

# Votives and votaries in Greek sanctuaries

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## VI

FOLKERT VAN STRATEN

### VOTIVES AND VOTARIES IN GREEK SANCTUARIES

Greek votive offerings of the classical period (including some material that may be slightly earlier or later) are studied in this paper. I have not intentionally restricted myself to the Attic material, but there probably is a certain Attic bias in what follows, as a large proportion of the more interesting material happens to be from that area. The restriction to private votive offerings, however, is intentional.

In the first part we shall look into the placement and arrangement of votive offerings in Greek sanctuaries, basing ourselves on the monuments themselves, as we have them and as they were found. In the second part we shall attempt to view the *ex votos* through the eyes of the ancient worshippers. Finally, in the third section of the paper, we shall focus on the worshippers as they present themselves through their votive offerings.

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\* *Abbreviations*: the abbreviations used in the notes are those of the *Archäologische Bibliographie*.

## 1. Placement and arrangement of votive offerings

The most common words in ancient Greek for «votive offering» and «setting up a votive offering in a sanctuary», ἀνάθημα and ἀνατιθέναι, suggest that they were preferably placed at a certain height from the ground. They could be mounted on a pedestal, nailed to a wall, or suspended from the branches of a tree.

Various types of columns and pillars were used as support for votive offerings. Among the archaic dedications from the Athenian Akropolis, which represent a fair sample, we find small pillars with rectangular or hexagonal cross sections<sup>1</sup>, fluted columns<sup>2</sup>, and smooth unfluted columns such as the one dedicated by Telesinos, which still preserves the bronze base plate of the statuette it once supported (probably a statuette of Athena of roughly the same type as the often illustrated dedication of Meleso)<sup>3</sup>.

One particular type of pillar, however, which already occurred in the archaic period, was to become the most common type of support for votive sculpture in classical times<sup>4</sup>. It

<sup>1</sup> E.g. A.E. RAUBITSCHK, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis* (Cambridge Mass. 1949), nr. 191, dedicated by Philea; nr. 290, dedicated by Lyson.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. A.E. RAUBITSCHK, *Dedications*, nr. 10, dedicated by Epiteles.

<sup>3</sup> A.E. RAUBITSCHK, *Dedications*, nr. 40: Telesinos' dedication. — The Athena statuette dedicated by Meleso is Athens NM 6447: A. DE RIDDER, *Catalogue des bronzes trouvés sur l'Acropole d'Athènes* (Paris 1896), 312 ff. nr. 796; W. LAMB, *Greek and Roman Bronzes* (London 1929), 144; H.G. NIEMEYER, «Attische Bronzestatuetten der spätarchaischen und frühklassischen Zeit», in *Antike Plastik III* (Berlin 1964), 7-31, esp. 21 and pl. 11; C. ROLLEY, *The bronzes, Monumenta Graeca et Romana V 1* (Leiden 1967), 4 nr. 42; *IG I<sup>2</sup> 426*.

<sup>4</sup> Some late archaic examples: A.E. RAUBITSCHK, *Dedications*, nr. 233, dedicated by Hierokleides; nr. 294, dedicated by Euthydikos.

has a rectangular cross section, and tapers slightly from the bottom to the top, where there is a sort of rectangular capital, somewhat wider than the upper part of the shaft, from which it is offset by a cavetto moulding. A typical example is the votive offering of Lysikleides from the sanctuary of Themis at Rhamnous, dating from around 420 B.C.<sup>5</sup> It consists of a small marble statue of a youth, Lysikleides himself one assumes, mounted on a pillar of the type just described. The dedication, as is often the case, is inscribed on the capital of the pillar.

Similar pillars were used to support votive reliefs. Some good examples of reliefs and pillars having survived together are the dedication of Xenokrateia found in Phaleron, and the double-relief from the same sanctuary.<sup>6</sup> In a few exceptional instances, relief and pillar were made of one piece. This is the case with an Athenian votive relief dedicated to Zeus Philios by a club of *eranistai*<sup>7</sup> and a votive relief of the banquet type dedicated to the hero Bouthon and the heroine Eudisia.<sup>8</sup> Normally, however, the supporting pillar was made separately, and the votive relief was provided with a tenon which was inserted in a hole in the top of the pillar. This apparently was so much the usual tech-

<sup>5</sup> V. STAIS, in *AEphem* 1891, 55 pl.6; S. KARUSU, «Das 'Mädchen vom Piräus'», in *AM* 82 (1967), 158-169, esp. 160 and Beil. 89; B.Ch. PETRAKOS, in *Prakt* 1976, 51 nr. 3; *IG I*<sup>2</sup> 828.

<sup>6</sup> O. WALTER, «Die Reliefs aus dem Heiligtum der Echeliden in Neu-Phaleron», in *AEphem* 1937, I 97-119.

<sup>7</sup> Athens Epigr. Mus. 8783: J.N. SVORONOS, *Das Athener Nationalmuseum* (Athens 1908-1937), 668 pl. 219; O. WALTER, «Kniende Adoranten auf attischen Reliefs», in *ÖJb* 13 Beibl. (1910), 229-244 fig. 143; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Did the Greeks kneel before their gods?» *BABesch* 49 (1974), 164 fig. 7; *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 2935; dated at 324/3 B.C.

<sup>8</sup> Present whereabouts unknown; it was seen at an Athenian art dealer's and a photograph was published in *Πολέμων* 1 (1929), 241; the inscription is *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 4591.

nique that even one of the smallest marble votive reliefs found in the Athenian Agora, which is less than 10 cm high and little more than 10 cm wide, has a tenon for mounting it on a separate pedestal.<sup>9</sup> An unfortunate consequence of the practice of making votive sculpture and support of separate pieces is, that only a small minority have survived together. In sanctuaries such as the Athenian Asklepieion or the sanctuary of Artemis in Brauron we can still see considerable clusters of pillars which have lost their votive offerings. Since they usually bear the votive inscriptions, they are largely confined to the epigraphical literature. Most of the votive statues and reliefs that we have, on the other hand, are now without their bases or pedestals, and without the inscriptional evidence these might have provided.

Some types of votive offerings naturally lent themselves to being nailed to a wall. An inventory-inscription from Delos mentions a temple key dedicated in the Artemision, and describes it as «unweighed, because it is nailed to the wall».<sup>10</sup> Small terracotta votive plaques, which were quite popular in some sanctuaries, were regularly hung on the wall or suspended from the branches of a tree. They often are provided with suspension holes for that purpose. An early example (ca. 700 B.C.) comes from Sounion and is decorated with a painting of a war ship.<sup>11</sup> In Athens several painted votive plaques have come to

<sup>9</sup> Athens Agora Mus. S1939: E. MITROPOULOU, *The kneeling worshipper in votive reliefs* (Birmingham 1972), nr. 20 fig. 18; F.T. VAN STRATEN, in *BABesch* 49 (1974), 168 nr. 10.

<sup>10</sup> *IDélos* 1444 Aa 47-8 (inventory of 141/0 B.C.: [--- κλειδα] κλειδουχικήν σιδηράν ἔχουσαν προτόμην λέοντος ἀργυ[ρ]ᾶν [ἐφ' ἧς ἐ]πιγραφή [--- Στρατονίκη Ἀντιφῶντος ἐγ Μυρρινούτ]της ὑφιέρεια γενομένη, ἄστατον [διὰ] τὸ καθηλῶσθαι.

<sup>11</sup> Athens NM 14935: *AEphem* 1917, 209; J. BOARDMAN, «Painted votive plaques and an early inscription from Aegina», in *BSA* 49 (1954), 183-201; 198 nr. 1; D. WACHSMUTH, ΠΟΜΠΙΜΟΣ Ο ΔΑΙΜΩΝ. *Unter-*

light in the sanctuary of Nymphe on the south slope of the Akropolis.<sup>12</sup> The most spectacular collection, however, of such pinakes was found at Penteskouphia, near Corinth, more than a century ago.<sup>13</sup> They all date from the archaic period, and must have come from a sanctuary of Poseidon. As many of these pinakes from Penteskouphia have a painted representation on both sides, it would seem probable that they were intended to hang free.

One terracotta plaque, singularly unimpressive in itself, deserves special mention, as it may well be the cheapest votive offering ever to have been hung in an ancient Greek sanctuary. It is a small rectangle (3.6×4.1 cm) with rounded corners and pierced by a single hole at the top. The painting, in Attic red figure technique of the third quarter of the 5th century B.C., represents the upper part of a woman carrying a wool basket.<sup>14</sup>

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*suchungen zu den antiken Sakralhandlungen bei Seereisen* (Diss. Berlin 1967), 142 note 246; J.S. MORRISON and R.T. WILLIAMS, *Greek oared ships* (Cambridge 1968), 73 nr. 2, pl. 8b; G. NEUMANN, *Probleme des griechischen Weihreliefs*, *Tübinger Studien zur Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 3 (Tübingen 1979), 13 pl. 11b.

<sup>12</sup> J. TRAVLOS, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Athen* (Tübingen 1971), 361-4 with bibliography.

<sup>13</sup> O. RAYET, «Plaques votives en terre cuite trouvées à Corinthe», in *Gazette Archéologique* 6 (1880), 101-107; M. COLLIGNON, «Tablettes votives de terre cuite peinte trouvées à Corinthe (Musée du Louvre)», in *Monuments grecs publiés par l'Association pour l'Encouragement des Etudes Grecques en France*, Vol. 2, nos 11-13 (1882-4), 23-32; A. FURTWÄNGLER, *Beschreibung der Vasensammlung im Antiquarium* (Berlin 1885), 47-105; *Antike Denkmäler* I pl. 7-8 and II pl. 23-24, 29-30, 39-40; E. PERNICE, «Die korinthischen Pinakes im Antiquarium der Königlichen Museen», in *JdI* 12 (1897), 9-48; H.A. GEAGAN, «Mythological themes on the plaques from Penteskouphia», in *AA* 1970, 31-48; G. ZIMMER, *Antike Werkstattbilder*, *Bilderheft der Staatlichen Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz* 42 (Berlin 1982).

<sup>14</sup> Frankfurt Liebieghaus Li. 555: *CVA Frankfurt* 2, pl. 85, 9; F. ECKSTEIN & A. LEGNER, *Antike Kleinkunst im Liebieghaus* (Frankfurt am Main

Beazley, after careful study of this piece, concluded that it was not originally manufactured as a plaque, but that it must have been a fragment of a vase, which was trimmed into shape and thus had a secondary use as votive pinax.<sup>15</sup>

Another class of votive offering, which was hung in the same manner as terracotta plaques, consists of painted wooden pinakes. There are several indications that these were very popular and occurred in large numbers in many Greek sanctuaries. Owing to the perishability of the material, however, only a few have survived.<sup>16</sup> Conversely, for the small gold and silver plates with representations in repoussé relief (τύποι ἔγμακτοι or κατάμακτοι), which resembled the *támata* still found in many Greek churches, it was precisely the intrinsic value of the material that made their chances of survival very slim. So far only one excavated sanctuary, in Thracian Mesembria, has yielded a number of such *τύποι*. Often they were eventually melted down and the gold and silver put to other uses.<sup>17</sup> Fortunately, however, in some cases we still have a record of the *τύποι* that have themselves disappeared, in the form of inventories inscribed on stone. Thus we know that the Athenian Asklepieion in the 4th and 3rd century B.C. had hundreds of them.<sup>18</sup>

As we saw above, stone reliefs — even small ones — were not normally hung but rather set on a pillar of some sort. There are

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1969), nr. 80; P.C. BOL, *Liebieghaus — Museum alter Plastik. Führer durch die Sammlungen. Antike Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main 1980), 55 fig. 63.

