



Eidinow, E. (2019). "The Horror of the Terrifying and the Hilarity of the Grotesque": Daimonic Spaces—and Emotions—in Ancient Greek Literature. *Arethusa*, 51(3), 209-235.  
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**“THE HORROR OF THE TERRIFYING AND THE HILARITY OF THE  
GROTESQUE”: DAIMONIC SPACES—AND EMOTIONS—IN ANCIENT GREEK**

**LITERATURE**

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**1. INTRODUCTION: QUESTIONS OF CATEGORIES\***

The title of this paper quotes a phrase from Jean-Pierre Vernant’s discussion of the Gorgon that focuses on the ways in which representations of the *gorgoneion* (a Gorgon mask) were depicted as “disrupting the features that make up a human face,” producing “an effect of disconcerting strangeness that expresses a form of the monstrous that oscillates between two extremes: the horror of the terrifying and the hilarity of the grotesque” (1991.113).<sup>1</sup>

This portrayal ushers the reader into a murky world of concepts of alterity: as Vernant puts it, the Gorgon’s mask “expresses and maintains the radical otherness, the alterity of the world of the dead, which no living person may approach” (1991.121), and his analysis reveals this otherness as comprising a network of ideas that associate not only the realm of the dead, but also night, some particular qualities of the female, and monstrosity. The Gorgon, an offspring of Phorkys and Keto, is, as he notes, “at home in the land of the dead”; she and her siblings play “the role of watchmen, even bogeys, who bar the way to forbidden places” (1991.122).

Following Hesiod, Vernant lists among this grim retinue the Graiai, Geryon, and the Echidna. For Vernant, such creatures are expressions of the “Power of Fear” for adults, and he describes “fear as a category of the supernatural” (1991.128). He traces their origins to what he calls “the sphere of popular superstition and the child’s world,” citing Plato’s discussion in the *Phaedo* (77e) of the adult anxiety that the wind will disperse the soul as it exits from the body—a fear of

death that is compared to a childish fear of *mormulukeia*. Where the adult fears the Gorgon, Vernant argues, the child fears Lamia, Empousa, Gello, and, above all, Mormo. It is these creatures of childhood terror that are the focus of this article.

But what is it that I am discussing? These figures are hard for modern scholarship to categorise. Vernant describes them as “a variety of revenants, phantoms, Doppelgänger, *eidola*, and *phasmata*” (1991.129);<sup>2</sup> Karl Schefold and Luca Giuliani (1992.85) call them “monsters” and “*daimones*”;<sup>3</sup> Alan Griffiths calls them *daimones* and “bogeywomen” (1995.102 n.49). In his handbook on Greek and Roman folklore, Graham Anderson uses “bogeymen” and “gremlins” (2006.126). This apparent uncertainty about terminology reflects, in turn, the ambiguity of the ancient sources, which in part seems to arise from their appearance (as we shall see below) in primarily oral, rather than literary, accounts. This may also prompt the changes in terminology used to describe them, which emerge in the literary material over time.

Consider the different descriptions of Empousa found in, on the one hand, Aristophanes’ *Frogs* and, on the other, the scholia commenting on the play. In the play, Empousa is portrayed by Xanthias as a *therion* or “creature” (Ar. *Ran.* 293). But the scholiast defines her in terms of her, as it were, “daimonicity”: *phantasma daimoniodes*.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, we find the mention of Empousa in the *Ekklesiazousai* explained by the scholiast with reference to *daimones*.<sup>5</sup> This allusion may, in part, be related to—it certainly does not contradict—the characterisation of these creatures as *phasmata* or ghosts (as in the previous scholion): the term *daimones* is used to refer to the dead, and it may also capture these creatures’ close relationship, even identification with, the goddess Hekate.<sup>6</sup>

Since emic terminology does not help to us to understand the nature of the daimonic, there may be alternative ways to approach this category of creatures—ways which focus on their

representation. One potentially fruitful strategy is to examine them in terms of the “spaces” they inhabit, considering “space” to indicate not only a physical, but also a conceptual possibility and, as well, the ways in which the physical and conceptual interact.<sup>7</sup> This approach draws on the discussion by Jonathan Z. Smith of the idea of the “demonic as a locative category,” that is, as a relational term that “is part of a complex system of boundaries and limits” (1978.429). Although physical space is important in this model, it is part of a system that is primarily conceptual and is not dependent, as Smith notes, on “substantive categories, but situational categories . . . mobile boundaries which shift according to the map being employed” (1978.430).

Taking up this idea, this article examines the meaning of space with regard to these creatures from three directions. First, I argue that there is significance in the spaces that these creatures were perceived to inhabit, which supports their identification as *daimones*. This strand of the argument considers both where these creatures were perceived to be present among mortals and how this location appears to have changed over time. In addition, drawing on Charles Stewart’s analysis of modern Greek demons (1991.164–77), it examines how, as part of this sense of location, physical space relates to social space and temporal space, including times of day or night and lifecycle.

But it was not only the location of these creatures that changed over time, and this introduces the second conception of space to be considered here. These creatures were themselves “spaces” of meaning, available for claims and counter-claims about the natures of the unnatural and the supernatural, and man’s relationship to them. In this regard, as the title of this article indicates, the particular physical embodiment of each *daimon* is significant: as is the case with the Gorgon, Empousa, Mormo, and Lamia are frequently referred to by their horrifying appearance. This aspect also existed in time, evolving as part of a shared—and contested—

symbolic language. These creatures were, as Vincent Crapanzano describes in his work on demons in Morocco, “elements in the idiom through which [an individual] articulates his world” (1980.15).

And this observation introduces the third and final conception of space that this article explores: the particular cultural space in or from which these creatures emerged. In part, this kind of space relates simply to the type of source that provides the evidence, but it also reaches beyond this to explore the context of that source: the broader cultural imaginary comprising cultural models and paradigms that shaped, and were shaped by, these ideas about and conceptions of the monstrous.<sup>8</sup> In that respect, I am also interested in the ways in which a monstrous figure moves, as a space of meaning, between other times and places, and in other narratives. I suggest that these three different conceptions of space are interactive and mutually illuminating: viewing these daimonic creatures from these dynamic spatial perspectives can bring depth to our understanding not only of how these creatures were imagined, but also how these imaginings changed over time and how these representations may provide insight into the contexts from which they emerged.<sup>9</sup>

In discussing the imagining of these creatures and its/their cultural significance, we cannot only consider how they were represented; the cultural responses to those depictions are also crucial. This article is structured according to the two extreme emotional responses to the monster introduced by Vernant and readily apparent in the ancient evidence: hilarity and horror.<sup>10</sup> At first sight, these two emotions seem opposed and this is how some other scholars have treated them.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Vernant describes these emotions as co-existent, emerging from the disruption of a normal face and the “effect of disconcerting strangeness” that this produces. To amplify this point about the Gorgon, Vernant explores the figures of Baubo (whom he

compares to Gorgo, Mormo, and Empousa through the figure of Hecate) and Iambe (in Apollod. 1.5.1; see Vernant 1991.113–14), but he does not go on to elaborate the ways in which Mormo, Empousa, and Lamia may also have been figures that provoked these coexisting emotions.

