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MINOR HEALING CULTS WITHIN ATHENS AND ITS ENVIRONS

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ABSTRACT

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MINOR HEALING CULTS WITHIN ATHENS AND ITS ENVIRONS

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This thesis looks only at the minor, non-Asklepian healing cults in and around Athens and the Peiraieus. It looks at the evidence for healing cults prior to the introduction of Asklepios and concludes that healing was a power exercised by several deities but in a general way quite unlike the concentrated therapy provided by the cults in the post 420 B.C. period. This period saw the emergence of numerous 'saviour deities' and these, along with similar heroes, were at the forefront of a new healing movement. This new movement had two main characteristics. The first was the development of care for the health of individuals and families as well as communities. The second was the network of links connecting healing deities and heroes around Athens and the Peiraieus with gods and goddesses more at home in various parts of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Using epigraphic, anaglyptic and any other archaeological evidence available, the various healing cults of Zeus are studied from 420 B.C. until the Roman period. The healing hero Amynos has a chapter to himself. The lunar and maieutic deities are studied as a group and an attempt is made to show that their role was genuinely curative. The Egyptian deities are studied in relation to Delos and their homeland. Finally a range of hero cults is studied.

The study concludes that the evidence supports the hypotheses that the Peloponnesian War and the Great Plague formed a watershed in religious beliefs and practices, that the cult of Asklepios profoundly influenced other healing cults and that the cosmopolitan nature of Athenian society often gave them an Eastern flavour.

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K.M.P.

Introduction. The established deities.

THE ESTABLISHED DEITIES

This study is only concerned with the minor healing deities of the area which in classical times was occupied by the City Trittyes, i.e. the area delineated to the north-west of Athens by Mount Aigaleos - but including the Dafni pass which splits Aigaleos into two, virtually separate halves - to the north-east by the foothills of Mount Pentelikon, to the south-east by the sea[1] (see Plate 1). This area was chosen because the inhabitants would have had relatively easy access to shrines within those natural boundaries. Some people, of course, travelled further afield to the healing site in the coastal deme of Rhamnous beyond Mount Pentelikon up in the north-east corner of Attica or even further to the healing centre at Oropos on the boundary with Boeotia. Most people, however, restricted by the difficulties, expense and length of time involved in travelling beyond those boundaries, would generally have looked to healing cults nearer to hand.

They would have found no shortage of healing cults to choose from. Within the area of the City Trittyes throughout the late Classical and Hellenistic periods there was a wide choice of such cults. The literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence that we have almost certainly does not fully reflect the spectrum of choice and yet what evidence we do possess is sufficient to suggest a multiplicity of cults some of which specialised in certain healing problems while others covered a wide range. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. To-day in Athens, as over all Greece, Ἁγία Παρασκευή specialises in eye problems and has her own shrines while, for example, the Spring House of the Athenian Asklepieion, which in fact predates the founding of the Asklepieion[2], now houses a multiplicity of healing cults within the one shrine. A spinster may dedicate her τάμα of two στεφάναι impressed upon a silver plaque for her marriage, or when married dedicate a plaque showing an infant in swaddling clothes in return for a successful pregnancy. A man can dedicate a plaque showing the part of his body healed - leg, arm etc. All of this takes place within the one shrine and with the plaques dedicated to Christ, Our Lady or any one of a variety of saints (see Plate 2).

Dedications to the saints in fact outnumber those to Christ and this too is an interesting reflection on an underlying and unchanging state of affairs. There are two basic categories of saints:

> '...(i) those saints almost exclusively concerned with healing; and (ii) the all-rounders. Looking at the second category in more detail, we find that the greatest proportion of their time too is taken up with ministering to the sick.'[3]

What is unchanging is that just as to-day we might expect Christ to be the major healer and yet find that it is his mother and the saints who are the most common healers both in the Western Patriarchate and in the Greek Orthodox Church, so too in and around Athens it was not the Olympian gods who were the major healers but, as we shall see, foreign gods - some of whom had undergone a process of syncretism with the Olympian deities while others retained their starkly foreign flavour - and minor deities and heroes of one sort or another.

Zeus, as we shall see, was a healer yet he was not the Olympian Zeus but a version much closer to ordinary men and women. Apollo is often thought of now as the god of medicine par excellence but there is little evidence that his position in and around Athens was anything but a formal one[4]. Dionysus too would be invoked as ἰατρός[5] but there is no evidence that this was anything but an honorific title. Indeed any god could heal. This study, however, is an attempt to look at those gods and heroes whose cult centred entirely or largely around a healing role. Athena Hygieia is the greatest problem. There are dozens of votive offerings to Hygieia originating from the Athenian Asklepieion and dating from the fourth century B.C. through into the Imperial period.[6] What relationship has this Hygieia with Athena Hygieia?

We know that Athena had acquired the epithet Hygieia probably a hundred years or more before the arrival in Athens of Hygieia, the daughter of Asklepios, in 420/419 B.C. We are fortunate in not having to rely merely on later, hearsay reports that Athena Hygieia was worshipped at an early period since we have two possible, original sources of

information. Firstly we have the remains of a pillar or base which is in pieces[7]. We have three, two of which actually join. They were first reassembled in 1888[8]. The most recent appraisal of the pieces gives a reading which starts in hexameters and then ceases to be metrical.

[– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪] ὄρχαμε : τ[έχνες]
[– ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪]ε : καλὸς [– ∪]
[– ∪ ∪ –] α [∪∪ – ∪∪ – ∪ ∪ϑ] εκεν [ἀπαρχὲν]
[• • • • •] αν[:]υγιεία [ν – ∪ ∪ – ∪ ∪] ν [– ∪].
[Ε]ὐφρόνιος[: ἀνέθεκε] ν : [• • • • •]$_{o}$
κεραμεὺς : [τἀθεναί]αι δε [κάτεν].
[.....] ερ [– – –] [9].

Other reconstructions are possible. But there seems little doubt about the ὑγιεία although it need not refer to the Goddess Hygieia. The dedicant is probably by the Euphronios responsible for the ten vases bearing his name followed by ἐποίησεν[10]. We can thus date this dedication fairly accurately. We have a lower limit of 480 B.C. since apparently the remains were found 'im Perserschutt'[11]. Our upper limit is set by the ἐποίησεν for Euphronios had been in his younger days a painter and he then signed ἔγραψεν[12]. If the potter is the same man as the painter, as seems almost certain[13], then the year 500 B.C. is our upper limit since

> 'it appears that Euphronios worked as a painter in the period ca. 515-500 B.C. and as a potter in the following years until about 460 B.C'.[14]

Our second piece of evidence is stronger than the first. It is a sherd found on the Acropolis. The sherd is a μικρὸν ἐρυθρόμορφον τεμάχιον[15]. On it there is μέρος ἱματίου καὶ ἀσπίς ἐφ' ἧς γεγραμμένος ὄφις[16]. What makes the piece of greatest interest, however, is the signature:

'A] θην [αίᾳ]Υγιαί [ᾳ K] άλλις | [ἐ] ποίησ [ε]καὶ ἀνέθ [ηκεν][17]

(see Plate 3)

Little is known of the potter Kallis but the sherd is dateable by

its findspot: ἐν δὲ τῇ τρὸς τὸ νότιον τεῖχος τῆς Ἀκροπόλεως ἐπιχώσει[18]. It is therefore among Persian ransack debris. The 'hot cross bun' thetas, which seem very rarely to have been used in Athens after the Persian sack, confirm the date as being about 490 B.C.

Our next piece of evidence for Athena Hygieia is much later: Plutarch's account of the accident during the building of the Propylaia:

> τύχη δὲ θαυμαστὴ συμβᾶσα περὶ τὴν οἰκοδομίαν ἐμήνυσε τὴν θεὸν οὐκ ἀποστατοῦσαν, ἀλλὰ συνεφαπτομένην τοῦ ἔργου καὶ συνεπιτελοῦσαν. ὁ γὰρ ἐνεργότατος καὶ προθυμότατος τῶν τεχνιτῶν ἀποσφαλεὶς ἐξ ὕψους ἔπεσε καὶ διέκειτο μοχθηρῶς, ὑπὸ τῶν ἰατρῶν ἀπεγνωσμένος. ἀθυμοῦντος δὲ τοῦ Περικλέους ἡ θεὸς ὄναρ φανεῖσα συνέταξε θεραπείαν, ἣ χρώμενος ὁ Περικλῆς ταχὺ καὶ ῥᾳδίως ἴασατο τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ἐπὶ τούτῳ δὲ καὶ τὸ χαλκοῦν ἄγαλμα τῆς Ὑγιείας Ἀθηνᾶς ἀνέστησεν ἐν ἀκροπόλει παρὰ τὸν βωμὸν ὃς καὶ πρότερον ἦν, ὡς λέγουσιν.[19]

One might be tempted to dismiss this as a pious story but we do have the archaeological evidence to back up at least part of it. In 1839 the base of a statue was discovered. On it was the inscription:

> Ἀθεναῖοι τῆι Ἀθεναίαι τῆι Ὑγιείαι Πύρρος ἐποίησεν Ἀθεναῖος[20]

(see Plate 4)

Although Plutarch's story is late, the statue base seems to back up his story. It certainly was not placed in its present position until the completion of the Propylaia in 432 B.C. However, the base , which looks as though it should be circular, in fact has the back third cut away in a straight line so that it can be fitted flush with the first step of the Propylaia. This *may* indicate that the base is from an earlier shrine and the lettering would certainly bear a date closer to 450.[21] For our purposes we can be certain that the base at least indicates a cult statue on this spot by 430 B.C. We cannot be sure that the story of Plutarch - or the more garbled version of Pliny[22] - is true. Nor can we be sure that, even if one or other story is correct, this base is linked to the incident of the injured workman. Difficulties arise from the base's dedication by the Athenian people generally rather than Pericles and also from the signature of Pyrros who is, unfortunately, not known for any other piece of sculpture. Further difficulties arise from varying

interpretations of the marks on the upper surface of the base. Athena Hygieia may well have held a spear in her right hand[23] although any suggestions about the left hand and what it held are somewhat hypothetical. She could easily have been holding a patera.

We thus have evidence of a cult of Athena Hygieia ranging from before the Persian sack of Athens until about twelve years before the introduction of the Asklepian Hygieia in 420/419 B.C. The cult may even have had its origins back in the sixth century[24]. That there was a cult of Athena Hygieia there is thus no doubt but what form did it take? Unfortunately we here have to rely on two authors, Pliny and Plutarch, who were writing literally five hundred years after the event they were describing. Both Pliny's and Plutarch's accounts smack of the vivid re-enactments invented by tourist guides! The base with its dedication from the Athenian people Ἀθεναῖοι, its position on the Acropolis and its statue of a, probably, rather martial Athena all lead one to suspect a formal cult. Offerings of κόραι and works of art could as easily be dedicated to Athena with the epithet Hygieia as they could to her under any other title.

The Asklepian Hygieia appears to have also had origins back in the archaic period[25] especially if one can trust Pausanias' description of the image of Hygieia at Titane[26]. It may well be that Hygieia as a member of the Asklepian family had her origins at Titane[27] although, as at Athens, she may originally have been quite independent of Asklepios[28]. If one is willing to discount Pausanias' description of the Hygieia at Titane and to push back the Athenian Hygieia into the sixth century B.C., it is even possible to believe that the worship of Hygieia had its ultimate origins in Athens[29].

Whichever of these positions one adopts, one cannot avoid an impression of a very distinct change after the introduction of the Asklepios cult in 420/419 B.C. Within a very short space of time there is the stream of inscriptions linking Hygieia with Asklepios[30] and often accompanying them a series of beautiful anaglyphs[31] showing the goddess near Asklepios, almost always standing even if he is sitting, often slightly in the background even if the other members of the Asklepian family are more deeply carved in the foreground. It is almost as if a deliberate attempt were

being made to link the imported cult of Asklepios with the home-grown, or at least long-rooted, cult of Hygieia. At last, with the arrival of the Asklepian cult, Hygieia, for so long the centre of a formal cult, could lose her abstraction and become embodied in a cult which could attract believers and followers by the thousand:

> 'C'est à Athènes qu' Hygieia fut le plus étroitement associée au dieu guérisseur et, peut-on dire à la lettre, c'est là qu' elle prit corps'.[32]

This is obviously only a hypothesis but it does fit the facts. There are other facts too with which it dovetails. Asklepios was introduced into Athens not long after the great plague which first struck in 430-428 and again in 427-426 B.C. Although a later tradition[33] asserted that the Athenians had the help of the great Hippocrates and as a result rewarded him handsomely because παρήγγειλε τίσι χρὴ θεραπείαις χρωμένους ἀσφαλῶς διαφεύξασθαι τὸν ἐπιόντα λοιμὸν[34], we know that the truth was very different. As will be seen again in Chapter 6, it is Thucydides[35] who paints the contemporary, factual and rather terrifying picture of what took place. Thucydides tells us that the plague had not entirely disappeared in between the two main bouts. In the second bout Thucydides tells us that about a third of the hoplite ranks died from the plague - about four thousand,four hundred. Three hundred, about thirty percent of the total, in the cavalry ranks died from the disease too. Of the rest of the population - metics, foreigners, slaves, women and children an inestimable number perished - τοῦ δὲ ἄλλου ὄχλου ἀνεξεύρετος ἀριθμός[36]. While typhus, taking the now generally accepted view that it was typhus[37] 'is no respecter of the rich and well-fed'[38], nonetheless the insanitary crowding and lack of adequate supplies of food and water may well have led to a casualty rate approaching fifty percent for the non-combatant population including metics. This would mean something in the region of seventy to eighty thousand[39]. Thucydides tells us that at the same time there was a great number of earthquakes at Athens[40]. These too must have frightened people already in a state of shock.

What medical treatment did people have access to at the time? There was probably no free medical care[41] and doctors, such as there were, suffered the highest casualty rate[42]. This apparently has always been the fate of doctors in typhoid epidemics[43]. All of this took place long before the

Sicilian Expedition and the final, traumatic end of the war in 404 B.C. which must have deepened the already profound sense of insecurity and helplessness. To whom could people turn? There was a feeling of utter despondency - ἀθυμία[44]. Not only was there medical despair but also a loss of religious trust. Not only did the bad die but also the good and, what is worse, it was especially the good who succumbed because it was they who made it a point of honour to visit the sick[45]. This is precisely the situation in which one would expect some people to reject all morality because their traditional moral code was being breached. We are told that this was a common reaction in Athens at this time[46]. To back up a conviction that morality had collapsed there was also the spectacle of the temples of their traditional gods hopelessly profaned, full, as they were, of corpses - νεκρῶν πλέα[47].

Life, however, had to go on. Even when life is full of plagues, there is still hope:

μούνη δ'αὐτόθι Ἐλπὶς ἐν ἀρρήκτοισι δόμοισιν ἔνδον ἔμιμνε.....
ἄλλὰ δὲ μυρία λυγρὰ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἀλάληται[48]

To what or to whom could they turn? Not to their old gods but among the numerous foreigners either resident as metics or involved as traders and merchants there were many who knew of or actually believed in deities from other poleis or even from other countries. Some of these deities had already penetrated into the Peiraieus. The Thracian goddess Bendis had arrived there probably in 430/429 B.C.[49] shortly after the start of the Peloponnesian War although her advent had probably been arranged a little earlier as the result of political manoeuvres[50]. The greatest example, however, is obviously the arrival of Asklepios in 420/419.

From this time onwards we find signs of a blossoming of healing cults. Some of them masqueraded under names which would lead one to believe that the deity is an ancient one but closer inspection reveals that some degree of syncretism has taken place between the older and a newer occupant of the cult shrine. There is an increased emphasis on those gods who had as their role, or as part of their role, the protection of individuals and families. Illness, after all, is a highly personal and family matter. This is not to deny that any of the Olympian gods and goddesses played a role in healing cults because they obviously did- but a change had taken place.

Just as it has been suggested that Athena Hygieia strongly influenced the emergence of the Asklepian Hygieia in Athens and was in the process herself largely absorbed into the new cult, so too other gods and goddesses had aspects of their cult - aspects which had in most cases always existed if only embryonically - accentuated. Wherever there was a tradition of care for individual or family, that aspect became enlarged and the deity became the focus for a healing cult. Often this transition was assisted by the deity being associated with some foreign god, goddess or hero who shared some characteristics with the indigenous deity but who in addition had a history of personal and family care for his or her devotees. In this way many of the deities traditionally worshipped in Athens, the Peiraieus and the surrounding districts obtained a faintly foreign aura often endorsed by the evidence for their having had a distinctively foreign element among their clientele.

The eventual defeat of Athens in 404 B.C. must have strengthened the trend towards finding deities in whom a battered and now defeated people could put their trust. Some people might have looked towards a renewal of their great, imperial past but many more would have been simply glad to be alive. In religion this latter group would have continued the search for deities other than those too closely associated with the official religion of the polis. The fourth century B.C. seems to have been a time when Athenians were particularly open to foreign influence. It certainly marks the time when our evidence suggests that many new ideas infiltrated the Peiraieus and Athens. New cults or alterations of older ones seem to have flourished throughout the Hellenistic period and into the Roman era although some withered and others expanded. Healing cults generally seem to have flourished well into the Christian period with some, notably the cult of Asklepios, surviving well into the fifth century A.D. The transition to the Christian period of healing cults, with its saints taking over the role of the older deities and heroes, marks the chronological point at which this study ends.

The inclusion of Asklepios, his family, his main cult centre - the Asklepieion on the south slope of the Acropolis - not to mention his minor shrines in Athens and his other great centre in the Peiraieus would have doubled the size of this study. The material found in Athens alone at or near the Asklepeion is so plentiful, of such great interest and fortunately

so well documented[51] that the inclusion of Asklepios would necessarily have dominated the subject to the detriment of the far less well known, minor healing deities. It was therefore decided to keep the study within manageable proportions and to concentrate on the lesser cults. That is not to say that Asklepios never crops up! His influence was pervasive and he will be frequently mentioned but his cult will never become the focus of attention.

An attempt will be made to study the origins of the lesser cults, to identify the ways in which the deities or heroes conformed to the pattern of caring for the individual or family and finally to assess the degree of foreign influence in terms of the deity or hero him/herself and in terms of the clientele. Where there is a sizeable amount of evidence for one cult, it is given a chapter of its own. Where the evidence is meagre or where a particular cult has strong ties with others, several are grouped within the one chapter.

Chapter I. Zeus Meilichios.

Ζεύς Μειλίχιος

"Zeus Meilichios, an ancient chthonian deity with healing powers"
R.E. Wycherley, 'Synopsis of Zeus Cults at Athens',
G R B S, V, 1964, p. 177

1. Introduction: Zeus Meilichios and our earliest sources.

This simple description of Zeus Meilichios conceals a complex problem for it is not clear how ancient or chthonian Zeus Meilichios was nor when he acquired a healing role. It would appear that our earliest source of information is Thucydides in his history of the Peloponnesian War while all other references to the god, both literary and epigraphic, seem to date from the fourth century B.C. and later:

> Ἔστι γὰρ καὶ Ἀθηναίοις Διάσια, ἃ καλεῖται, Διὸς ἑορτὴ Μειλιχίου μεγίστη, ἔξω τῆς πόλεως, ἐν ᾗ πανδημεὶ θύουσι, πολλοὶ οὐχ ἱερεῖα ἀλλὰ θύματα ἐπιχώρια[1].

Starting with such a simple picture this chapter will try to build a fuller profile of the god by examining the later evidence and by comparing the cult of Zeus Meilichios with the worship of Zeus under similar titles - Ktesios and Philios especially. We shall see that under all three titles Zeus has connections with healing shrines. Evidence for connections between Zeus Meilichios and Middle Eastern deities will be assessed and a chronological framework attempted. Finally the evidence for the cult in Athens and the Peiraieus will be studied and placed in perspective.

2. Evidence for the cult of Zeus under the title 'Meilichios'

It is clear that, although archaeological evidence for the worship of Zeus Meilichios during the Archaic period is entirely non-existent, there was at least a tradition that his cult went back far beyond the Classical period. This is made clear by the story recorded by Pausanias:

> Διαβᾶσι δὲ τὸν Κηφισὸν βωμός ἐστιν ἀρχαῖος Μειλιχίου Διός· ἐπὶ τούτῳ θησεὺς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀπογόνων τῶν Φυτάλου καθαρσίων ἔτυχε, ληστὰς καὶ ἄλλους ἀποκτείνας καὶ Σίνιν τὰ πρὸς Πιτθέως συγγενῆ[2].

Pausanias merely makes the link between the purification ceremony and the altar of Zeus Meilichios. Plutarch's version of the story adds two slightly different aspects:

> Προϊόντι δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ γενομένῳ κατὰ τὸν Κηφισόν, ἄνδρες ἐκ τοῦ Φυταλιδῶν γένους ἀπαντήσαντες ἡσπάσαντο πρῶτοι, καὶ δεομένου καθαρθῆναι, τοῖς νενομισμένοις ἁγνίσαντες καὶ μειλίχια θύσαντες εἱστίασαν οἴκοι, μηδενὸς πρότερον αὐτῷ φιλανθρώπου καθ' ὁδὸν ἐντυχόντος.[3]

The first aspect that Plutarch adds to the information given by Pausanias is that by implication Zeus is called Meilichios because of the μειλίχια offered to him. These μειλίχια - appeasements - can be interpreted as either presents begging for kindness or offerings of an apotropaic character. There is some evidence to suggest that the latter is the truer explanation[4]. If that is so, then the Zeus Meilichios whom we know in the Classical and Hellenistic periods has undergone considerable change[5]. It is not possible here to argue in detail one way or the other. However, it must be said that the Greeks had no concept of an evil god or devil as some Middle Eastern religions did. Even Hecate, who had some particularly sinister aspects, could be called upon as an averter of evil and could even be associated with other goddesses who acted as helpers of women in times of need[6]. Gods often had two sides to their character. Homer in Book I of the Iliad shows this clearly with regard to Apollo - he who can destroy by disease and a great healer-god. Zeus, the most powerful of all the gods, had many aspects to his character. As Zeus Keraunios, Ζεὺς Κεραύνειος, he was feared[7] but as Ζευς Μειλίχιος he showed forgiveness and favour to men, purifying them from the stains of their misdeeds. Any fear connected with Zeus Meilichios may well be due to a healthy awareness of the danger

surrounding suppliants who have committed a crime.

The second aspect added in Plutarch's account is the feasting. This is not an added extra as is clear from the Greek νενομισμένοις ἁγνίσαντες καὶ μειλίχια θύσαντες εἱστίασαν οἴκοι. Plutarch gives no indication of the nature of the μειλίχια but it may well be that the use of the participle θύσαντες, which has the effect of linking more closely the μειλίχια with εἱστίασαν, means that Plutarch intended us to understand that the feasting involved the eating of what had been sacrificed. This feasting connected with Zeus Meilichios almost certainly links him with Zeus under the title of Ξένιος whom travellers invoked when they needed board and lodgings for the night[8]. The reference to the Phytalidae being the first to greet him kindly, no-one having done so before - μηδενὸς προτερόν αὐτῷ φιλανθρώπου καθ' ὁδὸν ἐντυχόντος - also suggests a connection with Zeus Φίλιος whom we will look at more closely later.

It was pointed out many years ago[9] that the Phytalidae were linked with the culture of the fig tree. The ἱερὰ συκέα was the spot where Demeter first showed Phytalos the fruit of the fig and it was near here that Theseus was purified. Complex arguments have been proposed to show the link between the fig cult and Zeus Meilichios including the fact that figs were called μείλιχα on the island of Naxos[10]. While not denying any of this evidence, a more straightforward explanation lies close at hand - figs were used as part of the purificatory rites[11]. A late source of information tells us that purifying Zeus could be called Συκάσιος or Καθάρσιος:

> λέγεται δὲ καὶ συκάσιος Ζεὺς παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς, ὁ καθάρσιος. τῇ γὰρ συκῇ ἐχρῶντο φασὶν ἐν καθαρμοῖς[12]

A slight indication of a link between purifying Zeus and the Lesser Mysteries at Agrai can be seen in the fact that Plouton is reported to have descended to the underworld with Kore at a place known as Ἐρινεός - the wild fig tree[13]. This tiniest of clues will be added to later when other links between Zeus Meilichios and the Lesser Mysteries will be investigated.

Clearly Zeus Meilichios is a god whom the Greek regarded as being capable of cleansing men of guilt-stain. However, κάθαρσις was a term

with a wide variety of meanings. The verb καθάιρειν meant any physical or spiritual purging while the nouns καθαρμός and κάθαρσις overlapped in meaning but were not totally interchangeable. καθαρμός tended to have the spiritual purification as dominant but could be used in a medical context[14]. κάθαρσις probably had an even wider range of meanings. It certainly included the idea of purification from defilement and the cleansing from stain of guilt which formed part of the initiation into, for example, the Mysteries of Eleusis. It also included the concept of bodily discharges such as the menses and other bodily wastes whose retention would cause the body problems. The whole concept of καθαίρειν - purification - had the ideas of cleansing from moral pollution, the evacuating of waste materials and the removal of real or imaginary hindrances to healthy growth[15] so intertwined that the cognate words must have evoked a set of interlinked ideas in the mind of a Greek[16]. Purification producing both moral and physical health would certainly have gone together and it would have been quite natural to call on a purifying god like Ζεύς Μειλίχιος/Καθάρσιος / Συκάσιος for either moral or physical health. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say 'moral *and* physical health' since the distinction between them was very unclear[17].

3. Zeus Meilichios as a chthonic deity.

Having ascertained that, at the very least, there is no reason why Zeus Meilichios should not have been a deity connected with healing, can it be discovered if he was a chthonic god? The standard answer is in the affirmative and the evidence adduced is Xenophon's account of his sacrifice to the god on the way back from his expedition when his fortune was at a very low ebb and the omens were against him. He was told that Zeus Meilichios was hindering him and that it was advisable for Xenophon to sacrifice to that deity. He did so:

ἐθύετο καὶ ὁλοκαύτει χοίρους τῷ πατρίῳ νόμῳ, καὶ καλλιερεῖται[18]

The total burning of a sacrifice is certainly a usual sign of the chthonic nature of the deity. It can be argued, however, that the most that can be inferred is that the deity has a chthonic aspect. That is certainly the conclusion arrived at by one scholar[19]. He quotes Pausanias' description of Orestes and the Furies. Pausanias tells us that the Furies appeared as black to Orestes who, in a fit of madness, bit off a finger whereupon they seemed white to him. Orestes then made ἐναγισμός to them in order to avert their anger and also sacrificed (ἔθυσε) to them as white goddesses[20]. This is not so unlikely when one reflects on the number of gods who had both chthonic and ouranian aspects[21].

The fact that Xenophon sacrificed a pig to Zeus Meilichios has also been seen as an indicator of that god's chthonic nature[22]. However, the pig has three other aspects. Firstly, it is a small animal as well as being cheap and therefore was eminently suitable for individual offerings by almost everyone, even the poorest[23]. Secondly, the pig had a very special relevance to purification ceremonies. The most obvious example of this for an Athenian would have been the strange sight of a thousand or more people each carrying a piglet down into the sea at the Peiraieus during the Lesser Mysteries of Eleusis during the month of Boedromion. After ritual washing of both person and piglet, the pig was sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the Mystes in a lustral ceremony[24]. Certainly, Athenian audiences should have understood what Aeschylus meant by the words χοιρόκτονοι καθαρμοί which he put into the mouth of Orestes[25]. Thirdly, the pig may have carried connotations of fertility.[26]

Evidence came to light some few years ago to suggest that we are right in not trying to pigeon-hole Zeus Meilichios too precisely as regards his chthonic nature. This evidence is a sacrificial calendar for the Attic deme of Erchia, near the modern village of Spata east of Athens. This calendar, found about 1950, was published in 1963[27]. The vast majority of the sacrifices listed took place somewhere in the deme of Erchia but a few (six out of fifty six) were elsewhere. One of these latter took place in Athens[28]. The one which is of immediate interest is the sacrifice to Zeus Meilichios:

> Ἀνθεστηριῶνος, Διασίοις, ἐν ἄστει ἐν Ἄργας, Διὶ Μιλιχίωι, οἷς, νηφάλιος μέχρι σπλάγχ[ν]ων[29].

We know that the Diasia was the greatest festival of Zeus[30] and so it was fitting that demesmen should send representatives to the sacrifice in Athens. The Erchia calendar specifies a ram as their contribution. The calendar also specifies that the sacrifice is to be νηφάλιος μέχρι σπλάγχνων. This could mean either that there was to be NO drinking until after the inspection/burning of the entrails[31] or that NO offering of wine formed part of the sacrifice until the entrails had been disposed of[32]. It is true that the injunction νηφάλιος always accompanies holocausts in this calendar[33] but it is also to be found a further three times accompanying another injunction οὐ φορά[34], presumably meaning that the sacrifice is to be consumed within the sanctuary and none of it is to be taken away[35]. The injunction οὐ φορά is found another sixteen times in the calendar without the νηφάλιος rubric[36]. Thus there is obviously some variety in the mode of making the sacrifices. It is interesting to note that the sacrifice to Zeus Meilichios was neither a holocaust nor one of those sacrifices where the people were forbidden to take the meat out of the sanctuary. It would seem strange if the representatives from Erchia, present at the sanctuary of Zeus Meilichios in Agrai for the Diasia, performed their sacrifice in the form of a θυσία while Athenians at the same sanctuary at the same time performed a ὁλόκαυτος. Surely it seems much more likely that everyone sacrificed in the form of a θυσία.[37]

The picture of Zeus Meilichios which emerges from the Diasia and his other festival, the Pompeia, is usually one of a god with a distinct duality of aspect[38]. Thucydides[39] gives a great deal of information about the Diasia when he describes Kylon's failure to become tyrant in 632 B.C.because

he misinterpreted the Delphic oracle. The oracle had told him to seize the Acropolis on the greatest festival of Zeus which Kylon took to be the Olympic Games instead of the festival of Zeus Meilichios which was the correct interpretation. The reason why the latter would have been so superb an occasion for an aspiring tyrant to seize the acropolis is that most of the population would have been outside the town at the sanctuary in Agrai. From there the entrance to the acropolis would not have been visible. These two facts would have given the perfect opportunity for the seizure of the acropolis[40]. Thucydides also tells us that during the Diasia the people offered οὐχ ἱερεῖα ἀλλὰ θύματα ἐπιχώρια to Zeus Meilichios.[41] These were said to be bloodless and the scholia describe them as cakes in the shape of animals[42]. Is this proof that holocausts were the norm and the poor gave animal-shaped cakes as substitutes[43]? This still would not square very neatly with the statement that the whole population brought bloodless offerings at the Diasia. Nor, however, does it square with the evidence from the Erchia calendar. Instead of trying to square a circle and thus twist the evidence to fit one's preconceptions, it is much safer to admit that the evidence of Thucydides does not dovetail with other literary and epigraphic evidence. It is possible that official sacrifices of rams were performed on behalf of the demes while individuals brought bloodless offerings. That is an acceptable hypothesis. It is also possible that the situation which Thucydides was describing as having taken place in 632 B.C. or the situation as it was at the time of his writing (c. 420?) was different to that being described in the Erchia calendar c. 360 B.C.[44]

One small sidelight thrown on the Diasia by Aristophanes is a comment made by Strepsiades in The Clouds[45]. He is trying to persuade his son Pheidippides to enrol at the school of Socrates and part of his emotional blackmail is the reminder that the father had pandered to his son, for example, in buying him a little toy cart at the Diasia when the boy had been only six and still lisping. A few lines later Socrates shows that he is still unimpressed by the young man's pronunciation! The picture of the Diasia is of a festival where toys were available for sale and where children had a prominent place. This is admitted even by those who propose a relatively sombre interpretation of the festival[46]. More recently it has been suggested that children were of greater significance in the Diasia[47] and that Zeus Meilichios was a tutelary god of children. We shall

see later that there is indeed good reason to link Zeus Meilichios with children.

There was another festival of Zeus Meilichios at Athens - the Pompaia. Most of our information about this festival seems to come from Polemon of Ilion[48]. The essence of this festival was purification[49]. It was a winter feast, being held in the month of Maimakterion. The festival obviously had a procession and in this the central feature was the Διὸν Κῴδιον. This fleece came from a sacrificed sheep and those who wished to be purified stood on it with their left foot. This seems to be linked with the purification ceremony employed on special occasions at Eleusis, for example in the case of Herakles[50]. It is possible that the fleece came from an animal sacrificed at the preceding Diasia[51]. It is clear that the festival was purificatory but who or what was to be purified? If the suggestion that a circuit of the city[52] is accepted as likely, a parallel with the Roman Lupercalia comes to mind. The parallel is not exact because there are obviously many differences but are there not some interesting similarities? The essence of the latter ceremony lay in the twin aims of purification and fertility and these were achieved by the sacrifice of animals, goats, the smearing of the blood onto the foreheads of young men, the removal of the blood by wool dipped in milk, the tour of the city by the young men and the beating with the <u>februa</u>. These purifying strips of skin from the sacrificed goats were believed to remove barrenness and to ease the birth-pains when used to touch sterile or pregnant women respectively.

With regard to the Pompaia, the Διὸν Κῴδιον proves the purificatory aspect. The fertility aspect is shown by the connection between the festival and the sowing of the grain[53] and is quite probably reflected in the use of fleeces in attempts to influence the weather for the purpose of fertilising that grain[54]. The purificatory aspect of the Pompaia is again interestingly indicated by such words as ἀποδιοπομπήσασθαι which is linked by Plato with the verb καθήρασθαι when describing the purification of the home[55] and the adjective ἀποπομπαῖοςwhich is virtually a synonym for ἀλεξίκακος and ἀποτρόπαιος.

Thucydides calls the Diasia Διὸς ἑορτὴ Μειλιχίου Μεγίστη so that, if we take him literally, there were probably more festivals dedicated to him than

just the Diasia and Pompaia. He seems to have been a god whose worship attracted many people and this is a puzzle if we accept him as a god to be feared:

> 'In spite of his fearsome character, Zeus Meilichios was one of the most popular gods of Attica and had many shrines in Athens and environs.'[56]

It may well be a mistake to see in the epithet 'Meilichios' 'a euphemistic name like Eumenides'[57]. The popularity of Zeus Meilichios is much more easily explained if we accept his name as meaning 'kindly' or 'open to propitiation' [58]. Certainly, he had chthonic aspects but that does not entail regarding him as sinister[59]. What was he open to propitiation about? Obviously his major role was the removal of impurities. The sinister aspect of Zeus Melichios lies possibly in two areas. Firstly:

> 'Ceremonies to avert evil are a normal part of worship but could easily assume a sinister aspect: Porph. Abst.II.44 speaks of purification after them. They can in a measure project something of this character upon the deities to whom they are directed, even though these deities are invoked as protectors'.[60]

Secondly, of course, when praying for the removal of some moral or physical impurity, the god may not grant the petition. When this happens, the continuing presence of the impurity may be ascribed directly to the will of the god[61]. Many gods, Apollo is a good example, could bring good or evil, but there were a few gods to whom sacrifices were offered to keep them- the gods- away[62]. Zeus Meilichios does not enter into this other category.

Zeus Meilichios was thus a purifying god, with some chthonic but only indirectly sinister aspects, to whom one prayed to take away moral or physical impurities. To be sure, there is evidence of a wide variety of practice in his honour through space and time - Xenophon's holocaust, animal-shaped cakes and rams whose meat was eaten - but the overall picture in Attica is clear.

The medical role of such a god is apparent and his chthonic aspect confirmed when one looks at a much earlier book on the interpretation of dreams than Artemidorus' ΟΝΕΙΡΟΚΡΙΤΙΚΑ. This is the ΠΕΡΙ ΔΙΑΙΤΗΣ[63] of the

Hippocratic corpus. This was possibly written by Philistion in the fourth century. B.C. Its fourth book, ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥΠΝΙΩΝ, is a short treatise on the medical significance of dreams. The book starts off by stating that dreams, when they take on a character contrary to daytime activities, constitute a sign of bodily disturbance[64]. The author says that ordinary dream-interpreters merely tell the recipients of such dreams to pray to the gods[65]. The author, however, while not condemning such interpreters, says that medical remedies have to accompany any rites of aversion and goes on to recommend emetics, change of diet and exercise[66]. He then goes on to analyse dreams of heavenly bodies, sun, stars, moon, etc. He draws conclusions from various sorts of dream about each and then makes this statement:

> Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν οὐρανίων σημείων οὕτω γινώσκοντα χρὴ προμηθεῖσθαι καὶ ἐκδιαιτῆσθαι καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσιν εὔχεσθαι, ἐπὶ μὲν τοῖσι ἀγαθοῖσι Ἡλίῳ, Διὶ οὐρανίῳ, Διὶ κτησίῳ, Ἀθηνᾷ κτησίῃ, Ἑρμῇ, Ἀπόλλωνι, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖσι ἐναντίοισι τοῖσι ἀποτροπαίοισι καὶ Γῇ καὶ ὥρῃσιν, ἀποτρόπαια τὰ χαλεπὰ εἶναι πάντα[67].

It is interesting to note that Hermes, who so often had a chthonic aspect as ψυχοπομπός, is included within the list of obviously ouranian gods. It is possible that by a simple change of the epithet attached to Zeus he could belong to the second list of chthonic, purificatory deities.

The ΠΕΡΙ ΔΙΑΙΤΗΣ is not the only medical work to throw light on the role of deities such as Zeus Meilichios. The work known as the ΚΑΘΑΡΜΟΙ of Empedocles, of which fragments only exist, also links religious rites and medical purification. This type of link shown in the ΠΕΡΙ ΔΙΑΙΤΗΣ and the ΚΑΘΑΡΜΟΙ, while propounded by some medical writers, was condemned by others. Even such condemnations shed light on beliefs and practices of purifications. One such condemnatory work is ΠΕΡΙ ΙΕΡΗΣ ΝΟΥΣΟΥ[68]. This work sets out to show that epilepsy is no more or less sacred than other diseases. The author says that the theory that it is a sacred disease is weakened by the simplicity of the cure which consists merely of ritual purification and incantation[69]. Charlatans of the worst order, the author alleges, attribute different forms of epilepsy to various gods and goddesses - the Mother of the Gods, Poseidon, Enodia, Apollo Nomius, Ares, Hecate or the Heroes. To cure those ill the charlatans (ἀγύρται)

or purifiers (καθάρται)[70] resort to purification with blood and similar things. They also used charms buried in the ground, thrown into the sea or carried off into the mountains where no one could touch them or tread on them[71].

All of this the author condemns on the grounds of inconsistency, impiety and dishonesty[72], but there is also another religious and purificatory side of which he does not disapprove. He contrasts this acceptable side with the quackery he has just described:

> οὓς (the sick) ἐχρῆν τἀναντία τούτων ποιεῖν, θύειν τε καὶ εὔχεσθαι καὶ ἐς τὰ ἱερὰ φέροντας ἱκετεύειν τοὺς θεούς.[73]

Obviously there are several ways for people to go about curing their maladies from purely religious to purely medical. The author of ΠΕΡΙ ΙΕΡΗΣ ΝΟΥΣΟΥ approves of the stance at either end of that spectrum but strongly disapproves of the καθάρται who, he alleges, dupe people by a fraudulent mixture of the religious and medical.

4. Zeus Meilichios and similar deities.

The purificatory nature of Zeus Meilichios and his link with medicine seem clear. What is less clear is precisely why Zeus Meilichios has a chthonic aspect. There is no doubt *that* he has a chthonic aspect both from the evidence adduced already and the anaglyptic evidence that we shall look at more closely later. This proves clearly that Zeus Meilichios was often depicted as a snake.

We can trace some of the clues about the true nature of Zeus Meilichios by studying his links with other deities and especially Zeus identified by other epithets. One of the most interesting links is to be seen in Zeus Ktesios. They are explicitly linked through the use of the purificatory fleece:

> Διὸς κῴδιον ... θύουσί τε τῷ τε Μειλιχίῳ καὶ τῷ Κτησίῳ Διί, τὰ δὲ κῴδια τούτων φυλάσσουσι, δῖα προσαγορεύοντες[74].

Now Zeus Ktesios was a god of the household and, like Zeus Meilichios, was represented as a snake[75]. Immediately some light is shed on Plutarch's statement that the feasting following Theseus' purification took place οἴκοι[76]. It also illuminates the Xenophon incident[77] where the cult of Zeus Meilichios is again described as having his cult ὅικοι and as having close connections with the well-being of his family[78]. Zeus Ktesios protected the house's store-chamber, may have been originally the guardian snake of the house[79] and some authors believe that he may even have had his origin as an ancestor, possibly buried in the house, who was subsequently worshipped as the protector of his descendants and their home[80]. However, others think this unlikely[81]. Modern Greek folklore analogy suggests that a snake can be described as the 'master of the house' (νοικοκύρης) or 'genius of the place' (τοπάκας), can be seen as in some way symbolising the master- like the snake representing the genius of the pater familias in Roman times - and can portend harm to the family if it is harmed, without any suggestion that the snake actually embodies an ancestor[82].

Zeus Ktesios as well as having a purificatory role had the concomitant job of promulgating health. This is clearly shown by a deposition in a case about legitimacy and inheritance where presence at the sacrifice to Zeus Ktesios could be used as proof of family bonds:

τῷ Διί τε θύων τῷ Κτησίῳ, περὶ ἣν μάλιστ' ἐκεῖνος θυσίαν ἐσπούδαζε καὶ οὔτε δούλους προσῆγεν οὔτε ἐλευθέρους ὀθνείους, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς δι' ἑαυτοῦ πάντ' ἐποίει, ταύτης ἡμεῖς ἐκοινωμοῦμεν καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ συνεχειρουργοῦμεν καὶ συνεπετίθεμεν καὶ τἆλλα συνεποιοῦμεν, καὶ ηὔχετο ἡμῖν ὑγίειαν διδόναι καὶ κτῆσιν ἀγαθήν, ὥσπερ εἰκὸς ὄντα πάππον.[83]

Despite the insistence on exclusion of all but close family, it is evident from our sources that friends could be invited to some family celebrations in honour of Zeus Ktesios. It would also appear that feasting could accompany a sacrifice to Zeus Ktesios, as would be natural for a god of the home's store-chamber. We have good evidence for both of these points in a passage from another legal speech which talks of a man who is alleged to have been poisoned while entertaining a friend in his home:

'Επειδὴ γὰρ ἐδεδειπνήκεσαν, οἷον εἰκός, ὁ μὲν θύων Διὶ Κτησίῳ κἀκεῖνον ὑποδεχόμενος, ὁ δ' ἐκπλεῖν τε μέλλων καὶ παρ' ἀνδρὶ ἑταίρῳ αὐτοῦ δειπνῶν, σπονδάς τ' ἐποιοῦντο καὶ λιβανωτὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐπετίθεσαν[84].

This form of worship given to Zeus Ktesios is akin to that given to other deities connected with the home and family. Zeus Herkeios is an ancient household god judging by his role in Book XXII of the Odyssey. He is sometimes explicitly linked with Zeus Ktesios[85] who in turn, in addition to his domestic role in promoting health and prosperity, also has dedications made to him in healing centres[86]. In this another link can be seen in the relationship between Zeus Ktesios, Zeus Herkeios and 'Αγαθὸς Δαίμων. This last was a household god who also received a libation of undiluted wine at the end of a meal[87]. The 'Αγαθὸς Δαίμων was probably also called the Δαίμων Μειλίχιος[88]. It is no coincidence that the 'Αγαθὸς Δαίμων is again represented as a snake and apparently there is evidence that at Alexandria certain harmless snakes were venerated as house guardians and actually called ἀγαθοδαίμονες[89]. The 'Αγαθὸς Δαίμων is very close in character to Zeus Ktesios insofar as he is the genius of the pater familias, the νοικοκύρης and the guardian of the family in every generation. This is clear from an oracle response, probably from Delphi, where a certain Poseidonios of Halikarnassos asks what he and his children ought to do to ensure the welfare of the family and the reply comes that they should worship Zeus Patroos,

Apollo Lord of Telmessos, the Moirai, the Mother of the Gods and they should also pay honours to and keep in favour with the Agathos Daimon of Poseidonios and Gorgis just as their ancestors had done:

καθάπερ καὶ οἱ πρόγονοι...τιμᾶν δὲ καὶ ἱλάσκεσθαι καὶ Ἀγαθὸν Δαίμονα Ποσειδωνίου καὶ Γοργίδος[90].

It is interesting that we know that the Δαίμων Μειλίχιος or Ἀγαθὸς was depicted as a snake for we also know that certain snakes were fed and we have one famous example in particular which tells us what one at least was fed on. This was the snake which was the symbol of the protection of Athena over Athens. The departure of this snake from the acropolis, indicated by uneaten food, made the Athenians the readier to leave their city at the approach of Xerxes:

λέγουσι Ἀθηναῖοι ὄφιν μέγαν φύλακα τῆς ἀκροπόλιος ἐνδιαιτᾶσθαι ἐν τῷ ἱρῷ· λέγουσί τε ταῦτα καὶ δὴ ὡς ἐόντι ἐπιμήνια ἐπιτελέουσι προτιθέντες· τὰ δ' ἐπιμήνια μελιτόεσσα ἐστί. αὔτε δὴ ἡ μελιτόεσσα ἐν τῷ πρόσθε αἰεὶ χρόνῳ ἀναισιμουμένη τότε ἦν ἄφαυστος. σημηνάσης δὲ ταῦτα τῆς ἱρείης, μᾶλλόν τι οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ προθυμότερον ἐξέλιπον τὴν πόλιν, ὡς καὶ τῆς θεοῦ ἀπολελοιπυίης τὴν ἀκρόπολιν.[91]

The sort of food given as described here was a μελιτόεσσα μᾶζα which was a barley cake sweetened with honey. Was this the sort of offering that the scholiast on Thucydides I, 126,6 was thinking of when he tried to explain the οὐχ ἱερεῖα ἀλλὰ θύματα ἐπιχώρια offered to Zeus Meilichios[92]? Is it possible, therefore, that Thucydides was conflating household cult and festival ritual in his description of the sacrifices at the Diasia?

The snake as symbol of Zeus Meilichios, Zeus Ktesios and the Agathos Daimon was the protector of the household and the guardian of the health and wealth of all its members. Like Zeus under his epithets, the Agathos Daimon is also found being invoked in healing centres[93]. All of these gods and also the Διὸς Κοῦροι who appear to have been the protectors of the amphorae of the house[94] along with other unnamed spirits who also look after the health, safety and wealth of the members of the household are known as the ἀγαθοὶ θεοί or the θεοὶ μειλίχιοι and all of them received offerings of food in the house[95]. There are some similarities between this group of gods and Zeus known under other titles as well - Soter, Teleios and Epopsios[96]. All of these titles expressed roles equivalent to those undertaken by the

Roman Lares[97].

The well-being of the household is the province of all these gods. This well-being entails both the health and the wealth of the various members of the household and these two aspects are seen most clearly in the cult of Zeus Philios. We shall see when we look at the anaglyptic evidence from Athens that Zeus Meilichios and Zeus Philios were depicted identically either as a serene god often bearing a cornucopiae or as a snake. Like the Agathos Daimon[98] he is often linked with Agathe Tyche once explicitly as his wife[99]. His role as guardian of health is shown by the inscriptions dedicated to him found at Epidauros[100] and by similarities between Zeus Philios and Zeus Asklepios which we will see shortly. One illuminating portrayal of Zeus Philios[101] shows him reclining on a couch holding a cornucopiae in his left hand and a phiale in his right. Next to him is his wife Agathe Tyche and to the left of her is a naked cup-bearer and then two women and a man. On a table next to Zeus are some little cakes[102]. These surely are the clue to the true nature of this deity. He is the same as the Zeus Meilichios or Zeus Ktesios to whom small offerings of food were made to beg the blessings of health and wealth on the family. Comparisons with the Totenmahl and the dead man's marriage-banquet with the deities of the underworld[103] are not necessary. The god depicted is not an ancestor as such but the genius (just as Agathe Tyche is the Juno?) from whom blessings on the family are being sought.

One extension of the household cult of Zeus Philios, which adds an extra dimension to our notion of that god, is that he had a dedication made to him in Athens by some ἐρανισταί[104]. The anaglyph, which is broken at the top and right, shows the god seated with a phiale in his right hand. His complex role is indicated by an eagle at the side of his throne and the presence of a pig by the altar in front of him. The eagle reminds us that he is genuinely Zeus[105] and the pig reminds us that his role is to show friendship to men by purifying them and so making them morally blameless and physically healthy. We do not know, incidentally, whether the ἐρανισταί had Zeus Philios as the patron of their ἔρανος. However, it seems likely that ἐρανισταί, for whom a regular, shared meal was a prominent part of their membership, dedicated to Zeus Philios for their collective health and welfare just as they individually dedicated to him at home for the health and welfare of their families. Their worship may well have centred upon or at the least

included other gods apart from Zeus Philios.

Zeus Philios was frequently invoked as a guardian of friendship as is shown by invocations to him scattered in Greek literature[106]. He was also seen as a god who would show kindness to human beings and do something for those in need who called on him. In order to communicate with his devotees he would sometimes have recourse to dreams as was particularly common for the gods with a healing role. Thus it is that we have at Epidauros a dedication [Δ]ιὶ Φιλίῳ Πύροιος κατ' ὄναρ. On this same inscription is the number νϑ and the symbol of a branch within a circle[107]. A god who grants visions and then accomplishes what he foretells would be suitably invoked before and thanked after his deed as Τέλιος or Επιτέλειος. The Athens inscription we have already seen [108] is dedicated to Zeus Philios under the further title of Επιτέλειος.

'Αριστομάχη, 'Ολυμπιόδωρος, θεωρὶς ἀνέθεσαν Διὶ 'Επιτελείωι Φιλίωι καὶ τῆι μητρὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Φιλίαι καὶ Τύχηι 'Αγαθῆι τοῦ θεοῦ γυναικί.

It has already been mentioned[109] that a link exists between Zeus as Philios and also as Teleios and Soter. It is not surprising that drink was offered to Zeus as Soter and Teleios as part of the ritual after a meal.[110] What at first sight is more surprising is that Zeus as Soter and Teleios was identified with Asklepios. He and such gods as Zeus Ktesios and Agathe Tyche were ἐνοικίδιοι θεοί[111] but as Zeus Soter and Teleios the healing god was publicly worshipped particularly at Epidauros. To what extent this identification held good at Athens is not certain since positive evidence appears to be lacking. The role of Fulfiller and Accomplisher of healing dreams at least partially passed to a boy companion of Asklepios known as Τελεσφόρος[112]. However, most certainly at Epidauros and quite likely elsewhere Asklepios was known as Ζεὺς 'Ασκληπιὸς Σωτήρ and Zeus was known as 'Ασκληπιὸς Ζεὺς Τέλειος. This is most clearly shown in inscriptions found at Epidauros[113]. How early this identification first took place is not certain but nusmismatic evidence would suggest that it was early and statuary gives us indications of a late fifth or early fourth century B.C. date. There is no doubt that the chryselephantine statue of Asklepios, made by Thrasymedes of Paros in the early fourth century, showed the god to be uncannily like Zeus. We are told that Asklepios was portrayed enthroned holding a staff, holding his other hand over a snake's head and with a dog lying beside him[114]. Fortunately Epidauros issued a coin series based on

this statue which gives us concrete proof of the accuracy of the literary description of the statue[115]. The beautiful trihemidrachm issued in the middle of the fourth century shows a head of Apollo wearing a wreath on the obverse and Asklepios just as in Pausanias' description of the cult statue on the reverse. He faces left. The staff is in the god's left hand. The throne is backless. The only extras on the coin are the letter E for Epidauros on the right of the coin and the letters ΘE very small under the throne[116]. Variations on this general theme were possible. The throne might have a back and the dog might be behind rather than under it. The significance of depicting Asklepios in this manner is that Greeks everywhere would recognise in it a reflection of one of the most common ways of showing Zeus and so reinforcing the Zeus-Asklepios equation clearly shown in inscriptions.

An enthroned Zeus with a staff and an outstretched arm holding or being held over something has a long numismatic history in Greek cities. He is to be found facing right, holding a thunderbolt and with a bird on a tree in front of him on a tetradrachm from the Greek town of Aetna in Sicily as early as c.470 B.C.[117] Much more like the Epidaurian coin series, however, are the fourth century issues from a number of Greek towns and leagues. The Achaian league[118] formed after the battle of Leuctra in 371 B.C. struck a stater with Zeus facing left with the sceptre-staff in his left hand and his right hand outstretched. Over his hand is an eagle with outstretched wings and under it a crested helmet. His feet rest on a footstool[119]. Similar coins with minor differences are to be found as far apart as Praesus in Crete[120] and Cyrene[121]. The type became extremely common over the entire Hellenistic world as it became the standard reverse for all of Alexander's silver coinage throughout his empire during his lifetime and remained so after his death in many places. The magnificent tetradrachms minted at Alexandria c.325 B.C.[122] and closely similar designs from Babylon[123] and posthumously from Sicyon[124], Sardis[125] and elsewhere show that Zeus was generally recognised in this form. We shall be discussing the precise pedigree of this design a little later.

The link between Zeus under one of his 'caring' titles and Asklepios is certainly proved by epigraphic evidence and corroborated by numismatic examples. At Epidauros not only the cult statue but other pieces as well help to strengthen the connection. It has been argued, for example[126], that

fourth century metopes from the Temple of Asklepios which show, to the untrained eye, almost identical portrayals of either Zeus or Asklepios, do not in fact show the same god but one metope shows Zeus and the other Asklepios. The fact that a case had to be made out for the distinction and that a layman is still not sure after studying the two metopes proves how far the conflation of the two had gone by about the middle of the fourth century B.C. Asklepios was very much a Zeus but he was certainly a caring one - a Zeus Philios or Meilichios. The gentle Zeus had his artistic as opposed to literary origin, it can be argued, in the chryselephantine statue made by Pheidias for the temple at Olympia[127]. Thrasymedes continued the compassionate aspect in his statue of Asklepios made for Epidauros in the 370's and from these the idea underwent continual development, a high point being the so-called Asklepios Blacas in the British Museum[128] which, because of the positioning of dowel holes and similar evidence has been ascertained to have bent downwards so that the god looked into the eyes of his worshippers rather than gazing into the distance, oblivious of them[129]. As we shall see later, these characteristics, along with the full beard and wavy hair grown moderately long, were transferred to other great gods for whom healing was part of their care for humans - Serapis and Christ.

5. Zeus Meilichios and Middle Eastern connections

We are obviously dealing with not just Zeus with the epithet Meilichios but the same god performing a similar role under several titles. 'Similar' and not 'same' because although the roles are correlative they are not co-extensive. A common core existed in the interrelation of all of them in household religion whose purpose was the promulgation of the health and prosperity of the family. The gods and δαίμονες [130] were especially linked to the master and mistress of the house although one does not have to go so far as to say that they actually embodied ancestors. Rather, they perhaps ought better to be thought of as protectors of the continuity of the family[131]. This means that we can restrict the chthonic aspect to the Plutonian, i.e. the fertility and prosperity aspect of the underworld gods and thus we are not forced into a most unhelpful chthonic - Olympian dichotomy[132]. Such a dichotomy is unhelpful because it does not do justice to the evidence.

These gods and δαίμονες gradually had their role extended into a more public sphere. All of them were invoked at the healing centres of Asklepios at Athens or Epidauros[133]. There they were asked in a public fashion to do one of those jobs they were always being asked in private, domestic rituals to perform. This extension into the public sphere seems datable from epigraphic evidence to the fourth century B.C. although, of course, the festivals of Zeus Meilichios go back much further. It is not the public, collective rites that we are now concerned with but public dedications of a private and individual nature. Did any new factors bring about a change in the situation?