<sup>15</sup> J.D. BEAZLEY, *apud* CVA Frankfurt 2, pl. 85, 9.

<sup>16</sup> F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts for the gods», in H.S. VERSNEL (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship — Aspects of religious mentality in the ancient world*, *Studies in Greek and Roman Religion*, 2 (Leiden 1981), 65-151, esp. 78-79.

<sup>17</sup> F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 79-80.

<sup>18</sup> S.B. ALESHIRE, *The Athenian Asklepieion. The people, their dedications, and the inventories* (Amsterdam 1989), 39: in all the inventories taken together, records of 1347 dedications are fully or partially preserved; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 108-113.

some exceptions. A limestone plaque from Golgoi (Cyprus), for instance, has two suspension holes in the top centre. This plaque, which dates from the 4th century B.C., is of modest dimensions, though not extremely small (31×47 cm), and it is decorated in shallow relief with a representation of people worshipping, dancing and banqueting in a sanctuary of Apollo.<sup>19</sup>

Sometimes hanging may have been regarded as a more convenient method of display even for larger objects, if they were of an irregular shape. Thus, most of the approximately life-size terracotta votive limbs from the Asklepieion of Corinth have suspension holes.<sup>20</sup>

Finally a vast group of small votive offerings remains to be considered, such as the charming bronze figurines from the Arcadian sanctuaries and the Theban Kabirion, or the omnipresent terracotta figurines, which must have overcrowded many a Greek sanctuary.<sup>21</sup> Excavations seldom tell us anything

<sup>19</sup> O. MASSON, *Les inscriptions chypriotes syllabiques. Recueil critique et commenté* (Paris 1961), 287 nr. 268; J.-M. DENTZER, *Le motif du banquet couché dans la Proche-Orient et le monde grec du VII<sup>e</sup> au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle avant J.-C.*, BEFAR Fasc. 246 (Paris 1982), 281-2, 570 R27, fig. 208; F. GHEDINI, «Un rilievo da Golgoi e il culto di Apollo Magirios», in *AM* 103 (1988), 193-202.

<sup>20</sup> C. ROEBUCK, *The Asklepieion and Lerna, Corinth XIV* (Princeton, N.J. 1951); M. LANG, *Cure and cult in ancient Corinth. A guide to the Asklepieion, Corinth Notes 1* (Princeton, N.J. 1977); F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 123-4.

<sup>21</sup> W. LAMB, «Arcadian bronze statuettes», in *BSA* 27 (1925/1926), 133-148; M. JOST, «Statuettes de bronze archaïques provenant de Lykosoura», in *BCH* 99 (1975), 339-364; M. JOST, *Sanctuaires et cultes d'Arcadie, Etudes Péloponnésiques* 9 (Paris 1985); B. SCHMALTZ, *Terrakotten aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben, Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben V* (Berlin 1975); B. SCHMALTZ, *Metallfiguren aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben. Die Statuetten aus Blei und Bronze, Das Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben VI* (Berlin 1980); B. ALROTH, *Greek gods and figurines*, *Boreas* 18 (Uppsala 1989).



about their original position.<sup>22</sup> When they were first dedicated, the dedicants (subject of course to the permission of the persons in charge of the sanctuary) would tend to put them in a more or less prominent position, close to the altar or the cult image. This is what we read in Herondas' *Fourth mimiambus*: the poor woman who has come to the Asklepieion of Kos to thank the god for having cured her, tells her friend to set her votive offering to the right of Hygieia, that is, close to the image of the deity.<sup>23</sup> One suspects that eventually the temple personnel may have found another place for this humble offering.

In any case, it was not unusual that from time to time, during a clean up operation or a reorganization of a sanctuary, many of the older and smaller *ex votos* were buried within the sacred precinct.<sup>24</sup> In this way they had a much better chance of being recovered more or less intact by modern archaeologists, but any information concerning their original position was lost.

## 2. The worshippers' view of the votive offerings

Obviously it is not really possible for us to look at the votive offerings through the eyes of the ancient worshippers, but we

<sup>22</sup> There are some exceptions. In the «Provisorischer Kultraum» at Kalapodi (Phokis), which was in use between the destruction of the archaic shrine by the Persians in 480 and the building of the monumental classical temple about the middle of the 5th century B.C., the excavators discovered a «Votivbank», on which various votive offerings were found *in situ*: i.a. a small bronze kouros, a terracotta mask, and a terracotta cock. See R.C.S. FELSCH *et alii*, «Apollon und Artemis oder Artemis und Apollon? Bericht über die Grabungen im neu entdeckten Heiligtum bei Kalapodi 1973-1977», in *AA* 1980, 38-123. At Kommos in Crete a terracotta bull was found *in situ* on an altar: J.W. SHAW, in *Hesperia* 47 (1978), 142 ff., pl. 40-41.

<sup>23</sup> Herondas IV 19-20: ἐκ δεξιῆς τὸν πίνακα, Κοκκᾶλη, στῆσον | τῆς Ὑγιῆς μοι.

<sup>24</sup> B. SCHMALTZ, *Metallfiguren aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben*, 4-5.

may try to come close by studying the representational evidence. There is, fortunately, a considerable number of reliefs and vase paintings, mostly from Attika, in which votive offerings are depicted. The most interesting among these are votive reliefs which, in a roughly self-referring manner, include in their scene a small representation of a votive tablet on a pillar.

A good example is the monument of Telemachos of Acharnai, the founder of the Athenian Asklepieion, which has been painstakingly reconstructed from its *disiecta membra* by L. Beschi.<sup>25</sup> The two sides of this amphiglyphon show the interior and the exterior of the newly founded sanctuary. On the side with the exterior there is also, on the right, an indication of the Asklepieion in Piraeus, whence Asklepios had come to Athens.<sup>26</sup> The nature of this Piraeus sanctuary is suggested, among other things, by a small representation of a votive relief on a pillar, and enough of this miniature votive relief remains for us to recognize the theme. It is an incubation scene: a patient lying on a couch in the *enkoimeterion* is visited by the healing god.

The iconography of the Telemachos monument as a whole is quite unusual, owing to the unique nature of the event to which it refers. Representations of votive tablets on pillars, however, also occur on a number of regular votive reliefs. An incompletely preserved one from the Athenian Asklepieion shows Hygieia leaning against a tall pillar which supports a

<sup>25</sup> L. BESCHI, «Il monumento di Telemachos, fondatore dell' Asklepieion Ateniese», in *ASAtene* 45-46 (1967-1968), 381-436; L. BESCHI, «Il rilievo di Telemachos ricompletato», in *AAA* 15 (1982), 31-43. The foundation of the Athenian sanctuary is accurately dated at 420/419 B.C.; Telemachos' monument was probably made about a quarter of a century later.

<sup>26</sup> According to the inscription on the pillar of Telemachos' monument: [ἀ]νελθὼν Ζεῶθ[εν], see L. BESCHI, in *ASAtene* 45-46 (1967-1968), 412.

votive tablet.<sup>27</sup> The tablet itself is bordered at top and bottom by a raised band, but otherwise it is plain, not carved with a relief of its own. This, in fact, is the case with most of the classical examples. As it was not unusual for details on votive reliefs to be added in paint, these tablets may originally have been painted with a suggestion of a relief representation.<sup>28</sup> An exceptionally well preserved relief from the same sanctuary, now in the Louvre, depicts a family sacrificing to Asklepios and Hygieia.<sup>29</sup> Again, Hygieia is leaning against a votive offering on a pillar. The shape of the tablet, a thick flat circular disc, is unusual here. One is reminded of the painted marble disc of the doctor Aineas, of late archaic date, but that almost certainly was a sepulchral monument, and in any case can never have been mounted on a pillar in this fashion.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Athens NM 2557: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, pl. 171; H.K. SÜSSEROTT, *Griechische Plastik des 4. Jahrhunderts v.C. Untersuchungen zur Zeitbestimmung* (Frankfurt am Main 1938), 119, pl. 22, 2; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum — Untersuchungen zu den griechischen Asklepiosreliefs* (Potsdam 1948), 177 nr. 143. Second half of the 4th century B.C.

<sup>28</sup> See S. KARUSU, «Bemalte attische Weihreliefs», in *Studies P.H. von Blankenhagen* (Locust Valley, N.Y. 1979), 111-116.

<sup>29</sup> Paris Louvre 755: H.K. SÜSSEROTT, *Griech. Plastik*, 123, pl. 25, 4; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum*, 178 nr. 146, fig. 5; J. CHARBONNEAUX, *La sculpture grecque et romaine au Musée du Louvre* (Paris 1963), 119; O. PALAGIA, «A colossal statue of a personification from the Agora of Athens», in *Hesperia* 51 (1982), 99-113, pl. 34c; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «The god's portion in Greek sacrificial representations: Is the tail doing nicely?», in R. HÄGG, N. MARINATOS, G.C. NORDQUIST (eds.), *Early Greek Cult Practice. Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 26-29 June, 1986*, Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, Series in 4°, 38 (Stockholm 1988), 51-67, esp. 53, fig. 6. Late 4th century B.C.

<sup>30</sup> Athens NM 93, unknown provenance (confiscated in Piraeus), inscription: μνῆμα τὸδ' Αἰνέο σοφίας ἰατρῶ ἀρίστο. E. BERGER, *Das Basler Arztrelief. Studien zum griechischen Grab- und Votivrelief um 500 v.Chr. und zur vorhippokratischen Medizin* (Basel 1970), 155 ff., fig. 164-5; IG I<sup>2</sup> 1019.

The Amphiareion near Oropos, another healing sanctuary which, like the Asklepieia, enjoyed an increasing popularity during the later fifth and fourth century B.C., has produced two votive reliefs that are relevant in this context. The first is the well known dedication of Archinos.<sup>31</sup> The main scene shows what Archinos experienced when he slept in the *enkoimeterion*: on the left, as he himself saw it in his dream, his shoulder is being treated by Amphiaraos; on the right, as the same event was witnessed by outsiders, a snake is licking Archinos' shoulder while he is asleep on a couch. In the background stands a plain rectangular votive panel on a pillar. The other relief from Oropos has a depiction of an *apobates*-race and, again, a plain tablet on a pillar.<sup>32</sup> Similar plain votive tablets occur on a relief from the Amphiareion at Rhamnous, with a family preparing the sacrifice of a pig,<sup>33</sup> and another votive relief from the Amphiareion in Athens.<sup>34</sup> In the latter instance, the tablet is framed all round with a raised band.

