HUNTING SCENES IN ROMAN ART, THIRD TO SIXTH CENTURIES A.D.

A STUDY OF HUNTING SCENES AND *VIRTUS* IN ROMAN ART, THIRD TO SIXTH CENTURIES A.D.

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Abstract

In Rome, the activity of hunting was a pastime traditionally associated with the emperor and aristocracy. As such, hunting imagery in Roman art became symbolic of masculinity and power, expressions of which were important for the self-representation of status-conscious citizens. More specifically, *virtus*, often translated as "manliness" or "courage," is the principal quality that is expressed through hunting scenes, although other ideas such as wealth and erudition were alluded to in these scenes as well. This thesis examines hunting scenes in the media of sarcophagi, mosaics, and silverware from the third to the sixth centuries AD. It focusses on the kinds of hunting imagery found on different media in order to discern the values that were important to patrons in the later Roman period, and the ways in which these values were expressed in the visual arts. In the funerary context, mythological hunting scenes on sarcophagi most often present the deceased as a man of *virtus*. However, owing to the *Entmythologisierung* of Roman sarcophagi during the third century, the ways in which *virtus* was expressed through these scenes underwent significant change during this period. On domestic floor mosaics, *virtus* was also a principal virtue that was expressed, but other ideas such as wealth and generosity were also displayed on hunting scenes in this medium, both mythological and non-mythological. Moreover, hunting scenes on silverware often highlight the wealth of the vessel's owner. Additionally, allusions to a patron's *paideia*, his formal educational background in Greek and Latin literature, as well as expressions of one's Christian faith, also served as claims of membership in exclusive groups.

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Declaration of Academic Achievement

The author declares that the content of this research has been completed by Jonah Halili, with gratitude for the contributions of his supervisory committee consisting of Dr. Michele George, Dr. Martin Beckmann, and Dr. Claude Eilers during the research and writing process.

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Introduction

Hunting in the Roman world was a pastime associated with the elite and the imperial court. Not only was the practice of hunting steeped in a tradition from the Hellenistic era as an activity of kings, it was also an assertion of the emperor's power over the natural world. By overcoming the strength of wild animals, the emperor reinforced the notion that he had dominion over the empire, that savagery could be conquered by intelligence, skill, stamina, and strength, which were all markers of a good emperor.[1] For these reasons, hunting in the visual arts became a metaphor for manliness and vigour.

The sport of hunting and hunting scenes also brought to mind the Greek concept of *paradeisos*, a term used to describe the private reserves of Persian kings which were famous for their variety of plant and animal life as well as for the tranquil and secluded setting that they provided for those who entered.[2] The fascination of this ideal place led to an interest in the hunt on the part of Hellenistic kings and extended into the imperial period, when emperors such as Domitian adopted the image of the heroic hunter partly as a sign of philhellenism, even using the motif in his visual program.[3] Tuck argues that an equestrian statue of Domitian does not depict the emperor engaged in a battle, but is possibly modelled on a statue of a Hellenistic king, and he argues that the emperor would have been shown on horseback over the body of a lion (Figure 1).[4] As hunting imagery became incorporated

[1] Thébert 1987: 403-404.
[2] Giesecke 2001: 13.
[3] Tuck 2005: 243.
[4] Tuck 2005: 234, 245.

into official imperial art, this kind of imagery became popular among private citizens as an expression of status and power. An elite citizen, therefore, may have wished to appropriate these qualities of the emperor for his own self-representation, namely in the art which he owned and displayed.

Starting in the fourth century, a new class of landowning magnates emerged that was composed of men whose wealth greatly outclassed that of the aristocracy of the classical period.[5] In this social climate, the late antique elite citizen was free to not only decorate his home lavishly, but also to liberally commission art objects that recalled the splendor of his own property. Hunting scenes, because of their outdoor setting and the opportunities to display expensive equipment, were an ideal vehicle to convey this idea, and were versatile expressions of values that were sought by status-conscious Romans of the late antique period.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ways in which hunting scenes were used to cultivate and display the elite persona of private individuals from the third to sixth centuries AD. Although explicit allusions to imperial power are rare in the funerary and domestic art of the late antique period, expressions of a citizen's upstanding character were often found in hunting scenes in a variety of ways. By studying this imagery and the common motifs found across different media, it is possible to discern the qualities that were most desirable for a wealthy late-Roman male in his self-representation.

Through the display of art that embodied qualities associated with the ideal elite male, a citizen laid claim to traits that were reserved for an exclusive group of Romans,

[5] Brown 1980: 22.

wealthy men of high social status whose exploits were worthy of depiction in visual media. In general, as will be made clear in the following chapters, patrons of hunting scenes most often associated themselves with scenes that emphasized their masculinity, wealth, and prosperity. Before I begin my discussion of the cultural significance of hunting scenes in later imperial Rome, it is necessary to elaborate on the Roman concept of *virtus*, since this quality will be mentioned frequently throughout this thesis.

The concept of *virtus* has no simple translation in the English language. Balmaceda offers a definition of *virtus* as "the excellence of a man manifested in actions,"[6] while McDonnell asserts that the essence of *virtus* was "the ideal behaviour of a man."[7] McDonnell identifies certain issues in modern scholarship that render the word *virtus* difficult to translate, as well as the fact that it has not been the subject of sufficient study. He notes that scholars often treat the concept of *virtus* as a static quality that encompassed many generic ideals and that there have not been many serious attempts to fully characterize the nuances of the word. However, the opinion that *virtus* had the same connotations in the Roman mind since the beginning of the Republic have been refuted. *Virtus* was generally expressed through military achievement starting in the middle republican period, when military service was mandatory for all citizen males across social strata.[8] The strong connection between military service and *virtus* can be observed through representations of the personification of *Virtus*, who is most often shown in the garb of a soldier.[9]

[6] Balmaceda 2017: 31.
[7] McDonnell 2006: 2.
[8] McDonnell 2019: 181.
[9] Balmaceda 2017: 16.

Although the relationship between martial superiority and *virtus* persisted throughout the republican and into the Imperial period, the definition of *virtus* among the Romans seems to have been broadened over time to include other positive traits associated with the ideal male. One of the factors that influenced of this broadening of scope is the Greek concept of *arete*, or excellence, which seems to have shaped the Roman concept of manliness. The Latin word *virtus* was used by the Romans to translate the word *arete*, which can be seen on certain bilingual inscriptions.[10] Although both words communicate an ideal to which all males should aspire, their meanings were inherently different; *virtus* was associated with specific actions that a man took to display his manliness, while *arete* concerned an innate goodness that a man possessed.[11] The use of *virtus* to translate a Greek concept to which it did not fully correspond helped to expand the definition of this Roman concept; it became a word that indicated positive moral value in a more general way owing to the different ethical quality with which it became associated.[12]

Furthermore, manliness itself was a rather vaguely defined concept in Roman society, an indeterminacy which also contributed to the wide-ranging definition of *virtus*.[13] Roller claims that the word *virtus* was used to communicate a man's excellence through his state of mind, with public action not being required to show this quality. When discussing the character of Julius Caesar and that of Cato, Sallust notes that the *virtus* of Caesar was evident through his activities in war, while Cato's was visible through his personality and

[10] e.g., CIL I^2 743.; McDonnell 2003: 235-236.
[11] McDonnell 2019: 179.
[12] Roller 2001: 26.
[13] Noreña 2011: 78.

traits such as his self-control and his sternness.[14] *Virtus* was used predominantly to encompass a variety of traits that stood in opposition to *vitia* ("flaws");[15] the word thus took on a form resembling that of its Greek counterpart, in the sense that it became associated with the intangible qualities of a man that did not require substantive proof.

Moreover, Balmaceda's definition implies that a degree of performativity was necessary in the manifestation of *virtus,* and that for a man's excellence to be perceived by others, his manly and virtuous actions needed to be publicly visible. Displays of *virtus* were deeply connected with expressions of individual *gloria*; a man's achievements in the public sphere not only served to benefit the state, but also bestowed honour onto the individual that could be celebrated openly.[16] Thus, public services to Rome, not necessarily related to military achievement, were appropriate channels through which a man could display his *virtus.* Noreña argues that while manly behaviour and excellence in battle were included in the definition of *virtus*, service to the state was also deeply rooted in this concept, a connection that lasted from the Republic to the fourth century.[17]

Virtus as an expression of public service reflects the fact that the idea was a strong indicator of Roman identity associated with the greatness of Rome by which the achievements of Rome were made possible.[18] For example, in his *Philippics*, Cicero maintains that *virtus* drives off the cruelty of death and that it was a quality particular to the people of Rome.[19] *Virtus* was seen as a quality that was fit for the ideal Roman citizen

[14] Sal. *Cat.* 54.4-6.
[15] Roller 2001: 26.
[16] Noreña 2011: 79.
[17] Noreña 2011: 78.
[18] McDonnell 2006: 2.
[19] Cic. *Phil.* 4.13.

who served his fatherland to the best of his abilities. Therefore, it was a highly desirable trait for all Roman men and the rather broad definition of *virtus* made it accessible for many citizens, regardless of opportunity for participation in the military.

The three chapters in this thesis are based on different media: sarcophagi, mosaics, and silverware. It is useful to treat these media separately since, although they are all largely restricted to the private realm, the contexts are different, and therefore the qualities that are expressed in the hunting scenes from each medium vary to a certain extent. Furthermore, the chronology of the objects chosen from among these media align with the organization of chapters; the sarcophagi from Chapter 1 mostly originate from the mid- to late-third century, the mosaics from Chapter 2 were largely created between the third and fourth centuries, and the examples of silver from Chapter 3 are dated to the fourth to sixth centuries. All three chapters use examples from their respective medium in order to illustrate the cultural values that are displayed through different kinds of hunting imagery. Where appropriate, I also include brief discussions of late antique society and the reasons why certain ideas were deemed worthy to have been shown to viewers.

Chapter 1 examines hunting scenes on sarcophagi starting from the late Severan period. The majority of the chapter is centered around the concept of *Entmythologisierung*, or the demythologization of Roman sarcophagi in the third century. By exploring the transformation of mythological hunting scenes over the course of this period, the expression of cultural values that were important to patrons can be observed. Episodes from the myths of the hunters Meleager, Hippolytus, Endymion, and Adonis will be discussed in relation to their connections with *virtus* and Roman masculinity. The funerary context of the reliefs

is considered as well, since the scenes on sarcophagi would only be displayed after the patron's death.

Chapter 2 focusses on the hunting scenes featured on domestic floor mosaics, on which illusions to *virtus*, wealth, munificence, and Roman identity on mosaics are common. Since these mosaics decorated the floors of houses belonging to private citizens, they are useful in discerning the values that were thought to have been appropriate for display to one's guests, and the values with which the homeowner wanted to have been associated. Owing to the fact that most types of scenes in this medium did not change significantly over the course of the late antique period, it is possible to observe which values remained important through the third century and beyond. The inclusion of certain elements such as architecture, hunting equipment, and inscriptions affect the interpretation of several mosaics, and different aspects of a patron's character are emphasized through these elements. Additionally, mosaics depicting *venationes*, or staged animal hunts of the arena, are examined, as well as the ways in which scenes of these hunts differ from those of generic hunt scenes.

Finally, Chapter 3 provides a discussion of hunting imagery on late antique silver plate. While mosaics decorated the floors of different rooms of the Roman house, the examples of Roman silver discussed in this chapter were primarily viewed during mealtime, and thus the subject matter of scenes on silverware were appropriate for dining and were meant to stimulate conversation. Scenes depicting the hunting banquet are prominently featured in this medium, as many owners sought to exaggerate the bounty of their property through these scenes. The role of *paideia*, the elite education system in antiquity, and its

effect on the taste of late antique patrons influenced the popularity of hunting scenes and the ways in which they were interpreted. Furthermore, the role of Christianity in the ownership of silver plate is briefly explored in the context of hunting scenes.

Chapter 1: *Entmythologisierung* and the Display of Cultural Values on Roman Sarcophagi

Hunting scenes were part of the repertoire of images used on Roman sarcophagi to commemorate the dead and extol their memory. *Virtus* was one of the principal qualities that was displayed through this medium, starting in the second century; Ewald notes that hunting sarcophagi emerged as a genre during the Severan period and become more numerous in the third century.[20] According to Ewald, mythological allusions dominated sarcophagi reliefs from the Hadrianic to the Antonine periods; in particular, the exploits of heroes like Meleager and Hippolytus were heavily featured in Roman funerary art. The third century, however, saw different treatments of mythological subject matter, as such scenes began to decline in number. The hunting scenes that were popular before the Severan period assumed new meanings over the course of the third century. The gradual abandonment of mythological scenes in the repertoire of sarcophagus relief starting in this period is referred to by the German word *Entmythologisierung*, or "demythologization."

In this chapter, I will discuss mythological hunting scenes in the context of *Entmythologisierung* and the cultural values that were expressed through these scenes during this period of change. After an introduction to the concept of *Entmythologisierung*, the type scenes of four mythical hunters will be examined: Meleager, Hippolytus, Endymion, and Adonis. By studying the imagery related to these figures in the earlier period, it will become clear that the cultural values that were associated with hunting scenes

[20] Ewald 2003: 564.

of the earlier imperial period were largely unchanged, but rather the modes of expression for these values changed alongside the new desires of patrons during this period. More specifically, the inclination for subjects to be commemorated with a greater degree of individuality during this period was likely a factor that sparked this change in expression, and this can be observed on the scenes which feature the heroes mentioned above.

The expression of cultural values in the relief sculpture of mythological sarcophagi is evident through the emphasis of certain virtues in the depictions of episodes from myth. These narratives were most often employed as *exempla* of Roman values, such as *virtus*, *pietas*, and *concordia*. Unlike contemporary biographical sarcophagi which sought to emphasize specific moments of the deceased's life, mythological sarcophagi of the second and third centuries glorified the dead by the depiction of recognizable scenes from legend, thus analogizing the lives of the deceased to those of the great figures from the mythical world.[21]

The term *Entmythologisierung* has been used by scholars to describe the apparent decline of mythological subject matter in sarcophagus reliefs after the second century.[22] It is a phenomenon that is largely restricted to later Roman sarcophagi and so to the funerary context; Zanker notes that scenes from myth were used in the domestic context owing to the emphasis on *otium* and the role of rituals in Roman *Villenkultur*.[23] The decline in number of mythological narratives on sarcophagi started in the early third century and culminated in the 230s and 240s, at which point the popularity of myth was overshadowed

[21] Gessert 2004: 218.
[22] e.g., Zanker and Ewald 2012; Andreae 1980 uses the term "*Entmythisierung.*"
[23] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 259.

by other kinds of imagery, including decorative ornamentation such as garlands and allegorical scenes such as the seasons and lions killing their prey.[24] Indeed, in his quantitative survey on sarcophagus imagery, Ewald records that in the early Antonine up to the pre-Gallienic periods, mythological themes by far dominated the relief sculptures on Roman sarcophagi. There was a sharp increase in the number of sarcophagi featuring philosophers, seasons, and bucolic subject matter in the third century, while the earlier mythological narratives were featured much less; hunting scenes with familiar legendary heroes fell into disuse in favour of lion hunts.[25] This change in the main themes of sarcophagi has been seen as a greater acceptance of both purely symbolic imagery and more realistic ones, which eclipsed the allegorical narratives of myth.[26]

Mont Allen, who explores the concept of *Entmythologisierung* in his doctoral thesis, provides a thorough treatment of the topic, taking into consideration the arguments found in modern scholarship. He agrees with Zanker's argument, stating throughout his dissertation that the waning interest in mythological subject sarcophagi does not necessarily reflect a growing disinterest in myth in the general population.[27] Domestic mosaics contain a wide variety of mythological imagery starting in the second century and extending well into late antiquity. Indeed, because of the continuity of mythological narratives in private art before and during the late antique period in Rome, it is unlikely that these subjects no longer appealed to the Roman viewer.

[24] Borg 2014: 238.
[25] Ewald 2003: 564; for the symbolic meanings of lion hunt sarcophagi, see Andreae 1980 and Smith's 1988 review of Andreae.
[26] Newby 2011b: 316.
[27] e.g., Allen 2014: 40.

Allen identifies two possible interpretations of Entmythologisierung, citing either a rejection of myth or the abstraction of myth.[28] The former refers to the simple abandonment of myths that begins in the early third century and the rise of non-mythological sarcophagi that far surpass these reliefs in number; the latter does not assume an outright rejection of myth, but rather entails a transformation of individual narratives which includes the contraction of scenes and the reduction of a once-grander narrative into a simpler composition. It is the latter form of *Entmythologisierung* that will be considered for my study of hunting scenes in this chapter.

There has been considerable difficulty in understanding the reasons for this decline in mythological subject matter in the third century. It is possible that stylistic preferences changed, as they did throughout the Roman era, as patrons sought more innovative ways to memorialize themselves. Scholars, however, have suggested more complex explanations. One explanation that had been accepted is that this change arose from the chaotic social environment of the empire during this period. Paul Zanker has built upon this argument in his extensive study of mythological sarcophagi, noting that the darker mythological scenes featuring tales of death, abduction, and lament were replaced by more positive motifs that expressed felicity and were of a more joyful tenor.[29] Sarcophagus reliefs that depicted these dark narratives and that were once popular, such as those which depicted the rape of Persephone, were no longer fashionable in the third century. Although sarcophagi that depicted more pleasant scenes were used by patrons well before the Severan period, they

[28] Allen 2014: 14.
[29] Zanker 2012: 254.

dominated the commemorative landscape well into the later Roman empire. Zanker proposes that a shift in Roman thought occurred during the Antonine period and that patrons no longer wished to identify with the allegories of mythological reliefs.[30] Furthermore, Zanker identifies the advent of Christianity as a factor that may have catalyzed the demythologization of sarcophagi, since "religiously neutral" themes would have appealed to both Christians and pagans.[31]

Barbara Borg suggests that the observed decline in mythological subject matter was a symptom of a general shift in the thinking of patrons and that they wished to be commemorated with different imagery and with a greater focus on the individual, arguing that the increase in the use of portrait heads on the bodies of mythological figures is an indication of the patron more directly assuming the heroic qualities of the figure to which he or she is likened.[32] Instead of mythological narratives that depicted the dramatic deaths of heroic figures, the reliefs on third century sarcophagi more closely reflected the life of the subject, whether through symbolic or realistic imagery.

