

## §8 EPIDAUROS: PILGRIMS AT A HEALING SANCTUARY

Of all the reasons for which pilgrims undertook pilgrimage, to solicit an oracle, become initiated in the hope of obtaining a better hereafter, attend Panhellenic festivals which included athletic games, or simply take part in a religious festival that honoured a particular deity, one of the most popular was the pilgrimage in search of a cure. “The most oppressive crisis for the individual is sickness”,<sup>1</sup> and in such cases it is only natural for the individual to call upon the gods for assistance. In the classical period, many cities and towns had sanctuaries dedicated to the god of healing, but there were some sanctuaries which enjoyed a greater prominence than others. The sanctuaries of healing, the Asklepieia, at the sites of Epidauros, Kos, and Pergamon achieved the status of Panhellenic sanctuaries, while other important healing centres were the Asklepieion at Lebena which served the island of Crete, and the Amphiarraion at Oropos which had a clientele drawn from throughout Boeotia and Attica. The temples of healing at these sites attracted the sick and dying from all over the Hellenic world, and the experiences which pilgrims underwent at these, and particularly at the most significant centre Epidauros, provide valuable evidence for the motivation and practices of pilgrims generally in the Greek world.

In the classical period, Asklepios was considered as the special provider of cures for mankind, though his father Apollo also had the ability to cure illness: “a special power to send and to banish sickness belongs of old to Apollo”.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the antithesis holds true as well, with Apollo sending sickness as a punishment.<sup>3</sup> The reasons for the transference of the healing functions of Apollo to his son are obscure, but worthy of consideration, for the greatest healing shrines of the classical period (Epidauros, Kos and Pergamon) take not Apollo as their patron but Asklepios. Asklepios is primarily a beneficent deity in that his only function is healing, though,

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<sup>1</sup> Burkert *Griechische Religion* 401: ‘Die bedrückendste individuelle Krise ist die Krankheit...’ (*Greek Religion* 267); cf. Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 120: “...der Asklepioskult brachte eine Antwort auf eine immer dringender werdende Forderung...” In this chapter, references to the relevant evidence are also given their testimonium number as in Edelstein *Asclepius* 1, except where passages are divided by Edelstein into separate testimonia; for example: Pind. *Pyth.* 3.1-58 (T1). *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 121-22 are T423, and this will not be cited henceforth; Pausanias is cited so frequently below, that T numbers in this case have not been given. The testimonia numbers of Delling *Antike Wundertexte*, who gives the texts of several ancient miracles, are referred to as D; for example: Strabo 8.6.15 (374) (T382; D22).

<sup>2</sup> Burkert *Greek Religion* 267.

<sup>3</sup> See the opening lines of the *Iliad* (1.9-10, 48-53), where the god is slaying men with the plague. Burkert *Greek Religion* 147 gives references to the archery exploits of Apollo in myth.

on the other hand, he is found punishing those who disobey his command. Often Apollo and Asklepios were associated and at Epidauros both gods remained linked in their curative functions. The great fourth century list of iamata at Epidauros have as their heading an attribution both to Apollo and Asklepios, though the actual cures themselves mention Asklepios but never Apollo,<sup>4</sup> and while individual iamata ascribe the cure to Asklepios, though not all of them claim his personal intervention, the heading on the inscription makes clear the link between the two, father and son, “The Cures of Apollo and Asklepios”.<sup>5</sup> While the cures are entirely ascribed to Asklepios, vestigial traces of Apollo’s role as a healing deity are still apparent, with Asklepios thought of as having originally drawn his power from Apollo. The inscriptions were erected by the Epidaurian temple authorities to make known the cures, and hence the powers, of the god, as well as to dispel scepticism and anxiety amongst pilgrims.<sup>6</sup>

The sanctuary to Asklepios at Epidauros apparently came into existence in either the late sixth or the early fifth century.<sup>7</sup> It was not the first Asklepieion in Greece, the

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<sup>4</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 121, line 1; cf. Kerényi *Asklepios* 24, and note his discussion at 24-31. The iamata are recorded on stelai: *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 121-24 in the edition of von Gaertringen (these are presumably amongst the six stelai which Pausanias saw in his own day, and he notes that there were once more, Paus. 2.27.3; D23); for texts of the iamata see *SIG<sup>3</sup> 1168-69*; D24. There is also *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 127, a cure inscription of Roman times (T424; L25). English translations of *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 121-22 and 127 can be found in Hamilton *Incubation 17-27* Edelstein *Asclepius* 1.221-38 (TT423-24; with text) (a selection from the Edelsteins’ translations is also in Jackson *Doctors and Diseases* 146-47); Horsley *New Documents* 2.22-23 gives a text and translation for *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 123.1-33, iamata 44-48; Guarducci *Epigrafia Greca* 4.147-75 discusses and translates (into Italian) *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 121 iamata 1, 10, 24, *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 122 iama 24. The cures of *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 121-23 were each given a number by the editors of *IG IV*; these are used by most modern editors and authors, and individual iamata will be referred to by iama number (the numbering system used by Herzog has not found wide acceptance). *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 121-23 are fairly well preserved and there is little controversy about the readings; the main exception is iama 47, for which see below n. 174, with text. No sense can be made of another list of cures, *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 124, except to state that it contains a list of iamata. Note that several *SEG* entries deal with the inscriptions, i.e.: *SEG* 34.299, 34.1702; cf. *SEG* 36.1571. For Pausanias and the stelai, see Siefert *Incubation* 326; for the fact that Pausanias had read the inscriptions at Epidauros carefully, see Habicht *Pausanias’ Guide* 155, with nn. 60-61, and 32, for a general comment on the accuracy of Pausanias’ description of the site. For the cures at Lebena, see T426; Guarducci *Epigrafia Greca* 4.154-58; cf. *SIG<sup>3</sup> 1171-72* (D26).

<sup>5</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 121: [Ἰά]ματα τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ. Note also *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1*, 128.2 (T296), a joint dedication to Apollo and Asklepios. At Erythrai, provisions were made for including Apollo in the thanksgiving to Asklepios, *I. Erythrai & Klazomenai* 205.30-38 (T521).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Kern *Religion der Griechen* 3.155; Burkert *Greek Religion* 215; Siefert *Incubation* 333, 335.

<sup>7</sup> The earliest surviving testimony from Epidauros is *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 136*, of the fifth century BC (Jeffery *Scripts* 180); the latest is *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 438*, of AD 355: the site thus had a long history. The iamata were inscribed in the fourth century.

honour of which belonged, apparently, to Trikka in Thessaly.<sup>8</sup> Yet Epidauros became the most important cult sanctuary and a centre for pilgrims from all over Greece. Traditional myths placed Asklepios' birth in Thessaly,<sup>9</sup> as Hesiod stated,<sup>10</sup> though the Epidaurians propounded a myth in which Epidauros was his birthplace, and this was accepted by many, including Pausanias.<sup>11</sup> Epidauros thus usurped both the birthplace of Asklepios and the prominence which had been Trikka's in Homer's time,<sup>12</sup> and since Epidauros was the site which was to become the more prosperous of the two it was to here, rather than to Trikka, that pilgrims came seeking cure. The *Hymns of Isyllos*, engraved at Epidauros, have the version that Phlegyas, father of Koronis, was a native of Epidauros, and that he fathered her here, while Koronis gave birth to the child of Apollo in the temple itself.<sup>13</sup> The oracular centre of Delphi supported the Epidaurian claim to be the birth place of Asklepios and did not give credence to the earlier tradition that Asklepios was from Thessaly.<sup>14</sup> Why Delphi gave this prominence to Epidauros is unknown, but if this oracle dates to a time early in the classical period, it perhaps helps to explain why Epidauros became so important, although the oracle might date to a time when Epidauros was already prominent, and simply have confirmed its position as the most important of the Asklepieia.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Strabo states that the earliest and most famous temple of Asklepios was at Trikka: 9.5.17 (437) (T714) and that Asklepios was born there: 14.1.39 (647) (T11), 9.5.17 (437) (T714). Other sources also give Trikka as the birthplace (Hygin. *Fabul.* 14.21 (T12); Eus. *Praep. Ev.* 3.14.6 (T13)), or, less specifically, Thessaly (Hom. *Hymn Ask.* 1-3 (T14); Apoll. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.616-17 (T15)). According to Theod. *Graec. Affect. Cur.* 8.19 (T5) Asklepios first gave proof of his art at Trikka and Epidauros. Trikka does not seem to have been without some success in proselytising, as Strabo notes that in Gerenia, Messenia, there could be seen a temple of Trikkaion Asklepios, in the likeness of that at Trikka (8.4.4 (360) (T715)).

<sup>9</sup> Modern accounts of the myths may be found in Robert *Épidaure* 9-14; Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 121-22; Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.1-6; Siefert *Inkubation* 338-39.

<sup>10</sup> Hes. fr. 122 (Merkelbach, West 59) (T21). Hesiod apparently gave the honour to the Messenians, a version at which Pausanias scoffed: Hes. fr. 87 (Paus. 2.26.7) (Merkelbach, West 50) (T16).

<sup>11</sup> Paus. 2.26.4-7.

<sup>12</sup> In the *Iliad*, the two sons of Asklepios, Podaleirios and Makhaon, are stated to have come from Trikka (Hom. *Il.* 2.729-33 (T10), with Eustath. *Comm. Il.* 2.729 (T137)). Homer clearly treats the sons as mortals: *Il.* 4.194, cf. 193-202 (T164). An epitaph dedicated to Podaleirios and Makhaon is recorded by Aristotle *Peplos* fr. 20 (T161) πρόσθεν μὲν θνητοί, νῦν δὲ θεῶν μέτοχοι.

<sup>13</sup> *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 128, 4.40-50 (T32).

<sup>14</sup> Hes. fr. 87 (Paus. 2.26.7) (Merkelbach, West 50) (T16).

<sup>15</sup> Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 129-30 believes that this oracle at Delphi established the presence of the new cult at Epidauros and its pre-eminence, but, in the absence of any firm evidence for the dating of the oracle, Krug's assertion should remain an hypothesis; cf. *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4969 (T729).

Pausanias, who was a clear partisan of the god Asklepios, argued that Asklepios had always been a god, and that Homer affirmed this, his statement “Makhaon the man, the son of Asklepios” meaning “the human son of a god.”<sup>16</sup> Pindar refers to Asklepios as a hero,<sup>17</sup> a view which Pausanias was countering, and gives us the earliest elaborated aetiological myth. As evidence for his belief that the god was born at Epidauros, Pausanias cites that the most renowned sanctuaries had been founded from Epidauros,<sup>18</sup> but this could also simply be taken as an indication that in the classical period Epidauros had asserted primacy over other cult centres, in particular Trikke which was its main rival. Pausanias provides three examples to prove his point: Athens, Balagrai (Cyrene),<sup>19</sup> and Pergamon.<sup>20</sup> Some of the other Asklepiad centres in the Greek world presumably originated from Epidauros, but it is only in the case of these three and Halieis and Sikyon that there are accounts of how this occurred.<sup>21</sup> Epidauros’ status is clearly pre-eminent by the fifth century: according to Pausanias, the Athenians gave a day in the Eleusinian Mysteries to Asklepios, and called that day the *Epidauria*.<sup>22</sup> This is supported by the evidence of an Athenian inscription, which records that in 420 the god came to the Greater Eleusinian Mysteries and lodged at the Eleusinion. Sending for his serpent from home, Asklepios brought it to Eleusis in the chariot of Telemakhos, and as a consequence a temple was dedicated by the state to Asklepios in the arkhonship of Astyphilos, of Kydantidai.<sup>23</sup> The acceptance of the god at Athens and the honour

<sup>16</sup> Paus. 2.26.10. That Pausanias finds it necessary to assert that Asklepios had always been a god indicates that there was a tradition that this had not always been the case; cf. the late writer, Theod. *Graec. Affect. Cur.* 8.23 (T5), who argued that Homer calls Makhaon “the son neither of a god, nor of a demi-god”. For Pausanias as a partisan of Asklepios, see Habicht *Pausanias’ Guide* 155.

<sup>17</sup> Pind. *Pyth.* 3.5-60 (T1).

<sup>18</sup> Paus. 2.26.8-9.

<sup>19</sup> Pausanias states that at Balagrai (Cyrene) the cult of Asklepios Iatros had come from Epidauros, but does not record how this took place (Paus. 2.26.9). Pedius Blaesus was ejected from the senate in AD 59, after being accused by the Cyreneans of violating the treasury of Asklepios: Tac. *Ann.* 14.18.1 (T831).

<sup>20</sup> Paus. 2.26.8: one Arkhias, having incurred a sprain while hunting around Pindaros, went to Epidauros and was healed there and as a consequence was responsible for taking the cult to Pergamon: thus Pergamon, the important Asklepieion of Asia Minor, was made part of the Epidaurian tradition; cf. Kern *Religion der Griechen* 3.157 with n. 3. From Pergamon the cult was taken to Smyrna and an Asklepieion built by the sea in Pausanias’ own day: Paus. 2.26.8-9, 7.5.9; cf. Aristeid. *Orat.* 47.17 (T814); note Habicht *Pausanias’ Guide* 10 with n. 154 (with references), 177.

<sup>21</sup> Halieis: *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 33; Sikyon: Paus. 2.10.3.

<sup>22</sup> Paus. 2.26.8; for the Epidauria, cf. ch. 5 nn. 59, 61, with text.

<sup>23</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4960a (T720); cf. ch. 5 n. 62, n. 133 below, with text. For the date, see Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.66 n. 3; cf. Edelstein 2.120 n. 4, 246 n. 12. According to a late source, Sophokles was named *Dexion* by the Athenians after his death, and they built him a *heraion*, in order to honour him

paid to him in being associated with the Eleusinian Mysteries is clear evidence for the status which his worship had achieved by the late fifth century.

The geographical locations of Asklepieia are significant in their coverage of the Hellenic world:<sup>24</sup> the three Panhellenic shrines were Epidauros, serving the mainland, Kos in the Aegean,<sup>25</sup> though no doubt receiving some “patients” from the mainland as well, and Pergamon in Asia Minor.<sup>26</sup> Local Asklepieia also dealt with cases of illness and in addition, the shrine of Amphiaraos at Oropos dealt with visitors from both Boeotia and Attica.

The universality of Asklepios as the god of healing is not mirrored in the uniformity of ritual practised in his shrines throughout the Hellenic world: certain features were standard, but there were dissimilarities, and pilgrims to different shrines would have met with different procedures. The most detailed account, in fact, comes not from Epidauros, the Asklepiad centre *par excellence*, but from the shrine at Pergamon, where it is evident that a sophisticated and popular cult was practised by the second century AD. The incubatory procedure at this shrine can be compared to those from other Asklepieia,<sup>27</sup> and despite the fact that the main text from Pergamon is imperial,<sup>28</sup> the editor argues that the document contains traditional elements,<sup>29</sup> and given religious conservatism it seems justifiable to make use of this document in describing the procedure of classical and Hellenistic times.

for his role in the reception of Asklepios at Athens: he had “received the god in his house, and had built an altar” to him (*EM s.v. Δεξίωνα* (T591)); see the discussion of Aleshire *Athenian Asklepieion* 7-11.

<sup>24</sup> For a list, with testimonia, of the Asklepieia of the Greek mainland and the islands, see Semeria *ASNP* 16 (1986) 931-58.

