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**Bronwen Lara Wickkiser**

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**The Dissertation Committee for Bronwen Lara Wickkiser certifies that this  
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**The Appeal of Asklepios and the Politics of Healing  
in the Greco-Roman World**

**Committee:**

---

**Lesley Dean-Jones, Supervisor**

---

**Erwin Cook**

---

**Fritz Graf**

---

**Karl Galinsky**

---

**L. Michael White**

**The Appeal of Asklepios and the Politics of Healing  
in the Greco-Roman World**

by

**Bronwen Lara Wickkiser, B.A., M.A.**

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# **The Appeal of Asklepios and the Politics of Healing in the Greco-Roman World**

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Bronwen Lara Wickkiser, Ph.D.  
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Supervisor: Lesley Dean-Jones

The cult of the Greek healing god Asklepios was one of the most popular cults in all of antiquity. Over the course of a millennium beginning in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, sanctuaries of Asklepios spanned the Greco-Roman world and attracted countless individuals in search of cures.

Scholars have long studied the cult in accordance with dichotomies like rational vs. irrational and public vs. private. These dichotomies are not only misleading when applied to Asklepios-cult, pitting it against “rational” Greek medicine and placing it beyond the political interests of the state, but have driven the cult into interpretive gridlock. Consequently, fundamental questions about the cult’s development remain unanswered.

This study begins by exploring why the cult only arose in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC despite the fact that Asklepios had been known as a healer since Homer. Adducing evidence from the Hippocratic corpus, I argue that developments in Greek medicine were critical to the rise of the cult in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. As Greek medicine began to define itself as a *technē* and to delimit its boundaries by specifying the kinds of illnesses that it could and could not treat, it generated

a void in healing. The god Asklepios, whose mythology portrayed him as a trained physician, was ideal for filling the void left by mortal medicine.

Since translocal factors alone fail to explain the spread of Asklepios-cult, this study next examines local factors that motivated Athens and Rome, two of antiquity's best-documented cities, to import Asklepios. Analysis of the placement of the cult within both the topography of Athens and the Athenian civic calendar, indicates that Athens' immediate motivation for importing Asklepios in 420 BC was not plague (as many have argued) but imperial ambitions in the context of the Peloponnesian War.

Similarly, examination of ancient sources for the cult's importation to Rome, as well as of the topography of the area surrounding Aesculapius' sanctuary there, demonstrates that Rome imported Aesculapius ca. 291 BC not because of a literal plague, but in response to a metaphorical plague manifest in the Samnite Wars, Demetrios Poliorketes, and the patrician-plebeian struggle.

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## INTRODUCTION

Leaning on his staff around which the serpent was coiled,  
[Asklepios] revealed himself to the race of mortals unremittingly  
and without envy.... He was the savior, mightier and stronger than  
any other deity; he was the lover of man, kinder and more  
benevolent than any other god, lending his hand to help mankind.  
—Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius*, vol. 2, p. 65.

Asklepios-cult was one of the most popular cults in all of antiquity. Beginning in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, visitors flocked to the sanctuaries of this healing god in the hope of meeting him in a dream wherein he would perform a medical procedure or prescribe a regimen for cure. Evidence as various as healing inscriptions, votive dedications, temple inventories, and literary accounts from comedy to autobiography attest to the popularity of the cult from Hispania in the west to Ekbatana in the east, and from Britain in the north to Cyrene in the south until the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD.

In the mythological tradition, Asklepios, son of Apollo and a mortal woman, was trained as a healer by the centaur Cheiron, and became famous for his healing skills. When one day Asklepios brought a dead man back to life, however, Zeus killed Asklepios with a thunderbolt and hurled him into Hades. Some time later, Asklepios was released from Hades and elevated to the ranks of the Olympians as a healing deity. Although details of the tradition vary (e.g., the identity of his mother, the place of his birth, and the identity of the mortal whom he raised from the dead), its focus throughout antiquity remained Asklepios' skill as a healer, both while mortal and later when deified.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of Asklepios persists today. His iconographic trademark, a walking staff entwined by a serpent, is featured on the seals of most medical

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<sup>1</sup> For ancient sources on Asklepios, and discussion of his myth, see Edelstein 1945 (esp. T. 1-122; vol. 2, p. 22-53).

associations, including the World Health Organization.<sup>2</sup> Asklepios has gone global.

Moreover, various healing sanctuaries today function similarly to those of Asklepios, with the sick bedding down, waiting for a cure. This is true of Lourdes in France and Panagia Evangelistria on Tinos in Greece, to name but two of the most prominent. Many of these sanctuaries contain medical facilities, such as hospitals.

Asklepios' appeal extends also to the groves of academe where he has attracted the attention of scholars of magic, religion, medicine, and dreams. As a result, a large body of work on Asklepios and his cult has developed since the late 19<sup>th</sup> c.

## **I. Review of Scholarship**

Modern scholarship on Asklepios-cult began at about the same time as the earliest excavations of Asklepios' sanctuaries. Excavations at Athens and Epidauros got underway in the 1870s and 1880s, respectively.<sup>3</sup> And in the 1880s and 1890s, Eduard Thraemer published two articles summarizing ancient literary references to the cult (Thraemer 1884 in Rosher, and 1896 in *RE*).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Alice Walton produced the first monograph on Asklepios-cult in the Greco-Roman world (Walton 1894).

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<sup>2</sup> Several of the seals, including that of the World Health Organization, are depicted in Hart 2001.

<sup>3</sup> The sanctuary at Athens was excavated by the Greeks in 1876-1877, along with all of the terraces on the south slope of the Acropolis from the theater of Dionysus to the Odeion of Herodes Atticus. As Aleshire 1989 (5) points out, not only was a large tract of land excavated in a short period of time, but that tract had been used as a dump for excavations on the summit of the Acropolis from 1840-1870, further compounding the excavation effort. Excavations at Epidauros were begun by the Greeks in 1881. See Semeria 1986 *ad loc.* for excavation history and bibliography relevant to both sites. Semeria compiles the literary, numismatic, epigraphic, and topographic evidence and bibliography, as well as excavation history, for sanctuaries of Asklepios on the Greek mainland and islands.

Walton compiled all of the available archaeological and literary evidence for the cult, and her catalogue, divided by site, remains a valuable, albeit now incomplete, reference.

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. witnessed the first comprehensive study of an individual cult of Asklepios. Maurice Besnier assessed the literary and archaeological evidence for the sanctuary of Aesculapius on Tiber Island in Rome (Besnier 1902). Due to lack of literary and material evidence for the Roman cult, Besnier's interpretation relied heavily on Greek parallels. In the absence of much new evidence, reliance on Greek comparanda continues to characterize discussions of Asklepios-cult in Rome.<sup>4</sup>

Also at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. there appeared two studies of ancient incubation, the act of sleeping in the god's sanctuary in the hope of meeting him in a dream (Deubner 1899 and Hamilton 1906). Both works include lengthy discussions of Asklepios-cult. Ludwig Deubner compiled literary references to incubation in Asklepios-cult, while Mary Hamilton integrated material evidence into an analysis of ancient texts. No comprehensive work on ancient incubatory practice has been published since.<sup>5</sup>

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., excavations were launched at many sanctuaries of Asklepios, including Pergamon, Kos, Troizen, Lebena on Crete, Delphi, Corinth, and Tricca in Thessaly. The finds of most of these sites were published between 1900 and 1950.<sup>6</sup>

Motivated in part by these excavations, general studies of the cult resumed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. In 1945 Emma and Ludwig Edelstein published

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<sup>4</sup> E.g., Kerenyi 1959; Graf 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Scholarship on dreams in antiquity has appeared since, but not on incubation *per se*. On dreams in relation to Asklepios-cult, see Behr 1968; Oberhelman 1993; P.C. Miller 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Excavations at Pergamon, Kos, and Troizen were carried out by the Germans beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> c. Delphi was excavated by the French, Lebena by the Italians, and Corinth by the Americans. See Semeria 1986 *ad loc.* for excavation history and bibliography relevant to these sites, except Pergamon. For Pergamon, see *PECS ad loc.*



what remains the most comprehensive study of Asklepios-cult. The first volume of this work, compiled by Emma Edelstein, reproduces most of the literary and many epigraphical sources for the cult. The second volume, written by Ludwig, is an interpretation of the cult based on literary evidence. Ludwig, a scholar primarily of ancient medicine, compared Asklepios-cult and ancient medicine, and strove to demonstrate that the two were not always at odds with one another. However, his overtly Christianized reading of the cult forced an artificial divide between the cult and ancient medicine. Christianizing interpretation of the cult proved a lasting effect of the Edelsteins' work, as discussed in more detail below.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly after the text-oriented work of the Edelsteins, Ulrich Hausmann published the first comprehensive study of iconography in Asklepios-cult (Hausmann 1948). His publication brought Asklepios-cult into the realm of art history.

In the wake of the Edelsteins, scholarship on Asklepios-cult has centered largely on individual aspects of the cult, or on individual sanctuaries. Influential among works of the 1950s and 1960s are: Le Gall 1953, which updates Besnier's discussion of the cult of Aesculapius in Rome; Meier 1967, which examines incubation in the context of psychotherapy; Beschi 1967/68, a reconstruction of the Telemachos Monument, which gives enormous insight into the establishment of the cult of Asklepios in Athens; and Burford 1969, a study of construction accounts from the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC building program at Epidauros, and thus a valuable window onto the monumental articulation and historical development of one of the most popular sanctuaries of Asklepios in antiquity.

After a lull in publication during the 1970s, interest in the cult resumed in the 1980s. Semeria 1986 catalogued literary and archaeological evidence

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<sup>7</sup> E.g., Kerényi 1959; Temkin 1991; Ferngren 1992; Avalos 1999.

for sanctuaries of Asklepios on the Greek mainland and Greek islands. Degrassi 1986, part of the publication of the sanctuary of Aesculapius at Fregellae in Italy, is one of the first discussions of Asklepios-cult in Republican Italy. In the same decade, interest in votives generally, and in anatomical votives in particular (body parts fashioned from materials such as clay and metal) soared. Since anatomical votives were a popular form of dedication at most sanctuaries of Asklepios, study of such votives focused additional attention on Asklepios-cult.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the catalogue of anatomical votives compiled by van Straten 1981 includes many from sanctuaries of Asklepios. Comella 1981 related anatomical votives in Italy to anatomical votives from cults of Asklepios in Greece.<sup>9</sup> Holzmann's 1986 contribution to *LIMC* categorized and discussed the iconography of Asklepios, and thus offered a much-needed update of Hausmann 1948.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, attention returned to epigraphic evidence for Asklepios-cult. Aleshire 1989 and 1991 provided text, commentary, and thorough discussion of inventory lists from the Asklepieion at Athens. Clinton 1994 presented new epigraphic evidence for the arrival and integration of Asklepios-cult into Athens. And LiDonnici 1995 studied the Epidaurian healing inscriptions from a narratological perspective. Moreover, Perlman 2000, in her study of *theorodokia* in the Peloponnese, devoted a chapter to the *theorodokoi* inscriptions from Epidauros, a much-neglected epigraphical source for the cult. In addition to these works on particular cult sites, Girone 1998 compiled healing inscriptions from various sanctuaries and periods of Asklepios-cult.

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<sup>8</sup> Interest in anatomical votives in Italy was particularly high at the time. Studies centered on votives from the Etruria-Latium-Campana area of Italy. See also Pensabene et al. 1980; Comella 1982-1983; Blagg 1985; Edlund 1987a and 1987b.

<sup>9</sup> A more recent discussion of anatomical votives from the Greco-Roman world, including sanctuaries of Asklepios, is Forsén 1996.

Studies of Asklepios-cult within particular geographic regions also appeared in the 1990s, including Musial 1992 on the Roman provinces, Stavropoulos 1996 on the Peloponnese, and Tiussi 1999 on the northern Adriatic coast. Furthermore, new studies of Athenian religion, most notably Garland 1992 and Parker 1996, reexamined Asklepios-cult within its civic context.

In the same decade, Graf 1992 looked beyond individual regions and chronological periods in order to identify elements common to various sanctuaries of Asklepios in the Greco-Roman world.

In 1998, just over a half-century after its original publication, the work of Ludwig and Emma Edelstein was reprinted. The new introduction by Barry Ferngren judiciously appraises its shortcomings while emphasizing its enduring value. Its reprinting attests to abiding interest in Asklepios-cult, as does recent publication of general studies of the cult, such as Hart 2001.<sup>10</sup>

## **II. Common Misconceptions**

There has been no comprehensive publication on Asklepios-cult since Edelstein 1945. Because this work has proven so influential for current understanding of Asklepios-cult, it is worthwhile to point out some of its limitations. First, it focuses on textual evidence to the virtual exclusion of all other types of evidence. The foreword to the 1948 edition, written by Ludwig's colleague Henry Sigerist, explains that Ludwig Edelstein's interpretation of the cult is based upon literary evidence due to the seeming impossibility of dealing with both material and literary evidence in one

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<sup>10</sup> Studies currently underway on various aspects of the cult are cited in the notes to subsequent chapters.

work.<sup>11</sup> This limited focus is borne out in vol. 2 where an occasional reference to a coin or statue illustrates a point derived from literary sources.

While the catalogue of literary references in vol. 1 remains invaluable to all scholars of Asklepios-cult, any sound analysis of the cult must address material as well as literary remains.<sup>12</sup> This has become increasingly true with the wealth of material excavated from sanctuaries of Asklepios in the past century. To ignore this evidence is to ignore critical aspects of and interpretive windows onto the cult.

A second limitation of the work is that it views the cult as “irrational” in contrast to “rational” Greek medicine.<sup>13</sup> This view is not unique to the Edelsteins, but was propagated already at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. by Sir James Frazer. In his epic-length *The Golden Bough*, published in revised and ever-expanding editions from 1890-1915, Frazer posited an evolution from magic → religion → science that implied a progression from irrational to rational.<sup>14</sup>

Frazer’s model proved highly influential. In 1951, E.R. Dodds forced Asklepios-cult into Frazer’s evolutionary model in *The Greeks and the Irrational*. There Dodds spoke of Asklepios-cult as a “regression” from rationalism, and wondered how the Greek mind of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC could at one time honor the “medical reptile” Asklepios while at the same time witnessing

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<sup>11</sup> Edelstein 1945 (vol. 1, p. xxiii-xxiv): “One thing, however, must be emphasized: the material here taken into consideration is restricted to the written evidence....The study of the monuments requires an approach very different from that to be applied to the study of the literary remains; to combine both methods within the compass of one inquiry seemed impossible.” Sigerist was director of the Institute for the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, and had invited Ludwig to join his staff. Ludwig, forced out of his native Germany by the Nazi regime, taught at Hopkins from 1934-1937.

<sup>12</sup> Sigerist (Edelstein 1945 [vol. 1, p. xxiv]), however, contended that, although omission of the material evidence makes the interpretation “defective,” it “nevertheless contains all the essential features.”

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 154), speaking of the “irrational” element in Asklepios’ cures.

<sup>14</sup> The final edition of 1915 comprised 13 volumes, versus the two volumes of the 1890 initial edition. On the nature of Frazer’s project and its progression, see Jonathan Smith’s essay, “When the Bough Breaks,” in J.Z. Smith 1978 (208-239).

“some of the most austere scientific of the Hippocratic treatises.”<sup>15</sup> For Dodds, Asklepios-cult, full of magic and miracle, occupied the irrational end of an axis at whose other end sat Greek medicine. The conceptual framework of rational medicine vs. irrational Asklepios-cult continues to govern studies of Asklepios and his cult.<sup>16</sup>

Scholars in other fields, however, have begun to question the validity of this dichotomy. For example, Patricia Cox Miller’s 1994 study of ancient dreams has demonstrated that the Greeks and Romans did not consider dreams irrational. Her conclusions are critical for understanding the nature of Asklepios-cult, since scholars have long pointed to dreams as a prime indicator of the cult’s irrationality.<sup>17</sup>

A third limitation of the Edelsteins’ work is its synchronic approach. One gets the impression that the cult sprang forth fully formed c. 500 BC and existed unchanged until c. 500 AD.<sup>18</sup> Nor is there any attempt to address regional or local variations. Regarding a cult with such longevity and geographic range, this is a serious flaw.

A related problem is comparison of Asklepios-cult to Christianity. For Edelstein, Asklepios is perceived as a Christ-figure.<sup>19</sup> Such comparison is anachronistic and misleading not only for more than the first half-millennium of the cult’s history when Christianity did not yet exist, but also for the several centuries beyond when Christianity was a struggling movement unlike the powerful, organized institution it would later become. These comparisons, moreover, often result in demonstrably erroneous conclusions.

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<sup>15</sup> Dodds 1951 (193).

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Behr 1968 (36); Kee 1982 (124-125, 134-136); Temkin 1991 (171-196); Cotter 1999.

<sup>17</sup> E.g., Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 154).

<sup>18</sup> Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 242-257) does describe the spread of the cult over time, but interpretation is otherwise synchronic.

<sup>19</sup> This is most evident in a section entitled “Asclepius and Christ” in Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 132-138).

For example, Edelstein declares that Asklepios' sanctuaries were charitable institutions along the lines of "Christian hospitals and poorhouses."<sup>20</sup> Not only were Christian hospitals and poorhouses a much later development than the early sanctuaries, but evidence indicates that Asklepios' cures were not charity, nor were they even inexpensive alternatives to other forms of healthcare. An individual wishing to incubate had first to contribute specified amounts of money and other offerings to the god.<sup>21</sup> A more productive approach to Asklepios-cult would have been to compare it to other Greek and Roman healing cults.<sup>22</sup>

The comparison of Asklepios-cult to Christianity fostered by Ludwig Edelstein has generated a further problematic, if not simply false, dichotomy: "public cult" vs. "private cult." Asklepios-cult is regularly considered an example of the latter. Under this interpretation, Asklepios-cult served the needs of individuals but not the needs of the state as a political entity.<sup>23</sup> The modern church-state dichotomy is manifest in this interpretive model, despite its obvious anachronism.

Recent studies of Greek cult have concluded that virtually no cults in ancient Greece, and particularly in 5<sup>th</sup>-c. BC Athens, were exclusively private.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 176).

<sup>21</sup> A 2<sup>nd</sup>-c. AD inscription from the sanctuary of Asklepios at Pergamon is a good example of the remuneration required for incubation; see Habicht 1969 (vol. 8<sup>3</sup>, no. 161, with commentary p. 167-190). Criticism of the comparison of Asklepios to Christ was made already by Vlastos 1949. For the role of healing and charity in early Christianity, see Ferngren 1992.

<sup>22</sup> Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. xxxiii) explicitly rejects comparison of Asklepios to other Greek and Roman deities, but for unstated reasons.

<sup>23</sup> E.g., Aleshire 1989, 1994; Garland 1992; Parker 1996 (180-181).

<sup>24</sup> E.g., Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 (esp. 270-273); Sourvinou-Inwood 1990; Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992 (63); Parker 1996 (5-6). Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel write, "[The label 'domestic (or family) religion'] is inadequate, because the rituals in question are as much civic as domestic, and the cleavage familiar today between private and public life has hardly any meaning in a context where matrimonial and funerary rituals were a matter of concern to the community at large, not just the few individuals immediately involved."

Even *oikos*, or “domestic,” cults were authorized and regulated by the *polis*, or city-state.<sup>25</sup> Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, for example, argues that the *polis* controlled all cults and cult activity in the classical period: “The *polis* anchored, legitimated, and mediated all religious activity.”<sup>26</sup> In another context, she remarks: “All cult acts, including those which some modern commentators are inclined to think of as ‘private’, are (religiously) dependent on the polis.”<sup>27</sup> The intervention of the Athenian *polis* in cults and sanctuaries is evident in many 5<sup>th</sup>-c. documents, a fact that has been discussed at length by Robert Garland.<sup>28</sup>

It may thus be better to do away with the public-private distinction regarding Greek cults of the classical period.<sup>29</sup> However, even if all such cults were in fact public, there remains a difference between the level of state involvement in the cult of Athena Polias on the Acropolis, for example, and in that of a hero cult. In other words, did the state merely authorize the cult, or did it go so far as to organize civic festivals in that god’s honor? As we shall see, Asklepios in fact resides nearer the Athena Polias, or heavy state-involvement, end of this continuum.

The dichotomies of public vs. private and rational vs. irrational, prominent in Edelman 1945 and persistent in Asklepios studies since, have driven the cult into interpretive gridlock. Consequently, despite a wealth of

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<sup>25</sup> Parker 1996 (6) observes that even household shrines were expected to be open for use by Athenians at large. “Thus the antithesis between ‘public’ and ‘private’ proves not to be absolute even at its extreme points.”

<sup>26</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1990 (297). For an opposing view, see J.K. Davies in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 4, p. 370).

<sup>27</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 (270). See also Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel 1992 (63); Parker 1996 (5-6).

<sup>28</sup> E.g., *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 7, 14, 34, 35, 38, 133, 136, 138. See Garland 1992 (99-115) for discussion of these decrees and for the increasing involvement of the *demos* in Athenian religion.

<sup>29</sup> This distinction has not been so hotly contested in its application to Rome, although see Bendlin 2000. Nor is it an impediment for understanding the cult’s importation to Rome since this was clearly engineered by the state.

scholarship, major questions about Asklepios-cult remain unresolved.

### **III. The Current Project**

This study addresses two fundamental questions about the development and spread of Asklepios-cult. First, why did the cult only begin to flourish in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC despite the fact that Asklepios had been known as a healer since Homer? As explained in the following chapters, the popularity of the cult has long been ascribed to its personal appeal, especially among societies ravaged by war and plague, as Greece was in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. However, there has been no convincing explanation as to how or why these particular wars and plagues, versus any of the other periods of warfare and plague that frequently addled the ancient Greek world, prompted the cult's initial development.

A second crucial question has seldom been asked, much less answered: why did any particular city decide to import Asklepios at a given moment in time? While warfare, illness, and a corollary desire for one-on-one relations with an efficacious healer surely fueled the cult's widespread popularity, little attention has been paid to local factors that prompted each city to import the cult.

In examination of both questions, the present study falls into two main parts. The first analyzes the early development of the cult in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC in relation to developments in Greek medicine. The second part analyzes motives for the introduction of Asklepios-cult into Athens (in 420/19 BC) and Rome (ca. 291 BC), two of the best-documented cities in the Greco-Roman world.

Throughout this study, material evidence, such as anatomical votives, statues, architecture, and coins, will be employed in addition to literary evidence, including inscriptions. Only by looking at this full range of evidence can we better understand a cult that has left its mark on so many



aspects of the ancient world.

The first part proceeds under the assumption that the rational vs. irrational dichotomy is false. This assumption enables side-by-side examination of evidence from ancient medicine and Asklepios-cult, which in turn elucidates important points of contact and even influence between the two. The main argument of this part of the study is that Asklepios-cult arose and spread in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC largely in direct response to an emerging void in healing created by contemporary developments in Greek medicine.

The second part of the study examines aspects of the topographical and ritual contexts into which Athens and Rome integrated Asklepios-cult. These contexts are significant because they indicate motives for Asklepios' importation to both cities.

In recent years, ritual theory has attracted much attention; and in many, albeit inexplicit, ways, this study draws upon recent observations about the impact of ritual—in both its spatial and temporal dimensions—upon culture. The argument that will be made here is that Asklepios-cult was imported to forge, extend, and religiously legitimate alliances for both Athens and Rome, a function long-ascribed to other cults, but rarely to Asklepios-cult. While these are certainly not the only, or even the primary, ways that the importation of the cult could have been understood, historical context and the placement of the cult within ritual space and time strongly suggest such interpretation.

## CHAPTER 1: ASPECTS OF TRADITION AND DEVELOPMENT IN GREEK NATURAL HEALING FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO THE 5<sup>TH</sup> C. BC

Our forefather Asklepios established our craft.  
—The physician Eryximachos in Plato's *Symposium*, 186d.

In ancient Greece from at least the Bronze Age on, there were many ways to heal the human body:<sup>30</sup> these included prayer, sacrifice, incantations, philters, amulets, drugs, poultices, bandages, and surgery, to name but a few. Most people probably had some basic healing knowledge,<sup>31</sup> but over time as various types of healers were distinguished from the rest, they could also consult healers with more specialized and advanced knowledge, such as μάγοι (magicians), ῥιζοτόμοι (root-cutters), ἱερεῖς (priests), ἰατροί (doctors), καθάρται (purifiers), and φαρμακοπῶλαι (drug vendors). In practice, there were no rigid lines drawn between the various instruments and devices of healing; different practitioners used different combinations of these elements. Drugs, for example, were frequently used by *magoi*, *iatroi*, root-cutters, and drug vendors,<sup>32</sup> but in different combinations and with other methods. The term ἰατρομάντις itself suggests an overlap, in addition to a dichotomy, between the methods of the *iatros* and those of the *mantis*, or seer.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> One of the best general, well-referenced discussions of ancient Greek healing practices is Majno 1975. Not only is it highly readable and accessible to those with little or no background on the subject, but it also discusses healing practices of other ancient cultures. On social aspects of ancient medicine, see also Nutton 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c.

<sup>31</sup> For example, in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' cousins, who are not healers by trade, adeptly heal his boar wound (*Od.* 19.447-462). There are also healers who seem to have had more training in healing than the average person, but not as much as *iatroi*. The Homeric warrior Patroklos, for example, is said to have learned healing from Achilles who was taught by Cheiron (*Il.* 11.831-832). The average person probably could not have named a particular individual as their teacher, but would have absorbed healing knowledge from various sources.

<sup>32</sup> On the use of drugs by different healers, see Scarborough 1991.

<sup>33</sup> On ἰατρομάντις, see Dodds 1951 (135-178). This term, however, is attested only in Aeschylus, and only in reference to Apollo (*Eum.* 62), Apollo's son Apis (*Supp.* 263), and to a bond (δεσμός) and hunger pains (νήσιδες δύαι) (*Ag.* 1623).

Despite the occasional overlaps in method, certain healers tended to employ certain modes of healing more often than others. *Magoi* and priests, for instance, brought about cures by communicating with and influencing deities, and thus often employed methods like prayer, sacrifice, and incantations to effect communication with the divine.<sup>34</sup> The *iatros* more commonly employed bandages, surgery, drugs, poultices and the like to heal the body naturally without divine intervention.

This chapter will explore aspects of the development of natural, as opposed to divine, methods in Greek healing. **By “natural” is meant modes of healing whose efficacy could be explained without reference to the intention of any other being.** This is not to say that those who practiced natural healing had nothing to do with the divine. Quite the opposite is true: as we shall see, *iatroi*, for example, claimed descent from the god Asklepios and swore to the gods to uphold certain standards (the famous “Hippocratic Oath”). Nevertheless we can distinguish a type of healing—natural healing, as I call it—that located the cures of illness not in the gods, but in nature. Moreover, the ancients themselves distinguished a type of healer, the *iatros*, whom they consistently described as employing only natural healing methods.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Nor were those incantations of the *magoi* very different from the prayers of the priests, as Graf 1991 has shown. He points out, in reference to the traditional dichotomy between prayer and incantation made already by Plato (*Rep.* 364b; *Laws* 10, 909b), that there is little in the language and tone of incantations recorded on magical papyri that differs from prayer requests. As to other healing methods, like amulets, commonly associated with *magoi*, Rufus of Ephesus (fr. 90) categorizes amulets among natural cures (possibly because they were thought to act by physical means, such as giving off aromas; cf. Galen, *SMT* [Kühn 11.859-860]), and Soranus of Ephesus says they should be used in certain cases because they can make patients more cheerful (Sor. *Gyn.* 3.42.3). See also Lloyd 1979 (42); Scarborough 1991 (159).

<sup>35</sup> King 1998 (159) comments: “[The authors of the Hippocratic corpus] place what they do within the context of a divinely ordered universe but, although they are not opposed to religious systems of healing, they see no particular deity as being responsible for the cures they effect.” I would extend this last clause to include not just deities, but any other being, whether mortal or immortal.

To talk of “natural” healing methods is productive inasmuch as their presence in the historical and even pre-historical record demonstrates that what later became known as “Hippocratic medicine” is not a departure from, but rather a development of, practices that had been utilized for centuries. In other words, the Hippocratic movement did not create something entirely new, but refined, categorized, and further professionalized methods that had been in use by all sorts of healers since at least the Bronze Age.

The long tradition of natural healing methods is significant to the study of Asklepios and his cult because affinities between natural healing and Asklepios, which made Asklepios so well-suited to his role as patron of *iatroi*, can be traced back to Homer and the first descriptions of *iatroi* in Greek literature. These affinities themselves developed over time and were not new to the 5<sup>th</sup> c BC.

Yet the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC did mark major developments, both in the realm of natural healing and in Asklepios-cult. Change in natural healing coalesced in historical accounts around the figure of Hippocrates and included introduction of the term *iatrike*, or “medicine,” whose substance was characterized as a *techne* with distinct limits.<sup>36</sup> Awareness of the limits of *iatrike* meant that it was the duty of the good *iatros* to refuse cases beyond his ability. Such refusal opened a void in natural healing. As the two subsequent chapters will explore, it was this void that the divine *iatros* Asklepios helped to fill, and that fueled his widespread popularity beginning in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

The present chapter examines evidence for natural healers, or *iatroi*, in the Bronze Age and Homer to demonstrate how they differed from other healers. Next, it traces these characteristics down into the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, when ancient accounts posit a milestone in natural healing.

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<sup>36</sup> The term *techne* is discussed below.

## **I. The Bronze Age and Homer**

### **A. Evidence from the Bronze Age**

The tradition of Greek natural healing extends well into the distant past, leaving traces already in Bronze Age Greece. At Pylos, Knossos, and Mycenae, for example, Linear B tablets record spices that may have been used as drugs for healing.<sup>37</sup> These include *ep-i-ka* (ebiscus), *ko-ri-a-da-na* (coriander), *ka-na-to* (safflower), and *ko-ro-ki-no* (saffron).<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it is clear from skeletal remains of the Bronze Age that certain types of ailments, including fractures and dental problems, were treated by means of natural healing methods such as the immobilization of bones with splints. Some healing instruments were also found in a Mycenaean tomb dating to 1450 BC.<sup>39</sup> Among these instruments were drills, scalpels, forceps, and grinding stones for the preparation of drugs. In addition, a Linear B tablet listing occupations and land holdings contains the word *i-ja-te*, related to the later Greek word *iatros* that first appears in the *Iliad*.<sup>40</sup> Both terms, *i-ja-te* and *iatros*, are significant because they indicate that the *iatros* was distinguished from other professions.

### **B. Homer**

Western literature, it has been observed, begins with a disease.<sup>41</sup> Homeric epic provides the earliest extant description of Greek healing

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<sup>37</sup> Wylock 1972; Janko 1981; Shelmerdine 1982 (130). Laskaris 1999 (1-2) emphasizes cross-cultural contacts of medical experts in the Bronze Age Aegean; see also Laskaris 2002.

<sup>38</sup> R. Arnott 1996 (267-268).

<sup>39</sup> On Bronze Age skeletal remains and healing instruments, see R. Arnott 1996 (266, 268-269), 1999 (501-504). Regarding the instruments, Arnott 1996 (269) adds that the burial of these instruments with the tomb's occupant indicates high social status for the deceased.

<sup>40</sup> R. Arnott 1996 (266).

<sup>41</sup> J.T.Vallance, *OCD*<sup>3</sup>, sv 'medicine.'

methods.<sup>42</sup> The opening lines of the *Iliad* tell of the plague suffered by the Greeks at the hands of Apollo. The only hope the Greeks believe they have of ridding themselves of the plague is to appease the god who sent it (Book 1, *passim*). In the *Iliad*, this disease has a divine causation and a divine cure.<sup>43</sup> Reliance on the divine as an aid to healing, however, is not limited to disease. For example, in Book 5 when Aeneas is wounded by a stone hurled by Diomedes, Apollo whisks him from the battlefield to the care of Leto and Artemis. Apollo's mother and sister heal the wound, it would appear, simply by their divine presence (*Il.* 5.445-448). The role that the divine plays in human health, as in all aspects of human existence, is central to the epic.

Yet, despite the role of the divine, there are many cases in the epic when healing, especially of wounds, is described solely in terms of natural cures without recourse to prayers, incantations, or other signs of divine intervention. The *Iliad* paints a very vivid picture of war, replete with pitched battles, countless bloody wounds, and, in some cases, even extended descriptions of the treatment of those wounds. When Eurypylos suffers a thigh wound in Book 11, and "sweat flowed in streams from his head and shoulders, and dark blood poured from his gruesome wound," he beseeches Patroklos, "Save me, lead me back to my black ship, and cut the arrow from my thigh and wash the black blood from it with warm water, and spread on it gentle herbs."<sup>44</sup> Patroklos, taught by Achilles to heal, helps Eurypylos: "Patroklos stretched him out and cut with a knife the sharp arrow from his thigh, and washed with warm water the dark blood, and having crushed a bitter, pain-slaying root (ὄδυνήφατον ῥίζαν) in his hands, applied it to the

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<sup>42</sup> This is not the place to enter into debate about the dating of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Following proponents of a long tradition of oral composition, I use the phrase "period of composition" to indicate for the *Iliad* a span from the Bronze Age to roughly the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC. For the *Odyssey*, that period seems to extend later, possibly to the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC; see Cook 1995.

<sup>43</sup> On the nature of the plague in the *Iliad*, see Hankinson 1995 (27-29).

<sup>44</sup> All translations in this study are my own, unless otherwise noted.

wound. The root stopped all his pains; the wound dried and the blood stopped flowing” (*Il.* 11.804-848). All of the wounds treated by human healers in the epic are treated in much the same way, often by poultices of drugs and bandages—that is, by natural means. Drugs are so regularly used in the treatment of wounds that, according to Homer, an *iatros* is one who “knows many drugs” (πολυφάρμακος, *Il.* 16.28).<sup>45</sup>

Even wounds suffered by certain of the gods—for instance, by Hades and Ares in Book 5—are treated by natural methods, although their healer, Paieon, is himself a god. For example, when Paieon heals Hades, he spreads pain-slaying herbs (ὀδυνήφατα φάρμακα) on the wound (*Il.* 5.395-402). When Paieon heals Ares, moreover, an empirical observation is made about the effect of the drugs that he spreads on the wound. Their effect is compared to a natural physical process: to the quick curdling of milk when fig juice is added (*Il.* 5.902-904).<sup>46</sup> This is the first example of what might be called “scientific simile.” It is thus clear that natural healing methods could be distinguished from other forms of healing, like incantations;<sup>47</sup> in addition, these natural methods were so well known and, in the case of battle wounds, largely effective that the gods were sometimes envisioned as participating in the very same natural healing practices.

The human healers in the *Iliad* who treat mortals’ wounds by natural methods are called *iatroi*, and include the warriors Machaon and Podaleirios.<sup>48</sup> In the epic, the term *iatros* thus designates a practitioner of primarily, if not

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Eustath. *Il.* 11.833.

<sup>46</sup> *Il.* 5.902-904: ὡς δ’ ὅτ’ ὀπὸς γάλα λευκὸν ἐπειγόμενος συνέπηξεν / ὑγρὸν ἐόν, μάλα δ’ ὤκα περιτρέφεται κυκώοντι, / ὡς ἄρα καρπαλίμως ἰήσατο θοῦρον Ἴαρηα.

<sup>47</sup> In the *Odyssey*, the boar wound of Odysseus is treated by both natural means (bandages: δῆσαν ἐπισταμένως) and supernatural means (incantations: ἐπαοιδῆ). The healers, however, are not called *iatroi*, so we should not be surprised that they use supernatural methods in addition to natural. On the use of incantations in natural healing, see Ch. 3 below.

<sup>48</sup> Machaon, Podaleirios, and their father Asklepios, are the only *iatroi* mentioned by name in the *Iliad*.

exclusively, natural healing methods. That a particular term had been created for this type of healer is significant: it indicates that there was both a means of and desire for demarcating the *iatros* from other healers.

The high value that the society of the epic placed on *iatroi* is evident from the statement, “An *iatros* is a man worth many other men when it comes to cutting out arrows and sprinkling on soothing herbs” (*Il.* 11.514-515).<sup>49</sup> The *Odyssey* likewise attests to the elevated status of and demand for *iatroi*: along with prophets, builders, and poets, they are said to be called upon across the boundless earth (*Od.* 17.383-386).<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, the grouping of *iatroi* together with prophets, builders, and poets, agents who produce, suggests the efficaciousness also of *iatroi*. It is the value of his product, dependant upon the agent’s special skill, that makes the *iatros* so important to society. Others in the society were not able to provide the same services, at least not to the same degree of quality.

Thus, not only was natural healing a distinguishable method of healing in the epic world, but its practitioners were singled out for their particular skills. Eumaios in the *Odyssey*, moreover, speaks of the *iatros* as a δημιοεργός, or craftsman (*Od.* 17.383-385). The evidence of the *Iliad* complements the *Odyssey*: the centaur Cheiron is said to have given Asklepios, blameless *iatros*, and father of the *iatroi* Machaon and Podaleirios, drugs (φάρμακα, *Il.* 4.217-219), just as he also taught (ἐδίδαξε, *Il.* 11.830-832) natural healing to the hero Achilles. As with any other craft, the skills of natural healing had to be

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<sup>49</sup> *Il.* 11.514-515: ἰητρὸς γὰρ ἀνὴρ πολλῶν ἀντάξιός ἄλλων / ἰοὺς τ’ ἐκτάμνειν ἐπὶ τ’ ἥπια φάρμακα πάσσειν.

<sup>50</sup> *Od.* 17.383-386: ἄλλον γ’, εἰ μὴ τῶν, οἳ δημιοεργοὶ ἔασι; / μάντιν ἢ ἰητῆρα κακῶν ἢ τέκτονα δούρων, / ἢ καὶ θέσπιν ἀοιδόν, ὅ κεν τέρπησιν ἀείδων. / οὔτοι γὰρ κλητοὶ γε βροτῶν ἐπ’ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν. The great demand for *iatroi* across the earth alludes to their itinerant lifestyle. Many such healers were portrayed with walking sticks as symbols of this itinerant way of life. A 6<sup>th</sup>-c. BC relief now in Basel, one of the earliest surviving images of a Greek natural healer who is distinguished as such by cupping instruments, portrays the healer as holding a walking stick. It is also the walking stick, or caduceus, that becomes the distinctive symbol of Asklepios. On the Basel relief and on the walking stick, see below.



learned. Moreover, the father-son relationship between Asklepios and Machaon and Podaleirios demonstrates that natural healing was a craft often handed down within a family, as was typical of most crafts in antiquity.<sup>51</sup>

In Homeric tradition, then, natural healing plays a prominent role. It is the most common form of healing on the battlefield, and is in great demand. While epic narrative describes such healing as mainly surgical, it may also have included the fighting, or prevention, of infection, a prime threat on any battlefield.<sup>52</sup> Its practitioners are respected for their particular skills, and those skills are considered a craft. As with any other craft, it must be learned and is often handed down from father to son.

## II. From Homer to the 5th c. BC

While Homer thus proves an early and invaluable source for natural healing, further evidence is sparse until the early 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, due mainly to the fact that evidence for most everything is sparse in this period. But by the early 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, respect for the *iatros* and his distinction from other healers is attested in Solon. In his prayer to the Muses, Solon lists *iatroi* among various occupations of men:

..Others are *iatroi* and have the task of Paieon of the many drugs. For these men there is no end of labors, since often a small discomfort becomes a great suffering. Nor could anyone alleviate it even by administering gentle drugs. But it is also the case that an *iatros* might

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<sup>51</sup> There is an exception even in the *Iliad*, as noted above: Patroklos is taught natural healing by his friend Achilles, who learned such techniques from the centaur Cheiron (*Il.* 11.831-832).

<sup>52</sup> We cannot be sure of this based on the treatments as they are recorded. Nothing in Western medicine before Semmelweiss in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. seems to show any regard for basic cleanliness, and it is not until Lister later in the same century that doctors began routinely using antiseptics. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility, especially since there are allusions to internal medicine in early poetry, including Homer (e.g., *Od.* 4.230-231 on Egypt as a land yielding many drugs). For further allusions to internal medicine in early poetry, see Dean-Jones 2003 (99-100).

quickly heal with his hands one overcome by wretched, painful illnesses. (Fr. 13.57-62)<sup>53</sup>

*Iatroi* are here characterized by the use of drugs and other physical intervention (ἀψάμενος χειροῖν, a phrase that could refer to any number of procedures such as surgery or the application of cupping instruments).<sup>54</sup> Moreover, their value is recognized by their ability to quickly heal dire cases when, as the poem elaborates, Fate (Μοῖρα) allows.

There is also evidence for development in the organization of natural healing. According to the epic poet Arktinos, whose *Sack of Troy* dates to the 7<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the *iatros* Machaon, here the son of Poseidon, treats mainly wounds, while his brother Podaleirios treats internal disorders.<sup>55</sup> This split, represented by the two brothers, points to a differentiation between internal and external healing absent in Homer.<sup>56</sup>

Beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, natural healing shared a discourse and vocabulary, theories and ideas with the early teachings of natural philosophy.<sup>57</sup> Thales, according to Aristotle, was the founder of Ionian natural science.<sup>58</sup> He was born in Miletus ca. 625 BC. As the purported founder of a new way of thinking about the natural world, he looked to

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<sup>53</sup> Solon Fr. 13.57-62: ἄλλοι Παιῶνος πολυφαρμάκου ἔργον ἔχοντες/ ἰητροί· καὶ τοῖς οὐδὲν ἔπεστι τέλος·/ πολλάκι δ' ἐξ ὀλίγης ὀδύνης μέγα γίγνεται ἄλγος,/ κούκ ἄν τις λύσαιτ' ἤπια φάρμακα δούς·/ τὸν δὲ κακαῖς νούσοισι κυκώμενον ἀργαλέαις τε/ ἀψάμενος χειροῖν αἶψα τίθησ' ὑγίη.

<sup>54</sup> See below on the development of internal medicine in the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Cupping instruments are attested by the late 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC; see, e.g., the discussion below of the Basel relief. These instruments were used by physicians to draw sickness carried by humours away from the body. After being heated, they were placed still hot on the skin, which caused a vacuum to develop and the humours to be drawn out towards the skin. See also Krug 1985 (96-97).

<sup>55</sup> Schol. ad *Il.* 11.515; Eustath. *Il.* 11.514. In this fragment, Machaon and Podaleirios appear to be the sons of Poseidon and to have been granted, not taught, healing skills. This distinction between being granted and being taught is important to the concept of a *technē*, characterized as a rationally explicable skill transmitted through teaching rather than inspiration.

<sup>56</sup> The lack of distinction between internal and external healing in Homer may be driven by the nature of Homeric healing as primarily battle-wound management.

<sup>57</sup> On the development of both and their mutual impact, see Lloyd 1979; Longrigg 1993.

<sup>58</sup> Arist. *Metaph.* 983b20 = *DK* 11A12.

nature instead of the supernatural for causes of events. For example, he explained the phenomenon of an earthquake not in terms of Poseidon's wrath that caused him to shake the earth with his trident, but in terms of the sometimes-violent movement of the waters on which, he postulated, the earth floats.<sup>59</sup>

While events in nature were beginning to be conceptualized as the immediate result of natural instead of divine forces, so too were the function and malfunction of the human body. By the late 6<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> c., Alcmaeon, a philosopher and possibly also a physician from the Greek colony of Croton in Magna Graecia, attributed the health of the human body to the balance (ἰσονομία) of four elements: hot, cold, wet, and dry.<sup>60</sup> He also advanced theories on the physiology of the body, such as the brain being the seat of the intellect, and semen being the main constituent of the brain.<sup>61</sup> Alcmaeon relied heavily on empirical observation in order to describe the functioning of the sense organs of the human body. For example, he said that hearing takes place through the ears because they contain a void that resounds; sound is produced in the cavity and echoed by the air.<sup>62</sup> These arguments based on reason and empirical observation are similar to the

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<sup>59</sup> Sen. *NQ* 3.14 = *DK* 11A15: *Quae sequitur Thaletis inepta sententia est. Ait enim terrarum orbem aqua sustineri et uehi more nauigii mobilitateque eius fluctuare tunc cum dicitur tremere; non est ergo mirum si abundat umor ad flumina profundenda, cum in umore sit totus.* On the development of naturalistic explanation, see also Lloyd 1979; Hankinson 1998a (esp. Ch. 1).

<sup>60</sup> Aëtius 5.30.1 = *DK* 24B4: ἔφη τῆς μὲν ὑγιείας εἶναι συνεκτικὴν τὴν ἰσονομίαν τῶν δυνάμεων, ὑγροῦ ξηροῦ θερμοῦ πικροῦ γλυκέος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν, τὴν δ' ἐν αὐτοῖς μοναρχίαν νόσου παρασκευαστικὴν εἶναι. This theory bears a strong resemblance to that of the slightly earlier Anaximander of Miletus, who believed that the cosmos was a balance between opposites (Simplicius *In physica* 24.13 = *DK* 12B1). Metaphors of justice are important in the writings of both.

<sup>61</sup> For the brain as the seat of the intellect: Aëtius 5.17.3 = *DK* 24A13; for semen as the substance of the brain: Aëtius 5.3.3 = *DK* 24A13. Longrigg 1993 (54-57) provides a useful table comparing Alcmaeon's queries into the physiology of the body to those of other natural philosophers.

<sup>62</sup> Theophr. *Fragment on Sensation*, 25-26 = *DK* 24A5.

types of arguments and observations made in the Hippocratic corpus later in the century.

The mutual influences of medicine on philosophy and vice-versa are complex, but are frequently understood and described by scholars in terms of the influence of philosophy on medicine.<sup>63</sup> It seems more likely, however, that philosophers would have extrapolated observations of the microcosm (i.e., observations on the human body) to the macrocosm.<sup>64</sup> That the direction of influence flowed, at least in part, from medicine to philosophy is supported by the early publication of medical treatises. Some of the extant treatises have been dated to the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and may reflect an earlier tradition.<sup>65</sup>

Certain geographic areas, including Ionia and Magna Graecia, were associated with both natural philosophy and healing from an early period.<sup>66</sup> Centers of thought, if not also of training, seem to have developed for natural healing at least by the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Croton in Magna Graecia was one such center. It was the home not only of Alcmaeon and his predecessor Pythagoras, but also of Democedes, an *iatros* who practiced in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC<sup>67</sup> and one of the first *iatroi* of the historical period whose name has survived in literature.

The figure of Democedes as portrayed by Herodotus (Hdt. 3.131) demonstrates the increasing rise in the status of and demand for practitioners

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<sup>63</sup> E.g., Longrigg 1993.

<sup>64</sup> This has been suggested to me by Lesley Dean-Jones.

<sup>65</sup> Among the treatises given an early date are *Diseases II* ca. 450 (Jouanna 1999); *Gynecology* ca. 480 BC (Grensemann 1987); *Airs, Waters, Places* pre-Herodotus (R. Thomas 1993); *Places in Man* early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC (Craik 1998).

<sup>66</sup> Hankinson 1991 (87) addresses succinctly the later distinction of Kos and Knidos, as well as cities in southern Italy (like Croton), as centers of medical training. He lists relevant bibliography, including especially Thivel 1981. Warren 2002 links Pindar's description of Asklepios in *Pyth.* 3 to certain theories of health and healing evident in Sicily and Magna Graecia in the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> cs. BC (particularly those of Alcmaeon and Empedocles).

<sup>67</sup> Democedes arrived at the Persian court ca. 522 BC.

of natural healing, a trend already clearly discernible in Homeric epic. Conforming to the description of *iatroi* in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 17.383-385), Democedes' skills are in such demand that he finds work in Aegina and Athens, is hired by the tyrant Polykrates of Samos, and is even compelled by the Persian king Darius to treat the king's injured ankle (*Hdt.* 3.129-130, 132).<sup>68</sup> At Aegina, he surpasses all other *iatroi* despite his lack of medical equipment (*Hdt.* 3.131). And in Susa where his reputation as an *iatros* brings him to Darius' attention, he fears that discovery of his skills may prevent his ever leaving Persia (*Hdt.* 3.130). On Aegina certainly, and probably also in Athens, his was a public position (*δημόσιον*). In other words, he was hired by the *demos*, and is thus the first attested example of a "public physician" in Greece.<sup>69</sup> As such, it is likely that he provided medical services to the Aeginetan community. According to Herodotus, his salary increased with each successive post (*Hdt.* 3.131). Moreover, because of Democedes' skill, Croton acquired a reputation as the home of the best *iatroi* in Greece, with Cyrene taking second place (*Hdt.* 3.131).

The level of respect, status, and potentially even wealth that a practitioner of natural healing could acquire by the late 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC is evident also from a fragmentary relief, now in Basel, celebrating an unnamed healer.<sup>70</sup> (See Fig. 1 below). Little is known about the relief, including its original provenance and its purpose—whether grave relief, votive relief, etc.

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<sup>68</sup> He also treats Darius' wife Atossa for an abscess on her breast (*Hdt.* 3.133).

<sup>69</sup> On public physicians in ancient Greece, see Cohn-Haft 1956; Plekett 1983. What exactly a public physician was and did is open to debate, but the position was clearly an elected one in Athens by the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. The position of public physician is discussed by Plato *Grg.* 456b-c, 514d. Cohn-Haft proposes that the public physician was secured by the *demos* as a way of ensuring the presence and services of at least one physician in the city during a period when the demand for physicians outweighed their supply. Jouanna 1999 (77-78) attributes the office instead to the desire to ensure the availability of not just any physician at all, but of a competent one.

<sup>70</sup> Antikenmuseum, Basel, Inv. No. BS 236. The dating is contested: Berger 1970 (30-33) dates it to the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. (ca. 480 BC) on stylistic grounds, while Nutton 1992 (20) maintains a 6<sup>th</sup>-c. date.

The relief depicts two figures, a bearded man seated with a staff in his hand, and another male, badly preserved, standing and facing the seated figure. The posture of the seated figure becomes the standard way of depicting *iatroi* in later works of art, such as tombstones and rings where the *iatros* sits on a chair, often to examine his patient.<sup>71</sup> Cupping instruments, a tool of natural healing and one that would become associated primarily, if not exclusively, with *iatroi*, appear in the background of the relief and hang from the arm of the standing figure. From the staff (symbol, among other things, of his itinerant lifestyle<sup>72</sup>), cupping instruments, and posture it is evident that whoever commissioned the relief wished to portray an *iatros*, a sign that the status and visibility of at least some natural healers was fairly high; also, the nature and duties of an *iatros* were well enough known that he could be distinguished from other types of healers by the depiction of cupping instruments and a walking staff.

Another work of art, this time from Attica and dating to ca. 510-500 BC, is explicit in its celebration of an *iatros* named Aineos.<sup>73</sup> (See Fig. 2 below). It is a painted marble disk designed for a funerary context (possibly to cover an urn or an opening in a tomb through which offerings were received)<sup>74</sup> and bears the inscription:  $\mu\nu\epsilon\mu\alpha\ \tau\omicron\delta\prime\ \text{ΑΙΝΕΟ}\ \sigma\omicron\phi\iota\alpha\varsigma\ \iota\alpha\tau\rho\omicron\ \alpha\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron$  (“This is a memorial of Aineos, best of *iatroi* in regards to his skill”).<sup>75</sup> The painting, although worn, clearly depicts a bearded man sitting in a chair—the same

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<sup>71</sup> A famous example is the 2<sup>nd</sup>-c. AD tombstone of the Athenian *iatros* Jason (well-illustrated in Berger 1970 [78]; now in the British Museum). On rings depicting *iatroi*, see below.

<sup>72</sup> On the meaning of the staff, see Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 225-231).

<sup>73</sup> National Museum, Athens, Inv. No. 93. The lettering of the disk is distinctly Attic, although the original provenance of the object is unknown. See Jeffrey 1962 (147, no. 66); Berger 1970 (155-158). It is illustrated in Marshall 1909 (154); Berger 1970 (157).

<sup>74</sup> Marshall 1909 (154).

<sup>75</sup> *IG I*<sup>3</sup> 1393 = Friedländer and Hoffleit 1948 (16, no. 8). It is striking that *sophia* is used instead of *techne*, which may reflect the early date of the monument. On *techne*, see below.

posture as the *iatros* in the Basel relief. The epithet “best of *iatroi*” indicates the prestige and renown that this *iatros* achieved based on his skill (σοφία) in particular.

Figures of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC like the anonymous healer on the Basel relief, the “best of *iatroi*” Aineos, and their more fully-documented peer Democedes of Croton demonstrate that the prominence of some *iatroi* within society was at least as high as it had been in Homer.<sup>76</sup> In addition, the demand for skilled *iatroi* was so high that certain cities like Aegina had begun paying for such healers to serve the city. Moreover, areas like Croton were becoming known as centers of natural healing that produced some of the finest practitioners of their kind.

### III. The 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC: Tradition and Development

#### A. Continuance of the Tradition

All of these trends continue. A Red-figure aryballos of ca. 480 BC, the Peytel aryballos, depicts a healer at work with as many as six patients to his left and right, all stricken with various visible maladies like skin irritations and flesh wounds.<sup>77</sup> (See Fig. 3 below). The healer applies a scalpel to one patient’s forearm in the process of letting blood, a procedure identifiable by the basin situated beneath the patient’s arm to catch the blood. As in the Basel relief, cupping instruments hang above the healer and erase any doubt as to his profession.

The notable presence of natural healers is attested also in literature. The *iatros* makes his way into some of the earliest surviving comedy of Aristophanes. In the *Acharnians* of 425 BC, when a man approaches

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<sup>76</sup> As Pleket 1995 has cautioned, many *iatroi* never attained high social status. The examples discussed here, however, demonstrate that some clearly could and did attain a comfortable level of status and wealth.

<sup>77</sup> Louvre, Inv. No. CA 2183.

Dikaiopolis for some balm to soothe his sore eyes, Dikaiopolis barks, “Go away, scoundrel. I am not the public *iatros*” (οὐ δημοσιεύων τυγχάνω, *Ach.* 1030).<sup>78</sup> But, according to the play, someone named Pittalos clearly is the *iatros demosie* (1032), and the general Lamakos later asks to be taken to Pittalos with his healing hands (παιωνίαισι χερσίν, 1222).

In Aristophanes’ *Ploutos*, produced in 388 BC, *iatroi* are striking for their unusual absence. The protagonists want to have the god Ploutos healed of his blindness so that his distribution of wealth will be more just. They think first to take him to an *iatros*, but as Chremylos cries rhetorically, “Is there an *iatros* in all the city? No, for there is no pay, and therefore no *techne*” (*Pl.* 407-408).<sup>79</sup> The fact that an *iatros* was the first and most obvious resort, however, indicates a general expectation both of the presence of and accessibility to *iatroi*.

Other trends evident in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC continue to develop in the 5<sup>th</sup>. Thus, although Democedes is the sole surviving representative of the office of “public physician” from the 6<sup>th</sup> c. to the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, literary accounts attest to annual, competitive posts for *iatroi demosioi* in cities like Athens. Plato’s *Gorgias* includes a discussion of the office of public *iatros* not as something new, but as an office with which Socrates’ immediate audience was familiar without explanation.<sup>80</sup> And, just as natural philosophy and natural healing shared a discourse beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> c., that discourse continued to develop in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. with philosophers like Parmenides of Elea, Diogenes of Apollonia, and Empedocles of Akragas putting forward medical theories. These thinkers continued to coalesce around Ionia and Magna Graecia.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> On *iatroi* in Greek comedy, see Alfageme 1995.

<sup>79</sup> *Ar. Pl.* 407-408: Τίς δῆτ’ ἰατρός ἐστι νῦν ἐν τῇ πόλει;/ Οὔτε γὰρ ὁ μισθὸς οὐδέν ἐστ’ οὔθ’ ἡ τέχνη.

<sup>80</sup> On the competitive nature of the posts, see *Pl. Grg.* 456b-c, where Gorgias contends that a sophist, by reason of his ability to speak and thus persuade the assembly, could easily win the position any day and anywhere over a qualified *iatros*. On public physicians, see Cohn-Haft 1956; Plekett 1983.

<sup>81</sup> See Longrigg 1993.



Such threads of continuity make it possible not only to gauge in broad terms the development of natural healing from the Bronze Age society of Homer but also demonstrate the longevity of the tradition. Much of the evidence discussed thus far indicates continued development as opposed to drastic change. The *demioergos* (literally, worker for the *demos*) who had been in demand in the *Odyssey* could now receive a formal position and salary as an *iatros demosie* within some cities. Remuneration based on contract or an agreed scale of fees is indicative of the degree of professionalization *iatroi* had attained by this period. By the same token, the demand for the *iatros* also continued to compel some healers to travel, much like Homeric *iatroi*. We know for example that Democedes traveled from Italy to Greece and Asia Minor, just as the figure in the Basel relief holds a walking stick as a sign of his itinerant ways. Moreover, the status of the healer in the *Iliad*, a man worth countless others for his skills, now received recognition in works of visual art like vases and reliefs.

## **B. Development within the Tradition**

While there is strong evidence for continuity in the tradition of natural healing from Homer through the 6<sup>th</sup> c., the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC was recognized even in antiquity as a watershed of sorts for Greek natural healing. The most important factor that contributed to this assessment was the floruit of the best-known *iatros* in ancient history, Hippocrates.

Born ca. 460 BC on the island of Kos, Hippocrates was known by his contemporaries as a famous *iatros*, referred to simply as “Hippocrates the Koan, one of the Asklepiads,” (Pl. *Prt.* 311b-c), and an authority on the relationship between the body and nature (Pl. *Phdr.* 270c). Moreover, he was considered on a par for his profession with the sculptors Polykleitos and Pheidias and even the poet Homer (Pl. *Prt.* 311c-d).

This is all the more remarkable since Hippocrates is not known to have visited Athens, yet Athenians were familiar enough with him to consider him a paradigm of his profession within his own lifetime.<sup>82</sup> Yet it is also remarkable, given his fame, how scanty contemporary or near-contemporary references to him are. We have only the two references from Plato, and nothing else.

Hippocrates' reputation grew as time passed. In the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, the *medicus* Scribonius Largus would call him “the founder of our profession” (*Comp.* 5);<sup>83</sup> Seneca would say that he was the greatest *medicus* and again called him the founder of medicine (*Ep.* 95.20);<sup>84</sup> and Celsus would eulogize him as “a man most worthy of being remembered, notable for his technical skill and eloquence” (*de Med.* 1.praef.8).<sup>85</sup> By the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, Galen made even these comments seem stingy and lackluster by heaping frequent, hyperbolic praise on Hippocrates in many of his writings.<sup>86</sup> The repeated emphasis on Hippocrates as “the founder of medicine” reflects the ancient view that he marked the beginning of a new phenomenon. Modern scholars perpetuate this tradition by referring to Greek natural healing as “Hippocratic medicine.”

While much of what we know of Hippocrates, and indeed even much of what the ancients knew about him, is almost certainly a fabrication, there coalesced around this one figure a number of phenomena that mark new developments in the area of natural healing, or ἰατρική, as it was now called.

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<sup>82</sup> Jouanna 1999 (6). Literacy and the spread of medical treatises by Hippocrates may have facilitated Athenian awareness of Hippocrates. For the impact the spread of medical texts had on Greek medicine in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cs. BC, see Dean-Jones 2003.

<sup>83</sup> Scrib.Larg. *Comp.* 5: *conditor nostrae professionis*.

<sup>84</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 95.20: *maximus ille medicorum et huius scientiae conditor*.

<sup>85</sup> Celsus *de Med.* 1.praef.8: *Hippocrates Cous, primus ex omnibus memoria dignus...uir et arte et facundia insignis*.

<sup>86</sup> On Galen's admiration for Hippocrates, see W.D. Smith 1979 (61-176); Temkin 1991 (47-50).

## 1. *Technē*

The demarcation of a particular type of healing as *iatrike* was motivated by the desire to define *iatrike* as a *technē*. *Iatrike*, related to the word *iатros*, was originally an adjective probably first used to modify the word τεχνή.<sup>87</sup> *Technē*, or practical skill, has a range of meanings from Homer on, including the sometimes negative connotations of cunning and trickery.<sup>88</sup> By the later 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, however, it was used often to refer to a particular skill that involved training.<sup>89</sup> The number and diversity of such *technai*, as well as their prominence in discourse, is suggested by a reference in Plato's *Sophist* to the writings of Protagoras on wrestling and the other arts (περί τε πάλης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνῶν, *Soph.* 232d-e). They are likewise attested by the opening words of *On Art/Technē* where the author states that he is responding specifically to those people who make a practice of vilifying *technai* generally (*de Arte* 1.1; L. 6.2).<sup>90</sup>

Various disciplines were carving out their own niches as distinct *technai*, and many were using treatises to do just that. Rhetoric is one of the most prominent examples from the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC of a discipline trying to establish its status as a *technē*.<sup>91</sup> Much of Plato's *Gorgias*, for example, is an attempt to determine the particular *technē* of *rhetorike*. One of

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<sup>87</sup> See Chantraine 1956 (115; 129-130) on the understood *technē*. Aristophanes, poking fun not only at the wealth of new *technai*, but also acknowledging the place of *iatrike* in the later 5<sup>th</sup> c., coins the word ιατροτέχνη in the *Clouds* produced in 423 BC (*Nub.* 332). It is not surprising that the chorus of *Clouds* are thought to nourish not only *iatrotechnē*, but also sophists, particularly those from Thurii in Southern Italy (*Nub.* 331-334). Southern Italy was the home of *iatroi* (like Democedes, Alcmaeon, etc.) and of sophists, like Gorgias, vital to the development of *rhetorike*.

<sup>88</sup> On the range of meanings of *technē* over time, Hankinson 1991 (82-83) provides a useful summary; for a more detailed discussion, see Isnardi Parente 1961.

<sup>89</sup> This is particularly true in Plato; see Hankinson 1991 (82-83).

<sup>90</sup> *de Arte* 1.1; L. 6.2: Εἰσὶ τινες οἱ τέχνην πεποιήνται τὸ τὰς τέχνας αἰσχροπεῖν. The author concludes this introduction, however, by stating that his own response will be limited to attacks on *iatrike*.

<sup>91</sup> On the development of rhetoric as a *technē*, see Kennedy 1963; Cole 1991.

Socrates' interlocutors in the *Gorgias* is Polus, a teacher and author of a treatise on rhetoric called Τεχνή, to which Socrates refers (*Grg.* 462b11). Socrates, unpersuaded by the arguments Polus has made in his treatise, presses both him and the rhetor Gorgias further as to the precise nature of their *techne*. As Gorgias and his followers struggle to name what exactly it is that their *techne* concerns, Socrates declares that rhetoric cannot be a *techne* because "it cannot give an account of that to which it applies, and cannot therefore name the cause of each" (*Grg.* 465a2-5).

In the very course of trying to get Gorgias and Polus to tell him what *rhetorike* concerns in particular, Socrates frequently returns to *iatrike* as a prime example of a *techne* because it is obvious to all what *iatrike* deals with: the health of the human body. In fact, it is the first *techne* that Socrates uses as a model in the dialogue (*Grg.* 448b4-10). It recurs more famously later in the *Gorgias* when Socrates contrasts the *techne* of *iatrike* with the knack (ἐμπειρία) of cookery, which aims not at what is the best for the body but at what is most pleasing to it (*Grg.* 463e5-466a3).<sup>92</sup> Thus, while rhetoric was still trying to prove itself as a *techne*, *iatrike* was easily recognizable as one.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *Iatrike* is also important as an example of a *techne* in Plato's *Ion* (537-540), and is a paradigm *techne* for Plato (e.g., *Prt.*) and Aristotle.

<sup>93</sup> The very title *On Ancient Medicine* (Περὶ ἀρχαίας ἰατρικῆς) may be evidence for the relative age of *iatrike* as a *techne* vs. other *technai*. While the treatise probably dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (Hankinson 1992 [55, n. 2]), "ancient" (ἀρχαίης) is a relative term implying that *iatrike* has been in existence for a very long time.

## 2. *Iatrike*

The term *iatrike* is itself indicative of development.<sup>94</sup> It occurs in the literary record for the first time only in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, but at exactly what point is a matter of dispute.<sup>95</sup> Herodotus uses it to refer to healing practiced by the Egyptians (Hdt. 2.84, 3.129). It occurs repeatedly also in Plato's *Gorgias*, composed ca. 385 BC but having a dramatic date roughly in the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>96</sup> Here it is applied to Greek healing, and its use does not appear novel or new to the dialogue's participants. While *iatrike* is the term for the practice of *iatroi*, that is, the practice of natural healing methods that had been in use for centuries, the fact that it was now given a particular verbal designation is significant, for it indicates a desire to reify natural healing practices as something separate from its practitioners. This in turn allowed *iatrike* to be defined as a *techne* with distinct limits.

The term *iatrike* appears also in medical treatises of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC and later that have come down to us under the name of Hippocrates. The corpus of writings collected by Alexandrian scholars and attributed *en masse* to Hippocrates was understood even in antiquity to represent the work of more

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<sup>94</sup> *-ike* is an adjective-producing suffix, and *iatrike* thus originally an adjectival form related to *iатros* (as we shall see below, modifying an understood noun like *techne*). On the linguistic development of *iatrike*, and other ancient Greek medical vocabulary, see van Brock 1961 (5). On the evolution of the *-ikos* ending, see Chantraine 1956 (97-171). The *-ikos* ending appeared as an ethnic (or, more specifically, according to Chantraine, a 'ktetic') in Homer (Chantraine 101-114). Gradually, and at least by the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, it began to replace earlier adjectival endings in words like *μαντεία* (Chantraine 129-130). By 424 BC, words ending in *-ikos* had become so prolific that Aristophanes parodied them in the *Knights* (Eq. 1375-1381). Chantraine (115, n. 2) notes that the *-ikos* ending may be Ionian in origin since Pindar, whose spelling of *Μοῖσα* is otherwise consistently Doric, switches to the Ionic *μουσικά*. Links between Ionian philosophy and natural science may have promoted the early coining of the term "*iatrike*."

<sup>95</sup> A work of Empedocles is referred to by various ancient sources as *ιατρικὸς λόγος* and *περὶ ἰατρικῆς* (Diog. 8.77 = *DK* 31A1; Pliny *NH* 29.1.5 = *DK* 31A3). If the work was so named by Empedocles (ca. 492-432 BC), then the term may have been used much earlier in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. than Herodotus. The term also appears in certain of the medical treatises, the dating of which is contested and may well precede Herodotus, but by how long is a matter of speculation. On the occurrence of *iatrike* in the medical treatises, and on the problems of

than one author.<sup>97</sup> Although all these treatises were eventually attributed to Hippocrates alone and the names of the other authors have been separated from their works, the mere fact that a number of different people were writing about natural healing is indicative of lively discourse on the subject. Moreover, the range of audiences to which the treatises aim, from prospective students to those already studying natural healing, attests to its widespread interest.<sup>98</sup>

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dating these treatises, see below.

<sup>96</sup> Dodds 1959 (17-18) declares it impossible to reconcile all the disparate chronological clues in the text.

<sup>97</sup> The “Hippocratic Question” is a huge one, and cannot be dealt with here in great detail; the following lists some of the issues and relevant bibliography. The corpus contains over 60 treatises that vary in style, vocabulary, and even theory. On the editing by Alexandrian scholars, see Jouanna 1999 (348-353). Littré’s edition, dating from 1839-1861, is the last complete one. Jouanna 1999 (App. 3, p. 373-416) provides a handy catalogue of the treatises in alphabetical order by title, with a summary of their contents and their probable dates. While not all scholars agree with his dates (in fact, it is hard to find any two people who agree about the dating of all of the treatises in the corpus), Jouanna’s catalogue is useful because it includes his dating criteria. The dating of individual treatises is highly problematic, but there is general agreement that a number of these 60-plus treatises were composed in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and some perhaps by the 430s. The earliest of the treatises are thought by many to be *Airs, Waters, Places* and *On the Sacred Disease*, dating to the mid- to late-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, although the dates of the earliest treatises are continually being pushed earlier. The authorship of the treatises of the corpus was a matter of debate even in antiquity. Galen (2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD) refers often to the debate about which writings were really by Hippocrates. He is said to have published an entire work on the subject, *On the Authentic and Inauthentic Writings of Hippocrates*. The earliest scholar known to us to have tackled the question of authenticity in the corpus is Erotian, who lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD. For summary of the ancient and modern debate about which treatises are by Hippocrates, see W.D. Smith 1979 (esp. 14-43); Jouanna 1999 (58-65). Some scholars believe that none of the treatises of the Hippocratic corpus are by Hippocrates; see Lloyd 1970 (50). The debate over multiple authorship extends even to individual treatises. One of the latest and most systematic attempts at distinguishing different authors within a particular treatise is that of Grensemann 1987 on *de Muliebris*. See also the comments of Dean-Jones 1989 on Grensemann.

<sup>98</sup> The question of the target-audiences of particular Hippocratic treatises has recently attracted attention. See, e.g., R. Thomas 1993. It is clear that some of the treatises speak to an audience already practicing *iatrike* (e.g., *Airs, Waters, Places; Nature of Man*), while others speak to those with some knowledge in *iatrike*, but who are not necessarily *iatroi* (e.g., *On Art*). Dean-Jones 2002 argues that most of the treatises were meant as teaching texts.

These writings of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC helped advance the professionalization of natural healing. *Iatroi* published their own thoughts about the true causes of illness and proper methods of treatment. Uncertainty about both the dates of composition and the authors of the individual treatises makes it hard to say when the term *iatrike* was first used by *iatroi*, but the term does appear in *Airs, Waters, Places*, one of the earliest treatises of the corpus.

*Iatrike* was thus used not just by those outside the profession like Herodotus, but also by those inside it to distinguish *iatrike* from other forms of healing, and to delimit it. The author of *Airs, Waters, Places*, for example, begins his treatise, “Whoever wishes to pursue *iatrike* correctly must proceed in the following way” (*Aer.* 1.1; L. 2.12).<sup>99</sup> The author of *On the Sacred Disease*, often thought to be the same author who wrote *Airs, Waters, Places*, wishes to prove the efficacy of natural healers as opposed to magicians, purifiers, charlatans and quacks. These latter, he argues, say that the divine, rather than the body itself, is the cause of disease:

It seems to me that it was people like today’s *magoi*, purifiers, charlatans, and quacks who first made this disease [of epilepsy] a “holy” one. It’s just those sorts people who claim to be especially holy and to know a lot. At a loss and having nothing to offer in the way of help, they alleged that the divine was the true cause of this disease and, so as not to appear completely ignorant, called it sacred....But the cause of this illness is the brain, just as with the other major illnesses. (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.22-28, 3.1-2; L. 6.354, 366)<sup>100</sup>

In *On Art*, a work probably not by an *iatros* although included in the Hippocratic corpus,<sup>101</sup> the primary intent of the treatise is to provide an

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<sup>99</sup> *Aer.* 1.1; L. 2.12: Ἱητρικὴν ὅστις βούλεται ὀρθῶς ζητέειν, τάδε χρὴ ποιέειν.

<sup>100</sup> *Morb.Sacr.* 1.22-28, 3.1-2; L. 6.354, 366: Ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκέουσιν οἱ πρῶτοι τοῦτο τὸ νόσημα ἀφιερῶσαντες τοιοῦτοι εἶναι ἄνθρωποι οἷοι καὶ νῦν εἰσι μάγοι τε καὶ καθάρται καὶ ἀγύρται καὶ ἀλαζόνες, ὁκόσοι δὴ προσποιέονται σφόδρα θεοσεβέες εἶναι καὶ πλέον τι εἰδέναι. Οὗτοι τοίνυν παραμπεχόμενοι καὶ προβαλλόμενοι τὸ θεῖον τῆς ἀμηχανίης τοῦ μὴ ἴσχειν ὅ τι προσενέγκαντες ὠφελήσουσιν, ὡς μὴ κατάδηλοι ἔωσιν οὐδὲν ἐπιστάμενοι, ἱερὸν ἐνόμισαν τοῦτο τὸ πάθος εἶναι... Ἀλλὰ γὰρ αἴτιος ὁ ἐγκέφαλος τούτου τοῦ πάθους, ὡσπερ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων νοσημάτων τῶν μεγίστων.

<sup>101</sup> Mann 2003 argues convincingly that this treatise was written not by an *iatros*, but by a

argument for the defense of *iatrike*. “As to *iatrike*, I will explain what it in fact is. First I will describe what I believe *iatrike* to be” (*de Arte* 3.2-11; L. 6.4-6).<sup>102</sup> The term *iatrike*, i.e., the province of the *iatros*, could therefore be delimited.

### 3. Limits of the *Techne* of *Iatrike*

Not only was *iatrike* generally recognized as a *techne*, but various authors of the Hippocratic corpus undertook to specify in greater and unambiguous detail exactly where the parameters of this *techne* lay. Specifying what was beyond the limits of *iatrike* proved another way of further determining precisely what it could treat, and what thereby constituted *iatrike*.

There is widespread recognition within the Hippocratic corpus that *iatrike* cannot treat all cases. Certain diseases are deemed beyond the capabilities of the *techne*, as are diseases that, although otherwise curable, had progressed too far. The author of *On the Sacred Disease*, one of the earliest treatises of the corpus, alludes to such limits when he claims that epilepsy, or the “sacred disease” (ιερή νοῦσος), is no less curable (ιητόν) than any other disease, unless so much time has elapsed and the illness has become so entrenched that it is already stronger than the remedies applied (*Morb.Sacr.* 2.1-7; L. 6.364).<sup>103</sup> In other words, once an illness has progressed beyond a certain point, the procedures of an *iatros* are insufficient to conquer it. This

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sophist, possibly Protagoras himself. Mann mentions that the very title of the treatise, Περὶ τέχνης (*On Art*), rather than Περὶ τῆς τέχνης, (*On the Art*), suggests that any *techne* could have been slotted into the text in place of *iatrike*. If Mann’s thesis is correct, *On Art* is one of the earliest of the Hippocratic treatises. See also Mann forthcoming.

<sup>102</sup> *de Arte* 3.2-4; L. 6.4: Περὶ δὲ ιητρικῆς, ἐς ταύτην γὰρ ὁ λόγος, ταύτης οὖν τὴν ἀπόδειξιν ποιήσομαι, καὶ πρῶτόν γε διοριεῦμαι ὃ νομίζω ιητρικὴν εἶναι.

<sup>103</sup> *Morb.Sacr.* 5.1-7; L. 6.364: Τὸ δὲ νοῦσημα τοῦτο οὐδὲν τί μοι δοκῆει θειότερον εἶναι τῶν λοιπῶν, ἀλλὰ φύσιν μὲν ἔχει ἢν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα νοσήματα, καὶ πρόφασιν ὅθεν ἕκαστα γίνεται· φύσιν δὲ τοῦτο καὶ πρόφασιν ἀπὸ ταύτου τὸ θεῖον γίνεσθαι ἀφ’ ὅτου καὶ ἄλλα πάντα, καὶ ιητόν εἶναι, καὶ οὐδὲν ἦσσαν ἐτέρων, ὅ τι ἂν μὴ ἤδη ὑπὸ χρόνου πολλοῦ καταβεβιασμένον ἔη, ὥστε ἤδη εἶναι ἰσχυρότερον τῶν φαρμάκων τῶν προσφερομένων.



places a premium on early diagnosis. The author of *Prognostic I* asserts that it is impossible to restore every patient to health (*Prog.* 1.8-9; L. 2.110).<sup>104</sup>

*Prorrhetic II*, also considered an early treatise by some, states bluntly that certain cases of gout are “all incurable by human *techne*,” at least as far as he knows (*Prorrh.* 2.8.1-4; L. 9.26).<sup>105</sup>

Consequent upon the idea of *iatrike* as a limited field was the conviction that *iatroi* needed to recognize and abide by those limits. This meant that the good *iatros* should refuse to undertake cases that were inherently incurable, or that were brought to the *iatros*’ attention too late. One treatise in particular, *On Art*, is quite specific and emphatic about these limits. Addressing the charge that *iatroi* refuse to undertake dire cases, the author responds that such cases are beyond the power of *iatrike*: “For if a man deems possible either from a *techne* what does not belong to that *techne*, or from nature what does not grow up by nature, his ignorance is closer to madness than to lack of knowledge. For in cases where we have control due to our *techne* or to nature, there we can be craftsmen, but not otherwise” (*de*

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<sup>104</sup> *Prog.* 1.8-9; L. 2.110: Ὑγιέας μὲν γὰρ ποιέειν ἅπαντας τοὺς ἀσθενέοντας ἀδύνατον. According to Jouanna 1999 (App. 3.48), ancient critics unanimously attributed this treatise to Hippocrates; it may thus belong to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

There is a wealth of recent literature on the topic of the limits of *iatrike* and the practitioner’s refusal to treat, including Wittern 1979; von Staden 1990; Prioreshi 1992; Amundsen 1996. von Staden 1990 also contains a valuable discussion of the differences in vocabulary used to designate a case as “untreatable.”

<sup>105</sup> *Prorrh.* 2.8.1-4; L. 9.26: Περί δὲ ποδαγρόνων τάδε· ὅσοι μὲν γέροντες ἢ περὶ τοῖσιν ἄρθροισιν ἐπιπορώματα ἔχουσιν, ἢ τρόπον ἀταλαίπωρον ζῶσι κοιλίας ξηρὰς ἔχοντες, οὗτοι μὲν πάντες ἀδύνατοι ὑγιέες γίνεσθαι ἀνθρωπίνῃ τέχνῃ, ὅσον ἐγὼ οἶδα. The cases of gout that he considers incurable are those contracted by old people, or those who have concretions at their joints, or those who do not exercise and suffer from constipation. Jouanna 1999 (App. 3.50) states that the treatise dates to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Garcia Novo 1995 has followed others in arguing for a 4<sup>th</sup>-c. date on the basis of style and language primarily, but her evidence could also support an earlier date. Stover (forthcoming) demonstrates how the text’s structural features and discursive practices are informed by its socio-cultural context, which he, following Garcia Novo, takes to be the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and especially the fierce competition then by teachers of medicine for students.

*Arte* 8.8-12; L. 6.12-14).<sup>106</sup> And later:

[When people urge *iatroi* to take on incurable cases], they are admired by those who are so-called *iatroi*, but are laughed at by those who are truly *iatroi*. For those experienced in this craft [of *iatrike*] have no need of being blamed or praised so foolishly, but need praise only from those who have taken into account where the work of craftsmen has reached its limits and where it falls short. (*de Arte* 8.24-30; L. 6.14)<sup>107</sup>

The idea that certain cases are beyond the limits of the *techne* is central to the entire treatise. At the opening of his discussion of *iatrike*, the author of *On Art* defines *iatrike* by three criteria only: elimination of the suffering of those who are ill, decrease in the violence of their diseases, and realization that *iatrike* is powerless in some cases (*de Arte* 3.4-7; L. 6.4-6).<sup>108</sup> Only the true and good doctor, as opposed to pretenders and negligent *iatroi*, both sees and abides by those limits, refusing treatment to anyone whose illness falls outside the capabilities of the *techne*.<sup>109</sup> The author concludes the treatise by stating that not only his own words, but especially the very deeds of *iatroi* make clear that *iatrike* has in itself well-equipped arguments for defense when refusing impossible-to-cure cases (*de Arte* 13.1-4; L. 6.26).<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> *de Arte* 8.8-12; L. 6.12-14: εἰ γάρ τις ἢ τέχνην, ἐς ἃ μὴ τέχνη, ἢ φύσιν, ἐς ἃ μὴ φύσις πέφυκεν, ἀξιώσειε δύνασθαι, ἀγνοεῖ ἄγνοϊαν ἀρμόζουσαν μανίη μάλλον ἢ ἀμαθίη. ὅτι γάρ ἐστιν ἡμῖν τοῖσι τε τῶν φυσίων τοῖσι τε τῶν τεχνῶν ὀργάνοις ἐπικρατέειν, τουτέων ἐστὶν ἡμῖν δημιουργοῖς εἶναι, ἄλλων δὲ οὐκ ἐστὶν. Note the echo of *demioergos* from the *Odyssey*.

<sup>107</sup> *de Arte* 8.24-30; L. 6.14: παρακελευόμενοι δὲ ταῦτα, ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν οὐνόματι ἰητρῶν θαυμάζονται, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν καὶ τέχνη καταγελῶνται. Οὐ μὴν οὕτως ἀφρόνων οἱ ταύτης τῆς δημιουργίης ἔμπειροι οὔτε μομητῶν οὔτ' ἐπαινετῶν δέονται· ἀλλὰ λελογισμένων πρὸς ὅτι αἱ ἐργασίαι τῶν δημιουργῶν τελευτώμεναι πλήρεις εἰσὶ, καὶ ὅτε ὑπολειπόμεναι ἐνδεεῖς, ἔτι τε τῶν ἐνδειῶν, ἅς τε τοῖς δημιουργοῖσιν ἀναθετόν, ἅς τε τοῖσι δημιουργομένοισιν. Note, again, the echo of *demioergos* from the *Odyssey*.

<sup>108</sup> *de Arte* 3.4-7; L. 6.4-6: πρῶτόν γε διοριεῦμαι ὃ νομίζω ἰητρικὴν εἶναι, τὸ δὴ πάμπαν ἀπαλλάσσειν τῶν νοσεόντων τοὺς καμάτους, καὶ τῶν νοσημάτων τὰς σφοδρότητας ἀμβλύνειν, καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐγχειρέειν τοῖσι κεκρατημένοισιν ὑπὸ τῶν νοσημάτων, εἰδόμενος ὅτι ταῦτα οὐ δύναται ἰητρικῆ. Emphasis mine.

<sup>109</sup> On distinction between good doctors as opposed to charlatans and quacks, see below.

<sup>110</sup> *de Arte* 13.1-4; L. 6.26: Ὅτι μὲν οὖν καὶ λόγους ἐν ἐωυτῇ εὐπόρους ἐς τὰς ἐπικουρίας ἔχει ἡ ἰητρικῆ, καὶ οὐκ εὐδιορθώτοισι δικαίως οὐκ ἂν ἐγχειρέει τῆσι νούσοισιν, ἢ ἐγχειρευόμενος ἀναμαρτήτους ἂν παρέχοι, οἱ τε νῦν λεγόμενοι λόγοι δηλοῦσιν αἱ τε τῶν εἰδόμενων τὴν τέχνην ἐπιδείξιεσ. The author now adds another clause to his argument: if *iatroi* should undertake

A number of other treatises corroborate this attitude toward incurable cases.<sup>111</sup> *Diseases II*, for example, probably also containing material from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, bluntly admonishes in certain cases of consumption, “Do not treat this patient” (*Morb.* 2.48.15; L. 7.72).<sup>112</sup> Similarly, *Diseases I*, which some date to the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, asserts that the *iatros* should treat to the very end those ailments that are capable of treatment, but in the case of untreatable ones, he should know why they cannot be treated (*Morb.* 1.6.1-8; L. 6.150).<sup>113</sup>

While this attitude towards incurable cases is not unanimous, it is by far the predominant one in the Hippocratic corpus.<sup>114</sup> Nor is the prohibition against treating certain cases a new one. Both Egyptian and Assyro-Babylonian texts make similar statements.<sup>115</sup> But what makes the statements from the Greek world of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC different is their constant reinforcement of the idea that the *techne*, not the practitioner, is limited. In Egyptian culture, tradition held that the gods bestowed this skill upon men complete and beyond improvement.<sup>116</sup> The Greeks, as mentioned above, conceived of

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cases that are impossible to cure, they are not to be blamed.

<sup>111</sup> The citations are too numerous to list, but can be found in von Staden 1990; Prioreshi 1992; Amundsen 1996.

<sup>112</sup> *Morb.* 2.48.15; L. 7.72: Τοῦτον μὴ ἰᾶσθαι ὅταν οὕτως ἔχη. Jouanna 1999 (App. 3.16) claims that the material contained in *Diseases II* is possibly mid-5<sup>th</sup> c., but that the treatise underwent several subsequent rewritings.

