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DEPICTING WOMEN AT THE FOUNTAIN HOUSE

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NICOLE RENEE BAHL

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of the requirements for the

M.A. degree in Art History

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**AN INVESTIGATION OF BLACK-FIGURE GREEK POTTERY DEPICTING
WOMEN AT THE FOUNTAIN HOUSE**

By

Nicole Renee Bahl

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF BLACK-FIGURE GREEK POTTERY DEPICTING WOMEN AT THE FOUNTAIN HOUSE

By

Nicole Renee Bahl

Under the Peisistratid tyranny, ancient Athens witnessed the construction of numerous water systems. Vase painters, influenced by these new building projects, created numerous black-figure vessels depicting fountain houses. Although all Athenians were impacted by the improved water supply, women were the most affected for they were responsible for gathering water use within the home and in ritual and cult. Accordingly, most fountain house scenes depict women.

This thesis investigates the status of the women presented on images with fountains. It is my contention that the women are citizens, rather than slaves or metics as is often believed. I draw upon evidence from archaeology, iconography, literature, and history to support this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

In the sixth century b.c.e., there was a proliferation of vases that show, almost exclusively, groups of women obtaining water at a fountain house. The inclusion of architecture and scenes of everyday life in Athens is a shift in the last quarter of the sixth century from the previous pottery that tended to focus on mythological themes.¹ The reason for the abundance of images at the fountain house seems to reside in the historical building record of Athens at the time they gained in popularity. During this period, Athens witnessed the construction of many fountain houses throughout the area, as well as changes to previous systems. The production of these vessels peaked in the last quarter of the sixth century. This coincides with hydraulic building projects throughout Athens under the Peisistratid tyranny, including the famed Enneakrounos. The improvement in the water supply to Athens was one of the most dramatic changes in everyday life and demonstrated the government's move to provide public services, which was met with excitement by Athenian citizens, including vase painters who created images to celebrate this.²

Hydriai and lekythoi comprise the majority of vessels decorated with images of women at the fountain house. The hydria, a large-bellied vase with three handles that could weigh sixty pounds when filled, would have been used to fetch the water. The lekythos consisted of a tall cylindrical body with a single vertical handle. Most often it was used to hold perfumes and oils, but the shape was also popular for holding libations

¹ John Griffiths Pedley, "Reflections of Architecture in Sixth-Century Attic Vase-Painting," in *Papers on the Amasis Painter and His World* (Malibu: The John Paul Getty Museum, 1987), p. 72.

² Pedley, p. 77.

to be poured for the dead. When used for a funerary context, the images often depicted a mourning figure.

Vase painters varied in their treatment of the theme of women at the fountain house. The artists relied upon two primary formats for depicting the fountain house's architecture. The first involves placing the fountain house to the far right or left of the composition. Most often a waterspout is shown in profile dispensing water into a hydria that a woman has placed upon on a block underneath. Doric or Ionic columns support the roof that covers the waterspout, which may or may not cover the woman filling her hydria.³ Another stylistic technique used when placing the fountain house to the edge of the composition depicts the spout in a frontal view.⁴

A second technique for indicating the fountain house places the women inside the building.⁵ In this treatment, spouts (usually three) run along the back wall and a spout is shown in profile on each side wall. The building's front is flanked by a colonnade which provides the artist the opportunity to show depth through the use of overlapping. The colonnade is often comprised of Doric columns, although Ionic columns are not unknown.⁶

There are two more ways the artist depicts the fountain house although they are both quite rare. Both place the fountain house in the center of the picture plane. The first treatment places a wall in the center of the composition essentially dividing it into halves.⁷ On each side of the wall are two inset columns behind which is a spout shown in

³ Compare Figure 9 and Figure 13.

⁴ See Figures 14 and 15.

⁵ Figures 1, 6, and 12.

⁶ See Figure 6 for Ionic columns.

⁷ Figure 11.

profile. This technique is unusual, in part, because it does not seem to reflect the architecture of any fountain houses found in the Greek world. Another infrequent depiction places a single spout in the center of the scene.⁸ A pedimented roof with metopes that is supported by two columns covers the spout but not the women.

Not only does the technique for designating the space of the fountain house vary, but the architectural details also vary between vases. In all depictions, columns are present indicating a roofed structure, although the roof may or may not be visible. The roof covering the spout or spouts may be either flat or gabled (indicating a pediment). When the fountain house is set to the edge of the picture, metopes may or may not be included.⁹ In contrast, when the fountain house is located across the picture plane, metopes are shown, less frequently topped by a pediment.¹⁰ In addition to the variation in the roof and metopes the waterspouts often vary. The most popular type of waterspout is a lion-head, especially when the spout is shown in profile. Lion-headed spouts comprise the majority of actual spouts found in archaeological remains. Two more popular animals found on the vases are mules and panthers. These are less known in the archaeological record, but not unlikely. A third type of spout seems to have no precedence in the archaeological record—horsemen spouts. It has been suggested that this is a type of joke played by the vase painters in an attempt to add humor to the images. It is unclear if there is a more meaningful explanation.

Another variation in vessels showing fountain houses is the decoration of the space. A number of vases survive that show the fountain house bedecked with ivy and

⁸ Figure 2

⁹ Figure 10 depicts a flat roof, while that of Figure 9 is gabled.

¹⁰ Figure 6 includes a pediment.

garlands. Sometimes, women carry wreaths to place over the waterspouts. These images convey a sense of festivity or celebration to the viewer. One surviving hydria decorated with ivy survives that includes the deities Hermes and Dionysos, whose presence provides the context under which one should view the vessel.¹¹

Throughout the depictions of fountain houses in the Archaic period, the frequenters are women. They generally wear the clothing of the upper-class woman, a patterned himation. Their long hair is often pulled back into a bun that falls at the nape of the neck, although occasionally it hangs down. Some vases show both hairstyles in the same image.¹² There may be as few as three women at the fountain house, although usually there are at least five, sometimes as many as eight. The women always have a hydria or jug to fill, sometimes they have placed it under a spout to fill while other times they carry it in their hand or atop their head.

Although the number of vessels depicting women at the fountain house rose dramatically during the time of the Peisistratids' building projects, the theme was not particularly new. Women utilized water in a variety of rituals, and this use is attested to in the visual imagery. As early as the Geometric period, women were identifiable on funerary vessels because they carried hydriai representing the rites performed for the deceased. The ritual obtainment and use of water is also attested to on vessels related to marriage rites. One of the most important days of a woman's life was her wedding, and one of the most frequently referenced rituals associated with the wedding was the prenuptial bath. Water also played a significant role in the cults of Hera, Demeter, and Artemis. In most of the religious rites involving water, women were the main

¹¹ Figure 6.

¹² See Figure 15.

participants and the dedications they left signified the use of water in religious activities. These ritual uses of water by women reflected the role of women within the home as they were the ones responsible for getting water for daily use including drinking, washing, and rinsing.

However, scholarship concerning the status of the women depicted at the fountain house is divided. Many authors believe that within Athens, citizen women were secluded in the home, therefore the women depicted cannot be citizens, but must instead represent slaves, hetairae, or metics. Others believe that the figures may indeed be citizen women fetching water for use within the home.¹³ In this study I intend to demonstrate the women depicted are indeed citizens. The primary beneficiaries of the new water supply were the common people of Greece. The visual evidence showing women using water in ritual dating at least as far back as the eighth century b.c.e. and the continuing use of water in ritual and cult in the last quarter of the sixth century b.c.e. provide an iconographic association of women and water. This association of women with water reflects their traditional roles within the home as procurers of water, and the ancient viewer would not think of a woman getting water as a slave. Instead, she represents virtuousness. Additionally, the appearance and dress of the women on the vessels created around 520 suggests the women are not slaves but rather, must be citizens, as Herodotus's account also proves. Finally, the notion of complete seclusion of the female, especially during the Archaic period, represented an Attic ideal that most citizens were unable to attain in reality. All of these factors suggest that the women are indeed respectable wives and

¹³ Those who specifically address these images and believe they are citizens include: John Boardman, Lauren Hackworth Petersen, and Claude Bérard. Those who believe they are not citizens: Sian Lewis, Dyfri Williams, and Sarah Pomeroy. A third group does not comment because of the inconsistency. This includes: Ivonne Manfrini-Aragno

daughters. In ancient Greece, these vessels and their imagery were accessible to almost everyone; they would have been seen in the home, the symposium, and outside the home, for ritual use or fetching water¹⁴ (although none of the hydriai used in scenes of the fountain house is decorated¹⁵). And these vases are primarily the concern of women, seemingly created for them, appealing to women's taste and reflecting their reality and some of their important roles in society.

¹⁴ Lauren Hackworth Petersen, "Divided Consciousness and Female Companionship: Reconstructing Female Subjectivity on Greek Vases," *Arethusa* 30.1 (1997), p. 50.

¹⁵ This is common throughout vases on which the vase's shape is repeated in the decoration. For example, symposiasts playing kottabos on kylixes play with an undecorated kylix. As well, loutrophoroi often depict a loutrophoros that is undecorated. It may be that the vase shape itself was sufficient to convey the artist's idea and the added decoration was therefore unnecessary. Or it may be that the vase a figure carries was too small to allow for adequate decoration.

CHAPTER 1

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ATHENIAN WATER SUPPLY

UNDER THE PEISISTRATID TYRANNY

In ancient Greece, it was important to supply the populace with clean, drinkable water for survival and prosperity. This helps explain why early Greek cities usually developed at the foot of a calcareous massif. The massif provided two essential elements: an acropolis that could be defended, and a source of water at its base.¹⁶ Because Greece receives little rainfall, an adequate supply of water remained essential throughout its cities. In fact, Pausanias recounts that Panopeus in Phocis could not be designated a *polis* because it had, "no government offices or gymnasium, no theatre or agora or water flowing down to a fountain."¹⁷ Thus, for an area to be deemed a true city, the supply of water was crucial.

Athens itself was moderately well watered with three rivers passing through the landscape: the Kephissos, Eridanos, and the Ilissos. The Kephissos was the northernmost river, but it seems to have played little role in the water supply of Athens, unlike the Eridanos and the Ilissos. The Eridanos was an early water source for the Athenians, although later the stream became contaminated, and only the spring remained in use. The Ilissos lay just outside the city walls, and its springs provided much water for Athens. Its

¹⁶ Alfred Burns. "Ancient Greek Water Supply and City Planning: A Study of Syracuse and Acragas," *Technology and Culture* 15.3 (July, 1974), p. 409.

¹⁷ Paus. x.4.1

shady banks were described as some of the most idyllic spots of ancient Athens.¹⁸ The Acropolis's rock also provided many sources of natural springs. The western half of the base of the citadel rock has been exposed and contains no less than four separate sources for water.¹⁹

Public and private wells were a traditional source of water for the Athenian population. In the area around the Athenian agora there are at least sixty-two wells which supplied Archaic Athens with some of its water. Many of these were found in private houses that had their own wells or cisterns to collect the rainwater. These private sources of water were of questionable purity for drinking.²⁰ Instead, well and cistern water was used washing and rinsing.²¹ In the Archaic period, Solon provided some of the earliest surviving legislation concerning the water supply of Athens, in which he refers to wells. Plutarch tells of Solon's restrictions placed on private citizens concerning the digging of wells:

Since the country has but few rivers, lakes, or large springs, and many used wells which they had dug, there was a law made, that, where there was a public well within a hippicon, that is, four stades, all should draw at that; but when it was further off, they should try and procure a well of their own; and if they had dug ten fathoms deep and could find no water, they had liberty to fetch a hydria of six choes twice a day from their neighbor's for he [Solon] thought it prudent to make provision against want, but not supply laziness.²²

The restrictions placed on citizens digging wells and the limited number of fountains may reflect concern over the conservation of this important resource.²³ Early in the sixth

¹⁸ John M. Camp, *Water Supply of Ancient Athens*. (Phd. Dissertation Princeton University, 1979), p. 20.; Plato *Phaedros*, 230.

