

Fulfilling one's purpose

Reproduction and female agency
in classical Attica



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Abbreviations

AIO	Attic Inscriptions Online (https://www.atticinscriptions.com)
AM	Acropolis Museum
BE	Archaeological Museum of Brauron
<i>BÉ</i>	<i>Bulletin épigraphique</i> , pub. in <i>Revue des études grecques</i>
Britannica	https://www.britannica.com
<i>CID</i>	<i>Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes</i>
<i>DK</i>	H. Diels and W. Kranz (1952) <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , ed. 6, Berlin: Weidmann.
DOL	Dodona Online: https://dodonaonline.com/
<i>DVC</i>	Dakaris S., I. Vokotopoulou, A.F. Christidis, <i>Τὰ χρηστήρια ἐλάσματα τῆς Δωδώνης τῶν ἀνασκαφῶν Δ. Ευαγγελίδη</i> (Athens 2013).
EM	Epigraphic Museum Athens
EMC	Echos du Monde Classique
<i>FGrH</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker I-III</i> , F. Jacoby ed. (Leiden 1923).
<i>IG IV2 I</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Argolidis IV: Inscriptiones Epidauri Fasc. I</i> , 2nd edn. F. Hiller de Gaertringen ed. (Berlin 1929).
<i>IG II/III²</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae II and III: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores</i> , 2nd edn. J. Kirchner ed. (Berlin 1913-1940).
<i>IG II3</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae II, III3: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores; I: Leges et decretae</i> , S.D. Lambert (nos 292–572), V.N. Bardani and S.V. Tracy eds. (Berlin 2012).
<i>IG II/III3</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae II and III: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores, Part IV, Fasc. II. Dedications: Dedications Privatae</i> , 3rd ed. J. Curbera, ed. (Berlin 2017).
<i>Kerameikos XIV</i>	Kovacovics W., <i>Die Eckterasse an der Graberstrasse des Kerameikos</i> (Berlin 1990).
<i>Lindsay</i>	Sexti Pompei Festi, <i>De verborum significatu quae supersunt cum Pauli epitome; Thewrewkianis copiis usus edidit W.M. Lindsay</i> (New York 1913)
<i>LSCG</i>	F. Sokolowski, <i>Lois sacrées des cités grecques</i> (1969)
<i>LSJ</i>	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, and R. McKenzie, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon, with a supplement</i> 9th ed. (Oxford 1996).
NM	National Archaeological Museum Athens
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
SK	Staatliche Museen in Berlin
<i>TLG</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i> (www.stephanus.tlg.uci.edu)
Theoi	https://www.theoi.com

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Introduction

‘And in women again, owing to the same causes, whenever the matrix or womb, as it is called,—which is an indwelling creature desirous of child-bearing,—remains without fruit long beyond the due season, it is vexed and takes it ill; and by straying all ways through the body and blocking up the passages of the breath and preventing respiration it casts the body into the uttermost distress, and causes, moreover, all kinds of maladies; until the desire and love of the two sexes unite them.’¹

This ancient Greek notion of a ‘wandering womb’ was one of the reasons it was so important for ancient Greek women to become pregnant. Besides Plato, the Hippocratic doctors also saw the womb as a rebellious organ that would – when the absence of intercourse and pregnancy caused lack of moisture and fullness - wander around the body and cause illness and disease.² This however, was obviously not the only reason for ancient Greek women to conceive. Providing their families with children and - more importantly - legitimate heirs was an ancient Greek woman’s most important task in life. Especially since only legitimate children (a child whose parents were both Athenian citizens) could receive an inheritance and keep up the family’s name.³ It was of vital importance for both the *oikos* - the family on the level of the household - and the *polis* that the paternal family lines would be continued and that the ancestral heritage would not be lost. In addition, citizens and non-citizens alike - though the latter lacked ancestral heritage that was linked to the *polis* - needed (legitimate) children since they were an asset for the future; they could take care of their parents when these were older and arrange a proper burial when the parents died.⁴

As Nancy Demand aptly pointed out, a woman’s role and status were determined through her membership of an *oikos* or the lack thereof. Her ability to bring children into her husband’s *oikos* was critical, for only when she gave birth to a healthy child she would receive the full status of *gyne* (women-wife).⁵ Pregnancy and childbirth involved however, great risks for both mother and child. Figures are not readily available, but through comparison with much later non-industrialised societies (eighteenth-century rural England for example) Donald Toddman has estimated a maternal mortality ratio of approximately twenty-five deaths per every thousand births and an infant mortality ratio of a shocking three hundred per every thousand children born. These estimates are for Roman times, but they are probably similar to the death rates in

¹ Plato, *Timaeus*, 91c. (Loeb translation).

² Demand (1994) 55-57.

³ Blok (2017) 100-146; In terms of material goods sons and daughters did not receive an equal share, but they did equally inherit immaterial goods. The latter included both rights and obligations like citizenship and memberships of the subgroups of the *polis* (the *phratry* for example) and inheriting and upholding the ancestral bond with the gods.

⁴ Hong (2016) 675.

⁵ Demand (1994) 2-3, 17.

ancient Greece.⁶ These high mortality rates were mainly due to the lack of knowledge of the (female) body, the societal assumptions that developed from this lack of knowledge, and the use of dangerous herbs for both pain relief and abortions.⁷ In addition, Irene Salvo points out that pregnancy and childbirth were not just physically, but also considered ritually dangerous phases (e.g. in terms of pollution). Pregnant women and unborn children or infants were seen as vulnerable and therefore as more susceptible to dangerous spirits and curses.⁸ To protect themselves and their child during and after pregnancy and childbirth, but also to conceive in the first place, women used both medical help (doctors and midwives), and religion and magic to ease their worries and pains.⁹ These aspects and the means they had to do so are what I will study in this thesis.

Research on women's daily lives and their ritual practice in ancient times has grown immensely in the past decades due to an increase of scholarly interest in the less 'visible' social groups - such as women, metics, slaves, and the lower classes - and the day-to-day lives of people instead of a sole focus on big events. The women's movement of the second half of the twentieth century and the fields of study that derived from this (e.g. gender studies) have played an important role in focussing our attention on these subjects in the first place. In addition, the fields of anthropology and biology contribute different methods and approaches that can be helpful when studying day-to-day life and the less 'visible' social groups.¹⁰ As part of all this, scholars in the fields of history and archaeology started studying the subjects of fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth, focussing at first on collecting source material. After this, the focus shifted to ancient societal (and thus predominantly male) thoughts on women, investigating and explaining specifically female dominated rituals and festivals, and the (religious) role of women within the *polis*.¹¹ With this approach, the focus was mainly on a sectional group of women: namely female priests and the elite. Although great work has been done already when it comes to the study of reproduction in ancient Greece, more and more scholars call our attention to the fact that in order to get a proper perspective on the lives of women (in all layers of society) we have to study the women themselves by studying the sources they themselves have left behind (e.g. votives, inscriptions, and archaeological remains). Emphasising this, Matthew Dillon writes the following in his book *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*:

⁶ Todman (2007) 84-85.

⁷ Ibidem 86; Sotiriu (2006) 126-127.

⁸ Salvo (2017) 132; Demand (1994) 5.

⁹ Salvo (2017) 132.

¹⁰ David Cohen, for example, took on an anthropological approach in his book *Law, Sexuality and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens*, by using a comparative model derived from the social anthropological study of modern-day Mediterranean societies. Cohen (1991); Another example is John Winkler, who approaches sexuality and gender in his book *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*, by using models developed by feminist anthropology. Winkler (1990); The use of Anthropological methods for the study of ancient society etc. has, however, also led to criticism. See for example: Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 111. She writes: 'even when applied with great subtlety and sophistication, the use of contemporary "Mediterranean societies" as a model leads to serious misreading of the ancient realities.'

Studies in the field of biology allowed us to find female migrants. See for example: Prowse (2016); For points of improvement see Tacoma (2017) 133-137.

¹¹ See chapter one.

‘Too many articles and books deal with topics about Greek women with the barest of facts and substitute semantic flourishes and imaginative conclusions for solid facts and discussion of the women themselves.’¹²

In addition, Barbara Goff explains in her work *Citizen Bacchae: Women’s Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* that instead of exclusively studying the rituals, she aims to study how ritual practice was interwoven into the daily lives and identity of women; and Salvo in her article ‘Owners of their own bodies’ focusses on the women’s own knowledge of reproduction.¹³

These scholars’ call for the focus on the women themselves inspired the approach for this thesis. Here, my aim is to discuss the women themselves; not from a male perspective or from the *polis*, but by studying women’s own means to enhance their chance of getting pregnant and giving birth to a healthy baby while also keeping themselves alive. To make this research graspable, I follow Jon Mikalson in focussing my studies on one location during a certain period (classical Attica), instead of studying ancient Greece as a whole. Moreover, Mikalson argues in his work *Religion in Hellenistic Athens* that differences in religion between mainland Greek cities, Greek colonies, and within these places during different periods should be studied separately where possible, in order not to impose, for example, a religious aspect of a certain place and time on a place and time where this was not in practice.¹⁴ The focus on classical Attica provides me with abundant source material and allows me to pay attention to details. Doing so, I will occasionally consult sources from outside Attica when needed, which does not have to be a problem since *poleis* had common patterns and structural similarities. In addition, I will try to distinguish between women with different social and economic backgrounds - i.e. free women (wealthy or poor), metics, and slaves – but this will not be a main concern of my research.

The main question of this thesis is: how did Attic women independently organise fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth in their own lives during the classical period? What I mean by independently here is the means these women, and their family members, had on a personal level (without the help of the *polis*). The means they used to get satisfying results in relation to procreation: dedicating votives, performing rituals, wearing amulets, seeking medical help etc. I will answer this main question by investigating multiple sub-questions, of which the first is: what medical help was used, by whom, and why? The second and third questions focus on different aspects of reproduction and the different means related to these aspects. These questions can be summarised as followed: why did a certain woman (or her family members) perform a ritual, dedicate, or practice magic, in connection to which deities (to whom) and where did they do this? The final sub-question is: to which sanctuaries did Attic women travel outside of Attica; and for what particular reasons concerning reproduction did they do this. Moreover, the first chapter of this thesis focusses on laying the basics. Here a more detailed historiography can be found; as well as my position within the different debates relevant to the subject of fertility, pregnancy and childbirth. Furthermore, I will provide a brief introduction to ancient

¹² Dillon (2002) 5.

¹³ Goff (2004) 9; Salvo (2017) 131-148.

¹⁴ Mikalson (1998) 2.

Greek (*polis*) religion, women within the religious sphere, and the interconnectedness of the religious, medical, and magical sphere.

Chapter two is concerned with the medical help available to women. In this chapter I will discuss the Hippocratic texts, which provide an abundant amount of information on the thoughts on, and remedies for, different reproduction issues. The focus of this chapter lays on (female) doctors and midwives, and their services in helping women with fertility, pregnancy and childbirth. Moreover, I will study the relevant works from the Hippocratic corpus (gynaecological treatises) that contain remedies and treatments prescribed in cases ranging from the enhancing of fertility to the cleaning out of the uterus after childbirth. Doing so, I will answer questions like: what was the status of midwives? When did midwives provide their services? When did doctors provide their services? What methods and means does the Hippocratic corpus provide to help women within the different stages of reproduction?

In chapter three I will start with my analysis of women's own means regarding reproduction. This chapter will focus on the rituals performed and magical practices used by women and their families. After this, in chapter four, I will study the reproduction related votive offerings, found in Athenian sanctuaries, to discover to which deities Attic women turned for help with procreation. Here, I focus on Athenian and the more prominent Attic sanctuaries (e.g. Brauron), since a full study of all the sanctuaries and shrines in Attica is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is likely that the deities discussed here were similarly worshipped in the remainder of Attica. In addition, though the topic of childrearing is not part of this research, some kourotrophic (related to child-rearing) deities will be discussed, since it is often impossible to make a clear distinction between fertility/childbirth deities and kourotrophic deities.¹⁵

In the final chapter of this thesis, the focus will be on sacred travel beyond the borders of Attica in relation to procreation. In this chapter, I will study the archaeological finds from one healing sanctuary (Epidaurus) and two oracular sanctuaries (Delphi and Dodona) in search of female appeals (and those of their family members) concerning reproduction.

By conducting this research, I hope to contribute to our knowledge of ancient (Attic) women by presenting an extensive study of women's own means to deal with their most important task in life. The purpose of this thesis is to present an overview of these means (in Attica) as there is currently no such thing available. Furthermore, I aim to disprove the outdated notion that ancient Greek women were confined to the limits of their home,¹⁶ by showing that the means they used (concerning reproduction) involved them doing many things by themselves, without the guidance of a man. Additionally, I hope to provide new perspectives on the women of ancient Attica and their day-to-day lives, and on how rituals, magic, dedications, and sacred travel are part of this.

¹⁵ Parker (2005) 428-429.

¹⁶ For exclusion see:

Pro: Blundell (1995); Morgan (2007).

Contra: Cohen (1989); Cohen (1991); Just (1989); Sourvinou-Inwood (1995); de Ste. Croix (1970) 278. Who holds a position somewhere in the middle by arguing that seclusion was mostly the case for women of the 'propertied class', not for all Athenian women.

Chapter I

Context

The debate

Scholarship focussing on the reproduction related aspects of the lives of ancient Greek women - i.e. fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, and the upbringing of children - was in previous decades mostly limited to the study of literary sources. One widely expressed criticism of studying women through literary sources is, as previously mentioned, that literary sources are often written by men and therefore only show us male thoughts on women. Another critique is that literary sources cause a focus on the elite, with the consequence that scholars ignored the variety in social and economic classes.¹⁷ Some scholars however, realised early on that material sources - such as archaeological finds, epigraphic evidence, vase decorations etc. - were of key-importance when studying the lives of ancient women. Paul Baur for example, wrote the first - already in 1899 - systematic evaluation of childbirth related religious practice. In his work 'Eileithyia' he writes about the ancient Greek gods concerned with childbirth and brings together all the literary and archaeological evidence on the sanctuaries, votive offerings, and 'art objects' (statues etc.) that belonged to Eileithyia.¹⁸ This work influenced later scholars studying the topic of reproduction in ancient Greece, such as Theodora Hadzisteliou Price who wrote an important book on kourotrophic (child-rearing) divinities, and Semeli Pingiatoglu who updated our knowledge of the cult of Eileithyia by focussing her dissertation on this subject in imitation of Baur's work.¹⁹ Moreover, in the last two decades scholars started approaching the topic of ancient women and reproduction by separating the different aspects of this topic. On the one hand, scholars are expanding our knowledge by analysing the Hippocratic texts. In 1994 Nancy Demand published the first exhaustive study of the social and cultural construction of childbirth in ancient Greece.²⁰ Not long after, Helen King published her book *Hippocrates' Woman* in 1998, in which she writes about the ancient Greek's understanding of the female body, the origins of gynaecology, and the influence of the Hippocratic texts on the theories of gynaecology in later times.²¹ King did not stop there, she still researches the subject of gynaecology throughout history, and keeps publishing different works on ancient women.²² On the other hand, there are scholars studying votive offerings in relation to fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth. Susan Wise for example, wrote her dissertation on votive offerings and rituals associated

¹⁷ Pomeroy (1995) 59-60.

¹⁸ Baur (1902).

¹⁹ Price (1978); Pingiatoglou (1981).

²⁰ Demand (1994).

²¹ King (1998).

²² See for example: King (2008); King (2013).

with childbirth in ancient Greece.²³ Dimitris Sourlas recently published a study on two votive reliefs dedicated to Eileithyia and Aphrodite; and Michaela Senkova and Cecilie Brøns recently studied votive offerings dedicated to Artemis in relation to childbirth.²⁴ Other scholars - like Barbara Goff and Susan Guettel Cole - focused on the ritual aspects of reproduction; and scholars like Irene Salvo and Ann Hanson studied the ancient practice of magic in association with reproduction.²⁵

Overall however, the subject of reproduction is almost never the sole focus of scholarly research. Works studying the overall lives of women or an aspect of these, typically only dedicate one chapter to the subject since it is a topic which cannot be avoided when it comes to the lives of women.²⁶ This however, is in my opinion not enough. The fact that reproduction was such an essential part of a woman's life and the fact that it has not received enough explicit attention, is exactly the reason why I decided to study this subject and create an overview of the means women of a specific place and during a specific time had available to them when it came to dealing with reproduction issues. In the present chapter I will first provide the needed background information on the importance of religion in ancient Athens, a general introduction to a woman's competence in this sphere, and the interconnectedness between religion, medicine and magic, and discuss how this influences my findings.

Ancient Greek religion

By dividing my chapters in themes like medicine, ritual and magic, and deities and their votive offerings, I create a non-existing division between spheres that were highly interconnected in real-life classical Attica. Religion was interwoven in every aspect of ancient Greek life and most, if not all, of women's means to deal with reproduction issues involve the gods and religious aspects like prayers, sacrifices, dedications, and rituals. In ancient Greece deities - by which I mean all the gods and other deities, like daemons, nymphs, and heroes - were believed to be everywhere and in practically everything. These deities concerned themselves with every aspect of human life. From one's birth to one's death, these deities could not be avoided. On the one hand they had to be appeased to prevent them from getting enraged and causing harm (e.g. bareness, illness, earthquakes etc.), but on the other they could also be consulted when a *polis* or individual had to make a life-changing decision (see chapter five) and were asked for help during troublesome times (see chapter four). In Athens, as in other Greek *poleis*, different deities were worshiped and were asked for help at the same time. Robert Parker nicely captures this phenomenon in the following quote: 'Gods overflowed like clothes from an over-filled drawer which no one felt obliged to tidy.'²⁷ This metaphor helps us imagine what the city of Athens must have looked like with all its different deities and their shrines and sanctuaries. Classical Athens had countless sanctuaries and sacred areas, varying from massive

²³ Wise (2007).

²⁴ Sourlas (2017); Senkova (2016). On the healing opportunities in the temples of Artemis and Hera: Brøns (2017).

²⁵ Goff (2004); Guettel Cole (2004); Hanson (2004); Salvo (2017).

²⁶ For ancient women in general see for example: Blundell (1995); Brulé (2001); MacLachlan (2012); Chrystal (2017); For ancient women in ritual and religion see for example: Dillon (2002).

²⁷ Parker (2005) 387.

concentrations - like the Acropolis, containing a lot of space and housing big temples - to smaller shrines, situated in the streets of the city amongst the houses and shops. Throughout Attica, likewise, many sanctuaries and cult places could be found, not in the least because practically every natural feature was believed to be connected to a deity and hold powers. The city of Athens introduced many of these 'rural' deities (deities from other cities in Attica and deities from non-Greek regions) into their own city.²⁸ Moreover, Athenian *polis* religion is perfectly summarised by Susan Deacy in the following way:

'Athenian religion was nondogmatic and receptive to foreign influences and new beliefs. Added to this, it was non-credal in that it lacked a central authority or set of directives setting out what people should believe, or not believe. But its religion was an open system only so long as traditional practices and gods were not seen to be disrespected.'²⁹

Within *polis* religion a distinction can be made between communal religious practice (sacrifices and festivals performed to please the gods and benefit the entire *polis*) and personal religious practice (performed for one's own benefits), of which the latter is of importance to the subject of this thesis. Here reciprocity played an important role. Both the community and the individual provided the deities with gifts (sacrifices, dedications etc.) in the hope of appeasing them and to receive favours.³⁰ Although these sacrifices and dedications could be presented together, there was a slight difference in their make-up and the way they were offered. Sacrifices were made on a more regular basis and could be anything from a special cake to the offering of hundreds of animals. Dedications were often made in association with a crisis or particular request and could be produced out of varying materials like stone, terracotta, precious metals etc. Anything could become a votive, from small personal objects (like loom weights or household pottery) to costly and specially made objects (like marble reliefs or statues).³¹ Moreover, it seems the value of the object was not of great importance. People dedicated what they could; if someone could afford something costly the gods might expect them to dedicate something costly, but otherwise small personal objects were just as well received. These gifts could be offered before a favour was granted, as a 'commercial transaction', but also afterwards, to show one's gratitude and in hope of future sympathies from the deity. A person or community could also ask for divine help by providing the deity with a small offering and the promise of a bigger offering after the deity delivered.³²

²⁸ Wycherley (1970) 283-286.

²⁹ Deacy (2007) 234.

³⁰ These favours could be anything from being cured from an illness, or getting pregnant, to a good harvest or victories in war. Parker (1998); Jim (2014) 3; Larson (2016) 40-65.

³¹ Dillon (2002) 36; van Straten (1981) 80.

According to Folkert van Straten we can distinguish between sacrifices and dedications in the following way: 'We talk of sacrifices when the object offered is intended for consumption (human or divine), while votive offerings are basically durable-a general definition which does indeed serve our purpose, although it does not do justice to the complex of phenomena contained in the term 'sacrifice'.' van Straten (1981) 66.; The practices of making sacrifices and dedications were, however, often combined. van Straten (1981) 83-86.

³² van Straten (1981) 72; Jim (2014) 3.

A place for women

The role of women in ancient Greek religion is a frequently studied subject, but most previous scholarship tends to focus on the more exclusive roles for women within the religious sphere, e.g. during festivals and in their roles as priestesses.³³ I will study woman in general, during their day-to-day life and from a more personal perspective. Luckily, women left quite some traces in the historical records relating to their participation in religion, as we will see in chapter four. In the past however, this abundant amount of source material has been ignored by many scholars. During the previous decades many debates erupted that concern themselves with the idea that women were less active in, or even excluded from, religious practice. An excellent example of this is the debate regarding votive offerings.³⁴ For a long time the idea existed that women dedicated fewer and less expensive votives, and that the women listed as dedicators of expensive votives commissioned these with their husband's permission and money.³⁵ Recent in-dept studies of source material like treasury lists, individual votive offerings, and votive inscriptions brought to light that these notions are not valid and that women were more present in the religious sphere and at different levels within this sphere than previously thought. The study of the treasury lists of prominent sanctuaries within Attica in particular, indicates that we cannot consider a certain 'class of dedications' (i.e. certain types of dedications) to be exclusively male or female,³⁶ and Alma Kant convincingly argues against the notion that women did not pay for expensive dedications themselves.³⁷ In addition, the extensive study of the textiles listed in the treasury lists of Brauron by Liza Cleland, and later Brøns, show that the objects certainly dedicated by women were not simple and inexpensive objects dedicated when the owner was done with them, but instead were rather costly and sometimes especially produced for the deity.³⁸ Perhaps the only place where we can partially distinguish between the worship practice of women and men, is in their worship of certain deities, as women were often the main dedicators in sanctuaries of deities that concern themselves with fertility and childbirth, like Artemis Brauronia and Eileithyia. This can be explained by the fact that these subjects were of major concern in a woman's life, but it is important to stress that these deities were not solely worshipped by women, and a proper division between deities worshipped by men and by women cannot be made.

Religion and medicine

As women's means in relation to reproduction issues involve both religion, medicine and magic - as will become clear in the following chapters - the question arises if it is even possible to

³³ See for example: Pomeroy (1995); Goff (2004); Stehle (2012).

³⁴ Another example is the debate on the role of women during sacrifices: see Detienne (1972) who argues that women were mostly excluded from the most prominent handlings of sacrifices.; see Osborne (1993) who convincingly argues against these notions.

³⁵ See for example: Schaps (1979) 73, who first came up with this idea. For a more recent example see: Dillon (2002) 36.

³⁶ The Asklepieion in Athens: Aleshire (1989) and (1991). The Parthenon and the Erechteion: Harris (1995). Brauron: Linders (1972); Cleland (2005).

³⁷ Kant (2018).

³⁸ Cleland (2005); Brøns (2017) 46-53.

separate medical practice from religious practice and distinguish between the spheres of magic and religion, and magic and medicine. In the classical period, people could both turn to medical professionals, like doctors and midwives, and to healing sanctuaries, like those of Asklepios and Hygieia. Yet, how did they decide who to turn to, and did they even see these options as opposing means?

In ancient Greece, the spheres of religion and medicine were intrinsically interconnected. This becomes clear when we compare the Hippocratic corpus and its doctors with Asklepios' healing sanctuaries. The Hippocratic writers had a natural explanation for the causes of illnesses, as they attributed these to a disbalance in the body caused by anything from the changing weather to the nature of man.³⁹ This seemingly 'scientific' approach, does not however exclude religion, since in ancient Greece both doctors and laymen believed that these natural phenomena were agencies of the gods and other deities.⁴⁰ Although there were some differences between religious and medical healing (particularly concerning their methods as will become clear in chapter two and four), none of the Hippocratic writers disapproved of people visiting healing sanctuaries or criticised Asklepios' methods. Doctors even served at these healing sanctuaries as priests themselves and dedicated their medical equipment to Asklepios, for instance in his sanctuary on the south slope of the Acropolis.⁴¹

In short, the two spheres cannot be disconnected. Yet the question remains *if* people chose between healing sanctuaries or medical professionals, and if so *why* they chose one or the other. Researching this subject, King concluded that neither the type of ailment, the costs, nor the level of access were of main concern. She argues instead, that if the patient was to choose between the two, the decision was mostly based on the patient's previous experience with either or both methods, and what the patient felt most comfortable with.⁴² The feminist debate concerning the idea that women more often turned to the gods, instead of turning to medical professionals (especially male doctors) is, as King convincingly argues, ungrounded.⁴³ In conclusion, it is not unthinkable that people sought both the assistance of the gods and that of medical professionals at the same time, or at the very least tried the other option when their first attempt failed. This we see in the case of Aelius Aristides (second century AD) who used doctors to carry out Asklepios' instructions.⁴⁴ Though this is a late example, the interconnectedness of religion and medicine in the classical period suggests the combination of these different treatments was very well possible.

Religion and magic

Let us now turn to the relationship between ancient religion and magic. Many scholars have viewed 'magical practices' as remainders of primitive religion, as corrupt forms of religion, superstition, and even as the complete opposite of religion.⁴⁵ For a long time they believed that

³⁹ On the nature of man (dry, moist etc.) and its influence on illnesses related to reproduction see chapter two.

⁴⁰ Edelstein (1937) 204-223.

⁴¹ Nutton (1985) 46.; von Staden (1989) 8.; For the dedication of medical equipment see: Aleshire (1989) 65-66.

⁴² King (1998), 105, 107, 111-112.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 104-105. See for this debate: Dean Jones (1994) 35; Demand (1994) 87; Blundell (1995) 105.

⁴⁴ Behr (1968) 169-170.

⁴⁵ Faraone and Obbink (1991) vi; Graf (1991) 188.

in magical practice, the relationship between mortals and the gods differed from the relationship maintained in religion.⁴⁶ An example of this is a theory of Sir James George Frazer that implies that instead of *asking* for a god's divine interference (as in religion) the 'magician' uses coercion to *force* a god to get what he or she wanted.⁴⁷ Besides this, the notion also arose that magic was practiced by the lower classes and by non-citizens, and not by the elite. Although these ideas are currently viewed as outdated by most scholars, they are still not completely forgotten.⁴⁸ Today, according to Christopher Faraone and Dirk Obbink, many scholars view magic in the following way:

'Many (...) view magic as a type of religious deviance and treat magical practices as nondichotomous variations in ritual procedure, arguing that the antithesis between magic and religion arbitrarily separates a continuous spectrum of interlocking religious phenomena.'⁴⁹

Following this, I would like to argue that as long as the gods were not disrespected and nothing illegal occurred, in classical Athens magic was an accepted - and in some cases integrated - part of religious practice. Although there are many sources that seemingly imply that magic was frowned upon,⁵⁰ it is likely that not all magical practice was viewed in a negative way. For example, even though Plato is not positive about the 'begging priests and seers', he does not seem to condemn magical practice all together, as he lists the fact that midwives are skilled in drugs and incantations as positive aspects,⁵¹ and mentions the use of magic spells and amulets by physicians in a neutral way.⁵² In addition, according to Jennifer Larson, some magical practices were part of everyday religious rituals. She writes that magic was a ritual technique, frequently - but not solely - used in religious settings: 'Within Greek religion, a distinction has often been drawn between public, communal, sanctioned activity and private, unsanctioned activity, yet both used magical techniques.'⁵³ Another example of how religion and magic are intertwined comes from Fritz Graf, who studied prayers from the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* and compared these to non-magical prayers from ancient Greek religion. He concludes that

⁴⁶ Graf (1991) 188.