This article, therefore, examines two key themes: on the one hand, it aims to broaden our conception of these monsters by considering the multiple ways in which they are represented as occupying space. On the other hand, it examines those representations for their intention to provoke the emotions of either and/or both hilarity and horror, and reflects on the question of the relationship between the two. It will do this by means of two case studies from Greek literature, in contrasting genres, which examine the presence of these creatures over time: first, ancient stage comedy, then a much later and philosophical tale from Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*; <sup>12</sup> in each case, contextually relevant literary material will also be explored.

## 2. CASE STUDY ONE: *DAIMONES* AND COMEDY

Empousa, Lamia, and Mormo appear in the earliest comedies that survive; in Old Comedy, they play a variety of dramatic roles, sometimes they may even have been fully personified and appeared on stage. But before considering the plays themselves, we should note a particular connection between one of these creatures and drama via the masks worn by actors in both comedy and tragedy. These masks were apparently called *mormolukeia* (“mormo-goblins”; schol. on Ar. *Peace* 474 and *Amphiaraios* frag. 31) and were hung around Dionysos's precinct (Ar. *Geras* frag. 130), either as dedications or as part of the announcement of new productions (cf. Henderson 2007.130). The *Etymologicum Magnum* explains their appearance as fashioned to create a particular emotion: *kataplexis*, a term that evokes not just fear, but a horrified, almost frozen fixation on a dreadful vision (cf. Thuc. 7.42.2 and 8.66.2).<sup>13</sup> The term draws attention not only to the subjective experience it describes, but also to the nature of the sight that prompts it.

In that context, we can perhaps understand the association of these masks with both theatrical events and the creature Mormo: not only do the masks per se allude to the technologies of the ancient theatre, but masks may also have brought to mind the kinds of characters seen by the audience and, in turn, the facial features of an audience's stunned response. But beyond these adult theatrical associations, the name given to these masks also alludes to another realm where such emotional responses were more frequently experienced, that of childhood. A number of sources, ranging from Erinna to the scholiast on Aelius Aristides, indicate that Mormo and her fellow creatures were the subjects of stories told by parents to frighten their children into behaving (Erinna *The Distaff* 12–14, schol. ad Ael. Arist. *Or.* 13.102 D. Dindorf, and Strabo i.2.8). In Xenophon's *Hellenica*, the Spartans even use a comparison to such childish fears as these to mock their allies (Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.17), and in a phrase that is also relevant to the question of their categorisation, Hesychius defines *Mormonas* as “wandering *daimones*” (πλάνητας δαίμονας).<sup>14</sup>

That these *mormolukeia* were expected to prompt such an emotional response of *kataplexis* illuminates the nature of the theatrical experience, but it also reveals the vivid nature of the childish fears with which Mormo herself was associated, brought to life on the ancient stage in ancient comedy. But what was the substance of these fears? The last half of the term *mormolukeia* seems to introduce notions of wolfishness, and in Aristophanes' *Knights*, we find the Sausage-Seller alluding to Mormo's appetite when he says of Cleon that he seems to want to swallow him up alive.<sup>15</sup> It is an idea found in other sources (e.g., Theocritus's fifteenth Idyll). When Praxinoa tells her child that she will not take him to the festival, she threatens him with Mormo's bite (15.40).<sup>16</sup> The brief, idiomatic phrase she uses associates Mormo with a horse, and Neil Hopkinson (2015 ad loc.) suggests that this may be a reference to the horses in the street

that could harm the child, or some sudden frightening movement. Other descriptions of Mormo involved related physical elements: like Empousa, Mormo was also called *onoskelis* (*Suda E1049*; schol. vet. *Eccl.* 1056, and see n. 4), that is, she had the leg of an ass (a characteristic of *lamiai* even into the early twentieth century, as Stewart 1991.180–81 describes).<sup>17</sup>

It may be that the precise nature of the animal is irrelevant: it certainly remains undefined in the nonetheless vivid description of Mormo given by the poetess Erinna (*The Distaff* 12–14, trans. Page 1941 no. 120): “We clung to our dolls in our chambers when we were girls . . . Oh, what a trembling the Mormo brought us then, when we were little ones! On its head were huge ears, and it walked on all fours, and changed from one face to another!” Or perhaps part of the horror is that this is *not* one identifiable animal: the poem seems to draw attention to the disconnection of the creature’s parts, from its ears and walking stance to its changing face.<sup>18</sup> This emphasis on the terrifying nature of Mormo’s face, in particular the image of it changing from one face to another, is a reminder of the masks with which this discussion started. It is also one of the characteristics of Mormo referred to in comedy: it underlies the allusion to her head and face made, apparently as an (indirect) insult, in Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* (Ar. *Ach.* 582, with schol., referring to the Gorgon; see also *Ach.* 574) and *Peace* (Ar. *Peace* 474 with schol.), in reference to the Athenian general Lamachos. These are, ostensibly, descriptions of the image on his shield (also referred to as a Gorgon’s head), but they are phrased so that they could also be understood to be about his personal appearance.

Later evidence may help us to understand the background story that underpinned—and explained—these characteristics, as well as the focus on childhood. The scholiast to Aristides (ad Ael. Aristid. *Or.* 13.102 Dindorf; trans. Johnston 1999.174) reports of Mormo: “They say that she was a Corinthian woman who, one evening, purposefully ate her own children and then flew

away.” This account would certainly provide a context for the consistent references to Mormo biting, especially in narratives told to frighten children. Moreover, it clarifies the changing appearance of the creature as depicted, e.g., by Erinna. The tale of Mormo is about the radical transformation of mother to monster: her changing face not only symbolizes this switch, it also evokes the very moment of horror itself, perhaps especially from the viewpoint of a child hearing the story of another child’s fate.<sup>19</sup>

A woman destroying children also occurs in the backstory of Lamia.<sup>20</sup> As scholars have observed, Lamia has a variety of meanings and alludes to a range of different mythic figures. Daniel Ogden (2013.100), for example, makes a useful distinction between the term as a proper name for the “archetypal individual . . . and as a term for the category of monster related to the archetype.” Hesychius (s.v. “Lamia”) notes metaphorical uses of the term, as well as a number of referents: for example, the term “lamiai” was used not only of phantoms, but also of gluttonous people, and of a fish, the latter both emphasising excessive appetite; while “Lamia” could refer both to monsters and “an ancient Libyan woman of this name.”<sup>21</sup> This Libyan Lamia is the one who is associated with the loss and killing of children. Not surprisingly, a variety of versions are in evidence. Thus Douris relates how Lamia was a beautiful queen in Libya. Zeus’s interest in her makes Hera angry, and she destroys all the queen’s children.<sup>22</sup>

Lamia’s grief deforms her; she seizes the children of other women and either tears them apart (Douris *FGrH* 76 F 17, Herakl. *Incred.* 34, schol. Ar. *Peace* 758) or (in some versions) eats them (Hor. *AP* 340). She goes to live in a cave as a beast; Hera curses her with insomnia, but Zeus, in pity, gives her the ability to remove her eyeballs, so when she wants to sleep, she can take them out and place them in a basket.<sup>23</sup> In turn, a rationalising version recounted by Diodorus Siculus (20.41.3–6) omits the gods and describes Lamia as driven to madness by the loss of her

own beauty. Envious of the fertility of other women, she gives orders to her men to snatch their babies and kill them. In this account, her removable eyeballs are an explanation given by her own people to explain why, when she was drunk, she did not put a stop to the licentious behaviour in her kingdom: they said she must have “put her eyes in a vessel.”