Athens, after an all-time low at the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404, underwent quite rapid change after the turn of the century. By 377 and the decree of Aristoteles, Athens was the centre of a confederation in which genuine, international institutions appeared in order to ensure that the confederation did not degenerate into an Empire like the previous one had done. Trade prospered, the Peiraieus flourished and Athens experienced an economic upsurge. However, Athens and the Peiraieus did not gain a monopoly. Other ports, perhaps especially those in the Persian Empire, also expanded. Ephesus, Rhodes, Cyzicus and Byzantium all greatly extended

their trade in the Mediterranean. Athens became increasingly dependent on imported grain and arranged for large quantities to be imported from Egypt, Cyprus and Phoenicia. Athens found herself more of an equal in an increasingly cosmopolitan world than she had ever done before. "Foreigners were increasingly numerous and Egyptian, Phoenician and Cypriot merchants frequented the Piraeus"[134]. In particular the Phoenician population from the fourth century onwards was considerable, Sidon and Tarsos being the most common towns of origin for these immigrants to Athens[135].

People from the Levant and Athenians visiting it would have found much in common. We have already seen how a standard representation of Zeus became the standard reverse for all of Alexander's silver coinage. What is most interesting is that the motif was not taken from any of the similar designs we have seen existing in fourth century Greece[136]. The prototype has been proved to be from an unexpected source[137]. The source is a coin which was minted for Mazaeus, the Satrap of Cilicia, somewhere between 361 and 333 B.C. at the mint of Tarsus. An almost identical coin seems to have been the basis for this one[138] with the earlier minted between 378 and 372 B.C. Zeus is seated on a throne, facing left, with a staff/sœptre in his left hand and his right hand outstretched towards a bunch of grapes and an ear of corn. Below the throne is a crux ansata which may well be a symbol of sovereignty[139]. Could it, however, also carry some significance of the ankh? This Egyptian hieroglyph for 'life' would suit the context - grapes and corn are the obvious sustainers of life and the ankh was becoming a general symbol at about this time. To the right of Zeus is an Aramaic inscription. The reverse of the coin concerns us less because it was rejected by Alexander who substituted a head of Herakles on his own issues. The reverse, with its depiction of a lion attacking a stag, does give us the information in Aramaic that the coin was issued by Mazaeus - his name is above and the letter M below.

What is, perhaps, of the greatest interest about this coin is the inscription on the obverse. In Aramaic script it says BAALTRS, i.e. Baʿal of Tarsos. This identification should not surprise us for the Zeus - Baʿal equation was common throughout the Levant. Similar coins were minted, for example, at Myriandros[140] in Cilicia for Mazaeus at about the same time and under Alexander became common over a wide area. Baʿal, of course,

was both a specific name for the son of El and an epithet used to describe other male gods of the Phoenician pantheon. The enthroned god had been for centuries a recognisable piece of Phoenician and before that Ugaritic religious art[141]. During the lifetime of Alexander the Great the Phoenicians would have seen no problem in identifying the god on the obverse of the silver as their Ba^{c}al[142] nor would Phoenician visitors to Athens have had any difficulty in seeing great similarities between the Athenian Zeus and their Ba^{c}al.

The Phoenicians were also, perhaps coincidentally, heirs to gods who were gracious or kindly or merciful towards men. Philo of Byblos even used the word Μειλίχιος to describe a god called Χουσὼρ, whom he equates with Hephaistos, who was said λόγους ἀσκῆσαι καὶ ἐπῳδὰς καὶ μαντείας.[143] He also invented sailing and fishing:

> εἶναι δὲ τοῦτον τὸν Ἥφαιστον, εὑρεῖν δὲ ἄγκιστρον καὶ δέλεαρ καὶ ὁρμιὰν καὶ σχεδίαν πρῶτόν τε πάντων ἀνθρώπων πλεῦσαι[144]

He is described as a man because one of the strands in Philo's account is his desire to explain that those who had invented things useful to mankind were precisely those who were deified. Χουσὼρ was thus a kindly god, one particularly suited to the seafarers of a nation known for its travel and trade and someone who had formed or practised (ἀσκῆσαι) charms (ἐπῳδὰς). Again it may be coincidental but it was precisely this word which was used to describe the incantations -ἐπαοιδαί - which accompanied purifications - καθαρμοί - in the attack on those who tried to cure illnesses in the role of καθάρται[145].

The whole question of Phoenician mythology is extremely complex and it is dangerous to be dogmatic about the interrelationships of the various deities. However, it seems possible that the Μειλίχιος - Χουσὼρ (Ἥφαιστος) link is paralleled in Σαμημροῦμος (Ὑμουράνιος) - Οὔσωος[146]:

> 'Le nom sémitique Šamîm-roumîm veut dire 'Cieux élevés', et le nom grec Hypsistos - ouranios, 'Très-Haut-céleste? Nous sommes donc bien en présence d'Elioun = 'le Très-Haut' = Zeus = Ba^{c}al Shamîm, et la ligne suivante nous avertit qu'il s'agit bien du dieu de Tyr, le même donc que Dêmarous.

> Ce dieu a un frère Ousôos, inventeur de la navigation, le dieu éponyme de la Tyre continentale. Ce couple fraternel du Très-Haut-céleste et d'Ousôos, réapparait un peu plus bas sous les noms de Zeus Meilichios, ' le Zeus doux' et de Kousôr-Héphaïstos ' qui le premier de tous les hommes aurait navigué' .[147]

If this argument is correct then Philo is evidence, albeit late but writing about a much earlier period, that Phoenicians, especially those from or with a knowledge of the pantheon of Tyre, would see their own Baʿal Shamîm in the Athenians' Zeus Meilichios. Other Phoenician towns each had their pantheon although, obviously, there were links. Within each pantheon it is interesting that one of the gods was frequently a god with power to heal. The most famous Phoenician healing god was Shadrafâ of Palmyra who was sometimes identified with Eshmoun while the god Bôl included healing as one of his attributes. Many of these healing deities underwent a process of assimilation with Asklepios from the fourth century B.C. onwards and especially during the Hellenistic period[148]. The Phoenician tradition of a kindly god was extremely ancient:

> 'On rapprochera ce nom de celui de 'Miséricordieux' (R ḥ m) que la tablette de Ras Shamra (1. 13, 16, 28) donne au père des dieux gracieux[149].

These 'dieux gracieux' were Shaḥar and Shalîm, that is, Pollux and Castor respectively, the Διὸς Κοῦρου whom we have seen among the θεοὶ μειλίχιου in household worship[150].

Zeus as Baʿal Shamîn is made even more complex by a further identification as Dêmarous[151]. Zeus Dêmarous is the son of Ouranos and Gaia and in turn the father of Melkart who was throughout the Mediterranean region identified with Herakles. Zeus Dêmarous is a bit of a puzzle in etymological terms. His name has been derived from that of a river, the people from the land of Amourrou, etc.[152] It is interesting that one of the possible derivations has a healing connection:

> 'Ce surnom, il faut le reconnaître, aurait assez bien l'aspect d'un nom sémitique, mais le sens n'en serait cependant pas facile à découvrir. F. Lokkegaard a proposé de le traduire dū marūṣ, '(celui) du malade', mais Zeus-du-Malade, le Zeus-médecin, serait tout à fait

anormal. Rien dans Philon de Byblos ne fait penser que Demarous fut un dieu guérisseur.'[153]

One would need to be very reckless to enter this argument when specialists in Phoenician and Phoenician religion disagree among themselves! In view of the context of Zeus Meilichios as a god for whom healing was part of his concern for men, an explanation of his equivalent - Zeus Demarous as 'un dieu guérisseur' makes good sense. It is true that Philo gives us no direct evidence that he was a healing god but part of the complex conflation surrounding Zeus Dêmarous is that he was the father of the Dioscouri and with them the wheel turns full circle to a link with Οὔσωος and healing:

οὗτοι πρῶτοι πλοῖον εὗρον. ἐκ τούτων γεγόνασιν ἕτεροι, οἳ καὶ βοτάνας εὗρον καὶ τὴν τῶν δακετῶν ἴασιν καὶ ἐπῳδάς[154]

Another suggestion is that Zeus Dêmarous means Zeus 'du secours du pays ou du peuple'[155]. This interpretation depends on Philo having used a Greek-based adjective from δῆμος. This is quite feasible. If that is true, 'Il s'agissait du dieu secourable à tous, du dieu sauveur, Zeus Σωτήρ'[156]. Either way it is clear that Phoenicians would have seen a reflection of their own god in Zeus Meilichios.

6. The Cult of Zeus Meilichios in the Peiraieus and at Athens

The Peiraieus is a fascinating area for the study of ancient religious beliefs for it contained the most colourful variety of cults of any Greek town. The Peiraieus is also a most frustrating place to study since it is still a flourishing entrepôt and the archaeological evidence, although reasonable for small finds, is very scrappy as regards structures.

As we shall see again in a later chapter[157], the peninsula facing the little island of Stalida is probably the single most interesting point. Here there was a series of wells (τὰ Φρέατα) and this was probably the place where the court known as the Phreattys (ἡ Φρεαττώ or Φρεατώ or, in Pausanias, Φρεαττύς) was established whose function was the trial of those accused of homicide outside Attica[158] or, perhaps, the trial of exiles on further charges[159]. The accused was on board a ship and the judges on the shore! The purpose of this strange arrangement seems to have been to prevent pollution of the land. Near the Phreattys was an Asklepieion. Again, not far away was the healing shrine of Serangos. Part of the Σηραγγεῖον or Σηράγγιον was a set of baths whose purpose, reinforced by the discovery of a dedication to Apollo Apotropaios, seems to have been purificatory[160]. The baths, or, to be more precise, one of the baths is linked by a thirteen yard long passage with the sea. The sea, therefore, appears to have been used as part of the lustral process. The sea of this area was used for precisely that purpose, of course, every Boedromion when a thousand or more would-be Eleusinian initiates descended on the area, each with a piglet, to purify themselves and their offerings as part of the Lesser Mysteries. The whole of this area, therefore, appears to have been strongly associated with purificatory and healing cults. Here too there is evidence for a shrine of Zeus Meilichios.

The coastline of this area seems to have been full of indentations (cf. σῆραγγες and Σηράγγιον) where there were shrines. These shrines facing the island of Stalida used to have the remains of numerous niches for votive reliefs[161]. We do not know for certain but it seems likely that these niches were in groups forming sanctuaries and that one such sanctuary belonged to Zeus Meilichios. These two assumptions are based, firstly, on comparisons with other known areas, such as the slopes of the acropolis in

Athens, where particular caves and recesses were used for dedications to particular gods[162] and, secondly, on the number of dedications found to Zeus Meilichios and Zeus Philios in this area. It is possible that these dedications do not belong to a sanctuary of Zeus Meilichios but to the Asklepieion where they would obviously not be out of place. The concentration of dedications in the Peiraieus and the existence of the 'niche-sanctuaries' lead, however, to the probability of a separate sanctuary. It is also possible, of course, that Zeus Meilichios and Zeus Philios had separate sanctuaries but the close similarity of their respective dedications does not support this possibility. However, there is some evidence to suggest that Agathe Tyche, the consort of Zeus Philios, had a separate but adjacent precinct[163].

A number of the dedications to Zeus Meilichios/Philios have an architectural frame of pilasters and an architrave on which the dedication was usually carved. A grotto four hundred metres north-west of the island of Stalida in a foothill on the mainland at one time still had a recess with signs of red stucco and with the pilasters, architrave and palmettes still intact[164]. This grotto and a nearby group of niches may have formed the central point of the sanctuary.

Some of the dedications lack an inscription altogether or omit the name of the god so rather than try to survey the votive offerings using the dedicatee as the criterion, it may be more profitable to use the subject matter of the anaglyghs as a guide. The single largest, homogeneous group of anaglyphs is the one composed of a bearded and coiled snake either with or without a dedication and lacking any depiction of the dedicants:

1. ----Διὶ Μειλιχίωι[165]
2. No inscription[166]
3. No inscription[167]
4. ---ν Ἡδύλη [ἀνέθηκ] αν[168]
5. Ἡδίστιο [ν] Διὶ Μιλιχίῳ[169] (sic)
6. Ἀσκληπιάδης Ἀσκληπιοδώρου Διὶ Μιλιχίῳ[170] (sic)
7. Ἡρακλείδης τῷ θεῷ[171] (Plate 5)
8. ---Διὶ Φ [ιλί] ψ [ἀνέθηκ] εν[172]
9. ---Διὶ] Φιλί [ωι] [ἀνέθηκ] εν[173]
10. No inscription[174]

Where evidence is available it can be ascertained in most if not all of this group of ten dedications belong to the fourth century B.C. In nine out of the ten there is a single, bearded snake. The last one listed is exceptional. Not only does it have no inscription but it shows three snakes. The centre snake is coiling round a cylindrical altar. A pair of snakes drinking, perhaps, out of a phiale between them forms the design for the cylindrical altar at the entrance to the Asklepieion at Pergamon. It is just a possibility, therefore, that the tenth dedication in our list comes from the Mounychian Asklepieion and not the sanctuary of Zeus Meilichios/Philios.

A second group of dedications has anaglyphs showing both the snake and and the dedicatees. There are only two:

11. No inscription[175] Large coiled snake on right. Half the snake's size are a veiled woman, an older and a younger man on the left.

12. [Διὶ Μ]ειλιχίῳ[176] Broken aedicula with pilasters. Top of young man's body on left. His right arm is outstretched towards, on the right, a huge snake of whose coiled body only the lower part is preserved.

A third group of dedications has only an inscription:

13. Διὶ Μειλιχίῳ[177]

14. Διὶ Φιλίῳ[178]

The last group of dedications is possibly the most interesting. Each of them shows Zeus Meilichios/Philios enthroned on the left, holding either a cornucopiae or a sceptre/staff in his left hand while in his right hand there is a patera. On the right there are always two or more people approaching the god with the adults raising their right hand in adoration. Sometimes there is an altar between god and worshippers:

15. ---]τοβόλη Διὶ Μιλιχίω [ι][179] Zeus with cornucopiae. Boy with basket[180] behind altar and pig in front. On the right are a bearded man and a woman together with three children. In the background, between the

Κριτοβόλη ?

Ἀριστοβούλη ?

man and the woman, there is a girl carrying a basket[181]. The basket seems large[182]. There seems to be no room on the inscription for any other name in addition to that of the female dedicant whose name partly survives.

16. Ἀριστάρχη Διὶ Μειλιχίωι[183]

Zeus with sceptre, his feet on a footstool. Altar in centre. To the right a man, woman and child. The adults raise their right hand to adore the god. The woman is, presumably, she who has made the dedication. The man could be her husband or an unrelated figure, perhaps a priest[184]. However, the previous inscription is similar and the following one, which has no inscription, clearly shows a woman taking the leading role. In view of the family groupings, husband is more likely, but he is beardless and rather young. (Plate 6)

17. No inscription[185]

Zeus on left with phiale and a staff that would have been shown in paint. His feet rest on a footstool. On the right there is a group of worshippers. The woman kneels and grasps the knees of Zeus in the ancient gesture of supplication. She makes no attempt to grasp his beard! To the right, i.e. behind her, is another woman with her right hand raised and next to her two young children. To the right again there is a slave or ἱερόδουλος with a ram and what appears to be a tray in his right hand. On the extreme right is a κανηφόρος. (Plate 7)

18. [Μύ]ννιον Διὶ Φιλίῳ ἀνέθ[ηκεν][186]

Zeus on left with a staff in his left hand which would have been shown in paint. On the right is Mynnion with her right hand raised and next to her is her daughter.

19. Ἑρμαῖος Διὶ Φιλίωι[187]

A broken relief in form of an aedicula. On the left is a head of Zeus, his left shoulder and his

left hand holding a staff. On the right are two men, the first elder and partly preserved and the second, younger and with less preserved[188]. Behind him are the fragmentary remains of a third figure[189].

The nineteen reliefs show no appreciable distinction between Zeus Meilichios and Zeus Philios. In either guise he is shown as a snake or an enthroned king. Whether there is any significance in the fact that as enthroned king he is always on the left of the anaglyph while, on the two examples we have of him as a snake being approached by worshippers, he is on the right is difficult to say on the basis of such a small sample. As we shall see, the positions could be reversed on anaglyphs found in the upper city.

Women seem to prevail in these dedications. Even where a man is present both the inscription and the anaglyph suggest the importance of the woman, the former by indicating that the woman was the dedicant or the first dedicant and the latter by showing her as the main worshipper. Sometimes the anaglyph places the man nearer the god but in no special position of worship while the inscription tells us that the woman is the dedicant. Men are not excluded, however, although it is not possible to be certain whether men alone were shown on dedications without a woman. The last of the nineteen just dealt with has the remains of a third figure which may have been that of a woman and the same is true, as we shall see, of a damaged anaglyph from Athens[190].

Obviously, where the anaglyph is of the snake type there was a tendency not to depict the dedicant(s). Numbers eleven and twelve in the list just given show that there were exceptions. These exceptions are very useful in that they tie together what would otherwise be two disparate types of dedication - the snake alone without worshippers on the one hand and the enthroned Zeus with worshippers on the other. None of this latter type, for example, was in the cache of dedications discovered in 1878. This group, described together[191], was said to have been 'découverts dans les travaux exécutés pour la construction d'un chemin auprès des maisons Tsiller, près de la pointe Nord-Est du port de Munychie'[192]. This quite reasonable provenance has caused problems because most if not all of the

other dedications have been found further west between Mounychia and Zea, i.e. nearer to the supposed sanctuary. It may be that a second sanctuary of Zeus Meilichios existed, perhaps on the eastern peninsula of Mounychia. However, in view of our knowledge of how far slabs of stone seem to get moved from their location it is not necessary to assume this. Yet when seven are found together the possibility of a second sanctuary must be borne in mind.

Another interesting aspect of the Peiraieus reliefs has also been pointed out[193]. None of the dedications has the name of the dedicant and the demotic. As we shall see, there is one exception among all the known Attic reliefs to be found in the upper city[194]:

> 'Dans les six dédicaces gravées sur les bas-reliefs, nous ne trouvons pas une seule fois le nom du donateur suivi d'un démotique, comme cela aurait eu lieu s'il avait été citoyen athénien. Ce sont donc des étrangers, métèques, affranchis ou esclaves.'[195]

Certainly there was a tendency for citizens to include their demotic but it is dangerous to presume that they always did so. However, the general picture does seem to indicate at least a likelihood that most of the dedicants were not citizens. M. Foucart then noted that one inscription was simply dedicated τῷ θεῷ,[196] and saw in this a reflection of semitic practice. He then looked at the various associations of foreigners and drew this conclusion:

> 'Il me semble qu'il faut chercher dans l'application de ce procédé le sens de Zeus Milichios. Zeus est la traduction du nom générique de Baal; Milichios la transcription du nom particulier Milik, Melek ou Molok'.[197]

This suggestion provoked various responses[198]. Gradually it was discovered that the Milichios-Milik theory did not hold water. One author then put forward the idea that the cult of Zeus Meilichios was a conflation of an ouranian Zeus with a chthonic hero/daimon called Meilichios[199]. As we have seen, yet another author saw Meilichios in terms of ancestor worship[200]. On the basis of what we have seen of Phoenician links with this cult, I suggest that M. Foucart was right, despite the wrong suggestion of the

identification of Milichios and Milik.

One penultimate point to be made about the Peiraieus reliefs is that they give a very strong impression of family matters. 'Impression' because the terse inscriptions give us no clue but the female dominance plus the presence of young children seem to indicate family concerns. This impression is reinforced by the material from the upper city but for different reasons.

The last point is that it is interesting that the two sacrificial animals shown are a pig and a ram[201] for, as we have seen, not only are both linked to Zeus Meilichios but both help to reinforce his purificatory role. The ram is shown in a way typical of sacrificial animals[202]. However, the pig stands in front of the altar rather unlike a sacrificial victim and more like something playing a symbolic role[203]. Perhaps the impression is false.

When we come to Athens itself the cult of Zeus Meilichios/Philios presents us with some different facets. We have already seen[204] that there was an altar of Zeus Meilichios by the Kephisos where Theseus had undergone purification. This area was outside the city boundaries part of the way towards Eleusis and the evidence, as far as is known, is purely literary. Archaeological evidence tells us, however, in explicit terms of another sanctuary of the god. This was found 'in Athenarum suburbio Ampelokipi'[205]. Ampelokipi or Ambelokipoi is a suburb just east north east of Mount Lykabettos on the main road leading north east out of Athens. This area would have been outside the ancient city boundary in the fourth century B.C. To get there one would have needed, for example, to go out of the north east gate and have gone some way along the road to Marathon. The evidence comes in the form of a marker stone probably of late fifth century date.

HIEPON:
ΔΙΟΣ : MI
ΛΙΧΙΟ : /
ΗΣ : ΑΘΗΝ
ΑΙΑΣ (206)

It seems to be agreed[207] that the last letter of line three should be gamma which would make it a joint dedication to Gaia and Athena, the latter under her old, solemn name Ἀθηναία . Athena could be linked with most cults[208] but Gaia is very interesting. Some would see this as a further indication of the chthonic nature of Zeus Meilichios[209]. Obviously Gaia is chthonic but the word chthonic is used with many different meanings - linked with the dead, fruitfulness, prophecy, etc. In view of what has been seen to be the likely situation in the Peiraieus, Gaia is a very suitable dedicatee along with Zeus Meilichios. When it comes to the production of and care for children, Gaia surely is the Κουροτρόφος par excellence?[210]

We might expect evidence of a literary and/or archaeological kind for an altar, as at the Kephisos, or a temenos, as at Ampelokipi, dating to the fifth century or earlier. If one accepts that the expansion of the cult reflects some syncretism at work, dating in all probability from the early years of the fourth century, then we would not expect many, if any, private dedications of the sort we have seen in the Peiraieus dated to before about 400 B.C. No such dedications from the fifth century have yet come to light.

Moving nearer to the ancient city boundary, a beautiful votive offering showing an enthroned Zeus and worshippers was excavated in 1893[211]. It is similar to those from the Peiraieus. The inscription is damaged and now disputed. The excavator completed it as [ὁ δεῖνα ἀν] ἔθηκεν Ναΐ[ῳ Διΐ] but there is so little of the lettering left that alternatives are possible. One such is [Διὶ Μειλιχίωι κατ' εὐχὴν ἀν]έθηκεν Ναϊ[άς][212]. Certainly the style of the anaglyph points to Zeus Meilichios. However, along with this votive offering were found a colossal head of Herakles and a relief showing Zeus (probably), a much damaged figure holding a cornucopiae and a phiale, Hermes holding a caduceus and an oinochoe and Herakles with lionskin, club and possibly something in his right hand. Zeus is seated on a horned and bearded head inscribed as ΑΧΕΛΩΙΟΣ[213]. These reliefs were excavated from two reservoirs by the eastern Kallirrhoe next to the Ilissos. The Kallirrhoe spring poured into the Ilissos at the south-eastern corner of the Olympieion at the point where the river looped northwards before returning to its normal NE-SW course. A few years ago a shrine of Ἡρακλῆς Παγκράτης was excavated within that loop[214]. The similarities between the 1893 material and that excavated in 1953-1954 are such that the earlier Ilissos reliefs must be looked at when we study the Pankrateion.

There is one last body of material connected with Zeus Meilichios/Philios and this has been found in the Agora, the shrine of Nymphe or in connection with the hill of the Nymphs. We have evidence of a priest of Zeus Philios during the time of the Emperor Augustus[215], but having adverted to this piece of evidence, it ought to be laid to one side since the rest of our evidence is fourth and third century B.C. One inscription is, as far as I can gather, unprovenanced apart from its being Attic and probably from Athens, while another is certainly Athenian but its exact find-spot is, as far as is known, uncertain[216]. The remainder of the evidence gives us some interesting information about the links between Zeus Meilichios/Philios and the Nymphs. We have a cluster of three dedications[217] from the northern slope of the Hill of the Nymphs and a cluster of five from the Agora[218]. This latter group of finds may have strayed from the sanctuary on the nearby Hill of the Nymphs. These nymphs were probably γενέθλιαι and St. Marina, whose church stands nearby, continues their role to-day[219]. The other finds come from the shrine of Nymphe to which spot brides came to make their dedications from the mid seventh to the third century B.C. Three finds[220] link Zeus Meilichios/Philios with this shrine. Two inscriptions to Zeus Philios were found near where we now know the shrine of Nymphe to exist. The inscription to Zeus Meilichios, with a beautiful anaglyph of a snake, is securely linked to the shrine of Nymphe since great care was taken to pinpoint the find spot. Apparently the excavator:

> 'prend soin de spécifier que la stèle de Zeus Meilichios a été trouvée ἐπὶ τῆς κυμιλιᾶς, c'est-à-dire sur le sol naturel, non parmi les déblais: la stèle, sans être en place à proprement parler, appartiendrait bien, selon lui, au sanctuaire'[221].

The find-spots of the other inscriptions up the north slope of the Hill of the Nymphs, the theatre of Herodes Atticus and, slightly further, in the Agora lend weight to the argument that the shrine of Nymphe is their common origin.

Assuming, therefore, that they do come from the same spot, we can analyse them like we did those from the Peiraieus. The single largest group are the simple inscriptions without any accompanying anaglyph:

1. Διὶ Μειλιχίωι ⟨Ξ⟩ωπυρίων[222]
2. Λυσικράτης [Λ]υσικλέο ⟨υ⟩ς ἐκ Κο[λ]ωνο ⟨ῦ⟩
   Δ ι[ὶ] Φιλίωι [ἀ]νέ[θ]η[κεν][223]
3. Ἡλίῳ καὶ Διὶ Μειλ[ιχίῳ] Μαμμία[224]
4. [Διὶ Μιλι]χίωι [- - - - -]ιος[225]
5. [- - - - Διὶ Μι]λιχίωι[226]
6. Καλλίας Κα[- - -]ρίκιος, θουκ[ριτίδης - - - -]Διὶ Φι[λίωι][227]

Then there are two where there was or, in the case of the latter, is only evidence of, a snake:

7. Θεόδ[- - - -] Διὶ Μιλ[ιχίωι][228]
8. [- - - -] δεα Διὶ Μιλι[χίωι][229]

A further three show a snake and some people, or people approaching what was probably a snake:

9. Ὄλυμπος Διὶ Μιλιχίωι[230] On the left is a huge, bearded snake. On the top, part is preserved. The same is true for the right side which shows a man's head. There is probably no room for a second figure. Olympos is probably a freedman[231].

10. Διὶ Μ ⟨ι⟩λ[ιχίωι] Ἀριστο[- - -]
    καὶ Φιλακ[- -]άν ⟨έθ⟩εσ[αν][232]
    On the left is a bearded man and behind him a veiled woman. The right side is missing. The inscription is central to the block. A coiled snake would make the inscription central. An enthroned Zeus is possible but it might well have taken up more space and would have made the whole asymmetrical.

11. Ἀριστομένης Διὶ Μειλιχίωι[233] A beautiful relief 39cms. high to the top of its pediment. The greater part of the relief is taken up by a large snake whose lower half is doubly coiled. The snake's head is held high. The snake is bearded. Right up in the top left corner of the relief, just below the snake's eye level, are a diminutive married couple advancing from the left towards the snake which is facing left. The man is in front of the woman, beside the woman is a child. Each of the three human figures has his/her hands joined together in supplication to the god. (Plate 8)

Last of all there are the two anaglyphs depicting an enthroned Zeus:

12. Ἐρανισταὶ Διὶ Φιλίῳ ἀνέθεσαν ἐφ' Ἡγησίου ἄρχοντος[234] The bottom left corner only is preserved along with the dedication. It shows the typical enthroned Zeus with an eagle by the side of the throne and a pig by the altar in front of Zeus.

13. Ἀριστομάχη, Ὀλυμπιόδωρος, Θεωρὶς ἀνέθεσαν Διὶ Ἐπιτελείωι Φιλίωι καὶ τῆι μητρὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Φιλίαι καὶ Τύχηι Ἀγαθῆι τοῦ θεοῦ γυναικί[235] On right is Zeus with phiale in his right hand and a cornucopiae in his left. Some small cakes are on a table by his side. To the left of him and equal in size is his wife Agathe Tyche holding a fillet or garland[236], then further left is a naked cup-bearer with a phiale in his left hand and dipping his right into a krater. Then come Aristomache, Olympiodoros and, at the extreme left, Theoris. More detail could have been painted on the background.

We have one dedication (no. 2 in the list above) made by a man who is clearly a citizen. This is exceptional in the present state of our knowledge of reliefs dedicated to Zeus Meilichios/Philios. We have the intriguing dedication by the Ἐρανισταὶ (no. 12) which was found not far from the

sanctuary of the Nymph ἐν τῇ πρὸς βορρᾶν κατακλίσει τοῦ λόφου τῶν Νυμφῶν[237]. This fact clearly links Zeus Philios with the sanctuary below. We have a dedication to Zeus Meilichios and Ἥλιος (NO. 3) which is perhaps not as odd as it may at first appear:

Ἥέλιος οἰκτείρειέ με
ὃν οἱ σοφοὶ λέγουσι γεννητὴν θεῶν
καὶ πατέρα πάντων[238]

With the exception of the dedication by a citizen, the picture gained from the Peiraieus material is confirmed. We have some new factors notably the Ἐρανισταί. The most intriguing thing of all, however, is the connection between Zeus Meilichios/Philios and the Νύμφη. It has been suggested that the Νύμφη might even be regarded as the Bride of Zeus Meilichios i.e. Hera Meilichia[239]. The sanctuary of the Νύμφη produced masses of plaques, masks, figurines and pottery. The female interest looms large and the numbers of λουτροφόροι excavated reveal the marriage angle and form a link incidentally with Kallirrhoe, from where water was fetched in a λουτροφόρος for the bridegroom on the day of his wedding. We know (cf. 13 above) that Agathe Tyche is a better identification for the Νύμφη if she is the bride of Zeus Meilichios.

It would appear that in Athens, in addition to the roles of purifier/healer, guardian of the family's health and prosperity and promoter of the family's fertility, Zeus Meilichios/Philios along with his consort performed a special role for those about to get married. This role would surely have involved all his powers to ensure the purity, health and fertility of the couple.

The cult of the sanctuary of the Νύμφη is ancient. Judging by the pottery found[240] it certainly went back into the mid sixth century or earlier and lasted until the mid second century B.C. The Nymphs, in the plural form, had as their territory the slope of the hill from the valley base to the top of the hill near the Old Observatory. This hill may well be what the ancients called The Hill of Hyakinthos[241]. As has already been noted, the nymphs on this hill were probably invoked as Γενέθλιαι[242] - goddesses who as tutelary deities ensured the family's continuity by procreation. We know from boundary markers that Zeus had a sanctuary higher up actually on

this hillside[243] and perhaps the dedications to Zeus Meilichios/Philios found in this area actually come from this sanctuary rather than the shrine of the Νύμφη and Zeus Meilichios at the foot of the hill. Either place would have been suitable for this god of purification, health and fertility. It is interesting too that the nearby church is dedicated to St. Marina. She is also concerned with fertility, birth and young children. Not long ago women used to go to the church to pray for children and apparently, as part of a ritual process, used to slide down the long, sloping rock in front of the church[244].

The role of Zeus Meilichios/Philios was similar although not identical in other Greek cities[245]. We hear of a society of Diosmilichiastai in Nisyros[246] to compare with our Ἐρανισταί. Visitors from any of these cities along with foreigners from lands worshipping Ba'al would have found much to compare with their familiar cults back home in the worship of Zeus Meilichios as a god of purification, health and fertility and a guardian of the family at Athens and the Peiraieus.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to show that Zeus Meilichios was a healing god. It has meant that the chapter has turned out rather like a literary jigsaw puzzle but the nature of the evidence has precluded a linear approach. Instead, it has been necessary to make a number of sideways steps and to try to make each new piece of information thus acquired illuminate the central issue.

It is clear that Zeus Meilichios was an ancient god. He had festivals, notably the Diasia, which went back to at the very least the sixth century B.C. He had altars and sanctuaries which literary evidence suggests went back to the Age of Heroes and archaeological evidence confirms as being at least fifth century B.C. His cult seems to have centred upon his role as a purifier and from that emerged further roles as a giver of fertility and health. These latter roles seem to have acquired added significance at the start of the fourth century B.C. for all the votive offerings so far found date from this time onwards. It can not be coincidental that at the same time two other processes are discernible: firstly, Zeus Meilichios was becoming more and more identified with Zeus Philios, Ktesios and the same deity under several other guises - the common factor being a concern for the individual and especially the family; and secondly, Zeus Meilichios/ Philios and Asklepios were undergoing a process of reciprocal influence which is immediately obvious today in the sculptural and numismatic evidence. To judge by the votive offerings placed in shrines sacred to either of the two deities, the eye of faith in fourth century Athens must also have been able to see that a caring and healing role was shared by them. It seems likely that Zeus as protector of the household, as a result of a conflation with Asklepios at the end of the fifth century, emerged from a domestic role and adopted a role in which he was available to all members of society in Athens and the Peiraieus. This more public role of Zeus Ktesios/ Philios found echoes in the already existing public image of Zeus Meilichios, further helping a merger of a whole range of cult-titles of Zeus. However, his background as a family god is still clearly visible in the anaglyphs even though his appeal became much wider.

This wider appeal extended to the whole range of relative newcomers in

Athens and particularly the Peiraieus. Only one dedicant of a votive was certainly a citizen and at least one of the dedicants seems to have been a freedman. A lot of the new-comers must have been brushing shoulders with a cosmopolitan cross-section of society. Those from the eastern end of the Mediterranean were heirs to an ancient tradition. Each city could worship Baʿal as the protector of that city and at the same time see their god as part of the wider pattern. Syncretism seems to have come easily to them. In the pattern of deities that formed a common heritage to many of the peoples living in what we now call Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Israel, there were gracious, kindly and healing deities. The evidence is meagre but we know from numismatic evidence that the Greeks too were not averse to borrowing and it seems quite probable that the elevation of Zeus Meilichios to a public, caring role was hastened by a growing perception of a chief male deity with that function.

The strong links between Zeus Meilichios/Philios and Asklepios are obvious to anyone entering the Rooms of Decree and Votive Reliefs in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Often it is difficult to distinguish what relief is dedicated to which god and it is often only the inscription or the find-spot which clinches the identification of the dedicatee. Unfortunately so few reliefs are explicit about the cures being requested or for which thanks are being given that we are left completely in the dark. Because of the background of Zeus Meilichios/Philios/Ktesios and because of the anaglyphs showing women and family groupings, we can fairly safely surmise that family concerns were paramount in the prayers of the dedicants. The presence of young children among the dedicants indicates probably the single, most important family concern - the birth of children and their health. Other prayers, hopes and thanks offered to the god by worried or grateful worshippers are only open to speculation.

Chapter II. Zeus Hypsistos.

Zeus Ὕψιστος

'Περὶ ὑγιείας θύειν καὶ εὔχεσθαι Διὶ ὑπάτῳ'.

Demosthenes,
Against Meidias, 52.

1. Background to the cult

Although Athens was the city par excellence of its eponymous goddess Athena, yet the worship of Zeus under a variety of epithets permeated the religious life of the entire city[1]. So far we have looked at Zeus under those titles which linked him most particularly with home and family. There remains a whole range of titles many of which express his connections with the political life of the city or its geography. On the Acropolis, Pausanias tells us that he was worshipped as Ὕπατος and that sacrifices to him were made at an altar facing the entrance to the Erechtheion[2]. He was the Πολιεύς of Athens[3]. As an Olympian and the chief of the Olympians he was particularly associated with the hilltops of Athens - Ὕπατος on the Acropolis, possibly Ἐξόψιος on the Hill of the Nymphs[4], somewhere on the north western slopes of the Acropolis Ὀλύμπιος[5], and on the hills round Athens: Ὑμεττιος and Ὄμβριος on Hymettos, Παρνήθιος, Ὄμβριος, Σημαλέος and Ἀπήμιος on Parnes and Ἀνχέσμιος on Anchesmos, though which of the hills round Athens that is no-one knows for certain[6]. As a deity with chthonic aspects we have already looked at him as Μειλίχιος[7] or Φίλιος[8] and seen that under this guise Zeus was worshipped as a helper and healer of men.

The epithets of Zeus which connect him with mountain tops are normally to be taken literally. Sometimes they link him with a specific location - Ὑμέττιος on Mt. Hymettos. However, some such epithets become detached from the location and become attached to the long string of interchangeable titles from which a Greek could choose according to his requirements rather than his or the god's location. The most obvious example is Ὀλύμπιος. Although detached, such epithets were normally applied to the god in situations where the original connotation would at least not be contradicted by the new usage. Hence the Olympieion on the north western slopes of the Acropolis may have been a cave adjacent to one belonging to Apollo, but at

least it was a cave up a hill.

Zeus was worshipped as Ὕψιστος on the Pnyx[9]. Although it should not be presumed that this epithet is identical to Ὕπατος, it seems likely that in origin it had a similar connotation. As well as at Athens, the worship of Zeus Ὕψιστος was found elsewhere on the mainland of Greece, the islands, Asia Minor, the Middle East and possibly North Africa[10]. Thebes, Corinth, Argos and Olympia all had a cult of Zeus Ὕψιστος[11]. The epithet was appropriate for worship by virtually everyone. In Syria it meant Ba'al-Šamēm[12] whereas in Macedon it seems to have been a native cult of Zeus[13]. However, the epithet was particularly appropriate for the Jews. ὁ Ὕψιστος became a normal way to describe Jehovah[14]. The Jews of the Dispersion seem to have had a particular liking for the title since it aptly described their own god while offending no-one. The need to avoid trouble is shown clearly by a pair of almost identical inscriptions, one of which was found on Rheneia while the other probably came from there but may have come from Lesser Delos where, as we shall see, Ὕψιστος was worshipped by the Jewish community.

These two inscriptions are a prayer to the god to bring vengeance down on those who had wrongly killed by violence or witchcraft two Jewish maidens named Marthine and Heraklea[15]. These inscriptions are thought to date from the end of the second century B.C. during the heyday of the island's prosperity under the Romans and a few years before the island was ravaged in the course of the first Mithridatic war.

During the last years of the first century B.C. Jewish communities seem to have been established in many places in Asia Minor and around the Black Sea, Cappadocia, Pisidia, Lydia, Bosporos Kimmerios and Moesia[16]. Their religion seems to have been distinctly syncretistic and included Zeus alongside their θεός Ὕψιστος as well as Ge and Helios[17]. These Jews of the Dispersion had a strong tendency to stick together and form their own grouping within the larger gentile society. At Tanais, for example, the worshippers of θεός Ὕψιστος banded themselves together into religious fraternities - θίασοι or σύνοδοι. Each group contained from fifteen to forty members - θιασῶται, θιασῖται, θιεσεῖται or συνοδεῖται. They accepted neophytes and they had a number of ranks from ἱερεύς down to

γραμματεύς. These fraternities almost certainly owed their unity to their religious beliefs but they also went in for social works like educating their children and probably acting as a burial club for their deceased members[18].

These Jews were able to assimilate local beliefs wherever they settled, unless we are to presume a reverse process of assimilation whereby pagan communities absorb partly or wholly Jewish beliefs and terminology. This seems less likely because pagans would probably have had less opportunity of being influenced by local Jewish beliefs than vice versa. In Cappadocia, for example, their beliefs became blended with the prevalent Persian beliefs. The adherents to the new hybrid were called Ὑψιστάριοι[19] or Ὑψιστιανοί[20]. Although the worship of Ὕψιστος has proven connections with Jews in Cappadocia and many other areas, not all the sites where inscriptions have been found can be proved to have a Jewish connection. However, the majority of sites are coastal towns with harbours or are other forms of trading centre. There is a strong likelihood that the popularity of the title Ὕψιστοςwas spread by Jewish merchants and perhaps by some of the gentiles with whom they came into contact. It had reached Delos by the end of the second century B.C. At this time Delos was a thriving centre of trade - largely slaves but also other commodities. The island was sacked by Mithridates' general Menophanes in 88 B.C. and again in 69 B.C. by Athenodoros. Many of those who escaped the slaughter and enslavement must have fled to other trading centres where they had contacts so by the end of the first century B.C. these communities became quite numerous throughout Asia Minor and the trading towns round the Black Sea.

To judge by the inscriptions the communities survived. Most of the inscriptions date from the first to third centuries A.D. The factor common to them all is obviously the dedication to Ὕψιστος. This is often all the god is called though not infrequently he is called Θεός Ὕψιστος and occasionally Ζεύς Ὕψιστος. The dedications often show an eagle as a sign of the supreme deity[21]. He seems to be a remarkably accommodating god responding to all sorts of requests, from revenge to healing. The truth is, of course, that he is not one god but the result of a fusion between a common Hellenistic name for the supreme god and the

chief divinity of a particular area. For Jews in particular the title accentuated the supremacy of their own, true god over the multiplicity of pagan, false gods while not cutting them off from free and easy intercourse with the pagan world in which they had to conduct their business.

The likelihood of a Jewish background to Hypsistos as a healer is probable in one and certain in the other of the two areas, apart from Athens, where we have evidence of a healing cult. There was at least one sanctuary of Hypsistos on Cyprus. He is known from an inscription from Haghios Tykhon:

Θεῷ ὑψίστῳ
Νεικόδημος
κατ [ὰ] χρηματισ-
μόν [22].

The phrase κατὰ χρηματισμόν would seem to indicate some sort of oracle. Certainly the god communicated with the dedicant in some way. All the other Cyprus dedications come or are thought to have come from Golgos:

Θεῷ ὑψ [ίστῳ]
'Αφροδείσις
εὐξάμενος
ἀνέθηκεν[23].

Θεῷ ὑψίστῳ ἀνέθη-
κεν Πρόκτυος εὐξαμέ-
[νη][24].

Θεῷ ὑψίστῳ εὐξαμέ-
[νη...][25].

Of these four dedications the first, the one from Haghios Tykhon, may not have any connection with a healing cult but there is no doubt about the others. The second one, which seems to have the dedication of a poor person, was painted and along with the words there was a representation of the part of the body which had been cured - in this case possibly a nose[26]. The third inscription accompanies a pair of breasts in relief while the fourth shows a pair of eyes. These last two were among several

mainly fragmentary, ex-votos from Golgos. One clearly shows a phallos[27]. Several uninscribed pieces eventually came into the safekeeping of the Louvre[28].

It is interesting that all of the inscribed pieces are dedicated Θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ since this seems to have been the most acceptable way for Jews to address their god. This was certainly the case on Delos where a Jewish link with a healing cult of Hypsistos is known. On Delos there was a sanctuary of Zeus Hypsistos on the southern summit of Mount Kynthos[29]. This sanctuary had, as far as is known, no Jewish connections. The other sanctuary where Hypsistos was worshipped was the Jewish synagogue itself. Excavations here revealed a number of dedications[30]. The one which is of particular interest is that concerned with healing:

Λαωδίκη Θεῶι
Ὑψίστωι σωθεῖ-
σα ταῖς ὑφ' αὐτο-
ῦ θαραπήαις
εὐχήν[31].

As the excavator says, here it is quite clear that 'le Très-Haut a joué le rôle de guérisseur"[32]. He also adds the salutary reminder that one ought not to be too quick to make a link between the Jewish Hypsistos as a healer on Delos and the Hypsistos who was a healer in Athens since in Athens, as we shall see, it was also possible to make dedications Διὶ Ὑψίστῳ[33]. Certainly no orthodox Jew would make such a dedication. However, at a shrine to Hypsistos there was no reason why a Jew should not have made his dedication Θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ while the Gentile dedicated his ex-voto Διὶ Ὑψίστῳ.

There are good reasons for supposing that Hypsistos was viewed as a healer in places other than Cyprus, Delos and Athens. It was possible for both Θεὸς Ὕψιστος and Ζεὺς Ὕψιστος to be given the added epithet ἐπήκοος[34]. Ex-votos addressed to deities with such an epithet generally refer to cures[35] and often, as we shall see in the chapter on Egyptian healing deities, there is an Egyptian link. In that same chapter the close relationship between Delos and Athens will be looked at in some detail because that close relationship forms an essential link in an argument about the nature of Egyptian healing practice in Athens. For

the moment it is enough to say that Athens and Delos were inextricably linked for a large part of the island's history. We have seen how Delos at the time of these inscriptions, probably first century B.C.[36], was entering upon a very troublesome period in its history being sacked by Mithridates' general Archelaus in 88 and again, this time by piratical allies of Mithridates, in 69 B.C. This was a time of dispersion for the inhabitants when many, probably including members of the Jewish community, would have settled elsewhere. Athens would have been an obvious refuge. What is more likely than that they took an affection for Hypsistos with them? A custom known from the cult of the Egyptian gods on Delos, as well as in Egypt itself, may thus explain one of the anaglyphs in Athens. Pilgrims arriving at their destined shrine would record their visit and express thanks to the god or goddess by dedicating an ex-voto showing one or both feet and carrying an inscription with the name of the dedicant(s). An example is known on Delos[37]. We shall shortly see the one in Athens which is, significantly, dedicated θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ.

2. The site of the Athenian cult.

Of the three places Hypsistos seems certain to have been a healing deity Athens has provided the largest amount of epigraphic evidence. At least thirty inscriptions, pieces of inscriptions and uninscribed sculptures linked with his worship have been found there. Most have come from the Pnyx but there is also a cluster round the west end of the Acropolis and a scattering in the Greek and Roman Agoras. Large pieces of stone often stay in their proper place because of the problems in moving them. Small pieces can travel easily. However, to move pieces as small as 0.3m. x 0.25m. x 0.04m. down from the Pnyx, up across the ridge running southwards from the Areopagos and round to a site near the slopes of the Acropolis seems a lot of work for a small return especially in view of the fact that bigger quarries were closer at hand - the Acropolis itself and the Agora. Thus there is a possibility that we are dealing with two shrines of Hypsistos - a certain one on the Pnyx and a possible one perhaps on or near the north slope of the Acropolis. The Olympieion comes immediately to mind. A shrine of Zeus under the title Olympios might well attract the worship of a group whose god was called Hypsistos. However, that is pure conjecture. (Plate 10)

The Pnyx is the area where, from some time in the sixth century until the Roman period, the assembly of the people took place. Before the Pnyx was built any assemblies seem to have taken place in the Agora[38] and the ostracising assemblies seem always to have been held in the Agora even after the construction of the Pnyx[39]. During the Roman period the assemblies seem to have been held in the Theatre of Dionysus:

> Ἐνεκλησίαζον δὲ πάλαι μὲν ἐν τῇ Πυκνί. Πνὺξ δὲ ἦν χωρίον πρὸς τῇ Ἀκροπόλει κατεσκευασμένον κατὰ τὴν παλαιὰν ἁπλότητα οὐκ εἰς θεάτρου πολυπραγμοσύνην. αὖθις δὲ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ἐν τῷ Διονυσιακῷ θεάτρῳ, μόνας δε τὰς ἀρχαιρεσίας ἐν τῇ Πυκνί[40].

This passage neatly encapsulates the facts but does not give us a time scale. For that we have to turn to the archaeological evidence. Unfortunately the excavations of the Pnyx have turned up as many questions as answers. It is a fact that the Pnyx really is the Pnyx but its general chronology is still disputed and many adjustments are still being made to the dates of the later stages of its history[41]. The basic outline is

that the Pnyx was first built about the end of the sixth century or beginning of the fifth century B.C. In this first version a speaker on the bema would have looked approximately southwards towards his audience. If Plutarch is to be trusted, we have a firm date for the second stage:

> διὸ καὶ τὸ βῆμα τὸ ἐν Πνυκὶ πεποιημένον ὥστ' ἀποβλέπειν πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν ὕστερον οἱ τριάκοντα πρὸς τὴν χώραν ἀπέστρεψαν, οἰόμενοι τὴν μὲν κατὰ θάλατταν ἀρχὴν γένεσιν εἶναι δημοκρατίας, ὀλιγαρχίᾳ δ' ἧττον δυσχεραίνειν τους γεωργοῦντας[42].

This would place stage two at 404-403 B.C. The date of the third period is more problematic but is normally fixed at about 330 B.C. The Pnyx of this third stage was similar in design to that of the second, i.e. the speaker on the bema faced approximately northwards towards his audience. The difference between them lies partly in the enlargement of the semi-circle radiating northwards from the bema which contained the assembly and partly in the reorganisation of the rock face either side of and above the bema[43]. (Plate 9)

The shrine of Hypsistos was situated to the east of the bema and it is presumed that the shrine antedates the third stage of the Pnyx because the shrine was seriously affected by that reorganisation. The shrine area was first excavated in what would appear to be a rather desultory fashion by Lord Aberdeen in 1803[44]. He found twelve marble tablets of which nine mention, wholly or in part, the dedicatee as being Hypsistos[45]. Of the other three, two do not mention the name of the god while the third is uninscribed but all three clearly belong to the same cult[46]. These tablets are now in the British Museum. Four similar tablets were found built into the wall of a fairly modern house north of the Acropolis. It has already been mentioned that this situation may indicate another shrine of Hypsistos on the slopes of the Acropolis but until proof is obtained one had better presume that these tablets had been moved from the Pnyx shrine. Two of them mention Hypsistos as the dedicatee[47], a third does not[48] and a fourth is not inscribed at all although the anaglyph of the middle part of the body of a nude female clearly associates it with the others[49]. These four tablets are now to be found in Berlin. A few years after their discovery, excavations on the Pnyx in 1852/3 produced some fragments of marble reliefs and Ernst Curtius

found pieces of two more in his excavations of the Pnyx in 1862[50]. These fragments have apparently now gone missing[51]. The large-scale excavations conducted by H.A. Thompson unearthed a great deal more information about the shrine. In 1931 another tablet was discovered[52] and the excavations subsequently unearthed five more pieces[53]. The Agora excavations during the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's also turned up five tablets which are thought to have come from the Pnyx shrine[54]. In addition to these clutches of finds there have been some occasional finds. One is a tablet similar to the others and found in 1931 in the Roman Forum[55]. This one probably arrived in the Roman Forum at the same time as its companions in the Agora although there is no proof of that. The two pieces found near the Acropolis are odd since one at least is an architectural piece. One is a column with an inscription[56] and the other is a small inscribed Ionic capital[57]. Finally there is a piece of yet another tablet[58].

These finds and what remains of the shrine itself are our only clues in any attempt to unravel the history of this cult and yet the finds and the shrine seem to point in different directions right from the start of any investigation. The reason for this is simply that the shrine must predate the third stage of the Pnyx's history, which is usually dated to around 330 B.C. because the shrine was severely damaged in that reorganisation and yet all the inscribed finds are Imperial in date. Unless one presupposes that the earlier tablets were deliberately destroyed or that chance has played a cruel trick on us by not bringing to light the earlier tablets, we are left with a strange gap of between four and five hundred years!

The evidence on the ground for the shrine and its date depends on the dating of the Pnyx and its reorganisations. Although there may be arguments over problems of dating, no-one has yet been in a position to refute the outline of the Pnyx's early history as revealed by the extensive excavations of H.A. Thompson between 1930 and 1937. The initial excavators H.A. Thompson and K. Kourouniotes, originally thought that the third stage of the Pnyx's organisation was similar in date to the tablets:

> 'We may conclude that the worship of Zeus Hypsistos as a healing divinity was established, possibly in the first century A.D., in a depression in the shoulder of the Pnyx Hill to the south of the assembly place proper as it existed at that time.'[59]

However, on the basis of evidence which turned up during the remaining years of the excavation, H.A. Thompson, now working in collaboration with R.L. Scranton, radically revised his dating, taking the third stage of the Pnyx's organisation into the fourth century B.C. with the result that the dating of the shrine is now left high and dry in view of the discrepancy with the Imperial date of the tablets[60].

Leaving aside the problem of absolute dating, how certain is the comparative date of the shrine in relation to the organisation of the Pnyx? All that remains of the shrine is the south wall[61]. Some fifty eight niches are still to be seen in the wall[62] (Plate 11). Most of the niches are to be found on a roughly dressed surface slightly set back from the lower and more finely dressed surface. The dividing line between the two surfaces is a straight line broken by a very large niche which also cuts through some of the smaller ones and therefore postdates them. At the western end the dividing line ends with the profile of four steps. To the west of those steps are some more niches carved into the smoother surface. This smoother surface is the scarp cut back at the time of the third stage of the Pnyx's history and in view of the butt ends of the four steps and the clear floor level broken only by the later, large niche, it is apparent that the final reorganisation of the Pnyx cut through a pre-existing shrine. The remains of a pivot socket and a threshold of a doorway north of the scarp may well indicate another entrance to the shrine. The shrine itself was sunk into the hill and, prior to the third stage reorganisation, was placed between the scarp forming the backdrop to the Pnyx's second stage and what was to be later the third stage scarp. The depression which it made use of may well have been a quarrying pit used by the builders of the wall supporting the outer circumference of the Pnyx in its second stage. If the pivot socket and the threshold of a door belong to the shrine, we have a measurement of eleven metres for its maximum north-south measurement. The east-west measurement is more of a problem. The third stage scarp leaves the wall of the original shrine intact by being cut twenty centimetres to the north of it at the western end of the shrine. However, the third stage scarp cuts more and more into the earlier surface as it goes eastwards until a point is reached fourteen metres east of the bema when the two surfaces are vertically one above the other. Thus we have no evidence for the east wall and therefore the original overall east-west measurement. Even the

north-south measurement is indefinite since the doorway is not securely connected with the shrine and, if it is connected, there must have been steps up from the doorway and these steps may well have been outside the shrine itself. The hypothetical steps would have been quarried away in the third stage reorganisation of the Pnyx and this obviously entails the steps being south of the doorway. This makes the eleven metres between the scarp and the doorway the maximum within which we must place the north-south measurement.

The evidence for a shrine predating the final stage of the Pnyx's reconstruction is hard to refute. The niches, apart from those west of the steps and cut into the more smoothly dressed surface, certainly appear to have been carved before the cutting of the scarp and the concomitant lowering of the ground level. However, there are certain questions which remain unanswered. In view of the Imperial date of the tablets can we be sure that the earlier shrine was dedicated to the worship of Hypsistos? Why did the designers of the Pnyx's third stage feel free enough to destroy a shrine and yet constrained enough to leave part of the southern wall and so spoil the smooth line of the rest of the scarp at a point so near the bema as to be immediately obvious?

The evidence for Hypsistos being the deity worshipped in the shrine before its drastic alterations consists of two things. Firstly there is a single piece of dubious archaeological presumption. Secondly, there is the assumption that, for lack of contrary evidence, the god worshipped earlier must be seen as the same as that worshipped later.

The archaeological evidence is an altar excavated during the 1930's[63]. It is in a bad state of preservation. Found with the altar were several scraps of marble which fit one another and probably came from the altar although they cannot be obviously fitted there. The inscription which emerges when these fragments are fitted together reads:

...ια εὐχ...

...ι ϑ...

This certainly looks like a formula of thanksgiving to a god but the restoration of the god's name depends on the assumption that it belongs to the same series as the intact tablets.

The proof of the early date of this altar lies, not in a discussion of its epigraphic evidence, but in its position when excavated:

> 'The removal of the earth filling of the Third Period revealed a small natural depression in the rock-cut floor of the First Period, 21m. to the northwest of the great bema. In this pit, where apparently it had been deliberately buried, lay a small altar of Pentelic marble and of a familiar shape, much broken[64].

The Pnyx, however, is not a securely stratified site especially in those areas where there was a relatively loose earth filling. This is not to say that the excavators are wrong but merely to add a caveat. If they are right, the deliberate burial may give us some clues since they presume that it took place at the same time as the cutting of the scarp, the relative destruction of the shrine and the reorganisation of the rock to the south of the new scarp.

