UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Life Cycle of Disability in Ancient Greece

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Archaeology

by

Deborah Sneed

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Life Cycle of Disability in Ancient Greece

by

Deborah Sneed

Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Sarah P. Morris, Chair

Through the lenses of Disability Studies and archaeological theories of identity, I use ancient Greek art, literature, architecture, laws, and bioarchaeology to investigate how ancient Greek communities (ca. 1000 to 100 BCE) understood, treated, and accommodated physical disability among their members. Most specifically, I trace how the intersection of disability with age resulted in different negotiations for infants, children, adults, and the elderly, as well as for mythological figures like the limping god Hephaistos. I demonstrate that far from being ejected from their families or communities, disabled ancient Greeks were integrated where they could be and accommodated where they couldn't. I highlight, for example, the ways that parents and midwives assisted infants who were born with conditions like cleft palate, as well as military exemptions for disabled adult men in 4th century BCE Athens. I emphasize how individuals with a variety of somatic realities participated and engaged in their communities. By removing disability from a biomedical frame of reference, with its attendant prejudices and estimations of ability predicated on modern modes of production and interaction, and re-locating it to an active,

social context, I demonstrate the contingent and constructed nature of disability and resist generalizations about the universal plight of the disabled in the past.

The dissertation of Deborah Sneed is approved.

David L. Blank

Helen E. Deutsch

Gail E. Kennedy

John K. Papadopoulos

Sarah P. Morris, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

To my parents,

Cheri and David,

and

to Scott

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Preface

This project began as a paper that I wrote for a class on Hellenistic art and archaeology that I took with Dr. Sarah James at the University of Colorado. Having just passed my Master's exams, I needed a research topic for the paper due at the end of the semester. Flipping idly through J. J. Pollitt's *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (1986), I settled on the page showing three figurines: an ivory hunchback and two bronze dwarfs. Pollitt did not provide much information on these figurines and that lack drew me in. My paper was rushed, but I continued to build on the research when I began my Ph.D. program at the University of California, Los Angeles in a class on mortuary archaeology with John K. Papadopoulos. It was in this class that I first read into Disability Studies literature and discovered the wealth of evidence that survives on the topic from the ancient world. Dr. Papadopoulos encouraged me to develop my final project for that class into a dissertation proposal and I didn't look back. This project gave me everything that I wanted out of a dissertation project: it is interdisciplinary and allows me to incorporate a wide variety of evidence; the topic and its relevance is accessible and generally understandable by non-academics; and it introduced me to whole worlds that were unfamiliar to me. My focus and arguments have changed greatly since my initial engagement with the subject, as one would expect, but my appreciation for the ancient world has continued to grow, and I have learned almost as much about my own culture as I have about ancient Greece.

I have a lot of people to thank for their support and encouragement throughout this whole process. First and foremost, I thank my parents and my many siblings. They didn't always understand what I was doing or why, but they asked questions, made sarcastic jokes (mostly Josh), and let me play with their kids. It is because of them that my research questions have tended toward the socially relevant and because of them that I have tried to make my writing

accessible to a broader audience. I owe equal thanks to Scott, who has showed me endless love, support, and especially patience. He is a model of careful scholarship, thoughtful engagement, and teaching excellence, and I wouldn't be half the person and scholar I am without him. He also introduced me to the Margaret, who passed away in 2016 after giving years of love and joy to so many people.

I thank my MA cohort, Kate Behan, Christina Dickerson, and Jon Gress, who helped me get through those first two years. My cohort at UCLA, Jacob Damm, Maryann Kontonicolas, Carrie MacLeod, Shi Tao, and Wen Chenghao, shared this whole nonsense with me and helped me shape my project into what it is, and I thank them for being who they are. Anastasia Baran, Kate Bishop, and Trevor Van Damme have been wonderful friends and they have helped me navigate my life since I arrived at UCLA. I thank John Gibert, mostly for the puns, but also for the other stuff. Katie Petrole has been with on this since we became friends during our second year digging together at the Agora in Athens in 2010 (and not a moment sooner). Ric Reverand assured me that I would like Greek food and has been helping me understand academia since I was in college. I thank Samm Caselli for, well, everything she's been doing since high school to make me feel like I'm making the right decisions. John Camp gave an awkward Wyoming undergraduate her first taste of archaeology, without which I would not have gone down this road. Beth Dusinberre, Diane Conlin, Sarah James, and Noel Lenski encouraged me to see myself as belonging in this world. For their friendship, corrections of my translations, bibliography suggestions, pictures of things they saw in museums or collections, reading drafts, listening to practice talks, etc., I thank (in alphabetical order) Hans Bork, Brandon Braun, Rose Campbell, Myles Chykerda, Adam DiBattista, Ashleigh Fata, Grace Gillies, Andre Matlock, Rachel Moy, Mary McClanahan, Jennifer Starkey, John Tennant, and Hugh Thomas. If I forgot

anyone in this list, I am sorry, but keep in mind that I will probably remember immediately after I submit this and proceed to dwell on it forever.

I thank each member of my dissertation committee for their years of support and encouragement. Sarah Morris and John Papadopoulos read a lot of e-mails, proposed questions, pointed me to relevant bibliography, kept me honest, and embraced my project. They showed a great deal of patience, prodded me along when I needed it, and quelled my many insecurities as they supported me personally and professionally. I probably can't thank them enough. David Blank has been supportive of me and my project ever since I showed up at his office without an appointment. He has been an excellent sounding board for all of my questions and gave not just help with trying to understand medicine and philosophy and corrections of my translations, but also a lot of cool emotional support. Helen Deutsch has provided me with an invaluable perspective on this project. She has given me support and advice about my research and about academia in general, and my project would look very different (and worse) were it not for her influence. Finally, Gail Kennedy has been encouraging about my goals and my project since I took my first bioarchaeology class with her. She has provided thoughtful insight that has made my project so much better. Thank you, Sarah, John, David, Helen, and Gail.

This project was made possible by funding I received from the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA's Graduate Division, the Dean of Humanities at UCLA, the University of California Humanities Research Institute, and the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation. Funding is important for the success of a project and I am forever grateful for the financial support I have received as I tried to make this dissertation happen.

Throughout the project, I have used spellings of ancient proper names that seem, to me, to be most current in modern literature and scholarship. For this reason, some words are closer to the original

Greek (e.g., Hephaistos), while others are Latinized (e.g., Oedipus). My goal was to make my references as accessible as possible to a general audience, though I suspect that some may quarrel with my choices. For the sake of accessibility, too, I have provided translations of longer ancient passages first, followed by the original Greek or Latin. Except where otherwise noted, all translations are my own (with much help from David Blank, Jennifer Starkey, John Gibert, Anastasia Baran, and Grace Gillies). Of course, all errors or infelicities are my own responsibility.

Vita

EDUCATION

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February 2017	"I am not disabled." Blog post for Classics and Social Justice. https://classicssocialjustice.wordpress.com/2017/02/09/i-am-not-disabled/

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January 2015	"Cybele and Attis in Domestic Cult at Olynthos: Evidence for Flexibility in Household Ritual." Panel for the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions, Society for Classical Studies Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.
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Introduction

> What is it that has one voice but becomes four-footed
> and two-footed and three-footed?
>
> Pseudo-Apollodorus, *The Library* 3.5.8

> τί ἐστιν ὃ μίαν ἔχον φωνὴν τετράπουν
> καὶ δίπουν καὶ τρίπουν γίνεται.

From a 2nd century CE text we have a relatively full version of the so-called Riddle of the Sphinx, a riddle that provides a welcome introduction to the topic of disability in the ancient world. According to the ancient Greek tradition, a Sphinx is a hybrid creature, with a lion's body, a woman's head, and wings (**Figure 0.1**). In the story, which is best-known from Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, the king and queen of Thebes, Laius and Jocasta, are warned by an oracle that if they have a son, he will grow up and kill his father. When Jocasta gives birth to a boy, Laius immediately binds and disfigures his ankles and orders him to be exposed (set out on a hillside and left to die). The shepherd ordered to expose Oedipus takes pity on the child and instead gave him to the care of the king and queen of Corinth, Polybus and Merope. Once grown, Oedipus learns of an oracle that says that he is destined to kill his father and bed his mother. Fearing the oracle and thinking that his father and mother are Polybus and Merope, Oedipus leaves Corinth in a self-imposed exile. During his exile, he comes to a junction of three roads and encounters a train of carriages and men. A dispute ensues, and Oedipus slaughters the entire retinue, save one man. Later, Oedipus solves the Riddle of the Sphinx, thereby freeing the city of Cadmus, Thebes, from the Sphinx's terror. In honor of him rescuing the city, Oedipus is granted the kingship of Thebes and, with it, the widowed queen, Jocasta, with whom he eventually has four children. Many years later, a plague falls over Thebes and Oedipus, now the long-reigning king of Thebes, seeks relief from the oracle at Delphi, who says that the pollution of the city, the man responsible

for the killing of the former king Laius, must be killed or driven from the city. Through a series of revelations, Oedipus learns that he had unknowingly fulfilled the oracle: he killed his biological father, Laius, in that dispute at the junction of three-roads and bedded his biological mother, Jocasta. Jocasta hangs herself; Oedipus gouges out his eyes and enters exile, guided by his daughter Antigone.

In Classical literature, we get only vague references to the content of the Sphinx's riddle. The playwright Aeschylus seems to be referring to the riddle when he has his chorus in the *Agamemnon* (79-81) refer to themselves and to extreme old age generally as walking "on triple feet" (τρίποδας). A fragment of a play about Oedipus by Euripides (*Oedipus* fr. 540a) preserved on papyrus from Egypt includes a brief reference to the riddle, which was apparently in hexameter and included references to varying numbers of feet.[1] In the rest of Greek tragedy, the references are vaguer. In Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* we learn that Oedipus rescued the Cadmeans from the riddling Sphinx, who was holding them hostage. No one, not even the seer Tiresias, could solve the riddle, and it was only Oedipus who succeeded, aided by his wit. In Euripides' *Phoenissae*, we hear that the Sphinx was oppressing the city of Cadmus and that Oedipus solved the riddle and thereafter became king. The myth itself seems to be older, as details emerge in Homer's *Odyssey* (11.271-280) and other 8th and 7th century BCE texts, but it is not until much later that we receive the full details of the famous riddle, which is often rephrased

[1] Euripides's version of the story apparently included a longer narrative (than Sophocles's) about the riddle and how Oedipus solved it. See, also, Athenaeus (10.456b, *FGrH* 12 F 7a), which gives a relatively full account of the riddle attributed to Asclepiades of Myrlea (in Bithynia, not to be confused with a roughly contemporary physician of the same name, also from Bithynia), a 2nd to 1st century BCE grammarian. There is a reference to the Sphinx in Hesiod (*Theogony* 326), but no reference to a riddle or to Oedipus.

as "What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening?"[2] How is it that Oedipus is the only one positioned to know the answer?

A compelling explanation is offered by David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder in their *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (2000). For them, it is one particular facet of Oedipus's identity – his physical disability – that allows him to understand and answer the riddle of the Sphinx (Mitchell and Snyder 2000:61). "Oedipus," they say, "taps into the cultural reservoir of disability's myriad symbolic associations as an interpretive source for his own riddle-solving methodology" (Mitchell and Snyder 2000:61). As the riddle depends on a complex understanding of shifting mobility in humans – from crawling in infancy (four legs), to walking erect as adults (two legs), to walking with the aid of a cane or crutch in old age (three legs) – only someone who has a complex understanding of his own mobility could parse its terms. Such a theory aligns well with theories about Oedipus's name, which seems to be a pun on both his disability and on his wit. On the one hand, his name (in Greek, Οἰδίπους) could be understood to mean something like "Swollen Foot": a combination of the Greek οἴδημα (modern edema, a swelling) and πούς (foot). On the other hand, the first part of the name – οιδ – recalls the Greek verb of knowing, οἶδα. Mixed up in Oedipus's name are references to both his disability and his mental acuity; the two are inseparable and, in fact, he cannot succeed without both. His intelligence here depends on his disability.

[2] We know, also, of an epic entitled *Oedipodia*, possibly composed by Cinaethon of Lacedaemon, but we only know that it included a mention of the sphinx. The sphinx is likewise mentioned as a destroyer of the Cadmeans in Hesiod (*Theogony* 325). More details may have been included in a satyr play by Aeschylus, entitled *Sphinx*, which was a part of a tetralogy consisting of *Laius, Oedipus,* and *Seven Against Thebes*. Euripides, too, wrote an *Oedipus*. See *Oxford Classical Dictionary* s.v. Oedipus. See also Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 10.456b, attributed to Asclepiades, *Stories Told in Tragedy* (*FGrH* 12 F 7a = *AP* 14.64).

Oedipus's defeat of the Sphinx was a popular subject in ancient art, as on a vase that is itself enigmatic, painted by the Meidias Painter (**Figure 0.2**).[3] The scene occupied later artists, as well, including most famously Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Gustave Moreau, whose different versions of "Oedipus and the Sphinx" often adorn modern translations of Sophocles' trilogy of plays dealing with the subject. The Sphinx has appealed to modern literary figures, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose poem "The Sphinx" has drawn attention for its rather obscure nature. Martha L. Rose (2003) is sensitive to the significance of Oedipus's disability, even drawing attention to it in the title of her monograph (discussed below), but it is otherwise largely overlooked in modern studies. It is completely ignored, for example, in Freud's psychoanalysis of the myth (see, e.g., Zepf, Ullrich, and Seel 2016), and is often treated as irrelevant in modern scholarship. It is the case that many, even scholars of Classics, sometimes confuse the situation and consider the disability as the cause of Oedipus's exposure, as opposed to a means to render the exposure successful (see Rose 2003:29).

The Riddle of the Sphinx serves to open this dissertation, in which I use a variety of ancient Greek art and material culture, literature, architecture, laws, and burial customs to show how ancient Greek communities understood, treated, and in fact accommodated physical disability among their members. Not only does the Sphinx episode depend on disability – as, indeed, does the whole play, which features the blind seer Tiresias and, at the end, the blinded Oedipus, as well as old-age related disabilities – but the formulation of the riddle itself describes both the life course of humans from infancy to adulthood to and through old age. In the riddle we are expected to understand that humans do not retain the same physical integrity throughout their

[3] London, British Museum 1887,0801.46. Here, Oedipus literally *slays* the Sphinx, instead of defeating it with his wit. He is surrounded by figures identified by inscription as Athena, Apollo, the Dioskouroi, and Aineias. See Burn (1987) for a fuller discussion of the Meidias Painter and this vase.

lives and, for this reason, I follow a life course approach in my own study. I trace how the intersection of disability with age resulted in different negotiations for disabled infants, children, adults, and the elderly. Throughout the life course, all individuals – regardless of disability – experience stages of dependency, including infancy, early childhood, and, to a certain extent, old age (Southwell-Wright, Gowland, and Powell 2017:8). A disabled infant, for example, who requires additional care due to a disability will deviate less from her or his contemporaries, who also require a great deal of care and attention, than a disabled adult, who deviates more severely from the requirements attending other, non-disabled adults. As William Southwell-Wright, Rebecca Gowland, and Lindsay Powell (2017:10-11) explain, "an impairment may remain static in terms of the dysfunction caused, but the perception of the individual as 'disabled' may be life course situated." In this study, I demonstrate what aspects of ancient society could be and were adjusted for the benefit of individuals at different stages along the life course in order to allow them to participate in their capacities as citizens, foreigners, or slaves; men or women; craftsmen or statemen. The structural accommodations evident in ancient Greek society suggest an implicit, if not explicit, acknowledgement of a range of limitations attendant upon physical disability and an attempt to accommodate individuals with a diversity of somatic realities. That the ancient Greek world facilitated disability – providing for it informally but also formally through means like social welfare systems, architectural adjustments, military exemptions, and adjusted employment practices and expectations – does not in and of itself indicate whether disabled ancient Greeks were treated well or poorly by their contemporaries. Whatever their quality of life, disabled ancient Greeks were not, in the main, formally barred from participating as active members of their communities.

In her book on disability in the ancient Greek world, Martha L. Rose (2003:3) argues that "[D]isability in ancient Greece was treated as a family and civic issue, in which disability status was defined and negotiated between individuals on a case-by-case basis within the community." In an earlier essay, she argues that the ancient Greeks "had not reached a level of abstraction in perceiving a category of physical disability in which people were a priori banned from carrying out certain roles and expected to fulfill others" (Edwards 1997:36). Rose is right, I think, in suggesting that there was a great deal of individual, case-by-case negotiation of one's place within a community. Those individual negotiations, however, were enabled and facilitated by broader, structural elements of ancient communities that supported participation by disabled members, elements that require an abstract understanding of and appreciation for physical difference.

My overall argument in this project is that ancient Greeks not only possessed an abstract understanding of physical disability, but they instrumentalized or put into practice their understanding in a variety of ways. To accomplish my project, I engage with ancient Greek literature, material culture, and human remains from ca. 1000 to 100 BCE, focusing especially on the period ca. 600 to 200 BCE. In these diverse media we can see not only examples of accommodation, but also instances of tension, where the needs of a disabled individual clashed with the needs of the community.

I am not the first to try to understand disability in the ancient Greek world. The first English-language book-length study of disability in antiquity, Robert Garland's *Eye of the Beholder*, was published in 1995; in the same year, Martha Lynn Edwards finished her Ph.D. dissertation on the subject, which she published (as Martha L. Rose) in 2003 as *The Staff of Oedipus*. Before that, scholars had dealt with particular aspects of the topic. William Edward

Stevenson III, for example, focused in his Ph.D. dissertation (1975) on "The Pathological Grotesque Representation in Greek and Roman Art," which is still the most comprehensive catalogue of Hellenistic grotesque figurines available. Some scholars have homed in on specific categories of disability or bodily difference: Véronique Dasen (1993) compared attitudes about dwarfs in ancient Egypt and Greece and, more recently, Lisa Trentin (2015) confronted the issue of the hunchback in Hellenistic and Roman art. More recent books, edited collections, articles, and encyclopedias demonstrate the growing interest in and importance of the topic. The state of research on this subject is well-illustrated in the bibliography maintained online by Christian Laes (2017) on "Disability History and the Ancient World (ca. 3000 BCE – ca. 700 CE)": as of January 2017, this document comprised 59 pages. The scholars represented in this bibliography, as well as those whose work intersects with but does not explicitly address issues of dis/ability in antiquity, are all engaged in a similar effort to do justice to the existence of the likely large numbers of disabled members of ancient communities.

In what follows in this introduction, I discuss the development of Disability Studies as a field. I then outline some previous approaches to the study of disability in ancient Greece. As R.G. Collingwood expressed (1939:132, quoted in Trigger 2006:1-2), "no historical problem should be studied without studying…the history of historical thought about it." My own approach, as I will make clear, represents something of a departure from earlier studies on the subject in Classics, not only in its emphasis on structural accommodation and facilitation of disability, but also in its intersectional approach, that is, in its appreciation for the complicated picture that emerges when you consider not just one aspect of identity – in this case, disability – but several, including age, sex and gender, status, and so on. In particular, I am interested to understand how disabilities experienced at different ages were regarded and treated differently,

on the grounds that infants and adults, for example, will have different experiences of disability and will require different kinds of accommodations in order to fulfill their expected roles within society. Identity, as has been shown time and again, depends not on any single facet of an individual but comprises all aspects of one's being, and these vary in relative importance depending on where and when one is (see, e.g., Shennan 1989; Díaz-Andreu *et al.* 2005; Insoll 2007). The rules of meaning and interaction are contingent and cannot be usefully transferred from one culture or society to another, or even from one situation to another, and I attempt to lay bare and engage with the relevance of complex and complicated identity in my study.

In addition to its being intersectional, my approach is interdisciplinary. I use different kinds of evidence – literature, material culture, art, architecture, and human remains – together to reconstruct a more holistic picture of the ancient world. The ancient Greeks did not separate these from one another, forgetting literature when gazing at art or ignoring mythology when accessing a temple, and that lack of conceptual separation should characterize, too, our attempts to understand the entire social world, the *milieu*, of the ancient Greek world. Not all evidence is created equal, however, and I consider each piece of evidence for what it can offer our understanding of disability in ancient Greece. I discuss in more detail below just what disabilities I incorporate into my study, as well as why I have chosen to highlight particular genres of literature or types of art to the near exclusion of other, more familiar representations of disability. In short, I focus on physical disabilities, those that are most easily traceable in an interdisciplinary study, and evidence that has a closer, or at least more obvious, relationship to what we might consider "reality" than in contexts such as tragedy and representations of mythological stories. Disability in the mythological world, especially in the figure of Hephaistos, finds expression in the Conclusion to this project.

After I discuss Disability Studies and situate my work within the larger body of scholarship on disability in ancient Greece, I turn briefly in this Introduction to politics. How we study identity in the past, especially in a past that is considered so foundational for Western culture and society, has serious and important ramifications for modern identity politics. As scholars, we have a responsibility to present ancient peoples and communities fairly as well as accurately, a process that requires sensitive engagement with all available evidence. We must not be presentist, using modern standards to commend or condemn past societies for their attitudes about or treatment of their disabled community members, but must emphasize the gap between the past and the present and highlight the problems entailed in relying on antiquity as a precedent for modern policymaking, a problem that may be obvious to scholars but that is too often misunderstood by the broader public.

Finally, I conclude this Introduction with an outline of individual chapters and their general arguments.

Disability Studies[4]

The main theoretical thrust for my project comes from the field of Disability Studies. This academic discipline began developing in Great Britain and the United States in the 1970s and early efforts were focused on building models (not theories) of disability. Although there is, by now, a large number of these models, the two most important for this discussion are the individual/medical model and the social model. The individual or medical model of disability is underpinned by the idea of personal tragedy. According to this model, an individual's impairments are the direct cause of her or his problems (Oliver 2004:19). That is, disability

[4] For a good introductory discussion of disability as a concept, see Wasserman *et al.* (2016).

resides within the individual and overcoming disability requires overcoming one's own body. Disability activists and scholars quickly favored the so-called social model of disability, which identifies disability as externally imposed restrictions on an impaired body. The social model, which developed out of documents prepared for and by the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS) in Great Britain, attempts to divert focus away from the functional limitations of individuals with impairments and onto the problems caused by disabling environments, barriers, and cultures (UPIAS 1976:3; Oliver 1981). At its conceptual base, the social model of disability distinguishes between impairment and disability in much the same way that early feminist scholarship divided sex from gender: one is biological, the other social or cultural (UPIAS 1976:14; Oliver 1981; Barnes 2012). Impairment, then, is a form of biological, cognitive, sensory, or psychiatric difference that is defined within a medical context, while the term "disability" encompasses the negative social reaction to those differences (Sherry 2010:94) This heuristic distinction separates "the experience of biological difference from the prejudice, discrimination, and other negative social experiences that many disabled people experience" (Davis 2010:3). The social model has its critics (e.g., Shakespeare 2013), but its value for my project is that it understands disability as being culturally contingent: the nature of disability, the kinds of conditions that are considered disabling, and the meanings attached to disability all vary with time, place, and context (Straus 2013:462).

My project aligns well with the general contextual approach to disability taken by many other scholars, but its focus on ancient Greece lends it a historical depth not well-represented within Disability Studies. Scholars working in this burgeoning field of study have largely attended to literary sources from the Renaissance to the present day. Subjects like Tiny Tim in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, the creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and Captain

Ahab in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* have received ample critical analysis, as have more modern memoirs, art exhibits, music, and films. By focusing my study on a much earlier, and different, historical context, I contribute to the opening-up of Disability Studies away from modern Western contexts that have been its mainstay.

To what extent, then, are the models and theories of disability that have been formulated in the United States and Great Britain applicable to very different historical and cultural contexts? To begin, many scholars beg the question of the value of disability in society. In their *Narrative Prosthesis*, for example, David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder (2000:47) argue that disability and disabled populations pose a "problem…to all cultures," that "[N]early every culture views disability and disabled populations as a problem in need of a solution, and this belief establishes one of the major modes of historical address directed toward people with disabilities." True though this may be when talking about the so-called "First World" societies of the modern developed world, the nearly universal subordination and marginalization of the disabled has been assumed in other contexts, not proven (Shakespeare 2013). As a part of my project, I argue that the specific negative connotations of disability are just as contingent as the classification of disability. We cannot uncritically assume the positive or negative value of corporeal difference in antiquity, but must demonstrate, on the ancients' terms, what disability meant to and for ancient communities.

Foundational Scholarship on Disability in Antiquity

In order to situate my work within scholarship on disability in the ancient world, I offer here a brief survey of what I consider to be some of its defining works. This survey is not intended to be exhaustive, but to focus on those works that best represent the broader trends in studies on disability in the ancient Greek world. I begin with the book that brought the topic to

the fore in English-language scholarship, Robert Garland's *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World* (1995). Garland's express aims are worth quoting in full:

> …my primary objective is to analyse how, through public rituals, social institutions, myth, literature and art, the Greeks and the Romans utilised deformity for a variety of social ends, and, albeit in a marginal sense, accommodated it within their ranks. In addition, I examine the plight of, and stigma surrounding, the disabled, with a view to determining the social and economic conditions governing their existence. I also attempt to assess the extent to which those with medical expertise and other healing skills offered their services to the disabled, and address the question whether the ancient world produced anything comparable to the modern science of teratology – the study of the aetiology of congenital deformity. (Garland 1995:xii)

These are ambitious objectives and Garland amassed an impressively broad collection of literary and iconographical references to support his ultimate conclusions, that the disabled and deformed in ancient Greece fulfilled roles as "portents, scapegoats, objects of amusement, embodiments of evil, living testimony to the power of divine retribution, or simply as proof of Nature's ingenuity" (Garland 1995:179). Regardless of which of these roles an individual deformed or disabled person played in her or his community, Garland says, "they were divested of their intrinsic human identity and worth" (Garland 195:179). Garland is liberal in his understanding of just what constitutes "disability and deformity," at times seeming to use the terms as bywords for generic Otherness and thereby extending his discussion to (ostensibly non-disabled) women and slaves, mythical monsters and animals, epileptics, and the overweight. Garland's focus on "the Graeco-Roman world," moreover, is so broad that the two cultures are often conflated, although he does occasionally distinguish them, as when he says that "in relation to their respective attitudes towards congenitally deformed and disabled slaves, so in regard to

the religious importance which they attached to monstrous births, the Greeks and Romans differed profoundly" (Garland 1995:72).

Reactions *to The Eye of the Beholder* were decidedly mixed. Tim Parkin (1996:329-330) says that Garland "is to be congratulated on another worthwhile book" and that the book is "one of the most readable and informative books of recent years in the field of ancient social history." Leona Ascher (1997:443) calls the book an "important contribution" that will be useful "for both the undergraduate and the graduate student in courses concerned with social history, and for the researchers or anyone interested in the human condition." Marc Huys (1997) is ambivalent. He calls the study "vivid and compelling" (Huys 1997:367) but expresses a series of reservations. Garland's attempts, he says, to link the past to the present "tend to instill subjectivity in the interpretation of the material at the expense of scholarly accuracy" (Huys 1997:371). Huys provides several appropriate examples that he says are "characteristic of the naïveté and bias with which [Garland] sometimes uses quotations…isolating them from the genre and context to which they belong" (Huys 1997:372). What is more, he says (Huys 1997:373), Garland's extensive bibliography lacks "some of the most relevant studies in the field." Thomas A. J. McGinn (1996:668) criticizes Garland's "refusal to define carefully what he means by 'deformed' and 'disabled,'" resulting in a situation where the groups Garland discusses are so broad as to seem more like the majority than the minority. McGinn (1996:669) concludes that "there is much to learn from this book about what is desired in a treatment of this vastly understudied subject." Dominic Montserrat (1996:226) calls *The Eye of the Beholder* "an opportunity missed." He says that Garland's "attempts to embody the lived experience of disability verge on the offensive," citing specifically Garland's discussion of Hellenistic grotesque figurines, in which Garland writes (and I shorten Montserrat's quotation here) that

"[T]hese in brief are the social rejects of any and every culture" (Garland 1995:114, cited in Montserrat 1996:226).

In 2010, Garland issued a second edition of *The Eye of the Beholder* in order to address some of the concerns expressed by reviewers. He did not alter the text, images, or bibliography from the first edition, but added a new preface in which he defends his approach as "inclusive but not exhaustive" (Garland 2010:vii) and he appends a supplementary bibliography to the "Preface to the Second Edition" that primarily includes works from the field of Disability Studies, many of which were current when he published the first edition. Garland denies that he ever claimed to be able to identify diachronic developments and attitudes toward the disabled and deformed, nor even to be able to demonstrate any "appreciable difference in social construction or in attitudinal response between the Greek and Roman periods" (Garland 2010:viii). Its shortcomings notwithstanding, Garland says, *The Eye of the Beholder* has "hardly been superseded." He provides a map for the way forward, including a series of questions his study left unanswered, such as the different experiences of disability by people of different social status, gender, ethnicity, and age, and acknowledges that "[I]t is impossible to do rigorous investigative work into disability in antiquity without availing oneself of the current findings of disability studies" (Garland 2010:viii).

My work diverges most significantly from Garland's in its engagement with theoretical literature. As a result of my investment in theories of disability and identity, as well as in osteobiography and the bioarchaeology of care, my study is sensitive to concerns not addressed in Garland's study, including – and perhaps most especially – the subject position and biases, prejudices, and assumptions of the researcher. My work follows Garland's example in that it claims to address a roughly similar topic, disability, but with a more limited scope. Our bodies of

literary and iconographical evidence overlap, substantially in some cases, but it is my aim to avoid the naïveté and bias that Huys says characterizes Garland's use of citations. Each literary genre, each author's body of work, and each individual work must be subjected to critical analysis in order to determine what it can realistically tell us about disability in the ancient world. Homer cannot be interpreted according to the same "rules" as Herodotus, the Hippocratic physicians, Pliny, and St. Augustine, and careful attention is necessary to ensure fair treatment of the sources. My study also makes use of a wider range of evidence than Garland's, juxtaposing not just literature and iconography, but also the study of ceramic vessel shapes and architecture, as well as paleopathology and bioarchaeology. More focused studies may disregard evidence that does not fall within their purview, but a wide-ranging study like my own must incorporate all available evidence.

In 2003, Martha L. Rose published her book, *The Staff of Oedipus: Transforming Disability in Ancient Greece*. This book was based on her Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Minnesota (Edwards 1995). In the introduction to her book, Rose (2003:1) says that she examines "ancient Greek material through the lens of disability studies." This clearly differentiates her approach from Garland's, which involved no such engagement with this theoretical field. Rose begins by discussing what she calls the "landscape of disability," establishing what we can expect of the prevalence of disability and deformity among Greek communities, and she then confronts the controversial question of whether ancient Greeks killed deformed infants at birth. Here, Rose (2003:47) establishes that in ancient Greece, "physical deformity did not necessarily evoke a negative visceral reaction, an assumption of ill health, religious horror, or the expectation of economic dependence." In the following chapters, Rose treats specific disabilities: speech impairments and speech disorders; deafness and muteness; and

blindness. Finally, she touches briefly on the now well-known speech by the orator Lysias in which the unnamed defendant must prove that he deserves a state pension for the *adunatoi*, a term that is usually translated as "disabled." She asserts that this word implies not strictly physical disability, but the inability (*adunamia*) to support oneself financially and that the ancient Greeks did not create a dichotomy between disabled and able. In each chapter, Rose considers the etiology, or cause, of various disabilities and the vocabulary used to name or describe disability. Relying largely on a broad range of literary evidence, she argues, ultimately, that "[D]isability in ancient Greece was treated as a family and civic issue, in which disability status was defined and negotiated between individuals on a case-by-case basis within a community" (Rose 2003:3, see above). In ancient Greece, she says, "the criteria of physical ability and disability rested not on one's ability to function as an individual but on one's functional ability within the community" (Rose 2003:98). Rose is explicitly political throughout, aiming to highlight the biases that underpin much modern scholarship on disability in the ancient world.

The Staff of Oedipus received more attention in the Disability Studies community than *The Eye of the Beholder* ever did. Mark Sherry (2005:88) commends Rose for illuminating an unexplored area but says that she engages "in precisely the behavior which she often criticizes: imposing modern perspectives on the material she analyzes." Petra Kuppers (2003) praises Rose for "providing an important chapter on ancient history to the on-going project of historicizing disability, its meaning and its experiences" but criticizes her for not thematizing "the relationship between knowledge and experience." Kuppers encourages Rose to explore the "radical ways that knowledge, bodies, experience, and power are intertwined and worked together in all societies." In Classics, *The Staff of Oedipus* met with a similar mixture of appreciation for the engagement

with a vastly under-studied topic and reservation about Rose's execution, but it received more uniform praise among Disability Studies scholars. Martha Stoddard Holmes (2006:292) welcomes Rose's study as the "first disability studies investigation of the social construction of disability in Ancient Greece." She calls Rose's argument "compelling" and says that the book "stands to make a significant impact on the way we read – and teach – and make rhetorical or other use of disability in the ancient world" (Holmes 2006:294-295). Patricia A. Baker (2006:120), an historian of Greek and Roman medicine, calls it a "well-researched study" that advances "our awareness of issues related to the body and its care" and "helps to dispel misunderstood perceptions of disability in the past." Lesley Dean-Jones (2005:532), on the other hand, pans Rose's "fervent agenda: to demonstrate that the category of physically disabled is a purely cultural construct by showing that disability was not a marker of difference in ancient Greece." Dean-Jones takes especial issue with Rose's superficial discussion of Lysias 24 and with her lack of engagement with sources like the scene painted on a (by now) well-known aryballos by the Clinic Painter in the Louvre (discussed only briefly in this project in Chapter 1).

Despite any shortcomings, *The Staff of Oedipus* represents an important landmark in the development of studies on disability in antiquity as the first full-fledged attempt to theorize the concept of disability in ancient Greece. While Garland introduced the topic to the mainstream of Classics, Rose demonstrated that it deserved critical analysis and drew attention to the biases and assumptions that cloud modern scholars' thinking on the subject. In many ways Rose's treatment is more sophisticated than Garland's, but the latter's study has unfortunately received more attention outside of the subfield, likely due to the popularity of Garland's prior two books, *The Greek Way of Death* (1985) and *The Greek Way of Life* (1990).

My project follows Rose's example more closely than it does Garland's, especially in its theoretical engagement, but with some notable differences. First, Rose relies heavily on literary sources and especially on myth and tragedy. She refers occasionally to vase painting and sculpture but does not incorporate analyses of these pieces of evidence into the main of her argument. Like Garland, Rose disregards the value of skeletal evidence in studies on disability, saying that "the best that skeletal evidence can offer for my purposes is confirmation that various conditions existed" (Rose 2003:5). A large body of anthropological and archaeological studies, however, have demonstrated how bioarchaeological and mortuary studies can contribute to our understanding of various constructs, including gender, age, and disability. The bioarchaeology of personhood (e.g., Boutin 2016) and the bioarchaeology of care (e.g., Powell *et al.* 2016) explicitly confront the issue of disability in the past and both engage with Disability Studies in addition to archaeology, anthropology, history, and literary studies. In my own study, I incorporate a variety of evidence, including literature, art, material culture, architecture, and human remains, assessing each for what it can reasonably contribute to the reconstruction of a concept like disability in the past.

My project differs from Rose's also in the types of disabilities discussed. Rose organizes her study around three main categories of disability, those related to speech, hearing, and sight. This organization, according to modern diagnostic and medical categories of impairment, somewhat contradicts her argument that "the notion of physical disability as a classification was foreign to the Greeks" (Rose 2003:98), something that Sherry (2005:88) highlights in his review. I confine my own study to physical disabilities, like Rose, but organize it according to the age of the affected, not by diagnosis, and my argument specifically relates to the recognition of physical disability as a category by the ancient Greeks.

Finally, my study is distinct from Rose's in the role that politics plays in interpretation. Rose advocates a political agenda throughout, arguing against the "aesthetic, economic, religious, and medical assumptions" (Rose 2003:100) that cloud modern studies of disability in ancient Greece. As Dean-Jones (2005:532) points out, Rose's agenda seems often to guide her interpretation of certain sources, causing her to "minimize some evidence, overly emphasize other [evidence], and ultimately base most of her argument on the silence of sources." It is difficult (if not impossible) for scholars to separate themselves entirely from their own identities and motivations, which bring with them a whole slate of biases and assumptions, and, for this reason, I attempt to remain flexible in my approach, allowing for positive, neutral, and negative attitudes toward disability in ancient Greece to find expression. The diversity of attitudes toward disability in ancient Greece does not change my larger argument – that ancient Greeks altered the structures of their societies in various ways in order to accommodate the physically disabled – and this approach will, I hope, minimize (though cannot completely remove) the effects of my personal biases, which are (inevitably) many.

Garland's and Rose's books receive top billing here because they are the only two English-language attempts to understand disability as a total concept in ancient Greece (and ancient Rome, in Garland's case). Other studies are more focused, to different ends. I discuss several here – once more, with no intention of being exhaustive – to demonstrate some of the major trends in the scholarship.

Some scholars, including Garland (1995), have approached the subject of disability through the term "monstrosity." Such an approach owes a lot to the dissertation by Wendy Reid Morgan (1984:5), which argues that "the Other can only be understood in relation to the Self, and the Different must be conjoined to the Same, so monstrosity is an issue for any who try to

define humanity." Morgan relies exclusively on literary representations of the monstrous because "the relations between the written and the visual may be so variable" (19).[5] Daniel Ogden focuses his attentions on Archaic Greek monarchs and tyrants in *The Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece* (1997), considering the common ancient trope that these figures were in some way deviant or disabled. Like Morgan and indeed like many scholars who have attempted to understand disability in ancient Greece, Ogden uses literary evidence to the exclusion of any other materials from the ancient world.

An early study about the place of disability or deformity in art is Alan J. B. Wace's "Grotesques and the Evil Eye" (1903). Wace was the first to suggest that the corpus of grotesque figurines, dated from about the 3rd century BCE to the 3rd century CE and showing humanoid figures with a variety of deformities including emaciation, dwarfism, and hunchbacks, be assembled and subjected to critical analysis. The torch was taken up (albeit 70 years later) by several scholars, most notably William Edward Stevenson III, who in 1975 completed his dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania on "The Pathological Grotesque Representation in Greek and Roman Art." Stevenson discusses the figurines as a group, not on an individual basis, and attempts to identify an ancient Greek equivalent to the notion of the "grotesque." Most valuable is his catalogue of 643 figurines, which provides a useful reference for anyone interested in this understudied, widely dispersed, and poorly published corpus. Nearly 20 years later Véronique Dasen published a cross-cultural study on *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece* (1993), in which she focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on iconography, incorporating

[5] There is not a lot of overlap between notions of the "monstrous" and ideas of disability in the ancient Greek world. Monstrosity, however, is what leads many modern scholars to the topic of disability in the ancient world. Robert Garland (1995:vii), for example, was encouraged to write his book on disability after writing an article about monstrosity in myth and medicine. It is this link maintained between monstrosity and disability by some modern scholars that leads to what I consider to be some of the more problematic studies of disability in the ancient world.

literary references and skeletal remains where appropriate and relevant. Dasen (2013[1993]:1) sees her study as contributing to the "more general discussion of acceptance of physical deviance, and hence of tolerance in human societies" and she demonstrates that in both ancient Greece and Egypt, dwarfs "had a specific place in the socio-religious system of the community": in both cultures, she says, dwarfism was "never shown as a physical handicap" (2013[1993]:246), the result being that dwarfism was more accepted than we might have thought. More recently, Lisa Trentin (2015)'s *The Hunchback in Hellenistic and Roman Art* attempts to understand the place of the hunchback in ancient art, including in her discussion not just grotesque figurines but also "higher art," life-size or near life-size marble sculpture. Trentin usefully provides an excellent catalogue of all known representations of hunchbacks in Hellenistic and Roman art.

Other scholars deal with the "non-ideal" in Greek art in different ways. David Walsh (2009), Alexandre D. Mitchell (2009), and Claudia Gottwald (2009) all discuss different kinds of visual humor, including, respectively, burlesque representations of mythological and heroic figures, visual humor generally, and disability as humor in ancient Greece. Mirko D. Grmek and Danielle Gourevitch (1998) catalogue representations of various illnesses, including what we would classify as physical disabilities, in a variety of visual media from the ancient Greek world. Occasionally discussions relevant to the study of disability and deformity in ancient art appear in more general overviews of Greek art, as in A.D. Trendall's (1989) analysis of *phlyakes* and *phlyax* scenes on South Italian vases, but such discussions are generally confined to more specialized studies.

Some studies under the umbrella of disability and deformity in ancient Greece focus on specific characters, such as Hephaistos (e.g., Bazopoulou-Kyrkanidou 1997) or Thersites from

Homer's *Iliad* (e.g., Simms 2005), or on generic figures like the Archaic *komast* dancers on Corinthian vases (Ziskowski 2012).[6] Some discuss representations of diseases in votive plaques (Geroulanos 2014) or medical, social, or religious consequences of disease, either generally (Grmek 1989) or specifically (Karpozilos and Pavlidis 2004). Several studies have focused on mental illness in ancient Greece (Harris 2013[7]; Kefalidou 2009), others on disability in specific literary genres, such as philosophy (MacFarlane and Polansky 2004). These various and often disparate approaches to the subject make it difficult to determine any common threads, but they demonstrate, first, that the topic is a fertile one and, second, that many scholars have, indeed, studied disability, even if they do not use the word.

More recent are edited collections that incorporate multiple approaches and perspectives on disability. *Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen / Disability and Impairment in Antiquity* (2012), edited by Rupert Breitwieser, includes studies on disability in the ancient Mediterranean world, including Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Early Medieval Europe, from scholars working in a variety of media and traditions. *Disabilities in Roman Antiquity. Disparate Bodies A Capite ad Calcem* (2013), edited by Christian Laes, Christian Goodey, and M. Lynn Rose, considers disability in the Roman world from a variety of literary perspectives. *Disability in Antiquity* (2017a), edited by Christian Laes, offers a cross-cultural perspective, with essays about disability in the Hittite kingdom, Mesopotamia and Israel, ancient Persia, Egypt, India, China, the Greek

[6] These "padded dancers" appear on Archaic vases from several regions, including Attica, Laconia, and Boeotia, but Ziskowski (2012) confines herself to the Corinthian examples.

[7] I hesitate to cite this work given Harris's long and well-documented history of sexual harassment of his female colleagues and graduate students while at Columbia University, which is detailed in many public fora. Harris is but one representation of the culture of academia that supports and even rewards bad actors to the detriment of their victims. His behavior should not disadvantage the excellent work of the many authors featured in this edited collection, many of whom are women and/or junior scholars. I encourage the reader to consider Harris's role in negatively affecting the mental health and safety of women throughout his career and therefore evaluate his contribution to understanding mental illness in the ancient world as coming from his position as a harasser.

world, the Roman world, and Late Antiquity, with obvious emphases on the Greek and Roman worlds. This volume includes discussions of both physical and mental disabilities in philosophy, visual arts, religious sanctuaries, medical literature, Greek oratory, and Muslim, Jewish, and Christian traditions. Some volumes, such as *The Dark Side of Childhood in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Unwanted, Disabled and Lost* (2011), edited by Katariina Mustakallio and Christian Laes, focus on specific subsets of the population affected by disability and deformity, recognizing that attitudes about and experiences of disability differ depending on other aspects of an individual's identity.

The amount of scholarship on the study of disability is astounding. As discussed above, Christian Laes maintains an online bibliography, "Disability History and the Ancient World (ca. 3000 BCE – ca. 700 CE), that stretches for 59 pages. This extensive, but not comprehensive, document demonstrates several things. First, disability is a complex and complicated concept, like any other. There is no simple answer to the question, "What does disability mean in antiquity?" and we should not expect one book or article to solve the problem for us. Second, disability is a worthwhile subject for study. If you want to understand a culture, a society, a religion, a text, a work of art, or anything, you must understand all of its constituent elements. Third, there is no one way to study disability. It can be studied in medical, philosophical, tragic, comic, historical, religious, or any other texts; in marble or terracotta; in architecture; in cemetery populations; in material culture and iconography; in religion; or in several of these combined. Each additional study contributes to our progress in understanding what, exactly, disability means in different ancient societies.

My own study will represent another perspective on disability in the ancient world. While in its total form my project resembles something more like the books by Garland (1995) or Rose

(2003), discussed above, it represents a combination of approaches. I want to understand how the structure of ancient societies were modified – or not – to create a space for the physically disabled to participate, sometimes only partially. I consider how individuals at different ages – with the different roles that they played at those different ages – were the subject of different expectations and therefore different accommodations. With my study, I construct a more general path for understanding disability in ancient Greece and I hope that it will develop, change, or be replaced as more instances and examples that inform on the topic are identified, studied, and interpreted. This study is not the last word, but another small step in the process of understanding disability in ancient Greece.

Evidence

The evidence for disability in ancient Greece is plentiful and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* illustrate this well. To my knowledge, no book or article has been dedicated specifically to the role of disability and deformity in Homer's epic poems: individual deformed or disabled figures are occasionally treated, but disability as a phenomenon or concept has escaped notice. This is not, however, from a lack of available evidence. The god Hephaistos, described as both a "renowned craftsman" (κλυτοτέχνης) and "lame in both legs" (ἀμφιγυήεις), is mentioned 41 times in the *Iliad* and 19 times in the *Odyssey*. Hephaistos is critical to the plot of the *Iliad*, as he must fashion Achilles's armor, without which the hero cannot succeed, and the Greeks cannot win the war. In Book 2 of the *Iliad* we meet Thersites, "the ugliest man who came beneath Ilion," with his bandy legs, lame foot, hunched shoulders, and balding pate (2.216-219). His is the longest physical description of any character in the *Iliad*, surely picking it out for especial notice. Thersites may also have an intellectual disability: he is described as knowing many words

in his mind, but the words are disorderly, in vain (μάψ), but not in order (οὐ κατὰ κόσμον).[8] In addition to its length, this passage is unique in its heavy use of *hapax legomena*, words that appear only once in the epics or in the extant corpus of Greek literature. For whatever reason, Homer wants his audiences to be active and conscious in their visualization of this one particular character. Book 3 of the *Iliad* opens with the *geranomachy*, the famed fight between the Pygmies and the cranes. One of the Greek host, the Thracian Thamyris, was maimed (πηρὸν) by the Muses (*Il.* 2.599) in the only instance of this adjective in either poem, and the spirits of Prayers are called lame (χωλαί, *Il.* 9.503). The mythical Lycurgus was blinded by Zeus (*Il.* 6.138) and the unfortunate Peisander lost his eyeballs just as he died at the hands of Menelaus (*Il.* 13.615-617). In the *Odyssey* we meet the blind bard Demodocus in Book 8 and in Book 9 we meet a grotesque monster named Polyphemus, assumed from the episode to have only one eye. Odysseus and his men blind Polyphemus, who must now, devoid of his sight, continue to live and shepherd his flock. Beyond individual characters who are disabled, disability metaphors abound, as when at the feast games on Phaeacia Athena places a mark where Odysseus's discus lands, saying "Even a blind man, stranger, could distinguish this mark by groping for it" (*Od.* 8.195-196). On numerous occasions gods and mortals are careful not to conduct a "blind man's watch" (ἀλαοσκοπιή, *Od.* 8.285; *Il.* 10.515, 13.10, 14.135).

This list does not exhaust the literal or metaphorical instances of disability and deformity in the epic poems, but suffices, I hope, to demonstrate that disability is far from being absent in the world of Homer, a poet who, according to tradition (see, e.g., *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 172) was himself blind. Similar lists could be made for almost every genre of classical literature,

[8] The phrase here, μὰψ ἀτὰρ οὐ κατὰ κόσμον, occurs in two other instances (*Iliad* 5.759 and *Odyssey* 3.138).

including poetry, history, tragedy, comedy, philosophy, and medicine, and the subject balloons when one incorporates non-literary evidence, including vase-paintings, figurines, statues, inscriptions, architecture, ceramic vessels (as opposed to the images that decorate them), and human remains.

No research project can account for every example of a phenomenon and, for this reason, I limit my study to particular kinds of disabilities and categories of evidence. First, I focus on physical disabilities and deformities, including cleft conditions, mobility impairments, missing or deformed limbs, and dwarfism, that is, the kinds of conditions that could, theoretically be traceable archaeologically and that would affect an individual's physical engagement with their world. These are the kinds of disabilities that elicited the kinds of accommodations and structural modifications that are traceable archaeologically. Second, I discuss those categories of evidence that can be assumed to have some basis in and relatively straightforward relationship to "reality." In terms of literature, I deal with medical texts, histories, and philosophical treatises, with examples from poetry and mythology added only where appropriate. I include art in the form of Hellenistic figurines, non-mythological scenes on vases, marble sculptures, and architectural sculptures. Architecture, inscriptions, and burial contexts and human remains round out this study of disability. These sources of evidence do not reproduce reality, but the gap between these representations of disability and the reality of disability is in many ways smaller and more easily understood. I confine my analysis of tragic and mythological instances of disability to the Conclusion.

I do not here attempt a comprehensive survey of disability in ancient Greece. Rather, I hope to show that the structure of ancient Greek society was flexible enough to accommodate individuals with a wide range of bodies, of somatic realities. Structural changes of the sort I

discuss do not require but certainly argue for an abstract understanding and appreciation of physical difference and its attendant limitations in ancient Greece. Important here is not only that the ancient Greeks recognized and understood disability, but that they took active steps to modify their societies and institutions in order to facilitate participation by at least some disabled ancient Greeks.

Why It Matters

In her study of disability in ancient Greece, Martha L. Rose (2003:31) argues that "too often, anachronistic assumptions about modern standards of normalcy have been applied to very thin evidence and have resulted in sweeping conclusions." These sweeping conclusions matter. As the foundation of Western society, ancient Greece is often turned to for precedent and that has had dangerous consequences in the modern period. In 1973, for example, the landmark Supreme Court Case *Roe v. Wade* (410 U.S. 113) established the foundation for abortion rights in the United States. In the majority opinion for the case, Justice Harry Blackmun articulated the task of the Court

> …to resolve the issue by constitutional measurement, free of emotion and of predilection. We seek earnestly to do this and, because we do, we have inquired into, and in this opinion place some emphasis upon, medical and medical-legal history and what that history reveals about man's attitudes toward the abortion procedure over the centuries. (*Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113, 116-117)

Later, Blackmun reveals just what "medical and medical-legal history" he means when he enters into a lengthy discussion of the Hippocratic *Oath*. The *Oath* is clear, regardless of the translation, that physicians who took it agreed not to administer abortive remedies. The *Oath*, Blackmun (*Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113, 116-117) says, "represents the apex of the development of strict ethical concepts in medicine, and its influence endures to this day." If Blackmun found historical

precedent significant in his opinion, how did he reconcile the *Oath*'s prohibition of physician-assisted abortion with the Court's ultimate decision?

It worked because Blackmun did not rely solely on the text of the *Oath* in crafting his opinion: if he had, he likely would have come to the opposite conclusion about abortion rights. Rather, he appealed to a classicist's interpretation of the text. Classicist Ludwig Edelstein (1943:18; quoted in *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113, 131-132) argued that the *Oath* "echoes Pythagorean doctrines" and that "[I]n no other stratum of Greek opinion were such views held or proposed in the same spirit of uncompromising austerity." Edelstein (1943: 63, quoted in *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113, 132) demonstrated that the *Oath* represented "only a small segment of Greek opinion, and that it certainly was not accepted by all ancient physicians" and that even into the 2nd century CE we can see evidence of "the violation of almost every one of its injunctions." It was only later in the Christian period that this Pythagorean ethic was embraced whole-heartedly, when the *Oath* "became the nucleus of all medical ethics" and therefore, says Edelstein and agrees Blackmun, the *Oath* is "a Pythagorean manifesto, and not the expression of an absolute standard of medical conduct." (Edelstein 1943:64, quoted in *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113, 132).

Despite the fact that it does not abide by the strictures of the *Oath*, then, Blackmun (*Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113, 165) concludes that the Court's decision "is consistent with the relative weights of the respective interests involved, with the lessons and examples of medical and legal history." That is, he understands the opinion to comport with ancient thought as interpreted by Ludwig Edelstein in 1943.[9] Edelstein cannot have known that his interpretation of the

[9] Edelstein's argument has been criticized and contradicted, with some even suggesting the opposite, that the *Oath* actually was a mainstream ethical code, one that most ancient physicians adhered to. See, for example, Prioreschi (1995).

Hippocratic *Oath* would become a prominent factor in a significant Supreme Court decision, just as we cannot know the impact that our own arguments will have, and it behooves us to give full and sensitive consideration to all available evidence, especially when discussing the value of a human life.

Outline of dissertation

In chapter 1, I attempt an answer to the question of whether noticeably deformed infants were always or almost always killed at birth. Evidence in the form of medical treatises, specialized ceramic and glass vessels, and burials of neonates suggests that parents, midwives, and physicians did not automatically abandon congenitally deformed infants and even in some cases attempted to treat, cure, and/or accommodate their special needs. We cannot pretend to know how every parent reacted to the birth of any infant, let alone a particular infant, but the totality of evidence paints a picture of acceptance and accommodation, not rejection.

In chapter 2 I turn to children who were disabled, whether congenitally or due to disease or trauma. Medical treatises and inscriptions, statues and amulets suggest that children's health was at the forefront of Greek parents' minds. Indeed, parents, other relatives, and physicians occasionally went to great lengths to assist children who were temporarily or permanently disabled.

Disabled adults are the subject of chapter 3. Adults were expected to fulfill a variety of roles in their communities – as wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, farmers and laborers, soldiers, politicians, athletes, religious leaders and followers, and so on – and when an adult could not participate, or could not participate in the same ways, it appears that communities either modified their structures in order to allow the disabled to participate or modified their expectations of those adults.

