

The LEGEND
of the LARES
Collected Essays



Director's Foreword

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum has long been recognized for its stellar collection of objects from the ancient Mediterranean world. The impetus for this exhibition, *The Legend of the Lares*, was the 2013 purchase of an exquisite Roman statuette from the 1st–2nd century CE, *Lar holding a patera and cornucopia*. An exemplary representation of a Roman household god, this impressive bronze is the Museum's most significant acquisition of Roman art in nearly 20 years.

Curated by Taylor Anderson '15, this exhibition explores the cult of the *Lares Familiares*, protective deities venerated daily in the Roman home. Through the presentation of 27 antiquities, this thematically concise exhibition offers insight into this profoundly important facet of Roman culture. With essays by leading classicists and art historians, this brochure provides an overview of such domestic gods and their public counterparts, from their mysterious origins to the ultimate proscription of Lares worship during the 4th century.

This exhibition is the capstone project for Taylor's Art Museum Advisory Board Fellowship, as well as the culmination of original research she conducted while an undergraduate at Mount Holyoke College. Indeed, a visit to the Museum for Professor Bettina Bergmann's "Collecting Antiquity" seminar sparked Taylor's interest in our *Lar*, inspiring her to investigate Roman domestic religion.

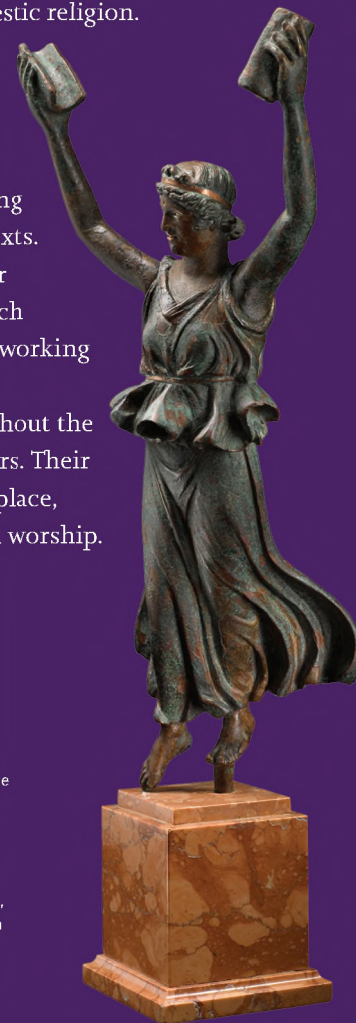
The MHCAM staff and I are proud of Taylor's achievement, and we thank her for the dedication, excellence, and vision she brought to this project and all her endeavors at the Museum. I also extend our thanks to Professor Bergmann for thoughtfully guiding and mentoring Taylor, as well as to the authors for writing their incisive texts. I must also thank the Art Museum Advisory Board for their committed support of their annual AMAB Fellowship, which provides a recent alumna the opportunity to gain valuable working experience at the Museum.

Lastly, this exhibition would not have been possible without the generous contribution of our institutional and private lenders. Their crucial support allows for this gem-like exhibition to take place, offering an intriguing glimpse into everyday Roman life and worship.

TRICIA Y. PAIK

Florence Finch Abbott Director

Front cover: Lar holding a patera and cornucopia, 1st–2nd century CE, bronze, Purchase with the Susan and Bernard Schilling (Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund, 2013.31, Photograph: Laura Shea; *Back cover: Aphrodite holding mirror and apple*, 1st century BCE, leaded bronze, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, David M. Robinson Fund, 1971.30, Photograph: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College; *Right: Statuette of a woman (possibly from an incense burner)*, late 1st century CE, bronze with silver inlay, Private Collection, Photograph: Maggie Nimkin; *Opposite page: Lar*, 1st century CE, bronze, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.834, Photograph: Allen Phillips/Wadsworth Atheneum