<sup>113</sup> *Morb.* 1.6.1-8; L. 6.150: Ὁρθῶς δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ οὐκ ὀρθῶς τὰ τοιάδε· οὐκ ὀρθῶς μὲν...τὰ δυνατὰ μὴ ἐξιῆσθαι, καὶ τὰ ἀδύνατα φάναι ἐξιῆσεσθαι. Jouanna 1999 (App. 3.15) dates the treatise to the 380s BC.

<sup>114</sup> Wittern 1979 and von Staden 1990 demonstrate convincingly that not all authors of the corpus promoted the refusal of incurable cases. One such case is *On Joints* (*Art.* 40), a 5<sup>th</sup>- or 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC treatise according to Jouanna 1999 (App. 3.43). These exceptions, however, are very few in number relative to the recommendation to refuse untreatable cases. Moreover, as Prioreshi 1992 (346) has argued, a distinction must be made between “supportive treatment,” meant to relieve suffering, and treatment meant to influence the course of a disease. Most of the concessions to take on untreatable cases are recommendations for supportive treatment only and are not intended to give the patient hope of recovery.

<sup>115</sup> E.g., case 31 of the Egyptian Edwin-Smith papyrus; and the Hindu *Sushruta Samhita* and *Caraka Samhita*. On the Hindu texts and their English translations, see Prioreshi 1992 (345, with n. 21 and 22).

<sup>116</sup> The god Thoth is said to have given medical skill to men. On Egyptian medicine, see

*iatrike* as having limits, but at the same time as capable of expansion and improvement.

One reason *iatrike* was thought to have limits was a general recognition that the *techne* had not yet reached its full potential; there was still room for discovery and development. The author of *On Ancient Medicine* states this clearly:

*Iatrike* has long had all things at its disposal, and a beginning and path has been found by which many excellent discoveries have been made over a long period of time. And all the rest will be discovered provided that the researcher proceeds competently, being aware of previous discoveries and using them as his starting point. (VM 2.1-4; L.1.572)<sup>117</sup>

While there have already been many outstanding discoveries in *iatrike*, more will be made in the future.<sup>118</sup>

Thus in Greek culture, *iatrike* was delimited by its capabilities as well as its methods. The good *iatros* chose to abide by those limits, which could however be advanced by developments in the *techne*.

#### 4. Training and Legitimation

A number of reasons made specification of the limits of *iatrike* crucial in this period of the development of natural medicine. In the absence of any

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Jayne 1925 (3-86); Majno 1975 (69-140). A passage in the Edwin Smith papyrus gives labels for each case that a healer may encounter: “A disease which I shall treat. A disease with which I shall struggle. A disease which I cannot treat” (translated in von Staden 1989 [14, n. 48]). The last label, “A disease which I cannot treat,” coupled with the idea that medicine was for the Egyptians already complete, implies that the healer himself is limited rather than the practice of healing. Presumably only the gods could treat cases beyond the abilities of the human practitioner.

<sup>117</sup> VM 2.1-4; L. 1.572: Ἱητρικὴ δὲ πάντα πάλαι ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ ὁδὸς εὐρημένη, καθ’ ἣν καὶ τὰ εὐρημένα πολλὰ τε καὶ καλῶς ἔχοντα εὐρῆται ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ εὐρεθήσεται, ἢν τις ἱκανός τε εὖν καὶ τὰ εὐρημένα εἰδὼς, ἐκ τουτέων ὁρμώμενος ζητῆ. Jouanna 1999 (App. 3.5), following Jones 1923, dates this treatise to the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Hankinson 1992 (55, n. 2) prefers a date in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC on linguistic grounds.

<sup>118</sup> This concept is strongly evident also in Galen; see Hankinson 1994 on Galen’s concept of scientific progress.

formal method of validating the quality of healers, the true and good *iatros* had a social and economic interest in distancing himself from charlatans and quacks (ἀγύρται and ἀλαζόνες) who may also call themselves, or be called by others, “*iatroi*.”<sup>119</sup> As noted, the author of *On the Sacred Disease* distinguishes those who properly treat illness from *magoi*, purifiers, charlatans, and quacks (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.22-24; L. 6.354). The author of *On Ancient Medicine* likewise acknowledges that there is a range of ability among *iatroi*: “Some craftsmen are poor and others very good; this would not be so if *iatrike* did not exist at all, nor would it be so had there never been any research or discoveries in the field, in which case all practitioners would be equally inexperienced and unlearned” (*VM*1.8-12; L. 1.570).<sup>120</sup>

Since by definition a *techne* implied more than common knowledge about the subject, the only way to become a good *iatros* was by undergoing proper training. Such training could not come from books alone, but had to derive in part from study with an *iatros*. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates asks Phaedrus whether people would think a man is an *iatros* who knows what to

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<sup>119</sup> The danger of people posing as *iatroi* is illustrated in the passage of the *Gorgias* about the election of public physicians. Socrates says that it will often be the smoothest talker, not the best *iatros*, who persuades the people to vote for him (*Grg.* 456b-c). The lack of a formal method of legitimating true *iatroi* is discussed by Amundsen 1977 and 1996 (esp. 35-37) (although he overplays the negative reputation of *iatroi* in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC). von Staden 1990 and Pioreschi 1992 discuss the dangers to an *iatros*' reputation caused by taking on untreatable cases. See also Cohn-Haft 1956 (17-18); Jouanna 1999 (107-111). One factor often mentioned in these discussions is that *iatrike* was under attack; there seems to be no evidence for this, however, as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. See Dean-Jones 2003 (esp. 103-104). On the reputation of *iatroi* in antiquity, see Amundsen 1977. Demand 1993 discusses their negative reputation in Attic oratory, although her evidence for negativity begins only in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

<sup>120</sup> *VM*1.8-12; L. 1.570: Εἰσὶ δὲ δημιουργοὶ, οἱ μὲν φλαῦροι, οἱ δὲ πολλὸν διαφέροντες· ὅπερ, εἰ μὴ ἦν ἱητρικὴ ὄλως, μὴδ' ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσκεπτο, μὴδ' εὐροίτο μὴδὲν, οὐκ ἂν ἦν, ἀλλὰ πάντες ἂν ὁμοίως αὐτέης ἄπειροίτε καὶ ἀνεπιστήμονες ἦσαν. Most *iatroi*, the author claims, are in fact bad (κακοί). All *iatroi* make mistakes, but bad *iatroi* make grave errors and are easily distinguished from good *iatroi* in severe, violent, and dangerous cases, much as the inadequacies of a poor helmsman are made blatantly evident when a major storm suddenly descends (*VM*9; L. 1.588-590).

apply to the body to produce various effects like heat or cold, but does not know to whom these techniques should be applied. Phaedrus replies: “I suppose they would say that he’s crazy, and that just because he had read some book or stumbled upon some drugs he thought that he was an *iatros*, when really he knew nothing about the *technē*” (*Phdr.* 268b-c).<sup>121</sup>

Proper training is emphasized repeatedly in the Hippocratic corpus, even in treatises not considered to be advertisements for students or patients. The author of *On Art* asserts that “effective *iatroi* are those who were educated not off-the-beaten path (μὴ ἐκποδῶν), and whose natural ability is not terrible” (*de Arte* 9.13-14; L. 6.16).<sup>122</sup> The phrase μὴ ἐκποδῶν seems to refer to training by an *iatros* or teacher recognized as someone skilled and qualified in the *technē*, as opposed to some fly-by-night operation, or to the relatively more widely accessible knowledge published in books.

Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* contains a vivid account of the importance of education to proving one’s worth as an *iatros*.<sup>123</sup> Socrates parodies the speech of a highly unqualified candidate for the office of *iatros demosie*. This candidate, according to Socrates, declares that he has not studied *iatrike* and has purposely avoided learning anything at all from *iatroi*, even to the point of resisting the appearance of such knowledge. Socrates’ sarcasm and emphasis on educational credentials (or the lack thereof) demonstrates just how much education could matter to the reputation of an *iatros*.

*The Law*, a late treatise,<sup>124</sup> addresses the issue of proper conditions

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<sup>121</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 268b-c: Εἰπεῖν ἂν οἶμαι ὅτι μαίνεται ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἐκ βιβλίου ποθὲν ἀκούσας ἢ περιτυχὼν φαρμακίοις ἰατρὸς οἴεται γεγονέναι, οὐδὲν ἐπαίῳ τῆς τέχνης. Also Aristotle (*NE* 1181b) says that medical treatises are of benefit to those with experience (ἐμπείροις) but useless to those without such knowledge (ἀνεπιστήμοσιν).

<sup>122</sup> *de Arte* 9.13-14; L. 6.16: δύνανται δὲ, οἷσι τά τε τῆς παιδείης μὴ ἐκποδῶν, τά τε τῆς φύσιος μὴ ταλαίπωρα.

<sup>123</sup> Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.5.

<sup>124</sup> The date of this treatise, too, is disputed. Erotian attributed it to Hippocrates. Jouanna 1999 (App. 3.35) adduces linguistic evidence in support of a post 5<sup>th</sup>-c. date.

necessary for producing good *iatroi*:

*Iatrike* is the only *techne* in our cities that is penalized by nothing except dishonor....Many are physicians by repute only, but very few in actuality. Whoever is going to attain a true understanding of *iatrike* must have the following: natural ability, training, a suitable place (τόπος εὐφυής), education beginning in childhood, love of toil, and time....[The teaching of the *techne*] must be acquired with intelligence, and the education, beginning in childhood, must occur in a place well-suited to learning (τόπος εὐφυής). (*Lex* 1.4-5, 1.9-2.3, 2.5-7; L. 4.638-640)<sup>125</sup>

The τόπος εὐφυής is akin to μὴ ἐκποδῶν in *On Art*, a phrase stressing a right and a wrong kind of training distinguished probably by the qualifications of the instructor, access to drugs and other supplies, etc. The treatise concludes with the admonition that only those who have been initiated into the secret rites of the profession can learn what is sacred (*Lex* 5; L 4.642).<sup>126</sup> While couched in terms of a cult with initiatory rites, the words of the author imply a proper training for the good *iatros*.<sup>127</sup>

Citing one's credentials, especially proper training, became critical with the opening of *iatrike* to those born outside families of *iatroi*. In Homer, fathers taught sons to be *iatroi*, as was the norm in antiquity where sons were expected to take up their father's trade. With the exception of mythic heroes like Asklepios and Achilles who were taught healing by the centaur Cheiron,<sup>128</sup> no evidence challenges this model until the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. One of the few certain historical facts about Hippocrates is that he would teach *iatrike* to

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<sup>125</sup> *Lex* 1.4-5, 1.9-2.3, 2.5-7; L. 4.638-640: πρόστιμον γὰρ ἰητρικῆς μούνης ἐν τῆσι πόλεσιν οὐδὲν ὄρισται, πλὴν ἀδοξίης· ... οὕτω καὶ ἰητροὶ, φήμη μὲν πολλοὶ, ἔργω δὲ πάγχυ βαιοί. Χρὴ γὰρ, ὅστις μέλλει ἰητρικῆς ζύνεσιν ἀτρεκέως ἀρμόζεσθαι, τῶνδὲ μιν ἐπήβολον γενέσθαι· φύσιος· διδασκαλίας· τόπου εὐφυέος· παιδομαθῆς· φιλοπονίης· χρόνου. ... ἦν μετὰ φρονήσιος δεῖ περιποιήσασθαι, παιδομαθῆα γενόμενον ἐν τόπῳ, ὁκοῖος εὐφυῆς πρὸς μάθησιν ἔσται.

<sup>126</sup> *Lex* 5: Τὰ δὲ ἱερὰ ἔοντα πρήγματα ἱεροῖσιν ἀνθρώποισι δείκνυται· βεβήλοισι δὲ, οὐ θέμις, πρὶν ἢ τελεσθῶσιν ὀργίοισιν ἐπιστήμης.

<sup>127</sup> Various ancient cults had secret initiatory rites. See Burkert 1987.

<sup>128</sup> *Il.* 4.217-219, 11.830-832.

anyone who could pay (*Prt.* 311b-c).<sup>129</sup> There is no way of telling when this practice began.

There were places in the Greek world known for medical thinking and teaching, misleadingly called “schools” in much of the secondary literature. Croton, the home of Democedes and Alcmaeon, was one such place, as well as Cyrene, mentioned by Herodotus. Kos, where Hippocrates was born and spent part of his life, as well as Knidos, also became known as centers of *iatrike*.<sup>130</sup> These areas had no formal, well-organized institutions, but were “at best...loose groups of practitioners associated with particular theories [and] teachers.”<sup>131</sup>

Once the field did begin to open to non-family members, training in *iatrike* still followed closely a family-model, with apprenticeship to a male family member, or to the local *iatros*, or to someone farther away with a greater reputation (like Hippocrates).<sup>132</sup> The metaphor of the family was maintained throughout antiquity in such documents as the *Oath*<sup>133</sup> in which one swore to treat one’s teachers like one’s parents.<sup>134</sup> Such a measure to safe-guard true knowledge, and thereby also the quality and standards of the

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<sup>129</sup> P1. *Prt.* 311b-c: ὡς περ ἂν εἰ ἐπενόεις παρὰ τὸν σαυτοῦ ὁμόνυμον ἐλθὼν Ἴπποκράτη τὸν Κῶνον, τὸν τῶν Ἀσκληπιαδῶν, ἀργύριον τελεῖν ὑπὲρ σαυτοῦ μισθὸν ἐκείνῳ, εἴ τίς σε ἤρετο· "Εἰπέ μοι, μέλλεις τελεῖν, ὃ Ἴπποκράτης, Ἴπποκράτει μισθὸν ὡς τίνι ὄντι;" τί ἂν ἀπεκρίνω; — Εἶπον ἂν, ἔφη, ὅτι ὡς ἰατρῷ.

<sup>130</sup> Galen was the first to identify a rivalry between the two. See Thivel 1981; Nutton 1995c. Nutton observes that although there may have been broad trends that distinguished Kos from Knidos, and vice-versa, within either place there was still disagreement.

<sup>131</sup> Nutton 1995c (19).

<sup>132</sup> Nutton 1995c. The article is a well-documented description of medical education and society in the Greek and Roman worlds. Nutton concludes that medical education should be thought of in terms of family units, whether literal or metaphorical, rather than formal institutions.

<sup>133</sup> The authorship and date of the oath are disputed. Erotian attributed it to Hippocrates, and Galen wrote a commentary on it. It must predate the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, when the first reference to it appears (Scribonius Largus *Comp.* 5). For text and commentary, including discussion of the date, see Edelstein 1943; Lichtenthaeler 1984.

<sup>134</sup> *Jusj.* 4-12; L. 4.628-630: ἡγήσασθαι μὲν τὸν διδάξαντά με τὴν τέχνην ταύτην ἴσα γενέτησιν ἐμοῖσι, καὶ βίου κοινώσασθαι, καὶ χρεῶν χρηρίζοντι μετάδοσιν ποιήσασθαι, καὶ γένος τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ



profession, suggests a growing number of *iatroi*, not all of whom were qualified to be *iatroi* by proper training.<sup>135</sup>

Thus, by the later 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC at least, with the proliferation of books about natural healing and the opening of the profession to anyone who could afford to study, knowledge about natural healing was not rigidly restricted.<sup>136</sup> Anyone could claim to be an *iatros* and support this claim with some knowledge of *iatrike*. Consequently, being able to cite one's teachers and training became more important as a method of indicating that one had had a chance to learn to be an *iatros* “*in techne*.”<sup>137</sup>

#### IV. Conclusions

*Iatrike* developed out of a long tradition of Greek natural healing practices that extended at least to the Bronze Age, and thus it would be fallacious to regard *iatrike* or “Hippocratic medicine” as a new phenomenon. From Homer on, social value, scarcity, and training in the familial model—whether literal or metaphorical—all characterize *iatroi*. So, too, do

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ἀδελφοῖς ἴσον ἐπικρινέειν ἄρρεσι, καὶ διδάξειν τὴν τέχνην ταύτην, ἣν χρηρίζωσι μανθάνειν, ἄνευ μισθοῦ καὶ ξυγγραφῆς, παραγγελίης τε καὶ ἀκροήσιος καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς ἀπάσης μαθήσιος μετάδοσιν ποιήσασθαι υἱοῖσί τε ἐμοῖσι, καὶ τοῖσι τοῦ ἐμῆ διδάξαντος, καὶ μαθηταῖσι συγγεγραμμένοισί τε καὶ ὠρκισμένοις νόμῳ ἱητρικῷ, ἄλλω δὲ οὐδενί.

<sup>135</sup> Nutton 1995c (13-15) lists evidence from Asia Minor and Italy for surprisingly large numbers of *iatroi* in relatively small towns. He mentions, for example, a 3<sup>rd</sup>-c. BC curse tablet from Metaponto on which are listed the names of no less than 17 Greek *iatroi* (*SEG* 30.1175). This number is remarkably high given an estimated population of 6,000-7,000 for this Greek colony in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC.

<sup>136</sup> Nutton 1995c (18, and n. 82) explains that in the Roman period by the time of Pliny at least, one could watch operations taking place on a street corner or in a theater.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. *de Arte*. The ease with which anyone could set up shop as a healer (but not as an *iatros*) is suggested by the following anecdote about Antiphon, the famous 5<sup>th</sup>-c. orator. According to Plutarch, although Antiphon never claimed to be an *iatros*, he did claim before beginning his career as an orator “to be able to cure distress, just as the treatment of *iatroi* is effective on those who are ill; and setting up a room near the agora in Corinth, he wrote on the door that he was able to cure those who were troubled....But, believing this *techne* unworthy of him, he turned to *rhetorike*” (Plut. *Mor.* 833c-d). See also Jouanna 1999 (77-78).

methods of healing that locate the causes and cures of illness not in other beings, like the gods, but in nature.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, developments in natural healing included the coining of a new term for the profession (*iatrike*), the opening of the field to those outside families of *iatroi*, and the proliferation of writing about *iatrike*. One further aspect of *iatrike* that received much attention in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC—the evolution of *iatrike* as a *techne* with distinct limits—had a great effect upon healing already in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. These inherent limits, so often remarked upon in the literature of the corpus, required that *iatroi* refuse to treat certain cases. The next chapter explores where individuals turned away by *iatrike* went for healing.

## CHAPTER 2: THE LIMITS OF *IATRIKE* AND THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ASKLEPIOS-CULT

A prominent characteristic of the newly-named field of *iatrike* was emphasis by its practitioners on the limits of their *techne*. As already noted, the specification of such limits entailed encouraging good *iatroi* to turn away untreatable cases. In so doing, *iatrike* created a void in healing; illnesses that lay beyond the limits of the ability of *iatroi* were left for others to heal.

Among these other healers were not only “bad” *iatroi*—the quacks and charlatans (ἀγύρται and ἀλαζόνες) who failed to recognize or refused to abide by the limits of *iatrike*, or who tried to win patients by claiming to be able to heal untreatable cases—but also healers like *magoi*, purifiers, root-cutters, drug-vendors, priests, gods, heroes, etc. There was thus no shortage of alternatives to *iatrike*. It is logical to suppose that, much as today, people who consulted an *iatros* but were turned away did not just resign themselves to chronic suffering or wait to die from fatal ailments that had progressed too far, but sought help from healers outside *iatrike*.<sup>138</sup>

This chapter and the one that follows explore in more detail the void in healing created by *iatrike*, as well as one of the candidates best suited to fill that void: the healing deity Asklepios. The concurrence of developments in both *iatrike* and Asklepios-cult is striking: just as *iatrike* was beginning to be delimited and defined in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the earliest evidence for Asklepios-cult emerges. And in the course of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cs., as treatises of the Hippocratic corpus continued to emphasize the limits of the *techne*, Asklepios-cult emerged as one of the most popular cults of antiquity, spreading in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. to sites throughout and beyond Greece. I propose that this popularity was due in large part by developments in *iatrike*, and

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<sup>138</sup> Even in the instance of treatable ailments, the sick sometimes consulted not just one type of healer, but several at the same time. See King 1998 (99-131).

particularly by the void in healing that *iatrike* left when it refused to treat certain cases.

This chapter begins by examining the Hippocratic corpus for clues as to what its authors condoned as viable alternatives to *iatrike*. As we shall see, while certain types of healers are clearly disparaged in the medical treatises, the gods themselves never are, and thus become a legitimate and palatable alternative to *iatrike* once its limits have been reached. The chapter next reviews evidence for the early development of Asklepios-cult to discern when the cult emerged and began to spread, and to consider what factors fueled its development.

## I. Alternatives to *Iatrike*: What *Iatroi* Condoned

According to authors of Hippocratic treatises, certain healers were clearly frauds. Quacks, charlatans, purifiers, *magoi* and others were considered to be pretenders who had no real ability to treat illnesses. Some of these, like purifiers and *magoi*, moreover, were thought to hide their inability behind τὸ θεῖον (the divine).

The relevant passage in *On the Sacred Disease* is worth considering in detail in order to understand the nature of its author's arguments. As we have seen, those claiming that epilepsy is a sacred disease are accused of ignorance. Such healers, being at a loss for how to treat the illness, posit a divine cause and a "divine" cure. These cures, however, are not only fraudulent, but impious:

Whoever is the sort to remove such suffering by means of purifications and magic can also, by the same *technē*, bring other illnesses on, and, in accordance with this argument, *to theion* is destroyed. By such words and pretenses they claim to know more, and yet they deceive men by proposing purifications (ἀγνείαι) and cleansings (καθάρσιαι) for them. Much of their argument rests on the divine (*to theion* and τὸ δαμόνιον). Yet it seems to me that their arguments derive not from piety (εὐσεβείη), as they think, but rather from impiety (ἀσεβείη), since they imply that

the gods do not exist. I will demonstrate that their piety and their “*to theion*” is really impious and unholy. (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.60-68; L. 6.358)<sup>139</sup>

The author then argues that such healers merely hide behind a pretense of *to theion*, but in reality their actions show impiety (ἀσέβεια and δυσσέβεια). He says they profess to be able to control the divine (by bringing down the moon, eclipsing the sun, causing storms and sunshine, rain, drought, and other changes to the weather), and in so doing claim to be themselves more powerful than the divine, which is thus thwarted and enslaved by human cunning (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.68-79; L. 6.358-360).

He continues by arguing that when such healers apply purifications (καθαρμοί) and incantations (ἐπαοιδοί) to the sick, they act as if the sick person were polluted by the gods (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.93-97; L. 6.362). But a god, who is by nature completely holy, is more likely to purify and sanctify than to pollute (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.103-112; L. 6.362-364). Thus the gods are not the cause of most illnesses.<sup>140</sup>

Moreover, he admonishes that if the gods are in fact the cause of an illness, one would do better to take the sick to sanctuaries (τὰ ἱερά) and supplicate the gods with prayer and sacrifice (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.97-103; L. 6.362). Besides, if it is true that those suffering from an illness are polluted or have brought it on themselves through some unholy deed, they ought not to be merely purified with blood and other such practices, but should be taken to sanctuaries (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.105-106; L. 6.364).

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<sup>139</sup> *Morb.Sacr.* 1.60-68; L. 6.358: Ὅστις γὰρ οἷός τε περικαθαίρων ἐστὶ καὶ μαγεύων ἀπάγειν τοιοῦτον πάθος, οὗτος κἂν ἐπάγοι ἕτερα τεχνησάμενος, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ τὸ θεῖον ἀπόλλυται. Τοιαῦτα λέγοντες καὶ μηχανεύμενοι προσποιέονται πλέον τι εἰδέναι, καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἐξαπατέουσι προστιθέμενοι τούτοις ἀγνείας τε καὶ καθαρότητας, ὅ τε πούλυς αὐτοῖσι τοῦ λόγου ἐς τὸ θεῖον ἀφήκει καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον. Καίτοι ἔμοιγε οὐ περὶ εὐσεβείης δοκέουσι τοὺς λόγους ποιέεσθαι, ὡς οἴονται, ἀλλὰ περὶ δυσσεβείης μᾶλλον, καὶ ὡς οἱ θεοὶ οὐκ εἰσὶ, τό τε εὐσεβὲς καὶ θεῖον αὐτῶν ἀσεβὲς καὶ ἀνόσιόν ἐστιν, ὡς ἐγὼ διδάξω.

<sup>140</sup> *Morb.Sacr.* 1.106; L. 6.362: ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καθαίρεσθαι καὶ ἀγνίζεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ μιαίνεσθαι (The gods are more likely to purify and sanctify than to pollute). Examples to the contrary, such as Apollo sending the plague in the *Iliad*, may well have been challenged by *iatroi*.

There is no evidence from medical treatises or from any other ancient source that healing in a sanctuary was ever categorically opposed by *iatroi*.<sup>141</sup> According to the author of *On the Sacred Disease*, no disease is any more or less sacred than any other. “The causes of disease are the same: the things that enter and leave the body, cold, sun, changing winds that never rest: these things are θεῖα (divine)” (*Morb.Sacr.* 18.1-6; L. 6.394).<sup>142</sup> *Theia* and *to theion* in *On the Sacred Disease* seem to signify the natural order of things in nature.<sup>143</sup> The author of *Airs, Waters, Places* says something very similar in his discussion of impotence among the Scythians: “It seems to me as well that these diseases and all others are divine (*theia*), and none of them is more divine or more human than another, but all are alike and all are divine. Each of them has its own nature, and none arises without nature” (*Aer.* 22.8-13; L. 2.76-78).<sup>144</sup> Such statements implicitly attack the idea that some illnesses are

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<sup>141</sup> We find in later sources, like Aelius Aristeides in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, that *iatroi* and Asklepios disagreed as to the proper treatment of certain ailments. But more significant is the fact that Aelius Aristeides consulted both *iatroi* and Asklepios, often for the same malady, and never abandoned the one type of healer wholly for the other. Instead, both together tended to Aristeides’ needs, with *iatroi* often carrying out the prescriptions of Asklepios. Percy 1992 persuasively argues that in the *Sacred Tales*, physicians were a foil for Asklepios, but this does not detract from the fact that Aristeides made use of both types of healers simultaneously. Nor is there evidence in the *Sacred Tales* that *iatroi* believed procedures recommended by Asklepios were opposed to their own methods, even though *iatroi* and Asklepios might not agree on a particular treatment. One of the most famous examples of the latter is Asklepios telling Aristeides in the dead of winter to bathe in a cold stream (*Orat.* 48.20-21). Friends and *iatroi* come to watch out of concern and curiosity. After Aristeides emerged from the river in improved health, one *iatros* admitted having thought Aristeides would be lucky to survive the cold plunge with nothing worse than back trouble. On Aristeides’ consultation of both *iatroi* and Asklepios, as well as other healing gods, see Tinker 1983 (118-120); Temkin 1991 (184-187).

<sup>142</sup> *Morb.Sacr.* 18.1-6; L. 6.394: Αὕτη δὲ ἡ νοῦσος ἢ ἱερὴ καλεομένη ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν προφασίων γίνεται ἀφ’ ὧν καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ ἀπὸ τῶν προσιόντων καὶ ἀπιόντων, καὶ ψύχρος, ἡλίου, πνευμάτων μεταβαλλομένων τε καὶ μηδέποτε ἀτρεμιζόντων. Ταῦτα δ’ ἐστὶ θεῖα, ὥστε μηδὲν διακρίνοντα τὸ νοῦσημα θεϊότερον τῶν λοιπῶν νοσημάτων νομίζειν, ἀλλὰ πάντα θεῖα καὶ ἀνθρώπινα πάντα.

<sup>143</sup> On the concept of the divine in the Hippocratic corpus, see Thivel 1975 (who, on this very point, also compares Hippocratic medicine to ancient medicine in other cultures); Hankinson 1998b; also van der Eijk 1990 (focusing on *On the Sacred Disease*) and 1991 (focusing on *Airs, Waters, Places* and *On the Sacred Disease*).

<sup>144</sup> *Aer.* 22.8-13; L. 2.76-78: Ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ αὐτέφω δοκεῖ ταῦτα τὰ πάθεα θεῖα εἶναι καὶ ἄλλα πάντα,

caused by the gods and some by factors such as climate, diet, and the like. Since all are caused by natural factors, they need not be combated on two opposed fronts, by *iatroi* on the one, and by healers with recourse to the divine on the other.

The belief that all illness is *caused* by natural factors does not, however, exclude the divine as a supplement to natural healing in some cases. The author of *On the Sacred Disease* suggests that there are occasions when visiting a sanctuary is warranted:

[For the sick,] they should have done the following instead [of performing purifications and incantations]: they should have brought the sick to sanctuaries with sacrifice and prayer, in supplication to the gods. But people today do none of these things; rather, they purify the sick and hide the trappings of purification in the ground, or throw them into the sea, or carry them off to the mountains where they can't be touched or stepped on. If the god was the cause of the illness, however, they ought to have taken these things to the sanctuaries and offered them to the god. (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.97-103; L. 6.362)<sup>145</sup>

The author's acceptance of divine healing is supported by his general piety. He condemns *magoi*, etc., for pretending to be pious when in fact they are impious for claiming to have more power than the gods, and for saying that it is the gods who cause illness. "I hold that a man's body is not defiled by a god, the one being utterly corrupt and the other perfectly holy" (*Morb.Sacr.* 1.103-104; L. 6.362).<sup>146</sup>

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καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἑτέρου θειότερον οὐδὲ ἀνθρωπινώτερον, ἀλλὰ πάντα ὅμοια καὶ πάντα θεῖα· ἕκαστον δὲ ἔχει φύσιν τῶν τοιούτων, καὶ οὐδὲν ἄνευ φύσιος γίγνεται.

<sup>145</sup> *Morb.Sacr.* 1.97-103; L. 6.362: οὐς ἐχρῆν τάναντία τούτοισι ποιέειν, θύειν τε καὶ εὔχεσθαι καὶ ἐς τὰ ἱερὰ φέροντας ἰκετεύειν τοὺς θεοὺς· νῦν δὲ τούτων μὲν ποιέουσιν οὐδὲν, καθαίρουσι δέ. Καὶ τὰ μὲν τῶν καθαρμῶν γῆ κρύπτουσι, τὰ δὲ ἐς θάλασσαν ἐμβάλλουσι, τὰ δὲ ἐς τὰ οὐρεα ἀποφέρουσιν, ὅπη μηδεὶς ἀμεται μηδὲ ἐπιβήσεται· τὰ δ' ἐχρῆν ἐς τὰ ἱερὰ φέροντας τῷ θεῷ ἀποδοῦναι, εἰ δὴ θεός γέ ἐστιν αἴτιος. There is disagreement about the tenor of this passage, as well as the remarks about *magoi*, etc. Some scholars think that the author is being ironic (e.g., Thivel 1983), while others take the author's words literally (e.g., Edelstein in Temkin and Edelstein 1967 [205-246]). See also van der Eijk 1990 (esp. 89-91, with n. 6 and 9); Hankinson 1998b.

<sup>146</sup> *Morb.Sacr.* 1.103-104; L. 6.362: Οὐ μέντοι ἔγωγε ἀξιῶ ὑπὸ θεοῦ ἀνθρώπου σῶμα μαιίνεσθαι, τὸ ἐπικηρότατον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγνωστάτου.

The idea that some *iatroi* are themselves pious men and believe there to be room for piety in healing is corroborated by another treatise from the corpus: *Regimen*.<sup>147</sup> The author of Book 4<sup>148</sup> discusses the interpretation of dreams sent by the soul as an important tool in prognosis, and advocates the use of prayer in certain cases where dreams indicate impending illness.<sup>149</sup> Depending upon whether one has received good or bad signs (σημείαι) in dreams sent by the soul, one must take precautions and pray to the gods: “In the case of good signs, to Helios, heavenly Zeus, Zeus and Athena Protectors of the Home, Hermes and Apollo; if the signs be opposite, to deities that avert evil, as well as Ge and the heroes, that all difficulties may be averted” (*Vict.* 4.89.89-94; L. 6.652).<sup>150</sup> Later he writes that if someone should see the earth black or scorched in a dream, he or she should, in addition to other recommendations, pray to Ge, Hermes, and the heroes (*Vict.* 4.90.38-47; L.

<sup>147</sup> Jouanna 1999 dates it to late 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC; Hankinson 1998b (16, n. 30) to ca. 400 BC. In this treatise, there is not just a sense of nature as in some way divine, but even a belief in the traditional deities. This is reinforced by the very last sentence of the treatise: “Employing these methods as described will produce a healthy life; and I have discovered regimen, inasmuch as it is possible for a man to do so, with the help of the gods” (Τούτοισι χρώμενος ὡς γέγραπται, ὑγιανεῖ τὸν βίον, καὶ εὖρηταί μοι δίαίτα ὡς δυνατὸν εὖρεῖν ἄνθρωπον ἔοντα ξὺν τοῖσι θεοῖσιν, *Vict.* 4.93.29-30; L. 6.662).

<sup>148</sup> Modern editions divide *Regimen* into four books, but there was dispute even in antiquity about its division. Galen, for instance, thought that there were three books, and that the second could have been by Hippocrates but certainly not the first (*Alim. Fac.*, Kühn 6.473). Jones’ 1923 edition of the Loeb of Hippocrates ( vol. 4, p. xxxviii, n. 1) cites the passages in Galen that remark upon *Regimen*. One of the two ancient manuscripts (Θ) also divides the treatise into three books.

<sup>149</sup> The author distinguishes between dreams sent by the gods and those sent by the soul. Dreams sent by the gods have their own interpreters. Dreams sent by the soul result from excesses of or changes to the body during the day, which affect the soul while asleep. (*Vict.* 4.87; L. 6.640-642). These latter dreams, since they arise ultimately from the body via the soul, can be interpreted by *iatroi*.

<sup>150</sup> *Vict.* 4.89.89-94; L. 6.652: Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν οὐρανίων σημείων οὕτω χρῆ γινώσκοντα προμηθέεσθαι καὶ ἐκδιαιτῆσθαι καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσιν εὐχεσθαι, ἐπὶ μὲν τοῖσιν ἀγαθοῖσιν Ἥλιῳ, Διὶ οὐρανίῳ, Διὶ κτησίῳ, Ἀθηνᾶ κτησίῳ, Ἑρμῇ, Ἀπόλλωνι, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖσιν ἐναντίοισι τοῖσιν ἀποτροπαίοισι, καὶ Γῇ καὶ ἥρωσιν, ἀποτρόπαια γενέσθαι τὰ χαλεπὰ πάντα.



6.656-658).<sup>151</sup> Prayer and the gods clearly have a place in this writer's methods of prognosis.<sup>152</sup>

But it is also true that elsewhere he cautions against the use of prayer alone. Early in Book 4, when discussing the role interpreters play in analysing dreams sent by the gods (*Vict.* 4.87), he mentions that these interpreters also study dreams triggered by the soul.<sup>153</sup> When they do so, they recommend only prayer, as in the case of divine dreams, because they do not understand how to counteract dream-signs otherwise. "Prayer is appropriate and entirely good," he writes, "but a man must call upon himself at the same time that he lays hold of the gods" (*Vict.* 4.87.10-12; L. 6. 642).<sup>154</sup> As the rest of the treatise makes clear, he means that diet, exercise, and other aspects of regimen must be altered, in addition to the offering of prayer, to bring about change. Health is not entirely up to the gods: humans must take responsibility and action as well.

Regarding authors of early treatises of the Hippocratic corpus who address matters of the divine and the gods, the following can be said: they believe all illnesses are divine (*theia*) inasmuch as they have a nature (φύσις) that can be identified and explained; some think that the gods play a role in maintaining health, and that a person facing oncoming illness should therefore pray to the gods as part of their regimen to avert illness (*Regimen* 4); moreover, healing in sanctuaries is mentioned as an option, one neither aggressively condoned nor in any way condemned (*On the Sacred Disease*).<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> *Vict.* 4.90.38-47; L. 6.656-658: Ἄλλ' οὐδὲ μέλαιναν ὄρην τὴν γῆν οὐδὲ κατακεκαυμένην δοκεῖ ἀγαθόν. ... εὐχεσθαι δὲ Γῆ καὶ Ἑρμῆ καὶ τοῖσιν ἥρωσιν.

<sup>152</sup> The author speaks of using such dreams only for prognosis, not for healing. (I would like to thank Philip van der Eijk for bringing this to my attention.)

<sup>153</sup> The author Book I of *Regimen* accepts *mantike* as a *techne* attributed to the mind of the gods (*Vict.* 1.12; L. 6. 488). See also Hankinson 1998b (29).

<sup>154</sup> *Vict.* 4.87.10-12; L. 6. 642: Καὶ τὸ μὲν εὐχεσθαι πρέπον καὶ λίην ἐστὶν ἀγαθόν· δεῖ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν ξυλλαμβάνοντα τοὺς θεοὺς ἐπικαλέεσθαι.

<sup>155</sup> Several other passages in the corpus also refer to matters divine, including the prologues to *Prognostic* (5<sup>th</sup> c. BC) and *Nature of Women* (this prologue is possibly the work of a later

The concept of the divine in the corpus of medical writings is not consistent, nor was there a universal stance on the interrelation between the gods and natural healing. Moreover, due to the sheer variety of beliefs concerning the gods, it is likely that there were *iatroi* who did not condone healing in sanctuaries. If the latter is true, however, it is significant that no evidence whatever has survived from the classical period to prove it, especially since the authors of medical treatises were otherwise so ready to castigate other forms of healing.<sup>156</sup> Any sentiment that did exist against such healing practices must have been too limited to survive or potentially too controversial to admit.

Despite arguments *ex silentio* and differing views about the divine in the medical treatises, the evidence points to the following scenario: some *iatroi*, by disparaging most other forms of healing and making certain concessions to deities and prayer, suggested that the void they had created could be filled by the gods, prayer, sacrifice, and healing in sanctuaries.<sup>157</sup>

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editor and based on a passage in *Diseases of Women* 2.3). Thivel 1975 (76) believes references to the divine in both of these treatises are traditional formulas (without influence on *iatrike*) preserved by *iatroi* at the beginning of their discourses. Also Section 6 of *Decorum*, a corrupt passage, seems to attribute much that is positive in *iatrike* to the gods (dating disputed: late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> cs. BC [Thivel 1975]; 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, because it is not on Erotian's list [Jouanna 1999]).

<sup>156</sup> As Dean-Jones 1995 (45) has argued, authors of the Hippocratic corpus are vociferous about healing with which they disagree; thus, their silence on certain types of healers (such as women, in the texts discussed by Dean-Jones) may be interpreted as a sign of their lack of disagreement.

<sup>157</sup> All of these measures relate to the supernatural; if a human were capable of responding effectively and consistently to all ailments, then their responses could have been included in the human *techne*.

The author of *Regimen* 4 seems to be saying that prayer to the gods is to be used not only by those turned away by *iatrike*, but also by those who are under its treatment. Hankinson 1998b (11) comments that whatever the degree of personal piety of the authors of the treatises, these suggestions "are clearly invitations to step outside the borders of the practice, not reflections of something integral to it." It is worth noting that all such invitations to step outside the borders of the practice, however, are directed towards the

## II. The Early Development of Asklepios-Cult

Development of this void in healing coincides with the early development of Asklepios-cult. Although the early history of Asklepios-cult is difficult to determine with exactitude and in several cases to distinguish from pre-existing Apollo cults, both the archaeological and literary evidence point to expansion of the cult in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

One of the earliest places where a cult of Asklepios can be documented is at a sanctuary about six miles inland from the ancient city of Epidauros. This sanctuary would become one of the most prestigious sanctuaries of Asklepios in the ancient world.<sup>158</sup> Here, as in Corinth and later on Kos,<sup>159</sup> Asklepios was tied to a pre-existing cult of Apollo. At Epidauros, Apollo was worshipped as “Maleatas” on Mt. Kynortion overlooking the later sanctuary of Asklepios. This area was in use already in the Bronze Age, and the cult of Apollo Maleatas itself may have had connections to Mycenaean cult activity.<sup>160</sup> In the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Apollo at Epidauros received a new epithet and another home. Referred to in at least one inscription as “Pythias,” he was given a sanctuary below Mt. Kynortion and on the site of the later sanctuary of Asklepios.<sup>161</sup>

The earliest remains from this lower sanctuary date to no earlier than 550 BC, and perhaps much closer to 500 BC. They include a U-shaped building created by three stoas, called Building E; an altar in the center of the courtyard of Building E; and a layer of ash and debris near the altar and

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gods, prayer, sacrifice, and temple-healing; none point specifically to *magoi*, purifiers, etc.  
<sup>158</sup> Roman magistrates visited the sanctuary; among them, Aemilius Paulus in 167 BC (Livy 45.28.3, who describes Epidauros as *inlutam Aesculapi nobili templo* [famous for its temple of noble Asklepios] and *tum donis dives erat* [at that time rich in offerings]); and the senator Antoninus, who in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD built several monuments in the sanctuary (Paus. 2.27.6-7).

<sup>159</sup> On sanctuaries of Asklepios at Corinth and Kos, see below.

<sup>160</sup> Paus. 2.17.8. See also Farnell 1896-1909 (vol. 4, p. 235-238); Lambrinouidakis 1982; Peppa-Papaioannou 1985.

<sup>161</sup> The inscription (*IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1.142*), on a bronze *lebes*, dates probably to the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC; see

containing inscribed bronze vessels.<sup>162</sup> The inscription on one of these vessels, a bronze *lebes*, marks it as the property of Apollo Pythias.<sup>163</sup> Another, a bronze *patera* dedicated to Asklepios by a certain Mikylos, has been dated to about 500 BC based on the Argive alphabet used in its inscription.<sup>164</sup> It is likely from these remains that a sanctuary involving Asklepios was present here by the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, but how much earlier is uncertain.

The fact that Asklepios had a place in the Epidauros sanctuary by the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. is corroborated by literary evidence. Pindar mentions athletic victories at Epidauros in three of his odes: *Nemean* 3.84, 5.52 and 5.95-97, and *Isthmian* 8.68.<sup>165</sup> These contests presumably were in honor of Asklepios since no other games are attested from Epidauros, and since the ancient commentators on these odes identify the games as specifically in honor of

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below.

<sup>162</sup> On the early architecture of this site, see the excellent short summary in LiDonnici 1995 (6-9); also Tomlinson 1983. The function of Building E is much disputed; one of the best discussions of the architecture continues to be Robert 1933, although his conclusions have met with skepticism (Tomlinson 73-75; LiDonnici 8-9). It is a sign of the significance of this structure that it was preserved as the sanctuary grew and that later buildings were arranged to accommodate it (Tomlinson 73). In addition to Building E and the square altar, the only other element of the sanctuary that seems certainly to have existed at this time is a well with 6<sup>th</sup>-c. foundations next to the later, 4<sup>th</sup>-c. abaton. Tomlinson (67) states that next to this well was a structure (two rooms and a stoa) of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, which he suggests was a bath building. R. Rüttimann, in a 1986 Ph.D. dissertation from Harvard entitled *Asclepius and Jesus*, argues that the maze-like foundations of the round Thymele (constructed in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC) were part of an earlier building that may date also to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. For discussion of Rüttimann's arguments, see LiDonnici (6-7, and n. 6 and 9). LiDonnici (9) proposes that the Thymele foundations were part of an early temple to Asklepios since the Thymele is in line with and faces east toward the 5<sup>th</sup>-c. square altar. On the sanctuary in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see Melfi 2003.

<sup>163</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1.142. Jeffrey 1990 (180) dates it to the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC based on letter-forms.

<sup>164</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1.136. Jeffrey 1990 (179-181) dates the Argive alphabet in which the *patera* is inscribed to ca. 500 BC. Jeffrey (180-182) also discusses several other inscriptions from Epidauros that date to the 5<sup>th</sup> c., including a bronze fragment from the Asklepieion inscribed to Asklepios and dating to ca. 500 BC (*IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1.151).

<sup>165</sup> The only contests specified in the odes are boxing and the *pankration* (*Nem.* 5.52). See Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 208-213) for discussion of games in honor of Asklepios.

Asklepios.<sup>166</sup> While the exact dates of these odes are uncertain, Pindar's death ca. 438 BC provides a *terminus ante quem*. Moreover, in *Nemean 5*, the grandfather of the boy to whom the ode is addressed is said to have won a victory in the *pankration* in Epidauros, making it likely that that contest took place at least by the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC (if not earlier), about two generations before this ode was composed.<sup>167</sup> Certainly by the time these odes were written, the contests at Epidauros had enough international status to attract athletes from Aegina (the home of all three athletes in these Pindaric odes), which in turn suggests that the games had been around for some time.

By the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. or very early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, in addition to athletic competitions, there were also Panhellenic contests for music and poetry associated certainly with the cult of Asklepios at Epidauros. In the opening of Plato's *Ion*, the Athenian rhapsode Ion is returning from this very competition when he meets Socrates (*Ion* 530a).<sup>168</sup> Socrates claims to be unaware of such a competition for rhapsodes at Epidauros, a fact that may indicate their relative newness, although Socrates' (feigned?) ignorance is no certain proof of this.

Nor was Epidauros the only sanctuary of Asklepios in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. In fact, according to Strabo, the earliest sanctuary of Asklepios was not in Epidauros, but at Tricca in Thessaly (Strabo 9.5.17 [C 437]). In mythological accounts, this city vied with Epidauros as the birth-place of Asklepios.<sup>169</sup> If

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<sup>166</sup> Schol. ad Pindar *Nem.* 5.95-96, *Nem.* 3.84. Not all scholars agree that these games had ties to the cult of Asklepios; for discussion, see Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 208-209). However, the fact that *Nem.* 3 mentions not just contests at Epidauros but also Asklepios himself (lines 53-55) suggests that Asklepios be linked with the *Epidaureia* just as Herakles (discussed at lines 20-26) is linked with the Nemean games (mentioned along with the *Epidaureia*, line 84).

<sup>167</sup> On the dating of *Nem.* 5 and of the contest in which the victor's grandfather participated, see Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 208).

<sup>168</sup> The dramatic date of this dialogue is uncertain, but must be before the time of Socrates' death in 399 BC.

<sup>169</sup> Strabo 14.1.39 (C 647); Hyg. *Fab.* 14.21; and Euseb. *Praep. Ev.* 3.14.6 all mention that Asklepios is from Tricca. In the *Iliad*, Machaon and Podalirios are also said to be from

Strabo is right that the sanctuary at Tricca predates all other sanctuaries of Asklepios, then Asklepios was worshipped in Thessaly before the end of the 6th c. BC—that is, before the earliest evidence for Asklepios in Epidauros. There is numismatic evidence for Asklepios in Tricca by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC and in neighboring Larissa by the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>170</sup> To date, however, excavations in Tricca have not revealed a sanctuary of Asklepios.<sup>171</sup>

In the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, a dedication was made to Asklepios at Olympia. Pausanias says that he saw a dedication by a certain Micythus of Rhegium to Asklepios and Hygieia (Paus. 5.1.26). This Micythus, according to Pausanias, is the same Micythus mentioned in Herodotus as the slave of Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegium (Hdt. 7.170). After Anaxilas' death, Micythus retired to Tegea, and later dedicated the offerings at Olympia in fulfillment of a vow for the recovery of his sick son. The reference to Anaxilas allows us to date the dedications to ca. 460 BC.<sup>172</sup> Whether or not there was a sanctuary or cult of Asklepios at Olympia is uncertain, but the fact that a dedication was made to Asklepios demonstrates that he was worshipped as a healing god at this time.

The first datable cult of Asklepios outside the Peloponnese is on the island of Aegina. We know from Aristophanes' *Wasps*, produced in 422 BC,

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Tricca (*Il.* 2.729-733, 4.198-202; cf. Eustath. *Il.* 2.729; 4.202), which may be the source of Strabo's claim.

<sup>170</sup> A coin, ca. 400-350 BC, depicts the nymph Tricca on the obverse, and Asklepios on the reverse. He is seated, with his walking staff across his shoulder, feeding a serpent with a bird he holds in his right hand; see *LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios' (no. 52, with plate); and *BMC* 7.52.17 = *LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios' (no. 40, with plate) for a very similar coin of the same period also from Tricca. There is an earlier coin (*BMC* 7.28.44; 450-400 BC) of Asklepios from Larissa in Thessaly. It depicts a horse on the obverse, and Asklepios on the reverse feeding a serpent. If Gardner's date in *BMC* is correct for this coin, it suggests that there was a cult of Asklepios at Larissa by the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

<sup>171</sup> A site identified by its excavators as an Asklepieion produced no convincing evidence to link it with Asklepios. See Kastriotis 1903, with *PECS*, sv 'Triikka.' On sanctuaries of Asklepios in Thessaly, including Tricca, see Melfi 2003 (418-437).

<sup>172</sup> Anaxilas lived 494-476 BC. See Thucy. 6.4.6; and Asheri's article in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 4, ch. 16).

that a sanctuary of Asklepios existed there.<sup>173</sup> Bdelykleon takes his father Philokleon to the sanctuary for healing (*Vesp.* 121-123). That the sanctuary appears in a play of Aristophanes indicates the god's Aeginetan cult was fairly well-known to the poet's Athenian audience.

Asklepios-cult reached Athens in 420/19 BC.<sup>174</sup> An inscription records the cult's journey from Zea harbor to the Acropolis, and, via the archon lists, provides a fairly secure date for Asklepios' arrival.<sup>175</sup>

In addition to places where Asklepios-cult is securely attested, there are several places in the Peloponnese where inconclusive evidence suggests the existence of Asklepios-cult in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. One such place is Corinth. Like Epidauros, Corinth welcomed Asklepios into a pre-existing Apollo sanctuary, possibly by the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>176</sup> The sanctuary lies at the northern edge of the lower plateau between Acrocorinth and the sea, and seems to have belonged to Apollo already in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. In one of

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<sup>173</sup> To my knowledge, no archaeological evidence for this cult has yet been found.

<sup>174</sup> To simplify matters, I will refer to the year as 420 BC.

<sup>175</sup> *SEG* 25.226. On this inscription and the arrival of Asklepios in Athens, see Ch. 4-6 below. That Asklepios was brought into Zea harbor in Piraeus on his way to Athens in 420 BC suggests to some that a sanctuary of Asklepios was already in place in Piraeus (Burford 1969, 25-26 and 51), or that a sanctuary was established there in 420 *en route* to Athens (Garland 2001 [115]). Evidence for this cult includes several votive reliefs and decrees regulating cult procedure, the earliest of which dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Among the decrees is *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 47. On the reliefs, see Hausmann 1958 (44-48). The exact location of this cult is uncertain, but was probably near Mounykia and may have been related to the cult of Bendis who arrived in Piraeus in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. For evidence of the cult, see Semeria 1986 (943); Garland 2001 (esp. 208, n. 115, and for epigraphic evidence, Appendix III, sv 'Asklepios'); von Eickstedt 2001. On the link between Bendis and Asklepios, and the disputed date of the arrival of Bendis, see Planeaux 2000-01 (esp. 179-182).

The first archon named has been reconstructed as Astyphilos of the year 420/19 BC; in conjunction with his name is the founding of the sanctuary on the Acropolis; most scholars agree that the cult probably arrived in Zea and traveled to the center of Athens earlier the same year during the celebration of the Greater Mysteries. See Clinton 1994 (18). Other than Rome (where the cult arrived ca. 291 BC), this is the only instance of the arrival of the god that can be dated to a particular year or very narrow range of years. On Asklepios' arrival in Rome, see Ch. 7-9 below.

<sup>176</sup> On the archaeology and history of the sanctuary of Asklepios at Corinth, see Roebuck 1951; Lang 1977. On the cult in the Hellenistic period, see below.

several closed deposits in the sanctuary, dated by its contents to ca. 575-525 BC, was a krater rim inscribed with Apollo's name: Ἀπέ[λ]λωνος ἰμί.<sup>177</sup> In another deposit containing materials that date from the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC were various vessels inscribed with Asklepios' name,<sup>178</sup> as well as a large quantity of terracotta body-parts. There is no way of telling just when the cult shifted its orientation from Apollo to Asklepios.

At least three other Asklepios sanctuaries, including those at Mantinea, Sikyon, and Kyllene, are usually dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC based on references to the sanctuary as many as six centuries later.<sup>179</sup> At Mantinea, Pausanias saw a temple, half of which was dedicated to Leto and her children, and the other half to Asklepios (Paus. 8.9.1). The statue of Asklepios, according to Pausanias, was sculpted by Alkamenes. A sculptor named Alkamenes was active in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, but we cannot know for sure whether this is the same Alkamenes or if the identification is correct. Likewise at Sikyon, Pausanias records seeing a statue of Asklepios crafted by Kalamis (Paus. 2.10.2).<sup>180</sup> One sculptor named Kalamis was active in the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC,

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<sup>177</sup> Roebuck 1951 (14-15, and cat. no. 1).

<sup>178</sup> Roebuck 1951 (135, cat. nos. 65-66).

<sup>179</sup> For example, Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 242-257) lists the sanctuary of Asklepios at Mantinea as having been founded in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. based upon Pausanias' statement. Likewise, Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 244) lists Sikyon as a 5<sup>th</sup>-c. sanctuary, albeit with a caveat about the uncertainty of which sculptor Pausanias means. Graf (*OCD*<sup>3</sup>, sv 'Asclepius') supports a 5<sup>th</sup>-c. date for the founding of the cult in Sikyon. Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 245) also discusses the possibility of a 5<sup>th</sup>-c. date for the cult at Kyllene.

<sup>180</sup> Pausanias also relates the Sikyonian tradition that Asklepios, in the form of a snake, arrived at Sikyon on a wagon drawn by mules (Paus. 2.10.3). The sanctuary of Asklepios at Sikyon has not yet been located. The archaic and classical city of Sikyon was replaced by a new city built farther inland in 304 BC by Demetrios Poliorketes (Diod.Sic. 20.102.2-4; Plut. *Dem.* 25.3; Paus. 2.7.1). The sanctuary of Asklepios that Pausanias visited was probably built after the founding of the Hellenistic city. It is difficult to tell from Pausanias' topographical clues where in relation to the old or new cities of Sikyon the Asklepieion lay. All he notes is: "From [the gymnasium] is a road to the sanctuary of Asklepios" (2.10.2). Excavation at Sikyon has been limited mainly to the plateau on which the Hellenistic city stands. Further evidence for the cult at Sikyon is listed in Semeria 1986



although another was active in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>181</sup> And at Elis Strabo reports a cult statue at Kyllene by a certain Kolotes (Strabo 8.3.4 [C 337]). Again there were two famous artists named Kolotes: one of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC and another of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC.<sup>182</sup> There is the further complication that the materials from which the statue were made are not those for which the elder Kolotes is known.<sup>183</sup>

The dating of individual Asklepieia based upon little more than inference from a work of art is highly speculative. To date any of these sanctuaries to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. is to assume 1) that the sculptors named by Pausanias and Strabo are the same as those otherwise known to us as 5<sup>th</sup>-c. artists, and 2) that the statue was originally designed for and immediately used in these sanctuaries. Pausanias himself records the transference of statues from sanctuary to sanctuary.<sup>184</sup> Finally, there is a related problem of matching what Pausanias describes as a statue by a certain sculptor with what we know otherwise to be typical of that artist's style.<sup>185</sup>

Yet while there are obvious dangers in dating a cult with statuary seen in a sanctuary of Asklepios as many as five or six centuries later, the possibility for a 5<sup>th</sup>-c. date cannot be entirely discounted. Moreover, whether or not the sanctuaries at Mantinea, Kyllene, and Sikyon date to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC,

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(945-946). On the history and development of the city, see Griffin 1982.

<sup>181</sup> On the dates and careers of the two artists named Kalamis, see Pollitt 1965 (59-61, 220-221, 233-234).

<sup>182</sup> As Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 245, n.10) admits, there is no way of deciding between the two artists.

<sup>183</sup> See Pollitt 1965 (80; 214-215).

<sup>184</sup> Paus. 8.30.3, 8.31.5. These sculptures were bronze and wood, respectively. The statue at Sikyon was gold and ivory, that at Kyllene ivory. Pausanias does not mention the material from which the statue at Mantinea was made. Even if the Mantinea statue was marble, its weight should not have prevented its being moved.

<sup>185</sup> On this problem in regard to artwork of Asklepios, see Holtzmann in *LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios' (esp. no. 890). On this confusion in relation to Alkamenes in particular, see Pollitt 1965 (76-78).

the fact remains that the cult began to burgeon in this period, as the evidence discussed above demonstrates.

To review, Asklepios-cult is practised in Greece from at least the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC when a dedication, found at Epidauros, was made to Asklepios. Whether the cult existed earlier cannot be determined, but if it did, the cult does not seem to have been prominent. But by the 5<sup>th</sup> c., at least one cult of Asklepios (Epidauros) had become panhellenic, offering competitions in athletics and music. By the late 5<sup>th</sup> c., Asklepios-cult is attested in places as diverse as Attica (Aegina and Athens), Elis (Micythus' dedication at Olympia),<sup>186</sup> and Thessaly (if Strabo is right about Tricca). With the possible addition of Sikyon, Matinea, Kyllene, and Corinth to the list, Asklepios-cult seems to have enjoyed a relatively strong representation in the Peloponnese in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. While evidence for Asklepios-cult at this time is not abundant, there is enough to demonstrate that the cult was known in several areas of the Greek world, especially by the later 5<sup>th</sup> c.

### III. The Popularity of Asklepios-Cult in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC

In the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and continuing into the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the popularity of the cult burgeoned. According to some estimates, more than 200 new sanctuaries of Asklepios were built at this time throughout the Greek world.<sup>187</sup> In the Peloponnese, where the cult was already thriving in Epidauros, Asklepios-cult spread to places like Argos,<sup>188</sup> Troezen,<sup>189</sup> Halieis,<sup>190</sup> and Gortys.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> The dedication in itself is not sufficient evidence for a cult of Asklepios at Olympia.

<sup>187</sup> *PECS*, sv 'Epidauros.' The problem with estimates like this is determining exactly which cults of Asklepios are being included in the estimate, and upon what evidence that dating is made. Dating is often, as we have seen, based on the name of an artist who sculpted a statue seen by Pausanias or Strabo.

<sup>188</sup> A votive relief of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC depicting Asklepios was found in the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios; see *LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios' (no. 318); Semeria 1986 (948). Pausanias mentions two sanctuaries and a temenos of Asklepios at Argos (Paus. 2.21.1, 2.23.2-4).

<sup>189</sup> According to Welter 1941, the sanctuary of Asklepios dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. However, it

Moreover, although the existence of Asklepios-cult in Corinth and Sikyon in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC is questionable, the cult had certainly reached both places by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>192</sup>

Beyond the Peloponnese, the cult spread to Eleusis in Attica,<sup>193</sup> and to Delphi in Phocis.<sup>194</sup> Among the islands, it reached such cities as Eretria on

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is difficult to find a reason for dating any of the remains to the 4<sup>th</sup> c., instead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c., outside Pausanias' remark about a sculpture there by an artist named Timotheus. A Timotheus is also recorded on the building inscriptions from Epidauros where he was contracted to make a *typos* (a statue) and *akroterion* for the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. temple of Asklepios (*IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1.102). On Timotheus, see Pollitt 1965 (151-152). See also Semeria 1986 (946). On the problems of dating according to statuary, see above.

<sup>190</sup> The founding of Halieis is recounted in one of the *iamata* from Epidauros (*IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 122.69-82 = LiDonnici 1995 [B 33]). It records that a man from Halieis named Thersandros unknowingly transported a snake from Epidauros back to Halieis on his wagon. The snake healed Thersandros, but the people of Halieis did not know whether to keep it in Halieis or take it back to Epidauros. They therefore consulted the oracle at Delphi, and were told to keep the snake and dedicate a sanctuary to Asklepios in their town. LiDonnici 1995 (110-111). The Epidaurean *stelai* were inscribed in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC at the time of the rebuilding of Epidauros (see below); thus, the founding of the sanctuary at Halieis must predate them. On the date of the inscriptions, see LiDonnici 1995 (17).

<sup>191</sup> Paus. 8.28.1 records a statue by Skopas, a famous 4<sup>th</sup>-c. sculptor, at Gortys. On Skopas, see Pollitt 1965 (140-143). Two sanctuaries of Asklepios have been excavated at Gortys, one dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, another with temple foundations dating from the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> cs. BC. For further evidence and references to the excavation reports, see Semeria 1986 (949-950); Melfi 2003 (168-178).

Skopas is also said to have sculpted a statue of Asklepios at Tegea (Paus. 8.47.1). The original location of this statue has been disputed. Norman 1986 argues that it stood in a sanctuary of Asklepios, while Stewart 1977 (66-67) argues that it originally stood next to Athena in the goddess' sanctuary, which is where Pausanias saw it.

<sup>192</sup> On the problems of dating the cults at Corinth and Sikyon, see above. At Corinth, since the closed deposits containing vessels inscribed to Asklepios were made in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Asklepios must have joined the earlier cult of Apollo by this time. On the deposits, see Roebuck 1951 (113-114). At Sikyon, the statue of Asklepios, if made by the younger Kalamis, dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

<sup>193</sup> A votive to Asklepios by a certain Epikrates Pamphilos Leukoneos dates to the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 4414). See Semeria 1986 (943-944) for further evidence for the cult. The cult of Demeter at Eleusis and that of Asklepios at Athens were closely linked from the time of Asklepios' arrival in Athens in 420 BC (see Ch. 4-6 below). A votive relief of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC from Athens depicts Asklepios with Demeter and Kore (*LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios' [no. 313, with plate]). For ties between Demeter and Asklepios in myth and cult generally, see Benedum 1986, and below.

<sup>194</sup> Inscriptions dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC mention Asklepios. See Daux and Salač 1932 (III.3.1, 45-47). A small temple dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC was built for Asklepios in the

Euboea<sup>195</sup> and Lebena on Crete.<sup>196</sup> The cult spread also to Greek colonies as distant as Balagrae outside Cyrene in northern Africa,<sup>197</sup> and Tarentum in southern Italy.<sup>198</sup> In Asia Minor, the cult reached Erythrae<sup>199</sup> and Kos<sup>200</sup> in the

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sanctuary of the Muses near the treasury of the Athenians. See Semeria 1986 (941-942). According to Pherekydes, a 6<sup>th</sup>-c. BC writer of cosmogonies, Asklepios was struck by Zeus' thunderbolt for healing "those dying at Delphi" (Pherec. fr. 35a). Other evidence exists for ties between Asklepios and Delphi, which is not surprising since Apollo is Asklepios' father. A 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC inscription mentions worship of Apollo by a *koinon* of Asklepiads (descendants of Asklepios) from Kos and Knidos. For the text, see Rougement 1977 (122-124). At least two cities in antiquity were said to have consulted Delphi regarding importation of Asklepios: Halieis (*IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.69-82 = LiDonnici 1995 [B 33]) and Rome (Ov. *Met.* 15.626-643). Moreover, there were links between Delphi and Hippocrates of Kos. Pausanias reports that a statue he saw at Delphi of a man sick with consumption was, according to the Delphians, dedicated by Hippocrates (Paus. 10.2.6). In pseudo-Hippocrates, there is also a story that during the plague Hippocrates traveled to Delphi and asked Apollo to save the Greeks. As a result of his visit, the Asklepiads were granted priority in consulting the oracle (Hipp. *Ep.* 27.7).

<sup>195</sup> A 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC inscription describes provisions for sacrifices and a procession to be made by the children of Eretria in honor of Asklepios (*IG XII* 9.194). See also Semeria 1986 (939).

<sup>196</sup> Sanders 1982 (80-83) describes the sanctuary as "early Hellenistic," with modifications in the late Hellenistic period. A relief from nearby Gortys depicting Asklepios is dated to ca. 400 BC by Holtzmann (*LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios' [no.57]). See also Rizzo 1984; Semeria 1986 (954-955); Myers et al. 1992 (160-163, with figs. 20.1-20.3); Melfi 2003 (438-465).

<sup>197</sup> According to Pausanias, the cult of Asklepios at Lebena on Crete (which has been dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC based on archaeological evidence—see below) was founded from the sanctuary of Asklepios at Balagrae (Paus. 2.26.9). If Pausanias is right, then the sanctuary at Balagrae had to have existed by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. On Asklepios at Balagrae, see Sichtermann 1959 (326-335).

<sup>198</sup> According to Julian, who is a late (4<sup>th</sup> c. AD) source, a sanctuary of Asklepios was established at Tarentum before the god was imported to Rome ca. 291 BC (Jul. *Gal.* 200 A-B). No sanctuary of Asklepios has been identified at Tarentum, probably because much of the ancient city remains unexcavated, covered as it is by the modern city; see Ch. 7 below.

<sup>199</sup> A decree from Erythrae dating to the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC stipulates proper procedures for sacrifice to Asklepios. Two paeons are included in the inscription, one to Apollo and one to Asklepios. (There is also a third, added in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, to Seleukos.) Here again Asklepios and Apollo are joined in cult, as at Corinth, Epidauros, Kos, and Delphi, among others. For text and commentary, see Engelmann and Merkelbach 1973 (no. 205).

<sup>200</sup> For the history and archaeology of the Asklepieion, see Herzog and Schazmann 1932; Sherwin-White 1978 (340-359). The sanctuary of Asklepios at Kos was integrated into an older sanctuary of Apollo Kyparissios, and it is difficult to determine when Asklepios joined Apollo at this site. An inscription from the site dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC names Apollo Pythios; another names Paeon. For Apollo Pythios, see Jeffrey 1990 (352-353; and pl. 69, no. 39); for Paeon, see Herzog 1928 (33). An altar dating to the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC is the earliest architectural feature of the sanctuary, but there is no way of determining whether this

4<sup>th</sup> c. BC; and Pergamon by the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC.<sup>201</sup> In ca. 291 BC, Asklepios-cult entered Rome.<sup>202</sup>

In addition to the establishment of many new cults of Asklepios, certain sanctuaries that had been in existence were lavishly refurbished during the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. These refurbishments include Athens<sup>203</sup> and Corinth.<sup>204</sup>

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altar was dedicated to Apollo or to Asklepios. The altar, however, is inscribed with the name of Asklepios' son Machaon, in addition to Helios, Hemera, and Hekate ('Αλίο· Ἀμέρας Μαχάονος Ἐκάτας); Sherwin-White (334, n. 395). See also Herzog and Schazmann (72). This, coupled with the fact that Hippocrates was from Kos and that the tradition by the Roman period includes Koan ties between Asklepios and Hippocrates, suggests that a cult of Asklepios was active on Kos by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, if not earlier. For connections between Asklepios and Hippocrates on Kos, see Sherwin-White (354-356); also Ch. 3 below. It is possible, given the immense size of the Asklepieion, and given that the city was moved in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC from the southwestern part of the island to the northeastern (just over 2 km from the Apollo Kyparissios sanctuary, as Sherwin-White [340] estimates), that earlier evidence for Asklepios-cult exists but has not yet been identified. On the *synoikismos* of Kos and the founding of a new capital on the eastern side of the island in 366 BC, see Sherwin-White (41-81).

<sup>201</sup> On the history of the Asklepieion at Pergamon, see Deubner 1938; Habicht 1969; Ziegenaus and de Luca 1968-; Rädts 1984 (for a brief overview); Rädts 1988. There is disagreement about the date of Asklepios' arrival in Pergamon. Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 249), Habicht 1969 (1), and Rädts 1988 (250) all state that the cult reached Pergamon by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. But there is no convincing evidence for Asklepios at Pergamon prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. Pausanias records that a certain Archias, after having been healed at Epidauros, brought Asklepios to Pergamon (Paus. 2.26). An inscription from Pergamon of 191 BC also mentions an Archias, priest of Asklepios and presumably a descendant of the Archias who brought the deity to Pergamon (*JG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.60). Whether the elder Archias imported Asklepios in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c., or earlier, cannot be determined. Another piece of evidence often cited as proof of the cult in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. are two classical reliefs that may depict Asklepios, found along the road leading to the Asklepieion (for refs., see Habicht 1969 [1, n. 4]). Habicht is right, however, to caution against taking these as certain proof of the cult in the classical period: the marble is Pentelic, suggesting Attic production and the transfer of the reliefs to Pergamon some time after their manufacture. The site that later became the Asklepieion was in use, probably for cultic purposes (although to what deity is uncertain), already by the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC: Töpferwein 1976 (13-15, 83-86) catalogues the terracottas, none of which bear any resemblance to Asklepios or are indicative of his cult before the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC; Ziegenaus and de Luca discuss the architecture as well as the finds. The 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC marks new phases of building activity, and may indicate the first structures of the cult of Asklepios. For building activity in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, see Ziegenaus and de Luca.

<sup>202</sup> On the arrival of Asklepios in Rome, see Ch. 7-9 below.

<sup>203</sup> See Travlos 1971 (sv 'Asklepieion,' with bibliography). Additions to the sanctuary include a temple to Asklepios and Hygieia, an altar, and a large Doric stoa. Prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> c., the only architectural features known from the site are a 6<sup>th</sup>-c. spring house and an Ionic

Epidauros, however, is the best example. There, several new buildings were erected, including a temple, a round building called the Thymele, and the long stoa thought by scholars to be the *abaton* where people slept in the hope of meeting the god in a dream.<sup>205</sup> Building inscriptions record not only amounts of money spent on the refurbishment, but also names and locations of craftsmen, people and institutions that provided funding, and sources and quantities of construction materials like marble and wood.

In addition to the expansion of the sanctuary, an inscription erected ca. 365 BC at Epidauros attests to the growing popularity and status of not just the local sanctuary of Asklepios, but of Asklepios-cult in general. The inscription records the names of Greek cities from Thrace to Sicily and Italy that received ambassadors sent from Epidauros to promote and collect money for the Epidaurian building program.<sup>206</sup> That so many cities across the Mediterranean supported the cult demonstrates the widespread level of awareness of and interest in Asklepios throughout the Greek world.

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stoa dating probably to the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. Numerous votive reliefs from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, as well as lengthy inventory lists of gifts to Asklepios, attest to the cult's popularity at this time. On the inventory lists, see Aleshire 1989 (esp. 103-165 for the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. inventories).

<sup>204</sup> See Roebuck 1951 (esp. 23-26 for description and dates of the early Hellenistic buildings); Melfi 2003 (222-226). In the late 4<sup>th</sup> –early 3<sup>rd</sup> cs. BC, a new temple of Asklepios was built, complete with offertory box and surrounded by a colonnade and statues, as well as a large building believed to be the *abaton*. At the same time the large area of Lerna spring immediately to the west was monumentalized with a peristyle court and connected to the Asklepios sanctuary by a ramp. Roebuck emphasizes that the Asklepieion and Lerna were part of a single building plan.

<sup>205</sup> See LiDonnici 1995 (10-14) for a brief summary of the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. building program. For a more detailed description, including analysis of inscriptions documenting the building program, see Burford 1969; also Kavvadias 1891 and 1900.

<sup>206</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 94. For brief discussion of the inscription, see Tomlinson 1983 (25); Lomas 1993 (103). On *theorodokoi* in the Peloponnese, and for a fuller discussion of this decree, see Perlman 2000 (esp. 67-97 on Epidauros). The inscription is fragmentary and the list of cities therefore incomplete. The implications of the inscription for our understanding of Asklepios-cult in Italy are discussed in Ch. 7-8 below.

As these new and newly-refurbished sanctuaries grew in number, size, and opulence, so, too, did the number of votives to Asklepios. At Corinth, closed deposits of hundreds of anatomical votives date from the late 5<sup>th</sup> through the late 4<sup>th</sup> cs. BC.<sup>207</sup> Pieces of pottery in these deposits bear inscriptions naming Asklepios, and thus suggest that the votives should be associated with him.<sup>208</sup> At the Asklepieion in Athens, a large number of votive reliefs date to the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, many of which depict Asklepios.<sup>209</sup> In addition to these reliefs, inventories from the sanctuary in Athens list hundreds of votives in many forms and materials.<sup>210</sup> At Epidauros, inscriptions erected in the sanctuary in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC record narratives of over 70 healing experiences; many of these narratives seem to be derived from

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<sup>207</sup> Roebuck 1951 (113-138). These deposits predate the rebuilding of the sanctuary in the late 4<sup>th</sup> –early 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC. The fact that almost no votives from the sanctuary postdate the 4<sup>th</sup> c. is probably a result of chance. At Athens, where the inventory lists record numerous anatomical votives from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. and later, relatively very few were recovered in excavation; see Aleshire 1989. Thus, without inventory lists, our picture of Athens would be skewed. The fate of the later votives at Corinth may have been similar to Athens.

The anatomical votives from Corinth are terracotta, unlike their counterparts in Athens and elsewhere in Greece that were mainly metal (especially gold and silver) or stone (especially marble). Also striking is the absence of sculpted reliefs, of the sort found at Athens and Piraeus, and of healing inscriptions, like those at Epidauros, Lebena, Rome, and elsewhere. Regarding both of these peculiarities, Roebuck (112-113) suggests that a well-established terracotta industry at Corinth, coupled with the absence of good marble, played a large role in determining the nature of the sanctuary's votives. Once again, however, what has been found may largely be a matter of chance. As Roebuck admits, a precious material like metal could have been melted down, and stone and marble reused.

Anatomical votives in terracotta are numerous also in Italy from at least the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. See Ch. 7 below. One of the best general discussions of votives, including a detailed catalogue of anatomical votives from the Greek world beginning in the archaic period, is van Straten 1981.

<sup>208</sup> The votives may also have been dedicated to Apollo who had occupied the sanctuary already in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. On Apollo, see Roebuck 1951 (8-22). For the Asklepios inscriptions, see Roebuck (135, no. 61 and 65-67).

<sup>209</sup> See *LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios'; also Holländer 1912; Hausmann 1948. The votive reliefs are currently being studied by Jesper Jensen in his doctoral dissertation, *The Votive Reliefs from the Athenian Asklepieion on the South Slope of the Akropolis*, University of Aarhus, Denmark.

<sup>210</sup> Aleshire 1989.

votives.<sup>211</sup> In other words, these sanctuaries were bustling places with countless visitors.

Asklepios-cult, moreover, spread within cities and regions beyond the bounds of individual sanctuaries. Coins depicting the god and his attributes contributed to this more general dispersion. As we have seen, Asklepios appears on Thessalian coinage in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. In the 4<sup>th</sup> c., Asklepios also appears on coins of Thessaly<sup>212</sup> and Epidauros.<sup>213</sup> Possibly by the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, he appears on coins of Pergamon as well.<sup>214</sup>

Literary references beginning in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC also carried Asklepios-cult beyond his sanctuaries. Although Asklepios appears in early tragedy and epinician, it is difficult to read these accounts of Asklepios as secure references to cult.<sup>215</sup> Likewise, although according to the Suda,

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<sup>211</sup> LiDonnici 1995 (50-75, summarized in a list on p. 74) analyses probable sources for the narratives.

<sup>212</sup> Penn 1994 (15, ref. 5; 16, ref. 6). As with sculpture, so with coins it is often difficult to differentiate Asklepios from certain other male deities, especially Apollo. See Penn 19-20, 46. For this reason, neither of the coins cited in this note can with certainty be said to depict Asklepios. However, the coins from Epidauros listed in the following note almost certainly do. Not only is he the god of Epidauros in the 4<sup>th</sup> c., but on the first coin the bearded figure holds a staff, a common attribute of Asklepios. On the second coin appears a cupping instrument, which is also associated with Asklepios (cf. the Telemachos monument) and thus indicates that the bearded figure is Asklepios. A Pergamene coin mentioned below also shows a figure who is probably Asklepios: he is bearded and has a staff. The Pergamene coin may date as late as the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC.

<sup>213</sup> Penn 1994 (16-17, ref. 7; 57, ref. 34).

<sup>214</sup> Penn 1994 (18, ref. 9).

<sup>215</sup> Pindar's odes that refer to games at Epidauros (*Nem.* 3.84, 5.52; *Isth.* 8.68) are the only odes to overtly suggest cult practice. While the references to games and victories at Epidauros are assumed to relate specifically to Asklepios-cult because of evidence for development of the cult there in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC (see above), it must be emphasized that Asklepios himself is not explicitly tied to the games in these particular odes. This is not meant to imply that the references to Asklepios in early 5<sup>th</sup>-c. literature absolutely cannot allude to cult, only that there is nothing inherent in the references that suggests that they do. Two further genres deserve mention here: the hymn and the paeon. Both, written in honor of the god, suggest cult activity, and both were probably performed at sanctuaries of Asklepios by at least the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC when musical contests were held at Epidauros (Pl. *Ion* 530a; see also above). There is no certain evidence for hymns or paeons to Asklepios, however, until the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. The five-line *Homeric Hymn to Asklepios* provides too little



Aristarchos of Tegea wrote a tragedy entitled *Asklepios* in thanks for healing by the god, this may reflect a later tradition, much like Sophocles' supposed relationship with Asklepios.<sup>216</sup>

Beginning with Aristophanes, however, unambiguous allusions to Asklepios as a cult-figure appear in literature. In the *Wasps* of 422 BC, mentioned above, Philokleon is said to have been taken to a sanctuary of Asklepios on Aegina for healing (*Vesp.* 122-123), and in the *Ploutos* of 388 BC, Ploutos is also taken to a sanctuary of Asklepios. The description of the latter sanctuary and its rituals is substantial, adding up to over 100 lines of the play (*Pl.* 633-747).<sup>217</sup> Theophrastus, in the *Characters* published in 319 BC, characterizes a person of μικροφιλοτιμία, or petty pride, as one who fusses publicly over his bronze votive to Asklepios (*Char.* 21.10). A prologue to an unidentified play, probably by Menander, compares new-found self-awareness to waking up in a temple of Asklepios (*P.Didot* 1.9-11).<sup>218</sup> Even Plautus' *Curculio*, based almost certainly on a Greek new-comedy original but

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evidence for dating; see Janko 1981 (1). A tradition evident by the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD ascribes to Sophocles the composition of a paeon in honor of Asklepios (Lucian *Demosthenes Encomium* 27; Philostr. *VA* 3.17). Moreover, a highly fragmentary inscription of the Imperial period preserves a few battered lines of a poem to Koronis, the mother of Asklepios (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 4510). The inscription cites Sophocles as the author. The reliability of this late tradition linking Sophocles to Asklepios, however, is questionable. See Ch. 5 below.

<sup>216</sup> Snell 1971 (F 14.1). On Sophocles and Asklepios, see Ch. 5 below.

<sup>217</sup> It is uncertain which sanctuary of Asklepios is meant. The scholiast to the *Ploutos* says that it is the sanctuary on the Acropolis in Athens (ἐν ἄστει, *ad loc.* 621). Scholars have doubted this assertion, however, mainly because the sanctuary in the *Ploutos* is described as being near the sea (*Pl.* 656-658). For this reason, many believe that the Asklepieion in the *Ploutos* is the sanctuary at Zea in Piraeus.

<sup>218</sup> *P.Didot=P.Louvre* 7172. For text and discussion of the date, authorship, and content of this papyrus fragment, see G.W. Arnott 2000 (473-479). Arnott emphasizes the Athenian setting of the play based on references to the Acropolis and theater (479, n. 5). The reference to Asklepios' sanctuary, located on the south slope of the Acropolis right next to the theater of Dionysus, should be added to the evidence Arnott adduces in making this argument.

produced in Rome, keeps the Epidaurian setting, complete with rituals at the temple of Asklepios (*Curc.* 216-273).<sup>219</sup>

For comedy to be effective, its references must be familiar to the audience. Thus, that Aristophanes and later Menander<sup>220</sup> in Greece, and even Plautus in Rome, chose to refer to or set their plays in Asklepios' sanctuaries proves the widespread visibility and recognizability of the cult. Moreover, although no plays of Old Comedy are known to have been entitled *Asklepios*, at least two of Middle Comedy were so named, one by Philetaeros and the other by Antiphanes.<sup>221</sup> These plays may also be indicative of the growing popularity of the figure of Asklepios.

Nor is reference to Asklepios-cult confined to comedy. As mentioned above, in Plato's *Ion*, Socrates and Ion converse briefly about contests in honor of Asklepios at Epidauros (*Ion* 530a). Socrates' appeal in *Phaedo* that upon his death a cock should be offered to Asklepios suggests an awareness of Asklepios as a deity to whom one sacrifices (*Phd.* 118a).<sup>222</sup> Xenophon, in Book 3 of his *Memorabilia* composed ca. 355 BC, also relates a conversation between Socrates and his interlocutors in which reference is made to a sanctuary of Asklepios (*Mem.* 3.13.3). In a court speech of the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Aeschines mentions civic sacrifice to Asklepios (*Against Ctesiphon* 66-67).<sup>223</sup> Aristotle in *Republic of the Athenians* likewise mentions processions in honor of Asklepios (*Rep.* 56.4). In the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, Theocritus wrote an epigram celebrating a statue of Asklepios approached every day with sacrifices by its

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<sup>219</sup> The Greek original is not known. For Plautus' innovations on the presumed original, see Moore 1998 (126-139).

<sup>220</sup> Sandbach 1977 (70-73) and G.W. Arnott 1979 (vol. 1, p. xiv-xvi) have found it hard to believe that Menander's 100-plus plays could all have been performed at Athenian festivals.

<sup>221</sup> Edmonds 1957 (vol. 2, p. 21, 183).

<sup>222</sup> On the dedication of a cock to Asklepios at the close of the *Phaedo*, see Most 1993.

<sup>223</sup> Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 67: τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ ἢ Θυσία. Aeschines is criticizing Demosthenes' decree calling for a meeting of the assembly on the day both of sacrifice to Asklepios and of the *proagon* to the City Dionysia.

dedicant Nikias (*Ep.* 8).<sup>224</sup> By the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, Herodas' famous fourth miniamb celebrated the visit of two women to an Asklepieion.<sup>225</sup> The poem, narrated by women who have come to offer a cock and votive to Asklepios, paints a vivid picture of a busy sanctuary full of remarkable works of art.

While literary evidence in the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> cs. BC is mainly Attic, by the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC non-Attic sources, too, reflect the spread of Asklepios-cult. Theocritus, a native of southern Italy who lived also on Kos and at Alexandria, presumably had audiences in many parts of the Greek world; and Plautus used the theater to transport his Roman audience to Epidauros—the setting of the *Curculio*. This accords with the trend, suggested by the archaeological evidence, that the cult had a fairly limited existence in the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, but beginning in the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. and continuing through the 4<sup>th</sup> and into the 3<sup>rd</sup> c., the cult spread to numerous cities across the Greek world and even beyond. Moreover, the rebuilding and enlargement of sanctuaries in and the wealth of votives from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC confirm the popularity of the deity at this time.

#### **IV. The Development of the Aspect of Healing in Asklepios-Cult**

Central to the development and popularity of Asklepios-cult was the element of healing. The mythology of Asklepios throughout antiquity focuses on Asklepios primarily as a healer. Therefore, it is likely that healing would have been an element of even the earliest cults of Asklepios, although the archaeological evidence makes this difficult to prove.

At Epidauros, the earliest evidence from the sanctuary provides no unambiguous indication of healing. The stoas of Building E have prompted

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<sup>224</sup> For commentary, see Gow 1952 (vol. 2, *ad loc.*). This Nikias is probably the *iatros* mentioned also in *Id.* 13 and *Id.* 28.

<sup>225</sup> The poem is dated to ca. 280-265 BC based on references to particular artists in the text. See Cunningham 1971 (128).

some scholars to conclude that incubation was part of cult activity in the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>226</sup> While the association of Asklepios with Apollo's cult is suggestive, the layer of ash debris from the courtyard of Building E contained nothing, such as anatomical votives, that obviously suggests healing.

The earliest cult-related evidence directly suggestive of healing comes from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. According to Pausanias, when Micythus of Rhegium erected a statue of Asklepios at Olympia ca. 460 BC, he did so in partial fulfillment of a vow made for the recovery of his ailing child (Paus. 5.26).<sup>227</sup> This information, which Pausanias says he read on inscriptions at the site (τὰ μὲν ἐπιγράμματα ἐν Τεγέῳ φησιν), clearly states that Micythus' child suffered from a wasting sickness (παιδὸς νοσήσαντος νόσον φθινάδα, which may indicate tuberculosis). This illness is similar to one later attested among those treated by Asklepios at Epidauros, and thus was probably a common one for Asklepios to cure.<sup>228</sup> Micythus, however, fulfilled his vow by erecting not only a statue of Asklepios, but also of other deities, including Zeus, Poseidon, Ganymede, and Amphitrite. Just how much of the credit for his son's recovery Micythus ascribed to Asklepios is thus uncertain.

