

PREFACE

This volume grew out of several separate projects which I have undertaken over the last several years, including a set of encyclopedia articles on Greek gods and goddesses, and a series of lectures which I delivered in 1996 at the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg to an extraordinarily receptive and encouraging audience. My goal in expanding the articles and lectures into the current book has been to express in a single volume of manageable size what I have come to regard as the most useful and illuminating modern and not-so-modern commentary on the divinities of the Classical world, supplemented by my own remarks and evaluations. In order to render the book as readable and useful as possible, I have not encumbered the text with footnote numbers; references to primary and secondary sources may be checked in the General Bibliography and Chapter Bibliographies.

I am grateful to many people for their assistance and encouragement. My good friend and colleague Charles Marie Ternes of the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg first suggested that I transform my lectures and articles into a book; he then encouraged me to submit it for publication in Luxembourg. Mark T. Riley of California State University at Sacramento read a preliminary draft of this book, making detailed and helpful suggestions for the production of the current text; faults and failings which remain are more than likely a result of my having ignored his good advice. I owe a particularly large debt of gratitude to my friend and colleague, Prof. Charles Marie Ternes of the Centre Alexandre-Wiltheim, Luxembourg, and the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg. Dr. Ternes encouraged me to write this book and offered many helpful suggestions during

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INTRODUCTION: THE TWELVE GODS

A brief comment on the Twelve Olympians and the twelve chapters of this book is in order. The Greeks assembled their gods into a company of twelve and I have chosen to supply twelve chapters on each of the members of one of various alternative lists of the Twelve. The number twelve is fixed in the various ancient lists which have come down to us; some names vary, Dionysus being frequently substituted for Hestia. Other lists of twelve differ quite drastically from that upon which this volume is based. I have followed here the selection of Twelve made for the central group of the Parthenon Frieze, leaving Hestia out and including Dionysus: Aphrodite, Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Demeter, Dionysus, Hephaestus, Hera, Hermes, Poseidon, and Zeus. Burkert regards these Twelve "quite simply as the gods of the Greeks;" without going quite this far, I would defend my choice of twelve divinities as being those gods who are not only enshrined in the Parthenon, the archetypal symbol of Classical Greek culture, but also those who are likely to be of most interest to modern readers.

Hestia, then, is not accorded a full chapter here. As the hearth, she is the physical manifestation of the center of the home, of the sacrificial fire of the temple (that is, the hearth of the gods), and of fire itself as one of the core prerequisites of civilized life. Plutarch (Life of Aristides, 20.4) refers to the ever-burning sacrificial fire at Delphi as being "the public hearth"; Hestia tends the shrine of Apollo at Delphi according to one of the two Homeric Hymn to Hestia (HH 24). Without Hestia, "mortals hold no banquet" (HH 29.5-6). As the hearth of the gods Hestia is, of course, a major divinity

but she may by definition never leave home, nor can she have lovers, family, interesting adventures, and so on. The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, perhaps the least Hestia-like of the Twelve Gods, amplifies this point:

Nor yet does the pure maiden Hestia love Aphrodite's works. She was the first-born child of wily Kronos and youngest too, by will of Zeus who holds the aegis, a queenly maid whom both Poseidon and Apollo sought to wed. But she was wholly unwilling, nay, stubbornly refused; and touching the head of father Zeus who holds the aegis, she, that fair goddess, swore a great oath which has in truth been fulfilled, that she would be a maiden all her days. So Zeus the Father gave her a high honor instead of marriage, and she has her place in the midst of the house and has the riches portion. In all the temples of the gods she has a share of honor, and among all mortal men she is chief of the goddesses. (Loeb translation)

Hestia is, then, a major divinity, both oldest and youngest of the children of Kronos in that she was the first to be born and swallowed, and the last to be regurgitated (cf. Hesiod, Theogony 454). Beyond this, however, she is somewhat uninteresting.

In discussing the Twelve Gods (ofl dēdeka theōn or simply ofl dēdeka), Guthrie points out in The Greeks and their Gods that they can be shown to have been conceived in Classical times as a kind of corporate body; this is shown in several ways, for example in the erection of the single Athenian altar to them which we shall discuss below, and in the common oath "By the Twelve!" (cf. Aristophanes' Knights, 235). Thucydides (6.54) and Herodotus (6.108; 2.7) both mention the altar to the Twelve at Athens, which according to Thucydides was set up in the agora by Peisistratus the Younger (grandson of the tyrant) and later enlarged. Six altars, each dedicated to a pair of gods, existed at Olympia, where Pindar (Olympian 10.50ff.) says that their cult was founded by Heracles.

O. Weinreich ("Zwölfgötter," in W.H. Roscher, Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie, Hildesheim, 1936) suggests that the twelve gods to whom the Athenian altar was dedicated in 522-521 BC were the canonical twelve of the time of the archon Peisistratus the Younger: Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes, Athena, Hephaestus, and Hestia. On the east frieze of the Parthenon (dedicated in 438), a slightly different set of twelve is depicted; Dionysus has replaced Hestia. Though a "late intruder and hardly of Olympian status," as Guthrie characterizes him, Dionysus could hardly be refused a place so close to his own theater. Hestia is displaced here and elsewhere with little surviving comment by ancient writers other than Plato's description of a procession of the gods; Hestia remains at home and the canonical number of twelve is made up without her presence (Phaedrus, 246e; R. Hackforth trans.):

And behold, there in the heaven Zeus, mighty leader, drives his winged team. First of the host of gods and daimons he proceeds, ordering all things and caring therefor, and the host follows after him, marshaled in eleven companies. For Hestia abides alone in the gods' dwelling place, but for the rest, all such as are ranked in the number of the twelve as ruler gods lead their several companies, each according to his rank.

We shall see that other variations from the Peisistratean Twelve are attested. At Olympia, the Titans Kronos and Rhea, plus the river-god Alpheus, take their place among the twelve gods, probably sometime between 470 and 400 BC, replacing Hephaestus, Demeter and Hestia. The change may have been made to pay particular honor to the parents of Zeus, the god to whom the site was primarily sacred, as well as to the god of the local river. In Laws (828), Plato suggests linking the twelve gods

with the months of the year; he would set the twelfth month apart from the others by devoting it to Pluto so that this portion of the year could be sacred to chthonic powers, as opposed to the celestial gods honored by the remainder of Plato's annual round of observances.

Weinreich collects an enormous amount of literary and archaeological data on altars and inscriptions dedicated to the Twelve Gods, from all parts of the Greek-speaking world: mainland Greece, Crete, Asia Minor, Sicily and Italy, including even some references to India. He follows U. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (Glaube der Hellenen, Berlin, 1931) in concluding that the cult of the Twelve originated in Ionia. In fact, the earliest cults of the Twelve Gods which can be dated with certainty are indicated by the 6th-century altars at Olympia and Athens mentioned above. Weinreich suggests that the Twelve served as guardian spirits of the twelve months and of the signs of the zodiac; as we shall see below, this association is late and based on the purely coincidental similarity between the Olympian Twelve and the twelve Egyptian gods of the months and of the zodiac. Weinreich maintains, probably correctly, that the Twelve were Olympian gods from the very beginning; A.E. Raubitschek challenges this conclusion, maintaining that the Twelve were originally local heroes or daimones ("Die Attische Zwölfgötter," in Opus Nobile: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Ulf Jantzen, Wiesbaden, 1969).

Charlotte R. Long, in The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome (New York, 1987), follows Weinreich to the extent of agreeing that the Attic Twelve "seem to have been major, named Greek gods from the start." She engages in a long-needed, comprehensive reassessment of the literary and epigraphical evidence for the

Olympian Twelve. Long points out that, while Greek texts frequently mention the number twelve, they seldom name the gods included in that number. While the figure twelve is firmly fixed in surviving sources, the actual composition of the company of major gods, when in fact it is revealed at all, may vary widely. In about 400 BC, for example, Herodorus named the six pairs of divinities to whom the altars at Olympia were dedicated: Zeus and Poseidon, Hera and Athena, Hermes and Apollo, the Charites and Dionysus, Artemis and Alpheus, Kronos and Rhea. These are by no means, as Long indicates, the twelve Olympian gods but "they could be regarded as the chief gods of Olympia," since the last three have cults virtually nowhere else. Long cites an Attic black-figure kyathos, approximately contemporary with the founding of the Peisistratean altar to the Twelve in Athens, which displays six pairs of gods: Zeus and (perhaps) Nike, Hephaestus and Aphrodite, Heracles and Athena, Dionysus and Hermes, Poseidon and Demeter, Ares and (probably) Hera. Even if, with Long, we equate the Charites with Aphrodite, the two sets of twelve have only seven members in common. The Athenian set of twelve on the kyathos is closer than the Olympian group to the Twelve of the Parthenon frieze, but it includes Nike and Heracles instead of Apollo and Artemis. Variations continue in the composition of the Twelve throughout ancient history, down to representations dating from the Roman era in Pompeii and Ostia; only the number twelve is firmly fixed.

Long acknowledges that the origin of the number twelve is uncertain and that while numerological arguments (twelve is chosen because "it is the product of the perfect number three and the generative number four") may have satisfied Neoplatonists, they are hardly convincing, and in any case they

can have nothing to do with the origin of the traditional company of twelve gods. She further suggests that the resemblance between the Olympian Twelve and the Egyptian gods of the twelve months is purely superficial and that the later Greek assimilation of the Twelve to the months and signs of the Zodiac was without historical basis. We will do well simply to agree with Long in contenting ourselves with the observation that the Greeks had a fondness for assembling many types of phenomena into groups of twelve, of which Weinreich lists many ("Zwölfgötter," 767-772).

The Twelve appear in myth as a panel of judges who protect divine order; the Peisistratean altar in the center of Athens may be regarded as the embodiment of the desire for civic concord. In his Laws, Plato suggests that the tribes of citizens of the ideal state be named after the Twelve; as Long points out (221-222), one Greek city-state actually did this. Much later, subsequent to their disastrous defeat at the hands of Hannibal at Lake Trasimene in 217 BC, the Romans established an official cult of the Twelve Gods, presumably in order to ensure the safety of the state which was then at such great risk.

APHRODITE

Introduction

Other divinities may appear paradoxical or contradictory in their various functions and powers; Aphrodite, though, manifests, in Harrison's words, "not only a singular loveliness but a singular simplicity and unity." This unity comprises, of course, sexuality in all its many aspects, particularly its pleasures and its irresistibility. The undoubted and demonstrable power of eros in human experience made it obvious to the Greeks that Aphrodite was a particularly powerful and therefore a potentially dangerous deity. Hesiod's story of the birth of Aphrodite (Theogony 154-206) describes the miraculous emergence of the goddess from the sea. Ouranos, personification of the vault of heaven, had been emasculated by his wily, sickle-wielding son Cronos. The severed male organ fell into the sea and, under the magical influence of the sea, was transformed into the goddess (193-195):

Afterwards she came to sea-girt Cyprus, and came forth an awful and lovely goddess, and grass grew up about her beneath her shapely feet.

This extraordinarily close link between Aphrodite and Ouranos, along with her title "Ourania" (Queen of Heaven) indicate to the satisfaction of most scholars that Aphrodite should be understood, as a Greek expression of a Middle Eastern queen of heaven of the Astarte/Ishtar type, that is, a creating divinity strongly linked to the power of procreation. Aphrodite was worshipped at Corinth with orgiastic rites and through temple prostitution on a vast scale. Similarity between the Corinthian

cult and the traditional worship of Ishtar has suggested to Downing, among others, that the cult of Aphrodite is of Asian origin. Gods, mortals and beasts are subject to the power of Aphrodite; none is immune except for the perpetually virgin goddesses Hestia, Athena, and Artemis. By an odd paradox, Aphrodite herself is vulnerable to her own power, as the stories of her passion for Anchises and Adonis illustrate.

Homer's Aphrodite is a far less impressive figure, as we would expect of a goddess of love in heroic epic. She is completely dependent on her father Zeus; her mother, according to Homer, is the obscure and colorless sea nymph Dione. In the Iliad, Aphrodite presides over the erotic relationship between Paris and Helen (Iliad 3.380ff.); later, she enters the battle, only to be wounded and driven off in tears by a the Greek hero Diomedes, a mere mortal (5.330ff.). Diomedes had recognized her as a "weakling goddess" (331) and certainly no Athena. Zeus advises Aphrodite to confine herself to "the lovely works of marriage" and leave war to the likes of Ares and Athena (428-430). In the Odyssey, Aphrodite is married to the crippled artisan god Hephaestus; a story sung by the poet Demodocus describes at length the farcical result of her adulterous union with Ares (8.266ff.).

The cult of Aphrodite most likely entered the Greek-speaking world through the island of Cyprus, an extremely ancient center of trade and industry centered around the abundant copper, the primary component of bronze, which gives the island its name. Extremely ancient idols portraying women with exaggerated sexual characteristics have been found in large numbers on Cyprus, along with indications of very early Greek settlements. It is reasonable to conclude that the first Greek traders and settlers

encountered there the primary goddess of the island and transmitted her cult, along with copper ingots, to their homes. In Greece, as Rose (Religion) suggests, Aphrodite faced competition from the established goddesses of the Greek pantheon, especially Hera; consequently her activity came to be confined to sexuality alone, and did not include Hera's concern with marriage and childbirth. In this capacity, Aphrodite was often called the mother of Eros, despite Hesiod's quite different account of his origins as one of the primordial offspring of Chaos at the very dawn of the universe (Theogony 116-122). Aphrodite was worshipped in widely differing fashions at her various shrines. At Athens, she was Aphrodite Pandemos and as such presided over the love and marriage of "all the people"; very different indeed was the worship of Aphrodite at Corinth and at other cult centers where she retained her old Cypriote title "Ourania," Queen of Heaven. Here Aphrodite was served by large numbers of temple prostitutes, as if she were a Middle Eastern Ishtar. Aphrodite, as we have seen, shares the epithet Queen of Heaven with this eastern divinity (see Section II below).

The main function of Aphrodite is to embody the pleasure of sexual union in gods, humans, and animals. From the very beginning of Greek literature, her name and the phrase "the works of Aphrodite" have been synonyms for the joys of sexual love; at Odyssey 22.444, Odysseus orders the murder of the slave women of his house so that they might forget the passion, literally the "Aphrodite," which they had shared with the suitors. "The works of golden Aphrodite" is a common poetic phrase for sexuality, as in Hesiod, Works and Days 521; the noun aphrodisia and the verb aphrodisiazein, are regular terms for the act of love. The Homeric Hymn To Aphrodite begins with an

invocation of "golden Aphrodite" who "stirs up sweet passion in the gods and subdues the tribes of mortal men, and birds that fly in air, and all the many creatures that the dry land rears, and all that the sea: all these love the deeds of rich-crowned Cytherea."

Aphrodite is the goddess of sex and erotic yearning, not of the orderly and controlled institution of marriage. The power of Aphrodite is, then, potentially dangerous; it can cause its victims, as Otto points out, to "forget the whole world for the sake of the one beloved"; Aphrodite can shatter the legal bonds of marriage and personal vows of faith. Like all gods, she is jealous of her prerogatives and intolerant of resistance even, or perhaps especially, when she drives her victims to illicit or adulterous sex. Aphrodite loves and defends Paris; she gave him Helen as a reward for granting her the prize in the famous beauty contest, despite the inconvenient fact that she already had a lawful husband in Menelaus ("whose wife you have stolen," Iliad 3.54ff.). Paris is handsome, according to Homer; he has lovely hair, is a skilled lyre player and dancer, but he is no warrior. Aphrodite rescues him from sure death at the hands of Menelaus in his unwise duel; the goddess delivers Paris to Helen as a man suited for the bedroom rather than for the field of battle (Iliad 3.391ff.):

He was radiant with beauty and dressed in gorgeous apparel.
No one would think he had just come from fighting, but
rather that he was going to a dance.

Hippolytus, by contrast, comes to a bloody and painful end at the hands of Aphrodite as a result of his priggish rectitude and excessive devotion to the virginity personified by his patroness Artemis.

Aphrodite can bring good fortune to men who do not offend her or resist her power; women, on the other hand, are more often brought to their dooms by the power of the goddess. This is certainly a reflection of the very different circumstances under which ancient Greek men and women lived. The former were free to follow the leadership of Aphrodite more or less without serious consequences; women under the overpowering influence of Aphrodite are induced to break the bonds of what Otto terms the life of security and restraint represented by marriage, and to engage in criminal adultery with males not their husbands. Helen, Medea, Phaedra, and Phaedra's mother Pasiphaë are all mythical examples of illicit female passion: Helen was the immediate cause of the Trojan War; Medea murdered her own children by Jason; Phaedra was the human cause of the bloody death of Hippolytus; Pasiphaë gave birth to the cannibalistic Minotaur. Aphrodite was worshipped and propitiated at Thebes as Apostrophia, "Averter" or "Rejecter," so that "mankind might reject unlawful passion and sinful acts" (Pausanias 9.16.3). A similar cult of Venus Verticordia, "the Turner of Hearts," was established at Rome, very likely for the same reason (cf. Ovid, Fasti 4.133ff.).

I. Origins and Nature of Aphrodite

The Greeks consistently attributed an eastern origin to Aphrodite. Homer regularly calls her Cypris, the Cyprian. Herodotus (1.105) states that the temple of Aphrodite Ourania (Aphrodite Queen of Heaven) in Askalon, near Gaza, is the oldest of her temples, and that the Cypriotes themselves believed their

own temple of Aphrodite to have derived from it; at 1.131, Herodotus asserts that the Persians first learned of the cult of Aphrodite from the Assyrians. Pausanias (1.14.7) traces the cult of Aphrodite from Assyria to Cyprus and to "the Phoenicians who live at Askalon in Palestine." There is general agreement among modern scholars that Aphrodite did in fact first come to the Greeks' attention on Cyprus during the Mycenaean period. Adonis, her consort, has an undoubtedly Semitic name (cf. Hebrew adonai, "Lord") and is likewise of eastern Mediterranean, possibly Palestinian, origin.

In essence, Aphrodite is a goddess of fertility and sexuality; to the poets from Homer on, her name is often little more than a synonym for sexual activity or sexual pleasure. Where Hera is the patroness of reproductive functions within the family, Aphrodite, as Aphrodite Hetaira or Aphrodite Porne, was the patroness of prostitutes (cf. Athenaeus 13.572e-573a). Sacred prostitution, a practice also found in connection with the cults of Middle Eastern fertility goddesses, was a notorious feature of Aphrodite's cult at Corinth; many questions remain about the origin, transmission, and structure of the Corinthian cult of Aphrodite. Burkert emphasizes the Middle Eastern origins of the institution of sacred prostitution, citing the presence of male and female prostitutes in the cult of Ishtar-Astarte both on the Asian mainland and on Phoenician Cyprus. Likewise, Ferguson points out that temple prostitution appears to be an Asiatic practice. At Corinth, Aphrodite had "a thousand" temple prostitutes who were called hierodouloi ("slaves of the temple"). Ferguson cites evidence for ritual prostitution associated with the worship of Aphrodite on Cyprus and in Syria, until it was abolished by Constantine. The elimination of what was apparently a very popular institution brought about violent

protest (Eusebius, Life of Constantine, 3.58; Sozomen, History of the Church, 5.10).

Despite Greek attempts to explain Aphrodite's name as deriving from aphros, the marine "foam" out of which she was born in Hesiod's account (Theogony 154-206) and with which she is associated in Homeric Hymn 6.3-7, we may conclude, with Otto and many others, that her name is probably no more Greek than her origin. Ferguson suggests that her island shrines on Cyprus and Cythera and her importance in the great port city of Corinth suggest an overseas origin. Despite Aphrodite's nearly complete naturalization to Hellenism by the time of Homer, she retains traces of her beginnings as the great goddess of fertility and sexuality of the ancient Middle East. This Semitic goddess is mentioned in the Old Testament as "queen of heaven" in Jeremiah 7:18. In a passage on the punishment of false religion, the women of "the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem" are denounced for making "crescent-cakes in honor of the queen of heaven"; later, at 44:17-19, the Jews living in Egypt announce their faithlessness to the God of Israel by stressing their undiminished devotion to "the queen of heaven." There can be little doubt that this heavenly goddess who is so dangerously attractive to the children of Israel is to be linked with the sanctuary of Aphrodite Ourania at Askalon, described by Herodotus and Pausanias, above. From here, the cult was carried to Cyprus whence it entered Greece, as is clear from Homer's calling the goddess "Cypris" (cf. Iliad 5.330), and from the terms "Cyprogenes" and "Cyprogeneia" in Hesiod and elsewhere. Walton (OCD) points out that the epithet Ourania "seems frequently a mark of the Oriental goddess, and was a cult name at Cyprus, Cythera, and Corinth." The epithet was also applied to various foreign goddesses, such as the Scythian Argimpasa

(Herodotus 4.59), the Arabian Allat (Herodotus 3.8), and to Astarte at Carthage who was later worshipped as Venus Caelestis. A fragment of Aeschylus' Danaids describes Aphrodite as the instigator of the hieros gamos or sacred marriage between earth and sky, and helps to establish the Greek goddess as a fertility divinity (Aphrodite is the speaker):

"The pure Sky longs passionately to pierce the Earth, and passion seizes the Earth to win her marriage. Rain falling from the bridegroom sky makes pregnant the Earth. Then brings she forth for mortals pasture of flocks and grain, Demeter's gift, and the fruitfulness of trees is brought to completion by the dew of their marriage. Of these things am I part-cause."

To Jane Harrison, Aphrodite was above all "the goddess of life upon the earth, but especially goddess of the sea, as became her island birth"; cf. the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (3-7; Harrison's translation):

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 her deathless

hea

For Otto, Venus is "the divine enchantment of peaceful seas and prosperous voyages just as she is the enchantment of blooming nature." She was called "goddess of the serene sea," "goddess of the prosperous voyage," and "goddess of the haven"; an oracle of Aphrodite at Paphos was consulted for safe sea journeys (Tacitus, Histories 2.4; Suetonius, Tiberius 5). She was commonly worshipped at harbors and seaports. Aphrodite is also the goddess of abundant nature, being associated, as we have seen, with the Graces, beneficent spirits of beauty and

fertility. She is worshipped as Aphrodite of the Gardens (Pausanias 1.19.2), as Anthia, "She of the Flowers" (Hesychius, s.v. Antheia), and as the patroness of roses and Spring blossoms in general (Pervigilium Veneris 13ff.).

II. Cult and Worship of Aphrodite

As with Apollo, the name of Aphrodite has not been detected in the Linear B tablets; it is reasonable to conclude from this that her cult is of later date. The temple of Aphrodite at Paphos, on Cyprus, has been regarded from antiquity as the center of her cult from which it entered Greek-speaking lands, perhaps in the late Bronze Age. In the post-Mycenaean "Dark Age," Cyprus held, as Burkert points out, "large temples of Near Eastern type, such as had never before existed in Greek lands, with large, impressive bronze statues." Paphos eventually became the site of the pre-eminent sanctuary of Aphrodite; the island site may be the crucial link in the transmission of the cult of Aphrodite to Greece. Paphos is certainly the earthly home of the goddess to Homer; cf. Odyssey 8.362-364:

. . . laughter-loving Aphrodite went to Cyprus, to Paphos, where is her sanctuary and fragrant altar. There the Graces bathed her and anointed her with immortal oil, such as gleams upon the gods that are forever.

The issue of the origin of the goddess is, however, more complex than this would suggest. Burkert points out that there is at Paphos, a large ceremonial installation dating from the twelfth century BC, which is about the time when the Mycenaean Greeks first settled there; this is about three hundred years before the first Phoenician colonists reached Cyprus from Tyre. The cult of Aphrodite cannot, therefore, have been transmitted in a

simple and orderly manner from Semitic Phoenicia to Paphos and on to Greece; moreover, since the archaeological record seems to indicate that Aphrodite cannot be a goddess native to Cyprus, the origin of her cult remains as obscure as the meaning of her name. In any case, the importance of Paphos and Cyprus to the cult of Aphrodite is undeniable, however difficult it may be to define that importance precisely.

In linking the cult of Aphrodite to that of the Phoenician Astarte, Ferguson cites a request, in 333 BC, by a group of merchants from Citium on Cyprus, residing in Athens, for permission to acquire land for a temple to Aphrodite, who was presumably their Astarte. Ferguson also points to a coin found on Cyprus, of Roman Imperial date, showing the temple of Aphrodite on Paphos, of Phoenician rather than Greek style, containing no image but rather a conical stone idol. Ferguson suggests that Aphrodite is one of the forms the great mother goddess of Asia assumed in Greek religion. She may have originally been worshipped, in remote antiquity, as a mountain goddess, as was Artemis. The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (100-103) states that Anchises promised to make her "an altar upon a high peak in a far-seen place" on Mt. Ida near Troy. There was a temple of Aphrodite on the summit of Acrocorinth, and another, still undiscovered, nearby. Corinth, of course, was where the "talented and expensive" temple prostitutes conducted their worship. Ferguson cites shrines of Aphrodite at Athens, on the slope of the Acropolis, and along the Sacred Way from Athens to Eleusis. On Mt. Eryx in Sicily there was a mountain-top shrine to a goddess whom the Greeks called Aphrodite, the Phoenicians Tanit, and the Romans Venus Erucina. Aphrodite may also be linked to the extremely ancient cult of a mountain goddess on the island of Samothrace. The fertility divinity worshipped

there originates, as Ferguson points out, in remote pre-Hellenic antiquity.

Aphrodite is regularly linked in worship with other divinities; she is most frequently associated with Adonis, Ares, Hermes, and Eros. Adonis, whose name means simply "the Lord," is a god of eastern, probably Phoenician, origin; the annual rites in his honor commemorate his death and resurrection. The cult of Adonis, both in the Middle East and in Greece, was always particularly popular with women. Adonis was apparently well established on the island of Lesbos by around 600 BC, at least in the group of women centered around the poet Sappho (cf. Lobel and Page, fragments 96, 140 and 168). Burkert suggests that Adonis had first arrived in Greece along with Aphrodite. Like Aphrodite, he was what Burkert calls an immigrant from the East with origins in Phoenicia, especially Byblos, and Cyprus. We have seen that the root of his name, adon, is clearly Semitic. His peculiar cult was celebrated by women's planting of "Adonis gardens," fast growing greenery planted on shards of pottery, usually on the flat roofs of houses. The climax of the festival was lamentation for the dead god who was laid on a bier in the form of a statuette. The figure and the little gardens were thrown into the sea. The dead god was regarded as eventually being restored to life by virtue of a compromise between Persephone, as mistress of the dead, and his lover Aphrodite; like Persephone herself, Adonis spent a third of the year in Hades and two thirds of the year with Aphrodite. Ovid retells the story at Metamorphoses 10.503ff. where Adonis simply dies a permanent death; the dead youth's blood, by the power of Aphrodite, causes the short-lived anemone flower to spring from the earth: "the winds from which it takes its name shake off

the flower so delicately clinging and doomed too easily to fall" (10.738-739).

Adonis, then, is either the beautiful mortal lover of Aphrodite who was killed by a boar, or the personification of the earth's vegetation, which dies and returns to life annually; his resurrection is celebrated with much rejoicing. The great mythographer James G. Frazer observed that Adonis was known by this name only to the Greeks; in the east, he was called Thammuz. Throughout the history of Christianity, both supporters and critics of the faith have seen Adonis as a mythical model for the risen Christ. In Greece, the Adonis cult furnished an opportunity for the uninhibited public expression of grief and joy at the god's death and restoration. Burkert points out that the cult of both Aphrodite and Adonis were associated with the burning of incense, particularly frankincense, which is first mentioned in a poem by Sappho (fr. 2). The importing of frankincense and myrrh from southern Arabia, via Phoenician middlemen, began about 700 BC at the latest; incense burners used by the Greeks were also of Eastern origin, and like the goddess herself very possibly reached the Greeks via Cyprus.

Despite the frequency with which poets and artists link Aphrodite with Ares, they are only infrequently encountered together in formal cults. The most prominent pairing of the two occurs, of course, in the famous and ribald episode in the Odyssey (8.267ff.), in which the Phaeacian minstrel, Demodocus, sings the story of their adulterous liaison and eventual entrapment by Aphrodite's mortified husband Hephaestus, to the delighted laughter of the other gods. Numerous vase paintings portray the relationship between the goddess of sex and the god

of violence. Poets after Homer regularly refer to Ares as the consort of Aphrodite. Hesiod, Theogony 933-937, says that they are the parents of Phobos and Deimos, "Panic" and "Fear"; cf. also Pindar, Pythian 4.87f., Aeschylus, Seven Against Thebes, 105 and 135ff., and Suppliants 664-666. Burkert points out that the pair have several temples in common. Harrison terms the relationship between the two as one between "two counter-powers of Strife and Harmony," but surely we may hypothesize here something more concrete and less pleasant. The seemingly odd linking of the gods of Sex and War surely represents a reality of war, both ancient and modern: victorious soldiers come into possession of the losers' women and are by custom entitled to rape and enslave them. The humorous tale in Homer and the tranquil representations of the vase painters rest upon this grim fact of ancient, and often modern, warfare. Burkert, then, is surely correct when he terms the linking of Ares and Aphrodite as "a polarity, in accordance with the biological-psychological rhythm which links male fighting and sexuality."

Hesiod describes Eros as one of the three primeval principles to appear at the beginning of the universe, along with Chaos and Gaea (Theogony 116-122; Dorothea Wender trans.):

Chaos was first of all, but next appeared broad-bosomed Earth, sure-standing place for all . . . , and Eros, most beautiful of all the deathless gods. He makes men weak, he overpowers the clever mind, and tames the spirit in the breasts of men and gods.

Eros, then, is here a personification of the generative instinct which brings about the series of matings which allow Hesiod's universe to evolve from one generation to the next.

Paradoxically, however, it seems to have been an excess of erotic zeal which causes Ouranos (Sky) to join himself to Gaea

(Earth) in an uninterrupted sexual embrace, thus preventing the birth of her children and interrupting the continuing process of generation. The brutal act of Kronos, cutting off his father's sexual organ, brings about the separation of Earth and Sky, producing the space needed for the birth and growth of the next generation of divinities (Theogony 178-206). Yet, as Brisson points out, the very act of separation ensures an unending series of unions: Aphrodite now assumes the function of Eros and virtually all of the other gods and goddesses would be born as a result of her action, with the exception of Athena and perhaps Hephaestus. Sappho, in contrast to Hesiod, makes Eros the offspring of Aphrodite and Ouranos; Ibycus, of Aphrodite and Hephaestus; Simonides, of Aphrodite and Ares; and Cicero, of Aphrodite and Hermes. Others, such as Bacchylides and Apollonius of Rhodes, call Eros the son of Aphrodite without specifying a father. It is this non-Hesiodic Eros, born to Aphrodite and subordinate to her, who is portrayed in art and literature, from the Classical period to modern Saint Valentine's Day cards, as the overly-cute putto with bow or torch who causes people to fall in love.

This later, debased Eros is what Harrison calls "the fat, idle Cupid of the Romans." The "real" Eros, she continues, is "no idle, impish urchin, still less is he the romantic passion between man and woman; he is just the spirit of life, a thing to man with his moral complexity sometimes fateful and even terrible, but to young things in spring, to live plants and animals, a thing glad and kind." So common is the association of Aphrodite and Eros, of Venus and Cupid, in literature and art that it is important to be reminded that they have little or nothing to do with one another in cult until quite late, and that their linkage in literature is scarcely found at all before

the Hellenistic period. In the Argonautica of Apollonius of Rhodes, for example, Eros is depicted as the spoiled and fractious son of an Aphrodite who is simultaneously amused and exasperated by his uncontrollable antics (3.91-105). The original, primal, and universal Eros encountered in Hesiod's Theogony is what Rose (Handbook) calls "an ancient cosmogonic power," the mythological analogue of one of the fundamental laws of physics, such as gravitation, which allowed the evolution of the universe to proceed in an orderly manner. Only much later does Eros take on what Hesiod would surely have regarded as the almost insignificant role of the instigator of romantic love.

There is some evidence for common cults of Aphrodite and Hermes, as for example their common shrine next to the temple of Hera on Samos. Aphrodite is also linked to her son by Hermes, the odd bisexual Hermaphroditus who had a fourth century BC cult in Attica. He was portrayed by artists with both male and female sexual characteristics, and thus furnished Hellenistic sculptors with an opportunity of portraying this mythologically insignificant figure in a sexually titillating manner. Ovid's later tale (Metamorphoses 4.285-388) has nothing to do with the more ancient figure of Hermaphroditus; the Roman poet tells the story of a son of Aphrodite and Hermes merging into a single mixed-gender body with his female lover.

III. Aphrodite in Art and Literature

Aphrodite in the Iliad suffers humiliations and indignities similar to those endured by Artemis when the twin of Apollo is beaten with her own bow by Hera and chased weeping from the battlefield (see the chapter "Artemis"). In a similar manner,

Aphrodite is attacked, wounded, and driven away in tears by Diomedes, a mortal warrior (5.330ff.). Diomedes scoffs at the goddess, shouting that she may be able to "beguile weakling women" (349) but that she should keep away from war; her father Zeus agrees with this assessment, but expresses himself more kindly (428-430). Elsewhere in Homer than the field of battle, and also in the other poets, the portrayal of Aphrodite is far more complimentary; she is "golden Aphrodite," the supernaturally beautiful embodiment of physical allurements and erotic pleasure. When the goddess rescues Paris from certain death in single combat with Menelaus (Iliad 3.380-420), Helen recognizes Aphrodite by her "beauteous neck, lovely bosom, and flashing eyes"; Helen is unable to resist the powerful will of the goddess and dutifully accompanies Paris to the couch of their false marriage. Aphrodite, mistress of "love, yearning, kind discourse, and beguilement" (Iliad 14.216), later, and perhaps ironically, overcomes Zeus himself. At Iliad 5.311ff., just before her encounter with Diomedes, Aphrodite had already intervened in battle in order to rescue a favorite Trojan in imminent danger of death; she rescued her son Aeneas from death at the hands of Diomedes by wrapping him in her white arms and bright garment. In the Odyssey, Aphrodite is wife of Hephaestus in the song of the poet Demodocus (8.266-366); as we have seen, she is caught naked with her lover Ares in a snare designed by her craftsman husband, to the great amusement of the gods (except Hephaestus) who gather around to stare.

As is the case with Hera, and as might be expected outside the genre of heroic epic, the goddess Aphrodite is presented in a more impressive manner in the Homeric Hymns. In the Hymn to Aphrodite (5.68-74), the goddess, anointed with "heavenly oil such as blooms upon the bodies of the eternal gods," appears to

Anchises who is to be the father of Aeneas. In her epiphany, she moves across the slopes of many-fountained Mt. Ida accompanied by "grey wolves, fawning on her, and grim-eyed lions, and bears, and fleet leopards, ravenous for deer." She manifests herself here as a figure reminiscent of the Mistress of Beasts generally associated with Artemis (see the chapter "Artemis"). The goddess is "glad in her heart" (72) to see the beasts and places "desire in their breasts, so that they all mated, two together, about the shadowy coombes." Under her influence the animals momentarily forget their hunger for prey and obey what is presented as the higher law of sexual desire. Aphrodite's own union with Anchises follows inevitably, "a mortal man with an immortal goddess, not clearly knowing what he did" (167). Later, the goddess ends Anchises' uncertainty as to his lover's identity by putting off her disguise; she tells him who she is, and his response is to turn away his face in terror and to beg for mercy (181-190).

The myth of the birth of Aphrodite preserved by Hesiod (Theogony 154-206), as we have seen above, is darker and more disturbing than Homer's description of the goddess as the daughter of Zeus and Dione (Iliad 5. 312, 370). Hesiod's poetic image of the goddess rising from the sea became a popular subject for Greek artists; it is most famously and successfully portrayed on the so-called Ludovisi Throne of the late Archaic period, which may come from the Aphrodite temple at Locri.

The Homeric Hymn (5 ff.) describes events after the sea gave birth to Aphrodite:

There the gold-filleted Horai (Hours) welcomed her joyously. They clothed her with heavenly garments: on her head they put a fine, well-wrought crown of gold, and in

her pierced ears they hung ornaments of orichalc and precious gold, and adorned her with golden necklaces over her soft neck and snow-white breasts . . . and when they had fully decked her, they brought her to the gods, who welcomed her when they saw her, giving her their hands.

With only a few notable exceptions, later authors are more reticent in their praise and celebration of Aphrodite. The poet most devoted to the intense and personal worship of the goddess is Sappho. Easterling describes the circle of young women who were drawn to the poet as they awaited marriage as "bathed in the aura of the goddess, with garlands of flowers, costly head-dresses, sweet fragrances, and soft couches." The power of Aphrodite, along with that of Artemis, dominates Euripides' Hippolytus. The two goddesses are terrifying in this play, as Gould suggests, precisely because their superhuman power is directed by mentalities which are spiteful, jealous, and all too human. Hippolytus rejects "the works of Aphrodite," thus offending her and challenging her power; the inevitable result is the hideous death of the young man, a fate from which his divine patroness Artemis is powerless to save him (see the chapter "Artemis").

Later, in the fourth century BC, we find a philosopher's Aphrodite who has been separated into two aspects: the higher, celestial love represented by Aphrodite Ourania, and the lower, sexual love embodied by Aphrodite Pandemos, who is responsible for eroticism and for prostitution (cf. Plato, Symposium 180D ff. and Xenophon, Symposium 8.9). Both terms reflect a late misapplication of these very ancient cult titles: Aphrodite Ourania was, as we have seen, originally the Queen of Heaven who corresponded to the Phoenician Astarte; Aphrodite Pandemos was that aspect of love which embraces a whole people and supplies

the common bond and fellowship which allows a community to exist.

Representations of Aphrodite in art are quite common throughout Greek history. Statues of the Archaic period show a clothed and dignified figure. Not until about 340 does a statue of a naked Aphrodite appear in Praxiteles' representation of the goddess, for the sanctuary in Cnidos, as she is apparently preparing to take a bath. This was one of the most famous, if not notorious, representations of the goddess of love; ancient references to it suggest that the naked form of Aphrodite excited more prurient interest than pious reflection. She was known as Aphrodite Kallipygos, "lovely-bottomed." In art as well as in literature, Aphrodite was associated with birds, especially the allegedly amorous dove; coins of Cyprus show doves over her shrine. Aphrodite is also linked in art with the goose, the dolphin, and the goat, the last being frequently associated with open and promiscuous sexuality.

IV. Aphrodite in Italy

Although the cult of Venus was to become widespread in Italy, she is not originally a Roman goddess, nor is she of great antiquity. Writing in the first century BC, Varro (Lingua Latina 6.33) says that her name does not appear in ancient documents available to him (cuius nomen ego antiquis litteris . . . nusquam inveni). It is probable that the Romans first became aware of Aphrodite through the cult of the goddess at Mt. Eryx in Sicily; they called her Venus Erucina, apparently employing as her name an archaic Latin word, venus, which meant much the same as the Greek charis, "charm" or "beauty." Venus

may therefore have been associated with Charis or the Graces at some early date; later, of course, Venus was to the Romans simply the Greeks' Aphrodite by a Latin name. Rose (Handbook) suggests that the original Venus may have been to the early Romans that agricultural deity responsible for making tilled fields and gardens look trim and neat, giving them venustus, charm. The Greek Aphrodite of Eryx, he adds, arriving from Sicily where her cult was famous and long established, "thrust this puny native wholly into the background, and stamped her own cult, in its more respectable form, on Rome." The crucial event in the history of Venus in Rome may have been the Second Punic War, during which a great deal of fighting took place near Mt. Eryx. Rose (Religion) points out that during this period, when Hannibal's invading army in Italy threatened Rome's existence, various religious measures were taken to secure the favor of all manner of gods. The Romans consulted the Sibylline Books and found instructions to establish in Rome a temple of Venus Erucina. This they did in 215 BC, constructing another in 181. The Romans thus removed the goddess of Eryx from Carthaginian control and placed themselves under her protection; a later tradition maintained that the temple at Eryx had been founded by Aeneas. Thereafter, miraculous events were alleged to occur regularly at the site; every night, all traces of sacrificial fire vanished and were found to be replaced by fresh green foliage (Aelian, Historia animalium 10.50). Later, the Julian gens or clan would adopt Venus Genetrix, or Venus the Begetter, as their patron deity and tutelary parent through their supposed ancestor Aeneas. If this sequence of events is correct, the Romans, as they did in so many other cases, abandoned an aniconic personification of agricultural beauty for the much more engaging anthropomorphic Greek figure of Aphrodite. Roman divinities were not originally characterized by the kind of

anthropomorphism found in the religions of the Greeks and Etruscans; in their original forms, Roman gods were figures defined merely by their function, and were devoid of parents and of mythological adventures.

The Roman poet and philosopher Lucretius gives us the most august image of Venus Genetrix, Venus the Creator (De rerum natura, 1.1ff.; Jane Harrison's translation):

"Of Rome, the Mother, of men and gods the pleasure,
Fostering Venus, under heaven's gliding signs
Thou the ship-bearing sea, fruit-bearing land
Still hauntest, since by thee each living thing
Takes life and birth and sees the light of the Sun.

Thee, goddess, the winds fly from, thee the clouds
And thine approach, for thee the daedal earth
Sends up sweet flowers, the ocean levels smile
And heaven shines with floods of light appeased.

Thou, since alone thou rulest all the world,
Nor without thee can any living thing
Win to the shores of light and love and joy,
Goddess, bid thou throughout the seas and land
The works of furious Mars quieted cease."

Various first-century BC Roman potentates turned Roman devotion to Venus to their own advantage. Sulla claimed the patronage of Venus Felix (Venus the Lucky), Pompey of Venus Victrix (the Conqueror), and Julius Caesar of Venus Genetrix. Caesar claimed direct descent from the goddess, citing Iulus, son of Aeneas and grandson of Venus, as founder of the gens Iulia. In this way, Caesar exploited the Trojan mystique for his own profit; as founder of the imperial system of government which would rule Rome for the next half millennium, he also established the national myth according to which Venus was not only mother of the Caesars but also mother of the Romans. Vergil's epic poem,

the Aeneid, stresses the divine birth of its hero Aeneas from Venus; insofar as the mythical founder Aeneas prefigures Caesar's adoptive son and heir Augustus, the epic also reinforces the new political role of Venus as divine patroness of the emperors of Rome.

APOLLO

Introduction

That Apollo is "the most characteristically Greek," or "the most typically Hellenic" of the gods, or even "the incarnation and utterance of the Greek way of thinking," is generally agreed upon by students of this divinity; and yet, this most Greek of gods has origins, and perhaps also a name, which are not Greek. Apollo is linked with both healing and destruction, especially sudden death inflicted from a distance; he is associated, Ferguson suggests, with the sun "which both scorches and gives life." Apollo and his twin Artemis are the pitiless destroyers of Niobe and her children, in a scene frequently shown on painted pottery; he is also the god of prophecy at Delphi and elsewhere. This latter role is also a popular subject for the visual arts. In art, Apollo is what Rose (Handbook) calls "the ideal male figure, which has reached its full growth, but still has all the suppleness and vigor of youth." Apollo is for the Greeks what Carlier terms a "god of perpetually renewed youth." In the Homeric Hymn, (449-450), the god is described as "bearing the form of a man, brisk and sturdy, in the prime of his youth, while his broad shoulders were covered with hair." Though at the very threshold of male maturity, Apollo has not yet grown a beard, nor will he: "A god always beautiful, always young; no trace of down ever grew on his tender cheeks" (Callimachus, Hymn to Apollo, 36-37).

Ferguson observes that Apollo appears on coins which show him seated on the omphalos, the navel-stone which represented the center of the world; "vase paintings show him wrestling with Heracles for possession of the sacred tripod. A wonderful cup

at Delphi has been supposed to depict the god, but perhaps shows a victorious lyre-player, crowned with a bay-wreath, pouring a libation to the god who has inspired his victory, while the god's own prophetic raven perches opposite. The finest of all portrayals of the god, however, is not at Delphi and not in one of the god's own temples, but in the temple of Zeus at Olympia, where in the west pediment which portrays the battle between Centaurs and Lapiths he stands majestic and impassive above the strife, his bow lowered in his left hand, his right hand outstretched in imperious gesture. This is one of the greatest of all representations of numinous power."

Apollo is generally associated by ancient writers and artists with one of two stringed instruments, the lyre or the bow; the one generates harmony, the other deals death. The god is linked also with phenomena as varied and diverse as plague, ritual purification, the herding of sheep, ecstatic prophecy, constitutional law, colonization, and healing. Perhaps in no other case is it so difficult to express in concrete terms the range of an Olympian god's concerns and activities.

There are indications in surviving fragments of Aeschylus and Euripides that Apollo was identified with the sun as early as the fifth century BC; this link was frequently made in Hellenistic and Roman times and has appealed to some modern scholars. There is, however, no pre-Classical evidence that Apollo was originally a solar divinity. It is more likely that his origins are to be sought in his role as patron of herdsmen in wild country. The cult titles Nomios (god of shepherds) and Lyceios (god of the wolf) point to this, as do his interests in archery, music, and medicine. Rose and Robinson conclude that it is reasonable to expect that a god of herdsmen "should be

somehow connected with their worst enemy, the wolf," since "he can both send and stay that and other plagues."