The LARES FAMILIARES: The POWER to PROTECT and PUNISH

TAYLOR ANDERSON

Art Museum Advisory Board Fellow (2015–2016),

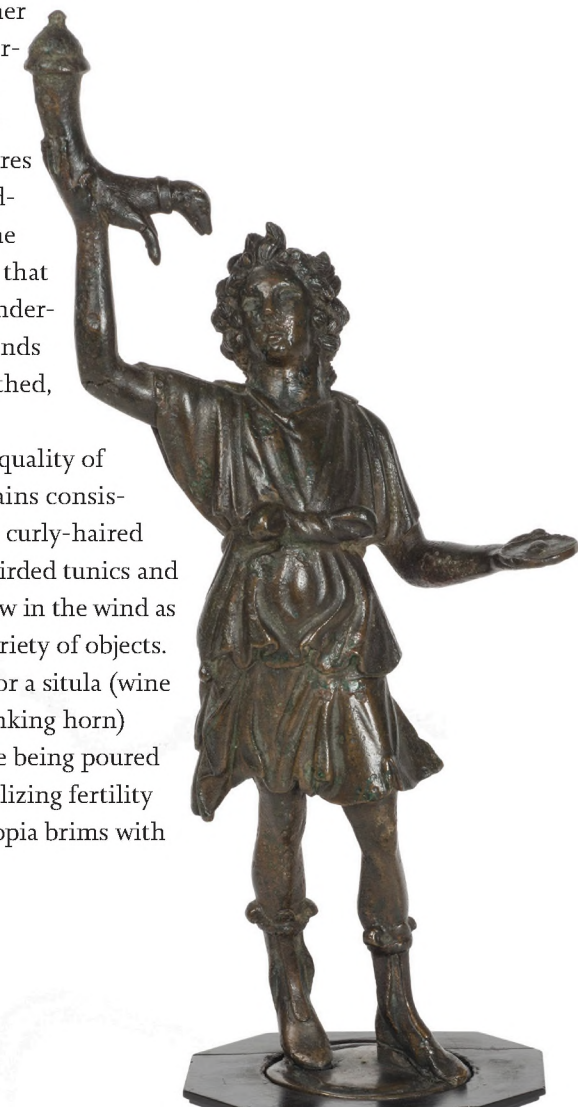
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum



To a modern observer, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's *Lar holding a patera and cornucopia*, standing at just over four inches tall, may not exude great power or authority. To an ancient Roman, however, the statuette would have been immediately recognizable by his costume and attributes as the *Lar Familiaris*, a deity who, in exchange for prayer and sacrifice, could assure the wealth and safety of an entire familia (both the freeborn and enslaved members of a household).

In addition to the *Lares Familiares*, who safeguarded the home—what Cicero described as “the most sacred, the most hallowed place on earth”—Romans invoked Lares as protectors of various other domains.¹ Yet the origins of the enigmatic and versatile deities are a mystery. Even ancient authors offer conflicting theories about their genesis; the first-century BCE elegist Tibullus refers to the Lares as “guardians of the fields,” while Festus, a second-century CE grammarian, describes them as “divine ancestors.”² Modern scholars have also suggested that the figures may have descended from Etruscan underworld spirits.³ Whatever their beginnings, thousands of examples of household Lares have been unearthed, in Britain, France, Italy, North Africa, and Spain.

While the material composition and artistic quality of the *Lares Familiares* vary, their iconography remains consistent. Almost always in pairs, the deities appear as curly-haired male youths crowned with leafy wreaths, clad in girded tunics and high boots or sandals. Their garments seem to billow in the wind as they tiptoe forward, as if in dance. Lares carry a variety of objects. In one hand, most hold a patera (sacrificial bowl) or a situla (wine bucket). The other hand often raises a rhyton (drinking horn) from which one can imagine a thin stream of wine being poured in libation, or it may hold a horn of plenty, symbolizing fertility and abundance. The Mount Holyoke *Lar*'s cornucopia brims with grapes and pinecones.



The Lares' convivial appearance belies the Roman belief that insufficient veneration could result in serious retribution. Plautus's *Aulularia*, an illuminating play written around 190 BCE, gives voice to the power of the Lares Familiares to wreak vengeance. In the opening monologue, a household Lar describes a reward—a discovered hidden treasure—for a young woman who consistently worshiped him. The deity also tells a cautionary tale about the woman's impious grandfather, noting that "his devotion to me soon diminished, and I had a small and smaller share of honor. So I did the same by him, and he died."⁴ Plautus underscores the paramount importance of properly honoring the Lares—failure to do so could result in severe consequences, including death.

The significance of these statuettes is further confirmed by those excavated in the streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum, evidently carried from the city's houses by people fleeing the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.⁵ Desperate and terrified, Pompeians may have hoped that the household Lares, their trusted protectors, could shield them from the volcano's fury.

Notes

- 1 Cicero, *De domo sua* 109.

2 Tibullus 1.1.19–20; Festus, *De verborum significatu* 239.

3 The word Lar itself may derive from the Etruscan *lar*, *lars*, or *larth*, meaning "lord."
- 4 Plautus, *Aulularia*, prologue.

5 Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*, vol. 1 (New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas Bros., 1979), 118.