<sup>25</sup> For Kos, note esp. Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 159-62; Sherwin-White *Ancient Cos* 275-78, 256-57; Burkert *Greek Religion* 215. Herod. *Mimes* 4 (T482) need not necessarily be set in the Koan Asklepieion; cf. Cunningham *CQ* 16 (1966) 115-17; idem *Herodas* 128. The importance of the Asklepieia, a festival inaugurated in 247, is attested by the decrees of various states agreeing to participate; see ch. 1, esp. nn. 82, 85, with text.

<sup>26</sup> Philostr. *Apoll.* 4.34 (T792); for Pergamon, see Kern *Religion der Griechen* 3.157-59; Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 164-172. Pergamon’s chief significance as a healing sanctuary seems to have arisen in the imperial period; Habicht *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 10-11 argues that the buildings are Hadrianic rather than belonging to Hadrian’s successor, Antoninus Pius; cf. idem *Pausanias’ Guide* 44.

<sup>27</sup> Burkert’s description *Greek Religion* 267, with 451 n. 52, and cf. 215, of the rituals relating to incubation is a conflation of several sources: *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 168-69, no. 161; *I. Eryth.* 205; *LSCG Suppl.* 22, *LSCG* 60 (Epidauros) *LSCG* 21 (Piraeus). See also the discussion by Meier *Ancient Incubation* 53-72.

<sup>28</sup> *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 168-69, no. 161, for which see also Sokolowski *GRBS* 14 (1973) 407-13. *I. Perg.* II, 264 (T513) is another text, known for some time, which is also important, even if fragmentary; cf. below, nn. 46 and 52.

<sup>29</sup> *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 185-87.

Pilgrims who were sick would visit an Asklepieion in their local area if there was one, and the spread of Asklepieia throughout the world occurred because, as one source tells us, it was more convenient to visit a local shrine than to have to travel to Trikka or Epidauros; in fact Aristagora of Troizen, not far from Epidauros, chose to incubate in her local Asklepieion, which obviously had a flourishing practice despite its proximity to Epidauros.<sup>30</sup> This, however, did not detract from the popularity of Panhellenic sites such as Epidauros, Pergamon and Kos. Obviously, if pilgrims could afford it, or felt the need strongly enough, they would travel to one of the more important sites; Philostratos, writing in the late second century AD, states that just as Asia flocked to Pergamon to be cured by Asklepios, so all of Crete and even many Libyans from across the sea visited the shrine of Asklepios at Lebena.<sup>31</sup> Both Epidauros and Kos embarked on ambitious building programmes at their sanctuaries in the fourth century, at the very time that Asklepieia had spread throughout the Hellenic world, so even when a local sanctuary became available, the main Asklepieia retained their prominence. Obviously for those who could afford to travel to them the main cult centres of the god were considered to be the most efficacious.

The main centre and “original” Asklepieion at Epidauros was important for a number of historical and geographical reasons. Epidauros itself lay on the coast, but the shrine to the god was about nine kilometres inland and accessibility owing to its position near the coast might have helped to facilitate the popularity of this shrine, as opposed to that at Trikka. Proximity to the coast meant that pilgrims did not have to undertake a lengthy journey overland, which would have been more expensive than a trip to a more remote shrine inland; most travellers presumably came by sea.<sup>32</sup> A long history, extending into Roman times, attests to the popularity of this shrine amongst pilgrims, and the authorities of the shrine set up stelai engraved with the testimony of

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<sup>30</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 122, iama 23; cf. n. 44 below (for Troizen). *Them. Or.* 27 (T385) comments that in his time Asklepios was no longer available locally (presumably due to the onslaught of Christianity), so that travel to Trikka and to Epidauros was necessary: Εἰ τὰ σώματα ἐνοσοῦμεν καὶ ἐδεόμεθα τῆς παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ βοηθείας, ὁ δὲ ἐνταῦθα παρῆν ἐν τῷ νεῷ καὶ τῇ ἀκροπόλει καὶ παρέχεν ἑαυτὸν τοῖς κάμνονσιν, ὥσπερ δήποτε καὶ λέγεται, πότερον ἢ ἀναγκαῖον εἰς Τρίκκην βαδίζειν καὶ διαπλεῖν εἰς Ἐπίδαυρον κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν κλέος, ἢ δύο βήματα κινηθέντας ἀπηλλάχθαι τοῦ νοσήματος; The spread of Christianity thus seems to have provided an impetus for pilgrimage to the main Asklepieia.

<sup>31</sup> Philostr. *Apoll.* 4.34 (T792): ὥσπερ ἡ Ἀσία εἰς τὸ Πέργαμον, οὕτως εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦτο ξυνεφοῖτα ἡ Κρήτη, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ Λιβύων εἰς αὐτὸ περαιοῦνται. It is not known whether Lebena was founded from Epidauros, Cyrene or Kos; cf. Ferguson *Among the Gods* 97.

<sup>32</sup> *Them. Or.* 27 (T385); cf. Kerényi *Asklepios* 27. For travelling by sea, see ch. 2, esp. nn. 9-11, with text.

those who had been cured. The keeping of the records was thus officially inspired, though these stelai are at least partly a compilation of private inscriptions, and express the gratitude of worshippers for their cures.<sup>33</sup> Over the centuries, hundreds of worshippers from the upper socio-economic groups must have set up private inscriptions thanking Asklepios for their cures. Despite the effects of the Roman occupation of the site, the remains of the classical period attest to a prosperity based on success,<sup>34</sup> while the archaeological remains at both Kos and Pergamon highlight the same point, that Asklepios was a deity who repaid worship.

It might seem extraordinary that a deity who arrived so late achieved the remarkable popularity which Asklepios did at Epidauros. Apollo, however, had been the centre of a cult at Epidauros since Mycenaean times, and although the presence of Apollo was never forgotten, Asklepios was to become the dominant deity at the site. The current consensus, based on attested building activity, is that the cult of Asklepios was established by the early fifth century, and that perhaps the god's worship was commenced in the sixth.<sup>35</sup> Architecture provides clues regarding Epidauros' rise to importance; Burford, who has carried out an extensive study of the architectural history and the organisation of the site, notes that a building programme which took place about 430 was a modest affair, while in the second quarter of the fourth century, a more elaborate one was undertaken.<sup>36</sup> The festival at the site recorded by Pindar, in two odes, was either a reflection of the religious importance of Epidauros at that point or might have been the means of bringing the cult of Asklepios to international attention.<sup>37</sup> The plague that struck Athens in the course of the Peloponnesian War is sometimes seen as one explanation for Epidauros' rise to importance, and the outbreaks of plague in 430 and 427 are considered to have been the catalyst for the importation of the deity into the polis. The resulting establishment in Athens would soon have led to an international reputation for Asklepios, resulting in both the spread of his cult from Epidauros, and to the recognition of Epidauros as a healing sanctuary of some value.<sup>38</sup> This, however, may be too limited a view for a cult of Panhellenic

<sup>33</sup> That they are a compilation of private dedications, *pinakes*, is suggested by the mention of a *pinax* in *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 1*, discussed below n. 103, with text.

<sup>34</sup> Tomlinson *Epidauros* 31-33.

<sup>35</sup> See Tomlinson *Epidauros* 9, 12, 22 cf. the bibliography referred to at *Epidauros* 23.

<sup>36</sup> Burford *Temple Builders* 15, cf. 21.

<sup>37</sup> Pind. *Nem.* 3.147 (T556a), 5.95-97 (T556); Schol. Pind. *Nem.* 3.147 (T559); cf. Burford *Temple Builders* 15, 19. Participants at the games would naturally have mentioned this aspect of Epidauros when they related their experiences at home.

<sup>38</sup> Kern *Religion der Griechen* 2.312; Burford *Temple Builders* 20-21; Tomlinson *Epidauros* 24. This view has its detractors: Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.120, n. 4.

significance, and importation into Athens may not have necessarily promoted its reception elsewhere.

Asklepios, as a son of Apollo by a mortal woman, was one of the few such mortal sons who came to be regarded as a god, and this alone shows the increasing popularity of his cult. The myths placing the birth of Asklepios in Epidauros cannot be used as an argument that Epidauros had long been a centre of Asklepiad cult activity: such myths could easily have arisen in the classical period, or shortly before. Rather, they are an indication that Epidauros became so popular that the site was able to generate new myths concerning the birthplace of the god and the powers of his healing cult. The myths which surrounded the healer naturally played their part in attracting pilgrims once the popularity of the shrine had been established, especially those highlighting his miraculous healing powers. According to Pindar's account, Asklepios, the hero who aided those in sickness, was raised by Kheiron the centaur, who taught him to cure the sick, but when Asklepios brought someone back from the dead, he was struck down by the son of Kronos. Diodoros states that Asklepios had brought many back from the dead, and that Hades complained to Zeus that his power was diminishing because of this, so Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt, while Apollodoros ascribes the responsibility for Asklepios' death to Zeus alone, who feared that men might come to each other's aid. Apollodoros adds that Asklepios was able to resurrect the dead because Athena had given him the blood which had filled the veins of the gorgon: the blood from the gorgon's left side portion destroyed, that from the right saved people. This last element of the myth seems to be a later accretion to explain how Asklepios was able to save lives: the original myth depicts Asklepios as relying on his medical skill alone. According to Pausanias, Asklepios was suckled by a goat and guarded by a shepherd's dog. The shepherd discovered the child, and went to pick it up, but lightning issued forth from it. The child was soon famous throughout the land: he invented medicine for the sick, and engaged in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>39</sup> Such myths would have impressed the worshippers with the god's divine powers, and instilled in them the belief that the god had the ability to cure their illnesses.

The popularity of Asklepios and the spread of his cult is sometimes explained by arguing that the 'old' Olympian gods were no longer as religiously satisfying as in the past, and Krug also argues that the growth of urbanisation led to a municipal interest in the health of the community, as shown by the inauguration of state doctors

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<sup>39</sup> Pindar *Pyth.* 3.5-60 (T1); Diod. 4.71.1-4 (T4); cf. on this point Theod. *Graec. Affect. Cur.* 8.19-20 (T5); Apollod. 3.10.3.5-4.1 (T3); Paus. 2.26.5.



in this period.<sup>40</sup> However, several of the stories associated with the foundation of individual Asklepieia indicate that the impetus for the establishment of the cult did not arise from a sense of municipal spirit. The Asklepieia at Pergamon, Athens, Sikyon, and to a certain extent that at Halieis, were established, not because of any concern on the part of the states involved, but, according to the stories, as a direct result of the actions of individuals, pilgrims who had been to Epidauros, and who acted as proselytisers for the cult. The state might have taken a hand after the individuals introduced the cult, but any such action is, of course, quite different from a deliberate policy of state introduction and encouragement.

Increasing urbanisation presumably did lead to many more sick individuals, and to an increasing need for Asklepieia in or near urban communities. Of interest is the fact that Asklepieia were spreading throughout the Hellenic world at the same time that Hellenic medicine was developing.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the doctors and the god do not seem to have been in competition for “patients”, and the development of Hippocratic medicine did not mean the end of temple medicine in the Greek world.<sup>42</sup> The god was allowed his pilgrims without any condemnation by doctors as merely an idle superstition; on the contrary Asklepios was the patron of doctors at all times. On the island of Kos, which was the medical centre *par excellence* of the Hellenic world, the medical practitioners existed side by side with a major healing centre which did not employ medical science but relied on faith healing.<sup>43</sup>

The primacy of the Asklepieion at Epidauros over other Asklepieia is made clear in one iama at Epidauros, which does not concern a pilgrim at Epidauros, but a woman, Aristagora of Troizen, who had sought the aid of the god at her local Asklepieion. Suffering from a tapeworm in her stomach, she incubated, and dreamt that the sons of Asklepios operated upon her, cutting off her head; Asklepios himself was at Epidauros, and this explains why he had not conducted the “operation” personally. The sons of Asklepios, however, could not put the head back on again, and they had to send a message to Epidauros for the god to come. He came, stitched her head back, and then splitting open her stomach, took out the tapeworm, the

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<sup>40</sup> Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 120: “Mit dem Aufblühen großer staatlicher und städtischer Gemeinwesen wurden Krankheit, Verletzung und Tod zu einem Zivilisationsproblem....” For state doctors, see Cohn-Haft *Public Physician: passim*; for doctors at festivals, see ch. 4 nn. 153-55, with text; ch. 7 n. 88, with text.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 121. Aleshire *Athenian Asklepieion* 4 is incorrect in describing the Athenian Asklepieion as unique because it had only a local status; the majority of Asklepieia in the Hellenic world will have had only local significance.

<sup>42</sup> Cohn-Haft *Public Physicians* 13.

<sup>43</sup> Cohn-Haft *Public Physicians* 27-31; Sherwin-White *Ancient Cos* 275-78; cf. Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.148 n. 11.

original cause of her sickness and of her incubation, stitched up her stomach, and cured her. This iama clearly served to remind those who read it of the primacy of Epidauros, and to assert Epidauros' position as the home of Asklepios.<sup>44</sup>

The cult of Asklepios depended upon visitation by the god, and in the Asklepieion sicknesses were cured by divine dreams. The procedure of incubation was a religious ritual, and pilgrims had to carry out a series of acts to ensure that they would be cured. The ritual which all the Asklepieia had in common was that of sleeping in a special chamber, the abaton, which was not the temple. At the healing sanctuaries, the sick, after performing the customary rituals, went to sleep in the abaton hoping that the god Asklepios would appear and cure them. There is a relief illustrating this: the ill person is asleep, with Asklepios standing over him, while the relatives on the left keep anxious watch over the sick person, and do not see the god, who is represented pictorially as appearing in a dream to the sick individual, and curing him.<sup>45</sup>

There is a provision requiring ritual bathing in a Pergamene cult inscription, in the context of other required observances,<sup>46</sup> and at Athens, the Asklepieion in which Ploutos is shown by Aristophanes as being healed required bathing in the sea.<sup>47</sup> Bathing was important as a preliminary rite at some Asklepieia, and is evidenced at the Asklepieion at Piraeus and the Amphiarraion at Oropos.<sup>48</sup> Bathing as part of the

<sup>44</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 23*; cf. Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 145. For the Asklepieion at Troizen, see Habicht *Pausanias' Guide* 31-32, esp. 31 n. 11 with references; cf. Benedum *JDAI* 101 (1986) 141 with nn. 19-20.

<sup>45</sup> Fig. 8.8. The abaton was the sleeping place for the incubants at Epidauros (see *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121 iamata 1, 6, 11, 15, 17*; *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122 iamata 24, 27, 28, 29, 38* (as *adyton*)), referred to as the *enkoimeterion* at Pergamon (*Alt. Perg.* 3.3, pp. 168-69, no. 161.11, .12, .18, .27, cf. .14 (for this text see further below, esp. nn. 54, 58)). For the abaton see Tomlinson *Epidauros* 67-71; Robert *Épidaure* 29-30; Burford *Temple Builders* 50-51, 62-63, 82. The term abaton will be used throughout this chapter, although *adyton* is also found as in iama 38. What went on in the abaton was a secret: one Aeschines climbed a tree to see over into the abaton, but fell and hurt his eyes on some fencing: he slept in the abaton and was cured (*IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121 iama 11*); cf. ch. 5 n. 12.

<sup>46</sup> *I. Perg.* II, n. 264 (T513): εἰσιῶν λουσάμενος (the context is fragmentary). See also the provisions for bathing at Andania (not necessarily for purification): *LSCG* 65.106-11; ch. 4 nn. 52, 110, 113; ch. 6 nn. 24-25; and below, n. 168, with text.