We cannot explain how Apollo first came to be linked to ecstatic prophecy. His major oracular sites were Delphi, on the Greek mainland, Claros and Didyma on the Ionian coast of Asia Minor, and Cumae in Southern Italy. The typical mode of divination involved a priestess' becoming possessed by the god, passing into a state of frenzy marked by the alterations of voice and facial expression familiar from modern mediumistic enterprises, and speaking the words of Apollo. It is difficult to overstate the prestige and authority of the oracles of Apollo in the Greek world, especially that at Delphi which was, as Rose and Robinson suggest "the nearest approach to a Vatican which Greece possessed."

In addition to the omphalos (navel) at Delphi, there was a similar stone at Claros in Asia Minor and, consequently, a second center of the universe. Apollo's adventures in myth include his killing the snaky Python which occupied Delphi before the god's cult was established there; he also killed the giant Tityos who assaulted Apollo's mother Leto. He is an amorous god having famous liaisons with, among others, Coronis, Marpessa, Cassandra, Daphne, the Cumaean Sibyl, and Cyrene, generally with disastrous consequences for the women concerned.

Apollo first appears in Italy in Etruria at an early date. The famous statue of the god from Veii is an accurate indication of the rapidity with which the cult of Apollo spread throughout the peninsula. The city of Rome received Apollonian influences during the first centuries after its founding both from Etruria to its north and from the Greek colonies of Southern Italy.

Although the Romans generally settled on certain fixed identifications of Greek gods with native Italian divinities (Italic Jupiter for the Greek Zeus, Juno for Hera, and so on), the thoroughly foreign, Hellenic nature of Apollo apparently prevented this; alone among the Olympians, he was known to the Romans only by his Greek name. At Rome in Republican times, Apollo seems to have been regarded mainly as a god of healing. Augustus had, or feigned, a special devotion to Apollo, establishing the god in a magnificent new temple near his own residence on the Palatine Hill; the prestige and authority of the Palatine Apollo was surpassed in Augustan Rome only by those of Capitoline Jupiter himself.

I. Origins and Cult of Apollo

Unlike many other Greek divinities, the name of Apollo has not been identified on Linear B tablets, indicating that the god was perhaps not part of the Greek pantheon during the Bronze Age. Apollo's name is most likely not derived from the Greek language and its etymology is therefore not certain. There are two main theories of the god's origin: either he comes from somewhere north of Greece, or from Asia Minor. In favor of the first view is the traditional close relationship between the god and the Hyperboreans, legendary dwellers "beyond the north wind," whose annual offerings arrived at Delos, not delivered in person but after being passed southward from city to city (see Herodotus 4.33 and Farnell, Cults, vol. 4, 99ff.). Asian roots of Apollo are suggested by his title Lyceios, which in addition to "wolf" (see Introduction above) suggested the nation of Lycia in Asia Minor; the name of his mother Leto has been connected with the Lycian word "lada" (woman). The god was, as Rose and Robinson

observe, worshipped enthusiastically at Troy; in Homer he supports the Trojan cause.

The case for Apollo's northern origins is equally conjectural. Pindar, Simonides, and others describe the Hyperboreans as a blessed race, free of the curses of work and war, who live thousand-year lifetimes in a sort of northern version of the Isles of the Blessed which was linked in both myth and cult practice with Apollo. Herodotus (4.32-35) describes at length the process by which Hyperborean offerings to Apollo at Delos, wrapped in straw, were passed from land to land southward until they arrived at their destination. The actual origin of these gifts to the god is unknown; conjectural explanations have not, of course, been lacking, but they remain conjecture. Also in favor of the northern theory of the god's origin is the ancient description of the odd Delphic observance called Stepterion, or Festival of Wreaths, which linked Apollo to Tempe, a valley in Thessaly in northern Greece.

Delos was the site of the mythical birth of Apollo. Leto, pregnant with Zeus' twin offspring Apollo and Artemis, had been forbidden by a jealous and vengeful Hera to give birth in any land. A floating island, subsequently named Delos ("bright" or "famous") by Zeus, pitied Leto, perhaps recognizing in her a fellow wanderer, and allowed her to bear her children there; Zeus then fixed the island to the sea floor. Whatever the actual origin of the god Apollo might be, it clearly has nothing to do with Delos, where archaeology proves that he was a relatively late arrival. Ferguson assembles and evaluates information on the cult of Apollo, beginning with evidence from the island of Delos. There are archaeological indications of pre-Greek habitation of the island as early as the third

millennium BC and signs of intense religious activity during the Mycenaean period: "The main deity was a goddess, who survived on the island as Apollo's twin sister Artemis." The cult of Apollo was most likely established on Delos during the Geometric period, the eighth or seventh century BC. Athens controlled the island in the sixth century; following the Athenian victories over the Persians at Marathon and Salamis, the Delian League, an anti-Persian defensive alliance, established its treasury there. Gradually and tragically, this free association of liberated states became an Athenian empire. From time to time, as during the reign of Pisistratus in the sixth century BC, and again in 426, the Athenians "purified" the island by removing tombs first from the main sanctuary area and finally from the entire island, with one or two special exceptions. No-one was to be born or die on the island and Ferguson points out that "inscriptions show the complex problem of dealing with bodies from shipwrecks." The whole island was in a sense a religious sanctuary, although there was a central sacred area which contained temples and statues of the god; both the island and the sanctuary were dedicated to Apollo. The site contains several temples dating from perhaps as early as the Mycenaean period to the Classical era and later. Noteworthy dedications included a colossal statue of Apollo offered by Naxos and a bronze palm tree which commemorated the tree against which Leto leaned in her labor. There was also the tomb of two Hyperborean maidens, visitors from the mythical northern paradise tended by Apollo in myth and thought by some modern scholars to represent a northern homeland for the god. There was an Artemision, dedicated to the god's twin, whose birth was also linked to Delos. In addition to shrines and sanctuaries sacred to other Olympian divinities, Delos also held temples dedicated to various non-Hellenic gods, including a temple and several altars

of Serapis, a god invented in Ptolemaic Egypt, perhaps from a syncretistic combination of Osiris and Apis, and brought to Delos in the third century BC. There was also a temple of Isis and a sanctuary of the Syrian gods Atargatis and Hadad. There was an Asclepion in a remote location in the southern part of the island, some distance from the main sanctuary, and also a temple of the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux.

Apollo was often linked in myth and cult to Asclepius who is, by most accounts, son of Apollo by the god's faithless mistress Coronis who was killed by Artemis to punish the insult to her twin. Apollo rescued the unborn infant from his mother's body as it was being consumed on the pyre. Thus, Carlier remarks, "Asclepius passes victoriously through the trial by fire, which myths so often made a test of immortality; he is born of a corpse and springs forth from a funerary fire, which will reverse the paths of life and death for him." Asclepius is raised and educated by the wise centaur Chiron who teaches him "magic incantations, potions and unguents, and skillful surgery that straightens distorted limbs." So skillful is Asclepius that he is able to resuscitate the dead, robbing Hades of that which is rightfully his. For this disruption of the natural order, Zeus destroys the hero with his thunderbolt, ending the physician's life in a blaze which recalls his birth. He loved human beings, Carlier points out, "even to the point of displeasing Zeus." By the Classical period, Asclepius was regarded not merely as a hero but as fully divine, a compassionate and philanthropic god who, as a result of having been human, sympathizes with the pains and afflictions of mortals.

The close association of Asclepius with the snake makes it clear that, in opposition to his shining and celestial father, he is a chthonic god, embodying the dark powers of the earth. After a period of fasting, prayer and purification, visitors to the great sanctuaries of Asclepius at Epidaurus, Cos and Pergamum would sleep in the shrine, on the ground, in a process known as "incubation"; they were attended in their sleep by tame snakes kept by the priests. The god performed his cures during apparitions in the patients' dreams, or he might describe in the dream the means of effecting a cure. Incubation, in Carlier's opinion, is the "decisive trait that makes Asclepius a divinity in close participation with the earth, with its divinatory and salutary powers." Carlier remarks on the apparent paradox that a god like Apollo, "the declared enemy of all crawling and subterranean creatures, the victorious rival of the oracle of incubation, [has] produced and protected a son so marked by his complicities with the earth, the producer of dreams."

Trophonius likewise is a snaky, chthonic son of Apollo. He is, as Carlier points out "a snake hero, swallowed by the earth, a prophet operating in a subterranean lair." Also among the god's protégés, is Amphiaraus, another chthonic hero who was likewise consulted through incubation; he carried on an underground existence after Zeus opened up with his thunderbolt a hole in the earth which swallowed the hero up (Apollodorus 3.60-77). The resemblances among these three prophetic heroes, Carlier concludes, are striking; all are clearly chthonic but myth "makes them sons or protégés of Apollo. It is rather as if, through the subterfuge of lineages and patronages, the irreducible part that returns to the earth in any oracle is restored, re-allied to Apollo but kept at a good distance."

II. The Nature of Apollo

There have been, as we shall see in this section, many attempts to articulate the nature of Apollo in a concise yet comprehensive manner. Callimachus, Hymn to Apollo, 40-55, lists some of the many attributes of Apollo:

No one has as many arts in his hand as Apollo; he has as his share both the archer and the poet—for the bow is his possession, and also the song. To him belong the prophetesses and diviners; and doctors, too, derive from Phoebus the science of deferring death. Phoebus we invoke as shepherd too. . . It is in the steps of Phoebus that the fortifying walls of cities are laid out; Phoebus delights in establishing them, and his hand builds their foundations.

Law

Law and order comprise what Guthrie terms Apollo's "most important and influential aspect." E. Fraenkel has suggested that Apollo represents the Greek preference for "the intelligible, determinate, measurable, as opposed to the fantastic, vague and shapeless." Legal codes are attempts to reduce the flux and confusion of human experience to terms which are precisely intelligible, determinate, and measurable. Apollo's advice at Delphi was "Know thyself" and "Nothing too much"; all Greece, Guthrie observes, looked to the god as both the giver and interpreter of law, both legislator and judge. Tyrtaeus (fragment 7) and Herodotus (1.65) record the tradition according to which Lycurgus, the mythical lawgiver of Sparta, received the Spartan constitution from Apollo's oracle at Delphi. Many other Greek cities lived under legal codes said to originate with Apollo. In his Republic (4.427b), Plato lists

the types of legislation which the ideal state will leave to Apollo:

The founding of temples, sacrifices, and other services to gods, demigods, and heroes; also the burial of the dead and any observances which are necessary to propitiate the spirits of the other world. These matters we do not understand ourselves, and in founding our city we shall not, if we are wise, listen to anyone else nor ask anyone to expound them to us save the god of our country. For he is the national expositor who explains things to all men from his seat at the navel of the earth.

Plato identifies Apollo as the "expositor" or exegete (exegetes) whose "exegetis" was regarded as authoritative in the city-states of Greece. Athens, Sparta, and probably other cities, maintained local expositors or prophets who interpreted the will of Apollo, each to his own city, speaking authoritatively on matters such as "temples, cult-procedure, sacrifices—but especially on the rules of purification to be followed in cases of homicide or any contact with it." The Delphic oracle would be consulted in cases of exceptional importance or difficulty; Delphi was particularly influential in the matter of colonization, often specifying the location, laws, and religious obligations of the new community. Apollo was, in Guthrie's words, "first and foremost the patron of the legal or statutory aspect of religion. In his province were the rules for the founding and prosecution of official cults all over Greek lands." Apollo was consulted especially on matters of manslaughter or homicide and presided over the granting of cleansing, or catharsis, of the killer of a human being, whether deliberate or accidental, of the religious pollution or miasma which was regarded as clinging to the killer and which could spread to the whole community. Cathartic cleansing of the stain of human blood was therefore a public health issue vital to the entire city state, and not merely a matter between the god and

the killer. Apollo himself was subjected to this procedure; after killing the Python at Delphi, the god needed to undergo purification before he was able to take up residence at the holy site newly sacred to him.

Purification

Since the cleansing of a killer of the miasma clinging to him involved the propitiation of chthonic forces, including the soul of the victim, Apollo has, in addition to his role of embodiment of light and reason, a function in the realm of the dead which would at first seem to contradict his Olympian nature. From the matter of Apollo's jurisdiction over issues of manslaughter and homicide, "the threads lead," in Guthrie's words, "in two opposite directions." On the one hand, Apollo is the embodiment of law, order, and due process; his legal activity comprises all branches of legislation from civil and criminal to constitutional. This is what Guthrie terms the Olympian aspect of the god. On the other hand, killing involved for the Greeks more than a statutory offense, requiring more than purely secular remedies such as trial followed by acquittal or execution. Here Apollo's activity in purifying a killer of miasma, which comes from any contact with death, takes the god into chthonic realms. The need for purification, Guthrie reminds us, "was bound up with dark superstitions about the power of the dead to return and visit with frightful plagues the guilty or neglectful living." Apollo, then, has the power to propitiate the soul of a slain man and to cleanse the killer of the pollution arising from having shed human blood. Burkert suggests that in this ability of Apollo to reconcile the guilty living with the outraged dead we may see intimations of "a

universal morality overriding tradition and group interests. . . . It was Delphi which confirmed and inculcated the sense that murder demands atonement and at the same time affirmed that it is possible to overcome the catastrophe through expiation." As legislator and ritual purifier, Apollo operates in both the Olympian world of law codes and legal procedures, but he is also active in the terrifying world of blood-guilt and vengeful souls of the slain.

Apollo is the god of the healing hymn, the paean; on the other hand, his bow and arrows, especially in Iliad 1, bring plague on men and animals. Healing and death, harmony and destruction, find a paradoxical unity and reconciliation in the nature of Apollo. On Olympus, it is his lyre, another stringed instrument, with which he soothes and entertains his brother and sister gods. As Burkert observes, Apollo is a plague god who is "at the same time master of the healing hymn; this association of bow and lyre is crystallized into a single image: the bow sings and the lyre sends forth sound. That Apollo is a god of healing remains a central trait in his worship—from the mythical foundation of Didyma when Branchos, ancestor of the priestly line of the Branchidai, banished a plague, to the building of the well-preserved temple in the lonely mountains of Bassae in Arcadia, which was erected following the plague in 430 and dedicated to Apollo the Helper, Epikourios."

Apollo and Artemis are twins in myth; it is not clear how gods whose origins seem to be so distant from one another came to be so closely linked. In any case, Otto sees their linkage as profoundly significant, the differences between the two ultimately being resolved into what Otto sees as effectively one single divinity, "in twofold expression, whose agreements and

oppositions in some marvelous and ingenious fashion constitute a complete world." Greek poets describe each of the twins as "holy" and "pure," terms not used of other divinities nearly so regularly. Both gods possess, in Otto's words, "something mysterious and unapproachable, something that commands an awed distance." Otto suggests that what he terms "withdrawal" is an indispensable part of Apollo's nature. The god is present at each of his cult sites for only part of the year, dwelling for the rest of the time in some hidden location, variously understood to be Lycia in Asia Minor or the ideal land of the legendary and uniquely blessed Hyperboreans. Unlike Athena, for example, who was the ever-present companion to Odysseus, Apollo is always distant, remote; "he is not, as Athena is, a spirit of immediacy, of clever and energetic mastery over the moment."

Apollo is to be seen most clearly as an austere, uncompromising, yet ultimately humane god in Aeschylus' Oresteia: Orestes had killed his mother to avenge her murder of his father Agamemnon; he had done so at the express order of Apollo. Orestes was eventually brought to trial to answer charges of the Furies that he owed a terrible penalty for his crime against his mother; Apollo defended him. Here as Otto points out, "the old gods and the new encounter one another. The primal divine law of the earth protests against the new Olympian spirit. Two worlds are locked in struggle. Each presents its case fully, each asserts the validity of its motivation. And as they dispute with one another their inmost natures are revealed to us. Apollo, the Olympian god, is utterly repelled by the ghastly ghouls who gorge on human gore and celebrate their grisly rites at sites of torture and savagery (Aeschylus, Eumenides 186ff.). The Erinyes are one with blood. Brute and blind as the will of blood are their purpose and procedure. To the spiritual freedom of the

Olympian god they defiantly oppose their intransigence; for the softness of unspiritual nature turns stony hard in defending itself. They know only deeds, and if the fact of commission is established, words are useless. The deed must be followed by the consequence ordained for it from eternity." Apollo, speaking for the eventual acquittal of Orestes, argues that not merely the deed but also the status of the victim and the circumstances attendant upon his killing must be taken into account; in the person of Apollo, in Otto's words, "the bright and free spirit of the Olympians comes face to face with the brutish, narrow, earth-bound spirit of the primal forces."

Purity

Purity is the real key to Apollo's nature, in Otto's opinion; the god, as we have seen, has a particular interest in catharsis and cleansing. Apollo's role as healer and physician is closely related to his purificatory function; this is because healing, as Otto points out, always included "a capacity to ward off the dangers of impurity. . . . The purifier is the healer, the healer the purifier." Ferguson cites archaeological evidence for the original primacy of Apollo over Asclepius at healing sanctuaries such as Epidaurus and Corinth. At Epidaurus, "Apollo retained the first sacrifice, but by the fourth century Asclepius had virtually ousted the older god"; and at Corinth too, "it seems that Asclepius took the sanctuary over from Apollo, since a fragment of a vase has been found with the inscription 'I belong to Apollo'." Apollo's ability to purify is, of course, especially important in cases of homicide where the pollution of what Otto terms "the fearful blood of the slain man" is cleansed away. Apollo also advocates the moderation and

self-knowledge expressed in the motto "Know yourself" which greeted visitors to his temple at Delphi (cf. Plato, Charmides 164D). Otto sees this uniquely Apollonian combination of purity and restraint embodied in the various stories which have reached us about those mortals who should be regarded at most blessed: the simple Athenian described by Solon to the proud and wealthy Lydian king Croesus (Herodotus 1.30ff) who died fighting for his city after raising his family; the Arcadian peasant who never left the humble patch of land which he farmed for his sustenance (Valerius Maximus 7.1.2); the poor farmer who, like the widow in the New Testament who gave out of her poverty, offered to Apollo a handful of grain which he could hardly spare (Porphyry, De abstinentia 1.15ff). Also to be included among this company, in Otto's accounting, is Socrates; named by the god at Delphi as the wisest of men (Plato, Apology 21ff.), he defied death and the hatred of his fellow citizens "seeking for knowledge and examining himself and his fellow men." According to Plato's account, Socrates' superior wisdom consisted solely in his awareness that he possessed no superior wisdom and in his desire to purify himself and his city of illusion and falsehood. "Accurate perception," as Otto points out, "is a portion of knowledge of the true essence of things and their interrelationship." This focus on precise knowledge of the truth is also a feature of Apollo's sponsorship of prophecy: "I will declare to men the unfailing will of Zeus" (Homeric Hymn 132).

Music occupies a central position among what Otto terms "Apollo's manifold perfections; surely it is the source out of which these perfections flow. Other gods too," Otto continues, "take joy in music, but with Apollo his whole nature seems to be musical." Apollo is the patron and inspiration of mortal

musicians. According to Hesiod (Theogony 94), "From the Muses and far-darting Apollo derive all singers and players upon the lyre"; the Homeric Hymn (189ff.) describes the god's part in maintaining the eternal ecstatic harmony of Olympus:

All the Muses together, voice sweetly answering voice, hymn the unending gifts the gods enjoy and the sufferings of men, all that they endure at the hands of the deathless gods, and how they live witless and helpless and cannot find healing for death or defense against old age. Meanwhile the rich-tressed Graces and cheerful Horae dance with Harmonia and Hebe and Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, holding each other by the wrist. And among them sings one, not mean nor puny, but tall to look upon and enviable in mien, Artemis who delights in arrows, sister of Apollo. Among them sport Ares and the keen-eyed slayer of Argus, while Apollo plays his lyre, stepping high and elegantly, and a radiance shines around him, the gleaming of his feet and close-woven vest.

Otto points out that Apollo's music is dear to "friends of the lucid and well-ordered world which is governed by the lofty thoughts of Zeus."

Distance

Along with the lyre, the bow is an attribute commonly linked to Apollo: "The lyre and the curved bow shall ever be dear to me," says the god in the Homeric Hymn (131). Apollo first appears in the Iliad as a deadly archer mercilessly bent on inflicting punishment on Agamemnon through the effects of plague on the Greek army. Though lethal, his arrows, along with those of his sister Artemis, are often referred to as "gentle," bestowing an easy and painless death on the inhabitants of a blessed island:

Famine never comes into the land, nor does any hateful sickness besides fall on wretched mortals; but when the

tribes of men grow old throughout the city, Apollo of the silver bow comes with Artemis, and assails them with his gentle shafts, and slays them. (Odyssey 15.407-411)

Whether he acts in anger or with mercy, Apollo is the god before whom, as Otto points out, "even the mightiest fall when their hour strikes." Otto sees distance as the common element linking Apollo, sudden death, and the bow. Apollo "comes to man out of a remote land of light and always disappears into that same land again."

"The song of the most alert of all gods does not arise dreamlike out of an intoxicated soul," Otto concludes, "but flies directly towards a clearly seen goal, the truth and the rightness of its aim is a sign of its divinity. Out of Apollo's music there resounds divine recognition. . . . This music is thus the great educator, the source and symbol of all order in the world and in the life of mankind. Apollo the musician is identical with the founder of ordinances, identical with him, who knows what is right, what is necessary, what is to be." This clarity of vision, this unerring perception, Otto claims, is only possible with distance: "Apollo rejects whatever is too near—entanglement in things, the melting gaze, and, equally, soulful merging, mystical inebriation and its ecstatic vision." For Otto, Apollo is the god of cognition above all, and this requires distance, "freedom from the heaviness, coarseness, and constriction of what is near, stately objectivity, a ranging glance. . . . a flat contradiction of values which Christianity later rated high. . . . he is oblivious to the eternal worth of the human individual and the single soul." Otto brilliantly characterizes the theological and spiritual chasm which separates the Christian believer who "humbles himself and is thereby assured of becoming worthy of God's love and God's nearness," and the follower of Apollo who must accept that there

is a vast uncrossable gulf between man and god, that the individual human "has no part of the realm of infinity." As Pindar points out, there is a race of men and a race of gods; "the one is nothing, while for the other the brazen sky is established their sure citadel forever" (Nemean 6.1ff.; Lattimore translation). Otto concludes, then, that Apollo is "the manifestation of a single idea," a concept of pure cognition, of absolute and objective truth, of divinity which is "bright, unencumbered, luminous, and penetrating." As is occasionally the case with Otto's memorable and illuminating discussions of the Olympian gods, one receives the impression of reading not so much a scholarly analysis as a testament of personal faith.

The bow, seen in this context, is the ideal image of the remoteness and aloofness of Apollo: "Is not the bow a symbol of distance? The arrow is sped from a place unseen and flies to its mark from afar." Otto also attempts to formulate a possible connection between the bow and the lyre, pointing out that Heraclitus had seen the two instruments as metaphors for the harmony of opposites. Both give off a musical sound when the string is plucked (cf. Iliad 4.125: "the bow twanged", and Odyssey 21.410ff. where Odysseus strings his mighty bow as easily as a musician strings a new lyre, and the string "sang sweetly" under the hero's touch). Otto even advances the unconvincing notion that the bow and stringed musical instruments might derive from some common prehistoric origin; in any case, the Greeks saw a strong similarity between the two. Pindar, as Otto points out, "sees the true singer as a marksman and his song as an arrow that never misses":

Cast a winged shaft of delight

to Pytho likewise; you will find words that falter not to
the ground
as you throb the lyre.

(Olympian 9.11ff., Lattimore translation).

Jeannie Carlier sees in this connection between the lyre and the bow intimations of Apollo's prophetic role. The bow, as we have seen, is like a lyre and makes a musical note when the string is released; but the song of a poet inspired by Apollo "resembles an arrow sent from afar that reaches its target," as Carlier points out, also citing Pindar, Olympian 9. The god's lyre is his bow, by means of which he sends unerring prophetic song to its destination. Thus, Carlier continues, "a common metaphor, that of aiming directly at a distant goal and always reaching that goal, is the means of articulating between poetic speech and oracular speech." Poets and soothsayers, as masters of truth, are linked in Greek thought and are thus both worthy of the patronage of Apollo. The concord and harmony engendered by the god manifest themselves in various sorts of correct and harmonious relationships among humans, in what Carlier refers to as the "well-tempered society"; Apollo is present in music, dance, laws, purificatory rituals, and divination.

An understanding of the tension between proximity and distance seems to provide a useful line of approach to this baffling god. Apollo is both close and remote. As the god to whom young men dedicate the first lock cut from their hair, the god is a close companion and patron of young males. He is, then, the patron and model of kouroi, the protector of young men in general, and of Telemachus in particular (Hesiod, Theogony 346-348; Odyssey 15.525ff., 19.85-87). And yet, it is Apollo in the Iliad who stresses the unimaginable distance between divine and human nature:

"Earthshaker, you would say that I had lost my mind if I should do battle with you for the sake of poor mortals, who are like leaves, who live for a while full of brilliance, eating the fruit of the earth, then are consumed and fall into nothingness" (21.462-466).

Apollonius of Rhodes, in Argonautica 2.680ff., describes a glimpse of Apollo granted at dawn to the Argonauts as the god moved away to the remote land of the Hyperboreans:

They were awe-struck at the sight and no one dared to face the god and meet his lovely eyes. They stood there with selfbowed heads while he, aloof, passed through the air on his way across the sea.

The god makes no direct contact with the adventurers, and certainly offers them no intimate, personal assistance such as that granted to Odysseus by Athena in the Odyssey. Apollo, Carlier concludes, was for the Greeks distant, formidable, and a readily-available symbol of divine transcendence.

Alternations between light and darkness, sky and earth, reassert themselves in literary portrayals of Apollo. John Gould points out that in the Iliad Apollo is shown as giving "hints of a darker, altogether more uncanny aspect of divinity than that seen in the divine assemblies of Olympus." In Book One, for example, Apollo "comes like the night" to punish the Greeks for Agamemnon's insult to Chryses, the devoted priest of Apollo (44-47):

Down from the peaks of Olympus he strode, wroth at heart, bearing on his shoulders his bow and covered quiver. The arrows rattled on the shoulders of the angry god, as he moved; and his coming was like the night.

"Even further from the image of socialized humanity," Gould continues, "is the unseen Apollo who begins (the sacrificial

image is almost inevitable) the slaughter of Patroclus in Iliad 16." In lines 787-796, Patroclus is attacked by Apollo, who strikes him in the back, stunning him; the god then knocks his helmet off, leaving Patroclus with neither sense nor means of defense. Patroclus has been touched by Apollo and is now doomed; with tragic irony, it is just as Patroclus is attacking the Greeks "like a god" that Apollo intervenes, and the end of the hero's life is "shown forth" (787).

Despite Homer's words in Iliad 1 comparing the advent of Apollo to the onset of darkness, it is the god's connection with light and the sun which has seemed to predominate, especially as a result of 19th-century German scholarship. We must be cautious not to give undue emphasis to the alleged link between Apollo and the sun. Bremmer points out that this association originated with "an intellectual, sun-venerating sect in the fifth century BC. It had little influence, except that Roman poets found the name Phoebus a convenient synonym for Sol." As Carlier observes, the linking of Apollo and the Sun does not occur in surviving texts before Aeschylus. Moreover, "the myths often pit him against nocturnal and chthonic forces: against Gaia, mistress of nocturnal Dreams, in Iphigenia in Tauris, and especially against the Erinyes (Furies), those daughters of Night, in Aeschylus' Oresteia." The Python which Apollo kills at Delphi is a snaky, earthy creature, as is the earth-born giant Tityos whom he defeats. Apollo has sons who are, as Carlier points out, "similar to himself, such as Aristaeus, physician-purifier and killer of serpents, but also children who are very different from him: Asclepius and Trophonius, hero-serpents, soothsayers marked by their complicity with the earth and its mantic powers." These chthonic associations, especially when seen alongside of the god's close links to homicide and

appeasement of the furious dead, form "a dark side to the luminous and celestial Apollo." Carlier points out that the fire of Apollo is neither the flame of the artisan nor the "peaceful and supernatural light" associated with him by philosophers; rather, Apollo's fire is blazing, violent and frightening:

Then, like a star at noonday, the lord, far-working Apollo, leaped from the ship: flashes of fire flew from him thick and their brightness reached to heaven. He entered into his shrine between priceless tripods, and there made a flame to flare up bright, showing forth the splendor of his shafts, so that the radiance filled all Crisa, and the wives and well-girded daughters of the Crisaeans raised a cry at that outburst of Phoebus; for he cast great fear upon them all. (Homeric Hymn to Apollo 440-447)

Carlier sees in this passage "blast, immediacy, possession, terror, cry." Apollonian light, she concludes, "has been described since the Homeric Hymns in terms that evoke the violent nature of the bow—the bow being the characteristic weapon of the god, which gains him access to Olympus."

Oracles

Apollo is also, of course, a god of prophecy, a function to be discussed in detail in Section III, below. In this capacity, as Burkert notes, Apollo is especially close to Zeus: "Loxias is prophet of his father Zeus" (Aeschylus, Eumenides, 19).

Nevertheless, Burkert continues, "it is the indirect and veiled revelation which belongs especially to Apollo; for this reason he is called Loxias, the Oblique; the obscure utterances of a medium possessed by the god are formulated in verses which are often intentionally ambiguous and indeterminate." Apollo is the chief sponsor of divination. The Pythia, the prophetess at

Delphi, spoke oracles in the god's own voice; Apollo says "I" when he speaks through his inspired medium. Carlier articulates the link she sees between prophecy and healing: "Master of purifications, Apollo is therefore entitled to three titles: he is Phoebus the Brilliant, but also the Pure; he is the physician who wards off evil; he is the oracle who knows the cause and the remedy for evil. The solidarity between physician and oracle—'Physician-prophet,' iatromantis, is what Aeschylus calls him—is emphasized in another way by Plato when he affirms that by using the same procedures as a physician or as a prophet (fumigations, sprinkling of lustral water) the god produces the same effects: cure—or purification—of bodies and of souls (Cratylus 405A-C)."

III. Oracles, Divination, and Healing

Delphi, Apollo's main oracular site and the center of his cult, was the most important of the panhellenic religious sanctuaries; others were Olympia, Nemea, and Dodona, which were all sacred to Zeus, and Isthmia near Corinth, center of a cult of Poseidon. The sacred area of Delphi is on the lower slopes of Mt. Parnassus, about 2000 feet above the gulf of Corinth, in an awesome and austere landscape of cliffs and valleys. Ferguson describes it as "a numinous place, high above the gorge of the Pleistos, whose silver ribbon trails its way among the thickly clustered grey-green olives." Excavations have disclosed the remains of a great many buildings and shrines connected with the cult, including many "treasuries," small temple-like structures erected at Delphi by individual city states which functioned as safe-deposit vaults for the storage of money, valuable documents, and implements used in worship. Larger structures

include the Temple of Apollo, a stadium, and a theater. Every four years, the Pythian games were celebrated; the contests included not only athletic events like those found at the Olympic games in honor of Zeus, but also contests of a more aesthetic or intellectual nature such as musical, dramatic, and literary competitions. The Pythian games were second only to the Olympic contests in popularity throughout Greek antiquity.

Like Olympia, Delphi owed its importance to the presence of an oracle consulted regularly by Greeks and non-Greeks. Croesus, king of the Asian nation of Lydia during the middle of the sixth century BC, made use of the oracle on several occasions, as reported by Herodotus (1.47-58), and sent rich offerings, listed by Herodotus, which were still on display in the time of Pausanias. Individual Greeks often sought personal advice from the god; heads of state or individual city states requested inspired information about political matters such as war and the planting of colonies. In fact, as Coldstream points out, one of Apollo's chief functions was as "Archegetes, the guide of colonists seeking new homes overseas; from the Delphic oracle it was his custom to give his counsel and blessing to leaders of colonial expeditions—and here lies one of the main reasons why Delphi rose to panhellenic fame." There was at work here a combination of religious piety and plain common sense. The Delphian priesthood, though not directly involved in politics, was extraordinarily well informed on the politics, geography, and international affairs of the ancient Mediterranean. The priests appear to have been expert gatherers of intelligence; they questioned closely Greek and non-Greek visitors to the shrine about the geographical and political situations of their homes; in this way, the priests of Apollo assembled a large quantity of valuable information. Not surprisingly, the

priests' advice to visitors often included recommendations for the advancement of the worship of Apollo through the establishment of new temples, priesthoods, and so forth. As we have seen (Section II above), the legal codes and constitutions of several city states were traditionally attributed to Apollo speaking through his oracle at Delphi.

In mythology, Apollo replaced an older, chthonic, snakelike divinity, the Python, as divine patron of the site and oracle at Delphi. The site was originally known as Pytho (cf. Iliad 9.405 and Herodotus 1.54); the name Delphi seems to be no older than the Homeric Hymn to Artemis (14). Rose (Handbook) suggests that Delphi was originally the site of an oracle of the Earth, and that the myth of Apollo's slaying the Python represents the historical fact of the displacement of the chthonic by the Olympian divinity. Aeschylus states clearly in the first lines of his Eumenides that Delphi was originally the site of an oracle of the Earth:

I give first place of honor in my prayer to her
who of the gods first prophesied, the Earth; and next
to Themis, who succeeded to her mother's place
of prophecy; so runs the legend; and in third
succession, given by free consent, not won by force,
another Titan daughter of Earth was seated here.
This was Phoebe. She gave it as a birthday gift
to Phoebus, who is called still after Phoebe's name.

(Aeschylus, Eumenides, 1-8; Lattimore
translation)

Ferguson points out that Apollo was a post-Mycenaean latecomer to Delphi. Before his arrival, the site of the Temple of Apollo contained buildings which were secular and domestic. Worship of Apollo's predecessor took place elsewhere. This original and extremely ancient Bronze Age cult center is some distance from the location of the temple of Apollo. Moreover, the very fact

that at Delphi oracles were delivered by a prophetess suggests to Ferguson that Apollo was not the original divinity here; elsewhere the god is served by priests and male prophets, except at Argos "where the cult was probably an offshoot of Delphi." References to the oracle by Homer (e.g., Iliad 9.404-5, Odyssey 8.79-82) make it clear that by the eighth century BC, Delphi had become the most leading oracle in mainland Greece. By the sixth century the sanctuary had become, as Price observes, "one of the unquestioned centers of the Greek world," drawing visitors and gifts from the Greek cities of the mainland and the South Italian and Sicilian colonies, but also from foreigners such as Croesus.

Literary and archaeological information give us a generally clear, although by no means complete, picture of the appearance of the sacred area and the process of consulting the oracle. The Homeric Hymn to Apollo contains extended descriptions of the oracle at Delphi. The works of Plutarch, priest of Apollo at Delphi during the second century AD, are a valuable source of information on the oracle and its operation. His works other than the famous Lives are collected under the general title Moralia, or "moral writings,"; particularly useful are two essays, "The Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse" and "The Obsolescence of Oracles." Occasionally, consultation did not go well; Plutarch gives an interesting account of such an episode (Moralia 438B):

[The Pythia] went down into the adyton unwillingly, they say, and half-heartedly; and at her first response it was at once clear from the harshness of her voice that she was not responding properly and was like a laboring ship, as if she was filled with a mighty and baleful spirit. Finally she became hysterical and with a frightful shriek rushed towards the exit and threw herself down, with the result that not only the members of the deputation, but also the prophet Nicander and the cult officials that were present fled.

From this description it is clear that, at least on this occasion, the priestess delivered her prophecies in the presence of a small crowd of witnesses. Pausanias also is a valuable source of information on the appearance and operation of the site during approximately the same period during which Plutarch wrote.

The sanctuary also contained, in addition to the temple of Apollo and its oracular apparatus, offerings made by the various Greek city-states, often commemorating victories over one another: Argos over Sparta, Sparta over Athens in the Peloponnesian War, and so on. A group of statues offered by Athens celebrated their victory over the Persians at Marathon. By the fifth century BC, the sacred area was crowded with commemorative offerings; as Ferguson points out, "the complexity of the site gives us some idea of the complexity of a successful oracle, and the ramifications of Greek religious emotion. The oracle shows the cardinal importance of two emotions--anxiety and gratitude. Without anxiety the oracle would hardly have any being. But it was gratitude which covered the sacred site with treasuries and statues and other offerings."

Treasuries of the city-states contained lesser offerings and religious equipment and documents. That of the eastern Aegean island Siphnos was particularly sumptuous and was one of the great examples of Archaic art, bearing on its frieze relief sculptures portraying the battle of gods and giants; the Siphnians, as Ferguson observes, had their own gold mines with which to support this display. The treasury of the Athenians was "built with a tithe of the spoils from Marathon out of marble from Paros, and excellently reconstructed. It was placed on a terrace with a triangular extension which carried some of the booty for all to see. The inscription, 'The Athenians dedicate

to Apollo the spoils of the Medes after the Battle of Marathon,' is a third-century copy of the original. The metopes of the treasury showed heroic scenes involving Heracles and Theseus."

Plutarch describes the sacrifice of a goat to Apollo on each of the days suitable for consultation; there were only nine of these each year, one day a month excluding the three winter months. A visitor to the oracle, would have entered the cella of the temple of Apollo, within which was the oracular hearth. To consult the oracle, he would descend to the innermost sanctuary, the adyton, the exact location of which is still uncertain. Here most likely stood a gold image of Apollo, the omphalos, Apollo's sacred laurel tree, and the oracular tripod where the Pythia or prophetess sat and issued her ecstatic, and incomprehensible, responses. Her answer was interpreted by the male priests, often delivered to the questioner in hexameter verse. E.R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational, accepts as historical the priestess' ecstatic or mediumistic mode of prophecy; he is convinced that prophecy through divine possession was at least as old as the Greek presence at Delphi, and possibly older still. Dodds takes it as certain that the priestess' trance was "auto-suggestively induced, like mediumistic trance today." The word for seer or prophet, mantis, is almost certainly derived from mainomai, to be insane. The association of prophecy and madness, then, "belongs to the Indo-European stock of ideas." At Delphi, "the Pythia became entheos, plena deo: the god entered into her and used her vocal organs as if they were his own, exactly as the so-called 'control' does in modern spirit-mediumship; that is why Apollo's utterances are always couched in the first person, never in the third."

From the second century AD on, it was widely reported that the priestess delivered her oracles in a state of ecstatic intoxication brought on by her inhaling volcanic vapors which seeped through crevices in the rock below the oracular shrine, or by the consumption of laurel leaves. There were, however, no such crevices and no such vapors. As Ferguson points out, the limestone and schist which surround Delphi do not emit such gases and cannot ever have done so. As for the laurel, or bay, leaves, the plant is certainly sacred to Apollo and was conspicuous in his cult, but the suggestion of laurel-induced intoxication is late and also without foundation in fact. The leaves of this plant, a common ingredient in Mediterranean cookery, are in fact incapable of any intoxicating or hallucinogenic effect. Ferguson describes the experiment of a modern scholar who solemnly masticated and swallowed a supply of bay leaves, remaining utterly uninspired. Nor was the priestess put into a state of altered consciousness by drinking sacred spring water which welled up in the oracular site. Pausanias (10.24.7) claims that the waters of the spring Cassotis emerged within the temple to give the Pythia inspiration ("It is said that the water of this Cassotis sinks under the ground, and inspires the women in the shrine of the god."), but archaeology shows that this cannot have been the case. The priestess' state of prophetic ecstasy, then, was almost certainly induced by a combination of intense religious belief and meditation.

Plutarch, as a priest of Apollo at Delphi, knew the site and its operation very well; at Moralia 437C, he describes not a dizzying miasma seeping up through the rock, but rather a "delightful fragrance" like the aroma of costly perfume which was perceived on occasion by visitors and attendants at the shrine. Plutarch blames the relative inactivity of the oracle in his own day to

the absence of this divine scent. The origin of this aroma has been sought in vain and it is likely that no definitive explanation will be forthcoming; on the other hand, and by way of a rough comparison, it is not uncommon for early Christian visitors to saints' tombs to report a sweet smell, the "odor of sanctity." Most likely then, the scent described by Plutarch was a subjective phenomenon, reflecting the piety and intense belief of certain visitors and attendants; its absence could logically be expected during a period of oracular inactivity and declining religious fervor, as described by the participants in Plutarch's dialogue on the decline of the oracle. In any case, as Price points out, most Greeks accepted as axiomatic the existence of the power of Apollo, just as modern students of the subject reject it; Greek sources, therefore, offer various explanations as to how this power actually worked in the world and are generally unconcerned with the issue of whether it worked. We find it extraordinarily difficult to put aside even for a moment our skepticism and to enter the spiritual world of ancient people. Price's inquiry into the nature of the social and religious forces which, in his words, "sustained the general acceptance of the Pythia's power of prophecy" is more productive of factual conclusions. He is surely correct to conclude that it was a falling off of this sustaining structure of traditional belief which accounts for the decline of the oracle in the time of Plutarch .

Price rejects as "highly unsatisfactory" the suggestions by Guthrie and by others, going back to the eighteenth century, that it was mainly the prophets at Delphi, the interpreters of the Pythia's raving, who were chiefly responsible for both the content and the prestige of the oracular responses. According to this view, the prophets supplied content for the priestess'

nonsensical ravings which supported not only traditional religious beliefs and practices, but also promoted "new moral values such as purity of the spirit." It was, in Guthrie's words, "the high-water mark of religious spirit in pagan antiquity." This theory depends on the assumption that the Pythia's words were incoherent and that the prophets therefore, as interpreters of her gibberish, enjoyed total control over the content of oracular responses. Price argues convincingly that the priestess "did not rant and rave and the inquirer would have been able to hear and understand much of what she said." Thus the role of the prophets, in Price's view, was restricted to transcribing the Pythia's oracular utterances. In support of this view, Price cites Herodotus' account of legal action brought against the Pythia, and not against the prophets, for accepting bribes to deliver corrupt oracles (6.66 and 6.75). "Ancient critics of Delphi," Price adds, "never attacked the oracle on the grounds that it was controlled by scheming prophets. The Pythia was the person held responsible." On the basis of this and other evidence, Price concludes that "we should not picture the oracle as a positive source of progressive theological or political doctrines which showed the way to the other Greeks. Delphi was indeed regarded as a source of authority, but it was there to be consulted, not to lead." The Homeric Hymn to Apollo describes the founding of the oracle by Apollo (247-253):

"Here I am minded to make a glorious temple, an oracle for men, and hither they will always bring perfect hecatombs, both those who live in rich Peloponnesus and those of Europe and all the wave-washed isles, coming to seek oracles. And I will deliver to them all counsel that cannot fail, giving answer in my rich temple."

Citing this passage, Price describes what he sees as the fundamental need of Greek society which was satisfied by Delphi:

"to give advice to the Greeks, advice which would be unflinching because of the oracle's access to the plans of the immortal gods." This advice was delivered in response to inquiries from individuals and cities, on matters personal, religious, and political; Price cites numerous examples from Herodotus and Plutarch, and then reiterates the crucial question: "Why did the intelligent, rational Greeks not think about these problems for themselves and reach their own decisions?" To answer this difficult question, Price cites the importance of the interaction of oracular response and human intelligence to reach a correct interpretation. For example, when the Delphic oracle told Athens, in response to an inquiry, how they should respond to the advancing Persian forces in 480 BC, the Athenians interpreted differently the oracle's obscure predictions and promises. The initial response was most discouraging, addressing the Athenians as "doomed ones," advising them to "fly to the world's end," and announcing that "all is ruined." The horrified petitioners decided to seek "some kindlier prophecy." and re-entered the shrine "in the guise of suppliants begging for a better fate." Their threats not to leave the shrine until their request was granted resulted in the ambiguous promise that safety lay behind "wooden walls" (Herodotus 7.141):

"Though all else shall be taken within the bound of Cecrops
And the gold of the holy mountain of Cithaeron,
Yet Zeus the all-seeing grants to Athena's prayer
That the wooden wall only shall not fall, but help you and

you

One faction in Athens took this to mean that the Acropolis, if protected by a wooden wall as in ancient times, would be impregnable; they were killed by the Persians when the city was occupied. Another faction, led by Themistocles, argued that the oracle must refer to ships as the city's final line of defense; this group won the argument (and the war) because their

interpretation best succeeded in explaining the entire text of the complex and riddling reply of the Pythia. It was, as Price points out, "the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that he had interpreted correctly. Failure to do so could lead to disaster." On the other hand, the Greeks were quite prepared to disregard an oracle which they regarded as being in direct conflict with their interests; the Athenians, warned by Delphi to refrain from attacking Aegina for thirty years (Herodotus 5.89), concocted a legalistic rationalization for doing so immediately, as they very much wanted to do. In both cases, the oracle was taken seriously and its advice followed, either directly or evasively. The decline of the oracle after the fifth century, Price concludes, was due "not to the rise of doubt and skepticism but to changes in Greek society." Most particularly, the loss of the independence of the individual Greek city-states following the conquests of Alexander in the fourth century and the emergence of Greek monarchy as the new prevailing pattern of governance eliminated much of the city-states' freedom of action, especially in matters of inter-city relations. By Plutarch's time, Greek cities were of course no longer free to make war on one another or to sign treaties (Moralia 408B-C, 805A); they did, however, continue to consult oracles on those civic and personal matters which concerned them greatly. "Through these changing patterns of Greek history," Price concludes, "the Delphic oracle continued, when human intelligence failed, to mediate to mortals the knowledge and advice of the gods."

Dodds emphasizes the universal and astonishingly durable prestige of Delphi and its oracle, noting that skepticism about Delphi before the Roman period is both rare and striking. He describes Greece as "a guilt-culture" in need of supernatural assurance and a source of authority greater than merely human institutions.