The third stage of the Pnyx involved the quarrying of large stone blocks from the southern boundary of the Pnyx and their construction into the massive, semicircular retaining wall round the northern curve of the assembly area. It was this quarrying which destroyed the shrine and created the fresh scarp. South of the scarp and higher up the hill, two stoas were started although their construction was probably never completed.[65] At this time there was also constructed a huge cutting for an altar. Now we know that the assembly area was held to be sacred and also that it was Zeus who guaranteed that sanctity:

> Ἀγοραῖος Ζεὺς ὕδρυται ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ[66].

This altar which they now constructed above the bema was dedicated to Zeus Agoraios and must have been a more than worthy replacement for the one which almost certainly existed before. Where was the altar which was excavated in the 1930's found? The answer is that it was discovered 21m. north-west of the bema i.e. on that side of the bema which is the furthest from the supposed shrine of Hypsistos. Why bury an altar so far from its supposed source when there are plenty of hollows in the rock which need to be filled in nearer the shrine? Is it not likely that its burial place, especially if it is being done with religious respect, would be as near as possible to its former position? If that is true, it would have stood west

of the bema in a prominent position close to the scarp of the second period. Is it then not likely that, if this altar does genuinely belong to the period predating the third stage of the Pnyx, it is the altar, or at least an altar, to Zeus Agoraios. The building of the large new altar to him would make redundant the older one and, since the very site of the older one was disappearing, it was respectfully buried as near to its site as possible but not until after being damaged, probably by careless workmen.

This is obviously only a hypothesis but nonetheless one that fits the facts. There is also one more piece of information which lends weight to the theory that it was Zeus Agoraios who dominated the cult on the Pnyx. During the reign of Augustus it would appear that as the place of assembly was moved so too was the altar of the god who presided over those assemblies. There is evidence to show that the altar of Zeus Agoraios was dismantled and moved to the Agora at some time from the reign of Augustus onwards. The remains of the altar have been found and there is little doubt about its being an old altar moved to a new site. The bedding for the Altar of Zeus Agoraios on the Pnyx strongly suggests that its origin lay there[67].

Once one removes the assumption that any early evidence of a cult on the Pnyx is connected with Hypsistos, then a good case can be made that the god worshipped there was Zeus Agoraios. His worship continued there for as long as assemblies were held on the Pnyx. This hypothesis answers all the questions that the assumption of the cult being connected with Hypsistos leaves unanswered. It explains why the designer felt free to destroy a shrine - because an even more lavish sacred area with a splendid altar was being built to replace it nearby. Most importantly it explains why all our evidence for Hypsistos is late and how it fits the pattern of the worship of Zeus under that title around the Mediterranean. It would appear that, if this hypothesis is correct, there was an ancient cult of Zeus Agoraios probably from the earliest time that the Pnyx was used as an assembly area. He had a shrine on the site and tablets were placed there. It cannot be presumed that these tablets were connected with healing. In many ways it may be more likely that they were connected with the work of the assembly. There are several areas in Athens where niches for tablets have been found - on the north face of the Acropolis near the

Mycenaean stairway below the Erechetheion[68] and at the north western end of the Acropolis[69]. These latter niches held tablets many of which have been found. They were dedicated to Apollo 'under the Long Rocks' or 'under the Heights'. The inscriptions are usually surrounded by a wreath of olive or myrtle and, although they are all Roman in date, they were dedicated by archons taking the ancient oath of office[70]. A possible analogy with the Pnyx niches, if they do belong to Zeus Agoraios, becomes clear. The original tablets may well have been connected with elected officials or decisions taken by the assembly.

When the assembly area was moved, all the apparatus connected with the work of the assembly was also dismantled. The large altar of Zeus Agoraios was transferred to the Agora, the tablets were taken down and either put up elsewhere or disposed of, and the deserted shrine was taken over by the cult of the same god under a different title. New niches were cut westwards of the old ones, which explains how they came to exist carved into the face of the scarp of the third stage organisation. At the same time a large central niche was cut right through some of the old, small niches and down into the third stage scarp. This large niche was presumably cut to house either a particularly large dedication or, more likely, a relief sculpture directly connected with the worship of Hypsistos, although it is unlikely to have been an image of the god especially if we accept the likelihood of Jewish influence on the cult. Any Jewish connection with the shrine would incidentally confirm an Imperial date from the first century onwards. We know from epitaphic evidence of thirty-four people buried in and around Athens who are likely to have been Jews. Only two of these people can be dated to the Hellenistic period while the remainder lived during the Imperial era with the vast majority being of first century A.D./date with a few being as late as the third or fourth[71].

It is very difficult to decide how the first century A.D. shrine might have looked. If the architectural fragment[72] did come from the Pnyx shrine there is the possibility that there was at least some sort of roof. There are no sure signs of the sort of strong wall needed to build a substantial structure on the site. Perhaps a stoa-like structure may be envisaged. It may well be, however, that there was no real building at all on the site.

We have fewer tablets than probably originally existed for there are fifty eight niches of which thirty three are original i.e. prior to the third stage reorganisation, twenty one cut into the scarp made during that reorganisation and another four further east[73]. There are also signs of the remains of niches since mostly eroded, in several places but especially on the natural face of the rock above the scarp[74]. There is also evidence that some of the niches were quarried away during the third stage re-organisation since one of the retaining wall blocks, which are thought to have been quarried from the shrine area, bears the evidence of a cutting 0.22m. long, 0.17m. wide and 0.04m. deep[75]. This fits well into the range of measurements shown by the surviving niches. Yet other tablets were probably not even placed inside niches since traces of holes for suspending pins are visible in the rock[76]. Thus originally there may have been a hundred or more tablets to be seen. Some more may yet turn up but the chances are that many of them landed up in the lime kilns of later generations. The condition of the tablets that do survive is little help in trying to establish the nature of the shrine since they vary tremendously in the weathering they seem to have encountered[77]. Arguments fromthe condition of tablets cannot be conclusive because of our lack of knowledge about the site from the date it fell into disuse onwards.

3. Evidence for the nature of the cult

We must now turn to the evidence of the tablets themselves. Including both the architectural fragments we have from Athens thirty pieces of fairly certain evidence:

1) -----εἴνη | εὐχὴν ὑπὲρ | Εὐφροσύνου[78]

2) Σύντροφος | ὑψίστῳ Διὶ | χαριστήριον[79] (2/3rd century A.D.)

3) { Εὔοδος ὑψίστῳ εὐχήν[80] (2/3rd century A.D. anaglyph of an eye)
{ [Ὑψ]ίστῳ [εὐχήν]

4) Ὀλυμπιὰς Ὑψίστῳ | εὐχήν[81] (2/3rd century A.D. trunk of a female)

5) Τερτία Ὑψίστῳ | εὐχήν[82] (2/3rd century A.D. lower part of face) (Plate 12)

6) Κλαυδία Πρέπουσα | εὐχαριστῶ Ὑψίστῳ[83] (2/3rd century A.D. two arms) (Plate 12)

7) Ὀνησίμη εὐχὴν | Διὶ ὑψίστῳ[84] (2/3rd century A.D. breast)

8) Εὐτυχὶς Ὑψίστῳ | εὐχήν[85] (2/3rd century A.D. breast)

9) Εἰσιὰς Ὑψ[ίστῳ] | εὐχ[ήν][86] (2/3rd century A.D. breast) (Plate 12)

10) [Φ]ιλμάτιν | [ε]ὐχὴν ἀνέ|[θ]ηκεν[87] (2/3rd century A.D. two eyes) (Plate 12)

11) ----α θεῷ Ὑψί[στῳ | ε]ὐχήν[88] (2/3rd century A.D. shoulder)

12) An uninscribed relief[89] (a foot)

13) Εἰσιδότη Διὶ ὑ|ψίστῳ[90] (2/3rd century A.D. eyes and nose) (Plate 13)

14) Εὐτυχία ὑψείστῳ | εὐχήν[91] (2/3rd century A.D. breast) (Plate 13)

15) Εὔπραξις | εὐχήν[92] (2/3rd century A.D. breast) (Plate 13)

16) An uninscribed relief[93] (trunk of female) (Plate 13)

17) Διονυσία ὑψίστῳ | εὐχήν[94] (2nd century A.D. breasts)

18) Ὑψίστω(ι) Γαμιχὴ | εὐχήν[95] (breast)

19) An indecipherable inscription due to the fragmentary nature of the letters[96] (breast)

20) Ὑψ | ίστῳ[97]

21) [Διὶ ὑψ]ίστω(ι) | [---]ν Ζωσί | [μου θ]εραπευ | [θεῖ]σα[98]

22) Ὑψίστ [ῳ ἀνέθη] | κε Δα [----] | εὐχή [ν][99] (1st century A.D. altar) (Plate 14)

23) Γράτ ⟨α⟩ Ὑψί ⟨σ⟩ τ | ῳ εὐχήν[100] (2/3rd century A.D. altar with boukranion and wheatsheaves) (Plate 14)

24) Χρυσάριν ὑψίσ | τῳ εὐχήν[101] (2/3rd century A.D.

25) Διὶ Ὑψίσ [τωι] | [----]ν[-----][102] (2/3rd century A.D. part of altar) (Plate 14)

26) ὑψίστ [ῳ] | εὐχὴ [ν] | Μοιραγέν [ης][103] (2/3rd century A.D. altar) (Plate 14)

27) Εὐτυχία εὐχὴν θεῷ | ὑψίστῳ ἀνέθηκα[104] (2nd century A.D. two footprints) (Plate 15)

28) Γλαῦκος, | Τρύφαινα, | Λέων Ὑψίστῳ | [εὐχὴν] ὑ [πὲρ] | [-------] 105 (Imperial, column)

29) ἀγαθὴ τύχη. | Ἰουλ(ία) Ἀσκληπιανὴ | θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ ὑπὲ [ρ] | Μαξίμου τοῦ υἱ [ου] | εὐχαριστήριον ἀνέθ [ηκεν][106] (2nd century A.D. column capital)

30) [----]α Διὶ ὑψί | [στῳ εὐχ]ήν[107] (Imperial)

In these inscriptions we have two women who call themselves Κλαυδία Πρέπουσα and Ἰουλία Ἀσκληπιανὴ respectively[108]. They are the only ones to use two names while the remainder, both men and women, employ only one name. The names of the dedicants are Γαμιχὴ, Γλαῦκος, Γράτα, Δα————,

Διονυσία, Εἰσιὰς, Εἰσιδότη, Εὔοδος, Εὔπραξις, Εὐτυχία is found twice, Εὐτυχὶς, Ἰουλία Ἀσκληπιανὴ, Κλαυδία Πρέπουσα, Λέων, Μοιραγένης, Ὀλυμπιὰς, Ὀνησίμη, Σύντροφος, Τερτία, Τρύφαινα, Φιλημάτιν, Χρυσάριν, ——εύνη and two names ending -α. We should not expect to find any distinctly Jewish names, even if we accept the hypothesis that the Hypsistos cult was coloured by Jewish monotheism, for Hellenized Jews frequently adopted Greek vernacular names and indeed the pagan Greek theophoric names[109]. The vast majority of these are women's names and the inscriptions show a distinct bias towards women's concerns. These concerns include children e.g. the son Μαξίμος of Ἰουλία Ἀσκληπιανὴ while other dedications are on behalf of men of unknown relationships to the dedicant[110]. One more dedication is on behalf of another person or other people and that is the only one dedicated by a group of people. These were Γλαῦκος, Τρύφαινα and Λέων. Perhaps their dedication was for their parents[111].

The anaglyphs reinforce the impression of women's concerns. There are eighteen recognisable anaglyphs[112]. One is an exception because it is on an altar and shows a boukranion on the front, another on the back and sheaves of wheat on the sides[113]. These are rather conventional themes often found on altars and are unconnected with the cult specific to Hypsistos. Of the remaining seventeen not one is specifically connected with men. Over half, ten to be precise, are unequivocally gynaecological. Two are of the central portion of the female body containing the ovaries, womb and vagina[114]. The other eight of the gynaecological ones all show one or two female breasts[115]. The breasts are all small and firm. Unless they are sculpturally stylised, which is quite possible, they are meant to depict the breasts of women who have never given birth to and suckled their babies. All ten gynaecological anaglyphs are, therefore, most probably the fulfilment of a promise to dedicate a tablet to Hypsistos if the woman concerned became pregnant. In addition to these ten gynaecological tablets, several of those which lack an anaglyph could also be the result of pregnancies. These are the tablets which simply express thanks to Hypsistos[116].

Of the remaining tablets which possess an anaglyph, the largest homogeneous group is that which shows eyes[117]. One of these[118] has not only the eyes but also the nose and thus forms a link with yet another anaglyph which shows the lower part of a face excluding eyes[119]. With all

of these facial anaglyphs the straightforward explanation is the most likely. They were dedicated by people who had suffered from some affliction of the eyes or face from which they believed Hypsistos had delivered them. One most intriguing example of this is the ex-voto of Philematin[120]. This shows a pair of eyes of which the right, from the viewers's standpoint, shows a slit 'apparently the scar from a successful operation'[121]. The slit certainly seems intentional on the anaglyph but it is difficult to be dogmatic. Assuming it does represent scar tissue after a successful operation, we cannot infer that the operation was carried out by someone connected with the cult of Hypsistos. It is more likely that the god was being thanked for rendering efficacious an operation undertaken independently.

All save one[122] of the facial anaglyphs were dedicated by women. There are also anaglyphs concerned with limbs - one showing a shoulder[123] and two showing arms[124]. Both were dedicated by women. These two were almost certainly meant to show parts of the body which had been healed. The last anaglyphs show two footprints/and one foot respectively[125]. (Plate 15) The single foot is almost certainly a straightforward healing ex-voto. A foot in profile seems to have been a normal way of showing that part of the body as having been cured or of needing to be cured - 'i piedi dei malati vengono riprodotti sulle lapidi votive come visti di profilo'[126]. However, the pair of footprints represents something very different. We know from shrines as far away as Delos and Crete of such footprints and they either turn out to be records of a visit to the shrine by pilgrims or they are records of an apparition, perhaps a healing apparition, of the shrine's deity[127]. Here, in company with all the other ex-votos recording a cure, or asking for one, the pair of footprints is more likely to record a healing apparition of Hypsistos.

It would appear, then, that mainly women used the shrine of Hypsistos. Women seem to have been the major users of healing shrines generally but a preponderance of women would also accord with what we know of the religious beliefs of many Jewish women. Excluded from all official means of religious expression, Jewish women often had recourse to what Jewish men regarded as superstitious folk practice or even magic[128]. The names seem to have been those of women from the lower classes and their concerns were predominantly gynaecological. There is no real evidence for any form of ritual at the shrine although that is not the same as saying that

no ritual took place. There is no evidence of a source of water at the shrine such as had been almost essential for healing cults in the classical period. The altars which survive[129] are all small, votive offerings and not of a size to have acted as cult altars. The shrine itself may have had some insubstantial , roofed structure or it may have been an open air temenos. There is no evidence for an organising priesthood or any form of fraternity but there may well have been some person or persons responsible for the upkeep of the shrine.

In the absence of any evidence of an organisational structure, what was the common factor which united the dedicants to Hypsistos? Clearly they were all concerned with some aspect of healing but other healing shrines were operating at the same time so why did they choose one rather than the other? A possible answer lies in the nature of the deity. Leaving aside the tablets which have anaglyphs clearly linking them with the cult but lacking inscriptions, we have twenty-eight inscribed pieces. Three are inscribed θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ[130], five are inscribed Διὶ Ὑψίστῳ or Ὑψίστῳ Διὶ[131], one has only Ὑψίστῳ but is damaged and may originally have had θεῷ or Διὶ in addition[132], three do not mention the god at all but clearly belong to the cult[133], one is undecipherable[134] and fifteen are dedicated simply Ὑψίστῳ[135]. One dedication starts off ἀγαθὴ τύχη[136] which was a fairly stylized and not uncommon way to start a dedication[137] and was probably not intended as any indication of polytheistic beliefs. If that is true, we have an identical pattern to the one already observed over much of the Mediterranean[138]. It seems to show a strange mixture of monotheism and syncretism. The eagle linked with one of the inscriptions[139] adds weight to the theory that the worshippers of Hypsistos in Athens had something in common with that god's worshippers elsewhere round the Mediterranean. The Athenian dedicants may well have belonged to that section of society which existed on the fringe of more established social groups. To this section would have been drawn poorer foreigners, freedmen and their families and possibly slaves and prostitutes[140]. This is the fertile ground in which introduced, syncretistic cults tending towards monotheism could flourish. Unorthodox Judaism would certainly have been able to obtain a foothold in this milieu. It is probable that the worshippers of Hypsistos belonged to this social and idealogical mix. If more orthodox Jewish ideas were present in the wor ip of Hypsistos it is quite possible that the central niche of the shrine was not filled with an image of the god but with another and larger inscription.

4. The end of the cult

The ex-votos seem not to date further than the third century A.D. Although the Asklepieion at Pergamon appears not to have been rebuilt after the destructive earthquake of the 250's, healing shrines generally seem to have flourished throughout the century with Diocletian actually ordering the building of new temples to Asklepios[141]. Fairly early in the fourth century A.D., however, destruction of healing shrines was begun. Constantine himself directly ordered the razing to the ground of the Asklepieion at Aegae in Cilicia[142]. For what happened to healing shrines in Athens we have only more indirect evidence. We know that the Athenian Asklepieion was still intact, if not in pristine condition, as late as the mid fifth century if we are to accept the account of Marinus. We are told that Proclus ἀνῄει εἰς τὸ Ἀσκληπιεῖον προσευξόμενος τῷ θεῷ[143]. He also by implication gives us information about similar but lesser known healing shrines and pagan sites elsewhere in Athens for he says καὶ γὰρ ηὐτύχει τούτου ἡ πόλις τότε, καὶ εἶχεν ἔτι ἀπόρθητον τὸ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἱερόν[144]. There was no need to emphasise that the Asklepieion was unravaged unless other, similar shrines had been sacked and closed. However, by the mid fifth century Christianity must have been in a very powerful position. Julian's support for paganism had been of little effect in slowing the growth of Christianity for his preference for paganism had lasted the length of his short reign - A.D. 361-363.

If the Asklepieion could survive until being turned into a Christian basilica in the late fifth century, it proves only that Asklepios had held a dominant position in Athenian society and one close to the hearts of men. Lesser healing cults, such as that of Hypsistos, probably disappeared during the course of the fourth century. There are no signs of the destruction of the shrine on the Pnyx. What is most likely is that Christianity actually took root within the same milieu as that in which Hypsistos had been popular. Thus allegiance would have been gradually transferred from the older to the newer cult. If this is true, we may picture the shrine of Hypsistos on the Pnyx slowly losing its adherents so that during the fourth century it became abandoned while Christianity went from strength to strength.

Chapter III. The healing cult of Amynos.

The healing cult of Ἀμύνος

1. The excavation of the shrine

In 1892/3 the German archaeological team led by Wilhelm Dörpfeld was excavating the approximately triangular area bounded on the north by what we now know is the Agora, on the west by the Pnyx and on the east by the Acropolis. The Areopagus forms the highest spot in this triangle. The German team's efforts were concentrated mainly on the eastern and southern parts of this area - those parts still visible and identifiable as excavations that run down the eastern side of the busy, modern road known as Leoforos Apostolou Pavlou. Soon after the discovery of what Dörpfeld thought was the Enneakrounos, but which later was proved to be the water system of Peisistratos, the German team came across another site. Dörpfeld made the following note:

> 'Auf der östlichen Seite der alten, zur Akropolis führenden Fahrstrasse trat zwischen Pnyx, Areopag und Akropolis der Eingang und die westliche Grenzmauer eines Bezirks zu Tage, welcher sich durch die darin gemachten Funde als das Heiligtum eines Heilgottes herausstellte'.[1]

In that first season of excavation on this site, the western boundary wall was uncovered along with the western end of the wall running across the northern side of the precinct. At the juncture of these two walls the excavators found the remains of a doorway. From the doorway the excavators then seem to have decided to expose a section corresponding to a diagonal across the site. This produced several reliefs, a well, some internal retaining walls and within these the remains of a marble offerings table (see Plate 17).

These finds enabled the excavators to be certain not only that they had come across a healing shrine but also that the shrine either belonged to or had some connection with Asklepios. This was clearly indicated by an inscription:

ΗΔΕΙΑ ΑCΚΛΗΠΙΩΙ [2]

After the excavation of the diagonal strip, the shrine was left until

they had time to excavate the whole of it. Dörpfeld writing on January 12th, 1895 records that two years after the initial excavations he still had not managed to complete the dig:

> 'Weiter südlich gelangen wir zu dem Bezirke eines Heilgottes, den wir vor zwei Jahren fanden und teilweise ausgruben ... Die vollständige Freilegung des Heiligtums wird eine unserer nächsten Aufgaben sein.'[3]

Soon afterwards, however, the German team did complete the excavation and the results were published the following year[4]. During the course of the final excavations several inscriptions turned up which have both illuminated and obscured the answer to questions about the identity of the healing god or hero of this shrine. At one stage it might have been possible to assert that the shrine was dedicated to Asklepios but under a particular cult-title:

Μνησιπτολέμη ὑπὲρ Δικαιοφάνος Ἀσκληπιῶι Ἀμύνωι ἀνέθηκε[5].

However, other inscriptions used the phrase Ἀμύνωι καὶ Ἀσκληπιῶι and so made it clear that we are dealing with separate entities and not a name and an epithet. An altar mentions Ἀμύνωι καὶ Ἀσκληπιῶι καὶ Ὑγείᾳ[6] and two decrees refer to Ἀμύνου καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ Δεξίονος[7]. This left two problems, namely, who was Amynos and who was Dexion?

2. Interpretations of the evidence

The answer to the second question was easily found although it too led to further problems. The Etymologicum Magnum tells us that Dexion was no other than Sophocles:

> ΔΕΞΙΩΝ: Οὕτως ὠνομάσθη Σοφοκλῆς ὑπὸ Ἀθηναίων μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν. Φασὶν ὅτι Ἀθηναῖοι τελευτήσαντι Σοφοκλεῖ, βουλόμενοι τιμὰς αὐτῷ περιποιῆσαι, ἡρῷον αὐτῷ κατασκευάσαντες, ὠνόμασαν αὐτὸν Δεξίωνα, ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ δεξιώσεως. Και γὰρ ὑπεδέξατο τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ οἰκίᾳ, καὶ βωμὸν ἱδρύσατο. Ἐκ τῆς αἰτίας οὖν ταύτης Δεξίων ἐκλήθη.[8]

This seems very clear yet the Vita of Sophocles complicates the issue by stating that Sophocles was the priest of a deity or hero named in the genitive as Ἄλωνος or Ἄλωνος or even Ἄλκωνος[9]. Now the Vita of Sophocles is a compilation and so its value as a source of evidence must be assessed with considerable reserve. However, such scholarly reserve does not automatically exclude the possibility that a compilation could contain material derived from early and, possibly, near contemporary sources. The fact that such material could only be studied in a later compilation and through the agency of several intermediary writers does not ipso facto invalidate its evidence. Unfortunately there is no other certain evidence which can be adduced to corroborate or contradict the Vita. The Ἄλκωνος variant was introduced[10] - without textual evidence but on the grounds of an error in the manuscript tradition - to link the healing deity or hero with some other known personage. Although manuscript evidence does not support such a variant that is not to say that it is wrong. If all the manuscripts rely ultimately on a faulty source then it would come either from evidence within the manuscript tradition or from completely external literary or archaeological evidence. The textual evidence strongly indicates that the spelling Αλωνος is correct. The MS Laurentianus 125 (G) has Ἄλωνος and all the others Ἄλωνος[11].

What about external evidence? There is no archaeological support for any shrine of a healing deity or hero of the right name. Literary evidence is also totally absent. As a last resort are there any other considerations? The variant MS reading Ἄλκωνος was suggested because we have literary evidence of several people of that name, the most famous being Alcon the father of Phaleros who was an Argonaut and the eponymous

founder of the port of Athens[12]. In years to come evidence may come to light to show that this suggestion is correct but at the moment it has to be rejected because it does not link up with any other pieces of evidence:

> 'Die ganze Existenz des Heilheros Alkon beruht auf der Conjectur Meinekes, keines der andern Zeugnisse, die wir über ihn haben, kennt ihn in dieser Eigenschaft. Sonst wird er meist als Vater des Argonauten Phaleros genannt, und heisst bald ein Sohn des Abas, bald des Erechtheus, andere Nachrichten verweisen ihn an die Propontis. Dass er in Attika einen Kult gehabt habe, ist nirgends bezeugt, am festesten scheint er mit Euboia verknüpft zu sein.'[13]

Caution suggests that we accept the version of the Vita so let us, for the moment at least, suppose that Sophocles was indeed the priest of a hero named Ἄλων or Ἄλων. The manuscripts, except for one, agree on the aspirated form. If we look closely at this name we have to work from the genitive form which is the only one for which we have evidence. This genitive is Ἄλωνος. The use of an omega rather than an omicron as the vowel completing the stem ων- makes it more likely that the nominative form should be Ἄλων rather than Ἄλον unless the name had its origins in the old alphabet in use before the acceptance of the East Ionic alphabet during the archonship of Eucleides in 403-402 B.C. Ἄλων can be linked etymologically with several quite different roots. One very sensible suggestion[14] was made earlier this century that it is cognate with ἡ ἅλς and ὁ ἅλς both coming from the root ΑΛ. It was also pointed out that there is both archaeological and mythological evidence to support such an interpretation:

> 'Voraussetzung für die Existenz dieses Gottes in Athen wäre also eine salzige oder salzig schmeckende Quelle innerhalb des alten Stadtgebietes. Und eine solche ist tatsächlich vorhanden. Die östliche der beiden Quellen, die 1876 bei den Grabungen der Archäologischen Gesellschaft am Südabhang der Burg zu Tage traten, führt, wie sich jeder überzeugen kann, Wasser von leicht salzigem Geschmack.'[15]

This spring was part of the area excavated by a team led by S. Koumanoudes and was an integral part of the Asklepieion. The usefulness

of this link between Halon and the spring, which became part of the precinct of Asklepios after that god's entry into Athens, becomes obvious when one realises that Sophocles held the priesthood of Halon and it was Sophocles who received Asklepios, accommodated him in his οἰκιά and was afterwards called Dexion for his deed. However, the usefulness of the link does not amount to a proof that it is correct. Against this link are two factors: firstly, Sophocles was mentioned as Dexion not on the south slope of the Acropolis but in the shrine of Amynos south west of the Areopagus; secondly, we do not know where the οἰκιά of Sophocles was. The word would lead one to believe that it was his own private home rather than a sanctuary or a shrine where he was the priest. The οἰκιά of Sophocles was more likely to be on the edge of the Areopagus than on the south slope of the Acropolis since the shrine of Amynos was in an area with large numbers of private houses.

However, a very interesting suggestion has been made to consolidate the link between Halon and the salty-tasting spring on the south of the Acropolis. When talking about the Asklepieion Pausanias mentions this spring:

> ἔστι ἐν αὐτῷ κρήνη, παρ' ἣ λέγουσι Ποσειδῶνος παῖδα Ἁλιρρόθιον θυγατέρα Ἄρεως Ἀλκίππην αἰσχύναντα ἀποθανεῖν ὑπὸ Ἄρεως, καὶ δίκην ἐπὶ τοῦτῳ τῷ φόνῳ γενέσθαι πρῶτον[16]

Is it possible for Halon and Halirrotios to be the same people or to have some other close relationship? Examples have been given where such name differences conceal a common origin: Ἅλκιμος and Ἀλκιμέδων, Δηώ and Δημήτηρ are only two of several such possibilities[17]. Although there is no absolute proof of the link between Halon and Halirrotios, the distinct possibility of a common root has to be admitted:

> 'Wie es nun damit auch im vorliegenden Falle bestellt sein mag, jedenfalls wird man die Möglichkeit zugeben müssen, dass Halon und Halirrotios zwei Namensformen für denselben Heros sind'.[18]

Further archaeological evidence can be adduced to suggest that the shrine centred upon the salty-tasting spring predates the Asklepieion by at least a century[19] and that it therefore may well have had a presiding deity or hero, possibly Halon/Halirrotios before the advent of Asklepios.

A relief carving found during the excavation of the Asklepieion also suggests that some hero was venerated as well as Asklepios and Hygieia. This implication is based, not on epigraphic evidence, but on the presence of a figure taller than the worshippers, although subsidiary to Asklepios himself, on this relief carving and similar ones[20]. The identification of such a figure as a hero connected with the healing site would be very plausible.

If we accept the existence of a hero named Halon, we solve one problem and cause another. We dispose of any doubts about the truth concerning Sophocles' priesthood of the hero Halon as described in the Vita, but we are left with the odd discovery of dedications to Sophocles under the title Dexion in the shrine of a hero called Amynos who also suffered a takeover by Asklepios. Did Sophocles hold two priesthoods, one of Halon and one of Amynos? This is not impossible and solves many of the problems. Another possibility is that the manuscript evidence of the Vita is even more faulty than has been indicated. Is it possible that the relevant passage should read Ἀμύνου and not Ἄλωνος/Ἄλωνος?

> 'Schreibt man dagegen Ἀμύνου statt Ἄλωνος so fügt sich alles vortrefflich zusammen und alle Schwierigkeiten, die bisher in der Überlieferung von Asklepios Einführung in Athen vorlagen, lösen sich.'[21]

It is perfectly true that many of the difficulties disappear at a stroke but it seems rather a drastic revision of the evidence! There are two other possible explanations, and perhaps more, that have not been considered. Firstly, it seems to have been presumed that the word Ἄλων if that is the correct reading, has its derivation in the root ΑΛ and must therefore have a connection with the sea, salty water, salty-tasting water or salt itself. However, it is quite conceivable that the omega in Ἄλων indicates a quite different root.

It is possible that it derives from the same root as ἀλωή and the festival of Demeter known as the Ἀλῶα . The word ἄλων, or its more usual form ἄλως, was used to refer to circular objects, primarily threshing floors but other things as well. Nicander of Colophon, an admittedly late source of information since he was writing about the middle of the second century B.C., used this word ἄλως in his work on poisonous

creatures to describe the snake[22]. Now the snake is a common symbol of healing deities and heroes but if the word ἄλως/ἄλων is cognate with this healing hero Halon it would surely have to have a greater connection than merely 'snake'. Since the root meaning implies a circular shape, in this instance it would mean a coiled snake. The excavations of the shrine of Amynos revealed the lower part of a stone table 'mit zwei Schlangen geschmückt'[23] but most interesting are two stone snakes:

> 'Aufbäumende bärtige Schlange, von der ausser dem gehobenen Kopf und Hals noch eine Windung des geringelten Leibes erhalten ist.'[24]

> 'Eine Schlange ringelt sich an einem Felsen in die Höhe, der Kopf fehlt.'[25]

The fact that these snakes are coiled thus comes as no surprise. Their presence in the shrine obviously does not prove the theory that perhaps Halon is an epithet of Amynos with the meaning 'of the coiled snake', or something similar yet it remains a possibility.

Secondly, there is a distinct possibility that the hero or god, whose priest Sophocles was, obtained his name as late as the fourth century B.C. Before then it is quite probable that the hero or god was anonymous. We know of other deities who were both anonymous and worshipped by orgeones. One such was the deity known simply as ἡ θεὸς on one orgeonic record[26]. From another we even know of a hero who was anonymous on a decree of some orgeones around the mid fifth century B.C. but who had received the name of Echelos by the time that the original decree was included in an anagraphe of the orgeones early in the third century B.C.[27]. The fact that, as we shall see shortly, the excavation of the shrine shows some evidence of use as far as back as the sixth century while the name of our hero first appears (already linked with Askepios) in the fourth century adds weight to the possibility that he was originally anonymous. Perhaps too he was known periphrastically as Halon from his symbol, the snake.

We are left with evidence from the Vita that Sophocles was the priest of a Halon and evidence from the excavations south west of the Areopagus that Sophocles was connected, under the title of Dexion, with the shrine of Amynos. Part at least of the speculation about the Halon-Sophocles-Dexion-Amynos interrelationships was solved a few years ago when the decrees

mentioning Dexion in the shrine of Amynos were carefully scrutinised. One of the two refers quite specifically to τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὀργεώνων τοῦ Ἀμύνου καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ Δεξίονος but goes on to speak of two shrines and not one - ἐν ἀμφοῖν τοῖν ἱεροῖν and τὴν μὲν ἐν τῶι τοῦ Δεξίονος ἱερῶι, τὴν δὲ ἐν τῶι τοῦ Ἀμύνου καὶ Ἀσκληπιοῦ[28]. The link between Sophocles and Amynos[29] is not that the playwright was the priest of that hero but that their cult was cared for by the same group of orgeones. Dexion clearly has his shrine in some place quite separate from that of Amynos. The decree makes it certain that there were two and that they were fairly independent of one another. If they had not been, what would be the point of the decree stipulating that a duplicate should be placed in the shrine of Dexion?

Sophocles received Askelpios ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ οἰκίᾳ, καὶ βωμὸν ἱδρύσατο.[30] Although οἶκος is quite commonly[31] used to describe a shrine, it looks here from the use of the word οἰκία as though Sophocles received Asklepios into his own home and even established some sort of altar there. Perhaps even during his lifetime Sophocles was known as the receiver, Dexion. A similar situation applied to the founder of a city who was venerated as the οἰκίστης. After his death Sophocles was venerated in a shrine linked by a combined organisation to the shrine whose hero he had served. Orgeones served the hero Amynos, the god Asklepios and Dexion as well although these orgeones seem from the wording of the decree[32] to have restricted their attentions to the shrine of Amynos and Asklepios jointly on the one hand and to the shrine of Dexion on the other. It seems strange that they appear to have had nothing to do with the cult of Asklepios on the south slope of the Acropolis. This problem will have to be considered when the orgeones are looked at more closely.

3. Foreign links with the name Amynos

Turning to Amynos himself, we find that the excavations have revealed eight instances of his name. Three are in the genitive form - Ἀμύνου[33]. Two are in the dative - Ἀμύνωι[34]. The remaining three inscriptions have not retained the full form of the name. Two of these can be said to have been certainly in the dative[35] and one is uncertain because the remains of the name are all that is left from the entire inscription[36]. These forms leave little doubt that the nominative is Ἀμύνος. There are apparently few doubts that his name is cognate with ἀμυντήρ and ἀμύντωρ and like them means 'Defender':

> 'Klar ist, dass der Name mit ἀμύνειν zusammenhängt und Abwehrer bedeutet'.[37]

The form of the name causes some surprise but there are similar proper nouns formed from abstract nouns:

> 'Aber die Bildung ist auffallend, man würde etwa Ἀμύντωρ erwarten. Ähnliche adjectivische Namensbildungen scheinen in Attika Ἄλεξος und Βόηθος zu sein.'[38]

So far as is known, the name Amynos occurs only once in Greek literature. Eusebius of Caesarea, a fourth century Church Father, wrote a book now known as the Praeparatio Evangelica. In the course of this book he quotes extensively from Philo of Byblos whose work Phoenician History is lost and is known only from these quotations and a few other fragments[39]. Amynos crops up in a section on the history of culture which charts the major inventions of mankind. The discoveries of fire, clothing, housing, fishing, hunting, sailing, spells and prophecies are related. After the inventors of these skills comes Amynos:

> ἀπὸ τούτων γενέσθαι Ἄμυνον καὶ Μάγον, οἳ κατέδειξαν κώμας καὶ ποίμνας.[40]

Philo was writing in Greek about Phoenician deities and culture heroes. The names are frequently, therefore, mere approximations from one language into another. This is presumably the case with Amynos as also with the others mentioned in this text. Körte neatly sums up the conclusions he draws from this account:

'Hier ist "Αμυνος einfach Übersetzung eines phönikischen Namens, so gut wie Hypuranios der Erbauer der ersten Hütten, Agreus und Halieus, die Erfinder von Jagd und Fischfang, Technites und Geïonos Autochthon, die zuerst dem Lehm der Ziegel Spreu beimischen und Dächer bauen, und endlich Agros und Agrueros denen die Erfindung der Höfe bei den Häusern und anderes zugeschrieben wird. Alle diese Namen sind mit mehr oder weniger Verständniss und Glück aus dem Phönikischen übersetzt und es wäre falsch, daraus dass Amynos hier als Erfinder der Dörfer und Weiden genannt wird, das geringste für unsern attischen Heros folgern zu wollen. Höchstens das wäre möglich, dass Philon von Byblos den Namen des attischen Heilheros, der ja noch immer Verehrung genoss, gekannt und deshalb einen phönikischen 'Helfer' mit dieser Form wiedergegeben hat.'[41]

These comments seem sensible and well-founded. However, there are two not easily reconcilable points of view about Philo. Körte in the passage quoted above adopts one. He is supported, for example, by Attridge and Oden who argue that much of Philo's Phoenician History cannot be more or less a translation of a Phoenician work written by someone called Sanchuniathon who lived many generations before, perhaps as early as the Trojan War according to Porphyry[42]. One of the major arguments against an early date for the Phoenician History is the euhemeristic nature of the material including the 'history of culture' section which mentioned Amynos:

'Although rationalist criticism of religion and the assumption that gods were deified mortals existed long before Euhemerus, it is hardly proper to argue, as some scholars have done, that the highly developed, thorough and consistent historical interpretation of mythology found in the Phoenician History is a characteristic feature of ancient Semitic thought ... Nor is it proper to dismiss the significance of the euhemerism of the Phoenician History for dating the work on the grounds that it is simply Philo's redactional addition to Sanchuniathon's work. The euhemerism of our text is not simply a superficial application of the general categories of Hellenistic rationalism. It is rather an integral part of all the historical narratives here, and, as noted above, it serves as the major organizational principle of the rather disparate

> mythological materials involved. The natural inference to be drawn from the presence of full-blown euhemerism in the Phoenician History is that the compilation of ancient myth here cannot be dated before the Hellenistic era.'[43]

The other point of view is that such scepticism is entirely misplaced. In 1929 and the following few years Ras Shamra, known as Ugarit in ancient times, in northern Syria was the scene for the discovery of a number of tablets inscribed about the middle of the fourteenth century B.C. The mythological information gained from these Ugaritic tablets has turned out to be immense. The information is about early Phoenician, usually called Canaanite, religion. Other excavations, this time at Ḫattuša, the ancient Hittite capital in modern day Turkey, revealed other tablets written between 1400 and 1200 B.C. These were in the Hittite language but contain even earlier Hurrian material and so the material is normally classified as Hurro-Hittite. An analysis of the Ugaritic and Hurro-Hittite material has convinced most specialists in this field that they are both drawing upon the same sources. Furthermore, when early Greek material, and specifically Hesiod's Theogony, is drawn into the comparison a striking picture emerges:

> 'The close similarity between the Hurrian, Phoenician and Greek theogonies shows that we have to do with one mythological pattern.'[44]

However, Hesiod's Theogony and Philo's Phoenician History do not entirely agree with one another. The tablets from Ras Shamra and Ḫattuša now indicate that Philo's sources are extremely ancient while not discrediting Hesiod:

> 'The many points wherein the Phoenician History disagrees with Hesiod's Theogony, but corresponds to the Hurrian mythology, prove that the theogony of the Phoenician History and Hesiod's Theogony are both independent versions of the old religious tradition in the Near East.'[45]

Tracing the links between the Hurro-Hittite, Canaanite/Phoenician and the Greek mythologies is obviously extremely complex. It can be forcefully argued that the Greeks received their traditions via Babylonian sources[46]. However, it is probably true to say that the majority of scholars feel that 'The Greeks must have received this' (viz. their mythological pattern)

'from the Orient, probably via Phoenicia'[47]. The precise lines of transmission are made more complex still by the existence of other, linked mythologies such as the Iranian which lead to the conclusion that all of these cultures share a common Indo-European stock of mythological stories[48]. Despite this, the general picture seems clear. The Phoenician History contains a great deal of material of considerable antiquity:

> 'For our purpose it may be taken as definitely established that Philo of Byblos had access to some genuinely archaic Phoenician/Canaanite traditions. On the other hand, it is also to be expected that Philo's material has been colored (sic) by late developments within Phoenician religion as well as by Hellenistic syncretism and the Tendenz of his own Euhemerism. Each detail in his report must therefore be tested in order to determine whether it is genuinely representative of old Canaanite religion.'[49]

If we look again at the text which mentions Amynos, we ought to do so without the preconception that the material is necessarily Hellenistic to Roman. It is generally assumed that this Amynos mentioned by Philo and quoted by Eusebius has nothing to do with the Athenian healing hero or at best that his name is a useful equivalent of some Phoenician culture hero. Amynos, however, comes in a passage which is full of interest from the point of view of healing methods:

> Ἐκ τούτων Ἀγρόται καὶ Κυνηγοί. οὗτοι δὲ καὶ Ἀλῆται καὶ Τιτάνες καλοῦνται. ἀπὸ τούτων γενέσθαι Ἄμυνον καὶ Μάγον, οἳ κατέδειξαν κώμας καὶ ποίμνας. ἀπὸ τούτων γενέσθαι Μισὼρ καὶ Συδύκ, τουτέστιν εὔλυτον καὶ δίκαιον.
>
> Ἀπὸ Μισὼρ ὁ Ταάυτος, ὃς εὗρεν τὴν τῶν πρώτων στοιχείων γραφήν· ὃν Αἰγύπτιοι μὲν Θωύθ, Ἀλεξανδρεῖς δὲ Θώθ, Ἕλληες δὲ Ἑρμῆν ἐκάλεσαν. ἐκ δὲ Συδὺκ Διόσκουροι ἢ Κάβειροι ἢ Κορύβαντες ἢ Σαμοθρᾷκες. οὗτοι (φησί) πρῶτοι πλοῖον εὗρον. ἐκ τούτων γεγόνασιν ἕτεροι, οἳ καὶ βοτάνας εὗρον καὶ τὴν τῶν δακετῶν ἴασιν καὶ ἐπῳδάς.[50]

When we start to unravel this text we find that the generation succeeding Amynos is composed of Misor and Sydyk. In reverse order these seem to be the same as ṣdq mšr who form an Ugaritic pair meaning

'righteousness and justice'[51]. These seem like vague personalisations of abstract notions. This impression is strengthened by the rather clumsy Greek translation of Misor and Sydyk: τουτέστιν εὔλυτον καὶ δίκαιον. However, this pair have now turned up in an Ugaritic text[52]. The interesting fact here is that the transliteration from ṣdq mšr into Συδύκ and Μισὼρ is clear even if the attempted explanation and translation of those names is clumsy. This alone should make us look at the preceeding generation with some respect. Secondly Misor and Sydyk are given the honours for discovering the use of salt. Salt has already cropped up in our discussions of healing methods in relation to Halon. At the very least this is an interesting coincidence. Thirdly, the close association of these generations - Ἀλῆται καὶ Τιτᾶνες, Ἄμυνος και Μάγος, Μισὼρ και Συδύκ - is not totally different to the account given by Hesiod in his Theogony, line 135, where he describes the birth of the Titans and includes Themis. Now Themis is an exact equivalent of the Ugaritic pair ṣdq mšr[53]. Fourthly, Themis has strong connections with oracular and therapeutic sites, especially the Asklepieion on the south slope of the Acropolis[54].

The text then discusses the following generation. From Misor comes Taautos/Thouth/Thoth/Hermes while from Sydyk come the Dioscuri/Kabeiri/Korybantes/Samothracians. Finally from these come others οὓ και βοτάνας εὗρον καὶ τὴν τῶν δακετῶν ἴασιν και ἐπῳδας. Thus the section of the cultural history containing Amynos ends with a general comment about the descendents of Amynos being responsible for the discovery of herbs, healing of bites from poisonous animals and ἐπῳδαί - verbal formulae to help, often magically, in the healing process. These were, according to Herodotus[55], often used by priests called Magi. The word Magi/μάγοι by the fifth century B.C. had acquired sinister overtones[56]. These men were not magicians in a modern sense but were healers albeit healers with primitive methods. Aristotle[57] perhaps knew that the word μάγοι originally had no perjorative meaning. The medical treatise On the Sacred Disease, which was written about the year 400 B.C., discusses epilepsy and states that that disease is no more sacred than other diseases. The treatise says that it was probably first called sacred by μάγοι, καθαρταὶ, ἀγύρται and ἀλαζόνες[58]. These people are contrasted by the author of the treatise with those, notably himself, who believe in a more rational explanation of disease. Despite this difference, the Magi do not emerge as complete charlatans:

'It is clear from his account that they did not rely on spells and incantations (ἐπῳδαί) alone, but also made suggestions, for example, about diet, even if their advice here was negative, about what to avoid, rather than what to take. The combination of charms and suggestions about diet in the opponents of On the Sacred Disease corresponds to what we should expect if we compare the data collected by anthropologists concerning primitive medicine, or the evidence for ancient Egyptian or Babylonian medicine.'[59]

It seems clear that Magi originally used a variety of approaches to healing:

'The response to disease is often a complex one: when spells and the like are used, this is often in conjunction with other treatments that may include drugs, dietary prescriptions and other types of what we should consider natural remedies.'[60]

If Herodotus is to be believed they also included the interpretation of portents among their skills[61]. Thus emerges the picture of the Magi as healers using sacred formulae, drugs, dietary advice, natural remedies and the interpretation of portents. This picture accords exactly with what we know of, for example, many Asklepian healing centres.

The word μάγοι shares the same stem as many relatively late Greek words such as τό μαγγάνευμα, μαγγανεύω, τό μάγγανον, μαγεύω, κτλ. All of these words share a common meaning of deception of one sort or another. The stem also entered Latin with a similar meaning - magicus, etc. Professor Lloyd, when dealing with these words, discusses the μαγ-root[62].

The Magi were originally 'The Great Ones'. Presumably their name was given to them because of what was seen as their power. The word Μάγος is also surely cognate with the Phoenician word māgōn which was used as an epithet for the gods and described their qualities of leadership and power[63].

It has been seen how the two separate-looking names Misor and Sydyk have now been found to correspond to a divine pair ṣdq mšr, righteousness and justice. Interestingly the previous generation is similarly linked

in the Greek text: ἀπὸ τούτων γενέσθαι Ἄμυνον καὶ Μάγον as compared with ἀπὸ τούτων γενέσθαι Μισὼρ καὶ Συδύκ. With Misor and Sydyk the Greek gives the modern reader a false impression of a separation and an independence between these two names which we now know from the Ugaritic is false. Is it not possible from the exact parallel which exists between the two generations that just as Misor and Sydyk turn out to be ṣdq mšr so too the apparent plurality of Amynos and Magos in fact conceals a singularity, i.e. one deity only. In this case, surely the 'Magos' part of the pair will be cognate with the Phoenician māgōn and also perhaps with the earlier connotation of μάγος. Amynos would then emerge as 'The great One who Heals'. This is not so far-fetched if we remember that Philo says that the descendants of Amynos not only discovered salt but that they were the ones οὗ καὶ βοτάνας εὗρον καὶ τὴν τῶν δακετῶν ἴασιν καὶ ἐπῳδάς[64]. These were precisely the methods used by the Magi.

A Phoenician link with the Athenian healing cult of Amynos is not impossible on other grounds either. There are strong connections between other Athenian healing cults and the Phoenician tradition as described by Philo. Amynos and Magos had as immediate descendants Misor and Sydyk. From them came Taautos and the Dioscuri/Kabeiroi[65]. Philo tells us that the Kabeiroi were seven in number but that they also had an eighth brother named Asklepios[66]. We happen to know that it was common for the Phoenicians to identify their god 'Ešmun with Asklepios[67]. The description of him as the eighth brother apparently comes from the connection between his Phoenician name 'Šmn and the Phoenician word for eight - 'šmn[68]. This genealogy would make Amynos the grandfather of Asklepios/'Ešmun. Other gods who had healing cults in Athens seem also to be connected with this Phoenician genealogy - Zeus Meilichios[69] who appears some generations earlier than Amynos, and Hypsistos[70] also called Ἐλιοῦν[71].

There appear to be too many factors in favour of some connection between the Phoenician Amynos and the Athenian healing cult to dismiss the connection entirely. There seem to be two main problems left. Firstly, is it possible for Philo to have used his knowledge of Athenian healing cults to provide him with equivalent Greek names for the Phoenician culture heroes he was describing in his work? This is an interesting possibility but the evidence is not in its favour. Apart from the lack of proof that

Philo ever visited Athens or used any oral or written account of that city's healing shrines, the archaeological evidence suggests a different problem. The inscriptions which securely link Amynos with the shrine are all dateable to the fourth century B.C. with the possible exception of one which may be late fourth or early third century B.C. and the certain exception of one which is to be dated to the latter half of the second century B.C.[72]. There is no mention of Amynos after that date. Geometric, early Attic shards and pieces of Attic black-figure[73] indicate an early date for a shrine. Amynos appears in the record from the fourth to the second century B.C. only but the shrine seems to have survived, probably in completely Asklepian guise, into the second century A.D. That it survived so long seems to be indicated by an altar dedicated to Hadrian[74]. Its Asklepian guise seems to be indicated by the later anaglyptic evidence. Philo's dates are disputed but somewhere in the range A.D. 54 to A.D. 138, viz. some time during Nero's reign for his birth to some time during Hadrian's reign for his death[75], would seem to be likely. Thus it is possible for Philo to have seen the shrine in operation but it is most probable to have been an Asklepian centre rather than a shrine of Amynos. The chances of Philo coming across Amynos in this shrine are thus very slim.

The other problem is in some ways the reverse of the first. Why does the shrine show evidence in the form of polygonal masonry and early shards that it is to be dated to at least the sixth century while the earliest evidence for Amynos is shortly before the middle of the fourth century?[76] One can presume that all the earlier epigraphic evidence, if it existed, has since been destroyed but this is dangerous. True, it is dangerous to argue also from the lack of evidence but there seems a strong possibility that, although a healing shrine existed on this spot during the sixth century, the hero/deity did not become named as/identified with Amynos until the fourth century. If this is the case, there are indications in Philo's work of a further layer of syncretism which might help to explain it.

Philo wrote a section on snakes in which he described the attributes of these creatures. This work on snakes may well not have been part of the Phoenician History but instead part of another lost work[77]. Philo tells us that the Phoenicians and Egyptians believed snakes to be divine and to have a sort of immortality.

καὶ πολυχρονιώτατον δέ ἐστιν οὐ μόνον τε ἐκδυόμενον τὸ γῆρας νεάζειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὔξησιν ἐπιδέχεσθαι μείζονα πέφυκεν· καὶ ἐπειδὰν τὸ ὡρισμένον μέτρον πληρώσῃ, εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀναλίσκεται, ὡς ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς ὁμοίως αὐτὸς ὁ Τάαυτος κατέταξεν γραφαῖς. διὸ καὶ ἐν ἱεροῖς τοῦτο τὸ ζῷον καὶ μυστηρίοις συμπαρείληπται.

Εὕρηται δὲ ἡμῖν περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιγεγραμμένοις Ἐθωθιῶν ὑπομνήμασιν ἐπὶ πλεῖον, ἐν οἷς κατασκευάζεται ὅτι ἀθάνατον εἴη καὶ ὡς εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀναλύεται, ὥσπερ πρόκειται· οὐ γὰρ θνήσκει ἰδίῳ θανάτῳ εἰ μὴ βίᾳ τινὶ πληγὲν τοῦτο τὸ ζῷον. Φοίνικης δὲ αὐτὸ Ἀγαθὸν Δαίμονα καλοῦσιν. ὁμοίως καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι Κνὴφ ἐπονομάζουσιν[78].

Thus as well as Halon it would appear that the name Agathos Daimon would fit in exactly with what the Athenians might have called the hero of the Amynos shrine prior to the fourth century. The term was certainly used to describe a snake-divinity[79] and is altogether suitable for the beneficent, healing power which the Athenians believed came from the shrine. It would also fit in nicely with the sort of other anonymous heroes whom we know as having healing shrines in Athens - ἥρως ἰατρός and ξένος ἰατρός. The snake would clearly represent the power of the hero and would probably also symbolise the power over illness and possibly over death itself.

Philo tells us that the Egyptians called this Agathos Daimon by the name Κνὴφ . Apparently this title is based upon the Egyptian Kham-utef which is said to mean 'der welcher seinen Augenblick vollendet hat'[80]. If this interpretation is correct it appears very close to Philo's description of the Agathos Daimon - καὶ ἐπειδὰν τὸ ὡρισμένον μέτρον πληρώσῃ, εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀναλίσκεται[81].

The interesting thing is that the Greeks would not in all likelihood have known anything at all about Kneph but they may well have recognised him under his more usual Egyptian name of Amun. Is it possible for our Amynos to have a connection with Amun/Kneph? It is not possible to prove such a connection but the coincidences are numerous and the timing seems close insofar as Amun/Kneph appears to be very much a late classical or even Hellenistic manifestation of the god whom the Greeks usually called Ammon. If Amynos is Amun/Kneph-utef/Kneph, does that necessarily mean

that Philo meant Amun when he spoke about Amynos and Magos? This does not seem impossible but no evidence has yet come to light to help with the answer to that problem. Surely, however, Μάγος/māgōn would be a very suitable title for the god Amun?

If it were the case that an unknown healing hero, who was called simply Agathos Daimon rather like Dionysus-Zagreus was called Xenikos Daimon[82], became identified with a god who under a specific title bore a great resemblance to the hero, we would not necessarily expect to find archaeological evidence of a takeover beyond evidence of a title coming into use at a certain date with no evidence for its use before that date. That, of course, is the situation we have. In the Celtic/Roman and Pagan/Christian amalgams we frequently encounter similar situations. No offence is given to the old deity but he/she is kept under control in the ancient place of worship by such an arrangement. In this way Dionysus became St. Dionysios, Artemis St. Artemidos, Demeter St. Demetra and Apollo (through Helios) Elijah[83]. So too with Amynos the cult would have remained largely uninfluenced by the change and Athenians might well have staunchly rebuffed any idea that their healing hero was an import. Christians would react similarly to the information that Stella Maris was a title of Isis before the advent of Christianity.

4. Archaeological evidence for the nature of the cult

A. The epigraphic evidence

Turning from speculation about Amynos to certainties about the shrine, we have a great deal of information to enable us to form a reasonable picture of what it looked like and, to a certain extent, what went on in it. The excavations reports tell us that the walls were built of hard, blue calcareous stone obtained in the neighbourhood. The walling is polygonal and would suggest a date probably in the sixth century. One of the most important discoveries of the second phase of the excavations was that the wall seems to have had its supply of water supplemented through a conduit from the south. This appears to have linked up with the water-course of Peisistratos which is not far away at this point. Since the well is so near the focal point of the shrine, this additional fact helps to emphasise that water almost certainly played an important and probably curative role in the healing process. The second stage also fully uncovered the remnants of foundation walls. These were mainly fragmentary except for substantial pieces near the well. These walls were traced in a rectangular shape about 3.30 x 3.50 metres. They were presumed by the excavators to be the remains of a small temple[84]. More recently it has been suggested that they were only retaining walls which held in place the earth needed to produce a level area[85]. It was within this rectangle that the remains of the offering table mentioned earlier were found.

The most likely picture we have of the whole shrine is to be obtained from a combination of the anaglyptic evidence with the epigraphic. The latter is composed of two shards, one inscribed simply [Ἀσ]κληπιῶ and the other [Ἀγαθ]ῆς Τύχης[86], eleven published inscriptions on larger or smaller pieces of marble, eight of which are relatively short, and two probably unpublished inscriptions:

1. Μνησιπτολέμη ὑπὲρ Δικαιοφάνος Ἀσκληπιῶι Ἀμύνωι ἀνέθηκε[87].