Allen disagrees with these arguments and states that if the reverse were true, that third century sarcophagi exclusively displayed dramatic and violent scenes, scholars would have likewise attributed this to the crises of the third century and the flux that Roman society faced at this time.[33] Instead, Allen hypothesizes that this phenomenon, as generally observed by scholars of Roman sarcophagi, may not reflect a unified shift in the meanings

[30] Zanker 2012: 259.
[31] Zanker 2012: 259-260.
[32] Borg 2014: 248-249.
[33] Allen 2014: 46; "In short, once one assumes that the troubles of a time find expression in art, almost any imagery, whether idyllic or unhinged, can be made a symptom. Falsifiability becomes impossible."

of different mythological narratives, but rather a transformation in the discrete meanings of myth for which no single explanation would suffice for every genre of sarcophagus relief.[34]

In accordance with Allen's hypothesis, the change in the expression of cultural values in hunting scenes cannot be directly compared to the other types of mythological reliefs that reflect *Entmythologisierung* and must be treated as a separate phenomenon to some degree. Among the mythological hunting scenes that saw a shift in artistic representation during the third century, I will examine the imagery associated with the narratives of four of the most common hunters on Roman sarcophagi: Meleager, Hippolytus, Endymion, and Adonis. These four heroes were celebrated in antiquity, the exploits and biographies of whom were recorded by ancient authors, both Roman and Greek. Although Meleager and Hippolytus are more prominently featured as hunters in their narratives than Endymion and Adonis, all four are traditionally associated with the sport of hunting in some way.

A popular subject on mythological sarcophagi, the story of Meleager was first featured on sarcophagi in the early Antonine period, depicted on approximately 200 extant sarcophagus reliefs.[35] A hunter known for his conquest over the Calydonian boar and his relationship with Atalanta, Meleager's narrative was particularly appealing in the funerary realm due to his associations with masculine virtues in life as well as the dramatic events of his dying moments. Additionally, his tragic death, set into motion by the actions of his

[34] Allen 2014: 69-70. He argues that Andreae 1980's thesis regarding *Entmythologisierung* and lion hunt sarcophagi, i.e., that the defeat of the lion represents victory over death, is particular only to these kinds of sarcophagi. Similarly, Zanker's argument that depictions of emperors replaced mythological figures as *exempla virtutis* cannot be applied to other genres.
[35] Lorenz 2011: 311.

mother Altheia, was suitable for depiction on sarcophagi. Ovid's narrative in the eighth book of his *Metamorphoses* describes Meleager's role in the slaughter of the Calydonian boar and the events leading up to his death.[36] The hero Theseus, having been called to Calydon in order to dispatch a violent boar that was menacing the citizens, attempted to slay the animal alongside other hunters such as Meleager and Atalanta. After delivering the killing blow to the beast, Meleager attempted to give the spoils to his female companion, but was interrupted by his uncles, Plexippus and Toxeus. In a fit of rage, Meleager murdered the two, which greatly distressed his mother, Altheia. Consumed by the desire for vengeance, Altheia invoked the Fates before burning a log which was tied to the life of her son; as a result, Meleager was burned alive. Upon the hunter's death, the citizens of Calydon mourned Meleager while his mother, stricken by guilt, commited suicide. Among the mourners of the young hero were his sisters, Gorge and Deianira.

There are three groups of Meleager sarcophagi differentiated on the basis of the scenes they depict: the return of the hero's dead body, the events surrounding his death, and the events concerning the Calydonian boar hunt. While the first two are largely confined to the second century, the last type persists from the middle of the second century well into the third.[37] The first two types appear to be characteristic of the inclination for second century patrons to be commemorated with emotional scenes centred around themes of death and loss. Scenes depicting the return of Meleager's body were, for the most part, straightforward expressions of grief for the deceased, and one such sarcophagus from c.

[36] Ov. *Met*. VIII.262-546. See also Zanker and Ewald 2012: 361.
[37] Newby 2011b: 310.

AD 150 shows the body of the fallen hero being borne to his parents' house (Figure 2). The many figures in the relief are posed dramatically, resulting in a quite chaotic composition, which was likely intended to reflect the *pathos* of Meleager's death; this dramatic posing possibly serves as an evocation of mental state of the mourners, dismayed at the loss of their loved one. It should be noted, however, that Meleager is not depicted as a hunter in this scene, but as a warrior who was struck by Apollo.[38]

An example of a sarcophagus displaying Meleager's death can be observed on the relief of a vessel from c. AD 190 that is now in the Louvre (Figure 3). The relief shows narrative images which preceded the death of the legendary hunter; the right side of the sarcophagus' front panel depicts a nude Meleager brandishing a sword and holding the hide of the Calydonian boar. After quarreling with his uncles over the rewards of defeating the boar, Meleager murders them and sets into motion the events that lead to his own death, which is alluded to by the presence of the Fury standing behind him with a scroll in hand.[39] On the left, Altheia can be seen placing a log over a fire with a Fury brandishing a torch beside her; the log that Altheia places in the fire was directly connected to the life of her son and by destroying it, she condemned her son to death. The centre of this relief contains a depiction of Meleager on his deathbed surrounded by his sisters and Atalanta in mourning, the latter of whom is seated in front of her companion in grief. It is this section that is most strongly meant to evoke the *pathos* of the dying hero, a fate that may have called to mind the citizen whose body was contained in the sarcophagus. Such a display of mourning was

[38] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 66.
[39] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 365.

associated with the feelings of loss associated with the death of Meleager and that of the deceased Roman; thus, the popularity of this scene seems to have arisen from its use as an expression of grief of the patron's loved ones.

Ewald notes that Atalanta's posture in this scene is nearly identical to that of the figure of Atalanta found on the left side panel of a child's sarcophagus from Ostia, c. AD 160 (Figure 4). Although the central scene on the child's sarcophagus is mostly similar to the Louvre sarcophagus (Figure 3), Atalanta is placed to the right of the central scene, lamenting the loss of the boar skin which was taken by Meleager's uncles after the hunt.[40] Ewald also argues that this particular image of Atalanta was detached from its original context in order to more effectively suit the mood of the central scene. Lorenz refers to this particular relief as an "image in distress," in which the narratives of the mythological and the everyday intersect;[41] the allegorical meaning of the mythical figure's death is juxtaposed with the depiction of mourners who mimic those from real life. Therefore, it can be said that different commemorative tastes are evident in the years leading up to the third century and the *Entmythologisierung* of the period. Familiar imagery of Atalanta experiencing loss was adapted by artisans in order to better reflect the needs of the patrons. By using the figure of Atalanta in the context of mourning for Meleager, the huntress was transformed into a figure of grief that echoed the feelings of mourners in reality, rather than simply mourning the loss of a *spolium* from the Calydonian boar. The changing role of the figure of Atalanta on Meleager sarcophagi may reflect a change in commemorative

[40] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 365.
[41] Lorenz 2011: 313.

practice; rather than displaying her as a huntress that is not given her due reward in a mythical hunt, Atalanta is depicted on third century sarcophagi among mourners, rendering her presence as more relatable to the viewer.

On the other hand, the story of the Calydonian boar hunt itself had greater longevity in the repertoire of sarcophagus scenes, most likely owing to its appeal to the third century taste for scenes that did not recall heroic deaths. Reliefs that depict this scene often contain, at their centre, Meleager thrusting his spear into the boar, while his hunting companions and Atalanta watch and assist him; an early example of this type can be found on a sarcophagus from Ostia dated to approximately AD 160 (Figure 5). In this relief, Meleager and Atalanta stand in the middle of the scene, with the former preparing to deliver a killing blow to the boar with his spear while the latter aims her bow towards the animal. Hunting dogs can be observed approaching the boar and flanking the central pair of hunters are various nude and partially draped figures armed with a variety of weapons such as spears, axes, and javelins.[42]

A later example of a Calydonian boar hunt scene can be found on a sarcophagus from c. AD 200 now in the Doria Pamphilij Gallery in Rome (Figure 6). Like the Ostia sarcophagus, the centre of the relief contains a lively image of Meleager killing the beast with his spear alongside Atalanta, who prepares to shoot the beast with an arrow. With respect to the compositions of the two reliefs, they are largely similar except for the fact that the Doria Pamphilij sarcophagus contains more figures in low relief. Besides this, however, the central part of the relief in which Meleager and Atalanta attack the boar are

[42] D'Ambra 1988: 96.

quite similar, and the formulaic quality of this scene and its rather repeated appearance over the course of decades attests to its lasting popularity.

Aside from the simple connection between hunting and death in this type of scene, the activity itself afforded opportunities for patrons to communicate messages about their own character and influence the ways in which they were remembered after death. The depiction of hunting on Roman sarcophagi, as laid out in the introduction of this thesis, was an expression of the *virtus* of the deceased. As Anderson suggests, hunting for sport usually took the form of boar hunting for Romans who were able to participate in such activities;[43] because of this, the Calydonian boar hunt would have been recognizable to the Roman viewer as a closer reflection of expressions of *virtus* in reality.

Indeed, Brilliant notes that during the second and third centuries, the original narrative context of the scene was lost and the Calydonian boar hunt then became symbolic of the overcoming of death. Thus, Meleager's heroic qualities, rather than his tragically premature death, became the main appeal of his story, and the detailed portrayal of his mythological narrative was of less interest to patrons.[44] The Calydonian boar hunt became symbolic of a general idea of *virtus* that appealed to Romans in their funerary commemoration. In the context of *Entmythologisierung*, the use of the Calydonian boar hunt scene allowed for a more individualistic manner of remembrance that emphasized the deceased's positive qualities during his lifetime. Rather than selecting a somewhat generic death scene that was at a remove from the experiences of the deceased Roman, displays of

[43] Anderson 1985: 93.
[44] Brilliant 1984: 157-158.

Meleager's virtues in life were an effective way for third century patrons to aggrandize their own character through allusion to the familiar sport of hunting, a pursuit overwhelmingly identified with elite status.

The prevalence of the Calydonian boar hunt type in the third century and the decline of the other two types is a reflection of the changing needs in the commemoration of third century Romans. The fact that the boar hunt scene, a direct reference to the hero's *virtus* and indirectly by analogy to the deceased, attests to the constant desire for citizens to be remembered for their individual qualities; rather than focussing on the narrative surrounding Meleager's death, the deceased could be likened to the hero at the moment of his greatest and most famous display of masculine virtue. Although the *Entmythologisierung* of this period was linked to an overall decrease in the variety of Meleager scenes, the hero's strong connection to *virtus* ensured that various elements of his story would be depicted on sarcophagi long after scenes of his death fell out of fashion.

In addition to the narratives concerning Meleager, reliefs that bore scenes with the exploits of Hippolytus were also popular starting in the second century. The story of Hippolytus, a hunting companion of the goddess Diana, was known throughout the ancient Mediterranean. The young hunter's death was the subject of tragic plays in both the Greek and Roman worlds;[45] Ovid includes the story of Hippolytus' death in Book 15 of the *Metamorphoses*.[46] Aphrodite, having been rebuked by Hippolytus on account of his disdain for love and sex, cursed his stepmother Phaedra with an overwhelming lust for her stepson.

[45] See Euripides' *Hippolytus*, Seneca's *Phaedra*, and Ovid, *Her.* 5. Similarly to the literary accounts of Meleager's exploits, the degree to which these plays influenced the demand for sarcophagi centuries later is impossible to discern.
[46] Ov. *Met*. XV.479-546.

After her advances were rejected by Hippolytus, Phaedra lies to her husband Theseus, saying that Hippolytus raped her. Theseus invokes the god Poseidon, who sends a bull to overturn Hippolytus' chariot; the hero dies while being dragged by his horses. Of the approximately 40 extant examples of sarcophagi featuring reliefs of Hippolytus, two groups have been identified: those which depict the mythical hero departing for the hunt, and those which depict scenes focussing on Hippolytus and Phaedra. It is the first group of Hippolytus around which my discussion in this section will be centred.

The iconography of the first group of Hippolytus sarcophagi is known to have developed earlier than that of the second group. Traditionally, reliefs of this type are divided into two parts; the left side of the front panel shows Hippolytus leaving Phaedra in his departure for the hunt, and the right is an image of Hippolytus engaged in the hunt itself. An early third century sarcophagus now in the Vatican shows the hunter taking his leave from his stepmother on one side of the panel, while he is on horseback and poised to attack a boar on the other (Figure 7). The left side has been interpreted as Hippolytus' rejection of his mother and her incestuous love according to the mythical narrative; in the funerary context, the hunter's rejection may also symbolize departure, and therefore, its symbolic meaning associated with death renders it an appropriate scene for commemoration.[47]

Like the Meleager sarcophagi, the right side of the relief depicts a boar hunt. Companions of Hippolytus can be seen taking part in the activity while Hippolytus himself prepares to launch a spear towards the beast. Unlike Meleager, Hippolytus is depicted on horseback and the female behind him has been identified as Virtus, the personification of

[47] Newby 2016: 294-295.

masculine virtue, which is identified by her Amazon dress.[48] In addition to the allusion to *virtus* present through the image of the boar hunt, the personification's presence in the scene emphasizes Hippolytus' status as an *exemplum virtutis*; thus, the deceased is commemorated with a twofold allusion to legendary qualities.

The image of Hippolytus on horseback carrying a spear bears a strong similarity to certain non-mythological hunt sarcophagi from the third century. For example, a late-third century sarcophagus for a military leader from Rome depicts a portrait head of the deceased on a body with a pose that is hardly different from that of Hippolytus (Figure 8). Like the Hippolytus sarcophagus, the deceased is shown on horseback and accompanied by Virtus, but instead of a boar, the military leader's prey is a lion. The imagery from this sarcophagus has most likely been modelled from the sarcophagi featuring Hippolytus, and the fact that the image of the mounted hunter with portrait features developed from the Hippolytus sarcophagi is significant. Borg refers to this as a kind of "*vita humana*" scene, in which a realistic but not necessarily real event is taking place. The substitution of the boar with the lion in later sarcophagi reflects a greater appeal to self-representation on sarcophagi in the third century and the allusion to lion-hunting, an activity associated with the emperor, reflects the social ambition of the deceased.[49] The lion hunt motif is known in the imperial art of Hadrian; the emperor, triumphant over the body of a dead lion, is the subject of a medallion that is now found on the Arch of Constantine (Figure 9), and hunting in general was a cornerstone of his image program in official art of the empire.[50] It is natural to

[48] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 346.
[49] Borg 2013: 180; Andreae (1980)'s argument that the lion hunt represented an overcoming of death has been refuted since then, e.g., by Smith (1988) and Borg (2013).
[50] Anderson 1985: 103.

assume, therefore, that the pre-existing associations between hunting, status, and imperial imagery played some role in the transformation of Hippolytus' imagery on sarcophagi, especially at a time when patrons sought to be commemorated with reliefs that featured symbolism rooted in more realistic settings.

Zanker and Ewald make note of the relationship between the image of Hippolytus as a mounted hunter and equestrian portraits of the emperor. They mention the fact that sculptors borrowed the image of the emperor on horseback from imperial art in the first renditions of Hippolytus on sarcophagi.[51] Scenes of Hippolytus' departure from Phaedra, in addition to their symbolic meaning of death, also draws influence from the imperial *profectio*.[52] Hippolytus sarcophagi of this type, laden with imperial allusions, became the foundation for the growth of non-mythological sarcophagi with similar compositions. Whereas the presence of Virtus remained constant in order to ensure a reading that stressed the deceased's masculinity, Hippolytus' likeness and the boar hunt were abandoned so as to frame the deceased's memories using more realistic imagery.

The mythological aspect of Hippolytus' imagery and his associations with the boar hunt were minimized in favour of making deliberate statements about status and social aspirations. By setting the scene in the Roman present and employing familiar artistic modes of representation from the imperial sphere, a new fashion was established that shifted demand away from Hippolytus' narrative.[53] In short, third century Hippolytus sarcophagi served as prototypes for certain non-mythological sarcophagi, and while some

[51] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 222-223.
[52] Ewald 2018: 234.
[53] Borg 2013: 180.

elements of the type retained their use, artists later personalized them to reflect the new desires for self-representation.

Endymion was another legendary hunter whose narrative was used to commemorate deceased Romans in the second and third centuries. The popularity of the Endymion narrative in funerary commemoration was probably due to the nature of his fate, which constituted a kind of death. A resident of the countryside, Endymion's beauty attracted the attention of the moon goddess Selene, who drove her chariot to earth in hopes of making him her lover. Although the literary sources do not describe his fate in great detail, it is generally agreed that Endymion fell into eternal sleep before being approached by the goddess.[54] In his *Tusculanae Disputationes*, Cicero relates his understanding of the myth, stating that Endymion was lulled to an eternal sleep on Mount Latmus by Selene, who hoped to take the young man as her lover.[55] The condition of eternal sleep was likened to death, which helps to explain Endymion's appearance on mythological sarcophagi, with over 120 extant reliefs bearing his narrative.[56] Ovid also reports part of the myth in his *Heroides*; in a letter to his lover Hero, Leander addresses the moon, saying that Selene descended to the earth in order to find a mortal lover.[57]

The myth of Endymion and Selene is, for the most part, presented uniformly on sarcophagi from the late Hadrianic to the pre-Gallienic periods, reaching the height of its popularity in the mid-Antonine to Severan periods.[58] An example of a relief depicting a

[54] Sorabella 2001: 70.
[55] Cic. *Tusc*. I.38.92.
[56] Sorabella 2001: 70.
[57] Ov. *Her.* XV.61-66.
[58] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 334.

typical encounter between Endymion and Selene can be found on a third century sarcophagus that is now located in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City (Figure 10). Selene stands in the centre of the scene over a reclining Endymion, holding a long cloak billowing in the wind, while she alights from her chariot. Nyx also stands over Endymion, holding a poppy stem in her left hand and a horn in her right, an object which serves as a vessel for a sleeping potion that is poured on Endymion.[59] Endymion himself lies on the ground, nude except for a mantle that covers the left side of his chest, and he directs his gaze towards the right, away from the goddesses. The erotic features of Endymion's body in this relief are especially noteworthy. The nudity of Endymion's sleeping form and the smooth texture of his skin displayed alongside Selene's bare right breast provide the scene with a strong erotic charge.[60]

Later sarcophagi, while still depicting the rustic figure in slumber, deviated from traditional imagery in their renderings of Endymion. In particular, Endymion is shown with the attributes of a hunter on some reliefs, including a sarcophagus in the Louvre, c. 240 (Figure 11). The central scene is largely identical to the New York sarcophagus. On this relief, however, it is Hypnos, the god of sleep, who stands over the young man while holding a poppy stem and a horn filled with sleeping potion. Another difference is that Endymion is clothed with a short tunic and a cloak, and he is equipped with spears; Zanker states that in this scene, Endymion's sleep is one that is meant to rejuvenate the young man

[59] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 340-341.
[60] Zanker 2012: 172.

after a hunt.[61] In contrast to the mostly nude figure found on the New York sarcophagus, this Endymion is depicted fully clothed in the garb of a hunter.