But Greece, Dodds observes, "had neither a Bible nor a Church; that is why Apollo, vicar on earth of the heavenly Father, came to fill the gap. . . . Out of his divine knowledge, Apollo would tell you what to do when you felt anxious or frightened; he knows the rules of the complicated game that the gods play with humanity; he was the supreme alexikakos, Averter of Evil." The Greeks believed in their oracle, Dodds concludes, "not because they were superstitious fools, but because they could not do without believing in it. And when the importance of Delphi declined, as it did in Hellenistic times, the main reason was not, I suspect, that men had grown (as Cicero thought) more skeptical, but rather that other forms of religious reassurance were now available."

There were other oracles of Apollo on the Greek mainland. At Thebes as at Delphi, the god had apparently displaced a former very ancient cult of a mother goddess; at Corinth the god was deemed to speak in the sounds of a sacred spring. There were also important oracles of the god in Asia Minor, at Didyma in the territory of Miletus, and at Claros, further north in the general vicinity of Ephesus. Both sites have been thoroughly excavated; the archaeological remains, including inscriptions, give valuable clues to the methods of divination at each place. Robin Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians, supplies useful information on the methods of consultation and the history of these oracular shrines.

The massive temple and oracular shrine of Apollo at Didyma, for example, supplies eloquent testimony to the wealth and prestige enjoyed by the cult of Apollo far from the Greek mainland. Built by Miletus in about 330 BC, the temple was twice the size of the Parthenon. It is an Ionic structure and its columns are, as

Ferguson notes, the tallest in all Greek architecture; they are surpassed only in the Roman period by the Corinthian columns of the temple of Bacchus at Baalbek. Like other similarly grandiose structures, such as the temple of Zeus at Agrigento in Sicily, the immense structure at Didyma was never completed. As Coldstream points out, the column bases and the cushions immediately above them were as tall as a man. Beyond the imposing porch, Coldstream continues, "a monumental flight of steps sweeps about sixteen feet down into the cella, which was left open to the sky. Within this open court lay a small temple, which housed the cult-image of Apollo." The inner court functioned as the shrine's adyton; the small Ionic structure, or naiskos, contained a sacred spring. The priestess gave her responses in this small temple within a temple; they were then transmitted by the attending priests from a platform standing above the level of the porch to the visitors waiting among the porch columns, in what Coldstream terms "a fine example of Hellenistic stage-management." Records exist of oracular responses to questions on a variety of personal and political issues dating from around 600 BC to the third century AD.

At Claros, also in Asia Minor, there was no priestess corresponding to those at Delphi and Didyma; here, a male prophet spoke for the god, delivering oracles beneath the temple in a subterranean chamber reached by a zigzag tunnel which changed direction seven times. An antechamber contained an omphalos stone, indicating that Claros was like Delphi regarded as the navel of the universe. An inner chamber contained a sacred spring from which the prophet was deemed to draw inspiration. We know from inscriptions that the god was served by a prophet who was appointed annually; the priest of Apollo served for life as did the interpreter who put the prophecies into Greek verse.

It is important to distinguish between the Pythia, Apollo's prophetess at Delphi, and a series of figures known as "Sibyls." Rose (Handbook) points out that the two have nothing to do with one another. The legend of the Sibyl seems to have originated in a tale about a woman from the vicinity of Troy whose name was Sibylla, and who manifested her devotion to Apollo by delivering inspired and obscure prophecies. These oracular utterances were preserved and circulated; as many towns eventually claimed to be the birthplace of Sibylla, the name came to be regarded as a title. A whole series of Sibyls, and lists of Sibyls, are attested; Rose refers to Varro's inventory as the "orthodox" list of ten, among whom were the Persian Sibyl, the Libyan, the Cumaean, and the Samian. "Behind all these shadowy figures," Rose adds, "lurk, in all probability, a certain number of real women." The Pythia and the various prophetesses of Apollo known as Sibyls were no doubt in many cases sincere persons who easily passed, voluntarily or not, into the state of trance or hysteria which was regarded as being divine possession.

Most famous of the Sibyls, of course, is the Cumaean, celebrated in Book Six of Vergil's Aeneid as Aeneas's guide and adviser in the Underworld; once again, Apollo is strongly linked to the dark subterranean regions. The Sibyl of Cumae has a long and remarkable career, outlasting the collapse of the Classical world and appearing in the most unlikely places as a prophetess foretelling the Christian culture to come. "Not even the fall of Rome," according to Robin Lane Fox, "could cause the Sibyl to die. She had prophesied for Greeks and had spoken, too, for Jews; her books guided the Romans, and she survived as a witness to Christ." Lane Fox cites an early Christian tradition according to which the Cumaean Sibyl encountered the emperor

Augustus in Rome, on the Capitoline Hill, in order to prophesy to him the birth of Christ. The Church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli stands on the site of this alleged meeting between the emperor and the prophetess. This, Lane Fox points out, assured the Sibyl's future "from the Capitol to the great floor scenes in Siena's cathedral and so to the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel."

IV. Apollo, Italy, and Augustus

The Etruscans adopted the cult of Apollo early; Rose (Religion) reminds us that "one of the most impressive monuments ancient Italy has left us is the famous statue of Apollo from Veii, a marvelous and awe-inspiring piece of Etruscan art, which shows the god at his most terrible." The Etruscan kings of Rome consulted the Delphic oracle and obtained the so-called Sibylline Books, collections of prophetic texts of very obscure meaning linked with the Sibyl at Cumae. A collection of such texts was certainly in the hands of the Republican government from quite early, whether or not it was handed down in some way from the Regal period. This collection was burned in 83 BC; Augustus instigated a search for replacement prophetic verses, which were duly obtained from the various Sibyls and then deposited in his magnificent new temple of Apollo on the Palatine.

Apollo's presence in Rome, however, is much older than his splendid Augustan temple. He is addressed as Physician and Healer in prayers of the Vestal Virgins which are of great antiquity and, as Rose points out, "he was called Physician in connection with his oldest temple, vowed in 433 BC during a sickness and dedicated two years later. It stood outside the pomerium, near the river bank, and succeeded an older and smaller

shrine." Schilling discusses the arrival of Apollo in Rome as a healing god: "the oldest invocation recorded in the prayers of the vestals was addressed to the 'physician,' 'Apollo Medice, Apollo Paeon' (Macrobius, Saturnalia 1.17.15)." The god seems to have been known in Rome first as Apollo Medicus; a temple was dedicated to him under this title in 433 BC during an epidemic (Livy 4.25.3; 40.51.6). The neighborhood of the temple, southwest of the Capitol, was called the Apollinar (Livy 3.63.7).

Augustus' Temple of Apollo on the Palatine was built in fulfillment of a vow made by the emperor after his defeat of his dangerous enemy Sextus Pompey in 36 BC. Apollo would also be the god to whom Augustus attributed his victory over the naval forces of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 BC; at the sight of "Actian Apollo," according to Vergil (Aeneid 8.704-6), the alien and polyglot forces allied to the Egyptian queen turned and fled from the righteous and properly Roman fleet of the emperor. Augustus, then, always had, as Rose points out, "a deep devotion, real or simulated, to Apollo." The emperor created on the Palatine Hill in the god's honor what amounted to a rival cult to that of Capitoline Jupiter, giving official Rome two religious centers, "one on each of the venerable heights overlooking the Forum." By placing the Sibylline Books in the new temple of Apollo, under the statue of the god, Augustus, as Schilling points out, "maintained the old Roman tradition that allowed him, by order of the Senate, to consult the Sibylline Books; at the same time he made an innovation by reestablishing the logical connection between the inspired books and their source of inspiration." The symbolic political meaning of this new sharing of religious authority between its traditional Capitoline seat and the Apollo temple on the Palatine, virtually next door to the residence of the princeps who claimed a special closeness to this

god, is obvious. As Galinsky remarks, "the close connection between Augustus' house and the temple by means of a ramp is a manifestation in architecture of the confluence between private and public aspects typical of both Augustus' style of government and Augustan culture."

ARES

Introduction

Ares is the embodiment of everything that is hateful, destructive and bloody in war; the positive aspects of victory (nike) are associated with Athena. Ares embodies the violence, fury, and bloodshed of mortal combat, as opposed to Athena Promachos ("Athena of the Front Lines") who leads men into battle in an organized and valorous manner. The panic that causes a warrior to turn and flee is in the retinue of Ares (Iliad 13.298-300):

. . . Ares, the bane of mortals, goes forth to war, and with him follows Rout, his son, valiant alike and fearless, who turns to flight a warrior, were he never so staunch of heart.

In keeping with his savagery, Ares has his home in the wild, barbarous land of Thrace (Iliad 13.301, Odyssey 8.361), a much more backward place than Greece. Unlike divinities such as Zeus, Apollo and Athena, Ares never develops into a god with any connection to moral functions or ideas. He is never anything more than an instigator or personification of violence, a supernatural cut-throat, in the words of one commentator. The "star of Ares," as a Greek would refer to the planet Mars, was thought to influence war and all things connected with it, including especially violent death.

Not surprisingly then, Ares is an unpopular divinity, being important only in Athens and Thebes. A small hill dedicated to Ares lies west of the Athenian Acropolis; it gave its name to the sacred council of the Areopagus, once the aristocratic governing body of the city; the growing Athenian democracy

stripped the Areopagus of its power and made it a court for homicide (cf. Aeschylus, Eumenides, where the Areopagus is the venue for the trial of Orestes). Athena Areia was worshipped here, along with the Semnai ("Awesome Goddesses"), or Furies. It is doubtful whether Ares himself had a shrine in this location. There was an Ares temple in the Athenian agora where Ares was associated with Aphrodite, Athena, and Enyo, a goddess of war and companion of Ares (Iliad 5.333, "the sacker of cities," and 592; Aeschylus, Theb. 45). Cf. Pausanias 1.8.4:

Near the statue of Demosthenes is a sanctuary of Ares, where are placed two images of Aphrodite, one of Ares made by Alcamenes, and one of Athena made by a Parian of the name of Locrus. There is also an image of Enyo, made by the sons of Praxiteles.

But this temple was only transferred to the agora under the Roman emperor Augustus (31 BC-AD 14) in connection with his promotion, for political reasons, of the cult of Mars Ultor, "Avenging Mars."

In fact, the cult of Mars, Roman god of war and approximate analogue to Ares, contrasts strongly with that of the Greek divinity. Mars was popular and was worshipped all over Italy, including Etruria where he had been adopted as Maris. Mars was associated with fertility and health, as indicated by Cato the Censor (234-149 BC). In his essay on agriculture, Cato gives directions for ensuring the health of cattle by sacrificing to Mars Silvanus. Mars, says Cato, may also be counted upon to ward off bad weather and other misfortunes, which seem to have nothing to do with war. On the other hand, numerous festivals and rites attest to the warlike function of Mars in Italy. Mars, then, appears to have been, in the words of H.J. Rose, "one of the great powers in which the Italian peoples trusted,

their mighty protector in both war and peace." Ares could hardly be more different. He receives more uncomplimentary epithets in literature than any other deity and is associated exclusively with war and violent death.

I. Origins and Cult of Ares

Ares not only has his home in the wild and turbulent land of Thrace, he is commonly portrayed as the helper of foreign nations, such as Troy, or of such unusually warlike peoples as the Amazons. On the other hand, the name of Ares has been tentatively identified on Linear B tablets; we can presume, therefore, that Ares was part of the Greek pantheon from a very early date. The etymology of Ares' name is uncertain, although it may be Greek, and might, as Burkert suggests, be an ancient abstract noun meaning battle or war. The name is apparently related to the Greek root aro-, meaning "fit together" or "equip" (cf. Latin arma). The same root is most likely also found in arete which, as used by the philosophers, means something like "excellence"; that is, the Greeks' first notion of goodness was equivalent to manliness or bravery in war (cf. Latin vir-tus from vir, "man"). In Homer, ares is often used as a synonym for "battle," as for example in the expressions, "to stir up sharp ares", "to measure one's strength in ares," "to kill in ares." Homer presents the god Ares as an enormous bronze-clad warrior who, accompanied on the battlefield by Fear and Terror, is overwhelming, insatiable, destructive, and man-slaughtering. Some heroes, particularly Menelaus, are said to be like Ares in battle and particularly dear to the god. In the context of Greek polytheism, of course, any divinity may be

simultaneously an abstract idea and the anthropomorphic figure who embodies that idea.

The literary record preserves information about some of the relatively rare local Ares cults. At Tegea, Ares was worshipped by women under the epithet Gunaikothoinas, "he who entertains women," according to Pausanias (8.48.4) who preserves the legend of the women of Tegea: after having put the Spartan army to flight, they did not share with their husbands the meat of sacrifice offered to Ares. Dogs were sacrificed to Ares under his title Enyalios, at Sparta; (Plutarch, Quaest.Rom. 290d; Pausanias 3.14.9). Sacrifices to uncanny or chthonic deities such as Hecate frequently include dogs.

Walter Otto suggests that Ares may derive from very ancient earthreligion, "where his savagery had its proper place among other pitiless forces. He is the spirit of imprecation, vengeance, blood-guilt. As the daemon of bloody slaughter he still possesses fearful stature for Homer--the more fearful, indeed, the less his personality is delineated. His element is manslaughter." It is for this reason, according to Otto, that Zeus calls Ares "most hateful" of the gods (Iliad 5.890-893):

"Most hateful to me art thou of all gods that hold Olympus, for ever is strife dear to thee and wars and fightings. Thou hast the unbearable, unyielding spirit of thy mother, even of Hera."

Zeus points out that Ares always loves strife and war and battle, implying that the other gods do not. According to this view then, Ares is basically only a daemon whose character is blind savagery. Athena is also mighty in battle but, as goddess of intelligence, she almost always retains her dignified bearing. Ares represents the emotional furor of bloodshed; he

lacks the moral complexity, the breadth and depth, which are characteristic of most other Greek gods and goddesses.

II. Ares in Myth

Whatever his origins might have been, by the time of Homer Ares is the son of Zeus and Hera and a member of the Olympian family. He never has the agricultural associations of the Roman Mars, nor any connection with righteousness or righteous violence, as does the politically-generated Mars Ultor of Augustan Rome. Rather, Ares is war pure and simple; he is the "warrior with tough shield of hide" who gluts himself in battle with the blood of fallen heroes (Iliad 5.288-289). Ares has little mythology, aside from his role as companion of Aphrodite. He also functions as a martial antithesis to Athena (see below), and as stirrer up of strife. In conflict, Ares often gets the worst of it; Otus and Ephialtes defeat and imprison him (Iliad 5.385ff.). After killing a son of Poseidon, who had raped his daughter by the Attic heroine or goddess Aglauros, Ares was tried before the Areopagus, the high court of Athens then meeting for the first time, and like Apollo, was condemned to a period of servitude. After being urged into battle by Apollo in order to put an end to the heroic slaughter being perpetrated by Diomedes (Iliad 5.455-459), Ares, "wielding a monstrous spear" (594), is wounded in the belly by a spear-thrust of the mortal Diomedes and bellows "loud as nine thousand warriors, or ten thousand" (855-868). Complaining of this indignity, Ares fails to gain the sympathy of his father Zeus (888-898) who denounces the war god as "most hateful" of the Olympians and a mere "annihilator."

Ares is involved in the foundation myth of Thebes (Apollodorus 3.4.1-2). The dragon killed by Cadmus was the son of Ares; the

earth-born warriors sprung from the dragon's sown teeth, some of whom become the aboriginal nobility of Thebes, are therefore the god's descendants. Cadmus later makes his peace, so to speak, with Ares and marries Harmonia, the daughter of Ares and Aphrodite; the murderous war among the sown men ends in a city founded with harmonious order. Combining various accounts, the children of Ares by Aphrodite include Eros (Simonides, frag. 24 Diels), his companions Phobos and Deimos (Fear and Terror) who personify the effect of Ares in battle (Iliad 15.119 and Hesiod, Theogony 934), and, oddly, Harmonia (Theogony 937). The human offspring of Ares, by various mothers, are mostly sons and are generally warlike and violent: Ascalaphus (Iliad 13.518, 15.113), Diomedes, the fierce king of Thrace with his man-eating horses (Euripides Alcestis 481ff.); Cycnus (Hesiod Shield 57ff.); Phlegyas (Apollodorus 3.5.5); and Oenomaus and Evenus who murdered the suitors of their daughters (Apollodorus Epitome 2.4-5; Library 1.8.7-8).

III. The Nature of Ares

Zeus, as we have seen, terms his ferocious son "most hated of the gods." Only once does Ares appear among the other Olympians as a member of their company and as an accepted part of their divine celebrations. In the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, 183-206, the newly-born Apollo joins the gods on Olympus and leads them in song and dance (200-204):

Ares too and keen-sighted Argeiphontes [Hermes] play among them, and Phoebus Apollo plays the lyre for them, dancing with fine high steps, and a radiance shines about him.

Through the incongruous presence of the bloodthirsty incarnation of mayhem on this sublime occasion, the poet is surely suggesting that the power of Apollo is such that even Ares can be brought at least temporarily into this ideal scene of divine harmony. With the exception of this one episode, Ares, as Burkert argues, never attains the full dignity of a god. Despite the delight in battle and heroism shown in the Iliad, the men who rejoice in battle tend to ignore the existence of the war god. Ares is often present in the epic, of course, and the Achaeans are often called his "servants"; nevertheless, Ares remains a bloodthirsty spirit of slaughter, who takes possession of men, filling them with the physical and mental fortitude to face combat (Iliad 17.209-212):

The son of Kronos spoke and bowed thereto with his dark brows, and upon Hector's body he made the armor to fit, and there entered into him Ares, the dread Enyalios, and his limbs were filled within with valor and with might.

Heroes, and especially Menelaus, are called "favorites of Ares," but they never pray to him. His fellow Olympians only reluctantly count Ares as one of their number and treat him with less respect than any other divinity. His antithesis Athena, whom Burkert calls the goddess of "genuine, intelligent Hellenism," defeats Ares in a duel (Iliad 21.385ff.), although, in this case at least, Athena seems to be temporarily infected with the fury usually personified by her opponent (403-406):

But she gave ground and seized with her stout hand a stone that lay upon the plain, black and jagged and great, that men of former days had set to be a boundary mark of a field. Therewith she smote furious Ares on the neck, and loosed his limbs.

Centaur and the Minotaur, in Greek sculpture and painting, fight with rocks, because they are meant to be understood as subhuman monsters; their civilized human opponents, the Lapiths and Theseus, are equipped with swords, the standard weapons of civilized warfare. Athena here fights in a barbarous and savage manner appropriate to her adversary.

The connection between Ares and Aphrodite, at his temple in Athens and frequently in art and literature, is probably not difficult to understand; war and rape, violence and sex, have been close companions throughout human history. Aphrodite is commonly thought of as the wife of Hephaestus; from this derives the story, related in the farcical episode in the song of Demodocus (Odyssey 8.266ff.) that she is the adulterous lover of Ares. The relationship between the two is attested in numerous vase paintings as well as in cult. The poets call Ares the consort of Aphrodite without hesitation. Hesiod, Theogony 933-936, records the birth of their children:

Also Cytherea [Aphrodite] bore to Ares the shield-piercer Panic and Fear [Phobos and Deimos], terrible gods who drive in disorder the close ranks of men in numbing war, with the help of Ares, sacker of towns.

The union of the gods of eroticism and violence is a common poetic motif; cf. Pindar, Pythian 4.87f., and Aeschylus, Seven Against Thebes 105, 135ff., Suppliants 664-666. Ares and Aphrodite have two attested temples in common and they share a priest at Knossos (Pausanias 2.25.1; cf. Burkert, p. 436, n. 35 and 36 for complete references). Their joining links male fighting with female sexuality. A normal result of ancient warfare was the rape of the losers' wives and daughters by the victors. Paradoxically, the daughter of Ares and Aphrodite is

Harmonia, implying euphony or concord, sprung from the union of war and love.

The clearest indication of the fundamental nature of Ares is perhaps to be seen in his frequent pairing with Athena. In the Iliad, Ares is repeatedly contrasted with Athena, usually to his disadvantage. This may be due simply to his backing Troy, the losing side; Vernant, however, understands Homer to be contrasting Ares and Athena in an intellectual and ethical manner. Ares, the embodiment of violence and carnage is one element in an antithetical pair who have the monopoly on matters of war; at Iliad 5.430, Homer causes Zeus to specify that warfare "shall be the business of swift Ares and Athena." Vernant argues that Athena is "the supreme virgin goddess, the Parthenos. Ares rapes and impregnates." Athena's main characteristic is metis, wisdom (see the chapter "Athena"), whereas Ares is the most lacking in this quality of all the gods. At one point in the Iliad, Zeus complains that Ares is even incapable in the heat of combat of distinguishing between the two warring sides (Iliad 5.831-834):

". . . furious Ares that raveth here a full-wrought bane, a renegade, that but now spake with me and Hera, and made as though he would fight against the Trojans but give aid to the Argives; yet now he consorteth with the Trojans and hath forgotten these."

Hera accuses Ares to Zeus of being a "madman that regardeth not any law" (Iliad 5.761). Ares, then, is hated by all the gods; Athena enjoys universal respect. In the Iliad, Ares always loses; Athena wins and imposes her will each time the two come together (Iliad 5.765. 824-864; 15.121-142; 21.391-415). As we have seen, it is Athena who gives Diomedes the courage to face the god of war himself in battle and to wound him.

Finally then, Ares is the embodiment of excess, of the lack of the supreme Hellenic virtue, sophrosyne, moderation or temperance, which is personified by Athena, the child of Zeus' brain. Ares incarnates the furious force of combat, which though necessary for the city's survival against its enemies, can be self-destructive unless controlled by measure and reason, as represented by Athena. Athena is military science, as opposed to berserk mayhem; she substitutes "the ordered combat of hoplites for the wild melees of heroes" and brings technical skill to the battlefield. She bears a hoplite's gear (helmet, breastplate, shield, and spear) but draws her major strength from her Aegis, magical symbol of her supernatural power. Through Athena, war is domesticated and made civilized. Athena tames the forces deriving from Ares, as well as Ares himself, for the city's benefit. Ares is dedicated solely to the violence of war, with no interest whatever in the larger issues of civilized life in a settled polis; according to Hesiod, Ares is emblematic of the men of the dire Age of Bronze (Works and Days 144-146, 152-155):

They loved the lamentable works of Ares and deeds of violence; they ate no bread, but were hard of heart like adamant, fearful men. . . . These were destroyed by their own hands and passed to the dank house of chill Hades, and left no name: terrible though they were, black Death seized them, and they left the bright light of the sun.

ARTEMIS

Introduction

Although Artemis is often linked to Hecate, goddess of the underworld, and to Selene, personification of the Moon, her fundamental sphere of activity is the uncultivated wilderness of forests and hills; Artemis presides over hunting and over the young of all species.

Homer assigns a singularly unimpressive role to Artemis in the Iliad (21.470ff.). Although she is a daughter of Zeus and sister of Apollo, Hera insults Artemis as a mere "lion to women" (483), a condescending reference to the role of Artemis as Mistress of Beasts, potnia theron, and to her responsibility for sudden death among women. Hera then wrenches the bow out of Artemis's hands, beats her with it, and sends her fleeing in tears to Zeus, "like a dove which flees from a falcon" (493-494). In Archaic Greek art, the goddess is often shown winged and in the company of lions, deer, and other beasts. As Potnia Theron, goddess of the wild places of the earth, Artemis is also associated with the fertility and fruitfulness of humans, animals, and trees. She has very little mythology beyond the story of her birth as Apollo's twin. Although her actual origins in cult are quite separate from those of her brother (see the chapter "Apollo"), she often appears with him in Classical art, either in councils of the gods or in the battle of gods and giants. The association of Artemis with fertility suggests that she was at some early time a mother goddess; though perpetually a virgin in Greek myth, she was regarded as a friend and helper of women in childbirth.

Although her cult was in most respects not unlike that of any other major deity, elements of animal worship, and even hints of prehistoric human sacrifice, point to the great and certainly pre-Hellenic antiquity of the cult of Artemis. She was worshipped by little girls called "bears" at Brauron in Attica, and possibly by people playing the part of fawns at Larissa and Demetrias. Traces of a very ancient cult involving human sacrifice may survive in the ritual drawing of a few drops of blood from a man's throat with a sword at Halae (Euripides Iphigenia at Tauris, 1450ff.); late, and probably unreliable, sources attest to actual human sacrifice in historical times at Phocaea. The famous Artemis of Ephesus represents the fusion of the Greek goddess with the original universal mother goddess of Asia Minor. Whatever the exact significance of the odd multiple protrusions from the figure's torso (breasts? eggs?), they certainly indicate both a link with fertility and a non-Greek iconography. The Ephesian version of Artemis traveled widely in the ancient Mediterranean; a statue modeled on the goddess of Ephesus stood in the temple of Diana on Rome's Aventine hill (Strabo 4.1.5).

I. Origins of Artemis

Artemis, according to the nearly unanimous consensus of modern scholars, is by origin a non-Greek divinity. Despite her close links in myth and cult with her twin brother Apollo, who is virtually the archetypal Hellenic divinity, a general consensus prevails that originally she had nothing to do with him. The name of Artemis is not Greek; the alternate spelling Artamis

("slaughterer," "butcher") is most likely a late and popular assimilation of a word of unknown meaning to a Greek root.

Traces of what Harrison calls "primitive savagery" in local cults of Artemis indicate with near certainty the extreme antiquity of the goddess. For example, Pausanias (7.18.12-13) describes the horrific annual sacrifice, a holocaust in the original sense of the term, to Artemis at Patrae:

The festival begins with a most splendid procession in honor of Artemis, and the maiden officiating as priestess rides last in the procession upon a car yoked to deer. It is, however, not till the next day that the sacrifice is offered, and the festival is not only a state function but also quite a popular general holiday. For the people throw alive upon the altar edible birds and every kind of victim as well; there are wild boars, deer and gazelles; some bring wolf-cubs or bear-cubs, others the full-grown beasts. They also place upon the altar fruit of cultivated trees. Next they set fire to the wood. At this point I have seen some of the beasts, including a bear, forcing their way outside at the first rush of the flames, some of them actually escaping by their strength. But those who threw them in drag them back again to the pyre. It is not remembered that anybody has ever been wounded by the beasts.

Harrison informs us that this rite is nearly identical to one offered to the Great Mother at Hierapolis in Asia Minor and adds that "even in the civilized days of Pausanias the service of the Huntress-Maid was horrible and bloodthirsty. It is well perhaps for once to realize from what imminent savagery the Olympian divinities had emerged." The similarity of this quite gruesome Greek rite to one found in Asia Minor points to the close connections of Artemis with this region. Burkert informs us that her name is to be found among the gods of Lydia and Lycia in Asia Minor; Artemis was regularly identified with the Great Goddess of Asia Minor and with Cybele. Although in myth Artemis

is closely linked with her brother Apollo, her cult is strong in Ephesus and in other places where Apollo has no concern, where the goddess is worshipped in non-Hellenic form, and where she has "temple-legends connecting her with non-Greek peoples." Burkert concludes that Artemis is "a goddess of the conquered race, not yet fully naturalized a Greek, as Hera is."

Other scholars have emphasized the possible Minoan roots of Artemis, particularly in her role of Mistress of Animals. It is very likely, according to Guthrie (CAH), that a single great goddess who personified the earth as source of all life, a goddess of all nature and of all creatures of land and water, was worshipped in Crete under various aspects. It was probably the Greeks, Guthrie suggests, "with their more concrete imagination, who divided these aspects among different personalities, creating names out of what they had taken over as epithets." He concludes that Artemis, with her non-Greek name, is clearly an example of the universal mother goddess found all over the Aegean from the prehistoric period on; the many-breasted Artemis of Ephesus is most likely her original form (see Section VI, below). Artemis, then, is the Greek divinity to whom were assigned some of the characteristics of the universal Minoan goddess who may have dominated Minoan religion and who was perhaps represented in the well-known ivory statuettes with snakes wrapped around her arms. For Guthrie, the original goddess of abundant motherhood, patroness of all wild things and of those who hunt them, did not appeal to the "masculine and rational Greeks"; as a Hellenized goddess, the great mother became the virginal maiden who is nevertheless the protector and patroness of marriage and childbirth. Guthrie points out that Artemis is called Mistress of Animals in Homer and that the phrase 'slave of Artemis' is found in a Mycenaean

inscription. The Mycenaean tablets supply important evidence that the process of the individuation of Artemis from her Minoan ancestor was already well advanced by the thirteenth century BC. One of the names of the Minoan goddess was Britomartis, which may mean "sweet maid"; the Greeks honored Britomartis with her own cult (Strabo 10.4.13) but also identified her with Artemis. The Greeks also associated the Cretan goddess Dictynna, who presumably held sway over Mt. Dicte on the eastern extremity of Crete, with Artemis, and also with Britomartis.

This picture of the origins of Artemis is further complicated by a consideration of the nymphs attendant upon the goddess in Greek myth. Rose (Handbook) remarks that these nymphs were commonly linked with the goddess in worship and suggests that they may be very ancient deities either identical to or very similar to Artemis herself. Britomartis, as we have seen, is most likely Artemis with a Cretan name. After a series of adventures with Artemis, she fled to Aegina and was worshipped there as Aphaia. Callisto ("the most beautiful") was the mother by Zeus of Arcas, the eponymous hero of Arcadia; she bears a name so strongly suggestive of one of Artemis' cult titles (Calliste) as to make it likely that she was once Artemis herself. Callisto was rejected by Artemis when she became pregnant by Zeus; she too, then, seems to have been split off from the original goddess, taking one of the divinity's epithets as a name (cf. Ovid, Metamorphoses 2.405ff. and Fasti 2.155ff.).

Iphigenia ("mightily born"), the daughter of Agamemnon in myth, was either sacrificed to Artemis or saved from sacrifice by having a wild animal substituted by Artemis for her (Pindar, Pythian 11.23; Aeschylus, Agamemnon 184ff.; Sophocles, Electra 563ff.; Euripides, Iphigenia in Tauris, Iphigenia at Aulis; also

Lucretius, De Rerum Natura 1.84ff.). Euripides (Iphigenia at Tauris, 20-21) links the intended sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter to a custom whereby the goddess claims as her own "the most beautiful product of the year." As Rose (Handbook) suggests, since Iphigenia is consistently linked with Artemis as sacrificial victim, recipient of the goddess' merciful intervention, or priestess of Artemis, and since her name is or easily could be the epithet of a divinity, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Iphigenia too was once identical to Artemis.

In view of all this, the source of the Classical conception of Artemis as virgin huntress is unclear. The universally accepted Greek legend of the birth of Artemis and Apollo has Leto, pregnant with the twins by Zeus, searching the world for a land which would allow her to give birth there. Having been rejected by all other places out of their fear either of her brother Apollo (Homeric Hymn to Apollo, 47-49) or of the envious wrath of Hera, Leto finally came to Ortygia, a name which was identified at an early date with Delos (Apollodorus 1.4.1; Callimachus Hymn 4). Granted sanctuary by Delos, Leto gave birth there to her twins; Apollodorus relates that Artemis was born first and assisted at the birth of her brother, thus anticipating the aid in childbirth for which mortal women would look to her. The first adventure of the young goddess was the killing of the giant Orion (Apollodorus 1.4.3-5). All artists who portray the Battle of Gods and Giants, as illustrated by the well-known reliefs from the Treasury of the Siphnians at Delphi, agree that Artemis took part in the event armed with her bow. By virtue, then, of what Guthrie calls the Greek genius for adaptation, "the goddess whose primary characteristic had been her ever-fertile motherhood became the beautiful figure of the

virgin huntress whose highest expression we see in the Hippolytus of Euripides." Artemis, "though childless herself, has childbirth for her province" (Plato, Theaetetus 149b). On the other hand, vestiges of the primeval mother goddess always survived; her cult at Ephesus apparently preserved the ancient conception of the Mistress of Beasts.

II. "Potnia Theron": Our Lady of Beasts

As we have seen (Section I, above), Artemis is in part an archetypal mother goddess and protectress of beasts. In vase painting and elsewhere in Greek art, Artemis is often depicted as winged and surrounded by lions, birds, or unidentifiable animals. Temples of Artemis were often located in remote and dramatic locations on mountain sides, in gorges, or looking over the sea, apparently as indications that she was regarded as the power of the wild. Rose (Handbook) points out that she is universally regarded as being concerned with wildlife and with the young of both animals and humans; she was worshipped under the cult titles Paidotrophos, Kourotrophos, Philomeirax (lover of children or of the young). Guthrie suggests that, "if Artemis protected the young of all species, including mankind, it was for a very good reason, namely that she had originally been their mother." Artemis was worshipped over a wide area under many names by various peoples: in Phrygia, as Cybele, who rides in a chariot pulled by lions; in Cappadocia, as Ma; in Crete, as Britomartis.

The Homeric Hymn to Artemis describes the goddess in exceptionally fine language (1-20):

I sing of Artemis, whose shafts are of gold, who cheers on the hounds, the pure maiden, shooter of stags, who delights in archery, own sister to Apollo with the golden sword. Over the shadowy hills and windy peaks she draws her golden bow, rejoicing in the chase, and sends out grievous shafts. The tops of the high mountains tremble and the tangled wood echoes awesomely with the outcry of beasts: earth quakes and the sea also where fishes shoal. But the goddess with a bold heart turns every way destroying the race of wild beasts: and when she is satisfied and has cheered her heart, this huntress who delights in arrows slackens her supple bow and goes to the great house of her dear brother Phoebus Apollo, to the rich land of Delphi, there to order the lovely dance of the Muses and Graces. There she hangs up her curved bow and her arrows, and heads and leads the dances, gracefully arrayed, while all they utter their heavenly voice, singing how neat-ankled Leto bare children supreme among the immortals both in thought and in deed. .
. .

III. Artemis in Homer and Tragedy

Although Homer terms Artemis Mistress of Animals, he suppresses her role as universal mother and goddess of nature; Artemis for Homer is a girl whom Hera beats, humiliates and drives from the battlefield (Iliad 21.470-514). At Odyssey 6.102-109, Homer describes the virginal, impressive and royal beauty of Nausicaa in terms of the wild majesty of Artemis:

And even as Artemis, the archer, roves over the mountains, along the ridges of lofty Taygetus or Erymanthus, joying in the pursuit of boars and swift deer, and with her sport the wood-nymphs, the daughters of Zeus who bears the aegis, and Leto is glad at heart—high above them all Artemis holds her head and brows, and easily may she be known, though all are fair—so amid her handmaidens shone the maid unwed.

This, as Burkert observes, becomes the definitive picture of the goddess in later literature and in Classical iconography: the

youthful, lithe huntress who carries bow and quiver and is often accompanied by animals, often a stag or doe. "A feeling for virgin nature with meadows, groves, and mountains, which is as yet barely articulated elsewhere, begins to find form here; Artemis is the goddess of the open countryside beyond the towns and villages." Burkert and others consider Euripides' Hippolytus to be the most moving expression of the Artemisian ideal. Hippolytus the hunter brings Artemis a garland of flowers (73-82):

It was I that plucked and wove it,
plucked it for you in your inviolate meadow.
No shepherd dares to feed his flock within it:
no reaper plies a busy scythe within it:
only the bees in springtime haunt the inviolate meadow.
Its gardner is the spirit of Reverence who
refreshes it with water from the river.
Not those who by instruction have profited
to learn, but in whose very soul the seed
of Chastity toward all things alike
nature has deeply rooted, they alone
may gather flowers there! the wicked may not.

Only Hippolytus is allowed to enter this pure retreat; here, he says (85-86), "I am with you and to your words can answer words." On the other hand, the patronage of Artemis ultimately gains Hippolytus nothing but anguish and death; his exclusive devotion to the virgin goddess offends Aphrodite and brings about his appalling doom. As the end approaches, the man who had been the closest to Artemis calls upon his goddess; the austere divinity acknowledges that she is "dearest of the gods" to him (1394) but nevertheless bids Hippolytus a hasty farewell and leaves the scene lest she be polluted by the presence of the corpse he is soon to become (1437-1441):

"It was fate that you should die so.
Farewell, I must not look upon the dead.

My eye must not be polluted by the last
gaspings for breath. I see you are near this."

IV. Huntress, Virgin and Mother: Goddess of the Border Lands

The virginity of Artemis is unlike the asexuality of Athena; rather, it represents, in Burkert's words, "a particularly erotic and challenging ideal. . . . Artemis and Dionysus seem to be opposed to each other as the freshness of the morning to the sultriness of the evening, but their cults have many parallels. They, and they alone, have a thiasos, a retinue of animated dancers, though the maenads of Dionysus are mature women and the nymphs of Artemis are young virgins; masks and even phallic costumes are found in dances for Artemis as well as in dances for Dionysus." We see elsewhere elements of eros paradoxically associated with the virginity of Artemis. Homer mentions the chorus of Artemis only once in the Iliad (16.181-186) and tells the story of how Hermes fell in love with and impregnated one of the dancers. In other places too, the chorus of the virgin huntress appears as a "predestined occasion for rape," as when the Dioscuri seize the virgin daughters of Leucippus, when Theseus carries off Helen as she was dancing in the temple of Artemis (Plutarch, Theseus 31.2), or when Zeus rapes Callisto (Apollodorus 3.8.2). The inclusion of erotic elements in the literary and artistic portrayals of Artemis and her retinue very probably reflects the realities of ritual and of daily life. Girls of marriageable age did form choruses to sing and dance in honor of the goddess at public events, where in fact they often met their future husbands; this is a common motif in New Comedy. In Greek Anthology 6.280, a young girl on the verge of marriage

dedicates the toys of her childhood and her virginity to Artemis.

Detienne points out that the institution of marriage, along with the discovery of agriculture, viticulture, and the art of cooking meat to make it edible, was among those developments in primitive societies which led to what the Greeks referred to as the cultivated life, a way of life superior to savagery and intermediate between animal and divine existence. In the earliest times, people mated freely by random encounter, so that the father could never know his offspring. Cecrops, the first semilegendary king of Athens, put an end to sexual promiscuity, decreeing that a woman would be wed to one man. Plutarch notes that the marriage ritual marking the passage from little girl to married woman required sacrifices to at least five divinities: Zeus Teleios, Hera Teleia (teleios/a, "the fulfiller"), Aphrodite, Peitho ("persuasion"), and Artemis. Hera was first of the three great female powers governing marriage, but the preliminary complicity of Artemis was absolutely necessary. Artemis and Hera together received the locks of a young woman's hair which were offered just before marriage. As with Hera, the association with childbirth and women's life in general has led to the identification of Artemis with the moon; however, neither literature nor the earliest forms of her cult support the suggestion of her lunar character. Once the bride left her home and entered the marriage chamber, she had left the domain of Artemis for that of Aphrodite and Hera. That is, the frontier of marriage is especially reserved for Artemis; she has a particular interest in the act of crossing the boundary from virginity to married womanhood. "No woman could become a bride unless she first dwelled in the kingdom of Artemis and paid the required tribute upon leaving"; this tribute might be dolls,

toys, hair, or time spent at Brauron as a "bear" of Artemis. But, as Detienne adds, "the domain of Artemis is a place merely to pass through. It is a place of transition. No one can dwell in it, or attempt to return to it with impunity." The fate of Atalanta is a cautionary tale: like Hippolytus, she hated marriage and hoped to guard her virginity from the "gifts of Aphrodite." After eventually failing in this attempt, and for polluting with sex a place sacred to Artemis, she was turned into a lioness by Aphrodite (Apollodorus 3.9.2; Ovid, Metamorphoses 10.560-707; Hyginus, Fabulae 185; Servius on Aeneid 3.113).

Artemis, then, punishes without mercy human attempts to force or impede the normal crossing of the various boundaries over which she presides. For example, we have seen that Hippolytus, the son of Theseus, had devoted himself completely to Artemis and the hunt, avoiding all contact with women. Although Artemis is eternally virgin, a human may not remain so without offense. Aphrodite incites the passion of Phaedra, wife of Theseus, for her stepson; Hippolytus's arrogant denunciation of Phaedra and sex in general brings on his stepmother's suicide and her posthumous accusation of rape. Mangled by an avenging bull from the sea, Hippolytus dies in agony; Artemis does nothing to save the young man who had been so excessively devoted to her. Hippolytus had attempted, Ellinger suggests, "to reduce the world to only one of its aspects," ignoring the interdependent and cohesive nature of a Greek pantheon in which all aspects of nature must be recognized and worshipped in an appropriate manner.

As Kourotrophos, nourisher of the young, Artemis leads human offspring, both male and female, to the boundary between childhood and maturity; there they abandon their lives as children and, with the patronage of Artemis and through initiation rituals over which she presides, cross over into adult life. Artemis supervises the activities of young men, governing their training in hunting and warfare, areas where the fragility of the boundary between savagery and civilization is most noticeable. She is mistress of the gymnasia (Euripides, Hippolytus, 229), institutions especially frequented by ephebes or young men who had reached puberty and were eligible for military service and full citizenship. The young, as Vernant points out, "occupy a liminal position that is uncertain and equivocal" and it is this status which is a concern of Artemis. At Brauron in Attica, for example, young Athenian girls spent some time in seclusion in the sanctuary of Artemis as a preparation for marriage. They become "bears" dedicated to the service of the goddess but are gradually domesticated or civilized until they may be able "to cohabit in marriage with a man" (Suda, s.v. arktos en Brauroniois). It is probably not a coincidence that the sanctuary of Brauron in Attica is situated at the extreme edge of the territory. Other shrines sacred to Artemis, as Ferguson points out "are generally at the end of cultivated territory. Already wild, adjoining the mountains or a part of them, bordering the sea, these regions bear the Greek name of eschatiai: the extremities, the limits, the land 'at the end.'" As Callimachus remarks, "To the cities Artemis does not often come down" (Hymn to Artemis 19). Both male and female initiation rites took place at the eschatiai and were presided over by Artemis who, forever virginal, would never reach what Vernant terms "the cultivated territory of adulthood." Artemis, then, is not the incarnation of total wildness; rather, it is

the transition, the change of state, from the unsocialized condition of childhood to adult life, or from savagery to civilization, over which Artemis presides. This idea may also explain the apparent paradox between the role of Artemis as, on the one hand, a virgin goddess to whom all erotic contact is alien and, on the other, Locheia, mistress of childbirth, or Kourotrophos, Nurse of Youths. Childbirth signifies "both the end of the girls' gradual maturation for which Artemis is responsible and the beginning, for the newborn, of the career in life that also belongs to her."

Artemis is both kindly and dangerous; she is worshipped as the protector of young animals and of hunting, as the patroness of birth and of sudden death. She ranges the mountains with her nymphs "rejoicing in boars and swift deer." In Greek literature from Homer on, Artemis bears the epithet Agrotera, "Lady of the Hunt"; she is the protector of wild animals, and especially of their young. Aeschylus states that she is "gracious to the tender whelps of fierce lions, and take[s] delight in the suckling young of every wild creature that roams the field" (Agamemnon 141-143). Artemis is also the huntress who "turns every way destroying the race of wild beasts" (Homeric Hymn, 10). Young women on the verge of marriage and women in labor pray for the kindly assistance of Artemis. She had a major sanctuary elevated on a terrace at Thasos, largely Hellenistic in its present form, but dating back at least to the fifth century BC. A first century BC inscription here honors Artemis as Eileithyia, the goddess of childbirth. Elsewhere she was worshipped as Soteira ("savior"). On the other hand, as we have seen, her arrows bring death to women (Iliad 21.483). With her brother Apollo, she killed without hesitation all the children of Niobe, who had offended Leto by boasting of her many

children. The arrows of Artemis are nevertheless sometimes described as "gentle," and are sometimes prayed for; her "sweet arrows" bring "tender death" (Odyssey 5.124; 11.172-173, 324-325; 15.478; 18.202; 20.61-63, 80-81).

Vernant suggests that what he calls "alterity" or "otherness" is the principle characteristic of Artemis; as we have seen, she presides over liminal states and the passage from one condition to its opposite. It is this which suggests unity and coherence in her many functions in myth and cult through the entire history of the Classical world. Vernant cites the third-century AD Life of Apollonius of Tyana (6.20) to establish that, even at this late date, consciousness of the "strangeness" of Artemis persisted and that her cult continued to address "equivocal relations" between savagery and civilization, barbarism and Hellenism. The goddess thus always and everywhere has two sides: first, she is the huntress who slaughters wild animals with her weapons and whose arrows, when used against humans, bring sudden death to women; she is also goddess of the untamed wilderness and of the young "insofar as they are not yet integrated into society, not yet civilized." But Artemis is also the goddess of fertility who makes plants, animals, and humans flourish and grow. As mistress of the hunt, then, Artemis is not wildness itself; she introduces civilized people into the world of wild animals and governs their activities there, seeing to it that "the boundaries between the wild and the civilized are permeable in some way."

V. Temples and Cults of Artemis and Diana

We have seen that Artemis plays a minor and even ludicrous role in the Iliad; she is more fully and respectfully described in

the Homeric Hymns. In each case, Artemis is the familiar chaste huntress of virtually all subsequent Greek literary and artistic portrayals. She is most fully characterized as the austere virgin of Euripides' Hippolytus. The problem for modern students of Greek religion is that this Homeric and Classical portrait is not consistent with the role of Artemis in cult. That is, already in Homer we find not the first but the last point in the history of the development of the character of the goddess. Greek literature gives us the civilized Artemis, virgin goddess of the hunt and of the wilderness; in cult, we find practices which derive from a much earlier and comparatively savage stage of social evolution, such as holocausts of live animals and even hints of human sacrifice. In other words, with Artemis, more than with any of the other Olympians, the disjunction between myth, art, and literature on the one hand and cultic practice on the other is so great that the literary portraits of the goddess are relatively unimportant compared to written and archaeological evidence for religious practice in reaching an understanding of her role in the religious life of the ancient Greek people.

