

**Artemis the Lioness: Huntress and Protectress**

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**Abstract:**

Artemis is traditionally known as the virgin goddess of the hunt and paradoxically protector of wild animals. This paper will explore some of these more complex qualities of the nature of her worship with a focus on her relationship with women in classical Athens. Primary and secondary literary sources, visual culture - including sculpture and vase paintings, as well as architectural remains will be used to demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of this complex goddess. Through careful consideration of these sources it will become evident that Artemis' significance to Athenians was as contradictory as her relationship with nature. One such complicated divergence is her varying significance with respect to gender. Among the numerous meanings she held for Athenians she seemed to represent a harsh enforcer of divine propitiation for men while for women she was a force to be appeased to ensure safe transitions throughout life. This may be a reflection of widely divergent perceptions of gender in ancient Athenian society.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The goddess Artemis is generally thought of as a virgin huntress, wielder of silver arrows, first-born child of Leto and Zeus, the lesser sister of her golden brother Apollo. Walter Burkert, in his magisterial work, *Greek Religion*, discusses her ancient and possibly eastern origins, emphasizing “the organization of beggar priests or even eunuch priests within the framework of a temple state.”<sup>1</sup> This sinister, almost fascistic characterization is only the beginning of his description. As *potnia theton*, Artemis is “wild and uncanny and even shown with a Gorgon head..., the huntress who triumphantly slays her prey with bow and arrow.”<sup>2</sup> She is “an inviolate and inviolable virgin,” “terrible and even cruel,” “a Mistress of sacrifices, especially of cruel and bloody sacrifices.”<sup>3</sup>

Jennifer Larson’s discussion of the goddess is more nuanced, but shades of the same notions run through her description. Thus “the young, regarded as untamed and akin to the unruly natural world, are her special concern.”<sup>4</sup> She continues, “Hints of Artemis’ cruelty and power appear in the Homeric portrait. Hera (*Il.* 21.483) calls her ‘a lion to women,’ pointing out that she brings death to any woman she wishes.”<sup>5</sup> Larson describes the role of Artemis in warrior cults and in cults having to do with wild beasts, with emphasis on her personality: “an angry goddess who must be appeased.”<sup>6</sup> Cults said to be imported from the east that required ritual bloodletting from the throats of humans “demonstrate the uncanny and savage aspect of the goddess and the belief that she desired such [human] sacrifices.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Burkert, Walter. *Greek Religion*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1985. Print. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 150-152.

<sup>4</sup> Larson, Jennifer. *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print. 101.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 102. ; see also Gennimata.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Larson also points out another side of Artemis, however, in connection with what she terms “the vulnerable maiden.”<sup>8</sup>

In many if not most Greek cities, adolescent girls danced for Artemis. These dances had social as well as religious functions, as they signaled a girl’s readiness for marriage and made her visible to potential suitors. Also, transitions in the female life cycle governed by Artemis were linked to the prosperity and safety of the community as a whole. Many of Artemis’ sanctuaries were located on the borders of a given polis, in lands that formed territorial boundaries. Rituals conducted safely by girls at these vulnerable sites demonstrated the strength of the polis, just as the very placement of such border sanctuaries asserted territorial claims.

This aspect of Artemis, her role in women’s lives, offers a wholly different insight into the position of the goddess in society. Her necessary engagement with women’s life cycles — and as we shall see particularly reproductive cycles — ensured the wellbeing of the polis.

This thesis considers these two divergent aspects of the goddess Artemis in classical Athens, incorporating literature, visual culture, and the architectural and artifactual evidence for cult practice. In the realm of men’s lives and activities, Artemis’ primary aspect was one of unbending upholder of the gods’ rights. She strikes down those who offend her and supports those whose actions she approves. Men expected her to step in to exact justice. For women, her primary role was to ensure safety in reproductive transitions and the birth of legitimate offspring. Pious and righteous, she nurtures the young and those in need, encouraging proper behavior as a productive family member by example and through cult practice. Women of all ranks worshiped her and fostered a relationship with Artemis as a helpmeet and support in times of need.

While studying women in ancient Greece I became intrigued by the presence of Artemis in transitional moments in women’s lives. I wanted to better understand why this virgin, huntress goddess was important to women in reproduction and the seemingly initiatory function of her cult at Brauron. I wanted to investigate how she was portrayed in Athenian society in hopes of

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 106.

better understanding her cult. I found that before exploring gender and societal roles it is important to consider the implications of making generalizations about women.

Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble*, contends that gender and the physical condition of our bodies do not define who we are. Instead our actions and behaviors are what matter and we can decide our own identities, which may also shift throughout our lives. She points out that gender is culturally conditioned. I think these points are important to keep in mind when we talk about women or men as groups. Not all women have the same feelings, not all women have the same identity or view their identity in the same way.<sup>9</sup>

Chapter 2 will begin by exploring the life and status of women in Classical Athens drawing largely on literary sources, secondary sources, and the Hippocratic Corpus. We will see what was important to an Athenian women and what was expected of women from society. We will discuss how men may have thought about women and how some women may have thought about themselves.

In Chapter 3 we will turn to an overview of Artemis in literature. Literary sources from the Classical period were mostly written by and for men. With the nature of these sources in mind we will explore the representations of Artemis and what they might mean. We will find that these male authors largely considered Artemis a goddess of justice because of the emphasis on her role in punishing those who have done wrong. We will also find that when Artemis is invoked by female characters, the focus of her characteristics shifts to her guardianship of marriage and childbirth.

Chapter 4 will take a look at a different mode of representation of both Artemis and women. We will assess renditions of the two subjects on vases and in sculpture. Several patterns

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<sup>9</sup> Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.

emerge here. The subject matter on vessels commonly used for wine drinking, and therefore typically associated with men, compliments the aspect of Artemis that is so prevalent in literature. Sculptural renditions of Artemis, however, tell quite a different story. The votive reliefs and terracotta figurines examined mostly come from Sanctuaries to Artemis and therefore were likely not meant for a male audience, as is the case in the literary sources we discuss. These artifacts showcase Artemis looking pious and mingling with her family. Certainly this image of Artemis would have served as a model for women.

Finally in Chapter 5 we will explore Attic sanctuaries to Artemis beginning with the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron and then the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia on the Athenian Acropolis. These sanctuaries are the most substantial remaining evidence for Artemis cult worship in Athens. We will also consider other small remains of sanctuaries in or near the city of Athens. The architecture and artifacts from these areas provide excellent insight into actual cult practices and associations between women and Artemis that we might otherwise know nothing about.

## **Chapter 2: Women in Classical Greece**

Before considering visual representations of women and Artemis and trying to understand how they might intersect (Chapter 4), it is important to understand what actual Athenian women's lives were like. By understanding their prescribed or expected gender role, (what things mattered to women, and how they lived day to day) it will be easier to understand the significance of the way females are portrayed in visual culture and literature. This chapter focuses on literary sources to seek an initial understanding of female society in Athens.

Most of the literary evidence that survives from ancient Greece was written by male writers in Athens. Thus the literary sources present a subjective male point of view, an important point to keep in mind when considering the roles and rights of women in ancient Greece. Still, with careful analysis valuable information can be extracted from these sources. The nature of the sources lets us understand how men thought about the female gender in ancient Greek society. Among other things, a close reading of these sources can shed light on the nature and scope of some women's roles and involvement in religion during the time. The Hippocratic Corpus provides us with information on women's health and medicine. Thus we may learn about possible roles fulfilled by women in society from the way females were portrayed in myth, tragedy, comedy, and philosophy.

### ***The Role of Women in Classical Athens***

A pattern is evident throughout several types of sources, in which men are considered active and women passive. In sculpture in the classical age men are depicted as warriors and athletes, heroically nude, absorbed in their own actions. Mortal women, as will be discussed further in Chapter 4, are portrayed clothed, legs close together and in a static position, passively

standing by.<sup>10</sup> Males were the ones who contributed form in the creation of a child and the child makes its own way out of the womb making the woman's role in childbirth entirely passive.<sup>11</sup> As we shall see, even in Homer's poems the mortal women characters seem to have been serving the purpose of providing a platform for the male characters to act upon.<sup>12</sup>

During the late archaic period sumptuary laws were put in place in Athens. Opportunities for citizen women to show off or make spectacles of themselves were to be regulated and limited. Pomeroy states that the aim of the sumptuary laws for women was to extinguish the influence women had on men because they were often the cause of conflict among men. If indeed these restrictions were strictly enforced they would end up having a lasting effect on the lives of later generations of women.<sup>13</sup>

The exclusion of women from the official workings of the polis may have resulted in an oppressive environment for women in classical Athens. As we shall see, the main contribution and primary function of the Athenian woman was widely considered to be to produce a legitimate heir in the family and keep the household in running order. In reality this ideal woman could only exist in the most affluent families.

Women in classical Athens were not full citizens. They were barred from participating in the government of the city, or polis. However, the women in Athenian families played a key role in society by passing on citizenship to their children, therefore ensuring the continuity of the polis.<sup>14</sup> They were considered responsible for producing legitimate sons who would inherit the family's estate, carry on the family name and participate in the public workings of the polis.

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<sup>10</sup> Blundell, Sue. *Women in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995. Print. 188-190.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 105-106.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 19, 48.

<sup>13</sup> Pomeroy, Sarah B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York: Schocken, 1975. Print. 57.

<sup>14</sup> Blundell, op. cit., 119.

According to philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, these same women were also believed to be incapable of controlling their sexual desires.<sup>15</sup> This combination of conditions resulted in what Demand described as a near obsession with watching over the women in the family<sup>16</sup>

Citizen women ideally had guardians all their lives. Fathers were the guardians of their daughters, and upon marriage husbands took over guardianship.<sup>17</sup> It was of utmost importance to guardians that female family members were chaste until marriage and produced legitimate children. Any other outcome was troublesome for the *oikos*.

Marriage at an early age was traditional in Athens. Fathers were anxious to marry their daughters off as soon as they came of childbearing age at about fourteen.<sup>18</sup> This practice ensured that the girls would be pursued by well off suitors seeking pure brides. Marriages were arranged between the father and the future husband — possibly without the knowledge of the girl whose future was being decided. John H. Oakley and Rebecca H. Sinos explain further:

The process began with the *engye*, a contract between the prospective bridegroom and the bride's father (or legal guardian). Our first evidence for this contract at Athens appears in Herodotus' description of the marriage of Megacles to Agariste, daughter of Cleisthenes, the tyrant of Sicyon. Herodotus reports the words of Cleisthenes to his prospective son-in-law, 'To Megacles, son of Alcmeon, I pledge [*engyo*] my child Agariste in accordance with the laws of the Athenians' (6.130). *Engyem* means something placed 'in the hand'; in the context of the wedding the *engye* is the promise made by the bride's father to the groom and then sealed by a handshake."<sup>19</sup>

Usually the father, or a woman's guardian, sought a husband who would provide a valuable social, political, or business connection for the family.

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<sup>15</sup> Demand, Nancy H. *Birth, Death, and Motherhood in Classical Greece*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994. Print. 147.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>17</sup> Blundell, *op. cit.*, 114.

<sup>18</sup> Demand, *op. cit.*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Oakley, John H., and Rebecca H. Sinos. *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993. Print. 9.



The girl's family provided her with a dowry, which depending on its value helped determine how attractive an asset she could be to a potential husband. The dowry was returned to her family in the case of a divorce.<sup>20</sup> This likely prevented frivolous divorces and abuse and also gave the woman some stock in her new household.<sup>21</sup> Wealthy citizen women might marry cousins or other family members so that the fathers' property would stay in the family and not dwindle by being split between other families. If the girl's family could not afford a dowry, this limited the daughter's options for marriage and jeopardized her place in society. "An unmarried woman would have been financially dependent on her male next-of-kin, and one whose relatives were poor might have faced destitution or have been driven into prostitution (Demosthenes 59.113)"<sup>22</sup>. When possible, this dire fall was avoided with the help of a wealthier member of the extended family.<sup>23</sup>

The primary goal of a marriage was to produce a legitimate heir. The emphasis in ritual examined below on the female reproductive system, the beginning of menstruation or the bearing of children, reflects this primary function of women in classical Athens as seen by society. Some studies<sup>24</sup> have deduced that the average female gave birth about four times in her life. Frequent pregnancies starting at a young age combined with poor nutrition and unsanitary homes meant women's health was at great risk. Childbirth presented a risk for all women. The combined importance and danger of childbirth certainly would have created a need for women to have a powerful guardian to turn to in these extreme circumstances.

The concern for the honor of the *oikos* as represented through women's actions meant that the females in the family in an ideal situation participated in few public activities in order to

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<sup>20</sup> Blundell, op., cit., 115.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>24</sup> Pomeroy, op. cit., 68.

reduce the opportunity for shameful behavior. Even the marketplace was not an appropriate place for the woman of the house.<sup>25</sup> This may have resulted in extreme seclusion for some women, but the degree to which they were confined is debated.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, urbanization in classical Athens resulted in a change in lifestyles. The city was crowded, and “respectable” women were expected to remain inside the house as much as possible to maintain her honor. The Athenian citizen women of the upper class had the duty of running the household. This entailed being in charge of rearing children, cooking and cleaning, making clothing for the household, caring for the sick, and overseeing any servants that may have helped with these responsibilities.<sup>27</sup>

Wealthier Athenian women would have had several slaves available to go out to get water from the public fountain or do any other chores that would require her to work outside the house.<sup>28</sup> It is possible that the time-consuming task of running a household left few opportunities for wealthy women to go about in public anyway. When women did wander about the streets in the classical period, this could be seen as neglecting household responsibilities, thus tarnishing their reputations. It is likely that visiting with female friends and neighbors in their homes for conversation or advice was socially acceptable, however.<sup>29</sup>

Although it might be ideal to delegate tasks to slaves, less wealthy Athenian women could not afford to keep slaves and had to do most of the work on their own. Thus they needed to move about in public to accomplish domestic tasks such as going to the market and fetching water from the community fountain. While this would appear to afford a woman more freedom,

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<sup>25</sup> Blundell, *op. cit.*, 135.

<sup>26</sup> Pomeroy, *op. cit.*, 58.

<sup>27</sup> Blundell, *op. cit.*, 140.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-137.

these women were still segregated from men when they went out.<sup>30</sup> Some citizen women even sought work in the community to help support their families. Common occupations for these women included grape-picking, washing laundry, nursing other women's children as wet nurses, and selling goods in the market place including their own woven products, garlands, or food.<sup>31</sup> Employment as assistants to doctors eventually became an occupation possible for women.<sup>32</sup> Although these were not considered the duties of the most respected and ideal women, it is possible that they provided enjoyable activities for women who chose to do so as they had the opportunity to mingle with other women.<sup>33</sup>

Another occupation fulfilled by women in Athens was prostitution. This took place in brothels staffed with slaves.<sup>34</sup> Prostitution was even something the lawgiver Solon promoted; prostitutes were important for attracting travelers. Slave prostitutes could sometimes gain a great amount of wealth from working.<sup>35</sup>

The highest rank of prostitute was the hetaira. These women were known for their beauty and intellect and served as entertaining companions for men. They chose their clients, appeared in public with men and attended symposia, things respectable citizen wives would never do.