The story illuminates how the characteristics found among the different definitions of Lamiai/lamiai can be understood to be associated: here is a creature with an appalling appetite, whose wild, uncivilised behaviour includes the monstrous treatment of others. And these qualities are also made manifest in Lamia’s appearances in comedy, as far as we can tell from the traces that survive. The evidence for her depiction in Old Comedy suggests that her wild, uncivilised characteristics were the focus: Lamia was the title of a play by Krates I in which she was depicted as breaking wind, perhaps as a form of attack (Krates frag. 20; cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1177 and *Ekk.* 77–78). This barbarous aspect was also made apparent by Lamia’s monstrous embodiment: Aristophanes (*Peace* 758) appears to have suggested that Lamia had testicles, while Krates’ allusion (frag. 20 = schol. Ar. *Ekk.* 77) to her possession of a *skytale*—a Spartan truncheon or staff—may indicate that she also was imagined as having a penis (see Ar. *Lys.* 991 with Johnston 1991.178). This particular element may have carried over into visual depictions. For example, in the Beldam Painter’s name vase, the grotesque female figure tied to a palm tree and being tortured by five satyrs has long been identified by modern scholars as (a?) Lamia. Perhaps supporting this identification, Monique Halm-Tisserant recently noted that she seems to have been portrayed with an erect phallus.<sup>24</sup> In New Comedy, Lamia remains a useful image of ugliness (Men. frag. 297 with Wiles 1991.130); while in Atellan comedy, as a child-eating ogress, she is a stock character alongside the other grotesque characters of that genre. They

embody the kind of social iniquities that foreshadow the Seven Deadly Sins of medieval morality plays (Denard 2007.147).

In contrast, Empousa (described rather winningly as a “hobgoblin” in Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon*), while she shares a number of features with the creatures above, including habits of metamorphosis and specifically equine traits, does not seem to be linked to a story of mothers killing children. Rather, we find an association with Hecate and with more obscure ritual activities. The Suda (E1049 “Empousa,” trans. Suda OnLine) draws particular attention to her shape-shifting, starting the definition as follows: “A daimonic ghost (*phantasma daimoniodes*) sent by Hecate and appearing to the ill-fated. [Something] which seems to change into many forms”;<sup>25</sup> the entry later refers to her shape-shifting characteristic as one of a number of possible etymologies of her name. The other possible explanations include the notion that she had a single leg (presumably a single fleshy leg is meant, since the other is described as being of bronze, or being an ass’s leg, or made of donkey excrement) and her connection to rituals of initiation into the mysteries.

Her depiction in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (*Ran.* 308) can be taken to support (indeed, may be the source of) a number of these theories about her nature and appearance. In that play, it is not clear whether or not she is seen on the stage; nevertheless, she is apparently so frightening that just the thought of the sight of her prompts the god Dionysos to soil himself. His companion, Xanthias, describes her as shape-shifting, her appearance changing from an enormous beast, to a cow, a mule, a very attractive woman, and a dog. The final transformation apparently confirms her identity to Dionysos, and may refer to her identification with the infernal goddess Hecate (see also *Ar. Tagenistai* frag. 515 and *Daitaleis* frag. 209). Her single leg is mentioned: in this play, she has a leg of bronze and then one of cowpats.<sup>26</sup> As Richard Buxton (2009.172) observes,

the limb of cow dung is appropriately scatological here, but it is also apparently in accordance with descriptions of her found elsewhere (cf. Waser 1905). Finally, in this scene, she appears closely behind the initiates, so this may be a reference to the ritual of the Eleusinian Mysteries, during which, according to Idomeneus of Lampsacus (*FGrH* 338 F 2), she emerged from out of the darkness (see further Brown 1991.43-46). He describes her as *phasma pantomorphon* (a ghost that takes all shapes), and says “she reveals herself to the initiates coming out of the dark places.”

We are told by Harpokration (*Lex. s.v. “Empousa”*) that comedy was full of the name of Empousa; as in the case of Mormo, some of those references are comic comparisons to her singular appearance. In the *Frogs*, she is described both as lovely and as having a face blazing with fire. The latter may be evoked again in *Ekklesiazousai* when an old woman who is trying to seduce a young man is described by him as “an Empousa covered in (ἡμφιεσμένη) bleeding blisters!” (*Ekkk.* 1058-59, trans. here and below Sommerstein 1998). The comparison could be a reference to the old woman’s use of too much rouge, which is not necessarily contradicted by the young man’s description of her, later in the scene, as “an ape plastered in white lead” (*Ar. Ekkk.* 1072). However, the term ἡμφιεσμένη, used in that first description to convey how the red colour engulfs the old woman, suggests her whole body is somehow involved in the comparison rather than just her face. This could be a reference to the scrofulous nature of her skin, and Buxton suggests that she is “enclosed in a blood blister” (2009.172). But other sources (*Ar. Vesp.* 1172, *Thesmoph.* 92, *Ekkk.* 879) indicate that ἡμφιεσμένη could also be translated as “clothed in or wearing”: it may be a description, not of her skin, but of what she is wearing (a frightful cloak).

### 2.1. “Uncivilized Space and Time”

Empousa, Lamia, Mormo: we can identify distinct creatures with different narratives attached to them; but these names also signal a conceptual network of overlapping physical and behavioural characteristics. Hence, for example, they are all understood to inhabit spaces outside the civic sphere, spaces that are characterised by night, darkness, and the wild. Smith offers the insight that “the demon’s place is in uncivilized space and time—the desert or forest, the realm of the idea, the night—walled off from those spaces and times in which man dwells and finds himself at home” (1978.428–29). If we return to our initial question about categories, these creatures can be observed to transgress certain social boundaries that are also associated with modern conceptions of the demonic.

The often horrifying appearance of these creatures is another shared characteristic that indicates their imagined role as “a hybrid or monster, a protean figure capable of a range of transformations or as a being with superfluous parts” (Smith 1978.430). As Stewart remarks in his discussions of modern Greek demons, the disturbing appearances of these creatures is linked to morally unacceptable behaviour: “Importantly, monstrosity involves more than just form. It entails an affront to the moral order” (1991.180). In the case of the ancient creatures, this behavioural aspect is reflected in some of their background stories, for example, Mormo’s and Lamia’s thwarted, distorted relationships with children. It is also suggested in their metaphorical role in Old Comedy. As Alan Sommerstein (2009) notes, when Aristophanes describes himself as a Herakles facing a realm of “monsters,” including Lamia, Kerberos, and the demon Epiolos or Epiales (e.g., *Ar. Vesp.* 1030–42 = *Peace* 752–59), he means his political opponents.