⁴⁷ Frazer (1994) 61-62.

⁴⁸ Graf (1991) 188.

⁴⁹ Faraone and Obbink (1991) vi.

⁵⁰ Hippocrates, *On the Sacred Disease*, 3-4; Plato, *Republic*, 364b; Sophocles, *Trachiniae*, 582-586; Aeschines, *Against Ctesiph*, 137; Sosiphanes, *TrGF I*, no. 92 F 1.

⁵¹ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 149-150a.

⁵² Plato, *Republic*, 4.426b. Plato likely only sees people that claim that they can bribe and bewitch the gods into doing what they want them to do - with prayers, sacrifices and incantations - and ask money for this, as wicked and impious. Plato, *Laws*, 10. 909 a-d; Collins (2008) 43 and 139.

In addition, although there are legal cases where it looks like people were prosecuted for their magical practices, most scholars now agree that they were most likely prosecuted for impiety and not for magic per se. Cases of homicide where the suspect may have used magic, poisoning for example, were prosecuted like 'normal' homicide cases. Collins (2008) 133-134; Dickie (2007) 369.

⁵³ Larson (2016) 133 and 167. In terms of public religious activity where magic is used, Larson gives examples like the cursing of potential oath-breakers, the sacrificing of small clay figurines of sacrificed animals instead of the sacrifice of actual animals, and the 'binding' of a god like Ares to prevent armed violence. Larson (2016) 133, 221.

‘magicians’ prayed to the same gods as were worshiped in religion, and that magical formulae resemble Greek religious prayer.⁵⁴

We have abundant evidence that the ancient Athenians made great use of magical techniques in day-to-day life (see chapter three). Magic could be performed by paid professionals (possibly midwives and physicians), as well as by individuals (like the women we are studying in this thesis),⁵⁵ and was used for everything from making someone fall in love to killing someone. Magic could also be used in relation to reproduction. It was used both to do harm to others (e.g. by causing someone else not to conceive), as well as to help one’s own chances of getting pregnant and ease childbirth.⁵⁶ To achieve this, people used means like potions, incantations, amulets, spells and curse tablets.

Medicine and magic

One of the few scholars who deals with the relation between magic and medicine in a thorough way, is Ludwig Edelstein. However, Edelstein’s work was published a long time ago and he is one of the old guard in his perception of magic as an opposite of religion. He argues that ancient medicine is ‘hostile to magic’,⁵⁷ even though he does recognise religion to be at the heart of ancient medicinal practice.⁵⁸ John Scarborough convincingly argued against Edelstein from the perspective of ancient pharmacology. He strongly associates pharmacology with both magic and medicine and writes that Edelstein’s ‘proof’ does not hold because he ignores many ancient writers:

‘[His] proof (...) collapses when one reads the admixture of scorn and praise by Galen for amulets and medical astrology, the quotation of local customs attached to various herbs by Dioscorides, or the painstaking evidence of botanical lore sandwiched with magicoreligious observances as assembled by Theophrastus. One cannot - as Edelstein does - dismiss medical magic as "found only in the magical papyri which contain not the knowledge of physicians but prescriptions of folklore".’⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Graf (1991) 195. The only real difference between magic and religion might be, as Graf notes, that magic is individualistic, in contrast to religion which focusses on the community (*oikos, polis* etc.). According to Graf’s example, animal sacrifices during magical practices are not performed in the exact same way as during religious sacrifices. Graf states that, whereas a religious sacrifice for the Olympic gods would end in a communal meal for the sacrificing group, the ‘magician’ appears to eat alone or does not eat the sacrificed animal at all.⁵⁴ This notion is important according to Graf, since: ‘the community, which finds its identity and its feeling of *communitas* in the Olympian sacrifice and the ensuing meal, is absent from the magical praxis. The magician is an isolated individual—either an itinerant specialist working for a customer or an individual layperson (so to speak), practicing the ritual in his or her own interest.’ Graf (1991) 195-196.

⁵⁵ Salvo argues that these techniques were not limited to women (‘None of these ritual practices was gender-specific’), but that it is likely that they (especially the techniques related to gynaecological problems) were transmitted orally amongst female friends or family members, and that this knowledge was likely not restricted to midwives and other professionals, but widely held amongst women. Salvo (2017) 144.

⁵⁶ Aubert (1989) 426.

⁵⁷ Edelstein (1937) 234.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 224-234.

⁵⁹ Scarborough (1991) 151.

Magical techniques are an important part of religious practice and in a similar way they also play an important role in ancient medicine. Many of the Hippocratic remedies can be viewed as magical techniques, since they relied on the antipathy or the sympathy aspects within the cosmos that are accessible through magic. Jean-Jacques Aubert explains sympathetic magic in the following way:

‘It was expected to work through the principle that similar things affect each other because of their vicinity in space and time: a spell buried near a stream would bring forth the menstrual flux; (...) sitting with crossed legs in the presence of a pregnant woman would prevent her from giving birth; and the loosening of a girdle would provide an easy delivery.’⁶⁰

Antipathy worked in an opposite way. For example, when in nature two animals are antagonistic to one another, a remedy made from one could cure an infliction caused by the other. In chapter three I discuss a wonderful example of a remedy from the Hippocratic corpus (an amulet) which uses sympathetic magic to accelerate birth. This is not our only evidence that magic and medicine are interconnected. The fact that the Hippocratic writers focus on the importance of balance within the human body and therefore prescribe remedies with ingredients whose qualities oppose that which is believed to have caused the ailment is - I believe - likewise a form of antipathetic magic.⁶¹

To conclude, religion, medicine, and magic were all interconnected and influenced each other. This meant that people could turn to both the gods, to medicine, and to magic to address reproduction issues and, as will become clear in the following chapters, many of the means people could use (e.g. certain rituals, medical methods etc.) combined aspects of these different spheres.

⁶⁰ Aubert (1989) 448-449.

⁶¹ If the body was too dry, for example, it could not conceive. In this case remedies were prescribed to moisten the patient and balance out the body. For the full study of these notions and the Hippocratic remedies see chapter two.

Chapter II

Medical Help

What I mean by medical help within this thesis are the different people - doctors and midwives - a woman (or her husband or other family members) could seek out, and the remedies these people prescribed and methods they used to help women with fertility, pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum problems. There are various sources that provide us with answers on questions about medical help in classical Greece. The most important literary source is the Hippocratic corpus and its so called ‘gynaecological treatises’, which are related to reproduction and the female body.⁶² Another valuable literary source is Aristotle’s *Biology*, in which he describes how he views the human body and reproduction. Besides this, archaeological finds – such as (funerary) inscriptions for physicians and midwives and a votive offering attributed to a midwife - are significant, because they can help us answer questions about healthcare and medicine. In this chapter, I study all these different sources to provide a broad overview of the medical help women could turn to. Here, I discuss the ancient notions of the female body and reproduction, medical professionals, and the prescribed remedies in the gynaecological treatises.

Before I can begin however, I must discuss what I understand by the term ‘medical professionals.’ For me these are doctors and midwives. Doctors I define as professionally trained (both male and female) physicians, and midwives I define as women professionally assisting other women with everything that has to do with reproduction. Moreover, in classical Attica women had access to more than just these two types of medical personnel. Nurses for example, could also assist a woman during her pregnancy or childbirth. However, in most cases these nurses were members of the *oikos* (slaves or family members); and they are particularly associated with the upbringing of children, a topic beyond the scope of this thesis.⁶³

The female body

In classical Attica - as in Ancient Greece in general - medicine, religion, and magic were, as previously discussed, highly interwoven. Even today, medicine - in the broadest sense of the word - is not as clear-cut as we think it is. We like to see medicine and medical help as mostly, if not completely, scientific and ever moving forward. Even though there are many types of ‘alternative’ medicine (e.g. acupuncture and aromatherapy) and medicine is not an all solving miracle worker, we still imagine that the scientific aspect of medicine will eventually cure all. Moreover, Helen King writes the following:

⁶² The corpus is attributed to Hippocrates of Cos, but it was written by different male authors who mostly lived during the classical period. King (1998) 54.

⁶³ See for example: Kosmopoulou (2001) 285-292; King (1998) 157-171.

‘Medicine is never neutral. In any society it carries cultural values, including beliefs about the human body and about the roles and relative importance of different age/gender groups. It constructs its object in a dialogue with culture; before treating sickness, it is necessary to decide who is sick and who is not, what behaviour is abnormal and what is normal.’⁶⁴

It is, therefore, important to first determine how the ancient Greeks thought about the female body, and what they considered to be normal and abnormal when it comes to reproduction.

Ancient literary sources give us different interpretations of the workings of the female body. Aristotle describes the female body as an inferior form of the male body: a ‘natural deformity’.⁶⁵ He believes that there is one body - the male body - and that coldness or heat determines whether we are dealing with a woman or a man. Women are out of the ordinary; they are cold and therefore lack the ability (i.e. the heat) to produce semen out of blood, something a man *can* do.⁶⁶ Besides this, there are also views of the female body that see the female and male body as completely dissimilar. For instance, in *Glands* (Hippocratic corpus), the author argues that women have a different texture of flesh. He compares the female body to wool and calls it spongy and loose-textured, which causes female bodies to retain water and makes them colder.⁶⁷ This interpretation is accepted in some of the other Hippocratic works, but not in all.⁶⁸

An important aspect of the interpretation of the female body - one that can be found throughout the corpus - is the idea that women have a *hodos* (‘a way’, also translated in this context as ‘tube’) extending from vagina to head (nostrils and mouth).⁶⁹ Hippocratic healers (*iatroi*) used this *hodos* to diagnose their female patients and determine what remedies would work. For example, they thought that treating the uterus could be done both ‘from the top’ and ‘from the bottom’ since it was all connected.⁷⁰ The cause of the ailment and the theories of the *iatros* would then determine from which direction the uterus was to be approached. Another important element that could inform *iatroi* about the health of a woman’s body was her menstruation. Women, being of a loose and moist texture, absorb more fluids from food than men and must menstruate to get rid of this excess moisture. Most Hippocratic writers recognised and expected women of a certain age to menstruate every month unless they were pregnant. Failure to shed blood was interpreted as problematic since the blood would gather in the body and would put pressure on organs, resulting in disease or even death. It was also possible for the body to discard menstrual blood in another way (through the nose for example), and though effective and helpful in ridding the body of excess blood, this was not the proper way and it needed medical attention.⁷¹ In case of pregnancy, the excess blood would go to the womb and

⁶⁴ King (1998) 114.

⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, 775 a 14-23.

⁶⁶ Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, 728 a 18-25.

⁶⁷ [Hippocrates], *Glands*, 16.

⁶⁸ Examples of Hippocratic works that agree with this interpretation: [Hippocrates] *Diseases of Women I*, 1; [Hippocrates], *Regimen I*, 27; King (1998) 11.

⁶⁹ King (1998) 27-28.

⁷⁰ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 66.

⁷¹ King (1998) 59.

nourish the foetus. The *iatroi* considered menstruation at the beginning of a pregnancy normal, because the small foetus did not yet require much nourishment.⁷²

In addition, the Hippocratic writers valued sexual intercourse, pregnancy, childbirth, and the period of lactation and saw them as positive for the female body. Sexual intercourse helped the fluids of the body flow correctly, which had a positive influence on all aspects of a woman's health. Pregnancy would give the woman's excess moisture - in the form of menstrual blood - an alternative use and gave the womb fulness, which would make it less likely to wander around the body. Finally, when a woman gave birth, the actual childbirth and the lochia discharge⁷³ purged her body from all the stored excess moisture. This also happened when a woman was lactating, since breastmilk was seen as menstrual blood diverted from the womb to the breasts and transformed into milk.⁷⁴ Likewise, *Diseases of women I* and *II* consider excess moisture to be the cause of women's diseases. However, not all Hippocratic writers agreed on this since the author of *Places in Man* sees the uterus as the cause of all problems.⁷⁵

This brings us to the question of how the ancient Greeks thought about the womb. They perceived the womb to be a hot organ. King writes the following on this subject:

‘In classical Greek imagery, whether women were seen as ‘hot’ or ‘cold’, the womb was seen as ‘hot’, its role being to cook the seed. In a powerful analogy, retained even by Aristotle, for whom women were ‘cold’, the womb was likened to an oven (...). In the Hippocratic *Generation/Nature of the Child* the womb is seen successively as an oven in which the seed is ‘baked’ (...).’⁷⁶

In ancient Greece the womb was perceived as an upside-down jar with at least one mouth that ideally aligned with a second mouth at the lower end of the tube or *hodos* (i.e. the mouth of the vagina).⁷⁷ As stated before, the ancient writers believed that the womb could wander around the body when lack of moisture and fulness occurred. They also thought that a uterus' mouth that was not open enough or was facing the wrong direction would make it impossible to conceive, because the male seed would not be able to get into the uterus. When the mouth of a uterus was too open or when the female body was too moist, conception was likewise deemed impossible because the male seed would not be able to stay within the uterus.⁷⁸ These conditions could also lead to problems when a woman was pregnant. For example, when the mouth of the uterus was too open and the foetus lost vital nutriment because the menstrual blood would not stay inside the womb.⁷⁹

To conclude, it is these interpretations of the female body that the ancient Greeks used to determine how diseases and abnormalities of the (female) body should be treated. In *Regimen* for example, the author writes: ‘inclining more to water, [women] grow from foods, drinks and

⁷² King (1998) 29, 31; King (2013) 66-67.

⁷³ Lochia is the loss of blood and wound fluids after childbirth. King (1998) 70.

⁷⁴ King (2013) 66-67.

⁷⁵ [Hippocrates], *Places in man*, 47.

⁷⁶ King (1998) 33.

⁷⁷ King (1998) 34-35.

⁷⁸ See for example: [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 10, 11, 13, 18.

⁷⁹ See for example: [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 25.

pursuits that are cold, moist and gentle.’⁸⁰ This view, as I will discuss in more detail below, greatly influenced or even determined the use of certain medicine and procedures while treating reproduction issues. Although the ancient Greek medical writers do not all agree on the causes of diseases nor on all medical procedures, overall what seems to be most important in keeping the female body healthy (and fertile) is balance. A balance must be kept between moisture and dryness, hardness and softness, cold and heat. This balance plays an important role in the remedies the *iatroi* prescribed in the Hippocratic corpus and the methods they used (see the last section of this chapter).

Iatroi

‘Democedes (...) went to Aegina. Settled there, before a year was out, he excelled all other physicians (...). In his second year the Aeginetans paid him a talent to be their public physician; in the next the Athenians hired him for a hundred minae, and Polycrates [tyrant of Samos] in the next again for two talents.’⁸¹

If this writing of Herodotus is to be believed there were already, something like public doctors during the late sixth century BC. Besides Herodotus, further sources tell us about physicians and the work they did,⁸² but it is not until the Hippocratic corpus that we have any surviving testimonies from the physicians themselves. Within this corpus the different writers discuss everything from the way a respected physician must act and present himself (or exceptionally herself), to the causes of ailments and what remedies or treatments to use.

For a long time, the idea existed that these *iatroi* only assisted women during pregnancy or childbirth when complications occurred; that for example, at first a midwife would assist in childbirth, and only when delivery turned out to be problematic people consulted a doctor.⁸³ Ann Hanson however, has convincingly shown otherwise. Analysing *Epidemics*, Hanson accurately points out that of the nineteen cases where childbirth is discussed, only five were considered problematic by the authors themselves. In a further seven of these nineteen cases some form of complications can be detected, leaving us with still seven cases that seem to be without complications.⁸⁴ Vivian Nutton and Helen King likewise strongly argue against this idea. They too demonstrate that there is enough evidence within the Hippocratic corpus to suggest that male physicians did more than aid women during problematic births. They argue that the Hippocratic corpus was written - and primarily read - by men, discussing both small (e.g. how a woman could enhance her chances of getting pregnant) and big (e.g. how to remove a dead

⁸⁰ [Hippocrates], *Regimen* I, 27. (Loeb translation)

⁸¹ Δημοκίδης (...) οἶχετο ἐς Αἴγινα. καταστάς δὲ ἐς ταύτην πρῶτῳ ἔτει ὑπερεβάλετο τοὺς ἄλλους ἰητρούς (...) καὶ μιν δευτέρῳ ἔτει ταλάντου Αἰγινήται δημοσίῃ μισθοῦνται, τρίτῳ δὲ ἔτει Ἀθηναῖοι ἑκατὸν μνέων, τετάρτῳ δὲ ἔτει Πολυκράτης δωὸν ταλάντων. Herodotus, *Persian Wars* III, 131. (Loeb translation)

⁸² See for example: Heraclitus, *DK*, 22b 58.; Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 848-50; Plato, *Republic*, 426 a-b.; Plato, *Laws*, 933a.

⁸³ Demand (1994) 66; Blundell (1995) 110.

⁸⁴ Hanson (1994) 171-173.; Additionally, Antoine Thivel and Lesley Dean-Jones have argued - from this same material - that *iatroi* did not just attend difficult births but could have been summoned at an early stage during normal births. Thivel (1981) 137; Dean-Jones (1994) 212.

foetus) reproduction issues.⁸⁵ The authors of *Barrenness* and *Diseases of Women* make many observations concerning the earlier stages of pregnancies and the beginning of childbirth. They also discuss pregnancy tests, prescribe remedies for birth pangs, and ways to ease childbirth.⁸⁶ Some scholars have argued that this information derived from a female oral tradition which the Hippocratic writers have later written down, but - as I will discuss below - this is likely not the case.

Now that we have established that at least some women were aided by male physicians before, during, or shortly after their pregnancies, the question arises how this would actually work. What was the status of a doctor for example? This question is of importance since a person had to believe in an *iatros*' abilities in order for him/her to ask for his help. A doctor was an artisan whose status and wealth - like that of other skilled artisans - depended on skills and (self-)presentation. The field of early medicine was a competitive one, with *iatroi*, midwives, magicians, deities, and even quacks providing their services. A doctor thus had to present himself as a trustworthy and skilled professional in order to acquire patients.⁸⁷ For some physicians, obtaining a good reputation through word of mouth or being publicly honoured probably helped in their search for patients or in obtaining a position as a public doctor.⁸⁸ Both Plato and Xenophon mention that there were public physicians - chosen by the assembly - in Athens as well as in other *poleis*. These public physicians likely received a fee to stay in the city, where they would treat the citizens.⁸⁹ However, little is known about how much it would have cost to get treated by an *iatros*, which makes it hard to determine how accessible these physicians really were. It is likely that prices varied depending on skills and reputation. Honorary decrees and tombstones show that some doctors (occasionally) provided free care,⁹⁰ but it is likely that this only occurred when the patient was really poor.⁹¹

Another practical question is *where* a person in need of medical help could find an *iatros*. Concerning this, Nutton writes that an *iatros* might work within his own community (on his own or in a group with other physicians), or travelled to nearby places or faraway cities (possibly in a group) to earn a living.⁹² This we have also seen in Herodotus' writings about Democedes above and it was even possible that at a certain time no *iatroi* were present within a city.⁹³ Moreover, Nutton writes that the *iatros* received his patients at his own house or at his workshop (*ergasterion*). King on the other hand, thinks it is more likely that *iatroi* visited their patient's houses and worked from there, while members of the patient's household (and possibly neighbours) assisted the physician.⁹⁴ However, when we compare Aeschines' and Plato's work, I

⁸⁵ Nutton (2004) 100; King (2013) 62-65.

⁸⁶ King (2013) 62-63.

⁸⁷ Nutton (2004) 154, 271.

⁸⁸ Massar (2001) 184.

⁸⁹ Plato, *Gorgias*, 455b, 456b; Xenophon, *Memoirabilia* IV, 2.5.

⁹⁰ Cohn-Haft (1956) 33-45.

⁹¹ In the case of public doctors who were chosen by the assembly, it is uncertain if they were to provide their services for free, but as Nutton states: 'the presence of a public doctor was no welfare state *avant la lettre*.' Nutton (2004) 87.

⁹² Nutton (2004) 87.

⁹³ King (1998) 107.

⁹⁴ King (1998) 108.

believe we find the answer to be somewhere in the middle. From Aeschines it becomes clear that special surgeries did exist:

οὐ γὰρ τὰ οἰκήματα οὐδ' αἱ οἰκήσεις τὰς ἐπωνυμίας τοῖς ἐνοικήσασι παρέχουσιν, ἀλλ' οἱ ἐνοικήσαντες τὰς τῶν ἰδίων ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἐπωνυμίας 124 τοῖς τόποις παρασκευάζουσιν. (...) ἐὰν δ' εἰς ἓν δῆπου τούτων τῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς ὁδοῖς ἐργαστηρίων ἰατρὸς εἰσοικίσηται, ἰατρεῖον καλεῖται

‘For it is not the lodgings and the houses which give their names to the men who have lived in them, but it is the tenants who give to the places the names of their own pursuits. (...) If perchance a physician moves into one of these shops on the street, it is called a “surgery”.’⁹⁵

According to Plato’s *Gorgias* however, there were also doctors who *visited* their patients: ‘Many and many a time have I gone with my brother or other doctors to visit one of their patients.’⁹⁶ Possibly the ancient Greeks combined the two options, like some doctors do today, visiting the weaker patients that cannot come to them.

Now, one important question remains on the spectrum of *iatroi* and their practice: who decided when to ask for an *iatros*’ help?⁹⁷ King argues that it must have been a woman’s *kyrios* - a male guardian (e.g. her father or husband) - who decided and payed for it.⁹⁸ I believe however, that this was not necessarily the case. Of course, female slaves were dependent on their owner for medical help relating to pregnancies and freeborn women too under normal circumstances (i.e. living in her husband’s or natal *oikos*) probably relied on their *kyrioi* to arrange the necessary aid. However, in practice, many women at this time lived under ‘abnormal’ circumstances. Classical Attica was marked by great wars, taking many men away from their homes and families for years, and countless of them never returned. In addition, because of the great age difference between women and their husbands at the time of marriage, many women became widows when they were still young. When a woman became a widow, she could either return to her natal (or other male relative’s) *oikos* or remarry,⁹⁹ but there must have been cases in which a woman was left without any *kyrios*. These circumstances and others - like poverty - occasionally forced women to handle things on their own. It is therefore not unthinkable that some of these women sought the help of an *iatros* by themselves and even under ‘normal’ circumstances this is not entirely implausible. Assumedly, King has based her idea on - or was influenced by - the debates surrounding the *medimnos* law,¹⁰⁰ which brought forward the notion that women could only spend small amounts of money and had little or no control over the *oikos*’ finances. Alma Kant (following Lin Foxhall and Virginia Hunter) convincingly argues

⁹⁵ Aeschines, *Speeches*, 1.124. (Loeb translation)

⁹⁶ Plato, *Gorgias*, 455b, 456b.

⁹⁷ In this case I do not solely focus on reproduction cases.

⁹⁸ Nutton (2004) 160; King (2013) 55.

⁹⁹ Hunter (1989) 291–311.

¹⁰⁰ A law left to us by the fourth century BC Attic orator Isaios, which states that a woman is not allowed to enter a contract which had a value of more than one *medimnos* of barley.

that husband and wife both provided a share to the *oikos*' finances, and that the *kyrios* did not essentially act as a financial superior.¹⁰¹ She writes:

‘Regarding the property of the *oikos* and the function of the husband as *kyrios* of his wife we must add another remark: the fact that the *kyrios*-husband was responsible for his wife's (financial) upkeep and maintenance, does not necessarily mean that he should or could assert control over his wife financially. Women spent money of the *oikos* on a daily basis, either through the intermediary of a slave or by themselves. Logically, we can imagine that indeed, when larger transactions were made, the husband was consulted, but if we accept the idea of the wife as manager of the household — as is often proposed and put forward in Xenophon — we should not be surprised that a husband might well have consulted his wife in the same way.’¹⁰²

I am not claiming that a woman was free to do whatever she pleased, but I do think that men did not - as King suggests - have absolute control when it came to summoning an *iatros* and that there must have been situations in which no man was even near this decision making or financial transaction at all.

Midwives

Evidence for the lives of midwives (*maiai*) and female doctors during the classical period is way less abundant than that for male doctors.¹⁰³ One important piece of evidence is a myth that seems to explain the coming into existence of female midwives in Athens. This myth about the first female midwife Agnodike, was handed down to us through the Roman writer Hyginus but is suspected to be based on earlier Greek writings. It tells the story of the young Athenian Agnodike who - disguised as a man - worked as a midwife. Being accused by male rivals of seducing women (because they only wanted to be treated by her), she had to reveal her true identity in court, after which the wives of important Athenians convinced the Areopagus to save Agnodike and change the law, allowing free-born women to study medicine.¹⁰⁴ Even though many scholars have tried to fit this story into actual history,¹⁰⁵ it is likely nothing more than a myth.¹⁰⁶

Another source can be found in the case of Socrates' mother Phaenarete, who - as mentioned by Socrates in Plato's *Theaetetus* - was supposedly a midwife. Socrates - while discussing the nature of knowledge - refers to midwives and to his mother in particular and says that midwives are women who have given birth in the past but are now past the age of childbearing. He furthermore states that they can handle difficult births successfully, that these women are skilled in cutting umbilical cords, and that they are proficient in the use of 'drugs and incantations' that

¹⁰¹ Kant (2018) 19-27; Foxhall (1989) 28-32; Hunter (1994) 9-13.

¹⁰² Kant (2018) 26.

¹⁰³ Some literary texts do mention what seem to be professional midwives: Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 746; Plato, *Theaetetus*, 149-150a; *Greek Anthology*, VII 168.

¹⁰⁴ King (1998) 181-187.

¹⁰⁵ See for example: Grant (1960) 176; Pomeroy (1977) 58-59.

¹⁰⁶ King (1998) 182.

can both ease and arouse birth pangs as well as cause miscarriages. Finally, he labels them as the best matchmakers since they know all about which men and women could produce the best offspring.¹⁰⁷ Socrates, by mentioning his own mother, thus seems to imply that midwives could be of high social class and were respected, experienced, wise, and most importantly good women. Even though (Plato's) Socrates only tells this story about midwives to explain his own role as a person who helps 'give birth' to knowledge and doing so is being overly positive about midwives in order to build up his own *ethos*, there must have been some kernel of truth in order for this text to make sense to Plato's audience. To further understand the position of midwives and the way that they functioned and were perceived within classical Athenian society, I will now discuss some additional (later) sources.

This is a highly debated topic, since modern scholars disagree on the function of midwives. Angeliki Kosmopoulou in her study of classical Attic gravestones argues that the *maiai* of the classical period 'were little more than practical helpers at labour'.¹⁰⁸ King (followed by Rebecca Flemming) argues more convincingly that midwives and (male) *iatroi* sometimes worked together and that even though there might have been a hierarchy amongst *iatroi* and *maiai* (see below), midwives were likely involved in more than just reproduction related cases.¹⁰⁹ She states: 'because of the influence of the womb and menses on the whole body, [a *maia*] could also be valuable in other disorders of women.'¹¹⁰ That the ancient Greeks did in fact distinguish between (female) *iatroi* and *maia* can be seen in the following funerary inscription of a woman named Phanostrate:

Φανο[στράτη — — —, — — —]
 Με[λιτέως γυνή]?
 Αντιφίλη Φανοστράτη.