In chapter 4 I look at the elderly, who were subject to a variety of additional disabilities and impairments as a result of degenerative processes. The personification of Old Age, or Geras, appears on Attic red figure vases as a small, feeble, hunched man walking with a cane, and old men and women are occasionally mocked in Greek tragedies and comedies and caricatured in ancient art. But other evidence, such as the requirement in some cities, most notably Athens, for children to care for their parents in their old age, suggests that it is not true that "the elderly . . . would have been left to fend for themselves" (Garland 1995:125). Indeed, the prevalence of degenerative conditions like osteoarthritis in skeletal populations throughout Greece suggests that old age-related impairments were not only common, but that individuals with these conditions were not simply cast aside by their communities.

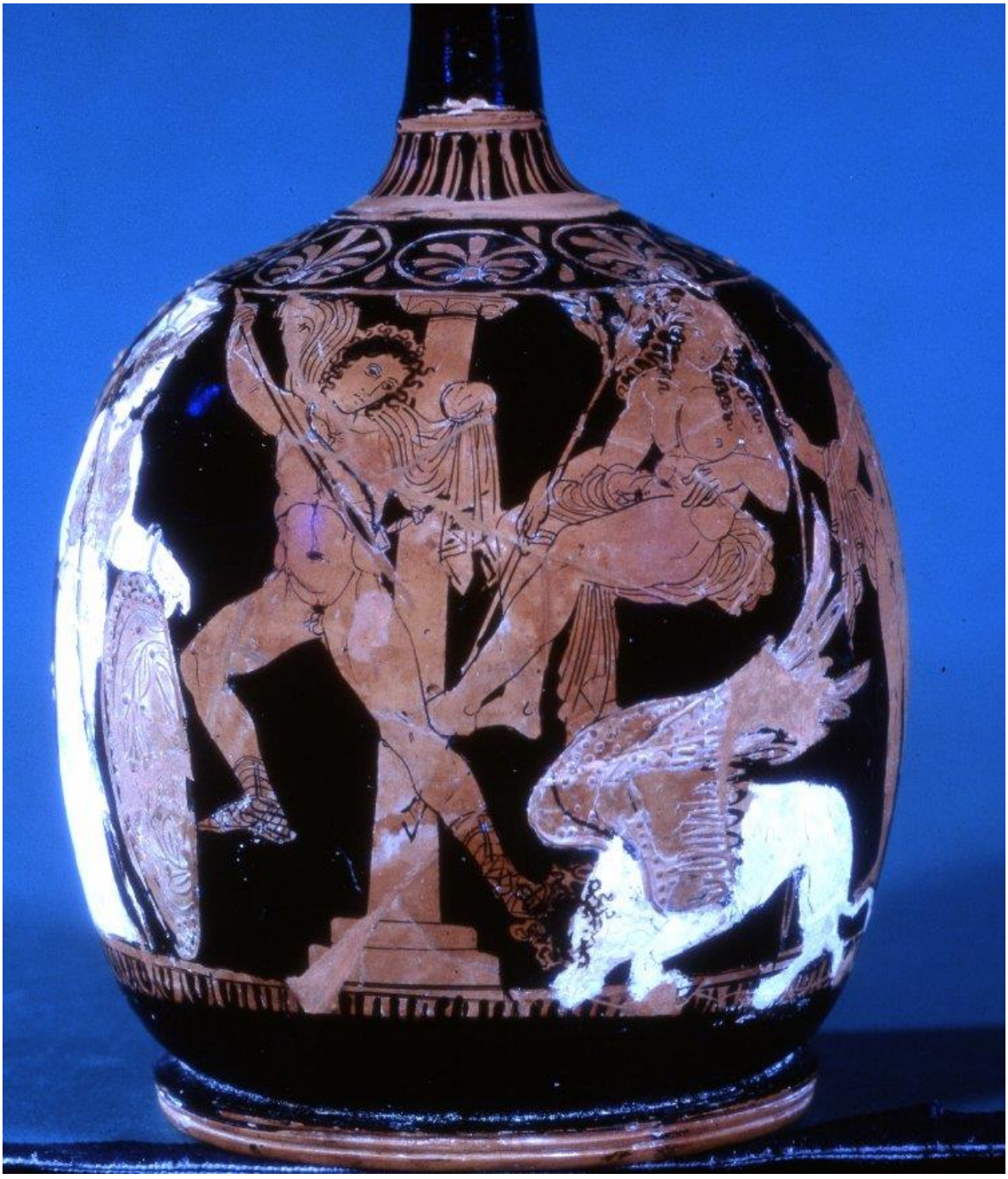
In the Conclusion to the project, I confront the figure of the limping god Hephaistos and consider how the foregoing picture – one of accommodation and facilitation of disability in the very fabric of the mortal realm – comports with the situation that we see in the mythological realm. The mythological world operated according to its own rules – it is here, after all, that taboos like incest are acceptable – and therefore lessons learned here cannot easily be transferred to the mortal world. What is important, however, is how disability among the immortals was mediated through and presented in mortal art and literature, a mediation that reflects something of the attitudes and expectations of the context in which it was produced.

Figure 0. 1

Tondo of an Attic red-figure kylix (drinking cup), attributed to the Oedipus Painter, ca. 470 BCE showing Oedipus seated before the riddling Sphinx.
Rome, Vatican Museums, Cat. 16541.

Photo from the Musei Vaticani, <http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-etrusco/sala-xix--emiciclo-inferiore--collezione-dei-vasi--ceramica-atti/kylix-attica-del-pittore-di-edipo.html>. Accessed May 22, 2018.

Figure 0. 2



Attic red-figure lekythos (oil flask), attributed to the Meidias Painter, ca. 420-400 BCE. Oedipus slaying the Sphinx.
London, British Museum 1887,0801.46.

Photo from the British Museum.

Chapter 1: Disabled Newborns in Ancient Greece

Most die before the seventh day
Aristotle, *History of Animals* 9(7).588a8

τὰ πλεῖστα δ᾽ ἀναιρεῖται πρὸ τῆς ἑβδόμης

I begin my discussion of if and how ancient Greeks accommodated disability among their ranks with newborn infants, that is, infants immediately at or just after birth. At this point, the infant was biologically born, but had not been formally incorporated into the family, which occurred at a ceremony known as the Amphidromia (see Plato, *Theaetetus* 160e; Hamilton 1984; Pomeroy 1997:68-69; Neils 2003:144; and Golden 1990:20). It was only at this later ceremony, or perhaps at a separate ceremony referred to as the *dekate* (Golden 2015:20), that children were named, probably because, as Aristotle noted in the quote that opens this chapter, infant mortality is very high in the first days after birth. It is commonplace in classical scholarship and in undergraduate courses to state that deformed infants – that is, infants who were born with noticeable physical defects – were exposed (i.e., abandoned) or killed immediately after birth.

The topic is a popular one in studies about religion, law, philosophy, culture, medicine, gender, and disability.[10] Most of these discussions rely heavily or totally on literary references to these practices because "archaeological evidence for the practice of infant exposure or infanticide is non-existent" (Beaumont 2012:90). Still, scholars express confidence that the practice existed. Martha L. Rose (2003:29) states that "The Greeks practiced exposure, the discarding of unwanted infants." Mark Golden (2015:75) says that "It is likely (though not

[10] Good surveys of the practice include Eyben (1980/1); Oldenziel (1987); Boswell (1988); and Corbier (2001). More focused discussions include Van Hook 1920; Engels (1980); Golden (1981); Patterson (1985); Golden (1988); Huys (1989); Feen (1996); Haentjens (2000); Beaumont (2012); and Golden (2015). For discussions specifically focused on exposing or killing deformed infants, see Schmidt (1983/4); Edwards (1996); Laes (2008). See also Scott (1999); Chamberlain (2006); and Lewis (2007) about infanticide for demographic reasons, a topic covered also in Classics in some of the articles listed above.

beyond reasonable doubt) that the exposure of newborns…was widespread and even more common at Athens." Infant exposure is well-known even outside of academic circles due to the notoriety of the myth of Oedipus, whose parents had him maimed and exposed at birth (see Introduction). The practice itself having been well-established, arguments circle around issues of just how prevalent it was, whether girls were more likely than boys to have been exposed or killed at birth, and the fate of infants born with noticeable physical defects.

It is this last issue that concerns us here. Studies on infanticide tend to resolve the issue quickly, without critical analysis.[11] Louis R.F. Germain (1969:12) warns that we must not confuse the exposure of infants who were normally formed but not wanted with those who were physically unfit: the exposure of the latter, he says, was probably a holdover from older practices that were preserved for a long time. He does not, however, provide evidence for the time depth of the practice. Lesley Beaumont (2012:91), too, says that "Illegitimate or deformed offspring probably faced the greatest risk" of exposure or infanticide. In his study of disability in the Graeco-Roman world, Robert Garland (1995:13) says that "The pressure to eliminate a congenitally deformed infant was fueled not only by religious but also by practical considerations, since the rearing of such a child is economically burdensome and unprofitable in the extreme," but even Garland rests his argument on a summary discussion of disparate literary references.[12]

[11] There is a big difference between infant exposure and infanticide, though many use the two terms interchangeably, with "exposure" often used euphemistically to mean "infanticide." In the ancient world, however, exposure could have been seen as an *alternative* to infanticide (Evans Grubbs 2011). At issue here is primarily infanticide—the active or passive killing of infants with no hope or expectation that they will survive by the goodwill of passersby.

[12] Here Garland refers to issues of pollution, disability as a consequence of sins against the gods, and so on.

These claims elicit little controversy. It is easy to accept that deformed infants were unwanted and had no place in ancient society because we assume that an economy based largely on agriculture rendered impractical any investment, emotional or otherwise, in non-productive members.[13] But a sensitive reading of all available evidence supports neither this conclusion nor its premises. In this chapter, I discuss the practice of killing deformed infants in the ancient Greek world.[14] It is not enough to rely on a narrow range of literary sources to argue for or against the practice, nor should we expect to determine with certainty a single perspective on the issue that was relevant at all times and in all places in the ancient world. Instead, I attempt to come closer to a total picture by considering multiple types of evidence: literary and epigraphic texts; formal and informal burials of infants; and the production and use of specialized vessels for sick and deformed infants. In the end, I argue that there was a range of reactions to the birth of a weak or deformed infant and that parents, midwives, and physicians did not automatically or necessarily resort to exposure or infanticide, but in some instances actively attempted to treat or accommodate such an infant.

After a brief discussion of problems with making universalizing statements about infanticide, I discuss the most familiar evidence for the exposure or killing of deformed infants in the ancient world: passages from Plutarch, Plato, and Aristotle. I argue that these sources do not represent realistic depictions of actual practices. In Plutarch's case, the apocryphal Spartan

[13] K.A. Dettwyler (1991) presents the assumptions that modern researchers harbor about disabled members of ancient populations.

[14] A note about terminology: in a modern context, we do not refer to infants as "deformed," but might say instead that they have birth defects. Although the words "deformed" and "defective" are related semantically—both referring to some sort of failure in development— "defective" sounds more negative and less appropriate than "deformed" as an adjective applied to humans. Furthermore, "deformed" fits better with ancient terminology, since much of the literature focuses on visible physical deformities—contorted feet, missing or shrunken limbs, etc.—as opposed to the range of conditions implied in "birth defects," which includes more than just physical deformities that are externally visible at birth.

practice of killing deformed infants serves to highlight the Spartans' famously intransigent martial ethos. Plato and Aristotle are not only unspecific with regard to the identification of and consequences for, deformed infants, but they also present the topic of selective infanticide within proposals for abstract, idealized states, not validations of contemporary practices. Next, I introduce evidence to demonstrate that far from being pessimistic about the fate of deformed infants, some ancient authors, including and especially medical physicians, are more optimistic on the fate of deformed infants. Hippocratic physicians, for example, offer cures and treatments for congenital impairments, as well as positive comments about the economic and productive potential of deformed infants. I then discuss ancient Greek feeding bottles, found primarily in infant and child burials from the Late Bronze Age through the Roman period. These vessels, I argue, point to active assistance and accommodation given to infants who were too weak or ill or who had such severe facial deformities that they could not feed normally. Finally, I present the lack of positive bioarchaeological evidence for the killing of deformed infants. The famous 2nd century BCE deposit of 449 infants from the Agora in Athens, for example, is evidence not for infanticide but for the burial of infants who died of natural causes before being formally initiated into the family. In the end, I argue that the exposure of deformed infants was not the rule in ancient Greece, even if we cannot say that it was never practiced.

Competing attitudes

Anthropologists have amassed ethnographic case studies that prove that reactions to, and treatments of, infants vary considerably, not only across cultures, but also within cultures (cf. Hausfater and Hrdy 1984; Brewis 1992). These different "cultural modes of infancy" (Lancy 2014) depend on a variety of factors, some extrinsic to the birth (e.g., infant mortality rates, religious and legal status of infants), some concerning the biological parents (e.g., age, status,

employment), and some related to the infant itself (e.g., age, health). Not only are ideas about the birth of an infant different between and within cultures, so, too, are those about an infant's death, whether accidental or intentional. In a modern Western society, far removed from many of the past and present hazards of childbirth and early infancy, we are shocked by the death of an infant, but feelings of sadness and guilt cannot be generalized across all populations at all times; nor can we assume the inverse, that those in communities with high infant mortality rates were not shocked and dismayed by the death of an infant. Among the Ache, a modern foraging society in eastern Paraguay, for example, it is common to kill an infant if either of its parents is dead.

> The baby was small and had very little hair on its head. The Ache felt little affection for the children born without hair. No woman volunteered to cradle the baby while the mother recovered from the birth. No man stepped forward to cut the umbilical cord. The signs were clear, and it took only Kuchingi's verbal suggestion to settle the point. "Bury the child," he said. "It is defective, it has no hair." "Besides, it has no father [killed by a jaguar]. Getapangi [the mother's current husband] does not want it. He will leave you if you keep it." Pirajugi [the mother] said nothing, and the old woman Kanegi began to dig silently with a broken bow stave. The child and placenta were placed in the hole and covered with red sandy so*Il.* A few minutes later the Ache packed up their belongings and Grandpa Bepurangi began to break a trail through the undergrowth with his unstrung bow. Pirajugi was tired, but she had nothing to carry, so she was able to keep up without difficulty. (Hill and Hurtado 1996:3; quoted in Lancy 2015:30).

But even when we can identify a common practice, as here among the Ache, we cannot extrapolate from there to understand the emotions associated with it. How did Pirajugi feel about her infant being taken away from her and buried alive in a shallow hole? The mere fact that the practice is legal and/or common does not mean it was necessarily a neutral act. One need only consider the practice of abortion in the modern United States.[15] The practice is legal, and a large

[15] I do not here equate abortion with infanticide, even if some pro-life advocates argue that abortion is a form of infanticide. I use this example here to illustrate the point that a law code of a nation cannot be used to prove the attitudes of its citizens.

number of Americans support a woman's right to choose whether to continue a pregnancy to full term. Still, there is a wide range of reactions to the practice and an equally wide range of feelings that women who choose to have an abortion experience. Just because something is legal does not mean everyone chooses to do it, or does it for the same reasons, or thinks about it in the same way.

In short, there are no relevant universal attitudes that can be attributed to the birth, life, and death of infants, and it is unproductive to make assumptions about how any culture or even any individual within a culture thinks or behaves towards infants, especially regarding a culture so far removed from our own. This is especially true when it comes to infanticide, the active or passive killing of live infants after birth. Different groups and societies make different decisions or calculations about whether to bear or rear a child and being calculating "is not synonymous with wickedness; on the contrary, it is adaptive behavior" (Lancy 2015:33). Such adaptive behavior is not specific to humans: infanticide has been tracked in several mammalian taxa, including the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (Zheng *et al.* 2016) and the Golden Snub-Nosed monkey (Yao *et al.* 2016), while different solutions, such as alloparenting (a system of parenting in which parents other than the biological parents perform a parental role), are identified in Stellar sea lions (Maniscalco *et al.* 2007) and Barbary macaques (Small 1990). More specifically relevant, scientists observed a chimpanzee mother, with the help of her oldest daughter, provide extensive care to a severely disabled female infant (Matsumoto *et al.* 2016). The very different "ecological regime" of the ancient Greek world likely instilled very different expectations regarding pregnancy, childbirth, and infancy in parents, midwives, and physicians (Laes 2008:98). While modern medical technologies assure parents that their babies will conform to somatic norms or give them advance time before birth to make decisions about babies who will

not, ancient parents did not have that luxury and may have understood a wider range of "acceptability" for infants, who were anyway more fragile in antiquity than they are today. What is more, ancient Greeks sometimes believed that individuals could outgrow or be cured of their handicaps. We cannot universalize or assume reactions toward or value ascribed to infants, deformed or not, within any society.

Plutarch on a Spartan law regarding deformed infants

Probably the best known ancient passage about the Greek practice of killing deformed infants comes from Plutarch, who lived and worked in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE. Plutarch was born in Chaironea in central Greece, lived, taught, and lectured in Rome for some time, and spent the last 30 years of his life serving as a priest of Apollo in Delphi. He was a prolific author: a 4th century CE catalogue of his works, the *Catalogue of Lamprias*, so-named because it was supposedly compiled by Plutarch's own son, Lamprias, lists 227 separate works, including 23 pairs of *Lives*, biographical works about prominent Greek and Roman men. Much of what Plutarch wrote has been lost, but what remains paints a picture of a man very much steeped in contemporary social, political, and philosophical concerns.[16]

Among his *Lives* is one of Lycurgus, a semi-mythical Spartan lawgiver who may have lived sometime between the 9th and 7th century BCE. According to Plutarch, Lycurgus instituted a law that newborn infants had to be taken to the *lesche*, probably a public building, where Spartan elders examined them (Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 16).[17] If the infant proved to be sound and strong (εὐπαγὲς εἴη καὶ ῥωμαλέον), the elders would order it to be raised; if, however, it was ill-

[16] The volume edited by Judith Mossman (1997) provides accessible insights into the intellectual climate of Plutarch's age.

[17] The *lesche* is again mentioned at *Lycurgus* 25 as a place where men spend their days in conversation.

bred and deformed (ἀγεννὲς καὶ ἄμορφον), it would be sent to the *apothetai*, a word that literally means "exposure places," a pit at the foot of Mount Taygetus,[18]

> …on the grounds that it is worse for [the infant] and for the city [for the infant] to live its natural life poorly equipped in terms of health and strength immediately from the beginning.
>
> Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 16

> …ὡς οὔτε αὐτῷ ζῆν ἄμεινον ὃν οὔτε τῇ πόλει τὸ μὴ καλῶς εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς πρὸς εὐεξίαν καὶ ῥώμην πεφυκός.

In her thorough discussion on the causes of infant exposure in ancient Greece, Cynthia Patterson (1985:113) uses this passage as proof that "In Sparta, there was an official public inspection, but the Spartans were not unique in their attitude." In *The Greek Way of Death* (1985:81-82) Robert Garland states that the Spartans "demanded the exposure of malformed infants" and in his discussion of disability in the Graeco-Roman world he says that this passage anticipates the interest in eugenics which nineteenth- and twentieth-century legislators have also manifested" (Garland 1995:14fn2). More recently, ancient historians have been more critical in their application of the "facts" presented in Plutarch; nevertheless, the story of the Spartans killing deformed infants persists: a 2012 version of a standard textbook on the political, social, and cultural history of ancient Greece refers to the "official elimination of male infants" as described in Plutarch (Pomeroy *et al.* 2012:182) and the most recent online edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Garland 2012) lists Plutarch's passage under its entry on "deformity," saying that "In Sparta, the abandonment of deformed infants was a legal requirement."

[18] One possible site for this pit is the so-called Καιάδας, which was explored by Petros Themelis (1982, 1985), but the skeletons his team identified belonged almost exclusively to adults and none to infants (see also Little and Papadopoulos 1998:394ff.; Pitsios 2010; Paradiso 2017).

Plutarch's passage persists as an authority in this discussion because we assume that he had access to more information on Lycurgus and his reforms than what survives for historians today, and we rely on him for a fair and reasoned analysis of the records. What is more, Plutarch's story fits into our understanding of Spartan society as wholly dedicated to a martial ethos, a society that has no room for anyone who cannot participate in the rigorous training exercises for which Sparta is famous.[19] This, however, proves circular: our idealized view of Sparta is largely shaped by Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* (Hodkinson 2012:ix). Plutarch lived more than 700 years after the Spartan lawgiver and he himself admits that "concerning Lycurgus the lawgiver, it is not possible to say anything that is undisputed" (Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 1). Other ancient authors, including Plato and Xenophon, refer to Lycurgus in a lawgiving role (e.g., Plato, *Laws*; Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians*), but nowhere else do we read of such a Spartan law. Plutarch's own goals in writing the Lives, explicitly articulated in his work on the Macedonian king Alexander, argues against a historical reading of these texts:

> For I am not writing Histories, but Lives, and it is not in the most famous deeds that there is a revelation of virtue or wickedness, but often a small thing, some word or jest, reveals character more than battles with a thousand corpses and the greatest battle lines and sieges of cities. Therefore, just as painters take likenesses from the face and from the look in the eyes, in which character shows itself, regarding least of all the remaining parts [of the body], in this way it must be given to me to delve more into the signs of the soul and to mold the Life of each man according to these [signs], leaving to others the great [deeds] and the contests.
>
> Plutarch, *Alexander* 1

> οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους, οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δήλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιά τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι καὶ παρατάξεις αἱ μέγισται καὶ πολιορκίαι πόλεων. ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ ζωγράφοι τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν

[19] See, for example, François Ollier's two volume *Le mirage spartiate* (1933, 1943), as well as more recent discussions (e.g., Hodkinson and Morris 2012) for discussions of the "Spartan mirage."

> εἰδῶν, οἷς ἐμφαίνεται τὸ ἦθος, ἀναλαμβάνουσιν, ἐλάχιστα τῶν λοιπῶν μερῶν φροντίζοντες, οὕτως ἡμῖν δοτέον εἰς τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεῖα μᾶλλον ἐνδύεσθαι καὶ διὰ τούτων εἰδοποιεῖν τὸν ἑκάστου βίον, ἐάσαντας ἑτέροις τὰ μεγέθη καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας.

In other words, Plutarch is not so much interested in establishing a historical account of the deeds of these great men but in creating an overall impression of their characters. In his story of Lycurgus, Plutarch creates for us the character of a man who drew such a hard line in his law code that he required deformed infants to be killed. Plutarch used this practice as an example of how harsh Lycurgus was, knowing that his readers would be taken aback by such a requirement of parents, thereby ensuring that he had succeeded in giving the impression of Lycurgus as a stringent lawgiver.[20]

Further calling his assertion into question is the fact that Plato and Xenophon, two 4th century BCE sources on Lycurgus, do not mention such a Spartan law. What is more, trends in Plutarch's own writings suggest that he uses disability metaphorically and for rhetorical purposes. In his *Moralia*, for example, Plutarch tells a story about a Spartan named Androkleidas:

> Androkleidas the Spartan, who was maimed in his leg, drew himself up among the warriors. But when some men resisted, preventing him because

[20] This technique was not new: the mythical founder of Rome, Romulus, who was himself exposed at birth but survived, supposedly instituted a law that required parents to raise all male children and the first-born of female children and forbade them from killing infants under 3 years old "except if the child was maimed or monstrous immediately from birth" (πλὴν εἴ τι γένοιτο παιδίον ἀνάπηρον ἢ τέρας εὐθὺς ἀπὸ γονῆς, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.15), and even in that case the "monstrous" child's father had to seek approval of five neighbors before he could legally expose (ἐκτιθέναι) it. The historical accuracy of Dionysius's claim is a hot topic for debate: cf. Eyben (1980/1). See, also, Cicero's *Laws* III.8, 19 for the legality of killing deformed infants in Rome. What is more, Diodorus Siculus (17.91) attributes the same practice to those under the rule of Sopeithes, an Indian king. These, he says, are assessed from infancy. Those who are perfect and naturally have a comely appearance and are strong are raised; on the other hand, those who are lacking in their bodies are not considered worthy of rearing and are thus killed (διόπερ ἐκ νηπίου παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς τὰ βρέφη διακρίνεται καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄρτια καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἔχοντα πρὸς εὐπρέπειαν καὶ ἰσχὺν εὔθετον τρέφεται, τὰ δὲ καταδεῆ τοῖς σώμασιν ἀνάξια τροφῆς ἡγούμενοι διαφθείρουσιν). Here, too, the purpose of this particular reference is to present these peoples as exotic and formidable, to make it all the more remarkable that Alexander the Great managed to subjugate them.

> he was maimed, he said, "But one must fight one's enemies while staying put, not while fleeing."
>
> Plutarch, *Moralia* 217c

> Ἀνδροκλείδας ὁ Λάκων πηρωθεὶς τὸ σκέλος κατέταξεν αὑτὸν εἰς τοὺς πολεμιστάς· ὡς δ᾽ ἐνίσταντό τινες διακωλύοντες ὅτι ἐπεπήρωτο, "ἀλλ᾽ οὐ φεύγοντα," εἶπε, "μένοντα δὲ δεῖ τοῖς ἀντιτεταγμένοις μάχεσθαι."

He repeats a similar story several times (e.g., *Moralia* 234e, 241e, and 331b), making its historical accuracy unlikely but demonstrates, instead, that it was probably employed for a more ideological or metaphorical purpose. The story demonstrates just how awesome the Spartans or Macedonians, depending on the instance, were as soldiers (Rose 2003:44). In a treatise transmitted among the works of Plutarch, but probably not by him, the proverbial saying is repeated that "if you dwell with a lame man you will learn to limp" (*Education of Children* 4a). Indeed, throughout his works, including the *Lives*, Plutarch uses disability in ways that are more anecdotal than historical in nature. Even when he does claim a certain amount of historical accuracy, his temporal distance from the subject encourages us to question his facts and to consider the rhetorical effect that they could instead play.

The important point is that we cannot know if the ancient Spartans, of Lycurgus's time or later, actually did regularly kill deformed infants. Until we find secure evidence of the practice, such as a collection of infant remains from the vicinity of Mount Taygetus, we cannot make even tentative statements about it based solely on what Plutarch reports. Plutarch's passage tells us a lot about 1st and 2nd century CE Roman attitudes concerning disability, infanticide, and their estimation of the Spartans' awesome martial ethos, but nothing about actual ancient Spartan practice.[21]

[21] See Huys (1996). Germain (1969) also expresses reservations using Plutarch's *Lycurgus* as evidence for an actual historical practice.

Plato and Aristotle on ideal societies

Often invoked alongside Plutarch in modern reconstructions of an ancient Greek practice of killing deformed infants are two passages by Greek philosophers Plato (ca. 429-347 BCE) and Aristotle (ca. 384-322 BCE). In the *Republic*, Plato outlines his vision for an ideal state, a kind of utopian society. He describes not Greek society as he knows it, but Greek society as he would create it, if he could. In Book 5, two interlocutors, Socrates and Glaucon, discuss breeding. Socrates asks Glaucon if he breeds all of his hunting dogs alike, or only the best ones (459a ff.). Glaucon admits that he breeds only the best animals, those in the prime of their lives, a principle that he says is best whether you mean dogs or horses. Socrates agrees and says the same is true of humans; therefore, in an ideal state, rulers must devise means to breed the best women and men and to discourage the inferior from reproducing. More than that, there must be some authorities—whether men, women, or both—who take the offspring of "good" parents (τὰ μὲν δὴ τῶν ἀγαθῶν) and raise them,

> …and the children of inferior parents, and if some [offspring] of other parents are deformed, will be hidden away in a secret and unknown place, as is fitting.
>
> Plato, *Republic* 5.460c

> …τὰ δὲ τῶν χειρόνων, καὶ ἐάν τι τῶν ἑτέρων ἀνάπηρον γίγνηται, ἐν ἀπορρήτῳ τε καὶ ἀδήλῳ κατακρύψουσιν ὡς πρέπει.

Socrates here does not explicitly advocate infanticide but says these children will be "hidden away in a secret and unknown place." Some modern scholars contend that Plato is being euphemistic, implying infanticide without actually saying it (e.g., Patterson 1985:113; Adam 1902 *ad* 460c). Plato elaborates on this idea in another dialogue, *Timaeus*. In what seems to be a recapitulation of the conversation in the *Republic*, Socrates asks Timaeus,

> Socrates: And indeed [do you recall] that we said that the children of good parents (τὰ μὲν τῶν ἀγαθῶν) should be raised, but those of bad parents

> should be dispersed in secret among the rest of the citizens? And that when they have grown, it is necessary [for rulers], assessing them, always to bring the worthy ones back again, and to exchange the unworthy amongst themselves into the place of those who came back?
>
> Plato, *Timaeus* 19a[22]

> ΣΩ. Καὶ μὴν ὅτι γε τὰ μὲν τῶν ἀγαθῶν θρεπτέον ἔφαμεν εἶναι, τὰ δὲ τῶν κακῶν εἰς τὴν ἄλλην λάθρᾳ διαδοτέον πόλιν; ἐπαυξανομένων δὲ σκοποῦντας ἀεὶ τοὺς ἀξίους πάλιν ἀνάγειν δεῖν, τοὺς δὲ παρὰ σφίσιν ἀναξίους εἰς τὴν τῶν ἐπανιόντων χώραν μεταλλάττειν;

The similar vocabularies about good and bad parents suggest that Plato's statements in the *Timaeus* and the *Republic* are related, in which case it is unlikely that Plato is speaking euphemistically (van N. Viljoen 1959).[23] More likely is that in the *Republic*, Plato intends that the children of the lower class and deformed children of any class be denied a kind of social existence.

Like Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics* is an outline of an ideal society. In Aristotle's utopia, measures should be taken "in order that the bodies of offspring adhere to the wish of the lawgiver" (1335a5-7). To ensure this, Aristotle lists the best ages for humans to produce children, saying that

> And the coupling of young people is bad for childbearing: for in all animals the offspring of the young are undeveloped (ἀτελῆ) and more likely to produce girls and are small in form, so that it is necessarily the case that the same thing happens also among humans. And as proof of this: in those cities in which it is habit to couple young men and women, their bodies are imperfect (ἀτελεῖς) and small.
>
> Aristotle, *Politics* 1335a11-19

> ἔστι δ᾽ ὁ τῶν νέων συνδυασμὸς φαῦλος πρὸς τεκνοποιίαν· ἐν γὰρ πᾶσι ζῴοις ἀτελῆ τὰ τῶν νέων ἔγγονα καὶ θηλυτόκα μᾶλλον καὶ μικρὰ τὴν

[22] I am grateful to David Blank for his assistance with the translation of τὰ δὲ τῶν κακῶν εἰς τὴν ἄλλην λάθρᾳ διαδοτέον πόλιν.

[23] Though the participants in the *Republic* and in the *Timaeus* are different, the two are clearly related. See Donald Zeyl and Barbara Sattler's entry for "Plato's *Timaeus*" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/plato-timaeus/>, accessed March 12, 2018.

> μορφήν, ὥστ᾽ ἀναγκαῖον ταὐτὸ τοῦτο συμβαίνειν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. τεκμήριον δέ· ἐν ὅσαις γὰρ τῶν πόλεων ἐπιχωριάζεται τὸ νέους συζευγνύναι καὶ νέας, ἀτελεῖς καὶ μικροὶ τὰ σώματά εἰσιν.

Moreover, citizens of Aristotle's ideal city should study the works of physicians and natural philosophers so that they may know the best time of year to give birth. Pregnant women should take care of their bodies, avoiding exercising, eating adequately, and visiting sanctuaries of deities who are concerned with childbirth. Aristotle then prescribes:

> And concerning the exposure or raising of offspring, let there be a law to raise no deformed [infant].
>
> Aristotle, *Politics* 1335b 20-22

> περὶ δὲ ἀποθέσεως καὶ τροφῆς τῶν γιγνομένων ἔστω νόμος μηδὲν πεπηρωμένον τρέφειν·

This seems clear: Aristotle advocates exposing or outright killing deformed infants. But to what extent can we say that contemporary Greeks were, indeed, acting as Aristotle envisioned his ideal citizens would? That he is compelled to include such an explicit statement suggests, to the contrary, that the practice was not a matter of course in contemporary Greece.

Both Plato and Aristotle apparently do not value the lives of certain infants and would, if they could, ordain that such infants be hidden away among the lower classes or killed. But as many have pointed out, "what Plato stipulates here for his eutopia may not be used as evidence for the practice in contemporary Athens" (van N. Viljoen 1959:63) and "Both Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* describe ideal societies. While a utopia mirrors reality to some extent, it is a distorted reflection" (Rose 2003:34). Neither Plato nor Aristotle describes in these works contemporary societies.[24] Instead, they outline their visions for perfect societies. What these

[24] Indeed, the Roman orator Cicero (*Letters to Atticus* 2.1.8) criticizes Cato the Younger for acting as if he lives in Plato's utopian city and not in the slums of Romulus (dicit enim tamquam in Platonis πολιτείᾳ, non tamquam in Romuli faece sententiam), emphasizing the gap between a utopia and reality. Referred to in Plutarch, *Life of Phocion* (3).

passages tell us is not about 4th century BCE Greek practices but about Plato's and Aristotle's respective philosophical ideals.

Other texts that scholars often appeal to raise similar problems when reconstructing the practice of killing or exposing deformed infants. Soranus of Ephesus, a physician working in Rome in the 2nd century CE, says that midwives should determine if infants are worth rearing based on a variety of criteria, including their size and shape (Soranus, *Gynecology* 2.10). Despite some continuity in thought and practice among physicians working from the late 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE, however, it is unwise to use Soranus as evidence for earlier practices, not least because of the serious advances in medical knowledge and theoretical rigor that developed in Alexandria (where Soranus trained) during the Hellenistic period and the changing ideas about the value of infants and the practice of infanticide (Evans Grubbs 2013). [25]

Hippocrates, *On Joints*

Aristotle and Plato, then, cannot be used as evidence for the actual practice of killing or hiding away deformed infants in the 4th century BCE, and Plutarch and Soranus are too far removed in time to be relevant for a reliable reconstruction of practices hundreds of years earlier. We are not without recourse, however. The *Corpus Hippocraticum*, or the Hippocratic *Corpus*, is a collection of more than 60 treatises written by anonymous practicing physicians between the second half of the 5th century BCE and the end of the Hellenistic period; most, however, date to the 5th and 4th centuries BCE. The *Corpus* can be characterized by its variety, both in content (surgical and nosological [i.e., related to the classification of diseases], theoretical and practical,

[25] For a brief and accessible discussion of the development of ancient medicine, see King (2006). A more thorough discussion can be found in Nutton (2004).

etc.) and its style: some texts, like *Airs, Waters, Places* resemble lecture notes; others, like *On the Sacred Disease*, are referred to as sophistic protreptic speeches (i.e., persuasive essays, see Holmes 2010); others are more like bedside notes, like those that make up the seven books of the *Epidemics*. The treatises were collected together sometime between the 3rd and 1st centuries BCE in Alexandria, Egypt, a city that might be called the "medical center" of the Mediterranean world at that time. It was here and at this time that physicians were experimenting with different modes of understanding medicine and the body—including experiments by Herophilos and Erasistratos in human dissection and maybe even vivisection. Before this time, the treatises in the *Corpus* were individual documents written by itinerant physicians; we cannot be sure that any were written with the intent of ever being compiled under a single umbrella. In fact, the *Corpus* as we know it dates only from 1526 CE: no known papyrus from the ancient world contains all the treatises together.[26] For our purposes, it suffices to consider the ideas propounded by the authors of individual texts, rather than to try to identify a single idea from the *Corpus* as a whole. In discussing these texts, I hope to demonstrate that individuals in the ancient world fostered different ideas about deformed infants and that not everyone was as dismissive of them as Plato and Aristotle. Furthermore, I argue that these medical treatises, especially those that reflect medical practice (e.g., those that resemble practical manuals or bedside notes), should be given

[26] Scholars, both ancient and modern, debate which texts were written by Hippocrates himself. Some argue that such an attempt is futile, and the treatises should instead be labeled according to the "school" of medicine they reflect (Koan, Knidian, or other) (e.g., Jouanna 1992). Some argue that the texts should not be separated, but efforts should instead be made to identify the shared stock of knowledge that underlies all of the treatises in the *Corpus* (e.g., King 1998). Still others argue that we should not even consider the *Corpus* as a unit; instead, the texts should be treated as individual documents by anonymous authors, some having an affinity with one another, others more closely related to texts outside of the *Corpus* (e.g., philosophical texts), and others reflecting their own currents of thought (e.g., van der Eijk 2005). I fall more in line with this last view, that the texts are best considered individually, but admit that there likely are shared stocks of knowledge and common assumptions that link many of the treatises.

more weight in reconstructing actual ancient practice than the abstract philosophical idealizations of Plato and Aristotle.

No Hippocratic physician makes an explicit statement about whether parents should kill or rear a deformed infant. One text, however, can help us reconstruct what a physician might have said about the issue. *On Joints* was written in the late 5th or early 4th century BCE (Jouanna 1992:539-540). It is a practical manual, with instructions for physicians treating various dislocations and fractures. The author, a practicing physician, demonstrates a great deal of experience and expertise, not only when he describes correct procedures but also when he criticizes incorrect methods used by other physicians. Fortunately for this project, the author often distinguishes between dislocations that affect the patient from birth (ἐκ γενεῆς) and those that result from later trauma. He is sensitive to differences between patients when it comes to dislocations

> …since with respect to their bodies, humans are well-balanced, both with respect to their hands and their legs, one must use as a model the healthy [joint] for the unhealthy [joint], and unhealthy [joint] for the healthy one, not observing other people's joints (for other people naturally have joints that project more than others') but [the joints] of the afflicted patient himself, [to see] if the healthy [joint] is dissimilar to the affected [joint].
>
> Hippocrates, *On Joints* 10

> …ἐπειδὴ δίκαιον ἔχουσι τὸ σῶμα οἱ ἄνθρωποι, καὶ τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τὰ σκέλεα, παραδείγματι χρῆσθαι δεῖ τῷ ὑγιεῖ πρὸς τὸ μὴ ὑγιές, καὶ τῷ μὴ ὑγιεῖ πρὸς τὸ ὑγιές, μὴ τὰ ἀλλότρια ἄρθρα καθορῶντα—ἄλλοι γὰρ ἄλλων μᾶλλον ἔξαρθροι πεφύκασιν—ἀλλὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ κάμνοντος, ἢν ἀνόμοιον ᾖ τὸ ὑγιὲς τῷ κάμνοντι.

The author is sensitive in his understanding that individual humans differ from one another and recognizes that it is unproductive to compare two different patients because people naturally have different bodies.[27]

Weasel-armed infants

Consider his discussion of patients that are called "weasel-armed from birth" (οἱ καλούμενοι δὲ ἐκ γενεῆς γαλιάγκωνες). According to the author, there are consequences for such a deformity:

> Of course those who are weasel-armed from birth are definitely able to use [their weasel-arm], and they really can't stretch their [affected] arm up by the ear after they extend their elbow, but [the affected arm] is inferior to the healthy arm…still, whenever they stop feeling pain, as many tasks as it is necessary to perform by raising the elbow outwards from the sides, they aren't able to do these things in the same way [as before]; but as many tasks as it is necessary to perform by swinging the arm along the side, either backwards or forwards, they are able to perform them. For they could draw a bow-saw or a saw, and they could swing an axe, and they could dig without much raising up their elbow, and they perform as many other tasks as are done from the same sort of posture.
>
> Hippocrates, *On Joints* 12

> χρῆσθαι μέντοι τῇ χειρὶ δυνατώτατοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐκ γενεῆς γαλιάγκωνες, οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοί γε ἀνατεῖναι παρὰ τὸ οὖς τὸν βραχίονα ἐκτανύσαντες τὸν ἀγκῶνα δύνανται, ἀλλὰ πολὺ ἐνδεεστέρως ἢ τὴν ὑγιέα χεῖρα… ὅταν μέντοι ὀδυνώμενοι παύσωνται, ὁπόσα μὲν δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι ἐπαίροντας τὸν ἀγκῶνα ἀπὸ τῶν πλευρέων ἐς τὸ πλάγιον, ταῦτα μὲν οὐ δύνανται ἅπαντα ὁμοίως ἐργάζεσθαι· ὁπόσα δὲ δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι, παραφέροντας τὸν βραχίονα παρὰ τὰς πλευράς, ἢ ἐς τοὐπίσω ἢ ἐς τοὔμπροσθεν, ταῦτα δὲ δύνανται ἐργάζεσθαι· καὶ γὰρ ἂν ἀρίδα ἑλκύσαιεν καὶ πρίονα, καὶ πελεκήσαιεν ἄν, καὶ σκάψαιεν ἄν, μὴ κάρτα ἄνω αἴροντες τὸν ἀγκῶνα, καὶ τἆλλα ὅσα ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων σχημάτων ἐργάζονται.

[27] This explicit lack of comparison between two individuals is important for thinking about whether the ancient Greeks had a concept of "normal."

Being congenitally "weasel-armed," then, is not a limitation. These people, he says, cannot perform the same kinds of tasks or tasks in the same way as those who do not have weasel-arms, but there are a number of physical tasks that they can perform just as easily. Later, he elaborates: those who are weasel-armed from birth or from accident in early childhood can perform manual exercises that contribute to the physical development of the affected arm. Moreover,

> …for so far as handicrafts [are concerned], the weasel-armed perform most of them eagerly with that [affected] arm, exactly as many as they are able to perform with their other arm, and [the affected arm] is not at all inferior to the unimpaired one.
>
> Hippocrates, *On Joints* 53

> …ὅσα γὰρ χειρῶν ἔργα ἐστί, τὰ πλεῖστα προθυμέονται οἱ γαλιάγκωνες ἐργάζεσθαι τῇ χειρὶ ταύτῃ, ὅσα περ καὶ τῇ ἑτέρῃ δύνανται οὐδὲν ἐνδεεστέρως τῆς ἀσινέος.

These two passages about patients with weasel-arms suggest, in the first place, that the physician is dealing with laborers: he describes tools associated with physical labor and "handicrafts," literally "tasks of the arms." This is not a leisure class of patients, then, individuals who might, in economic terms, have been able to "afford" a disability more easily; they are people who performed skilled or unskilled labor for their living. Second, the passages demonstrate that the physician does not see these infants as "unprofitable in the extreme" (Garland 1995:13) just because they exhibit a physical deformity at birth. The author does not lament their fates but describes their conditions dispassionately and dwells not on what they could not do but lists what they would be able to do. The author wrote this treatise as a manual for his colleagues, other physicians, and he leads them through optimism about congenitally deformed infants. What is more, he does not present it as an argument: he does not try to convince, as if he is working against a commonplace pessimism, but his matter-of-fact tone suggests that there were no strong contrary opinions on the matter.

Clubfooted infants

When he reaches the lower body, the author of *On Joints* (62) describes individuals with congenital clubfoot (ὁπόσοι ἐκ γενεῆς κυλλοὶ γίνονται).[28] Clubfoot is the most common congenital anomaly, occurring in about 1 or 2 out of every 1,000 live births (Anand and Sala 2008), so it is not surprising that an ancient physician encountered it. Our author says that these cases are, for the most part, curable and he describes the full treatment of the condition, which he says should begin as soon as possible after birth. The treatment is not a quick one, but requires adjustments, rotations, bindings, and bandaging, and even incorporates specially made leaden shoes. Once the clubfoot is cured, the patient should continue to wear special shoes, what he calls "mud shoes" (αἱ πηλοπατίδες), which have thick soles, presumably to provide additional support to the heel; also suitable are "Cretan shoes," which are likewise reinforced under the sole with a strap. Most interesting about this passage is that the physician's treatment for clubfoot is not far afield from non-surgical treatments used to correct the deformity in the modern period (Dobbs *et al.* 2000:59). Even more extraordinary is the optimism that the physician expresses. Clubfoot is a deformity that is visible at birth, and the development of a lengthy treatment plan suggests that parents and/or midwives did not discard these infants immediately and that physicians did not automatically recommend that these infants be killed.

Dwarfs

The author of *On Joints* also apparently treated infants born with dwarfism. It is worth quoting the passage in full:

[28] See, also, Hippocrates, *Instruments of Reduction (Mochlicon)* 32, in which the author says that there is more than one kind of clubfoot (κυλλώσιος γὰρ οὐχ εἷς ἐστὶ τρόπος) and describes the treatment of the condition.

> There are some cases in which the hip-joints of both legs are dislocated outwards, either immediately at birth or from disease. Here the bones are affected in the same way as was described, but there is very little flaccidity of the tissues in such cases; for the legs keep plump, except for some little deficiency on the inner side. The plumpness is due to the fact that both legs get exercised alike; for they have an even swaying gait to this side and that. These patients show very prominent haunches, because of the displacement of the hip-joints; but if no necrosis of the bones supervenes, and they do not become humped above the hips—for this is an affection which attacks some—if nothing of this sort occurs, they are distinguished by very fair health in other respects. Still, these patients have defective growth of the whole body, except the head.
>
> Hippocrates, *On Joints* 56

> Εἰσὶ δέ τινες, ὧν τοῖσι μὲν ἐκ γενεῆς αὐτίκα, τοῖσι δὲ καὶ ὑπὸ νούσου ἀμφοτέρων τῶν σκελέων ἐξέστη τὰ ἄρθρα ἐς τὸ ἔξω μέρος. τούτοισιν οὖν τὰ μὲν ὀστέα ταὐτὰ παθήματα πάσχει· αἱ μέντοι σάρκες ἥκιστα ἐκθηλύνονται τοῖσι τοιούτοισιν· εὔσαρκα δὲ καὶ τὰ σκέλεα γίνεται, πλὴν εἴ τι ἄρα κατὰ τὸ ἔσω μέρος ἐλλείποι ὀλίγον. διὰ τοῦτο δὲ εὔσαρκά ἐστιν, ὅτι ἀμφοτέροισι τοῖσι σκέλεσι ὁμοίως ἡ χρῆσις γίνεται· ὁμοίως γὰρ σαλεύουσιν ἐν τῇ ὁδοιπορίῃ ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα· ἐξεχέγλουτοι δὲ οὗτοι ἰσχυρῶς φαίνονται διὰ τὴν ἔκστασιν τῶν ἄρθρων. ἢν δὲ μὴ ἐπισφακελίσῃ αὐτοῖσι τὰ ὀστέα, μηδὲ κυφοὶ ἀνωτέρω τῶν ἰσχίων γένωνται—ἐνίους γὰρ καὶ τοιαῦτα καταλαμβάνει—ἢν οὖν μὴ τοιοῦτόν τι γένηται, ἱκανῶς ὑγιηροὶ τἄλλα διαφέρονται· ἀναυξέστεροι μέντοι τὸ πᾶν σῶμα οὗτοι γίνονται, πλὴν τῆς κεφαλῆς.[29]

The author does not use the specific Greek vocabulary for dwarfism (either νᾶνος or πυγμαῖος) but the statement that these people have defective growth in their whole body except the head resembles Aristotle's statement that some dwarfs, those whose dwarfism is caused by a lack of nutrition, seem to have child-size limbs (ὅσοι δὲ διὰ τροφῆς ἔνδειαν ἀτελεῖς γίνονται, οὗτοι καὶ παιδαριώδη τὰ μέλη ἔχοντες φαίνονται) (Aristotle, *Medical Problems* 10.12.19-20), but he makes no reference to the size of the torso. In *On Sleeping and Waking* (457a24 and again at 457a26), Aristotle refers to the "dwarfs and the big-headed" (οἱ νανώδεις καὶ οἱ μεγαλοκέφαλοι),

[29] This passage is very similar to that at Hippocrates, *Instruments of Reduction* 22. The vocabulary is not identical, and the latter passage is much shorter and does not mention whether the condition is congenital or not, but it is likely that the two passages refer to conditions that were considered similar or within the same category of condition by the physicians.

the context of which suggests that the two should be related and refer to those with disproportionately large heads (relative to their bodies) (see Dasen 2008).[30]

Contemporary images of dwarfs support the identification of this patient in *On Joints* with a dwarf. Although a large number of images of dwarfs survive from the Hellenistic period, many fewer can be dated to the 5th and early 4th centuries BCE. One, dated to the second half of the 5th century BCE and attributed to the Kleophon Painter, shows a female dwarf holding a skyphos.[31] Dasen (1993:172-3) identifies this as the only example of a dwarf with a short torso in Greek art. This nude female dwarf has very long arms and a short torso, but with prominent buttocks (ἐξεχέγλουτοι) and plump (εὔσαρκα) legs, as in the description given in *On Joints* (Grmek and Gourevitch 1998:207). Another scene, decorating an aryballos (oil jar) and dated to the early 5th century BCE (ca. 480-470 BCE), shows a dwarf standing nude in what has been identified as a doctor's office (**Figure 1.1**; Dasen 1993:221; Jouanna 1999:86-87, 95; Dean-Jones 2005:532).[32] The dwarf is often identified as having achondroplasia, the most common form of dwarfism (Grmek and Gourevitch 1998:204), but his torso is, in fact, shorter than those of the other figures in the scene who are not dwarfs. His torso from the top of his shoulders to the top of his thighs is as long as his legs from the top of the tights to his ankles. What is more, as in the passage from *On Joints* and the image of the female dwarf (above), this dwarf's legs are

[30] The Hippocratic passage does not comport with all of Aristotle's descriptions of dwarfs, however. In *Parts of Animals*, for example, Aristotle clearly describes those who are "dwarf-like" (νανῶδες) as having large upper bodies, by which he means the trunk from the head to the exit of the waste matter (ὁ καλούμενος θώραξ, ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς μέχρι τῆς ἐξόδου τοῦ περιττώματος) (Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* 686b). In this case, Aristotle seems to be describing *achondroplasia*, which accounts for about 70 percent of all cases of dwarfism, but there are more than 200 diagnosed types of dwarfism (see, e.g., Dasen 2013:7-15) and we need not expect that both ancient authors would always describe the same condition.

[31] Munich, Antikensammlungen 8934.

[32] Louvre CA 2183. See Krug (2012) for an interpretation of the setting as a *palaistra*.

"plump" (εὔσαρκα) and although he stands frontal, he seems to have prominent buttocks (ἐξεχέγλουτοι). Unlike the female dwarf on the Kleophon Painter's vase, who presents very long arms, this dwarf shows growth that is stunted in his whole body (ἀναυξέστεροι μέντοι τὸ πᾶν σῶμα). A slightly later vase (ca. 450 BCE) by the Niobid Painter shows a satyr-dwarf with a very long torso relative to the length of his limbs,[33] something more typically associated with achondroplasia, which suggests that the Clinic Painter could well have represented his male dwarf with similar proportions. The passage from *On Joints*, then, may refer to the same kind of dwarfism as is represented on two 5th century BCE Attic vases.

Even if the author of *On Joints* is not explicitly describing dwarfism, he refers to a potentially congenital condition. These individuals are clearly deformed in some way, but they are "otherwise sufficiently healthy" (ἱκανῶς ὑγιηροὶ τἄλλα διαφέρονται). Such infants do not present any problems for the Hippocratic physician. That dwarfs were not automatically rejected at birth is supported by the class of small-scale sculpture that emerged in the Hellenistic period, referred to by modern scholars as "grotesque." These small figurines in terracotta and bronze often show male and sometimes female dwarfs in a variety of poses and postures (see, e.g., Stevenson 1975; Dasen 1988; Dasen 1993; Dasen 2015). The anatomical accuracy with which many of these dwarf figures are depicted suggests that the artists were familiar with living dwarfs.

It cannot have been regular practice for parents and midwives to dispose of all deformed infants immediately at birth: if it were, physicians would have no opportunity to develop cures and treatments for various congenital deformities, nor would they bother enumerating the kinds

[33] Metropolitan Museum of Art 1982.474.

of tools that congenitally deformed infants could use or activities that they could engage in as they age. Physicians were not typically present at childbirth or involved in decisions regarding childbirth (Jouanna 1992:172ff), but parents and midwives obviously consulted this physician for his advice about infants with various congenital deformities. [34] This suggests not only that parents and midwives were unsure about what to do (i.e., there was no obvious, culturally- or legally-prescribed course of action) but also that physicians did not automatically recommend infanticide if a parent or midwife sought their assistance. Indeed, nowhere do we have evidence that Greek physicians from the period under study here (ca. 1000 to 200 BCE) recommended killing deformed infants.

Other textual evidence

On Joints is not the only Hippocratic treatise to touch on the issue of deformed infants. The other references are not explicitly positive or optimistic, but they do not represent deformity as a problem to be solved by infanticide. In *Generation* (also known as *The Seed*), dated to the late 5th or early 4th century BCE (Jouanna 1992:540-1), the author writes that sometimes "thin and weak children are born of a father and a mother who are both robust and strong" (τέκνα λεπτὰ ἔστιν ὅτε τὰ καὶ ἀσθενέα γίνεται, ἐκ πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς παχέων τε καὶ ἰσχυρῶν ἐόντων) (Hippocrates, Generation 9). In *Airs, Waters, Places*, dated to the late 5th century BCE (Jouanna 1992:528-9), the author describes the effects of the location of a city and its associated winds and water supplies on the inhabitants. When the winter is wet and mild with southerly winds and then the spring is dry with a northerly wind, he says, women will miscarry or have infants that either

[34] Physicians could, indeed, be present for births: the author of *Diseases* I, for example, discusses instances "when you must deliver a woman that is giving birth" (5) and provides instructions "if a physician gives anything to a woman in childbed for the pain in her belly" (8). It seems, however, that this was not common and that instead parents relied on midwives during childbirth.

die immediately "or they live small and weak and sickly" (ἢ ζῶσι λεπτά τε ἐόντα καὶ ἀσθενέα καὶ νοσώδεα) (Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places* 10.40). The author of *Fleshes* (18), dated probably to the 5th century BCE (Jouanna 1992:532-3), mentions those who are "deaf (or mute) from birth" (οἱ κωφοὶ οἱ ἐκ γενεῆς). References like this are not uncommon throughout the whole corpus of Hippocratic treatises and they demonstrate that physicians were aware of congenital deformities, suggesting that they may have at least occasionally seen and treated deformed infants. As mentioned above, physicians were not usually present during childbirth, so these references suggest that parents and/or midwives did not immediately kill deformed infants but consulted physicians for their advice and help. These parents and midwives may have experienced a wide range of feelings about giving birth to children who were "thin and weak and sickly," but their first reaction was apparently not to discard the infant. Nor were physicians surprised or taken aback by such infants. Instead, they describe the conditions matter-of-factly, just as they do other run-of-the-mill conditions and illnesses like baldness or fevers. A lack of explicit optimism about the fate of deformed infants is not the same thing as a call for infanticide.