¹⁹ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 20.

²⁰ R. E. Wycherly, *How the Greeks Built Cities* (New York, London: W W Norton and Company, 1976), p. 200.

²¹ Aristotle, *Pol.* 7 1330b15-17. Bell cites Aristotle for proof of this statement; however, Lang disagrees believing well water would be drunk, while concurring cistern water would only be used for washing.

²² Plutarch *Solon* 23.6

²³ Burns, p. 410.

century, there were limited fountains to provide the populace water, but eventually fountains became a more common source of water for the population of Athens than wells.

Public water sources were such an important element in a city that they could dictate the city's plan. In Morgantina, residential areas were based upon a rectangular grid, the placement of which appears to have been selected based upon the location of water sources such as springs.²⁴ The rest of the city then developed around this natural civic center. The location of a city's agora, which included the central public and religious buildings, was determined in relationship to the vicinity of the water supply, including the fountain house.²⁵ In Morgantina, the spring feeding an excavated fountain house was likely the underlying factor for choosing the siting of the agora.²⁶ The effort that went into securing this space for the procurement of water suggests that one of the recognized functions of the agora was providing the citizenry with water. Water sources in an agora would be found throughout Greece, including Corinth, Athens, Priene, Olynthos, Magnesia on the Maeander, also provide a water source in the agora.²⁷ Most excavated fountain houses have been found in the busiest areas of a city: near the agora, at the gateways to the city, within temple precincts, or along the main streets that connect the gates with the agora and the acropolis of a Greek city.²⁸ For instance, fountains on the

²⁴ Dora P. Crouch, "The Hellenistic Water System of Morgantina, Sicily: Contributions to the History of Urbanization," *American Journal of Archaeology* 88 (1984), p. 355.

²⁵ Burns, p. 409

²⁶ Malcolm Bell, "Excavations at Morgantina, 1980-1985 Preliminary Report XII," *American Journal of Archaeology* 92 (1988), p. 337.

²⁷ Bell, p. 337; John M. Camp, *Athenian Agora. Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), pp. 42-43.

²⁸ Dora P. Crouch, *Water Management in Ancient Greek Cities* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 284.

street in Morgantina are found at the northwest corner of the agora, along the northern wall of the theater, and in the southwest corner of the agora.²⁹

The sixth century was a time of growth and prosperity for Athens. Under the tyrants, parts of the city were newly built and others rebuilt. This period marked the beginning of city planning, development of architectural styles, and major civil engineering feats – including jetties and harbors, drainage and water systems, enlargement of market areas, and the construction of many buildings.³⁰ The Archaic period in Greece demonstrates the importance that was beginning to be placed on a steady water supply, as water supplies were improving throughout the Greek world including: Samos, Akragas and Syracuse in Sicily, Megara, and Corinth.³¹ Athens was no exception. In Athens, water sources were protected from exposure to open air because of the ancient Greeks' belief that wind and water spread epidemics.³² To combat this concern, water traveled through underground tunnels to the ancient city where it ended at a public water source. This kept the water cooler as well as more palatable. The Peisistratid tyranny provided Athens with her first major public fountain house and an elaborate aqueduct system to supply it.³³ The fountain house was a public building to which the sixth century tyrants in Athens and other Greek cities paid particular attention. The fountain houses undoubtedly demonstrate an improvement in the water supply of Athens. For the people living in the city, it would be much more convenient to fill a jar

²⁹ Crouch, *Hellenistic Water*, p. 355 see note 17.

³⁰ Burns, p. 406.

³¹ Camp, *Water Supply* p. 63.

³² Burns, p. 405. See Hippokrates *Airs, Waters and Places*; Aristotle *Pol.* 7 1330a-1330b 11-14.

³³ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 21.

under a spout or dip it into a reservoir than to draw it up ten meters from a well, which could more easily be contaminated or face the threat of a drop in the water table.³⁴

Available water and the space in which it was contained could be used for propaganda. The black-figure vases of women at the fountain houses may be a demonstration of the tyranny's use of these structures as political propaganda, influencing their popularity as a subject. London Hydria B 331 indicates the vessels may reflect the political associations with the fountain houses. The hydria is inscribed with a "kalos" name directed at Hippokrates who was part of the family of tyrants.³⁵ This suggests that the Peisistratid tyranny may have been successful at using the fountain houses as tools of political propaganda, since vessels created around the time of their completion flatter the ruling family. Undoubtedly, the fountain houses built under the Peisistratids were the result of need, but they were also installed for political reasons. Like most large public works projects, the water systems provided employment and benefited the common people who constituted the political strength of the first tyrants.³⁶ Many tyrannies throughout Greece, including Polykrates at Samos and Theagenes at Megara, featured large hydraulic projects for similar reasons. However, it was the Peisistratids' Enneakrounos fountain house that is most mentioned in antiquity, being referred to in several ancient sources.³⁷

³⁴ Camp, *Athenian Agora*, p. 43.

³⁵ Eleni Manakidou, "Athenerinnen in schwarzfigurigen Brunnenhausszenen," *Hephaistos* 16/17 (1998/99), p. 66.

³⁶ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 21.

³⁷ Alkiphron, *Epist.* III, 49 (13), 1 and 51 (15), 1; Herodotos VI 137.3; Isokrates XV (*Antidosis*), 287; Pausanias, I.14.1; Plato *Axiochos* 364a, b, d; Pliny *Natural History* IV.24 and XXXI.50; Thucydides II.15.4-5; See Camp's *Water Supply* Testimonia 16-41 for a more complete listing.

Around the same time as the Enneakrounos's completion (c. 520 b.c.e.), images of women at the fountain house rise dramatically in their popularity as an Attic vase painting subject. Fountain houses quickly became a popular source of imagery for Archaic vase painters concerned with depicting contemporary Athenian life. These fountain houses not only demonstrated an improvement in life, but also became a site of social interaction as groups of women would congregate there to obtain water. The Priam Painter's vessels demonstrate the celebration of the improvement in the water supply, and he depicts the frequenters of these new public water sources.

On hydriai, such those depicted on Figures 1 and 2, the women congregate at the fountain house, which is an important element in the composition. On the Boston hydria, water pours from five animal-headed spouts spread out across the picture plane. On the left is a lion-headed spout, on the right a mule-headed spout, and the three along the back wall are panther heads. The space is divided by Doric columns, which provide depth and overlapping. In this scene, the architecture of the space shares the composition with the women who frequent it. On the Toledo hydria, the covered panther-headed spout is flanked by Doric columns is in the center of the composition. The six women are balanced to the left and right with three on each side so that the central focus is on the waterspout and its architectural forms. The architecture of the fountain house appears considerably smaller than that of the Boston hydria with its five spouts. The Toledo hydria has just a single covered spout leaving the women who visit without an overhead roof.

Because vases of women at the fountain house peaked in the years around the Enneakrounos's completion, archaeologists have attempted to utilize painted vases in

conjunction with archaeological evidence to reconstruct the Enneakrounos. However, which site, if any thus far found, is the actual Enneakrounos discussed by ancient writers such as Thucydides and Pausanias remains unknown. The reconstruction of the Enneakrounos is complicated because several other hydraulic installations were built in Athens during the same period. It appears a spring named Kallirhoe was “embellished” and then called the Enneakrounos during the Peisistratid tyranny. Some ancient authors place the Enneakrounos near the Ilissos stream southeast of the city, other sources place it within the city center. Still others have suggested that the name Enneakrounos did not refer to a single fountain house, but to a water-supply system found throughout the city. However, source citations suggest that the Enneakrounos was a single fountain house. Herodotus and Kratinos, the fifth-century comic poet, situate the Enneakrounos south of the city.³⁸ E. J. Owens cites other written evidence for locating the Enneakrounos south of the city, but Pausanias sets the Enneakrounos inside the Agora.³⁹ Pausanias’s account describes its location thus:

When you have entered the Odeion at Athens you meet, among other objects, a statue of Dionysos, worth seeing. Nearby is a fountain, which they call Enneakrounos, for thus they arranged it under Peisistratos. There are wells all over the city, but this is the only source. Above the fountain there are temples of Demeter and Kore ...

The Odeion Pausanias discusses must surely be that which dominates the agora square, and the Eleusinion has been associated with the temples of Demeter and Kore about which he writes.⁴⁰ Their sanctuary is found just east of the Panathenaic Way where it climbs the lower slopes of the Acropolis. In his discussion of the monuments of the

³⁸ E. J. Owens, "The Enneakrounos Fountain-House," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 87 (1983), p. 223.

³⁹ Paus. I.14.1

⁴⁰ Camp, *Water Supply*, pp. 90-92.

Agora, Pausanias places it between the Odeion and the Eleusinion. Since the discovery of an appropriately datable fountain house in the southeast corner of the Agora, known as the Southeast Fountain House, Pausanias's suggestion has become stronger.⁴¹ Isokrates and Alkiphron also imply the fountain house was found within the center of the city.⁴² Alkiphron says the Enneakrounos was situated in the Kerameikos district, thus including the Agora.

However, the account of Thucydides confuses the picture. Thucydides gives the most detailed account of the fountain house and refers to its former name, situating it south of the Acropolis:

Before this the city consisted of the present citadel and the district beneath it looking rather towards the south. This is shown by the fact that the temples of the other deities, besides that of Athena, are in the citadel; and even those that are outside it are mostly situated in this quarter of the city, as that of the Olympian Zeus, of the Pythian Apollo, of Earth, and of Dionysus in the Marshes, the same in whose honor the older Dionysia are to this day celebrated in the month of Anthesterion not only by the Athenians but also by their Ionian descendants. There are also other ancient temples in this quarter. The fountain too, which, since the alteration made by the tyrants, has been called Enneakrounos, or Nine Pipes, but which, when the spring was open, went by the name of Kallirhoe, or Fairwater, was in those days, from being so near, used for the most important offices. Indeed, the old fashion of using the water before marriage and for other sacred purposes is still kept up.⁴³

Thucydides describes the Enneakrounos as one of the other monuments south of the Acropolis. In his account, the fountain was so-named the Enneakrounos only when the Peisistratids fashioned it with nine spouts. Previously, it was known as Kallirhoe.⁴⁴ Pliny draws a similar parallel with the Enneakrounos as Kallirhoe.⁴⁵ Plato places the Kallirhoe

⁴¹ Owens, p. 224.

⁴² Alkiphron, *Epist.* III, 51 (15), 1; Isokrates, XV *Antidosis*, 287.

⁴³ Thucydides, II.15.3-5.

⁴⁴ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 92.

⁴⁵ Pliny. *Natural History*, IV, 24.

along the banks of the Ilissos River suggesting the Thucydidean Enneakrounos is located at the spring of Kallirhoe, south of the Acropolis near the bed of the Ilissos. If Thucydides' observation is accurate, the Southeast Fountain House is not the Enneakrounos. Hence the fountain called Enneakrounos by Pausanias and Thucydides cannot be the same building.⁴⁶ Thucydides is usually a careful and accurate witness, and he wrote within one century of the construction of the building. Thus, he should know its location. Also, Thucydides is supported by other ancient sources, including Herodotus and Kratinos.⁴⁷ In addition, the implication in the sources of an abundant supply of water better suits the Ilissos area. But, despite extensive excavations near the Olympieion and the Ilissos, a suitable building has not been found. However, abundant springs flowed into the bed of the river until recent times. Owens believes it is possible Thucydides was correct and the original Enneakrounos was situated southeast of the city in the vicinity of the Ilissos, but the building had been destroyed by the late fifth century, and by the middle of the fourth century b.c.e., its name had been transferred to another Peisistratid fountain house in the city center. As a result, by the time Pausanias visited Athens, the original site of the fountain house had been forgotten.⁴⁸

Using Pausanias's account, the Southeast Fountain House of the Agora seems a likely candidate for the Enneakrounos. The Southeast Fountain House lies on the right of the Panathenaic Way as one climbs from the Odeion to the Eleusinion. It is located just west of the Panathenaic Way and just east of South Stoa I. It contains the earliest pipeline found in the Athenian Agora lying beneath the primary east-west road of the

⁴⁶ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 92.