This is a stele found in the well along with other material although the relative positions of the different pieces seem not to have been recorded. The overall height is about 1.18m. The upper part of the stele widens at a neck and forms a square similar to a capital. What can not be seen from any frontal illustration is that in the top there is an indented rectangle 16.5cms. x 7.5cms. into which was originally inserted an offering of some sort (Mid fourth century B.C. or slightly earlier).

2. Ἀριστοκλεύδης Φυ [λάσιος] ἀνέθηκε[88]. This is a small base, 15cms. x 6cms. x 5cms. high, for a statuette. (Mid fourth century B.C.)

3. Διόφαντος Καλλίου ἐκ Κερ [αμέων] Ἀμύνω [ι ε] ὑξάμενο [ς[89] This is a small (35cms. x 30cms. x 65cms.) corbel which originally had been let into a wall. This obviously has implications for our reconstruction of the shrine. Further implications derive from the fact that the inscription is not engraved into but painted on the stone. The letters have faded but have been protected against total destruction from weathering due to the piece being buried for most of its history. The corbel has a flat space on the top for an offering (Mid fourth century B.C.)

4. ...ων ἄρ] θρων τευξ [α ...]ων σεμνοτάτην [Λυσιμαχί]δης Λυσιμάχου Ἀχαρνε [ύς][90] (Plate18) This is an extraordinary piece of evidence in view of the anaglyph. The piece is broken at the top but is still 73cms. high. It shows a bearded man holding ('umfasst' 'amplexum') a huge leg with a varicose vein clearly marked. It is thought that the relative size of the person and the leg forbids the assumption that it is the god/hero who is being depicted here while the scene is possibly meant to be taking place in the shrine if the niche on the left with two feet as a votive offering is meant to represent such a niche in the shrine itself[91]. The odd disparity in the size of the leg in comparison with the man, and the fact that the doctors or medical guilds presented votive offerings to their deity[92] have jointly led to the supposition that this votive offering shows a priest placing a votive offering in the shrine. This is a very interesting possibility but it still leaves the leg which is being offered of a huge size compared to known votive offerings! (Mid fourth century B.C.)

5. Ἡδεῖα Ἀσκληπιῶι[93]. This is a small tablet 17cms. high by 8.5cms. wide showing a woman's breast. A nail used to attach the tablet to a vertical surface has rusted and helped to split the tablet or at the least the hole has formed a weak spot at this point (Fourth century B.C.) **(Plate 19)**

6. Ἀμύ [νωι[94]. This is found on a fragment of a bowl made of marble and found near the shrine. (Fourth century B.C.)

7. ...ωνὶς Α...
...νωι[95]. This votive offering shows the lower part of a woman's body in profile. The donor was obviously a woman but it is difficult to say whether the second name was a patronym or, for example, 'Ασκληπιῶι in apposition to 'Αμύ]νωι in line two. (Fourth or third century B.C.).

8. [Π]ερσ[αῖ]ος Θεοξενίδο[υ] Μαραθώνιος 'Αμύνωι καὶ 'Ασκληπιῶι καὶ 'Υγεία(ι) ἐπ[ὶ] ἱερέως Σοφοκλέους τοῦ Φιλώτου Σουνιέως γόνω(ι) [δ]ὲ Διονυσοδώ[ρο]υ Δ(ε)ιραδιώτου.[96] This inscription is on an altar. We know some of the people mentioned here from other inscriptions[97]. It is interesting to see a descendant of Sophocles still involved in the cult at the time of this inscription which has to be placed around the end of the second or start of the first century B.C.

9. This inscription and the following two are much longer:

Κλειαίνετος Κλεομένους Μελιτεὺς εἶπεν·
δεδόχθαι τοῖς ὀργεῶσι ἐπειδὴ εἰσιν ἄνδρες
ἀγαθοι περὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὀργεώνων τοῦ 'Αμύ
νου καὶ τοῦ 'Ασκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ Δεξίονος
Καλλιάδης Φιλίνου Πειραιεύς, Λυσιμαχί
δης Φιλίνου Πειραιεύς, ἐπαινέσαι αὐτοὺς
ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ δικαιοσύνης τη(ς) εἰς τοὺς
θεοὺς καὶ περὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὀργεώνων καὶ
στεφανῶσαι αὐτῶν ἑκάτερον χρυσῶι στε
φάνωι ἀπὸ Μ δραχμῶν, εἶναι δ'αὐτοῖς καὶ
ἀτέλειαν τοῦ χοῦ ἐν ἀμφοῖν τοῖν ἱεροῖν
καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐγγόνοις δοῦναι δὲ καὶ εἰς
θυσίαν καὶ ἀνάθημα αὐτοῖς, ὅτι ἄν δόξει
τοῖς ὀργεῶσιν, ἀναγράψαι δὲ τόδε τὸ ψήφι
σμα ἐν στήλαις λιθίναις δυοῖν καὶ στῆσαι
τὴν μὲν ἐν τῶι τοῦ Δεξίονος ἱερῶι τὴν δὲ
ἐν τῶι το(ῦ) 'Αμύνου καὶ 'Ασκληπιοῦ δοῦνα[ι]
δὲ καὶ εἰς στήλας αὐτοῖς, ὅτι ἄν δόξε[ι]
τοῖς ὀργεῶσι, ὅπως ἄν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι φιλοτι
[μῶντα]ι περὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὀγεώνων εἰδό
[τες ὅτι χάριτας ἀποδ]ώσουσι τοῖς εὐεργετοῦ
[σιν ἀξίας τῶν εὐεργετημάτων][98]

This stele was found in the well. (After the middle of the fourth century B.C.)

10. Θεοί
ἔδοξεν τοῖς [ὀργειῶσιν ...]
Ἱππομάχου Με[λιτεὺς εἶπεν· ἐπειδὴ Διό]
δωρος καὶ Ἀντ[... ἄν]
δρες δίκαιοι γεγ[ό]νασι περὶ τὰ κοινὰ
τῶν ὀργειώσιν τοῦ Ἀμύνου καὶ τοῦ
Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ Δεξίονος· ἐπαινέ
σαι αὐτοὺς δικαιοσύνης ἕνεκα καὶ
στεφανῶσαι αὐτῶν ἑκάτερον χρυσῶι
στεφάνωι· τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα τόδε ἀναγρά
ψαι ἐ[ν] τῶ[ι] ἱερῶι ἐν στήλει λιθίνει[99]
(After the middle of the fourth century B.C.)

11. Θεόδ(ο)τος εἶπεν· ἐπειδὴ οἱ ἱστιά[τορ]
ες οἱ ἐπὶ Θευφράστου ἄρχοντος Ἀν[τι]
[κ]λῆς Μέμνονος καὶ [Κ]λε[ι]το[φ]ῶν [Δημοφ
ί[λου καλῶς και [φ]ιλοτε[ίμ]ω[ς] ἐπιμε[μέ]
ληνται τῶν [τε κ]οι[ν]ῶ[ν κ]α[ὶ] τῶ[ν] θυσιῶ[ν]
ἐπαινέσαι α[ὐτοὺς καὶ σ]τ[ε]φανῶσαι [θ
αλ]λο[ῦ σ]τεφάν[ωι], ὅπ[ως] ἄν [και] οἱ ἄλλο[ι
φιλοτ[ι]μῶν [ται εἰδότες ὅτι ...
α] ἀπολ[ήφονται μισθὸν ἄξιον· ἀναγρά]
ψαι [δὲ τόδε τὸ ψήφισμα ἐν στήλει λιθ
[ίνει ...[100] (Dated to 313/312)

There are also two further inscriptions found with the Amynos material in Athens. This extensive body of material does not appear to have been published in its entirety by A. Körte in his two reports and so it is not possible to be certain where these pieces were found with any degree of precision. Only a full, modern publication of the complete body of material using Wilhelm Dörpfeld's excavation diaries as a guide is likely to produce a satisfactory knowledge of the details. His own account of his excavations of the Amynos shrine is as yet unpublished[101]. Among the Amynos material in the National Archaeolgical Museum in Athens are the following two inscriptions:

12. A stele with a damaged inscription:

Ι]ΑΤΡΩΝ
Α] ΣΚΛΗΠΙΑ [ΔΩΝ ?
ΕΠΙΧΑΡΗ
ΤΙΜΑΡ[
Δ[102

This piece, depending on what date ought to be ascribed to it, might help to corroborate the suggestion[103] that doctors or medical guilds presented votive-offerings at the Shrine of Amynos.

13. A small altar with a slightly damaged inscription:

Σ]WΤΗΡΙ ΚΑΙ
ΚΤΙΣΤΗ
ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟ [ΡΙ]
ΑΔΡΙΑΝΩ
ΟΛΥΜΠΙ[104

This altar, if it belongs with the other Amynos material, brings the survival of the shrine into the second century A.D.

The epigraphic material and in particular the three large stelai provide us with a vast amount of information. As has already been seen,[105] they tell us that there were two sanctuaries - one of Amynos and Asklepios and one of Dexion. It is strange, however, that the second of them talks about the decree being engraved on a stone stele ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι. It is difficult to understand why one decree mentions two sanctuaries and another only one. The most important information, however, is about the orgeones of Amynos, Asklepios and Dexion.

The first stele[106] makes it quite clear that the orgeones served all three - τῶν ὀργεώνων τοῦ Ἀμύνου καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ Δεχίονος while the third[107] tells us that the orgeones had two hosts - ἱστιάτορες - who had carefully and enthusiastically looked after the affairs and sacrifices on behalf of the orgeones - καλῶς καὶ φιλοτε ίμως ἐπιμεμέληνται τῶν τε κοινῶν καὶ τῶν θυσιῶν. The two brothers honoured in the first stele and presumably the two men honoured in the second were almost

certainly histiatores also. All the men concerned seem to have been of citizen status and of some social standing[108]. The orgeones were also fairly rich if we are to judge by the five hundred drachmas each of the two gold crowns being voted for in the first inscription was going to cost. The two histiatores organised the annual reunions, each one probably looking after the meeting in one of the two shrines on a different date to the reunion in the other[109]. These reunions and the whole cult seem to have had nothing to do with the orgeones dedicated to, as far as is known, Asklepios only. These orgeones belonged to the deme of Prospalta[110]. Nor do the orgeones of Amynos appear to have had any links with the Athenian Asklepiastai who were not orgeones as such but eranistai[111]. These were later foundations.

The word ὀργεών seems to have had at least two connotations in Athens. It seems to have meant more or less the same as ἱερεύς[112] but with a more 'civilian' connotation linked with deme groupings. As just mentioned, the deme of Prospalta seems to have had its own college of orgeones[113]. The older colleges of orgeones were composed entirely of citizens who were probably thought of as being related to one another even if such kinship was fictional rather than real[114]. These orgeones met regularly for the worship of various Greek deities and heroes. Their association and its funding were private matters but their rights as orgeones were recognised by the state[115]. From the late fifth century the devotees who looked after the worship of foreign, imported deities were also called orgeones and their number could and did include non-citizens[116]. These deities often appear at first sight to be thoroughbred Greeks - Ζεὺς Σωτήρ and Ἡρακλῆς Ἡγεμών - but upon deeper investigation they have always turned out to be imports![117] The main sources of these imports? Egypt, Syria and Phoenicia! Serapis, Isis, Cybele, Syrian Aphrodite, Tyrian Heracles/Tyrian Marcod are among these gods.

Zeus Soter is an interesting example of these imports. He had a temple constructed at the city's expense in the Peiraieus but he had a second temple which maintained the foreign connections in a way which the first seems not to have done. This second temple was also in the Peiraieus. We know that there was a college of worshippers formed into an ἔρανος who offered worship to Zeus Soter as well as Herakles and the other Saviours[118].

That this ἔρανος was attached not to the temple of Zeus Soter erected at state expense but the smaller temple became clear when the latter's excavation revealed inscriptions, one simply Διὶ Σωτῆρι[119], a second Ἑρμῆι[120] dedicated by a man called Python from the Phoenician colony of Abdera in Spain, while the third turned out to be a Phoenician inscription to Sachoun[121]. All three dedicants had their dedications placed in the sanctuary of Zeus Soter and, presumably, saw in that deity an image of their own 'saving god' whether he was called Zeus or Sachoun. Further conclusions can be tentatively drawn:

> 'Le dieu phénicien Sachoun est connu seulement parce qu'il entre dans la composition de quelques noms propres. Mais sa présence me porte à croire que les éranistes avaient pour patrons les Cabires ou Patèques phéniciens, protecteurs des navigateurs.'[122]

Now the Kabeiroi were eight in number. Shahar and Shalim were pseudonyms for two among the Phoenicians but are better known as the Διόσκοροι. Five have always remained shadowy and were included in the generic title for the group 'The kindly ones' 'les gracieux'[123]. The eighth of course was Eshmoun. The father of these eight was Συδύκ about whom has been written:

> 'Disons tout de suite qu'il s'identifie très bien avec Él le Miséricordieux père des dieux gracieux dans le poème de Ras Shamra.'[124]

Going back to the genealogy given to us by Philo of Byblos, the generation before Συδύκ was Amynos and Magos so that we are once again faced with the evidence that the shrine of Amynos in Athens has very distinctly foreign characteristics. It also seems very likely that its orgeones shared many of the characteristics of the members of the ἔρανος attached to the shrine of Zeus Soter.

If the hypothesis of a Phoenician origin for, or at least influence on, Amynos is correct, then the orgeones were a body of people who venerated Amynos, his grandson Asklepios/Eshmoun and the man who received him into Athens under a heroized guise. These orgeones had the usual organisation of such bodies and regularly thanked their benefactors by public eulogies, crowns of various sorts and the recording of these honours for posterity on stone stelai.

The third decree[125] is slightly anomalous. The excavation report discusses the possibility of its being extraneous but this is seen as unlikely[126]. It is much more probable that the officials mentioned in the decree - those who ἐπιμεμέληνται τῶν κοινῶν/θοινῶν - were officials of the orgeones. It is true that there is no mention of the group involved and also true that the dating by archon is exactly how civil decrees started. Neither of these facts, however, proves that the decree did not belong to the orgeones of Amynos. Everything else, especially its discovery in the well along with other inscribed material which no-one doubts came from the shrine, leads us to believe that it must be accepted along with the other two decrees.

The picture which emerges is familiar from other similar organisations.[127] The orgeones elected officials who ran the affairs of the society. No doubt they used much of their own money to subsidise the society. They organised τὰς θυσίας on a regular basis and almost certainly arranged regular dinners. The sanctuary had to be paid for, both its construction and its upkeep. Meetings probably took place at the sanctuary but may have been arranged elsewhere. An annual general meeting thanked outgoing officials and publicly praised them for their unstinting hard work and charity. It was these meetings which passed the resolutions we see on the stelai.

Who were the people we know were worshippers in this shrine? We have nineteen people mentioned on the stelai and smaller inscriptions:

			I G
Κλειαίνετος	Κλεομένους:	Μελιτεὺς	2-3/1/2, 1252
Καλλιάδης	Φιλίνου	:Πειραιεύς	2-3/1/2, 1252
Λυσιμαχίδης	Φιλίνου	:Πειραιεύς	2-3/1/2, 1252
_____	Ἱππομάχου	:Μελιτεὺς	2-3/1/2, 1253
_____δωρος			2-3/1/2, 1253
Ἀντ_____			2-3/1/2, 1253
Θεόδοτος			2-3/1/2, 1259
Ἀντικλῆς	Μέμνονος		2-3/1/2, 1259
Κλειτοφῶν	Δημοφίλου ?		2-3/1/2, 1259
Μνησιπτολέμη			2-3/3/1, 4365
Δικαιοφάνος (genitive)			2-3/3/1, 4365
Ἀριστοκλείδης		:Φυλάσιος	2-3/3/1, 4386
Διόφαντος	Καλλίου	:Κεραμέων	2-3/3/1, 4385

Λυσιμαχίδης	Λυσιμάχου	:'Αχαρνεύς	2-3/3/1, 4387
'Ηδεῖα			2-3/3/1, 4422
____ωνὶς	plus initial letter A which could be patronym, deme or neither		2-3/3/1, 4435
Περσαῖος	Θεοξενίδου	:Μαραθώνιος	2-3/3/1, 4457
Σοφοκλῆς	φιλώτου	:Σουνιέως	2-3/3/1, 4457
Διονυσοδώρος	Διραδιώτου		2-3/3/1, 4457

We know something about a few of these people. Κλειαίνετος was a διαιτητής and mentioned in the catalogue for the year 325/4[128]. He was obviously, therefore, a citizen of some social standing. He was a local man for he came from the deme of Melite which probably included the site of the shrine of Amynos. Καλλιάδης is the orator decreti Piraeen sium mentioned in another inscription[129]. He too was obviously a citizen widely involved in the life of his community. We know of an 'Αντικλῆς Μέμνονος from an inscription dating from before 360[130]. Whether he is the same one as the one mentioned in the decree found in the shrine of Amynos depends largely on the date of the eponymous Archon mentioned in the same decree. A Θευφράστος was eponymous archon in 340/39 and another in 313/2. Therefore, our 'Αντικλῆς could be the same man or his grandson[131]. The 'Αριστοκλείδης we know from another catalogue[132]. Finally, we can be fairly sure that the Σοφοκλῆς is a descendent of the poet. We also know that this later Sophocles had a son who was a θεσμοθέτης in 88/7[133].

We know the deme for nine of the nineteen and they cover a wide area of Attica (Plate 20). 'Αριστοκλείδης has a demotic but no patronym. 'Αντικλῆς, Κλειτοφῶν and Διονυσοδώρος have a patronym but no demotic. It is difficult to draw certain conclusions from these omissions. For example, it would be unwise to assume that none of these is a citizen. However, several of the people mentioned in the inscriptions do seem not to have been citizens. Both 'Αντ____ and ____δωρος seem to lack a patronym and a demotic although there may have been enough space on the inscription for one or other after 'Αντ___. Θεόδοτος, Μνησιπτολέμη, Δικαιοφάνος (genitive) and 'Ηδεῖα certainly seem to have lacked both demotic and patronym while ___ωνὶς may well have also lacked both. None of them, unfortunately, is described in any other way which could make us certain of these people's origin and status. It looks extremely likely though that several of those mentioned in the inscriptions were

not citizens and that those who were citizens came from demes in every corner of Attica although, of course, that does not mean that they actually resided in those demes. We certainly have enough evidence for citizen participation in the cult to prove that Amynos, although perhaps a hybrid, still retained connections with his fifth and sixth century roots before any process of syncretism had begun.

If the theory that the votive offering of a huge leg showing a varicose vein was presented by a doctor is correct then some at least of the donors belonged to the medical profession. We have seen[134] that an inscription probably not previously published may help in substantiating such an idea. Even if this is doubtful we still have a good picture of the people and the site. The worshippers were made up of both men and women. The men at least represented both the citizen class and probably non citizens as well. Those who were Athenians came from all over Attica. They together formed a college of orgeones and, under the leadership of elected officials, held ceremonies, probably in both precincts. These ceremonies are likely to have included meals, sacrifices and regular meetings. Money collected from the orgeones paid for the upkeep of the site, the sacrifices and the honours meted out to retiring officials. For the final details, the non-inscribed small finds can be fruitful.

B. The anaglyptic evidence

As has already been said[135], the material from Wilhelm Dörpfeld's excavations of the Amynos shrine needs to be published to modern standards. The following analysis is no substitute for such a publication and the list is not exhaustive.

Looking through the vast range of material it seems useful to divide it into various categories. Firstly there are the anaglyphs which show the god/hero, sometimes accompanied by another divinity, sometimes facing two or more worshippers and twice possibly represented as a snake. Occasionally anaglyphs of the god/hero are very fragmentary. In this category are to be found:

ii) A broken ex-voto in the form of a plaque with a raised border, the god/hero stands on the left leaning on a staff tucked under his left armpit. He is looking towards the right from which direction first a man and then a woman approach with their right hands raised. The whole is very Asklepian in style[136].

ii) A broken relief with a headless Hygieia-type figure standing to the left of an altar. On the right of the altar only the hand of the god/hero remains holding a kantharos. The altar is garlanded. On the left of the relief facing the deities are five worshippers of various ages, both men and women[137]. (Plate 21)

iii) The right side of a plaque showing two adults facing left and accompanied by a child with a sacrificial sheep[138].

iv) A small fragment of a bearded worshipper probably from a similar plaque to the preceding one[139].

v) The top right corner of an ex-voto showing a family approaching the god/hero who is now missing but would have been on the left of the plaque. Five heads of the members of the family are now visible. The girl on the extreme right carries a large basket on her head[140].

vi) Several fragments of so-called Totenmahl reliefs showing the god/hero reclining on a couch[141].

vii) Several fragments of the god/hero standing or walking. In one example the base of the staff adjacent to the right foot of a very damaged statuette has a snake coiling round it[142].

viii) The snake is also to be found on two other anaglyphs and is presumably meant to represent the deity. Of the two one[143] shows a now headless, coiled snake on a rock while the other is part of a coiled snake on a piece of bluish marble. The snake is bearded and, although damaged, the head and the top of the coil are well preserved. The snake is facing left[144].

All of the reliefs in this first category are reminiscent of the material already looked at in connection with the cult of Zeus Meilichios/ Philios. Alongside these are the healing votive offerings of the type already seen in connection with Zeus Hypsistos. These form the second category:

ix) A small plaque, 11 cms. high by 8 cms. wide, made of marble, showing, in damaged relief, a man's genitalia - the pubes and the scrotum. The penis must have been in very high relief as it is now broken off. Apparently when found there were signs of its background having been painted in red. A fixing hole is still to be seen in the lower part of the plaque[145]. (Plate 19)

x) A leg about 30 cms. tall from foot to waist. Damaged. Signs of an inscription at the top but not enough of the inscription survives to warrant including it in the epigraphic section. The letters ΙΩΙ seem fairly clear. The inscription is at the top of the piece[146].

xi) A small marble ex-voto, 10½ cms. high by 15½cms. wide, showing in relief a pair of ears. They could be an invocation to the god as ἐπήκοος or a normal healing ex-voto. A similar pair was found in the Asklepieion at Pergamon and is now to be seen in Bergama Museum[147]. (Plate 19)

xii) As we saw with the Hypsistos cult[148], votive offerings of one or both female breasts seem to have formed the largest homogeneous

grouping. Along with the other epigraphic evidence there is the dedication of Ἡδεῖα to Asklepios[149]. This narrow plaque only ever showed one breast. There are three other votive offerings of breasts - all uninscribed. One[150] of these has a single breast intact but the edge of the ex-voto is damaged so it is impossible to be sure whether there was only one originally or perhaps a pair of breasts. The same is equally true of a second[151] where only the left portion of an ex-voto remains. This now shows just over half of one breast. The last[152] has a pair of breasts intact. Along with the ex-voto of the lower half of a woman's body[153] (the male genitalia may also have had a fertility motive[154]) these votive offerings of breasts show a strong gynaecological slant to the requests for healing from the occupant(s) of the Amynos shrine.

The third category of anaglyptic evidence contains the evidence for a belief that other deities could be invoked for healing purposes at the Amynos shrine:

xiii) Telesphoros is very much an Asklepian figure - the 'Accomplisher' of the cure. A little marble statuette of him was found not far from the shrine[155]. Part of a terracotta statuette may also possibly come from a Telesphoros figurine[156].

xiv) To judge by the surviving half of a crescent, one anaglyph must represent the god Men. He is seated on an animal, perhaps a rooster. Under the animal there is what appears to be a table along with a bird. On the left there are two worshippers gazing up at him[157]. We shall see that Men was a healing deity in Athens and elsewhere[158].

xv) The substantial remains of an anaglyph showing a rider standing by his horse whose reins he is holding. This is a common way of depicting a hero. The Dioskouroi, who are saviour-heroes, are often so depicted.[159]

xvi) There are a number of those statuettes, mostly in a very fragmentary condition, known as 'Venus figurines'. Aphrodite, under one guise or another, was a healer[160].

xvii) A terracotta 'Archaische Dionysos-Herme, bärtig und ithyphallisch'[161].

xviii) We have already seen a Hygieia-type figure on a relief from the shrine[162]. There is also a fragment from another relief showing the head possibly of a fourth century B.C. youthful type of Hygieia[163].

xix) Cybele, who, as we shall see[164], was a healing goddess too, is also represented in the shrine of Amynos. There are possibly two marble statuettes of her. One, now headless, is 26cms. high. In her left hand she is holding a tympanon while in her right she has a phiale. In her lap there lies an animal, probably a lion.[165]. Another, which I presume to be a different piece to the one just mentioned since the head is intact, shows an identical figure. The goddess is wearing a polos-type hat[166]. There are several other seated or enthroned mother-goddess-type statuettes among the Amynos material There is a terracotta representation showing her with both hands resting on her thighs[167]; a pair of mother-goddess figures sitting side by side, each holding a phiale in her right hand and each wearing a polos-type hat. These two are almost certainly meant to be Cybele and that other great mother - Demeter[168]; several now headless statuettes of a seated mother-goddess[169]; the top half of a small plaque showing a seated mother-goddess-type figure[170]; finally there are several pieces of female figures which are more difficult to ascribe to any particular deity or indeed to be sure that they were intended to represent a deity rather than being simply some sort of offering[171].

All of the above anaglyphs have been classified into reasonably coherent categories. In addition there are some miscellaneous pieces such as a Roman ivory statuette of a beardless man[172]; a small, broken altar with boukrania carved on three of the four sides[173]; finally, there are the remains of some marble fingers[174].

5. Conclusion

It seems fairly certain that the cult at the Amynos shrine dates back to the sixth century B.C. but probable that at that early period the incumbent of the shrine and the recipient of the orgeones' worship was anonymous. At this early period all the orgeones were citizens as was usual with this type of association at that time. To judge by the epigraphic and anaglyptic evidence a huge change took place at the very end of the fifth or beginning of the fourth century B.C. Our very first epigraphic evidence of Amynos is on an offerings stele dedicated Ἀσκληπιῶι Ἀμύνωι[175]. This dates to the early part of the fourth century B.C. Thus our first mention of Amynos is on a joint dedication with Asklepios having precedence. The anaglyptic evidence too convinces us that the entry of Asklepios into Athens in 420/419 B.C. had a profound effect on the cult of Amynos for Asklepian iconography is very noticeable.

On his arrival in Athens, Asklepios, as narrated by the chronicle of the later Asklepieion[176], was received under the form of a snake by Sophocles since there had been a delay in building a temple specially for the god. Sophocles looked after the god in his own home and composed a Paean in his honour[177]. When the new temple on the south slope of the acropolis was finally ready, Telemachos, who had accompanied the god from the Peiraieus on his original journey to the upper city, now dedicated the first altar to Asklepios actually in the Asklepieion[178]. However, by this time Asklepios had been firmly established as σύνναος with the resident hero of the Amynos shrine and stayed as such even after the official transfer of the new deity to his freshly completed temple. After his death in 406 B.C. Sophocles, as the 'Receiver' of Asklepios, was given a separate though minor, cult established for him in a separate shrine. The orgeones held thereafter annual reunions in both shrines but worship and prayers and thanks for healing took place only at the shrine of Amynos and Asklepios.

The question of Sophocles being the priest of a deity/hero named Ἄλων is not capable of easy solution. Some suggestions have been proposed. In view of the apparently late arrival of any name for the incumbent of the Amynos shrine and the possibilities that Ἄλων may be a periphrasis and Ἀμύνος a name derived from the hero's function as a

defender, like Asklepios, from the plague, it would be unwise to be dogmatic about any one solution to the problem.

From the beginning of the fourth century B.C. Asklepian iconography influenced the votive-offerings in the Amynos shrine. From early in that century the old hero seems to have assumed the guise of the new god. Hygieia seems to have also appeared early. Finally, the shrine seems to have received dedications of a broadly eclectic nature and this eclecticism was probably accompanied by a broadening of the shrine's clientèle to include non-citizens who saw in Amynos a reflection of other healing deities. The epigraphic evidence is rather small in terms of the number of pieces we have but the anaglyptic material shows the evidence for Cybele who was associated with a strong healing tradition[179] and whose Metragyrtes promised cures in her name[180]. The anaglyphs of Men, possibly one of the Dioskouroi and Aphrodite all add to the impression of a broad eclecticism with a foreign flavour.

What is most noticeable is the paucity of evidence for the pre-Asklepian period and the sudden transformation at the end of the fifth century. Once again, this could be coincidental but it seems more likely that the great plague and the introduction of Asklepios actually sparked off that transformation. Before, there was a cult organised by sedate orgeones. Afterwards, there is evidence both of worship by a wider range of devotees and their belief that the deity/hero of the shrine cared for them, looked after their personal and family concerns and, most especially, cured them of their illnesses.

Chapter IV. Healing as an aspect of the role of the lunar and maieutic deities.

Healing as an aspect of the role of the lunar and maieutic deities

1. Introduction

διὰ κύανεον πόλον ἄστερων
διὰ τ' ὠκυτόκοιο σελήνης

Timotheus fr. 29

In this section an attempt is made to show that, in the Classical and Hellenistic periods of Athens and its environs, women suffered from a large number of real or imaginary diseases. They believed that these were occasionally caused by and were always curable by deities who presided over the gynaecological aspects of a woman's life. These deities have in common either a lunar aspect linking them to a care for a woman's sexual cycle or a maieutic and child-rearing aspect which links them to a woman's state of pregnancy, parturition and the early years of child rearing. Since pregnancy and a successful birth were the panacea for gynaecological ailments, these lunar and maieutic deities were healers specialising in women's problems.

2. Healing as an aspect of the role of the lunar and maieutic deities

Women, while suffering from most of the diseases and medical problems which afflicted men, had to put up with conditions that were peculiarly their own. Some of these were real enough but the man in the street, often abetted by a medical profession still woefully inadequate in the fourth century B.C., diagnosed other, spurious diseases. Our main evidence for the real and supposed diseases of women comes from several gynaecological treatises written during the fourth century B.C. and forming part of the Hippocratic corpus. Both Plato and Aristotle, writing about the same time, add further information and help to indicate that the ideas promulgated in the Hippocratic writings were as prevalent in Athens at this time as they were on Kos.

Those diseases which were particular to women were linked to the procreative organs of the woman, her menstrual cycle and pregnancy. This meant that perfectly sound parts of the female anatomy and absolutely normal bodily functions were held responsible for what were seen as mental or physical problems. Young women in particular were thought vulnerable to these problems, partly at least because of their ignorance about their own bodily functions. The author is speaking of female diseases:

> ἐπικίνδυνα δέ ἐστιν, ὡς εἴρηται, καὶ τοπουλὺ ὀξέα καὶ μεγάλα καὶ χαλεπὰ ξυνιέναι, διὰ τοῦθ' ὅτι αἱ γυναῖκες μετέχουσι τῶν νούσων, καὶ ἔσθ' ὅτε οὐδ' αὐταὶ ἴσασιν τί νοσέουσιν, πρὶν ἢ ἔμπειροι νούσων γένωνται ἀπὸ καταμηνίων καὶ ἕως γεραίτεραι· τότε δὲ σφέας ἥ τε ἀνάγκη καὶ ὁ χρόνος διδάσκει τὸ αἴτιον τῶν νούσων.[1]

This inexperience and ignorance meant that it was not unusual for the sick woman to be unable to communicate her problem to a doctor:

> καὶ ἔστιν ὅτε τῇσι μὴ γινωσκούσῃσιν ὑφ' ὅτευ νοσεῦσι φθάνει τὰ νοσήματα ἀνίητα γινόμενα, πρὶν ἂν διδαχθῆναι τὸν ἰητρὸν ὀρθῶς ὑπὸ τῆς νοσεούσης ὑφ' ὅτου νοσέει[2].

This inability to communicate her problem was caused by a mixture of inexperience and ignorance and compounded by a sense of shame:

καὶ γὰρ αἰδέονται φράζειν, κἢν εἰδῶσι, καί σφιν δοκέουσιν αἰσχρόν εἶναι ὑπο ἀπειριής καὶ ἀνεπιστημοσύνης.[3]

No doubt a woman in this position often turned to her mother or mother-in-law for advice. Sometimes such a woman would find solace in praying to a goddess who specialised in such problems. Most women would have had reservations about approaching a male doctor:

Ἅμα δὲ καὶ οἱ ἰητροὶ ἁμαρτάνουσιν, οὐκ ἀτρεκέως πυνθανόμενοι τὴν πρόφασιν τῆς νούσου, ἀλλ' ὡς τὰ ἀνδρικὰ νοσήματα ἰώμενοι· καὶ πολλὰς εἶδον διεφθαρμένας ἤδη ὑπὸ τοιούτων παθημάτων. Ἀλλὰ χρὴ ἀνερωτᾶν αὐτίκα ἀτρεκέως τὸ αἴτιον· διαφέρει γὰρ ἡ ἴησις πολλῷ τῶν γυναικηίων νοσημάτων καὶ τῶν ἀνδρώων[4].

The actual job of helping to deliver babies was very much a woman's preserve. Midwifery was a respected profession and could at least on occasion by linked with that of physician[5]. However, the vast majority of doctors were male. Unless midwives, therefore, helped with all women's problems and not just births, it was to male doctors that women had to turn for help. Their attitude towards female problems was certainly tainted by the presuppositions of the male sex!:

Ἔχει δὲ καὶ τόδε οὕτω τῇσι γυναιξίν· ἢν μὲν μίσγωνται ἀνδράσι, μᾶλλον ὑγιαίνουσιν· ἢν δὲ μὴ, ἧσσον· ἅμα μὲν γὰρ αἱ μῆτραι ἰκμαλέαι γίνονται ἐν τῇ μίξει καὶ οὐ ξηραὶ, ξηραὶ δὲ ἐοῦσαι μᾶλλον τοῦ καιροῦ συστρέφονται ἰσχυρῶς, συστρεφόμεναι δὲ ἰσχυρῶς πόνον τῷ σώματι παρέχουσιν· ἅμα δὲ ἡ μίξις τὸ αἷμα θερμαίνουσα καὶ ὑγραίνουσα ποιέει ὁδὸν ῥηϊτέρην τοῖσι καταμηνίοισι· τῶν δὲ καταμηνίων μὴ χωρεόντων τὰ σώματα τῶν γυναικῶν ἐπίνοσα γίνεται[6].

The presupposition that intercourse and the bearing of children are beneficial to women runs through the whole of gynaecological medicine at this period. In the instance just quoted pain could be ascribed to contraction of the womb due to dryness resulting from lack of intercourse. The idea of the menses not leaving the body, here mentioned in connection with the useful role of intercourse in heating the blood and so allowing them an easier egress, was extremely common and will be seen again shortly.

Pain might also occur during menstruation and intense pain was thought more likely to occur in women who had not given birth to children:

φημὶ γυναῖκα ἄτοκον ἐοῦσαν ἢ τετοκυῖαν χαλεπώτερον καὶ θᾶσσον ἀπὸ τῶν καταμηνίων νοσέειν· ὁκόταν γὰρ τέκῃ, εὐροώτερα οἱ τὰ φλέβιά ἐστιν ἐς τὰ καταμήνια[7]

Menstruation was obviously a crucial time for women. Apparently it was also a time when they could find themselves in a 'catch twenty-two' situation:

Χωρέει δὲ αἷμα οἷον ἀπὸ ἱερείου, καὶ ταχὺ πήγνυται, ἢν ὑγιαίνῃ ἡ γυνή. Ἧσι δὲ ἐν φύσει ἐστὶ πλέονας καθαίρεσθαι τεσσάρων ἡμερέων καὶ πολλὰ κάρτα χωρέει τὰ ἐπιμήνια, αὗται λεπταὶ γίνονται, καὶ τὰ ἔμβρυα αὐτέων λεπτὰ καὶ ἀμαλδύνεται. Ἧσι δὲ τριῶν ἡμερέων ἔλασσον ἡ κάθαρσις γίνεται ἢ ὀλίγα χωρέει, αὗται παχεῖαι καὶ εὔχροοι ἀνδρικαί τε, οὐ μνησίτοκοι δέ εἰσιν, οὐδὲ κυΐσκονται[8].

Obviously husbands and physicians felt able to form prognoses about a woman's chances of conceiving, using her menstrual pattern as the criterion. Childless women must have viewed their time of menstruation with some trepidation. Her menses could be used to diagnose several problems. One of these was hydropsy:

Ἢν ὕδερος ἐν τῇσι μήτρῃσιν ἐγγένηται, τὰ ἐπιμήνια ἐλάσσω καὶ κακίω γίνεται, ἔπειτα ἐξαπίνης ἐκλείπει, καὶ ἡ γαστὴρ ἐπανοιδέει, καὶ οἱ μαζοὶ ξηροὶ γίνονται[9].

Water retention is not an uncommon problem and is menstrually connected. The cure for this simple ailment must have seemed worse than the problem for after a warm wash and the application of warm poultices she was given a laxative:

μετὰ δὲ τὸ φάρμακον πυριῆν ἐν τῷ βολβίτῳ τὰς ὑστέρας, ἔπειτα προσθεῖναι τὸ ξὺν τῇ κανθαρίδι, διαλιπὼν δὲ ἡμέρας τρεῖς το ξὺν τῇ χολῇ· μίαν δὲ διαλιπὼν τρεῖς ἡμέρας κλυσάτω ἐν τῷ ὄξει[10].

Cow dung vapour- baths and vinegar douches must have been bad enough but cantharidine, the active ingredient of the cantharid beetle, cantharus versicatoria, produced as the name implies, blisters on the skin. Perhaps they employed another member of the cantharid genus whose effect was less drastic. In more recent times, if not also in classical times, small quantities of cantharidine were used intra-vaginally as an aphrodisiac. The main effect of this so-called aphrodisiac[11] was to set up an intense

irritation which is surely what the woman suffering from hydropsy must have had to put up with as a result of the treatment. After all of these humiliating and painful 'cures', if they failed to dispel the excess water, a repeat of the whole process was performed. She was also encouraged to drink a concoction made from the rind of samphire, crithmum maritimum, and dark seeds from a paeony - γλυκυσίδης τοὺς μέλανας κόκκους. The paeony, of course, was also known as ἡ παιωνία and was so-called after Παιάν, the physician of the gods, whose name was transferred to Apollo. The plant also carried links with his sister Artemis since the choral song known as a paean could be sung to either of them as a thanksgiving. Finally the woman was encouraged to drink elderberries in wine and to eat mercury plant, garlic, squid and other soft foods. All of this treatment only gives a temporary respite - ἢν δὲ τέκῃ, ὑγιὴς γίνεται[12].

Various case histories tell us of other gynaecological problems. One woman had menstrually connected headaches which were lessened by the insertion of scented pessaries. Her problem too was only finally solved by becoming pregnant[13]. Another woman, who also had never been pregnant, felt pains whenever she had intercourse. Her problem continued until she was sixty when, after fainting in the middle of the day from severe pains, another woman extracted a stone rather like a spindle-whorl from the mouth of her womb[14]. Perhaps the oddest complaint of childless women was the movement of the womb around their bodies. That this occurred seems to have been accepted quite generally[15]. Plato compared the male organ with the womb and suggested that both have an innate propensity towards procreation. The womb, if frustrated by remaining unfruitful too long, becomes angry and wanders around the body. This results in breathing being hindered and all sorts of other diseases being caused. Pregnancy is obviously the only solution to this problem[16]! The Hippocratic corpus deals at length with this phenomenon. Here, too, the ultimate cause is seen as a failure to become pregnant but there can be several more immediate causes which bring on the condition:

> Ἢν δὲ πνὶξ προστῇ ἐξαπίνης, γίνεται δὲ μάλιστα τῇσι μὴ ξυνιούσῃσιν ἀνδράσι καὶ τῇσι γεραιτέρῃσι μᾶλλον ἢ τῇσι νεωτέρῃσι· κουφότεραι γὰρ αἱ μῆτραι σφέων εἰσί· γίνεται δὲ μάλιστα διὰ τόδε· ἐπὴν κενεαγγήσῃ καὶ ταλαιπωρήσῃ πλέον τῆς μαθήσιος, αὐανθεῖσαι αἱ μῆτραι ὑπὸ τῆς ταλαιπωρίης στρέφονται, ἅτε κενεαὶ ἐοῦσα, καὶ

κοῦφαι· εὐρυχωρίη γάρ σφίν ἐστιν ὥστε στρέφεσθαι, ἅτε τῆς κολίης κενεῆς ἐούσης· στρεφόμεναι δὲ ἐπιβάλλουσι τῷ ἥπατι, καὶ ὁμοῦ γίνονται, καὶ ἐς τὰ ὑπο ὑποχόνδρια ἐμβάλλουσι· θέουσι γὰρ καὶ ἔρχονται ἄνω πρὸς τὴν ὑκμάδα, ἅτε ὑπὸ τῆς ταλαιπωρίης ξηρανθεῖσαι μᾶλλον τοῦ καιροῦ·τὸ δὲ ἧπαρ ὑκμαλέον ἐστίν· ἐπὴν δὲ ἐπιβάλωσι τῷ ἥπατι, πνίγα ποιέουσιν ἐξαπίνης ἐπιλαμβάνουσαι τὸν διάπνοον τὸν περὶ τὴν κοιλίην[17].

There were thought to be possible complications linked to this condition. When the womb was moving towards the liver some women were diagnosed as releasing phlegm from the head. This phlegm moisturised and helped the return of the womb to its normal position. However, for other women, the womb fell towards the neck of the bladder and produced strangury or fell towards the hips, because of exhaustion or lack of food, and caused pain. Sometimes these conditions cured themselves but treatment assured speedy recovery.[18]

The treatment for a wandering womb varied according to the position of the womb and the resultant problems. If the womb was in the upper abdomen then there might well be suffocation, sleepiness, loss of speech and chattering teeth. In this case:

... πρὸς μὲν τὰς ὑστέρας προσθεῦναι εἴριον πρὸς αὐλὸν, ὡς ὠθεῖν μάλιστα, τοῦ πτεροῦ περιελίξας, βάψας ἢ λευκῷ αἰγυπτίῳ ἢ μυρσίνῳ ἢ βακχαρίῳ ἢ ἀμαρακίνῳ· ἐς δὲ τὰς ῥῖνας, τοῦ φαρμάκου τοῦ μέλανος, τοῦ τῆς κεφαλῆς, λαβόντα τῇ μήλῃ ἐμπλάσαι[19].

If this black medicine was not available then the nostrils could be wiped with silphium or a feather dipped into vinegar could be inserted into the nostrils to induce sneezing[20]. When the symptoms were different, alternative measures had to be adopted. If the woman's mouth was tightly closed, the same pessary procedure was followed but she had to drink castoreum in wine and her nostrils had to be wiped with seal oil. If all of this did not work then recourse was had to vapour inhalations. Ground up goat or deer horn was mixed with hot ashes and the smoke inhaled or seal oil was dripped onto pieces of burning charcoal for the same purpose.[21]

Sometimes the womb was thought to move even higher towards the head and

this resulted in a heaviness of the head with the symptoms showing themselves on one side or the other. The patient complained that the veins on her nose and under her eyes were painful. The patient suffered from sleepiness and, when that was alleviated, foaming at the mouth. In this case:

> Χρὴ λούειν πολλῷ θερμῷ· ἢν δὲ μὴ ἐνακούῃ, ψυχρῷ, καὶ κατὰ κεφαλῆς, δάφνην τε καὶ μυρσίνην ἐνεφῶν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ψύχων· καὶ ῥοδίῳ μύρῳ τὴν κεφαλὴν χριέσθω· καὶ ὑποθυμιήσθω τὰ εὐώδεα, τὰ δὲ κακώδεα ὑπὸ τὰς ῥῖνας καὶ τὴν κράμβην ἐσθιέτω, καὶ τὸν χυλὸν ῥοφεέτω[22]

All of these cures are for various forms of upward moving womb. For the condition caused by one moving down other cures were prescribed. The woman had to be washed in warm water and was told to eat as much garlic as she could and drink undiluted sheep's milk. She was fumigated and given a laxative. Then the womb was again fumigated with a mixture of fennel and absinthe. After the fumigation the doctor had to insert a pessary of squills, later one of opium poppies, then one of bitter almond oil and finally one of rose perfume. If her next period came normally, all was well. If it did not, the woman had to drink a concoction of cantharid beetles, peony seeds, cuttlefish eggs and parsley seed all mixed in wine. If her period came but was irregular in flow then a different procedure had to be followed. Whatever the regime, the woman endured the prescription until a cure was finally achieved. The total cure, of course, was pregnancy.[23]

Not only young ladies but old maids and even widows - παρθένοισι παλαιῃσιν καὶ χήρῃσιν[24] - could be affected by a movement of the womb towards the liver causing a loss of voice, a chattering of the teeth and a darkening of the complexion. That this could happen to young widows who had successfully borne children - αἳ νέαι ἐοῦσαι καὶ τοκήεσσαι χηρεύουσιν[25] - is an interesting reflection on the social conditioning of medical diagnoses. For the previously married woman a manipulation of the womb away from the liver, the tying of a bandage below the ribs to prevent its return and a regime of fumigations, purgatives and pessaries formed the prescription. For those never married, a gentler regime of medicines to be drunk linked with the advice to find a husband formed the remedy.[26]

There was another woman's complaint which could be as grave a problem

as the wandering of the womb. This complaint was retention of the menses:

> Ἐπὴν οὖν γυναικὶ ἀτόκῳ ἐούσῃ κρυφῇ τὰ ἐπιμήνια καὶ μὴ δύνηται ὁδὸν ἔξω εὑρεῖν, νοῦσος γίνεται, τοῦτο δὲ ξυμβαίνει, ἢν τῶν μητρέων τὸ στόμα μεμύκῃ ἢ ἰδνωθῇ, ἢ ξυστραφῇ τι τοῦ αἰδοίου· ἢν γὰρ τουτέων τι ᾖ, οὐ δυνήσεται ἔξοδον εὑρεῖν τὰ ἐπιμήνια, πρὶν ἂν αἱ μῆτραι ἐς τὴν φύσιν τὴν ὑγιεινὴν μεταστέωσι. Γίνεται δὲ τὸ νούσημα τοῦτο μάλιστα, αἵτινες στενοστόμους τὰς μήτρας ἔχουσιν, ἢ τὸν αὐχενα πρόσω τοῦ αἰδοίου κείμενον[27].

There was thought to be another contributory factor in cases of menstrual retention. A woman's flesh was regarded as more sponge-like and soft than a man's - φημὶ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀραιοσαρκοτέρην καὶ ἀπαλωτέρην εἶναι ἢ τὸν ἄνδρα[28]. This extra porosity resulted, so it was thought, in the rapid absorption of blood not naturally evacuated by the menstrual flow, accompanied by a rise in temperature due to the accumulation of blood. Women's blood was thought to be warmer than men's and this exacerbated the problem. If a woman suffering from menstrual retention was not treated, then the menses continued to accumulate and after two months might move to the lungs. This could well be fatal - καὶ οὐχ οἵη τέ ἐστι περιεῖναι[29]. If it was not fatal then the accumulation could result in temporary madness - hysteria. When the pressure of blood has built up so that it rushes up towards the heart and lungs, then:

> ὁκόταν οὗ ταῦτα πληρωθέωσιν, ἐμωρώθη ἡ καρδίη· εἶτα ἐκ τῆς μωρώσιος νάρκη· εἶτ' ἐκ τῆς νάρκης παράνοια ἐλαβεν[30].

This madness was accompanied by fevers and inflammation. It exhibited itself in mad, murderous, fearful or suicidal behaviour, the perception of visions and a distortion of norms of behaviour generally. What about the cure?

> Κελεύω δ' ἔγωγε τὰς παρθένους, ὁκόταν τὸ τοιοῦτον πάσχωσιν, ὡς τάχιστα ξυνοικῆσαι ἀνδράσιν· ἢν γὰρ κυήσωσιν, ὑγιέες γίνονται[31].

Unfortunately for the poor woman, pregnancy might end one series of medical problems but it brought on yet others. Doubtlessly miscarriage was a constant worry for some women then as it is now. Bleeding during pregnancy was a sure sign that all was not well:

ἢν δὲ χάνωσιν αἱ μῆτραι μᾶλλον τοῦ καιροῦ, παραμεθίασι τοῦ αἵματος κατὰ μῆνα, ὥσπερ εἴωθε χωρέειν, καὶ τὸ ἐν τῇσι μήτρῃσιν ἐὸν λεπτόν τε καὶ ἀσθενὲς γίνεται. Μελεδαινομένης δὲ τῆς γυναικὸς, ἄμεινόν τε τὸ ἔμβρυον, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ γυνὴ ὑγιαίνει· ἢν δὲ μὴ μελεδαίνηται, φθείρεται τὸ ἔμβρυον, κινδυνεύει δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ τὸ νούσημα χρόνιον ἔχειν[32].

The inability to retain the blood necessary for the development of the foetus was thus seen as one cause of miscarriage. Another cause was smoothness of the womb's interior.:

ἢν γὰρ λεῖαι (αἱ μῆτραι) ἔωσιν, ἔστιν ὅτε οἱ ὑμένες ἀπ' αὐτέων ἀφίστανται, ἐπὴν τὸ παιδίον ἄρχηται κινέεσθαι, οἱ περιισχόντες αὐτὸ, ἅτε ἡσσόνως ἐχόμενοι τῶν μητρέων ἢ ὡς δεῖ, οἷα λείων ἐουσέων[33].

The list of reasons why a woman might suffer a miscarriage was very long. If she was a sickly sort of person, merely picking up a heavy weight could bring on a miscarriage. If she was beaten, jumped up and down, did not eat properly, fainted, suffered a terrible fright, shouted too loudly, drank too much or drank or ate something strong enough to upset her stomach - any of these could bring on a miscarriage[34]. Even a woman who took every possible precaution could not be certain of avoiding a miscarriage:

αὐταὶ δὲ αἱ μῆτραι ἔχουσι φύσιας ἧσιν ἐξαμβλέεται, οὖσαι πνευματώδεες, πυκιναὶ, μαναὶ, μεγάλαι, σμικραὶ, καὶ ἀλλὰ ὅσα ἔοικεν[35].

Having suffered a miscarriage a woman needed to undergo purges and fumigations if she was to avoid ulceration of the womb[36]. If on the other hand she and the foetus survived until the time of parturition, she still had to face the pains of giving birth to which, Euripides made Medea say, standing in the line of battle was preferable[37]. A difficult birth must been a constant worry:

Ἔστι δὲ καὶ τόδε μέγα αἴτιον τοῦ μὴ ῥηϊδίως ἀπιέναι, ἢν νεκρὸν ἢν ἀπόπληκτον ἢ διπλόον ᾖ[38].

There was also the problem of a perfectly healthy baby getting itself in an awkward position - feet first or, even more difficult, sideways on[39].

It can be seen that women were besieged with problems connected with their menstrual cycle, pregnancy and childbirth. It is also obvious that conception was not merely a desirable way of fulfilling one's wifely duties and keeping one's husband happy. To be pregnant was a panacea for a host of ills. True, it caused yet other problems but these were secondary. The problems caused by a failure to become pregnant were primary, basic and social disorders. The medical profession did its best to alleviate the symptoms but could not cure sterility or subfertility. The methods employed by the doctors must have been painful and extremely humiliating as well as of little practical value in most cases. It is not surprising that women faced with the problems associated with the failure to become pregnant and those resulting from having succeeded in conceiving turned to religion. The doctors themselves knew this quite well. The medical treatise on the problems of unmarried women tells us to whom women turned after they were cured of the madness resulting from menstrual retention:

> Φρονησάσης δὲ τῆς ἀνθρώπου, τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι αἱ γυναῖκες ἄλλα τε πολλὰ, ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ τὰ πουλυτελέστατα τῶν ἱματίων καθιεροῦσι τῶν γυναικείων, κελευόντων τῶν μάντεων[40].

Why Artemis? We have evidence from many places in the Greek world that this goddess was connected with marriage and the concomitant loss of virginity by the woman, problems linked to child-bearing, childbirth and the raising of children perhaps as far as puberty[41]. In Athens and the Peiraieus, however, there appear to be links between Artemis, several other goddesses and one god who all seem to have played a similar role vis-à vis the female cycle. On occasion these links went so far as to imply the identification of Artemis with another deity or at least the assimilation of one aspect of that deity. This phenomenon was not restricted to Attica[42]. One might imagine that any goddess could be invoked at crucial moments in a woman's life especially if the unmarried Artemis was so popular. However, the evidence suggests that the deities generally chosen as patrons of a woman's cycle were all linked by having a lunar connection. This is not to argue that they were personifications of the moon but rather to suggest that those deities protected areas of life seen as influenced by the moon.

The moon has been linked with the measurement of time, the movement of waters, the growth and fertility of plants and animals, the female cycle

and death and resurrection by many peoples for thousands of years[43]. The Greeks were no exception[44]. Aristotle was resident in Athens as a student for many years and from about 335 to 323 B.C. taught there in the school he had founded. His views may give us a clue as to what less academic Athenians were thinking. Aristotle did not agree with the theory that females tended to be warmer than males because of their greater quantity of blood[45]. The opposite view is a central tenet in his explanation of the role of male and female in procreation and so ἀνάγκη τῶν ζῴων τὰ ἄρρενα τῶν θηλέων θερμότερα εἶναι[46]. He does agree, however, with the theory that women are more moist than men and this is another essential part of his theory of progeneration. This fluid nature of woman leads to several conclusions of which one concerns the woman's menstrual cycle:

> Καὶ τὸ γίνεσθαι δὲ τὰ καταμήνια κατὰ φύσιν φθινόντων τῶν μηνῶν μᾶλλον διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰτίαν συμβαίνει. ψυχρότερος γὰρ ὁ χρόνος οὗτος τοῦ μηνὸς καὶ ὑγρότερος διὰ τὴν φθίσιν καὶ τὴν ἀπόλειψιν τῆς σελήνης[47].

Aristotle does not accentuate the causal link between the moon's cycle and that of the woman but a clear parallel is drawn. He goes so far as to say that Nature wants to measure generations by the cycle of the heavenly bodies - βούλεται μὲν οὖν ἡ φύσις τοῖς τούτων ἀριθμοῖς ἀριθμεῖν τὰς γενέσεις καὶ τὰς τελευτάς[48]. The sun and moon were thought by him to be 'principles' by which the cycle of living things was governed. From that he drew this conclusion about the moon's role: διὸ συμβάλλεται εἰς πάσας τὰς γενέσεις καὶ τελειῶσεις[49]. This parallelism certainly covered the conception of a child and its growth in the womb for he makes it clear: φασί τινες ... τὴν σελήνην εἶναι θήλυ ὅτι ἅμα συμβαίνει ταῖς μὲν ἡ κάθαρσις τῇ δ' ἡ φθίσις, καὶ μετὰ τὴν κάθαρσιν καὶ τὴν φθίσιν ἡ πλήρωσις ἀμφοῖν[50].

Once safely born the child is still subject to the moon's influence. The time of the full moon could be a bad time for sick children[51].

It is clear that Aristotle,in fairly restrained terms, is expressing the common folk-belief of his day. The moon clearly influenced a woman's menstrual cycle, her level of coldness and humidity, the conception of a child, the time of pregnancy , the birth of the child and its early years.

There is little evidence that the moon itself was worshipped or that people prayed directly to the moon for help in these matters. Instead, various goddesses were seen as sharing the 'measuring' and allotting role of the moon[52].