Lar holding a patera and cornucopia, 1st–2nd century CE, bronze, Purchase with the Susan and Bernard Schilling (Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund, 2013.31, Photograph: Laura Shea

LARARIA, PENATES, and HOUSEHOLD WORSHIP

TAYLOR ANDERSON

Art Museum Advisory Board Fellow (2015–2016),
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum



Lararia, household shrines to Lares and centers of domestic ritual, stood in key places of the home, such as the atrium, peristyle, and kitchen.¹ As a symbol of the Roman family's *pietas* (devotion to the gods), the lararium was often positioned directly within the sight line of passersby on the street. Lararia have been found in all manner of Roman dwellings, from crowded apartment buildings to luxurious villas. They could be lightweight and movable or permanent, but all included images of gods and a place for offering prayer and sacrifice.

Nearly all surviving lararia take three main forms: as wall niches, structures known as aediculae, or painted images on kitchen or garden walls. The niche and aedicula shrines contained portable statuettes, while in painted lararia the same divinities appear two-dimensionally in fresco. Most prevalent are simple rectangular or oval niches carved into a wall, sometimes with a projecting shelf. The elaborate aediculae were constructed of stone or brick and look like miniature temples on bases with ledges for statuettes, offerings, and lamps. Usually set against a wall, these are covered in plaster and painted or inlaid with precious stones. Some are even ornamented with seashells.



Lararium in the House of the Vettii, Pompeii, 63–79 CE, fresco, Photograph: Wikimedia Commons

A fine, though uncommonly shallow, example of an aedicula lararium still stands in the entry hall to the kitchen quarters of the House of the Vettii in Pompeii. This shrine also incorporates elements of fresco lararia. Painted on the white background is an image of Lares dancing on tiptoe on either side of a standing male figure, whose head is covered by a toga in priestly guise: this is the ancestral genius, the procreative power of the paterfamilias (male head of the household). Each Lar pours wine from a rhyton into a situla hung on his outside arm, while the genius extends a patera in one hand and holds a small box in the other. Painted garlands with fluttering ribbons, signs of ritual celebration, frame the scene. Above, sacred symbols depicted in the shrine's gable include a patera, an ox skull, and a sacrificial knife. Below the figures, an enormous serpent—a sign of generative power and protection from bad luck—writhes through greenery toward a low, laden altar. The majority of painted lararia include this basic composition of two Lares, the ancestral genius, and a snake. Occasionally, other figures, including religious assistants, musicians, sacrificial animals, and Olympian gods such as Bacchus and Mercury, appear as well.² In contrast to complex mythological murals that adorned dining rooms and bedchambers, lararium paintings were often quickly sketched, with little attention paid to proportion or perspective.

Along with Lares, wall niches and aediculae housed statuettes of many other deities. The Penates, guardians of the pantry, encompassed all of the gods worshiped in the home, which families may have accumulated over generations. Olympian gods mingled with mythical heroes and foreign deities (specifically of Egyptian, Italic, and Oscan traditions) or even earthly figures such as emperors, philosophers, sacrificial animals, and family ancestors. For example, the lararium of the third-century CE emperor Severus Alexander is rumored to have featured sculpted portraits of Achilles, Cicero, Virgil, and other “great men.”³ The figures varied in size, material, and quality of craftsmanship, ranging from costly, masterfully cast silver statuettes to mold-made, terra-cotta figurines. Household shrines also incorporated items made of organic material like wood or wax, although the vast majority are now lost. A rare surviving example of a portable wooden lararium in Herculaneum, complete with miniature Corinthian columns, contained a marble figure



Above: *Togatus* (possibly genius), 1st–2nd century CE, leaded bronze, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Transfer from the Alice Corinne McDaniel Collection, Department of the Classics, Harvard University, 2012.1.129, Photograph: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College; Right: *Bust of Isis*, 117–138 CE, bronze, Purchase with the Nancy Everett Dwight Fund and the Psi Omega Society Fund in honor of Mary Gilmore Williams (Class of 1885), 1965.10.C.G, Photograph: Laura Shea; Opposite page: *Incense shovel*, 1st century CE, bronze, Princeton University Art Museum, Museum purchase, 1994–18, Photograph: Princeton University Art Museum



of Venus, a bronze statuette of the hero Hercules, and clay and glass vessels, demonstrating the often arbitrary-seeming mix of materials. Cicero suggests that the heterogeneity of lararia ensembles was a matter of familial inheritance: “Privately, [individuals] shall worship those gods whose worship they have duly received from their ancestors.”⁴

Some wealthy homes boasted multiple shrines, with elaborate aediculae occupying central spaces and fresco lararia in service quarters. The entire household venerated the same Lares, but free and enslaved members usually prayed separately. In contrast to the prescribed public rituals led by state-appointed priests, private worship was more flexible. Every day the paterfamilias, along with the women and children of the family, paid the Lares worship, greeting them upon entering or leaving the home. Daily offerings included cakes, eggs, fruits, honey, olive oil, and wine, as well as garlands, incense, pinecones, and occasionally blood. The first-century BCE poet Horace indicates that humble yet sincere offerings were most effective for appeasing the Lares.⁵ The charred remains of sacrifices were burned into the hearth, buried in the garden, or disposed of in the sewer. Statuettes might be placed at the table during family meals and banquets; any food that fell to the floor was theirs.