⁴⁷ Owens, p. 224.

⁴⁸ Owens, p. 225.

square and dating to the last part of the sixth century b.c.e., during the Peisistratid tyranny.⁴⁹ It is difficult to recover the original Archaic structure because it has been altered and remodeled, as well as quarried for building materials from the fourth to eleventh centuries. However, enough remains to establish securely its function as a source of water. Here, a narrow trench was dug in the earth and the pipes were laid from east to west. Several private houses were destroyed to create the 6.8 by 18.2-meter rectangular fountain house that included a large central chamber and smaller ones at either end.⁵⁰ The central area, which is 4.9 by 9.2 meters, is largely destroyed. Nothing of the original floor or wall remains, but the shallow beddings for the north and south walls provide indications of the original plan.⁵¹ If the basins were not symmetrically arranged, it is possible that the nine spouts were not symmetrical, which makes Pausanias's account accord with the Southeast Fountain House.⁵²

The chambers at each end provide more clues to the original structure, especially the waterproofing and drainage, which prove the space was used for water basins. Each of the basins measures 3.2 by 5 meters, and they are similar, with the exception of the floor level of the western basin, which is one step lower than that of the eastern basin. From the drainage and waterproofing, it is certain that water was supplied to the two areas at each end of the large central area. The foundations suggest the western basin

⁴⁹ Mabel L. Lang, *Waterworks in the Athenian Agora. Agora Picture Book No. 11* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), np.; The dating of the Southeast Fountain House to the Archaic period is based upon the use of the hard grayish limestone, the Z clamp, and the polygonal jointing of the construction, which are similar to the Old Athena temple on the Acropolis and the early temple of Dionysos below the theater, dating the building to the second half of the sixth century B.C.E.; Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 85.

⁵⁰ Camp, *Athenian Agora*, p. 42.

⁵¹ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 74.

⁵² Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 91.

functioned as a tank from which water could be drawn over a parapet, while the eastern chamber was entered and a woman would fill her hydria by holding it under the spout.⁵³

The building was a long rectangle in plan with its entry from the north. At either end was a shallow basin ... Water was delivered to a point in the middle of the back wall by a terra-cotta pipeline ... the water was conveyed in channels in the thickness of the wall to supply a series of spouts, doubtless in the shape of animal heads. The overflow was carried off in an underground terra-cotta pipeline in a northeast direction to be used elsewhere.⁵⁴

This is the best-documented fountain to have a natural flow being supplemented by water from elsewhere, and a natural basin articulated by formal architecture.⁵⁵ H. A.

Thompson's *The Athenian Agora* continues:

Deep exploration around the archaic fountain house has shown, moreover, that the ground water is close to the surface of this area at all seasons, so that there may well have existed in early times a simple freeflowing spring destined to be replaced, as the needs of the community grew, by a capacious fountain house fed by a pipeline from some distant source.⁵⁶

Despite the excavations at the site, several aspects of the restoration of the Southeast Fountain House remain unknown, in particular, the upper part of the building's architecture.⁵⁷ Because the Southeast Fountain House is often believed to be the Enneakrounos, attempts have been made to reconstruct the fountain house based upon reproductions found on painted pottery. The archaeological remains suggest that a step course across the front of the building on the north side existed, which would include a columnar façade. Columnar façades are consistent with the images found on Attic black-figure hydriai that are dated to the same period. Almost all of these hydriai show

⁵³ Camp, *Athenian Agora* p. 42.

⁵⁴ H. A. Thompson, *The Athenian Agora: A Guide to the Excavation and Museum*. Third edition. Athens, 1976.p. 97.

⁵⁵ Crouch, *Water Management*, p. 295.

⁵⁶ Thompson, p. 97.

⁵⁷ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 76.

columned buildings, but the images are not consistent to help describe a particular fountain house.⁵⁸ The columns found on the hydriai are both Doric and Ionic, some include a pediment, others do not. This demonstrates the impossibility of reconstructing beyond a speculative judgment the actual fountain houses of Athens based upon representations created by vase painters. The architecture of the Southeast Fountain House's interior space also remains unresolved. And again, the vase paintings vary widely in this respect. It remains unclear whether one stood in the lobby and drew water over a parapet, or whether one entered the basin area and drew water directly from spouts in the well. However, it may be that the two basins of the fountain houses varied in this respect.⁵⁹ This may provide an explanation for the arrangement of the nine spouts between two catch basins.⁶⁰

Instead of faithfully reproducing the Enneakrounos, the artists applied the elements consistent with the fountain houses to create an image that suggests these Attic structures without specific references to the actual building. Black-figure vases that feature fountains show the type where hydriai are filled under spouts, instead of dipped into the water; this is logical, as it would be difficult visually to depict the latter.⁶¹ If water was procured by dipping the vase, the water would not be visible, and the figure's actions would be illegible since the vase would be hidden. This is a likely reason the basin type of fountain is excluded from visual representations, as we know of basin types of fountains built during the rule of the tyrants,⁶² including the basins at the Southeast

⁵⁸ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 77.

⁵⁹ Camp, *Water Supply*, p. 77.

⁶⁰ Owens, p. 224, Thompson, pp. 32-3.

⁶¹ B. Dunkley, "Greek Fountain-Buildings Before 300 BC," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 36 (1935-1936), p. 153.

⁶² Dunkley, p. 153.

Fountain House. Similarly, vase painters use both lion-headed and mule-headed spouts in their reproductions. Both types of animal-head spouts were utilized during the period so their presence is accurate, but they are not consistently applied based upon the architecture depicted. The vase painters transmitted an idea of the architecture, not an actual picture of the space. What we have instead is an interpretation of the architecture, the space and those who visit.

D. Levi believes that the Enneakrounos built by the Peisistratids was not a single fountain house with nine spouts, but instead refers to nine separate fountain houses found throughout the city.⁶³ Instead of translating "krounos" as spout, he reads it as "source". He also cites a passage in Statius,⁶⁴ which he interprets as a reference to the Enneakrounos as a series of separate spaces. If he is correct, one can then assume that the different images on vase paintings are in celebration of the Enneakrounos system, and that is why they vary widely between images. However, only in Statius does it appear that we have a literary account for a system, and not a single, specific building. Because there is little evidence, Levi's interpretation of a system has lost favor. But, while the famed Enneakrounos may be only a single location, we do know of a variety of other water projects throughout Athens at the same time of its construction. This helps explain the widely varying architectural features in the fountain houses on vase paintings.

The increase of images of women at the fountain has been temporally connected with the increase in public fountains during this period, demonstrating the improvement in Athens as a result of the Peisistratids' building projects. The construction of the

⁶³ D. Levi, 'Enneakrounos', *Annuario*, 39/40, n.S. 1961-1962, pp. 149-171.

⁶⁴ Statius *Thebaid* XII, 629-633. It reads, "These tribes were sent by Salamis, those by Ceres' town Eleusis, to the savage combat, their plows hung up; they too were sent whom Kallirhoe encloses with water nine

fountain houses and aqueducts was one of the most celebrated achievements of the Peisistratid tyranny, and as such, the Southeast Fountain was pointed out to Pausanias (I.14.1) as the "famous" Enneakrounos built by the tyrants.⁶⁵ By building these famed fountain houses, the tyrants demonstrated themselves as champions of the people.⁶⁶ The scenes of women at the fountain house without any mythological connotations may have attempted to show the "common good" of the tyranny directed at the people, and the vessels may directly refer to the building of the Enneakrounos by the tyrants.⁶⁷

The vases depicting fountain houses are unlikely to represent only the Enneakrounos. Instead, they appear to represent the availability of water throughout the city afforded by the tyrants. The vase paintings correspond to our limited archaeological remains in various sites, and provide clues to the people who would frequent them, namely the women of Athens. The Athenian women were closely associated with water, and most benefited from the fountain houses found throughout Athens, and that is why they figure predominantly in images of fountain houses.

times wandering, and Elisos who, knowing of the rape of Orithyia, concealed the Getic love upon his banks.

⁶⁵ T. Leslie Shear Jr., "Tyrants and Buildings in Archaic Athens," in *Athens Comes of Age: from Solon to Salamis: papers of a symposium sponsored by the Archaeological Institute of America, Princeton Society, and the Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University*, (Princeton: Archaeological Institute of America, 1978), p. 11.

⁶⁶ Shear, p. 11.

⁶⁷ Pedley, p. 70.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN'S USE OF WATER IN RITUAL AND CULT

In ancient Greece, women played important roles in religion, funerals, marriages, birth, and the maintenance of the house, or *oikos*. Many of the functions involved in maintaining the home appear in religious and secular rituals, including cooking, the production of woven garments, and fetching water.⁶⁸ Religious activities that were important within the *polis* were often performed by women, and re-enforced their roles within the home. Religious and cult rites involving water provide an iconographic precedent for viewing black-figure vessels created in the last half of the sixth-century b.c.e. showing women at the fountain house.

Marriage was perhaps one of the most important events of a woman's life. A number of vessels survive that refer to the wedding and the importance of bearing children, and many of these focus on the role of women in the ceremonies and their experiences. Hydriai, especially those from the last half of the sixth century, comprise most of the surviving vases dealing with weddings. Vases dealing with weddings are believed to be decorated for women and represent their experience because weddings are such an important part of a young woman's life, and because the images themselves deal with rituals of the wedding ceremony that are their particular concern. One of the most important of these rituals centered upon water.

Both the bride and groom took nuptial baths before the wedding. Bathing before the wedding was made ceremonial. The water was drawn from a prescribed source

⁶⁸ Pierre Brulé. *La Fille d'Athènes* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1987), pp. 99-115.

according to local custom, either a river or spring. This explains why Klytemnestra brings bath water from home when Agamemnon summons Iphigeneia to Aulis for marriage.⁶⁹ Thucydides tells us (2.15.5) in Athens, on their wedding day, the bride and groom were given nuptial baths using water gathered at the Kallirhoe spring,⁷⁰ This source was used for other religious ceremonies as well. And some fountain house scenes name the spot "Kallirhoe." "The people in those days used to use this spring for all purposes since it was so close to them, and from this ancient habit of theirs is derived the custom of using it for ceremonies before marriage and in other religious ceremonies." The vessel that carried the sacred water came to be known as a loutrophoros; it is a tall vase with a high, funnel-shaped neck, a slender body and a flaring mouth. The literal translation of loutrophoros means "someone who carries the bathwater" - that someone was always a woman.⁷¹

Many rituals associated with weddings, especially the prenuptial bath, emphasized fertility, and attempted to ensure it in the new couple. The scholia to Euripides' *Phoenician Women* tells the purpose of the bridal bath, "Bridegrooms were accustomed in days of old to bathe in the local rivers and to sprinkle themselves symbolically with water from the rivers and springs, praying for fertility in this way, since water is life-giving and productive."⁷² Here, water is described as life-giving and productive; these qualities are most regarded in the Attic woman - her ability to provide the *oikos* with a suitable heir and supply the *polis* with another man. The goal of

⁶⁹ John H. Oakley and Rebecca H. Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 15.

⁷⁰ Oakley & Sinos, p. 15.

