Ancient Greek society was a patriarchal society – everywhere, and at all times. In religion and cult, however, females had functions, offices, duties, and possibilities that were equal to those of men. Thus it is very likely that women acted as founders of cults long before there is evidence to substantiate this assumption. Women are credited with having transferred ancestral cults to colonies founded in the Archaic period. In Classical times (fifth and fourth centuries BCE) we are on firm ground with the earliest evidence for foundations made by women on their own initiative, and it is on this period that I concentrate in this paper.

As an archaeologist I am used to working with anonymous data. We can deduce a lot from the material evidence, but we cannot connect this evidence with specific agents if we do not have additional information. A sanctuary does not show that it was founded by a woman, and a votive offering as such does not reveal whether it was given by a man or a woman. If we want to trace female founders we need explicit testimony, we need names, we need written records in the form of literary sources or inscriptions. So the search for female founders is first of all a problem of evidence, a problem of visibility. Actually, there are two problems: visibility in ancient times (why, when, how did a female founder want to show up and succeed in being conspicuous?) and visibility in modern scholarship (how does the archaeologist see and present the evidence?). I will start with the first problem and end with the last one.

I would like to thank the anonymous referee(s) for suggestions and an additional reference (I. Malkin, What is an Aphidruma?, in: Classical Antiquity, 10.1, 1991, pp. 77–96).


In his treatise on laws (Nomoi), Plato calls for a general ban on private cults – cults in houses as well as cults established by individuals in places where they had had a religious experience. According to Plato, the foundation and practice of cults require special insight (dianoia) and should be left to priests and priestesses. He then proceeds to expound his observations of common practice: there are people, and especially women, he says, who, when they find themselves in either a precarious or an especially fortunate situation, promise sacrifices and foundations to gods, daimones and the children of gods. Also, when they are frightened or reminded of frightening experiences, they build altars and cult places (bomoi and hiera) in their houses and villages. Thus according to Plato the establishment of cults by private individuals was a widespread phenomenon in Classical Athens, a phenomenon that was to a large degree due to the initiative of women.

Plato’s comment about female activity is in line with what we know about the society of Athens in the Classical period. Whereas politics and all juridical matters were the exclusive affairs of the male citizens, cult activities were open to the female part of the population, too. In affairs of religion and cult women acted independently, took decisions, performed various functions including high offices as priestesses, gave orders, and managed cults. For certain activities limits were set by their expenses. The foundation of a cult and the installation of a cult place did not, however, necessarily require extensive financial resources. For a place for worship a small spot in open nature with simple installations for sacrifices and votive offerings would do. Cults could also be established in private houses. So the foundation of a cult as such was not primarily a question of economic power.

The majority of cult foundations by private individuals will have been rather modest establishments. There are exceptional cases. The establishment of the sanctuary of Asklepios on the south slope of the Acropolis in 420/19 BCE was due to a private individual named Telemachos. He recorded his action on the slab of a stone stele topped with a double-sided relief and had two copies erected in the sanctuary.

---


6 A fine example is the altar for the nymphs and Demos, carved in the rock on the Hill of the Nymphs in Athens (fifth century BCE), see U. Kron, Demos, Pnyx und Nymphenhügel, in: Athenische Mitteilungen, 94, 1979, pp. 49–75.

Plato’s statement about the multitude of private foundations can only indirectly be confirmed. The fact that there were decrees forbidding individuals to erect altars in public sanctuaries sheds a light on what must have been common practice in Classical Athens.8 There is very little positive evidence for foundations by individuals in the literary or epigraphic record referring to the Classical period9 (although this changes in Hellenistic times10). This fact cannot be accounted for only by an unfavorable state of preservation. Excavations have long focused on Greek sanctuaries, and we have much archaeological and literary evidence for matters of cult and cult practice. There is also a rich tradition of stories that tell about foundations by mythical figures.11 There is, however, a poor record of foundation acts by historical persons.

We have to consider the circumstances that are necessary for the existence of such evidence: in order to appear in the literary or epigraphic record, the founders themselves have to make an effort to escape oblivion. They themselves have to write down their names and a statement about their action in one form or the other. The bulk of the literary sources about cultic matters in general concern the circumstances that tell about foundations by mythical figures.12 There is, however, a poor record of foundation acts by historical persons.