Women of all classes who were prostitutes, or who were used by men instead of their wives in order to avoid unwanted children within the marriage, were more likely to be put in the position of having to expose a child than wealthy citizen women were.<sup>36</sup> It is an interesting speculation that prostitutes might prefer female babies to male babies so that they could train

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>31</sup> Pomeroy, op. cit., 73.

<sup>32</sup> Dean-Jones, Lesley. *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994. Print. 31. And Blundell, op. cit., 145.

<sup>33</sup> Blundell, op. cit., 145

<sup>34</sup> Pomeroy, op. cit., 57.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 73, 89.

<sup>36</sup> Blundell, op. cit., 131.

them and have means of support when they get older<sup>37</sup> — if true, this would form a contrast to the strong desire of citizen wives to bear males.

### ***Women in Medicine in Ancient Greece***

Medical treatises from Classical Greece that dealt with females mainly focused on gynecology.<sup>38</sup> This may be partly due to expectations of women to perform their role in society, which was expected to be focused on producing legitimate heirs. Two well-known sources on this subject are the Hippocratic Corpus and Aristotle's *Biology*. Cultural views of women are evident in inaccurate diagnoses, prescribed treatments for illness, and anatomy and physiology of male and female bodies contained within these writings. Outside of the gynecological Hippocratic treatises, patients are referred to with male pronouns.<sup>39</sup> Side notes in cases sometimes mentioned that a specified illness affected women differently than men. This shows that when it came to medicine, men and women were separate entities. Most of women's illnesses were attributed to malfunctioning reproductive organs.

The Hippocratic Corpus is a collection of about 60 medical treatises written around the second half of the fifth century BCE and the first half of the fourth century BCE in addition to some possibly later dates. The writings were probably compiled around the third or second century BCE. It is the work of many different authors, probably including Hippocrates, but it is difficult to distinguish which works belong to him.<sup>40</sup> The Corpus does not necessarily have a unified medical theory due to numerous authors writing at different times and places and for varying reasons. The many types of accounts written include, among others, notes on patients'

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<sup>37</sup> Pomeroy, op. cit., 91.

<sup>38</sup> Dean-Jones, op. cit., 10.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 113-114.

<sup>40</sup> Dean-Jones, op. cit., 6.

cases, theories on the nature of various illnesses, and suggestions for treatments.<sup>41</sup> The purposes of these writings may have been to gain the confidence of the public showing what treatments Hippocratic doctors give and their reliability, and to dispel irrational beliefs that magic can heal.<sup>42</sup>

Aristotle's *Biology* is based on applying observations (often of animals) and ideologies to human anatomy and physiology. Aristotle follows a more systematic method than that of the eclectic Hippocratic Corpus. He tries to maintain consistency by keeping to hypotheses he believes to be true and applying them to wider scientific principles. However, the hypotheses that he adheres to are based on little or no actual evidence and lead to biased theories.<sup>43</sup>

This was probably the result of the perceived "otherness" of women and their bodies. The features of the female body that differ from the male body seem to have been considered weaknesses or flaws. Furthermore, there was an obvious preoccupation with the bodily functions of women, which were vital for performing their societal duty to produce children.

Giving birth was one of the biggest events in a woman's life. Given the dangers of childbirth in the absence of modern medicine, many women risked their lives to fulfill their assumed role in the *oikos*. The Hippocratic corpus provides some insight into the kinds of health risks women faced in childbirth. Careful analyses of the recorded symptoms suggest that illnesses like puerperal infection, malaria, and tuberculosis were some of the diseases that threatened pregnant women.<sup>44</sup> Risks in childbirth could have been augmented by possible malnourishment typical of women at the time.<sup>45</sup> Midwives traditionally helped mothers through

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 15-19.

<sup>44</sup> Demand, *op. cit.*, 71-86.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 8.

giving birth, and if labor was particularly difficult or problematic, her guardian might call for help from a doctor.<sup>46</sup>

The Hippocratic treatise *Epidemics* discusses common complications in pregnancy as well as during and after giving birth. The treatise suggests remedies for how to test or cure infertility in women, such as fumigation and use of pessaries. Rather than seek possibly invasive or humiliating treatment from a doctor some women may have preferred to seek help from the god Asclepius to cure their infertility.<sup>47</sup> Regardless of what treatment was carried out, it is clear that women's most important quality, fertility, was a matter of great concern in Greek society. Several ancient texts discuss the problem of the "wandering womb". Often health problems women had were attributed to lack of sexual intercourse with men. It was believed that without constant contact with the male the womb would dry up and sometimes move about the body causing health issues like suffocation, drowsiness, suicidal tendencies, hysteria, and other illnesses. The afflicted woman could be cured by intercourse and pregnancy. These beliefs likely contributed to the pressure put on women to marry and reproduce.<sup>48</sup>

The authors of the Hippocratic Corpus and Aristotle's *Biology* tried to be objective through the use of empirical data but they did not always escape their biases against women. Mistaken diagnoses were often the result of reasoning based on a biased belief. For example, when a woman became ill and stopped menstruating as a result of this illness the doctors thought that the illness was brought on by impeded menstruation. When the woman recovered from the illness and began menstruating again the doctor attributed her recovery to the return of

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<sup>46</sup> Death in childbirth was seen as something to be pitied but probably not viewed as brave or heroic as was the case for men who died in war. Demand, op. cit., 140.

<sup>47</sup> Blundell, op. cit., 105-106.

<sup>48</sup> Blundell, op. cit., 100-101.

menstruation rather than restored health.<sup>49</sup> Menstruation, fertility, and illnesses during and just after pregnancy are all well documented in medical texts. There was a considerable effort to try to identify patterns in cases related to female fertility and pregnancy in order to be able to predict what the outcome of different symptoms would be. Men likely would have wanted to be able to know if their wives were more likely to bear male or female children or if they could bear children at all. The great concern for these important bodily functions and their outcomes led to many illnesses being attributed to a malfunction in the woman's reproductive system.<sup>50</sup>

Several theories about the flesh of men's and women's bodies are presented in the Hippocratic Corpus. One such theory was that women's flesh was loose and spongy, soaking up more blood, which had been converted from food in the stomach. Men's flesh was denser, not soaking up as much blood as the women. Men had glands resembling the flesh of women that absorbed any excess blood that had not been used up in exercise. Women ended up being moister than men because of this spongy nature of their flesh. Women also had a greater excess of blood due to their dormant life styles, which did not provide much opportunity for using up that blood. This was said to be kept in check by menstruation.<sup>51</sup>

Menstruation was a topic of great interest to Hippocratic doctors because they knew that it related to fertility in women. Discussions on this topic include how much blood loss was normal. They thought that blood was filling the womb constantly and when it was full menstruation occurred. This resulted in an expectation of greater blood loss than what is actually healthy.<sup>52</sup> Abnormal menstruation was thought to bring on problematic symptoms and many

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<sup>49</sup> King, Helen. *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print. 31; Dean-Jones, op. cit., 127-129.

<sup>50</sup> Dean-Jones, op. cit., 125-146.

<sup>51</sup> Dean-Jones, op. cit., 55-56.

<sup>52</sup> King, op. cit., 30.

illnesses were thought of as being cured through menstruation ridding the body of infectious substances.<sup>53</sup>

How often and under what circumstances women sought care from a doctor might be indicated in the contents of the Hippocratic Corpus. Patient cases are more often male than female.<sup>54</sup> Does this mean that women got sick less often than men? It seems more likely that many women sought traditional methods of treatment from wise women and religion more often than from doctors. These women rightly may have felt that they understood their bodies better than a male doctor. They also may have preferred to avoid coming into intimate contact with men they did not know and so preferred only to seek help when illnesses became severe or life threatening. About a third of females in the patient cases suffered from illnesses resulting from complications in pregnancy and childbirth. These women's guardians may have felt that this delicate situation required the involvement of a doctor out of concern for a successful childbirth.<sup>55</sup>

The treatment of women as entirely separate and different from men in medicine in the Hippocratic treatises yielded different misconceptions about women's health than Aristotle's approach. Aristotle based his conclusions on the belief that the female body was modeled after the male body.<sup>56</sup> He came to the conclusion that women did not contribute seed to the conception of a child.<sup>57</sup> If it was thought that women did have this ability the male would not hold as much authority. In contrast, the Hippocratic authors took into account that children resemble both parents and so women did put forth seed in conception. They were able to reach this conclusion because they did not see this as posing any power threat to men. In their eyes, even if women put

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<sup>53</sup> Dean-Jones, op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>55</sup> Dean-Jones, op. cit., 34-5.

<sup>56</sup> King, op. cit., 34.

<sup>57</sup> Dean-Jones, op. cit., 177.



forth seed their flawed bodies were so different that they could never reach the potential of men.<sup>58</sup>

The Hippocratic theory probably reflects more closely the views on this matter in Greek society in general. This could be a result of the intended audiences for these texts. Aristotle's writings were intended for a male audience and so were less sympathetic toward women. The Hippocratic doctors had a wider audience. They needed to gain the confidence of both men and women in order to be able to treat and work with them.<sup>59</sup>

The evidence we have for women and medicine in the ancient Greek world largely comes from the Hippocratic Corpus and Aristotle's *Biology*. While they include many misconceptions about women and the female body they are valuable texts. How these misconceptions came to be reveals cultural biases men held against women. Despite the inaccurate diagnoses and treatments we can still learn about what illnesses women faced and how they may have chosen to deal with them.

### ***The Role of Religion in Women's Lives***

In addition to caring for their bodies, of course, women had to care for their spiritual lives – and the two were closely connected in the Athenian mindset. It was acceptable for women in classical Athens to go beyond the confines and duties of the home when it came to matters of religion, and indeed religion was likely important in the lives of most Athenian women. They attended religious rituals such as funerals, marriages of their children, and festivals.<sup>60</sup> Women

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>60</sup> Pomeroy, *op. cit.*, 80.; Blundell, *op. cit.*, 134.

from noble families were eligible to be chosen for highly honored priestess positions.<sup>61</sup> This does not mean that all other women were entirely excluded from religion, however: freedwomen made dedications to Athena, and other gods, giving thanks. Women of all walks of life visited sanctuaries and made dedications. The Eleusinian Mysteries were a highly popular cult in Athens and was open to anyone including men, women, and slaves.<sup>62</sup> The Thesmophoria festival for Demeter however, was only celebrated by free women with good reputations.<sup>63</sup> While religion was relevant for all women it was more accessible for free wealthy women.

We know only a little about the rites celebrated by women. For instance, wives of citizen men were they who celebrated the Thesmophoria. In Athens, this festival went on for three days. Women who participated were excused from their work at home. This may have been a welcome social outlet for women frustrated with their exclusion from the polis despite their key role in its continuity. Furthermore, the Thesmophoria revolved around the myth of Demeter and Persephone, reinforcing the message of the importance of marriage and childbearing in the community.<sup>64</sup> We cannot definitively say what meaning this festival held for the participant, however.

The goddess Artemis makes an important appearance in women's lives in connection with their reproductive systems. Prepubescent girls partook in a sort of coming of age ceremony, the *Arkteia*, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 and involved participating in games and races in the nude. This ceremony would have occurred just before the onset of menarche, which signaled a girl was ready for marriage. This ceremony took place primarily at

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<sup>61</sup> Connelly, Joan Breton. *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007. Print. 27.

<sup>62</sup> Pomeroy, op. cit., 77.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Demand, op. cit., 24.

the Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron and is an important example of the role the goddess Artemis played in the lives of females at key points in their reproductive cycle.

When young maidens fell victim to the “illness of maidens”<sup>65</sup> due to impeded menstrual flow, some symptoms were delirium, suffocation, and hallucinations. Victims were at risk of committing suicide. The Hippocratic doctors tell us of women who dedicated their most valuable clothing to Artemis to give thanks when they became well again.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, multiple sources demonstrate that many women believed their capacity for reproduction was at the mercy of the goddess. It was because of this that Athenian girls played the role of “she-bears” for Artemis at Brauron before they reached puberty in the *Arkteia* rites: these served as preparation for childbirth and helped avoid retribution against themselves or the entire city, (later myths tell of Artemis sending a plague on a community when she is offended). Items from a girl’s childhood were often dedicated to Artemis just before marriage. Women prayed to Artemis during labor and made dedications to her after a successful childbirth. When women died in labor their garments were often dedicated to Artemis at Brauron. Women were constantly appeasing Artemis, almost always in circumstances related to their ability to bear healthy children.<sup>67</sup> Thus her connection to women’s lives, to their physical health, and to their practice of religion is clear.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>66</sup> King, op, cit., 78.

<sup>67</sup> Cole, Susan G. *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space: The Ancient Greek Experience*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2004. Print. 211-212.

### Chapter 3: Artemis in Literature

Now that we have considered the nature of women's lives in Greece and the times when they were particularly likely to call on the goddess Artemis, we will turn to examine literary portrayals of Artemis. Artemis has many facets to her role as a Greek goddess. Nowhere is this as obvious as in literature. Her widely varying characteristics change from region to region and throughout time. In the classical period in Attica she was considered, among other things, goddess of the hunt. But some deeper meaning and attributes came along with being a huntress: she was both the protector and hunter of animals. This polarity may seem surprising at first but is actually a common feature among gods and goddesses — for example, Apollo is both the god of healing and plague. Artemis's relationship with animals at times seems to parallel her relationship with women. She guides young girls through puberty, then marriage, and then childbirth — and at the same time she strikes them down with her arrows. Wild nature is her territory, yet she loves the cities of men. She is both comforting and fearsome.

This chapter will explore Artemis' representations in literature beginning with Homer and Hesiod. It then turns to the classical period, including the Odes of Pindar, plays written by the tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, as well as by the comedian Aristophanes, speeches from Aeschines and Demosthenes, and philosophical writings by Plato. It is far too difficult to say with absolute certainty who the audience for these texts was or how it was received but it is commonly thought they were intended for a predominantly male audience. Still, we can see that Artemis appears already as a powerful goddess in Homer. Her character develops and comes to be predominantly featured in classical texts as vehemently promoting piety towards the gods and avenging misdeeds. We also consider texts that provide further nuances to the goddess' character, including her power in military contexts. A particularly interesting point is

that when she is invoked in the mouths of females, even in these works written by men, she commonly takes on the role as a protector or promoter of child-bearing and marriage. Thus her portrayal seems to differ in accordance with gender.