Hippocratic physicians treated a wide variety of patients throughout the Greek-speaking world from the 5th century BCE onwards and they wrote down their experiences and ideas and arguments, many of which provide insights into contemporary medical and philosophical thought. These physicians worked with actual patients and many of the texts can be understood as reflecting actual practical experience, lending a certain amount of authority to their thought, especially when weighed against the abstract idealizations presented in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*. But even Aristotle himself is occasionally less pessimistic about the fate of deformed or otherwise imperfect infants. In *History of Animals* (9(7).587a20-24), for example,

the philosopher, whose father was a physician, describes infants who appear dead at birth but who are "merely weak." In these cases, Aristotle says, experienced midwives resuscitate them by squeezing blood from inside the umbilical cord, where it is stuck, back into the infant's body. In some cases, this likely led to brain damage due to a lack of oxygen, but still such infants are resuscitated. Aristotle (*History of Animals* 9(7).581b22-23) describes boys who are congenitally impotent and sterile because their genitals are maimed or malformed (γίνονται δέ τινες ἄνηβοι ἐκ γενετῆς καὶ ἄγονοι διὰ τὸ πηρωθῆναι περὶ τὸν τόπον τὸν γόνιμον), a situation that is at least potentially visible at birth. He says (*History of Animals* 9(7).584b10-11) that the ease of childbirth in Egypt means that infants who are born deformed are able to live (δύναται ζῆν κἂν τερατώδη γένηται), presumably because they experience less birth trauma. Aristotle (*History of Animals* 9(7).585b30) mentions deformed infants born of deformed parents (γίνονται δὲ καὶ ἐξ ἀναπήρων ἀνάπηροι) but says that it is sometimes the case that children born of deformed parents are themselves sound, and, he says (585b36-586a1), there is no special rule regarding them (τὰ δὲ πλεῖστα οὐ γίνεται ἀλλ᾽ ὁλόκληρα ἐκ κολοβῶν καὶ οὐθὲν ἀποτέτακται τούτων). In these instances, Aristotle does not express clear pessimism, but describes deformed or otherwise imperfect infants without passing judgments about their value.

Scholarly emphasis on the passages from Plutarch, Aristotle, and Plato offers a selective view on the subject and includes no source that can be assumed to reflect reality. Hippocratic physicians, who had actual, practical experience with patients from all over the Greek world not only saw and treated congenitally deformed infants, but they also expressed active optimism about the potential capabilities of deformed infants. Although he is speaking generally, Isocrates, a 4th century BCE rhetorician, calls the exposure of infants by parents a crime of the sort that never occurs at Athens (*Panathenaicus* 122). It is unmethodical to ground our understanding of

ancient Greeks' treatment of deformed infants in the utopian discussions of Plutarch, Aristotle, and Plato. That we accept conclusions based on such a limited range of sources reflects implicit assumptions and biases that we have about disability and deformity.[35] By digging deeper, we find evidence that contradicts the conclusion that "The exposure of the physically defective infant is usually—and correctly, I think—considered routine practice in ancient Greece" (Patterson 1985:113). That Plato and Aristotle imagined ideal societies in which deformed infants were hidden away or killed does not need to be reconciled with the more likely reality: we should expect multiple and competing attitudes to exist in any society. But the abstract musings of Aristotle and Plato should not outweigh the practical experience and advice of Hippocratic physicians or the testimony of Isocrates when we question the prevalence of practices like infanticide.

Feeding bottles

Archaeological evidence strengthens the argument that ancient Greeks did not kill deformed infants and that they occasionally attempted to accommodate a range of congenital deformities. A specialized drinking vessel, the so-called feeding bottle,[36] found primarily in burials of infants and small children, suggests that the ancient Greeks assisted infants who were

[35] For a good discussion of the application of modern assumptions about disability to ancient populations, see Dettwyler (1991). Dettwyler asks whether paleopathology (here, the identification of disabled individuals in past societies) can provide evidence for "compassion" in those societies. The assumptions she outlines are that (1) most of a population's members are productive and self-sufficient most of the time; (2) individuals who do not present evidence of impairments were not disabled; (3) a person with a physical impairment is necessarily non-productive; (4) "survival" of disabled individuals indicates "compassion"; and (5) facilitating the survival of a disabled individual is "compassionate." Brewis (1992) discusses scholars' need to identify how a culture "justified" infanticide, a quest which itself entails numerous implicit assumptions.

[36] This vessel is known by many names in a variety of languages (e.g., θήλαστρον in Greek; *poppatoio* in Italian; *Saugflasche* in German; *dječje bočice* in Croatian; and *biberon* in French), and it is often difficult to identify the vessel from excavation reports without an accompanying image. Despite its many names in English, I prefer "feeding bottle."

too weak or sick or who exhibited such severe facial deformities that they could not eat normally.

Distribution in time and space

The feeding bottles under discussion here are found from the Early Iron Age through the Hellenistic and Roman periods. There are, however, examples from as early as the Late Neolithic period that are identified as feeding bottles: in Phase III (Dikili Tash) levels at Sitagroi in northern Greece (ca. 3800-2700 BCE), for example, excavators found a short (8.8 centimeters tall) two-handled jar with a spout (Pot 17), which they tentatively labeled a feeding bottle (**Figure 1.2**; Renfrew, Gimbutas, and Elster 1986:181).[37] At this early date, these spouted jugs were found in what seem to be domestic (or at least certainly non-funerary) contexts, and in this they differ from the vessels under consideration here, which are found primarily in funerary context.

Spouted vessels, whether jugs or cups, remain relatively rare until the Late Bronze Age, at which point their numbers multiply and the form becomes "standardized" (Pomadère 2007:271). In the Late Bronze Age, feeding bottles are associated most often with infant and child burials in chamber tombs (Pomadère 2007:279); later, in the historical periods under consideration here, they are found primarily in pot-burials (ἐγχυτρισμοί) of infants under about 1 year old (Golden 2015:15). Exceptions to this pattern are few and do not contradict the general association of feeding bottles with graves of infants and children (Pomadère 2007:280).[38] The

[37] See a similar example of a two-handled spouted jar from Tigani on the island of Samos (Flesch 1988:188).

[38] Exceptions include fragments of seven spouts found in non-funerary contexts in Chania on Crete, dated to the Late Minoan IIIB period (Hallager 2003:227). Other possible exceptions include fragments of similar vessels (cf. Furumark FS 159-162) found in the excavations of the palace at Pylos (Blegen *et al.* 1966:379), but these are too big to be considered in the same class of vessel as feeding bottles intended for infants.

numbers and distribution of the vases continue to expand in the historic period: 4th century BCE examples are known from the Greek mainland; Rhodes; the Black Sea region; Asia Minor; Palestine; Cyrenaica; and Spain (Kern 1957:21). In the Roman period, feeding bottles continue to be found primarily in burials, but are also found in pottery workshops, especially in Roman Gaul (cf. Rouquet and Loridant 2000:427; Pastor 2010:246). Based on a series of experiments related to the rate of flow through the narrow spout and chemical analyses of the vessels' contents (Huttmann *et al.* 1988), however, it is relatively safe to say that vessels of this form found in Roman-period workshops are not potters' tools (Pastor 2010:246) but were produced episodically in these workshops. From the Late Bronze Age through the 1st century BCE, feeding bottles seem to have been made solely of terracotta, but numerous examples in glass are known from the Roman period (Štefanac 2009; Whitehouse 2003:150; McFadden 1946:475) not just in Greece, but throughout the Mediterranean and Europe. The glass examples are similar in form and find contexts, and chemical analyses of their contents suggest that they held the same liquids as their terracotta counterparts (Huttmann *et al.* 1988; see below), suggesting that the glass bottles performed the same functions.

From at least the Late Bronze Age through the Roman period, then, feeding bottles apparently belong to the world of infants and small children. These should not, however, be considered part of the typical appointment of infancy (Blondé and Villard 1992:107): they are found almost exclusively in burial contexts, not in contexts of use or disposal, and they are relatively rare, recognized by archaeologists more by their unusual form than by their ubiquity.[39]

[39] Susan Rotroff (1997:183), for example, says that feeders are "not well represented in the Hellenistic pottery assemblage at the Agora or elsewhere." In Pydna in northern Greece, feeding bottles were present in less than 10 percent of infants' graves in the first half of the 4th century BCE and less than 5 percent of infants' graves in the second half of the 4th century BCE (Kotitsa 2012:84).

Although we find them most often in burials, it is clear that at least some of these bottles were used before they ended up in tombs: an example in Oxford bears tooth-marks on its spout.[40] Further strengthening the pre-deposition use is an early 5th century BCE figurine from Boeotia (central Greece) that shows a woman feeding an infant from a feeding bottle (**Figure 1.3-4**).[41] The woman, presumably the mother, midwife, nurse, or female relative, supports a male infant on her lap. In her right hand is a feeding bottle, complete with its long, narrow spout and handle positioned 90º from the spout. She holds it up to the mouth of the infant, who leans forward to accept it. In her left hand, the woman holds an object, identified by Danielle Gourevitch (1992:79) as a folded rag for wiping up any liquid that spills. Feeding bottles, it seems, were crafted specially to effect an uncommon strategy of feeding infants, children, and, rarely, adults (Blondé and Villard 1992:107), one that seems to have been used for individuals who were at an unusually high risk for death, which explains the bottles' preponderance in graves.

Attributing function to feeding bottles

Different scholars emphasize different aspects of the functions of these vessels. Gourevitch (1992) and Maria Pomadère (2007) argue that the vessels were only used as aids for weaning infants who were old enough to ingest solid foods and not as alternatives to breastfeeding. Maria Sommer and Dion Sommer (2015:64-65), on the other hand, contend that the vessels were used as an alternative to breastfeeding for newborns and young infants, like modern mothers relying on infant formula and rubber nipples. Céline DuBois (2013) and Pomadère (2007) suggest that the feeding bottles could also be symbolic, citing miniature

[40] Oxford, Ashmolean Museum: 1924.66; cf. J.D. Beazley, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Oxford I* 41; Plate 48.24.

[41] Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire, inv. HM 2218.

versions, such as those found in the prehistoric tomb of twin babies at Jebel Moya in Nubia (Lacaille 1950; cited in Pomadère 2007:276). Sophie Bouffier (2012:139-140) argues that the vessels are more symbolic than functional, especially when they appear in the tombs of infants younger than the age of weaning. Several scholars identify these vessels as breast pumps, used to draw breast milk from a woman, which was then fed to an infant from the same vessel (Obladen 2012; Rouquet and Loridant 2003; Gourevitch 1990; Noll 1936).[42]

As to what liquids the bottles held, Panagiotis I. Chatzidakis (2000:372-3) and Gourevitch (1992) cite issues of sanitation as reasons why they could not and did not contain milk or milk products. Victoria Sabétaï (2000:509), on the other hand, argues that the vessels regularly contained milk, referring to the results of chemical analyses performed on an example from a Late Classical South Italian necropolis at Tarentum that revealed traces of milk products. Gourevitch (1992:80) points to analyses performed by means of gas chromatography and mass spectrometry on 27 terracotta and 13 glass feeding bottles that showed traces of palmitic, myristic, stearic, lauric, and capric acids, the combination of which is found only in milk, whether human or animal (Huttmann *et al.* 1988), but dismisses it as evidence for the daily use of these vessels. Instead, she says, the milk in these vessels was an offering placed in the vessel at the time it was deposited in the tomb, a kind of symbolic reference to infancy to accompany the dead infant. Pomadère (2007:278) is more open to the possibility that the vessels could contain both milk and non-milk products: residue analysis on an example from Roman Gaul showed that it contained milk (Rouquet 2004) but an example from Late Bronze Age Midea, located in the Peloponnese on mainland Greece, contained beeswax or honey and something

[42] Obladen (2012) describes how these vessels would function as breast pumps.

fermented (hydromel or beer?) (Tzédakis and Martlew 1999:169). Pomadère (2007:80) and Sommer and Sommer (2015:54) cite the use of the vessels themselves as the reason that most are found in tombs: a lack of proper sanitation probably meant that spoiled and fermented milk in the nozzles transmitted dangerous microbes to the infant, which led to a variety of conditions, including diarrhea, that likely caused the infants' deaths.

Ancient authors offer few hints about the function or contents of the vessels. I know of only one reference from the Classical period that might illuminate the issue. In the Hippocratic treatise *Diseases* III, written sometime in the 5th century BCE (Jouanna 1992:546), the author describes how to treat (adult) patients with pleurisy, a condition of the lungs. If the patient is in a particularly bad state, the physician must take care not to exert her or him and

> …after the bath, let the patient first drink sweet wine watered down, not cold, a little bit from a narrow-mouthed bombylios
>
> Hippocrates, *Diseases* III 16

> …μετὰ δὲ τὰ λουτρὰ καὶ οἶνον γλυκὺν ὑδαρέα προπίνειν, μὴ ψυχρόν, ὀλίγον ἐκ βομβυλίου <οὐκ> εὐρυστόμου.

Francine Blondé and Laurence Villard (1992) argue that this *bombylios* is the same as our "feeding bottle." The word, however, is rare in Greek, especially in this usage (more typically it refers to a bumblebee). In at least one other instance it refers to a vessel: on an early 3rd century BCE inventory inscription from the island of Delos a *bombylios* is listed alongside other, more familiar vessels, such as a dinos, a psykter, and a pelike.[43] These other vessels are usually associated with wine-drinking and bear no exclusive relationship with infants or children. The

[43] *IG* XI,2.154A68, dated to ca. 296 BCE. It is unclear if the vessels in question were made of metal or terracotta.

presence of *bombylios* in this list does not help us identify the vessel as our feeding bottle, but its association here with other kinds of vessels might suggest that it is not.[44]

The only clue in the passage from *Diseases* III, then, is the single word, ὀλίγον, "a little," which the author emphasizes a little later in the same passage, instructing physicians to administer certain liquids κατὰ σμικρὸν, in small amounts. Later, he says that liquid medications should be "poured in so that [the patient] does not choke" (ἐγχεῖν ἵνα μὴ ἀποπνίγῃ). These additional instructions do suggest the use of a spouted vessel that meters the outpouring of liquid, something like our feeding bottle, but the exact identification of the feeding bottle with *bombylios* is not secure.[45] Regardless, the name *bombylios* has been used in modern studies, both of the feeding bottles and of other spherical vessels without spouts.[46]

We may never be able to identify a single function for feeding bottles (as is the case for many aspects of material culture generally) but it is clear that these vessels, whatever they were called in the ancient world, were used to nourish infants and small children, rarely adults, with both milk and non-milk products. Their relative rarity suggests that we should consider these not as general-use cups, but instead as vessels produced for a specific and uncommon purpose. They

[44] *Bombylios* refers to a drinking cup in other sources (e.g., Athenaeus *Deipnosophistai* 11.784d) but they are equally vague and are too late to provide evidence for much earlier practices.

[45] Soranus of Ephesus, 2nd century CE, provides another hint about these vessels: he mentions an artificial nipple that permits infants to draw liquid (sweet water or watered-down wine) slowly and without risk, like from a breast (*Diseases of Women* II.17): διὸ κἂν ἔκδιψόν ποτε γένηται μετὰ τὴν τροφὴν τὸ βρέφος, ὕδωρ ἢ ὑδαρὲς οἰνάριον δοτέον αὐτῷ διὰ τῶν πεφιλοτεχνημένων θηλῶν΄ἀβλαβῶς γὰρ ἐκ τούτων κατ'ὀλίγον ὡς ἐκ τῶν μαστῶν τὸ ὑγρὸν ἕλκει. He does not describe the artificial nipple in more detail but allows us to imagine something similar to our feeding bottle. Varro, a Roman who lived in the late 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, describes a *guttus* as a vessel that pours "little by little" (*minutatim*). The reference, however, is to drinking wine at banquets, which would be inappropriate for an infant, so it is unlikely that this is the same as the feeding bottle (Varro, *On the Latin Language* V.124). The ancient shape that modern archaeologists refer to as a *guttus* does not resemble a feeding bottle and is likely not what Varro had in mind with his use of the word.

[46] See, for example, Ure (1934). For further discussion of the use of *bombylios*, see Blondé and Villard (1992).

are found with both newborns[47] and young children,[48] and rarely with adults,[49] which suggests that they were not intended to be used exclusively for breastfeeding or for weaning. Our only possible literary references to feeding bottles come from medical texts (Hippocrates, *Diseases* III and the later Soranus, *Diseases of Women* II) and an inventory for a Delian sanctuary that may be linked with concerns of childbirth, which suggests a particular context of use, one in which the individuals who used them were at an unusually high risk of death: infants, children, and adults who were too ill or weak or who exhibited various facial deformities that prevented them from suckling or feeding normally.

Cleft conditions

The almost exclusive appearance of feeding bottles in burial contexts supports the argument that feeding bottles assisted infants, small children, and occasionally adults who were exceedingly ill or weak (e.g., Blondé and Villard 1992). The question of its use for infants with orofacial (i.e., related to the mouth and face) deformities like cleft palate is less secure. Several scholars have argued specifically that cleft lips and cleft palates would have caused an infant to be killed at birth. Susan Rotroff and Maria Liston (2013:74) argue that an infant with "such a visible and debilitating birth defect" with a "poor prognosis for survival" would "almost certainly" have been rejected by its parents. Christian Laes (2008:98) suggests that parents would likely have reacted aversely to "a little girl…with a cleft lip, with the almost certain prospect of

[47] See, for example, the burial of a perinatal infant (T118) in the Greek necropolis at Sainte-Barbe à Marseille, which included a feeding cup (Moliner 2012).

[48] Two feeding bottles, for example, were found in the tomb (Tomb 12) of a four- or five-year-old at the Late Geometric Heroon in Eretria (Blandin 1998).

[49] Mariaud (2012:30) lists three examples found in adult graves at Ephesos, Chios, and Samos.

never being able to marry her off." Garland (1995:13) uses infants with cleft palates as his only example of "infants exhibiting gross abnormalities" who were "exposed immediately," although he offers no evidence to support the claim. Such a fatalistic conclusion, however, is not the only possibility.

Cleft conditions (cleft lip, cleft lip with palate, cleft palate) constitute the most common congenital defects of the face and the second most common overall developmental defect following clubfoot (Conderman 2016:167).[50] Besides being aesthetically disruptive,[51] cleft conditions can cause serious problems for infants: while closure around a breast or bottle can be obtained with a cleft lip as simply as a parent laying a finger across the opening, a cleft palate, which opens the oral and nasal cavities to one another, prevents an infant from creating the negative pressure (i.e., sucking) needed to feed (Reid *et al.* 2007). Because cleft conditions are often accompanied by a whole slate of other congenital abnormalities, infants born with cleft conditions are at a higher risk of death—a study conducted in 2002-2010 of 638 children born with orofacial clefts in England demonstrated that children born with a cleft palate had a mortality rate that was 15 times higher than the average for children born without a cleft palate (Kang *et al.* 2012), and an increased risk exists even when the infant does not have any associated congenital abnormalities (Hujoel *et al.* 1992).[52] In fact, cleft conditions have been

[50] For a recent and relevant discussion of the prevalence, embryology, and etiology of cleft conditions in modern as well as ancient contexts, see Adams (2016).

[51] A cleft palate alone does not necessarily affect an infant's appearance, it may be identified only after the infant has trouble feeding.

[52] The risk of death for infants with a cleft palate but no other abnormalities is much lower (1.4 times higher) than for those who have additional abnormalities.

shown to increase the risk of death for adults up to age 55 (Christensen *et al.* 2004). Risk factors include not only malnutrition and undernutrition, but also infections.

It is reasonable, I think, to assume not only that cleft conditions were at least as common in the past as they are today but also that the mortality rate of such infants in antiquity was much higher, given the limitations of contemporary medical knowledge and practice and ignorance about sterilization and contaminants. Cleft conditions, however, are not necessarily a death sentence in the absence of modern medicine: skeletal remains radiocarbon dated to 1883-1665 cal. BCE from a pastoralist cemetery in Altai, Russia show a young man, between 18 and 23 years old, with a cleft condition (complete bilateral cleft of the primary palate) that affected not only his palate, but also his dentition and nasal bones (Tur *et al.* 2016) (**Figure 1.5**). Facial reconstruction of this man suggests how visible his deformity would have been (**Figure 1.6**). Despite the problems that these pathologies likely caused for this young man, he lived into adulthood, was taller and more robust than his contemporaries, and isotopic analyses show that he shared a diet very similar to his contemporaries. Other archaeological examples, including an adult male from the Late Woodland period (ca. 500 to 1000 CE) in Pike County, Indiana (Phillips and Sivilich 2006), show that even before modern medical advances, individuals born with cleft conditions, even serious ones, could survive into adulthood, though they surely required additional accommodations for feeding as infants. Archaeological examples are, admittedly, few. In her Master's thesis from the University of Waterloo, Alisha Adams (2016) identified 23 archaeological instances of cleft lip or cleft palate in published reports from all over the world, and most identified belonged to individuals aged 20 to 50 years old, with the youngest

individual aged 8 to 10 years. The low number of archaeological examples, however, represents the difficulty with identifying cleft palate, not the lack of the presence of the condition.[53]

To my knowledge, no ancient author has been identified as describing someone with a cleft palate. A few passages in the Hippocratic *Corpus*, however, may refer to the condition. In one instance, the physician describes

> People with pointed heads: if they have strong necks, they are strong both elsewhere and in the bones; if, on the other hand, they have headaches and runny ears, their palates are hollow and teeth overlapping.
>
> Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 6.1.2

> Οἱ φοξοί, οἱ μὲν κραταύχενες, ἰσχυροὶ καὶ τἆλλα καὶ ὀστέοισιν· οἱ δὲ κεφαλαλγεῖς, καὶ ὠτόρρυτοι, τούτοισιν ὑπερῷαι κοῖλαι, καὶ ὀδόντες παρηλλαγμένοι.

Elsewhere, and in a passage that is repeated multiple times throughout the corpus, the physician says that

> For those whose bone separates from the palate, their nose sits in the middle; for those for whom it is where the teeth are, their nose is upturned.
>
> Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 6.3
> cf. also *Epidemics* 4.19; *Instruments of Reduction* 39

> Ὁκόσοισιν ὀστέον ἀπὸ ὑπερῴης ἀπῆλθε, τούτοισι μέση ἵζει ἡ ῥίς· οἷσιν ἔνθεν οἱ ὀδόντες ἄκρη σιμοῦται.

Both of these passages describe not only a palate-related defect, but also associated facial distortions that bear similarities to those associated with cleft palate. These passages suggest that physicians were familiar with clef conditions.

[53] It is difficult to distinguish a cleft palate from breakage due to taphonomic process or archaeological practice. What is more, because the palate is thin and fragile, it sometimes does not survive, depending on the qualities of the so*Il.*

Further suggesting that survived cleft conditions were not unknown in the ancient world is a terracotta figurine fragment from ancient Corinth (**Figure 1.7-12**).[54] Agnes Newhall Stilwell (1952:143), who published the mid-4th century BCE terracotta head, described it as "by far the finest grotesque figurine from the Potter's Quarter" at Corinth. Her description of the figurine's nose and mouth is worth quoting in full:

> Nose projects nearly at right angles to forehead and is bent to right. Wings of nose strongly marked and asymmetrical. Cheek bones and jaw muscles very prominent. Mouth wide open. Upper lip droops in center. Deep wrinkles from corners of nose to mouth. (Stilwell 1952:143)

"Every non-essential detail was omitted" (Stilwell 1952:143), so the peculiarities of the nose and mouth are here meaningful. As Tord Skoog (1969:50) notes, the sculptor of this figurine reproduced the characteristics of nasal asymmetry in a complete unilateral cleft of the lip with remarkable accuracy (see **Figure 1.13**, a photograph of a three-year-old infant with this congenital lip formation for comparison). The figurine has no teeth, perhaps to draw attention to what may be a particularly rough palate (although it is difficult to discern from photographs). Mirko Grmek and Danielle Gourevitch (1998:234) call the identification of this congenital condition "certain" and commend the sculptor on his precision. The presence of an orofacial cleft on this figurine reflects a familiarity with the condition, one that contradicts suggestions that such an infant would be rejected and/or killed.

Somewhat less secure is the identification of a facial deformity on the infant in the Boeotian figurine group discussed above (**Figure 1.3-4**). In her publication of the figurine, Gourevitch (1992:79) notes that "the infant's mouth appears to present a bizarre cavity." She says that it is not a deformity, but a mistake: the tip of the feeding bottle and the infant's mouth

[54] Corinth Inv. KT 24-9; Cat. No. 19.9.

were originally joined, but either in the process of firing or during modern restoration, the two were separated, leaving un creux bizarre, a bizarre cavity, on the infant's face. As Gourevitch (1992:78) points out, however, the faces of the infant and woman are finely detailed, unlike the simple molding of their bodies, and the feeding bottle was originally constructed separately. If the infant's face was originally molded separately, without the encumbrance of the vessel, one would expect the same attention to detail for his mouth as for the rest of his face. At the very least, his mouth should not be "bizarre." Furthermore, because the vessel was formed separately from the mouth, it should not have distorted the infant's mouth if it shrank back during drying or firing. Could the sculptor have here been deliberate in her or his molding of the infant's mouth, intending to draw attention to its malformation? Antoinette Chamoux (1973:411; cf. also Pomadére 2007:276) points out that historically, hard spouts such as the ones on feeding bottles were covered with a piece of cloth so that it more closely resembled a nipple (or a wick). Gourevitch (1992:79) identifies the object in the woman's hand as a rag or a piece of cloth: could that have been used to cover the mouth of the feeding bottle? If, in fact, this identification is correct, we may well have an example of an infant with an orofacial malformation who is being actively accommodated by his terracotta mother or nurse.

Feeding bottles associated with sick or deformed infants

Skulls with clear and intact cleft palates are rarely found in archaeological samples: as stated above, there are only 23 published archaeological examples worldwide (Adams 2016:4). Cleft palates are rarely identified because it is difficult to distinguish between the condition and later breakage due to taphonomic processes, excavation, or post-excavation storage. It is not that the condition did not exist. We cannot, therefore, conclusively link feeding bottles with any Greek infant, child, or adult with a cleft palate or, for that matter, with any specific illness. The

feeding bottles, however, fulfill the requirements of modern bottles specifically made for infants with cleft conditions in that they dispense milk slowly (Rouquet and Loridant 2003) and without needing the infant to produce suction.[55] One possible (though ultimately unprovable) association comes from central Athens. In 1937 and 1938 archaeologists excavated a deposit from a well in the Agora, the commercial, political, and economic center of the ancient city. The deposit in question dates to the 2nd century BCE (175-150 BCE) and contained the remains of at least 449 pre-term or full-term infants, two infants under 1 year old, an 8-year-old, and an adult (Liston and Rotroff 2013). Upon excavation, the bones (including the remains of at least 150 dogs) were collected and then stored all together, and it is no longer possible to identify whole skeletons; instead, elements must be studied individually, in isolation. Included in the deposit was a range of industrial and household debris and at least some items that should be considered grave goods, deposited along with the infants (Liston and Rotroff 2013:65). The deposit will be discussed in more detail below, but relevant here is the presence of a feeding bottle amidst the infant remains (**Figure 1.14**).[56]

Maria Liston and Susan Rotroff identify this feeding bottle as a grave good, given that the shape is most often found as a grave good in formal burials, but we cannot link this feeding bottle to any particular infant among the 449 in the deposit. Among the deposited remains, however, were at least nine maxillae that exhibited cleft palates (Liston and Rotroff 2013:74; Adams 2016:13). Is it possible that the feeding bottle was used to try to feed one of the infants

[55] See, for example, the four bottles recommended by the Seattle Children's Hospital: "Cleft Feeding Instructions" Seattle Children's Hospital, accessed 18 November 2016, <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/craniofacial/patient-family-resources/cleft-feeding-instructions/>. This is similar to what Soranus of Ephesus (above) recommends for artificial nipples: they allow the infant to drink slowly and without difficultly.

[56] Agora P 13498. Originally published in Rotroff (1997:358, no. 1195; fig. 73, pl. 87).

with a cleft palate who ultimately died and was deposited in the well? Even though we cannot link it definitively with an infant with a cleft palate, the bottle is here present with infants who were sick, weak, or deformed: almost 40 percent of the infants in the deposit presented evidence for illnesses like meningitis, which would have resulted in their natural deaths, and many others likely died from fatal conditions and illnesses that left no visible trace on the skeleton (Liston and Rotroff 2013:73). It is likely that this feeding bottle was used to nourish one of these infants, perhaps even one with a cleft palate.

"Babies in the well"

The 2nd century well deposit introduced above is important when considering the question of infanticide in ancient Greece. Although the well was located near the city's most public square, its precise location was relatively isolated, tucked in an alley between the Stoa of Zeus and the so-called Arsenal, making it easy to access privately without being much seen by passersby. Until it was re-examined recently (e.g., Liston and Rotroff 2013), scholars were divided on its interpretation. T. Leslie Shear (1939:239) suggests that these infants probably died in childbirth and were deposited in the well as a symbolic sacrifice to Aphrodite. J. Lawrence Angel (1945:311) posited that the deposit was best explained by large-scale deaths from a famine or plague. John K. Papadopoulos (2000:111) argues that the well should be equated with modern "designated resting places for stillborn, unbaptized children and other members of society who are considered unsuitable for burial in consecrated ground." Some scholars associated the Athenian deposit with a deposit of 100 infants in a Late Roman or Early Byzantine sewer in Ashkelon, Israel (Faerman *et al.* 2008; Smith and Kahlia 1992).[57] Ancient DNA analysis

[57] Comparison is sometimes made between the Athenian well deposit and a deposit of more than 262 infants in a 3rd or 2nd century well in Messene in the Peloponnese. These infants, however, were originally buried formally in pots

suggested that the infants in the Ashkelon cistern were overwhelmingly male, and the deposit was interpreted as an example of selective infanticide: prostitutes working at a nearby bathhouse kept female infants, whom they could raise as prostitutes, and killed male infants, who could be of less economic use to them.[58]

Infanticide was considered for the Athens deposit because of the age distribution of the infants: the ages range from 26 weeks in utero to four- to six-months post-term, but there is a clear peak at 37 to 38 weeks, or about the age of a full-term birth (Liston and Rotroff 2013:69). The majority of infants here, then, were either premature or mature births, a result that raises the question of how the infants died. The fact of the matter, however, is that infant mortality is highest within the first few days of birth. Furthermore, analysis of the infants' skeletons revealed that almost 40 percent died from natural causes, and it is likely that many more succumbed to conditions or illnesses that left no trace on the hard skeleton (Liston and Rotroff 2013:73). Given these circumstances, Liston and Rotroff (2013:74) conclude that "it is unlikely that most of these infants were victims of infanticide."

They do not, however, rule out infanticide as the cause of death for some of these infants. Of the infants who presented cleft palates, for example, Liston and Rotroff (2013:74) suggest that they may have been victims of infanticide, calling the condition "visible and debilitating." Another infant had a deformed arm when it died sometime at or near birth (Liston and Rotroff 2013:74-75) and yet another infant, though not a neonate, had hydrocephalus (Rizvi and Anjum 2005:503; cited in Liston and Rotroff 2013:72), a relatively common condition. We cannot know

nearby (Bourbou and Themelis 2010). When the infants' original burial ground was re-used, the infants' remains were transported to the well, which was then used as a disposal area.

[58] For a discussion of the problems with the use of aDNA in this case, see Fox (2012).

for sure if some of the infants with deformities or illnesses died naturally or were victims of infanticide, but because so many infants in the well were shown definitively to have died of natural causes and deposited in the well after they died, not before, I suggest that infanticide is not usefully applied to any of the infants in the well.

Consider, for example, the infant with the deformed arm. Both the upper and lower segments of the arm (a humerus and an ulna) were as short as those belonging to a 26-week-old fetus but nearly as broad as those of a full-term infant, and the joint surfaces of these bones are flat, shallow, and amorphous (Liston and Rotroff 2013:74-75). This infant may be compared with the description of those who are "weasel-armed from birth" in the Hippocratic treatise *On Joints* (12; 53), discussed above. As we learn from the physician, such conditions are no cause for despair, as the individuals can be usefully employed in a variety of jobs and use several different kinds of tools. The presence of the feeding bottle in the deposit (see above) suggests that the parents, midwife, or physician of at least one infant attempted to feed it when it could not eat normally, which demonstrates an attempt to keep a weak, sick, or deformed infant alive in spite of its weakness, illness, or deformity. Instead of providing any evidence for infanticide, then, this deposit likely represents the disposal of infants who died shortly after birth, before they had been formally incorporated into the family (Papadopoulos 2000:111; see also Garland 1985).

Conclusion

Any argument about the exposure or killing of deformed infants in ancient Greece that does not incorporate literary, material, and bioarchaeological evidence rests on insecure grounds. Relying solely or even heavily on the testimonies of Plutarch, Plato, and Aristotle presents a skewed view on the matter: Plutarch's discussion of the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus belongs in studies about 1st and 2nd century CE Roman perceptions about Sparta, disability, and infanticide,

and Plato and Aristotle present only their ideal conceptions of the world. Practicing physicians who traveled and treated patients throughout the Greek world in the 5th and 4th century BCE obviously encountered infants, children, and adults with a variety of congenital deformities, including clubfoot, weasel-arms, and dwarfism. The physicians saw these individuals fulfill productive roles in their communities and they developed treatments for those they thought could be cured. I am not aware of any skeletal remains from the period under question here (ca. 1000 to 200 BCE) that exhibits a congenital deformity,[59] but Angel (1971:55) identified a skeleton from Middle Bronze Age Lerna belonging to an adolescent male, about 15 years old, who had a "striking deformity of the left foot," which he identified as clubfoot.[60] Parents, midwives, and physicians occasionally attempted to deliver nourishment and medicines to sick, weak, or deformed infants by means of a specially designed vessel, the feeding bottle. Figurines like the mid-4th century BCE man with an orofacial deformity and the entire corpus of grotesque figurines that emerge in the Hellenistic period show a certain familiarity with deformed bodies. Even one of the twelve Olympian gods, Hephaistos, who will be discussed in more detail in the Conclusion, walked with a limp, and a whole series of vases from the Archaic period (see, e.g., Ziskowski 2012) show male figures with clubfeet. The assumption that it was common, regular, or automatic for deformed infants to be killed finds no support in the evidence from any period of ancient Greece. The evidence that we have rather suggests the opposite, that such infants were reared and sometimes treated or accommodated. It is not impossible that, in some cases,

[59] This is due to several reasons. First, it is difficult to distinguish congenital and acquired deformities on skeletons. Second, taphonomic processes and issues surrounding excavation and storage of human remains mean that much potential data is lost. Third, bioarchaeological studies on skeletal material from this time period in Greece have only recently focused on issues of paleopathology.

[60] 122 Ler (grave BE-18). Another skeleton, that of a 45-year-old man, might exhibit the same deformity (127 Ler) (Angel 1971:52).

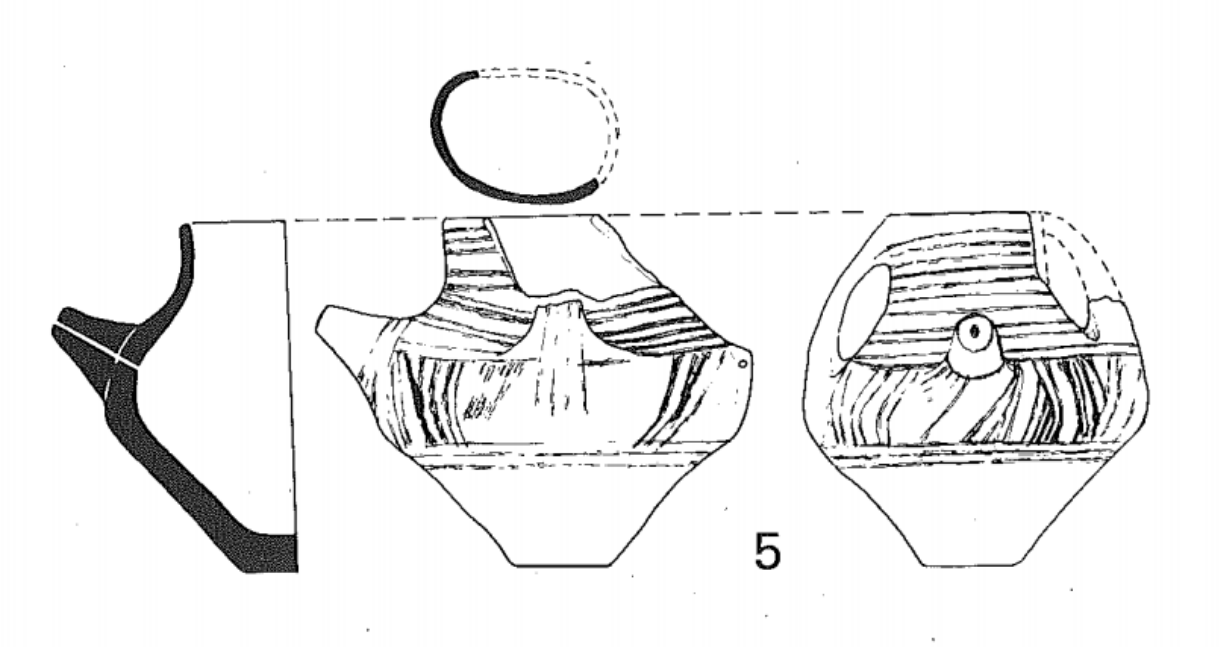
infants—deformed or otherwise—were killed or exposed in ancient Greece, but such a practice should be considered the exception, not the rule.

Figure 1. 1

Attic red-figure aryballos (oil jar), name vase of the Clinic Painter, ca. 480 BCE, showing a male dwarf in the context of a physician's clinic.
Paris, Louvre CA 2183.

Photograph by Maria Daniels, courtesy of the Musée du Louvre.

Figure 1. 2



Late Neolithic graphite-painted ware with spout. Sitagroi Pot 17.

Photo from Renfrew, Gimbutas and Elster (1986, Fig. 12.5:5).

Figure 1. 3

Early 5th century BCE terracotta figurine from Boeotia.

© Musées d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève, n° inv. A 2003-0011/dt
Photo: André Longchamp

Figure 1. 4

Early 5th century BCE terracotta figurine from Boeotia.

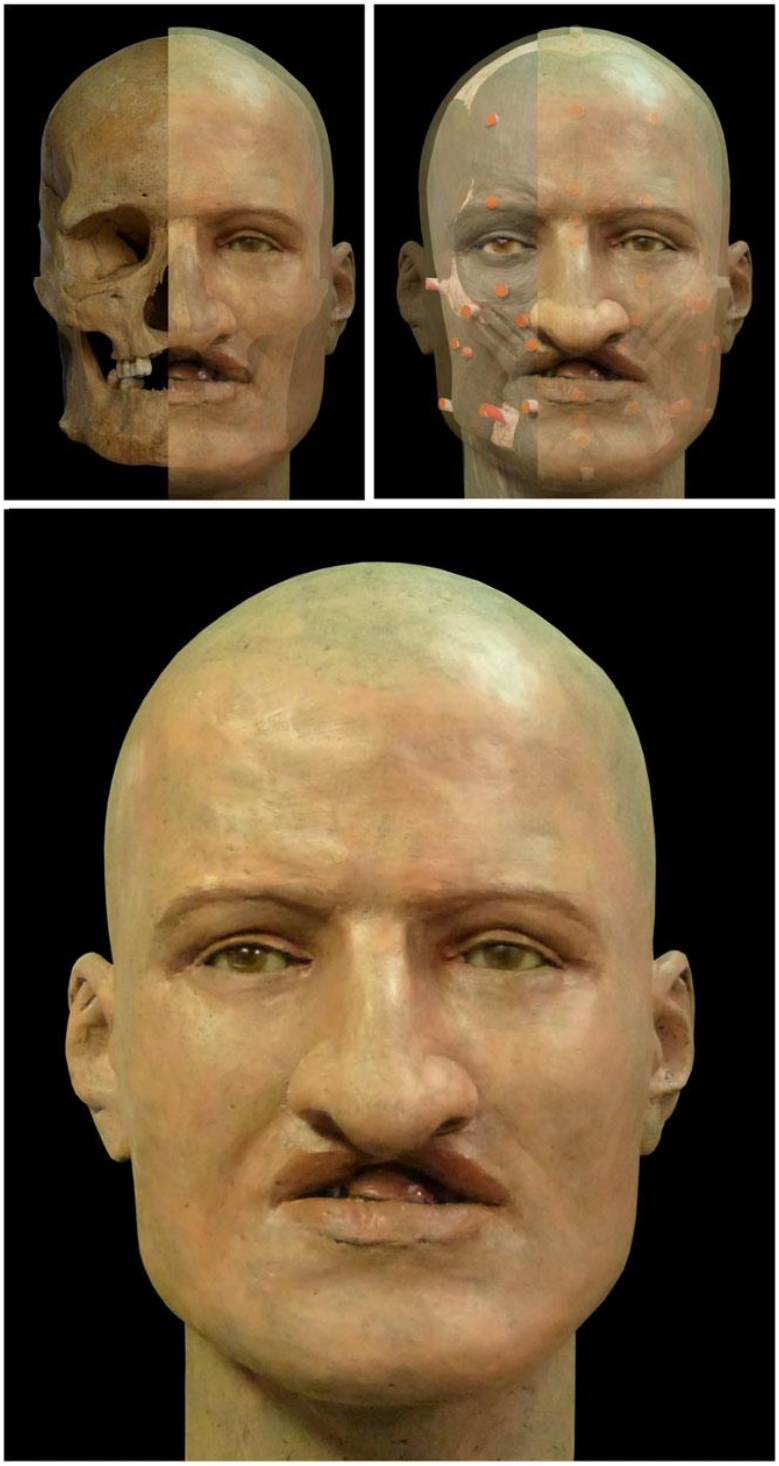
© Musées d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève, n° inv. A 2003-0011/dt
Photo: André Longchamp

Figure 1. 5

Anterior (a) and lateral (b) view of the cleft skull of an 18- to 23-year old man from the Middle Bronze Age cemetery of Firsovo 14 (Altai, Russia).

Photo from Tur *et al.* (2016: Figure 3).

Figure 1. 6



Facial reconstruction of the cleft man from the Middle Bronze Age cemetery of Firsovo 14 (Altai, Russia).

Photo from Tur *et al.* (2016: Figure 5).

Figure 1. 7

Mid-4th century BCE terracotta figurine fragment from Corinth's Potter's Quarter. Corinth KT 24-9. Originally published in Stillwell (1952: Pl. 30, cat. 19.9).

Photo: Petros Dellatolas. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations.

Figure 1. 8

Mid-4th century BCE terracotta figurine fragment from Corinth's Potter's Quarter. Corinth KT 24-9. Originally published in Stillwell (1952: Pl. 30, cat. 19.9).

Photo: Petros Dellatolas. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations.

Figure 1. 9

Mid-4th century BCE terracotta figurine fragment from Corinth's Potter's Quarter. Corinth KT 24-9. Originally published in Stillwell (1952: Pl. 30, cat. 19.9).

Photo: Petros Dellatolas. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations.

Figure 1. 10

Mid-4th century BCE terracotta figurine fragment from Corinth's Potter's Quarter. Corinth KT 24-9. Originally published in Stillwell (1952: Pl. 30, cat. 19.9).

Photo: Petros Dellatolas. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations.

Figure 1. 11

Mid-4th century BCE terracotta figurine fragment from Corinth's Potter's Quarter. Corinth KT 24-9. Originally published in Stillwell (1952: Pl. 30, cat. 19.9).

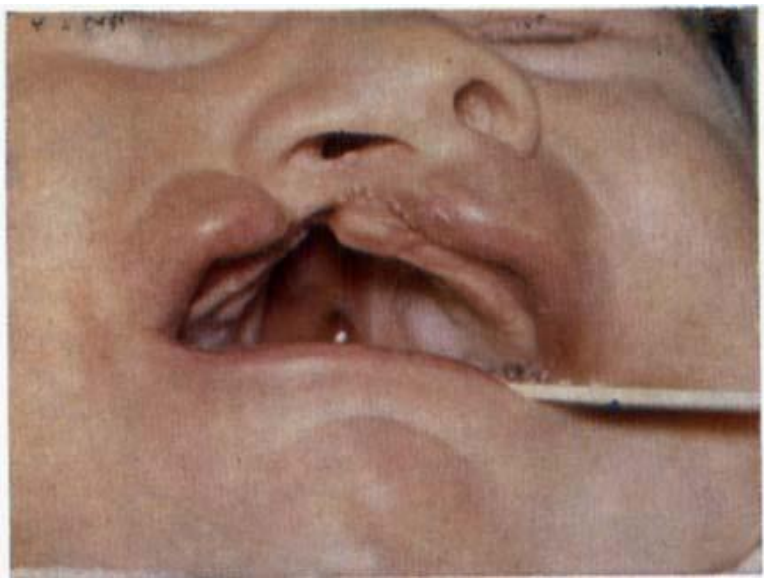
Photo: Petros Dellatolas. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Corinth Excavations.

Figure 1. 12

Drawing of a mid-4th century BCE terracotta figurine fragment from Corinth's Potter's Quarter. Corinth KT 24-9.

Drawing after Skoog (1969: Fig. 2).

Figure 1. 13



Photograph of an infant aged 3 months, with congenital lip malformation with associated deformities, including oblique nose and asymmetry of nostrils.

Photo from Skoog (1969: Figure 5a).

Figure 1. 14

3rd or early 2nd century BCE feeding bottle from the Athens "baby well."
Agora inventory P 13498.

Photo by Craig Mauzy, Agora Excavations.

Chapter 2: Disabled Children in Ancient Greece

> "When kissing your child," Epictetus said, "you should say in your heart: maybe it will be dead tomorrow."
>
> Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 11.34
> (quoted in Parkin 2013:40)

> "Καταφιλοῦντα τὸ παιδίον δεῖν," ἔλεγεν ὁ Ἐπίκτητος, "ἔνδον ἐπιφθέγγεσθαι· Αὔριον ἴσως ἀποθανῇ."

A 6th century BCE king of Lydia, Croesus, supposedly had two sons. As the 5th century BCE historian Herodotus tells the story, one of Croesus's sons was "utterly ruined" (διέφθαρτο) because he was deaf (κωφός), while the other, named Atys, was superior in every way for a man of his age (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.34). Croesus was very protective of Atys, whom he considered to be his only son; "for the other son," Herodotus has Croesus say (1.38), "because his hearing is ruined, I do not reckon a son of mine." Later, Herodotus says (1.85) that this other son, who remains unnamed throughout, was fit or suitable except for the fact that he was mute (ἄφωνος). There is some slippage here – is this son deaf or mute? or both? – but the point seems to be that this son, whose only defect was related to this loss of hearing and/or speech, was thought of as incomplete and therefore lost. He is no longer valuable as Croesus's son. But Croesus did not give up on the son from the beginning. We learn that Croesus in fact expended considerable wealth and energy to assist this "destroyed" son, including consulting the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. There, the Pythian priestess warned Croesus neither to wish nor to pray to hear his son speak because it will be a luckless day when it happens (Herodotus 1.85). Whatever the value that Croesus accorded this son as an adult, we can see that he invested much in him as a child.

Croesus and his son show up often in studies on disability in the ancient world. Christian Laes (2008) uses this story to open his discussion of disabled children in Roman antiquity. Robert Garland (1995:96-97) cites this story as an example of Herodotean subversion, whereby

the defective son serves primarily to highlight the same moral blindness and lack of insight that encouraged Croesus's "ill-considered invasion of a military superior neighbor," Persia. Martha L. Rose (2003:66-78) frames an entire chapter around the story of "Croesus's Other Son," in which she describes the "broad cultural assumptions that shaped the realities of hearing-impaired people" in ancient Greece (see also Laes 2011b). In each case, the focus is on the son and his deafness and/or muteness.

The purpose to which I put this story, however, is somewhat different. In this chapter, I demonstrate that parents and communities invested a great deal of emotional energy into the health and well-being of their children when they were sick, injured, or disabled. Successful or not, these parents and communities prayed, underwent pilgrimages, hired physicians, consulted oracles, employed magic, and made sacrifices and dedications in their quest to maintain or restore the health and able-bodiedness of their children. These efforts were sometimes preventative, aiming to keep children healthy and uninjured. They were sometimes undertaken after a child had become sick or injured, in hope for a cure.

Ancient Greeks cared a great deal for their children, including and perhaps especially when they were sick or permanently or temporarily disabled. Such a state of disability was obviously undesirable, an observation that deserves more scrutiny but that is outside of the scope of this study, but disabled children were not banished from the hearts or minds of their families and communities before, during, or after an illness, injury, or disability, whatever its duration. To the contrary, the families and communities of these children took extraordinary pains for the prevention of, accommodation for, removal or cure of, and resignation to disability experienced by their youngest members.

This argument is noticeably different than those presented for disabled individuals in other age groups. The difference lies in the special status that children had in the ancient Greek world: they were neither newborns, not yet initiated into the family, nor adults expected to fend for themselves. Children already required a great deal of care or attention and parents display a great deal of anxiety about children whether they were healthy or not. For this reason, much of what I discuss here applies equally to disabled children as to able-bodied children, that is, parents were no less concerned about their disabled children – they did not invest less in them – than they were for their able-bodied children.

I begin by discussing the difficulties inherent in studies on children in the ancient world, difficulties that arise at the point of identification. What is a child, and how do you know? After establishing some definitions, I turn to the various ways that parents, families, and communities attempted to protect children from misfortune and to help children who were already ill, injured, or disabled. Evidence for such measures comes in the form of dedications to kourotrophic deities, visits to healing and/or oracular shrines, the use of magic (e.g., amulets), and appeals to physicians. It is not always possible to tell whether a dedication at a healing sanctuary was preemptive or made on behalf of a child who was already sick, injured, or disabled. For children who were already struck by such misfortune, ancient Greeks provided active care and treatment; such treatment could indeed be extensive, expensive, and long-lasting. My argument in this section bears affinities to one put forth by Rebecca Miller Ammerman (2007) in the context of south Italian religious practice. Ammerman showed how the dedication of certain votives – figurines of women holding infants and of swaddled infants alone – was the material manifestation of parents' anxiety and fear regarding the health and well-being of their child(ren). This same anxiety and fear, I argue, is traceable throughout the Greek world.

Who is a child?

Studies of children in past eras have burgeoned in recent decades. Scholars have successfully argued for the legitimacy of studying such children, demonstrating that "[C]ulture is not static and is not created only by adults of one gender. Instead it is constructed by individuals of different ages, gender, class, ethnicity, and occupation" (Coşkunsu 2015b:6). Scholars have shown that "childhood" is not a given or a universal feature of societies, despite the fact that biological "children" must always have existed, and that "by neglecting children in their reconstructions of ancient societies, archaeologists are unwittingly adopting a universal notion of childhood which is unwarranted on theoretical and evidentiary grounds" (Coşkunsu 2015b:8). One need only survey the literature on the history of childhood (see, e.g., Ariès 1960; de Mause 1974; Lillehammer 1989; Kamp 2001; Shanahan 2007) to understand that a child and childhood are both cultural constructions, that there is not necessarily a distinct phase of the human life cycle called "childhood" that is differentiated from what precedes and what follows. Philippe Ariès (1960), for example, argued (unconvincingly, to some) that the idea (in French, sentiment) of childhood did not exist in the Medieval world, that childhood was effectively discovered in the 17th century. As scholars of the ancient world have shown, however, the ancient Greeks did, indeed, recognize some form of a childhood.[61]

Studying childhood is complicated by the methods and materials available to study childhood in the past. The most obvious body of material, literary texts, were written by adults – and usually adult men – and therefore reflect an adults' perspective on childhood. Many studies on childhood in the ancient world (e.g., Golden 2015), rely heavily on the literature of ancient

[61] The seventh edition of a bibliography maintained by Ville Vuolanto (2015), for example, includes 2,067 pieces of scholarship on the subject of "Children in the Ancient World and the Early Middle Ages, Eighth Century BC – Eighth Century AD." This alone should make clear how robust the field is.

Greece. Popular, too, in reconstructions of ancient childhood are iconographical and material analyses (e.g., Crelier 2008; Beaumont 2012), as images of children in sculpture, reliefs, and vase paintings, as well as material associated with children, inform a variety of aspects of ancient life. Finally, bioarchaelogical analysis (e.g., Lagia 2007) has been helpful in reconstructing information about things such as weaning ages, diet and nutrition, and trauma for children. In each type of study, however, scholars confront the problem of how to identify or distinguish children and whom to include as "children." The question becomes, how do you divide the life-course into its culturally relevant stages and how do you apply that to the available evidence?

Siân E. Halcrow and Nancy Tayles (2008), Anna Lagia (2007), and Megan A. Perry (2006) discuss the problems of defining age-grades through the bioarchaeological record, and Ann Gibbons (2008) considers the issue over the long-term, comparing humans with apes. Jane Eva Baxter (2008) and the papers included in the volume edited by Güner Coşkunsu (2015) address additional problems and approaches to "the archaeology of childhood." One part of the problem in defining childhood is the difference between biological age and social age (see Halcrow and Tayles 2008): a child's biological birth–when she or he exits the birth canal – is not necessarily her or his social birth – when she or he is formally (and legally?) incorporated into the family or community. In ancient Greece, a child's social birth does not occur until some days after her or his biological birth (see, e.g., Golden 2015:20).