<sup>31</sup> Athens NM 3369: U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum*, 169 nr. 31, fig. 2; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 124-5 nr. 16.1, with bibliography. First half 4th century B.C.

<sup>32</sup> Berlin 725 (K80): C. BLÜMEL, *Die klassisch griechischen Skulpturen der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin* (Berlin 1966), 72 nr. 85, pl. 121; B.X. ΠΕΤΡΑΚΟΣ, *Ὁ Ὀρωπὸς καὶ τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Ἀμφιαράου* (Athens 1968), 121, pl. 38. Early fourth century.

<sup>33</sup> Athens NM 1384: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 329, pl. 39, 2; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum*, 181 nr. 181; B.Ch. PETRAKOS, in *Prakt* 1976, 57 nr. 34; IG II<sup>2</sup> 4426. Mid 4th century B.C.

<sup>34</sup> Athens NM 1383: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 328, pl. 38, 4; H.K. SÜSSEROTT, *Griech. Plastik*, pl. 22, 5; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum*, 171 nr. 74. Late 4th century B.C. This relief was found near the Hephaisteion, during the construction of the Piraeus railway, together with Athens NM 1396, which is a honorary decree with a relief representation of Amphiaraos, Artikleides and Hygieia, all three with their names inscribed.

From the Athenian Akropolis comes a broken votive relief, dedicated by victorious torch racers, which features the by now familiar tablet on a pillar.<sup>35</sup> Possibly of the same provenance is a fragment of a relief dedicated to Athena, which has a tablet bordered by a moulding at top and bottom, but otherwise similarly undecorated.<sup>36</sup>

Next we turn to four representations of votive tablets that are decorated with relief scenes. They were all part of votive reliefs, but unfortunately in all four instances only a small fragment is preserved, containing little more than the tablet and part of its pillar, so that we have no way of knowing what their iconographical context was. On the tablet in the first fragment, from Athens, tree female figures are depicted dancing hand in hand.<sup>37</sup> If the traces of an inscription on the capital of the pillar supporting this tablet have been correctly interpreted by Peek as Δή[μωι καὶ] Χάρ[ισιν], they must be the Charites.<sup>38</sup> The date of this relief is difficult to determine; it may still be 4th century, but quite possibly it belongs to the Hellenistic period, as the next three fragments certainly do. One from the Athenian Agora preserves part of a tablet with a Nymph relief (or Charites),<sup>39</sup> a fragment from Chios depicts Hygieia and

<sup>35</sup> Athens Akr. Mus. 3012 and London BM 813: O. WALTER, *Beschreibung der Reliefs im kleinen Akropolismuseum in Athen* (Wien 1923), nr. 213 and 213a; A.H. SMITH, *A catalogue of sculpture in the department of Greek and Roman antiquities*, British Museum I (London 1892), nr. 813. Late 4th century B.C.

<sup>36</sup> Athens NM 1389: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 349, pl. 58. Inscription: [-] Ἀθηνάαι ἀνέθ[ηκεν or εσαν].

<sup>37</sup> Athens NM 2354: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, pl. 141.

<sup>38</sup> W. PEEK, «Attische Inschriften», in *AM* 67 (1942), 1-217, esp. 58 nr. 97.

<sup>39</sup> Athens Agora Mus. S1527: E.B. HARRISON, *Archaic and Archaistic sculpture*, The Athenian Agora XI (Princeton, N.J. 1965), 84 nr. 132, pl. 31.

Asklepios,<sup>40</sup> and finally on one in Corinth we have Apollo, Leto and Artemis.<sup>41</sup>

Some reliefs have votive tablets that are not mounted on pillars, but attached to the background, which in these cases, one imagines, should be understood as a wall in the sanctuary. A votive relief from Piraeus with a scene of a hero banquet has in its upper left corner a framed relief panel depicting a horseman.<sup>42</sup> Frequently such hero banquet reliefs have a similar panel with only a horse's head. In fact, we have here an interesting example of the flexibility of votive iconography. In a dedication to a hero, some indication of his horsemanship was desirable,

<sup>40</sup> Bonn Akad. Kunstmus. B68: U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heilium*, 168 nr. 27; Idem, in *AM* 69/70 (1954-1955), 131, 144-5, Beil. 53; H. KYRIELEIS, in *Antiken aus dem Akademischen Kunstmuseum, Bonn* (Düsseldorf 1971), 21 nr. 15, fig. 11; P. KRANZ, «Bemerkungen zum Bonner Asklepios-Pinax», in *Beiträge zur Ikonographie und Hermeneutik. Festschrift für N. Himmelmann, Bjb Beih.* 47 (Mainz 1989), 289-295. Hausmann suggested a date in the 4th century B.C., but Kyrieleis and Kranz argue for the 2nd century B.C. There are traces of an inscription which may be tentatively restored as [- 'Ασκληπιῶι καὶ 'Υγιε]ῖαι | [- κατ' ἐπιτα]γήν.

<sup>41</sup> Corinth S2567: B.S. RIDGWAY, «Sculpture from Corinth», in *Hesperia* 50 (1981).— Yet another Hellenistic example of a votive tablet on a pillar, in a relief with a Dionysiac scene: Volos 421, see D.R. THEOCHARIS, in *ADelt* 17 (1961-1962), 171 pl. 190a. — Reliefs with depictions of statues on pillars: Athens NM 3867, see M. KYPARISSIS & W. PEEK, in *AM* 66 (1941), 228-232 nr. 4, pl. 75-76; Thebes Mus., see *ADelt* 10 (1926), Par. 11 nr. 6, fig. 3.

<sup>42</sup> See J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 536, fig. 243; J.-M. DENTZER, *Banquet couché*, 594 R226, fig. 481. In a fragment of a similar relief, also from Piraeus, the miniature tablet even has the conventional more elaborate architectural frame of the later classical votive reliefs, see J.N. SVORONOS, *ibid.*, fig. 244. See also the Hellenistic banquet relief from Pergamon: E. PFUHL & H. MÖBIUS, *Die ostgriechischen Grabreliefs II* (1979), nr. 1917, pl. 277.

though not absolutely indispensable. One could choose to depict the hero as a horseman, on horseback or dismounted. But if, for some reason, one preferred the other most popular type of heroic votive relief, the banquet, then one could add either a life-size full picture of a horse or rider, or just a horse's head looking in over a wall or through a window, or a horse's head in a frame (window or framed relief panel?), or a relief tablet with a horseman on a reduced scale.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to votive tablets, other types of votive offerings may also be depicted in votive reliefs. For instance the relief of Telemachos of Acharnai depicting the interior of the temple of Asklepios shows a couple of surgical instruments, hanging on the wall between Hygieia and Asklepios.<sup>44</sup> They are a forceps, which may be compared to the *καρκίνοι ἰατρικοί* mentioned in an inventory of ex votos in the Asklepieion in Piraeus,<sup>45</sup> and a cupping instrument (*σικύη*).<sup>46</sup> Other votive reliefs to healing gods have depictions of anatomical ex votos, seemingly hanging on the background of the relief (which here again may be thought of as a wall in the sanctuary), or suspended from the upper part of its architectural frame.<sup>47</sup> In an often illustrated relief from the Amyneion in Athens, the dedicant, Lysimachides, is seen actually placing his offering, a huge replica of a leg with

<sup>43</sup> F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Unclassical religion in Classical Greece: The archaeological angle», in *Πρακτικά του XII Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Κλασικής Αρχαιολογίας, Αθήνα, 4-10 Σεπτεμβρίου 1983* (Athens 1988), 288-292. For the hero banquet reliefs (for the votive reliefs of this type I prefer this term to the conventional but misleading «Totenmahl» or «funeral banquet»), see R.N. THÖNGES-STRINGARIS, «Das griechische Totenmahl», in *AM* 80 (1965), 1 ff.; J.-M. DENTZER, *Banquet couché*.

<sup>44</sup> See note 25.

<sup>45</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 47.

<sup>46</sup> See E. BERGER, *Basler Arztrelief*, 63 ff.

<sup>47</sup> F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 105-151, nrs. 1.1, 1.2, 9.1, 10.2.

a varicose vein, in the sanctuary; on the left, in a recessed panel, stand a pair of votive feet.<sup>48</sup>

It seems most likely that the votive leg that Lysimachides is handling represents his own votive offering. But this raises the broader question, whether an *ex voto* depicted in a votive relief is always to be understood as specifically the votive offering of the dedicant of this relief, or as a more general indication of the nature of the locality, i.e. a sanctuary. The answer to this question may have varied from case to case. When someone ordered a votive relief in connection with a cure, and he wanted to make clear the nature of the sanctuary concerned by including a representation of an anatomical votive offering, then it stands to reason that he would choose that part of the body that had ailed him. In the case of the votive relief from the Athenian Asklepeion, however, which presents a fairly complete collection of all the parts of the human body, I think we should take this as an indication of the comprehensive healing power of the god, rather than the manifold complaints of the woman dedicant.<sup>49</sup>

The votive tablets on pillars depicted in votive reliefs, which were discussed above, are probably just general indicators of the nature of the place. There is no good reason to assume that they are self-referring in the strict sense, i.e. that the votive tablet in a relief is a representation of that relief itself. Whenever it is itself decorated with a relief, it is always of a most general, impersonal type: just a picture of the deities and no special reference to any worshippers in particular. In the Telemachos relief, the pillar surmounted by a relief of an incubation, clearly serves to indicate that there was a sanctuary, and that it was a healing

<sup>48</sup> Athens NM 3526: F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 113 nr. 2.1, with bibliography. Second half of the 4th century B.C.

<sup>49</sup> Athens Akr.M. 7232: O. WALTER, *Beschreibung*, nr. 108; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 106 nr. 1.1. 4th century B.C.



sanctuary. And certainly in later times, in Neo-Attic reliefs, pillars supporting votive panels were a stock component, used as a general indication of a sanctuary. In one version of the so-called «Ikarios relief», now in the British Museum, there even are two of those.<sup>50</sup> And in the series of reliefs with Nike and warrior on either side of a Palladion, one replica has the pillar and tablet as an alternative to the Palladion.<sup>51</sup>

The opinion that in the classical period too, representations of votive offerings on pillars could be used as a general indication of the sacred surroundings, finds support in the fact that they also occur in vase paintings. For instance, an Attic red figure crater with a sacrificial scene features a votive tablet on a column next to the altar.<sup>52</sup> There is no good reason to connect this votive offering with any specific person.

There are some other vase paintings with votive panels or statues on pillars.<sup>53</sup> One Boeotian vase painting has a represen-

<sup>50</sup> London BM 2190: on the various versions and their genealogy see C. WATZINGER, «Theoxenia des Dionysos», in *Jdl* 61/62 (1946/1947), 76-87; W. FUCHS, *Die Vorbilder der neuattischen Reliefs*, *Jdl* Ergänzungsheft 20 (Berlin 1959), 157.