The decision to emphasize Endymion's identity as a hunter may reflect the shift in commemorative needs of third century patrons. The minimizing of Endymion's erotic characteristics and the appearance of clothing on his body is likely indicative of the changing mode of self-representation on sarcophagi. Because later artists chose to render Endymion in a manner that emphasized his virtue rather than his physical appearance, deceased individuals could find greater identification with this figure.[62] The shift away from depicting the subjects of the Endymion scenes as erotic figures can be linked to the increase in personalized commemoration on third century sarcophagi. Because the deceased assumed the role of the mythical youth, the erotic connotation of the hunt was removed in order to avoid overemphasizing the subject's sexuality. Although there are several examples of earlier funerary sculptures depicting deceased individuals in the nude and with idealized bodies, the purpose of this particular scene was to liken the deceased male to the mythical hunter in terms of *virtus*; displays of sexuality were not necessarily a priority for the dedicand. Therefore, the adaptation of existing imagery, as seen in the sarcophagi of Meleager and Hippolytus, occurred as a result of a shift in the desires of patrons who wished to be remembered by allusion to their own character rather than emphasizing other narrative elements in the myth.

[61] Zanker 2012: 171.
[62] Borg 2014: 246.

In addition to these aspects of the Endymion reliefs, the coupling of the hunter and Selene can be explored further. According to Borg, portraits featuring the likenesses of the deceased on Endymion sarcophagi developed in the second and third centuries. Additionally, the vast majority of reliefs of this type starting in the third century depicted both Endymion and Selene with portrait features, and the deceased thus assumed the roles of the mythical couple.[63] While a consolatory message about death and eternal sleep surely influenced this sarcophagus type's popularity, the emphasis on the Roman patrons and their assimilation to the figures from legend through the use of portraits is unmistakable.[64] The myth's popularity on sarcophagi, especially in the third century, must have arisen in part from the change in taste from darker myths directly concerning death to those which contain characters that serve as *exempla virtutis* for the deceased.

Aside from the eroticization of the sleeping Endymion's body in earlier examples, the depiction of the couple together is meant to highlight the myth's romantic and sexual readings. The fact that it is Selene, a female deity, who assumes the active role of the lover in these reliefs is significant since the woman of the couple is shown with qualities usually assigned to men; Birk remarks that Selene expresses masculine *virtus* and through her role as a supporter, her appearance alongside her partner embodies the virtue of marital *concordia* as well.[65] Moreover, as Holliday mentions, the motif of the upright seducer and the reclining beloved foreshadows the activities that will imminently take place between them. The scene's proleptic quality, that it only depicts the events beforehand, attests to an

[63] Borg 2014: 244-245.
[64] Newby 2011a: 206.
[65] Birk 2014: 41.

assumed knowledge of the narrative, since its success is dependent on the viewer's knowledge of the tale.[66] Because of this, the scene's composition can be interpreted as evidence for a widespread understanding of this motif's allusion to the ideals of love and *virtus*.

Koortbojian identifies *amor* and *virtus* as the "twin grand themes" of mythological sarcophagi.[67] The *amor* between Endymion and Selene, in addition to the *virtus* that is displayed by both figures, were both appropriate for expression in funerary art; they not only celebrated the individual attributes of the deceased, but also his or her excellence as a member of a family unit. It is on Endymion sarcophagi, then, that two dominant cultural values concerning love and masculinity are expressed clearly in the third century. While earlier Endymion sarcophagi focussed on the *amor* of the narrative, the imagery of later examples was modified so as to place greater emphasis on the hunter's *virtus* as well. Through the use of portrait heads on Endymion and Selene, firm connections to the *amor* and *virtus* of both partners could be drawn on a single relief.

The relationship between love and hunting on Roman sarcophagi can be further characterized through examination of reliefs featuring the mythical hunter Adonis and his lover Aphrodite. Known for his beauty, Adonis was wooed by the goddess of love, an account of which is recorded by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*; despite his lover's warnings, Adonis set out on a hunting trip and encountered a wild boar. Although Adonis landed a sidelong strike on the beast, the boar delivered a fatal bite to the hunter and upon his death,

[66] Holliday 1998: 235.
[67] Koortbojian 2015: 295.

the anemone blossomed from his blood through the work of Aphrodite.[68] There are approximately two dozen extant Adonis sarcophagi, with the majority of reliefs showing scenes of Adonis' departure from the goddess, the boar attacking the hunter, and Aphrodite tending to her injured lover.[69]

The typical imagery of the Adonis sarcophagi can be found on a rare third century example, located in the Vatican, which shows the mythical couple seated in the middle of the relief with the facial features of the patrons (Figure 12). This relief displays all three of the typical Adonis scenes, but they are not presented in chronological order; the left side shows Adonis' departure, the centre shows Aphrodite tending to his wounds, and the boar hunt is depicted on the right. Like the sarcophagi that depict other mythological heroes, portrait features were given to Adonis and Aphrodite. This simple analogy to the couple's upstanding quality is a unique example; no other Adonis sarcophagi with portrait features are known to exist.[70]

Just as Meleager, Hippolytus, and Endymion became symbolic of the *virtus* of the mythical hunter that was bestowed upon the deceased patron, Adonis' appearance as a hunter also served as a mythological *exemplum* of ideal masculinity, and the focus on his relationship with Aphrodite was suitable for the commemoration of the patron's wife. Borg observes, however, that Adonis' posture is not suggestive of that of a gravely injured man. He sits upright next to Aphrodite rather than leaning on her, and his "regal" appearance makes the couple resemble a pair of citizens ready to receive guests or clients into their

[68] Ov. *Met.* X.298-739.
[69] Zanker and Ewald 2012: 299.
[70] Borg 2018: 189.

home.[71] The mythical couple's stately appearance is most likely connected to the pair's association with the patrons. Since this sarcophagus originates from the third century, the growing distaste for grim funerary imagery likely influenced the production of Adonis sarcophagi at this point.

As mentioned earlier, the third century saw a decrease in the production of mythological sarcophagi that were decorated with reliefs that directly alluded to the death of the central figure. The paucity of Adonis sarcophagi in the third century likely arose from the fact that the imagery associated with this narrative solely revolved around the death of the heroic hunter; reliefs of other narratives would have been able to communicate ideas of *virtus* and *amor* without displaying Adonis' violent end. Because Adonis' imagery did not develop much further beyond the second century, patrons chose to use other myths for their commemoration rather than the outdated imagery of Adonis' narrative.

Another example of this type of relief can be observed on the Rinuccini sarcophagus now in Berlin, c. AD 200 (Figure 13). This sarcophagus deviates from typical imagery and instead only two scenes are present on the front panel: the left half which depicts a couple proffering hands to one another in the *dextrarum iunctio*, and the right half which depicts an injured Adonis and the boar hunt. The Roman couple on the left side of the relief stands before the personification of Concordia, rendering the interpretation that this side represents the *concordia* of the marriage between the patrons as natural to the viewer. The right side, on the other hand, presents a similar message to that of the Vatican sarcophagus, one of *virtus* and excellence. The *vita humana* scene places emphasis on the married couple

[71] Borg 2018: 187-188.

who was most likely commemorated with this sarcophagus; the *concordia* and the *virtus* of the couple are displayed and the qualities of the male partner by himself are not as clearly celebrated.[72]

According to Ewald, the replacement of mythological hunt scenes with non-mythological lion hunts in the second half of the third century reflects the growing prominence of female patrons of sarcophagi reliefs and the transforming modes of their commemoration.[73] A version of this supportive, feminine companion to the male can be observed on the later Calydonian boar hunt found on the Doria Pamphilij Gallery sarcophagus discussed earlier in this chapter (Figure 6); Atalanta is presented as a steadfast helper to Meleager, and her appearance alongside her lover on sarcophagi along with her participation in the hunt underscores the *concordia* between the two.[74] This contrasts with her presentation on earlier Meleager sarcophagi, in which she is shown seated in front of her dying lover, static and grief-stricken. By the same token, Phaedra, lamenting the departure of her stepson, appears seated and is at a remove from the action of the hunt. While a great number of earlier mythological hunting sarcophagi focussed solely on the qualities of men, women became more frequently commemorated as subjects on these sarcophagi in later periods. Thus, the expression of *amor*, and by extension *concordia*, was valued by patrons at a level that was comparable to *virtus*.

[72] Brilliant 1992: 1032.
[73] Ewald 2012: 59.
[74] Besides the helpful nature of Atalanta's and her prowess in the hunt, her physical beauty was also lauded in antiquity; e.g., the dedicant of *CIL* VI 37965 states that the beauty of Allia Potestas' legs surpasses that of Atalanta's.

Earlier mythological hunt sarcophagi were dominated by the theme of *virtus,* whereas later sarcophagi, sometimes displaying the same myths, intermingled both *amor* and *virtus* more frequently. Brilliant argues that in the third century, the interpretations of hunting scenes from myth on sarcophagi were largely similar and because of this, a blurring of the identities of mythical hunters took place that was only possible in a cultural environment that valued typological conformity over individual narratives.[75] It may be the case, then, that the integration of *amor* and *virtus* on single, cohesive scenes on later hunting sarcophagi is also a result of the *Entmythologisierung* of the third century. The barriers between individual myths and types of reliefs in funerary art were broken in this period. In order to suit the needs of their customers, artists made innovations to familiar works to emphasize the cultural values that had come to be preferred, and compositions that could not accommodate this, such as the Adonis and Hippolytus sarcophagi, were not favoured; Adonis' death was a major part of his narrative and other episodes of his myth may not have been suitable for sarcophagi. In the same vein, Phaedra's incestuous love for Hippolytus may have been unattractive as a commemorative trope for romantic couples. In general, only mythological hunt sarcophagi whose subject matter enabled a positive reading of both partners survived past the third century.[76]

In conclusion, the cultural values that were expressed on mythological sarcophagi remained relatively constant during the transition between the second and third centuries and the *Entmythologisierung* that occurred during this time. The focus shifted from

[75] Brilliant 1992: 1035.
[76] The popularity of non-mythological hunt sarcophagi such as those depicting the lion hunt is a different matter. I comment here solely on the popularity of mythological hunt sarcophagi.

depicting somber narratives that dealt more firmly with death to celebrating the patron and their character in life. The themes of *amor* and *virtus* were consistently shown starting in the second century; the values associated with commemoration, by which patrons wished to be remembered, did not significantly change during this transitional period. The modes of expressing these values and the ways in which these values were manifest on mythological sarcophagi, however, saw profound change as a result of the *Entmythologisierung* of the third century.

Meleager sarcophagi that depicted the Calydonian boar hunt celebrated the *virtus* of the deceased, and this subtype became dominant in the third century, when scenes of his death fell out of favour. Likewise, the imagery on Hippolytus sarcophagi was chosen in order to conflate the masculine qualities of the deceased with those of the legendary hunter. Although mythological scenes were seen less frequently on sarcophagi after the Severan period, the influence of the Hippolytus type on non-mythological mounted hunter sarcophagi is clear. Endymion, a figure whose occupation as a hunter was emphasized on later sarcophagi, and his divine lover Selene were appropriate subjects for the sarcophagi of couples. Finally, Adonis, whose narrative on sarcophagi was restricted to the events concerning his death, was not featured on later sarcophagi of the third century owing to the static nature of his imagery. *Entmythologisierung* and the adaptation of existing mythological imagery represent a shift in thinking and signalled new forms and interpretations of imagery in the visual arts into the late antique period.

Chapter 2: Hunting Scenes on Mosaics from the Third to Sixth Centuries AD

In this chapter, I discuss the cultural significance of hunting scenes starting in the Severan period, and the degree to which hunting imagery in the medium of mosaic reflected the social standing of patrons in the private sphere. In Roman art, hunting was a metaphor for a patron's aristocratic status and *virtus* since the activity was typically considered an elite pastime, and the overcoming of an animal's strength required intelligence and skill from hunter.[77] It is the purpose of this chapter to characterize the different ideals that were expressed through hunting scenes on mosaics and the ways in which the elite citizen could cultivate his persona through conspicuous displays of these scenes. In domestic decoration, the goal of works featuring hunting iconography was to aggrandize the character of the patron and, in some cases, to cultivate the persona of a citizen who participates in all activities that were privileges to members of high society. Thus, hunting iconography in domestic décor emphasized the qualities of the patron which typically reflected those of an upstanding Roman citizen. Through different kinds of hunting scenes, an aristocrat could exemplify traits that supported his claim to elite status and display his masculinity, wealth, generosity, and strong sense of Roman identity.

Throughout the chapter, I use examples of domestic mosaics to show the ways in which individuals of high status displayed their virtues for those who entered their homes. Rather than attempt to characterise a chronological development of hunting imagery, I treat these scenes thematically; the iconography of different kinds of hunting scenes are

[77] Thébert 1985: 404.

explored, and the multivalent meanings associated with certain combinations of images are also discussed. Specifically, the qualities of the patron that were expressed through different kinds of scenes are studied in detail and as such, the examples that appear in this chapter have been organized according to the trait that is most evident from the imagery. The majority of mosaics studied in this chapter originate from North Africa, since this region contains a large number of known extant domestic mosaics from the later Roman period. Although some mosaics discussed below originate from different parts of the empire, the geographic variations of hunting scenes is not a primary concern for this study, since the main objective is to understand the nature of hunting iconography in a domestic context at a general level. Additionally, there does not appear to be any great variation in the meanings of hunting iconography with respect to geography, and that the canon of imagery is consistently represented throughout the empire.

Hunting scenes in domestic decoration were often used as vehicles to communicate the patron's *virtus* and to present him as an exemplar among Roman citizens. At the most basic level, depictions of hunting were used to draw parallels between the *dominus* of the house and the hunter in terms of skill and *virtus*. The sixth century Worcester Hunt from Daphne is a crowded composition with several individual hunts packed into a single scene (Figure 14), and this 140 m^2 mosaic decorated the floor of Room 1, the largest of three rooms, of the House of the Worcester Hunt near Antioch.[78] Although the house itself was destroyed in an earthquake in AD 526, the room's large size may indicate that the owner often received guests who would have seen this mosaic. Hunters, both mounted and on

[78] Barsanti 2012: 31.

foot, are shown attacking their prey with spears, and at the center of the mosaic, a tunic-clad figure stands triumphantly over a dead boar with a spear in his left hand. Parrish notes that this image of the victor might represent a princely hunter that recalls the hunts of the Hellenistic period.[79] Here, the *dominus* assumes the role of the noble figure standing at the center of the scene, surrounded by images of animal combat. With this image of the victorious hunter, the patron alludes to his superior abilities in the hunt and thus he conveys his *virtus* through this scene to the viewer.

In their patrons' pursuit of self-aggrandizement and optimal displays of *virtus*, mosaicists would sometimes create compositions with elements that were not grounded in reality. The tendency for mosaicists to compose hunting scenes that contained images not strictly rooted in reality is a phenomenon that can be observed in North Africa starting in the third century. Starting in the Severan period, hunting scenes were among the most common subjects of domestic mosaics in North Africa; Dunbabin attributes this to the fact that patrons desired to see depictions of "one of their favourite occupations," and that these scenes appealed to the broader taste for realistic, generic themes in art at the time.[80]

However, the desire for realistic hunting scenes appears to have waned in the years leading to the fourth century, and rather the depiction of sensational scenes became the new fashion for domestic hunting mosaics, to the degree that such scenes can be seen throughout Carthage during this period.[81] Auguet notes that many aspects of the activity of hunting enabled stories of these exploits to grow as legends; the travels to distant lands, the great

[79] Parrish 2017: 281-282.
[80] Dunbabin 1978: 48.
[81] Dunbabin 1978: 53.

virtus of the participants, and the mortal dangers that hunters faced were the source of countless stories.[82] Thus, the bold narratives of hunting adventures seem to have given rise to a growing popularity of sensational scenes on hunting mosaics; the visual depictions of the hunt that were commissioned by Roman patrons had to keep pace with the tales of their exploits for the purposes of expressing their *virtus*.

One method for exaggerating the adventurous nature of the hunt was to include wildlife that were not typically found in the region. Mosaics that included animals foreign to the area often included that were more ferocious than the local wildlife in order to heighten the perceived dangers of hunting. An early 4th century mosaic from the Maison des Chevaux at Carthage that was placed in front of the entrance to the *oecus* contains a hunting scene in which armed men can be seen engaging with various kinds of wild beasts such as lions and leopards (Figures 15, 16). Among these African animals, however, tigers can be observed alongside them.[83] In this case, it can be said that the mosaicists, given their occupation and relative lack of wealth, were unfamiliar with the wildlife of foreign territories and relied on established patterns and motifs to construct compositions such as this. Thus, they introduced an error with the inclusion of tigers, a species not normally found in Africa, in this scene.[84]

On the other hand, the mosaicists' depiction of tigers may have served a purpose despite the factual inaccuracies that this presents. By creating a composition which includes an array of animals that would normally inspire dread within a hunter, the *virtus* of the

[82] Auguet 1994: 119.
[83] Dunbabin 1978: 53.
[84] Auguet 1994: 119.

subject becomes abundantly clear; by including all manner of dangerous animal in the composition, the communication of the hunter's *virtus*, and in turn the patron's, is the focus of the work and the faithful representation of an actual geographic location is reduced to a secondary concern. The naturalism of the composition gives way to the depiction of a rather fantastic hunt, since the number and variety of wild detracts from the realism of the scene.[85] The mosaicists of this period had very little exposure to great hunts in reality, and therefore the introduction of errors such as the inclusion of tigers in an African setting is understandable.[86] It is likely, however, that the average Roman citizen would not have been aware of this error either, and compositions such as this would have still delivered their messages successfully, since the goal for the mosaicist was to capture the thrill of a great hunt rather than design a faithful recreation of an actual expedition.