Below relief:
 μαῖα καὶ ἰατρὸς Φανοστράτη ἐνθάδε κεῖται
 [ο]ὔθενι λυπη(ρ)ά, πᾶσιν δὲ θανοῦσα ποθεινὴ

'Phano[strate wife of ...] of Me[lite]
 Antiphile Phanostrate [naming figures on relief]

Below relief:
 Midwife and doctor Phanostrate lies here, she caused pain to no-one and, having died, is missed by all.'¹¹¹

This funerary inscription (dated to c. 350 BC) is one of the few pieces of evidence we have that tells us about an actual midwife in the classical period. It includes a relief of two women and four children and describes and depicts the deceased Phanostrate as both a midwife (*maia*) and

¹⁰⁷ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 149-150a.

¹⁰⁸ Kosmopoulou (2001) 299-300.

¹⁰⁹ King (1986) 53-77; Flemming (2007) 258-259.

¹¹⁰ King (1998) 179.

¹¹¹ *IG II²* 6873 (translation AIO).

an *iatros*. One certainty that can be derived from this inscription is that there was at least one female doctor during the classical period in Attica and that this woman - if the speculations about her link to a votive offering found at the Asklepieion on the Acropolis is correct - left quite the impression on her contemporaries.¹¹² Many scholars have argued that, because *iatros* is written in a masculine form, Phanostrate must have had the proper training and experience - equal to her male counterparts - to receive this title, and was thus more than an assisting midwife. Though I believe this was the case, this cannot be derived from the masculine form of *iatros*, since a female form of the word does not exist.¹¹³ The choice for the term *iatros* itself is enough to lead to this conclusion, especially since the available female denominations do not carry the same weight. When we search the Hippocratic corpus for terms used to denote midwives or female doctors, the only words we find are *iatreuosa*¹¹⁴ ('female-healer'), and *omphalêtomos*¹¹⁵ ('cord-cutter').¹¹⁶ The term *Iatreuosa* is not a female form of *iatros*, but a substantively used participle of the verb *iatreuo* ('to treat medically' or 'to cure'), thus lacking the same significance, and *omphalêtomos* is simply the word for 'maia' in the Ionic dialect.¹¹⁷ Moreover, these words are only mentioned once in the entire corpus, while *iatros* is mentioned hundred-eighty-five times.¹¹⁸ It thus becomes clear that - in absence of a female declension - the term *iatros* is used to indicate Phanostrate's status as a doctor. The professions of midwife and doctor were perceived as two different things and the words *maia* and *iatros* in Phanostrate's funerary inscription hold separate meanings; she was both a midwife and a doctor who did not solely concern herself with reproduction issues, but also treated other ailments.

That this 'opposition' between *maia* and *iatros* suggests a difference in hierarchy is suggested by Christian Laes who - in his study of Hellenistic and Roman era Greek inscriptions mentioning midwives - states that Phanostrate being called an *iatros* is a way to enhance her status.¹¹⁹ He does not necessarily seem to mean that she was not both qualified as a midwife and a doctor; but that people viewed these two concepts differently, valuing *iatros* more than *maia*.¹²⁰ Moreover, even within the profession of midwife there seem to have been different degrees as is suggested by a much later source (ca. first/second century AD) attributed to Soranus of Ephesus. The first degree concerns older, technically skilled, wise women. The second degree holds more advanced women, learned in the theory and practice of obstetrics and gynecology; and the third degree consists of women trained in overall medicine who specialised in

¹¹² *IG II³ 4 700*, is inscribed on a statue base and was dedicated as a votive offering to Asklepios. It honours Phanostrate in association with Asklepios.

¹¹³ *LSJ* s.v. 'ιατρός'.

¹¹⁴ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women* I, 68. (Loeb translation)

¹¹⁵ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women* I, 46. (Loeb translation)

¹¹⁶ Within the Hippocratic corpus midwives are referred to in both a positive and negative way. The 'cord-cutter' is blamed for making the ignorant mistake to cut the umbilical cord too soon, which leaves the baby in danger. [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women* I, 46. The 'female-healer', on the other hand, seems to work together professionally with an *iatros* in a situation where difficulty occurs while removing a foetus. [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women* I, 68.

¹¹⁷ *LSJ* s.v. 'ὀμφαλητόμος';

¹¹⁸ *TLG*

¹¹⁹ Laes (2011) 157. Just as was the case with *iatroi*, these women would benefit from a good reputation. Cilliers and Retief (2005) 183-184.

¹²⁰ Laes (2011) 157-158.

gynecology. This latter group is considered equal to male physicians by Soranus.¹²¹ Although this source dates to much later than the period studied here, it seems reasonable to assume that similarly during the classical period a gradation existed in the skill and status of midwives.¹²² That these women carried out a range of tasks perhaps even overlapping those of *iatroi* is also suggested by Nutton, who further states that ‘where one drew the line between a *maia* and a mediciner was a personal one, since there were no laws that defined either profession.’¹²³

We know little of how these women were educated, but here again funerary inscriptions might shed some light on the situation. Laes’ study concluded that most of the women in his dataset can be connected to a husband, a father, or an owner who practised medicine and with whom these women likely trained and worked.¹²⁴ This was probably also how the female medical practitioners of the classical period obtained their education.¹²⁵ Cillier and Retief write that medical training must have differed widely, but that in general - both for midwives, and (fe)male doctors - it likely ‘focused on practice rather than on a strict theoretical foundation.’¹²⁶ This does not mean however, that these *maiai* and female *iatroi* were unfamiliar with the remedies written down in the gynaecological treatises, but rather that they (as well as their male counterparts) likely learned them in practice.

To conclude, it seems that - specifically in relation to reproduction - highly trained professional midwives could (possibly) provide the same services as (female) doctors. The question arises here, how then a woman (or her family members) decided who to consult when it came to reproduction issues. Euripides’s *Hippolytos* suggests that for some issues women should turn to a female helper (in this particular case the woman’s nurse and the chorus) and for other issues – i.e. those that can be discussed with men - a doctor might be summoned.¹²⁷ In this case however, it is unclear if by ‘female helpers’ also midwives are meant, and if the doctors that are referred to are solely male. In a much later case, Galen (ca. second/third century AD) tells us about a woman who had menstrual problems and too was ashamed to ask male doctors for help. He writes that she turned to the help of midwives, but that her husband summoned *iatroi* when the situation did not improve.¹²⁸ Although this latter source is a late one, I think it paints a general picture of how the situation might well have been in some classical households. Some women were probably ashamed to consult a male doctor, while some men likely thought that *iatroi* were better able to cure an ailment. On the other hand, some men probably thought that ‘female ailments’ and issues were better left to women, while some women possibly preferred the help of a male doctor. In this, we cannot be certain. As previously discussed, it is likely that both male and female *iatroi*, and *maiai* could help women with reproduction issues; I think that deciding between the two was likely a matter of personal

¹²¹ Soranus, *Gynecology* I, 3-4.

¹²² When it comes to the ‘social’ status of a midwife there must also have been a great variety. Although Louise Cillier and Francois Retief mention that most of them were likely freeborn (citizen) women, there must also have been slaves who were trained by their masters (notable in Roman times). Cillier and Retief (2005) 184-185.

¹²³ Nutton (2004) 101.

¹²⁴ Laes (2011) 158.

¹²⁵ Flemming (2007) 262.

¹²⁶ Cilliers and Retief (2005) 179.

¹²⁷ Euripides, *Hippolytos*, 293-296.

¹²⁸ Galen, *On prognosis* VIII.; King (1998) 170.

experience (what one was used to), close connection (does one always seek out the same doctor or midwife),¹²⁹ or is a medical professional recommended by someone they know), and, not least, availability (who was there to help).

Remedies

As Laurence Totelin concluded, eighty percent of the remedies and methods prescribed in the entire Hippocratic corpus are found within the gynaecological treatises, which means that *iatroi* - and possibly *maiai* - could turn to a wide selection of remedies and treatments when dealing with reproduction issues.¹³⁰ Of these gynaecological treatises, three works contain remedies and treatments and are thus of special importance. These are *Diseases of Women I*, *Diseases of Women II*, and *Barrenness*. Throughout these works a great amount of treatments are described, addressing everything from conception to postpartum conditions.¹³¹ Of course, we must be careful when reading and interpreting the Hippocratic corpus, as these texts are ‘rarely straightforward accounts of reality;’¹³² and we cannot be certain how often Attic women were actually treated with these remedies. What we can derive from them is how the ancient Greeks thought about the female body and how this affected the treatment of women who wanted to have children. Furthermore, though I will not focus on whether the prescribed methods and remedies really worked it is important to ascertain whether Attic women and their family members believed that they did.

Let us first turn briefly to the debate on whether the prescribed remedies in the gynaecological treatises were originally part of ‘women’s lore.’ Many scholars have argued that these remedies were ‘female knowledge’ passed down through word of mouth and appropriated by the male authors of the Hippocratic corpus.¹³³ King (following Totelin) however, convincingly argues against this.¹³⁴ She writes:

‘Rather than seeing the gynaecological texts as representing women’s knowledge because of our anachronistic assumptions about the gendered ownership of recipes, we should regard the Hippocratic medical texts as a complex mixture of men’s and women’s knowledge, with much being shared.’¹³⁵

Agreeing with King, I believe it is likely that both sexes (not just women) contributed to the knowledge united in the gynaecological treatises. In addition, I believe that the possible health benefits - or at least the symbolic benefit - of certain herbs and plants were not exclusively

¹²⁹ This does not seem impossible since in *Diseases of Women I* 43 the author writes: ‘apply the compresses to her that you know by experience she will best accept.’

¹³⁰ Totelin (2009) 111.

¹³¹ In this thesis I have placed the focus on *Diseases of Women I* and II, and *Barrenness*. I have made this selection judging the different gynaecological treatises on their overall topics, and by following Ann Ellis Hanson in her notion that *Nature of Women* and *Superfetation* are mainly a compilation of information we also find in *Diseases of Women I* and II and *Barrenness*. Hanson (1975) 568-569.

¹³² King (1998) 248.

¹³³ Rousselle (1988) 24 and 26; McLaren (1990) 28; Riddle (1992) 97; Demand (1994) 63.

¹³⁴ For a detailed overview of this debate, and King’s full argumentation see: King (1998) 132-142; King (2013) 53-55; Totelin (2009) 111.

¹³⁵ King (2013) 55.

known by doctors and midwives, but that even lay people - both men and women - used remedies similar to the ones described within the Hippocratic corpus. Though we cannot say so for certain, it is imaginable that some people would self-medicate and believed in the workings of their remedies. Concerning this, Lesley Dean-Jones writes: '[the Hippocratic remedies for women] must have been acceptable to them [women] and have squared with their view of their own physiology.'¹³⁶ King subsequently adds to this, that these treatments must have made sense not only to women but also to men, who (at least in some cases) were the ones deciding to ask an *iatros* for help, and they would not do so if they were unconvinced of their methods.¹³⁷

Now, let us turn to these remedies and methods themselves. The listed remedies and treatments in the gynaecological treatises offer many ways to treat issues like infertility, disorders of pregnant women (e.g. losing a baby before it is born, being weak or ailing, menstruating even during the later months of the pregnancy, having a difficult birth etc.), cases where lochial cleaning has to be helped, postpartum disorders (e.g. inflammation of the uterus, no lactation, the afterbirth will not come out etc.), and disorders of the uterus (i.e. where the Hippocratic writers discuss the removal of death foetuses). These different issues were mostly treated using the same sorts of remedies and the works almost always advise to combine certain treatments. For example, one passage in the corpus mentions that when treating infertility a doctor could prescribe lead sounds,¹³⁸ bathing in hot or cold water, emollients, sleeping in a certain position, sitz baths, and suppositories.¹³⁹ Other treatments for infertility mentioned are: having sex on a certain day,¹⁴⁰ enemas,¹⁴¹ no or few baths,¹⁴² fumigation with an 'evil' or a 'nice' smelling substance,¹⁴³ eating and drinking certain things to add moisture or dryness,¹⁴⁴ exercise,¹⁴⁵ fasting in combination with a diet of moisturising or drying foods,¹⁴⁶ dilating the uterus with (lead) spatulas,¹⁴⁷ purgative potions,¹⁴⁸ emetics,¹⁴⁹ flushing or washing the lower area of the body,¹⁵⁰ and mixtures of herbs and other substances (e.g. wine or oil) either eaten or applied as a potion, or in a suppository.¹⁵¹ These same treatments - or with different herbs, foods, smells etc. - are prescribed for other reproduction related issues as well. For example, when treating disorders in pregnant women, the main remedies concern them eating foods and drinking potions (i.e.

¹³⁶ Dean-Jones (1994) 27.

¹³⁷ King (2013) 55.

¹³⁸ The Hippocratic corpus is unclear about what specifically is meant by a lead sound. In music, however, lead sounds are sound that are only able to produce one note at the time. These sounds can be made with a lead instrument like a horn, a voice, or the banging of two objects together.

¹³⁹ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women II*, 49.

¹⁴⁰ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 12, 24.

¹⁴¹ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 13.

¹⁴² [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 11, 12.

¹⁴³ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 11, 13.

¹⁴⁴ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 11, 12, 13, 16, 89.1.

¹⁴⁵ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 11.

¹⁴⁶ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 11, 13, 89.1, 89.3.

¹⁴⁷ [Hippocrates], *Barrenness*, 9.

¹⁴⁸ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women II*, 58.

¹⁴⁹ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 12, 13.

¹⁵⁰ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women II*, 49.

¹⁵¹ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 89.1, 89.2.

mixtures of herbs and other substances) that were prepared in a certain way,¹⁵² sometimes in combination with fumigation and suppositories,¹⁵³ while some treatments are prescribed to promote pregnancy,¹⁵⁴ to accelerate birth,¹⁵⁵ to help clean out the lochia,¹⁵⁶ and to expel the after-birth.¹⁵⁷ It must be noted however, that these methods and the combination of remedies are never exactly the same. That is, the ingredients for suppositories, emollients, and potions always vary, and different combinations of remedies are prescribed for different issues.

The reason why the treatment of these different issues is nonetheless so similar is - as previously mentioned - that the Hippocratic doctors blame most, if not all, of the problems of the female body on the same causes: menstrual blood and the uterus. They use dry foods to get rid of too much moisture,¹⁵⁸ and use moisturising treatments - like baths, eating boiled sea foods, meats and vegetables, and drinking diluted wine - when a woman's body is 'overly dry or fleshly.'¹⁵⁹ These treatments all seem to have been devised based on the symbolic meaning of their ingredients.¹⁶⁰ An example of this is the eating of the flesh or fat of a puppy prescribed by *Barrenness* to promote pregnancy and childbirth:

καὶ ἐσθιέτω σκυλάκια σιαλώδεα δίεφθα καὶ πουλύποδα ἐν οἴνῳ ἐφθὸν γλυκυτάτῳ, καὶ τοῦ ζωμοῦ πινέτω, καὶ κράμβην ἐφθὴν καὶ οἶνον λευκὸν ἐπιπινέτω·

'Also have her [the mother (to be)] eat fat, well-steamed meat of puppy together with octopus boiled in very sweet wine, drink the sauce from this, take some boiled cabbage, and after that drink white wine.'¹⁶¹

The Hippocratic idea that the flesh of a mature dog is a substance with drying qualities and the flesh of puppies is moisturising,¹⁶² carries the same symbolism as the idea that girls and young women are seen as more wet in texture as opposed to older women who bleed less and have firmer flesh,¹⁶³ thus making the meat of a puppy a suitable ingredient when moisture is required to promote pregnancy. Another example is the juice of a squirting cucumber (*Ecballium elaterium*),¹⁶⁴ listed quite often as an ingredient for reproduction issues in recipes similar to the following:

Ἐκβόλιον ὑστέρων· σικύου ἀγρίου τὸν ὀπὸν ὅσον πόσιν ἐς μαζίον ἐμπλάσας προστιθέναι, προνηστεύσασα ἐπὶ δύο ἡμέρας, οὐκ ἂν εὖροις τοῦδ' ἄμεινον.

¹⁵² [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 29, 31.

¹⁵³ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 34.

¹⁵⁴ [Hippocrates], *Barrenness*, 5.

¹⁵⁵ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 77.1,3,6.

¹⁵⁶ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 78.3.

¹⁵⁷ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 78.25.

¹⁵⁸ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 11.

¹⁵⁹ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 16.

¹⁶⁰ Nutton (2004) 98.; King (1998) 152-153.

¹⁶¹ [Hippocrates], *Barrenness*, 5. (Loeb translation)

¹⁶² King (1998) 25.

¹⁶³ See for example: [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women II*, 145; [Hippocrates], *Nature of Women*, 1.

¹⁶⁴ Britannica s.v. 'Squirting cucumber.'

‘A medication to cause expulsion from the uterus: a draft of juice from the squirting cucumber daubed on a barley scone: apply after having the patient fast for two days. You would never find anything better than this.’¹⁶⁵

Here too, it is likely that the Hippocratic doctors prescribed this plant because of its symbolism. The way the plant ejects its seeds was likely associated with expelling things from the womb, such as too much moisture, an unwanted conception, and the afterbirth.¹⁶⁶ It seems likely that many herbs and plants were not necessarily used because of their chemical properties, but rather because of their symbolic meaning.

When studying these texts, it becomes clear that women themselves sometimes played an active role during their treatment. Besides the fact that women occasionally helped the *iatros* with diagnosing their own ailment,¹⁶⁷ they sometimes also carried out the treatment by themselves using the prescribed remedies. Several passages mention women who must anoint the mouth of their own uterus, or fumigate or bathe themselves.¹⁶⁸ In addition, the author of *Diseases of Women I* also stresses the women’s own responsibility when he lists things women should be cautious about while carrying a baby, as the embryo is weak and easily aborts:

καὶ γὰρ ἢν ἡ γυνὴ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα νοσήσῃ καὶ ἀσθενῆς ᾗ, καὶ ἄχθος βίη ἀείρῃ, ἢ πληγῇ, ἢ
πηδήσῃ, ἢ ἀσιτήσῃ ἢ λιποθυμίῃ ἴσχηται, ἢ πλέονα ἢ ὀλίγην τροφὴν λαμβάνῃ, ἢ δευδίσηται καὶ
πτύρηται, ἢ κεκράγῃ ἢ ἀκρατήσῃ·

‘if a pregnant woman becomes ill and weak, or uses force to lift some burden, or is struck, or jumps up, or goes without food, or loses consciousness, or takes too much or too little nutriment, or has a fright that makes her afraid, or shouts, or loses command over herself.’¹⁶⁹

This shows that women were not perceived to be completely passive when it came to their treatment by *iatroi* and *maiai*. It was of vital importance that a woman herself and the people around her took care of her, and that her body was balanced and healthy. If not, she would not conceive, carry the baby to full term, or give birth successfully.

¹⁶⁵ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 78.13. (Loeb translation)

¹⁶⁶ Nutton (2004) 99.

¹⁶⁷ Although it was thought that diagnosing women was harder than diagnosing men because women were less likely to talk, we still have accounts where women help the *iatros* by examining themselves. In *Diseases of Women I*, for example, a woman examined herself and discovered that the uterus is obstructed, of which she then informs the *iatros* who prescribes a treatment. [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Woman I*, 40.

Overall, however, the Hippocratic writers mention a difference between women who are experienced - since they had given birth before - and young girls who are of no real help. The *iatros* must determine if a woman has enough experience and if her findings are trustworthy. King (1998) 54.

¹⁶⁸ This texts, for example, states: ‘fumigate herself’ ([Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 11; [Hippocrates], *Barrenness*, 15), ‘wash herself’ ([Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 49; [Hippocrates], *Barrenness* 18.4, 29), ‘flush herself’ ([Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 23, 49), ‘bathe herself’ ([Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 52), ‘have her anoint the mouth of her uterus’ ([Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 37).

¹⁶⁹ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 25. (Loeb translation)

Chapter III

Ritual practice and magical techniques

The combination of the inextricable connection between religion and magic, as discussed in chapter one, and the essential role of magic in everyday classical Attica life, provides the foundation of this chapter. Here, the religious and magical aspects of rituals are combined. Their connection contributes to our understanding of the term ‘ritual’. Rituals include all religious and magical actions performed in order to please the gods and ask for their help, and all symbolic proceedings to, for example, enhance fertility or accept a new born child into the *oikos*. Performing these rituals during the stages of reproduction - conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum recovery - was of great importance to ancient Greek women. Some rituals were believed to enhance fertility and ease childbirth, while others were believed to protect mother and child from harm of both human and divine beings who tried preventing conception, delaying birth, or even killing mother and/or child. Moreover, rituals were performed in processes shaping social relationships and identities.¹⁷⁰ Most of these rituals relied on the antipathy or the sympathy aspects within the cosmos, which were accessible through magic. Such magic techniques were mostly used by paid professionals (possibly midwives and physicians), and the women and their family members seeking help during the reproduction process themselves. The abundant amount of evidence of the use of such magic techniques, and the absence of signs that their use was viewed as something bad, suggest that they were likely widely used during the classical period.

Furthermore, there is a multitude of sources informing us about ancient ritual customs. Regarding magical techniques, most of the information derives from sources (like the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, inscriptions, and archaeological evidence) dating to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Nevertheless, there are multiple indications that some of these magical techniques, at least, were used during the classical period. In the previously mentioned texts of Plato, for example, Socrates discusses the drug and incantation skills of midwives and lists magic spells and amulets amongst the means of physicians.¹⁷¹ Moreover, although most of the inscribed gem stone amulets date to the (post-)Hellenistic period, there is one classical example of an amulet (within the Hippocratic corpus) that was used to accelerate birth (I will elaborate on this amulet below).¹⁷² Another indication that shows that amulets and incantations were likely used during the classical period, is the study of Pliny the Elder’s recipes (first century AD). Patricia Gaillard-Seux discovered that one of these recipes - concerning an amulet in combination with an

¹⁷⁰ Salvo (2017) 131-132.

¹⁷¹ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 149-150a; Plato, *Republic*, 4.426b

¹⁷² [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women* I, 77.4; Hanson identifies this procedure as an amulet because of its application (*peripto*: ‘tie around’), and the colour of the material (red) and its sympathetic magical techniques (the woman’s blood was believed to be drawn towards the red colour and, I think also, the absorbent qualities of the wool). Hanson (2004) 276-277.

incantation - can likely be dated back to classical times. This recipe does not treat something that is related to reproduction (it is said to treat ophthalmia), but its dating back to the classical period underscores the use of such amulets and incantations in this period. This makes it probable that at least some of the abundant amount of reproduction related amulets and incantations that were found for later periods, were also used during this time.¹⁷³ Moreover, Ann Hanson has convincingly argued that amulets were used during the classical period, but many did not survive the test of time because they were made of perishable materials.¹⁷⁴

Based on the above-mentioned and other sources, like the decorations on Athenian pottery, this chapter discusses reproduction-related rituals and magical practices. I study rituals and magical practices performed by the women of classical Attica, their immediate family members, and paid professionals in a systematic way, from the conception phase to postpartum recovery. Here, I will not discuss communal rituals and festivals - like the Thesmophoria - performed and held to ensure fertility for the entire *polis*. I solely study 'private' rituals, performed in public sanctuaries, informal shrines, and at home. Moreover, votive offerings, which can be considered a ritual as well, are not included in the current chapter, but will be studied in depth in chapter four.

Fertility rituals

The importance of having children for both women and men is reflected by the amount of fertility rituals that were, or could be, performed. Fertility rituals started within the context of wedding preparations, aiming to ensure a fertile marriage, and were appropriate at any time during the marriage when the couple was trying to conceive. First, I address the rituals performed during wedding preparations, the wedding night and the wedding itself, before focusing on more general rituals and practices.

Marriage was a major transition point in a woman's and a man's life. Therefore, during this precarious period, sacrifices and dedications to the gods in order to appease, please, and ask for divine help were considered an absolute necessity. These *proteleia* (prenuptial sacrifices)¹⁷⁵ were in Athens bestowed upon, for example, Ge and Ouranos, the Furies (goddesses of vengeance), the Moirai (the three goddesses who bestowed a destiny on mortals at birth), Aphrodite Ourania, and Artemis.¹⁷⁶ In addition to the *proteleia*, other dedications (some possibly overlapping with the *proteleia*) were carried out at different times before a girl's wedding. Although some dedications are associated with the transition from childhood to the girl's

¹⁷³ Pliny, *Natural History*, 28.29; Gaillard-Seux (2014) 212.

¹⁷⁴ Hanson (2004) 268.

¹⁷⁵ Casey Mason on *Proteleia*: 'Before the nuptial ceremony could take place, sacrifices would be made on behalf of the bride and groom to propitiate the gods. These particular sacrifices before a wedding were called *proteleia* and would have occurred outside of the local temple.' Mason (2006) 22.

¹⁷⁶ Dillon (2002) 217; Especially the latter three are concerned with fertility and or childbirth. Dillon (2002) 217; Parker (2005) 430-431. Artemis, for example, is considered a childbirth and childrearing goddess, but in this case she had to receive a sacrifice to be appeased when a girl would go from her sphere (virginity) to that of Aphrodite (sexuality), to ensure a safe transfer between these two spheres. Oakley and Sinos (2002) 12. Aphrodite (Ourania) will help the *parthenos* (virgin girl) in her transition from virgin to *nymphe* (bride) during the wedding ceremonies and wedding night. Rosenzweig (2004) 65-67; See also chapter four: 'Aphrodite Ourania'.

becoming of a marriageable age – e.g. the dedication of one’s toys to Artemis for example -¹⁷⁷ others are directly connected to fertility. For example, according to Phanodemus, the Athenians prayed and made sacrifices to their ancestors (*Tritopatrones*) before the wedding, in order to ensure fertility.¹⁷⁸ Another possible fertility ritual is the dedication of hair:

Ἄρτεμι, τόξα λαχοῦσα καὶ ἀλκήεντας ὄϊστους, σοὶ πλόκον οἰκείας τόνδε λέλοιπε κόμης
Ἀρσινόη θυόεν παρ’ ἀνάκτορον, ἢ Πτολεμαίου παρθένος, ἡμερτοῦ κειραμένη πλοκάμου.

‘Artemis, who wielded the bow and the arrows of might, by thy fragrant temple hath
Arsinoe, the maiden daughter of Ptolemy [the first], left this lock of her own hair, cutting
it from her lovely tresses.’¹⁷⁹

Although this fragment is late - like most (if not all) other sources for this practice - and does not refer to Attica specifically, this ritual does seem to have been commonly used in the ancient Greek world.¹⁸⁰ Matthew Dillon writes that the cutting and dedicating of a girl’s hair was a transitional ritual, marking the girl’s transition to marriage and later - through childbirth - to womanhood.¹⁸¹ Paul Baur, in a much earlier publication, elaborates on this meaning, arguing convincingly (from Pollux¹⁸² and Hesychius¹⁸³) that Athenian women dedicated locks of hair to Hera Teleia, Artemis, and/or the Moirai before their wedding.¹⁸⁴ Baur argues that since these goddesses were all concerned with fertility and childbirth, the dedication of hair must be related to fertility. Although Pollux does not literally mention fertility as the purpose of this practice, I do agree with Baur. Namely, the production of children (heirs) was widely regarded as the main purpose of marriage, and the *proteleia* tended to focus on making the marriage a fertile one.¹⁸⁵ all these perspectives, however, remain speculative. Perhaps this ritual was intended as both a transition ritual and a fertility ritual, and it is possible that the purpose of this ritual varied according to which goddess the hair was dedicated.