As regards the great antiquity of the cult of Artemis, it is surely significant that the very earliest Greek cult images we possess are early Archaic representations of this goddess. Coldstream mentions the discovery at Dreros of three bronze cult statues representing Apollo, Artemis and Leto; they are, he observes, "by far the earliest cult-images found in any Greek temple," Robinson cites a find at Delphi which appears to be the earliest marble statue known, a figure of a woman, greater than life size of simple, even primitive, design; it bears an inscription dedicating the figure to Artemis, "the mark-hitting arrow-pourer." The left hand of the statue is pierced so that

it could have held a bow; the figure represents either Artemis herself or a certain Nikandre who made the dedication.

Artemis was worshipped along with Apollo at Delphi. As Burkert points out, the twins are very closely associated in the Greek imagination. Homer mentions them together with Leto; this trio of divinities is found represented in cult images from Dreros, as we have seen, and at many other shrines. The group appears on the sixth century east pediment of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. The Delphic amphiktyones, the Greek deputies to Delphi, swore by Apollo, Leto, and Artemis. The temple of Apollo at Delos stood next to the Artemision. Innumerable vase paintings from the seventh century onwards show the divine pair together. Burkert emphasizes the power which the image of the twin offspring of Leto had over the Greek imagination and suggests that, in both art and myth, they represent "the archetypes of adolescent youth: at the festivals of the gods, the mortals honor their own archetype. In Karyai young girls dance for Artemis, and in Sparta the boys celebrate the Gymnopaidia for Apollo; on Delos girls and boys dance the crane dance together. . . . On Delos girls sing the hymn for Apollo which reaches a state of ecstasy. . . . The experience of the dance merges with the experience of the deity. At the Gymnopaidia, boys dance for Apollo, and everywhere girls dance for Artemis: the vigorous, youthful form of these divine siblings appears as a projection of these dances. Apollo himself plays for the dance, and Artemis joins in the dance with her Nymphs (Iliad 16.183)."

Unfortunately, there is a darker side to all this. Burkert reminds us that "the inviolable goddess is terrible and even cruel—her arrow threatens every girl who fulfills her womanly destiny." Artemis assists women at childbirth, but those who

died giving birth were regarded as victims of the goddess. Young women in ancient Greece tended to marry young, shortly after puberty. Among other things, Artemis represents the frighteningly dangerous plight of what we would regard as underage girls confronted with childbirth in a world lacking real medical care. Like Apollo, Artemis can be both gentle and destructive. Ferguson cites a metope from Temple E at Selinus which shows Artemis causing the hunter Actaeon, who had happened upon her naked, to be mauled to death by his own hounds. She appears on vases shooting down Niobe's daughters. Hera calls Artemis "a lion to women" at Iliad 21.483. At Odyssey 15.407ff., Homer describes a blessed land free of disease and old age, where women and men pass over into death painlessly by virtue of the arrows of Artemis and Apollo. We have seen that Artemis presides over hunting and over the initiation of girls (Section IV, above), but behind maiden initiation may lurk maiden sacrifice. It is Artemis who demands that Agamemnon sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia (Aeschylus, Agamemnon 192-227). Artemis is mentioned on a lead curse tablet which consigns to subterranean damnation a malefactor "in the name of Artemis, Demeter, Kore and all the gods with Demeter." It is no doubt this association with the chthonic Demeter, as well as her very ancient agricultural role, which leads to the establishment of Artemis as one of the elements of the "triple goddess": Selene, the Moon, occupies the sky, Artemis the earth, and Hecate the Underworld.

The consecration of boys and girls for a period of temple service was a common characteristic of the cult of Artemis. Athenian girls were sent to Artemis at Brauron, a site on the east coast of Attica, dedicated to the Potnia Theron ("Our Lady of the Animals"), and also linked to the myth of Iphigeneia.

The daughter of Agamemnon, doomed to be sacrificed to Artemis so that the Greek fleet could sail with a favoring wind to Troy, was not sacrificed after all but, in a variant of the legend, was saved by the goddess. An animal was left in the girl's place and she became priestess of Artemis among the savage Taurians. She eventually saved the life of her brother Orestes, escaped with him and, bringing along an ancient image of Artemis, settled and died at Brauron. Later, local people claimed that it was here, and not at Aulis, that the attempted sacrifice took place, and that the substituted animal was a bear. The fifth-century site of Brauron includes a Doric temple and a courtyard whose pillars bear the names of girls who are called the goddess' "bears." They lived here from the ages of 7 to 11 under the care of Artemis, cut off from the world in the lonely sanctuary of the goddess, performing dances, running races, and making sacrifice; cf. Aristophanes, Lysistrata 643, "I was a bear at the Brauronian festival." Burkert points out that "seclusion and even cultic nakedness, as evidenced by vase paintings, are typical initiation motifs, as is the threat of maiden sacrifice in myth." Harrison suggests that Artemis herself, bearing the euphemistic title of Kalliste, "the fairest," was originally a bear, and that we should not be surprised that one of her faithless worshippers was turned into a bear. After the sacrifice of a goat, a common offering to Artemis, there was a dance of "bears," little girls in saffron-colored robes which perhaps imitate a bear's pelt. This, Rose suggests, "gives us a glimpse into something much more primitive than the normal Attic cult, suitable for a festival not belonging to the capital itself. . . . By a very common tendency of all manner of religions, her worshippers were attracted into their deity's outward form; the bear-goddess is attended by bear-virgins."

Recollections of human sacrifice to Artemis in myth and in cult add additional, and distressing, detail to the picture we have drawn of the original nature of the goddess. Melanippus and Comaitho, priestess of Artemis at Patrae, forbidden by their parents to marry, defiled the sanctuary of the goddess with their lovemaking. Artemis sent as punishment a plague which blighted the lives of field, flocks and people. The Delphic oracle, consulted for a remedy, revealed the lovers' crime and ordered that they be sacrificed to Artemis, and that each subsequent year a chosen man and woman also be offered to the goddess—the bloody practice only being ended by the introduction of the cult of Dionysus (Callimachus, Hymn to Artemis); cf. Pausanias 7.19-20:

. . . this pair had their fill of the passion of love in the sanctuary of Artemis. And hereafter also were they to use the sanctuary as a bridal-chamber. Forthwith the wrath of Artemis began to destroy the inhabitants; the earth yielded no harvest, and strange diseases occurred of an unusually fatal character. . . . The oracle [of Apollo at Delphi] ordered that they themselves should be sacrificed to Artemis, and that every year a sacrifice should be made to the goddess of the fairest youth and the fairest maiden.

At Halai, after a night filled with the songs and dances of women in honor of Artemis, a man was led to the altar to have his throat nicked with a sword, just enough to draw blood. This is almost certainly the last trace of something far grimmer: the slaughter of a man to the goddess of fertility. Euripides (Iphigenia in Tauris, 1450-1462) preserves this memory and calls the custom "a grave reminder of her former ways." The Spartans replaced ancient human sacrifice by sprinkling the altar of Artemis with the blood of young men following their flagellation; cf. Pausanias 3.16.10-17:

He used to be sacrificed [to Artemis] upon whomsoever the lot fell, but Lycurgus changed the custom to a scourging of the lads, and so in this way the altar is stained with human blood.

In Euripides' Iphigenia in Tauris, Iphigenia protests the necessity of human sacrifice to the bloodthirsty Artemis of barbaric Tauris (380ff.). According to the version of the myth central to this play, Artemis herself had recorded her objection to human sacrifice by substituting a fawn for Iphigenia when the girl had been prepared for slaughter by Agamemnon. The substitution story, like that of the ram which replaces Isaac (Genesis 22), almost certainly marks the very ancient transition from human to animal sacrifice.

Diana

The Italian goddess Diana was virtually identical to Artemis; she was likewise associated with fertility, childbirth and the life of animals. Diana was worshipped, as Rose points out, "in the most ancient cult of which we know anything" at Aricia, near the Italian town of Nemi in the Alban Hills outside of Rome. Here the King of the Grove (rex nemorensis), made famous in Frazer's Golden Bough, was always an escaped slave who acquired office by killing his predecessor; this custom of remote prehistoric origin survived at least until the second century AD. According to Pausanias (2.27.4), "down to my time the prize for the victor in single combat was the priesthood of the goddess. The contest was open to no freeman, but only to slaves who had run away from their masters" (cf. also Strabo 5.3.12, Suetonius, Caligula 35.6, and Servius on Aeneid 6.136). Roman

representations of Diana assimilate the attributes of the Greek divinity: bow and quiver, and often hunting dogs and a stag or other wild beast. Diana is also regularly given a torch, a common attribute, as Rose remarks, of goddesses of fertility, probably from the very common association of light with life or birth. Hecate, goddess of fertility and the Underworld, invoked by witches like Medea and in many magical spells, is also sometimes thought of as a companion or attendant of Artemis.

Originally, Diana was apparently the Roman moon goddess; her name is formed, like that of Iuppiter, from the Indo-European root dyeu and means "shining." According to this etymology, Diana may embody the light of night, as opposed to that of day; cf. Cicero De Natura Deorum 2.69-69: "It is thought that Diana is identified with the moon; . . . she is called Diana because at night she provides, so to speak, the day (diem)." At an early date, Roman worship of Diana was influenced by the Greek cult of Artemis who, as we have seen, was not originally a moon goddess. A process of syncretism conferred upon Diana a series of attributes and traits originally foreign to her; for example, Diana came to preside over childbirth and hunting. Similarly, as Diana Trivia ("of the crossroads"), the Roman goddess was linked with Hecate who was associated with crossroads. By the time of Augustus, Schilling remarks, "the absorption of Diana by Artemis was virtually complete."

VI. "Great Is Artemis of the Ephesians"

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus was the most important sanctuary of the greatest metropolis of Ionian Asia Minor.

Pausanias (3.31.8) comments on the great antiquity of both site and cult, and supplies reasons for their prestige:

But all cities worship Artemis of Ephesus, and individuals hold her in honor above all the gods. The reason, in my view, is the renown of the Amazons, who traditionally dedicated the image, also the extreme antiquity of this sanctuary. Three other points as well have contributed to her renown, the size of the temple, surpassing all buildings among men, the eminence of the city of the Ephesians, and the renown of the goddess who dwells there.

The Hellenized city of Ephesus was built on the site of an earlier settlement of native Carians and Leleges, which had contained a sanctuary dedicated to the Mother Goddess of Asia Minor. Almost nothing remains to be seen of the ancient Artemision on the swampy plain northeast of the city. The sanctuary lay on low, marshy ground which speaks, as Ferguson perhaps somewhat fancifully claims, "of the ancient earth mother living in the folds of the earth." Only a few foundation blocks may now be seen; these are submerged or not, depending on local rainfall.

The site of one of the most famous temples of the ancient world was only discovered in the late nineteenth century by the English engineer J.T. Wood. The earliest shrine, a late seventh or early sixth-century BC structure, consisted simply of two platforms, one bearing an altar, the other supporting the image of the goddess. Later the platforms were joined and formed the base of a roofless temple. The much larger Great Artemision was underwritten in part by King Croesus of Lydia; the dedicatory inscription is now in the British Museum. This structure was built about 560 BC upon a stylobate measuring about 115 by 55 meters. It apparently consisted of a roofless sekos, or enclosure, containing the goddess's image and surrounded by a

rows of columns; completed about 500 BC, it is the only example of an early Ionic structure which can be dated with certainty. This famous temple, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, was burned in 356 BC by the arsonist Herostratus whose motive was to ensure that his name would survive his own death; it was rebuilt in the time of Alexander the Great to the dimensions of the original. This last temple measured 104 by 50 meters, with two rows of columns all around it, each of which measured 1.83 m in diameter at the base and may have stood as much as 16.9 m high. Virtually nothing remains of this colossal structure. The restored Artemision was completed about 250 BC and stood until AD 263 when invading Goths burned it; destruction was completed during the Christian era.

The Roman Imperial government honored the Great Artemision and the cult of Ephesian Artemis by awarding to the city the coveted title of Neokoros or "Custodian of the Temple". A third century AD Ephesian coin proudly announces the city's position as "four times Temple Warden" and illustrates the willingness of the Roman government to encourage the ancient religious institutions of the eastern Mediterranean. This last temple was of course the sanctuary made famous by the apostle Paul's visit to Ephesus in AD 53, described in Acts of the Apostles 19:23-41. A silversmith named Demetrius "who made silver shrines of Artemis, and provided considerable employment for the craftsmen," attempted to incite a riot against Paul and his companions on the grounds that Christianity, by teaching that "gods made by human hands are not gods," diminished the prestige of the Artemision and was thus bad for business. A potential lynch mob shouted "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" for two hours in the theater, we are told, until being dispersed by the town clerk who threatened the crowd with action by the Roman authorities.

Paul prudently left for Macedonia immediately after this incident.

The many-breasted form under which the goddess was worshipped at Ephesus makes her maternal character clear, although there is disagreement as to whether the oddly-shaped multiple protuberances are indeed breasts. Ferguson reminds us that other possibilities have been suggested: that they form part of the goddess's outer garment; that they are eggs; or even that they are the "scrota of sacrificial bulls." There is however a general consensus that "one way or another, they symbolize fertility." The Ephesian image of the virgin goddess seems unambiguously to stress the role of Artemis as mother. Guthrie suggests that in Asia Minor, and especially in Ephesus, images of Artemis with their grotesquely multiplied breasts are further proof that Artemis was originally an all-nourishing, universal mother goddess, perhaps with origins farther east in Asia. Strabo, as we have seen, attributes the image to the Asiatic Amazons and emphasizes its great antiquity. Herodotus (2.156.6) claims that Aeschylus called Artemis the daughter of Demeter, identifying the virgin goddess with the universal principle of fertility. Farnell (Cults vol. 2, p. 572, n. 55) lists other references linking Artemis to Persephone, Demeter, and Dionysus; he concludes that "Artemis was in the earliest Greek religion an earth-goddess, associated essentially and chiefly with the wild life and growth of the field, and with human birth." We have seen that Artemis is agrotera ("wild") as goddess of the hunt and of open country; in matters related to parturition, she is locheia, goddess of childbirth. Bean concludes that Ephesian Artemis always retained a large measure of her oriental nature and never became a truly Greek goddess. The rows of egg-shaped objects which we have understood to be breasts, or in any case

as obvious symbols of fertility, have little to do with the virgin huntress of Greek myth; however, the numerous animals portrayed on her lower garment—bulls, lions, sphinxes—do represent the animal world with which the Greek Artemis, as Potnia Theron, was associated.

Artemis was served at Ephesus by orders of priests who bore non-Greek titles; her chief priest was a eunuch with the title Megabyxus, a Persian term meaning "set free by god." Strabo points out that he was always chosen from abroad. The chief priest was assisted by an order of virgins, compared by Plutarch to the Vestal Virgins at Rome. Other priests were called "Essenes," a non-Greek word the relation of which, if any, to the ascetic Jewish sect of the same name described by Josephus is not clear. Ephesian Artemis, then, was the mother goddess whose deeply-entrenched cult the Greeks encountered when, in remote antiquity, they first occupied the lands of Greece, Crete and the coastal regions of Asia Minor.

ATHENA

Introduction

Gilbert Murray, in Five Stages of Greek Religion, describes Athena as "an ideal and a mystery: the ideal of wisdom, of incessant labor, of almost terrifying purity, seen through the light of some mystic and spiritual devotion like, but transcending, the love of man for woman." She is a paradoxical figure, acting as patroness of both war and handicrafts; Athena is both remote, as "the ideal of wisdom," and capable of intimate friendship with humans such as Odysseus. Best known as the patron goddess of Athens, her worship was widespread in Greek-speaking lands, both on the mainland and in the various Greek colonies. Scholars agree that her name is not Greek and that her origin must be pre-Hellenic; the -na suffix is found also in many place names, such as Mykene, Pallene, Troizene, Messene, and Cyrene, which are generally agreed to be aboriginal and thus to precede the Hellenic presence in the Greek peninsula. The name of Athena has been identified on a Linear B tablet found at Cnossos on Crete, as a-ta-na po-ti-ni-ja, Lady Athena. Rose and Robertson (OCD) conclude that Athena is the guardian divinity of Minoan and Mycenaean lords, and that she was retained in later cult when the Bronze Age citadels, such as the Athenian Acropolis, ceased to be royal residences and became the centers of popular cult.

The most famous cult center of Athena is, of course, the Acropolis of Athens, which is also the site of a Mycenaean palace known since the time of Homer as the "house of Erechtheus" (cf. Iliad 2.549 and Odyssey 7.81). In myth, Athena

became the guardian divinity of Athens as the result of a quarrel with one of her fellow gods. Poseidon arrived at the site first and caused a salt-water spring or sea to well up on the Acropolis, near the present Erechtheum; Athena made an olive tree grow from the rock of the Acropolis (cf. Apollodorus 3.14.1 and Augustine, City of God 18.9). A panel of Athenian judges settled the divine dispute, choosing the gentle and civilized olive tree over the barren sea. Poseidon was defeated and Athenian civilization could begin.

The owl is often portrayed as Athena's companion, not only in literature and art, but also on the reverse of Athenian coins, which were colloquially called "owls." The goddess is associated with other types of bird as well. In Homer, Athena occasionally takes on the form of a bird in order to fly away, thus both revealing her presence and departing at the same moment; at Odyssey 1.319 she vanishes as a "bird," 3.371-2 as a "sea-eagle," and at 22.239 as a "swallow."

Athena's most conspicuous role, in literature and in public cult, is as a goddess of war. At Iliad 17.398, she is equated with Ares as a "rouser of hosts." More frequently, she leads individuals or groups which she favors into battle, either fighting for them or guiding them to victory; in the Iliad (5.856-7), she directs the spear of Diomedes into the side of Ares himself, inflicting a painful wound. The martial role of Athena should be understood as part of her intimate connection with her father and sole parent Zeus. Conceived by the goddess Metis (Wisdom) but born from the head of Zeus (Hesiod, Theogony 924-5; cf. Pindar Olympian 7.35), Athena often boasted of being motherless and the child of Zeus alone. Zeus, for his part,

favors his courageous and crafty daughter; only Athena of all the offspring of Zeus is allowed to carry his aegis and thunderbolt. If indeed Athena was a pre-Hellenic guardian of citadels, among them the Athenian Acropolis, she is a goddess of war in a quite different sense from that of Ares. He is the personification of the indiscriminate bloodshed and butchery of battle; she is protectress of the city, concerned with the well-being of the community, and not primarily with the mayhem which may from time to time become necessary to secure it.

Bearing the full battle armor of a male and deriving from a male parent alone, Athena is characterized by perpetual virginity; in myth, she has a strong inclination to favor men and the masculine, without any overtones of sexuality. Aeschylus' Athena explains her bias in favor Orestes in his dispute with the earth-born, female Furies at Eumenides 736-738:

"There is no mother anywhere who gave me birth,
and, but for marriage, I am always for the male
with all my heart, strongly on my father's side."

She particularly favors Odysseus whose shrewd caution and pragmatic craftiness are so much like her own distinctive qualities. Athena is not originally associated with wisdom in any abstract or philosophical sense (although this link was made in late Classical times); rather, she is the personification of the clear-sighted common sense and skillfulness embodied by her protégé Odysseus.

It is the force of civilization which, as Burkert suggests, unites all the aspects of Athena; she presides over the "organizational wisdom" which makes possible the orderly division of tasks and roles of a community's women, craftsmen,

warriors, and so on. Athena is also, as we have seen, not merely a war goddess, but rather a goddess of military science, of tactics, strategy and discipline. Her assistance, in mythology and literature, consists more often in supplying practical prudence than in direct aid in the line of battle. At Iliad 2.155ff. and 278ff., Odysseus employs his eloquence and wit to persuade the Greeks to continue the war despite their fatigue and low morale; he does so with the assistance, and as the earthly representative, of Athena. As she assists Odysseus' powers of persuasion in the Iliad, so in the Odyssey does she aid him in concealing or disguising himself, in the land of the Phaeacians and on Ithaca. Athena assists Heracles in his labors, helps with the construction of the Argo, and aids Bellerophon in the taming of Pegasus. Athena is also associated with music, and particularly with the aulos, a wind instrument which she invented and then discarded because playing it distorted her face. The unfortunate satyr Marsyas found the aulos and learned to play it well enough to challenge Apollo to a music contest (Apollodorus 1.24). The god won of course and, enforcing the agreement that the winner could do whatever he chose to the loser, skinned the luckless Marsyas alive for his presumption.

Like Hephaestus, Athena is a divinity of the crafts and techniques of civilization, of what Frontisi terms the "qualities of manual skill and practical intelligence" which form the basis of organized society. Potters ask Athena to "spread her hand over the kiln" ("Homeric Epigram" 14); she sees to it that "the pots and all the dishes turn out well and are well fired." Carpenters, carvers of wood, and makers of ships and chariots likewise enjoy Athena's special patronage. According to one late source, she, not Demeter, invented the

plow (Servius on Vergil, Aeneid, 4.402). Apollonius describes the goddess as directing the construction of the Argo, from the cutting of the appropriate trees, to the measuring of lumber, and the final assembly of the vessel (Argonautica, 1.724, 2.1187ff.). Her nautical interests, then, are directed towards the technical aspects of ship construction and navigation, rather than to domination of the sea, which belongs to Poseidon. Likewise, it is the civilized mastery of horses, from the invention of the bridle to Bellerophon's taming of Pegasus (Pausanias 2.4.1; Pindar, Olympian 13.63-87) which concerns her; Poseidon, in contrast, embodies the untamed wildness, strength, and speed of horses (see the chapter "Poseidon"). Athena also protects and guides workers in wool and other fabrics: spinners of thread, weavers of cloth, and embellishers of textiles by embroidery. She teaches this skill to Pandora (Hesiod, Works and Days 64) and to the supremely skillful women of Phaeacia (Odyssey 7.110). Like all gods, she is jealous of her primacy; Arachne's too-perfect work incites Athena to destroy the offending product and turn its maker into a spider (Ovid, Metamorphoses 6.42, 140). The weaver of fabric, the potter, and the ship builder are all engaged in remarkably similar activities, in which Athena takes great interest: the preparation of usable material (thread, cut lumber, clay) from the unshaped tree, or fleece, or raw clay in a pit; the interlacing, shaping, and skillful joining of the component materials; and most of all the shrewd application throughout of technical intelligence to the task at hand. These techniques embody the qualities of Athena's own intelligence and may, of course, be applied to tasks which are purely mental; thus Athena and her protégés, in Frontisi's words, "sometimes spin their tricks and weave their plans, sometimes arrange their projects and construct their subtle traps." The most familiar example of

this is Penelope who craftily weaves a plot to delay choosing a husband from the suitors by claiming to be preoccupied with weaving the burial shroud of her father-in-law.

I. Origin of Athena

Athena's non-Greek name suggests that she was worshipped by the non-Hellenic aborigines of the Greek peninsula whom the Greeks referred to as "Pelasgians"; she was accepted and "naturalized" by the invading Greek speakers. Her thorough Hellenization is indicated by her extraordinarily close mythical ties to her Hellenic father Zeus. There is no reasonable doubt, according to Rose (Religion) and others that the Olympian Zeus, whose name is certainly Greek (see the chapter "Zeus") was brought to Greece by the invaders in remote antiquity. It is also likely that the religion of the "Pelasgians" centered around the earth and chthonic divinities. In any event, when we first encounter Athena in the Homeric epics, she is the thoroughly Hellenic favorite child of Olympian Zeus.

The goddess is frequently referred to as Pallas Athene; this is so common a title, Guthrie suggests, that Pallas seems to be more than a mere epithet; it is used virtually as a second name. A priest in Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus mentions "two temples of Pallas" in Thebes (20). The extremely ancient sacred image of Athena, miraculously sent from heaven by Zeus to Dardanus, was called the Palladium (Dionysus of Halicarnassus 1.69). Guthrie suggests that Pallas is a Greek word meaning maiden or girl; the roughly comparable Classical forms pallake and pallakis mean "concubine." Guthrie thinks it likely that the invading Greeks had a virgin goddess, perhaps named Pallas (the Maiden), who

"considering their way of life may well have been a martial, Valkyrie-like figure." These early Greeks may have identified their own goddess with the ancient and powerful native "Athena". If this is correct, the name Pallas would be the equivalent of the other titles by which Athena is known: Kore (Maiden) and Parthenos (Virgin). Most often, the Athenians simply called her "the Goddess."

The chief myth of Athena concerns her birth from the head of Zeus, motherless and fully armed for battle. Hesiod, as we have seen, tells the story at Theogony 924-5; it was apparently widely accepted by the time of Pindar (cf. Olympian 7.35). Zeus had impregnated Metis (Wisdom); he then swallowed her lest she fulfill the prophecy that she would bear a son mightier than his father. Athena was in due course born from her father. In both literature and art, the birth was accomplished by splitting Zeus' head with an axe; generally it is Hephaestus who acts as midwife in this unconventional procedure, but other deities appear in different accounts. Athena sprang forth, clad in armor and bellowing a war cry according to Hesiod (Theogony 929) and the Homeric Hymn to Athena (4-16):

From his awful head wise Zeus himself bare her arrayed in warlike arms of flashing gold, and awe seized all the gods as they gazed. But Athena sprang quickly from the immortal head and stood before Zeus who holds the aegis, shaking a sharp spear: great Olympus began to reel horribly at the might of the bright-eyed goddess, and earth round about cried fearfully, and the sea was moved and tossed with dark waves, while foam burst forth suddenly; the bright Son of Hyperion stopped his swift-footed horses a long while, until the maiden Pallas Athena had stripped the heavenly armor from her immortal shoulders. And wise Zeus was glad.

The swallowing of Metis is, of course, a near repetition of Cronos' swallowing his own children as they were born (cf.

Theogony 459-460). Zeus likewise swallows the child, but he includes the mother as well. This bizarre tale is, at the very least, what Rose (Handbook) terms "a very odd combination, the ancient and savage myth of swallowing being blended with what seems to be a sort of allegory: the chief god has Wisdom always within him." Upon her arrival at the site of the future Athens, Athena had to contend with Poseidon for sponsorship of the new city (see Section III). A contest of miracles ensued, Poseidon causing salt water to spring from the Acropolis rock, Athena bringing forth an olive tree. Discerning that latter had greater utility than the former, the first Athenians quite sensibly conferred the honor upon Athena.

II. Goddess of War and of Craft

The mode of Athena's birth is the key to understanding her nature.

In Hesiod's Theogony (924ff.), Zeus gave birth "from his own head to owl-eyed Tritogeneia, the awful, the strife-stirring, the host-leader, the unwearying, the queen who delights in tumults and wars and battles." Virgin and childless, she acts as guardian or foster-mother to inquisitive, aggressive, and far-ranging heroes: Odysseus, Theseus, Perseus, and Heracles. Lacking a mother, Athena owes complete and unquestioned allegiance to her father Zeus, with whom she shares many important qualities, most especially metis, the wisdom personified by the goddess who conceived her. In the twenty-eighth Homeric Hymn, the poet calls Athena polymetis ("many-skilled") in the second line; two lines later, the poet calls Zeus metieta ("master of craft"). The goddess Metis is, of course, the embodiment of craft, intelligence, and practical

understanding; by swallowing her, Zeus both precluded the possibility of Metis' bearing a child to him mightier than its father, and he incorporated divine wisdom into his own being. Aeschylus, as we have seen (Eumenides 376-8) causes Athena to speak of her lack of a mother and her consequent close alliance with her father; her inclination and loyalty are exclusively masculine. It is this applied intelligence, "craft" in the various shades of the English word, which Athena manifests and encourages. Nestor, the wise counsellor and source of much practical advice in the Iliad, patiently explains to his son Antilochus the practical worth of thinking a problem through and acting upon considered reflection (23.313-318):

"Wherefore come, dear son, lay thou up in thy mind cunning (metis) of every sort, to the end that the prizes escape thee not. By metis, thou knowest, is a woodman far better than by might; by metis too doth a helmsman on the wine-dark deep guide aright a swift ship that is buffeted by winds; and by metis doth charioteer prove better than charioteer."

In the end, Antilochus finishes the chariot race ahead of Menelaus, defeating the older and more experienced man, as Homer says, "by guile, and nowise by speed" (515). The metis of Athena, then, is as Burkert points out, wisdom of a peculiarly practical, even ruthless, sort. This "wisdom" or, perhaps better, craft includes schemes and devious tricks. Athena's connection with phronesis, ethical wisdom or morally responsible reason, comes much later, in the Classical period.

If Athena was indeed the household goddess of Bronze Age Minoan and Mycenaean lords in their citadels, this would explain, Guthrie suggests, her connection with the handicrafts of both men and women, and in particular with weaving and spinning. Thus she is not primarily a war goddess but, as protector of

households in a martial society, she necessarily assumed a warlike character. At Athens she lived on the Acropolis, former site of a Mycenaean palace, retaining the spear and shield she employed as armed patroness of the kings of Athens. In the Classical polis, she held the cult titles Polias and Poliuchos, "Protector of the polis." A.B. Cook (Zeus, III, 224) concludes that "Athena was the pre-Greek mountain-mother of the Acropolis rock." As such, she would have been the protectress or divine manifestation not only of the Acropolis but also of plant and animal life of the place. This would account for her association with the olive tree, the snake, and the owl, all of which are found on the Acropolis. Burkert points out that armed goddesses are frequently found in the Middle Eastern religions, as Ishtar/Astarte in many local variants, and as Anat in Ugarit. Images of Athena fully armed and brandishing her spear aggressively correspond to representations of these eastern goddesses. Athena, and her ancient, extremely sacred image, the Palladium which had been sent down from heaven, were the key to the destruction of Troy; only after Odysseus and Diomedes had crept into the city and stolen the Palladium could the city be taken. Since she is a goddess associated with war, it is not surprising to find that Athena is linked with the techniques and implements of war; she was regarded as the inventor of the taming of horses and of the art of driving chariots. Athena made possible Bellerophon's capture and taming of the glorious and immortal winged horse Pegasus. She has a particular interest in warships and guided Argus in the building of the Argo. Athena also assisted in the construction of the Trojan Horse.

In addition to her armor, Athena bears the characteristic aegis, a cloak or short cape which she is often shown wearing over her

shoulders; sometimes she bears it on her left arm like a shield. This is an attribute which she shares with Zeus. Aeschylus (Libation Bearers 593) uses the word aigis in the sense of "whirlwind," suggesting that the true origin of the word is in the root of the verb aisso, "to move violently." At Iliad 5.738-742), Athena prepares for battle by placing around her shoulders the "tasseled aegis, fraught with terror." When she raises the aegis, panic seizes her enemies and they flee, as when the suitors are driven out of their wits and routed at Odyssey 22.297-301:

And then Athena held up her aegis, the bane of mortals, on high from the roof, and the minds of the wooers were panic-stricken, and they fled through the halls like a herd of kine that the darting gad-fly falls upon and drives along in the season of spring, when the long days come.

The name of the aegis was taken by artists and most authors to be the skin of a goat (aix; cf. Herodotus 4.189.1-2), an animal of some particular importance to Athena. A special goat sacrifice was part of the her cult in Athens (cf. Varro, De re rustica 1.2.19). Euripides recounts an apparently well-known story according to which this goatskin derived from a monster, a gorgo, which Athena herself killed and skinned; cf. Ion 987-997:

Creusa: Listen, then: you know the battle of the giants?
Tutor: Yes, the battle the giants fought against the
gods in Phlegra.
Creusa: There the earth brought forth the Gorgon, a
Tutor: As an ally for her children and trouble for the
Creusa: Yes; and Pallas, the daughter of Zeus, killed it.
Tutor: What fierce shape did it have?
Creusa: A breastplate armed with coils of a viper.
Tutor: Is this the story which I have heard before?
Creusa: That Athena wore the hide on her breast.
Tutor: And they call it the aegis, Pallas' armor?
Creusa: It has this name from when she darted to the
gods' battle.

dre

In pictorial art, the aegis bore a Gorgon's head and was bordered with snakes; in the Iliad, Athena's aegis is decorated more opulently, with golden tassels (2.446-449):

. . . and in their midst was the flashing-eyed Athena, bearing the priceless aegis, that knoweth neither age nor death, wherefrom are hung a hundred tassels all of gold, all of them cunningly woven, and each one of the worth of an hundred oxen. Therewith she sped dazzling throughout the host of the Achaeans, urging them to go forth; and in the heart of each man she roused strength to war and to battle without ceasing. And to them forthwith war became sweeter than to return in their hollow ships to their dear native land.

Athena's link with crafts may have a historical basis. Athens was the most nearly industrialized city of ancient Greece; as patroness of Athens, then, Athena is appropriately the guardian divinity of the techniques of ancient manufacturing, such as spinning, weaving, pottery, and ship building. The metis of Athena, as we have seen, was really the practical skill and thoughtful prudence of the tactician and the artisan; eventually this technical expertise was allegorized into Wisdom of an abstract or intellectual sort, becoming similar to the sophia associated with philosophical speculation, as opposed to the problem-solving metis or craft of Odysseus.

III. Worship of Athena: "Goddess of Nearness"

Athena is inseparable from the earth of Attica and of the Athenian Acropolis. A peculiar story, which seems to have been carefully designed to preserve her virginity, describes Athena as something like the mother of the Attic hero Erichtonius,

whose name contains the element chthon, "earth." According to the myth, Hephaestus was consumed by sexual desire for Athena; he obtained the permission of Zeus to approach her. Zeus gave his permission but specified that Athena herself must consent to sex. Athena refused the advances of Hephaestus; he attempted to force himself upon the goddess. In the course of their struggle, his semen fell to the earth; the soil conceived and eventually gave birth to Erichthonius who became a particular protégé of Athena. The hero Erichthonius was often confused in antiquity with the legendary Athenian king Erechtheus, and it seems likely that the two were once identical. Like Erichthonius, Erechtheus was born of the Attic earth, and raised and protected by Athena; cf. Iliad 2.546-549:

. . . Athens, the well-built citadel, the land of great-hearted Erechtheus, whom of old Athena, daughter of Zeus, fostered, when the earth, the giver of grain, had borne him; and she made him to dwell in Athens, in her own rich sanctuary.

Athena and Erechtheus were worshipped together in the Erechtheum, a much older version of which stood on the site of the Classical structure on the Acropolis. This pre-Classical shrine in turn stood on, or at least very near, the remains of the Bronze Age palace of the Mycenaean kings of Athens, whose divine guardian Athena almost certainly was. Literary and archaeological evidence, then, seems to show that Athena in a sense is the land of Athens and that, as such, she is the mother (by a mythological sleight-of-hand which preserves her virginity) of the primal ancestor of the Athenians, Erichthonius/Erechtheus. Harrison points out that in the local cult of Athena the real object of worship was not a goddess but the city of Athens itself.

Whatever Athena's pre-Hellenic origins might have been, the goddess remains what Burkert describes as "the pre-eminent citadel and city goddess." It is not surprising, then, that her temples are frequently found on fortified hilltops. This is the case in Athens, of course, and also in Argos, Sparta, Gortyn, Lindos, Larisa in Thessaly, and even Ilion, despite the fact that, in epic, Athena is the enemy of Troy. As protectress of citadels and their hoped-for inviolability, Athena logically manifests herself as an untouchable armed virgin. The taking of a city and the ravishing of a virgin are ancient metaphors for one another; at Iliad 16.100, for example, the taking of Troy is described as loosening its veils. Coldstream recounts the history and prominence of the cult of Athena at Priene in Asia Minor. Around 350 BC, a new city of Priene was founded, on the Maeander River, to replace the older city which had been rendered useless after the silting up of its ancient harbor by the river. The new city, laid out on a regular Hippodamian grid plan, stood on a high hill. Nearby was the sanctuary of Athena Polias, protector of the city. As Burkert observes, the chief deity of any place in antiquity will inevitably assume warlike functions, given the incessant struggles among communities. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that Athena's role of warrior goddess is not only consistent with her earth-mother aspect, but is in fact a logical outgrowth of it: armed and dangerous, she maintains the integrity and inviolability of the soil which she embodies. Beginning as the protecting divinity of the sanctity of Bronze Age royal fortifications, Athena remained, long after those ancient lords and their palaces had passed away, as the resident goddess of citadels and natural strong points, as new Greek-speaking towns grew up around the old royal citadels.

Inevitably, the worship of Athena was linked to that of Ares. Between them, the two divinities preside over all aspects of war; at Iliad 5.430, Zeus says of war, "all these things shall be the business of swift Ares and Athena." Nevertheless, the two divinities are radically different. Athena remains a virgin; Ares, as personification of the violence of war, is also the embodiment of the rape which inevitably accompanies it. Myths about Ares credit him with numerous amorous adventures most prominently his adulterous union with Aphrodite, but also with Erinyes, Chryse, and Althaea. Athena, as we have seen, is the earthly manifestation of metis or prudent judgement; no god could have less of this quality than Ares (see the chapter "Ares"). The violence of Ares is random and indiscriminate. In the Iliad, Zeus complains that Ares fights for and against both sides, without reason or consistency (5.831-834, Lattimore translation):

" . . . violent Ares, that thing of fury, evil-wrought, that double-faced liar who even now protested to Hera and me, promising that he would fight against the Trojans and stand by the Argives. Now all promises forgotten, he stands by the Trojans."

Ares is hated by all the gods, especially by his father Zeus. Athena is respected universally and is the particular favorite of her father. Athena was worshipped wherever the Greeks settled; shrines dedicated to Ares are quite rare. In their meetings on the battlefield in the Iliad, Ares always loses, and Athena prevails each time; cf. Iliad 5.765, 824-864; 15.119-142; and especially 21.391-415:

[Athena] smote furious Ares on the neck and loosed his limbs. Over seven roods he stretched in his fall, and befouled his hair with dust, and about him his armor clanged. But Pallas Athena broke into a laugh.

Ares is the unreasoning force that sends a warrior, berserk and raging, headlong into the thick of battle. This is, as we have seen, a force which is necessary for the survival of a city at war; the destructive violence of war, however, must be controlled by the reason and discipline for which Athena was venerated. She brings her prudent wisdom to the city's industrial, political, and military life, substituting, as Darmon suggests, "the ordered combat of hoplites for the wild melees of heroes." Athena domesticates war and subjugates armed might to governmental and military discipline. Ares is little more than what Otto terms a bloodthirsty, raging demon; the gods call him mad and insane (Iliad 5.761, 831). Zeus hates him as he does no other god on Olympus (5.890; see the chapter, 'Ares') because he "thinks only of strife and wars and battles." Against this grim spirit of slaughter and bloodshed stands the prudent intellectual force of Athena.

Athena, then, is the goddess of civilized warfare, a concept which may sound contradictory but in fact is not. She supplies the moral and emotional fortitude which enables men to face death at the hands of their enemies; at Iliad 2.451-2, "in the heart of each man she roused strength to war and to battle without ceasing." A soldier in Aristophanes describes the fortifying and bracing effect of Athena's presence in the Persian War (Wasps 1084ff.):

A hail of arrows hid the sky. However, by the help of the gods, we
as one hunts the tunny-fish.

In poetry and ritual, Athena is referred to by such titles as Ageleie (Taker of Loot), Persepolis (Destroyer of Cities),

Erysiptolis (Guardian of Cities), Polias and Poliouchos (Goddess of the Citadel).

Athena's actions in the final battle of the Odyssey (22.239ff.) are particularly revealing. Odysseus, armed and supported by his son Telemachus and two loyal slaves, is ready for the decisive confrontation; Athena appears to him, disguised as Mentor, and encourages him to begin to take his vengeance on the suitors. Almost immediately, she disappears, flying off like a sparrow and perching invisibly on a rafter. As the battle continues and the suitors are killed, Athena brandishes her goatskin aegis, terrifying the surviving suitors and causing them to flee in panic until they are all hunted down and killed by Odysseus and Telemachus. Throughout this entire episode, as Otto remarks, "Athena's presence alone is effective." The goddess does not play any active role in the action. "So she is shown in the famous pediment reliefs of the temple of Aphaia in Aegina: she stands fully armed but in attitude of repose in the midst of the warriors. On the shield of Achilles she was shown along with Ares in super-human stature at the head of an army marching out to battle (Iliad 18.516)."

Otto attempts to define "the being of the goddess," especially as a manifestation of what he terms the spirit and the ideal of Hellenism. Athena, he suggests, inspires boldness and the will to victory, as in the Odyssey passage cited above. "But all of this is nothing without directing reason and illuminating clarity. These are the true fountainheads of worthy deeds, and it is they which complete the nature of the goddess of victory." It is helpful in this connection to compare Athena with Apollo, Hermes, and Artemis. Otto terms Apollo "the god of distance and as such the god of purity and of cognition" (see the chapter

"Apollo"); if this is the case, he claims, Athena is the goddess of "nearness." She is not unlike Hermes in this respect, acting as protector and adviser to her favorites; in some cases, especially that of Odysseus, both gods aid the same hero. And yet, Otto claims, "there is a world of difference between their modes of guidance. In Hermes we recognize divine presence and direction as the wonderful windfall of sudden gain, finding, snatching and irresponsible enjoyment. Athena, on the other hand, is the heavenly presence and direction as illumination and inspiration to victorious comprehension and consummation. To Hermes belongs what is clandestine, twilight, uncanny; Athena is bright as day."

The virginity of Athena suggests a likeness to Artemis, but again, as Otto points out, it is a comparison useful mainly in that it clarifies the fundamental differences. The virginity of Artemis "has a tart, shy, disdainful character which fends love off; in Athena maidenhood is the spirit of action. It is in her nature to associate with men, to think of them always, always to be near them in order to reveal herself to them in moments of life which differ from the erotic, not by shy aloofness but by the strength and clarity of energetic action. . . . Athena's inclination and involvement are in the nature of the friendship that man feels for man. . . . Athena is a woman, and yet it is as she were a man."

What then, Otto asks, is the meaning of Athena's femininity? Why, in other words, could her functions not be fulfilled as easily, or even more easily, by one or another of the male divinities? Otto's answer is based on his understanding of the different natures of men and women, an understanding which may strike some readers as outdated and unacceptable. Nevertheless,

his views deserve consideration and may shed some light on the inner nature of the goddess: "The divine precision of the well-planned deed, the readiness to be forceful and merciless, the unflagging will to victory—this, paradoxical as it may sound, is woman's gift to man, who by nature is indifferent to the momentary and strives for the infinite. . . . In the prosecution of her will, woman, for all her charm, is more strenuous and unyielding than man." It is this unyielding will and uncompromising focus upon present and immediate problems which strikes Otto as the most thoroughly and irreplaceably feminine of the qualities of Athena; it is, he argues, her very strength of mind and clarity of purpose which requires that her qualities be embodied in a female divinity. Most striking in the nature of the goddess, he claims, are her "brightness" and "terrifying harshness." She is "oblivious to what we call tenderheartedness"; immediate, intelligent, and practical action are the concerns of Athena. "Consummation, the immediate present, action here and now—that is Athena." Like her protégé Odysseus, who is also merciless when the situation calls for direct brutal action, the goddess excels at discerning in every situation the decisive factor, and at choosing the most pragmatic and effective means of achieving the desired goal. She shows forth the "spirit of brightest vigilance which grasps with lightning speed what the instant requires" and unerringly puts that understanding to practical use. For Otto, Athena is "spirited immediacy, redeeming spiritual presence, swift action. She is the ever-near."

Athena is the patroness and supporter of many of the strongest personalities of Greek mythology: Diomedes and Odysseus, of course, but also the valiant and ferocious Tydeus, "small in stature, but a warrior" (*Iliad* 5.801; cf. Bacchylides, fr. 41,

and Apollodorus, 3.6.8.3). She is, in Otto's words, "the divine sister, friend, and companion of the hero in his undertakings; always her heavenly presence kindles, illuminates, and blesses him at the right instant." When, at Iliad 10.274ff., Odysseus and Diomedes venture on a dangerous night patrol behind enemy lines, the goddess encourages them by sending a bird as omen; Odysseus prays:

"Hear me, daughter of Zeus of the aegis, you who always stand beside me in all my tasks and always remember me wherever I go: be thou friendly to me now more than ever, grant that I come back to our ships covered with glory, having achieved some great deed that shall bring sorrow to the Trojans."

Athena helps them; the heroes kill many Trojans in their sleep and return to their own camp safely. Elsewhere, as we have seen, the goddess gives Diomedes the courage, and physical assistance, necessary for him to attack and wound the god of war, Ares himself.

The other side of Athena's meaning to her worshippers is represented by the peaceful olive tree, especially the olive tree on the Athenian Acropolis which commemorated her miracle. This tree came to embody the survival of the city after the Persians had destroyed the shrines and temples on the Acropolis (Herodotus 8.55):

Now it happened that this olive was destroyed by fire together with the rest of the sanctuary; nevertheless on the very next day, when the Athenians, who were ordered by the [Persian] king to offer the sacrifice, went up to that sacred place, they saw that a new shoot eighteen inches long had sprung from the stump.

Here, then, Athena represents the hope for a new Athens, rising from ruins and Persian occupation just as the green shoot springs from the burned olive stump. In a time of national disaster, Athena offers her people a vision of redemption and resurrection which is almost Biblical, as when the resurgence of Israel is foretold at Isaiah 11:1: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow from his roots."