By 422 BC, it is clear that people visited sanctuaries of Asklepios for healing. Philokleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps* is taken to the Asklepieion at Aegina in search of a cure for his love of jury service (φιληλιαστής, *Vesp.* 88).

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<sup>226</sup> Robert 1933 (391). But Tomlinson 1983 (74-75) cautions against this interpretation due to two factors in particular: the ash debris from the altar in the courtyard of Building E does not necessarily imply that Building E itself was a hallowed building, and Building E does not give any indication of what its own ritual function may have been. Reinforcing Tomlinson's arguments is the fact that a stoa is a very practical structure providing protection from sun and rain alike. As Tomlinson 1992 urges in his interpretation of the sanctuary of Hera at Perachora, greater consideration must be given to the practical needs of the worshippers alongside their often-exaggerated ritual needs.

<sup>227</sup> Paus. 5.26: τὰ δὲ ἀναθήματα ἀνέθηκεν ἐς Ὀλυμπίαν εὐχὴν τινα ἐκτελῶν. The approximate date of dedication is determined by a reference in Pausanias to Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegium. See also Ch. 3 below.

<sup>228</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.69-82 = LiDonnici 1995 (B13). This particular healing event is introduced with the words: [Θ]έρσανδρος Ἀλικὸς φθίσιν.

His visit to the sanctuary caps a list of unsuccessful and progressively more drastic measures to cure the old man, including ritual bathing, purification, and Korybantic rites (*Vesp.* 112-135). A slave reports, “When these other measures proved of no benefit, his son took him by boat to Aegina. There he put him to bed for the night in the sanctuary of Asklepios. But early the next morning his father was at the courtroom gate” (*Vesp.* 121-124). The effect of the culminating measure—the journey to visit Asklepios—is that not even Asklepios could help him, so badly is Philokleon stricken.

Other evidence attests to healing as both the primary function and appeal of Asklepios-cult at this time. Inscriptions of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC from Epidauros narrate healing events that took place at the sanctuary as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>229</sup> These events were inscribed on *stelai* and erected for public perusal during the great 4<sup>th</sup>-c. rebuilding of the sanctuary.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, many of these early narratives name the towns from which the cured had come. Such towns include Pellene, Athens, Thessaly, and Epidauros itself. Thus, not only was healing a primary function of the cult at Epidauros, but people from different areas of Greece knew this and traveled to Epidauros especially for healing by the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

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<sup>229</sup> LiDonnici 1995 (76-82) convincingly argues that some of the healing experiences inscribed on *Stele* A in the mid-4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC reflect votives and visits to the sanctuary of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Her arguments are based on linguistic characteristics and references within the inscriptions to earlier inscriptions. I am not convinced, however, that the healing events and votives referred to date to the *beginning* of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, as she claims.

The Epidaurean inscriptions also include several stories of Asklepios doing things other than healing. For example, he puts a broken vessel back together (*IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 121.79-89 = LiDonnici 1995 [A10]); and he locates missing treasure (*IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 123.8-21 = LiDonnici 1995 [C 3]), a lost oil bottle (*IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 123.129-134 = LiDonnici 1995 [C22]), and a lost child (*IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 122.19-26 = LiDonnici 1995 [B4]). It is remarkable, however, that even in the case of the broken vessel, the particular adjective used twice to describe it in its reassembled state is ὑγιῆς, or healthy (*IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 121.85 and 87). Moreover, of the approx. 70 healing inscriptions that have survived from Epidauros (some of which are highly fragmentary), only these four are not directly related to health.

<sup>230</sup> See Burford 1969.

The first of these *stelai*, which describes the oldest healing events, is titled “Healings by Apollo and Asklepios.”<sup>231</sup> How much Asklepios was responsible for these cures, as opposed to Apollo, is uncertain, but Asklepios is named specifically in the narrative of at least one of the early cures, whereas Apollo is named in none.<sup>232</sup> By the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Asklepios is named eight times in the narratives, Apollo never. This suggests that Asklepios was receiving a large share of the attention and credit for healing by the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>233</sup> By the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, moreover, the list of cities from which people came to visit Asklepios in Epidauros had grown to include: Aegina, Argos, Epeiros, Halieis, Herakleia, Hermione, Kaphyai, Keos, Khios, Kirrha, Knidos, Lampsakos, Messene, Mytilene, Pherai, Sparta, Thasos, Thebes, Torone, and Troezen.<sup>234</sup> Epidauros was clearly growing as a panhellenic healing cult.

Even cults of Asklepios that were not panhellenic demonstrate the great appeal of his healing among local populations. In Athens,<sup>235</sup> where the arrival of Asklepios in 420 BC was commemorated on a monument that depicted cupping instruments and forceps and thus foregrounded his healing

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<sup>231</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.2: ἰάματα τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ.

<sup>232</sup> Of the earliest healing experiences recorded on the *stelai*, eight of the 10 describe the healer simply as “the god” (ὁ θεός), leaving his identification ambiguous. One narrative does not mention a god at all. The tenth narrative, which refers to Asklepios, is *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.79-89 = LiDonnici 1995 (A10). On the chronology and grouping of the narratives, see LiDonnici 1995 (20-82).

It is likewise difficult to make any determination about which god healed based on the nature of the cures. *Stele B*, thought to postdate *Stele A*, contains a greater percentage of cures described in terms of procedures used by *iatroi* than does *Stele A*. Since Asklepios was an *iatros*, and not Apollo, this suggests that Apollo’s role in the cures declined over time.

<sup>233</sup> See also LiDonnici 1995 (46, n. 28). The same may have been true at Corinth by the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. As noted above, however, whether the Corinth votives were dedicated to Apollo or Asklepios in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC is uncertain.

<sup>234</sup> On pilgrims to Asklepios in Epidauros, see Dillon 1994 (243), 1997 (73-80).

<sup>235</sup> Aleshire 1989 (71) emphasizes the local character of the sanctuary. There is little evidence indicating foreign visitors.

role,<sup>236</sup> Asklepios immediately stole attention away from other healing cults. After 420 BC, for example, private dedications to Athena Hygieia, or “Health,” on the Acropolis dropped off drastically although she had been worshipped from at least the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>237</sup>

## V. Traditional Explanations for the Popularity of Asklepios

A number of arguments have been advanced to explain the upsurge in popularity of Asklepios-cult in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Most are a variation of the following: widespread disenchantment with the traditional pantheon as plague and war struck;<sup>238</sup> growing tension and insecurity as the dominant powers of the period shifted during the course of the Peloponnesian War and through the rapid reversals of fortune in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC;<sup>239</sup> and consequently the growing acceptance of the “irrational,”<sup>240</sup> as well as the desire for more personal attention from a gentle god who would in person care for each individual worshipper.<sup>241</sup> Another line of argument states that the rise in popularity was due to increased visibility of Asklepios following Athens’ importation of the cult in 420 BC.<sup>242</sup> All of these reasons are valid to varying degrees, but not even when combined are they a complete answer.

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<sup>236</sup> On the arrival of Asklepios in Athens and the Telemachos monument, see Ch. 4-6 below.

<sup>237</sup> Hurwit 1999 (199, and App. C.11). A dedication by Euphronios dates to ca. 475 BC (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 824). Athena Hygieia may have been edged out in part by, or even assimilated to, Asklepios’ daughter Hygieia who moved into the Acropolis sanctuary with Asklepios in 419/18 BC (*SEG* 25.226). On Hygieia, see Ch. 6 below.

<sup>238</sup> E.g., Avalos 1999 (50-51).

<sup>239</sup> E.g., Hölscher 1991.

<sup>240</sup> E.g., Dodds 1951.

<sup>241</sup> E.g., Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 111-118); Mitropoulou 1975 (11); Amundsen and Ferngren 1982 (77).

<sup>242</sup> E.g., Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 120-121); Garland 1992 (116-135). Dillon 1997 (78, n. 119), however, suggests that Garland exaggerates the impact of Athens on the spread of

### A. Demand for a Healing God

A common explanation for the spread of Asklepios-cult is plague.<sup>243</sup> While plague may help explain the greater need for a healing god, it cannot explain the appeal of Asklepios in particular. With only one exception (and it is a much later and dubious one), Asklepios is never credited by ancient sources with treating plague.<sup>244</sup> This has mainly to do with the fact that fatal illnesses are not what Asklepios is known to have treated.<sup>245</sup> Moreover, since plague was considered a *miasma*, healing it required supernatural skill capable of removing defilement from the entire community.<sup>246</sup> Apollo above all other gods was renowned for this skill, but his son Asklepios seems never to have exercised it. Plague cannot thus ultimately explain the appeal of Asklepios.

Likewise, the argument that individuals were looking for a more personal relationship with the gods than was possible with the canonical Olympian pantheon fails to explain why a healing god became so popular. It is true that Asklepios provided personal attention to his worshippers, but this kind of attention was not unique to a healing god. *Incubatio*, the process whereby one encounters a deity in dreams, was practiced in oracular cults like those of Amphiaraos and Trophonius by the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>247</sup> An

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Asklepios-cult throughout Greece, as is supported by Aleshire 1989 (71) who observes that there were not many foreign visitors to the sanctuary in Athens.

<sup>243</sup> E.g., Avalos 1995 (41-43).

<sup>244</sup> The one exception is Rome, where sources say the god was imported to end a plague of 295 BC. However, Ch. 7-9 below reconsider the ancient accounts. Scholars have likewise often explained the arrival of Asklepios in Athens as the result of plague, but no ancient evidence attests to this, as discussed in Ch. 4-6 below.

<sup>245</sup> The type of illnesses that Asklepios healed were normally chronic, but not fatal, ailments; see below.

<sup>246</sup> Parker 1983 (271-276).

<sup>247</sup> According to Herodotus, Kroesus and Mys (in 480/79 BC) both consulted the oracles of Amphiaraos and Trophonius (Hdt. 1.46, 1.49, 1.52, 1.92, 8.134). Some scholars, however, doubt the truth of these statements; see Schachter 1981- (vol. 3, p. 79-80, with n. 1 on p. 80). A sanctuary of Amphiaraos may have existed at Oropos by the mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC; see Hubbard 1992 (105, n. 76). Schachter 1981- (vol. 3, p. 75) claims that Trophonius was the inhabitant



oracular cult, as opposed to a healing cult, would also potentially have served more people since it provided general help. Illness was thus not a prerequisite for incubation at the sanctuary of an oracular deity, while in the case of Asklepios, incubation was usually reserved for those who were ill.<sup>248</sup> Another explanation then is necessary to account for the widespread demand for a healing god.

The void in healing created by *iatrike* better accounts for this demand. As *iatroi* turned away untreatable cases, forcing some patients to look elsewhere for healing, the gods remained the only healers not disparaged by *iatroi*. Healing gods consequently became prime candidates for filling this void.

## **B. Other Healing Gods**

Healing deities were worshipped in the Greek world since at least the Bronze Age. Numerous anatomical votives from Bronze Age sites suggest strongly that some people were requesting or thanking deities for healing. On Minoan Crete, for example, concentrations of anatomical votives have been found at sanctuaries atop mountain peaks.<sup>249</sup> Which deities got the credit is not certain.

In Homer's depiction of Bronze Age society, there is already a plurality of gods associated with healing. Some of the healing is wholly supernatural, like that of Apollo, Athena, Leto, and Artemis. In the *Iliad*, it is Apollo to whom sacrifices are made to end the plague—a plague that he himself sent in the tenth year of the Trojan War (*Il.* 1.43-67). And Athena, Leto, and Artemis join Apollo in using supernatural means to heal the wounds of their favorite

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of the oracle at Lebadeia by the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. He bases this claim on a reference to a cult-statue attributed to Daedalos in the sanctuary (Paus. 9.39.8). The hazards of this kind of claim are discussed above.

<sup>248</sup> There are several exceptions in the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. Epidaurean healing inscriptions, including the

human combatants (*Il.* 5.114-122; 5.445-448; 16.508-529). Moreover, the *Odyssey* mentions a man who is cured of illness by the gods in general (θεοί, *Od.* 5.394-398). Paieon, by contrast, uses natural procedures to heal wounds suffered by the gods on the battlefield, and by Hades at the hands of Zeus (*Il.* 5.395-402; 899-904).

That many of the gods could cure illness accords with the fact that already in Homer many can also inflict it, like Apollo who inflicts the plague at the opening of the *Iliad*. Zeus, too, holds such power to cause illness among men (*Od.* 9.407-411), and Artemis can slay any woman she wishes (*Il.* 21.483-484).

In Greek literature over time and across genres, most of the gods, especially the canonical twelve of the Olympian pantheon, acted as healers.<sup>250</sup> During the archaic period, moreover, evidence resumes for the worship of certain deities in their capacity to heal.<sup>251</sup> Metal anatomical votives dating to the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> cs. BC were found at the sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesus.<sup>252</sup> Several dating to the archaic or classical periods were also found in the Artemis sanctuary at Lousoi in Arkadia.<sup>253</sup> At the sanctuary of Hera on Samos, 7<sup>th</sup>-c. BC bronze statuettes connected to the cult of the Babylonian healing goddess Gula of Isin suggest a healing function also for this cult of

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finding of lost items noted above, and a mother who incubates by proxy for her sick daughter (*IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 122.1-6 = LiDonnici 1995 [B1]).

<sup>249</sup> On Minoan peak sanctuaries, see Peatfield 1990; Nowicki 1994; Jones 1999.

<sup>250</sup> As Kearns 1989 (14) observes, almost any god can function as a healer. There is no recent comprehensive study of healing gods. Jayne 1925 is still a valuable reference, but is now incomplete. So, too, is Farnell 1921 (236), who discusses some of the healing heroes. Forsén 1996 provides information on many Greek healing deities in his study of Greek anatomical votives.

Laskaris 1991 argues that certain archaic Greek healing cults acted as repositories of Near Eastern technical healing knowledge, especially about plant substances. The cults she discusses are all Ionian.

<sup>251</sup> On anatomical votives in the Greek world, see van Straten 1981 (esp. 105-151); Forsén 1996.

<sup>252</sup> Hogarth 1908. Many of the anatomical votives at Ephesus were found in the foundations and placed carefully among the blocks of a structure built ca. 700 BC.

Hera.<sup>254</sup> When Pindar expresses concern for the health of Hieron in the decade before the latter's death in 467 BC, the poet prays to Mater, the Mother (*Pyth.* 3.77-79).<sup>255</sup> And, as noted above, Athena Hygieia received a sanctuary and votives on the Acropolis in Athens by the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

In addition to the host of full-fledged gods who acted as healers, there were lesser gods and heroes, many of whom had associations with specific communities.<sup>256</sup> For example, Herakles was called Ἀλεξίκακος, and in one tradition was said to have averted the great plague from Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>257</sup> Pan, too, was credited with averting plague at Troezen in the Peloponnese.<sup>258</sup> Amphiaraos, one of the Argive Seven against Thebes, and later a Theban oracular deity, was by 414 BC also a healer.<sup>259</sup>

## VI. Conclusions

All of these figures and more were active healers by the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, that is, by the time *iatrike* had created a void in healing. Individuals turned away by *iatrike* thus had many choices at hand. Yet Asklepios was the deity to whom most people turned, as the popularity of his cult attests.

What made Asklepios, a god outside of the traditional pantheon and a relatively new cult figure, particularly appealing? Why did Asklepios become dominant in cults where he had earlier joined his father Apollo (such as

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<sup>253</sup> These are in the form of hands. See Forsén 1996 (137, with n. 19).

<sup>254</sup> Burkert 1992a (75-79). Gula is also called *azugallatu*, or “the great physician.” Burkert ties this Babylonian healing goddess to Asklepios via the presence of dogs in both cults, as well as the similarity of the words “*azugallatu*” and “Asklepios.” The origin of the name Asklepios has defied explanation, as Burkert describes. On Mesopotamian healing and the cult of Gula, and the relation of both to Asklepios-cult, see Avalos 1995 (99-231).

<sup>255</sup> On *Pyth.* 3, see also Ch. 3 below. For text and translation, see Appendix I.

<sup>256</sup> Farnell 1921 is the most recent comprehensive study; Jayne 1925 is also useful for Greek healing heroes; Kearns 1989 discusses the healing heroes of Attica in particular.

<sup>257</sup> Schol. ad Ar. *Ran.* 501.

<sup>258</sup> Paus. 2.32.6.

<sup>259</sup> Aristophanes' fragmentary *Amphiaraos*, produced in 414 BC, contains references to

Epidauros and Corinth)? And why did his cult displace pre-existing cults of healers like Athena Hygieia on the Acropolis in the Athens? To answer these questions, we will next examine Asklepios' ties to *iatrike*.

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healing; see Edmonds 1957 (vol. 1, p. 576-583, esp. fr. 22, 28). On Amphiaraos as a healer, see Ch. 3 below.

## CHAPTER 3: *IATROI* AND ASKLEPIOS

While there were other healing deities available for patients who wished to seek divine healing, Asklepios became by far the most popular choice. A number of reasons account for the prevalence of the choice of Asklepios, and, as this chapter will demonstrate, many of these reasons have to do with his great affinity to *iatroi*, and with his healing of a certain type of illness refused by *iatroi*.

### I. Asklepios as *Iatros* in Myth and Cult

#### A. Mythology

The mythology of Asklepios from Homer through the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC demonstrates a number of affinities between Asklepios and *iatroi*. First, in Homer, Asklepios is himself an *iatros* (*Il.* 4.193-194), as are his sons Machaon and Podalirios (*Il.* 2.731-732; 11.833). As discussed above, the *iatros* in the *Iliad* heals in a specific way: through natural healing methods like poultices and bandages. He must also learn his trade. Cheiron guides Asklepios (*Il.* 4.218-219), just as the custom of handing a profession down from father to son leads us to believe that Asklepios in turn trained his own sons. In Homer there is yet no hint that Asklepios is immortal, that he is the son of Apollo. Thus, in at least this one line of the early mythic tradition, Asklepios is a mortal *iatros*.

Hesiod identifies Asklepios as the son of Apollo, as do most accounts of Asklepios in antiquity.<sup>260</sup> Unlike his father, however, Asklepios is never

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<sup>260</sup> Merkelbach and West 1967 (fr. 51). The brief, five-line *Homeric Hymn to Asklepios* also identifies Asklepios as the son of Apollo. The hymn, however, provides too little in the way of content or style to make it datable; see Janko 1982 (1).

portrayed as having been born with the knowledge to heal. Instead, Asklepios must learn to heal like any mortal *iatros*.<sup>261</sup>

Nor does being the son of Apollo give Asklepios immortality; as will be discussed below, Asklepios is killed by Zeus. Yet by the time of Pindar, Asklepios is also thought to have become immortal; when and how he attained immortality after dying as a mortal is never explained in ancient accounts until late antiquity.<sup>262</sup> The fragmentary nature of Hesiod's account leaves uncertain whether Hesiod envisioned such an apotheosis for Asklepios. It is tempting to associate this development in the myth—the immortality of Asklepios—with a statement in *On Ancient Medicine*. The author says that the first researchers of *iatrike* believed their *technē* worthy of being ascribed to a god.<sup>263</sup> It is possible that this desire to ascribe developments in *iatrike* to a famous and even immortal *iatros* prompted the apotheosis of Asklepios sometime between Homer and Pindar.

In Hesiod's account, it is nonetheless clear that Asklepios is punished with death for raising someone from the dead. Later tradition generally holds that Asklepios is struck by a lightning bolt and hurled into Hades, which in turn prompts Asklepios' father Apollo to kill the Cyclopes, Zeus' thunderbolt-makers. Never one to be outdone by his children, Zeus then punishes Apollo by making him serve the mortal Admetus for one year.<sup>264</sup>

Asklepios' punishment becomes a fairly stable element of the myth, the only frequent variable being whom exactly Asklepios tries to bring back

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<sup>261</sup> E.g., Pind. *Nem.* 3.54-56, *Pyth.* 3.1-7; schol. ad *Nem.* 3.92, *Pyth.* 3.79, 3.9, 3.102; Xen. *Cyn.* 1.1-6; Philostr. *Her.* 9; Heraclitus *All.* 15.

<sup>262</sup> On Asklepios' deification, see Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 67-76).

<sup>263</sup> *Vet. Med.* 14.16-20; L. 1.600-602: οἱ πρῶτοι εὐρόντες καὶ φήθησαν ἀξίην τὴν τέχνην θεῷ προσθεῖναι.

<sup>264</sup> Sources for the story of Asklepios' punishment and death can be found in Edelstein 1945 (T. 105-115); Gantz 1993 (91-92). Apollo's servitude to Admetus is most famously portrayed in Euripides' *Alkestis*.

to life.<sup>265</sup> It is this very attempt to raise someone from the dead—and thus to overstep his proper bounds—that, not surprisingly, is the focus of his myth in 5<sup>th</sup>-c. tragedy.<sup>266</sup> It is also the focus of Pindar’s lengthy portrayal of Asklepios in *Pythian* 3, an ode contemporary with early tragedy. Composed for Hieron of Syracuse, the ode dates between the 476 BC (the founding of the city Aetna) and 467 BC (the death of Hieron).<sup>267</sup>

Because *Pythian* 3 includes one of the most detailed extant accounts of Asklepios, it appears as Appendix I below, and part of it is quoted here. After the story of the union of Koronis and Apollo, by which Asklepios is conceived, Pindar tells of Koronis’ affair with a stranger. Apollo, angered at her betrayal, has his sister Artemis send a deadly plague to kill her, but Apollo resolves to save his unborn son Asklepios from Koronis’ funeral pyre:

But when her relatives had placed the girl	38
within the pyre’s wooden wall and the fierce blaze	
of Hephaistos ran around it, then Apollo said: “No longer	40
shall I endure in my soul to destroy my own offspring	
by a most pitiful death along with his mother’s heavy	
suffering.”	
Thus he spoke, and with his first stride came and	
snatched the child	
from the corpse, while the burning flame parted for him.	
He took him and gave him to the Magnesian Centaur	45
for instruction in healing the diseases that plague men	
(καί ῥά νιν Μάγνητι φέρων πόρε Κενταύρω διδάξαι	
πολυπήμονας ἀνθρώποισιν ἰᾶσθαι νόσους).	

<sup>265</sup> Exactly whom Asklepios attempted to raise from the dead was a matter debated already in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC; see Schol. ad Eur. *Alc.* 1, quoting Pherekydes; also Schol. ad Pind. *Pyth.* 3.96, quoting Pherekydes, Stesichorus, and others. Among the candidates were Hippolytus, Glaukos, Tyndareos, Hymenaeus, Capaneus, Lykourgos, “the dead in Delphi,” the Phinidae, Orion, and the daughters of Proteus. The debate continued to be a matter of interest in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC; see Phld. *De pietate* 52.

<sup>266</sup> E.g., Aesch. *Ag.* 1022-1024; Eur. *Alc.* 1-7, with Asklepios’ transgression providing the motivation behind the plot of the *Alkestis*. At least one tragedy from the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC dealt primarily with the myth of Asklepios, but only its title and author are known: Aristarchos, *Asklepios*.

<sup>267</sup> The occasion of the ode is debated. Race 1997 (vol. 1, p. 242) believes that the ode was composed for Hieron’s illness.

Now all who came to him afflicted with natural sores  
 or with limbs wounded by gray bronze  
 or by far-flung stone,  
 or with bodies wracked by summer fever 50  
     or winter chill, he relieved of their various ills and  
 restored them; some he tended with calming  
     incantations (μαλακαίς ἐποιδαίς),  
 while others drank soothing potions (προσανέα),  
     or he applied remedies (φάρμακα) to all parts  
 of their bodies; still others he raised up with surgery (τομαίς).

But even wisdom is enthralled to gain.  
 Gold appearing in his hands 55  
     with its lordly wage  
 prompted even him to bring back from death a man  
 already carried off. But then, with a cast from his hands,  
     Kronos' son took the breath from both men's breasts  
 in an instant; the flash of lightning hurled down doom.  
 It is necessary to seek what is proper from the gods  
     with our mortal minds,  
 by knowing what lies at our feet and what kind of destiny 60  
     is ours...

(Pyth. 3.38-60)<sup>268</sup>

For both Pindar and the tragedians, the transgression of proper limits, an inherently hubristic act, makes Asklepios well-suited to the poetic aims of tragedy and Pindaric epinician.<sup>269</sup>

At the same time, however, Asklepios' punishment, so much emphasized in poetry of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, also informs his relationship with human *iatroi*. Just as *iatroi* are limited in their ability to heal by the capacity of their *techne*, so, too, was Asklepios limited in his ability to heal. Asklepios, although capable of raising the dead, was restricted in this capacity by the power and sovereignty of Zeus. In neither case is the limitation inherent in the healer; rather, it is imposed upon the healer from outside.

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<sup>268</sup> Translation by Race 1997.

<sup>269</sup> Others who overstep their limits, particularly in their attempts to provide humans with technical skill, include Prometheus and Hephaistos.



Moreover, Asklepios in *Pythian* 3 is called a craftsman (τέκτων, *Pyth.* 3.6) of healing, which further allies Asklepios with human *iatroi*. In Homer, as discussed above, *iatroi* are trained in the particular skill of healing. According to Pindar, Asklepios, too, had to be trained in order to become a craftsman (*Pyth.* 3.45-46). Most of the techniques that Pindar says Asklepios used are very much like those described by Homer for *iatroi*, and which are also common in the Hippocratic corpus: Asklepios applied drugs, either externally in the form of poultices or internally via potions, and he performed surgery (*Pyth.* 3.51-53).

In the same poem, however, Asklepios is also said to have used incantations (*epaoidoi*) to heal. These are never associated with *iatroi* in ancient literature, but with *magoi* or other healers.<sup>270</sup> They appear in a healing context first in *Od.* 19.455-462, where a boar wound of Odysseus is treated with bandages, poultices, and an incantation to stop the flow of blood. Here, although the healers make use otherwise of the very same procedures as *iatroi*,<sup>271</sup> as does Asklepios himself in *Pythian* 3, they are not called *iatroi*, almost certainly because they employ supernatural methods.

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<sup>270</sup> See Graf 1997 (28-29, with n. 29); W.R. Furley 1993 (80-104). The noun *epaoidos* is used twice elsewhere in Pindar: *Nem.* 8.49 and *Pyth.* 4.217. The latter is in the context of Medea's sorcery. On the use of incantations and other utterances as a means of establishing the healer's authority, see Gordon 1995. Kotansky 1991 (108-110) and Scarborough 1991 (143) assume that *Pyth.* 3.52-53 (περάπτων φάρμακα) describes Asklepios as affixing amulets. This is certainly possible, although περάπτων φάρμακα may also connote the application of poultices to the skin. Neither the use of *epaoidoi* nor amulets is attested for Asklepios in any of the healing inscriptions.

There is some ambiguity about the use of incantations by *iatroi* in Sophocles' *Ajax*: a wise *iatros* does not sing incantations over a pain that requires surgery (οὐ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ / θρηνεῖν ἐπὶ δῶς πρὸς τομῶντι πήματι, *Aj.* 581-582). This implies either that *iatroi* never used *epaoidoi*, or that there is a right and wrong time for the use of incantations even by the wise *iatros*. A reading in favor of the former is supported by the boar-wound episode of Odysseus at *Od.* 19.455-462. Here, Odysseus' wound is treated with incantations, but the healers are not *iatroi*.

<sup>271</sup> See Renehan 1992.

The fact that incantations are not traditionally associated with *iatroi* distinguishes Asklepios from his mortal counterparts. He is, after all, the son of Apollo, and therefore his supernatural methods are consistent with his divine nature. One effect of all of these affinities and distinctions in Pindar is to characterize Asklepios as an *iatros* while at the same time elevating him above human *iatroi*. As a super-*iatros* of sorts, Asklepios is capable of more than any mortal physician, even to the point of raising the dead, although this power is violently curtailed by Zeus.

Since this ode dates to the period between 476 and 467 BC, it is difficult to know whether Pindar based his description of Asklepios' healing on his knowledge of healing practices within Asklepios-cult. With the exception of incantations, for the use of which there is no evidence at any time in Asklepios-cult, all of the other healing techniques listed by Pindar are attested later for the cult. While at least one sanctuary of Asklepios (at Epidauros) was operating in the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, we have no way of knowing how or even whether healing was practiced in Asklepios-cult during this period.

What is more certain is that by the mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the tradition of Asklepios in myth was that of a deified *iatros*. As a human, he was trained in his craft, he used techniques employed by human *iatroi*, and, like human *iatroi*, he was unable to heal all cases. Asklepios was later a deity, and thus employed certain techniques characteristic of supernatural healing. Moreover, his divinity made him more effective than a human *iatros*.

Asklepios was also unlike his immortal counterparts. The other healing gods were not trained to heal but seem to have been born with the ability; they often functioned as much more than healers;<sup>272</sup> and when they

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<sup>272</sup> Burkert 1985 (214) emphasizes the “complex personalities” of the other gods vs. the “one single [healing] function” of Asklepios. Asklepios' primary function by far was healing, but he also assisted people in other ways, like locating lost objects (e.g., lost treasure, *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 123.8-21, or a lost son, *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.19-26); see also Ch. 2 above.

did heal, they healed with techniques unlike *iatroi*. Apollo, Asklepios' father, is a prime example of this type of divine healer. Apollo was worshipped as a healing god, yet he also played a number of other roles, including prophet, poet, and vindicator, as the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* makes clear.<sup>273</sup> Nor is there any tradition that Apollo ever had to learn to heal; instead, his ability seems innate. Finally, Apollo's methods of healing do not involve surgery, bandages, poultices, or other techniques associated with *iatroi*.<sup>274</sup> Rather, Apollo heals most often in inexplicable ways. In the *Iliad*, for example, when Apollo heals Glaukos of an arrow wound he does so in a manner described only as making the pains cease, staunching the blood, and putting strength in his heart (*Il.* 16.527-531).<sup>275</sup> Exactly how he accomplished this is not stated. Later he is known for healing by simply raising his right arm on high, which earns him the epithet Ὑπερδέξιος.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Apollo was assimilated with Paieon, probably a separate deity originally who appears in the *Iliad* as a healer of the gods (*Il.* 5.395-402, healing Hades; *Il.* 5.898-902, healing Ares). Furthermore, inherent in Apollo's role as sender of plague is his ability also to avert it, and thus to heal. See also Burkert 1985 (145).

<sup>274</sup> In Aesch. *Eum.* 62, Apollo is called an *iatromantis*, but it is not until Aristophanes' *Birds*, produced in 414 BC, that there is evidence for the epithet *iatros* applied to Apollo (*A v.* 584). It is notable, moreover, that he is thus called in his capacity to heal the gods, not mortals. By 414 BC the tradition of Asklepios as an *iatros* not just in myth but also in cult may have influenced the choice of epithet for the father of Asklepios. In cults of Apollo on the Black Sea a common epithet of Apollo was *iatros*, as Calder 1971 notes. But the epithet is found no earlier than the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC in these cults. It is also notable that a dedication to "Apollo *iatros*" from the Black Sea is made by the same sculptor who inscribed a dedication to Asklepios found at the Asklepieion in Athens (Calder 1971). Again, there is the possibility of the influence of Asklepios-cult on the use of this epithet for Apollo. Eur. *Alc.* 969, mentions drugs (φάρμακα) in relation to Apollo, but there is no indication that he himself uses them to heal; rather, he gives them to the descendants of Asklepios.

<sup>275</sup> *Il.* 16.527-531: Ὡς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων. / ἀντίκα παῦσ' ὀδύνας ἀπὸ δ' ἔλκεος ἀργαλείοι / αἶμα μέλαν τέρσηνε, μένος δέ οἱ ἔμβαλε θυμῷ. / Γλαῦκος δ' ἔγνω ἦσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ γήθησέν τε / ὅττι οἱ ὦκ' ἤκουσε μέγας θεὸς εὐξαμένοιο.

<sup>276</sup> Weinreich 1909 (41); Jayne 1925 (229).

## B. Techniques of Healing in Asklepios-Cult

Despite his divine parentage, then, mythological tradition portrays Asklepios as much more like a human *iatros* than the other healing gods. This affinity with *iatroi* is apparent also in cult practice by the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>277</sup>

Among the earliest healing experiences from Epidauros, which likely date to the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC if not earlier,<sup>278</sup> appear instances of surgery and the application of drugs to the eyes,<sup>279</sup> the surgical removal and reattachment of parts of the body,<sup>280</sup> the cutting open and sewing up of the belly,<sup>281</sup> the removal of material from the belly after it has been cut open,<sup>282</sup> and the draining of liquid from the body.<sup>283</sup>

The latter procedure appears to have been influenced by Hippocratic humoral theory.<sup>284</sup> This theory held that the body was composed of fundamental substances, or humours, such as bile, blood, and phlegm. In the

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<sup>277</sup> E.g., Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 112); Lloyd 1979 (37-49). Vlastos 1949 (280) is right to point out that not all of Asklepios' cures are like those of an *iatros*, but it cannot be denied that many of them in some way are, especially in comparison with the healing procedures of Asklepios' divine contemporaries. Moreover, while Vlastos 278 harshly criticizes Edelstein for failing "to sift out fact from fancy in the surviving accounts..." and for giving "no thought...to what the pilgrims themselves might have contributed by way of imaginative embroidery upon the facts...", it is the very fact that the worshippers and others described the experiences in terms of procedures common to *iatroi* that is of the utmost significance. Although we do not know what actually happened in such a healing experience, we do know how people chose to describe it, whatever their motivations and true beliefs may have been. Lloyd 1979 (40-41) puts it well, "Clearly the faithful who attended the shrines of Asclepius were used to the god behaving — and they expected the god to behave — in visions in ways which were in certain respects very similar to those of the doctors represented in our extant Hippocratic treatises."

<sup>278</sup> The earliest experiences recorded are the first 10 on the first *stèle* (*Stèle A* = *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121) and the first six of the second *stèle* (*Stèle B* = *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122). On the dating of the experiences described in the inscriptions, see LiDonnici 1995 (76-82).

<sup>279</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.33-41 = LiDonnici 1995 (A4); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.72-78 = LiDonnici 1995 (A9).

<sup>280</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.1-6 = LiDonnici 1995 (B1); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.10-19 = LiDonnici 1995 (B3).

<sup>281</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.10-19 = LiDonnici 1995 (B3); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.26-35 = LiDonnici 1995 (B5).

<sup>282</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.26-35 = LiDonnici 1995 (B5).

<sup>283</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.1-6 = LiDonnici 1995 (B1).

<sup>284</sup> See also Tinker 1983 (84).

healthy body, these humours were balanced. To treat an unhealthy body, one had to restore the humours to balance by ridding the body of whatever humour(s) were in excess. The draining of fluid, such as that done by Asklepios, would have restored humoral balance. Thus Asklepios is portrayed as healing not just with the mechanics of *iatrike*, but seemingly also in accordance with its account of illness and health.

In other narratives from Epidauros dating no later than the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the god draws out weapons (much like Asklepios' son Machaon does in the *Iliad*), grinds and pours drugs, excises sores, administers emetics, and even cleanses areas on which he has performed an excision. While human *techne* may not have been capable of all of these treatments (such as the reattachment of limbs), they are described in terms of procedures used by *iatroi*.

Some of the experiences recorded from Epidauros include treatment by animals—most often snakes or dogs who lick the afflicted area, but also horses and even a goose.<sup>285</sup> In one such animal treatment recorded on the earliest *stèle*, a man suffered from a malignant ulceration on his toe and fell asleep.<sup>286</sup> His cure is described in two ways. While asleep, a snake came and treated him with its tongue; but the man dreamed that a young man had sprinkled a drug on his toe. Thus, even treatment by an animal (whether actual or also imagined is uncertain) could be conflated consciously or subconsciously with the procedures of *iatrike*.

These healing narratives, or *iamata*, indicate what people cured in the sanctuary claimed to have happened. Among compositional issues related to

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<sup>285</sup> Dogs: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.113-119 = LiDonnici 1995 (A17); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.125-126 = LiDonnici 1995 (A20); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.35-38 = LiDonnici 1995 (B6). Snakes: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.102-110 = LiDonnici 1995 (B17); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.117-119 = LiDonnici 1995 (B19); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.128-131 = LiDonnici 1995 (B22); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 123.1-3 = LiDonnici 1995 (C1); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 123.104-108 = LiDonnici 1995 (C2); *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 123.89-94 = LiDonnici 1995 (C15). Horses: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.110-116 = LiDonnici 1995 (B18). Geese: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.132-133 = LiDonnici 1995 (B23).

<sup>286</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.113-119 = LiDonnici 1995 (A17).

the Epidaurian *iamata* is the question of interpretation by those who compiled the narratives in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC from oral tales and votive depictions.<sup>287</sup> While it is likely that the healing inscriptions contain some degree of interpretation and elaboration, other sources, however, also attest that worshippers thought Asklepios behaved in certain ways like an *iatros* when he healed them.

For instance, according to Hippys, a 5<sup>th</sup>-c. BC historian, a woman was treated for an intestinal worm at the Asklepieion.<sup>288</sup> Temple attendants severed her head from her neck, and drew the worm out; Asklepios reattached the head.<sup>289</sup> While severing the head from the body is hardly typical of *iatrike*, surgery as a method of healing is. In the *Ploutos*, Asklepios is described as making rounds of the ill with pestle, mortar, and a medicine chest (κιβώτιον, *Pl.* 707-711).<sup>290</sup> The god also mixes various plants and spices to make a poultice for the eyes of a certain Neokleides (*Pl.* 715-723).<sup>291</sup> Moreover, Asklepios accepted the account of illness espoused by *iatrike*: illness results from imbalance of opposites, and health from their balance. Thus Asklepios drains excess fluid from a woman suffering dropsy, albeit by removing her head and suspending her from her feet.<sup>292</sup> But even suspension by the feet is a procedure attested for *iatroi*.<sup>293</sup>

<sup>287</sup> See LiDonnici 1995 (50-75).

<sup>288</sup> Aelian *NA* 9.33.

<sup>289</sup> As many scholars have noted, this account in Hippys bears a strong resemblance to the cure of Aristagora of Troezen recorded on the Epidaurian *iamata* (*IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.10-19 = LiDonnici 1995 [B3]).

<sup>290</sup> *Ar. Pl.* 707-711: Μετὰ ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μὲν εὐθὺς ἐνεκαλυψάμην / δείσας, ἐκεῖνος δ' ἐν κύκλῳ τὰ νοσήματα / σκοπῶν περιήει πάντα κοσμίως πάνυ. / Ἔπειτα παῖς αὐτῷ λίθινον θυεῖδιον / παρέθηκε καὶ δοῖδουκα καὶ κιβώτιον.

<sup>291</sup> *Ar. Pl.* 715-723: ὁπὰς γὰρ εἶχεν οὐκ ὀλίγας μὰ τὸν Δία. / Πρῶτον δὲ πάντων τῷ Νεοκλείδῃ φάρμακον / κατάπλαστον ἐνεχείρησε τρίβειν, ἐμβαλὼν / σκοροδῶν κεφαλὰς τρεῖς Τηνίων. Ἔπειτ' ἔφλα / ἐν τῇ θυεῖᾳ συμπαραμειγνύων ὄπῶν / καὶ σχῖνον· εἶτ' ὄξει διέμενος Σφηττίῳ / κατέπλασεν αὐτοῦ τὰ βλέφαρ' ἐκστρέψας, ἵνα / ὄδυνῶτο μᾶλλον.

<sup>292</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.1-6 = LiDonnici 1995 (B1).

<sup>293</sup> *Mul.* 3.248; *L.* 8.462. Here it is used to treat a prolapse of the womb. See also King 1998

Our sources demonstrate that the description of Asklepios' healing in terms of procedures typical of *iatrike* was not limited, even in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, to a single type of witness. It was not only the testimonia inscribed at Epidauros, or the words of a comic playwright, or the words of an historian that cast the cult in terms of *iatrike*. What then becomes all the more startling about the Epidaurian *iamata* is that the personnel who compiled them *did not* eradicate references to such methods. As one scholar has commented, if the *iamata* from Epidaurus had never been discovered, many people would think that Aristophanes in the *Ploutos* had exaggerated and even fabricated the cult's rituals.<sup>294</sup> Other sources confirm the view that Asklepios healed in terms of *iatrike*: on the Telemachos monument erected ca. 400 BC to celebrate the arrival of Asklepios in Athens, the relief depicts not just Asklepios, but a cupping instrument and forceps.<sup>295</sup> Such tools are rarely, if ever, found on dedications to Apollo, but are common on monuments of *iatroi*.<sup>296</sup> By the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, moreover, the city of Epidauros minted coins with Asklepios on one side and a cupping instrument on the other.<sup>297</sup>

As time went by, Asklepios' cures shared a somewhat different affinity with practices of *iatrike*. At Lebena on Crete, inscriptions detailing cures of Asklepios were found in a stoa of the Asklepieion.<sup>298</sup> These date mostly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, but, as with those at Epidauros, they catalogue votives that were dedicated sometime earlier.<sup>299</sup> These cures include careful lists of particular

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(160).

<sup>294</sup> Roos 1960 (56-59).

<sup>295</sup> On the Telemachos monument, see Ch. 4 below.

<sup>296</sup> On the presence of cupping instruments and other tools of *iatrike* in depictions of *iatroi*, see Ch. 1 above.

<sup>297</sup> *BMC* 10.157.12. On the reverse, along with the cupping instrument, is Epione, Asklepios' wife according to some accounts (cf. Paus. 2.27.1-8).

<sup>298</sup> The inscriptions are catalogued in *ICr* I.XVII, p. 150-178.

<sup>299</sup> The Asklepieion at Lebena can be dated no earlier than the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and may even be as late as the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC; see Ch. 2 above on the dating. The votives catalogued in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, therefore, probably date to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC.

drugs to be assembled and administered by the patients themselves, and are thus similar to prescriptions of *iatroi*.<sup>300</sup> While at Epidauros only general terms like φάρμακα or ποία (herb) are used to describe a drug, at Lebena there is mention of herbs like chestnut, myrtle, laurel, and lettuce. And one of the Lebena inscriptions lists a cupping instrument (σικύα) as part of a cure.<sup>301</sup> By the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, Aelius Aristeides' vivid account of his own healing experiences at the hands of Asklepios contains blood-lettings and regimens for diet and exercise, as well as drugs and poultices. Despite this shift away from immediate and active healing by Asklepios toward detailed prescription of drugs and regimen to be carried out—and thus to be effective—only later, the affinity to treatment employed by *iatroi* remains strong.

But, just as Asklepios in myth was not only an *iatros* but also the son of Apollo, it should come as no surprise that his cult healing included aspects common to divine healers. This is apparent already in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cs. BC. In healing inscriptions from Epidauros, for example, one of the early tales has the god make a woman pregnant simply by touching her with his hand.<sup>302</sup> In another instance, a mute boy who performs sacrifices and rituals in the sanctuary is suddenly able to speak.<sup>303</sup> These cures sound much like the kind Apollo performs in the *Iliad*, a healing simply by presence or mere touch. The *Ploutos* of Aristophanes similarly combines natural with supernatural. While

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<sup>300</sup> See Weinreich 1909 (111-136); Cohn-Haft 1956 (28-29); Sherwin-White 1978 (353); Tinker 1983 (84-85); Krug 1985 (157-159); LiDonnici 1995 (46-49). The inscriptions from the Asklepios sanctuary in Rome indicate similar procedures, as well as detailed information about diet and exercise.

<sup>301</sup> *ICr* I.XVII, no. 9.

<sup>302</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.60-63 = LiDonnici 1995 (B11). It is remarkable that, in the *iamata* from Epidauros, five of the six women seeking help for matters related to pregnancy are treated in a supernatural way, such as by touch or sleeping with a snake. The only exception is a woman suffering from a false pregnancy whose stomach is cut open and basinsfull of creatures removed; *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.26-35 = LiDonnici 1995 (B5). On healing by touch in Asklepios-cult, see also Tinker 1983 (54-56).

<sup>303</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.41-48 = LiDonnici 1995 (A5).



Asklepios carries mortar, pestle, and medicine kit, and mixes drugs for other incubants, he heals Ploutos by putting a scarf over the blind god's head and beckoning the sacred snakes to lick his eyes (*Pl.* 727-738). It is also possible that it was thought Asklepios' divine nature gave him supernatural perception. Asklepios, being divine, could see more and thus better gauge cures; but the cures could still be perfectly naturalistic. Natural and supernatural techniques, as well as supernatural ability, thus combine in the person of the divine *iatros* Asklepios to reinforce his dual nature and thereby guarantee that his healing is more effective than a mere mortal's.<sup>304</sup>

## II. Asklepios' Colleagues: The Healing Heroes

Asklepios' dual nature is unique among healing gods. It is also rare among healing heroes. In Attica, where cults of healing heroes are better documented than anywhere else, these heroes include Amphiaraos (Ἀμφιάραος), Amaryn (Ἄμυρνος), and the anonymous "hero Iatros" (Ἡρώς Ἴατρος).<sup>305</sup>

By the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the Argive hero Amphiaraos healed at his sanctuary in Oropos, on the border of Boeotia and Attica.<sup>306</sup> From inscriptions and votive *stèle* of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, it is clear that Amphiaraos cured his worshippers in ways very similar to Asklepios, ways that combined natural and supernatural techniques.<sup>307</sup> Just as with Asklepios, the sick

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<sup>304</sup> King 1998 (99-131) proposes that Asklepios was appealing because he did not ask embarrassing questions about one's past and thereby suggest that one's way of life was to blame for an illness, as did *iatroi*.

<sup>305</sup> On Attic healing heroes, see Kutsch 1913; Kearns 1989 (14-21).

<sup>306</sup> On the cult of Amphiaraos, see Petrakos 1968 and 1997; Schachter 1981- (vol. 1, p. 19-26); Kearns 1989 (14-21, and App. 1, sv Ἀμφιάραος); Hubbard 1992 (101-107); Forsén 1996 (146-147).

<sup>307</sup> The most famous and descriptive piece of evidence for the manner in which Amphiaraos cured is a votive relief of the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC erected by Arkinos. *LIMC*, sv 'Amphiaraos' (no. 63, with plate). It is inscribed Ἀρχίνος Ἀμφιαράωι ἀνέθηκεν. On the relief are depicted

incubated at his sanctuary: the god appeared in dreams in which he employed procedures, such as surgery, common among *iatroi*. Thus, by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC at least, Amphiaraos as a healer behaved much like Asklepios.

However, Amphiaraos while alive was not a healer but a prophet. In myth, Amphiaraos was one of the original Seven against Thebes. As he fled the failed attack on Thebes, he was swallowed up by the earth at Zeus' instigation, whereupon the prophet became an oracle. This cult, at which visitors incubated in order to communicate with the god, was in operation by the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>308</sup> Not until 414 BC, however, with the production of Aristophanes' *Amphiaraos*, is there evidence that Amphiaraos acted as a healer.<sup>309</sup> That is, his healing role is unattested before the arrival of Asklepios in Athens in 420 BC. And although Amphiaraos' cult function as healer eclipsed his role as prophet by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC and his cult spread to a number of places in Attica,<sup>310</sup> the myth of the living Amphiaraos never changed to accommodate his role as healer.

Another healer known as Iatros had sanctuaries in Athens, Marathon, Rhamnous, and Eleusis.<sup>311</sup> An inscription from Eleusis dating to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC mentions this hero Iatros in the context of a building contract,

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three vignettes of Arkinos' healing experience: to the left, Amphiaraos applies a scalpel to Arkinos' shoulder (this presumably is what Arkinos experienced in his dream); in the middle, Arkinos is bitten by a snake as he sleeps (what Arkinos believes, or was told, happened to him as he dreamed that Amphiaraos was treating his shoulder); and to the right, Arkinos stands next to a depiction of the *stèle* he is dedicating in thanks for being healed. See van Straten 1981 (124-125) for a description and analysis of the *stèle*, as well as a brief list of some of the other votive offerings in the sanctuary.

<sup>308</sup> The original location of this cult is contested. See Hubbard 1992 (103-107) on the debate.

<sup>309</sup> Edmonds 1957 (vol. 1, p. 576-583, esp. fr. 28).

<sup>310</sup> On the prevalence of the healing as opposed to the mantic function of the cult, see Schachter 1981- (vol. 1, p. 23, n. 7). The places to which Amphiaraos-cult spread include Athens, Rhamnous, and Piraeus. See Kearns 1989 (App. 1, sv 'Ἀμφιάραος') for bibliography. According to Pouilloux 1954 (143, n. 30), Amphiaraos at Rhamnous took over the sanctuary of another healing god. There is no evidence, however, for who that god was or how the god healed.

<sup>311</sup> See Kearns 1989 (14-21, and App. 1, sv 'Ἡρώς ἰατρός'); Forsén 1996 (146).

probably for the Telesterion in the sanctuary of Demeter.<sup>312</sup> From his appellation “*Iatros*” it can be assumed that he was a trained healer and that he used techniques similar to human *iatroi*, but almost nothing is known about who he was,<sup>313</sup> who he healed, or how he in fact healed. Moreover, his cults in Athens, Marathon, and Rhamnous are not attested before the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

Athens also had a healer known as Amynos, who occupied a sanctuary on the south slopes of the Areopagus.<sup>314</sup> Nothing is known of the mythology of Amynos, much less of his healing practices. And although he occupied a sanctuary that may date to the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC,<sup>315</sup> there is no conclusive evidence that any healing god resided there before the arrival of Amynos. Moreover, the earliest evidence for Amynos comes from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. That he was a healer at this time is attested by anatomical votives, some inscribed to Amynos, found in the sanctuary.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> *IG I*<sup>3</sup> 395; also *IG I*<sup>3</sup> 393. T.L. Shear 1966 (163-176, esp. 174-175) dates *IG I*<sup>3</sup> 395 to 448/7 BC based on similarities to the lettering of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Athenian tribute quota lists, which date to 448/7 and 447/6 BC, respectively. Shear’s dating of the inscription is uncontested by Clinton 1987 (259-260) and Cavanaugh 1996 (160).

<sup>313</sup> By the Roman period, he is identified with Amphilochos (the son of Amphiaraos) in Athens and Oresinios in Eleusis; at Marathon and Rhamnous he was known as Aristimachos.

<sup>314</sup> Travlos 1971 (sv ‘Amyneion,’ with bibliography); Kearns 1989 (14-21, and App. 1, sv ‘Ἄμυνος’); Forsén 1996 (146). Asklepios was also worshipped in the same sanctuary, as numerous 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC inscriptions attest: *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1252, 1253, 4365, 4385, 4422, 4424, 4435.

<sup>315</sup> Travlos 1971 (76).

<sup>316</sup> Forsén 1996 (54-56).

It is uncertain whether any of these heroes was trained as a healer.<sup>317</sup> Only the traditions of Asklepios and the very name *Iatros*, moreover, indicate that these two deities were considered primarily as *iatros*-like healers. Given the void in healing created by *iatroi*, it may not be coincidental that Asklepios and *Iatros* had received cults in Greece by the mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, while these other heroes probably had not, at least not in their capacity to heal.<sup>318</sup>

Not only in Attica, but throughout the Greek world there were many healing heroes and gods, as a quick glance through Jayne's now dated but still useful catalogue proves.<sup>319</sup> But evidence for these gods and heroes follows much the same pattern that emerges for Attic healing divinities.

These patterns gain new meaning when read against those of *iatrike* in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cs. BC. Asklepios, a divine *iatros*, offered an attractive option for a person turned away by *iatrike*. As Asklepios-cult gained ascendancy because of public confidence in *iatrike*, other healing cults became obsolete if they did not adopt Asklepios' methods. The cult of Athena Hygieia may be an example of the latter; this cult fell out of favor in direct response to the

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<sup>317</sup> By the Roman period, Herakles was said to have been trained as a healer by Cheiron, but there is no evidence for this tradition in the classical period. On Herakles' training and subsequent role as a healer in myth and cult, see Jayne 1925 (329-331; 359-360); Forsén 1996 (149-150). According to Forsén, Herakles was often associated with Asklepios in sanctuaries (e.g., Hyettos in Boeotia, Troezen, Messene, Megalopolis, Titane, the Acropolis in Athens, Epidauros, Pergamon). Herakles, however, was famous for a host of accomplishments other than healing, as he himself points out to Asklepios in their vituperative quarrel in Lucian's delightful *Dialogi Deorum* (13.1-2): "By no means did we have equal or even similar lives. I am a son of Zeus and have labored much to purify life. I wrestled wild beasts and exacted vengeance from insolent men. But you are a mere root-cutter (ρίζοτόμος) and charlatan (ἀγύρτης), perhaps useful to sick men when you apply drugs, but you've never shown any courage."

Other heroes like Achilles were trained in healing (Achilles, too, was trained by Cheiron; Hom. *Il.* 11.832), but there is no evidence that these heroes were worshipped as healers.

<sup>318</sup> Amphiaraios, for one, had a cult by this time, but was not yet certainly a healer. See above.

<sup>319</sup> Jayne 1925 (201-369).

arrival of Asklepios.<sup>320</sup> Meanwhile, certain hero-cults, like that of Amphiaraos, became popular after adopting methods of *iatrike*. As noted above, Amphiaraos-cult spread to a number of places in Attica in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC and later, and votives and inscriptions indicate great activity in his various sanctuaries from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC on.<sup>321</sup> His cult at Oropos lasted until at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD,<sup>322</sup> and prominent Romans like Sulla took an active interest in it.<sup>323</sup> The healer Amygnos, too, about whose healing practices little is known, undoubtedly received some cachet from his association with Asklepios. In the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Asklepios had joined Amygnos in the latter's sanctuary south of the Areopagus. And the hero Iatros, whose cult is attested as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, continued to thrive in his healing capacity well into the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, at least.<sup>324</sup> By the Roman period, this hero may have been identified in Athens with the son of Amphiaraos, perhaps another attempt to bolster the association of Amphiaraos with *iatrike*.<sup>325</sup>

The iconography of some of these healing heroes began to look so alike as to be confusing in antiquity. Statues of Trophonios, a hero who had an oracle at Lebadea in Boeotia and who was consulted on matters of childbearing,<sup>326</sup> looked to Pausanias much like statues of Asklepios.<sup>327</sup> And a

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<sup>320</sup> According to Plutarch, when one of Perikles' workmen fell during construction on the Acropolis and all of the *iatroi* despaired of helping him, Athena appeared to Perikles in a dream and told him what to do to heal the man (*Per.* 13.12-13). Although Plutarch leaves the treatment unspecified, Pliny says that Athena (Minerva) advised Perikles to use a particular herb (hence forth called *parthenium*) to heal the man (*NH* 22.44). However, this description may derive from Pliny's interest in *parthenium*. For bibliography on the cult, see Ch. 2 above.

<sup>321</sup> On inscriptions, see Schwenk 1985 (nos.17, 28, 40, 41, 50); Mikalson 1998 (33). On votives, see Petrakos 1968. On the overall popularity of the cult in antiquity, see Schachter 1981- (vol. 1, p. 24, with n. 2).

<sup>322</sup> Schachter 1981- (vol. 1, p. 25, n. 3).

<sup>323</sup> Sulla granted the cult at Oropos tax-free status (*IG* VII 413).

<sup>324</sup> Jayne 1925 (363); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 839-840.

<sup>325</sup> See Kearns 1989 (sv 'Ἀμφίλοχος'), citing Kutsch 1913 (No. 4).

<sup>326</sup> Eur. *Ion* 304. There is little evidence otherwise for Trophonios' healing role; see Kearns 1989 (16). On the cult of Trophonios at Lebadea, see Schachter 1981- (vol. 3, p. 66-89).

depiction of Amphiaraos on a relief from Oropos would be indistinguishable from images of Asklepios if his identity were not confirmed by an inscription.<sup>328</sup> If the evidentiary record were more complete for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cs. BC, we would surely find many such healing cults all over Greece.<sup>329</sup>

While Asklepios never controlled a monopoly on divine healing, ultimately he far surpassed other healing heroes in the temporal and geographic scope of his popularity. This has mainly to do with the fact that these heroes, unlike Asklepios and Iatros, were not originally healers, much less *iatroi*. Another reason has to do with the ties of heroes to local communities versus the mobility of Asklepios. While most heroes were identified with the place of their death, Asklepios' mythology is ambiguous and often even silent about the location of his death and burial. The effect of this ambiguity and silence is that no one place could claim Asklepios as exclusively their own.<sup>330</sup> Even his place of birth was hotly contested in antiquity, a state of affairs that further freed him from being pinned down too firmly to a particular region. His mythology was thus geographically rather fluid, which undoubtedly contributed to his exportability and widespread appeal.

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<sup>327</sup> Paus. 9.39.3-4.

<sup>328</sup> *LIMC*, sv 'Amphiaraos' (no. 63, with plate). On the similarity in iconography between Amphiaraos and Asklepios, see also Petrakos 1968 (120.10, 124.27), and Schachter 1981- (vol. 1, p. 26).

<sup>329</sup> Kearns 1989 (17-18) assesses the paucity of evidence for Attic healing heroes and makes a strong case for the likelihood that other healing deities also existed in Attica. Given that Attica is one of the best-documented areas of ancient Greece, it is also likely that there were numerous local healing deities outside of Attica about whom nothing is now known.

<sup>330</sup> There was a strong tradition of Koan and Knidian *iatroi* claiming Asklepios as their ancestor in antiquity. It was not Asklepios, however, who had brought his family to these cities, but the descendants of his son Podaleirios (Theopompus, *FGH* 115F103 [14]). Asklepios himself thus had no exclusive ties to these cities, and *iatroi* in general would claim descent from Asklepios, as attested by Eryximachos in Plato's *Symposium* (186e). See also Jouanna 1999 (10-12).

Moreover, Asklepios' profession implied itinerancy. In Homer, the *iatros* is one of four types of men called upon across the boundless earth (*Od.* 17.383-386).<sup>331</sup> The walking staff, a symbol of the itinerant nature of *iatroi*,<sup>332</sup> appears in depictions of *iatroi* (as seen above, e.g., in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC Basel relief) and became standard in images of Asklepios as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>333</sup> Asklepios was thus a translocal deity, capable of import by any community. This, coupled with his being a trained *iatros*, helps to explain why Asklepios-cult in particular, as opposed to cults of other healing deities, spread to so many places in the Greek world in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cs. BC.

### III. Asklepios and *Iatroi*

While scholars often characterize the relationship between *iatroi* and Asklepios as non-hostile or neutral,<sup>334</sup> their relationship was actually much more active and even cooperative than such adjectives imply. Outside of healing technique, other close ties between Asklepios and *iatroi* further fueled the popularity of Asklepios-cult.

By the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, *iatroi* had claimed Asklepios as the patron of their *techne*. Eryximachos, an *iatros* in Plato's *Symposium* set in 416 BC,<sup>335</sup> makes a

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<sup>331</sup> The others are prophets, builders, and poets.

<sup>332</sup> The ancients debated the meaning of the staff, and none of them tied the staff to Asklepios' role as an *iatros*. For references to this ancient debate, see Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 227-228). As Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 228-229) points out, however, the connection between the itinerant Asklepios and a walking staff is highly appropriate given the mythology of Asklepios as an *iatros*.

<sup>333</sup> See Holtzmann's article in *LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios,' with bibliography.

<sup>334</sup> E.g., Lloyd 1979 (45), "At the same time, despite these important signs of the overlap between the different strands that go to make up Greek medicine in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.,...the practitioners in question were evidently in direct competition with one another." Amundsen and Ferngren 1982 (80), "...one cannot speak of a 'conflict' between religious and secular medicine....The two traditions existed side by side, probably with little contact."

<sup>335</sup> The symposium took place in 416 BC, and is reported by a certain Apollodoros between 406 and 400 BC. Historical allusions in the text indicate Plato wrote the dialogue after 385

speech in honor of the god Eros in which he also mentions Asklepios: “Our ancestor Asklepios established our *techne* when he had learned to impose love and harmony on opposites [such as hot and cold, wet and dry, bitter and sweet], as these poets of ours say and as I myself concur” (*Symp.* 186e).<sup>336</sup> Not just Eryximachos but also certain poets held this understanding of Asklepios. Thus the idea of Asklepios as the founder of *iatrike* and ancestor of *iatroi* was gaining wide acceptance and was of some age when repeated by Eryximachos in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

The treatise *On Ancient Medicine* further suggests that the tradition of Asklepios as patron of *iatrike* was already quite old by the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Its author says that the first researchers of *iatrike*, who executed their investigations with reason and made good discoveries, believed their *techne* worthy of being ascribed to a god.<sup>337</sup> It is possible that the author is referring here to Asklepios as the patron of *iatrike*, especially since he adds that even in his own day (late 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC) *iatrike* is ascribed to a god. By the 5<sup>th</sup> c., as Eryximachos attests, that god was Asklepios, patron of *iatrike*.

While Eryximachos’ statement is one of the earliest secure attestations of Asklepios as founder and patron of *iatrike*, other evidence for Asklepios’ close ties to *iatroi* quickly follows. By the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, *iatroi* were dedicating votives at sanctuaries of Asklepios, were sacrificing to him and swearing oaths in his name, and were frequently known as Asklepiadae, or descendants of Asklepios.

Inventory records from the Asklepieion in Athens list various medical instruments dedicated at the sanctuary, including a cauterizing implement,

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BC. See Nehamas and Woodruff 1989 (xi-xii).

<sup>336</sup> Pl. *Symp.* 186e: τούτοις ἐπιστηθεῖς ἔρωτα ἐμποιῆσαι καὶ ὁμόνοιαν ὁ ἡμέτερος πρόγονος Ἄσκληπιός, ὡς φασιν οἶδε οἱ ποιηταὶ καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι, συνέστησεν τὴν ἡμετέραν τέχνην.

<sup>337</sup> *Vet. Med.* 14.16-20; L. 1.600-602: Ὡστε καλῶς καὶ λογισμῶ προσήκοντι ζητήσαντες πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν εὗρον αὐτὰ οἱ πρῶτοι εὗρόντες, καὶ φήθησαν ἀξίην τὴν τέχνην θεῶ προσθεῖναι, ὡς καὶ νομίζεται. On the date of the treatise, see Ch. 1 above.



probes, a cupping instrument, κυλιχνίδες (small pots for the preparation of medicine), and two physicians' writing tablets.<sup>338</sup> While it is not certain that *iatroi* made these dedications, it seems unlikely that others would have had reason to do so.<sup>339</sup> In any case, two *iatroi* are mentioned specifically as dedicants on lists of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, respectively.<sup>340</sup> Moreover, a statue of Polykritos was dedicated at the same sanctuary in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. It is generally agreed that this statue depicts Polykritos of Mende, a famous *iatros* of the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>341</sup> Nor was the sanctuary at Athens the only Asklepieion to receive such dedications. Inventories of the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC from the Asklepieion at Piraeus also include medical instruments.<sup>342</sup> And such instruments were found also in excavations of the sanctuary of Asklepios on Kos.<sup>343</sup>

In addition to dedications, by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC *iatroi* were also making sacrifices to Asklepios. An inscription from Athens dating to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC mentions an ancestral custom in which public *iatroi* sacrifice to Asklepios twice a year on behalf of themselves and those they have healed.<sup>344</sup> The fact that it is an ancestral custom (πάτριον) suggests the sacrifice was taking place already by the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. As noted above, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-c. poet Theocritus wrote an epigram about his friend Nikias of Miletos, an *iatros* who made daily sacrifice to Asklepios and who commissioned a wooden statue of the god (*Ep.* 8). Nikias was just one of a number of *iatroi*, the most famous being Galen, to

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<sup>338</sup> Listed, with references to the inventory records, by Aleshire 1989 (44).

<sup>339</sup> Aleshire 1989 (65).

<sup>340</sup> Aleshire 1989 (65; 71).

<sup>341</sup> Aleshire 1989 (156).

<sup>342</sup> *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 47.16-19.

<sup>343</sup> Herzog 1931 (148, with n. 15); Zervos 1932; Sherwin-White 1978 (275, with n. 103).

<sup>344</sup> *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 772.9-13. See Nutton 1995 (4) on the importance of this ritual to the professionalism of *iatroi*: it functioned as an assertion of collegiality and simultaneously distinguished them from other types of healers.

have had a close relationship with their divine patron Asklepios.<sup>345</sup>

In the Hippocratic Oath, which may date as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, *iatroi* swear by Asklepios to behave properly towards fellow *iatroi*—that is, as a member of a family or brotherhood claiming common descent from Asklepios.<sup>346</sup> This reflects the fact that natural healing was originally an inherited trade within certain families. While *iatrike* was developing as a *techne*, however, and began to open its doors to those born outside families of *iatroi*, the oath served to protect genuine *iatroi* and their knowledge from quacks and charlatans.<sup>347</sup> By preserving the metaphor of a family, *iatrike* was thus better able to maintain its standards and instill a sense of familial obligation and respect among true *iatroi*.

An essential aspect of the familial metaphor was claiming Asklepios as the ancestor of all *iatroi*. When this tradition began is uncertain, but the term Asklepiadai (“descendants of Asklepios”) appears already in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Scholars since antiquity have debated whether specific instances of the term Asklepiadai refer to a true blood-descendant of Asklepios, or to all *iatroi*.<sup>348</sup> Both uses are attested in literature and inscriptions, including some of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>349</sup> By the time of Eryximachos’ speech in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c., it is clear that some *iatroi* considered themselves to be Asklepios’ descendants.

That *iatroi* traced their lineage back to Asklepios constituted a powerful link between Asklepios and his human counterparts. *Iatroi* undoubtedly

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<sup>345</sup> On Galen, see below.

<sup>346</sup> On the date of the oath, see Ch. 1 above.

<sup>347</sup> Jouanna 1999 (47-48). See also Nutton 1995c (esp. 4-5) on the oath as related to the analogy of *iatrike* as an extended family.

<sup>348</sup> Tzetzes *Chiliades* 12.637-639 explains the distinction. For discussion of Asklepiadai, see W.D. Smith 1990 (9-17); Jouanna 1999 (10-12, with n. 16 and 17; 33-35).

<sup>349</sup> The term Asklepiadai first appears in Theognis (432), but the passage may be an interpolation. It also occurs in Euripides (*Alc.* 969); Plato (*Prtg.* 311b6; *Phdr.* 270c; *Rep.* 3.406a); two inscriptions of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC (Delphi Museum, Inv. No. 3522; Greek Anthology 7.508); and an inscription from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (Delphi Museum, Inv. No. 6687A and B, and No. 8131). See also Edelstein 1945 (T. 217-231) for other occurrences.

gained, and presumably even intended to gain, some additional authority among the population at large by claiming descent from a deified *iatros*. These links between *iatroi* and Asklepios grew easily out of myth that from Homer on portrayed Asklepios as an *iatros*. But there is little evidence that such links were emphasized vigorously until the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, at the very time *iatroi* were defining their *technē*.

By the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, there is evidence not just of links between *iatroi* and Asklepios himself, but also of definite links between *iatroi* and Asklepios-cult. Some *iatroi* worshipped Asklepios, sacrificed to him, swore oaths to him, and made dedications in his sanctuaries. Thus, any attempt to completely dissociate *iatroi* from Asklepios-cult has no basis in the facts. Quite the opposite is true: some *iatroi* had a strong, and not unprofitable, interest and involvement in the cult.

Such interest and involvement by *iatroi* grew as the popularity of the cult expanded. By the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, a tradition involving Asklepios had been spun around the figure of the famous 5<sup>th</sup>-c. *iatros* Hippocrates.<sup>350</sup> According to a collection of false letters known as the *Pseudepigraphia*, Hippocrates was a descendant of Asklepios<sup>351</sup> on his father's side (*Ep.* 2, also *Ep.* 10,<sup>352</sup> 17, 25), and dreamed that Asklepios took him by the hand and gave him comfort when Hippocrates asked for his assistance in healing a difficult case (*Ep.* 15). The 1<sup>st</sup>-c. BC geographer Strabo wrote that Hippocrates derived some of his treatments from cures recorded on healing inscriptions at the Koan

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<sup>350</sup> For a text, translation, and discussion of the letters, see W.D. Smith 1990; Pinault 1992. Jouanna 1999 (8, and App. 3.36) postulates that the letters range in date from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC-1<sup>st</sup> c. AD.

<sup>351</sup> Phaedrus in Plato's *Phaedrus* refers to Hippocrates as an Asklepiad (*Phdr.* 270c). There were numerous attempts in antiquity to calculate the exact number of generations separating Hippocrates from Asklepios. Among them, the *vita*; Tzetzes *Chiliades* 944-958; Hipp. *Ep.* 2.

<sup>352</sup> According to *Ep.* 10, Hippocrates is tied to Asklepios by means of both γένος (family) and τέχνη.

Asklepieion (Strabo 14.2.19 [C 657]). Pliny the Elder remarks that Strabo's contemporary, the antiquarian Varro, also thought that Hippocrates copied down cures from Koan healing inscriptions (*NH* 29.1).<sup>353</sup> According to Pliny, Varro adds that when the temple of Asklepios burned, Hippocrates established clinical (*clinice*, or bedside) medicine using these very cures (*NH* 29.4).<sup>354</sup>

Another account of interaction between Asklepios and Hippocrates appears in a 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD mosaic depicting an elder Hippocrates greeting Asklepios as he arrives by boat on Kos.<sup>355</sup> The implication here is that Hippocrates and *iatrike* were established before the arrival of Asklepios. Thus the influences between Asklepios-cult and *iatrike* were seen as moving in both directions.

The fundamental bond and symbiotic relationship between Hippocrates and Asklepios were advertised on coins of Kos that depicted the head of Hippocrates on one side and the staff and snake of Asklepios on the other.<sup>356</sup> And, just as Asklepios himself was a divinity, Hippocrates eventually received the status of hero and was worshipped publicly in cult on Kos.<sup>357</sup>

While the legends about Hippocrates are largely apocryphal, by the Roman period other *iatroi* sought to publicize their close relationship to

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<sup>353</sup> Strabo 8.6.15 (C 374) also mentions healing inscriptions from Kos. None of these Koan healing inscriptions have been discovered.

<sup>354</sup> The Latin adjective *clinice* is related to the Greek adjective κλινική, derived from the noun κλίνη, or bed; *OLD*, sv 'clinice.'

<sup>355</sup> Jouanna 1999 (5); Sherwin-White 1979 (338). It is illustrated in Morricone 1950 (316, fig. 82).

<sup>356</sup> *BMC* 18.216.216 (Imperial period).

<sup>357</sup> It is not known when his cult was instituted. Sherwin-White 1978 (356) and Jouanna 1999 (37) suspect it existed in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC since coins bearing the image of Hippocrates were already being minted then. The cult is mentioned in the anonymous *vita* of Hippocrates (attributed to Soranus of Ephesus). Lucian also mentions a private cult of Hippocrates kept by the *medicus* Antigonos (*Philpseudeis* 21). See also Temkin 1991 (71-75). Zeller 2003 discusses the tradition of Hippocrates' θεῖα φύσις.

Asklepios. In the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, the Koan *iatros* Stertinius Xenophon, famous for his role as *iatros* to the emperor Claudius,<sup>358</sup> made lavish dedications in the Asklepieion at Kos. He increased the sanctuary's water supply; dedicated a library; built and dedicated a *naiskos* to Asklepios, Hygieia, and Epione; dedicated an altar to Asklepios; and served as the god's priest. Coins were even minted with his image on one side and the staff and serpent of Asklepios on the other, just as on coins depicting Hippocrates.<sup>359</sup> Xenophon's numerous contributions to the cult of Asklepios at Kos attest to the potential degree of interest and participation by *iatroi* in Asklepios-cult.<sup>360</sup>

Other *iatroi* were priests of Asklepios in various cities in the Greek world.<sup>361</sup> At the Asklepieion in Athens, *iatroi* held the office of ζάκορος, or overseer of the daily functioning of the cult in the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD.<sup>362</sup> In Nysa, an *iatros* dedicated a temenos and cult implements to Asklepios.<sup>363</sup> At Smyrna, the *iatros* Nikomedes, who calls himself a θεράπων of Asklepios, donated a prominent statue to Basileus Asklepios ca. 200 AD for his help in escaping frequent sickness.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> *CIL* VI.8905; Tac. *Ann.* 12.67. A story disputed in the ancient sources has this Xenophon assist Agrippina in poisoning her husband Claudius (Tac. *Ann.* 12.67; Suet. *Claud.* 44).

<sup>359</sup> The sources for this evidence are noted in Sherwin-White 1978 (283-285), who provides a detailed description of Xenophon's attachment to Asklepios. According to *BMC* 18.215-216.215, the same staff-and-serpent die used for the reverse of Xenophon's coins was used for those depicting Hippocrates.

<sup>360</sup> At Kos, two tombs containing medical instruments may indicate that two *iatroi* proclaimed a more everlasting tie to Asklepios by locating their tombs near the Asklepieion. On the tombs and the medical instruments found therein, see Zervos 1930 (53); Sherwin-White 1978 (281, item 6, with n. 142). It is uncertain, however, whether these tombs belonged to *iatroi*.

<sup>361</sup> Oehler 1909 (16) lists some of them.

<sup>362</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3798.3-5 (date: 98/9-103/4 AD), and Aleshire 1989 (59). On the office and duties of *zakoroi*, see Aleshire 87-88. Aleshire (74) believes that the office of *zakoros* may have had something to do with medical treatment for suppliants. There is no evidence from Athens for *iatroi* as priests of Asklepios; see Aleshire 66.

<sup>363</sup> Sherwin-White 1978 (353, n. 530).

<sup>364</sup> *IG* XIV 967b (ca. 200 AD). The desire for the statue to be highly visible is expressed by the clause νηῶ δ' ἐν τῶδε ζωάγρια θῆκεν ὀρᾶσθαι.

*Iatroi* themselves were thus in some cases directly responsible for the architectural expansion and general wealth of individual cults of Asklepios.<sup>365</sup> And while such beneficence helped various Asklepieia, it no doubt also increased the visibility and reputation of the *iatroi* who made these contributions.

This may have been why in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD Galen, *iatros* to Marcus Aurelius, emphasized repeatedly in his copious writings a close association with Asklepios.<sup>366</sup> Galen wrote that not only was he a descendant of Asklepios<sup>367</sup> but was personally healed by the god of an abscess<sup>368</sup> (ἀπόστημα) and advised by him in making at least one important decision while serving the emperor.<sup>369</sup> Galen further claimed that Asklepios was largely responsible for his becoming an *iatros*: the god appeared in a dream to Galen's father and revealed that Galen would practice *iatrike*.<sup>370</sup> Galen was also born, studied, and practiced *iatrike* at Pergamon, home of one of the most popular and lavish Asklepieia of the time.<sup>371</sup> He may even have held a position in the cult there.<sup>372</sup>

By the time Galen was writing his numerous tomes, other *iatroi* had ties to Asklepios-cult. Aelius Aristeides, a notorious hypochondriac and

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<sup>365</sup> On the trend of *iatroi* as visitors to and benefactors of Asklepios-cult, see also Lane-Fox 1987 (152) who, unfortunately, provides no notes for this particular point in his discussion.

<sup>366</sup> On the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD as a "renaissance" of Asklepios-cult, and on Galen's relationship with Asklepios, see Bowersock 1969 (59-75).

<sup>367</sup> Galen, *San.Tu.* (Kühn 6.41); *Lib.Prop.* (Kühn 19.8-48).

<sup>368</sup> Galen, *Lib.Prop.* (Kühn 19.8-48); cf also *Cur.Rat.Ven.Sect.* (Kühn 11.314-315).

<sup>369</sup> Galen, *Praen.* (Kühn 14.649-651). Galen was instructed by Asklepios in a dream not to accompany the emperor Marcus Aurelius on his German campaign (*Lib.Prop.* [Kühn 19.18-19]). While this dream may simply have been an acceptable way out of an unwelcome obligation, it nevertheless presented others with the impression of a close relationship between Galen and Asklepios, and indicates that Galen knew he could benefit by creating such an impression.

<sup>370</sup> Galen, *MM* (Kühn 10.609); *Hipp.Hum.* (Kühn 16.223); *Lib.Prop.* (Kühn 19.59).

<sup>371</sup> On Galen's life, see Nutton 1973. Bowersock 1969 (74) suggests that Galen's connections to Pergamon and consequently also with Asklepios may have fueled Galen's own prestige.

<sup>372</sup> Galen, *Lib.Prop.* (Kühn 19.19); also Nutton 1973 (162, with n. 4).

fervent devotee of Asklepios at Pergamon, consulted not only other healing gods like Serapis, Apollo, and Athena, but continued to seek help from *iatroi*.<sup>373</sup> His experience is significant regarding relations between *iatroi* and Asklepios because it demonstrates that *iatrike* and Asklepios-cult were not always distinct alternatives. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD at least, it was not simply the case that Asklepios was consulted only after *iatrike* had proven unable to heal, but *iatroi* and the god could be consulted simultaneously.<sup>374</sup> Images of Asklepios also appeared on medical kits to visibly link the patron of *iatrike* with its human practitioners.<sup>375</sup> And rings, which possibly belonged to *iatroi*, bore images of Asklepios cut into their gemstones. On one such ring, Asklepios stands watching an *iatros* examine a patient.<sup>376</sup> Moreover, there were festivals at the Asklepieion in Ephesus during which *iatroi* took part in various medical contests.<sup>377</sup>

Thus, as Asklepios-cult continued to develop alongside *iatrike* well into the Roman period, evidence for interaction between Asklepios-cult and *iatroi* increases. But there is ample evidence already from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC to demonstrate such interaction at an early stage in the history of the cult. Such

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<sup>373</sup> Aristeides even imagined that one of the temple staff from the Asklepieion in Pergamon came to him in a dream in the guise of an *iatros* (Aristeides *Orat.* 3.25). On Aristeides' polytheism, see Behr 1968 (25-27). Behr observes that Aristeides' devotion to Asklepios grew as his illnesses progressed; prior to travelling to Pergamon to consult Asklepios, Aristeides had been a devotee of Serapis in Smyrna. On his frequent consultation of *iatroi* in conjunction with the commands of Asklepios, see Behr 1968 (44); Tinker 1983 (118-120). On his religious belief generally, see Kudlien 1981.

<sup>374</sup> King 1999 (283-284) recommends rethinking the traditional model of Asklepios-cult as only ever an alternative to *iatrike*. She suggests, for example, that *iatrike* might have been an alternative to Asklepios-cult when Asklepios proved ineffective, but we simply lack the evidence (like healing inscriptions for *iatroi*) to demonstrate this.

<sup>375</sup> E.g., a medical kit of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD made of bronze with silver and niello inlay, now in Berlin at the Staatl. Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Antikenmuseum, Inv. No. Fr 1222.

<sup>376</sup> E.g., British Museum, Inv. No. 1912.3-11.1. See *LIMC*, sv 'Asklepios' (no. 289, with plate). Another, from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, depicts Asklepios and Hygieia. Wien, Kunsthist. Mus., Inv. No. IX B 1550; illustrated in Simon 1990 (fig. 12).

<sup>377</sup> *IEph* 1161-1169, 4101b. See also Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 212); Nutton 1995 (7, with n. 23).

interaction is significant because it disproves the common view that there was at best only peaceful neutrality between *iatrike* and Asklepios-cult. Instead, *iatroi* took part in the cult. And Asklepios himself continued to be welcomed as patron and ancestor of *iatroi* generally. Had Asklepios-cult been problematic for *iatroi*, then presumably the link between *iatroi* and Asklepios would have been severed as Asklepios' role as cult-figure transcended any other identity.

The converse is true as well. Had Asklepios-cult not found it beneficial to assimilate aspects of *iatrike*, it would have sought to dissociate itself from natural healing in favor of healing techniques more closely associated with the divine. Instead, Asklepios-cult assimilated more and more from *iatrike* over time, as indicated by the types of cures ascribed to Asklepios from the late Hellenistic and Roman periods. People visiting sanctuaries of Asklepios continued to come with the expectation that the god would heal them in ways similar or identical to *iatrike*.

#### **IV. Asklepios and Chronic Cases**

While Asklepios was thus well suited in numerous ways to the task of healing people turned away by *iatrike*, the question remains what kinds of cases in particular Asklepios is known to have healed. Healing inscriptions from Epidauros, Lebena, and Rome point again and again to chronic ailments such as blindness, deafness, infertility, and paralysis.<sup>378</sup> These are the most common ailments listed in healing narratives from Asklepios-cult. For example, at Epidauros:

Antikrates of Knidos, eyes. This man, hit by a spear through both his eyes in battle, was blind and carried the spearhead around with him lodged inside his face. While sleeping here he saw a vision. The god

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<sup>378</sup> See LiDonnici 1995 (4) on chronic ailments in the Epidaurian inscriptions.



seemed to him to extract the dart and fit the so-called “girls” [pupils] back into his eyelids. The next day he left healed. (*IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.63-68 = LiDonnici 1995 [B12])

At Epidauros, in addition to blindness, deafness, infertility, and paralysis, other attested ailments include ulcers and tumors, wounds with the weapons still lodged in the body, muteness, dropsy, baldness, φθίσις (a “wasting” condition of some sort),<sup>379</sup> persistent headache accompanied by insomnia, a stone in the penis, gout, stomach disorder, pus, worms in the belly, leeches in the chest, lice, and epilepsy. The overwhelming majority of these ailments are chronic. Blindness, paralysis, and infertility, moreover, appear among the earliest (5<sup>th</sup>-c. BC) healing tales from Epidauros, as LiDonnici dates them.<sup>380</sup> Thus the earliest evidence for healing in Asklepios-cult characterizes Asklepios as a healer primarily of chronic cases. Nor does this change throughout the history of Asklepios-cult.<sup>381</sup>

Many of the *iamata*, moreover, emphasize the amount of time a patient suffered from an ailment before receiving help from Asklepios. For example, Kleo was pregnant for five long years,<sup>382</sup> Ithmonika for three;<sup>383</sup> a man named Euhippos had a spear lodged in his jaw for six years;<sup>384</sup> another named Gorgias struggled with a festering arrow in his lung for a year and a half and filled an astounding 67 bowls full of pus before being healed.<sup>385</sup> The length of time that these and other people suffered from their ailments

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<sup>379</sup> On *phthisis*, see Hankinson 1995 (55-58, esp. n. 41).

<sup>380</sup> For a list in chronological order of the *iamata*, see LiDonnici 1995 (79).

<sup>381</sup> Inscriptions from the Asklepieia at Lebena and Rome from the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC and the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, respectively, attest the same kinds of illnesses, including blindness, tumors, and paralysis. Many of these are collected in Girone 1998.

<sup>382</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.3-9 = LiDonnici 1995 (A1).

<sup>383</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.10-22 = LiDonnici 1995 (A2).

<sup>384</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121.95-97 = LiDonnici 1995 (A12).

<sup>385</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.55-60 = LiDonnici 1995 (B10).

suggests that they had sought other forms of healing, and were either turned away or found them inadequate, prior to consulting Asklepios.<sup>386</sup>

Blindness, deafness, paralysis, baldness, tumors (φύματα), and cancerous sores (φαγεδαίναι) are still today in many cases untreatable by medicine (or at least not fully treatable), and were clearly beyond the limits of ancient Greek *iatrike*. Other ailments that Asklepios cured are specifically named by *iatroi* as untreatable. For instance, gout (ποδάγρα) is mentioned in a healing inscription from Epidauros,<sup>387</sup> while the author of Book 2 of *Prorrhetic* lists gout among those illnesses that, under certain circumstances, an *iatros* should refuse to treat.<sup>388</sup>

Still other ailments, like arrow wounds, were treatable in many instances; *iatroi* since the Bronze Age had successfully cared for such wounds.<sup>389</sup> But either their location in a difficult place in the body, like the lung, or the degree to which they had festered, placed them sometimes beyond the limits of *iatrike*. Gorgias' arrow wound to the lung that festered for one-and-a-half years may have fallen under either, or both, of these categories.<sup>390</sup>

Ancient sources indicate, moreover, that Asklepios was often an alternative only after other healers proved unable to provide sufficient assistance. The orator Aeschines, for example, wrote an epigram celebrating Asklepios' healing of an ulcer on his head. He claims to have gone to

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<sup>386</sup> Elements in these accounts may have been exaggerated to magnify the skill of Asklepios in comparison to his mortal counterparts, but if that were the prime purpose behind the narratives, such a purpose would have been more effectively accomplished by cases of fatally ill patients restored to health.