The introduction of deliberately fictional elements to exaggerate the dangers of the hunt and emphasize the patron's *virtus* was not uncommon in the later Roman world. In domestic decoration, there was a chronological progression for the degree of fantasy in hunting scenes; mid-fourth century hunting scenes begin to incorporate imaginary elements and mythical creatures, and by the sixth century beasts such as griffins and hippocamps are prominently featured in this type of scene.[87] At the sixth century Great Palace of Constantinople, a peristyle mosaic spanning approximately 20,000 square feet shows pastoral scenes alongside episodes of animal violence (Figure 17). In one area of the mosaic, a griffin can be seen participating in the violence and eating a lizard, and the

[85] Dunbabin 1978: 53.
[86] Auguet 1994: 119.
[87] Reece 1997: 147.

creature is featured alongside real-life animals such as leopards and antelopes (Figure 18).[88] Here, the ferocious griffin is used to reinforce the brutal nature of the wild beasts and their impending confrontation with the hunters. The presence of the legendary creature makes it clear to the viewer that hunt taking place on the mosaic was an extraordinary affair, fit for a man of superior skill and strength. And so, the character of the villa owner is celebrated through the imaginary, mythical hunt in his peristyle mosaic.

Overall, the opportunities for exotic and fantastic imagery that were offered by hunting scenes made them desirable for patrons to express their *virtus*. By composing fictionalized scenarios, mosaicists were not constrained by reality; they were free to design works that were more thrilling and fantastic than a hunt on a landowner's estate could possibly be. Reece notes that a sense of competition between landowners may have motivated the introduction of strange and dangerous animals into compositions; a citizen may have viewed his neighbour's piece that displayed a lion hunt, and therefore he would be tempted to commission a work that mirrored or surpassed his neighbour's, even if exaggerated elements were to be introduced.[89] At a certain point, this competition may have resulted in the creation of compositions not based on familiar myths, but on new, fabricated tales of the heroic landowner who faced all manner of exotic and mythical beast.

In addition to the inclusion of exotic and fictional creatures in hunting scenes, mosaics depicting mythological narratives were a popular way in which aristocrats could conflate their own masculine traits with those of legendary figures. The widespread use of

[88] Guberti Bassett 2000: 16.
[89] Reece 1997: 147.

mythological hunting scenes in domestic decoration likely arose from the symbolic value that such famous narratives acquired over time.[90] Until the late third century, the majority of mythological scenes found in domestic decoration focused on presenting pleasant narratives that evoked pleasure and serenity, and the popularity of scenes depicting figures such as playful *erotes* and mythological couples eventually waned in favour of scenes that displayed the aristocrat's wealth and property.[91] Although there was a decline in mythological scenes in this period, Muth notes that this is not indicative of a growing disinterest in mythological subject matter, and the scholar attributes this change to increase of activity within the Roman house that would have previously been conducted in public areas such as the forum.[92] Because of this increased activity within the house and the higher frequency with which guests were welcomed into the home, a greater diversity of new themes came into being that somewhat diminished the relative number of older mythological themes on mosaic.

Likewise, Dunbabin states that mythological themes in the later Roman period underwent a transformation through which mythological figures on mosaic were seen as *exempla virtutis*.[93] Mosaics with mythological subject had a similar function to mythological sarcophagi in this respect since in both contexts, the virtues of the former are celebrated through familiar narratives, and the scene is understood to be a metaphor for the patron's character. Upon entering the home, guests of the patron were meant to view these mosaics and a establish a connection between the host and the mythological figure. These

[90] Hachili 2009: 162.
[91] Muth 2015: 419.
[92] Muth 2015: 421.
[93] Dunbabin 2014: 244.

famous mythological figures were easily recognizable and although there was not always an explicit link between the patron and the events depicted from the image itself, the scene's presence in his home was sufficient for expressing his *virtus*. Thus, mythological hunting scenes on mosaics after the first half of the third century depicted famous hunters with whom a patron could associate himself, and who embodied the ideal traits that the late-Roman aristocrat sought.

The Calydonian boar hunt was one of the most widely used mythological episodes in domestic decoration. Meleager's victory over the beast sent by Artemis to terrorize Calydon required a high degree of skill and physical strength on the part of the hero, thus making him an appropriate *exemplum virtutis* for the Roman male. In mosaics featuring scenes with this narrative, many focus on the hunt itself; the hero Meleager is most often being the subject, and his courage and boldness are exhibited in depictions of this event.[94] Since Meleager was viewed as a paragon of male virtue among Roman citizens, his image was appealing for elites who wished to express his own masculinity through visual representations. Allusions to myth were deliberately chosen to suit the desires of aristocratic patrons. The handling of mythological hunt scenes by mosaicists focussed on distinct parts of the mythological narrative that were useful for a patron's self-representation. The majority of scenes concerning Meleager display the moment of action in which the heroic hunter appears as an *exemplum virtutis*; this, however, caused other parts of the tale become relatively unimportant for the viewer's understanding of the

[94] Zanker 2012: 361.

allegory to *virtus*.[95] Artists consciously selected episodes of myths that could be used to maximize the patron's positive, masculine qualities in their compositions.

A depiction of this mythological hunt can be observed on a 4th century floor mosaic at the Villa of Constantine in Antioch (Figures 19, 20), which contains a combination of four images: a sacrifice to Artemis, two scenes in which mounted hunters pursue predator animals, and a depiction of the Calydonian boar hunt. As a whole, this mosaic conveys the *virtus* of the hunter, and by extension, the *dominus*; the allusion to the Calydonian boar hunt and the presence of other predators in the mosaic emphasizes the dangerous nature of the hunt and from this, the *virtus* of the hunter is understood to have been especially great.[96] It is important to note that this scene depicts the moment of greatest tension, right before the boar is slaughtered by Meleager. Because of this, the thrill of the hunt is most clear; this, however, resulted in the other parts of the narrative losing importance in this particular depiction of the myth. Rather than perfectly recounting the entire myth of the Calydonian boar hunt to allude to the patron's character, the story was compressed into its single, most dramatic moment for the sake of presenting Meleager, and thus the patron, as an exemplar of valour.

While the Calydonian boar hunt was the subject of many mosaics depicting Meleager, other scenes featured different narratives featuring the legendary hero in order to highlight different virtues for the patron. At Apamea on the Orontes, a late 5th century mosaic depicts the famous hunter along with Atalanta (Figure 21); both figures are

[95] Raeck 1997: 36
[96] Raeck 1997: 33-34.

mounted, and Meleager is shown holding a spear while Atalanta holds an arrow. Along with the display of the pair's heroic *virtus*, the couple is shown to be an *exemplum* of love and support, as well aristocratic status with the presence of horses, other hunting accoutrements, and their elegant clothing.[97] Not only does the hero Meleager appear as an *exemplum virtutis* for the *dominus*, the mythical couple of Meleager and Atalanta can be interpreted as an allusion to the patron and his wife, and the relationship of the latter is thus also celebrated. Here, the simple allusion to *virtus* through Meleager's exploits is complemented by the appearance of his lover as well as their clothing, both of which provide additional opportunities for the patron to make claim to his own status.

Furthermore, an individual of high status may have used hunting scenes to express his own wealth and the opulent nature of his property. Recognizable representations of a patron's country estate reminded viewers of the "good life" to which the estate owner was accustomed and to which others aspired. Pleasant, idyllic scenes of hunting activities were sometimes used to affirm the bounty of the owner's estate. Peter Brown identifies triumph and good living as common themes in late antique art; in the fourth century especially, this sort of imagery became popular with the rise of a new class of magnates whose wealth surpassed that the aristocrats from earlier periods. Public displays of status for this burgeoning class of vastly wealthy Romans included large villas and hunting expeditions.[98] The art that was commissioned by the later Roman aristocrat reflected an ideal way of living, and the bucolic themes often found on mosaics of this period did not accurately

[97] Dunbabin 2014: 244.
[98] Brown 1980: 22-23.

reflect the predominantly urban lifestyle of the wealthy citizen.[99] As an activity that was strongly associated with leisure and high status, hunting was an appropriate subject for the domestic art of these landowning patrons, regardless of whether or not they participated in the activity in reality.[100] As a result, hunting scenes may have been personalized to some degree for the patron in order to more strongly associate him with the depiction of bounty in the composition.

The later 4th century Dominus Julius mosaic from Carthage, for example, features a depiction of a fortified villa of contemporary design (Figure 22).[101] The mosaic itself decorated the floor of a reception room in a wealthy townhouse, and the image of the villa surrounded by various scenes of the *dominus* and *domina* engaged in aristocratic activities was suitable for the room's function to engage guests and express the patron's status.[102] The villa at the center of the mosaic alludes to the patron's property and status as a landowner, and the activities shown around it make reference to the opportunities for *otium* that were accessible for the couple. On the other hand, the central register of the mosaic on either side of the villa shows the *dominus* of the house on horseback while leading a hunting expedition with servants and a pack of dogs.[103] The figure of the *dominus* about to engage in a hunt on his villa is a clear expression of the size and splendour of his estate. In this scene, the juxtaposition of the hunt and the grand villa of the patron function together as a direct claim to his status and affluence.

[99] Ellis 1997: 46.
[100] Reece 1997: 146-147.
[101] Parrish 2017: 270.
[102] Muth 2015: 419-420.
[103] Parrish 2017: 270.

While generic allusions to the activity of hunting were used in the communication of patrons' aristocratic self-presentation through mosaic, a clear episode of a hunt was not always necessary to associate the patron with the sport. In another North African mosaic, the fragmentary Mosaic of the Personification of Carthage, the Seasons, the Circus, and the Hunt from the late fifth or early sixth century consisted of rows of discrete hunting scenes (Figure 23). As the title of the mosaic suggests, these scenes appear alongside a personification of the city, as well as the four seasons and circus scenes. Parrish states that the eclectic subject matter was chosen to elicit feelings of prosperity. The combination of circus and hunt scenes were allusions to aristocracy and wealth, while the depictions of the seasons and Carthage were likely used to invoke good fortune.[104] Although no continuous narrative of a single hunt is present in this mosaic, the collection of smaller scenes called to mind general aristocratic pursuits and pleasures rather than a single event. Furthermore, the presence of the hunting scenes complemented those of the Seasons and the circus scenes, and the diverse imagery contributed to a cohesive message that advertised the patron's claim to aristocratic status. Therefore, the relegation of hunting episodes to the marginal role of a decorative motif complemented the larger scene in the composition while also calling to mind ideas of *virtus*. As a whole, the hunting scenes in this particular mosaic were selected for their associations with the "good life" of aristocratic citizens and were a key part of a composition that was meant to inspire the viewer to be in awe of the bounty of the *dominus*' estate.

[104] Parrish 1984: 56, 130.

In addition to displaying an aristocrat's wealth and status, hunting mosaics may have also shown the patron's willingness to spend his money freely for the benefit of his community. An allusion to the allegorical figure of Megalopsychia, or "great-mindedness," on mosaic can be observed at Yakto near Antioch, on the later 5th century Mosaic of Megalopsychia (Figure 24). The name of this mosaic is derived from the inscription accompanying the central female bust holding a container of money along with roses, and around this figure are a series of animal combat scenes. Further away from the center are scenes in which hunters engage with various wild beasts, among which are a lion, a leopard, and a wild boar. It is likely that this mosaic is a representation of the patron's generosity, while the presence of the hunting scenes symbolizes his munificence towards the public.[105] Moreover, the presence of Megalopsychia may refer to the patron's beneficence to the city of Antioch associated with a specific event. The city of Antioch had suffered from an earthquake shortly before the construction of this mosaic, and the depictions of an urban setting in the border of the mosaic may indicate that the patron offered financial assistance in the city's reconstruction efforts.[106]

In addition to the presence of the personification of Megalopsychia, the hunters surrounding her bust are labelled with the names of legendary figures such as Meleager, Narkissos, and Teresias. These allusions to literary heroes serve to highlight the patron's hunting skills and *virtus*, and to glorify him through comparisons to the patron.[107] The appearance of Megalopsychia alongside these well-known figures engaged in the hunt

[105] Liebeschuetz 2015: 380.
[106] Parrish 2017: 279-280.
[107] Parrish 2017: 280.

complemented one another; similarly to the mosaic from Apamea mentioned above, the combination of mythological hunters associated with masculine *virtus* alongside another figure allowed the patron to communicate his persona as an ideal citizen. In this mosaic, the twofold expression of the patron's *virtus* and his generosity celebrated multiple aspects of the aristocrat's character through references to myth and events in recent history. Altogether, the mosaic's central figure of Megalopsychia highlights the patron's munificence, while the mythological decorative elements contribute further to the patron's self-representation.

Expressions of munificence can also be observed on domestic mosaics that depict hunts associated with the *venationes* of the Roman amphitheater. The *venatio* was performed as a regular part of amphitheater and circus shows in which a variety of creatures, often wild and foreign to Rome, were placed in the arena and slaughtered in combat or as part of an artificial hunt.[108] Throughout different periods of Roman history, *venationes* and other public events were channels through which the Roman elite were able to demonstrate their own wealth and privilege to the general population. The benefactors of spectacles were instrumental in the integration of these events into the Roman experience and as a result, the staged hunts of the amphitheater and other events became symbols of civic prestige and by extension, the aristocratic donors also became associated with this idea.[109]

[108] Guberti Bassett 2000: 15.
[109] Kondoleon 1995: 313.

After the Imperial period, power was less concentrated in the city of Rome and local leaders sought ways in which they could demonstrate their power and wealth. Through acts of euergetism in their own cities, aristocrats could offer their own resources for the benefit of the common people in a manner similar to the funding of public spectacles at the arena in the city of Rome.[110] Thus, the *venatio* motif adopted a new meaning in the visual arts of the later Roman period, one that better reflected the affluence of the local magnate outside of Rome whose wealth was abundant and freely given. By presenting scenes associated with the *venatio* on a mosaic in his home, an elite individual was able to express virtues that were not typically associated with generic hunting scenes. Specifically, by associating oneself with these amphitheater activities through a mosaic, a patron could claim to have funded these events in a display of his munificence.

Kondoleon uses the example of the late 2nd century hunt scenes found at the House of Dionysos at Paphos to examine the relationship between the *venatio* and the elite patron's self-representation.[111] The atrium-peristyle of the house was decorated with hunting mosaics in which animals and hunters were arranged in a frieze (Figures 25, 26). In her discussion of the iconography of the mosaics, Kondoleon asserts that the owner's desired to associate himself with other Roman elites through the depiction of *venationes* on these mosaics; the representation of such events within the patron's house was intended to be an extension of the public spectacles that were funded by elite donors, and as such were

[110] Garnsey 1991: 168.
[111] Although the date of this mosaic does not fall within the period of interest for this study, I include it as a useful example to illustrate the concept of the image of the *venatio* as an expression of ideal Roman character.

became signs of privilege and status.[112] From this example, the communication of the patron's *virtus* through hunting becomes secondary to the display of his wealth and largesse. Nevertheless, the masculine virtue implicit in the hunt scenes is readily understood by the viewer and therefore, multiple positive qualities of the patron could be advertised in a single *venatio* scene.

In other mosaics, the likeness of the patron may have appeared in the composition itself in order to strengthen his association to the events of the amphitheater. A floor mosaic that decorated a large room in a house from Smirat dates to the mid-third century and displays four combat scenes between *venatores* and leopards, as well as figures of who are believed to be Dionysos and Diana (Figure 27).[113] Near the center of the mosaic, a boy holds a tray of four money bags, and the inscription on either side of this figure describes the events of an actual amphitheater show; the inscription on the left is an appeal for the audience to purchase the four leopards for 500 *denarii* for each, while the inscription on the right records that Magerius purchased the creatures for 4000 *denarii*, twice the original cost of all four leopards.[114] The money bags that the boy holds, therefore, represent the total cost of the leopards that Magerius purchased. Magerius' name appears twice in the mosaic, one of which is found directly above the head of a man who is presumed to be the Magerius himself.[115]

The decision to depict a specific *munus* on the part of Magerius enabled this event to be recorded permanently, with the subject's munificence being displayed those who

[112] Kondoleon 1991: 107, 109.
[113] Adams 2015: 509-510.
[114] Poulsen 2012: 175.
[115] Dunbabin 1978: 68.

entered the home.[116] Furthermore, the presence of Diana and Dionysos in the mosaic bestows a supernatural element to the work, and Magerius' proximity to Dionysos suggests that the man was under the protection of the god.[117] Dunbabin argues that three elements were combined in this mosaic: the exciting images of staged hunts, an assertion of protection from the gods, and the commemorative record of Magerius' *munus*.[118] These separate parts attempt to display a single, cohesive narrative that was intended to celebrate different aspects of Magerius' character; the *venationes* capture the spirit of the hunt and thus symbolize the subject's aristocratic status, the appearance of Diana and Dionysos alludes to a divine presence in Magerius' life, and the inscription recalls an impressive display of the man's largesse. The likeness of Magerius within the mosaic helps to ensure that his role in sponsoring these events would be clear and unambiguous.

Also, a mid-fifth century mosaic from a grand dining hall in the Maison de Bacchus at Djemila depicts a hunt and the scene is roughly divided into two parts by an uneven groundline near the top of the composition: the image of a mounted hunter above, and *venationes* below (Figure 28). The smaller image depicts a figure on horseback, presumably the patron of the mosaic, flanked by animals and riding in front of what is presumed to be a depiction of a city.[119] The larger scene below shows *venatores* beneath the *dominus* who are in combat with four lions and a leopard; one lion is wounded, and the hunters are poised to defend themselves against the rest of the animals. The fact that the owner of the house, situated at the top of the mosaic, is the only mounted figure symbolizes the *dominus*' power

[116] Poulsen 2012: 175.
[117] Dunbabin 1978: 68.
[118] Dunbabin 1978: 68.
[119] Février and Blanchard-Lemée 2019: 154.

in reality, and his high placement in the mosaic echoes his high social status.[120] Like the Dominus Julius mosaic mentioned above, the patron of this mosaic made deliberate statements about his *virtus* through certain aspects of the composition. He is presented as a triumphant figure who oversees the staged hunts taking place beneath him, and his victory in the hunt is assumed to have arisen from his *virtus* and skill.

Although this mosaic clearly presents the patron as a figure of great masculine virtue, his wealth and generosity are also advertised. Dunbabin identifies this scene as a staged amphitheater hunt, and she also argues that the presence of the *dominus* at the top of the composition above the *venatio* suggests to the viewer that he funded the *munera* below him.[121] In a manner similar to the mosaics from the House of Dionysos, the patron uses domestic decoration to represent the public spectacles which he claims to have sponsored. Through this, it is evident that the owner of the House of Bacchus wished to identify with the local elite who donated large sums of money to support these forms of public entertainment. This direct reference to the patron's role in funding the games celebrates his beneficence toward the public and the role he played in upholding this traditional Roman institution. The patron, therefore, is depicted as an ideal aristocrat who has strong civic virtues and the willingness to donate his own resources for the benefit of his city.