Making matters more difficult are the multiple, contradictory systems of age-grades in operation at any given time (see Golden 2015:10ff). Thomas M. Falkner (1989) shows how Hesiod understands four basic divisions within the male life course, coinciding with the Greek terms παῖς (boy), νέος/νεώτερος/κουρότερος (youth), ἀνήρ (man), and γέρων (old man). The 4th century BCE philosopher Aristotle, on the other hand, subscribed to a tripartite system (Aristotle,

Rhetoric II.12ff.).[62] According to Aristotle, the male life course is divided into youth (νεότης), prime (ἀκμή), and old age (γῆρας). The author of the Hippocratic *Sevens*, writing probably during the Hellenistic period (3rd-1st century BCE), instead divides the life-course into seven periods, each lasting seven years and corresponding to the terms παιδίον, παῖς, μειράκιον, νεανίσκος, ἀνήρ, πρεσβύτης, and γέρων.[63] The Athenian statesman Solon also used seven-year divisions, but conceived of ten such seven-year periods (see West 1972:135-137). Diogenes Laertius quotes Pythagoras in his division of the life-course into four twenty-year periods and their associations with the seasons:

> A boy (παῖs) for twenty years, a youth (νεηνίσκος) for twenty, a young man (νεηνίης) for twenty, and an old man (γερών) for twenty. And these ages correspond to the seasons thus: παῖς to spring, νεηνίσκος to summer, νεηνίης to autumn, and γέρων to winter.
>
> Diogenes Laertius 8.1.10

> Παῖς εἴκοσι ἔτεα, νεηνίσκος εἴκοσι, νεηνίης εἴκοσι, γέρων εἴκοσι. αἱ δὲ ἡλικίαι πρὸς τὰς ὥρας ὧδε σύμμετροι· παῖς ἔαρ, νεηνίσκος θέρος, νεηνίης φθινόπωρον, γέρων χειμών.

The author of the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* operates within a vaguer system when he ranks men according to how they endure fasting: old men (γέροντες) easiest, followed by middle-aged men (οἱ καθεστηκότες), then young men (μειρακία), and finally children (παιδία) (Hippocrates, *Aphorisms* 1.XIII), without formally designating the relevant biological ages for these categories.[64] An inscription from the 2nd century CE lists four stages of life for the Athenian youth: γάμων, γεννήσεως, Χοῶν, ἐφηβείας, that is, marriage, birth, choes, adolescence (*IG* II^2,

[62] See, also, Gomme (1956:105).

[63] For a discussion of the history of this text, see West (1971). Roscher (1906) was one of the first attempts to understand the text in a cosmological sense and Webster 1951 discusses the importance of the number seven in this text and others.

[64] Lesley Dean-Jones (2013) discusses the age parameters of childhood in the Hippocratic corpus.

1368.130; see Papadopoulos 2000:111 and Burkert 1972:221fn28). And as Mark Golden (2015:12) has shown, "usage is thoroughly inconsistent" when it comes to any of the above systems of age categorization.

Such a complex organization of age is not specific to the ancient Greek world. As Laura L. Nash (1978:4) argued, we in the modern period "regularly recognize at least fourteen stages of life: newborn, infant, toddler, child, preteen, teen, early twenties, late twenties, midthirties, forties, midforties, fifties, early sixties, senior citizen." And our own system is not static. The classicist Moses I. Finley (1981:159), for example, refers to "the American discovery (or should I say invention?) of the teen-ager or the increasing tendency . . . to prolong social adolescence into the late twenties." Modern debates about who, exactly, is a member of Generation X, Generation Y, the Millennial generation, and Generation Z reflect how complicated these discussions can get, even among those living through them.[65]

More complicated still is the gendered construction of age (see, e.g., Garroway 2012). Most of our understanding of ancient Greek age-grades, including all of the above, are in reference to the male of the species. The Roman physician Galen stated explicitly that boys and girls had different biological trajectories after the onset of puberty (*On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, especially 8.6.25-29; see Bobou 2015:23). In his utopian *Laws*, the philosopher Plato plots different life courses for boys and girls: after the age of six, boys and girls are separated and, thereafter, boys spend time with boys and girls with girls (Plato, *Laws* 7.794c). Lesley Beaumont (1995), Anne P. Chapin (2007), Ada Cohen (2007), and Susan

[65] New generations are regularly added as they are deemed necessary. As I was writing this chapter in the early months of 2018, a new micro-generation was born: those born between 1977 and 1983 – a mere seven-year period – are now termed "xennials." See, for example, the Pew Research Center's report on "The Whys and Hows of Generations Research" (2015), which addresses why research on age cohorts is relevant in modern politicking and advertising.

Langdon (2007) discuss gender conventions in the representation of children, whether divine or mortal, in art (for more on art, see below). Kathy L. Gaca (2010-2011) demonstrates the difficulty presented by the use of generic terms like παῖς but argues convincingly for the value of critical analysis of the distinction in certain contexts, as in narratives of sexual violence. When girls and women were not referred to with generic terms, they could be called a number of other, gender-specific words, such as κόρη (girl), παρθένος (girl), γυνή (woman), and γραῖα (old woman).

A variety of scholars have addressed the problems related to identifying children in ancient art (e.g., Beaumont 1995; Neils and Oakley 2003; Grossman 2007; Langdon 2007; Lawton 2007; Crelier 2008; Dasen 2008; Oakley 2013; Bobou 2015). As Olympia Bobou (2015:*passim*) and others have pointed out, before the 4th century BCE, children in Greek art appear as miniature adults. See, for example, a well-known mid-5th century BCE depiction of Oedipus by the Achilles Painter (**Figure 2.1**).[66] Here, the infant Oedipus has the physique and facial features of a grown man, including well-proportioned limbs and toned and defined musculature. That he is a child is indicated only by his size, small enough to be carried by the adult (not giant) shepherd, labeled Euphorbus. The smaller scale of children can be difficult to read in group scenes because slaves and attendants are likewise depicted as small adults. Such a blurring of the line between child and slave in art is similar to the situation in literature, in the use of the word παῖς (see above). In the 4th century BCE and later, however, children are depicted more realistically. Very young children are often shown sitting or crawling, and older children have chubby bodies with proportions more appropriate for a child (Boubou 2015:2). It is

[66] Paris, Cabinet des Médailles: 372; *ARV*[2] 987.

difficult at times to distinguish boys from girls (see, e.g., Grossman 2004; Palagia 2008). A lot of ink has been spilled, for example, on the culminating scene on the (in)famous Parthenon frieze (**Figure 2.2**). Here, a standing adult male figure receives a folded cloth from a child. The online entry on the British Museum's website for this slab of the East Frieze of the Parthenon lists the child as a boy, but as Olga Palagia (2008) showed, the matter is hardly uncontentious. Palagia (2008:6) herself identifies the child as a girl, as Stuart and Revett (1787:12) had more than 200 years earlier. A similarly muddled situation occurs for the youths in Bronze Age frescoes on the island of Thera (see Davis 1986 and Chapin 2007, with bibliography). For these reasons, I apply contextual clues and rely on the expertise of the above scholars to determine whether a figure is a child or slave, and whether a child is male or female.

Given the inconsistent and fluid nature of age-grades in the ancient world, I will be somewhat inconsistent and fluid in what follows. I rely on references in texts and inscriptions to children using any of the above words that clearly refer to non-adults, with an especial focus on those children who have not yet attained puberty, without distinguishing between children of different biological ages. The word παῖς can refer either to a child or to an (adult) slave and I rely on context to determine which is meant (see Golden 1985). I will attempt to tease out gender distinctions, but this is not always possible. In what follows, my focus is on children, or pre-adults, in general, regardless of their specific biological ages. This begs the question of the existence of childhood as a separate and distinct phase in the ancient Greek world, something that is borne out in a variety of studies on the subject. Children not only existed as children, but parents, families, and communities attempted to guard their children from misfortune and to help them when they fell ill or became injured or disabled.

Protecting children

Ammerman (2007:131) showed convincingly that "[W]hen it comes to what is arguably a society's most precious resource, its children, divine assistance is often sought . . . to keep watch over the health of young offspring." And indeed, the "anxieties and hopes of the local community with regard to the well-being of infants" (Ammerman 2007:148) that she showed for the (presumably Greek) communities living in South Italy are traceable in the ancient Greek world. Ancient Greek parents, families, and communities expressed a great deal of anxiety about the health and well-being of their children and they undertook a variety of preventative and protective measures on their behalf, including making dedications at sanctuaries of deities they hoped would protect them; employing magic in the form of amulets; celebrating children's passage of especially risky periods of life; and, at least on the part of physicians, working to understand the kinds of regimens that were particularly suitable for children. Parents, families, and communities were invested in the lives of children not just when they were engaged in religious, economic, educational, and other spheres of ancient society, but also when they were unable to participate due to illness, injury, or disability.

Appeals to the gods

We have plenty of evidence that parents visited and made sacrifices and dedications at sanctuaries for a variety of deities for the sake of their children, both before they needed divine assistance and after. In the story that opened this chapter, we learn that

> When he was in his former prosperity, [the Lydian king] Croesus had done everything on [his deaf son's] behalf, and in addition to trying other things, he had sent to Delphi to inquire about him.
>
> Herodotus 1.85

> ἐν τῇ ὧν παρελθούσῃ εὐεστοῖ ὁ Κροῖσος τὸ πᾶν ἐς αὐτὸν ἐπεποιήκεε, ἄλλα τε ἐπιφραζόμενος, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐς Δελφοὺς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπεπόμφεε χρησομένους.

A very wealthy man at the time, Croesus had the means to consult the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, which he later determined was the only true oracle (νομίσας μοῦνον εἶναι μαντήιον τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖσι, Herodotus 1.48); he was a king, with significant resources at his disposal. How much does this story reflect the realities of ancient Greek families?

Among the tales about various visitors to the healing sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros in the Peloponnese, inscribed sometime in the 4th century BCE, is the story about a voiceless boy (παῖς ἄφωνος) who came to the sanctuary for the sake of his voice, accompanied by his father.[67] Croesus's son, too, was ἄφωνος. In the Epidaurian instance, however, we are encouraged to believe that the boy was cured (καὶ ἐκ τούτου ὑγιὴς ἐγέ[νετο]). First the voiceless boy and his father sacrificed and performed the customary rites. Then a boy carrying fire for the god, probably a temple servant, commanded the father to promise that if they obtained the cure they sought, they would return in a year's time and offer thanks. At this, the voiceless boy said aloud, "I promise" (ὑποδέκομαι), repeated it once more at his father's bidding, and was thereafter cured. This father and son pair, then, undertook a journey – from where, we do not know – in search of a cure, and they received it.

Similar stories are evident elsewhere. At Dodona, located in northwest Greece near the modern city of Ioannina, was an oracular sanctuary of Zeus. The oracle here was one of the oldest in antiquity (see, e.g., Nicol 1958). Herodotus tells a story, told to him by the priestesses at the sanctuary itself, that two black doves flew from Thebes in Egypt, one to Libya and the other

[67] Stele A 5 (LiDonnici 1995); T423.5 (Edelstein and Edelstein 1945).

to Dodona (Herodotus 2.55). The black dove that flew to Dodona landed on an oak tree and spoke with a human voice, declaring that this should be the place for an oracular shrine of Zeus and so it was. Another tradition has it that the sanctuary was founded by Deukalion, the son of the god Prometheus, after the Great Flood (see, e.g., Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 1). In whatever way it was established, the oracle at Dodona was active early enough for the epic hero Odysseus to visit it in order to learn whether he should return to his home of Ithaca openly or *in cognito* (Homer, *Odyssey* 14.327ff.). It was certainly active in the late 5th century, when a parent or parents visited and inscribed on lead a question for the oracle: "About the child: will it [learn to] talk?"[68] This child may have been ἄφωνος, like Croesus's son and like the boy who visited the healing sanctuary at Epidauros. Whatever the specific nature of this child's impairment, it was permanent enough that her or his parent(s) traveled to the oracle at Dodona to put forth this question, much as Croesus had visited the oracle at Delphi to seek guidance for his own son's impairment.

In the above examples, parents visited the sanctuaries of Apollo, Asklepios, and Zeus in search of a cure for a child who was, either congenitally or by incident after birth, disabled. Other evidence is less clear on the timing of dedication or request. On the south slope of the Acropolis in Athens at the end of the 4th century BCE, a woman named Lysistrata set up a dedication to Herakles for the sake of her children (ὑπὲρ τῶν παιδ[ίων], cited in Price 1978:128).[69] We do not know if Lysistrata hoped that Herakles would protect her children from misfortune befalling them or help them because it already had, and we do not know what,

[68] Archaeological Museum of Ioannina 13126. For translation, see Chaniotis, Kaltsas, and Mylonopoulos (2017: 36, cat. no. 15) and Dakaris, Vokotopoulou, and Christides (2013: 176, cat. no. 3027B).

[69] *IG* II^2, 4613.

precisely, she was hoping Herakles would protect them from. On Cyprus in the 3rd century BCE, Onasion made a dedication at the sanctuary of Aphrodite Golgia "for her daughter Tasion" (cited in Hadzisteliou-Price 1969:106). In both of these instances, parents visited sanctuaries and paid for these dedications to be made and erected in order to ensure protection for their child(ren) from the god or goddess in question.

Evidence for such concern to guard the health and well-being of children can perhaps be traced as early as the Late Minoan III period on Crete (Price 1978:17, 85; Forsdyke 1926/7:263, 290ff., pl. xxi; but see Olsen 1998:388-390). In Tomb VII at the Mavrospelio cemetery at Knossos, excavators discovered a terracotta figurine of a woman holding a male infant (VII B.9, Forsdyke 1926/7:263) (**Figure 2.3**). As Price (1978) argues, this figurine represents an early example of a Kourotrophos, a polymorphous figure that, at different times, was either a deity in her own right or an epithet or aspect of other deities, including Ge (Earth), Hekate, Artemis, Demeter, and Athena. The earliest Kourotrophos figure found on the mainland dates to the Late Helladic II period and comes from the Aidonia cemetery excavations at Nemea in the Argolid (Olsen 1998:386; Demakopoulou 1996). The interpretation of such kourotrophic figurines in the Bronze Age is not straightforward (see, for example, French 1971; Price 1978; Merrillees 1988; Olsen 1998; Budin 2011) but the situation becomes clearer by the Classical period – that is, the 5th century BCE – when representations of and references to the Kourotrophos, whether as a deity or as an epithet for another god or goddess, become widespread. These figurines, which can be found at a variety of sanctuaries, not just those dedicated primarily to healing, seem to have been dedicated by parents hoping to keep their children safe from illness, injury, and/or disability (Ammerman 2007). Kourotrophic figurines typically depict a female figure holding an infant or, more rarely, multiple infants (see Oakley 2013 for a brief discussion of the type). The amount of

detail in the modelling is variable, but the intention seems always to be the same, to ask the god or goddess to protect the child(ren) from harm (Garland 2013:210).

A similar goal seems to be behind dedications, primarily at sanctuaries of deities associated with healing (e.g., Asklepios) and/or kourotrophic activities, of statues or figurines of children. Such figurines can include images of swaddled infants (see, e.g., Ammerman 2007; de Cazanove 2016; Glinister 2016) but also a class of object showing children, usually boys, crouching on the ground. These crouching children, sometimes referred to as "Temple Boys," become popular beginning in the late 4th century BCE and can be linked with the dissemination of various cults, especially that of the healing god Asklepios (Hadzisteliou-Price 1969; Bobou 2015:4). These statues and figurines take various forms, including boys of various ages either completely naked or with a himation (i.e., light outer garment) draped over the arm and/or shoulder, and girls, never nude, wearing plain, short-sleeved chitons sometimes together with a himation (Bobou 2015). An example in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City is representative (**Figure 2.4**).[70] This mold-made terracotta statuette of a boy, measures 34.6 centimeters, or 13.6 inches, tall and dates to the late 4th century BCE; it was found in the sanctuary of Apollo Hylates at Kourion on Cyprus (see Hadzisteliou-Price 1969 and Beer 1994 for a discussion of Cypriote examples of the type). The boy sits with his left leg folded in front of him; his right leg is bent upward. His right hand rests on his right knee. The carefully modelled face is expressive. He wears a short-sleeved tunic, and a string of seals, amulets, and rings hangs across his chest. The amulets will be discussed in more detail below.

[70] New York City, Metropolitan Museum of Art 74.51.1449.

Statues of this type have been found at sanctuaries of Artemis, as at Brauron and Messene; sanctuaries of Eileithyia, the goddess most closely associated with childbirth, as at Agrai; and sanctuaries of Aphrodite, as at Amathous, and of Aphrodite with Eros, as at a small sanctuary on the slopes of Mount Parnitha on the way from Athens to Eleusis (Hadzisteliou-Price 1969; Bobou 2015). Significantly, those found at Agrai, located south of the city of Athens, all represent girls, such as the one in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, which Hadzisteliou-Price (1969:104) reports came from Agrai (**Figure 2.5**).[71] These deities and their sanctuaries all have kourotrophic aspects, so these dedications, aimed as they are at the protection of children, are not unusual in the broader context of dedications at these sanctuaries. The above deities are those to whom statues, statuettes, and figurines of crouching children were most often dedicated, but these dedications have been found, too, at sanctuaries associated with the healing god Asklepios, as at Epidauros, Lissos (Crete), Lebena (Crete), Piraeus, Athens, Gonnoi (Thessaly), Skopelos, Trikka (Thessaly), Pheneos (Arcadia), Butrint (Albania), Mantinea (Arcadia), Agioi Theodoroi, and Agios Konstantinos (Bobou 2015:64). Unsurprisingly, similar statues and figurines have been found at the healing sanctuaries of Amphiaraos at Oropos (Petrakos 1968) and Eshmun at Sidon (Stucky 2002; Bobou 2015).[72] Similar dedications have been found at sanctuaries of Apollo, Demeter and Kore, Zeus, and Poseidon and Amphitrite.

As a corpus, these images of children, usually boys (except in the case of Agrai, above, cf. Robertson 1941-1950), express parental cares and concerns, as Olympia Bobou (2015) argues in her discussion of children in the Hellenistic period. Based on inscriptions that accompany some of the dedications, we know that both parents, either together or separately, visited

[71] Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 02.38.

[72] For the relationship between Eshmun and Asklepios, see, for example, McCasland (1939).

sanctuaries of various deities for the sake of their children. These dedications may have been given in thanks for a cure received. Alternatively, they could have been preemptive, either to secure the protection of a child's health and well-being or to request a cure for a child who was already sick, injured, or disabled. Either way, they indicate an emotional and a material investment in children.

We can assume, I think, that preemptive dedications – that is, those made before a child had fallen sick or was injured or disabled – represent blanket requests for the total health and well-being of the dedicant's child(ren), as opposed to being aimed at preventing specific conditions. When Argeia set up a dedication to Ennodia, a Thessalian goddess of childbirth and child-nurturing (akin to Hekate), on behalf of her child (ὑπὲρ πα[ι]δὸς), we can assume that she did not have a specific hazard in mind.[73] The same could be said of Meidias and Danais, who inscribed a dedication to the healing god Asklepios on behalf of their children, Hediste, Sosikleos, and Olympiodoros.[74] It is possible, of course, that some parents had specific requests in mind – to protect their child from fevers, for example – but our evidence suggests something more generic.

In the cases where parents visited sanctuaries and made dedications on behalf of children who were already sick, injured, or disabled, however, we can probably assume that the children's conditions were long-term and/or permanent. We saw (above) that a father and son visited the healing sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros due to the child's voicelessness. Other visitors recorded in the cure-tablets from the site include a boy (παῖς), Lyson from Hermione, a city in

[73] *IG* IX,2 575; *SEG* 35:590,b.

[74] *IG* II^2, 4403.

the southeast Argolid.[75] Lyson was blind (ἀϊδής) but when he was in the sanctuary, one of the temple dogs cured him and he left healed. Another boy (παῖς), this one from the island of Aegina, had a growth (φῦμα) on his neck and when he visited the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros, he, too, was cured by the temple dogs.[76] Arata from Lacedaimon was too sick with dropsy (ὕδρωπα) to travel, so her mother traveled to the sanctuary of Asklepios for her.[77] Arata, too, was healed. In all of these cases, the condition affecting the child was long-term and potentially permanent, as in the case of the blind and voiceless children. At least some parents, then, invested time, energy, and money in order to obtain solutions to their children's long-term and permanent illnesses, injuries, and disabilities. Parents did not abandon children to their fates but, like Croesus, they did what they could for the sake of their child(ren)'s health.

Magic

In addition to seeking the help of the gods, parents made use of magic in the form of amulets to protect their children. The terracotta statue of the child at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, discussed above (**Figure 2.4**), is decorated with a garland of rings, seals, and amulets, apotropaic charms intended to guard the child from misfortune. Similar strings of amulets can be seen worn by children depicted on choes, or small jugs, produced in Athens in the last quarter of the 5th century BCE (Van Hoorn 1951; Green 1971; Hamilton 1992; Dasen 2003; Dasen 2005; Oakley 2013:166; Garland 2013:212; Golden 2015:36-38).[78] Choes were apparently produced

[75] Edelstein and Edelstein (1945: T423.20).

[76] Edelstein and Edelstein (1945: T423.26).

[77] Edelstein and Edelstein (1945: T423.21).

[78] Semni Papaspyridi-Karouzou (1946) identified the string around children on *choes* as an example of a μάρτης, a red- and white-twisted thread that used to be worn by children in (modern) rural Greece on the first day of March as a way of protecting them from being burned by the sun. This explanation does not seem sufficient to explain the

for the Anthesteria festival in Athens and are thought to have been used to give children their first drink of wine (see, e.g., Golden 2015:36ff.). A fair number of children depicted on these vessels are draped in strings of amulets. A chous at the Art Institute of Chicago illustrates this well (**Figure 2.6**). Here, a boy crawls toward a bird that is standing on a perch or shelf. Hanging above the boy is a chous. Across the boy's chest is draped a string of small, rounded objects, identified as amulets. The child on a chous in Florence is apparently older than the one on the Chicago chous, as he stands instead of crawls (**Figure 2.7**).[79] Here we see a male child leaning over and gesturing toward an object, perhaps a cake or a bird. Behind him is a toy cart. Draped across his body is a string of amulets.

According to Véronique Dasen (2003:275), amulets are a part of a universally widespread custom aimed at protecting children from malignant forces and harm in general. It may be possible, in some cases, to identify classes of illnesses or ailments that amulets or similarly magical objects were intended to avert (see, e.g., Dasen 2014). How, exactly, these magical charms were thought to have performed cannot be easily gleaned from contemporary iconography, but in this case, later evidence can add some flavor to our imaginations. With reference to the late Hellenistic and Roman periods, Christopher A. Faraone (2012) identified amulets and other magical objects that were not prophylactic or preventative, but that were intended to cure specific illnesses, in this case, fevers, bleeding, and headache and sore throat. In

repeated appearance of such strings, with their amulets, rings, and seals, that show up not only on *choes*, but also on figurines and statues.

[79] Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 4213.

the case of a fever, for example, the early 3rd century CE Roman medical author Quintus Serenus provides a recipe (Quintus Serenus Sammonicus 935-40; quoted in Faraone 2012)[80]:

> Rather more deadly is what in Greek words is called hemitritaion [i.e., a fever that lasts 36 hours; a tertian fever]. This no one could express in our language, I believe, and neither did parents wish for that. Write on a sheet [of papyrus] the word ABRACADABRA, repeat it rather more often underneath, but omit the last letter, so that more and more individual letters will be missing from the lines, the elements that you remove, which you continually snatch away, while you commit to writing the others, until a single letter is to be rendered as the narrow end of a cone. Remember to attach this to the neck with a linen thread.
>
> Quintus Serenus Sammonicus, Liber medicinalis 931-9 [no. LI]
> Translation by Peter Kruschwitz (2015)

> mortiferum magis est quod Graecis hemitritaeos
> uulgatur uerbis; hoc nostra dicere lingua
> non potuere ulli, puto, nec uoluere parentes.
> Inscribes chartae quod dicitur abracadabra
> saepius et subter repetes, sed detrahe summam
> et magis atque magis desint elementa figuris
> singula, quae semper rapies, et cetera + figes,
> donec in angustum redigatur littera conum:
> his lino nexis collum redimire memento.

This is the first known occurrence of the magical word ABRACADABRA (see Faraone 2012; Kruschwitz 2015; Totelin 2016), a mainstay of modern magic shows, and there is some debate about how Quintus Serenus would have it rendered on the page (**Figure 2.8**). As the magical word disappeared on the page, it seems to have represented the gradual disappearance of the disease – in this case, a fever – and was likely coupled with verbal incantations (Faraone 2012).

We cannot readily use this evidence to inform us about ancient Greek practice, but we do know that ancient Greeks employed magic, not just for preventative and curative purposes, but also as curses (see, e.g., Faraone and Obbink 1991; Faraone 1991; Gager 1992). We can assume

[80] For a brief introduction to Quintus Serenus Sammonicus, see Steven M. Oberhelman's entry in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (2013).

that ancient Greeks performed magic, including amulets and perhaps even oral incantations, in their efforts to protect their children from harm and to help them when harm befell them.

Calling physicians

In addition to employing religion and magic in the quest to protect and heal or cure children, parents and communities had recourse to physicians. The so-called Hippocratic physicians theorized often about children's health and obviously treated a large number of child patients. In *Airs, Waters, Places*, for example, the physician describes children who live puny, weak, and sickly (λεπτά τε ἐόντα καὶ ἀσθενέα καὶ νοσώδεα, Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places* 10.39) and in *Aphorisms*, we learn that fasting is not an appropriate treatment for children (1.13). These and other examples suggest that physicians not only saw children who were not in peak health, but that they were also invested in understanding treatments that would best suit children, as opposed to adults.

Throughout the corpus of texts collected under the name of Hippocrates we see evidence for the range of conditions that children could experience and the kinds of conditions that could apparently warrant medical attention. This list ran the gamut and included what we consider to be illnesses and injuries typical of childhood, such as fevers, earaches, and broken bones, but also things like the Sacred Disease, glossed in modern scholarship as epilepsy. Some conditions are traceable in the bioarchaeological, literary, and artistic evidence from antiquity. A seven- or eight-year old child who died in Herculaneum during the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE, for example, had experienced a combined radial and ulnar fracture some four or five weeks before she or he died (Ottini *et al.* 2001). Such a fracture is common, likely caused when the child fell on the palm of the right hand (Ottini *et al.*:24). The fracture, however, was quickly and successfully reduced and was contained in an apparatus made of wood and arranged like a splint,

a treatment process described in the writings of Celsus, a 1st century CE physician (Ottini *et al.*:24). The child, then, had access to medical treatment. This evidence is later than the period under question here but shows the ubiquity of this kind of injury and, as the author of the late 5th or early 4th century BCE Hippocratic treatise *On Fractures* (1) reports, the treatment of a fractured arm is not difficult and is among the duties of every physician. We cannot say how common fractures in childhood were: J. Lawrence Angel, for example, studied 100 children's skeletons from Bronze Age Lerna and Argos and identified only one with evidence for a fracture (162 *Ler,* Angel 1971:61; Grmek 1989:59), although this frequency may be underreported because of the incompleteness of skeletons generally and of children's skeletons in particular. Nevertheless, we must assume that at least some children experienced trips, falls, fights, and abuse that resulted in fractures, as well as a host of other illnesses and injuries that we consider to be typical of childhood.

The Hippocratic corpus details those familiar patterns of children's illnesses and injuries, and also provides evidence for their treatment. One physician treats a child with earaches and resultant deafness (Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 7.63), while another describes infants with coughs, upset stomachs, and continuous fevers (Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 6.1.12). Children who experience falls, says one physician, experience stunted growth (Hippocrates, *Instruments of Reduction* 37). We can read one physician detailing the consequences of dislocating one's legs in youth (Hippocrates, *Fractures* 52; 60) and of dislocating one's shoulders during adolescence (53).

Physicians occasionally practiced trephination on children, as some Hippocratic authors report. Trephination, also known as trepanation, is a surgical procedure that involves drilling or scraping into the skull, exposing the dura mater, a thick membrane surrounding the brain. The

procedure has been used for a variety of reasons, including to reduce pressure in the skull as a result of injury (for discussions of the practice in Greece, see Grmek 1989:63-65; Arnott 1997; Liston and Day 2009). Hippocratic physicians performed trephination on children, including on a boy who had been injured by another with a potsherd (Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 2.11); on a 12-year-old girl whose skull was crushed and shattered by a door (Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 5.28); and on a child whose skull was laid bare (Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 7.35). It may well have been a trained physician who trephined the skull of a child from a 4th to 3rd century BCE cemetery in Chania on Crete (**Figure 2.9**; see Bourbou 2013:341, with bibliography).

Certain rare conditions are identifiable, as well, such as premature ageing, referred to in modern literature as progeria or Hutchinson-Gilford Syndrome, a congenital condition that occurs today in one out of every four million births and results in the early deaths of those affected, usually before one reaches her or his teenage years (see Felton 2012). Metaphorical references to the condition can be found as early as Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and experience with the condition may explain the 5th century BCE physician Ctesias's description of an Indian race whose children are born with teeth and hair (Felton 2012:356). It is likely that physicians were consulted when the illnesses or injuries were unusual or required more specialized care than a parent or household member could provide, and we cannot expect that every parent would have consulted physicians in every instance.

Access to medical care could have been based on a variety of factors, including wealth. The idea of differential access to professional medical treatment is borne out in evidence from the Bronze Age: an adult male skeleton from Asine (110 *As*., Angel 1982:109, fig. 15) preserved evidence for a fracture on the humerus (upper arm) that was poorly healed, while an adult female at nearby Mycenae (58 *Myc*., Angel 1973:381) experienced a similar fracture that was instead

well-healed (both cited in Grmek 1989:59-60). In the later, historical periods, we do not know who had access to professional medical care, including whether state-sponsored physicians offered care for free or charged a fee (see, e.g., Cohn-Haft 1986). What the evidence does show is that parents did consult professional medical practitioners when their child or children experienced a variety of illnesses, injuries, and disabilities, from fevers and broken bones to the Sacred Disease and deafness.

Alternative measures

In some cases, parents' interventions in their children's health was either minimal or left no trace in the material or literary record. The cremated skeleton of an adult (35-40 years old) man buried in an Early Iron Age cemetery in Athens (AA 54c in Tomb 13) contained a wedge-shaped thoracic vertebra, which Maria Liston (2017:533) attributed either to a childhood developmental pathology or to spinal degeneration. This pathology, she suggests, would have resulted in "a slight, but noticeable, rounding of the upper back, which does not seem, however, to have been a significant impairment" (Liston 2017:533). The remainder of the individual's skeleton exhibited arthritis and muscle development that together suggest that he lived an active life full of strenuous activity, which included, most likely, a lot of riding on horseback (Liston 2017:533). We cannot know what, if any, intervention was performed for this child with a "slight, but noticeable, rounding of the upper back," but the condition did not prevent him from growing into a man who participated in strenuous work, including and maybe especially warfare, and from being buried alongside an iron sword wrapped around an amphora, a collection of goods that earned his burial the title of the "Warrior Grave" (Liston 2017:512, 531).

Likewise, the skeletons of several children from Athens suggests long-term poor health. We cannot know, of course, what measures parents took on their children's behalf, but the

duration of some of these conditions and pathologies suggests some level of intervention or care. A six- to nine-month-old infant (AA 318 in Tomb 35), for example, showed evidence for a long-term disease process that Maria Liston identified as likely genetic anemia (Liston 2017:543-544). A five- to six-year-old girl (AA 316 in Tomb 44) likely had a long history of poor health that led to a significant gap between her skeletal development and her dental development (Liston 2017:544).

Parents as a source of comfort and assistance

In some cases, parents themselves were the source of comfort and assistance. A boy working as an apprentice in Athens in the early 4th century BCE, for example, had a different kind of intervention in mind when he wrote a letter to his mother and a man named Xenokles (Jordan 2000).[81] This boy, named Lesis, writes

> Lesis is sending (this) to Xenokles and his mother (asking that) they definitely don't overlook that he is being destroyed in the foundry, but (that) they come to his masters and find something better for him. For I have been handed over to a thoroughly evil man, I am being killed by being whipped, I am being tied up, I am being foully abused, more and more!
>
> Λῆσις {ις} ἐπιστέλλει Ξενοκλεῖ καὶ τῆι μητρὶ μηδαμῶς περιιδεῖν / αὐτὸν ἀπολόμενον ἐν τῶι χαλκείωι, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸς δεσπότας αὐτοῦ ἐλθεῖν / καὶ ἐνευρέσθαι τι βέλτιον αὐτῶι. Ἀνθρώπωι γὰρ παραδέδομαι πάνυ ποηνρῶι, / μαστιγόμενος ἀπόλλυμαι· δέδεμαι· προπηλακίζομαι · μᾶλλον μᾶ[λ]λον.

Lesis is apparently working as an apprentice at a foundry and is being mistreated by his immediate master. Not only is working in a foundry itself dangerous, but he is also apparently, perhaps hyperbolically, at risk of injury and even death at the hands of a wicked master. He

[81] Agora inv. IL 1702. There is some debate about whether the author of this letter was a citizen, a metic (resident alien), or a slave. Jordan (2000), for example, identifies the individual as a child metic, while Harvey (2007) concludes, convincingly, in my opinion, that he is a slave. Whatever his status, however, there seems to be little debate about the classification of this individual as a child.

seems to think that his mother and Xenokles, who is probably not his father, could intervene on his behalf. This is similar to a story told by Lucian, a 2nd century CE satirist who was born in Syria but lived a large part of his life in Athens. Lucian writes that at the conclusion of one stage of his education, his father decided to apprentice him to his uncle, who was a sculptor. Lucian made some novice mistakes and was sorely beaten by his uncle for it. At this, Lucian ran home crying to his mother, who comforted him and reprimanded Lucian's uncle, her brother (Lucian, *The Dream*, or *Lucian's Career* 1-4). In these two instances we can see children, both boys, appealing to their mothers' ability to intervene for the sake of their bodily and/or emotional health and safety. The same expectation for parental comfort and assistance shows up in the Hippocratic *On the Sacred Disease*. Here, we learn that children with the Sacred Disease run to their mothers or someone they know well when they feel a fit coming on (Hippocrates, *On the Sacred Disease* 15). These children presumably recognize their mothers as feeling care and concern for their well-being.

Parents and nurses practiced different methods of swaddling in order to prevent their children from developing permanently deformed or disabled legs. In Plato's *Laws* (7.789e), we read that children could be swaddled until the age of three so that the pressure of walking did not permanently twist or distort (στρέφηται) their legs. Aristotle (*Politics* 7.1336a), however, says that swaddling causes distortions in the limbs and that, therefore, children should be allowed to move freely. Contradictory opinions notwithstanding, parents could choose or refuse to swaddle their infant in order to optimize their physical development (see Rose 2003:38). Whether it was in the provision of emotional or physical protection and care, parents were ready and willing to protect or help their children when necessary.

Conclusion

Parents in the ancient world invested a great deal of emotion in their children. This is especially clear when the child had succumbed to an illness, injury, or disability by the emotional content of their burial assemblages and of the stelai that mark their tombs. Personal documents from later periods represent in writing the depth of feeling that we can trace in the material records left by the ancient Greeks. In the 2nd century CE, for example, Plutarch penned a letter to his wife after the death of their two-year-old daughter, Timoxena (Plutarch, *Consolation to his Wife*). Plutarch consoles his wife and praises her resilience, contrasting her behavior with the flagrantly emotional displays that many parents perform when their children die. The Roman orator Cicero was regarded by some as showing excessive emotion at the death of his own (adult) daughter, but still his intense and long-felt grief pervades the relevant letters and texts (see, e.g., Wilcox 2005; Baltussen 2009). Chryssi Bourbou (2013) has in fact shown just how the demonstration of emotions toward children, and especially deceased children, in antiquity can be traced archaeologically through burial practices.

The anxieties that were present for parents while their children were still alive is apparent in their appeals to religion, magic, and medicine, among other things. Parents, families, and communities invested emotional, intellectual, and financial resources in order to protect and/or seek help for their children. The evidence here runs counter to Robert Garland's (1995:29) claim that "Many parents of disabled children may have later regretted their ill-considered decision to raise such a child and henceforth treated it with contempt if not downright abuse, assuming that they did not eject it from the home altogether." Instead, it seems that parents rendered what protection and assistance they could to their male and female children. We cannot assume that all parents availed themselves of all means to protect or assist their children, but what evidence

survives paints a picture of active investment in the health and able-bodiedness of the more vulnerable members of ancient societies.

Figure 2. 1

Detail of an Attic red-figure amphora attributed to the Achilles Painter, mid-5th century BCE showing a shepherd, labeled Euphorbus, carrying an infant Oedipus (labeled).
Paris, Cabinet des Médailles: 372.

Figure 2. 2

Slab V from the East Frieze of the Parthenon, 447-432 BCE. At right, a standing male figure, probably a priest, receives a folded peplos from a child, identified variously as a boy or a girl. British Museum 1816,0610.19.

Photo from the British Museum.

Figure 2. 3

Late Minoan III (ca. 1500-1000 BCE) terracotta figurine of a female figure holding a male infant. From Mavro Spelio cemetery, Knossos, Tomb VII.B.

Photo from Forsdyke (1926/7:pl. XXI).

Figure 2. 4

Late 4th century BCE moldmade terracotta statuette of a seated boy (sometimes referred to as a "Temple Boy"). From the Temple of Apollo Hylates in Kourion, Cyprus.
New York City, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cesnola Collection, 74.51.1449.

Photo from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 2. 5

Late 4th century BCE moldmade terracotta statuette of a seated girl. From Agrai. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 02.38.

Photo from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Figure 2. 6

Attic red-figure chous (small jug) showing a male child crawling toward a bird. A chous hangs on the wall above him; a string of amulets is draped across his chest. Late 5th century BCE. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, 1907.14.

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Figure 2. 7

Attic red-figure chous (jug) showing a male child gesturing toward a cake or perhaps a bird; a rolling cart is behind him. Across his chest is a string of amulets. Late 5th century BCE. Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 4213.

Photo from the Museo Archeologico Etrusco, Florence. *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Firenze, Regio Museo Archeologico* 2, III.I.60 (Pl. 650, 656), 66.5, 72.3.

Figure 2. 8

Possible visualizations of the ABRACADABRA formula by Quintus Serenus, per Alf Önnerfors, reproduced in Kruschwitz (2015).

Figure 2. 9

Detail of a trephined skull. National Stadium of Chania: Burial 25.

Photo from Bourbou (2013:341, Figure 4).

Chapter 3: Disabled Adults in Ancient Greece

> 'Biped' should not be (considered) a particularity of Man, for not every person has two feet.
>
> Aristotle, *Topics* 134a
>
> οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἀνθρώπου ἴδιον τὸ δίπουν· οὐ γὰρ πᾶς ἄνθρωπός ἐστι δύο πόδας ἔχων.

The story of disability for adults in ancient Greece is both easier and much harder to reconstruct than it is for any other age category. Easier because evidence for this topic is in ready supply: disabled adults show up in almost every literary and artistic genre and their presentation is often detailed in ways that it is not for infants, children, or the elderly. Likewise, the bulk of the skeletal material that has been excavated and subsequently studied belongs to individuals classified as "adults," increasing the potential for identifying disability on the skeleton. And, implicitly or explicitly, most studies on disability in the ancient world use adults – and especially adult men – as their base unit for analysis, making them the group of disabled individuals from the ancient world already most explored and theorized. For these same reasons, the task ahead is much harder to accomplish than it is for infants, children, or the elderly. The amount of evidence is so voluminous as to be overwhelming: it seems an impossible task to reconcile every single representation of disabled adults from the ancient world in order to form a coherent picture of what disability meant to and for adults at that time. Still, it is possible to demonstrate based on the available evidence that disabled adults in ancient Greece fit into their communities and were regarded as contributing members, even when they were unable to contribute as much or in the same ways as their able-bodied contemporaries.

In this chapter, I will discuss various aspects of daily or at least regular life for adults in the ancient Greek world, including military service, labor and the economy, marriage and reproduction, health and illness, and religion. In each of these spheres of life and activity,

disabled adults – both men and women – could act and be regarded as contributing members of the larger community or were accommodated in their limited ability to contribute. My intention here is not to present an exhaustive treatment of disabled adults in ancient Greece. Rather, I attempt to paint a representative picture of the range of experiences of – and possible reactions to – disabled adulthood in a variety of situations in ancient Greece. This picture is based not only on literary and artistic representations of disabled individuals in what can be termed "daily life" contexts, but also on the burials of disabled adults, whether socially conforming or deviant. It is a picture rounded out by external signs of acceptance or inclusion, including established laws, contemporary medical practices, representations of the body in contexts that cannot be termed "realistic," and architectural features associated with access and/or exclusion. The overall impression borne from the available evidence suggests something akin to Martha L. Edwards's (1997) "community model" of disability. Ancient Greek communities not only acknowledged and allowed but also facilitated and accommodated disability among their ranks by both formal and informal measures and means.[82]

I begin by discussing the hazards of ancient life, that is, the very real chance that the majority of ancient Greek adults either experienced disability themselves or witnessed it as it was experienced by a member of their household (*oikos*) or immediate community. This section sets up what follows, which is an argument that in significant spheres of ancient life (warfare; marriage and reproduction; religion; and labor and the economy), disabled men and women could and did play active roles within their communities or were accommodated in their inability to participate. I conclude by arguing that the ancient Greek world facilitated disability. Contrary

[82] Garland (1995:7) argues that "the demands and rigours of life in the ancient world were such that no allowance could be made for those suffering from minor impairments, however acute and debilitating their discomfort." As I hope to show, this is not borne out in the evidence.

to predominant views, ancient Greeks, disabled and able-bodied alike, participated as members of the same communities and the ancient Greek world allowed for disability as a very real part of life.

Hazards of ancient life

The hazards of ancient life were many. Citizens, slaves, and foreigners, men and women, adults and children, regularly encountered situations and circumstances that could result in their temporary or permanent disability or deformity. In our earliest literature, the epics of Homer, we read about the dangers of warfare,[83] and the poet Hesiod (*Works and Days* 497), who flourished sometime around 700 BCE, details the lives of farmers who could experience conditions like malnutrition and, with it, swollen feet (παχὺν πόδα), probably what is known today as starvation edema (Grmek 1989[1983]:39; see also Schiller 1921).

My goal here is to emphasize the very real possibilities for having or acquiring disabilities and deformities that existed for adult members of ancient communities.[84] I will not dwell here on common and relatively short-lived illnesses or on conditions that were likely present since birth or childhood but highlight the various ways that adults could become disabled or deformed in the course of their daily, lived lives. What I hope to show is that the majority of ancient adults likely experienced disability themselves or dealt with it as it was experienced by a member of members of their household (*oikos*) and community.

[83] See, for example, Samama (2017); Galanakos *et al.* (2015); Kömürcü *et al.* (2014); Apostolakis *et al.* (2010); Konsolaki *et al.* (2010); Mylonas *et al.* (2008); Sapounakis *et al.* (2007); Santos (2000); Saunders (1999); Mumford (1996); Dunbar (1880).

[84] See Martha L. Rose's first chapter, "The Landscape of Disability," in *The Staff of Oedipus* (2003). Here, she presents a similar argument, that "the ancient Greek world was inhabited by people with a wide range of visible physical disabilities" (Rose 2003:9). The point, however, bears repeating in the present context.

Much evidence for disability and deformity can be found in the Hippocratic *Corpus*. The physicians who composed the treatises in the *Corpus* detail a variety of injuries and illnesses that individuals could experience either at work or at home that had serious and often permanent consequences. The author of *Coan Prenotions* (498, 500), for example, says that individuals who are injured in the thick cords (i.e., the spine) generally become lame and those who are wounded on or above the eyebrow lose their vision. In *Nature of Women* (14) the physician mentions a particular disease that leaves women both sterile and lame, and *Epidemics* 2 (2.9) preserves a case about a carpenter whose head was cracked. *Epidemics* 4 (20) describes craftsmen and laborers who become injured or ill, including someone who fell from a kiln in a ceramic factory and *Epidemics* 3 (Constitution 4) describes a certain disease that caused many sufferers to lose their entire forearm and some who were also affected in their thigh, shin, and foot. The author of *Fractures* (9) says that patients with broken feet sometimes walk on their injured foot before it is healed, causing them recurring pains. The physician who wrote *Instruments of Reduction* (34) refers to amputated arms and legs and according to the author of *On Joints* (42), humped backs can be caused by severe falls.

Hazards could be both mundane, as above, or exceptional. The 5th century BCE historian Thucydides describes a plague that struck Athens several times during the Peloponnesian War, especially in 430 BCE.[85] The plague killed a large number of Athenians, including apparently the

[85] Scholars of various backgrounds and diverse training have attempted to understand not only how the plague fits into Thucydides's narrative, but also – and perhaps especially – to identify what, exactly, the plague was. A brief and in no way complete survey of these kinds of scholarship (e.g., Kazanjian 2015; Littman 2009; Papagrigorakis *et al.* 2008; Hillard 2006/07; Cunha 2004; Finnegan 1999; Olson *et al.* 1998; Olson *et al.* 1996; Bellemore *et al.* 1994; Morgan 1994; Wylie and Stubbs 1983; Longrigg 1980; Holladay and Poole 1979; Littman and Littman 1969; Parry 1969; Eby and Evjen 1962; Salway and Dell 1955; MacArthur 1954; Couch 1935; Collier 1857) demonstrates the enduring popularity of the topic. It has extended into popular media, too, with recent articles in the *New York Times* (Ramirez 1996) *The Los Angeles Times* (Crenson 1997), and *The Atlantic* (Davis 2015), among other places, discussing the Athenian plague based on scholars' interpretations of its identification.

great statesman Pericles, but even in cases where it was not mortal, Thucydides says, it left a mark on the victims' bodies: many experienced damage or loss to their genitals, fingers, and toes, and some were also deprived of their eyes (Thucydides 2.49). Thucydides suffered from the plague and may well have been deformed by it himself, if his reports about the deformities experienced by plague survivors applied to him, as well.[86] The plague was so devastating that Thucydides (3.87.2) says nothing distressed the Athenians and reduced their power (ὥστε Ἀθηναίους γε μὴ εἶναι ὅτι μᾶλλον τούτου ἐπίεσε καὶ ἐκάκωσε τὴν δύναμιν) more than the repeated outbreaks of the plague.[87]

Some authors present a variety of these hazards or potentially disabling circumstances metaphorically. In Plato's *Symposium* (205e), for example, Diotima, a fictional philosopher and priestess, uses amputation of harmful (i.e., diseased) hands or feet as a metaphor in his discussion of love and wholeness. And the hazards presented in literature could affect anyone from any stratum of society. The general Miltiades, a hero at the battle of Marathon, destroyed his knee or upper leg during a campaign on the island of Paros (Herodotus 6.134-136). He had to be carried around on a litter and eventually died from a related infection. Xenophon (*Anabasis* 7.4.4) describes the bitter cold that he and his fellow soldiers experienced on the plain of the Thynians: it was so cold, he says, that water and wine stored in jars would freeze and many of the Greeks suffered frostbite on their noses and ears.[88]

[86] We have no external evidence that Thucydides was deformed by the plague. This is an inference based on the comments that Thucydides himself provides about survivors of the plague.

[87] Thucydides elsewhere discusses the impact that the plague had on Athenian population and morale, see Hillard (2006/7) and Strauss (1986). There is some discussion about whether the plague led to the introduction of the cult of Asklepios into Athens, but see Wickkiser (2008) for a well-written and compelling argument against this idea.

[88] Diodorus Siculus, too, describes bitterly cold temperatures and frostbite accompanied by the loss of fingers, toes, and limbs at 3.34.2, and of cold temperatures affecting soldiers with loss of extremities and blindness on campaign at 14.28.3.

The hazards of life are painfully evident in non-literary media and in other contexts.[89] Susan Kirkpatrick Smith (2009) details skeletal evidence for trauma sustained in warfare in Mycenaean Athens. Evelyne Samama (2017) discusses war medicine in ancient Greece, while Robert Arnott (1999) focuses on the medical treatment of war wounds in the Aegean Bronze Age. Dimitria Malamidou (2006) suggests that differential exposure to risk explains gendered differences in the distribution of skeletal lesions at Amphipolis in northern Greece: male skeletons presented more frequent evidence for things like lesions, fractures, and deformities, which she attributes to men's participation in heavy labor, travel, and warfare. Robert Garland (1995:pl. 5) published a photograph of a skull from the 4th century BCE Tomb of the Messenians in Athens showing an adult with a nail protruding from the skull. Christine Salazar (2000) presents a thorough analysis of war wounds and their treatment in the ancient world, and in his Ph.D. dissertation Nathan Arrington (2010) examines the reception of military casualties in 5th century BCE Athens (see also Arrington 2015). David Saunders (2008, 2010) presents warriors' injuries on black-figure and red-figure vases; Jenifer Neils (2007) uses the Sarpedon krater to discuss depictions of corpses; and Matthias Recke (2002) analyzes images of violence and suffering on vases and in architectural sculpture. The entire corpus of so-called grotesque figurines from the Hellenistic period (see, e.g., Stevenson 1975; Trentin 2015) presents figures with a variety of both specific and nonspecific pathologies (e.g., Muratov 2012; Hoggan 1893).[90]

[89] See, also, Grmek (1983[1989]: esp. 57-63) for a discussion of some of the evidence for trauma in the ancient world.

[90] I do not consider diagnoses of terracotta figurines particularly helpful for determining the presence or absence of actual diseases or conditions in the ancient world. Given what we know about ancient conceptions of diseases and illnesses, it is likely that ancient artists, authors, and craftsmen would emphasize a different suite of symptoms or appearances than those that we believe to be diagnostic. That being said, scholars persist in this activity and I do find it interpretively useful to know if or how ancient producers depict or represent ill-health, even if we cannot assign a name to a particular condition.

Votive body parts, plaques, and other dedications at healing sanctuaries throughout the Greek world attest to a whole range of corporeal illnesses and injuries, while 4th century BCE inscriptions from the healing sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros describe individuals with various conditions, including blindness, too-long pregnancies, infertility, nonspecific lameness, paralyzed bodies, baldness, and even a spear lodged in a man's jaw (LiDonnici 1995; Edelstein and Edelstein 1945; see also Dillon 1994; Girone and Totti-Gemünd 1998).

Mirko D. Grmek's *Diseases in the Ancient Greek World* (1989[1983]) deals in literary, archaeological, and bioarchaeological evidence for diseases and illnesses, traumas, and congenital malformations in ancient Greek populations and a volume by Grmek and Danielle Gourevitch (1998) presents visual representations of various illness, injuries, and corporeal realities like obesity as an enduring feature of ancient art.

Ancient Greeks, then, were at risk for a wide variety of illnesses and injuries that could lead to temporary or permanent disabilities. It is impossible, of course, to say what proportion of people living in the ancient world experienced or lived with a disability. The World Health Organization's "World Report on Disability" (2011) estimates that around 15 percent of the modern world's population – that is more than a billion people – live with a disability. We can reasonably expect, I think, that a significant percentage of ancient persons experienced either temporary or permanent disabilities as a result of work, play, warfare, interpersonal conflict, and accident. We cannot – or at the very least should not – assume that all of these individuals were either temporarily or permanently excluded from their former level of participation or engagement with their community. The question becomes, to what extent can we extend to demonstrate that disabled people did, indeed, participate (or not) in ancient society?

In what follows, I hope to show beyond a reasonable doubt that disabled adults performed in a variety of roles and capacities within their families, communities, and cities. I discuss the military; marriage and reproduction; religion; labor and the economy; and athletics. What is more, I will discuss the many ways that ancient communities accommodated or otherwise assisted their disabled members. This is not to say, of course, that all people – disabled or not – who fulfilled these various roles in their communities were treated well or kindly or that they were happy in their roles. Rather, I argue that the ancient world facilitated disability in multiple and surprising ways and that individuals' lives were not entirely determined by their disabilities.

Military

The earliest depiction of a disabled man in a military role comes from the epics of Homer. In Book II of the *Iliad* the epic poet introduces us to a character named Thersites.[91] Thersites has received generally bad press in both ancient and modern scholarship (Aeschines 3.231; Plato, *Gorgias* 525e; Plato, *Republic* 620c; Lycophron *Alexandra* 1000; Rosen 2003; Thalmann 1988; Postlethwaite 1988; but see also Marks 2005; Stuurman 2004; Schmidt 2002) because of his querulous disposition. He receives the fullest physical description of any character in the *Iliad* (Garrison 2010:8; Thalmann 1988:15): he is

> the ugliest man who came beneath Ilion: he was bandy-legged, and lame in one foot: his shoulders were humped, contracted upon his chest: and above, he had a pointy head, and hair grew sparsely.
>
> Homer, *Iliad* 2.216-219

[91] The figure of Thersites appears in a variety of other contexts, including the post-Homeric *Aethiopis*, fragments of a play potentially written by the 4th century BCE tragedian Chaeremon, and even in later works like that of Quintus Smyrnaeus (1.722ff.). He is not a regular figure in vase-painting or art of any period, but he shows up decapitated on a 4th century BCE Apulian volute crater in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 03.804) in a scene related to the so-called "Thersitoktonos" episode described in the *Aethiopis* and other sources. His appearance on a mid-5th century BCE hydria in the British Museum (1891,0629.3) is briefly discussed in this chapter.