<sup>51</sup> Mantua Pal. Ducale: A. LEVI, *Sculture greche e romane del Palazzo Ducale di Mantova* (Roma 1931), 36 nr. 52 pl. 38b; on the type in general see V.H. POULSEN, «A late-Greek relief in Beirut», in *Berytus* 2 (1935), 51-56; W. FUCHS, *Vorbilder*, 123-126. — Another Hellenistic relief type which includes a pillar and votive tablet represents a Muse and a Satyr chorus in a sacred precinct (replicas in Rome and in Naples): M. BIEBER, *The history of the Greek and Roman Theater* (Princeton, N.J. 1961), 85, fig. 308. — See also E. SCHMIDT, *Archaistische Kunst in Griechenland und Rom* (München 1922), 62 note 19, pl. XIX 3 (relief fragment in Rome MN); G.M.A. RICHTER, «A Neo-Attic crater in the Metropolitan Museum of Art», in *JHS* 45 (1925), 201-209.

<sup>52</sup> Athens NM 12491: H. METZGER, *Recherches sur l'imagerie athénienne*, Publications de la Bibliothèque Salomon Reinach 2 (Paris 1965), 116 nr. 35; pl. XLVIII 2.

<sup>53</sup> E.g. Cologne Arch. Inst.: A. RUMPF, «Ein etruskischer Krater», in *Bjb* 158 (1958), 253-261. — New York MMA 08.258.25: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 776/3 The

tation of anatomical ex votos.<sup>54</sup> Much more common, however, on vases, are representations of painted votive pinakes, to be taken as either terracotta or wood. Fragments of an Attic red figure crater of the second half of the 5th century B.C. preserve a picture of Herakles sacrificing in the sanctuary of Chryse.<sup>55</sup> This is a mythical picture, a scene imagined in the remote past, so the sanctuary is depicted as a simple sacred grove, with a cult statue on a pillar, a rustic altar, and three pinakes suspended from the branches of a tree. On a roughly contemporary chous a similar open air sanctuary is depicted, with two pinakes hanging from a tree, next to an altar.<sup>56</sup> On the left are two women, one holding a phiale and an oinochoe, facing them on the right is a youth standing beside his horse. Since this iconographical pattern closely resembles a typical class of votive reliefs to heroes, we may perhaps imagine that the vase painter had some Attic hero shrine in mind.

On an Attic red figured fragment in Bucarest, also of the second half of the 5th century, we see Apollo playing the kithara

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Group of Berlin 2415; G. NEUMANN, *Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst* (Berlin 1965), 82, fig. 41 (statue of Athena on a column, perhaps cult statue rather than votive statue). — Paris Louvre L63 (S1662): *ARV<sup>2</sup>* 858/8 The Trophy Painter; G. VAN HOORN, *Choes and Anthesteria* (Leiden 1951), 169 nr. 828, fig. 11; B. LAMPRINOUDAKES, in *AAA* 9 (1976), 111, fig. 2 (statue of a boy on a column set in a base; inscription painted on the base: [Te?]ισίας | [ἀ]νέθηκεν).

<sup>54</sup> Athens NM 1393: F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 125 nr. 17.2 with bibliography.

<sup>55</sup> London BM E494: *ARV<sup>2</sup>* 1079/3 The Painter of London E494; F.T. VAN STRATEN, in R. HÄGG *e.a.* (eds.), *Early Greek Cult Practice* (Stockholm 1988), 63-4 nr. 17 with bibliography.

<sup>56</sup> Paris Louvre L64: *Encyclopédie photographique de l'art. Le Musée du Louvre* III (Paris 1938), 29; G. VAN HOORN, *Choes*, 169 nr. 829, fig. 32.

outside a temple.<sup>57</sup> The temple is rendered in the abbreviated form, usual in vase paintings, consisting of a Doric column and architrave. Suspended from the architrave or from the capital of the column is a pinax with a picture of Herakles.

Painted votive plaques occur in several other vase paintings, both Attic<sup>58</sup> and South Italian.<sup>59</sup> Most frequently we find them in combination with a herm and an altar. A red figure amphora of the first half of the 5th century has a rare picture of pinakes being brought to a sanctuary: a man and a youth each carry a forked branch from which a painted plaque is suspended, and a vessel.<sup>60</sup>

If we look back for a moment, and survey the representations of votive offerings in both votive reliefs and vase paintings, an interesting difference appears. The sculptors of votive reliefs

<sup>57</sup> Bucarest NM 03207: *CVA* Bucarest pl. 32, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Column crater, once Basel: *Münzen und Medaillen*, Sonderliste N (1971), nr. 8. — Bell crater Brussels A725: *CVA* Brussels 3, IVe/IVc, pl. 2; H. METZGER, *Recherches sur l'imagerie*, 83 nr. 20, pl. 31, 1. — Pelike Leningrad 4515: *Paralip* 514; A.A. PEREDOLSKAJA, *Catalogue of Attic red figure vases in Leningrad* (in Russian, Leningrad 1967), nr. 133, pl. 95, 3-4. — Lekythos London BM E585: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 685/162 Bowdoin Painter. — Column crater Naples MN 3369: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 523/9 Orchard Painter; J. BOARDMAN, *Athenian red figure vases. The Classical period* (London 1989), fig. 42. — Cup Oxford 305: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 416/3 Painter of Louvre G265; *CVA* Oxford 1, pl. 2, 3; 7, 1-2. — Skyphos Paris Cab. Méd. 839: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 367/97 Triptolemos Painter. — Lekythos private collection: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 685/164 Bowdoin Painter; E. SIMON, *Götter der Griechen* (Darmstadt 31985), 308 fig. 294.

<sup>59</sup> A Sicilian red figure skyphos in Gela, of the second half of the 4th century B.C., shows Herakles and Silenus sacrificing at an altar. Behind the altar is a pillar, and a considerable number of painted pinakes hanging on the wall, nicely overcrowding the picture. See A. CALDERONE, in *ArchCl* 29 (1977), 267-276, pl. 56-7.

<sup>60</sup> *Münzen und Medaillen*, Auktion 40 (Basel 1969), nr. 95.

(and their patrons?) had a distinct preference for the inclusion of votive sculpture of a more or less monumental nature, whereas the majority of votive offerings depicted by vase painters are pinakes such as, at times, they might paint themselves. Every man to his trade, apparently.

Let us now return to the votive reliefs. Although no one would begrudge the dedicant the pleasure of regarding the ex voto depicted in his votive relief as his own, to the general public visiting the sanctuary it was just another element in the representation that referred to the material surroundings of the sanctuary. It is of the same class, then, as the altars that we see in many (though certainly not all) votive reliefs, and the not too numerous indications of the architecture, to which we shall now turn.

Fourth century votive reliefs often have an architectural frame consisting of a bottom ledge, two antae, and an architrave topped by something like the lateral edge of a tiled roof (the antae seem to occur from ca. 420 B.C., the complete architectural frame somewhat later). This frame has been variously interpreted as a reflection either of temple architecture, or of the stoa which formed part of so many sanctuaries.<sup>61</sup> This opinion seems to find support in a curious votive monument from the Athenian Asklepieion.<sup>62</sup> It was carved out of a single block of marble, and consists of a relief depicting the usual procession of worshippers in an architectural frame, and, attached to it at right angles on the left, a higher naiskos containing the deities. It may be that the sculptor of this monument was exceptionally liter-

<sup>61</sup> G. NEUMANN, *Probleme griech. Weihreliefs*, 51.

<sup>62</sup> Athens NM 1377: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 294, pl. 48; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heilum*, 167 no. 11; B.S. RIDGWAY, «Painterly and pictorial in Greek relief sculpture», in W.G. MOON (ed.), *Ancient Greek art and iconography* (Madison 1983), 193-208, fig. 13.4 a-b.

ally minded, and that in general we should not take the conventional architectural frame as reflecting any specific type of building, but rather as an indication that the scene depicted was set within the architecturally defined space of the sanctuary. At least we may agree, I think, that it is not an unmistakable and exact representation of any real building. Still, at least in some cases it was felt by the sculptor as a piece of architecture, so that he could let Hygieia lean against the anta of the architectural frame.<sup>63</sup>

In votive reliefs to the Nymphs the same effect of setting the scene within the space of the sanctuary may be achieved by an irregular frame suggesting the mouth of a cave, which occurs from about the middle of the 4th century. Before that time, in the late 5th and early 4th c., we sometimes see a small stylized cave of Pan in the upper part of the relief field.<sup>64</sup>

That we should beware of taking these frames too literal, is emphasized by the fact that sometimes they are, rather illogically, combined. For instance, in a fourth century votive to the Nymphs, found in Piraeus,<sup>65</sup> and in a Thessalian dedication to Artemis of the second century B.C.,<sup>66</sup> the irregular mouth of the cave is set within the conventional architectural frame.

There are some other indications of architectural elements in votive reliefs. Telemachos' relief, which shows both the interior and the exterior of the sanctuary of Asklepios in Athens, is a rather special case. It is not an ordinary votive relief, but a

<sup>63</sup> Athens NM 1383, see note 34.

<sup>64</sup> C.M. EDWARDS, *Greek votive reliefs to Pan and the Nymphs* (Diss. New York 1985); G. NEUMANN, *Probleme griech. Weihreliefs*, 54.

<sup>65</sup> Berlin 710 (K84): C. BLÜMEL, *Klass. griech. Skulpt.*, 78 nr. 91, fig. 130; C.M. EDWARDS, *Greek vot. rel. Pan and the Nymphs*, 540 nr. 31.

<sup>66</sup> P. ARNDT & W. AMELUNG, *Photographische Einzelaufnahmen* 3401b; *LIMC* II 1, s.v. «Apollon», nr. 959.

monument commemorating the founding and construction of the sanctuary.<sup>67</sup>

Two votive reliefs from the same Asklepieion, both incomplete and with a very battered surface, give us a slight hint of the architectural environment. In one three girls are descending three steps.<sup>68</sup> The other has, in the background behind the worshippers, two isolated columns close together.<sup>69</sup> A fragment from the Athenian Agora shows a herm standing in front of a vertical edge, offset in the background, probably indicating the entrance of a sanctuary.<sup>70</sup> Rather indistinct pillars or pilasters occur in the background of some other fragmentary votive reliefs.<sup>71</sup>

An exceptionally explicit rendering of a special type of sacred building connected with the cult of Herakles, the so-called «Säulenbau», is encountered on some ten votive reliefs and on a series of Attic red figure vase paintings.<sup>72</sup> It is probably not one specific sanctuary, but rather a specific *type*, for the votive reliefs come from various parts of Greece. The construction (wood or

<sup>67</sup> See note 25.

<sup>68</sup> Athens NM 1366: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 285, pl. 45; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heilum*, 182 nr. 188.

<sup>69</sup> Athens NM 2417: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 641, pl. 150; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heilum*, 176 nr. 130.

<sup>70</sup> Athens Agora Mus. S1154: E.B. HARRISON, *Archaic and Archaistic sculpture*, The Athenian Agora XI (Princeton, N.J. 1965), 174 nr. 233, pl. 61. 4th century B.C.

