

Movement, the Senses and Representations of the Roman World: Experiencing the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias

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Abstract *This article examines the Sebasteion – a complex for emperor-worship built in the first century AD - in Aphrodisias, modern Turkey, and studies its political and ideological messages when the sensory experiences of the spectators are considered. The monument contained geographical representations of the peoples of the Roman world placed above a portico. Previous studies of this monument focus upon close and repeated visual study to gain an idea of a powerful empire, but this is not how the contemporary audience would have experienced it. During a religious procession the spectators were moving past static images situated high above them, with many other stimuli, which could distract from or add to the intended ideological messages of the monument. Therefore this article considers movement and architecture as part of the sensory experience and illustrates that these would have affected the audience's encounters, which in turn could affect perceptions of the Roman world.*

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Introduction

Throughout the Roman Empire there existed monuments that displayed ideas about the power of Rome and the emperor, military might over foreign nations and the extent of Roman power. Modern audiences experience the ancient world through such surviving monuments and literature, which give an impression of clean, bright, open, gleaming cities laid out neatly according to grid patterns – although some ancient texts suggest the opposite impression: a dark and crowded dystopia full of pollution and poverty (**Morley 2005: 192-194, 2015: 111- 112; Toner 2009: 128; Koloski-Ostrow 2015: 90-109**). The limited evidence, and the poetic or literary nature of much of it, makes it difficult to understand what life was truly like on the streets of cities in the Roman Empire,

although in recent years such questions have been raised, especially with regard to sensory experience. A series of works on *Senses in Antiquity* is in the process of being published and the study is becoming more nuanced, with questions being raised about how senses could overlap (**Bradley 2015: 8**) or have cultural, personal or religious connotations, as a smell or a sight can recall memories or emotions for one individual but not another. Such issues are explored in the book, *Synaesthesia and the Ancient Senses* (**Butler and Purves 2013**). Beatrice Caseau also investigates how the senses could interact with each other in the Christian setting. She emphasises that church interiors showed an awareness of the effects of synaesthesia, whereby the faithful would prostrate on a marble floor in a building filled with colours and lights, whilst hearing the Word of God (**Caseau 2014: 91-92**). One of the perils of investigating the Graeco-Roman world in terms of sensory experience is the temptation to apply modern notions of the senses to the ancient city. For example, smell is a purely subjective experience, with ideas as to what is pleasing differing from person to person, or across time. Some scholars such as Koloski-Ostrow (**2015: 90-109**) emphasise the less than pleasant odours of ancient cities, but Morley (**2015: 112**) has argued that just because there is the conception that the West has been 'de-odorized' in modern times, it does not mean that the past was especially odoriferous.

In the modern West the five senses of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, as described in Aristotle's *De Anima* (c.350 BC), have dominated such discussions, with an apparent emphasis on the visual and auditory (**Morley 2015: 110; Betts 2011: 118**). However, a strong case for the importance of smell in ancient poetry, comedy or biography has been made by Bradley (**2015: 6-7, 16**). Recently, Butler and Purves have taken steps to move away from this hierarchy of senses (**2013: 2**) and Diane Favro (**2006: 333**) has called for academics 'to break the tyranny of sight and explore all experiential aspects of past cities.' Yet elsewhere in the world the sensorium is already somewhat different from the Western idea of senses being something that happen to a passive body. In Ghana, experiences such as balancing and kinaesthesia are seen as key senses (**Geurts 2002**); the Anlo-Ewe people use the same term – *seselelame* - for both emotions felt within a person and outer sense perception (**Geurts 2005: 164-178**). The Kaluli people of Bosavi, Papua New Guinea have an ear- and voice-centred sensorium, with local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge and imagination greatly affecting the sense of space (**Feld 2005: 179**). Jacques Rancière (**2004**) highlights the use of architecture in what was allowed to be experienced and what was denied to individuals, so that aesthetics became part of the 'arena of sensorial experience'. Scholarship that deals with the sensorial

experiences of the ancient world is beginning to move away from the simple 'five senses' model. Therefore, by considering how kinaesthesia could affect individuals' experiences of their surroundings, this article provides a new method for exploring the ancient world and the influence sensory experiences could have on its interpretation.

Movement, which can be both active and passive depending on whether the person is moving or observing movement, and how this interacts with the other senses, has only just begun to be investigated in great detail. Eleanor Betts (2011: 118-132) explores how the five Western senses could affect an individual's navigation choices through the ancient city. This article raises questions as to how movement could affect how the senses were interpreted. It takes a monument from the ancient world - the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias - and investigates how considering the senses of those taking part in a religious procession could alter or enhance the messages of such monuments, with emphasis upon the effects of movement and architecture. There have been no scholarly to recreate the path this procession would have taken, and it is beyond the scope of this article to do so. Therefore in order to gain insight into what was experienced in Aphrodisias and how this could affect the monument's interpretation, ancient literary sources describing movement through, and the sensory experiences of urban life in the ancient world have been used, as well as research on the religious life of other cities in ancient Asia Minor (Price 1984, Rogers 1991). However, while some aspects of the sensory experiences of the ancient world can be recreated through the surviving literature, it is important to acknowledge that these were still individual experiences. Different people would have reacted in different ways to their sensorial surroundings, including the procession, the aesthetics of the city and Sebasteion.

The Sebasteion is a complex dedicated to the *theoi Sebastoi* (divine emperors) of the Julio-Claudian period (27BC - AD68). It was dedicated to the emperor Tiberius during his reign (AD14 - AD37) but there is evidence that the two families responsible for its construction were still working on the project under Nero (AD54 - AD68). Its form is of two porticoes lining a processional way up to the temple (Figure 1). The north building – on the right hand side of the figure - contained marble reliefs depicting female allegorical personifications of the *ethne* (peoples) who inhabited the Roman world in its second storey, along with imperial scenes and universal allegories on its third storey. This was facing the south building depicting victorious Roman emperors over defeated barbarian nations, on par with the Olympian gods and scenes from Greek mythology.