It is always problematical to argue *ex silentio*, but considering the abundance of votive inscriptions and other items in the sanctuaries that often carried inscriptions of all sorts in relation to the scarcity of evidence for founding activity we must conclude that this activity was not regularly commemorated, and that the founders usually made no great efforts to link their name or their image to the place they established.13 Unlike in Byzantine times when images of founders were often presented on walls of churches, in the Classical period one could not expect to be confronted with information about the foundation of the cult place.

This observation has consequences for the interpretation of the evidence that we do have. We must regard the comparatively few cases of recorded foundations by individuals as exceptions, as deviations from the normal procedure. They should be taken not as standard evidence for founding activity, but as evidence for the rather unusual case in which a private individual wanted her or his action to be announced to visitors of the cult place and to be preserved over time. We need to be aware of the fact that the

---


10 P. GAUTHIER, Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs, Paris 1985; B. DIGNAS, Benefitting Benefactors: Greek Priests and Euergetism, in: L'Antiquité Classique, 75, 2006, pp. 72–84 (with emphasis on the close link of priesthoods and benefactions in the Hellenistic and Roman periods). – Female founders: see n. 16.


12 Cf. Purvis, Singular Dedications (cit. n. 2), pp. 4, 125. She points to evidence for inscriptions on wood: ibid., p. 18.
evidence does not tell us about the usual practice of founding, but about the rather unusual wish to have this act of founding commemorated. So we must ask not only about the reasons for founding, but also about the reasons of the wish for commemoration.

Bearing this in mind we can approach a phenomenon within the issue of private foundations, namely that there is a remarkable disproportion of male and female founders attested for the Classical period. Even without a comprehensive collection of material – and taking into account that the total number of records for private foundations in the Classical period is statistically too small – we can say that males far outnumber females as founders (and not only in the Classical period).¹³

How does this remarkable disproportion of male and female founders relate to Plato’s comment on female agency in this matter? I see two alternatives:

First alternative: Plato’s statement can be accepted at face value. Women acted as founders just as men did (or with even more eagerness than men), but the motivation to make this action known and commemorated was stronger for men than it was for women. After all, whereas the founding of a cult was an act of piety and of personal concern (suitable for men and women alike), the commemoration of this act was a public performance, a conspicuous display of representation, a communication that went beyond the bilateral contact of worshipper and cult recipient. The recording of a foundation announced this act to the community, to other worshippers, to the public. It aroused attention and bestowed prestige. Communication within the society, social interaction in public, competition and distinction were concerns and domains of the male part of the population. This might account for the reluctance or lack of interest on the part of female founders in having their action recorded.¹⁴

Second alternative: we can interpret Plato as referring to the social organization and preserved evidence as revealing the social structure. The initiative for founding might have been taken by the female part of the family (just as Plato suggests), but the actual founding could have been made by the kyrios, the head of the family (and the agent for all legal acts of the females in the family).¹⁵ This scenario can be supported by two lines of reasoning.

¹³ Male founders: see n. 7 and 9. Female ones: see the cases discussed below. As the cases of the male founders show it was not generally considered hybristic to display one’s name and activity as founder in an inscription. – B. Laum, Stiftungen in der griechischen und römischen Antike, I.II, Berlin 1914, pp. 23–26, discusses foundations in the sense of legacies and testaments (mostly Hellenistic and Roman Imperial times). Among 244 personal names there are 28 female ones. – Even on the level of dedications women are usually vastly outnumbered (with the exception of cults for a female clientele), see van Straten, Daikrates’ Dream (cit. n. 3), pp. 17, 21–27 (15 percent by women); Kron, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism (cit. n. 2), pp. 160–161, 165–166. The statistics given by S. B. Aleshire, The Economics of Dedication at the Athenian Asklepieion, in: T. Linders/B. Alroth (ed.), Economics of Cult in the Ancient World, Uppsala 1992, pp. 90–92, for the Athenian Asklepieion are revealing: in the inventories (mostly referring to the Hellenistic period) the proportion of female dedicants to male ones is 43 percent to 38 percent (in an earlier study of the same material she gives different figures: 51 percent to 46 percent; S. B. Aleshire, The Athenian Asklepieion, Amsterdam 1989, pp. 45–46; Kron, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism [cit. n. 2], p. 165); however, as dedicants of the costly and prestigious artefacts made of stone the ratio is 12 percent (females) to 67 percent (males).