<sup>47</sup> *Ar. Wealth* 656-58 (T420; D20). Ritual bathing is purificatory for obvious reasons, cf. Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.149; Parker *Miasma* 212-13 with nn. 27-31. Ferguson *Among the Gods* 93 notes that the Piraean Asklepieion was later the site of a church of the healing saints Kosmas and Damian, an interesting example of cult continuity (for Kosmas and Damian, see Deubner *De Incubatione* 68-79, and idem *Kosmas und Damian* for a text of their miracles).

<sup>48</sup> *Ar. Wealth* 656-58 (presumably the Piraeus, due to the proximity of this Asklepieion to the sea), *Xen. Comm.* 3.13.3 (Amphiaraios). *Paus.* 9.39.7 states that consultants at the oracular

healing process, but without a purificatory role, is, according to Parker, attested only at the cult of Podalirios in Apulia, but he notes that the archaeology of some Asklepieia, nevertheless, suggests that water therapy was being used there from the fourth century onwards.<sup>49</sup> None of the surviving Epidaurian iamata, however, mention bathing as a part of the curative process.

The clothing of participants in any cult was usually regulated, and this was true also for Asklepiad cults.<sup>50</sup> Just as the god Asklepios was described as being dressed in white,<sup>51</sup> so too were the suppliants seeking cure.<sup>52</sup> Sacrifice was essential to the incubatory procedure,<sup>53</sup> and the cult regulations for the Pergamon Asklepieion, the opening lines of which are lost, commence with the sacrificial procedure which was to be followed. With the consultant dressed in white and wearing a wreath, an animal sacrifice would be made, then cakes decorated with olive sprigs were sacrificed to various gods; the sacrificer was commanded to put on another wreath when commencing the sacrifice of the cakes. A pig was then sacrificed to Asklepios on the altar, and three obols placed into the *thesauros*. This procedure must have occurred during the day, for the next injunction is to make sacrifices in the evening, that is, immediately prior to incubation. Three cakes decorated as before were to be sacrificed on the altar: two to Tykhe and Mnemosynē, the third to Themis. The incubant then entered the shrine, having abstained from all the things which were previously described in the inscription (this part of the text is lost), including sex and goat's meat and cheese, and a further item which cannot be identified because of the state of the stone.<sup>54</sup> No longer can it be claimed that there is "...no evidence that the suppliants refrained from certain food... as they did in the sanctuaries of other gods..."<sup>55</sup> Sexual abstinence was a common purity rite in Greek cults,<sup>56</sup> and an inscription from

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incubatory centre of Trophonios at Lebadeia bathed in the river prior to the consultation, cf. ch. 4 n. 39, with text.

<sup>49</sup> Lykoph. *Alex.* 1050, Schol. on same (*FGH* 566 Timaios F 56); Parker *Miasma* 213 n. 31.

<sup>50</sup> See ch. 4, esp. nn. 19-30, with text (Andania); nn. 31-38, with text (Lykosoura); n. 40, with text (Lebadeia).

<sup>51</sup> *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 128, 1-2.18-19 (3rd century BC) (T296).

<sup>52</sup> *Contra Edelstein Asclepius* 2.150. See *I. Perg.* II, 264 (T513); Aristeid. *Orat.* 48.31 (T486), cf. 30 (T806). Note that an Eretrian inscription mentions coloured clothes for a festival of Asklepios (*IG* XII, 9, 194 (T787)), but this does not relate to incubation.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Burkert *Greek Religion* 267.

<sup>54</sup> *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 168-69, no. 161.2-14; cf. Parker *Miasma* 75 n. 4.

<sup>55</sup> Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.49. For restrictions on certain foods in particular cults, see the discussion in ch. 4 nn. 62-67, 79-80, with text.

<sup>56</sup> Parker *Miasma* 74-75 n. 4 gives examples of cults in which purity from recent intercourse was a ritual requirement; see also ch. 4, esp. nn. 50, 55-59, and below, nn. 79, 122, with text. The regulations concerning sexual segregation during incubation at the Amphiaraiion at Oropos could

Pergamon concerning entry to the temple of Athena gives some precise details concerning sexual purity, which are interesting for comparative purposes.<sup>57</sup> Wreaths had to be worn because sacrifice was a preliminary to incubation, and after incubation the wreath was to be left on the incubatory bed,<sup>58</sup> presumably as a thanksgiving item.

Provision was also made for those who wished to undergo a further consultation, on their own behalf or that of someone else, and this involved the sacrifice of another pig. In connection with this procedure, there was also a reference to a smaller incubatory chamber: whoever entered it was to make himself pure, and it is possible that this chamber was for those who wished to have a second consultation. The sacrifices of cakes and the deities involved were the same, and three obols were to be placed into the *thesauros*, but in addition there were to be made sacrifices of honey cakes, with oil and frankincense, and in the evening, again, three cakes, one each to Themis, Tykhe, and Mnemosyne. At Pergamon, therefore, preliminary sacrifices, the payment of a fee for consultation and incubation, could be followed by a second consultation if required.

At Oropos the deity Amphiaraios effected cures,<sup>59</sup> and the method was also by incubation.<sup>60</sup> Little is known of the preliminary rites, and the relevant inscriptions provide little information,<sup>61</sup> but abstinence from wine for three days and from food for one was prescribed.<sup>62</sup> There was also a monetary fee, as was the case at Pergamon.<sup>63</sup> Preliminary sacrifice was also the rule and whoever wished to seek healing from the god had to offer up sacrifice; given the context, this presumably refers to pre-incubatory sacrifices.<sup>64</sup> The priest, if present, was to say prayers, and

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indicate that there were similar provisions there. For the necessity of purity at Epidauros, note especially Porph. *Abst.* 2.19; cf. Parker *Miasma* 322-23.

<sup>57</sup> The relevant inscription is *SIG<sup>3</sup> 982*; cf. ch. 4 n. 50, with text.

<sup>58</sup> *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 168-69, no. 161.14-15: Τὸν δὲ στέφανον ὁ ἐγκοιμώμενος / [ἀποτιθέμ]ενος καταλείπτω ἐπὶ τῆς στιβάδος.

<sup>59</sup> *LSCG Suppl.* 35, .3-4; *LSCG* 69.20-22, .36-43.

<sup>60</sup> *LSCG* 69.36-43. Pausanias explains the use of dreams at the Amphiaraiion: Paus. 1.34.4-5.

<sup>61</sup> *LSCG Suppl.* 35; *LSCG* 69.

<sup>62</sup> Philostr. *Apoll.* 2.37; cf. Deubner *Le Incubatione* 14-17.

<sup>63</sup> *LSCG Suppl.* 35.3-6; *LSCG* 69.21-24. Petropoulou *GRBS* 22 (1981) 53-54 is mistaken in stating that there was no fee charged at healing sanctuaries, unlike oracular centres, and that the fee at Oropos was “unique”. The evidence of *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 168-69, no. 161.8 is clear: three obols for consultation, not as thanksgiving. For the offertory box from the Asklepieion at Corinth, see Roebuck *Corinth* 28-30; fig. 4.2. For the Amphiaraiion at Oropos, see Schachter *Cults of Boiotia* 1.19-27.

<sup>64</sup> *LSCG* 69.20-22.

put the sacred portion on the altar, and in the case of the priest's absence this was to be the responsibility of whoever was making the sacrifice.<sup>65</sup>

Pausanias, writing over four hundred years after the Oropian inscriptions, adds details which, if they cannot be taken as further evidence for fourth century practices, can at least be seen as reflecting further development at a later date. He gives specific details regarding the nature of the sacrifice, including the fact that the consultant had to enter into a state of purification, and that this was achieved through sacrifice made to all the gods who were named on the altar in front of the shrine.<sup>66</sup> When this had been done, the consultant sacrificed a ram, and slept on the fleece, and during sleep the dream occurred which would lead to the cure.<sup>67</sup> These practices, then, were similar to those at Epidauros, where the official cure inscriptions record that the incubants received dreams advising them on the treatment to be undertaken.

The evidence of comedy can also be utilised in this context, and Aristophanes' *Wealth* provides the most detailed account of a night in the abaton. As the god of wealth, Ploutos, is blind, explaining why undeserving men have wealth, it was decided to cure him, so that he would then distribute wealth to those who deserved it.<sup>68</sup> A description of a night in the abaton follows, in which reference is made to honey cakes and preliminary sacrifices,<sup>69</sup> and a comic scene presented in which the priest is shown 'doing the rounds' of the altars, gathering up the offerings for himself.<sup>70</sup>

Sacrifice must have been an essential part of the general fourth century practice, as a hymn of Isyllos notes that even at Triikka, the first temple of Asklepios, incubation was preceded by sacrifice to Apollo, suggesting that if this happened at the original Asklepieion, it occurred at all the other Asklepieia.<sup>71</sup> At Epidauros, one of

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<sup>65</sup> LSCG 69.26-27.

<sup>66</sup> Paus. 1.34.5.

<sup>67</sup> Paus. 1.34.5 seems to indicate that more than one individual could sleep on the fleece; see Petropoulou *Pausanias 1.34.5: Incubation on a Ram Skin* 169-77.

<sup>68</sup> The restoration of sight is a common subject in the Epidaurian iamata: *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1. 121*, iamata 4, 9, 11, 18, 20; *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1. 122*, iamata 22, 32. Note the case of Eukrates at Eleusis, ch. 5 n. 93, with text; fig. 5.9.

<sup>69</sup> Ar. *Wealth* 660.

<sup>70</sup> Ar. *Wealth* 676-81.

<sup>71</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1 128.3.29-31 (T516)*. The point here is that Triikka was thought to be the original centre of Asklepios, but that even here his father had to be given his due. It is interesting that the hymns of Isyllos, which claim Epidauros to have been the birthplace of Asklepios, nevertheless retain traces of the belief that Triikka was originally the most important site, while rejecting Thessaly as the birthplace of the god.

the iamata mentions “preliminary sacrifice and customary rites”.<sup>72</sup> Sacrifice, then, was a necessary prelude to incubation, and presupposed sacrificial items, such as the pigs and cakes required at Pergamon. Such essential items had to be available to the pilgrim at the site, and procuring these was made easy at Epidauros. An inscription of the fourth century from this site instructs the priest of Asklepios to provide to those sacrificing all the things that are needed for the sacrifice. Grain, wreaths and wood are mentioned, and priced, setting out the amounts that the priest was to charge the sacrificers.<sup>73</sup> The sacrifice referred to here is not specified, but it might be the preliminary sacrifice prior to incubation.<sup>74</sup>

Certain taboos were in force at Asklepieia for worshippers. The purity regulations at Pergamon specified that the consultant had to abstain from goat’s cheese and goat’s meat for two days prior to the day of incubation. It seems that this aversion to goat’s meat was one which was enforced at nearly all the cult places of Asklepios, and it seems that there were also dietary restrictions at Lebadeia, the incubatory site of Trophonios.<sup>75</sup> Pausanias states that at Cyrene, where a cult to Asklepios had been founded from Epidauros, the Cyreneans sacrificed goats to the god, while this was against the custom of the Epidaurians.<sup>76</sup> Pausanias had previously related that an Asklepieion had been founded at Lebena, in Crete, from the one at Cyrene, but gives no information on whether goats were sacrificed at Lebena;

<sup>72</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 5*: Παῖς ἄφινος. / [οὗτος ἀφί]κετο εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν ὑπὲρ φωνᾶς· ὡς δὲ προεθύσατο καὶ / [ἐπόησε τὰ] νομιζόμενα, μετὰ τοῦτο ὁ παῖς ὁ τῶι θεῶι πυρφορῶν / [ἐκέλετο, π]οῖ τὸμ πατέρα τὸν τοῦ παιδὸς ποτιβλέψας, ὑποδέκεσ/[θαι ἐντὸς ἐ]νιαυτοῦ, τυχόντα ἐφ’ ἃ πάρεστι, ἀποθυσεῖν τὰ ἱατρα. / [ὁ δὲ παῖς ἐξ]απίνας “ὑποδέκομαι,” ἔφα· ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἐκπλαγεῖς πάλιν / [ἐκέλετο αὐ]τὸν εἰπεῖν· ὁ δὲ ἔλεγε πάλιν· καὶ ἐκ τούτου ὑγιῆς ἐγέ/[νετο].

<sup>73</sup> *LSCG Suppl. 22*, i.e. a wreath was half an obol, as was wood for the suckling pig; cf. ch. 4, esp. nn. 44-46, 116-19, with text, for the provision of items at festival sites. The wreath, as an accompaniment to all sacrifice, is of course important. Its importance at Pergamon, however, is not merely as a feature of sacrifice but also of the incubatory procedure. Cf. ch. 4 n. 18, with text.

<sup>74</sup> Sokolowski *LSCG Suppl. 22*, p. 57. There is a brief reference to these preliminaries in *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1 121, iama 5*: ὡς δὲ προεθύσατο καὶ / [ἐπόησε τὰ] νομιζόμενα. Cf. above n. 54, with text.

<sup>75</sup> Kratinos fr. 221 (Edmonds *FAC* 1.103), discussed by Parker *Miasma* 358 with n. 11; see Arbesmann *Fasten* 101, and generally, for the “ekstatische Fasten”, 97-102; for such restrictions, cf. ch. 4 nn. 48-67, 79-80.

<sup>76</sup> Paus. 2.26.9.

the connection with Cyrene might suggest this. Pausanias notes that the Tithoreans sacrifice any animal, except goats, to the god.<sup>77</sup>

The ritual relating to the abaton is clarified by the account of Aristophanes, as the Epidaurian iamata record personal epiphanies, but not the procedure involved. In the *Wealth*, after the offerings had been made, the incubants lay on the floor; Aristophanes has one of the characters, Karion, join the suppliant. This may have been simply for the purposes of the plot, though it is possible that friends or relatives of the sick could also stay with them there, and perhaps the sick were helped to overcome anxiety and tension in the presence of friends. Ploutos is blind, and perhaps the badly disabled were assisted into the abaton by friends or relatives, who stayed to provide care if this were needed, and parents of children may have wished to exercise this function.<sup>78</sup> Sexual segregation was part of the cultic regulation at Oropos, where the women slept on one side of the altar, and the men on the other, and while it is not mentioned at other sites, the rules for sexual abstinence at Pergamon point to similar practices. The rule at Oropos can be explained in terms of the fact that sexual purity was a prerequisite for incubation, and may be due to the fact that the Greeks did not approve of sexual activity in their temples.<sup>79</sup> Aristophanes describes as present in the abaton, incubating, both Ploutos and many others suffering from every kind of illness.<sup>80</sup> The servant of the god doused the lights and commanded the suppliants to fall asleep, and to behave;<sup>81</sup> the god appeared while the suppliants slept, and effected his cures.<sup>82</sup> The temple servants, if trust can be placed in Aristophanes' account, seem to have been in charge of the incubants.<sup>83</sup>

The abaton in which sick individuals coming to Epidauros for a cure slept was near the temple of the god,<sup>84</sup> and incubants did not sleep in the temple of the god

<sup>77</sup> Paus. 10.32.12, cf. ch. 3 n. 75, with text; for explanations of this taboo, see Sext. Emp. *Hypotyposesis* 3.220-21 (T534); Serv. *Verg. Georg.* 2.380 (T535). Parker *Miasma* 357-65 discusses the prohibition of certain animals as sacrificial offerings from particular rites.

<sup>78</sup> Children were regular suppliants at the Epidaurian Asklepieion: *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 121, iamata 5, 8, 20; *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 122, iama 26; a father on behalf of a lost boy: *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 122, iama 24. See ch. 4 nn. 22, 26, with text, for children at festivals (Andania); for the "child of the hearth", the only child permitted at the Eleusinian Mysteries, see ch. 5 n. 48, with text.

<sup>79</sup> See above, n. 56.