### *Artemis in Epic*

Artemis appears in the *Iliad* in connection both with women and with men<sup>68</sup> Hera calls her a lioness to women.<sup>69</sup> She carries out cruel punishments, slaying Niobe's daughters<sup>70</sup> and sending a plague on Oeneus's people when he leaves her out of his offering to several gods.<sup>71</sup> Altogether Homer portrays Artemis as a vengeful goddess, bringing death and punishment to mortals. In the immortal realm she is perhaps less powerful: at one point Hera beats and scolds Artemis.<sup>72</sup> She is not the only god that receives this kind of treatment in the *Iliad*, however, and in fact this need not change our understanding of her portrayal as a powerful goddess.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, at the same time as the renditions of the goddess as one who mercilessly exacts retribution on men for their want of rectitude, Artemis' role in bringing death to women as well as the passage mentioning a young man who falls in love with a young woman "...amid the singing maidens, in the dancing floor of Artemis..."<sup>74</sup> may allude to an existing tradition of female worship of

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<sup>68</sup> Homer. *The Iliad*. Trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013. <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg001.perseus-eng1:5.43>>. 6.205, 6.428, 24.605.; In *Il* 19.59 Achilles wishes that Artemis had slain Helen when he took her.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.483

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.605; Burkert, *op. cit.*, 150-152.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.533

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.470

<sup>73</sup> I am grateful to Professor Lauri Reitzammer for pointing out that Artemis' is not the only god that is thus treated therefore it does not mean that Artemis was considered particularly weak especially in relation to mortals.

<sup>74</sup> Homer.*Il.* *op. cit.*, 16.183

Artemis in the archaic period that resembled the tradition seen later in the classical period, especially at Brauron.

Homer's *Odyssey* includes another quality of Artemis unseen in the *Iliad*. The goddess' beauty comes into the foreground when Helen's and Nausicaa's looks are likened unto those of Artemis.<sup>75</sup> Artemis' strength as described in the *Iliad* as "lioness to women"<sup>76</sup> comes up several times in the *Odyssey*, however, including when Penelope prays that Artemis will drive an arrow through her heart and let her die<sup>77</sup> and when the goddess slays Ariadne and a woman on a ship.<sup>78</sup> In book 15 there is an interesting anecdote about the island Syra, where Apollo and Artemis kill the residents with painless shafts when they grow old: Apollo kills the men and Artemis the women.<sup>79</sup>

Artemis plays an important role in death and sometimes-cruel punishment in Homer's works. The Artemis from the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* ends up continuing into and growing in the classical period into a significant, powerful goddess who picks up additional attributes relating to military strength and strength in childbirth along the way. This way was paved in the earliest periods by her roles in Homer and contemporary literature.

The Homeric Hymn to Artemis (No. 9) reflects the otherworldly beauty of the goddess but gives only little insight into the deity or her role in humans' lives:

Muse, sing of Artemis, sister of the Far-shooter,  
the virgin who delights in arrows, who was fostered with Apollo.  
She waters her horses from Meles deep in reeds,  
and swiftly drives her all-golden chariot through Smyrna  
to vine-clad Claros where Apollo, god of the silver bow,

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<sup>75</sup> Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013.

<<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg002.perseus-eng1:4.100>> 4.2, 6.2, 6.3, 19.1.

<sup>76</sup> Homer.*Il.* op. cit., 21.483; Larson, op. cit., 102.

<sup>77</sup> Homer.*Od.* op. cit.,18.4, 20.1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.,11.6, 15.9.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 15.8.

sits waiting for the far-shooting goddess who delights in arrows.  
 And so hail to you, Artemis, in my song and to all goddesses as well.  
 Of you first I sing and with you I begin;  
 now that I have begun with you, I will turn to another song.<sup>80</sup>

This hymn features Artemis in Asia Minor where her cult was perhaps more significant at the time than it was in Attica. Her association with her brother Apollo, arrows, and Asia Minor seems to be her most important identifying characteristic at this time.

The Homeric Hymn to Artemis (No. 27) includes the most familiar depiction of Artemis as the huntress accompanied by a stag with her bow and arrows.

I sing of Artemis, whose shafts are of gold, who cheers on the hounds,  
 the pure maiden, shooter of stags, who delights in archery,  
 own sister to Apollo with the golden sword.  
 Over the shadowy hills and windy peaks  
 she draws her golden bow, rejoicing in the chase,  
 and sends out grievous shafts. The tops of the high mountains  
 tremble and the tangled wood echoes  
 awesomely with the outcry of beasts: earth quakes  
 and the sea also where fishes shoal. But the goddess with a bold heart  
 turns every way destroying the race of wild beasts:  
 and when she is satisfied and has cheered her heart, this huntress  
 who delights in arrows slackens her supple bow  
 and goes to the great house of her dear brother  
 Phoebus Apollo, to the rich land of Delphi,  
 there to order the lovely dance of the Muses and Graces.  
 There she hangs up her curved bow and her arrows,  
 and heads and leads the dances, gracefully arrayed,  
 while all they utter their heavenly voice,  
 singing how neat-ankled Leto bore children of Zeus,  
 supreme among the immortals both in thought and in deed.<sup>81</sup>

It is interesting that in this passage Artemis orders and leads dance, singing how Leto bore the supreme children of Zeus. Later, in the classical period, young girls danced in worship of Artemis. Perhaps this is another allusion to cult practices relating to Artemis in the archaic period.

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<sup>80</sup> "Homeric Hymn to Artemis." *Ancient/ Classical History*. About.com. Web. 8 February 2013 <[http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl\\_text\\_homerhymn\\_artemis.htm](http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_text_homerhymn_artemis.htm)>

<sup>81</sup> "Homeric Hymn to Artemis." *Ancient/ Classical History*. About.com. Web. 8 February 2013 <[http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl\\_text\\_homerhymn\\_artemis2.htm](http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_text_homerhymn_artemis2.htm)>

Artemis is mentioned two times in Hesiod's *Theogony*.<sup>82</sup> In both instances she is described as Artemis who delights in arrows. Additionally, in one of those instances she is also called daughter of Leto and sister of Apollo. These characteristics are her main general identifiers in epic, and they continue into the classical period.

If Homer's works are at all indicative of popular thought in archaic Greece, Artemis was already seen as a fierce and fearful goddess, possibly one worshipped by women through dancing rituals. Artemis was receiving rich dedications from women at her sanctuary of Brauron in Attica before 480 BCE,<sup>83</sup> supporting the possibility that cult practice and worship by women was already established to some degree in the archaic period.

### *Artemis in Classical Literature*

Already in late lyric poetry of the classical period we see Artemis' character develop and her vengeful spirit featured more prominently. Pindar's Olympian Ode 3, written in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, refers to Artemis as the one who sets things right.<sup>84</sup> His Pythian Ode 3, written around the same time, tells of Coronis (mother of Asclepius), who was struck down by Artemis' golden arrows and sent down to Hades by Apollo before she could bear her child. Pindar explains that Apollo and Artemis' anger was not for nothing. She had consented to a marriage

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<sup>82</sup> Hesiod. *Theogony*. Trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013

<<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0020.tlg001.perseus-eng1:1>> 14, 920

<sup>83</sup> Papadimitriou, John. "The Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron." *American Scientific* 208.6 (1963): 110-22. Print. 111-115

<sup>84</sup> Pindar. *Olympian*. Trans. Diane Arnson Svarlien (1990). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013  
<<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0033.tlg001.perseus-eng1:3>> 30.



without her father's knowledge while carrying Apollo's child.<sup>85</sup> The punishment seems harsh — but Artemis' affinity for strict punishment shows up again in later classical texts.

We will now turn to a careful consideration of representations of Artemis in classical tragedy, comedy, oratory, and philosophy. We will begin by surveying literature apparently written for a male audience: first we will review texts representing Artemis as a strict enforcer of rules, one who upholds the rights of the gods and severely punishes those who disregard them. Then we will turn to texts that touch on Artemis in conjunction with war. Finally we will change our focus to look at how Artemis appears in female contexts.

*Agamemnon* is a tragedy written by Aeschylus dating to 458 BCE.<sup>86</sup> The story deals with Clytaemnestra killing her husband, the king Agamemnon, in retribution for having sacrificed their daughter Iphigenia to Artemis while the Greek troops were stranded at Aulis. The remaining children, Electra and Orestes, then plot to kill their mother for murdering their father. Artemis is inevitably mentioned in this play in connection with her part in the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The reason for Artemis' demand for Iphigenia's life is thus explained: "For, in her pity, holy Artemis is angry at the winged hounds of her father, for they sacrifice a wretched timorous thing, together with her young, before she has brought them forth. An abomination to her is the eagles' feast."<sup>87</sup> The goddess' call for Iphigenia's sacrifice once again seems exceptionally severe.

Again in *Agamemnon* the chorus addresses Artemis starting in line 140:

Although, O Lovely One, you are so gracious to the tender whelps  
of fierce lions, and take delight in the suckling young of every wild

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<sup>85</sup> Pindar. *Pythian*. Trans. Diane Arnson Svarlien (1990). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0033.tlg001.perseus-eng1:3>> 15.

<sup>86</sup> Aeschylus. *Agamemnon*. Trans Herbert Weir Smyth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0085.tlg005.perseus-eng1:122>>

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-139.

creature that roams the field, promise that the issue be brought to pass in accordance with these signs, portents auspicious yet filled with ill. And I implore Paeon, the healer, that she may not raise adverse gales with long delay to stay the Danaan fleet from putting forth, by urging another sacrifice, one that knows no law, unsuited for feast, worker of family strife, dissolving wife's reverence for husband. For there abides wrath— terrible, not to be suppressed, a treacherous guardian of the home, a wrath that never forgets and that exacts vengeance for a child.<sup>88</sup>

It is evident here from the chorus' anxiety about what is to come that upsetting Artemis can have extreme consequences. Furthermore, by the end of the passage it seems that the chorus might not only be describing Clytaemnestra. There is foreshadowing of the act that Clytaemnestra will commit out of rage. She is certainly a force to be reckoned with: she had brought her daughter to Aulis thinking she would be marrying the great hero Achilles, but instead the girl was killed as a sacrifice by her father. Clytaemnestra never forgot and would soon seek revenge. Artemis too had been enraged by the loss of one of her beloved animals and the coming Trojans' demise. She could not forget so easily, and would demand severe punishment in return for the slaughter.

In Sophocles' *Electra*, Clytaemnestra swears by Artemis that Electra will not go without punishment for accusing her of unjustly killing Agamemnon.<sup>89</sup> In another play by Sophocles, *Ajax*, the chorus sings,

Was it Artemis ruler of bulls, Zeus's daughter, that drove you, O powerful Rumor, O mother of my shame, drove you against the herds of all our people? Was she exacting retribution, perhaps, for a victory that had paid her no tribute, whether it was because she had been cheated of the glory of captured arms, or because a stag had been slain without gifts for recompense? Or can the bronze-cuirassed Lord of War have had some cause for anger arising out of an alliance

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 140-160

<sup>89</sup> Sophocles. *Electra*. Ed. Richard Jebb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1894). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0011.tlg005.perseus-eng1:558>> 626.

of spears, and taken vengeance for the outrage by contrivance shrouded in night?<sup>90</sup>

Here it makes sense to the author that Artemis would cause misfortune as recompense for some misdeed against her.

Euripides, too, portrayed Artemis as the potentially vengeful upholder of duty towards the gods. Thus, in the *Medea*, Medea calls on Themis (i.e., justice) and Artemis, asking if they have seen what she suffers and hopes that her husband will suffer for leaving her.<sup>91</sup> In the *Bacchae*, Kadmos warns Pentheus about offending the gods, recalling how Artemis had Actaeon's own dogs tear him apart because he bragged about being better than her at hunting<sup>92</sup>. Antigone in the *Phoenissae* prays that Artemis will kill Parthenopaeus for coming to attack her city<sup>93</sup>. In the tragedy *Iphigenia at Aulis* Agamemnon killed one of Artemis' beloved stags and stirred up the wrath of Artemis with his boasting.<sup>94</sup>

Euripides' tragedy *Hippolytus* is a good showcase of Artemis' heavy-handed implemetation of retribution against mortals.<sup>95</sup> Hippolytus was a strong devout worshipper of Artemis. He remained a virgin and hunted in the wild with her. He picked a flower for her from a

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<sup>90</sup> Sophocles. *Ajax*. Ed. Richard Jebb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0011.tlg003.perseus-eng1:172>> 172-181.

<sup>91</sup> Euripides. *Medea*. Trans. David Kovacs (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming) *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0006.tlg003.perseus-eng1:160>> 160-164.

<sup>92</sup> Euripides. *Bacchae*. Trans. T. A. Buckley (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1850). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 11 Mar. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0006.tlg017.perseus-eng1:298>> 310-345.

<sup>93</sup> Euripides. *Phoenissae*. Trans. E. P. Coleridge (New York: Random House, 1938). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 21 Feb. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0006.tlg015.perseus-eng1:145>> 151.

<sup>94</sup> Euripides. *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Trans. E. P. Coleridge (London: George Bell and Sons, 1891). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 19 Feb 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0006.tlg018.perseus-eng1:80>>

<sup>95</sup> Euripides. *Hippolytus*. Trans. David Kovacs (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 21 Feb. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0006.tlg005.perseus-eng1:1>>

field that had never been touched. He made the mistake of stating that he thought Aphrodite to be the most base of gods. Although his servant warned him that he was in dangerous territory, he did not give Aphrodite another thought. Of course this did not sit well with her, and she could not just leave it be. She decided Hippolytus would pay.

Aphrodite made Hippolytus' stepmother fall so deeply in love with him that she fell deathly ill and could not even eat. One of her servants, fearing for her mistress's life, went to Hippolytus and made him swear an oath not to speak of what she would tell him. She informed him of his stepmother's desires and he, being a chaste worshipper of Artemis, denounced his stepmother for such wicked desires. His stepmother, fearing for her honor should her husband find out, decided to take her own life and leave a note accusing Hippolytus of raping her. Hippolytus' father, Theseus, believed her and ignored Hippolytus' attempts to explain his innocence. He banished his son and sent a curse on him. Hippolytus was then gravely injured in a chariot wreck. His father allowed him to come back into the palace to die.

Artemis then stepped in and informed Hippolytus and Theseus about what had happened. She explained that Hippolytus had offended Aphrodite and these unfortunate events were all part of her plan. She explained too that she had to obey a code among the gods that they would not interfere in matters like this (despite the extreme cruelty of it all), but that she would kill one of Aphrodite's most beloved mortals in return. Thus in this play, she strictly adheres to keeping balance and doing what she — and the gods — considered morally right.