¹⁴ Cf. Aleshire, The Economics of Dedication (cit. n. 13), pp. 91–92 (wish for conspicuous display and self-advertisement as motivation for dedications).

¹⁵ For a detailed study of the legal position of women in Classical Athens see E. Hartmann, Heirat, Hetären und Konkubinat im klassischen Athen, Frankfurt 2002. – A comparable imbalance between decision-making in private (with active participation of females – left unrecorded) and action-taking in public (with male agency recorded and taken for granted) can be assumed for the private grave monuments of Classical Athens: a family’s precinct is
The recording of a foundation was, as stated above, not an act of worship, but of communication within the community. As a worshipper a person acted on her or his own, in a private dialogue with the cult recipient. Within the community a person did not act as an individual, but as a social persona. The social persona of females was shaped by their roles in the family. Within the community the family was represented by the kyrios.

As the recording of a foundation betrays a certain aspiration for social prestige, more ambitious foundations are more likely to be linked to a founder’s name than more modest installations. Although the foundation of a cult did not have to be expensive, costlier foundations had better chances of being commemorated as private initiatives than simpler ones. Tellingly, the remarkable increase of evidence for female founding activity in the Hellenistic period goes hand in hand with an increase of evidence for female handling of financial affairs and euergetism.  

*Visibility in Classical Greece, II: The Foundress’s Voice*

The following three examples for female founders of the Classical period present slightly more evidence than the mere name of a female in connection with the establishment of a cult.  

1. Nikagora and the healing god Asklepios (Text 1)

One of the earliest sanctuaries of Asklepios was founded by a woman. She lived in Sikyon (near Corinth) and introduced the god into her home town. Pausanias, who in the second century CE travelled in Greece and recorded buildings, works of art, and stories told by the locals, heard that *Nikagora, mother of Agasikles, wife of Echetimos,* carried a snake from Epidaurus in her carriage to Sikyon. This was the usual form of *translatio* for the cult of the healing god. A chronological clue for the foundation is given by the name of the artist Kalamis who made the cult statue for the sanctuary, also mentioned by Pausanias in that context. There are two sculptors by the name of Kalamis. The famous one worked in the second quarter of the fifth century BCE; his grandson was active in the first half of the fourth century BCE.  

Further evidence: The famous *hetaira* Phryne (fourth century BCE) was accused of having introduced a new cult for a new divinity, *Parker,* Athenian Religion (cit. n. 7), pp. 162–163.


17 Further evidence: The famous *hetaira* Phryne (fourth century BCE) was accused of having introduced a new cult for a new divinity, *Parker,* Athenian Religion (cit. n. 7), pp. 162–163.

18 Pausanias 2,10,3; Riethmüller, Asklepios (cit. n. 7), pp. 193–201, 232–233, no. 23.

time after Nikagora’s action had taken place.\textsuperscript{20}
We do not have any additional information about the persons mentioned by Pausanias. He does not mention Nikagora’s motivation. There is no archaeological evidence for the sanctuary or the cult statue.

2. Xenokrateia and the river god Kephisos (Text 2)
More can be said about a foundation that occurred in Athens in the late fifth century BCE. Near the mouth of the river Kephisos and halfway between the harbors Piraeus and Phaleron a very fine, large votive relief was found (Fig. 1). Its base (Fig. 3) carries an inscription saying that Xenokrateia founded a sanctuary (hieron) of or for Kephisos, and that she set up the relief as a gift for him and the divinities (worshipped) at the same altar (symbomoi theoi), as a gift for didaskalia (line 2). In the third line she calls herself the daughter and mother of Xeniades, from the deme of Cholleidai.\textsuperscript{21}

The area yielded another votive relief contemporaneous with the one erected by Xenokrateia, as well as a slab with an inscription containing the names of ten cult recipients, among them the river god Kephisos. The sanctuary itself has not been excavated (Fig. 2).\textsuperscript{22}