<sup>71</sup> Athens NM 1507: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 626, pl. 127; J.-M. DENTZER, *Banquet couché*, 613 R388, fig. 619. — Chalkis 913: E. MITROPOULOU, *Horses' heads and snake in banquet reliefs and their meaning* (Athens 1976), 15 nr. 1.

<sup>72</sup> A. FRICKENHAUS, «Das Herakleion von Melite», in *AM* 36 (1911), 121-127; S. WOODFORD, «Cults of Heracles in Attica», in *Studies presented to G.M.A. Hanfmann* (Mainz 1971), 211-225; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «The lebes of Herakles. Note on a new decree stele from Eleusis», in *BABesch* 54 (1979), 189-191.

stone?) consists of four columns placed at the corners of a square foundation and supporting an epistyle. On festive occasions this permanent framework was decked with boughs and thus transformed into a pleasant shady pavilion, where Herakles could enjoy the banquet prepared for him by his worshippers.

To summarize what we have found so far: it would seem that for the worshippers in general votive offerings were a typical component of a sanctuary. Representations of *ex votis* could serve to identify the space, in which a scene was set, as a sanctuary, much the same as a depiction of an altar or a specific architectural element would. Some further insights into the appreciation of the Greek worshippers for votive offerings may be gained from literary and epigraphical texts.

Some key words that are often found in connection with votive offerings, are ἄγαλμα<sup>73</sup> and κόσμος (κοσμεῖν): they are something to be enjoyed, something beautiful, an ornament for the sanctuary. Around the middle of the 5th century B.C. a priestess of Demeter and Kore dedicated a votive ἄγαλμα in the Athenian sanctuary of her goddesses, which, in her own eyes, was an adornment of their portal (προθύρο κόσμον).<sup>74</sup> A pillar of a lost votive relief, found in the Athenian Agora, bears the dedication of a cobbler and his sons to the hero Kallistephanos. With this dedication he adorns the hero (ἥρω κοσμεῖ).<sup>75</sup> In

<sup>73</sup> F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 75.

<sup>74</sup> Athens Agora I 5484: SEG X 321; M.L. LAZZARINI, *Le formule delle dediche votive nella Grecia arcaica*, *MemLinc* VIII, XIX 2 (1976), nr. 715.

<sup>75</sup> Athens Agora I 7396: J.M. CAMP II, in *AJA* 77 (1963), 209; *The Athenian Agora. A Guide to the Excavation and Museum* (Athens 1976), 208 f., fig. 107; M.L. LANG, *Socrates in the Agora*, *Excavations of the Athenian Agora*, Picture Book no. 17 (Princeton, N.J. 1978), fig. 12; J.M. CAMP II, *Gods and heroes in the Athenian Agora*, *Excavations of the Athenian Agora*, Picture Book no. 19 (Princeton, N.J. 1980), 28, fig. 56; J.M. CAMP II, *The Athenian Agora. Excavations in the heart of Classical Athens* (London 1986), 147 fig. 126. Second quarter of the 4th century B.C.

Cyrene a certain Hermesandros set up a votive offering and two almost identical inscriptions, commemorating his exceptionally rich contribution to the festival of Artemis: τῶν τάδε κεῖται κόσμος καὶ μνᾶμα καὶ κλέος εὐδόκιμον.<sup>76</sup>

In an inscription from a fourth century choregic monument, found near Vari (Attika), the monument is referred to as a gift to the god in remembrance of the victory, an ornament for the deme: μνημόσυνον δὲ θεῶι νίκης τόδε δῶρον [ἔθηκα], δήμωι μὲν κόσμον, etc.<sup>77</sup>

But not only did the dedicants regard their own dedications as κόσμος and ἄγαλμα, they were also objects of sightseeing, tourist attractions almost, for the general visitors. This is charmingly illustrated in Euripides' *Ion*, in the conversation between Ion and the handmaidens of Kreousa who have accompanied their mistress to Delphi (184-232). That Ion is well accustomed to sightseers is also clear from his question to Kreousa: «Has your husband accompanied you to come sightseeing, or for consultation» (301: πότερα θεατῆς ἢ χάριν μαντευμάτων;). In Herondas' 4th *mimiambus*, the women who have come to the Asklepieion to make a thank offering and set up a votive pinax, are amazed at the beautiful statues: μᾶ καλῶν, φίλη Κυνοῖ, ἀγαλμάτων (20-21). And they take the opportunity to have a good look around.

<sup>76</sup> G. PUGLIESE CARRATELLI, «Supplemento epigrafico cirenaico», in *ASA-tene* 39-40 (1961-1962), 219-339; 312-313, n<sup>os</sup> 161-162. 4th/3rd century B.C.

<sup>77</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 3101. According to D. WHITEHEAD, *The demes of Attica 508/7-ca. 250 B.C. A political and social study* (Princeton, N.J. 1986), 234-5, δήμωι κόσμον, which he translates «honor for the deme», refers to the victory. I think that it is much more likely that it refers to the δῶρον, i.e. the concrete monument on which this dedication was inscribed. — Some further occurrences of κόσμος, κοσμεῖν in connection with votive offerings: *SEG XXVIII* 509 = W. PEEK, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften aus Thessalien* (*SBHeidelberg* 1974, 3), 11-12 no. 7 = B. HELLY, «Quarante épigrammes thessaliennes», in *RPh* 104 (1978), 121-135; esp. 124. *Pind. Isthm.* I 18-23; *Plut. Per.* 12.



In the normal course of their lives, and even more so when abnormal events occurred, the ancient Greeks had many occasions on which it was usual to make a dedication to a god. When generation upon generation of worshippers brought their votive gifts, a sanctuary might eventually become so full of them, that they would be an impediment as much as an adornment. This is certainly the impression we get from the number of surviving votive offerings, which surely only forms a small percentage of the original number, and those attested in the inventories, of, for instance, the Athenian Asklepieion in the first couple of centuries after its foundation. The situation in many sanctuaries, as described by some later authors such as Diodorus Siculus, Strabo and Pausanias, was probably not unlike that in some modern Greek churches, where especially the more thaumaturgical icons are largely blocked from view by thick clusters of *támata*.<sup>78</sup>

This custom of cluttering up the sanctuaries with dedications, set up for every conceivable reason, was a major irritation to Plato: «To establish gods and temples is not easy; it's a job that needs to be very carefully pondered if it is to be done properly. Yet look at what people usually do — all women in particular, invalids of every sort, men in danger or any kind of distress, or conversely when they have just won a measure of prosperity: they dedicate the first thing that comes to hand, they swear to offer sacrifice, and promise to found shrines for gods and spirits and children of gods. And the terror they feel when they see apparitions, either in dreams or awake — terror which recurs later when they recollect a whole series of visions — drives them to seek a remedy for each individually, with the result that on open spaces or any other spot where such an incident has occurred they found the altars and shrines that fill every home and village.»<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> See references in F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 78.

<sup>79</sup> Plato, *Lg.* X 909 e-910 a (translation Saunders).

Even the authorities in charge of the sanctuaries, who would not — one imagines — have shared Plato's prejudices, would for practical reasons sometimes find it necessary to lay down certain rules restricting the placement of *ex votos*. A Rhodian decree of the 3rd century B.C., concerning the Asklepieion, stipulates, «that no one is permitted to request that an image or some other votive offering be set up in the lower part of the sanctuary (---) or in any other spot where votive offerings prevent people walking past». <sup>80</sup> In an inscription of the same period from Miletus we read, «that it is forbidden to fasten to the woodwork of the new stoa in the sanctuary of Apollo either a votive tablet or anything else, to prevent the woodwork from being damaged, nor to the columns. And if someone wishes to place any votive offering in the new stoa, he must place it against the plastered sections of the walls, underneath the stone course supporting the beams». <sup>81</sup> In a very damaged inscription from Athens, dating from the 2nd century B.C., the priest of a sanctuary is authorized to remove various votive tablets which block the cult image of the god from view, and whatever else is deemed

<sup>80</sup> F. SOKOLOWSKI, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques. Supplément* (Paris 1962), nr. 107: (---) μὴ ἐξέστω μηθενὶ αἰτήσασ-

[θαι ἀνά]θεσιν ἀνδριάντος μηδὲ ἄλλου  
[ἀναθ]ήματος μηθενὸς ἐς τὸ κάτω μέρος  
[τοῦ τ]εμένους (---)  
ἢ ἐς ἄλλον τινὰ τόπον ἐν ᾧ στα-  
θέντα τὰ ἀναθήματα κωλύσει τοὺς περι-  
πάτους (---).

<sup>81</sup> F. SOKOLOWSKI, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques. Supplément*, nr. 123: (---) πρὸς τὴν ξύλωσιν τῆς στοιῆς τῆς καινῆς τῆς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος | μὴ ἐξεῖναι πίνακα ἀναθεῖναι μηδὲ ἄλλο μηδέν, ὅπως μὴ βλάβηται ἢ ξύλωσις, μηδὲ πρὸς τοὺς χίονας <ἦ>ν δέ τις | βούληται ἀνατιθέναι τι εἰς τὴν στοιῆν τῆς καινῆς, ἀνατιθέτω πρὸς τοὺς τοίχους τοὺς ἀλειφομένους ὑποκάτω | τοῦ ἀντιδοκίου τοῦ λιθίνου (---). See also F. SOKOLOWSKI, *op. cit.*, nr. 43 and 111.

unworthy of the sanctuary, from the temple to the stoa. And in the future, no one is to set up any votive offering in the sanctuary without consulting the priest.<sup>82</sup>

Votive offerings, once they were placed in a sanctuary, were the property of the god, and there could be no doubt about their inalienability. Yet, sometimes it was considered useful explicitly to restate this fact, as in an inscription from Loryma on the Rhodian Peraia (3rd century B.C.): «It is forbidden to remove votive offerings from the sanctuary or to damage any of them.»<sup>83</sup> The remainder of the inscription, which is very fragmentary, probably prohibited the introduction of votive offerings and any alterations in their arrangement without the permission of the priest.

*Deisidaimonia*, if not common decency, would probably prevent most people from stealing votive offerings.<sup>84</sup> Regrettably, there is always the odd exception. Aelian has a fascinating story about a temple-thief and a dog in the Asklepieion of Athens, which (whatever one may think of its historicity) is too good to be left out. «A temple-thief who had waited for the midmost hour of night and had watched till men were deep asleep, came to the shrine of Asklepios and stole a number of offerings (ὑφείλετο τῶν ἀναθημάτων πολλά) without, as he supposed, being seen. There was however in the temple an excellent watcher, a dog, more awake than the attendants, and it gave chase to the thief and never stopped barking, as with all its might it summoned others to witness what had been done. (---) Since

<sup>82</sup> F. SOKOLOWSKI, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris 1969), nr. 43.