<sup>387</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.132-133 = LiDonnici 1995 (B23).

<sup>388</sup> *Prorrh.* 2. 2.8.1-4; L. 9.26.

<sup>389</sup> See Ch. 1 above.

<sup>390</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.55-60 = LiDonnici 1995 (B10). The case of epilepsy cited from Epidauros may have been one that was too severe for *iatrike* to treat (*IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 123.115-117 = LiDonnici 1995 [C19]).

Epidauros after “having despaired of the *technai* of mortals.”<sup>391</sup> Evidence from later in antiquity parallels Aeschines’ predicament. Aelian writing in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD records the case of a man suffering from pneumonia. After unsuccessful treatment at the hands of mortal *iatroi*, he was taken to Asklepios.<sup>392</sup>

Turning to Asklepios and other divine healers was very often occasioned by despair of the skills of mortals. Moreover, that despair was most often felt not by the patients themselves over *iatroi*, but by *iatroi* over difficult cases, as Tinker has argued.<sup>393</sup> Diodorus records that in the Roman period, “Many whose *iatroi* have lost hope of treating them because of the difficulty of their illness, Isis has restored to health” (Diod. 1.25). Moreover, in a 5<sup>th</sup>-c. AD account of the life of Proclus, Proclus went to an Asklepieion as a proxy for a young girl suffering from a difficult illness (νόσος χαλεπή). Proclus only went, however, after her *iatroi* despaired of treating her (ἀπογιγνωσκόντων δὲ τῶν ἰατρῶν, Marin. *Proc.* 29). A direct cause-and-effect relationship between the limits of *iatrike* and visits to sanctuaries of Asklepios is thus evident in at least some of the cases handled by the god.

## V. Conclusions

The relationship between Asklepios-cult and *iatrike* was one not principally of competition, but of complement. As *iatrike* and Asklepios-cult

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<sup>391</sup> *Anth. Gr.* 6.330: Θνητῶν μὲν τέχναις ἀπορούμενος, εἰς δὲ τὸ θεῖον / ἐλπίδα πᾶσαν ἔχων, προλιπὼν εὐπαιδᾶς Ἀθήνας, / ἰάθην ἐλθὼν, Ἀσκληπιέ, πρὸς τὸ σὸν ἄλσος, / ἔλκος ἔχων κεφαλῆς ἐνιαύσιον, ἐν τρισὶ μῆσιν.

<sup>392</sup> Aelian fr. 89.

<sup>393</sup> Tinker 1983 (108-122) includes an excellent discussion of this “motif,” as he calls it, of despairing by *iatroi* of certain patients and their illnesses. He cites the list of ancient testimonia published by Weinreich 1909 (App. “Die Kunst der Arzte versagt”) on this topic.

developed in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, each responded to the other in ways that promoted the further growth of both.

Asklepios-cult flourished in the Greek world beginning in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. There is no doubt that a complex set of factors was responsible for this popularity, including Asklepios' personal interaction with worshippers, the ever-shifting political climate of Greece, and concern over health sparked by the prevalence of plague and other hard-to-treat illnesses. But the development of *iatrike* surely also played a major role in this popularity. *Iatrike* created the need for another healer—one who practiced like a human *iatros* but whose powers were more far-reaching. Asklepios and his cult met this very need by treating chronic ailments.

## CHAPTER 4: THE ARRIVAL OF ASKLEPIOS IN ATHENS IN 420/19 BC

Cults arise within and carry the meanings and values of historical contexts by which they can be understood. The history of fifth-century Athenian religion is inseparable from the history of Athenian political and social aspirations, and the centrality of religion...requires us to evaluate the two side by side.

—Robert Garland, *Introducing New Gods*, 171.

To account for the popularity of Asklepios-cult in universal terms, such as those discussed in the previous chapters, is inherently limited. Whatever aspects of the cult generated interest in any one community may not have been the same that captured the attentions of another at a given point in time. Thus from reasons for the popularity of Asklepios-cult that seem to obtain in its every instantiation, we turn now to local factors. In particular, we will consider factors that motivated the importation of Asklepios into two of antiquity's best-documented cities: Athens, the subject of Chapters 4-6, and Rome, the subject of Chapters 7-9.

Asklepios arrived in Athens in 420 BC amidst considerable fanfare.<sup>394</sup> Setting sail from his sanctuary at Epidauros in the Peloponnese, Asklepios docked at Zea harbor in Piraeus where he was welcomed by personnel of the cult of Eleusinian Demeter. A ritual procession, or πομπή, led by the priestess of Demeter escorted the god into the city of Athens, and he was given temporary accommodation in the city Eleusinion, a sanctuary of Demeter at the northwest foot of the Acropolis near the Agora. Soon after, Asklepios journeyed by chariot, probably around the west bastion beneath the Nike temple, to the south slope of the Acropolis where he settled in among notable neighbors: Dionysus immediately next door to the east, and Athena Polias

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<sup>394</sup> As noted in Ch. 2 above, I will use 420 BC as shorthand for 420/19 BC.

just above on the summit of the newly-refurbished Acropolis. (See Fig. 4 below for a plan of the area around the Acropolis, including the Eleusinion.)

The arrival of Asklepios is remarkable for a number of reasons. First, the event is unusually well-documented.<sup>395</sup> Little or no information remains about the establishment of most ancient Greek cults, and many assumptions about their early history are a matter of conjecture beginning already in antiquity. In the case of Asklepios, however, an inscription traditionally dated to the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC (*SEG* 25.226), inscribed on the Telemachos monument, provides detailed information from a contemporary source.<sup>396</sup>

Second, the cult was given an especially choice location within the city. Few other cults introduced to Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC received real estate high on the slopes of the Acropolis.<sup>397</sup> And no others are known to have been welcomed by Athens' own panhellenic cult of Eleusinian Demeter.

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<sup>395</sup> *SEG* 25.226 = *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4961 + 4960, associated by Beschi 1967/68. Other than *SEG* 25.226, information about the arrival of Asklepios comes from late accounts of the life of Sophocles. Some of these record that Sophocles received Asklepios into his own home when the god arrived in Athens. On Sophocles and Asklepios, and problems inherent in this tradition, see Ch. 5 below.

<sup>396</sup> The closest parallel is a column inscribed in the late 3<sup>rd</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC with an account of the founding of a cult of Serapis on Delos (*IG* XI.4.1299). The founder's grandson says that his grandfather Apollonius brought Serapis from Egypt to Delos. The importation probably occurred in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. He also mentions a legal dispute over the temple of Serapis (lines 23-38), akin to a land dispute mentioned on the Telemachos monument. On the latter, see below. On the Delos inscription, known as the Aretalogy of Serapis, see Engelmann 1975; White 1996 (32-40).

The Telemachos monument may have been erected by Telemachos or his family, and if so is inherently biased. Nevertheless, it would have been difficult for Telemachos to fabricate and publish such detail about highly public events in a place as prominent as the Asklepieion without recrimination, or removal of the monument, by the *demos*.

<sup>397</sup> The only other cult introduced to Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC known to have been placed on the Acropolis is the cult of Pan. His sanctuary was located in a cave on the northwest shoulder of the Acropolis. See Travlos 1971 (sv 'Pan'); Hurwit 1999 (130); Camp 2001 (50). Other cults introduced to Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. include Bendis, Pheme, Artemis Aristoboule, Adrasteia, Meter, Adonis, Sabazius, and possibly Aphrodite Ourania and Aeacus (although the latter two may have arrived in the late 6<sup>th</sup> c.). On cults introduced to Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> c., see also Garland 1992; Parker 1996 (152-198). On Meter, see also Sickinger 1999 (105-113).

Moreover, the cult quickly became popular and, just as rapidly, had an impact on other healing cults in Attica. As mentioned above, dedications to Athena Hygieia on the Acropolis ceased soon after Asklepios' arrival, while certain other cults that adopted healing methods like Asklepios' attracted strong followings.<sup>398</sup> Cult inventories document the high volume of visitors and votives that the Acropolis sanctuary received from the time of its establishment.<sup>399</sup>

Even though we have unusually secure evidence for Asklepios' arrival and the subsequent impact of his cult, no ancient source explains why Asklepios was brought to Athens. Based on *SEG* 25.226—the Telemachos monument inscription—scholars have commonly assumed that an individual named Telemachos brought the god to Athens after being healed at Epidaurus. While the monument attests to this man's efforts in establishing Asklepios' sanctuary on the Acropolis, we shall see that the view that the cult was imported by Telemachos alone is based on misinterpretation of the inscription.

It is also argued that Asklepios was immediately appealing to the Athenians because of the great plague of 430 BC. A healing god was sorely needed, and obvious ones like Apollo were no longer proving effective, so they welcomed a new healer. Moreover, it is argued that the Athenians were so despondent as a result of the Peloponnesian War that they were eager for a god who would give them individual attention.<sup>400</sup> Therefore, they received Asklepios with great enthusiasm. These arguments, however, ignore the fact

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<sup>398</sup> On these other healing cults (including Aminos, the Heros Iatros, and Amphiaraos) and their development in relation to Asklepios-cult, see Ch. 2-3 above.

<sup>399</sup> Aleshire 1989 (103-369). While the earliest inventory (Inventory I, Aleshire = *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1532 fr.b) dates to ca. 350-339/8 BC, it includes dedications from previous years, possibly even from the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC; see Aleshire (107-108).

<sup>400</sup> E.g., Burford 1969 (20); Martin and Metzger 1976 (66-67); Mikalson 1984; Garland 1992 (130-132); Parker 1996 (175-185).

that Apollo, not Asklepios, was given credit for ending the plague in Athens.<sup>401</sup> Also, the popular panhellenic cult of Eleusinian Demeter had long since provided individual attention to Athenians.<sup>402</sup>

Scholars typically blur Telemachos' personal interest and involvement on the one hand, and the immediate popularity of Asklepios-cult among Athenians on the other, into an explanation for the importation that derives largely from the cultural disruptions and displacements following from war and plague. These explanations are refreshing in that they acknowledge what too often goes unacknowledged for most ancient cults: that they responded to more than just the political climate of the day, but served also the personal and spiritual needs of the Greeks. In the case of Asklepios-cult, however, these personal and spiritual elements alone are thought sufficient to explain his popularity.

A central goal of this investigation is to demonstrate that the importation of Asklepios-cult to Athens was not the result of a single individual's efforts. Instead, the city of Athens as a civic entity played a fundamental role in importing the cult. This *polis*-intervention, moreover, had little if anything to do with plague, whatever its effects may have been on health issues, and much to do with Athenian imperialism in the context of the Peloponnesian War.

This imperial factor has long been overlooked or even denied in scholarship on Asklepios' Athenian cult. Asklepios-cult has been treated as an exception—often the sole exception, according to J.K. Davies, T. Hölscher, and Robert Garland, among others—to Athens' "political" interest in cults in

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<sup>401</sup> Paus. 1.3.4 reports that a statue of Apollo at Delphi received the epithet Ἀλεξίκακος because the god ended the Athenian plague. This is striking since Apollo-cult was never strong in Athens, possibly because of his association with Delos, from which Athens moved the treasury of the Delian League in the 450s BC, as discussed below.

<sup>402</sup> On Demeter and the Eleusinian Mysteries, see below.



the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>403</sup> As the next three chapters will elucidate, at the time of its arrival in 420 BC, Asklepios-cult played a role vital to Athenian foreign policy in addition to meeting the personal and spiritual needs of Athenians.

The exact nature of the *polis*' interest in Asklepios-cult and its role in the larger context of Athenian foreign policy will be considered in subsequent chapters. In this chapter, I will consider the vivid narrative inscribed on the Telemachos monument. Interpretation of this monument has long rested on the misguided assumption that Asklepios-cult was "private." Not only does this assumption lack evidentiary support, but the monument itself clearly indicates a high degree of *polis*-interest and involvement in Asklepios' importation.

## I. Description, Text, and Translation of the Telemachos Monument

The Telemachos monument is named after the man whom the narrative credits with establishing the sanctuary of Asklepios on the southern Acropolis slope. The monument is traditionally dated to ca. 400 BC.<sup>404</sup>

This T-shaped monument of Pentelic marble consists of a shaft bearing the inscription, and is surmounted by sculpted reliefs apparently depicting participants, rituals, and architecture relating to the cult and its sanctuary.

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<sup>403</sup> E.g., J.K. Davies in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 4, p. 372), regarding the ease of transferring cults: "In Greece the instigators were nearly always tyrants or whole communities and the purpose nearly always overtly political. Of course there were exceptions, the most famous and best-documented being perhaps the introduction of the cult of Asclepius to Athens in 420/19 B.C., where no strictly political dimension is visible." Hölscher 1991 (376): "The most important new sanctuary [of the late Classical period] was not dedicated to the deity of a political state cult but to Asclepius, the god of healing." Garland 1992 (130): "Of all the cults [investigated in this book] up till now, that of Asklepios stands alone in lacking any apparent political dimension whatsoever." For a fuller discussion of the tendency to treat Asklepios-cult as apolitical, see Ch. 5 below. For discussion of Athenian manipulation of cults to advance domestic and foreign policies, see Ch. 5-6 below.

<sup>404</sup> For discussion and bibliography, see Beschi 1967/68 (428-436). The dating is based on letter forms and sculptural style. The last archon listed in the inscription, Kallias, provides a *terminus post quem* of 412/11 BC.

The monument has been reconstructed from 14 marble fragments in the collections of the National and the Epigraphical Museums in Athens, the British Museum in London, the Museo Civico in Padova, and the Museo Maffei in Verona.<sup>405</sup> Some of these fragments appear to be copies of the original monument. Elpis Mitropoulou has assembled a catalogue of most of the fragments, including detailed measurements and photographs.<sup>406</sup> An illustration of the monument as reconstructed by Luigi Beschi appears as Fig. 5 below.

The text and translation of the inscription are as follows:<sup>407</sup>

[Τηλέμαχος ἰδ[ρύσατο τὸ ἱ]-  
 [ερ]ὸν καὶ τὸν βω[μὸν τῷ Ἀσ]-  
 [σκλ]ηπιῶι πρῶτ[ος καὶ Ὑγι]-  
 [εἰαί], τοῖς Ἀσσ[κληπιάδαι]-  
 5 [ς καὶ τ]αῖς Ἀσσκ[ληπιῶ] θυγ[ν]-  
 [ατράσιν] κα[ὶ -----]  
 [-----]  
 [.....] | Σ[.....] Μ[.....]  
 [..... ἀ]νεληθὼν Ζεόθ[ε]-  
 10 [ν Μυστηρί]οις τοῖς μεγά-  
 [λοις κατ]ήγετο ἐς τὸ Ἐλ-  
 [ευσίνιο]ν· καὶ οἴκοθεν  
 [μεταπεμ]ψάμενος δια[κ]-  
 [όνος ἥγ]αγεν δεῦρε ἐφ' ἄ-  
 15 [ρματος] Τηλέμαχο [ς] κα[τ]-  
 [ἀ χρησμ]ός· ἅμα ἦλθεν Ὑγ-

<sup>405</sup> Recent reconstructions of the monument are Beschi 1967/68; Mitropoulou 1975. See Mitropoulou 1975 (12) for a summary of earlier reconstructions. Mitropoulou proposes a reconstruction with a *stèle* wider than Beschi's. Her *stèle*, however, is too wide for the length of inscribed lines as restored by Beschi 1967/68 and accepted by Mitropoulou. Beschi 1982 publishes a fragment from Verona that confirms the narrower width of the *stèle* (0.7 m by his calculations). On the reliefs, see also Frel 1975; Ghedini 1980 (15-18); Beschi 1985 (15-19); Eliades 1992-1998.

<sup>406</sup> Mitropoulou 1975 (13-42). The Verona fragment, not included in Mitropoulou, was identified later by Beschi and published with photographs in Beschi 1982.

<sup>407</sup> Lines 1-26: Clinton 1994 (*SEG* 47.232); lines 30-44: Beschi 1967/68 (*SEG* 25.226). Clinton 1994 is a new edition of lines 1-26 only of *SEG* 25.226.

[ίεια καὶ] οὕτως ἰδρύθη  
 [τὸ ἱερὸν]ν τόδε ἅπαν ἐπὶ  
 [Ἄστυφί]λο ἄρχοντος Κυ-  
 20 [δαντίδο]. Ἄρχ[χ]έας· ἐπὶ το-  
 [ύτο οἱ Κ]ήρυκες ἡμφεσβ-  
 [ήτον τὸ χ]ωρίο καὶ ἔνια  
 [ἐπεκώλ]υσαν ποῆσαι· Ἄν-  
 [τιφῶν . . . ἐπὶ το]ύτο εὐ-  
 25 [. . . . .]· Εὐφημος·] ἐπὶ τ-  
 [ούτο . . . . .]

*lacuna*

30 .]ε[ . . . . .]  
 ν ἔκτ[ισε καὶ. . . . . κα]-  
 τεσκ[εὔασε. Χαρίας· ἐπὶ]  
 τούτο τὸν [περίβολον ἀ]-  
 πὸ τῷ ξυλοπυ[λίω. Τείσα]-  
 35 νδρος· ἐπὶ το[ύτο ἐπεσκ]-  
 ευάσθη τὰ ξ[υλοπύλια κ]-  
 αὶ τὰ λοιπὰ [τῶν ἱερῶν π]-  
 ροσιδρύσατ[ο. Κλεόκρι]-  
 τος· ἐπὶ τού[το ἐφυτεύθ]-  
 40 η καὶ κατέστ[ησε κοσμή]-  
 σας τὸ τέμεν[ος ἅπαν τέ]-  
 λει τῷ ἐαυ[τῷ. Καλλίας  
 Σκαμβων ἰδης· ἐπὶ τούτ-  
 ο . . . . . ρα . . .]

Telemachos first set up the sanctuary and altar to Asklepios, and to Hygieia, and the Asklepiadae and the daughters of Asklepios...

Coming up from Zea at the time of the Greater Mysteries, he arrived at the Eleusinion; and Telemachos, having sent for temple attendants from the god's home,<sup>408</sup> brought him here<sup>409</sup> on a

<sup>408</sup> In contrast to Clinton 1994, I understand οἴκοθεν as referring to his new home on the Acropolis. Clinton 1994 translates διακόνοος as “servants” and οἴκοθεν as “at his own expense.” According to *LSJ*, διακόνοος can mean servant, messenger, or temple attendant. Clinton (23-24) argues that understanding διακόνοος as temple attendant is not in keeping with the main purpose of the monument, “which is to give due credit to Telemachos.” However, the inscription refers to parties other than Telemachos who participated in the importation of the cult. As to οἴκοθεν meaning “at his own expense,” it is odd that this term should be chosen here, while another phrase, τέλει τῷ ἐαυτῷ, is used later in the inscription to mean the same thing. It makes much more sense, given the context, that Telemachos sent for attendants from Asklepios’ home (hence οἴκοθεν—either his sanctuary at Epidaurus or

chariot in accordance with the oracle. Hygieia came along with him. And thus this whole sanctuary was established when Astyphilos of Kudantidai was archon. When Archeas was archon, the Kerykes disputed the land and hindered some actions. When Antiphon was archon...[??] prospered. When Euphemos was archon...

When Karias was archon, a *peribolos* was built apart from the wooden gateway. When Teisandras was archon, the wooden gateway was rebuilt and the rest of the sanctuary set up in addition. When Kleokritos was archon, the sanctuary was planted, and he arranged and adorned the whole sanctuary at his own expense. When Kallias of Skambonidai was archon...<sup>410</sup>

## **II. Interpretation of the Telemachos Monument: Signs of *Polis*-Interest**

### **A. The Rhetoric of the Inscription**

This fragmentary document emphasizes Telemachos' role in the establishment of the sanctuary of Asklepios: Telemachos brought Asklepios by chariot to the south slope of the Acropolis and Telemachos founded the Acropolis sanctuary. But the prominence of Telemachos in this account has led to the questionable assumption that nobody else, especially not the state, was involved in Asklepios' arrival.<sup>411</sup>

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his new home on the Acropolis) to escort Asklepios from the Eleusinion.

<sup>409</sup> δεῦρε refers to the Acropolis sanctuary, where the Telemachos monument stood.

<sup>410</sup> Archonship dates: Astyphilos (420/19 BC), Archeas (419/18), Antiphon (418/17), Euphemos (417/16), Arimnestos (416/15), Charias (415/14), Teisandros (414/13), Kleokritos (413/12), Kallias (412/11).

<sup>411</sup> Scholars have suggested at best a very minimal role for the state in Asklepios' importation. This minimal role spans the following range. Körte 1896 and 1927 argue that the state did not even authorize the importation. Aleshire 1989 implies that the state had little involvement since she does not discuss it, and since she considers the cult a "private" foundation. On the "private" nature of the cult, see below. Cavanaugh 1996 (47) remarks that the state in the very least must have ratified the importation and allotted the land for the sanctuary. Clinton 1994 suggests a greater role for the state when he discusses the participation of the cult of Eleusinian Demeter in Asklepios' arrival. But the state's role is much larger than anyone has heretofore argued.

Since Telemachos probably commissioned the monument, it is dangerous to take it as a purely objective account.<sup>412</sup> Moreover, Telemachos only receives credit for moving Asklepios from the Eleusinion to the south slope of the Acropolis (lines 12-16), and for setting up his sanctuary and altar there (lines 1-6).<sup>413</sup> Before that, although not stated explicitly, personnel from the Epidaurian cult must have accompanied Asklepios to Piraeus,<sup>414</sup> and personnel from the Eleusinian cult must have been responsible for housing him in the Eleusinion. The mix of transitive and intransitive, active and passive verbs in the inscription is not only confusing, as Kevin Clinton has observed, but potentially deceptive.<sup>415</sup>

Consequently, scholars give Telemachos much more credit than the monument itself gives him: they credit Telemachos with bringing Asklepios from Epidauros to Athens. It should not be assumed, however, that the monument in one of its lost fragments credits Telemachos with bringing Asklepios to Athens singlehandedly. The phrasing of the fragments we have indicates that Telemachos' involvement began at the Eleusinion.

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<sup>412</sup> For the sake of simplicity, I am treating Telemachos as if he were an historical figure. It occurs to me, however, that Telemachos may be a fictional character. While this could have interesting repercussions, which I hope to pursue at a future date, it would presuppose a higher level of state involvement, and would thus only strengthen the arguments I am making here.

<sup>413</sup> On the establishment and typical components of Greek sanctuaries, see Stengel 1920 (10-31); Burkert 1985 (84-95).

<sup>414</sup> Agora, Inv. No. I 7471, a law about one of Asklepios' annual festivals in Athens, has been convincingly restored to include the word *φρουροί*, or sacred officials. For a text and discussion of the law, see Clinton 1994 (18-21). According to Clinton, *φρουροί*, otherwise unattested in Attica, were prominent in the cult of Asklepios at Epidauros. Their presence in this Athenian inscription suggests that Athenians deliberately adopted the title, and/or that Epidaurian officials participated in the Athenian festival. Since the Epidauria commemorated Asklepios' arrival in Athens, Clinton argues that it is likely these officials participated in the god's arrival in 420 BC. On the role of *φρουροί* at Epidauros, see Jeffrey (1966); Clinton 1994 (20). On this inscription, see also below.

<sup>415</sup> As Clinton 1994 (24) remarks regarding the text of the Telemachos monument: "The style lacks art, but it serves Telemachos well; it conveniently leaves unsaid what others have contributed in bringing the cult of Asclepius to Athens."

Moreover, it was a *topos* in antiquity for a god to make his wishes known through an individual. For example, Athena instructed Orestes to establish a cult in honor of Iphigeneia (Eur. *IT* 1446-1474), and Pan appeared to Pheidippides on his run between Sparta and Marathon to request that the Athenians establish a cult of Pan (Hdt. 6.105-106).<sup>416</sup> This communication between god and human frequently occurred via oracles or dreams. And the establishment of several cults of Asklepios was attributed to individuals: e.g., those at Sicyon (Paus. 2.10.3), Argos (Paus. 2.23.4), and Pergamon (Paus. 2.26.8). As Robert Garland comments: “It was the responsibility of the god to signal his readiness to be incorporated into the community by commissioning a private individual to speak on his behalf.”<sup>417</sup>

Even if Telemachos did bring Asklepios to Athens, such intense involvement by an individual would in no way preclude the *polis* from having been an active and even essential participant in the event. While the precise role of the *polis* in the importation of deities has been disputed, it is widely agreed that bringing a new god into Athens in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC would have required the approval of the *demos*.<sup>418</sup>

Recognizing the state’s role in the importation of Asklepios has been hampered by an attempt in scholarship to distinguish between “public” and “private” cults. Although the terms are often left undefined, it seems that what is most often meant by “private cult” is that the cult was established and/or controlled not by the state, but by an individual or group. Since most scholars consider Telemachos the primary and even sole party engineering the importation of Asklepios, this cult is labeled “private.”<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> For more examples and discussion of the *topos*, see Garland 1992 (14-22); Gebhard 2001.

<sup>417</sup> Garland 1992 (14).

<sup>418</sup> See, e.g., Rudhardt 1960 (92-93); Garland 1984 (78), 1992 (19); Clinton 1994 (24-25, 28); Parker 1996 (180, 214-217); S. Price 1999 (76-78).

<sup>419</sup> E.g., Aleshire 1989 (7); Garland 1992 (128-130); Stafford 2000 (155, with n. 33).

Sarah Aleshire's insightful work on the Athenian Asklepieion is frequently cited for proof that the cult was private, at least until the mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. However, the only evidence that Aleshire adduces for it being a private cult is the change from a lifetime priesthood to an annually-rotating one beginning ca. 350 BC.<sup>420</sup> The lack of any inventory inscriptions before ca. 350 BC must be her main (albeit unstated) proof since she defines a "state cult" as "one where the Athenian demos and boule, either directly or through their agents, exercise some supervision over the presence and distribution of the votives dedicated in a sanctuary."<sup>421</sup>

This is an argument *ex silentio* since earlier inventory lists may have existed, but have not been discovered. That the priesthood became annual, moreover, does not indicate much at all about state involvement in the cult either before or after 350 BC. The priesthood of Athena Nike, for instance, as not annual.<sup>422</sup> Finally, in a cult where individuals met the god one-on-one in a healing encounter, it is logical that dedications by individuals dominate the evidentiary record; but this does not mean that the *polis* had no involvement in or control over the cult.

Moreover, as addressed in the Introduction above, criticism has recently arisen as to the validity of the public-private distinction as applied to Greek cults. Removal of this distinction allows us to see not only that the cult of Asklepios was not "private," but that it was in fact very much under the control of the state.

And so, even if Telemachos' own involvement did stretch from Epidauros (which is unlikely given that the inscription only mentions his involvement as beginning at the Eleusinion), he would have needed authorization from the *demos* to found the Acropolis sanctuary. Nor did his

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<sup>420</sup> Aleshire 1989 (14-15).

<sup>421</sup> Aleshire 1989 (14, n. 5).

<sup>422</sup> *ML* 44.

involvement preclude the state from playing a large role also in the importation and establishment of the cult.<sup>423</sup> The very narrative of the Telemachos monument, moreover, contains evidence of just such *polis*-interest and involvement.

## **B. The Eleusinian Cult of Demeter and Kore**

Second only to the prominence of Telemachos in the chronicle of Asklepios' arrival is the role played by the Eleusinian cult of Demeter and Kore. According to the Telemachos monument, Asklepios came to Athens at the time of the Greater Mysteries (lines 10-11), and was housed for a time in the city Eleusinion (lines 11-12).<sup>424</sup> Furthermore, a dispute over Asklepios' sanctuary on the Acropolis arose in 419/18 BC at the instigation of the Kerykes (lines 20-23),<sup>425</sup> or priests of Eleusinian Demeter who played a prominent role in the state as generals, ambassadors, and envoys. One of their priests, for example, was the Kallias reputed to have engineered the peace between Sparta and Artaxerxes, and to have negotiated the Thirty Years' Peace with Sparta.<sup>426</sup> The level of involvement of the Eleusis cult in the arrival of Asklepios, especially as documented in a fragmentary inscription of 25 short lines, is remarkable.

The Eleusinian cult was itself a *polis*-cult of great importance to Athens. It was one of Athens' three major panhellenic cults, along with those of

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<sup>423</sup> Burford 1969 (20); Mikalson 1984; Simms 1985 (284-286); Garland 1992 (130-132); and Parker 1996 (175-185) all speak variously of the interest of the "*polis*" or of the "Athenians," but trace that interest to the plague. Schlaifer 1940 (240, n. 2) and Cavanaugh 1996 (47) note *polis*-interest in the introduction of the cult, but do not comment on the nature of that interest.

<sup>424</sup> On the Eleusinion, which has been only partially excavated, see Travlos 1971 (sv 'Eleusinion'); Miles 1998.

<sup>425</sup> On the dispute, see below.

<sup>426</sup> On the clan, see Clinton 1974 (47-68); Garland 1984 (99-100).



Athena Polias and Dionysus Eleuthereus,<sup>427</sup> and its primary festival, the Greater Mysteries, attracted visitors from all over the Greek world well into the Roman period.<sup>428</sup> By the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC at the latest, Athens had taken control of this cult, as attested by the reorientation of the Eleusis sanctuary towards Athens and the issuance of Athenian decrees regulating the worship of Demeter and Kore.<sup>429</sup> Athens' stamp on the cult is also visible in the introduction of Triptolemos to Demeter-myth beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>430</sup> Triptolemos was said to be an Eleusinian who taught agriculture to humans after learning it from Demeter. But since the first earth he plowed was near Athens, Athens could claim to be the origin of agriculture.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the Eleusis sanctuary continued to expand.<sup>431</sup> It was rebuilt under Kimon and Perikles in the wake of Persian destruction.<sup>432</sup> While Persian destruction necessitated rebuilding, expansion of the sanctuary at the same time suggests that the cult was growing. So, too, does the size of the new Telesterion, or large building used for initiation rituals, whose footprint is nearly three times that of its 6<sup>th</sup>-c. predecessor.<sup>433</sup> Its unusual form, a hypostyle hall, resembles that of the Odeion built also by Perikles in the

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<sup>427</sup> For an overview of the cult and its sanctuaries and rituals, see Mylonas 1961; Foley 1994.

<sup>428</sup> The cult at Eleusis existed for over a thousand years. Not until the edict of Theodosius in the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD was it suppressed along with all other pagan cults.

<sup>429</sup> On changes to the sanctuary, see Mylonas 1961 (103-105). On the decrees, see Garland 1984 (98). The decrees include: *SEG* 21.3-4; 22.2-3.

<sup>430</sup> The first artistic representations of Triptolemos date to the mid-6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. In literature, he appears in Orphic versions of the Demeter myth. On the significance of Triptolemos to Athens, see Foley 1994 (99-100); Miles 1998 (35-57, esp. 53-56), which includes a good review of Athenian archaeological evidence for Triptolemos. For visual representations of Triptolemos, see also Shapiro 1989 (67-83).

<sup>431</sup> This may have been due in part to Demeter's alleged defense of Athens in the Battle of Salamis in 479 BC (Hdt. 8.65).

<sup>432</sup> On building activity in the sanctuary during the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, see Mylonas 1961 (106-129). Expansions to the sanctuary included the peribolos wall and the area of the east court.

<sup>433</sup> Mylonas 1961 (117-124).

sanctuary of Dionysus on the south slope of the Athenian Acropolis, and thus visually linked the Athenian and Eleusinian building projects.<sup>434</sup>

In the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, a sacred law authorized the Athenians to use proceeds from the cult “as they wish” (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 6*).<sup>435</sup> Maureen Cavanaugh comments, “The close interaction of the Athenian state with the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in this early period is striking.”<sup>436</sup> And in 405 BC, Aristophanes characterized his chorus of the *Frogs*, who essentially represent the Athenian *demos*, as initiates in the Greater Mysteries.<sup>437</sup> Such equation points to the centrality of the cult to Athens, and its absorption into Athenian *polis*-identity.

In the Greater Mysteries, Athens publicized its close ties to Eleusis. Those celebrating the Mysteries gathered first in Athens, which was the locus of ritual on four of the six festival days. On the fourth day, participants processed from Athens to Eleusis, thus re-creating annually a bond between the two cities that, according to François de Polignac’s model of extra-urban sanctuaries, articulated Athenian control over Eleusis.<sup>438</sup> By the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, a festival known as the Lesser Mysteries was celebrated seven months prior to and in preparation for the Greater Mysteries.<sup>439</sup> All who wished to be

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<sup>434</sup> On the Odeion, see below, and Ch. 5.

<sup>435</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup> 78*, line 33: ἡό[τι] ἄν βόλο[ντα].

<sup>436</sup> Cavanaugh 1996 (74). The decree is dated to ca. 460 BC based on letter forms; see Clinton 1974 (10-13); Cavanaugh 1996 (73-74).

<sup>437</sup> Bowie 1993 (244); Foley 1994 (144).

<sup>438</sup> de Polignac 1995 (85). On processions as defining and articulating space in ancient Greece, see Graf 1996, with notes for bibliography, and Ch. 6 below. Graf (63-64) makes an attractive suggestion about the length of this procession (an all-day journey with many stopping points): its relatively long duration and distance removed initiates from the organization of the *polis*, and thereby prepared them for individual encounters with the god.

<sup>439</sup> On the Lesser Mysteries, see Deubner 1932 (70); Mylonas 1961 (239-243); Parke 1977 (122-124). According to Athenian tradition, this festival was introduced to initiate Herakles, a foreigner, into the Mysteries (Schol. ad Ar. *Pl.* 1013; Diod.Sic. 4.14; Plut. *Thes.* 30).

initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries had to attend this preparatory festival, which took place entirely in Athens at Agrai on the banks of the Ilissos river.<sup>440</sup>

Asklepios' arrival in Athens during celebration of the Greater Mysteries cannot therefore have been without significance to the *polis*. Moreover, it was more than temporal concurrence that associated the arrival of Asklepios with the Mysteries. Asklepios resided briefly in the Eleusinion, where objects from Eleusis were deposited immediately before the start of the Mysteries,<sup>441</sup> and where sacrifices were probably held during this festival.<sup>442</sup>

Furthermore, according to Pausanias and Philostratos who wrote in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cs. AD, an annual festival of Asklepios, called the Epidauria, was integrated into the Greater Mysteries. Both authors state that Asklepios came to Athens to be initiated into the Mysteries, but because he arrived too late to take part in the preliminary rites of the first day of the festival, the fourth day was added to accommodate his late arrival.<sup>443</sup>

The two festivals were probably integrated soon after Asklepios' arrival. Pausanias' narrative suggests that the festival was established with the introduction of Asklepios to Athens, and a sacred law from the Agora

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<sup>440</sup> Parke 1977 (58) views the establishment of the Lesser Mysteries as one of a series of steps taken by Athens to promote its own interests.

<sup>441</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 885.

<sup>442</sup> Mylonas 1961 (250-251). On the Eleusinion, see also Ch. 5-6 below.

<sup>443</sup> Paus. 2.26.8: τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ Ἀθηναῖοι, τῆς τελετῆς λέγοντες Ἀσκληπιῶ μεταδοῦναι, τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην Ἐπιδαύρια ὀνομάζουσι καὶ θεὸν ἀπ' ἐκείνου φασὶν Ἀσκληπιὸν σφισι νομισθῆναι (The Athenians say they let Asklepios take part in the Mysteries and they name this day the Epidauria; they say from then on Asklepios was worshipped by them). Also Philostr. *VA* 4.18: Ἦν μὲν δὴ Ἐπιδαυρίων ἡμέρα. τὰ δὲ Ἐπιδαύρια μετὰ πρόρρησίν τε καὶ ἱερεῖα δεῦρο μνεῖν Ἀθηνα οἰς πάτριον ἐπὶ θυσ α δευτέρῃ, τοῦτι δὲ ἐνόμισαν Ἀσκληπιοῦ ἕνεκα, ὅτι δὴ ἐμύησαν αὐτὸν ἴκοντα Ἐπιδαυρόθεν ὄψε μυστηρίων (It was the day of the Epidauria. After the Prorrhesis and the 'Hither the Victims' it was customary for the Athenians to celebrate the Mysteries with a second sacrifice. This was their custom for Asklepios, since they initiated him when he arrived late from Epidaurus for the Mysteries).

dating to 410-404 BC makes reference to the Epidauria within the context of the Mysteries.<sup>444</sup>

That the Epidauria took place on the third or fourth day of the Mysteries in commemoration of Asklepios' arrival from Epidauros accords well with the claim of the Telemachos monument that Asklepios arrived while the Mysteries were underway.<sup>445</sup> It is also likely, as Kevin Clinton has argued, that a priestess of Eleusinian Demeter met Asklepios when he arrived in Piraeus, and escorted him to Athens.<sup>446</sup> She would therefore have been a participant in the annual Epidauria, which probably reenacted Asklepios' original route into the center of Athens.<sup>447</sup>

Scholars, however, have detracted from the cooperative role of the Eleusinian cult by assuming that a dispute over Asklepios' sanctuary (mentioned in lines 20-23 of the Telemachos monument) was in fact an attempt by the Eleusinian cult to dislodge Asklepios from the Acropolis slopes. Kevin Clinton argues that there was friction between Telemachos and a priestly clan of Eleusis: the Kerykes wanted to align Asklepios more closely with the cult of Demeter by housing him nearer the Eleusinion, and thus got angry and picked a fight with Telemachos when he carted Asklepios off from the Eleusinion.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> Paus. 2.36.8. The law is Agora, Inv. No. I 7471, mentioned above. On the establishment of the Epidauria in or shortly after 420 BC, see also Clinton 1994 (27). On the Epidauria, see also Ch. 5-6 below.

<sup>445</sup> On the uncertainty of the date of the Epidauria, see Mikalson 1975 (56).

<sup>446</sup> Agora, Inv. No. I 7471 mentions a Priestess of Demeter in reference to the Epidauria. On the priestess of Demeter, see Clinton 1974 (68-76); Garland 1984 (100-101). On other sacred officials of Eleusinian Demeter, see Clinton 1974; Garland 1984 (96-104). On Asklepios in Piraeus, see Garland 2001.

<sup>447</sup> On the procession and other probable events of the Epidauria, see Deubner 1956 (73); Parke 1977 (63-65); Clinton 1994 (29). Little is known about the festival other than a sacrifice, banquet, and an all-night festival (παννυχίς) mentioned in *IG II<sup>2</sup> 974* (2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC).

<sup>448</sup> Clinton 1994 (28-34).

However, it is puzzling why the measures of the Kerykes should be considered as negative—as having been at odds with Telemachos and/or the cult and sanctuary of Asklepios—rather than in support of it. Although vague in detail, the inscription clearly indicates that the Kerykes prevented someone from completing certain actions (ἔνια [ἐπεκώλ]υσαν ποῆσαι, lines 22-23). Perhaps the Kerykes were helping to safeguard the cult and sanctuary against another, unnamed party.

And nothing in the inscription indicates that the Kerykes disputed the land *per se* rather than other aspects of the sanctuary, such as who administered the site. It is difficult to explain why the Kerykes would have waited almost two years to contest Asklepios' relocation.

Furthermore, nothing in the inscription indicates that Telemachos was involved in the dispute. It seems odd that Telemachos, in a monument that otherwise praises his efforts, would mention a dispute that he lost.

Granted all of the above caveats, even if Telemachos had been involved in the dispute, his participation should not be conflated with a larger antagonism between himself and the rest of the cult at Eleusis. The prominence given the Eleusinian cult in the inscription suggests instead a high level of cooperation between Telemachos and the cult of Eleusinian Demeter, and attests many times over to the interest of the Athenian *polis* in Asklepios' importation.

### **C. The Location of Asklepios' Sanctuary**

When Telemachos moved Asklepios from the Eleusinion, he did not take the god to some outlying region of the city, or to an inconspicuous place near the city center; instead, he brought him up the south slope of the Acropolis just under the brow of some of Athens' most prominent cults.

According to Thucydides, the Acropolis was the site of the oldest part of Athens, and thus the location of some of its earliest sanctuaries.<sup>449</sup>

In 420 BC, the Acropolis was still under reconstruction in an effort to restore buildings destroyed by the Persians.<sup>450</sup> Work continued on the temple and parapet of Athena Nike, and on the Erechtheion.<sup>451</sup> And in the sanctuary of Dionysus, east of and immediately adjacent to what would become the precinct of Asklepios, a large Odeion had been built less than 20 years earlier, accompanied probably by changes to the theater.<sup>452</sup>

As noted above, the very prominence and cultic significance of the Acropolis implies that Telemachos had to have secured the support and approval of the *demos* and *boule* to build a sanctuary there. As Robert Schlaifer comments, “The mere granting by the state of permission to build on so well situated a site, indicate[s] that the state was seriously interested in the cult from the beginning.”<sup>453</sup>

The size of Asklepios’ sanctuary is also remarkable. It ultimately extended about 80 m across the slope of the Acropolis. Although the dimensions of the original sanctuary are uncertain, the possibility that Telemachos was able to acquire a strip of land almost 80 m long on the

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<sup>449</sup> Thucy. 2.15.3-6.

<sup>450</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the impact of the topography of the Acropolis on the cult of Asklepios, see Ch. 5-6 below.

<sup>451</sup> See Travlos 1971 (sv ‘Athena Nike,’ ‘Erechtheion’); Hurwit 1999 (200-215; App. C.13-15 for ancient sources and bibliography).

<sup>452</sup> The Odeion of Perikles was built ca. 440-430 BC. See Hurwit 1999 (216-217; App. C.19 for ancient sources and bibliography). Hurwit (217) suggests that the theater was also altered at this time: “It is difficult to believe that the Periklean program would have created so vast a building as the Odeion without paying at least some attention to the Theater next door, and there is the possibility of some kind of Periklean refitting.” On the Odeion, see also Ch. 5 below.

<sup>453</sup> Schlaifer 1940 (240, n. 2). Simms 1985 (285), following Schlaifer, regards the location of the cult on the Acropolis, “the religious center of the city,” as indicative of the state’s interest in the cult. Simms, however, attributes the importation of the cult to plague.

Acropolis further suggests the participation and ratification of the *demos* in his endeavor.<sup>454</sup>

An element in one of the reliefs from the Telemachos monument, moreover, reinforces the likelihood that the *demos* and *boule* played a central role in his importation and in positioning Asklepios on the Acropolis slopes. The relief depicts a large double doorway, with a stork sitting in a tree next to it. (See Fig. 5 below. This scene appears on the upper left corner of the third view in Beschi's reconstruction.) Beschi has argued that these images represent the topography of the Asklepieion. The doorway is that of the sanctuary, and the stork, which in Greek is called a *πελαργός*, symbolizes the Pelargikon, or wall that surrounded the Acropolis.<sup>455</sup> This stork, then, reflects the proximity of the Asklepieion to the Pelargikon.

The area marked by the Pelargikon was of interest to the *demos* of Athens in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, as attested by *IG I<sup>3</sup> 78*, the First-Fruits decree.<sup>456</sup> This decree regulates offerings of first-fruits, or portions of

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<sup>454</sup> On the size and layout of the sanctuary, see Travlos 1971 (sv 'Asklepieion'); Aleshire 1989 (21-36); Hurwit 1999 (219-221; App. C.20 for ancient sources and bibliography).

<sup>455</sup> Beschi 1967/68 (386-397). On the Pelargikon, see Travlos 1971 (sv 'Akropolis'); Camp 1984; Hurwit 1999 (78).

<sup>456</sup> The date of the decree is disputed; see Appendix II.B below. Cavanaugh 1996 (29-72) provides an extensive summary of previous scholarship on the dating debate. Of the 67 sources she lists and their proposed dates for the decree, plus her own suggested date, only 18 include a date, or date range, that falls after 420 BC and the arrival of Asklepios. Many of these 18 have followed the assumptions of Körte 1896 and Körte 1927 that the establishment of the Asklepieion prompted the rider, and that the cult thus arrived without state authorization; see Cavanaugh (55-59). As Cavanaugh (47) remarks, however, "The idea that the Asklepieion could be established without the consent of the Athenian *demos* is unthinkable." In the very least, it is unlikely. Some of the scholars she lists as proponents of a post-420 date, like Clinton 1974, have subsequently favored an earlier date (cf. Clinton 1994 [32, with n. 65]). Her own arguments against a date post-422/1 BC, based on publication at that time of a decree (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 391*) reflecting changes to *IG I<sup>3</sup> 78*, are persuasive.

The importance of the Pelargikon in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC is attested also by Thucy. 2.17. He describes how people forced to flee the Attic countryside in the early years of the Peloponnesian war sought refuge within the Pelargikon despite the fact that residence in the Pelargikon was forbidden by a curse and cautioned against by the oracle at Delphi.

the annual harvest, to Eleusinian Demeter. The text of the decree is given in Appendix II.A below. According to the rider to *IG I<sup>3</sup> 78* (lines 47-61), certain restrictions were placed upon activity within the Pelargikon, including a prohibition against building altars there without the approval of the *demos* and *boule* (lines 54-59).

The path of the Pelargikon is uncertain,<sup>457</sup> which means it is also uncertain whether any of the Asklepieion, including the altar built by Telemachos (*SEG 25.226*, line 2), fell within it. Yet the depiction of the *pelargos* on the Telemachos monument suggests that the sanctuary had a significant relationship to—most likely inclusion within—the boundary. If so, then Telemachos had to have received the approval of the *demos* and *boule* to build his altar and sanctuary there.<sup>458</sup> Moreover, the mere fact that the *demos* and *boule* approved building within a highly restricted and regulated piece of land suggests more than mere approval, but active interest.

### III. Conclusions

It is clear that Telemachos alone did not engineer the importation of Asklepios. The god's journey from Epidauros to Piraeus and then to the Eleusinion, at any rate, seems to have taken place before Telemachos' actions. Moreover, the location and size of Asklepios' sanctuary on the slopes of the Acropolis, and the close and numerous ties between Asklepios-cult and the cult of Eleusinian Demeter, so strongly associated with Athens, all demonstrate Athenian *polis*-interest and involvement in the cult. As the next two chapters will explore, this interest had much to do with Athenian empire.

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<sup>457</sup> Hurwit 1999 (78, with bibliography at n. 42).

<sup>458</sup> As stated above, however, it is extremely unlikely, even without this clause in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 78*, that the Athenian state did not consent to the establishment of this cult. Cavanaugh 1996 (44, 47) voices the same opinion.



## CHAPTER 5: ASKLEPIOS AND THE TOPOGRAPHY OF ATHENIAN CULT

The Telemachos monument indicates that Athens was interested in Asklepios-cult and took steps to ensure his successful entrance into the heart of the city. The present chapter explores the nature of this *polis*-interest in Asklepios.

I begin by showing why traditional accounts, which focus predictably on physical health, cannot explain why Athens imported this god in 420 BC. In search of a more satisfying explanation, I investigate where Athens situated Asklepios both spatially and temporally (i.e., in regard to the civic calendar) upon his arrival. These points in Athenian space and time are critical as markers of *polis*-intervention inasmuch as the *polis* approved the allocation of land for Asklepios on the Acropolis, and the *polis* added two annual festivals in honor of Asklepios to the civic calendar.<sup>459</sup> These alignments were part of a careful orchestration of time and space capable of evoking particular associations, and thus their study affords new insight into motivations behind Athens' importation of the cult.

Since it is impossible to consider all the connections forged by the *polis* with Asklepios, I will confine myself to three of the most visible: 1) the Acropolis and its slopes as the primary spatial context into which the sanctuary of Asklepios was integrated, and the cults of 2) Dionysus Eleuthereus and 3) Eleusinian Demeter, as the cults with which the two annual festivals of Asklepios were coordinated, and thus those most closely aligned with Asklepios.

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<sup>459</sup> Although aspects of the Attic festival calendar antedate the Ionian migration, as discussed by Burkert 1992 (543), the *polis* would have controlled additions to the calendar.

## I. Asklepios and the Athenian Plague

The assertion that Asklepios arrived in Athens in response to plague is conjectural; it is based on his status as a healing god and on the coordinate assumption that he needed something to heal to motivate his importation.<sup>460</sup>

While the nature of the god's cult makes such an explanation attractive, it is problematic for a number of reasons. First, Asklepios is never credited with curing the Athenian plague. Admittedly, this is an argument *ex silentio*, but if a healing god of such renowned skill and fame had stepped in to drive plague from a city of Athens' importance, we would expect to hear about it somewhere in the ancient sources, especially Thucydides who documents the plague in detail.<sup>461</sup> In this case, silence is eloquent. Moreover, ancient sources give credit instead to Apollo and Herakles for ending this plague.<sup>462</sup>

Secondly, the plague initially and most violently erupted in 430 BC, followed by recurrent outbreaks until 426 BC. But Asklepios did not arrive in Athens until 420 BC. Jon Mikalson argues that the 10-year lag between cause and effect was due to the Peloponnesian War: Athens had to wait to import Asklepios from the Peloponnesian city Epidauros until the Peace of Nikias in 421 BC.<sup>463</sup> As we shall see, the Peace of Nikias was important for Asklepios' arrival, but not because it presented the sole opportunity for bringing Asklepios to Athens.

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<sup>460</sup> One scholar who does not believe that plague motivated the arrival of Asklepios in Athens is Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 120, n. 4). Edelstein, however, views the cult as a "private" foundation rather than a "state" cult; if the cult were imported due to plague, he contends, then the state rather than an individual would have imported the god. He believes instead that Aesculapius was imported by Telemachos because of a successful healing, presumably at Epidauros.

<sup>461</sup> Thucy. 2.47-54.

<sup>462</sup> Paus. 1.3.4 on Apollo, Schol. ad Ar. *Ran.* 501 on Herakles; see also Ch. 4 above. Pan Luterios is credited with ending the plague in Troezen (Paus. 2.32.6).

<sup>463</sup> Mikalson 1984.

War in itself did not necessarily prevent the importation of Asklepios from Epidauros. In the classical period, efforts were made at maintaining cult and festival traditions even among warring states. Sacred truces, for example, were declared between enemy states to allow for participation in panhellenic festivals.<sup>464</sup> Matthew Dillon notes that these truces were observed with very few exceptions.<sup>465</sup> And, while a clause in the Peace of Nikias guaranteeing safe passage to those wishing to consult oracles or visit common sanctuaries indicates that the Peloponnesian War posed some hindrances, there is no particular reason to suppose that the dangers prompting this clause were operative all 10 years of the Archidamean War.<sup>466</sup>

Mikalson's argument, moreover, begs the question why Athens would have waited to import Asklepios from Epidauros if the god were so badly needed because of plague. Epidauros was almost certainly the most popular sanctuary of Asklepios at the time, and his power there may well have been thought more efficacious, but the god had other sanctuaries by 420 BC.<sup>467</sup> According to Strabo, the oldest cult of Asklepios was at Tricca in Thessaly.<sup>468</sup> Thessaly would later be credited as the origin of the cult of Asklepios on Kos, which indicates Epidauros did not have a monopoly on his export.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> Dillon 1997 (1-26). These truces guaranteed safe passage through warring territories for those attending particular festivals. Dillon (2) explains that these truces did not affect hostilities; instead, wars continued to be waged: "Pilgrims could even make their way freely through states which were openly at war, and combatants were bound to respect the status and privileges of pilgrims."

<sup>465</sup> Dillon 1997 (4).

<sup>466</sup> Thucy. 5.18.2.

<sup>467</sup> Greeks outside Epidauros went there not only to be healed, but also to compete in festival games. The panhellenism of the Epidaurian cult is discussed in Ch. 2 above. Moreover, although it would be extremely difficult to determine relative efficaciousness based on the little evidence from other Asklepieia at the time, the popularity of the Epidaurian cult suggests that people believed they had a better chance of being healed there.

<sup>468</sup> Strabo 9.5.17 (C 437). There was also a tradition from Homer on that Asklepios lived in Thessaly (*Il.* 2.729-733; Eustath. ad. *Il.* 2.729).

<sup>469</sup> Herondas 2.97; 4.1-2. On Koan and Epidaurian affiliations of various cults of Asklepios, see Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 238-242).

Thessaly, moreover, was an ally of Athens during much of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Thus, if Athens had wished to import the god because of plague, they could have brought him from Thessaly, or even from Aegina, which also had a cult of Asklepios by 422 BC that was visited by Athenians.<sup>470</sup>

Furthermore, as discussed above, there is no evidence from the *iamata* or from any other source that Asklepios ever cured plague in the Greek world. Asklepios was a divine *iatros*, and like other *iatroi*, he did not attempt to heal communities *en masse*, but treated individuals. This focus on the individual contrasts with other healing gods, like Apollo, who could cure (or decimate, which Asklepios never did) entire communities in an instant. And, to reiterate, Apollo, not Asklepios, was among those given credit for curing the great plague at Athens. Moreover, Asklepios was not likely to handle plague even on an individual basis given that plague is generally fatal, and is therefore just the sort of illness not only that *iatroi* refused to treat as being beyond the limits of their *technē*,<sup>471</sup> but that Asklepios himself is never credited with treating.<sup>472</sup>

Given that Asklepios was not the sort of god to cure plague, and that no evidence demonstrates Asklepios ever cured any plague in the Greek

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<sup>470</sup> On the Aegina cult, see Ch. 2 above. It is possible that Athens chose not to import Asklepios from Aegina because of rivalry with Aegina at the time.

<sup>471</sup> There is little evidence for *iatroi* treating plague. Thucy. 2.47.4 says *iatroi* helped to care for those suffering from the great plague in Athens, but were unsuccessful against the disease, at least at first (τὸ πρῶτον), due to their ignorance (ἀγνοία). Apocryphal stories credit Hippocrates with intervening against the same plague: Aëtius 5.95, ps-Gal. *De theriaca ad Pisonem* 16, and Pliny *NH* 36.202 all say that Hippocrates lit fires throughout Athens to purify the air. Plut. *de.Is.et Os.* 383 says the same of the *iatros* Akron of Akragas. According to Hipp. *Ep.* 27.7, Hippocrates explained how plague could be avoided, but not how it could be cured, which is in keeping with the refusal of *iatroi* to treat hopeless conditions. This latter plague was not the great plague of 430-429 BC, but a supposed plague of 419-416 BC. See Jouanna 1999 (31-33). Even the Roman physician Galen dodged plague as much as possible: in 166 AD he left Rome for Pergamon because plague had broken out in Rome, and in 169 AD returned to Rome to avoid plague in Pergamon (Gal. *Lib.Prop.* 19.15-19).

<sup>472</sup> On the types of illnesses Asklepios treated, see Ch. 3 above.

world, it is unlikely that he was imported to help against this one. This is not to deny, of course, that the aftermath of the plague had something to do with Asklepios' appeal. After a plague and the anxiety about health that it and other hardships of war must have caused, it is understandable that any healing god would have been welcome.<sup>473</sup> But by 420 BC, six years after the last major outbreak, plague was not the immediate motivation for importing Asklepios.

The reasons for Asklepios' appeal to so many communities surely contributed to Athens' own interest in his cult. Asklepios presented an alternative for those suffering chronic maladies that *iatroi* refused to treat. Moreover, he gave individuals personal attention by appearing to them in dreams. And his affinities to *iatroi* made him a familiar and popular type of healer as *iatrike* itself became well-established in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. However, since these are translocal reasons for the cult's appeal, they fail to explain why in 420 BC Athens chose to import Asklepios from Epidauros.

To determine what did in fact motivate Athens to import the god, we return to the context of his importation, and specifically to cults and rituals with which he was aligned upon his arrival.

## **II. The 5<sup>th</sup>-century Acropolis and the Greater Panathenaia**

### **A. The Acropolis: Topography and Associations**

When Asklepios took up residence on the south slope of the Acropolis in 420 BC, he was assimilated into the web of associations and meanings the Acropolis held at that time. (See Fig. 6 below for a plan of the Acropolis and its slopes.) While it is common to speak of the 5<sup>th</sup>-c. building program on the summit initiated by Perikles as a unity unto itself, even as a "text" whose

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<sup>473</sup> Mikalson 1984 adduces much evidence to counter Thucydides' statement that the Athenians gave up on the gods after the plague (Thucy. 2.47.4).

meaning changed over time and with each addition or alteration,<sup>474</sup> the structures on the slopes of the Acropolis must likewise have exerted their own influence and been influenced by those on the summit.<sup>475</sup> As Jeffrey Hurwit has argued, the themes of *agon* and *nike* prevalent on the summit were reflected in the dramatic contests that took place in the theater of Dionysus, in the choregic dedications that flanked it, and in the Odeion built there probably to celebrate Athenian victory over the Persians.<sup>476</sup> In the case of the sanctuary of Asklepios, associations between the Acropolis and empire, manifest in cults, decrees, iconography, and rituals, could not have failed to make their mark.

A monument as prominent and cultically important as the Acropolis necessarily conveyed numerous meanings over time.<sup>477</sup> One of the most constant of its meanings, however, was as a locus of Athenian origins—a function integrated into the fabric of the rebuilt Acropolis. The Acropolis is where Athena vied with Poseidon over possession of Athens.<sup>478</sup> And Thucydides explains that Athenians of his day still referred to the Acropolis as “the *polis*” since it was where the early inhabitants of Athens lived; Athens, he relates, consisted originally of the Acropolis itself and the area immediately south of it.<sup>479</sup>

When the Athenians rebuilt the Acropolis under Perikles, attention was drawn to these traditions. For example, a corner of the Propyleia was truncated to accommodate Cyclopean masonry of the Mycenaean period,

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<sup>474</sup> Hurwit 1999 (228-232).

<sup>475</sup> In “The Wobbling Pivot,” J.Z. Smith 1978 (88-103) has stressed the importance of the periphery as well as the Center—championed by Mircea Eliade—to studies of sacred space.

<sup>476</sup> Hurwit 1999 (232).

<sup>477</sup> On the history, mythology, and archaeology of the Acropolis from the Neolithic to the modern periods, see Hurwit 1999.

<sup>478</sup> The earliest literary account is Hdt. 8.55.

<sup>479</sup> Thucy. 2.15.3-6.

and carefully positioned cutouts in the blocks of the Nike temple bastion provided windows into the Mycenaean bastion below.<sup>480</sup> Moreover, the artwork of the new buildings celebrated the distant, mythic past on the Acropolis. The Parthenon west-pediment, for example, depicted Athena's victory over Poseidon and her claim to Attica.<sup>481</sup> Thus in 420 BC when Asklepios arrived, the Acropolis broadcast its status as the oldest and most sacred civic space in Athens.

In 420 BC, the Acropolis also symbolized Greek victory over the Persians who had burned it in 480 BC. Not until Perikles' building program were many of its monuments and temples reconstructed, an act which celebrated Athens' ultimate victory over the Persians.<sup>482</sup> Victory was explicitly articulated in elements such as sculptural friezes adorning the Parthenon and the Temple of Athena Nike; these depicted battles of Greeks over foreigners and alluded to Marathon.<sup>483</sup> And Athena Nike was one of dozens of sculpted, winged Nikes hovering over the Acropolis as a harbinger of victory.<sup>484</sup> The combined effect was to assimilate recent accomplishments into the heroic age, and thereby elevate them towards heroic status.

Defeat of the Persians in 480 BC led to the creation of the Delian League. Its purpose, according to Thucydides, was to exact vengeance on

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<sup>480</sup> See Hurwit 1999 (159-160).

<sup>481</sup> Paus. 1.24.5. See also Binder 1984; Palagia 1993.

<sup>482</sup> The rebuilding of the Acropolis may have reversed an oath taken by the Greeks at Plataea in 479 BC. Ancient sources say that this oath included a clause to not rebuild any temples destroyed by the Persians. The authenticity of the oath has been challenged since at least the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and inconsistencies in ancient reports of the contents of the oath continue to prompt questions of authenticity even today. On ancient sources for the oath and questions concerning it, see Meiggs 1972 (504-507); Hurwit 1999 (141, 157-158).

<sup>483</sup> The victory at Marathon had been celebrated already in structures and monuments like the Nike of Kallimachos erected on the Acropolis sometime between the battle and the destruction of the Acropolis in 480 BC. See Hurwit 1999 (129-132).

<sup>484</sup> Images of Nike in various guises could be found all over the Acropolis; see Hurwit 1999 (187; 230-232). Hurwit (232) argues convincingly that the Acropolis itself was "in large part a complex essay on competition and victory — it was a vast field of *Agon* and *Nike*."

Persia for the sufferings of the Greeks.<sup>485</sup> This goal was attained in the 460s BC when the Greeks defeated the Persians at Eurymedon.<sup>486</sup> It is possible that a formal declaration of peace between Greece and Persia soon followed, yet the league continued.<sup>487</sup> With its defining goal attained, the league developed into an empire under Athenian control.

In 420 BC, the Acropolis had also come to symbolize this Athenian empire. The Peloponnesian War, at a temporary lull that would last only until 419 BC, pitted Athens not only against Sparta, but also against many Greek states under Athenian control. Since the empire grew out of a league organized to retaliate against the Persians, any image of Athenian victory over the Persians implicitly symbolized Athenian rule. Images of Greeks fighting barbarians, for example, and the flock of Nikes concentrated on the Acropolis, all carried a potentially double meaning.

More explicit signs of Athenian imperial control also crowded the Acropolis. By 454 BC, the treasury of the Delian League was moved from Delos to Athens, and presumably onto the Acropolis. This transfer not only openly acknowledged and further reinforced Athens' position, but identified Athena as the deity of empire instead of Delian Apollo, who had been patron of the league. Imperial tribute was now to be paid to Athena. It was this tribute that helped to finance the building of Athena's largest temple on the Acropolis, the Parthenon, in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>488</sup> Moreover, records of tribute

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<sup>485</sup> Thucy. 1.96.

<sup>486</sup> The date of the battle at Eurymedon, as with most dates of Thucydides' *pentekontaetia* (Thucy. 1.89-118) is disputed. For chronologies, see Gomme 1945-1981 (vol. 1, p. 394, 397, 408); Badian 1993; Pritchett 1995.

<sup>487</sup> The historicity of the so-called Peace of Kallias has been disputed since the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. On the debate and its bibliography, see Badian 1987.

<sup>488</sup> On the architecture, building, and symbolism of the Parthenon, see Hurwit 1999 (161-188; 222-245; App. C.3 for ancient sources and bibliography). On the financing of the Periklean building program and Athens' own ambivalent reactions to the financing, see Kallet 1998.



payment,<sup>489</sup> as well as regulations governing its collection,<sup>490</sup> were published on marble *stelai* on the Acropolis. The *hellenotamiai*, who administered the collection of tribute, also conducted their business on the Acropolis. Athena's sanctuary there housed offerings from Athens' colonies and allies, and inventory lists tallied its contents for public record.<sup>491</sup> Decrees concerning Athens' relations with specific colonies and allies (like Erythrai, Chalkis, Samos, and Brea<sup>492</sup>) also crowded the Acropolis.<sup>493</sup>

In the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the Acropolis thus became, among its many other meanings and associations, a monument celebrating Athenian empire. One did not have to read the inscriptions to understand this subtext.<sup>494</sup>

## **B. The Greater Panathenaia and Athenian Imperialism**

Not only the Acropolis' monuments, but also its festivals, articulated Athenian imperialism. Paramount among these was the Greater Panathenaia, celebrated every five years.<sup>495</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 259-272. The tribute lists record not the full tribute but the first-fruits, or one-sixtieth of the total tribute paid by Athens' subject-allies.

<sup>490</sup> E.g., *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 68.

<sup>491</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 296-299, for the years 430-426 BC.

<sup>492</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 14, 40, 46, 48.

<sup>493</sup> For additional signs of Athenian imperialism on the Acropolis, see J.L. Shear 2001 (17-18; 724-768).

<sup>494</sup> Hurwit 1999 (54) addresses the issue of literacy in regard to the numerous inscriptions on the Acropolis. He suggests that "the principal of publication may have mattered more than the actual practice of reading," and that the formulaic nature of most of the inscriptions enabled them to be interpreted even by those with little ability to read. Hedrick 1994 (174) asserts that inscriptions served the democracy as mnemonic devices of "what everyone already knows." However, Sickinger 1999 (78) adduces a phrase appearing on some 5<sup>th</sup>-c. inscriptions, "for whoever wishes to scrutinize" (εἰδέναι τοὶ βουλομένοι; e.g., *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 84), to demonstrate that inscriptions were erected, at least in part, to be read and examined. How many Athenians could read them remains uncertain.

<sup>495</sup> The Greater Panathenaia stretched over the course of about eight days, and included athletic and musical contests. J.L. Shear 2001 offers a comprehensive, diachronic study of

By the later 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, this festival was heavily imbued with imperial overtones. While panhellenic contests in poetry and athletics attracted people from around the Greek world,<sup>496</sup> and metics took part freely in the festival's great procession along with manumitted slaves and barbarians,<sup>497</sup> Athens also mandated participation. In 425/4 BC Athens issued a decree requiring all cities of the empire to send a cow and suit of armor to the Greater Panathenaia.<sup>498</sup> Other decrees addressed to specific cities, like Erythrai and Brea, included similar requirements.<sup>499</sup>

The festival's rituals reinforced its imperial aspect. The procession paraded the cows and panoplies through the crowds who flocked to the city, while a wheeled boat fitted out with Athena's *peplos* floated by as a symbol of Athenian naval empire.<sup>500</sup> The procession ended on the Acropolis where

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the history, composition, and topography of the festival. On the length of the festival, see also Mikalson 1975 (34). For the early history of the festival and description of its rituals, see also Deubner 1956 (22-35); Parke 1977 (33-50, with notes). On athletic competitions, see also Kyle 1992; on musical competitions, see also Shapiro 1992. For artistic representations related to the festival, see also Neils 1992. On the democratic and imperial implications of the Panathenaia in the Periklean period, see also Shapiro 1996 (215).

The athletic contests of the Greater Panathenaia were associated with the Persian Wars through the figure of Erechthonios, who is said to have founded these contests. See Cook 1995 (128-170) for discussion and references. Erechthonios was the ancestor of Erechtheus, the king of Athens who successfully defended the city against an invasion of barbarians (cf. Eur. *Erechth.*). This barbarian horde was led by Eumolpos, a Thracian according to some sources, and thus a foil for the Persians. The athletic contests, which celebrated the arrival of order in the Athenian *polis* as a military act (an invasion by barbarians), therefore acquired new meaning after the Persian invasion.

<sup>496</sup> Pind. *Nem.* 10 celebrates the victory of an Argive wrestler at the Panathenaia. See also Parke 1977 (37).

<sup>497</sup> See Parke 1977 (44-45, with notes) for ancient references.

<sup>498</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 71.

<sup>499</sup> Erythrai, for instance, was required to bring an offering, probably of grain, to the festival (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 14). The date of this decree is disputed, but falls somewhere between 470 and 450 BC based on letter forms; see *ML* 40. Brea, an Athenian colony, was required to send a cow and suit of armor (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 46). The date of this decree is also disputed; see *ML* 49. Another decree, possibly of the 440s BC, required certain cities of the empire to send a cow and panoply (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 34); see *ML* 46. On participation by Athenian allies and colonists, see J.L. Shear 2001 (139-143).

<sup>500</sup> The procession wound from the Dipylon Gate through the Agora, by the Eleusinion, and

decrees mandating participation stood alongside other monuments of empire.<sup>501</sup> Amidst them, the requisite cows were slaughtered in a massive sacrifice to Athena and the suits of armor stored away in Athena's sanctuary.<sup>502</sup>

Financial management further linked the Greater Panathenaia to the Athenian empire. The same decree of 425/4 BC that required the contribution of a cow and suit of armor stipulated reassessment of imperial tribute every five years during the Greater Panathenaia.<sup>503</sup>

By 420 BC, moreover, Athena was a prominent symbol of Athenian empire outside Athens. League-cults of Athena spread to such places as Kos and Samos, where cults of "Athena, Ruler of Athens" (Ἀθηνῶν μεδέουσα) are attested in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>504</sup>

The Greater Panathenaia thus strongly reinforced associations between the Acropolis and empire. These associations, moreover, were paramount at the time of Asklepios' arrival. The decree requiring a cow and panoply in celebration of the Greater Panathenaia, for example, had been issued just five years earlier, and the first Greater Panathenaia at which it was

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up to the Acropolis, as attested by Thucy. 6.56-57; Xen. *Eq. Mag.* 3.2; Dem. 34.39; Schol. ad Ar. *Eq.* 566; Paus. 1.2.14, 1.29.1; Philostr. *VS* 2.1.5. See also J.L. Shear 2001. On the wheeled ship as symbol of naval empire, see Shapiro 1996 (217). J.L. Shear (143-154; 163-164), however, cautions that there is no explicit evidence for a ship in the procession before the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD.

<sup>501</sup> Both *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 14 and *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 46 were found on the Acropolis in the area of the Erechtheum. See *ML* 40, 49.

<sup>502</sup> On the dedication and storage of the panoplies given to Athens by her colonies and allies, see Hurwit 1999 (60); J.L. Shear 2001 (187-195). Gold crowns dedicated at the Greater Panathenaia are also listed in Athena's inventories beginning in 400/399 BC (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1385.17-18); see also J.L. Shear 2001 (195-200).

<sup>503</sup> The tribute quota lists from 450, 446, and 434 BC indicate changes in the amount of tribute, and therefore reassessment. These same years coincide with celebration of the Greater Panathenaia; see *ML* 39. Specific stipulations regarding reassessment in years of the Greater Panathenaia appear also in *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 71.

<sup>504</sup> On these "League cults" of Athena, see Barron 1964; Parker 1996 (144, with n. 92).

effective must have been that of 422/1 BC.<sup>505</sup> Another decree, requiring the appointment of tribute collectors, had been published on the Acropolis six years earlier.<sup>506</sup> Moreover, construction of the Temple of Athena Nike was still underway in 420 BC, or had only recently concluded.<sup>507</sup> Nike's championing of Athenian empire was broadcast in her temple friezes depicting Greeks fighting Persians and even Greeks fighting fellow Greeks.<sup>508</sup> And construction may have begun on the Erechtheion, named after Erectheus, the legendary king of Athens who successfully defended his city against a barbarian invasion that was later cast in terms of the Persian invasion.<sup>509</sup>

### III. The Cult of Dionysus Eleuthereus and Asklepios

Asklepios' presence on the Acropolis, and the timing of his arrival in 420 BC when imperialism was so much at issue that it had led to war, made associations between Asklepios and empire inevitable. These associations were reaffirmed, moreover, in his integration both topographically and ritually into the cults of Dionysus Eleuthereus and Eleusinian Demeter, two cults with especially prominent ties to Athenian imperialism. Other Athenian cults, especially those located on the imperially-oriented Acropolis, were associated with empire, as was unavoidable in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. However, no

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<sup>505</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 71.

<sup>506</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 68.

<sup>507</sup> Travlos 1971 (sv 'Athena Nike') argues for a period of construction from 427-424 BC; Mark 1993 argues for a period from 424/3-418 BC. For further bibliography on the dating dispute, see Schultz 2001 (1, n. 2). See also Hurwit 1999 (App. C.14) for ancient sources.

<sup>508</sup> Stewart 1985; Hurwit 1999 (211-212). Schultz 2001 situates the temple's references to Nike within the larger context of Athenian victory monuments.

<sup>509</sup> The date when construction began (often given as 421 BC) is conjectural, based on an assumption that only with the Peace of Nicias would there have been resources to build such an elaborate structure. See Hurwit 1999 (206; App. C.13 for ancient sources and bibliography). On integration of the Persian invasion into the Erectheus myth, see Cook 1995 (esp. 134, n. 23).

cults next to those of Athena herself were as well-integrated into the articulation of empire as those of Dionysus and Demeter, as we shall see.

**A. Topographical and Ritual Associations between Dionysus Eleuthereus and Asklepios**

The tract of land occupied by the sanctuary of Asklepios lay between the sanctuary of Dionysus to the east and a series of small sanctuaries of the Nymphs, Themis, and Aphrodite to the west.<sup>510</sup> While the sanctuaries to the west of the Asklepieion were relatively small, the much larger sanctuary of Dionysus immediately to the east dominated the south slope in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

Although the exact extent of the sanctuary of Asklepios in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC is uncertain, as is that of Dionysus, the two were clearly situated side-by-side. When both sanctuaries were more fully monumentalized in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the terraces of the Asklepieion were level with the upper seats of the *cavea* of the theater of Dionysus. At that time, the retaining wall of the theater abutted the eastern terrace of the Asklepieion, and the paving of the eastern terrace accommodated the curve of the theater's *cavea*.<sup>511</sup>

Spatial proximity facilitated association between the two cults. A visitor to the Acropolis would have encountered these sanctuaries in succession, as did Pausanias in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD. In the larger "text" of the Acropolis, they were successive paragraphs, making associations readily available to the viewer.

Rituals reinforced these spatial links. The Asklepieia, one of Asklepios' two annual festivals in Athens, coincided with the City Dionysia. The events

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<sup>510</sup> On the topography of the south slope, see Wycherley 1978 (179-185); Aleshire 1989 (21-36). The identification of the sanctuaries to the west of the Asklepieion is debated; see S. Walker 1979.

<sup>511</sup> In Travlos' plan of the Asklepieion, it is evident that the paving of the eastern terrace is clipped at its south-eastern edge to accommodate the curve of the *cavea*. See Travlos 1971 (fig. 171).

of the Asklepieia are poorly documented; we know only of a large sacrifice and παννυχίς, or all-night revelry.<sup>512</sup> The festival was established probably upon the arrival of Asklepios in 420 BC.<sup>513</sup> According to Aeschines, the Asklepieia took place on the same day as the *proagon* to the City Dionysia, on Elaphebolion 8.<sup>514</sup> During the *proagon*, poets, actors, and choruses of tragedies competing in the Dionysia stood in the Odeion of the sanctuary of Dionysus to announce the subjects of their plays.<sup>515</sup>

These topographical and ritual links were not simply coincidental, but were carefully engineered by the *polis*. The *polis* must have supported and defended the allocation of land for Asklepios, as we have seen. It is unlikely, moreover, that the plot chosen for his sanctuary was determined by merely practical reasons, such as the presence of a water source there (a spring on the eastern terrace). While water is an element common to Asklepieia, this was not the only water source on the Acropolis, much less in Athens; moreover, a well could have been drilled almost anywhere on the Acropolis.<sup>516</sup> Similarly, the *polis* controlled the festival calendar, and it cannot have been coincidence that led to the coordination of festivals of Asklepios and Dionysus.<sup>517</sup> The presence of Asklepios and his sons in plays like

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<sup>512</sup> Deubner 1956 (142); Parke 1977 (135). *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1496 records the revenue received by the state for the sale of animal skins used at various sacrifices and festivals from 334-330 BC. The Asklepieia is included among these festivals, and the amount of revenue is high enough to suggest large numbers of animals, probably for sacrifice. On the decree, see also Mikalson 1998 (36-39). *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 974 (2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC) records the sacrifice also of a bull, and an all-night celebration (παννυχίς), for both this festival and the Epidauria.

<sup>513</sup> The Asklepieia was probably introduced soon after, if not upon, the arrival of Asklepios in 420 BC. See Mikalson 1998 (37). It is unlikely that a festival of Asklepios would have been celebrated in Athens before the importation of the cult.

<sup>514</sup> Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 66-67.

<sup>515</sup> The best description of a *proagon* is that to the Lenaia in Pl. *Symp.* 194b.

<sup>516</sup> Water was used in Asklepieia for ritual bathing and also for practical matters like drinking. On ancient Athenian water sources, see Camp 1977. At a fissure in the bedrock on the north side of the Acropolis, the Myceneans had drilled deep into the marl to produce a well; see Hurwit 1999 (78-79).

<sup>517</sup> On the Athenian calendar, see Deubner 1956; Mikalson 1975; Parke 1977; Bruit Zaidman

Sophocles' *Philoctetes* produced in the theater of Dionysus increased and enhanced ties between the two sanctuaries and cults.<sup>518</sup>

The inevitable question is, why did the *polis* associate the cults of Asklepios and Dionysus Eleuthereus?

## **B. Proffered Reasons for the Alignment of Asklepios with Dionysus**

This question is almost never addressed in scholarship, and when it is, it is addressed with an underlying tone of surprise. H.W. Parke, for example, writes, "In a curious way [the festival of Asklepios] managed to intrude itself into the *Dionysia*."<sup>519</sup> Several explanations have been advanced to account for this link. One concerns the tragedian Sophocles, another developments in drama, and a third healing.

### **1. Sophocles**

Parke accounts for the connection between Asklepios and Dionysus through Sophocles, whom ancient sources credit with welcoming Asklepios to Athens. The *Etymologicum Magnum* explains that Sophocles received

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and Schmitt Pantel 1992 (102-107); S. Price 1999 (28-30).

<sup>518</sup> Within a century of Asklepios' arrival, the two cults were even more closely integrated. In 328 BC, a priest of Asklepios named Androkles was honored for his role as priest of Asklepios and also for his care of the theater of Dionysus (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 354). The decree was awarded in the month Elaphebolion, the same month as celebration of the City Dionysia and Asklepieia. For discussion of the decree, see Schwenk 1985 (no. 54, p. 266-278).

Soph. *Phil.* 1333-1334. Aristophanes' *Ploutos* is also evocative of the topography of the Acropolis. It includes description of a visit to a sanctuary of Asklepios, and the final scene is an elaborate procession engineered to reinstall Wealth on the Acropolis where once he guarded Athena's treasury (1191-1193: 'Ἰδρυσόμεθ' οὖν αὐτίκα μάλ' ἀλλὰ περίμενε/τὸν Πλοῦτον, οὐδ' ἔπειτα πρότερον ἢν ἰδρυμένος,/τὸν ὀπισθόδομον ἀεὶ φυλάττων τῆς θεοῦ [So we'll set Wealth up at once then—hold on!—in the very place he used to sit, guarding always the *opisthodomos* of the goddess]). The festival at which this play was produced is not known.

<sup>519</sup> Parke 1977 (135). Emphasis mine. Parke (65) seems to contradict this when he remarks, as quoted below, that the integration of these two festivals must have been engineered by the *polis*.

Asklepios into his own *oikia* and set up an altar to the god, and was thus called “*Dexion*,” or “Receiver,” and honored as a hero.<sup>520</sup> In addition, an inscription of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD records a *paeon* to Asklepios composed, the inscription says, by Sophocles.<sup>521</sup> On the basis of this slender evidence, Parke speculates that Sophocles convinced the city to situate Asklepios’ sanctuary next to the theater of Dionysus and to coordinate the festivals of the two gods.<sup>522</sup>

There are several problems with such a scenario. First, the date and hence the historical accuracy of the identification of Sophocles as *Dexion* of Asklepios is problematic. Our sole source, the *Etymologicum Magnum*, is a document from the 12<sup>th</sup>-c. AD, although it drew upon material collected during the Hellenistic period when poets’ biographies became a matter of erudite scholarship.

Sophocles’ *vita* is one such Hellenistic biography. As Mary Lefkowitz argues, these Hellenistic biographies carry a large fictional element that can be distinguished from fact only with great difficulty.<sup>523</sup> Moreover, Sophocles’ *vita* only states in reference to Asklepios that Sophocles was a priest of Ἴαπων, “a hero taught by Cheiron along with Asklepios.” Halon, however, is

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<sup>520</sup> *Et.M.*, sv ‘Δεξιῶν.’ Since there is no mention of Telemachos in this account, scholars reconcile the two traditions by suggesting Asklepios stopped at Sophocles’ *oikia* on his way to the Eleusinion. For a list of ancient testimonia and recent bibliography on Sophocles’ relationship to Asklepios, see Clinton 1994 (25, with n. 26-27). While there are parallels for individuals welcoming gods into their homes (cf. *IG V* 2.265, where a priestess of Kore receives the goddess into her house every year; see also Clinton 1994 [26]), this does not prove that Sophocles welcomed Asklepios into his home. Moreover, unlike the priestess of Kore, there is no evidence for Sophocles being a priest of Asklepios.

<sup>521</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 4510. On the monument on which the *paeon* is inscribed, see Aleshire 1991 (49-59). Other late accounts also attest to a Sophoclean *paeon* to Asklepios: Lucian *Dem.Enc.* 27; Philostr. *VA* 3.17; Philostr.*Jun. Im.* 13.

<sup>522</sup> Parke 1977 (135). Both Aleshire 1989 (9) and Clinton 1994 believe the tradition of Sophocles as *Dexion* to be historically accurate, but neither acknowledges an association between Sophocles and the Asklepieion on the Acropolis.

<sup>523</sup> Lefkowitz 1981. Her discussion of the *vita* of Sophocles appears on p. 75-87. Connolly 1998 reviews the evidence for Sophocles as *Dexion* in greater detail, and concludes that *Dexion* was not the heroized Sophocles.



otherwise unknown, and Körte emended the *vita* to read Amynos instead.<sup>524</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup>-c. tradition of Sophocles as Dexion may thus have its genesis in something as untelling as the *paean* to Asklepios.

Furthermore, although 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC inscriptions from the sanctuary of Amynos on the south slope of the Areopagus group the names Amynos, Asklepios, and Dexion,<sup>525</sup> Sophocles' name occurs nowhere in conjunction with them.<sup>526</sup> Even the *vita* of Sophocles does not mention his being honored as Dexion.<sup>527</sup>

There is thus no evidence from the classical period to support a tie between Sophocles and Asklepios.<sup>528</sup> Just because Sophocles composed a *paean* to the god, which seems likely, we cannot assume the playwright and god shared a special relationship. Moreover, it is just as possible that the story of Sophocles welcoming Asklepios developed as an *aition* for the spatial and ritual links between Asklepios and Dionysus described above.

Furthermore, even if Sophocles did receive Asklepios into his own home, the further inference that Sophocles out of devotion to the god singularly engineered the cult's location and festivals to coincide with those of Dionysus is unlikely. More than one person's interests were operative in the integration of Asklepios into the city's rituals and topography.

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<sup>524</sup> See Clinton 1994 (31, n. 61).

<sup>525</sup> *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1252 + 999; *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1253.

<sup>526</sup> Lefkowitz 1981 (84) comments that it would be odd for Sophocles to have been called "Dexion" instead of "Sophocles" in his heroic role since heroes were worshipped under their own names.

<sup>527</sup> See Lefkowitz 1981 (84; 86-87) for further reasons to doubt the historicity of Sophocles being Dexion of Asklepios.

<sup>528</sup> A 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC inscription from Eleusis concerning the Rural Dionysia (*IG II*<sup>2</sup> 3090) mentions performances by Sophocles, but this may be the grandson of the famous playwright. See below.

## 2. A Change in Drama

Early studies of Greek theater have argued that the cult of Asklepios at Epidauros exerted strong influence on Athenian tragedy by the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>529</sup> As David Wiles explains, this model maintains that the idea of drama changed from something “agonistic or dialectical” to a “holistic, cathartic ideal embodied by Epidauros.”<sup>530</sup> By this view, Epidaurian impact on Athenian drama is reflected in the contiguity of the sanctuaries and festivals of Asklepios and Dionysus on the Acropolis. It is also reflected in a shift from rectangular theaters typical of Attic *demes* towards a circular theater “acoustically perfect for the paeon, Apollo’s lyre and Homeric recitation.”<sup>531</sup>

The argument for Epidaurian influence on Athenian drama is weakened by anachronism, however. The theater building at Epidauros said to exemplify the Apolline ideal is a construction of the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>532</sup> Thus, to extrapolate the character of 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Epidaurian poetry from the space it later occupied is problematic. Even more problematic is the suggestion that the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. theater at Epidauros influenced the 5<sup>th</sup>-c. theater of Dionysus and Athenian tragedy.

## 3. Healing

The concept of a “cathartic” drama suggests a more general bond between Asklepios and Dionysus based on healing. In broad terms,

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<sup>529</sup> E.g., Fiechter 1930-1950; Pickard-Cambridge 1968; also Travlos 1971.