These examples suggest how these creatures were used to reflect on social behaviours. They exemplify Smith’s insight that, “Demons serve as classificatory markers which signal what

is strong and weak, controlled and exaggerated in a given society at a given moment” (1978.430). Indeed, one reason why these comparisons may have seemed even funnier onstage is that these monstrous names were more usually found attached to a very different social group: *hetairai*. A fragment from Anaxilas’s comedy *Neottis* (frag. 22; see Brown 1991.44) compares particular *hetairai* to legendary monsters, including *drakaina* (“snake”), Chimaera, Charybdis, Skylla, the Sphinx, Hydra, Lion, Echidna, and Harpies. Other sources indicate that *hetairai* might well have adopted such names for themselves in the real world: a “Lamia” was one of the lovers of Demetrius (Athen. 6.253a–b) and we read of a “Leaina” (“Lion”, Athen. 13.577d–e) and a “Chimaera” (Athen. 13.583e). As this demonstrates, the transgressive quality of the monster was not, or not always, straightforwardly concerned with a horrific appearance. As her shifting appearance in *Frogs* (1.291) demonstrates, one of the shapes that the Empousa could assume was that of an attractive woman. But the nicknames of *hetairai* presumably pointed the observer (/client) to consider their (transgressive) behaviours and sexual appetites—and the ways in which these disrupted social mores, including those associated with gender and status.<sup>27</sup>

These transgressive associations may explain the potency of Demosthenes’ insult against Glaukothea (Aeschines’ mother) when he states that she was nicknamed Empousa and refers to her “doing and putting up with everything” (18.130). Demosthenes’ choice of term here may be influenced by the links between Glaukothea’s ritual activities and the role of Empousa in the Eleusinian mysteries, but the sexual implications are clearly intended by Demosthenes to be more insulting. “Empousa” marks Glaukothea as a sexually incontinent woman (cf. Patera 2014.263–71), her carnal appetite made even more horrific because of her age. This is reinforced by Alkiphron’s allusion to Demosthenes’ description, which he makes when he is describing an old but lustful serving maid (3.26.3); we have also seen Empousa used in the same way by

Aristophanes in the *Ekklesiazousai*. By introducing the image of the Empousa, Demosthenes was suggesting the threat posed by such an appetite, which is realised in the monster through its hunger for human flesh. Empousa was, it seems, considered rampant, and her lust was not (or not simply) titillating but—in any number of ways—it also crossed behavioural boundaries and transgressed social norms. In part, it is in this crossing of boundaries that audiences could experience both hilarity in horror and horror in their hilarity. As Noel Carroll argues of the modern genre of horror-comedy, the “relation of affinity between horror and humour” can be located in the recognition that “these two states, despite their differences, share an overlapping necessary condition insofar as an appropriate object of both states involves the transgression of a category, a concept, a norm, or a commonplace expectation” (1999.154).

If we remain with the genre of comedy, it might appear that the resonance these figures held for the popular imagination evaporated with time. Where they had offered a rich source of imagery for Old Comedy, even appearing in “person” on the stage, in New Comedy, they are rarely even mentioned, although, when this does occur, it is, as might be expected, as a metaphor for physical ugliness and ugly behaviour (e.g., Men. frag. 297). However, other evidence suggests that we should not take this change as indicating that these creatures, and the threat they posed, had been erased from the popular imagination. As we will see in the second case study, they were still present in the cultural imaginary, but the roles they played, the conceptual spaces they occupied, had changed.

### **3. CASE STUDY TWO: *DAIMONES* IN DISGUISE: APOLLONIUS OF TYANA**

My second case study is from the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, selected because it offers some rare details about the continuing activity of these figures in the ancient cultural imagination. The biography is a confection, written 120 years after the death of Apollonius (98 C.E.) in order to

satisfy the empress Julia Domna by presenting Apollonius as a philosophical sage like Pythagoras and Empedokles. But this work also provides “superstitious and folkloric material uncharacteristic of the Greek philosophical tradition” (Brenk 1986.2136), and it is thought possible that it was based on an oral tradition that Philostratus acknowledges early on in his account, which also appears to have been drawn on by other authors (cf. Bowie 1978.1686–87). Philostratus offers insights into the ways in which the presence of *daimones*—and their exorcism—were employed by the itinerant charismatic “holy men” of this period, as part of their competitive discourse of contested authority.<sup>28</sup> And among these *daimones*, we find *lamiai* and *empousai*.

In the *Life*, the first such creature we meet is an *empousa*. Apollonius and his companions have crossed the Caucasus and are travelling by night—in full moonlight—when they encounter (VA 2.4): “a phantom of an empousa . . . (φάσμα ἀδὲ . . . ἐμπούσης) one that changed into this and that and yet was nonexistent” (trans. here and below Jones 2006, with some adjustments). Apollonius shows no fear: he abuses the phantom (τὸ φάσμα), encouraging those with him to do the same, and it goes off gibbering “like a ghost” (ὥσπερ τὰ εἶδωλα). Although brief, this story seems to conform in a number of ways to the characteristics of the locative category of the demonic that we have seen already: the encounter takes place at night and (as indicated by the particular features of the inhabitants of this area) Apollonius and his companions are at the edge of the world. The creature is both characterised by this marginal space, and is, itself, also used to mark it, emphasising the metaphysical significance of the crossing of the mountain. If Christopher Brown is right that the Empousa appeared during the Eleusinian Mysteries (1991), the episode may also be intended to evoke the initiatory nature of this part of the journey.<sup>29</sup> This episode comes before the travellers reach the highest part of the mountain range, Mount Athos,

where Apollonius engages Damis in a dialogue concerning the nature of his experience and what it has taught him, reflecting on the acquisition of wisdom that is suitable for an initiatory experience. Apollonius ends with a rumination on the importance of the state of the soul (VA 2.5): “. . . how the Deity cares about the human race, and how it loves to receive worship from it, what virtue is and justice and chastity, all this Athos will not reveal to those who climb it, nor will the famous Olympus so admired by the poets, unless the soul discerns them. If it is pure and unblemished when it apprehends them, in my opinion it soars much higher than the Caucasus here.”

But a lengthier and more disturbing encounter with a *daimon*, specifically another *empousa*, occurs in a later book of the *Life*.<sup>30</sup> Set in Corinth (which, as we have already seen in the story of Mormo, has a particular link to these creatures), this tale concerns one Menippus of Lycia, seduced on the road to Kenchreai by a beautiful woman who claims she is Phoenician and has been in love with Menippus for a long time (Phil. VA 4.25.2–6; the significance of her non-Greek origin is noted by Patera 2014.8).<sup>31</sup> The young man is fortunate: he comes as a student to Apollonius, who diagnoses the hidden problem. Apollonius waits until the wedding feast itself, and then he announces that the woman Menippus is to marry is, in fact, no woman: “This excellent bride is one of the *empousai* (μία τῶν ἐμπουσῶν ἐστίν), which most people think are the same as lamiai and mormolukeia” (Phil. VA 4.25.4). Apollonius provides crucial background information about their behaviour, describing how they use their sexuality to feed themselves: “Empousai adore sexual pleasure, but they adore human flesh above all, and they use sexual pleasure to entrap those they want to devour.” The suspect bride at first denies the charge, but then all her gold and silver furnishings disappear, as does her retinue of servants. She pretends to weep until, interrogated by Apollonius, she confirms his accusations, confessing that she is an

*empousa* and has been “fattening Menippus with pleasures in order to feed on his body, since it was its custom to devour beautiful young bodies because their blood was fresh” (Phil. VA 4.25.5).

This is, as we are told, one of the most famous of the stories about Apollonius, and the emphasis placed on it by Philostratus is of some interest in attempts to chart the nature and transmission of the oral tradition about these creatures. Philostratus claims that many have heard a story about Apollonius’s discovery of this creature but were unaware of the details provided here (Phil. VA 4.25.6): “Yet they have only heard a general account, that he once unmasked a Lamia in Corinth; they do not know at all how it behaved and that he acted to save Menippus.” Anderson draws attention to the presence of folklore elements in the *Life*, but notes how: “We must be prepared for the possibility in case after case that Philostratus can preserve genuine tradition or thicken popular material with literary elements, and that we cannot always hope to distinguish the strands” (2009.223). However, in this instance, there is some possibility for teasing out those strands by examining how Philostratus’s employment of this story of the *empousa* differs from the previous literary appearances of these creatures.