The relief set up by Xenokrateia neatly demonstrates its purpose. Against the background of various divinities who fill up almost the entire space of the relief, three figures take prominence: the dedicant herself, who – according to

\begin{itemize}
  \item Moreno, Kalamis I and II (cit. n. 19), p. 384, assuming that the cult of Asklepios did not spread from Epidauros before the fourth century BCE, thinks that Kalamis the Younger was responsible. See, however, Riethmüller, Asklepios (cit. n. 7), pp. 150–153. For the dispersion of the cult see ibid., pp. 229–240.
  \item Votive relief (with inscription IG II\textsuperscript{2} 4546): Comella, I rilievi votivi greci (cit. n. 7), pp. 70–71, 211, figs. 61–62; Kaltzas, Sculpture (cit. n. 21), p. 134, no. 258; Wulfmeier, Griechische Doppelseliefs (cit. n. 7), pp. 9, 61–63, 128–131; Purvis, Singular Dedications (cit. n. 2), pp. 24–25, fig. 2. – Inscription: IG II\textsuperscript{2} 4547; Purvis, Singular Dedications (cit. n. 2), pp. 18–19; Parker, Polytheism (cit. n. 21), pp. 430–432. – Site of the sanctuary: J. Travlos, Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Attika, Tübingen 1988, pp. 288–291, fig. 364.
\end{itemize}
the usual habit of votive reliefs – is depicted in a smaller scale than the cult recipients; a small naked boy in front of her, the younger Xenia- des mentioned in the inscription; and a youthful male god who bends towards the two mortals and sets his right foot on a base. Because of his intense interaction with Xenokrateia and her son (who raises his head and arms to the divinity) it is very likely that he is Kephisos for whom Xenokrateia founded the hieron.23

The relief tells us what the inscription does not: it tells us that Xenokrateia, who set up this relief out of concern for her young son, actually entrusted her child to the care of the river god and his partners in the sanctuary. River gods as the proverbial carriers of fertility qualify as kourotrophic deities, too.24 And there are more divinities with that responsibility shown. Although the figures depicted in the relief (and referred to in the inscription as symbomoi theoi) and the ten cult recipients mentioned in the separate inscription do not exactly match, we can expect to see some of the Nymphai genethliai represented in the image. Furthermore, the word didaskalia in line 2 points to the teaching of the little boy, an important part of his upbringing.25

3. Chrysina and the goddesses Kore and Demeter (Text 3)

The third example carries us to the western coast of Asia Minor. In Knidos, known for the famous Aphrodite by Praxiteles, there was also a small sanctuary of Demeter (Fig. 4). In this sanctuary a marble base with an inscription of

---

23 For reasons of space diverging interpretations cannot be fully discussed here. Guarducci, L’offerta di Xenokrateia (cit. n. 21), pp. 61–66, and L. Baumer, Vorbilder und Vorlagen, Bern 1997 p. 132, think that he is a priest. A priest depicted taller than other mortals and of the same size as the divinities is without parallel. Because of the size of the figure the interpretation by Kaltsas, Sculpture (cit. n. 21), p. 133 (Xenokrateia’s father Xeniades) cannot be accepted either. Purvis, Singular Dedications (cit. n. 2), pp. 21–31, excluded Kephisos for iconographical reasons and suggested either Dionysos or a local hero. However, river gods can be depicted beardless and without horns, see C. Weiss, Fluvii, in: Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, IV, Zurich 1988, pp. 144–148.


the fourth century BCE came to light. The base was prepared to support a statue (which was not found). The inscription tells that Chrysina, mother of Chrysogone, wife of Hippocrates, dedicated an oikos (building) and an agalma (statue) to Kore and Demeter. It also gives the reason for this act: Chrysina had a holy vision during the night. So here we have one of the cases that Plato mentioned as a typical phenomenon in his home town: action taken upon a dream. Chrysina uses the word anetheken, the usual term for dedications, but that her action is not a mere dedication can be deduced from the last line of the inscription: Hermes tells Chrysina to serve the goddesses as propolos (temple servant), in a place called Tathne. As it was common practice for founders of a cult to serve as cult personnel, I follow Uta Kron who regards Chrysina as a foundress; however I wonder whether she was the foundress of the sanctuary of Demeter itself or of the cult place at Tathne mentioned in the inscription.

These three foundations of sanctuaries for three different cult recipients in three different places of Classical Greece have, in addition to the fact that they are foundations by women,
one striking feature in common: in each case the woman is presented or presents herself as a mother.