3. Artemis as a healing deity

Artemis is at the centre of this group of goddesses and was the most important of them in Attica. Her role in child-bearing is best known from the excavations of Brauron which have produced inscriptions recording the gifts presented to the goddess by women safely delivered of their children[53]. The same custom was widespread[54]. Young girls about the age of ten served some time as a bear - ἄρκτος - at this same sanctuary[55]. Interestingly we know that they sacrificed to her under a double title which links Brauron with her sanctuary in the Peiraieus - συνετέλουν τὴν θυσίαν τῇ Βραυρωνίᾳ Ἀρτέμιδι καὶ τῇ Μουνυχίᾳ[56]. Bear-priestesses are known to have existed also in the sanctuary of Artemis at Cyrene where women appear to have had to spend a night before their marriage and to pay a ceremonial visit when pregnant or soon after the child's birth[57]. The bear is a recurrent theme and is enshrined in the myth of Artemis and Kallisto. The latter was a companion of Artemis. She became pregnant by Zeus, in some versions of the story bore him a son called Arkas, and was killed by Artemis, perhaps accidentally after Kallisto had been turned into a bear. At death Kallisto became the constellation of the Great Bear while her son became Arctophylax[58]. Underlying the layers of myth, however, is the symbolism of the bear as an animal with a cycle of activity and passivity, an 'animal lunaire'[59]. Its cycle perfectly mirrored those other cycles of life which so intimately affect women. The name Kallisto is reflected in a cult title of Artemis as Καλλίστη. Whether Καλλίστη came from Καλλιστώ or vice versa is an insoluble problem but the link is clear and made explicit by Pausanias who described Kallisto's grave in Arcadia and said that on top of the grave-mound was a sanctuary of Artemis Kalliste[60].

The shrine of Artemis Kalliste in Athens has provided the clearest archaeological evidence of the worship of Artemis by women wanting her help in gynaecological matters. Almost certainly, however, the archaeological evidence gives us too narrow a view of her importance. Well over thirty titles of Artemis are known to us[61] from Attica although not all of these are attested in the Classical period. Many of these titles have no connection with her healing, gynaecological powers yet even then there is an occasional clue that she was invoked under the most unexpected guises by women who wanted or had received help in connection with conception, pregnancy,

birth or the upbringing of children. One such clue is a dedication found near the theatre of Dionysus:

[Τιμ]οθέα 'Αγνίου 'Ερχιέως γυνὴ [ὑπὲρ τῶν] παιδίων 'Αρτέμιδι Δικτύννει ἀνέθηκεν[62]

There is no obvious reason for Timothea to have dedicated this offering to Artemis with the epithet Diktynna. Whatever precise reason, it was for her children, so a goddess of the hunting-net does not seem relevant and yet Timothea saw fit to make the dedication. We shall see that this dedication helps to interpret the link between gynaecological problems and the Thracian goddess Bendis. It is also a warning that many of the dedications to Artemis may have had a healing motivation which we can not discover and which we would not imagine was there to judge from the title by which Artemis was being invoked.

There are some titles of Artemis which are clearly gynaecologically linked. We know that she was invoked as Λυσίζωνος[63], ' the one who frees from the womb', 'Ηγεμόνη[64], perhaps ' the one who leads a child into the world', Γενετυλλίς[65], 'the goddess of one's birth-hour, 'Ωραία[66], 'she who makes things come at the right time', childbirth titles such as Λοχεία, Λοχία, Λεχώ and Εἰλείθυια[67], Σώτειρα[68], perhaps 'she who saves by/in childbirth', and Κουροτρόφος[69], 'the rearer of children'. We also know, having seen that pregnancy was regarded as a cure for all sorts of real and imaginary diseases, that Artemis was not being invoked by these titles merely as a goddess of fertility but also as a goddess who heals through the medium of fertility.

Some of the moon-linked titles of Artemis may also have been used within a similar context. 'Ωραία may be a lunar title. Σελασφόρος[70] 'the light-bringer', Φωσφόρος[71], also a'light-bearer' and possibly also Λευκοφρυνή[72] 'white-browed?' may all have originated as lunar or acquired a lunar connotation.

As we have already seen, it is the shrine of Artemis Kalliste which has provided the clearest archaeological evidence for the gynaecological cult of Artemis in Athens. The shrine, but not its gynaecological role, had always been known about from a short description of it by Pausanias:

'Αθηναίοις δὲ καὶ ἔξω πόλεως ἐν τοῖς δήμοις καὶ κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς θεῶν ἐστιν ἱερὰ καὶ ἡρώων καὶ ἀνδρῶν τάφοι· ἐγγυτάτω δὲ 'Ακαδημία, χωρίον ποτὲ ἀνδρὸς ἰδιώτου, γυμνάσιον δὲ ἐπ' ἐμοῦ. κατιοῦσι δ' ἐς αὐτὴν περίβολός ἐστιν 'Αρτέμιδος καὶ ξόανα 'Αρίστης καὶ Καλλίστης· ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ δοκῶ καὶ ὁμολογεῖ τὰ ἔπη τὰ Πάμφω, τῆς 'Αρτέμιδός εἰσιν ἐπικλήσεις αὗται, λεγόμενον δὲ καὶ ἄλλον ἐς αὐτὰς λόγον εἴδως ὑπερβήσομαι[73].

Pausanias clearly describes the shrine of Artemis Ariste and Kalliste as the first on his list of notable places on his way from the city gate to the Academy. Inscriptions to Artemis had been discovered in the general area of the Dipylon Gate in the nineteenth century[74] but it was only earlier in the twentieth century that a concentration of finds, indicating perhaps the actual site of the shrine, was excavated. One has to say 'perhaps' because one cannot presume that the site of discoveries is their original home and because the structural remains unearthed were inconclusive. As the accompanying map shows (Plate22), however, the site fits well with the description of Pausanias. The excavator started with a rescue dig which resulted from the discovery of classical material during the digging of some shop foundations at 90, Keramikou. This excavation revealed three fifth century tombs and a fourth chamber was discovered nearby along the same alignment. The excavation reports continues:

> 'Lorsqu'il fallut suspendre les travaux pour ne pas interrompre la circulation dans la rue, nous reprîmes les recherches à quelque distance, au No. 11 de la rue de Platées. Là, à une profondeur de 2 mètres environ, nous avons mis au jour un mur fait de grands blocs de poros bien taillés, qui formait un angle: il faisait apparement partie de l'enceinte d'un sanctuaire, pour lequel les trouvailles faites dans la voisinage permettent de proposer une appelation'[75].

The excavator linked his finds with those made in 1896 by A.Oikonomos. The latter, working very close to the site of the 1922 excavation between Plataion and Salaminos καὶ ὄντως ἡ ἀνασκαφὴ ἐφανέρωσε μέρος τῶν θεμελίων ἀρχαίου μνημείου συγκειμένων ἐκ μεγάλων τετραγώνων πωρίνων λίθων[76]. Moreover, a stele found just nearby carried an inscription in honour of a priest of Kalliste[77]. A similar inscription[78] was found in 1890 in the 'Hekataion'. The possibility of the temenos of Hekate also hosting a cult of Artemis Kalliste will be looked at shortly.

The poros walls discovered in 1922 together with those found in 1896 tell us little about the sanctuary except that it was perhaps enclosed by a wall as we would expect from Pausanias' description of the sanctuary as a περίβολος[79]. The small finds, however, are most revealing. Firstly, there was a bas-relief 26cms. tall x 38 wide x 7 thick. This shows a goddess holding an uplifted torch. Behind her are two pithoi while in front of her is an altar and beyond that two small worshippers, a man and a woman, each holding up their right hand in adoration. On top of the relief can be read the inscription Ἱππόκλεια[80]. The goddess is presumably Artemis Kalliste and the couple are asking for or thanking the goddess for a pregnancy or a successful birth or something similar. As for the torch:

> 'Il est vraisemblable que le pouvoir fécondant de la déesse s'étendait aux animaux et aux plantes: le feu de la torche, aux mains des divinites πυρφόρου, fertilise le sol aussi bien qu'il renouvelle la force vitale des humains'[81].

The two pithoi behind the goddess are more problematic. It has been suggested[82] that they are a duplication of the pithos we know as Pandora's box or jar, the one containing good and the other bad. This suggestion was made within a chthonic context which would place Artemis Kalliste among the chthonic divinities of fertility. Like all gods and goddesses she was linked ultimately with Gaia but fundamentally Artemis was Ouranian. A less convoluted explanation is thus more likely. The jars might well represent good and bad simply because Artemis was the saviour of women and yet also the slayer of women[83]. A pair of jars would often imply choice as in the case of the urns in which jurors placed their ballot.

The second find from the 1922 excavation was a marble base inscribed

[Τ] ιμα [σ] ίθεος : Πλωθε [υς]
[Κ] αλλίστει : ἀνέθηκεν[84].

The third piece is a broken votive offering in the form of a marble plaque showing a pair of women's breasts. The carelessly added inscription runs [Ἰπ] ποστράτη [Κα] λλίστει[85]. The carelessness of this inscription leads to a possible supposition that the piece was bought uninscribed and

that the inscription was added very much on the cheap. The fertility aspect of this votive offering is immediately apparent. As we have seen, the healing connotation follows directly from the therapeutic role of pregnancy and childbirth.

The fourth find was a large statue base inscribed Εὐκολίνη Καλλίστει εὐξαμένη ἀνέθηκε[86].

The fifth and sixth pieces are, like the third, very informative. They each show the mons veneris[87]. One still retains its fixing tenon. Neither is inscribed but their significance is clear in view of the context. Like the votive plaque of the breasts they are probably requests for healing through conception. However, the choice of the mons veneris rather than breasts could possibly indicate menstrual problems which needed healing or, since the mons veneris is either stereotyped or was actually meant to show the genitalia of a young girl, it could have been a question of, for example, hysteria - the maiden's madness.

The seventh discovery was another votive showing a woman's breasts[88]. This small tablet was uninscribed. The eighth was a stone slab. 'Sur l'une des faces est creusée une empreinte qui présente la forme d'une semelle'[89]. To judge from the holes drilled into the other side the excavator thought that this piece had been later re-used as a counterpoise weight - a σήκωμα. That it was so re-used on its original site seems rather improbable but not impossible. The original purpose of the slab was probably to record a vision or a dream in which the goddess appeared to the dedicant of the votive offering. The ninth discovery[90], a life-sized marble foot, may have had the same significance.

The tenth and last find to come from the 1922 excavation was a small burial urn - κάλπις - containing the remains of a small child and five lamps[91]. Of these lamps one shows a lion and the letter A underneath. The second a crescent moon, the third a naked child and the remaining two a bucranium The lamps showing the crescent moon and the naked child were probably chosen as burial gifts because of their appropriateness. As we have seen, Artemis, like the moon, can bestow or take away light and life. Perhaps the choice of lamps as opposed to any other offering was also deliberate. It is true

that they were not uncommon grave goods, partly due no doubt to their being plentiful, cheap and a good symbol of everyday life. However, they would have been particularly meaningful as grave goods for an infant burial linked to the shrine of Artemis who had, among her many titles, the epithets Σελασφόρος and Φωσφόρος[92].

It is presumed that the 1922 excavation found part of the sanctuary of Artemis Kalliste. Part of the foundation walls of this same sanctuary had also been discovered in the 1896 excavations of A. Oikonomos. This centre, to judge from the finds just described, was a healing shrine for gynaecological problems. Artemis was also the Saviour - Σώτειρα - and there are inscriptions to her under this title found in the area of the Dipylon Gate. However, there are problems about ascribing these dedications to a site of origin. There are two possibilities, the shrine of Artemis Kalliste and the so-called Hekateion[93]. The latter, named as such from the discovery of a base for a statue of Hekate in her triple form, was excavated by K.D. Mylonas in 1890[94]. These excavations revealed a decree of a group calling themselves Soteriastae in honour of the founder of their association. This inscription dates to the middle 30's B.C.[95]. Secondly, there was found an inscription 'Αρτέμιδι Σωτείρα [ι] Μάρων ἀνέθηκε Μάρωνος, an inscription which probably dates to the late second century B.C.[96] Thirdly there was discovered a relief showing a man and woman holding twigs, possibly of myrtle[97], preceded by a boy leading a ram for sacrifice and carrying offerings towards an altar. There is no inscription and little clue remains of the dedicant but Artemis under one of her titles is a strong contender. The date of this piece is difficult to fix but is probably third or second century B.C.[98]

The last discovery which we know for certain came from the so-called Hekataion is the one which 'puts the fat in the fire'. The problem arises from the fact that this piece is part of a decree in honour of a priest of Kalliste[99]. The entry for this piece in Inscriptiones Graecae states its provenance simply as 'Athenis prope Dipylum'. That this inscription was found in the 'Hekataion' has been double-checked[100]. This decree is mid third century B.C. The situation, therefore, is this: there are third to first centuries B.C. inscriptions and a relief found in connection with a shrine dedicated, it is thought, to Hekate. The structural remains

of this shrine all appear to date from well into the Roman period[101]. (Plate23) There is thus a possibility that all the finds from the so-called Hekataion were transferred there from elsewhere with the shrine of Artemis Kalliste being the prime candidate for their original site[102]. This hypothesis would neatly explain why the decree in honour of the priest of Kalliste, which should have been erected in the sanctuary of Kalliste, στῆσαι ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι τῆς Καλλίστης[103], was found some 170 metres away in the 'Hekataion'[104]. We can not be certain that this was the case since the shrine of Artemis Kalliste was still in existence and in possession of its cult statues for Pausanias to see them in the second century A.D.[105] However, Pausanias was not absolutely certain that Ariste and Kalliste were titles of Artemis. What is interesting is that the finds brought to light by A.Philadelpheus make no mention of Artemis but only of Kalliste and yet one piece discovered at the so-called Hekataion clearly mentions Artemis although it also calls her Soteira[106]. Other inscriptions found in the general area of the Dipylon also clearly mention Artemis. If we are to presume the existence of only one original shrine of Artemis then these too must come from it.

We are left with alternative conclusions. Either Pausanias did not look closely at the inscriptions and so found no clear proof that Artemis was indeed the goddess described by the title Kalliste or no such inscriptions were to be found at the shrine at the time of Pausanias' visit. If one prefers the second conclusion one has to speculate as to whether the inscriptions clearly naming Artemis had been moved possibly to the 'Hekataion' before the time of Pausanias or whether they had never been there in the first place.

It really is a strange coincidence that no dedication to Artemis as such is securely linked to the shrine of Kalliste and Pausanias was unsure of that epithet as a title of Artemis. The coincidence is sufficiently strange to be wary of identifying the shrine of Artemis Soteira with that of Kalliste[107]. It certainly looks likely that the decree in honour of the priest of Kalliste[108] has travelled from its original home. It is less likely that the other pieces had also travelled. It is quite possible that the 'Hekataion' is in fact a sanctuary of Artemis Soteira[109] and possibly older than its Roman remains suggest.

Having reviewed the pros and cons of postulating one or two Hellenistic shrines of Artemis in the Dipylon area, we can now turn to the other pieces of epigraphic evidence that have been found in that area but are not securely tied to a particular site. There is yet another decree this time of a group calling themselves Thiasotai[110]. This decree is not intact but appears to be honouring the priests of Artemis or the steward -ταμίας - Dionysios and the secretary - γραμματεύς - Theopropos. The eponymous archon mentioned dates this decree to 232/1 B.C. What is perhaps of most interest for our purposes is the list of names of the Thiasotai. The first two or more are missing but after them come the following:

[Δ] ωρίων	Κα [λλίστιο] ν
[Ν] ουμήνιος	Δόρκιον
[Φ] ειδίας	Κόμφη
[Σω] σιγένης	Συμάλη
[Δίη] ς	Μηλίς

Is one wrong in detecting several slave or ex-slave names here? Συμάλη sounds very much like someone called after an odd facial characteristic. The inclusion of women is also an interesting feature. However, it is important to emphasise that there is no necessary connection between the Thiasotai and the gynaecological role of Artemis even if, as is not proven, they both centred on the same shrine. Another decree was found near the ancient road leading north from the Dipylon[111]. This decree, too was made by Thiasotai of Artemis and can be dated to 237/6 B.C. It lists all fifty-eight members of the Θίασος, many of them women. If this decree originates from the same source as the preceding one, the only puzzling thing is why none of the Thiasotai mentioned in the decree of 232/1 is to be found in the complete list of 237/6.

Apart from decrees, some smaller pieces have come to light one side or the other of the Dipylon Gate. A simple dedication Μιτροβάτης 'Αρτέμιδι ἀνέθηκε[112] certainly came from that area but another piece inscribed τῆι 'Αρτ [έμιδι] τῆι Σω [τείραι] ['A] πο [λλ - - -][113], while it probably originated from the Dipylon area, cannot certainly be ascribed to any one location. American excavations in the Agora along with occasional finds elsewhere have provided several pieces. One mentions Artemis as Saviour: 'Αριστονίκη 'Αρτέμιδι Σωτείραι while another

mentions simply Artemis: Ἀρέσκουσα εὐχὴν Ἀρτέμιδι[114]. The former is undated but the latter is dated to about 100 A.D. Another Roman piece has an anaglyph of a breast and a dedication to 'listening Artemis' - a sure sign of a healing role when linked to the anaglyph: Καλλιστράτη Ἀρτέμιδι Κολενίδι ἐπηκόῳ εὐχήν[115]. All are dedications by women and could well be linked with the gynaecologically healing role of Artemis.

Another Roman piece is a part of a dedication probably from a prytany catalogue[116]. It mentions a priest of Artemis Kalliste in an inscription which is unfortunately partly missing. J.H. Oliver completes the title as Καλλίστης καὶ [Σωτείρας] but he does not note that καὶ [Ἀρίστης] is just as likely. This dedication is Hadrianic in date. The restoration with Soteira probably presumes too much; Ariste is more likely. The double epiklesis is interesting and tends to corroborate Pausanias' statement for the twin roles of Artemis as Kalliste and Ariste. This was confirmed by the only piece of epigraphic evidence so far discovered with the double epiklesis intact[117]. The dedication was made by a man called Antibios who had been made priest. The piece can be dated to 249/8 B.C. or shortly afterwards and begins Καλλίστε καὶ Ἀρίστε.

The shrine of Artemis Kalliste was certainly a gynaecologically healing shrine. The nearby Hekataion or, better, shrine of Artemis Soteira may also have served the same purpose. Both of these were just outside the city walls but were so close as to justify inclusion within the number of healing shrines of Athens. Other shrines of Artemis inside the walls may also have had a healing function. There was the sanctuary already mentioned[118] of Artemis Orthosia. However, this too was probably outside the city walls in the Kerameikos[119]. It may even have been identical to the shrine of Artemis Kalliste[120]. Outside the city walls also was the shrine of Artemis Agrotera. This was to the south-east of the city on the southern bank of the Ilissos[121]. Certainly inside the city boundaries were the shrines of Artemis Brauronia[122] which abutted onto the Propylaia in the south-west of the Acropolis, Artemis-Hekate/Hekate-Propylaia/Artemis Epipyrgidia/Hekate-Epipyrgidia/Artemis-Phosphoros[123] which stood by the small temple of Athena Nike, and Artemis Aristoboule[124] north of the Hill of the Nymphs. An altar existed for Artemis Boulaia[125] south-east of the Tholos in the Agora and possibly nearby also for Artemis Phosphoros, here linked with

some female deities called Phosphoroi[126]. No doubt there were other centres for her worship in the city and its immediate environs. The inscription to her under the title Artemis Diktynna has already been mentioned[127]. This inscription may not have been linked to any particular shrine. A stele recording the sale of the property of Alkibiades and his associates after their conviction for sacrilege mentions a shrine of Artemis Amarysia in Kydathenaion, just north of the Acropolis[128]. This cult title was derived from her worship with that epithet at Athmonon, a country deme a few miles north-east of Athens[129]. One other piece of evidence for a cult of Artemis in Athens is an inscription Μητρὸς [θε] ῶν καὶ Αρτέμιδος[130]. This was found on or near the Acropolis and, as we shall see, the link between the Mother of the Gods and Artemis has strong gynaecological and healing overtones.

This inscription linking Artemis with the Mother of the Gods is a convenient point to leave Artemis in Athens and look at those deities with whom she was either identified or had close links and who certainly or probably shared her healing role for women. The clearest picture of this syncretism emerges in the Peiraieus but there are links with the upper city.

We have already seen that Artemis was a lunar deity. However, she was much more than simply that. Artemis, in fact, was a goddess of many guises. One of the oddest of these guises, or so it would appear for a virgin deity, is that of mother goddess. Ephesian Artemis gives the clearest expression of this aspect. At Ephesus the fertility side of her role reigned supreme[131]. Under this guise Artemis was readily identified with several of the mother goddess figures of the Eastern Mediterranean. The further attribute of Artemis as Πότνια θηρῶν[132] made her particularly easily identifiable with Cybele, the Anatolian Great Mother of the Gods[133].

4. The Great Mother

Cybele's hellenised cult had, at a surprisingly early period, found a central role in Athens and always seems to have been connected with the Boule's work. Kleisthenes instituted the Council of Five Hundred at the end of the sixth century and within a few years, probably at the very beginning of the fifth century, the Athenians built a council chamber which we now know as the Old Bouleuterion. Nearby, just to the south of it, they built a small temple which almost certainly was dedicated to the Mother.[134] All of these buildings were destroyed in the Persian sack of 480 B.C. The Metroon was not immediately rebuilt even though the Old Bouleuterion seems to have been restored. Towards the end of the fifth century a second Bouleuterion complex was built but the temple of the Mother seems not to have been replaced and her cult may even have lapsed. It is almost certainly to this moment in time that we ought to ascribe a strange tradition that a Metroon was dedicated to the Mother of the Gods as the result of the murder of one of her priests - a μητραγύρτης. The story was that a Phrygian priest of the Mother came to Athens and initiated the women into the mysteries of the Mother. The Athenians condemned him to death and he was accordingly thrown into the Barathron. A plague followed. The Delphic oracle was consulted and the Athenians were told that the plague arose from the anger of the Mother at the treatment of her priest. Having been ordered to appease her, the Athenians established a Metroon for her and erected a statue of the priest[135].

There are several good reasons for ascribing this event to the end of the fifth century B.C. rather than the end of the sixth century[136]. Firstly, the event described is most likely to have been the great plague which first struck in 430-428 and reappeared in 427-426 B.C. Secondly, an association of the Mother with the Bouleuterion seems to have been very ancient and to long predate the period when Delphi was involved in encouraging the spread of this cult[137]. Thirdly, we know that a restoration took place at the end of the fifth century and that the cult statue made by Pheidias[138] or, more likely, his pupil Agorakritos[139], was very much a statue of the Phrygian goddess, enthroned with a tympanon in her hand and with a lion or lions at her feet[140]. Lastly, we know that the Barathron went out of use soon after 430 B.C.[141]. All of these factors

combine to make it fairly certain that the substantial revival of the cult of the Mother was - or was believed to be - connected with the plague of 430-428 or 427-426 B.C.

The new statue of the Mother, the Phrygian Cybele, must have been housed within the area of the Old Bouleuterion, perhaps in a tiny shrine[142] so that the word Metroon became synonymous with Bouleuterion, meaning the old Bouleuterion which continued in use as a repository for the state archives[143]. This continued as her shrine until a new Temple of the Mother of the Gods was built in the second century B.C.[144].

The cult of the Mother in the city of Athens seems to have been well integrated within the state-regulated framework of cults. We have numerous epigraphic references to her, the vast majority of them referring to the Metroon rather than to the Mother herself[145]. Her cult seems to have been so well regulated by the state that there is little sign of any personal devotion to her. The only exception to that general rule may be found in the series of reliefs showing the enthroned goddess found in the Agora. Occasionally these small offerings have an inscription[146] but they give us no clue as to the reason for the dedication. The Athens workshops actually produced these marble reliefs in huge numbers and many of them were exported[147]. As well as producing reliefs of Cybele on her own they also carved a series showing her enthroned alongside Demeter[148]. In later, Roman times we do have a little evidence of a more personal cult in Athens. This is shown by an intriguing dedication depicting two figures of Pan and bearing the inscription Εὐσιας Διοδώρου ἐκ Λαμπτρέων Μητρὶ θεῶν κατ' ἐπιταγήν πάντ [α] θεὸν σεμνύνομεν[149]. In Classical and Hellenistic times, however, we are in the dark about a more personal and perhaps healing role of Cybele in Athens. We know even less about a second Metroon just outside the city walls[150].

It is when we look at the cult of the Mother in the Peiraieus that we begin to gain some real insights into her healing role. The Metroon on the peninsula of Akte in Peiraieus was founded by non-citizens who grouped themselves together as Thiasotai[151]. The cult itself dates to at least as early as the end of the fourth century B.C.[152]. Apparently, between 284/83 and 246/45 B.C. the organisation was taken over by Orgeones but it looks as though non-citizens continued to take part and one alien a

year may have served on the board of epimeletai[153]. Finally, in Roman times, the cult at the Peiraieus Metroon was taken over by the state religion[154].

The site was excavated by le corps d'occupation français du Pirée in 1855[155]. It appears to have been a walled temenos within which there was at one time a house with cooking facilities, a ναός and a courtyard where stelai were erected, sacrifices and ceremonies performed, feasts organised and processions started[156]. Many small finds were discovered within the precinct[157]. These were mainly small terracotta figurines of the goddess.

Women appear to have had an extensive role in the worship of the Great Mother. Women may not have belonged to the Thiasotai in their own right but by virtue of being the relative of a male member[158]. However, apparently from the time the members were grouped into Orgeones rather than Thiasotai, the priest of the cult was replaced by a priestess elected by lot from the womenfolk. The ex-priestesses formed a powerful, permanent group. Other women formed groups of cupbearers and attendants upon the Goddess. The priestess was the major dignitary of the Orgeones and she was assisted by a female zakoros. All the women members took part in the sacrifices, feasts and processions[159].

The Great Mother had a reputation for many powers including that of healing[160]. Several of the inscriptions found in the Peiraieus Metroon indicate that she was a healer there too. From the scant remains it is very difficult to reconstruct a full picture of the healing role of the Great Mother in the Peiraieus. We know that incubation could form part of her cult[161] but we have little evidence as to whether it took place in the Peiraieus. One of her most common titles in the Peiraieus inscriptions is Εὐάντητος. It is possible that this refers to the ease with which she could be met in dreams[162]. Even if this is true it does not mean necessarily that those dreams occurred during incubation in the Metroon.

A great deal of information about the worship of the Mother of the Gods is derived from the two sets of decrees but this information is concerned with the organisation and administration of the Orgeones rather than with the healing role of the Great Mother and so is not relevant to the present discussion[163]. Other inscriptions, although private dedications, also do not add to our knowledge of the healing side of the cult[164]. Yet other

inscriptions unfortunately lack a clue as to the reason for the dedication although the fact that we can often tell that a woman was the dedicant is significant:

--- -- κράτος Μητρὶ θεῶν ἀνέθηκε[165]

Μάνης Μητρὶ καὶ Μίκα Μητρὶ Θεών[166]

Εὔφρις Πάτρωνος Προβαλίσιος
Μητρὶ θεῶν ἀνέθηκεν[167]

The most informative dedications, however, are those which explicitly describe the Mother of the Gods as having a maieutic or healing role:

Ἐπὶ Ἐπικράτους ἄρχοντος Μεγίστη|Ἀρχιτίμου Σφητίου θυγάτηρ
Μητρὶ|θεῶν εὐαντή(τῳ) ἰατρίνῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ|ἀνέθηκεν[168]

Ἴμερτος Μαραθώνιος|ὑπὲρ Ἰμέρτου Μαραθωνίου|Μητρὶ θεῶν
εὐαντήτῳ|ἰατρίνῃ[169]

Πολυνίκη Μοσχίων | ος Φιλάδου|γυνὴ Μητρ | ὶ θεῶν εὐαντή|
τῳ ἰατρεί | νῃ εὐχήν[170]

Each of these three describes the Mother of the Gods as being εὐάντητος. It has already been noted[171] that this might possibly refer to a dream message. The link with Aphrodite in the first of the three will lead to a further unexpected cult that will be looked at later. All three refer to the Great Mother as (ε) ἰατρ (ε) ίνη. This term could either mean simply a 'healer' being the equivalent of ἰάτρια which in turn is simply the feminine of ἰατηρ or it could have the more precise meaning of 'midwife'. Within the context of gynaecological diseases, either meaning is as relevant as the other.

After the solution of a gynaecological problem, usually by the successful birth of a child, it looks as though the Great Mother sometimes wanted some more personal sign of gratitude than an inscribed dedication alone:

Φιλοστράτη Ἀρόπου Ἀζηνιέως|θυγάτηρ τὴν ἑατῆς θυγατέ|ρα
Μνασίδα Φιλοκράτου Πειρ | αιέως κατ' ἐπιταγὴν Μητρὶ|θεῶν[172]

The statue which originally stood on the inscribed base may well have shown the lady in question.

We have very little mention of Attis from the material excavated in Athens and the Peiraieus. We know that part of the ceremonies were in his honour[173]. That piece of information comes from a decree. The only other reference to him is in a intriguing dedication:

'Ανγδίστει καὶ "Αττιδι Τιμοθέα ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων κατὰ πρόσταγμα[174]

Somehow, perhaps through a dream, incubation or possibly through a human medium, Timothea has been told to dedicate the stele with this inscription. The anaglyph shows Attis receiving a flower from Angdistis. Attis, as we shall see again shortly, was the consort of Cybele but who was Angdistis? The most likely explanation is that this is meant to be Cybele herself[175]. There is, however, a version which sees Angdistis as the androgynous creature from whose severed male genitalia an almond tree grew whose fruit impregnated a girl called Nana[176].

Before we leave the Great Mother, mention must be made of one very interesting inscription which seems to have come from the Metroon: "Αξιος κ [α] ὶ Κ [λε] ὼ 'Αρτέμιδι Νάνᾳ εὐξάμενοι ἀνέθηκαν[177]. (Plate 24) A better reading may give Κλειὼ[178]. This looks very much like a husband and wife giving thanks to Artemis for the solution of a gynaecological problem but why Artemis Nana? Nana was the daughter of Sangarios and the mother of Attis, the lover of Cybele[179]. However, it looks likely that here Nana is the Great Mother herself in the form of Nana Ishtar although other opinions include linking her with the Iranian fertility goddess Anaïtis[180]. This is far from impossible since the Metroon seems to have been the focus of a large number of Anatolian cults[181] including the god Men. Interestingly, we know of Artemis Anaïtis and Men linked as healing deities on an inscription from Lydia[182].

Artemis herself and the goddesses closely linked with her were prominent in the religious life of the Peiraieus. At Munychia there was a temple of Munychian Artemis[183]. This title was, as we have seen[184], linked to Brauronian Artemis and may well indicate that Munychian Artemis was concerned with the welfare of girls and the problems of young women[185]. A more informative piece of evidence, another inscription: 'Ιέρων

'Αρτέ [μιδι] 'Ωραίᾳ[186], almost certainly refers to the role of Artemis in helping to deliver babies at the right time. Whether the inscription should be ascribed to one sanctuary or another is difficult to say.

The Great Mother was not the only mother goddess worshipped and appealed to as a healer of women's ills in Athens and the Peiraieus. In the theogonies the Great Mother was seen as being identical to 'Ρέα, hence her title Μήτηρ θεῶν. Another and even older mother-goddess was, of course, Gaia - Γαῖα or Γῆ, the primordial earth herself. She was worshipped as Ge Karpophoros and apparently also as Olympia[187]. Perhaps her most famous title in Athens, however, was Kourotrophos[188]. Her main shrine as 'Nurse of Youth' seems to have been just southwest of the Acropolis propylaia: ἔστι δὲ καὶ Γῆς Κουροτρόφου καὶ Δήμητρος ἱερὸν χλόης[189]. Pausanias saw this on his way round from the Asklepieion to the Propylaia. The archaeological evidence for the shrine itself seems to have long disappeared but inscriptions have turned up at the Asklepieion[190]. It is possible that theseoriginally came from the shrine of Ge Kourotrophos which would have been only a few metres away.[191] We do not know how people saw the role of Ge Kourotrophos but an insight can perhaps be gained from a comparison with the third day of the Athenian festival of the 'Απατούρια. This third day was called the κουρεῶτις or κουρε ῶτις ἑορτή[192]. This was the day when lockets of hair were dedicated by boys to Artemis in thanks-giving for having been looked after by the goddess since their birth just as their mother had made offerings of her own hair or items of clothing to Artemis after the successful birth of the child some years previously. Ge Kourotrophos may well have been thanked in a similar way.

5. Bendis and Men

A goddess who was closely identified with Artemis in Athens and the Peiraieus was Bendis. In the summer of 431 B.C. the Athenians formed an alliance with the Thracian king Sitalkes and at the same time they allowed the Thracians in the Peiraieus to establish a private hieron to their goddess. It used to be thought that it was then too that the public, state cult of Bendis was established[193]. However, we now know that the state cult was introduced later and very careful computations have revealed the exact parameters of her public arrival. The earliest date for the public establishment of her cult is June 28, 430 and the latest is April 17, 429 with the most likely time being between August and October 430[194]. This means that the political situation was almost certainly not the immediate cause of the goddess's public introduction. What is most likely to have brought about this event in the later summer of 430 is the great plague which had broken out at the start of June[195]. An oracular statement from Dodona had apparently backed the official acceptance of her cult[196]. Her worship was organised by orgeones of Thracians in the Peiraieus[197], orgeones of Athenian citizens from the asty and from about 261-260 B.C. yet a further group of orgeones, this time Thracians living in the asty[198]. These groups organised the splendid festival so tantalisingly described by Plato[199].

It is the public and official side of her cult that has received the lion's share of attention[200]. Little is known of how she was viewed by her worshippers. She was apparently linked closely with the nymphs and her temenos was in some way connected with a Nymphaion[201]. She was, at least in origin, a Thracian form of the mother goddess[202]. Could the torch-light race on horseback which took place in the evening of the Bendideia indicate an original or added lunar aspect? Her sanctuary in Mounychia was not far from that of Asklepios - nor, indeed, far from the healing shrine of Serangos. It may, therefore, be no coincidence that she could be shown accompanied by a male deity whom everyone would recognise as a healer[203] (see Plate 25). The male figure is leaning on a staff tucked under his right arm. The majestic, bearded head is clearly in the Zeus Philios/Asklepios tradition and the angle of the head ensures that he, along with Bendis, is clearly paying attention to the prayers of

the two worshippers depicted, as usual, as being diminutive by comparison with the deities. 'In der oberen linken Ecke erscheinen Hermes, drei Nymphen, Pan und der Achelooskopf'[204]. Hermes is carrying an enormous cornucopiae. All of these lesser figures have tremendous significance for the healing implications of this stele. They will all be looked at in a later chapter[205]. There is no doubt that this stele stood in the sanctuary of Bendis. It reads:

Θεοί
Φιλοκράτης εἶπεν· ἐπειδὴ Εὐφύης κα
ὶ Δέξιος γενόμενοι ἐπιμεληταὶ τοῦ ἱε
ροῦ ἐπὶ Κηφισφῶντος ἄρχοντος καλῶς
καὶ φιλοτίμως ἐπεμελήθησαν καὶ ἀξίω
ς τῆς θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ὀργεώνων, δεδόχθαι τ
οῖς ὀργεῶσιν στεφανῶσαι Εὐφύη καὶ Δέ
ξιον δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐπιμελείας ἕνε
κα χρυσῶι στεφάνωι ἑκατερον ἀπὸ Η δρα
χμῶν καὶ ἀναγράψαι τόδε τὸ ψήφισμα ἐν
στήλει λιθίνει καὶ στῆσαι ἐν τῷ ἱερ [ῶ]
ι τῆς θεοῦ.

There is no doubt because the female figure on the right is indisputably Bendis and therefore the goddess referred to in lines six and twelve is almost certainly her. Besides, this decree can be fitted into the known pattern of decrees issued by the Orgeones of Bendis. The only question arising is about the healing hero/god standing next to her. Originally he was thought to be Asklepios himself:

> 'Wenn wir also auf unserem Relief Asklepios neben Bendis stehen sehen, so wird dadurch sicher auf eine locale Verbindung ihrer Heiligthümer angespielt.'[206]

Then a new inscription[207] was found which led to the strong suspicion that the healing figure was not Asklepios but a hitherto unknown hero called Deloptis. The new inscription, another decree, links Bendis and Deloptes:

Δεδόχθαι τοῖς ὀργε-
ῶσιν ἐπαινέσαι Στέφανον τῆς τε
πρὸς τὴν Βένδιν καὶ τὸν Δηλόπτη-
ν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους θεοὺς εὐσεβείας
ἕνεκεν[208]

After the publication of this decree it was simply assumed that the male deity next to Bendis is Deloptes[209]. Deloptes alone had been found on a votive relief on Samos with the inscription: Ἥρως Δηλόπτη [ς][210]. The anaglyph was described as:

> 'Die einfache Darstellung isteingerahmt von zwei Parastaden und einem horizontalen Gebälk mit Ziegeldach. In der Art des Asklepios auf seinem Stab (der nur gemalt war) gestützt, steht Deloptes N. R. vor einem Altar. Davor rechts ein Adorant[211].

The representation of Deloptes in a form which nearly everyone would have had no trouble in recognising as Asklepios has sometimes been seen as accidental[212]. Surely, however, when a foreign deity had to be portrayed by Greek sculptors, inscribed with a Greek inscription and displayed for aliens and Greeks alike to view, careful thought must have been given to the image of that deity so that the citizens would have some inkling as to his or her role? The coincidence that Deloptes looks like a mirror image of Asklepios cannot be accidental:

> 'Das stärkste Argument für die Identifizierung des Deloptes mit Asklepios BZW. für seinen Charakter als Heilheros ist das samische Relief... Da Deloptes mit Bendis verbunden war, wurde der Asklepios neben ihr schon in alter Zeit wie jetzt als Deloptes aufgefasst, so dass dieser seine Gestalt von jenem entlieh'.[213]

Therefore, it is not unfair to argue that Bendis and Deloptes could be seen as healers and probably of women's and family complaints in particular.

Bendis was closely associated with Artemis and the association was such that the assimilation process continued for some time after the arrival of Bendis. Those attributes which had originally been particularly distinctive were softened to accord with the then current picture of Artemis.[214] Some goddesses more or less lost their own characteristics in this process of assimilation:

> Καλοῦσι...τὴν Ἄρτεμιν Θρᾷκες μὲν Βένδιν, Κρῆτες δὲ Δίκτυναν, Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ Οὖπιν[215].

If Callimachus is to be believed[216] Diktynna was no other than

Britomartis, the Cretan goddess. Her name was probably derived from Mt. Dikte where Zeus was born and her relevance to a gynaecological healing cult is that she was probably a kourotrophos of Zeus. She was certainly regarded as such during the Roman period[217]. Οὖπις or Ὦπις may never have been a separate figure[218] but, if she had been, she certainly lost her identity. Bendis retained her identity while having the 'edges smoothed out'. One deity in no danger of being assimilated was Men. His masculinity prevented his assimilation by Artemis. Originally Men seems to have been an Iranian moon-god. Further west in the Mediterranean the moon was generally regarded as feminine. His cult became very common, especially during the Empire, in Asia Minor. Antioch-near-Pisidia seems to have been regarded as his chief sanctuary[219]. He appears to have had strong links with local communities and this led the Romans into suspecting his cult of having a nationalist flavour[220]. With good reason he was identified with Apollo or Asklepios for he was a healing god[221].

The best evidence of his healing powers probably comes from the Lydian inscriptions and anaglyphs. These have provided evidence of requests or thanks for the healing of eyes, feet, breast and legs as well as animals and relatives[222]. He appears to have been quite popular in Attica with finds associated with him found not only in Athens and the Peiraieus but also at Thorikos and Sounion. In this last spot he had a temple and a complex cult[223].

In Athens we have already seen an anaglyph of Men in the healing shrine of Amynos. This helps a little to negate the statement that evidence 'is exasperatingly silent concerning the reasons that people may have had for worshipping Men'[224]. At the very least, the finds from Athens and the Peiraieus 'show Men as a god manifest and as a protector of family life, as well as a god with more general fertility powers, particularly connected with rainfall'[225]. Immediately we are given this general description we can fit Men into the picture of family-oriented gods. As a moon god he would be an ideal deity to care for the weather and rainfall, fertility and the human family. The centrality of the human family among his concerns is apparent from the material found in Athens and the Peiraieus. In a fragment excavated in the Athenian Agora in 1936, although Men himself is badly damaged, we can see that he was seated on a large crescent moon

and was holding a staff in his left hand. Below him is a table with offerings, probably of cakes. To his right stands a male devotee making an offering to the god while on his left is a woman with, rather indistinctly, her three children[226]. The relief from Thorikos is similar and can be used to reconstruct the relief just mentioned[227]. (Plate 26) There are some obvious dissimilarities. Men is seated on a rooster not a crescent moon and he is not holding a staff; the two devotees are together and have no children with them. That last fact may be the salient point of the votive offering for the inscription makes it clear that they are man and wife. There is a general pattern belonging to the Athenian pieces which follows along the same lines as the two just described. One broken relief, discovered in 1894 between the Areopagus and the Pnyx, shows Men on a ram. He is holding a patera towards a male and a female worshipper. Beneath the god is a table with offerings and below that a rooster[228]. Another relief, sculpted on both faces, shows on one side the remains of a ram and slight signs of the drapery belonging to Men sitting on it. In front of the ram is a table with the usual offerings while under it there are a rooster and a hen. Beyond the table are four worshippers. These appear to be two older, bearded men, a younger, beardless man and a child all holding out the right hand in adoration[229]. Similar again is a piece whose exact provenance is uncertain although apparently Athenian. Again it shows Men on a ram, a young man standing and an older man and a woman kneeling either side of an offerings table with the rooster and hen underneath[230].

Those pieces form a pattern. Not fitting into that pattern, largely because they served different purposes, are three contiguous bricks from a well-head in the Kerameikos, bearing the inscription ὁ Πάν, ὁ Μήν, χαίρετε νύμφαι καλαί, ὗε κύε ὑπέρχυε[231]; a relief showing Pan, Men and a female figure[232] found apparently in Athens although exactly where is not known[233]; and finally an inscription beneath a seven-pointed star in a crescent[234]. The inscription reads:

Ἱερεὺς στολιστὴς Ἴσιδος
καὶ Σεράπιδος Αὐρ. Ἐπαφρόδει-
τος τῷ Οὐρανίῳ Μηνὶ εὐχα-
[ρ]ιστήριον ἀνέθηκα.

There are traces of some letters, perhaps added later, at the end of this inscription. This must be a late piece[235]. The rank of ἱερεὺς στολιστής in the cult of Isis and Serapis is a regular feature of the Egyptian religion. Its holder would have been a free man. The worship of Men in Athens and the Peiraieus seems to have had strong links with other cults. The piece, mentioned above, which showed the figured relief within an aedicula may have been intended to indicate that there was a shrine to Men in Athens[236]. On the other hand, as we shall see and have already noted[237], Men seems to have been associated with the Metroon in the Peiraieus although he may have had his own shrine as well. In Athens, therefore, couples may have had to go to a section of an Egyptian shrine. There was one just north of the Acropolis[238] and possibly a second south-east of the Acropolis in Agrai[239]. Is it coincidence that both sites had an adjacent shrine of Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth?[240]

The information about the worship of Men in the Peiraieus is unfortunately scanty. There are only two pieces, each with an inscription. The first is a marble altar which seems to have been found in the Metroon. Its inscription reads:

Δημήτριος καὶ ἡ γυνὴ Ἐρώτιον Μηνὶ ἐπὶ ἱερέας Γλαύκου[241].

The husband and wife, to judge by names, are not Athenian citizens. One would think that the priestess mentioned would be one serving the cult of Men but a good argument has been made[242] that this Glaukon was the priestess of the Great Mother whom we know from another inscription[243]. The date of this latter inscription is 213/2 B.C. If this argument is correct, and all the evidence seems to favour it, we have a date for the Men inscription and the strong link between the cult of Men and that of the Great Mother confirmed.

The other piece of evidence for Men's worship in the Peiraieus is an inscribed marble statue base. The inscription reads: Διονύσιος καὶ Βαβυλία τῷ Μηνὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἀνεθεσαν[244]. Babylia has been thought to be a Phrygian name[245]. This is certainly not unlikely. It looks as though we have yet another husband and wife. This has been true of nearly all the votive offerings in Athens and both from the Peiraieus. The problem with this inscription is to know whether τὸ ἱερὸν refers, as it so often

does, to a building - the shrine or sometimes the whole temenos - or to the statue which the inscribed base originally supported[246].

We have a picture of a strongly family - especially husband and wife - oriented cult of Men. The material from Sounion is outside our purview but it is interesting to note the link between several of the regulations for ritual cleanliness which that material contains and the sexual relationship of husband and wife. Worshippers apparently had to wash after sexual intercourse before they entered the sanctuary but no delay in time was enforced[247]. This was a fairly standard regulation[248]. More informative is the regulation that a woman had to wait seven days, i.e. a quarter of a lunar cycle, after her menstrual period, then wash and come in on the same day[249]. This is probably an indication of the nature of this cult with the importance of the moon for the menstrual cycle being reflected in cult regulations[250]. Finally there was a forty day delay imposed after what the inscription calls φθορᾶς[251]. This word probably includes what are termed these days as miscarriages and abortions. Forty days would be a very long exclusion but is not unknown in other laws about pollution[252]. Within the cult of Men it may well be that it is such a long period because, voluntary or not[253], a φθορά runs completely counter to the essence of the Men's meaning: ὗε, κύε, ὑπέρχυε[254].

6. Aphrodite and the Genetyllides.

In an earlier inscription which was noted in connection with the Great Mother[255] it was seen that the Mother of the Gods was closely linked with Aphrodite: Μητρὶ θεῶν εὐαντή(τῳ) ἰατρίνῃ Ἀφροδίτῃ. This association, incongruous at first sight, rapidly appears quite natural when one realises that the Aphrodite is either Ἀφροδίτη Οὐρανία or is closely linked with her. We have good evidence for Heavenly Aphrodite in the Peiraieus in the form of inscriptions[256]. In Athens Aphrodite Ourania had two if not three separate shrines. There was one ἐν Κήποις near the Ilissos not far from the Olympieion and probably a twin sanctuary on the north slope of the Acropolis[257] while the third was not far from the Hephaistieion:

> πλησίον δὲ ἱερόν ἐστιν Ἀφροδίτης Οὐρανίας. πρώτοις δὲ ἀνθρώπων Ἀσσυρίοις κατέστε σέβεσθαι τὴν Οὐρανίαν, μετὰ δὲ Ἀσσυρίους Κυπρίων Παφίοις καὶ Φοινίκων τοῖς Ἀσκάλωνα δὲ Φοινίκων Κυθήριοι μαθόντες σέβουσιν.[258]

Almost certainly Pausanias is preserving some ancient and apparently accurate tradition for it would appear that Aphrodite Ourania was how the Phoenicians abroad termed their own goddess whom at home they called Tanit. Venus Caelestis was her Roman counterpart[259]. Tanit was a lunar goddess[260] and Pausanias gives us a clue as to one of her roles:

> Ἀθηναίοις δὲ κατεστήσατο Αἰγεύς, αὑτῷ τε οὐκ εἶναι παῖδας νομίζων - οὐ γάρ πω τότε ἦσαν - καὶ ταῖς ἀλδελφαῖς γενέσθαι τὴν συμφορὰν ἐκ μηνίματος τῆς Οὐρανίας[261]

If we did not know that Aphrodite Ourania was the goddess being spoken of, we might assume that it was Artemis, the goddess who can cause or solve women's problems. The lunar link is there and the role is the same. She performs her role at healing shrines[262] and was very popular in and near Athens. We can not say that all dedications to her, even when made by women, were performed for gynaecological and healing reasons. Very often we are left in ignorance of the motive[263]. Nor can we be sure that Aphrodite Ourania is meant in dedications of a known gynaecological nature where simply Aphrodite is mentioned.

In Athens any of her three shrines could have been the centre of a

healing cult of Aphrodite. It may well be that it was at such a centre that the Genetyllides, minor goddesses of birth, were worshipped[264]. There are indications that these may have had a shrine in Athens[265]. A likely candidate for such a shrine is the sanctuary of Aphrodite ἐν Κήπους on the north slope of the Acropolis if the votive offerings, including genitalia and parts of an ex-voto depicting the αἰδοῖα γυναικεῖα, are anything to go by. This latter piece is a very common feature of gynaecologically healing cults[266].

Aphrodite had two other healing shrines on the outskirts of Athens. One was at Cape Kolias:

> Κωλιάδος δέ ἐστιν ἐνταῦθα Ἀφροδίτης ἄγαλμα καὶ Γενετυλλίδες ὀνομαζόμεναι θεαί[267].

The Genetyllides were minor birth goddesses[268] but the shrine here was obviously important[269] for the priestess had an inscribed seat in the Theatre of Dionysus[270]. It is thought that Cape Kolias is what is now called the promontory of Aghios Kosmas. Excavations on the promontory found no remains of this sanctuary, indeed no classical remains at all[271]. Surely the remains are to be found under the church of Aghios Kosmas from which the peninsula got its name? It would not be the first time that a Christian healer took over from a pagan one.

The other shrine of healing Aphrodite was at modern Dhafni whose very name, of course, derives from the former abundance of the bay trees sacred to Apollo. Pausanias saw this shrine too[272] but he gives us no clue as to Aphrodite's role there. He mentions an unusual wall:

> ...Ἀφροδίτης ναός ἐστι καὶ πρὸ αὐτοῦ τεῖχος ἀργῶν λίθων θέας ἄξιον.

What he did not mention were the niches cut into the rock nearby with votive statuettes and numerous inscriptions. The gynaecological aspect of these votive offerings, or at least some of then, is revealed by those which have an anaglyph of the mons veneris[273]./(Plate 27) There are numerous other inscriptions[274].

7. Eileithyia and Demeter

The Genetyllides, who were associated with Aphrodite, were adjutants rather than principals in gynaecological matters. The same is true of the Nymphs. Eileithyia, who has already been mentioned[275], was, on the other hand, a very important goddess for women. Apparently there was a tradition which conflated Eileithyia and Aphrodite for the legendary poet, whom Pausanias calls the Lykian Olen, said that Eileithyia was the mother of Eros[276]. Eileithyia was closely linked with Artemis and also Hera from whom she seems to have taken over gynaecological matters leaving the wedding side of marriage to Hera[277]. Eileithyia seems to have been descended from a Minoan or even earlier goddess of childbirth and she seems to have retained a prominent position in Crete where she was commonly called Ἐλεύθυια[278]. Apart from the two shrines that we know she had in Athens[279] we have a certain amount of epigraphic evidence[280] but the chants have been lost[281] and we often do not know to whom statuettes, for example, were dedicated[282]. (Plate 28)

Eileithyia's Cretan name, Ἐλεύθυια is cognate with Ἐλευσύνιος and may well be a link with Demeter[283]. Just as Eileithyia could be a healing goddess[284] so too could Demeter be a goddess of childbirth. She also is a mother goddess and there was a tradition that the phrase ὗε κύε ὑπέρχυε, which we saw earlier in connection with Men, was used at Eleusis[285]. We have several inscriptions to Demeter and sometimes Kore as well which have been found in Athens although usually they throw no light on any healing role[286]. Just occasionally we have a piece of evidence which indicates their gynaecological role as in an inscription of the fourth century B.C.: φίλη ταῦν/[θεαῖν] ὑξαμένη ὑπὲρ τοῦ παιδίου[287]. The goddesses are not named but the inscription almost certainly refers to Demeter and Kore. We do know, however, that Demeter had a proper shrine which she appears to have shared with Gaia - ἔστι δὲ καὶ Γῆς Κουροτρόφου καὶ Δήμητρος ἱερὸν Χλόης[288]. Demeter Chloë had much in common with Aphrodite ἐν Κήποις. Their role was to assist in vegetative fertility and by analogy in that of humans. At the shrine shared by Gaia and Demeter, Kore seems to have shared in the child-rearing role and mother and daughter seem also to have used dreams as part of that role:

ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙ ΧΛΟΗ
ΚΑΙ ΚΟΡΗ
ΤΗΝ ΚΟΥΡΟΤΡΟ
ΦΟΝ ΕΙΣΙΔΟΤΟΣ
ΑΝΗΘΗΚΕΝ
ΚΑΤΟΝΕΙΡΟΝ[289]

(Plate 29)

This inscription is on a tapered column which originally held a dedication of some sort on the top. It confirms the gynaecological role of Demeter and Kore who may in fact have had an even wider healing role to judge by the evidence from other sites. Eleusis is outside our brief but it is interesting to note that in addition to the ordinary ex-votos at Eleusis there are signs, not only of a gynaecological slant but occasionally of a more general healing role[290]. Perhaps, therefore, Demeter performed much more of a healing role than we now have evidence for in Athens and the Peiraieus.

8. Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this chapter to show that women suffered from a large number of both real and imaginary ailments and that it was believed that these were possibly caused by and certainly curable by various deities. These were mainly goddesses but we have seen that the god Men was associated with them and there is evidence that even the Tritopatores were prayed to for children on the eve of a marriage[291]. These deities presided over women's ailments partly because they were generally lunar divinities and thus presided over the cycles of a woman's life and partly because they were maieutic and thus assisted in the bringing of children into the world. Since most gynaecological problems were thought to be solved by a successful pregnancy these maieutic deities were automatically also healers. The cluster of these divinities centres around Artemis and they are each linked to her by their lunar or fertility role or their function as a kourotrophos. Many of them were foreign or had foreign links but all became acceptable and accepted by a wider range of worshippers although the Peiraieus predictably remained the centre of alien cults. The evidence for these cults is sometimes literary but is usually to be found in an interpretation of the inscriptions and their accompanying anaglyphs. Almost certainly much of the evidence which would indicate an even wider range of deities invoked in gynaecological problems has disappeared. Luckily, what remains gives a reasonable idea of the variety of deities whom women could invoke and ask for help although the nature of the problem - disease, menstrual complications, sub-fertility, bleeding during pregnancy, miscarriage, etc. - is not usually specified.

In Hellenistic times especially, the goddess Isis took over the roles of giver of fertility, guardian of women, the healer of women's ailments, midwife and rearer of the young in the hearts of many living in Athens and the Peiraieus. Athens, however, tended to be conservative to a certain extent and most of the older cults continued. Isis and Sarapis also catered for a much wider clientele than women and healed much more than gynaecological problems. Dreams were particularly important and incubation was practised. In spite, therefore, of the strong links between Isis - especially in her lunar and maternal roles - and the other maieutic deities, she and Sarapis will be looked at separately.

Chapter V. The Egyptian healing deities in Athens and its environs.

The Egyptian healing deities in Athens and its environs

1. Introduction

This chapter sets out to look at those Egyptian deities renowned for their healing role who had shrines in and around Athens. It starts by looking at the origins of the Greek contact with Egypt especially in the field of medicine and that area of healing where medicine and faith worked together. In particular cures by sacred water and incubation are shown to be the best documented methods of healing by the Egyptian deities.

The introduction of these gods into Athens and the Peiraieus is then charted and linked with Delos. Delos had a very important religious complex dedicated to the Egyptian deities. Healing practices there are well attested. Since Athens had such strong links with Delos, the healing practices there are described in detail so that they can be used to illuminate the much smaller amount of evidence from Athens.

The evidence from Athens mainly attests the practice of incubation followed by dream-interpretation. An attempt is made to unravel the procedures involved in this type of healing. Finally, the Egyptian healing deities underwent a process of syncretism with other major healing deities. This process is looked at in Athens and compared with the similar situation in Epidauros.

