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THE ICONOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION
OF THE LUDOVISI THRONE

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts

by
Merav Banai, B.A.

The Ohio State University
1983

Approved by

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INTRODUCTION

The relief called "Ludovisi Throne", found in the last century in the gardens of the Villa Ludovisi and now placed in Terme Museum in Rome, has been the subject of numerous studies concerning its style, use, date, origin and iconography.

The present work will focus on the iconography of the Ludovisi Throne and attempt to find an acceptable explanation of its scenes. Iconographically, all three panels should be considered one unit, and an interpretation should provide a reasonable explanation for both the main and the side panel scenes. In order to accomplish this, literary evidence, vase paintings and other objects of art will be examined in connection with the major explanations that have thus far been attempted. This discussion will include only the most relevant examples and supporting evidence, and include objects of art dated up to the end of the fifth century B.C.

The discussion of date, style and function of the Ludovisi Throne is beyond the scope of this study. Furthermore, the Boston relief which so many scholars have connected with the Ludovisi Throne, as mentioned in Chapter I, will not be treated here.

The most common interpretation for the Ludovisi Throne was, and still is, the birth of Aphrodite from the sea. In order to prove that this is indeed the most logical interpretation, the discussion here will start with a brief description of the "throne" indicating the major interpretations suggested for it. In Chapter II, two of the suggested interpretations — Persephone or Pandora as a goddess
rising from the earth, will be presented in detailed discussions. Chapter III will examine other interpretations of a birth scene, Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth and the birth of Erichthonios and Dionysos. Chapter IV will be dedicated to the most acceptable interpretation, the birth of Aphrodite. Here also we suggest the origin of the Ludovisi Throne.
CHAPTER I

THE LUDOVISI THRONE AND THE QUESTION OF ITS INTERPRETATION

The so-called Ludovisi Throne is a three-sided marble relief from the Transitional period, dated c. 460 B.C.

The three-sided relief is carved from a single block of Parian marble. The front has a rectangular shape and the two side panels are at right angles to the front. The upper edges of the side panels slope down towards the back. The back was hollowed out. The top, bottom and end surfaces are smooth, but the inner faces are rough and unfinished. The upper part of the front panel is broken away, and the preserved edges at the corners show that they slope slightly downwards and suggest a form of a low gable. The side panels were perhaps originally rectangular.

The outer faces of the front and the two wings of the "throne" are decorated with sculpture in low relief. The scenes consist of three figures in the front and one figure on each side. The figures on the sides are seated with their backs to the front scene (fig. 1a, b).

Although the main intention of the present work is to discuss the meaning of the scenes on the Ludovisi Throne a little should be said concerning its date and style. All agreed that the Ludovisi Throne belongs to the Transitional period. The dates proposed vary between 470 and 450 B.C. One opinion even tried to attribute it, together with the Boston relief, to a specific historical event between the years 479 and 471 B.C. Ridgway claims that the style of the Ludovisi Throne belongs to around 460 B.C.
As a work of the Transitional period the monument shares both Archaic and Classical elements. The artist emphasizes both frontal and profile views and distorts proportion to fit the design, all Archaic traits.

The central figure in the front panel (fig. 1a, b) is a woman, or a goddess, her body in frontal view and her head in profile, looking up. She wears a thin cloth which clearly reveals the form of her body. The lower part of her body is hidden by a piece of cloth held by the two female figures at her sides. These two attendants are standing on a stony ground, bend towards her, and support her under her arm-pits, as shown by the tips of their fingers. Their arms are unnaturally long. One of the figures, that to the left, wears a Dorian peplos, the other one — the Ionic thin linen chiton without the upper garment. Both garments reveal the body from beneath. Both figures wear sandals.

On the left side panel is a girl in profile toward the left, playing a flute, seated on a folded cushion with her back to the main scene. Her right leg is crossed over the left one. She is nude with the exception of a scarf around her hair. This flute-player is the first nude female figure that appears in major works of art (except the Orientalizing relief from Gortyn). Nude women appear in early ivories, bronze statuettes and vase-painting in the late Archaic period. But, for the first time in the fifth century they appear in narrative sculpture.

On the right side panel is a single figure in profile toward the right with her back to the main scene, sitting on a folded
cushion. This woman is dressed in a tunic and wears sandals while a cloak covers her head and arms. She is holding a small vessel, probably a box, and placing incense from it in a stand placed in front of her.

The form of the Ludovisi Throne does not provide us with a clear notion of its function. We do not know whether it was a single monument or was designed as a part, together with the Boston relief. As such they would be two parts of the same monument. An older theory, which gave rise to its name, held that it was the back and arms of a throne. This theory is unsatisfactory as its proportions do not fit a colossal statue, the sides are too deep and the back is too broad.\(^5\) Peterson suggested that together with the Boston relief they create the ends of a colossal couch which was used in a temple of Aphrodite.\(^6\) Hawes supported Peterson's theory. Based on literary evidence, representations of altars on vases and the good state of preservation of the marble surface, she came to the conclusion that the Ludovisi reliefs, together with those in Boston were parts of a couch-altar placed on a platform within a sanctuary.\(^7\) But the proportions of the two monuments do not fit the ends of a bed any more than they fit a throne. The other theories, a parapet above an opening in a pavement or a sarcophagus also prove to be unsatisfactory. A more acceptable explanation, supported by Caskey, is that the Ludovisi Throne together with the Boston relief were placed on the narrow ends of a long rectangular altar (fig. 2).\(^8\) His reconstruction is based on ruins of a similar altar dedicated to Poseidon found near Miletos from a much earlier period. In spite of the tendency of many scholars to see the
two monuments as two parts of one monument, it seems more acceptable to see each relief as a part of a separate monument, that of the Boston relief of later date inspired by the earlier prototype of the Ludovisi reliefs, both however made for the same purpose.

It is obvious that the three figures on the front and the single seated figures on the wings make some reference to a religious cult. But opinions differ as to whether to explain them as divinities or as human beings cloaked in symbolic significance.

The mythological interpretations of the Ludovisi relief are based on the assumption that the main scene shows a goddess rising with the aid of two attendants. The goddess has been variously identified as Aphrodite, Persephone, Pandora, Hera or Ge, as a goddess in birth or the goddess of childbirth. Most of these interpretations will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

The two female figures on the side panels must be explained in connection with the scene on the front. The most common and acceptable explanation is that they are types of worshippers of the deity in whose sanctuary the relief was used.

Goldman rejects the notion of childbirth and suggests a different meaning to the main scene on the Ludovisi Throne. He sees here a scene of purification of a goddess after giving birth, helped by two nymphs standing on a pebbly shore of a stream. The goddess is identified as Rhea, the great mother-goddess and the scene is her purification after she gave birth to Zeus. Her attendants raise the lower part of her garment since her body must be purified by the water of the stream. The artist shows the moment after the
purification when the nymphs lift the goddess out of the water and are about to let her garment fall. Rhea raises her head in gratitude to the nymphs. This interpretation is associated with the story mentioned in Pausanias\textsuperscript{10} of a certain river in Arkadia where the goddess Rhea was purified by the nymphs after giving birth to Zeus. This interpretation seems persuasive, but does not help to explain the side panel figures.

A somewhat different interpretation of the subject of the Ludovisi Throne has been proposed by Langlotz.\textsuperscript{11} He sees here a ritual bath, but does not identify whether the central figure is a goddess or a mortal. The two figures on the side panels are, according to this opinion, ministrants connected with the cult shown on the front.