Athena watches over olive trees in general, and it is olive oil that serves as a prize to the victors at her festival, the Panathenaea. This celebration, the gathering of "All Athenians," was held every year on the birthday of Athena, and every fourth year with particular grandeur as the Great Panathenaea. The scene is depicted in the surviving fragments of the Parthenon frieze currently in the British Museum. At dawn, a procession to the Acropolis began, consisting of "basket-bearers," young girls who carried necessary ritual gear. Sacrificial victims, attendants, priests and citizens followed in great numbers. The object of the procession was to present a new garment to the goddess; it was carried on a wheeled ship, symbolizing the naval power of Athens which had saved the city, and all Greece, from the Persian invaders at Salamis in 480.

IV. Athena in Literature and Art

Athena's legendary birth from the head of Zeus, after one of the lesser gods, usually Hephaestus, had cracked it open with an axe, was a theme popular among Greek artists. Athena springs forth in full armor, uttering her war-cry, to the astonishment of the other gods. The twenty-eighth Homeric Hymn supplies us,

as we have seen, with a magnificent image of Athena's first appearance among the other Olympian gods, shaking her spear as Olympus itself reels and the sea is churned into foam. The birth of Athena is the subject of the east pediment of the Parthenon, balancing the contest with Poseidon for Attica on the west. Here, the portrayal of Athena is closely associated with her role of patroness of imperial Athens and surely has a propagandistic and patriotic character. The goddess here represents for us the tragedy of Classical Athens: the Athenian perversion of the voluntary Delian League of free cities into an Athenian empire, and the long, catastrophic Peloponnesian War which ruined Athens and did immense damage to all Greece.

Athena is often represented in art and in literature as a dignified and powerfully-built woman. She generally appears wearing armor, a helmet, and carrying a spear. On her shield, or on the aegis which she often wears over her shoulders, is a Gorgon's head. The Gorgon forms an important part of the myth and iconography of Athena. Although the monster was also supposed to have been killed by Perseus, Athena was credited in an alternate version with having killed the Gorgon herself. Athena is always prominent in representations of the battle of the gods with the earth-born, snaky Giants, as for example on the Hellenistic Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamum. Her warlike character is indicated by some of her titles: Promachos (Fighter in the Front Line), Sthenias (Mighty), and Areia (Warlike). Her more peaceful nature, as protectress of the city and patroness of various skilled occupations may be seen in epithets such as Polias (She of the City), Boulaia (Goddess of the Council), Ergane (Worker), and Kourotrophos (Nurturer of the Young). The poets stress her closeness to Zeus, her sole parent; we have seen that Athena alone among the other Olympians

can carry the thunderbolts and aegis of Zeus; he even has a special pet name for her: "dear grey-eyes" (Iliad 8.373).

"Athena does not carry her weapons without reason," as Burkert points out. To Hesiod, the goddess is "bright-eyed Tritogeneia, the awful, dread rouser of battle-strife, unwearied leader of the host, queen who delights in the clamorous cry of war and battle and slaughter" (Theogony 925ff.). As the Achaeans rush onwards into battle, Athena sweeps, "dazzling, through the host, with weapons flashing," rousing in every man "strength to war and to battle without ceasing" (Iliad 2.446-454); when Achilles rejoins the war, Athena herself takes a stand "upon the loud-sounding shores" and bellows her war-cry (Iliad 20.48-50). Just so, Burkert suggests, "in the wild noise of war and in the extreme pitch of excitement the warrior believes he perceives the goddess herself. Even Archilochus can describe how Athena graciously stood beside the victorious warriors in real battle and stirred up courage in their hearts (fr. 94)."

We have discussed Otto's useful concept of Athena as "goddess of nearness"; this idea will also be helpful in characterizing the goddess' appearance in painting and sculpture, as well as in literature. Athena is near when insoluble problems are solved, when insurmountable obstacles are overcome; and yet, as Burkert notes, paradoxically the presence of the goddess does not detract from human achievement. A Greek proverb advises, "In league with Athena set your own hand to work." Athena often supports Heracles, whose strengths extend far beyond mere physical might and prowess in combat; Athena protects and fosters in Heracles moral fortitude and dedication to goals beyond normal human attainments. Eventually, Heracles is able to transcend the very limits of humanity and join Athena as a

fellow divinity on Olympus. During his earthly struggles, the goddess was frequently at the side of Heracles, eventually leading him into heaven in a scene often portrayed in Greek art: "Athena is taking Heracles to dwell henceforth with the gods" (Pausanias 3.18.11). A metope from the temple of Zeus at Olympia shows Athena effortlessly supporting the sky which weighs down upon the shoulders of Heracles, providing, as Burkert notes, "one of the most beautiful images of her intervention: grace and assistance which remains ever subtle and almost playful." To Otto, this scene is "perhaps the finest illustration of the bond between the attending goddess and the hero who struggles to raise himself from the limitations of his humanity. . . . Unnoticed, the bright and noble figure of Athena has stepped up behind him, and with the indescribably dignity of posture which is the hallmark of Greek divinity, she gently touches the burden—and Heracles, who cannot see her, feels that his strength is gigantic and is able to perform the impossible." Other metopes from the same temple continue the theme of the labors of Heracles, showing him either during or after one of his legendary feats, with Athena nearby, her presence accomplishing something poised delicately between presiding and assistance.

Athena is often present in vase paintings, assisting Heracles on various occasions during the long ordeal of his labors, or helping Perseus defeat the Gorgon. In the Iliad, she is the charioteer of Diomedes, inciting him to attack and wound Ares himself (Iliad 5.793-863). Burkert identifies the episode at Iliad 1.188-222 as her most characteristic manifestation. Athena appears to Achilles at just the moment when he is about to draw his sword and cut Agamemnon down, an impossible act which would have brought the Trojan War (not to mention the epic

itself) to a premature and unsuccessful conclusion. As the "great sword" of Achilles is about to clear its scabbard, Athena "caught the son of Peleus by his golden hair, making herself to be seen of him alone, and of the rest no man beheld her." Achilles recognizes her instantly, for "terribly did her eyes flash." Athena calms the deadly rage of Achilles, for the moment, and averts the crisis, persuading him to limit the conflict to insults; she implies that it is not the gods' will that Agamemnon die at this moment. Achilles agrees to obey, "and stayed his heavy hand on the silver hilt, and back into its sheath thrust the great sword." The obedience of Achilles, without question or hesitation, has often been discussed as the perfect Homeric example of how Homer presents as divine intervention what may also be taken as a psychological process of self-control. Athena both stimulates and embodies the prudence of Achilles as his quarrel with the great king Agamemnon escalates toward violence. In this instance at least, the Goddess of Nearness is so near as to be virtually inseparable from the hero's own prudent suppression of the impulse to murder a king. We may read Homer's narrative as the portrayal of an actual encounter between man and goddess, or as a poetic statement that the hero's better judgement and self-control prevailed; clearly though, it is in some sense both. The goddess inspires the violent Achilles with the qualities of restraint and self-possession, and at the same moment she is the visible and audible embodiment of those virtues which do, finally, enable Achilles to vindicate himself. There is, as Otto points out, "no alternative between the independent action of a human and the influence or injunction of a deity. What a man wills and does is himself and is the deity. Both are true, and in the last analysis the same." In the Iliad, Diomedes says of Achilles (9.702) that he will return to the line of battle

"when the heart in his body urges him to and the god drives him"; the impulses from within and without are merely aspects of a single phenomenon.

Athena is very frequently the companion and adviser of Odysseus, both in the Iliad and the Odyssey. In both epics, the goddess is the embodiment and source of the qualities which consistently distinguish the "man of many turnings" (polytropon, Odyssey 1.1). Only Odysseus in the Iliad is called polymetis, the man of much wisdom or of many counsels, a term which is applied to Athena herself in the Homeric Hymn to Athena (28.2).

Particularly instructive is the role of Athena in the so-called "Doloneia," or story of Dolon, as told in Iliad 10 (314ff.) and in the pseudo-Euripidean tragedy Rhesus. Lissarrague's account is worth a detailed look, with emphasis added to mark the role of Athena in this interesting episode:

Dolon, a Trojan hero, goes out at night, at the request of Hector, to spy on the Greek camp. In order to pass unnoticed, he covers himself with the skin of a wolf. Thus he is transformed from warrior into animal. In parallel, Diomedes volunteers for a similar spying mission, and asks to be accompanied by Odysseus. These two equip themselves with light arms (bows, javelins) which are hunting weapons, not fighting weapons, and leave the Greek camp in the night. A favorable presage from Athena, the cry of a heron, encourages them at the moment of their departure. Odysseus and Diomedes see Dolon, the wolf, pass them in the dark. They allow him to advance, and surprise him from the rear. He can no longer go back to the Trojan camp; the two Greek heroes pursue him, capture him, and force him to talk; then they execute him and sacrifice his remains to Athena in thanksgiving. Their expedition then continues. Once in the Trojan camp, Odysseus and Diomedes massacre the Thracian king Rhesus and twelve of his men. On the way back to their camp, they pick up Dolon's remains and attach them to the prow of Odysseus's ship.

This episode takes place away from the plain where fighting normally takes place, in remote and uncultivated land. Trickery on the part of all three heroes takes the place of the heroic values of physical strength and skill with the traditional weapons of war, the sword and spear. Dolon's name suggests dolos or "trickery"; his disguising himself as an animal underlines the unheroic nature of the two intelligence-gathering missions. Appropriately, Athena is present throughout, favoring the Greeks and Odysseus in particular, as is her habit; she presides over the bloody slaughter of the Thracian king and his men. The unfortunate Dolon, trickery incarnate, encounters someone even trickier in Odysseus, master of deception and protégé of Athena, the patroness of craft and practical intelligence. Dolon's trick is turned against him: Odysseus and Diomedes stalk the man disguised as beast as if he were hunters' prey; they trap him, cut his throat as if he were a beast, and sacrifice the best part of his remains, not to Artemis as patroness of the hunt, but to Athena who, from the initial omen of a bird's cry, has favored the Greek cause in this interlude in more traditional martial activity.

In a particularly striking scene of mutual deception, the disguised Athena meets in Odyssey 13 a cautiously devious Odysseus who has just awakened immediately after his return to Ithaca. Unable for the moment to recognize his long-sought homeland, Odysseus is approached by Athena who is disguised as a herdsman and is also momentarily unrecognizable. Odysseus, told that he is home, remains untrusting; he replies with an elaborate lie about his name, origin, and business. The goddess explains what it is that she finds irresistible in the crafty hero (Odyssey 13.287ff.). Far from being angry at Odysseus for attempting to deceive her and for refusing to accept her word,

Athena is delighted by the reciprocal fraud being perpetrated. She smiles and reminds the hero that what binds the two of them together is their clearmindedness and intelligence:

"Cunning he must be and knavish, who would go beyond thee in all manner of guile, aye, though it were a god that met thee. Bold man, crafty in counsel, insatiate in deceit, not even in thine own land, it seems, wast thou to cease from guile and deceitful tales, which thou lovest from the bottom of thine heart. But come, let us no longer talk of this, being both well versed in craft, since thou art far the best of all men in counsel and in speech, and I among all the gods am famed for wisdom (metis) and craft."

This, after all, is what binds Athena to Odysseus. Both are famed for schemes and wily plans, he among humans, she on Olympus. They are the human and divine counterparts of the same set of skills and tendencies; therefore, the goddess literally cannot abandon Odysseus. Hero and goddess are one throughout the epic. Finally, Athena assists Odysseus in the decisive ruse of the epic; in a variation of his infiltration of Troy inside the hollow horse and his escape from the cave of Polyphemus underneath a sheep, Odysseus is to insinuate himself into his own house disguised by the power of Athena as a wandering beggar.

As motherless daughter of Zeus, Athena is as far removed as possible from all chthonic and female concerns, and particularly from the world of blood-guilt and retribution represented by the Furies. In Aeschylus' Eumenides, Athena is the staunch opponent of the earth-born, snaky divinities who seek to impose a hideous and bloody punishment upon Orestes. She is the proponent of the universal order represented by what the Furies themselves call the "new gods." In this play, Otto suggests, "we feel with horror that these two world orders are in conflict and that

their opposition is insoluble. It must be counted as a magnificent aspect of Greek thought, which Aeschylus here represents, that it left this opposition unresolved. No declaration of an external power places the right upon one side and the wrong upon another." Athena herself declines to decide the case, instituting rather a jury (471) which hereafter will judge cases of murder. She retains a single vote for herself, casting it for the acquittal of Orestes, because of her alliance with all things masculine (736-738; see Introduction, above). Without Athena's ballot, Otto continues, "Orestes would have been lost. He is acquitted, but only by a tie vote. The avenging goddesses are eventually reconciled by Athena who promises them high honors, and pronounce their blessing instead of their curse over land and people. . . . The Aeschylean tragedy celebrates the institution of the Athenian court for cases of murder, by means of which the law and authority of the state supplants the bloody expiation of the old order. . . . Here the new Olympian gods stand opposed to the ancient deities; the bright and free spirit of the Olympians comes face to face with the brutish, narrow, earth-bound spirit of the primal forces. And the Olympians justify their new dominion by achieving reconciliation with the old forces. The new truth does not extinguish reverence for the old. The Erinyes of Aeschylean tragedy present a living picture of the ancient earth-powers." Athena presides over this complex tangle of bloody grudges and murderous violence, bringing to the human and chthonic participants in the grisly tale light, reason, and reconciliation.

DEMETER

Introduction

Demeter, one of the offspring of Kronos and Rhea, is an earth-goddess and patroness of the Mysteries of Eleusis. The "mother" element is unmistakable in the last two syllables of Demeter's name. Jane Harrison maintains that, rather than being a generalized earth mother, Demeter is specifically goddess of tilled, cultivated land, and of its fruits. That is, the goddess represents the growing of grain, and agriculture in general. Demeter's daughter is Persephone or Kore, "the virgin." So closely are mother and daughter linked that they are sometimes simply called the Two Demeters or the Demeteres. In myth, Persephone is carried off to the underworld by Hades and thereafter spends part of each year as his subterranean queen. Burkert suggests that Persephone may have been a formerly independent, "uncanny" variant of the great goddess Demeter. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 367-369, for example, points out that those who offend against the divinity of Persephone "shall be punished for evermore," implying a universality at odds with the Hymn's general portrait of Persephone as merely a hapless maiden. See Section V below on the contrasting roles of Demeter and Persephone/Kore.

The full story of the two goddesses is told in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. Kore, who is also Persephone (a name which defies interpretation), is carried off by Hades, lord of the Underworld; while the distraught Demeter searches the earth for the missing girl, the earth withers and universal famine ensues. Other mythological events flow from the grief of Demeter. Tantalus tested the gods by serving them the flesh of his son Pelops; Demeter, distracted by her grief for the loss of

Persephone, ate part of one shoulder. The other gods realized what had happened and brought Pelops to life again, replacing his missing shoulder with an ivory one. Pindar, Olympian 1.49ff., describes this chthonic, pre-Christian communion: " . . . and among the tables at the last course they divided and ate your flesh."

Zeus arranges the return of Persephone to Demeter so that life on earth will not perish but, since she had eaten pomegranate seeds while in the land of the dead, Persephone cannot completely sever her tie to her subterranean abductor. Persephone thus spends part of the year in Hades as Mistress of the Dead; at Eleusis, this was considered to be the summer when dryness seemingly kills much of the earth's vegetation and when seed-grain is stored underground in jars. The Great Mysteries of Eleusis are celebrated in early autumn, in the month of Boedromion, when the seed is taken out of storage for the fall planting; at this time, the Virgin rises as daughter of the goddess of grain, "a great wonder to gods and mortal men" (Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 403). Her return is made evident by the growth of crops in the fields. The Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis, then, celebrated the cycle of life and death of crops and seed-grain; at some unknown point in the history of this enormously ancient, and possibly Stone Age and pre-Hellenic, vegetation cult, the hope or assurance of humans' rising from the dead to new life under the benevolent care of Demeter became the central element of Eleusinian worship. Elsewhere, throughout Greek territory, the many cults of the goddess repeat local legends about Demeter; these tend simply to reiterate that Demeter had visited a given place in her search for Kore, or that she had introduced agriculture to the locality. The cult of Demeter at Eleusis, then, owes much of its prominence to the

site's having been annexed by Athens at an early date and to the subsequent economic and literary prestige of Athens.

I. Origins and Cult of Demeter

The worship of Demeter seems to be of immense antiquity; the Thesmophoria, a rite common to all Greeks, in all likelihood dates from the Stone Age (see Section II below on the festival of Demeter Thesmophoros, the "Law-Giver"). Pausanias, 2.34.10, informs us that at Hermione in the Argolid there were "circuits of large unhewn stones, within which they perform mystic rituals to Demeter"; a church now stands on the probable site of this sanctuary. Burkert suggests that this rite may be of Stone Age origin; the cult of Demeter, dealing as it does with the primal mysteries of generation and germination, leads, in Burkert's words, "into an age before definition in which the individual figures disappear; all that remains is the maternal power, demanding sacrifice and bestowing life."

Pig sacrifices are frequently found in these extremely archaic agricultural rites, perhaps because the pig is the most common domestic beast. Burkert cites a clay pig studded with grain, probably of Neolithic date, from Nea Makri near Marathon. Ferguson supplies further examples of Demeter's frequent accompaniment in the Greek pantheon by pigs, such as terracotta votive offerings from her shrines in the central Peloponnese and Camarina in Sicily which show the goddess with a pig in her arms. An early Neolithic clay pig has been found near Marathon, perhaps belonging to an early form of the Demeter cult. The goddess is often shown giving the gift of grain to mankind, sometimes accompanied by Persephone. Perhaps her supreme image

for worship is that of what Burkert terms the Mater Dolorosa, mourning the abduction of her daughter. Pigs continue to play an important role in the cult of Demeter in the historical period. The Athenian Thesmophoria (see Section II below) took place in the autumn, when life returned to the fields after the desiccating heat of summer, when the planting of seed was imminent; during the ritual, the putrefied remains of pigs which had previously been thrown into a pit were drawn up and mixed with seed grain, presumably in order to secure by magic the vitality of the seed.

There can be no question that grain is the center of Demeter's function. At the time of planting, the farmer prays to Zeus Chthonios and to Demeter; the harvest is celebrated by worshipping Demeter, who has supplied the successful outcome of the agricultural year. Hesiod's advice to the farmer (Works and Days 465-469) illustrates this:

Pray to Zeus of the Earth and to pure Demeter to make Demeter's holy grain sound and heavy, when first you begin ploughing, when you hold in your hand the end of the plough-tail and bring down your stick on the backs of the oxen as they draw on the pole-bar by the yoke-straps.

So inseparable are Demeter and the subject of grain that in Cyprus the word for harvesting the grain crop is damatrizein, "to Demeterize."

There has been some scholarly discussion as to whether the return of Persephone is properly to be placed in the Spring or Autumn. Since antiquity, the myth of Persephone has generally been understood as an allegory for the return of Spring; the daughter of Demeter returns at the time when "the earth blooms with spring flowers" (Homeric Hymn, 401). Burkert examines the

agronomic difficulties presented by this assumption, pointing out that the account "does not accord with the pattern of growth in Mediterranean lands, where the corn germinates a few weeks after the autumn sowing and then grows continuously." For this reason, some modern scholars, such as Ferguson, have suggested an alternative interpretation, seeing in Persephone's descent into the underworld, and the subsequent drought on earth, as a representation of the storing of the seed-grain in underground silos during the dry summer months, awaiting the autumn sowing. In a Mediterranean climate, it is the summer when vegetation is seemingly dead of the heat and dryness. Seeds are taken up out of underground storage at the time of the autumn rains, and the annual agricultural cycle begins again. Burkert, implying that the Greeks were not inclined to let prosaic agronomic facts get in the way of a good story, points out that this modern suggestion undoubtedly fits the facts much better, but that this is nevertheless certainly not the ancient Greek understanding of the myth. We may therefore confidently await the return of Kore in the Spring.

Demeter has noteworthy connections with other Olympians. The birth of Persephone came about as the result of a union of Zeus and Demeter, as described by Hesiod, Theogony 912-914.:

Also he came to the bed of all-nourishing Demeter, and she bare white-armed Persephone whom Aïdoneus carried off from her mother; but wise Zeus gave her to him.

An Arcadian myth describes the rape of Demeter by Poseidon while she was searching for her lost daughter. In an attempt to avoid him, she became a mare, but he assaulted her in the form of a stallion. Demeter gave birth to the miraculous talking horse Arion, which belonged to the hero Adrastus. The goddess also

bore a daughter to Poseidon, but only those initiated into Demeter's mysteries could know the child's name. There was a similar legend at Phigaleia, according to which Demeter was represented as black and horse-headed; the daughter was the goddess Despoina, "The Mistress," which is one of the many names of the queen of the underworld (cf. Pausanias, 8.25.4ff.; 8.42.1ff). Rose (Handbook) suggests that this is an extremely ancient fertility myth in which male and female powers of fertility produce offspring, and that later the female power was hellenized into Demeter.

In Arcadia, Demeter was regarded as the wife of Poseidon who was venerated as gaieochos, the "earth-holder" or "earth-embracer" (see the chapter "Poseidon"). Elsewhere, Demeter could be worshipped in various forms; Demeter of Phigalia, for example, was represented by an ancient wooden image of the goddess as a woman with a horse's head. Homer refers to the union of Demeter and Iasion, the brother of Dardanus, "in the thrice-plowed fallow land" (Odyssey 5.125ff.); Hesiod reports this same story (Theogony 969-974):

Demeter, bright goddess, was joined in sweet love with the hero Iasion in a thrice-ploughed fallow in the rich land of Crete, and bore Plutus ["Wealth"], a kindly god who goes everywhere over land and the sea's wide back, and he makes rich the man who finds him and into whose hands he comes, bestowing great wealth upon him.

This is no doubt an instance of the familiar hieros gamos, or sacred marriage, between the male sky and the female earth which fructifies the soil (see the chapter "Hera"). Demeter was often addressed as Kourotrophos, or nursing mother, as were other goddesses linked in one way or another with fertility or the earth such as Artemis, Ge, Leto, and Hecate.

Demeter embodies the ambivalence of the Earth. The earth provides life to human beings and then takes them, as corpses, into herself; likewise, Demeter is not only the source of life and fertility, but also the dire goddess of the land of the dead. Victims of curses are regularly consigned to Demeter and to Kore/ Persephone; the Athenians used the term "Demeter's people," Demetreioi, as a euphemism for the dead. Powers of the underworld, as Ferguson observes, were often associated with sacred wells and sacrificial pits. An example has been found in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Acragas/Agrigentum in Sicily. Pausanias (2.35.5-7) describes a peculiar festival of Demeter Chthonia, Demeter of the Underworld, at Hermione. Demeter, as we have seen, was sometimes invoked in curses and other forms of malignant magic recorded on lead tablets and then buried. A tablet from the temple of Demeter at Cnidos (SIG³ 1179) uses Demeter's name to damn a thief to Hades:

I consign to damnation, in the name of Artemis, Demeter, Kore, and all the gods with Demeter, the person who at my demand does not return to me the cloaks, clothes, and tunic which I left behind. Let him pay the penalty before Demeter, and if anyone else has any possessions of mine, let him be in torment till he confesses. And grant me purity and freedom, fellowship in drink, and food and house. I have been wronged, Lady Demeter.

In the Latin-speaking world, Demeter was worshipped under the name Ceres, a word which derives from an Indo-European root ker, meaning "growth." The notion became personified and deified; the goddess Ceres presides over growth, especially the growth of cereal grains. Valerius Probus, a grammarian of the first century AD, gives this definition in his comment on Vergil, Georgic 1.7: Cererem a creando dictam ("Ceres comes from 'to cause to grow'"). As in the Greek world, the Italic divinity of

agriculture is extremely old. Originally, she was an aniconic numen, an impersonal divine force or deified abstraction of earthly fertility. One of the indications of the great age of her cult is that Ceres was deemed to carry out her functions with the help of what Schilling calls "lesser specialists" who were invoked along with her. These minor deities include some of the highly specific Italic numina ridiculed later by Christian authors such as Augustine, in the City of God. Among them are Veruactor, who presides over plowing fallow land, Reparator who renews cultivation, and so on through the entire agricultural cycle to Conditor, who stores the harvest, and Promitor, who removes the harvest from storage. Ceres is active throughout the entire cycle. Under Greek influence, pictorial images of Ceres became common during the third and second centuries BC; eventually, the Italic Ceres had become more or less identical to the Greek Demeter in all but name.

II. The Thesmophoria

The most widespread of all Greek festivals and the chief manifestation of the worship of Demeter was the Thesmophoria, or festival of Demeter Thesmophoros, the "Law Giver" or patroness of civilization. Burkert's detailed account of this important rite (pp. 242-246) is indispensable and unmatched for completeness.

The goddess of agriculture was regularly honored throughout Greek-speaking lands in a series of lengthy rituals which, unlike the mystery cult at Eleusis, remained the exclusive property of women. The distinctive feature of all Thesmophoria, as Burkert points out, is the pig sacrifice which, as seen above

in Section I, may be a sign of extremely ancient cult practice in honor of the fertility of the earth. "Pig bones, votive pigs, and terracottas, which show a votary or the goddess herself holding the piglet in her arms, are the archaeological signs of Demeter sanctuaries everywhere."

For the Thesmophoria, women left their homes and families for several days—for three days at Athens and up to ten at Syracuse. They assemble in makeshift shelters from which men, and also children and virgins, are excluded. Husbands were obliged to send their wives and to meet whatever costs of attendance might be incurred. There were initiation rites and our sources speak of "mysteries." Some temples of Demeter held statues which men were never allowed to see; Aristophanes' comedy, "Thesmophoriazousae" (or "Women at the Thesmophoria") gives virtually no details about the rites which his chorus of celebrants actually performed.

Athenian women converged in the autumn near the Pnyx, the place of the (exclusively male) citizens' assembly, carrying a substantial amount of food, equipment for the stay, cult implements, and of course the essential piglets. The scholiast quoted by Burkert describes the celebrants' evening sacrifice:

The piglets are thrown into the chasms of Demeter and of Kore. The decayed remains of the things thrown in, women know as the Bailers fetch up; they have maintained a state of purity for three days and they descend thus into the forbidden rooms, bring up the remains and place them on the altars. It is believed that whoever takes of this and scatters it with seed on the ground will have a good harvest. It is said that there are snakes down below in the chasm that eat most of what is thrown down; for this reason a noise is made when the women bail up and then again when those forms are laid down, so that the snakes will go away. . . . Unspeakable sacred things are made of

dough and carried up, models of snakes and male membra; they also take pine branches. . . . This is thrown into the so-called "Megara," and so are the piglets, as we have already said.

Pits containing pig bones and votive images of pigs have been found on the island of Cnidos, at Priene in Asia Minor, at Agrigentum on Sicily, and elsewhere; the Athenian sacrificial pit has not been found. Facilities varied from one Greek city to another, but the archaeological record seems to support the suggestion that these rites always contained the common element of casting sacrifices into the earth and then recovering the remains—perhaps, as seems to have been the case at Athens, in an advanced state of putrefaction.

Women celebrating this festival, as Burkert sums it up, entered "into contact with the subterranean, with death and decay, while at the same time phalloi, snakes, and fir-cones, sexuality and fertility are present." Ancient variants of the myth of the rape of Persephone explain the pig sacrifice by reference to the pigs of a swineherd named Eubouleus, the "Good Counselor," which were swallowed up along with the daughter of Demeter. Our fragmentary and very reticent ancient sources speak of the remaining days of the festival at Athens as devoted to fasting, seclusion, grieving (as Demeter mourned her daughter), obscene language, the veneration of a model of the female genital—a fitting complement to the dough phalloi at the pig sacrifice—and the eating of pomegranates, whose abundant seeds and deep blood-red juice make it a frequent accompaniment to rites of fertility. Thesmophoriazousae, then, were much occupied with blood and death.

In both myth and cult practice, the rites of Demeter are often associated with grisly hostility to men who presume to invade

the privacy of female worship. At Cyrene, a Greek colony in North Africa, women called Sphaktriai ("Slaughterers"), who smeared their faces with blood and held swords in their hands, acted out the castration of a man who had spied on their mysteries. Pausanias (4.17.1) describes the unhappy fate of some men from Messenia in Sicily who intruded upon a local Thesmophoria in Laconia:

. . . the women were inspired by the goddess to defend themselves, and most of the Messenians were wounded with the knives with which the women sacrificed the victims and the spits on which they pierced and roasted the meat. Aristomenes was struck with the torches and taken alive. Nevertheless he escaped to Messenia during the same night. Archidameia, the priestess of Demeter, was charged with having released him, not for a bribe but because she had been in love with him before; but she maintained that Aristomenes had escaped by burning through his bonds.

The spy in Aristophanes' "Thesmophoriazousae" comes under suspicion and is held prisoner by the worshippers of Demeter. The women's wrath had previously been directed exclusively at Euripides for his alleged defamation of women in his tragedies. Herodotus (2.171.1), is careful to preserve what he terms a "discreet silence" concerning "that rite of Demeter which the Greeks call Thesmophoria, except as much of it as I am not forbidden to mention." He claims that the festival was brought to Greece from Egypt by the daughters of Danaus who had murdered their husbands.

Appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the festival in historic times did in fact have a fundamentally domestic and familial purpose. Detienne stresses the significance of the Thesmophoria as a celebration exclusively for wives of citizens. In becoming a wife, a young girl "penetrated into the domain

that drew upon the power of cereals. The ritual of marriage marks out her course with a series of symbols and gestures: the requirement to carry a frying pan to roast the barley; the practice of fastening a mortar and pestle in front of the bridal chamber, and of transporting a sieve, entrusted to a young child of the retinue." Through the ceremonies of marriage, Detienne suggests, the woman was identified with a field "whose plowing and sowing were done by the husband when he fathered legitimate children." The last day of the Thesmophoria was called Calligeneia or the day of beautiful birth.

While the specific meaning of many of the odd and fascinating features of the Thesmophoria will no doubt remain obscure, Burkert is clearly correct in concluding that the practice of handling the decomposed remains of piglets to achieve a good harvest is one of the clearest examples in Greek religion of primitive agrarian magic. The remains are mixed with seed grain and thus they are clearly intended to bring to the grain the magic of fertility for fields, beasts, and humans. This magical rite is probably of extreme antiquity, dating perhaps from the earliest origins of agriculture in the early Neolithic period.

This is by no means the end of the story of the Thesmophoria. Karl Kerényi draws a comparison between the Greek seclusion of the women in an atmosphere of blood, death, and sexuality with the taboos surrounding menstruating women in many primitive cultures. In any case, as Burkert points out, "at the core of the festival there remains the dissolution of the family, the separation of the sexes, and the constitution of a society of women; once in the year at least, the women demonstrated their independence, their responsibility, and importance for the fertility of the community and the land." An important part of

the Thesmophoria was probably a dramatized passage through darkness, symbolizing Demeter's grief and rage at the rape of her daughter by Hades. "The dark pits which were opened are closed again, the beautiful birth points with hope to the future; the prospect of a good harvest is part of the expectation which arises from the festival. The Greeks finally interpreted Demeter Thesmophoros as the bringer of order, the order of marriage, civilization, and of life itself, and in this they were not entirely mistaken."

III. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter, and Homer

The Homeric Hymn to Demeter is our best and most ancient source for the cult of Demeter. Much in the hymn, as Ferguson suggests, is aetiological, offering a rationalizing account in myth for practices which were historically known. Ferguson sees in the hymn two connected religious elements, the fertility of the earth and the promise of new life for Eleusinian initiates after death. Commenting on the ceremonies at Eleusis, Cicero said, "We have gained from them the way of living in happiness and dying with a better hope" (Laws 2, 14, 36). According to Richardson, the Homeric Hymn to Demeter "attests to the belief that if one performed certain secret rituals in honour of Demeter and Persephone one would thereby be guaranteed exemption from the common fate of men after death, whereas on the contrary those who offended Persephone would suffer punishment in the after-life."

Demeter has only slight importance in the Homeric epics; this is somewhat surprising in view of the universal observance and great antiquity of her cult. Otto comments on this odd

circumstance: "even that figure of the earth-goddess endowed with most regal splendor, the figure who gives unforgettable expression to motherhood under the name of Demeter, has virtually no standing in the Homeric world, though her dignity goes back to the remotest ages and was maintained till later centuries. In her the unity of life, death, and holy justice found its noblest symbol. But Homer ignores her association with the realm of death. Often enough, indeed he mentions the queen of the dead, the 'illustrious Persephone,' but there is no hint of the great myth of her rape and none that she is the favorite child of Demeter, as the Homeric Hymn so called first tells the tale." And yet, Homer is surely aware of the myth of the union of Demeter and Iasion. The story is mentioned by Calypso (Od. 5.125), and, as Otto points out, when Calypso adds that a thrice-plowed fallow field was the goddess's marriage bed, "the most wonderful mystery of the earth-religion is suddenly and vividly present before our eyes." Homer refers to a liaison between Zeus and Demeter at Iliad 14.326; he mentions her sanctuary in "flowery Pyrasus" (Iliad 2.695). The goddess herself is seldom present in the Homeric epics, aside from references to her association with the growth of grain. At Iliad 5.500, Homer refers to "fair-haired Demeter amid the driving blasts of wind," separating grain from chaff. Food is described as the "grain of Demeter" at Iliad 13.322 and 21.76. For Homer then, Demeter is nothing more than a source of food, or a poetic locution for grain. This is, Otto suggests, not accidental. The female sex is relegated to a subordinate status in the Iliad and this is reflected in the dominant role of the male divinities. The martial and masculine focus of the Iliad, then, would seem to leave little room for the agricultural and reproductive activities embodied by Demeter.

IV. Eleusis and the Mysteries

A. The Site

The cult of Demeter at Eleusis predates the arrival of the Hellenes in the Greek peninsula; archaeological evidence makes it clear that both site and cult belonged to the pre-Greek inhabitants, who may have worshipped there in order to assure the fertility of their fields, their livestock, and themselves. Burkert suggests Neolithic origins for the mysteries of Demeter and also of Dionysus. The use of pigs in the Eleusinian cult is perhaps indicative of its great age (see Section I, "Origins of Demeter," above). Ferguson informs us that occasionally in vase paintings initiates are depicted carrying pigs; votive statuettes of pigs have been found at Eleusis, and the pigs are shown on coins issued at the site.

Eleusis lies 22 kilometers west of Athens; archaeologists have shown that it was inhabited from at least the Early Bronze Age. Burkert points out that although the first telesterion, or initiation hall, was built in the time of the 6th century BC dictator Pisistratus, the cult itself can be traced much further into the past, to the Geometric Age and probably to the Mycenaean period. Mylonas (Princeton Encyclopedia) agrees that the cult of Demeter in its Hellenic form dates to the Mycenaean Age, and that it became a panhellenic phenomenon in the 6th c. BC. The mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis were universally respected in Roman Imperial times. The sanctuary was destroyed by the Persians under Xerxes in 480-479 BC and suffered great damage at the hands of the hordes of Alaric in AD 395. The site never recovered from this last destruction; by the fifth century it was desolate, by order of the Christian Roman government.

Fragmentary remains indicate that the initiation hall or Telesterion dates from the Mycenaean period. The building, then, was in continuous use from the Bronze Age until the final closing of the site in late antiquity, an extraordinary record of continuous worship. The Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis occupies the site of a Bronze Age royal palace; similarly, the Telesterion of Eleusis stands on the ruins of a Mycenaean palace. Ferguson and Mylonas describe the history of the structure in detail. The earliest building on the site was a simple Mycenaean megaron (a great hall with a central hearth, a porch and two columns), dating to the second half of the second millennium BC; it was either a royal residence or the site's first house of Demeter. Mylonas points out that a larger Telesterion was built over the site of the original structure in the time of Solon in the early sixth century. This building was replaced in the time of Pisistratos, 550-510 BC, by a larger one. The roof of the Pisistratean structure was supported by twenty columns; tiers of seats were set around three of the sides. The Classical Telesterion was larger still and had a roof supported by 42 columns. It was destroyed by fire in 170 BC and rebuilt under Marcus Aurelius to essentially the same plan. The Anaktoron, or inner sanctuary, was added to the temple built by Solon, and, according to Coldstream, was to remain sacrosanct for the next thousand years as the center of the rites which took place here. Every successive Telesterion, he points out, incorporated the Solonian Anaktoron, a sort of temple inside a temple thought to have housed a very ancient wooden image of Demeter. Remains now visible at the site belong to the rebuilding under Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180).

The Telesterion is an unusual structure. Normally, of course, Greek sacrifice and prayer took place not inside temples but outdoors, at the altars which stood nearby; worship was open, public, and visible to all. The initiation hall at Eleusis, by contrast, is clearly designed as an assembly place whose interior is meant to accommodate large numbers of people in privacy and seclusion from the general run of passersby. Thus, the Telesterion, an enclosed assembly hall for a large crowd of initiates and other worshippers, has more in common with a synagogue, church, or mosque: it is clearly meant to enclose the community of worshippers and to separate them from those outside. It has long been suggested that the closest parallels to the general layout of the initiation hall at Eleusis are the "theatral areas," or central plazas of Minoan palaces such as those at Knossos and Phaistos. But these supposedly similar Minoan structures are open to the sky and, at least at Knossos and Phaistos, were part of the ceremonial entranceways to the palaces; the Telesterion at Eleusis, as we have seen, is without parallel by virtue of its being an enclosed and roofed venue for worshippers. Nevertheless, the possibility of a very ancient Minoan link to the Eleusinian cult remains intriguing. Hesiod, as we have seen (Theogony 969-974), places the union of Demeter and Iasion in Crete. In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, the goddess in search of Persephone is disguised as an ancient woman who is "cut off from childbearing and the gifts of garland-loving Aphrodite" (101-102); she describes herself as having been kidnapped from Crete by pirates (123ff.). Hesiod's choice of Crete may have no particular significance at all and Guthrie urges caution here, reminding us that Odysseus too hits upon Crete as a fictitious homeland when he arrives in Ithaca. Demeter's assumed name is recorded in the Hymn as either Dos or Doso; in either case, the name seems certainly, and

appropriately, to be connected with the root "to give." Does all of this mean that Demeter is in origin a Minoan mother goddess? The evidence is far too insubstantial to support such a claim. Whatever the validity of the Minoan connection may be, Demeter reveals herself for the first time to the Greeks, in myth at least, at Eleusis. She puts aside the sterility of old age and assumes her true form as the embodiment of the fertile and blossoming earth (Homeric Hymn to Demeter, 275-280):

When she had so said, the goddess changed her stature and her looks, thrusting old age away from her: beauty spread round about her and a lovely fragrance was wafted from her sweet-smelling robes, and from the divine body of the goddess a light shone afar, while golden tresses spread down over her shoulders, so that the strong house was filled with brightness as with lightning.

B. Initiation

The cult at Eleusis is of particular interest as part of what Guthrie calls "the religion of the ordinary citizen," theoretically open and accessible to all without regard for nationality, gender (in contrast to the Thesmophoria), or social status. Burkert points to the very great antiquity of the Eleusinian rites, suggesting that such secret societies and initiations are of extreme antiquity and that the Mysteries may be of Neolithic origin. The literature on the Mysteries of Eleusis is vast and varied, ranging from purely factual descriptions of the state of the literary and archaeological record to the most speculative and fanciful interpretations of the nature and meaning of the Mysteries of Demeter. Guthrie restates the ancient and modern consensus that the Eleusis cult was agricultural—an aetiological account of the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in the vegetable world. As Burkert points

out, though, the myth does not describe a mere cycle: things are never the same after the rape of Persephone. Rather, the myth establishes "a double existence between the upper world and the underworld: a dimension of death is introduced into life, and a dimension of life is introduced into death." In any case, Persephone represents the life of the crops and spends a third of the year, when the fields are apparently dead, beneath the earth (see Section I above for the dispute as to whether this was winter or summer). Demeter, the chthonic goddess, combines the two functions of the earth in Greek religion: first, she receives the seed which is planted in her. Lacking any understanding of seeds as cases for dormant, embryonic plants, ancient people regarded seeds as lifeless and in need of magical revivification after their burial, like tiny corpses, in the earth; cf. John 12:24, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Demeter bestows new life upon the "dead" seed by means of her divine power; soon, she covers the fields with the new growth of crops which are represented in myth by the return of the goddess's daughter Persephone.

Since the earth was also regarded as the repository of the souls of dead human beings, the belief apparently arose, at some indeterminate time, that Demeter had the power to imbue not only dead seeds but also dead people with new life, granting to her special friends an alternative to the dreary afterlife of, for example, Odyssey 11. For the Greeks, immortality was the chief defining characteristic of the gods; the term athanatoi, or "deathless ones," after all, simply means "gods" in Homer and later authors. Demeter here presides over a process whereby mortals, through purification and initiation, are raised to the status of divinities. We know that in Athens the dead were

called "Demeter's people," demetreioi; Detienne reminds us that the Greeks "sowed seeds on the grave in which they had just interred a body, setting the womb of the earth within the maternal womb in this way. Demeter receives the dead as she receives the seeds; and that is why a very ancient tradition recalls that sacrifices are addressed to the dead, praying to them 'to make good things grow here above,' in the conviction that from those that are buried, foods, growth, and seeds come to the living. Eleusis unfolds its mysteries around this vision of death." Plato (Phaedrus 250B-C), records for us in memorable and evocative language the sense of joy, purity, and hope conferred by initiation:

Beauty it was ours to see in all its brightness in those days when, amidst that happy company, we beheld with our eyes that blessed vision, ourselves in the train of Zeus, others following some other god; then were we all initiated into that mystery which is rightly accounted blessed beyond all others; whole and unblemished were we that did celebrate it, untouched by the evils that awaited us in days to come; whole and unblemished likewise, free from all alloy, steadfast and blissful were the spectacles on which we gazed in the moment of final revelation; pure was the light that shone around us, and pure were we, without taint of that prison house which now we are encompassed withal, and call a body, fast bound therein as an oyster in its shell.

Burkert (276-289) discusses at length the general phenomenon of mysteries and the particular case of Eleusis. He distinguishes between the very public religion of the Greek states—with its conspicuous processions, sacrifices, prayers and meals—and the secret cults which were available only to the relatively small number of initiates. There were many of these "mysteries," and the observances at Eleusis in honor of Demeter are merely the most prominent of them. Secrecy and revelation were common to the mystery cults. "The image which epitomizes the mysteries is

the basket closed with a lid, the cista mystica: only the initiate knows what this cista conceals." In addition to initiation, which some have suggested may possibly originate in puberty initiation, mysteries also tend to have in common with one another, first, an agrarian element which may link them with prehistoric agricultural magic, and, second, a more or less blatant sexual content (probably not present at Eleusis; see below) which may consist of, as Burkert points out, "genital symbols, exposures, and occasionally veritable orgies in the common sense." Whatever the origins of the mystery cults, by the historical period they seem to have become linked with the concept of human salvation in the world beyond the grave. In the end, it does not matter whether the Mysteries originated in primitive agricultural magic, initiation rites for adolescents, or in some other Neolithic observance; the ancient sources make it clear that long before the Classical period the Greeks associated the Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis with the conquest of death. For the mystes or initiate, death ceases to be a source of terror and may be conceived of as something good, the guarantee of a blessed existence beyond the grave. This promise of a happy afterlife was at least a part of Eleusinian initiates' understanding of the meaning of their experience.

The scholarly literature on the Eleusinian mysteries includes even suggestions that miraculous events actually occurred there. W.F. Otto, in "The Meaning of the Eleusinian Mysteries" (The Mysteries, ed. Joseph Campbell, New York 1955, pp. 14-31), suggests that actual miracles were performed in the Telesterion at Eleusis. In this, he may be following K.H.E. de Jong (Das antike Mysterienwesen, Leiden 1909) who understands the passage in Plato's Phaedrus cited above as an indication of supernatural events at Eleusis. Otto suggests that a stalk of grain may have

miraculously grown to maturity during a single night. Kerényi objects that this notion "seems too close to the miracle of St. Januarius in Naples," referring to the famous public celebrations of the visible and annually recurring miracle of the liquefaction of the saint's blood. We need not go so far as to posit the occurrence of actual miracles performed at Eleusis by the divine influence of Demeter to grasp what our sources tell us about the supreme importance of "seeing" in the Mysteries. Kerényi establishes that "the great vision, the visio beatifica of Eleusis, was seen with open, corporeal eyes: no distinction was made between the light of the Mysteries and the light of the sun." Socrates, for example, in the Phaedrus passage quoted above, states that sights or visions actually seen (as is the liquefaction of the saint's blood in the Naples cathedral) were a vital part of initiates' experience and lay at the center of the lifelong impression which initiation made upon them.

Only the final stage of initiation, the Beholding or Epopeteia, was hidden by the Mysteries' vow of secrecy; we are actually fairly well informed about the ceremonies of purification and preparation which led up to it: the procession in honor of Demeter along the Sacred Way from Athens to Eleusis, led by the image of Dionysus who was called Iacchus for the occasion; the purification of participants by bathing in the sea; and a long series of dances, sacrifices, libations and hymns, not to mention various purifications by water and fire. All this caused the procession of some twelve miles to occupy more than a full day. In fact, as Burkert points out, the mysteries of Eleusis are really quite extensively documented by archaeological, epigraphical, and literary evidence. The ancient testimony covers a period of more than a thousand years,

from the Homeric Hymn to Demeter to the fifth-century closing of the site by the Christian Roman emperor Theodosius. During this immensely long time, "the cult drew men and women from all of Greece and later from the whole of the Roman Empire and, as is affirmed over and over again, brought them happiness and comfort."