### 3.1. Changing Spaces

From Aristophanes to Apollonius, with regard to the locative nature of these creatures, as described above, some key changes have occurred. First of all, there is the space that they inhabit: in Aristophanes’ work, these are creatures of darkness, of the night or underworld. That darkness is not only spatial, it is also social: they inhabit or are used to characterise those who are somehow marginal or uncivilised. In contrast, the story of Menippus and the Phoenician *daimon* describes a creature living a full life in broad daylight. This, in turn, has implications for

its appearance. In the plays of Aristophanes, monsters are terrifying or, at least, physically repellent. Their distorted physical characteristics were an important aspect of their role onstage, or in metaphor. In contrast, in the descriptions by Philostratus, the opposite is true: in the first encounter, although the aspect of metamorphosis is still there, the *empousa* cannot really be seen properly. In the second, it is explicitly attractive, and the emphasis is on the enormous deceit being worked: here is a *daimon* that conceals itself in human form and tricks its way into a close, intimate relationship.

The use of a human body, or its appearance, is another marker of change: in earlier sources, the *daimon*'s relationship with mortal flesh was by means of an overt invasion of another's human body, while the *daimon* itself remained unseen. Examples include Eurykles, as mentioned by Aristophanes in *Wasps*, who may have been a prophetic *daimon* or possessed by one.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the *engastrimuthoi* ("ventriloquists") who gave oracular pronouncements with voices in their bellies (mentioned, e.g., in the Hippocratic treatise *On Epidemics* 7.28) may also have been understood as a product of human/daimonic interaction.<sup>33</sup>

These earlier examples feature individuals who themselves conformed to the locative idea of daimonic space insofar as they were socially marginal figures.<sup>34</sup> In both our literary case studies, it can be argued, the presence of *daimones* sets the scene for "otherness" in other ways. In the *Frogs*, the presence of *Empousa* reinforces the alterity and horror of the underworld, while perhaps signalling a specific feature of the Eleusinian Mysteries; in the *Life of Apollonius*, the appearance of an *empousa* on the road at night indicates how far the travellers are from civilisation and how dangerous is their quest, while implying the initiatory nature of this part of their journey.<sup>35</sup> Both ancient authors employed this creature in implicit criticism of those whose appetites and behaviours were understood to exceed the norm, and who were thus perceived to

be wild and uncivilised. In particular, these *daimones* were used to provide a consistent commentary on the transgressive and dangerous sexuality of women. In these case studies, the later, ostensibly more philosophical account is only mildly less humorous than the earlier, explicitly comic depiction, in its portrayal of the threat of sexual predation. However, the underlying criticism that they convey is both more widespread and more serious.<sup>36</sup>

While acknowledging similarities, we can also observe some characteristics of these creatures that are specific to each period and genre. First, there are some crucial changes in the perceived nature of the threat: in the classical period, these creatures emphasise the “otherness” of women, especially those whose focus is sexual desire. In the cases of Mormo and Lamia, these monsters seem to emerge from, or are associated with, stories of women who have somehow failed to achieve their *telos* as wives and mothers, and become monstrous in their lack of fulfilment (Johnston 1995). The image of the Empousa, while not associated with such a narrative, seems to have been used to evoke inappropriate sexual desire, especially that of old women, with implications for our understanding of perceptions of gender and age roles in that period. In contrast, in the *Life of Apollonius*, the *empousa* is, in a far more sinister way, presented as young and desirable. Concealed within the community, engaging in a relationship of love and marriage, she suggests the dangers of intimacy and sexual pleasure. As Anderson notes (2009.221), we can rationalise the story so that it tells how Apollonius dispatched a rival for his young philosophy student; but the story also has broader implications, revealing how deceptive are our own very human desires and how they may be turned against us. Within the *Life of Apollonius*, this aspect of the story has obvious significance for our understanding of Apollonius’s own philosophy of sexual abstinence: “Thanks to his virtue and self-mastery, Apollonius was not subject to it even as an adolescent, but despite his youth and physical

strength he overcame and ‘mastered’ its rage” (Phil. VA 1.13.3, on lust). Moreover, the vignette reinforces his role as sage: while most people failed to recognise the *empousa*, Apollonius can distinguish between *empousai*, *lamiai*, and *mormolukeia*. His knowledge of categories suggests the skills required of those who would identify these creatures and overcome their deceptions.

Finally, this latter observation draws attention to two other key shifts in focus in these narratives. First, regarding the victims of these *daimones*, the classical evidence puts particular emphasis on the role of children as the targets of these monsters: they are their victims within the narratives, as well as comprising the primary audience for the narratives themselves. Indeed, as Vernant’s observations (quoted above) suggest, when they were depicted on the comic stage, their victims were adults, but bringing these symbols of childhood fear to life was, I would argue, part of their comic effect. The *Life of Apollonius* is a story for an adult audience, and the targets of these creatures are also adults, specifically young men (the “beautiful young bodies” that the *empousa* hungrily describes when confessing her crime). This change in the profile of the victim is accompanied by a second key shift in the narrative regarding the identity of the creatures—or rather their identities. Imperceptibly, the singular, though terrifying *daimon* of earlier periods has become plural: this multiplication is particularly highlighted by Apollonius’s comment to Menippus, when he casually explains how “most people think *empousai* are the same as *lamiai* or *mormolukeia*” and then goes on to describe the terrifying feeding habits of the *empousai*.

#### 4. A SHIFT IN PERCEPTION

That there were changes in the way these figures were perceived seems clear, but the question of why these figures developed in this way is more difficult. The evidence for these *daimones* is

scattered across different sources; the fragments allow, perhaps, a glimpse of what could be described as widespread popular beliefs, expressed in different genres and to different effect. Modern scholars approach the utility of this evidence in diverse ways. Frederick Brenk, for example, concludes that the majority of writers will have “sublimated earlier beliefs and interpreted them in their own manner, as citizens of a more sophisticated world might see it their privilege and duty to do. Like a sort of vast subconscious, the lower level of the population undoubtedly lived in a different world, a world only vaguely reproduced in the writings of these intellectuals” (1986.2140–41). But it is the traces left by and for this different world that are the focus of this article, and so I turn to Giulia Sfamini Gasparro’s response to the challenge of tracing links between popular and intellectual beliefs, which she has set out with regard to daimonic forces related to Tyche (esp. 1997.68–69).

Gasparro argues that “daimonology” was “a more or less homogenous and articulated set of ideas and beliefs, sometimes associated with ritual practice, relating to the category of the divine with the Greeks, from the time of Homer, denoted by the term *daimon/daimones*”; she emphasises the conservatism of beliefs within the Mediterranean *oikoumene* (1997. 90). Nevertheless, she identifies a “specifically Hellenistic juncture within the *longue durée*” in which the *daimon* began to offer a way of thinking about or expressing the turbulence of the Hellenistic age, leading to a “redrawing of the map of the sacred,” and, in this sense, she finds that “The term *daimon* could be used to represent a graduated conception of the divine” which both distanced divinity, but also mediated between man and the divine—and was “capable of intervening in the daily life of the individual” (1997.90). I would argue that Gasparro’s insights are also relevant to the development of the darker and more dangerous *daimones* that are the subject of this article. The evidence suggests that just as Tyche became an increasingly

personalised goddess, so did these more threatening powers. But I want to emphasise the “spatial” aspects of this process—and the way that they developed. Over time, these creatures can be seen to have changed both the nature of their embodiment and the spaces they were imagined to inhabit. These transformations, in turn, offer insights into changes in the particular cultural spaces that produced them. The case studies presented here provide examples: the classical evidence predominantly comprises childhood tales, or emerge from the unreal world of comedy; the kinds of dangers they present are somewhat contained by and within their genres. In contrast, the *Life of Apollonius* is a text of philosophical and religious significance, poised between fiction and history, which resonates, on the one hand, with other (playful) second sophistic literary creations and, on the other hand, with hagiographical writing, both pagan and Christian (cf. Gyselinck and Demoen 2009 and Van Uytfanghe 2009). It draws *daimones* into everyday events, positioning them as common, even imminent, dangers.