Another goddess on the Ludovisi Throne is suggested by Casson.\textsuperscript{12} He sees in the relief a representation of the goddess Hera becoming a maiden by rising from the spring with the aid of two attendants, who are either priestesses or maidens. This suggestion is based upon both archaeological finds and literary evidence. Terracotta figurines found in the temple of Hera in Tiryns depict different forms of the goddess Hera. Some of these figurines (from the first half of the fifth century B.C.) illustrate the goddess with a square cloth in front of her breast, which is not part of her garment. The author sees in these figures representations of Hera as the goddess of matrons and the cloth in front of her as her cult attribute. The literary evidence for this is found in Pausanias' description of the Argolid\textsuperscript{13} in which he mentions a spring in which Hera bathes every year and becomes a maiden. These two proofs, according to
Casson, explain the scene of the Ludovisi Throne. Before the ceremony the goddess had the cloth on her breast; this symbolized matronhood, and by rising from the spring and letting the cloth down she becomes a maiden again. The fact that on the "throne" the goddess is not shown nude seems to the author to be in agreement with the representation of Hera in art, as Hera never appears nude in art. This interpretation, according to Casson, provides an explanation for the figures on the side panels. They could either be votaries or, more likely, figures of Hera the maiden and Hera the matron.

Contrary to the previously discussed mythological interpretations of the scenes on the Ludovisi Throne, Powers sees here mortals. In his opinion the main scene illustrates a woman in childbirth. Together with the side panels the throne represents different aspects of womanhood. The woman as child-bearer is illustrated on the front, the woman as the giver of pleasure in the nude flute-player and the woman as matron and nurturer in the clothed figure, on the side. This interpretation, interesting by itself, does not seem to fit an altar or a religious monument, which the monumentality and shape of the "throne" suggest, nor are there other comparable examples of mortals involved in such abstract or generic human activity at this date.

The above presented interpretations to the scenes of the Ludovisi Throne, mostly mythological, indicate the iconographic questions that the Ludovisi relief presents. Of the various interpretations to the scene — as birth of Aphrodite, Persephone or Pandora rising from earth, purification of Hera, the birth of the child Erichthonios or
Dionysos or the goddess of childbirth — the most acceptable is the birth of Aphrodite.

The fact that the figures on the side panels do not face the front scene but turn their back to it, brought into doubt whether the side panels' figures are directly connected to the front scene.  

It seems that they should be considered as related one to the others as long as there is a reasonable interpretation justifying it.
CHAPTER II

A GODDESS RISING FROM THE EARTH, PERSEPHONE OR PANDORA?

Among the interpretations of the scene on the central panel of the Ludovisi Throne is one of a goddess rising from earth. This goddess could be either Kore-Persephone or Pandora. But, as will be shown here, these interpretations, among others, are unlikely since both Persephone's return to earth and Pandora rising from earth are not illustrated in Greek myth and art in this manner. Both the background and the attending figures accompanying the goddesses normally differ from those of the main scene of the Ludovisi Throne.

Kore or Persephone (meaning, "the maiden") was, in Greek mythology, the daughter of Zeus and Demeter. Usually, but not always, Demeter and Kore were worshipped together. Thus, we would expect to find Demeter beside or represented in close association with Kore. Further, Kore was not a goddess, as all her functions were fulfilled by Demeter. In the early phase of religious development Demeter's name appears in cult contexts without her daughter Kore, but Kore rarely appears without her mother. Kore as a name for an independent deity started around the seventh century B.C. The name-form Kore is probably pre-Hesiodic, as both Hesiod (seventh century B.C.) and the author of the Homeric Hymn mention Persephone but not Kore. Kore's name first appears connected with that of Demeter, as Demeter-Kore. As the name Kore became detached to identify a distinct person from that of Demeter, it was associated with Persephone, who was regarded as the daughter of Demeter. The functions of Demeter and
Kore, influenced probably by the Mysteries, differed in that Kore was connected with the world of the dead, whereas Demeter was primarily an agrarian goddess. Demeter and Kore were considered two forms of the Earth-goddess or Corn-goddess, and as such were the Mother and the Maiden, and, in fact, were thought of as two forms of the same person. Moreover, in Greece proper it was at Eleusis that the Mother and the Maid achieved mythologically differentiated form as Demeter and Persephone and also took on their distinctive functions — of agriculture (Demeter) and of the underworld (Persephone).

The myth of Kore-Persephone is well known. She was carried off by Hades, and Demeter in her grief withdrew fertility from the earth. Zeus, fearing the destruction of mankind, sent Hermes to bring her back to earth. But Kore, as she had eaten some pomegranate seeds, had to spend some time every year underground. This myth agrees with the Eleusinian Mysteries — the Great Mysteries were celebrated in the autumn and the Lesser Mysteries in the spring.

The "Homer Hymn to Demeter" is the main literary source for that myth, and for the story about the return of Persephone to earth:

"Swiftly they [Hermes and Persephone] traverse their long course, and neither the sea nor river-waters nor grassy glens nor mountain-peaks checked the career of the immortal horses, but they clave the deep air above them as they went. And Hermes brought them to the place where rich-crowned Demeter was staying and checked them before her fragrant temple. And when Demeter saw them, she rushed forth as does a Maenad down some thick-wooded mountain, while Persephone on the other side, when she saw her mother's sweet eyes, left the chariot and horses, and leaped down to run to her... Then bright-coiffed Hekate came near to them, and often did she embrace the
daughter of holy Demeter: and from that time the lady Hekate was minister and companion to Persephone."

But, as will be shown here, the story about the return of Persephone to earth, as represented in vase painting, is not in full agreement with the hymn.

One example is a black figure lekythos by the Athena Painter, dated c. 470 B.C.\(^20\) (fig. 3). Here, the upper half of a woman, her colossal head and two raised hands, are shown rising out of the earth. At her sides are two men with hammers; one of them strikes her head. One column at either side indicates that the scene takes place in a sanctuary or in a temple. Harrison\(^21\) explains the scene as depicting the coming of Kore. Here, the artist seems to have added elements normally seen in the myth of the creation of Pandora (see below, p. 15 ff.) which helps to explain the presence of two figures with the hammers. The fact that the scene takes place in a sanctuary or temple may hint at the festivals that were celebrated for the Earth Goddess, Kore.

The myth is illustrated differently on red figure vases. One of them is one of four small scenes on the neck of an Attic volute-krater from Spina\(^22\) by the Painter of Bologna 279, a follower of the Niobid Painter; the date is about 450 B.C. (fig. 4). At the center of the scene a goddess with crown and sceptre rises out of the ground. She wears chiton and her himation covers the back of her head. Behind her stands a man with a long torch in each hand. He has a wreath and wears a short chiton and over it is a mantle of thicker material.
To the left and right of these two figures are satyrs with hammers greeting the goddess; two of them drop their hammers and dance. At the right side of the scene—a man stands dressed in a simple himation; at the left is a flute-player and a child. Beazley follows others and identifies the goddess as Persephone and the man behind her as the high priest of Eleusis. This scene is probably based on the actual celebrations of the Greater and Lesser Mysteries celebrated annually at Eleusis in honour of Demeter and Persephone-Kore. The torchbearer was the second in importance to the chief priest in these Mysteries.

From a slightly later date, about 440 B.C., is a bell-krater painted by the "Persephone Painter" (named after this scene). The scene, with each figure named, shows Persephone, Hermes, Hekate and Demeter (fig. 5). Persephone rises from an opening in the ground, while she raises her right hand in a gesture of surprise. She wears a chiton and himation and lifts her garments as she steps up. She also wears a diadem on her head. Behind the opening in the ground stands Hermes, her guide; he wears a chlamys, hat, and sandals, holds a kerykeion in his hand. Hekate lights the way with two torches. Hekate was a triple goddess combining the concepts of moon, earth and underworld goddess all in one. As an underworld goddess she was an attendant of Persephone. Behind Hekate, Demeter, with sceptre in her hand, waits for her daughter. The artist intends to depict here the moment when Persephone returns to earth and to her mother. Contrary to the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, mentioned above, Persephone and Hermes come on foot and not in a chariot. Furthermore
Nekate is present at the moment of the return instead of later. These deviations in art from those of the literary account occur frequently in translating myth into visual form. Indeed, the chariot is not shown in any of the representations of this theme on vases. It is also possible that the vase painters followed a different, now lost, version of the story.²⁶

A series of clay relief plaques, dating from the first half of the fifth century B.C., describe religious scenes and come from a sanctuary of Persephone at Locri. They provide us with a different representation of the story of the return of Persephone. On one of them, dated 455 B.C., a bearded male figure is shown carrying off a young woman in a chariot (fig. 6). Schefold²⁷ sees here Hermes bringing Persephone back from the underworld, although this scene can also be explained as Hades carrying Persephone off to the underworld.²⁸ If one accepts the first explanation we have here a representation of the story that is close to the Homeric Hymn.