Figure 1. The Sebasteion looking west. Aphrodisias, Turkey. Photograph Kathryn Thompson, The University of Warwick.

Personifications of nations were nothing new in the ancient world, nor is the study of them (**Gardner 1888; Toynbee 1934: 7-23; Smith 1988: 70-77, 2013: 114-118**). Previous research into the intended meaning of this monument states that it gives a very clear message of empire. R.R.R. Smith (1988: 50) indicates that the depictions of the peoples of the world were distinctly Roman and full of imperialistic messages. These personifications are accompanied by imperial themes, including divinities such as Aphrodite, from whom - in her guise as Venus Genetrix - the Roman imperial family claimed descent. Hellenistic allegories of *Oceanus* (Ocean) and *Hemera* (Day), suggest that *Tellus* (Earth) and *Nyx* (Night) may also have been present (**Smith 2013: 86**). If so, this whole structure would have had a very strong imperial message about the Roman *imperium sine fine* - empire without limits - in terms of space and time. The surviving personifications of *ethne* mostly represent peoples who lived on the very edges of the Roman world, tying into the idea of a far reaching empire throughout the Julio-Claudian period.

There has also been debate about the homogeneity of these reliefs: their clothing, poses, expressions and hair styles are all remarkably similar, though it has been argued that subtle differences marked levels of 'civilization' (**Smith, 1988: 60; 2013: 89**). The reliefs today reside in one large hall in the Aphrodisias museum:

http://www.aphrodisias.com/images/Map/16_aphrodisias_museum_2.jpg). These comparisons between the *ethne* have been made based on the

spectators being static, at eye-level with the personifications, and able to study them closely over a prolonged period. In ancient times the people experiencing the monument would have been moving, with the images static far above them. Thus the experience would have been very different. The people in the processions may or may not have been focusing on the monument itself and would have had to deal with the sensory experiences of a religious procession and sacrifice in the early Roman Empire. Thus the senses would have combined and interacted with the monument to create an idea of the *oikoumene* - the inhabited world - in the minds of those experiencing the monument.

Searching for Meaning through Close Visual Study

Most discussions focusing upon the Sebasteion have been concerned with the temple-complex as a visual monument. This is hardly surprising; monuments and architecture are thought to be primarily concerned with what is visual when considering the experience of both creator and user (**Lokko, 1998: 52**).

If this monument was full of the imperialistic messages about the power of Rome, as claimed by R.R.R. Smith, then it would make sense for the peoples depicted to be in poses of supplication. In the city of Rome depictions of foreign nations were based upon captives actually seen in a triumph. For instance, on Augustan coinage a kneeling barbarian is shown bearded and in trousers (*RIC I², 416*: http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/augustus/RIC_0416.2.jpg) as well as in supplication handing over a vexillum, and the Gemma Augusta (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b1/Gemma_Augusta_KHM_2010_%28cropped%29_lower.jpg) depicts Roma raising a military trophy, soldiers and subdued barbarians in the lower register, all of whom have expressive features and poses to show their defeat. On later monuments such as Trajan's Column – which displays the emperor's conquest of the Dacians (AD101 - 102, AD105 - 106) - or Marcus Aurelius' Column in Rome, showing the annihilation of the Marcommani and Quadi peoples (AD166 - 180), female barbarians are depicted not as allegories; they are portrayed as 'real' people (**Dillon 2006: 244-271**), but still very much submissive to the Roman state. These monuments all have strong military imagery, emphasising Roman victory over the barbarian enemy. Such imagery is in complete contrast to the *chiton*-clad, peaceful allegories seen in the north building of the Sebasteion, who all stand straight with similar poses and dress and look forward with little expression in their faces (Figure 2.a-d). These representations of foreign peoples are unlike anything that currently survives and was created in Rome at the time.