Domestic lararia served as sacred depositories for commonplace objects signaling rites of passage, such as a son's bulla (a personal locket) and first beard trimmings, or the doll and breastband of a daughter approaching maturity. Following a wedding ceremony, the bride traveled to her new residence and worshiped at her husband's lararium, typically presenting a coin to her new household gods. A homeward-bound Roman could be described as returning *ad Larem* (to the Lar), retiring soldiers offered their weapons to the Lares, funeral rites included sacrifices at the lararium, and family members invoked the Lares on the paterfamilias's birthday.⁶ Furthermore, Lares were specially venerated on noteworthy days, including the *calends* (the first day of the month) and the *ides* (the fifteenth day of the month). The many occasions that called for special worship of the Lares demonstrate that these gods were not only a centerpiece of domestic religion, but also an integral and ever-present part of Roman daily life.

Notes

- 1 It is important to note that early ancient writers refer to the shrine as *aedes*, *sacrum*, *sacellum*, or *templum*. The term *lararium* first appears in the *Historia augusta*, which was likely written in the fourth century CE.
- 2 Bacchus, standing at the base of Mount Vesuvius, appears in the painted lararium at the House of the Centenary in Pompeii. Bacchus and Mercury are depicted in the shrine positioned at the end of the bar in the *thermopolium* (tavern) of Vetutius Placidus, also in Pompeii.
- 3 *Historia augusta*, Severus Alexander, 31.4–5.
- 4 Cicero, *De legibus* 2.19.
- 5 Horace, *Odes* 3.23.
- 6 Ovid, *Tristia* 4.21–22.



The most sacred
is the home of each
his sacred hearth and his home
the very center of his worship,
and domestic ritual.

CICERO



BULLA-BULLA?

PAMELA RUSSELL

Head of Education and Andrew W. Mellon Curator
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Several Roman authors note that children of wealthy families wore gold amulets around their necks to protect them from evil. These round, convex pendants were called *bullae*, literally translated as “bubbles.” In the collection of the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College is a composite bronze object consisting of two shallow convex discs attached to a short chain. The museum’s inventory card identifies it as a “Roman Bulla” and notes that the Latin Department turned it over to the Art Department in 1946. The object clearly meets the second definition of *bulla* as “anything rounded by art, a boss, a knob.”¹ Whether this was in fact a protective amulet worn around the neck is less certain.

Pliny the Elder maintains that the custom of a patrician father presenting his son with a gold amulet originated with the Etruscan king Lucius Tarquinius Priscus and that a leather version was appropriate for plebeians.² After reaching maturity, a youth would ritually relinquish the amulet of his childhood and dedicate it to the household Lares.³

Most surviving *bullae* have a short cylindrical tube, attached at the top, through which the neck cord passes. The Mead bulla, however, lacks this tube, and hangs from a chain composed of three double links and larger single link. Traces of iron at the center of each disc may be the remains of a pin, which could have served to connect and secure the two halves. If it was not an amulet, the Mead bulla may have been a rattle, a jingle bell, or simply an ornament.

Notes

¹ Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879), s.v. “*bulla*.” Perseus Digital Library (accessed October 21, 2016).

² Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 33.4.10.

³ Persius, *Satire* 5.30–31



Opposite: Installation view (recreated lararium), Anne Greer and Fredric B. Garonzik Family Gallery, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum;
Above: *Bulla*, n.r., bronze, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, From the Latin Department, AC 1946.93, Photograph: Mead Art Museum

The PUBLIC CULT of the LARES

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Professor of Classics, Mount Holyoke College



Worship of the Lares, guardian spirits of the Roman hearth and home, extended beyond domestic contexts to the city’s crossroads and public squares, where they were celebrated in festivals; veneration of these gods also occurred outside the capital city, in villages and towns in Italy and even on the battlefield and at distant trading outposts, where they protected Romans far from home.