⁷¹ Rush Rehm, *Marriage to Death: The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 14

⁷² Oakley & Sinos, p. 15., scholia line 347.

marriage was the production of legitimate heirs; therefore, fertility was an important element for a successful marriage. In this way, water becomes an important element for a Greek woman to fulfill her roles in society, for if she was not fertile (the male is assumed to be so), her husband could divorce her for failing to produce a suitable heir. One thinks here of the Danaids in the underworld forced to fill continually a leaking pithos for the murder of their husbands. The water that leaks out symbolizes their rejection of marriage and therefore fertility.⁷³ Water, itself connected with fertility and marriage rituals, is part of their punishment, and represents that which they denied.

In Attic vessels showing marriage ceremonies, the bridal bath is a popular depiction. Most show the procession either going to or returning from the Kallirhoe, the fountain house where the Athenians gathered water for sacred occasions. This iconography is found as early as the Proto-Attic period, but is especially predominant in red-figure vases from the Classical period (see Figure 3). This loutrophoros shows the procession carrying bathwater from the fountain house. The artist has included a woman carrying a loutrophoros which holds the water. Behind her, the bride's mother carries the torch as part of the wedding procession. Scenes showing the bride's bath are far more common than those that show the bridegroom's (although they are not unknown).

Wedding scenes in the black-figure technique occur most often on amphorae and hydriai, both of which are used to hold liquids, the former wine, and the latter water suggesting both the nuptial bath and feasting. By the middle of the fifth century, wedding scenes were more popular on loutrophoroi and lebetes gamikoi, which often

⁷³ Giulia Sissa, *Greek Virginity* Trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 171.

depict rituals.⁷⁴ Loutrophoroi frequently represent the procession to draw water, with the figures themselves carrying a loutrophoros. This is a popular motif utilizing the "vessel on the vessel," whereby the vase itself reveals the occasion of its use.⁷⁵

The only context in which the loutrophoros was used was the marriage ceremony, and as a result the shape itself was used in dedications and for gifts surrounding the wedding day. Many loutrophoros fragments have been found in the sanctuary of Nymphe at the foot of the Athenian Acropolis where they may have been dedicated following the ritual bath. In other instances, brides are presented with a loutrophoros at their *epaulia*. The popularity of this ritual in the visual history of the Greeks demonstrates the important role women played in marriages. Similarly death was another area in which women were closely connected and played an important and public role in Attic society. In fact, marriage and death are inextricably linked in the Greek mentality with many of the rituals being similar. Rituals for both weddings and funerals often shared elements with each other, and both included the use of water.

Loutrophoroi were also given as grave offerings for women who died before marriage, which demonstrates the association the Attic Greeks made between weddings and deaths. To illustrate their use in funerary practice, these vessels often show a woman mourning who sometimes holds a loutrophoros. The grieving woman recalls the ritual bath before the laying out of the body, which is also the only "nuptial bath" the dead girl will ever take.⁷⁶ Unmarried men who died in battle were also dedicated loutrophoroi on

⁷⁴ Rehm, p. 30 see note 3; Robert Franklin Sutton, Jr. *The Interaction Between Men and Women Portrayed on Attic Red-Figure Pottery*. Phd. Dissertation; The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1981), pp. 164-215; Webster 1972, pp. 105-08.

⁷⁵ Rehm, pp. 30-31.

⁷⁶ Rehm, p. 31 see note 7.

occasion. The vases typically show a cavalry battle in front of a tomb with a frieze below showing a funeral procession. The iconography tells of the young man's death in battle, while the vase shape alludes to the married life he will never know.⁷⁷

The women were responsible for the fertility ritual prior to the marriage for both the bride and the bridegroom. The numerous representations of women holding loutrophoroi obtaining water clearly represent this ritual because the shape is associated solely with marriages, as well as funerals for one who dies unwed. The subject's popularity on vases, as well as the fact that the vessel is left at the grave for an unwed deceased, confirms that the ritual was one of the more important elements of the marriage ceremony.

The ritual bathing of a bride before her wedding was similar to the washing of a body in funerary ritual. In both weddings and funerals, women washed the body with sacred water. The women of the house washed the body of the deceased, although if death was imminent, as in the case of Socrates and Alcestis, the dying person may have done this himself or herself. As in weddings, the washing of the body prepared the dead for a rite of transition from one stage of life to the next. Euripides' *Supplikes* demonstrates that the activity of washing the dead is a role for women, as Theseus is "feminized" by his washing of the corpses of the recovered Argives.⁷⁸

The earliest figurative Greek art following the Dark Ages focused on funerary practices and women's use of water in ritual. Early Geometric vessels show women and men lamenting the dead. These early images involving death also make reference to the use of water by women in funerary rites. Late-Geometric vessels, including a kantharos

⁷⁷ Rehm, p. 31.

⁷⁸ Rehm, p. 27.

in Copenhagen (Figure 4), show women carrying water for the deceased in ritual lamentation.⁷⁹ The central composition shows a man being devoured by lions. This derives from Oriental images that used man-eating lions to symbolize the power of the gods. By the Greek Geometric Period, lions were *keres*, spirits who carried men to their graves.⁸⁰ The artist shows the death at the same time as the funerary games (left of the death scene) and at the same time as the funerary rituals (the right side). The juxtaposition of different time frames is typical of the Geometric artist.⁸¹ The youth to the right of the lions plays the lyre for the dancing, a ritual in the Cult of the Dead. While next to him, two women holding sprigs each carry a full hydria, which is assumed to be filled with water to be poured at the grave of the deceased. In comparison with other vessels, we know that the figures are female because of the activities in which they partake in other images. For example, in a sub-Geometric grave, a figurative vessel (Figure 5) was found on which a woman carries a hydria on her head while she beats her breast in a traditional gesture of mourning. The water she carries is part of the libations to be poured for the deceased in the rite of the *hydrophoria*, a regular feature in the cult of the dead.⁸² This is another ritual use of water by women in funerary practice.

Already in the Geometric Period, women are depicted in art with water. Geometric artists were concerned with creating scenes that were legible to viewers, so it seems likely that the women carrying hydriai were an important element of funerary practice during this time, and this would be a clear indication of the activities presented

⁷⁹ Bernhard Schweitzer, *Greek Geometric Art* trans. Peter and Cornelia Usborne (London: Phaidon, 1971), p. 188; Erika Diehl, *Die Hydria* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1964), p. 128.

⁸⁰ Schweitzer, p. 55.

⁸¹ Anthony Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists. Text and Picture in Early Greek Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 55-66.

⁸² Diehl, p. 130.

for the viewer. These early images are rare, but suggest an iconographic formula is present in which women are readily identifiable in funerary scenes because they carry a hydria. The use of water by women in ritual is not only limited to rites of transition, but is a common feature in cult practice as well.

The processions of women carrying water as part of the lamentation for the deceased gave rise to the festival of the Hydrophoria during the Anthesteria.⁸³ This took place on the third day of the festival when women collected water for the dead who had been killed in Deukalion's flood, and poured the water into the earth's crack where the water of that flood disappeared.⁸⁴ Pausanias⁸⁵ describes the chasm where honeycakes are given to the deceased, which would also be the place where girls with hydriai walked to pour in the water.⁸⁶ "In the sanctuary of the Olympian Earth there was a cleft in the ground where, it was said, the water from Deukalion's flood had flowed away; here the water which had been carried along was poured." The religious activity of the Hydrophoria featuring women pouring water for the dead mirrors their traditional activity in funerals, and provides a religious context for examining images of women carrying water on hydriai.

The relationship of women at the fountain house and the Hydrophoria for which they gather water is most evident on a hydria in London (Figure 6). This vase shows three well-dressed women, each holding a vessel to get water at a fountain house surrounded by ivy. A pediment supported by Ionic columns covers the fountain house.

⁸³ Diehl, p. 130.

⁸⁴ Erika Simon, *Festivals of Attica. An Archaeological Commentary* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), p. 99.; Ludwig Deubner *Attische Feste* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962), p. 113.; H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 117.

⁸⁵ 1.18.7

⁸⁶ Diehl, p. 130-34.

On each side a woman fills her hydria from a lion-headed spout flanked on one side by Dionysos and on the other by Hermes. This hydria corresponds to the Anthesteria when the first day focused on the opening of the new wine, which was the realm of Dionysos, and the last (third) day when the dead were on earth belonging to the realm of Hermes. It was on the third day that the women would pour water into the crack in the earth from Deukalion's flood. The water was important for this ritual, but also had a double meaning during the festival of the Anthesteria during which the new wine was opened and drunk, as water would again be necessary for mixing with the wine. The fountain house is bedecked with garlands, a popular motif found in vase painting to emphasize a festival, and this iconography occurs on other hydriai depicting women at a fountain house. The inclusion of sprigs, garlands, and elaborate clothing is used by vase painters to suggest that the scene has been elevated in importance beyond the common activity into something more important than the everyday.⁸⁷ The Anthesteria has been associated with this vase because it is a festival that includes both Dionysos and Hermes, as well as involving a ritual act using water.⁸⁸ The inclusion of the gods on London hydria B 332 makes clear that the scene involves religion and ritual, but even without their presence, we see the decoration of the fountain house indicating to us a sacred occasion, rather than the everyday activity of fetching water. This religious rite is not clearly alluded to on other vases, but this hydria provides visual evidence for women's use of water in cultic rites, as in funerary rites.

The earliest vases showing women carrying hydriai in cult date to near 540. In these scenes the focus is not on a fountain house, well, or the act of getting water.

⁸⁷ Sutton *Interaction*, p. 37.

⁸⁸ Diehl, p. 132.

Rather, the subject is the women who carry the water (Figures 7 and 8). On these hydriai, well-dressed women (indicated by the decorative details on their elaborate clothing) carry full vases on their head (indicated by the fact that the hydriai stand upwards, rather than on their side) in a processional queue. This procession is indicative of ritual activity, as seen on Geometric vessels.⁸⁹ Usually, processions on Attic pottery depict a marriage or funerary rite. Ritual is also evidenced through the attributes of the women in the images, such as dress and posture.⁹⁰ (Later figures will become more relaxed and converse). The Boston Hydria shows little interaction between the figures, as they all face the same direction with a full hydria. The orderly nature of the scene suggests that this is not a daily fetching of water, but something more solemn as they are carrying their water to a particular place. On both of these early vessels, the subject is the women carrying water, as the fountain is not shown on either vase.

The Cult of the Dead may be referenced on Munich hydria 1690 (Figure 9). Six women with hydriai are shown gathering water. An Ionic column supports a roof to cover the horse-headed spout where a woman fills her hydria. Behind her two women face each other, one carries a full hydria while the other who holds branches carries an empty hydria. Behind these two is a group of three women again with both full and empty hydriai and one woman carrying branches. The noticeably large branches recall the Geometric kantharos (Figure 4) with women holding branches carrying hydriai on their heads. These boughs featured in funeral practices. The Geometric kantharos and its funerary context is also recalled through the decoration below the main scene that shows two lions attacking a bull. If not funerary, the women may be obtaining water for use in a

⁸⁹ Diehl, p. 132.

⁹⁰ Manakidou p. 55.

sacrificial ceremony. Twigs were used to sprinkle water before acts of purification. The nature of the festivities is unknown, but the decoration of the fountain house suggest it is part of a ritual or festival, and the vase is created in recognition of this. This is one of the earliest images of ritual that includes the fountain house in the scene. Also, it is an early image that has women seeming to interact with each other in a more relaxed fashion. The iconographic precedent of women carrying water in a procession for ritual dating as far back as the Geometric Period and the inclusion of sprigs that elevate the scene provide the primary evidence that these scenes are not showing daily activity.

Erika Diehl and Eleni Manakidou believe the Antimenes Painter drew upon the traditional scenes of the Cult of the Dead on London hydria B 336 (Figure 10). Although given less space, the fountain house is again set to the left and features an Ionic column supporting the roof that covers a single lion-headed spout. However, in contrast to the Munich hydria (Figure 9) the woman filling her hydria is not covered by the roof. On the London hydria, well-dressed women flanked by nonsense inscriptions alternate directions and hydriai: one has a full hydria while the next is empty. The figures face each other with pronounced arm and hand gestures which Diehl and Manakidou believe indicates dancing or traditional movements.⁹¹ Erika Diehl believes the arm and hand gestures represent dancing that took place at the Cult of the Dead.⁹² However, given the lack of ritual references (such as branches) it appears that the Antimenes Painter has actually attempted to show interaction between the visitors to the newly created fountain house.