<sup>83</sup> F. SOKOLOWSKI, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris 1955), nr. 74: ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ | μὴ ἐκφέρειν | τῶν ἀν[α]θ[ημά]των | μηδὲ βλ[άπ]τε[ι]ν | μηθέν (---).

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Diod. Sic. V 63, 3 (concerning the sanctuary of Hemithea in Kastabos): διὸ καὶ πολλῶν ἐκ παλαιῶν χρόνων σεσωσμένων πεπλήρωται τὸ τέμενος ἀναθημάτων, καὶ ταῦτα οὐθ' ὑπὸ φυλάκων οὐθ' ὑπὸ τείχους ὄχυροῦ φυλαττόμενα, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῆς συνήθους δεισιδαιμονίας.

however the dog continued to bark when the thief came to the house where he lodged and when he came out again, it was discovered where the dog belonged, while the inscriptions and the places where the offerings were set up lacked the missing objects (ἐγνώσθη μὲν ὁ κύων ἔνθεν ἦν, τὰ λείποντα δὲ τῶν ἀναθημάτων ἐπόθουν αἱ γραφαί τε καὶ αἱ χῶραι ἔνθα ἀνέκειντο). The Athenians therefore concluded that the man was this thief, and by putting him on the rack discovered the whole affair. And the man was sentenced in accordance with the law, while the dog was rewarded by being fed and cared for at the public expense for being a faithful watcher and second to none of the attendants in vigilance.»<sup>85</sup>

The question of inalienability might also crop up, though in a less embarrassing fashion, when a decision was taken to melt down old gold and silver *ex votis*, in order to use the material for one more impressive *anathema*, or for some useful cult implement. As this could easily be construed as tampering with the god's possessions, an official decision was required of the worldly powers that were in charge of the sanctuary. There are several inscriptions which deal with just such an operation and inform us about the procedure that was to be followed. One of the better known examples comes from the Athenian sanctuary of the Heros Iatros, north of the Agora (221/0).<sup>86</sup> The boule decrees that the demos shall appoint a select committee. The members of this committee shall take down the metal reliefs (τύποι) and any other silver or gold objects and the coins that are kept as votive offerings in the sanctuary, they shall weigh these

<sup>85</sup> Ael. *NA* VII 13 (translation A.F. Scholfield).

<sup>86</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 839; F. SOKOLOWSKI, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*, nr. 41. For the location of the sanctuary see F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Gifts», 114 nr. 3; also S. DOW, «The cult of the Hero Doctor», in *BAmSocP* 22 (1985), 33-47. — See also F. SOKOLOWSKI, *op. cit.*, nr. 42.

and then make them into an ἀνάθημα for the god as beautiful as they can. The members of the committee must inscribe the names of the dedicants and the weight (of their ex votos) on a marble stele which they must set up in the sanctuary. They must also offer a propitiatory sacrifice to the god worth fifteen drachmae.

This inscription very clearly illustrates, that votive offerings constituted a sort of permanent link between the worshipper and his god. Therefore, if votive offerings are interfered with, both parties, dedicant and god, have to be given satisfaction.

### 3. The worshippers

Votive offerings may contribute to our understanding of the ancient worshippers: how they saw themselves and how they wanted to be seen. On the one hand there is the iconographical evidence, in particular the votive reliefs with representations of worshippers in the sanctuary. Let us take a closer look at one example, from the Amphiareion at Rhamnous.<sup>87</sup> In the sanctuary, indicated by the familiar votive tablet on a pillar, a couple with three children have come to offer sacrifice. They are accompanied by one male and one female servant. The names are inscribed above the figures (except, of course, the servants). On the left, at the head of this small gathering, the *pater familias* is taking something from the sacrificial basket (κανοῦν), which is held by the male servant. In the background a glimpse can be seen of the pig which is about to be sacrificed. On the right, behind the man, stand his wife and children, and the maid carrying a cylindrical basket (the χίστη) on her head.

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<sup>87</sup> Athens NM 1384, see note 33.

On the other hand, there is the relevant epigraphical material, such as votive inscriptions, and inventories of votive offerings. Notably the inventories from the Athenian Asklepieion and from the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia, offer a wealth of information, made accessible by the valuable studies of Sara Aleshire and Tullia Linders.<sup>88</sup> With their large number of records they offer the possibility of a quantitative study of, for instance, the sex of the dedicants. It turns out that in the inventories of the Athenian Asklepieion 51.39 percent of the dedicants is female and 45.82 percent male (the remaining 2.79 percent are couples, two men, two women, the Athenian demos).<sup>89</sup> So there is a hardly significant predominance of women. In the inventories of the *epistatai* of Artemis Brauronia, the dedicants (apart from a couple of possible exceptions) are all female, which is only to be expected, given the particular character of Artemis Brauronia as protectress of pregnant women, women in child bed, etc.<sup>90</sup>

In this context, it might seem to be interesting to compare the proportion of male and female worshippers represented on votive reliefs from the same sanctuary, or pertaining to the cult of the same god. On closer inspection, however, things are not as clear cut as one might expect. Let us look at a couple of fourth-century votive reliefs from the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron.

In the first one, apart from the servants leading the sacrificial animal and carrying the kiste, there are 12 worshippers:

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<sup>88</sup> S.B. ALESHIRE, *The Athenian Asklepieion. The people, their dedications, and the inventories* (Amsterdam 1989); T. LINDERS, *Studies in the treasure records of Artemis Brauronia found in Athens*, Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, Series in 4°, 19 (Stockholm 1972).

<sup>89</sup> S.B. ALESHIRE, *Ath. Asklepieion*, 45.

<sup>90</sup> T. LINDERS, *Artemis Brauronia*, 38 and 40 f.

4 couples each with one child.<sup>91</sup> According to the inscription on the architrave, however, this is the dedication of one woman: Ἀρτέμιδι εὐξαμένη ἀνέθηκεν Ἀριστονίκη Ἀντιφάτους Θοραιέως γυνή. In all likelihood Aristonike is the woman of the first couple; but she, the dedicant, does not even walk up front. Another votive relief from Brauron was dedicated, according to the inscription on the architrave, by the woman Πεισις.<sup>92</sup> Again in the representation the woman dedicant takes second place behind her husband. They are followed by a woman, probably a nanny, accompanying four children.

If we only look at the epigraphical evidence of the inventories, it seems as though the Athenian women by themselves, independently, could make their own dedications. But if we incorporate the iconographical material, we get a substantially different picture: women's dedications there appear as basically a family affair.

Votive reliefs with single female worshippers, or in which a woman at least is depicted in front of the family group, do occur, but they are very rare. There is a small series of reliefs with women kneeling directly in front of the god.<sup>93</sup> And there are a few reliefs in which a woman with both hands raised (normally worshippers in votive reliefs only raise their right hand)

<sup>91</sup> Brauron 1151 (5): *Ergon* 1958, 35 fig. 37; I. KONTES, «Artemis Brauronia», in *ADelt* 22 A' (1967), 195, pl. 104a; S. KARUSU, «Bemalte attische Weihreliefs», in *Studies P.H. von Blanckenhagen* (Locust Valley, N.Y. 1979), 111-116, pl. 33, 2; *LIMC* II 1, s.v. «Artemis», nr. 974; J. TRAVLOS, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie der antiken Attika* (Tübingen 1988), 72 fig. 77. Second half 4th century B.C.

<sup>92</sup> Brauron 1152 (83): I. KONTES, in *ADelt* 22 A' (1967), 195, pl. 104b; *LIMC* II 1, s.v. «Apollon», nr. 957; s.v. «Artemis», nr. 1127; J. TRAVLOS, *Bildlexikon Attika*, 72 fig. 78. Second half 4th century B.C.

<sup>93</sup> F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Did the Greeks kneel before their gods?», in *BABesch* 49 (1974), 159-189.

is either alone or precedes the rest of the family. One example, where the woman is accompanied by her family, is a hero banquet from the west slope of the Akropolis.<sup>94</sup> In an incomplete relief in Chalkis, the woman dedicant is the only human figure, but this is an unusual dedication insofar as the woman is a priestess.<sup>95</sup>

In another votive relief from the sanctuary of Artemis in Brauron, the woman, by whom or on whose behalf this dedication was set up, precedes her family, with a small child standing in front of her, closest to the goddess. She is followed by three bearded men, a youth and two smaller children.<sup>96</sup>

This brings us to those few votive reliefs where a child is represented in front of the other worshippers, closest to the god. Some probably are connected with the introduction of the child into the *phratría*. Apparently children were introduced twice over, once when they were very small, and again when they reached the ephebic age. The ceremonies could be accompanied by the offering of votive gifts to Zeus Phratrios or Athena Phratría. Connected with the ephebic *εἰσαγωγή* was the ceremony of the *οἰνιστήρια* celebrated in honour of Herakles.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Athens NM 3527: O. WALTER, «Ein Totenmahlrelief aus Samos», in *Studies D.M. Robinson I* (Saint Louis, Missouri 1951), 594-605, esp. 600 ff., pl. 58a; R.N. THÖNGES-STRINGARIS, in *AM* 80 (1965), 78 nr. 69, Beil. 10, 1; J.-M. DENTZER, *Banquet couché*, 590 R192, fig. 450. Late 4th century B.C.

<sup>95</sup> Chalkis 337: G. DAUX, «Le relief éleusinien du musée de Chalcis», in *BCH* 88 (1964), 433-441. Late 4th century B.C. — See also the relief fragment from Pergamon: O. DEUBNER, *Das Asklepieion von Pergamon. Kurze vorläufige Beschreibung* (Berlin 1938), 13, fig. 5.

<sup>96</sup> Brauron 1153 (32+32a): *Ergon* 1958, 34 fig. 36; I. KONTES, in *ADelt* 22 A' (1967), 195, pl. 105a; *LIMC* II 1, s.v. «Artemis», nr. 673; J. TRAVLOS, *Bildlexikon Attika*, 73, fig. 79. Mid 4th century B.C.

<sup>97</sup> O. WALTER, «Die heilige Familie von Eleusis», in *ÖJh* 30 (1937), 50-70, esp. 60; O. WALTER, «Die Reliefs aus dem Heiligtum der Echeliden in



The first introduction may be represented on a votive relief from the Athenian Akropolis.<sup>98</sup> Another Athenian relief which shows Herakles next to his «Säulenbau», and a boy in front of him, probably refers to the *oinisteria* and the ephebic introduction.<sup>99</sup>

Apart from these more or less official occasions, children could, of course, be commended to the special care of whatever deities, whenever their parents felt that might be helpful. The large votive relief of Xenokrateia from Phaleron was dedicated, so the inscription on the pillar tells us, to Kephisos and the gods who shared his altar, as a gift for the upbringing of her son Xeniades (διδασκαλίας τόδε δῶρον).<sup>100</sup> Xenokrateia is depicted with her little son before her, stretching out his hand to Kephisos, who is attentively bending over towards his worshippers. They are standing in the midst of a dozen other gods and goddesses, the ξύνβωμοι θεοί of the inscription.