αἴσχιστος δὲ ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθε:
φολκὸς ἔην, χωλὸς δ᾽ ἕτερον πόδα: τὼ δέ οἱ ὤμω
κυρτὼ ἐπὶ στῆθος συνοχωκότε: αὐτὰρ ὕπερθε
φοξὸς ἔην κεφαλήν, ψεδνὴ δ᾽ ἐπενήνοθε λάχνη.

G.S. Kirk (1984:140) says that the "shambling, limping gait, the hunched back and shoulders and the pointed, balding cranium combine to make Thersites a monstrosity by heroic standards." His monstrous appearance is given a visual form on a mid-5th century BCE hydria in the British Museum (**Figure 3.1**).[92] Here, Thersites leans on a crooked staff as he faces Agamemnon and another man, perhaps Nestor. Thersites is bald, with an oddly-shaped head. His face is marred by wrinkles. His nose, ears, and chin are very unlike those of the heroes he faces, the skin on his neck sags, and his shoulders are hunched. Thersites here – if this is Thersites – is a far cry from the heroic figures we see on contemporary red-figure vessels.

Some scholars have diagnosed Thersites with a congenital condition called cleidocranial dysplasia (Beasley 1972; Carter 1973; Bartsocas 1973; Altschuler 2001; Simms 2005),[93] recalling efforts to diagnose Tiny Tim from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. Complicating the picture, Thersites may, in fact, also have a learning or a mental disability that prevents him from being able to articulate his thoughts clearly:[94]

> But Thersites of the endless words alone still scolded [Agamemnon],
> [Thersites] who knew in his *phren* many words that were disordered and ineffective, and not in order . . .
>
> Homer, *Iliad* 2.212-214

[92] British Museum 1891,0629.3. The identification of Thersites by Walters and Forsdyke (1930) here is based on the overall context of the scene. See *CVA* London, British Museum, Fasc. 5, III.Ic.14, pl. 81.1.

[93] Cleidocranial dysplasia is a very rare condition, occurring in perhaps 1 out of every 1,000,000 births. It was recently introduced to a broad audience by an actor, Gaten Matarazzo (in Netflix's *Stranger Things*), who was born with the condition.

[94] R. Clinton Simms (2005) suggests that the references to Thersites's inability to articulate his speech is a pun on dental abnormalities associated with cleidocranial dysplasia.

Θερσίτης δ᾽ ἔτι μοῦνος ἀμετροεπὴς ἐκολῴα,
ὃς ἔπεα φρεσὶν ἦσιν ἄκοσμά τε πολλά τε ἤδη
μάψ, ἀτὰρ οὐ κατὰ κόσμον…

In his appearance and in his inability to speak clearly and effectively, Thersites is set apart from the other heroes of epic, including Odysseus, who is one of the most renowned speakers in the *Iliad* and who silences Thersites after his speech. All of this seems to lead to the conclusion that Thersites's deformed and disabled appearance is relevant to, if not responsible for, his being hated by his contemporaries.

In truth, we cannot diagnose Thersites with either a learning or a physical disability. What we can say, however, is that with the length of the description and the specialized vocabulary, which is both vivid and obscure, the poet wants us to dwell on the figure of Thersites and his epic un-hero-ness, to notice Thersites for all of his deformity. Scholars tend to agree that Thersites must have been something like a "common soldier" due to his unheroic appearance, but they are divided on his function in the epic. Does he somehow embody blame poetry, as Gregory Nagy (1979: 259-264) has suggested? Or is he, as Geoffrey de Ste. Croix (1981:413) and others have argued, a caricature with whom the audience surely had no sympathy? Is he a comic character and a scapegoat (Ogden 1997; Thalmann 1988)? Or does Thersites instead represent the masses, with his words of rebuke for Agamemnon giving voice to the sentiments of the Achaean host (Postlethwaite 1998; Stuurman 2004)?

Whatever his function in this scene and within the epic world, Thersites is present among the Achaean host, enfranchised to speak in this assembly. His deformities and disabilities do not prevent him from being a part of this extended military expedition to Troy – surely he had at least some of his conditions before he left for the war? – nor is he barred from participating in the decision-making process that this assembly in Book 2 represents. Thersites may be the

"worst of the Achaeans," as he has been called by Nagy (1979:253-264), when compared to the likes of Achilles or Odysseus, but an Achaean he was, nevertheless. We cannot say how representative the *Iliad* is for contemporary society, nor can we use the *Iliad* to make arguments about the situation for the disabled and deformed in later Greek societies. Thersites here serves to open the discussion about how ancient Greek militaries included disability among their ranks or facilitated it by means of exemptions from active service.

Injury and death were obvious risks of ancient warfare.[95] In the Hippocratic *Epidemics* 5 (95, 98, 99), we read about Tychon, who was struck by a catapult and Aristippos and Neapolis who were wounded with arrows. In the 4th century BCE inscriptions from the healing sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros, Gorgias of Herakleia was wounded "in some battle" (ἐμ μάχαι τινὶ) by an arrow in his lung (LiDonnici 1995:B10; Edelstein and Edelstein 1945:30). Antikrates of Knidos was struck in both eyes in battle and became blind, and he carried the spearhead with him inside his face (LiDonnici 1995:B12; Edelstein and Edelstein 1945:32).

At issue here is not whether military service was a risky endeavor for those who fought it, but whether those with disabilities could and did participate in ancient military operations. In his discussion of the Athenian hoplite force during the Peloponnesian War, Arnold Wycombe Gomme (1927:147) says that "[I]t is extraordinary how often it is assumed that every citizen of a Greek city between 20 and 50 was fit to wield a sword and carry shield, cuirass, and helmet (or to row a trireme)." In the Hippocratic *On Joints* (11) the physician writes that a dislocated shoulder makes one worthless in warfare (ἐν πολεμικοῖσιν ἀχρήϊοι) and we can assume that even

[95] See, for example, Rachel Hall Sternberg (1999) for a discussion of some of the practicalities of being on campaign with soldiers who became ill or wounded.

minor dislocations, injuries, and disabilities to the limbs and torso, at a minimum, would render a man incapable of participating in what was largely a cooperative activity.

In exceptional cases, however, disabled and/or injured men could apparently be called on to participate in modified roles.[96] During the Persian Wars, for example, Themistocles convinced the Athenians to construct walls to fortify the city and to finish the walls of the Piraeus. As Thucydides reports (1.93.6), this wall was a massive undertaking and the idea was that the walls themselves, by their size and thickness, would be able to withstand attacks from the enemy and, as Themistocles believed, could therefore be guarded only by "a small number of the most useless men" (ἀνθρώπων… ὀλίγων καὶ τῶν ἀχρειοτάτων) leaving the rest of the men free to serve in the naval fleet.[97] The word in question here - ἀχρειοτάτων – is generally thought to refer to individuals who were physically unfit for war, that is, men with disabilities and deformities that prevented them from being effective as cavalrymen, infantrymen, or rowers. The word is repeated, probably with reference to a similar group of individuals, elsewhere in Thucydides (see below), as well as in Herodotus (1.191.2), where it refers to men in Cyrus's army who, whether due to disability or to some other reason, were on campaign but not active participants in battles.[98]

Some more famous figures from the ancient world participated in military training and warfare despite their disabilities. The 4th century BCE Spartan king Agesilaus, for example, was

[96] See Rose (2003:43-45) for a discussion of some later literary evidence for this phenomenon.

[97] Hornblower (1991) does not discuss this passage.

[98] The "useless" segment of Cyrus's army was used to dig a series of ditches, suggesting that they were not disabled. However, as the author of the Hippocratic *On Joints* reports, individuals born with "weasel arms," as well as adults who suffer dislocations in their shoulders, are able to perform work that involves moving their arm backwards or forwards along their sides, including using a pick or a spade (Hippocrates *On Joints* 12). These men, then, could have been injured on campaign in such a way that they were unable to support the weight of a shield and/or weapon or march at the same pace as their comrades but could still perform manual labor of the sort required to dig ditches.

lame in one leg (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.3.3; Cartledge 1987:4) and still trained in his youth as a soldier and later led and participated in major military campaigns (Xenophon, *Agesilaus*).[99] The Macedonian king Philip II suffered the loss of his eye, fractured his collarbone, and had his hand and his leg shattered in his quest for an empire (Demosthenes, *On the Crown* 67), yet he continued leading an army and joining in the fray of battle.

It seems, then, that, although it was not a regular practice that men with physical disabilities, whether permanent or temporary, to participate in military activities, they were sometimes – in exceptional circumstances – called on to contribute to war efforts.[100] This should not be surprising, given other situations in which exceptional measures were taken for security. The so-called "Decree of Themistocles," for example, which dates to the later 4th century BCE, describes the abandonment of Athens during the Persian invasion of the city in 480 BCE (Jameson 1960, 1962).[101] Athens was evacuated of its residents, except for the treasurers and priestesses, who remained in order to safeguard the possessions of the gods. Women were not integral guardians of ancient cities, but the unusual circumstances of the time required the priestesses' enlistment in this defense. In his *Laws* (6.785b), Plato prescribes that after women have passed their childbearing years but have not yet reached the age of 50, they should contribute to the military in whatever way they are able and is appropriate. It is within reason,

[99] Plutarch's *Life of Lysander* also discusses Agesilaus's physical deformity.

[100] Susan Kirkpatrick Smith (2009:106) presented evidence for three adult men from Mycenaean Athens who had evidence for both healed and unhealed fractures indicative of interpersonal conflict. These men likely acquired their injuries in warfare contexts – one, for example, had wounds consistent with dagger or sword wounds and another wound consistent with an injury from a sling stone – and the continued accumulation of wounds suggests that they returned to the battlefield at a later date to engage in combat again. One can imagine that similar studies of trauma and paleopathology in the historical period would yield similar and perhaps more numerous results.

[101] A great deal of scholarship exists on the subject of the Themistocles decree, particularly on its authority as a 5th century BCE text (rather than a 4th century BCE recreation), and a discussion of it is beyond the scope of this project.

then, that men otherwise considered unfit for service would be called upon to assist when necessary and where they were able.

More often than not, however, disabled adults were not expected to participate in the military, and ancient Greek armies had contingencies in place for men who could not fulfill their mandatory, or at least socially prescribed military duties.[102] At least this seems true of the Persian army of Cyrus, where some men occupied noncombatant roles (above). It was apparently potentially true, too, in the mythological realm: in numerous depictions of the fight between the gods and the giants, the so-called Gigantomachy, the blacksmith god Hephaistos, who was disabled in his legs, is shown not actively engaged in warfare, but standing at the side with his bellows, presumably constructing arms and armor for his fellow gods and goddesses (see Conclusion).

The 4th century BCE historian Xenophon says that the costs of maintaining a mercenary cavalry could be offset by the collection of dues from rich men – indeed, anyone eligible for cavalry service was rich – who were "unable in their bodies" (ἀδυνάτων δὲ τοῖς σώμασιν) to serve (Xenophon, *The Cavalry Commander* 9.5).[103] A similar idea is communicated in the Aristotelian *Athenian Constitution*. Here we read that the Council inspects both cavalrymen and infantrymen and rejects for service those men who are not fit for duty (Aristotle, *Athenian*

[102] Although not relevant for this discussion due to its late date, the story recounted in Plutarch's *Life of Phocion* (10) gives a good idea of how discussions about exemptions might have played out in meetings of the council or assembly. Here, Phocion, a general and orator in 4th century BCE Athens, is described as being generally antipathetic to most Athenians of his day. His behavior in the assemblies included pointing out others' hypocrisies, including that of Aristogeiton, a public informer, who urged the Athenians to battle while appearing at muster leaning on a staff with both legs in bandages. He was, as Phocion claimed sarcastically, "lame and worthless" (χωλὸν καὶ πονηρόν). The anecdote serves here to demonstrate that Aristogeiton's presumably temporary physical state – using a staff and wearing bandages – while a ploy in this instance to avoid muster, would have been grounds for dismissal from military service.

[103] The other two categories of individuals mentioned in this context are wealthy orphans and those who do not desire to serve.

Constitution 49.1). In the case of the cavalrymen the author is more specific, saying that the Council deletes from the cavalry roll any man who swears on oath that he is exempt from service due to bodily incapacity (Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 49.2, μὴ δυνατοὺς εἶναι τοῖς σώμασιν ἱππεύειν). For some purposes, a claim of temporary bodily incapacity might suffice to exclude the claimant from service. Demosthenes (*On the False Embassy* 124) accuses his rival Aeschines of feigning illness in order to avoid attending an embassy, going so far as to get Execestus the physician to testify on his behalf. Aeschines (*On the Embassy* 94-5) himself affirms this course of events. Despite the way that Demosthenes portrays Aeschines's medical leave as unjustified, the episode demonstrates that those who were physically incapacitated – either temporarily or permanently – were not expected to fulfill their prescribed or expected service.

Such formal or informal exemptions from military service can be supposed for the Spartans based on a tale recounted by the 5th century BCE historian Herodotus. Of the three hundred Spartans who fought at the battle of Thermopylae, there were two, Eurytus and Aristodemus, who were both suffering greatly from a sickness of the eyes (ὀφθαλμιῶντες), and their suffering was bad enough that the Spartan commander Leonidas excused them from fighting (Herodotus 7.229).[104] After hearing of some Persian treachery, Eurytus donned his armor and ordered his slave attendant to lead him into battle, where he died; meanwhile, Aristodemus did not enter the fray but returned to Sparta, where he was shunned.[105] The shunning of Aristodemus seems to have been the result not of the original exemption, but because Aristodemus did not join Eurytus in returning to battle.

[104] This episode is discussed in Baldwin (1967). For an attempt at a diagnosis, see Hogewind *et al.* (2013).

[105] The character of Aristodemus appears, in a modified form, in the movie *300* (2006) as Dilios, a man who loses his eye in battle and survives to recount the events to the Spartans, but is not shunned.

A similar theme of military exemptions shows up outside of historical texts, as well. In his utopian treatise *Laws* (9.878c) Plato ordains that if a man wounds another he is thereby wounding the State by rendering the victim incapable of performing his military service. In such cases, Plato says, the aggressor must perform his own military service and then serve as a substitute for the incapacitated victim or be prosecuted for failing to fulfill his military service. In epic and tragedy, we learn that Odysseus, a hero of the Trojan War, attempted to avoid military service by feigning mental illness. This was apparently the theme of a lost play by Sophocles, Odysseus Mainomenos, and is mentioned in the Cypria (West, *Arg*. 5).[106] Odysseus pretended incapacity in his attempt to renege on his oath to participate in the Panhellenic expedition.

In most cases, then, ancient Greek militaries enlisted the services of able-bodied men.[107] When a man could not fulfill his military service due to a temporary or permanent disability, he was most likely excused: a weak link in phalanx warfare or on a ship was a liability for the entire company.[108] We cannot know if men who were excused from military service experienced social repercussions or if they felt shame at their inability to serve. The 5th century BCE logographer Antiphon (DK B 57) said that illness is a holiday for those who shrink from life, and Demosthenes is decidedly condescending about Aeschines's exemption due to illness. This attitude likely applied to those who claimed exemptions from military service due to anything

[106] Odysseus's unwillingness to participate in the Trojan War – the reason for his feigned mental illness – is referenced or alluded to in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* (841-842) and in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (1025-1028). For more discussion on this, see Christ (2001: esp. fn. 36).

[107] See, for example, the chapter on 'Physicality' in Bardunias and Ray (2016). Franz (2002) has a lengthy discussion of ancient hoplite warfare, including their (very heavy) armor and weaponry, which would have been quite taxing even on able-bodied men. Military exemptions for reasons of disability are discussed at varying lengths in Christ (2001); Baldwin (1967); Gomme (1927).

[108] The individual was also a liability for himself: in the *Memorabilia* (3.12) Xenophon says that many men, by their bodily weakness or infirmity, are killed or captured during battle.

except extreme illness or disability.[109] Indeed, in the context of Pericles's funeral oration (Thucydides 2.34ff.), it can be hard to imagine that anyone who received military exemptions for disingenuous reasons would be regarded positively, but we have no commentary to support or negate this assumption. What we can say is at least Athens and probably also Sparta and other Greek poleis had contingencies in place for those men who were of military age but who could not, due to physical incapacity, serve effectively as a rower, infantryman, or cavalryman.[110] Whatever they thought about their disabled community members, ancient Greek policymakers recognized their presence and their liabilities and facilitated their inactivity as soldiers by means of formal and informal policies.

Marriage and reproduction

Disabled men were accommodated in their inability to serve in the military, a service that was legally and socially expected of citizen men. Citizen men and women were generally expected to fulfill another purpose: to marry and reproduce. It is difficult to determine what we should expect here for disabled and deformed ancient Greeks. In the *Laws*, Plato organizes and arranges almost every aspect of life in his ideal city, including personal affairs, such as what happens with a man's property and children after he dies. In the event that a man dies intestate – without a will – Plato ordains the proper order of inheritance. If the man has no will and no

[109] See, for example, Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.12. Here, Socrates, referring to exercise in the gymnasium as a kind of practice for warfare, says that many men obtain a shameful reputation because of their bodily incapacity, because they are thought to be cowards (πολλοὶ δὲ δόξαν αἰσχρὰν κτῶνται διὰ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀδυναμίαν δοκοῦντες ἀποδειλιᾶν), that is, using bodily infirmity as an excuse for shirking from risky endeavors.

[110] In his *Life of Pericles* (12), Plutarch reports that the Athenian statesman employed the "unwarlike throng of laborers" (τὸν δ᾽ ἀσύντακτον καὶ βάναυσον ὄχλον) and those who stayed at home (τὸ οἰκουροῦν) in his constructions atop the Acropolis. He does not, however, report the reason that these men did not participate more directly in the war efforts. He says, however, that by people of "every age, almost, and every nature," the city's abundance was distributed.

children, Plato says, a man and a woman from the family – listed in order of kinship – shall become partners (ξύννομοι) both in the inheritance and in marriage (Plato, *Laws* 11.925c-d). The philosopher acknowledges a limitation to this law: some, he says, may object to being forced to marry another who is impaired in body or mind (Plato, *Laws* 11.925e, 926b). Plato allows for such objections and, in so doing, acknowledges the difficulties that may have existed for the mentally or physically disabled in ancient Greece to fulfill two fundamental aspects of ancient life: marriage and reproduction. In Plato's ideal society, marrying someone who is disabled could prove intolerable (ἀβίωτον), but it is difficult to argue that this was universally true.

The evidence for this – all of which is literary – is mixed. On the one hand, numerous ancient authors acknowledge that few would willingly choose to marry and reproduce with a man, and especially with a woman who was disabled. On the other hand, it seems that disabled individuals were not completely barred from rites of marriage and reproduction and several authors even present disability as no real obstacle to successful reproduction.

Herodotus is probably the most equivocal author on the topic. In at least two places, the historian presents women with physical defects or deformities as the butt of the marriage joke, first in the context of Babylon, second in Corinth. In Book 1 of his *Histories* (1.196) Herodotus details what he describes as the wisest (ὁ μὲν σοφώτατος ὅδε) of the Babylonians' customs, even though it is no longer current in his own day.[111] Each year, all women of marriageable age were brought together and auctioned off in order from the most beautiful to the least. Wealthy men would outbid each other in order to obtain the most beautiful, and that revenue would in turn subsidize the dowries of the "ugly and disabled" (τὰς ἀμόρφους καὶ ἐμπήρους) maidens. The

[111] See Garland (1995:42) for a brief discussion of this passage.

majority of the populace, Herodotus says, cared nothing for beauty and would willingly take the ugly women along with the subsidized dowries. As Richard A. McNeal (1988:63) has argued, this "Babylonian" custom "has some very curious parallels with what we know of Athenian customs of marriage." Whether this is an old Babylonian custom or a more recent Athenian one, Herodotus presents a plausible scenario, wherein beautiful brides would fetch large sums, while the ugly – not just the ugly, but the deformed and disabled – would have had a more difficult time finding a suitable partner.

Nevertheless, partners they did find. The same is true in the case of Labda, whom we meet in Book 5 of Herodotus's *Histories*.[112] Labda was a member of the oligarchic Bacchiadae family who effectively ruled Corinth in the 6th century BCE (Herodotus 5.92). This family only married among themselves, but one member, Amphion, had a daughter who was lame (χωλή) and none of the Bacchiadae were willing to marry her (οὐδεὶς ἤθελε γῆμαι). Labda was therefore married to a man named Eëtion from a nearby village. At first, Eëtion and Labda were childless. Eëtion traveled to the oracle at Delphi to inquire if he would ever have an heir and the oracle revealed not only that Labda was pregnant, but that the child she carried was a rolling rock (ὀλοοίτροχον), one who would (eventually) bring justice to Corinth (δικαιώσει δὲ Κόρινθον). The rest of the story is irrelevant, but, in short, the Bacchiadae learned of the prophesy and attempted to kill the baby – later named Cypselus – who was destined to overthrow them. The

[112] See Garland (1995:98-99) for a brief discussion of this passage.

men sent to kill the baby, however, could not overcome the baby's charm and Cypselus grew to adulthood and overthrew the Bacchiadae to become the tyrant of Corinth.[113]

Members of the Bacchiadae family were unwilling to marry Labda, and the context indicates that it was because of her physical disability. Nevertheless, the family were able to find a suitable mate for her and she performed just as other women did in the ancient world: she married and provided her husband with a viable and legitimate heir. How Labda felt about her lack of acceptance within her family can only be guessed and it is easy to see the Bacchiad rejection of the deformed and disabled Labda in broader terms, that in contemporary Corinth the deformed and disabled were not accepted, at least among the elite ruling class. Another – not necessarily contradictory – reading of this story focuses instead on Labda's ability to fulfill her socially prescribed roles as wife and mother. Rejected as a suitable partner from her immediate family, she was not excluded from more general participation in society.

Even in cases where there may be some suggestion that deformed or disabled ancient Greeks were not suitable marriage partners (as above, in Herodotus), there remain options for the unwed to participate in their communities. In Lycophron's *Alexandra*, for example, dated to the fourth or third century BCE, we read about Daunian maidens in South Italy who reject marriage with men who resemble the Trojan hero Hector in their hairstyles but who are either mutilated in form or disgraced in their family (1131ff., μορφῆς ἔχοντας σίφλον ἢ μῶμαρ γένους).[114] This reference suggests, first, that perhaps south Italian women had some agency when it came to marriage and, second, that they were able to replace one socially sanctioned role with another, as

[113] Due to Labda's lameness, the lineage of the Cypselids was associated with lameness and/or deformity in the Greek cultural imagination. See, for example, Ziskowski (2012) and Ogden (1997:Ch. 13).

[114] For a fuller discussion of this reference, see Hornblower (2015: *ad loc*.) with associated bibliography.

priestesses of Cassandra.[115] We cannot generalize from this statement and say that women could assert their agency in this way or that, if they did, there was a safety net to support them. What this quote supports, instead, is that those who did not marry, for whatever reason, were not necessarily excluded from their communities entirely.

There seems to have been no general rule about disabled men and women marrying and reproducing in ancient Greece. In a speech by the early 4th century BCE logographer Lysias, the unnamed speaker, who is disabled and uses two crutches to aid his mobility, says that he does "not yet" (οὔπω) have children (Lysias 24.6), a public declaration that he could, indeed, expect or at least hope for that situation to change. In Book 9 (7) of his *History of Animals* (585b30-31), Aristotle writes that deformed children can be born from deformed parents (ἐξ ἀναπήρων ἀνάπηροι): lame children from lame parents and blind children from blind parents. He says that children tend to resemble their parents – even to the extent that a grandfather's tattoo showed up on the same place, but blurred and dark, on his grandson – but the philosopher admits that in most cases this does not actually happen: the children of deformed parents are themselves whole, that is, not deformed (Aristotle, *History of Animals* 9(7).585b36-37, ὁλόκληρα ἐκ κολοβῶν). Indeed, he says (*History of Animals* 9(7).586a1), there is no separate rule about deformed parents reproducing (οὐθὲν ἀποτέτακται τούτων). The physician who authored the Hippocratic text *Generation*, also known as *The Seed* (9-10) says that small and sick children can be born of parents who are large and robust, and that deformity occurs when a pregnant woman receives a blow or injury to her stomach: the fetus, he says, becomes deformed in the place where the injury occurred. He elaborates, echoing Aristotle's comment, that the children of deformed parents are

[115] The rites described in this passage recall Cassandra clinging to the statue of Athena in her attempt to flee the rape of the lesser Ajax. See Hornblower (2015: *ad loc.*); Hurst (2008: *ad loc.*) and McNelis and Sens (2016:92) provide additional, if brief, commentary on this scene.

commonly sound (Hippocrates, *Generation* 11, ὅτι δὲ, πεπηρωμένων ἀνθρώπων, ὑγιέα γίνονται τὰ παιδία, ὡς ἐπὶ πλεῖον). Like Aristotle, then, this physician recognizes that deformed parents do not necessarily produce deformed offspring.[116] In fact, physicians and philosophers occasionally discuss what may prevent successful pregnancy, such as obesity in women (Hippocrates, *Nature of Women* 20), but disability and deformity are not mentioned in this regard.

In this critical aspect of ancient life – marriage and the successful production of children and especially heirs – disabled and deformed adults were not barred from participation. Even the famously ugly Socrates found a suitable marriage partner, Xanthippe, despite his apparently uncanny resemblance to a satyr with a snub nose and bulging eyes (see, e.g., Plato, *Symposium* 215a-c, 216c-d, 221d-e; Plato, *Theaetetus* 143e; Xenophon, *Symposium* 4.19, 5.5-7).[117] Xanthippe also gave Socrates three sons: Lamprocles, Sophroniscus, and Menexenus. Here, too, ancient Greek communities accommodated a wide range of somatic realities.

Religion

In Book 6 of his utopian *Laws* (759c), Plato says that priests and priestesses should be "whole and legitimate" (ὁλόκληρον καὶ γνήσιον), a reference to both somatic and ancestral integrity. The relevant word – ὁλόκληρον – seems to be a direct reference to someone who is not deformed in their body: Aristotle uses the word as an antonym for "deformed" in his *History of*

[116] Similar attitudes are reflected in Roman authors. Pliny the Elder, for example, says that "it is well known" (*iam illa vulgata sunt*) that sound parents can have deformed children and deformed parents can have children who are either sound or deformed (Pliny, *Natural History* 7.50).

[117] For a fuller discussion of Socrates's appearance, see the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. *Socrates*, with bibliography: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/socrates/.

Animals (9(7).585b36-37, above).[118] Given the diversity of religious practice and experience in the ancient world, however, we cannot generalize Plato's prescriptions for the priests and priestesses in his utopia. Ancient religious practice, like much else of the ancient world, created space for a range of individuals to participate, both formally and informally.

Herodotus (9.37-38) introduces us to the figure of Hegesistratos from Elis, a town located in the western Peloponnese. Hegesistratos was a diviner (μάντις) who had previously been held captive by the Spartans. While in captivity and bound in the stocks, Hegesistratos cut off his own foot so that he could escape.[119] Thereafter, the diviner fashioned himself a prosthesis out of wood and, according to Herodotus, continued performing sacrifices. He successfully conducted sacrifices, then, despite not being literally whole (ὁλόκληρος). Indeed, the figure of the "diviner" – an undoubtedly religious role – is often disabled or deformed in some way: Tiresias, for example, is famously blind (see, e.g., *FGrH* 3 F 92a and Callimachus, *Hymn* 5.75ff.). Hegesistratos and Tiresias, then, led religious activities, and it seems that, too, suppliants to the gods were sometimes themselves disabled or deformed in some way, as the testimonies inscribed at the healing sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros attest. Suppliants here made dedications and/or sacrifices to the god, making them integral components of the religious process, despite being blind, lame, tattooed, or otherwise sick or disabled (see LiDonnici 1995; Edelstein and Edelstein 1945).

[118] The 12th century CE *Etymologicium Magnum*, s.v. *aphelēs*, also mentions such a rule that ancient priests had to be *holoklēroi*.

[119] See, also, the story recounted in Pliny's *Natural History* 97.104-106) about Marcus Sergius Silus, who, after losing his right hand in battle, fashioned himself a prosthesis of iron, discussed in detail in Laes (2011a:921-925), with references in footnote 11.

The physical structure of religious sanctuaries even facilitated participation by disabled members of the community. Ancient Greek architects planned and constructed stone ramps on temples and other sanctuary buildings in order, I contend, to make them accessible to mobility-impaired visitors, including not just the disabled, but also pregnant women, the elderly, and small children. Well-known ramps include the one at the front (east) side of the Temple of Aphaia on Aegina (**Figure 3.2**) and leading to the top of the Acropolis in Athens (**Figure 3.3**). When they are considered at all, ramps such as these are often interpreted as a means of conveying sacrificial animals, religious dedications, or building materials into or out of the buildings. While we cannot say that ritual activity did not occur inside the temple building (Sporn 2015:*passim*), it is unlikely that these uses explain the labor- and cost-intensive construction of ramps. Sacrificial animals, for example, could, indeed, enter temples (see, e.g., Pausanias 2.35.5-8, cited in Sporn 2015:352), but this practice seems to have been limited to certain temples and cannot be applied to every temple that features a ramp. What is more, cattle and other sacrificial animals likely did not enter all subsidiary buildings at sanctuaries that were built with ramps. Permanent stone ramps are likewise unnecessary in the process of construction: they represent a significant investment of time, money, and energy for a temporary structure. For such purposes, ancient Greeks likely constructed wooden or earthen ramps, as in the case of the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, where, as the 1st century CE Roman author Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 36.21) says, builders built and then removed earthen ramps used during the construction process. Finally, ramps were apparently not critical or even desired for moving heavy metal and stone dedications, as structures like treasuries, whose sole purpose is to house valuable dedications at religious sanctuaries, were not built with permanent ramps.

Ramps, then, were likely constructed in order to facilitate human traffic. The famous ramp leading up to the Acropolis in Athens (**Figure 3.3**; see, e.g., Stevens 1946), for example, was built in the 6th century BCE, rebuilt in the 5th century BCE, and allowed the entirety of the demos to participate in the Panathenaic festival (Gissen 2014: 98-99), including the elderly men (**Figure 3.4**) and small children depicted as participating in the Panathenaic procession on the Parthenon frieze.[120] Such ramps would have been beneficial to individuals who moved about by means of any of the numerous walking aids which are in evidence in the ancient world. In Herodotus (1.31), for example, we encounter a story about an Argive priestess of Hera. She urgently needed to go to the sanctuary, which was located about nine kilometers from the city of Argos, but the oxen who were supposed to convey her did not arrive in time. Her two sons, Kleobis and Biton, instead harnessed themselves to the yoke and pulled the cart carrying their elderly mother all the way to the sanctuary.[121] Inscriptions from the healing sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros record visitors using a variety of aids. Thesandros, for example, traveled to the sanctuary from Halieis on a wagon (LiDonnici B13; Edelstein and Edelstein 33) and Sostrata traveled from Pherai in Thessaly by being carried on a litter or couch (LiDonnici B5; Edelstein and Edelstein 25). The speaker in Lysias 24 walks around with the help of two crutches and a man at Epidauros was carried around by slaves (LiDonnici A17). A man on a ca. 420 BCE votive relief from Macedonia can be seen lying on a litter and being carried by attendants

[120] Ramps can also be found at Delphi, the Argive Heraion, Tegea, and Selinunte. At especially built and extensive sanctuary sites, including the Acropolis in Athens and the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, one can reach the highest points of the sanctuary without actually walking up a single step.

[121] The mother's age can be implied by her having two adult sons and her limited mobility by her needing to be conveyed on a cart instead of going by foot.

(**Figure 3.5**).[122] Even in our earliest work of literature from ancient Greece we can see the idea of mobility aids embodied in the golden automata in the form of living women that assist the limping god Hephaistos move around in his workshop (Homer, *Iliad* 18.417ff.). In each of these cases, the presence of ramped access to a building or sanctuary site would have aided access for individuals whose mobility was limited due to disability, illness, or age.

That ramps were constructed with the express purpose of accommodating mobility-impaired visitors to religious sanctuaries is supported by the preponderance of ramps at healing sanctuaries, where we know relatively large numbers of mobility-impaired visitors congregated. At the most famous healing sanctuary in the ancient world, for example, the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros, ramps provided access through the *propylaia* (gateway) (**Figure 3.6**) and into the temple (**Figure 3.7**), the *tholos* (**Figure 3.8**), Sanctuary V, the temple of Artemis, the temple of Aphrodite, the temple of Themis, the so-called Epidoteion, and Building T.[123] Other structures, such as the *abaton* and the *katagogeion*, were not raised and therefore did not require ramps to enter them, at least on their first – or ground – level. In total, the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros contains 12 substantial stone ramps. As a point of comparison, the similarly-sized and also Panhellenic Sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia included just two ramps, one leading into the temple of Zeus and another into the Pelopeion, a walled precinct that hosted grand sacrifices. At the much smaller sanctuary of Asklepios at Corinth (**Figure 3.9**), a ramp provides access to the temple, which was raised high on a platform, and a ramp runs the full length of the sanctuary to provide access to the lower Lerna Court (Lang 1977; Roebuck 1951). The long ramp leading to the lower Lerna court would have been unnecessary due to the presence of stairs leading down to

[122] Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 2308.

[123] For a full discussion of the building program at Epidauros, see Alison Burford (1969).

the courtyard, suggesting that the stairs and the ramp were intended to serve different (though not mutually exclusive) groups. Excavations at the sanctuary of Asklepios at Corinth yielded large numbers of anatomical votives including, especially, representations of legs and feet (**Figure 3.10**; see Lang 1977). This apparent interest in lower-body ailments and injuries at the sanctuary supports the idea that the sanctuary was visited by large numbers of people with lower body illnesses and injuries, as well as other conditions that would have affected mobility, and helps explain the considerable investment represented by the construction of ramps.

The investment of time, money, and energy to build ramps at healing sanctuaries (Sporn 2015) does not suggest a lack of interest in the participation of mobility-impaired suppliants at non-healing sanctuaries. Instead, the relative proportions of the mobility-impaired at healing sanctuaries rendered the construction of ramps into not just the main buildings, but also subsidiary buildings, practical and worthwhile. The relatively low numbers of such visitors– that is, the proportion of impaired to non-impaired visitors – at non-healing sanctuaries supported the construction of ramps into temples, the main focus of religious activity, but not necessarily into subsidiary buildings.

In Euripides's *Children of Herakles* (260), Demophon says that the seat of the gods is a common refuge for all (quoted in Mikalson 2005:8). The inclusivity of religious sanctuaries seems, based on the evidence that we have, to have included individuals with a variety of disabilities and deformities. Religious activity, whether public or private, was not restricted to those who were perfect in their bodies but allowed participation by those who did not succeed in the bodily ideal outlined by Plato in his *Laws* (above).

Labor and the economy

The majority of ancient Greeks were engaged in farming and agriculture (Burford 1972:30), but there were a variety of ways that one could be employed. Male and female slaves, for example, served as attendants, rowers, and recordkeepers, as well as in mining, quarrying, and craft production and household industry. In addition to their responsibilities within the household, such as raising children, textile production, and managing the *oikos* and its slaves, women could serve as shopkeepers, priestesses, teachers, musicians, and in craft production.[124] Men could own shops, be physicians or sculptors, write speeches, act in tragedies and comedies, and conduct long-distance trade. Adult men and/or women could be carpenters, midwives, or scribes, sex workers or bankers. This list is not exhaustive, of course, but demonstrates the wide range of occupations and roles available to those living in the ancient world.[125] It is easy to imagine that not everyone is as capable of performing all tasks equally. A certain amount of mobility would have been required for mining, for example, and motor skills for certain kinds of craft production. But, as with other aspects of the ancient world, in the realm of labor and the economy we find disabled and deformed ancient Greeks participating and/or being accommodated in their inability to participate.[126]

[124] For women in craft production, see especially a widely-published mid-5th century BCE volute krater attributed to the Leningrad Painter, which shows a woman working on a ceramic or metal vessel in a workshop, "Caputi hydria," Milan, Torno C278; *ARV*[2] 571,73; see Papadopoulos (2003:197ff.). Angeliki Kosmopoulou (2001) discusses the depictions of women commemorated as nurses, priestesses, and midwives on Classical Attic grave stelai.

[125] For an excellent discussion of labor in the ancient world, see Alison Burford (1972), which includes literary and artistic evidence for craftsmen. See also Mrozek (1989); Mossé (1969); Glotz (1926) for treatments of different aspects of labor and employment in the ancient world.

[126] Garland (1995:32-39) argues that "the world of entertainment probably provided the most lucrative form of employment for a talented minority" of disabled ancient Greeks (32) but admits that some disabled men could work as seers and poets, for example, in various craft industries, as spies or informers, or as beggars. Rose (2003:esp. 39-42) also discusses disabled individuals' participation in the labor force of ancient communities. See also fn. 28 (above) about Pericles employing a large number of laborers who were unable (for unspoken reasons) to participate

The strongest evidence that we have for disabled Greeks' participation in the economy is a speech from the 4th c. BCE logographer Lysias. The speaker in Lysias 24 (6), which will be discussed in more detail below, is disabled – he uses two canes to help him get around – but he plies a craft (τέχνην δὲ κέκτημαι) and even maintains a shop where, as his accuser alleges, ne'er-do-wells spend their time. Unfortunately, the speaker does not discuss the details of his trade, so we cannot know what industry supported this disabled man. The physician who authored the Hippocratic text *On Joints* (12) discusses people who, from birth or from accident in childhood, have so-called "weasel-arms." Such a condition can occur in adults, as well, if a person dislocates her or his shoulder and it is not reduced and becomes lean. Once the arm no longer causes the bearer pain, the physician says, these people can operate a variety of tools: bow-drills, saws, picks, and spades, all tools of various trades. Elsewhere in the text he says that weasel-armed people engage in "handiwork" (χειρῶν ἔργα) as eagerly as those without "weasel-arms" (Hippocrates, *On Joints* 53). In the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* (2nd section, 49) we learn that weak or old individuals who endure accustomed labors fare better than strong, young people who are not used to them. In the Third Section of *Epidemics* 6 (9) we read about a man who ruined his legs working in the mountains (9), a condition that seems to have been a developing situation.

The author of *On Joints* (53) recounts a story about the mythical tribe of Amazons: some tell a story, he says, that the Amazons maim the lower bodies of their male infants by dislocating their joints and then use them as "artisans of all kind of leather and copper work, or some other sedentary occupation" (ὁπόσα ἢ σκυτείης ἔργα ἢ χαλκείης, ἢ ἄλλο τι ἑδραῖον ἔργον). The physician says he cannot vouch for the story, but he can confirm that this is the result of such

directly in the war efforts. This evidence is, admittedly, late and apocryphal, but gives a sense that it would not have been unusual for people of varying abilities and capacities to be employed where they could be productive.

dislocations. A similar idea is present in the *Library* of Diodorus Siculus (17.69), a 1st century BCE author. Here, we read that during his campaign toward Persepolis, Alexander the Great encountered a "strange and terrible sight" (θέαμα παράδοξον καὶ δεινὸν). He saw approximately 800 Greeks who had been kidnapped by the Persians. While in captivity, these Greeks had been mutilated and maimed: some had lost their hands, some their feet, some their ears and noses. The Persians, Diodorus Siculus recounts, had mutilated those parts of the Greeks' bodies that were unnecessary for their successful completion of their particular craft: they left only those parts that were critical to their respective professions. Though later than our other evidence, Diodorus Siculus provides some confirmation of the idea that disability and deformity were not – in and of themselves – enough to bar someone from engaging in productive labor.

A Hellenistic bronze sculpture shows a man wearing a short tunic (*exomis*) that identifies him as an artisan (**Figure 3.11**). The pair of wax tablets tucked into his belt suggests that, despite his apparent age, which is indicated by his balding head, this man is active in his craft. This man falls far short of the classical ideal and he has been identified variously as the disabled craftsman god Hephaistos and, most recently, as the 6th century BCE iambic poet Hipponax, who was famously ugly and deformed (McGowan 2015). This statue, which may or may not have been linked with a human or divine personage from the ancient world, may have been a physical manifestation of the esteem in which technical crafts were held in the ancient world (van den Hoven 1996; Finley 1965). Ancient sources report that certain occupations were not held in high regard because, among other things, they are unhealthy. In the *Oeconomicus* (4.1-3) for example, Xenophon says that banausic occupations are disdained and held in low regard because they utterly destroy the bodies of the workers who must sit all day inside and sometimes while away

their days in front of the fire.[127] One could see how repeated and sustained labor could lead to bodily changes. The 5th century BCE figurine from Boeotia of a carpenter (**Figure 3.12**), for example, shows a man sitting hunched over his work, a posture that could ultimately result in degeneration evident along the spine.[128] Evidence of the toll that ancient labor took on the body can be traced in the bioarchaeological record. In the cemetery at the northern city of Amphipolis, for example, nearly 60 percent of the inhumed adult skeletons dated to the 5th and 4th centuries BCE presented evidence for arthropathies (e.g., osteoarthritis) (Malamidou 2006:pl.4). Arthropathies develop over time as the result of a variety of factors, including – and perhaps especially – biomechanical stress from physical activity, including labor. The preponderance of osteoarthritis and other degenerative joint disorders on the male skeletons at Amphipolis suggests that men were more engaged in heavy work, war, voyages, commerce, and so on (Malamidou 2006:205). It is difficult to know how much an individual would have been affected by her or his arthritis and similar conditions, but we can assume at least some consequences for mobility and movement for at least some of the individuals in the population. That these individuals were buried as a part of the regular population suggests they suffered no negative consequences from their development of arthritis, despite the effect that the condition could have had on the individual's livelihood.

At Hellenistic and Roman cemeteries at Paphos (Cyprus) and Corinth, Sherry C. Fox (2005:79) reports that the most prevalent skeletal pathology at both sites was osteophytosis, and that most instances were due either to age or to degeneration due to wear-and-tear on the body.

[127] For a fuller discussion of the low esteem in which banausic arts were held in the ancient world, especially in philosophical circles, see van den Hoven (1996:49ff.).

[128] Copenhagen, Danish National Museum, no. 3888. Depicted in Higgins (1986).

Similar evidence for heavy labor and mechanical stresses have been found on skeletons from the Bronze Age cemeteries of East Lokris. Here, Carina Iezzi (2009:188) identified less evidence for biomechanical stress on the bodies of women, who suffered from higher rates of metabolic disorders and nutritional issues, than on men's bodies. This pattern, she suggests, may indicate that women in relatively poor health were given reduced workloads, a pattern that supports the argument that the ancient world was flexible enough to accommodate individuals' different abilities.

The 3rd century BCE philosopher Hieronymus of Rhodes tells a story about the Athenian statesman Pericles:

> Indeed, come on and let's examine the education of children, how fathers handle it. For not only in the matters discussed earlier, but also in these matters men we shall find them disagreeing greatly. First, some men who handed over <their children> to barbarian teachers and bade them listen to them, they believe that they are taking adequate care, as though the children needed one who would follow them around, rather than one who would lead them well and prevent them from straying, as a swineherd would, but not . . . therefore, even if someone has been judged unfit to be a laborer, they assign him to tutoring, giving what is naturally most valuable to what is most worthless. That is also why Perikles, once when a slave fell from an olive tree and shattered his leg, said, "So the young man has turned out to be a tutor', plausibly mocking the disgraceful status of that line of work.[129]
>
> Stobaeus, *Anth*. II 31.121, p. II 233.1-16 Wachsmuth-Hense

> Δεῦρο δὴ καὶ σκεψώμεθα περὶ τῆς τῶν παίδων ἀγωγῆς, τίνα τρόπον διειλήφασιν οἱ πατέρες·οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἐν τοῖς πρότερον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τούτοις εὑρήσομεν αὐτοὺς οὐ μικρὰ διαφωνοῦντας· οἵτινες πρῶτον μὲν βαρβάροις παραβαλόντες ⟨τοὺς παῖδας⟩ παιδαγωγοῖς καὶ τούτων ἀκούειν κελεύσαντες, ἱκανῶς ἐπιμελεῖσθαι νομίζουσιν, ὥσπερ τοῦ κατὰ πόδας ἀκολουθήσοντος, ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦ καλῶς ἡγησομένου δεομένων τῶν παιδίων καὶ τοῦ φυλάττοντος καθάπερ συβώτου μὴ πλανηθῆι, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ...διὸ καὶ τὸν ἐκ τῶν ἐργατῶν ἀποδοκιμασθέντα, τοῦτον ἐπὶ παιδαγογίαι κατατάττουσι, τὰ φύσει τιμιώτατα τοῖς εὐτελεστάτοις διδόντες· ὅθεν καὶ Περικλῆς, οἰκέτου ποτὲ πεσόντος ἀπὸ ἐλαίας καὶ τὸ σκέλος

[129] Many thanks to Anastasia Baran, Jennifer Starkey, and David Blank for their help with this translation.

συντρίψαντος· «νέος ἄρα», ἔφη, «παιδαγωγὸς πέφηνεν», οὐκ ἀπιθάνως τῆς ὑπουργίας τὴν ἀτιμίαν σκώψας.

This passage is interesting for thinking about the esteem in which teachers (paidagogoi) were held, but relevant here is the position of the slave. We can picture this slave as the figure up the tree on a black-figure amphora in the British Museum (**Figure 3.13**), [130] having climbed the tree in order to shake down olives for their collection. The young man fell from the tree and crushed his leg, making him no longer able to fulfill his role as olive-shaker. But, as Perikles's mocking comment suggests, the injury did not render the slave totally unemployable: he could be shifted in his responsibilities, taking on the mantle of a paidagogos or teacher.[131] Of course, we cannot say that Hieronymus's story was based in reality – it probably was not – and the story functioned for Hieronymus to illustrate a point about the value of education in his contemporary Greece. Nevertheless, the story supports an argument made by Martha L. Rose (2003), that ancient Greeks integrated people with disabilities into their communities in a variety of (flexible) roles.[132]

Not everyone, however, could be accommodated even in the most flexible of ancient models of labor. A man represented by an early 6th century BCE figurine in Geneva (**Figure 3.14**) is missing both of his legs below the knee and his left arm at the shoulder.[133] These missing limbs were intentionally modeled by the coroplast – the ends are finished, not broken – and

[130] British Museum 1837,0609.42.

[131] In his *Laws* (11.916a-b) Plato provides opportunities for slaveowners to return slaves who turn out to be ill or disabled in a way that prevents them from fulfilling the purpose for which they were purchased. That is not to say that the slaves are totally useless, only that they could not fulfill specific and intended purposes.

[132] Rose first articulated this argument in Edwards (1997). Oliver (2007:esp. 74-76), presents an argument for the desperate need for manpower in ancient Greece, a picture that would support the argument in Rose (2003:100) that "the Greeks did not waste manpower."

[133] Geneva, Museé d'Art et d'Histoire, Inv. HR 79 (gift of Jean Lauffenburger 1985).

though we cannot say whether this figurine represents an actual person or is a figment of the creator's imagination, it illustrates that disabilities can be more or less severe and that some individuals may, in fact, have been more seriously limited in their ability to participate in the ancient economy. But, as with other spheres of activity in ancient Greece, here, too, at least some ancient communities facilitated their disabled members.

In 4th century BCE Athens, some disabled citizens could rely on a daily dole from the city.[134] Our primary source of information on this welfare program is a speech by Lysias (24). In the speech, a self-identified disabled man – he walks with the aid of two crutches – defends himself against a charge that he is receiving the city's disability pension fraudulently.[135] The speaker practices an unspecified trade, but he is not able to support himself. He says:

> For my accuser says that I am unjustly taking the money from the city: indeed that I am capable in body and do not belong among those classed as *adunatoi*, and that I know a craft such that I could live even without this donation.
>
> Lysias 24.4

> φησὶ γὰρ ὁ κατήγορος οὐ δικαίως με λαμβάνειν τὸ παρὰ τῆς πόλεως ἀργύριον: καὶ γὰρ τῷ σώματι δύνασθαι καὶ οὐκ εἶναι τῶν ἀδυνάτων, καὶ τέχνην ἐπίστασθαι τοιαύτην ὥστε καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ διδομένου τούτου ζῆν.

[134] Rose (2017) argues that this should not be considered a "pension for the handicapped" akin to modern systems of disability compensation, partly because she does not believe that the Greek *adunatos* is equivalent to the modern "disabled."

[135] Rose (2017) provides an excellent discussion of the speech with specific engagement with theories of disability. Carey (1990) discusses the structure and strategy evident in the speech. Fischer (2012) discusses the speech in the context of employment for the disabled in the ancient world. For questions of authenticity and intent, see Usher (1999:106-110); Gil (1986); Dover (1968); Darkow (1917); Adams (1905). See also Dillon (2017).

Here, the word *adunatoi* can be understood to refer to a group of people, whether legally distinguished or not, who approximate what we would call "disabled."[136] We learn about the details of the law also in the later 4th century BCE *Athenian Constitution*:

> And the Council also inspects the *adunatoi*: for there is a law that orders that the Council inspect those possessing less than three minae[137] and being maimed in their bodies such that they are unable to perform any work, and give each man, at the public expense, a maintenance of two obols a day. And there is a treasurer appointed by lot for them.
>
> [Pseudo-]Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 49.4

> δοκιμάζει δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἀδυνάτους ἡ βουλή· νόμος γάρ ἐστιν, ὃς κελεύει τοὺς ἐντὸς τριῶν μνῶν κεκτημένους καὶ τὸ σῶμα πεπηρωμένους, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι μηδὲν ἔργον ἐργάζεσθαι, δοκιμάζειν μὲν τὴν βουλήν, διδόναι δὲ δημοσίᾳ τροφὴν δύο ὀβολοὺς ἑκάστῳ τῆς ἡμέρας. καὶ ταμίας ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς κληρωτός.

The law is also discussed by Harpocration, who cites Lysias, Aristotle, and the Atthidographer Philochorus of Athens (*FGrH* 328 F 197b),[138] and later in Plutarch (Solon 31). The details of this law indicate two things. First, that there were, indeed, citizens who were disabled and able to earn enough money to live without the support of this daily dole.[139] The dole, both sources say, was for individuals who were so disabled that they could not earn a living. Second, the city of

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[136] Walter Penrose (2015) has argued that the term *adunatoi* is, in this context, a legal classification and that, therefore, a class of "disabled" can be distinguished, but Martha L. Rose objects (2013, 2017) and argues that such a category did not exist in any ancient Greek context. Samama (2017) also discusses the Greek word *adunatos*.

[137] Not an insubstantial amount of money.

[138] Philochoros of Athens, *FGrH* 328 F 197b: ἀδύνατοι· οἱ μέρος τι βεβλαμμένοι τοῦ σώματος ὡς μηδὲ<ν ἔργον> ἐργάζεσθαι, οἳ καὶ ἐχορηγοῦντοτὰ πρὸς τὸ ζῆν παρὰ τῆς πόλεως, μισθοφορούντων [αὐτοῖς] τῶν ἐντὸς τριῶν μνῶν περιουσίαν κεκτημένων. ἐδοκιμάζοντο δὲ οἱ ἀδύνατοι ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν φ¯βουλῆς, καὶ ἐλάμβανον τῆς ἡμέρας, ὡς μὲν Λυσίας λέγει, ὀβολὸν ἕνα, ὡς δὲ Φιλόχορος † πέντε· ᾽Αριστοτέλης δὲ δύο ἔφη.

[139] This speech makes a crucial distinction between impairment and disability in ways that modern disability theorists do in their explanation of the social model of disability (see, e.g., UPIAS 1976:14; Oliver 1981; Barnes 2012). In the first instance is the impairment of the individuals in question: the impairment, in and of itself, does not prohibit one from participating in society. In the second is the disability, which is the result of environments, barriers, and cultures that prevent the impaired individuals from participating as full and contributing members of society. Here, the law clearly intends that you must be not only impaired, but also disabled in order to receive the dole.

Athens, at least in the 4th century BCE but probably earlier, recognized that not all disabled citizens were equally capable of earning a living in their respective industries and that some would require financial assistance in order to survive. What is more, the law was constantly revisited, as is suggested by the increase of the payment from one obol in Lysias to two in Aristotle.[140]

It is difficult to know how recipients of this dole were regarded, whether positively or negatively, but we have some clues from elsewhere in legal discourse. In Lysias 31 (esp. 10-13) for example, the speaker seeks to discredit a man named Philon on several grounds, including that he did not participate in the overthrowing of the Thirty Tyrants. All people, he says, forgive the poor and disabled (ἀδυνάτοις τῷ σώματι) for not enduring hardship because their situation is involuntary (ἄκοντας αὐτοὺς ἁμαρτάνειν) and because the disabled are unable to suffer hardship (ἀδύνατος ἦν ταλαιπωρεῖν). Athenians, his speech suggests, regarded the disabled with some leniency (ἀδυνάτοις τῷ σώματι συγγνώμην). But Philon is neither disabled nor poor, and he should, therefore, be held to account because he should have been able to bear the hardships suffered by those who fought the Thirty. The speaker in Aeschines's *Against Timarchus* (1.103) condemns Timarchus for discontinuing the income from a family's estate that was given to his blind uncle, Arignotus, by Timarchus's father and that continued by appointed guardians until Timarchus's majority. Due to Timarchus's actions, Arignotus was forced to take the state's dole for the disabled (ἐν τοῖς ἀδυνάτοις μισθοφοροῦντα). In one year, Arignotus was omitted from the list to receive the dole and, when he appealed to the council, Timarchus, who was present in the proedria that day, failed to support his uncle's petition and Arignotus was denied re-assertion to

[140] According to Philochoros, it may have been five obols at some point. Philochoros, *FGrH* 328 F 197b.

the list (Aeschines, *Against Timarchus* 1.104). It is Timarchus's lack of support for his uncle that is most terrible (ὃ καὶ δεινότατον), not his uncle's receipt of the pension.