According to tradition, the public cult of the Lares in Rome originated during the reign of the sixth-century BCE king Servius Tullius, as part of his organization of the city into four *regiones* (districts). Festivals devoted to the Lares, called Compitalia, included sacrifices, banquets, and theatrical performances and took place at altars marking the *compita* (crossroads) within *vici* (neighborhoods).¹ Woolen *lanæ* (dolls) and *pilæ* (balls) were hung on these altars, the former for each free member of a household, the latter for each slave, a practice that may have been associated with a primitive census.² The Compitalia did not occur on a fixed date on the Roman calendar but were scheduled each year by the praetor (a judicial magistrate), and usually lasted three days in early January, activities that were in effect a kind of movable feast.³

Certainly by the late Republic (ca. 146–43 BCE), the Compitalia were closely associated with *collegia* (private professional associations) in certain *vici* and were supervised by *vicomagistri* (neighborhood officials). Many members of the *collegia* were current or former slaves, an indication of the festivals’ importance to the lower orders of Roman society. Ambitious politicians, usually tribunes of the plebs with the help of *vicomagistri* or others connected to *collegia*, exploited the Compitalia to generate popular support for legislative initiatives, often against the will of the senate. The senate therefore banned many of the most politically active *collegia* in 64 BCE, effectively suspending the events. In 58 BCE, however, the games were revived under the leadership of Publius Clodius Pulcher, tribune of the plebs, who perfected the art of employing the Compitalia and their associated *collegia* to foment collective action.

Manifestations of the Lares outside Rome included the Lares Viales, which ensured the safety of travelers by road; Lares Permarini, associated with the Trojan hero Aeneas, protected sailors in naval battles, and the Lares Militares, soldiers in land battles.⁴ Aeneas and Hercules, moreover, were both venerated as Lares in the town of Lavinium, just south of Rome, reflecting the connection between Lares and hero cults. Other towns hosted Compitalia, as in Rome, in honor of the Lares, and villages held similar festivals called Paganalia. Even on the island of Delos, a trading outpost in the Aegean Sea



Household God (Lar), 27 BCE–4 CE, bronze-iron alloy, Colby College Museum of Art, Museum purchase from the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund, 1998.063, Photograph: Colby College Museum of Art

frequented by expatriate Romans and Italians, wall paintings in houses and chapels depict scenes of sacrifice for the cult of the Lares. Moreover, a temple on the island dedicated to the Lares Compitales stands in the agora, and inscriptions attest to a college of *kompetaliastai*, officials who apparently were charged with maintaining this cult.⁵ These private and public manifestations of the cult of the Lares underscore the importance of the gods in providing protection, reassurance, and perhaps a sense of self-affirmation for the Roman community in lands far from home.

Notes

- 1 Cicero, *In pisonem* 8; Asconius, *Commentary on Cicero's "In Pisonem,"* ed. A. C. Clark (Oxford Classical Texts, 1907), 6–7; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 4.14; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.7.34–35.

2 On *lanæ* and *pilæ*, see Sextus Pompeius Festus, *De verborum significatu*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 108, 273. Festus also claims that these dolls and balls were meant to propitiate the Lares as spirits of the underworld, in the hopes that these spirits would accept the tokens in place of the living people they represented.
- On the early census, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 4.14.2–4.

3 Aulus Gellius, *Noctes atticae* 10.24.3.

4 Lares Viales: Plautus, *Mercator* 865; *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* 8.2.9755, 12.4320; Lares Permarini: Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 40.52.4; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.10.10. Lares Militares: *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* 3.1.3460, 3.1.3463.

5 *Lares Compitales: Inscriptions de Délos* 1760–66, 1768–71.

AUGUSTUS and the LARES AUGUSTI

HARRIET I. FLOWER

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The family home is often thought to be the most characteristic setting for Lares. Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's *Lar holding a patera and cornucopia* most likely comes from a domestic context, perhaps a shrine in the atrium or even a special niche in a bedroom. As Geoffrey Sumi discusses in his essay, Lares of various kinds watched over the spaces where Romans lived, especially the family hearth, where food was prepared, and the corners of property or fields. The Lares at the *compita* (crossroads), Lares Compitales, were a particular feature of the city's urban landscape.

The profound significance of Lares at compital shrines is underscored by the fact that Augustus, Rome's first emperor, renamed them with his special epithet. In 27 BCE Julius Caesar's adopted heir, who had been born Gaius Octavius, accepted the name Augustus ("revered" or "holy") from the senate in recognition of his restoration of constitutional government. Exactly twenty years later, at the culmination of an extensive reorganization of city administration, Lares in neighborhoods became known as Lares Augusti (August Lares). At the same time, the eighth month of the year became yet another namesake, called August. In at least one neighborhood Augustus himself is said to have "given" the Lares Augusti to the *vicomagistri* (neighborhood officials). Their cult was in the care of these annually chosen magistrates, most of whom were freedmen.