Thus, all of the examples discussed above indicate that the main scene on the Ludovisi Throne can not be explained as the return of Persephone from the underworld, as neither the description of the myth in the Homeric Hymn, nor art work have elements found on the main scene of the Ludovisi Throne. Moreover, Persephone's myth does not help us to explain the figures on the main panel, nor do they provide clues to the identity of the woman holding an incense burner and the nude flute-player on the side panels.

Another goddess whose rising from earth is thought to be the subject of the Ludovisi Throne is Pandora. The well known story about Pandora
as it appears in Hesiod tells us that Zeus, in order to punish
Prometheus for stealing fire from the gods and giving it to mankind,
caused Hephaestos to create a beautiful woman of clay. Later,
according to the myth, she proves to cause many sorrows for mankind.
In the Theogony 29 Hesiod only mentions the new born maiden as a
"beautiful evil". But in Works and Days 30 she is already called
Pandora as all the gods gave her gifts.

The birth of Pandora most probably was a part of the lost drama
written by Sophocles, Pandora or the Hammerers, 31 which told of her
release from earth by hammers. Still the original meaning of Pandora
goes beyond the Hesiodic tale. Pandora was also a form of the Earth-
Mother rising in the spring. 32

In accordance with these two aspects of Pandora — an ancient
earth-goddess on the one hand and a woman made by Hephaestos on the
other — the various representations of the theme in art can be
interpreted. Moreover, Pandora, as a goddess rising from the earth,
could possibly be the meaning of the main scene of the Ludovisi Throne.
But, after a detailed examination of the representations of the Pandora
theme in art this is not the case here.

Pausanias 33 reports that the birth of Pandora was represented by
Phidias on the base of the famous statue of Athena Parthenos in the
Parthenon at Athens. From two copies of that statue we learn that the
scene illustrating the birth of Pandora by Phidias took place in the
presence of the Sun-god and Moon-goddess who each occupied either end
of the scene. 34 According to Pliny's report 35 twenty gods were de-
picted as attending. These two accounts together help us to
reconstruct a procession of deities bringing gifts to the new born Pandora between the end figures. As for Pandora, she probably stood between Athena and Hephaestos.

In vase painting there are not many examples depicting the story of Pandora. Among them we find two different aspects of the theme.

The first, a scene inspired by the story as told by Hesiod appears on a red figure krater in the British Museum by the Niobid Painter, 36 c. 460 B.C. (fig. 7). Here, on the upper of two registers of figures, Pandora stands frontal and erect, holding branches in each hand, surrounded on either side by some of the Olympian gods and other figures, Hermes and Iris. Zeus is seated on the left with a sceptre and thunderbolt. Athena to her right is about to crown her.

We also see the scene on another example, a red figure kylix 37 by the Tarquinia Painter, with the interior scene on white ground, dated 465 B.C. (fig. 8). It shows Pandora, a doll-like figure, standing between Athena and Hephaestos. Athena drapes her and Hephaestos adjusts the diadem on her head. Pandora is named here in the inscription [A]nesidora.

The second aspect is represented by a completely different scene, and appears on a red figure volute-krater by the Alkimachos II Painter in the Ashmolean Museum, 38 dated about 450 B.C. The scene on one side of the vase shows the birth of Pandora (fig. 9). Here, all the figures are carefully inscribed so there is no doubt of their identification. On the right — Pandora rises out of the ground, dressed in bridal drapery, with a crown and veil on her head. Her arms are outstretched toward the surprised Epimetheus, who moves forward to
help her holding a hammer in his hands. Greeting her, Eros flies above holding a fillet in his hands. Hermes, shown with his usual attributes, walks toward Pandora but turns his head back to Zeus who watches from the far left of the scene. The subject as depicted here is not based on Hesiod but on a version illustrating Pandora as an earth goddess released in springtime from her prison, the earth, after it has been struck by a hammer. It seems that to the primitive matriarchal Greek culture Pandora was an Earth goddess. But in patriarchal mythology, as in Hesiod, she became a mortal woman created by the Olympian gods. 39

Thus, none of the Pandora mythological examples discussed above, either in literary or vase form, explains the scene of the Ludovisi Throne, for on it we see no Olympic gods and we have two unaccounted-for female attendants. Only Pandora's gestures on the Ashmolean vase (fig. 9) resemble those of the goddess of the "throne". The other figures in the Pandora scene completely differ from those on the Ludovisi Throne. Even if we will try to explain the two attendants on the Ludovisi Throne as two goddesses or other female figures who help Pandora, the stony ground that appears on the Ludovisi Throne does not appear here. Moreover, the two figures on the side panels have no logical connection with either the story of the creation of Pandora or her rising from the earth.
CHAPTER III

A BIRTH SCENE?

A goddess giving birth to the child Erichthonios or to Dionysos, or the goddess of childbirth are additional interpretations suggested for the scene on the Ludovisi Throne and will be discussed in this chapter.

Carpenter interpreted the scene on the Ludovisi Throne as the goddess of childbirth, Eileithyia. But, as will be shown here his interpretation, although interesting, is not acceptable.

Eileithyia was the goddess of birth who attended women in childbirth and played a physical part in assisting the processes of birth. She was probably developed from the goddess Hera as she is often identified with her, or her name is used as an epithet of Hera. On occasion she is the daughter of Hera and sometimes she is identified with Artemis. There is no specific myth related to her and she appears as a subordinate figure in various stories of birth (as delaying the birth of Heracles).

Carpenter suggests that the scene on the main panel of the Ludovisi Throne illustrates a kneeling goddess whom he identifies as Eileithyia. His interpretation is based on a comparison of descriptions in Pausanias related to Eileithyia and an Egyptian relief showing a kneeling woman giving birth, in a similar pose to that on the throne. The passages Carpenter uses are related to different shrines of Eileithyia:
In Olympia:\textsuperscript{44}  
"...maids and matrons wait in the sanctuary of Eileithyia and chant a hymn; they also burn all sorts of incense..."

At the gate of Hermion in Argolis:\textsuperscript{45}  
"there is a sanctuary of Eileithyia within the city wall. They propitiate the goddess on a great scale daily with sacrifices and incense; and besides all this a vast number of votive offerings are made to her. But no one, unless perhaps the priestesses, is allowed to see the image."

A figure of Eileithyia at Aigion:\textsuperscript{46}  
"Her image is draped from head to foot in a robe of fine texture."

Referring to the Egyptian relief, Carpenter claims that the same theme, woman giving birth, is illustrated in the same way in spite of the fact that there is no direct connection between the Egyptian relief and the Ludovisi Throne. He argues that since there is no child being born on the Ludovisi Throne, it is a scene not of a goddess giving birth but of the goddess of childbirth — Eileithyia in the attitude of her votaries. He also claims that showing a god or goddess engaged in their specific function is quite common, as for example, Artemis, the goddess of hunters appears in hunt scenes, or Dionysos, the god of wine, appears drinking.\textsuperscript{47}  In the same way Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth, can appear as giving birth herself.

Carpenter himself feels that the real difficulty in his interpretation is the fact that Eileithyia's cult has no artistic prototypes. He overcomes this difficulty by identifying Eileithyia's cult
with that of Hera or Artemis, and he attributes the Ludovisi relief to a West Greek sanctuary of Hera-Eileithyia.\textsuperscript{48}

While Carpenter's citations from Pausanias would seem to explain the scenes on the Ludovisi Throne, artistic representations of Eileithyia are completely different. Pausanias' description of Eileithyia's shrines in Olympia and Argolis may explain the meaning of the figures of the side panels of the throne, the incense burner and the flute-player. But it does not explain why the latter is nude and, what is more important, it does not agree with the main scene. Pausanias' description stresses the fact that the figure of the goddess was hidden by clothes and that no one, except her priestesses, could see her. Therefore, it is unlikely that the same goddess on the one hand cannot be seen by her votaries and on the other hand will be shown on a relief in a scene of childbirth.