Artemis' unforgiving character turns up in Athenian historical descriptions as well as tragedy. In the Greek soldier Aeschines' speech *Against Ctesiphon*, written ca. 330 BCE, he

accused Ctesiphon of wrongly proposing Demosthenes be awarded a crown.<sup>96</sup> In this speech he mentioned Artemis several times. He told of the Amphictyons receiving an oracle from Delphi that they must fight the Cirrhaeans and Cragalidae and utterly destroy their country. The oracle instructed that they dedicate the conquered land to the Pythian Apollo, Artemis, Leto, and Athena Pronaea so that no man would ever till it. They did just as the oracle instructed and swore an oath to never allow the sacred land to be used. They attached a curse of Apollo, Artemis, Leto, and Athena Pronaea, saying that any man at all who disturbed the land would grow no fruit, their wives would have monsters rather than children, and they would incur other misfortunes and essentially never recover from their misfortunes. Finally they implored that the violators will never have pure sacrifices accepted by those same gods. All of these authors understood Artemis to play a key role in harsh punishment, strict adherence to rules, and piety toward the gods.

Artemis also is found providing help to men in times of war. In the *Athenian Constitution* attributed to Aristotle it is stated that the “war-lord” was responsible for sacrificing to Artemis the Huntress.<sup>97</sup> In *Seven against Thebes*, the chorus calls out to Artemis as they hear their city being attacked.<sup>98</sup> In another instance from the same play, Eteocles explains that he has a sentinel who has the good will of Artemis stationed against Capaneus.<sup>99</sup> In his speeches, *Against Midias*, and *Against Macartatus*, Demosthenes points out that there are oracles that instruct among other

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<sup>96</sup> Aeschines. *Against Ctesiphon*. Trans. Charles Darwin Adams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web 10 Mar.

2013.<<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0026.tlg003.perseus-eng1:108>>

<sup>97</sup> Aristotle. *Athenian Constitution*. Trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 20 Feb.

2013.<<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0086.tlg003.perseus-eng1:58>> 58.1-4.

<sup>98</sup> Aeschylus. *Seven Against Thebes*. Trans. Herbert Weir Smyth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 21 Feb. 2013

<<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0085.tlg004.perseus-eng1:149>> 154.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 450.

things sacrificing to Apollo, Artemis, and Leto for good fortune. These excerpts highlight her hand in military contexts, and the understood importance for men to sacrifice to Artemis.

There are also examples of Artemis' actions and interactions in classical literature that more closely relate to her cult function and role in the lives of women. Interestingly, most of these instances are voiced by women — even if they are in works written by men. Thus Aeschylus' play, *Suppliant Women*, features a reference to Artemis-Hecate, praying that she will watch over the childbirth of the women.<sup>100</sup> In that same play the chorus of Danaids who ran from their proposed marriages ask that Artemis look over them and that they never marry.<sup>101</sup> In *Thesmophoriasuzae* by Aristophanes, Mnesilochus gets caught attending a strictly female festival pretending to be a woman. He is discovered and as the women tie him up and threaten to burn him he snatches the baby of one of the women and threatens to kill it.<sup>102</sup> It turns out it is just a wine skin with little shoes. Mnesilochus asks the woman if it is her child and she responds swearing by Artemis that she carried it ten months. In Euripides' *Suppliants*, mothers mourn the loss of their children lamenting, “No longer a happy mother, no longer blessed with children, nor do I share their happy lot among Argive women who have sons; nor any more will Artemis of childbirth kindly greet these childless mothers...”<sup>103</sup> The chorus of women in Euripides' *Hippolytus* cries, “Women's nature is an uneasy harmony, and with it is wont to dwell the slack unhappy helplessness of birth-pangs and their folly. Through my womb also has this breath

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<sup>100</sup> Aeschylus. *Suppliant Women*. Trans. Herbert Weir Smyth (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 21 Feb. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0085.tlg001.perseus-eng1:667>> 670-675.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 1030.

<sup>102</sup> Aristophanes. *Thesmophoriasuzae*. Trans. Eugene O'Neill, Jr. (New York: Random House, 1938). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 21 Feb. 2013. <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0019.tlg008.perseus-eng1:101>> 730.

<sup>103</sup> Euripides. *The Suppliants*. Trans. E. P. Coleridge (New York: Random House, 1938). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 21 Feb. 2013 <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0006.tlg008.perseus-eng1:955>> 955-959.

darted. But I called on the heavenly easer of travail, Artemis, mistress of arrows, and she is always—the gods be praised—my much-envied visitor.”<sup>104</sup>

Such references are not limited to plays, moreover. In *Theaetetus* by Plato, Socrates discusses why certain women are appointed midwives by Artemis.<sup>105</sup> Artemis herself being a virgin and having been allotted the realm of childbirth requires women who have had the experience but no longer give birth because of their age and in not giving birth still share a connection with Artemis. Artemis’ significance to women in matters of childbirth and marriage is well represented in literature in of the classical period.

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<sup>104</sup> Euripides.*Hipp.*.op. cit., 161-169.

<sup>105</sup> Plato. *Theaetetus*. Trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921). *Perseus Digital Library*. Web. 10 Mar. 2013  
<<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg006.perseus-eng1:149b>> 149b.

## Chapter 4: Artemis and Women in Classical Sculpture and Vase Paintings

Some of the biggest challenges in interpreting vase paintings (as well as many other types of visual culture), as Mary Beard points out, are not knowing exactly who the audience for each vase was and how different people might have reacted to the subjects depicted.<sup>106</sup> Keeping this in mind, this chapter will explore how Artemis intersects with women in visual culture.

This chapter first assesses representations of Artemis in visual culture including vase paintings, relief sculptures, and terracotta figurines. Because of the nature of these items – being personal belongings and appearing as personal dedications in sanctuaries – a more female audience may have been in mind in their creation and use. From this we can try to better understand what Artemis’ meant to women. Then we will turn to the same media for images of women. This will help us to understand the ideal roles women were expected to fulfill which Artemis provides protection and aid to accomplish.

### *Artemis in Greek vase paintings*

Images of Artemis in vase paintings from the classical period are not as numerous as images of mortal women, but there are a few patterns and typical settings in which she is depicted. She is shown playing her role in the tragic stories of Actaeon, and Niobe. In other instances she is shown on her own or with Apollo and her mother Leto. In most instances she is shown with a bow, arrows, quiver, fawn or some combination of these symbols to identify her. More often than not she wears a long dress and in at least one instance she has wings. I have not found any images of Artemis interacting with mortal women.

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<sup>106</sup> Beard, Mary. "Adopting an Approach 2." *Looking at Greek Vases*. Ed. Tom Rasmussen and Nigel Jonathan. Spivey. Cambridge [England: Cambridge UP, 1991. 12-35. Print.



A well-known calyx crater by the Niobid Painter shows the slaying of Niobe's children by Artemis and Apollo (fig.1). Artemis holds her bow out in front of her taking aim and reaches back for an arrow from her quiver. Artemis' pose mimics a statue group of the tyrannicides who were held by the Athenians to be upholders of justice and balance. Artemis's role in this story is to exact revenge on Niobe by killing all of her children for having insulted Artemis and Apollo's mother Leto. Artemis killed the girls and Apollo the boys. In this vase intended for the male symposium, then, Artemis is shown in the vengeful character that most commonly typified her presentation in mid-fifth century Athenian literature as well.



**Figure 1. Calyx Crater by the Niobid Painter. Apollo, Artemis, and the Niobids. Early 5th c. BCE** <sup>107</sup>

A bell crater painted by the Lykaon painter from the mid fifth century shows the fate of Actaeon (fig.2). He is being attacked by his hunting dogs, shown sprouting antlers as he turns into a stag. Artemis wears a long dress with a mantel. She holds a torch in her right hand and her bow in her left. Her quiver juts out from behind her shoulder. She stands by overseeing

<sup>107</sup> Boardman, John. *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Classical Period*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1989. Print. 17.

Actaeon's punishment for disrespecting her by bragging that he was a better hunter than she.

Another perhaps more famous bell crater by the Pan Painter from ca. 480 BCE shows the same myth, although this time Artemis draws back her arrow and aims right at Actaeon (fig.3).



**Figure 2. Bell crater depicting the death of Actaeon by the Lykaon Painter. ca. 440 BCE.<sup>108</sup>**



**Figure 3. Bell Crater by the Pan Painter. Artemis slaying Actaeon.<sup>109</sup>**

<sup>108</sup> Reeder, Ellen D. *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*. Baltimore, MD: Trustees of the Walters Art Gallery in Association with Princeton UP, Princeton, N.J., 1995. Print. 316.

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.studyblue.com/notes/note/n/blue-box-exam-2/deck/181817>

From about 480 to 460 BC Artemis is shown on several vases, mostly red-figure lekythoi, as a huntress mid stride with her bow out in front of her (fig.4). She reaches behind her to pluck an arrow from her quiver. She focuses her gaze straight ahead on a target not shown on the vase. Usually a fawn running alongside her accompanies her. In these instances, it is not wholly clear if the scene is intended to convey any deeper sense of Artemis or if it simply characterizes her through her paraphernalia.



**Figure 4. Red-figure lekythos with Artemis and fawn. Ca. 480-460 BCE<sup>110</sup>**

At least three red-figure lekythoi from about 420 BC show Artemis wearing a short dress with an animal skin wrapped around her waist and draped over one of her shoulders (fig.5). In each one she holds a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other. She also wears a quiver on her back. In two of the vases she strides toward a palm tree looking back behind her.

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<sup>110</sup> “Artemis.” *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. 1981. Print.



**Figure 5. Red-figure lekythos with Artemis. ca. 420 BCE<sup>111</sup>**

Artemis is also shown as a pious and feminine figure, however. Frequently she is depicted with a phiale, sometimes also with an oinochoe, either pouring or suggesting a libation to the gods. On a white ground lekythos with Artemis and a swan ca. 490 by the Pan Painter, Artemis can be identified by the deerskin tied around her neck as a cape and the quiver on her back (fig.6). She is in profile and reaches one hand out to the beak of a swan and holds a phiale in the other. She resembles the typical noble Athenian woman but she exudes a look of power and awareness appropriate for a goddess with her power. The swan could allude to her mother, Leto, or perhaps it could be some sort of remnant of her past as Potnia Theron, mistress of the animals<sup>112</sup>. The phiale might call to the viewer as a reminder of one's duty to sacrifice to the gods. This representation reflects her role in literature as an upholder of pious rectitude.

<sup>111</sup> LIMC, op. cit.,

<sup>112</sup> Reeder, op. cit., 309.





Figure 6. White ground lekythos of Artemis and swan. Ca. 490 BCE<sup>113</sup>

Throughout 500 to about 420 we find red-figure and white ground lekythoi, oinochoai and hydriai featuring Artemis holding a phiale over an altar or out in front of her brother Apollo. Sometimes she holds a phiale and an oinochoe, or on one occasion a phiale and a laurel branch.

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<sup>113</sup> Reeder, *op. cit.*, 308

A couple of vases show her with bow and arrow drawn over an altar. Artemis' portrayals with sacrificial paraphernalia reflect her role in literature as an upholder of pious rectitude. Lucilla Burn suggests that red-figure lekythoi were primarily associated with women.<sup>114</sup> White ground lekythoi were used as tomb offerings and therefore associated with women. Hydriai also are often thought to be predominantly used by women. These pious images of Artemis do not show up on kraters therefore it is quite possible that these images were aimed at women specifically. (figs.7, 8)



**Figure 7. Red-figure lekythos Artemis with bow and arrow before an altar. Ca. 550-420 BCE.<sup>115</sup>**

<sup>114</sup> Burn, Lucilla. "Red figure and white ground of the later fifth." *Looking at Greek Vases*. Ed. Tom Rasmussen and Nigel Jonathan. Spivey. Cambridge [England: Cambridge UP, 1991. 118-130. Print.

<sup>115</sup> LIMC, op., cit.



**Figure 8. Red-figure hydria with Artemis to the left of the altar holding an oenochoe and phiale pouring a libation. Hermes stands on the left, Apollo to the right of the altar, and Leto to the far right holding a phiale and laurel branch.ca. 470-460<sup>116</sup>**

Two oinochoai from the early classical period (fig.9) and one lekythos from about 430 BCE (fig.10) show Artemis with wings. In the earlier oinochoe she reaches down to touch a fawn with her right hand and holds her bow and an arrow in her left. In the later lekythos she walks toward a palm tree with her bow raised drawing back an arrow. Artemis is not shown with wings in sculpture and only in these instances in classical vase painting. The wings might be a remnant of her role as Potnia Theron, that had died out throughout the classical period. Thus that “lioness for women” of the earlier period has been tamed, reduced to something more manageable.

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<sup>116</sup> LIMC, op. cit.; CVA Cambridge 2, pls.





**Figure 9. Red-figure oinochoe. A winged Artemis reaches out to a fawn. Early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>117</sup>**

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<sup>117</sup> Reeder, op. cit., 310.





**Figure 10. Red-figure lekythos featuring a winged Artemis. Early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE<sup>118</sup>**

Artemis in her vengeful roles of killing Niobe's children and Actaeon was featured on calyx, bell, and volute kraters. All of these served as bowls for mixing wine and therefore were likely intended for use by men at symposia. Artemis' justice-keeping characteristic that is so prominently featured in the male dominated literature of the fifth century is thus once again featured in another medium most likely intended for a male audience. The scenes of Artemis looking pious holding a phiale in various settings appear on white ground lekythoi, hydriai, and oinochoai - vases typically associated with women. Both in literature and in vase paintings, Artemis is presented differently in accordance with the associated gender.

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<sup>118</sup> LIMC, op. cit.

### *Artemis in Classical Greek Sculpture*

Artemis' many facets are becoming eminently clear and manifest themselves in sculpture. We have but few sculptural remains representing her from classical Attica yet still her images hint at some of these aspects. Classical period sculptures of Artemis are mainly votive reliefs and terracotta figurines.<sup>119</sup> The votive reliefs are mostly from sanctuaries, especially Brauron; they feature Artemis with her family and draw a parallel between the goddess and the worship at her sanctuaries. This family connection highlights her protective relationship with girls, since her cult welcomed girls into their new role as fully participating family members, as potential mothers. A few other reliefs provide further understanding of how Artemis was viewed and what her role was in people's lives. The contexts of the terracotta figurines of Artemis are largely unknown, but they also emphasize the goddess' protective characteristics.