<sup>530</sup> Wiles 1997 (43). Wiles (44) rejects this view: “The Apolline model is seductive, and we must be cautious of it.”

<sup>531</sup> Wiles 1997 (43-44).

<sup>532</sup> von Gerkan and Müller-Wiener 1961; Burford 1969 (75-76); Käppel 1989. The date of the stone theater is uncertain, but evidence points to the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. See Tomlinson 1983 (87). The reference at Pl. *Ion* 530a to rhapsodic and unspecified other musical competitions (καὶ τῆς ἄλλης γε μουσικῆς) at Epidauros presumably in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC make it likely that an earlier theater existed, but we have no evidence for its location, construction, or design.

Dionysus was associated with fertility; plant growth, especially the grape vine, and the phallus were two of his most common symbols.<sup>533</sup> Dionysus could also send and cure illness, as could any god. According to the scholiast to Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, Dionysus Eleuthereus was angered that the Athenians did not receive him as a god. He therefore afflicted the men of Athens with a genital disease until they fashioned phalluses to propitiate him—an *aition* for the procession of phalluses in the City Dionysia.<sup>534</sup> Moreover, according to the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC physician Mnesitheus, the Pythian priestess ordered the Athenians to honor Dionysus as Ἴατρός, and everyone calls Dionysus Ἴατρός because of the effects of wine.<sup>535</sup> By the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Dionysus was also called ὑγιότης and παιώνιος.<sup>536</sup>

Dionysus could also alleviate emotional suffering. In Euripides' *Bacchae* of 406 BC, Dionysus not only has the ability to reverse the madness he has instilled in Thebes, but his wine is said to be a *pharmakon* capable of easing grief and providing sleep and forgetfulness of daily cares (*Ba.* 278-283).<sup>537</sup>

These latter, however, are the pains of life in a general sense rather than specific illnesses. Evidence for Dionysus as a healer as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, moreover, is problematic. Other than associations with fertility, nothing

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<sup>533</sup> The primary function of the phallus is apotropaic, however, as demonstrated by Burkert 1983 (58-72). On the healing aspect of Dionysus, see Detienne 1989 (27-41). Detienne's arguments for Dionysus of the Acropolis as a healer would benefit from observation of the topographic and ritual associations between Dionysus and Asklepios.

<sup>534</sup> Schol. ad Ar. *Ach.* 243.

<sup>535</sup> Athen. *Deip.* 1.22, 2.36.

<sup>536</sup> Athen. 2.36; Hesych. sv 'παιώνιος.'

<sup>537</sup> Eur. *Ba.* 278-283: ὃς δ' ἦλθ' ἔπειτ', ἀντίπαλον ὁ Σεμέλης γόνος/ βότρυος ὑγρὸν πῶμ' ἠῦρε κάσινέγκατο/ θνητοῖς, ὃ παύει τοὺς ταλαιπώρους βροτοὺς/ λύπης, ὅταν πλησθῶσιν ἀμπέλου ροῆς./ ὕπνον τε λήθην τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν κακῶν/ δίδωσιν, οὐδ' ἔστ' ἄλλο φάρμακον πόνων (Then follows, by contrast, Semele's son, who discovered the watery drink of the grape clusters and gave it to mortals. It stops the pain of grief-weary mortals whenever they drink deeply of the flow of the vine. He also gives sleep—a forgetting of daily woes. No better remedy for toils exists).

indicates for certain that Dionysus was perceived as a healer in Athens in 420 BC.

Association between Asklepios and Dionysus based on healing also begs the question why Dionysus in particular was chosen—whose healing role seems not to have been prominent in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC—instead of another healing god? Since all gods had the power to heal, Asklepios could have been linked with any number of them. More importantly, sanctuaries of Asklepios and Dionysus seem not to have been paired outside of Athens, which suggests a localized reason for their Athenian alignment.<sup>538</sup> Dionysus' later associations with healing were probably a simple extension of what was found in Athens, based no doubt on the proximity of the two cults.

It is also doubtful that the connection between Asklepios and Dionysus was a byproduct of tragic catharsis. Although Aristotle wrote of the cathartic effects of tragedy in the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, there is no secure evidence that tragedy was thought to be cathartic in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>539</sup> If the connection had been based on tragedy, moreover, one would expect to find Dionysus and Asklepios aligned in places other than Athens where tragic festivals were celebrated.

The metaphor of the state in need of an *iatros* recurs often in Athenian tragedy (as well as in other forms of poetry, and in prose), but it, too, does not account for the alignment.<sup>540</sup> In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Agamemnon announces upon his return to Argos that any disease befalling the city shall be treated with drugs, a scalpel or cautery (*Ag.* 848-850).<sup>541</sup> Likewise, in the

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<sup>538</sup> I have found no evidence for their association outside of Athens. Parke 1977 (135) also comments: "There is no usual connection between [Asklepios] and Dionysus."

<sup>539</sup> Arist. *Poet.* 1449b-1450a. On the date of the *Poetics*, see Halliwell 1986 (App. 1).

<sup>540</sup> By the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, we see it, e.g., in Solon 4.17; Thgn. 39-40, 1133-1134; Pind. *Pyth.* 4.270-271; Hdt. 3.76.2, 3.127.1, 7.148.3; Thucy. 6.14; Ar. *Vesp.* 650-651. On the metaphor of the ailing state, see also Brock 2000; Kosak 2000. On the metaphor in Thucydides, see Kallet 1999.

<sup>541</sup> Aesch. *Ag.* 848-850: ὅτ' ἄνδ' ἀὶ δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων, / ἧτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως/

Thebes of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, a sickness attacks plant, animal, and human procreation (similar to the *aition* of Dionysus Eleuthereos), and is described as one that has settled into the body politic (*OT* 1-77, esp. 59-69). As the *Agamemnon* makes clear, a healer is necessary to treat the ailing body politic; that healer, moreover, behaves like an *iatros*. In the words of Thucydides' Nikias, the presiding officer in the Sicilian debate should act as an *iatros* to the city (Thucy. 6.14).<sup>542</sup>

But there is no evidence for Asklepios healing anyone other than individuals until the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC; only then is Asklepios thanked for the health and safety of the Athenian *polis*. And, as Jon Mikalson points out, this marks a larger trend of thanking not just Asklepios but a number of the gods for the health and safety of the state.<sup>543</sup>

Moreover, the effectiveness of an ailing state in need of an *iatros* depends upon slotting the right politician into the role of *iatros*. Just as the state is a metaphorical body, the healer is a metaphorical (not an actual) *iatros*. Thus in Aeschylus (as well as in Thucydides), the "*iatros*" effective at healing the state is a capable politician. Just as no one would have turned the *polis* over to the *iatros demosie* (the public physician) for healing (at least not based on the mere fact that he was an *iatros*), the *polis* would not have entrusted itself to Asklepios simply because he was a deified *iatros*. And even if they had, this would not have resulted in an alignment with tragedy.

The centrality of healing to Asklepios and his cult has largely blinded us to other explanations for the alignment of Asklepios with Dionysus.

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πειρασόμεσθα πῆμι' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου (Whenever there is need of healing remedies, then we will try to avert the misery of illness with wise use of cautery or surgery).

<sup>542</sup> Thucy. 6.14: εἰ ὀρρωδεῖς τὸ ἀναψηφίσαι, τὸ μὲν λύειν τοὺς νόμους μὴ μετὰ τοσῶνδ' ἂν μαρτύρων αἰτίαν σχεῖν, τῆς δὲ πόλεως (κακῶς) βουλευσαμένης ἰατρὸς ἂν γενέσθαι, καὶ τὸ καλῶς ἄρξαι τοῦτ' εἶναι, ὃς ἂν τὴν πατρίδα ὠφελήσῃ ὡς πλεῖστα ἢ ἑκὼν εἶναι μηδὲν βλάβῃ (If you are afraid to put the matter to vote again, consider that you would incur no guilt by breaking the law before so many witnesses; instead, you would be an *iatros* of a city that has taken poor counsel. To

#### IV. The Cult of Eleusinian Demeter and Asklepios

##### A. Topographical and Ritual Associations between Eleusinian Demeter and Asklepios

Ritual links between the cult of Asklepios in Athens and the cult of Eleusinian Demeter are discussed above: Asklepios was welcomed at Piraeus during the Eleusinian Mysteries and escorted to Athens by personnel of the cult of Eleusinian Demeter; the god was housed for a time in the Eleusinion; and the Epidauria, one of his two annual festivals, was integrated into the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The many connections between Eleusinian Demeter and Asklepios were explained later in antiquity as the result of Asklepios' interest in the Mysteries. As mentioned above, Pausanias and Philostratos wrote that Asklepios, like Herakles, came to Athens in order to be initiated into the Mysteries. When Asklepios arrived too late for the preparatory rites, the Mysteries were briefly paused to allow him to prepare and join the other initiates.<sup>544</sup> That hiatus corresponded to celebration of the Epidauria on the third or fourth day of the Mysteries. Asklepios' arrival in Athens thus became an *aition* for holding the Epidauria during the Mysteries.

But, as with the alignment of Asklepios and Dionysus Eleuthereus, coordination of the cults of Asklepios and Demeter had to have been engineered, for some reason, by the Athenian *polis*.<sup>545</sup>

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rule well is to help one's country as much as possible and to harm it willingly not at all).

<sup>543</sup> Mikalson 1998 (42-44).

<sup>544</sup> Paus. 2.26.8; Philostr. *VA* 4.17. On the initiation of Herakles, see Apollod. 2.5.12; Diod.Sic. 4.14; Schol. ad Arist. *Pl.* 1013; Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.6.

<sup>545</sup> Clinton 1994 (25): "The major change in the public celebration of the Mysteries [i.e., the integration of the Epidauria] also required ratification by the Demos."

## B. Proffered Reasons for the Alignment of Asklepios with Demeter

As with Dionysus, traditional explanations for Athens' alignment of Asklepios and Demeter hinge upon healing.<sup>546</sup> Demeter is analogous to a healer inasmuch as she controls the growth and destruction of crops. Moreover, at Athens Demeter was called Κουροτρόφος, or Nurturer of Children.<sup>547</sup> And her Mysteries promised the possibility of a better life and a different afterlife.<sup>548</sup>

Unlike Dionysus, Asklepios and Demeter were aligned in ritual, art, and topography in many places in the Greek world. Christa Benedum has mapped these alignments at Epidauros, Sikyon, Troezen, Hermione, Paros, and Aegina, to list but a few.<sup>549</sup> She accounts for the coordination of these two gods, moreover, in terms of their salvific powers. While Asklepios heals the living, Demeter aids with the afterlife. Thus, both are concerned with mediating the life-death border and providing mitigated triumph over death.

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<sup>546</sup> E.g., Edelstein 1945 (vol. 2, p. 127-128). Edelstein also points to a similarity between Demeter and Asklepios as civilizing gods. Demeter offered humanity agriculture; Asklepios offered medicine. However, the sources for this tradition are late. Aelius Aristides (38.15) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, for example, compares Machaon and Podalirius to Triptolemos as propagators of medicine and agriculture, respectively. The pseudo-Hippocratic letters would do the same for Hippocrates (*Ep.* 9). Not before the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, moreover, is there evidence that Asklepios received credit for establishing the *technē* of *iatrike* (Pl. *Symp.* 186E). Before that, Prometheus was credited with giving medical *technē* to humans. In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, for example, Prometheus says that the greatest *technē* he gave humans consisted of remedies to ward off illness (478-483). Moreover, according to Soph. *Ant.* 363-364 and the treatise *On Ancient Medicine*, humans worked out how to heal the body on their own without recourse to the gods. The *Iliad* corroborates this: Cheiron trains men like Achilles and Asklepios who in turn train other men.

<sup>547</sup> Pauly-Wissowa (sv 'Demeter' §28). There was also a Ge Kourotrophos whose sanctuary is mentioned by Paus. 1.22.3. The sanctuary has not yet been identified, but Pausanias indicates that it was on the south slope of the Acropolis. If this is correct, then it is possible that Asklepios, too, was associated with the *kourotrophos* aspects of Demeter and Ge via spatial and ritual proximity. On Ge Kourotrophos, see also Pauly-Wissowa (sv 'Gaia'); T.H. Price 1978 (esp. 101-132 on Attica).

<sup>548</sup> *HHDem* 480-489; Isoc. 4.4.28; Pind. fr. 137a; Soph. fr. 837 Radt. See also Foley 1994 (70-71). For further discussion of Demeter as a healer, see Rubensohn 1895.

<sup>549</sup> Benedum 1986.

Both, moreover, focus on the individual. Demeter brings a different afterlife to those who undergo initiation into her Mysteries, just as Asklepios brings health to the individual who undergoes incubation in his sanctuary. Each thus complements the work of the other.<sup>550</sup> This is made obvious in the story of Asklepios raising the dead, an echo (and illegitimate extension) of mystery cult.

Benedum's explanation of the alignment of Asklepios and Demeter in cult is compelling, especially as it accounts for the prevalence of the phenomenon. Dionysus, too, could be included in such an explanation inasmuch as he, too, mediates the life-death border. But it is significant that none of the evidence cited by Benedum for the alignment of Asklepios and Demeter predates the arrival of Asklepios in Athens.<sup>551</sup> As mentioned above, the same is true for Dionysus and Asklepios. Thus while health in a general sense, especially as an extension of salvific benefits, may help explain many of these instances, it cannot be used as paradigmatic of the association in Athens.

Furthermore, while the Athenians may have exploited this natural affinity when they aligned the cults of Demeter and Asklepios in 420 BC, it probably was not the sole reason for doing so. An explanation so simple ignores the complexity of forces and interests involved in deciding such matters. Moreover, the prominence of imperialism in the cults of Eleusinian Demeter and Dionysus Eleuthereus, and in the cults and monuments of the Acropolis, is a major indication that other factors were at work.

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<sup>550</sup> Benedum 1986 (154-157); Garland 1992 (124).

<sup>551</sup> The same observation about Benedum's arguments is made by Parker 1996 (180, n. 96).



## V. New Explanations for the Alignment of the Cults of Dionysus Eleuthereus, Eleusinian Demeter, and Asklepios

### A. The Sanctuary of Dionysus Eleuthereus and Athenian Imperialism

By 420 BC, the sanctuary of Dionysus Eleuthereus included the theater of Dionysus, a small temple, and the Odeion. Although the theater of Dionysus was not the monumental stone structure it would become in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, its wooden bleachers utilized the natural concavity of the hillside to provide seating for at least all of the male citizen population as well as notable visitors.<sup>552</sup> The focal point of this *cavea* was the orchestra, behind which stood a modest temple of Dionysus dating to the archaic period. But the most striking monumental element of the sanctuary in the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC was the Odeion.

A large roofed, almost square hall to the east of the orchestra, the Odeion housed musical contests, dramatic events, and even court proceedings.<sup>553</sup> Its building history is debated by ancient sources.<sup>554</sup> One version attributes it to Themistokles;<sup>555</sup> another, more widely accepted account, attributes it to Perikles.<sup>556</sup> Both versions agree, however, that the structure celebrated Greece's victory over Persia. Vitruvius says that the posts supporting the roof were taken from Persian warships, and Plutarch and Pausanias remark that the structure had been built to resemble the Persian king's tent.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> On the composition and size of the audience, see Winkler 1990; Ley 1991 (33-34); Wiles 1997 (51). Estimates of the size of the audience vary. According to Pl. *Symp.* 175e, the audience of the theater of Dionysus in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC was 30,000.

<sup>553</sup> See Wiles 1997 (54-55); Nielsen 1999 (49); Hurwit 1999 (216-218, App. C.19 for sources and bibliography).

<sup>554</sup> The dispute is continued in scholarship. See Robkin 1979; M.C. Miller 1997 (218-242).

<sup>555</sup> Vitr. 5.9.1.

<sup>556</sup> Plut. *Per.* 13.9-11.

<sup>557</sup> Vitr. 5.9.1; Plut. *Per.* 13.9-11; Paus. 1.20.4. The Odeion that stood when these men wrote was not the 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Odeion, but a later rebuilding. The Athenians burned the 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Odeion in 86 BC to preempt Sulla's pillaging of it. See Hurwit 1999 (217).

As a Persian victory monument, and like victory monuments on the summit of the Acropolis, the Odeion by the later 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC could carry connotations also of Athenian dominance, and thereby share in the reflexive text of imperial connotations published across the Acropolis. Pausanias reports, moreover, that the Odeion was financed by tribute from Athens' allies.<sup>558</sup> And, according to Plutarch, Perikles decreed that musical contests belonging to the Greater Panathenaia be performed in the Odeion.<sup>559</sup> This festival, so heavily imbued with imperial overtones, integrated the sanctuary of Dionysus more fully into the Acropolis' imperial associations.<sup>560</sup>

Furthermore, anyone standing in the sanctuary of Dionysus had only to gaze up to the summit of the Acropolis to see the temple of Athena Parthenos, goddess of the Panathenaia and of the empire, dominating the view.<sup>561</sup> This was not true for sanctuaries on the north or west slopes of the Acropolis where other structures and the elevation of the summit obstructed one's view of the Parthenon.<sup>562</sup>

## **B. The City Dionysia and Athenian Imperialism**

The strongest link between the sanctuary of Dionysus and Athenian Empire resided in the rituals of the City Dionysia. Taking place over a period

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<sup>558</sup> Plut. *Per.* 12.1-5, 14.1.

<sup>559</sup> Plut. *Per.* 13.11.

<sup>560</sup> J.L. Shear 2001 (770-772) argues that construction of the Odeion added a new axial dimension to the Kerameikos—Agora—Acropolis axis which had previously dominated the Greater Panathenaia.

<sup>561</sup> See Wiles 1997 for a spatial analysis of the sanctuary of Dionysus, and of the visual axis uniting the sanctuary and Acropolis.

<sup>562</sup> Column drums from an earlier Parthenon were built into the fortification wall along the north side of the Acropolis in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC—a visual shorthand to those standing to the north of the Acropolis for the Parthenon along the southern edge of the summit, and a reminder of the Persian destruction.

of five days,<sup>563</sup> this festival in honor of Dionysus Eleuthereus foregrounded Athens' position as head of a vast empire.<sup>564</sup>

John Winkler has proposed that numerous elements of the festival's dramatic competitions reflected and celebrated the *polis*, including such practicalities as the seating of the audience by *demes* and the military training of the chorus.<sup>565</sup> Rituals preceding the dramatic competitions also celebrated Athens, as Simon Goldhill elucidates.<sup>566</sup> Citizens who had made significant contributions to the city were awarded gold crowns, and children of men killed in war were brought onto the stage; these latter, it was announced, had been raised and trained by the city to fight on its behalf. And Athens' generals poured libations prior to performances in the theater of Dionysus. All of these rituals eulogized the power—past, present, and future—of the city in much the same way as the public funeral held each year to commemorate Athenians who died in war.<sup>567</sup>

Other evidence for the festival is explicit about its articulation of Athenian empire. According to the slander-wary Dikaiopolis in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* of 425 BC, an Athenian must be very careful what he says during the City Dionysia since more foreigners than usual are present in the city (*Ach.* 496-509).<sup>568</sup> A major reason for this influx of foreigners was the schedule of tribute payment: Athens decreed that cities of the empire pay imperial tribute by the start of the City Dionysia.<sup>569</sup> The financing of empire

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<sup>563</sup> Mikalson 1975 (123-129). During the Peloponnesian War, the festival was reduced to four days.

<sup>564</sup> On the events of the City Dionysia, and for ancient sources, see Deubner 1956 (138-142); Pickard-Cambridge 1968 (57-125); Parke 1977 (125-135); Goldhill 1990.

<sup>565</sup> Winkler 1990.

<sup>566</sup> Goldhill 1990.

<sup>567</sup> On the ritual of the Athenian public funeral, see Loraux 1986.

<sup>568</sup> The *Acharnians* was produced at the Lenaea, the other major festival of Dionysus in Athens. Dikaiopolis is able to speak freely to the audience because he is at the Lenaea, as opposed to the City Dionysia.

<sup>569</sup> Schol. Ar. *Ach.* 504. Ar. *Ach.* 504-506: Αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἔσμεν οὐπὶ Ληναίῳ τ' ἀγών./ κοῦπω ξένοι

was thus coordinated with this Athenian festival, much as the reassessment of tribute was coordinated with the Greater Panathenaia.

The City Dionysia, moreover, integrated imperial tribute into its very rituals. Tribute was paraded into the theater of Dionysus and laid out talent by talent across the orchestra.<sup>570</sup> Tribute thus became yet another staged spectacle that brought home, quite literally, the message of Athenian imperialism to residents and visitors alike.

Moreover, at least one imperial colony was required to send a phallus annually to the procession of the City Dionysia, in addition to a cow and suit of armor to the Greater Panathenaia.<sup>571</sup> Unlike most other processions that moved from the center of the city to its periphery, these two processions terminated on the Acropolis (Panathenaia) or its slopes (Dionysia) amidst numerous indications of empire.<sup>572</sup> Both processions were thus reciprocal in form and function; they expressed the power of the Athenian *polis* to itself and to foreign visitors.<sup>573</sup> Both also celebrated Athenian empire.

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πάρεισιν· οὔτε γὰρ φόροι/ἤκουσιν οὔτ' ἐκ τῶν πόλεων οἱ ξύμμαχοι (For now is the time of the Lenaia; strangers are not yet present. Neither has the tribute nor representatives from the allied cities yet arrived). It is generally believed that Athens fixed this date for tribute payment because the City Dionysia coincided with the reopening of the sailing season; boats carrying tribute could only get to Athens once the seas became accessible after winter storms. Moreover, the arrival of the allies by sea with tribute echoes Dionysus' arrival by ship to bring good things, like viticulture, to the city.

<sup>570</sup> Isoc. 8.82.

<sup>571</sup> Brea: *IG I*<sup>3</sup> 46.

<sup>572</sup> On these centripetal processions, see Graf 1996 (57-59). Graf considers the procession of the City Dionysia an inversion of the Panathenaic procession, however, since it terminates on the south slope of the Acropolis, "a place for non-civic cults." But as this chapter demonstrates, cults on the south slope, like those of Dionysus and Asklepios, were very much civic cults. On other similarities between these processions, see Seaford 1994 (248-249).

<sup>573</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1994 points to other rituals of both festivals that were articulated by the *polis* as a whole, rather than by subdivisions, like *phratries*, characteristic of other Athenian festivals. However, according to Winkler 1990, certain subdivisions were clearly articulated in, e.g., seating in the theater of Dionysus.

Furthermore, rituals of the City Dionysia that displayed Athenian military strength—such as generals pouring libations before the performance of tragedies, and the parading of war orphans across the stage—acquired new meaning in the years around 420 BC as Athens attempted to stifle insurrection within its empire.

Its imperial focus made the City Dionysia a fitting context in which to conduct other business of empire. Around 430 BC, Athens issued a decree attempting to restrict Macedonian interference in Methone with the stipulation that, should Macedonia not cooperate, both Macedonia and Methone were to send envoys to the City Dionysia to negotiate.<sup>574</sup> The decree was erected in the theater of Dionysus, and depicted on it was Athena, goddess of the empire. The preliminary measures of the Peace of Nikias, moreover, were ratified during the City Dionysia,<sup>575</sup> and the treaty was to be renewed each year at this festival.

The celebration of imperialism in the City Dionysia and the sanctuary of Dionysus Eleuthereus was impossible to overlook in 420 BC. The same is true for the cult of Eleusinian Demeter.

### **C. Eleusinian Demeter and Athenian Imperialism: The First-Fruits Decree**

Association of Eleusinian Demeter with Athenian imperialism is best attested by *IG I<sup>3</sup> 78*, the First-Fruits decree, issued by Athens probably in the 420s BC. The date of the decree, which is debated, is discussed in Appendix II.B below. The rider to this decree, with stipulations for sanctuaries within the Pelargikon, is discussed in Chapter 4 above. The main body of the decree

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<sup>574</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup> 61*; illustrated in Lawton 1995 (Pl. 1.2). This decree was inscribed along with a second decree in 423 BC and erected in the theater of Dionysus. The date of the first decree is disputed, but falls within the first half of the 420s BC. See *ML* 65.

<sup>575</sup> Thucy. 4.118; 5.23. The peace was also to be renewed at the Hyakinthia in Sparta.

consists of provisions for the offering of ἀπαρχαί, or first-fruits, to Demeter and Kore. A text and translation appear as Appendix II.A below.

First-fruits, or a portion of an individual's harvest, were traditionally offered to local deities. These first-fruits could be combined with others to represent the offering of an entire community. The tribute to Athena, for example, was a first-fruits offering collected city-by-city, as attested by the tribute quota lists. Demeter's role as goddess of grain made her an obvious and doubtless long-standing recipient of the first-fruits of the grain harvest in many Greek cities.

A decree dating to ca. 460 BC provides the earliest evidence of first-fruits offered to Demeter at Eleusis (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 6*).<sup>576</sup> According to this decree issued by Eleusis, the proceeds from the first-fruits (that is, the money made from sale of the grain) were to be stored in Athena's sanctuary on the Acropolis and to be used at the discretion of the Athenians.<sup>577</sup> This document is significant as evidence for the assimilation of Eleusis into the orbit of Athenian authority. Athens reaped the benefits of Eleusinian finances.

As opposed to *IG I<sup>3</sup> 6*, the First-Fruits decree demands that the entire empire offer first-fruits to Eleusinian Demeter (lines 14-24). Such a mandate is closely akin to Athens' requirement that the empire pay annual tribute to Athena, that this tribute be brought to Athens every year at the time of the City Dionysia, and that all cities of the empire send a cow and suit of armor to the Greater Panathenaia. Like these other mandates, the First-Fruits decree is an expression of Athenian control over its empire. Significantly, neither "tradition" nor the "oracular response of Delphi," mentioned four times in the decree, is invoked in the clause governing members of the empire. This suggests Athens could not pretend that requiring first-fruits from its allies was sanctioned by tradition/the oracle.

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<sup>576</sup> The decree is dated by letter forms. See Cavanaugh 1996 (73).

<sup>577</sup> See Ch. 4 above.

Beyond her own empire, moreover, Athens urged all the Greeks to contribute first-fruits to Eleusinian Demeter (lines 24-34). According to the decree, this exhortation was sanctioned by tradition and Delphi. Only an Athens confident in its position would exert its influence over the entire Greek world. As Robert Parker writes in his book on Athenian religion, “It may well have been traditional for a tithe of crops to be sent to Eleusis by the Attic demes...; but it was doubtless only at the height of her political and cultic hegemony that Athens, with the support of the Delphic oracle, could press her claims on the rest of the Greek world.”<sup>578</sup>

Athens thus exploited the prestige of the cult to promote Athenian empire. It should not be surprising that the rider to the First-Fruits decree contains a scheme for another first-fruits offering: this one of olive oil (lines 59-61), presumably in honor of Athena who gave the olive to Athens. Although the proposal evidently never passed, as Parker comments, “it is revealing that it was made.”<sup>579</sup> What it reveals is not just Athenian ambition and confidence, but interest particularly in Demeter and Athena to express Athenian imperialism. Since both gods had panhellenic cults in Athens, they were obvious choices to advertise public acknowledgment of the empire.

Other Athenian rituals further associated these two goddesses with one another and with imperialism. The Panathenaic procession, for example, passed by the Eleusinion.<sup>580</sup> This procession wove Eleusinian Demeter into the web of imperial references that crowded the Acropolis. Moreover, during the Greater Mysteries, a herald visited Athena’s priestess on the Acropolis to announce the arrival at the Eleusinion of the “holy things” from

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<sup>578</sup> Parker 1996 (143). See also Cavanaugh 1996 (xiii) for a similar interpretation. Although the influence and prestige of the Eleusinian cult could have been a basis in its own right for making such demands, it is probably not coincidental that the decree came about at a time of Athenian confidence in its hegemony.

<sup>579</sup> Parker 1996 (144).

<sup>580</sup> Schol. ad Ar. *Eq.* 566.

Eleusis.<sup>581</sup> Demeter was thus subordinated to the patron goddess of the empire. And, as mentioned above, proceeds from the sale of Eleusinian first-fruits were housed in Athena's sanctuary on the Acropolis (attested in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 6* and again in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 386* of 408/7 BC), presumably alongside the imperial tribute. Although by 434/3 BC the possessions of gods other than Athena were stored on the Acropolis and managed *en masse* by "treasurers of the other gods" (ταμίαι τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν, *IG I<sup>3</sup> 52*),<sup>582</sup> the assets of Eleusinian Demeter were kept under separate control until at least 408/7 BC.<sup>583</sup>

The integration of Asklepios into Demeter's cult in 420 BC cannot have been without studied implications for Asklepios.

#### **D. Associations between Dionysus and Demeter**

The alignment of Asklepios with both Dionysus and Demeter must also be considered in light of associations between the latter two at the time of Asklepios' arrival. Dionysus, albeit not as Eleuthereus, had a marked presence at Eleusis.<sup>584</sup> The chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone* refers to Dionysus as "you who rule in the all-welcoming folds of Eleusinian Demeter" (*Ant.* 1119-1121).<sup>585</sup> A Red-figure skyphos by Makron, dating to ca. 480 BC, depicts a personification of Eleusis, along with Demeter, Persephone, Triptolemos, Eumolpos, Zeus, and Dionysus. Kevin Clinton, noting the equal size of the figures, has interpreted this vase and several others from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC as indicating that Dionysus was worshipped at Eleusis.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 885.16. See also Parke 1977 (60).

<sup>582</sup> On the institution of the "treasurers of the other gods," see Linders 1975.

<sup>583</sup> Demeter's assets were under the control of Eleusinian officials who, by the later 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, were probably appointed by Athens. See Cavanaugh 1996 (119-124).

<sup>584</sup> On Dionysus at Eleusis, see Mylonas 1960; Graf 1974 (40-78); Clinton 1992 (65-67, 123-125).

<sup>585</sup> *Soph. Ant.* 1119-1121: μέδεις δε/παγκοίνοις Ἐλευσινίας/Δηοῦς ἐν κόλποις.

<sup>586</sup> Clinton 1992 (123-125).



Although no sanctuary to Dionysus has been identified at Eleusis, nor is one mentioned by Pausanias, inscriptions from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC attest to celebrations of the Rural Dionysia there.<sup>587</sup> One inscription in particular (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1186) attests to the importance of the Eleusinian Dionysia to the Athenian *polis* during the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC: a chorus trainer who donated choruses at the Eleusinian Dionysia is praised for his *philotimia* toward both Eleusis and the Athenian *demos*.<sup>588</sup>

Dionysus also played a role in the Greater Mysteries. On the fifth day of the festival, an image of the god Iakchos escorted the initiates to Eleusis, while those in the procession shouted “*iakche*.”<sup>589</sup> When the initiates reached Eleusis, they celebrated the reception of Iakchos (ὑποδοχή τοῦ ἰάκχου).<sup>590</sup> In Aristophanes’ *Frogs* of 405 BC, Iakchos escorts the initiates of the Mysteries (*Ran.* 325-403). It is believed that the god Iakchos developed as a personification of the cry “*iakche*” voiced during the Mysteries.<sup>591</sup>

There is evidence for assimilation of Iakchos and Dionysus as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Poets, for example, refer to Dionysus as Iakchos. In Sophocles’ *Antigone*, the chorus calls Dionysus simply “Iakchos” (*Ant.* 1151).<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> Pickard-Cambridge 1968 (47-48). *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3090 mentions performances by Sophocles and Aristophanes, but Clinton 1992 (125) argues that this Sophocles is the grandson of the famous playwright Sophocles. On the prominence of the Eleusinian Dionysia, Clinton (124) states, “The Dionysia at Eleusis were certainly one of the major celebrations of the Rural Dionysia; indeed they may have been the most renowned such festival in Attica.”

Another Eleusinian festival, the Haloa, was celebrated in honor of Demeter, and, according to later sources, included Dionysus. However, skepticism has been cast on his presence in this festival, especially for the classical period. See Brumfield 1981 (104-131).

<sup>588</sup> See Clinton 1992 (125).

<sup>589</sup> Hdt. 8.65; Ar. *Ran.* 316-317.

<sup>590</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1078 (3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD); see Clinton 1988 (70). Deubner 1956 (73) suggests that the procession from Athens to Eleusis was as much an occasion to honor Iakchos as it was a way of returning the holy things to Eleusis. Clinton (70), however, argues convincingly that the procession to return the holy things to Eleusis took place on 19 Boedromion, while the procession with Iakchos took place the following day.

<sup>591</sup> Clinton 1992 (66).

<sup>592</sup> Clinton 1992 (66) tentatively identifies this as the earliest instance of the use of Iakchos

Furthermore, the procession from Athens to Eleusis during the Mysteries was imbued with a spirit of Dionysiac revelry. Those who participated in the Mysteries must therefore have sensed the similarity, the interchangeability even, of Dionysus and Iakchos.<sup>593</sup> Thus, although neither Dionysus himself nor his priests took part directly in the Mysteries, his presence was apparent by the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

Dionysus' presence at the Mysteries can be explained in part by the fact that he was likewise a god of mystery cult promising a better afterlife.<sup>594</sup> Moreover, as noted above, by the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC Dionysus and Demeter were grouped among other gods, including Athena, who gave civilizing gifts to humans.<sup>595</sup>

The timing of the Greater Mysteries and the City Dionysia within the Attic calendar enriched the agricultural connection between Demeter and Dionysus. The Greater Mysteries took place six months after the City Dionysia. The gods of grain (sown soon after the Greater Mysteries) and the vine (budding in March at about the time of the City Dionysia), thus framed the Attic calendar.

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in reference to Dionysus. The date usually proposed for the *Antigone* is the 440s BC. For other ancient sources that interchange or confuse the names, see Clinton 1992 (66, with n. 22-23).

<sup>593</sup> After reaching Eleusis, for example, worshippers took part in an all-night revelry (*παννυχίς*). Clinton 1994 (27-28) suggests that this *παννυχίς* at Eleusis was designed as a sequel to the *παννυχίς* of the Epidauria that occurred earlier in the same festival. The *παννυχίς* at Eleusis offered an opportunity for the *mysteis*, who remained indoors during the Epidauria, to engage in revelry. It should be noted, however, that *παννυχίδες* are attested for other festivals as well, including, as seen above, the Greater Panathenaia. On other Dionysiac aspects of the procession to Eleusis, see Graf 1974 (55-58).

<sup>594</sup> See Burkert 1987 (21-22).

<sup>595</sup> Prodicus in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC and Euhemerus in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC list Dionysus and Demeter among gods who brought civilization to humans. See also Detienne 1989 (37-38) on this and healing as significant ties between Dionysus and Demeter. That Dionysus and Demeter were not singled out as "civilization-bearers" but were lumped among other gods should be kept in mind, however, when assessing the validity of "civilization-bearer" as a primary basis for the alignment of the two cults at Eleusis. On Athena, see Burkert 1985 (139-143).

Nevertheless, Dionysus' presence at Eleusis is in striking contrast to a near complete absence of association between him and Demeter elsewhere in the Greek world.<sup>596</sup> This suggests that their alignment at Eleusis had more to do with local factors than affinities between their cults.

Asklepios' integration into both the Eleusinian Mysteries and the City Dionysia at the time of his arrival thus further strengthened a particularly Athenian link between the cults of Dionysus and Demeter. Yet again we are faced with the question of how this link was perceived at the time when Asklepios was used to reinforce it.

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<sup>596</sup> At Thebes, the sanctuary of Demeter Thesmophoros was located at the house of Kadmos (Paus. 9.16.5) where Semele, the mother of Dionysus, was said to have been buried. See Schachter 1981- (vol. 1, p. 166). Pind. *Isth.* 7.3-5 describes Dionysus as the partner of cymbal-sounding Demeter (χαλκοκπότου πάρεδρον Δαμάτερος). As Privitera 1982 (*ad loc.*) points out, however, Pindar's use of πάρεδρος does not always imply a cultic association. The fact that Demeter is "cymbal-sounding" is also odd; such an epithet is usually found modifying Cybele instead. On Pindar's description, see also Farnell 1932 (*ad loc.*); Willcock 1995 (*ad loc.*).

Admittedly, the lack of evidence elsewhere may be misleading. Burkert 1985 (163) assigns the various Dionysiac rites to different regions. But see also Parker 1988 on the cults of Demeter and Dionysus at Sparta. He argues that, while there is evidence for Demeter-cult, there is little evidence for Dionysus at Sparta. "We have too little evidence to know how singular Sparta's position may truly have been. What is almost certain is that in the fifth century the role of Dionysus in the festival calendars of Sparta and Athens was very different; and it is plausible that this distinction was not due simply to ancient divergences between Ionian and Dorian traditions, but became sharper in the historical period" (101). Parker mentions the rise of the populist Peisistratos vs. the growing intensity of Spartan rigour in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC as examples of historical, rather than regional, causes for variance in Dionysus-worship.

There are several examples of Demeter and Dionysus together in works of art outside Attica, but these come mainly from the farther reaches of the Greek world—from Kerch on the north coast of the Black Sea, and from Magna Graecia. The only other examples within Greece outside Attica are a vase from Crete dating to 330-320 BC (*LIMC*, sv 'Dionysos,' no. 529), and statues of Dionysus and Demeter of unknown date reported by Pausanias at a sanctuary between Scione and Phlius (Paus. 2.11.3). The evidence from Crete, and possibly also the statue mentioned by Pausanias, postdate the connection in Athens by almost a century.

Moreover, even in Attica, while Dionysus' presence at Eleusis is very evident, Demeter's role in the cult of Dionysus Eleuthereus at Athens remains unattested.

## VI. Conclusions

As H.W. Parke writes in reference to the integration of Asklepios into the Greater Mysteries and City Dionysia, “The whole arrangement suggests the conscious planning of a careful priesthood working in harmony with the authorities of Athens.”<sup>597</sup> In other words, the alignment of all three cults was due not to chance or coincidence, but to careful orchestration by the *polis*. While factors such as health and the agricultural cycle help explain this orchestration, they are not satisfying explanations even when combined.

From arguments made in this chapter, it is clear that the *polis* aligned Asklepios with locations, cults, and festivals particularly expressive of Athenian imperialism in 420 BC, especially the Acropolis—as the prime locus of the Greater Panathenaia—and the cults of Dionysus Eleuthereus and Eleusinian Demeter. Each of these links alone may not be significant, but the accumulation of evidence is striking. Athenians viewed the importation of Asklepios as relevant to imperial policy. The next chapter explores the possibility that the *polis*’ imperial interest in the god motivated his importation.

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<sup>597</sup> Parke 1977 (65).

## CHAPTER 6: ASKLEPIOS, EPIDAUROS, AND ATHENIAN IMPERIALISM IN THE 5<sup>TH</sup> C. BC

The position of Asklepios within Athenian topography and the festival calendar indicates that he further articulated and was articulated by the element of imperialism evident in the Acropolis and in the cults and festivals of Dionysus Eleuthereus and Eleusinian Demeter in 420 BC.

In this chapter, I argue that a primary reason for importing Asklepios and associating him deliberately with Athenian imperialism was the role he played in helping safeguard Athenian empire during the Peloponnesian War. Asklepios came from the Peloponnesian city Epidauros, whose geographic position made it critical to Athenian success in the war.<sup>598</sup> The importation of Epidauros' panhellenic cult was, in part, an act of Athenian diplomacy designed to bring Epidauros into alliance with Athens, and thereby to secure control of the Peloponnese.

I begin by examining relations between Epidauros and Athens from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> to the mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Throughout this period, and especially during the Peloponnesian War, Athens exhibited frequent interest in Epidauros due to its strategic position vis-à-vis Athens.

The next section explores the impact of the Peace of Nikias (421-419 BC) on the importation of Asklepios in 420 BC. Events during the peace indicate that Asklepios' importation was intended to improve relations with

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<sup>598</sup> To explain why Athens had an imperial interest in this Epidaurian cult based on the nature of the cult—that it, on its prestige or efficaciousness alone—is difficult. Having an offshoot from the most famous and panhellenic branch of the cult might have been important to the Athenian cause of promoting empire since it may have reflected Athenian interest in the whole of Greece. But the fact that few visitors to the Asklepieion in Athens came from anywhere outside of Athens, as demonstrated by Aleshire 1989 (71), suggests that Athens had no designs on generating its own panhellenic version of the cult. Unlike the cults of Dionysus and Demeter, moreover, there is no indication of such designs in decrees.

Epidauros. Viewed in this way, the importation is consistent with perceived patterns of Athenian manipulation of cults for political ends in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

I conclude by returning to the location of Asklepios within the spatial and temporal topography of Athens to consider how such placement articulated Athenian imperial interest in the Epidaurian cult.

### **I. Epidauros and Athens in the Peloponnesian Wars**

Epidauros, located on the northern coast of the Akte peninsula, faces the Saronic Gulf. (See Fig. 7 below for a map of mainland Greece.) As Michael Jameson describes, the strategic importance of this gulf and its numerous harbors was apparent to the Greeks during the Persian Wars; in 480 BC, the Greek fleet assembled at the harbor of Pogon in the Troezenia before sailing to victory at Salamis.<sup>599</sup>

The advantages of the gulf increasingly drew the attention of Athens as its naval power expanded. During the so-called First Peloponnesian War (460-451, and 446 BC), Athens fought cities of the Saronic Gulf including Epidauros.<sup>600</sup> War began when Athens attacked Halieis, a city on the southern coast of the Akte peninsula. Troops from Epidauros, Sikyon, and Corinth repelled the attack. As Jameson argues, the concerted and timely effort of the Peloponnesian cities suggests their awareness of Athenian interest in the area.<sup>601</sup>

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<sup>599</sup> Jameson 1994 (76). This interest seems to extend even into the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, when Athens was part of an amphictiony based at the sanctuary of Poseidon in Kalauria (Strabo 8.6.14 [C 374]). The amphictiony included Hermione, Epidauros, Aegina, Nauplia, Prasiai, and Boeotian Orchomenos. Kalauria, Aegina, and Epidauros are all on the Saronic Gulf, and Hermione is only slightly beyond, lying farther south along the coast of the Akte peninsula facing the island Hydra.

<sup>600</sup> Thucy. 1.105.1; Diod.Sic. 11.78.

<sup>601</sup> Jameson 1994 (76).

In 430 BC, at the start of the next Peloponnesian War, Athens ravaged the territories of several cities on the Akte peninsula.<sup>602</sup> The territory of Epidauros was the first to be attacked, but Athens did not succeed in taking the city itself. By this time, Athenian concern had expanded much beyond the Saronic Gulf to include all of the Peloponnese, and Athens' quickest route into the Peloponnese was from Piraeus, across the Saronic Gulf, to Epidauros. In 425 BC, Athens built a wall to separate the smaller peninsula Methana from the rest of the Akte. Athens also established a garrison on Methana and used this garrison to raid the territories of Epidauros and other cities.<sup>603</sup> These raids presumably recurred for a number of years, perhaps until the Peace of Nikias.<sup>604</sup>

In 421 BC, Athens and Sparta declared a peace (the so-called Peace of Nikias) that would last for less than two years. It was in this period that the cult of Asklepios was brought to Athens from Epidauros.

The importance of Epidauros to Athens becomes especially clear in events subsequent to the Peace of Nikias. When hostilities resumed, the first city attacked was Epidauros. During the summer of 419 BC, the Athenian general Alcibiades convinced the Argives, Athens' allies, to attack Epidauros.<sup>605</sup> According to Thucydides, the real motive for this act was to bring Epidauros under the control of Argos and Athens.<sup>606</sup> This would, in

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<sup>602</sup> Thucy. 2.56.4-5. The other territories attacked were Halieis, Hermione, and Troezen. For earlier Athenian relations with Halieis and Hermione, see Gomme 1945-1981 (vol. 1, p. 311, 367).

<sup>603</sup> Thucy. 4.45.2. The other territories raided were Troezen and Halieis. On the size of the expedition, see Hornblower 1991- (vol. 1, p. 328-329).

<sup>604</sup> Thucy. 4.45.2: καὶ φρούριον καταστησάμενοι ἐλήστευον τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον τὴν τε Τροιζηνίαν γῆν καὶ Ἀλιάδα καὶ Ἐπιδαυρίαν ([At Methana the Athenians] left a garrison to make pillaging expeditions thereafter into the territories of Troezen, Halieis, and Epidauros). Gomme 1945-1981 (vol. 3, p. 495) suggests that Epidauros was successful in resisting these attacks because Athens was involved in too many theaters of warfare, and was thus overextending itself at the time.

<sup>605</sup> Thucy. 5.53.

<sup>606</sup> Thucy. 5.53.1: Τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ θέρους Ἐπιδαυριοὶς καὶ Ἀργείοις πόλεμος ἐγένετο, προφάσει μὲν

part, facilitate communication between Athens and Argos: rather than sail all the way around Cape Skyllaion, the eastern-most point of the Akte peninsula, Athenians could sail from Aegina to Epidauros, and then travel over land directly west to Argos. Argos thus attacked Epidauros, precipitating a war between them. Athens supported Argos in the war.

The following winter (419/18 BC), Sparta sent troops north by sea to support the Epidaurians in the war against Argos. Argos complained that Athens had allowed Spartan troops into Epidauros past Athenian garrisons.<sup>607</sup> According to the terms of the Peace of Nikias, which was still in effect, enemy troops were not allowed to pass through allied territory without consent of all the allies.<sup>608</sup> With this act, the peace was formally broken and war between Athens and Sparta resumed. The Argive war on Epidauros continued with Athenian support.

Later in 418 BC, Sparta won a major victory at Mantinea. Fear of Spartan power shifted the allegiance of some Argives who not only

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περὶ τοῦ θύματος τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ Πυθαέως, ὃ δέον ἀπαγαγεῖν οὐκ ἀπέπεμπον ὑπὲρ βοταμίων Ἐπιδαύριοι (κυριώτατοι δὲ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἦσαν Ἀργεῖοι)· ἐδόκει δὲ καὶ ἄνευ τῆς αἰτίας τὴν Ἐπίδουρον τῷ τε Ἀλκιβιάδῃ καὶ τοῖς Ἀργείοις προσλαβεῖν, ἣν δύνωνται, τῆς τε Κορίνθου ἕνεκα ἡσυχίας καὶ ἐκ τῆς Αἰγίνης βραχυτέραν ἔσεσθαι τὴν βοήθειαν ἢ Σκύλλαιον περιπλεῖν τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις. (During the same summer, war broke out between the Epidaurians and Argives. The alleged reason for this was a sacrifice to Apollo Pytheus that the Epidaurians were required to send, but were not sending. The Argives were in control of this sanctuary. Aside from this cause, it seemed best to Alcibiades and the Argives to acquire Epidauros if they could in order both to keep Corinth quiet and to provide a shorter route for Athenians bringing help [to Argos] via Aegina, rather than sailing all the way around Skyllaion).

Corinth had proved troublesome to Athens for many years. Its poor relations with Corcyra, according to Thucy. 1.24-55, had been a major factor triggering the Peloponnesian War. Even in 421 BC, after the conclusion of the Peace of Nikias, Corinth tried to engineer a defensive alliance of Greek states that would refuse to ally with Athens or Sparta (Thucy. 5.27-32).

<sup>607</sup> Thucy. 5.56.1-2. Gomme 1945-1981 (vol. 4, p. 77) notes that Athens did not disclaim responsibility for the Spartan advance. Certain Athenians, like Alcibiades, were clearly interested in resuming war with Sparta, and therefore may have let the Spartans advance in order to have an excuse to return to war.

<sup>608</sup> Thucy. 5.47.5.



negotiated a peace with Epidauros, but persuaded Athens to do the same.<sup>609</sup> The cities of the Akte peninsula were further encouraged by Athenian defeat in Sicily in 413 BC and remained active supporters of Sparta throughout the Peloponnesian War and well into the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. As a result, Athens made no successful advances in the area for many years.

Not until the mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC did Athenian military activity in the Akte peninsula resume.<sup>610</sup> In 365 BC, Spartan dominance in the peninsula ended when Thebes attacked the northern Peloponnese. That year Epidauros made peace with Thebes.<sup>611</sup> Meanwhile, Athens also negotiated a peace with Epidauros in the hope of establishing a bloc against Theban dominance.<sup>612</sup> That Athens made a treaty with Epidauros as soon as Epidauros was out of Spartan control indicates how important this city continued to be.

Athenian interest in Epidauros, particularly during the Peloponnesian War, was due to several geographical factors. First, the harbor at Epidauros afforded safe and convenient anchorage for the Athenian navy; moreover, it was the port of entry into the Peloponnese closest to Athens. For a naval power like Athens, Epidauros was especially appealing.

Second, Epidauros was the city on the Akte peninsula nearest the Isthmus of Corinth—the only land route into and out of the eastern Peloponnese. Control of Epidauros would thus enable Athens to safeguard

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<sup>609</sup> Thucy. 5.80.

<sup>610</sup> According to Polyaeus (3.9.48), the Athenian general Iphikrates plundered Epidauros in 372 BC. It is not clear from his account, however, why Iphikrates was at Epidauros other than to pillage.

Beginning ca. 390 BC, Athenian craftsmen helped with the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. construction of the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros. Their names are listed on building accounts published in the sanctuary (*IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.102-120); see Burford 1969. The participation of Athenian craftsmen in work at this panhellenic sanctuary is not necessarily indicative of foreign relations between Athens and Epidauros, as Avalos 1995 (93-98) has argued. Dillon 1997 shows that panhellenic sanctuaries often remained accessible even to individuals coming from enemy states.

<sup>611</sup> Isoc. 6.91; Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.9.

<sup>612</sup> Arist. *Rhet.* 1411a.11.

its own troops' entry into the Peloponnese, and also prevent Peloponnesian troops from invading Attica, an annual calamity for Athens during the war.<sup>613</sup>

Furthermore, Epidauros was a powerful city, and thanks to the cult of Asklepios, increasingly wealthy, as Allison Burford has documented.<sup>614</sup> According to A.W. Gomme, it was the second most important city on the Akte peninsula after Argos.<sup>615</sup> The impact of its participation in acts of defiance against Athens (such as the Corcyrean affair and Megarian revolt, which precipitated the war) must have been significant.<sup>616</sup> Moreover, its defeat would have drastically weakened Peloponnesian confidence during the war. A nearby city like Corinth, for example, would have felt very exposed if Epidauros allied with Athens, and especially if Argos joined the alliance.

Thucydides writes that the real cause of the Peloponnesian War was fear of the growing dominance of Athens.<sup>617</sup> In other words, it was a war about Athenian empire. The ability of Athens to maintain its empire depended in large part on gaining control of the Peloponnese; forging closer ties with Epidauros was key to achieving this goal.

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<sup>613</sup> Athens' frequent attempts to overtake the Megarid confirm its desire to control this land corridor between Attica and the Peloponnese. On the importance of the Megarid to both Athens and the Peloponnese during the war, see Thucy. 2.93, 4.66-69. As Jameson 1994 (80-81) comments, "The fighting that marked the end of Spartan dominance [in the 4th c. BC] showed the strategic importance of the states on and around the Isthmos of Corinth for any power intending to control both central and southern Greece."

<sup>614</sup> Burford 1969.

<sup>615</sup> Gomme 1945-1981 (vol. 2, p. 163).

<sup>616</sup> Epidauros assisted Corinth in the Corcyrean affair, and supported the Megarian revolt against Athens; cf. Thucy. 1.27.2, 1.114.1.

<sup>617</sup> Thucy. 1.23.5-6. Thucy. 1.23.6: τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν, ἀφανεστάτην δὲ λόγῳ, τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἡγοῦμαι μεγάλους γιγνομένους καὶ φόβον παρέχοντας τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν (But I believe the truest cause—and the least apparent—was that the Athenians were becoming greater, and the Lacedaimonians grew afraid, which drove them to war). Cf. also Thucy. 1.88, 1.139.3, 2.8.4.

## II. The Peace of Nikias and the Arrival of Asklepios

Within this broader context of anxiety and contention over Athenian empire, Asklepios was brought from Epidauros to Athens. When Asklepios arrived in 420 BC, the Peloponnesian War had been waged already for 10 years. By the terms of the Peace of Nikias of 421 BC, Athens and Sparta were to remain at peace for 50 years.<sup>618</sup> But according to Thucydides, who viewed the larger struggle lasting from 431-404 BC as one long war, the peace was doomed to fail.<sup>619</sup>

Several factors made it difficult to maintain the Peace of Nikias. According to Thucydides, those factors had less to do with Athenian and Spartan interest in resuming the war than in displeasure among Sparta's allies over the terms of the peace.<sup>620</sup> Corinth, Boeotia, Elis, and Megara had all voted against the peace in 421 BC, not least because the final clause authorized Athens and Sparta together to amend the treaty without consulting their allies. Aggrieved, these cities all took steps to form an independent league under the leadership of Argos.

Although this league did not materialize, the actions of Boeotia in particular proved fatal to the peace. In 420 BC, Boeotia manipulated Sparta into concluding a separate alliance with them.<sup>621</sup> When Athens learned of this alliance, negotiations between Athens and Sparta broke down. Athens threatened to ally with Argos, Mantinea, and Elis unless, 1) Sparta severed its

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<sup>618</sup> Thucy. 5.23.

<sup>619</sup> Thucy. 5.26.1-2: ἔτη δὲ ἐς τοῦτο τὰ ζύμπαντα ἐγένετο τῷ πολέμῳ ἑπτὰ καὶ εἴκοσι. καὶ τὴν διὰ μέσου ζύμβασιν εἴ τις μὴ ἀξιῶσει πόλεμον νομίζειν, οὐκ ὀρθῶς δικαιοῦσει. τοῖς [τε] γὰρ ἔργοις ὡς διήρηται ἀθρεῖται, καὶ εὐρήσει οὐκ εἰκὸς ὄν εἰρήνην αὐτὴν κριθῆναι, ἐν ἧ οὔτε ἀπέδοσαν πάντα οὔτ' ἀπεδέξαντο ἃ ξυνέθεντο (Up until [404 BC], the war lasted 27 years altogether. And if anyone should not think it right to include the intervening truce in that war, they will not judge correctly. For let them assess the deeds as they have been recounted and they will find that such a situation—in which everything agreed on had neither been given back nor received—cannot be judged a peace).

<sup>620</sup> Thucy. 5.29.3. The breakdown of the peace is well summarized by Sealey 1976 (337-346).

<sup>621</sup> Thucy. 5.39.2-3.

alliance with Boeotia, and 2) the Boeotians agreed to the Peace of Nikias. Sparta refused;<sup>622</sup> the new quadruple alliance including Athens, Elis, Mantinea, and Argos was formed;<sup>623</sup> and Athens and Sparta no longer exchanged embassies to negotiate. Although the Peace of Nikias was still nominally in effect, it would soon be declared broken in 419 BC when the Spartans sent troops to Epidauros past Athenian garrisons.

Frequent communication and negotiation between Sparta and Athens from 421-420 BC, however, demonstrate that these two powers were interested in maintaining peace. Thucydides records that in the summer of 421 BC alone there were “many and frequent conferences” between the two cities, and that there was “peace and exchange with each other.”<sup>624</sup> The following winter, there were “constant discussions” between Athens and Sparta while other powers like Boeotia continued to stir up suspicion and animosity.<sup>625</sup> Even when Boeotia manipulated Sparta into accepting an alliance with them, Sparta continued sending embassies to Athens in the spring of 420 BC to settle the matter amicably. Not even a ruse on the part of the Athenian general Alcibiades to compromise the integrity of Sparta’s envoys derailed the peace. Instead, Athens sent envoys back to Sparta to continue to negotiate.<sup>626</sup> When these negotiations failed, Athens allied with Argos and all further negotiations ceased.<sup>627</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> Thucy. 5.46.4.

<sup>623</sup> Thucy. 5.47. A copy of the treaty was erected in Athens near the theater of Dionysus (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 83).

<sup>624</sup> Thucy. 5.35.7-8: πολλάκις δὲ καὶ πολλῶν λόγων γενομένων ἐν τῷ θερεί τούτῳ... τὸ μὲν οὖν θέρος τοῦτο ἡσυχία ἦν καὶ ἔφοδοι παρ’ ἀλλήλους (Many and frequent conferences had been held during this summer....This summer, then, there was peace and exchange with each other).

<sup>625</sup> Thucy. 5.39.2: ἐγίνοντο γὰρ αἰεὶ λόγοι τοῖς τε Ἀθηναίοις καὶ Λακεδαιμονίοις (There were constant discussions between the Athenians and Lacedaimonians).

<sup>626</sup> Thucy. 5.43-46; Plut. *Nik.* 10.

<sup>627</sup> Thucy. 5.47.

It is difficult to determine from Thucydides' narrative the exact timing of final negotiations between Athens and Sparta, but Asklepios probably came to Athens soon after these negotiations had ceased. Importing any cult, much less a well-established panhellenic cult, was not an instantaneous matter and must have required some period of negotiation between Athens and Epidauros. These latter negotiations were no doubt carried out while Athens and Sparta were at peace, but whether they still expected to avoid war is uncertain. In either case, the importation of Asklepios promised Athens a strong position in relation to Epidauros, and thereby also the Peloponnese.

### III. Athens, Cults, and Politics in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC

Athens adopted and adapted cults often in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> cs. BC for what we consider political ends. It has long been argued that 6<sup>th</sup>-c. cults, festivals, and sanctuaries were manipulated by the tyrant Peisistratos to garner popular support for himself and to promote allegiance to Athens. He is said to have been involved in building the first stone temple to Athena on the Acropolis, in reorganizing the Panathenaia, in founding or re-founding the City Dionysia, in building a predecessor to the temple to Zeus Olympios, in constructing shrines in the Agora, in rebuilding the initiation building (*telesterion*) at Eleusis, in purifying Delos and building a temple there, and in tailoring the myths of Herkales and Theseus.<sup>628</sup>

On this model, cults provided a means of welding acquired territories more firmly to the Athenian *polis*.<sup>629</sup> Martin Nilsson writes, "The transference of cults is a well-known expedient to unite an incorporated district with the

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<sup>628</sup> Extensive bibliography on Peisistratos and his contributions can be found in Parker 1996 (67-101). See also Osborne 1994, who argues that Athens manipulated cults for political reasons long before Peisistratos.

<sup>629</sup> E.g., Nilsson 1951 (25-41); Garland 1992; de Polignac 1995.

ruling city.”<sup>630</sup> A prime example is the cult of Artemis Brauronia. A temple to this goddess was erected on the Acropolis—a sign of assimilating Brauron, located on the eastern coast of Attica, into the Athenian *polis*.<sup>631</sup>

The pattern of ascribing political motives to innovations by Peisistratos and other Greek tyrants has largely shaped modern perceptions of 6<sup>th</sup>- and 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Athenian religion.<sup>632</sup> Regarding the 5<sup>th</sup> c., the period after tyranny had been overthrown and democracy established, scholars focus on foreign policy as the most prevalent factor behind innovations in cults and festivals. The Persian Wars in particular are considered a primary cause for introducing new cults or expanding preexisting ones.<sup>633</sup> These wars supposedly sparked developments in the cults of Athena Nike, Theseus, Pan, Artemis Aristoboule, Boreas, Poseidon (at Sounion), Nemesis (at Rhamnous), Apollo (at Phaleron), among others,<sup>634</sup> most often as a means of thanking the various deities for help in the war.

But other wars, and other matters of foreign and domestic policy, are also seen as having driven developments in 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Athenian cult, as discussed below. The importation of Asklepios, by stark contrast, is never cast in the light of state interests.

In order to better appreciate the exclusion of Asklepios from this interpretive model, it will be helpful to look briefly at how two cults are

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<sup>630</sup> Nilsson 1951 (33).

<sup>631</sup> Nilsson 1951 (40-41); Garland 1992 (40); de Polignac 1995 (36). The date of the temple of Artemis on the Acropolis is uncertain. See Osborne 1985, with bibliography.

<sup>632</sup> But Parker 1996 (69) remarks: “The religious chronology of the [6<sup>th</sup> c. BC] is thus a concertina, which if squeezed brings all the relevant events within the Peisistratid period, if stretched puts almost all outside. In the name of caution—and perhaps even of truth—one should speak more generally of ‘the sixth century expansion’ rather than more specifically of ‘Peisistratean religious policy’.”

<sup>633</sup> Parker 1996 (187): “What is truly striking is the extent to which the new foundations of the fifth century reflect in one way or another its great historical centerpiece, the struggle against Persia.”

<sup>634</sup> On these and other cult developments in the wake of the Persian War, see Parker 1996 (152-198)

thought to have been manipulated in response to Athenian foreign policy in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. One, the cult of Theseus, and in particular the tradition of his labors, developed in the late 6<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC; the other, that of Bendis, was brought to Athens much later, only about 10 years before Asklepios.

#### **A. Theseus' Labors**

The Athenians credited their legendary king Theseus with bringing much of Attica under Athenian control.<sup>635</sup> When as a young man Theseus journeyed from Troezen to Athens, he killed five menacing opponents along the way.<sup>636</sup> These five acts, known as his labors, had been developed into a consistent system by 510 BC: potters were painting the same series of labors onto their wares and sculptors soon began carving them onto metopes.<sup>637</sup>

The five labors all took place on the Isthmus of Corinth or near Eleusis, the first near the location of the Isthmian games, the second and third near Megara, and the fourth and fifth near Eleusis. All these were places with which, at least according to ancient tradition, Athens had vied for territorial control and won it under Theseus. But in the late 6<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> cs. BC, Athens was trying to (re)gain control of some of these same territories.

The importance of the Corinthiad would become more apparent during the Peloponnesian War, but Athens recognized the importance of the Megarid already in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>638</sup> The Megarid lay on major land routes into

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<sup>635</sup> On Theseus and Athens, see Garland 1992 (82-98); H.J. Walker 1995; Calame 1996. On the Theseus legend, see also the collection of essays in Ward et al. 1970.

<sup>636</sup> The five people Theseus encountered were Sinis (on the Isthmus), Krommyon (on the border of Corinth and Megara), Skiron (at Megara), Kerkyron (near Eleusis), and Procrustes (between Eleusis and Athens).

<sup>637</sup> On Theseus in Attic vase painting and sculpture, see Neils 1987. For the date when these labors began to appear, see Neils (36-37). The labors also appear on the late archaic Athenian treasury at Delphi, and on the Hephaestaeon in Athens (ca. 450 BC). For Theseus in Greek tragedy, see Mills 1997.

<sup>638</sup> At this time, Athens fought Megara over control of Salamis: Hdt. 1.59; Arist. *Ath. Pol.*

Attica, Boeotia, and the Peloponnese, and was thus of great importance both to Athenian self-defense and expansion. Furthermore, since Athenian tradition considered the Isthmus the frontier between Ionia and the Peloponnese, and Megara part of Ionia, Athens believed Megara should be under its control.<sup>639</sup>

Although archaeological evidence indicates that Eleusis, also in the Megarid, had long since been under Attic influence, Athenian tradition tells a different story: Eleusis was separate until war brought it under Athenian control.<sup>640</sup> Myth is thus a record of Megarid–Attic antagonism.

Evident in the labors of Theseus, therefore, were both a tradition of Attic synoicism and hope for further expansion. The myth of Theseus affirmed what Athens already controlled, namely Eleusis, and provided mythic validation for its claims to further territory.

A sixth encounter—at Epidaurus—was added to the Theseus cycle later, but exactly when is uncertain.<sup>641</sup> It is tempting to associate the development of the Epidaurian labor with the importance of Epidaurus to Athens during the Peloponnesian Wars. Just as the importation of Asklepios was one way that cult articulated Athenian foreign policy regarding Epidaurus, the Theseus cycle may have been tailored to do the same.

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14, 17; Plut. *Solon* 8; Diog.Laert. 1.47.

<sup>639</sup> Pl. *Crit.* 110d; Hdt. 5.76; Strabo 3.5.5 (C 171), 9.1.5 (C 392); Paus. 1.39.4. According to Plut. *Thes.* 25, Theseus had united the Megarid with Attica.

<sup>640</sup> Athenian tradition about Eleusis is discussed in greater detail below. Osborne 1994 (148-154) discusses archaeological evidence dating from at least the Dark Age for cultural uniformity between Eleusis and Athens.

<sup>641</sup> The earliest literary evidence for this encounter with Periphetes is Augustan (Diod.Sic. 4.59; also mentioned in Plut. *Thes.* 1.2; ps-Apollod. 3.15). It may appear on a metope of the Athenian treasury at Delphi (mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC); but, as Nilsson 1951 (54) comments, “the interpretation is not at all evident.” See also Neils 1987 (48); and Neils (127) on the Hephaestaeon. Neils (122, 127) also cautions that the Periphetes episode is, with one unlikely exception, unknown in vase painting.



The formulation of these tales into a consistent pattern at a time when Athens was not only promoting the role of Theseus in its shift from tyranny to democracy, but was contending over some of the very locations these labors entailed, cannot be coincidental. As Henry Walker comments, the Theseus cycle is “a visual representation of the perennial Athenian dream of ruling the Isthmus....It is a dream that lasts from Solon to the Peloponnesian War.”<sup>642</sup> Cult and myth were thus tailored to reflect Athens’ territorial interests at the time.

### **B. Bendis’ Entry into Athens**

The introduction of Bendis is said to have served a similar purpose. The Thracian goddess arrived in Piraeus around 430 BC.<sup>643</sup> For many years prior to her arrival, the region of Thrace was a focus of Athenian interest.<sup>644</sup> The allure of Thrace lay largely in its geography and wealth. It was rich in natural resources, particularly timber, necessary for maintaining the large Athenian fleet. Moreover, Thrace is close to the Hellespont, through which all trade north to the Black Sea had to pass. Furthermore, some of Athens’ allies and colonies were located on the Thracian coast (e.g., Amphipolis and Brea).

Athens’ interest in this area is attested by Thucydides: Athens besieged Potidea after it revolted in 432 BC, and fought against Perdiccas, king of Macedonia. In 431 BC, Athens concluded a treaty with Sitalkes of Thrace and with Perdiccas.<sup>645</sup> For several years after, Sitalkes aided Athens. It was in this

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<sup>642</sup> H.J. Walker 1995 (42), following Calame 1996 (422) first published in 1990.

<sup>643</sup> The date is disputed. An Athenian inscription recording the accounts of the treasurers of the other gods for 429/8 BC includes an entry for Bendis (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 383.143). But the earliest reliable evidence for a temple of Bendis is Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.11, which concerns events in 404/03 BC. See Planeaux 2000-01 for bibliography and discussion of the date of Bendis’ entry.

<sup>644</sup> Thucy. 2.29.4.

<sup>645</sup> Thucy. 2.29.5-6.

period of peace and amicability that Bendis arrived in Piraeus. According to Nilsson, “The reception of the Thracian goddess into the Athenian state cult has its appropriate place precisely in connection with this highly political event.”<sup>646</sup> In this view, Athens’ importation of Thracian Bendis was a way of consolidating Athenian alliance with Thrace.<sup>647</sup>

Athens thus manipulated the cults of Theseus and Bendis to articulate and advance its foreign policy, particularly in acquiring territory (Theseus) and improving relations with foreign states (Bendis). These are just two of many heroes and deities said to have functioned in this way for Athens. Garland sums up developments in 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Athenian cults thus: “The conclusion seems irresistible that the Demos utilized religious worship for the furthering of its foreign policy....In domestic as well as in foreign policy, a state’s gods were deeply implicated in the advancement of its aims.”<sup>648</sup>

Are scholars pressing the political motives too far? It is possible; we should not reduce the significance of cults and festivals to issues of military and foreign policy. As Parker cautions in the case of Bendis, too much weight is perhaps being placed on single issues rather than the larger reality that Thrace, for an Athenian in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, was “a phenomenon that loomed.”<sup>649</sup> Since Athens sent colonies there and mined its natural resources, Thrace—albeit barbarian—was a land of promise for Athenians.

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<sup>646</sup> Nilsson 1951 (46).

<sup>647</sup> Garland 1992 (112). Planeaux 2000-01 argues that Bendis arrived in Athens also in response to the plague. Planeaux considers this a reason for the appeal of the goddess to the citizens at large, versus the state’s interests in furthering foreign policy with Thrace. The date of Bendis’ entry, if 429/8 BC, is much more compelling than Asklepios’ in relation to the plague of 431 BC, but Planeaux’s arguments for a link between Bendis and healing are tenuous. Deloptes, Bendis’ male consort whom Planeaux associates iconographically with Asklepios, is too poorly attested in art to make strong connections between him and Asklepios convincing (there is only one depiction of him that is certain; see *LIMC* sv ‘Deloptes’, no. 1).

<sup>648</sup> Garland 1992 (115).

<sup>649</sup> Parker 1996 (173-175).

But in the case of Asklepios, political motives have not been explored at all, despite ample evidence that the god played an important role in foreign relations between Epidauros and Athens.<sup>650</sup>

#### IV. Asklepios and Athenian Diplomacy

After years of warfare, the Peace of Nikias afforded an opportunity for increased diplomatic maneuvering. Several signs point to Asklepios' importation being a cooperative endeavor. First, Epidaurian officials must have been involved in negotiations, and they seem to have taken part in welcoming Asklepios to Athens.<sup>651</sup> Athens did not abduct Asklepios; rather, Athens negotiated his importation.

Also noteworthy is that Kallias (III), one of the leaders of the Kerykes, was *proxenos* for Sparta at about the time of Asklepios' importation.<sup>652</sup> Clinton proposes that this Kallias may have taken part in negotiations to bring Asklepios to Athens.<sup>653</sup> As *proxenos* for Sparta, he would have been on favorable terms with Epidauros, Sparta's ally, and thus in a good position to negotiate between it and Athens. His participation would also be consistent with his belonging to the Kerykes inasmuch as the cult of Eleusinian Demeter played such a large role in welcoming Asklepios to Athens. It is thus entirely plausible that this Kallias participated in negotiations between Epidauros and Athens.

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<sup>650</sup> A good example of this is Avalos 1995 (45-46, 93-98) who argues that Asklepios "was not a politically oriented deity" (45), and uses the case of Athens importing Asklepios as a prime example. According to his argument, since Athens was hostile to Epidauros, Athens would never have imported Asklepios from Epidauros if Asklepios had had anything to do with politics (95-97). I think the converse is true: since Asklepios was a symbol of Epidauros, his importation served perfectly as a gesture of conciliation towards Epidauros.

<sup>651</sup> Agora, Inv. No. I 7471. On this inscription, see Ch. 4 above.

<sup>652</sup> On Kallias, see Clinton 1974 (49-50).

<sup>653</sup> Clinton 1994 (30).

Further evidence that Athens used diplomacy to import Asklepios is the name of the festival that commemorated the god's arrival in Athens: the Epidauria. There is no reason that Athens had to name the festival "Epidauria"; it could as easily have been called "Asklepieia," for example.<sup>654</sup> Moreover, while cults often took their names from locales, few were named for foreign locales. But Athens chose to publicize the Epidaurian origins of the cult. Why it chose to do so is uncertain. Perhaps Athens hoped the name would lend prestige to their own cult since Epidauros was a popular, panhellenic sanctuary. But the name "Epidauria" may also have served a diplomatic function—a declaration of a newly-forged alliance between Athens and Epidauros.

It is not difficult to imagine what benefits Athens could reap from such alliance: use of a strategic harbor, easier access to the Peloponnese, and all that such access entailed for control of the Peloponnese. But what would Epidauros have hoped to gain from the bargain? Having Athens as an ally may have been viewed as a self-defensive measure. Athens was the perpetrator of many attacks on Epidauros in the 420s BC. With an Athenian alliance, Epidauros was less likely to be the target of future aggression. And, while a more formal alliance with Athens might have provoked the wrath of other Peloponnesian cities against Epidauros, a less formal arrangement would have promised Epidauros a greater sense of security on all fronts, especially against powerful, inimical neighbors like Argos.

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<sup>654</sup> Clinton 1994 (18) raises this point. His conclusions as to the importance of Epidauros to Athens are different, however. He suggests that Asklepios was imported from Epidauros and incorporated into the Eleusinian Mysteries to boost Demeter's waning popularity in Athens. Clinton believes that the Epidaurian cult in particular was chosen because of ties between the Kerykes and Epidauros evident in the cooperation of *φρουροί* and Eleusinian officials during celebration of the Epidauria (Agora, Inv. No. I 7471, discussed above). Clinton (30-31) also argues that a 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC priest of Asklepios at Zea was a member of the Kerykes—a further indicator, he contends, of cooperation between Epidauros and the Kerykes in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

Another, very practical reason for Epidauros' exporting Asklepios to Athens might have been to advertise the Epidaurian cult and thereby also Epidauros itself. This was accomplished in two ways: as noted above, the Epidauria called attention to Epidauros; moreover, integration of Asklepios into two major panhellenic festivals (the Eleusinian Mysteries and City Dionysia) boosted the fame of the Epidaurian cult.<sup>655</sup> That there were relatively few non-Athenian visitors to the sanctuary of Asklepios at Athens indicates Athens did not detract panhellenic business from Epidauros. Quite the opposite was true; the cult at Epidauros flourished, resulting in a vast building program in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>656</sup>

There may also have been economic reasons for exporting Asklepios to Athens. If any of the advertising (intentional or not) that Athens did for the Epidaurian cult increased the volume of visitors to Epidauros, it simultaneously increased that cult's finances. More visitors meant more offerings to Asklepios. In addition, Athens appears on an inscription of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC listing places that contributed money to the sanctuary at Epidauros.<sup>657</sup> Athens may have been making such contributions already in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, as Garland suggests.<sup>658</sup>

It is thus possible to see why Epidauros would have found diplomatic ties with Athens advantageous (especially via the cult of Asklepios), and vice-versa. But if Athens was indeed interested in alliance with Epidauros,

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<sup>655</sup> Garland 1992 (126) suggests that the support of Athens and Eleusis were key to catapulting Asklepios-cult to panhellenic fame. The role of Athens in the spread of Asklepios-cult should not be overstated, however. The cult at Athens was not itself panhellenic; moreover, the cult at Epidauros was already panhellenic by the time Asklepios came to Athens, which indicates that the cult was becoming popular before it had reached Athens.

<sup>656</sup> See Ch. 2 above.

<sup>657</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 94. See also Ch. 7-8 below.

<sup>658</sup> Garland 1992 (122).

why did Athens take part in Argive aggression against Epidauros in 419 BC, within a year of importing Asklepios?

About the attack Thucydides writes, “It seemed best to Alcibiades and the Argives, if possible, to acquire Epidauros.”<sup>659</sup> The role of Alcibiades in this effort is suspicious. He was among those Athenians opposed to peace with Sparta. Thucydides attributes Alcibiades’ anti-Spartan stance partly to his wounded pride. Alcibiades had hoped to become proxenos to Sparta, an office that his grandfather had held and later given up.<sup>660</sup> When Sparta prepared to negotiate the Peace of Nikias, however, it chose to do so not through Alcibiades, as Alcibiades had expected, but through the Athenian generals Nikias and Laches.<sup>661</sup>

As a result, when Spartan envoys arrived in Athens in 420 BC to dissuade Athens from allying with Argos, Alcibiades sabotaged their efforts by tricking them into appearing unwilling and unprepared to participate fully in negotiations.<sup>662</sup> At the same time, Alcibiades was secretly urging Argos to ally with Athens. And in 418 BC, when Argos complained that Athens had allowed Spartan troops to reach Epidauros past Athenian garrisons, Alcibiades proposed that the inscription bearing the Peace of Nikias be amended to read that the Spartans had not abided by their oaths.<sup>663</sup>

It is therefore possible that in 419 BC, Alcibiades, angry at Sparta, managed to convince enough Athenians to support the attack of Sparta’s ally Epidauros as a means of triggering renewed hostilities between Athens and Sparta. In other words, acting out of self-interest, he convinced Athens to pursue hostilities rather than an amicable alliance with Epidauros.

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<sup>659</sup> Thucy. 5.53: ἐδόκει δὲ...τὴν Ἐπίδουρον τῷ τε Ἀλκιβιάδῃ καὶ τοῖς Ἀργείοις προσλαβεῖν, ἣν δύνωνται.

<sup>660</sup> Cf. Thucy. 5.89; Plut. *Alc.* 14.

<sup>661</sup> Thucy. 5.43.

<sup>662</sup> Thucy. 5.45; Plut. *Nik.* 10.

<sup>663</sup> Thucy. 5.56.

There thus seem to have been at least two factions debating how to bring Epidaurios into alliance during the Peace of Nikias. One, which included Kallias, favored peace and pursued alliance with Epidaurios in part through the importation of Asklepios. Another, which included Alcibiades, was anti-Spartan and favored the use of force to give Athens a more secure link with Argos and more control generally over their alliance partner. While the pro-peace faction got its way long enough to import the cult, the anti-Spartan one prevailed by convincing Argos to attack Epidaurios, an act which ended the peace.

## V. Asklepios in Ritual Space and Time: Articulating Imperial Diplomacy

Since evidence points to desire for alliance between Epidaurios and Athens as motivation for importing Asklepios, we return to cults, festivals, and locations with which the god was aligned in order to show several ways that his importation can be understood as articulating that alliance.

The πομπή of the Epidauria wound from Piraeus to the sanctuary of Asklepios just below the Parthenon. Its starting point reminded viewers of Asklepios' origins in Epidaurios. Moreover, Piraeus was the new port of Athens, and therefore fitting for the entry of a new god; Bendis, too, arrived in Piraeus.<sup>664</sup> The imperial significance of Piraeus, critical to Athenian naval supremacy and thus also to control over the Delian League and eventually Athenian empire, necessarily nuanced the passage of Asklepios into Athens.

Furthermore, the centripetal movement of the Epidauria drew Epidaurian Asklepios into the heart of the *polis*. This procession brought the periphery (Epidaurios) to the center of Athenian empire, with a sub-articulation of the new national boundary at Piraeus.<sup>665</sup>

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<sup>664</sup> On the history of Piraeus, see Garland 2001. The older port was Phaleron.

<sup>665</sup> This is an inversion of de Polignac's model in which, as noted above, the *polis* articulates

A similar sub-articulation of empire took place at the Eleusinion, where Asklepios stopped on his way to the Acropolis. The god entered this sanctuary several days after a procession from Eleusis made its own stop there to deposit ritual objects (the “holy things”) in preparation for the Greater Mysteries.<sup>666</sup> Both the Epidauria and Mysteries thus utilized the Eleusinion within a very brief period of time.

In the context of the Greater Mysteries, the holy things were brought to the Eleusinion by, among others, the Eumolpid family.<sup>667</sup> The Eumolpids were descendants of Eumolpus, famous for having launched an attack against Athens at the time of King Erechtheus. Only after much bloodshed did the attack result in Athenian annexation of Eleusis. Ismaros, Eumolpus’ son and the one said by some sources to have led the attack against Athens, was buried in the Eleusinion.<sup>668</sup> The entry of Eumolpus’ descendants into the Eleusinion during the Mysteries thus symbolized the assimilation of its one-time enemy into Athens. The invading enemy had become an ally of the state.<sup>669</sup> The very name “Eleusinion” called attention to the city Eleusis whose assimilation was reenacted annually in the center of Athens.

In much the same way, Epidaurian Asklepios—a representative of Athens’ recent Peloponnesian enemy—followed Eumolpus’ invasive route and entered the Eleusinion only days later to be assimilated into the Athenian

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its periphery by locating cults there.

<sup>666</sup> Clinton 1994 (27) argues that the procession stopped at the Eleusinion in commemoration of Asklepios’ stay there ca. 420 BC. His stay at the Eleusinion is documented in *SEG* 25.226; see Ch. 4 above.

<sup>667</sup> The Hierophant, as well as other priests and priestesses at Eleusis, were from the Eumolpid family. It was the Hierophant who, by definition, showed the holy things (*hiera*) to the initiates (Hesych. sv ‘ἱεροφάντες’), and he alone could enter the Anaktoron at Eleusis where the holy things were kept (Aelian fr. 10). In later years, a separate carriage was used to transport the interpreters, also members of the Eumolpid family, in the procession of the holy things from Eleusis to Athens (*Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 587). See also Clinton 1974.

<sup>668</sup> Clem.Al. *Protr.* 3.45.1. See also Cook 1995 (141).

<sup>669</sup> On the symbolism of the procession of the Mysteries, see Cook 1995 (128-170).



*polis*. However, just as the Acropolis and Athena herself represented empire, so too did entry into the Eleusinion, especially within the context of the Greater Mysteries. Epidauros was now an ally of Athenian empire. The name “Epidauria,” like “Eleusinion,” further articulated this Athenian synoicism. Athens had pushed the borders of its empire well into the Peloponnese.

The terminus of the procession on the Acropolis signaled Asklepios’ welcome by some of Athens’ oldest and most venerated cults, including Athena, patron of Athens. His welcome by Athena was especially significant. As Fustel de Coulanges comments: “War or peace between two cities was war or peace between two religions....If [the ancients] could imagine that the protecting deities of two cities had some motive for becoming allies, this was reason enough why the two cities should become so.”<sup>670</sup> Asklepios and Athena were now neighbors and allies; consequently, so were Epidauros and Athens.

But Athena was also patron of Athenian empire, and Epidauros as friend of Athens had been subsumed into that empire. The topography of the Acropolis indicated a clear hierarchy: Asklepios’ sanctuary lay below Athena’s home on the summit.

Asklepios reached his sanctuary by ἄρμα, or chariot, a vehicle closely associated with Athena.<sup>671</sup> Athena is often depicted next to a chariot in scenes of the Gigantomachy.<sup>672</sup> Some sources attribute the invention of the ἄρμα to Athena, while others ascribe it to her foster son Erichthonios at the first

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<sup>670</sup> Fustel de Coulanges 1980 (201), published originally as *La Cité antique* in 1864.

<sup>671</sup> *SEG* 25.226.14-15. Clinton 1994 translates ἄρμα as “wagon” without comment, but this definition is not given in *LSJ*. In other accounts of Asklepios-cult transfer, wagons are a means of conveying the god, but the term used there is ἄμαξα (e.g., *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 122.69-82 = LiDonnici B13).

<sup>672</sup> For references, see J.L. Shear 2001 (49-52).

celebration of the Panathenaia.<sup>673</sup> Chariots were also an essential component of the festival's apobatic contests, whereby armed contestants jumped off and on their moving cars. The association of the chariot with Athena is reinforced in the story of Peisistratos' second seizure of power in Athens. Herodotus reports that Peisistratos dressed a very tall woman named Phye in a suit of armor to look like Athena, and that the "goddess" escorted Peisistratos by ἄρμα back to the Acropolis.<sup>674</sup> Asklepios, in traveling by chariot from the Eleusinion to his home on the Acropolis slopes, was thus fully assimilated into Athena's city and empire.

Asklepios' other annual festival, the Asklepieia, took place below Athena's sanctuary on the Acropolis, and was closely identified with the Peace of Nikias. The peace had been published on the Acropolis.<sup>675</sup> Moreover, the peace was concluded during the City Dionysia in 421 BC and was to be renewed each year at that festival.<sup>676</sup> When Asklepios arrived a year later, the Asklepieia was coordinated with the City Dionysia, and thus with renewal of the peace. Celebration of Asklepios' Athenian cult thus helped to articulate this peace.

The complexity of these relations between Epidauros and Athens is further echoed in iconography of the Athenian cult of Asklepios. Hygieia, daughter of Asklepios, figures prominently in the cult beginning in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. According to the Telemachos monument, she arrived at the sanctuary along with Asklepios (lines 16-17), and she is depicted next to Asklepios on

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<sup>673</sup> On Athena and the chariot, see Cook 1995 (128-194). The earliest reference to Erichthonios as inventor of the chariot is the Marmor Parium (*IG XII 5.444*), an inscription of 264/3 BC which draws on information of earlier attidographers. For other references to Erichthonios, and on the apobatic contests mentioned below, see Cook (128-194); J.L. Shear 2001 (43-52).

<sup>674</sup> Hdt. 1.60-3-5. See also J.L. Shear 2001 (52).

<sup>675</sup> Thucy. 5.23.5. A *stèle* was to be erected also at the temple of Apollo at Amyclae.