The case of Xenokrateia is the most obvious. While the relief shows us the motivation for her initiative, relief and inscription combined might reveal the reason why Xenokrateia chose to record not only the dedication but also the fact that she founded the sanctuary. She is depicted with her child, she speaks about *didaskalia*, and the god for whom she founds the sanctuary and sets up the relief is a kourotrophic deity. In her votive inscription she calls herself the daughter and mother of Xeniaides, without mentioning her husband. As her son has the same name as her father, Kron has convincingly argued that Xenokrateia probably was an *epikleros*, a single daughter or a daughter whose brothers had died without heirs and who, in order to keep the wealth within the family, had to marry a male relative. Thus, due to the lack of a son’s son, Xeniades’ name would have passed on to a daughter’s son.\(^{30}\) By recording both names, Xenokrateia documents her function as a link between the generations and she presents her son as the heir of the older Xeniades. In a way, then, in the inscription – to be exact in that part of the dedication that records her foundation – Xenokrateia speaks for her son.

The two other cases are less evident, but they both share the peculiarity that the name of the woman’s child precedes the name of the woman’s husband.\(^{31}\)

In the Knidos inscription, the child is a daughter. The dedication is made for the goddesses who are the archetypical mother and daughter. However, in this case the younger goddess Kore is named first, contrary to the usual order. Likewise, the dedicant’s daughter precedes the dedicant’s herself (*mother of Chrysogone, wife of Hippokrates, Chrysina…*). There is an obvious attempt to parallelize the relationship of daughter and mother on both the divine and the mortal level. The focus on the daughter (the divine and the mortal one) might have been enhanced by the statue that likely represented Kore.\(^{32}\) Furthermore, the foundress is to serve as *propolos* for the goddesses. The inscription stops short of saying that the daughter should follow her mother in that function one day.

As for Nikagora, the foundress in Sikyon, we have only the short notice of Pausanias, citing her as the mother of Agasikles before calling her the wife of Echetimos; and we have, of course, the cult recipient, Asklepios. The emphasis on Nikagora as a mother and the fact that she founded the cult of a healing god suggests a connection.

---

714, also assumed that Tathne was the name of the site of the *temenos*). Chrysina’s inscription, however, may be a little later than the earliest evidence we have for the establishment of this sanctuary, the mid-fourth century statue of the seated Demeter in London (see below n. 32); Blümel, Die Inschriften von Knidos, I (cit. n. 26), p. 76.

30 Kron, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism (cit. n. 2), p. 168. – Walter, Die Reliefs (cit. n. 24), pp. 100–104, suggests the possibility that Xeniades was not the first-born son (who would have received the name of his father’s father) but the second son, bearing the name of his mother’s father. However, in this case the missing father would be even more surprising. – Purvis, Singular Dedications (cit. n. 2), p. 31, hypothesizes that Kephisodotos (who dedicated a contemporaneous relief in the same sanctuary, see n. 22) was Xenokrateia’s husband.

31 Cf. Telestodike’s dedication (Paros, late Archaic times); Kron, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism (cit. n. 2), pp. 157–158 (dedication for her son?).

32 Suggested already by Kron, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism (cit. n. 2), p. 152, n. 62 (the cavity on top of the statue base belongs to a standing figure). Both goddesses could be represented standing. However, according to the evidence of votive reliefs, in the fourth century there is a certain preference for showing Demeter seated and Kore standing, see Comella, I rilievi votivi greci (cit. n. 7), pp. 194–209, figs. 110, 113–115, 117, 127. The statue of Demeter found in the sanctuary (mid-fourth century BCE, now in London, BM) is seated: Kron, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism (cit. n. 2), pp. 150–152, fig. 7. – Connely, Portrait of a Priestess (cit. n. 1), p. 135, assumes that the base supported Chrysina’s portrait statue. However, the word *agalma* suggests the statue of a divinity.
Nikagora might have called on the god for facilitating conception or for the delivery of her child, or she might have entrusted her son to the healing god for his well-being during childhood.

Given the fact that there is so little evidence for female founders in Classical times one should be careful with generalizing conclusions. The following remarks, however, seem justified. I asked whether the ostentatious emphasis on motherhood in these cases pointed to the fact that these women were widows who acted on behalf of their dead husbands. After all, a child, male or female, was primarily thought of as the child of its father; and although mothers would, of course, have prayed, sacrificed and given offerings for the well-being of their children, the public record of the concern for a child would be expected from the parents as such. On the other hand, male founders do not generally make references to their families. That is why I see no necessity to interpret these female founders as substitutes for male founders.