That disabled ancient Greeks participated in the economy and labor force or were accommodated in their inability to do so effectively, should not be surprising in the context of a culture in which the god of craftsmanship, Hephaistos, was himself disabled. Hephaistos's disability not only did not prevent him from engaging in craft production, but may, in fact, have enabled him to do so at such a high level (see the Conclusion of this dissertation). Just so, we can expect that disabled ancient Greeks – men and women, slave and free – worked in a variety of capacities, including in agriculture, craft production, and education.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion should not imply that it is possible to separate these various spheres of activity from one another. In fact, however, ancient Greeks participated in multiple spheres over the course of a single day and definitely over the course of their entire lives. In the late 5th century BCE, for example, Mannes, the son of Orymaios, a Phrygian in Attica, lived as a woodcutter but died in a battle as a soldier.[141] Johann Peter Franz titled his 2002 book on ancient hoplite warfare *Krieger, Bauern, Bürger – Warriors, Farmers, Citizens* – which encapsulates the idea that men (and women) were never one thing in the ancient world, but that individuals occupied many roles within their communities. In each of these spheres – with the possible exception of sports – the disabled and deformed could, in theory and in practice, occupy productive roles or they were accommodated in their inability. In extreme circumstances the disabled could be called on to serve in war, but, by and large, disabled men were given

[141] *IG* I² 1084, quoted in Burford 1972:18.

exemptions from their legally and socially-prescribed military service. Disabled men and women married and reproduced, attended to their religious lives as suppliants, priests and priestesses, or seers, and provided for themselves by working in various sectors of the formal and informal economies. Ancient Greek communities were designed to facilitate individuals who experienced a wide range of bodies.

This understanding of the place of disabled adults in ancient Greece may help us understand situations like the severely disabled man treated to a seriously deviant burial in Early Iron Age Athens. According to Lisa M. Little and John K. Papadopoulos, the adult man was intentionally buried in the upper fill of a well, a deviation from contemporary burial practice. Analysis of his skeleton revealed that the man had suffered serious injuries in early adulthood: fractures to the skull and a broken back (Little and Papadopoulos 1998:385). The trauma to the skull may have had long-term consequences for the man's behavior: he likely suffered permanent neurologic disturbances and/or post-traumatic epilepsy (Little and Papadopoulos 1998:389). The vertebral trauma may have initially been minor but it, too, affected this man throughout the rest of his life, including in the development of secondary degenerative joint disease, that is, degeneration that is understood to stem from habitual physical activity or trauma (Little and Papadopoulos 1998:391).

This man, then, experienced severe trauma early in life that affected him for his entire life. He can, I think, safely be called "disabled" in a sense that is appropriate for the purposes of this study. His physical condition, however, did not prevent him from engaging in strenuous labor later in his life: robust bony muscle attachments demonstrate that this man regularly performed tasks that involved movements such as climbing or habitual squatting (Little and Papadopoulos 1998:391). Regardless of the specific details, the man was robust and "remained

physically active despite having suffered and survived severe cranial and vertebral trauma" (Little and Papadopoulos 1998:392). As can be reconstructed for later periods of Greek history, this man, despite his physical disabilities, acted in some capacity that could be considered productive, whether as a slave or citizen.

If this man survived his trauma and continued acting in some sort of productive capacity within his community, what, then, explains his deviant burial? As Little and Papadopoulos (1998:397) argue, his special mortuary treatment was likely the result not of his physical condition, but of behavioral changes that attended his disabilities, including neurologic damage and/or post-traumatic epilepsy. His physical body was obviously not a problem for his continued activity within the community – as his bony muscle attachments show – but apparently his behavior was.

Other evidence supports the argument that the disabled were considered to be an integral and functioning segment of the population. During the siege of Plataea during the Peloponnesian War, for example, the Athenians came to the aid of the Plataeans and evacuated the city of its most vulnerable members: women, children, the elderly, and the "great number of useless men" (Thucydides 2.78.3, καὶ πλῆθος τὸ ἀχρεῖον τῶν ἀνθρώπων).[142] The reference here seems to be to men who were unable to participate in the war efforts for reasons other than old age, as the elderly are represented as a separate category of people. In the Hippocratic *On Joints* (58) the physician says that one might say that individuals with deformed or maimed limbs are outside of the healing art because they are incurable.[143] But this is wrong, he says, because curable and

[142] See, also, Thucydides 2.6.4.

[143] See the comment at Plato, *Republic* 3.407d-e, for example, about physicians not treating apparently incurable cases.

incurable cases are both part of the same area of knowledge (Hippocrates, *On Joints* 58, τῆς γὰρ αὐτῆς γνώμης καὶ ταῦτα συνιέναι). In at least these two contexts, the ancient Greeks did not abandon their disabled, but considered them alongside their non-disabled contemporaries. The ability of ancient Greek adults to engage in the various spheres of ancient life depended not so much on their physical bodies as on a variety of intersecting factors, including their age, sex, wealth, and status. Disabled adults participated where they were expected to and, when they could not because their bodies prevented them, they were often accommodated formally and informally.

Figure 3. 1

Attic red-figure hydria showing Thersites (right) leaning on a crooked staff as he faces Agamemnon (center) and another man, perhaps Nestor (left).
British Museum 1891,0629.3.

Photo from the British Museum.

Figure 3. 2

Photograph of the Temple of Aphaia on Aegina, from the southeast, showing the ramp that connected the altar with the front porch of the temple. Human for scale.

Photo by author.

Figure 3. 3

Reconstruction of the Acropolis in Athens, showing 1, Old Athena Temple and possible location of Bluebeard Temple; 2, Old Parthenon; 3, Old Propylon (hypothetical plan); 4, Athena Nike bastion with small limestone temple; 5, forecourt entrance area; 6, ramp; 7, Building B (hypothetical plan and location); 8, pre-Mnesiklean cistern (hypothetical plan). From Paga (2017:Fig. 1).

Figure 3. 4

Fragment of the Ionic frieze from the Parthenon (Athens) showing elderly men, 447-432 BCE. Parthenon Frieze, Block N IX, ca. 447-432 BCE.

© 2009 Ministry of Culture – Acropolis Restoration Service – First Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities – Department of Information and Education
© 2009 National Documentation Centre-National Hellenic Research Foundation

Figure 3. 5

Marble votive relief showing a man being carried on a litter. The men on either side of the litter are holding stones and aiming them at the snake, whom they hope to drive away.
Macedonia, ca. 420 BCE
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 2308.

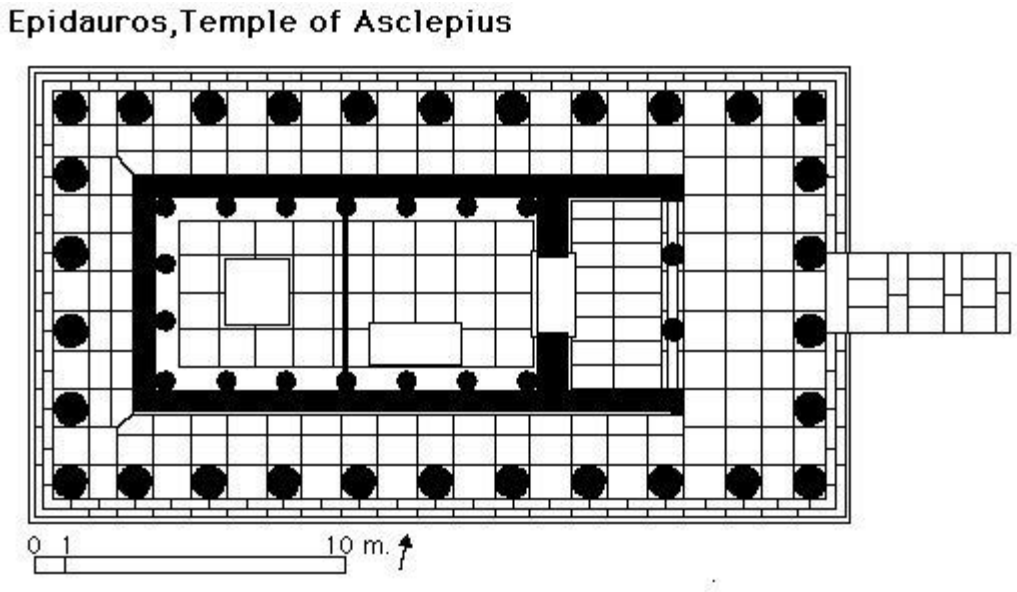
Photo: Sergey Sosnovskiy (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Figure 3. 6

Photograph of the ramp leading into sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros from the propylaia, or gateway.

Photo by author.

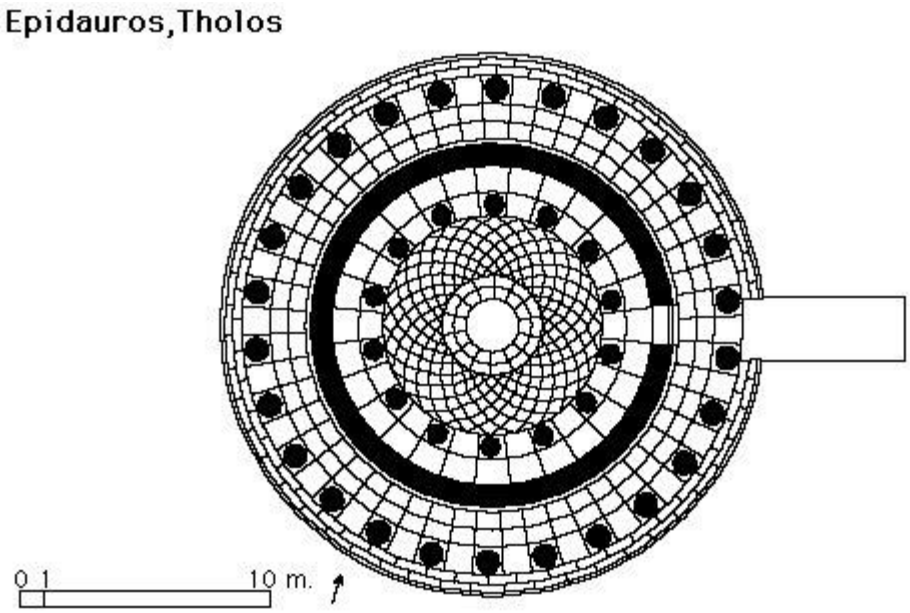
Figure 3. 7



Plan of the Temple of Asklepios at Epidauros, with ramp at east end.

Plan based on Roux (1961:pl. 28).

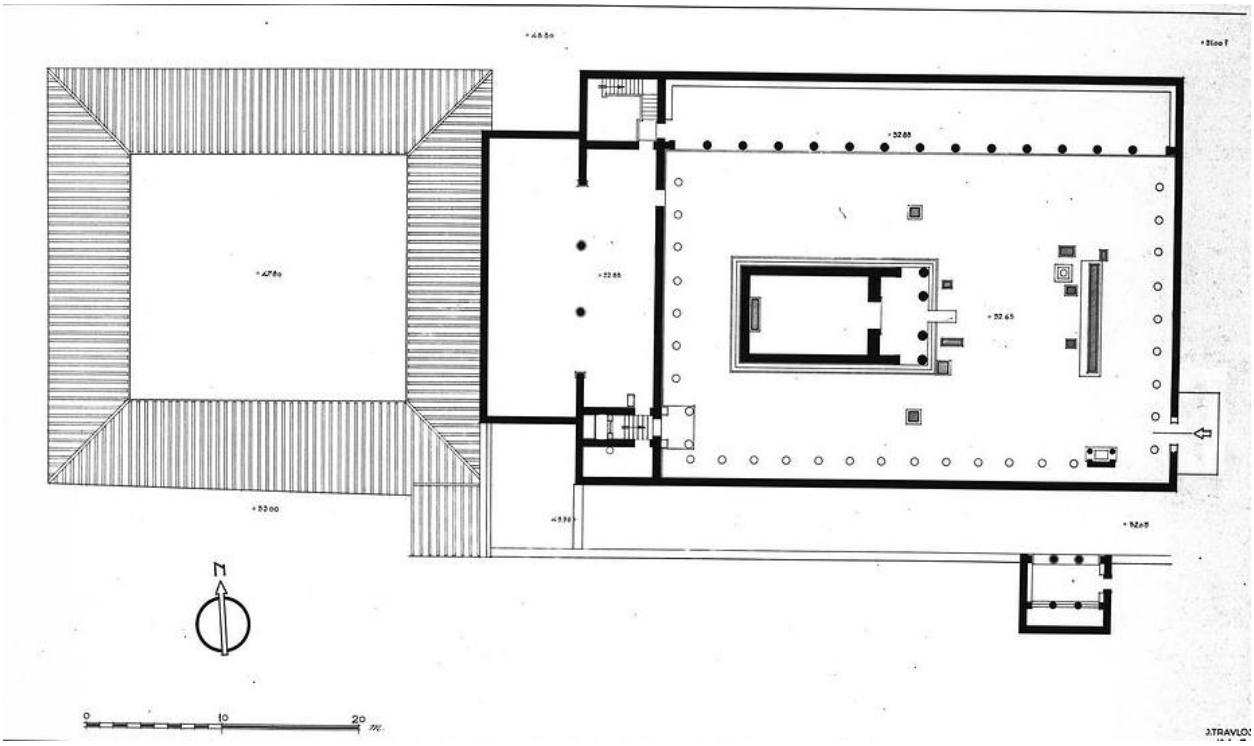
Figure 3. 8



Plan of the Tholos at Epidauros, with ramp at east end.

Photo in Lawrence (1983:fig. 216).

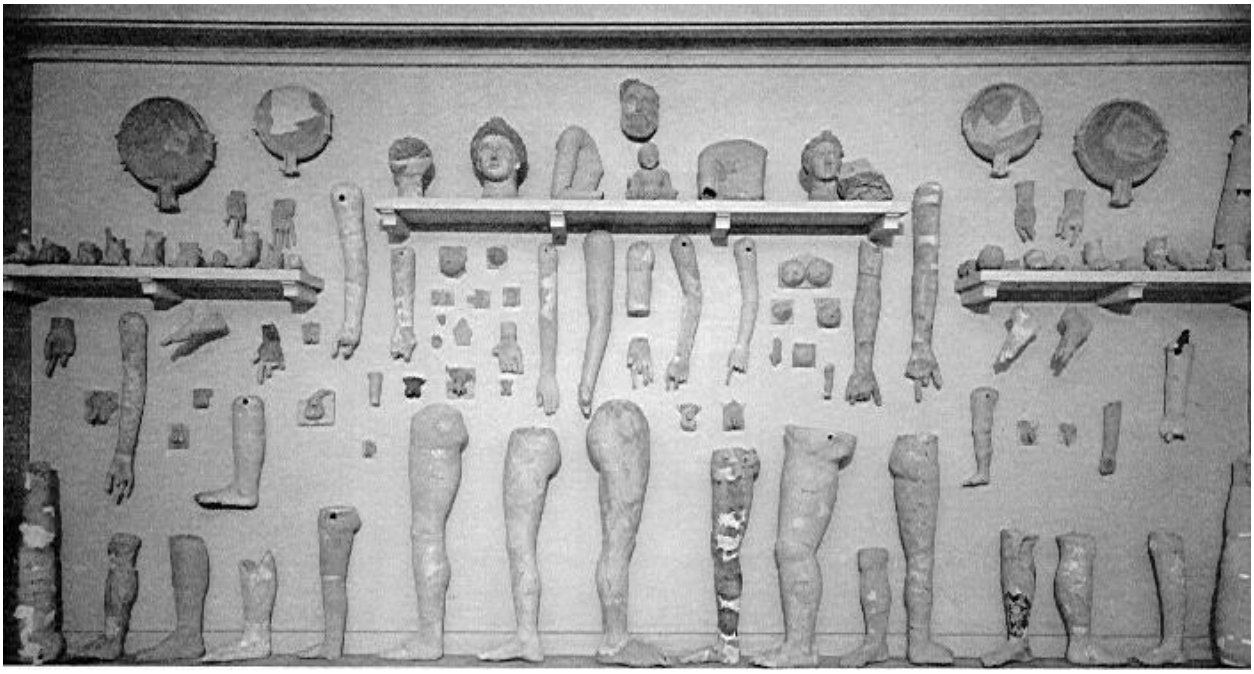
Figure 3. 9



Plan of the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Corinth. One ramp leads into the temple, while another extends the length of the temenos (sanctuary precinct) along the south side, leading down to the Lerna Court.

Photo in Lang (1977:16-17).

Figure 3. 10



Terracotta anatomical votive dedications from the Sanctuary of Asklepios at Corinth.

Photo from Lang (1977:14).

Figure 3. 11

Late Hellenistic (1st century BCE) bronze and silver sculpture of an artisan.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972.11.1.

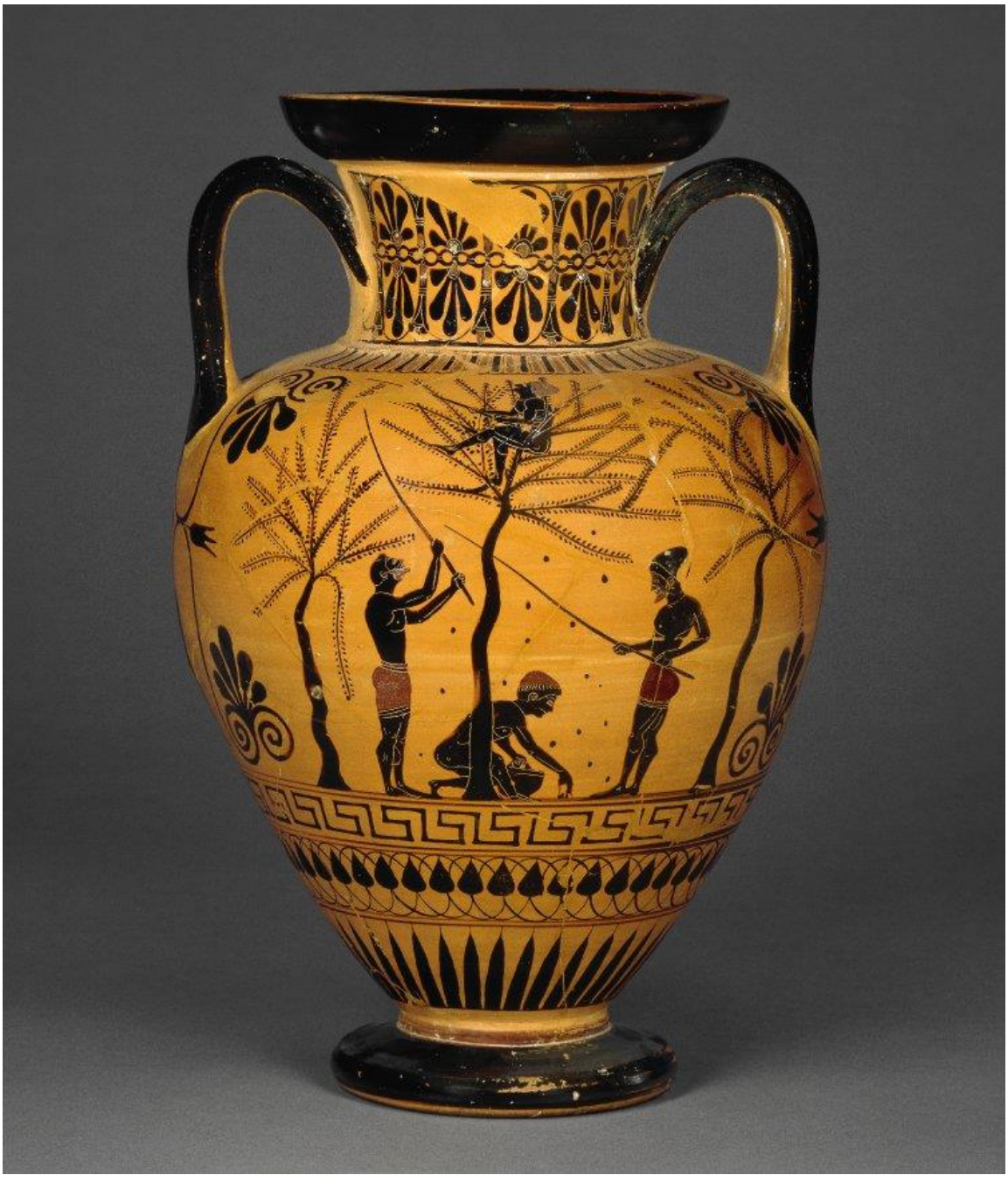
Photo from Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 3. 12

5th century BCE Boeotian terracotta figurine showing a carpenter at work.
Copenhagen, Danish National Museum, no. 3888.

Photo by DEA PICTURE LIBRARY/De Agostini/Getty Images

Figure 3. 13



Amphora showing four male figures collecting olives. ca. 520 BCE.
London, British Museum 1837,0609.42.

Photo from British Museum.

Figure 3. 14

Early 6th century BCE terracotta figurine of a deformed man, Corinthian style, from Sicily. Geneva, Museé d'Art et Histoire, Inv. HM 79.

Photo by author.

Chapter 4: The Elderly Disabled in Ancient Greece

> My limbs are no longer steady, dear friend; not my feet, neither
> do my arms swing light from my two shoulders.
> Homer, *Iliad* 23.627-8
>
> οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἔμπεδα γυῖα, φίλος, πόδες, οὐδέ τι χεῖρες
> ὤμων ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐπαΐσσονται ἐλαφραί.

In Book 23 of Homer's *Iliad*, the aged king Nestor, quoted above, presents a good case for why disability in old age should be distinguished from disability experienced earlier in life: with old age comes a whole slate of physical conditions, "most of which are unavoidable consequences of the aging of the human body" (Grmek 1989). Scientists today cannot easily explain the causes of aging (see, e.g., Jin 2010), but a review of ancient literature makes it clear that age-related degeneration is not a modern phenomenon. In the 5th century BCE, for example, the pre-Socratic philosopher Democritus described old age as a whole impairment (ὁλόκληρος …πήρωσις): it possesses everything and yet each (part) lacks something (DK 68 B296). The figure of the aged and aging old man or woman can be found throughout Greek literature and art, regardless of genre, and very often the figures are depicted with what we may term age-related disabilities, including diminished mental capacity and memory loss, hearing loss, impaired sight, hunched backs, and/or limited mobility. This raises a series of questions. First, to what extent was disability in old age regarded as similar to, or different from, disability experienced as a child or an adult? Second, was there a difference in attitudes toward, and expectations for, those disabled in/by old age compared with those who were old but not disabled? Third, did it matter whether someone was disabled only as a consequence of old age or if they carried previous (congenital or acquired) disabilities with them into old age?

In this chapter, I attempt answers to these questions. I emphasize why it is impossible to discuss "disability in ancient Greece" without regard for age-related distinctions in attitudes and

expectations. My main focus here is on disabilities that are solely or largely due to age, as opposed to those that were acquired earlier in life and continued to affect an individual in her or his old age, although in many cases it is difficult to distinguish between them. I begin by outlining current approaches to, and understandings of, old age in ancient Greece. This body of scholarship focuses not so much on disability in old age as on old age more generally, including when, exactly, "old age" was thought to begin and how it was characterized in various literary genres, including epic and lyric poetry, tragedy, comedy, and medical treatises. This brief literature review, which is not intended to be exhaustive, will provide context for the larger arguments I make in the chapter.

I turn then to what we know from studying ancient Greek cemeteries about the kinds of impairments and disabling conditions that ancient Greeks experienced as they aged. Things like degenerative joint disorders (e.g., osteoarthritis) manifest on the skeleton and statistical analyses illustrate just how common age-related impairments were in ancient Greek communities. Relevant here, also, are numerous clinical descriptions of old age-specific illnesses and impairments in Greek literature, as well as depictions of age-related impairments in Greek art. These representations not only confirm what we see in the bioarchaeological evidence, but also provide us with information about conditions that affected the elderly in ancient Greece that are not identifiable on bone.

The bioarchaeological evidence and artistic and textual references to specific old age-related diseases and impairments demonstrate the range of conditions that an aging ancient Greek could expect to experience. A list of disabling conditions does not, however, tell the whole story. It can be difficult to assess whether pathologies identified on the skeleton or in literature had actual, lived consequences for the affected individual and for this reason I turn next to

literary and artistic representations of the experience of disability in old age. The overall preference expressed in literature is for a bodily and mental integrity sustained until death, but artists and authors reveal a wide range of experiences of aging and therefore attitudes about the physical processes of aging, including in the figure of Geras, the personification of Old Age.

I then discuss the kinds of roles that we know the elderly disabled could and did play in their communities, as well as the kinds of accommodations and legal protections that were afforded them. The elderly, regardless of disability, already had different duties or responsibilities than they had had earlier in life – there was no military obligation, for example, which decreases a sense of corporate membership – and due to this shift in the position of the individual, the nature and effect of disability was not the same as it was or would have been for an individual earlier in life. In the end, I argue that age-related disability is of a different nature and character from disability experienced earlier in life. Disability in old age was, to an extent, expected as a part of the natural process of aging and it therefore did not elicit the same reactions that attended disability experienced in infancy, childhood, or adulthood. Old age disability cannot easily be compared with disability experienced earlier in life.

The theory of aging[144]

One of the earliest attempts to understand old age as a cultural construct was Simone de Beauvoir's *The Coming of Age*, originally published in French as *La Vieillesse* (1970). De Beauvoir wanted to understand how different societies, both past and present, viewed old age and why old age is, and has been, so taboo in the abstract and negative in the experience. Her work, referred to by the classicist Moses I. Finley (1981:158) as "brilliant but flawed," was the

[144] I took this phrase from my dad. Thanks, Dad!

first to consider old age synoptically, as a whole, and she attempted to account for how class or status governs the manner in which old age is experienced. Any study, de Beauvoir argued, that does not account for class distinctions must be challenged. Later studies on old age emphasize that there is no universal experience of old age.[145] In his *History of Old Age*, Georges Minois (1989[1987]:7) argues that "Western history from antiquity to the Renaissance is marked by fluctuations in the social and political role of the old." His study of old age through successive ages provides a variety of paradigms for understanding the different roles and statuses that the elderly can occupy within a society. Andreas Luh (2003) attempted to find a "golden age of the elderly" by considering this subset of the population in prehistory, Greek and Roman antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Age of Enlightenment, during and immediately after the Industrial Revolution, and in the post-industrial civilization of the present (*Erlebnisgesellschaft*). The experience of old age, he says, depends on a variety of factors that are particular not only to each culture and society, but also to each individual's sex, status, health, and so on (see also Thane 2000, 2003; Gowland 2017:80-81). Taken all together, these studies demonstrate not only that the study of old age is interesting in its own right, but also that it is important for understanding our own society and its portrait of old age.

Moses I. Finley (1981) presented not the first study on the elderly in ancient Greece, but likely one of the best known and one of the few that attempts to reconstruct the totality of the experience of old age in antiquity. In his article, Finley provides a model for scholarly approaches not just to old age, but to any social construct:

> [I]f one searches through the surviving poetry, drama, histories, political and forensic speeches, philosophical treatises and essays, one will find, not at all

[145] Rebecca L. Gowland (2017) clearly and beautifully articulates the situated and embodied nature of old age in her discussion of elder marginalization and abuse in Roman Britain.

> surprisingly, passages running the gamut of possible attitudes and conceptions of the elderly. Quotations are available to support almost any judgment. (Finley 1981:10)

He discusses what we do know from our sources about topics like legal requirements for children to care for their parents in old age, retirement, a lack of medical discussion about old age, and suicide and mental illness among the elderly. Along with others, Finley concludes that studying old age in antiquity is important in its own right, but also as a means to reflect on (but not find practical answers to) how our own society copes—or fails to cope—with the elderly. Other scholars have attempted broad-based understandings of old age in antiquity, including Bessie Ellen Richardson, whose 1933 interdisciplinary study on old age among the ancient Greeks is still useful for scholars interested in various aspects of the subject,[146] and Wolfgang Schadewaldt (1933), who argued for a positive reading on the experiences of the elderly in ancient Greece.[147]

Other studies on old age have been more circumscribed, focusing on specific media or genres. Literary approaches to old age are perhaps most numerous. One of the most comprehensive works on this topic is Thomas M. Falkner's *The Poetics of Old Age in Greek Epic, Lyric, and Tragedy* (1995). Falkner (1995:xii-xiii) argues that "the treatment of old age, geras, is so extensive in Greek poetry as to suggest a cultural obsession" and in his book he considers old age as a topic of study in and of itself, but also as "a conceptual tool by which Greek poetry examines other related themes and ideas." Unlike some of the more interdisciplinary studies on old age, Falkner (1995:xiv) does not attempt to inform about social

[146] But see critical reviews (Hewitt 1934; Schmid 1934) that credit the book as essentially a sourcebook with flawed analyses.

[147] See also Christian Krötzl and Katariina Mustakallio (2011), another broad-ranging study of old age, this time in antiquity and the Middle Ages, and Robert W. Ulery, Jr.'s address (2010-2011) at an annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle, West, and South.

realities, but he examines "old age as a semiotic system" and he shows how considering old age offers new readings of texts as wholes. That is, by considering how Greek poets understood and deployed old age in their works, we can appreciate totally new interpretations of authors like Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Euripides, and Sophocles. Falkner is careful to allow each author or text to speak for itself and he considers what is now termed "intersectionality," that is, how age, sex/gender, and status all work together to create different (literary) experiences of old age for different characters. A similar approach to old age, but with a broader focus on both Greek and Latin literature, is evident in *Old Age in Greek and Latin Literature* (Falkner and de Luce 1989). Chris Gilleard (2007) uses Greek literature to consider the different attitudes toward old age in Athens and Sparta and suggests how such attitudes can inform modern anti-aging debates. He ultimately concludes that the ancient Greeks generally were not interested in prolonging life.

Jan N. Bremmer (1984) presents a more focused study, one of the few that accounts specifically for old women, this time in Greece and Rome. Bremmer discusses representations of old women in a wide variety of genres, from epic to forensic oratory to comedy, and attempts to reconcile the seemingly contradictory attitudes evident, and he goes so far as to discuss modern attitudes toward old women in the Mediterranean. Louise Pratt (2000) uses the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* as a tool with which to assess the role of old women in ancient Greece, discussing old women's work and their apparent "freedom" of movement and she ultimately concludes that while we cannot usefully link representations of old women in texts like the *Hymn to Demeter* to any lived reality, we can reconstruct various strains of thought that may inform us about Greek values.[148]

[148] See, also, Jeffrey Henderson's (1987) study on women in Attic Old Comedy (i.e., Aristophanes). Like Bremmer (1984) and Pratt (2000), Henderson attempts to understand the relationship between literary representations of old women and their counterparts in Greek society.

Medical approaches to understanding old age in ancient Greece are exemplified in Hermann Orth's "ΔΙΑΙΤΑ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ: die Geriatrie der griechischen Antike" (1963). Orth (1963:38) relies principally on the works of the 2nd century CE physician Galen, to a lesser extent on figures like Oribasius (4th century CE), Aëtius (6th century CE), and Paul of Aegina (7th century CE), in order to reconstruct "the theory and practice of ancient geriatrics." Orth argues that the ancient Greek physicians attempted to assist their contemporaries in a healthy old age (contra Finley's [1981:3] argument that ancient Greek physicians were not concerned with aging) and he draws numerous connections between ancient and modern physicians in this regard. Darrel W. Amundsen and Carol Jean Diers's (1970) study on the age of menopause in ancient Greece and Rome relies on medical and related treatises in order to reconstruct when ancients believed a woman exceeded her childbearing years and thereby entered into new and different social roles.[149]

In addition to studying the function that old age plays in various literary genres, scholars have studied how artists have depicted old age and the meanings attendant in these representations. Bessie Ellen Richardson (1933), Patrizia Birchler Emery (1999), Andrew Stewart and Celia Gray (2000), Ada Cohen (2007), and Susan B. Matheson (2009, 2014), to name a few, have all addressed visual representations of the elderly, especially in vase painting but also in sculpture. Central themes of these studies include identifying age in visual media, as well as what cultural baggage underlies the different visual cues. The general impression that one receives from this line of scholarship is that artists are more balanced and sympathetic about the elderly than were poets and playwrights (Matheson 2009). Old age has proven productive as a

[149] Gail Kennedy (2003) discusses the significance of menopause and a non-reproductive old age in humans.

means for understanding things like political and social organization (Bauer 2011) and even the history of education (Tarrant 1996; Laes 2009).

A survey of the scholarship on old age in ancient Greece (and Rome) demonstrates at least two points. First, any attempt to reconstruct a single experience of old age is flawed. Finley (1981:164-165) asked, "Why should we assume that Greeks and Romans were less prone than we are to hold ambiguous or mutually contradictory attitudes about the elderly?" Each medium, each literary genre presents different perspectives on the issue, and it is even sometimes the case that two figures in the same scene or text can reflect different attitudes about old age. Second, very little modern work explicitly questions what role disability played in attitudes about or experience of old age. The foregoing studies consider old age in a general sense and demonstrate that ancient Greeks seem to have generally lamented the approach of old age. It is not the case that the elderly were always, or even necessarily, marginalized, but old men and women did experience shifts in the roles they played and what was expected of them, sometimes to their chagrin. There is, however, no reference to whether Greeks recognized impairment as a natural part of old age, something that was implied in general understandings of old age, or as something that subjected its bearer to additional social consequences.

In what follows, I demonstrate that a large proportion of the elderly in ancient Greece were, in fact, impaired in one way or another.[150] It is not the case that "[T]he majority of Greeks who reached advanced years were no doubt active and vigorous until their final illness, which in the overwhelming majority of cases would have been mercifully brief, painless, and uncomplicated" (Garland 1990:255). To the contrary, the evidence suggests that the ancient

[150] The question of when, exactly, "old age" began has been addressed in nearly every study on old age in the pre-modern world. It does not, however, concern me here: I take an impressionistic approach, one in which the criteria for evaluation depends on the specific context of analysis.

elderly were subject to a whole slate of old age-related impairments and illnesses and that ancient Greeks acknowledged the biological consequences of aging as characteristic of that stage of life.

Biological consequences of old age in ancient Greece

We assume that aging and aged ancient Greeks experienced the same or similar impairments and illnesses as the elderly in the modern period. Without the benefits of modern medical knowledge, techniques, and treatments and before industrialization and its attendant benefits and consequences, however, humans lived quite different lives and experienced the biological consequences of their lives differently. In what follows, I establish through ancient bioarchaeological evidence, literature, and art just what conditions the ancient Greeks experienced as they aged and those that they considered typically characteristics of old age. I begin with the evidence from the bones and then discuss literary and artistic representations of the biological consequences of old age.

Bioarchaeological evidence for old age-related degeneration

The most common pathological conditions identified in skeletal populations (ancient and modern) are what are called joint diseases, including especially osteoarthritis and osteoarthrosis (Roberts and Manchester 2010:133; Weiss and Jurmain 2007:437). Arthropathies are caused by a variety of factors, including age, genetic predisposition,[151] weight/obesity, underlying trauma, activity/lifestyle, and even things like posture and furniture use (Roberts and Manchester

[151] There is little or no heritability of the presence versus absence of osteoarthritis, but genetics accounts for the severity of the osteoarthritis present (Weiss and Jurmain 2007; Spector and MacGregor 2004).

2010:138).[152] While they can, in theory, occur at any point in a human being's lifespan, arthropathies are more often associated with older individuals (Anderson and Loeser 2010).[153] Human joints are covered in cartilage, which functions to transmit and distribute loads, maintain contact between the bones of the joint with minimum friction, and absorb shock (Roberts and Manchester 2010:134). Repeated stress to the joints causes the cartilage to deteriorate, which exposes the bone beneath it. Once lost, cartilage is gone forever, and if an individual continues to use the affected joint(s), the exposed bones begin to rub against one another, which causes the bones to become very hard and polished (sclerotic and eburnated). The entire process takes time, which is why it is more often associated with older individuals.

Bioarchaeological research from ancient Greece demonstrates that ancient Greek populations were not immune from the development of joint diseases, including and especially osteoarthritis. At the site of Amphipolis in northern Greece, for example, archaeologists excavated more than 900 tombs dated to the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods (Malamidou 2006:204ff.). Bioarchaeologist Sevasti Triantaphyllou analyzed approximately 20 percent of the excavated inhumations and identified osteoarthritis on nearly 60 percent of the adult skeletons dated to the Classical period; nearly 40 percent of those dated to the Hellenistic period; and 40 percent of those belonging to the Roman period (Malamidou 2006:Pl. 32.3). From the Early Iron Age cemeteries in Athens, Maria Liston examined the skeletons of 53 individuals (Liston 2017:508). Of the 11 adult inhumations that she studied, Liston identified evidence for

[152] Carina Iezzi (2009) demonstrated the different frequencies of osteoarthritis that can be present even between two very close populations, caused by factors like local terrain and occupation. Angel (1966) argues for specific occupation-related etiologies for arthritis at particular joints (in his case, the elbow).

[153] Anderson and Loeser (2010) write that "the evidence is conclusive that age remains the single greatest risk factor for the development of [osteoarthritis] in susceptible joints." Aging, however, contributes to the development of osteoarthritis, but it does not cause it, as not all members of an aged or aging population will develop osteoarthritis.

osteophytes (small spicules of bone that form along the upper and lower margins of vertebral bodies) on eight (73%) and evidence of some form of degenerative joint disease on ten (91%), mostly in the hips and/or knees (Liston 2017:524). The oldest cremated individual in the study, a man in his sixties (AA 53 from Tomb 17) showed significant age-related degeneration, including osteophytes on the cervical, thoracic, and lumbar vertebrae and arthritis in the hip and finger joints (Liston 2017:524, 536). A woman estimated to be in her 50s (AA 126 in Tomb 67) had Schmorl's Nodes on 13 of her vertebral bodies, as well as significant dental pathology, with two lost molars and severe caries (i.e., cavities) on at least three other teeth. (Liston 2017:524, 551-553).[154] Another woman, this time in her 40s (AA 304 in Tomb 28), showed significant osteoarthritis and degenerative joint disease in her neck, lower back, shoulders, right hand, ankles, and feet, as well as extensive osteophytes on several of her vertebrae, and evidence for osteoporosis in her scapulae, humeri, and femora (Liston 2017:541-542). Osteoarthritis, Schmorl's Nodes, and other joint diseases and disorders are more often associated with older adults. We can assume, therefore, that most of the cases of joint disease and other arthropathies identified in Amphipolis, Athens, and elsewhere belonged to those beyond their prime. Arthritic and similar, rheumatic, conditions were relatively common elsewhere, as well: at Argos, excavators noted three cases of rheumatism (Charles 1958).

In addition to osteoarthritis, rheumatism, and other age-related conditions like osteoporosis, bioarchaeologists working in Greece have identified tooth decay and tooth loss, conditions not necessarily but often associated with older adults.[155] In Argos, for example, a

[154] Schmorl's nodes are associated with degeneration of the intervertebral disks, when the disks exert pressure on the surfaces of the vertebral bodies (Roberts and Manchester 2005:140-141; Liston 2018).

[155] Older adults with significant *antemortem* tooth loss may have been aided in their nutritional intake by the use of feeding bottles like those discussed in Chapter 1 with respect to newborn infants. The association between feeding bottles and the elderly requires additional study and analysis of the adults whose tombs included a feeding bottle.

relatively large proportion of adults (including the elderly) presented with teeth that were heavily worn and, in some cases, missing altogether (Charles 1958). In Tomb 93, dated to around 950 to 890 BCE, were the remains of a 50-year-old man (Charles 1958:276-277). This man's jaw was heavily worn, and he had long ago lost several of his teeth, as the sockets (*alveoli*) for the teeth were completely remodeled (i.e., missing). A 35-40-year-old woman in Tomb 14, dated to about 900-850 BCE, had a jaw that was deformed from the loss of teeth, and most of her bony tooth sockets were obliterated (Charles 1958:277-278).[156] Tooth decay and tooth loss were present in every period of the Argive cemetery's use: in Tomb 85, for example, dated to the 3rd to 1st centuries BCE, a 30-35-year-old woman presented with alveolar bone loss from teeth that had been lost long before her death. Tooth loss and tooth decay with older adults is common at cemeteries throughout the Greek world. A 50s-year-old woman in an Early Iron Age cemetery in Athens (AA 314 in Tomb 61), for example, had lost at least 16 teeth before her death, a distressing result of extensive use of the teeth to aid in some tasks (Liston 2017:546-547). In the Early Iron Age cemetery at Torone, located in the Chalkidiki in northern Greece, many of the adults had experienced *antemortem* tooth loss (Musgrave 2005:*passim*). An adult male (North skull, aged 35+) buried in Tomb 9, for example, had lost at least five teeth before death (Musgrave 2005:255, 268-269). Another Torone adult (male?), aged at least 45 years (Tomb 10), had lost a remarkable 11 teeth before his death (Musgrave 2005:255, 269-271). Tooth loss and decay associated with older adults is common at cemeteries throughout the Greek world. Tooth decay and loss would have surely caused pain for many individuals and may have required

[156] Once an individual has reached maturity (ca. 23-30 years old), morphological characteristics on the skeleton have an increasingly limited ability to represent chronological age accurately (Gowland 2017:80). Rebecca Gowland (2007) outlines osteological biases in the study of old age. In this study, I rely largely on old age-related impairments, illnesses, and references to argue that someone who presents as "elderly" should likely be considered in that category of analysis.

attendant changes to diet and lifestyle, changes that would have continued affecting the individual until their death.

In addition to age-related conditions, elderly individuals in ancient Greek cemetery populations also occasionally bear signs of impairments and severe illnesses experienced at some point in their lives, whether as children or adults, such as fractures. A woman in her 50s in Early Iron Age Athens (AA 314 in Tomb 61), discussed above with respect to her 16 lost teeth, had experienced a severe fall that resulted in a fracture to her left arm and three broken ribs (Liston 2017:546-549). The injuries were all fully healed, although not well-aligned. In this case, then, the woman may not have received care from a properly trained physician, but she would have required reprieve from her usual tasks in order to recover, and it is likely that she continued to experience consequences of these injuries (e.g., pain) until her death.

In all of the above cases, the individuals who experienced osteoarthritis, tooth loss, and/or other impairments in their old age were not treated aberrantly in death, suggesting that there was no difference in the regard with which they were held. That is, experiencing disability or impairment in old age did not mark someone out as deviant. There are, however, potential exceptions to this pattern. A man in his 60s in a cemetery in Early Iron Age Athens (AA 340 in Tomb 82), for example, showed considerable degeneration, including arthritic lipping, on all major joint groups (Liston 2017:525, 557-558). His extensive pathologies suggest both regular activity and systematic disease. What is more, he had healed fractures on two of his ribs and on the base of his right thumb. Interestingly, this man was buried in a prone, or face-down, position (Liston 2017:557). Prone burial at this time is considered anomalous or deviant, suggesting that this person was being marked out as different and perhaps worthy of fear in death. What led to this differential treatment? Because no other individual in these cemeteries who experienced

similar levels of joint disorders and fractures were buried in such a deviant manner, it is likely that his pathologies alone were not enough to lead to his treatment.

Medical and literary discussions of the consequences of old age

The data that we gather from cemetery populations tell an interesting story, but it is one limited to the very few conditions and impairments that manifest on human bone. Other common conditions affect only the soft tissues of the human body or do not last long enough to result in any bony changes. Such conditions are therefore impossible, or nearly so, to study bioarchaeologically. Fortunately, ancient Greek authors and artists described, depicted, or alluded to various biological consequences of old age that allow us to comprehend a fuller range of conditions that affected the elderly in ancient Greece.

The treatises that form the Hippocratic corpus are chock full of references to the general relevance of age in considering health, disease, and disablement. In the late 5th or early 4th century BCE *Epidemics* I, for example, the author describes how he reaches his diagnoses and prognoses:

> These are the circumstances surrounding the diseases from which I give my judgments, having learned them from the common nature of everyone and from the specific nature of each person; from the disease; from those who are ill; from what was prescribed; from the person who prescribed it -- for it is from these things that [the diagnosis] is more or less favorable – from the constitution of the heavens and of each locality, each [considered] altogether and in parts; from the custom, regimen, activities, age of each patient; by words, behaviors, silence, thoughts, sleep, the absence of sleep, the appearance of dreams, which kinds and when . . . (emphasis added)
>
> Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 1, Third Constitution, 23

> Τὰ δὲ περὶ τὰ νοσήματα, ἐξ ὧν διεγινώσκομεν, μαθόντες ἐκ τῆς κοινῆς φύσιος ἁπάντων καὶ τῆς ἰδίης ἑκάστου, ἐκ τοῦ νοσήματος, ἐκ τοῦ νοσέοντος, ἐκ τῶν προσφερομένων, ἐκ τοῦ προσφέροντος—ἐπὶ τὸ ῥᾷον γὰρ καὶ χαλεπώτερον ἐκ τούτων—, ἐκ τῆς καταστάσιος ὅλης καὶ κατὰ μέρεα τῶν οὐρανίων καὶ χώρης ἑκάστης, ἐκ τοῦ ἔθεος, ἐκ τῆς διαίτης, ἐκ

> τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων, ἐκ τῆς ἡλικίης ἑκάστου, λόγοισι, τρόποισι, σιγῇ, διανοήμασιν, ὕπνοισιν, οὐχ ὕπνοισιν, ἐνυπνίοισι, οἵοισι καὶ ὅτε . . .

In essence, age is as important a factor in the physician's art as everything else that could possibly be relevant. This is true whether one is speaking of the general population, as above in *Epidemics* I, or with reference to a specific subset of the population, such as women. *In Nature of Women* (1), the author offers an account of "the nature of women and their diseases." He writes that the age of the woman is important because younger women (αἱ μὲν νέαι) are "wetter and have more blood," while older women (αἱ δὲ πρεσβύτιδες) are "drier and have less blood," and women in between (αἱ δὲ μέσαι) have something of both. One must, he says, begin by considering "divine" factors, but then account for women's natures and ages, then the seasons and the place where they happen to be.

Despite the fact that we do not know what relationship any Hippocratic physicians or their treatises had with one another, there does seem to be a presupposition underlying most of the texts of the corpus that one's age determines the kinds of diseases and conditions one is especially susceptible to. The author of *Aphorisms* (3.31) writes that old men (τοῖσι δὲ πρεσβύτῃσι) suffer from difficult breathing; catarrh (a kind of inflammation of the mucus membranes) with coughing; strangury (painful and frequent urination); difficult urination; painful joints; kidney disease; dizziness; apoplexy; wasting disease; severe itching of the whole body; insomnia; watery discharges from the bowels and eyes and nostrils; dulled vision; cataracts; and dulled hearing. In *Coan Prenotions* (502) we learn that after the age of 63, individuals become vulnerable to diseases that they were earlier (largely) immune from, including scrofula, a disease that manifests with the swelling of glands; bladder stones, unless it has happened before; and hemorrhoids, among other things. In *Airs, Waters, Places* (10.50ff.), the author writes that old men (τοῖσι δὲ πρεσβύτῃσι) are more susceptible to catarrhs because

they are flabby, and their veins are wasting away. In *On Joints* (47) we learn that curvature of the spine can occur for a variety of reasons, including due to its nature and use and, of course, "there is a giving way due to old age" (ὑπὸ γήραος). In *On the Sacred Disease* (12) we learn that the disease, probably epilepsy, does not kill or distort (put in spasm) older adults (τοὺς δὲ πρεσβυτέρους) because these people have wide veins that are full of hot blood, which means that phlegm, which is cold and causes the disease, cannot overpower the hot blood and cause it to congeal. The sacred disease does, however, kill or paralyze the elderly (τοῖσι δὲ πρεσβυτάτοις) because their veins are empty, and their blood is scant and thin and watery, making it easy for the cold phlegm to overwhelm it and cause an attack of the disease. Not only does age bring with it new diseases, but diseases from earlier in one's life can accompany one into old age, as the authors of *Diseases* 1 (e.g., 22), *Diseases* 2 (*passim*), *Internal Affections* (e.g., 26), and other Hippocratic treatises make clear. Sometimes diseases strike regardless of age but manifest differently in patients of different ages. In *Epidemics* 1 (Third Constitution, 15), for example, we read about a disease called kausos, which causes hemorrhages in youths and in adults at their prime but jaundice or disordered bowels in the elderly (πρεσβυτέροισι), including a man called Bion. The Hippocratic physicians, then, articulated their understanding that health, disease, and disablement in old age must be considered in its own right, because old age is a distinct circumstance of the human body.

Hippocratic physicians also recognized that elderly patients often required age-specific treatments and regimens. The author of *Regimen in Health* (2) says that the best health is enjoyed when the physician prescribes diets based on the patient's age, the season, the patient's habit, the locality, and the patient's physique. Young people, he says, do better when their diet is softer and wetter because that (younger) age is drier and has bodies that are firm, but the elderly should

have a drier kind of diet most of the time because, at this age, the body is wet and soft and cold. In the First Section of *Aphorisms* (13) we learn that old men handle fasting more easily than those who are younger.

Physicians were not the only ancient authors interested in the conditions that affected the elderly. Probably the most frequent physical condition associated with the elderly is a stooped or hunched posture. In the *Odyssey* (2.16) Homer describes Aegyptius as "bent over with age." The late 8th or early 7th century BCE poet Hesiod (*Works and Days* 533-534) writes about the cold winter months during which animals who live in the forest avoid the snow and move about "like a three-footed mortal" (i.e., using a staff, cane, or crutch) whose back is broken and whose head looks toward the ground. In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (237) the aging Tithonus has no motion left in his limbs, an overall state that emphasizes the inevitable fate of mortals (see King 1989).

Authors emphasize other aspects of old age, including diminished hearing, as in the figure of Demos in Aristophanes's *Knights* (43), who is described by his slave as nearly deaf (ὑπόκωφον) and senile, and who may even require slaves to pre-chew his food for him (cf. Aristophanes, *Knights* 716-718). The elegiac poet Mimnermus of Colophon detested the thought of old age, which renders men ugly and useless (Minois 1989[1987]; Falkner 1995). For Mimnermus, old age is misshapen (ἄμορφον), harming the eyes and clouding the mind (Fragment 5, from Stobaeus, *Anthology* 4.50.69; see also Fragments 1-4). Old age is very often referred to as a kind of second childhood (Garland 1990; Crichton 1991-1993; Parkin 2011), a reference to senility and a more general loss of mental and emotional acuity.[157] The chorus in

[157] Hesiod implies that older adults are more mature (*Works and Days* 441-447), but he seems to refer to full-fledged adults, still in their prime, not the elderly, as the man under discussion is performing heavy manual labor.

Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* (75) for example, compare old age with childhood (ἰσόπαιδα).[158] Aristotle (*On Colors* 798a) compares the physical appearance of childhood with that of old age, a coincidence he attributes to the weakness of those in the two age groups. Xenophon's Socrates laments the potential of paying the fees of old age:

> To see and to hear less; to understand worse; to end up slower to learn and more forgetful; and in whatever I was better before, in those things to become worse.[159]
>
> Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.8.8

> ὁρᾶν τε καὶ ἀκούειν ἧττον καὶ διανοεῖσθαι χεῖρον καὶ δυσμαθέστερον ἀποβαίνειν καὶ ἐπιλησμονέστερον καὶ ὧν πρότερον βελτίων ἦν, τούτων χείρω γίγνεσθαι.

Elderly men seem to be more often characterized as suffering the consequences of old age, but old women are not totally immune. Herodotus (1.31) writes about an (presumably aged) Argive priestess who must be transported to the sanctuary from the city on a wagon, presumably because she could not make the long journey on foot. The speaker in a speech written by Lysias (24.6) writes about how he was only recently caring for his elderly mother (see below), suggesting that she required more than passive attention. Greek authors, then, understood that with age came a whole slate of biological consequences, including hunched posture, limited and uneasy mobility, new diseases and different effects of old diseases, diminished sight and hearing, senility, and diminished mental capacity. These features were apparently so characteristic of old age that most elderly figures of ancient literature either experience them or lament that they will.

[158] See Gantz (1983) for a fuller discussion of the vital role that this chorus of elders plays in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*.

[159] My thanks to Dr. Jennifer Starkey for her help with this translation, specifically with punctuation issues in the passage.

Depictions of old age in ancient Greek vase painting

Physical consequences of aging like limited or uneasy mobility and diminished mental and emotional faculties are prominent, also, in art.[160] Age is difficult to assess in ancient Greek vase painting, but where the elderly are distinguishable from adults in their prime, it is through references to physical degeneration and less restrained behavior. The most common characteristics of the elderly, generally speaking, in vase painting, as discussed in detail by Patrizia Birchler Emery (1999), are baldness (for men), white hair and/or beard, and wrinkles (see also Matheson 2009). More important for this project are characteristics like bent bodies and the use of mobility aids like staffs and canes. Literary references to the elderly often refer to bent limbs, hunched backs, and limited or uneasy mobility, all of which are visible in scenes painted on ancient Greek vases. The personification of Old Age, Geras, demonstrates all of these characteristics. H. Alan Shapiro (1993:89) refers to images of Geras as "manifestly old": he is emaciated and frail, often bald or balding and with a white beard; his back is usually hunched, and he supports his lean frame on a cane or a staff (**Figure 4.1**). There are, according to Erika Simon (2014), six representations of Geras in vase-painting, as well as one on an Etruscan pseudo-scarab dated to the last third of the 6th century BCE (**Figure 4.2**).[161] As Shapiro (1993:90) reports, Geras embodies all the characteristics that the Greeks associated with old age, including ugliness, disabilities, and death.

[160] Other aspects of aging cannot be easily rendered in art, especially within the artistic *milieu* of ancient Greece, and so we should not expect to be able to identify things like diminished hearing and sight in Greek vase painting. Some scholars have identified blindness in sculpture, especially in statues of Homer (e.g., Naples 6023; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 04.13), but this identification is heavily influenced by a longstanding literary tradition of the poet's blindness and less on the evidence of the sculptures themselves (see, e.g., Pollitt 1986:Fig. 122; Smith 1991:37).