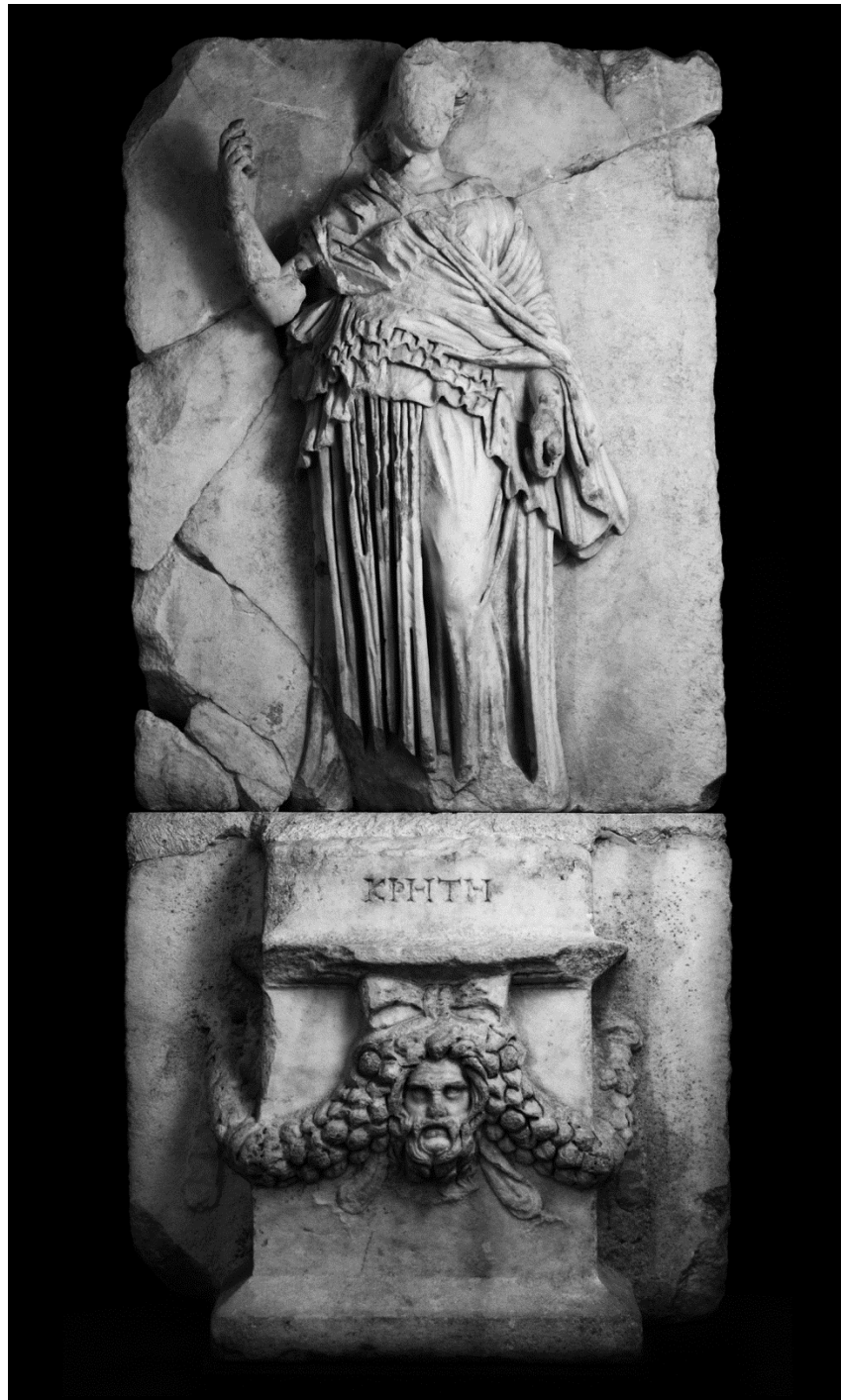
a.



b.



C.



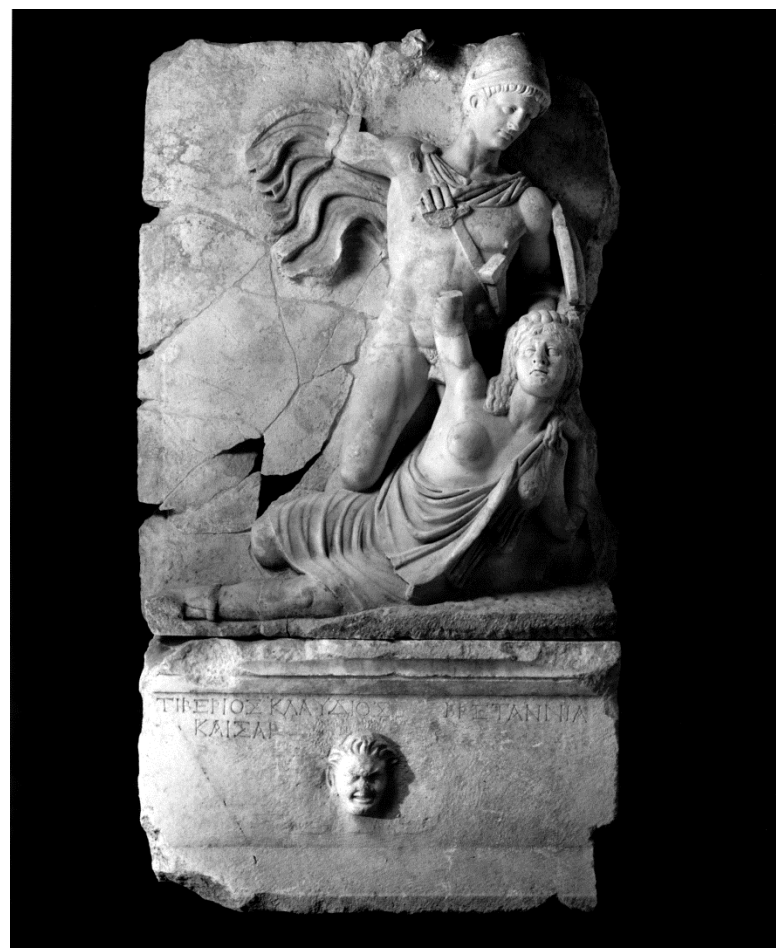
d.

Figure 2. Ethne reliefs from the North Building of the Sebasteion, Aphrodisias, Turkey. a: The Pirousti. b: The Dacians. c: The Bessi. d: Crete. Photographs: New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias (G. Petruccioli).