The representations of Eileithyia in art provide us with a new aspect of the goddess, and prove that the main scene on the Ludovisi Throne cannot be the goddess Eileithyia. In works of art she is usually represented as standing and draped.\textsuperscript{49} The most significant part of her representation, on vases and coins, is her gesture of upraised hands with opened palms.\textsuperscript{50}

In literary sources Eileithyia is often represented plurally.\textsuperscript{51} In Attica there were four Eileithyia sanctuaries.\textsuperscript{52} In the temple of Eileithyia at Athens there were three wooden images that were cult-statues of Eileithyia and it seems that the Athenians believed in multiplicity of Eileithyia.\textsuperscript{53} Pausanias\textsuperscript{54} mentions a sanctuary of "the Eileithyiai" in Megara, and Homer mentions Eileithyia both in
singular and in plural. \textsuperscript{55} This observation, as will be shown later, is important for the understanding of the character of the goddess. In vase paintings showing birth-scenes we find, according to the space allowed for the scene, one, two or three Eileithyiai. Two are more common, mainly for the sake of symmetry, as the number of Eileithyiai has no religious or mythological meaning. \textsuperscript{56}

Eileithyia, one or more, appear both on black and red figure vases representing mainly the birth of Athena. In these there is a uniformity of the concept, but variation in the details. Zeus is always in the center of the scene, seated on a throne, to the right. Only in a few instances is he portrayed frontally. Facing Zeus, or flanking him are the Eileithyiai, one or more. As spectators of the birth scene, the other Olympian deities are on both sides of Zeus: Apollo, Hermes and Poseidon, whenever they appear, are always behind Zeus and Ares is almost always in front of Zeus, at the extreme right of the scene. On many vases Zeus appears in labour, helped by the Eileithyiai. As for Athena, she usually appears emerging from Zeus' head. She also appears standing on Zeus' knees, armed but not fully grown, or fully grown and armed standing in front of Zeus. The Eileithyiai are present in each of these types of scenes — before Athena was born, when she emerges from Zeus' head and after her birth. The following discussion will show that in all these examples the Eileithyiai have the function of midwives.

The group of vases which show Zeus in labour helped by the Eileithyiai is confined to black figure vases. \textsuperscript{57}
An example illustrating a single Eileithyia is found on a black figure amphora from Vulci showing Zeus seated with Eileithyia in front of him and two watching gods at his sides (fig. 10). Another is a black figure amphora from Caere with one Eileithyia in front of a seated Zeus. Poseidon and Hermes (?) are behind him and Ares is on the other side. An example of this type but with two Eileithyias is found on an amphora at Munich (fig. 11). Here Zeus, with a sceptre, is sitting on a throne and is flanked by Eileithyias, their hands palm up in the typical gesture, helping the birth of Athena.

An example of a scene that is not limited to Zeus and the Eileithyias but also shows other deities is seen on a black figure amphora from Girgenti (fig. 12). Here Hermes appears at the left, moving to the right, together with Zeus and the two Eileithyias.

To the type of scene showing Athena emerging from Zeus' head attended by an Eileithyia belongs a black figure amphora, dated c. 550 B.C. (fig. 13). It is one of the rare examples where Zeus is portrayed frontally. Athena springs from Zeus' head, while Hera is to his left, Eileithyia to his right, both raising their hands in astonishment. At the ends are Hermes and a warrior. Perhaps Eileithyia in this example plays the role of a midwife rather than a deity.

While in the preceding examples Zeus is shown in labour helped by the Eileithyias, on other examples he is helped both by the Eileithyias and Hephaestos. This type appeared as early as the sixth century B.C. and remains the dominant type later on.

A black figure amphora from Vulci, dated 530-520 B.C. by the Antimenes Painter shows Zeus seated in the center of the scene flanked
by two Eileithyiai with hands raised, while Athena, fully armed, emerges from his head. They are accompanied by other deities: Hephaestos to the right and Hermes to the left (fig. 14).

The same scene with some variations appears on red figure vases, too. A red figure pelike from Vulci by the Birth of Athena Painter (name vase) dated 460 B.C. shows the figures of Zeus enthroned, frontal, one Eileithyia to the right with Artemis, and to the left — Hephaestos and Poseidon (fig. 15).

On the vases where Athena appears standing on Zeus' knees, armed but not fully grown, the scene is also attended by one or more Eileithyiai. An early example is a black figure amphora from Vulci (fig. 16). Here Zeus is seated with the new born Athena on his knees; in front of him an Eileithyia. The other deities are Apollo and Hermes behind Zeus and in front of him is Poseidon. Other examples follow the same scheme.

The Eileithyiai appear as well on vases which show Athena armed and fully grown standing in front of Zeus. On a black figure hydria from Vulci (fig. 17) by the Antimenes Painter, dated 520 B.C., Zeus is seated on a throne, to the left, holds a thunderbolt and a sceptre and Athena stands before him. Flanking the central group stand two Eileithyiai, Poseidon and Hermes.

Other art works which represent the scene of birth of Athena with Eileithyiai attending are a bronze and a marble relief. An Argive-Corinthian bronze relief from Delphi from the second or third quarters of the sixth century B.C. (fig. 18) depicts Zeus seated on a throne dressed in chiton and himation (?) and holds a bolt. Behind him stands
Eileithyia dressed in chiton and himation and raising her left hand with open palm to Zeus' head. In front of Zeus stands Hephaestos, or another male god, with his head turned toward Zeus, his left hand is extended with open palm and in his right hand he might hold an axe. This scene shows Zeus at the moment prior to the birth of Athena.

The other example is a marble relief found at Kadi Keui, the ancient Kalchedon, a colony of Megara and dated, according to the lettering of its dedication to 550-500 B.C. It shows (fig. 19) Zeus seated on a throne facing left, just before the birth of Athena. Two Eileithyiai are at either side of Zeus, one with her hand on his head and shoulder, the other holding his hands. Two smaller female figures appear at either side of the central group. At Megara there was a temple of Eileithyiai. This fact led Reinach to the conclusion that the relief was an ex-voto dedicated to Eileithyia. This relief most probably influenced the vase painters' representations.

On vases and reliefs showing the birth of Dionysos, Eileithyia plays a far less important role. One example, though, from fourth century B.C. should be mentioned here. It is a red figure south Italian vase, now lost (fig. 20). Here in the upper register Zeus appears seated on a throne, dressed in himation, thunderbolt in his right hand. Facing Zeus, Eileithyia fully dressed bending to get into a piece of cloth the child Dionysos who just emerged from Zeus' thigh. Behind Zeus stand two figures, Apollo (?) and Artemis (?). In the lower register, Athena and two maenads are seen. This example shows that in scenes of the birth of Dionysos, Eileithyia appears in the same way as in scenes of the birth of Athena. Another aspect of
the birth of Dionysos will be discussed in the following section.

The discussion above of both the literary evidence and the artistic representations of the theme of Eileithyia has led us to conclude that it cannot be the subject of the Ludovisi Throne. In vase painting the Eileithyiai always appear as helpful and benevolent deities and are mainly midwives. They may also be thought of as assisting in the childbirth by sorcery. 76

The interpretation of the subject of the Ludovisi Throne as the goddess Eileithyia may provide us with a partial explanation of the side panel figures. Musical instruments undoubtedly played an important part in ceremonies connected with birth of a child. But this does not help to explain the nudity of the flute-player. Further, Apollo playing a lyre on vases illustrating the birth of Athena suggests the healing power of the music. As for the other side panel, the place of the incense-burner is clear. It is rational in that incense accompanied prayers which in this case were offered for a successful birth.