Employing Smith’s “locative category” allows some refinement of these observations: not only have the locations and embodiments of these creatures changed, but the imagined boundaries that marked the monstrous from the mortal have become disturbingly more fluid. In contrast to the singular creatures of the classical sources, the *Life of Apollonius* portrays multiple and ubiquitous *empousai* (or *lamiai*). These creatures not only intervene in human lives, they dwell among humans and resemble them. The human appearance of the *daimon* is far more startling in some ways than its more monstrous earlier counterparts and, perhaps, more horrifying, since, as Apollonius describes it (and the *empousa* herself seems to agree, see Phil. VA 4.25.4–5), its self-presentation as a human seeking intercourse is part of a long-term strategy of supernatural aggression against mortals. Altogether, this *empousa* is a powerful reimagining of the Empousa depicted in the classical sources: she not only reinforces the themes of the *Life of*

*Apollonius*, playing a potent rhetorical role in the story and philosophy of the sage himself, she also provides insights into the larger theological concerns of the time.<sup>37</sup> From comedy to philosophy, from horror to hilarity: viewed within this broader historical perspective, the comparison of these very different narratives suggests dramatic changes in the perceived relationships between mortal and supernatural entities.

### 5. BOUNDARIES: THE UNCANNY AND THE OBJECT . . .

By exploring not only the physical spaces that these creatures inhabit and their boundaries, but also the creatures themselves *as* symbolic spaces and boundaries, this article has explored how and why these *daimones* were transformed from representations of the radically “other” to incarnations of their contemporary (human) audience. Building on this point, I end as I began, with Vernant’s discussion of the Gorgon and the oscillating emotions that it provokes. I have discussed the interrelation of horror and hilarity, but as a concluding observation, I turn to the “sense of strangeness” that Vernant evokes as the generator of these emotions. While these emotions appear to exist at opposite ends of a spectrum, he describes them as arising from one, far subtler experience—of the everyday somehow altered, the familiar transgressed.

This description is a vivid, albeit brief, evocation of the uncanny, “that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar” (Freud 1925.369). Freud is discussing his theories concerning the role of repressed childhood fears or primitive beliefs, but he also uses the term uncanny to describe more violent imagery: the severed head or hand cut off at the wrist, for example; images that are made even more uncanny if these objects are still able to move independently (Freud 1925.397). This analysis of individual anatomical elements is close to Vernant’s analysis of the Gorgon’s mask, which describes how

its different elements disrupt a familiar human face. Similarly, the depictions of the physical forms of the *daimones* discussed here also disrupt the familiar human or animal body: e.g., the beautiful woman who turns out to have ghastly appetites or the creature that shifts shape from one being to another. Mormo, Lamia, and Empousa are uncanny in other ways as well: their presentation in literature appears to have been understood to recall childhood fears, especially those relating to “death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts” (Freud 1925.395).

These creatures were, in part, horrific because they revealed the presence of “the other” emerging from the familiar everyday world. But the instantiation of these figures in literary form, across genres and over time, reveals another psychological process in train: a repeated cultural identification of what is “other” and its rejection. In discussing this aspect of the cultural creation of monsters, scholars have invoked Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection (Kristeva 1982; see Cohen 1996.18 and Creed 2012 for an analysis of the “monstrous-feminine” in modern horror films). The theory of abjection describes a process in which an individual, a culture, represses what they are not—in order to identify what they are—but finds that this very othering process is what enables their being. Kristeva relates abjection to uncanniness in order to distinguish the two approaches. She refers to the abject as “a sudden and massive emergence of uncanniness” (1982.2) and states: “Essentially different from ‘uncanniness,’ more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory” (1982.3).

Yet the uncanny and the abject seem to come together in the representations, over time, of these ancient Greek creatures: e.g., the repeated depiction of these *daimones* and their sexual appetites, which “disturb[s] identity, system, order” (Kristeva 1982.4), can be described as a

(cultural) abjection of female sexuality. The examples in both case studies seek not only to surprise audiences through the transgression of boundaries, but to provoke a host of accompanying emotions, including, most notably, disapproval and disgust. Indeed, taking note of Kristeva's comments on the "sinister, scheming, and shady" nature of abjection, we can see how, in case study two, the *empousa* of Corinth presents a very potent instance of "a terror that disassembles" (Kristeva 1982.4). Reflection on the case studies presented here suggests how the uncanny and the abject may work together to describe the phenomenon of these *daimones*. As depicted, these creatures can themselves be described as uncanny; each of them, within their different narratives, reveals the relationship between what is familiar and "the other." At the same time, they are also instantiations of a long-term cultural process of abjection, revealing what was identified and rejected as "the other" within ancient Greek culture, but which remained necessary to that culture's own self-imagining, repeatedly invoked, "as tempting as it is condemned" (Kristeva 1982.1).

In fact, Vernant himself seems to be acknowledging both uncanniness and abjection when he describes the appearance of the Gorgon. First, as we have seen, he alludes to the uncanny nature of the mask, which "expresses and maintains the radical otherness, the alterity of the world of the dead." But the passage then continues: "In order to cross the threshold, one would have had to confront the face of terror and, beneath its gaze, to have been transformed oneself into the image of the Gorgon, into that which, in fact, the dead already are" (1991.121). Here is a description, in effect, of the concept of abjection—or, rather, of the experience it seeks to control, since the crossing of the threshold towards the rejected other results, as Vernant observes, in self-annihilation. However, what Vernant does not consider here, but what this

article has set out to reveal in these ancient sources, is a growing cultural concern that it was not enough to reject “the other” if that other was crossing the threshold towards you.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Focussing on the Gorgon’s fellow creatures—Mormo, Lamia, and, especially, Empousa—and using a spatial perspective, this article has examined not only the physical (social and temporal) spaces these creatures were depicted as inhabiting, but also the spaces of meaning that they themselves embodied and the cultural spaces that gave rise to them. Building on this, and drawing on Vernant’s insights into the emotions they provoked, it has explored the ways in which these creatures, as depicted, were, each and together, instantiations of the uncanny, while their collective representations, especially when considered over time, provide an insight into processes of abjection in ancient Greek culture.

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\* My grateful thanks to: Emmanuela Bakola and Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe, the organisers of the conference "Locating the *Daimonic*" held at Kings College London, March 2015, at which I delivered the first version of this paper; the conference participants, especially Richard Buxton, for their helpful thoughts and questions; the anonymous reviewers for the journal, who made so many valuable additional suggestions; the editors at *Arethusa* (Martha Malamud, Madeleine Kaufman, and Cassidy Phelps), and Simon Hornblower. This paper was completed in a period of research supported by the Leverhulme Trust, for which the author is very grateful.