<sup>676</sup> The *stèle* inscribed with the peace stood next to the Parthenon; Thucy. 5.20.1, 5.23.4. The peace was to be renewed in Sparta at the Hyakinthia.

one of the monument's reliefs. She also appears both with and separate from Asklepios on numerous 5<sup>th</sup>- and 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC votive reliefs from the sanctuary.<sup>677</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Red-figure vases, for example, place her in the company of Attic deities and heroes.<sup>678</sup> Although Hygieia was linked to Asklepios before his arrival in Athens, she played a more prominent role in his Athenian cult.<sup>679</sup>

The prominence of Hygieia in this cult must relate to the earlier presence of Athena Hygieia on the Acropolis. Since evidence for worship of Athena Hygieia drops off considerably after the arrival of Hygieia, it is likely that Hygieia was syncretized with Athena Hygieia.<sup>680</sup> As others have proposed, this was an effort to assimilate the Epidaurian cult of Asklepios more fully into Athens, and to create a ritual act of subordination that gave the god a distinctively Athenian stamp.<sup>681</sup>

## VI. Conclusions

Jonathan Hall has argued that “the function of the hero is not so much to serve as an exclusive and static emblem of a city’s distinctive identity, but to articulate the dynamic relationships that might exist between several

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<sup>677</sup> See Leventi 1992.

<sup>678</sup> The name-vase of the Meidias Painter (420-410 BC) depicts Hygieia with four of the Attic eponymous heroes; she also wears an Argive peplos and carries a scepter like Athena on the Parthenon east frieze (British Museum, Inv. No. E224; illustrated in *LIMC*, sv ‘Hygieia,’ no. 1). See Leventi 1992 (Ch. 3.1-2). An Attic Red-figure *pelike* of the late 5<sup>th</sup>-early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC by the Circle of the Pronomos Painter depicts Hygieia with two Nikes, which associate her with Athena in the guise of Nike (Barcelona Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. 33). See Leventi 1992 (Ch. 3.2).

<sup>679</sup> According to Paus. 5.26.2, Mikythos of Rhegium dedicated a statue to Hygieia as well as to Asklepios and other gods at Olympia in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Also, an altar from Epidauros inscribed to Hygieia dates to the late 5<sup>th</sup>-early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and may precede the arrival of Asklepios in Athens. See Peek 1972 (23, no. 25); Aleshire 1989 (12, n. 8). On Epidauros and Hygieia, see also Wagman 1995 (149-178).

<sup>680</sup> Worship of Athena Hygieia is attested in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC: *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 334.8-10 (330s BC).

<sup>681</sup> Leventi 1992; Stafford 2000 (160-161).

cities.”<sup>682</sup> Asklepios expressed just such a dynamic relationship between Epidauros and Athens. While Athens surely knew that its importation of Asklepios would convey a message, they must also have known that that message would be perceived in different ways.

While other factors surely motivated the importation of Asklepios, the god came in large part to articulate and strengthen a new alliance between Athens and a city critical to the preservation of Athenian empire. Asklepios’ integration into the Acropolis and the festivals of Dionysus Eleuthereus and Eleusinian Demeter particularly attest to this. These places and rituals speak eloquently of the relations between cities and territories encompassed in the organization of Athenian empire, and of the diplomacy and alliances that contributed to its construction.

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<sup>682</sup> Hall 1999 (52).

## CHAPTER 7: AESCULAPIUS' ARRIVAL IN ROME

The Romans were by no means boorish rustics, awestruck and intimidated by Hellenism, gripped by an inferiority complex that produced a mix of clandestine acceptance and ostensible rejection. The success of Greek culture in Rome came in part because it could serve certain public purposes....Roman leaders were attuned to the possibilities.

—Erich Gruen, *Studies in Greek Cult and Roman Policy*, 1.

Asklepios-cult was imported to Rome ca. 291 BC.<sup>683</sup> Ancient sources relate that a plague struck Rome in 295 BC, and in 293 BC the Senate consulted the Sibylline books for a cure.<sup>684</sup> The books recommended summoning Asklepios from Epidauros. However, the Samnite Wars and other affairs of state prevented Rome from sending an embassy to Epidauros that year. Sometime later, presumably the following year, a plebeian named Q. Ogulnius led an embassy to Epidauros to invite the god to Rome. Asklepios, in the form of a snake, joined the ambassadors on their voyage home. They sailed around the western coast of Italy and up the Tiber river. As they passed Tiber Island, Asklepios slithered unexpectedly from the boat to the island where the Romans built a temple to Aesculapius, as they called him.<sup>685</sup> (See Fig. 9 below).

Unlike Athens, where a single, contemporary source documents the arrival of Asklepios, numerous sources narrate events surrounding Aesculapius' arrival in Rome. All of our sources tell a similar story and they all ascribe the god's arrival to plague; these sources, however, postdate his arrival in Rome by more than two-and-a-half centuries. The chronological

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<sup>683</sup> The date of Aesculapius' import to Rome is uncertain, but must have occurred in the years 292-290 BC. On the chronology, see Ch. 8 below. For the sake of brevity, I have chosen to designate the date as ca. 291 BC.

<sup>684</sup> The ancient sources are discussed below.

<sup>685</sup> On ancient and modern explanations for Aesculapius' location on Tiber Island, see Ch. 9 below.

gap is large enough to admit change and even error; the consistency of the sources does not guarantee their accuracy.<sup>686</sup>

Chapters 7-9 will demonstrate that the import of Aesculapius to Rome was due to a variety of factors—including, as with Athens, the foreign interests of the state. While diplomacy motivated the introduction of Asklepios to both Athens and Rome, the contexts in which that diplomacy functioned were markedly different. The shift of focus from Athens to Rome within this study occasions not only temporal and geographic, but also cultural, change. Rome's import of Aesculapius must be understood in the context of attitudes towards the gods, healing, and the state that differ significantly from late 5<sup>th</sup>-c. BC Athens.

The present chapter demonstrates why plague alone cannot account for the import of Aesculapius. While there was no consistent response to plague by the Roman state during the Republic, the import of a god and the erection of a temple to that god were extraordinary measures.

## **I. Sources for the Importation of Aesculapius**

Many ancient sources recount the import of Aesculapius.<sup>687</sup> Three authors describe his arrival in detail: Livy, Ovid, and Valerius Maximus. Livy, the earliest of the three, wrote during the principate of Augustus, and thus over 250 years after the arrival of Aesculapius. In Book 10 of his history of Rome, Livy records a plague that broke out in 295 BC.<sup>688</sup> Later in the same book, he mentions the continuance of the plague into 293 BC and the

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<sup>686</sup> The consistency may rather reflect knowledge of a common source, or widespread misunderstanding of events that occurred several centuries earlier. The latter has been demonstrated by Gruen 1990 concerning sources for the arrival of Mater Magna, discussed in more detail below.

<sup>687</sup> The most comprehensive collections of these testimonia, including discussion of them, are Roesch 1982; Musial 1992 (13-17).

<sup>688</sup> Livy 10.31.

subsequent decision to consult the Sibylline books.<sup>689</sup> (This text is included as Appendix III.A below). Book 11, which narrated the embassy to Epidauros and the bringing of Aesculapius to Rome, is lost. Its *periocha* merely mentions these events. (See also Appendix III.A below).

The other two authors, Ovid and Valerius Maximus, wrote during the reign of Augustus and Tiberius, respectively, and thus within 50 years of Livy. Ovid's narrative occurs in Book 15 of the *Metamorphoses* and recounts with Ovidian charm and wit the importation of the snake from Epidauros. (See Appendix III.B below). Ovid's version is embedded in a longer section on the deification of Julius Caesar, and, as with Livy and Valerius Maximus, must be interpreted in the context of the works.<sup>690</sup>

Valerius Maximus, who wrote under Tiberius, recounts the arrival of Aesculapius in his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*.<sup>691</sup> (See Appendix III.C below). Although Valerius is notorious for his uncritical use of sources, his version is close to both Livy's and Ovid's, which suggests that all three were drawing upon the same sources or traditions.<sup>692</sup>

Later authors also mention the arrival of Aesculapius. These include Arnobius (*Adversus nationes* 7.44-48) in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> c. AD; Lactantius (*Divinae*

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<sup>689</sup> Livy 10.47.

<sup>690</sup> The differences in detail in Ovid, especially the visit of the embassy to Delphi before going to Epidauros, can best be explained in terms of Ovid's larger poetic project. In the latter part of Book 15 of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid associates Augustus with Apollo and Asklepios; Delphi strengthens the Apollo-Asklepios association. See Segal 1976; Wickkiser 1999. Musial 1992 (15), however, proposes that the visit to Delphi reflects Livy's account of the importation of Mater Magna in 204 BC, which included a stop also at Delphi.

<sup>691</sup> Val.Max. 1.8.2. An account in the anonymous *De viris illustribus* 22.1-3, although shorter than Valerius, is close to Valerius in minor details.

<sup>692</sup> It is possible that Ovid and Valerius both drew primarily upon Livy, but since all that exists of Livy's version of the event is the *periocha*, the matter of influence remains uncertain. Also, as shown below, non-literary evidence presents a similar narrative of Aesculapius' arrival, thus indicating that the story was widespread in the late Republic and early Imperial period. On Valerius' use of sources, see Wardle 1998 (15-18). On Roman religion in Valerius, see Mueller 2002.

*institutiones* 2.7; 2.16) in the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD; Augustine (*De civitate Dei* 3.12; 3.17; 10.16) in the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD; and Orosius (3.22.5) in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD.<sup>693</sup> All these authors also attribute the god's arrival to plague.

Not only texts, but also coins and medallions depict the arrival of Aesculapius in Rome. On the reverse of a bronze medallion minted by Antoninus Pius (140-143 AD), the personified Tiber reclines and extends a hand towards a Roman galley passing under a bridge. A coiled snake sits on the galley's prow and faces an island with gates, a tower, and a tree. The medallion is inscribed "AESCULAPIUS."<sup>694</sup> Over two centuries earlier, a coin minted by L. Rubrius Dossenus ca. 87 BC depicts a similar scene. On its reverse appears a temple and an altar encircled by a snake. Beneath the temple is the prow of a ship, which may recall the arrival of Aesculapius.<sup>695</sup>

Further, architectural evidence appears to have celebrated the import of Aesculapius. Probably in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, with the rebuilding of the Pons Fabricius and Pons Cestius, the southern end of Tiber Island was encased in travertine to resemble a ship's prow.<sup>696</sup> On that prow, carved in relief, was the image of the bearded Aesculapius, his snake-entwined staff, and a bull's head.<sup>697</sup> The fashioning of the island into a prow may, like Rubrius' coin, have echoed the story of the voyage of the god up the Tiber river to his home on Tiber Island.<sup>698</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> Ancient references to the cult of Aesculapius in Rome are collected in Edelstein 1945 (T. 845-861).

<sup>694</sup> Grueber and Poole 1874 (4, 5); Mattingly 1940 (vol. 4, p. xcv); Banti 1984 (35); Penn 1994 (37-38); *LIMC*, sv 'Tiber, Tiberinus' (no. 23). Another bronze medallion of Antoninus Pius (180 AD) shows a similar scene of the reclining Tiber extending his right arm towards a galley; *LIMC*, sv 'Tiber, Tiberinus' (no. 21d).

<sup>695</sup> Crawford 1974 (348/6). On the possible reference to the arrival of Aesculapius, see *BMC Roman Republic* (vol. 1, p. 313). See also Penn 1994 (121-122).

<sup>696</sup> On these bridges, sv 'Pons Fabricius,' 'Pons Cestius' in Richardson 1992 and *LTUR*; see also Ch. 9 below.

<sup>697</sup> Jordan 1867; Guarducci 1967; Brucia 1990 (18-23); *LTUR*, sv 'Insula Tiberina.'

<sup>698</sup> It is just as possible, however, that the travertine articulation of the natural boat-shape of Tiber Island was partly responsible for generating the tradition of Aesculapius' arrival



The literary sources, coins, medallions, and architectural embellishment of Tiber Island all point to a common tale, widespread in the late Republic and Empire, concerning the arrival of Aesculapius in Rome. The literary sources, it must be emphasized, agree on plague as the reason for Aesculapius' import. However, since Livy—the earliest extant literary source documenting Aesculapius' arrival—dates to more than two-and-a-half centuries after the event, and was probably the source for later versions, his account should not be accepted uncritically.

Livy knew that there was a plague in the 290s BC because pontifical tables listing famines and plagues were readily available.<sup>699</sup> It is easy to understand how the arrival of a healing god could come to be associated primarily with this occurrence of plague, especially over the course of several centuries, even if the importation was not actually motivated by this plague.<sup>700</sup> Livy's explanation represents a shift from a *post hoc* to a *propter hoc* relationship.

Ancient accounts of the arrival of the Phrygian goddess Mater Magna in Rome in 204 BC present a useful parallel to the accounts of Aesculapius'

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by boat. Roman monuments often responded to the topography of their locations. Much as a frieze of nymphs on a statue base in the Circus Flaminius appears to refer to the temple of the Nymphs standing nearby, the ship's prow may have been a response to the island setting and its proximity to Rome's port and shipsheds east of the island. On the importance of topography to Roman monuments, see Kuttner 1993 (208-209); Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 167-210). The statue base on which the nymphs appear is a commemorative monument of Marcus Antonius, and dates to the late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC; see Kuttner 1993. Beard et al. (vol. 1, p. 173-174) describe how Roman myths in the Augustan period were strongly influenced by place. For example, Varro explained the banning of women from the altar of Hercules in the Forum Boarium as a result of the refusal of the goddess Bona Dea (whose temple stood nearby) to allow Hercules to drink from her spring. On the shipsheds and port of Rome, see Ch. 9 below.

<sup>699</sup> On Livy's sources, see Walsh 1961; Oakley 1997- (vol. 1, p. 3-108; esp. 24-27 on the use of pontifical tables). On Livy's reliability as a source for Republican religion, see Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 8-10; 76-77).

<sup>700</sup> As Orlin 1997 (27) observes, "Even an anachronistic account maintains a semblance of historical accuracy; it reflects the later understanding of how the events might have transpired...."

arrival, particularly in their widespread misunderstanding of motives for the goddess' import. Sources as numerous and diverse as Livy, Cicero, Silius Italicus, the author of the anonymous *De viris illustribus*, and Julian all attribute her arrival to dire circumstances in the course of the Second Punic War.<sup>701</sup> As Erich Gruen has shown, however, Mater Magna arrived not in a moment of desperation during the war, but when “the tide had been reversed and the Republic was on its way to inevitable victory.”<sup>702</sup> All of these sources, postdating the arrival of the goddess by at least 150 years, are therefore inaccurate regarding the immediate motivations behind her import.

Gruen goes on to demonstrate that the choice of a Phrygian goddess makes more sense in the context of Rome's relations with Attalus I of Pergamon than with Hannibal. Around 204 BC, Rome was eager to cultivate an alliance with Attalus I, and the importation of a goddess local to Phrygia, the region surrounding Pergamon, was a gesture of alliance towards its king.

Similarly, a tradition developed in the centuries between the arrival of Aesculapius and the earliest extant literary record of it that explained his arrival in terms of related, but not necessarily the most immediate, factors. As Mary Beard and others have pointed out, Livy was engaged in much the same arguments as we are today, knowing possibly not much more than we do, and seeking, just as we do, to find an explanation that makes sense of the traditions at hand.<sup>703</sup>

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<sup>701</sup> Gruen 1990 (6, with n. 4). Livy 29.10-11, 29.14.5-14; Cic. *De har.resp.* 27; Sil.Ital. 17.1-43; *De vir.ill.* 46.1; Julian *Or.* 5.159-161.

<sup>702</sup> Gruen 1990 (6).

<sup>703</sup> This is a paraphrase of Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 59) regarding Livy's account of the monarchy.

## II. Problems with Plague as the Sole Motive for the Importation of Aesculapius

### A. Roman Responses to Plague

In Republican Rome, there was no consistent response to plague by the state.<sup>704</sup> According to Livy, our primary literary source for Republican Rome, different plagues, or different stages of the same plague, invited responses ranging from inaction<sup>705</sup> to *obsecrationes* (expiations),<sup>706</sup> *lectisternia* (banquets for the gods),<sup>707</sup> *feriae* (festivals) and *ludi* (games),<sup>708</sup> to the driving of a nail into a wall,<sup>709</sup> *supplicationes*,<sup>710</sup> the restoration of shrines,<sup>711</sup> and even the erection of temples. According to Livy, however, the only two temples erected due to plague were those to Apollo in 433 BC<sup>712</sup> and to Aesculapius ca. 291 BC.

Moreover, these responses to plague were instigated by different parties, and with no consistency as to who instigated what. For example, construction of the temple to Apollo was undertaken by an unspecified party, while sources attribute the temple to Aesculapius to a directive from the Sibylline books.<sup>713</sup> Although natural catastrophes such as drought or plague

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<sup>704</sup> Orlin 1997 (esp. 20-24) gathers and discusses the evidence in relation to Republican temple-building.

<sup>705</sup> E.g., Livy 4.52 (412 BC).

<sup>706</sup> E.g., Livy 4.21 (436 BC).

<sup>707</sup> E.g., Livy 7.2 (364 BC).

<sup>708</sup> E.g., Livy 7.2 (364 BC), 27.23 (208 BC).

<sup>709</sup> E.g., Livy 7.3 (363 BC), 8.18 (331 BC).

<sup>710</sup> E.g., Livy 10.47 (293 BC).

<sup>711</sup> E.g., Livy 51.3, 51.6 (179 BC). Morgan 1990 (26) argues that this temple would have been restored before additions were built to it.

<sup>712</sup> Livy 4.21.5, 4.25.3.

<sup>713</sup> Livy's account is unclear regarding the party responsible for vowing the temple to Apollo. He writes at 4.25.2: *pestilentia eo anno aliarum rerum otium praebuit. aedis Apollini pro ualetudine populi uota est. multa duumviri ex libris placandae deum irae auertendaeque a populo pestis causa fecere* (That year [433 BC] a plague gave rest from other events. A temple was vowed to Apollo for the health of the people. The *duumviri*,

often motivated consultation of the Sibylline books, the books were apparently not always consulted when plague hit, nor was there any clear correlation between the severity of a plague and their consultation.<sup>714</sup> For example, in 346 BC, the Sibylline books were consulted as the first response to plague,<sup>715</sup> but in 433 BC, they were only consulted three years into the plague and then after an *obsecratio* (public prayer).<sup>716</sup>

What stands out then in the case of Aesculapius' import compared to other responses to plague, is the magnitude of the action undertaken.

## **B. Importing a God and Building a Temple: Major Responses to Plague**

Of the 14-plus cases of plague reported in Livy, only two are said to have prompted the erection of temples. The plague that struck in 436 BC prompted the temple to Apollo, and the plague of 295 BC the temple to Aesculapius.<sup>717</sup> Aesculapius is all the more striking as the only instance during the Republic of the importation of a god in response to plague. Apollo seems to have had a presence in Rome well before the building of his temple. According to Livy, a meeting of the Senate in 449 BC took place in an area known "even then as the Apollinare."<sup>718</sup>

Moreover, the importation of Aesculapius was recommended by the Sibylline books. No set procedures are discernible in Republican Rome for importing gods or building temples.<sup>719</sup> Nevertheless, while the Sibylline

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in accordance with the Sibylline books, took many steps to avert the anger of the gods and the plague from the people). The temple, preceding the clause about the Sibylline books, does not appear to have been one of the measures prescribed by the books.

<sup>714</sup> Orlin 1997 (87-88).

<sup>715</sup> Livy 7.27.

<sup>716</sup> Livy 4.20-25. See Orlin 1997 (21-24, 87-88) for more examples.

<sup>717</sup> On the temple to Apollo, see above.

<sup>718</sup> Livy 3.63.7: *iam tum Apollinare appellabant*. See Richardson 1992 (sv 'Apollinare'); *LTUR*, sv 'Apollinare.'

<sup>719</sup> Beard et al. 1998 (87-89) comment on the rash of temple building in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cs. BC:

books were consulted for other plagues, during no other plague did they recommend the importation of a god or the erection of a temple.

That the directive came from the Sibylline books is significant. As Eric Orlin has argued, the Sibylline books were an organ of the Senate. The Senate determined when the books were to be consulted; the interpreters of the Sibylline books (*decemviri*) were themselves senators; and the Senate decided how an oracle was to be interpreted and applied.<sup>720</sup> The Sibylline books were thus the primary mechanism through which the Senate initiated the import of a cult.

The Senate, composed of a small elite of the most wealthy members of the state, was the most influential governing body of the Republic.<sup>721</sup> Acts of the Senate thus represented the interests largely of the ruling class, and of the state as a body politic. Whatever external or internal pressures may have come to bear on the decision to import Aesculapius, the final decision rested with the Senate, and thus with the state.

The state was responsible not only for importing this god, but also for building his temple. During the Republic, the most frequent builders of temples were individuals, especially victorious generals. Of the 70-plus temples known to have been built during the period, only eight were initiated by the Senate via the Sibylline books.<sup>722</sup> Of these eight, only the temple to Aesculapius was said to have been built in response to plague.

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“While the choice of deities must have responded in a general way to the ideas and tastes of the period, there can be no question of looking for any religious policy as such; neither senate nor priests can have been in a position to maintain any consistency, even if they could exercise restraint by advice and non-co-operation.”

<sup>720</sup> See Orlin 1997 (76-115).

<sup>721</sup> Since most magistrates were elected from the ranks of the Senate, and their continued membership in the Senate was dependant on Senate-approval, many magistrates felt compelled to abide by the majority opinion of the Senate.

<sup>722</sup> Ceres, Liber, Libera (493 BC; attributed to drought); Aesculapius (ca. 291 BC, plague); Hercules Custos (3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, unknown circumstances); Flora (241 or 238 BC, drought); Mens and Venus Erycina (215 BC, battle at Trasimene); Mater Magna (204-191 BC, battle at

Furthermore, Aesculapius is the only instance of a god arriving from mainland Greece at the Senate's instigation for any reason.<sup>723</sup> The importation of a Greek god cannot be attributed to a Greek bias in the Sibylline books. According to tradition, the books were bought by the Etruscan king Tarquinius Superbus from an old lady whose origin is contested. Some sources say she was Greek; others say that she was from Asia Minor.<sup>724</sup> During the Republic, the books were kept in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, not in the temple of the Greek god Apollo.<sup>725</sup> And, although they were written in Greek hexameters, their consultation was a Roman process and they usually recommended Roman rituals.<sup>726</sup>

If we are to understand the motives for Aesculapius' import as given by the ancient sources, we must ask why the Senate undertook such drastic measures in response to this particular plague. As stated above, there was little correlation between the severity of a plague and the response it provoked. This instance proves no exception. Valerius Maximus says that

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Trasimene); and Venus Verticordia (114 BC, Vestal Virgins' loss of chastity). See Orlin 1997 (97, and App. 2). On the Sibylline books as a way of mediating Roman religious innovations, see North 1976 (9).

<sup>723</sup> The cult of Ceres, Liber, and Libera may have been Italic in origin rather than Greek; see Le Bonniec 1958 (292-305); Spaeth 1996 (6-11); Orlin 1997 (100-101). According to Livy 1.7, who states that Romulus worshipped Hercules, Hercules was in Rome by the time the Sibylline books ordered construction of a temple to Hercules Custos. Venus Verticordia had also been in Rome before her temple was constructed, as attested by Val.Max. 8.15.12. Flora was an Italic deity who, according to Varro *LL* 5.74, had been in Rome since Titus Tatius; see Scullard 1981 (110). Venus Erycina was a Sicilian goddess, and there is nothing in Livy to indicate that the Sibylline books were responsible for her importation; see Orlin 1997 (99). Mens is a Roman personification of an abstract concept. The only foreign god other than Aesculapius brought to Rome by the Sibylline books was the Phrygian Mater Magna.

<sup>724</sup> The story of the Sibylline Books appears in Dion.Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.62; Gell. *NA* 1.19.1; Lactantius *Div.Inst.* 1.6.10-11; Serv. ad *Aen.* 6.72; Zonaras 7.11.1; Tzetzes on Lycophron 1279. Ancient sources that identify the old woman often call her Amatheia and include her among the Sibyls of either Cumae or Erythrae.

<sup>725</sup> Augustus moved the books to the temple of Apollo sometime after its dedication in 28 BC (Suet. *Aug.* 31).

<sup>726</sup> On the Roman nature of the consultation and recommendations of the books, see Scheid 1995 (25-26); Orlin 1997 (85-97).

the plague was in its third year, and that both human and divine efforts were helpless against it.<sup>727</sup> Livy says that the destruction caused by the plague was like a portent.<sup>728</sup> But, according to Livy, other plagues of the Republic lasted at least as long and were at least as severe, and did not lead to the introduction of a new cult.<sup>729</sup> Thus the severity of the plague alone cannot account for the import. It especially cannot account for the importation of a Greek god since there were other healing gods to choose from, many within Italy.

### C. Other Healing Cults in Italy

In the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, several gods with healing functions resided in Rome. Apollo, for instance, had been vowed a temple in 433 BC apparently to avert plague.<sup>730</sup> Castor and Pollux, who had a sanctuary in Rome since 494 BC, may also have served a healing role.<sup>731</sup> Moreover, thousands of anatomical votives, said to date from the late 4<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> cs. BC, have been found in Rome.<sup>732</sup> These include arms, legs, feet, heads, ears, eyes, open torsos

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<sup>727</sup> Val.Max. 1.8.2.

<sup>728</sup> Livy 10.47: *portentoque iam similis clades erat.*

<sup>729</sup> E.g., the plague of 436-433 BC, which resulted in an *obsecratio* and the building of the temple of Apollo (Livy 4.20-25). Also the plague of 365-363 BC, which prompted a *lectisternum*, the introduction of *ludi scenici*, and the driving of a nail into the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (Livy 7.1-3). Livy 7.1.7 describes the plague of 365-363 BC as *ingens.*

<sup>730</sup> Livy 4.25.

<sup>731</sup> According to Livy 2.20.11-12, Castor and Pollux were brought to Rome in 496 BC when the dictator Postumius vowed a temple during battle at Lake Regillus. Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 6.13, however, reports that Castor and Pollux appeared during the battle and brought victory to Rome; later that day Castor and Pollux announced the victory. On their importation, see Simon 1990 (35-42); Orlin 1997 (30, with n. 62).

The healing function of Castor and Pollux is discussed by Schilling 1979 (344-347), who bases his arguments on the Schol. ad Persius 2.56 and on a connection between the two deities and the spring of Juturna, the latter associated with healing by Varro *LL* 5.71 and Prop. 3.22.6.

<sup>732</sup> See Comella 1981 (Table, no. 61). The date of many of these votives is uncertain because the votives were found in secondary contexts. That is, they were found removed from their

showing organs of the body, and male and female genitalia, among a host of other body parts.<sup>733</sup> These votives, found mainly in the Tiber riverbed and in the area of the Esquiline hill,<sup>734</sup> cannot be linked to any god in particular. Moreover, they cannot all be linked to Aesculapius since some seem to predate the arrival of the god, and most were found upstream of Tiber Island.<sup>735</sup> The votives attest to widespread interest in divine healing before, during, and after the arrival of Aesculapius, and thus indicate that Rome had a strong tradition of divine healing by the time Aesculapius came to Rome.

Whether Castor and Pollux, and the unnamed recipients of anatomical votives, could cure plague is uncertain. Perhaps it was their inability to heal plague that forced Rome to look beyond its own borders and pantheon in 293 BC for a new healer. But Rome did not have to look all the way to Greece to find another healer. There were many present elsewhere in Italy.

Beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, thousands of anatomical votives, like those found in the Tiber bed and on the Esquiline in Rome, appeared in other areas

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initial places of dedication. For example, in the case of the Tiber river where many votives were found, there is no way of knowing where the votives were initially deposited. Were they set up elsewhere and later dumped into the Tiber? Or were they thrown initially into the river itself? In the latter case, they would likely have floated downstream from their initial submersion points. Consequently, dating of most of these votives is based on nothing more exact than the style of any attached terracotta heads (e.g., Pensabene et al. 1980 [43-45]; Gatti lo Guzzo 1978 [150]). Stylistic dating, however, is very inexact, and cannot account well for such misleading factors as deliberate archaizing.

<sup>733</sup> See Comella 1981 (Table, no. 61, sv 'Deposito votive di Minerva Medica' and 'Tevere').

<sup>734</sup> On the Tiber votives, see Pensabene et al. 1980. On the Esquiline votives, see Coarelli and Ricciotti 1973; Gatti lo Guzzo 1978.

<sup>735</sup> The Tiber votives have been ascribed to Aesculapius by Comella 1982-1983; Degrassi 1986 (146-147). On the dating of these votives and their relation to Tiber Island, see Pensabene et al. 1980 (10); Lesk 2002. The Tiber votives have also been ascribed to the river god Tiberinus by Le Gall 1953a (68-74) based on evidence for Tiberinus on Tiber Island. The date of Tiberinus' cult, however, is unknown. Gatti lo Guzzo 1978 (16-18) ascribes the Esquiline votives to Minerva Medica, but there is scant evidence to link the votives with her. While a 4<sup>th</sup>-c. AD section of the regional catalogue of Rome attests to a temple to Minerva Medica in the area of the Esquiline, its precise location, and its existence seven centuries earlier, is uncertain. On problems of ascribing these votives to Minerva Medica, see also Coarelli and Ricciotti (148).



of Italy.<sup>736</sup> Even before this time, such votives in both metal and terracotta had been dedicated in Italy, but in much smaller numbers.<sup>737</sup> By the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, thousands of terracotta votives were dedicated, especially in the areas of Etruria, Latium, and Campania.<sup>738</sup> The appearance of terracotta anatomical votives in Rome must have been part of this larger phenomenon.

Many anatomical votives from Italy remain unpublished. Many were also removed from their primary contexts already in antiquity.<sup>739</sup> These factors, coupled with the general paucity of evidence for the Republican period, severely limit our understanding of them.

Accordingly, the dedicatees of many of these votives are unknown. While some places where anatomical votives were found later housed deities whose identifications are known from the archaeological and literary record, it cannot be assumed that the votives were dedicated to these later deities. As Alexandra Lesk has shown, moreover, those sanctuaries whose finds have been well enough published to permit careful study often indicate monumentalization in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, at about the same time that dedication of anatomical votives ceases.<sup>740</sup> Whether the deity of the monumentalized sanctuary is the same as the deity of the earlier sanctuary is uncertain.

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<sup>736</sup> The bibliography on these votives grew quickly in the 1970s and 1980s. For bibliography, See van Straten 1981 (146-147); Edlund 1987a and 1987b; Lesk 1999.

<sup>737</sup> Edlund 1987a (53) notes their presence at Fonte Veneziana, Arezzo, and Marzabotto in Etruria. Comella 1982-1983 (238-239) mentions others found in southern Italy and Sicily. Metal votives, unlike terracotta, were likely to have been melted down for reuse. While little can thus be said with certainty about the relative popularity of metal votives based on their surviving numbers, the fact that metal is a more precious material suggests that fewer people could afford to dedicate them.

<sup>738</sup> A map in de Cazanove 2000 (72) illustrates the distribution of terracotta anatomical votives.

<sup>739</sup> Most of these votives have been found in secondary deposits, often in pits (*favisae*) where the votives were ritually buried after removal from their original locations. Such ritual burial often occurred to make room for more votives. Ancient explanations of *favisae* appear in Val.Flac., sv 'favisae'; Gell. *NA* 2.10, quoting Varro.

<sup>740</sup> Lesk 1999 (33-108).

It is supposed, however, that the dedicatees of the anatomical votives were gods with multiple functions. Ingrid Edlund states: “In most cases, the healing aspect of the god was an adjunct one, and the sanctuary provided a number of different functions.”<sup>741</sup> The catalyst that brought about this far-reaching change in dedications in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC is also uncertain, but has been attributed to changes in the political climate, particularly the “Romanization” of Italy.<sup>742</sup>

While many aspects of these votives remain opaque, they nonetheless document interest in divine healing within Italy at the time of Aesculapius’ arrival. Whoever these deities were, and however broad their range of functions, they attracted much attention specifically in their capacity of healing. This indicates that Rome, faced with a plague that supposedly demanded the importation of a healing god, could have turned to other gods within Italy.

#### **D. Aesculapius in Italy**

Aesculapius himself, moreover, had reached Italy before his arrival in Rome.<sup>743</sup> According to Julian the Apostate who wrote in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD,

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<sup>741</sup> Edlund 1987a (54).

<sup>742</sup> Edlund 1987a (56) states that the sudden appearance of these votives in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC and their disappearance in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> c. BC should be ascribed to “political and historical events of Italy which correspond to Roman expansion.” She does not elaborate, however, on the precise events and their impact on the communities that adopted such dedicatory practices. Blagg 1985, regarding the disappearance of these votives, proposes economic reasons arising from the displacement of poorer populations (whom he assumes are the dedicators of terracotta votives) by wealthier villa-builders. His arguments do not account for the disappearance of such votives from Rome itself. And, as Edlund 1987a (55-56) notes, the existence of terracotta votive deposits at the “finest urban temples” suggests that citizens as a whole—not just the poor—were interested in healing.

<sup>743</sup> On the diffusion of Asklepios-cult in Italy, see Comella 1982-1983. Coins of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC depicting Asklepios have been found in Rhegium, Syracuse, and Agrigentum. See Comella (230-231). These coins do not prove the worship of Asklepios in these cities before his arrival in Rome, however. Comella (228, 232) argues that during the Sicilian expedition of

Asklepios arrived at the Greek city of Tarentum in southern Italy before reaching Rome. Julian is explicit about the order in which he thinks Asklepios-cult spread: “[Asklepios] came to Pergamon, to Ionia, *afterwards* to Tarentum, and *later* he came to Rome.”<sup>744</sup> Julian is a late source, and no archaeological evidence for a cult of Asklepios has been found in Tarentum. However, much of the ancient city remains unexcavated, buried beneath the modern city.<sup>745</sup> Moreover, as Mark Warren has argued in reference to Pindar’s *Pythian* 3, the myth of Asklepios was especially appropriate for honoring the ruler of Syracuse not just because Hieron was ill, but also because the god was probably well known in Magna Graecia due to the thriving Greek medical community there.<sup>746</sup>

The Latin spelling of ‘Aesculapius’ also suggests the presence of the god in Italy before his import to Rome. While the *-us* ending is a common Latinization of the Greek termination *-ος*,<sup>747</sup> the change from *’Ασ-* to *Aes-* or *Ais-*<sup>748</sup> is not a common Latinization. Instead, the Latin *Aes-/Ais-* reflects

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the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Athens brought Asklepios-cult to Sicily. A 4<sup>th</sup>-c. BC inscription (*IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 95) includes cities in Sicily among those that welcomed ambassadors from Asklepios’ sanctuary at Epidauros, and thus indicates knowledge of Asklepios-cult and the possibility that he was worshipped in Sicily at that time. On the inscription, see below.

<sup>744</sup> Julian *Gal.* 200a-b: ἦλθεν εἰς Πέργαμον, εἰς Ἰωνίαν, εἰς Τάραντα μετὰ ταῦθ’, ὕστερον ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην. Emphasis mine. The context is Julian’s attacks against Christianity, especially Jesus’ healing miracles. Like Tac. *Ann.* 15.44 on the spread of Christianity, Julian makes Rome the “last,” or “ultimate,” trip for foreign cults.

<sup>745</sup> Several terracotta phalluses were found in the vicinity of Tarentum’s port, but are difficult to date and may have nothing to do with Asklepios. See Comella 1982-1983 (230-231). Neighboring Metapontum, another Greek city, minted coins ca. 400-350 BC depicting Hygieia; *LIMC*, sv ‘Hygieia’ (no. 219). The presence of Hygieia suggests the presence also of Asklepios, which is all the more likely given the strong tradition of *iatrike* in Metapontum by the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. On evidence for *iatroi* in Metapontum, see Nutton 1995c (14).

<sup>746</sup> Warren 2002.

<sup>747</sup> Buck 1933 (no. 82.2 and 238-239).

<sup>748</sup> *Ais-* is attested in inscriptions in Etruria and Rome. The earliest occurrence of this form of the god’s name is a drinking cup inscribed AISCLAPI POCO[[CO]]LOM, from an Etruscan tomb in Chiusi (*CIL I*<sup>2</sup> 440). The inscription dates to ca. 289 BC; see Comella 1982-1983 (233-234); Degrassi 1986 (149). Four votive bases of the Republican period found in Rome

acquaintance with the Doric Greek spelling of the god's name: Αἰσκληπιός. This spelling was used in early 5<sup>th</sup>-c. BC inscriptions at Epidauros,<sup>749</sup> but by the late 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the god's name was consistently spelled Ἄσ(σ)κλήπιος throughout most of the Greek world, including Epidauros.<sup>750</sup> In southern Italy, Greek script preserved forms similar to the Doric spelling.<sup>751</sup> The Romans either adopted a Latinized form, or themselves Latinized the form, of the Doric Greek spelling. This earlier Doric spelling, rather than the spelling current at Epidauros ca. 291 BC, was probably the one in use in southern Italy at the time of the god's import to Rome.

The likelihood that the Romans chose a Latinized spelling of the god's name used in southern Italy, but long out of use in Greece including Epidauros at the time of the god's importation to Rome, suggests that the Romans knew of Aesculapius at least indirectly from the Greek colonies of southern Italy.<sup>752</sup>

A decree of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC from Epidauros further indicates knowledge of Asklepios, if not also his presence, in Italy. *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 95 lists cities that welcomed and hosted representatives, or θεωροί, from the cult of Epidaurian Asklepios, who traveled around the Greek world to announce the festival of Asklepios at Epidauros.<sup>753</sup> Cities that received these representatives—the θεωροδόκοι—were honored by having their names inscribed on a *stèle* at Epidauros, and included Greek cities of southern Italy and Sicily. The decree

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also bear spellings of the god's name that begin *Ais-/Aes-*, as does an altar from Fregellae. On the Roman bases, see Degrassi 1986 (147, n.29). On the Fregellae altar, see Coarelli 1987 (26).

<sup>749</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 136, 151. See also Jeffrey 1990 (179-181).

<sup>750</sup> Exceptions are Corinth, where the form Ἄισκλήπιος is attested in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (see Roebuck 1951 [131 and 135, with pl. 50-51]), and Troezen, where the form is attested in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC (*IG IV* 771).

<sup>751</sup> Jeffrey 1990 (181).

<sup>752</sup> On the Roman spelling of Aesculapius and its relation to southern Italy, see also Latte 1960 (225, with n. 3); Comella 1982-1983 (234-235); Degrassi 1986 (145).

<sup>753</sup> On θεωροί and θεωροδόκοι, see Dillon 1997 (11-20); Perlman 2000.

dates to the early- or mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and thus proves that Aesculapius was widely known in southern Italy in the century before his arrival in Rome. Moreover, it is likely that some of these cities had their own cults of Asklepios. It is thus not surprising that Tarentum appears in the decree since, according to Julian at least, it had a sanctuary of Aesculapius before Rome did.<sup>754</sup>

Rome thus had choices. It could have brought in one of the healing gods attested in many areas of Italy by anatomical votives. Or it could have brought Aesculapius from Magna Graecia. Instead, Rome turned to distant Epidaurus for a healing god. This, too, was not an obvious choice for Rome in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC.

#### **E. Contact between Rome and Mainland Greece**

The only contact attested between Rome and Greece by ca. 291 BC is trade and consultation of the Delphic oracle, although the latter has been questioned.<sup>755</sup> Rome seems to have had no formal alliances with Greek states at this time.

According to Livy, when the Romans were deliberating about the importation of Mater Magna in 205 BC, discussion turned to how to bring the goddess to Rome. Concern was raised over the fact that Rome had as yet no alliances with Asia, and would thus be hindered in importing her.<sup>756</sup> Livy goes on to say that the Romans took heart by remembering that “Aesculapius too had once been summoned from Greece for the health of the

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<sup>754</sup> Julian *Gal.* 200a-b.

<sup>755</sup> Gruen 1990 (9, with n. 18 for bibliography).

<sup>756</sup> Livy 29.11.1: *nullas dum in Asia socias civitates habebat populus Romanus*. As Gruen 1990 shows, however, the prospect of alliance with Attalus I was what made the importation of Mater Magna desirable in the first place. As we shall see, the same is true regarding Aesculapius and Rome’s relations with the Greeks.

people although they had had no treaty of alliance.”<sup>757</sup> In Livy’s model, alliances facilitated the importation of gods.

If Livy is right about the lack of alliances, the importation of Aesculapius must have been executed after considerable advance planning and negotiation with Epidauros. In other words, Rome had to make a special effort to bring this particular healing god to Rome.

#### **F. Roman Attitudes towards *Iatrike***

The choice of Epidaurian Asklepios was especially odd for a society with ambivalent attitudes towards *iatrike*. As a deified *iatros* and founder and patron of *iatrike*, Asklepios was more closely associated with *iatrike* than were other Greek gods. At Epidauros, moreover, the tradition of Asklepios using methods of *iatrike* is attested repeatedly in healing inscriptions of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>758</sup>

But Rome had, at best, mixed feelings about *iatrike*. Sources on early Roman healing practices are scant, particularly for a period as early as the 290s BC, and our understanding of Roman healing therefore limited.<sup>759</sup> However, healing by the gods is attested frequently, especially for pestilence and plague since these were attributed to divine displeasure. Rome appealed for divine aid through prayer, banquets, festivals, and games, as the long list of Roman responses to plague above indicates. In the plague of 364 BC, for example, both a banquet and games were held.<sup>760</sup>

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<sup>757</sup> Livy 29.11.1: *tamen memores Aesculapium quoque ex Graecia quondam haudum ullo foedere sociata valetudinis populi causa arcessitum.*

<sup>758</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 121-124; see also Ch. 3 above.

<sup>759</sup> Good general studies of Roman healing practices include Jackson 1988; Scarborough 1993; Nutton 1986, 1992, 1993, 1995b.

<sup>760</sup> Livy 7.1.7-2.3.

Outside of plague, Romans also employed *carmina* (marked speech) and correct rituals to influence the *numina* (powers) that caused sickness. Proper performance of words and deeds was the main ingredient in most cures known from the Republic.<sup>761</sup> For example, according to Cato, a broken bone was treated by applying a split reed to the bone and chanting the assonant phrase *motas vaeta daries dardares astatares disunapiter*, plus the formula *haut haut istasis tarsis ardannabout dannaustra*.<sup>762</sup>

In contrast to Greek *iatrike*, which was the field of specially trained natural healers, there is no evidence in Rome during the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC for doctors. The literary sources paint a picture almost as comically stark as Guido Majno describes: “Hippocrates passed away; Alexandria sprang up; Greek medicine discovered the laboratory. And all this time the Romans had no physicians at all.” According to Cato the Elder, whose 2<sup>nd</sup> c.-BC treatise on agriculture is the earliest extant literary Latin prose, Roman healing, especially in agricultural communities, was often carried out by the *pater familias*. This healing was characterized by *carmina* and rituals like those mentioned above for the mending of a broken bone. Whether people living in urban settings had recourse to professional healers by Cato’s day, much less by the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, is uncertain.<sup>763</sup>

*Iatrike*, moreover, was viewed with suspicion by the Romans, as were all things Greek. According to Pliny the Elder, the Romans despised *iatroi*, whom they called by the Latin term *medici*. Pliny says that Cato the Elder ranted to his son about the evils of the Greeks, especially their healing

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<sup>761</sup> The need for proper performance of words and deeds is evident, e.g., in Cato’s *De agricultura* and Varro’s *De re rustica*, and from Pliny’s *Natural History*. Pliny *NH* 28.10-11 provides a good example of prescribed ritual acts for healing. See Scarborough 1993 (13-22) for discussion. On *carmina* and rituals as part of Roman healing, see also Graf 1997.

<sup>762</sup> Cato *Agr.* 160. See also Graf 1997 (43-46).

<sup>763</sup> When such healers do become evident in Rome, the vast majority have Greek names, suggesting that *medici* did not practice in Rome until the arrival of Greek *iatroi*. See Nutton 1986 (37).

practices. Cato declared: “When that race [of Greeks] gives us its own literature, it will corrupt all things; all the more so if it sends us its *medici*.”<sup>764</sup> The conditional nature of the final clause, “*if* it sends us its *medici*,” suggests that Greek medicine was not yet widespread in Rome in Cato’s day. However, Cato’s remark must be understood in the context of his letter, a literary artifice full of hyperbole designed by Cato to grab his readers’ attention and make more stark the distinctiveness of Roman culture.<sup>765</sup>

Pliny also says that the Romans were at first avid for medicine (*medicinae avidus*) until they tried it and then condemned it.<sup>766</sup> Roman acquaintance with *iatrike* may have begun in 219 BC when, according to Pliny, who cites Cassius Hemina (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC), the first *medicus* came to Rome from Greece.<sup>767</sup> Archagathus specialized in the treatment of wounds and was immediately popular. Soon, however, the perceived brutality of his use of surgery and cautery led to his condemnation, and the condemnation of all *medici* by the Romans.<sup>768</sup>

Pliny is almost certainly overstating the extent and degree of Rome’s apprehension towards Greek *iatroi*. And, as some have argued, Archagathus was probably not the first *iatros* to arrive in Rome, but was instead the first *iatros* hired by the state.<sup>769</sup> The question then returns, when did the first *iatroi* reach Rome. Moreover, despite Pliny’s exaggerated polemic, there is little

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<sup>764</sup> Pliny *NH* 29.14: *quandoque ista gens suas litteras dabit, omnia conrumpet, tum etiam magis si medicos suos hoc mittet.*

<sup>765</sup> Gruen 1992 (52-83).

<sup>766</sup> Pliny *NH* 29.11: *medicinae vero etiam avidus, donec expertam damnavit.*

<sup>767</sup> Pliny *NH* 29.12-13.

<sup>768</sup> Pliny *NH* 29.13: *vulnerarium eum fuisse <eg>reg<i>u<m>, mireque gratum adventum eius initio, mox a saevitia secandi urendique transisse nomen in carnificem et in taedium artem omnesque medicos* (They say that he was amazingly popular upon his arrival, but soon he was known as the ‘Executioner’ because of his savage cutting and cautery, and all *medici* were despised along with their craft).

<sup>769</sup> Nutton 1986 contends that Greek *medici* must have been in Rome before the late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. On Archagathus as a state *iatros*, see Nutton 1993 (59).



evidence to suggest that Romans of the Middle Republic maintained anything but an ambivalent attitude towards *iatroi*.<sup>770</sup>

Why, then, would Rome in 293 BC, perhaps as many as 70 years before the arrival of the first *medicus*, have imported a healing god with so many affinities to *iatroi*? Unlike Greece, where widespread acceptance of *iatrike* contributed to the popularity of the cult of Asklepios, Rome had no tradition of *iatrike* on which to draw for its understanding or acceptance of Aesculapius' healing practices. Probably for this very reason, the cult of Aesculapius barely spread within the Roman world during the Republic.<sup>771</sup> Rome's negative perception of Aesculapius as an *iatros*, moreover, is evident from Pliny who opines that Aesculapius' sanctuary was relegated to an island outside the city because of Roman hatred for *medicina*.<sup>772</sup> It thus seems that even to Pliny, this deified Greek *iatros* was an odd choice for the Romans.

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<sup>770</sup> Nutton 1986 urges caution in assuming that Rome had only negative experiences with *iatroi* by the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. However, two factors that have been advanced as evidence of Rome's acceptance of *iatrike* must be reconsidered. First, although Apollo, to whom a temple was dedicated in 433 BC in response to plague, eventually received the epithet "Medicus," there is no evidence that he had this epithet until the time of Livy. The earliest context in which Livy refers to Apollo as *medicus*, moreover, is in 179 BC in reference to new construction near the temple of Apollo Medicus ("ad aedem Apollonis Medici"); Livy 40.51. Second, the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC *Lex Aequilia*, concerning wrongful damage to property, was interpreted by Imperial jurists as applying to *medici*, but the original law, quoted verbatim in the *Institutes of Gaius* (3.210-219), makes no mention of doctors. The Imperial jurists are Ulp. *Dig.* 9.2.7.8; Gaius *Dig.* 9.2.8.pr. My thanks to Andrew Riggsby for clarifying this point and providing references.

<sup>771</sup> Only two other sanctuaries of Aesculapius are attested from the Republic. One is at Fregellae. This sanctuary dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, and its excavators have noted Koan influence in its foundation and design; see Coarelli 1986. The other is at Antium and is referred to by Val.Max. 1.8.2; *De vir.ill.* 22.3; Livy 43.6-7. The precise location of this sanctuary has not yet been determined. According to Valerius and the author of *De viris illustribus*, the sanctuary at Antium predates the arrival of Aesculapius in Rome.

<sup>772</sup> Pliny *NH* 29.16: *non rem antiqui damnabant, sed artem, maxime vero quaestum esse manipretio vitae recusabant. ideo templum Aesculapii, etiam cum reciperetur is deus, extra urbem fecisse iterumque in insula traduntur* (It was not medicine itself that the ancients condemned, but the practice of it. For this reason, they are said to have built the temple of Aesculapius outside the city and again on an island). The word "iterum" in Pliny's text has been interpreted as referring to a second temple to Aesculapius; however, Besnier 1902 (148) and Musial 1992 (29-30) dispute this interpretation.

### G. Aesculapius, Plague-Healing, and the Popularity of Epidauros

It is also strange that Rome chose a god with no credentials for plague-healing to cure its plague.<sup>773</sup> As mentioned above, Asklepios healed bodily illnesses on an individual basis.<sup>774</sup> The treatment of plague on a city-wide level was not characteristic of his techniques, nor is there evidence that Asklepios cured plague even on a case-by-case basis.

It is nevertheless possible that the Romans believed Epidaurian Asklepios could cure plague. The Romans may have conflated the plague that hit Athens in 430 BC and the arrival of Asklepios there in 420 BC, and consequently assumed Asklepios was capable of averting plague. Moreover, aside from plague, Asklepios was one of the most popular healing gods within the Greek world in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, and Epidauros was his signature cult. It therefore makes sense that the Romans would have given Epidaurian Asklepios careful consideration in their search for a healing god.

But even if the Romans did believe that Asklepios could cure plague and were attracted by the fame of this god, the many other exceptional aspects of his importation impel us to ask why on this occasion in particular Rome imported Aesculapius.

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<sup>773</sup> In 180 BC, the Romans dedicated *dona* and *signa inaurata* to Apollo, Aesculapius, and Salus because of a plague that had hit in 182 BC (Livy 40.37.2). The following year, a theater and porticus were added to the temple of Apollo (Livy 51.3, 51.6). It thus appears that Apollo got more of the thanks for ending the plague than did Aesculapius or Salus. See also Morgan 1990 (26, with n. 60), who thinks that the plague prompted the additions to the temple of Apollo.

<sup>774</sup> By the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Asklepios was beseeched in Athenian inscriptions for the health and safety of the people as a whole, with no apparent reference to a particular health crisis; see Mikalson 1998 (42-45). Ensuring the general health of a population is not the same as curing that population of a pestilence, however.

### III. Plague as Metaphor

Given that plague alone is not a convincing explanation for the importation of Aesculapius to Rome, the universal adoption of this explanation by ancient sources demands comment. It is significant that Livy is the earliest extant account of both the plague and Aesculapius' arrival. Livy composed his history during the late Republic and early Empire, when the metaphor of the ailing state was rife in contemporary rhetoric. During the civil wars of the late Republic, for example, Cicero speaks often of the state as diseased; the enemy Catiline is just one type of *morbis*, or illness, that attacks it.<sup>775</sup> Cicero also recommends various “cures” for the suffering state, and touts individuals like Pompey as potential healers.<sup>776</sup>

In the early Empire, Augustus' close association with Apollo—which played upon all of Apollo's roles including poet, prophet, avenger, and healer—made Augustus a healer of the Roman state.<sup>777</sup> Augustus' ability to heal a civil-war torn state became assimilated with Apollo's ability to avert plague.<sup>778</sup>

These medical metaphors, so prevalent in Livy's day, influenced his account of Roman history. Livy often uses medical metaphors to describe

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<sup>775</sup> In an extended medical metaphor, Cic. *Catil.* 1.31 warns of the dangers of removing Catiline alone, as opposed to the whole group of conspirators, from the Republic: *ut saepe homines aegri morbo gravi, cum aestu febrique iactantur, si aquam gelidam biberunt, primo relevari videntur, deinde multo gravius vehementiusque afflicantur, sic hic morbus qui est in re publica relevatus istius poena vehementius reliquis vivis ingravescet* (As is often true of men heavy with illness, tossed by heat and fever—if they drink cold water, at first they are relieved, then they are afflicted more seriously and violently—in the same way this illness, too, if removed from the Republic by the punishment of that man, will grow more violent if the others remain alive). Also Sal. *Catil.* 10.6; Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.15.

<sup>776</sup> E.g., *Mil.* 68; *Sest.* 25; *Catil.* 1.31; *Q. Caecilius* 3 and 21; *Att.* 2.9.

<sup>777</sup> Gagé 1955 discusses many ties between Augustus and Apollo.

<sup>778</sup> Apollo was called upon to avert plague in 433 BC (Livy 4.25.3), 208 BC (Livy 27.23.5-7), 180 BC (Livy 40.37.2), and possibly also in 212 BC (Livy 25.12); on the latter, see below. On Augustus assuming the role of healer of state via association with Apollo, see Wickkiser 1996.

dangers internal to the state. For example, in his account of the first plebeian secession in 494 BC, he ascribes to Menenius Agrippa a lengthy speech in which the state is compared to a body whose health depends upon the presence of all its parts.<sup>779</sup> In 460 BC, when patrician-plebeian tensions had reached such a pitch that civil war was imminent, Livy has Cincinnatus declare that the state needs a dictator since, “The state suffers in such a way that it cannot be cured by ordinary means.”<sup>780</sup> And in 403 BC, Appius Claudius in a speech to the patricians speculates that the tribunes enjoy disharmony of the orders more than harmony, much like quack professionals looking for work; they always want there to be something ailing the Republic so that the patricians will call the tribunes in to cure it.<sup>781</sup>

Livy also describes external dangers as threats to the state’s health: in 212 BC as Hannibal marches towards Rome, he is described as a *vomica*—a boil or plague—upon the Roman state.<sup>782</sup> For the same year, Livy reports the first celebration of the *ludi Apollinares*, or games of Apollo, and clarifies that their celebration was due not to the health of the state (*valetudino*), as many people think (*ut plerique rentur*), but to victory (*victoria*).<sup>783</sup> The conflation that Livy attempts to resolve between the health of the state and a military threat illustrates well the metaphorical slide between the two common in Livy’s day.

It is easy to understand, therefore, how an occurrence of plague in 295 BC became for Livy a metaphor for the many internal and external tensions that wracked Rome later in the 290s BC—tensions like the Third Samnite War and the continuing patrician-plebeian struggle, discussed below. It is also

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<sup>779</sup> Livy 2.32. See also Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 6.86.

<sup>780</sup> Livy 3.20.8: *non ita civitatem aegram esse ut consuetis remediis sisti possit.*

<sup>781</sup> Livy 5.3.6: *sic hercule tamquam artifices improbi opus quaerunt; quippe semper aegri aliquid esse in re publica volunt, ut sit ad cuius curationem a vobis adhibeantur.*

<sup>782</sup> Livy 25.12.9. Livy is here quoting the prophecy of the seer Marcius.

<sup>783</sup> Livy 25.12.15.

easy to see how Aesculapius, the son of Apollo—whose games were instituted when Hannibal threatened the health of the state, and whose healing role was emphasized by Augustus—was perceived by Livy as a fitting healer for the Rome of the 290s BC. Moreover, at the time of Livy, Rome's relations with Greece and its attitudes towards *iatrike* had changed;<sup>784</sup> importing a deified *iatros* from Greece would not have seemed as strange during the late 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC as during the middle Republic.

As Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price observe, “Livy was...writing his history of the middle Republic with an underlying conception of Roman religious history that was very much the product of the experiences of his own time and the political régime under which he lived.”<sup>785</sup> Writers subsequent to Livy probably used him as a source and repeated his explanations, perhaps unaware of his metaphorical treatment of the plague and likewise conditioned to explanations in medical terms.<sup>786</sup>

#### IV. Conclusions

The importation of Aesculapius was not an obvious choice for Rome in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. Importing a god in response to plague seems to have been a unique event in the Republic. Moreover, although there were other healing gods in Italy at the time, and despite a lack of alliances with Greece, the Romans chose a Greek god who healed in ways they distrusted and who had no reputation for treating plague.

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<sup>784</sup> According to Suet. *Caes.* 42 and *Aug.* 42, Caesar granted citizenship to all *medici* living in Rome, and Augustus had occasion to expel all foreign residents from Rome except for *medici* and teachers. On Rome's changing attitudes towards Greek medicine, see Scarborough 1993.

<sup>785</sup> Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 77).

<sup>786</sup> Lloyd 1987, in a chapter entitled “Metaphor and the Language of Science” (172-214), discusses the development of metaphor (or “semantic stretch,” as he prefers) in the Greek language, and remarks that “discourse about the divine is bound to involve exceptional semantic stretch” (177).

The use of medical imagery by Livy and others helps account for the ascription of his importation to plague: plague served as a metaphor for various internal and external tensions afflicting Rome in the 290s BC. The following chapter examines those tensions.

## **CHAPTER 8: ROMAN FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS IN THE 290s BC**

In the first decade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, Rome confronted a number of challenges on both foreign and domestic fronts. This chapter will focus on three spheres in particular that occupied Rome in the years leading up to the arrival of Aesculapius and each of which can be demonstrated to have influenced his importation.

The first sphere encompasses escalating interactions between Rome and Magna Graecia beginning in the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. For the first time, Rome's expansionist policy brought Rome into direct military contact with Greek cities of southern Italy—cities that also supported the cult of Epidaurian Asklepios.

The second sphere of Roman involvement, mainland Greece, concerns Demetrios Poliorketes, whose rise to power occurred late in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. and especially in the first decade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. Demetrios took control of much of mainland Greece, acquired a sea route to Italy, and formed a new Greek league, whose charter was published at the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros.

The third sphere of Roman involvement, struggles between plebeians and patricians, caused repeated trouble in the 290s BC, culminating in major plebeian unrest ca. 287 BC. These struggles found expression in Rome's relations with the gods, including Aesculapius, whose import was conducted by a plebeian active in advancing the plebeian cause.

The task of exploring additional factors behind Aesculapius' import is hindered by a dearth of evidence, literary and archaeological, for mid-Republican Rome. This chapter begins by assessing sources for the period, then progresses to analysis of the three spheres of Roman involvement.

## I. Sources for the Middle Republic

The major literary sources for the Middle Republic are Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.<sup>787</sup> The books of Livy's history covering the years 293-264 BC are lost, however, leaving only brief *periochae*, or summaries, compiled in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD. Moreover, only excerpts remain from Dionysius' history after 443 BC.

Other sources, like Diodorus Siculus (who covers the years 486-302 BC), Cassius Dio (whose history remains only in fragments), and Polybius, Strabo, and Plutarch, fill out the picture somewhat.<sup>788</sup> So, too, do authors of the late Republic and Empire with antiquarian interests, like Cicero and Varro.<sup>789</sup>

All these authors wrote much later than the period they document. Livy and Dionysius wrote in the late Republic and early Empire. They relied on earlier historians of Rome, the annalists, the earliest of whom date to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. And, as fragments of their histories suggest, these annalists do not appear to have discussed the period of the middle Republic in any detail.<sup>790</sup>

Livy and others cast events of the middle Republic in terms of their own, much later, experiences. A prime example is the debt crisis of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, which Livy interpreted through the lens of the Gracchan reforms.<sup>791</sup> Such accounts leave us with a potentially distorted view of events at the time of Aesculapius' arrival. Just as one must question the completeness and

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<sup>787</sup> An excellent holistic overview of evidence for the middle Republic is the exhibit catalogue by Benedetto et al. 1973.

<sup>788</sup> On sources for Rome from its beginning to the middle Republic, see Cornell 1995 (1-30).

<sup>789</sup> Literary sources for Rome from 293-265 BC are compiled by M.R. Torelli 1978.

<sup>790</sup> Oakley 1997- (vol. 1, p. 21-110, esp. 22-24). The limitations of the evidence for recovering Roman religion before 200 BC are discussed by J.A. North in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 7.2, p. 573-582).

<sup>791</sup> Cornell 1995 (327-329).



accuracy of sources documenting Aesculapius' arrival, one must also therefore question the accuracy of sources for all events of mid-Republican Rome.

Archaeological evidence, like the coins and anatomical votives discussed in Chapter 7, helps clarify the picture of Republican Rome.<sup>792</sup> But since archaeological evidence must be interpreted in order to have meaning, and since interpretation is subject to limitations and error, it, too, is almost inevitably distorting. The anatomical votives provide a good case in point: their chronology cannot be fixed with precision, and factors triggering their appearance and disappearance are not well understood (nor are a host of other factors related to their production and use).

Finally, due to the paucity and difficulty of interpreting the evidence, scholars devote little attention to the middle Republic, dwelling instead on the beginnings of Rome on the one hand, and the late Republic and early Empire on the other.<sup>793</sup>

Despite these limitations, it is clear that several major events occupied Rome's attentions in the 290s BC. Some of these help explain the extraordinary nature of the importation of Aesculapius.

## **II. Gods and the Roman State**

In Rome, as in Athens, there was no distinction between church and state. The gods were part and parcel of all aspects of Roman life, and thus played an integral role in state affairs. Not only were favorable signs from the gods required for the proper functioning of the machinery of

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<sup>792</sup> A good overview of early Roman material culture and its impact on perceptions of Roman history is Holloway 1994 (esp. 1-11).

<sup>793</sup> Starr 1980 addresses the problem. Much more recently Cornell 1995 (xiv-xvii) reassesses the state of scholarship and, while recognizing the contributions of continental Europeans, points to a continuing avoidance of early Roman history by English-speaking scholars.

government, such as convening assemblies and ratifying elections, but the gods themselves as residents of the state participated in matters of domestic and foreign policy.<sup>794</sup> The significance of gods to state affairs is especially evident in Rome's adoption of deities.

Rome adopted most of its gods from neighboring communities or imported them from abroad. As Eric Orlin describes:

The Romans possessed no cults which could truly be called their own, excepting perhaps only the Penates which Aeneas was supposed to have brought with him when fleeing the sack of Troy. All other cults, including the Capitoline triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva which lay at the heart of the state religion, were taken from neighboring peoples.<sup>795</sup>

Agents responsible for bringing gods to Rome ranged from individuals (especially victorious generals) and groups (like the plebeians) to governing bodies like the Senate. For the adoption of any cult to be official, however, it had to be ratified by the Senate and magistrates, and thus was always a state matter.<sup>796</sup>

Scholars of Roman religion since Georg Wissowa at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. have argued that the main motivation behind all rites and rituals in Rome, including adopting gods, was maintenance of the *pax deum*, or divine favor.<sup>797</sup> This favor was viewed as critical to the success of the Roman state. By adopting new gods, Rome increased the security of the state.<sup>798</sup>

Rome often adopted gods during periods of warfare. Adoption of an enemy's god could articulate divine approval of Rome's domination,<sup>799</sup> as the

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<sup>794</sup> On gods as residents, and even citizens, of the state, see Scheid 2001 (69-76).

<sup>795</sup> Orlin 1997 (14).

<sup>796</sup> Scheid 2001 (70).

<sup>797</sup> Wissowa 1902 (38-46; 327-329). For discussion and bibliography concerning this perception of Roman religion, see North 1976; Orlin 1997 (12-18); Beard et al. 1998 (*passim*, esp. 37-38, 61-72).

<sup>798</sup> Also for this reason, Rome was generally tolerant of foreign cults. See North 1976 and 1979.

<sup>799</sup> Orlin 1997 (14-15).

procedure of *evocatio* demonstrates. In 396 BC, the Romans convinced the goddess Juno Regina to abandon Veii by promising she would be worshipped in Rome.<sup>800</sup> As a new resident and citizen of Rome, Juno expressed the favor of Veii's primary deity towards Rome's growing power, at the expense even of conquered Veii itself.

The adoption of gods during periods of war could also seal alliances. In 338 BC, Rome conquered the Lanuvinians, gave them citizenship, and restored their sacred rites.<sup>801</sup> Rome also stipulated that the sanctuary of Juno Sospita at Lanuvium be common to Lanuvium and Rome. The sharing of the sanctuary marked new relations between Rome and Lanuvium, and Juno's approval of Roman domination.<sup>802</sup>

Domestic matters, too, influenced the adoption of gods. Ancient accounts of introduction of the cult of Ceres, Liber, and Libera to the Aventine in 496 BC, for instance, associate these deities closely with the plebeians, a politically repressed group.<sup>803</sup> The temple to Ceres, Liber, and Libera was situated on the very hill to which the plebeians seceded when pressing their claims against the patricians. This triad championed the plebeians in opposition to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, a triad more closely associated with the patricians.<sup>804</sup>

Rome thus adopted gods to further foreign and domestic policies long before the arrival of Aesculapius.<sup>805</sup> Since sources for the middle Republic are few, late, and prone to inaccuracy, it is often difficult to ascertain the influence

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<sup>800</sup> Livy 5.22.3-6. For other examples, see Orlin 1997 (15).

<sup>801</sup> Livy 8.14.2.

<sup>802</sup> Fustel de Coulanges 1980 (201), published originally as *La Cité antique* in 1864.

<sup>803</sup> Dion.Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.17.2-4, 6.94.3, 6.89-90; Livy 2.31-33, 3.54.9. See also Spaeth 1996 (81-102).

<sup>804</sup> On Ceres and the plebeians, see below.

<sup>805</sup> Nor was the use of cults as diplomatic gestures limited to the adoption of gods. Scheid 1995 argues that Rome, beginning in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, also adopted Greek rituals (*Graeco ritu*) in order to promote the idea of Rome as an open city that welcomed foreigners.

of state affairs on Rome's relations with the gods. The 290s BC, however, marked a temple-building boom outdone only by the period following the Second Punic War.<sup>806</sup> No fewer than 10 temples—including the one to Aesculapius—arose between 304 and ca. 291 BC, all with Senate approval.<sup>807</sup> This rash of temple building, a concentrated effort at strengthening the *pax deum*, indicates that many and/or major events were affecting the Roman state at the time.<sup>808</sup>

### III. Rome and Magna Graecia

#### A. Expansion of Roman Power to Magna Graecia

Beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> cs. BC, colonists from mainland Greece began populating an area of southern Italy later known as Magna Graecia. Their cities hugged the southern coastline all the way from Tarentum at the instep of the peninsular boot up the western seaboard as far as Cumae in Campania, and included much of Sicily.<sup>809</sup> (See Fig. 8 below.)

These cities differed from one another politically and economically, yet shared a sense of cultural heritage strong enough that they united against Italic migrations in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cs. BC.<sup>810</sup> The clearest indication of a united

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<sup>806</sup> Between 194 and 179 BC, 14 temples were dedicated. See Orlin 1997 (127). For discussion of, ancient references to, and recent bibliography on these temples, see Richardson 1992; Ziolkowski 1992; *LTUR*.

<sup>807</sup> Ziolkowski 1992 (193-261) and Orlin 1997 describe the process of vowing, building, and dedicating temples in Republican Rome, and show that Senate-approval was necessary for vowing and constructing these temples.

<sup>808</sup> Degrassi 1986 (146), following Scheid 1983 (113), remarks that innovations in religion, like the rash of temple building at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, typically carry a political and diplomatic dimension.

<sup>809</sup> The distribution of these Greek cities is mapped by Pallottino 1991 (Fig. 2 and 6). Since the argument presented in the current study centers on Roman expansion within the Italian peninsula, Sicily will be omitted from the discussion.

<sup>810</sup> Lomas 1993 (8).

Greek front is the formation of a league, called by modern scholars the “Italiote League,” to protect Greeks from incursions by local populations.<sup>811</sup>

From at least the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Rome interacted with cities of Magna Graecia, mainly through trade. In the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, however, Rome’s relationship with Magna Graecia changed as Rome for the first time came into military contact with the area. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, Rome had pushed its borders almost to Magna Graecia. The following sections will review events that brought about these changes and that influenced the decision to import Aesculapius.

### **1. Early Contact between Rome and Magna Graecia**

Rome had contact with the Greek world since at least the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC, as attested by Greek pottery found in the Forum Romanum and the Forum Boarium.<sup>812</sup> Whether this pottery arrived from mainland Greece, from the Etruscans, from the Greeks of southern Italy, or elsewhere, is uncertain. But by the late 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, it is certain that Rome was in contact with Magna Graecia. In 508 BC when Rome suffered from famine, Rome sent for grain from Greek Cumae.<sup>813</sup> Cumae, along with Sicily, again contributed grain to a famine-stricken Rome again in 492 BC.<sup>814</sup>

Both literary and archaeological evidence point to a decrease in contact between Rome and the Greek world beginning in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, paralleled by an apparent decrease in building activity and in imported Greek fine-ware

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<sup>811</sup> The Italiote League was formed possibly as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. On the league, see Polyb. 2.39.1-7; Larsen 1968 (95-97); Lomas 1993 (32).

<sup>812</sup> Finds from the Forum Romanum and Forum Boarium are discussed by Coarelli 1977 (Forum Romanum); Coarelli 1988 (Forum Boarium); Holloway 1994 (37-90); C.J. Smith 1998. La Rocca 1977 details the amount of Greek evidence in archaic Rome. For discussion of the impact of Greek culture on early Rome, see also Cornell 1995 (esp. 81-172); Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 12-13).

<sup>813</sup> Livy 2.9.6. On contacts between Cumae and Rome, see also Lomas 1993 (30).

<sup>814</sup> Livy 2.34.3-4.

pottery throughout the Italian peninsula.<sup>815</sup> Scholars have named this phenomenon an “age of crisis,” and locate its cause in economic recession.<sup>816</sup> At Rome, a series of food shortages,<sup>817</sup> and the related agitation of the plebeians for release from debt bondage and for reallocation of land, pressed the city.<sup>818</sup> Factors, such as shifting balances of power among the various cities of Magna Graecia, affected other parts of Italy.<sup>819</sup>

Another factor affecting much of Italy in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC was tribal migrations caused by natural disasters such as famine.<sup>820</sup> Territorial disputes arose as these tribes migrated. Thus the Gauls who moved south in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC sacked Rome in the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>821</sup> Other groups, like the Aequi and Volsci, attacked Rome repeatedly in the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>822</sup>

The southward migrations of east Italic peoples, principally Oscan-speaking Sabellians, had a major impact on Magna Graecia. The Sabellians migrated into Campania, Samnium, Apulia, Lucania, and Bruttium, and the resulting populations were called the Campanians, Samnites, Apulians, Lucanians, and Bruttians, respectively.<sup>823</sup> (See Fig. 8 below.) In 473 BC, the

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<sup>815</sup> For instance, Livy records the building of only one temple in Rome in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC (the temple of Apollo, 431 BC), as opposed to four temples in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and four in the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. See Orlin 1997 (App. 1).

<sup>816</sup> See Pallottino 1991 (97-125); Cornell 1995 (225-226; 265-268).

<sup>817</sup> Between 508 BC and 384 BC, 14 food shortages are recorded, while none are recorded after 384 BC. See Garnsey 1988 (168-172).

<sup>818</sup> On the patrician-plebeian struggles, see below.

<sup>819</sup> These are concisely summarized by Pallottino 1991 (118-119). See also Pallottino (110-117); Lomas 1993 (30-32).

<sup>820</sup> On the migrations, see Cornell 1995 (304-309). The migrations are mapped by Pallottino 1991 (Fig. 8 and 10). See Salmon 1967 (30-35) for ancient references and further argument that food shortages were widespread in Italy during the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

<sup>821</sup> Livy 5 *passim*. According to Livy, these two tribes launched campaigns against Rome almost every year from ca. 495-455 BC.

<sup>822</sup> The most famous of these campaigns was launched by the Aequi in 458 BC when Cincinnatus was called from his plow to meet the threat (Livy 3.26-29). See also Cornell 1995 (304-309).

<sup>823</sup> Salmon 1967 (28-49).

Greek city Tarentum was defeated by the Iapygians (who had moved into the eastern coast of Italy just north of the heel of the boot) in what Herodotus called the greatest slaughter of the Greeks ever.<sup>824</sup> Along the entire western seaboard, only the Greek city Naples survived incursions by the Lucanians (who had moved onto the western coast just opposite the Iapygians to the east).<sup>825</sup> While the Greek cities of the western coast fell under Lucanian control, those of the southern coast continued to withstand these encounters into the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

## 2. Expansion of Roman Power into Southern Italy in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC

Contact between Rome and Magna Graecia resumed in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC due largely to struggles for land and power caused by these tribal migrations. The Samnite Wars in particular drew Rome into southern Italy and Magna Graecia.<sup>826</sup> The First Samnite War (343-341 BC) brought Rome into Campania. In 343 BC, the Samnites besieged Capua, and the Campanians appealed to Rome for assistance.<sup>827</sup> Rome, despite an alliance with the Samnites, joined forces with the Campanians against the Samnites. By 341 BC, the Samnites sued for peace, and the Samnite-Roman alliance was renewed, much to the chagrin of the Campanians.<sup>828</sup>

The Second Samnite War (326-304 BC) brought Rome into military conflict with Naples. According to Livy, this war was precipitated by Rome's

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<sup>824</sup> Hdt. 7.170: φόνος Ἑλληνικὸς μέγιστος οὗτος δὴ ἐγένετο πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν.

<sup>825</sup> Frederiksen 1984 (134-157); Lomas 1993 (33). Lomas (35) points out that despite warfare between Oscans and Greeks, trade still took place between them. See also Whitehouse and Wilkins 1989.

<sup>826</sup> On the Samnite Wars, see Salmon 1967; Frederiksen 1984 (180-237); Lomas 1993 (39-57); Cornell 1995 (345-363). On Samnite culture, see Alvino et al. 2000.

<sup>827</sup> Livy 7.29.

<sup>828</sup> Livy 7.37-38.

founding of a colony at Fregellae in northern Campania/southern Latium.<sup>829</sup> The Samnites, threatened and angered by this Roman advance into territory they themselves had recently conquered, convinced Naples to attack Rome's possessions in Campania.<sup>830</sup> In 327 BC, Rome in turn declared war on Naples. Naples itself was divided, with the *demos* favoring the Samnites while the upper classes, the *principes civitatis*, favored Rome.<sup>831</sup> These latter handed Naples over to Rome in 326 BC, an act that formalized Roman influence in Campania.

The remaining 20 years of the Second Samnite War show Rome extending and strengthening its presence in Campania. Rome maintained an offensive stance against the Samnites until suffering major defeat at the Battle of the Caudine Forks in 321 BC.<sup>832</sup> Rome remained undaunted, however, and continued to make alliances with areas encircling Samnite territory until, in 312 BC, the Samnites were surrounded by Rome's allies. Rome went on acquiring Samnite territory until 304 BC when the Samnites sued for peace. By 304 BC, Roman power extended into northern Apulia.<sup>833</sup>

The Greeks farther to the south were troubled by the shifting powers of the Second Samnite War. Tarentum in particular exhibited signs of anxiety at Samnite and Roman aggression. By the early 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Tarentum had become the most powerful Greek city of southern Italy, and head of the Italiote League.<sup>834</sup> For this reason, ancient sources focus attention more on

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<sup>829</sup> Livy 8.22-23.

<sup>830</sup> Livy 8.23.6.

<sup>831</sup> Dion.Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 15.6.5; Livy 8.25.9.

<sup>832</sup> Livy 9.2-6.

<sup>833</sup> A Roman colony was founded at Luceria in 314 BC (Livy 9.26.1-5).

<sup>834</sup> On the formation of the league, see Polyb. 2.39. On Tarentum's control of the league in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, see Lomas 1993 (40-42).

An area of the Campus Martius close to the Tiber river in Rome was known as Tarentum. Although the reason for its name is unknown, the appellation may have been influenced by Tarentum in Magna Graecia. See Richardson 1992 (sv 'Tarentum'); *LTUR*, sv 'Tarentum.'



Tarentum than other cities of Magna Graecia in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Inevitably, as Kathryn Lomas has observed, the reported history of Magna Graecia is largely the history of Tarentum, whether or not this was really the case.<sup>835</sup> Nevertheless, Tarentum remains a valuable indicator of how Greek cities reacted generally to 4<sup>th</sup>-c. shifts in population and power.

In 326 BC, when Rome declared war on Naples, the Tarentines promised support.<sup>836</sup> This support never arrived,<sup>837</sup> perhaps because Tarentum wanted the war to continue as a way of keeping Samnite power in check.<sup>838</sup> Also in 326 BC, Rome allied with the Lucanians.<sup>839</sup> The Tarentines attempted to sabotage this alliance, possibly out of fear of an allied Roman-Lucanian power bloc in southern Italy.<sup>840</sup> And in 320 BC, when Rome was slowly encircling Samnite territory, the Samnites reacted by going to meet the Romans in battle.<sup>841</sup> The Tarentines stepped in to arbitrate before the battle began, however, and threatened to join whichever side refused arbitration. Tarentum's desire for arbitration, and thus for maintaining some balance of power between Rome and the Samnites, indicates yet again how afraid Magna Graecia was of either power becoming dominant in southern Italy.

Another indication of this fear is the repeated appeals by Magna Graecia for help from mainland Greece. In the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Greek and Macedonian generals came to Italy to help Greeks fend off encroaching populations. The first of these generals was Archidamus of Sparta, who

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<sup>835</sup> Lomas 1993 (40).

<sup>836</sup> Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 15.5-6.

<sup>837</sup> Livy 8.25.7-8.

<sup>838</sup> Lomas 1993 (46). Lomas (46-49) counters the traditional view that Tarentum was anti-Roman at this point.

<sup>839</sup> Livy 8.27-28.

<sup>840</sup> Livy 8.27.

<sup>841</sup> Livy 9.14.1-9.

arrived in Italy in the 340s BC;<sup>842</sup> one of the last was Cleonymous of Sparta at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>843</sup> Their being invited indicates the degree of anxiety felt by Magna Graecia over some of their non-Greek neighbors.

### **3. The Third Samnite War (298-290 BC) and Roman Expansion to Magna Graecia**

In the last decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Rome's power had grown rapidly at the expense of other populations.<sup>844</sup> Rome acquired territory to the north from the Etruscans, and in central Italy from local tribes such as the Hernici and Aequi.<sup>845</sup> Rome's control of central Italy was marked by construction of the Via Appia, begun in 312 BC, linking Rome to Capua in Campania, and the Via Valeria, begun in 307 BC, running from Rome through the Apennines to the Adriatic sea.<sup>846</sup>

Rome's territory and power had become so vast, as T.J. Cornell remarks, that the logical result was Roman domination of the entire peninsula, an outcome that could be averted only by the concerted action of all those who remained independent of Roman power within Italy.<sup>847</sup> And so, by 298 BC with the start of the Third Samnite War, Rome found itself battling on many fronts.

In 298 BC, the Lucanians, occupying an area of southern Italy just south of the Samnites, were attacked by the Samnites and sought alliance

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<sup>842</sup> Plut. *Agis* 3.2; Diod. 16.62.4; Pliny *NH* 3.98.

<sup>843</sup> Diod. 20.104-105; Livy 10.1-2. On the deeds of these generals, see Lomas 1993 (41-44).

<sup>844</sup> See Cornell 1995 (357-358) for a list of many Roman alliances and colonies created at the time, and for references to ancient sources.

<sup>845</sup> Rome fought a war against Etruria and Umbria in 311-308 BC (Livy 9.31-41; Diod. 20.35). See also Salmon 1967 (242-243); Cornell 1995 (355). Advances against the Hernici and Aequi took place from 306-304 BC (Livy 9.45; Diod. 20.101.5).

<sup>846</sup> Livy 9.29.5-6, 9.43.25.

<sup>847</sup> Cornell 1995 (358).

with the Romans.<sup>848</sup> Rome, hoping to squeeze the Samnites from the south as well as the north, allied with the Lucanians.<sup>849</sup> Rome succeeded against the Samnites for two years, but in 296 BC, a Samnite force moved north to join the Gauls and Etruscans in attacking the Romans. Livy reports that Samnites, Etruscans, Gauls, and Umbrians had formed a united front against Rome.<sup>850</sup> In 295 BC, the Gauls and Samnites (the Etruscans and Umbrians had been diverted elsewhere) fought the Romans at Sentinum in Umbria and were soundly defeated.<sup>851</sup> Rome followed up that success by moving the front of war to the south and making rapid advances into Samnite territory. By 290 BC, Rome had forced the Samnites to surrender, making them allies of Rome.<sup>852</sup>

By 290 BC, Magna Graecia thus no longer had a buffer zone between itself and Roman expansion. The cities of Magna Graecia would be the next to encounter Rome's southward sweep, as the Pyrrhic Wars (280-272 BC) soon proved.

## **B. Aesculapius and Magna Graecia**

The importation of Aesculapius ca. 291 BC, as Rome tied up the last loose ends of the Third Samnite War and thereby galvanized its presence in southern Italy, can be understood as a response to encounters with Magna

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<sup>848</sup> The Samnites had been trying to forge an alliance with the Lucanians. When the Lucanians refused, the Samnites attacked them. Livy 10.11.-11-13.

<sup>849</sup> Livy 10.12.1-3; Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 17/18.1-2.

<sup>850</sup> Livy 10.21.11-15.

<sup>851</sup> Livy 10.27-30; Duris of Samos = *FGH* 76 f.56. On the battle, see Cornell's discussion in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 7.2, p. 377-380).

<sup>852</sup> Livy 11.*per.*

Graecia.<sup>853</sup> The last years of the Third Samnite War are worth considering in detail in relation to the process of importing Aesculapius.

## 1. Events of 295-290 BC

### a. 295 BC

In 295 BC, Rome fought the allied forces of Samnites and Gauls at Sentinum in Umbria. The victory was great for the Romans not only in respect to the number of enemies slain, but also as a watershed in Rome's position vis-à-vis the Italian peninsula. Not even the combined forces of four of the strongest independent populations left in Italy could overtake Rome.<sup>854</sup> Victory at Sentinum clearly communicated Rome's military prowess and determination to protect its territory.

Following Sentinum, Rome moved one of its battle lines south where it overran parts of Samnite territory at heavy cost.<sup>855</sup> Another of its battle lines remained in the north to continue suppressing uprisings in Etruria.<sup>856</sup>

Also in 295 BC, the plague broke out that would lead, according to ancient sources, to Aesculapius' import. The plague and other prodigies

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<sup>853</sup> Scheid 1985 (97-98) asserts that the cult of Aesculapius was able to play the role of benefactor and integrator for the cities of Magna Graecia. Orlin 1997 (107) remarks: "The adoption of Aesculapius by the Romans would have been a signal that the Romans sought to enter the world of Greek culture rather than impose their own Italic customs on southern Italy." Beard et al. 1998 (69-70) state that the temple to Aesculapius was "a gesture of recognition towards the Hellenistic culture that the Romans were now meeting in the south of Italy...." Neither Scheid, nor Orlin, nor Beard et al. explain or explore these assertions in detail, however.

<sup>854</sup> A sign of the importance of this battle was Rome's own anticipation of its magnitude. Cornell 1995 (360) documents that from 297-295 BC, Rome appointed a number of promagistrates, an act that had occurred only twice previously in the history of the Republic. These promagistracies, some of which included the conferring of *imperium* even on *privati*, or private citizens, suggest that Rome knew of the four-part coalition, and the magnitude of the war it was planning.

<sup>855</sup> Livy 10.31.6-7.

<sup>856</sup> Livy 10.31.1-4.

prompted the Romans to consult the Sibylline Books, but Livy does not report their recommendations.<sup>857</sup> There is as yet no word of Aesculapius.

**b. 294 BC**

In 294 BC, Rome took several cities from the Samnites.<sup>858</sup> Rome also gained some powerful cities (*validissimae urbes*, as Livy calls them) as allies in Etruria.<sup>859</sup> Livy does not mention the plague in 294 BC.