<sup>80</sup> Ar. *Wealth* 667-68; cf. discussion of the play by Siefert *Inkubation* 335-36.

<sup>81</sup> Ar. *Wealth* 668-71: ὡς δὲ τοὺς λύχνους ἀποσβέσας / ἡμῶν παρήγγειλεν καθεύδειν τοῦ θεοῦ / ὁ πρόπολος, εἰπὼν, ἢν τις αἴσθηται ψόφου / σιγᾶν, ἅπαντες κοσμίως κατεκείμεθα. For lights in the Asklepieia, see Walton *Asklepios* 46.

<sup>82</sup> Ar. *Wealth* 708-11.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 121, iama 5.

<sup>84</sup> Paus. 2.27.2.

itself.<sup>85</sup> At Epidauros, the iamata were set up in the peristyle, but it is uncertain whether this was the place of incubation,<sup>86</sup> though the architectural features might prompt such a conclusion, supported by the statement of Pausanias that the place of incubation was by the temple.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, in the Asklepieion described by Aristophanes, the serpents which are seen after the lights are extinguished are described as coming out of the shrine, that is, from the sacred area as distinct from the sleeping area.<sup>88</sup> The altar which separated women and men at Oropos need only have been an altar for offerings,<sup>89</sup> and the incubants need not necessarily have been sleeping in an inner shrine.

The experiences which the pilgrims underwent and their impressions of what happened during their sleep are more difficult to define. The iamata provide clear evidence, both of their beliefs and of the official versions of successful cures. Iamblichus stated that Asklepios provided cures through dreams, and that medical science originated in recording the dreams which cured these illnesses.<sup>90</sup> In addition to the iamatic evidence, there is also that of iconography, and a relief found at the Amphiarraion at Oropos is important for an understanding of what the incubants thought happened to them during the night. In the background, the suppliant sleeps on a bed, watched over by the healing deity Amphiarraos, while in the foreground, the same person stands, supporting his right hand with his left, while Amphiarraos touches his right shoulder.<sup>91</sup> This is clearly how the pilgrims visualised their experience, and this relief from Oropos corresponds to the iamata at Epidauros, for it is a pictorial representation of the experiences recorded there. Another well known example of a relief is that from the Piraeus, where the god Asklepios lays his hands on the sleeping individual while anxious relatives look on.<sup>92</sup>

In the iamata of the Asklepieion at Lebena dreams are not specifically mentioned, but they record that the ill were cured while they slept. Demandros of

<sup>85</sup> Cf. ch. 3, esp. nn. 4-6, 67, 69-71, 73-77, with text.

<sup>86</sup> In fig. 8.3a Tomlinson labels the peristyle building as the abaton, compare Kerényi at fig. 8.3b, with *Asklepios* 24. According to Kerényi the western wing was composed of two stories.

<sup>87</sup> Paus. 2.27.2.

<sup>88</sup> Ar. *Wealth* 733-46; for serpents: 7. 3-34.

<sup>89</sup> In Ar. *Wealth* 672-83 offerings are left on altars in the sleeping area.

<sup>90</sup> Iambl. *Myst.* 3.3 (T414): ἐν Ἀσκληπιοῦ μὲν τὰ νοσήματα τοῖς θεοῖς ὀνειροῖς παύεται.

<sup>91</sup> See fig. 8.7 (Athens NM 3369): ΑΡΧΙΝΟΣ ΑΜΦΙΑΡΑΩΙ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ; Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 55, 88-91; Hausmann *Kunst und Heilum* 55-56; Siefert *Inkubation* 330-32; Himmelmann-Wildschütz *ΘΕΟΛΕΠΤΟΣ* 19; Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 136. For dreams at Oropos, see Paus. 1.34.5.

<sup>92</sup> See fig. 8.8 (PM 405); van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 98. For an imaginary healing scene at Epidauros, see fig. 8.10.



Gortyn was operated on by Asklepios while asleep;<sup>93</sup> a husband (who was from Lebena itself), who at the age of fifty was childless, was ordered by the god, presumably in a dream, to send his wife to the Asklepieion. While the wife was asleep there the god placed a *sikua*, cupping instrument, on her; she left and became pregnant.<sup>94</sup> These appear to be references to dreams, and three other iamata, later than these, record instructions given by the god to suppliants, who were subsequently cured,<sup>95</sup> one of which mentions visions seen by the patient while asleep.<sup>96</sup> It seems very likely therefore that Lebena relied upon the same dream visions as the shrine at Epidauros. Lebena seems to have been a popular place, at least in the early imperial period, and possibly prior to that, drawing its clientele from all over Crete, and even Libya.<sup>97</sup> All of this evidence strongly suggests that all the Asklepieia, as well as the Amphiaraiion at Oropos,<sup>98</sup> relied upon dreams as the customary curative medium.

Dreams were not only experienced by pilgrims when they were at the shrine, and it seems that the inspiration for some of the pilgrimages was a vision of the god while the sufferer was still in his or her home town. According to the testimonies of the iamata, the ill did not always solicit the god, but rather he commanded them to present themselves at a particular Asklepieion. When Eratokles was asleep at Troizen, about to undergo cautery, the god appeared to him in a dream, and persuaded him not to allow the cauterisation to take place, but to go to Epidauros, where he was subsequently cured.<sup>99</sup> In this case, it might seem that as a result of the anxiety of the patient, about to undergo cautery for a cure, the idea of a painless cure by Asklepios impinged itself on his consciousness, and led to subliminal suggestion. Two similar cases are also attested at Lebena, where one individual, suffering from sciatica, was

<sup>93</sup> *I. Cret.* 1, 17, no. 9.1-5 (T426); for the Asklepieion at Crete, note Willetts *Cretan Cults* 224-27.

<sup>94</sup> *I. Cret.* 1, 17, no. 9.9-11 (T426).

<sup>95</sup> *I. Cret.* 1, 17, no. 17 (T439); no. 18 (T440); no. 19 (T441). Note also no. 24 (T442), a votive offering for a cure.

<sup>96</sup> *I. Cret.* 1, 17, no. 19 (T441).

<sup>97</sup> Philostr. *Apoll.* 4.34 (T792), quoted in n. 31 above.

<sup>98</sup> Paus. 1.34.5: δοκῶ δὲ Ἀμφιάραιον ὄνειράτων διακρίσει μάλιστα προσκεῖσθαι· δηλὸς δέ, ἡνίκα ἐνομίσθη θεός, δι' ὄνειράτων μαντικὴν καταστησάμενος. Note also Strabo 14.1.44 (649-50) on the healing cult at Akharaka near Nysa which relied on dreams; cf. ch. 4 n. 7, with text; below n. 204, with text. Iamata are attested for Kos and for Triikka, though none survive: Strabo 8.6.15 (374) (T382; D22).

<sup>99</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 123, iama 48: Ἐρατοκλῆς Τροζάνιος ἔμπυ/[ος. τούτῳ] ἐν Τροζᾶνι μέλλουσι ὑπὸ τῶν ἰατρῶν καίεσθαι καθεύδου/[τι ὁ θεὸς ἐπιστὰς τὰμ μὲν] καθύσιν ἐκέλετο μὴ προσκεῖσθαι, [ἐγ]καθεύδειν / [δ' ἐν τῶν ἰατρῶν Ἐπιδαυρίων· τοῦ δὲ χρ[ί]νου π[α]ρελθόντος, ὃμ ποτε[τέ/τακτο, ἐρράγη τὸ πύος, καὶ ὑγιῆς ἀπῆλθε]. This iama is not in Edelstein *Asclepius* 1; the text is from Peck *Fünf Wundergeschichten* 76; there is a translation in Horsley *New Documents* 2.22-23.

ordered to go to the temple so that he would be cured, while the childless man of fifty was commanded to send his wife to the temple. In both cases success resulted, in the first, the sciatica was cured, and in the second, a pregnancy ensued.<sup>100</sup>

At Epidaurus, the god cured pilgrims of a wide range of ailments, including lengthy pregnancies, paralysed limbs, blindness, gall stones, baldness, dropsy, worms, lice, headache, pus, and sterility.<sup>101</sup> At Lebena, Asklepios treated sciatica, infertility and abdominal problems.<sup>102</sup> Some of the Epidaurian iamata record cures of the most fantastic nature, such as that of the woman Kleo, who had been pregnant for five years and came to Epidaurus and slept in the abaton. When she left the sacred area she gave birth to a son, who immediately washed himself in a fountain and walked about.<sup>103</sup> Even here, in the realm of the fantastic, fact and fiction can be separated to make the modern scholar less dismissive of the cure descriptions. The evidence of modern medicine indicates that women can suffer from delayed pregnancies, and it is possible that, in reality, Kleo thanked the god for the relief from the long pregnancy, and that the element about the child's precociousness at birth was an apocryphal addition by the authorities. To the ancient mind it might have been logical that a child who had been trapped in the womb would nevertheless have undergone physical development and years after the original cure, when it came to be inscribed along with the others, the story was given a flourish by those responsible for compiling the list.<sup>104</sup>

Those seeking cures came from a variety of places, and the inscriptions at Epidaurus attest to pilgrims from all over the Hellenic world, clearly indicating the popularity of the cult. Patients, as recorded in the iamata, came from Aegina, Argos,

<sup>100</sup> *I. Cret.* 1, 17, no. 9.5-11, .21-5 (T426).

<sup>101</sup> *JG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1, 121-23.

<sup>102</sup> *I. Cret.* 1, 17, no. 9 (T426).

<sup>103</sup> *JG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 1. This iama is the first in the modern editions of the cure inscriptions, and thus for the modern reader it sets the tone for the cure descriptions which follow: [Κλ]εὼ πένθ' ἔτη ἐκύησε. αὐτὰ πέντ' ἐνιαυτοῦς ἤδη κυοῦσα πρὸς τὸν / [θε]ὸν ἰκέτις ἀφίκετο καὶ ἐνεκάθευδε ἐν τῷ ἀβάτῳ· ὡς δὲ τάχις/[τα] ἐξῆλθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐγένετο, κόρον ἔτεκε, ὃς εὐ/[θη]ὺς γενόμενος αὐτὸς ἀπὸ τῆς κράνας ἐλοῦτο καὶ ἄλλα τὰι ματρὶ / [πε]ριῆρπε. τυχοῦσα δὲ τούτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἄνθεμα ἐπεγράνατο· “Ὀὐ μέγε/[θη]ὺς πίνακος θαυμαστέον, ἀλλὰ τὸ θεῖον, πένθ' ἔτη ὡς ἐκύησε ἐγ γασ/τρὶ Κλεὼ βάρος, ἔστε ἐγκατεκοιμάθη καὶ μιν ἔθηκε ὑγιῆ.” For prohibition on birth in the abaton, see below n. 190. Van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 76-77 uses this iama as an example, along with others, of a votive offering set up as a remembrance, μνημα.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Ferguson *Among the Gods* 89, who notes of the cures: “Some, like the account of Kleo, it is impossible to credit; yet one asks how ever such a record came to be kept...” This iama purports to be a record of the personal inscription put up by Kleo.

Athens, Epeiros, Halieis, Herakleia, Hermione, Kaphyiai, Keos, Khios, Kirrha, Knidos, Lampsakos, Messene, Mytilene, Pellene, Pherai, Sparta, Thasos, Thebes, Thessaly, Torone, and Troizen.<sup>105</sup> Asklepieia elsewhere were also patronised from far afield: individuals from Gortyn and even from Libya travelled to Lebena to incubate in the Asklepieion.<sup>106</sup>

In the cases described by the surviving iamata, all the pilgrims were satisfied, and all were cured. Inscriptions do not, of course, refer to those who failed to obtain a cure, but the Pausanian reference to those dying outside the sanctuary presumably includes unsuccessful pilgrims in addition to local incubants.<sup>107</sup> It is easy for the modern reader to be sceptical about the cures attributed to Asklepios, but this scepticism is not new, according to the testimony of the iamata, though in such cases the scepticism and illnesses of doubters were simultaneously cured by the intervention of Asklepios. One inscription records the incredulity of one visitor to Epidaurus, who did not believe that the god had performed such miracles. He, however, all of whose fingers except one were paralysed, incubated, and the god appeared to him and curing him enquired if the patient still doubted the efficacy of the god: the patient answered in the negative. The god renamed him “The Unbelieving”, and in the morning the patient left the sanctuary cured.<sup>108</sup> Such an inscription no doubt served to convince the sceptics, and encourage others to have faith in the god. Ambrosia, of Athens, scoffed at the cures which were recorded at Epidaurus, and at the belief that the lame and blind could become better just through seeing a dream. She herself was blind in one eye. She incubated, and in her dream the god appeared to her and said that he would make her well, but as payment she would have to place in the shrine a silver pig as a remembrance of her ignorance.<sup>109</sup>

Scepticism was therefore said to be forgiven by the god: the man with the paralysed fingers was punished with a nickname, Ambrosia by having to dedicate a silver pig. But ridicule also brought out the worst in the god: Kephisias mocked the cures of Asklepios engraved at Epidaurus in an insolent fashion: “The god is speaking falsely by claiming to heal the lame. For, if he has the power, why doesn’t he heal Hephaistos [the lame god].” While riding soon after, he was kicked by his horse, lamed, and was carried into the temple on a stretcher, and the iama states that Asklepios was clearly punishing him. Finally, Kephisias, only after he had greatly

<sup>105</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1, 121-22; see fig. 8.1 (the Herakleia referred to is not specifically identified in the iama; for Pherai, see ch. 2 n. 15). The theodokoi lists for Epidaurus show widespread participation in the Epidauria festival, see ch.1 n. 100.

<sup>106</sup> *I. Cret.* 1, 17, no. 9 (T426); Philostr. *Apoll.* 4.34 (T792).

<sup>107</sup> Paus. 2.27.1, 6; cf. ch. 4 n. 145, with text

<sup>108</sup> “Apistos”: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup>, 121, iama 3.

<sup>109</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.121, iama 4.

entreated the god, was made well.<sup>110</sup> These iamata were clearly an advertisement for the Epidaurian sanctuary, publicising the fact that Asklepios was the god who cured even sceptics, but who could punish them if they refused to realise his power.

The testimonies of the patients at Epidauros make quite clear that the main feature of the cure was the dream. But obtaining a dream in itself could become a matter for anxiety, for the god might fail to appear. Philostratos illustrates the point in his fictional *Life of Apollonios* where he states that Apollonios, arriving at Pergamon, gave advice to the suppliants on what to do in order to obtain “favourable dreams”.<sup>111</sup> The Epidaurian iamata do not always record that the incubant dreamed, and some pilgrims to Epidauros were disappointed with respect to their dreams.<sup>112</sup> One of the sick after an obscure dream departed from Epidauros disappointed (but with no ill-feeling towards the god), only to receive a personal epiphany on the way home, in which she was cured.<sup>113</sup> Thersandros of Halieis saw no dream while sleeping in the abaton, but was cured on his return home by one of the sacred serpents which had travelled on the wagon, coiled up on the axle for most of the journey.<sup>114</sup>

Even incubation was not always essential and some pilgrims were cured upon arrival at the sanctuary, without apparently having incubated.<sup>115</sup> Incubation by proxy was also possible, though in this particular case, the god sent the same dream both to the proxy in the abaton, and to the sick individual who had stayed at home.<sup>116</sup> This is interesting as it indicates that a substitute could go to Epidauros on behalf of the invalid. While an oracle could be solicited by representatives of those who wanted the response, sickness is a different matter, as it affects the individual, and the cure must be given directly, unlike an oracle, which can be passed on from the recipient to the person concerned. Most of the iamata, however, record that the incubant did have a dream while sleeping in the abaton: some of these dreams involved conversations with the god, others were more passive, in which the god simply effected the cure while the patient was asleep,<sup>117</sup> while in certain dreams which involved conversation with the god the deity gave direction for action to be taken upon waking.<sup>118</sup> Hagestratos

<sup>110</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121*, iama 36; cf. Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 136.