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<sup>1</sup> The original (1985.32): “Dans le bouleversement des traits qui composent la figure humaine, elle exprime, par un effet d’inquiétante étrangeté, un monstrueux qui oscille entre deux pôles: l’horreur du terrifiant, le risible du grotesque.”

<sup>2</sup> *eidola* “images”; *phasmata* “ghosts.”

<sup>3</sup> Schefold and Giuliani are describing the characteristics of the opponents of Herakles: “the forces against which his heroism must prove itself, are huge size and strength; the mysterious, daimonic element of monsters is less in evidence. But it is precisely this daimonic nature which typifies the opponents with which Perseus, Bellerophon and Oedipus are confronted” (and they list the Gorgon, the Chimaira and the Sphinx).

<sup>4</sup> Schol. Ar. *Ran.* 293a–c: φάντασμα δαιμονιῶδες ὑπὸ Ἑκάτης ἐπιπεμπόμενον. ἔνιοι τὴν αὐτὴν τῆ Ἑκάτη <φασίν> “A daimonic phantasm, sent by Hekate. Some say she is the same as Hekate.”

<sup>5</sup> Schol. Ar. *Ekk.* 1056: (Ἐμπουσαί τις) ἦν καλοῦμεν νῦν ὄνοσκελίδα. θέλει οὖν εἰπεῖν δαίμονας, “(A certain Empousa:) whom we now call ‘donkey-legged.’ So it is customary to say *daimones*.”

<sup>6</sup> Hekataia: schol. ad Ap. Rhod. 3.861, Suda E1049 “Empousa,” and see also Call. frag. 461 = Eust. ad *Od.* 12.85. In schol. ad Ael. Aristid. 102.5 Dindorf, Mormo and Lamia are *phasmata*.

In this article, I will use *daimon* and its cognates. However, I note that Smith 1978, on which I draw, uses “demon” and its cognates, including for translations of the Greek *daimon* and related vocabulary; I have kept his original spelling in quotations from his work.

<sup>7</sup> While others have inquired about the spaces *in* which the daimonic is deemed to appear in ancient literature (e.g., Doroszewska 2017, see further discussion below; Felton and Gilhuly 2018b), this article takes a slightly different approach, first by focusing on the ways in which

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these spaces change, but also by examining the nature of the daimonic and thinking about it as a “space.”

<sup>8</sup> I use this term advisedly, observing how the seven theses of Jerome Cohen’s “monster theory” reinforce a number of the observations I wish to make (for example, and just to start with, “The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis” refers to the difficulties of categorisation that we have observed of these *daimones*: Cohen 1996.4–20, no. 3 at pp. 6–7).

<sup>9</sup> Patera 2014 examines the manifestations of these creatures over a broad swathe of time but does not inquire into how and why their changing appearance responds to the changing cultural imagination of different periods and what these different representations may reveal about diverse historical contexts. Resnick and Kitchell 2007 offer a more limited but still fascinating account of the development of the image of the *lamia* and its uses into the medieval period.

<sup>10</sup> Felton and Gilhuly 2018b raise questions about the differences between various negative emotions, e.g., fear, anxiety, and dread with regard to “landscapes of dread” (esp. 2, 4). They discuss (4-5) Wierzbicka’s 1999 work on the modern use of these terms. With regard to the ancient world, they note (5) the findings of a forthcoming study of fear in Roman narrative (Ingemark and Ingemark forthcoming) to suggest that: “The relations between fear and other emotions are seldom spelled out, except for the general contention that fear pertains to an evil in the future, distress to an evil in the present.”

<sup>11</sup> For example, Cohen 1996.18, considering the appeal of the monster, suggests that comedy may result in “the neutralization of potentially threatening aspects.”

<sup>12</sup> I have selected this tale because it is the only later Greek literary source that provides a detailed account of one of these creatures (in this case, the *empousa*) as a supernatural figure rather than a mortal creature endowed with the power of great evil, as, for example, the so-called

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*lamiai* in Apuleius’s story of *The Golden Ass* (*Met.* 1.1–17, at 8). Resnick and Kitchell 2007.83 also note this aspect, describing the witch, Meroe, as a more “humanized Lamia” and observing the way that she and her sister have “been reduced from the status of demon to that of witch.” They suggest that *lamia* is a term of abuse (“bitch”) when used by Cupid to Psyche of her sisters later in the poem (Apul. *Met.* 5.11). Leinweber 1994.81 calls this blending of Lamia and witch “an important syncretism in the folklore of late antiquity.” The self-described “sea-women, called Donkey-legged,” of Lucian’s *True Histories* (*VH* 2.46), with their alluring features and cannibalistic appetites, are clearly conceptually related to the *empousa*, but are not described as such (nor as *daimones*), so are not discussed in this article.

<sup>13</sup> *Etym. Mag.*: “Mormolukeion: τὰ πρὸς κατάπληξιν τυπωθέντα προσωπεῖα.”

<sup>14</sup> See Scobie 1979, esp. 244–52, for a discussion of the evidence for ancient storytelling in Graeco-Roman culture (on frightening tales told to children, see 245–50).

<sup>15</sup> Ar. *Eq.* 693: ὡς δὴ καταπιόμενός με. μορμῶ τοῦ θράσους, lit. “As if gulping me down! A ‘mormo’ of insolence!”

<sup>16</sup> Praxinoa: ... οὐκ ἄξῳ τυ, τέκνον. Μορμῶ, δάκνει ἵππος. (trans. Hopkinson 2015): “I’m not going to take you, baby. Boo, the Bogeyman! Horses bite.”

<sup>17</sup> On the cross-cultural meaning of the term *onoskelis* as “female demon,” see Patera 2014.278–90, who offers a particular focus on the significance of the ass’s leg.

<sup>18</sup> This characteristic of a monster as comprising disconnected parts is not uncommon; Wengrow 2011 links it to the rise of technological advancements in the Bronze Age that made such composite images more common.

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<sup>19</sup> In this context, Gello should also be mentioned, although, in fact, she does not appear in surviving comedies. Her unfulfilled *telos* as a mother is the reason for her appalling activities (see Sappho frag. 178 [Zenob. 3.3 = i 58 Leutsch–Schneidewin], trans. Campbell). Because of the similarity of the child-destruction stories between Gello, Lamia, and Mormo, Johnston 1999.161–99 assimilates these creatures under the heading of *aoroi*, or restless dead, but (as Patera 2014.92–95 also observes) neither Lamia nor Mormo fit this category.

<sup>20</sup> West 1991 argues that both Gello and Lamia may originate in the semitic demoness Lamashtu, who was also a killer of children, a cannibal, and had the characteristics of animals.