The motivation of these mothers in recording their activities was the wish to secure the permanence of the cult institution, outlasting the respective foundress herself, so that the child would continue to profit from the cult recipient's beneficial disposition. Asklepios and the river god Kephisos were archetypical gods for the well-being of the young. In the case of Chrysina, her daughter was the person who would suggest herself as Chrysina’s successor as temple servant in the cult.

According to Plato's statement, we can expect women to have founded cults for their own interests and benefits. The scant nature of the evidence leads to the conclusion that whenever women made the effort to leave a lasting record of their activity, they did so for their children, either because of the benefits their children could expect from the cult recipients or because of the function in the cult their children might inherit from their mothers.

**Visibility in Modern Scholarship: The Vanished Foundress**

There is another difficulty with female founders: their visibility in modern scholarship. In his seminal book on the cult of Asklepios, Jürgen Riethmüller twice refers to Pausanias’s statement about Nikagora, the foundress of the sanctuary of Asklepios in Sikyon, and twice he paraphrases the ancient author’s words. Twice he speaks of Nikagora as the *wife of Echetimos, mother of Agasikles* (whereas Pausanias mentions the son first, then the husband: see Text 1). By subconsciously twisting the statement about Nikagora’s relation to her kin, Riethmüller misses the point that Pausanias implicitly makes.36

---

33 Suggested by Riethmüller, Asklepios (cit. n. 7), pp. 132, 233 (cf. below n. 36).
34 In the case of Archedemos’s dedication to the nymphs (see n. 9) one might have expected a reference to a family or children, given the fact that the nymphs were kourotrophic deities and often associated with (divine and mortal) children. Parker, Polytheism (cit. n. 21), pp. 430–431.
35 This interest is voiced in votive inscriptions, e.g. that of the priestess Timo of Erythrai (fourth/third century BCE): Timo dedicates a portrait statue of herself, as a lasting reminder for children and descendants; Kron, Priesthoods, Dedications and Euergetism (cit. n. 2), p. 149. – Dedications, on the other hand, could not expect the same longevity as the foundation of a cult.
36 Riethmüller, Asklepios (cit. n. 7), pp. 132, 233. He does end up suggesting the god’s help in getting pregnant as one of the possible motivations for Nikagora’s foundation because, as he says, this might account for the “otherwise unmotivated reference to her son”, ibid., p. 132.
Whereas in this case a peculiarity of a person’s characterization was simply overlooked, there are cases in which obvious evidence is simply ignored, misunderstood or misinterpreted. There is a very prominent example which I would like to mention here (although the foundress belongs to a later period than the one I have focused on thus far).

The excavations in the Panhellenic sanctuary in Olympia brought to light the substantial remains of a fountain building, including equally substantial remains of the building’s sculptural decoration (mid second century CE; Fig. 7). The inscription recording the dedication is fully preserved and perfectly readable, and it states that Regilla, priestess of Demeter, donated the whole complex (Text 4; Figs. 5–6). Regilla is a very well-known person. She was a member of a noble Roman family, related to the empress Faustina the Elder; her husband Herodes Atticus was immensely rich and a well-known sponsor and patron. Statues of members of the imperial family and statues of the family of Regilla and Herodes were placed in niches behind the water basin. This fountain, a so-called nymphaeum, was situated in a most prominent spot of the sanctuary, close to the oldest temple and the treasuries, and it was one of the major monuments in the sanctuary in the Roman imperial period.

Now go to Olympia and ask for the nymphaeum of Regilla, or go to a library and check the publications on Olympia for that complex. You will look in vain. The prestigious donation is known among tourist guides and archaeologists as – the nymphaeum of Herodes Atticus.