Another birth interpretation to the scene of the Ludovisi Throne was the birth of the child Erichthonios or that of Dionysos. The pose of the central figure on the main relief of the "throne", that of a woman, frontal, emerging from below, her head turned aside and hands raised up, is like that found in scenes illustrating Ge handing the child Erichthonios over to Athena, or the pose of Semele giving birth to the child Dionysos. Only a few monuments are preserved illustrating these scenes and they provide us with a clear picture of the way in which these subjects were depicted in the fifth century B.C. In our
following discussions of both the birth of Erichthonios and Dionysos, as in our previous ones, the conclusion is inevitable — the "throne" cannot illustrate these themes.

Erichthonios, an Attic hero, in most versions of the story was considered son of Hephaestos and Ge (earth). He was taken care of by Athena. When born, Athena put him in a chest and gave him to Kekrops' daughters. Although forbidden to do so, they opened the chest and saw the child in it. In some versions of the story the child Erichthonios took on human form and had two serpents surrounding him. According to other versions the upper part of his body was in human form and the lower part, a serpent. In the version followed by Pausanias 77 Erichthonios was a serpent. When Pausanias describes the statue of Athena in the Parthenon Temple on the Acropolis, he mentions that the serpent beside her was probably Erichthonios. It seems that in the older form of the legend, Erichthonios was the sacred serpent of Athena that lived in the Erechtheum and guarded the Acropolis. The story which held that Erichthonios was half man and half serpent, or a man guarded by serpents, probably represents a common evolutionary stage in the development of the mythological belief; in which case an animal god evolved from the animal form to the human form. 78

The birth of Erichthonios as a subject in art was relatively popular and appears on a number of vase paintings and reliefs. An example is a red figure stamos 79 dated c. 450 B.C. by the Painter of Munich 2413, shows the scene of birth of Erichthonios (fig. 21). In the center, Ge emerges from the earth and presents the infant Erichthonios to Athena in the presence of Hephaestos and two Erotes.
Hephaestos wears only a clamys draped on his shoulders and holds a long staff. While most scholars identify the god here as Hephaestos, Cook suggests that he might be Poseidon or Kekrops.\footnote{80}

The identify of the god is secured by his appearance in a similar scene on a red figure kylix from Tarquinia\footnote{81} from 435 B.C. by the Codrus Painter (fig. 22a, b), where all the figures are named. In this scene Ge presents the child Erichthonios to Athena and behind Ge, Kekrops appears with a serpent tail, while behind Athena, Hephaestos stands, wreathed, with a clamys over his shoulders and holding a long knobby staff in his right hand. Behind him is one of Kekrops' daughters. The scene continues to the other side of the vase. Here Erichthonios appears between two of the three daughters (one is illustrated on side A) of Kekrops and at the rear of the procession are two men, Aigeus and Pallas, who later, as Erichthonios, become kings of Athens.

Another illustration of the story is on a red figure hydria from Chiusi (?)\footnote{82} in the British Museum, dated 450 B.C. by the Oinanthe Painter. In this case there is a doubt as to the identity of the child. Ge emerges from the ground and hands over the child to Athena, as the child extends his arms toward her (fig. 23). Athena, armed, receives the child into a striped mantle. Zeus, facing Athena, is dressed in a himation with a pattern similar to that held out by Athena, wreathed and holds a thunderbolt in his left hand. Behind Athena, Nike extends a fillet to the child with her outstretched hands. Touching Zeus' shoulder is a woman who is named Oinanthe, dressed in a long chiton. Oinanthe, "Wine bloom", which is a Dionysiac name,
caused some scholars to conclude that the scene here might instead be the birth of Dionysos. The presence of Zeus supports interpreting the child as Dionysos and not Erichthonios as, on representations of the birth of Erichthonios, Hephaestos, instead of Zeus, is present. Therefore, Harrison explains the vase as the birth of Dionysos portrayed in the manner of the birth of Erichthonios. Cook, on the other hand, interpreting the child as Erichthonios, based his opinion on the fact that this scene was similar to others that with certainty represent the birth of Erichthonios. In this case the figure on the extreme left could be identified as Hebe, the goddess of youth and daughter of Zeus and Hera.

This subject also appears with a similar composition on reliefs. A terracotta relief (fig. 24) now in Berlin, dated 490-470 B.C., shows Ge as a massive figure with long heavy hair; she emerges from the ground with only her head, shoulders and hands illustrated. She hands the infant Erichthonios to Athena, who comes from the left and is dressed with helmet. Behind Ge, Kekrops, bearded, with a snake-like tail, holds in one hand a spray of olive, while with the other he holds his forefinger to his lips, in order to call for a silence at the birth of the holy child.

Inside the Hephaesteion in Athens there was a sculpture in front of the pedestal of the statues of Athena and Hephaestos that perhaps represented the birth of Erichthonios. The literary evidence reports that "in the temple of Vulcan and Minerva, which the two shared at Athens, was a boy wrapped in the coils of a snake." Though no precise identification can be confirmed, the presence of Hephaestos
and Athena, as in other scenes of the birth of Erichthonios, lead us to conclude its interpretation as Erichthonios.

The foregoing examples show that there is a certain uniformity in the representation of the subject of the birth of Erichthonios. It probably stemmed from an earlier tradition than that of the date of the examples discussed here, and it continues to be illustrated later on.

The subject, the birth of Erichthonios, was a suitable representation for a relief connected in one way or another to a temple or a sanctuary. Sanctuaries were often in association with ancestors and great heroes and their representations in close connection with the cult is a clear and well known tradition. But the manner in which the theme of the birth of Erichthonios appears in art differs significantly from the main scene on the Ludovisi Throne. In all the representations of the birth of Erichthonios the new born child is the center of the scene, all attention is focused on him and all the other figures are in some way connected with him. The presence of the child is the necessary and major element. But it is completely missing in the main scene of the Ludovisi Throne; there is no child here. And if the figure Ge was intended, her hands outstretched as if to give the child over to Athena, she becomes meaningless without the child's presence. Further, Athena cannot be identified as one of the women on the relief, nor can either of the two attendants be identified using this interpretation.

As for other details provided on the throne, the woman is more probably emerging from the sea; for the ground appears as if it were
composed of small beach pebbles, while Ge, as Earth, naturally emerges from the earth. Further, the piece of cloth that the two attendants hold between them is not extended as if ready to cover a new born child as seen on the British Museum vase (fig. 23). In addition to this the figures of the side panels of the Ludovisi Throne cannot be interpreted in a reasonable connection with the story of Erichthonios. Consequently this scene on the throne cannot refer to the birth of Erichthonios.

In our previous discussion of the hydria from Vulci in the British Museum (fig. 23) we noted the possibility that the new born child there is Dionysos and not Erichthonios. Indeed, the birth of Dionysos has been one of the suggested interpretations of the scene on the Ludovisi Throne.

Dionysos was the son of Zeus and the mortal Semele. Semele died when she asked Zeus to appear to her armed with his thunderbolts. Since she could not stand the divine fire she was burned to ashes. But Zeus succeeded in saving the unborn child before her death, and placed it in his thigh. Later the child was born from Zeus' thigh.

"Semele" is also a Greek modification of the name "Zemelo", which is the name for the Phrygian earth-goddess. So Dionysos is the son of an ancient Earth-goddess Semele. The general opinion of both ancient and modern authors is that Dionysos came from Thrace.

The birth of Dionysos at Semele's death was not a very popular subject in art. Obviously the more frequent representation is what one may call the "second birth" of Dionysos from the thigh of Zeus. However, it is the "first birth" of Dionysos from Semele that might
be the subject of the Ludovisi Throne.

The scene on the vase from Chiusi (fig. 23) has been interpreted by some as Ge handing over the child Dionysos to Athena. The attending figures have been explained as Zeus, Nike, and Oinanthè.

A clearly identifiable example of this subject is found on a hydria dated 390 B.C. (fig. 25), by the Semele Painter. In the upper part Zeus, Aphrodite, two Erotes and two attendants with gifts are seen. Below it is the main scene showing Semele, on her death bed, Hermes with the child Dionysos, clothed and identified with an ivy wreath, on his left arm. Behind Hermes is a nymph of Nysa. Hera, Iris and two mortal figures also appear here.