During premarital rituals, natural elements also played an important part in enhancing fertility. In classical Attica, people prayed and sacrificed to river gods like Kephisos, who was also a kourotrophic deity, in the hope to conceive.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, the water from a sacred river or spring itself was regarded as ‘life-giving’ and, therefore, associated with fertility (water is needed to make crops grow).¹⁸⁷ The importance of water for fertility and general reproduction

¹⁷⁷ Oakley and Sinos (2002) 14; Dillon (2002) 215.

¹⁷⁸ *FGrH* 325 F6.

¹⁷⁹ *Greek Anthology*, VI 277. (Loeb translation)

¹⁸⁰ Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 3.38; See also: *Greek Anthology*, VI 276; Hesychius s.v. γάμων ἔθη.

¹⁸¹ Dillon (2002) 215.

¹⁸² Second century AD.

¹⁸³ Fifth or sixth century AD.

¹⁸⁴ Baur (1902) 69.

¹⁸⁵ Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 3.38.

¹⁸⁶ Parker shows the existence of this practice by indicating that some children were named in the honour of a river god: ‘names such as the Cephisodotus, ‘given by Cephisus’, of one of our inscriptions attest a practice of praying to rivers in order to conceive.’ Parker (2005) 431. On Kephisos see also chapter four.

¹⁸⁷ On water for ritual purposes: ‘Washing is one way to establish divisions, between different activities or from the rest of the world, and the Greeks performed some kind of purification with water before every sacrifice or other contact with the sacred.’ Oakley and Sinos (2002) 15.

rituals can be attested by the high number of fertility and childbirth sanctuaries that housed sacred springs.¹⁸⁸ One fertility ritual that involved water is the nuptial bath. Before the wedding, men and women washed themselves in water collected from a sacred source, purifying themselves for marriage and enhancing their fertility.¹⁸⁹ According to Thucydides, the Athenians used water from the spring Callirrhoe for this and other ritual purposes:

Ἀθηναίων Ἴωνες ἔτι καὶ νῦν νομίζουσιν. ἴδρυται δὲ ἑκαὶ ἄλλα ἱερὰ ταύτῃ ἀρχαῖα. καὶ τῇ κρήνῃ τῇ νῦν μὲν τῶν τυράννων οὕτως σκευασάντων Ἐννεακρούμφω καλουμένη, τὸ δὲ πάλαι φανερῶν τῶν πηγῶν οὐσῶν Καλλιρρόῃ ὀνομασμένη ἐκεῖνοί τε ἐγγυὺς οὔσῃ τὰ πλείστου ἄξια ἐχρῶντο, καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρχαίου πρό τε γαμικῶν καὶ ἐς ἄλλα βῆτων ἱερῶν νομίζεται τῷ ὕδατι χρῆσθαι.

‘The fountain now called Enneacrunus, from the fashion given it by the tyrants, but which anciently, when the springs were uncovered, was named Callirrhoe, was used by people of those days, because it was close by, for the most important ceremonies; and even now, in accordance with the ancient practice, it is still customary to use its waters in the rites preliminary to marriages and other sacred ceremonies.’¹⁹⁰

In the case of a soon-to-be-married Athenian girl, this water was collected in *loutrophoroi* and carried from the Enneakrounos fountain house in a procession.¹⁹¹ A procession like this is depicted on a red-figure *loutrophoros* (fig. 1). The girl portrayed underneath one of the handles holds the *loutrophoros* which will be used to collect the water. She is likely selected by the bride’s kin to perform this task.¹⁹² The bride herself walks right behind this girl, slightly tilting her head. There is evidence that, in Attica, after their use *loutrophoroi* were occasionally dedicated to deities to enhance fertility. An example of this is their dedication to the Nymphs (sometimes in association with Pan). *Loutrophoroi* were found in several caves associated with the Nymphs: at a cave at Vari, holding a spring that was sacred to the Nymphs; at caves associated with the Nymphs at Eleusis, Daphne and on mount Parnes; and on the south slope of the Athenian Acropolis where a shrine of *Nymphe* (Bride) was located.¹⁹³

Another ritual - or rituals - performed in Attica, shortly before or during the wedding night, involved a (or possibly more than one) *pais amphithales*: a child of which both parents are still alive. Scholars are uncertain what exactly these rituals entailed and have generally addressed these uncertainties by ignoring some of, or parts of, the sources.¹⁹⁴ I wish however, to reconsider all available sources concerning these rituals, to provide a clear overview of what we do and do not know. I will start with the written sources on this subject. Pollux writes the following:

¹⁸⁸ Coley (2004) 191-194; For more on the presence of sacred springs in Artemis’ sanctuary at Brauron see chapter four.

¹⁸⁹ Oakley and Sinos (2002) 15.

¹⁹⁰ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.15.5. (Loeb translation)

¹⁹¹ Dillon (2002) 220; Oakley and Sinos (2002) 15.

¹⁹² Oakley and Sinos (2002) 15.

¹⁹³ Dillon (2002) 220; for Eleusis and the Acropolis, see Dillon (1999) 70-71; for Vari, see Dillon (1997) 119-120; See also chapter four ‘Nymphe’.

¹⁹⁴ Reilly (1989) 426-427.; Golden (1990) 30-31.; Oakley and Sinos (2002) 20.

‘ἡ δ’ ἀπαυλιστηρία χλανίς ἀπὸ τῆς νύμφης ἐν τοῖς ἀπαυλίοις τῶ
νυμφίῳ πέμπεται. καὶ τῶ μὲν νυμφίῳ τότε ἐν τοῦ πενθεροῦ
παιδίον ἀμφιθαλὲς θῆλυ συγκατακλίνεται, τῇ δὲ νύμφῃ ἐν τοῦ
γαμβροῦ ἄρρεν.’¹⁹⁵

‘The *chlanis* [garment] belonging to the *apaulia* is sent from the bride to the groom during the *apaulia*. And a female *pais amphithales* is then made to lie with the groom in the presence of (at the house of) his father-in-law (or brother-in-law), a male *pais amphithales* is made to lie with the bride in presence of a connexion by marriage (at the house of the bridegroom)’¹⁹⁶

Although this source is late, it refers to earlier times and seems to provide us with details for a similar (if not the same) ritual from Naxos described by Callimachus in the third century BC:

ἦδη καὶ κούρῳ παρθένος εὐνάσατο, τέθμιον ὡς ἐκέλευε προνύμφιον ὕπνον ἰαῦσαι
ἄρσενι τὴν τάλιν παιδί σὺν ἀμφιθαλεῖ.

‘And already the maiden was bedded with the boy, as ritual ordered that the bride should sleep her prenuptial sleep with a boy whose parents were both alive.’¹⁹⁷

Yet another text - by Zenobius (AD 117-138) - implies that these rituals, involving at least one *pais amphithales*, likely involved more than laying or sleeping with this child. Accordingly, the *pais amphithales* also played an active role during the wedding itself:

‘Ἀθήνησι γὰρ ἐν τοῖς γάμοις ἔθος ἦν, ἀμφιθαλεῖ
παῖδα ἀκάνθας μετὰ δρυῖνων καρπῶν στέφεσθαι, καὶ
λίκνον ἄρτων πλήρες περιφέροντα λέγειν,
Ἐφυγον κακὸν, εὔρον ἄμεινον.’¹⁹⁸

‘Because in Athens during the wedding it is custom to crown the *pais amphithales* with a wreath of thorns and acorns, and he, carrying around a basket [possibly in the shape of a cradle] with cakes/breads, says: ‘I fled the bad, I found better.’¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 3.40.

¹⁹⁶ Authors translation.

Most scholars translate ‘ἐν τοῦ πενθεροῦ’ and ‘ἐν τοῦ γαμβροῦ’ as at the current house of the future spouse. See for example: Reilly (1989) 427.; Golden (1990) 30-31.; Oakley and Sinos (2002) 20. In the bride’s case this would mean she would sleep at the groom’s house and in the groom’s case that would mean he would sleep at the bride’s natal home. Although I agree with this translation - since I think that Pollux is referring to the head of the household with these words and thus to the current house of the future spouse - I do want to emphasize that ‘ἐν τοῦ πενθεροῦ’ and ‘ἐν τοῦ γαμβροῦ’ indicate a ‘connexion by marriage’, which could mean that the ritual was performed in the presence of a father-in-law, brother-in-law, or husband of a sister etc.

¹⁹⁷ Callimachus, *Aetia* III, 75. (Loeb translation)

¹⁹⁸ Zenobius, *Epitome collectionum Lucilli Tarrhaei et Didymi* III, 98.

¹⁹⁹ Author’s translation.

Besides these written sources, Athenian pottery also give us a glimpse of parts of these rituals and indicates their performance during the classical period in Attica. These objects often likely show a *pais amphithales* during wedding preparations (with a bride), or during the wedding (with both the bride and groom). On a *lekythos*, Joan Reilly identifies a seated woman who is handed a baby, as a bride reaching out her arms to receive the *pais amphithales* (fig. 2).²⁰⁰ A *lebes gamikos* shows a similar scene, portraying a seated bride holding a baby boy (fig. 3). A heavily damaged *loutrophoros* depicts both the bride and groom with a *pais amphithales*. Here, a bride and groom are sitting across from each other, while a *pais amphithales* - looking at the bride - stands between them (fig. 4). Besides these classical examples, there is some evidence that the *pais amphithales* also played a role in weddings during earlier times. For example, according to Mark Golden, an archaic *Lekythos* depicts a *pais amphithales* while riding with the bridal couple in a wedding procession (fig. 5).

Overall, these sources indicate that the *pais amphithales* was likely present during some wedding preparations and the wedding itself. It is, however, still unclear what *exactly* these rituals involving a *pais amphithales* - or multiple children of this kind – entailed. What we do know is that the bride and or groom slept or layed with the child, or that the bride held the child in her lap. In addition, the *pais amphithales* was present at the wedding, likely playing an active role. Moreover, by performing these rituals the Athenians presumably hoped the child brought one family's good fortune, of having a healthy child with living parents, to strengthen the newly created family's luck of having a fruitful marriage themselves.²⁰¹

Let us now move on to the wedding night. On this night a ritual, involving sympathetic magic, was performed to help the bride conceive. This ritual pertained to the loosening of a woman's girdle (*zonē*), often in association with Artemis *lysizonos* ('girdle-loosener') or Eileithyia *Lysizonos*, who, according to Helen King, played an important part in this ritual:

The epithet *Lysizonos* evokes the presence of Artemis (...). She releases the blood (...) at the transitions of defloration and parturition, where she 'releases' the *parthenos* to cross the threshold of bleeding into a fuller expression of the status of *gyne*.²⁰²

The girdle did not just play an important role during the wedding night, but also in the earlier stages of transition in a girl's life. Girls wore girdles during puberty, which they dedicated before they got married as part of the wedding preparations. During the wedding night they wore a 'special girdle', which was tied with a ritual knot and played an important role in a fertility ritual. The groom untied this girdle before he and his new wife spent the night together ('Theocritus who loosed my maiden zone, untouched as yet'),²⁰³ in order to - through sympathetic magic - open the womb and allow the male seed to properly enter the woman's womb.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ Reilly (1989) 427.

²⁰¹ Rühfel (1990) 107-114.

²⁰² King (2008) 121.

²⁰³ Θεόκριτος, ὁ πρὶν ἄθικτα ἡμετέρας λύσας ἄμματα παρθενίης.: *Greek Anthology*, VII 164. (Loeb translation)

²⁰⁴ *Greek Anthology*, VII 164, 324; Euripides, *Alcestis*, 177; King (2008) 120-121.

After this, or after childbirth, this girdle was dedicated to Artemis or Eileithyia,²⁰⁵ a ritual which is likely depicted on pottery from Attica (fig. 6).²⁰⁶

Besides fertility rituals during the marital process, Greek women could also try to enhance their fertility long after their wedding. Most of the above-mentioned rituals and practices could also be used later in life. Again, natural elements played an important role. Sacred water, for example, might be used in fertility rituals when a woman was trying to conceive for a second, third etc. time, by bathing in it, or drinking from it.²⁰⁷ In addition, objects dipped in sacred water were possibly worked into an amulet, as amulets could be made out of all sorts of materials (see below).

A fertility ritual that probably does not date back to ancient times but is very interesting, since it involved a natural component (in this case, a rock), is an early modern Athenian ritual on the Hill of the Nymphs. Here, women who desired fertility slid down a smooth rock near the Church of Agia Marina.²⁰⁸ The saint Agia Marina is identified, partially like the Nymphs, as a patron of fertility, childbirth, and the health of children. Combined with its location, this has led many scholars, including Baur and Susan Wise, to argue that this ritual derives from a similar ancient practice in honour of the Nymphs.²⁰⁹ Gerald Lalonde, however, has studied this practice excessively and argues convincingly that it is implausible that this practice is a continuation of an ancient practice, considering the lack of evidence thereof. On the other hand, he does mention that rituals like this are generally not unthinkable for classical Athens.²¹⁰ Besides rocks, stones were expectedly also used in fertility rituals. Many smooth stones have been found at different sanctuaries related to fertility and childbirth, amongst which the sanctuary of Eros and Aphrodite on the northern slope of the Athenian Acropolis.²¹¹ In addition, although inscribed gems were likely not used as amulets before the Hellenistic period, it is probable that during the classical period plain un-inscribed gems - especially Haematite - were worn as amulets and ground into drinks, because of their inherent powers believed to help with gynaecology related issues and wishes.²¹²

Pregnancy and childbirth rituals

During pregnancy and childbirth, a woman was considered highly vulnerable since malicious beings (both human and supernatural),²¹³ angry or jealous deities, and medical complications

²⁰⁵ *Greek Anthology*, VI 59, 200, 202, 272.

²⁰⁶ Oakley and Sinos (2002) 14, 56 fig. 9; Dillon (2002) 216; See also: *Greek Anthology*, VI 272.

²⁰⁷ Wise (2005) 74; Rituals involving sacred water and visitations to sacred springs were not just for women seeking fertility, but also during a pregnancy were of great importance. Women would likely access the powers of the water in similar ways as during the fertility rituals. In this case they, however, hoped it would help to bring a pregnancy to a successful end and ease childbirth. Wise (2007) 74-75.

²⁰⁸ Baur (1902) 35 note 47.

²⁰⁹ For an overview of this debate see: Lalonde (2005).

²¹⁰ Lalonde (2005) 114.

²¹¹ Broneer (1933) 342-347.

²¹² Faraone (2011) 56.

²¹³ An example of a mortal being is a jealous woman living close to the pregnant woman. Examples of supernatural beings are evil spirits (possibly a woman who died in childbirth) and daemons.

could all nullify the pregnancy or complicate birth.²¹⁴ Meanwhile, she was faced with the fears of childbirth itself (e.g. fear of pain or complications). In short, she could use all the help available to carry her baby full term and have a prosperous birth. Certain rituals and practices - often carried out in sacred places and/or involving items considered to hold magic or sacred powers - were used to keep mother and child safe during these periods of vulnerability and to ease childbirth.

During pregnancy, sacrifices and dedications were made to the gods. There is some evidence that pregnant women were not allowed to participate in certain cults (e.g. the cult of the Despoina at Lykosoura),²¹⁵ and that it was forbidden for them to visit certain places (e.g. the hill where Zeus was born in Arkadia).²¹⁶ However, this does not seem to apply to all cults and sanctuaries, especially not in Attica. In Attica, it seems that women were actually expected to go to sanctuaries and make offerings to gods like Artemis, Demeter, and Eileithyia, as well as to other fertility and childbirth deities.²¹⁷ Aristotle, for example, even writes that the former should be taken up as a law:

χρὴ δὲ καὶ τὰς ἐγκύους ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῶν σωμάτων, μὴ ῥαθυμούσας μηδ' ἀραιᾶ τροφῆ
χρωμέννας· τοῦτο δὲ ῥάδιον τῷ νομοθέτῃ ποιῆσαι προστάξαντι καθ' ἡμέραν τινὰ
ποιεῖσθαι πορείαν πρὸς θεῶν ἀποθεραπείαν τῶν εἰληχότω τὴν περὶ τῆς γενέσεως τιμὴν.

‘And pregnant women also must take care of their bodies, not avoiding exercise nor adopting a low diet; this it is easy for the lawgiver to secure by ordering them to make a journey daily for the due worship of the deities whose office is the control of childbirth.’²¹⁸

Although Aristotle is presenting his ideal *polis* - in which he focusses on the importance of exercise for pregnant women - this text does imply that pregnant women generally visited sanctuaries. This is underscored by a multitude of other written sources. Some, for example, indicate that women were prohibited to give birth within a sanctuary, because giving birth causes pollution.²¹⁹ The existence of such laws in itself underwrites that pregnant women did surely visit sanctuaries.²²⁰ Within this context, it is uncertain whether it was mandatory for pregnant Attic women to sacrifice before giving birth. In Cyrene, a late fourth century BC law indicates that it was compulsory to sacrifice to Artemis before giving birth,²²¹ but there is no evidence that this was a requirement in Attica as well. However, it does seem likely that most women, or rather one of their family members,²²² made a sacrifice before or shortly after a birth.

²¹⁴ See for example this late (first/second century AD) example of a woman who curses another woman to become barren: Stroud (2013) nos. 125/126.

²¹⁵ *LSCG* 68.11–13 (third or second century BC)

²¹⁶ Callimachus, *Hymns to Zeus*, 11–13.

²¹⁷ Dillon (2002) 250.

²¹⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1335b 12–16. (Loeb translation)

²¹⁹ *IG* II² 1035.10–11; *IG* IV² 1.121; See also: Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1080.

²²⁰ Dillon (2002) 252–253.

²²¹ *SEG* IX 72 A 15–20; Parker (1983) 345.

²²² See for example: Euripides, *Electra*, 625–629.

Moreover, it is plausible that mothers (to be) wore amulets during a pregnancy to deter danger. Unfortunately, there are no concrete classical examples of such amulets, but those dated to the Hellenistic and Roman times could indicate what kind of objects were used as amulets during the classical period. One interesting example includes amulets that have a key and womb inscribed on them.²²³ Aubert writes the following about keys in a gynaecological context:

‘The key serves to open the womb to allow conception and delivery, and to lock it to avoid efflux of semen, menorrhagia, menstruation, miscarriage, and wandering of the womb.’²²⁴

In this context of sympathetic magic, the key was also used symbolically to keep the baby ‘locked’ within the uterus to prevent a premature birth. In Athens and Attica keys are listed amongst dedications (on treasury lists of the classical period) to multiple gods (e.g. Athena and Asklepios), making these amulet inscriptions particularly interesting.²²⁵ Although not all these keys were dedicated for reproductive reasons, some possibly were. Namely, according to Festus (second century AD), Roman women dedicated keys to the gods in the hope of a prosperous birth.²²⁶ This was possibly also the case in classical Greece. I believe it is probable that, besides the previously mentioned non-inscribed gems, women also wore keys as amulets during pregnancies to lock the baby inside the womb and prevent a miscarriage and premature birth. These keys were then possibly dedicated after the woman gave birth.

In childbirth rituals and practices, sympathetic magic thus played an important role, being necessary to open the womb and let the baby out. The amulet prescribed by the Hippocratic corpus to accelerate birth (mentioned in the introduction of this chapter), is one of the few existing examples of an amulet from the classical period, but is another good example of the workings of sympathetic magic:

Ὠκυτόκιον τοῦ σικίου τοῦ ἀγρίου, ὅστις ἂν ᾗ λευκός, τὸν καρπὸν ἐμπλάσας κηρῷ, εἶτα εἰρίῳ ἐνελίξας φοινικέῳ, περιάψον περὶ τὴν ὀσφῦν.

‘An agent to accelerate birth: take fruit of the wild cucumber [squirting cucumber: *Ecballium elaterium*]²²⁷ that has already turned white, plaster it with wax, wrap this in a piece of deep red wool, and fasten it around the patient’s loin.’²²⁸

²²³ Aubert (1989) 443.

²²⁴ Ibidem, 446.

²²⁵ For examples that might have been dedicated because of reproduction related issues. Aleshire (1989) to Athena see: *IG II² 1414.44*, 47; For Asklepios see for example: *IG II² 1533.27*.

²²⁶ Lindsay 49.

²²⁷ Potter translates τοῦ σικίου τοῦ ἀγρίου here as wild cucumber, but throughout the rest of the book he translates it as squirting cucumber ([Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 78.13) and also in other translation of the Hippocratic corpus the translation squirting cucumber is used. See for example: [Hippocrates], *Places in Man*, 28, 46; [Hippocrates], *Internal Affections*, 26; [Hippocrates], *Nature of Women*, 95.

²²⁸ [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 77.4. (Loeb translation)

According to Hanson, the red colour of the wool was supposed to draw out the woman's blood because of their affiliation.²²⁹ Additionally, the choice of wool as a material for this amulet can be attributed to the absorbent qualities of wool, while the squirting cucumber also has perfect qualities for its use in an amulet to accelerate birth. The squirting cucumber, namely, was believed to expulse things (in this case, the baby) from the uterus. Although this amulet was likely remotely different in use (not necessarily in material) from a fertility or pregnancy amulet,²³⁰ it is a good example of the composition of an amulet out of multiple materials and ingredients working towards one goal.

Sympathetic magic was also believed to be able to - similarly to how a key could symbolically open and lock the uterus - delay or prevent a birth (e.g. by sitting with crossed legs and interlocked fingers).²³¹ Therefore, a comparable ritual to the loosening of the girdle on the wedding night took place during childbirth, as the parturient woman undid herself of all ties and knots:

ἔνθα γὰρ Εἰλείθειαν ἐβώσατο λυσίζωνον Ἀντιγόνας θυγάτηρ βεβαρημένα ὠδίνεσσιν· ἧ δέ οἱ εὐμενέοισα παρίστατο, καὶ δ' ἄρα πάντων νωδυνίαν κατέχευε μελῶν· ὃ δὲ πατρὶ εἰοικώς παῖς ἀγαπητὸς ἔγεντο.

'It was there that the daughter of Antigone, oppressed by the pains of labor, called on Eileithyia, the looser of girdles; and she obligingly stood beside her and poured down painlessness on all her limbs; and he was born, the image of his father, a child to delight his parents.'²³²

In this fragment, the goddess Eileithyia *Lysizonos* or Artemis *Lysizonos* magically aided in opening the womb and easing childbirth. The woman and possibly also the people who attended the birth, undid all knots on themselves and in the room to allow for the birth to be quick and less painful. The usage of this practice during the classical period in Attica is evident in the only visual representation we have of childbirth: grave reliefs of women who died while giving birth (fig. 7). Most of these reliefs depict the deceased women with their hair unbound and hanging loose around their faces, while being partially nude with their clothes hanging loose, having undone the girdle.²³³

Rituals after childbirth

Post-partum rituals were mostly aimed at, besides offering gratitude to the gods, the (re-)integration of mother and child into society and purifying the household. The latter was a necessary

²²⁹ Hanson (2004) 276-277.

²³⁰ Unlike the other amulets, this amulet was likely only worn for a short amount of time during the childbirth process.

²³¹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 9.292-324.

²³² Theocritus, *Idyll*, 17. 60-64. (Loeb translation); See also: Pindar, *Olympian Odes*, 6.39-44; and Soranus, *Gynecology* II, 6. Who does not connect this practice to a god but still advises it in order to enhance the woman's breathing and to relieve stress, and he writes that the woman should even undo her hair.

²³³ For other examples see: Demand (1994) pl. 1-11.

goal because birth was considered to cause pollution, involving so much blood.²³⁴ The following section discusses the rituals related to shaping social relationships and identities for the baby, and though the limited scope of this thesis prevents me from fully addressing the issue of pollution, I will briefly introduce the subject and discuss related rituals. This is important, because many post-childbirth rituals seem to combine these two aspects of purification and acceptance/transition.

An important source concerning ancient perspectives on pollution from childbirth is the previously mentioned ‘Cyrene cathartic law’:

[Ἄ λ]εχῶνι ὄροφομ μινεῖ· τὸν μ [ἐν ὑπόροφον μινεῖ,
τὸν | δ’ ἐξόροφον οὐ μινεῖ, αἶ κα μὴ ὑπένθη. Ὁ δ’ ἄ[νθρ|ω]-
πος, ὅ κα ἐνδοι ἦι, α<ὐ>τὸς μὲν μινεῖς τέντα[ι ἀμ|έρα]ς τρις,
ἄλλον δὲ οὐ μινεῖ, οὐδὲ ὅπυῖ κα ἐνθ[ηι ο]ἴτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος.

‘The woman in childbed shall pollute the house. \gap\ she shall not pollute [the person who is outside the house(?)], unless he comes in. Any person who is inside shall be polluted for three days, but shall not pollute anyone else, not wherever this person goes.’²³⁵

This is the only available source concerning childbirth pollution during the classical period. It shows that, after childbirth, the mother herself was considered as highly polluted. The rituals performed suggest that both mother and child were confined to the house for a period of at least five to ten days.²³⁶ This confinement was likely not solely for reasons related to pollution, but also to protect mother and child during a time of physical vulnerability directly after childbirth.²³⁷ According to Wise, available medical texts indicate a longer period (ca. thirty to forty days) of seclusion for mother and child, from which she infers that after the first ten days a period of lesser impurity and isolation followed.²³⁸ The texts by Hippocrates and Aristotle she refers to discuss the period of lochia discharge after childbirth, which continues for four to six weeks. The authors of these works warn their readers to be aware of this period, referring to possible complications that can endanger the mother. However, they do not mention impurity, confinement, or even seclusion. In addition, I agree with Parker, who convincingly argues that it is unlikely that new mothers in classical Greece were excluded from communal life for a period of forty days. Namely, the only real evidence for a long period of exclusion dates from the third century AD - there is no trace of this in earlier Greek sources.²³⁹

Regarding purification rituals, it is possible that dogs were sacrificed. Plutarch (ca. AD 46 - AD 120) mentions - in his answer to the question why a dog is sacrificed to Geneta Mana

²³⁴ Parker (1983); Dillon (2002) 252.

²³⁵ SEG IX 72 A 16-20. (Translation Parker (1983) 336). See also SEG IX 72 B 24-27.

²³⁶ Parker (1983) 65.

²³⁷ Ibidem, 65.

²³⁸ Wise (2007) 90-93. Wise refers to the following texts: [Hippocrates], *Nature of the Child*, 18; Aristotle, *History of Animals*. 9.3 583a 30-32.

²³⁹ [Hippocrates], *Nature of the Child*, 7; [Hippocrates], *Diseases of Women I*, 72; Aristotle, *History of Animals*, 9.3 583a 30-32; Censorinus, *De Die Natali*, 11.7. Parker (1983) 55 n. 87.

- that the Greeks sacrificed dogs to Hekate. Plutarch writes that Geneta Mana is a goddess of birth and seems to suggest that dogs were also sacrificed to Hekate in relation to births.²⁴⁰ A ritual like this is highly plausible since dogs were believed to have purifying properties. Dogs were, just like Hekate, associated with significant transition points in a human's life (especially birth and death). They were both likely used in purifying rituals during births and deaths, and as a means of protection against evil spirits at hazardous places like crossroads, thresholds, and at cemeteries, where the dead could reach the living.²⁴¹ Plutarch writes the following about a purification ritual involving dogs:

‘τῷ δὲ κυνὶ πάντες ὡς ἔπος εἶπεῖν Ἕλληνας ἐχρῶντο καὶ χρῶνται γε μέχρι νῦν ἔνιοι σφαγίῳ πρὸς τοὺς καθαρμούς· καὶ τῇ Ἑκάτῃ σκυλάκια μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων καθαρσίων ἐκφέρουσι καὶ περιμάττουσι σκυλακίοις τοὺς ἀγνισμοῦ δεομένους, περισκυλακισμὸν τὸ τοιοῦτον γένος τοῦ καθαρμοῦ καλοῦντες.’