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Neu-Phaleron», in *AEphem* 1937, I, 97-119, esp. 103; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «The lebes of Herakles. Note on a new decree stele from Eleusis», in *BABesch* 54 (1979), 189-191; Idem, «Gifts», 89-90.

<sup>98</sup> Athens AkrM 3030: O. WALTER, *Beschreibung*, nr. 46; N. KONTOLEON, in *AEphem* 1974, 17, pl. 4.

<sup>99</sup> Athens NM 2723: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 379, pl. 101, 121; H.K. SÜSSEROTT, *Griech. Plastik*, 110 f., pl. 16, 4; J. TRAVLOS, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Athen* (Tübingen 1971), 276; F.T. VAN STRATEN, in *BABesch* 54 (1979), 189-191.

<sup>100</sup> Athens NM 2756: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 493 ff., pl. 181; O. WALTER, «Die Reliefs aus dem Heiligtum der Echeliden in Neu-Phaleron», in *AEphem* 1937, I 97-119; H.K. SÜSSEROTT, *Griech. Plastik*, 97 ff.; U. HAUSMANN, *Griechische Weihreliefs* (Berlin 1960), 63 f., fig. 33; A. LINFERT, «Die Deutung des Xenokrateiareliefs», in *AM* 82 (1967), 149-157; M. GUARDUCCI, «L'offerta di Xenokrateia nel santuario di Cefiso al Falero», in *Phóros — Tribute to B.D. Meritt* (Locust Valley, N.Y. 1974), 57-66; E. MITROPOULOU, *Corpus I: Attic votive reliefs of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.* (Athens 1977), no. 65; C.M. EDWARDS, *Greek vot. rel. Pan and the Nymphs*, 310 nr. 3. Ca. 400 B.C.

It is not surprising that among the votive reliefs of Asklepios we should also find some, in which small children are placed in a prominent position. In an Athenian one we have a man and woman followed by five daughters, neatly lined up according to size. The sixth and smallest child, also a girl, stands in front of them, close to Asklepios and Hygieia.<sup>101</sup> It is an exceptionally large family, which may have something to do with the fact that all children are female.

What about the civil status of the families of worshippers depicted in the votive reliefs? If they are from Athens, can we determine whether they are citizens, metics or slaves? If we are to believe the Old Oligarch, the citizens in Athens were no better dressed than the slaves and metics, nor did they look any better.<sup>102</sup> And indeed, if there is no inscription, it is impossible to distinguish between metics and citizens in votive reliefs on the grounds of visual evidence only. Whether there are any slaves among the dedicants of votive reliefs is doubtful. It is perhaps unlikely that they could afford such a rather expensive gift.

Servants or slaves do occur, however, as accessories in votive reliefs with families offering sacrifice. Typically they are a relatively small (not necessarily very young) male figure leading the victim and carrying the *kanoûn*, and a female figure carrying

<sup>101</sup> Athens AkM: O. WALTER, *Beschreibung*, 55 nr 96. 4th century B.C. — Other Asklepios reliefs with children in front: Athens NM 1356: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 276, pl. 50; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum*, 171 nr. 62. — Brocklesby Park (from Athens): A. MICHAELIS, *Ancient marbles in Great Britain* (Cambridge 1882), 228 nr. 10; B. ASHMOLE, «An Attic relief of the late fifth century», in *Antike Plastik. [Festschr.] W. Amelung* (Berlin/Leipzig 1928), 13-15; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum*, 166 nr. 3. — A hero banquet relief with children in front: Vienna I 1074: J.-M. DENTZER, *Banquet couché*, 523 R431, fig. 653.

<sup>102</sup> Pseudo-Xenophon, *Ath.* I 10: ἐσθῆτά τε γὰρ οὐδὲν βελτίων ὁ δῆμος αὐτόθι ἢ οἱ δοῦλοι καὶ οἱ μέτοικοι, καὶ τὰ εἶδη οὐδὲν βελτίους εἰσίν.

the *kíste* on her head. They are only there as an inevitable extension of the things that are essential to the sacrifice: the animal and the sacrificial implements. Consequently, if the composition so demands, they may be represented disproportionately small or almost invisible in the background. In a votive relief from the Asklepieion in Piraeus, four couples are preparing the sacrifice of a bull.<sup>103</sup> In the background, almost wholly obscured by the other worshippers, is the maid carrying the quite prominently displayed large *kíste*. In another votive relief to Asklepios, found in Thyreatis on the estate of Herodes Atticus (who probably brought it there from Athens), both the dedicant and the god brought their family, making the relief very crowded.<sup>104</sup> So the sacrificial pig, hardly visible in the background, must make do without the usual servant carrying the *kanoûn*. The *kíste* is carried by an all but invisible maid. However, bringing up the rear of the procession of worshippers (two bearded men, a woman, two children), but clearly visible in the foreground, there is a female figure that can almost certainly be identified as a slave girl by her hair style, dress, and the box she holds in her hands. On classical grave reliefs women are often accompanied by similar handmaidens (e.g. on the well known Hegeso

<sup>103</sup> Athens NM 1429: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 434, pl. 37; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum*, 181 nr. 179; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Greek sacrificial representations: livestock prices and religious mentality», in T. LINDERS & G. NORDQUIST (eds.), *Gifts to the gods. Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1985*, Boreas 15 (Uppsala 1987), 159-170, fig. 4. 4th century B.C.

<sup>104</sup> Athens NM 1402: J.N. SVORONOS, *Ath. NM.*, 351, pl. 35; H.K. SÜSSEROTT, *Griech. Plastik*, 114; U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heiltum*, 166 nr. 7; S. KARUSU, «Die Antiken vom Kloster Luku in der Thyreatis», in *RM* 76 (1969), 253-265; Π.Β. ΦΑΚΛΑΡΗΣ, *Αρχαία Κυνουρία. Ανθρωπινή δραστηριότητα και περιβάλλον*, Δημοσιεύματα του Αρχαιολογικού Δελτίου 43 (Athens 1990), 96-104 and 192-3. Second quarter 4th century B.C.

stele). There and here their primary purpose probably is to serve as a status indicator.

Next, I would like to include some observations on the composition of family groups in classical Greek votive reliefs. There is sufficient material for a cautious statistical analysis. It would probably be best to base such a statistical research on all surviving votive reliefs, but for various practical reasons that is not easily feasible. Limiting the field to one particular sanctuary would seem to be a promising alternative. However, apart from other practical problems, the number of surviving votive reliefs (with worshippers that are identifiable as to their sex and age) from any one sanctuary, is generally too small to produce statistically interesting results. I have tried to steer a middle course, by choosing one specific class of votive reliefs, the hero banquet type, which in the classical period is as good as restricted to hero cult. Heroes had a broad range of functions. They could be invoked on all sorts of occasions, by people from all walks of life, so there is a reasonable chance that whatever picture emerges may not be too much different from the average.

The total number of classical banquet reliefs with worshippers that I have found is a little less than 200.<sup>105</sup> Of these ca. 15% have only one single male worshipper. There is some margin for error, due to the state of preservation of some reliefs, and if we include all the doubtful but possible ones, the single males would amount to ca. 17%. Single female worshippers there are none. Couples are found in ca. 74% (maybe 78%) of the reliefs; this includes all couples, with or without children or other

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<sup>105</sup> I have used the lists in R.N. THÖNGES-STRINGARIS, «Das griechische Totenmahl», in *AM* 80 (1965), 1 ff. and J.-M. DENTZER, *Le motif du banquet couché dans le Proche-Orient et le monde grec du VII<sup>e</sup> au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle avant J.-C.* (Paris 1982), augmented with some stray specimens that for some reason or other were not included in those lists.

additional figures.<sup>106</sup> Approximately 70% of these couples have children. In other words, in more than half of the reliefs with worshippers (ca. 55%), these worshippers are couples with children.<sup>107</sup> There are a few single parents: 3 or 4 single men, and 3 or 4 single women, with a child or children, which amounts to roughly 2% each. Finally, there are 3 or 4 reliefs with rather larger groups of worshippers, consisting of adult male figures only. These, clearly, are not family groups, but probably some sort of clubs or religious associations such as ὀργεῶνες.<sup>108</sup> That there are so few of these among our banquet reliefs reemphasizes the fact, that the bulk of this material is really of a private nature.

So what we may conclude (with due caution) from the quantitative breakdown of the iconographical material, is this: 1) Private dedications by men could be regarded as an entirely individual matter. This, however, is only the case in a not too impressive minority of the dedications. 2) Private dedications of women were always regarded as a family affair; they are always portrayed together with their family, or, at the very least, their children. If we look through other types of votive reliefs, we will come across the odd single female worshipper, so instead of «always» we should rather, more prudently, say «almost always».<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> For the present purpose I have defined «couple» as an adult male and female figure standing next to each other.

<sup>107</sup> The number of children per couple is as follows: 36% of the couples have 1 child, 46.5% have 2 children, 14.9 have 3, and 2.6% have 4 children. On average this works out at a bit more than 1.5 children per family. For another type of votive relief with a larger number of children, see note 101.

<sup>108</sup> W.S. FERGUSON, «The Attic Orgeones», in *HTbR* 37 (1944), 62-140; W.S. FERGUSON, «Orgeonika», in *Hesperia* Suppl. 8 (1949), 130-163.

<sup>109</sup> See e.g. note 95.

It is clear from the above that the dedicants of the classical votive reliefs preferably viewed and represented themselves as members of a family. What, finally, can we learn from these reliefs with regard to their behaviour, their activities in the sanctuary? Even on a cursory perusal of the material it soon emerges, that the repertoire of activities depicted is extremely limited.

There is one activity, performed in sanctuaries of healing gods, that is depicted not infrequently: *incubation* (ἐγχοίμησις, ἐγκαταχοίμησις), i.e. the patient is seen lying on a couch, being visited by the god. Here again the patient is regularly accompanied by his family.<sup>110</sup> But otherwise, the only things we see worshippers do in the scenes on their votive reliefs are worshipping, praying, with one hand raised (sometimes two hands raised or kneeling), and offering sacrifice. The sacrificial scenes usually include an animal. Sometimes only sacrificial cakes (πόπανα) are offered, brought to the sanctuary in a *kiste*. But even of the sacrificial ritual, which encompassed a whole range of consecutive activities, only the initial stage is represented: the presentation of the animal at the altar, and occasionally the deposition of the ὀλαί.<sup>111</sup> Subsequently the animal had to be killed and slaughtered, parts of it were burnt on the altar, most of it was eaten by the worshippers. These interesting and enjoyable activities are (almost) totally absent in votive

<sup>110</sup> U. HAUSMANN, *Kunst und Heilium*, Kapitel II; F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Mens en ziekte. De genezingsinscripties van Epidauros», in *Hermeneus* 55 (1983), 181-195.