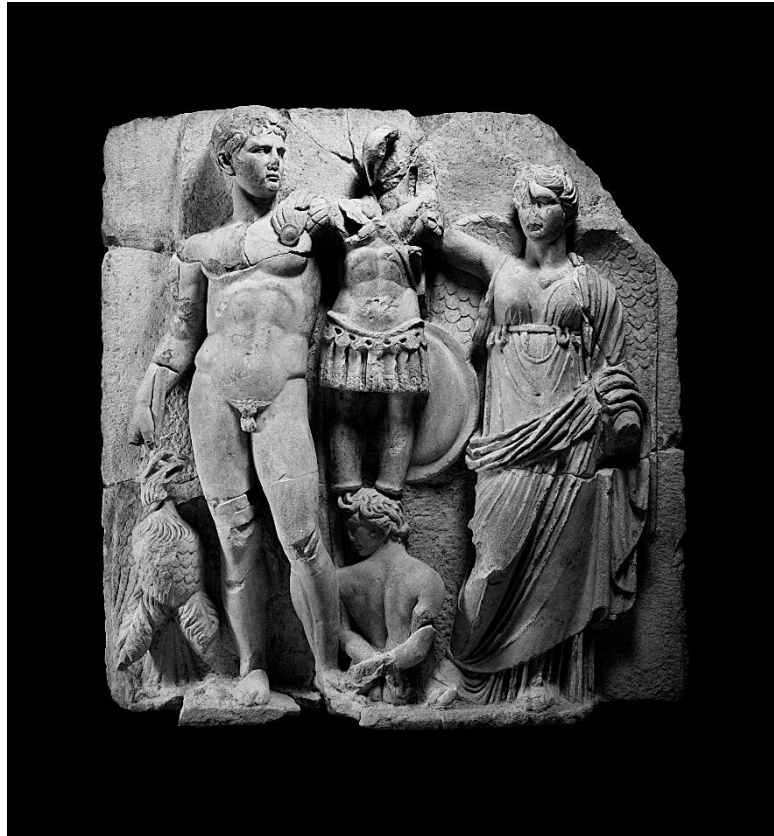
Therefore the peoples in the North building at Aphrodisias are not simply conquered barbarians. They do not have the submissive features associated with a Roman military triumph and the art that developed from it, which is how they were portrayed on the south building (Figure 3.a-c), which was created at the same time, but by a different family. In these reliefs the Roman emperors are mostly in heroic nude to show their divine status as they easily defeat the barbarian enemy.



a.



b.



C.

Figure 3. Reliefs from the South Building of the Sebasteion, Aphrodisias, Turkey. a: The emperor Tiberius with a conquered barbarian. b: The emperor Claudius conquers Britain. c: The emperor Augustus and Nike with a trophy, eagle and captive barbarian. Photographs: New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias (G. Petruccioli).

Elsewhere in artwork from the Roman Empire, certain attributes are given to demarcate peoples of the world, such as a triskelion for the three-sided island of Sicily, or coiled hair to demarcate Egypt or Africa. These are an easy way for people to identify the nations represented and attributes could have easily been assigned to the *ethne* in Aphrodisias. Yet there are very few surviving attributes; an animal, possibly a bull, can be seen on the Dacian relief (Figure 2.b), but if a myth was associated with it then it has been lost to us. This distinct lack of attributes would suggest that possibly not much was known of these obscure peoples, which is what led Smith to believe that they were copied from a monument in Rome (Smith 1988: 59). Yet contemporary writers such as Strabo and Pomponius Mela have proven otherwise with detailed descriptions of the peoples shown in the Sebasteion. Therefore it is probable that the homogeneous way in which all of the peoples are presented was a stylistic choice. Certainly the personifications were not readily identifiable, even to the sculptors, as an inscription naming the Pirousti was found behind its relief, probably to ensure that it was matched to the correct base (Smith 2013: pl.27, B.1).

Another way in which the *ethne* could be differentiated was dress. The coinage of Augustus described above shows the Parthians in trousers and with a beard to mark their identity. However, in the Sebasteion the allegorical females all wear a Greek *chiton*, *himation* or *peplos* and while it is a possibility that some held weapons which have now been lost, the few that appear in armour wear Greek helmets, rather than the arms of the people they represent. This is certainly the case with the Pirousti *ethnos* (Figure 2.a); the idealised woman wears a Corinthian helmet and carries a small hoplite shield. No serious attempt was made to add realism to the national dress or weaponry (**Smith 1988: 62**).

Through very close and detailed examination of the reliefs in the Sebasteion it can be inferred that the craftsmen working on the south building chose to emphasise the military might of the Roman emperors through Nike (Victory), trophies and submissive barbarians. But this was not the case with the north building. There are subtle differences between the reliefs, which, when studied repeatedly and carefully can be identified and commented upon. But would such subtleties have been picked up by the spectators below?

Experiencing the Monument: The Moving Religious Procession

There is the question of whether the people who inhabited, or visited, Aphrodisias at this time would have been able to study the reliefs in great detail. The monument may have been designed with vision in mind, but this was not the only way in which the inhabitants of the city experienced the complex. These reliefs formed a portico-temple complex and a processional way, from the *propylon* (gateway) in the west to the temple in the east. A plan of Aphrodisias can be found at:

https://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/fineart/pdfs/academics/State_City.pdf

The Sebasteion is on the east side of a large square which formed the main street through Aphrodisias and is opposite the entrance to the north *agora* (market). This monument was a temple complex and sacred way, so its primary function would have been for religious processions to walk along towards the temple and altar of the *theoi Sebastoi* in the east, having first wound their way through the city streets. This is where the question of movement in the arena of sensual experience comes to the foreground.