‘Nearly all the Greeks used a dog as the sacrificial victim for ceremonies of purification; and some, at least, make use of it even to this day. They bring forth for Hecatê puppies along with the other materials for purification, and rub round about with puppies such persons as are in need of cleansing, and this kind of purification they call *periskylakismos* (“puppification”)’²⁴²

It is likely that the ancient Greeks thought that rubbing a dead dog (or puppy) on their body absorbed and eliminated all the harmful and polluting substances birth brought upon them. After this ritual the dog(s) were probably sacrificed to Hekate, who played an important role in these purification rituals after birth. Sacrificing a dog was possibly a way to ask for her protection and help during these hazardous times.²⁴³

Another means of purification for mother and child after the birth was a ritual bath in (sacred) water. We find references to the cleaning of the child and mother in ancient texts concerning the birthing myths of the gods. For example, Callimachus recorded the following about the birth of Zeus:

‘ἔνθα σ’ ἐπεὶ μήτηρ μεγάλων ἀπεθήκατο κόλπων 15αὐτίκα δίζητο ῥόον ὕδατος, ᾧ κε τόκοιο λύματα χυτλώσαιο, τεὸν δ’ ἐνὶ χρωῶτα λοέσσαι.’

‘There when thy mother had laid thee down from her mighty lap, straightway she sought a stream of water, wherewith she might purge her of the soilure of birth and wash thy body therein.’²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, 52.

²⁴¹ Strelan (2003) 150-151; Johnston (1991) 220-221.

²⁴² Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, 68. (Loeb translation). See also Theophrastus, *Characters*, 16.13.

²⁴³ Strelan (2003) 150-151; Johnston (1991) 221-222.

²⁴⁴ Callimachus, *Hymns to Zeus*, 14-16. (Loeb translation); For other examples see: *Homeric Hymns To Apollo*, 120-121; Pausanias, 8.28.2 and 8.41.2-3.

For mortals this bath did not suffice to wash away all the pollution childbirth caused, but it did work towards this goal. Furthermore, there is evidence that this ritual was not solely performed for purification reasons, since it was likely - as Wise argues convincingly - also related to the mothers' acceptance of her baby. Wise points to Euripides' *Ion*, in which Creusa describes how she abandons her illegitimate son. Here Creusa mentions how she did not wash her baby. Referring to this, Wise argues that by denying her baby food and the 'symbol of acceptance that the bath represents', Creusa rejects her son.²⁴⁵

When a mother did accept her baby, this did not automatically mean that the child would be accepted into the *oikos*. Namely, the child also had to be accepted by its *kyrios* (I will further elaborate upon what happened to children that were not accepted later on in this chapter). In Athens, another ritual was likely performed to initiate the new child into the *oikos* and purify the household: the *amphidromia*.²⁴⁶ The evidence for this ritual and the study of sources by modern-day scholars, however, yield more questions than answers.²⁴⁷ A classical source mentioning this ritual is Plato's *Theaetetus*. Here, Socrates, in his role as a midwife of knowledge, refers to Theaetetus' idea as a new-born child in need of an *amphidromia*:

μετὰ δὲ τὸν τόκον τὰ ἀμφιδρόμια αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐν κύκλῳ περιθρεκτέον τῷ λόγῳ, σκοπομένους μὴ λάθῃ ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἄξιον ὄν τροφῆς τὸ γινόμενον, ἀλλὰ ἀνεμιαῖόν τε καὶ ψεῦδος.

'And now that it is born, we must in very truth perform the rite of running round [*ta amphidromia*] with it in a circle—the circle of our argument—and see whether it may not turn out to be after all not worth rearing, but only a wind-egg, an imposture.'²⁴⁸

Besides this source, numerous other sources - amongst which many later lexicographical entries - also discuss (parts of) this ceremony, but they often seem to contradict each other. Richard Hamilton argues that, post-childbirth, multiple rituals were performed during the *amphidromia*, and that the celebrations must have lasted several days. He writes that the *amphidromia* likely began with a private ritual, when, initially, just the women (possibly midwives, female friends of the family, and female relatives) examined the child by running around with it or by laying it on the ground. This ritual was followed by a sacrifice to the gods, the preparations of a feast, and the feast itself. The child, then, received his/her name and was introduced to - or accepted by - the larger group of kin.²⁴⁹ From the *Suda* we learn that, during the *amphidromia*, kin sent traditional gifts (like octopuses and cuttlefish) to the family where a baby was born, which were, according to Ehippus, prepared for and eaten at the feast.²⁵⁰ Hesychius writes that, most likely, at this time the birth of the baby was announced publicly by decorating the entrance of the house

²⁴⁵ Euripides, *Ion*, 1489-1496; Wise (2007) 89-90.

²⁴⁶ Some scholars also link this festival to purification rites. See for example: Golden (1990) 23-24; Parker (1983) 51; Wise (2007) 95.

²⁴⁷ See for an old but complete overview of this debate: Hamilton (1984) 243-251.

²⁴⁸ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 160e-161a. (Loeb translation)

²⁴⁹ Hamilton (1984) 252-257.

²⁵⁰ Athenaeus. *The Learned Banqueters*, 9.370d (citing Ehippus 3.4); *Suda* s.v. ἀμφιδρόμια.

with an olive wreath for a boy, or a wreath with (or made of) wool for a girl.²⁵¹ Although Hamilton's research is thorough, the ambiguity of the sources still allows for different interpretations of these ritual practices. This raises the question whether the naming ceremony - and, particularly, the *dekate* (held on the tenth day after birth) - was part of the *amphidromia*. Golden, for example, agrees with Hamilton that, for most girls and children of poorer families, a naming ceremony took place during the *amphidromia*. However, he argues that the *dekate* was a separate naming ceremony - including an extravagant feast - only held by rich people and/or for Athenian (citizen) boys (and possibly girls).²⁵² Moreover, these same citizen children would later be introduced to the *genos* and *phratry*.²⁵³ However, this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis, especially considering that this introduction did most likely not occur shortly after the child was born, and that this ritual was more a concern of the *polis* than the mother.²⁵⁴

Besides these rituals allowing the new-born to be accepted by its kin and into the *oikos*, there is (relatively new) evidence of specific rituals to introduce the baby to the gods.²⁵⁵ Namely, in 1979, a votive relief was found in Echinus (modern Achinos), depicting a scene where a child is presented to a goddess while a sacrifice is being made (fig. 9). Dillon discusses this relief and argues the following:

‘While the publishers of the relief, as well as van Straten and Cole, interpret the woman holding the baby as the mother, it is this largest human figure [on the left], respectably veiled, who is the mother, with the two smaller female figures being her servants. This taller figure on the left is usually identified as a woman priest. But this relief has been a costly production, and the most prominent woman in it is also the one who is giving thanks (...). The woman on the far left is clearly the one who is dedicating the relief, and does so in thanks for her child. The uniqueness of such a scene could mean that it does not indicate a custom, even on a local scale, to dedicate such reliefs, but could well be a very individual expression of the mother's; the size of the relief points to some expense.’²⁵⁶

Dillon also emphasizes that this particular child is presented to Artemis, a deity both associated with childbirth and the protection of children.²⁵⁷ Although its discovery far from Attica, this relief provides significant information on the overall classical practice of introducing a child to the gods by bringing it to the temple, making a sacrifice, and possibly offering a votive at the same time. It is plausible that similar practices were conducted in Attica, since the gods were

²⁵¹ Hesychius s.v. στέφανον ἐκφέρειν.

²⁵² Golden (1986) 252-256.

²⁵³ Lambert (1998) 70.

²⁵⁴ We are not certain at what age this ritual, or these rituals occurred. Golden argues that a child of wealthy citizens was introduced to the *genos* during the first year after his/her birth.

For the introduction to the *phratry* there are, however, opposing notions (some say soon after birth, others later in life) in the sources. Golden (1990) 25-26, 190 n. 12.

²⁵⁵ Although a relief, that was found at Echelidai, might entail a similar practice with an older child. Parker (2005) 428-431. In this relief the child is, although small, already standing on its own, which I think indicates that it is not a new-born (fig. 8).

²⁵⁶ Dillon (2002) 231-232.

²⁵⁷ Dillon (2002) 232.

of great importance in the lives of the ancient Greeks. According to Wise, there were two important reasons for a new-born to be introduced to the gods. First, a child is very delicate, and infancy is a dangerous period. By introducing a child to the gods, the parents placed the child in the care of, and under the protection of these gods. Second, this ritual introduced - just like the acceptance of the child into the *oikos* and later the introduction of the child to the *genos* and *phratry* - the child to the gods as a legitimate family member. This is important considering children's expected participation in religious ceremonies from a young age.²⁵⁸

Rituals after death

The above-mentioned rituals and practices were performed when mother and child survived childbirth and the subsequent precarious period. However, death rates were high among mothers and children, making many households likely to perform other rituals: those following death. I have not found any indications - except for the dedication of the clothes of a deceased woman to Artemis and or Iphigeneia (which I will further discuss in chapter four) - that women who died in childbirth were ritually treated differently from women who died in another way. Since the discussion of general post-mortem rituals is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will solely focus on the rituals and practices performed when the baby or foetus died (or when the child was not accepted by the *oikos*). These rituals partially differ from those when older children and adults died. According to Maria Liston and Susan Rotroff, the issue of what happened to foetuses that died before birth and babies that died shortly after birth is clouded in mystery. They write that the ancient literary sources do not discuss the subject, and too few graves have been found to account for the high mortality rates.²⁵⁹ While their first observation is correct, their second inference can be partially explained by the fact that most infants (both those already accepted into the *oikos* and those who died prematurely) were cremated, instead of buried, when they died.²⁶⁰ Subsequently, there is hardly any evidence of what exactly happened to infants who were not accepted into the *oikos* and/or died prematurely. Fortunately, there is one source - although dating to a later period - that sheds some light on these questions: the findings in the 'Agora baby well.' This well, discovered in 1937 on the Athenian agora (ca. 40 meters north of the temple of Hephaestus), derives its name from the discovery of the unburned remains of 449 foetuses and infants. These remains are dated to the Hellenistic period (before ca. 150 BC). Whereas these remains and the associated pottery found make up the only evidence regarding this topic, they do indicate a continuity in burial practice from earlier periods, making them valuable source material.

The finds within the well baffled many scholars in the past century and incited speculations on their context.²⁶¹ Recently, however, the finds were extensively studied (both their

²⁵⁸ Wise (2007), 97-98.

²⁵⁹ Liston and Rotroff (2013) 62.

²⁶⁰ Young (1951) 133-134.

²⁶¹ Examples of theories that were produced in the past seventy years are: An undocumented famine or plague that hit the city, possibly during the siege of Sulla in 86 BCE (Angel 1945, 311). Another theory is that these children died of natural causes and were symbolically offered to Aphrodite Ourania, who had a sanctuary some 60 meters from the well. Shear (1939), 239; Osanna (1988-1989). See for counter arguments: Liston and Rotroff (2013) 69-70.

biological and archaeological components) by Liston and Rotroff, who discard most of the initial theories. Most importantly, they conclude that the human remains were deposited here over a longer period of time. Accordingly, it is likely that these fetuses and babies were placed here (some likely dumped others buried) as they were repudiated or died before they could be accepted into the *oikos*.²⁶² Interestingly, in the same layers as where the skeletal remains of the infants and fetuses were found, the excavators also found coarse pottery and the bones of over 150 dogs (both mature dogs and puppies).²⁶³ The pottery can be associated with the human remains. Several objects were probably used during childbirth or to carry the deceased, and subsequently thrown into the well because they were polluted.²⁶⁴ Others were possibly used to bury a fetus or infant in, as these same shapes were found in archaic and classical graves on the Kerameikos, as a container for a deceased infant.²⁶⁵ The dog remains can likely be seen as a much needed purification means, since these infants (who died untimely) were regarded as polluted by both their birth and their death. As argued, dogs were used in purification rituals after childbirth, but we also have cases where, during the classical period, dogs were buried with new-born children and a woman (early archaic period) who possibly died in childbirth.²⁶⁶ On the other hand, it is possible that these dogs were not solely sacrificed to Hekate in association with pollution, but rather as a means to keep the spirits of these untimely deceased from wandering and haunting the living.

In short, the ‘Agora baby well’ seems to indicate that some fetuses and babies that died untimely (and the children that were repudiated) were dumped or buried (depending on the context) within one place. This prompts the question why these deaths were dealt with differently from those of adults. One possibility is that infants, children, and especially fetuses, did not have a proper place within the community yet.²⁶⁷ Another explanation, also accounting for the burying of these deceased within the city walls (a practice we also see in other Greek communities),²⁶⁸ is that the death of a child or infants, and even more so that of a (underdeveloped) fetus²⁶⁹ was perhaps believed to cause less pollution than the death of and the body of an adult.²⁷⁰ This, however, does not answer the questions *why* these bodies were buried in this particularly central location of the Athenian agora and *by whom*. Did this place slowly grow into a burial site, after its use as a well during the classical period, due to the secretive deposit of death infants and fetuses by midwives here, as suggested by Liston and Rotroff?²⁷¹ Or was

²⁶² Liston and Rotroff (2013) 73-74, 76.

‘The bones correspond in size to skeletons ranging in age from twenty-six weeks in utero to four to six months post-term for the two older infants, with a clear peak at thirty-seven to thirty-eight weeks, or about the age of a full-term birth.’ Liston and Rotroff (2013) 69. This means most of them died before the fifth or tenth day after birth, which are the possible dates for the *amphidromia* where they were accepted into the *oikos*.

²⁶³ Liston and Rotroff (2013) 63-65.

²⁶⁴ Shapes like large bowls, kraters, *lekanai*, large cooking-pots, and mortars were possibly used during the birth to catch the afterbirth or for cleaning mother after the birth. Liston and Rotroff (2013) 66.

²⁶⁵ Liston and Rotroff (2013) 67.

²⁶⁶ For the new-borns see: *Kerameikos XIV* 60–61, 125. For the woman see: Smithson (1974) 334, 362.

²⁶⁷ Bremmer (1983) 96-99.

²⁶⁸ Parker (1983) 41.

²⁶⁹ See also *SEG IX 72 B 24-27*. (Translation Parker (1983) 346).

²⁷⁰ Marshall (2000) 9-10, 15.

²⁷¹ Liston and Rotroff argue that midwives were the ones who would dispose of the fetus, or dead or unwanted infant. Here they refer to Plato’s *Theaetetus* - where Socrates visualises himself as a midwife who might

it possibly just a convenient place for this purpose, specifically designated for this precise purpose (after its use as a well) by the authorities? Whereas these questions are unlikely to be definitively answered, we *can* further examine the question of who buried these bodies. I disagree with Liston and Rotroff, who attribute the main responsibility for the discard of unwanted and death infants and foetuses to midwives. Although some might have engaged in such activities, they cannot have been the only ones who did this. As argued in chapter two, midwives did not have a monopoly on helping women through a pregnancy and childbirth, and it was very unlikely that there always was a midwife present at a birth. In some cases, a medical professional, or another person present at the birth (a nurse, friend, slave etc.) might have fulfilled this horrible task. On the other hand, it seems that some people who deposited a body in this well were emotionally involved (possibly the mother or father itself, a grandmother etc.) as some of these infants were buried in a ‘normal’, possibly even loving way (e.g. in a vessel, and/or with grave goods). Such behaviour could hardly be expected from a midwife or other person with emotional distance.

examine Theaetetus idea, as if it were a new-born, and in case it is not right he will get rid of it - as being evidence for this. Liston and Rotroff (2013) 63, 76-77. I, however, think that this source is hardly enough evidence for the theory that solely midwives discarded the bodies of unwanted or death infants.

Chapter IV

The deities, their dedications, and their sanctuaries

In chapter one, I mentioned that reciprocity played a fundamental role in ancient Greek religion. The importance of reciprocity - relating to reproduction issues - can be detected in the abundant amount of votive offerings that were found together with the votive offerings mentioned in treasury lists.²⁷² Many women (and their family members) turned to a wide range of deities and asked them for help with conception, safekeeping during the pregnancy, the easing of childbirth, and for protection after delivery. They either offered a votive when asking for divine help, or made a vow to dedicate one after the deity had granted them the favour. These votive offerings are of great value as source material for this thesis, since they allow us to track the religious practice of women in classical Attica and discover *what* these women dedicated and to *which* deities they did so, with regard to their wish for healthy offspring.

There are often many uncertainties surrounding the question of why a dedication was made: unless the purpose of a dedication is explicitly stated in an inscription on the object itself, we can never be completely certain. However, the findspot, the type of votive (e.g. anatomical votives of vulvae and breasts²⁷³ or clothing), and - if known - the receiving deity can nonetheless indicate whether these dedications were made in relation to reproduction issues. Furthermore, these votive offerings can thus help us determine which deities and what sanctuaries and shrines in Attica concerned themselves with procreation. Therefore, this chapter focusses on the study of reproduction related votive offerings.

For this purpose, I created a dataset (Appendix I) of votive offerings which I believe were dedicated in relation to reproduction issues, by surveying the publications of votives. Moreover, the publications included in this survey are those on anatomical votives (reliefs of body parts, mostly found in healing sanctuaries),²⁷⁴ the female dedicatory inscriptions and their objects from *IG I3* and *IG II/III3* recently studied by Alma Kant,²⁷⁵ and the database of ancient childbirth votives created by Susan Wise. Additionally, I analysed the treasury lists of all the main

²⁷² These treasury lists had an administrative purpose, as they documented what was dedicated to the deity in a particular year or in a sanctuary at a certain time, and what particular votives were melted down at a certain time. Besides this, however, these documents presented the piety of the people, as they were placed in a prominent place where everyone could see them. They provide us with a more or less complete overview of the dedications to a deity in a particular year or an impression of what kind of dedications were present in a temple at a certain moment. See Aleshire (1989) 103-112; Cleland (2005) 8.

²⁷³ Genitals and breasts are overall perceived to be dedicated in association with fertility and childbirth. See for example: van Straten (1981); Aleshire (1989) 46; Forsén (1996) 133-144.

²⁷⁴ By Folkert van Straten (1981) and Björn Forsén (1996).

²⁷⁵ Kant (2018). I am ever so grateful to Alma Kant allowing me access to her dataset. Without her previous research this part of my enquiry would be impossible within the set timeframe.

sanctuaries in Athens that were possibly concerned with fertility and childbirth. These lists inform us about the dedications that were made out of perishable materials (e.g. clothes) and therefore did not survive the test of time, and about the objects that are simply lost. Likewise, they provide us with overviews of what types of votive offerings were dedicated to a certain deity. What I sought for in these treasury lists were mainly three particular types of anatomical votives: breasts, vulvae and *somata* (naked bodies, or rather limbless naked bodies). I searched for the former, since most scholars agree that these types of votives were dedicated in relation to reproduction issues.²⁷⁶ My decision to study the presence of *somata* within these lists, however, requires a short introduction. Joan Reilly argues that *somata* (σωμάτιον and σῶμα) are votive offerings dedicated by young girls to Asklepios in relation to fertility.²⁷⁷ I would like to test this theory further, and see if these *somata* were also dedicated to other fertility deities.

Now to get back to my dataset. To make this study feasible I only included votives dated between the early classical period and the early Hellenistic time, at the boundaries of 500 to 300 BC.²⁷⁸ Focussing on dedications, mentioning women as (co-)dedicator and dedications related to women and/or the reproduction process in another way. As an indicator for the dedicators gender, I studied the names - when known - inscribed on the votives and treasury lists. Moreover, my dataset does not exclusively contain votives dedicated by women, as I am also interested in the possible familial dedications. Besides the votives that were almost certainly dedicated for reproduction issues, I also studied overall categories of votives generally believed to be dedicated for the purpose of procreation (e.g. garments). I choose not to focus too much on personal and household objects, like jewellery, pottery (except for certain shapes), mirrors, and loom weights, since in most cases it is impossible to determine if they were dedicated in relation to reproduction issues.

To make this research graspable, I decided to create an overview of the Athenian fertility and childbirth deities and their sanctuaries, including the major²⁷⁹ fertility and childbirth sanctuaries of Attica (i.e. Brauron and the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Daphne, on the way from Athens to Eleusis). Most of the dedications in the dataset belonged to these Athenian deities, providing me with abundant source material. Additionally, Athens alone was, as explained in chapter one, overflowing with deities and shrines, making it challenging enough to locate all fertility and childbirth deities. Therefore, a complete overview of Attic deities and their sanctuaries is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is likely that the deities discussed in this chapter were similarly worshipped in the remainder of Attica.

²⁷⁶ Although these are not exclusively dedicated by women, overall, they are believed to be dedicated in relation to reproduction issues, also from a male perspective. Baur (1902) 62-66; Forsén (1996) 133-134.

²⁷⁷ Overall her article is convincing, but I think Reilly takes her statement a bit too far by arguing that: 'These figures were icons or emblems of the desired qualities of femininity. In dedicating her votive she probably learned the appropriate attitudes towards her body and sexuality. These figures taught her to desire the body that would enable her to fulfil the roles of bride, wife, and mother. The anatomical votive in particular, an image of the important parts, taught her the parts that really mattered.' Reilly (1997) 164-165.

²⁷⁸ When there is doubt whether a dedication was made at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century, I only included them if they are of exceptional value for this thesis. In these cases, I will mention their deviation.

²⁷⁹ Here I mean by the term major, those sanctuaries that were not solely local sanctuaries, but were of importance for the whole of Attica.

Before I can turn to the overview of fertility and childbirth deities and their sanctuaries, there is one final thing I must discuss, namely the combination of the formulae ‘having prayed’ and ‘dedicated on behalf of her children’ in votive inscriptions. The phrase ‘dedicated on behalf of her children’ is a wording we encounter quite often in dedicatory inscriptions belonging to female dedicants. In our dataset, there are a total of seven dedications of which the inscription includes this phrasing. Robert Parker argues that this formula likely indicates that the dedication was made for the welfare of the family, but I would argue that in some cases these votives were dedicated in relation to reproduction issues.²⁸⁰ Overall, a mother could dedicate on behalf of her children because of many reasons (an ailment for example). Having considered this however, I still believe that these particular votives were dedicated in relation to reproduction issues,²⁸¹ taking in to account the deities to which they were dedicated, the combination of the phrase ‘dedicated on behalf of her children’ with the formula ‘having prayed’, and the fact that many of these votives were dedicated on behalf of both mother and child(ren).²⁸² Here, the mother or both parents likely dedicated a thank offering on behalf of not just one child, but all their surviving children. Moreover, most (if not all) of these dedications were costly. This makes it likely that the mother, or both parents, saved money for many years to have one extravagant dedication made. With this dedication they could subsequently thank the deity who helped them conceive and protected mother and child(ren) through the dangerous time of pregnancy and childbirth, and possibly during the first years of the children’s lives (since many of these deities are also *kourotrophoi*).

The sanctuaries and shrines of the fertility and childbirth deities of Athens

In the following sections I give an overview of the childbirth and fertility deities and their sanctuaries in Athens. In doing so, I made a division in deities certainly worshipped in relation to fertility and childbirth, and those who were possibly worshipped for these reasons, based on archaeological finds, epigraphy, ancient written sources, and secondary literature. In both sections the deities (with their epithets) and their sanctuaries are listed in alphabetical order, not in order of importance.

Fertility and childbirth deities

Aphrodite

An important aspect of the worship of Aphrodite was unification. She united people in politics - the Attic demes for example - as well as in marriage and lust.²⁸³ Rachel Rosenzweig mentions that Aphrodite’s sanctuaries ‘lacked cult specificity’, which means that the Athenians did not

²⁸⁰ Parker (2005) 40.

²⁸¹ Asklepios received at least three of these inscribed dedications, of which two were on behalf of both mother and child. Demeter and Kore, Herakles, and Agdistis and Attis all received at least one of these dedications.

²⁸² One was also dedicated by both parents, on behalf of their children: *IG II/III3 717*.

²⁸³ Rosenzweig (2004) 4

have to visit a specific sanctuary of Aphrodite to seek out a particular aspect of the goddess. Therefore, Aphrodite could be worshipped at any of her sanctuaries in relation to fertility issues. In certain sanctuaries and under certain epithets, however, Aphrodite particularly concerned herself with fertility: these are the ones I will discuss here.

Aphrodite Ourania

According to Pausanias, the cult of Heavenly Aphrodite was established in Athens by Aegeus to appease the goddess whose wrath he thought caused his and his sisters' infertility. Pausanias writes that Aphrodite Ourania had a sanctuary on the Agora, not far from the temple of Hephaestus.²⁸⁴ Fertility was, however, likely not the sole focus of this sanctuary, as this was probably Aphrodite's main sanctuary of the city,²⁸⁵ but there are many indications that Aphrodite Ourania was also worshipped in relation to marriage and fertility. One of these indications is a fourth-century BC treasury-box, of which the inscription refers to the dedication of first-fruits (one drachma) as a *proteleia* to Aphrodite Ourania.²⁸⁶ These 'first-fruits' were likely dedicated as a request for the goddess blessing of a marriage and as a request for fertility.²⁸⁷ Another example of a possible fertility votive is a marble base, likely dedicated by a female metic from Kition (Cyprus).²⁸⁸ This dedication was found at Akte (Piraeus), where Aphrodite Ourania had, what Robert Garland called, a 'foreign shrine.'²⁸⁹ The fact that Aphrodite Ourania was worshipped as a fertility goddess and the fact that the inscription mentions the phrase 'having prayed', makes this a probable fertility votive.

Aphrodite *en Kepois* (in the Gardens)

In and around Athens there were at least two, but possibly three, sanctuaries where Aphrodite mainly concerned herself with fertility: the sanctuary she shared with her son Eros on the north slope of the Acropolis, her sanctuary at Daphne, and likely her sanctuary near the Ilissos. Rosenzweig writes that these were possibly duplicate sanctuaries and argues that the fact that Aphrodite had three sanctuaries concerned with fertility indicates that her role as a fertility goddess was significant and that she was sought after by many people. She also writes that it is possible that Aphrodite was the main goddess worshipped by the average Athenian seeking fertility, before Asklepios was introduced to the city in 420/19 BC.²⁹⁰

At the site of her sanctuary on the north slope, many dedications of genitals were found. Most of these are male,²⁹¹ but as I will argue below, these are likely fertility votives. Besides this, at least one relief of a vulva was found during the excavations led by Oscar Broneer in

²⁸⁴ Pausanias 1.14.6

²⁸⁵ Rosenzweig (2004) 62-63.

²⁸⁶ SEG 41.182.

²⁸⁷ Dillon (2002) 217.

²⁸⁸ *IG II/III*³ 1513.

²⁸⁹ In 333/2 BC the Kitians were granted a plot of land by the Athenian demos for establishing a sanctuary of Aphrodite Ourania. *IG II*² 337; Garland (1987) 147, 228-229.

²⁹⁰ Rosenzweig (2004) 43.

²⁹¹ These dedications are not dated so I did not include them in my dataset. See: van Straten (1981) 114-115. See also Broneer (1935) 118-119, 127-128. Broneer thinks that the smooth stones that were found at the sanctuary (mentioned in chapter three) were phallic symbols and relates them to fertility purposes.