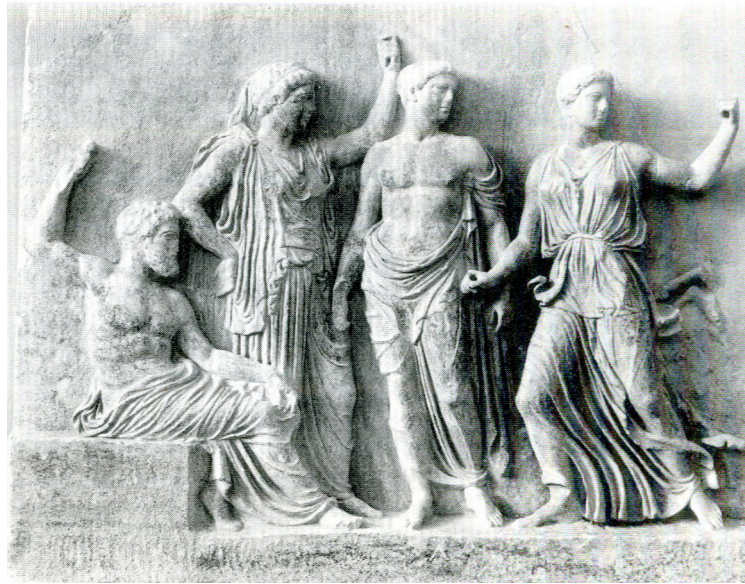
#### *Votive Reliefs*

The Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron yields a votive relief of Zeus seated on the left of the register, then Artemis' mother Leto standing to the right wearing a long peplos and a himation draped over her head with her left arm extended up in front of her with her hand in a fist and her index finger in a hook, a gesture associated with marriage (fig.11).<sup>120</sup> Apollo stands to the right and then Artemis is to the right of him. Zeus, Leto, and Apollo all look toward Artemis who seems to be looking at an animal that she is about to strike with a spear that would have once been in her left hand stretched back behind her. It makes sense that Artemis is the focus considering its placement in a sanctuary to Artemis. It also fits that Artemis be shown with

<sup>119</sup> The free standing sculptures of Artemis I came across belonged to the Hellenistic period.

<sup>120</sup> Lewis, Sian. *The Athenian Woman: An Iconographic Handbook*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print. 135.

her family at the sanctuary in Brauron where girls serve Artemis as a rite of passage to becoming a woman and creating a family. The Brauron Sanctuary would have been an appropriate context to showcase Artemis as a part of a family unit.



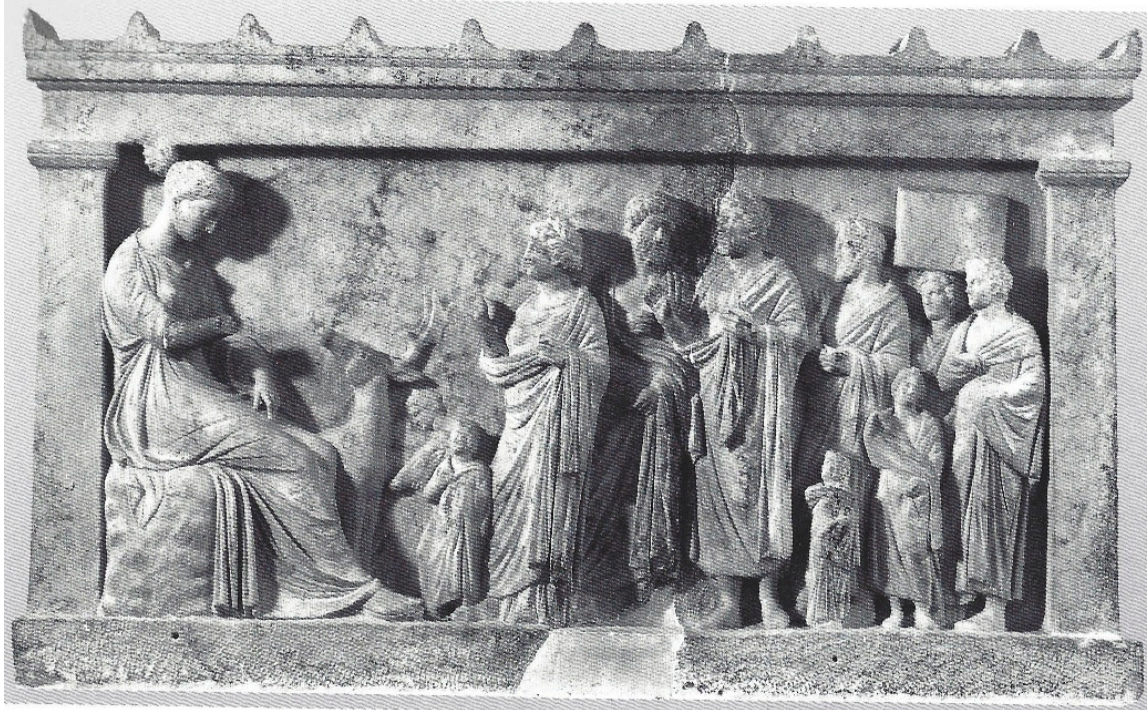
**Figure 11. Votive relief from Brauron of Artemis and her family. ca. 410 BCE.<sup>121</sup>**

Another votive relief from Brauron shows men, women, and young girls in a procession before Artemis seated in profile on the left wearing a long dress with sleeves (fig.12). Her chin dips down and her hair is tied back in a bun. Her pose is very much like the pose of a pious young woman. Our knowledge of worship of Artemis at Brauron is limited and often focuses on girls serving as bears at the Sanctuary at Brauron. This relief might provide a little more insight into the importance of this cult to the families of the young girls. Males in the family may have accompanied their young female family members when they were able.

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<sup>121</sup> Boardman, *op. cit.*, 201.





**Figure 12. Votive relief from Brauron. Artemis and worshippers. ca. 320 BCE.** <sup>122</sup>

A votive relief dating to c. 410 BCE shows Artemis striding to the right of the frame onto her left foot as her right leg drags behind (fig.13). Her torso faces the viewer and her head is in profile looking down at her kill in the lower right corner of the scene. She has already thrown one spear into the deer, and as it falls she swiftly moves in to make the kill. Her right arm reaches far behind her holding the spear about to kill the stag. In this snapshot we only see Artemis the huntress attacking her prey and confident in her ability to do so. This portrayal of Artemis looking so serene and beautiful with her dress flowing about her as she swiftly brings death communicates her formidable power but does it in a way that makes this otherwise scary part of life seem natural and almost poetic.

<sup>122</sup> Kaltsas, Nikolaos, and Alan Shapiro, eds. *Worshipping Women: Ritual and Reality in Classical Athens*. New York, NY: Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, 2008. Print. 80.



**Figure 13. Votive relief of Artemis slaying a stag. ca. 410.<sup>123</sup>**

Another votive relief from around 400 BCE, identified as Artemis because of the hunting dog next to her, shows Artemis sitting on what looks like a rock-bench leaning back on her left arm (fig.14). Her head is in profile looking to the left and her body is turned slightly toward the viewer. As goddesses were often rendered in Greek art, she looks much like a typical young Athenian woman in a long dress with many folds and her hair pulled back into a bun. The rocky setting and her hunting dog sniffing at the ground provide an outdoor surrounding less typical for Athenian women to be depicted in and provides an interesting combination of features. Perhaps this is a way of showing a domesticated aspect of Artemis and making her more familiar to women.

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<sup>123</sup> Reeder, op. cit., 305.





**Figure 14. Artemis reclines accompanied by her hunting dog. 400 BCE <sup>124</sup>**

The latest piece of sculpture considered here is a piece of a votive relief with the Apollonian Triad dating to 330-320 BCE (fig.15). Apollo stands on the left wearing a peplos and a himation around his shoulders. His hair falls down to his shoulders in curls and he holds a kithara on his left side, which is mostly obscured by Leto.<sup>125</sup> Leto is wearing a headdress and holds out a scepter to her left. Artemis is standing to the right, holding two torches in front of her with both hands. Eugenia Vikela suggests that this trio references a statue group of the Apollonian Triad that stood in a sanctuary in Athens.<sup>126</sup> This grouping is a common setting for Artemis in Greek art. Again, emphasizing her role as a family member underscores the importance of the rites at her sanctuaries in Attica that served to welcome girls into adulthood and into their newly significant family roles as potential mothers.

<sup>124</sup> Boardman, op. cit., 200.

<sup>125</sup> Kaltsas, op. cit., 98.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.



Figure 15. Apolline triad. Ca. 330-320.<sup>127</sup>

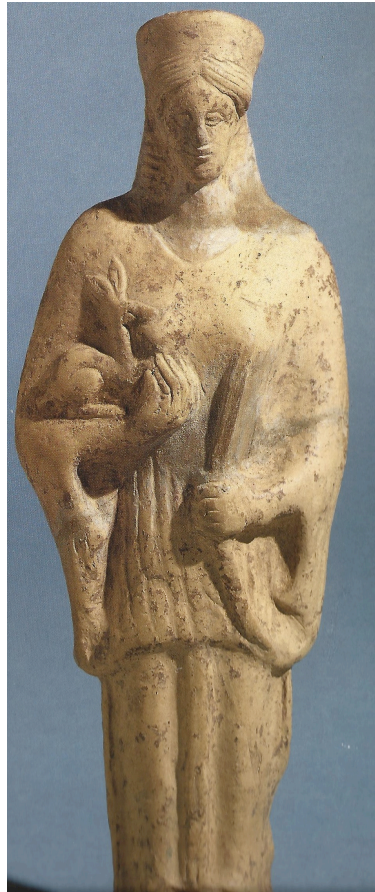
### *Terracottas*

Figure 16 is a small terracotta figurine of Artemis dating to the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Her frontal stance and hairstyle resemble an archaic kore, but the face has been reworked and shows a softness characteristic of the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>128</sup> A young girl straddles Artemis's feet and reaches her arms upward towards the goddess's waist. This child calls to mind the young girls who served as bears at Brauron so that Artemis would protect them. In her right hand Artemis holds her bow. Perhaps this simple attribute that gives the figure an identity is also a gentle reminder of her powers both to protect and to strike down victims.

<sup>127</sup> Kaltsas, op. cit., 99.

<sup>128</sup> Reeder, op. cit., 312.

Another terracotta figurine of Artemis from the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE uses the bow to identify the goddess, but she also holds a fawn in her right arm (fig.17). This combination of fawn and bow might be no more than a visual naming mechanism, but the image of her cradling a fawn might hint at the careful balance between protector and aggressor.



**Figures 16 and 17. Terracotta figurines of Artemis with a young girl and Artemis with a fawn. Early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE<sup>129</sup>**

Ellen D. Reeder identifies a terracotta figurine of a woman closely holding a girl who leans her head against her bosom as Artemis, based on many similar figurines found at Brauron.<sup>130</sup> The scene looks much like mother and child. The girl is safe and protected. It may

<sup>129</sup> Reeder, op. cit., 311, 312.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 313.



have been dedicated at the sanctuary as a form of asking Artemis for protection of a child, or to protect the one making the dedication. If the figurine is just mother and child it could have been given in thanks for a successful childbirth.

Although the amount of evidence for Artemis in classical Greek sculpture is limited the existing remains present several different aspects of her role in religion in Attica. As we have seen, she is shown as the protector and the huntress of women, a daughter with her family, and a deity worshipped by men, women, and children.

### ***Women in Classical Greek Visual Culture***

The representations of Artemis take on deeper meaning when considered in the context of classical Athenian portrayals of women, particularly ideal women. In researching the vast topic of women in Greek vase paintings I consulted approximately one third of the books in the collection of the Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum at the CU Boulder library. My hopes are that this small sample provides an accurate representation of Attic women in Greek vase paintings. I focused mainly on the mortal Athenian women. I will not be analyzing mythical women, heroines, or goddesses. There are many depictions of slaves and hetairai sometimes naked, attending symposium, playing music, and performing sexual acts. Prostitutes, slaves, and hetairai are fairly well represented in vase paintings. Why this is and who the audience was can provide for an interesting debate about the male view of women and exactly who used which vases — however, I will not be delving into that here. Instead I would like to take a closer look at the moments from the lives of higher status women and the portrayal of the ideal woman.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> I am grateful to Professor Kirk Ambrose for making the excellent point that images of saints in the Middle Ages were to be admired yet they were not held to be models for commoners. They functioned in a different realm than humans thus their relationship with everyday people is exceptionally complex. I think this topic of idealism requires a closer look especially in conjunction with Artemis and women. I

It should be noted that a great amount of pottery and vases that survive as evidence for Greek vase painting and pottery are uncovered in Italy due to ancient inhabitants in that area importing these goods. Despite the context of these finds we can still apply them to Greek culture because they originated in Greece and portray Greek subjects.<sup>132</sup>

### *Women in Attic Greek Vase Paintings*

The major vase shapes bearing images of women in the Classical Athenian period are Attic white ground and red figure lekythoi, hydriai, loutrophoroi, and perfume bottles. Women show up repeatedly in an array of scenes like preparing for and in the midst of a marriage ceremony, being pursued or chased by a male, bidding farewell, tending a grave, laying out a body and lamenting, participating in or sporting icons relevant to religious ritual, spinning wool, going to the fountain, holding babies, or just looking elegant and beautiful.

One of the most important events in a young woman's life was marriage. This transformation included leaving her family and becoming part of a new family of strangers at a young age by today's standards. The new bride was expected to take on a world of responsibilities in her home, to her husband and to her community, and her new role in society would potentially change who she was. Marriage preparations are, unsurprisingly, a common feature on certain shapes of vessel made in 5th-century Athens. One example of such a vase is a fragment of a hydria, or water jug<sup>133</sup>, where one woman is seated in profile and the other women (two to the left, three to the right) all fix their gazes on her. The woman in front of her holds out a mirror and holds a box (possibly for jewelry or ribbons?) in her right hand. The woman behind

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think this would add greater nuance to the relationship between everyday women and Artemis. Unfortunately, I was unable to incorporate a discussion on this topic in this thesis at this time.

<sup>132</sup> Lewis, op. cit., 132.

<sup>133</sup> CVA Great Britain 22, plate 33.

her is also holding a box. A ribbon hangs on the wall letting us know that the scene is indoors. These women are preparing the seated girl for her wedding. The bride's head tilts down and she wears a grave expression reflective of the seriousness of the process of leaving her own family and joining a new one.

An Attic, red figure, three handled, loutrophoros from Pikrodaphne shows the laying out of a young woman's body and a funeral procession (fig.18). An old woman with short hair and wrinkles on her neck lays the deceased young woman's crowned head down on an artfully decorated pillow. A woman to the left looks down at the face of the deceased. Her hair is down and she grabs at it with both hands in lamentation. Further to the left stand four more women. They all wear their hair down. Two have short hair, one has long, and the head of the woman furthest left does not survive. Three of them grab at their hair with both hands and one rests her chin on her right hand and holds that arm with her left. To the right of the old woman are two horses, facing right and several men leading the funeral procession. The woman being mourned is young and beautiful. It could be possible that the person being commemorated is being depicted as ideally as possible but it is also important to note that it was not uncommon for women (and men) to die at a young age especially with the added risks that came with pregnancy and childbirth.



