Oddly, even Phillips (1992: 67), who was arguing against a distinction between the festivals, saw Remus as "malevolent." He does not explain. Newlands (1995: 119–120) argues that Ovid, by portraying Romulus as simply granting the request without any elaboration, undercuts Romulus' innocence by not providing a more detailed description of his reaction to his dead brother's appearance, but

that argument assumes that the story is primarily about Romulus and Remus, rather than about the *Lemuria*, which is Ovid's stated subject in the passage.

43. Bona (1964).

44. Warde Fowler (1899: 106–111 and 1921: 747–749); more recently repeated in the *OCD* (1996: 434).

45. Sabbatucci (1988: 164–166).

46. Littlewood (2001: 925); Dolansky (2006: 151–155).

47. I quote more of Porphyio in appendix 2.

48. Littlewood (2001).

49. Ariès (1981: 29–33, 40–41); P. Brown (1981: 4–8); Yasin (2009).

50. Bodel (1994 and 2000); Patterson (2000); Graham (2005b).

51. *Silvae*, 3.3.197–202, my trans. from text of Courtney (1990):

tu custos dominusque laris, tibi cuncta tuorum
parebunt: ego rite minor semperque secundus
assiduas libabo dapes et pocula sacris
manibus effigiesque colam; te lucida saxa,
te similem doctae referet mihi linea cerae,
nunc ebur et fuluum uultus imitabitur aurum.

The use of the household gods, *lares*, as a word to mean "home" is fairly common. Ovid (*Fasti*, 3.242) could even use it to mean a bird's nest. Translating *dominus laris* as "lord of the home" thus seems legitimate, though one cannot rule out the possibility that something more is meant and that the *manes* of the father will supervise the other household gods. On Statius more generally, see Hardie (1983).

52. Maiuri (1933: 1: 98–106).

53. There are some examples of tomb portraits that overtly present the dead person as a god or goddess (Wrede 1981; D'Ambra 1993), but that involved presenting the person through the iconography of some identifiable deity (Venus, Ceres, Hercules, or others). What does not seem to exist is an iconography specific to *manes* themselves, as opposed to the living persons the *manes* once were. Thus, any of the surviving tomb portraits discussed by Kleiner (1977; 1987) or Birk (2013) could be effigies of *manes*.

54. Maiuri (1933: 1: 98–106); Flower (1996: 43–46). There are many altars and shrines within the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum, but their interpretation is often problematic. Orr (1978) is a good introduction to the subject, and cf. Foss (1997) and Bodel (2008).

55. *Silvae*, 3.3.209–213, my trans. from text of Courtney (1990):

supremumque uale, qui numquam sospite nato
triste chaos maestique situs patiere sepulcri.
semper odoratis spirabunt floribus arae,
semper et Assyrios felix bibet urna liquores
et lacrimas, qui maior honos.

"*Chaos*" in line 210 could be a reference to the underworld (i.e., "*Tartarus*"), but cf. *Silvae*, 3.2.92, where the word has the sense of "obscurity." "*Liquores*" is also ambiguous, but the Near Eastern provenance makes "perfumes" more likely than "wines." Cf. Caseau (1994: 29–39).

56. On which, see Altmann (1905); Boschung (1987); Kleiner (1987).

57. Wheeler (1929); Wolski and Berciu (1973); a good picture in Hope (2009: plate 7).

58. For brief references to the different types of *Rosalia*, see the *OCD* (1996: 1335); for a much fuller discussion with an emphasis on the dead, Fiscelli (2004: 39–65).

59. Lattimore (1962: 137–141).

60. Fiscelli (2004: 30–31).

61. Fiscelli (2004: 13–14).

62. Flower (1996: 185–222); Doonan (1999).

63. *OLD* (1982: 1296).

64. Cf. Livy (3.58.11); Statius (*Theb*., 9.215–217); Tacitus (*Ann*., 1.49.3).

65. *"Duos," inquit, "fratrum manibus dedi."* My trans. from text of Conway and Walters (1914).

CONCLUSION

1. J. Z. Smith (2013: 126–127).

2. North (1988).

3. Litwa (2013; 2014).

4. Wrede (1981); Koortbojian (1995); and Birk (2013).

APPENDIX 1: THE *LARVAE*

1. Plautus (*Amph*., 776–777; *Men*., 890; *Aul*., 642; and the fragments quoted by Nonius Marcellus, 64L, and Servius, *Aen*., 6.229). See the discussion of Paschall (1939 [1935]: 42, note 27, and pp. 60–69).