<sup>111</sup> Philostr. *Apoll.* 4.11 (T415).

<sup>112</sup> The cases *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122*, iamata 25, 33.

<sup>113</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121*, iama 25, discussed below nn. 175-76, with text; compare a similar situation, as depicted in fig. 8.9.

<sup>114</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121*, iama 33; see Weirich *Antike Heilungswunder* 103-05; cf. Benedum *JDAI* 101 (1986) 143.

<sup>115</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121*, iamata 16, 17, 20; *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122*, iama 26.

<sup>116</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121*, iama 21; cf. ch. 6 n. 143, with text.

<sup>117</sup> Conversations: *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121*, iamata 2, 3, 4, 8; *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122*, iamata 35, 37.

<sup>118</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122*, iama 37.

suffered from insomnia on account of headaches, and when he fell asleep (this seems to be mentioned as an indication that although he had insomnia, he was able to sleep in the abaton, where Asklepios worked cures) he dreamt that the god cured him of his headaches, and getting him to stand up naked taught him the *probala*, a hold used in the pankration. The following day he was well, and not long afterwards he won a victory in the pankration at the Nemean games.<sup>119</sup> Two other examples involved the god commanding pilgrims to do things against their wishes, at which Asklepios was at first angry, but then good humoured.<sup>120</sup> But these dreams involved imaginary physical actions which the sick individuals carried out in reality when awake, although in their dreams they had been afraid of so doing. There is only one dream recorded in which the patient, by means of physical action in his dream, became cured, without the necessity of carrying out this action upon waking. An unnamed man, who had a stone in his genitals, dreamt that he was lying with a beautiful boy and that by ejaculating he ejected the stone and left the shrine cured holding the stone in his hands.<sup>121</sup>

This cure is unique, in that it is the only *iama* that survives which describes a cure which was effected by an action which occurred during sleep, and it is also significant in that regulations concerning sexual purity applied to many cults, and healing centres were no exception. The Pergamon inscription set down that prior to incubation, a two day period of sexual abstinence was required, and furthermore, sexual activity in temples was generally frowned upon by the Greeks.<sup>122</sup> While masturbation is not mentioned in ritual restrictions, it would, by definition, have presumably fallen into the same category of prohibited sexual activity. It can only be assumed that, in this case, as an involuntary physiological reaction on the part of the incubant, it did not contravene religious convention.

A “beautiful boy”<sup>123</sup> appears in several of the Epidaurian *iamata*, perhaps the same individual, and presumably he played a part as a helpmate for Asklepios. In the case just dealt with, he causes the ejaculation of the stone, while other *iamata* record that a good looking youth applied a drug to the malignant toe of an incubant,<sup>124</sup> and

<sup>119</sup> *JG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, *iama* 29.

<sup>120</sup> *JG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, *iamata* 35, 37.

<sup>121</sup> *JG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, *iama* 14: Ἄνηρ ἐν αἰδοίῳ λίθον. οὗτος ἐνύπνιον εἶδε· ἐδόκει παιδὶ καλῶι / συγγίνεσθαι, ἐξονειρώσσω δὲ τὸν λίθον ἐγβάλλει καὶ ἀνελόμηνος ἐξῆλθε ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν ἔχων. Lang *Cure and Cult* 23 briefly discusses the seminal discharge in connection with the votive offerings of male genitalia at Corinth. Cf. ch. 4 n. 54.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. above, nn. 56, 79, with text.

<sup>123</sup> *JG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, *iama* 14: παιδὶ καλῶι.

<sup>124</sup> *JG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, *iama* 17: νεανίσκον εὐπρεπεῖ.

that a woman who had come in the hope of falling pregnant, while sleeping in the abaton dreamt that a beautiful youth uncovered her and that the god then touched her with his hand.<sup>125</sup> This youth, or youths, can be included in the list of the helpers of Asklepios,<sup>126</sup> joining the goose, serpents, dogs, and, on the inanimate level, dice, as Asklepios' associates.<sup>127</sup>

Most important of these associates are the sacred serpents and dogs of Asklepios, which pilgrims encountered while at Epidauros, as well as seeing them represented in Epidaurian art. Pausanias records that the chryselephantine statue of Asklepios at Epidauros was half the size of the statue of Olympian Zeus at Athens and describes its features which incorporated important elements of the cult of healing at Epidauros: Asklepios is seated, holding a staff around which a serpent is entwined, one hand above the head of the serpent, while a dog lies beside the statue.<sup>128</sup> The serpented staff was the typical cult motif, the emblem of this god, and most representations of Asklepios show him with staff in hand, and a serpent entwined around the staff beneath his hand.<sup>129</sup>

The iamata include several cures in which the serpents of the god played a crucial role, and one of these incidents highlights the proselytising role of the serpents in the cult of Asklepios, as the sacred serpent is a recurrent motif playing an important role in the transfer of the cult from Epidauros to other places. Thersandros of Halieis who had gone to Epidauros in the hope of a cure for consumption, failed to receive a dream and was taken back to Halieis on a cart. As it transpired, he was not to be disappointed by the god, as the sacred serpent, when Thersandros was resting at home, slithered from the cart, went to Thersandros and cured him.<sup>130</sup> Thersandros' home city, Halieis, enquiring into the matter, at a loss as to what to do with the serpent, either to return it to Epidauros or to keep it in their own city, did what was a

<sup>125</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 31: π[α]ῖς τις ὄρατ/ος.*

<sup>126</sup> Asklepios is himself described in an epiphany description as a "good looking man": *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 25, εὐπρεπῆς ἀνὴρ.*

<sup>127</sup> These helpers are discussed below: serpents: *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 17, IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iamata 33, 39, 42; dogs: IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 20. IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iamata 26; goose: IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 43 (see n. 160 below, with text); dice: *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 8.* For an Epidaurian dog, see fig. 8.11.*

<sup>128</sup> Paus. 2.27.2; see fig. 8.11. Kerényi *Asklepios* 102-05 suggests that the labyrinth under the thymele at Epidauros was a chamber built for snakes, and that these were kept alive on mice; see the discussion on the thymele below. Paus. 2.28.1 states that all serpents are sacred to Asklepios, and that Epidauros alone produced serpents that were tame with humans.

<sup>129</sup> See the statues of Asklepios in Kerényi *Asklepios*, plates 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 20, 31, 35-44, 49-52.

<sup>130</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 33; cf. ch. 2, esp. nn. 14-15, with text for pilgrim transport on land; fig. 8.9. Lecos, Pentagalos Early and Late Asclepieia* 13 identify the serpents of Asklepios as belonging to the genus *Elaphe longissima*.

reasonable thing for Greeks of the time to do: they resolved to send to Delphi for an oracle (the serpent must have been recognised as having come from Epidauros). The god replied that the serpent should remain in Halieis, and that a temenos be constructed for Asklepios, and an image of the god made and placed in the temple, and these things the city duly performed. In this case, the founding of the Asklepieion is represented as involuntary, in that the city of Halieis had not sought to bring the cure from Epidauros; rather, it was an act of the god himself, and he, as the god of healing, must have sent the serpent to effect the cure, and possibly to establish a new sanctuary. But the question of whether or not the serpent was intended to remain in Halieis was a point the people of Halieis were not prepared to decide for themselves, and they therefore sought the advice of the oracle.<sup>131</sup>

The Sikyonians also had a clear account of how the god Asklepios came to them, from Epidauros, in the form of a serpent riding on a mule drawn cart. Nikagora of Sikyon, mother of Agasikles wife of Ekhetimos, was responsible for bringing him, and this story has clear parallels with that of Thersandros, as in both cases the cult arrives as a serpent in a cart. As a female, one would not expect Nikagora to have been sent by the Sikyonians to Epidauros for the express purpose of bringing back the cult of Asklepios. It therefore seems safe to conjecture that Nikagora had gone to Epidauros as a sick person, had been cured, and had brought back the god, in the form of a serpent, to Sikyon.<sup>132</sup>

In the foundation story of the Asklepieion of Athens, as at Halieis and Sikyon, the serpent is prominent, and is portrayed as an ancillary to Asklepios, and essential to the establishment of the cult.<sup>133</sup> It is the god himself, presumably as a statue, who is described as coming to the Eleusinion, and who then summoned the serpent from Epidauros to join him, the serpent being chauffeured in the chariot of Telemakhos. Perhaps the cult statue of Asklepios was sent to Athens in the care of an individual who had successfully incubated at Epidauros. The establishment of the cult may then have been similar to the situation at Pergamon, where Arkhias, cured at Epidauros,

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<sup>131</sup> Siefert *Inkubation* 333 states that this is an example of “...der antiken Missionpolitik gerade Priesterschaft von Epidauros...”; but it was not the priests at Epidauros but the oracle which was responsible for the proselytisation in this case. The precise nature of the relationship between the Epidaurian priests and the Delphic oracle is uncertain: cf. Kern *Religion der Griechen* 3.156; Krug *Heilkunst und Heilkult* 129-30. Delphi recommended Epidauros to the Romans: Ovid *Metam.* 15 (TT76, 689, 850); cf. Kern 3.156; nn. 14- 5 above, with text.

<sup>132</sup> Paus. 2.10.3: φασὶ δὲ σφισιν ἐξ Ἐπιδαύρου κομισθῆναι τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ ζεύγους ἡμιόνων δράκοντι εἰκασμένον. The transfer of the cult to Rome is also relevant, see Kerényi *Asklepios* 3-17.

<sup>133</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4960a (T720); cf. n. 23 above, with text.

took the cult to his home,<sup>134</sup> and to that of Thersandros, who inadvertently carried the serpent to Halieis.

In the case of Halieis, the responsibility for the establishment of the cult lies with the serpent, though the oracle at Delphi played a part. For Athens and Halieis, for which there are detailed accounts, both the cult statue and the serpent were the main features of the cult recorded. In the case of Sikyon, however, the serpent was actually identified with the god, so close had the identification of the serpent with the god become. Perhaps it can be conjectured that, if as suggested Nikagora was motivated to bring the serpent to Sikyon because she had incubated at Epidauros and been cured, she had been cured through the agency of a serpent, perhaps as an epiphany of the god.

This emphasis on the serpent is understandable given the role which is attributed to the serpent in the cure inscriptions at Epidauros. The cures for which serpents were responsible at Epidauros fall into three categories:<sup>135</sup> they cause pregnancies,<sup>136</sup> heal sores by licking,<sup>137</sup> or bring about cures by unspecified means.<sup>138</sup> Why the serpent was associated with Asklepios was explained by the ancients as related to the fact that the serpent sheds its skin for a new one annually, and hence was considered to be a symbol of renewal and healing.<sup>139</sup> Modern scholars, impressed by the serpent's role in pregnancy, prefer to see in the serpent's role a phallic symbolism.<sup>140</sup>

Most notable is the serpent's role in bringing about pregnancies. At Sikyon, on the roof of the temple of Asklepios there was a woman represented riding a serpent, whom the Sikyonians claimed was Aristodama, mother of Aratos, the *strategos* of the Achaeans in the second half of the third century, whom the Sikyonians considered to be the son of Asklepios.<sup>141</sup> In the light of the *iamata* which claim that the serpent of

<sup>134</sup> See above, nn. 18-21, with text, for the foundation of cult sanctuaries from Epidauros.

<sup>135</sup> Unfortunately, for the role of serpents, we can rely only on this site, the isolated report from Halieis involving Thersandros, and the two *iamata* from Lebena.

<sup>136</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 122, *iamata* 39 and 42 discussed below, nn. 150-51, with text; cf. ch. 5 n. 103, with text.

<sup>137</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 121, *iamata* 17.

<sup>138</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 122, *iamata* 33.

<sup>139</sup> Macrob. *Saturn.* 1.20.1-4 (T301).

<sup>140</sup> Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.167; Siefert *Inkubation* 330.

<sup>141</sup> Paus. 2.10.3, 4.14.7; Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 37 discusses possible epigraphic evidence for the involvement of the serpent in this case. Aratos was born in 270; Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 42 believes a trace of the story can be found in Plut. *Arat.* 2.4, 24.1, 53.1-6, esp. 5-6; for Aratos' enslavement of pilgrims (*Arat.* 28.6), see ch. 1 n. 15, with text; ch. 2 nn. 75-76, with text. Much later, Sidon. Apollin. *Carm.* 2.121-26 (T 89) records not only the well known story of Alexander's serpentine origins (associated with Zeus), but also that Augustus himself rejoiced that because of the marks on his mother of the Epidaurian serpent he was considered to be the offspring of Phoebus



Asklepios effected pregnancies, it is possible that Aristodama had incubated, either at Sikyon or Epidauros, in the hope of falling pregnant, and that this was the origin of the tale. That Asklepios was the father could have been inspired by a dream, and she, like others, might have dreamt that the serpent slept with her or that the god touched her. The fact that she is depicted riding the serpent might be an indication that the serpent had been somehow involved. The serpent would thus, given the claimed paternity of Aratos, have been identified as Asklepios, and Aratos was openly known as his son.<sup>142</sup>

One of the main reasons why women were among the suppliants of Asklepios was because they were in quest of successful conclusions of pregnancies, like Kleo who had been pregnant for five years.<sup>143</sup> Ithmonika of Pellene had a similar problem; originally, she had incubated in the temple “for the sake of offspring”, and the god appeared to her in a dream in which she requested of the god that she might become pregnant, with a daughter. Asklepios promised this, and asked if she had a further request; she answered that she did not. She did not, however, give birth to the child, but experienced a three year pregnancy. Ithmonika therefore came back to Epidauros and incubated again and the god reminded her that he had asked her if she needed anything else, and that she had said no. He would, however, grant her childbirth, although she had not asked for help with this, and upon awaking, she hurried out of the abaton, and gave birth.<sup>144</sup> Not only Ithmonika sought the aid of Epidaurian Asklepios in order to become pregnant;<sup>145</sup> Andromakha of Epeiros also incubated for this purpose. She dreamt that a handsome boy uncovered her, and that the god touched her with his hand, and subsequently she became pregnant, and bore a son.<sup>146</sup>

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(Apollo). The serpent would have come from the shrine of Asklepios on the Tiber island: it is not known whether Augustus’ mother had visited the shrine, or whether the serpent had made a special trip to her; probably the former.

<sup>142</sup> Paus. 2.10.3.

<sup>143</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 1.* Herzog *Wunderheilungen 71-73* discusses this case and cites various passages from Hippokrates to indicate that women could be mistaken about the length of their pregnancies. It is better to invoke the evidence of modern medicine (see above n. 104, with text).

<sup>144</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 2:* Ἰθμοϊκά Πελλανῆς ἀφίκετο εἰς τὸ ἱερόν ὑπὲρ γενεᾶς. She did not give birth in the abaton, for this was not allowed, see below n. 190 (cf. above n. 103), with text; cf. Herzog *Wunderheilungen 73*.

<sup>145</sup> Siefert *Inkubation 329* notes: “Kunderwunsch war und ist ebenfalls ein... Grund für ein Wallfahrt und häufig von Erfolg gekrönt...”