Figure 18. Attic red-figure loutrophoros showing the laying out of the body.<sup>134</sup>

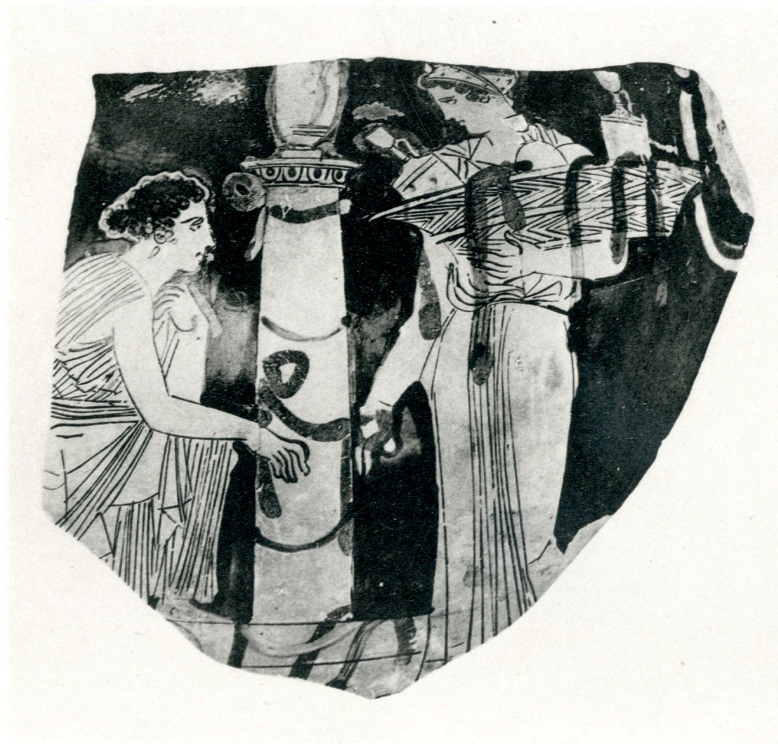
We know from literature and sumptuary laws that women took part in lamentations in funeral processions and were even sometimes paid to perform these services.<sup>135</sup> The female relatives also took on the responsibility of laying out the body of the deceased. Contact with deceased persons was a source of pollution and it was only appropriate for women to prepare bodies for burial. Perhaps it was thought that in bringing children into the world they have a connection with this transitional space between living and non-living.

Another responsibility women had in relation to funerary rituals was tending to the graves of family members. This leads us to another common motif portraying women. In a fragment of a hydria of unknown provenance and painted in the Attic red figure style we see a

<sup>134</sup> CVA Greece 2, plates 22, 23

<sup>135</sup> Blundell, *op. cit.*, 72-73, 162.

grave stele with several ribbons wrapped around it in the center with a lekythos on top of it (fig.19). To the right stands a woman holding a basket filled with ribbons and vases in her right arm. In her right hand she holds either a ribbon or a flower, which extends past the stelae to the left where another woman, possibly the deceased, crouches down and reaches out slightly toward the same object with her right hand. Delicate and peaceful scenes such as this one are common for ideal mortal women. Wild dancing, sexual interaction, and music playing are reserved for maenads and hetairai.



**Figure 19. Fragment of an attic red-figure hydria. A woman tends the grave of the deceased.<sup>136</sup>**

What seem to be just about the only exception from showing these mortal women in action are scenes of women being chased and pursued by men.<sup>137</sup> Young women surely would

<sup>136</sup> CVA Greece 2, plate 28.

<sup>137</sup> CVA France 20, plate 40.



have felt anxious knowing that at any time they could be betrothed to a man they may not necessarily know very well and possibly without their consent or being consulted. This also brings in the excitement and curiosity men must have felt toward those young women, who they understood so little about.

Priestesses and female worshippers show up constantly in vase paintings alongside gods and goddesses but also worshipping among other mortals. Pouring libations is the most common act of worship shown, but occasionally there are some other slightly less recognizable rituals. Thus a red figure Attic lekythos from about 430-425 BC shows a woman holding a small dog by the tail in one hand and a basket in the other, while she crouches down in a nighttime ritual lit by three torches. Scholars think that this ritual probably had to do with Hekate who liked the living and the dead.<sup>138</sup> This may further highlight the presence of the relationship of women with the non-living in vase painting.

A red figure Attic hydria dating to about 440 BCE shows a scene from the home (fig.20). A woman sits in the center facing frontally holding up a distaff with wool wrapped around in her left hand. The thread continues into her right hand still held above her head and then draws downward where the other end is connected to a spindle. Two other women stand by one helps, the other observes. Another hydria<sup>139</sup> shows two women, maybe a mother and daughter, washing clothing over a basin. Calm scenes depicting household activities women partake in or supervise show up again and again. Baskets for holding wool for spinning show up in these scenes of women very often.

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<sup>138</sup> Kaltsas, op. cit., 259.

<sup>139</sup> CVA France 12, plate 46



**Figure 20. Attic red-figure hydria showing women spinning wool. 440 BCE.<sup>140</sup>**

A great number of pots, mostly red figure lekythoi or perfume bottles, show very simple images of women standing or sitting and holding objects like an oinochoe and/or a phiale, a mirror, a wreath, or a perfume bottle. These women apparently provided enough decoration on their own, standing there looking pious. Also, it seems that in the 4<sup>th</sup> century there start to be more pots with just busts of women in profile. These types of pots were probably used more often by women and it may be possible that we can see some catering to the female audience and possibly an increased interest in the private life of women as a result of a failing democracy and a turn inwards in society.

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<sup>140</sup> CVA Great Britain 21.

In Greek vase paintings we get to see what seem to be real and intimate moments of women's lives: mourning over a loved one, quietly tending to their graves after they've gone, chatting as they wash their clothes, and watching after their children. We also see what might be more important moments, preparing for a wedding, preparing a cow for sacrifice, saying goodbye to their son or husband maybe for the last time and participating in the laying out of a family members body and partaking in the funeral procession. Often times there is not an obvious background story and the women on the vases appear to be there only as decorations.

### *Women in Classical Greek Sculpture*

There is relatively little evidence for mortal women in sculpture. Their absence from public displays of sculpture, except in funerary contexts or personal figurines for decoration or dedication, reflects their position and role in Athenian society. Women were expected to lead private lives centered on the household, and their sexuality had to be kept in check. The more expensive funerary monuments highlight the ideal nature and appearance of noble women. Less expensive terracotta figurines also favor pious, beautiful women and were likely available to a wider audience who enjoyed them as personal keepsakes.

Classical Athenian women of a certain status were expected to be pious and home-bound. These traits are reflected in sculptures, both in terms of their imagery and the contexts in which they have been found. Athenian wives were a potential source for friction among Athenian men. In order to reduce distractions that may have interfered with conducting politics smoothly women were encouraged to avoid being public figures.<sup>141</sup> Women's responsibilities were therefore ideally relegated to management of the household. Sculpture was

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<sup>141</sup> Pomeroy, op. cit., 57.



typically an art that was displayed publicly, so it follows that mortal women were not often represented in public sculptural monuments.<sup>142</sup> The widely popular korai which were often dedicated in sanctuaries and used as tomb markers in the archaic period fell out of use by the classical period (fig.21). Images of Athenian women in classical sculpture are most common in funerary monuments.



Figure 21. Archaic kore<sup>143</sup>

Funerary stelae are made of marble and are often high quality carvings. These were expensive purchases for a family and they would have chosen the subject matter carefully to

<sup>142</sup> Blundell, op. cit., 188

<sup>143</sup> Stewart, Andrew F. *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration*. Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale UP, 1990. Print. 154.

represent the deceased woman and her family in a favorable way. In this way the context of these sculptures affected their imagery. Families would want to honor their dead by depicting them beautifully dressed and noble looking. It seems that it was ideal to be able to have slaves to help with household chores and the noblest women did not have to participate in strenuous labor. It makes sense then that women are not honored on their funerary monuments by being shown toiling away preparing or cooking food. Maids are shown handing them their children or jewelry.

Public funerary monuments provided an opportunity for families to display their wealth and cultural propriety. Scenes of family members exhibiting traditional and culturally promoted roles were common. The gravestone of Hegeso dating to around 400 BCE from Athens shows a woman in profile, wearing a long, many-folded peplos, seated to the right of the scene (fig.22). A himation is gently draped over her head. Her left arm rests in her lap as her hand touches a small box, which a younger more simply dressed girl holds out for her. Her chin tilts downward as she inspects a piece of jewelry held up in her right hand. Assuming Hegeso's husband paid for this monument to be set up, as was usual practice, he was able to make a statement that he was able to provide for his wife. Her elegant dress and conservative pose tell the viewer that she is the ideal Athenian woman. This is just one of several types of simple scenes of women in a context considered typically feminine at the time that show up on grave reliefs.



**Figure 22. Grave stone of Hegeso. Ca. 400 BCE.<sup>144</sup>**

Another common scene again shows a woman sitting in profile with a veil but in her right hand she softly grips the side of her veil and holds it slightly out in front of her, a gesture that indicates she is a bride. The gravestone of Ampharete (c. 410 BCE) depicts a seated woman looking down to the face of a baby she is holding in her left arm as she holds a bird in her right hand. In each of these reliefs and in others the women look similar. They are all fully clothed, usually seated, with their heads tilted downwards with serene facial expressions. These idealized portrayals showcased the important role women were expected to play. The best way they could bring honor to their family was to be the woman portrayed in funerary reliefs. Epithets associated

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<sup>144</sup> Boardman, *op. cit.*, 191.

with these funerary monuments often described the deceased with the qualities every man would have sought out in a wife and the qualities proper women were expected to display.

Most grave stelae of women did not reveal anything about the woman's specific status. Once in a while this was not the case, though: the most public status a woman could obtain while maintaining her dignity in the eyes of the public was that of a priestess, and grave stelae frequently mention it if a woman had served this role. In the relief on the grave stele of Polystrate stands a woman wearing a sleeved chiton and a himation over her left shoulder with the ends held with her left arm up at her waist. Her right arm hangs down by her side and she holds a temple key indicating that she is a priestess.<sup>145</sup> The use of specific iconography to set apart women like Polystrate in a context where idealized representations of the deceased were the goal reinforces that being a priestess was an honorable status for Athenian women.

Mortal women are rarely shown in action, striking suggestive poses, donning revealing drapery, or simply naked. Certainly no Athenian would have wanted to display his mother, sister, wife or daughter in such ways that would bring shame to the family. These sculptural features were reserved for women of myth and for goddesses. As maenads dance and twirl, their dresses swirl about them taking on a life of their own. Their outfits reveal more of their bodies and they stretch out their arms diverging from the self-conscious look the women on the stelae show (fig.23). On the Temple of Athena Nike parapet on the Acropolis an image of Nike lifts her knee up as she bends down to adjust her sandal (fig.24). The cloth of her dress clings to her body emphasizing her anatomy underneath. The Cnidian Aphrodite takes this emphasis on the sexuality of the female body even further (fig.25). She rises from her bath, nude, reaching for her clothing. She attempts to cover her genital region with her right hand, which in turn draws the

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<sup>145</sup> Kaltsas, op. cit., 206



viewer's attention to her sexual potential. This was a scandalous work at the time considering women had not been depicted entirely naked in public sculpture before.<sup>146</sup> A mortal Athenian woman would never be shown in this way at the time unless, perhaps, she was a slave or prostitute.<sup>147</sup>



**Figure 23. Sculptural relief of dancing maenads. (Roman copies) originals C. 410 BCE<sup>148</sup>**

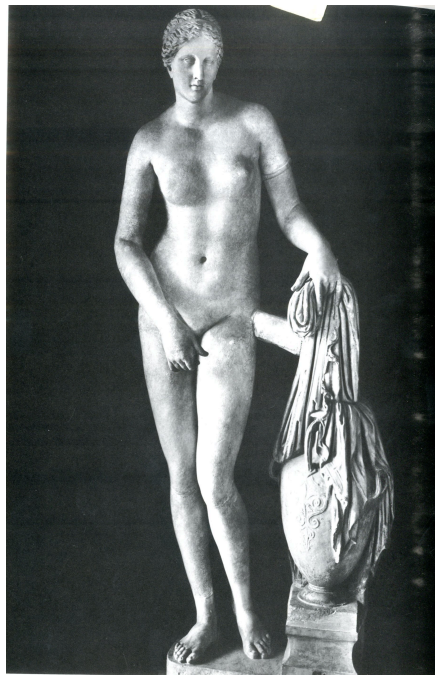
<sup>146</sup> Blundell, *op. cit.*, 194

<sup>147</sup> The story of this statue added to the scandal because it was said that Praxiteles used his own mistress as a model for the sculpture.

<sup>148</sup> Stewart, *op. cit.*, 436



**Figure 24. Nike, from the parapet of the temple of Athena Nike on the acropolis, adjusting her sandal. Ca. 410 BCE<sup>149</sup>**



**Figure 25. A Roman copy of Praxiteles' Cnidian Aphrodite. Ca. 340 BCE<sup>150</sup>**

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<sup>149</sup> Blundell, op. cit., 159.

This issue of nudity of males and females in sculpture tells us about gender ideas in Ancient Greek culture. When comparing nude male images with nude female images we see that male and female nudity were regarded as entirely different ideas. In the Archaic period when the kore and kouros were popular, women were never naked, the detail of their clothing got special treatment but men were emphatically nude. Male nudity in Greek sculpture was present for a long time before artists started even hinting at female nudity through the use of the wet tee-shirt look. Even when nudity became popular in portrayals of goddesses it was not quite acceptable for mortal females. Perhaps this can be attributed to the general view that female sexuality was dangerous and required careful monitoring.

Another group of sculpture to consider is terracotta figurines. This material was much cheaper and women of all economic backgrounds would have been able to afford them. They are typically found in sanctuaries and temples, probably dedications, as well as in tombs. Few figurines survive from Attica, but they include women wearing long dresses standing with their legs together, weight on one leg, and arms at their sides or gently grasping at their clothing (fig.26). They appear similar to the noble women depicted in marble funerary reliefs but with slightly less quality in details.

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<sup>150</sup> Blundell, op. cit., 160.



**Figure 26. Terracotta figurine from Attica. Early 5<sup>th</sup> c BCE.<sup>151</sup>**

Figurines of women carrying pigs or pitchers, probably representing worshippers, have been found in Boeotia and could be the result of Attic influence.<sup>152</sup> Even in the use of cheaper materials the noble well-dressed woman is a favored subject. The figurines might be used to show piety, through their being dedicated at sanctuaries and depicting worship.

There are figurines also surviving from Boeotia of women engaged in chores of the kitchen. One woman bends over a bowl, grinding corn. Another sits peering into an oven before her. Perhaps this could be evidence for women taking pride in those activities. R.A. Higgins likes

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<sup>151</sup> Higgins, R. A. *Greek Terracottas*. London: Methuen & CO, 1967. Print. 30.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.



the conclusion that these figurines were meant to serve the deceased in the afterlife.<sup>153</sup> These figurines could lend insight into women's personal interests in art seeing as these were things available to them to own when they were alive to use for decoration or dedication.