Many later (c. 510 b.c.e.) black-figure Archaic hydriai representing religious occasions pay greater detail to the architecture of the fountain house. This is made clear

⁹¹ Manakidou, p. 53-4.

⁹² Diehl, p. 130.

through the inclusion of garlands, wreaths, or twigs that decorate the fountain house. Paris hydria F 296 and London hydria B 329 (Figures 11 and 12 respectively) show women decorating a fountain house. The Paris hydria dedicates the central portion to the wall of the fountain house that appears to have inset Doric columns, although there is no indication of a roof, one assumes its presence is simply excluded from the representation. On the left wall is a mule-headed spout and on the right a lion-headed spout. Underneath each spout is a series of blocks on which two women each rest their hydria and upon which each places one foot. Behind each of the women filling her hydria are three more women with both full and empty hydriai. This Paris hydria is especially busy with eight elaborately dressed women at a fountain bedecked with ivy and garlands, as the woman just right of center appears to be carrying a wreath to decorate the lion-headed spout.

The London hydria (Figure 12) also shows a fountain house bedecked with vines with women decorating the spouts. This time the fountain house provides indication of the roof which is held up by four Doric columns. Four women are at the fountain house, although the scene has five hydriai supported on blocks. The left, right and center spouts are lion-headed. While the other two spouts on the back wall are rare—horsemen spouts. The right horseman spout is also being decorated with a wreath. A woman hangs a wreath around the lion-headed spout on the left. Through the decoration of the fountain house, the women make the source of the water sacred for use in religious ceremonies. The celebration on these vases decorated with garlands and wreaths may recall one of several Athenian festivals that involve the use of water by women.

The most important religious festivals included women, at times excluding males, such as the Thesmophoria, and many significant religious roles were held by women. At

religious events, it was acceptable for women of all social levels to venture outside of the home, especially if the religious activity emphasized their roles as childbearers.⁹³ In fact, women would leave the seclusion of their homes to visit religious shrines that could be quite far from their own home. Many of these experiences involve the ritual use of water, including the Eleusinian Mysteries, which was one of the most important religious ceremonies for the ancient Greek.

At the conclusion of the Eleusinian Mysteries, two vessels were filled, probably with water, and then overturned, one towards the west and one towards the east, while to the sky one cried "rain!" and to the earth "conceive!"—in Greek a play on words: *hye - kye*.⁹⁴ The same words were engraved on a fountain, illustrating the importance of the source of water used in ritual. Because crops required water to flourish, it reasons that it became associated with fertility. Women were responsible for many rituals that were concerned with the growth of crops because water was associated with fertility and life-giving, which was likened to a woman's own fertility.

Other festivals that featured women also attested to the likening of water with women, evidenced by the predominant use of water in these celebrations. During the Panathenaia, girls called *hydroporoi* would carry water in a hydria for use in sacrifice; this was a feature common in public sacrifice.⁹⁵ Also as part of the Panathenaia, women at the head of the Panathenaic procession carry hydriai and phialai for the water that would be used for libations to be poured for those who died in Marathon.⁹⁶ This

⁹³ Nancy Demand, *Birth, Death, and Motherhood in Classical Greece* (Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 24.

⁹⁴ Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* Trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 73.

⁹⁵ Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Trans. Peter Bing (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 137.

⁹⁶ Simon, p. 59.

obviously is not the activity depicted on these vases where the women carry jugs because the Battle of Marathon occurs much later. But the festival highlights the use of processions of women carrying hydriai for libations to the dead in a larger context, not just the Anthesteria, and it may have been a common feature across cult practice.

In the cults of Hera, Artemis, and Demeter, water was used in rituals associated with women.⁹⁷ This is particularly true in the case of Hera, who had a longstanding tradition of water in her rites (especially in Argos and on Samos—the centers of cult worship dedicated to her).⁹⁸ Charles Waldstein found hundreds of miniature hydria at Hera's sanctuaries during his excavations.⁹⁹ And near the temple to Hera at Argos, J. L. Caskey found approximately 900 such miniature hydriai dated from the seventh through the sixth centuries.¹⁰⁰ These miniature hydriai were dedicated to various female gods, but are most abundant in the cults of Artemis, Hera, and Demeter.¹⁰¹ Sanctuaries dedicated to Demeter have revealed a great number of miniature hydriai and terracotta figurines of women carrying hydriai. This reflects their role in the mystery cults of Demeter in which the ritual pouring out of water was associated with salvation.¹⁰² These miniature hydriai dedicated by women reflect the *hydrophoroi* festivals in which the Greek women partook.

⁹⁷ Susan Guettel Cole, "The Uses of Water in Greek Sanctuaries," *Early Greek Cult Practice. Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 26-29 June, 1986* Ed. Robin Hägg, Nanno Marinatos and Gullög C. Nordquist (1986), p. 161.

⁹⁸ Cole, p. 163.

⁹⁹ Charles Waldstein, *The Argive Heraeum I*, (Boston, 1902), p. 100 ff.

¹⁰⁰ J. L. Caskey and P. Amandry, "Investigations at the Heraion of Argos, 1949," *Hesperia* 21 (1952), p. 175 ff., 197 ff.

¹⁰¹ Cole, p. 164.

¹⁰² Christopher A. Faraone, "Salvation and Female Heroics in the Parodos of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* cxvii (1997), p. 51.

In cults that include the use of water, sanctuaries were often equipped with water sources. The water system at the Argive Heraion is believed to be for ritual use relating to the myth of Zeus and Hera's marriage, most specifically Hera's wedding bath, as it was said that girls brought baths to Hera.¹⁰³ And the miniature hydriai found at the sanctuary may have been associated with this ritual acting out of Hera's bridal bath. Demeter also had provisions for water in her sanctuaries where it appears that hydriai and *hydrophoroi* were popular dedications to her, suggesting an association with the need of water for agriculture, which was possible because of her, again emphasizing fertility made possible via water.¹⁰⁴ Similarly hydriai have been found dedicated to Artemis at Brauron, Ephesos, and Sparta, and there is evidence of *hydrophoroi* at Didyma, Patmos, Samos, and Lousoi.¹⁰⁵ Notably, these sanctuaries of Artemis are the places where young girls were involved in ritual activity.¹⁰⁶ Artemis was particularly important in caring for female children, and at the time of their marriage, dedications were made to her before the girl made the transformation into wife.

Given the hot, dry climate of Greece, water was extremely important to the ancient Greeks, and it became an important element of their religion. In semiarid lands, cool springs were identified with nymphs and accorded divine honors. And in the ancient Greek city of Morgantina, many religious objects were found at the fountain house, suggesting the fountain house itself was a site of religious importance. These objects are datable to the third century b.c.e., when the spring was likely a focal point of a cult, and include fragments of terra-cotta busts of Persephone, and a pinax decorated with three

¹⁰³ Cole, p. 164; Based upon ancient lexicographers Hesych. s.v.

¹⁰⁴ Cole, pp. 163-64.

¹⁰⁵ Diehl, p. 199-201.

¹⁰⁶ Cole, p. 164.

music-making nymphs.¹⁰⁷ Many sources of water throughout Greece were a focus of ritual and cult, and the nymphs thought to inhabit these springs were worshipped and celebrated.

In Greek cult, nymphs were the female divinities Poseidon left to guard the water he sent to the earth's surface, like Amymone. These figures, seeming to scoop water from its sources and give it to humans, were responsible for the water that was gathered at the fountain house.¹⁰⁸ These female deities, believed to provide the populace with water, echo the role of women in ancient Greece, as nymphs parallel a Greek woman's life.¹⁰⁹ The nymphs were often given names of the source that they were believed to inhabit, and were themselves worshipped at these spots. The divinities responsible for the water supply of Greek cities were feminine, since water — its obtainment and many ritual uses - was closely related to the sphere of women. These nymphs were celebrated for providing the Athenian citizens with clean, cool water for drinking, and water used in rituals had to be procured from a source that was free flowing and thus associated with these deities. Eleni Manakidou believes that the elevation of fountain house scenes with the inclusion of garlands and wreaths represents the conflation of the sacred with the profane. And these women, in carrying out the daily activity of fetching water, often brought gifts to and decorated the fountain house as a way of celebrating the nymph divinities.¹¹⁰ Fresh spring water, its sources, and the fountain houses that supplied it were often associated with divinities, although the celebration of them on a regular basis

¹⁰⁷ Bell p. 333.

¹⁰⁸ Diehl, p. 201.

¹⁰⁹ Jennifer Larson, *Greek Nymphs. Myth, Cult Lore*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), See especially 3.2 "Nymphs, Goddesses, and the Female Life Cycle, pp. 100-120.

¹¹⁰ Manakidou, p. 58.; This suggestion would most likely also be supported by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "Early Sanctuaries, the eighth century and ritual space: Fragments of a discourse." in *Greek*

remains speculation. Her suggestion is, however, strengthened by Berlin hydria F1908 and Rome hydria 47457 (Figures 13 and 14). In these images, women gather water at a fountain house decorated with garlands and inhabited by deer. The Berlin hydria pays less attention to the articulation of the architecture of the fountain house. It is a covered lion-headed spout supported by an Ionic column. Under the spout is a block on which a hydria has been placed. In contrast, the Rome hydria gives greater space to the architecture of the fountain house, which is comprised of a panther-headed spout covered by a roof supported by a Doric columns. Under the spout is a series of blocks on which the first woman has placed her vessel while filling. The inclusion of deer may serve to highlight the naturalness of the scene, and allude to these nymph divinities who guard the natural world. Deer were often associated with Artemis in the mythological tradition, and the nymphs were her companions, which may serve to highlight the women at the fountain house decorated with ivy.

The black-figure vessels showing women at the fountain house involved in some sort of religious activity are curious because in most cases there is no clear indication of the divinity being worshipped. (The most notable exception is London Hydria B 332 [Figure 6], on which the inclusion of Hermes and Dionysos illuminates the context within which one should view the hydria). However, other images of women at a fountain house bedecked with garlands and carrying sprigs do not include a divinity's presence, nor do inscriptions locate the participants. This could provide clues to the location of the figures as well as the events. Because of this, I believe there are two likely explanations. First, it seems possible that the celebration is in honor of the nymphs who we know were

the focus of ritual activity, in particular at the sanctuary of Nymphe at the base of the Acropolis. The inclusion of animals perhaps alludes to the natural setting of the water's source, which would be associated with nymphs, or Artemis. The lack of an iconographic formula may have been discernable to an ancient viewer accustomed to seeing the area of the fountain house as being under the protection of nymphs, and thus they are the divinities celebrated. A second possibility is that the decorators generally were unconcerned with depicting or celebrating a particular occasion, but instead highlighted the role of women in festivals that involved the ritual use of water. The specifics of the festival were less important than the familiarity of the ritual act of the women who we assume would be the primary consumers of such vases.¹¹¹

In all of these Archaic images involving ritual activity at the fountain, men are not present. Men did utilize water in religious activity (it was always used for purification and cleansing in sacrifices and ritual), but its procurement by a man is not emphasized. Instead, the subject reveals itself in scenes that appeal to women, and on shapes that are associated with women - especially the hydria, the vessel used for obtaining water. In these early images, the women are the focus of the composition; the fountain house itself is not shown. Later it is set apart from the center and indicates the space where we find the women, rather than emphasizing the architecture of the fountain so that the activities dominate.