1935.²⁹² Although this relief is not dated, the sanctuary dates back to the fifth century BC, and seems to have concerned itself with fertility from the beginning.²⁹³

Just like at the previously mentioned sanctuary, many fertility votives were found at the sanctuary of Aphrodite *en Kepois* at Daphne: here mostly in the shape of vulvae. Dated to the second half of the fourth century BC, are four reliefs depicting a vulva and dedicated by women.²⁹⁴ Two more have been found, but these have not been dated.²⁹⁵ Even more interesting is what possibly is a vulva attached to a marble dove, which was dedicated by a man (fig. 15).²⁹⁶ If this really is a depiction of a vulva, the man who dedicated it possibly did so on behalf of his wife, or as a request for a fertile wife. Besides these finds of anatomical votives, archaeologists also found a votive with an inscription stating the phrase ‘having prayed’, which given the context is possibly also a fertility votive.²⁹⁷

The exact location of the sanctuary of Aphrodite near the Piissos has not been discovered yet, but the sanctuary was mentioned by Pausanias:

ἐς δὲ τὸ χωρίον, ὃ Κήπους ὀνομάζουσι, καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης τὸν ναὸν οὐδεὶς λεγόμενός σφισὶν ἐστὶ λόγος· οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ ἐς τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, ἢ τοῦ ναοῦ πλησίον ἔστηκε. ταύτης γὰρ σχῆμα μὲν τετράγωνον κατὰ ταῦτά καὶ τοῖς Ἑρμαῖς, τὸ δὲ ἐπίγραμμα σημαίνει τὴν Οὐρανίαν Ἀφροδίτην τῶν καλουμένων Μοιρῶν εἶναι πρεσβυτάτην. τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμα τῆς Ἀφροδίτης τῆς ἐν Κήποις ἔργον ἐστὶν Ἀλκαμένους καὶ τῶν Ἀθήνησιν ἐν ὀλίγοις θῆεας ἄξιον.

Concerning the district called The Gardens, and the temple of Aphrodite, there is no story that is told by them, nor yet about the Aphrodite which stands near the temple. Now the shape of it is square, like that of the Hermae, and the inscription declares that the Heavenly Aphrodite is the oldest of those called Fates. But the statue of Aphrodite in the Gardens is the work of Alcamenes, and one of the most noteworthy things in Athens.²⁹⁸

Rosenzweig writes that this sanctuary was possibly interconnected with the sanctuary of Aphrodite on the north slope and the one at Daphne and that its main concern was likely fertility, but little is known about this sanctuary.²⁹⁹

Aphrodite HIPPOLYTOS

Little is known about this Aphrodite, but I briefly want to discuss the fact that she had a shrine on the south slope of the Acropolis and that her cult possibly derived from that of Aphrodite

²⁹² Broneer (1935) 140 no. 14 fig. 31; See also: van Straten (1981) 115 no. 4.2

²⁹³ Broneer (1935) 127-128; Rosenzweig (2004) 36-37.

²⁹⁴ *IG II/III*³ 1519; *IG II/III*³ 1520; *IG II/III*³ 1521; *IG II/III*³ 1532;

*IG II/III*³ 1520 and *IG II/III*³ 1521 both depict the lower half of the belly and the vulva.

²⁹⁵ Wise (2007) 265 1.13 and 1.14.

²⁹⁶ *IG II* 4577; van Straten thinks this is possibly a vulva. van Straten (1981) 121 no. 11.1.

²⁹⁷ *IG II/III*³ 1518

²⁹⁸ Pausanias 1.19.2.

²⁹⁹ Rosenzweig (2004) 31-35, 43.

Hippolytos' at Troezen, where she was likely worshipped in relation to fertility.³⁰⁰ In Athens, just as in Troezen and at Epidaurus, she was likely interconnected with Asklepios, who also had his sanctuary on the south slope of the Acropolis (see below).³⁰¹

Artemis

Although Artemis was a goddess worshiped for her role as protector of the *polis* - we often find her sanctuaries near the sea, where she protected her worshippers from the dangers of the wild sea and was on the lookout for enemies - she was often also associated with fertility and childbirth.³⁰² Especially when she was mentioned with epithets like *lochia*, *lysizonos* ('girdle-loosener'), *Eileithyia*, and *Hekate*, there is no doubt she concerned herself with childbirth. Matthew Dillon neatly summarises Artemis' connection to fertility and childbirth in the following way:

'Artemis will lose her coterie of young adherents, the virgins; they must placate her to ensure that when they lose their virginity in marriage, and particularly their status as *parthenoi* through childbirth, she will not take revenge on them. Girls were expected to marry, and this is underscored by their very invocation of this virgin goddess. They are expected to take husbands, they cannot remain like Artemis, but they can and must seek her assistance through this period of change in their lives. Artemis is in a very real sense without gender, her biological potential is eternally unfulfilled, and she is invoked precisely to engender the virgins, to take them from their virgin status as asexual beings through to motherhood.'³⁰³

Here, Artemis was appeased with dedications as part of the *proteleia*, as discussed in chapter three, and asked for help in her role as protector of pregnant women and easer of childbirth pains. In Athens she was worshipped at the following sanctuaries, under the following epithets.

Artemis Brauronia (and Iphigeneia)

Artemis Brauronia had an important sanctuary on the east coast of Attica at Brauron and a smaller sanctuary, connected to the one at Brauron, on the Acropolis at Athens. The excavations at the archaeological site of Brauron started in 1948 led by John Papadimitriou and continued until 1963 when he passed away. The finds were never fully published, which makes a proper study of the sanctuary challenging and means we must approach the material with great care. For both the sanctuary at Brauron and the one on the Acropolis we have many finds that show that Artemis Brauronia concerned herself with, amongst other things, fertility and childbirth. Besides (inscribed) votives, archaeologists have also found the treasury lists of Artemis

³⁰⁰ On cult at Troezen see: Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 1423-1439; Pausanias mentions that girls dedicated locks of hair to Aphrodite Hippolytos at Troezen it is unknown if this was also the case for Athens. Pausanias 2.32.1.

³⁰¹ In Troezen the Asklepieion was located within the precinct of Aphrodite Hippolytos and at both Epidaurus and Aegina a relief was found depicting Asklepios and Aphrodite Hippolytos together. Rosenzweig (2004) 85-86.

³⁰² Cole (2004) 184-185.

³⁰³ Dillon (2002) 235.

Brauronia on the Acropolis.³⁰⁴ These are identical to the fragments of treasury lists found at Brauron, and can therefore be used as source material for the study of the sanctuary at Brauron.³⁰⁵ The sanctuary at Brauron and the one on the Acropolis were strictly interconnected, and it is likely that during the Peloponnesian war some of the cult activities moved from Brauron to the Acropolis, because the Athenians were separated from their hinterlands for long periods of time. Other indications we have for the fact that the two sanctuaries were interconnected, are that at a certain time during the war the treasures from the sanctuary at Brauron were moved to the Acropolis, and that it is likely that the Athenians expanded the Brauronia at Athens somewhere during the war.³⁰⁶

Let us now turn to the votive offerings. I will begin with the archaeological finds of Brauron and later discuss the treasury lists. Papadimitriou briefly discusses some of the finds he did at Brauron in an interim summary article:

On the hillside just below the north-west corner of the temple a spring issues from the rock and forms a pool. In this area we found during our last campaign [1962] literally thousands of objects associated with the private lives of women – bronze mirrors, rings, gems, scarabs, statuettes, vases [and] (...) perishable wooden objects.³⁰⁷

He dates all these objects to after 700 BC and before 480 BC: when the Persians destroyed the sanctuary at Brauron. What immediately struck me was the fact that the archaeologists found gems amongst the votives. Could it be that these were once worn as amulets and later dedicated to Artemis? Sadly, I can neither confirm nor deny this idea, simply because these findings are not published, and even if they were it would probably be impossible to determine what purpose they once held. In addition, for the other finds it is also impossible to determine with certainty why they were dedicated. The only indication we have suggesting that at least some of these were dedicated for fertility or childbirth purposes is the fact that they were found at this particular spot at Brauron: near the spring.³⁰⁸ As discussed in chapter three, water from sacred springs and rivers was associated with fertility and childbirth, therefore the find spot of these dedications possibly indicates a connection to fertility and childbirth rituals.

Besides these smaller objects, archaeologists discovered two inscribed votive reliefs dedicated by Athenian, probably citizen, women (fig. 10 and 11). Both reliefs have similar settings, as they portray families - including four children on each relief - sacrificing to Artemis. Kant argues that these reliefs were likely dedicated as a thank offering for Artemis' help with reproduction, as this was naturally of great importance to the woman in particular, but also to the

³⁰⁴ These treasury lists are exceptionally valuable for this thesis, because of the dedicated clothes they list (see below).

³⁰⁵ Susan Cole writes the following about the reason behind the setting up of Brauronia treasury lists at Athens: 'In Athens, the stoa provided a prominent space to display the stones inscribed with inventories of the dedications made at Brauron. Exhibited at the heart of the city, the inscriptions displayed Attic unity and made visible the political identification of the city with its outer territory.' Cole (2004) 196; See also Ekroth (2003) 59-60.

³⁰⁶ Cole (2004) 226.

³⁰⁷ Papadimitriou (1963) 113-114.

³⁰⁸ Water was an essential feature of the sanctuary at Brauron, since it played fundamental role in the rituals performed for Artemis in relation to fertility, childbirth and her role as kourotrophic deity. Cole (2004) 193.

oikos as a whole.³⁰⁹ Although I am not completely convinced of this being the reason of dedication for the second relief,³¹⁰ I definitely agree with Kant when it comes to the first relief.³¹¹ This relief is inscribed with the previously discussed formula ‘having prayed’, which I think strengthens the notion that this relief is a thank offering related to fertility and childbirth. In addition, there is another clue possibly indicating that this is a votive offering dedicated with this purpose: the depiction of a new-born infant. This baby, held by the second female figure from the left, is probably a new-born since it seemingly wears swaddling clothes, making the notion that this relief is a thank offering for reproduction purposes plausible.³¹²

In addition to these votive offerings which survived the test of time, there are many votives, which are now lost, mentioned on the treasury lists of the sanctuary.³¹³ I studied these treasury lists for the mentioning of particular objects possibly connected to fertility and childbirth - keys, and anatomical votives of genitals, breasts and *somata* - but I found none. These lists are, however, not complete, so this does not mean that Artemis Brauronia did not receive these kinds of votives at all, especially since near another shrine of Artemis in Athens (the shrine of Artemis Kalliste)³¹⁴ two vulvae and a relief with two breasts were found (see below).³¹⁵ Items mentioned on the treasury lists of which we are quite certain that at least some were dedicated in relation to reproduction issues are clothes. Although the *Greek Anthology* does not directly refer to Artemis Brauronia and is hard to date, it confirms this notion:

Ἄρτεμι, σοὶ τὰ πέδιλα Κιχησίου εἶσατο υἱός, καὶ πέπλων ὀλίγον πτύγμα Θεμιστοδίκη, οὐνεκά οἱ πρηεῖα λεχοῖ δισσὰς ὑπερέσχευ χειρας, ἄτερ τόξου, πότνια, νισσομένη. Ἄρτεμι, νηπίαχον δὲ καὶ εἰσέτι παῖδα Λέοντι νεῦσον ἰδεῖν κοῦρον γυῖ ἔπαεξόμενον.

‘ARTEMIS, the son of Cichesias dedicated the shoes to thee, and Themistodice the simple folds of her gown, because that coming in gentle guise without thy bow thou didst hold thy two hands over her in her labour. But Artemis, vouchsafe to see this baby boy of Leon’s grow great and strong.’³¹⁶

Here, Artemis’ childbirth and kourotrophic qualities are addressed, as a man and a woman thank Artemis for her help during childbirth and ask her to protect the child during his childhood.

In terms of clothing, there are some specific items I searched for in the treasury lists. First of all, girdles. As discussed in chapter three, girdles played a fundamental role in multiple fertility and childbirth rituals and were often dedicated to Artemis. The treasury lists mention three girdles, of which two were certainly dedicated by women, but only one entry explicitly states

³⁰⁹ Kant (2018) 43.

³¹⁰ *IG* II/III3 1087 (fig. 11).

³¹¹ *IG* II/III3 1086 (fig. 10).

³¹² On swaddling clothes see below.

³¹³ I took into account the areas of duplication and reiteration while studying these treasury lists.

³¹⁴ Kalliste is a different epithet of Artemis, which was likely also a form of the goddess concerned with reproduction (see below).

³¹⁵ The dedication of this type of anatomical votives to Artemis, possibly dates to after the classical period, since the relief depicting breasts dates to the third century BC and the vulvae could not be dated. van Straten (1981) 116 5.1-5.3.

³¹⁶ *Greek Anthology*, VI 271.

that it was a woman's girdle being dedicated.³¹⁷ The third mentioning of a girdle does not refer to a dedicant and can also have belonged to a child or a man.³¹⁸ Overall, however, it is likely that the two girdles with female dedicants were dedicated in association with fertility or childbirth. The second item I searched for in the lists are swaddling clothes, since the ancient Greeks seemingly swaddled their infants in special swaddling bands or *sparganon*.³¹⁹ These swaddling bands are, however, not mentioned on the treasury lists of Brauron, nor on any of the other treasury lists I studied.

When we focus on the overall garments being dedicated, we can say that, as discussed in chapter one, these were handmade and often costly items. Liza Cleland argues from the fact that there is only one mentioning of the word *kainon* 'new' in the lists, that overall the dedicated garments were used before they were dedicated and that they were not necessarily made for the goddess.³²⁰ Cecilie Brøns, however, points out that the mentioning of the word *kainon* does not necessarily imply that the garment was newly made, but was rather recently dedicated and that the other garments had been in the sanctuary for a longer period of time.³²¹

Another interesting issue of debate concerning these garments involves the heroine and first priestess of Artemis: Iphigenia. From a play by Euripides we have the following:

σὲ δ' ἄμφι σεμνάς, Ἰφιγένεια, λείμακας Βραυρωνίας δεῖ τῆδε κληδουχεῖν θεᾶ· οὗ καὶ τεθάψῃ κατανοῦσα, καὶ πέπλων ἀγαλμά σοι θήσουσιν εὐπῆγους ὑφάς, ἃς ἂν γυναιῖκες ἐν τόκοις ψυχορραγεῖς λίπωσ' ἐν οἴκοις.

And you, Iphigenia, in the holy meadows of Brauron must serve this goddess as her temple warder. When you die, you will lie buried here, and they will dedicate for your delight the finely woven garments which women who die in childbirth leave behind in their houses.³²²

This passage led I.D. Kontis to argue that there was a strict separation at the sanctuary of Brauron, in which Artemis looked after women in childbirth and received dedications (also garments) when women survived their pregnancies, and Iphigeneia received the garments of women who died in childbirth and functioned as the patroness of these deceased women.³²³ Emily Kearns, however, correctly points out that we cannot be certain about this separation.³²⁴ Moreover, although in some cases it seems possible to detect the garments that were dedicated on behalf of women who died in childbirth,³²⁵ the treasury lists do not explicitly state who the

³¹⁷ *IG II² 1514 15* (uncertain if woman's girdle). (Duplicated in *IG II² 1515 8*); *IG II² 1518 57-58* (woman's girdle). (Duplicated in *IG II² 1524 167*)

³¹⁸ *IG II² 1523 16*. (Duplicated in *IG II² 1524 188-189*).

³¹⁹ *TLG s.v. σπάργανον*; Plato, *Laws*, 7.789E; Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 16.3.

³²⁰ Cleland (2005) 95.

³²¹ Brøns (2015) 70.

³²² Euripides, *Iphigenia Among the Taurians*, 1462-1467.

³²³ Kontis (1967) 157-161; See also Cole (2004) 219.

³²⁴ Kearns (1989) 28.

³²⁵ The treasury lists mention multiple dedications of garments that are unfinished (sometimes including the wool that was used to produce the garment) Cleland (2005) 95. I agree with Cleland and Cole in their argument that

recipient of these particular garments was. In short, the suggested separation between the roles of Artemis and Iphigeneia is not unthinkable but cannot be proven. Since, however, Iphigeneia was mentioned in relation to Brauron and childbirth by Euripides and she had a shrine at Brauron where dedications have been found that are very similar to the ones found near the spring,³²⁶ it is likely that Iphigeneia was a deity who concerned herself with childbirth.

Artemis Kalliste

The epithet Kalliste in relation to Artemis and a sanctuary for this deity are mentioned by Pausanias:

Ἀθηναίοις δὲ καὶ ἔξω πόλεως ἐν τοῖς δήμοις καὶ κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς θεῶν ἐστὶν ἱερὰ καὶ ἡρώων καὶ ἀνδρῶν τάφοι· ἐγγυτάτω δὲ Ἀκαδημία, χωρίον ποτὲ ἀνδρὸς ἰδιώτου, γυμνάσιον δὲ ἐπ' ἐμοῦ. κατιούσι δ' ἐς αὐτὴν περίβολός ἐστιν Ἀρτέμιδος καὶ ξόανα Ἀρίστης καὶ Καλλίστης· ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ δοκῶ καὶ ὁμολογεῖ τὰ ἔπη τὰ Πάμφω, τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος εἰσὶν ἐπικλήσεις αὗται, λεγόμενον δὲ καὶ ἄλλον ἐς αὐτὰς λόγον εἰδῶς ὑπερβήσομαι.

‘Outside the city, too, in the parishes and on the roads, the Athenians have sanctuaries of the gods, and graves of heroes and of men. The nearest is the Academy, once the property of a private individual, but in my time a gymnasium. As you go down to it you come to a precinct of Artemis, and wooden images of Ariste (Best) and Calliste (Fairest). In my opinion, which is supported by the poems of Pamphos, these are surnames of Artemis.’³²⁷

Archaeological finds confirm the existence of this sanctuary and locate it near or on the Kerameikos.³²⁸ These finds, namely the previously mentioned vulvae and a relief with two breasts (mentioning Artemis Kalliste),³²⁹ convinced many scholars that Artemis Kalliste was worshipped in relation to fertility and childbirth.³³⁰ A relief from the Kerameikos, depicting Artemis and what seems to be a married couple (fig. 12),³³¹ is according to Pierre Roussel and Alexandre Philadelpheus a childbirth votive, since the anatomical votives were found nearby. Although I agree with these scholars and think that Artemis Kalliste was a childbirth and possibly fertility deity, we cannot be certain that Artemis Kalliste was already worshipped at this location in relation to reproduction issues during the classical period, since all the previously mentioned finds, except for the relief,³³² date to the third century BC.

these garments likely belonged to women who died in childbirth and were dedicated at Brauron by their family members. Cleland (2005) 95; Cole (2004) 220.

³²⁶ Papadimitriou (1963) 115.

³²⁷ Pausanias 1.29.2.

³²⁸ Hesychius also mentions a sanctuary for Artemis Kalliste on the Kerameikos. Hesychius s.v. καλλίστη

³²⁹ van Straten (1981) 116 5.1-5.3.

³³⁰ Philadelpheus (1927); Roussel (1927).

³³¹ This relief is engraved with the name of the dedicant: Ἰππόκλειᾶ. This is the name of a woman who was probably an Athenian. Philadelpheus (1927) 158 no. 1.

³³² The relief is dated to 320 BC. Vikela (2015) 92, 110.

Artemis Mounichia

Although one probably expects Artemis Mounichia to be more concerned with war and the protection of the *polis*, given the location of the sanctuary on the Mounichia hill at Piraeus, there are indications that Artemis Mounichia was also worshipped in relation to reproduction. Moreover, archaeologists found a terracotta figurine of a swaddled baby (fig. 14), which is a particularly interesting find, since very few of these have been found in Greece.³³³ Maureen Carrol, following Emma-Jayne Graham, proposed that a figurine like this was likely dedicated when a child survived his or her critical first months.³³⁴ Earlier already, based on this dedication and the possible dedication of garments mentioned on a treasury list,³³⁵ Lydia Palaiokrassa suggested that Artemis Mounichia likely concerned herself with reproduction.³³⁶

Asklepios (and other healing deities)

During the classical period, healing deities were widely represented in Athens. In the following section, I discuss the healing deities for which I found evidence that they concerned themselves with reproduction issues. These deities are Asklepios and Hygieia, the healing deity Amynos is listed under ‘possible fertility and childbirth deities.’³³⁷ In this case, I do begin with the most prominent deity: Asklepios.

Asklepios

During the second half of the fifth century BC the Athenians imported the cult of Asklepios to Athens from Epidaurus, where Asklepios had his main sanctuary.³³⁸ In Athens two sanctuaries were located: one in Piraeus and one on the south slope of the Acropolis.³³⁹ At these sites an abundant amount of anatomical votives (not solely reproduction related) were found, the dedication of which likely originated in Athens and Corinth, according to Jessica Hughes.³⁴⁰ Nicholas Rynearson convincingly argues that these votives show how the ancient Greeks saw their illness as a localised phenomenon.³⁴¹ If, for example, a person had bad eye sight, he or she often dedicated a votive of one or two eyes. Moreover, the focus lay on the body part believed to cause the illness. This is also what we find when it comes to votives dedicated to Asklepios in relation to reproduction issues. Here, the votives which were almost certainly dedicated for these reasons are representations of breasts, genitals (both male and female) and *somata*. Especially the treasury lists of the Asklepieion on the south slope of the Acropolis mention many of these types of votives (Appendix I and II).

³³³ Lee (2015) 97; Carrol (2018) 72.

³³⁴ Graham (2014) 40; Carrol (2018) 72.

³³⁵ SEG 39.163.

³³⁶ Palaiokrassa (1989).

³³⁷ It is possible that Amphiaraos was also worshipped in relation to reproduction issues in Attica, but I have not found any concrete evidence that this was the case during the classical period.

³³⁸ The plague of Athens of 420 BC and the Peloponnesian War probably influenced this decision. Hughes (2017) 30.

³³⁹ Hughes (2017) 40-41.

³⁴⁰ Hughes (2017) 28-29, 40-41.

³⁴¹ Rynearson (2003).

Here, I first briefly discuss my findings about *somata*, mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, after which I discuss reproduction related anatomical votives in general. The only lists where *somata* appear are those of Asklepios. Moreover, in contrast to what Reilly argues, these votives were not dedicated solely by girls, but by both female and male dedicants, they could refer to both male and female bodies, and some of the female bodies were dedicated by men (Appendix II). This does, however, not necessarily prove Reilly's theory wrong, since some of these *somata* were dedicated in combination with other votives, which were seemingly dedicated in relation to fertility.³⁴² In addition, there is one example of a possible couple, which likely dedicated a female and a male *soma* on three different occasions.³⁴³ These people, Kallippos Phalereus and Mika, were possibly having trouble conceiving.

Now to get back to the reproduction related anatomical votives in general, here something peculiar occurred. These votives are only mentioned on the lists dating from the third century BC onwards, none are mentioned on the lists from the fourth century BC.³⁴⁴ The lists of the third century BC where these votives occur, are mostly inventory lists describing the dedications present in the sanctuary at a certain time and listing the objects melted down in a certain year, making it a possibility that some of these objects were dedicated at the end of the fourth century. Moreover, archaeologists found an actual anatomical votive of a pair of breasts, dated to the late fourth century;³⁴⁵ and a relief likely dedicated to Herakles Menytes (see 'Herakles' below), but found in the Asklepieion, depicting a sanctuary where anatomical votives hang on the walls, of which one represents the lower half of a female body (fig. 13). Overall, however, all the votives of these types I found (not just those dedicated to Asklepios) date to 350 BC or later.

How can we explain the immense growth in the dedication of these kinds of votives in later centuries? Does this mean that Asklepios was not, or not often, worshipped in relation to reproduction issues in Athens during the classical period? This seems unlikely, since Asklepios was also worshipped in relation to these issues in Epidauros.³⁴⁶ Can the lack of these kind of votives be explained by a bias against the nude female figure during the classical period? Although the first nude female statue was produced in ca. 350 BC,³⁴⁷ this idea is also unlikely, since during the late fifth century the naked female form is already represented on pottery.³⁴⁸ It

³⁴² The following dedications were possibly made as a request for help or as a thank offering for fertility: Aleshire (1989) IV 101 b and c: Here Myrrhine dedicated a piece of jewellery (ankle bangle) and a body of a woman on behalf of herself and her child (see below); IV 104 b and c: Here Epikratia dedicated a body of a woman and an anatomical votive of hips; V 137 a and b: Here Nannion dedicated a body (unspecified) and a breast.

³⁴³ Aleshire (1989) V 108 b en c; V 111 a.; V 119.

³⁴⁴ Other anatomical votives, like eyes and legs are mentioned, are mentioned in the lists dated to the fourth century. Aleshire (1989) 113-165.

³⁴⁵ *IG II/III*³ 727. Dedicated by an Athenian woman.

³⁴⁶ See for example: *IG iv*2 1.121 iama 39; *IG iv*2 1.122 iama 31; See also chapter V 'Epidauros'.

³⁴⁷ Havelock (1995) 1.

³⁴⁸ Sutton (2009); In addition, there was no bias against male nudity at all. The rise in these male genitalia can perhaps be explained by the possibility that the dedication of female genitalia in relation to reproduction issues inspired those of male genitalia. Naturally, these male genitals were possibly dedicated in relation to other issues concerning the genitals, but it is quite striking they only appear when female genitals are dedicated. Besides this, we know that fertility issues were not solely blamed on women, and that the ancient Greeks were aware that men

is more probable that, in the classical period, women dedicated other objects to Asklepios for procreation reasons, possibly jewellery and other personal objects.³⁴⁹ Moreover, the growth of the dedication of these anatomical votives can then probably be attributed to a change in the contemporary dedicatory trends.

Besides these anatomical votives and personal objects, Asklepios also received other dedications for procreation purposes. One possible example of this, is a dedication of what seems to be a couple, of which the wife was possibly a slave. This couple dedicated a marble pillar on behalf of their three children.³⁵⁰ The inscription indicates that this couple prayed on behalf of their children, which could mean that the reason for dedication was related to keeping the children healthy but does not rule out the possibility that this was a thank offering for giving this couple healthy children. In addition, as discussed in chapter three, the treasury lists also mention a key, which I think was possibly worn as an amulet during a pregnancy.³⁵¹

Hygieia

Before Hygieia was introduced to Athens as an independent deity, likely with the cult of Asklepios, she was only referred to as an epithet of Athena. In Athens, she remained highly connected with her father (Asklepios), as she was not presented without him before the third century BC,³⁵² and she was worshipped at his sanctuary on the south slope of the Acropolis.³⁵³ In fact, Hygieia did not have her own sanctuary in Athens.

Although in Athens there is no explicit evidence indicating that Hygieia was worshipped as a fertility or childbirth deity, there is a votive from Thorikos demonstrating that it is not unthinkable that Hygieia was worshipped in this way. This limestone tablet was dedicated by a woman from the deme of Poros and includes the two phrases ‘having prayed’ and ‘dedicated on behalf of her children’:

— — — c.9 — — — λλα Θουφάνους Πορίου θυγάτηρ
 [— — c.6 — — Ὑγι]εῖαι εὐξαμένη ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων
 ἀ ν ἔ θ η κ ε ν. ³⁵⁴

[...]lla daughter of Thouphanes of Poros [...] to Hygieia having prayed, dedicated on behalf of her children.³⁵⁵

could also be infertile. Senkova (2015). Therefore, it is likely that most of these male genitals were dedicated in relation to male infertility.

³⁴⁹ These kinds of objects are represented in the treasury lists dated to the fourth century. Aleshire (1989) 113-165. Although these objects could have been dedicated for a multitude of reasons, it is not unthinkable that women dedicated them in relation to reproduction issues.

³⁵⁰ *IG II/III*³ 717.

³⁵¹ Aleshire (1989) III 27; See also: Aleshire (1989) 155-156. Although keys could sometimes have belonged to the sanctuary itself, this does not seem to be the case here, since it is listed amongst other rather random objects like sixteen finger-rings and a wine-pitcher from the hand of a statue. which I think might have been worn as an amulet during a pregnancy.

³⁵² Aleshire (1989) 12-13.

³⁵³ Kutsch (1913) 1.

³⁵⁴ *IG II/III*³ 898.

³⁵⁵ Translation Kant (2018).

The woman possibly prayed to the goddess for fertility and later dedicated this votive on behalf of the children she received.