A series of altars and other dedications provides rich evidence for the iconography and popularity of the renamed Lares, who were often shown with Augustus's typical attributes, also granted to him by vote of the senate twenty years earlier—the *corona civica* (oak wreath), the twin laurels planted outside his house, and the *clipeus virtutis* (a shield inscribed with his four virtues). Each neighborhood in Rome now elected four freedmen *vicomagistri* and four slave *ministri* (attendants) from its residents every year. Both slaves and freedmen made dedications to celebrate the local Lares cult, funding inscriptions and installations with their own money. During Augustus's lifetime this cult is (in the present state of our evidence) attested only at crossroads shrines in Rome, since it expressed the special relationship of the first princeps with the city's inhabitants.

The new cult of Lares Augusti, who were still the Lares Compitales, was also celebrated with two new festivals, when the shrines were decorated



Via Labicana Augustus (Augustus as Pontifex Maximus), after 12 BCE, marble, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, National Museum of Rome, Photograph: Wikimedia Commons

with spring and summer flowers (perhaps on the first of May and the first of August, respectively). These festivals complemented the main midwinter holiday of Compitalia, whose celebrations Augustus had also enhanced with *ludi* (games). Very few other deities were officially called "august" gods, but ordinary people extended this special name to their favorite gods at will in local cults. The Lares Augusti were among Augustus's boldest and most successful innovations, a religious reform that had profound political implications and also fostered community at the local level.

The CULT OF THE LARES in the CHRISTIAN EMPIRE

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On October 28, CE 312, Constantine became the first Roman emperor to credit Christ with leading him to victory on the battlefield. His subsequent patronage of Christian bishops and other clergy, funding for churches in Rome and Palestine, and attempts to limit pagan practices through legal means inaugurated a gradual revolution in Roman culture. A series of increasingly strident laws issued in the last half of the fourth century shuttered pagan temples in cities as well as rural shrines to root out the practice of sacrifice. These restrictions also targeted household religion and individual beliefs. In 392 CE, two generations after Constantine's victory in the name of Christ, the emperors Theodosius, Arcadius, and Honorius declared that no person could sacrifice publicly nor, "by more secret wickedness, venerate his lar with fire, his genius with wine, his penates with fragrant odors"; like the large public temples, household shrines, with their collection of small statues, were to be denied their sanctity: "he shall not burn lights to them, place incense before them, or suspend wreaths for them."¹

These heavy-handed attempts to purify the public and private spaces of the late empire represent the triumph of a long tradition of Christian apologetics. Since the end of the second century, Christian intellectuals like Tertullian thundered

against the materiality of pagan practices and beliefs, including the notion that divine power existed in statues like the Lares.² This oppositional stance continued to be articulated into the fourth century by Arnobius and Lactantius and into the fifth by Prudentius and Augustine.³ For these intellectuals, as well as for the Christian emperors, the problem was not the statues, but the erroneous beliefs and practices associated with them. Nor was the word *lares* in itself dangerous. Indeed, in the laws and literature of the late empire, *lares* is synonymous with the household: wars destroyed *lares*, refugees longed to return to their forsaken *lares*, and the highly status-conscious nobility conducted their lives in *lares*.⁴

It is difficult to determine exactly how long the use of household shrines and the veneration of the Lares continued into late antiquity. Simple domestic and workplace shrines dating from the

third and possibly fourth centuries have been identified in Ostia, and in Rome a richly decorated lararium was discovered in a late antique domus.⁵ The shrine focused attention on a large niche for a statue of Isis-Fortuna, and its walls had abundant space for busts and statuettes of gods and goddesses. Near Carthage, a mosaic from a fourth-century home depicts three women moving toward a lararium to present offerings to a statuette of Attis.⁶ Perhaps the most enduring feature of Roman domestic religion were practices related to the imperial cult. Elite homes in fourth-century Rome included large-scale painted images of Roma, while the use of small-scale stone busts, and even bone statuettes, of emperors and empresses throughout the empire attests to the importance and persistence of civic religion in the intimate lives of Romans during late antiquity.⁷