We arrive at the same conclusion as above in our previous discussion of the theme of the birth of Erichthonios on the Ludovisi Throne. The scene cannot represent the birth of Dionysos. The major element of the birth scene, the child, is missing. But unlike the case of Erichthonios' birth the two figures on the side panels of the Ludovisi Throne might have a connection to Dionysos' cult, for women were the primary participants in his rituals.

The discussion above of the birth of a specific child, Erichthonios or Dionysos, shows once again that one should look for a different interpretation to the Ludovisi Throne.
CHAPTER IV

THE BIRTH OF APHRODITE

Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty and fertility, was worshipped throughout almost all the Greek world. In Homer she is the daughter of Zeus and Dione, the wife of Hephaestos, and in a later myth, the wife of Ares. Also, she was the wife of the Trojan Anchises and thus the mother of Aeneas. She was both "Aphrodite Ourania" who personifies the intellectual love, and "Aphrodite Pandemos" who personifies the sexual love.93

Originally she was an Oriental divinity94 and retained many Oriental traits in her local cult in Greece. She certainly was akin to the Semitic goddess Astrate.

The meaning of the name "Aphrodite" is uncertain. From Hesiod95 on the Greeks derived it from "aphros", "foam" and told the myth of her birth from the sea.96 According to this myth she was born from the seeds of Uranus. Cronos bit off the genitals of Uranus and flung them into the sea, foam gathered about them and from this sea-foam Aphrodite rose and was carried to land on a sea-shell.

This myth of Aphrodite's birth from the sea was very popular in art throughout the ages, and it appears in vase paintings, reliefs and other objects of art.

The myth of Aphrodite rising out of the sea was represented by Phidias on the pedestal of the great statue of Zeus at Olympia. According to Pausanias97 the central scene there was the birth of Aphrodite from the sea: "Love [Eros] receiving Aphrodite as she
rises from the sea and Persuasion [Peitho] is crowning Aphrodite."
Around this birth scene were, as Pausanias describes, on each side
three pairs of deities and at the edges the Sun and the Moon. Another
representation of birth of Aphrodite from the sea appears, again ac-
cording to Pausanias,\textsuperscript{98} at Corinth, on the pedestal of the statues of
Amphitrite and Poseidon on a chariot. There was a relief on which "in
the middle is the Sea holding up the child Aphrodite and on either
side are the Nereids."

The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite\textsuperscript{99} describes her birth from the sea,
received by the Seasons.

"For the West Wind breathed to Cyprus and lifted
her tenderly
And bore her down the billow and the stream of
the sounding sea
In a cup of delicate foam. And the Hours in
wreaths of gold
Uprose in joy as she came, and laid on her fold
on fold
Fragrant raiment immortal, and a crown on the
deathless head."

On vase paintings and other works of art appears the subject of
the birth of Aphrodite from the sea in several ways. A red figure
skyphos in Boston,\textsuperscript{100} by the Penthesilea Painter dated 460 B.C., shows
a goddess rising from earth with two Pans (fig. 26). The goddess is
dressed in Doric peplos, with an overfold around her waist and a
sakkos on her head, and she is lifting her garment with both hands.
At either side of the goddess, demons with goat heads and bodies of
men are dancing and looking toward her. The identity of this goddess
is controversial, as the lower part of her body, from her knees
downwards is concealed and she seems to be rising from some kind of
deep place which can be interpreted in various ways. Beazley\textsuperscript{101} and
Simon\textsuperscript{102} see here the birth of Aphrodite. Swindler\textsuperscript{103} and others\textsuperscript{104}
saw here Persephone rising from earth. The latter was the commonly
accepted interpretation of the subject of this vase for some time.
Caskey,\textsuperscript{105} by comparing this vase to other vases with similar scenes
but where the subject is clearer, proved it to be the birth of
Aphrodite.

A red figure pelike found at Rhodes, by the Erichthonios Painter,
dated 460 B.C.\textsuperscript{106} shows a rising goddess with half of her body con-
cealed. Hermes and Pan are present at the scene (fig. 27). The in-
scription, "Aphrodite" leaves no doubt as to her identity.

Pan's presence in the scene of the birth of Aphrodite is also
shown on a red figure hydria from the middle of the fifth century
B.C. in Syracuse\textsuperscript{107} in the manner of the Peleus Painter, with two
rows of pictures (fig. 28). There are no inscriptions here; how-
ever, there is no doubt that the subject in the upper register is the
birth of Aphrodite. In the center of the scene a figure of a goddess
emerges from the line that divides the two registers. She is dressed
in chiton and wears a diadem on her head. A winged nude Eros crowns
her, and a Pan is behind him. At each side of the main scene a
female figure is dressed in chiton and himation. They can be iden-
tified as the Moirai.\textsuperscript{108} On the left side of the scene there is also
the figure of Ares.

The foregoing interpretation is supported by two fragments of a
bell-krater by Polygnotos in Agrigento.\textsuperscript{109} Here, only parts of the
group in the middle, Aphrodite and Eros, are seen. From Aphrodite's figure only her face, neck and part of her left hand lifting her garment remain. Of the Eros figure who bends to assist Aphrodite only the head, arms and parts of the belly, thigh and wings remain. A few letters of the goddess' name are preserved, above her [APROD[ITE].

The last three examples (the pelike from Rhodes, the hydria in Syracuse and the fragments in Agrigento) suggest that the scene on the Boston skyphos is the birth of Aphrodite rather than Persephone, although there are a few elements which are similar to both of them. Persephone sometimes also wears a peplos with a long overfold, and both wear the sakkos. Persephone lifting her dress also appears on the vase (fig. 5) by the Persephone Painter.

A red figure hydria in Genoa, from 460-450 B.C., by the Painter of Bologna 417 shows a different type of scene (fig. 29). In the center a goddess dressed only in a chiton rises from below. She is received by a winged and slender Eros who greets her with the taenia in his hands. The goddess herself lifts her hands to take it from him. Behind the goddess, on the right, stands a woman, holding a piece of cloth in her hands with which she is about to wrap the rising goddess. The rising goddess greeted by Eros recalls the anodos of Pandora greeted by Eros as shown on the Ashmolean amphora (fig. 9). The landscape from which the goddess rises lacks definition and allows itself to be interpreted in different ways. It could be either the sea or the earth. Nevertheless, the figure at the right with the piece of cloth in her hands aids in clarifying the subject
of the scene — it is undoubtedly the birth of Aphrodite from the sea. A pyxis in Ancona by the Penthesilea Painter illustrates a similar scene (fig. 30). The newly born Aphrodite is rising from below the ground and is welcomed by Eros who extends a taenia as she steps up. Behind Aphrodite a woman, probably Hora, rushes forward offering a piece of cloth. Behind the Hora, another woman, with the inscription "Peitho" above her, holds a phiale in her left hand. Peitho is both cult-title of Aphrodite and a separate lesser deity who appears in art and literature as an attendant to Aphrodite. She also appears at the birth scene of Aphrodite on the base of the statue of Zeus at Olympia. Behind Eros, Zeus sits on a throne, facing right and turns back toward Aphrodite, holding out a palm branch in his right hand over an altar, and a sceptre in the other. He looks around toward the rising Aphrodite. To the right of Zeus stands Hera, also facing Aphrodite. Here all the figures are inscribed so there is no doubt as to their identity and consequently, the interpretation of the scene.

Unlike the depiction of a rising figure of Aphrodite on all of the previously mentioned vases, on a red figure pyxis from Athens, dated 475-450 B.C. by the Wedding Painter (fig. 31), she is a running figure. In this scene Aphrodite and Eros are at the center. Aphrodite is represented as a young girl dressed in a chiton and himation running toward the winged Eros. Eros extends his arms to support or welcome her. Women, full of excitement, run from both sides toward the central figures. They are bringing sashes, a perfume vase, a branch and toilet chest. These figures must be the Horai, or Seasons, who, according to the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, welcomed her after her birth.
Aphrodite is not accompanied by the same figures on all the scenes of the fifth century vases depicting her birth. On some of the vases she appears with Hermes and Pans, or with Pans only. These figures result from the influence of satyr plays. On other vases the goddess is welcomed and greeted by Eros accompanied by the other figures of the Horai, or the Seasons, who appear carrying a piece of garment. Only in one case do they appear carrying gifts.