Another mode of expression of a citizen's munificence towards the activities of the amphitheater were scenes that depicted hunts of animals for transport to the arena. The

[120] Ellis 1991: 124.
[121] Dunbabin 1978: 76.

presence of this sort of hunting scene in an aristocrat's house alluded to his role in the funding of expeditions that made the *venationes* possible, and therefore advertising his wealth. The early fourth century Hunt Mosaic from the Maison d'Isguntus at Hippo Regius shows a scene of the capture of wild animals for combat at the amphitheater (Figure 29). The rather busy narrative of the mosaic is not intended to reflect an actual expedition, but it is a rather a general scene with several activities taking place, which can be associated with this sort of expedition.[122] Leopards and lions can be seen being driven into a cage, while cows and sheep stand behind the cage to act as bait. In a different area of the mosaic, a hunter can be seen lassoing an onager, and below him hunter's picnic can be seen in which food is being prepared and a slave is serving drink.[123] These activities depict the capture of animals for the arena, and the combination of different episodes of the expedition in a single frame captures the spirit of the hunt and the owner's role in these events. The presentation of a rather crowded scene allows for the dangers of the hunt, and in turn the *virtus* of the hunters, to be easily understood. In addition to displaying the sport of hunting at a basic level and communicating the aristocratic ideals that were related to it, the artificial hunts of the *venationes* are also called to mind, thereby suggesting a great degree of munificence on the part of the patron.

Additionally, part of the appeal of *venatio* scenes in domestic decoration can also be attributed to the activity's connection to the concepts of Romanization and *romanitas*. Kondoleon states that in the decorative arts, common themes and the institutionalization of

[122] Lavin 1963: 234.
[123] Dunbabin 1978: 55.

compositions were linked to the tastes of patrons in a certain part of the Roman world, which in turn was linked to Romanization and public displays of civic identity.[124] Hunting in the Roman world was considered to be analogous to Rome's civilizing force and the empire's power to bring culture to savage populations; in the hunt, animals could be seen as the embodiment of barbarianism and irrationality, and successful hunters were to overcome them.[125] In the context of the *venatio* specficically, the variety of animals that were hunted in the arena symbolized the reach of Roman power; different species from all corners of the empire were imported to Rome so that citizens could experience the pleasure of witnessing the deaths of crocodiles, lynxes, ostriches, among many others.[126] These animals stood in the place of barbarians and foreign armies that fought in opposition to Rome's might, and their slaughter in the arena reflected Rome's triumph over these groups and the order that Rome brought to the provinces. Thus, hunting scenes became a visual statement of the patron's Roman identity and his desire to be associated with the ideals of the empire, and these scenes affirmed the patron's Roman identity and through this, his power as the *dominus* and his right to rule over his property.

A citizen's funding of public spectacles including *venationes* was a public expression of a person's wealth, power, and his fulfillment of his duties as a Roman citizen.[127] In addition to expressing his largesse, a patron's choice to display a scene associated with the *venatio* enabled him to represent himself as a figure embodying the *romanitas* that was implicit with beneficence and the amphitheater. In the decorative arts,

[124] Kondoleon 1991: 105.
[125] Guberti Bassett 2000: 15.
[126] Hopkins 1983: 11.
[127] Kondoleon 1991: 112.

common themes and the institutionalization of compositions were linked to the tastes of patrons in a certain part of the Roman world, which in turn was linked to Romanization and public displays of civic identity.[128] Hunting in the Roman world was considered to be analogous to Rome's civilizing force and the empire's power to bring culture to savage populations; in the hunt, animals could be seen as the embodiment of barbarianism and irrationality, and successful hunters were to overcome them.[129] Thus, hunting scenes became a visual statement of the patron's Roman identity and his desire to be associated with the ideals of the empire. By appealing to the viewer's familiarity with the events of the amphitheater, scenes like the Hunt Mosaic from the Maison d'Isguntus reinforced the patron's own sense of Roman identity and thus, he would be understood as a citizen of upstanding character.

In the large peristyle mosaic from Great Palace of Constantinople mentioned earlier in this chapter, scenes of nature and bucolic imagery of plants are punctuated by violent scenes in which several different kinds of animals are shown engaging in combat with humans and other animals. This mosaic makes a general statement about the struggle between savagery and civilization, and the control exercised by imperial house over that which is alien.[130] This contrast between order and chaos acts as a metaphor for Romanization, in which the menacing presence of wild animals fighting with one another provides a stark contrast to the civilizing force of the hunters. Through this allusion, the

[128] Kondoleon 1991: 105.
[129] Guberti Bassett 2000: 15.
[130] Guberti Bassett 2000: 16.

dominus, then, is understood to be an instrument in the spread of *romanitas* through this analogy and associates himself with Rome's dominance in the world.

A great portion of this chapter was concerned with the iconography of hunting mosaics in a domestic context. It is also important to consider the spaces that these mosaics occupied, their intended audiences, and the ways in which messages were communicated to them. The hunting mosaics at Piazza Armerina contain a particularly useful set of scenes that take advantage of several valences of hunting iconography for the benefit of the owner's aristocratic self-representation. Likely constructed in the early fourth century, the Sicilian villa complex of Piazza Armerina contains a sprawling villa with over 50 excavated rooms and several corridors, many of which were decorated with polychrome mosaics (Figure 30); Wilson notes that approximately 3,500 m^2 of floor mosaics have been discovered at the site.[131] Because the southern part of Sicily is in close proximity to North Africa and the mosaics found at the site closely resemble the works of African craftsmen, it is most likely that North African mosaicists constructed the mosaics at the villa. Although the identity of the owner is not known with certainty, the size of the building and the quality of decoration within suggest that the owner was of quite high status, exceeding that of most homeowners.[132]

Movement within the villa was most likely directed, and the northern side of the peristyle constituted an area reserved mostly for private movement, while the southern side was often visited by guests. Owing to the difference in audiences between the different

[131] Wilson 1983: 15.
[132] Liebeschuetz 2015: 376.

sides of the peristyle, the décor of these areas were influenced to fit the needs of the owner.[133] As mentioned throughout this chapter, hunting scenes were often used in the aristocrat's pursuit of positive self-representation, and such subject matter was appropriate for areas in which outsiders were expected to frequent. The two floor mosaics in the villa which most strongly exemplify the social significance of hunting iconography are the "Small Hunt" and "Great Hunt" mosaics, both constructed in the fourth century. In order to fully understand the messages that were communicated to the viewers of these mosaics, it is necessary to study their locations within the villa complex and the functions of the spaces which they decorated.

The Small Hunt mosaic decorated the floor of room 23 of Piazza Armerina, accessible from the northern side of the peristyle. The room's location in relation to the peristyle suggests that it was not visited as frequently the rooms on the southern side; a hunting scene here would be expected to have had a lesser contribution to the villa owner's self-representation. Indeed, Wilson concedes that the exact function of this room is not immediately clear; he proposes that it may have been a bedroom, possibly reserved in part for guests of the villa,[134] and Liebeschuetz classifies room 23 as a "relatively minor reception room.[135]" Regardless of the room's exact function in the villa, it is agreed that guests were often admitted into the room and thus, they would have been the primary audience for this mosaic. As a result, the iconography of the Small Hunt mosaic was most likely selected to display the villa owner in an ideal manner to visitors.

[133] Scott 2004: 44.
[134] Wilson 1983: 24.
[135] Liebeschuetz 2015: 376.

The mosaic itself contains five registers that depict generic hunts, a sacrifice to Diana, and an open-air picnic (Figure 31). The hunting episodes are mostly realistic; the prey are ordinary animals and the hunters at the banquet appear to be richly dressed.[136] The central scene depicting a sacrifice to Diana, the goddess of the hunt, is interpreted as a celebration of *virtus* and *pietas*.[137] The fulfillment of rites to the goddess of the hunt would have been interpreted as an act to invoke divine protection, and its inclusion was intended to attribute the success of the hunt to the villa owner and his actions. The open-air picnic, on the other hand, was deliberately included to reflect the villa owner's treatment of his guests. Raeck asserts that in some cases, hunting scenes were used to evoke general feelings of fortune and enjoyment, and that such scenes were typically found in rooms often visited by guests.[138] The seemingly expensive banquet in the scene alludes to the bounty of the estate and the fact that the patron treated his guests well. This suggests that the patron was willing to devote his own resources for the sole purpose of entertaining his guests. Therefore, he is presented as an ideal host in this scene as well as a virtuous and *pius* hunter.

On the other hand, the Great Hunt mosaic at Piazza Armerina was situated on the floor of a transverse corridor running adjacent to the eastern side of the peristyle. The mosaic shows scenes of different aspects of animal capture for the *venationes* of the amphitheater (Figure 32). A party of hunters can be seen engaging with a wide assortment of wild animals including elephants, hippopotamuses, and rhinoceroses. At the center of the hallway, boats are being loaded with the newly captured animals and at either end of

[136] Wilson 1983: 24.
[137] Dunbabin 1978 202-203.
[138] Raeck 1997: 35.

the mosaic, a personification is present. The figure on the northern apse has been destroyed and is consequently unrecognizable, but the figure in the southern apse is a woman seated alongside an elephant and a tigress; these personifications are thought to represent the East and West, indicating the sources of wild game present in the mosaic.[139] The presence of this collection of exotic animals from different areas of the empire in a single location likely served a purpose in the overall message of the mosaic. Scott asserts that the personifications of provinces observed in the apses of the corridor oversee the transport of exotic creatures into Rome, and that such a display represented the Roman senatorial aristocrat's power.[140] The collection of animals from various geographical locations in this scene was symbolic of Rome's dominion over other parts of the world. Just as the other *venatio* scenes mentioned in this chapter, the Great Hunt mosaic reflects the spirit of *romanitas* and the villa owner expresses his claim to power through this scene.

This large corridor is said to have functioned as a vestibule to a rather large audience hall. In addition to the rich, figural scene that adorned the floor in this space, the architectural decoration of the adjoining basilica was also intended to amaze the guests. The 420 m^2 room that was accessible from the Great Hunt corridor is believed to have been an audience hall, likely designed for parties and banquets. The floor was adorned with panels of polychrome *opus sectile* mosaics, while the walls were covered in marble veneer.[141] The expansive hunting mosaic before the of the basilica was designed to amaze the viewer before entering. By including this hunt scene as the primary decoration of the

[139] Wilson 1983: 24-25.
[140] Scott 2004: 46.
[141] Wilson 1983: 25.

corridor, the patron was able advertise his *virtus* and his Roman identity to a large volume of people.

In conclusion, hunting scenes in later Roman mosaics were modes of expressing a patron's *virtus* and were opportunities for an aristocrat to imagine himself as the ideal Roman male. Idealized hunts, whether represented as serene, idyllic settings that promised nature's bounty or as sensational, action-packed depictions were not the reality for most aristocrats, but they served as models of activity for the virtuous Roman male. Mythological allusions in hunting mosaics were also effective in expressing a patron's superior qualities. Notions of exoticism, *romanitas*, and munificence added layers of meaning to a traditional motif, and in general, hunting scenes were a popular and commonly understood metaphor for *virtus* across the empire.

Chapter 3: Hunting Scenes and the Display of Cultural Values on Late Antique Roman Silverware

Well into the late antique period, silver vessels such as caskets, plates, and cups were often elaborately decorated with *repoussé* figural scenes. Images associated with hunting are especially popular on these kinds of luxury goods because they served a patron in his own self-representation, but because of the inherent value of silver, vessels of this material were not as widely commissioned as works from other media. Therefore, hunting scenes on silverware must be interpreted in ways that account for the original context of the object and to whom it was displayed. Much like hunting scenes on sarcophagi and mosaics, those on silverware were used to allude to the owner's *virtus* to his guests. Furthermore, references to the elite educational system of late antique aristocrats can be discerned through an examination of hunting scenes in this medium, allowing another aspect of social status to be displayed. In addition, the advent of Christianity as the dominant religion of the later empire also influenced the ways in which these scenes were interpreted by contemporary viewers, and their appeal to patrons both Christian and pagan.

In this chapter, I discuss hunting scenes on late antique silver plate and the ways in which this kind of imagery presented the patron as an ideal late-Roman aristocrat. As luxury goods that were commissioned well into late antiquity, silver vessels communicated messages through hunting imagery that were employed as expressions of *virtus*. This allusion to an established visual tradition associating patrons with the virtues of a hunter also appealed to the late antique aristocrat's desire to be associated with the classical tradition. I explore the appeal of hunting scenes as decoration on the silverware of status-

conscious Romans. A study of hunting scenes on silverware thus reveals the values of elite Roman society through the integrated references to wealth, education, and social status. Hunting scenes in this medium drew their longevity, at least in part, upon the fluidity of this kind of imagery; it could be easily adapted to suit the needs of patrons regardless of their occupation or location within the empire, and the versatility of this imagery ensured that it appealed to Romans long after the early imperial period.

Before I begin my analysis of the different kinds of scenes found on Roman silverware, it is necessary to discuss the nature of the evidence. Many of the extant silver plates that are examined in this chapter were recovered from hoards scattered throughout the Roman world. It is generally understood that the burial of a hoard containing precious metals such as silver was carried out in order to safeguard one's valuables.[142] Millett, on the other hand, considers the possibility that such depositions might have had a votive purpose, arguing against interpreting the archaeological finds of hoards based solely on their monetary values or materials and instead, they are best studied in relation to one another in a greater context of other phenomena.[143] For example, I propose that the cultural value of these objects may have influenced an owner's decision to bury a hoard of precious objects. Regardless of the original intent of the owner in depositing his hoard, the objects within it must have held some value to him, whether financial or otherwise.

Unlike mosaics and sarcophagi, silver vessels were luxury objects, the ownership of which was not readily accessible to those outside of the elite. As such, one must consider

[142] Millett 1994: 100.
[143] Millett 1994: 104.

the medium in connection to imagery; the ornate designs that were imprinted on silver plates bestowed value to the object in addition to the material itself. The connection between the intrinsic value of silver and the value of silver plates as art objects cannot be overlooked, since the subject matter of the silver plate was in part determined by the status or aspirations of the owners. This point will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter.

Despite the fact that the examples I discuss in this chapter originate from different parts of the empire, there are no significant differences in imagery among geographic locations that would affect the interpretation of hunting scenes in this medium. Although certain hoards such as the Boscoreale Treasure are known to have survived from the early to high imperial periods, silverware from the late antique period constitutes the best corpus of the medium for studying imagery. Moreover, the chronological development of hunting imagery in the late antique period is rather difficult to trace; aside from small bodies of silver plate that were stamped with the name of the emperor at the time of manufacture, few plates can be firmly dated between the fourth and the sixth to seventh centuries AD.[144] These limitations hinder any definitive analysis of hunting scenes on silver plate within a narrow time period; however, for the purposes of this chapter, a general study of silverware from the fourth to the sixth centuries is appropriate. Bearing these considerations in mind, I argue that the examples of hunting scenes that are discussed here, created over the course of the late Roman period and found throughout different locations of the empire, are

[144] Mundell Mango 1997: 83.

reasonably representative of the genre and reflects its cultural significance in the late antique period.

The silver objects chosen for the examination were found in a domestic context and were often commissioned by their owners, similarly to the mosaics from the previous chapter of this thesis. Furthermore, silver plates, often decorated with elaborate scenes which would have been observed by diners during a meal, were primarily used in the context of dining. The subject matter of these scenes reflected the tastes of their owners and the repetition of similar motifs that can be observed on extant vessels can reveal the popularity of certain kinds of imagery. Reece, in his review of Lambert Schneider's *Die Domäne als Weltbild* and Wulf Raeck's *Modernisierte Mythen*, lists three levels of intent concerning the interpretation of hunting imagery on silver plates: the patron who commissioned the work, the artist who crafted it, and the spectator who viewed it.[145] Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the primary viewers of these scenes were the patron and his guests, and that the meanings of the scenes probably differed between the two. Because of this, it is necessary to consider both the patron's intended message that accompanied the scene as well as the guest's reception of the image.

A window into the reception of scenes on Roman tableware is provided by several literary sources. In Vergil's third *Eclogue*, Menalcas offers two wooden cups as a prize for a contest concerning mastery of the panpipes:

> Verum, id quod multo tute ipse fatebere maius,
> insanire libet quoniam tibi, pocula ponam
> fagina, caelatum divini opus Alcimedontis;
> lenta quibus torno facili superaddita vitis

[145] Reece 1997: 147.

> diffusos hedera vestit pallente corymbos:
> in medio duo signa, Conon, et—quis fuit alter,
> descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
> tempora quae messor, quae curvus arator haberet?
> Necdum illis labra admovi, sed condita servo.[146]

The fact that Menalcas, a farmer in a pastoral setting, reserves the use of such finely crafted cups to honour the victor of the competition, rather than for his personal use at mealtimes, suggests that certain elements of tableware were valued more for their appearance and social value than for their practical use. With respect to silverware specifically, the function of tableware in an owner's self-representation can be further observed through the character of Trimalchio in Petronius' *Satyricon*. Describing his taste for luxury goods, the wealthy freedman states the following about the silverware which he owns:

> In argento plane studiosus sum. Habeo scyphos urnales plus minus quemadmodum Cassandra occidit filios suos, et pueri mortui iacent sic ut vivere putes. Habeo capidem quam reliquit patronus meus, ubi Daedalus Niobam in equum Troianum includit. Nam Hermerotis pugnas et Petraitis in poculis habeo, omnia ponderosa; meum enim intellegere nulla pecunia vendo.[147]

Here, Trimalchio's silver vessels are decorated with mythological narratives, and his refusal to sell these objects also reflects the fact that this sort of tableware was valued by

[146] Verg. Ecl. III.35-43. "But (and here's what even you will admit is far more), seeing that you are bent on folly, I will stake a pair of beech-wood cups, the embossed work of divine Alcimedon. On them a pliant vine, laid on by the graver's skill, is entwined with spreading clusters of pale ivy. In the middle are two figures, Conon and—who was the other, who marked out with his rod the whole heavens for man, what seasons the reaper should claim and what the stooping ploughman? Not yet have I touched them with my lips, but keep them safely stored." Trans. Fairclough 1916.

[147] Petron. *Sat.* 52.1-4. "I myself am very fond of silver. I've about a hundred three-gallon urns done in relief showing how Cassandra killed her own children, and the boys are lying there so dead that you would think that they were alive. I've a bowl that my patron bequeathed to me, on which Daedalus is shutting Niobe in the Trojan horse. And I've got the fights of Hermeros and Petraites engraved on goblets, all of which are heavy; of course I don't sell products of my expertise for any amount of money." Trans. Schmeling 2020.

patrons for their artistic value. Although this passage is of a comedic nature, the humour of Trimalchio's description must be rooted in the known reception of Roman silverware from the perspective of the social-climbing, status-conscious citizen. Because of this, it can be observed that silver tableware had a definite place in the Roman house as a marker of wealth and the selection of imagery in this medium was a way in which an owner could lay claim to high status.