**c. 293 BC**

In 293 BC, Rome won a decisive victory over the Samnites at Aquilonia. Livy describes the battle as a *bellum ingens*, and says it was the largest victory yet over the Samnites.<sup>860</sup> Rome won another major victory against the Samnites at Cominium,<sup>861</sup> and took Duronia, Saepinum, Velia, Palumbinum, and Herculanium.<sup>862</sup> Although the location of some of these cities is uncertain, their sheer number attests to the rapid expansion of Roman power and influence in Samnite territory.<sup>863</sup>

Triumphs celebrated by the consuls of 293 BC reflect the magnitude of these victories. Livy describes in detail the wealth that poured into Rome's

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<sup>857</sup> Livy 10.31.8.

<sup>858</sup> Livy 10.32-36, 10.37.13. The locations of these cities (Milionia, Feritrum) are unknown.

<sup>859</sup> Livy 10.37. The three cities are Volsinii, Perugia, and Arretium. The Romans also devastated the territory of Rusellae.

<sup>860</sup> Livy 10.38.1.

<sup>861</sup> Livy 10.43.1-8.

<sup>862</sup> Livy 10.39.4, 10.44.9, 10.45.9-10.

<sup>863</sup> See T.J. Cornell's discussion in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 7.2, p. 358). Cornell wants to place all of these cities to the north of Monti del Matese in the middle of Samnite territory. An ancient city Velia (modern Elea), however, lies on the western coast of Italy just south of Paestum. See Greco and Krinzinger 1994. Lomas 1993 (47) believes this to be the Velia captured by the Romans in 293 BC. If this is correct, then Velia is in Lucanian territory just across the instep of the peninsular boot from the Greek cities Metapontum and Tarentum (approx. 160 km), and thus reinforces Rome's proximity to Magna Graecia.

treasury. The consul Lucius Papirius Cursor, who had taken Aquilonia, had acquired so many spoils from the Samnites that they adorned not only the Forum Romanum and the temple of Quirinus, but were distributed to allies and colonies for decorating their own temples and *fora*.<sup>864</sup> There must have been little doubt at this point that the Samnites would lose not only the war, but their territory.

The plague continued into 293 BC. Livy reports that the Sibylline Books were consulted, and that they recommended the import of Aesculapius from Epidaurus. However, “nothing was done about it in that year because the consuls were occupied with the war.”<sup>865</sup> Instead, a *supplicatio*, or prayer service for help, was held for Aesculapius.<sup>866</sup>

#### d. 292-290 BC

Beginning with events of 292 BC, Livy’s history is lost. The *periocha* to Book 11 of Livy allows us to glean only the barest outline of the last events of the war and of the importation of Aesculapius. It indicates without much detail that Rome continued to advance its control into southern Italy. The plague, too, continued, but it is uncertain how long. Moreover, it is uncertain in what year the embassy set sail for Epidaurus and in what year Aesculapius arrived in Rome.<sup>867</sup>

Despite these obstacles to detailed chronological analysis, it is clear that Rome continued to advance towards Magna Graecia. In 292 BC, the consul Q.

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<sup>864</sup> Livy 10.46. On the consul, see *RE*<sup>2</sup>, sv ‘[I 16] P. Cursor, L.’

<sup>865</sup> Livy 10.47.6-7: *inventum in libris Aesculapium ab Epidauro Romam arcessendum; eque eo anno, quia bello occupati consules erant.*

<sup>866</sup> A *supplicatio* consisted mainly of prayer, but banquets were also sometimes held. Often images of the gods were placed on couches for the day. See Freyburger 1977.

<sup>867</sup> Other ancient sources provide information about some of the events of these years, but none gives a precise year for the importation of Aesculapius. Ancient sources and events for these years are listed in the year-by-year catalogue of M.R. Torelli 1978.

Fabius Gurges celebrated a victory over the Samnites that included the beheading of a Samnite general.<sup>868</sup> Moreover, by 291 BC Rome had captured Venusium, a large Samnite city approximately 120 km from Tarentum.<sup>869</sup> Rome established a colony there soon after.<sup>870</sup> The Romans were now close to Tarentum, the most powerful city of Magna Graecia.

Probably in 292 or 291 BC, Rome brought Aesculapius from Epidaurus. The *periocha* of Book 11 describes the coming of Aesculapius immediately before describing events conducted by L. Postumius as *consularis*, and those of M'. Curius Dentatus as consul. Postumius was *consularis* and Curius consul in 290 BC. Since the *periochae* generally follow the chronological order of Livy's narrative, Aesculapius must have arrived by 290 BC.

Although it is impossible to determine whether Venusium was taken by Rome before or after the arrival of Aesculapius, its capture signals Rome's increasing proximity to Magna Graecia, particularly Tarentum.<sup>871</sup> Given the long history of Tarentine intervention to check Roman advances into southern Italy, Rome must have supposed Magna Graecia would seek to counter this expansion as well.

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<sup>868</sup> Other sources for the victory of Fabius are collected by M.R. Torelli 1978 (sv '292 a.C.'). The year of the triumph is disputed; it may have occurred in 291 BC. See Torelli (48). The *periocha*, however, states that Fabius as consul conquered the Samnites (*consul...caesis Samnitibus triumphavit*, Livy 11.*per.*). The same *periocha* distinguishes the activities of a *consular* from those of a consul (regarding M'. Curius Dentatus). It is therefore likely that Fabius triumphed in 292 BC when he was consul.

<sup>869</sup> Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 17/18.4.

<sup>870</sup> Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 17/18.4; Vell.Pat. 1.14.6. According to Velleius, the colony at Venusium was established four years after Rome took the city; Dionysius, however, does not indicate a lag between the taking of the city and the founding of the colony.

<sup>871</sup> Orlin 1997 (106-108) argues for a close connection between Venusium and the arrival of Aesculapius based on the assumption that Aesculapius arrived in 291 BC. The precise year of Aesculapius' arrival, however, cannot be determined.

## 2. Rome's Motives for Diplomacy towards Magna Graecia

Magna Graecia posed a special threat to Roman expansion because of its potential for creating damaging alliances. As seen above, Tarentum often played tribes off of one another to keep them in check. In the 290s BC, it was therefore possible that Magna Graecia would ally with the Lucanians and/or Bruttians, who held the instep and toe of the peninsular boot, to form a strong southern coalition against Rome.

Magna Graecia might also have called in troops from Sicily and mainland Greece. Beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, as mentioned above, Magna Graecia sought military assistance from Greek generals. While in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC these generals had been invited to help against Italic populations, in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, they were likely to be invited to fight against Rome. This potential is best exemplified by Pyrrhus of Epirus, to whom the Tarentines later appealed in 282 BC.<sup>872</sup> As Lomas argues, this call for help was probably motivated ultimately by Roman attempts to dissolve the Italiote League.<sup>873</sup> Pyrrhus arrived in 280 BC with 20,000 troops, 2000 cavalry, and 20 elephants, and received support from Antiochus of Syria and Ptolemy of Egypt. Moreover, he organized an anti-Roman alliance that included Samnites, Umbrians, and Etruscans. Rome thus faced a well-equipped enemy able to attack from the south (Magna Graecia) and the north (Umbria and Etruria).<sup>874</sup> Rome was well aware of this danger, as indicated by its hesitance to engage Pyrrhus in war in 279 BC.<sup>875</sup>

The menace of Greek generals such as Pyrrhus loomed for Rome already in the late 290s BC. The Macedonian Demetrios Poliorketes was one

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<sup>872</sup> Plut. *Pyrr.* 13.5-6; Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 19.8.

<sup>873</sup> Lomas 1993 (50-51).

<sup>874</sup> On the extent of Pyrrhus' threat to Rome, see also Lomas 1993 (51-53).

<sup>875</sup> Roman troops devastated Tarentum in 279 BC, but refused to engage in battle (App. *Samn.* 7.3; Zon. 8.368-369).



of the strongest military commanders in Greece at the time.<sup>876</sup> By 293 BC, Demetrios had conquered much of mainland Greece,<sup>877</sup> and in 291 BC, he took control of the sea route to Italy.<sup>878</sup> While his holdings in Greece demonstrate Demetrios' resources and success, his control of the sea route indicates his interest in the West. All of these attributes would have made him appealing to Magna Graecia in its struggles against Rome.

Nor was Demetrios the only Greek to whom Magna Graecia could appeal, as proven by the list of earlier generals active in Magna Graecia. Mythic precedent provided added impetus for Greeks to take part in a war against Rome. Some Greeks, like Pyrrhus who would arrive in Italy in the 280s BC, envisioned battle with Rome as another Trojan War; fate was driving the descendants of the Homeric Greeks to conquer the Romans, self-proclaimed descendants of Troy.<sup>879</sup>

By advancing against Magna Graecia, Rome thus risked war not just against Magna Graecia, but against powerful, ambitious, and ideologically motivated Greek generals capable of enlisting Italic as well as Greek troops. While we cannot know for certain what Rome, faced with such a prospect, intended to communicate to the Greeks by importing Aesculapius at just this time, we can speculate based on historical context and on Rome's use of cult in matters of foreign policy.

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<sup>876</sup> On Demetrios Poliorketes, see below.

<sup>877</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 31-41; Diod.Sic. 21.14.1-2; Strabo 9.5.15 (C 436).

<sup>878</sup> Plut. *Pyrrh.* 9-10.

<sup>879</sup> Paus. 1.12.1. On the development of the tradition associating Rome with Troy, see Perret (1942); Gruen 1990 (10-20). As Gruen (20) points out, not all Greeks viewed the association as grounds for antagonism between Rome and Greece.

### 3. Rome's Methods of Diplomacy

As discussed above, Rome adopted gods to advance its foreign policy. In the instances of Juno Regina and Juno Sospita, for example, the arrival of an enemy's god signified that god's favor towards Rome and Roman domination. The importation of Aesculapius may have carried similar connotations. Aesculapius became a resident of Rome, and thus his allegiances now lay with the Romans as well; the Greeks of Magna Graecia could no longer expect Aesculapius to betray the Roman state. The stories of his importation, moreover, consistently emphasize the god's willingness to go to Rome; he was not coerced into boarding the Roman ship, but did so of his own volition. Aesculapius chose to join the Roman state.<sup>880</sup>

However, unlike Juno Regina and Juno Sospita who were imported from enemy cities, Aesculapius came from Epidauros, a point also consistently emphasized in the narratives of his importation.<sup>881</sup> This factor makes it difficult to interpret the import as cooption an enemy's god, and thus as *evocatio*.

The choice of Epidaurian Asklepios invites another interpretation. Epidaurian Asklepios was a panhellenic deity; people from all over the Greek world visited his sanctuary. Moreover, Epidaurian Asklepios was a symbol

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<sup>880</sup> North 1976 (11) suggests that the adoption of new gods by the Roman state be understood in conjunction with its policy of "opening her community to new and foreign citizens....The one is the projection on to the symbolic level of the social reality of the other."

<sup>881</sup> Emphasis on Epidauros in ancient accounts of the god's arrival is noted by Brucia 1990 (93-101), who explains this as a reflection of the belief that the most effective Asklepios in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC was Epidaurian Asklepios. At the time the earliest extant accounts of Aesculapius' importation were recorded (beginning in the late 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC with Livy), Epidauros still fascinated the Romans despite the fact that the sanctuary had been pillaged by Sulla (Paus. 9.7.5). Livy 45.27-28 reports that L. Aemilius Paulus visited it in 167 BC while touring Greece. Livy interrupts his narrative to comment that the Epidauros of his own day "is rich now in the vestiges of pillaged dedications" (*nunc vestigiis revolorum donorum...dives*), whereas at the time of Paulus it was rich with the dedications themselves (*tum donis dives erat*). The sanctuary was rebuilt in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD (Paus. 2.27.2). On Epidauros in the Roman period, see Tomlinson 1983 (30-33).

of political alliance, as indicated by his importation to Athens in 420 BC. Shortly before his arrival in Rome, moreover, Epidaurian Asklepios symbolized an alliance of Greeks under Demetrios Poliorketes. The charter of Demetrios' Greek league, established in 302 BC, was published in the Asklepieion at Epidauros.<sup>882</sup> These aspects of panhellenism and alliance made Asklepios ideal for placating the Greeks.

Other Greek gods could not as easily serve this function. Some gods were too localized, carrying epithets that tied them to a particular locale (e.g., Eleusinian Demeter). Other gods bore connotations counter to diplomacy. Athena's close association with Athens and even past imperialism, for example, rendered her counter-productive to expressing good will towards most non-Attic Greeks, including those of Magna Graecia.

That Rome was casting a message to a wide population of Greeks in its importation of Aesculapius is supported by Rome's adoption of certain Greek rituals just prior to the import. In 293 BC, Rome held a *supplicatio* to Aesculapius; and at the *ludi Romani*, or Roman games of that year, Rome for the first time adopted the Greek ritual of giving palms to victors.<sup>883</sup>

It is striking that in the same year as the *supplicatio*, Rome did not decide to import Aesculapius, even though plague had been troubling the city for three years and the Sibylline books recommended his importation. Livy reasons that the consuls were too busy with the war.<sup>884</sup> His observations about the difficulty of importing a god like Mater Magna from an unallied

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<sup>882</sup> On Demetrios Poliorketes and his league, see below.

<sup>883</sup> Livy 10.47.3: *eodem anno coronati primum ob res bello bene gestas ludos Romanos spectarunt palmaeque tum primum translato e Graeco more uictoribus datae* (And that same year [293 BC], palms were given to victors for the first time in accordance with a custom borrowed from the Greeks).

<sup>884</sup> Livy 10.27.7.

country may help explain the postponement.<sup>885</sup> Lacking alliances with Epidauros, Rome may have been unable to complete negotiations in 293 BC.

But the war may have affected the postponement in another way. The year 293 BC marked major advances against the Samnites in southern Italy, most notably the Roman victory at Aquilonia. A handful of other Samnite towns were also taken. As Rome began to make significant inroads into Samnite territory, it recognized that it would soon have to contend with Greeks to the south. Rome thus began to adopt Greek rituals in an attempt to communicate its own willingness and ability to contend with the Greeks on their own terms.

The importation of Aesculapius, however, would await the advance of Roman power to the very borders of Magna Graecia. By this time not only the expansion of Roman territory, but also a decade of temple building reinforcing Roman valor, necessitated a stronger message. As mentioned above, the second largest temple-building boom in Republican Rome occurred between 304 and ca. 291 BC. Most of these temples were the result of victories in battle, and were vowed by victorious generals. The only three not associated by ancient sources with military events are 1) the temple to Concordia, vowed in 304 BC as a result of the patrician-plebeian struggles; 2) the temple to Venus, vowed in 295 BC and built with fines assessed against married women convicted of adultery; and 3) the temple to Aesculapius.

The other seven temples celebrated Roman military successes. For the first time Victoria, probably inspired by Greek Nike, entered Rome to proclaim Rome's military prowess (294 BC), as did permutations of Victoria apparent in such deities as Jupiter Victor (295 BC).<sup>886</sup> Likewise, Bellona,

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<sup>885</sup> Livy 29.11.1. See also above.

<sup>886</sup> Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 69) state that the cult of Victoria was "apparently derived from an awareness of Greek Victory cults in the late fourth century and especially of the conquests and the invincibility of Alexander the Great."

goddess of war (Bellona derives from *bellum*, or war; 296 BC) and Jupiter Stator (the “Stayer” who arrests the enemy’s attack; 294 BC) communicated Rome’s might and power in their names and epithets. Salus (302 BC), Quirinus (dedicated in 293 BC, but vowed in 325 BC), and Fors Fortuna (293 BC) were all the result of successful battles. All of these, moreover, in addition to Concordia and Venus, were vowed by individuals.

Of these 10 temples, only that of Aesculapius was built at the instigation of the Senate. The Senate, aware that Roman military success was being expressed emphatically via temple after temple in the 290s BC, may have realized that it was time to temper this bellicose message if it were to forge amicable alliances with enemy states. Building a temple to Aesculapius, a Doric Greek god associated with alliance as opposed to domination, communicated just such an amicable message.

At the very same time, the tenth temple in such a series must also have been a reminder of the power that brought Rome to the borders of Magna Graecia. Following the decade-long pattern, Aesculapius legitimated the absorption of foreign territory.

#### **IV. Rome, Mainland Greece, and Demetrios Poliorketes**

Roman contact with mainland Greece was also expanding at this time, and gave Rome reason to cultivate good relations with the powerful Macedonian king Demetrios Poliorketes.

##### **A. Demetrios Poliorketes and Mainland Greece ca. 307-290 BC**

Plutarch tells the following story about the Macedonian king Demetrios Poliorketes. At some time, presumably in the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC when Demetrios’ power within Greece was considerable, some pirates

from a town under Roman control fell into his hands. He sent these men back to Rome with the admonition that a power that controlled Italy should not permit piracy; furthermore, Rome in particular should not permit pirates to be sent against Greece since Rome worshipped Greek gods, like the Dioskouri, in their own Forum.<sup>887</sup> The anecdote, if true, is significant for indicating that one of the most powerful men in Greece was beginning to take notice of Roman expansion (στρατηγεῖν τε ἅμα τῆς Ἰταλίας).

In the last decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Antigonos Monophthalmos, or “The One-Eyed,” a successor to Alexander the Great, decided to wrest control of mainland Greece from Cassander, ruler of Macedonia.<sup>888</sup> His object was to free all of Greece.<sup>889</sup> In 307 BC, he equipped his son Demetrios—who would later earn the epithet “Poliorketes,” or “Besieger of Cities”—with a fleet and sent him to take Athens.<sup>890</sup> Demetrios succeeded, and within three years began a campaign to take the Peloponnese. In 304/3 BC, Demetrios seized Corinth, Sikyon, Achaea, and all of Arcadia except Mantinea. Outside of the Peloponnese, he took Chalcis in Euboea.<sup>891</sup>

In 302 BC, Demetrios and Antigonos formed an alliance of Greek states under their control. This league, a reincarnation of the Corinthian League established by Philip II of Macedon in 338 BC, probably included most

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<sup>887</sup> Strabo 5.3.5 (C 232). Strabo says that Demetrios sent the captives back safely because of *συγγένειαν* between Rome and the Greeks. The cult of the Dioskouri in the Forum existed since at least the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC (Livy 2.19-21; Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 6.13), and may have been introduced to Rome from Lavinium just southeast of Rome. See Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 66).

<sup>888</sup> On Antigonos, see E. Will in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 7.1, p. 39-61); Billows 1990; Green 1990 (3-35).

<sup>889</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 8.1: ὀρμὴ παρέστη θαυμάσιος αὐτοῖς ἐλευθεροῦν τὴν Ἑλλάδα, πᾶσαν ὑπὸ Κασσάνδρου καὶ Πτολεμαίου καταδεδουλωμένην ([Antigonos and Demetrios] had an admirable desire to free Greece, all of which had been enslaved by Cassander and Ptolemy).

<sup>890</sup> Diod.Sic. 20.45-46; Plut. *Demetr.* 8-14.

<sup>891</sup> Diod.Sic. 20.100.5-6, 102-103; Plut. *Demetr.* 23-27.

of the Peloponnese.<sup>892</sup> Thus by 302 BC, Demetrios and Antigonos held a significant portion of mainland Greece.

In 301 BC, Antigonos was preoccupied with his holdings in the East. That same year, at the Battle of Ipsus in Phrygia, he was defeated and killed. As a result, Antigonos' eastern holdings were divided among the other successors of Alexander's empire. Demetrios went to Ephesos with 9000 of his soldiers, and, because of his absence from Greece he lost much of his hold on the Greek mainland.<sup>893</sup> The league of 302 BC was defunct, at least for the time being. Nevertheless, Demetrios still controlled the largest fleet in the Aegean and had enough support left at Corinth to return there in 301/0 BC.<sup>894</sup>

By 296 BC, Demetrios decided to make a second attempt at control of mainland Greece, and was successful. The following year Athens surrendered to him, and he took back much of the Peloponnese.<sup>895</sup> In 294 BC, he had himself proclaimed king by the Macedonian army.<sup>896</sup> In 293 BC, he recovered Thessaly and acquired most of central Greece.<sup>897</sup> In 292-291 BC, Thebes, too, fell to him.<sup>898</sup>

In 291 BC, Lanassa, the daughter of Agathokles of Syracuse, offered herself in marriage to Demetrios. Lanassa's dowry was the island of Corcyra.<sup>899</sup> By marrying Lanassa, Demetrios thereby acquired control of the

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<sup>892</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 25. A fragmentary *stèle* containing the league's charter was found at Epidauros. For the text, see Moretti 1967-1976 (vol. 1, no. 44, p. 105-118); for a translation, see Bagnall and Derow 1981 (no. 8, p. 17-20). Other publications of the text and its translation are listed in Green 1990 (749, n. 76). The most notable exception to the league is Sparta, which never fell under Demetrios' control.

<sup>893</sup> Diod.Sic. 20.107-109, 21.1; Plut. *Demetr.* 28-30.

<sup>894</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 31.

<sup>895</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 33.

<sup>896</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 37.

<sup>897</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 39-41; Strabo 9.5.15 (C 436).

<sup>898</sup> Diod.Sic. 21.14.1-2; Plut. *Demetr.* 40.

<sup>899</sup> Plut. *Pyrrh.* 9-10. Lanassa had been married previously to Pyrrhus, king of Epirus in

sea route to Italy. As Peter Green comments, “The prospect of western *apertura* was something Demetrios found irresistible.”<sup>900</sup>

Demetrios’ power began to wane soon thereafter. In 288 BC, he lost Macedonia to Pyrrhus.<sup>901</sup> In 287 BC, he made a settlement with Ptolemy Soter<sup>902</sup> and left Greece for Asia Minor.<sup>903</sup> There, after surrendering to Seleucus I Nikator, he drank himself to death in 283 BC.<sup>904</sup>

Until the 280s BC, however, Demetrios was one of the most powerful individuals in mainland Greece. Throughout the 290s, he possessed the strongest fleet in the Mediterranean and controlled most of the Peloponnese, Attica, and even central Greece northward into Macedonia.<sup>905</sup> Demetrios, moreover, was keenly aware of the importance of Italy, and of Rome as the increasingly dominant power there, as attested by his marriage to Lanassa and by Plutarch’s anecdote about the pirates.

From Rome’s point of view, Demetrios, with the strongest fleet in the Mediterranean, could cause trouble. This was especially true as Rome expanded towards Magna Graecia, prone to calling in ambitious Greek generals. The Pyrrhic War in 282 BC could have been Demetrios’ war had he remained powerful and lived long enough to fight it. Thus Rome had reason to take notice of Demetrios and to establish a strong position for itself in relation to him. The importation of Epidaurian Asklepios was one way of doing just that.

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northwestern Greece and an enemy of Demetrios Poliorketes.

<sup>900</sup> Green 1990 (291).

<sup>901</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 44-46.

<sup>902</sup> The “Kallias Decree,” Agora, Inv. No. I 7295.

<sup>903</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 46.

<sup>904</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 49-52.

<sup>905</sup> On the fleet, see Green 1990 (127).



## **B. Aesculapius, Epidauros, and Demetrios Poliorketes**

The resurgence of Demetrios in mainland Greece can be mapped against the expansion of Roman domination in Italy and events leading to the arrival of Aesculapius. As with the Samnite Wars, careful study of this chronology sheds new light on the importation of Aesculapius.<sup>906</sup>

The pinnacle of Demetrios' power occurred in the mid- to late-290s BC. In 295 BC, he had regained Athens and much of the Peloponnese. This was also the year of Rome's victory at Sentinum, and the first year of the plague. By 293 BC, Demetrios was king of Macedonia and controlled most of central Greece. Rome had taken Aquilonia and a number of other Samnite cities. Aesculapius was supplicated and Rome adopted the Greek custom of crowning victors with palms. In 291 BC, Demetrios acquired the sea route to Italy. With the capture of Venusium, Rome was close to Tarentum; colonization of Venusium indicated Rome's intention of maintaining a strong local presence. At about this time, Aesculapius arrived in Rome.

Thus, just as Rome had arrived at the borders of Magna Graecia, Demetrios controlled the largest Mediterranean fleet, sea access to Italy, and much of mainland Greece. Rome therefore would have been wise to cultivate good relations with this man. And so it did, by importing a god with ties to Demetrios.

The only surviving text of the charter of Demetrios' league formed in 302 BC was found in the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros, as noted above.<sup>907</sup> While copies of the league charter were undoubtedly published in

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<sup>906</sup> Kirchner 1956 (19-20) proposes a complex connection between the importation of Aesculapius and what he argues were the united interests of Pyrrhus of Epirus, Agathokles of Syracuse, and Demetrios. The problems with this scenario are summarized by Musial 1992 (24).

<sup>907</sup> Guarducci 1971 (268-269) views Epidauros' membership in Demetrios' league as critical to Rome's ability to import the Epidaurian god. Guarducci, relying heavily on the pirate story in Strabo 5.3.5 (C 232), argues that Rome had a "rapport" with Demetrios on which it could capitalize to appeal, in turn, to the Epidaurians. See also Degrassi 1986 (145). In my

other places in Greece, its publication at Epidauros is not without significance. It is striking that this copy of the charter was set up not in the city of Epidauros itself, but in the sanctuary of Asklepios some 7 km outside it. The panhellenic appeal of the sanctuary must have influenced the decision to locate the charter there. Since Epidauros attracted visitors from all over the Greek world, publication there guaranteed that the league-charter would be seen by many. Moreover, the panhellenic, and thus politically and culturally unifying, aspect of the sanctuary complemented Demetrios' agenda to bring all of Greece together—albeit under his own control.

Publication of the charter thus created an association between Epidaurian Asklepios and Demetrios. Whether the text of the league-charter continued to stand in the sanctuary after Ipsus in 301 BC is uncertain, but by 295 BC Epidauros was back in Demetrios' control, and the earlier association between Demetrios and Epidauros was thereby renewed.

What was the message conveyed to Demetrios by Rome's importation of Asklepios? Here we can only speculate. Perhaps it was an amicable gesture: Rome was welcoming a god associated with Demetrios. Or perhaps the message was less friendly: Epidaurian Asklepios favored Rome too, not just Demetrios and his kingdom. Asklepios was now a citizen of Rome, and would not betray his fellow Romans in a struggle against Demetrios. Or, more likely, the tenor of both messages was contained in the importation.

## **V. The Patrician-Plebeian Struggle in the 290s BC**

In addition to events outside Rome, domestic concerns, like plague, preoccupied Rome at the time of Aesculapius' arrival. The patrician-plebeian

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interpretation, however, Rome used Epidaurian Asklepios to get at Demetrios, rather than using Demetrios to get at Epidaurian Asklepios.

struggle was one such major concern, and was associated by ancient sources with the importation of Aesculapius.

### A. History of the Struggle

Antagonism between plebeians and patricians flared in Rome from the early 5<sup>th</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> cs. BC. Much has been written on the subject, but little is known for certain due to the paucity and lateness of sources documenting the struggle. While the distinction between patricians and plebeians is debated and seems to have changed over time, the patricians, loosely defined, were the most prestigious group of the nobility, and the plebeians, at least initially, were the poor.<sup>908</sup> The plebeians, inferior economically, socially, and politically, struggled against the patricians for better conditions. In 487 BC, they seceded for the first time from the state to press their claims, and within about 40 years had their own assembly and magistrates.<sup>909</sup> Over the next two centuries, plebeians continued to acquire a greater voice in the state. With the *lex Hortensia* of ca. 287 BC, decisions of the plebeian assembly (plebiscites) were considered binding on the whole state.<sup>910</sup>

When preparations got underway for the importation of Aesculapius late in the 290s BC, tensions between patricians and plebeians were unusually high, having escalated over the course of the decade. In 300 BC, the tribunes

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<sup>908</sup> For definitions of “patricians” and “plebeians,” see Momigliano 1969 (419-436); Mitchell 1986; Cornell 1995 (242-271); *RE*<sup>2</sup>, sv ‘Patricii,’ ‘Plebs.’

<sup>909</sup> Livy 2.44.9: *duas civitates ex una factas, suos cuique parti magistratus, suas leges esse* (Two states had been created from one, each with its own magistrates and laws). The assembly was the *concilium plebis*, and the magistrates *tribuni plebis* and *aediles*. The decision of the assembly was a *plebiscitum*. Secession (*secessio*), or withdrawal to a place outside the sacred boundary of the city, was one of the tactics the plebeians used to prompt action by the state. Three plebeian secessions are recorded for the Republic: one in 494 BC, another in 449 BC, and a possible final secession ca. 287 BC. The latter is debated; see Cornell 1995 (377-380). On the plebeian movement in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, see the discussion by A. Drummond in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 7.2, p. 212-242).

<sup>910</sup> On the limited effect of the *lex Hortensia* for the plebeians, see Cornell 1995 (377-380).

of the plebeians, Q. and Cn. Ogulnius, proposed the *lex Ogulnia* opening the priesthoods of *augures* and *pontifices* to plebeians. In 299 BC, the *lex Valeria*, protecting citizens against magisterial execution, was renewed. According to Livy, who notes that this same law had been introduced two times previously, it was renewed again because “the wealth of the few was greater than the liberty of the plebs.”<sup>911</sup>

In 296 BC, the patrician Ap. Claudius Caecus mounted a campaign for election to the consulship alongside another patrician, according to Livy, in order to recover both consular positions for the patricians.<sup>912</sup> Appius’ intention ran counter to legislation of the mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC mandating that one of the consular positions be held by a patrician and the other by a plebeian.<sup>913</sup> Livy reports that all the nobles (*omnes nobilitas*) supported Appius’ intention in the hope of raising the consulship from the plebeian mire (*ex caeno plebeio*) and restoring it to its former dignity (*maiestas pristina*).<sup>914</sup> Although Appius won one of the consulships, the other went to a plebeian. That same year, the proconsul Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus took an army to Lucania to suppress plebeian-agitated sedition.<sup>915</sup>

In 295 BC, a quarrel broke out in the Forum Boarium when a patrician woman, Verginia, was excluded from the shrine of Pudicitia for marrying a plebeian.<sup>916</sup> While the story smacks more of rumor than historical event, it is

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<sup>911</sup> Livy 10.9.3-6: *plus paucorum opes quam libertas plebis poterat.*

<sup>912</sup> Livy 10.15.7-8: *Ap. Claudius, consularis candidatus, uir acer et ambitiosus, non sui magis honoris causa quam ut patricii reciperarent duo consularia loca, cum suis tum totius nobilitatis uiribus incubuit ut se cum Q. Fabio consulem dicerent* (Ap. Claudius was candidate for the office of consul. A passionate and ambitious man, he was more eager to recover both consulships for the patricians than to increase his own honor. Thus he drew upon his own strength as well as that of all of the nobles in order to be named consul with Q. Fabius).

<sup>913</sup> This legislation is either the Licinio-Sextian laws of 367 BC or the *lex Genucia* of 342 BC. See Cornell 1995 (333-340).

<sup>914</sup> Livy 10.15.9.

<sup>915</sup> Livy 10.18.8.

<sup>916</sup> Livy 10.23.1-10.

indicative of the general climate of patrician-plebeian antagonism portrayed by Livy during the 290s BC. That same year, Livy reports that Fabius, a patrician, and P. Decius Mus, a plebeian, were elected consuls. Although the two were remarkable in their ability to cooperate initially, patrician-plebeian rivalry soon drove them apart.<sup>917</sup>

In 293 BC when the consul L. Papirius Cursor celebrated his triumph over the Samnites, he angered the plebeians by depositing in the state treasury all the vast amounts of silver and bronze despoiled from the Samnites. As a result, a war-tax had to be levied to pay the troops, causing more economic hardship.<sup>918</sup>

With the loss of Livy's history beginning in 292 BC, we lack a major source for the patrician-plebeian conflict at the end of the decade. Nevertheless, major plebeian unrest ca. 287 BC, with a possible final plebeian secession, confirms that problems were escalating in the late 290s BC.

## **B. Aesculapius and the Patrician-Plebeian Struggle**

Not only did the patrician-plebeian struggle flare at the time of Aesculapius' importation, but the two were associated via the plebeian Q. Ogulnius Gallus, famous for his efforts on behalf of the plebeians.

According to Valerius Maximus and the author of the anonymous *De viris illustribus*, Q. Ogulnius participated in the embassy to Epidaurus to retrieve Aesculapius. Valerius refers to Ogulnius as a *legatus*, or ambassador. The author of *De viris illustribus*, moreover, specifies that Ogulnius was the

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<sup>917</sup> Livy 10.24.1-2: [*concordia*] *ne perpetua esset, ordinum magis quam ipsorum inter se certamen intervenisse reor* (Their cooperation would not last, which, in my opinion, was due more to the struggle of the orders than to any conflict among themselves).

<sup>918</sup> Livy 10.46.5-6.

leader (*princeps*) of the 10 ambassadors.<sup>919</sup> None of the other ambassadors are identified.

This is the same Q. Ogulnius who, as a tribune of the plebs with his brother Gnaeus in 300 BC, introduced the *lex Ogulnia* and thus opened the colleges of *augures* and *pontifices* to plebeians.<sup>920</sup> Livy says that the Ogulnii caused a stir in promoting their legislation, and that they sought all possible occasions for maligning the *patres* to the plebeians.<sup>921</sup> The patricians were so distressed at the proposal that they pretended the gods themselves were more concerned about it than they were; the patricians only hoped the state would be safe from disaster. A huge debate resulted, and Livy records a lengthy, impassioned speech by the plebeian Publius Decius Mus in support of the proposal.

Patrician agitation indicates how major a victory the *lex Ogulnia* was for the plebeians. The patricians had no intention of sharing the honor and authority accorded by these priesthoods, one of the last bastions of patrician-only power. The *augures* were responsible for demarcating religious space and for interpreting signs from the gods. No activity of the state took place without their intervention and approval. The Senate, for example, could not meet if the presiding *augur* believed that the auspices had not been taken properly that day. The other priestly college, the *pontifices*, served as the repository of human and divine law. They guarded the legal formulae with which all legal proceedings began. They also controlled the calendar, and thus determined when courts and assemblies met. Furthermore, they intervened with individuals in matters of legal advice.<sup>922</sup> It is easy to see why patricians wanted to safeguard these positions for themselves.

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<sup>919</sup> Val.Max. 1.8.2; *De vir.ill.* 22.1-3. Both appear in Appendix III.C below.

<sup>920</sup> Q. Ogulnius was also an ambassador to the court of Ptolemy II in 273 BC, consul with C. Fabius Pictor in 269 BC, and dictator in 257 BC.

<sup>921</sup> Livy 10.6-10.9.2.

<sup>922</sup> On the function and duties of these priesthoods, and the effect of opening them to

In Livy's account, moreover, the Ogulnii were attempting to persuade not the masses of plebeians, but their leaders who had held consulships and triumphs, and who were honored in all other ways except with priesthoods.<sup>923</sup> The Ogulnii were promoting the interests of the highest ranks of the plebeians, those who already had a prominent role in the governance of Rome.

Regarding Ogulnius' impact on the importation of Aesculapius, the inseparability of cult and ritual from politics must be taken into account; so, too, must the likelihood that events such as the patrician-plebeian struggle left their mark on relations between the Romans and their gods, as Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price have suggested.<sup>924</sup> Livy's account of patrician opposition to the *lex Ogulnia* hints at this: the patricians claimed that the gods themselves were gravely concerned about the legislation.

Beard, North, and Price raise the possibility, moreover, of a sustained connection between the plebeians of Rome and the gods of southern Italy.<sup>925</sup> This connection can be detected in the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. After the first secession in 496 BC, the plebeians adopted the temple of Ceres, Liber, and Libera as their cult center. The cult of Demeter, Dionysus, and Kore—deities much like Ceres, Liber, and Libera—was widespread in southern Italy, and it is possible that Rome's acquaintance with the triad originated in Magna Graecia.<sup>926</sup>

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plebeians, see Beard 1990 (34-40); Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 18-30, 134-135).

<sup>923</sup> Livy 10.6.4-5: *eam actionem susceperunt qua non infimam plebem accenderent sed ipsa capita plebis, consulares triumphalesque plebeios, quorum honoribus nihil praeter sacerdotia, quae nondum promiscua erant, deesset* (They undertook this act not to enflame the lowest ranks of the plebeians, but the very top—the plebeians who had been consuls and had celebrated triumphs, and who lacked no honor other than priesthoods that were not yet open to all).

<sup>924</sup> Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 64), in reference to the patrician-plebeian struggle, states: "Any such long-standing division in society [like the patrician-plebeian struggle] would eventually find some religious expression, since any kind of continuing, coherent action would have had to be put in some relation with the gods and their involvement in Roman life."

<sup>925</sup> Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 64-66), following Momigliano 1969 (419-454).

Painted terracotta sculptures adorning the temple of Ceres, Liber, and Libera at Rome, moreover, were the work of Greek artists.<sup>927</sup> Although the temple was vowed by a patrician, A. Postumius Albus, it was dedicated by the popular leader, Sp. Cassius Vecellinus, and for this reason may have appealed to the plebeians.<sup>928</sup> The association of Ceres with grain—a substance of paramount importance to plebeians, especially ca. 497 BC when famine motivated the first plebeian secession—further explains plebeian affinity for the cult.

Other Roman cults of Greek influence had ties to the plebeians. The temple of Mercury (related to Greek Hermes), for example, was dedicated by a plebeian in 495 BC.<sup>929</sup> And the temple of Concordia, a cult sharing marked affinities with the Greek cult of Homonoia popular in Magna Graecia in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, was dedicated in 304 BC by the plebeian Cn. Flavius.<sup>930</sup>

Ties between patricians and plebeians extended beyond what we view as “religion,” and included the adoption of Greek cognomina by certain plebeians. The first Roman known to have adopted a Greek cognomen is Q. Publilius Philo, a prominent plebeian magistrate. In 339 BC as dictator,

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<sup>926</sup> Momigliano 1969 (449-454); Spaeth 1996 (6-10). However, Spaeth (8) argues that since emphasis on a male divinity (Liber) is lacking in cults of Demeter and Kore in Magna Graecia, the grouping of Ceres, Liber, and Libera can be better explained as a result of linking two dyads of Italic divinities: Ceres/Liber and Liber/Libera. Spaeth also argues that the particular triad of Ceres, Liber, and Libera was a Roman creation. Their 5<sup>th</sup>-c. temple provides a *terminus ante quem* for the triad at Rome.

<sup>927</sup> Pliny *NH* 35.154. The temple is also said to have employed Greek rituals and to have received its priestesses from Velia or Naples in Magna Graecia. Cic. *pro Balbo* 55. See also Scheid 1995; Cornell 1996 (263-265); Spaeth 1996 (81-102). From 449 BC, moreover, all Senatorial decrees were to be given to the plebeian aediles for keeping in the temple of Ceres (Livy 3.55.13). As Cornell (264) observes, this was consistent with the Greek conception of Demeter as law-giver, or *thesmophoros*.

<sup>928</sup> Dion.Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.17.-2-4. On Sp. Cassius and the temple, see Cornell 1995 (263). See also Richardson 1992 (sv ‘Ceres, Liber Liberaque, Aedes’); *LTUR*, sv ‘Ceres, Liber, Liberaque, Aedes; Aedes Cereris.’

<sup>929</sup> Livy 2.27.5-6. See also Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 65-66, with n. 201). However, Orlin 1997 (163-172) cautions against accepting Livy’s close association of this cult with the patrician-plebeian struggle.



moreover, Publilius proposed the *leges Publiliae* mandating that one of the censors be plebeian, and limiting Senate intervention in the plebeian legislative process.<sup>931</sup> And as consul in 327 BC,<sup>932</sup> his contacts with the Greeks of Magna Graecia proved instrumental in securing the surrender of Naples to Rome a year later.

There is ample evidence, moreover, that not just the *lex Ogulnia*, but the larger patrician-plebeian struggle of the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, affected articulation of Rome's relations with its gods. A law of ca. 304 BC mandated publication of civil law traditionally kept by *pontifices*; and in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, a limited popular election began for the office of *pontifex maximus*.<sup>933</sup> Also, according to Livy, the temple to Concordia, dedicated in 304 BC by a plebeian, was built in response to the patrician-plebeian struggle.<sup>934</sup> And a statue of a she-wolf suckling twins, dedicated in 296 BC by Q. and Cn. Ogulnius, seems also to have responded to these struggles.<sup>935</sup>

It is likely, therefore, that the patrician-plebeian struggle also influenced the decision to import Aesculapius. Since the import was the Senate's doing, it must have had patrician support. Although we cannot recover whether the import was the result of a patrician or plebeian initiative, both sides would have seen its value. The import of a god popular in

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<sup>930</sup> Livy 9.46. On the relation between Concordia and Homonoia, see Curti 2000 (80-81).

<sup>931</sup> Livy 8.12.14-17.

<sup>932</sup> He was consul also in 339 BC, 320 BC, and 315 BC.

<sup>933</sup> The publication of pontifical records is ascribed to Cn. Flavius (Livy 9.46.5). The *pontifex maximus* was now elected by 17 out of the 35 voting tribes. The earlier form of selection is unknown, but was probably by vote of the college of *pontifices*, or by seniority. See Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 99-100), who suggest that this election reform was connected with the *lex Ogulnia*.

<sup>934</sup> Livy 9.46. Orlin 1997 (163-166), however, cautions against association of this temple with the patrician-plebeian struggle.

<sup>935</sup> The dedication is mentioned in Livy 10.23.11-12. Wiseman 1995 argues that Remus was added to the Romulus legend only in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC as a reflection of growing parity between the patricians and plebeians. This statue is one of the earliest surviving depictions of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, and, according to Wiseman, indicates the growing

southern Italy, an area with traditional ties to the plebeians, presented the Senate with a way of diffusing plebeian unrest. Moreover, delegating a champion of the plebeian cause to head the embassy to Epidauros ensured that the plebeians got the message. So, too, did the decision to locate Aesculapius' sanctuary near a plebeian enclave, as we shall see in Chapter 9.<sup>936</sup>

## VI. Conclusions

A complex set of factors motivated the importation of Aesculapius to Rome. These factors include Roman expansion towards Magna Graecia, the growing power of Demetrios Poliorketes, and the patrician-plebeian struggle. While plague in 295 BC called for the importation of a healing god, by ca. 291 BC, metaphorical plague manifest in threats to Rome's internal and external safety presented a more immediate motivation for importing Aesculapius.

Asklepios was a god whose importation could forge and strengthen alliances within Greece, as indicated by Athens in 420 BC. For Rome, ready and willing to interact with Greece and the Greek East, the importation of Asklepios was ideal for indicating such interest. It was no coincidence that Asklepios-cult took off also at Attalid Pergamon in the same century of its importation to Rome. Rome was astute: it chose a cult that enjoyed huge popularity with Alexander's successors, like the Seleucid Demetrios and the

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power of the plebeians in the first decade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC.

<sup>936</sup> Alternative relationships between Ogulnius and the importation of Aesculapius have been proposed, but in relation to Rome's foreign affairs as opposed to their domestic. Degrassi 1986 argues for a close tie between the Etruscan Ogulnii and the patrician *gens Fabii*, both of whom were proponents of Rome's expansion towards the center and north of Italy. Degrassi draws no further connections between Ogulnius and Aesculapius, however, except to note the role of the former in the importation of the god. Another relationship is proposed by Musial 1992 (25-26), following Gag  1977. Pointing also to the Etruscan heritage of the Ogulnii, Musial sees Ogulnius' involvement in the importation of Aesculapius as a counterbalance to his promotion of Etruscan interests manifest in his erection of a statue group of the she-wolf and twins in 295 BC (Livy 10.23.11-12).

Attalids.

While diplomacy played a primary role in the importation of Asklepios to Athens and Rome, the importation also functioned as an implicit reminder of the power of both cities and its ruling class. As the following chapter will explore, the location of Aesculapius' temple in Rome, just as in Athens, helped articulate these multivalent messages.

## CHAPTER 9: AESCULAPIUS AND THE TOPOGRAPHY OF ROME

From explanations for the importation of Aesculapius, this study turns to ways in which messages inherent in the importation were communicated to their respective audiences. This chapter focuses in particular on the location of Aesculapius' sanctuary within the topography of Rome, and how this location articulated and further nuanced the multivalent messages towards both Greeks and plebeians.

The chapter begins by considering where temples were located in Rome, and how these locations were determined in the middle Republic. While a complex system of organizing Roman space may not have been operative at the time of Aesculapius' arrival, the Romans were even then manipulating architecture and topography for programmatic meaning.

Next, I examine ancient and modern explanations for Aesculapius' location on Tiber Island. Since these explanations treat the island as an isolated area, and view Aesculapius' appeal as derived solely from healing, they cannot account fully for his placement there. I analyze the topography surrounding the island to propose a different set of explanations.

### I. Locating Temples in Roman Space

When Aesculapius arrived in Rome ca. 291 BC, his was the tenth temple vowed or dedicated in Rome within roughly a decade.<sup>937</sup> It is worth considering where these other nine temples were situated, and how Aesculapius fit into the city's rapidly changing topography.

Of the 10 temples, two were located on the Palatine (Victoria, 294 BC; Jupiter Stator, 294 BC), two on the Quirinal (Salus, 302 BC; Quirinus, 293 BC),

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<sup>937</sup> On this building boom, see also Ch. 8 above.

and a third probably also on the Quirinal (Jupiter Victor, 294 BC). Another was located on the lower slopes of the Capitoline above the Forum Romanum (Concordia, 304 BC).<sup>938</sup> All six of these temples stood within the *pomerium*, or sacred boundary of the city. The Palatine and Quirinal were the areas most affected by this building boom.

Another four temples stood outside the *pomerium* and were located: in the Campus Martius next to the temple of Apollo (Bellona, 296 BC); in the Circus Maximus (Venus, 295 BC); along the Via Campana, on the west bank of the Tiber, at the 6<sup>th</sup> milestone (Fors Fortuna, 293 BC); and on Tiber Island (Aesculapius, ca. 291 BC).

Adam Ziolkowski has argued that intra-pomerial temples were usually sited in areas previously sacred to the temple's deity.<sup>939</sup> Quirinus' temple, for example, was located on the Quirinal. But Ziolkowski has also shown that this was not always the case. Space could be manipulated for other symbolic purposes as well.

It was probably left to the magistrate who vowed the temple to choose its location, and such locations could make strong statements.<sup>940</sup> Thus, the temple to Concordia, vowed by a plebeian in the heat of the patrician-plebeian struggles, was perched above the Forum and just below the Capitolium, overlooking both the Comitium and Curia, presumably to promote concord between the orders.<sup>941</sup> And the temple to Victoria, vowed in 305 BC by L. Postumius Megellus as a victory monument for the last battle of the Second Samnite War, was completed in 294 BC on the highest point of

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<sup>938</sup> According to Livy 9.46.6, the temple was built "*in area Volcani*." The Volcanal lay on the lower northeastern slope of the Capitoline, along the stairs that continued the route of the Sacra Via through the Forum. See Richardson 1992 (sv 'Volcanal'); *LTUR*, sv 'Volcanal.'

<sup>939</sup> Ziolkowski 1992 (268-283).

<sup>940</sup> On the process of deciding where temples were to be located, see Ziolkowski 1992 (214-219).

<sup>941</sup> Livy 9.46.6. See also Ziolkowski 1992 (282).

the Palatine, above the area traditionally identified with Evander's Arcadian foundations.<sup>942</sup> The position of this temple may represent an attempt by Postumius physically to dominate the traditional foundation myths of Rome, and may have been countered in 296 BC (while the temple was still under construction) by the dedication directly below it of a statue of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus.<sup>943</sup> This statue focused attention back onto Rome's pastoral foundations.

Thus even within the crowded area encircled by the *pomerium*, the Romans organized space to make certain statements, and some forms of symbolism could be contested. Outside the *pomerium*, where more space was available, sites could be manipulated much more easily, and the Romans were aware of the possibilities. In the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, for example, a temple was built to Diana on the Aventine, outside the *pomerium*, but still very close to it. While as a federal deity Diana had to reside outside the city, nevertheless the Romans placed her very close to it, and thereby indicated both the goddess' allegiances and their own level of control.<sup>944</sup> The use of monuments as an expression of political or social sentiment was already operative as a medium for communicating ideologies and/or exercising persuasion.

As to extra-*pomerial* temples of the early 3<sup>rd</sup>-c. BC boom in construction, that of Bellona, goddess of war, was aptly located in the area sacred to Mars. The temples of Venus and Fors Fortuna have not been precisely located. The temple of Aesculapius was built on Tiber Island,<sup>945</sup> and,

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<sup>942</sup> Livy 10.33.9.

<sup>943</sup> Livy 10. 23.12. See also Ziolkowski 1992 (282-283). Ziolkowski (sv 'Victoria in Palatio') argues that Megellus financed the temple not by money collected in the office of *aedile*, as Livy states, but from money he had won as general. The temple is thus even more thoroughly a victory monument than Livy's account implies. See also Richardson 1992 (sv 'Victoria, Aedes'); *LTUR*, sv 'Victoria, Aedes.'

<sup>944</sup> Cornell 1995 (108-113).

<sup>945</sup> Livy 11.*per*; Val.Max. 1.8.2; *De vir.ill.* 22.3; Arnobius *Adv.Nat.* 7.44; Ov. *Fasti* 1.291-294; Pliny *NH* 29.16; Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 5.13.4; Suet. *Claud.* 25.2.

as noted, unlike the other boom temples, it was built at the instigation of the Senate under the advice of the Sibylline books. Its location was thus decided by the Senate.

The rest of this chapter examines why the Roman state, involved in the architectural, and thereby symbolic, organization of the city, located Aesculapius on Tiber Island.

## **II. Previous Explanations for Aesculapius' Location**

### **A. Ancient Accounts**

No structures on Tiber Island are known to predate the temple of Aesculapius. Moreover, since no remains of this temple have been found, its precise location on the island itself remains uncertain. It seems likely, however, that it stood at the southern end of the island where the church of S. Bartolomeo now stands, near the image of Aesculapius carved on the island's travertine casement.<sup>946</sup>

The ancients themselves were bewildered as to why Aesculapius' temple was built on Tiber Island. Narratives of his import, including those of Livy, Ovid, and Valerius, say that the god himself chose the spot: as the boat transporting Aesculapius sailed by the island, Aesculapius in the form of a

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<sup>946</sup> The almost continual use of the island since antiquity has frustrated efforts at excavation. Almost all of the ancient material found on the island, moreover, dates to the Imperial period. Thus, very little is known of the Republican phase of the island save for the presence of temples and porticoes attested by Livy 2.5 and Plut. *Publ.* 8.6. See Degraffi 1986 (147); *LTUR*, sv 'Aesculapius, Aedes, Templum (Insula Tiberina).' The presence of a well in the church of S. Bartolomeo at the southern point of the island also suggests that the temple was located here near a source of fresh water for ritual purposes, although it is not certain that the well dates to antiquity. The history of the island in antiquity is discussed in detail by Besnier 1902. Brucia 1990 updates the evidence of Besnier and extends the study into the Medieval period. See also Le Gall 1953a. The present-day topography of the island is illustrated by Hart 2000 (Plan 5). On the travertine encasement of the island, see Ch. 7 above. On the well in S. Bartolomeo, see Brucia 1990 (135-139); Graf 1992 (162).

snake jumped off and swam to it, and thus the Romans built his temple there. By shifting responsibility for the choice of his location onto the god, these narratives betray that even in antiquity there was no convincing explanation for Aesculapius' placement.<sup>947</sup>

Other ancient sources address a related topographical conundrum: why was Aesculapius placed outside the city? Pliny claims it was because the Romans condemned the practice of medicine.<sup>948</sup> That Pliny felt the need to explain the location suggests it was still being questioned. Plutarch explicitly queries, "Why is the sanctuary of Asklepios outside of the city?" and proffers three alternative explanations: 1) the area outside the city was more healthy, and the Greeks themselves put sanctuaries of Asklepios in clean, high places;<sup>949</sup> 2) Aesculapius came from Epidaurus, where the Asklepieion lay outside the city; and 3) Aesculapius himself chose the spot.<sup>950</sup> Plutarch's first explanation, relating to health, supports the precepts of Vitruvius that sanctuaries of healing deities should be located in healthful areas.<sup>951</sup>

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<sup>947</sup> Graf 1992 (160-167).

<sup>948</sup> Pliny *NH* 29.16.

<sup>949</sup> The Tiber location could not have been very healthy since it lay just at the point where the river was prone to flooding, and was thus especially conducive to disease and illness. See Le Gall 1953b. Nor was Tiber Island a lofty spot.

<sup>950</sup> Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 94.286D: διὰ τί τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ τὸ ἱερόν ἔξω πόλεώς ἐστι; ἴσχυον ὅτι τὰς ἔξω διατριβὰς ὑγιεινοτέρας ἐνόμιζον εἶναι τῶν ἐν ἄστει; καὶ γὰρ Ἕλληνας ἐν τόποις καθαροῖς καὶ ὑψηλοῖς ἐπιεικῶς ἰδρυμένα τὰ Ἀσκληπιεῖα ἔχουσιν· ἢ ὅτι τὸν θεὸν ἐξ Ἐπιδάουρου μετάπεμpton ἤκειν νομίζουσιν; Ἐπιδουρίους δ' οὐ κατὰ πόλιν ἀλλὰ ὑπόρρω τὸ Ἀσκληπιεῖον ἐστίν· ἢ ὅτι τοῦ δράκοντος ἐκ τῆς τριήρους κατὰ τὴν νῆσον ἀποβάντος καὶ ἀφανισθέντος αὐτὸν ᾤοντο τὴν ἰδρυσιν ὑφηγεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν; (Why is the sanctuary of Asklepios outside the city? Is it because they thought it was more healthy to spend time outside the city rather than within it? The Greeks, in fact, smartly situate their sanctuaries of Asklepios in clean and lofty places. Or is it because they believe that the god came from Epidaurus when summoned? The sanctuary at Epidaurus is not in the city, but some distance from it. Or is it because the snake leapt from the trireme and down onto the island, and therefore they think that the god thus indicated his choice of location?).

<sup>951</sup> Vitruv. 1.2.7: *naturalis autem decor sic erit, si primum omnibus templis saluberrimae regiones aquarumque fontes in his locis idonei eligentur, in quibus fana constituentur, deinde maxime Aesculapio, Saluti, ut eorum deorum, quorum plurimi medicinis aegri curari videntur* (There will be a natural *décor* if, first, for all temples the healthiest areas with



Regardless of whether any or all of these explanations are correct, they demonstrate that placing Aesculapius' sanctuary on Tiber Island struck the ancients themselves as odd. Nor has their perplexity entirely dissipated.

## **B. Modern Explanations**

Scholars continue to present explanations for Aesculapius' location. Some have returned to the question why Aesculapius was placed outside the city. Joël Le Gall argues that the extra-urban location was determined by the Republican practice of placing foreign gods beyond the *pomerium*.<sup>952</sup> This explanation has been widely accepted, even though the premise that foreign gods should be placed outside the *pomerium* is a modern, and probably false, construct.

Julius Ambrosch in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. was the first to argue that foreign gods were kept outside the *pomerium* during the Republic.<sup>953</sup> His model has been accepted almost universally.<sup>954</sup> Ziolkowski argues against Ambrosch's model, however, and cites four exceptions to it: the cults of the Dioscouri in the Forum, Venus Erycina on the Capitoline, Mater Magna on the Palatine, and Hercules in the Forum Boarium.<sup>955</sup> Ziolkowski, nuancing the arguments of Ambrosch, proposes that instead of a hard-and-fast rule about keeping foreign gods outside the *pomerium*, there was a tendency to do so because of a lack of available space within. Foreign deities like Aesculapius, who had no ties to preexisting cult sites, could thus be placed outside the *pomerium*.

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springs are chosen, and secondly and especially, if this is done for Aesculapius, Salus, and those gods by whose healing power very many sick seem to be healed).

<sup>952</sup> Le Gall 1953a (103).

<sup>953</sup> Ambrosch 1839 (189-191).

<sup>954</sup> See Ziolkowski 1992 (266-267) for bibliography.

<sup>955</sup> Ziolkowski 1992 (268-283).

Even assuming that they are correct, such explanations of why Aesculapius' sanctuary lies outside the city do not account for the particular choice of Tiber Island. Why, for example, was Epidaurian Aesculapius not placed in the Campus Martius next to Apollo, his father, with whom he shared a sanctuary at Epidauros?<sup>956</sup>

Le Gall has explained the choice of Tiber Island as the result of association of Aesculapius with an earlier healing cult, probably of Tiberinus, on the same island.<sup>957</sup> Lacking literary and epigraphic sources for this cult, Le Gall bases his argument on anatomical votives found in the river bed near the island.<sup>958</sup> But, as mentioned above, many of these votives were found upstream from the island, which indicates they had no direct association with it.<sup>959</sup>

Another argument relates the location of Aesculapius to the myth of the island's formation. Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch all discuss the formation of Tiber Island in the same basic terms.<sup>960</sup> When the Etruscan king Tarquinius Superbus was ousted in 509 BC, grain that he had

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<sup>956</sup> Graf 1992 (164-166) also raises the question. A temple to Bellona was vowed in 296 BC (Livy 10.19.17-21) and was built to the east of and on the same axis with the temple of Apollo. On the location of the temple of Bellona, see Coarelli 1965-1967 (53-72). The area to the west of the temple of Apollo, however, might have been used for the sanctuary of Aesculapius.

<sup>957</sup> Le Gall 1953a (103).

<sup>958</sup> Le Gall 1953a (68-74). The votives are discussed in Ch. 7 above. An Imperial calendar does mention a *Tiberinus in insula* (CIL I<sup>2</sup> 15, p. 245), but it is impossible to determine anything about the earlier history of the cult from this late inscription.

<sup>959</sup> Critique of Le Gall's arguments can be found in Guarducci 1971 (269, n. 8); Brucia 1990 (55-57); Musial 1992 (31-35); Graf 1992 (164-165). Brucia (12-13), in support of Le Gall's arguments, adduces a temple antefix, probably of the archaic period, found in the Tiber riverbed. Association of this antefix with the island, however, is speculative; even more so is its belonging to a temple of Tiberinus. On the antefix, see Van Buren 1914.

Other cults are attested on the island at a later period. These include: Faunus, Jupiter/Veiovis, Semo Sancus, and Bellona. None of these, however, certainly predates the arrival of Aesculapius. On these cults, see Le Gall 1953a; Brucia 1990 (44-60).

<sup>960</sup> Livy 2.5.2-4; Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 5.13.1-4; Plut. *Publ.* 8. The legend is discussed by Besnier 1902 (15-31); Brucia 1990 (6-17).

grown in the Campus Martius was dumped into the Tiber river. The grain was thrown into the river because it was “*religiosum*,” accursed, and thus its use by humans sacrilegious.<sup>961</sup> This discarded grain silted up to form Tiber Island.

Hendrik Wagenvoort adduces this myth to propose that the island was always a liminal area for the Romans, especially since its formation was attributed to grain from the Campus Martius, the Field of Mars.<sup>962</sup> Mars, he argues, is the god of death, and Aesculapius could raise the dead. While Wagenvoort is right that Aesculapius did in myth raise the dead, this power was curtailed by Zeus, and he never again brought anyone back to life. Raising the dead was never part of the cult of Asklepios, nor, probably, was the treatment of fatal cases. A link between Aesculapius and death is therefore tenuous.

Fritz Graf also refers to the legendary formation of Tiber Island in his explanation of Aesculapius’ location.<sup>963</sup> Since the island, like the river in which it sits, was a receptacle of what had to be eliminated from the state, it was perceived as a different sort of space than the city itself, and therefore as liminal.<sup>964</sup> As such, the island is much like the extra-urban areas in Greece at which many early sanctuaries of Asklepios were located. Such liminal places were especially well-suited for the ritual of incubation, an unmediated form of contact with the god.<sup>965</sup>

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<sup>961</sup> Livy 2.5.3 describes the grain as *religiosum*. See also Dion.Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 5.13.3.

<sup>962</sup> Wagenvoort 1956 (274-289). On rivers in Rome as boundaries having magical powers, see Holland 1961 (1-74). On the Tiber as a geographic boundary, see Le Gall 1953b (46-47); Pallottino 1991 (74).

<sup>963</sup> Graf 1992 (esp. 166-167, 198-199).

<sup>964</sup> Graf 1992 (166-167), following Le Gall 1953a (83-95), points out that the river also received portents that needed to be eliminated, *parricida*, *purgamina Vestae*, and straw puppets at the ceremony of the Argei. On the straw puppets, see also Brucia 1990 (27-28).

<sup>965</sup> There were, however, incubatory and healing cults in less obviously liminal areas of Rome: e.g., the cult of Jupiter on the Capitoline in which incubation was practiced since at least the early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC (Plaut. *Curc.* 265-269; Serv. ad *Aen.* 7.88).

As Graf himself notes, however, there was no consistency in the placement of Asklepios' sanctuaries in the Greek or Roman worlds. Not all were in obviously liminal areas. As early as the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, some of the god's sanctuaries were situated in the very center of the city (e.g., Athens; those at Corinth, Argos, and possibly Messene and Orchomenos were also within the city).<sup>966</sup>

All of these theories account for Aesculapius' location on Tiber Island as the result of his healing function. It is Aesculapius' role as a healer that draws him, in Le Gall's theory, to the place of an earlier healing cult, while Wagenvoort and Graf view healing, especially incubatory healing, as best suited to liminal areas such as an island. But association of the island with healing before the arrival of Aesculapius remains speculative, and the liminal character of the island is true also of the banks of the Tiber relative to the urban settlement.

Association of the Tiber river (as opposed to the island) with healing is attested by the thousands of anatomical votives found there;<sup>967</sup> thus healing does seem to have played a role in locating Aesculapius in proximity to the river. The healing qualities of the river, however, cannot in themselves explain Aesculapius' location on the island.

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Graf also points to features of the island, such as a well and grove, common to many sanctuaries of Aesculapius. The well, however, may not be ancient, as noted above; moreover, these could be found in other areas of Rome, and thus are not decisive factors in the sanctuary's location.

<sup>966</sup> Graf 1992 (173-178) observes that urban sanctuaries of Asklepios were often paralleled by extra-urban ones in the same city.

<sup>967</sup> Literary sources also attest to the healing qualities of the Tiber's waters: Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.290-292; Persius 2.15-16; Juv. 6.522-526; Val.Max. 2.4.5. With the exception of Valerius, however, these all refer to instances of healing long after the arrival of Aesculapius, and thus convey a belief in the curative powers of the Tiber that may have been enhanced by Aesculapius' presence there. Valerius' story, by contrast, is set in Rome's mythic past when a Sabine named Valesus cured his children of a fever by giving them water from the Tiber boiled on a fire sparked by a flame from the altar of Dis Pater and Proserpina. It is uncertain, however, whether the water was thought to be curative, or the flame from the altar, or both.

Consequently, we must consider factors other than healing that may have determined the sanctuary's location. We should also consider (a question that has not previously entered these discussions) why the Romans seem to have positioned Aesculapius at the southern end of the island.<sup>968</sup>

To answer these questions, we must cease looking at the island as an isolated spot in the midst of a river and look instead at its relation to the neighboring banks. By examining the location of Aesculapius in relation to monuments close by, we can perceive a connection between Aesculapius' location at the southern end of Tiber Island and his role as diplomat for Rome.

### **III. The Banks of the Tiber and the Cult of Aesculapius**

In Athens, as argued above, the diplomatic function inherent in the importation of Asklepios was communicated by positioning the cult in relation to other monuments and cults. But Athenian topography was a staging ground for spectacles of empire for a far-reaching audience. Foreigners regularly traveled to Athens for matters of empire and trade, and were even required to participate in some of the city's festivals. Moreover, the diplomatic message aimed at Epidauros clearly reached the Epidaurians since they were involved in annual festivals of Asklepios at Athens.

But what could Rome, a town without the traffic of empire that characterized 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Athens, do to convey a message of diplomacy to the Greeks? One way would have been to place Aesculapius in an area of high visibility to Greeks arriving at Rome. The southern end of Tiber Island was

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<sup>968</sup> To those who will assert that the location at the southern end of the island was determined by some preexisting water source, it must be emphasized that the preexistence of any such water source is conjectural; moreover, a water source could be had by digging a well anywhere on the island, meaning that the sanctuary could have been placed elsewhere in the island, or in many other places in its vicinity.

just such a place, at a major crossroads and the very hub of Roman commerce. (See Fig. 9 and 10 below.)

**A. Topography of the East Tiber Bank near the Sanctuary of Aesculapius**

Little is known for certain about the topography of Rome at the time of Aesculapius' arrival, particularly in the area near Tiber Island. As Ziolkowski characterizes the situation, "It is well nigh impossible to indicate more than a handful of Mid-Republican constructions whose dating or location (or both) are generally agreed upon."<sup>969</sup> This uncertainty extends especially to the west bank of the Tiber.<sup>970</sup> The law code known as the Twelve Tables, traditionally dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, indicates that the west bank was the place to which debtors were sent.<sup>971</sup> The farm of Cincinnatus, dictator and hero of 458 BC, was located along the west bank just north of Tiber Island.<sup>972</sup> In 338 BC, a local population given to revolt was sent to live across the Tiber.<sup>973</sup> And three temples of Fortuna stood on the west bank by 293 BC.<sup>974</sup>

Despite these uncertainties, it is clear that the east bank directly across from Tiber Island underwent substantial development as a center of trade and shipping in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cs. BC.

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<sup>969</sup> Ziolkowski 1992 (7).

<sup>970</sup> On the area *Transtiberim*, see also Lugli 1952- (esp. vol. 2).

<sup>971</sup> Gell. *NA* 20.1.46-47.

<sup>972</sup> Livy 3.26.8.

<sup>973</sup> Livy 8.14.5.

<sup>974</sup> Livy 10.46.14. On these temples, see also Richardson 1992 (sv 'Fors Fortuna, Fanum'); Ziolkowski 1992 (sv 'Fors Fortuna trans Tiberim').

## 1. The Regal Period through the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC

When Aesculapius arrived in Rome ca. 291 BC, the stretch of land along the east bank of the Tiber, the bank on which the city of Rome lay, had been developed since at least the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and even much earlier according to tradition. Three areas were distinguished along this bank in the vicinity of Tiber Island. These were, from north to south: the Campus Martius, the Forum Holitorium, and the Forum Boarium, the latter of which was bordered to the south by the Circus Maximus. When these areas were first identified as such is uncertain, although the Campus Martius and the Forum Boarium were believed to have been so demarcated long before the beginning of the Republic.<sup>975</sup>

Cults of great antiquity resided in these areas. Mars gave his name to the Campus Martius. Hercules, whose altar the ancient sources trace to the time of Evander, or even of Hercules himself, was worshipped in the Forum Boarium.<sup>976</sup> And Fortuna and Mater Matuta shared adjoining temples, also in the Forum Boarium. Their temple foundations date to the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and the introduction of their cults was ascribed in antiquity to Servius Tullius (reigned 578-534 BC).<sup>977</sup>

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<sup>975</sup> Some ancient sources state that the Campus Martius only became sacred to Mars after the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus (510 BC); others state that the land was already sacred to Mars when Tarquinius appropriated it. For ancient references, see Richardson 1992 (sv 'Campus Martius'); *LTUR*, sv 'Campus Martius.' The appellation 'Boarium' was much debated among the ancients, with most arguing that it signified the cattle market of Rome. But the swampiness of the land, and its relatively small size, make this unlikely. Other sources attribute the appellation to a statue of an ox said to have demarcated the *pomerium* of Romulus. Still others attribute it to the story of Cacus and the cattle of Geryon. For references to these traditions, see Richardson (sv 'Forum Boarium'). On the Forum Boarium during the early Roman period, see C.J. Smith 1996 (179-183).

<sup>976</sup> Coarelli 1988 (61-77). For ancient references and additional bibliography, see also Richardson 1992 (sv 'Herculis Invicti Ara Maxima'); *LTUR*, sv 'Hercules Invictus, Aedes (Forum Boarium).' The precise location of the altar is uncertain, but ancient references attest that it sat in the Forum Boarium.

<sup>977</sup> Coarelli 1988 (205-437). For ancient references and additional bibliography, see also Richardson 1992 (sv 'Fortuna, Aedes'; 'Mater Matuta, Aedes'); Ziolkowski 1992 (sv 'Mater

But the east bank was more than a cult area. The building of the Cloaca Maxima, attributed to the Tarquin kings (who reigned 616-578 and 534-510 BC), drained the flood-prone valleys between the Esquiline and Quirinal hills.<sup>978</sup> Running from the Forum Romanum through the Forum Boarium, it emptied into the Tiber just southeast of Tiber Island. Other public works also made the area useful. These included roads like the Vicus Iugarius, which ran roughly perpendicular to the Tiber bank and ended just east of Tiber Island in the Forum Holitorium.<sup>979</sup> Another road, the Via Salaria, ran north out of Rome and was for centuries the main route to the Sabine Hills. The road got its name from salt-traffic between the Sabine Hills and salt flats on the west bank of the Tiber's mouth.<sup>980</sup> For this road to have connected the salt flats with the Sabine Hills, there must have been a crossing point over the Tiber; the most likely such place was Tiber Island.<sup>981</sup>

Louise Holland argues that the earliest land traffic would have crossed the river by ferry at Tiber Island since backwater there made traversing the rapidly flowing currents much easier.<sup>982</sup> These ferries were supplemented by the Pons Sublicius, constructed in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>983</sup> The exact location of this bridge is not known, but it probably lay just south of the island and connected the Forum Boarium to the west bank. It is likely that ferries

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Matuta on Foro Boario'); *LTUR*, sv 'Fortuna et Mater Matuta, Aedes.' The temple foundations lie beneath the present church of S. Omobono.

<sup>978</sup> For ancient references and bibliography, see Richardson 1992 (sv 'Cloaca Maxima'); *LTUR*, sv 'Cloaca, Cloaca Maxima.'

<sup>979</sup> For ancient references and bibliography, see Richardson 1992 (sv 'Vicus Iugarius'); *LTUR*, sv 'Vicus Iugarius.'

<sup>980</sup> For an illustration of the route, see Le Gall 1953b (Map 1; Fig. 7). On the earliest evidence for the route, which may be prehistoric in origin, see Holland 1949 (282-288). On the *salinae*, or salt flats, and their impact on Rome, see also Coarelli 1988 (109-113).

<sup>981</sup> Holland 1961 (29-49).

<sup>982</sup> Holland 1961 (157-159).

<sup>983</sup> Ancient sources attribute this, Rome's first bridge, to Ancus Marcius (reigned 640-616 BC). For additional bibliography and references, see Holland 1961 (234-241); Richardson 1992 (sv 'Pons Sublicius'); *LTUR*, sv 'Pons Sublicius.' For the likely location of the Pons Sublicius,



continued to be used to access the island since there is no evidence for bridges to it before the mid-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC.<sup>984</sup>

Thus, by the regal period, if not much earlier, Tiber Island and the surrounding banks constituted a nexus of land routes into and through Rome.<sup>985</sup> Holland emphasizes that it was land, and not river, traffic that facilitated trade and communication in early Rome.<sup>986</sup> But by the early Republic, river traffic is also attested.<sup>987</sup> Famines in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC forced Rome to seek grain from other cities in Etruria, southern Italy, and Sicily.<sup>988</sup> At least some of this grain came to Rome by way of the Tiber.<sup>989</sup> Agricultural products were also brought downstream to Rome.<sup>990</sup>

It is also likely that traders along this seaboard broke their journeys by turning in at the mouth and up the river to Rome. In the regal period, Greek colonists from Pithekoussai were mining on Elba. Greek pottery from Pithekoussai found in the Forum Boarium and dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC suggests that these travelers not only stopped at the Tiber's mouth, roughly half-way between Pithekoussai and Elba, but continued on to Rome.<sup>991</sup>

Early cults in the Forum Boarium were closely associated with this commercial activity. Erika Simon argues that the goddess Fors Fortuna's

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see also Richardson (Fig. 58.15).

<sup>984</sup> The earliest bridge leading to the island may be the Pons Fabricius of 62 BC connecting the island to the east bank. Probably at about the same time the Pons Cestius, connecting the island to the west bank, was also built. See Richardson 1992 and *LTUR*, sv 'Pons Fabricius,' 'Pons Cestius.'

<sup>985</sup> As Starr 1980 (6), following Holland 1961, observes, the city of Rome came into being for the very reason that it "was essentially a point favored by trade routes."

<sup>986</sup> Holland 1949.

<sup>987</sup> On the Tiber river in antiquity, see Le Gall 1953b; D'Onofrio 1980.

<sup>988</sup> Livy 2.9.6; 2.34.3-5; 4.52.4-6.

<sup>989</sup> Livy 2.34.5; 4.52.6. Also, Livy 2.34.3 reports that agents were sent from Rome "*mari*," by sea, to buy up grain from other cities.

<sup>990</sup> Strabo 5.2.5 (C 222) says that the Romans imported timber from upstream. Wine, too, was brought downstream to Rome on the Tiber; see Holland 1961 (196, n. 12).

<sup>991</sup> Wiseman 1995 (35). On Pithekoussai, see also Ridgway 1992.

name derives from the Latin verb *ferre*, “to carry”; she was a goddess of transport, and her location in the Forum Boarium related to the area’s port and market functions.<sup>992</sup> Hercules, who had a strong following among merchants, was also worshipped there.<sup>993</sup>

## 2. Development in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC

In the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the area east of Tiber Island underwent substantial development, some of it in direct response to traffic converging there. The Servian Wall, which demarcated and defended the city, dates to the second quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Two things are significant about this wall in reference to the present discussion. First, the wall probably did not enclose the Tiber bank in the area of the Forum Boarium. This stretch remained open to the river, presumably to facilitate docking and the loading and unloading of boats.<sup>994</sup> Secondly, the stone used to build the wall was Grotta Oscura, a tufa quarried at Veii. The easiest way to transport this stone was by boat down the Tiber, a fact that reinforces the importance of the river to commerce.<sup>995</sup>

By 338 BC, Rome had also built shipsheds, or *navalia*, on the east bank of the Tiber. According to Livy, when Rome defeated Antium in 338 BC, it seized Antium’s navy. Some of these ships were stored in shipsheds (*in navalia Romae subductae*)<sup>996</sup> just northeast of Tiber Island.<sup>997</sup> The construction

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<sup>992</sup> Simon 1990 (57-71)

<sup>993</sup> On Hercules’ association with merchants, see Dumézil 1966 (vol. 2, p. 433-439).

<sup>994</sup> The path of the walls is not certain. See Coarelli 1988 (13-59) for references and bibliography. Coarelli argues that the Forum Holitorium was enclosed within the walls, while the Forum Boarium remained outside. The theories of various scholars as to the path of the wall along the Tiber bank are mapped by Coarelli (Fig. 2).

<sup>995</sup> On the stone and its transport, see Säflund 1932. Säflund (236-237), moreover, believes that masons marks on the stones are Greek. Frank 1933 (vol. 1, p. 35), however, argues that they are Etruscan.

<sup>996</sup> Livy 8.14.12.

<sup>997</sup> Livy 3.26.8 says the shipsheds stood opposite the Prata Quinctia. These lay just

of *navalia* indicates the growing importance of the river, and the river front, by Tiber Island. These shipsheds also indicate the organization of the area not just for utilitarian but also for symbolic purposes. The enemy's ships, spoils of war, were housed in a busy part of the city that saw much foreign traffic. They thus became a victory monument of sorts announcing Rome's might to all who passed by.

Also by the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the colony of Ostia was established at the mouth of the Tiber. Although tradition attributes the founding of Ostia to Ancus Marcius in the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC, no remains have been found that predate the military colony, or *castrum*, of the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>998</sup> As Le Gall has pointed out, this colony originally served not as a port, but as a fort guarding the waterway into Rome. From it, signals could be sent to Rome of threats advancing by sea.<sup>999</sup> The establishment of this fort suggests increasing traffic into Rome.

This traffic led to the establishment of an "emporium," as the Romans called it, in the area of the Forum Boarium. At the emporium, goods brought by the Tiber were unloaded, stored, and sold. The earliest certain evidence of this emporium dates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, but it probably existed centuries earlier given that the area was a hub of land and river traffic.<sup>1000</sup> Greek pottery of

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northwest of Tiber Island; see Richardson 1992 (sv 'Navalia').

<sup>998</sup> Livy 1.33 attributes the founding to Ancus Marcius. See Martin 1996 on the earliest archaeological evidence. Meiggs 1973 (16-27) notes that the earliest literary source attributing the founding of Ostia to the kings is Ennius in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, and argues that since Ennius is relatively early, the tradition of the kings should not be dismissed entirely. Both Meiggs and Martin suggest that an earlier settlement existed elsewhere at the mouth of the Tiber. The pottery that Martin found in excavations of the earliest phase of the *castrum* include a fragment of a Rhodian amphora and various fineware fragments from Chiusi, all of which attest to the extent of trade into and through Ostia at the time.

<sup>999</sup> Le Gall 1953b (64-73).

<sup>1000</sup> Colini 1980 and Coarelli 1988 (113-127) argue for the early presence of an emporium in the Forum Boarium.

the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC in the Forum Boarium increases the likelihood that this was a locus of trade and commerce for many centuries.<sup>1001</sup>

Moreover, by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Rome had a population estimated at about 60,000.<sup>1002</sup> To feed such a population, Rome must have imported grain.<sup>1003</sup> Since there was as yet no port at Ostia, grain traffic must have traveled all the way up the river to the Forum Boarium, where the grain could be unloaded and stored, or sold at the emporium. In 312 BC, Rome's first aqueduct, the Aqua Appia, brought fresh water into the Forum Boarium, a sign that the area was by then heavily populated.<sup>1004</sup>

As a center of trade and commerce, this area was affected by Greeks, as the very word "emporium" indicates. This Greek word first appears in Latin in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC.<sup>1005</sup> Greek merchants who docked their ships and traded their wares at Rome may have given the Romans this word for their commercial area, as for many other elements related to seafaring.<sup>1006</sup>

The presence of Greek cults in the area further attests to Greek influence. The sanctuary of Hercules in the Forum Boarium has been noted, as has the temple to Apollo in the Campus Martius, and the temple to Ceres, Liber, and Libera that stood on the north end of the Aventine. The rites at the altar of Hercules were carried out "*Graeco ritu*," or in Greek style.<sup>1007</sup> Filippo Coarelli has argued that these cults, as well as other foreign cults like Mater Matuta in the Forum Holitorium, were the result of a concentration of

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<sup>1001</sup> See Coarelli 1977; La Rocca 1977, especially for pottery from the San Omobono sanctuary.

<sup>1002</sup> Cornell 1995 (385), citing Starr 1980 (15-26).

<sup>1003</sup> Starr 1980 (15-26).

<sup>1004</sup> For ancient references and bibliography, see Richardson 1992 (sv 'Aqua Appia'); *LTUR*, sv 'Aqua Appia.'

<sup>1005</sup> It was used by the Greek poet Naevius; Festus 128 L (sv, '*moene*'): *apud emporium in campo hostium pro moene*.

<sup>1006</sup> Le Gall 1953b (63) observes that most Roman words related to seafaring are Greek.

<sup>1007</sup> Macrobius 3.16.17, following Varro. On the Roman character of the "Greek style" of ritual, see Scheid 1996.

foreign merchants who not only traveled through the area, but even resided there.<sup>1008</sup>

By the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, a thriving center of trade and commerce had thus developed on the banks of the Tiber river just east of Tiber Island. This area was traversed and populated by Greeks who left their imprint on local cults and commerce.

## **B. Foreign Traffic and Aesculapius**

Literary references to and finds from Aesculapius' sanctuary in the Republican period are so scant that it is impossible to determine how many people used the sanctuary, and whether these included Greeks. All that has been recovered are four statue bases inscribed to Aesculapius,<sup>1009</sup> and four anatomical votives from the island itself, although the latter cannot be attributed with certainty to Aesculapius, nor can they be dated.<sup>1010</sup> Access may also have been limited by lack of a bridge to the island before the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC. Visitors may thus have had to arrive there the same way the god had, by boat.

Although we cannot know who typically visited the sanctuary during the Republican period, it is nevertheless clear that the sanctuary was ideally located for conveying a message to the Greeks. Greeks sailing north up the Tiber to the emporium would have encountered the temple of Aesculapius on the southern end of the island as they began to round the bend in the river. And the Pons Sublicius, just south of the island, provided a direct view

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<sup>1008</sup> Coarelli 1988 (113-127); Cornell 1995 (108-113). For critique of Coarelli, see Palmer 1990.

<sup>1009</sup> Degrassi 1986 (147-148).

<sup>1010</sup> Pensabene et al. 1980 (10).

of the sanctuary to those who crossed it.<sup>1011</sup> Even the market area in the Forum Boarium offered a largely unobstructed view of the island.

Why, then, not place Aesculapius on the east bank with other Greek cults? A major deterrent must have been the noise and bustle generated by commerce and trade. Noise is hardly conducive to a healing sanctuary that relied on sleep for encounters with Aesculapius. We know from Plautus' *Curculio*, a comedy of the late 3<sup>rd</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, that *incubatio* was practiced in his Roman cult during the Republican period. One of the characters incubates in a sanctuary of Aesculapius (*Curc.* 216-272). The location of this sanctuary is not clarified until after the incubation scene when the audience learns that the play is set not in Rome, but in Epidaurus. Timothy Moore shows how the absence of a prologue to establish setting, coupled with pointed Roman allusions early in the play, "encourage [the audience]...to connect the play's plot with Rome."<sup>1012</sup> In order for such a ploy to succeed, *incubatio* was almost certainly taking place in Aesculapius' sanctuary in Rome.

The island thus provided suitable distance from the noise and bustle of the Forum Boarium while being close to and clearly visible from this locus of Greek activity.

### C. Aesculapius' Sanctuary as Victory Monument

At the same time that the location of Aesculapius' sanctuary could communicate amicability towards the Greeks, it also spoke implicitly of the

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<sup>1011</sup> The Pons Aemilius, which lay between the Pons Sublicius and the island, was not built until the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC; thus the view from the bridge for land travelers was unobstructed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC when Aesculapius arrived. See also Richardson 1992 (sv 'Pons Aemilius'); *LTUR*, sv 'Pons Aemilius.' Richardson explains that the Pons Aemilius and Pons Sublicius served two very different purposes: the former directed traffic due west towards Caere and coastal Etruria, while the latter led southwest towards the salt flats at the mouth of the Tiber. The two functioned in close proximity to one another for centuries.

<sup>1012</sup> Moore 1998 (127; also 126-139).

power that brought Rome to the borders of Magna Graecia. Roman triumphal processions drew Aesculapius into the articulation of Roman power. These processions, which ancient sources trace to Rome's mythic past, began in the Campus Martius and wound counter-clockwise through the Forum Boarium, Circus Maximus, the valley between the Palatine and Caelian hills, along the Sacra Via through the Forum Romanum, and terminated on the Capitoline at the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.<sup>1013</sup> Although the leg of the procession between the Campus Martius and Circus Maximus is uncertain, marked by only a few signposts in literary sources, it is likely that the procession traversed the area in view of Tiber Island.<sup>1014</sup>

The temple of Aesculapius was thus woven into the visual panorama of triumphal processions, as were all cults in the area of the Forum Boarium. Moreover, Pliny reports that a statue of Hercules in the Forum Boarium was draped in a toga during triumphal processions.<sup>1015</sup> Such a custom, in conjunction with the path of the triumphal processions, symbolizes the emphatic, albeit metaphorical, envelopment of Greek cults in the garb of Roman tradition, a ritual act that directed full attention on Rome's achievements.<sup>1016</sup> Also, the victorious general of the triumphal procession was dressed to look like the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus.<sup>1017</sup> Roman Jupiter walked among the Greek cults and their deities as a sign of Rome's distinctiveness and even superiority. Because of his proximity, Greek Aesculapius, too, was subsumed under this hierarchy that celebrated Roman power.

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<sup>1013</sup> Coarelli 1968. On the symbolism of the procession, see also the discussion by J.A. North in *CAH*<sup>2</sup> (vol. 7.2, p. 600-601); Versnel 1970; Coarelli 1988 (363-437).

<sup>1014</sup> Coarelli 1988 (363-437).

