

{1.27.3} The things about this that most of all cause-wonder [*thaumazein*] for me are not known to all, and so I will write down what happens. Two maidens [*parthenoi*] dwell [*oikeîn*] not far from the temple [*nāos*] of Athena Polias. The Athenians call them Arrhēphoroi. For a time they live their life [*diaita*] [there] at the place the goddess, but when the festival [*heortē*] comes round they ritually-perform [*drân*] at night the following. They place on their heads what the priestess [*hiereia*] of Athena gives them to carry [*pherein*]—neither she who gives it knows what it is that she is giving nor do they who carry [*pherein*] it understand what it is. Now, there is a precinct [*peribolos*] in the city, the precinct of Aphrodite-in-the-Gardens [*kēpoi*], as she is called. It is not far away, and there is an underground descending-passage [*kathodos*] that extends across it [= the precinct] not-artificially-but-naturally [*automatē*]. By way of this passage the maidens descend [*katiēnai*], and, down below [*katō*], they leave behind the things they were carrying [*pheromena*] and they take [*lambanein*] something else that they bring-back [*komizein*], covered-up [*kaluptesthai*]. These maidens [*parthenoi*], after this, they dismiss, and they now lead [*agein*] up to the Acropolis other maidens in their place.

(Pausanias 1.27.3)