The presence of Eros on scenes of the birth of Aphrodite is not limited only to vase paintings. We also find it on other objects of art.

A small silver-gilt medallion from Galaxidi now in the Louvre and dated from late fifth century B.C. shows Aphrodite rising from the waves, lifting up her mantle (fig. 32a, b). Eros bends over her and assists her ascent. The scene as rendered on this medallion is thought to be a copy of the lost scene on the base of the throne of Zeus at Olympia, created by Phidias.

The subject of the birth of Aphrodite appears on reliefs as well. One example is a relief from Locri dated 460 B.C. (fig. 33). Here, Aphrodite who just emerged from the sea is welcomed by two female figures. One holds a garment in her hands with which she is about to wrap the goddess. The second is standing with outstretched arms. The goddess here is shown in a smaller scale than the two accompanying figures. The childlike goddess is standing on a small elevation depicted with stylized waves behind it. Prückner sees here a depiction of the place in Locri where, according to the tradition, the goddess landed after her birth from the sea. The two attendants
are identified as two Horai.

A second example is a terracotta altar from Tarentum\textsuperscript{123} of the second half of the fifth century B.C. On it Aphrodite, Iris and Zephyros appear (fig. 34). Aphrodite rises from the sea in a chariot drawn by Iris and Zephyros. This motive of Aphrodite rising from the sea on a chariot recalls a Locrian terracotta relief mentioned earlier in connection with Persephone (fig. 6). Some scholars, as Simon,\textsuperscript{124} see in this relief Aphrodite rising from the sea, joined by Hermes on a chariot drawn by Iris and Zephyros. Prückner, known as one who attributes most of the Locrian pinakes to Aphrodite, relates this pinax to her as well. He identifies the figures here as Aphrodite and Hermes in a chariot drawn by a winged boy and girl.\textsuperscript{125}

The reliefs, like the vases, provide us with more than one version of the birth of Aphrodite from the sea. One, in which she rises from the sea and is welcomed by two Horai, in the other — she rises from the sea on a chariot.

To this point, we have discussed the works that can be related to the front scene of the Ludovisi Throne. In the following section vase paintings that are related to the scene on one of the side panels are presented.

One of the parallel scenes that can be offered for the nude female flute-player to the left side panel of the throne is that on a psykter in Petrograd, attributed to Euphrhonios\textsuperscript{126} (fig. 35). Here the female flute-player is completely nude, except for a sakkos over her hair, and leans against a cushion. The figure is almost identical with the one on the throne. Radford,\textsuperscript{127} who dates the vase "no later than
490 B.C." claims that the sculptor borrowed it from the vase painter. According to Caskey it is an exaggeration to see in the panel of the Ludovisi Throne a copy of the hetaira on the Petrograd psykter, in spite of the great similarity. 128

A second vase in Madrid 129 by Oltos shows a similar figure (fig. 36). Here, as well, the nude female figure is playing a double flute and is leaning against a cushion. Facing her, in this example, is another nude female figure with a phiala in her hand.

The most acceptable interpretation to the Ludovisi Throne is the birth of Aphrodite from the sea, and the nude female flute-player and the veiled woman burning incense are usually explained as two aspects of the cult of Aphrodite. 130 The first one would be a temple courtesan, the other — a married woman. 131 Richter 132 sees in the two side figures representations of "different followers of Aphrodite". Incense and music were appropriate accompaniments of worship in Greece. Aphrodite has been connected with music based on the many flute-playing and lyre-playing votive figures found in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Cyprus. 133

Studniczka 134 is the only one among those who accept the Aphrodite theme, who sees in the figures on the sides, mythological personnages. According to him, both the flute-player and the incense burner are representations of Aphrodite herself.

By comparing other representations of the birth of Aphrodite in art with the Ludovisi Throne one can very clearly see that the main scene on the throne indeed is the birth of Aphrodite from the sea. However, the horizontal line below the goddess, between the legs of
the two attendants, does not give a clear indication as to whether the goddess is rising from earth or from water. But as is shown on vases which depict the scene of the birth of Aphrodite from the sea, she rises from a horizontal base line (figs. 26-29). Only in rare instances, however, during this period does one find landscape depicted in either relief sculpture or vase painting. The normal symbol for water is a leaping dolphin. Beach or terrain is almost never found illustrated. In the present case the stony ground on which the attendants are standing leaves no place for a doubt that this is a pebbly seashore (fig. 37). Clear waves are seen on the medallion from Galaxidi (fig. 32) and on the relief from Locri (fig. 33).

The most convincing elements which support the interpretation of the birth of Aphrodite are the attendants of the goddess. On the Ludovisi relief we have no Eros, who commonly accompanies the goddess, nor Pan or Hermes, but we do have two attendants who can be explained as the Horai. The Horai, the goddesses of the Seasons in Greek mythology, were associated with many deities, among them Aphrodite. Horai accompany Aphrodite with a piece of garment in their hands on vases (figs. 29, 30) and on the relief from Locri (fig. 33). The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite also mentions (see above p. 33) the Horai welcoming Aphrodite at her birth. The preceding comparisons provide strongly convincing evidence that the Ludovisi Throne is a rendering of the birth of Aphrodite from the sea accompanied by the Horai.

Finally, the two female figures on the side panels must be explained in connection with the front scene. All of the other interpretations, save the birth of Aphrodite, failed to give an
appropriate explanation to the side panels' figures. These figures represent two aspects of the cult of Aphrodite. The veiled woman burning incense is a married woman and the nude flute-player a temple courtesan. Aphrodite was primarily a goddess of generation and fertility. This can explain the figure of a married woman on the right panel. The nude figure is related to the other aspect of Aphrodite — "Aphrodite Pandemos", in which sacred prostitution was connected with her cult.

As was mentioned before Aphrodite was associated with the cult of the goddess Astarte. Astarte was, among other functions, the goddess of sexual love, and as such temple prostitution was used in her cult. In general, the cult of Aphrodite as known from literary sources and monuments, was pure and austere. The most non-Hellenic element of her cult was the existence of religious prostitution. In Greece only at Corinth were impure practices used as part of ritual worship. The second place said to have practiced temple prostitution was Eryx, in Sicily, where there was a famous temple to Aphrodite. In connection with these two places, the temples of Aphrodite at Corinth and Eryx, Strabo uses the term "hierodouloi" who were most probably prostitutes. The provincial aspect of the illustration of sacred prostitution on the relief brings us to try to connect the Ludovisi Throne with a specific site.

Various attempts were made to identify the sanctuary or temple in which the Ludovisi relief was originally erected. Peterson and Colin attempted to connect it with the temple of Aphrodite at Eryx. Peterson claims that the Ludovisi Throne, together with the Boston
relief, were brought to Rome in the year 181 B.C. to the temple of Venus Erycina. Hayes suggests that the two monuments were made between the years 479–471 B.C. for the sanctuary of the Lycomids at Phlya in Attica, which was burned in the second Persian war and was restored by Themistocles. Ashmole and Prückner suggested Locri as the origin place for the "throne". They base their opinions on both archaeological and literary evidence. Ashmole claims that the Ludovisi Throne (together with the Boston relief) were set up, although not made, at Locri where the cults of Persephone and Aphrodite were celebrated.