<sup>21</sup> Lamia and fish: it seems that the carcharia (a type of shark) was referred to as a Lamia and a Scylla because of its appetite (Sophron *Tuna Fisher* frag. 45 = Athen. 6.307d). Lamia in a more general form had aspects related to the sea: Lamia was said to be the daughter of Poseidon (Paus. 10.12.2) and mother of Scylla (Stes. ap. schol. Apollon. *Arg.* 4.825–31g and schol. *Od.* 12.124 = frags. 182a and 182b Finglass), which aligns her with Hekate, who also plays this role ([Hes] frag. 262 M-W). Other sources describe her as mother of the Sibyl (in “Eumelos” *Korinthiaka* F 8 Bernabé [= F 22 West] = Dio Chrys. *Or.* 37.13; see West 2002), in combination with, in some sources, Zeus (Plut. *Pyth. Or.* 9, *Mor.* 398c, and Paus. 10.12.1–2), and, in others, Apollo (Suda Σ355 *Sibulla*). Regarding the term’s use to describe beasts, some caution is needed here, since in some texts, the term is not used at all, but the characteristics of the creature or associations with other stories can suggest that a particular monster may be described as a *lamia*: e.g., Ant. Lib. *Met.* 8 describes the death of a Lamia monster at Delphi (but the appearance of the monster is not described); Stat. *Theb.* 1.562–669 describes a serpentine female monster but does not call it a *lamia*.

<sup>22</sup> Douris *FGrH* 76 F 17 [Phot. Suid. s.v. Λάμια = schol. Ar. *Vesp.* 1035], schol. Ar. *Peace* 758, Eur. frag. 472m *TrGF* = Diod. 20.41.6. This is a mytheme that is found elsewhere: for example, relating to Gerana, also called Oinoe, queen of the pygmies (see Fontenrose 1959.100–01). Libya is the setting for monsters (women/snakes) that devour young men as reported by Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 5.1, 5–16, 18–21, 24–27), while he does not call them *lamiai*. Ogden (2013.86–92 and 2018.181) suggests that they can be understood as such because of their “female-humanoid and serpentine forms . . . beast-like hands . . . taste for attractive young men . . . Libyan setting . . . and . . . allusion to the notion that the myth might have been developed to frighten children.” As Ogden 2018.174 notes, there are a number of references to the land of Libya as infested by snakes, including Lucan *Bellum Civile* 9.619–95 and the story of the Bagrada dragon which he traces to a mid first-century B.C.E. work by Quintus Aelius Tubero (Valerius Maximus 1.8 ext. 19 = Livy F9 W-M; Aulus Gellius 7.3, incorporating Tubero F8 Peter = F11 Cornell); see Ogden 2018.181 for further references.

<sup>23</sup> Schol. vet. Ar. *Peace* 758, Plut. *de Cur.* 2 [515 F], schol. ad Ael. Aristid. *Or.* 13.102 Dindorf, and Isid. *Etym.* 8.11.102.

<sup>24</sup> See Halm-Tisserant 1989.76 on the erect phallus. Seltman 1920.14 first identified the female figure on the Beldam Painter’s name vase (Athens NM 1129) as a *lamia* (see Rotroff 2014.170). Other possible visual depictions of (the) *Lamia/lamiai* are discussed by Boardman 1992.

<sup>25</sup> Trans. D. Lee ([www.stoa.org/sol/](http://www.stoa.org/sol/) s.v. “Empousa”).

<sup>26</sup> A single foot is also mentioned at Ar. *Ekk.* 1108–11 (Waser 1905). The leg of bronze may link her to the Erinys: see Soph. *El.* 491, where they are called bronze-footed. *Bolitinós*: Tucker 1906 sees this as a pun on lead, *molubdinós*—which Sommerstein 1996 ad loc. rightly associates

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with curse tablets—but would the audience have made such a connection from this brief mention?

<sup>27</sup> That monsters and social status were associated may be the implication of the play on words that Plutarch describes Aristophanes making with the terms *lamias* and *tamias* (“servants”; see Plut. *Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander* 1.853B = Ar. frag. 724).

<sup>28</sup> The account of the plague at Ephesus gives one example: Phil. VA 4.10–11, and see also Phil. VA 3.38, 4.20, [4.25], 6.27, with Sorensen 2002.186.

<sup>29</sup> Philostratus grew up in Athens, and probably held office there, making his familiarity with the Eleusinian rituals more likely (see Bowie 2009.19) and familiarity is confirmed by his mentions of Eleusis in descriptions of local sophists. E.g., his mention of the burial place of the sophist Apollonius (probably C. Casianus Apollonius of Steiria) as the place (the suburb called the Sacred Fig) where the sacred emblems carried from Eleusis to the city (during the Greater Mysteries) stopped to rest (*Vit. Soph.* 2.602); and that the burial place of Secundus was “before Eleusis” (*Vit. Soph.* 1.545; cf. Rife 2009.107–09)

<sup>30</sup> Felton 2013 discusses this episode as an example of a Lamia, and there are certainly similarities: Apollonius describes the creature with the image of a snake (4.25.3). But as Felton herself notes (233), the image of the snake may be metaphorical, and Apollonius is quite clear about the nature of the beast and the contemporary confusion about the differences between *lamiai* and *empousai*.

<sup>31</sup> On the possible identification of this Menippos with the philosopher Menippos of Gadara and its implications for the philosophical meaning of the text, see Doroszewska 2017.23 n.10.

<sup>32</sup> *Vesp.* 1018–20 with schol., with Sommerstein 1983 ad loc., but cf. Ogden 2002.32–34 and Pl. *Soph.* 252c.

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<sup>33</sup> Both Eurykles and the *engastrimuthoi* are referred to in Plut. *de Defect.* 414e.

<sup>34</sup> Julia Doroszewska recently used this episode as part of her argument that the suburbs of ancient cities were “a landscape of dread,” tracing their representation in ancient literature as “a natural demonic territory” (2017: 21). As a parallel, Sorenson 2002.127 and 131 discusses the ways in which, in a number of possession stories from New Testament sources, possessed individuals tend to be literally separated from their community, while the process of exorcism not only enables reacceptance into society, but also introduces the broader significance of this integration: these events “invite complementary interpretations that range from soteriological issues of personal healing and social reintegration, to larger political struggles, to the eschatological context of cosmic conflict.”

<sup>35</sup> In contrast, Felton 2018 describes a number of stories in which hauntings occur in domestic spaces (Plautus’s *Mostellaria*, Pliny the Younger *Epistula* 7.27, and Phlegon of Tralles’ *Tale of Philinnion*), but while the term *daimon* may be used of ghost-like creatures (see Lucian *Philopseudes* 31—but this is an odd ghost, since it shape-shifts and closer to the kind of spirit found at Lucian *Philopseudes* 16, cf. Felton 1999.86), the vocabulary used in these passages is not “daimonic.” In *Mostellaria*, Tranio refers to *mortuom*, “the dead man”; Pliny refers to the *imago*, *simulacra*, *effigies*, (all words with the meaning of “likeness”), *monstrum* (“monster”), and *idolon* (“representation”); Philinnion is called a *phasma* (“ghost”), *nekra* (“dead”), and *opsis* (“vision”). Similarly (a further example cited by Felton 2018.221), Taraxippus the Terror of Horses is described as a *deima* “fear” not a *daimon* (Paus. 6.20.15–16).

<sup>36</sup> Resnick and Kitchell 2007.82 observe with regard to the Lamia that her features were soon “invoked for the moralizing needs of the philosophers, and later authors.” They argue that the lessons for which the Lamia and her kind were useful can be seen to have “changed remarkably”

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between early Greek incarnations and those of the sophistic period. The former, they argue (drawing on Johnston 1995) helped to define a negative definition of womanhood, while the latter concerned lessons about desire and appetite. A fuller consideration of the evidence suggests that this is too categorical a description.

<sup>37</sup> Indeed, just how Apollonius manages to achieve the expulsion of the *daimon* is invoked as part of a Christian/anti-Christian polemic (see Eusebius *Against Hierokles* 13.30.1 and 35.2).