Generally, in the Greek East in the first century AD, a religious festival celebrating the Roman emperor as divine protector or guarantor would have seen a garlanded animal led along; there would have been flutes

and drums as seen on mosaics – though there are understandable difficulties in recreating the music that the instruments were playing (**Weddle 2012: 140**) - and the majority of the community would have been involved (**Price 1984: 107-114**), thus creating a sense of shared experience (**Toner 2009: 125**). The procession would have generally ended in an animal sacrifice on an altar in front of the garlanded temple (*I. Ephesos III, 814*): incense was burned, cult statues were garlanded and fragrant oils were added. This would have been the climax of the ceremony and recent works have tried to recreate the event to gain a deeper understanding of its significance. Candice Weddle (**2012: 137-159**) uses a modern sacrifice to explore the sensory experience of the ancient ceremony. Jerry Toner (**2009: 125**) explores how the transfer of senses helped transmit divinity to the mortals who touched cult statues, or who smelt of the sacrifice; Beatrice Caseau applies similar methods to explore how the haptic and olfactory senses could be used to create a link to God in Christianity when the divinity was no longer corporeal (**Caseau 2014: 103-105**). Ashley Clements (**2015: 46-59**) investigates how the sense of smell could be linked to divine presence in Greek religion. The archaic writer Hesiod explains how men burnt rich meats upon fragrant altars for the immortals (**2007: 535-557**). The satirist, Lucian (AD125 - AD180) criticises in his book *De Sacrificiis* the concept that the gods consumed the odours from the sacrifices of man when they could feast on ambrosia and nectar at home (**1921: 9**), but this demonstrates that into the imperial age, the notion that smoke, aroma and divinity were linked was still prominent. The air acted as a zone through which the earthly domain of mortals and the aether of the gods could interact (**Clements 2015: 48**); the smoke burning at the altar was thus transcending the mortal world and reaching the gods (**Hamilakis, 2014: 77-78**), carrying the odour with it. Thus kinaesthesia could affect how sensory experiences were interpreted even if the spectators themselves were static and the movement of another object/form was being observed.

But this sacrifice was the climax of the ceremony: first of all the participants had to take part in the procession. Focusing on just the sensory experience of the sacrifice itself ignores a large part of the ritual. Previous studies dealing with the moving processions have primarily dealt with their routes and how they related to other visual monuments associated with the cult, such as Guy Roger's investigation of the procession through Ephesus (**1991: 80-115**) and how images of the Roman Emperors and tribes of Ephesus were led past monuments that related to both Roman power and the city of Ephesus itself; thus the people who saw the images of the Roman emperors in the first part of the procession, celebrating the importance of Rome in the lives of the

Ephesians would have had a very different idea about the meaning of the procession from those who saw the tribes of the Ephesians parading past the spot where the mythical founder of the city, Androklos, supposedly slew a boar. Kristine Iara (2015: 125-132) discusses the significance of the processional routes for the cults of Rome as they passed across conscious or unconscious boundaries with special significance to the deity, such as the procession of the *transvectio equitum* who passed the temples at Porta Capena, the Forum Romanum and the Capitoline Hill, all places of significance to the gods who were honoured by this procession: Mars, god of war, the Dioscuri - patrons of the equites -, and Jupiter Optimus Maximus. Thus there is a clear sense in modern scholarship that surrounding buildings and monuments could manipulate the visual sense in order to create significance for the cult. But added to this should be considerations of how the movement towards the altar, through the streets of the city with its different smells, sounds, sights and textures could affect this experience; in short, how kinaesthesia as well as the surrounding aesthetics could alter the more passive senses and contribute to the audience's reading of the Sebasteion.

The sensory experience of travelling through the narrow streets of Aphrodisias will briefly be considered so that it can be compared with the experience once the Sebasteion was entered. As the procession moved through the narrow streets which were mostly 3.5m wide (Ratté, 2008: 32) there would have been a cacophony of sites, smells and noises. Of course one sense is never experienced in isolation from all the others and they could interact to create different experiences or ideas (Butler and Purves 2013). The subjectivity of experiences such as smell or sound, and the different emotions or connotations these senses could conjure up in the minds of the audience makes it very difficult to draw any definite conclusions about how this would have affected people's experience, but some attempt will be made.

Some of the scents or sounds or sights would have related to the ceremony itself. For instance, depictions of sacrifice in the Graeco-Roman world, such as an altar in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek museum, Copenhagen (inv. 858), often show that the animal would have been garlanded in flowers or wool (Virgil 1999: 3.487). These would have created a distinct aroma (Weddle 2012: 149) which at first would have been a dynamic, new experience. The fact that this was absent from everyday life would have made it stand out in the minds of its participants (Toner 2009: 125) and given the experience a certain level of significance. There would also have been music, but how loud this was depended upon the position of the participant in relation to the instruments. While the tunes played may be lost to us, we can hazard to comment upon the emotional response to music and its role in Geurts'

concept of *seselelame* (2005): the passive sense of hearing would have created an emotional reaction, a feeling within the body of those experiencing the music, but once again, the reaction would have been subjective. If people had experienced such a procession before then the smells and sounds could help create expectation of what the day might bring based on previous encounters, in a similar way to how smells of mulled wine or orange and cinnamon might remind people today that Christmas is on its way. Thus memory too played an important role in such events and Beatrice Caseau argues that such memories created by the senses, yet shared by a community could be transmitted as values which only those who had been present at previous experiences would understand (Caseau 2014: 91). Yet if others had not experienced such a procession before then their reaction to the visual, haptic, acoustic or olfactive stimuli would be different. Furthermore, there is also the possibility that to some the odours or sounds were unpleasant, - in the early second century Martial records a dislike for the smell of goat (1993: 6.93), which is an olfactory cliché from the ancient world - which would greatly affect that individual's experience (Bradley 2015: 6-7).