Prückner attributes most of the Locrian pinakes of the fifth century B.C. to Aphrodite, while others attribute them to Persephone's cult. He claims that the Ludovisi Throne (and the Boston relief) stood in the cella of a temple which he attributes to Aphrodite. The circumstances for which these Aphrodite's pinakes were produced he connects with an historical event — the famous votum in 477/476 B.C. The citizens of Locri Epizephyrii vowed at this time to give their virgin daughters for sacred prostitution to Aphrodite in return for a military success. For the fulfillment of this vow, which remained in force for a few generations only, Prückner attributes the Aphrodite's plaques. According to some scholars this votum, most probably, was not fulfilled at all. Nevertheless, prostitution was an unusual practice, and was probably practiced at Locri only at this specific occasion. The fact that Eryx is connected in literary evidence with sacred prostitution and the location of a famous temple to Aphrodite there (while at Locri the major goddess was Persephone) favors
connecting the Ludovisi Throne with Eryx rather than Locri.

The birth of Aphrodite from the sea is the most acceptable interpretation of the subject of the front panel of the Ludovisi Throne. Aphrodite is not accompanied by Eros, nor by Hermes or Pan. She is accompanied by two Horai, Seasons, with mantle in their hands ready to wrap her body as she steps ashore. In the same way the myth of her birth appears in the Homeric Hymn, on some vases and on one of the Locrian pinakes. The scene is not the anodos, the rising up of Persephone from earth, although there are many similarities between representations of Persephone and Aphrodite in art. Nor can it be Pandora rising from the earth. As for a goddess giving birth — it cannot be the birth or Erichthonios or Dionysos as no child is represented as in scenes of their births. Nor can it represent Eileithyia, the goddess of child-birth as she always appears as an attendant in birth scenes and not giving birth herself.

Aphrodite's birth from the sea is the only acceptable interpretation for it gives logical meaning to both the front and side scenes. This interpretation is based on both the literary and artistic tradition. Moreover, the explanation helps to connect the Ludovisi Throne to the specific site of Eryx in Sicily.
NOTES


5 Caskey, AJA, 106. Dimensions of the Ludovisi Throne and the Boston relief:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ludovisi</th>
<th>Boston</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Width of front at bottom, outside</td>
<td>1.42 m.</td>
<td>1.6 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of front at top, outside</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of front at bottom, inside</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of front at top, inside</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of right wing at bottom, outside</td>
<td>0.705</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of left wing at bottom, outside</td>
<td>0.705</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height of front at right corner</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height of front at left corner</td>
<td>0.835</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height of front at centre</td>
<td>ca. 1.03</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of front and sides at bottom</td>
<td>0.175</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of front at top</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of right wing at top</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of left wing at top</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average height of relief</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 E. Peterson, Vom Alten Rom (Leipzig, 1911) in Caskey, AJA, 107.

7 Hawes, 292-295. For the dimensions of Boston relief see above note 5.

8 Caskey, AJA, 107.


10 Pausanias, 8, 41, 2.

12 S. Casson, "Hera of Kanathos and the Ludovisi Throne", JHS 40 (1920) 137-142.

13 Pausanias, 2, 38, 2.


17 Ibid., 122.


19 Homeric Hymn to Demeter lines 380-389, 438-440.


21 Harrison, Prolegomena, 279-283.


23 Beazley, Hesperia, 311-312.


31. Jane E. Harrison, "Pandora Box", *JHS* 20 (1900) 99.


33. Pausanias, 1, 24, 7.


37. London D4 from Nola: Cook, 3, pl. 27; ARV² 869, 55.

38. Oxford 525: Gardner, pl. 1; CVA 21, 1-2; 32, 6; ARV² 1562, 4.


41. Farnell, 2, 608.

42. Pausanias, 1, 18, 5.


44. Pausanias, 6, 20, 3.


47 Carpenter, 56.


49 Paul V.C. Baur, "Eileithyia", *The University of Missouri Studies* 1 (1901) no. 4, 75.

50 Farnell, 2, 613.

51 Baur, 76.

52 Pausanias, 1, 18, 5.

53 Baur, 15.

54 Pausanias, 1, 44, 2.


56 Baur, 77.


58 Cook, 3, 667, n. 1.


63 Cook, 3, 670-671.
64. H.B. Walters, *Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan Vases in the British Museum*, 2 (London, 1893) 155, no. B244, fig. 21; *JHS* 47 (1927) 78; Cook, 3, 675, n. 3 (1).

65. London E410: Cook, 3, 676, n. 3; *ARV*² 492, 1.


71. Pausanias, 1, 44, 2.

72. Reinach in Cook, 3, 668.

73. *AJA* 5 (1901) 462.

74. Baur, 85.

75. *Ibid.*; Cook, 3, 82 (4).

76. Baur, 82.

77. Pausanias, 1, 24, 7.


79. Munich 2413: Cook, 3, 184–185, pl. 23; *ARV*² 495, 1.

80. Cook, 3, 185, n. 1.

81. Berlin 2537: Cook, 3, 185–186, fig. 95; *ARV*² 1268, 2.
82 London E182: Harrison, Prolegomena, 405-406; Cook, 3, 182-183, pl. 22; CVA 85-1a, b; ARV² 580, 2.

83 Cook, 3, 183.

84 Harrison, Prolegomena, 405-406.

85 Cook, 3, 183.


87 Harrison, Themis, 263-264.


89 St. Augustine, De Civitale Dei, 18, 12.


92 Berkeley 8.3316: CVA 47-50; ARV² 1343, 1; 1691.


94 Farnell, 2, 619.

95 Hesiod, Theogony, 188-206.


97 Pausanias, 5, 11, 8.

98 Ibid., 11, 1, 8.

99 Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, 6, 2.


103 Swindler, 412.

104 Caskey and Beazley, 62.

105 *Ibid*.

106 Rhodes 12454, from Camirus: BCH 68-69 (1944-1945) 304-306, fig. 6; CVA 2, 2-3; 2, 1; ARV² 1218, 2.

107 Syracuse 23912, from Camarina: CVA 24, 1-3; ARV² 1041, 11.

108 There are only two here, but in Greek mythology the Moirai were the three birth goddesses identified with the Fates. The artist must have eliminated the third because of a lack of space.

109 Agrigento, two fragments (joining): Caskey and Beazley, 2, 62; ARV² 1029, 23.

110 J.D. Beazley, "Some Inscriptions on Vases IV", AJA 45 (1941) 599.

111 Genoa 1155: Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 309-311; CVA 6, 1-3; 7, 4; ARV² 917, 206.


113 Ancona 3130, from Numana: Andreas Rumpf, "Anadonene", JB 65-66 (1950-1951) 169, fig. 2; Beazley, AJA, 599; ARV² 899, 144.

114 Beazley, AJA, 599.

116 Pausanias, 5, 11, 8. For the figures on the base of the statue of Zeus at Olympia see above, pp. 32-33.

117 N.Y. 39.11.8, from Greece: G.M.A. Richter, "Recent Acquisitions of the Metropolitan Museum of Art", AJA 44 (1940) 183-185; Attic Red-Figured Vases, A Survey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958) 100, fig. 72; ARV² 924, 34.

118 Metzger, 308.

119 Paris, Louvre: Robertson, 1, 318; 2, pl. 120d.

120 Farnell, 2, 691.


122 Ridgway and Scott, 45.


124 Simon, pl. 22.


126 ARV² 17, 12.


128 Caskey, AJA, 118.

129 Madrid 11267: CVA 4, 1; ARV² 58, 53.


131 Caskey, AJA, 118.
132 G.M.A. Richter, "The Subject of the Ludovisi and Boston Reliefs", JHS 40 (1920) 119.

133 Ibid.

134 E. Studniczka, "Das Gegenstück der Ludovisischer 'Thronlehne'", JD1 26 (1911), in Caskey, Catalogue.

135 Walton, 80.


137 Farnell, 2, 635; Woodhouse, 605.


139 Strabo, 8, 6, 20 (Corinth); 6, 2, 6 (Eryx).

140 Hogarth, 672.


143 Hawes, 280-306.

144 B. Ashmole, "Locri Epizephyrii and the Ludovisi Throne", JHS 42 (1922) 252.


146 Boardman, CR, 144.

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fig. 1a  The Ludovisi Throne, c. 460 B.C.
Front and side panels
fig. 1b The Ludovisi Throne, c. 460 B.C.
Front and left side panel
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Amphora
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Amphora
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