References to a patron's power and high standing in hunting scenes on silverware can be seen on certain vessels and have been remarked upon by scholars of late antique art. Hunting scenes as expressions of wealth and as expressions of power are two closely related aspects of this kind of imagery, since both are connected to status and the owner's membership of the Roman elite. While images of the hunt and subsequent banquet were ways in which the owner's estate could be showcased to his guests, focusing on or even overemphasizing the grandeur of his property enabled the plate's owner to identify as a man of power through his private art.

On silverware, the most basic way in which a patron could advertise himself as a wealthy individual of high status was to display scenes that included idealized depictions of his estate. This form of self-representation in domestic art was employed in mosaics of this period as well, and the kinds of imagery that were used remain largely similar. The scene found on the central medallion of the Great Cesena Dish, dated to the mid-fourth century, serves as an example of this kind of bucolic subject matter (Figures 33, 34). The top half of the medallion shows a group of five people gathered around a table upon which

lies an animal, possibly a piglet.[148] Slaves can be seen on both sides of the table; the one on the left side of the scene is shown pouring water over the hand of a seated diner, while the one on the right carries a jug of wine and a cup. Hanging behind the central figure are a pair of parted draperies, but the plants on either side of the figure indicate that the scene takes place in an outdoor setting. The lower half of the medallion shows a slave attending to a horse on the left side while a large building can be seen on the right. The two central scenes are surrounded by a circular border featuring floral and vegetal motifs.

Richard Reece refers to this scene as a "pause in a great hunt for a meal."[149] Indeed, the outdoor setting of the banquet and the decoration of the rim of the plate support this interpretation. The presence of the attendants, the elaborate table setting, and the abundance of food can be interpreted as signs of the owner's own wealth. The scene would have been recognizable as a hunting banquet to the owner of the plate and its viewers, and therefore it would have served as a visual representation of not only the owner's estate, but also of his generosity towards his guests. Moreover, the banquet scene implies that the owner's wealth is great enough that he is able to provide an extravagant experience for his guests with minimal difficulty, further underscoring his claims to wealth and status.

Another depiction of a sumptuous hunting banquet can be found on the central medallion of the Great Hunting Dish from the Sevso Treasure, dated to the late fourth or early fifth century (Figures 35, 36).[150] The central medallion of the dish consists of three main registers. The top register shows a hunter on horseback pursuing elk, while attendants

[148] Toynbee and Painter 1986: 44. See also Vroom 2007: 333.
[149] Reece 1997: 146.
[150] See Mundell Mango and Bennett 1994, 83-97, for detailed description of the plate.

to the right of the prey prepare a net to trap them. Below the groundline is the central register, in which a hunting banquet can be seen taking place. Five diners are seated, sharing a meal around a table upon which sits a plate of fish; the diner on the right side of the scene is shown holding a hand up to a dog's face, possibly feeding or petting it. Standing either side of the table are horses tied to trees, which also serve as supports for a canopy above the table. Below the table, a slave on the left holds a plate of food and one on the right holds a cup. On the lower left side of the scene, a slave can be seen butchering the meat of a boar, most likely in preparation for the central banquet.[151] To the right of the servants, a seated attendant fishes from the river in front of him, extending his line and preparing to reel in a fish. The lowermost register of the medallion shows a hunter urging his dog towards a boar, a deer, and a sheep.

The Dominus Iulius mosaic discussed in the second chapter of this thesis (Figure 22) served a function similar to the central scenes of the Cesena and Sevso plates. As discussed in the previous chapter, the inclusion of the building in the mosaic situates the scene in a Roman town, serving to ground the depiction in reality and allude to the idea that the owner's estate was as grand as it appeared in the mosaic. The effect of this strengthens the connection between the patron of the mosaic and the greatness of his estate in accordance with his own self-representation. Likewise, the outdoor setting and the hunting imagery of the silver plates indicate that these are depictions of a hunting banquet. The allusion to the owners' affluence is also present on both plates; the hunting banquet attended to by several slaves suggests that the owner of the plate was a man of means,

[151] Mundell Mango and Bennett 1994, 86.

possessing the resources to host an extravagant event on his property. On the plates, the background elements of the imagery were used to present the patron as a wealthy aristocrat, acquainted with the sport of hunting and willing to share his bounty with his guests.

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Reece notes that the imagery found on the *Meerstadtplatte* of the Kaiseraugst Treasure (c. AD 340) was arguably selected in order for the patron to demonstrate his dominion over the land and sea (Figure 37).[152] The central image of the plate shows a sprawling building, presumably a villa, that looms over a large body of water within which a large number of sea creatures swim while fishermen traverse the water in boats. The band that decorates the border of the plate consists of alternating images featuring geometric patterns and terrestrial hunts. The depiction of land and sea encircling the villa at the center of the scene is a statement of the plate owner's power; unlike the depictions of terrestrial hunts found on the Cesena and Sevso plates, the inclusion of aquatic activities suggests that

[152] Reece 1997: 146-147.

the owner's estate is grand and covers a vast area of land and sea, both sustaining wildlife that is available to hunt for the owner.

The ideal nature of the setting can be explored in further detail. As mentioned previously, the hunting scene on the Sevso dish (Figure 34) represents a fictitious hunt and hunting banquet, not events that had occurred in reality. The settings of the scenes on the central medallion were contrived with the goal of presenting the patron's estate in an ideal fashion. Here, the concern for the plate's owner was not to advertise his wealth by a display of the true likeness of his property, but rather to associate himself with the typical activities of a model aristocrat. It is also important to note that the imagery did not always reflect the real setting or magnitude of the owner's property, and that the scenes rendered on these plates might have greatly exaggerated the wealth of the patron. This mode of decoration was not meant to record the scale of the owner's estate as it existed in reality, but rather to display his wealth and presented him, along with his possessions, in a way that would impress his guests.

Swift likewise comments on the performative aspect of the depiction of hunting banquets on silver vessels during this period. The artificial hunt and banquet presented on a silver plate such as the one from the Sevso Treasure reflects an ideal setting in which rigid, stratified social identities are demonstrated.[153] The owner of the plate assumes the role of the provider for his guests; whether or not the guests are of equal or lower status to him in the scene, they are dependent on him and on his beneficence for their meal. The

[153] Swift 2007: 397-398.

depiction of the banquet on the Sevso dish, therefore, served to reinforce social hierarchies and remind guests that its owner was a man of wealth and power in Roman society.

In her study of architectural representations in late antique art, Carile comments on the relationship between subject matter and medium in the expression of status on silverware. She argues that the simultaneous appearance of hunting, banquets, and villas in domestic art served to memorialize the estate of the patron, and its depiction on a silver plate ensured that the image, whether rooted in reality or imagination, could be passed on through successive generations.[154] Representations of the hunt and the owner's estate were rendered on silverware so as to ensure that the patron would be associated with the fabulous display pictured on the plate. The estate itself became an ideal that was somewhat separate from the owner; regardless of whether the plate was in the possession of the original patron or one of his descendants, the image of the estate remained constant, a reminder of the extravagant lifestyle of its current owner. This kind of expression of status, therefore, was not necessarily limited to an individual, and the plate could have been used by several owners in order to communicate their aristocratic identities. The ideal representation of the hunt, banquet, and villa was symbolic of aristocratic life in general, and was easily adapted to serve the same purpose for a number of elite Romans.

Claims to a patron's elite education were often expressed through the display of mythological hunting scenes on silverware. Peter Brown argues that *paideia* was the backbone of a common culture for elites from all regions of the empire in the late antique

[154] Carile 2016: 32.

period.[155] He maintains that the civic leaders of the Greek East were not only well-versed in literary culture, but also sought the services of grammarians and rhetoricians in order to ensure that their own children would undergo a rigorous education in classical Greek. The inaccessibility of such a high level of education entailed that this system was reserved for a select few, most often the preeminent and wealthiest families of a city. He also mentions that in every province of the empire, imperial administrators would regularly conduct business with these local elites, all of whom shared a common background of *paideia* and who considered it emblematic of their high status.

Moreover, Brown notes that along with the strict educational upbringing of the elite came some degree of social mobility. Although few specific examples of men who ascended the social hierarchy through their education are known, enrollment in *paideia* allowed the sons of men of lower status the opportunity to advance in Roman society.[156] Although the cities and status backgrounds of aristocrats varied across the empire, a unifying thread between them was their shared knowledge of the classical literary tradition. Expressions of erudition in the visual arts were especially appealing for status-conscious Romans, both elite and non-elite, since conspicuously displaying imagery that only learned individuals could appreciate would have entailed a form of membership into this select group. Certain scenes that touched upon mythological or political themes, including those that depicted pastoral or hunting activities, may have stimulated conversation during and after dining.[157] Silverware became an appropriate medium for such displays, likely owing

[155] Brown 1992: 35-41.
[156] Brown 1992: 39. An example of one such man who ascended in Roman society after having been educated whom Brown cites is St. Augustine, from Thagaste.
[157] Lapatin 2014: 141.

to the high cost of the metal which, in conjunction with scenes demonstrating an owner's *paideia*, ensured that the plate fulfilled its purpose as a marker of elite identity.

Because of the longstanding association between hunting and aristocracy, it is natural that hunting imagery in the visual arts became an expression of a citizen's erudition and a way in which he could lay claim to elite status. One mode of expression for a patron in his display of his educational background was the use of mythological hunting scenes on silver plate. Like the mythological sarcophagi discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, Meleager was a popular subject for this kind of scene on silverware. The hunts of Meleager, most famously the Calydonian boar hunt, were fitting for depictions on silverware, especially in the context of the broader appeal of hunting in late antiquity. Stirling attributes this popularity to the inclination for elite patrons to liken their own qualities and pastimes to those of figures from myth.[158] In the medium of the silver plate, the patron assumed the role of the heroic Meleager through displays of the figure's hunting expeditions; unlike the images of Meleager that appeared on sarcophagi, however, the hunter was analogized to the living patron, rather than to the deceased. Although the purpose of depicting Meleager on both sarcophagi and silverware was to aggrandize the character of the patron, the hero's likeness on silverware was used to establish a connection between the living patron and his *virtus* to the viewer in his presence, rather than allude to his character in the memory of a mourner.

One plate from the seventh century, now in the Hermitage Museum, shows Meleager alongside his companion Atalanta, accompanied by horses, attendants, and

[158] Stirling 2005: 86.

hunting dogs (Figure 38). The figures of Meleager and Atalanta can be seen leaning on their spears in the center of the composition, their bodies forming a symmetrical arrangement. A horse stands behind Atalanta and an attendant appears to the left of her holding the body of a dead animal, while another attendant holds a spear to the right of Meleager. In the background, a large building looms in the distance and a tree branch extends to the top of the scene from the left side of the image. A pair of hunting dogs and a net are visible in the foreground. The mythological allusions on this plate were plainly visible in the choice of subject matter to those who were familiar with the mythological tale of Meleager. Because of this, the references to *virtus* and aristocratic life would have been understood by an educated viewer; although knowledge of the story of Meleager and Atalanta were not necessary in order to understand the message of the plate, it would have provided an additional layer of meaning to the guests if they shared in the standard forms of elite education.

Similarly, the central medallion of Meleager Plate from the Sevso Treasure, likely from the early fifth century, depicts the hunter and his companions after the slaughter of the Calydonian boar (Figures 39, 40). Meleager occupies the central position of this scene, seated atop the boar and resting his spear along the left side of his body, while Atalanta stands behind the hunter's shoulder immediately to the left. The figures flanking the left and right sides of the scene are understood to be the Dioscuri; Mundell Mango has identified the figure on the left as Castor and the one on the right as Pollux.[159] Behind

[159] Mundell Mango and Bennett 1994: 123-124.

Meleager, two hunters can be seen holding weapons, directing their gazes towards the right side of the scene.

According to Mundell Mango, this scene, along with other examples of silverware which the pair of Meleager and Atalanta, exemplify the double themes of love and hunting.[160] There is a possibility that these themes which are visible on the silver hunting dishes of late antiquity are related to the "twin grand themes" of Roman mythological sarcophagi, *virtus* and *amor*, as identified by Koortbojian.[161] On the Meleager plates, a continuity between Severan and late antique art can be observed. Despite the fact that the composition of the scenes on silverware differ greatly from those found on third century sarcophagi, the themes which are embodied through this kind of imagery remain the same. It is possible that the themes of love and hunting which are visible on the Meleager plates were chosen in order to demonstrate the patron's familiarity with the mythological traditions of the past, as well as the artistic traditions of this kind of iconography that were established centuries prior. Whereas the themes of love and hunting resonated with mourners on sarcophagi through their evocations of youth and lost potential, the twin themes on silverware celebrate the owner in the present, alluding to his prosperity in life.

Another mythological subject associated with the hunt who was featured on silver vessels in late antiquity was Achilles, and scenes featuring the legendary fighter at times bore representations of his youth. On a plate from the Kaiseraugst Treasure (Figure 41), episodes from the Greek hero's childhood and rearing by the centaur Chiron are depicted

[160] Mundell Mango and Bennett 1994: 20.
[161] Koortbojian 2015: 295. See the first chapter of this thesis for my discussion of these themes on mythological sarcophagi.

on the rim. The central medallion of the plate depicts the discovery of Achilles on the island of Skyros, while the octagonal border of the plate contains various scenes from the childhood of the Greek hero.[162] One scene at the top of the border is a scene in which Chiron teaches Achilles hunting and riding; the young Achilles can be seen mounted atop the centaur, poised to launch a spear towards a boar that stands in front of them.

Although the hunt scene is not emphasized to a great degree on the plate, its inclusion as one of the defining moments of Achilles' childhood is notable. Leader-Newby reports that the plate's iconography emphasizes certain qualities of Achilles' education; it is archaic since he was trained in the hunt and in fighting, as well as idiosyncratic since he was educated by the centaur Chiron. Because of these traits, the scenes from the Achilles plate appealed to a knowledge concerning the upbringing of heroes.[163] By containing an episode in which Chiron instructs Achilles in the hunt, an educated viewer would have been reminded of the unique upbringing of heroes of the mythical past. Through this allusion to the education of Achilles, the viewer could call to mind the plate owner's own upbringing in the *paideia*. The hunt scene, therefore, plays a role alongside the other scenes from Achilles' childhood in the presentation of the hero's education and in the references to the owner's own educational background. Altogether, this scene functions as a reminder of the patron's familiarity with the mythological subject matter, as well as a claim to his status through his education.

[162] For a more detailed description of the plate, see Leader-Newby 2004: 125-127.
[163] Leader-Newby 2004: 129.

In addition to their allusions to the owner's education, hunting scenes on silverware may have appealed to late antique aristocrats in part due to the religiously neutral nature of this kind of subject matter. Although Christianity became the official religion of the empire starting in the third century, there appears to have been a strong interest in secular imagery in the private sphere during the late antique period that appealed to Christian and non-Christian owners alike. Brown refutes the idea that the persistence of secular themes from the earlier imperial periods indicates a resurgence of interest in the Roman past. Instead, he argues that an established repertoire of scenes found new meaning in late antique society, serving the needs of aristocrats whose wealth was greater than the average aristocrat centuries before.[164]

With respect to hunting scenes, Brown refers to them as part of the *phantasia*, or "pomp and circumstance" of upper-class society.[165] Aristocratic activities such as hunting were often displayed in the art of the late antique aristocrat in order to make known his successes in life, and Christians held no reservations about participating in such activities. Because of this, hunting imagery remained symbolic of a man's fortune throughout the early imperial and late antique periods. While the intended audiences and owners changed along with the dominant religion of the empire, the hunt was a dominant theme in later Roman art owing to imagery's preexisting popularity and its compatibility with the Christian lifestyle at the time.

[164] Brown 1980: 22.
[165] Brown 1980: 23.

Furthermore, although the activity of hunting implicitly involves the slaughter of animals, Christian writers appeared to have no qualms about employing hunting in listing praises of others. An epigram of the fourth century poet and rhetorician Ausonius, for example, concerns a picture of a lion being slain by the emperor Gratian: "Quod leo tam tenui patitur sub harundine letum, non vires ferri, sed ferientis agunt."[166] In this quote, Ausonius lauds the hunting ability of Gratian and in turn, his abilities as an emperor; by presenting Gratian as a successful hunter, Ausonius commends the *virtus* and strength of Gratian himself. It is notable that Ausonius himself was a Christian; despite the fact that ideals of love and gentleness were present in the Christian faith, hunting was still thought to have been a respectable activity among the elites.

Moreover, the fifth century Christian writer Sidonius Apollinaris also praises the hunting abilities of his friend Potentinus in one of his letters; in his letter, Sidonius lists several merits of Potentinus that the writer deems worthy of mention:

> Veneror in actionibus tuis, quod multa bono cuique imitabilia geris. colis ut qui sollertissime; aedificas ut qui dispositissime; venaris ut qui efficacissime; pascis ut qui exactissime; iocaris ut qui facetissime; iudicas ut qui aequissime; suades ut qui sincerissime; commoveris ut qui tardissime; placaris ut qui celerrime; redamas ut qui fidelissime.[167]

Sidonius Apollinaris was a Christian bishop who was known to have written poetry, as Leatherbury notes, that was influenced by earlier Roman literary traditions and intended

[166] Auson. 19.30. "The death which the lion suffers through so frail a reed is due, not to the weapon's power, but to the wielder's." Trans. Evelyn-White, 1921.
[167] Sid. Apoll. Epist. 5.9.2. "In your various activities I note with admiration the many examples that your conduct sets before all good men. You cultivate your land with the greatest skill, you build on the most methodical plan, you hunt in the most successful way, you entertain1 to perfection, your jests are triumphs of wit, your judgments are absolutely fair, your advice as sound as could be; no one could be more slow to anger, more quick to relent, or more faithful in returning affection." Trans. Anderson 1965.

for both Christian and secular contexts.[168] Among the upstanding qualities of his friends, Sidonius lists Potentinus' hunting abilities as source of praise. It is apparent that the connection between hunting and upstanding character lasted from the imperial period into late antiquity. It can also be argued that hunting remained an important marker for aristocratic status, even among Christian circles, in the later empire.