**Figure 27. Terracotta figurine from Boetia.**<sup>154</sup>



**Figure 28. Terracotta figurine from Boetia.**<sup>155</sup>

From this study of portrayals of culturally ideal women we find that the moments of their lives that were highlighted most in visual culture involved marriage, daily activities in the home,

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>154</sup> Jeammet, Violaine, and Isabel B. Andujar. *Tanagras: Figuras Para La Vida Y La Eternidad : Colección Del Museo Del Louvre*. [Valencia]: Fundación Bancaja, 2010. Print. 54.

<sup>155</sup> Higgins, op. cit., 32.

raising children, and religious activities including tending grave sites and lamenting the dead.

We found that the vases that would have typically been used by men at symposia emphasize the harsher aspects of Artemis' character. Vases intended for women however emphasize the aspects of her character that were more relevant to their own lives specifically her role as guardian and involvement with family and religious piety.

## Chapter 5: Artemis and Cult Worship

The sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron and the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia on the Acropolis are important architectural remains for understanding cult practice in conjunction with Artemis as they offer the most substantial physical remains of any of her sanctuaries in Attica. Unfortunately most of the finds from Brauron remain unpublished, but the excavator J. Papadimitriou describes some of them in his article in the journal *American Scientific*.<sup>156</sup> Other architectural remains in Attica relating to worship of Artemis are scarce and small, but together they all provide beneficial information about cult behaviors. This understanding of cult space and practice is the last piece we need to wholly understand how the goddess Artemis functioned in the lives of classical Athenian women.

### *The Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron*

The role of Artemis in Athens is often discussed in the context of the cult of Artemis at Brauron, possibly because it is the best-known cult of the goddess in Attica, and the information we have is partial and sometimes confusing. The sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron is where the famous festival, the *arkteia*, took place. During this quadrennial festival young Athenian girls around ages five to ten served Artemis in order to gain her protection.<sup>157</sup> It was important not only to young girls to have Artemis' good favor when they went through puberty, marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth but also to the Athenian population. Artemis oversaw all of these difficult transitions in the lives of women and their safety was imperative for the success of

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<sup>156</sup> Papadimitriou, op. cit.

<sup>157</sup> Reeder, op. cit., 303.

Athens, for they would go on to bear legitimate heirs. The maidens' success in pleasing Artemis reflected the success of the city.<sup>158</sup>

Artemis, goddess of the hunt and of the wild, was worshipped all across the ancient Greek world. She had many unique cults in places ranging from Ephesus in the Greek east to colonies in southern Italy, each with its own emphasis and special features. The Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron is strongly associated with the protection of young girls and of women in childbirth. Women often dedicated clothing to Artemis to give thanks for a successful birth. The sanctuary has been partially excavated and an abundance of scholarship has been dedicated to examining and gaining a better understanding of this unique and complicated cult of Artemis.

Surveys of the acropolis at Brauron tell us that the area was inhabited from Neolithic times until it was abandoned around 1300 BCE. Rich Mycenaean tombs were found to the east of the acropolis. The evidence shows that the town prospered the most between 2000 and 1600 BCE. Most likely these prehistoric inhabitants worshipped a mother goddess, Iphigenia, and the cult survived the abandonment of the city and its focus later shifted towards Artemis. The cult area itself dates to the eighth century BCE. Persians attacked the site around 480 BCE. The site was abandoned in the third century BCE after the Erasinos River flooded the area. Fortunately the mud from this flood preserved many precious artifacts. The only other activity in the area was the use of some of the building materials to build a Christian basilica in the sixth century CE.<sup>159</sup>

The Sanctuary of Artemis is located in the town of Brauron about 38 kilometers east of Athens. Today the site consists of a small temple dating to just before the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE which

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<sup>158</sup> Reeder, op. cit., 79. The following quote is provided: "...son of Hierokles of the deme of Philaidai proposed: in order that everything in the sanctuary of the goddess at Brauron should be safe and sound, the Old Temple and the Parthenon...and everything else that the city has built and dedicated to the goddess for the salvation of the Athenian people..."

<sup>159</sup> Papadimitriou, op. cit., 111-115

may have been used to house dedications (fig.29). It is 66 feet long and 33 ½ feet wide and consists of a three-nave cella, an adyton and a prodomos. To the North and West of the temple survives a retaining wall with a stairway leading up to the level of the temple then some distance past the temple where there could have been an altar. A shrine was found uphill from the southeast corner of the temple next to a few rooms, which were at one time situated in a cave. The shrine is 24 ½ feet long and 14 ½ feet wide. A Doric stoa, 96 feet long with 12 foot columns, was found to the north of the temple. There are ten dining rooms along the north and west sides of the stoa. There may be more waiting to be explored according to an Athenian decree dating to around 300 to 200 BCE. The inscription gives instructions to evaluate the cost of repairs needed for the buildings in Brauron. At that point in time the city had at least a temple, a parthenon, an amphipoleion, a gymnasium, a palaestra, and stables.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

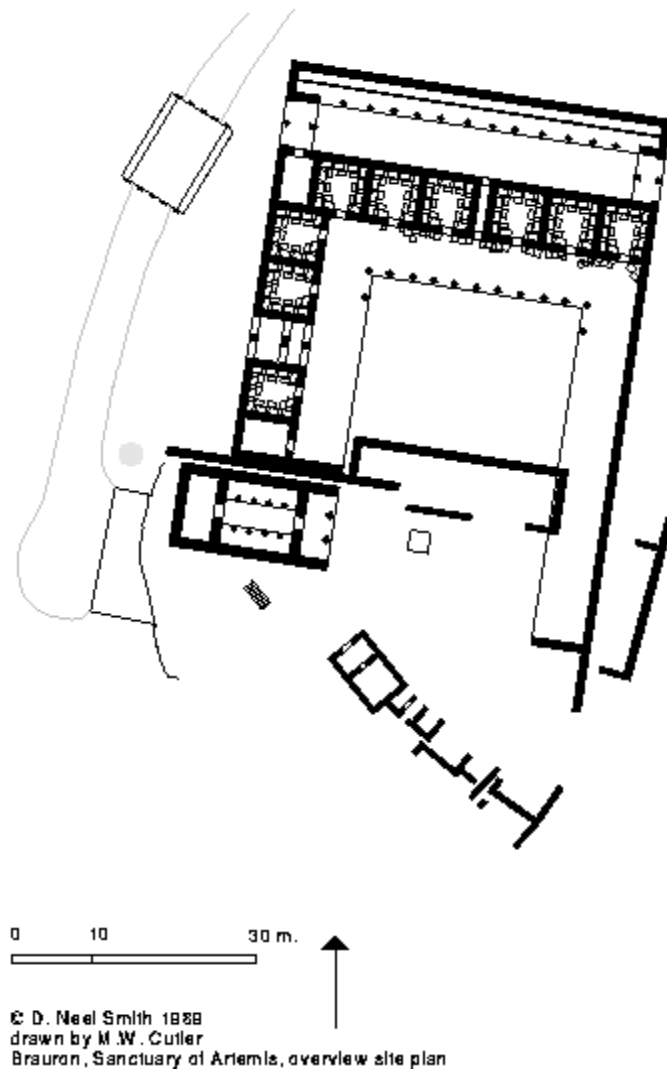


Figure 29. Map of the Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron.<sup>161</sup>

Near the retaining wall Papadimitriou uncovered many statuettes of little girls, most of which post-date the Classical period. He calls these figures *arktoi* after the girls who served Artemis at Brauron clad in saffron-colored dresses.<sup>162</sup> Of great interest in the context of this discussion are the several stelae listing offerings of jewels, rings, mirrors, and women's clothing as well as the names of women who made dedications giving thanks after successful

<sup>161</sup> Travlos, John. *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971. Print.

<sup>162</sup> Papadimitriou, op. cit., 118.

childbirth.<sup>163</sup> As Larson points out, women gave some of their most precious possessions to Artemis: “Pheidylla, a white woman’s himation in a display box. Mneso, a frog-green garment. Nausis, a lady’s himation with a broad purple border in wave pattern around the edge. Kleo, a delicate shawl. Phile, a bordered textile. Teisikrateia, a multi-colored Persian style shirt with sleeves”.<sup>164</sup>

Copies of these lists have been found on the acropolis in Athens where the dedications had been relocated for safe keeping during the Peloponnesian War (see also below). The city of Brauron was isolated, and the dedications there would not have been seen by many Athenians. It must have been important for people in the city to know that women were doing their duty to placate Artemis: by ensuring their safety in childbirth they were promoting success and continuity of the polis. As described above, the items dedicated include precious garments. Clearly, women of high social status were worshipping Artemis.

Outside the dining rooms in the stoa at Brauron, built in about 420 BCE, Papadimitriou found statuettes of young girls sometimes holding birds or fruit. He took this to mean that these rooms were the living quarters for girls serving the cult.<sup>165</sup> These rooms have the characteristics of andrones, or banqueting rooms. Each room could hold eleven couches, the layout of which is indicated by holes in the floor for their feet. The offset doorways and layout of couches are key features of the andron.<sup>166</sup> The prominence of male-purposed architecture could mean that the Sanctuary at Brauron was not exclusively used for the *arkteia*. Parker states that officials used

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<sup>163</sup> Cleland, Liza. *The Brauron Clothing Catalogues: Text, Analysis, Glossary and Translation*. Oxford: John and Erica Hedges, 2005. Print. 6.

<sup>164</sup> Larson, op. cit., 107-108

<sup>165</sup> Papadimitriou, op. cit., 118

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

these dining rooms during major festivals and that they are exemplary of the importance of the cult in Attica.<sup>167</sup>

The small finds from the excavations at Brauron have not been published in their entirety. We do know about some artifacts from the article written by the excavator. Papadimitriou tells of thousands of objects, all dating to before 480 BCE, discovered in the area surrounding the spring that is located near the northwest corner of the temple. These precious votive offerings included bronze mirrors, rings, gems, scarabs, statuettes and vases. Even wooden objects survived in the mud that buried them. Papadimitriou suggests that this was the most sacred spot in the sanctuary and that all dedications made up until 480 BCE resided in this spot. His explanation for the cease of dedications is that — as Herodotus tells us — Attica was vanquished by the Persians and Brauron did not escape destruction.<sup>168</sup>

In the area of the small shrine and rooms, which were situated in a cave just uphill from the southeast corner of the temple, excavations yielded bronze mirrors, gold ornaments, and gems. Papadimitriou interprets this region as being the tomb of Iphigenia and that the shrine was built next to it after the cave had collapsed. While he does not mention any physical evidence for associating the area with Iphigenia he mentions that in Euripides' play, *Iphigenia at Tauros*, Athena prophesizes that the maiden Iphigenia will die and be buried at Brauron. He considers this noteworthy information, saying that Euripides would not have used information that could be easily disproved.<sup>169</sup> A tomb of Iphigenia has not otherwise been identified at Brauron and this area is a good fit considering her association with the cult.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Parker, Robert. *Polytheism and Society at Athens*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print. 230

<sup>168</sup> Papadimitriou, op. cit.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 113-115.

<sup>170</sup> Larson, op. cit., 107.



Iphigenia is an important and complicated aspect of the cult at Brauron. The story of the daughter of Agamemnon is related in Proclus' summary of Stasinos' *Kypria*. Agamemnon and his men are stuck at Aulis unable to sail to Troy for lack of wind.

Agamemnon, out hunting, shot a deer and asserted that he had outdone even Artemis. The goddess was angered and sent storms to prevent them from sailing. And when Kalchas declared the anger of the goddess and said that Iphigenia should be sacrificed to Artemis, they sent for her on the pretext that she was to be married to Achilles and attempted to sacrifice her. But Artemis snatched her away and took her to the Tauroi, making her immortal; and she set a deer at the altar in place of the girl.<sup>171</sup>

In Euripides' *Iphigenia at Tauros* we learn the mythological explanation behind Iphigenia's association with the cult at Brauron. When Iphigenia arrives in Tauros she becomes a priestess of the cult of Artemis. While serving Artemis the maiden comes across her brother, Orestes, who has been ordered to take the cult statue from the temple and establish Artemis' cult at Halae Araphinides. Athena then tells Iphigenia that she must serve as priestess to Artemis at Brauron where she will then die and be buried.<sup>172</sup>

An explanation for Iphigenia at Brauron outside mythology is a matter of interest and debate in scholarship today. Mary B. Hollinshead speculates that Iphigenia was originally worshipped by locals at Brauron as a cave dwelling, childbirth goddess. Eventually Artemis took over and Iphigenia took on a role akin to heroine as she does in works like Euripides' play.<sup>173</sup>

Other Attic myths about the cult of Artemis Brauronia provide an origin of the rites performed at the Sanctuary. A female aristocratic Athenian woman claims to have served as a bear for Artemis in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. This specific passage has been studied closely as

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<sup>171</sup> Dowden, Ken. *Death and the Maiden: Girls' Initiation Rites in Greek Mythology*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print. 10.

<sup>172</sup> Larson, op. cit., 107.

<sup>173</sup> Hollinshead, Mary B. "Against Iphigeneia's Adyton in Three Mainland Temples." *American Journal of Archaeology* 89.3 (1985): 419-40. Print. 425-426.

scholars try to determine how old the woman claims to have been when she participated in the festival for Artemis at Brauron, the *arkteia*. Scholars largely agree that the girls who participated in the rites were most likely between five and ten years old.<sup>174</sup> These arguments take into account the need for girls to partake in the rites before puberty as a sign of their maidenhood ending, the festival occurring every four years, literary references to the cult, and vase paintings. The five to ten age range seems to work well with these factors.<sup>175</sup>

The *Souda* summarizes an Attic myth that explains why girls started playing the bear for Artemis.

Women doing the bear ritual used to perform the festival for Artemis, dressed in the *krokotos*, aged between 5 and 10, placating the goddess. For there was a wild bear about in the deme Philaidai [where Brauron was] and it was tamed and lived with men [another source tells us: ‘it was given to the shrine of Artemis’]. But a girl poked fun at it, with her lack of restraint upset it, and it scratched her. This angered her brothers and they shot the bear, as a result of which a plague befell the Athenians. The Athenians consulted an oracle and it said their ills would end if, as a penalty for killing the bear, they made their maidens do the Bear ritual. And the Athenians voted that no girl should be married to a man without performing the Bear ritual to the goddess.<sup>176</sup>

The motif of placating Artemis with the sacrifice of a daughter after the killing of an animal is present in most Brauron myths. It is clear the main concern is to propitiate the goddess. There are variations of the tale; for instance, one “Mounichia” reveals a father’s trick in which when it came time for his daughter to be sacrificed as penance for the slain bear, he dressed up a goat as his daughter and sacrificed the animal instead. When the girls of the community learned this they were no longer afraid to play the bear.<sup>177</sup>

There are other Greek myths involving maidens and bears, particularly the stories of Callisto and Atlante, and the arguments about why girls play the bear for Artemis are numerous.

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<sup>174</sup> Dowden, op. cit., 28.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>177</sup> Parker, op. cit., 238.