Shortly after 520 b.c.e., images of women at the fountain house change. The images no longer represent ritual, but instead women are at the fountain obtaining water for the home. Simultaneously, ritual images, especially for marriage ceremonies,

¹¹¹ By the sixth century, there is evidence that women were consumers of vases as indicated by the increase in genre scenes that showed aspects important to their own lives, particularly marriage festivities.

continue to document women fetching water. The earliest images of women at the fountain house, carrying water, and using water make reference to its use in religion and ritual by women. These images around 540 that show women carrying hydriai in a procession, as well as London Hydria B 332 (Figure 6), and the images of decorated fountain houses are part of the tradition of women using water in funerary cult practices. These rituals derived in part from women's association with fertility and life-giving, which are qualities associated with water. There is no problem identifying the women involved in ritual activity as citizens, but as the imagery changes, their status is questioned. Can these women involved in the secular act of obtaining water seemingly for use within the home be of citizen status or is it more likely that slaves would fetch water for the home?

Myth attests to the fact that women were responsible for procuring water for use in the home. Greek mythology provides the earliest evidence that images of women at the fountain house are indeed citizen women, and that these vessels continue a long-standing tradition of women as providers of water for the home. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Demeter, disguised as Doso, goes to a public well. While here, she comes across women of the city and there gained employment in a home. The daughters of Metaneira come to the well as part of their work to gather water for the home where they meet Demeter/Doso and offer her work. This aspect of the story becomes an important component in the Eleusinian mysteries. Within the sanctuary at Eleusis was the Kallichoron Well where the initiates danced while the goddess sat nearby on the Mirthless Rock.¹¹² And in Greek art, the rock on which Demeter sat while at the well

¹¹² Kevin Clinton, "The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis." in *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches* Ed. Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 118.

becomes part of the iconographic formula. In the *Hymn*, no men are present at the well; rather women performing traditional duties frequent this area. This is also documented in a now lost part of the Homeric *Iliupersis* in which Polyxena is at a fountain house when Achilles ambushes Troilos. This is a popular subject in black-figure vases. The depiction usually includes Polyxena at the fountain house with a broken hydria lying at her feet. Apart from Troilos, additional figures are rarely shown with her at the fountain house.

Another mythological story, the Danaids, tells of women's association with water. According to the tradition, Danaos invented the digging of wells,¹¹³ and had fifty daughters, one of whom is Amymone. She was sent to find water by her father. In her search, a satyr tries to rape her. She calls upon Poseidon who eliminates the satyr, and sleeps with her instead. Poseidon then strikes the ground with his trident, creating the Springs of Lerna, and the River Amymone. Hesiod relays the story, when he tells that Argos was waterless until the Danaai watered the land.¹¹⁴ The myth becomes particularly prevalent in the fifth century with Aeschylus's satyr play, *Amymone*, which became a popular subject in red-figure vase paintings.¹¹⁵

Amymone is a source name for a river and a spring formed because of her union with Poseidon. In Greek religious tradition, water was a symbol of fertility, and the divinities who inhabit these spaces of fresh water are women. Amymone is an example of this fusion of women and water as are her sisters, the Danaids. The Danaids, less Amymone and Hypermestra, are forced to marry; following their marriage, the Danaids

¹¹³ Ken Dowden, *Death and the Maiden: Girls' Initiation Rites in Greek Mythology* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 148.

¹¹⁴ Dowden, p. 152.

¹¹⁵ Dowden, p. 151.

murder their husbands.¹¹⁶ In the fourth century b.c.e. a tradition develops wherein they are made to carry water forever in leaking vessels in the underworld, a Sisyphean punishment for their refusal of marriage. Although it is unknown until the fourth century, this becomes a popular subject on Apulian vases and in later literature. However, it is noteworthy that these women are doomed to serve a punishment that forces them to carry out an everyday task over and over, unable to complete it because they rejected marriage.

The mythology of Polyxena, Demeter/Doso, the daughters of Metanaira, and Amymone attest to the role of women in Greek society as procurers of water for the home, as is also elaborated from cult and ritual. Apart from their daily activities, women of all social classes utilized water in ritual and cult roles, which was important for Attic women, and provided their most visible role in the society. However, these rituals derived from a woman's responsibility within the home, and echo their work. The black figure hydriai showing women at the fountain house conversing with each other while they fill their jugs became a very popular motif for vase painters of the period. In contrast to the earlier emphasis given to the women in the composition, the images now depict the women in a single row with their vessels, which they have just filled, are filling, or are waiting to fill. In some instances, the women dominate the composition with the architecture of the fountain house being subsidiary, while in other instances neither the architectural features of the fountain house nor the women depicted dominate the scene; instead, the two share the composition. In all, the artists make clear the space the women inhabit and their activities while giving the viewer a sense of camaraderie, as the women gesticulate and converse.

¹¹⁶ Hypermestra is forced to marry, but she is excepted because she does not murder her husband.

CHAPTER 3

THE STATUS OF THE WOMEN DEPICTED

Images of the fountain house existed before the Peisistratid tyrants began building public fountains, but the scenes were mythological, showing Achilles pursuing Troilos, such as on the François vase. Around 540 b.c.e., there was a shift. Instead of mythological characters being represented, women are shown in what appears to be ritual activity involving the use of water. These scenes of ritual activity then give rise to a daily activity. Achilles, Polyxena, and Troilos continue to be a subject of vase painting, as does ritual, but most fountain house scenes take an interest in the daily lives of the citizens as the artists depict the building projects happening around them. The new water sources built under the Peisistratid tyranny impacted the everyday life of Athenian citizens, and Attic vase painters represent this through their depictions of women frequenting fountain houses. Although many scholars believe that respectable women would not visit the fountain because of its public location, the vases suggest otherwise. The women shown appear to be citizens through their dress, adornment, and from what is known of the historical record.

Because of the belief that Athenian women were for the most part secluded within the home, scholarship concerning images of women at the fountain house in the sixth-century black-figure technique has recognized the difficulty in assigning a status to the women presented. Analyses tend to reflect the authors' position regarding the seclusion of women in the home in Attic society. There are those who believe that women did have some freedom outside the home, and fetching water was indeed part of a woman's role, and therefore, the women represented are respectable Athenian citizens. Others,

believing that women were isolated in the home, assume the figures are not wives, except in the examples of ritual activity at the fountain house, but instead must represent slaves, hetaerae, or metics. The final group of commentators believes that we cannot determine the identity of these women because the evidence is conflicting: i.e. the citizen women of ancient Athens are supposed to be secluded, but it appears they fetched water.

Looking at a stereotypical image such as the Toledo hydria (Figure 2), it is unlikely given their posture and dress that the women depicted are slaves. The women on the vases of this period are too richly adorned to be slaves or lower class citizens.¹¹⁷ The dress and adornment of the figures is consistent with most of the black-figure scenes showing women involved in activity that does not indicate a slave status. In addition, slaves' hair was usually kept short,¹¹⁸ but all of the women shown have longer hair pulled back. And during the period in which the greatest numbers of these vessels were created, slaves were shown as attendants to other figures, not in isolation.¹¹⁹ Given the Peisistratids' political stance as champions of the people (in part because of the improved water supply), it is unlikely to have received as much notice if the beneficiaries were slaves who were sent on the errand.

Apart from the iconography, Herodotus documents that the women presented in these images are citizens of Athens. He states in Book VI, chapter 137:

But the Athenians themselves say that their reason for expelling the Pelasgians was just. The Pelasgians, they say, issued out from their settlement at the foot of Hymettus and dealt wrongfully with the Athenians in these ways: neither the Athenians nor any other dwellers in Hellas had as yet servants at that time, and their sons and daughters resorted to the Nine Wells for water; and whenever they came, the

¹¹⁷ Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (New York: Harper & Row, 1995), p. 235.

¹¹⁸ Sarah Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), p. 83.

¹¹⁹ Sian Lewis, "Slaves as Viewers and Users of Athenian Pottery," *Hephaistos* 16/17 (1998/99), p. 82.

Pelasgians maltreated them out of mere arrogance and pride. Nor yet were they content with so doing, but at last were caught in the act of planning to attack Athens. The Athenians, by their own showing, dealt so much more rightly than the Pelasgians, that when they might have killed them, caught plotting as they were, they would not do so.

Thus, Herodotus explains that the sons and daughters of Athenian citizens were fetching water because they did not have house slaves.¹²⁰ He then implies that the Athenian citizens of Herodotus's time did own slaves who would be responsible for obtaining the water.¹²¹ This provides evidence for a change in the status of the women at the fountain house, which also becomes evident in the visual imagery.

Slaves' numbers peaked in the Classical period, in the time between the Persian and Peloponnesian wars. However, the numbers are more difficult to assess for the Archaic period. In late red-figure vases, including Louvre CA 2587, it is clear that the women are Thracian slaves, identifiable by their tattooed arms and necks and short hair.¹²² However, this vase is very late in the theme of women at the fountain house. In a period that had a marked increase in slaves as consumers of painted pottery, this is the only vase that clearly attests to female slaves fetching water. Apparently, the vase painters took a familiar subject and included in it the clear mark of the slaves. Given the increase of the slave population in later years and Herodotus's account, it seems likely the job originally done by citizen women fell to slaves, and in so doing fell out of favor as a subject relatively quickly.¹²³

¹²⁰ It is curious that Herodotus included sons in this account. There is a lack of evidence in the visual history, mythological tradition, and literature to demonstrate males at a fountain house for the purpose of collecting water. When they are found at a fountain in the visual history, they are washing under the spouts.

¹²¹ Lise Hannestad, "Slaves and the Fountain House Theme," in *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery: Proceedings of the International Vase Symposium in Amsterdam 12-15 April 1984*, ed. H. A. G. Brijder (Amsterdam: Allard Pierson Series, 1984), p. 254.

¹²² Hannestad, p. 254.

¹²³ Hannestad, p. 255.

Literary texts written well into the fourth-century suggest that citizen women, not just slaves, went to the fountain house and conversed in groups.¹²⁴ As a result, it was possible for men to intrude upon the space, as attested by ancient authors, such as by Aristophanes. Fetching water involved social interactions, gossip, and the potential for a "chance encounter" at the fountain. For this reason, slave girls may have been sent by those who could afford slaves.¹²⁵ Because some may have sent slaves, many scholars conclude women at the fountain in these black-figure scenes probably represent slaves although neither the iconography nor the historical record supports it. The women in the vases under discussion are well dressed, and do not appear as slaves or hetaerae, though it is possible they were citizens unable to afford a slave or who chose to fetch the water themselves. But, the prevalent association of women with water in ritual and cult suggests the duty was traditional. Therefore, it is likely that some women would uphold the tradition and maintain responsibility for collecting water within the *oikos*. This explains why a woman such as Lysistrata would be at the fountain house.

Inscriptions found on some of the vases have also been discussed in relationship to the status of the women presented on black-figure vases. But again, the conclusions reflect the lack of agreement regarding the women on the vases. Friedrich Bechtel discusses some of the names inscribed near the figures found on the hydriai. The names include Rodon, Kyane, and Iope—names of noble Athenian women.¹²⁶ Boardman states that the names inscribed on the fountain house scenes are a good source "for the familiar

¹²⁴ Claude Bérard, "The Order of Women," in *A City of Images: Iconography and Society in Ancient Greece*, ed. Claude Bérard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 95. Hannestad, p. 252.; Elaine Fantham, H. P. Foley, N. B. Kampen, S. B. Pomeroy, and H. A. Shapiro, *Women in the Classical World: image and text* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 108-09.; Petersen, pp. 40-41.

¹²⁵ Pomeroy, p. 72.

