

Agnodice Encyclopedia Article

Agnodice

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Agnodice

Third century A.D.

Greek female physician who disguised herself as a man to practice medicine, an occupation prohibited to women. According to legend, Agnodice once attempted to assist a woman crying out in the pain of childbirth. Thinking Agnodice was a man, the woman refused help, whereupon Agnodice lifted her tunic, revealing that she, too, was a woman. Agnodice was persecuted by male doctors, but her legend points to the realities of a male-dominated profession.