2. The Egyptian healing deities - the background

It is difficult to be certain how early the first influential contact between Greeks and Egyptians was. There is no proof that the Aqiyawasa who assisted in an invasion of Egypt during the reign of the Pharaoh Merneptah (c.1212-1202 B.C.) were Achaean Greeks nor that the Danuna who invaded Egypt during the reign of Ramesses III (c. 1182-1151 B.C.) were Danaäns[1]. It is certain, however, that Psamtik I (664-610 B.C.) used Greek mercenaries for his expulsion of the Assyrians from Egypt[2]. Psamtik I thought highly of the Greeks and πρός τε Ἀθηναίους καί τινας τῶν ἄλλων Ἑλλήνων συμμαχίαν ἐποιήσατο[3]. It may well have been during his reign that trade was regularly established between Greece and Egypt for the archaeological evidence from Naucratis, the Greek trading settlement on the Canopic branch of the Nile, would seem to indicate such a date[4] even though Herodotus says that it was Ahmose II (570-526 B.C.) who gave Naucratis to the Greeks as their commercial headquarters[5]. The link with Athens is confirmed archaeologically by the presence at Naucratis of Athenian fine ware, some as early as 620 B.C.[6]. During the sixth century Greek, including Athenian, pottery indicates that Greeks settled not only at Naucratis but also at Daphnae - Tell Defenneh - in the north east and that they penetrated the south of the country - Memphis, Thebes, Edfu and even Nubia[7].

The extent to which the Greeks were indebted to the Egyptians has in the past been a matter for debate as far as medicine is concerned[8]. As early as 1873, however, Le Page Renouf realised that much of the gynaecological section on pregnancy testing in the Hippocratic Collection was derived from Egyptian sources[9]. These sources are mainly the so-called Kahoun Papyrus VI[10], Ramasseum Papyri IV and V[11], Berlin Papyrus 3038[12] the London Medical Papyrus and the Hearst Papyrus[13], the Ebers Papyrus[14], the Edwin Smith Papyrus[15], Carlsberg Papyrus VIII[16] and the Chester Beatty Papyrus VI[17]. One specific example of this Greek dependence on Egyptian originals was pointed out some years ago by Erik Iversen[18]. The Hippocratic version of one pregnancy test is:

> Ἄλλο· μώλυζαν σκορόδου περικαθήραντα, τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποκνίσαντα, προσθεῖναι πρὸς τὴν ὑστέρην, καὶ ὀρῆν τῇ ὑστεραίῃ, ἢν ὄζῃ διὰ στοματος· καὶ ἢν ὄζῃ, κυήσει· ἢν δὲ μὴ, οὔ.[19]

The Egyptian version is to be found in the so-called Kahoun papyrus dating to about 1950 B.C. and also the Carlsberg Papyrus VIII of somewhat later date. This version reads:

> 'Another [recipe] to distinguish a woman who will conceive from one who will not. You shall let a clove of garlic (...) remain the whole night in her womb until dawn. If the smell is present in her mouth, then she will conceive, if (... [not]), she will not conceive.'[20]

There is now no longer any doubt about the Greek debt to Egyptian medicine. The ἄλλο which commences so many remedies is frequently an exact reproduction of the Egyptian method; the aphoristic style of the remedies; the pregnancy tests and gynaecological treatment by fumigation and many other sections of the Hippocratic Corpus[21]: all of these are sure signs of the reliance of Greek writers on Egyptian originals[22].

The Egyptians realised at a very early period that to cure a disease or disorder is not merely to administer a physical remedy. All illness is psychosomatic at least to the extent that the right mental attitude is required if the patient is to cope with the problems arising from the illness and/or its cure. The mental state of the patient was most frequently opened to the likelihood of a cure by religious means. Religion and medicine were inseparable for the same gods and goddesses who caused disease could also remove it and the priests of those divinities were the doctors although there were also some lay physicians. Thoth, the god of wisdom[23], was the inventor of healing remedies. Sekhmet both sent and healed diseases and her priests, w^{c}bw (Wabau), were the most important of the medical priests. Her figure, carved on the walls of Sahurē's mortuary temple at Abousir (c.2491-2477B.C.) became famous for its healing miracles[24]. Isis was the great enchantress who had power over life and death and had cured her father and her son as well as restoring her husband to life. Eye diseases were the special province of Thoth, Amen, Douaou and Horus. Horus also had a much wider role as an averter of evil and a healer. Pregnancy and gynaecological matters were the domain of Tauert, or Apet as she was known at Thebes, Neith and Heket. Isis and Hathor also had a part to play in gynaecological healing as did Bes. Animal stings and bites were cured by Meret-Seger, Isis or Horus.

Many other gods, who had as their primary role some non-medical function, such as the ithyphallic god Min, could be called upon as physicians. Sages and priest-physicians could be deified and/or thought of as continuing their healing work after their death. Of these Imhotep, later known as Imouthes and identified with Asklepios, and Amenhotep were the most famous but there were others such as Djed-Hor who will be mentioned again later.

Apart from the scientific medicine best exemplified by the Edwin Smith Papyrus[25], there was a complete spectrum of medico-religious healing. Lay doctors, swnw , worked as state employees on the huge pharaonic building sites, with the army and elsewhere[26]. The higher grade of doctors the w^{c}bw, however, was attached to temples. Temples had as part of them a pir-ankh, a 'house of life'. To this establishment belonged the priests of the god or goddess. The House of Life usually contained a library used to train new priests in the known arts, sciences and theology. Medicine, of course, was one of the subjects taught[27]. The pastophoria were apparently the quarters of those priests, pastophors, 'whose task was to master the medical texts and all the traditional magical lore of Egypt'.[28] The healing methods of these priests might involve simply the invocation of a deity's name or they might require specific prayers, the assumption by the priest of the deity's identity, forms of homoeopathy, recollections of hard times in the deity's life-history in order to elicit help from the deity for a patient enduring similar problems, the use of amulets, spells and drugs[29], operations, manipulations and other more 'scientific' remedies, threats against the deity[30] and specific healing rituals of which the best substantiated are water cures and incubation.

It would be surprising if water had not been used as a healing medium in view of the life-giving role of the waters of the Nile. It is likely that most Iseia had basins of sacred Nile-water and certain that Nile-water was distributed to the faithful in amphorae marked Σέραπις δῶρα although whether the contents were always genuine Nile-water or simply believed so because of some pious fiction is a moot point[31]. Nile water had always been sacred to the Egyptians. In early times it was sacred to the god Hapi and in later times it was linked to the life-cycles of several deities. It was probably Nile water that was used for the water cures. At Denderah, the only place where the remains of such a water cure

centre can still be seen, the water could have been obtained from an adjacent well-cum-Nilometer whose level rose at the time of the annual inundation. To effect the cure, the water had to be imbued with divine power. At Denderah this was achieved by letting the water run over divine statues mounted on pedestals inscribed with healing texts. The water then ran along channels, possibly via a reservoir, to a set of basins. Some of the water was probably drunk to effect a cure. The remains of several of the basins, however, indicate that immersion of the affected parts of the body or possibly the whole body was also practised[32]. (Plate 30)

The Denderah healing centre in all probability dates from the Ptolemaic period[33]. The whole site is basically dedicated to Hathor along with her consort Horus of Edfu and their child Ihy or Harsomtus. However, especially in Ptolemaic times, Hathor and Isis were closely associated and it is Isis along with her husband Osiris and their son Horus who are the gods invoked in the remaining pedestal's formulae[34]. (Plates 31-32)

Horus was the god perhaps most commonly found, along with his mother Isis, healing people from everyday dangers of ill-health such as stings and bites. Isis had been the first to cure from a serpent's bite when she healed her father Rē[35]. Later she cured her son and he came to share her power[36]. Horus was not infrequently shown on slabs of stone, known as Cippi or Stelai of Horus upon the crocodiles. These were often set up in private homes to ward off danger, that is, they were by nature apotropaic but occasionally they were mounted on a flat slab with a groove around the perimeter and a basin. Again water was poured over the stele showing a youthful Horus with his distinctive sidelock of childhood and holding venomous creatures. Hieroglyphic formulae added to the power of the water which collected in the basin and was then drunk as medicine to cure the illnesses of the family living in the home[37]. An unusual example of such a stele is that held by Djed-Hor who was a priest-doctor. Wanting to continue his healing work after his death he had made a black granite statue of himself holding a stele of Horus upon the crocodiles. Both the statue and the base are covered in healing formulae[38]. (Plate 33)

Sacred water was thus a common form of healing and appears to have been closely linked to the worship of Isis and Horus. The Sanatorium at

Denderah, however, probably also offered another type of cure: the therapeutic dream. The rooms around the central area are small but large enough for a couch. Niches contained statuettes of the goddess Isis/Hathor. The probable use of these rooms for therapeutic dreaming[39] fits in with our knowledge of how Isis cured people elsewhere for the dream was her most special form of cure:

> Φασὶ δ' Αἰγύπτιοι τὴν Ἶσιν φαρμάκων τε πολλῶν πρὸς ὑγίειαν εὑρέτιν γεγονέναι καὶ τῆς ἰατρικῆς ἐπιστήμης μεγάλην ἔχειν ἐμπειρίαν· διὸ καὶ τυχοῦσαν τῆς ἀθανασίας ἐπὶ ταῖς θεραπείαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα χαίρειν, καὶ κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους τοῖς ἀξιοῦσι διδόναι βοηθήματα, φανερῶς ἐπιδεικνυμένην τήν τε ἰδίαν ἐπιφάνειαν καὶ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς δεομένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐεργετικόν. ἀποδείξεις δὲ τούτων φασὶ φέρειν ἑαυτοὺς οὐ μυθολογίας ὁμοιως τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ἀλλὰ πράξεις ἐναργεῖς· πᾶσαν γὰρ σχεδὸν τὴν οἰκουμένην μαρτυρεῖν ἑαυτοῖς, εἰς τὰς ταύτης τιμὰς φιλοτιμουμένην διὰ τὴν ἐν ταῖς θεραπείαις ἐπιφάνειαν. κατὰ γὰρ τοὺς ὕπνους ἐφισταμένην διδόναι τοῖς κάμνουσι βοηθήματα πρὸς τὰς νόσους, καὶ τοὺς ὑπακούσαντας αὐτῇ παραδόξως ὑγιάζεσθαι· καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν ἰατρῶν διὰ τὴν δυσκολίαν τοῦ νοσήματος ἀπελπισθέντας ὑπὸ ταύτης σώζεσθαι, συχνοὺς δὲ παντελῶς πηρωθέντας τὰς ὁράσεις ἢ τινα τῶν ἄλλων μερῶν τοῦ σώματος, ὅταν πρὸς ταύτην τὴν θεὸν καταφύγωσιν, εἰς τὴν προϋπάρξασαν ἀποκαθίστασθαι τάξιν. εὑρεῖν δ'αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀθανασίας φάρμακον, δι' οὗ τὸν υἱὸν Ὧρον, ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων ἐπιβουλευθέντα καὶ νεκρὸν εὑρεθέντα καθ' ὕδατος, μὴ μόνον ἀναστῆσαι, δοῦσαν τὴν ψυχήν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀθανασίας ποιῆσαι μεταλαβεῖν. δοκεῖ δ' ὕστατος τῶν θεῶν οὗτος βασιλεῦσαι μετὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς Ὀσίριδος ἐξ ἀνθρώπων μετάστασιν. τὸν δὲ Ὧρον μεθερμηνευόμενόν φασιν Ἀπόλλωνα ὑπάρχειν, καὶ τήν τε ἰατρικὴν καὶ τὴν μαντικὴν ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς Ἴσιδος διδαχθέντα διὰ τῶν χρησμῶν καὶ τῶν θεραπειῶν εὐεργετεῖν τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος[40].

Though other gods and goddesses performed cures in Egypt and had healing sanctuaries even in the Ptolemaic period[41], Isis, Horus and Sarapis, as her husband tended to be called from the third century B.C. onwards, dominated the healing scene. The Sarapieion at Alexandria was

probably the single most famous healing centre in Egypt although the temple of Isis Medica at Menouthis came a close second. Christian zealots made a special point of destroying both in the fifth century A.D. since they were still retaining the devotion of numbers of people largely because of the healing role of both centres[42]. St. Cyril, the champion of the dogma of Panagia Theotokos, led the demand for the closure of the healing centre of Isis at Menouthis in the fifth century A.D.[43] Is it any coincidence that on or near the site of the Sarapieion in Athens there stood a church dedicated to Megali Panagia until the excavations of this area?[44]

3. The Egyptian healing deities in Athens, the Peiraieus and Delos

Isis had been famous as a healer in Egypt as early as the Old Kingdom. In the Pyramid Texts[45] she is described as a healer. Not long before the conquest of Egypt by Alexander she is called the 'Great Sorceress who heals' on the Metternich Stele[46]. Her reputation, and that of her husband and son, must have been great when Greeks had their first in-depth contact with Egypt in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. It is interesting, therefore, that it was not one of that triad but Ammon who first gained official acceptance in Athens at some date in or before 375/3 B.C.[47] This was no doubt due to the fact that his oracle at Siwah had long been famous. About the same time or at least prior to 333/2 B.C. the Egyptian community living in the Peiraieus was given permission to build a hieron of Isis. This is the implication of an inscription dated to that year giving permission to the merchants of Kition to erect a temple to Aphrodite in the Peiraieus:

> ...δοῦναι τοῖς ἐμπορόις τῶν Κιτιέων ἔνκτησιν χωρίου ἐν ὦι ἱδρύσονται τὸ ἱερὸν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης καθάπερ καὶ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τὸ τῆς Ἴσιδος ἱερὸν ἵδρυνται[48].

The mover of this decree was Λυκοῦργος Λυκόφρονος Βουτάδης whose famous grandfather Λυκοῦργος Λυκομήδους Βουτάδης was well known for and sometimes laughed at for his Egyptian leanings[49]. There is a probability or at the very least a possibility, that this man may have been involved in the popularisation of Isis in Athens at the end of the fifth century B.C. To what extent, if any, citizens were allowed to take part in the cult of Isis as established by the decree in the Peiraieus is unknown[50].

Virtually every other piece of evidence for the Egyptian gods in Athens and the Peiraieus is Hellenistic or later. This must not allow us to underestimate the reputation of Isis, Sarapis and Horus as healers before this time. They were obviously no strangers in the world of Demetrios of Phaleron who was cured of blindness by Sarapis in whose honour Demetrios then composed a hymn which thereafter became famous[51]. One major reason, however, for the Hellenistic flowering of the cult of the Egyptian gods in Athens is doubtless the close contact between that city and the island of Delos. Because of its very position on trade routes, Delos had for centuries been open to foreign cults but from 315 B.C. Egypt was probably

the most influential power in the eastern Mediterranean and a self-governing Delos was eager to attract trade. The trade helped the prosperity of the island economy and benefactions poured into the sanctuaries. In 166 B.C. the Roman Senate allowed Athens to regain control of Delos. The ἐπιμελητής the city put in charge of the island found three main sanctuaries dedicated to the Egyptian gods in the south and west sections of the area dedicated to foreign gods. Within a few years the Demos of Athens was making lavish gifts, including total rebuilding programmes, to these sanctuaries. From 166/5 B.C., or very soon after, an Athenian citizen was appointed Priest of Sarapis. This annual appointment was often taken up by distinguished men and no doubt this helped the position as Priest of Sarapis to gain in importance especially during the first century B.C.[52]

We are very fortunate in having a great deal of information about the dream-cures which took place in the Sarapieia on Delos. Sarapieion A seems to have been unusual in its organisation insofar as it had a special official who seems to have acted as some sort of intermediary between those seeking a cure and the gods from whom they hoped to obtain it. It is not unknown for someone to undergo incubation on behalf of a third party[53] but the intermediary in Sarapieion A is unusual. Most of our information about this official comes from one inscription:

> Ξενότιμος Ξενοτ[ίμου κ]αὶ Νικασὼ Ἱπποκράτου Δήλιοι ὑπὲρ τοῦ υἱοῦ Ξενοφῶντος ἰατρεῖα θεοῖς ἐπηκόοις Σαράπιδι, Ἴσιδι, Ἀνούβιδι χαριστήριον, ἐπὶ ἱερέως Δημητρίου (τ)οῦ καὶ Τελεσαρχίδου Δηλίου, ἐπιμελομένου δὲ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ τὰς θεραπείας αἰτοῦντος Ὥρου τοῦ Ὥρου Κασιώτου[54]

The official is Horos, son of Horos, from Kasion in Egypt[55]. The fact that he is an Egyptian is a very interesting indication of the close ties maintained in Delos with Egypt. Not only does this man have the responsibility of looking after the sanctuary but he also seeks cures for and on behalf of the sick. Some have seen his role as involving incubation replacing such participation by the sick themselves.[56] Not everyone, however, accepts this view[57]. It is dangerous to make comparisons with contemporary customs but such comparisons, if used wisely, can be illuminating. In the present discussion one interpretation of Horos' role could be that those seeking cures asked Horos to intercede for them;

perhaps they even wrote their requests for healing and he included them in his prayers to the gods. It is precisely this procedure that is employed at this time by the sick who flock to the healing shrine of St. Nektarios on the island of Aegina only a few miles from Athens. The sick and those who want some other favour write their request on paper available at the shrine. At intervals the requests are collected and handed to a priest who includes them one by one in a litany of prayers chanted in front of a reliquary containing the saint's head. This intercession by the priests does not preclude other activities undertaken by the sick such as drinking the healing water[58]. Something similar would certainly explain the αἰτοῦντος θεραπείας in our inscription.

The sick certainly succeeded in their attempts to persuade the Egyptian deities to heal them through the intercession of Horos. The ἰατρεῖα mentioned in the inscription are probably the religious equivalent of the doctor's fee[59] and they are being given as a χαριστήριον since the cure has been accomplished.

Sarapieion A is also interesting for another reason: it had a subterranean reservoir fed by a channel linked to the Inopos. This stream originated on Mr. Kynthos and was probably seasonal. It may have been this variation in its flow, the similarity of the local lizards to baby crocodiles or some quite different reason but the Delians certainly believed that the waters of this stream came originally from the Nile[60]. The fact that the other Sarapieia were also built close to the Inopos would add to the likelihood that this sacred 'Nile water' was employed for healing along with its other uses since we have plentiful evidence of healing practices there too, especially in Sarapieion C. The most unusual evidence to link the water with healing there is an inscription:

> [Σπόρ]ιος? Στερτίνιος Σπορίου Ῥωμαῖος Ὑδρε(ί)ῳ ἐπηκόῳ χαριστήριον, ἐφ' ἱ(ε)ρέως θεομνήστου Κυδαθηναίεως, ζακορεύοντος Νυσίου[61]

The deity is Ὑδρεῖος meaning Ὄσιρις Ὑδρεῖος and contains an obvious reference to a ὑδρεῖον. Whether this ὑδρεῖον is the cultic pitcher containing the sacred 'Nile water' which was regarded as the embodiment of Osiris or the related Osiris Hydreios jar-like statue is open to question[62].

The inscription calls Ὑδρεῖος ἐπήκοος which is a term with strong healing overtones[63]. There is thus a probability that the Nile water as the embodiment of Osiris is being thanked - χαριστήριον - for a cure[64].

There is, however, no doubt at all about the practice of incubation in Sarapieion C even though it may have been organised differently to the method employed in Sarapieion A. The priest in C held his appointment annually and was appointed from Athens from 166/5 B.C. or soon after. Being a non-specialist he needed skilled assistants. One of these was an ὀνειροκρίτις. We have no hint from the evidence in C that the oneirocritic did anything other than interpret the dreams of the faithful who had undergone incubation in search of a cure for themselves. The oneirocritic naturally regarded him or herself as acting on behalf of the healing deity: Ἐνύπνια κρίνω, τοῦ θεοῦ πρόσταγμα ἔχων[65]. We know of five oneirocritics by name who worked in Sarapieion C:

working c.160 B.C.: Ἀριστοκύδης Δημαρήτου[66]
working 129/8B.C.: Σαράπίας[67]
working 115/4B.C.: Πτολεμαῖος Διονυσίου Πολυρρήνιος[68]
working c.90B.C.: Μηνόδωρος Ἀγίου Νικομηδεύς[69]
working 1st Century B.C.: Μινδία[70]

It is very interesting in the last of those inscriptions to see a woman holding the post of oneirocritic. The same inscription tells us of women also holding the offices of canephor and lampterophor. In addition to these five oneirocritics known by name, we have two inscriptions where the names are missing[71].

Incubation by the sick and the interpretation of the resultant dreams by the oneirocritics must have been highly successful. Not only do inscriptions record the payment of ἰατρεῖα[72] but we are extremely fortunate in having some almost intact, as well as some fragmentary, inventories. These contain references to the numerous ex-votos donated by those cured. These include eyes[73] in large numbers and normally made of silver. Anyone who has been to a shrine of Ἁγία Παρασκευή in modern Greece knows exactly what these ex-votos look like since that saint specialises in healing eye-disorders and her shrines are full of little silver plaques bearing one or two eyes in high relief. Other offerings in the temples of the Egyptian gods on Delos included little figurines -

ἀνδριαντίδια - which also have their counterparts in contemporary healing shrines in Greece where little silver plaques with either a man or a woman in high relief act as general purpose χαριστήρια for acts of healing where plaques showing an arm, leg, genitals, breasts etc. would be inappropriate. Reading these inventory lists one knows exactly what these shrines of Sarapis, Isis and Anubis looked like, filled as they must have been with hundreds if not thousands of little ex-votos just as many a centre of pilgrimage for the sick still is to-day in Greece. Delos must almost certainly have been a centre of pilgrimage rather like Tenos is to-day. Instead of Isis there is now Παναγία Εὐαγγελιστρία. On the feast of the Annunciation on March 25th and the Assumption on August 15th thousands of sick people travel by boat to see her icon and spend the night in and around the church praying and hoping for a cure. That many have not been disappointed is attested by the thousands of gold and silver ex-votos which festoon the church. The deity who receives the act of faith in her power to heal is different - although perhaps not by much[74] - but the nature of the act of faith is the same. Isis, and the other Egyptian deities to a lesser extent, must have been close to the hearts of many and the presence of an Egyptian official in Sarapieion A and the presence of Anubis among the deities indicate a strong Egyptian influence.

In the Sarapieia on Delos, therefore, the Athenians encountered the healing role of the Egyptian gods in something like its native form. The syncretistic tendency of Athenian religious beliefs soon showed itself in the dedication of a statue of Isis Hygieia on Delos by an Athenian priest of Sarapis in 112/1 B.C.[75]. This was an interesting way of bringing together the Egyptian healing goddess and their own eponymous goddess under her healing title. This is a theme to which we shall return.

We have seen that a hieron of Isis was built by the Egyptian community in the Peiraieus before 333/2 B.C. Athens did not receive a temple dedicated to the Egyptian deities until some years later. This temple was termed a Sarapieion like those on Delos and again its cult was not just that of Sarapis but the other Egyptian deities as well. Pausanias tells us that on the way down from the Prytaneion to the lower city one passed the hieron of Sarapis ὃν Ἀθηναῖοι παρὰ Πτολεμαίου θεὸν ἐσηγάγοντο[76]. Unfortunately Pausanias does not tell us which Ptolemy! The Sarapieion

may have stood on or near the site of the former church dedicated to Megali Panagia inside the Library of Hadrian or it may have been further to the east on or near the site of the small metropolis known as Panagia Gorgoepikoös. Both modern names could point to an Isiac origin for the site. Unfortunately we have no literary or archaeological evidence to pinpoint the site any more accurately.

The cult of Isis, Sarapis and Harpocrates, as Horus came to be called, expanded rapidly during the third and second centuries B.C. Some time before 215/4 B.C. a society of worshippers, possibly θιασῶται, established themselves as Σαραπιασταί[77]. From the mass of evidence it is to our purpose to select only those things which shed light on the healing role of the Egyptian gods in Athens from this time onwards.[78]

A small but interesting sidelight is the use of theophoric names. The Olympian deity whose name was most frequently employed during the Hellenistic period was Zeus and during the Roman period Dionysus[79]. Of 'imported' gods during the Hellenistic period Asklepios, after a slow start, became by far the most popular. As far as the Egyptian gods are concerned, there was a Sarapion and an Isigenes in the fourth century B.C., a few names derived from Sarapis and Isis during the third and second centuries B.C. and then a massive explosion during the Roman period when Isis outshone all foreign deities. Only Apollo and Aphrodite just outdid her while Dionysus comfortably topped the list[80]. It clearly emerges, therefore, that Asklepios in the Hellenistic period and Isis in the Roman period were the most popular immigrant gods by a massive majority. Now it cannot be coincidence that these two outshone the others. There was a conventional way of choosing a child's name but this was breaking down during the second century B.C.[81] Gods and goddesses who healed, helped women to conceive and gynaecologically assisted were surely the obvious choice when it came to naming a child. Names such as Ἰσιγένης and Ἰσιδώρος[82] also indicate the likelihood of such a surmise.

Our evidence for the organisation of the healing side of the Egyptian cult in Athens is meagre. Almost certainly it was run along the same lines as in Delos. The proof of this lies in an inscription found near the beginning of the last century at 11a Philothea Street[83]:

Ἴσιδι, Σαράπιδι
Ἀνούβιδι Ἁρποκράτη [ι]
Μεγαλλὶς Μάγα
Μαραθωνίου θυγά
τηρ ὑπὲρ τῆς θυγα
τρὸς Δημαρίου κα[ὶ]
τῶν υἱῶν κατὰ
πρόσταγμα, ἐπὶ ἰε
ρέως Μενάνδρου
τοῦ Ἀρτέμωνος
Ἀλωπεκῆθεν, κλε[ι]
δουχοῦντος Ἄσω
ποκλέους Φλυέως,
ζακορεύοντος Ζω
σικράτου Λαοδικέ
ως, κρίνοντος τὰ ὁ
[ρ]άματα Διονυσίου
Ἀντιοχέως.

This very interesting and informative inscription was originally thought by some to have been moved to its find-site from Delos because of its similarity to inscriptions found there[84]. Now, however, it is accepted as Athenian because it was found only forty-five metres from the square in which the Metropolitan Church stands, because the mason who carved it worked in Athens and because in fact the inscription has marked differences from those from Delos[85].

The information about healing practices implied in this inscription lies in the two phrases κατὰ πρόσταγμα and κρίνοντος τὰ ὁράματα. It is extremely likely that the πρόσταγμα was given to the dedicant in a dream[86]. The dream-interpreter is not usually described participially and neither are the visions generally called ὁράματα on the Delian inscriptions where this post is mentioned. On Delos the one word ὀνειροκρίτις or ὀνειροκρίτης sums up the position of the interpreter of dreams, healing and otherwise[87]. Yet the phrase κρίνοντος τὰ ὁράματα is in some ways more revealing of the work of this dream-interpreter who was not an Athenian but a native of Antioch and who was employed at Athens presumably because of his training and/or experience in dream-interpretation.

The evidence of a dream - interpreter in this inscription is reinforced by a mention of a second such official in a much later inscription[88]. This lady had paid for a statue of Aphrodite and some architectural replacements or additions in a temple to the honour of a goddess whose name was presumably mentioned at the beginning of the dedication which is missing:

κιόνια καὶ τὸ αἴτωμα [κ] αὶ τὰς κυνκλίδας καὶ τὴν [Ἀ] φροδείτην τῇ θεῷ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέθηκεν, ἐπισκευάσασα καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν θεὸν καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτήν οὖσα καὶ λυχνάπτρια αὐτῆς καὶ ὀνειροκρίτις.

It may appear odd that a dream-interpreter and lamp-lighter of Isis should be dedicating a statue of Aphrodite but the mention later on of other officials such as stolistes, a zacoros and a hagiaphoros make it certain we are dealing with an Isiac inscription. Also, of course, in Hellenistic and Roman times especially, Isis was identified with Hathor and Hathor with Aphrodite[89]. Just to add to the confusion, in the same year - because the priest and the stolistes are the same people - a man called Eukarpos the son of Dionysios dedicated a statue of Asklepios[90]. It may possibly have been dedicated in the Asklepieion and yet the priest and stolist are known Isiac officials. The close connection between Isis and Sarapis on the one hand and Asklepios on the other is an aspect of this dedication that will be looked at shortly. For the moment it is the fact that Eukarpos dedicated this statue κατ' ἐπίταγμα which is of interest since this injunction too is most likely to have been given in a dream. The place might have been the temple of the officials, that is the Sarapieion although it could conceivably have taken place in a private house or even the Asklepieion.

The presence of dream-interpreters in the Athenian Sarapieion is, therefore, an established fact for dates as far apart as 116/5 B.C. and A.D. 126/7. We have no reason to suppose that the post did not exist before 116/5 B.C. or after A.D. 126/7 or that the post remained unfilled between those dates. By analogy with what we know happened on Delos and in Sarapieia and Isiac temples in Egypt, a large number of people undergoing the rite of incubation in the Athenian Sarapieion must have been seeking cures. What evidence have we of how the therapeutic dream was organised and interpreted?

4. The therapeutic dream and its interpretation.

Dreams were collected, sometimes grouped in some logical sequence and then written down for future reference. The oldest known written collection of dreams dates to between 2000 and 1790 B.C. and, of course, comes from Egypt[91]. Such dream books were eminently suitable for medical purposes, especially for diagnosis and prognosis, in view of what was thought to take place during sleep. It seems likely that the Ba[92] of a human being was originally thought to be as free during sleep as it was certainly believed to be after the death of its human embodiment[93].

> 'Sleep, like Death (in Greek mythological thinking, Hypnos, sleep, was brother to Thanatos, death) was, according to their conception, a reversible state during which the soul delved in the Nun, the dwelling of the Dead, as the sun dives at night in the primordial Ocean.'[94]

Whilst in this state the Ba could approach the gods and ask favours of them, notably cures but also frequently, knowledge of the future. During the time of sleep when his Ba was in the realm of the other world the sleeping man could receive the information ascertained by his Ba in the form of dreams. However, the time of sleep was also very dangerous. This danger lay partly in the sheer physical risk of being in the hands of others during a time of unconsciousness but largely the danger lay in the possibility of being deceived or exposed to the attacks of evil forces. It was to protect the unconscious man that the Egyptians employed a special head-rest carved with sympathetic deities and endowed with apotropaic properties. Aelius Aristides, a great devotee of Asklepios and Sarapis, writing about A.D. 170-171, tells of a time when he lay on the wrong side of his body during incubation and his dream messages were untrue, foretelling immediate death:

> ...ἔτυχον μὲν ἐξ τὸ εἴσω τετραμμένος τῆς κλίνης, ἔδοξα δὲ ὡς ὄναρ· αὐτὸ δὲ ἦν ἄρα ἡ λύσις· ἔδοξα δὲ καὶ δὴ ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ δραματος εἶναι, καὶ τοὺς ἐμβάτας ἀποτίθεσθαι, καὶ τὰς κρηπῖδας μεταλήψεσθαι τοῦ πατρός. κἀν τούτοις ὄντα στρέφει μὲ ὁ σωτὴρ Ἀσκληπιὸς τὴν εἰς τὸ ἔξω στροφὴν ἐξαίφνης[95].

It is possible that as early as the classical period this Egyptian

view of the journey of the soul being responsible for dreams was modified, probably under Greek influence[96], so that a physical connection between the nature of the dream and possibly its cause and certainly its significance was presumed to exist. Yet the earliest Greek dream book and one which was used for medical diagnosis certainly retains evidence of the earlier, Egyptian view:

> ὅταν δὲ τὸ σῶμα ἡσυχάσῃ, ἡ ψυχὴ κινεομένη καὶ ἐγρηγορέουσα διοικεῖ τὸν ἑωυτῆς οἶκον, καὶ τὰς τοῦ σώματος πρήξιας ἅπασας αὐτὴ διαπρήσσεται. τὸ μὲν γὰρ σῶμα καθεῦδον οὐκ αἰσθάνεται, ἡ δὲ ἐγρηγορέουσα γινώσκει πάντα, καὶ ὁρῇ τε τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ ἀκούει τὰ ἀκουστά, βαδίζει, φαύει, λυπεῖται, ἐνθυμεῖται, ἐνὶ λόγῳ, ὁκόσαι τοῦ σώματος ὑπηρεσίαι ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς, πάντα ταῦτα ἡ ψυχὴ ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ διαπρήσσεται. ὅστις οὖν ἐπίσταται κρίνειν ταῦτα ὀρθῶς μέγα μέρος ἐπίσταται σοφίης[97]

What is certain is that a physical - as well as psychological and spiritual - significance was attached to the dream. Dreams could signify good health. In the ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥΠΝΙΩΝ the general principle for such a significance was that what was dreamt should correspond, generally closely, to normal, waking reality:

> Ἔχει δὲ περὶ τούτων ὧδε: ὁκόσα τῶν ἐνυπνίων τὰς ἡμερινὰς πρήξιας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἢ διανοίας ἐς τὴν εὐφρόνην ἀποδίδωσι κατὰ τρόπον γινομένας ὥσπερ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐπρήχθη ἢ ἐβουλεύθη ἐπὶ δικαίῳ πρήγματι, ταῦτα τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀγαθά[98]

We know that dream-interpreters had categories of such dreams, as well as those signifying ill-health, and they listed them, in writing or pictorially, on boards πινάκια[99]. It would seem most likely that the dreams so listed were not recorded in any very complex fashion but in a simplified, outline form along with their significance. No doubt they were placed in a schematic arrangement so that adjoining πινάκια dealt with cognate material varying, for example, in intensity or detail. The ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥΠΝΙΩΝ shows signs of the author having drawn on one or more sets of πινάκια. The evidence for this lies in the presentation of the dreams as short, static, almost pictorial items rather than the literary presentation one might expect[100]:

"Ηλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ οὐρανον καὶ ἄστρα καθαρὰ καὶ εὐαγέα, κατὰ τρόπον ὁρεόμενα ἕκαστα, ἀγαθά· ὑγιείην γὰρ τῷ σώματι σημαίνει ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ... ὅ τι δ' ἂν τῶν οὐρανίων δόξῃ σοι ἐφέζεσθαι καθαρὸν μὲν καὶ ὑγρὸν ἐὸν ὑγιαίνειν σημαίνει... ὅ τι δ' ἂν παρὰ θεοῦ ὁκῇ λαμβάνειν καθαροῦ καθαρόν, ἀγαθὸν πρὸς ὑγείην ...κτλ.[101]

The general principle is clear. Many more examples are given of items where the prognosis is unequivocally one of good health. The list of dreams in which things are seen in a manner contrary to the way they are perceived in everyday life or dreams in which there is a struggle, an imbalance or a disturbance - this list is much longer since these dreams indicate present or future ill-health. The main function of the ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥΠΝΙΩΝ was to record such dreams, indicate their significance and then to prescribe the remedies.

Just as a theory was postulated to explain the relationship between a dream and its significance so too there had to be a theory underlying the connection between the disorder and the remedy. Obviously the gods could help directly - καὶ τὸ μὲν εὔχεσθαι ... ἀγαθόν[102] but the purpose of healing dreams was that the patient should receive information which could be converted, often by the dream-interpreter, into practical remedies - δεῖ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν συλλαμβάνοντα τοὺ θεοὺς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι[103]. The remedy might be made explicit by the deity in the dream[104] in which case the patient had no need of a dream-interpreter. More often, perhaps, the remedy was not clear. The patient could interpret the dream[105] but what criteria could he or she employ? Lack of knowledge must often have impelled such people to dream-interpreters many of whom were regarded as quacks[106]. However, there were dream-interpreters who specialised in looking after patients who underwent incubation for healing dreams. The dream-interpreters attached to the Sarapieion were such specialists. The question still remains, however, as to what criteria were employed in selecting specific remedies based on the patient's dream.

One of the most important ideas underlying much of the Hippocratic corpus is that man is composed of pairs of opposites : Hot/cold, dry/moist[107]. These have to be in balance for good health as do the blood, phlegm, yellow

bile and black bile[108]. If a dream indicates a struggle, imbalance or disturbance then some similar imbalance is taking place in the body - this is basically the conclusion drawn by the author of ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥΠΝΙΩΝ[109]. Non-specialist dream-interpreters, he says, do not understand this and cannot draw the right conclusions except by chance[110]. The quacks and non-specialists tended to advise apotropaic rituals as did those officials, such as ἐξηγηταί[111], whose job it was to decide upon issues and to maintain right relationships between gods and men as well as man and his fellows. The specialist, medical dream-interpreter, however, knew what dietary measures had to be taken, what exercise, massage and bathing had to be undertaken or refrained from if the proper balance within the body was to be restored:

> ὅταν δὲ πρὸς τὰς ἡμερινὰς πρήξιας ὑπεναντιῶται τὰ ἐνύπνια καὶ ἐγγίνηται περὶ αὐτῶν ἡ μάχη ἢ νίκη, σημαίνει τάραχον ἐν τῷ σώματι· καὶ ἢν μὲν ἰσχυρὴ ᾖ, ἰσχυρὸν τὸ κακόν ... ἢν μὲν οὖν ἰσχυρὸν ᾖ τὸ ἐναντιωθέν, ἔμετόν τε συμφέρει ποιήσασθαι καὶ τοῖσι σίτοισι κούφοισι προσάγειν ἐς ἡμέρας πέντε, καὶ τοῖσι περιπάτοισι ὀρθρίοισι πολλοῖσι καὶ ὀξέσιν ἐκ προσαγωγῆς χρῆσθαι, καὶ τοῖσι γυμνασίοισιν, ὅστις ἐπιγυμνάζεται, συμμέτροισι πρὸς τὴν προσαγωγὴν τῶν σίτων[112].

If the imbalance was less severe then the regimen was made correspondingly milder[113]. Certain dreams such as ones involving rain or hail in unusual circumstances were held to indicate an excess of the moist element in the patient. Exercise to increase perspiration or, in severe cases, use of a vapour bath, along with a diet of dry, astringent foods and possibly an emetic were advised to gain a cure[114]. If the dream involved excessive dryness, then plenty of bathing and a moist diet were advised.[115]

The repertoire available to the medical dream-interpreter was thus made up of ways of increasing or decreasing the moisture level in the patient by exercise, types of bathing, diet, emetics, diuretics, laxatives, massage and even blood-letting[116]. The purpose was to restore the balance within the patient and, linked to faith, a huge variety of combinations was available to be prescribed for this purpose.

It is possible that quite different methods were employed by the

dream-interpreters attached to the Sarapieion in Athens but what evidence we have would seem to point to those proposed in the ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΥΠΝΙΩΝ. Firstly, that book is very likely to have drawn on Egyptian tradition. Secondly, Aelius Aristides, who at times in his life rated Sarapis as highly as Asklepios and even on one occasion described Sarapis as the god who possessed the power of every one of the other gods[117], seems to regard Sarapis and Asklepios as interchangeable[118], therefore, allowing us to infer that Sarapis and Isis sent dreams which were similar and were interpreted similarly as compared to those sent by Asklepios which Aelius Asistides so carefully describes. Thirdly, in Athens and elsewhere we have independent evidence of the close connections between the cults of Asklepios and Sarapis.[119]

It may well be that cures other than by dream-interpretation took place in Athens - water cures, operations and other forms of treatment undertaken either by temple personnel by right of their profession or by the same people acting under the persona of the deity[120] but we have no evidence of any of them. By analogy with what happened in healing centres in Egypt and Asklepieia in Attica and elsewhere in Greece, however, we can be fairly sure that such a variety of cures was practised in the Athenian Sarapieion.

5. Isis, Sarapis and other healing deities.

Isis and Sarapis were so famous as healers in Athens that their names were associated closely with those of other great healing deities in the city. We have already briefly mentioned[121] that a statue of Isis Hygieia was dedicated by an Athenian priest of Sarapis on the island of Delos in 112/1 B.C. Isis was perhaps the most suitable of all deities to undergo the process of syncretism since she was all things to all men and her aretalogies frequently proclaimed this fact. She was known on Delos as 'the many-named' - κἀν Δήλῳ πολυώνυμον[122] - which would explain how easy it was there to add another, although particularly relevant, cult epithet. Like Sarapis she too could be regarded as the greatest of the gods - μεγίστη θεῶν[123] - and was seen as being able to subsume the roles of all the other deities. She was Aphrodite, Selene, Hestia, Hera, Maia, Leto, Dictynnis, Artemis, Atargatis and Hekate[124]. In several places she was also identified with Athena[125]. It is no surprise, therefore, to find in Athens that the amalgam of the city's eponymous goddess in her healing guise as Hygieia and the popular Egyptian healing goddess was probably quite common.

We know that the two were identified in official circles from the statue of Isis Hygieia on Delos but there is good evidence to suggest that the identification was also popular more generally. Terracotta lamps of any one design were produced in large numbers, fairly cheaply and over quite a long period of time thanks to the custom of keeping sub-archetypes made from the original moulds. From these sub-archetypes second generation moulds could be formed to prolong the production of a design. We know that Isis was a sufficiently popular goddess for lamp designs showing her to be kept in production over a long period of time by this method since part of sub-archetype, including the disk showing a bust of Isis wearing a chiton and a cross-banded scarf tied in front with the 'Isis knot', has been found during the Agora excavations[126]. Numerous fragments of Isis lamps have been found in Athens especially 'boat-lamps'[127]. One of the most interesting lamps shows Isis as an Egyptian goddess seen through Greek eyes. She is wearing a headdress of three feathers and her body is swathed in crisscross bands, like mummy wrappings, decorated with a faint, stamped pattern of small circles[128]. For the identification of Isis with Hygieia the evidence lies in two lamps dated to the third century A.D. The first[129] shows the goddess standing and holding in her right hand a snake which is coiling about her right arm. She is feeding it from a

bowl which she is holding in her left hand[130] (see Plate 34). She is wearing a chiton over the front of which is knotted her shawl. This knot was a symbol of her power to bind or release and give new life. The second lamp, the head of which survives, must have been similar to the first. It shows Isis wearing a diadem and a veil[131] (see Plate 34). The identification of Isis with Hygieia is also reflected in the close connection maintained by Sarapis and Isis with the Asklepieion in Athens. Just as Asklepios and Hygieia received dedications in Sarapieion C on Delos[132] so too the Egyptian gods appear to have received dedications in the Asklepieion in Athens in the same way as they received dedications at Epidauros[133]. They were linked in Asklepieia elsewhere[134]. In Athens the links between the Egyptian deities and the Asklepieion are clear but the precise nature of those links is generally obscure. The earliest evidence now surviving of these links is a large block of Hymettian marble which was one of several finds ἐκ τῶν περὶ τὸ Ἀσκληπιεῖον τόπων[135]. The face is cut so as to appear as three conjoined statue bases[136]. The left third is inscribed Ἑρμοῦ, Ἀφροδείτης, Πανός: the centre Νυμφῶν; while the right third is inscribed Ἴσιδος[137]. Hermes, Aphrodite, Pan and the Nymphs are all known from reliefs and dedications discovered on the south slope of the Acropolis[138] but since the block is so large it is generally agreed that it probably belongs to the place nearest to which it was found, the Asklepieion[139]. The precise use to which this block was put is unclear. Also unclear are the reason why it was situated in the Asklepieion and the relationship between the deities mentioned on it. Some light on this last problem may be obtained from a dedication already mentioned - that of the lady who dedicated a statue of Aphrodite[140]. The lady concerned was a dream-interpreter and lamp-lighter of Isis and she probably dedicated this statue in the Asklepieion[141]. Alternatively it is possible that τῇ θεῷ in the inscription refers not merely to the goddess in whose honour this statue was dedicated but the goddess in whose temple the dedication was made. In this case there was actually a temple of Isis on the southern slope of the Acropolis[142] and almost certainly adjacent to the Asklepieion. Whichever of these two points of view is correct, we are left in no doubt that there was a close connection between Isis and Aphrodite[143] on the one hand and Isis and the Athenian Asklepieion on the other.

The close relationship between Isis and Asklepios is shown by another

inscription which has already been mentioned and which comes from the same year as the Aphrodite dedication[144]. This inscription records the dedication of a statue of Asklepios by a man called Eukarpos. The context of this inscription is wholly Isiac since the priest and stolist are known officials of that cult. Where this dedication was made is not known for certain. It was found rather too far north to be sure that it came from the Asklepieion[145] or the hypothetical Iseion on the southern slope of the Acropolis. Did it originate in the Sarapieion near the Roman Agora? Either way, the link between Asklepios and the Egyptian deities is again obvious.

The last piece of evidence linking the two is to be seen in a small altar found at the Asklepieion. It has the inscription Γάϊς τῷ κυρίῳ Σεράπιδι εὐξάμενο[ς] ἀνέθηκε[146]. This time the provenance seems secure and helps to confirm not only the general nature of the connection between the Egyptian deities and Asklepios but also a precise connection between them and the Asklepieion at Athens.

The link between the Egyptian triad of Sarapis, Isis and Horus and the Greek Asklepios, Hygieia and Apollo seems at times to have become a virtual identification if a passage in Pausanias' description of Epidauros is being interpreted correctly. Pausanias describes how in his own day a Roman senator named Antoninus had had built there a bath of Asklepios and a sanctuary of the bountiful gods. He then describes another building erected at the senator's expense: ἐποίησε δὲ καὶ Ὑγείᾳ ναὸν καὶ Ἀσκληπιῷ καὶ Ἀπόλλωνι ἐπίκλησιν Αἰγυπτίους[147]. Certainly the most likely interpretation is that these are Isis, Sarapis and Horus[148]. That temple may well be the one near whose remains two of the three inscriptions of the priest Epaphroditos were found[149]. One of these two is dedicated to Isis: Ἴσιδι Ἐπαφρόδιτος ἱερεύς[150] while the other is to Sarapis: Σαράπιδι Ἐπαφρόδιτος ἱερεύς[151]. It is very interesting that the other Egyptian god for whom we have epigraphic evidence from the same spot is Ammon[152] for we have seen that he too, in the Egyptian tradition, could be a healing god.[153]

6. Conclusion

By analogy with Delos an attempt has been made to build on the small amount of evidence about the role of the Egyptian deities as healers in Athens. The situation at Epidauros and elsewhere adds confirmation to the picture at Athens. Isis and Sarapis were the main deities who had a healing role but there are small hints that Ammon had links with them in that regard. Anubis and Harpocrates also shared that role. Isis had a big part to play in gynaecological matters[154] but this did not exclude other areas of healing. Along with Sarapis and Anubis she appears also to have specialised in the cure of eye diseases. The inventories from Delos mention ex-votos of eyes twenty-three times and they were obviously so numerous that one inventory describes the arrangements for displaying them along with the figures and bowls that were such common but non-specific ex-votos[155].

Isis and Sarapis in particular exerted a great deal of influence in Athens and elsewhere. Their care for the sick has continued to this day to be reflected in the iconography and healing practices of Christianity in Greece.

Chapter VI. Plagues, healing heroes, nymphs and river gods in Athens and the Peiraieus.

Plagues, healing heroes, nymphs and river gods in Athens and the Peiraieus

1. Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to look at the variety of heroes who had a healing role in and around Athens. The chapter starts by looking at heroes in their social context and then continues to see how heroes often functioned in combating the social ills of λυμός and λοιμός It is seen that a remarkably high number of such heroes were athletes - boxers, wrestlers and pankratiasts - before their death, heroisation and assumption of a curing role. The role of sages in removing λυμός and λοιμός is also looked at. Plagues, heroes and sages are then dealt with in detail as far as Athens is concerned with some attention to connections with related healing heroes elsewhere in Attica.

Plagues can be caused by the presence of evil-doers in the land. The site of a possible purifying and healing shrine in the Peiraieus is investigated. Finally, the greatest of all the heroes is looked at - Herakles. It is suggested that a recently discovered healing shrine of his in Athens was not at all in the mould that at present people presume. A reinterpretation is proposed according to which Herakles gained his healing powers from winning a shamanistic struggle. In this way he became the greatest of the heroes and not only fought the community ills of λυμός and λοιμός but also cured the individual of his personal illnesses using water as a major aid in the healing process.

2. Healing Heroes

Herodotus, writing of the sixth century B.C., gives us two examples of how the discovery and re-interment of the physical remains of a putative hero were used for political or military advantage. The first[1] concerns the war between Sparta and Tegea and describes the one-upmanship of the Spartan Lichas who purloins the bones of their hero Orestes from under the noses of the Tegeans and re-inters them in Sparta. The second[2] tells of how Kleisthenes of Sikyon as part of his anti-Argive policy persuaded the Thebans to exhume the remains of their hero Melanippos so that he could re-inter them on the site where the Argive Adrastos, who had led the Seven against Thebes, was venerated. The purpose of this re-interment was to replace an Argive hero's cult with that of one of his chief opponents.

Archaeological evidence tells us that Bronze Age and earlier tombs began to be the focal points of cults probably as early as the latter half of the eighth century B.C. The graves thought to represent the resting place of the Seven against Thebes by the people of Eleusis were surrounded by an enclosure wall and received the veneration of the inhabitants.[3] These tombs turned out in fact not to be Mycenaean but Middle Helladic, but it is what people believed them to be that is of the greatest importance. The belief continued for at least eight hundred years for Pausanias saw these tombs and related how Theseus had buried the dead heroes at Eleusis[4].

In rural areas the discovery of an ancestral hero and the institution of his cult may well have been triggered by the need to find proof to back up a claim of land ownership at a time when the possession of land was becoming more widespread and a necessary precondition for citizenship[5]. In urban or at least more urbanised areas the reason was slightly different. Here the hero cults did not need to prove land ownership but in the case of cults involving an urban version of what was originally a rural hero-shrine we perhaps have a reflection of the desire to bind the χώρα to the ἄστυ. However, there could be other reasons for a hero-cult being established in an urban area. The great Athenian hero Theseus had reputedly retired to the island of Skyros where he was

murdered by King Lykomedes [6]. Kimon the Athenian politician and general gained considerable kudos about 474 B.C. for his conquest of Skyros and the return of Theseus' bones, as they were believed to be, to his home city. Moreover, this was no mere patriotic gesture for we are told that there was also a healing aspect:

> ὕστερον δε λιμοῦ καὶ λοιμοῦ κατασχόντος Ἀθηνας, χρησμῷ τὰ ὀστᾶ τούτου μόλις εὑρόντες ἐπὶ Κίμωνος τοῦ στρατηγοῦ Ἀθήναζε μετατίθενται[7].

Theseus was not only the greatest of the Athenian Bronze Age kings but he had been as short a time before as 480 B.C. the symbol of temporary defeat and triumphant return when the Athenians evacuated their women and children to Troezen [8]. Now in addition he had become a healer as many great heroes did. Theseus is partly an heroic warrior figure and partly the protagonist of civilisation fighting evil and injustice. Like all heroes his death was seen not as the end of his career but as the point in time when his powers were intensified and made available to help all of his people in whatever needs they chose to appeal to him about. His shrine in Athens, which has never been satisfactorily located, was a place of asylum and a place of several different sorts of meeting - lawsuits, the Boule, armed gatherings, etc [9].

Certain heroes, some of them extremely unlikely candidates for the role, became healing specialists after their death. One of those unlikely ones is the Thasian Theagenes who showed prodigious strength as a child, became famous for carrying off a statue he happened to like, narrowly avoided a sentence of death for this act of impiety, became famous as a boxer and pankratist and eventually also won fame as a runner. After his death some person consumed with jealousy came nightly and flogged the dead athlete's statue. One night the statue toppled killing the aggressor. The Thasians acting along the lines of Drakon's laws concerning inanimate objects responsible for homicide, drowned the statue in the sea. A famine ensued and an oracle from Delphi told them to reinstate Theagenes whereupon some fishermen by chance recovered the statue in their nets. The Thasians re-dedicated the statue and instituted the custom of offering sacrifices to it as to a god [10]. Pausanias records that many Greek and non-Greek

towns erected statues of Theagenes and wherever he was venerated he cured diseases:

> πολλαχοῦ δὲ καὶ ἑτέρωθι ἔν τε Ἕλλησιν οἶδα καὶ παρὰ βαρβάροις ἀγάλματα ἱδρυμένα Θεαγένους καὶ νοσήματά τε αὐτὸν ἰώμενον.

An interesting variant about Theagenes' parentage is also recorded by Pausanias who says that the Thasians maintained that his real father was not Timosthenes, the husband of Theagenes' mother. Instead, they recalled that Timosthenes was a priest of Thasian Herakles and expressed the belief that Herakles assumed the form of Timosthenes and thus fathered Theagenes on an unsuspecting mother. [11]

The story of Theagenes became famous. He is referred to by Eusebius of Caesarea when he is discussing another famous athlete, Kleomedes, who was worshipped as a hero on Astypalaia [12]. Lucian too knows the tale but seems to think that Theagenes' healing role is restricted to Thasos [13]. On one occasion fairly early in Theagenes' career he fought and beat a man called Euthymos in boxing [14]. This Euthymos also became a hero renowned for his powers. Although he was not particularly famous for healing but for his more general powers, a mention of his origins and most famous contest is not irrelevant because some distinct similarities with another even more important hero will emerge later.

The story of Euthymos is alluded to in a fragment of Callimachus [15] and is known by Aelian [16] although the latter's version is a little different to the most detailed account which is that of Pausanias. Euthymos was born in a Lokrian colony in the extreme South of Italy. His father was supposed to have been a man called Astycles. However, the locals knew better:

> εἶναι δὲ αὐτὸν οὐ τούτου, ποταμοῦ δὲ οἱ ἐπιχώριοι τοῦ Καικίνου φασίν, ὃς τὴν Λοκρίδα καὶ Ῥηγίνην ὁρίζων τὸ ἐς τοὺς τέττιγας παρέχεται θαῦμα[17].

After gaining fame as a boxer in the seventy-fourth, seventy-sixth and seventy-seventh Olympics, Euthymos returned to Italy and encountered

at Temesa the strange ritual by which every year a virgin of the town was deflowered by one of Odysseus' sailors who had been stoned to death for his drunken rape of a village maiden. This man's ghost had then gone about killing the inhabitants until Delphi ordered them to propitiate his spirit by worshipping him as a Hero and by the annual donation of a village maiden. Euthymos came just as another young lady was to be given to him. Euthymos waited in the Hero's shrine to fight him for the maiden:

ὁ Εὔθυμος ἐνεσκευασμένος ἔμενε τὴν ἔφοδον τοῦ δαίμονος, ἐνίκα τε δὴ τῇ μάχῃ.[18]

Pausanias then tells us that Euthymos himself married the young lady, lived to a ripe old age and escaped death:

ἤκουσα δὲ καὶ τοιόνδε ... ὡς ἀποθανεῖν ἐκφυγὼν αὖθις ἕτερόν τινα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀπέλθοι τρόπον[19].

This coy ending to the story of Euthymos is made clearer if Aelian's version is accepted for according to him Euthymos vanished into the river which Pausanias tells us was his father[20].

Another Lokrian who was an Olympic victor was Euthykles. This famous athlete was chosen by the south Italian Lokrians as an envoy but on his return from the mission was falsely charged with accepting bribes. The Lokrians voted to mutilate his statue and a plague ensued. Apollo informed them that the plague was due to their unjust treatment of Euthykles and his statue. Again the Lokrians honoured Euthykles and the plague ended. It would appear that a cult of Euthykles was established.[21]

A final example of an athlete becoming a hero is Poulydamas. This hero too is known to Lucian[22] but again the fullest account is to be found in Pausanias[23]. Poulydamas came from Skotoussa. He won the Pankration at Olympia in 408, perhaps there on other occasions and certainly at other games. Led by envy of Herakles he also killed a huge lion on Mt. Olympos. Other feats included the raising into the air of a huge bull with Poulydamas maintaining it there by holding only one hoof, the holding stationary of a chariot while the horses tried desperately to pull it away and the fighting and killing of three of Darius the Second's

Immortals in a combat of one against three. He died trying to stave off the collapse of a cave's roof [24]. His statue at Olympia healed fevers:

ἤδη καὶ ὁ Πολυδάμαντος τοῦ ἀθλητοῦ ἀνδριὰς ἰᾶται τούς πυρέττοντας ἐν Ὀλυμπιᾷ[25].