Eileithyia

Eileithyia is one of the most prominent childbirth deities. Her name is even used as an epithet for other deities that concern themselves with childbirth, like Artemis Eileithyia.³⁵⁶ Eileithyia supposedly had two sanctuaries in Athens,³⁵⁷ one of which is mentioned by Pausanias:

οὐ δὲ ἱεροῦ τοῦ Σαράπιδος οὐ πόρρω χωρίον ἐστίν, ἔνθα Πειρίθουν καὶ Θησέα συνθεμένους ἐξ Λακεδαίμονα καὶ ὕστερον ἄρ' ἑσπερωτῶν σταλῆναι λέγουσι. πλησίον δὲ ἠκοδόμητο ναὸς Εἰλειθυίας.

refe where they say that Peirithous and Theseus made their pact before setting forth to Lacedaemon and afterwards to Thesprotia. Hard by is built a temple of Eileithyia.³⁵⁸

The exact location of this sanctuary is unknown, but highly debated.³⁵⁹ About Eileithyia's other sanctuary we know a little more. This sanctuary was located in the suburb of Agrai on the left side of the Ilissos and belonged to Eileithyia Eukoline.³⁶⁰

Eileithyia could ease the pains of childbirth, as she was believed to be the one who sent these pains in the first place.³⁶¹ Women and sometimes men dedicated votives to her as, what seem to be mainly, thank offerings after childbirth. In terms of these dedications the *Greek Anthology* informs us what kind of votives Eileithyia received for her 'kindness' during childbirth:

Πότνια κουροσόος, ταύταν ἐπιπορπίδα νυμφᾶν, καὶ στεφάναν λιπαρῶν ἐκ κεφαλᾶς πλοκάμων, ὀλβία Εἰλείθυια, πολυμνάστοιο φύλασσε Τισίδος ὠδίνων ῥύσια δεξαμένα.

GODDESS, saviour of children, blest Ilithyia, receive and keep as thy fee for delivering Tisis, who well remembers, from her pangs, this bridal brooch and the diadem from her glossy hair.³⁶²

³⁵⁶ Sourlas (2017) 71.

³⁵⁷ There was possible another sanctuary for Eileithyia in the deme of Kollytos, Little, however, is known about this sanctuary. Sourlas (2017) 171.

³⁵⁸ Pausanias 1.18.4-5.

³⁵⁹ For an overview of this debate see: Sourlas (2017) 69-74. Semeli Pingiatoglou locates this sanctuary of Eileithyia somewhere between the monument of Lysikrates and Athens' cathedral, to the east of the library of Hadrian and the Roman Agora and dates it to the first half of the fourth century BC. Pingiatoglou (1981) 42-43.

³⁶⁰ This epithet is associated with Hekate (*TLG* s.v. Εὐκολίνη) and refers to the easing of childbirth pangs (*TLG* s.v. εὐκολία). Paul Baur writes the following about this epithet: 'Eukoline is an euphemistic appeasing name for the goddess who was supposed to send the pangs of childbirth.' Baur (1902) 224.

³⁶¹ Dillon (2002) 230.

³⁶² *Greek Anthology*, VI 274; See also: *Greek Anthology*, VI 270: 'head-kerchief and water-blue veil of Amphareta.'

It seems that Eileithyia, just like Artemis, received mostly personal objects. She, however, did also receive bigger objects. Two votives from female dedicants have been found in Athens: a marble base and a relief depicting three Xoana's (female herms). The marble base was dedicated by a man and a woman, but nothing can be said about their relation, and there are no real clues indicating the purpose of the dedication.³⁶³ The marble relief is probably dedicated by a metic from Thespiiai (Boeotia).³⁶⁴ It is possible that these dedications are both childbirth votives, but this idea is solely based on the fact that Eileithyia was a childbirth deity.

Hekate

As mentioned in chapter three, Hekate played a part during points of transition and received sacrifices during purification rituals after childbirth. There are, however, also other clues that indicate Hekate's relation to childbirth. The goddess is, for example, associated with Artemis. Manolis Manoledakis writes the following about this:

The identification of Hekate with Artemis had acquired such dimensions in antiquity that, as Farnell says, "any centre of the cult of Artemis was likely to attract the worship of the kindred goddess." (...) What is certain is that Hekate was identified with Artemis more than with any other goddess and that through this identification each goddess assumed attributes of the other.³⁶⁵

The former is also true for Brauron, where statues of Hekate in triple form have been found,³⁶⁶ and the sanctuary of Artemis Kalliste on the Kerameikos.³⁶⁷ In terms of the latter, we find Hekate as an epithet for Artemis in Aeschylus *Suppliants*.³⁶⁸ Here, Aeschylus likely refers to both the childbirth as well as the kourotrophic characters of these deities. In conclusion, it is likely that Hekate was worshipped as a childbirth goddess, either at her own shrines³⁶⁹ or at those of Artemis.

Kephisos and the other gods of the sanctuary at Echelidai

As discussed in chapter three, people prayed and sacrificed to a river god like Kephisos to enhance fertility. Interesting finds indicate that Kephisos (together with other fertility, childbirth, and kourotrophic deities) had a shrine at Echelidai. Literary sources do not discuss this shrine, but we do have an inscribed stele and two marble reliefs (of which one a double relief).³⁷⁰ For this thesis the stele, and the relief, including an epigram, dedicated by a woman named Xenokrateia (fig. 8) are of particular interest. The stele is inscribed with the names of different

³⁶³ *IG II/III*³ 1142; Pingiatoglou (1981) 158 no. E 35; Sourlas (2017) 172-173.

³⁶⁴ *IG II/III*³ 1141; Sourlas (2017); Kant (2018) 53.

³⁶⁵ Manoledakis (2012) 295.

³⁶⁶ Agora XI, 91. The earliest Hekate in triple form was found here and likely dates to the third century BC. Before this, single statues of Hekate were possibly made of perishable materials. Agora XI, 96.

³⁶⁷ Hesychius s.v. *καλλίστη*.

³⁶⁸ Aeschylus, *Suppliants*, 109-110: Ἄρτεμιν δ' ἐκάταν γυναικῶν λόχους ἐφορεύειν ('that Artemis Hekate may watch over the women giving birth'); Kraus (1960) 86; Johansen and Whittle (1980) 41-43.

³⁶⁹ These could be found throughout the city, at points of transition, for example, at crossroads.

³⁷⁰ *IG II* 4547; *NM* 2756; *NM* 1783. All dated to ca. 400 BC. Parker (2005) 430; Blok (2018) 8.

fertility, childbirth, and kourotrophic deities in the dative case. The names in order of Appearance are: Hestia, Kephisos, Apollo Pythios, Leto, Artemis Lochia, Eileithyia, Acheloös, Kallirhoë, Geraistai Nymphais Genethliais, and Rhapsos. This sacrificial list indicates which deities were worshipped at the sanctuary at Echelidai and considering the fact that quite a few of these deities are known to be concerned with fertility and childbirth,³⁷¹ people likely came to this shrine and worshipped these deities to enhance fertility, ease childbirth and seek protection for their children.

This notion is seemingly strengthened by Xenokrateia's dedication. On the relief she dedicated, we see Xenokrateia and her son Xeniadēs standing amongst the previously mentioned deities. Kephisos (a little to the left of the middle of the relief) seems to tell Xenokrateia something while he crouches down towards her, and at the same time Xeniadēs seeks the god's attention (fig. 8). The epigram reads:

Ξενοκράτεια Κηφισῶ ἱερὸν ἰδρύσατο καὶ ἀνέθηκεν
 ξυμβώμοις τε θεοῖς(1) διδασκαλίας τόδε δῶρον,
 Ξενιάδῶ θυγάτηρ καὶ μήτηρ ἐκ Χολλειδῶν (vacat)
 θύεν τῶι βουλομένωι ἐπὶ
 τελεστῶν ἀγαθῶν (vacat).³⁷²

Xenokrateia founded the sanctuary of Kephisos and dedicated
 to the gods who share his altar this gift because of
 instruction
 daughter and mother of Xeniadēs of Cholleidai;
 for whoever wishes to sacrifice for
 fulfilment of good things.³⁷³

Why did Xenokrateia dedicate this votive and set up a cult? Did it have something to do with the presentation of Xeniadēs to these Kourotrophic deities? Although this is likely partially the reason, interesting here is that Kephisos, as a fertility and kourotrophic deity, does not focus on the child in the picture, but on the mother.³⁷⁴ Moreover, Parker suggest that there was no clear or real point in life when people were no longer cared for by their *kourotrophoi*.³⁷⁵ In this context, Josine Blok convincingly argues that this dedication was likely a thank offering from Xenokrateia to her kourotrophic deities, who guided her through life and who kept her safe (during the Peloponnesian war).³⁷⁶ The idea, however, that the dedication is also a thank offering for her surviving son is plausible. Overall, this relief and its epigram probably suggest that these

³⁷¹ Fertility: Kephisos, Kallirhoë, and the Geraistai Nymphais Genethliais.

Childbirth: Artemis Lochia, Eileithyia, the Geraistai Nymphais Genethliais, and possibly Rhapsos (little is known about this deity).

³⁷² *IG* I3 987.

³⁷³ Translation Blok (2018) 6.

³⁷⁴ Purvis (2003) 20.

³⁷⁵ Parker (2005) 428-429.

³⁷⁶ Blok (2018) 19.

gods were worshipped by Xenokrateia mostly as being her *kourotrophoi*, but it is very likely, considering that some of the deities were also concerned with fertility and childbirth, that these were the deities to which Xenokrateia prayed for healthy offspring. These deities helped her throughout her life, they taught her how to live properly, gave her a son, and kept her and her son safe.

Moirai

These three goddesses bestowed a destiny on mortals at birth and decided when life ended. Klotho spun the thread of life, Lakshesis apportioned mortals their lots, and Atropos (or Aisa) eventually cut the thread of life.³⁷⁷ As mentioned in chapter three, the Moirai (or Fates) likely received sacrifices, like locks of hair, as part of the *proteleia* to ensure fertility. We know of at least one cult of these deities, located on the Mounichia Hill in Piraeus.³⁷⁸ The fact that Pausanias writes that Aphrodite Ourania was the oldest of those called the Moirai might indicate that the Moirai were also worshipped at some of Aphrodite's sanctuaries, for example the one Pausanias refers to here, near the Ilissos.³⁷⁹

Nymphs

Essentially, a nymph is a deity embodying an aspect of nature. Their sanctuaries are often set in caves and near rivers or springs, and in Attica they were frequently associated with Pan. There were different groups of nymphs in Attica and Athens, worshipped for a multitude of reasons.³⁸⁰ Overall, however, the roles they played often related to the feminine sphere, where they would protect brides, nurse children, and serve as guardians. Often, very little is known about which nymphs were worshipped in relation to what purpose, making it hard to study them in relation to the specific purpose of procreation. Therefore, I here explicitly mention the deities for which I have strong indications they concerned themselves with fertility and or childbirth.³⁸¹

Geraistai Nymphai Genethliai

These nymphs were worshipped as fertility and childbirth deities.³⁸² They are mentioned on the previously discussed sacrificial list of the sanctuary at Echelidai and depicted on Xenokrateia's votive relief. Miriam Ervin extensively studied the Geraistai Nymphai Genethliai, also known as the Genetyllides, concluding that these are the Hyakinthides: the daughters of Hyakinthos.³⁸³ Mythology explains that these daughters (their number and names often vary)³⁸⁴ were sacrificed to Athena or Persephone to deliver Athens from a plague and famine.³⁸⁵ According to this same myth, they were sacrificed on the tomb of the cyclops Geraistos, which Ervin places on the Hill

³⁷⁷ Theoi s.v. Moirai.

³⁷⁸ *JG* II² 4971; SEG 26 267; Garland (1987) 162, 230 no. 25, 235 no. 78.

³⁷⁹ Pausanias 1.19.2.

³⁸⁰ Ervin (1959) 713-714; Kopestonsky (2016) 212-215.

³⁸¹ I have, for example, also studied the Nympheion on the Mounichia Hill of which too little is known, and the Agraulids, but these cannot plausibly be connected to fertility or childbirth. Kearns (1989) 23-27.

³⁸² Ervin (1959)154-155; Cole (2004) 95; Kopestonsky (2016) 770.

³⁸³ Ervin (1959) 148-149.

³⁸⁴ Theoi s.v. Hyakinthos.

³⁸⁵ Apollodorus 3.15.8.

of the Nymphs.³⁸⁶ Although I think that these conclusions are convincing and that this is the place where the Geraistai Nymphai Genethliai were worshipped, I do not agree with all Ervin's findings. She argues, for example, that there were four Hyakinthides in total, and that they are all depicted on the Xenokrateia relief. The former is, however, uncertain even in ancient times,³⁸⁷ and the latter is not plausible since there is only place for three Geraistai Nymphai on the relief.

Nymphe

The name of this minor deity refers not to the mythical connotation of a nymph, but to a young bride.³⁸⁸ As briefly discussed in chapter three, this deity had a shrine on the south slope of the Acropolis, and was worshipped by girls who prepared themselves for marriage and those who recently married.³⁸⁹ Many *Loutrophoroi*, used to carry the water for the bridal bath, were dedicated to this deity,³⁹⁰ likely indicating that she was worshipped for fertility reasons as an aspect of her concern with marriage.

Possible fertility and childbirth deities

Agdistis and Attis

Agdistis is a different name for Mother of the Gods. She was worshipped at both Athens and Piraeus, where she was notably popular during Hellenistic times. Her cults were, however, established earlier. The first one was imported from Phrygia-Anatolia and established on the Agora as a state cult during the fifth century BC. Her second cult was a private one, established during the fourth century BC.³⁹¹ Agdistis was supposedly worshipped together with the fertility deity Attis, who was her son and lover.³⁹²

At Piraeus a possible fertility votive was found.³⁹³ This relief with an epigram was dedicated by Timothea 'on behalf of her children in accordance with a command.'³⁹⁴ It is hard to determine whether this votive was offered in relation to reproduction issues or, as Price suggests, as a kourotrophic votive as Price suggests. It is, however, likely that Agdistis and Attis were worshipped in relation to reproduction issues in their sanctuaries in Athens and Piraeus, since Attis is a fertility deity.

Aminos

Aminos was a hero believed to have healing powers. His shrine at Athens was located between the Pnyx and the Acropolis. On this location a relief depicting a breast was found, possibly

³⁸⁶ Ervin (1959) 153-159.

³⁸⁷ Theoi s.v. Hyakinthos.

³⁸⁸ Ervin (1959) 715.

³⁸⁹ Wycherley (1970) 293-295.

³⁹⁰ As discussed in chapter three, these baths were likely taken and the *Loutrophoroi* likely dedicated to enhance fertility.

³⁹¹ Garland (1987) 129.

³⁹² Price (1987) 120; Garland (1987) 129; Britannica s.v. Great Mother of the Gods

³⁹³ SK 1612

³⁹⁴ *IG II/ III*³ 1337

indicating that Amynos was worshipped in relation to reproduction issues.³⁹⁵ This votive, however, was dedicated to Asklepios, whose cult was closely associated with that of Amynos, since they were both healing deities and Asklepios was likely worshipped at the Amyneion during the late fourth century.³⁹⁶ In short, Amynos' healing powers and the previously mentioned votive possibly indicate that Amynos was a fertility and/or childbirth deity, but this is uncertain.

Athena

In terms of offspring it is likely that Athena was worshipped in Athens as a Kourotrophic deity, rather than a deity who concerned herself with reproduction.³⁹⁷ The scholiast to Euripides' *Hecuba* mentions a ritual where newly wedded couples were, or the young bride was blessed by Athena's priestess with the Aegis, possibly to secure fertility. This ritual, however, is quite obscure, and we are uncertain if it was performed at all, let alone if it was performed during the classical period.³⁹⁸

In addition, in the treasury lists of the Parthenon and the Erechtheion, I found some dedications which were possibly dedicated as reproduction votives: a golden belt from the west cella of the Parthenon,³⁹⁹ keys,⁴⁰⁰ and wedding pottery.⁴⁰¹ No dedicants are, however, listed and there are many possible reasons for the dedication of these objects, besides procreation purposes. Therefore, we must conclude that it is possible that Athena was worshipped in relation to reproduction issues in Athens, but we can be anything but certain about this.

Demeter and Kore

We know Demeter and Kore overall concerned themselves with (vegetal) fertility, but in Athens and more generally in Attica they were often worshipped in relation to this with public festivals. I found only one indication, in Athens, that these goddesses were possibly worshipped in relation to human fertility in the private sphere. This relief is inscribed with the following text:

Anaglyphum
[Φ]ίλη ταῖν θεαῖν
[ε]ὐξαμένη ὑπὲρ
τοῦ παιδίου.⁴⁰²

Phile to the two goddesses,
having prayed, on behalf
of her child.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁵ *IG* II/III3 906

³⁹⁶ Wycherley (1970) 285, 292-293; Kearns (1989) 20.

³⁹⁷ Farnell (1907) 96-100; Price (1978) 101-102.

³⁹⁸ Scholiast Euripides *Hecuba* 467; Price (1978) 103.

³⁹⁹ *IG* I³ 360.3

⁴⁰⁰ *IG* II² 1414.44, 47

⁴⁰¹ *IG* II² 1469 B89

⁴⁰² *IG* II/III³ 1013

⁴⁰³ Translation Kant (2018).

Here the phrase ‘having prayed’ does, however, not necessarily refer to the dedicant having prayed for fertility, and later dedicating this votive on behalf of her child, as the text seems to imply that the woman has prayed on behalf of her child. Therefore, it is not unthinkable that this votive offering was dedicated as a thank offering for a healthy child, but it is also possible that it was dedicated to the goddesses in relation to their (especially Demeter’s) kourotrophic role.

Hera

Although the cult of Hera was not as prominent in Attica as in other Greek regions⁴⁰⁴ and she was in Athens likely worshipped more as a kourotrophic than a fertility or childbirth deity, there are some indications that occasionally she *was* worshipped in relation to fertility and childbirth in Athens and Attica. Hera was after all a deity of marriage and procreation was an important aspect of marriage. Moreover, in chapter three, Hera Teleia was mentioned as one of the deities who received locks of hair as a *proteleia* to ensure fertility, and the dedication of a marble herm by Archestrate is possibly also a *proteleia*.⁴⁰⁵ In addition, at Thorikos there was a shrine for Hera Eileithyia.⁴⁰⁶ Here, Hera unmistakably concerned herself with childbirth, since she had the epithet Eileithyia.

Herakles

Herakles was worshipped as a kourotrophic deity in Athens.⁴⁰⁷ The city Herakleion has not been identified yet, but it is likely Herakles had a shrine or sanctuary on the south slope of the Acropolis, as multiple dedications were found here.⁴⁰⁸ There is, however, one dedication possibly indicating that Herakles, as a healing deity, also concerned himself with fertility.⁴⁰⁹ On this marble relief (fig. 13) we likely see Herakles Menytes⁴¹⁰ standing in a sanctuary, with a woman kneeling in front of him. Interesting in this picture are the anatomical votives on the wall of the sanctuary. One of these depicts the lower-half of a woman’s body, including a vulva. If Herakles is here depicted in one of his own temples, this might indicate that he also helped women with their fertility issues.

⁴⁰⁴ Clark (1998) 15-18.

⁴⁰⁵ *IG II/III*³ 1212.

⁴⁰⁶ Price (1978) 125.

⁴⁰⁷ Kearns (1989) 35-36.

⁴⁰⁸ *IG II/III*³ 1159-1162.

⁴⁰⁹ AM 7232.

⁴¹⁰ Walter (1923) 61-62 no. 108.

Chapter V

Sacred travel

For a long time, scholars were convinced that women rarely travelled, and that when they did they were accompanied by a man. In recent decades however, the shift away from the sole focus on literary source material helped put this notion into perspective.⁴¹¹ Women did travel. They did so for many reasons and under many circumstances (e.g. to visit family members, festivals like the Thesmophoria, or important shrines and sanctuaries).⁴¹² Travel in relation to religion is what we call sacred travel. This chapter discusses sacred travel for the purpose of solving reproduction issues.

The distances travelled for this purpose varied greatly. Some of the sanctuaries discussed in the previous chapter already required some form of travel. For example, when an Athenian woman saw the need to visit a shrine in Piraeus or the sanctuary at Brauron, she needed to travel for at least one day. There is however, also evidence that women travelled much further in relation to procreation, even far beyond the borders of Attica. Amongst these women, healing and oracular sanctuaries were most popular.⁴¹³ Since the scope of this research only allows me to give a brief introduction to this subject, I decided to restrict this chapter to a short study of these two different types of sanctuaries and the women who visited them in relation to reproduction issues. First, I will briefly discuss the logistics of female sacred travel, and the question why a woman travelled long distances to visit the sanctuary of a deity who likely also had a sanctuary closer to home. Second, I will study the most important healing sanctuary of the main land of Greece (Epidaurus in the Peloponnese), after which I will move on to oracular sanctuaries and study Delphi in Phocis and Dodona in Epirus. All these sanctuaries were visited and consulted by people from Attica, and there are indications that people occasionally visited them in relation to reproduction issues.

The logistics of and reason for female travel

Although women likely travelled alone at times, it is probable that often they travelled with family members, their husbands and/or their children, other women, or slaves.⁴¹⁴ Matthew Dillon and Wiebke Friese both argue that women of all socio-economic backgrounds travelled, since traveling was not necessarily expensive, especially when people travelled by foot and slept out in the open or stayed with relatives or kin. They do however, stress that wealthy women had the financial means and leisure time to make travelling slightly easier and more comfortable.⁴¹⁵ Although I do not disagree with Dillon and Friese, I want to stress that travelling in and

⁴¹¹ Dillon (1997) 183; Friese (2017) 48-49.

⁴¹² Dillon (1997) 184.

⁴¹³ Wise (2007) 77-79.

⁴¹⁴ Dillon (1997) 184; Friese (2017) 52.

⁴¹⁵ Dillon (1997) 184; Friese (2007) 52, 60-62.

around classical Attica was burdensome and could be very dangerous. War, piracy, and natural disasters endangered the traveller. During the Peloponnesian war, for example, traveling by sea could be very dangerous since there was less protection against piracy, one's ship could run into a hostile fleet, and there was a constant risk of sea battles.⁴¹⁶ Yet, many people, including women, still risked the journey to distant sanctuaries.

Why would they do this, or in this case, why would women do this in relation to reproduction issues? People could visit local shrines and ask local deities for help (e.g. a local Asklepieion), but in some cases seemingly deemed the distant, more prominent, sanctuaries of a deity to be a better option. Dillon writes the following on this subject:

‘if pilgrims could afford it, or felt the need strongly enough, they would travel to one of the more important sites. (...) clearly the healing power of the god was felt to be more efficacious at a major sanctuary.’⁴¹⁷

This however, does not explain *why* a person decided to travel to a distant sanctuary. When did someone ‘feel the need strongly enough?’ A possible answer to this question can be found at healing sanctuaries. These were visited mostly by people with chronic conditions, likely indicating that these people were at a point of despair.⁴¹⁸ The options closer to home possibly failed these people, who decided to travel long distances in search for a cure. In addition, another reason for people to visit distant healing sanctuaries was possibly that Asklepios sometimes ordered people, in a vision or dream, to visit a particular sanctuary of his.⁴¹⁹ These same reasons of despair and divine calling were possibly also why people visited distant oracular sanctuaries, where they could ask the deity what to do or which deity to turn to, in order to solve their (medical) issues.

Epidaurus

Asklepios had - beside many local shrines - three major shrines, of which Epidaurus was the most important one in mainland Greece.⁴²⁰ Here, Asklepios and his father Apollo were worshiped by people from all over Greece. Epidaurus was very accessible to people from Attica, since travelling from Piraeus to Epidaurus took only one day by boat in spring and summer, and the sanctuary was ‘open’ all year round.⁴²¹

In Epidaurus particular steps were to be taken on the way to a cure. These involved ritual bathing, the payment of a fee, abstinence, a sacrifice, incubation (i.e. sleeping in the abaton of the Asklepieion), dreams - in which Asklepios healed the patient or made clear what a patient had to do to heal - and the dedication of a votive offering.⁴²² In relation to the latter, it is interesting to note that no anatomical votives of breast or genitalia were found here. What we do have are the four surviving stelai on which cures (*iamata*) were inscribed. These stelai

⁴¹⁶ Jonkers (2010) 54.

⁴¹⁷ Dillon (1997) 76.

⁴¹⁸ LiDonnici (1992) 27.

⁴¹⁹ See for example: IG IV² 1, 123.48.

⁴²⁰ Dillon (1997) 74-75.

⁴²¹ Friese (2007) 51.

⁴²² Dillon (1997) 80; Friese (2007) 27.

date to the fourth century BC and discuss stories of Asklepios' healing powers.⁴²³ According to Lynn LiDonnici, the cases on these stelai are composed stories rather than true representations of historical occasions, since they are a product of the uniting of votive offerings, oral traditions, and earlier inscriptions.⁴²⁴ They show us what people believed Asklepios was capable of and the reasons why people visited Epidaurus, making them valuable in relation to this research.

Thirteen of the fifty-two *iamata* that clearly record the gender of the patient concern female patients, and of these six consulted the deity in relation to reproduction issues.⁴²⁵ These six cases, show us how people believed Asklepios cured infertility or started childbirth. We have two cases where women suffered extremely long pregnancies: Kleo was pregnant for five years and Ithmonika from Pellana for three years. According to the *iamata*, both women slept in the abaton - where Asklepios appeared in a dream to Ithmonika but not to Kleo - after which the birthing process started and they rushed out of sacred area to give birth.⁴²⁶ The latter has to do with a law prohibiting people from dying and women from giving birth within the sacred area, because of the pollution it caused.⁴²⁷

Besides this, the *iamata* indicate that women also asked Asklepios for help when it came to fertility issues. A woman from Troizen gave birth to a healthy son within a year after she visited Epidaurus.⁴²⁸ In this story, Asklepios worked alone, but this was not always the case. A woman named Andromache, likely a fourth century BC queen from Epeiros (Northern Greece), dreamt that a beautiful boy uncovered her and that Asklepios touched her with his hand, after which she became pregnant with her husbands' son.⁴²⁹ Besides this 'beautiful boy', snakes also played a role in some of the *iamata*. Agadema from Keos dreamt that a snake laid on her stomach, after which she became fertile and gave birth to five children;⁴³⁰ and Nikasiboula from Messene slept with a snake, after which she gave birth to two sons within two years.⁴³¹ Some scholars think that the snakes in these cases are phallic symbols,⁴³² or a representation of Asklepios himself.⁴³³ Although the latter is possible since Asklepios did sometimes present himself as a snake, there are many cases where snakes heal non reproduction related illnesses, making it unlikely that they had a specific phallic connotation.⁴³⁴

To conclude, these particular women were not from Attica, but in most cases we do see that they travelled from far (Epeiros, Messene, Keos, Pellana), hoping that Asklepios could help them with their reproduction issues. This, and the fact that there is plenty of evidence that Epidaurus was frequently visited by people from Attica, therefore makes it likely that Attic women

⁴²³ Dillon (1997) 79; For an overview of the scholarly debate on the dating of these stelai see: LiDonnici (1992) 25-26.

⁴²⁴ LiDonnici (1992) 28-29, 40-41.

⁴²⁵ Dillon (1997) 191.

⁴²⁶ IG IV² 1 121.1; IG IV² 1 121.2.

⁴²⁷ Pausanias 2.27.1; Some of the sick people that visited this sanctuary were beyond help, which makes the fear of death and pollution in the sacred area a real one. Moreover, the existence of this law and the fact that at least two of the *iamata* concern themselves with pregnancy and childbirth indicate that pregnant women sought Asklepios' help in Epidaurus.

⁴²⁸ IG IV² 1 122.34.

⁴²⁹ IG IV² 1 122.31; Herzog (1931) 73-74.