<sup>146</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 31:* Ἀνδρομάχα ἔξ Ἀπείρο[ν] περὶ παίδων. αὐτὰ ἐγκαθεύδουσα ἐνύπνιον εἶδε· εἶδόκει αὐτᾷ π[α]ρὶς τις ὥρατ/ος ἀγκαλύψαι, μετὰ δὲ τούτου τὸν θεὸν ἄψασθαί οὐ τᾷ [χη]ρί· ἐκ δὲ τούτου τᾷ Ἀνδρομάχαι υ[ι]ὸς ἔξ Ἀρύββα ἐγένετο. Cf. Siefert *Inkubation 329*; Weinrich *Antike Heilungswunder 28*; Herzog *Wunderheilungen 74*, who note this as an example of cures carried out by Asklepios at Epidauros through the direct use of his hands; see also *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 3*; *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1,*

In a similar case, the local woman of Lebena who slept in the abaton of the Asklepieion there to become pregnant, dreamt that Asklepios placed a *sikua*, a cupping instrument, on her stomach, and she became pregnant.<sup>147</sup>

Another iama records that a woman of Troizen, whose name is missing, slept in the abaton for the purpose of having offspring. The god appeared and promised her request, and asked the woman what sex she desired; she answered a male, and within the year he was born.<sup>148</sup> But there was another way in which women desiring children became pregnant with the help of Asklepios, without personal treatment by the god.<sup>149</sup> There are two examples from Epidauros, one of which involves Agamede of Keos, who slept in the abaton, and dreamt that a serpent lay on her stomach; subsequently five children were born to her.<sup>150</sup> Nikasiboula of Messenia, also in quest of children, saw a dream in which the god approached her, with a serpent crawling behind him, and she slept with the serpent, and from this two sons were born to her within the space of a year.<sup>151</sup> It is therefore clear that Asklepios is himself sometimes seen as a serpent;<sup>152</sup> Aristodama was depicted with a serpent, and her child, Aratos, was thought to be the son of Asklepios. Nikasiboula slept with a serpent accompanying the god, and while in the case of Agamede the serpent only

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122, iama 41, discussed by Weinrich *Antike Heilungswunder* 29-30, who notes that the “laying on of hands” treatment and manipulation is medically sound. Andromakha’s husband was Arybbas, the king of Epeiros; see ch. 3 n. 52, ch. 4 n. 124, with text; cf. Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 73.

<sup>147</sup> *I. Cret.* 1, 17, no. 9.5-11 (T426). The god in a dream had ordered the woman’s husband, who was fifty and childless, to send his wife along to the abaton. Clearly anxiety about his age and childlessness triggered this dream; if his wife was of the same age as he, concern for her approaching menopause may also have been responsible. Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 74 notes that the *sikua* finds no equivalent at Epidauros.

<sup>148</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 122, iama 34: [ Ἄ δεῦνα Τροζα]νία ὑπὲρ τ[έ]/κνων. αὐτα ἐγκαθεύδου[σα] ἐν[ύπνιου] εἶδε· ἐδόκει οἷ φᾶσει ὁ [θεὸς] / ἐσσεῖσθαι γενεᾶν καὶ ἐ[π]ερ[ωτῆν] πότερ’ ἐπιθυμοῖ ἔ]ρσεν[α ἢ θηλυ]/τέραν, αὐτὰ δὲ φάμεν ἐπι[θυμεῖν] ἄρσενα· μετὰ δὲ τοῦ]το ἐ[ν]τὸς ἐνι]/αυτοῦ ἐγένετο αὐτᾶι υἱ[ός]. Cf. Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 73.

<sup>149</sup> Weinrich *Antike Heilungswunder* 23.

<sup>150</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 122, iama 39: [ Ἀγαμή]/δα ἐκ Κέου. αὐτα περὶ παίδων ἐγκαθεύδ[ουσα] ἐν[ύπνιου] εἶδε· ἐδόκει οἷ ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ δράκων ἐπὶ τᾶς γαστ[ρὸς] κέσθαι· καὶ ἐκ τούτου] / παῖδες οἷ ἐγένοντο πέντε. Cf. Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 74.

<sup>151</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 122, iama 42: Νικασιβούλα Μεσσανία περὶ παίδων ἐγκαθεύδουσα] / ἐν[ύπνιου] εἶδε· ἐδόκει οἷ ὁ θεὸς δράκοντα μεθ[έρποντα] ἕκειν] / φέρων παρ’ αὐτάν, τοῦτωι δὲ συγγενέσθαι αὐτά· [καὶ ἐκ τούτου] / παῖδες οἷ ἐγένοντο εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἔρσενες δύο]. Cf. Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 74; Siefert *Inkubation* 329-30.

<sup>152</sup> Paus. 4.14.7.

slept on her stomach, it is clear that the serpent by itself can induce pregnancy.<sup>153</sup> Serpents were credited with other cures. In Aristophanes' *Wealth*, Ploutos' blindness is cured by the serpents licking his eyelids.<sup>154</sup> In the Epidaurian iamata, serpents cured one man's sore toe: during the day he was sleeping outside, and a serpent came and licked it, making it well.<sup>155</sup>

It can be noted in this context that of the forty-eight extant iamata at Epidauros, thirty-one of the suppliants were men, thirteen were women, and four were children; of the four children, one was female. The sample is small, and a little less than a third of these suppliants were women, though it is possible that the male temple authorities may have selected cures undergone by males in preference to those by females when compiling the iamata. Clearly women were regular suppliants at Oropos, and the presence of female suppliants at Lebena is well attested.<sup>156</sup> It is interesting to note that female suppliants were a significant group, and it was probably the case that a pilgrimage in search of a cure was one of the few times when the women of ancient Greece travelled outside the confines of their native polis.

Dogs also played an important, though not so prominent, role in the healing process, and were part of the cult apparatus at Epidauros. Theodoretos, who places the birth of Asklepios in Thessaly, relates a variant of the Thessalian myth in which Koronis exposed her child on a mountain, who was suckled by a dog, rescued by hunters, and conveyed to Kheiron the centaur.<sup>157</sup> According to one of the iamata, a blind boy pilgrim from Hermione while at Epidauros had his eyes cured by one of the temple dogs while he was awake, and not incubating. "Lyson of Hermione, a blind boy. While he was awake his eyes were cured by one of the dogs in the shrine. He went away healed".<sup>158</sup> A boy from Aegina was also cured in this way: "A dog cured a boy from Aegina. He had a tumour on his neck. Coming to the god, one of the

<sup>153</sup> But where the serpent heals in the absence of the god, it need not necessarily be assumed that the serpent is the epiphany of the god, as believed by Weinrich *Antike Heilungswunder* 95. That gods visited women in the form of snakes was a common mythical motif; references are collected by Weinrich *Antike Heilungswunder* 93-94, n. 1.

<sup>154</sup> Ar. *Wealth* 733-36; cf. Weinrich *Antike Heilungswunder* 95-97, 99. Weinrich 99 also quotes passages from Aristophanes *Amphiaraios* and Kratinos *Trophonios* in which serpents seem to play a role in healing.

<sup>155</sup> IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 17; IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 33 (Thersandros, discussed above nn. 114, 130, with text).

<sup>156</sup> Lebena: *I. Cret.* 1, 17, 9.5-11 (T4.16); Oropos: see ch. 4 n. 55, with text.

<sup>157</sup> Theod. *Graec. Affect. Cur.* 8.19 (T5).

<sup>158</sup> IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 20: Ἀύσων Ἐρμιονεὺς παῖς ἀΐδής. οὐ[τος] ἕπαρ ὑπὸ κυνὸς τῶν / κατὰ τὸ ἱερόν θ[εο]εὐόμενος τοὺς ὀπιλλοὺς ὑγ[ι]ῆς ἀπῆλθε.

dogs of the shrine cured him, while awake, with its tongue, and made him well".<sup>159</sup> Pilgrims, then, encountered canines as part of their pilgrimage experience.

Dogs are thus associated with cures, not in dreams but in reality. This might well be because one variant on the Asklepios birth myth gives a dog a role in the rearing of Asklepios. But it is possible that it is the curing efficacy of the saliva of dogs, which must have been observed by the ancients, that was in part, or perhaps completely responsible. Even a goose played a healing role: an individual from Kios, whose name is lost, was walking towards a goose: it bit his feet, and by making him bleed, cured him.<sup>160</sup> Animals, then, aided Asklepios in effecting divine cures.

In return for a cure, through a dream, pilgrims would make a thanksgiving offering. At the Asklepieia there was a tradition that grateful pilgrims would record the cures which they had received from the god Asklepios, either by iamata or by another form of votive offerings. At some Asklepieia, particularly Corinth, no iamata have survived, but the patients there have left behind testimonies of a different type in the form of votive offerings representing that part of the body which the god had cured,<sup>161</sup> though such votive offerings do not appear to have been generally dedicated at Epidauros. The only examples at Epidauros are two in number and are from the imperial period,<sup>162</sup> and at Kos there are also no votive offerings in this form. It seems that at these two sites the desire to thank the god (or rather the gods, for Apollo, as noted already, was not forgotten) for a cure took the form of inscriptions - the *pinakes*, which the iamata at Epidauros represent, or some form of appropriate offering, sometimes associated with the help given: bandages, a rock, dice, silver pig, or a goblet.<sup>163</sup> It is possible that the tablets were themselves the thank-offerings, or at

<sup>159</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 26*: Κύων ἰά/σατο παῖδα Αἰ[γιν]άταν. οὗτος φῦμα ἐν τῶ[ι τρα]χάλωι εἶχε· ἀφικόμενε[ν] / δ' αὐτὸν ποτὶ τ[ὸν] θε[ὸν] κύων τῶν ἰαρῶν ἕπ[αρτ]ῆι γλώσσαι ἐθεράπευσε / καὶ ὑγιῆ ἐπόη[σ]ε. For dogs in Asklepieia, see Walton *Asklepios* 33, 65, 91; at Athens, the dogs were to receive offerings of cakes: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 4962 (T515)*.

<sup>160</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 43*.

<sup>161</sup> At the museum at Corinth there is an impressive collection of votive body parts: Roebuck *Corinth* 114-28 catalogues these, with photographs at pls. 33-46; cf. Lang *Cure and Cult* 15-27, with photograph at 14; note the comments of the excavator, de Waele *AJA* 37 (1933) 440-44. *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1532-39* are a list of votive offerings of body parts at Athens; these are catalogued with introductory remarks by van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 108-13; also useful is Aleshire *Athenian Asklepieion* 37-51. On votive offerings at Corinth and Athens, cf. Ferguson *Among the Gods* 92-93. In general, note Siefert *Inkubation* 328 (with references). See fig. 8.12, a relief of a cured individual presenting a votive leg as a thank-offering, note the votive feet in the background.

<sup>162</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 440 and 474*; see van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 122-23 for discussion and bibliography.

<sup>163</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iamata 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 15*. Note that *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 1* mentions a *pinax*.

least can be considered as part of the thanks rendered to the god. The woman Kleo, cured of a lengthy pregnancy, wrote on her *an(a)thema*, offering, that while the *pinax* was not great the god who had cured her was.<sup>164</sup> This seems to mean that it was in effect her offering to the god: a testimony to the power of the god, and thus a thank-offering to Asklepios. That readers of the dedication are asked not to marvel at the *pinax* but at the greatness of the god might in fact suggest it was itself an admirable object, and that Kleo had thanked the god with a costly dedication. Wreaths could also be a thanksgiving offering, and the wreath which was worn into the incubatory chamber, according to the direction at Pergamon, was to be left on the mattress by the incubant.<sup>165</sup> Presumably the priests gathered these up and dedicated them to the god, and as such these wreaths are to be considered as part of the thanksgiving offerings to the god. Pausanias records that on the road from Oitylos to Thalamai there was a sanctuary of Ino where oracles were revealed in dreams. He states that it was difficult to judge whether the statue in the sanctuary was of bronze or not, owing to the garlands which covered it.<sup>166</sup> Clearly there were many incubants who donned garlands as part of the incubatory ritual and then dedicated these to the god.

At Oropos, thanksgiving took an interesting turn; near the shrine of Amphiaraios was a spring, and into this, after a successful cure, the custom was to throw silver and gold coins. This offering of money thrown into the spring might have been in addition to a thank-offering already made, and this supposition is strengthened by the consideration that the shrine did not benefit from the money thrown into the pool.<sup>167</sup> However, there was a similar pool at the Asklepieion at Athens, where the payment of thank-offerings is well documented.<sup>168</sup>

The thank-offering to the god could take the form of a sacrifice, especially of a cock.<sup>169</sup> At Erythrai, for example, those who had incubated in the shrine were to make a sacrifice to both Asklepios and Apollo.<sup>170</sup> One interesting case reveals some anxiety on the part of the individual paying the thanksgiving: Asklepios is reminded that he has received the debt which Akæson vowed him on behalf of his wife Demodike. If the god forgets that the vow has been paid, the tablet (on which

<sup>164</sup> *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 1.

<sup>165</sup> *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 168-69, no. 161.14-15.

<sup>166</sup> Paus. 3.26.1.

<sup>167</sup> Paus. 1.34.4; quoted in ch. 4 n. 114. Pausanias does not mention an actual thanksgiving sacrifice, and the inscriptions dealing with incubatory procedure at Oropos (*LSCG Suppl.* 35, *LSCG* 69) reveal nothing on this point.

<sup>168</sup> Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 2.103.225 (T724). See above, nn. 46-48, with text, for water in ritual purification.

<sup>169</sup> See below, nn. 184-86.

<sup>170</sup> *I. Erythrai & Klazomenai* 205.30-38 (T521).

payment of the vow is presumably recorded) is there to act as witness.<sup>171</sup> It is obviously important to thank the god, or he might be angry and behave in a vindictive fashion, and at Epidauros the iamata recorded examples of this, in order to warn those who might break their agreement with the god. One of the cure inscriptions at Epidauros records that Hermon of Thasos had his blindness cured by the god, but as he did not make a thank-offering to the god, Asklepios made him blind again. Coming back to the shrine, Hermon incubated for a second time, and was made well,<sup>172</sup> and presumably after the second cure he was sensible enough to make a thanksgiving offering.

In another case, the failure to pay a vowed offering met the full force of the wrath of the god. The Epidaurian iamata record two cases which are of relevance. These two would have been read by the literate pilgrim, and would have been a lesson to those who were tempted not to give the god his due. Pandaros, a Thessalian, had come to Epidauros because he suffered from scars on his forehead and slept in the abaton, experiencing a vision. He dreamt that Asklepios bound the scars with a fillet, and commanded him to remove the fillet when he left the abaton, and to dedicate it in the temple. At daybreak, he removed the fillet, the scars were gone, and he dedicated the fillet, to which the scars had been transferred, to the temple. Pandaros must have returned home, and there he gave money to one Ekhedoros to give to the god at Asklepios. Ekhedoros suffered from scars, as had Pandaros, and Pandaros' cure must have encouraged him to make the journey to Epidauros, and it is in fact probable that many pilgrims to Epidauros made their way there because they knew someone, or had heard of someone, in their local area who had experienced a cure there.

When Ekhedoros arrived at Epidauros, he omitted to make the offering of Pandaros' money, and slept in the abaton, where the god appeared to him, and asked if he had received from Pandaros money with which to set up a dedication in the temple. Ekhedoros denied that he had, but made an offer: if the god would make him well, he would set up a painted image. After this, the god bound the fillet of Pandaros on his forehead, and ordered him to take it off when he had left the abaton, wash his face in the spring, and examine himself in the water. When day came, Ekhedoros left the abaton, removed the fillet, on which the scars were no longer visible: he looked in the water, and saw that he not only retained his original scars, but had those of

<sup>171</sup> Callim. *Epigram*. 54 (T522 (given as 55)). This particular epigram is an example of a votive offering made in order to redeem a vow. While it might have been only a literary production, the central element, the necessity of an offering and anxiety that it is noticed, are clear (cf. van Straten *Gifts For the Gods* 70-72): τὸ χρέος ὡς ἀπέχεις, Ἀσκληπιέ, τὸ πρὸ γυναικός / Δημοδίκης Ἀκέσων ὤφελεν εὐξάμενος, / γινώσκειν· ἦν δ' ἄρα λάθη καὶ ἴμιν ἀπαιτῆς, / φησὶ παρέξεσθαι μαρτυρίην ὁ πίναξ.