2. Pliny, *HN*., preface, 31: *cum mortuis non nisi larvas luctari*.

3. Cf. Felton (1999).

4. *De Deo Socratis*, 15, my trans. from text of Moreschini (1991):

> *qui vero ob adversa vitae merita nullis [bonis] sedibus incerta vagatione ceu quodam exilio punitur, inane terriculamentum bonis hominibus, ceterum malis noxium, id genus plerique larvas perhibent.*

I have not translated the word "*bonis*," which is a modern (and perhaps unnecessary) addition.

5. My translation:

Manias Aelius Stilo dicit ficta quaedam ex farina in hominum figuras, quia turpes fiant, quas alii maniolas appellent. Manias autem, quas nutrices minitentur parvulis pueris, esse larvas, id est manes deos deasque, quod aut ab inferis ad superos emanant, aut Mania est eorum avia materve. Sunt enim utriusque opinionis auctores.

6. On polymorphism (in general and in relation to *lares*), see chapter 4.C.1 and C. King (2003). On Greek and Roman "Mania," see Lewy (1894–1897) and Wissowa (1894–1897b). Note that "Mania" is also one of the names given for the mother of the *lares* in traditions where the *lares* have a mother, and so the overlap of categories probably should include a link between *lares* and *larvae* as well. Wissowa (1904: 51–52) pointed out that *lares* and *larvae* are probably not from the same root due to a difference in vowel quantity, but Otto (1908: 117) rightly adds that the resemblance of the initial sound of the two words could have encouraged an association between them even without a genuine etymological link. The dual traditions about being the children of Mania would only link them further. Cf. also Tabeling (1932) and Bodel (2012).

7. Otto (1933: 54–55) and Thaniel (1973b: 186–187).

8. Virgil (*Aen.*, 6.432–433); Suetonius (*Tib.*, 75); cf. chapter 5.C.

9. On pale/ultra-dark color conventions, with Greek and Roman examples from several contexts, see Winkler (1980) and Felton (1999: 14–18). Thompson (1989: 110 and note 100) wants to see a racial slur in the use of dark skin to represent the dead, citing the example of a play in which African actors played the dead characters (Suet., *Calig.*, 57), but he does not address the examples of the ultra-white-skinned dead, nor does he explain where the insult lies. The "dead" characters in surviving plays are normally heroes or noble ancestors. Would it insult Africans to have them play a deceased Achilles or Scipio? Snowden (1983: 83–84) is right to reject the interpretation as a racial slur.

10. Frel (1980); cf. Dunbabin (1986), who sees larval imagery intertwining with art depicting a "remember to die" theme.

11. The purpose of this poem is ambiguous. I read it as being a tongue-in-cheek tribute to a dead slave, probably written by his master. The author is playing with the familiar image of the fearsome *larvae* to tease the slave about his formidable appearance (in death, and perhaps also in life). The recommendation that Niger become the guardian of the door of Dis might suggest that the slave held a similar position for the author while alive.

APPENDIX 2: THE DECLINE OF THE *LEMURIA*

1. Porphyrio, *Epist.*, 2.2.209, my trans. from text of Hauthal (1966):

Nocturnos lemures. Umbras vagantes hominum ante diem mortuorum, et ideo metuendas; et putant, lemures esse dictos, quasi remules a Remo, cuius occisi umbras frater Romulus cum placare vellet, Lemuria instituit, id est, parentalia, quae mense Maio per triduum celebrari solent ante additum anno mensem Februarium; ob quam rem Maio mense religio est nubere.

2. *De Deo Socratis*, 15, my trans. from text of Moreschini (1991): *Est et secundo significatu species daemonum animus humanus emeritis stipendiis vitae corpori suo abiurans: hunc vetere Latina lingua reperio Lemurem dictitatum*.

3. For citations, see entries on *lemures* and *Lemuria* in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. I quote many of them above in chapter 7.B.

4. Beard (1987).

5. The text of this work can be found in Mommsen (1892–1898: 1: 19–29) and Degrassi (1963: 237–262). An important discussion of its composition and context is in Salzman (1990).

6. Ausonius, *Opuscula*, book 3, passim.

7. Quasten (1940); P. Brown (1998, 660–661). Cf. also MacMullen (2014).

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GENERAL INDEX

Note: I have listed ancient authors in the form of their names by which they are most commonly called even when that introduces minor inconsistences of format, e.g., "Valerius Flaccus" is under "Valerius" but Cicero is under "Cicero" not "Tullius." Likewise, I have "Ovid" and "Virgil" not "Ovidius" and "Vergilius." I have listed modern scholars where they appear in the main text, but I have indexed them only selectively from the notes in cases when I added a comment.

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