<sup>111</sup> F.T. VAN STRATEN, «Greek sacrificial representations: livestock prices and religious mentality», in T. LINDERS & G. NORDQUIST (eds.), *Gifts to the gods. Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1985* (Uppsala 1987), 159-170; Idem, «The god's portion in Greek sacrificial representations: Is the tail doing nicely?», in R. HÄGG, N. MARINATOS, G.C. NORDQUIST (eds.), *Early Greek Cult Practice* (Stockholm 1988), 51-68.

iconography.<sup>112</sup> Another activity which must have occurred quite frequently in sanctuaries, dancing, is also very rarely depicted on votive offerings.<sup>113</sup>

Why is it that we see so few representations of dancing and banqueting on votive offerings? Some considerations which may have played a part in this iconographical selectivity, are the following. Dancing is mainly a collective activity, whereas the votive offerings are predominantly private dedications. And the votive offerings play an essential part in the *do ut des* relationship between men and gods. Therefore perhaps it is understandable that the worshippers, in the representations on their votive offerings, would rather emphasize the fact that they *give*, *offer* a sacrifice, than that they *eat* most of it themselves. These may be relevant points, but I have a feeling that they are, at best, only part of the answer. Perhaps it is wiser, for the moment, to leave the question open.

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<sup>112</sup> Banquets on later votive reliefs: E. MITROPOULOU, «Feasting and festivals», in *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongresses für klassische Archäologie, Berlin 1988* (1990), 472-474. See also the relief from Cyprus, note 19.

<sup>113</sup> E.g. in the pediment of the pinax of Niinnion from Eleusis, Athens NM 11036: A. PESCHLOW-BINDOKAT, «Demeter und Persephone in der attischen Kunst des 6. bis 4. Jahrhunderts», in *JdI* 87 (1972), 60-157, esp. 105 ff. with bibliography.

## DISCUSSION

*M. Schachter:* The illustration you showed of the votive supports at Brauron makes us wonder whether the number of votive reliefs dedicated there was unusually high.

*M. van Straten:* The number of votive reliefs *found* at Brauron is not particularly high. But then we should not forget that the pillars could support other types of votive offerings as well.

*M. Tomlinson:* Another interesting point about the Brauron stelai is the way in which they are carefully placed, in neat order, in relation to the stoa, that is, they are treated almost as if they were part of the architecture. I wonder about the extent to which it is possible to see such deliberate arrangement of votives in sanctuaries rather than a free-for-all. I know the references to *κόσμος* refer to the beauty and appearance of individual offerings but can there also be *κόσμος* in terms of their arrangement and relationship to the layout of the sanctuary? Is this, perhaps, a feature that develops later in the history of sanctuaries?

It is noticeable that offerings of more monumental character — like *exedrai*, for instance, at Epidauros — may be deliberately and carefully placed; there, of course, round the open space in front of the temple.

*M. van Straten:* From the, unfortunately largely restored, final part of the inscription from Loryma mentioned in my paper, it would appear that the arrangement of the votive offerings was supervised by the priest (3rd century B.C., F. Sokolowski, *LSAM* 74).



More to the point, I think, is the passage in the *psephisma* from the Rhodian Asklepieion stipulating that the stele on which this inscription was to be inscribed should be placed ἐν τῷ τεμένει τοῦ Ἀσ[κλαπιοῦ ἐς ὄν] καὶ ὁ ἀρχιτέκτων ἀποδεί [ξῆι τόπον...] (3rd century B.C., F. Sokolowski, *LSS* 107, 24-26). A similar concern is expressed in more general terms in an inscribed stele from the Amphiareion at Oropos, which was to be set up οὗ ἂν δοκῆι ἐν | καλλίστῳ εἶναι (3rd century B.C., F. Sokolowski, *LSCG* 70, 46-47).

One assumes that the location of monumental votive offerings would be given equal care.

In two Athenian inscriptions regarding the melting down of votive offerings of the Heros Iatros, among the members of the committee that is to supervise this operation ὁ ἀρχιτέκτων ὁ ἐπὶ τὰ ἱερά is mentioned (3rd and 2nd century B.C., F. Sokolowski, *LSCG* 41, 29-30; 42, 12 and 21-22).

*M. Schachter*: Is there any evidence from surviving supports of their re-use to carry new reliefs?

*M. van Straten*: From memory I don't know of such a case. There are one or two votive reliefs, however, from the Athenian Asklepieion that appear to have been reused within the lifetime of the sanctuary, which is unexpected as, in a way, this amounts to tampering with the god's property.

*M. Graf*: Haben Sie in Ihrem reichen Material Weihreliefs, auf denen ein Weihrelief und eine Gottheit zusammen dargestellt sind (ausgenommen das Telemachos-Relief, das ein Sonderfall ist)? Wenn nicht, würde dies doch nahelegen, dass Darstellung der Gottheit und Darstellung des Weihreliefs funktionell äquivalent sein können, dass also die Darstellung eines Weihreliefs auf einem Weihrelief keine individuelle, sondern eine generelle Bedeutung hat zur Angabe des sakralen Ortes beziehungsweise (wenn man an die Darstellung des Reiterheros denkt) der verehrten Gottheit?

*M. van Straten*: In votive reliefs that have a representation of a pillar supporting a votive relief (*vel sim.*), either the deities are depicted or the part of the relief where we would normally expect them is missing. So it does not

appear that the depiction of the votive offering mounted on a pillar is interchangeable with the representation of the deities.

*M. Rudhardt:* Y a-t-il dans l'espace sacré des lieux privilégiés pour placer les πίνακες?

*M. van Straten:* From Herondas, *Mime* IV, one gets the impression that the closer the votive offering was placed to the divine image (or, to put it more generally, to the focus of worship), the better it was considered to be. It is difficult, however, to substantiate this general impression with much archaeological evidence.

*M. Bingen:* Les ex-voto qui représentent le dédicant avec ou sans sa famille, qu'il y ait préparation au sacrifice ou non, s'opposent aux ex-voto qui sont de simples offrandes, un échange de bons procédés avec le dieu ou le héros. Mais ces ex-voto figurés se divisent en deux groupes à la signification différente. Les uns représentent un acte d'adoration collective, que perpétue l'offrande figurée; les autres, le moment de la présentation et de l'acceptation du sacrifice, où l'offrande n'est plus qu'un acte secondaire. Souvent, pour l'Égypte hellénistique, on oppose, d'une manière qui m'apparaît un peu simpliste, la représentation égyptienne de l'offrande ou de la prière comme une répétition continue de l'acte représenté, là où la représentation grecque n'aurait qu'une valeur de commémoration. Ne peut-on pas trouver dans ces représentations votives du groupe familial ou de l'association religieuse un même besoin de prolonger l'acte d'adoration ou le bénéfice du sacrifice au-delà de la présence du groupe dans le sanctuaire? Au fond, créer un espace individualisé du groupe dans les rapports généraux existant entre les hommes et une divinité, ce qui correspondrait à l'évolution générale de la religiosité grecque à partir de l'époque classique, chose que ne réalisait qu'en partie l'individualisation de l'offrande votive par l'inscription du nom du donneur?

*M. van Straten:* I am entirely in agreement with you. The neat opposition between the Egyptian and the Greek view is, in my opinion, altogether too artificial. In fact, in my article on «Gifts for the gods», in H.S. Versnel (ed.),

*Faith, Hope and Worship. Aspects of religious mentality in the Ancient World*, Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 2 (Leiden 1981), esp. p. 112, I have suggested a similar interpretation for those cases where an anatomical ex voto is combined with a representation of the entire worshipper.

*Mme Bergquist*: What is the proportion of votive reliefs per deity? From your slides, I get the impression that those to Asklepios predominate. Is that correct? It would fit my picture of the socio-economic place of these votives. To have a relief cut did, of course, cost money, and I presume the ancient Greeks were most prepared to accept that cost with regard to Asklepios and healing deities in general.

You also brought up a question which you did not answer, viz. why are only the initial, processional stages represented and not the feasting and dancing stages of a festival or a sacrifice? My suggestion is that it might not have appeared seemly or decent to represent on a votive relief to the deity the pleasures of the worshippers in connection with the sacrifice.

*M. Schachter*: Perhaps worshippers were depicted at the point where they could all be drawn together.

*Mme Jost*: Pour revenir sur l'emplacement des ex-voto dans les sanctuaires, peut-être faut-il distinguer les offrandes de pierre, souvent placées en vue (cf. les traces sur l'Acropole d'Athènes), et les offrandes plus fragiles (par exemple, le tableau peint cité par Pausanias à Lykosoura), abritées dans des portiques ou d'autres monuments.

*M. van Straten*: I am grateful for the suggestions of Professors Bergquist, Schachter, Jost, Rudhardt, Bingen on the question of why votive reliefs with sacrificial representations almost without exception show only the initial phase, consisting of the presentation of the victim at the altar. An additional point might be, as I have argued elsewhere, that it was considered important that the species (and thus the value) of the sacrificial animal should be clear, which would hardly be the case after it had been slaughtered (see: «The god's portion in Greek sacrificial representations: Is the tail doing nicely?», in



R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, G.C. Nordquist [eds.], *Early Greek Cult Practice. Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 26-29 June 1986* = *Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae*, Ser. in 4°, 38, 1988, pp. 51-68). With regard to the proportion of votive reliefs per deity, brought up by Professor Bergquist: it is true that among the surviving votive reliefs from Classical Greece those of Asklepios are particularly numerous. Votive reliefs to heroes, however, form an equally large (or possibly even larger) group, and the Eleusinian goddesses come in for a considerable number as well. Perhaps it is not just healing deities, but the somewhat broader class of *helping* deities (*theoi epekooi*), who received the most numerous and the most sumptuous votive offerings.

*Mme Kearns*: Social conditions would no doubt account in all cases for the very low proportion of solitary women worshippers depicted on votive reliefs; except in a few cases of 'women's illnesses' the woman defines herself in terms of her membership of an immediate family. All the same it occurs to me that the case of the hero-banquet, admittedly one of the commonest types of relief in Attica, may show a slight deviation from the norm. Apart from the case of healing heroes, in general the interests of heroes, where they are specially defined, seem oriented towards the masculine, to the life of the polis, that is fighting and counsel. The presence of the horse, even perhaps the banquet itself — despite the frequent presence of the heroine, in a subordinate role of course — are again suggestive of a rather exclusively masculine setting. Would a woman on her own have felt comfortable in such a context?

*M. van Straten*: I doubt whether in the context of hero worship women would feel more uncomfortable than usual. Surely, judging from the presence of the heroine in most hero reliefs, and from the participation of women in the more pleasant aspects of hero worship as we know it from the *orgeônes*-inscriptions, this should not be called an exclusively masculine setting? But you are right, of course, in underlining that the position of women was no more prominent here than in society in general.

*M. Tomlinson:* To introduce what is perhaps a red herring of an argument, but a point I shall bring up in the case of Perachora. Should we define all objects deposited in sanctuaries as votive? Are, for example, the suits of armour given to Athena on the Acropolis by the members of the Athenian Empire votive offerings?

*M. van Straten:* It would seem justified to define all non-consumable objects given to a deity and kept in the sanctuary on a permanent basis as ἀναθήματα: things that ἀνακεῖνται. Whether 'votive offerings' always is the perfect translation, is another matter.