[161] Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 21.1197. For representations of Geras in Greek vase painting, see Shapiro (1993:89-94); *LIMC* IV (1988) 180-182 pls. 100-101, s.v. Geras (H.A. Shapiro); *LIMC* Supp. (2009), s.v. Herakles/Heracle (S.J. Schwarz); Simon (2014).

Not all depictions of old age in Greek art are such caricatures, however. More sympathetic depictions of old age are present in so-called departure scenes (Matheson 2009; Richardson 1969[1933]:104-107). These scenes, which serve to organize the relationship between the warrior and his family (Lissarrague 1989), show a young man, in peak physical shape and either donning, or already decked out in, full military armor, in the company of one or both of his parents; when the father is present, he is usually depicted as elderly, with white hair and beard and, often, leaning on or holding a staff or cane. A late 6th century BCE Attic neck amphora provides a good example of the genre (**Figure 4.3**).[162] In the middle, a young warrior, outfitted in his armor and carrying a shield and spear, takes leave of his parents. His mother, at left, is essentially ageless, as are most non-child female figures on Greek vases, but the warrior's father, at right, is distinguished with his white hair and beard. Unlike his heroic son, who wields a spear, the old man supports himself on a staff, presumably due to his unsteady mobility.

Staffs, crutches, and canes (hereafter, staffs) are usually understood as nonspecific or generic attributes on Greek vases because they appear with a wide variety of male figures in diverse scenes, both mythological and not. Based on a quick survey of scenes, however, it is clear that staffs appear most often with warriors, in which case they are likely spears; travelers, identifiable usually by their clothing (traveling hat or petasos, cloaks, etc.); athletic and dance trainers; and old men.[163] In the case of old men, the staffs likely provided support, whether for

[162] Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen 1505. *CVA* Munich, Antikensammlungen (formerly Museum Antiker Kleinkunst) 8:51-2.

[163] In some instances, crutches, staffs, and canes are depicted with young men who do not fit into the above categories, in which case it is likely that some kind of mobility impairment is intended. This explains, for example, the numerous depictions of the Olympian god Hephaistos with a crutch, as on the Parthenon frieze, and the numerous male figures on an early 5th century BCE aryballos by the Clinic Painter (Louvre CA 2183) (see **Figure 1.1**). On this aryballos, several male figures use staffs, but their presence in a medical clinic and their bandaged legs and arms point to the function of these staffs as mobility supports. See also the tondo of a ca. 470 BCE kylix from

balance or for actual movement. These old men can be seen holding the staff in front of them, as on the late 6th century BCE amphora discussed above, or the staff can be used more like a modern crutch, physically propping up the aged man, as on a late 5th or early 4th century BCE loutrophoros (**Figure 4.4-5**).[164] In this crowded scene we can see a variety of men carrying or using staffs. Most of these men can be identified by their clothes or other attributes as either warriors or travelers, but one man, securely identified as elderly by his white hair and beard, leans on a staff tucked up under his left armpit as he talks with a young warrior (**Figure 4.5**). A similar juxtaposition of the different uses of staffs can be seen on a ca. 480 BCE neck amphora attributed to the Matsch Painter (**Figure 4.6**).[165] Here, we see an old man and a young warrior facing one another. The warrior's spear is straight and strong, while the old man's staff is crooked like his limbs and back. It is the case, in fact, that a large number of staffs wielded by old men on Greek vases are crooked, a far cry from the tall, straight, and strong versions carried by younger men.[166] The crookedness of such staffs can be likened to the frequent descriptions of the elderly as crooked or hunched. Finally, old men can be shown seated, sometimes also with a staff.

It is much more common for men to be shown with signs of aging in Greek vase painting than women; women are more often rendered ageless. One of the few scenes showing an aged

Athens (*ARV*[2] (1963), 969/69, *CVA*, Adolphseck 1, Germany 11 (1956), Pl. 25.1-3). Here, a young man (an athlete?) supports himself with a crutch tucked under his right armpit.

[164] Berlin, Antikensammlung 3209, Athens, National Museum 26821.

[165] New York, Metropolitan Museum 56.171.39.

[166] See, also, the difference between Herakles, with his long, straight, strong club and Geras, the personification of Old Age, with his lean, crooked staff that matches his own physique, on an early 5th century BCE red-figure *pelike* (Rome, Mus. Naz. Etrusco di Villa Giulia 48238) (**Figure 4.1**).

woman is on a mid-5th century BCE red figure skyphos attributed to the Pistoxenos Painter.[167] Here, Herakles's elderly nurse, Geropso, walks behind her hero charge (**Figure 4.7**). Her face is marred by wrinkles and her mouth hangs open, revealing that she has lost some teeth. Her posture is stooped or hunched, and she supports her weight on a crooked staff (see more about crooked staffs above). Another example, a later 5th century BCE kylix painted by Aison, shows on its exterior some of the deeds of Theseus (**Figure 4.8**).[168] An old woman (named Krommyo) stands in front of a sow. Her hair is white, her posture stooped, and she supports her weight on a staff. In both of these instances, the women are apparently shown aged only to conform with their mythological description or role. In non-mythological "daily life" scenes, however, women are not shown with signs of age unless they fulfill specific roles, such as an aged prostitute or slave.

In addition to showing or referring to physical degeneration that accompanies old age, vase painters depict the elderly as being emotionally or behaviorally immoderate, more like women and children than adult men (see, e.g., Matheson 2009). Behavioral changes in old age can be related to a diminution in mental acuity. In Greek vase painting, men in their prime do not display emotion but women, children, and old men mourn openly with tears and gestures such as that performed by the old man on an evocative mid-5th century BCE white ground lekythos attributed to the Achilles Painter (**Figure 4.9-10**).[169] On one side of this funerary vase stands a nude male warrior holding a shield in his left hand and a spear in his right hand. He stands next to the beribboned funerary monument that was likely erected in his own honor (that is, the nude

[167] Schwerin, Staatliches Museum 708.

[168] Madrid, Museo Arqueologico Nacional 11265.

[169] Berlin, Antikensammlung 1983.1.

male figure represents the deceased). On the other side stands an old man facing the burial monument. He is balding and what hair remains is white, as is his beard. Wrinkles cover his face and neck and the skin on his arms almost sags from the bones. His lips part slightly, betraying a sense of pain. In his left hand he holds a crutch and he raises his right hand to his forehead in a display of grief. The young warrior on the vase performs *sophrosyne,* a word that denotes a spectrum of qualities that range from political shrewdness to chastity, but which is commonly translated as "self-control" (McNiven 2000:71-72), something quite the opposite of what we see in the old man. Greek vase painters (and authors in various literary genres) present the elderly as lacking in this self-control, as childish and possibly senile (McNiven 2000:*passim*). These displays of grief, then, may be visual representations of mental degeneration that often accompany signs of physical degeneration (staffs, seated postures, hunched backs).

Depictions of old age in ancient Greek sculpture

One of the oldest and perhaps the best-known image of an old man in Greek sculpture comes from the east pediment on the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, which dates to the early 5th century BCE (**Figure 4.11**). Here, we see several of the hallmarks of representations of male old age in Greek art, including a balding head, wrinkles, sagging skin on the chest and abdomen, and a lack of *sophrosyne*. The seer's anguished expression is, of course, justified: he is about to witness a chariot race between Oinomaos, the King of Pisa, and Pelops, a suitor of Oinomaos's daughter, Hippodameia. As the Roman traveler and author, Pausanias, reports (5.10.8), represented in this pediment is the moment before the race begins. According to tradition, Oinomaos was warned by an oracle that he would die at the hands of his son-in-law. To prevent the oracle's fulfillment, Oinomaos challenged his daughter's suitors to a chariot race; Oinomaos's horses had been given to him from his father, Ares, and were unbeatable. In his

cunning, however, Pelops bribed Oinomaos's charioteer, Myrtilos, to replace the lynch pins on Oinomaos's chariot with wax. As the wheels of the chariot rotated rapidly during the race, the growing heat melted the wax and the wheels fell from the chariot, causing it to crash and kill Oinomaos in the process.[170] On the East pediment of this temple at Olympia, the seer is shown displaying grief, anxiety, or nervousness at his knowledge of the impending doom of Oinomaos.[171]

The balding head, sagging skin, and displays of emotion represented in the seer from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, as well as attributes including staffs, distinguish individuals of advanced age in sculpture, in much the same way that they did in vase painting. A mid-4th century BCE grave stele at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, shows a family group (**Figure 4.12**).[172] An old man is seated at the center, and he supports his upper body with a tall, sturdy staff. A late 4th century BCE marble sculpture in the Worcester Art Museum shows an old man, the skin on his chest sagging from his ribcage and the backs of his hands lined with veins (**Figure 4.13**).[173] He supports his entire upper body on a staff or a crutch. An old fisherman in the Metropolitan Museum of Art displays a frail body with a hunched posture and may have held a staff in one of his (now missing) hands (**Figure 4.14**).[174] The sculptural medium often shows

[170] According to a version of the story by Pindar (*Odes* 1.85), Pelops defeated Oinomaos not by cheating, but by appealing to his father, Poseidon, who provided him with horses and a chariot faster than Oinomaos's.

[171] Compare the seer's display of grief with that expressed by the old man in **Figure 4.9-10**.

[172] New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 11.100.2.

[173] Worcester Art Museum, 1932.2.

[174] New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 19.192.15. Old fishermen and other elderly laborers become popular character types in the Hellenistic period, see Theocritus *Idyll* 21. See, also, an elderly shepherd in Rome, Musei Conservatori MC 1111. The man stands hunched forward, carrying a lamb in his right arm and he probably held a staff in his (now missing) left hand.

young men in their peak physical shape as either athletes or warriors, while old men are distinguished by their stooped or seated postures and their use of staffs.

As is the case with vase painting, it is more often men who are shown with signs of age and we have only a few examples of old women. A Roman copy of a 2nd century BCE Greek original shows an old woman, stooped and hunched in her haggard old age (**Figure 4.15**).[175] A statue of an old woman in the Capitoline Museums in Rome shows something of the degeneracy that could be associated with old age (**Figure 4.16**).[176] The woman here is not the model of a respectable citizen woman, though she is not poor: the rings that adorn her fingers and earrings suggest wealth. The skin on her chest clings tight against her bones, but elsewhere her body is wrinkled and sagging. She looks up and grins, showing that she has lost several of her teeth. A marble head, also in the British Museum, shows an old woman(?), with most of the teeth missing from her pitiful mouth (**Figure 4.17**).[177] She wears a kerchief on her head. The skin of her face is heavily wrinkled, and it droops and sags. Her expression is sunken and her mouth gapes, showing that she, too, has lost a number of teeth.[178] Representations of old women are more common in smaller scale terracotta sculptures. A 4th century BCE terracotta figurine in the British Museum shows a seated old nurse hunched over her newborn charge (**Figure 4.18**).[179] Her forehead is slightly wrinkled; her body exhibits a certain heft, and her breasts sag. The hunch

[175] New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 09.39. See also the so-called Drunken Old Woman by Myron, which shows an old woman with a sunken frame, smiling a toothless smile, Musei Capitolini MC299; another version is in Munich, Glyptothek 437.

[176] Musei Capitolini MC299. See also Munich, Glytpothek 437.

[177] British Museum, 1852,3-27.9.

[178] See, also, Rome, Museo Conservatori MC640.

[179] British Museum 1874,1110.18.

is more prominent on the late 4th century BCE Boeotian figurine of an old woman holding an infant in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (**Figure 4.19**).[180] The woman here is much sterner in her appearance, and her thickset frame, wrinkled forehead, and sagging body betray her old age.

Overall, artistic representations of old age in ancient Greece complement what we see in cemetery populations and literature: the elderly are characterized not only by white hair, but also by means of limited or insecure mobility, diminished hearing or vision, and tooth loss and tooth decay. Old men and women are depicted differently – old women, for example, are rarely shown at all, and even then they do not often use a staff – but the message is clear: old age is so closely associated with physical and mental degeneration that its attributes can be used as signifiers for a painted or sculpted figure's age.

The experience of old age in ancient Greece

Bioarchaeology, literature, and art all paint a similar picture: ancient Greeks were subject to a wide range of physical consequences of aging, including arthritis and related conditions, tooth loss and tooth decay, hunched and stooped posture, limited or uneasy mobility, a loss of mental acuity, hearing and vision loss, and memory loss, as well as higher or new susceptibility to a suite of diseases. This should not surprise us. In the modern period we also believe that the elderly have generally worse health than younger adults. The World Health Organization states that "[A]s people age, they become more susceptible to disease and disability."[181] The National Council on Aging reports on their website that "[A]pproximately 92% of older adults have at

[180] New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 10.210.38.

[181] "Risk factors of ill health among older people," *World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe*, accessed May 15, 2017, <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/healthy-ageing/data-and-statistics/risk-factors-of-ill-health-among-older-people#>.

least one chronic disease, and 77% have at least two," and they list four chronic diseases (heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes) that are the biggest threats to the elderly.[182] Not only do the elderly experience new diseases, but they are also more susceptible to complications from common illnesses, such as influenza.[183] We likewise believe that the elderly are more likely to fall and to experience fractures and other complications as a result of a fall.[184] Modern doctors and ancient Greeks may disagree on exactly what diseases and conditions the elderly experienced or were more susceptible to, but the two groups reach common ground in thinking that health—in its manifestations, complications, and treatment—is different for the elderly than for children or adults.

A list of diseases and conditions, however, does not go far toward explaining how the ancient Greeks experienced the consequences of old age. Osteoarthritis, for example, can affect an individual's life to varying degrees depending on the joint(s) affected and the severity of the condition. What is more, a society's expectations for aged individuals affects how much things like limited mobility matter: if one is expected to remain productive and contribute to the economy of the family in old age, an inability to walk even short distances may be perceived more negatively than in a context in which the elderly are not expected to work outside of the house. In his study of old age in the Roman world, Tim G. Parkin (2004) makes a strong argument for the marginalization of the elderly disabled:

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[182] "Healthy Aging Facts," *National Council on Aging*, accessed May 15, 2017, <https://www.ncoa.org/news/resources-for-reporters/get-the-facts/healthy-aging-facts/>. A study published in 2014 reports that in 2012, 85.8% of Americans had at least one chronic illness and 60.8% had at least two (Ward *et al.* 2014).

[183] See, for example, the Center for Disease Control's "People at High Risk of Developing Flu–Related Complications," accessed May 15, 2017, https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm.

[184] "Healthy Aging Facts," *National Council on Aging*, accessed May 15, 2017, <https://www.ncoa.org/news/resources-for-reporters/get-the-facts/healthy-aging-facts/>.

> My underlying argument in this final chapter is that the extent to which old people in ancient society were an integral part of that society or were in some way excluded from full participation depended to a large extent, apart from questions of gender and status, on the degree of capability of the individual; that individual would not be wholly marginalized as long as he or she was still capable of performing some useful function, be it as a statesman or as a child minder. (Parkin 2004:240)

This is likely not far off the mark, even for Greece. The question becomes, however, what constitutes "capability" and what is a "useful function." The evidence suggests that the ancients did not evaluate the capabilities of the elderly according to the same standards used for adults in their prime, but they adjusted their expectations and attitudes according to the realities of old age, taking account of a wide range of physical and mental impairments. These managed expectations meant that Greeks did not express in their art or literature, nor did they signify in their burial practices, any condemnation for an elderly woman or man who was limited in their mobility, had diminished hearing, vision, or memory, became ill, was hunched or slouched, or became senile. It was not these qualities, at least, that led to the elderly being objects of scorn or satire, but the penchant for gossip, excessive talking, meddling in public or private affairs, and so on.

Consider, for example, the numerous old men pictured in departure scenes on Greek vases (above). These scenes typically show a family unit and seem to have been intended to honor a son who had perhaps died in battle (the scenes are most common on white-ground lekythoi, which are, at least in the 5th century BCE, almost exclusively funerary in function). The vases are intended to highlight the valor displayed by the young men who died in battle, a kind of visual representation of the qualities described by the general Pericles in his famous "Funeral Oration" (Thucydides 2.34-46), qualities like manly courage (ἀρετή). In this context, the members of the warrior's family experience grief (λύπη) and they mourn. It would be

inappropriate if the old men, with their white hair and beards, wrinkles and sagging skin, hunched, leaning on their staffs for support or seated, were presented as caricatures or objects of derision. Despite that they are in the "useless time of life" (ἐν τῷ ἀχρείῳ τῆς ἡλικίας, Thucydides 2.44), these old men mourn their sons and are honored in their turn as the progenitors of such courageous warriors, as Priam was at the funeral of Hector.

Staffs and other mobility supports, such as canes and crutches, not only appear in departure scenes and on funerary stelai with old men who cannot be viewed as anything but sympathetic, but, as Jane Masséglia (2015) indicates, they are relatively commonly incorporated into marble and bronze sculptures of philosophers and poets in the Hellenistic period. Philosophers, who are more often than not elderly (see, e.g., Richardson 1969[1933]:215-222) were presented (and often presented themselves) as privileging mind over body, and their seated postures and use of staffs communicate that priority. Whether these old men sit or use staffs because their joints are arthritic, their muscles lack tone and strength, or their bones are weak, their limited mobility hardly marginalized them; instead, it enhanced their sympathetic and honored/honorable portrayal, their status as the progenitors of noble sons, and their roles as the bestowers of knowledge and wisdom.

It is the case in literature and historically, as well, that a lack of physical strength and integrity is of little relevance for the status of old men. The old king Nestor, whose quote opened this chapter, lost his former physical strength, but in its stead, he gained a kind of moral strength that is unparalleled (see, e.g., Falkner 1995; Roisman 2005). Nestor is, after all, the most honored of all elders in Agamemnon's eyes, and his inability to participate in the raging battles alongside the likes of Diomedes, Ajax, and Hector is almost irrelevant. In his one battle scene, Nestor must be rescued by the younger, stronger Diomedes, who tells him, "your strength is gone" (*Iliad*

8.103). This transcendence of physical strength is evident, also, in examples of councils of elders, gerousiai. The most famous Gerousia was at Sparta,[185] but a Gerousia is known from Athens in the Roman period and they were common also in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Period (Oliver 1941; Bauer 2011).[186] These associations or organizations, whatever their specific function within a given community, represented important and honored bodies in Greek communities, responsible for a wide variety of social benefits and themselves recipients of various honors, gifts, and privileges (Bauer 2011). In these cases, the elderly play important and valuable roles within their communities, and those roles remain important despite their diminished physical strength and capabilities.

In medical literature and other healing contexts, physical aspects of age-related physical degeneration are not presented as issues warranting solutions. Physicians and other medical "professionals" do attempt to assist their contemporaries with conditions like hunched backs, for example, but only when the hunched backs are the result of falls (see, e.g., Hippocrates, *On Joints* 42). Our physician says that curvature of the spine can occur for a variety of reasons in otherwise healthy individuals (ὑγιαίνουσι), such as in old age, but he suggests no remedies in these cases (Hippocrates, *On Joints* 47). A hunched back in an elderly person, then, is not unhealthy and is not, therefore, a cause for medical concern.

Likewise, there is no evidence that any physical degeneration necessarily or universally resulted in any difference in the treatment of the bearer's burial. In Amphipolis in northern

[185] The Spartan *Gerousia* is widely discussed in studies on ancient cities and politics. See, for example, David (1991) and Cartledge and Spawforth (2002).

[186] According to Bauer (2011), women were occasionally members of the *gerousai* in the Hellenistic and Roman East. The overwhelming impression, however, is that these councils were composed of men, and that status may be of less importance than age.

Greece, none of the nearly 60 percent of the 6th through 4th century BCE skeletons that showed signs of arthritis were excluded from what can be considered typical burial rites. In one case in particular, an adult man, aged around 50 years, presented with arthritis; osteophytes, which are, like arthritis, associated with the degeneration of cartilage, on his cervical vertebrae; and healed lesions on his ribs (Malamidou 2006:200). Far from being marginalized, however, this man was given a relatively special burial. He was interred wearing a decorated iron belt and a mask made of three pieces of gold leaf. Funeral rites were performed on a stone and earthen hearth within the burial enclosure, rites that may have included a funerary feast, as the ashes at the hearth contained the remains of animal bones and remains of cereals. Malamidou (2006:200.) suggests that this man may have been an important figure at Amphipolis in the 6th century BCE, perhaps even a tribal chief. Regardless of his exact role within the community, it is clear that this man, who reached a relatively advanced age and likely felt the consequences of arthritis and the degeneration of cartilage in his spine, was not an outcast: his physical condition was apparently irrelevant to his status in the community.[187] At Argos, a 35- to 40-year-old woman in Tomb 14, dated to about 900-850 BCE, had lost a large number of teeth and had a curvature to her spine (scoliosis), but her burial was not distinct from that of her contemporaries' (Charles 1958:277-278).

Where we do see negativity expressed, it is not in cases of physical impairment or degeneration, but on account of alleged moral and/or behavioral failings. Old women and men in the comedies of Aristophanes are presented as physically disgusting, but the negativity is largely directed at those who do not act their age (Gilleard 2007:85-86). The old woman in Wealth, for

[187] It is, of course, possible that his physical condition actually had positive value, if he was an active participate in the military, for example, or if his arthritis was due to his time spent in athletics, horseback riding, etc.

example, is disgusting not because she walks with a cane or stoops, but because she desires and expects sexual attention from a young man.[188] The elderly Strepsiades in Clouds is mocked for his behavior and his slack mind, not his physical presence. Old women are portrayed negatively for their penchant for drunkenness, as in the case of the famous statue of the drunken old woman in Rome (**Figure 4.16**).[189] The late 7th century BCE elegiac poet Mimnermus (Fragments 1-6) is probably the ancient author who expresses the most pessimistic evaluations of old age, but his statements all seem to be informed by inability of the elderly to engage in sex. That is, old age is sexless and is therefore disgusting. Hesiod's (*Works and Days* 106ff.) five successive "ages of man" are characterized by an increase in moral degeneracy as the ages progress from golden all the way down to iron, with the result that in the final age of man, called "iron," men are born old, already with gray hair on their temples (Falkner 1989). Hesiod, then, equates a lack of moral strength with old age.

Mitigating the consequences of disability in old age

The ancient Greeks may not have relished the idea of growing old, but they did not regard age-related impairments and illnesses as particularly surprising or shocking. Rather, these impairments and illnesses were understood as a natural part of the aging process and, as such, they did not further marginalize their bearer in most cases. The evidence, however, does more than just suggest that these age-related impairments were passively accepted. In several instances we find ancient Greeks, either individually or collectively, actively attempting to mitigate the

[188] See, also, the old crones at the end of Aristophanes' *Ekkleziazusai* who insist on being sexually serviced by young men.

[189] Rome, Musei Capitolini MC0299. See Aristotle *On Drunkenness* (fr. 669, quoted in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 10.429c-d), who says the elderly get drunk quite quickly because they have less natural heat inside of them and the heat is weaker.

biological consequences of aging with the production of assistive devices and the passage of legislation intended to protect the elderly.

Production and use of walking aids

The most obvious example of an active attempt to assist the elderly disabled is in the production and use of staffs, canes, and crutches, as well as their neutral or even positive associations in literature and art (see above). These walking aids are functional, not ornamental, and they serve to assist their elderly users with balance as well as with actual movement on the uneven roads and paths in ancient Greece. In the modern period, about half of all patients diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis use walking aids, with disability and pain as the most common factors governing individuals' decisions to use (or not to use) aids (van der Esch *et al.* 2003).[190] The production and use of mobility aids is not, however, a given: in the modern United States, for example, social pressures and perceived stigma deter a large number of elderly individuals, especially those in minority groups, from using canes and crutches (Resnik *et al.* 2009). Popular media discussions, like articles in *The New York Times* (Henry 2009) and in *Reuters* (Neumann 2015) that present studies linking the use of canes and walkers with a higher risk of falls, sometimes seem to argue against the use of mobility aids. Even when a society produces, and its members use mobility aids, it is not necessarily the case that these aids are associated with positive attributes in media. A critical discourse analysis of representations of assistive technology devices, including canes, in a Canadian newspaper demonstrated that, even when older adults acknowledge that assistive technology devices are

[190] An earlier study (Edwards and Jones 1998) considered assistive devices in general, including not only canes and crutches but also eyeglasses, hearing aids, handrails, and so on, and demonstrates that almost three-quarters of respondents owned one or more such aid.

critical in maintaining their autonomy, they attempt to conceal them (Fraser *et al.* 2016) in order to avoid being associated with negative stereotypes like vulnerability. The researchers argued that the stigma associated with assistive technology devices presents a substantial barrier to the devices' acceptance and use (Fraser *et al.* 2016) and other studies (e.g., Gooberman-Hill and Ebrahim 2007) demonstrate that stereotypes associated with walking aids affect individuals' willingness to use them.

What we see in the literature and art of ancient Greece are largely positive associations with mobility aids. Staffs and canes are used by a wide variety of (male) figures, such as aged kings, honorable fathers of deceased warriors, and philosophers (see above), the representations of whom in media can be read as sympathetic and positive. One could even make an argument that the use of staffs and canes was considered most typical of old age: the so-called Riddle of the Sphinx, after all, depends on an understanding that at the end of his life, man walks on three legs (Apollodorus, *The Library* 3.5.8, but see Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 79-81, which may suggest that the content of the Riddle was known at this early date, if not earlier). The staff, then, represents the wisdom and experience that come from old age. Other means of transporting the elderly disabled, such as wagons, carts, and litters, were also presented positively. The aged Argive priestess in Herodotus (1.31) was transported a long distance on a wheeled wagon, presumably because she could not make the nearly nine-kilometer journey on foot, and we know that a variety of visitors to the healing sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros arrived on wheeled transportation or were carried. We cannot know if or how many ancient Greeks availed themselves of the various mobility aids documented in art, literature, and inscriptions, but we can say with a degree of confidence that ancient Greeks did, indeed, produce, and the elderly used

staffs, canes, and crutches, and that there was likely little or no increased marginalization of elderly men and women who used them.

Legal requirements for care of the elderly

At least by the 4th century BCE, children in some Greek states, whether biological or adopted, were legally required to care for their elderly parents, and this included, or at least did not explicitly exclude, elderly parents who were physically or mentally impaired. In Athens, the political offices of the nine archons were elected by lot and potential archons were questioned before they assumed office in order to ensure that they were eligible to serve. Questions ran the gamut and included whether the potential archon was a true citizen, whether he paid his taxes and fulfilled his military service, and whether he "does well by his parents" (γονέας εἰ εὖ ποιεῖ, [Pseudo-]Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 55.3). Furthermore, any citizen could bring a charge against anyone who mistreated his parents (γονέων κακώσεως, [Pseudo-]Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 56.6). This legal requirement to care for one's parents in their old age was apparently of long-standing: the 4th century BCE orator Aeschines says that the lawgiver Solon, who was active in Athens in the early 6th century BCE, instituted laws regarding the duties of citizenship, transgressions of which resulted in disenfranchisement. Offenses included striking one's mother or father, not taking care of them, and not providing them with a house (τὸν πατέρα τύπτων ἢ τὴν μητέρα, ἢ μὴ τρέφων, ἢ μὴ παρέχων οἴκησιν, Aeschines, *Against Timarchus* 28).[191] The contemporary orator Demosthenes (*Against Timocrates* 103, 105) agrees that Solon instituted a law requiring children to care for their parents: if any man convicted of ill-treating

[191] This Solonian law is repeated by the 3rd century CE Roman biographer Diogenes Laertius (1.2.55), who reports that a Solonian law required the state to revoke a citizen's rights if she or he failed to provide care for their parents (ἐάν τις μὴ τρέφῃ τοὺς γονέας).

his parents (ἐάν τις ἁλοὺς τῆς κακώσεως τῶν γονέων) enters the agora (marketplace), he will be imprisoned. The law, Demosthenes (*Against Timocrates* 105) writes, requires children to care for their parents (ἀναγκάζουσι τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς γονέας τρέφειν) as a protection for old age (τοὺς τῷ γήρᾳ βοηθοὺς).[192] Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 2.2.12) writes, also in the 4th century BCE, that while the Athenian State overlooks many forms of ingratitude, it inflicts penalties on and disqualifies from office anyone who does not care for his parents (ἐὰν δέ τις γονέας μὴ θεραπεύῃ).[193] The verb γηροβοσκέω and its adjectival variant γηροβοσκός/όν, refers to the care of the elderly and shows up in tragedy (e.g., Sophocles, *Ajax* 570; Euripides, *Suppliants* 923; Euripides, *Medea* 1033; Euripides, *Alcestis* 663) and comedy (e.g., Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 678), as well as in prose (e.g., Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 7.12). The tending of parents in their old age was deeply ingrained in the law and in the language of the Greeks.

The laws in Athens requiring children to care for their elderly parents are well-known in modern scholarship, but they were not exclusive to Athens. A late 4th or early 3rd century BCE inscription from Delphi (Lerat 1943:68-70; Bousquet 1940:90), for example, states

> God. It is decreed by the city in a plenary assembly, with 353 votes, to engrave[194] the law concerning parents; the ones in council were Melanopos, Philutas, Herakleios, Theudoris, Hagetor: if someone does not take care of his father and mother, whenever he is denounced to the

[192] For a discussion on the Athenian use of imprisonment as a form of punishment, and specifically in the context of Demosthenes' *Against Timocrates*, see Allen (1997, 2000).

[193] Similar statements, regarding the law or expectation regarding children caring for their parents in old age, comes up in a variety of speeches, including political speeches, e.g., Demosthenes, *Philippic* 4.141; domestic disputes about adoption and inheritance, e.g., Isaeus *On the Estate of Menecles* 10 and Isocrates, *Aegineticus*, especially section 24; philosophical treatises, e.g., Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.1165a15ff., and dialogues, e.g., Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 7.19; and so on. Defendants in legal cases often claim inheritance rights based on their care – or their opponent's lack of care – for elderly parents, suggesting that even if it was not legally prescribed (though we know that it was), it was a socially/culturally prescribed expectation, one that a defendant would be sure to emphasize in front of a jury largely composed of aged and/or aging Athenians.

[194] The implication here is that the decree will be officially registered as a law and publicly displayed.

> Council, let the Council shackle the one not caring (for his parents) and take him into the public prison…
>
> [Θε]ός · ἔδοξε τᾶι πόλι ἐν ἀγορᾶι τ-
> [ελ]είωι σὺν ψάφοις τριακατίαι-
> [ς π]εντήκοντα τρίεσσι τὸν νόμ[ο]-
> [ν ἀ]νγράψαι περὶ τῶν γονέων · βο[υ]-
> [λευ]όντων Μελανώπου Φιλύτα Ἠρ-
> [ακ]λείο[υ] Θευδωρίδα Ἀγήτορος · [ὅ]-
> [στ]ις κα μὴ τρέφηι τὸν πατέρα κα-
> [ὶ τ]ὰν ματέρα, ἐπεί κα [π]οτανγέ[λ]-
> [λη]ται πο[ὶ τ]ὰν βουλάν, ἁ βουλὰ κατ-
> [αδε]ίτω τὸν μὴ τρέφοντα καὶ ἀγ[έ]-
> [τω ἐ]ν τὰν δ̣α̣μοσίαν οἰκίαν ἔντ[ε]
> [κα...

It was legally required, then, for children to provide care for their parents not just in Athens, but also in Delphi. It is likely that this legal requirement existed elsewhere, though this is, at present, unprovable.[195]

Such a law existed not only in reality, but also in the political imaginary of Plato. In his *Laws* (11.930e), his philosophical creation of the model and ideal State, Plato condemns the neglect of one's parents (γονέων δὲ ἀμελεῖν). The gods, Plato (*Laws* 11.932a) says, do not grant the wishes of suppliants who dishonor their parents, and everyone should honor his parents "with the legally prescribed honors" (τιμαῖς ταῖς ἐννόμοις). In the utopian society that he envisions in the *Laws* (11.932b-c), therefore, Plato proposes his own law, similar to that attributed to Solon (above), that any parent who is neglected can report his or her mistreatment to the authorities, who will duly punish the derelict children (ἀδικοῦντας νέους). Plato's (*Laws* 11.932d) law goes

[195] There are hints that the requirement existed, at least informally, elsewhere in the Greek world. The text of a 3rd century BCE will from Ptolemaic Egypt states Dionysius and Callista leave their property and money to their sons. If, however, any of the sons refuses to care for them or pay their debts or does not participate in burying them (ἐὰν δέ τις αὐτῶν μὴ θέλῃι ἢ τράφειν ἢ συναποτίνειν ἢ μὴ συνθάπτωσιν), he pays a penalty out of his inheritance (*Select Papyri* I.III.82). This may not have been a legal requirement in Ptolemaic Egypt, for children to care for their parents in their old age, but the expectation nevertheless persisted at the level of the family.

as far as to say that slaves who report children mistreating their parents will thereby gain their freedom if they belong to the family of the injured or the injurers, or protection from retaliation by the State if they belong to another citizen.[196]

The question becomes, did it matter if the elderly parent was physically or mentally impaired? That is, did the lawmakers of Athens or Delphi provide exceptions for children whose duties to their parents became excessive due to a parent's level of disability? We have some clues that, in fact, children were expected, if not legally required, to care for their parents regardless of their parents' physical or mental (in)capacities. The speaker of a 4th century BCE speech written by Lysias is physically disabled (ἀδύνατος), requiring two canes in order to walk and stand. The speaker asserts first of all that he only recently stopped caring (τρέφων) for his mother, demonstrating that even a disabled child was expected to care for his parents. What is more, the speaker laments that he himself, being childless, has no one who will care for him (με θεραπεύσουσι) as he ages. Importantly, the speaker connotes different kinds of care with his choice of verbs. In the various iterations of the law requiring children to care for their parents, the verb is usually τρέφω, a word that can connote generalized care, including financial support, physical care and nursing, and even assistance in eating.[197] When referring to himself, the speaker uses θεραπεύω, whence comes our modern "therapy." This verb is more specific than

[196] Elsewhere in the *Laws* (9.881d) Plato says that if anyone is convicted of a charge of committing outrage against one's parents (ἐὰν δέ τις ὄφλῃ δίκην αἰκίας γονέων), he should be exiled; if he fails to stay away, he will be punished with lashes, and if he returns yet again he will be put to death. Going further, Plato (*Laws* 9.881d-3) says that if any free man shares a meal, a drink, or even a greeting with someone who has been charged with abusing his parents, that person shares in the guilt and must be purified before he enters any sacred precinct, the *agora* (marketplace), or any part of the city. Plato is firm on the issue of children respecting their parents, youths respecting elders, and so on, and throughout the *Laws* he prescribes appropriate behavior in these relationships, as well as (sometime quite harsh) penalties for anyone who transgresses, with too many instances to list here. See, also, the end of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, where a son beating a father (despite claiming that he does so justly) is presented as the ultimate outrage.

[197] *LSJ* s.v. τρέφω.

τρέφω and it implies something more like medical care, appropriate for a man who is physically disabled; it is the same word used in Xenophon's (*Memorabilia* 2.2.12) discussion of this filial expectation.[198] The intent of the speaker in the Lysias speech is clear: he cared for his mother, as he was required, but has no one to care for him in his turn. Presumably, then, if the speaker had children, they would not be exempt from the requirement to provide care for their father on the grounds that he was disabled, but they would be expected to care for him as all children are for their parents.

In the last quarter of the 3rd century BCE, a certain Ktesikles petitioned the reigning Ptolemaic king, Ptolemy Philopator, so that he may obtain justice from his daughter, Nike, and a comedian named Dionysios. Ktesikles complains that he nurtured and educated Nike, but

> … when I was unfortunate in my own body and disabled in my eyes, she would not provide me with anything that I required.
>
> *Select Papyri* 2.268

> …ἀκληρήσαντος δέ μου κατὰ τὸ ἴδιον σῶμ[α] καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀδυνατοῦντος, οὐχ οἷα μοι ἦν ἐπαρκεῖν τῶν ἀναγκαίων οὐδέν·

Ktesikles says his daughter was corrupted by Dionysios and is therefore not keeping her promises to him, contemning his old age and his present misfortune (i.e., his disabilities). He requests that Ptolemy Philopator allow his case to be heard by a magistrate so that his daughter, Nike, may be induced to provide "just things" (τὰ δίκαια) for him. It is unclear if Ktesikles is here invoking a legal right that he has to receive support and care from his daughter or appeals only on the grounds that his daughter Nike broke a written oath, but the bigger picture is clear: even before the oath Ktesikles harbored expectations that his daughter would support him and care for him in his aged and disabled state. Of course, it is not easy to use a reference drawn from

[198] *LSJ* s.v. θεραπεύω.

Ptolemaic Egypt as solid evidence for Greek practices, but Ktesikles's statements are similar to what we see on mainland Greece, suggesting a larger cultural expectation, one that followed Greeks to Egypt with the Ptolemies (if it did not exist there already).

It is evident, then, that at least as early as the 6th century BCE and through the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, at least in some states, Greek children were required by law or compelled by societal expectations to provide care for their aged parents, and that there were no exemptions in cases where either the child or her or his parents were disabled. This is not to say that children were in all cases happy to provide this care, and indeed some scholars argue that the Athenian law was regularly ignored, which is why it was regularly re-legislated (Thane 2000). Important here, however, is not whether ancient Greeks enjoyed being required to care for their aged and aging parents, but that, legally and socially, there was little or no difference between parents who were old and physically and mentally fit and parents who were old and impaired in one way or another. Children were expected, if not required, to care for parents of varying degrees of physical and mental (in)capacity from at least as early as the 6th century BCE.[199] There were, of course, positive moralistic models of good behavior on this front: consider Cleobis and Biton, who took the part of oxen and dragged their (presumably aged) mother from the city of Argos to the extra-urban sanctuary of Hera (Herodotus 1.31), as well as Antigone (and to a certain extent Ismene), who leaves behind her life and family to guide and care for her disabled (blind and physically impaired) father Oedipus at the end of his life in Sophocles's Oedipus at Colonus, written when the playwright himself was remarkably old.

[199] This law or custom may go back even further. Hesiod writes in his *Works and Days* talks about a race of men, the last in his list, who do not repay their aging parents for their rearing (οὐδὲ μὲν οἵ γε γηράντεσσι τοκεῦσιν ἀπὸ θρεπτήρια δοῖεν, 188-189), thereby earning the wrath of the gods.

Other solutions

It is likely that a variety of actions taken by ancient Greeks, either individually or collectively, served to assist the elderly, even if they were not explicitly intended to do so. In Athens, for example, it is likely that certain state subsidies effectively provided support for elderly citizens who had no alternative means. The Athenian state provided a small subsidy for its "disabled" citizens (τοῖς ἀδυνάτοις) (see previous chapter for a fuller discussion) and it is possible that a significant portion of those receiving the funds were elderly. In a speech by the 4th century BCE orator Aeschines, the defendant Timarchus is being accused of a variety of offenses, including outright knavery. Among his specific offenses, Timarchus apparently impoverished his uncle Arignotos, forcing the old and unfortunate man (πρεσβύτην καὶ ἠτυχηκότα) to survive by receiving the payment intended for the disabled (Against Timarchus, 103-104).

Athenian pay for jury service in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE may have attracted a large number of elderly men to serve as jurors (see, e.g., Pickard-Cambridge 1914:89-90; Todd 1990:fn 190 and his references and bibliography throughout), thereby ensuring that they had at least some income to support themselves or contribute to their families' incomes. The elderly were, at least occasionally, given state protections during warfare. During the siege of Plataea, the Athenians arrive and remove the women, children, elderly (τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους), and disabled, lest they be killed by the besieging armies of Spartans and Thebans (Thucydides 2.78.3). We even have later evidence suggesting that at least one non-Greek community created a physical space within the city specifically for the benefit of the elderly. In Book II of his treatise, the 1st century BCE Roman architectural historian Vitruvius writes about the palace of

Croesus in Sardis, a city in Turkey. Croesus, the king of Lydia in the mid-6th century BCE, had a lavish palace

> …which the people of Sardis dedicated to their fellow citizens for relaxing in the leisure of (old) age, as a gerusia for the society of elders.
>
> Vitruvius 2.8.10

> quam Sardiani civibus ad requiescendum aetatis otio seniorum collegio gerusiam dedicaverunt;

The citizens of Sardis, then, dedicated a building specifically for the elderly to use in their leisure. In his *Laws*, Plato recommends

> …in such places [as just described], young men should construct gymnasia both for themselves and for the elderly, offering baths for the old…
>
> Plato, *Laws* 6.761c

> ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις γυμνάσια χρὴ κατασκευάζειν τοὺς νέους αὑτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς γέρουσι γεροντικὰ λουτρὰ [θερμὰ] παρέχοντας…

Vitruvius's evidence is late and related to a city not in the Greek mainland, and Plato's advice is purely hypothetical, but both suggest that these kinds of provisions for the elderly were within the realm of possibilities in the ancient world.

Roles occupied by the elderly in Greek communities

The Greeks did not have a formal system of retirement (Finley 1981) where one could expect to exit the labor force after a certain number of years at work, but we do know that at least some ancient Greeks ceased from their former employment as they became incapable of performing the necessary tasks. It is not the case, however, that the Greeks did not plan for this eventuality. Xenophon's (*Memorabilia* 2.8.3) Socrates explains that no one will pay old men for their labor and that, because of this, men should choose work that will allow them to sustain themselves in their old age (ἃ καὶ πρεσβυτέρῳ γενομένῳ ἐπαρκέσει). The speaker in Lysias 24

(discussed above) laments that he has no children who can provide him with the care he will require in his old age.

Even if someone did not formally exit the labor force, it was likely possible to take on new, different, or lesser responsibilities within the craft. Jody Maxmin (1974) introduced the idea of transition in this respect. The well-known late 6th century BCE vase painter Euphronios, we know, transitioned around the year 500 BCE from painting to potting. Maxmin (1974:178) argued, ingeniously, that the artist perhaps experienced vision loss in his older years, a specific condition called presbyopia (literally, old person's eyes), and could no longer paint vases with the same level of skill as he had formerly and, as a result, he made the switch from painting to potting, something that she says "should be a perfectly normal procedure, and one which scholars studying the careers of painters should anticipate."[200]

Priests and priestesses are often elderly in literature, and Plato (*Laws* 759d) recommends that such offices not be filled by anyone younger than the age of 60. Older men could continue participating in the assembly and juries (see above) and some likely served as advisors in political or military affairs. Aged male slaves fulfilled roles as pedagogues or tutors for young children (see, e.g., Laes 2009) and old women, free and slave, could act as midwives and nurses (see, e.g., Kosmopoulou 2001; Laes 2011c), something attested to in the large number of small-scale terracotta sculptures showing old women in the role of nurse (see above, **Figure 4.16**) and grave reliefs showing a woman who has died in childbirth, surrounded by women who were probably her relatives and/or nurse. Grandmothers and other older women likely participated in childcare, as suggested in literature and in grave reliefs: the epitaph for one Mnesarete, a woman

[200] John D. Beazley (1944:34) first suggested that Euphronios may have experienced vision loss, but he left the painter's motivations for switching careers an open question.

who died in childbirth, reports that she bequeathed to her mother grief and a child (πένθος καί τέκνον) (**Figure 4.20-21**).[201] Likewise, old women could continue participating in the household economy through weaving, cooking, and so on, and could potentially continue to be supported by their former masters when they could not support themselves (see, e.g., [Demosthenes] 47.56). In all of these roles, peak physical shape is not required, and the elderly could expect to participate despite any physical impairments.

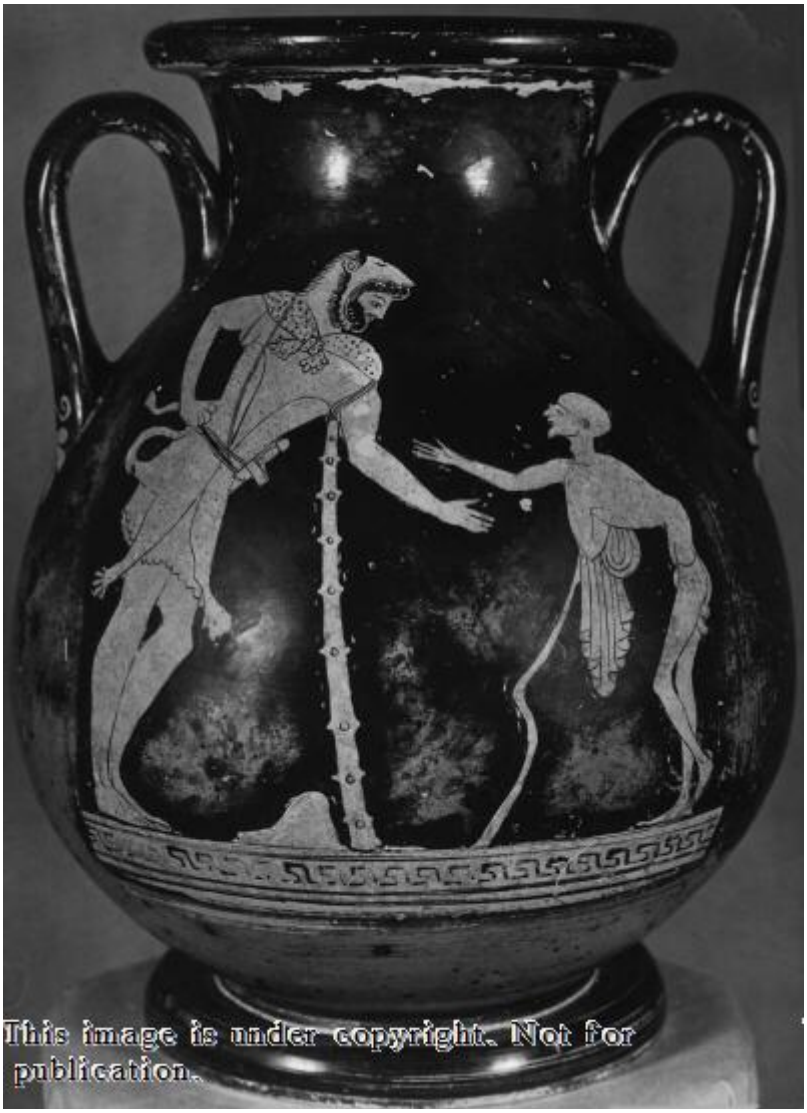
Conclusion

A large number of ancient Greeks experienced physical impairments and illnesses as they aged, including hunched backs, limited or uneasy mobility, tooth loss and tooth decay, vision and hearing loss, memory loss, moral degeneracy, and a suite of illnesses like catarrhs and strangury. The evidence presented above suggests that elderly men and women who experienced these old age-related impairments and illnesses did not differ significantly in terms of status or perception from their aged contemporaries who remained hale until death. This is not to say that the elderly disabled enjoyed high status in their communities, or that instances of abuse and neglect never occurred. Instead, the status of the elderly disabled was not far from that experienced by the elderly more broadly conceived. Physical impairment and disability in old age were apparently considered to be a part of the natural processes of aging and did not elicit surprise or shock. We have no evidence for the kinds of marginalization and abuse of the elderly that Rebecca L. Gowland (2017) identified in late Roman Britain, for example, or that is prevalent in the modern United States (see, e.g., Acierno *et al.* 2010). What seems to be relevant to the status and

[201] Munich GL 491. See, e.g., Stewart and Gray (2000) and Burton (2003).

marginalization of the elderly is not physical, but moral and behavioral degeneracy, that is, the elderly not acting their ages.

Figure 4. 1



Attic red-figure pelike attributed to the Matsch Painter, ca. 500-450 BCE, showing Herakles and Geras
Rome, Museum Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, 48238.

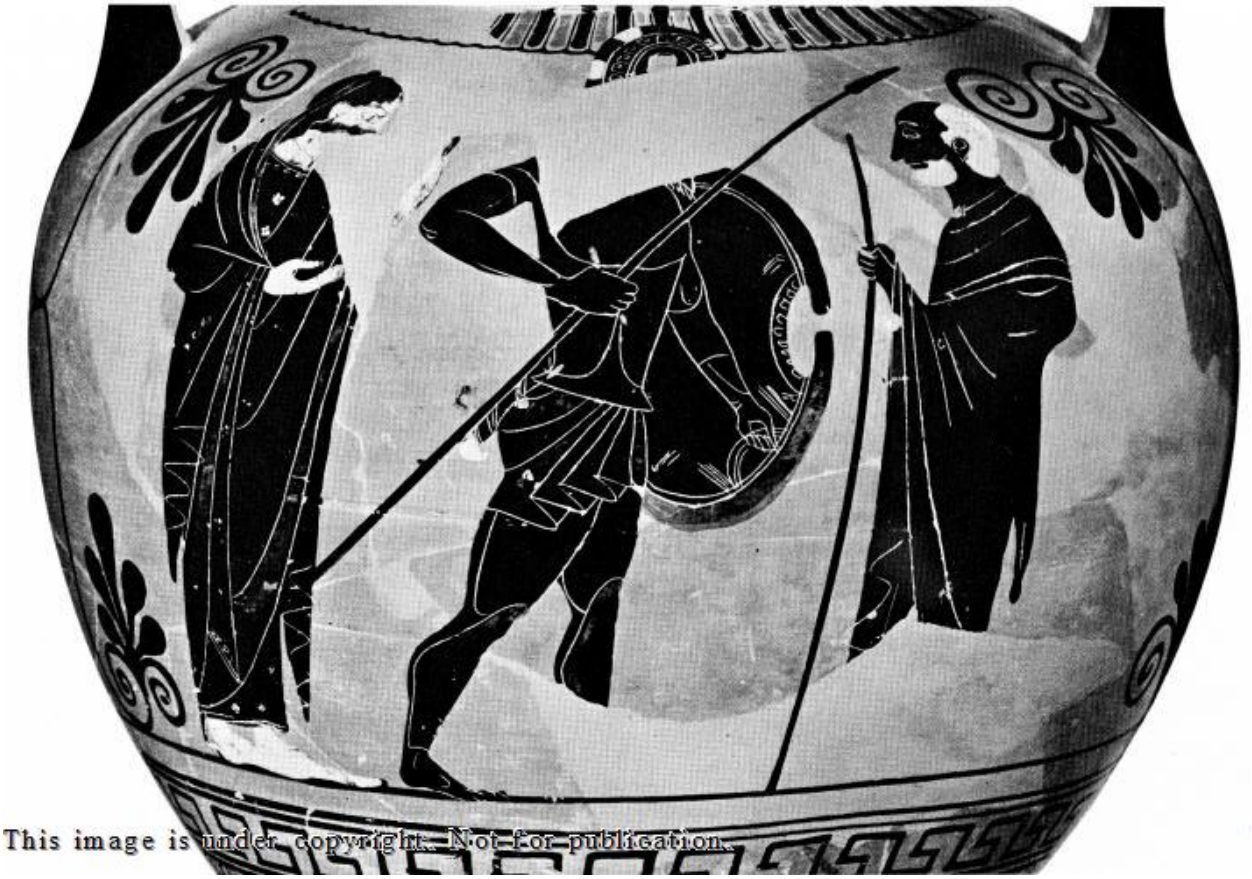
Photo by Beazley Archive Pottery Database, < http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/356B7440-A8CB-4657-B654-87254C036624>. See Shapiro (1993:Fig. 47).

Figure 4. 2

Etruscan pseudo-scarab attributed to the Master of the Boston Dionysos, last third of the 6th century BCE showing Herakles and Geras flanked by two female figures The other side of the gem shows Dionysos with a drinking horn.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 21.1197.

Photo by Maria Daniels, courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

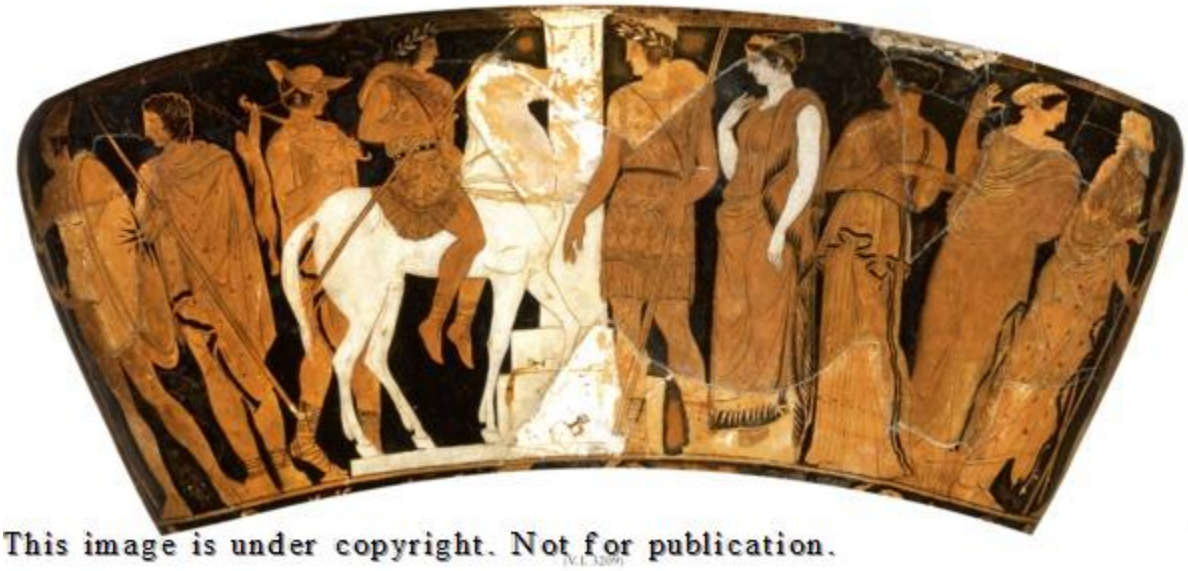
Figure 4. 3



Attic black-figure neck amphora, 550-500 BCE, showing a departure scene.
Munich, Antikensammlungen 1505.