It is fairly clear, therefore that in addition to the heroes of the Late Bronze Age, heroes like Theseus, there was a special category of hero who came to be venerated as such in much later times and as the result of his prowess in athletics. It is noteworthy that the most usual branches of athletics to lead to heroisation seem to have been the pankration, boxing and wrestling. Theagenes and Euthykles both won in the pankration, Euthymos in boxing and Poulydamas in the penthathlon, whose last and deciding event was wrestling. The application of their fighting skills to the problems of communities is made explicit in the case of Euthymos who used his skills to rid the community at Temesa of their carnal demon Polites. With some of these heroes, such as Theagenes, the cult started with an appeasement process. With all of them, there is the common Greek idea of a hero helping his community and by doing so atoning for the wrongs committed during his lifetime [26] for few, if any, heroes led blameless lives. Oedipus and Theseus come to mind immediately. Theagenes was fined for taking a victory from Kleomedes out of malice and Poulydamas died thinking he was strong enough to hold up mountains.

Even where no obvious character defects are known about and no evil deeds ascribed to a particular hero, to become a winner in an athletic event, especially the pankration, boxing or wrestling, obviously entailed defeating others. To the Greek mind such victories and especially victories in war, although glorious, brought dangers because of the damage done to the losers [27].

The healing power of heroes centred upon their mortal remains and could be relocated by reinterment. A healing power attached to the hero's statue is less intelligible but healing and oracular statues were not uncommon. We know of a statue of a man called Neryllinus which gave oracles and healed the sick at Troy in the second century A.D., a healing statue of Alexander of Abonuteichus at Parium and an oracular statue of Proteus at the same place. Such strange phenomena were the staple diet of

Lucian's diatribes against superstition and he wrote about both Alexander [28] and Proteus [29]. Neryllinus is even more obscure. We only know of him from Athenagoras [30] who questioned the method by which statues healed and poured scorn on them [31]. Yet the Greeks had a strong tradition of matter being a medium of healing or retribution and statues are obviously suitable media being representations of the healing or avenging hero or deity. Aristotle knew of the statue of Mitys at Argos which fell upon his murderer while he was looking at it and killed him [32] while another story was told of a lad who disdainfully rejected a would-be lover's advances. The older man committed suicide at the lad's doorway but his corpse too was ignored. Going to the baths, a statue of Eros fell onto and killed the boy [33].

Statues, therefore, were traditional means by which both gods and heroes could effect their wishes. Another traditional idea was that heroes primarily helped communities and only secondarily individuals. This community service could take several forms. An obvious example is the support given to poleis by their hero or heroes in times of war. Aegina took their two heroes with them into battle [34] and the Spartans even lent their two heroes, the Dioskouroi, to the Lokrians in their battle against the Crotonians. [35] In such situations the heroes could be recognised by their gigantic size. [36] The other obvious form of community service was in the aversion of problems affecting the whole community - λοιμός and λυμός. As we have seen, Theseus in Athens and Euthykles in Locri Epizephyrii were both renowned for averting a plague. Athens suffered from plagues on several occasions although the great plague during the Peloponnesian War overshadowed the previous ones and virtually subsumed them. We shall see more of the plagues in Athens later for they are central to the role of several Athenian healing heroes.

The Olympian gods could cause and avert plagues [37] but the heroes had a special role in the aversion of such community disasters. It was believed that when all was going well one thanked the gods but a different procedure was necessary when things started to go wrong:

> ...ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖσιν ἐναντίοισι τοῖσιν ἀποτροπαίοισι, καὶ Γῇ καὶ ἥρωσιν, ἀποτρόπαια γενέσθαι τὰ χαλεπὰ πάντα [38].

The techniques of aversion and catharsis could also be practised by others even during their lifetime if they were reputed to be sages or mystics. Such people, as Christ said of prophets [39], often had more of a reputation outside their own country than within it. The most obvious example of such a sage is Epimenides. The man was real enough and we even have fragments of his work [40]. His dates, however, are impossible to fix with absolute certainty but he must have been working in Athens during the sixth century B.C. and probably at the beginning of that century rather than later. He was a well-known figure even in the classical period [41]. His visit to Athens seems to have been connected with a need to purify the city from some sort of miasma or plague. This ritual purification may well have been necessitated by the murder of Kylon's associates after his attempted coup. This is the version of the story based on Aristotle's account. Aristotle says that Epimenides solved the problem by purifying the city - ἐκάθηρε τὴν πόλιν[42].
This is the version confirmed by Plutarch [43]. The fullest account, albeit a late one, mentions that one of the results of the miasma was a plague and that Delphi required the purification of the city for the removal of the plague [44]. His method of purification is of great interest:

> καὶ ὃς ἐλθὼν Ὀλυμπιάδι τεσσερακοστῇ ἕκτῃ ἐκάθηρεν αὐτῶν τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἔπαυσε τὸν λοιμὸν τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον. λαβὼν πρόβατα μέλανά τε καὶ λευκὰ ἤγαγε πρὸς τὸν Ἄρειον πάγον· κἀκεῖθεν εἴασεν ἰέναι οἷ βούλοιντο, προστάξας τοῖς ἀκολούθοις ἔνθα ἂν κατακλίνοι αὐτῶν ἕκαστον, θύειν τῷ προσήκοντι θεῷ· καὶ οὕτω λῆξαι τὸ κακόν[45].

Epimenides was famous throughout Greece. It is interesting that after his death his bones, like those of the heroes Orestes and Melanippos [46], were fought over, exhumed and transferred [47].

Every area of Greece had its own healing heroes. As we have seen, these could be the heroes of Epic fame [48], heroised local athletes skilled in the pankration, boxing or wrestling or sages during their lifetime. If they were heroised after their death this last category could continue

their role as we shall see. In many parts of Greece the healing heroes were members of Asklepios' family. Sometimes these were Asklepios' sons Μαχάων and Ποδαλείριος whom we first know of from the Iliad [49]. These two had cult centres in several parts of Greece [50]. Machaon had five sons: Gorgasus, Nicomachus, Alexanor, Sphyrus and Polemocrates all of whom seem to have acted as healers [51].

When we come to Attica we find several healing heroes. In the west, at Eleusis, there was a local hero called Oresinios. There appears to be nothing known of him except that the local people venerated him because of his healing powers:

> Ἥρως ἰατρός: ἰατρὸς ὄνομα Ὀρεσίνιος ἐν Ἐλευσῖνι τιμὰς ἔχει[52].

There was also another healing hero at Eleusis. This was Amphilochos who was a son of Amphiaraos [53]. This makes it likely that the cult of Amphilochos at Eleusis is an offshoot of his father's famous healing centre at Oropos. This was annexed to Attica on its north-eastern boundary with Boeotia for most of the fifth century B.C. and was under Athenian control spasmodically afterwards. The healing shrine at Oropos with its idyllic setting and evocative atmosphere is, unfortunately, well outside our sphere [54]. Suffice it to say that this healing centre was in many ways a miniature Epidauros. It had a temple to the hero, a larger than lifesize statue of him - whose remains are still to be seen, an altar for sacrifices, a source of pure, running water, a stoa which served as a place of ἐγκοίμησις - several of whose benches are still intact, a καταγώγιον and several smaller structures. The altar holds the clues to the complex nature of the cult at Oropos for underneath the large altar whose remains are now visible are signs of two earlier and smaller altars and Pausanias tells us in an invaluable passage that the altar indicated a multiple cult:

> παρέχεται δὲ ὁ βωμὸς μέρη· τὸ μὲν Ἡρακλέους καὶ Διὸς καὶ Ἀπόλλωνός ἐστι Παιῶνος, τὸ δὲ ἥρωσι καὶ ἡρώων ἀνεῖται γυναιξί, τρίτον δὲ Ἑστίας καὶ Ἑρμοῦ καὶ Ἀμφιαράου καὶ τῶν παίδων Ἀμφιλόχου· Ἀλκμαίων δὲ διὰ τὸ ἐς Ἐριφύλην ἔργον οὔτε ἐν Ἀμφιαράου τινά, οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ παρὰ τῷ Ἀμφιλόχῳ τιμὴν ἔχει. τετάρτη δέ ἐστι τοῦ βωμοῦ μοῖρα Ἀφροδίτης καὶ Πανακείας, ἔτι δὲ Ἰασοῦς καὶ Ὑγείας καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς Παιωνίας· πέμπτε δὲ πεποίηται νύμφαις καὶ Πανὶ καὶ ποταμοῖς Ἀχελῴῳ καὶ Κηφισῷ[55].

That these deities, heroes and water divinities were not merely decorative is made clear when Pausanias says a little later:

ἔστι δὲ καθάρσιον τῷ θεῷ θύειν, θύουσι δὲ καὶ αὐτῷ καὶ πᾶσιν ὅσοις ἐστὶν τῷ βωμῷ τὰ ὀνόματα [56].

We have a variety of Olympian deities most of whom had a clear if subordinate healing role. The others mentioned form the basis for this chapter's enquiry. Alkmaion or Alkmeon killed his mother Eriphyle for sending her husband - his father Amphiaraos - to his death in the expedition of the Seven against Thebes. Chased by the Erinyes he was purified by King Phegeus of Psophis but his continued presence in that land gave rise to a famine. He was given refuge by the river-god Achelous - Ἀχελῷος- on land he had recently formed at his river's mouth and so on ground the sun did not shine on at the time of Eriphyle's murder. The famine ceased as a result of Achelous' kind deed. Alkmaion married Achelous' daughter Callirhoe by whom he had two sons Acarnan and Amphoterus [57].

This altar at Oropos links the genealogies of the two great healing families - that of Amphiaraos and that of Asklepios for Πανάκεια, Ἰασώ and Ὑγίεια were also part of the latter's family circle [58]. The altar thus weaves together numerous threads and presents us with an intriguing picture of the various healing deities all of whom are to be found at work at Athens itself [59].

Pausanias tells us that Amphilochos, whom we have seen as a healing hero in Eleusis and primarily at Oropos, was also worshipped in Athens: τῷ δὲ Ἀμφιλόχῳ καὶ παρ' Ἀθηναίοις ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ πόλει βωμός [60]. At Eleusis he was regarded as a Ἥρως Ἰατρός [61] so he was titled in the same way as Oresinios at Eleusis [62]. However, this title of Ἥρως Ἰατρός seems to have been applicable to anyone of several names we know and perhaps to some names we no longer know of. Thus a recently restored dedication from Rhamnous tells us that Amphiaraos was also given the same title:

Εὔνομος [Ε] Ὑθυ [δί]
κου Τρικορύσιος
ἥρωι ἰατρῶ [ι]
Ἀμφιεράωι [63]

This inscription, which is dated to about 300 B.C. adds to our list of those with the title Ἥρως Ἰατρός. We find a prominent shrine with an incumbent of this title in Athens. Oresinios is not a likely candidate but Amphilochos and Amphiaraos are. Just to add to the list, however, we are told by one source that the Ἥρως Ἰατρός in Athens is neither of them:

> ἥρωος]οὕτως ἐκαλεῖτο ἥρως ἰατρός τις παρὰ τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις. ἐκλήθη δὲ ἥρως διὰ τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ σώματος. τὸ δὲ κύριον ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἀριστόμαχος[64].

So who was Aristomachos? He is known from another source as being a hero of Marathon, on the west coast of Attica about twelve kilometres south of Rhamnous. The size of his body indicates a fighter of some sort. Surely he fits into the category of fighting heroes of whom we have already seen several. His name almost certainly confirms this[65]:

> Ἥρως ἰατρός: ὁ Ἀριστόμαχος, ὃς ἐτάφη ἐν Μαραθῶνι παρὰ τὸ Διονύσιον καὶ τιμᾶται ὑπὸ τῶν ἐγχωρίων[66].

He is also virtually identified with Amphiaraos on a statue base from Rhamnous[67]. Aristomachos was almost certainly, therefore, a west Attic hero. He seems to have been one of those heroes one saw fighting on one's behalf and recognised by the huge size of his body[68]. If Aristomachos was closely linked with Amphiaraos, then it may well be that they shared a similar modus operandi. Amphiaraos effected cures by dreams in which the hero advised the sick person: νόσου δὲ ἀκεσθείσης ἀνδρὶ μαντεύματος γενομένου καθέστηκεν ἄργυρον ἀφεῖναι...[69] and δῆλος δέ, ἡνίκα ἐνομίσθη θεός, δι' ὀνειράτων μαντικὴν καταστησάμενος[70].

However, there is a beautiful anaglyph which suggests that Amphiaraos may himself in some way have done more. This anaglyph shows Amphiaraos performing an operation, presumably on the votive offering's dedicant - Archinos. The healing hero, dressed in a long himation, leans on a staff supporting him under the left armpit. His left hand is holding the right arm of Archinos while he uses his right hand to operate on the arm with a curved knife. Archinos remains standing throughout the operation. The relief then appears to show the patient recuperating while lying, turned to his left, on a couch. A snake is licking the shoulder area where the

operation has taken place. Finally, on the extreme right, a fully recovered Archinos is shown standing and offering his thanks to the hero by the dedication of the votive offering [71]. On the top of the anaglyph is a pair of eyes shown very much in the form of the Egyptian wd;t or healing eye of Horus. In Egyptian art they are frequently apotropaic. In addition

> "they are often to be found at the top of offering stelae in very much the same situation as the relief under consideration. When thus used the intention seems to have been to allow the recipient of the offerings to see what was being brought for him [72].

It has been suggested that Archinos had visited Egypt and seen the wd;t. When he came to dedicate his votive offering to Amphiaraos he remembered what he had seen and "without appreciating its significance caused (it) to be carved on his relief in a form that differed somewhat from the Egyptian prototype" but, although possible, this is not entirely convincing [73]. The Egyptian deities were probably not well known in Attica at the date of this relief. However, a hieron of Isis was built by the Egyptian community in the Peiraieus some time before 333/2 B.C. and there is evidence of the flourishing interest in the Egyptian deities from the first century B.C. in the deme of Teithras a little to the south of Marathon [74]. It is possible, therefore, that Egyptian ideas had arrived at Oropus as early as 362/1 B.C. There is an additional rather than alternative reason for seeing the wd;t on top of the relief of Archinos if Amphiaraos had been well known for treating eye problems as Horus and some of the other Egyptian deities [75] were. If any evidence can be found to support the idea that Amphiaraos - or Aristomachus, since the latter seems to have been virtually identified with the former at the Rhamnous Amphiaraion - specialised in eye cures, if not to the exclusion of other types of cure, then there would certainly be extra significance to the wd;t.

3. The Ἥρως Ἰατρός in Athens

It seems quite clear that the Ἥρως Ἰατρός in Athens is closely linked with the Amphiaraos circle, being either Amphiaraos himself or or his son Amphilochos or identified with Amphiaraos if we accept the evidence that the Ἥρως Ἰατρός was Aristomachos. His shrine in Athens certainly was well known since it was mentioned by Demosthenes as though it was a landmark. In one of his speeches he mentions it as being adjacent to a place of some very dubious activities!:

> ...ἡ μήτηρ τοῖς μεθημερινοῖς γάμοις ἐν τῷ κλεισίῳ
> τῷ πρὸς τῷ καλαμίτῃ Ἥρῳ[76].

Now there is no absolute proof that he is referring to our Ἥρως Ἰατρός in this passage but it seems overwhelmingly likely. The epithet κάλαμίτης seems to mean that he was renowned for, or his statue depicted him as, using a κάλαμος. In this context a κάλαμος was a surgeon's probe[77] and it appears to have been not uncommon to depict healing heroes holding some instrument of their profession. The same seems to have been true for Sphyros/Sphyromachos[78] and we have already seen Amphiaraos depicted as operating with a curved knife. Fourteen years earlier Demosthenes had again referred to the Ἥρως Ἰατρός but this time without his nickname. When talking again of Aischines he has occasion to mention the man's father:

> ...διδάσκων δ' ὁ πατὴρ γράμματα, ὡς ἐγὼ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων
> ἀκούω, πρὸς τῷ τοῦ Ἥρω τοῦ ἰατροῦ ...[79].

Now in the later speech he also mentioned Aischines' father as being a humble teacher:

> ...ὁ πατήρ σου Τρόμης ἐδούλευε παρ' Ἐλπίᾳ τῳ πρὸς τῷ
> Θησείῳ διδάσκοντι γράμματα[80].

Presuming that the school was the same in both cases - a presumption that we cannot unquestioningly accept[81] - then the shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός was near that of Theseus. Thinking that we are now on the verge of discovering where the shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός was, it comes as a great disappointment to discover that the shrine of Theseus is equally elusive[82]. It appears to have been to the north of the acropolis and east of the agora in an area basically still unexcavated.

The only other piece of literary evidence which is of help is a statement of Apollonios:

> ...φασι ... γεγονέναι δὲ τὸ κατ' ἀρχὰς δοῦλον καὶ πέδας ἔχοντα διδάσκειν γράμματα πρὸς τῷ Θησείῳ καὶ τῷ τοῦ Ἰατροῦ ἡρῴῳ[83].

Clearly Apollonios had evidence that the two shrines were associated but upon investigation it looks as though his source is none other than Demosthenes and it seems certain that Apollonios has simply made the assumption which we said earlier cannot be unquestioningly accepted.

Turning to the archaeological evidence we find two sizeable inscriptions dealing with the shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός and a small votive offering. Before looking at the inscriptions, it is worthwhile plotting their find-places and looking at suggested remains of the shrine.

The two large inscriptions were found early in 1873 and first published in the following year[84]. The publication of the two inscriptions was accompanied by a commentary and a survey of the evidence for the Ἥρως Ἰατρός. Later in the same year the discovery was mentioned in the Greek archaeological reports[85]. The precise find-spot is not entirely clear. One account says that the inscriptions were found in 'Hadriansstrasse'[86] while another says:

> Σημειωθήτω πρὸς τούτοις, ὅτι τὰ τεμάχια πάντα εὑρέθησαν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ Ἀθηνᾶς ἀπέναντι τῆς βρύσεως τῆς τοῦ βορέα καλουμένης οὐχὶ μακρὰν τοῦ ἐκκλησιδίου τῆς ἁγίας Μαύρης τοῦ ἄλλοτε ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ὑπάρχοντος[87].

Excavations in 1910 in ὁδὸς Πραξιτέλους revealed the foundations of a building which the excavator thought was the shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός[88](Plate 35). However, foundations discovered at the intersection of Vissis and Voreou Sts. in 1937 are a more likely candidate since they are almost exactly at the place where the inscriptions were found whereas the foundations discovered in 1910 are two hundred and twenty metres to the north[89]. If the conglomerate foundations found in 1937 to the east of a sanctuary of Zeus Phratrios and Athena Phratria are the remains of the shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός then that shrine bordered a branch of the road leading north eastwards from the Agora towards the N.E. Gate. It may have been a boundary

marker from the shrine that was found a few years ago and carved simply τό ἱερό [90]. A dedicatory plaque carved with an eye and inscribed [Ἥ]ρωι Ἰα[τρῶι...] was found in the Agora excavations in 1947 [91]. (Plate 36) This certainly came from the shrine and confirms the evidence contained in the two large inscriptions. The first of these is a very extensive inscription of eighty-eight lines on a stele 1.68m. high, 0.33m. wide and 0.15m. thick [92]. The other inscription, unfortunately, is more fragmentary with forty-six lines surviving [93]. Both stelai deal with the common practice of melting down very old or fragmentary votive offerings made of silver and converting them into a utensil useful in the rites performed at the shrine. The names of the donors were not lost because they were recorded on the stele commemorating the conversion.

Some very interesting points emerge from these two inscriptions. First of all the hero is described as 'he who is in the city' [94] which is a clear indication that his cult had a mirror image ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ. This confirms the view of the scholiast on Demosthenes who said that the Ἥρως Ἰατρός was Ἀριστόμαχος since the latter's home base was Marathon and he was extremely closely linked with Amphiaraos at Rhamnous [95]. The hero is also called θεός [96] which is a salutary warning about hard and fast distinctions. The earlier inscription tells us that the silver offerings were to be converted into a silver wine-bowl [97] while the later inscription mentions two wine-cups and a libation bowl [98] which had become unserviceable. These have led to the observation that wine may well have been used in honour of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός [99]. Also mentioned are a basket - κανοῦν - used for carrying loaves or wheat/barley-and a censer - or what is presumably a censer [100]. These too give us a further insight into the sacrifices performed by the priest at the shrine.

The votive offerings mentioned are extremely informative. The Boule at the instigation of the priest of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός appointed a commission to oversee the work undertaken on the old votive offerings and paraphernalia of the shrine. It ordered that an account of what they did was to be deposited in the Metroon [101] while the objects removed or restored had to be recorded in the shrine [102]. It is these lists which give us a poignant insight into the cures performed by the Ἥρως Ἰατρός.

The biggest single category of offerings is τύπου - little figures on thin silver sheets presumably not dissimilar to the modern ones. These are mentioned collectively [103] and are then listed one by one with their donors. Twenty four of these τύπου are mentioned. They were given by both men and women. From the names mentioned we can deduce that the shrine was equally popular with both sexes although Kallistion's total of nine τύπου skews the proportion of offerings given by women [104]. These little figures were general purpose thank offerings, as they still are today, and could record the healing of any part of the body, the cure of a mental problem or the fulfilment of any other request. Being of precious metal none of the originals has survived but the contemporary examples give us an excellent idea of their nature.

The next most popular votive offering was that of a pair of eyes. These had been dedicated by Kteson, Lamidion and Nikostrate - a man, possibly a relative of Kallistratos [105] and two women [106]. These silver eyes were the counterparts in silver of others which must have existed in other materials. We have already mentioned an eye carved on stone and inscribed :

[Ἥ]ρωι Ἰα[τρῶι] [107]. (Plate 36)

Do we have here the extra clue needed to explain the wd;t on the stele of Archinos showing the healing hero Amphiaraos? [108]

Certainty is not possible but it looks likely that the Ἥρως Ἰατρός specialised in eye problems, although not to the exclusion of other complaints. Due to the Ἥρως Ἰατρός - Aristomachos - Amphiaraos link it certainly seems reasonable to interpret the wd;t as having an eye healing connotation especially in view of the continuity of the motif in that same context to the present time as exemplified by the pairs of eyes to be seen today in the shrines of Ἅγια Παρασκευή.

Other parts of the body dedicated in little silver plaques were thighs [109], a chest [110] and a hand [111]. These were dedicated by Xenokles, Pyron and the last by Nikostrate, a woman. More general votive offerings were a little shield [112] and, presumably in miniature, a gunwale of a ship [113]. Both of these probably indicated escape from, on the one hand,

a battle and, on the other, a shipwreck.

The shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός evidently flourished over a considerable period of time. It existed at the time of Demosthenes' speech On the false embassy in 343 B.C. while of the two long inscriptions one is to be dated to 222/1 B.C.[114] while the other comes from the end of the second century B.C.[115]. The eye plaque is dated somewhere between those two. Thus we have certain evidence for the use of the shrine over a period of nearly two hundred and fifty years. Lack of evidence should not allow us to presume that the shrine was not functioning either side of the two termini. It has already been mentioned that Demosthenes referred to the shrine rather as one would to a landmark. This would presuppose that it was already well known to his listeners in 343 B.C. The shrine may well have survived in active form until the destruction of much of Athens in the Herulian sack of 267 A.D. The broken eye plaque, although dated to the late third to early second centuries B.C. was found in a late Roman context[116]. This might give an indication of the late date of the shrine's destruction and the dispersal of its small, non-precious votive offerings. It is possible, therefore, that the shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός flourished for a period of six hundred years.

We have seen that the Ἥρως Ἰατρός is most likely to have been Aristomachos. His name and his great size place him among the famous fighting heroes who became healers. His identification with Amphiaraos also brought him into a family of healers. Amphiaraos himself, of course, had been a warrior hence the ease with which he and Aristomachos could be identified. This family had other signs of their importance in Athens. Amphiaraos had a statue:

> μετὰ δὲ τὰς εἰκόνας τῶν ἐπωνύμων ἐστὶν ἀγάλματα θεῶν, Ἀμφιάραυς καὶ Εἰρήνη φέρουσα Πλοῦτον παῖδά[117].

Although we have no evidence with regard to this particular statue we have seen that statues of healing heroes could be the medium for that healing. It is quite possible, therefore, that Amphiaraos' statue in Athens may have had healing powers.

Another member of the family represented in some way in Athens was

his son Amphilochos. He had an altar as has already been mentioned:

τῷ δὲ Ἀμφιλόχῳ καὶ παρ' Ἀθηναίοις ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ πόλει βωμός[118].

We do not know where this altar was but it is a possibility that it was in the shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός.

The whole family of Amphiaraos was closely linked to that of Asklepios. We have already referred to the goddesses Iaso, Panacea and Hygieia as being common to both [119]. Amphiaraos and Asklepios are also to be found combined on a single inscription from Athens:

...] ους και τῷ Ἀμφιαράῳ καὶ τῷ [Ἀ] σκληπιῷ[120].

The two healing families seem to have retained their separate identities but overlapped as regards the goddesses. In art Asklepios and Amphiaraos appear to have been portrayed in virtually identical form - the bearded, caring physician.

4. Saviour Heroes and the Plague

The presence of the miniature gunwale in the list of offerings at the shrine of the Ἥρως Ἰατρός[121] is a reminder that healing deities were Σωτῆρες. A saviour god or goddess - Σωτήρ or Σώτειρα- could prevent illness or cure it just as they could avert a shipwreck or save those involved in one. In Hellenistic times the title was conferred on kings such as Ptolemy I. Earlier, however, it seems to have been used only for gods and heroes. A decree of Orgeones could group Zeus and Herakles along with other Saviours[122]. In the plural the word could denote all those deities a man saw as protecting himself, his family and his possessions[123]. Often, however, it was used to mean the Dioskouroi[124]. In Athens these two had their shrine at the foot of the northern slope of the Acropolis just to the south east of the Agora[125]. Pausanias says that above it was the enclosure of Aglauros[126]. We have little proof that the Dioskouroi were healers in Athens but we know that they were addressed as Σωτῆρες[127]. Is it a coincidence that on or by the place where they had their shrine there now stands the church of the Ἁγιοι Ἀνάργυροι- the Christian healers, the twins Kosmas and Damian?[128].

One of the ills most dreaded, especially in Athens, was plague. No doubt many heroes and deities were prayed to in an attempt to persuade them to prevent, or bring to an end a plague. The great plague of 430-428 B.C. stood out in Athenian history as one of the city's greatest calamities. It is arguable that it was the plague and not Sparta which brought about the eventual defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War[129]. All other plagues paled into insignificance by comparison with it. The main bout of the great plague was from 430-428 B.C.[130], but there was a further outburst during the winter of 427-6 B.C.[131]. Although more than one author mentions the plague[132] it is the account of Thucydides which gives us the fullest picture of the horror. It is his account that later authors refer to and reproduce[133].

Thucydides tells us that it was believed that the plague had originated in Ethiopia, spread into Egypt and Libya and had first reached Attica by entering the Peiraieus. From there it spread to the upper city. The

symptoms were a burning feeling in the head, an inflammation of the eyes, bleeding from the throat and tongue and difficulties in breathing. As the illness progressed so came a hoarseness of voice, chest pains and coughing followed by stomach aches and vomiting or retching. The skin became red and broke out into small ulcers. Sufferers felt a burning sensation inside their body, had an unquenchable thirst, could not bear any clothing to touch their skin and had to put up with insomnia and restlessness. Death often came after seven or eight days of this fever but for survivors of this stage the disease changed course and went to the bowels. This produced ulceration and uncontrollable diarrhoea. Obviously this fatally weakened many of those who had survived so far. Even though some people did beat this stage too, the waning of the disease left many with the lost use of genitals, fingers or toes. Some even had a total loss of memory.

Thucydides tells us that no treatment was of much if any use. As people have always done when human treatments fail, so too the Athenians turned to prayers in the temples and consultation of oracles [134], although in the end those who were overwhelmed by their sufferings gave up reliance in those [135]. Thucydides uses this vivid description to lead up to his account of the terrifying breakdown in morals and the totally selfish behaviour of those who were still fit. However, his account of the rejection of religion can only have been true of some people for near the end of his narrative he tells how in a time of distress people naturally recalled ancient oracles. One of these stated that a war with the Dorians would be accompanied by a plague. Thucydides proceeds to discuss whether the oracle had said plague - λοιμός - or famine - λιμός and concluded that people accepted the version that suited their situation[136]. Thucydides' religious scepticism, which allowed him to be misleadingly sidetracked on other occasions [137] should not allow us to believe that piety too was everywhere a victim of the plague.

By a peculiar irony it is another sceptic and avowed enemy of oracle mongers who gives us our only account of a hero called upon in a time of plague. Lucian [138] says that his story is set at the time of the great plague - κατὰ τὸν λοιμὸν τὸν μέγαν [139] at Athens although in view of the fact that the story ends with the successful aversion of the plague

while we know that there was no sudden cessation but merely a decline in the great plague's virulence [140], we may prefer to set the story in the context of another Athenian plague. Alternatively, the story may describe the cessation of the plague in one area of the city.

The story itself is of a dream or vision:

Κατὰ τὸν λοιμὸν τὸν μέγαν ἔδοξεν ἡ Ἀρχιτέλους γυνή, Ἀρεοπαγίτου ἀνδρός, ἐπιστάντα οἱ τὸν Σκύθην κελεῦσαι εἰπεν Ἀθηναίοις ὅτι παύσοντα τῷ λοιμῷ ἐχόμενοι ἦν τοὺς στενωποὺς οἴνῳ πολλῷ ῥαίνωσι[141].

She obviously obeyed the instructions for:

τοῦτο συχνάκις γενόμενον - οὐ γὰρ ἠμέλησαν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἀκούσαντες - ἔπαυσε μηκέτι λοιμώττειν αὐτούς[142].

Lucian muses over why the injunction worked:

εἴτε ἀτμούς τινας πονηροὺς ὁ οἶνος σβέσας τῇ ὀδμῇ, εἴτε ἄλλο τι πλέον εἰδὼς ὁ ἥρως ὁ Τόξαρις, ἅτε ἰατρικὸς ὤν, συνεβούλευσεν[143].

Whatever the reason, the plague stopped and grateful Athenians continued to have resort to him:

ὁ δ'οὖν μισθὸς τῆς ἰάσεως ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἀποδίδοται αὐτῷ λευκὸς ἵππος καταθυόμενος ἐπὶ τῷ μνήματι, ὅθεν ἔδειξεν ἡ Δειμαινέτη προσελθόντα αὐτὸν ἐντείλασθαι ἐκεῖνα τὰ περὶ τοῦ οἴνου[144].

His coming from his tomb is part of the vision Deimainete had. As a result of remembering the tomb she recognised it οὐ πολὺ ἀπὸ τοῦ Διπύλου, ἐν ἀριστερᾷ εἰς Ἀκαδημίαν ἀπιόντων[145]. When she found the tomb the inscription was only partially legible but the tomb was easily recognisable from the carving of a Scythian on the pillar:

ἐπὶ τῇ στήλῃ Σκύθης ἀνὴρ ἐγκεκόλαπτο, τῇ λαιᾷ μὲν τόξον ἔχων ἐντεταμένον, τῇ δεξιᾷ δὲ βιβλίον, ὡς ἐδόκει[146].

Lucian ends this part of his story by adding that Toxaris was still curing people at the time he was writing:

οὐ μέγα τὸ χῶμα καὶ ἡ στήλη χαμαί· πλὴν ἀλλ' ἔστεπταί γε ἀεί, καί φασι πυρεταίνοντάς τινας ἤδη πεπαῦσθαι ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐδεν ἄπιστον, ὅς ὅλην ποτὲ ἴάσατο τὴν πόλιν[147].

The purpose of Lucian's story is not to recount this interesting tale but to introduce a fellow Scythian, Anacharsis, who came as a stranger to Athens in the time of Solon. The moral Lucian wished to draw was that he was in the same position as a visitor to Macedon as Anacharsis had been in Athens and hoped to be the recipient of a similar degree of hospitality.

Lucian's descriptions of shrines and cults usually need to be treated very carefully in view of the spleen he vents on them but in this account the vituperative tone is absent. He is writing six hundred years or so after the plague and well over seven hundred years after the residence of Toxaris and Anacharsis in Athens [148]. However, we know something of Anacharsis from other sources [149] and the garlanding of the tomb along with the cure of plague and fever ring true [150].

According to our earliest source, Herodotus, the Scythians were regarded as wise while Anacharsis had a reputation as a man of learning. [151] According to his account medicine was not a highly developed skill and prophets were employed to find the cause of illness [152]. Anacharsis travelled widely outside of his homeland gaining in and displaying his wisdom [153]. One version of his death is that he was killed by his own brother, the king, for practising the Greek rites of the Mother of the Gods. [154] The reputation he left in Greece was that of a sage albeit a foreign one [155]. His sayings were collected [156] and later works ascribed to his authorship [157].

In Lucian's story Toxaris had come to Athens before Anacharsis. Like the latter, Toxaris was wise - σοφὸς μὲν καὶ φιλόκαλος [158]. His name obviously refers to the bow - τόξον - commonly associated with Scythians. This is confirmed by the tomb's carving of a Scythian holding a strung bow in his left hand. Although one cannot be sure, it seems possible to detect several layers of significance here. First of all, there was a tradition that Herakles was the progenitor of the Scythians or at least the Scythian kings [159]. It was the ability to draw one of Herakles' bows that allowed his son Scythes to establish himself at the start of the royal lineage [160] and Herakles was one of the chief gods of his descendants the Scythians [161]. As we shall see shortly, Herakles was a

major averter of plague and so his supposed link with the Scythians generally and, through the bow, with the name of Toxaris may well have had significance for Athenians.

Another link in this chain is the bow itself. The bow had several connotations for the Greek mind. For Athenians especially it could have the implication of eastern or specifically Persian methods of warfare[162]. Again for Athenians the bow was closely linked with οἱ τοξόται, the city's police force[163]. Within our present context, however, there is little doubt that the bow denoted plague aversion just as it could also denote the infliction of plague. The best example of this is the oldest and the one known to most Greeks - the use of the bow by Apollo to inflict a plague on the Greeks at Troy. Chryses, a priest of Apollo, begs the Greeks to return his daughter, captured in a raid and now allotted to Agamemnon. The king rudely refuses and the priest leaves and prays to Apollo to avenge him. Apollo is described as ἑκηβόλος[164], far shooting and in his supplication Chryses addresses him as ἀργυρότοξ'[165], of the silver bow.

Ὣς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων χωόμενος κῆρ
τόξ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτρην·
ἔκλαγξαν δ' ἄρ' ὀϊστοὶ ἐπ' ὤμων χωομένοιο,
αὐτοῦ κινηθέντος. ὁ δ' ἤιε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς.
ἕζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν, μετὰ δ' ἰὸν ἕηκε·
δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο.
οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπῴχετο καὶ κύνας ἀργούς,
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἐχεπευκὲς ἐφιεις
βάλλ'· αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμειαί.
Ἐννῆμαρ μὲν ἀνὰ στρατὸν ᾤχετο κῆλα θεοῖο[166].

Achilles calls an assembly of the troops to ascertain the cause of the plague, λοιμὸς[167], and why Apollo was sending it. If Apollo was offended by some deed of theirs then perhaps he could be pacified by a sacrifice of sheep or goats after which perhaps βούλεται ἀντιάσας ἡμῖν ἀπὸ λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι[168].

The seer Calchas finally plucks up courage to tell Agamemnon of the reason for the Archer - King's wrath. After the huge row between Agamemnon and Achilles which is the theme of the Iliad, preparations are made to return the priest's daughter.

λαοὺς δ' Ἀτρεΐδης ἀπολυμαίνεσθαι ἄνωγεν·
οἱ δ' ἀπελυμαίνοντο καὶ εἰς ἅλα λύματα βάλλον,
ἔρδον δ' Ἀπόλλωνι τελήεσσας ἑκατόμβας
ταύρων ἠδ' αἰγῶν παρὰ θῖν' ἁλὸς ἀτρυγέτοιο[169].

This purification is an extremely interesting part of the procedure and one to which reference will be made again. The young lady is escorted back to her father and Odysseus expresses the hope that the return of the girl and the ceremonial offerings will pacify Apollo. Chryses then prays to the god:

"κλῦθί μευ, ἀργυρότοξ', ὃς Χρύσην ἀμφιβέβηκας
Κίλλαν τε ζαθέην Τενέδοιό τε ἶφι ἀνάσσεις·
ἠμὲν δή ποτ' ἐμεῦ πάρος ἔκλυες εὐξαμένοιο,
τίμησας μὲν ἐμέ, μέγα δ' ἴφαο λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν·
ἠδ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν μοι τόδ' ἐπικρήηνον ἐέλδωρ·
ἤδη νῦν Δαναοῖσιν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἄμυνον."
Ὣς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων[170].

So the Archer god withdraws the plague and the Achaeans feast and sing to appease him:

οἱ δὲ πανημέριοι μολπῇ θεὸν ἱλάσκοντο
καλὸν ἀείδοντες παιήονα κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν,
μέλποντες ἑκάεργον· ὁ δὲ φρένα τέρπετ' ἀκούων[171].

Dancing and the παιήων or παίαν, the song of thanksgiving for healing, should remind us that no artistic form was alien in the context of rejoicing over deliverance from an ill as great as a plague.

The role of the bow is clear - it is the symbol of him (or her - Artemis) who sends illnesses, often plagues. The symbol continues to apply when the same deity or hero withdraws the scourge. This

symbolism would not have been lost on the Athenians in the case of Toxaris.

Lucian tells us that the other symbol carried by Toxaris was a book. He at first expresses some reservation: τῇ δεξιᾷ δὲ βιβλίον, ὡς ἐδόκει[172]. However, he goes on to say that most of the statue is visible καὶ τὸ τόξον ὅλον καὶ τὸ βιβλίον[173]. If we accept Lucian's word that it was a book, his uncertainty might be explained by the rarity of such a depiction. Although it was not uncommon in Roman times to be shown with a scroll or tablet to indicate a love of learning, it was not common in Greece. The only example which comes to mind is the so-called 'Lateran' Sophocles. It is a copy of the original which was set up in Athens about 340 B.C. It shows Sophocles standing with a look of concentration on his face. By his right foot is a basket of scrolls, presumably meant to indicate his plays. Whether it was a true likeness of him would not have been important. "The point is that the portrait is what Sophocles was and to a Classical Greek that was what really mattered".[174] The same is true of Toxaris. The book was meant to indicate that he was a sage. It is interesting that he was in Athens at probably about the same time as that other great sage Epimenides and both purified the city[175]. Epimenides used black and white sheep in his sacrifice[176] and Lucian tells us that a white horse was sacrificed to Toxaris[177].

Toxaris was given a title:

'Αθήνησιν ἀπέθανεν, καὶ μετ' οὐ πολὺ καὶ ἥρως ἔδοξεν καὶ ἐντέμνουσιν αὐτῷ Ξένῳ 'Ιατρῷ οἱ 'Αθηναῖοι[178].

This too rings true. If a Ἥρως 'Ιατρός why not a Ξένος 'Ιατρός? Some authors have wanted to identify these 'Ιατροί and link others with them,[179] but although the idea behind them all may be at root the same, a diversity of individual, heroic healers is to be expected. Even in Catholic countries today the healing roles of Christ and Mary have not ousted pagan healers although syncretism is always at work trying to assimilate them[180]. Certainly Asklepios had an effect in colouring probably all healing cults and notably those of Amphiaraos' family but many cults must have retained some of their own, sometimes primitive, characteristics. Such seems to have been the case with the healing cult of the Ξένος 'Ιατρός.

5. The Σηράγγιον as a possible healing shrine in the Peiraieus

We saw an interesting purification ceremony as part of the process of asking Apollo to avert the plague [181]. The Greeks bathed and then threw the λύματα into the sea. This was followed by a sacrifice on the seashore. This cleansing was clearly no purely physical process. Frequently, and always when in a religious context, the word bears the double meaning of physical and moral pollution [182]. The λύματα carried both of these and had to be disposed of carefully since otherwise the miasma could merely be transferred. Melampous was supposed, according to one version, to have polluted the river Anigros in Eleia when he threw in the λύματα from the purification of the daughters of Proitos [183]. The sea, presumably because of its salt content - Homer uses ἅλς with its double meaning to be found in the English 'briny' - was better able to neutralise the λύματα. Brine was able to preserve the good against the bad [184]. Aristophanes, for example, could deliberately parody the Homeric purification passage at the end of the Wasps. To a background of Xanthias' mutterings about plague and madness, Philokleon challenges would be dancers to a contest. The three, crabbed sons of Karkinos arrive! With a reference to the shore of the unfruitful sea, Philokleon asks his son to prepare the salt pickle for the victory celebrations [185]. This crazy passage must have neatly underlined in Athenian minds the connections between plague, purification, sea, salt and preservation.

For any Athenian who had been initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries such a reminder would have been unnecessary. He or she would have had clearly in their minds the visit to the sea at Phaleron and the purification of themselves and the piglet they were going to sacrifice before their joyful march to Eleusis for the initiation [186]. Not far from Phaleron there was an area where healing and purification were also closely linked. This area was on the east-facing side of the peninsula which projects south westwards from Munichia and separates Munichia from Zea [187]. (Plate 37) At the peninsula's tip was ἡ Φρεαττώ or Φρεαττύς. This was the place where exiled homicides were tried while on a boat and the judges listened to the case from the shore [188]. The implication of the accused staying at sea was both that they were still technically exiles and also that the land

remained free from pollution. The name of the court was linked to the numerous cisterns - φρεατίαι - along this part of the coast. Further north-eastwards there was the Peiraieus Asklepieion and, on the coast, the niches with dedications to Zeus Meilichios [189]. In this same area there are many caves and hollows - σήραγγες - which seem to have given rise to the name Σήραγγος. He was a hero who had a shrine and immediately below the shrine there was a set of baths called the Σηράγγιον. We have evidence from several authors about the Σηράγγιον but the evidence gives us very few facts to go on [190]. There was a set of baths called the Σηράγγιον at the Peiraieus probably by the end of the fifth century B.C. Its nature is unclear from the early sources. The later sources such as Alciphron mention it simply as a bathing establishment for οἱ παράσιτοι. The proverb - snippets are dated with difficulty but contain precious information such as the parallel with the Anakeion, the temenos of the Dioskouroi, and the connection between evil-doers - οἱ κακοῦργοι - and the Σηράγγιον.

The probable site of these baths has been found and excavated. As we are told by one of the anecdotes, the heroon seems to have been established at a slightly higher level than the baths. This was indicated too by the discovery of a marker inscribed Ἡρῴου ὅρος[191] above the spot of the subsequently discovered putative Σηράγγιον but not, unfortunately, in situ so its find-spot is indicative but not absolutely confirmatory. A few years later a site, perhaps the actual Σηράγγιον, was excavated and quite fully published [192]. The shore is to the south-east and it is from there that a rock-way leads first north-westwards and then north-eastwards to a roughly circular room at about two thirds along the length of a broad corridor aligned north-west to south-east. At the north-west end this corridor opens out into two roughly rectangular rooms. At the entrance to these rooms there is a well in the rock - φρέαρ ἐν τῷ βράχῳ πέντε μέτρων βάθους [193]. Just to the south-east of the corridor's circular room there is another well along with three hollows in the rock - φρέαρ καὶ τρία κοιλώματα ἐν τῷ βράχῳ ἀνισομεγέθη [194]. At the south-east end of the corridor were found the remains of a large, late-Roman mosaic showing a young man driving a four-horse chariot over the sea. To the north-east of that there was excavated a large circular room with

niches round its circumference. This room had two doorways, one at its south-west and another at the south. On the threshold of the latter was found another, fragmentary mosaic showing what is thought to have been Scylla.

The mosaics are late-Roman but the building seems to have had a very long history of use to judge from an altar found near the so-called Scylla mosaic. The inscription is not clear but probably reads ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΟΣ ΑΠΟΤΡΟΠΑΙΟΥ [195] and, on epigraphic grounds, is thought to be hellenistic [196]. The boundary marker of the associated shrine of Serangos, presuming it was the marker of that shrine, is mid fifth century and would therefore suggest a contemporary date for the baths. Thus the archaeological evidence confirms the literary. In Roman times the Serangion was probably not much more than a bathing establishment. This would accord with Alciphron's description. A niggling doubt remains, however, as to whether its role had always been secular. The altar is indicative. It has been thought that the mosaics can be interpreted to show a connection with Glaukos [197]. He came from Anthedon in Boeotia and became immortal by a magic herb or, more relevant to our purposes, a magic bath [198]. He then leapt into the sea and became famous for his prophecies [199]. He also wooed Scylla [200] and so helps us to link the two mosaics in the Serangion. This interesting theory would see the hero Serangos as obtaining his power from Glaukos or perhaps even being Glaukos but named after the σήραγγες where he had his shrine.

This theory may well contain some element of truth but does not of itself account for the altar. If the reading of the altar's inscription is correct, it is dedicated to Apollo the Averter of Evil, whose statues often stood outside the walls of cities where he was believed to use his arrows to avert plagues [201]. The proximity of the φρεαττώ is another factor which may be of significance. A third factor is the connection in the literary evidence between the Anakeion and the Serangion and the linking of both with evildoers. Can all of these be woven together into an intelligible whole?

The Anakeion in Athens was said to be a place where the wicked

gathered - εἰς τὸ Ἀνάκειον γὰρ οἱ πονηροὶ συνελέγοντο [202].
Why the Anakeion should be linked with evil doers is not entirely clear but the slave market there certainly seems to have been a major factor for those who held the view that slaves were untrustworthy and prone to crime if ever the occasion should arise [203]. We have already seen that the Dioskouroi were worshipped as Saviours in Athens [204]. The other Saviours with whom they were identified were the Kabeiroi [205]. Indeed the title Ἄνακες - from which the Anakeion, the shrine of the Dioskouroi obtained its name - seems to have been shared by both the Dioskouroi and the Kabeiroi if the ἄνακτες παῖδες at Amphissa were in fact the Kabeiroi [206]. The Kabeiroi were Saviours but they could also be purifiers. Zeus asked them to purify his daughter Ἄγγελος - the Syracusan form of Artemis/Hekate - after she had been into the house of a women who had just delivered a baby and from there into a funeral procession in order to escape from her mother Hera who was angry at her daughter's theft of some magic myrrh [207]. The most famous centre of the Kabeiroi - if the Kabeiroi were the same deities as the Theoi Megaloi - was on Samothrace but on mainland Greece it was Boeotia which could boast of the two most famous shrines, one near Thebes and the other on the coast at Anthedon. We are told that the Theban Kabeirion was founded from Athens [208] but it seems likely that the priest responsible, Methapos, was a Hellenistic reformer rather than the original founder. Whatever the truth of the matter is, unless Pausanias is totally wrong, there was a connection between Athens and the cult of the Kabeiroi at Thebes. The second Kabeirion was fifteen miles NNE of Thebes at Anthedon. Nearby was a spot known as 'Glaukos' Leap' [209]. Glaukos had his parentage variously described [210] but it was generally agreed that he ended the earthly phase of his life by obtaining immortality and jumping into the sea [211]. The spot called 'Glaukos' Leap' was at the top of a cliff overlooking the sea and obviously marked the place of his jump [212]. He was a sea divinity [213] and could give oracles to those who wanted them [214]. There was even a tradition that he taught Apollo the art of prophecy [215].

Glaukos was evidently a well-known mythological figure at Athens. Pindar knew of him either because he was a Boeotian or, less likely, from his sojourn in Athens [216]. His Athenian contemporary, Aeschylus,

knew enough of the myths surrounding Glaukos to write a whole play based on them. This play, Γλαῦκος Πόντιος, often seems to be confused with another of his plays, Γλαῦκος Ποτνιεύς. Both survive only in fragments.[217] Athenians would have known Glaukos too from a play of Euripides[218] and probably the earlier tales of the Argonauts which Apollonius wove into his story[219]. The identification of Glaukos with Melicertes[220] would also have reminded a Greek mind of the latter's mother Ino, transformed into Leucothea. She was depicted by Homer as performing the same role of marine messenger and saviour as Apollonius later showed Glaukos performing.[221] Melicertes after his metamorphosis into a sea deity was also known as Palaimon, the Wrestler - a very suitable name for a Saviour deity struggling to help mankind[222].

The links in this chain of identification are tenuous. There also are underlying suppositions which are precisely that and not facts. The first of those is that the building known as the Σηράγγιον is correctly identified as such. The second supposition is that the male figure in the mosaics is Glaukos[223]. Even if it is, the mosaic's late date meansthat we cannot be certain of its significance for the earlier period of the building's use. The third supposition is that the building had some religious significance. The presence of the altar to Apollo the Averter of Evil lends weight to this supposition. It would be foolish to build too grandiose a structure on such a series of suppositions. The word Σήραγγος, however is obviously more of an epithet than a name. It is possible, therefore, that it refers to a hero or δαίμων such as Glaukos. Although the basic link between Glaukos and the Σηράγγιον is unproven and, due to lack of evidence, unproveable, the subsequent links between Glaukos, the Kabeiroi and Melicertes, Ino's son, are forged more strongly by a beautiful dedicatory epigram recording an event for which the Kabeiroi and the Dioskouroi were famous - rescue from the sea:

> Γλαύκῳ καὶ Νηρῆϊ καὶ Ἰνοῖ Μελικέρτῃ,/καὶ βυθίῳ Κρονίδῃ,
> καὶ Σαμόθραξι θεοῖς,‖σωθεὶς ἐκ πελάγους Λουκίλλιος ὧδε κέκαρμαι/
> τὰς τρίχας ἐκ κεφαλῆς· ἄλλο γὰρ οὐδὲν ἔχω[224].‖

The Σηράγγιον may therefore have been the shrine of a Saviour. Like all such saviours he may have healed. Like the Kabeiroi with whom (if the

inhabitant of the shrine was Glaukos) he was closely associated, he may also have purified those guilty of crimes and so prevented the illness and disease that can follow pollution [225]. If Σήραγγος was only an epithet for Γλαῦκος then the latter's discovery of a healing herb or a magic bath was an obvious reason for venerating him as a healer. The altar to Apollo the Averter of Evil, the position of the Σηράγγιον near the φρεαττύς and the close proximity of the Σηράγγιον to the sea all suggest the purifying role. The salty water in the wells and the circular rooms would have been ideal for the process of περικάθαρσις[226].

The healing and/or purifying role of the Σηράγγιον would explain the presence of the altar. It was this altar which gave rise to the niggling doubt about the site's secular use. A religious significance and perhaps a healing one is also suggested by some marble tablets carved in relief with snakes [227] that were found on the site. It would be quite understandable for such a building with its cleansing role to be converted into a secular bathing establishment in later times. The whole interpretation of the Σηράγγιον has to remain tentative and hypothetical but, as one author has pointed out [228] the huge amount of work involved in the excavation of such grottoes largely out of the natural rock leads one to believe that they had a religious significance. Of all such grottoes, because of the altar and the tablets "on doit reconnaître à celui du Pirée quelque signification religieuse" [229].

6. Ἡρακλῆς Ἀλεξίκακος.

Fewer problems surround two other hero-gods who acted as purifiers and averters of evil in Athens. They were both connected with the great plague of 430 B.C. onwards. It has been cogently argued that it was the devotion of private citizens - in fear for their lives during the plague - which led to the introduction of the Asklepian cult to Zea in the Peiraieus in the early to mid 420's before its official introduction to Athens in 420 B.C. [230]. The other great hero-god who was a plague averter and a healer in Athens is the one whose name has constantly cropped up in connection with hero-athletes. He was the archetypal hero and the legendary founder of the Olympic games - Herakles.

Herakles may at first sight seem the most incongruous hero to be a healer. However, he is the supreme example of a man who overcame countless evils including the Underworld and, by his apotheosis, death itself. Some of these evils afflicted communities or individuals whom he saved. Other evils affected him most personally like the fit of madness reputedly sent by Hera. He himself had to be purified on many occasions as a result of his shedding blood [231]. Bloodshed could result in madness and madness could result in bloodshed. The madness suffered by Herakles at the hands of Hera is well known as is his killing of his children and, in some versions, his wife Megara while he was suffering from delusions caused by the madness [232]. That Herakles could have been suffering from madness as a result of a homicide, even as here a justifiable one, is implied, by the remark of Amphitryon about Herakles' revenge against Lycus [233]. Just as Apollo had to be purified from the blood he had shed and himself became a purifying god, so too Herakles, an infamous shedder of blood, underwent numerous purifications and ended up being a purifier. In Athens the connection between Herakles and purification was at its most obvious at Agrai on the southern bank of the river Ilissos. There were numerous shrines here [234] including a Metroon which may well have been the site of the Lesser Mysteries. Here there was held a preliminary purification ceremony in preparation for the greater mysteries [235] apparently involving the water of the Ilissos [236]. There was a tradition that these ceremonies had their origins in the purification of Herakles from the blood

of the centaurs [237]. As has been pointed out [238] this is a somewhat illogical aition for a set of ceremonies from which those with impure hands were expressly excluded but then Herakles was an obvious exception. If such a hero was to be initiated into the greater mysteries a purification ceremony as a preamble was essential even if ordinary mortals with blood on their hands were not to be allowed to follow his example. [239] It may be coincidence but the apparent identification of the Great Mother with Demeter at the Metroon at Agrai had another link with madness and release from madness. It was believed that the Mother and her corybantes could cause madness which might have various symptoms such as a wasting away of the body [240]. Participation in the corybantic rites was one obvious way of purifying a person of this and other forms of madness since Cybele was the καθάρτρια τῆς μανίας[241].

Herakles of course recovered from his fit of madness and so himself became an ideal candidate for the role of καθαρτής. Such a purifier was cleansing people of the afflications incurred through guilt or through no fault of their own. Either way, they were being rid of τὰ κακά and so the term καθαρτής was interchangeable with ἀλεξίκακος[242]. Herakles was the greatest of the heroic averters of evil because of his countless feats fighting monsters.- πολλὰ μὲν ἐν πόντῳ κατά τε δρία πάντα καθαίρων as Sophocles has Herakles describe his role, putting the word καθαίρων on the hero's lips [243] to describe his cleansing of Greece from its evils.

Herakles had numerous shrines in Attica several of which were in or near Athens itself [244]. Of course not all of these shrines venerated Herakles as a healer or purifier. However, Herakles seems to have played a role as protector of youth and in this way, as well as an athletic prototype and patron, was linked with the gymnasia which existed adjacent to or near his shrines at Cynosarges, the Academy, Melite, Marathon and Tetrakomos [245]. The cutting of hair from the heads of those about to become ἔφηβοι and its dedication to Herakles at the festival of the οἰνιστήρια[246] places Herakles among the κουροτρόφοι. As such he could have had a healing role which would have left few traces. [247] (Plate 38)

We have more certain knowledge about his role as a fighter against one of Athens' greatest evils, the plague. We are told that ἐν Μελίτῃ ἐστὶν ἐπιφανέστατον ἱερὸν Ἡρακλέους ἀλεξικάκου[248]. We are told quite explicitly that ἡ δὲ ἴδρυσις ἐγένετο κατὰ τὸν μέγαν λοιμόν· ὅθεν καὶ ἐπαύσατο ἡ νόσος, πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπολλυμένων[249]. However we are given the information τὸ δὲ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους ἄγαλμα ἔργον Γελάδου τοῦ Ἀργείου, τοῦ διδασκάλου Φειδίου[250]. If we add to the fact that he was the teacher of Pheidias the report by Pausanias that he was responsible for late sixth century and early fifth century statues at Olympia and Delphi[251], then there is obviously a problem about his having made a statue for a shrine founded at the time of the great plague. This is not the place to discuss this problem[252], but if the Herakles Alexikakos statue in Melite was not made by some lesser known artist of the same name then we obviously have to bear in mind the possibility that it was either dedicated at the time of a much earlier plague which became conflated with the great plague or re-dedicated some time during the 420's.