The relations between Christianity, silverware, and ownership can be explored through a study of the Risley Park lanx, now lost (Figure 42).[169] The lanx, likely created in the late fourth century, contains a central scene in which two hunters engage with a wild boar. The hunter on the right can be seen thrusting his spear towards the creature, while a hunting dog lunges towards it as well. Despite the fact that this scene is non-mythological, the influence of the boar hunts of Meleager sarcophagi, such as that on the Doria Pamphilij Gallery vessel (Figure 6), is clear from the arrangement of figures as well as the subject matter. Around this central hunt, pieces of the border can be seen containing images of animal hunts. Additionally, an inscription is known to have been included alongside the scene, reading "*EXSVPERIVS EPISCOPVS ECLESIAE BOGIENSI DEDIT*," followed by a Chi-Rho symbol.[170] This dedication, recording that the dish was given by a bishop to a church and accompanied by an unequivocally Christian symbol, indicates that the lanx was intended for a Christian audience. Although it has been argued that the lanx served some

[168] Leatherbury 2017: 35. A lanx is simply a Roman platter, but they often had a ritual function which might have been transferred to the Christian context.
[169] The lanx itself was discovered by a farmworker at Risley Park, Derbyshire, in 1729. It is accepted that, after accidently recovering the lanx during ploughing, the dish was broken into several pieces and distributed among the other workers at the farm. A drawing of certain pieces of the lanx, however, was sent to William Stukeley, who published it. See Johns and Painter 1995.
[170] "The bishop Exuperius gave this to the church of Bogiensis." Trans. my own. The identification of the word "*BOGIENSI*" in the inscription is contested; see Johns 1981, 66-69.

function within the church during liturgies,[171] its exact function is unknown, and it may have been the case that the church itself was situated on an estate.[172]

The motif of the boar hunt functions as an allusion to *virtus*. Unlike the boar hunts found on sarcophagi, however, this scene also evokes ideas of wealth and prosperity which, along with *virtus*, were markers of the lifestyle of the Roman aristocrat; Johns and Painter argue that the Risley Park scene is likely meant to evoke "the good life" to which late antique citizens aspired.[173] The fact that the subject matter of the plate was secular and influenced by mythological art was apparently not a concern for its Christian dedicator; Johns and Painter assert that regardless of the kind of imagery featured on the plate, it became a Christian vessel upon being given to the church and might have been used during church services.[174] Although the image of the boar hunt itself bears no strong references to Christianity, the plate's use and the religious identity of the owner made it suitable for a Christian audience. The lanx's religious dedication appears to have subsumed any reservations concerning pagan allusions found on the central panel, thus rendering the vessel suitable for ownership by a Christian citizen or estate.

Although the hunting scenes found on late antique silverware are largely devoid of any references to Christianity, inscriptions on plates may be used to identify whether the owner himself observed the faith, as has been shown through the inscription present on the Risley Park lanx. In addition to the grand hunting and banquet scene on the Great Hunting Dish from the Sevso treasure (Figure 34), the inscription around the rim of the dish reads:

[171] Johns and Painter 1991: 13.
[172] Painter 1997: 98.
[173] Johns and Painter 1991: 11.
[174] Johns and Painter 1991: 13.

"*H(*a)*EC SEVSO TIBI DVRENT PER SAECVLA MVLTA POSTERIS VT PROSINT VASCVLA DIGNA TVIS*."[175] The dedication to Sevso encircles the plate, and at the top in between the beginning and end of the text, a Chi-Rho monogram is visible. This strongly suggests that the recipient, Sevso, was a Christian, and that his faith was known to those who gave him the plate as a gift.

Like their pagan counterparts, wealthy Christian aristocrats were also concerned with expressing their status, and in addition to this, expressions of their faith became manifest in their private art. In her 2018 study on early Christian silverware, Leader-Newby states that, as evident through domestic hoards of the fourth century, expressions of Christianity became integrated into the self-representation of the Roman elite. The presence of the Chi-Rho in the inscription, at the point in which the text begins and ends, constitutes an integral yet discreet part of the design; Sevso's Christian faith is evident only to those who study the plate closely, but it nevertheless shows that Sevso's faith was an aspect of his life that he deemed worthy of display.[176]

It can be argued that along with wealth and *virtus*, Chrisitanity was an important marker of identity for certain late antique aristocrats. Christian symbols on these vessels, like hunting scenes on silverware in general, functioned as claims to an exclusive group. The juxtaposition of imagery associated with Christianity and aristocracy allowed wealthy Christians to express their faith and their high status simultaneously. The universal appeal of hunting scenes enabled them to find and retain their meaning when featured alongside

[175] "May these, O Sevso, yours for many ages be, small vessels fit to serve your offspring worthily." Trans. Leatherbury 2017.
[176] Leader-Newby 2018: 250.

strongly religious imagery. As such, the messages which are communicated by the plate concerning wealth, status, and faith were all visible to the learned viewer.

In summary, hunting scenes on late Roman silverware were used to advertise the owner as a man worthy of his aristocratic status. By displaying a scene in which he participates in a hunt followed by a lavish banquet, the owner could demonstrate the greatness of his estate to his guests, as well as his plentiful resources. On the other hand, he could also demonstrate his power and his dominion over the natural world by displaying these kinds of scenes. Because many late Roman aristocrats underwent rigorous educational training in the literature of earlier periods, scenes in which an owner could display his knowledge of myth were particularly attractive in the late antique period as markers of elite identity. Moreover, as Christianity became commonly practiced among the elites across the empire, hunting scenes found popularity owing in part to the religiously neutral nature of this imagery, alongside the established tradition of hunting scenes as symbols of high status; the latter was especially appealing to a class of men who wished to associate themselves publicly with both Christianity and aristocracy.

Conclusion

Throughout these three chapters, it has been demonstrated that hunting scenes were viewed as effective vehicles for patrons to aggrandize their reputation and present themselves as ideal Roman males. The social meanings of the sport ensured that hunting imagery was recognized as an allusion to manliness and high status. Sarcophagi, mosaics, and silver vessels featuring these scenes were sought by men who wished to make their *virtus* known to others and to lay claim to membership in an elite group of Roman citizens. The kinds of hunting scenes that recur across media and throughout time reveal that the values with which elite men wished to be associated remained largely consistent from the imperial period into late antiquity.

While many of the ideas that are expressed through hunting scenes are found across media, such as *virtus* and wealth, they were treated differently depending on the original context of the scene. On sarcophagi, mythological hunting scenes presented legendary figures as comparable to the patrons. Although the nature of hunting scenes shifted from largely mythological to non-mythological owing to the *Entmythologisierung* that took place during the third century, studying the kinds of hunting scenes that were produced in this period of flux has proven useful in understanding the values that were important for patrons in the shaping of their memory on funerary art. It is clear that while the cultural values expressed on sarcophagi remained largely unchanged throughout this period, namely *virtus* and physical strength, the ways in which the values were displayed on sarcophagi sometimes underwent significant transformation.

Scenes depicting episodes from myth such as the Calydonian boar hunt served to communicate the deceased's *virtus* to the viewer. In this case, on sarcophagi such as that from the Doria Pamphilij Gallery (Figure 6). the hunter Meleager served as an *exemplum virtutis,* a figure to whom the Roman male might have aspired in terms of strength and bravery. The lasting influence of scenes depicting the mounted Hippolytus as seen on the Vatican sarcophagus (Figure 7), is evident through later examples of reliefs featuring riders on horseback, such as the rider on the sarcophagus from the Palazzo Mattei II (Figure 8). The way in which the *virtus* of Hippolytus was represented was an effective mode of commemoration for Roman males, which is reinforced by the fact that the motif of the mounted hunter survived long after mythological scenes fell out of fashion. While he is not typically shown engaged in the hunt, the youthful Endymion was sometimes given the attributes of a hunter in order for the patron to be remembered as a man of *virtus*, along with the pleasant narrative of the young man's eternal sleep. The Endymion sarcophagus from the Metropolitan Museum of Art shows the goddess Selene approaching the sleeping youth moments before she takes him as her lover (Figure 10). The pair of Endymion and Selene also rendered this type of scene appropriate for the commemoration of couples, along with scenes featuring the hunter Adonis and his lover, the goddess Aphrodite. For example, the relief found on the Rinuccini sarcophagus (Figure 13) contains a scene of a Roman couple linking hands alongside a scene of Adonis' death during a boar hunt. By emphasizing the *amor* between the two individuals and the *virtus* of the male partner, scenes featuring these mythical hunters alongside their lovers made them desirable memorials for both men and women. Despite this, the changing taste of sarcophagi reliefs

in the third century strongly influenced the subject matter of scenes that were produced and certain myths that could not accommodate these transformations, such as those featuring Adonis, declined in popularity.

Mosaics, on the other hand, largely emphasized traits associated with elite status. Although references to *virtus* were abundant on hunting mosaics, other major ideas that are evoked in this kind of imagery include those associated with wealth, munificence, and Roman identity. Because they would have been seen by invited guests in a patron's home, domestic mosaics were an important part of a homeowner's self-representation especially during the late antique period, a time which saw an increase in wealth and power in an already prosperous group of upper-class citizens. The choice of scenes in domestic decoration therefore is an important demonstration of self-representation and reflects contemporary taste as well as revealing cultural values. For instance, the subject matter of the mosaics at Piazza Armerina varied depending on the function of the room. The Small Hunt mosaic from room 23 of the villa complex shows a scene of a relatively small excursion with finely dressed hunters (Figure 31). On the other hand, the Great Hunt mosaic situated in the transverse corridor adjacent to the peristyle showed a far more complex scene involving a much greater variety of animals (Figure 32). The mosaic found in the peristyle corridor, an area which was most likely frequented by many guests, displayed a far more impressive scene than that found in the minor reception room. From these examples, it is clear that the function of the rooms in a Roman house or villa influenced the kind of hunting scene that was chosen for the mosaic. Moreover, the great number of surviving mosaics from North Africa along with the popularity of North African artisans

and patterns abroad, facilitated a universal understanding of the social function of hunting scenes on mosaic.

Hunting mosaics emphasized several aspects of elite male identity. The owners of these mosaics were presented in ideal terms, as men who were physically capable, had abundant resources, a willingness to provide for their communities, and as exemplars of Rome's dominance in the Mediterranean. By including depictions of a homeowner along with his property in a mosaic, a clear statement of the citizen's wealth could be made, further emphasizing the man's status. The Dominus Iulius mosaic (Figure 22), for example, features a depiction of the mosaic's owner engaged in the hunt with his grand villa in the background and accompanied by attendants; this scene alludes to the patron's wealth by displaying the splendour of his property and the resources available to him in the hunt. Scenes featuring the *venationes* served to remind viewers of the patron's generosity, as well as his ability to donate funds to the arena, again reinforcing his persona as a man of means. The hunting mosaic from Smirat (Figure 27) depicts a *venatio* that is funded by the homeowner; by displaying himself in a scene featuring a staged hunt, the patron Magerius presents himself as a wealthy benefactor whose munificence served the city. Sensational scenes featuring dramatic compositions and at times even mythical creatures were intended to impress viewers and to allude to the skill and physical capabilities of the patron. The peristyle mosaic from the Great Palace of Constantinople, for example, shows a griffin among the scenes of animal violence in the composition (Figure 18). The fantastic elements of the scene underscore the patron's *virtus*; by including such a fearsome creature, the patron implies that the hunt depicted on the mosaic is fit for a man of his skill level.

In a similar manner, hunting scenes in the medium of silverware present the patrons of these works in an idealized fashion which often included depictions of the patronal estate in scenes of the hunting banquet. Instead of the basic allusion to a landowner's property, the hunting banquet afforded more opportunities for patrons to display their wealth and to make statements about the size of their estate. Because of this, at times, patrons overstated the productive and bucolic nature of their property; these exaggerated scenes were nevertheless used to impress a patron's guests and express his high status. The scene decorating the *Meerstadtplatte* of the Kaiseraugst Treasure (Figure 37) serves as an example of the idealization of a patron's estate; the sprawling villa complex along with the bountiful body of water in front of the building, filled with a great number of sea creatures, overstates the abundance of the patron's property and in doing so, it suggests to the viewer that the patron was wealthy, powerful, and held dominion over the land and sea. Since a great number of wealthy men would have been rigorously educated in literature of both the Greek and Roman worlds, hunting scenes that appealed to a guest on an intellectual level were especially desirable for patrons who wished to be associated with this group of elite Romans. Displays of a wealthy Roman's *paideia* were common in hunting scenes on silverware, such as the scene found on the Meleager plate from the Sevso Treasure (Figure 40). By featuring a scene with such strong references to myth, the patron alluded to his familiarity to the narrative, and therefore his education in the literary traditions of the Greco-Roman world.

Furthermore, because the late antique period saw the rise of Christian elites across the Mediterranean, the religiously neutral nature of hunting scenes ensured that they

maintained popularity among Christian and non-Christian patrons alike. The appeal of hunting among Christians is evident from the writings of late antique Christian authors such as Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris; the former praised the emperor Gratian through an allusion to the lion hunt,[177] while the latter cites the hunting abilities of his friend Potentinus as a source of praise.[178] The idea that hunting was strongly associated with ideal masculinity seems to have been unaffected by any reservations about participating in the sport from a Christian perspective. Indeed, the appreciation for hunting scenes on silver appears to have transcended the differences between pagan and Christians, and silver vessels bearing scenes that were heavily influenced by art of the pagan tradition found their way into the ownership of Christians. One such vessel is the Risley Park lanx (Figure 42), a piece of silverware decorated with a hunting scene that bears a strong resemblance to the Calydonian boar hunt sarcophagi of the early third century. The broad appeal of hunting scenes for Christian and pagan owners ensured that this kind of imagery survived throughout the periods of change in the later empire.

Hunting scenes were a commonly understood metaphor for *virtus*, wealth, and high status in the Roman world during the imperial period. This kind of imagery was typically used by patrons in their self-representation and to associate themselves with an upstanding version of the Roman male. The heroic hunters from myth and the idealized hunters of fanciful and fictitious estates served as exemplars to which citizens could aspire, or at least present themselves alongside them. In the media of sarcophagi, mosaics, and silverware,

[177] Auson. 19.30.
[178] Sid. Apoll. *Epist*. 5.9.2.

hunting imagery continued to hold meaning for the Romans long after the beginning of the empire. Additionally, the popularity of hunting scenes in the later empire attests to the fact that hunting scenes were an effective and succinct mode of communicating one's positive qualities to others, and that they held a universal appeal to citizens from different parts of the empire, and of different cultural backgrounds.

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Figures

Fig. 1. Bronze equestrian statue of Domitian, late first century AD, Bacoli, Museum of Baia, (Tuck 2005, Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Sarcophagus with scene in which Meleager's body is carried to his parent's house, c. AD 150, Istanbul, Archaeological Museum. (Zanker and Ewald, Fig. 54).

Fig. 3. Sarcophagus with mourning of Meleager, c. AD 190, Paris, Louvre. (Zanker and Ewald, Fig. 51).

Fig. 4. Child's sarcophagus with mourning of Meleager, c. AD 160, Ostia Antica, Museum. (Zanker and Ewald, Fig. 53).

Fig. 5. Sarcophagus with Calydonian boar hunt, c. AD 160, Frascati, Villa Aldobrandini. (D'Ambra 1988, Fig. 8).

Fig. 6. Sarcophagus with Calydonian boar hunt, c. AD 200, Rome, Doria Pamphilij Gallery. (Zanker and Ewald 2012, Fig. 38).

Fig. 7. Sarcophagus with Hippolytus' departure and hunt, c. AD 220, Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Profano. (Newby 2016, Fig. 6.7).

Fig. 8. Hunting sarcophagus with military leader, late third century, Rome, Palazzo Mattei II. (Borg 2013, Fig. 111).

Fig. 9. Roundel (left) depicting Hadrian standing over the body of a lion, early second century, Rome, Arch of Constantine (Photo by Sara N. James, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/community.11914761).

Fig. 10. Sarcophagus with Selene approaching a nude Endymion, early third century, New York City, Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Zanker and Ewald 2012, Fig. 37).

Fig. 11. Sarcophagus with Selene approaching Endymion clothed as a hunter, c. AD 240, Paris, Louvre. (Zanker and Ewald 2012, Fig. 184).

Fig. 12. Sarcophagus with the death of Adonis, c. AD 220, Vatican, Musei Vaticani. (Borg 2018, Fig. 7).

Fig. 13. Rinuccini Sarcophagus with *vita humana* and Adonis scenes, early third century, Berlin, Berlin Museum. (Brilliant 1992, Fig. 1).

Fig. 14. Worcester Hunt Mosaic, villa at Daphne, Antioch, now in Worcester Art Museum. (Parrish 2017, Fig. 36).

Fig. 15. Detail of hunting mosaic with tigers, entrance to *oecus*, Maison des Chevaux, Carthage, Antiquarium. (Dunbabin 1978, Fig. 24).

Fig. 16. Detail of hunting mosaic with tigers, entrance to *oecus*, Maison des Chevaux, Carthage, Antiquarium. (Dunbabin 1978, Fig. 25).