The strength of the aroma and the intensity of the music depended upon how close the sensor was to the source. Over time, as the animal or instruments moved along and the procession moved with them, the new and dynamic experiences could easily have faded into the background as other smells, sights, textures or sounds came to the foreground. The streets of cities in the ancient world were not just for travelling: they were used for everyday activities as well such as trade or eating. Thus there could be the smells of a bakery or fullery, or of a spice stall, or cooked meat, or even animal waste, either from the sacrificial animal or dogs that may be roaming the streets. Vendors would be shouting to sell their goods, babies crying or dogs barking, people talking or shouting; Seneca the Younger (4BC - AD65) laments the day to day sounds such as vendors selling sausages or confectionary close to his residence over the baths in Rome (1917: 56.1-2) and Martial complains how noisy the city streets of Rome were in comparison to the countryside (1993: 12.57). While such experiences may not have been conceived as a novelty to a static observer, such as one of the vendors who used the streets regularly (Bradley 2015: 16), the addition of movement made them more dynamic. These newer encounters would only be experienced for a short time by the audience, before they faded and became replaced by other experiences. Visually, again, the experience would have depended upon where in the procession the viewer was. If (s)he was at the front then there would be a relatively clear view of what was up ahead, be it a turn in the road, the agora, gateways, statues relating to civic officials or members of the imperial family etc. But if the viewer was at the back or

in the middle of the procession then they would have to strain to see over their fellow participants. The poet, Horace, in his *Satires*, protests how hard it was to navigate the city streets owing to crowds (**1926: 2.6.27-28**). Therefore one may not take in as much of the surrounding area, especially if the procession was moving at speed, the streets were narrow and the viewer was in the middle of a large group.

The everyday sights, smells or sounds may have been background experiences for those who were stationary in the area, but for those taking part in the procession, the addition of movement made them dynamic. Thus they would stand out as the participants ambled past, but only for a brief period of time before the momentum and motion carried the crowd away from these occurrences towards the main spectacle. The movement itself would have created a sense of anticipation, as anyone who has ever been in a queue at a theme park, or a traffic jam, might experience: there was the idea that the motion itself was progress, but when it ended, the crowd would have reached its destination and the expected sacrifice could take place.

Yannis Hamilakis explores how material evidence can help recreate the multi-sensorial ways of engaging with the world (**Hamilakis 2014: 2-5**) and how this approach was combined with cultural criticism and anthropological studies in the twentieth century in order to understand how human, non-humans, objects and their surroundings interacted (**Hamilakis 2014:13-14, 57-110**). Thus the remains of the Sebasteion need to be examined alongside literary descriptions of the events that took place during a religious procession and with consideration of individual experiences. The French philosopher, Jacques Rancière (**2004: 12-25**), argues that aesthetics have a political dimension; accordingly the 'distribution of the sensible' can dictate an individual's participation in a politics or a community by setting divisions between visible v. invisible, audible v. inaudible and sayable v. unsayable (**Rancière 2004:14**). If this theory is applied to the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias, then the architecture can be seen as attempting to control the kinaesthetic and sensory experiences of its users.



Figure 4. Propylon of the Sebasteion, Aphrodisias, Turkey. Photograph Kathryn Thompson, The University of Warwick.

The Sebasteion was marked off as a separate space from the everyday activities of the city by a monumental gateway (*propylon*) (Figure 4) (Macaulay-Lewis 2011: 276). Thus the sense of anticipation created by the movement would have been heightened when this came into view; it would have acted as a sense of climax: the march was almost over and the sacrifice would soon take place. Here the kinaesthetic and aesthetic helped to create a sense of expectancy and eagerness. A visible boundary was being crossed (Iara 2015: 125-132) and the participants were consciously entering the sacred space of the Sebasteion, ready to experience the sacrifice on the other side.

The street beyond the *propylon* is 14m wide, not including the porticoes (Erim 1986: 107), compared to streets elsewhere in Aphrodisias which were mostly 3.5m wide (Ratté 2008: 32). Thus as soon as those walking in the procession entered through the gateway there would have been a marked change from the experiences of the city-procession. The space immediately would have become more open. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the lower levels of the porticoes were used for shops or businesses. There was little light and the earthen floors were unfinished (Smith 2013: 30-31). Consequently the architecture was trying to dictate how the complex was to be used. It was not for the everyday activities or commerce. Thus in theory there would have been a decrease in the noise, smells, sites and textures of everyday life such as bars, bakeries, market stalls selling the likes of spices and silk, as well as fewer obstructions in the form of goods spilling out onto the streets or people milling about. However, as Eleanor Betts (2011: 123) highlights, smells and sounds could not be controlled by space in the same way the visual

sense could; while architecture is concerned with visibility, an auditory space has no limits (**McLuhan 2005: 51**) and can be spherical, whereas vision can only be focused in one direction. And given the proximity of the Sebasteion's *propylon* to the Main Square of the city, as shown in the map linked above, sounds and aromas from this location would have permeated into the processional way, despite attempts made by the architecture to separate it.

Yet the space still would have suddenly become more 'open,' and the fabric would have changed to the smooth marble. The *ethne* reliefs would now also be part of the surroundings for the first time in the procession. Kristina Hellerstöm has conducted research into how people observe their surroundings when travelling: landmarks need to be large, brightly coloured and in stark contrast to their surroundings to attract attention (**Hellerstöm, 2009: 99**). It should be remembered that during this procession, surroundings would have been coloured, with subtle polychromy which could be achieved through techniques such as gilding or painting (**Abbe 2010: 277-89**). Thus a sudden change in passive haptic and visual experience, coupled with the conscious crossing of a threshold into sacred space, would have made the people taking part suddenly try to take in their surroundings, especially if this was the first time they had taken part in the procession. The senses would have been heightened by the change, or by the unfamiliar surroundings (**Betts 2011: 126**) in contrast to the narrow streets. Yet the question remains, would they have had enough time to admire each relief carefully and to identify or draw conclusions about them? It seems unlikely unless the procession halted, giving people time to admire their surroundings in detail.