The exact location and nature of this shrine have been disputed. Earlier attempts at a topological evaluation of the evidence[253] were re-evaluated after the publication in 1936 of a stele of which two parts had already been found[254]. The stele with its two fragments[255] is concerned with the leases of mines and sales of confiscated property. At one point the stele mentions two workshops in Melite bounded on the east by a house of Philokrates of Hagnous, on the west by a workshop of Hierokleides of Hermos, on the north by a house of Philokrates of Hagnous and νοτό: ἡ ὁ[δος ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἡρακ]λείο τοῦ Ἀλεξικάκου εἰς ἀγο[ρὰν φέρουσα][256]. This posssibly places the Herakleion somewhere on the so-called "street of the Marble Workers" probably to the south-west of that stretch of the road which ran in an almost straight east-west direction and on the southern slope of the Hill of the Nymphs[257]. What was probably a boundary marker from this shrine was found in 1932 built into the wall of a modern house. It reads [ἰ]ερὸν [τοῦ Ἡ]ρακλέο[ς][258] and its lettering is compatible with a date somewhere in the middle of the fifth century.

As to the nature of the shrine we have little information. The scholiast calls it a ἱερὸν[259] and implies by his use of the adjective

that it was either very famous or the most famous - ἐπιφανέστατον. Many years ago it was realised that there was a special kind of Herakleion.[260] The original contention that they were heroa was later modified into a suggestion that they were constructed at the site of lectisternia held in honour of Herakles[261]. Representations in relief or on vase paintings survive along with fragmentary architectural remains[262]. One of the reliefs clearly has the inscription ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΣ ΑΛΕΞΙΚΑΚΟ[263]. Is it possible that this relief, which is Attic and possibly Athenian, shows a type of shrine erected to Herakles by various demes at the time of a plague and it is as a result of this that the shrine at Melite has to be described as ἐπιφανέστατον ?

Unfortunately, we have neither archaeological nor much more epigraphic and literary evidence to throw light on Herakles Alexikakos and his role vis-à-vis plagues and, possibly, insanity. Pausanias does not mention the shrine and so it is fair to presume that it was no longer in existence by his time. We know that in his Melite shrine Herakles also bore the title Μήλων[264] although we have no secure explanation[265]. One particularly interesting possibility is that there was a Boeotian influence at work because Thebans apparently offered an apple with twigs intended to look like a ram as part of their ritual in honour of Herakles[266]. A final piece of information about the more general cult of Herakles is that there existed a κοινὸν θιασωτῶν of Herakles in Athens from at least the early fourth century B.C. This seems to have been a group of fifteen and a priest of Herakles[267]. Unfortunately their activities tell us nothing about Herakles' healing role.

Herakles as an averter of pestilence had ancient origins. Even his name may have come from that of the old Babylonian god Eragal or Nergal "who sends, and may ward off pestilence, represented with lion, club and bow"[268]. Herakles was polymorphic and healing was one of his personae.[269] Herakles was famous as a dream god. We know that he was an auspicious sign in dreams[270] and he solved problems by appearing in dreams. In the classical period the most famous example of this is probably when he intervened after a golden wreath had been stolen from the Acropolis. A talent was offered as a reward for its recovery. Herakles appeared to Sophocles in a dream

and showed him where to find the wreath. Sophocles thus obtained the reward and spent the money on establishing a shrine of Herakles Menytes.[271] This shrine may have been on the southern slopes of the Acropolis where it would have been in close proximity to the Asklepieion but the site of the shrine is not known for certain[272]. The association of Herakles with other well known healers seems to have come naturally to the Greek mind. On the great altar at the healing centre of Amphiaraos at Oropos on the border between Attica and Boeotia, Herakles was shown on the first panel along with Zeus and Apollo the Healer[273].

7. Herakles Pankrates and Ἀχελῷος.

Until a few years ago that was about all that could be said concerning Herakles' healing role in Athens. Then in 1953 and 1954 a totally unexpected healing cult of the hero was revealed by excavations after chance finds had been reported late in 1952. We shall look at this cult in detail but before doing so another aspect of Herakles needs to be investigated for it seems that it is this aspect of the hero which is shown in the recently discovered shrine.

We have seen that there was a whole group of healers who during their lifetime were athletic contestants in wrestling, boxing or the pankration. Their healing power was derived from their superhuman struggle which eventually led to their glorious victory. It was Herakles Kallinikos who was thought to come to the defence of those who had been treated unjustly and avenged them or helped them. That is why we are told that Herakles Kallinikos was such an auspicious sign in dreams [274]. However, there was another, strong, Greek tradition about wrestling struggles. This was the virtually shamanistic idea that it was only through a struggle with a deity that one could force that deity to divulge information or pass on some power. Apollo's struggle with the Python is atypical because of the death of the creature but what is typical is the transfer, in this case,of power from the conquered to the conqueror [275]. Heroes even more than gods wrestled with divine opponents to obtain power or information. Peleus had to wrestle with Thetis in order to force her to give her consent to marriage with him [276]. Although the reason for the struggle was to obtain consent rather than information or power, the form the struggle took is classic with Thetis using the polymorphic powers so particularly possessed by marine deities to frequently change shape and so elude her opponent. Of course Peleus wins!

A hero who seems to have been involved in several of these shamanistic struggles is Herakles. Perhaps the most famous of his wrestling contests took place as part of his labour to recover the apples of the Hesperides. In order to discover their location he had to catch and wrestle with Nereus, the father of Thetis, and force him to divulge the whereabouts of the apples.

During this momentous struggle Nereus transformed himself into fire, water and numerous other shapes[277] before capitulating to Herakles and giving him the information he needed. This information was derived from the vast wisdom which Nereus was reputed to possess. With the knowledge gained from Nereus, Herakles then went on to successfully complete his quest for the golden apples. We shall shortly look at another and similar wrestling match of Herakles.

The installation of a large drain in the Ilissos river bed was the immediate reason for the discovery of a white marble head, probably of Sarapis, a second marble head of a bearded man, a large number of late Roman lamps and a votive relief of Herakles[278]. During 1953 and 1954 as full an excavation of the site as was possible was undertaken but the dig was hampered by the great depth of the work (up to nine metres deep), the narrow trenches in which the archaeologists had to work and the continuing construction of the drain and the highway above it. The spot is now marked by a statue of President Truman - or was until this was blown up in the anti-American trouble of March 1986! The excavations were provisionally published at the end of the 1953 and 1954 seasons[279] and summaries of those reports were published elsewhere. These reports seem to form the basis for the few mentions this cult has received for the latter contain information not contained in the former[280]. Professor Miliadis was preparing a full publication of all the Herakles material from the Ilissos shrine[281] but unfortunately his death cut short the work. Work has more recently been restarted by Ms. Athena Kalogeropoulou[282] and a research student from Athens University who is cataloguing the material as the substance of her thesis but it may be some time before the results of her work are seen. In the meantime we have to make do with what we already know. So what do we know?

The shrine occupied the spot on the east bank of the Ilissos where a westward turn of the river forms a loop. The extent of the shrine is unknown because the excavators managed to work only in the area between the river and the drainage channel, which was being installed in a straight line following the course of the river ignoring the loop. The shrine was obviously quite extensive. Part of what Professor Miliadis describes as

a large altar was found [283] and that there was at least one temple is thought certain [284] to judge from a piece of pedimental sculpture showing a reclining Herakles. The lifespan of the cult seems to span from at least the mid fourth century B.C. until, most likely, the Herulian destruction in 267 A.D. [285]

The anaglyphs and inscriptions are intriguing. A few are published and we have clear portrayals of Herakles, a deity of the Zeus Meilichios/Agathos Daimon type reclining and holding a cornucopiae and a variety of oddities along with one which is clearly a healing ex-voto - a leg - while another - an arm - is given a passing reference [286]. There is thus no doubt about Professor Miliadis' conclusion that the shrine housed a healing cult - εἶχε καὶ ἰαματικὰς ἰδιότητας ὁ ἥρως[287].

It would appear that the following inscriptions are published so far:

α) Παγκράτει εὐξάμενος Βόηθος[288]

Seated god/hero (on left) and worshippers

β) Παγκράτ[ει] εὐχὴν Κλήσι[π]πος[289]

Healing ex-voto of leg from thigh downwards

γ) Παγκράτει Νικαρέτη[290]

Plain slab - part of a base

δ) Παγκράτει Στράτων Σιδώνιος[291]

Plain slab - possibly part of an altar

ε) ...]ένη τῶι Παλαίμονι ἀνέθηκεν[292]

Seated god/hero (on right) with cornucopiae, worshippers on left

ζ) Πείθων εὐχὴν Παγκράτει[293]

Standing Herakles on right, head emerging from ground, worshippers on left.

η) Π]αγκράτηι εὐξάμενος ἀνέθηκεν[294]

Seated god/hero (on right) with cornucopiae, altar in centre, worshippers on left.

Professor Miliadis did not always give even these inscriptions in full [295] since he was going to present them all in their entirety in the full publication he was going to issue. From his two articles we also know in more general terms of some other inscriptions. For example, in addition to the fourth one listed above (δ) we know that there were others dedicated by inhabitants of Sidon [296], and that there was one which linked Herakles and Pankrates [297].

Ms. Kalerogopoulou informed me that several of the inscriptions were decrees dated between 300 and c.250 B.C. and that in addition to the Sidonian dedicants there were others from the Pontus region and Thebes and a stele dedicated by a foreign ἰσοτελής. Although the stelai are difficult to read because of the deposition of salts from the Ilissos on them, we thus already have a distinctly foreign and especially Phoenician clientèle. We also know of several uninscribed anaglyphs:

ϑ) A bull to the left and a bearded head rising out of the ground to the bottom right.[298]

ι) A bearded man holding a cornucopiae in his left hand and facing our left. A female figure stands on his right. A worshipper kneels before him while other worshippers stand behind.[299]

κ) An uninscribed relief to the shrine's hero/deity seated on the right. He is holding a cornucopiae in his left hand and a phiale in his right which he is stretching towards three worshippers. A woman kneels at the feet of the hero/deity. Behind her is a standing man. Between them, in light relief, is a third figure who looks like a female child. Also in lighter relief is a heroine/goddess standing and facing none of the figures in the relief but straight at anyone viewing the relief. She appears to have long hair and to be wearing a polos. In her left hand she is holding a sceptre and in her right a phiale.[300]

λ) An uninscribed relief to the shrine's hero/deity. He is seated, bearded, on the right with a cornucopiae in his left hand and a phiale in his outstretched right. At his feet there is a low table covered in offerings - some of them look like fruits. To the left of the table there is a kneeling, female worshipper. Behind her stands a man and at the extreme left of the relief a girl carrying a large cista on her head. As in the preceding anaglyph a fixing tenon is preserved on the base.[301]

μ) A substantial part of an anaglyph depicting the hero/deity seated on a rock to the right of the relief and looking towards the left. In front of the hero/deity there appears to be an altar and at the extreme left edge there are traces of a boy leading an animal. Behind the altar is a female worshipper with her right arm stretched out towards the hero/deity.[302]

ν) Right side of a votive relief. There are four worshippers facing left. The hero/deity would have been depicted on the left. On the left of the surviving piece, and so nearest to the hero/deity is a kneeling woman. Behind her is a standing man with his right hand raised. Behind him come two more standing figures - a shorter, presumably younger woman, and a boy [303].

Until the full publication of the complete finds, that is all the certain information we have to go on. So what is the current interpretation of this material? The interpretations are all based, as has already been mentioned, on Professor Miliadis' observations and comments. He realised that Herakles - Pankrates and Herakles - Palaimon formed pairs united by the common factor [304]. Basing his judgement upon the Sidonian inscriptions, the link between Herakles and Palaimon and the known connection between Palaimon and Melicertes, he indicated a likely link between Sidonians living in Athens and the shrine [305]. Using the evidence of the two reliefs (ζ and θ) where a head is shown emerging from the ground he says: Διὰ νὰ μὴ ὑπάρξῃ δὲ πλέον καμμία ἀμφισβήτησις διὰ τὴν χθονίαν φύσιν τοῦ ἐνταῦθα λατρευομένου ἥρωος [306]. Then he makes the link with the two reliefs by continuing: ἡ ἐφετινὴ ἔρευνα μᾶς προσεκόμισε δύο ἀκόμη ἀναθηματικὰ ἀνάγλυφα, εἰς τὰ ὁποῖα εἰκονίζεται ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ λατρευομένου ἥρωος προβάλλουσα ἀπὸ τὴν γῆν[307]. All subsequent authors have followed this view:

"Deux des reliefs montrent le caractère chthonien de Pancratès (tête sortant du sol)" [308].

"This Pankrates seems to be a chthonian (underworld) deity, with healing powers, associated with Herakles, or even occa sionally identified with him (the name then being treated as an epithet). One dedication is made to yet another personage called Palaimon" [309].

One short descriptions sums up the current view - apart from her omission of the healing aspect:

"A chthonic aspect of Herakles came to light in the course of I. Miliadis' excavations of a sanctuary on the eastern bank of the Ilissos in 1953-4. The sanctuary belonged to Pankrates, a deity represented with the attributes of Herakles on many reliefs found on the site. Two of the reliefs reveal his chthonian character for they show him with his head emerging from the ground. A third,dedicated to 'Herakles Pankrates', proves that Pankrates

was a hypostasis of Heracles. Palaimon, who appears on numerous other reliefs represented bearded, seated, and holding a cornucopia, appears to be another hypostasis of Heracles. The sanctuary, the memory of which is preserved in the modern name of the district, Pancrati, may have belonged to a small Sidonian colony resident in Athens, for three of the dedicants came from Sidon".[310]

Although this is the universally held point of view at the moment[311] is it not possible to interpret the material differently? The reason why that question is being asked is because one of the two anaglyphs showing a head (ζ) also shows Herakles. That seems very strange if the head is meant to show the chthonic aspect of Herakles - Pankrates. The following is a humble suggestion for an alternative explanation.

What did a disembodied head jutting out of the ground as shown on an anaglyph mean to a fourth century B.C. inhabitant of Attica? At the beginning of this century the cave at Vari in Attica was excavated. The excavation produced what was at the time and probably still is, the single largest group of reliefs representing Hermes, the Nymphs and Pan[312]. Five almost intact reliefs and parts of two others were found. On each of three virtually intact reliefs and on one of the fragmentary reliefs there is a head emerging from the ground or rocky sides of the grotto which surrounds the anaglyphs[313]. On one, the first, the head was shown without horns but on the others the head was depicted with smaller or larger horns. Such reliefs were already well known from occasional finds elsewhere in and around Athens and Attica. Several of these showed the head without horns and emerging from the lower part of the walls of a rocky cavern.[314] There was never any doubt to whom this head belonged. The National Archaeological Museum in Athens now possesses similar reliefs to add to those from Vari[315]; from the cave of Parnes[316], from the Peiraieus[317] from Eleusis[318] (Plate 39) and from Hekale[319]. They all show the same scene and are mid to late fourth century B.C. By a strange coincidence another somewhat similar relief was discovered during excavations in the bed of the Ilissos at the end of the last century. This shows Herakles, Hermes and a god (whom the excavator linked with Zeus Melichios) sitting over a bearded head emerging from the ground! Beneath the head, just to eliminate

any possible doubt, is the name of the deity whose head it is - ΑΧΕΛΩΙΟΣ (Plate 40)[320]. It is possible that this anaglyph originated from our Pankrates shrine rather than one of the other shrines dotted along the banks of the Ilissos. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the head emerging from the ground or a rocky side in the two Pankrates reliefs (ζ and ϑ) is that of Ἀχελῷος.

Ἀχελῷος belongs to the environment of the Ilissos. He is after all a river god and often assumed the role of personification for any great river. He was regarded as "the primal river"[321]. Moreover he was the father of Kallirhoe and her spring poured water into the bed of the Ilissos about three metres away from where the inscribed anaglyph was found and not far south of the shrine of Herakles Pankrates. Kallirhoe's waters ran strongly until as recently as 1962[322]. If that explains the right of Ἀχελῷος to be present on the banks of the Ilissos, it still does not explain the connection with Herakles. Some such connection has long been known[323] although its nature has remained obscure.

When the Herakles-Pankrates shrine was excavated, it was assumed that the epithet 'Pankrates' had its usual connotation:

> τὸ ἐπίθετον "παγκρατής" ἀπὸ τὸ ὁποῖον βεβαίως ἐσχηματίσθη τὸ ὄνομα, ἀποδίδεται εἰς τὸν Δία, τὴν Ἥραν, τὴν Μοῖραν, τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν, τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα, ὄχι ὅμως εἰς τὸν Ἡρακλέα, ὅστις, ἄλλωστε οὐδαμοῦ ἀναφέρεται εἰς τὰ εὑρήματα[324].

However, the epithet παγκρατής also has another connotation. True, it has implications that one would not expect in a religious context, yet nonetheless there is no doubt that παγκρατής is cognate with παγκράτιον. The root meaning is obviously the same and is shared with the adjective κρατερός, the verb κρατέω and the noun κράτος along with many other cognates. The word παγκρατής thus means all-powerful but also contains hints of struggles, wrestling and the παγκράτιον. This may seem far-fetched but let us turn to the other epithet of Herakles at the Pankrates shrine - Παλαίμων. Is it coincidence that this word is derived from παλαίω along with the other derivatives - παλαιστής, παλαίστρα, etc.? Παλαίμων means 'wrestler'. True, as Professor Miliadis pointed out[325],

Herakles and Palaimon are identified on a Boeotian inscription[326] and this led him in the direction of Melicertes. However, things are often more than they seem and one thing can be true without contradicting the truth of something else. We know from a source dated to about 295 to 273 B.C. that Herakles was known as Palaimon[327] although in the same work the name is also used of Palaimon as Melicertes[328]. With such an obscure source as Lycophron one is grateful for the scholia which attempt to elucidate what Lycophron seems to obfuscate! The exact title which Lycophron gives Herakles is, in the genitive of the text, Κηραμύντου Πευκέως Παλαίμονος. These titles are explained by the scholia: Κηραμύντης ὁ/τὰς Ἡρακλῆς κῆρας δίωκων· ἀλεξίκακος γαρ[329]. As for the second epithet we are told: Πευκεὺς δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς ἐν Ἀβδήροις τιμᾶται[330]. Now we come to the third epithet: Παλαίμων ὁ Ἡρακλῆς διὰ τὸ παλαῖσαι αὐτὸν Ἀνταῖον ἢ Ἀχελῷον ἐν Αἰτωλίᾳ περὶ τοῦ γάμου Δηιανείρας τῆς Οἰνέως θυγατρός[331].

There is the clue needed to clinch the connection between Herakles and Ἀχελῷος. It was a theme well known to Athenians. Not only did they have pictures of the great river god in fountain - grottoes but they must have known in some detail of his struggle with Herakles:

μνηστὴρ γὰρ ἦν μοι ποταμός, Ἀχελῷον λέγω,
ὅς μ' ἐν τρισὶν μορφαῖσιν ἐξήτει πατρός,
φοιτῶν ἐναργὴς ταῦρος, ἄλλοτ' αἰόλος
δράκων ἑλικτός, ἄλλοτ' ἀνδρείῳ κύτει
βούπρῳρος· ἐκ δὲ δασκίου γενειάδος
κρουνοὶ διερραίνοντο κρηναίου ποτοῦ...
χρόνῳ δ' ἐν ὑστέρῳ μέν, ἀσμένῃ δέ μοι,
ὁ κλεινὸς ἦλθε Ζηνὸς Ἀλκμήνης τε παῖς·
ὃς εἰς ἀγῶνα τῶδε συμπεσων μάχης/ ἐκλύεται με[332].

However, it was probably not in literary form that the struggle was best known to the Athenians but in art. If his head alone or a mask-like face was the most usual way of showing him on the many known Attic "Nymphenreliefs"[333] and the seven or so other types of dedication[334] it was on Attic Black Figure[335] and Attic Red Figure[336] vases that he seems most frequently to have been depicted. Outside Attica he seems to have been more commonly portrayed in three-dimensional form, either in clay or bronze but he is also well known from cameos and gems[337].

yet there is a peculiarity about the way he is depicted on sixth and fifth century B.C. vases when compared to the anaglyptic evidence from the Pankrates shrine on the Ilissos. The literary evidence, however, provides the solution.

The peculiarity is that on the vase paintings Ἀχελῷος is shown in one of two ways - either as a bull with a man's head or as a creature most aptly described as being more Centaur-like than anything else[338]. The anaglyphs from the shrine of Pankrates, however, show us only a head (ζ) which we know is exactly how he is represented on the "Nymphenreliefs" or a complete bull (θ) with a distinctly bovine face! The face of Ἀχελῷος is shown separately on this anaglyph emerging from the bottom right corner. This seems to have no parallel in other artistic representations of the god but we do happen to know from Sophocles' account of the appearance of Ἀχελῷος[339], that the river god changed his form in the traditional display of polymorphic powers. One minute he was ἐναργὴς ταῦρος the next αἰόλος δράκων ἑλικτός and the next ἀνδρείῳ κύτει βούπρῳρος[340]. Other sources simplify the polymorphism and reduce it to only the bull-change:

> παραγενόμενος δὲ Ἡρακλῆς εἰς Καλυδῶνα τὴν Οἰνέως θυγατέρα Δηιάνειραν ἐμνηστεύετο, καὶ διαπαλαίσας ὑπὲρ τῶν γάμων αὐτῆς πρὸς Ἀχελῷον εἰκασμένον ταύρῳ περιέκλασε τὸ ἕτερον τῶν κεράτων[341].

It seems clear that the literary tradition, following the pattern of polymorphism exhibited by a contestant in a struggle, portrays Ἀχελῷος as changing himself entirely into a bull either as his only or as one of his several metamorphoses. Therefore the anaglyph from the shrine of Pankrates which shows an entire bull, face and all, with a separate human face (θ), is following the literary tradition in its depiction of the bull. The human face is added merely to indicate the significance of the bull and follows the convention established by the "Nymphenreliefs".

However, having solved one problem another presents itself. This problem concerns the compatibility of some vase painting evidence with the literary evidence. It is difficult to give an exact number but several vase paintings show Ἀχελῷοςwith only one horn while others show

him with the more normal two. It must be noted that the representations of him with one horn depict him as such during the contest and not after the removal of a horn. Sometimes it is difficult to be sure that only one horn is shown because Ἀχελῷος is in profile. There is an example where there is no possibility of doubt. This is a vase in the British Museum, an exquisite example of Attic Black Figure work at the end of the sixth century, which shows Herakles grasping the beard of Ἀχελῷος with his left HAND while with his right he is grasping a large, solitary horn projecting from the river god's forehead [342]. Just to add to the oddity of the discrepancy between portrayals of the number of horns, a literary source, albeit a late one, compounds the confusion:

> ..... tauro mutatus membra rebello,
> induit ille toris a laeva parte lacertos,
> admissumque trahens sequitur, depressaque dura
> cornua figit humo, meque alta sternit harena.
> nec satis hoc fuerat: rigidum fera dextera cornu
> dum tenet, infregit, truncaque a fronte revellit [343].

It is known that different layers of myth were attached to Ἀχελῷος from Homer, through Archilochos and onwards [344]. The author of the most recent study on Ἀχελῷος has worked out that the essential element of the contest was not Deianeira but the horn:

> "In der ältesten Form des
> Kampfmythos muss wohl das
> Füllhorn, über welches Acheloos verfügt,
> eine grosse Bedeutung gehabt haben.
> Sicher ging es in der ersten Fassung
> des Mythos nicht um den Besitz einer
> Frau, Deianeira, allein. Der Kampfpreis,
> der begehrte Gegenstand, muss
> vielmehr das Füllhorn gewesen sein" [345].

If this is true it explains why we have the odd confusion over whether Ἀχελῷος had only one or a pair of horns. Shown with one and the depiction is harking back to the "Füllhorn" origins of the story while shown with two and the version being shown is the one with the Deianeira theme introduced.

We seem to have come a long way from the initial attempt to re-explain the evidence from the Herakles - Pankrates shrine on the Ilissos. However, the "Füllhorn" or cornucopiae is in fact the final clue to an understanding of the shrine. If there were two stories, one about a cornucupiae and another about Deianeira, what is the point at which they meet? We know that the cornucopiae was the famous κέρας Ἀμαλθείας. Amaltheia was a goat, or possibly a nymph, who had horns flowing with nectar and honey [346]. A horn was broken off and its possessor had everything he could wish for [347]. One account uses Amaltheia to explain the constellation Capella [348]. A later version describes how the horn was given to Zeus. [349]

The other story is about Deianeira. Here there is the clash of the suitors with Ἀχελῷος losing his horn in the fight with Herakles. Obviously the loss of a horn is a factor in common with the story of Amaltheia but is there anything else? Who was Deianeira? She was the daughter of "the wine-man", and Ἄλθαια, "the Healer" [350]. Here is the last piece of the jigsaw puzzle. There is a parallel with the time when Herakles after the murder of Iphitus, while in a fit of madness, and an unsuccessful purification, went to Delphi and asked for a cure from Apollo. When the Pythian priestess failed to prophesy for him, Herakles tried to steal the tripod with a view to establishing his own oracle. Herakles and Apollo fought over the tripod and it was only the intervention of Zeus which brought the fight to an end. He then obtained his oracle [351]. In the case of the fight with Ἀχελῷος we have an even clearer example of the shamanistic struggle. We have already seen [352] that Ἀχελῷος was linked with purification. He is the "primal river" [353], his cult was propagated by the Oracle at Dodona [354], he is the father of the Acheloid water-nymphs who were themselves healers [355], he is given a place of honour in the healing shrine of Amphiaraos at Oropos where the altar was divided into panels - πέμπτη δὲ πεποίηται νύμφαις καὶ Πανὶ καὶ ποταμοῖς Ἀχελῴῳ καὶ Κηφισῷ[356], his daughter Kallirhoe provided the water for the bridal bath, his daughters the Nymphs were worshipped in the spring house of the Asklepieion on the south slope of the Acropolis [357] and he had an established cult in Attica wherever there were springs to judge from the "Nymphenreliefs" and elsewhere, especially on the Ilissos. Plato mentions

a cult of Ἀχελῷος [358] and the so-called 'Nani Relief' links Ἀχελῷος not only with Hermes, the Nymphs and Pan but also with Demeter, Persephone and an unnamed hero [359]. He is associated with what is almost certainly a healing, gynaecological cult of the river Kephisos in the Peiraieus where he was included as a dedicatee along with Artemis Lochia, Eileithyia, Kallirhoe and the Nymphs as genethliai [360]. Lastly, his daughters the Nymphs along with Hermes and Pan are closely associated with the healing cult of Asklepios [361]. Is it not quite probable, therefore, that the struggle between Herakles and Ἀχελῷος is about the possession or sharing of healing powers? In true shamanistic fashion Ἀχελῷος changes shape and tries every trick he knows in an attempt to avoid sharing or handing over his powers. His opponent, Herakles, however, is stronger and finally forces him to submit. The winner, in one version, receives the hand of Deianeira in marriage. In the other version the winner receives the κέρας Ἀμαλθείας. Apollodorus links the two:

> καὶ τὴν μὲν Δηιάνειραν γαμεῖ, τὸ δὲ κέρας Ἀχελῷος λαμβάνει, δοὺς ἀντὶ τούτου τὸ τῆς Ἀμαλθείας. Ἀμάλθεια δὲ ἦν Αἰμονίου θυγάτηρ, ἣ κέρας εἶχε ταύρου. τοῦτο δέ, ὡς Φερεκύδης λέγει, δύναμιν ἔχει τοιαύτην ὥστε βρωτὸν ἢ ποτόν, ὅπερ (ἂν) εὔξαιτό τις, παρέχειν ἄφθονον[362].

The κέρας Ἀμαλθείας, one might add, gave even more than food and drink. It gave its possessor the power to grant all kinds of good things to those requesting favours. As the name implies, the power of healing was also possessed by the owner of the κερας Ἀμαλθείας. One would expect, if this theory is true, to see the winner of the struggle bearing the fruits of his victory and that is precisely what we find. Palaimon named on one anaglyph (ε) and Pankrates on another (η) are carrying particularly conspicuous examples of the κέρας Ἀμαλθείας and the same is true of uninscribed anaglyphs (ι, κ and λ). The epithets of Herakles themselves point to his struggle while the bull (anaglyph θ) and the head emerging from the ground (ζ and θ) point to his opponent. The votive offerings of a leg (β) and an arm [363] point to the successful use of his power in healing those who had come to his shrine to implore his help.

If this theory about the nature of Herakles - Pankrates - Palaimon is true, then we have no need to postulate a chthonic nature for the shrine's occupant. That in turn leaves the way clear to agree with Professor Miliadis' suggestion about a Sidonian connection with this shrine [364] at least to the extent that it seems likely that Phoenicians identified the Herakles there with the Melqart of their own country [365]. It has been suggested that the shrine "may have belonged to a small Sidonian colony resident in Athens" [366]. If so, there is evidence to suggest that it had been sufficiently integrated into the Greek pattern for it not to be exclusively Phoenician. There are several Sidonians involved in the shrine's inscriptions [367] and one can speculate that for them the shrine's deity was both their own Eshmun and the Tyrian (and more widely Phoenician) Melqart. As well, a Boeotian connection cannot be ruled out. Professor Miliadis referred to the Herakles - Palaimon inscription from Koroneia [368] and it seems too much of a coincidence that Ἀχελῷος had mythological connections with Koroneia [369].

At this point in time - before the full publication of the finds from the Pankrates shrine - it is not possible to be certain about how the shrine functioned. However, if the theory outlined above is true, we may speculate about some probabilities. For example, being on the Ilissos would obviously indicate that the shrine's connection with Ἀχελῷος was central to the way the shrine operated. The water of the river was therefore probably used for cleansing and healing purposes. Running water was particularly suitable [370]. We cannot be absolutely certain that the water was thus used for at Oropos, we are told quite explicitly, the stream emerging from a spring was not so used. Instead, when someone was cured, it was the custom for that person to throw a silver or gold coin into the spring ταύτῃ γὰρ ἀνελθεῖν τὸν Ἀμφιάραον λέγουσιν ἤδη θεόν [371]. This amounts to saying that the stream was virtually an epiphany of the hero turned god [372]. Since the Ilissos was a river and Ἀχελῷος was the primal river, the waters there too would have been a virtual personification of the Ἀχελῷος. Yet there is another aspect to rivers and their symbolism which makes it likely that the Ilissos waters were used in the healing process. "Auch der Fluss ist also Ort der Fülle" [373], and this Fülle or abundance comes from the quickening or life-giving qualities of

of water and especially flowing water [374]. It was this Fülle that was transferred, under the symbolism of the Füllhorn, from Ἀχελῷος to Herakles so that it is the latter who gains the power to quicken and heal. By a fortunate coincidence we even know of another healing water shrine dedicated to Ἀχελῷος and the Nymphs that was taken over by a different healer - that at Lebena taken over by Asklepios [375]. Almost certainly, the waters of the river were among the means he used to effect those cures because water can bring about change just as water-divinities can change themselves [376]. The nymphs are also water-divinities, bringers of luck and fertility, and healers [377]. They share in and help to impart the powers inherent in the waters they preside over. Along with the rivers, the nymphs and Apollo were given the task of bringing young men to their prime [378]. That, of course, is why offerings of hair were made to rivers as κουροτρόφοι [379] and why dreams of rivers were a sign of offspring for the dreamer [380].

There seems little doubt about a Phoenician and specifically Sidonian involvement in the shrine [381] and it has already been speculated that these Phoenicians saw a reflection of Eshmun and Melqart in Herakles Pankrates [382]. The Phoenician Melqart has obvious connections with Herakles Pankrates and Melicertes - Palaimon [383]. Is it a coincidence that the name Melqart is made up of two stems mlk and qrt and means "Ruler of the city" [384], while Παγκρατής contains the exact Greek equivalent of mlk which is the κρατ stem while the παν would admirably express for a Phoenician the position of Melqart as a chief deity? [385]. It has for some time been fashionable to assert that Melicertes - Palaimon has no Phoenician connection and that although his and his mother's story have a respectably old pedigree [386] the cult of Melicertes - Palaimon is almost certainly late [387]. It is not possible in all likelihood to prove that the Herakles Pankrates of our shrine originated out of a Phoenician cult of Melqart but that Phoenicians saw in Herakles Pankrates an almost exact equivalent of their Melqart, with Eshmun characteristics added, is, in view of the proven Phoenician involvement in the shrine, almost certain. This is turn lends weight to the proposal that the goddess shown in anaglyph (k) [388] is Leukothea [389] who was a saviour goddess. In particular Leukothea and Palaimon "were invoked as saviors to whom prayers were

addressed and dedications offered for calm and safety from the sea in many parts of the Mediterranean"[390]. Is it again coincidence that the Phoenician Melqart too had marine attributes?[391] Finally, of course, we have seen that for saviour deities salvation from storm and shipwreck formed only part of a much wider therapeutic role[392].

The shrine of Herakles Pankrates seems to have had a very chequered history. It probably originated as a water-grotto dedicated to Achelous and the Nymphs and its waters are likely to have been credited with generally beneficial qualities even during the fifth century B.C. During the early part of the fourth century, if not slightly earlier, Herakles assumes the major role in the shrine which now houses a proper healing cult. This Herakles was at the least identified with Melqart by Phoenicians who became actively involved with the shrine. Finally there are signs of yet a further layer of syncretism insofar as there are indications that the cult of Alexander the Great as Ἡρακλῆς Παγκράτης affected the shrine at least iconographically.[393]

8. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how heroes, often men skilled in boxing, wrestling and the pankration, could become healers working for the welfare of their communities after their heroisation.

The main community concerns were λιμός and λοιμός and accordingly these were the major areas of operation for such heroes. The same two problems could also be dealt with by sages, often foreigners, who were reputed to have the wisdom and the power to deal with them. We have seen that Athens had several fighting heroes among its healing deities and that it was helped in times of λιμός and λοιμός by more than one sage although only one seems to have retained a continuing cult. We have looked at a possible site of healing and purifying in the Peiraieus. This site certainly involved bathing even if it cannot be proved that this had a religious or healing significance. This led to a discussion of Athens' most recently discovered healing shrine - that of Herakles Pankrates. This cult is generally thought to be chthonic but a new interpretation of the material has been put forward.

This new interpretation would see Herakles as the supreme pankratiast and his opponent as a river god. Layers of symbolism have been suggested. If these are correct, then the shrine of Herakles Pankrates incorporates almost all of the other ideas seen in this chapter. Herakles was an athletic hero who wrestled in a contest and the prize was the power to dispense largesse including cures. Herakles cured the community problems of λοιμός and λιμός but he also seems to have gained the power to cure individuals. Finally, it is suggested that his opponent, a river-god, and the siting of the shrine on the Ilissos indicate the likelihood of the life-giving, running water of the Ilissos being an important part of the shrine's curing role.

Overall conclusions.

Overall conclusions

'When the goddess was angry with me, she made me become ill.

...Remove my transgressions (and) I will sing thy praise.

May thy heart, like the heart of a real mother, be quieted toward me;

Like a real mother (and) a real father may it be quieted toward me.'

Seventh century B.C. Sumero-Akkadian
prayer to every god to claim relief
from suffering.

Religions of the Ancient Near East - Sumero-Akkadian Religious Texts and Ugaritic Epics. ed. I. Mendelsohn, (New York, 1955), pp. 176-7.

In this survey of minor healing cults within the City Trittyes several facts have emerged. Seen in isolation each cult often presents no very striking picture. When combined, however, the facts about several cults often allow some interesting and profitable conclusions to be drawn. One of the most immediately obvious conclusions is the relatively late date of the material. The vast bulk of the evidence is fourth century B.C. or later. There is a smaller amount of evidence from the late fifth century B.C. and the least evidence for any healing cult prior to about 430 B.C. Upon investigation any evidence earlier than that date seems to be different in kind to material later than c. 430 B.C. In the case of Zeus Meilichios the evidence for an earlier cult is basically literary and not without a certain ambivalence. Yet that ambivalence centres upon his nature as a chthonic deity and does not radically affect any discussion of his healing role. At most a purificatory and fertility role is all that can be argued as belonging to him until about the end of the fifth century. From that time onwards there is a detectable change towards family concerns and especially health. The archaeological evidence clearly shows the process of syncretism by which Zeus Meilichios became closely identified with other caring, healing deities such as Zeus Philios while the whole group was iconographically influenced most strongly by the Asklepios tradition which took root in Athens in 420.

Of other healing cults which provide some evidence of existence in some shape or form before c. 430 the evidence for Amynos lies in the architectural remains of his shrine and, less convincingly, in some sherds of pottery. The sherds are not convincing evidence because of the lack of any secure proof of their stratigraphical position especially in view of the overwhelming amount of material of later date. The architectural evidence is sound and certainly proves the existence of some sort of shrine well before 430. What is worrying is that the epigraphic evidence, along with all the other archaeological material indicating a healing shrine, indicates a date of post 430. What seems likely, therefore, is that a specifically healing role was added to the more general work of Amynos. In view of the lateness of the first mention of the hero's name it is also distinctly possible that Amynos was not the first incumbent of the shrine. Somewhere around the end of the fifth century he may have replaced the original inhabitant. Alternatively the original hero of the shrine may

have been anonymous and Amynos the name given to him at the later date.

Some of the maieutic deities/heroes and river gods also have a pedigree which goes back well before 430. It is noticeable in each case, however, that a profound difference exists in the nature of the evidence for the cult in the earlier and later periods. In the earlier period the cult is that of a fertility deity or a culture hero. In the later period there is specific evidence of a healing role. Often this still includes a fertility aspect but this seems to have been sharpened from a general fertility function to a much more specific, gynaecological role.

The question inevitably arises as to why deities and heroes acquired so sharply defined a healing role from 430 onwards. The answer has become progressively clearer as a link between one deity or hero after another and the Great Plague became apparent. This is not to say that all healing deities and heroes acquired their role at that time. Instead, what seems most likely is that some few deities and heroes were specifically introduced as a result of the plague while the remainder gained their healing role as the result of a complex series of changes arising out of the aftermath of the plague. There is little doubt that the plague must have dealt those within the Long Walls a stunning blow. The sheer statistics of mortality are terrifying enough but the utter helplessness they must have felt - especially when combined with despair as they noticed people they loved and respected rapidly succumbing to the disease - must have profoundly affected the whole psychological outlook of many if not most of the survivors. Such a change would surely have been consolidated by the final defeat and humiliation of Athens at the end of the Peloponnesian war.

This evident defeat and humiliation for Athens must also have affected the Athenians' confidence in their city's eponymous goddess. Apollo too did not emerge unscathed for his oracle had shown itself far from impartial. The Athenians also never regained that pinnacle of importance in the Greek world that they could lay claim to from the time of Marathon until the beginning of disaster in the Peloponnesian War. After the plague and certainly after the end of the war, the Athenian vision must have been more introspective. There is certainly evidence that family and personal concerns, especially health, increased in importance. To whom could they

turn? Not to Athena nor Apollo - they were largely discredited. There were other deities and heroes, however, who could fill the gap. Asklepios had been introduced specifically as a personal, healing deity and others shared his role.

Asklepios must have been a seminal influence on many deities and hereoes who already had or acquired a healing role. The iconographic influence has already been mentioned. There are detectable similarities in approaches to healing - the use of water was a commonplace but the series of ex-votos seems to start with those to Asklepios and his family in the Asklepieion south of the Acropolis. As far as is known there is not a single plaque belonging to any healing cult which can be safely dated to before 420. These ex-votos indicate the family care of the healing deities, their response to gynaecological problems and their widening response to a growing number of problems related to eyesight, unwanted growths, varicose veins etc. There is hardly a single case of healing illustrated by epigraphic or anaglyptic evidence for one of the lesser divinities within the City Trittyes that can not be paralleled within the Asklepian tradition. It looks likely, therefore, that Asklepios formed the central strand in a process of syncretism which involved probably all the other healing deities. This syncretistic movement wove many disparate features from several, different backgrounds into a healing pattern that is recognisable in many cults. The use of water, the necessity of faith and humility, the presumption that the deity or hero cared for human concerns, the promise of an ex-voto after a cure or the making of some dedication in the hope of a cure - all of these formed part of a general pattern. The bearded, caring hero or deity recurs in the iconography of many cults as does some sort of caring mother-figure.

Just as Asklepios' influence seems to have permeated most of the healing cults to some degree or another, so too another evolutionary process is detectable. This is the gradual diminution of the role of theriomorphic and nature deities and their replacement by anthropomorphic heroes and deities who could more easily engage an Athenian's trust that the divinity was concerned with human affairs. It is noticeable that the theriomorphic aspects of the Egyptian deities are almost entirely absent among the evidence for their cult. The overshadowing of Achelous by Heracles is another

indication of the same process.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the healing cults within the City Trittyes is the number of occasions upon which the path of investigation into the associations and possible origins of a cult leads to Middle Eastern regions. Sometimes, as with the Egyptian deities, it is possible to pin-point a probable line of ingress into Athens, in this case via Delos. Frequently, however, the path peters out leaving us with no clear-cut explanation as to the precise origins of a cult or deity. Phoenicia is the source most frequently mentioned but Phoenician religion is still but imperfectly known due partly to lack of information and partly to problems of interpretation[1].

Of all the influential peoples of the Mediterranean it is the Phoenicians of the Archaic and Classical periods who are the most shadowy. We have tantalising glimpses of them in Greek literature[2] going right back even to Homer[3]. As far as religion is concerned we sometimes seem to have clearer knowledge of Greek involvement in Phoenician religion than vice versa[4]. However, this in itself is a useful start since it proves a connection between the two sets of beliefs.

Recent research has shown that the extensive network of seafaring and trading links forged by the Phoenicians, particularly around the Aegean, contributed greatly to the dissemination of their cults especially of Saviour deities who included the sea and those who sailed on it as part of their concern[5]. We have seen how that particular aspect frequently allied itself to a healing role as part of the general, caring function of Saviour deities.

The recent work has confirmed what we already knew in embryonic form of the spread of Phoenician beliefs across the eastern basin of the Mediterranean. We knew of their foundation of Kition (modern Larnaka) in Cyprus, their ties with Paphos and from there with Phoinike (modern Finike) near Cape Gelidonya in Turkey and from there with Athens and Thebes[6]. It had also been known for some time that the ancient god of Cyprus,'MKL' (Mukul), was at a very early period identified with the Phoenician Rešef and only later with the Greek Apollo and Zeus Keraunios[7]. In Athens itself the presence of Phoenicians is illustrated somewhat sketchily by a

reasonable quantity of epigraphic evidence. We know of several from bilingual inscriptions: an inhabitant of Ascalon mentioned on a bilingual tombstone[8] of the second century B.C.; a Phoenician from Byzantium on a tombstone[9]; an inhabitant of Kition mentioned on a tombstone found in Athens and dating from the third century B.C.[10]; two unplaced Phoenicians, one from a tombstone where only the Phoenician inscription survives[11] and another, also unplaced, from an altar with only a Phoenician inscription and found in the Peiraieus[12]; finally there are the Sidonians mentioned on three bilingual inscriptions: a man mentioned on a tombstone found in Athens and dated to the third or second century B.C.[13]; a woman from Sidon mentioned on a tombstone found in the Peiraieus[14]; and a decree telling us about an entire colony of Sidonians[15]. Another Sidonian is mentioned in passing as the person who erected the tombstone of the inhabitant of Ascalon[16].

Other Phoenicians are mentioned in purely Greek inscriptions. From non-sepulchral epigraphic evidence we know of Phoenicians from Aradus (modern Ruad in Syria)[17], Ascalon[18], four from Berytus (modern Beirut)[19], nine from Sidon[20] and six from Tyre[21]. Yet more Phoenicians are known from sepulchral inscriptions from Athens and the Peiraieus so the sum-total is quite high.

The inscriptions from the Herakles Pankrates shrine, when fully published, will extend considerably our knowledge of Phoenician involvement with Attic cults. What surely is no coincidence is the number of Sidonians involved in the cult of Herakles Pankrates. Firstly, Sidonians seem to have formed the single largest grouping of Phoenicians in Athens and the Peiraieus[22] and, secondly, Sidonians certainly knew of the great healing centre of Eschmoun on the outskirts of Sidon. It used to be thought that this centre was functioning at a later rather than an earlier date in comparison with the start of the Asklepian cult in Athens in 420 B.C.[23]. We now know, however, that the healing shrine of Eschmoun was functioning well before that date. This new information comes from a favissa discovered on site in May 1964 which contained eleven statuettes of children which 'avaient été consacrées au dieu en reconnaissance de la guérison des enfants qu'elles représentaient'[24]. One of the statue bases was dedicated by a future king of Sidon named Baʿalchillem whose dates, we know from numismatic evidence, fall within the Persian period. His father, King Baʿana, was reigning at the time of the dedication which would probably put

its date at about 430 B.C.[25] The actual building of the temple itself goes back to the end of the sixth or beginning of the fifth century B.C.[26]

Our knowledge of Phoenician shrines, especially any with a healing role, could not until recently be pushed back any further. The discovery of a Phoenician temple at Kition dating back to about 600 B.C.[27] and, most recently, the excavation of an eighth to fourth century B.C. shrine of Tanit-Ashtart at Sarepta in Lebanon, complete with a favissa containing numerous ex-votos, many of them Egyptian and including fourteen 'Eyes of Horus'[28], have given Phoenician scholars hope of more information to come. Apart from the mass of evidence attesting a syncretistic cult with the Egyptian element being particularly strong, the most interesting Sarepta votives are the terracotta figurines either of women holding a bird or of seated, pregnant women, the latter type being common throughout Phoenicia, Palestine and Cyprus and probably being of fifth century date[29].

What evidence have we that Phoenician religious ideas reached Athens and the Peiraieus? We have the epigraphic evidence mentioned earlier to show that they were well represented from the fourth century B.C. onwards but what of the fifth? The fourth century and later material testifies to the fact that many Phoenicians must actually have been living in Athens and the Peiraieus by that time. Lack of evidence for the fifth century does not prove that no Phoenicians were there at that time but may indicate residence is unlikely. More likely is that any Phoenicians in the earlier period were traders.

> 'The invasion of the western mind by eastern religious ideas is not something which happened once in ancient history. It happened once on an overwhelming scale; but in principle it is a recurrent phenomenon, something which reappears like the plague whenever the conditions favor its emergence - that is to say, roughly, whenever immigration from the East has been sufficiently intense and prolongued, and at the same time the western mind is sufficiently discouraged to be receptive. These conditions coexisted at Athens during the later years of the Peloponnesian war. For more than half a century past the trade of the East had been flowing into the Piraeus, bringing with it thousands of eastern slaves and eastern metics; at the same time, under the cumulative strain

> of war, faith in reason, faith in progress, faith in democracy, faith in the whole fifth century way of thinking and living, were steadily ebbing away from the Athenian people. The conditions were present, and there is a good deal of scattered evidence which indicates that the usual results followed'.[30]

That excerpt is from an article discussing the arrival of Sabazios/Dionysos as a possible background to the writing by Euripides of the Bacchae. Part of the point of the article, however, is the sheer number of foreign cults which seem to have penetrated Athens during the second half of the fifth century B.C. It is probably to precisely this period that Xenophon is referring in a passage which explicitly links Syrians with the influx of Lydians and Phrygians: Λυδοὶ καὶ Φρύγες καὶ Σύροι καὶ ἄλλοι παντοδαποὶ βάρβαροι· πολλοὶ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι τῶν μετοίκων[31]. The general influx of cults at the same time was also widely parodied in comedy not just by Aristophanes but by Cratinos and Eupolis and then Apollophanes in his Κρῆτες at the turn of the century and by Theopompos into the fourth century[32].

One of the major reasons why so many strange deities from foreign lands should have been accepted at this time was the result, not just of the presence of many foreigners in Athens and the Peiraieus, but of a positive search for new deities. This was probably prompted first by a desire to find a deity who would bring the plague to an end and secondly, after the plague, by a desire to find more effective and caring deities. There are some eighteen quasi-historical instances of the Delphic Oracle alone being asked for a response indicating a cure for some plague or other[33]. There are a further nineteen legendary instances of the same request[34]. The response of the oracle was frequently to enjoin the appeasement of some deity as was the case after the murder of the Metragyrtes[35]. Sometimes the response was to enjoin the establishment of a new cult as was the case with Theseus[36]. At the outbreak of the Great Plague the Athenians asked the advice of Apollo and were told to set up an image of the god[37]. The establishment of a cult to a god/goddess or hero as a means of bringing a plague to an end was extremely common. There was a tradition that the Athenians had accepted the worship of Dionysus only as a result of exactly such an oracle after an outburst of plague[38]. The Romans later reputedly accepted Asklepios under identical circumstances[39]. Apollo at one or other

of his oracle-sites continued to be concerned with plague oracles well into the Christian era with his oracle at Claros being particularly associated with oracles arising from an outbreak of plague[40].

The underlying assumption in many of these remedies prescribed by the god, especially in instances of cult establishment, is that the hero or deity had been directly or indirectly offended. The deed which caused offence may have been intentional or accidental or perhaps even unknown. This was the terrifying aspect of the plague recounted by Thucydides - the fact that the apparently virtuous were not immune: διεφθείροντο, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἀρετῆς τι μεταποιούμενοι[41]. This concept of an offended deity causing a plague or illness which could be transmitted by social contact can first be traced in the Sumerian and Akkadian texts known as the Šurpu tablets[42] and dating from the Middle Babylonian period, 1350-1050 B.C. These tablets contain incantations used to reverse a māmītu or curse and were designed to be used with a group of incantations known as Ilī-ul-īdi, literally ' My god, I do not know (what my sin is)'[43].

A closely related concept is to be found in Semitic culture where the best example is in a passage in the book of Leviticus[44]. Here a guilty man is asked to confess and bring a guilt offering. 'In effect, the man had violated a māmītu, one of the cardinal taboos of society, and was bringing an 'šm offering in the hope of breaking the curse inherent in the oath'[45]. Mention of the 'šm or 'āšām brings us to other members of the Semitic group of languages. The word is first found in Ugaritic and continues in subsequent Semitic branches including Phoenician. Here too:

> 'Disease was considered the result of some fault or guilt ('āšām) that had first to be identified and then atoned. The patient had to have recourse to priests who, by the usual way of divination, established what guilt had caused the disease and administered for it a sacred fine (also called 'āšām) to be paid to the sanctuary of the god offended by the committed transgression. Paying the 'āšām was supposed to automatically bring upon a recovery.'[46]

Plague was a particularly terrifying time in cultures where ritual purity was important because not only did the first person to catch it feel that he must have transgressed some divine law but also because those

who subsequently came into contact with him automatically became ritually defiled. The defilement would then be seen as automatically leading to punishment and so too they would contract the disease. Again a person might not have known that he/she had been ritually defiled until he/she contracted the disease. This was true of the Leviticus passage too for:

> "Twice in Lev. V the text reads wnʿlm mmnw whw' ydʿ w' šm, 'it was hidden from him, and he knows it, and becomes culpable'. The phrase whw'ydʿ does not mean, however, that the individual knew what his exact sin was, but only that he had sinned and was guilty, perhaps because he was suffering from some ailment or disease"[47].

The šurpu ritual was basically one of sympathetic magic but the concept of 'āšām was closer to sacrificial expiation in which guilt and its concomitant result, the illness, were removed by the offering of a sacrificial victim. The Sumerian/Akkadian šurpu ritual may not have been a direct and logical progenitor of the 'āšām concept but certainly 'similar psychological processes were at work'[48].

We saw earlier[49] that Cyprus was a meeting place for Cypriot, Phoenician and Greek ideas and that the ancient god of Cyprus, 'MKL', (Mukul) had at a very early period been identified with the Phoenicial god Rešef who in turn was later identified with Apollo and Zeus Keraunios. Rešef, who was basically a god of light, was also the Phoenician plague god so it comes as no surprise that the Delphic oracle, at the onset of the Great Plague in Athens, instructed the Athenians to avert the plague by setting up a statue of the god[50]. Such a procedure would have been common practice in both the Greek and Phoenician cultures. It did not work. The plague continued unabated.

In the Phoenician world there could have been an alternative solution, especially in problems of illness. It has already been mentioned that 'paying the 'āšām was supposed to automatically bring upon a recovery'[51]. What is intriguing is that:

> 'Therefore the healer-god, too, received the name 'Āšām... The Phoenicial healer-god 'Ešmun bears the same name with the suffix -un'[52]

It is a strong possibility, therefore, that at the time of the Great Plague, when traditional means of ending it failed, the Phoenician god

Eschmoun, in his hellenised form as Asklepios, was promoted as the god to cleanse Athens of its guilt and to put an end to the plague. His relationship to Apollo in the Greek pantheon would have strengthened this role. Perhaps his formal introduction into Athens in 420 was the official and public side of a promise made less formally during the time of the plague. If this is the case it is not surprising that Asklepios/Eschmoun retained the custom of ritual purity which required no contact with birth, let alone death, even though the health of the mother and child was of great concern to him. Such ritual purity would have been essential to a god who presided over the purification or healing of those who had become ill through a breach of the rules of ritual purity.

ὅτι ὁ ἐν Βηρυτῷ, φησίν, Ἀσκληπιὸς οὐκ ἔστιν Ἕλλην οὐδὲ Αἰγύπτιος, ἀλλά τις ἐπιχώριος Φοῖνιξ[53]. Certainly this was a strong tradition but in later times when faced with some such Phoenician argument a Greek could feel quite justified in replying: ἐγὼ δὲ ἀποδέχεσθαι μὲν τὰ εἰρημένα, οὐδὲν δέ τι Φοινίκων μᾶλλον ἢ καὶ Ἑλλήνων ἔφην τὸν λόγον[54].

If the Sidonian healing god was put forward by Phoenician influences in Athens and the Peiraieus as a suggested cure for the plague, then the plague's cessation may well have been attributed, at least in part, to the god's intervention. This would have resulted in the rapid growth of his popularity and the appearance of other, specifically healing cults. The personal dependence of the sufferer upon the healer and the caring concern of the divinity for the believer are aspects of the man/god relationship which appear to have emerged most strongly from the Great Plague and the Peloponnesian War. The new 'Saviour' deities dealt not only with health but a wide range of activities especially safety at sea. It is interesting that we have clues to so many of these 'Saviours' that link them with Phoenician customs. An example is the Πάταικοι, the pygmy figures placed on the prow or stern of Phoenician ships[55]. These were almost certainly the Kabeiroi who were shown as pygmy figures, the sons of the Egyptian god Ptah[56]. Their subsequent role in the Greek world as saviour deities is precisely what we would expect to find if their cult had been first promulgated by travelling Phoenician merchants. The same is true of Melqart whom the Greeks both directly encountered at Tyre[57] and whom they could see worshipped on Thasos, where the Phoenicians were the first to discover gold[58]. Melicertes may simply have been a seafarers' form of Melqart.[59]

The introduction of 'Saviour' deities at the end of the Peloponnesian War, the continuation of their maritime role[60], the enlargement of their role to cover problems of health, the introduction of a powerful, foreign healing-deity, the rapid spread of his influence, the growing concern with family and personal health, a massive growth in concern with having children after the depopulation caused by the Great Plague, the failure of 'home-grown' deities - especially civic deities - to help them, the openness to any deities with a history of care for humans, the openness to foreign deities after years of cosmopolitan influence, - these are the threads that make up the pattern of healing cults in the City Trittyes in the aftermath of the Great Plague.