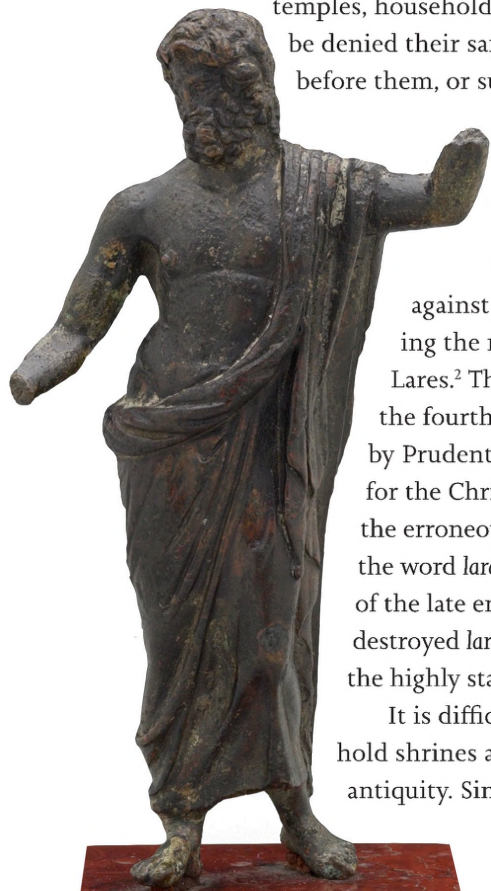
Notes

- ¹ Codex theodosianus 16.10.12, trans. Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmundian Constitutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 473.
- ² Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 13; *Ad nationes* 1.10. See also Dennis Paul Quinn, "Roman Household Deities in the Latin Christian Writers: Tertullian, Arnobius, and Lactantius," *Studia Patristica* 44 (2010): 71–75.
- ³ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 3.41–42; Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 2.15, and *Epitome divinarum institutionum* 28; Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 10.261; *Contra symmachum* 1.204; Augustine, *De civitate dei* 7.6.
- ⁴ See Claudian, *De bello gothico* 620; Ammianus Marcellinus 22.5; and Sidonius Ep. 2.3.
- ⁵ For a general overview of pagan household religion in late antiquity, see Kim Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 27–60; on lararia in Ostia, see Douglas Boin, *Ostia in Late Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 98–103; on the

richly decorated lararium in late antique Rome, see Federico Guidobaldi, "L'edilizia abitativa unifamiliare nella Roma tardoantica," in *Società romana e impero tardoantico II: Roma: politica, economia, paesaggio urbano*, ed. Andrea Giardina (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1986), 194–98, fig. 33.

⁶ Gilbert Charles-Picard, *La Carthage de saint Augustin* (Paris: Fayard, 1965), 126.

⁷ Susanna McFadden, "A Constantinian Image Program in Rome Rediscovered: The Late Antique Megalographia from the So-Called Domus Faustae," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 58 (2013): 83–114; Archer St. Clair, "Imperial Virtue: Questions of Form and Function in the Case of Four Late Antique Statuettes," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996): 147–62.



Opposite page: Standing figure of Jupiter, ca. 370–360 BCE (original); 1st–2nd century CE (copy), bronze with inlaid copper and silver (proper right nipple), Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Ruth Elizabeth White, 1988.80.12, Photograph: Yale University Art Gallery; Right: Cupid, 1st century CE, bronze, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.883, Photograph: Allen Phillips/Wadsworth Atheneum

SOUTH HADLEY to DRESDEN: The SURPRISING TRANSATLANTIC CONNECTION between TWO LARES

TAYLOR ANDERSON

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In contrast to the variations common to Roman domestic religious practice and the miscellany of objects often found in lararia groupings, the iconography and appearance of Lares remain consistent, as evidenced by the striking resemblances between a statuette in the collection of the Albertinum in Dresden and Mount Holyoke College Art Museum's *Lar holding a patera and cornucopia*.

Both of the Lares don tunics that fall in the same precise configuration of zigzagging folds. The curls and leaves that frame the faces match. Each carries a patera embossed with a pattern of whorls and dots in his right hand, and a grape-filled cornucopia topped with three pinecones in his left. Though the two statuettes have aged differently over the centuries, the similarities are unmistakable.

The Albertinum Lar now resides in the museum's Antiquities Study Depot and has not been on view since before the institution was damaged during the Allies' 1945 attack on Dresden. Before World War II, the statuette was the source for a line drawing printed in Charles Daremberg and Edmond Saglio's famed reference work on Greek and Roman antiquities.¹ The same drawing also illustrates an influential article, "The Nature of the Lares and Their Representation in Roman Art."² Written nearly one hundred years before Mount Holyoke acquired its Lar, the piece happened to be authored by Margaret C. Waites, a professor of Latin at the college.

Though bronze statuettes were made with molds, few extant Lares are as similar as these two. Whether they came from the same region, were created at the same workshop, or occupied the same lararium, their visual likeness is remarkable.

Notes

¹ Charles Victor Daremberg and Edmond Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* (Paris: Hachette, 1873–1919), 948.

² Margaret C. Waites, "The Nature of the Lares and Their Representation in Roman Art," *American Journal of Archaeology* 24, no. 3 (1920): 252.