Photo by the Beazley Archive Pottery Database,
<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/6F9619FF-8B86-D011-B42D-00C04FC964FF>. Accessed May 22, 2018.

Figure 4. 4



Attic red-figure loutrophoros, 425-375 BCE, showing a funerary scene.
Berlin, Antikensammlung V.I.3209, Athens, National Museum 26821.

Photo by the Beazley Archive Pottery Database.

Figure 4. 5

Attic red-figure loutrophoros, 425-375 BCE, showing a funerary scene.
Berlin, Antikensammlung 3209, Athens, National Museum 26821.

Photo by Johannes Laurentius, Art Resource, NY (ART453186).

Figure 4. 6

Red-figure neck amphora, attributed to the Matsch Painter, ca. 480 BCE, showing a departure scene.
New York, Metropolitan Museum 56.171.39.

Photo by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 4. 7

Attic red-figure skyphos, attributed to the Pistoxenos Painter, mid-5th century BCE, showing Herakles and Geropso.
Schwerin, Staatliches Museum 708.

Photo by the Beazley Archive Pottery Database,
<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/4F136666-4352-4FE2-A5B3-54505DEAF556>.

Figure 4. 8

Attic red-figure kylix, painted by Aison (signed), 450-400 BCE, showing the deeds of Theseus. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional 11265.

Photo by Museo Arqueológico Nacional. © Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte.

Figure 4. 9

Attic white-ground lekythos, attributed to the Achilles Painter, ca. 475-425 BCE, showing a grieving old man.
Berlin, Antikensammlung 1983.1.

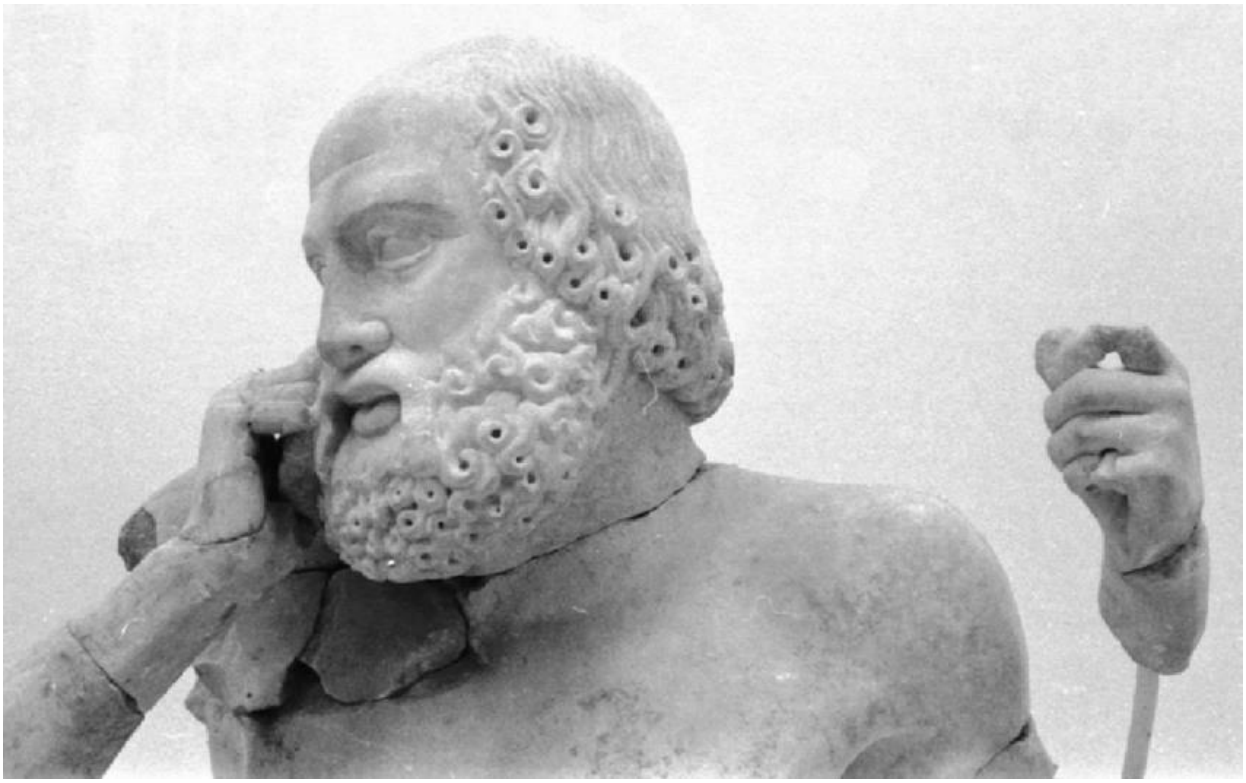
Photo: Museum

Figure 4. 10

Attic white-ground lekythos, attributed to the Achilles Painter, ca. 475-425 BCE, showing a grieving old man.
Berlin, Antikensammlung 1983.1.

Photo: Museum

Figure 4. 11



Marble architectural sculpture of an old man (identified as Seer N) from the East pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. ca. 470-460 BCE.

Photo from Younger (2009:Fig. 17).

Figure 4. 12

Marble grave stele with a family group, ca. 360 BCE.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 11.100.2.

Photo from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 4. 13

Marble statue of an old man, late 4th century BCE.
Worcester Art Museum, 1932.2.

Photo from the Worcester Art Museum.

Figure 4. 14

Marble statue of an old man, 1st or 2nd CE copy of ca. 3rd century BCE original.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 19.192.15.

Photo from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 4. 15

Marble sculpture of an old woman, Roman copy of a ca. 2nd century BCE Greek original. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 09.39.

Photo from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 4. 16

Marble statue of a drunken old woman. Roman copy of a Hellenistic Greek original attributed to Myron.
Rome, Musei Capitolini MC 299.

Photo by the Musei Capitolini, Rome.

Figure 4. 17

Marble sculptural head of an old woman. Roman copy of a Hellenistic Greek original of the 3rd or 2nd century BCE.
London, British Museum 1852,0327.9.

Photo from the British Museum, London.

Figure 4. 18

Terracotta figurine of an old nurse holding a baby, ca. 4th century BCE. British Museum 1874,1110.18.

Photo by the British Museum, London.

Figure 4. 19

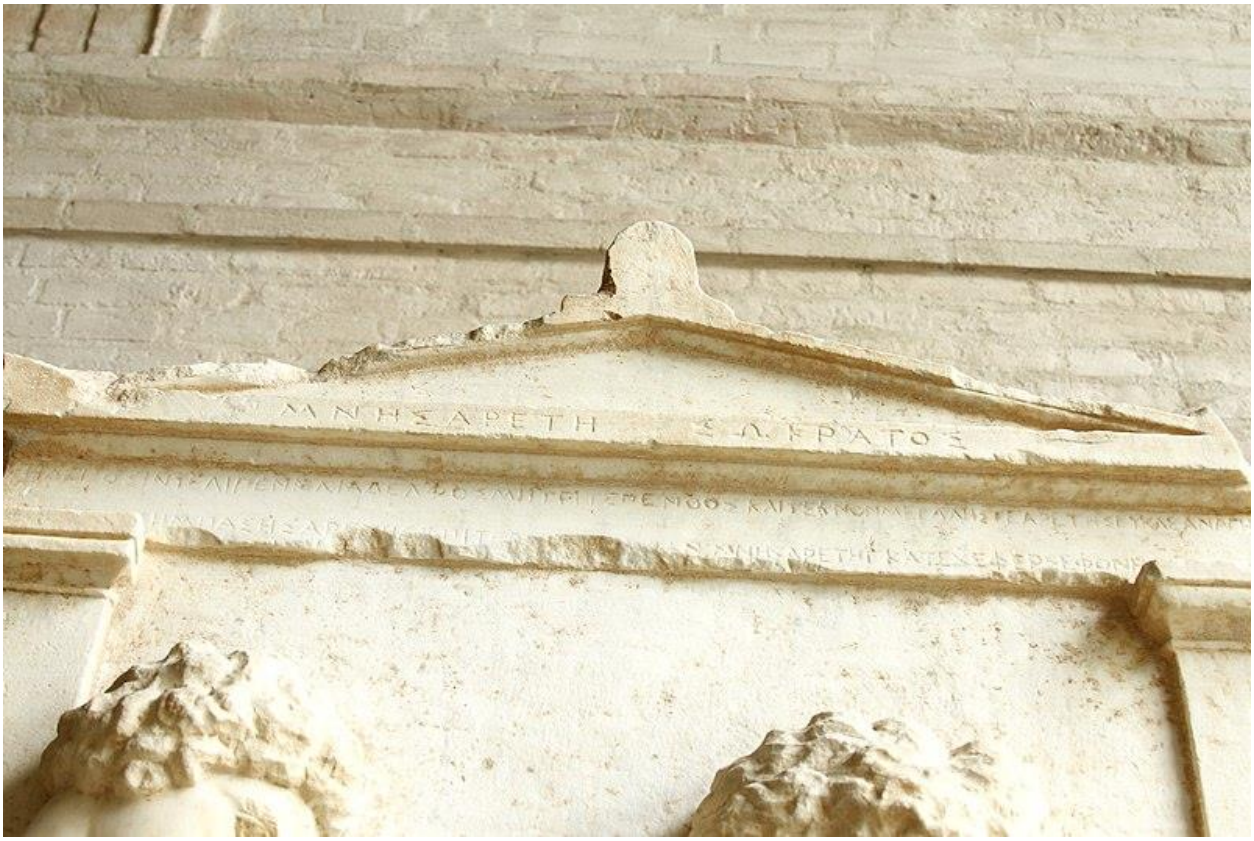
Boeotian or Attic terracotta figurine of an old woman holding an infant. Late 4th century BCE. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 10.210.38.

Photo from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 4. 20

Marble funerary stele, dedicated to Mnesarete (seated). ca. 400-375 BCE.
Munich, Glyptothek GL 491.

Figure 4. 21



Detail of inscription on stele of Mnesarete. ca. 400-375 BCE.
Munich, Glytothek GL 491.

Conclusion

> The slow, indeed, overtakes the swift,
> As even now Hephaistos, although he is slow, seized Ares,
> Who is by far the swiftest of the gods who hold Olympus,
> Even though he is lame, [he did it] by his skill.
>
> Homer, *Odyssey* 8.329-332

> …κιχάνει τοι βραδὺς ὠκύν,
> ὡς καὶ νῦν Ἥφαιστος ἐὼν βραδὺς εἶλεν Ἄρηα
> ὠκύτατόν περ ἐόντα θεῶν οἳ Ὄλυμπον ἔχουσι,
> χωλὸς ἐὼν τέχνῃσι:

In Classics, the value of difference is a popular topic, especially when the Other is understood to include anyone who is not an elite male citizen (e.g., women, children, slaves, foreigners). Disability as a marker of Other, however, presents problems because being or becoming disabled did not automatically and necessarily affect one's position within ancient Greek communities because disability cross-cut all other aspects of identity. One could be an elite male citizen and disabled, a young female slave and disabled, an old philosopher and disabled. In this study, I have shown that far from being ejected from their families or communities, physically disabled ancient Greeks of all ages were often integrated where they could be and accommodated when they couldn't. Infants who were born with noticeable physical disabilities, including and especially conditions like cleft palate, clubfoot, and "weasel-arms," did not automatically meet with death. Instead, parents, midwives, and physicians took active measures to help them survive. Children of all ages were valued as members of the *oikos* and were treated as such: parents and communities went to great lengths to protect them from suffering any misfortune and sought cures and aid for children who experienced illness, injury, or disability. Disabled adults contributed to their families and communities as wives and husbands, priestesses and priests, laborers, farmers, and soldiers. Finally, ancient Greeks accepted impairment as a natural part of old age and did not regard the elderly as socially deviant

due solely to physical impairment. By locating disability in an active social context and making use of all available evidence, I have shown that, as a concept, disability is contingent and constructed: its meaning and effect cannot be assumed but must be proven after careful consideration and analysis.

In 1991, Katherine Ann Dettwyler published an important article about studying disability in the past. She argued that evidence for survived disability in prehistoric societies or cultures is not, in and of itself, evidence for the expression of compassion by a disabled individual's community. Dettwyler (1991:376) questions "[W]hy should the discovery of individuals with 'severe' physical impairments, as reflected in skeletal and fossil evidence, invite speculation about the thought patterns of prehistoric populations and judgments about the moral rightness of past behavior?" The presumed correlation between disability and compassion, she says, makes a series of assumptions (Dettwyler 1991:379-383): that most people in a community or society are productive and self-sufficient most of the time; that individuals whose skeletons do not preserve evidence for impairments were not disabled; that disabled individuals are necessarily non-productive; that being allowed to survive is the same thing as being shown compassion; and that it is, indeed, compassionate to facilitate the survival of disabled individuals. The point she makes is that there is no established and universal correlation between disability and its experience or treatment. Dettwyler (1991:384) is, unfortunately, pessimistic about the possibility of discerning evidence of compassion from the study of bones and artifacts, but other scholars have shown that this is, indeed, possible (see, e.g., Powell, Southwell-Wright and Gowland 2017, especially Thorpe 2017; Hubert 2000). Like all social constructs, it is necessary to consider evidence in its larger context, that is, to consider not just the bones, but

also the literature and art (if such exists for that culture), architecture, religion, and so on. That is, every available aspect of the material record.

Significant for this discussion of disability in ancient Greece is the Olympian god Hephaistos (alternatively, Hephaestus). Hephaistos is perhaps best known for his work at the forge: he is a blacksmith, responsible for crafting the scepter of Agamemnon, the arms of Achilles, the chains of Prometheus, and the bane on humanity that was Pandora. He is a magician of sorts (Delcourt 1957), as well as the possessor of a special kind of cunning intelligence (Detienne and Vernant 1978). He is the son of Hera, sometimes also the son of Zeus; the husband of Charis, alternatively the husband of Aglaia or the cuckolded husband of Aphrodite. He is the progenitor of the whole Athenian race. He has a special home on the faraway island of Lemnos, but also a temple, which he shares with Athena, his sister, in the center of Athens. He receives honors at an altar in the Erectheion, a temple on the Acropolis in Athens, and is the beneficiary of rites on Lemnos and in Athens. Importantly for this study, Hephaistos, one of the 12 Olympian gods, is disabled.

Hephaistos

Hephaistos appears in a wide variety of literary and material contexts. In literature, we meet Hephaistos first in the Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It is here that we learn a lot about the god, his characterization, his story, and his cult. He is also featured in Archaic poetry, including Hesiod, the Epic Cycle, and the *Homeric Hymns*. He is an occasional character in 5th century BCE tragedies, as in Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, but after the turn of the 5th century BCE, Hephaistos is not a major figure in Greek literature. Hephaistos shows up in the material record in several ways. In addition to his temple in the Agora in Athens (which has not been securely identified) and his altar in the Erectheion on the Acropolis in Athens, Hephaistos

received cult on the island of Lemnos, as well as in numerous other cities and towns in Greece, Italy, and Asia Minor (see Brommer 1978:157-190). He appears in relief sculpture, as on the later 6th century BCE Treasury of the Siphnians at Delphi (**Figure 5.1**) and on the later 5th century BCE Ionic frieze on the Parthenon in Athens (**Figure 5.2**). He appears in Attic vase painting from the early 6th century BCE (**Figure 5.3**), as well as on vases from central Italy (**Figure 5.4**), Corinth (**Figure 5.5**), and elsewhere in the Mediterranean in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. He appears on a variety of vase types, including unusual shapes like psykters (**Figure 5.6**) and kotha (**Figure 5.7**). His appearances are often related to his creation of the arms of Achilles in the *Iliad* (**Figures 8-10**), but very often he is shown in the context of the so-called Return of Hephaistos (**Figures 3-6, 11**). Sometimes he is identifiable only by his attributes, as on **Figure 5.12**, where the axe differentiates him from the more regular rider of the winged vehicle, the agrarian god Triptolemos; at other times, as on **Figure 5.13**, he is identified by an inscription. He continues to have a material presence in into the Roman period, where he appears on lamps and coins and in small-scale sculpture from throughout the Mediterranean.

Hephaistos presents a fitting end to this study, as the structure (not necessarily the content, which cannot be used to illustrate Greek customs or habits) of his myth illustrates several key features of disability in ancient Greece. First, Hephaistos's disability was, by most accounts, congenital, and it affected him at all stages of his life, from birth through childhood and into adulthood (the gods do not experience old age). At each stage, we can see how his disability mattered in different ways and to different extents, as it did for humans. Second, the ancient Greeks express a great deal of ambiguity and ambivalence about Hephaistos's disability. His disability was not always relevant, nor did it necessarily result in his disenfranchisement from his community. He was honored by humans, as other gods were, and was relied on to a

great extent by his fellow gods and goddesses. Hephaistos was an equal among the gods, disability notwithstanding. Third, Hephaistos's disability did present limitations for him, but he was accommodated in a variety of ways. Many of his accommodations were devised by his own ingenuity, but this aspect of his characterization displays an acute awareness of the need for accommodation, an awareness that we have seen translated into the mortal realm. Fourth and finally, in Hephaistos we can see clearly that concepts like disability were not static; rather, understandings and representations of disability changed over time and were dependent on context. There is no one understanding of disability in ancient Greece, and therefore no essential "disabled experience" that can be distilled from the evidence.

In what follows, I discuss how Hephaistos illustrates these aspects of disability in ancient Greece with specific reference to his appearances in literature and art. I attempt to be representative and not selective in my choice of passages and images. In terms of texts, I rely heavily on the Homeric epics: these represent the earliest discussions of the god and include him in a variety of contexts. What is more, later authors tend to rely on the Homeric tradition, especially for Hephaistos's myth. I try to avoid late discussions of Hephaistos' myth, as they conflate or confuse details from earlier traditions and also reflect later attitudes that cloud our understanding Hephaistos's place in ancient Greek society. In art, Hephaistos is most prevalent in a scene known as the Return of Hephaistos. Frank Brommer (1978) reports that of the more than 280 representations of Hephaistos in black- and red-figure vase painting, more than 180 show him in this context. The god also appears often in scenes that hark back to the *Iliad*, specifically the scene in which the goddess Thetis retrieves new armor for her son, Achilles, from the blacksmith god. I discuss, too, Hephaistos's presence in group scenes, including in the so-called Gigantomachy, the fight between the gods and the giants, and on the Ionic frieze of the

Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens. I briefly mention Hephaistos's presence on Roman-era coins from Asia Minor, his temple in the Agora in Athens, and his appearance in scenes for which we have no clear understanding of the context. Throughout, I rely heavily on the catalogue compiled by Brommer (1978), as well as that prepared for the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (LIMC) by Antoine Hermary and Anne Jacquemain (1988). I encourage readers to consult these catalogues, with their many plates of images, in order to get a fuller sense of Hephaistos's presence in ancient Greek art and myth.

Through the life course

By most accounts, Hephaistos was born disabled. In our first meeting with Hephaistos in Homer's *Iliad*, his disability is congenital. In Book 18, the goddess Thetis visits Hephaistos at his forge in order to ask him to craft new armor for her son, Achilles. In the scene (Homer, *Iliad* 18.394-397), Hephaistos reveals that Thetis had once rescued him after his mother, Hera, rejected him "because I was lame" (χωλὸν ἐόντα). Likewise, in the *Odyssey* (8.306-311), Hephaistos reports that he was born weak and infirm (ἠπεδανὸς γενόμην). In Hesiod's *Theogony* (945), Hephaistos is disabled (ἀμφιγυήεις). The timing of his disability is unspoken, but the adjective used – ἀμφιγυήεις – is Homeric and suggests that Hesiod is drawing on the Homeric tradition, in which the god's disability is congenital.[202] In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (3.316-318), Hephaistos is congenitally disabled. This tradition continues into the 5th century CE, when Nonnos (*Dionysiaca* 228-231) repeats it.

[202] See Deroy (1956) regarding the Homeric epithet ἀμφιγυήεις applied to Hephaistos. See, also, Chantraine (1968:239-241), s.v. γύη and *LfGrE* (1955:673-674), s.v., ἀμφιγυήεις. The entry in the *LfGrE* suggests that when Hephaistos's disability is relevant for the context, the word χωλός is used and that ἀμφιγυήεις is more formulaic than meaningful.

A secondary tradition, that Hephaistos's disability was acquired later in life, appears in, for example, the 2nd century CE *Library* of Pseudo-Apollodorus, but it seems to conflate two different parts of the god's myth. The author says (Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Library* 1.3.5) that Hephaistos was disabled after Zeus hurled him from Olympus: Hephaistos landed on Lemnos and was consequently disabled in his legs (πηρωθέντα τὰς βάσεις) and rescued by Thetis.

A secondary tradition, present in, for example, the 2nd century CE *Library* by Pseudo-Apollodorus (1.3.5), has Hephaistos acquire his disability after birth. According to this version, the god was disabled after Zeus hurled him from Olympus: Hephaistos landed on Lemnos, was disabled in his legs (πηρωθέντα τὰς βάσεις) and was rescued by Thetis. This, however, conflates two separate stories that are present in the *Iliad*. According to the internal evidence of the *Iliad*, there were two separate expulsions from Olympus. In the first (Homer, *Iliad* 18.394-397), Hera rejected the congenitally disabled Hephaistos and threw him from Olympus; he was then rescued by Thetis and Eurynome. In the second (Homer, *Iliad* 1.590-594), Hephaistos intervened in a fight between Zeus and Hera; Zeus grabbed Hephaistos by his foot and hurled him from Olympus. Hephaistos landed on Lemnos and was rescued by the Sintians. It is these two stories that Pseudo-Apollodorus seems to conflate. This later tradition should not discourage us from recognizing that for the ancient Greeks, Hephaistos's disability was congenital.

The exact nature of Hephaistos's disability has occupied many scholars (e.g., Bazopoulou-Kyrkanidou 1997, with bibliography), as has its cause (e.g., Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 9.228-231; Hermary and Jacquemain 1988:628; Blakely 2012). Regardless of the exact diagnosis, Hephaistos is disabled in one or both of his feet. The Homeric epithet ἀμφιγυήεις clearly refers to a bilateral condition, regardless of its exact meaning, but when the god's disability is represented in vase painting, he can have either one or two disabled feet (see, e.g.,

Figure 5.3 vs. **Figure 5.4**). His disability must have been visible at birth: his mother, Hera, says in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (3.316-318) that Hephaistos was born weak and disabled and that, after picking him up in her arms, she rejected him into the deep sea (see, also, Homer, *Iliad* 18.394-397).

Hephaistos, then, was disabled at birth and was rejected because of it. This runs contrary to the argument I put forth in Chapter 1, that disabled children were not exposed or killed at birth in ancient Greece. It is important to remember, in the first place, that the mythological world is not the real world.[203] Incest and bestiality, for example, occur regularly in the world of myth but was considered taboo among the Greeks. What is more, even in this world, with its different rules, Hephaistos was taken up by Thetis and Eurynome: this rejected infant found acceptance among others in the divine realm. While his disability definitely complicated his birth and his relationship with his mother, it did not prevent him from finding a place within the pantheon and his mythological society.

After they rescued him, Thetis and Eurynome raised Hephaistos in a cave (Homer, *Iliad* 18.397-405). During the first nine years of his life, he worked for the goddesses as a smith, crafting things like pins, cups, and necklaces for them. It seems, then, that his childhood – if the gods can be said to have a childhood – was spent crafting jewelry for the pleasure of his nurturers. This story is similar to that recounted in the Hippocratic text *On Joints* (53). The physician tells us that the Amazons – a tribe of warrior women – dislocate either the knees or the hips of their male infants, disabling them so that they cannot grow up and plot against the women. The male infants are then raised to perform various craftworks. The relationships

[203] Robert Garland (1995:63) says that "Hera's rejection of her son duplicates the response of a very average Greek mother to the discovery that she had given birth to a cripple." There is no simple equation between the mythological or divine worlds and the "real" world and this statement is based on a variety of assumptions and biases.

between Hephaistos and the male infants of the Amazons is not explicit, but both stories suggest that disabled children were not necessarily viewed as unproductive but could be apprenticed to perform various kinds of sedentary work. In Hephaistos's case, that is definitely the case.

As an adult, Hephaistos is an integral member of the divine community. He is among the 12 Olympian gods and is present at their assemblies. He is embroiled in the conflicts of the Trojan War, even intervening in one instance, as other gods and goddesses do, to save a son of his Trojan priest, Dares (*Il*.5.9-24). He participates in quarrels and conflicts of all kinds, as other gods and goddesses do. Hephaistos is a husband: he is married to Charis in the *Iliad* (18.382-392), to Aphrodite in the *Odyssey* (8.266-366), and to Aglaia, the youngest of the Graces, in Hesiod (*Theogony* 946-947). He had children: he is father to many children, including most prominently Erectheus or Erichtonios (Euripides, Nauck *TGF*2 1889, fr. 925; Isocrates, *Panathenaicus* 126; Plato, *Critias* 109c-d; Apollodorus, *Library* 3.14.6; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 166, see also 48, 158; Ovid, *Metamorphosis* 2.752-759; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3.22) and the Kabeiroi (Herodotus 3.37; Strabo, *Geography* 10.3.21).

Hephaistos is present at the various gatherings of the gods, including the Gigantomachy. On the later 6th century BCE Siphnian Treasury at Delphi, for example, Hephaistos is identifiable at the very beginning of the frieze (**Figure 5.1**; see, e.g., Moore 1977).[204] He is not shown outfitted in hoplite armor as his fellow gods and goddesses are, but stands instead at his bellows, providing his colleagues with their weapons. In many scenes of the Gigantomachy, in fact, Hephaistos does not fight, but he is present and lending assistance to his fellow gods and

[204] Hephaistos remains a part of the Gigantomachy throughout Greek art, including on the well-known early 2nd century BCE Altar of Zeus at Pergamon, where he is pictured with his double axe. Hephaistos is, however, absent from at least one representation of the Gigantomachy, on an early 4th century BCE Attic red-figure amphora in Paris (Louvre S 1677).

goddesses, who are actively engaged in combat. Like disabled ancient Greek men, the god Hephaistos is not always able to participate in warfare on the same terms as others, but he is not exempt from the war effort.[205] Hephaistos is present, too, in other contexts in which the Olympian gods appear in an assembly, such as on the Ionic frieze on the Parthenon in Athens (**Figure 5.2**). Here, the gods and goddesses, shown in larger scale than the human figures who appear elsewhere on the frieze, sit and converse among themselves. Hephaistos, with a crutch tucked under his muscular shoulder, turns toward the goddess Athena, identifiable by traces of her snaky aegis, a common wardrobe item of hers, on her lap. Hephaistos, then, is an integral part of the pantheon.

Hephaistos may have existed for the Greeks of the Bronze Age: the attestation on a Linear B tablet from the Cretan palatial site Knossos of *a-pa-i-ti-jo* (KN L 588) suggests the existence of the anthroponym Hephaistios or Hephaistion (Ventris and Chadwick 1973:127), which may point to the god's presence in the Bronze Age pantheon. By itself, however, the name tells us nothing about Hephaistos in the Bronze Age. When Hephaistos is officially a god, he is a full-fledged member of the Olympian pantheon. He has a complex and developed story, one that begins with his birth. At each stage of his life, the relevance and import of his disability changes. As an infant, Hephaistos was rejected by his mother, but accepted by Thetis and Eurynome. As a child, he contributed through the production of jewelry and other goods. As an adult, he was a husband and a father; he was critical in the production of things like the shield of Achilles and of

[205] He is occasionally shown participating in warfare, as on an early 5th century BCE Attic red-figure kylix attributed to the Brygos Painter (Berlin, Antikensammlung F 2293). Here, Hephaistos is identified by the pairs of pincers or tongs that he uses as weapons against the Giants. See, also, an early 5th century BCE calyx krater painted in the manner of the Niobid Painter (Basel, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig LU51), on which Hephaistos threatens a giant with two tongs holding pieces of coal. In neither of these scenes is his disability given visual expression.

Pandora, the recipient of various rites and festivals, especially in Athens and Lemnos, and a regular figure in the Gigantomachy. His place among the pantheon is well-established from the beginning.

Ambiguity and ambivalence about disability

For the ancient Greeks, Hephaistos's disability did not define him, nor was it irrelevant (see Barbanera 2013). He is unambiguously disabled in the Homeric epics, but there is an overriding emphasis on his skills as a craftsman. The epithets attached to his person often refer to his craft skills and cunning, labelling him four times a renowned craftsperson (κλυτοτέχνης),[206] eleven times renowned (περικλυτός),[207] once very cunning (πολύμητις),[208] twice ingenious (πολύφρων),[209] and once a famous worker (κλυτοεργός).[210] In 11 cases, Hephaistos is called "crooked-footed" (ἀμφιγυήεις) and thrice is he "club-footed" (κυλλοποδίων).[211] Most often, however, Hephaistos is invoked without an epithet but in the context of his cunning and skillfulness.[212]

[206] *Iliad* 1.571, 18.143, 18.391; *Odyssey* 8.286. See, also, *Homeric Hymn to Hephaistos* (20.5), in which Hephaistos is also called κλυτοτέχνης.

[207] *Iliad* 1.607, 18.383, 18.393, 18.462, 18.587, 18.590; *Odyssey* 8.287, 8.300, 8.349, 8.357, 24.75. See, also, Hesiod, *Theogony* 571.

[208] *Iliad* 21.355.

[209] *Odyssey* 8.297, 8.327.

[210] *Odyssey* 8.345.

[211] *Iliad* 18.371, 20.270, 21.331.

[212] *Iliad* 1.600, 8.195, 14.167, 14.339, 18.191, 18.392, 18.429, 18.473, 18.617, 19.10, 19.368, 19.383, 20.12, 20.36, 20.73, 21.342, 21.357, 21.378, 21.379, 22.316; *Odyssey* 4.617, 6.233, 7.92, 8.268, 8.272, 8.293, 8.330, 8.355, 8.359, 15.117, 23.160. In some of these references (*Iliad* 1.600, 20.36; *Odyssey* 8.330), the context refers explicitly or implicitly to Hephaistos's disability.

In longer passes in which Hephaistos plays a major part, his disability is prominent, but its overall effect is unclear. In Book 1 of the *Iliad* (1.493-495), for example, all the gods come together on Olympus. When, finally, Zeus joins them (Homer, *Iliad* 533-600), he and Hera begin quarreling and it is left to Hephaistos to intervene and diffuse the tension. Hephaistos, present and enfranchises in that environment, presents a long speech. After he finishes speaking, the god walks around the assembly pouring wine for his fellow gods and goddesses. As the poet reports,

> But among the blessed gods an unquenchable laughter arose
> As they saw Hephaistos bustling through the halls.
>
> Homer, *Iliad* 1.599-600

> ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἐνῶρτο γέλως μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν
> ὡς ἴδον Ἥφαιστον διὰ δώματα ποιπνύοντα.

At this point in the narrative Hephaistos is not disabled but has been referred to only as a renowned craftsperson. Many, however, interpret this passage to mean that the gods are (cruelly) laughing at Hephaistos because of his disability. In the *Odyssey* (8.266-366), however, we see a reversal of the kind that Hephaistos's cunning might have brought about (see Detienne and Vernant 1978: *passim*). In a story narrated by the blind bard Democodus, Hephaistos's wife, Aphrodite, engages in an affair with Ares, the god of war. Hephaistos devises a trap to catch the pair in the act of adultery. Distraught by his wife's infidelity, which he attributes to his disability, Hephaistos summons the other gods to witness the shame of Aphrodite and Ares. The gods arrive and, Demodocus reports,

> But among the blessed gods an unquenchable laughter arose
> As they saw the handiworks of ingenious Hephaistos.
>
> Homer, *Odyssey* 8.326-327

> ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἐνῶρτο γέλως μακάρεσσι θεοῖσι
> τέχνας εἰσορόωσι πολύφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο.

The line here is the same as in the *Iliad* (1.599), where Hephaistos is the object of the laughter; here, however, he is its agent.[213] Hephaistos appears capable of both positions, as the gods laugh at him for bumbling around performing tasks often reserved for beautiful bodies and then laugh with him for his ingenuity.

The situation is equally ambivalent in other literary depictions of Hephaistos. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Hephaistos is disabled, but he is also famous (κλυτός), surpassing all others of the gods in his craft skills (ἐκ πάντων τέχνῃσι κεκασμένον Οὐρανιώνων: Hesiod, *Theogony* 927-929). In Hesiod's *Works and Days* (60), Hephaistos is again famous (περικλυτός). In another Archaic poem attributed to Hesiod (*Shield of Herakles*), Hephaistos is very careful or very thoughtful (περίφρων: 297, 213) and famous (κλυτός: 244). In the *Homeric Hymn to Hephaistos* (1-8), the god is not described as disabled, but as renowned for his cunning or skill (κλυτόμητις) and famous for his craft (κλυτοτέχνης), and he is responsible for the civilizing of mankind. It is unclear if Aeschylus's Hephaistos (in the *Prometheus Bound*) is disabled (Pavlovskis 1989), as no reference is made to it in the play. Pindar's Hephaistos (*Olympian* 7.35-36) skilled with his bronze-forged axe as he releases Athena from Zeus's head.

In vase painting, too, Hephaistos's disability is not his only or defining characteristic. His visual representation changes (see below), but he is more often shown as able-bodied, suggesting that his disability is not what he was most known for. Hephaistos is most often shown as disabled in scenes referred to in modern scholarship as the Return of Hephaistos (see, e.g., **Figures 3-6,**

[213] There are many studies about humor and laughter in the Homeric epics (e.g., Hewitt 1928; Brown 1989; Bell 2007; Halliwell 2008; Halliwell 2017) that demonstrate that its interpretation is not straightforward but requires critical contextual analysis.

11).[214] According to the myth, Hephaistos is angry with Hera for rejecting him. This rejection is likely the one that occurred at his birth as a result of his disability, as we have no other literary evidence that Hera rejected Hephaistos a second time. Hephaistos crafts a magic throne that will entrap Hera as soon as she sits on it. Once Hera is trapped on the throne, Hephaistos leaves Olympus and refuses to return, despite entreaties and efforts from the gods, including Ares. Finally, Dionysos, the god of wine, succeeds in coaxing Hephaistos to return, but only after getting him drunk. The two apparently returned to Olympus accompanied by a band of revelers, usually satyrs. Hephaistos's disability is what spurs the events that lead to the return, so its representation in this context is relevant, but apparently not so relevant that it was always depicted. In other scenes on vases in which Hephaistos is present, including the birth of Athena, the Gigantomachy, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the presentation of Achilles's arms to Thetis, and the birth of Erichthonios/Erectheus, Hephaistos is most regularly depicted as able-bodied.

Most often in vase painting, Hephaistos is shown as a craftsperson, a visual representation that matches his more regular description in literature. He is identified by attributes like a double-axe (**Figure 5.7**), a hammer (**Figure 5.8**), pincers or tongs, a brimless, conical cap called a pilos or pileus[215] (**Figure 5.9**), or the general context, such as a foundry (**Figure 5.9**).[216] On Roman-era coins from Asia Minor (see Hermary and Jacquemain 1988: *passim*), Hephaistos is often shown sitting, but his disability is not picked out. Similarly, in

[214] For discussions of the Return of Hephaistos, see Thomas (1985:56-86); Halm-Tisserant (1986); Lafferty (2003:68-72); Hedreen (2004); De Ciantis (2005:138-143); Fineberg (2009); Brennan (2016).

[215] For a discussion of this hat and its meaning, see Pipili (2000) with bibliography.

[216] Brommer (1978:138-156) outlines Hephaistos's many attributes.

terracotta and bronze figurines, as well as on lamps, Hephaistos appears in the guise of a craftsperson, not as a disabled god. A 6th century BCE Etruscan carnelian gem (**Figure 5.10**) shows Hephaistos as disabled in his feet, but the artist also emphasizes his craft skills.[217] The cult statue of Hephaistos (along with that of his sister, Athena) at the temple in Athens is, unfortunately, lost (see Harrison 1977; Brommer 1978:75-89; Hermary and Jacquemain 1988:634-635) but it was originally made by Alkamenes, a Lemnian sculptor who was a pupil of the famous Pheidias (Stewart 2012). According to later, Roman authors (Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.30; Valerius Maximus 8.11), the cult statue of Hephaistos did, indeed, show the god's disability, but only to a slight degree.[218] On the Parthenon frieze, Hephaistos's disability is indicated only by a crutch tucked subtly under his armpit (**Figure 5.2**).

Hephaistos is disabled, but it was apparently not necessary for the Greeks for his disability to be foregrounded in every instance. The god's characterization is complex, and his disability represents only one part of that. For the Greeks, Hephaistos was not the disabled god, but a god who (sometimes?) had a disability.

The role of accommodation

When Hephaistos is shown or described as disabled, he also requires accommodations in order to participate fully in his mythological community. In scenes of the Gigantomachy, as we saw above, Hephaistos is often shown to the side, not engaged in active combat but using his bellows and craft skills to supply his fellow gods and goddesses with the weapons and armor that

[217] Malibu, Getty 81.AN.76.121. See Hermary and Jacquemain (1988:657 no. 18a) and Boardman (1975:38-39).

[218] Pausanias (1.14.6) saw the statue but did not describe its appearance.

they need to succeed in their fight with the giants. Hephaistos may not be able to wear the heavy hoplite armor, but he can contribute in important ways nonetheless.

In other contexts, Hephaistos's disability is actively accommodated. When Thetis visits Hephaistos in the *Iliad* (18.368-617), the god is working at his forge, crafting mechanized tripods. His disability is emphasized in the scene: he is limping, and his shrunken legs move nimbly beneath him. His whole body, in fact, finds expression: he also has a stout neck and a hairy chest. As he moves toward Thetis, he uses a heavy stick and is supported by attendants. These attendants are made of gold and appear as living young women; they have the power of thought and speech and are strong enough to support Hephaistos physically as he walks through the workshop. These attendants, who exist, it seems, only to support Hephaistos, was given the knowledge of how to accomplish their tasks by the immortal gods. That is, Hephaistos's attendants were imbued with their work-consciousness not just by Hephaistos, but by his community of gods and goddesses. Hephaistos is disabled, but his movement is totally supported by two different mobility aids.

In vase paintings, Hephaistos is often riding on a donkey, mule, or horse (**Figures 3-6, 11**).[219] The equids may be aids for his disability, but the fact that Hephaistos does not always ride, and his able-bodied companion Dionysos is just as likely to ride on horseback suggests that the animal transportation is not necessarily related to his disability. Hephaistos is sometimes shown seated on a chair or stool (e.g., **Figure 5.8**), sitting in a specially crafted saddle (**Figure 5.11**), or using what has been referred to as a "proto-wheelchair" but is in reality just a winged chair similar to that used by the able-bodied agrarian god Triptolemos (**Figure 5.12**). In the

[219] For the differences between horses, donkeys, and mules in the Greek imagination, see Padgett (2000), Griffith (2006a, 2006b), and Schertz and Stribling (2017).

sculpted frieze on the Parthenon, Hephaistos has a crutch beneath his arm (**Figure 5.2**) and he supports his weight on a crutch or staff, too, in various scenes on vases, such as an Attic red-figure calyx crater in Virginia (**Figure 5.13**).[220]

It would, of course, be possible for Hephaistos, as a god, to move without accommodation. He could have, for example, been granted the power of flight or spontaneous transportation, as other deities seem capable of. Instead, Hephaistos sometimes walks directly on his deformed feet, and he is sometimes supported by canes, crutches, robotic attendants, or animals. This is very similar to the situation for disabled humans: many moved about with the help of similar aids. In Hephaistos, we see an acknowledgment that some people require accommodation in order to participate equally in their communities. Importantly, these accommodations are not what characterizes Hephaistos. That is, it is not any of his accommodations that help us identify Hephaistos in art. The god is identified by a variety of means (see Brommer 1978:138-156) but not by his disability or accommodations.

Changing attitudes through time

In Hephaistos, too, we can witness how the understandings and treatments of disability in ancient Greece were not static but changed over time. In the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, Hephaistos's characterization is ambivalent, as we saw above: he is characterized sometimes as disabled, but at other times his disability is left unspoken and it is unclear if we should consider it relevant in such contexts or not. In the earliest depictions of Hephaistos in literature, the god is congenitally disabled. Likewise, in his earliest appearance in art, on the early 6th century BCE François vase (**Figure 5.3**). One frieze of this heavily decorated vase shows the Return of

[220] Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts 81.70.

Hephaistos. The god, identified by an inscription, rides an ithyphallic mule. His right foot, which dangles on the far side of the mule, is twisted backwards, a visual representation of his disability.[221]

Throughout the 6th and early 5th centuries BCE, Hephaistos is sometimes depicted as disabled in vase painting (Brommer 1978:16-17). Sometimes his disability is obvious, as on a later 6th century BCE hydria from the Etruscan city of Caere (**Figure 5.4**).[222] Here, an unbearded Hephaistos rides on a mule; both of his feet are curved dramatically backwards. A similar representation appears on an early 6th century BCE Corinthian amphoriskos (**Figure 5.5**).[223] Here, the god's legs and thin, his feet are curved, and he rides on a horse's back. Hephaistos is not always depicted as disabled in the 6th century BCE, but those representations are not localized; rather, they were produced throughout the Greek world at this time. Maura Brennan (2016) has argued that Hephaistos's disability could have been represented subtly, as on a later 6th century BCE psykter (**Figure 5.6**).[224] Hephaistos here rides on a donkey or mule. The foot closest to the viewer is rendered with a zigzag line along its bottom, a hint, Brennan argues, to the god's disability.

As noted, however, Hephaistos's disability was not always represented. It may have been represented in scenes of the return due to the role that it played in his ejection from Olympus, but in other contexts, such as the birth of Athena, Hephaistos's disability was rarely, if ever, shown.

[221] That the disabled foot is in the background of the vase and not foregrounded further hints at the ambivalence of the god's disabled representation and may also contribute to our understanding of the vase as a kind of think-piece or a display of the owner's erudition, as only a learned observer would notice such a subtle reference.

[222] Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum Antikensammlung IV 3577.

[223] Athens, National Archaeological Museum 664. This vase is discussed in detail in Seeberg (1965).

[224] Paris, Louvre F321.

According to the myth, Zeus swallowed his first wife, Metis, when she was pregnant (see Detienne and Vernant 1978:107-130). Eventually Zeus experienced pain in his head and Hephaistos cleaved his skull with his axe, which released a fully-grown Athena, the daughter of Zeus and Metis. This scene was depicted, among other places, on the east pediment of the Parthenon in Athens and on numerous vases, such as an early 6th century BCE tripod kothon (perfume container) (**Figure 5.7**).[225] Hephaistos can be seen standing at the left, axe in hand. In this case, his feet are not obviously disabled.[226]

Throughout the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, then, the ambivalence with which the Greeks understood and represented Hephaistos's disability in literature and art is on display. He is at times disabled, at times not, depending on a variety of factors, including – and perhaps especially – context. With the turn of the 5th century BCE, however, and the ascension of red-figure vase panting, Athenian supremacy, and a new way of representing the human form in all media, Hephaistos is almost never depicted with a disability (Rose 2003:37). In the tondo of an early 5th century BCE Attic red-figure kylix attributed to the Foundry Painter, for example, Hephaistos sits on a low stool and presents a helmet to the goddess Thetis (**Figure 5.8**).[227] The god's feet are not depicted disabled or deformed in any way. On an early 5th century BCE amphora (**Figure 5.9**), Hephaistos is not depicted disabled as he stands, polishing the shield of Achilles before he hands it over to Thetis.[228] This is the same scene depicted in Book 18 of the *Iliad*, in which

[225] Paris, Louvre CA 616.

[226] Hephaistos may be shown as disabled in at least one representation of the Birth of Athena, a late 6th or early 5th century BCE amphora in the Lyman Allyn Museum in New London, CT (1935.4.172). It is difficult to make it out in photographs, but it appears that one of Hephaistos's feet is turned backward.

[227] Berlin, Antikensammlung F 2294.

[228] Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 13.188.

Hephaistos's disability is emphasized, but his disability is erased by these 5th century BCE artists. In 5th century BCE scenes of the Return of Hephaistos, too, the god's disability is erased.

It is possible that Hephaistos's disability is alluded to in some 5th century BCE scenes, such as when he is shown sitting on a chair (e.g., **Figure 5.8**) or riding on a donkey or mule. On a volute krater at the University of Mississippi (**Figure 5.11**), Hephaistos rides on a mule, sitting on a saddle that is specially outfitted with straps.[229] Significant, however, is that his disability is not nearly as clear in the 5th century BCE as it was in previous centuries, and a great deal of knowledge of myth history is required in order to interpret scenes as potentially implying his disability. Not only is Hephaistos's disability is never totalizing, but it is also not consistently important or relevant, in either synchronic or diachronic terms.

Disability in ancient Greece

All foregoing conclusions about disability in ancient Greece should be understood from this perspective: disability as a concept was not static. The same disability could have different consequences and meanings at different stages along the life course. The same disability could matter more or less for the same or different people depending on context. Disabilities that could be accommodated often were. And, finally, the meaning and import of disability as a concept changed from community to community and year to year, depending on a variety of factors. The evidence presented in this study, however, shows that there was some continuity in thought and practice. The ramps built at healing and other sanctuaries, for example, represent a significant

[229] Oxford (MS), University of Mississippi Museum, 1977.3.89. See, also, a calyx krater in Paris (Louvre G 162) attributed to the Kleophrades Painter that shows Hephaistos riding side-saddle, this time with his feet tucked up on the mule's back. These may be usefully compared with a ca. 560 BCE Lakonian black-figure scene (Rhodes 10.711): here, too, Hephaistos rides side-saddle, but his feet are visibly deformed.

investment of time and resources. The ramps provided permanent and long-standing accommodation for individuals with a variety of bodies. The ramp leading up to the Acropolis in Athens was built in the 6th century BCE and rebuilt in the 5th century BCE; it was replaced with stairs only in the 1st century CE (Stevens 1946:92). Athenians and others used the ramp to access the Acroplis, then, for nearly 600 years. Feeding bottles that helped nourish ill and deformed newborns continued to be produced, exported, and used for hundreds of years. Disability may have been understood in different ways at different times, but it did so in a context that already facilitated disability in multiple and meaningful ways.

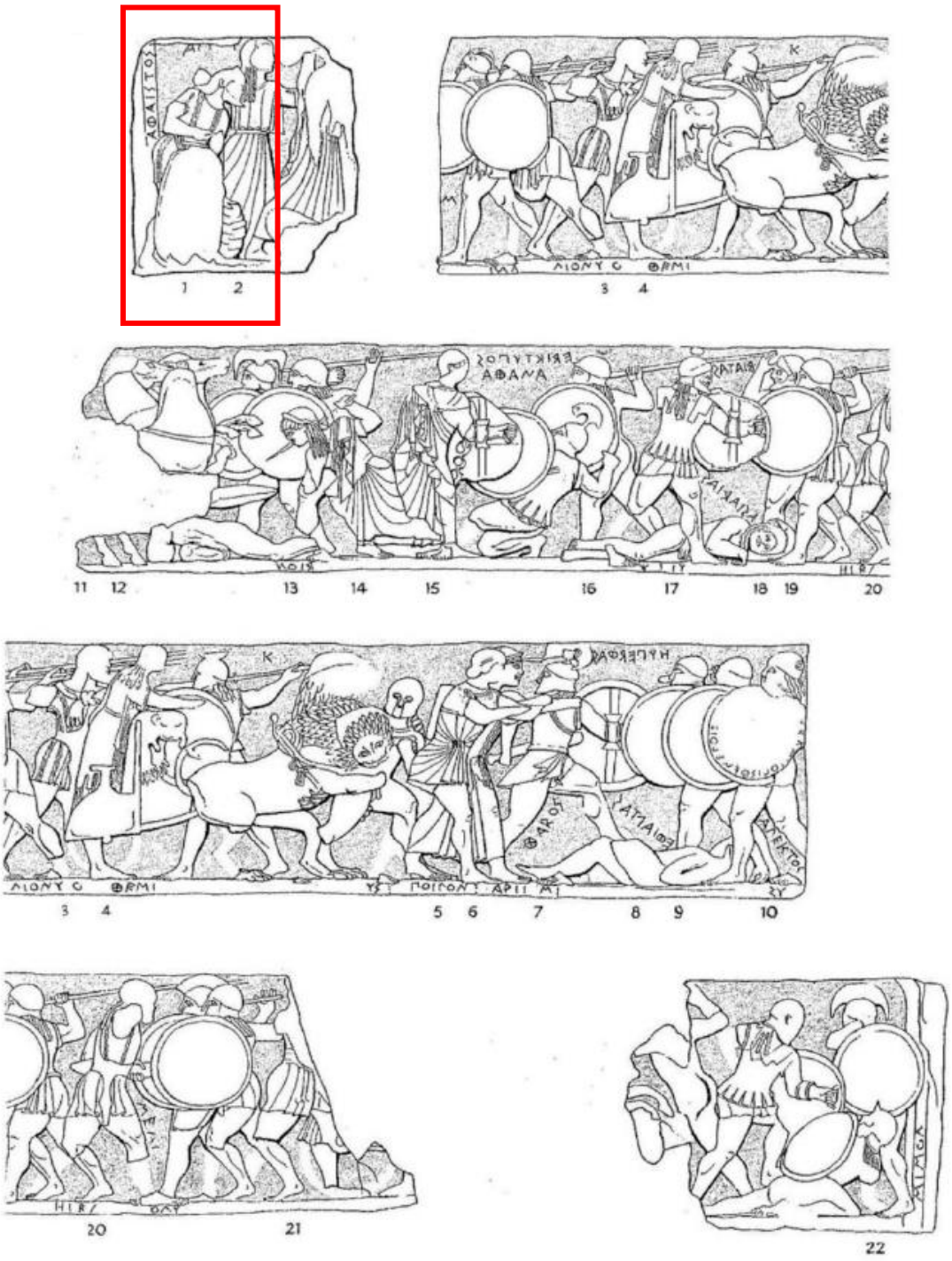
Coda

In this study, I have attempted to demonstrate that ancient Greeks did not automatically and universally reject the disabled from their ranks. Rather, they instituted formal and informal measures to facilitate their disabled community members' participation in the main of society. This likely (surely?) required a great deal of negotiation at the level of the individual – this is Martha Rose's "community concept (Edwards 1997) – but it is clear that there existed in ancient Greece a larger and abstract understanding of disability, one that allowed for society- and community-level accommodations to be implemented. I have not attempted to understand the individual, lived experience of disability, but instead to demonstrate that ancient Greeks did not see disability – it and of itself – as a reason for exclusion.

This study has relied heavily on the insights of Disability Studies, which has demonstrated that disability is contingent, intersectional, unstable and, most importantly, that it requires critical analysis. It is not possible to assume the position that disability will have in any society or culture, regardless of how familiar it feels. I have tried to demonstrate that disability was omnipresent in Greek society – it appears in every literary genre and artistic medium, in

every community – and hope that the foregoing discussion about disability will result in greater representation of disability in Classics scholarship and teaching.

Figure 5. 1



Gigantomachy on the Siphnian Treasury, Delphi, ca. 530 BCE. Hephaistos, labeled “1”, stands at his bellows.

After Boardman (1991:Fig. 212.1).

Figure 5. 2

Detail of the Ionic frieze of the Parthenon, showing Athena and Hephaistos. 437-432 BCE. London, British Museum 1816,0610.19.

Photo from the British Museum, London.

Figure 5. 3

Detail of the Return of Hephaistos scene from the François vase, an Attic black figure volute krater, signed by Kleitias (painter) and Ergotimos (potter), ca. 570 BCE.
Florence 4209.

Photo by author.

Figure 5. 4

Hydria from the Etruscan city of Caere (central Italy), ca. 525 BCE, showing the Return of Hephaistos.
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Antikensammlung IV 3577.

Photo from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Antikensammlung.

Figure 5. 5

Corinthian black figure amphoriskos, ca. 590-570 BCE, showing Hephaistos riding on a horse. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 664.

Photo from Brennan (2016:Fig. 7).

Figure 5. 6

Attic black figure psykter, attributed to the Antimenes Painter, ca. 520 BCE, showing the Return of Hephaistos.
Paris, Louvre F321.

Photo from Brennan (2016:Fig. 2).

Figure 5. 7

Attic black figure tripod kothon, attributed to the C Painter, ca. 570 BCE, showing the Birth of Athena.
Paris, Louvre CA 616.

© 1988 RMN, Musée du Louvre / Pierre et Maurice Chuzeville.

Figure 5. 8

Tondo of an Attic red figure kylix, attributed to the Foundry Painter, ca. 480 BCE, showing Hephaistos presenting arms to Thetis.
Berlin, Antikensammlung F 2294.

Photo by Maria Daniels, courtesy of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz: Antikensammlung.

Figure 5. 9

Attic red figure amphora, attributed to the Druit Painter, ca. 480 BCE, showing Hephaistos presenting arms to Thetis.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 13.188.

Photo from Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 5. 10

Etruscan carnelian scarab, attributed to the Master of the Boston Dionysos, late 6th century BCE, showing Hephaistos (or Sethlans, the Etruscan god assimilated with Hephaistos), at center, presenting armor to the hero Achilles.
Malibu, Getty 81.AN.76.121.

Photo by the Getty Villa.

Figure 5. 11

Attic red figure kylix, in the manner of the Altamura Painter, mid-5th century BCE, showing Hephaistos riding side-saddle on a mule.
Oxford (MS), University of Mississippi 1977.3.89.

Photo by the University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS.

Figure 5. 12

Tondo of an Attic red figure kylix, ca. 500 BCE, showing Hephaistos riding on a winged, wheeled cart.
Florence, Archaeological Museum 81600.

Photo by the Beazley Archive Pottery Database.

Figure 5. 13

Detail of an Attic red-figure calyx-krater showing the birth of Erichthonios. Ca. 400 BCE. Richmond, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts 81.70.

Photo by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA.

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