

Cynthia Argyrou of Delos

Persona Name

As I was considering this Persona Challenge, I decided on some goals that I hoped to accomplish by the finish of the challenge. One of the things I wanted was to develop a persona around the way that I usually dress while at Pennsic, which is almost entirely Greco-Roman. My primary persona is Sixteenth Century English - and the Tudor gowns that sparked my first SCA costuming interest are still my favorite look. However, while seven to nine yards of velvet are lovely, they are not a basis for summertime comfort – and even replacing velvet with linen, and skipping the gown altogether and wearing only a kirtle, is still quite warm. Several years ago at a West-An Tir war, I saw a lovely princess clad in Roman garb during the heat of the day, and fell in love with the graceful draping, the lovely colors – and the fact that she looked so very much more comfortable than I did.

I determined that I would need to choose whether my second SCA persona would be Greek or Roman. As my name is Cynthia (both mundanely and in the SCA), and that is a Greek name, I decided to create a third Cynthia, and settled on a Greek persona. Cynthia is one of the many names of Artemis, who desired to be known by many names to differentiate her from her twin brother Apollo. She is called Cynthia, as one of the versions of the myth of her birth has her mother Leda (or Leto) giving birth to them on Mt. Cynthus, located on the isle of Delos.¹ I decided that my Greek persona would also be from Delos. Another of the many names by which Artemis is known is Limnaea or Limnatis, sometimes called Lady of the Lake.² As my primary persona is Cynthia Anne of Silver Lakes, it seemed especially fitting to continue giving a nod to Artemis with my new persona.

I thought about calling my new persona Cynthiadora, as it was not uncommon for people to be named indirectly after a God or Goddess, but as Cynthia is not Artemis' primary name, it was more likely that a human would share the name directly.³ It also occurred to me to give a patronymic surname, and I decided on Argyrou, and feminine ending of the name Argyro, meaning "silver."

Time and Place of Origin

The next thing I had to do was narrow down geography, and the time period for my new persona. This involved delving into Ancient Greek history, and realizing as I did so how extremely little I know about Ancient Greek geography, or timelines. I decided to go ahead and

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Artemis."

² Ibid.

³ Robert Parker, "Theophoric Names and the History of Greek Religion." In *Greek Personal Names: Their Value as Evidence*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Elaine Matthews, 53-79. Vol 104 of Proceedings of the British Academy. London, The British Academy, 2000, 57-61.

stay on Delos – though I did consider a few of the other islands within the Cyclades, or possibly one of the Ionian Islands. In the end, I decided that I liked the sound of Cynthia of Delos, or Cynthia Argyrou of Delos, better than any other island name.

I then decided to look at the fiber availability of various time periods, as I knew that I wanted to make my new clothing out of silk. This limited my options to the 5th century BCE and onward, and I looked at the art and architecture that seemed most appealing to me. I settled on the 4th century BCE, within 50 years of the time of Alexander.

Choosing Objects to Create

Another strong goal for me for the project is to stretch my artistic skills. I decided, to begin, that I wanted to make a slightly more elaborate outfit than I usually did, primarily by using silk instead of linen. I have found some saree silk, which, while it does not contain linen fibers, does have the woven decorative edging that seems to have been the standard for Greek clothing of the 4th century.⁴

Next, I chose to explore pottery, as that is something I did only briefly, on high school, and not terribly skillfully. To that end, I have arranged to meet with a potter who teaches historical pottery, so that I can learn about techniques – even if I will not be able to quickly enough gain the skill set needed to create my pottery in the ways that the Greeks did.

It seems practical, as well, to decorate the box that currently houses my Greek and Roman jewelry with a mosaic. I suspect that the end design will somehow incorporate cats or musicians or both.

Finally, I will explore a new (to me – actually older) kind of calligraphy than that with which I am currently familiar, and either copy or compose a poem – possibly in Greek. To begin the process, I have ordered some lamp black ink to use instead of my usual oak gall, as the earliest written record of some sort of gall-based ink is of Pliny the Elder in the 1st century CE. I have also ordered reed pens and papyrus, and have started looking at examples and structure of poetry of the 4th century BCE.

I am very excited about where this project is going to take me, and for all of the new things I am going to learn!

⁴ Elsa Gulberg and Paul Åström, *The Thread of Ariadne: Study of Ancient Greek Dress*. Vol. XXI of *Studies in Mediterranean History*. Göteborg: Södra Vägen, 1970, 15.

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