Top: Drawing of the Albertinum Lar illustrated in Margaret C. Waites, "The Nature of the Lares and Their Representation in Roman Art", originally from Charles Victor Daremberg and Edmond Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités Grecques et romaines*; Above: *Lar holding a patera and cornucopia*, 1st–2nd century CE, bronze, Purchase with the Susan and Bernard Schilling (Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund, 2013.31, Photograph: Laura Shea; Right: *Lar*, 2nd century CE, bronze, Albertinum, H4 044/012, Photograph: © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Skulpturensammlung

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Lar holding a patera and cornucopia
1st–2nd century CE
Roman, Bronze
Purchase with the Susan and Bernard Schilling
(Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund
2013.31

Lar, 1st century CE
Roman, Bronze
Yale University Art Gallery
Bequest of Chester D. Tripp, B.S. 1903
1976.40.1

Lar, 1st century CE
Roman, Bronze
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Hartford, CT
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan
1917.834

Lar, 27 BCE–4 CE
Roman, Bronze-iron alloy
Colby College Museum of Art
Museum purchase from the Jere Abbott
Acquisitions Fund
1998.063

Lar, 2nd century CE
Roman, Bronze
Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
Transfer from Vassar College Classics
Department, 1968
CC23.017

Bust of Isis, 2nd century CE (Hadrianic
period, 117–138 CE)
Roman, Bronze
Purchase with the Nancy Everett Dwight
Fund and the Psi Omega Society Fund in honor
of Mary Gilmore Williams (Class of 1885)
1965.10.C.G

Standing figure of Jupiter, ca. 370–360 BCE
(original); 1st–2nd century CE (copy)
Roman, Bronze with inlaid copper and silver
Yale University Art Gallery
Gift of Ruth Elizabeth White
1988.80.12

Cupid, 1st century CE
Roman, Bronze
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art,
Hartford, CT
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan
1917.883

Aphrodite holding mirror and apple
1st century BCE
Roman, Leaded bronze
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museums
David M. Robinson Fund
1971.30

Togatus (possibly genius), 1st–2nd century CE
Roman, Leaded bronze
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum
Transfer from the Alice Corinne McDaniel
Collection, Department of the Classics,
Harvard University
2012.1.129

Mercury, 1st century BCE
Roman (from Asia Minor), Bronze
Private Collection

Seated Amazon, ca. 50–80 CE
Roman (possibly from Syria or Lebanon)
Bronze with silver and copper inlay
Private Collection

Mars-Cobannus from the Cobannus Hoard
1st century CE
Gallo-Roman (from east-central France)
Bronze
Private Collection

Stag from the Cobannus Hoard, 1st century CE
Gallo-Roman (from east-central France)
Bronze
Private Collection

Bust of the emperor Gaius (Caligula), 37–41 CE
Roman, Bronze with traces of gold leaf
Private Collection

Bust of Augustus, late 1st century BCE–
early 1st century CE
Roman, Marble
Private Collection

Lamp, 1st century CE
Roman, Earthenware with brown glaze
Museum purchase
1910.3.C.B

Lamp with the goddess Cybele and her two lions
1st century CE
Roman, Earthenware with orange pigment
Museum purchase
1910.8.C.B

Trefoil-mouth jug, 3rd–4th century CE
Roman (from Syria, Palestine, or Cyprus)
Glass
Gift of Mrs. Warren C. Hutchinson
(Eleanor Jones, Class of 1926)
1937.24.C.K

Jug, 2nd century CE
Roman (from Syria, Palestine, or Cyprus)
Glass
Purchase with the Nancy Everett Dwight Fund
1926.1.C.K

Thymiaterion (incense burner), 200–256 CE
Roman (from Dura-Europos, Syria)
Bronze
Yale University Art Gallery
Yale-French Excavations at Dura-Europos

Incense Shovel, 1st century CE
Roman, Bronze
Princeton University Art Museum
Museum purchase
y1994-18

Shovel-shaped incense burner, 2nd–3rd century CE
Roman, Bronze
Princeton University Art Museum
Gift of Mrs. Platt from the bequest of
Dan Fellows Platt
y1946-222

**Statuette of a woman (possibly from an incense
burner)**, late 1st century CE
Roman, Bronze with silver inlay
Private Collection

Libation bowl, 1st century CE
Roman (from Syria), Glass
Smith College Museum of Art
Gift of Mrs. Harold L. Chalifoux
1954:68-34

Libation bowl, late 4th–early 5th century CE
Roman (from Syria or Palestine)
Glass
Smith College Museum of Art
Gift of Mrs. Harold L. Chalifoux
1954:68-51

Bulla (possibly)
Roman, Bronze
Mead Art Museum, Amherst College
From the Latin Department
1946.93

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Seated Amazon, ca. 50-80 CE, bronze with silver and
copper inlay, Private Collection, Photograph: Maggie
Nimkin