As Hellerstöm pointed out, when travelling, there needs to be a sudden change for people to take notice. While we do not know how these reliefs would have been coloured (**Bradley 2014: 128** considers how colour was experienced and evaluated; **Abbe 2010: 277-289** investigates polychromy on other sculptures in Aphrodisias), we are able to comment upon the uniformity of them. As noted above, while there were subtle differences in costume between the reliefs, they were unlikely to stand out if people were not paying close attention to them. These peoples, with their similar clothing and expressions were not made to be prominent. Of those that survive, none appear to be given visual precedence. However, as Mark B. Abbe has demonstrated, other sculptures in Aphrodisias were gilded to give a polychrome effect (**Abbe 2010: 280-284**). If this technique was applied in the Sebasteion then the imperial and *ethne* reliefs would have glittered in the sun and made a visual impact about the wealth of the peoples who were paying homage to the emperors. However, this means that they would have reflected light. This depended upon the position of the sun and the location of the

viewer. As one person saw beautiful glittering clothing, another viewer further along the processional route might not have seen the relief; a cloud could have come across or he may be stood at the wrong angle. Thus the emotional response intended depended upon changing light, position and movement (**Hamilakis 2014: 76-77**).

The surviving reliefs show that some would have been holding attributes which could contribute to the audience's knowledge of the known world. But as seen above, this was based on close and repeated visual study. The reliefs in the museum today are at eye height and easily accessible. For the contemporary audience, they would have been far above; the porticoes were some 12m high. People would have to crane their necks to the sky in order to consider the attributes or the labels, and when walking in a large crowd where one could walk into people, or be walked into, this seems a somewhat dangerous idea. The participants of the procession were probably only capable of glancing at the reliefs high above them. When people glance at an object, they are relying on their peripheral vision to pick up details about it and the surrounding landscape, meaning that what is actually seen is unpredictable (**Hamilakis 2014: 79-80**). Thus a close analysis of the dress or attributes of the peoples would not have been possible; it cannot be said for certain that subtle differences in posture, or even just the names of the peoples depicted would have been noticed by the people below. Instead, the visual uniformity would have been more apparent.

The road may have been much wider through the *propylon*, but the porticoes were 12m high. Plus the route was 90m long and straight. This must have seemed somewhat overbearing at first with the high, imposing portico directing both the movement of the people below, and their sensory experience towards the temple where the sacrifice for the divine emperors who were responsible for the *pax Romana* (Roman peace) would take place. For all this time the participants of the procession would have been constantly moving towards the temple at the east end of the Sebasteion, directed by the overbearing architecture (**Hamilakis 2014: 70-72**). The fact that the temple, traditionally bedecked in garlands during sacrifices to the imperial family in Asia Minor (*I. Ephesos III, 814; Price 1984: 109*), was now in view must again have helped to create a further sense of anticipation which heightened as the procession moved closer. The kinaesthetic aspect here when linked to the visibility of the monument helped to create the expectation that the sensual experience, just like the procession, would culminate in this location. The constant motion meant that people in the procession perhaps did not get a chance to study the *ethne* reliefs in great detail, but their homogeneity and the imposing architecture all led the experience to focus on where the sacrifices to the emperor would take place.

Here the procession halted. This abrupt change in movement again would heighten people's attention and senses: the movement would have created a sense of anticipation, but the imposing architecture guiding the procession would have created ideas of the power of the emperors for whom the complex was built. This sudden end to the motion would have allowed people to consider this and remember their route. Those taking part in the ritual had first marched through all of the communities who enjoyed peaceful Roman rule on account of the *theoi Sebastoi* who were capable of defeating the dangerous barbarians who threatened the peace. The repetition of such imagery along the long corridor (Figure 3.a-c) illustrates an awareness on the part of the designers that the people below may not be focusing on each individual image due to the motion and other sensory experiences of the procession. Yet the architecture clearly tried to control these experiences, through directing the movement and creating a visual boundary between the complex and the everyday life of the city, even if it could not entirely separate the sounds or smells of daily life.

A Peaceful Place of Leisure or a Busy Thoroughfare?

But processions were not daily. This complex had no lockable gates so would have had other uses and thus other sensory experiences depending upon what was going on. Often in the ancient world streets were not purely for journeys, but could be destinations in themselves with activities such as trade, production, eating and politics taking place (**Holleran 2011: 250-253**). The experience of the city depended upon the time of day and year; at night then the experience would have been very different to the day where the streets and agora would generally have been hot, especially in summer. In the middle of the day they would have been filled with smells of local shops and noises of hustle and bustle which would have included traffic going to and from the agora as well as people milling about making their living, obstructing the movement (**Harnett 2011: 135-136**). Juvenal, (**2004: 3.244-67**) the Latin satirist, has his character, Umbricius complain of such experiences as an everyday part of life in Rome. If an individual stayed static in one point, such as the *agora*, then (s)he would experience many smells, noises, sights at once. But such sounds and smells, if experienced repeatedly for a long period of time, could become chronic. Yet adding kinaesthesia to the formula meant that each stimulus would only be experienced briefly. Walking past a fullery, butcher's shop or spice stall would produce very distinct, sudden aromas for a short period. Travelling past the merchants shouting to sell their wares, again would have brought these experiences to the foreground of one's attention until they moved onto something new.

These experiences could have elicited emotional responses, but these depended on individual, cultural and temporal conditions.