---


40 Bol, Das Statuenprogramm (cit. n. 38), pp. 50–58, Beil. 4–5.


42 This is the title of Renate Bol’s authoritative publication: Bol, Das Statuenprogramm (cit. n. 38). See also Galli, Die Lebenswelt eines Sophisten (cit. n. 38), pp. 222–227; P. Valavanis, Games and Sanctuaries in Ancient Greece, Athens 2004, pp. 185–188. – Regilla’s husband financed the water conduit in Olympia, Galli, Die Lebenswelt eines Sophisten (cit. n. 38), pp. 222–223. He is not, however, named in the dedication of the nymphaeum (see n. 38).
This is a drastic example, but it can remind us of the extent to which our interpretations depend on our preconceptions. The most unequivocal evidence is no help if we close our eyes. The search for female founders will to a large degree depend on the disposition to find them.

**Texts:**

1. **Text 1:**
   
   Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2, 10, 2–3
   
   Erinθέθην ἐστιν ὁδὸς ἔς ιερὸν Ασκληπιοῦ. ... ἐσελθοῦσι δὲ ὁ θεός ἐστιν οὖς ἔχων γένεια, χρυσοῦ καὶ ἑλέφαντος, Καλάμιδος δὲ ἐργόν ἔχει δὲ καὶ σκήπτρον καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐτέρας χειρὸς πίτυς καρπὸν τῆς ἁμέρου. φασὶ δὲ σφισιν ἐξ Ἐπιδαύρου κομισθῆναι τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ ζεύγους ἡμίονων δράκοντι εἰκασμένον, τὴν δὲ ἀγαγοῦσαν Νικαγὸραν εἶναι Σικυωνίαν Ἀγασικλέους μητέρα, γυναῖκα δὲ Ἐχετίμου.
   
   From there there is a way to a sanctuary of Asklepios. ...
   
   For those who enter there is the god, beardless, (made) of gold and ivory, a work by Kalamis. He holds a scepter and in the other hand a cone of a cultivated pine tree. They say that they got the god from Epidaurus (on a chariot drawn) by a pair of mules, represented by a snake, and that she who brought him was Nikagora from Sikyon, mother of Agasikles, wife of Echetimos.

2. **Text 2:**


   Ξενοκράτεια Κηφισοῦ ιερὸν ἱδρύσατο καὶ ἀνέθηκεν ξυμβώμοις τε θεοῖς διδασκαλίας τόδε δῶρον, Ξενιάδο θυγάτηρ καὶ μήτηρ ἐκ Χολλείδων, θύεν τῶι βουλομένω ἐπὶ τελεστῶν ἀγαθῶν.

   Xenokrateia founded a sanctuary of Kephisos and dedicated this gift also to the divinities (worshipped) at the same altar, because of (or: for) instruction, daughter and mother of Xeniades, from Cholleidai. Who wishes to sacrifice (is free to do so) for the fulfillment of good things.

3. **Text 3:**

   http://epigraphy.packhum.org / inscriptions / main.s.v. Asia Minor: Caria Ik Knidos I 131

   Κούραι καὶ Δάματρι ὁικὸν καὶ ἄγαλμ' ἀνέθηκεν | Χρυσογόνης μήτηρ, Ἰπποκράτους δὲ ἀλοχος, |
Χρυσίνα, ἐννυχίαν ὡς ἱερὰν ἰδοῦσα ἵππος γὰρ νιν ἐφησε θεαῖς Ταθνη προπολεύειν.  
For Kore and Demeter Chrysina, mother of Chrysogone, wife of Hippokrates, dedicated an oikos and a statue, after she had seen a holy vision at night. For Hermes told her to be a temple servant for the goddesses at Tathne.

Text 4:
Bol, Das Statuenprogramm (cit. n. 38), p. 109

Illustration credits: Fig. 1: DAI INST Athens Neg Hege 1135 (photographer: W. Hege). – Fig. 2: after Travlos, Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Attika (cit. n. 22), p. 291 fig. 364. – Fig. 3: after J. N. Svoronos, Das Athener Nationalmuseum, Athen 1908, pl. 182. – Fig. 4: after M. J. Mellink, Archaeology in Asia Minor, in: American Journal of Archaeology, 72, 1968, p. 137 pl. 59 fig. 23. – Fig. 5: DAI INST Athens 79 / 468 (photographer: G. Hellner). – Fig. 6: DAI INST Athens 79 / 467 (photographer: G. Hellner). – Fig. 7: after Bol, Das Statuenprogramm (cit. n. 38), Beilage 5.

Regilla, priestess of Demeter (dedicated) the water and the things around the water to Zeus