<sup>172</sup> IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122, iama 22; see Herzog: *Wunderheilungen* 134, cf. 96.

Pandaros as well;<sup>173</sup> the god had exacted vengeance, and displayed a punitive streak in his personality.

The second story along similar lines recorded in the iamata is somewhat more complicated. Amphimnastos, a fish carrier, while carrying fish to Arkadia, vowed to give one-tenth of the proceeds of the sale to Asklepios when the fish were sold. He did not fulfil his vow, and while selling the fish, at Tegea, suddenly the fish attacked him. A large crowd gathered at this spectacle, and the fish-monger confessed his deceit. He entreated the god to relieve him of the attacks; the god made many fish appear, and Amphimnastos dedicated a tenth of the proceeds to the god.<sup>174</sup> It is probable that Amphimnastos had been passing through Epidauros, incubated, made his vow, and then failed to fulfil it.

The god could also request thanksgiving offerings personally, as in the case of Pandaros. One woman, Sostrata of Pherai, had failed to receive a clear dream in the abaton.<sup>175</sup> She started back homewards, but at Kornoi there appeared to her and to her companions a fine looking man who, learning about what had happened, asked them to place on the ground the litter in which Sostrata was travelling. He cut open her abdomen and removed many worms, two foot-baths full, and after stitching up her stomach, and making her well, revealed himself to be Asklepios, and ordered her to send thanksgivings to Epidauros.<sup>176</sup> The iamata record other similar cases, such as

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<sup>173</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iamata 6-7*; see Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 133-34, who believes that Pandaros was probably cured through “Auto-suggestion”, and that Ekhedoros suffered through “Minderwertigkeitskomplex”, inferiority complex. If such psychological explanations must be sought, “Schuldkomplex” might be more appropriate (cf. Herzog 124-25); cf. van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 72.

<sup>174</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 123, iama 47*; Peek *Fünf Wundergeschichten* 6-8 (Peek also re-edited iamata 44, 45, 46, 48) proposed a restoration of this iama which was rejected by J. & L. Robert *REG* 77 (1964) 162-65 (no. 180). Peek defended himself in an addendum to *Fünf Wundergeschichten* when this article was reprinted in Pfohl *Inschriften der Griechen* 66-77, addendum (*Nachtrag* 1975) at 77-78; Peek maintains, as did Herzog, that the stone (.24) reads ἐξάπνας οἱ ἰχθύες, rather than as von Gaertringen, who failed to read ἰχθύες and restored as ἐξάπνας [κωνώπια] (Peek includes a majuscule text on the page after 78 where he prints ΙΧΘΥΕΣ). This would mean an attack by fish, rather than von Gaertringen’s gnats. Horsley *New Documents* 2.21-22, however, prefers to reprint von Gaertringen’s text; R. Merkbach, *per ep.*, believes that Peek’s reading is on the stone and must stand, and that the continued acceptance of von Gaertringen’s reading of [κωνώπια] is “unglücklicherweise” and “unmöglich”. See Paus. 10.9.3-4 for another example of a dedication of fish; cf. Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 133, 136; van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 72.

<sup>175</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 25*: οὐθὲν εἰρύπνιον ἐναργ[ε]ῖς ἐώρη.

<sup>176</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 25*. This is an example of a group epiphany. Siefert *Inkubation* 333 points to a similar example on a relief, in which a young man on a litter and his companions greet Asklepios; a serpent is entwined in the tree which is slightly left of centre of the relief; see fig. 8.9. Of Sostrata’s epiphany, Siefert *Inkubation* 332 states: “Ob hier wirklich Würmer zutage gefördert

that of Ambrosia, who had scoffed at the god, and then been cured, and who as a penalty for her scepticism was commanded to dedicate a silver pig.<sup>177</sup>

In one case, not the god but the temple servant who had charge of the fire made the request, and was the agent responsible for the cure. A dumb boy came as a suppliant, in the care of his father. After he had performed the preliminary sacrifices and performed the usual rites, the temple servant looking at the father of the boy requested that if he received that for which he came, he should make a thank-offering within the year. Before the father could reply, the boy suddenly said "I promise". His father, startled, asked him to speak again, and he repeated it; after this he became well.<sup>178</sup> In another, a local boy suffering from stones incubated and in a dream was asked by the god what he would give if he was cured: the lad promised ten dice, presumably his playthings, the god laughed good naturedly, and the boy was cured.<sup>179</sup> In one iama a paralytic dreamt that he was cured, and that the god ordered him to bring to the shrine as large a stone as he was able: the iama records that he brought the stone that then lay in front of the abaton.<sup>180</sup> A porter as he was going along fell over, smashing some clay vessels which he was carrying. One of these was his master's favourite drinking cup: the porter tried to put the pieces together, a passer-by laughed at him, stating that not even Asklepios of Epidauros could mend it. The porter took the vessel to the Asklepieion where it was made whole; the master, when the story was recounted to him, dedicated the vessel to the god.<sup>181</sup> According to these iamata, a thanksgiving offering had to be made, but it need not have been an extravagant one, presumably so as not to deter any potential incubants from amongst the poor.

The story of the boy whose father was asked to bring the offering within a year introduces the question of those who came without the wherewithal to make an offering, but intended, presumably, to dedicate one later. The fact that the temple slave requested that the offering be brought within the year if the father obtained what he came for, probably meant that some made no provision for such an offering, but

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worden sind oder ob die Würmer als konkrete Symbole für unbestimmte Beschwerden, zumal hysterischen Ursprungs, stehen, mag dahier gestellt bleiben...."

<sup>177</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 4.*

<sup>178</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 5, quoted above, n. 72.*

<sup>179</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 8.*

<sup>180</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 15.* There are two elements here: the bringing of the stone is symbolic of the man's new strength gained from the use of his limbs. The stone represents the cure, and is thus to be viewed in the same light as the dedication of votive offerings. The iama could also be seen as providing an explanation for the presence of the large stone outside the abaton, but this would deny the possibility that the stone was in fact brought by a grateful patient, who did dream that this was what the god required.

<sup>181</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iama 10.*



waited to see whether or not the god would help them. The period of one year recurs in the Pergamene cult inscription which sets out the procedure for incubation and states that those who have made pledges to the god are to pay these within a year.<sup>182</sup> This seems to indicate that promises would be made to this effect because pilgrims might not have the money or thanksgiving at hand when they came to be cured.

One of the most popular thanksgiving offerings was a cock, which is easy to account for. Asklepios was a popular deity, and often resorted to, sickness being a problem that often confronts the individual regardless of personal circumstances. Sokrates' debt of a cock to Asklepios was well documented in antiquity;<sup>183</sup> the character Kynno in Herodas' fourth mime, in visiting an Asklepieion, offers a cock, regretting that her lack of means prevents the offering of a more substantial gift.<sup>184</sup> Many of the suppliants were presumably too poor for oxen or pigs, so cocks, numerous and cheap, were vowed in return for cures. As in other areas socio-economic factors were important to the value of the gift: people gave what they could afford.<sup>185</sup> It is only the avaricious man in Libanius who claims that the cock is an onerous expense.<sup>186</sup> Even the most famous of Greeks made an offering to Epidaurian Asklepios. In 324 BC when Alexander III (the Great) of Macedonia was going to Babylon, he was met by ambassadors from Greece, including some from Epidaurus, to whom he gave an unspecified offering, to take back to Asklepios. This was shortly after the death of Hephaestion, and Alexander pointed out that he was making the dedication despite the fact that Asklepios had not saved Hephaestion.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>182</sup> *Alt. Perg.* 8.3, pp. 168-69, no. 161.29-30.

<sup>183</sup> Plat. *Phaedo* 118a; Luc. *Bis Acc.* 5; Olympiod. *In Plat. Phaed. Comm.* 205.24, 244.17; Tert. *Apol.* 46.5; Lact. *Divi. Inst.* 3.20.16-17, *Inst. Epit.* 32.4-5; Prud. *Apoth.* 203-06 (TT524-31).

<sup>184</sup> Herod. *Mimes* 4.11-18, esp. 14-18 (T482): οὐ γάρ τι πολλὴν οὐδ' ἐτοῦμον ἀντλεῦμεν, / ἐπεὶ τάχ' ἂν βοῖν ἢ νενημέυην χοῦρον / πολλῆς φορίνης, κοῦκ ἀλέκτορ', ἴητρα / νούσων ἐποιεῦμεσθα τὰς ἀπέψησας / ἐπ' ἠπίας σὺ χεῖρας, ὧ ἄναξ, τεύνας, cf. lines 86-87; the *neokoros* is to have the leg of the fowl, the serpent gets an offering of *pelanos*, and the rest of the cock is to be eaten at home (85-93; for this see Cunningham *CQ* 16 (1966) 113; idem *Herodas* 145-46, arguing against Kaibel and Wunsch's view that the cock was consumed within the sanctuary precincts). See Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 131; Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.188; Weinrich *Antike Heilungswunder* 31; Siefert *Inkubation* 324, 327; Kern *Religion der Griechen* 3.154-55.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Siefert *Inkubation* 328.

<sup>186</sup> Liban. *Declam.* 34.36 (T539, with *Argumentum* to 34: T537)). Van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 87 (see his references 87 n. 110) notes that many clay cocks have been found at the Asklepieia at Corinth and Athens, and that these were substitute sacrifices (87-88), so that it seems that there were poor who could not afford even the sacrifice of a cock.

<sup>187</sup> Arr. *Anab.* 7.14.6, cf. 7.14.5, where Arrian considers the story that Alexander burned the temple of Asklepios at Ekbatana (presumably equated with a native healing deity), as untrue, as this would have been uncharacteristic of him.

The temple at the Asklepieion at Epidauros must have been full not only of the inscribed accounts of iamata, but also of the votive offerings of thousands of pilgrims who visited the site over hundreds of years. These were, of course, as effective as the iamata in advertising the greatness of the god Asklepios, as a testimony of his cures. An inscription from the Asklepieion on Rhodes gives an idea of just how full temples could become: no-one was permitted to ask to set up a votive offering in the lower section of the temenos, or in any other place where the votive offering would obstruct the progress of those walking through,<sup>188</sup> and the situation at Epidauros, Kos and Pergamon, as Panhellenic healing sanctuaries, cannot have been dissimilar.

If the supplication of the god was unsuccessful, and the “patient” was beyond help, she or he would be removed from the site,<sup>189</sup> for there was a ritual law that no-one was allowed to die (or a woman give birth) within the sanctuary which was marked off by an enclosure; this was typical Greek practice.<sup>190</sup> That there was this provision, even at Epidauros, showed that not everyone was cured there. Presumably, those who were not cured left without leaving an offering behind: these were the unsuccessful pilgrims, for whom the journey to Epidauros, which must have been an enormous undertaking in terms of time, financial outlay and sheer physical effort for some of the sick, had been in vain. Diagoras of Melos, according to the account of Cicero, was blunt on this subject. At Samothrace, a friend pointed out the votive paintings made to the gods by those who had survived storms at sea, taking these as evidence of divine involvement in human affairs. Diagoras retorted that those who perished at sea did not have the opportunity to dedicate pictures.<sup>191</sup>

Most of the healing shrines, it appears, were open on a full yearly basis, and there is no evidence to suggest that the healing sanctuaries opened their doors to the sick only at specific periods or seasons. Sickness is, of course, perennial, and access needs to be always available. For this reason, healing sanctuaries never invited the sick through special embassies, but there are indications that seasonal factors did affect the attendance rates at healing shrines. An inscription from Oropos instructs the priest of Amphiaraos to be present at the shrine from the end of winter until the

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<sup>188</sup> *LSCG Suppl.* 107.10-13, .16-18: μὴ ἐξέστω μηθενὲ ἀίτησασ/[θαί ἀνά]θεσιν ἀνδριάντος μηδὲ ἄλλου / [ἀναο]ήματος μηθενὸς ἐς τὸ κάτω μέρος / [τοῦ τ]εμένους ... ἢ ἐς ἄλλον τινὰ τόπον ἐν ᾧ στα/θέντα τὰ ἀναθήματα κωλύσει τοὺς περι/πάτους. Cf. van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 78.

<sup>189</sup> Paus. 2.27.6; see ch. 4 n. 145, with text.

<sup>190</sup> Paus. 2.27.1, who notes that this was also the case on Delos; cf. ch. 4 n. 60, with text. The Greek concern about *miasma* will have prompted this regulation which sought to avoid the pollution of death and of blood.

<sup>191</sup> Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 3.89; cf. van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 78 with 78 n. 62; ch. 4 n. 145, with text.

summer ploughing.<sup>192</sup> This is an indication, almost certainly, that the shrine was more frequented in this period, perhaps because travel was easier, and required not simply the presence of the guardian of the shrine, the *neokoros*, but also that of the priest. Healing shrines were, however, unlike other Panhellenic sanctuaries, which invited pilgrims at a specific time of the year, or of a cycle if their festivals were not annual. Some healing sanctuaries, however, had festivals, distinct from their role as places of healing. Festivals in honour of Asklepios are attested at Epidauros, Pergamon and Athens, and while other festivals are known,<sup>193</sup> these three are the important ones. Like all Greek festivals, these involved processions, sacrifices and contests. In Plato's *Ion*, Ion relates to Sokrates that he has just returned from Epidauros, where rhapsodic and other musical contests were held.<sup>194</sup>

The Epidaurians invited Greek cities to send embassies to celebrate the festival. The surviving theorodokoi lists indicate that many cities participated, and these lists can probably be used to augment the places from which pilgrims are known to have set out to Epidauros.<sup>195</sup> In at least one case, one city which was invited was allowed to include its sacrificial animals in the Epidaurian procession; the city, Astypalaia (on the Aegean island of the same name), was a colony of Epidauros,<sup>196</sup> and this special privilege was probably accorded because of this relationship, and presumably was not an honour commonly granted.<sup>197</sup> This inscription also grants to Astypalaia *asylia* "in war and peace, on land and sea".

Asklepieia in the Hellenic world generally must have played a significant role as healing centres. Perhaps those attending the shrine at Epidauros "generally had a chronic condition which doctors had been unable to cure",<sup>198</sup> but there seems little evidence that the patients involved had consulted doctors prior to coming to Epidauros. The one case that might fit this category is that of Eratokles of Troizen whose abscess was about to be cauterized by doctors, but was persuaded instead by a

<sup>192</sup> *LSCG* 69.2-4; cf. Petropoulou *GRBS* 22 (1981) 51.

<sup>193</sup> For details of other festivals in honour of Asklepios, see Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.195-99.

<sup>194</sup> Plat. *Ion* 530a (T560); *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 40 (T561), 41 (T562) record sacrificial victims which were to be given to the members of a chorus, perhaps Epidaurian; presumably these references are to be taken as applying to the festival. On the issue of the frequency of the Epidaurian festival, it could be noted that Schol. Pind. *Nem.* 3.147 (T559) mentions that the Argives had a penteteric festival in honour of Asklepios (held nine days after the conclusion of the Isthmian festival); cf. ch. 4 n. 170. The dates of festivals in honour of Asklepios are discussed by Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.195-96 n. 3; cf. Kern *Religion der Griechen* 3.409.