The social reasons for playing the bear are somewhat clearer. The girls have to lay aside their maidenhood as they prepare to become a woman. It seems appropriate then to surrender their maidenhood to Iphigenia, the eternal maiden.<sup>178</sup> The bear might represent Artemis' wildness or otherness and by playing the bear the girls become more familiar with, and therefore less frightened of, the fearsome goddess who holds power over their transformation into the intimidating world that is womanhood. Furthermore, if the goddess has been sufficiently propitiated the girl will transition to womanhood with ease and have nothing to fear.<sup>179</sup>

Careful analyses have determined that the youngest girls depicted on the krateriskoi found at Brauron are around five to seven years old. The oldest are probably ten to twelve years old.<sup>180</sup> This supports the widely accepted age group for the she-bears. The girls on the krateriskoi published by Lily Kahil dance around altars, race one another, and move in processions sometimes carrying torches, wreaths, or twigs. They appear wearing various styles of clothing as well as without clothing.<sup>181</sup>

The specific role of nakedness in the *arkteia* is unclear. Some attribute the nudity to the stripping or putting on of the ceremonial dress symbolizing transition into womanhood. The debate about whether it is the taking off or donning of the dress is sparked by a passage from *Lysistrata* when the chorus mentions "shedding, (or the alternative translation, wearing) the krokotos" as a bear, the krokotos possibly referring to the yellow robes the she-bears were said to have worn at some point in the festival.<sup>182</sup>

The mediocre quality of the krateriskoi might provide hints about who got to play the bear. While the passage mentioned earlier from the *Souda* indicates that all Athenian girls

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<sup>178</sup> Dowden, op. cit., 47.

<sup>179</sup> Parker, op. cit., 242.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>182</sup> Parker, op. cit., 244.

participated in the *arkteia*, this was probably not the case. It would have cost a family a lot of money to send their daughter to isolated Brauron. Many Athenian families would not have been able to afford the cost of sending a child away let alone losing much needed help around the house for any amount of time. This is where the *krateriskoi* might come into play. Families who wanted their daughters to serve Artemis but could not afford to may have paid for *krateriskoi* to be used or dedicated at the sanctuary. In this way all girls could have the opportunity to perform the necessary rite to gain the favor of Artemis.<sup>183</sup>

### ***Artemis Brauronia on the Athenian Acropolis***

The Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia is directly to the right on entering the Acropolis in Athens. This sanctuary is related to that at Brauron, located thirty kilometers to the east of Athens. The cult was imported in the city around the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BCE by the Peisistratids.<sup>184</sup> As described above, we know that the cult of Artemis at Brauron had to do with the *arkteia* that was celebrated by young Athenian girls.

The sanctuary on the Acropolis is situated between a section of Mycenaean wall on its west side, the newer citadel wall to the south, and the Chalkotheke court to the East. The Northern boundary is cut out of the bedrock and limestone blocks were laid on top of it creating a wall. Scholars are unsure of what the precinct would have looked like in its early stages in the sixth century and it seems that they are also unsure about its development in the classical age. But it has been established from the remains that there were three building phases.<sup>185</sup> In the first phase a temenos wall was built on the east side running from the north end of the sanctuary to

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<sup>183</sup> Simon, Erika. *Festivals of Attica: An Archaeological Commentary*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1983. Print. 86.

<sup>184</sup> Hurwit, Jeffrey M. *The Acropolis in the Age of Pericles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print.

<sup>185</sup> Hurwit, op. cit., 194-195.

the south citadel wall. The doric Southern Stoa joins with this wall on the east side. In the second phase an eastern wing was started and the stoa was rebuilt. In the third and final phase a new wing extending along the east side of the sanctuary replaced the beginnings of the second phase east wing. The eight-stair entrance on the eastern side of the North wall was cut into the bedrock and also originated in this phase.<sup>186</sup> The Sanctuary is often reconstructed with a west wing but Hurwit mentions that there is actually little evidence for that (194-195).<sup>187</sup>

Worship of the cult of Artemis Brauronia on the Athenian Acropolis is thought to have started because the Peisistratid tyrants were from Brauron where the main sanctuary and temple to Artemis existed. Travlos suggests that when the Attic demes united in the seventh century BC, cults from all over the region came into Athens. Both locations hosted the arkteia, the festival for Artemis in which girls around the age of ten acted as she-bears for Artemis. The Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia on the Acropolis may be thought of as an urban branch of the rural sanctuary in Brauron.<sup>188</sup>

The axes of the northern wall of the Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia, the Propylaia, and the Parthenon are all almost exactly parallel. This could mean that all of these monuments were constructed as part of the same vision or plan. If this is true the existing Sanctuary can be dated to around the same time as the Periclean building program and the architect for the Propylaia and Parthenon, Mnesikles, may have had a hand in designing the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia as well.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Rhodes, Robin F., and John J. Dobbins. "The Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia on the Athenian Akropolis." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*. 48. 4 (1979): 325-341. Web. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/147839>>. 34.

<sup>187</sup> Hurwit, op. cit., 194-195.

<sup>188</sup> Hurwit, op. cit., 194-198

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 196

The Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia was not only a place for worship but also a place for display. The offerings that were dedicated in or near the sanctuary are particularly interesting. They show that display of wealth or piety towards the gods was something of importance to and a key element of the Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia on the Acropolis.<sup>190</sup>

Pausanias mentions a bronze statue of the Trojan horse complete with Greeks soldiers peeking out of it, and a portrait statue of a man running in armor, the statue bases of which were found in the sanctuary.<sup>191</sup> It is interesting that these would be dedicated in the Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia, a cult with a strong connection to female worship of Artemis. This dedication may make more sense if we consider other roles or characteristics of Artemis demonstrated already in literary and visual remains. It is plausible that we just do not have information about male worship of Artemis Brauronia. Also, Hurwit argues that throughout the Acropolis there are themes in the architecture and decorations. The Trojan Horse, dating to about 420 BCE, is a part of a Trojan war and Greek victory theme. It may have worked in conjunction with the metopes on the Parthenon visible in the background, which show the story of the Trojan war. The wooden horse is not depicted in the scenes on the metopes so this monument would have added to that story.<sup>192</sup>

Many stelae were set up near the sanctuary, as indicated by cuts found in the ground.<sup>193</sup> This area on the Acropolis, as Jorgen Mejer suggests, may have been set aside for various dedications not designated for Athena.<sup>194</sup> Presumably this was a small showcase where any Athenian could demonstrate his or her piety and respect for the gods. This is a particularly

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 237-238

<sup>192</sup> Hurwit, op. cit., 237-238.

<sup>193</sup> Travlos, John. *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971. Print.

<sup>194</sup> Mejer, Jorgen. "Artemis in Athens." *Acta Hyperborea: From Artemis to Diana*. Ed. Tobias Fischer-Hansen and Birte Poulsen. Vol. 12. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2009. 61-74. Print. 61.

interesting thought in light of Artemis' character in literature as promoting reverence toward the gods by punishing those who neglect them.

Although there are few finds from inside the sanctuary, there are some significant ones. By the mid fourth century BCE the Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia probably had a cult statue. There is a colossal head of a goddess currently in the Acropolis museum, which has been attributed to the cult statue of Artemis made by Praxiteles.<sup>195</sup>

It is likely that the east wing and the south stoa housed offerings made to the goddess. Because Artemis was important in childbirth and to women it has been suggested that women's robes were a popular offering here.<sup>196</sup>

Lily Kahil has published a series of the small, double handled cups she calls *krateriskoi*, of which many fragments were found in the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia. The decorations on the cups commonly depict ritual scenes including girls running or dancing around altars sometimes naked, sometimes clothed. As at Brauron itself, the quality of the painting on the *krateriskoi* is not particularly outstanding. Several scholars presume that these cups were inexpensive to buy or to have made.<sup>197</sup> These could suggest participation in worshipping Artemis by women of lower status. Serving Artemis was an important part of the lives of Athenian girls and women. Many women would not have been able to afford to go to isolated Brauron to participate in the *arkteia* or to offer lavish dedications to Artemis. Perhaps these women were able to purchase affordable ceramics to dedicate to the goddess on the acropolis or have them be used in the rituals at Brauron. Either way this would have provided a way for less wealthy Athenians to participate in Artemis' cult.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Hurwit, op. cit., 197-198.

<sup>196</sup> Hurwit, op. cit.

<sup>197</sup> Simon, op. cit., 86

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

### *Worship of Artemis in Athens*

Although the temples to Artemis in Athens were all quite small, they were located all around the polis and in various parts of the city. Artemis was significant to everyone in Athens. Women of all ages and statuses sought her protection, which was of utmost importance for survival of the polis through reproduction. Evidence is strong for women worshipping Artemis and while we may not know much about Artemis' role in civic and military worship in Athens, archaeological evidence shows that this type of worship likely did exist to some extent.

In the Athenian Agora we have two remains of a small sanctuary believed to be for Artemis Aristoboule, identified by inscriptions and the presence of krateriskoi, and located near the tholos. Plutarch tells us in *Themistocles* 22.1:

Beside this [Themistocles] gave offence to the people when he built the temple of Artemis, for not only did he style the goddess Artemis Aristoboule, or Artemis wisest in council, but he chose a site for it near his own house at Melite. This is the place where today the public executioners cast out the bodies of executed criminals and leave the clothes and halters of those who have hanged themselves...<sup>199</sup>

If this description by Plutarch is accurate, it is interesting to see that there may be a cult of Artemis in Athens that became associated with severe punishment (execution) given how we saw her portrayed in literature.

Just outside the city walls of Athens was the sanctuary of Artemis Agrotera. This sanctuary was strongly associated with the Athenian military. Every year the Athenians celebrated the victory at Marathon of 490 BCE at this sanctuary.<sup>200</sup> In Xenophon's *Anabasis* credit is given to Artemis for this Athenian success.

“For when the Persians and their followers came with a vast array to blot Athens out of existence, the Athenians dared, unaided, to withstand them, and

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<sup>199</sup> Mejer, op. cit., 63

<sup>200</sup> Cole, Susan G. *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space: The Ancient Greek Experience*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2004. Print. 188.



won the victory. And while they had vowed to Artemis that for every man they might slay of the enemy they would sacrifice a goat to the goddess, they were unable to find goats enough; so they resolved to offer five hundred every year, and this sacrifice they are paying even to this day.”<sup>201</sup> (Xen. *Anab.* 3.12)

And this was not the goddess’ only interaction with warriors: in Hellenistic times young Athenian men, ephebes, began their military service by making a sacrifice to her temple outside of Agrai on the bank of the Ilissos River.<sup>202</sup>

Architectural and other evidence for cult practice suggests a multi-faceted Artemis in the classical period just as literature and art do. In Athens, men looked to her in military and governing contexts: she was seen as champion of justice and a bringer of death to the unrighteous. Women turned to her for protection in childbirth, a role which contributed to her importance in their lives as they began menstruating and took on new roles as potential mothers. Thus the virgin huntress played significant, and significantly different, roles in the lives of men and of women in classical Athens.

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<sup>201</sup> Cole, *op. cit.*, 188

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

Artemis was a different goddess for women than for men. In the world of men, she was a vengeful goddess, one who kept things in line in the divine realm and exacted retribution on mortals who strayed from that line. She was a chaste huntress, a shooter of arrows. Her most prominent roles, interacting with Actaeon and Hippolytus, were as a pitiless upholder of divine justice. In literature and in visual culture designed for men, she had but little interaction with men but was consistently portrayed in this manner as rigidly righteous. For women, by contrast, she was another figure altogether. Women seem to have had much more personal interaction with the goddess in her cult and worship. She was present during those times of women's lives in which men could not share, revolving around reproduction and the production of legitimate offspring. In that capacity, she was a protectress, one who was frequently invoked by women in times of need. In visual representation, she was rendered as a pious and ideal role model for women. Indeed, Artemis was almost a separate deity altogether in the worlds of men and of women.

In literature written by and for men, males characterized Artemis as a fervent keeper of divine balance and justice. She sponsored victors in battle, shot down the unrighteous, and defended the rights of the gods. She abhorred excess and the unholy; she supported the true straight run of the hunt. Even in literature written by men, when Artemis was invoked by women, it was in a different capacity. She was called on by women in times relating to marriage and childbirth, to the beginning of menstruation. Even in this one medium, the gendered discrepancy in her role and worship was clear.

Visual culture parallels this gendered difference. Vases made primarily for use in the male symposium emphasized the goddess's role in the horrifying myth of Actaeon or shooting

arrows at the boastful. Vases designed for women, by contrast, show Artemis as a pious role model for women. She poured libations at altars, often in consort with her family members. Never was she shown together with mortal women, but always distinct and devout. These vases, designed for use by women, provide us with additional evidence for the relationship between Artemis and women than does literature where the main audience was probably men. Again, the gendered distinction is clear.

Sculpture showing Artemis comes almost exclusively from sanctuaries to the goddess. It provides further evidence for female relationships with Artemis – the votive reliefs from her sanctuaries feature her as a family member. This is significant. The sanctuaries of Artemis in Attica housed cults associated with girls entering adulthood, entering society as fully-functioning members of society and potential mothers. The emphasis on Artemis as a family member thus paralleled the emphasis in female lives on family roles. The pious image of Artemis reflected ideal portrayals of women as seen on grave stelae. Minor sculpture, in the form of terracotta figurines, highlighted Artemis as a nurturer, an almost maternal figure of love and support. Artemis' modesty, even in these images of family and affection, also seemed to be a model for the women worshipping at the sanctuaries.

Little remains to reconstruct cult practice and worship of Artemis. The best-preserved evidence concerns the cult of Artemis at Brauron and Artemis Brauronia in Athens, both of which center on women's rites and worship. At this point it is unclear if Artemis' worship overall was focused in the hands of women, or if this apparent feature is the result of archaeological preservation. The existence of at least one small temple in the Agora, and occasional references to other places housing cults, suggest the picture overall was more complex than we can recreate right now. In any case, the Brauron sanctuary demonstrates

precious dedications of great value being made by women to the goddess, including clothing in particular, as described in the lists of dedications set up in the sanctuary on the Acropolis. Many figurines, bronze statuettes, and mirrors were dedicated near the temple at Brauron. The key pieces of evidence for cult practice itself include the krateriskoi, painted with figures of girls dancing and altars, and limited textual evidence such as the passage in *Lysistrata*. These indicate that the cult was geared towards girls just on the brink of becoming fully reproductive wives. The range of quality of dedications suggests the cult was embraced by all ranks of society; their nature demonstrates the key role of Artemis in women's reproductive cycles.

Artemis was not simply a virgin huntress in classical Athens. In literature, visual representations, and cult practice, she possesses different traits and functions for men and for women. Thus in this strictly gendered society, the goddess emerges as one with very complex gendering, indeed divergent gendering dependent on the sex of the mortal seeking her. Virgin goddess of mothers, nurturing killer of animals, pious upholder of divine rights, she straddles the bounds.

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