<sup>1015</sup> Pliny *NH* 34.33.

<sup>1016</sup> A cult of Bellona Insulensis is attested by an inscription of the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD. See Panciera 1971 (121-125). It is uncertain when this cult arrived on the island, but its presence there deepens association of Aesculapius with Roman victory.

<sup>1017</sup> Beard et al. 1998 (vol. 1, p. 44-45).

#### D. Aesculapius and the Plebeians

The Aventine hill, just southeast of the Forum Boarium, was the foremost plebeian district of Rome. It was the place to which plebeians twice seceded,<sup>1018</sup> and in 456 BC it was given to the plebeians for settlement.<sup>1019</sup>

The Aventine lies east of the southern tip of Tiber Island, near the sanctuary of Aesculapius. The temple of Ceres lies in line with the western end of the Circus Maximus, in the area of the Aventine closest to Tiber Island.<sup>1020</sup> Aesculapius was thus brought into close quarters with the plebeians and with their favored deities who inhabited the Aventine. Plebeian contacts with Magna Graecia, moreover, particularly as expressed through association with Greek cults, made the Forum Boarium/Aventine district a suitable place for reaching plebeian as well as Greek audiences.

Why, then, was Aesculapius not placed in the midst of this plebeian district? Noise here, too, may have been a factor. But it is equally plausible that the Senate wanted to keep the sanctuary from becoming a locus for plebeian assembly and agitation. The Senate therefore placed the cult close to, but not on, the Aventine. Moreover, if Tiber Island were relatively difficult to access, then placing Aesculapius there may have been an added measure to prevent his sanctuary from becoming a plebeian refuge, especially at a time of turbulent relations between patricians and plebeians.

The patricians thus made a conciliatory gesture by locating the cult near a plebeian district, but simultaneously limited the potential of the cult for becoming a weapon against themselves.

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<sup>1018</sup> The first (494 BC) and second (449 BC) secessions: Livy 2.32.3, 3.54.9; Dion.Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 11.43; Diod. 12.24.

<sup>1019</sup> *Lex Icilia de Aventino publicando*: Livy 3.31.1, 3.32.7; Diod. 12.24.5; Dion.Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 10.32.2-4; Cic. *In Cornelianum*.

<sup>1020</sup> Spaeth 1996 (82-83).



#### IV. Conclusions

The position of Aesculapius' sanctuary at the southern end of Tiber Island was determined, in part, by the message his cult sent to the Greeks. Greeks traveling up the Tiber to Rome, as well as Greeks resident in the area of the Forum Boarium, would readily have seen his sanctuary on the island. While it is impossible to recover the exact natures of that message, it is likely that Aesculapius' proximity to other cults of Greek origin, clustered in the Forum Boarium, conveyed Rome's good will.

At the same time, however, triumphal processions, passing within clear view of the sanctuary of Aesculapius, integrated the sanctuary into celebrations of Roman power, thereby nuancing Rome's message with a reminder of Rome's military prowess. So, too, did the nearby *navalia* housing boats taken from Rome's enemy, and the Victory temple on the Palatine overlooking Tiber Island.

Aesculapius was also placed close enough to a plebeian district to articulate patrician concern over growing plebeian agitation. The center of that plebeian district was the temple to Ceres, Liber, and Libera, on an escarpment that forces the Tiber to bend and thus affords a perfect view north directly across Tiber Island. By housing the god on this island a bit beyond the plebeian stronghold, however, the patricians kept the sanctuary from becoming a center of plebeian solidarity and dissent.

## CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

Where a god passes, all around becomes hyper-charged with meaning: even the contingencies of his coming prove profoundly significant.

—J.Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion*, 53-54.

The factors responsible for the spread of a cult as far-reaching and long-lived as that of Asklepios are necessarily numerous and diverse. This study, by challenging long-held assumptions about the “private” and “irrational” nature of Asklepios-cult, has proposed several more. First, the early development of Asklepios-cult in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC resulted in large part from a void in healing created by *iatroi* who refused to take on untreatable, particularly chronic, cases. The deified *iatros* Asklepios became popular by treating just such chronic ailments.

Second, the spread of the cult was driven not only by the needs of individuals, but also by the interests of the state. In Athens, local factors that motivated the importation in 420 BC center on Athenian imperialism in the context of the Peloponnesian War. Athens imported the signature god of Epidauros in order to forge an alliance with this city whose location made it critical to Athenian success in the war. The importance of Asklepios to this endeavor is indicated by his immediate integration into major Athenian cults and monuments such as Eleusinian Demeter, Dionysus Eleuthereus, and the Acropolis.

In Rome, a similar set of factors motivated the importation of Epidaurian Asklepios ca. 291 BC. By importing a major panhellenic cult from mainland Greece, Rome communicated its readiness and ability to vie with the Greeks—both those of Magna Graecia, at Rome’s southern frontier as a result of the Samnite Wars, and the powerful successors to Alexander the Great, like Demetrios Poliorketes, who not only held much of the Greek

mainland but had strong interests in the west. The cult, escorted to Rome by a prominent plebeian, also indicated patrician concern over escalating plebeian unrest in the same decade. These factors in part determined the location of the cult on Tiber Island, close to Greek and plebeian communities on the east bank of the river.

Both conclusions highlight the impossibility of distinguishing “religion” from the rest of ancient culture, even from aspects we label “science,” “medicine,” and “politics.”<sup>1021</sup> *Iatroi*, far from being opposed to Asklepios-cult, adopted Asklepios as their patron and served his cults as priests. Moreover, their understanding of the human body did not oppose belief in the divine *per se*; rather, it opposed the belief that the gods cause illness. And while worship of the gods therefore was not a primary means of curing the body, the gods could assist in the healing process, particularly of cases beyond the capability of *iatrike*.

Furthermore, in both Classical Athens and Republican Rome, cult and ritual were subsumed under the aegis of the state. Even Asklepios-cult, although it privileged individual interaction with the divine, was regulated and controlled by the state in both locations. Moreover, this cult, like so many others, advanced Athenian and Roman foreign and domestic policies.

It is doubtful that Athens and Rome were exceptional in their motives for importing Asklepios, as study of other cities would likely prove. Analysis of the development of his cult at places like Kos and Pergamon, for example, where there were exceptionally large and popular cults of Asklepios with strong ties to powerful rulers (especially at Pergamon) and sufficient evidence for study, would shed valuable new light on what I suspect is a larger trend of state interest in this dynamic god.

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<sup>1021</sup> This is especially true since the Greeks and Romans did not reify religion; they had no word to designate it. On the history of the term “religion” in classical studies, see W.C. Cantwell Smith (1963); Bremmer 1998.

Nor should a seeming paucity of evidence necessarily stand in the way of studying the cult in other cities. Even in the case of Rome, where evidence is scant for the Middle Republic, we can use sources in innovative ways. As Peter Wiseman has stated regarding his own study of the development of the Remus myth: “It is true that the evidence for the period we are concerned with is desperately inadequate; but all that means is that hypotheses have to be carefully argued, and conclusions must be recognised as being necessarily provisional. What matters for the Remus myth is to recognise that explanation is needed.”<sup>1022</sup> The same is true for Asklepios.

A related body of evidence, the many transfer-narratives for Asklepios-cult contained in literary and archaeological sources, needs to be reexamined systematically and tallied against other evidence for these transfers. The Telemachos monument in Athens is instructive: we have learned that we cannot assume that a cult was a “private” foundation because a monument associates a particular individual with early events in its history. Topographic and ritual evidence clearly indicate otherwise. It is just as likely that other transfer-narratives for Asklepios-cult are not proof of “private” cult foundations. The transfer narratives for Pergamon and Kos, in conjunction with study of the state’s involvement in the cult in both instances, could prove particularly enlightening in this respect.

The impact of Asklepios-cult on healing at the individual level, both in antiquity and today needs also to be further explored. While Asklepios’ staff and serpent are the symbols of most medical associations around the world today, rituals practiced in Asklepios-cult are evident also in faith healing. Mother Teresa was deemed by the Vatican in Fall 2002 of having performed a miracle that echoes stories recorded on the Epidaurian *iamata*.<sup>1023</sup> And

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<sup>1022</sup> Wiseman 1995 (159).

<sup>1023</sup> A woman suffering from what was diagnosed as an inoperable tumor visited a home run by Mother Teresa’s order. She went to sleep there with a medallion worn by Mother Teresa

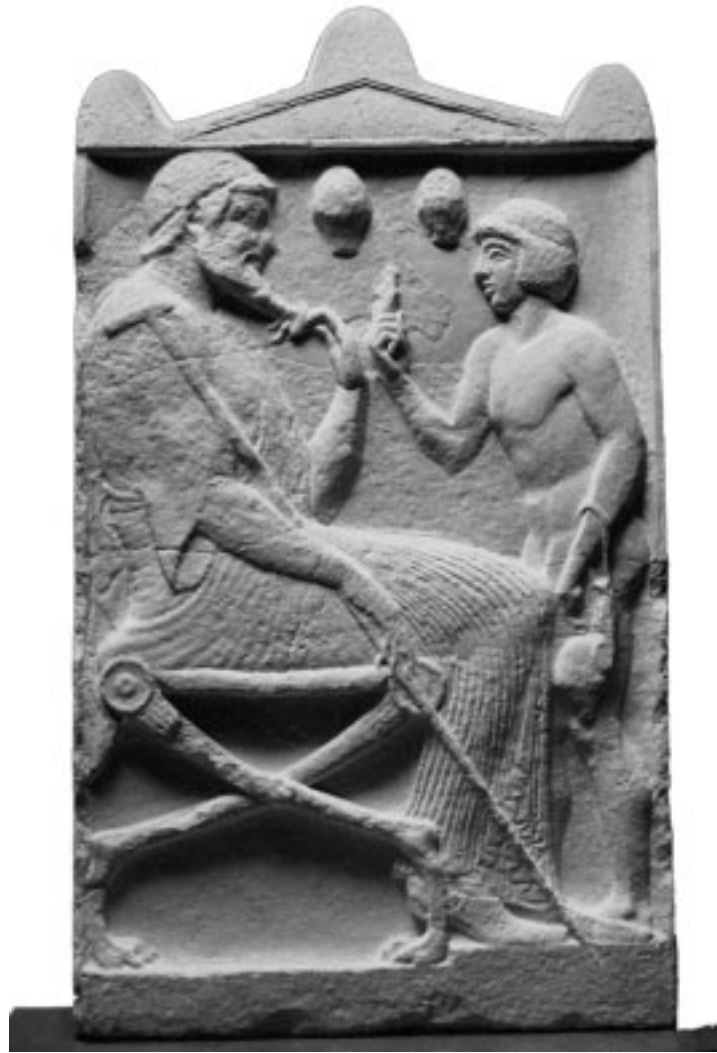
incubation and the dedication of anatomical votives characterize such famous healing sanctuaries as Lourdes in France and that of Panagia Evangelistria on Tinos in Greece, to which millions of worshippers continue to flock every year in search of cures. Such sanctuaries, albeit less famous, exist throughout the Mediterranean. They have received little scholarly attention, especially by classicists, despite their obvious parallels to Asklepios-cult. It is remarkable that a pagan god from antiquity bridges what today are considered diametrically opposed approaches to healing: scientific and faith-based.

The Alexandrian scholar Herophilos is said to have remarked in his work on dietetics: “Wisdom cannot display itself and skill is not evident and strength unexerted and wealth useless and speech powerless in the absence of health.”<sup>1024</sup> Given the enduring centrality of health to well-being, and the inability of modern science alone to cure every ailment, faith in the divine will continue to play a role in healing—as attested by aspects of Asklepios and his cult apparent even in today’s world.

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attached to her belly. She awoke to find the tumor disappearing.

<sup>1024</sup> Sext. Emp. *Math.* 11.50: Ἡρόφιλος δὲ ἐν τῷ διαιτητικῷ καὶ σοφίαν φησὶν ἀνεπίδεικτον καὶ τέχνην ἄδηλον καὶ ἰσχὺν ἀναγώνιστον καὶ πλοῦτον ἀχρεῖον καὶ λόγον ἀδύνατον ὑγείας ἀπούσης.



**Fig. 1:** Basel Relief, Basel Antikenmuseum, Inv. No. BS 236; ca. 500 BC.  
H: 1.4 m. Berger 1970 (Fig. 17).

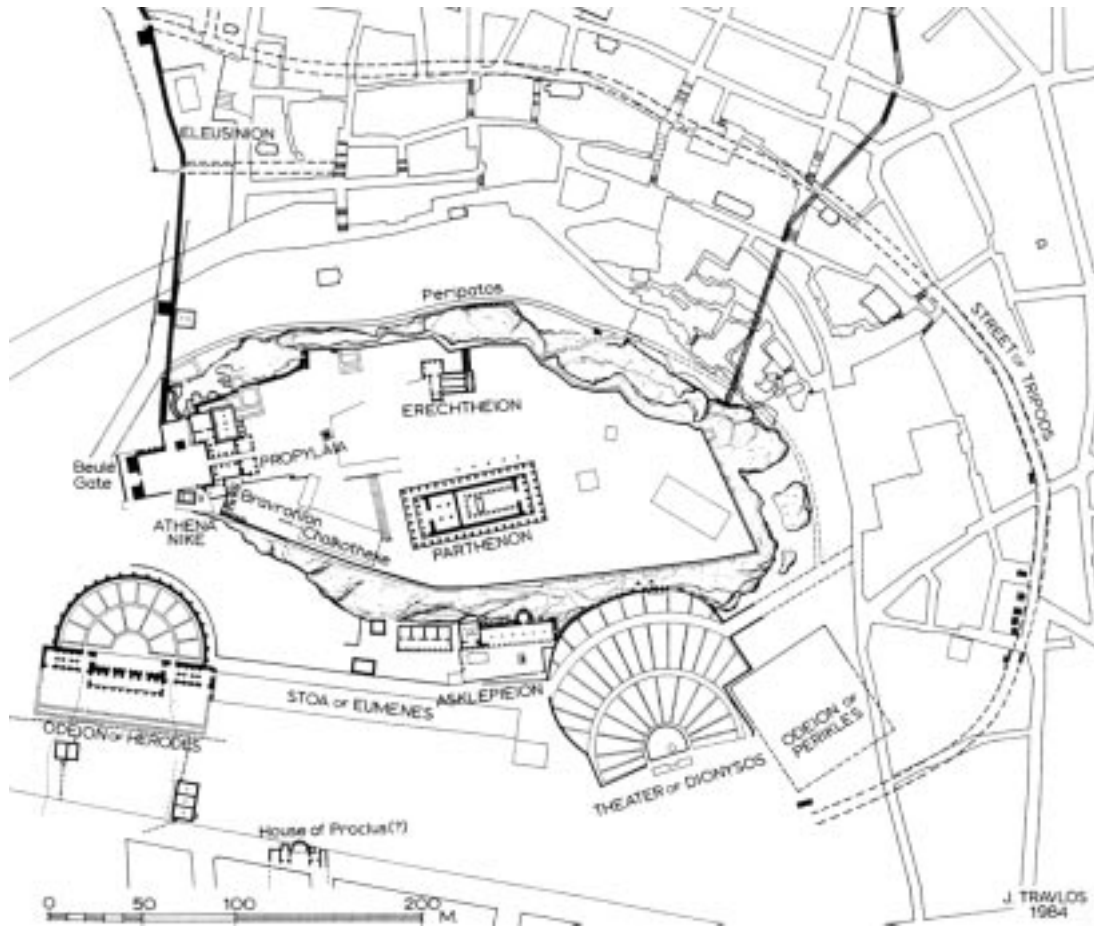


**Fig. 2:** Drawing of the Aineos Disc, Athens National Museum; ca. 500 BC.  
D: 27 cm. Berger 1970 (Fig. 164).

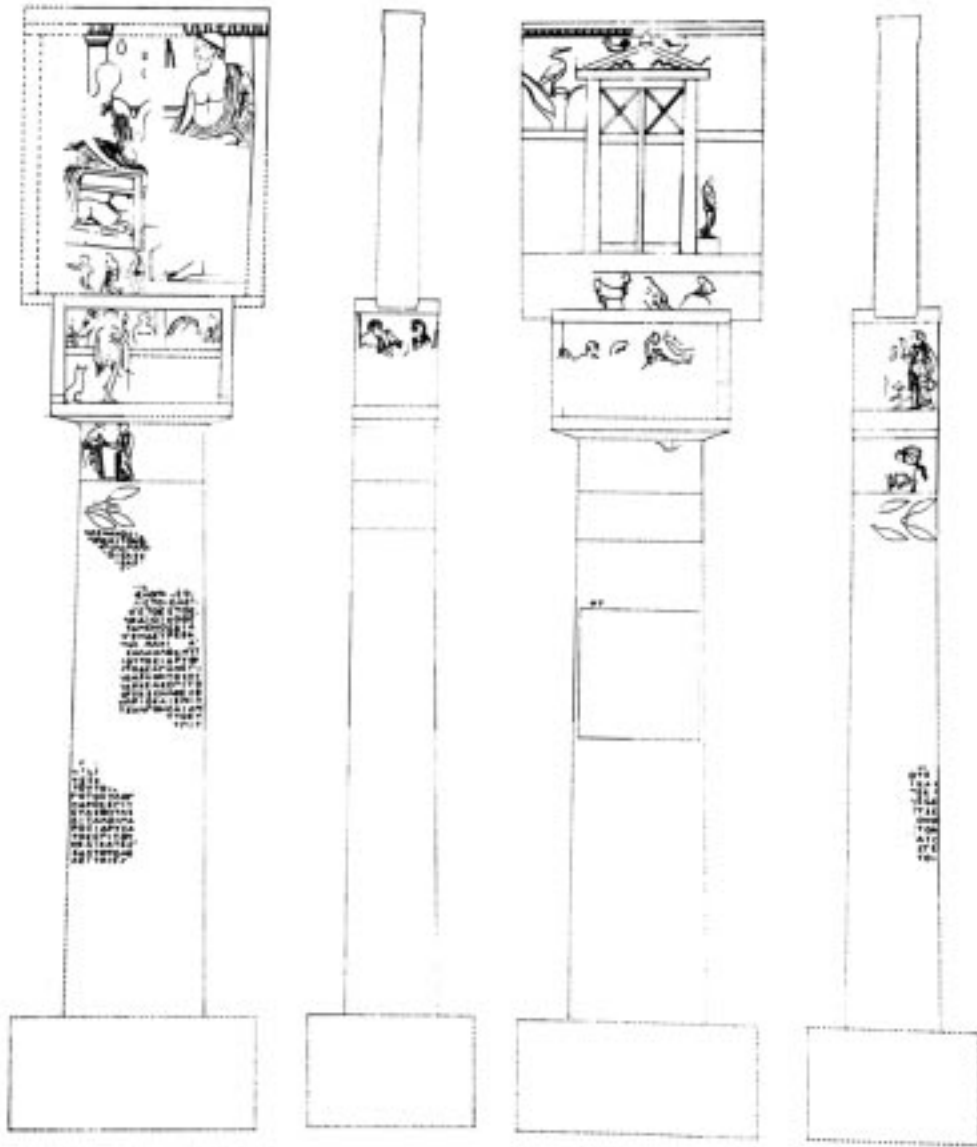


**Fig. 3:** Petyl Aryballos, Paris Louvre; ca. 480 BC.  
H: 9 cm. Berger 1970 (Figs. 91-95).

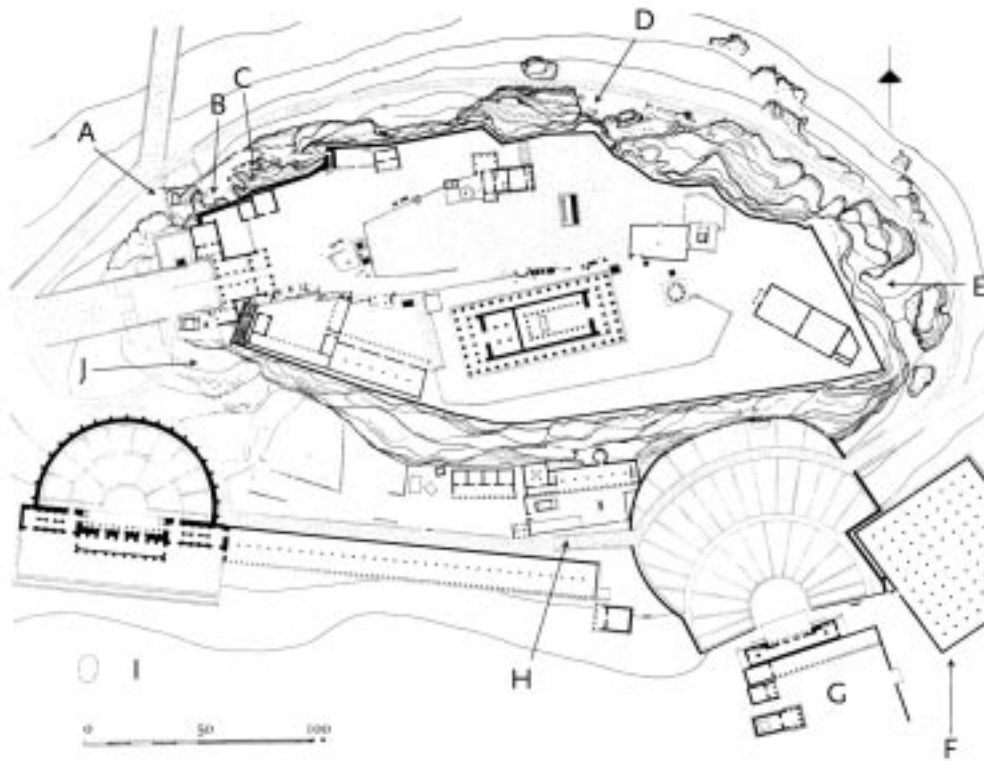




**Fig. 4:** Plan of the Athenian Acropolis (in the late Roman period; facing north), showing its relation to the Eleusinion to the northwest. Camp 2001 (Fig. 217).



**Fig. 5:** Telemachos Monument, reconstructed by Luigi Beschi.  
 H: ca. 2.85 m. Beschi 1967/68 (Fig. 22 a-d).



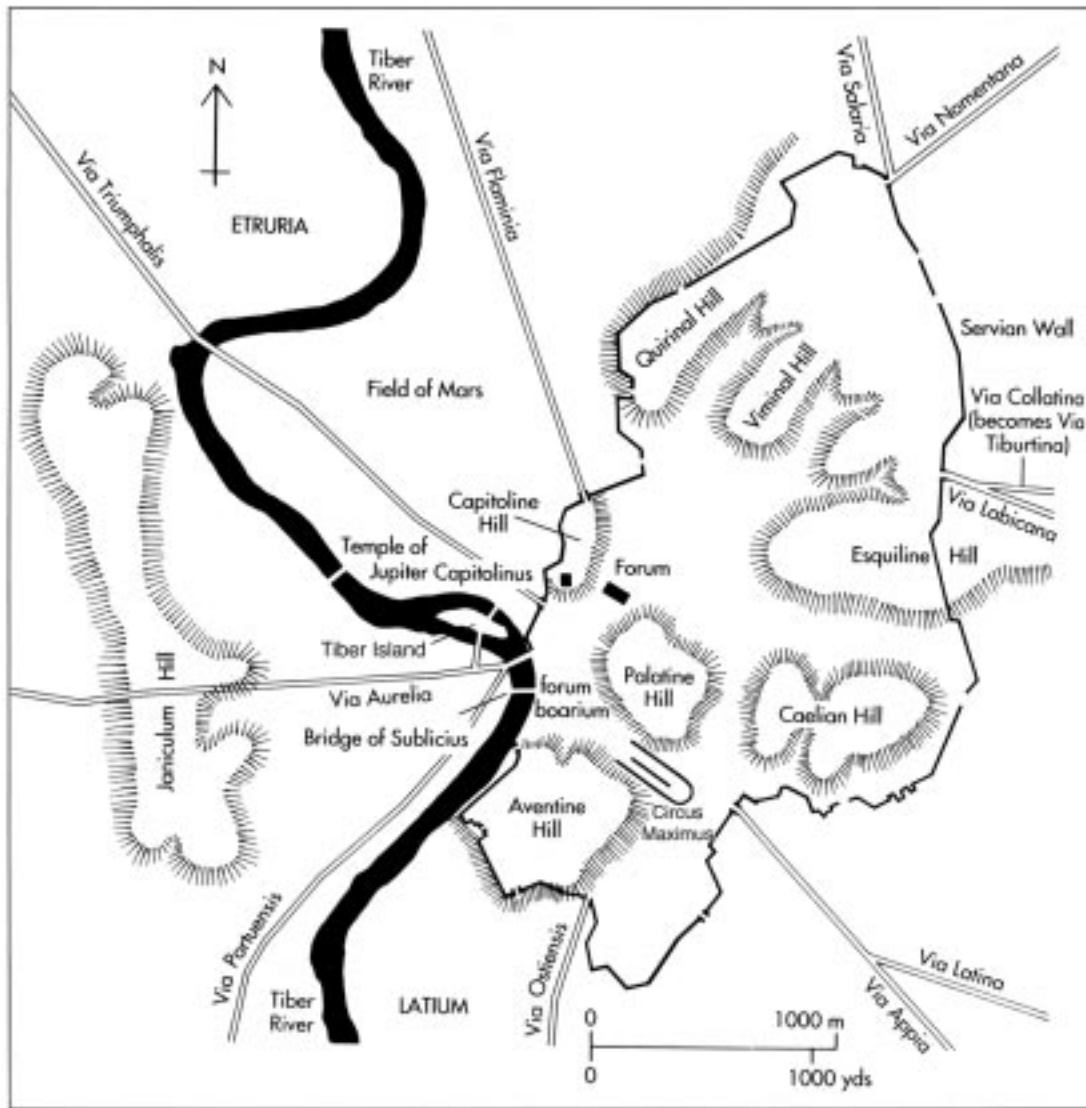
114. Plan of the slopes of the Acropolis, showing the position of the sanctuaries: (A) Klepsydra; (B) Cave of Apollo; (C) Cave of Pan; (D) Aphrodite and Eros; (E) Cave of Aglauros (?); (F) Odeion of Perikles; (G) Sanctuary of Dionysos; (H) Asklepieion; (I) Shrine of Nymphe; (J) Aphrodite Pandemos.

**Fig. 6:** Plan of the Athenian Acropolis and its slopes.  
Camp 2001 (Fig. 114).



**Fig. 7:** Map of mainland Greece indicating alliances at the outset of the Peloponnesian War. Pomeroy et al. 1999 (Fig. 7.2).





**Fig. 9:** Plan of Rome indicating Tiber Island, the Forum Boarium, the Campus Martius, and the Circus Maximus. Adkins and Adkins 1994 (Fig. 3.1).



Plan of the Forum Boarium and surrounding area. 1) Porticus of Octavia; 2) Temple of Apollo; 3) Temple of Bellona; 4) Porta Catularia?; 5) Theater of Marcellus; 6) Temple of Janus; 7) Temple of Juno Sospita; 8) Temple of Spes; 9) Porticus Triumphalis; 10) Temples of Fortuna and Mater Matuta; 11) Porta Flumentana and Aemiliana; 12) Temple of Portunus; 13) Temple of Hercules Olivarius; 14) Cloaca Maxima; 15) line of the Republican walls; 16) Imperial structures; 17) Arch of Constantine?; 18) Arch of the Argentarii; 19) Aedes Aemiliana Herculis; 20) consaeptum sacellum?; 21) Ara Maxima; 22) Porta Trigemina; 23) Mithreum; 24) Aedes Pompeiana Herculis?; 25) Temple of Ceres, Liber, and Libera; 26) Temple of Aesculapius; 27) Pons Fabricius; 28) Pons Aemilius; 29) Pons Sublicius.

**Fig. 10:** Plan of the Forum Boarium area, facing south. Coarelli 1988 (Fig. 1).

## APPENDIX I: PINDAR, *PYTHIAN* 3

Translation by William Race (Race 1997).

- A' Ἦθελον Χίρωνά κε Φιλλυρίδαν,  
 εἰ χρεῶν τοῦθ' ἀμετέρας ἀπὸ γλώσσας  
 κοινὸν εὐξασθαι ἔπος,  
 ζῶειν τὸν ἀποιχόμενον,  
 Οὐρανίδα γόνον εὐρυμέδοντα Κρόνου,  
 βᾶσαισὶ τ' ἄρχειν Παλίου φῆρ' ἀγρότερον  
 νόον ἔχοντ' ἀνδρῶν φίλον· οἶος ἔων θρέψεν ποτέ  
 τέκτονα ναδυνίας  
 ἡμερον γυιαρκέ(ο)ς Ἀσκλαπιόν,  
 ἦροα παντοδαπᾶν ἀλκτῆρα νούσων. 5
- τὸν μὲν εὐίππου Φλεγύα θυγάτηρ  
 πρὶν τελέσσαι ματροπόλῳ σὺν Ἐλειθυί-  
 α, δαμείσα χρυσεοῖς  
 τόξοισιν ὑπ' Ἀρτέμιδος 10  
 εἰς Αἶδα δόμον ἐν θαλάμῳ κατέβα,  
 τέχναις Ἀπόλλωνος· χόλος δ' οὐκ ἀλίθιος  
 γίνεται παιδῶν Διός· ἅ δ' ἀποφλαυρίζαισά νιν  
 ἀμπλακίαισι φρενῶν,  
 ἄλλον αἰνήσεν γάμον κρύβδαν πατρός,  
 πρόσθεν ἀκερσεκόμα μιχθεῖσα Φοῖβῳ,
- καὶ φέροισα σπέρμα θεοῦ καθαρὸν 15  
 οὐκ ἔμειν' ἔλθειν τράπεζαν νυμφίαν,  
 οὐδὲ παμφώνων ἰαχὰν ὑμεναίων, ἄλικες  
 οἷα παρθένοι φιλέοισιν ἑταῖραι  
 ἔσπερίαις ὑποκουρίζεσθ' αἰοιδαῖς· ἀλλὰ τοι  
 ἦρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων· οἷα καὶ πολλοὶ πάθον. 20  
 ἔστι δὲ φύλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισι ματαιότατον,  
 ὅστις αἰσχύνων ἐπιχώρια παπταίνει τὰ πόρσω,  
 μεταμῶνια θηρέων ἀκράντοις ἐλπίσιν.
- B' ἔσχε τοι ταύταν μεγάλην ἀνάταν 25  
 καλλιπέπλου λῆμα Κορωνίδος· ἐλθόν-  
 τος γὰρ εὐνάσθη ξένου  
 λέκτροισιν ἅπ' Ἀρκαδίας.  
 οὐδ' ἔλαθε σκοπὸν· ἐν δ' ἄρα μηλοδόκῳ  
 Πυθῶνι τόσσαις ἄϊεν ναοῦ βασιλεύς  
 Λοξίας, κοινᾶν παρ' εὐθυτάτῳ γνώμαν πιθῶν,



- πάντα ἰσάντι νόφ·  
 ψευδέων δ' οὐχ ἄπτεται, κλέπτει τέ μιν  
 οὐ θεὸς οὐ βροτὸς ἔργοις οὔτε βουλαῖς. 30
- καὶ τότε γνοὺς Ἴσχυος Εἰλατίδα  
 ζεινίαν κοίταν ἄθεμίν τε δόλον, πέμ-  
 ψεν κασιγνήταν μένει  
 θυίοισαν ἀμαιμακέτφ  
 ἐς Λακέρειαν, ἐπεὶ παρὰ Βοιβιάδος  
 κρημνοῖσιν ῥέκει παρθένος· δαίμων δ' ἕτερος  
 ἐς κακὸν τρέψαις ἐδαμάσσατό νιν, καὶ γειτόνων 35  
 πολλοὶ ἐπαῦρον, ἀμᾶ  
 δ' ἔφθαρεν· πολλὰν δ' ὄρει πῦρ ἐξ ἐνός  
 σπέρματος ἐνθορὸν αἰστώσεν ὕλαν.
- ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ τείχει θέσαν ἐν ξυλίνφ  
 σύγγοι κούραν, σέλας δ' ἀμφέδραμεν  
 λάβρον Ἀφαιστοῦ, τότ' ἔειπεν Ἀπόλλων· Ὀυκέτι 40  
 τλάσομαι ψυχᾶ γένος ἀμὸν ὀλέσσαι  
 οἰκτροτάτφ θανάτφ ματρὸς βαρεῖα σὺν πάθᾳ·  
 ὡς φάτο· βάματι δ' ἐν πρώτφ κιχὼν παῖδ' ἐκ νεκροῦ  
 ἄρπασε· καιομένα δ' αὐτῶ διέφαινε πυρά.  
 καὶ ῥά νιν Μάγνητι φέρων πόρε Κενταύρφ διδάξαι 45  
 πολυπήμονας ἀνθρώποισιν ἰᾶσθαι νόσους.
- Γ' τοὺς μὲν ὦν, ὅσσοι μόλον αὐτοφύτων  
 ἐλκέων ξυνάονες, ἢ πολιῶ χαλκῶ μέλη τετρωμένοι  
 ἢ χερμάδι τηλεβόλφ,  
 ἢ θερινῶ πυρὶ περθόμενοι δέμας ἢ 50  
 χειμῶνι, λύσαις ἄλλον ἀλλοίων ἀχέων  
 ἔξαγεν, τοὺς μὲν μαλακαῖς ἐπαοιδαῖς ἀμφέπων,  
 τοὺς δὲ προσανέα πί-  
 νοντας, ἢ γυίοις περάπτων πάντοθεν  
 φάρμακα, τοὺς δὲ τομαῖς ἔστασεν ὀρθούς·
- ἀλλὰ κέρδει καὶ σοφία δέδετα.  
 ἔτραπεν καὶ κείνον ἀγάνορι μισθῶ 55  
 χρυσὸς ἐν χερσὶν φανείς  
 ἄνδρ' ἐκ θανάτου κομίσαι  
 ἤδη ἀλωκότα· χερσὶ δ' ἄρα Κρονίων  
 ῥίψαις δι' ἀμφοῖν ἀμπνοᾶν στέρνων κάθειλεν  
 ὠκέως, αἶθων δὲ κεραυνὸς ἐνέσκιμψεν μόρον.  
 χρῆ τὰ ἐοικότα πᾶρ  
 δαιμόνων μαστευέμεν θναταῖς φρασίν  
 γόντα τὸ πᾶρ ποδός, οἴας εἰμὲν αἴσας. 60
- μή, φίλα ψυχά, βίον ἀθάνατον  
 σπεύδε, τὰν δ' ἔμπρακτον ἀντλεῖ μαχανάν.

- εἰ δὲ σῶφρων ἄντρον ἔναι ἔτι Χίρων, καὶ τί οἱ  
 φίλτρον (ἐν) θυμῷ μελιγάρυες ὕμνοι  
 ἀμέτεροι τίθεν, ἰατῆρά τοί κέν νιν πίθον 65  
 καὶ νυν ἐσλοῖσι παρασχεῖν ἀνδράσιν θερμῶν νόσων  
 ἢ τινα Λατοῖδα κεκλημένον ἢ πατέρος.  
 καὶ κεν ἐν ναυσὶν μόλον Ἴονίαν τάμνων θάλασσαν  
 Ἄρέθοισαν ἐπὶ κράναν παρ' Αἰτναῖον ξένον,
- Δ' ὃς Συρακόσσαισι νέμει βασιλεύς, 70  
 πρᾶυς ἀστοῖς, οὐ φθονέων ἀγαθοῖς, ξεί-  
 νοῖς δὲ θαυμαστός πατήρ.  
 τῷ μὲν διδύμας χάριτας  
 εἰ κατέβαν ὑγίειαν ἄγων χρυσεάν  
 κῶμόν τ' ἀέθλων Πυθίων αἴγλαν στεφάνοις,  
 τοὺς ἀριστεύων Φερένικος ἔλεν Κίρρα ποτέ,  
 ἀστέρος οὐρανίου 75  
 φαμί τηλαυγέστερον κείνῳ φάος  
 ἐξικόμαν κε βαθὺν πόντον περάσας.
- ἀλλ' ἐπέυξασθαι μὲν ἐγὼν ἐθέλω  
 Ματρί, τὰν κοῦραι παρ' ἐμὸν πρόθυρον σὺν  
 Πανὶ μέλπονται θαμὰ  
 σεμνὰν θεὸν ἐννύχιαι.  
 εἰ δὲ λόγων συνέμεν κορυφάν, Ἰέρων, 80  
 ὀρθὰν ἐπίστα, μανθάνων οἴσθα προτέρων  
 ἐν παρ' ἐσλὸν πῆματα σύνδυο δαίονται βροτοῖς  
 ἀθάνατοι. τὰ μὲν ὧν  
 οὐ δύνανται νήπιοι κόσμῳ φέρειν,  
 ἀλλ' ἀγαθοί, τὰ καλὰ τρέψαντες ἔξω.
- τὴν δὲ μοῖρ' εὐδαιμονίας ἔπεται.  
 λαγέταν γάρ τοι τύραννον δέρκεται, 85  
 εἴ τιν' ἀνθρώπων, ὁ μέγας πότμος. αἰὼν δ' ἀσφαλῆς  
 οὐκ ἔγεντ' οὐτ' Αἰακίδα παρὰ Πηλεῖ  
 οὔτε παρ' ἀντιθέῳ Κάδμῳ· λέγονται μὰν βροτῶν  
 ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον οἷ σχεῖν, οἷτε καὶ χρυσαμπύκων  
 μελπομενῶν ἐν ὄρει Μοισῶν καὶ ἐν ἑπταπύλοις 90  
 αἴιον Θήβαις, ὀπόθ' Ἄρμονίαν γᾶμεν βοῶπιν,  
 ὁ δὲ Νηρέος εὐβούλου Θέτιν παῖδα κλυτάν,
- Ε' καὶ θεοὶ δαΐσαντο παρ' ἀμφοτέροις,  
 καὶ Κρόνου παῖδας βασιλῆας ἴδον χρυ-  
 σέαις ἐν ἔδραις, ἔδνα τε  
 δέξαντο· Διὸς δὲ χάριν 95  
 ἐκ προτέρων μεταμειψάμενοι καμάτων  
 ἔστασαν ὀρθὰν καρδίαν. ἐν δ' αὐτε χρόνῳ  
 τὸν μὲν ὀξείαισι θύγατρεις ἐρήμωσαν πάθαις  
 εὐφροσύνας μέρος αἰ

τρεις· ἀτὰρ λευκωλένω γε Ζεὺς πατήρ  
ἦλυθεν ἐς λέχος ἱμερτὸν Θυῶνα.

τοῦ δὲ παῖς, ὄνπερ μόνον ἀθανάτα  
τίκτεν ἐν Φθίᾳ Θέτις, ἐν πολέμῳ τό- 100  
ξοις ἀπὸ ψυχὰν λιπῶν  
ῶρσεν πυρὶ καιόμενος  
ἐκ Δαναῶν γόν. εἰ δὲ νόῳ τις ἔχει  
θνατῶν ἀλαθείας ὁδόν, χρὴ πρὸς μακάρων  
τυγχάνοντ' εὖ πασχέμεν. ἄλλοτε δ' ἄλλοῖαι πνοαί 105  
ὑπιπετᾶν ἀνέμων.  
ὄλβος οὐκ ἐς μακρὸν ἀνδρῶν ἔρχεται  
σάος, πολὺς εὖτ' ἂν ἐπιβρίσαις ἔπηται.

σμικρὸς ἐν σμικροῖς, μέγας ἐν μεγάλοις  
ἔσσομαι, τὸν δ' ἀμφέποντ' αἰεὶ φρασίην  
δαίμον' ἀσκήσω κατ' ἐμὰν θεραπεύων μαχανάν.  
εἰ δέ μοι πλοῦτον θεὸς ἀβρὸν ὀρέξαι, 110  
ἐλπίδ' ἔχω κλέος εὐρέσθαι κεν ὑψηλὸν πρόσω.  
Νέστορα καὶ Λύκιον Σαρπηδόν', ἀνθρώπων φάτις,  
ἐξ ἐπέων κελαδεννῶν, τέκτονες οἷα σοφοί  
ἄρμοσαν, γινώσκομεν· ἃ δ' ἄρετὰ κλειναῖς ἀοιδαῖς  
χρονία τελέθει· παύροις δὲ πράξασθ' εὐμαρές. 115

- 
- Str. 1 I wish that Cheiron—  
if it is right for my tongue to utter  
that common prayer—  
were still living, the departed son of Philyra  
and wide-ruling offspring of Ouranos' son Kronos,  
and still reigned in Pelion's glades, that wild creature  
who had a mind friendly to men. I would have him be 5  
as he was when he once reared the gentle craftsman  
of body-strengthening relief from pain, Asklepios,  
the hero and protector from diseases of all sorts.
- Ant. 1 Before the daughter of the horseman Phlegyas  
could bring him to term with the help of Eleithuia,  
goddess of childbirth, she was overcome  
by the golden arrows of Artemis 10  
in her chamber and went down to the house of Hades  
through Apollo's designs. The anger of Zeus' children  
is no vain thing. Yet she made light of it  
in the folly of her mind and  
unknown to her father consented to another union,

although she had previously lain with long-haired  
Phoebus

- Ep. 1      and was carrying the god's pure seed.      15  
But she could not wait for the marriage feast to come  
or for the sound of full-voiced nuptial hymns with such  
endearments as unmarried companions are wont to utter  
in evening songs. No, she was in love with things  
remote—such longings as many others have suffered,      20  
for there is among mankind a very foolish kind of person,  
who scorns what is at hand and peers at things far away,  
chasing the impossible with hopes unfulfilled.
- Str. 2      Indeed, headstrong Koronis of the beautiful robes  
fell victim to that great delusion, for she slept      25  
    in the bed of a stranger,  
    who came from Arcadia.  
But she did not elude the watching god, for although he  
    was in flock-receiving Pytho as lord of his temple,  
Loxias perceived it, convinced by the surest confidant,  
his all-knowing mind.  
    He does not deal in falsehoods, and neither god  
nor mortal deceived him by deeds or designs.      30
- Ant. 2      And at this time, when he knew of her sleeping with the  
stranger Ischys, son of Elatos, and her impious deceit,  
    he sent his sister  
raging with irresistible force  
to Lakereia, for the maiden was living  
    by the banks of Lake Boibias. An adverse fortune  
turned her to ruin and overcame her; and many neighbors      35  
shared her fate and perished with her.  
    Fire that springs from one  
spark onto a mountain can destroy a great forest.
- Ep. 2      But when her relatives had placed the girl  
within the pyre's wooden wall and the fierce blaze  
of Hephaistos ran around it, then Apollo said: "No longer      40  
shall I endure in my soul to destroy my own offspring  
by a most pitiful death along with his mother's heavy  
suffering."  
Thus he spoke, and with his first stride came and  
    snatched the child  
from the corpse, while the burning flame parted for him.  
He took him and gave him to the Magnesian Centaur      45  
for instruction in healing the diseases that plague men.



	But, Hieron, if you can understand the true point of sayings, you know the lesson of former poets: the immortals apportion to humans a pair of evils for every good. Now fools cannot bear them gracefully, but good men can, by turning the noble portion outward.	80
Ep. 4	Your share of happiness attends you, for truly if great destiny looks with favor upon any man, it is upon a people-guiding ruler. But an untroubled life did not abide with Aiakos' son Peleus or with godlike Kadmos; yet they are said to have attained the highest happiness of any men, for they even heard the golden-crowned Muses singing on the mountain and in seven-gated Thebes, when one married ox-eyed Harmonia, the other Thetis, wise-counseling Nereus' famous daughter;	85       90
Str. 5	the gods feasted with both of them, and they beheld the regal children of Kronos on their golden thrones and received their wedding gifts. By the grace of Zeus, they recovered from their earlier hardships and they raised up their hearts. But then in time, the bitter suffering of his three daughters deprived the one of a part of his joy, although father Zeus did come to the longed-for bed of white-armed Thyone.	95
Ant. 5	But the other's son, the only child immortal Thetis bore him in Phthia, lost his life to an arrow in war, and as he was consumed by the fire, he raised a lament from the Danaans. If any mortal understands the way of truth, he must be happy with what good the blessed gods allot him. Now here, now there blow the gusts of the high-flying winds. Men's happiness does not come for long unimpaired, when it accompanies them, descending with full weight.	100       105
Ep. 5	I shall be small in small times, great in great ones; I shall honor with my mind whatever fortune attends me, by serving it with the means at my disposal. And if a god should grant me luxurious wealth,	110

I hope that I may win lofty fame hereafter.  
We know of Nestor and Lykian Sarpedon, still the talk of  
men,  
from such echoing verses as wise craftsmen  
constructed. Excellence endures in glorious songs  
for a long time. But few can win them easily.

115

## APPENDIX II: THE FIRST-FRUITS DECREE

### App. II.A. IG I<sup>3</sup> 78 (IG I<sup>2</sup> 76)

Translation by C.W. Fornara (Fornara 1983).

[Τιμο]τέλ[ε]ς Ἀχαρνε[ύς] ἐγραμμάτευε.

[ἔδοχσ]εν τει βολέι καὶ τῶι δέμοι· Κεκροπὶς ἐπρυτάνευε, Τιμοτέ-  
[λες ἐ]γραμμάτευε, Κυκνέας ἐπεστάτε· τάδε οἱ χσυγγραφῆς χσυνέ-  
[γρ]αφσαν· ἀπάρχεσθαι τοῖν θεοῖν τῷ καρπῷ κατὰ τὰ πάτρια καὶ τῆ-  
5

ν μαντείαν τὴν ἐγ Δελφῶν Ἀθηναῖος ἀπὸ τῶν η̄κατὸν μεδίμνον [κ]-  
ριθῶν μὲ ἔλαττον ἔ̄ η̄κτέα, πυρῶν δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν η̄κατὸν μεδίμνον μ-  
ἐ ἔλαττον η̄μιέκτεον· ἐὰν δὲ τις πλείο καρπὸν ποιέι ἔ̄ τ[οσοῦτο]-  
ν ἔ̄ ὀλείζο, κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ἀπάρχεσθαι. ἐγλέγεν δὲ [τὸς δ]εμ-  
άρχος κατὰ τὸς δέμος καὶ παραδιδόναι τοῖς η̄εροποιοῖς τοῖς  
10

Ἐλευσινόθεν Ἐλευσινάδε. οἰκοδομέσαι δὲ σιρὸς τρεῖς Ἐλευσίν-  
ι κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ἡ̄πο ἂν δοκῆι τοῖς η̄εροποιοῖς καὶ τῶι ἀρ[χ]ιτ-  
έκτονι ἐπιτέδειον ἔ̄ναι ἀπὸ το ἀργυρίο τῷ τοῖν θεοῖν. τὸ[ν δὲ κα]-  
ρπὸν ἐνθαυθοῖ ἐμβάλλεν ἡ̄ν ἂν παραλάβοσι παρὰ τὸν δεμάρ[χον],  
ἀπάρχεσθαι δὲ καὶ τὸς χσυμμάχος κατὰ ταυτά. τὰς δὲ πόλες [ἐγ]λ[ο]-  
15

γέας η̄ελέσθαι τῷ καρπῷ, καθότι ἂν δοκῆι αὐτέσι ἄριστα ὁ καρπὸ-  
[ς] ἐγλεγέσεσθαι· ἐπειδὰν δὲ ἐγλεχθῆι, ἀποπεμφσάντων Ἀθέναζε·  
τὸς δὲ ἀγαγόντας παραδιδόναι τοῖς η̄εροποιοῖς τοῖς Ἐλευσι-  
νόθεν Ἐλευσινάδε· ἐ[ἄ]ν δὲ μὲ παραδέχονται πέντε ἔ̄μερον νννν  
ἐπειδὰν ἐπαγγελεῖ, παραδιδόντων τῶν ἐκ τῆς πόλεος ἡ̄θεν ἂν [ε]-  
20

[ι] ὁ κα[ρπ]ός, εὐθυνόσθον ἡ̄οι η̄εροποιοῖ χιλίαισιν ν δραχμῆσι [η]-  
[έκασ]τος· καὶ παρὰ τὸν δεμάρχον κατὰ ταυτά παραδέχεσθαι. [κέρ]υ-  
[κα]ς δὲ η̄ελομένε η̄ε βολὲ πεμφσάτο ἐς τὰς πόλες ἀ[γ]γέλλον[τ]ας [τὰ]  
[νῦν] η̄εσφερισμένα τῶι δέμοι, τὸ μὲν νῦν ἔ̄ναι ἡ̄ος τάχιστα, τὸ δὲ [λ]-  
οιπὸν ἡ̄οταν δοκῆι αὐτέι. κελευέτο δὲ καὶ ἡ̄ο η̄εροφάντες καὶ [ὁ]  
25

δαιδοχος μυστερίοις ἀπάρχεσθαι τὸς ἡ̄έλλενας τῷ καρπῷ κατὰ  
τὰ πάτρια καὶ τὴν μαντείαν τὴν ἐγ Δελφῶν. ἀναγράφαντες δὲ ἐ[μ]  
πινακίοι τὸ μέτρον τῷ καρπῷ τῷ τε παρὰ τὸν δεμάρχον κατὰ τὸ[ν δ]-  
[ε]μον ἡ̄έκαστον καὶ τὸ παρὰ τὸν πόλεον κατὰ τὴν πόλιν η̄εκάσ[τεν]  
[κ]αταθέντων ἔ̄ν τε τῶι Ἐλευσινίοι Ἐλευσίνι καὶ ἐν τῶι βολ[ευτ]ε-  
30

[ρ]ίοι. ἐπαγγέλλεν δὲ τὴν βολὴν καὶ τῆσι ἄλλεσι πόλεσιν [τ]ε[σι] η̄ε-  
[λ]ληνικέσιν ἀπάσεσι, ἡ̄οποι ἂν δοκῆι αὐτέι δυνατὸν ἔ̄ναι, λ[έ]γο[ν]-



τας μὲν κατὰ *ἡ*ὰ Ἀθηναῖοι ἀπάρχονται καὶ οἱ χσύμμαχοι, ἐκέ[νοι]-  
[ς] δὲ μὲ ἐπιτάττοντας, κελεύοντας δὲ ἀπάρχεσθαι, ἐὰν βόλονται,  
[κ]ατὰ τὰ πάτρια καὶ τὲν μαντείαν τὲν ἐγ Δελφῶν. παραδέχεσθαι δ-  
35

ἐ καὶ παρὰ τούτον τῶν πόλεον ἐὰν τις ἀπάγει τὸς *ἡ*εροποιὸς κα-  
τὰ ταῦτά. θύεν δὲ ἀπὸ μὲν τῷ πελανῷ καθότι ἂν Εὐμολπίδαι [ἐχσ*ἡ*ε]-  
[γῶ]νται, τρίττοιαν δὲ βόαρχον χρυσόκερον τοῖν θεοῖν *ἡ*εκα[τέρ]-  
[αι ἄ]πὸ τῶν κριθῶν καὶ τῶν πυρῶν καὶ τῷ Τριπτολέμοι καὶ τῷ [θε]-  
οῖ καὶ τῷ θεᾷ καὶ τῷ Εὐβόλοι *ἡ*ιερεῖον *ἡ*εκάστοι τέλεον καὶ  
40

τῷ Ἀθηναίαι βῶν χρυσόκερον· τὰς δὲ ἄλλας κριθὰς καὶ πυρὸς ἀπ-  
οδομένοσ τὸς *ἡ*εροποιὸς μετὰ τῆς βολῆς ἀναθήματα ἀνατιθέν-  
αι τοῖν θεοῖν, ποιησαμένος *ἡ*άττ' ἂν τῷ δέμοι τῷ Ἀθηναίων δοκεῖ-  
ι, καὶ ἐπιγράφεν τοῖς ἀναθήμασιν, *ἡ*ότι ἀπὸ τῷ καρπῷ τῆς ἀπαρχῆ-  
ς ἀνεθέθε, καὶ *ἡ*ελλένον τὸν ἀπαρχόμενον· [τοῖ]ς δὲ ταῦτα ποιῶσι  
45

πολλὰ ἀγαθὰ ἔναι καὶ εὐκαρπῖαν καὶ πολυκαρπία[ν, *ἡ*οί]τινες ἂν  
[μ]ὲ ἀδικῶσι Ἀθηναῖος μεδὲ τὸν πόλιν τὸν Ἀθηναίων μεδὲ τὸ θεό. ν  
[Λ]άμπων εἶπε· τὰ μὲν ἄλλα καθάπερ αἰ χσυγγραφαὶ τῆς ἀπαρχῆς τῷ  
καρπῷ τοῖν θεοῖν· τὰς δὲ χσυγγραφὰς καὶ τὸ φσέφισμα τόδε ἀναγ-  
ραφσάτο *ἡ*ο γραμματεὺς *ἡ*ο τῆς βολῆς ἐν στέλαιν δυοῖν λιθίνοι-  
50

ν καὶ καταθέτο τὲν μὲν Ἐλευσῖνι ἐν τοῖ *ἡ*ερῶι τὲν δὲ *ἡ*ετέραν [ἐ]-  
μ πόλει· *ἡ*οι δὲ πολεταὶ ἀπομισθοσάντων τὸ στέλα· *ἡ*οι δὲ κολ[ακρ]-  
έται δόντων τὸ ἀργύριον. ταῦτα μὲν πε[ρ]ὶ τῆς ἀπαρχῆς τῷ καρ[π]ῷ [τ]-  
οῖν θεοῖν ἀναγράφαι ἐς τὸ στέλ[α], μῆνα δὲ ἐμβάλλεν *ἡ*εκατονβ-  
αιῶνα τὸν νέον ἄρχοντα τὸν δὲ βασι[ι]λέα *ἡ*ορίσαι τὰ *ἡ*ερά τὰ ἐν τ[ῷ]-  
55

ι Πελαργικῶι, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν μὲ ἐν *ἡ*ιδρύεσθαι βομὸς ἐν τοῖ Πελα-  
ργικῶι ἄνευ τῆς βολῆς καὶ τῷ δέμο, μεδὲ τὸς λίθος τέμνεν ἐκ τῷ [Π]-  
ελαργικῶ, μεδὲ γεν ἐχσάγεν μεδὲ λίθος. ἐὰν δὲ τις παραβαίνει ν  
τ οὔτον τι, ἀποτινέτο πεντακοσίας δραχμάς, ἐσαγγελλέτο δὲ *ἡ*-  
[ο] βασιλεὺς ἐς τὲν βολέν. περὶ δὲ τῷ ἐλαίῳ ἀπαρχῆς χσυγγράφ-  
60

σας Λάμπων ἐπιδειχσάτο τῷ βολῆι ἐπὶ τῆς ἐνάτης πρυτανείας·  
*ἡ*ε δὲ βολὲ ἐς τὸν δέμον ἐχσενενκέτο ἐπάναγκες.

[Timo]tel[e]s of Acharnai was Secretary. | *Resolved* by the Boule and the People, Kekropis held the prytany, Timote | [les] was Secretary, Kykneas presided. The following the Commissioners (syngrapheis) dra | fted: First fruits shall be offered to the two goddesses, in accordance with ancestral custom and th | | e oracular response from Delphi, by the Athenians (as follows): from each one hundred medimnoi of b | arley not less than one-sixth (of one medimnos); of wheat, from each

hundred medimnoi, not less than one-twelfth. If anyone produces more grain than [this amount] or less, he shall offer first fruits in the same proportion. Collection shall be made by [the] Demarchs deme by deme and they shall deliver it to the Hieropoioi from Eleusis at Eleusis. (The Athenians) shall construct three (storage) pits at Eleusis in accordance with the ancestral custom, at whatever place seems to the Hieropoioi and the architect to be suitable, out of the funds of the two goddesses. The grain shall be put in there which they receive from the Demarchs. The allies as well shall offer first fruits according to the same procedure. The cities shall have *colletores* chosen for the grain by whatever means seems best to them for grain collection. When it has been collected, they shall send it to Athens, and those who have brought it shall deliver it to the Hieropoioi from Eleusis at Eleusis. If (the latter) do not take delivery of it within five days after it has been reported to them, although it was offered by (the envoys) of whatever city [was the source] of the grain, the Hieropoioi at their euthynai shall be fined one thousand drachmas. They shall also receive it from the Demarchs in accordance with the same procedure. [Heralds] shall be chosen by the Boule, which shall send them to the cities announcing [the present] decree of the People, in the present instance as quickly as possible and in the future, whenever it (the Boule) thinks best. Let an exhortation be pronounced both by the Hierophant and [the] Daidouchos for the Hellenes to make offerings of the first fruits at the Mysteries in accordance with the ancestral custom and the oracular response from Delphi. After writing on a notice board the weight of the grain (received) from the Demarchs according to the demes and of that (received) from the cities according to city, (the Hieropoioi) shall set up (copies of) it in the Eleusinion in Eleusis and in the Bouleuterion. The Boule shall also send a proclamation to the other cities, [the] Hellenic cities in their entirety, wherever it seems to the Boule to be feasible, telling them the principles on which the Athenians and their allies are offering first fruits, and not ordering them but urging them to offer first fruits, if they so desire, in accordance with the ancestral custom and the oracular response from Delphi. The acceptance of any (grain) that anyone may bring from these cities as well shall be the duty of the Hieropoioi according to the same procedure. They shall perform sacrifice with the pelanos in accordance with what the Eumolpidae [dictate]; and (they shall sacrifice) the triple sacrifice, first, a bull with gilt horns to each of the two goddesses *separately*, out of (proceeds from) the barley and the wheat; and to Triptolemos and to the goddess and Eubolos a full-grown victim each; and to Athena a bull with gilt horns. The rest of the barley and wheat shall be sold by the Hieropoioi together with the Boule and they shall have votive offerings dedicated to the two goddesses, having made whatever seems best to the People of the Athenians, and they shall inscribe on the votive offerings that it was out of the first fruits of the grain that they were dedicated, and (the name) of every Hellene who made the offering of first fruits. [For those] who do this there shall be many benefits in abundance of good harvests if *they are men who do not* injure the Athenians or the city of the Athenians or the two goddesses. Lampon made the motion: Let all the rest be as (advised) in the draft-decree (of the Commissioners) for the first fruits of the grain for the goddesses. But their draft-decree and this decree shall be inscribed by the Secretary of the Boule on two stelai of marble and set up, the one in the sanctuary in Eleusis, and the other on the Akropolis. The Poletai are to let out the contract for the two stelai. The *Kolakretai* are to supply the

money. These things concerning the first fruits of the grain to the two goddesses shall be inscribed on the two stelai. There shall be intercalation of the month Hekatombiaion by the new Archon. The King (Archon) shall delimit the sanctuaries in the Pelargikon, and in the future altars shall not be erected in the Pelargikon without the consent of the Boule and the People, nor shall (anyone) cut stones out of the Pelargikon, or remove soil or stones. If anyone transgresses any of these regulations, he shall be fined five hundred drachmas and impeached by the King (Archon) before the Boule. As to the first fruits of olive oil, a draft-decree shall be produced by Lampon before the Boule in the ninth prytany and the Boule shall be obliged to bring it before the People.

### **App. II.B. The Date of the First-Fruits Decree**

The date of the First-Fruits decree has long been debated. Cavanaugh 1996 provides an annotated bibliography and thorough discussion about the debate.<sup>1025</sup> Neither epigraphic features nor content provide any help in fixing a precise date, and, as the arguments of numerous scholars demonstrate, the tenor of the decree can be made to fit most periods of the later 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Dates ranging from 459 to 414 BC have been proposed, although dates before 435 BC now seem doubtful on the basis of epigraphic arguments.<sup>1026</sup>

There are good reasons, moreover, to believe that the decree dates to the 420s BC, and thus not long before the time of Asklepios' arrival. The late 420s BC has been the period most frequently proposed for the decree since the 19<sup>th</sup> c., a fact which in itself is far from conclusive or even persuasive. But as Russell Meiggs and David Lewis have noted, two elements of the decree are suggestive of a date in the 420s.<sup>1027</sup> First, the provisions of the rider restricting building within the Pelargikon suggest an effort at better policing of the area (lines 54-59). This policing may have resulted from extensive building activity within the Pelargikon during the early years of the

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<sup>1025</sup> Cavanaugh 1996 (29-72).

<sup>1026</sup> *ML* 73 (p. 222) view the frequent omission of the aspirate as "the strongest epigraphic argument for a late date" (which for them means 422-415 BC).

<sup>1027</sup> *ML* 73 (p. 220).

Peloponnesian War.<sup>1028</sup> Such a scenario therefore requires that the First-Fruits decree postdate the beginning of the war in 431 BC. The second element suggestive of a date in the 420s BC is the appointment of ἐκλογεῖς to collect first-fruits from the cities of the empire (lines 14-30). These ἐκλογεῖς τοῦ καρποῦ (“collectors of fruit”) parallel the ἐγλογεῖς τοῦ φόρου (collectors of tribute”) appointed in 426 BC to collect imperial tribute from the allies (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 68), and may thus have been created at about the same time.

The appointment of ἐκλογεῖς for both Demeter and Athena, moreover, accords well with the link between the two goddesses forged by the Greater Panathenaia: at this time of tribute reassessment, the festival procession paraded offerings of empire by the Eleusinion on the way to the Acropolis.

Maureen Cavanaugh argues that the First-Fruits decree predates 422/1 BC, based on publication at that time of a decree (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 391) reflecting changes to *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 78. She explains that a change in administration evident in *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 391 (namely, the transfer of money related to first-fruits from officials known as ἱεροποιοί to those known as ἐπιστάται) must post-date the First-Fruits decree (which makes no mention of ἐπιστάται).<sup>1029</sup> Cavanaugh, however, also argues *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 78 must predate *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 32, a decree probably of 432/1 BC creating the ἐπιστάται, or officials who oversaw the treasury of the Two Goddesses (Demeter and Kore). Adducing further evidence, she arrives at a date of ca. 435 for *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 78.

Whether we believe Cavanaugh or Meiggs and Lewis, the First-Fruits decree most likely predates 420 BC, and thus its rider restricting activity within the Pelargikon must have been in effect at the time of Asklepios’ arrival in Athens.

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<sup>1028</sup> Thucy. 2.17.1. Thucydides attributes this building activity to the influx of country dwellers seeking shelter within the city at the start of the war.

<sup>1029</sup> Cavanaugh 1996 (73-95). Cavanaugh also argues *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 78 must predate *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 32, a decree probably of 432/1 BC that created ἐπιστάται, or the officials who oversaw the treasury of the Two Goddesses (Demeter and Kore).

## APPENDIX III: SELECT SOURCES FOR AESCULAPIUS' ARRIVAL IN ROME

### App. III.A:

#### Livy 10.47.6-7

multis rebus laetus annus uix ad solacium unius mali, pestilentiae urentis simul urbem atque agros, suffecit; portentoque iam similis clades erat, et libri aditi quinam finis aut quod remedium eius mali ab dis daretur. inuentum in libris Aesculapium ab Epidauro Romam arcessendum; neque eo anno, quia bello occupati consules erant, quicquam de ea re actum praeterquam quod unum diem Aesculapio supplicatio habita est.

In many ways it was a happy year (293 BC), but it could scarcely make up for one evil: a plague that ravaged both city and countryside. The destruction was like a portent, and the books were consulted as to what end or what measure the gods would give. It was discerned from the books that Aesculapius should be summoned from Epidauros. But, other than a *supplicatio* to Aesculapius, nothing was done about the plague in that year because the consuls were busy with war.

#### Livy 11.praef.

cum pestilentia civitas laboraret, missi legati, ut Aesculapi signum Romam ab Epidauro transferrent, anguem, qui se in navem eorum contulerat, in quo ipsum numen esse constabat, deportaverunt; eoque in insulam Tiberis egresso eodem loco aedis Aesculapio constituta est.

Since the city was suffering from a plague, envoys had been dispatched to bring an image of Aesculapius from Epidauros to Rome. They brought back a serpent that had boarded their ship of its own accord. This serpent was thought to contain the *numen* of the god; and in the very place where the serpent disembarked onto Tiber Island, a temple was built to Aesculapius.

**App. III.B:**

**Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.622-744**

Translation by D.E. Hill (Hill 2000).

622 Pandite nunc, Musae, praesentia numina vatū,  
(scitis enim, nec vos fallit spatiosa vetustas,)  
unde Coroniden circumflua Thybridis alti  
625 insula Romuleae sacris adiecerit urbis.  
Dira lues quondam Latias vitiaverat auras,  
pallidaque exsanguī squalebant corpora morbo.  
funeribus fessi postquam mortalia cernunt  
temptamenta nihil, nihil artes posse medentū,  
630 auxiliū caeleste petunt mediamque tenentes  
orbis humum Delphos adeunt, oracula Phoebi,  
utque salutifera miseris succurrere rebus  
sorte velit tantaeque urbis mala finiat, orant:  
et locus et laurus et, quas habet ipse, pharetrae  
635 intremuere simul, cortinaque reddidit imo  
hanc adyto vocem pavefactaque pectora movit  
'quod petis hinc, propiore loco, Romane, petisses,  
et pete nunc propiore loco: nec Apolline vobis,  
qui minuat luctus, opus est, sed Apolline nato.  
640 ite bonis avibus prolemque accersite nostram.'  
iussa dei prudens postquam acceperē senatus,  
quam colat, explorant, iuvenis Phoebeius urbem,  
quique petant ventis Epidauria litora, mittunt;  
quae simul incurva missi tetigere carina,  
645 conciliū Graiosque patres adiere, darentque,  
oravere, deum, qui praesens funera gentis  
finiat Ausoniae: certas ita dicere sortes.  
dissidet et variat sententia, parsque negandum  
non putat auxiliū, multi retinere suamque  
650 non emittere opem nec numina tradere suadent:  
dum dubitant, seram pepulere crepuscula lucem;  
umbraque telluris tenebras induxerat orbi,  
cum deus in somnis opifer consistere visus  
ante tuum, Romane, torum, sed qualis in aede  
655 esse solet, baculumque tenens agreste sinistra  
caesariem longae dextra deducere barbae  
et placido tales emittere pectore voces:  
'pone metus! veniam simulacraque nostra relinquam.  
hunc modo serpentem, baculum qui nexibus ambit,  
660 perspice et usque nota visu, ut cognoscere possis!  
vertar in hunc: sed maior ero tantusque videbor,  
in quantum verti caelestia corpora debent.'

extemplo cum voce deus, cum voce deoque  
 somnus abit, somnique fugam lux alma secuta est.  
 665 postera sidereos aurora fugaverat ignes:  
 incerti, quid agant, proceres ad templa petiti  
 conveniunt operosa dei, quaque ipse morari  
 sede velit, signis caelestibus indicet, orant.  
 670 vix bene desierant, cum cristis aureus altis  
 in serpente deus praenuntia sibila misit  
 adventuque suo signumque arasque foresque  
 marmoreumque solum fastigiaque aurea movit  
 pectoribusque tenus media sublimis in aede  
 675 constitit atque oculos circumtulit igne micantes:  
 territa turba pavet, cognovit numina castos  
 evinctus vitta crines albente sacerdos  
 et 'deus en, deus est! animis linguisque favete,  
 quisquis ades!' dixit 'sis, o pulcherrime, visus  
 utiliter populosque iuves tua sacra colentes!  
 680 quisquis adest, iussum veneratur numen, et omnes  
 verba sacerdotis referunt geminata piumque  
 Aeneadae praestant et mente et voce favorem.  
 adnuit his motisque deus rata pignora cristis  
 ter repetita dedit vibrata sibila lingua;  
 685 tum gradibus nitidis delabitur oraque retro  
 flectit et antiquas abiturus respicit aras  
 adsuetasque domos habitataque templa salutat.  
 inde per iniectis adopertam floribus ingens  
 serpit humum flectitque sinus mediamque per urbem  
 690 tendit ad incurvo munitos aggere portus.  
 restitit hic agmenque suum turbaeque sequentis  
 officium placido visus dimittere vultu  
 corpus in Ausonia posuit rate: numinis illa  
 sensit onus, pressa estque dei gravitate carina;  
 695 Aeneadae gaudent caesoque in litore tauro  
 torta coronatae solvunt retinacula navis.  
 inpulerat levis aura ratem: deus eminent alte  
 inpositaque premens puppim cervice recurvam  
 caeruleas despectat aquas modicisque per aequor  
 700 Ionium zephyris sextae Pallantidos ortu  
 Italiam tenuit praeterque Lacinia templo  
 nobilitate deae Scylaceaque litora fertur;  
 linquit Iapygiam laevisque Amphrisia remis  
 saxa fugit, dextra praerupta Cocinthia parte,  
 705 Romethiumque legit Caulonaque Naryciamque  
 evincitque fretum Siculique angusta Pelori  
 Hippotadaeque domos regis Temesesque metalla  
 Leucosiamque petit tepidique rosaria Paesti.  
 inde legit Capreas promunturiumque Minervae  
 710 et Surrentino generosos palmitum colles

Herculeamque urbem Stabiasque et in otia natam  
 Parthenopen et ab hac Cumaeae templa Sibyllae.  
 hinc calidi fontes lentisciferumque tenetur  
 Liternum multamque trahens sub gurgite harenam  
 715 Volturnus niveisque frequens Sinuessa columbis  
 Minturnaeque graves et quam tumulavit alumnus  
 Antiphataeque domus Trachasque obsessa palude  
 et tellus Circaea et spissi litoris Antium.  
 huc ubi veliferam nautae advertere carinam,  
 720 (asper enim iam pontus erat), deus explicat orbes  
 perque sinus crebros et magna volumina labens  
 templa parentis init flavum tangentia litus.  
 aequore placato patrias Epidaurius aras  
 linquit et hospitio iuncti sibi numinis usus  
 725 litoream tractu squamae crepitantis harenam  
 sulcat et innixus moderamine navis in alta  
 puppe caput posuit, donec Castrumque sacrasque  
 Lavini sedes Tiberinaque ad ostia venit.  
 huc omnis populi passim matrumque patrumque  
 730 obvia turba ruit, quaeque ignes, Troica, servant,  
 Vesta, tuos, laetoque deum clamore salutant.  
 quaque per adversas navis cita ducitur undas,  
 tura super ripas aris ex ordine factis  
 parte ab utraque sonant et odorant aera fumis,  
 735 ictaque coniectos incalfacit hostia cultros.  
 iamque caput rerum, Romanam intraverat urbem:  
 erigitur serpens summoque acclinia malo  
 colla movet sedesque sibi circumspicit aptas.  
 scinditur in geminas partes circumfluus amnis  
 740 (Insula nomen habet) laterumque a parte duorum  
 porrigit aequales media tellure lacertos:  
 huc se de Latia pinu Phoebeius anguis  
 contulit et finem specie caeleste resumpta  
 luctibus inposuit venitque salutifer urbi.

622 Reveal now, O Muses, bards' ever-present divinities,  
 (for you know and the vastness of past time does not deceive you),  
 from where did the island flowed around by deep Tiber  
 625 recruit Coronis' son for the rites of Romulus' city.  
 A dreadful plague had once blighted the Latian air,  
 and their pale bodies grew foul from the blood-wasting sickness.  
 Weary from the deaths, and when they saw that mortal  
 attempts could do nothing, nothing could their healers' arts do,  
 630 they sought heavenly help and, on reaching Delphi that holds



the middle of the world's earth, they went to the oracle of Phoebus,  
 and they prayed that he would be willing to hasten to the aid of their  
 unhappy  
 state with a health-bringing answer, and bring to an end the ills of so  
 great a city.  
 Both the place and the laurel and the quiver he himself holds trembled  
 635 all together and the cauldron gave this reply  
 from the depth of the shrine and roused their terrified hearts:  
 'What you seek from here, Roman, you could have sought in a nearer  
 place, and seek it now in a nearer place; it is not a task for Apollo  
 to lighten your griefs but for Apollo's son.  
 640 Go with good omens and summon my son.'  
 When the wise senate had received the god's bidding,  
 they began to explore in what city the Phoebeian young man dwelt,  
 and sent men to use the winds to seek the Epidaurian shore.  
 And as soon as those sent arrived there in their curved ship,  
 645 they went to the council and the Greek fathers begged them  
 to allow their god to be present and bring to an end the deaths  
 of the Ausonian race; that was, as they said, what the sure oracles were  
 saying.  
 Opinion was divided and fluctuating, and some thought  
 that help should not be denied, while many urged that they keep  
 650 their resources and not send them away nor hand over their god.  
 While they were hesitating, dusk drove the evening light away  
 and darkness had brought shadows to the earth's orb,  
 when the help-bringing god seemed in your dreams  
 to be standing in front of your bed, Roman, (but as he used  
 655 to be in his temple), and, holding his rustic staff in his left hand,  
 to be drawing down the hair of his long beard with his right hand  
 and uttering from his peaceful breast words such as these:  
 'Lay your fear aside, I shall come and I shall leave my images.  
 Only look at this snake which goes around my staff  
 660 in coils, and make note of it so that when you see it you will recognize it.  
 I shall turn myself into it, but I shall be bigger and I shall seem as great  
 as what the bodies of heavenly ones ought to turn into.'  
 Immediately, together with his voice, the god, and, together with voice  
 and god,  
 sleep left him, and kindly light followed the flight of sleep.  
 665 The next dawn had put the stars' fires to flight;  
 uncertain what to do, the leaders assembled at the elaborate  
 temple of their sought-after god and begged him to reveal  
 with heavenly signs in what place he himself wished to stay.  
 They had scarcely finished when the golden god in the form  
 670 of a snake with a high crest gave out heralding hisses  
 and by his advent moved both his statue and his altars  
 and his doors and marble floor and golden roof  
 and, rising up as far as his breast in the middle of the temple,  
 he stood still and cast his fire-gleaming eyes around.

675 The terrified throng trembled; the priest, his sacred hair  
 bound with white fillets, recognized the divinity:  
 'Behold, it is the god, it is the god! Be propitious with your minds and  
 tongues,  
 whoever you are that is present!' he said, 'May you, most glorious one,  
 have appeared  
 beneficently, and may you help the peoples who observe your rituals.'  
 680 Whoever was present adored the divinity they had seen, and they all  
 repeated the priest's doubled words, and the Aeneadae  
 provided pious support in mind and voice.  
 The god nodded his assent to this and, by moving his crest, he gave sure  
 pledges and, by vibrating his tongue, repeated hisses.  
 685 Then he glided down the gleaming steps and turned his face  
 back and, about to go away, looked around at his ancient altars  
 and his familiar home and saluted the temple he had lived in.  
 Then, through the ground they had covered in strewn flowers,  
 he crawled, huge, and bent his loops and, through the middle of the city,  
 690 made for the port which was protected by a curved breakwater.  
 He stopped here and, seeming to dismiss, with a peaceful look,  
 his own procession and the gathered throng of followers,  
 he put his body on the Ausonian ship; the vessel  
 felt the burden of the divinity and was pressed down by the god's weight.  
 695 The Aeneadae rejoiced and, after slaughtering a bull on the shore,  
 untied the twisted moorings of the garlanded boat.  
 A light breeze had driven the ship on; the god reared up on high  
 and, placing his neck upon the curved stern, pressing it down,  
 he looked down into the aquamarine waters and with slight Zephyrs  
 700 he reached Italy across the Ionian sea on Pallantis'  
 sixth rising, and was borne past the shores  
 of Lacinia, made famous by the goddess's temple, and those of Scylacea.  
 He left Iapygia and fled the Amphrisian rocks  
 on his left oars, and the sheer Celessians on the right side  
 705 and he skirted by Romethium, Caulon, and Naarycia,  
 and won his way past the strait and narrows of Sicilian Pelorus  
 and made for the home of king Hippotades, the metals  
 of Temese, Leucosia, and the rose-gardens of warm Paestum.  
 Then he skirted Capreae, the promontory of Minerva,  
 710 the hills prolific in the Surrentine vine,  
 Hercules' city, Stabiae and Parthenope born  
 for leisure and, from there, the temple of the Cumean Sibyl.  
 From here were reached the hot springs, mastic-bearing  
 Liternum and, the Voltumnus which drags much sand along beneath  
 715 its waters, and Sinuessa, abounding in snowy doves,  
 unhealthy Minturnae, and the place her foster-child made into her burial  
 mound,  
 and the home of Antiphates, marsh-beset Trachas, and  
 Circe's land and Antium of the solid shore.  
 When the sailors had turned the sail-bearing vessel into here

720 (for the sea was rough), the god unwound his coils  
and gliding by means of his frequent loops and great rolls  
he came into his father's temple which touched the yellow shore.  
When the sea had calmed, the Epidaurian left his father's  
altars and, after enjoying the hospitality of a divinity connected to  
himself,  
725 he made a furrow in the sand on the shore by dragging his rustling  
scales and, leaning on the ship's tiller, he put  
his head on the high stern until he came to Castrum  
and the sacred abodes of Lavinium and the mouth of the Tiber.  
There, the whole throng of the people, both mothers and fathers  
730 everywhere, and those who tend your fires, Trojan Vesta,  
rushed out to meet him, and they greeted the god with a joyful shout.  
And where the swift ship was being pulled against the stream,  
incense from altars made regularly along the banks  
on both sides noisily perfumed the air with its smoke,  
735 and victims were struck down and warmed the knives thrust into them.  
And now he had entered the city of Rome, the world's capital;  
the snake rose up, moved its neck to lean  
on the top of the mast and looked around for a site suitable for himself.  
The river is split into twin parts by what it flows around  
740 (and that has the name 'Island'), and on each part of two sides  
it stretches out equal arms, with land in the middle.  
Phoebus' serpent took himself here from the Latian  
boat and, resuming his celestial appearance, brought  
an end to their griefs and came to the City as health-bringer.

### App. III.C:

#### Valerius Maximus 1.8.2

Translation by D. Wardle (Wardle 1998).

Sed ut ceterorum quoque deorum propensum huic urbi numen exequamur, triennio continuo uexata pestilentia ciuitas nostra, cum finem tanti et tam diutini mali neque diuina misericordia neque humano auxilio inponi uideret, cura sacerdotum inspectis Sibyllinis libris animaduertit non aliter pristinam recuperari salubritatem posse quam si ab Epidauro Aesculapius esset accersitus. itaque eo legatis missis unicam fatalis remedii opem auctoritate sua, quae iam in terris erat amplissima, impetraturam se credidit. neque eam opinio decepit: pari namque studio petatum ac promissum est praesidium, e uestigioque Epidauri Romanorum legatos in templum Aesculapii, quod ab eorum urbe v passuum distat, perductos ut quidquid inde salubre patriae laturos se existimassent pro suo iure sumerent benignissime inuitauerunt. quorum tam promptam indulgentiam numen ipsius dei subsecutum uerba mortalium caelesti obsequio conprobauit: si quidem is anguis, quem Epidauri raro, sed numquam sine magno ipsorum bono uisum in modum Aesculapii uenerati fuerant, per urbis celeberrimas partes mitibus oculis et leni tractu labi coepit triduoque inter religiosam omnium admirationem conspectus haud dubiam prae se adpetitae clarioris sedis alacritatem ferens ad triremem Romanam perrexit pauentibusque inusitato spectaculo nautis eo conscendit, ubi Q. Ogulni legati tabernaculum erat, inque multiplicem orbem per summam quietem est conuolutus. tum legati perinde atque exoptatae rei conpotes expleta gratiarum actione cultuque anguis a peritis excepto laeti inde soluerunt, ac prosperam emensi nauigationem postquam Antium appulerunt, anguis, qui ubique in nauigio remanserat, prolapsus in uestibulo aedis Aesculapii murto frequentibus ramis diffusae superimminentem excelsae altitudinis palmam circumdedit perque tres dies, positis quibus uesci solebat, non sine magno metu legatorum ne inde in triremem reuerti nollet, Antiensis templi hospitio usus, urbi se nostrae aduehendum restituit atque in ripam Tiberis egressis legatis in insulam, ubi templum dicatum est, tranauit aduentuque suo tempestatem, cui remedio quaesitus erat, dispulit.

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But so that we may demonstrate the favourable disposition of all the other gods to this city: for three consecutive years our state had been troubled by pestilence, when it saw that no end could be brought to such great and so prolonged an evil by recourse to either divine mercy or human aid, and discovered from consultation of the Sibylline Books by the priests that the former state of health could not be restored unless Aesculapius were summoned from Epidauros. So ambassadors were sent there. Rome believed that through her influence, which was already very great in the world, she would obtain the unique remedy prescribed by fate. Nor did her

belief fail her: for help was promised with an equal zeal to that with which it was requested; and immediately the Epidaurians took the Roman ambassadors into the temple of Aesculapius, which is five miles from their city, and invited them very generously to take from there as their right anything that they thought they should take to bring health to their land. The divine presence of the god himself, imitating their ready generosity, ratified the mortals' words by heavenly compliance. For the snake, which the Epidaurians worshipped as Aesculapius, though it had rarely been seen and never without great benefit to themselves, began to slither with kindly eyes and gentle motion throughout the most crowded parts of the city; and for three days it was seen to worshipful admiration by all, displaying no uncertain eagerness to seek a more glorious residence, and made straight for the Roman trireme. While the sailors were terrified by the unusual spectacle, it climbed to the place where the cabin of the ambassador Q. Ogulnius was, and, wrapping itself into several rings, it fell into a very deep sleep. Then the ambassadors, as if they had achieved what they had hoped for, having duly thanked the Epidaurians and learned from experts how to look after the snake, joyfully set sail from there. After they had enjoyed a successful voyage and had put in at Antium, the snake, which had remained in the vessel throughout, slithered into the vestibule of the temple of Aesculapius and wrapped itself round a palm tree of exceedingly great size which overhung a myrtle which spread out with many branches. After it had for three days enjoyed the hospitality of the temple at Antium, as food was set down which it normally ate and the ambassadors were greatly afraid that it would not want to return to the trireme, it allowed itself to be taken to our city. When the ambassadors had disembarked onto the bank of the Tiber, it swam across to the island where its temple was dedicated, and by its arrival dispelled the plague as the cure for which it had been sought.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- BMC** = *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins*. British Museum, London. London: 1873-1927.
- CAH<sup>2</sup>** = *Cambridge Ancient History*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: 1961- .
- CIL** = *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Berlin: 1893- .
- DK** = *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. H. Diels and W. Kranz, ed. Dublin: 1966-67.
- FGH** = *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*. Paris: 1868-1884.
- ICr** = *Inscriptiones Creticae*. M. Guarducci, ed. Rome: 1935- .
- IEph** = *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. R. Habelt, ed. Bonn: 1979-1984.
- Kühn** = *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, C.G. Kühn, ed. Hildesheim: 1965.
- LIMC** = *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. Zurich: 1981- .
- LTUR** = *Lexicon topographicum urbis Romae*. E.M. Steinby, ed. Rome: 1993- .
- ML** = *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the end of the Fifth Century BC*. R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, eds. Rev. ed. Oxford: 1988.
- OCD<sup>3</sup>** = *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: 1996.
- PECS** = *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*. R. Stillwell, ed. Princeton: 1976.
- RE** = *Paulys Real-Encyclopadie der classischen Alerntumswissenschaft*. A.F. Pauly and G. Wissowa. Paris: 1894-1919.
- RE<sup>2</sup>** = *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopadie der Antike*. Stuttgart: 1996- .
- SEG** = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Amsterdam. 1923- .
- Syll.<sup>3</sup>** = *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*. W.F.K. Dittenberger, ed. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Leipzig: 1915-1924. Reprinted Hildesheim: 1982.

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## VITA

Bronwen Lara Wickkiser was born in York, PA, on May 19, 1969, the daughter of Bruce and Mary Jane Wickkiser. Raised in Baltimore, she graduated from Western High School in Baltimore, MD, in 1987. In 1991, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree, with honors in Latin Language and Literature, from Oberlin College in Oberlin, OH. After working for the state government in Madison, WI, she moved to Texas in 1994 to enter the Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin, where she completed her Master of Arts degree in Classics in 1996. She has since worked on archaeological projects in Ukraine, Italy, and Greece, and has spent more than two years as a fellow of the American School for Classical Studies at Athens.

Permanent Address: 3707 Tom Green St., Apt. 8, Austin, TX 78705

This dissertation was typed by the author.