<sup>195</sup> See the theorodokoi list in ch. 1 n. 100.

<sup>196</sup> *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 47 (T563).

<sup>197</sup> Though cf. Edelstein *Asclepius* 2. 96. The decree is briefly discussed by Kern *Religion der Griechen* 3.409; Tomlinson *Epidauros* 18; cf. ch. 7 n. 126, with text.

<sup>198</sup> See Horsley *New Documents* 2.23

dream to sleep in the shrine at Epidauros. When the time prescribed as necessary for healing had passed, the abcess was cured, and Eratokles went away from Epidauros cured.<sup>199</sup> While Eratokles had had preliminary consultations with the doctors involved, who prescribed cautery, it was not for lack of medical success that this patient went to Epidauros. In the case of a miracle such as this, the dream can perhaps be understood as an outcome of the patient's anxiety about the cautery. The god offered, and provided, a less traumatic cure for the problem. There are no attested cases in which the patient came to Epidauros after doctors had failed. This is not to state that this was not the case, and indeed, often individuals would have turned to the divine *after* medicine had not succeeded. But it is readily comprehensible that, for others, Epidauros might have been a place of first resort, and the pious (and those fearful of harsh medical practices) might have thought in terms of the deity first, rather than medical science.

The scholars who have dealt with the iamata of Epidauros have come up with a variety of suggestions as to their nature and purpose. Some accept them as genuine cures, among these are the Edelsteins,<sup>200</sup> while others believe that the priests at Epidauros were trained in medicine, and interpreted the dreams which the ill had dreamt in the night, and by crediting the cures which they worked by their skill to the god, sought to increase the fame of their sanctuary. This interpretation which was accepted by most scholars late in the last century, and early in this, represents the priests as charlatans, and their miracles as frauds.<sup>201</sup> In all of these interpretations, however, there lies a flawed assumption, that the iamata record cures that actually took place. Some of the cures are too fantastic for any credence at all to be placed in them, such as the account of the five year pregnancy of Kleo and the precocity of her baby. Rather, these iamata are a record of the beliefs held about Asklepios, and describe the experiences which pilgrims expected to undergo at Epidauros.<sup>202</sup> Concerning the proposition that the priests at Epidauros and other healing sanctuaries might have been doctors, the site of Kos draws most of our attention. For on Kos it is known that there was a practising medical fraternity, and that the Asklepieion there was one of the most important, definitely Panhellenic, and prosperous, as the building programmes

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<sup>199</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1, 123, iama 48.

<sup>200</sup> Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.142-45, esp. 143.

<sup>201</sup> Very early literature, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, prior to the discovery of the Epidaurian iamata, is commented upon by Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.142-43. Early verdicts on the iamata were adverse (Edelstein *Asclepius* 2.143, with 143 n. 10). Thraemer *RE* 2 (1896) 1686-90, claimed that the patients did dream but that there were priest-doctors who, on the basis of the dreams, provided medical care for the sick. Wilamowitz *Isyllos* 37 states that there was medicine at the Asklepieia at Kos (and at Knidos), but not at Epidauros, where the cures were the works of "quacks".

<sup>202</sup> For the didactic nature of the Epidaurian iamata, see Dillon *ZPE* (forthcoming) 1993.

there attest. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that the human doctors and the divine healer worked hand in hand.<sup>203</sup>

Relevant to a discussion of the role of medicine in Asklepiad cult is the ritual which is known to have taken place at Akharaka, in Asia Minor. Here there was a Ploutonion, which had a sacred precinct and shrine to the chthonic deities Pluto and Kore, and above these, in a hill, was the Kharonion, a cave where cures were effected. Those who were ill and gave credence to the accounts of cures prescribed by the gods, went to this site, and lived in a village near the cave. They did not have to sleep in the cave in order to be cured, and Strabo states that instead experienced priests would sleep in the cave on their behalf. These would dream, and on the basis of their interpretations of the dreams, would prescribe a cure for the suppliants. Often, however, the priests would take the sick into the cave, and leave them there, without food, for many days, which would certainly be an effective method of dream inducement. Strabo's account is unclear at this point, for he states that the sick sometimes "give heed to their own dreams", but whether he means only those who have been taken to the cave, or includes those who remained in the village, is not clear. He does, however, note that even when the ill "heed their own dreams", they still used the priests for advice and help. The priests here interpreted dreams sent to them by the chthonic deities on behalf of the suppliants, or helped to interpret dreams which the sufferers themselves had. The priests were experienced, but there is no hint of medical practice here, in that the priests' role (or professed role) is to interpret dreams sent by the gods; the focus was on the interpretation of the dream. The chthonic nature of the cult is clear, for the inspiration for the dreams came from the cave. The divinities associated with the area are chthonic, and the cave's name - Kharonion - indicates a connection with the underworld. The sanctity of the area, and perhaps the awesome nature of the deities involved, is indicated by the provision that none other than the ill and the priests can be present in the area. However, an annual festival was held at Akharaka, and those who participated in it "could see and hear about the things that went on at the shrine".<sup>204</sup>

An important question, given the number of healing sanctuaries, is that of the degree of specialisation at any one site: whether different healing sanctuaries specialised in different types of cure. Ferguson maintains that this was indeed the case for Oropos, where there are "...literally dozens of breasts, presented by males, suggesting a particular expertise in diseases of the chest and lungs. Other parts of the

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<sup>203</sup> Sherwin-White *Ancient Cos* 275. The view of Lecos, Pentogalos, *Early and Late Asclepieia* 20, that by the fourth century at Epidauros "skilled surgeons" impersonated Asklepios during incubation, and performed major operations, can be rejected.

<sup>204</sup> Strabo 14.1.44 (649-50); cf. ch. 4 n. 7, with text.

body found are face, hand, or sex organ, but they are few in comparison....”<sup>205</sup> The same was once thought to have been the case at Corinth, but in the case of this site, this view has been tempered by more recent findings.<sup>206</sup> The iamata of Epidaurus, as has been seen, cover an amazing number of complaints, and there the god specialised in every cure.

Some scholars argue that another of the buildings apart from the abaton was important for the treatment of the pilgrims, that referred to as either the tholos or thymele,<sup>207</sup> which lies behind and to the south of the temple of Asklepios at Epidaurus. The thymele was a round building, of which only the foundations remain, and has a substructure, which consists of a labyrinthine series of concentric circles arranged as a maze.<sup>208</sup> Interpreted by Kerényi as the home of the sacred serpents,<sup>209</sup> other scholars have put forward various interpretations: that the thymele was the venue for chthonic sacrifice,<sup>210</sup> the place of mystery celebrations,<sup>211</sup> or that the subterranean structure was an old sanctuary upon which the thymele was built.<sup>212</sup> Most significant from the point of view of pilgrimage is the idea that the labyrinth beneath the thymele had a psychological purpose, with pilgrims being taken into the maze in order to be cured.<sup>213</sup> The iamata, however, mention several places where cures took place: in the

<sup>205</sup> Ferguson *Among the Gods* 101.

<sup>206</sup> Van Straten *Gifts for the Gods* 149-150. The more recent finds, in conjunction with the accidents of survival, means that the idea of specialisation at Corinth has been dropped. Moreover, no trace of any suggestion of medical specialisation has been discovered in the mass of evidence for the healing sanctuaries; see fig. 8.12.

<sup>207</sup> Paus. 2.27.3, cf. 5; Kerényi *Asklepios* 44; Tomlinson *Greek Sanctuaries* 100.

<sup>208</sup> See figs. 8.4-8.6, esp. 8.4, the photograph of the foundations (which gives a reasonable view of the underground chamber) and the diagram of the substructure; the diameter was about 20 metres. Tomlinson *Epidaurus* 60-61 points out that the material remains of the thymele and the temple indicate that the former was the more elaborately built, indicating that it was an important component of the sanctuary. There was a similar thymele at Pergamon (see Kerényi *Asklepios* 45, for a model of the Pergamene Asklepieion with thymele). Kerényi 43 describes the substructure as follows: the “foundations form a ... labyrinth of concentric circles, so connected by openings that in order to reach the centre from the outermost ring one must fully describe each and every circle....”; cf. Tomlinson *Epidaurus* 61.

<sup>209</sup> Kerényi *Asklepios* 45-46, 102-105; but see Tomlinson *Epidaurus* 66.

<sup>210</sup> Robert *Thymélè* (cited by Kerényi *Asklepios* 44, 117 n. 40). Tomlinson *Epidaurus* 66-67 argues that the thymele marks the burial place of Asklepios, who had been a mortal; cf. Roux *Architecture* 187-200, esp. 193.

<sup>211</sup> See Kerényi *Asklepios* 44, 117 n. 39.

<sup>212</sup> Noack *JDAI* 42 (1927) 75 (cited by Kerényi *Asklepios* 44, 117 n. 40).

<sup>213</sup> Siefert *Inkubation* 340-42 summarises and gives references to German scholars who adopt this interpretation.

abaton, out in the open air, and even away from Epidauros itself,<sup>214</sup> but there is no mention of the thymele as a place where healing occurred. The evidence suggests that the thymele had no therapeutic significance, and that attempts to give to it a psychological healing status are modern attempts to reveal the healing cult as sophisticated and advanced. The cult, however, of Asklepios was one involving faith healing, rather than sophisticated psychological treatment.

A discussion of the various features of cult practice at the main Asklepieia has elucidated the means by which cures were effected, and what emerges is a clear paradigm of cure: abstinence, ritual bathing, payment of a fee, sacrifice, incubation, dreams, faith, and then healing.<sup>215</sup> Individuals were cured in the Asklepieia, but views that the priests were doctors can be ruled out. At Oropos, incubation could take place without the presence of the priest, and in none of the Asklepieia is there evidence for medical treatment, even on Kos. The ill who revived in the Asklepieia, or soon after, recovered either in the natural course of events, or through their faith in the god.

The sceptic will point to some of the iamata and dismiss them and some of the iamata clearly do exaggerate cures which are said to have taken place. Obvious examples of these are the cases of the five year pregnancy relieved by the god, the story of the broken goblet which the god put together again when entreated to do so, Sostrata with her two foot baths full of worms, and the case of Aristagora of Troizen left by the sons of the god lying in the Troizen abaton with her head chopped off.

Clearly, some of the miracle cures are inventions, or embellishments of minor cures, and the fact that many of the iamata were intended to be instructive to the reader is important. The iamata pointed out that the god was all powerful, that he expected thanks for cures, and that the sceptics had been proven wrong. The stories of fairly ordinary cures can perhaps be accepted, but the temple authorities have recorded some which defy credence, and in these cases the priests are probably not guilty of fraud, but rather may be recording almost mythical cures, "tall stories" about the god's prowess. It would be inevitable that the god would be credited with fantastic cures, and that elaborated stories would be told about him and his powers. The priests were not guilty of deliberate falsification in these cases, but were recording the semi-mythical deeds of their god, in a way common amongst partisans of cults. Moreover, many of the iamata may well owe much to the self-advertising tendencies of pilgrims.

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<sup>214</sup> In the abaton: *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121*, iamata 1-6, 8-9, 11-15, 18-20; *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122*, iamata 26-32, 34, 36-42; out in the open air: *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 121*, iamata 16, 17; *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122* iama 43; away from Epidauros (on the way home): *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122*, iama 25; (having arrived home): *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122*, iama 33; (never having left home, being cured by proxy): *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 122*, iama 21).

<sup>215</sup> Cf. Herzog *Wunderheilungen* 67: "Die Fassung der Heilberichte erweckt zwar wohl nicht ohne Absicht den Anschein, als ob die Heilung sich sehr flott vollzogen habe: Ankunft, Inkubation, Traum, geheilt Aufwachen, Abreise...."

The miracle inscriptions are a curious mixture of faith healing, invented cures, and instructional material. They were read by pilgrims for eight hundred years, and provided them with hope that they too might be cured. The incredible nature of some of them ought not to lead the modern reader to dismiss the efficacy of the cult of Asklepios. The fact that healing shrines at Epidauros, Kos, and Pergamon prospered for several hundred years indicates that cures were effected, of whatever nature, at these sites. This is the historical reality about the cult of Asklepios which has to be accepted.

From the iamata, it is clear that Asklepios emerges above all as a healing god *par excellence*. Epidauros was a site where the god himself appeared to ordinary men and women, and the way his character was perceived throws light on the nature of the whole cult. While Asklepios could be vindictive or angry, he was generally compassionate and was never bad tempered for long: in fact, he had a sense of humour. He was caring and administered to the needs of his worshippers. In many senses, he was the ideal general medical practitioner, and to achieve healing at his hands there were strict rituals which were to be followed. His cult was one of the last to succumb to the progress of Christianity, and in many places he was adapted rather than deposed.

His worship lasted for hundreds of years at Epidauros, and this site was, arguably, the most important pilgrimage centre in the Hellenic world. Other sites are more glamorous, involving athletic contests between men who were compared to gods, or priestesses through whom the god himself spoke. The focus on Olympia, Delphi and similar sites is perhaps a modern one; certainly the healing sanctuaries have not attracted the scholarly attention, particularly from those writing in English, that they deserve. As a sacred site Epidauros had more universal appeal than other sites: the travellers to Delphi seeking an oracle were primarily (in the classical period at least) the rich and the powerful, or their representatives, or the ambassadors of poleis who wanted advice from the god on a pressing political problem. The majority of pilgrims to athletic contests were spectators rather than participants. Only the initiation centres which also served the needs of the people of the time regardless of their place of origin can rival Epidauros, Pergamon and Kos as sacred sites where there was mass participation and reward for those involved.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Martin *Hellenistic Religions* 52, who devotes a little over two pages to Asklepios at Epidauros and quotes (in translation) *IG* [V<sup>2</sup> 1, 121, iamata 3-4, however, goes a little too far in his conclusion: "From these accounts [iamata 3-4] it is clear that soteriological transformation in the Hellenistic world sympathetically embraced the inner realm of dream and vision as well as the physical realm of bodily dysfunction. Within the parameters of the finite cosmos, sympathetic correspondence between the inner and outer, human and divine, animate and inanimate, psychic and somatic were considered natural. Soteriological transformation through the ritual epiphany of a



Epidauros thus provides, perhaps, the best example of a Hellenic pilgrimage destination. Pilgrims travelled from all over the Greek world in the clear expectation that they would be cured at this sacred site. The geographical spread of the pilgrims to Epidauros attests to the very real universality of the cult, and the pilgrims to this place were all motivated by the same consideration: they wished to regain their health. Those visiting Epidauros came from the mainland, the islands and Asia Minor. It can be presumed that these tended to be people from the higher socio-economic groups as they travelled a long way, and many would, presumably, have stayed several nights at Epidauros. Sostrata had companions, and presumably many pilgrims brought slaves with them as assistants. Women were prominent amongst those seeking the aid of the god, and a pilgrimage to this healing sanctuary was one of the few times in which women would have made their way outside of their home polis, and with the particular support of their husbands in the case of pregnancies. For nearly a millenium, the sick and the dying made their way to Epidauros: not all, certainly, were cured, but this did not affect the flow of travellers to the site, coming to seek physical well being from the god from throughout the Hellenic world.

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personal savior not only identifies the later Asklepiian rites as genuinely Hellenistic in form but also associates this medicine with that exemplar of hellenistic religiosity, the Mysteries....” We might enquire what is meant by “later Asklepiian rites”; the uniformity of Asklepiad ritual in the abata of the classical and Hellenistic period seems self-evident.