⁴³⁰ IG IV² 1 122.39.

⁴³¹ IG IV² 1 122.42.

⁴³² Edelstein (1945) 2.167; Siefert (1980) 330.

⁴³³ Weinreich (1909) 95.

⁴³⁴ See for example: IG IV² 1 121.17; IG IV² 1 121.33.

also visited this sanctuary in relation to reproduction issues. This shows that travelling to a distant healing sanctuary was, for some women, an important means in their quest for healthy children. Whether they travelled here on their own or with companions, the religious experience was their own.⁴³⁵

Oracular sanctuaries

Oracles played an important role in the ancient Greek world, since they could help the people communicate with the divine and clarify deities' wishes in certain situations.⁴³⁶ Although *manteis* (seers) and *chresmologoi* (oracle-tellers) provided similar 'services' in the major cities, the PanHellenic oracular shrines of ancient Greece were very popular. Delphi was the most prominent of these PanHellenic oracular shrines. Here, people from all over the Greek world consulted Apollo, who provided his worshippers with answers to their questions through the Pythia (the priestess who communicated the oracles).⁴³⁷ The oracle answered both 'state' (e.g. concerning politics, war, plagues and bad harvests) and private (e.g. concerning marriage and infertility) consultants. Unlike Epidaurus, worshippers could not consult the oracle all year round. The Pythia was likely only available on the seventh day of the month, and only for nine months a year, because Apollo was believed to be absent from the sanctuary during the three winter months.⁴³⁸

About the procedures at the sanctuary little is known, except for the fact that the consultants were obliged to make multiple costly sacrifices⁴³⁹ before they consulted the Pythia.⁴⁴⁰ Concerning the latter, an important issue occurs in relation to female agency, since it is likely that only men (except for the Pythia) were allowed in the inner part of the temple.⁴⁴¹ Women could therefore likely not consult the Pythia themselves. In Euripides' *Ion* we hear of a woman who travelled to Delphi with her husband:

ΙΩΝ

σὺν ἀνδρὶ δ' ἤκεις ἢ μόνῃ χρηστήρια;

ΚΡΕΟΥΣΑ

σὺν ἀνδρὶ. σηκοῖς δ' ὕστερεϊ Τροφωνίου.

⁴³⁵ Dillon (1997) 191-192.

⁴³⁶ For example, who to sacrifice to in case of a personal problem, or what to do when a plague was terrorising a city.

⁴³⁷ Dillon (1997) 81; Scott (2014) 24-25.

⁴³⁸ Scott (2014) 13.

⁴³⁹ A *pelanos* (sacrificial cake), which they bought of the Delphians, and a beast (probably a sheep or a goat). On price agreements for the *pelanos* (or actually the consultation with the Pythia): One inscription dating to 402 BC (*CID I 8*) tells us about a price agreement between Delphi and Phaselis (a city in Asia Minor). It shows that the prices varied and that the price for a city was higher than that for an individual. Michael Scott writes that the price possibly depended on a cities' wealth, which would make it more expensive for Athenians. In addition, he states that consulting the Pythia was a real investment, since it was rather costly. Besides the sacrifices, travelling to and from Delphi costed money, and people lost income because they could not work. Scott (2014) 16-17.

⁴⁴⁰ Euripides, *Ion*, 226-229; Dillon (1997) 81, 84.

⁴⁴¹ Scott (2014) 17.

ΙΩΝ

καρποῦ δ' ὕπερ γῆς ἦκετ' ἢ ποίων πέρι;

ΚΡΕΟΥΣΑ

ἄπαιδές ἐσμεν, χρόνι' ἔχοντ' ἐννήματα.

ΙΩΝ

Have you come to the oracle with your husband or alone?

ΚΡΕΟΥΣΑ

With my husband. But he is tarrying in the precincts of Trophonius.

(...)

ΙΩΝ

Have you come on behalf of the land's crops, or what is your errand?

ΚΡΕΟΥΣΑ

We are childless, though long married.⁴⁴²

Here we see that, people visited Delphi in relation to reproduction issues, and that - although Creusa did not do so - it was possible for a woman to visit Delphi by herself, since Ion asked Creusa if she came to the oracle on her own. The question remains however, was a woman allowed to consult the Pythia herself? In the above-mentioned case, the husband consults the oracle, which, when we study the surviving oracle texts for Delphi,⁴⁴³ seems to be the custom. Here, we only find *men* who inquire the oracle in relation to reproduction issues, making it likely that women did not consult the Pythia themselves.⁴⁴⁴ Their *kyrios* possibly consulted the Pythia for them, or for the *oikos*, as seems to be the case with Creusa. On the other hand, women might consult the oracle in other ways. It is likely, for example, that there were other ways in which people consulted the oracle besides the nine times during the year when people could receive an audience with the Pythia: possibly by lot, answering yes-or-no-questions.⁴⁴⁵ It is not unthinkable that women used these other means of consultation.

In addition, the proceedings at Delphi were not typical for an oracular sanctuary. At the oracular sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, for example, the proceedings differed from those at Delphi, in that the questions were here written on lead tablets.⁴⁴⁶ Although cases of state inquiries were found, Dodona focused more on personal inquiries.⁴⁴⁷ Though most consultants inquiring about reproduction were men, wives were occasionally mentioned or listed as co-consultant in

⁴⁴² Euripides, *Ion*, 299-304. (Loeb translation)

⁴⁴³ I studied Joseph Fontenrose's (1978) publication of these oracular texts.

⁴⁴⁴ Fontenrose divided the surviving oracular texts in four categories: Historical responses (H), Quasi-historical (Q), Legendary responses (L), and fictional response (F). The following are related to procreation: H34, L4, L5, L17, L23, L 28, L82, L99, Q28, Q59, Q104, Q159.

⁴⁴⁵ See on this matter: Dillon (1997) 86; Eidinow (2007) 36; Scott (2014) 13.

⁴⁴⁶ Parke (1967) 110.

⁴⁴⁷ Dillon (1997) 95; The oracle did also treat state questions. Parke (1967); L'hôte (2006).

the inquiries,⁴⁴⁸ and in one case a woman consulted the oracle herself.⁴⁴⁹ The former are mostly cases where a husband asked Zeus Naios, and occasionally Dione, what must be done or to which deity he must turn in order to have children with his wife.⁴⁵⁰ In one case however, a husband (Euandros) and wife (not mentioned by name) are listed together as consultants.⁴⁵¹ Susan Cole convincingly classifies this case as concerned with reproduction, since these people consulted Zeus and Dione for a fortunate future for themselves and their household, and children would be a vital part of this.⁴⁵² The case where a woman herself consulted the oracle is very interesting:

[περ]ῖ γενεᾶς Φίδου ἐξ[τίτι ἄν]
 [θε]ῶν εὐχομένης ἢ θ[υούσης]
 γενεὰ γένοιτο.

‘About descendants for Phidus [asks] – – – .
 To which god shall she pray or offer in order to have children?’⁴⁵³

Here a woman inquires the oracle on behalf of a man, in relation to childlessness. It is uncertain how this man and woman are related, they are likely part of the same *oikos*.⁴⁵⁴ Dakaris, Vokotopoulou, and Christidis argue convincingly that ἐξ- is the beginning of the female consultant’s name, who they think is Phidus wife.⁴⁵⁵ Something else which makes this tablet interesting, is that it is written in Attic Greek. Moreover, it was not uncommon for people to travel from Attica to Dodona to consult Zeus Naios, but it is unlikely that many people did so, since the journey was exceptionally long.⁴⁵⁶ The woman in question was therefore probably living in Northern Greece.⁴⁵⁷

Overall, however, we see that oracular sanctuaries were used by women and their husbands as a means in their quest for healthy offspring. The role a woman herself played likely varied, but nonetheless the means was there, and although it was probably costly the option was used.

⁴⁴⁸ This is something we do not see in the above-mentioned oracular texts from Delphi.

⁴⁴⁹ I studied both Herbert Parke’s (1967) and Eric L’hôte’s publications of the lead tablets from Dodona. I do have to mention, however, that many of the tablets that were found during the excavations remain unpublished as yet.

⁴⁵⁰ Parke, 264 no. 3; Parke, 264 no. 5. (L’hôte no. 41); Parke, 265 no. 7. (L’hôte no. 46); Parke, 265 no. 8. (L’hôte no. 48); Parke, 266 no. 9. (L’hôte no. 47); L’hôte no. 45.

⁴⁵¹ Parke 263 no. 1.

⁴⁵² Cole (2004) 150.

⁴⁵³ DVC 1268A. (DOL translation).

⁴⁵⁴ The woman is possibly the slave, sister, or wife of Phidus.

⁴⁵⁵ DVC 1268A.

⁴⁵⁶ Jonkers (2010) 54.

⁴⁵⁷ Phidus is a north-western Greek name, which possibly means that both he and the woman lived in North-Western Greece. Maybe the woman was originally from Attica and wrote the inquiry herself. Moreover, according to Parke most if not all tablets were written by the consultants themselves, since they are written in different Greek dialects, alphabets, with variations in grammar and spelling, and the handwriting varies significantly. Parke (1967) 101.

Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to identify the different means women of classical Attica had in organising fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth. As a result, it provides an overview of the medical help available, the rituals and magic performed, and the fertility and childbirth deities these women turned to. An overview founded on the study and analysis of ancient (medical) texts, votive offerings, vase decorations, and archaeological and epigraphic evidence. One that indicates that women, as well as their family members, invested a lot of time, effort, and money in the crucial undertaking of producing healthy offspring.

This analysis has shown that women with reproductive issues could be treated by (female) doctors, as well as by midwives; and that these medical professionals were likely not summoned solely by a woman's *kyrios*, but in some cases also by the women themselves. In addition, we learned that the many treatments these *iatroi* and *maiai* provided, were based on the believe that all ailments of the female body were caused by a disbalance in the body. This medical belief was - though lacking the detailed knowledge of the medical professionals - likely shared by the general public. It is my opinion that the knowledge of the health benefits of certain ingredients like plants, herbs, and stones in relation to these issues, could not only be accessed through medical professionals, but were also used by ordinary men and women who self-medicated and used similar recipes to those described in the Hippocratic corpus.

Moreover, we saw what kind of rituals Attic women, their family members, and possibly medical personnel performed in relation to procreation; and that sympathetic and antipathetic magic played a prominent role in these rituals. It became clear that procreation rituals were performed from an early age onwards - e.g. with the dedication of locks of hair - and were an important aspect of a woman's life up until she was past the age of childbearing. Some rituals were rather common and possibly even compulsory, while others were only occasionally used. It is probable that the rituals performed in relation to marriage - e.g. the dedication of the *proteleia*, the pre-nuptial bathing ritual, and the ritual involving the loosening of the girdle on the wedding night - as well as the rituals concerning the acceptance of the child into the *oikos*, were practiced widely and might even have been compulsory. On the other hand, the more personal rituals and magical practices (e.g. wearing amulets to enhance fertility or to keep mother and child safe during pregnancy and childbirth, or visiting certain shrines) were seemingly subjected to circumstance. That is, when a woman was afraid of childbirth or encountered complications during her pregnancy, she could turn to these more personal means, those that did not necessarily require the help or interference of a husband or other family member.

Our study of reproduction related votive offerings taught us that Athenian women turned to a variety of deities in their quest for healthy offspring. As the scope of this research only allowed for an analysis of the sanctuaries in and around Athens (apart from Daphne and Brauron), further research into the sanctuaries of rural Attica would be beneficial to complete the overview of the area as a whole. For now, we can conclude that the most prominent fertility

and childbirth deities were Aphrodite, Artemis, and Eileithyia. Furthermore, Asklepios - being a healing god - likewise fulfilled a prominent role. Other healing deities and deities associated with certain natural features (e.g. Kephisos and the Nymphs) further complete our list. Additionally, some of these deities seem to have had their own 'expertise'. Aphrodite for example, was more often approached in relation to fertility issues, while Eileithyia was specifically a childbirth deity. Artemis and Asklepios were approached both in relation to fertility and childbirth issues. Overall however, it is hard to determine precisely why a woman, or her family members, decided to approach one deity instead of the other. A woman's bond with (or her family's connection to) certain deities likely played an important role here, as we have seen with Xenokrateia. Alternatively, women could consult an oracle - i.e. an oracle teller in the city or in an oracular sanctuary - to decide which deity to turn to.

Analysing female dedicants and their votive offerings, it became clear once more that women were equally active in the religious sphere as men. The votives show that women dedicated both smaller (household) objects such as loom weights and pottery, as well as costly and especially (self-)made or commissioned objects (e.g. reliefs, garments etc.) and did so throughout all stages relating to reproduction.

In the last chapter we have seen that Attic women were even willing - and capable - of visiting distant sanctuaries. The results show, that women possessing the necessary resources could, when the need arose, travel by themselves or with companions. Presumably, they did so when they were in despair after more local means did not provide a solution to their problems, or when a deity had ordered them to do so. This shows that women could go to extreme lengths - sometimes literally - to fulfil the need to provide the *oikos* with healthy children.

When it comes to the sub-questions of *who* used particular means and *why*, some interesting finds occur. Though the focus throughout this research has been on women, the results show that the husband too played his part. This should not be too surprising, since having healthy offspring was equally important to both men and women. As we have seen, the husband likewise played an essential part in rituals surrounding marriage and the *oikos*. Other than that, men also co-dedicated reproduction related votives with their wife, consulted oracles, and seemingly tried to influence their wife's - or another female relatives' - chances of getting pregnant (e.g. by dedicating female *somata* and possibly vulvae). Men could thus actively aid (their) women in seeking medical and religious help for fertility and childbirth related issues. Perhaps more strikingly, the opposite - women aiding (their) men - also occurred. In the Dodonian case of Phidus we have seen that women on their end could likewise assist in men's quest for offspring. To gain more knowledge on the circumstances in which both women and men assisted each other in seeking remedies for reproduction related issues, further research is necessary.

Furthermore, the results show that - when it came to deciding what means to employ - experience likely played a decisive role. It is reasonable to assume that women initially acted based on their personal experience - or that of their families - and chose to go to one deity rather than the other based on what they were accustomed to. The same is true for choosing when or why to call in the help of a doctor or midwife, or when deciding whether to visit a sanctuary beyond the borders of Attica. The same is true on a lower level in choosing which ritual to carry

out or what magic to practice. The outcome of these choices would differ according to what a woman and her family were accustomed to and the resources they had.

This brings us to the question of to what extent status and economic background affected the means available to women. The source material discussed does not allow us to make a clear distinction between women of different social and economic backgrounds, but we can nonetheless conclude that overall, wealth was seemingly not of great importance when it came to the use of most of the discussed means. The reciprocal nature of ancient Greek religion did not entail that the costlier a dedication was the more a deity was willing to help. It is nevertheless true that certain means were more accessible to wealthy people than they were to the poor. They had better resources to travel and perhaps to pay for medical help, though in case of the latter we have no real indication of the price of medical help and therefore do not know if this was a real issue. In terms of status, the results indicate that nearly all of the available means could be used by women of all social backgrounds, but that the circumstances relating to their status - e.g. a female slave was likely unable to travel to distant sanctuaries - could sometimes form a restriction.

In relation to future research, a study of the reproduction related means of other Greek regions (e.g. the Peloponnese) can be of interest to allow for comparable research to be done between these regions and determine to which extent these means varied.

Finally, I want to emphasise that I never wished to imply that women in classical Attica had the complete freedom and resources to use *all* of the above-mentioned means in their quest for healthy offspring, nor that women were never subject to the will of their *kyrios*. Yet, the results of this thesis indicate that overall, Attic women could - by themselves - turn to an abundant amount of means both to enhance their fertility, to have a safe pregnancy and childbirth (both for mother and child), and to survive and ease the period shortly after birth. Even though these means occasionally required the aid of a *kyrios* or that of other family members, we see that in most cases the experience was a woman's own: she was the one asking the gods for help, she herself had visions of Asklepios while sleeping in the abaton at Epidaurus, she was the one dedicating garments she made by herself, and it was she who wore amulets and bathed in sacred rivers. Ultimately, she could even administer prescribed remedies by herself. This indicates once more the level of female agency in relation to procreation and marks her activity in the spheres of religion, magic, and medicine.

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⁴⁵⁸ Gettyimages, 'Red-figure loutrophoros' (version unknown) <https://www.gettyimages.nl/detail/nieuwsfoto's/red-figure-loutrophoros-representing-the-offering-of-nieuwsfotos/475597103> (March 28 2019).

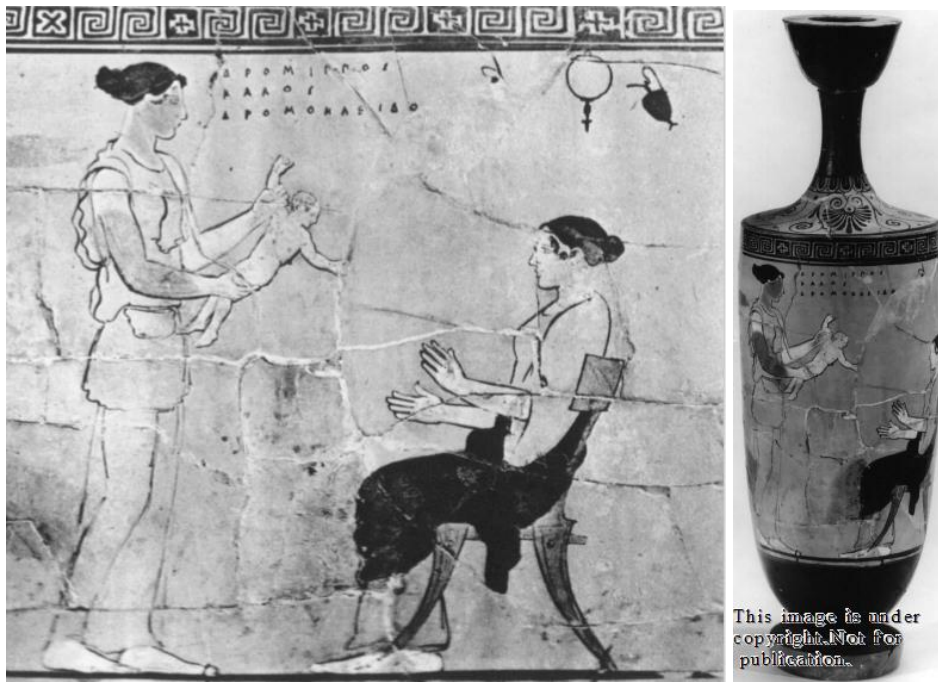


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⁴⁵⁹ University of Oxford, '213940' (version March 11 2019)
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⁴⁶⁶ Kant (2018) 87.

⁴⁶⁷ Wikimedia, 'File:Brauron - Votive Relief2.jpg' (version March 4 2017) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brauron_-_Votive_Relief2.jpg (June 10 2019).



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Appendices

Appendix I

Aphrodite

Epigraphic corpora	Inv. No	Object	Date	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG II2</i> 4577	NM 1592	Vulva (?) attached to a marble dove	Fourth century BC	Shrine of Aphrodite near Daphne	Aphrodite (<i>en Kepois</i>)	M.
<i>IG II/III3</i> 1513	EM 10603	Marble base	Ca. 350 BC	Piraeus	Aphrodite Ourania	F.
<i>IG II/III3</i> 1518	-	-	Ca. 350 BC	Shrine of Aphrodite near Daphne	Aphrodite (<i>en Kepois</i>)	F.
<i>IG II/III³</i> 1519	NM 1821	Marble tablet with relief	Ca. 350 BC	Shrine of Aphrodite near Daphne	Aphrodite (<i>en Kepois</i>)	F.
<i>IG II/III³</i> 1520	NM 1594	Marble tablet with relief	Ca. 350 BC	Shrine of Aphrodite near Daphne	Aphrodite (<i>en Kepois</i>)	F.
<i>IG II/III³</i> 1521	NM 1595	Marble tablet with relief	Ca. 350 BC	Shrine of Aphrodite near Daphne	Aphrodite (<i>en Kepois</i>)	F.
<i>IG II/III³</i> 1532	NM 2730	Marble tablet with relief	Ca. 350 BC	Shrine of Aphrodite near Daphne	Aphrodite (<i>en Kepois</i>)	F.

Other

Epigraphic corpora	Inv. No	Object	Date	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>SEG 41.182.</i>	Π 66 and 67	Treasury-box Aphrodite	Early fourth-century BC	Northeast side Acropolis	Aphrodite Ourania	-

Artemis

Epigraphic corpora	Inv. No	Object	Date	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG II/III3</i> 1086	BE 5 and 1151	Marble relief (aediculum) [?]	Ca. 340-330 BC	Sanctuary of Artemis (Brauron)	Artemis Brauronia	F.
<i>IG II/III3</i> 1087	BE 83 and 1152	Marble relief (aediculum) [?]	Ca. 340 BC	Sanctuary of Artemis (Brauron)	Artemis Brauronia	F.

Other

Epigraphic corpora/Publication	Inv. No	Object	Date	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG II/III3</i> 963	NM © 26	Marble relief	Ca. 320 BC	Kerameikos	Artemis Kalliste	-
Lee (2015) 4.3	MP 5383	Figure of swaddled infant	Late fourth-century	Mounichia hill (Piraeus)	Artemis Mounichia	-

Treasury lists Brauron

Epigraphic corpora	Mentioned object	Date treasury lists	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG II²</i> 1514.15	Girdle	Ca. mid-fourth century BC	Brauron	Artemis Brauronia	F.
<i>IG II²</i> 1518.57-58	Woman's girdle	Ca. mid-fourth century BC	Brauron	Artemis Brauronia	F.

Asklepios

Epigraphic corpora	Inv. No	Object	Date	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG II/III</i> 717	NK 38	Marble pillar with abacus [Hymettian]	Ca. 350-300 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
<i>IG II/III</i> ³ 727	EM 8761	Marble relief with breasts	Ca. 350-300 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.

Treasury lists Asklepieion

Bodies

Aleshire number	Type of anatomical votive	Date treasury lists	Location	Deity	Gender dedcant
IV 68	Female body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
IV 78	Relief with female body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
IV 101 b and c	Female body and ankle bangle	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
IV 104 b and c	Relief with female body and hips	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
IV 114 b	Body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 113 d	Female body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 123 b and c	Body and two hearts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 123 e	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 125 a	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V137 a	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 146 e	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 147 c	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 151 d	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 152 b	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 167 b	Female body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.

Aleshire number	Type of anatomical votive	Date treasury lists	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
V 169 c	Two bodies	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 170 c and d	Body and double eyes	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
IV 77 b	Relief with female body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
IV 81a	Relief, attached to tablet, with female body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 107 a	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 107 c	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 110 c	Male body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 119 a	Relief with three bodies	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 125 c	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 125 f	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 126 a	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 127 d	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 143 c	Female body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 144 c	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 144 f	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 145 b	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 145 c	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 146 d	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 147 b	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 167 a	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.

Aleshire number	Type of anatomical votive	Date treasury list	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
V 108 b en c	Two bodies, of a man and a woman	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M. and F.
V 111 a	Relief with two bodies	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M. and F.
V 146 a	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M. and F.
V 107 b	Two bodies	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M. and ?
IV 68	Body on a relief	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
IV 79 a	Male body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
IV 80 c	Male body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
IV 99 b	Female body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
IV 104 d	Male body	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 107 e	Female body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 110 b	Female body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 124 h	Bodies	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 143 b	Male body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 143 f	Female body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 144 a	Female body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 145 g	Two bodies	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 146 b	Bodies	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 147 d	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 166 b	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 169 d	Body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 170 a	Male body	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-

Genitals

Aleshire number	Type of anatomical votive	Date treasury lists	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
V 110 d	Female genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 170 b	Female genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 100 d	(Female) genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
IV 130 c	Male Genitals	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
IV 131 b	Male genitals	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 117 a	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 117 e	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	M.
V 75 g	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 81 g	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 84 g	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 87 c	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 92 e	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 130 g	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 131 g	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 132 e	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 161 d	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 161 e	Male genitals	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-

Breasts

Aleshire number	Type of anatomical votive	Date treasury lists	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
V 82 f	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 98 b	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 103 c	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 131 h	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V137 b	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 139 f	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
V 156 c	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
IV 88 d	Breasts	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
IV 89 b	Breasts	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
IV 107 c	Two breasts	Ca. 274/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 98 c	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-
V 106	Breasts	Ca. 244/3 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-

Keys

Epigraphic corpora	Object	Date treasury lists	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG II² 1533.27</i>	Key	Ca. 329-328 BC	City Asklepieion (Athens)	Asklepios	-

Eileithyia

Epigraphic corpora	Inv. No	Object	Date	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG II/III3 1141</i>	ΠΑ 2328	-	Ca. < 350 BC	Athens	Eileithyia	F.
<i>IG II/III3 1142</i>	PA 637	Marble base with cymation	Ca. 350 BC	Athens ?	Eileithyia	F.

Other

Epigraphic corpora	Inv. No	Object	Date	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG</i> I3 987	NM 2756	Pillar with relief	Ca. 405-400 BC	Sanctuary of Echelidai near New Phaleron	Kephisos	F.
<i>IG</i> II/III ³ 898	TE 68.1	Stone tablet	Ca. 400-300 BC	Sanctuary of the Medical gods (Thorikos)	Hygieia	F.
<i>IG</i> II/III ³ 906	NM 6422	Marble tablet with relief	Ca. 400-300 BC	Sanctuary of Amaryn (Athens)	Asklepios	F.
<i>IG</i> II/III ³ 1212	-	Marble Herm	Ca. 350 BC	Roman Forum (Athens)	Hera	F.
<i>IG</i> II/ III ³ 1337	SK 1612	Marble stele with relief	Ca. 300 BC	Piraeus	Agditis and Attis	F.

Treasury lists of the Erechtheion and Parthenon

Epigraphic corpora	Mentioned object	Date treasury lists	Location	Deity	Gender dedicant
<i>IG</i> I ³ 360.3	Golden belt	Ca. 408/7 BC	Acropolis	Athena?	-
<i>IG</i> II ² 1414.44	Key	Ca. 405/4 BC	Acropolis	Athena?	-
<i>IG</i> II ² 1414.47	Key	Ca. 405/4 BC	Acropolis	Athena?	-
<i>IG</i> II ² 1469 b89	Wedding pottery	Ca. 320 BC	Acropolis	Athena ?	-

Appendix II

Anatomical votives from the treasury lists of the Asklepieion on the south slope of the Acropolis⁴⁷⁰

Bodies

σωμάτιον and σῶμα (Half body σῶματος ἥμισυ en dorsal view of body σωματίον ὀπίσθιον niet meegerekend)

- Female bodies dedicated by woman: 6
 - Female bodies dedicated by man: 2
 - Female bodies dedicated by both a man and woman: 1
 - Female bodies, dedicant unknown: 6
 - Male body dedicated by woman: 0
 - Male body dedicated by man: 1
 - Male body dedicated by both a man and a woman: 1
 - Male bodies, dedicant unknown: 5
 - Unspecified bodies dedicated by woman: 12
 - Unspecified bodies dedicated by man: 12
 - Unspecified bodies dedicated by both a man and a woman: 1
 - Unspecified bodies, dedicant unknown: 15
- Total: 62

Genitals (both male and female)

- Male, dedicated by man: 3
 - Male, dedicator unknown: 10
 - Female, Dedicated by man: 0
 - Female, dedicated by woman: 1
 - Unknown, dedicated by man: 1
- Total: 15

Breasts

- Dedicated by woman: 7
 - Dedicated by man: 0
 - Dedicator unknown: 5
- Total: 12

⁴⁷⁰ In my research of the treasury lists of the sanctuary of Asklepios on the south slope of the Acropolis, I used the publication of these lists by Aleshire (1989). In this, I studied both her translation and the original texts.