¹²⁶ Friedrich Bechtel, *Die Attischen Frauennamen nach ihrem Systeme Dargestellt* (Göttingen, 1902).

names of Athenian girls."¹²⁷ Dyfri Williams, however, disagrees and suggests that the women are hetaerae, believing that the names are those of women who may have danced or played at parties of the pot's owner. An example is Rhodopis who was a famous *hetaira* of the sixth-century.¹²⁸ Iope he reads as a Lydian word for 'hither', which would correlate to her job,¹²⁹ but this association lacks adequate proof. Williams' suggestion implies a male audience, although hydriai do not usually depict images aimed at men. These conflicting opinions demonstrate the lack of agreement among scholars in assigning status to the women presented. Although there is nothing in the names or iconography establishing the women are hetaerae or slaves, the belief persists because of the notion of the seclusion of women in Attic society. But, some of the evidence is questionable.

In the sixth-century, Solon distinguished between respectable women and prostitutes. Solon's laws attempted to diminish the problems women may cause by limiting their influence, and their appearance in public.¹³⁰ However, citizen women who were less wealthy went to work as washerwomen, woolworkers, vendors, or sellers of textiles and garlands, nurses, and midwives.¹³¹ None of this work provides the security of the seclusion of the home, but it does indicate the different social levels of citizens within Athens. Engaging in this type of work indicated a family's lower social level, but it in no way means that those forced to do such work did not have full citizen rights. For the citizens that were less well off, seclusion within the home would not be possible as they

¹²⁷ John Boardman, *Athenian Black Figure Vases*, (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1974), p. 206.

¹²⁸ Dyfri Williams, "Women on Athenian Vases: Problems of Interpretation," in *Images of Women in Antiquity* ed. Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt (London and Canberra: Croom Helma, 1983), p. 105.

¹²⁹ Williams, p. 105.

¹³⁰ Pomeroy, p. 57.

¹³¹ Pomeroy, p. 73.

could not afford slaves to do the work necessary to maintain the home. Seclusion represents an ideal in Attic society, not necessarily a reality. The scholarly debate centering around the notion of seclusion of women assumes citizen women were all of equal levels, thus the definitions used are gross exaggerations from the reality of many citizens, and they often rely upon evidence that primarily dates to the Classical age while most of the images we have date to the Archaic age.

Because we lack a female perspective, classicists studying the role of women in ancient Mediterranean societies are forced to rely upon the writings of male authors who forward their own perception of reality, and thus lead classicists to make diverse assumptions. J. Gould has written about the seclusion of women, "False assertions are characteristic of this particular field of enquiry."¹³² The topic is fraught with problems as each side utilizes data that support its own opinions. Those who argue against the complete seclusion of the female rely upon tragedy and archaeology; the others utilize orations and some philosophical and historical literature; both sides use comedy, but in different ways.¹³³

The ancient association of men=outdoors:women=indoors is present in traditional Mediterranean societies today.¹³⁴ Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood used modern anthropological data of Mediterranean societies to address seclusion in ancient Greece. Although this approach has inherent biases, it does provide an ideological system with

¹³² J. Gould, "Law, Custom, and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980), p. 39.

¹³³ H. S. Versnel, "Wife and Helpmate. Women of Ancient Athens in Anthropological Perspective," in *Sexual Asymmetry : Studies in Ancient Society*, ed. J. Blok and P. Mason (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1987), p. 63.

¹³⁴ D. Cohen, "Seclusion, Separation, and the Status of Women in Classical Athens," *Greece and Rome* 36 (1989), 5.

which to compare.¹³⁵ Sourvinou-Inwood demonstrated, "[the] relationship to the lived reality and normative ideality of the observed society is problematic."¹³⁶ Anthropologists studying modern Mediterranean societies have noted the difference between first-hand observations and relying upon personal accounts that have a tendency to be subjective to the informant's conscious and unconscious relationship to perceived reality.¹³⁷ These modern societies continue to associate women with the indoors, which is in contrast to the reality of the society. Similarly ancient Athenians may have ideally sought seclusion for the women, but this did not necessarily reflect the reality of life. The "binary system"¹³⁸ used in describing Greek women in antiquity is that the male is outside and the female inside, tarrying away in the *oikos* for the betterment of the *polis*. However, religion proves this binary, either/or system fails to reflect accurately what we do know about ancient society in the public sphere. Religion was an important facet of the public *polis*; thus the system is questioned because of the importance placed on this sphere that belongs to women, and in which they play an important and very public role.¹³⁹

When fetching water, the women "cross social boundaries,"¹⁴⁰ entering into the public sphere. But, looking at other evidence of ancient Athenian society demonstrates this is not the only example of women leaving the home. Women of all social levels played some public roles in Archaic Athens including festivals, marriages, and funerals.

¹³⁵ Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "Male and Female, Public and Private, Ancient and Modern," in *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*, ed. Ellen D. Reeder (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 112.

¹³⁶ Sourvinou-Inwood, p. 111.

¹³⁷ Cohen, p. 4.

¹³⁸ Sourvinou-Inwood, p. 112.

¹³⁹ Women's power in religion is evidenced not only by their public role in cult rituals, but also by their various priesthoods and dedications and their patronage. Most of these dedications and acts of patronage date to the Archaic and Hellenistic age, "when the *polis* system was in the state of development or changing again." Uta Kron, "Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism: What Part Did Religion Play in the Political

In contrast to the Classical period, it is likely that in the Archaic period women had a more public role in funerals, marriages, and caring for cults.¹⁴¹ Women were not expected simply to lament the dead but they also were responsible for caring for the deceased after the burial, including visiting the grave and providing offerings continually.¹⁴² It was a woman's responsibility to visit the tombs of deceased family members to whom she would bring offerings and tie sashes around the stelai.¹⁴³ These activities, along with women's attendance at the funerary oration by Perikles, and visits to sanctuaries such as Artemis at Brauron and the Sanctuary of the Nymphae at the foot of the Acropolis, require entering into the public sphere of the male.¹⁴⁴ To fulfill these roles, a woman must have had some freedom of movement outside the home as opposed to the perceived seclusion of females in Athens. Plutarch tells of Athenian women who came to the Acropolis "on the pretext of admiring the works of art," and similarly, Euripides refers to women visiting Delphi admiring the monuments.¹⁴⁵ We know that women left the home to attend weddings and funerals, visit male family members in prison, as well as assist their neighbors in childbirth, which certainly would not be the only time they would see these neighbors.¹⁴⁶ It is possible that in leaving the home for such purposes a woman would wear a veil to be somewhat inconspicuous when venturing

and Social Status of Greek Women?" in *Religion and Power in the Ancient Greek World. Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1993*. Ed. Pontus Hellström and Brita Alroth (Sweden, 1996), pp. 139-182.

¹⁴⁰ Keuls p. 235.

¹⁴¹ Fantham, p. 96.

¹⁴² Fantham, p. 96.

¹⁴³ Ellen D. Reeder, "Women and Men in Classical Greece," in *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*, ed. Ellen D. Reeder (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 21.

¹⁴⁴ Reeder, p. 21.

¹⁴⁵ Reeder, p. 21.

¹⁴⁶ Demand, p. 23.

outside of the home,¹⁴⁷ but these activities all require a woman to enter into male/public space.

D. Cohen has questioned the modern association that separation equals seclusion. It is, "ideologically determined texts like Andromache's speech or Xenophon's portrayal of the ideal wife," that perpetuate the notion of complete seclusion of the female.¹⁴⁸ Ideology is not the same as reality. "Law codes are never automatic guides to the actual behavior of a society and behavioral norms are likely to have varied from class to class."¹⁴⁹ These opinions provide a framework for thinking about the seclusion of women in ancient Athens. The ancients probably desired seclusion for the female but in reality, this was not possible all of the time and they would have ventured outside the home for a variety of activities; one of which may have been fetching water.

Versnel believes that rather than being kept in complete seclusion, women were "neighborhood-bound."¹⁵⁰ Instead of venturing all over the city, they would stay near their house and neighbors. This establishes their presence at their neighbors to assist in childbirth that would be part of friendships developed through other visits.¹⁵¹ The women obtaining water at the fountain could be seen as staying near their home as there were public fountains throughout Athens built by the tyrants. If this is correct, a woman at the fountain could expect to see her neighbors as they partake in their daily activities and here would have the chance for socializing with people she knew. He believes the negative picture painted of women in literature does not automatically correlate to a

¹⁴⁷ Reeder, p. 21.

¹⁴⁸ Cohen, pp 6-7.

¹⁴⁹ Sarah C. Humphreys, *The Family, Women, and Death* (London: Routledge, 1983), p. 35.

¹⁵⁰ Versnel, p. 65.

¹⁵¹ Demand, p. 23.

uniform judgment of all women; the data presented conflicts and is inconsistent, demonstrating instead an "ambivalent" attitude toward women and their activities.¹⁵²

Although the fountain house is outside, the fountain house is essentially a female world, despite the fact that the nature of the task involves leaving the home, and we may see the fountain as an extension of the interior chores of the Athenian woman. The task does not necessarily involve interaction with men along the way, and Archaic vase painters suggest women are the primary users and visitors of the fountain house, as males are almost always excluded from the black-figure scenes.

Plato's *Meno* (71e) discusses a woman's *arete* as coming from her role inside the house. Thus she can gain honor for her work in this sphere.¹⁵³ Fetching water at the fountain house is one of the earliest female "domestic" tasks shown on pottery.¹⁵⁴ Obtaining water is the only activity that could be considered a "chore" that is represented on black-figure. Similarly, preparing food was clearly a daily activity in ancient Athens for women, but it is rarely depicted. On the rare red-figure vases on which cooking appears it is associated with festivals in which women play a predominant role.¹⁵⁵ It is unlikely that images of women at the fountain were so popular simply because the scene was particularly interesting or appealing to women. Fetching water must have been a repetitive and arduous task that was not particularly remarkable in everyday life, and as such it seems these vases must have had another appeal for women.

¹⁵² Versnel, pp. 66-67, Gould; M. Arthur, "Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude Toward Women," *Arethusa* 6 (1973), p. 26.

¹⁵³ Sourvinou-Inwood, pp. 112-113.

¹⁵⁴ Lewis, p. 71.

¹⁵⁵ Sian Lewis, *The Athenian Woman: an Iconographic Handbook* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 67-71.

Amy Richlin (1992 xiv) states in her critique of Michel Foucault's *The History of*

Sexuality:

"Foucault states early on that he sees his history as that of the desiring subject, who is male; women figure in these pages only as objects, and that rarely...Insofar as this is a history of sexuality at all, it is a history of *male* sexuality, and a partial one at that...I can only say that when I read these books I sense not consciousness but silence, a failure to ask where women's subjectivity was."

The view of reality of the ancient woman's life has always been one guided by a male-constructed ideology, with little to no mention of female subjectivity.¹⁵⁶ Men no doubt created the vases showing women at work, but that does not mean that the vases reflect only a male perspective or, as Eva Keuls contends, that they were designed to appeal to a man's sexual desires. Rather, it is quite likely that men created these vessels (predominately hydriai for the purpose of this study) for a female audience and for women's use in maintaining the *oikos* and for ritual use.¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately the history surrounding women of the ancient world is rooted in a male history making it difficult to recover the way women saw themselves, society, or their place in society. Claude Bérard argues, "although produced by men, the images painted on the vases transmit a much more complex vision of female realities . . . [than] . . . the stereotyped image, created by Attic writers to contrast their women with the girls of Sparta."

Petersen believes women:

chose, purchased, and utilized vessels with the aforementioned images, which would have reminded them of their own experience as they completed their various tasks. At the same time, scenes of industrious and virtuous females also helped to reinforce the ideological framework of patriarchy. In other words, the pleasurable images of female toil work well with patriarchal propaganda and notions of female virtue. Perhaps

¹⁵⁶ Petersen, p. 37.

¹⁵⁷ Petersen, p. 37; Bérard 1989.