Burkert summarizes current knowledge of the procession and initiation at Eleusis. The presiding priest or hierophant began with the prorrhesis, a warning or proclamation that all who are guilty of serious crime or who are not Greek must depart. Burkert observes that it is "characteristic of an archaic tradition that no mention is made of purity of heart." Prospective initiates, or mystai, purified themselves by bathing in the bay of Phaleron and by fasting. Initiates travelled the 30-kilometer distance from Athens to Eleusis in an ecstatic procession, marked by dancing and the repeated shout "Iakch' o Iakche." Iakchos may be simply an epithet of Dionysus; in any case, he was understood to be the third member of the triad of gods, along with Demeter and Kore, who were venerated in the Eleusinian mysteries.

The precise nature of the final revelation which took place in the telesterion and which admitted the initiate to the rank of Epopetes (Beholder) is unknown, despite centuries of vigorous scholarly discussion and speculation. Guthrie asserts that we can be confident that the climactic event was a revelation or spectacle which made an immediate impact upon the initiates' senses of sight and hearing. We may be sure that initiates were shown things and that the things seen left them with the conviction of their salvation. Guthrie draws the plausible conclusion that there was no Eleusinian doctrine or catechism

which appealed to the initiates' intellect; rather, Demeter's Eleusinian initiates seem to have come to believe in their blessed status by experiencing an emotional state which was induced by the arduous preliminary rites and by the final revelation itself. This beatific vision took place "in a scene of contrasts between darkness and the dazzling light of thousands of torches," The secrecy of the rites, according to Rose (Religion), was unlikely to have been due to fear of persecution from practitioners of another religion. Polytheists tended to be tolerant and to get along with the gods of others as well as they could. It is more probable, he suggests, that the secrecy surrounding the Eleusinian initiation derives from very ancient reluctance to let outsiders learn the true names of one's deities and the proper way to invoke them. It was probably also the case that since, as we have seen, there was no Eleusinian creed or catechism which could be learned and repeated, there simply was no doctrinal secret which could be expressed in words. The ancient sources refer consistently to things done and things seen, but never to lessons learned. If Guthrie and others are correct, then we may, without being unduly cynical about the matter, explain the otherwise unaccountable maintenance of strict secrecy about the Eleusinian revelation by tens of thousands of people over many centuries by suggesting that the final Epotheia, along with its profound emotional effect on the witness, simply could not be put into words. The absence of a single informative account of a ceremony of such fame from so many initiates implies that, as with other forms of religious mysticism or communion with divinity, the experience in the Telesterion defied expression in language. Mylonas cites Aristotle's statement that "the important thing was not to learn anything but to suffer or

experience (pathein) and to be brought into the appropriate state of mind through the proceedings."

Surviving pagan sources allude in circumspect and tantalizing language to the exact nature of the Eleusinian revelation. Demeter's reunion with her lost daughter Persephone is no doubt, in Burkert's words, "the mythical disguise of what happened at the mysteries." On the other hand, Christian writers attempted to reveal the secrets of Eleusis, usually as obscenely as possible, leading some modern scholars to suggest that the final revelation consisted of some sort of representation of genital organs; this notion is rejected by Mylonas who claims that this would be a violation of the chastity required of initiates and that acts involving actual or artificial genitals "would be symbolic of creation and not of rebirth. In any case, obscenity or overt sexuality seem to have had no place in the Eleusinian cult." Mylonas reports that even Clement, bishop of Alexandria in the early third century AD, "who had no difficulty in casting aspersions against the pagan rites, could find no evidence of and made no direct charges of immoral practices held in the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries." In fact, Mylonas cites a late-antique Gnostic writer who records "a proclamation of the hierophant and names what was shown as the high point of the celebration: an ear of grain cut in silence." For his part, Mylonas concludes that there is no reason to doubt his testimony.

The final rite, then, took place in the Telesterion, a building virtually unique among Greek religious structures, as we have seen, in that it was designed to contain a large number of people and thus to separate them from non-initiates. Each initiate, Burkert tells us, was escorted into the sanctuary by

his own mystagogos. As we have seen, the Anaktoron, a rectangular stone structure, stood inside the Telesterion. This temple within a temple "remained unmoved throughout the various phases of the construction of the temple and initiation halls; a piece of natural unhewn rock was left exposed inside. With minor alterations in Roman times, the Telesterion stood for eight hundred more years, the place where the secret mystery-rites were celebrated every year."

Burkert's evocative description continues: "Darkness shrouded the crowd thronged in the hall of mysteries as the priests proceeded to officiate by torchlight. Dreadful, terrifying things were shown until finally a great light shone forth 'when the Anaktoron was opened' and the hierophant 'appeared from out of the Anaktoron in the radiant lights of the mysteries.' We do not know the true course of events and have difficulty in coordinating the various allusions. The blessings of the mysteries are expressed in three ways. The mystes sees Kore, who is called up by the hierophant by strokes of a gong; as the underworld opens up, terror gives way to the joy or reunion. . . . Finally, he displays the ear of corn cut in silence." The cutting of the ear of grain implies death or castration; death in an agricultural context, as we have seen, often implies the potentiality for new life.

Ancient testimony leaves no doubt that the mysteries of Eleusis were widely understood to promise both escape from what Burkert calls "the dreary common lot of humanity," described in Homer's description of Hades in Odyssey 11, and a blessed existence in the afterlife. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter, our earliest source on the Eleusinian cult, proclaims, "Blessed is he who has seen this among earthly men; but he who is uninitiated in the sacred

rites and who has no portion, never has the same lot once dead down in the murky dark." Pindar states, "Blessed is he who has seen this and thus goes beneath the earth; he knows the end of life, he knows the beginning given by Zeus." Sophocles proclaims, "thrice blessed are those mortals who have seen these rites and thus enter into Hades; for them alone there is life, for the others all is misery." Isocrates adds that the mystai "have more pleasing hopes for the end of life and for all eternity." An epitaph of the Roman Imperial era announces that, in the case of a mystes, "death is not an evil but something good." The cult of Demeter at Eleusis in its Classical form, then, addresses the most universal of mankind's primal fears, the dread of death; it offers to the faithful initiates some hope of escape from the black nothingness of the Homeric Hades. As with other pagan mysteries, and indeed as in the case of Christianity, death remains a ghastly physical reality, but it is also transformed into the beginning of a new and better existence: "something good."

At first, there was apparently no moral code to be followed by those blessed with the saving vision, just as there was no requirement that initiates be spiritually pure, aside from a minimal requirement that they be free of pollution by serious crime. In fact, as Richardson notes, nothing much was expected of the initiates other than that they undergo the experience of initiation. By the Classical period, the belief seems to have spread that initiation was associated with moral excellence. The the chorus of initiates in Aristophanes' Frogs claim that they alone have light and happiness in the underworld because they have been initiated, but also because they have behaved piously (454-459). Scholars agree that Eleusis rose to special pan-Hellenic and international prominence by virtue of the

accident of its proximity to Athens, with which it was united at an early date. In historical times, the Athenians regarded the mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis as a purely Athenian institution. Guthrie points out that it was by virtue of its monopolistic control of the Eleusinian mysteries that Athens claimed to have been the source of the gods' two greatest gifts: agriculture, which lifts humans above the level of the animals, and the Mysteries, which elevate humans to the status of the immortals.

V. Demeter and Persephone: Food and Death

Homer's Apollo stresses the uncrossable distance which separates gods and humans (Iliad 5.440-442): "In no wise of like sort is the race of immortal gods and that of men who walk upon the earth". Later, he asks Poseidon why gods should argue or fight among themselves for the sake of things as inconsequential as human beings (Iliad 21.462-466); mortals, after all, are "pitiful creatures, that like unto leaves are now full of flaming life, eating the fruit of the field, and now again pine away and perish." The fleeting lives of humans, then, have in the Homeric view nothing whatever to do with the blessed deathlessness of the gods. People eat the fruits of the earth and, as corpses, enter the earth's depths when they die; the heavenly existence of the gods is of another order altogether. Demeter, on the other hand, introduces a paradigm which is radically different from the ancient Homeric orthodoxy: the earth is the domain of Demeter who, as Detienne suggests, "rules over food and receives into her womb the dead and the seeds, binding life and death between them, as the human condition intertwines life and death, without ever interrupting their embrace." The relationship between life and death, between

mortal and immortal, is redefined by Demeter and her mysteries, even to the possibility of passage through death to new life.

Homer refers to the flour of wheat and barley, the staples of the ancient Mediterranean diet, as the "marrow of men" (Odyssey 20.108), the prerequisite for all civilized activity. Detienne observes that "the invention of cereals marked the end of a state of savagery in which men lived like animals, feeding on herbs and fruits gathered in the woods: on acorns, as even in the historical period the Thracians did, clothed in animal skins, or on raw plants that the Earth, Gaea, caused to grow spontaneously. A tradition, which is perhaps Eleusinian, relates that the strength to stand upright came to men on the day that Demeter invented cereals. Previously, the unhappy creatures were condemned to move as babies and the majority of animals do: on all fours." Demeter and her Mysteries allowed humans for the first time quite literally to rise above the life of animals and to live in civilized communities.

On the other hand, as Detienne suggests, the very food which gives life to individuals and to communities also acts as a sort of death sentence in the absence of some further revelation. "The power over food borders on death, through the voracious beast enclosed in the belly. . . . But the belly that Demeter feeds is also the belly that begets and gives life by reproducing the human species." The universality of the Mysteries of Demeter, then, is not merely a universality of nationality, race, or gender; the Mysteries encompass the whole of human existence, from birth, nourishment, and death to rebirth to new life of an order previously and otherwise unavailable to men and women. "Eleusis was anyone's ground, external to the politico-religious space, toward which one

proceeded in pilgrimage from everywhere and nowhere. For here all differences between men were abolished: sex, status, ethnicity were no longer current." No man could make an exclusive claim to the immortality enjoyed by the gods; it was the gift of Demeter, her rituals and Mysteries freely given to humanity, which burst the ancient and previously inextricable bonds of death. With Demeter, mortality is no longer the inescapable common lot of mankind.

Our sources on Persephone give us a picture quite different from the image of wholeness and benevolent universality properly to be derived from her nurturing mother. As Kahn-Lyotard and Loraux point out, Homer in the Odyssey refers to Persephone by means of "ambiguous titles in which respect barely conceals dread, in which praise speaks the language of terror."

Persephone is termed "Noble" (agauē, 11.226, 635), "Terrible" (epainē, 10.491, 11.47; also Iliad 9.457), and "Pure" (hagnē, 11.386). The powerful daughter of Zeus (Odyssey 11.217) governs a realm "of pale ghosts, souls without memories, forever deprived of feeling." Odysseus was overcome with horror when he considered what Persephone might do to him now that he was in her kingdom (Odyssey 11.633-635):

. . . pale fear seized me, lest august Persephone might
send forth upon me from out the house of Hades the head of
the Gorgon, that awful monster.

Throughout Greek myth and literature, Persephone "remains powerful, august, and formidable," in stark contrast to the Homeric Hymn's picture of the daughter of Demeter as a helpless victim. In the Hymn, Persephone is Kore, the young girl, "and it is under this name that she is officially worshiped by many cities. . . . The myth tells the story of the abduction of the

young girl Persephone by Hades: the introduction of a queen into hell and, for the lord of the dead, the conquest of a wife. A major event in his dreary career as solitary despot, this abduction is the only myth in which Hades actively intervenes and perhaps also his only incursion into the land of the living. For Persephone, it means a separation from her mother, Demeter."

Persephone's alternation between dread mistress of Hades and ravished maiden leads, in the evocative phrase of Kahn-Lyotard and Loraux, to "the disturbing transparency" of Kore: "Persephone, standing by the side of Hades the Invisible, is the very ambiguity of brilliance in the depths of black light . . . : death in the form of a young girl reflects only itself. The Arrhetos Kore [unutterable maiden], she does not speak of herself, she does not see herself. She remains impenetrable."

DIONYSUS

Introduction

Dionysus was much more to the Greeks than simply the god of wine; his cult titles and epithets point first of all to a much wider association with vegetation and animal life. Dionysus was worshipped and commemorated, for example, as god of the tree (dendrites), of the winnowing fan (liknites), of flowers (anthios), as bringer of crops (karpios); he is addressed as bull horned and cow born; in art, Dionysus is portrayed in close association with lions, tigers, snakes, panthers, goats and fawns.

Dionysus, then, was associated with both the life-giving and the destructive sides of nature. He is the embodiment of the juices and fluids which engender and sustain life: sap in plants, blood in veins, semen as the source of new life. The god is also the personification of the power of the wine grape's blood, once spilled and transformed, to alter consciousness and to induce irrationality and violence. Both renewal and destruction are characteristic of the god's nature.

Dionysus is for the Greeks primarily the god of an emotional religion; he elevates worshippers into a state of madness or ecstasy in which the traditional gulf between Olympian god and mortal is obliterated. Among the Olympians, only Demeter shares with Dionysus the attribute of conferring, through ecstatic mysteries, salvation or immortality upon devotees; also like Demeter, Dionysus is rarely mentioned by Homer, indicating the limited attraction which the cults of these popular divinities had for Homer's audience of early Iron Age noblemen and warriors. Dionysus shares with Demeter's daughter Persephone a

cyclical existence which reflects the annual cycle of the vegetable world; he was regarded as sleeping, dead, or held prisoner in winter; in summer he was awake, alive, or free. At the Anthesteria or Festival of Flowers in Athens each spring, the new wine from the previous autumn's vintage was brought out of cellars and distributed. The wine was blessed in the presence of Dionysus; the wife of a leading citizen underwent a symbolic marriage to the god. At night, offerings of fruit were made to the dead. The significance of the rites seems clear: the Anthesteria celebrates the springtime arrival of the god, both as wine and in his anthropomorphic persona, at the crucial start of the growing season. The wine signifies past successful harvests; the sacred marriage (hieros gamos) is meant to fertilize the fields for the next growing season. The propitiation of the dead ensures the cooperation of the chthonic forces within the earth. On the more popular level, Dionysus regularly appears on painted pottery accompanied by subordinate divinities such as satyrs, silenoi, and other half-human, half-beast creatures which are usually drunk and in an ithyphallic state of sexual excitement.

As with all of the gods, the origins of Dionysus are obscure; Greek sources agree, though, on the god's late arrival from the east, Thrace being mentioned often by ancient and modern sources as a likely homeland. Rose (Handbook) concurs with the general consensus on Dionysus' foreign origins, but argues for Phrygia as a possible starting point. In any case, the appearance of the god's name on Linear B tablets indicates that he was already present in the Greek pantheon by the late Bronze Age. The first element of the god's name certainly refers to the sky god Dios (Zeus); the second may mean "child" or "son," but this is far from certain. Rose identifies Semele, the mother of Dionysus,

with Zemelo, the Phrygian earth-goddess; he sees parallels to the Greek story of the consumption of Semele by Zeus' lightning and the thrusting of the unborn Dionysus into the thigh of Zeus in Thracian, Mongolian, and even Native American myths.

Rose divides the adventures of Dionysus into two groups: tales of the rejection and persecution of the new god by unbelievers such as Lycurgus and Pentheus, and stories of the god's conquests of new lands. The unbelievers are punished horribly: Lycurgus undergoes blindness and death, Pentheus suffers dismemberment, and the daughters of Proitus are driven mad and destroy their own children. There are similar stories of unbelievers in Boeotia, Argos and Thebes; all of these myths describe madness and dismemberment. The god himself leads a revel of divine and human followers, including satyrs, silenoi, nymphs, and maenads. The maenads, women possessed by the god's divine madness, are thought to perform miracles, making fountains of milk or wine spring up from the ground; they have superhuman strength while inspired by the god and are able to tear goats, bulls, and human beings into pieces with their bare hands. Neither fire nor weapons will harm them. Maenads occasionally wear masks, reminding us that drama almost certainly has its origin in the cult of Dionysus.

Dionysus has chthonic or underworld associations and plays an important part in the Orphic cults. Orpheus was so skilled a musician that people, beasts, and trees followed him to listen; rivers ceased flowing in response to his music. His instrument was the lyre, Apollo's chosen vehicle. Wherever Orpheus went, he introduced the cult of Dionysus. Inconsolable after the death of his wife Eurydice, Orpheus lived a solitary life and shunned women. Thracian women, insulted by his neglect of them,

attacked Orpheus during a Dionysiac orgy and tore him to pieces. His head floated down the river Hebrus out to sea, eventually reaching the island of Lesbos, where there was later an oracle of Orpheus. Rose (Handbook) suggests that the dismemberment of Orpheus "may quite possibly have a germ of truth in it, the ritual tearing of an incarnation of Dionysus." Ferguson sees Orpheus as a doublet of Dionysus.

Implicit in the cult of Dionysus is a dualistic conception of the nature of humanity; Dionysiac myth and cult practice stress the earthly or mortal nature of the body, as opposed to the undying and divine character of the human soul. This idea is starkly opposed to the assumption, conveyed by the more typical Olympian cults, of a vast gulf between human mortality and the eternal blessedness of the gods: in what we might term Homeric and Hesiodic orthodoxy, the only fate possible for nearly all humans is the black oblivion of Hades. The gods are not only exempt from this fate, they may not even come into contact with death; the words of Artemis to her dying devotee Hippolytus in Euripides' *Bacchae* (1437-9) stress incompatibility of Olympian and human nature:

Farewell, I must not look upon the dead
My eye must not be polluted by the last
gasping for breath. I see you are near this.

Dionysus embodies the conjunction of human and divine in a single nature; though immortal, he emerges from the burnt ruin of the body of his mortal mother. After a second birth from the thigh of Zeus, he confers immortality on the abandoned and doomed Ariadne. In Orphic myth, Titans killed and ate Dionysus; a new Dionysus was born from his heart. Zeus destroyed the Titans with a thunderbolt. From the ashes of the earth-born Titans and the Olympian god whom they had consumed emerged

mankind. In Orphic thought, humans are Titanic, or earthly, in body; they are also Dionysiac, or divine, in soul. It is the proper goal of an Orphic initiate, then, to devote one's life to purifying himself of his Titanic element until he attains the divinity of Dionysus.

Dionysus also shares the attributes of the god of war; Teiresias in Euripides, Bacchae (302) says that Dionysus "has usurped even the functions of warlike Ares." In Plutarch's Life of Demetrius (2), the king celebrates his victory over Athens by transforming the ancient celebration in honor of Dionysus, the Dionysia, into a "Demetria." Diodorus Siculus calls Dionysus the first triumphator and thus the originator of the Roman triumphal procession (4.5.2); this brings Dionysus, the god who triumphs over opposition, into close association with Etruscan-Roman political and military traditions. Otto points out in Dionysus: Myth and Cult that the Greek term thriambos, or Dionysiac hymn, was used by the Greeks to express the Latin word triumphus. The culmination of the Roman triumph was the ceremonial crowning of the triumphator or victorious general in the presence of the image of Capitoline Jupiter, wearing not only clothing, but also the red face paint reminiscent of both Jupiter and of Dionysus. Pausanias refers to the Greek custom of painting the faces of images of Dionysus red at 2.2.6, 7.26.11, and 8.39.6.

I. Origins and Cult of Dionysus

The god's name is as enigmatic as his origin and nature; this may point to a non-Hellenic source. The name of the god seems clearly to contain the di- element which also appears in Zeus (genitive: Dios). It is certain that the Greeks understood the

name this way; Euripides, for example, refers to the god as "Dionysus, son of Zeus (Dios Dionysos), consummate god, most terrible, and yet most gentle, to mankind" (Bacchae 859-861). Burkert finds the remainder of the name "impenetrable" and almost certainly of foreign origin, as are the names Semele, the mother of Dionysus, and Bacchus, the alternate name for the god and title given a devotee. Likewise, thyrsus, the phallic staff used in Dionysiac worship, thriambos, and dithyrambos, the cult hymn, are all clearly non-Greek words. As we have seen, the Greeks linked Dionysus with Thrace, Phrygia, Lydia, and Anatolia.

Archaeological and epigraphic evidence points to the god's presence in Greek lands from remote antiquity. Ferguson cites a sanctuary of Dionysus on Keos, identifying it as one of the oldest sanctuaries in which continuity of worship can be traced from the Mycenaean period. It dates from the 15th century BC and was, of course, rebuilt and remodelled many times. Rose (Religion), claims that the cult of Dionysus entered Greece and was well established by about the seventh century BC, even gaining a place at the Apollo sanctuary at Delphi where the new god was worshipped in torchlight revels on Mt. Parnassus.

As an example of the historical development of the cult of Dionysus, Ferguson describes the early introduction of the god into the island of Thasos, probably about 680 BC. The main sanctuary of the god contains two altars: one dates to the sixth century BC, the other to the fifth or fourth. The impressive head of the main cult statue has been discovered. There was a theater associated with the sanctuary and a frieze showing Dionysus with a panther has been found. The god was worshipped here at an Anthesteria or festival of flowers in

January-February, a Dionysia in March-April, and a Choreia in May-June. Worship of Dionysus was continuous here through the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

The birth of the god from the body of Zeus, supposedly in Thebes, involves a bizarre variation on Athena's birth from her father's head. Zeus appeared to his lover Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, king of Thebes, in his full glory. The unfortunate woman, pregnant with the child of Zeus, was consumed by the god's thunderbolts. Zeus rescued the child, sewing it into his own thigh to complete its period of gestation. Dionysus was born a second time from the male womb of Zeus' thigh. Guthrie points out that by the fifth century Thebes was regarded as the center of the Dionysiac cult in Greece. Thracian and Phrygian origins were commonly asserted for the god as well.

From the sixth century on, the advent of Dionysus was celebrated with a procession in which a ship was either carried by men or rolled on wheels. The ship employed in these rites commemorates the first miracles, thaumata erga in the Homeric Hymn to Dionysus (34), of the young god, with which he avenged himself on pirates who, thinking him a prince who could be held for ransom, had attempted to kidnap him. The words of the Hymn convey the paradoxical nature of the god who embodies at once the fruitful abundance and the merciless savagery of nature (35-53):

First of all sweet, fragrant wine ran streaming throughout all the black ship and a heavenly smell arose, so that all the seamen were seized with amazement when they saw it. And all at once a vine spread out both ways along the top of the sail with many clusters hanging down from it, and a dark ivy-plant twined about the mast, blossoming with flowers, and with rich berries growing on it; and all the thole-pins were covered with garlands. When the pirates

saw all this, then at last they bade the helmsman to put the ship to land. But the god changed into a dreadful lion there on the ship, in the bows, and roared loudly: amidships also he showed his wonders and created a shaggy bear which stood up ravening, while on the forepeak was the lion glaring fiercely with scowling brows. And so the sailors fled into the stern and crowded bemused about the right-minded helmsman, until suddenly the lion sprang upon the master and seized him; and when the sailors saw it they leapt out overboard one and all into the bright sea, escaping from a miserable fate, and were changed into dolphins.

The aftermath of this violent and disturbing episode is interpreted in what Burkert refers to as the "unforgettable harmony" of the well-known wine cup, painted by Exekias, showing the serene god reclining in the ship. The vine with its grapes has grown up the mast and along the yard; dolphins, the erstwhile pirates, accompany the vessel in its progress.

Guthrie, in The Greeks and Their Gods, discusses the manifold nature of Dionysus. He argues that it is useless to try to account for the god in one single functional type, such as that of the vegetation-god. Always, he feels, there is something more, "strange, unique elements" in the myths and cult of Dionysus which defy simple explanations. The worship of Dionysus is filled with "variety and contradictions"; the god offers "ecstasy and spiritual union and wild intoxication." Dionysus is addressed as the raving god, but he offers peace and exaltation. Open sexuality is a prominent feature of his orgia. Guthrie is unable to explain how and when this "wild orgiastic cult of Asia" gained acceptance in Greece, alleged to be the homeland of "the intelligible, determinate, mensurable, as opposed to the fantastic, vague, and shapeless."

The nature of Dionysus contains an implicit challenge to mainstream Olympian assumptions about the nature of the human soul and the relationship between humans and divinities. The cult of Dionysus was Hellenized in various ways. The Great Dionysia, where tragedies were performed and sacrifices were offered to the god before the whole city in the traditional manner, had little in common with frenzied nocturnal revels described in myth. Thucydides describes a more archaic Dionysia, celebrated in the spring month of Anthesterion at the sanctuary of Dionysus in the Marshes, which had connections with the spirits of the dead. It was at this more archaic celebration that the god married the wife of the King-Archon, thus recapitulating the primordial sacred marriage. Rural Dionysia, such as the one celebrated by Dicaeopolis in the *Archarnians* of Aristophanes, were apparently occasions for public drinking and general merrymaking. Guthrie suggests that the Greek states accepted the worship of Dionysus only after "emptying this worship of its most characteristic content"; that is, at Athens at least, much of the originally dangerous and frenzied quality of Dionysiac worship was eliminated or minimized. Fertility worship, the cult of the souls of the dead, and rites to ensure survival beyond the grave were a side of religion which had been driven underground and out of aristocratic literature by the cultural predominance of the Homeric gods. These rites, though, Guthrie argues, remained close to people's hearts. Guthrie suggests that "there can scarcely have been a break in this less respectable, more fearful side of the worship from before the days of Euripides and Sophocles down to the time when Bacchic secret societies were giving offense to the authorities of Rome, and had to be suppressed by the Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus in 187 BC."

Dionysiac worship was the chief medium of transmission of the unorthodox, non-Homeric teaching that the aim of religious life was not to emphasize the gulf between mortal and immortal, but to attempt to close the gap between human and divine, perhaps even by becoming immortal and hence a god oneself. Maenadism, madness, and the eating of raw flesh play a central role in Dionysiac worship. As recorded in myth and portrayed in Greek art, it is what Detienne terms "a feminine phenomenon, the cultivation of madness in which women play a central part." It is nearly always married women who preside over private Dionysiac worship. The eating of raw flesh is an explicit rejection of the elaborate ritual which in normally structured society accompanied meat eating: prayer, sacrifice, and finally the distribution of the sacrificial animal's carcass to its divine and human recipients. Detienne argues that tearing apart the body of a wild animal which has been captured after a violent pursuit, and indiscriminately chewing its raw flesh instead of eating only certain parts, is "brutally to throw back the barriers erected between the gods, beasts, and men by the politico-religious system." Devotees of Dionysus turn into virtual beasts, escaping from structured human civilization into the timeless and irrational world of animals. Detienne describes an evocative custom in Miletus. In the third century BC, on the appropriate day, the priestess of Dionysus "put a mouthful of raw meat (omophagion) in the sacred basket. This was not a substitute for any regular animal sacrifice but a discrete reminder of the great hunts for fresh meat that Dionysus led relentlessly over mountains and valleys."

Burkert suggests that the relations of Dionysus with other gods are as problematic and contradictory as his relations with his worshippers. "Dionysus eludes definition and for this very

reason his relations to the other Olympian gods are ambivalent and indeed paradoxical: proximity becomes the secret of the mysteries, antithesis turns into identity. Thus Dionysus may belong with Demeter as the fruit of the tree with the fruit of the field, as wine with bread; but behind the facts of nature lurks the dark myth of Persephone's dismembered child. With Hermes, the crosser of boundaries, Dionysus enjoys friendly relations; it was Hermes who took him as a newborn child to the nymphs at Nysa; the Praxiteles statue from Olympia, showing Hermes carrying the child Dionysus, is one of the most widely known works of Greek art." Sacrifices to Hermes are made at the Anthesteria; Dionysus sometimes appears as a herm, and the lines separating the two figures become fluid. Likewise there are parallels between the cults of Dionysus and Artemis: both have retinues of ecstatic dancers, mature women for Dionysus and young virgins for Artemis; masks and phallic costumes are found in the celebrations in honor of each. Dionysus' relationship with Hera is always uneasy and sometimes explosive. The queen of the Olympians directs at Dionysus and his mother all the hatred which she generally musters against the mistresses of Zeus and their offspring. Hera persecutes Dionysus "with all the hatred of a stepmother," luring Semele to her death, and destroying Ino through madness, along with her children and her husband. Hera brings madness on Dionysus himself, but, Burkert concludes, "this hostility betrays a curious intimacy: to send madness is the peculiar domain of the frenzied god himself. Dionysus and Hera are linked in worship and myth on Lesbos and at Tiryns, Argos, and Elis. Far from excluding each other, the Hera and Dionysus cults define each other."

Most prominent in Burkert's account of the god's dealing with other Olympians is the notorious antithesis between Dionysus and

Apollo: "Ever since Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed this as the key to both the intellectual history of Greece and the essence of art—dream versus intoxication, form and definition versus dissolution and destruction—these symbols have taken on a significance and life of their own and have thus become almost independent of their origin in Greek religion." Apollo and Dionysus were often set in opposition to each other in Greek art. Several black-figure vases place Apollo on one side and Dionysus on the other. The opposition is also felt in music. The paeon of Apollo and the dithyrambos of Dionysus were felt to be "incompatible in harmony and rhythm and also in ethos; clarity is opposed to drunkenness." Delphi, however, is the most important place where Apollo and Dionysus counterbalance and complement one another. From Aeschylus onwards, the tragedies presided over by Dionysus were performed at Delphi. A fourth century vase painting shows Dionysus and Apollo joining hands in the Delphic sanctuary. Plutarch (On the "E" at Delphi 389c) says that the four winter months at Delphi belong to Dionysus and that the summer months are Apollo's. The fourth-century temple displays Apollo with the Muses on the east pediment, and Dionysus on the west. The tomb of Dionysus could be seen in the temple of Apollo at Delphi, beside the prophetic tripod and the Omphalos, or navel stone, marking the center of the earth. Dionysus does in fact seem to be the dark, chthonic counterpart to the bright, celestial Apollo. From the standpoint of the history of religion, Burkert concludes, "this intertwining of the two gods is generally attributed to an enactment of the Delphic priesthood which incorporated and legalized the Dionysian movement in the Archaic Age and at the same time confined it with limits." Plutarch, writing in the second century AD, says that Delphi belonged to Dionysus as much as it did to Apollo (Moralia 388E).

II. The Dionysiac Festivals

Dionysus is the god who, as Detienne points out, offers to humanity the most precious gift of all, the possibility of establishing "intimate communication with the sacred by means of enthusiasm and possession." It is the contradictory nature of the god as conveyed by the myth of his birth and deeds which allows him to bridge for humans the gulf between mortal and Olympian. He embodies "identity and otherness, presence and absence, imagination and reality, the absolute and nothingness, power and fragility, life and death, eternity and transition." Dionysus is, Detienne continues, "the point where the sacred energy in its absolute density enters into the earth: everywhere he goes, plants proliferate and are resplendent, every vital force is carried to its greatest intensity, ferocious animals bow down, dead wood puts forth new growth, marble is undermined by the growth of ivy, hearts are inflamed." The vital power of the god is manifested, in myth and in historical reality, at his great festivals.

In myth, a Dionysiac revel took place at night (cf. Euripides, Bacchae 485-486: "Do you hold your rites by day or night?" "Mostly by night. The darkness is well suited to devotion."); normal worship of the Olympians took place in the day. Participation was not confined to women, but, as Guthrie points out, they were the most frequent and characteristic worshippers. Dionysus offered women a sense of utter freedom from their normally constrained and subordinate position in ancient society. Wearing deerskin and carrying the phallic thyrsus, a

long rod tipped with leaves or a pine cone, they seek the wildest parts of the mountains, possessed by the god and oblivious of their social responsibilities. In vase paintings, many of these maenads carry snakes, either in their hands or twisted into their hair. Rhythmic and exciting music of flute and drum are an important part of the sense of release and freedom. Nothing is lacking, Guthrie observes, "which can serve to increase the sense of exaltation and of shedding the self of everyday existence; to the darkness, the music, and the rhythmic dance are added the smoky light of torches and no doubt the god's especial gift of wine." Sexual license may be an accompaniment to the general sense of release from social constraints; Teiresias (Bacchae 314-315) says, "Dionysus does not compel a woman to be chaste." All of these elements produce the final state of what the Greeks called ekstasis ("standing outside oneself") and enthusiasm ("possession by the god") in which devotees of Dionysus saw visions and performed impossible feats. The ground might seem to flow with milk, wine, and honey. With the superhuman strength of momentary insanity, they attack animals, tearing them limb from limb for what Euripides calls the delight of raw flesh (Bacchae 139).

It is important to distinguish Dionysiac revels in myth from festivals of the god in historical times. As we have seen, Dionysus was eventually "tamed" by the polis of the Archaic and Classical periods; the rites of the god were brought into the regular sequence of observances of the Greek states and became less hysterical and frenzied. There were four types of Dionysiac festival: the Anthesteria, a wine-drinking celebration; the Agrionia, a festival of "dissolution and inversion, with a women's uprising, madness and cannibalistic fantasies"; the rustic Dionysia characterized by goat

sacrifices; and finally, the Great Dionysia, which were introduced into Athens in the sixth century. Intoxication seems to have been a common element of all. There is also evidence for festivals celebrated by small private groups or colleges, often on alternate years, and for the early development of secret mystery cults.

The Anthesteria occurred in the middle of the spring month of Anthesterion; both names refer to the blossoming of nature at the end of winter. This festival was also referred to in Athens as the Older Dionysia, as opposed to the Great Dionysia which, as noted above, dates only from the sixth century BC. The Anthesteria extended over three days named respectively Pithoigia (the "opening of jars" of new wine), Choes ("the pitcher"), and Chytroi ("the cooking pots"); the occasion of the festival was the ceremonial opening of wine from the previous fall's vintage. The fourth-century Attic historian Phanodemos describes the festival's beginning:

At the sanctuary of Dionysus en limnais [in the marshes] the Athenians used to mix the wine for the god from the jars which they transported along there and then taste it themselves . . . Delighted with the mixture, they celebrated Dionysus with songs, danced and invoked him as the Fair-flowering, the Dithyrambos, the Reveller and the Stormer.

The second day was devoted to the consumption of large amounts of the new wine in a drinking contest, but it was also an uncanny day: measures were taken to ward off ghosts, the sanctuaries of the gods were closed, and no business was transacted. Ancient accounts disagree whether the city was visited by the spirits of the Athenians' ancestors or of the aboriginal inhabitants of Attica. Gould describes the peculiar customs which attended the intense and ritualized drinking of

this day: "Each participant did not merely drink from his own drinking-cup, as at any other drinking party, but his wine was mixed with water also in a personal jug which he took with him to the festival, and, when it was over, dedicated to the god. There was no common mixing bowl. Moreover it was of the essence of the ritual that all participants began to drink simultaneously, when a trumpet sounded, and that they drank in silence: there was a myth to explain why this was so and why each man had his own jug. Once, when the Athenians were celebrating the Anthesteria, Orestes came to Athens still polluted by killing his mother; the Athenian king, rather than break the rules of hospitality by sending him away or risk contamination by incorporating him in the ritual of the community, devised the cordon sanitaire of separate vessels and silence. This is one part of the darker side of the day called 'Jugs.' For the rest, to all appearances, it was a day of festivity, of often riotous drinking." In the evening, a sacred marriage was celebrated by torchlight between the wife of the King Archon and the god, who was brought in on the wheeled boat which is surely a reference to his foreign origin. The god's ritual marriage to a distinguished Athenian lady is surely sympathetic magic and must refer to the god's gift of fertility to the community. Women celebrants danced before an extremely primitive representation of Dionysus as a mask hung on an upright pole or column.

The third day, the day of cooking pots, was characterized by the boiling together of different types of grain in a pot along with honey. This is, Burkert observes, the most primitive meal of archaic farmers, older than the practice of milling flour and baking bread. The precise meaning of this extremely ancient observance is difficult to define with precision; however, we

may suggest with some confidence that it celebrates the god's agricultural gifts; both the nature of the dish of boiled grain and the method of its preparation point to an extremely ancient rite, perhaps having its origin in remote, possibly Neolithic, antiquity. Gould describes this day as one of "dark, ominous rituals, apotropaic rituals designed to keep evil at bay and to expel it." There is an obvious contradiction between the celebration of the renewed fertility of the earth and the dread of its darker powers; chthonic rites, though, often express the ambiguous nature of the earth which is simultaneously the giver of life and receiver of the dead. At the end of the rites, the ghosts deemed to have been present were dismissed with the shout, "Depart, spirits, it is no longer Anthesteria!"

The other Athenian festival in honor of Dionysus, the Great or City Dionysia, was second in importance in Athens only to the Panathenaea. Cartledge furnishes us with a detailed and extremely informative account of the content and organization of this festival, along with a discussion of the place of tragedy as part of these rites. Without entering deeply into the extremely complex and controversial discussion of the origins of tragedy, it will be sufficient to note that there is a general consensus among scholars that drama developed out of choral music performed at or connected with rites in honor of Dionysus. Cartledge argues that plays were added to an original cult of Dionysus Eleuthereus (from Eleutherai, a village on Attica's northern border), which consisted in "the bringing of his statue from outside Athens to his sanctuary at the foot of the Acropolis, to the solemn sacrifice, and the ensuing revel." The origins of tragedy are associated with the sixth century dictatorship of Pisistratus and the dim figure of the innovative dramatist Thespis; the democratic Athenian state took over the

institution and enlarged it. After a grand procession of citizens and resident aliens, which led the god back to the city and to his temple from Eleutherai (to which his image had previously been removed), there was a great sacrifice of cattle and a communal meal of their meat, accompanied by great quantities of wine. On the next day, after ceremonies which included libations, prayers, and a military parade, the tragedies began. The plays continued for four days, three days of tragedies plus satyr-plays, the fourth for comedies. Detienne suggests that Dionysus was particularly suited to be the presiding deity at the dramatic evocations of myths, gods, and heroes in the Theater of Dionysus: "around his altar, in the center of the orchestra, the dramatic action unfolded; under the supervision of his priest the myths became incarnate, thanks to the genius of the tragic and comic poets who were themselves devotees, inspired by the god. Dionysus thus aroused for the city the resurrection of the gods and heroes when he made the masks, the favorite symbols of this master of appearances and apparitions, move and speak, inspiring in the spectator the shudder of sacred horror and the delirium of the liberating laugh." Lenaia ("having to do with the wine press or wine vat") preceded the Great Dionysia and is very poorly understood; Dionysus was invoked by a chorus of female Lenai or maenads. At Athens, Lenaia was yet another springtime rite; there were a procession, games, and the performance of comedies, over all of which a priest from Eleusis officiated.

Like Anthesteria, Agrionia ("wildness," "savagery") was celebrated in many Greek cities, also in the spring. Little is known of this festival in Athens; in Boeotia, however, a group of women were deemed for the occasion to be the daughters of Minyas, who in a fit of madness had dismembered the child of one

of their number. These women were tormented by a priest of Dionysus. As Burkert describes the Agrionia, the god appears at this festival "savagely and dangerously." In the myth, the women are driven mad by the god after refusing to participate in his dances. The madness results in one of the daughters' tearing her own son to pieces. In Tenedos, Burkert adds, Dionysus was called anthroporraistes, "man-destroyer"; on Lesbos he is described as omestes, the eater of raw flesh. At Argos the Agrionia was clearly a festival of the dead as well as of Dionysus; the two cults, Otto claims, were so closely related that they amounted to a single common observance.

III. The Manifest God

Presence and accessibility to humans are the main characteristics which distinguish Dionysus from the other Olympians; he is immediately and objectively present in wine, music, and frenzied dancing. Worshipers take the god into themselves in celebrating his rites; the immediacy of the god's presence is felt by his followers to be undeniable and overwhelming. The unorthodox nature of the god and his rites may explain the presence in his myths of stories of persecution connected with the arrival of the Dionysiac cult in various parts of Greece. These myths have in common, as Guthrie observes, the theme of the god's vengeance on those who reject him; most often this takes the form of madness inflicted upon women. Possessed by the god, his now frenzied followers dismember a victim, either the king who has been the god's opponent, or, when the women themselves have been guilty, one of their own children. The Pentheus story contains both motifs; the king who has attempted to forbid the rites of Dionysus is

killed by his own mother. Otto's account of the immediacy of Dionysiac madness is particularly evocative: "His spirit glows in inebriating drink, which was called the blood of the earth. Primal ecstasy, frenzy, the dissolution of consciousness in the infinite, overcome his devotees like a storm, and the treasures of the earth are laid open to their rapture. About Dionysus too the dead throng, and they attend his coming in the Spring, when he brings the flowers. Love and unrestrained frenzy, cold shudders and happiness, join hands in his rout; in him all primeval traits of the earth-deity are enhanced, beyond measure and common sense."

Other "resistance-myths" include the madness of the daughters of Proetus, king of Argos (Apollodorus 2.2.2 and 3.5.2; cf. Herodotus 9.34), and the story of the daughters of Minyas at Orchomenus who resisted the ecstasy offered by the god, saw visions sent by the vengeful Dionysus and, in their madness tore a child to pieces (Ovid, Metamorphoses 4.9ff.).

The experience of Dionysus, then, goes far beyond the drunkenness with which he is commonly associated; Burkert suggests that Dionysiac frenzy may be entirely independent of wine and a spiritual end in itself. Possession is the outward sign that the worshipper and the god have become one; the devotee and the god have become indistinguishable from one another. Both are now called Bacchus. Initiation is another means whereby worshippers gained intimate communion with the god. Detienne points out that in more than 150 cities of Asia Minor and the Aegean islands, Dionysus was worshipped as "Bakcheios," the god of the bacchanals or revels. Possession was the desired end of Dionysiac worship and was not attainable by all; as Plato says (Phaedo 69C), "Many are those who carry

thyrsos; few are the Bacchantes." A Dionysiac community of worship fits almost exactly the description offered by the great sociologist Max Weber of a charismatic group as one which rejects the norms and lines of authority of day-to-day organized social life. Detienne describes a Dionysiac society as "an individual allegiance that rejects kinship or feudal ties and, in the fluid form of the private thiasos, creates associations and communities independent of authority and outside the control of the state. Whether he resides in the center of town or camps on its outskirts, Dionysus is always the lord of dementia and of the ability to get outside oneself."

Since ancient painted pottery was used mainly for storing, serving, or drinking wine, representations of Dionysus and his worshippers are common topics of vase painting; on the other hand, the disproportionate representation of Dionysiac scenes is almost certainly related to the popularity of his cult. Burkert points out that the popularity of the god on Attic vases from the sixth century on corresponds to the development in Athens of the Dionysiac festivals, including tragedy and the satyr play. The god's presence is established by the thyrsus, a bundle of ivy leaves or a pine cone fastened to the end of a thin pole; his retinue consists of maenads, always clothed, and male satyrs usually bearing animal ears and horses' tails, and having erect phalloi.

Darmon sheds light on the odd fact that Dionysiac vase paintings portray donkeys with remarkable frequency. The donkey is almost always present in Dionysian scenes, particularly as part of the processions led by the god and his devotees. The animal is frequently shown carrying Silenus or Dionysus, and it is almost always ithyphallic, or sexually aroused. Darmon cites myths

which enumerate the various services which the donkey performed for Dionysus. Donkeys graze moderately in vineyards, unlike goats which devour everything. This taught men how vines should be trimmed, thus helping them to take better advantage of this gift of the god (Pausanias 2.38.3):

By nibbling down the shoots of a vine the donkey caused a more plenteous crop of grapes in the future, and for this reason they have carved an ass on a rock, because he taught the pruning of vines.

A donkey carried the god to Dodona, in exchange for which service Dionysus transformed him into a star and gave him the power of speech (Hyginus, Poetica Astronomica 2.23). Darmon argues that the donkey is also a symbol of the worshipper who has been, or is being, initiated: "coarse, lewd, lazy, stubborn, ridiculous, but loyal, hardened to work, and obstinate, the donkey ends up, through the grace of the god, exchanging his dreadful braying for a harmonious voice, just as the initiate is freed from bestiality and ignorance through a mystical operation." The same symbolism is found elsewhere, as in Apuleius' Golden Ass, in which the hero, trapped in a donkey's form, is redeemed and restored to his humanity by the intervention of the goddess Isis. Much later, and perhaps employing a similar metaphor, the ascetic mystic St. Francis of Assisi habitually referred to his body as "Brother Donkey," the recalcitrant beast temporarily charged with carrying the saint's soul about. Darmon concludes that the donkey in a Dionysiac context "seems to have been a comic and optimistic symbol of man himself, full of animal clumsiness but also of good will, and promised, in spite of everything, a happy end."