But as seen above, the Sebasteion complex was marked off as separate from the activities of the square and street by its monumental gateway, even when a procession was not taking place. The porticoes would have provided cooling shade and casual conversation could have been heard as people used porticoes to meet friends or acquaintances (**Pliny the Younger, 1969: 1.5.9**). Macaulay-Lewis (**2011: 279-283**) emphasises that porticoes were places of leisure in Rome (**Martial, 1993: 3.20.10-14; Horace, 1926: 1.6.111-131**). Ovid's *Amores* (**1914: 2.2.3-4**) also speaks of lovers meeting in such places, creating their own private spaces with conversation that, even if others could hear murmuring, would have to be fairly loud for surrounding peoples to experience fully (**Betts 2011: 127**). The lack of provision for shops supports the idea that this complex was designed to be a peaceful location, away from the commerce and commotion on the main streets of the city, with a more 'open' feel. Thus movement inside the complex could have been for leisure, rather than transport, so would have been considerably slower (**Macaulay-Lewis 2011: 272**). These people would have had more time to admire the artwork, which was often displayed in porticoes or temples (**Pliny the Elder 1952: 35.102, 109**).

Yet as stated above, smells and sounds are not confined to an area in the same way as visual space can be controlled and manipulated. The din of the street beyond the agora or smells from shops and bars would definitely have permeated into the Sebasteion and could not have been silenced completely. What a space is designed for and how it is actually used can be two very different experiences. Being so close to the agora, street vendors were probably milling about, obstructing the flow of traffic or shouting loudly to encourage people to buy their wares (**Holleran 2011: 254-256**). If the physical remains of the Sebasteion are examined, there is also evidence of gaming boards having been carved on fallen entablature (**IAph2007. 9.115**), meaning that in Later Antiquity this location was being used for leisure. However, there are far fewer graffiti in this building than elsewhere in Aphrodisias, such as the theatre. The lined walkway in the Sebasteion may actually have been kept clear of such unofficial activities.

There is also evidence that people could enter via the east end, behind the temple. Therefore it also served as a thoroughfare for traffic moving from the private housing sector to the public city centre and vice versa. Yet even those walking in the opposite direction along this sacred thoroughfare were being guided and still travelled underneath the imposing high porticoes. Whether people were moving towards or away

from the noise and smells of the city would have changed the experience of this monument. Travelling for transport was not the same as travelling for leisure; streets or obstacles needed to be navigated and the individual would have been travelling faster than those taking a casual stroll. Thus attention would be focused on the other sensory experiences around them that helped them to navigate (**Betts 2011: 118-132**), rather than on the identity of the peoples far above them. Therefore the impressions they give to modern spectators about the subtle differences between peoples would have needed either very close study, or a repeated experience. If people were travelling for leisure then such close study would have been a possibility, but less so if they were travelling with a purpose other than admiring the artwork.

Overall this was a very different sensory experience from the religious procession. Yet it still celebrated the Roman world, overseen by the divine Roman emperors. The *ethne* were linked visually and in terms of motion with the temple of the *theoi Sebastoi* at the far end of the complex. And this monument was permanent. People could walk along it for as long as and as often as they desired and if they were using the portico for leisure then the images of victorious emperors or subtle differences in dress or pose of the *ethne* could be picked up. Yet if the people were moving with purpose then these reliefs may have received just a single glance occasionally. Subtle differences in posture probably would not have been noticed. Instead, the visual uniformity, wide open space, tranquillity and gentle murmuring of others on cool, smooth marble with a subtle hint of the scent of a sacrifice for the Roman emperor would have created ideas of a uniform, peaceful empire defended by the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

Conclusions

The Sebasteion presented a vision of the world and linked it both visually and in terms of motion to the divine Roman Emperor to whom civilized nations of the world paid homage whilst dangerous barbarians were defeated. The surrounding space was taken up by the *ethne* who oversaw everything the people moving through their space did, but those taking part in the religious procession may not have had the chance to afford more than a glance at these reliefs. The instruments, crowds, animals and slaughter were not daily occurrences and so participants would have paid more attention to these, or to the ever moving crowd that guided their attention to the altar and the sacrifice that would take place on it. The designers of the monument seem to have been aware of these distractions and thus repeated the idea of a powerful emperor being able to defeat uncivilized barbarians in the south building, and

emphasised a visual homogeneity of the *ethne* reliefs in the north building. This way, even if only one or two were seen, their similar poses, expressions and dress created the idea of a unified empire, thanks to the Roman emperors at the end of the processional way.

Apart from processions, the Sebasteion was a regularly used thoroughfare that people would use either to get from one part of the city to another, or just for leisure or social life. This would have been a very different experience from the religious processions, with fewer out of the ordinary sounds, sights and smells with cultural or religious connotations. The architecture in the form of the gateway and lack of formal space for shops reinforces that this area was marked off as separate from the busy streets beyond. The passive bodily senses were trying to be controlled to create a peaceful location, but this was not always a possibility and some aspects of the day-to-day life of the city must have seeped in. Yet the change in space as one entered through the gateway would have emphasised the importance of this location, even if people were not deliberately admiring the artwork in the porticoes, and the long processional way directed the motion of the travellers towards the temple of the divine emperors.

Adding kinaesthesia to the sensory experience and considering how people would have encountered ancient monuments, rather than close study which leads to complex arguments about subtle differences, allows new readings of ancient monuments' intended meanings and interpretation to come to light. It demonstrates how carefully the experience of the ancient participant was considered when religious complexes were being built, as demonstrated by the techniques used to guide their movement and experience. Such considerations of movement can also be applied to other processions, such as the Roman triumph, whereby the crowds for whom the spectacle was created were static, whilst the procession moved past them through winding streets, limiting visibility to short sections so using other bodily senses to create a sense of anticipation and excitement. In modern times much of the ancient world is experienced statically and behind glass, with the spectator being at a distance, both in terms of space and time. Yet considering the sensory experiences of the individuals who passed through such monuments allows the modern audience to move closer towards an understanding of the ancient world.

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