Sutton said it best when he described the nuptial scenes as images of persuasion.¹⁵⁸

In this assessment, she contends that the images on the vessels decorated with women performing various tasks, like fetching water and wool working, exist to depict a virtue in the patriarchal society. Paeonia, the fantasy woman desired by Herodotus, simultaneously carried water and wove. The ancients praised women for these two tasks.¹⁵⁹ Regardless of social status, women were expected to weave at home. Though this was not for profit, it marked virtue in a woman, and industriousness (in other words, kept her out of trouble). Likewise, fetching water was a feminine occupation, even if women who could afford slaves sent them for daily water, all women still were responsible for obtaining water for rituals that include religious ceremonies, such as the Hydrophoria, and secular ceremonies, such as obtaining water for the bridal bath.

Within the context of the virtue of women's work, there is a sense of pride in the work the women do on these vases, and that in these images they find a sense of female companionship. This is especially true in the images of women at the fountain, where the women are shown conversing with each other in an animated fashion, suggesting a social scene and a chance to be with friends, just as men seem to have been choosing vessels that depicted symposia. Webster sees the vases of women at the fountain as a feminine counterpart to scenes of athletes.¹⁶⁰ In this interpretation, then, women can be seen as partaking in their daily activities, and the scene is expected to be somewhat familiar to them and part of their daily conscious. If these vases do appeal to a female

¹⁵⁸ Petersen, p. 44.

¹⁵⁹ Eva Keuls, "The Sex Appeal of Female Toil." *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 232.

¹⁶⁰ T. B. L. Webster, *Potter and Patron in Classical Athens* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.), p. 61.

subjectivity, then it would be because these women saw in the images a reflection of their own reality and life. Certainly images of women in antiquity created by men reflect the male centered ideology of the culture. Women were expected to subscribe to the ideals of the male, and conform for the good of the state. However, images of women do not automatically present notions that make women uncomfortable or unhappy. Certainly, women must have sought pleasure within their defined cultural roles. The Antimenes Painter, the Priam Painter, and the Leagros Group decorated a number of these black-figure scenes showing groups of women at the newly constructed fountain house with an emphasis on the architecture of the space. While their interest in the subject may have been motivated by the architecture of the new building projects, the images allude to what would be expected in reality: women come with empty hydriai and leave with full ones. While the painter may have simply been reflecting society, a woman may have a different, more complex impression of the scene depicted.

Vases with women at the fountain house seem to appeal to a female subjectivity and appear to be designed with women's sensibilities in mind.¹⁶¹ It seems likely that female-female relationships existed, and were an important part of life and therefore would be presented on the hydria showing women.¹⁶² Bérard has questioned the assumptions surrounding the users of these vessels and their purpose. He asserts respectable wives used hydriai and loutrophoroi. And if it is not citizen women depicted, then in the home, respectable wives only used undecorated pots or their pots were depicted with scenes of hetaerae. The likelihood that hydriai were decorated for women

¹⁶¹ Bérard, p. 89; R. F. Sutton Jr., "Pornography and Persuasion on Attic Pottery," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* ed. Amy Richlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 28.

¹⁶² Petersen, pp. 45-49.

and in relation to their experiences, rather than for a male audience and in relationship to the sexuality of its decorator can be related to the use of pottery decorated with nuptial imagery. These marriage vases both decorated the home, recalling the wife's wedding, and were used in marriage rituals. Loutrophoroi and hydriai with nuptial imagery represented the experiences of women when they are married and the vessel re-enacts many of the events, such as the procession and gift-giving, *epaulia*. Because of the opportunity for socializing at the fountain house, the activity of fetching water may have appealed to the ancient woman seeking a chance for interaction, and as a result, the vessels depict not a chore, but a female experience. Burns states, " . . . for as the agora and the gymnasium were the meeting places for men, the fountain house was the informal social center for the women."¹⁶³ Burns suspects there was not popular pressure for a greater number of fountain houses distributing water following Solon's conservation measures because the Athenian women would not have wanted to give up their daily walk to the fountain, which provided an opportunity to meet friends and gossip.¹⁶⁴

On hydriai showing women in various stages of filling and emptying their hydriai at a fountain house, the scene appears as a social occasion for the women, as the women seem to converse with each other informally.¹⁶⁵ An example is Munich hydria 1693 (Figure 15) again showing a woman waiting for her hydria to fill under a simple lion-headed spout. As she does so, the four women with empty hydriai have formed groups and are conversing. Similarly dressed women waiting to fill their hydriai, which is made explicit by the one hydria that is being filled by the woman on the far left, pair off. This

¹⁶³ Burns, p. 406.

¹⁶⁴ Burns, p. 410.

¹⁶⁵ Fantham, p. 107-08.; Camp, pp. 43-44 also comments on the fountain house as a social center where women could escape the confines of the home.

time a group of four has formed in the central part of the image suggesting the decoration is less about the fountain house and importance of water, but it is about the interactions of the women who visit, and perhaps purchase these vases. For the women viewing these vessels, they demonstrate scenes of female friendship within the constructs of the patriarchal society, but the women would read the images as being about their social networks together.¹⁶⁶

Before new public fountain houses were built, many private houses in the center of Athens were destroyed, and along with them family-owned wells were filled in between 570 and 550 BC to make way for the Agora.¹⁶⁷ As a result, a woman who would normally privately draw water from a well in her courtyard now had to venture into the public sphere to accomplish the same task. Because the women were venturing out into this male space, it is possible there would be a perceived threat by the male citizenry of Athens. However, the benign scenes presented near the time of the completion of the Enneakrounos suggest this is women's work, and it is safe for a wife or daughter to venture out into public space to perform this traditional duty.¹⁶⁸ Later red-figure scenes will present a different theme when women at the fountain house or well are often shown alone with a male interrupting the scene, seeming to "ambush" the women at the fountain and suggest a threat.

¹⁶⁶ Petersen, pp. 44, 53.

¹⁶⁷ Shear, pp. 4-5.

¹⁶⁸ Pedley, p. 72. Sees decorated pottery of the last quarter of the sixth century to focus on more daily, contemporary concerns, as well as finding some elements of political propaganda.

CONCLUSION

In the later black-figure tradition, and especially early red-figure vessels that move into the Classical period, pursuit scenes become a popular motif,¹⁶⁹ their rise in popularity beginning around 475.¹⁷⁰ This trend becomes evident in images of women at the fountain houses. No longer are the images stately with scenes of ritual or respectable women, but instead the women become the target of male advances. During this period the ideal of seclusion may have been greater than in earlier times.¹⁷¹ As a result, most Attic vase painting shows respectable women indoors except for wedding processions.

There are trends that explain the increased sexuality in scenes depicting women at the fountain house. Firstly, there is an increase in sexual images in vases during the time the red-figure technique became popular. Secondly, the vessels were no longer created for a female audience, but rather a male audience. The vessels that are most commonly used for these scenes are no longer hydriai and lekythoi, but rather kylixes and skyphoi. These vessels would frequently be used during the all-male drinking parties, symposia. Thirdly, it is possible that one would no longer expect to find a respectable wife at the fountain. The fifth century saw an increase in the slave population and many slaves may have been sent to the fountain during this period that placed a greater emphasis on the ideal of seclusion. It is unclear whether *Lysistrata's* presence at the fountain confirms or denies this fact. Clearly, *Lysistrata* was at the fountain house suggesting moderately prosperous wives would gather water. However, the chorus's account of the events actually may highlight why a wife would be kept away (lines 325-332):

¹⁶⁹ Reeder, p. 339.

¹⁷⁰ Andrew Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 170.

¹⁷¹ Fantham, p. 102.

We started early but might be late: we had to fill our pitchers. The well was jammed, we got delayed by slaves and pushy bitches, shouting, shoving, smashing pots, banging heads and raising knots. Now we're here with pitchers filled to keep our friends from being grilled.

So while Lysistrata is at the fountain house, the chorus also attests to the presence of slaves with whom they must deal, confirming Herodotus's account of slaves obtaining water during this period.

During the Classical period, images of respectable women with water returned to the traditional roles of women in ritual, specifically the nuptial bath. Most of the decorated images are *loutrophoroi*. Another popular source of imagery during the Classical period is also a pursuit scene: Poseidon pursuing Amymone. This became popular following Aeschylus's play, *Amymone*. In the play, Amymone carries her hydria in search of water. Poseidon rapes her, but provides the Lerna Spring for her to fill her hydria. Rather than suggesting Amymone was accosted, the story follows in a long line of mythological pursuit scenes.¹⁷² Amymone is most often seen as a willing bride and her hydria functions as the vessel for her bridal bath.¹⁷³ Amymone's story is a mythological parallel to marriage for a Greek bride. Also during this period, the myth of the Danaids' punishment makes its first appearance attesting to the continued association of women with water even if it is less likely that a respectable woman would be fetching water at a public source.

While women in the Classical period were still responsible for rituals involving the use of water in funerals, marriages, and religious rituals (especially those connected with Demeter, Hera, and Artemis), it is less clear that they were responsible for the daily

¹⁷² Reeder, p. 352.

¹⁷³ Reeder, p. 352.

gathering of water within the home. As sexual scenes and scenes of pursuit became more popular in vase painting, and the Athenians desired greater seclusion for their wives, it is no longer obvious who would be the frequenters of the fountain house. During this period, the vase painters are interested in a chance for an encounter at the fountain house. The architecture provides the framework within a traditional genre scene rather than being interested in the architectural setting as it was during the construction of fountain houses under the Peisistratid tyranny.

However, the scenes created near the completion of the Enneakrounos depicted citizen women. Women were the primary users of the vase shapes decorated with groups of women at the fountain house and the scenes appealed to their own experiences. The women shown do not display any features identifying them as slaves or hetaerae, but instead accord with images of respectable Athenian wives. The concurrent images of ritual at the fountain house derived from traditional iconography attest to the virtuousness of the women depicted. The activity they perform is traditional. Water represented fertility—this is the most important role women played in ancient Greece. The vases of this everyday activity re-enforce this interpretation.

FIGURES



Figure 1. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 61.195. Hydria by the Priam Painter. c. 520-510 b.c.e. (*Paralipomena* 147.5BIS)



Figure 2. Toledo, Museum of Art 1961.23. Hydria by the Priam Painter.
c. 520-510 b.c.e. (*Paralipomena* 147.5TER)



Figure 3. Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum 69/78. Red-figure Loutrophoros near the Naples Painter showing the procession carrying bathwater from the fountain house. (*ARV* 1102.2) (*Paralipomena* 451)



Figure 4. Geometric Kantharos. Copenhagen 727.



Figure 5. Archeological Museum of Herakleion. Subgeometric terracotta figurine of a mourning woman.



Figure 6. London, British Museum B332. Hydria by the Priam Painter.
c. 520 b.c.e. (*ABV* 333.27)



Figure 7. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 01.8125. Hydria in the Manner of the Lysippides Painter. c. 530 b.c.e.



Figure 8. Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco. Hydria 3792. c. 540 b.c.e.



Figure 9. Munich, Antikensammlungen 1690. Hydria near the Antimenes Painter. c. 520 b.c.e. (ABV 280.2) (*Addenda* 73)



Figure 10. London, British Museum B336. Hydria by the Antimenes Painter.
c. 520 b.c.e. (ABV 266.3)



Figure 11. Paris, Louvre F 296. Black-figure Hydria. c. 510 b.c.e.



Figure 12. London, British Museum B329. Hydria by the A D Painter.
c. 515 b.c.e. (ABV 334.1)



Figure 13. Berlin, Antikensammlung F1908. Hydria Attributed to the Leagros Group. (*Paralipomena* 162.173) (*ABV* 365.70)



Figure 14. Rome, Villa Giulia 47457. Hydria near the Nikoxenos Painter.
(*Paralipomena* 393) (ABV 172)



Figure 15. Munich, Antikensammlung 1693. Hydria, Akin to the Antimenes Painter.c.. b.c.e. (*ABV* 280.2)

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