In painting and sculpture, the god may be represented by a mask hung on a column and dressed, almost like a scarecrow. Otto

(Dionysus: Myth and Cult) comments in detail on the role of the mask in Dionysiac art. The god was present as a mask at the ceremony of the mixing of the wine, which was performed by the women attendants, probably on the day of the Choes (see Section II, above). "There was no column made of stone, no primitively crude carved image to bear witness to his sacred presence, but just the external flat surface of a face, apparently suited for nothing else except to be worn by a living face as a disguise." In other words, the Dionysiac devotee could, by donning the mask, virtually become the god, at least for a time; once again, the theme of bridging the gulf between god and human, alien to the cult of other Olympians, appears to be an essential part of Dionysiac worship. Dionysus is, Otto claims, the mask god. In Methymna on Lesbos an olivewood mask of Dionysus, supposed to have been pulled out of the sea by fishermen, was worshipped (Pausanias 10.19.2). There were sacred masks of Dionysus made out of the wood of grape vines and fig trees on Naxos, and perhaps also in Athens. Some Dionysiac masks were colossal stone objects, much larger than life size, which cannot possibly have been intended for wear. The mask, Otto concludes, expresses the exciting immediacy with which Dionysus presents himself to his worshippers, in contrast to the remote aloofness of the other Olympians; it represents the "miracle of breathtaking, unavoidable presence" of the god. Using the frontal mask shown on the François vase as his chief example, Otto claims that "Dionysus was presented in the mask because he was known as the god of confrontations. It is the god of the most immediate presence who looks at us so penetratingly from the vase painting. Because it is his nature to appear suddenly and with overwhelming might before mankind, the mask serves as his symbol and his incarnation in cult." The theophany of the mask "thrusts Dionysus violently and unavoidably into the here and

now—and sweeps him away at the same time into the inexpressible distance. The final secrets of existence and non-existence transfix mankind with monstrous eyes.” Detienne also comments on the mask of Dionysus on the François vase, observing that all the other gods are shown in profile and only Dionysus faces with staring eyes toward the observer.

Union with the god through initiation into his mysteries is known to us mainly from post-Classical sources. Ferguson discusses the state of our knowledge of Dionysiac mystery cults, observing that we are best informed about the Hellenistic and Roman periods. He cites the example of the introduction of the mysteries of Dionysus at Magnesia-on-the-Maeander, probably in the third century BC. A tree split by a storm miraculously revealed an image of the god. The Delphic oracle told the people to build a temple to Dionysus, to institute a priesthood, to import Maenads, and to form thiasoi or companies of worshippers. Ferguson also cites evidence for Dionysiac societies or cults in Miletus, Seleucia on Calycadnus, Pergamum, Lerna, Panamara in Caria, and Thebes. Lists of officials of these mysteries survive; they include priest, deputy priest, steward, scribe, oxherd, chorus-master, silenus, hierophant, garland-bearer, basket-bearer, milk-bearer, archmystic, and many others. As usual, of course, the mysteries themselves are not recorded. We do know, however, that initiation was generally a form of local worship governed by local rules of secrecy. These local rites differed from one another strongly. Detienne cites a cult near Mantinea, in Arcadia, where “honey companions” (meliastai) worshipped Dionysus at a “Well of the Meliastai”, near a shrine of “Black Aphrodite” (Pausanias 8.6.4). At Bryseai, on the slopes of Mount Taigetos in Laconia, women tended a statue of Dionysus in an open-air sanctuary,

performing sacrifices in the greatest secrecy (Pausanias 3.20.3). Males were also excluded from Dionysiac worship on Lesbos and at Aigai. Ferguson suggests that the "privilege of experiencing a private, face-to-face encounter with Dionysus or of being truly possessed by him is restricted to women."

Despite our lack of specific information about the theology imparted to initiates, we are relatively well supplied with pictorial representations of mysteries. Ferguson describes what is most likely a scene of Dionysiac initiation from a sarcophagus in the Villa Medici. A temple stands in the background; in the center is a nude woman holding a garland, her dress fallen about her knees. There is a basket in front of her. To her right is a figure, possibly a woman, veiled head to foot; she is perhaps the initiate. She is guided by a man with a thyrsos. In the foreground is a fallen basket of fruit. Behind the figures, a veiled man carries a basket containing the covered phallus often to be seen in Dionysiac representations. The sarcophagus also depicts Dionysus finding Ariadne. Ferguson suggests that the mystery has to do with fertility, sexuality, fruit, and wine. The power of Dionysiac life over death is implied by the reference to the god's raising Ariadne, left to die by Theseus, to new life and immortality.

The cycle of Dionysiac paintings at the Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii, is the best known and most fascinating of surviving visual records of Dionysiac worship. A frieze of paintings of great beauty stand on a bright red background. The figures, some human and some divine, seem to be enacting the drama of an initiation. There are, for example, a dancing Bacchant, an old Silenus, a dancing faun, a figure thought to be the initiate, and Ariadne reclining in the arms of Dionysus. Although the

paintings have been interpreted in a wide variety of ways, it seems clear that they refer in some manner to the process of initiation into the god's company of devotees. An immobile and impassive woman who sits and watches is perhaps the lady of the house (all the human figures are female) and perhaps the chief officer of the Dionysiac group which used this room as an initiation hall. It is difficult to study this cycle of paintings without reaching the conclusion that they are meant to convey a profound religious message.

In Euripides' Bacchae, the leader of the orgiastic cult, known by the spectators to be Dionysus himself, claims to have received the secrets of initiation from the god and promises to pass them on; however, it is not possible to admit an uninitiate to the secret knowledge the god's rites (471). Paradoxically, one may not even be told the benefits of initiation without first having been initiated (472-473). Nothing at all may be told to a person who does not first humble himself and believe. The mysteries convey blessings comparable to those enjoyed by initiates into the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter: "Blessed, blessed are those who know the mysteries of the god" (73). Plato speaks of "the superiority of heaven-sent madness over man-made sanity" (Phaedrus 244D-E). It may be observed, he claims, that "grievous maladies and afflictions" lead to madness which in turn engenders prophecy and the revelation of means of escape. "Thus did madness secure, for him that was maddened aright and possessed, deliverance from his troubles." Dionysus is the master of being "maddened aright." The god's initiations (teletai) bring about purifications (katharmoi) and final release from afflictions. The only hope of freedom, then, is surrender to the god's madness.

The relationship between the blessings and dangers of direct knowledge of Dionysus is convoluted and paradoxical. Initiation or admission to his mysteries is accomplished through raving, baccheia, through which the initiate is turned into a bacchos. This state of frenzy, Burkert observes, is also a state of blessedness, expressed in the miracles described by the messenger who reports the doings of Euripides' Bacchae (677ff.): earth is transformed into a paradise; milk, wine, and honey spring from the ground; maenads offer their breasts to a fawn. Inextricably bound up with this beatific vision is the murderous savagery with which the Bacchae become irresistible hunters of men and beasts, and eaters of raw flesh. What Burkert terms "an atavistic spring of vital energy" bursts through the delicate structure of civilized life, offering release from what Freud called "civilization and its discontents." The conflict between bureaucratic government on the one hand and the Dionysiac release offered by divine madness may be seen best in Roman attitudes to the god's mysteries. On the one hand, the Senate in 186 BC suppressed the ecstatic worship of Dionysus with what Livy describes as extreme brutality (39.819). Participants in this "pestilential evil" were subjected to mass arrests, imprisonment, and execution. On the other hand, the magnificent paintings of the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, described above, are evidence of the continuing and immediate attractions of Dionysiac initiation: liberation from the pressures of everyday life, communion with the god, and hope of a blessed afterlife. The most graphic testimony of the secret benefits of initiation in the world beyond the grave is recorded on gold leaf from Hipponium (modern Vibo Valentia) on the Tyrrhennian coast of Calabria in Southern Italy. Hipponium was most likely founded in the seventh or sixth century BC; the text in question can be dated by archaeological context to about 400 BC:

In the house of Hades there is a spring to the right, by it stands a white cypress; here the souls, descending, are cooled. Do not approach this spring! Further on you will find cool water flowing from the lake of recollection. Guardians stand over it who will ask you in their sensible mind why you are wandering through the darkness of corruptible Hades. Answer: "I am a son of the earth and of the starry sky; but I am desiccated with thirst and am perishing: therefore give me quickly cool water flowing from the lake of recollection." And then the subjects of the Chthonian King will have pity and will give you to drink from the lake of recollection . . . And indeed you are going a long, sacred way which also other mystai and bacchoi gloriously walk.

Mystai and bacchoi, then, tread a holy road to eternal blessedness. Pindar (fr. 131a) says, "Blessed are they all by the part they have in the initiations that release from affliction".

In Dionysus: Myth and Cult, Otto describes Dionysus as a "true god," superior to a mere vegetation divinity with an annual cycle of birth and death. Otto sees meaning in Dionysus and his mysteries far beyond the idea of the growth of plants. The primordial life force which is revealed in Dionysus belongs to "a much more profound level of Being." For Otto, Dionysus represents a paradoxical union of life and death; "his spirit reveals itself from out of the immeasurable depths where life and death are intertwined. That is why the myth also has him die. . . With him appears the unfathomable mystery of life and death cemented together into a single entity. His victories become defeats, and from radiant heights a god plunges down into the horrors of destruction. But it is just because of this that the earth also brings forth its most precious fruits through him and for him."

IV. Dionysus, Ariadne, and Orpheus: Death and Resurrection

Dionysus' function as god of wine and madness is strongly linked to his role of savior and benefactor. Homer calls Dionysus the "joy of mortals" (Iliad 14.325) and Hesiod (Works and Days 614) refers to the god as the "giver of much joy." Dionysus gives humans the precious gift of wine. Filled with wine "suffering mankind forgets its grief; from it comes sleep; with it oblivion of the troubles of the day. There is no other medicine for misery" (Bacchae 280-282). Pindar observes that "the soul grows great, overcome by the arrow of the vine" (fr. 124b).

Nevertheless, the myths concerning the discovery of wine have a dark and ominous quality. Icarius, a peasant in Attica to whom Dionysus first revealed the arts of planting vines and pressing wine, was slain by other peasants who, not understanding that they were drunk, believed that he had poisoned them. After much searching, his daughter Erigone found her father's body in a fountain and hanged herself in despair. The death of a father and what Burkert calls maiden sacrifice "cast their shadows over the drinking of wine; this tale belongs to the Anthesteria festival. Perhaps in secret the death of the god himself was spoken of much more directly; the association of wine and blood, with wine being described as the blood of the vine, is ancient and widespread."

Otto (Homeric Gods) likewise recognizes the paradoxical situation of Dionysus: nearly excluded from Homeric religion, he is enormously popular as a result of the earthly and divine delights which he promises. Dionysus "lifts man beyond himself in holy ecstasy."

The god operates as savior most clearly in the story of the salvation and apotheosis of Ariadne. The Minoan princess Ariadne was married to the god after being abandoned by Theseus on an island variously identified as Naxos or Dia. Ferguson points out that she was portrayed on coins of Knossos. Homer and Plutarch refer to a sacred dance associated with her at the former Minoan city (Iliad 18.590-606; Plutarch, Theseus 21). Rose (Handbook) suggests that Ariadne was originally a fertility goddess. It is in any case quite clear that within the context of Dionysiac worship she comes to personify the god's salvational power. By her marriage to Dionysus, Ariadne was raised to immortality; the myth seems to mean that by establishing a personal and direct relationship with the god, worshippers may attain divinity likewise. Dionysus, at the head of a Bacchic revel, appears to Ariadne and rescues her from the agony of abandonment. The god, Burkert suggests, embodies "the conjunction of superabundant life and destruction." Dionysiac mysteries, he claims "promise the path to a blessed afterlife."

This concept of the nature of the god, so incompatible with the distance between mortal and immortal stressed in the mainstream Olympian cults, is implicit in the mysteries of Dionysus and in the theology of post-Classical Orphic groups. Detienne addresses the implicitly revolutionary nature of Dionysiac worship, observing that Dionysus occupies a central position in Greek mysticism for two reasons: first, because of the popularity of his own mysteries; second, through the major role he plays in Orphic myth. As we have seen, from the fourth century BC on, the story of the killing and eating of Dionysus by the Titans explained the state of humanity, partly Titan and partly Dionysian. Like the mysteries of Dionysus, Orphism is a

dissident or revolutionary religious movement that challenges the Homeric and Hesiod orthodoxy founded upon the distance that separates men from gods. Abstinence from meat in the Orphic way of life made it necessary that the Orphic initiate would have to remain apart from the organized sacrificial rites of the Greek city. Orphics categorically rejected the religious life of the organized community. Animal sacrifices were viewed by the ancient Orphic tradition as instances of precisely those "murders" (phonoí) from which Orphism teaches men to abstain. All animal sacrifice was, to the Orphics, a recapitulation of the murder and devouring of Dionysus by the Titans. Orpheus was understood to have taught that the human race could never purify itself as long as it refused to turn away from such Titanic practices and follow a new way of life which recognized the divine spark locked away in every living beast. The omophagy, or eating of raw, freshly-killed meat, which underlies the cult of Dionysus is, Detienne claims, the "homologue of Orphic vegetarianism." Each practice seeks a common end which is escape from the limitations of the normal day-to-day human condition. "In Dionysian religion, one escapes by becoming beastlike, whereas in Orphic religion the same process is carried out, but on the side of the gods by refusing to eat any meat and by eating only perfectly pure foods such as those reserved for the gods." Both the savagery of the Dionysiac and the quasi-divine asceticism of the Orphic lead to "the obliteration of all distance between the divine and the human."

Some scholars have seen in Dionysiac worship features which prefigure or resemble certain aspects of Judaism and Christianity. Jean P  pin points out that Justin, a second-century Christian apologist and martyr, saw similarities between the pagan mysteries on the one hand and Jewish and Christian

monotheism on the other (First Apology 5.3-5); Justin was certain that these likenesses were the result of demonic theft and imitation. In order to deceive and mislead the human race, demons craftily suggested the myths to pagan poets so that the story of Christ would also appear to be a mere fable when its time came. In Genesis 49.10-11, Jacob prophesies that the Messiah would be recognized, at least in part, as follows: "Binding his foal to the vine and his ass's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes." According to Justin, one of the false imitations of Jacob's true prophecy of the coming of the Son of God is the pagan myth of the slaughter and resuscitation of Dionysus, inventor of the grape vine; after his dismemberment by Titans, the god ascended into heaven. He has the power to admit his followers into eternal life; as we have seen, his mysteries involve an ass. Extensive references to grapes, wine, vines, and vintage may be found in early Christian texts and art. Jesus describes himself as the true vine; his first miracle is the transformation of water into wine. At the Last Supper, Jesus institutes the eucharist, the ceremonial eating of his flesh and drinking his blood under the appearance of bread and wine. The mosaics of the Constantinian church of St. Constantia in Rome refer obliquely to Christian teachings by means of the portrayal of vintage scenes. Connections between Dionysus and Jesus persisted for centuries in the popular mind, perturbing Church authorities. Evelyne Patlagean refers to a Church council of AD 692 which condemned the "wild dancing that drives women out into the streets, encourages costumes and masques." This illicit dancing is performed "in the name of the false gods of the Greeks" who are not named, with one exception: there is an explicit prohibition against proclaiming the name of the "infamous Dionysus" while treading grapes for wine. In the

twelfth century, a Greek Christian writer complains that these practices have not yet ceased; a Greek archbishop of the 13th century observes that Dionysus is still invoked at the vintage.

HEPHAESTUS

Introduction

In Greek literature and mythology, Hephaestus is generally held to live on Olympus where he is the divine craftsman and god of blacksmiths and artisans. He is worshipped especially at Athens and in other highly industrialized areas of the Greek-speaking world. If, as some argue, Hephaestus was originally a god of fire, his transformation into a divine smith took place before the composition of the Homeric epics. In the Iliad and Odyssey, Hephaestus is lame or crippled in his legs, although his arms are strong. It has long been noted that in a primitive community a man whose disabled legs render him unable to fight or hunt would naturally support himself by making and repairing weapons and other objects; the god may be in part a reflection of this social reality. Hephaestus's awkwardness makes him a figure of fun among the other Olympians who are, of course, physically flawless (Iliad 1.599-600): "And laughter unquenchable arose among the blessed gods, as they saw Hephaestus puffing through the palace."

The god's occupation is making marvelous objects of all sorts, many of which are magical, such as the golden robot attendants who perform various helpful tasks at Iliad 18.417ff.; this marks him out as the only Olympian who might be said to have a job—as opposed to presiding over some cosmic principle, such as fertility or the sea. Hephaestus works for a living (Iliad 18.373-373): "Him she found sweating with toil as he moved to and fro about his bellows in eager haste." Cf. also Odyssey 7.91ff. Various famous objects were made by Hephaestus: the scepter of Agamemnon (Iliad 2.101ff.), the armor of Achilles (Iliad 18.478ff.), the golden urn which holds the bones of

Achilles (Odyssey 24.74-75), the necklace given by Cadmus to his divine wife Harmonia (Apollodorus 3.4.2). For Callimachus and Virgil, although not for Homer, Hephaestus has Cyclopes as attendants. These one-eyed giants are not the savage cannibals of the Odyssey, but rather three highly-skilled divine artisans capable of devising, among many other things, the thunderbolts of Zeus (Hesiod, Theogony 140-141). Hephaestus is responsible for making Pandora, Hesiod's baneful first woman, as described by Hesiod, Works and Days 60-63: "And [Zeus] bade famous Hephaestus make haste and mix earth with water and to put in it the voice and strength of human kind, and fashion a sweet, lovely maiden-shape, like to the immortal goddesses in face."

To Homer, Hephaestus is the son of Zeus and Hera. Hesiod states that he is the child of Hera alone (Theogony 297). Hephaestus was cast out of heaven, either by Zeus for defending his mother against his father (Iliad 1.590ff.), or by Hera because he was misshapen (Iliad 18.395ff.). He is generally married to Aphrodite (Odyssey 8.266ff.), but cf. Iliad 18.382 where his wife is Charis ("Grace"). In either case, this match is often dismissed as nothing more than an allegory for the link between Craftsmanship and Beauty or Grace. On the other hand, Homer emphasizes Hephaestus's physical grotesqueness in the eyes of the other Olympians; the poet also tells us that Aphrodite has an adulterous relationship with Ares, the personification of bloodshed and mayhem. The triangle formed by erotic beauty, deformity, and war seems at least as interesting and evocative as the traditional allegorical pairing.

Hephaestus is frequently shown in vase paintings, in scenes depicting his helping Zeus to give birth to Athena, delivering

the arms of Achilles to Thetis, or returning to Olympus after his ejection by Hera, described below.

I. Origin and Nature of Hephaestus

Hephaestus is primarily the god of the blacksmith's fire, although there are indications that this was not his original nature. The history of his cult, moving from volcanic regions of Asia Minor to the likewise volcanic Lemnos (PW, s.v. "Hephaistos" by L. Malten), suggests that he is originally a Near Eastern god of volcanic fire. Volcanic mountains such as Aetna, seen as immense blacksmith's chimneys, mark the locations of the various underground smithies of Hephaestus (Callimachus, Hymn to Artemis 47; Vergil, Georgic 4.170ff., Aeneid 8.416ff.). Robinson and Rose (OCD) argue that Hephaestus' nature is primarily volcanic. Burkert claims that the links between Hephaestus and volcanic fire are secondary and late, and that his original nature was that of smith god.

Rose claims that Hephaestus was originally a fire god of Olympus in Lycia, an area in Asia Minor known for its abundance of natural gas jets. His cult apparently spread to Lemnos and then to other volcanic areas such as the Lipari Islands near Sicily, to Sicily itself, and to Campania, a volcanically active region in Southern Italy. Eventually, according to this theory, Hephaestus became known as a divine smith whose forges were under the earth where escaping smoke and flame made their presence known. The more industrially advanced areas of the Greek mainland, such as Attica, worshipped him; he had, for example, no cult in relatively backward Crete. Rose maintains that the Romans inappropriately identified Greek Hephaestus with their own Vulcan, who was a god of destructive volcanic fire, as

opposed to the constructive flames of the smithy with which Hephaestus ought properly to be linked.

Burkert argues that Hephaestus is of non-Greek origin and that the god's name is also not Greek. Hephaestus was worshipped by the native non-Greek population of Lemnos and may be connected with an extremely ancient Middle Eastern institution of smith-kingship, traces of which survive in Hittite sources.

Occasionally in Greek literature the name of Hephaestus is synonymous with fire. At Iliad 2.426, his name is used to signify the fire which consumes a sacrificial offering ("the flame of Hephaestus"); later, Hera calls upon the fire of Hephaestus to foil the attempt of the river god Scamandrus to drown Achilles (Iliad 21.328-382). At Odyssey 24.70-75, Hephaestus is both the devouring flame of Achilles' funeral pyre and also the anthropomorphic maker of the golden urn which holds the hero's bones:

But when the flame of Hephaestus had made an end of thee,
in the morning we gathered thy white bones, Achilles, and
laid them in unmixed wine and unguents. Thy mother had
given a two-handled, golden urn, and said that it was the
gift of Dionysus, and the handiwork of famed Hephaestus.

In Aeschylus, Agamemnon 281-282, Hephaestus is the beacon-fire which passes along to Mycenae the news of the fall of Troy.

The emphasis placed by aristocratic Bronze Age Greeks upon the heroic virtues associated with arete, military excellence, was probably responsible for the relegation of the cult of Hephaestus to a secondary place. Hephaestus occupies a position of importance only in Athenian myth and cult, where he was regarded as having been, through a peculiar encounter with Athena, the father of Erichthonius, the earth-born first king of

very ancient Athens and ancestor of the Athenians. Apollodorus records the story (III.14.6):

Some say that this Erichthonius was a son of Hephaestus and Atthis, daughter of Cranaus, and some that he was a son of Hephaestus and Athena, as follows: Athena came to Hephaestus, desirous of fashioning arms. But he, being forsaken by Aphrodite, fell in love with Athena, and began to pursue her; but she fled. When he got near her with much ado (for he was lame), he attempted to embrace her; but she, being a chaste virgin, would not submit to him, and he dropped his seed on the leg of the goddess. In disgust, she wiped off the seed with wool and threw it on the ground; and as she fled and the seed fell on the ground, Erichthonius was produced.

As father of the country, so to speak, Hephaestus is worshipped by the Athenians at a festival of the city's phratriai (kinship groups or brotherhoods); that is, the god was regarded as the common divine ancestor of the human founders of the various Athenian clans; Aeschylus (Eumenides 13ff.) and Plato (Timaeus 23E) both describe ancient people as the offspring of Hephaestus.

There are two accounts in the Iliad of the god's being cast out of heaven. According to the first, Zeus ejected Hephaestus when he interfered in a quarrel between his parents; after falling all day, he was received hospitably by the people of Lemnos where he came to earth (Iliad 1.590-594). In the alternative account, Hephaestus was lame from birth; Hera was so ashamed of his deformity that she threw him off Olympus, after which he lived with Thetis and Eurynome for nine years (Iliad 18.395-399). Hesiod records a third and somewhat different story. Hephaestus, the crippled god, was borne by Hera alone; she then threw him from Olympus into the sea (Theogony 927ff.). He took revenge by presenting his mother with a throne which trapped her

until Dionysus brought Hephaestus back to Olympus and effected a reconciliation (Alcaeus, fragment 349). The return of Hephaestus is a favorite Dionysiac theme, often found on Classical pottery.

Brisson suggests that the Homeric versions of the birth and infancy of Hephaestus establish a peculiar relationship between the smith-god on the one hand, and the sky and sea on the other. As we have seen, either Zeus threw Hephaestus from Olympus into the sea, or Hera cast him down into the sea out of shame for his deformity. In either case, Hephaestus spent part of his early life in the sea or surrounded by sea on an island. Like Ouranos, who was castrated by his son Kronos (Hesiod, Theogony 178-200), Hephaestus suffers from a physical defect; Hephaestus was cast into the sea, as were the sexual organs of Ouranos. The severed flesh of Ouranos combined with sea-foam to make possible the birth of Aphrodite, often considered to be the wife of Hephaestus.

II. Hephaestus and Athena

Not surprisingly, the cult of Hephaestus in Athens is linked with that of Athena. The two are worshipped together at the Chalkeia, a festival honoring the god of smiths and the patroness of technology which was held on the day the loom for weaving Athena's Panathenaic robe was set up. Plato (Laws 11.920D-E) names the pair as patrons of "artificers whose crafts have equipped us for the daily needs of life." The temple of Hephaestus in Athens is in a state of remarkable preservation due to its conversion into a church in the 7th c. AD; it stands on a low hill overlooking the Agora, an area where smiths

worked. The god's temple contained an image of Athena as well as one of Hephaestus (Pausanias 1.14.6); an ever-burning lamp in the temple of Athena Polias on the Acropolis has been taken as a representation of the god of fire. Homer links Hephaestus and Athena as gods of craftsmanship (Odyssey 6.233, 23.160; cf. Plato, Protagoras 321D, Crito 109C, Laws 920D). Homer often uses the adjective polymetis ("crafty, rich in devices") in both epics to describe Odysseus, the special favorite of Athena; the term is used once in the Iliad of the resourceful Hephaestus (21.355).

As a smith, Hephaestus shares in the metis or craft of Athena; he is klytometis, "famed for craft," in the Homeric Hymn to Hephaestus (1) as well as polymetis in the Iliad. He assists at the birth of Athena, cracking open the head of Zeus from which she emerged. Plato links the two divinities closely in his myth of Atlantis (Critias 109C-D), pointing out that Hephaestus and Athena have the same father and are motivated by the same love of knowledge and art.

In addition to technical skill, Hephaestus also possesses insight and intelligence beyond most other Olympians. Just as Apollo finds it beneath him to fight another god for the sake of a mere human being (Iliad 21.462ff.), so does Hephaestus find it unimaginable that the eternal serenity of Olympian life should be disrupted by divine wrangling over the fate of mortals (Iliad 1.573-576, Lattimore translation):

"This will be a disastrous matter and not endurable if you two are to quarrel thus for the sake of mortals and bring brawling among the gods. There will be no pleasure in the stately feast at all, since vile things will be uppermost."

Mindful of the immense gulf fixed between the paltry concerns of humans and the blessed life of the deathless gods, Hephaestus squelches an incipient quarrel among the Olympians for the sake of mere mortals. On earth, the catastrophic human events of the Iliad are just beginning; in the palace of Zeus, Hephaestus cannily restores calm and harmony.

III. The Crippled Olympian

Hephaestus is fully an Olympian god in Homer, with no chthonic qualities. For Homer, the forge of Hephaestus is on Olympus, not under the earth. Other authors, such as Callimachus and Vergil, portray a sooty and sweaty Hephaestus working in a subterranean forge on thunderbolts for Zeus, arrows for Artemis, and so on, assisted by Cyclopes. In addition to being the only Olympian who practices a trade requiring manual labor, Hephaestus is alone among the physically perfect gods of the upper ether to have a handicap; his crippled feet or legs make him, as we have seen, something of a figure of fun and an outsider on Olympus. Hephaestus' physical deformity disguises wit and craft lacking in his physically flawless brothers and sisters. At Iliad 1.571-600, the smith-god's awkward limping and puffing as he hurries to serve out wine cause derisive laughter among the Olympians; it is clear, however, that Homer wishes us to understand that Hephaestus is using this laughter as comic relief to defuse a dangerously tense confrontation between Zeus and Hera. In the Odyssey, too, Hephaestus is the object of mocking laughter when he catches his adulterous wife Aphrodite, along with her lover Ares, in a cleverly-designed trap (8.266-366).

Brisson suggests that the crippled lower limbs of Hephaestus, and the consequent ridicule to which he is subjected, can be seen as either the price of his extraordinary knowledge or as a sign of the public contempt in which manual work, no matter how skilled or sublime, was held in ancient Greek aristocratic culture. Plutarch, for example, points out that no gentleman would ever want to be a sculptor like Phidias or Polyclitus, even though the author has enormous admiration for the finest examples of their work. A person of good birth may be delighted by works of art, but he never desires actually to practice the arts himself (Pericles 2.1).

IV. The Divine Craftsman

The activities of Hephaestus comprise art, craftsmanship, and magic in a manner conveyed by no single English word. In the Iliad, Hephaestus appears first as a cupbearer to the gods, capable of restoring calm and a sense of proportion to his divine brothers and sisters (1.596ff.); later, he is a master metalworker (2.101, 18.369ff and 410ff.), and finally master of fire, the element with which he is sometimes identified (21.330ff.). As lord of fire, Hephaestus is identified with technical fire, as used in manufacturing, as opposed to the hearth fire which is Hestia's, or the celestial fires which Zeus controls. Even more specifically, Hephaestus is the master of the fire used by smiths in metalworking. He works only "noble metals": gold, silver, bronze, and brass, but never the iron which Hesiod associates with the corruption of the current fallen era of human history (Works and Days, 176-178).

For Hephaestus, metallurgy is inseparable from magic. Brisson points out that he "appears as the preeminent binding god." Hephaestus not only makes and breaks metallic bonds in the course of his ordinary work, but through magic binds his victims, especially Hera, whom he traps on a throne (Plato, Republic 2.378D). He also traps his adulterous wife Aphrodite and her lover Ares in an invisible net (Odyssey 8.266-366). Hephaestus also unbinds. He eventually releases his mother Hera, and also Ares and Aphrodite; moreover, Hephaestus also "unbinds," in the sense of animating those things normally without life or movement; his divine skill gives a sort of life to his golden robot servants, his self-moving bellows, and his very convenient automatic tripods (Iliad 18.369ff).

In the Homeric Hymn to Hephaestus, the god is a Promethean benefactor of mankind (2-7): "With bright-eyed Athena he taught men glorious crafts throughout the world." Human beings "used to dwell in caves in the mountains like wild beasts. But now that they have learned crafts through Hephaestus the famed worker, easily they live a peaceful life in their own houses the whole year round."

In the Iliad, Hephaestus and his wife Charis live in a bronze house which Homer describes as "imperishable, starry and pre-eminent among the immortals" (Iliad 18.370). Here Thetis, calling to request new arms for her son Achilles, finds him working at his forge. Although covered with sweat and soot, the god produces marvelous works of art: the famous automated serving-carts, robot maids, and so on. The shield of Achilles, the masterpiece of Hephaestus, is an image of the entire universe, from the stars down to a panoramic depiction of the human world. The skilled smith has become virtually a universal

creator. To some late-antique philosophers, such as the fifth-century AD Neoplatonist Proclus, Hephaestus became a symbol for the Universal Smith who crafted the brazen sky itself

(Commentary on Plato's Timaeus 23D-E): "Let us add to our traditions the convictions that we have received from the very first from the theologians concerning Hephaestus. . . . They say that he is a smith, because he is a worker and also because, since the sky is made of bronze, he who made the sky is a smith".

HERA

Introduction

Hera is one of the children of Kronos and Rhea, both sister and wife of Zeus himself, and one of the twelve Olympian gods; nevertheless, she is a peculiarly subordinate figure in Greek myth. As Argive Hera, she is the chief protecting divinity of the Greeks at Troy under Agamemnon of Mycenae. At Iliad 1.56, Hera "pitied the Danaans, for she saw them dying." Later in Book One, Hera sent Athena to intervene in the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon and to prevent violence between the men, because (196) "in her heart she loved them both alike and had care of them." Hera is also, inevitably, the principle divine enemy of Troy; at Iliad 4.21, she and Athena sit at the side of Zeus "devising ill for the Trojans." Nevertheless, in the councils on Olympus her desires are often ignored or mocked by Zeus, who asserts his bias in favor of Priam and the Trojan cause (Iliad 4.44-49), even though Troy is doomed to destruction and the Greeks are destined to win the war:

"For of all cities beneath sun and starry heaven
wherein men that dwell upon the face of the earth have
their abodes, of these sacred Ilios was most honored of
my heart, and Priam and the people of Priam, with
goodly spear of ash. For never at any time was mine
altar in lack of the equal feast, the drink-offering,
and the savor of burnt-offering, even the worship that
is our due."

Zeus supports the losing cause, Hera the side destined to win; nevertheless, Homer takes pains in the Iliad to demonstrate the powerlessness of Hera with respect to Zeus.

At Iliad 4.31-38, Zeus insults and threatens Hera for favoring the Greeks:

"Strange queen, wherein do Priam and the sons of Priam work thee ill so many, that thou ragest unceasingly to lay waste the well-built citadel of Ilios? If thou wert to enter within the gates and the high walls, and to devour Priam raw and the sons of Priam and all the Trojans besides, then perchance mightest thou heal thine anger. Do as thy pleasure is; let not this quarrel in time to come be to thee and me a grievous cause of strife between us twain."

On the other hand, archaeological research conducted over the course of the last century gives us a quite different picture of the cultic, as opposed to literary, significance of Hera. The intensity and constancy of religious observance in honor of Hera demonstrate the central role which the goddess played in the lives of worshippers throughout antiquity.

The legends and stories of Hera are mainly concerned with her relationship with and subordination to Zeus; as the center of widespread and popular cult practices, however, Hera stands alone and is rarely linked with her husband and brother. The Homeric Hymn to Hera, quoted in its entirety, addresses the goddess as a powerful and august being whom the gods respect as much as they do Zeus:

I sing of golden-throned Hera whom Rhea bore. Queen of the immortals is she, surpassing all in beauty: she is the sister and the wife of loud-thundering Zeus, the glorious one whom all the blessed throughout Olympus reverence and honor even as Zeus who delights in thunder.

In Homer's account, however, she fares much worse. Zeus threatens to beat Hera at Iliad 1.565ff. and 585ff.; on one occasion, he hung her up with heavy weights attached to her feet, a torture suitable for slaves and criminals (Iliad 15.16-22). At her major cult centers, however, such as Argos on the Greek mainland, the island of Samos just off the Aegean coast of Ionia (now Turkey), and Poseidonia/Paestum in Southern Italy, Hera was the central figure of an immensely popular cult which stressed her role as the protector and patron of women, marriage, and the family. The goddess appears on Attic pottery carrying a royal scepter and assisting brides' marriage preparations. Detienne places Hera alongside Artemis and Aphrodite as one of the three female powers that occupy a strategic position in matters related to marriage. While the transmitters and audience of the tales recorded by Homer and Hesiod were primarily men, the devotees of the cult of Hera seem to have been mainly women. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that these facts are related to the widely differing accounts of the goddess we encounter in myth and cult.

I. Hera in Myth

In the surviving mythological accounts, Hera is at times a subordinate and almost absurd character. A stereotypical representation of jealousy, marital strife and shrewish behavior, she plays the seemingly incompatible roles of great goddess and abused wife simultaneously. Homer articulates this paradox in Hera's response to Zeus at Iliad 4.58-61; the goddess acknowledges that Zeus is by far

the mightier divinity but protests that she is of the same stock, also a child of Kronos and worthy of great respect:

" . . . for I also am a god, and my birth is from the stock whence is thine own, and crooked-counselling Kronos begat me as the most honoured of his daughters in twofold wise, for that I am eldest, and am called thy wife, whilst thou art king among all the immortals."

Scholars have suggested various interpretations of the literary portrayal of Hera which need not be regarded as mutually exclusive. First, within the mythical accounts of the hostility between Hera and Zeus there is a certain odd internal logic. If we regard the Olympian family of gods and goddesses as a projection into the divine realm of the ideal Bronze Age aristocratic household, with Zeus as lord, master, and ultimate patriarch, Hera's resentful subordination may be seen as inevitable. Zeus, in the many myths concerning his infidelities, exercises the traditional lordly prerogative of promiscuous sexual relationships with a wide variety of human and divine women. This is at least in part a result of Greece's need of a multitude of human offspring of Zeus to serve as founders of the various royal houses and aristocratic lines of the Greek-speaking world (see the chapter "Zeus"). As ideal patriarch and father, Zeus is unfailingly fertile; his many liaisons engender the swarm of gods, goddesses, demigods, heroes, heroines, and so forth, needed to serve as the ancestors or founders of virtually all Bronze Age aristocratic families and cities. Zeus is both the ultimate ancestor of the Mycenaean Greek ruling class, and the sire, perhaps a couple of generations removed, of the mythical founders of many Bronze Age sites. The carnal

appetite of the Father of Gods and Men also extends to attractive young men such as Ganymede. Hera on the other hand is bound to strict observance of marital fidelity; her only significant child by Zeus is Ares whom Zeus calls the most hated of all his offspring (Iliad 5.890). Hephaestus, the misshapen smith god, is either the child of Hera and Zeus, as Homer says, or of Hera alone (Hesiod, Theogony 927-929); in any case, his handicap makes him a figure of fun (e.g., Iliad 1.597ff.). Since the Olympian household reflects a society in which the subordination and essential powerlessness of wives is axiomatic, Hera has no recourse against Zeus beyond hostility, which results in the punishments described above. On the other hand, Hera is implacably hostile and dangerous in her rage against rivals for Zeus' attention, and their children; she mercilessly persecutes Dionysus' mother Semele, Zeus's son by Alcmena, Heracles, and also Io, Ino, and Callisto, among others.

The strictly limited power and constricted field of activity we observe in the case of Hera is an instance of a more general principle observed by Sarah Pomeroy: in myth, goddesses are either hostile to women, as Hera often is, or they follow pursuits normally closed to women, as do the warrior Athena and the solitary huntress Artemis. The Greek goddesses taken as a group as have a fragmented or incomplete quality in myth. Male divinities, such as Apollo for example, may be intelligent, powerful, and erotically active. The wise and prudent Athena, however, lacks all sexuality and can never be a parent; the sexually alluring Aphrodite is never praised for intelligence. In cult however, as we shall see below in the case of Hera, goddesses play a larger and more universal role; they

satisfy women's needs and delineate women's appropriate role in ancient society.

Perhaps more important than the internal dynamics of the Olympian household are the insights into the nature of Hera offered by historical and anthropological investigation of her role in very early Greek culture. Hera's name is probably Greek; there is some scholarly consensus, by no means unanimous, that Hera is a feminine form of heros, "hero," and therefore means "Lady." Alternate etymologies have been suggested which link the name Hera with hora, "season" or "year." To Burkert, the "season" reading implies "ripe for marriage" and refers to Hera's role as divine bride; Harrison suggests that the name means "year" and implies "the fruits of the Year incarnate." For Harrison, Hera embodies "the seasons of the year and the stages of women's life as maiden, wife, and widow."

Although Hera's name is apparently Greek, it is possible that the Greeks, finding among the aboriginal population of the Greek peninsula a powerful goddess already in place, renamed the local divinity and made her the wife of their own chief god. Hera, then, may well have been originally a local pre-Greek Earth mother. Seen in this way, the marriage of Hera to Zeus is forcible and, as Harrison suggests, "reflects the subjugation of the indigenous people by incoming Northerners." The conflict between Hera and Zeus in this view, which is not universally accepted, reflects racial conflict: Hera is "the image, the projection of the turbulent nation, a princess coerced but never really subdued by an alien conqueror".

Arguments linking Hera to the fertility of the earth are strong but not conclusive. In this interpretation, the marriage of Hera to the sky god Zeus is an instance of the hieros gamos, or sacred marriage, of earth and sky which produces fertility; the moisture of the god of the sky impregnates the passive earth below. Guthrie suggests that the marriage of Zeus and Hera is not only the prototype of human marriage but also an instance of the union of earth and sky divinities which was re-enacted in ritual to ensure the abundance of the crops. Although generally understood to refer to the primordial union of Ouranos (sky) and Gaia (earth) described by Hesiod at Theogony 132ff., the hieros gamos may in this view be understood as being represented also in the unions of Zeus and Hera, Kronos and Rhea, Demeter and Iasion, as well as others. Odyssey 5.125-127 describes the union of Demeter and her lover in "thrice-plowed fallow land." Iliad 14.346-351 may preserve a memory of the original fructifying nature of the union of Hera and Zeus; in this extraordinarily beautiful passage, the sexual embrace of Hera and Zeus causes the "divine earth" to produce an abundance of grasses and flowers, while the lovers are surrounded by a golden, dewy cloud:

Therewith the son of Cronos clasped his wife in his arms, and beneath them the divine earth made fresh-sprung grass to grow, and dewy lotus, and crocus, and hyacinth, thick and soft, that upbare them from the ground. Therein lay the twain, and were clothed about with a cloud, fair and golden, wherefrom fell drops of glistening dew.

II. The Cult of Hera

It is in the end impossible to be certain about the Bronze Age origins of Hera, or of any of the other Olympians. Whatever the original functions of this goddess might have been, the Greeks transformed her into a goddess of marriage and attendant of women at childbirth. The festival of Theogamia, "Divine Marriage," was celebrated in Attica during the month of Gamelion (January-February), the season most propitious for fertility in human marriages according to Aristotle (Politics 1335A). The marriage of Hera and Zeus was commemorated at this festival as a model for all other divine and human weddings. In the case of Hera, as with the rest of the gods, Homer set the tone for succeeding generations by, as Herodotus points out (2.53), describing the gods and giving them their appropriate titles, offices, and powers. While Hera's cultic identity derives from an overriding connection with marriage, childbirth, and the life of women in general, in myth she remains the wife of Olympian Zeus with virtually none of these wider responsibilities.

Homer tells us that the dearest cities to Hera are Argos, Mycenae, and Sparta (Iliad 4.51-52). Although Olympia is primarily known as the site of an oracle of Zeus and of games in his honor, a festival in honor of Hera was celebrated there every four years; Olympia had a temple of Hera by 750 BC, long before the completion of the Classical temple of Zeus in 456. Around the middle of the 7th century BC, colonists from Sybaris founded Poseidonia in Italy (later, Paestum to the Romans and the local Lucanian population), 96 km. south of Naples. Extensive archaeological remains, including two massive Doric temples

dedicated to Hera, a unique subterranean shrine of the goddess, and close to a million votive offerings, establish the Western Greek city of Poseidonia as an important center of the cult of Hera. Beyond these major sanctuaries, Hera was worshipped by Greeks far and wide as a great goddess. In vase painting and sculpture, Hera embodies the majesty of her important cultic position; she appears as an impressive matronly figure, usually wearing a high crown, either standing or seated upon a throne.

Archaeology establishes beyond doubt the high esteem in which the cult of Hera was held; the worship of Hera discloses a cultic prestige accorded to the divine protector and patron of human marriage which contrasts sharply with Homer's near-comical figure of a goddess whose marriage is, in Pomeroy's words, "a kind of permanent war."

Argos

Hera is the great goddess of Argos. Homer frequently refers to her as Argive Hera (Iliad 4.8, 5.908, etc.); there is no question that Argos was an important center of her cult. In her original ancient form at Argos, it is clear that Hera was a more complex and august figure than merely a wife and consort of Zeus. Homer contributed a great deal to the simplification of this great female deity by stressing the tension between Zeus and Hera. Such a dependent figure, Kerényi claims, can never have been the object of a major cult. Alcaeus by contrast (fr. 24a 7) calls Hera panton genethla, "origin of all things."

The Argive Heraion is extremely ancient, perhaps dating to the 8th century BC. Its location, 5 km. from Mycenae and 10 km. from the city of Argos, indicates that it was a sanctuary of regional, rather than merely local, importance. Zeus never had an important temple nearby, as he did in Olympia. Although dates and reconstructions of many of the structures on the site are controversial, the siting of the Heraion, one of the oldest and most venerable sanctuaries in Greece, is an indication of its prominence; it stood on the western slope of Mount Euboia, high over the Argive plain, commanding a view of the citadel of Argos. The original temple, of which nothing remains, stood on a rectangular terrace supported by a Cyclopean retaining wall dating perhaps to the Late Geometric period. A late 8th c. BC terracotta model of a temple with a gabled roof and porch may represent the original temple which dated from that period. This earliest temple was replaced, probably in the first half of the 7th c. BC, by a later structure which was in turn replaced as a result of destruction by fire in 423 BC.

When Pausanias visited the Argolid in the 2nd century AD, he recorded that at many places which had been famous and had once supported populous communities he found only the local temple surviving; local cults apparently survived long after the founding community had ceased to exist. This phenomenon, by no means peculiar to the Argolid alone, demonstrates the capacity for survival of the Greek cults through centuries of social upheaval and turmoil. The cult statue of Hera at the Argive Heraion was still in place; Pausanias describes it as follows (2.17.4):

The statue of Hera is seated on a throne; it is huge, made of gold and ivory, and is a work of Polycleitus. She is wearing a crown with Graces and Seasons worked upon it, and in one hand she carries a pomegranate and in the other a scepter.

Samos

Samos is the greatest center of the cult of Hera after Argos. The island sanctuary of Samos in the east and Paestum in the west testify to the widespread nature of the cult of Hera. The sanctuary of Hera on Samos stood about 6 km. west of the city, at the mouth of the Imbrasmus river. Perhaps originally sacred to a local nature goddess, Greek mythology associated the site with the birth and marriage of Hera (Pausanias 7.4.4):

Some say that the sanctuary of Hera in Samos was established by those who sailed in the Argo, and that these brought the image from Argos. But the Samians themselves hold that the goddess was born in the island by the side of the river Imbrasmus under the willows that even in my time grew in the Heraeum.

According to legend, an aniconic or nonrepresentational wooden idol of the goddess was miraculously found at the site in remote antiquity; the cult object was still extant at the time of the visit of Pausanias in the 2nd century AD. Every year, the sacred marriage of Zeus and Hera was celebrated here; in the course of the rites, the ancient idol of Hera was washed and wrapped with foliage, thus restoring her virginity until the marriage ceremony.

The site of the sanctuary was transformed and enlarged in a period of intense building activity around the middle of the 6th c. BC. An enormous new temple, measuring 51 meters by 102 meters, with a double colonnade of two rows of 8 columns each on the front, 21 on the long sides and 10 on the back. The temple was termed a "labyrinth" from this forest of columns. According to Pausanias, the structure was destroyed by fire at the time of the Persian conquest of the island in 530 BC. The replacement temple was planned on such a colossal scale that it was never completed although construction continued until the Roman period.