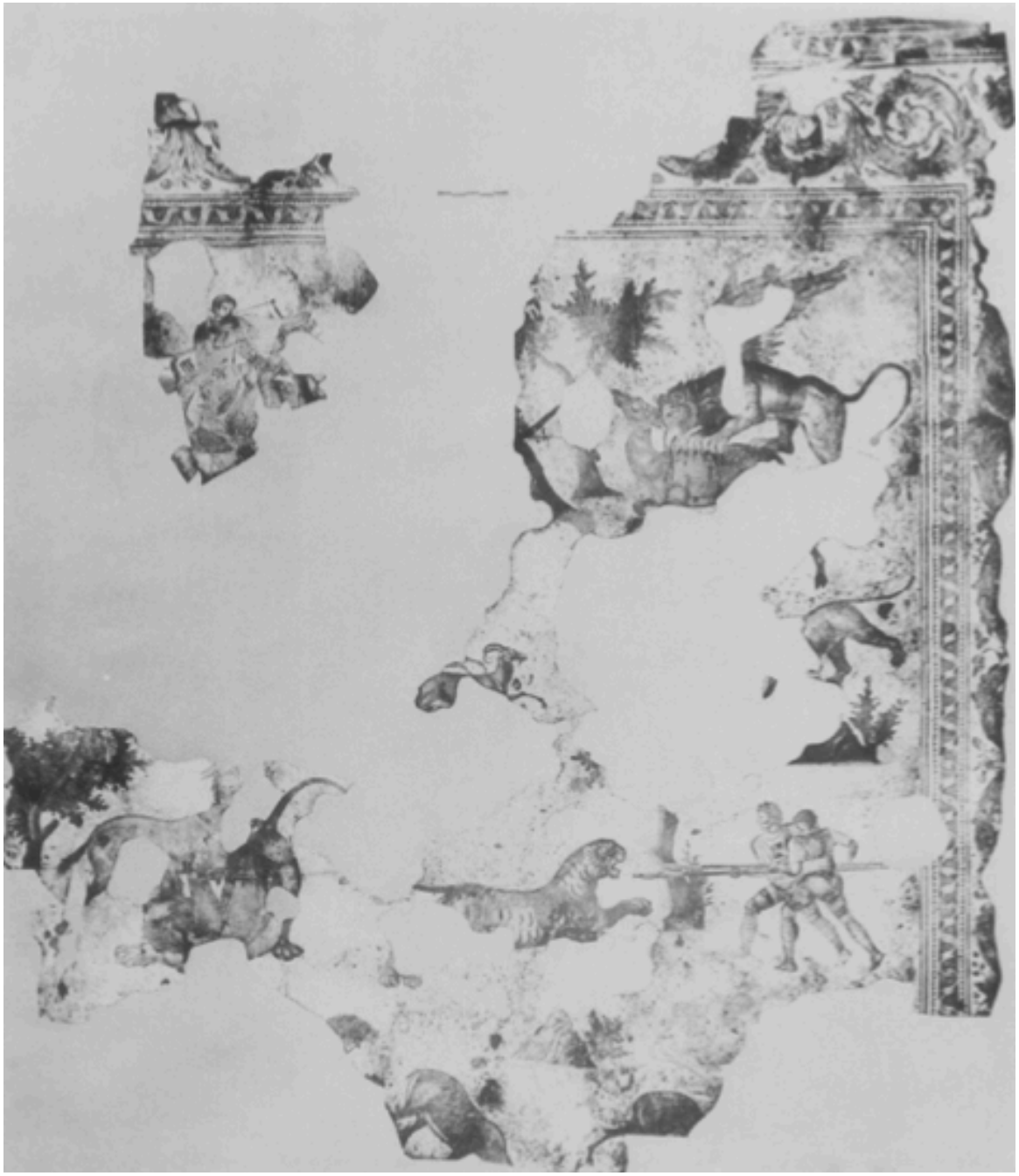

Fig. 17. North corner of mosaic with hunting scenes, peristyle, Great Palace of Constantinople, Istanbul, now in the Great Palace Mosaic Museum. (Trilling 1989, Fig. 2).

Fig. 18. Northeast side of mosaic with hunting scenes, peristyle, Great Palace of Constantinople, Istanbul, now in the Great Palace Mosaic Museum. (Trilling 1989, Fig. 1).

Fig. 19. Mosaic with hunting scenes, Villa of Constantine, Antioch, now in Musée du Louvre (Parrish 2017: Fig. 32).

Fig. 20. Detail of mosaic featuring Meleager and Atalanta, Villa of Constantine, Antioch, now in Musée du Louvre (Parrish 2017: Fig. 33).

Fig. 21. Mosaic with Meleager and Atlanta, Apamea, Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke München. (Raeck 1997, Fig. 4)

Fig. 22. Mosaic of Dominus Iulius, from Hill of Juno, Carthage, now in Musée du Bardo. (Parrish 2017, Fig. 19).

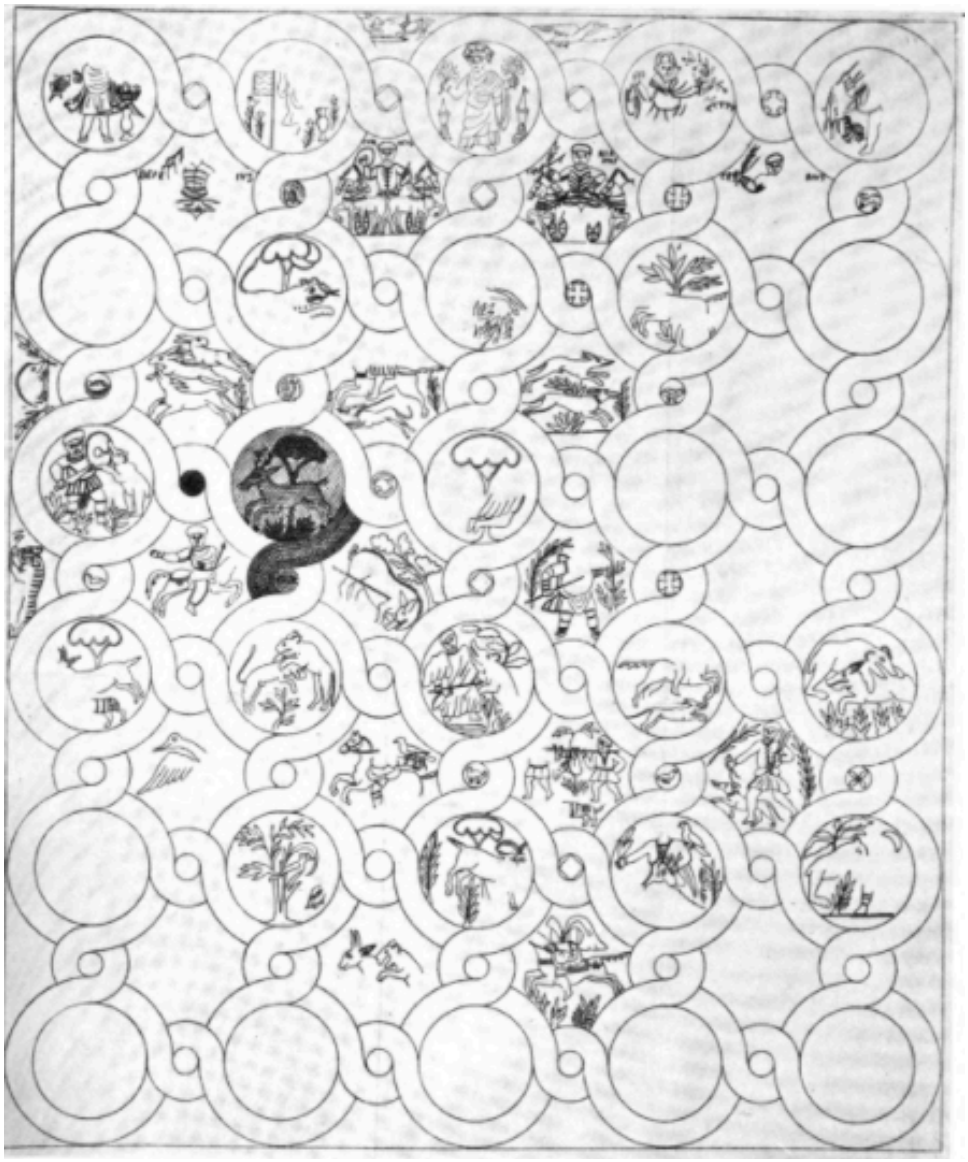

Fig. 23. Mosaic of the Personification of Carthage, the Seasons, the Circus, and the Hunt; from Byrsa; Carthage; now in Musée du Louvre. (Parrish 1984, Pl. 25).

Fig. 24. Megalopsychia mosaic, Yakto complex, near Antioch, now in Antakya, Archaeological Museum. (Parrish 2017: Fig. 35).

Fig. 25. Peristyle with hunting mosaics, House of Dionysos, Paphos, in situ. (Kondoleon 1995, Fig. 172).

Fig. 26. North portico panel hunting mosaic, Peristyle, House of Dionysos, Paphos, in situ. (Kondoleon 1995, Fig. 173).

Fig. 27. Mosaic floor with Magerius, private house in Smirat, now in Sousse Museum. (Poulsen 2012, Fig. 5).

Fig. 28. *Venatio* mosaic, dining hall, Maison de Bacchus, Djemila, now in Djemila Museum (Février and Blanchard-Lemée 2019, Fig. 121).

Fig. 29. *Venatio* mosaic, Maison d'Isguntus, Hippo Regius, now at Hippo Regius (Lavin 1963, Fig. 81).

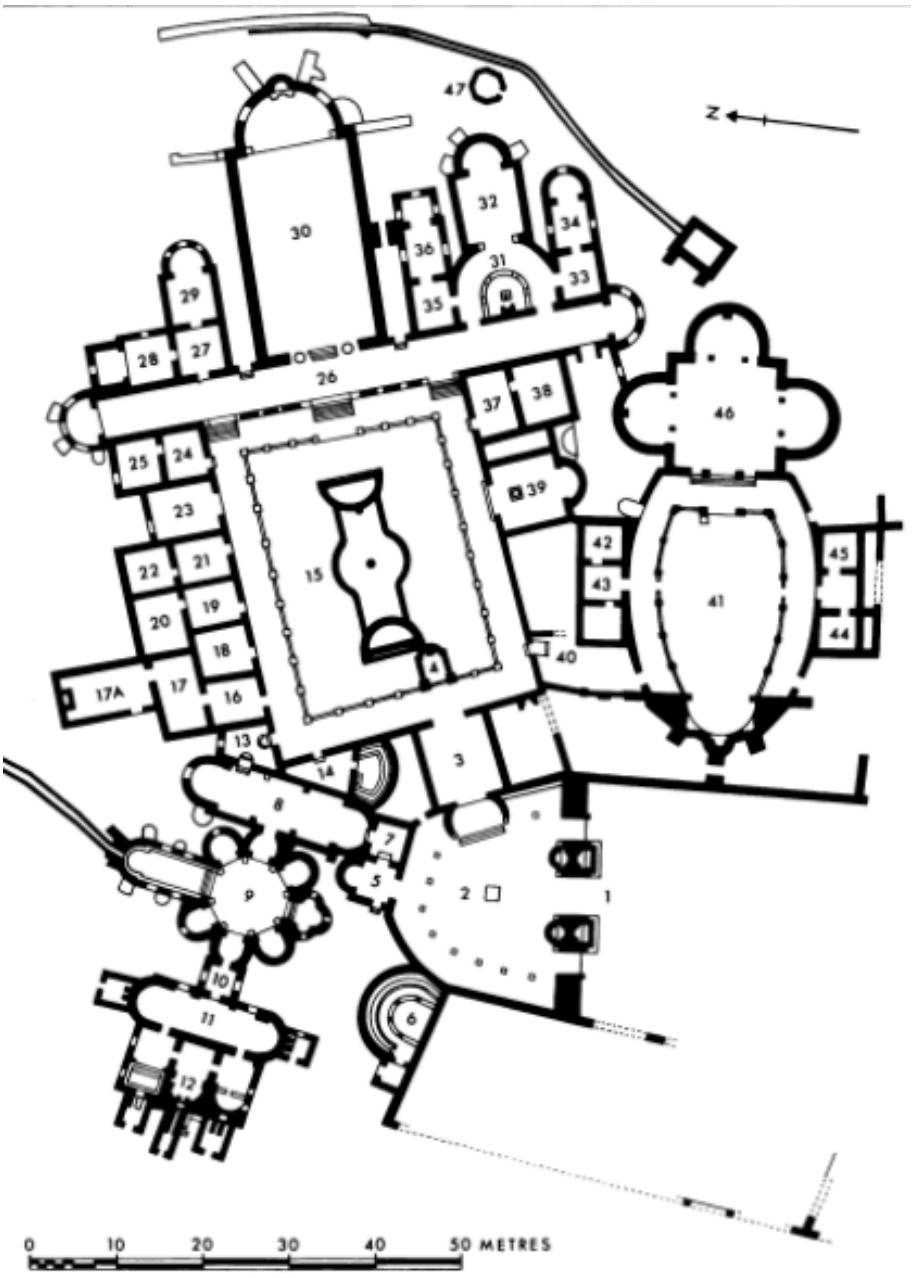

Fig. 30. Plan of Piazza Armerina. (Wilson 1983: Fig. 1).

Fig. 31. Small Hunt mosaic, room 23, Piazza Armerina, in situ. (Parrish 2017: Fig. 20).

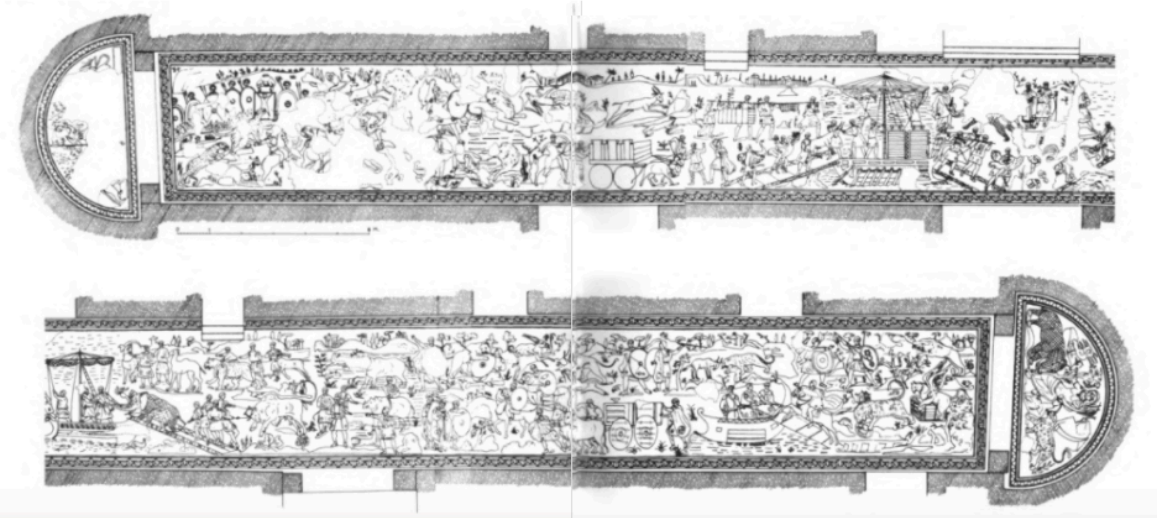

Fig. 32. Drawing of Great Hunt mosaic, room 26, Piazza Armerina, in situ. (Wilson 1983: Fig. 26).

Fig. 33. Great Cesena Plate, Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana. (Carile 2016, Fig. 2.5).

Fig. 34. Detail of the central medallion of the Great Cesena Plate. (Vroom 2007, Fig. 6.2).

Fig. 35. Great Hunting Dish, Sevso Treasure, Budapest, Hungarian National Museum. (Mundell Mango and Bennett 1994, Fig. 1-1).

Fig. 36. Detail of the central medallion of the Great Hunting Dish from the Sevso Treasure, Leader-Newby 2004, Fig. 1.1.

Fig. 37. *Meerstadtplatte* from the Kaiseraugst Treasure, Augst, Augusta Raurica. (Carile 2016, Fig. 2.4).

Fig. 38. Plate featuring Meleager and Atalanta, Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum. (Leader-Newby 2004. Fig. 3.9).

Fig. 39. Meleager plate from the Sevso Treasure, Budapest, Hungarian National Museum. (Mundell Mango and Bennett Fig. 2-1).

Fig. 40. Detail of the central medallion of the Meleager plate from the Sevso Treasure. (Mundell Mango and Bennett Fig. 2-4).

Fig. 41. Achilles Plate from the Kaiseraugst Treasure, Augst, Augusta Raurica. (Leader-Newby 2004 Fig. 3.1).

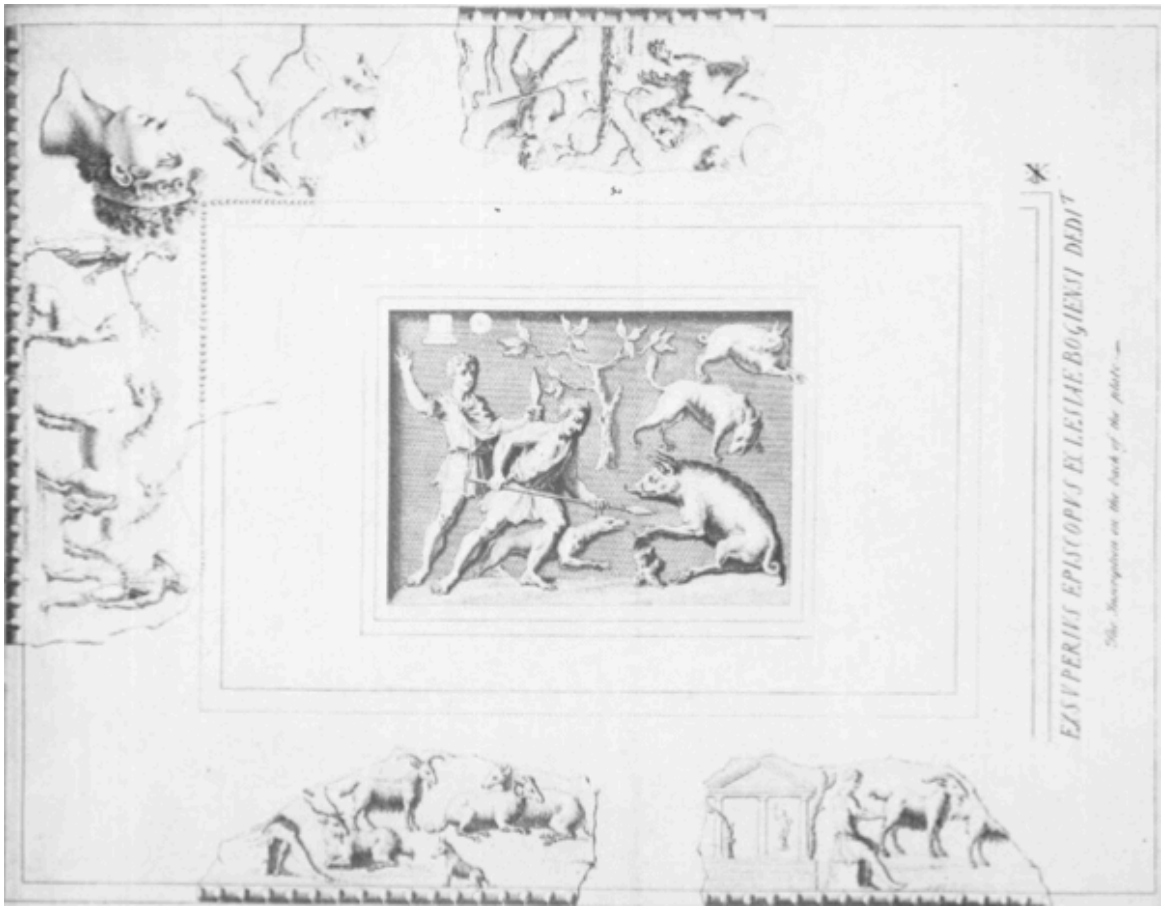

Fig. 42. Sketch of the Risley Park Lanx, now lost. Johns 1981, Pl. VII.