Poseidonia/Paestum

By the mid-sixth century BC, the western Greek city of Poseidonia had become a major pilgrimage goal for people anxious to participate in the cult of Hera. A consideration of structures at this site related to the worship of the goddess will illustrate the importance to ordinary people of the cult of Hera. Two impressive and very well-preserved Doric temples dedicated to Hera stand on the site: the so-called "Basilica," which dates to around 550 BC, and the temple once known as the "Temple of Poseidon" (Neptune) and now considered to be a second temple of Hera, of around 450. Excavation at Poseidonia has also disclosed an odd underground shrine very likely to have been a part of the thriving local Hera cult. Built roughly in the shape of a large dog house and measuring 4.4 by 3.3 meters, the shrine dates to around 510 BC. It was found to contain eight bronze vessels full of a sticky substance resembling honey or molasses and sealed with lead

plugs, an Attic black-figure amphora bearing a painting illustrating the apotheosis of Heracles, and five large iron spits wrapped in cloth and similar to objects found under the altar of Hera at Samos. The precise significance of these objects is not known; it seems reasonable, however, in view of the overwhelming importance of Hera at this site, to conjecture that the subterranean shrine may have been dedicated to Hera in her chthonic, or Earth-mother, aspect.

The various sanctuaries and shrines of Hera in and around Poseidonia have yielded votive offerings in the tens of thousands. Most of the dedications are terra cotta figurines inexpensively mass-produced in molds. Ancient authors tell us nothing of the growth and development of Poseidonia or its cult of Hera; nevertheless, these thousands of cheap offerings allow us to feel that we are in touch for once with the cultic practice of ordinary people. The figurines tend to fall into a small number of types; some of the most popular represent an enthroned woman, with or without a child, a woman with a small horse, a woman holding a pomegranate (cf. the medieval church of Santa Maria del Granato, or St. Mary of the Pomegranate, in the nearby town of Capaccio), and a standing woman brandishing a spear. These finds at Poseidonia illustrate for us, as Homer and Hesiod do not choose to do, the importance and centrality of Hera in particular, and of women in general, in ancient Greek religious life, with obvious emphasis on the vital and mysterious facts of sexuality and reproduction.

III. Hera and Greek Religious Architecture

Hera has a unique connection with Greek temple architecture; this establishes the early and continuing importance of the cult of Hera in Greek religious life. Minoan and Mycenaean people had no temple buildings. The temple first emerges as an architectural form in Greece around 800 BC; temples, then, were among the first corporate enterprises of the emergent city-states, along with the construction of city fortification walls (as opposed to palace defenses), and of public market places. Effort previously expended on service to kings and royal tombs was now directed toward projects of communal benefit, such as service to the gods who protected the polis. The very earliest and most important temples in Greek lands are dedicated to Hera. The first temple of Hera, on Samos, dates to about 800 BC; it is an architectural and historical landmark as one of the earliest public buildings in Greece. It was the first hecatompedon ("hundred footer"), that is, the first temple to establish what would later become the canonical length of 100 feet. When the temple was repaired in the early 8th century BC, it was given one of the earliest known peristyles, composed of wooden columns which were subsequently replaced by stone ones. At Tiryns, near Mycenae on the Greek mainland, the acropolis had first been the site of a Bronze Age royal palace; by the 8th century BC, a temple dedicated to Hera occupied the site, built on the palace ruins. The same transition from royal palace to polis cult center may be observed to have occurred on the Athenian acropolis and elsewhere.

François de Polignac discusses the political and religious significance of the extra-urban sanctuaries of Hera, especially at Argos and Samos, pointing out that they are just far enough from cities to be out of reach of ordinary, day-to-day observances, but not far enough to be difficult of access. He points out that Hera is the extra-urban goddess par excellence of these very early shrines. Athena, Artemis, and Apollo, along with Hera, are the divinities most likely to be the controlling deities of great extra-urban sanctuaries; other Olympians, such as Poseidon and, above all, Zeus are remarkably little involved in this extra-urban cult system. Here again, cultic practice does not reflect the hierarchy of the Olympian family as presented in the epics of Homer and Hesiod. These country shrines, like the Argive Heraion, tend to be placed in eminent positions near the borders of ancient territorial divisions. Polignac cites the military nature of 8th century BC offerings at the extra-urban sanctuaries, along with the martial quality of many observances at them, including especially the processions of armed men at the Argive Heraion; he suggests that these very ancient shrines, situated in strategic positions, may have been intended in remote antiquity both to symbolize the controlling community's possession of the surrounding territory and to guard it from enemies.

HERMES

Introduction

Hermes, son of Zeus and of Atlas' daughter Maia, seems originally to have been a simple heap of stones. Although he is generally represented in art and literature as youthful, he may in fact be one of the oldest and most primitive of the Greek gods. Hermes appears to be an ancient god of the countryside named by the Greeks for the herms or heaps of stones found along country roads and paths. That is, Hermes is the resident spirit, or daimon, of those cairns or stone heaps which mark routes through desolate land and prevent travelers from becoming lost. As the wayfarer's guardian and guide, Hermes must have been revered by the Greeks from a very early date.

An aetiological myth explains the origin of the herm as a heap of stones. Having stood trial for the killing of the monster Argus, Hermes was acquitted of guilt by his fellow Olympians who voted in the traditional Greek way, using pebbles to record their votes. The votes for acquittal were tossed at the god's feet; this accounts for the existence along roadsides, in all Greek-speaking lands, of herms as upright stone pillars with heaps of stones around their bases. Travellers added to these cairns as they passed. The pillars representing the god gradually became more and more anthropomorphic in execution until they reached their Classical form: a squared-off stone pillar surmounted by the god's sculpted head. Hermes acquired a phallus, to promote fertility or drive away evil daimons, which projected from the pillar at about the anatomically correct height.

Herms stood on street corners and in front of houses in Classical Greek towns; they were also commonly found at

roadsides and were used as landmarks. From this, Hermes came to be regarded as guide of travelers and god of roads. Hermes was venerated as psychopompos, the leader of the souls of the dead from earth to Hades, the last guide along the final road. At Odyssey 24.1-5, for example, Hermes leads the dead suitors to Hades:

Meanwhile Cyllenian Hermes called forth the spirits of the woosers. He held in his hands his wand, a fair wand of gold, wherewith he lulls to sleep the eyes of whom he will, while others again he wakens even out of slumber; with this he roused and led the spirits, and they followed gibbering.

Hermes is unique among the gods in moving regularly and easily between the lands of the living and dead. Hermes is also associated with grave-mounds and with Hades; in Aeschylus' Libation Bearers, lines 1-2, Orestes invokes Hermes at the tomb of Agamemnon as chthonios, or lord of the Underworld, and calls upon him as the savior (soter) and ally (symmachos) who oversees the rights of his ancestors: "Hermes, lord of the dead, who watch over the powers of my fathers, be my savior and stand by my claim."

In vase-painting, Hermes is fully anthropomorphic; he generally wears winged sandals, a broad-brimmed traveler's hat, and carries a herald's staff or kerukeion, suitable for a god who travels incessantly on the earth and to the shadowy realm beneath. We see Hermes as a guide, intermediary, and divine go-between at Iliad 24.331ff. where Zeus orders him to lead Priam on his dangerous visit to the tent of Achilles:

"Hermes, seeing thou lovest above all others to companion a man, and thou givest ear to whomsoever thou art minded, up, go and guide Priam unto the

hollow ships of the Achaeans in such wise that no man may see him or be ware of him among all the Danaans, until he be come to the son of Peleus."

At Odyssey 5.28ff. Hermes conveys the will of Zeus regarding Odysseus to Calypso, and at Odyssey 10.275ff. the messenger god helps Odysseus defeat the witch Circe with a magic plant.

In addition to carrying out these generally benevolent tasks, Hermes is also an amoral thief and the patron of merchants and thieves; in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes he drives off the cattle of Apollo and swears a false oath to deny his guilt. From the earliest age, then, Hermes was understood to be a skilled thief and a perjurer. Although, as Otto points out, much of the activity of Hermes is "questionable" when considered from the viewpoint of strict morality, the god does nevertheless personify a set of concerns or a mode of behavior which is somehow universal in human reality; therefore, according to the Greek understanding of divinity, he is worthy of reverence. Although the world of Hermes is not dignified, nevertheless "it is remote from vulgarity and repulsiveness. A spirit of gaiety, a superior smile, hovers over and illuminates it, and absolves even its boldest knaveries." The world of Hermes is a world of "easy laughter" and light-hearted deception which speaks to the soldier of fortune, freebooter, and swindler in each of us.

I. Hermes in Myth and Cult

A. Hermes the Trickster

In the sixth century BC, the pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes objected strenuously to traditional depictions of the gods by the Greek poets on the grounds that "Homer and Hesiod say that the gods perform countless most disgraceful actions: adultery, stealing, deceiving one another." The cheerful amorality of Hermes, as he is depicted in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, was surely part of the philosopher's list of grievances against conventional theology. The Homeric Hymn to Hermes provides the fullest ancient account of the god's birth, exploits and nature. One of 33 poems falsely attributed to Homer, the date of the Hymn cannot be stated with any certainty; the Hymn to Hermes is different from all the others by virtue of its air of comedy and familiarity; the unknown author chooses to stress the young god's cunning, virtually from the moment of birth, and his open, utterly shameless amorality. The Hymn describes Hermes as polytropos (13), an epithet also used of Odysseus in the first line of the Odyssey; meaning literally "of many turnings", the term implies craftiness or deviousness. The Hymn goes on to characterize Hermes as, among other things, "blandly cunning, a robber, a cattle driver, a bringer of dreams, a watcher by night, a thief at the gates" (13-15). Born at dawn, by midday Hermes had invented the lyre, and that evening he rustled a herd of cattle belonging to Apollo. The newborn god managed the theft by driving the cattle backward to disguise their direction of travel and by fashioning brushwood

footgear, like oversized snowshoes, to obscure his own tracks.

Especially interesting and important for understanding the Greek conception of Hermes is the humorous contrast between the very young god's childish innocence, "snuggled in his fragrant swaddling clothes" (HHH 237), and his utter amorality. The infant Hermes who, as he states (273 and 376), really was born yesterday, swears falsely by Zeus, and before Zeus (368-386), in denying his guilt the next day-- indeed, he is not quite certain just what "cattle" might be, having not had a chance to see any yet, but only having heard of them (278-9). In his perjured testimony before Zeus, Hermes goes so far as to question the honesty of Zeus himself (378: "You claim to be my father."). Zeus laughs out loud at the lies of his "evil-plotting child". The charming amorality of Hermes makes him an ambiguous figure, both benevolent and dangerous. Apollo, amused by Hermes' craftiness, identifies the young god as a sneak-thief who will plague herdsmen by driving off their livestock in lonely mountain pastures (286-8); Hermes himself, during his eventual reconciliation with Apollo, promises to guard flocks and ensure their increase (491-4). By trading his newly-invented lyre to Apollo, Hermes obtained from his brother the caduceus, the magnificent and powerful wand with which he guides the dead, wards off misfortune, and carries out the will of Zeus.

Not only does the thieving of Hermes reveal the young god's precocity, it also accounts for the change in Apollo who, having been a shepherd, becomes established as god of prophecy and of music. In fact, the thefts and tricks of Hermes later assisted the other gods and goddesses in various ways. Helped by Hermes, Perseus killed the Gorgon, Heracles was victorious in Hades, and Zeus by destroyed the Titans, becoming master of the universe. This may be why Hermes became Zeus's appointed herald. With the help of the caduceus, Hermes transmits the divine decrees of Zeus and thus assists in the establishing of justice and harmony throughout the world. To Kahn-Lyotard, the name of Hermes is "inscribed in a space of unexpectedness and mobility, qualifying even the ways and means by which he achieves divinity." Though primarily a guide for journeys, Hermes is also blamed for disastrous encounters by night, in the dim light and uncertain places outside the cities and towns. Trickery is the most significant of the god's characteristics; this quality lends an ambiguity to the nature of Hermes and to all his actions. He has been called an "unsettling figure" who tends to jeopardize the successful outcome of any enterprise. Hermes not only perjures himself before the tribunal of Zeus but also puts ambiguous and deceptive words into the heart of Pandora (Hesiod, Works and Days 67-68, 77-80; Theogony 58), making women, according to Hesiod, as duplicitous and dangerous as they are irresistible. He also facilitates marital union by guiding the bride, in his function of epithalamites, "nuptial", to the home of her new husband.

Hermes is always in motion; Kahn-Lyotard points out that there is always a "primordial uncertainty" connected to Hermes, and that chance and randomness are his only constant qualities. Hermes knows how to multiply flocks, but he can also on occasion decrease them (Hesiod, Theogony 444-447). Hermes occupies an "intermediary space"; he is the middle course whether he is the benevolent guide or the inexorable conductor of the souls of the dead to Hades. As the divine go-between, Hermes passes far more easily and naturally than any other god through the three realms of heaven, earth and underworld. Both humans and gods are normally constrained in their movements from one region to another; it is the nature of Hermes to move readily across boundaries which gods and humans normally find impassible. Hermes, as we have seen, disguises himself at Iliad 24.317-691 and guides Priam on the mortally dangerous journey from Troy to the tent of Achilles, the most implacable of all Troy's enemies. Hermes takes the reins of Priam's chariot, puts guards to sleep, advises the Trojan king on making his approach to Achilles, and assists him in his pre-dawn return to Troy. In the presence and under the influence of Hermes, watchful guards become unconscious, enemies meet on hospitable terms in the midst of war, and a frail old man succeeds in bridging the gulf between himself and the killer of his beloved son. It is the nature of the elusive and misleading Hermes thus to upset, overturn, and confound otherwise straightforward situations.

B. Hermes and the Underworld

Hermes is the guide of the dead. He conducted Heracles to Hades and back when the hero went to bring out the hellish hound Cerberus (Odyssey 11.626: "And Hermes was my guide."). Later in the Odyssey, we have seen the god leading the souls of the suitors whom Odysseus had killed to their final home in Hades (24.6-14):

And as in the innermost recess of a wondrous cave
bats flit about gibbering, when one has fallen
from off the rock from the chain in which they
cling to one another, so these went with him
gibbering, and Hermes, the Helper, led them down
the dank ways. Past the streams of Oceanus they
went, past the rock Leucas, past the gates of the
sun and the land of dreams, and quickly came to
the mead of asphodel, where the spirits dwell,
phantoms of men who have done with toils.

In tragedy, Ajax calls on Hermes to preside over
his suicide and give him an easy death
(Sophocles, Ajax 831-834); blind, aged Oedipus is
led by Hermes to the spot whence he is to vanish
mysteriously from the land of the living
(Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus 1547-1548).

Aeschylus says that the dying are seized by
Hermes (Libation Bearers 622). Hermes can also
act as guide to those rare individuals who are
able to undertake the upward journey. In the
Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Hermes brings Persephone
back to the land of the living (377-386):

And she mounted on the chariot, and the
strong slayer of Argus took reins and whip

in his dear hands and drove forth from the hall, the horses speeding readily. Swiftly they traversed 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.

The chorus of Persian elders in Aeschylus' Persians calls upon "Earth and King Hermes" to release the soul of Darius, the Great King of Persia, from Hades (629-630):
"Conduct him to light, up from the dead."

Jane Harrison sees the god's connection with the land of the dead as the key to a fundamental paradox in the nature of Hermes: he is both an unmoving stone boundary post and a winged messenger who is always in motion. In Harrison's view, it is the additional role of Hermes as psychopompos, or leader of souls to the Underworld, which provides the link between the static herm and the ever-moving god of many turnings. The connection between Hermes and the land of the dead ensured his early association with fertility and prosperity, although his later appearance as the Roman Mercury, the god of trade and commerce with a bulging money-bag, is not Greek. The name of Hermes as "Hermes Chthonios" (of the Underworld) and "Hermes Katochos" (the Holder-Down) on Classical Greek lead curse tablets, which

call down maledictions on their makers' enemies, is convincing evidence of the strong link in the popular imagination between Hermes and Hades. Hermes' role as a god with chthonic associations also explains the phallus which was almost always present on Classical herms; the phallus is not only an obvious symbol of fertility but also a very ancient apotropaic device which served to turn aside evil influence and assure prosperity and success. By 520 BC in Athens, for example, every neighborhood had its herm; they were sites of private, local sacrificial worship. The outrage and fear caused by the mysterious mutilation of the faces of many Athenian herms shortly before the departure of the great expeditionary force charged with the taking of Syracuse is good evidence of just how seriously Athenians took their local protectors and providers of good fortune (Thucydides 6.27):

While these preparations were going on it was found that in one night nearly all the stone Hermae in the city of Athens had had their faces disfigured by being cut about. These are a national institution, the well-known square-cut figures, of which there are great numbers both in the porches of private houses and in the temples. No one knew who had done this, but large rewards were offered by the state in order to find out who the criminals were, and there was also a decree passed guaranteeing immunity to anyone, citizen, alien, or slave, who knew of

any other sacriligious act that had taken place and would come forward with information about it. The whole affair, indeed, was taken very seriously, as it was reargarded as an omen for the expedition, and at the same time as evidence of a revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the democracy.

Otto disagrees with Harrison's chthonic interpretation and sees the role of Hermes as guide as the fundamental key to his nature: although Hermes may appear to be linked to the Underworld by such things as his epithet Chthonios, "always he reveals himself again as guide and he is therefore the same here as in his other spheres of action. In the favor of guidance the true essence of the god is manifested." Hermes, Otto argues, is the "wonderful companion" who is always present whenever a threshold is crossed or a road is travelled. It is a mistake, he feels to believe that the chthonic nature of the god ever supersedes his identity of divine guide to the living, as well as to the dead. It is precisely the nature of Hermes to belong to no fixed location and to have no permanent abode; "always he is on the road between here and yonder, and suddenly he joins some solitary wayfarer." Otto cites as an occurrence

of this type the events at Odyssey 10.277ff., where Odysseus has set out alone to find the companions who are being held in animal form by the witch Circe. Alone, walking through unfamiliar forests, he is confronted by Hermes "in the likeness of a young man with the first down upon his lip, in whom the charm of youth is fairest"; the disguised god explains the danger of Circe and picks the magic herb which allows Odysseus to enter the home of the sorceress without fear.

II. The Ambiguity and Unity of Hermes

Hermes "is the friendliest of the gods to men and the most generous giver" (Aristophanes, Peace 394); he brings both calculated and unexpected gain. A sudden stroke of luck or a windfall was to the Greeks a hermaion, something of or from Hermes (e.g. Aeschylus, Eumenides 947). On the other hand, Hermes is the master of the art of thieving. In the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, Apollo accuses him of being a burglar (282ff.); Euripides calls Hermes "lord of thieves" (Rhesus 217f.). Hermes "ponders sheer trickery in his heart, deeds such as knavish

folk pursue in the dark night-time" (HHH 66-67). He is, in Otto's memorable phrase, "the god of jolly and unscrupulous profit." But profit and loss belong together; the god who is capable of dropping a windfall into one person's life can also make wealth, or cattle, vanish in the blink of an eye. Hermes "is thought most to care for and to increase flocks" (Pausanias 2.3.4). Hesiod, as we have seen above (Theogony 444-447), points out that he can decrease as well as multiply sheep. Hermes is the guide of shepherds and of flocks, but he is a treacherous guide who can also lead astray; he causes both finding and losing. Therefore, Otto views Hermes not, as Harrison does, as a god of generation and fertility. The blessings of Hermes amount to much the same thing as the favor of a fertility god such as Demeter, but Hermes operates in a quite different manner, through deception and subterfuge; this gives him "the illusory character of a god of fertility." Hermes can also be responsible for the no less astonishing diminution of herds. Hermes "plagues many a lonely herdsman in mountain glades" when he comes upon their herds and flocks and has a hankering for meat

(HHH 286-288). Otto argues convincingly that the unity of the Greek religious understanding of Hermes lies precisely in the apparent contradictions: "danger and protection, terror and reassurance, certainty and straying." Otto supplies a poetic and evocative essay on night (pp. 118-120), which he sees as a realm which, due to its ambiguities, is peculiarly linked with Hermes.

Otto rejects all attempts to identify various strands or aspects of the Hermes tradition as "earlier" or "later," as more or less "primitive" or Classical. He sees no purpose in seeking, in the case of Hermes, to differentiate between earlier and later qualities, or to trace a line of historical development. All the traits of Hermes, regardless of which emerged earlier or later in the history of Greek religion, display the same basic meaning. His properties of "nimbleness and subtle cunning" set him apart from the other children of Zeus and link him with divinities of an earlier period, especially Kronos and Prometheus, who are characterized by craft,

resourcefulness, ingenuity, and deception.

III. Hermes in the Post-Classical World

Plato attempts to derive the name of Hermes from hermeneus or interpreter (Cratylus 407e-408a), getting it just backward but stressing the Classical link between the pillar-god and his role of divine messenger. Centuries later, in Acts of the Apostles (14:8-12), Paul and Barnabas were hailed by the local population as Hermes and Zeus, after a miracle of healing at the partially Hellenized Asia Minor town of Lystra; Paul was thought to be Hermes "because he was the chief speaker." This odd story is an indication of how widespread in time and geography was the notion of Hermes as a regular visitor to the earth and as a spokesman for the chief god. Stoics understood Hermes allegorically as the "word" (logos) of the Stoic school's single divine creative force, often identified as Nature or Necessity. In this, they anticipated by several centuries John 1:1, "In the beginning was the logos." By the fourth century AD, some pagan philosophers had developed this idea to the extent that Hermes became not only

a divine spokesman but a creator himself. A papyrus, almost certainly influenced by Christian theology, describes Zeus as creating Hermes out of himself and instructing his son "to make a most beautiful cosmos." That is, acting on behalf of the supreme father, Hermes creates the universe, much as Jesus, the Logos of God (John 1:3), acts on behalf of his own divine Father: "All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." From the time of Herodotus on, the Egyptian god Thoth was identified with Hermes. Beginning in the second century AD, the so-called Hermes Trismegistos (Thrice-Great Hermes) was credited with a corpus of the pseudonymous Hermetica, works probably of Hellenistic and later Egyptian origin, on magic, astrology, divination, and other occult topics. Articles by Jean-Pierre Mahé and Antoine Faivre on "Hermes Trismegistos" and "Hermetism" in Eliade's Encyclopedia of Religion supply interesting accounts, with thorough documentation, of this peculiar development in the Hermes tradition. As early as the third century BC, the tradition had become confused and Thrice-Great Hermes was sometimes

thought to be the god's human grandson, who was sometimes supposed to have lived in the time of Moses. In any case, the Hermetic writings have a long, colorful, and intricate history. Augustine (City of God, 8.23-26), assuming that Hermes Trismegistos was a sage who lived long before the philosophers of Classical Greece, quotes a Latin Hermetic text called Asclepius and condemns Hermes as a blasphemous magician who animated statues by conjuring spirits into them. Greek Hermetic manuscripts reaching Renaissance Florence around 1460 enjoyed enormous prestige in the court of Cosimo de' Medici, taking precedence even over the collected works of Plato in being speedily translated into Latin. Editions of and extracts from the mystical Hermetic texts were widely read in fifteenth-century Italy; their influence surfaces in, for example, Botticelli's painting Primavera (1478). The tile floor of the cathedral of Siena (1488) bears a "portrait" of Hermes Trismegistos, shown as a robed and bearded old man identified in an inscription as "Hermes Mercury Thrice-Great, Contemporary of Moses." The mixture of Gnostic, magical, and philosophical documents attributed to

Hermes continued to influence scholars and occultists until the nineteenth century; the Rosicrucian and Theosophical movements were concerned with these documents because of the allegedly enormous antiquity of the Egyptian wisdom they purported to contain. Serious scholarly analysis of these texts began only in the early twentieth century.

POSEIDON

Introduction

Poseidon was originally a god of earthquakes and of subterranean water; his association with the sea is apparently later and secondary. Poseidon (Doric, Poteidan) appears to have a Greek name and to be a native Greek divinity. There is a general consensus, but by no means unanimous, that the god's name means "husband of Da," or "lord of the earth," that is, Posis Das, consort of Ge or Da or Demeter. His cult titles, in Homer and elsewhere, are most often enosichthon and ennosigaios, both of which mean "earth-shaker" and refer to the god's role as causer of earthquakes. Poseidon is also addressed as gaieochos, "earth-possessing" or "earth holder," perhaps referring to his original function as husband of the earth-goddess. Poseidon's close association with water, particularly water which fertilizes the earth, probably ought to be thought of in this connection.

Along with Zeus and Hades, Poseidon is one of the sons of Kronos. A coin of Lesbos links the three brothers, showing Zeus, Hades and Poseidon. with the inscription "high gods of Mytilene." Homer considers Poseidon to be younger than Zeus (Iliad 15.204), but to Hesiod and most other authors it is Zeus who is youngest (cf. Theogony 453ff.). Beyond the account of his place among those children of Rhea and Kronos whom Hesiod describes as being swallowed and regurgitated by their father, Poseidon has little mythology of his own. Homer (Iliad 15.187ff.) describes how the three divine sons of Kronos, having deposed their father through a successful coup, draw lots for the three main divisions of the universe: "the grey sea"

becomes Poseidon's domain; "the murky darkness" of the Underworld falls to Hades; Zeus, of course, wins command of "the broad heaven, amid the air and the clouds."

The offspring of Poseidon are generally rough, brutal or monstrous: the Cyclops Polyphemus; the merman Triton who is human from the waist up and fish from the waist down (Hesiod, Theogony 930-934); the earth-born giant Antaeus (Apollodorus 2.115); and, according to some sources, the gigantic hunter Orion and the blasphemous giants Otus and Ephialtes who made an assault on Olympus. By some accounts, Poseidon is either the father or the lover of the foul bird-women, the Harpies (cf. Servius on Aeneid 3.241 and scholiast on Iliad 23.346). A shining exception to all this monstrosity and deformity are the winged horse Pegasus and the hero Chrysaor ("Golden Sword"), fathered by Poseidon on the Gorgon Medusa; she bore her glorious offspring as Perseus cut off her head (Theogony 280). The sublime, immortal horse "dwells in the house of Zeus and brings to wise Zeus the thunder and lightning" (285-286); Chrysaor, on the other hand, will become the father of the three-headed monster Geryon, and of the half-woman, half-snake Echidna.

Along with Apollo, Poseidon built the walls of Troy for king Laomedon, only to be cheated of his pay (Iliad 21.436ff.). For this reason, Poseidon is violently pro-Greek during the Trojan war and never misses an opportunity to damage the cause of Troy; Apollo, on the other hand, is a loyal ally of Troy and of Hector in particular. Elsewhere in Homer, Poseidon is perhaps best known for his anger at Odysseus for blinding his son, the Cyclops Polyphemus; in revenge, the god curses Odysseus, opposes his return home in various ways and brings it about that Odysseus does in fact, as Polyphemus' prayer to Poseidon

stipulates, return home alone to find much trouble waiting for him there (Odyssey 9.532-536):

"Grant that Odysseus, the sacker of cities, may never reach his home, even the son of Laertes, whose home is in Ithaca; but if it is his fate to see his friends and to reach his well-built house and his native land, late may he come and in evil case, after losing all his comrades, in a ship that is another's; and may he find woes in his house." So he spoke in prayer, and the dark-haired god heard him.

In Classical Greece, the cult of Poseidon most commonly concerns seafaring and safety in navigation; he is occasionally worshipped as god of earthquakes and of fresh water, many springs having been attributed to a stroke of his trident. His role as Lord of Horses (Hippios; cf. Aeschylus, Seven Against Thebes 130) is not completely understood (cf. sections I and IV, below), but may be connected with the god's having been a divinity of the original Indo-European speaking invaders of the Greek peninsula who also brought the first horses. Guthrie and Rose suggest that in remotest antiquity Poseidon may have been a horse; in some accounts, Poseidon and Demeter mate in the forms of stallion and mare. The roles of Poseidon as lord of horses and patron of fresh-water springs are linked in the "horse" element found in the names of many springs: Aganippe, Hippocrene, Hippe. In all probability, Guthrie continues, "it was not a blow from the trident, but a stamp of his hoof, which caused them to gush forth."

Poseidon is a frequent subject in Archaic and Classical art. He always appears in human form and is portrayed as bearded and carrying the trident which Aeschylus calls the ichthybolos machana, or "fish-striking device"; often a fish or dolphin is portrayed nearby. Without the marine attributes, he is difficult to distinguish from Zeus, who is the probable subject

of the well-known early Classical bronze statue found in the sea off Cape Artemisium and sometimes said to be Poseidon. The contest of Athena and Poseidon for the ownership of the land of Attica is the subject of the west pediment of the Parthenon; Athena won with her miraculous creation of the olive tree, judged by the canny Athenians-to-be as a more useful gift than Poseidon's magical salt-water spring (see the chapter "Athena"). In frustration and anger, Poseidon flooded the Thriasian Plain with seawater. Eventually a reconciliation between Poseidon and the city of Athens was reached, under the terms of which the god would indeed receive special worship in Athens, as Poseidon Erechtheus (cf. Herodotus 8.55, Pausanias 2.30.6, 2.32.8, and Apollodorus 3.14.1; also Ovid, Metamorphoses 6.75ff. and Varro, quoted by Augustine, City of God 18.9).

I. Earth-Shaker, Earth-Embracer

As noted above, the reading of Poseidon's name as Lord of the Earth is by no means universally accepted. Burkert, for example, feels that it is possible to prove neither that the name refers to the earth, nor that Poseidon is to be thought of as the consort of the Earth-goddess. Whatever the correct etymological interpretation may finally prove to be, it is clear that in the Classical period, not only was Poseidon considered to be the cause of earthquakes, but he was also invoked to end them; in this latter capacity he was addressed as asphaleios or "immovable."

When, in 198 BC, volcanic activity caused the emergence from the sea of a new island, the inhabitants of nearby Thera dedicated a temple to Poseidon Asphaleios on it. As god of earthquakes,

Poseidon was credited with carving out the Vale of Tempe with his trident; he also makes openings in the ground through which fresh water may reach the surface of the earth. When displeased, the god is also capable of closing these openings, as when he caused a drought to punish Argos for preferring Hera to him. The Greeks also attributed actual catastrophes to Poseidon, such as an earthquake at Sparta in 464 BC (Thucydides 1.128.1) and the sinking of the cities of Helike and Bura into the Corinthian Gulf in 373. The two latter towns were said to have been guilty of sacrilege against Poseidon (Pausanias 7.24.1-6). The storms Poseidon sends are, of course, normally to be dreaded; on the other hand, a new cult to Poseidon the Saviour was established by the Athenians in the year 480 subsequent to serious damage inflicted upon the Persian fleet by a sudden storm at sea (Herodotus 7.192).

As we have seen, some legends refer to Poseidon mating, in the shape of a stallion, with Demeter in the form of a mare. Cf. Pausanias 8.25.5:

When Demeter was wandering in search of her daughter, she was followed, it is said, by Poseidon, who lusted after her. So she turned, the story runs, into a mare, and grazed with the mares of Oncius; realizing that he was outwitted, Poseidon too changed into a stallion and enjoyed Demeter.

Cf. also Pausanias 8.42.1:

The Phigalians accept the account of the people of Thelpusa about the mating of Poseidon and Demeter, but they assert that Demeter gave birth, not to a horse, but to the Mistress, as the Arcadians call her.

These are almost certainly extremely ancient tales of the union of male and female powers of fertility; later, according to Rose

the feminine force was hellenized into Demeter, goddess of grain, and the masculine became Poseidon, lord of horses.

There are other possible connections among Poseidon, the Earth, the sea, and horses. Otto suggests that the god's mate Medusa may also be an earth-divinity; her name means "she who sways." Poseidon's strength as earth's consort is revealed in the shaking of the earth which is referred to in several of his epithets. At Iliad 20.57ff., he causes "the vast earth to quake, and the steep crests of the mountains." So severe is the earthquake that the lord of shades fears lest the earth be split open and his "dread and dank abode" be laid open to view from above. Poseidon can cause salt water to flow from the earth and he is also the god of freshwater springs and rivers. The most impressive manifestation of Poseidon, however, is the sea which he can rouse into raging storms, marine "earthquakes." Bulls are likewise part of this complex picture. In myth Poseidon occasionally causes bulls to emerge from the sea, always with dire results. A bull from the sea kills the unfortunate Hippolytus, son of Theseus; another maritime bull, Zeus in disguise, becomes the father of the cannibalistic Minotaur. Poseidon, then, is destructive when associated with the bull, whereas in equine form it is his generative power and relationship with the earth which is foremost. Bremmer echoes this when he characterizes Poseidon as "the ancient Greek god who embodies primitive power—the power of the untamed, the brutal, the wild."

In his survey of how the different characteristics of Poseidon were coordinated in Greek thought during the historic era, Rudhardt presents Poseidon as lord or husband of the earth and as author of earthquakes; under the cult-title Phytalmios

("nourisher of plants"), Poseidon is associated with agricultural festivals and was clearly thought of as supplier of fertility to the soil. In Rudhardt's opinion, Poseidon's mating with Demeter as a horse confirms the god's function as lord of the earth and source of the soil's fecundity. The coupling of Poseidon and Demeter, as horses, engendered two children, the horse Areion and a daughter whose true name is known only to initiates. The union of Poseidon and Demeter thus mirrors the union of Zeus and Demeter as yet another example of the hieros gamos, the sacred marriage between the masculine and feminine principles of fertility.

II. Poseidon in the Bronze Age

Poseidon's exact place in Mycenaean religion cannot be known. The occurrence of his name on Bronze Age clay tablets from Pylos and elsewhere, predating 1200 BC, places him in an older order of Greek religion, where he seems to have been more important even than Zeus. Burkert points out that Poseidon is more prominent even than Zeus in Pylos; this brings to mind Nestor's great sacrifice of black bulls to Poseidon at Pylos (Odyssey 3.4-66). The nature of the sacrifice, black animals offered in great numbers, points to a major cult of Poseidon as a god of subterranean fertility. The Pylos tablets also mention festivals in the god's honor and a cult association dedicated to him. Burkert discusses the remarkable continuity between Mycenaean and later Greek ritual practices which may be inferred from the Pylos documents. He cites a Bronze Age list from Pylos of items offered to Poseidon: wheat, wine, one bull, ten cheeses, one ram's fleece, and honey; wheat again, wine, two

rams, five cheeses, oil, and one ram's fleece; and again two rams, corn, and wine; corn, wine, five cheeses. Burkert concludes that "not only the combination of items, but the very order in which they are listed, agrees with Greek cultic precepts: first a preparatory offering of grain—corn or cakes—then a libation, then the animal sacrifice, then additional bloodless offerings, and the fleece probably for purification. Just as the name of the god Poseidon survived, so in Pylos a sacrificial ritual was performed which corresponded in essential respects with the later Greek cult."

Burkert finds structural parallels between the traditional Homeric division of the Universe among the Olympian brothers Poseidon, Zeus, and Hades and similar divisions in the extremely ancient Mesopotamian pantheon. If, according to this view, Poseidon is "Lord of the Deep," or "Lord of the Waters of the Deep," he is then comparable to the Sumerian Enki, who shares mastery of the cosmos with the sky god Anu and the storm god Enlil. As Lord of the Deep, Poseidon may also be a god of oracles. Burkert points out that the oracle of the dead at Cape Tainaron is dedicated to Poseidon and that he is even mentioned as an original lord of Delphi. Homer claims in the Odyssey that Odysseus, sailor and object of the wrath of Poseidon, will make his peace with the god by sacrificing to him in a land far from the sea (11.119-134).

III. Poseidon in Homer

The Homeric Hymn to Poseidon, although only seven lines long, nevertheless mentions all of his main characteristics:

I begin to sing about Poseidon, the great god, mover of the earth and fruitless sea, god of the deep who is also lord of Helicon and wide Aegae. A two-fold office the gods allotted you, O Shaker of the Earth, to be a tamer of horses and a saviour of ships. Hail Poseidon, Holder of the Earth, dark-haired lord. O blessed one, be kindly in heart and help those who voyage in ships.

Despite the hopeful language of the Hymn, Rose points out that in myth Poseidon is almost always described as violent and ill-tempered; since "a sea-god pure and simple would surely be sometimes calm," Rose suggests that Poseidon may owe some part of his violence and roughness to his very early identification with earthquakes. As always, the early origins of the god are extremely difficult to recover; in any event, Rose continues, "in Homer we already meet him as a fully-formed god, completely anthropomorphic, whose nature is assumed by the poet to be known to everyone. He is a violent partisan, who from first to last does everything possible to help the Achaeans and harm the Trojans."

In both Homeric epics Poseidon is, in Rose's words, "a savagely majestic figure," with enormous strength, even for a god; when he descends to do battle along with the other gods, Hades fears that Poseidon will split the earth which encloses and conceals the realm of the dead (Iliad 20.61-65). In four steps Poseidon can cross the sea from Samothrace to Aegae, where his palace is. Homer's remarkable and evocative description of the advent of the god creates a vivid image of divine grandeur (Iliad 13.17-31):

Forthwith then he went down from the rugged mount, striding forth with swift footsteps, and the high mountains trembled and the woodland beneath the immortal feet of Poseidon as he went. Thrice he strode in his course, and with the fourth stride he reached his goal, even Aegae, where was

his famous palace builded in the depths of the mere, golden and gleaming, imperishable forever. Thither came he, and let harness beneath his car his two bronze-hooved horses, swift of flight, with flowing manes of gold; and with gold he clad himself about his body, and grasped the well-wrought whip of gold, and stepped upon his car, and set out to drive over the waves. Then gambolled the sea-beasts beneath him on every side from out the deeps, for well they knew their lord, and in gladness the sea parted before him; right swiftly sped they on, and the axle of bronze was not wetted beneath; and unto the ships of the Achaeans did the prancing steeds bear their lord.

In the Odyssey, Poseidon's hatred of the hero is one of the principle motifs of the story; it is the opposition of the god of the sea which makes Odysseus's return voyage so long and dangerous. Though formidable enough that a stroke of his trident can smash a rock and drown the hero standing on it (Odyssey 4.505ff.), Poseidon is nevertheless limited in various ways. He only just catches sight of Odysseus as the hero is about to reach safety; the god, it seems, had been away from Greece, celebrating with the Ethiopians. In anger at his near failure to make Odysseus as miserable as possible, Poseidon stirs up a mighty storm at sea and smashes Odysseus' craft; then the god, still in an irritable frame of mind, goes to his home near Aegae (Odyssey 5.366-381):

Poseidon, the earth-shaker, made to rise up a great wave, dread and grievous, arching over from above, and drove it upon [Odysseus]. And as when a strong wind tosses a heap of straw that is dry, and some it scatters here, some there, even so the wave scattered the long timbers of the raft. . . . And the lord, the earth-shaker, saw him, and he shook his head, and thus he spoke to his own heart: "So now, after thou hast suffered many ills, go wandering over the deep, till thou comest among the folk fostered of Zeus. Yet even so, methinks, thou shalt not make any mock at thy suffering." So saying, he lashed his fair-maned horses, and came to Aegae, where is his glorious palace.

In Homer the dominion of Poseidon is almost entirely limited to the sea. The other gods of Homer may intervene in human life in various ways, but Poseidon is described only in connection with the sea and with horses. On the other hand, Poseidon alone dares to protest against the general overlordship of Zeus and would like to have Zeus confined to heaven as his only lawful domain, just as Poseidon is limited to the sea. Burkert suggests that the resentful tone of these lines may recall a much earlier time when Poseidon, as consort and lord of the Earth, was in fact, as the Pylos tablets seem to show, a divinity of at least equal importance with Zeus (Iliad 15.185-199, Lattimore trans.):

Then deeply vexed the famed shaker of the earth spoke to her: "No, no. Great though he is, this that he has said is too much, if he will force me against my will, me, who am his equal in rank. Since we are three brothers born by Rhea to Kronos, Zeus, and I, and the third is Hades, lord of the dead men. All was divided among us three ways, each given his domain. I when the lots were shaken drew the grey sea to live in forever; Hades drew the lot of the mists and the darkness, and Zeus was allotted the wide sky, in the cloud and the bright air. But earth and high Olympus are common to all three. Therefore I am no part of the mind of Zeus. Let him in tranquillity and powerful as he is stay satisfied with his third share. And let him absolutely stop frightening me, as if I were mean, with his hands."

IV. Lord of the Sea, Master of Horses

In Classical Greece, Poseidon is the particular patron and nemesis of sailors and fishermen. Painters often show the god with, or holding, either a dolphin or a trident, the fisherman's spear which symbolizes his power over the life of the sea and

over those people who venture out onto it. Those who displease Poseidon for any reason are completely at the god's mercy once they have left the land, as Odysseus found to his great cost. Sailors and fishermen therefore take pains to placate Poseidon, sacrificing and praying for a safe voyage before departure, and giving appropriate thanks upon their return. Later, aged sailors and fishermen dedicate the tools of their trade, oars, tridents, and nets to Poseidon in his temple as thanks for survival and in the hope of easy old age and death.

The connection between Poseidon Lord of the Sea and Poseidon Master of Horses has attracted considerable speculation involving the possible origin of the god as the horse-divinity of Bronze Age Greece. Burkert conjectures that the cult of Poseidon Hippios, or Horse Poseidon, is connected with the introduction of the horse and war-chariot from Anatolia to Greece about 1600 BC. In historical times, the techniques of horse-breaking and chariot-building belong to Athena's sphere of competence; Poseidon, however, seems to embody a less rational aspect of horse-rearing. Burkert suggests that Poseidon, unlike Athena the goddess of intellect and technique, personifies the horse's elemental force. The god is linked to the violence and unpredictability of sea-storm and earthquake, that is, to the most powerful natural forces; likewise, the horse for which Poseidon stands was the strongest source of energy which humans in antiquity could control. The raw, elemental power of Poseidon, then, must be seen as clearly distinct from the intellect, clarity, and illumination associated with divinities such as Athena and Apollo. Only the completely irresistible thunderbolts of Zeus can overcome the might of Poseidon. Darmon sees the taming of the winged Pegasus by the hero Bellerophon as an instance of intellect and technique gaining mastery over the

horse's unchained and elemental force which emanates from Poseidon.

V. Poseidon and Athena

As we have seen, Athena and Poseidon are linked through their connection with the horse. Burkert points out that Athena Hippias is the counterpart of Poseidon Hippios. "Poseidon sires the horse, and Athena invents the bridle and bit, thereby placing the animal at the disposal of man." Bellerophon, the first horseman, sacrifices a bull to Poseidon and sets up an altar to Athena Hippias (Pindar, Olympian 13.63-82). Bremmer further articulates the various roles played by the two divinities in connection with horses, suggesting that Poseidon is to be associated with the "wild, nervous and powerful nature of the horse," whereas Athena supplies the technique of managing horses. Consequently, one prays to Poseidon both before and after a horse or chariot race, but to Athena during the contest when technique and skill are paramount.

The chief encounter of Poseidon and Athena in myth is their quarrel over Athens; cf. Apollodorus 3.14.1:

So Poseidon was the first that came to Attica, and with a blow of his trident on the middle of the acropolis, he produced a sea which they now call Erechtheis. (*3.14.1.b) After him came Athena, and, having called on Cecrops to witness her act of taking possession, she planted an olive tree, which is still shown in the Pandrosium. . . . [T]he country was adjudged to Athena, because Cecrops bore witness that she had been the first to plant the olive. Athena, therefore, called the city Athens after herself, and Poseidon in hot anger flooded the Thriasian plain and laid Attica under the sea.

Augustine, City of God 18.9, records a version of the Roman Varro's lost mid-first century B.C. account of the results of this contest:

An olive tree suddenly appeared, and in another spot water gushed out, and these portents so alarmed the king that he sent to Delphic Apollo to inquire their meanings and to ask what action he should take. Apollo answered that the olive signified Minerva and the water stood for Neptune, and that it rested with the citizens to decide from which of the two deities thus symbolized their city should, for preference, take its name. On receipt of this oracle, Cecrops called an assembly of all the citizens, male and female, to vote on the question; for at that time and in that part of the world the custom was that women as well as men should take part in deliberations on matters of state. Now when the matter was put before the multitude, the men voted for Neptune, the women for Minerva; and, as it happened, the women outnumbered the men by one, and so the victory went to Minerva. Then Neptune was furious, and devastated the Athenian territory by floods of sea-water—for it is quite easy for demons to spread waters about on any scale at their pleasure. To appease his wrath, according to the same authority, the women suffered a threefold punishment: they were never to have the vote again; their children were never to take their mother's name; and no-one was ever to call them 'Athenian Women.'

In Varro's account, then, the women of Athens choose Athena; ironically, this choice brings about the dominance of the males of Athens. In voting for Athena, the women have chosen a warrior goddess, a virgin without a mother, daughter of a father who is also the nearly omnipotent father of gods and men. Despite her sex, Athena is in Greek mythology unambiguously on the side of patriarchy; during the trial of Orestes for the murder of his mother Clytemnestra, Athena decides unhesitatingly in favor of the rights of the father (Aeschylus, Eumenides 734-739):

It is my duty to give the final judgment and I shall cast my vote for Orestes. For there was no mother who gave me birth; and in all things, except for marriage, wholeheartedly I am for the male and entirely on the father's

side. Therefore, I will not award greater honor to the death of a woman who killed her husband, the master of the house.

Varro's story, then, bases the exclusion of women from the political life of the city on women's choice of Athena; so fearful was the wrath of the rejected Poseidon that he had to be appeased by the eternal punishment of those who had rejected him by choosing the daughter of Zeus. After their disastrous choice, and to appease the wrath of Poseidon who was flooding Attica with sea water, Athenian women were punished by never again having the right to vote; moreover, children would never bear the names of their mothers. Athena may be the patroness of the city, but Poseidon is the founder of the social order and of the supremacy of the men of Athens. For Darmon, Poseidon exemplifies and supports the ancient Greek system of subordination of wife to husband. The god is the lover of Amymone, one of the two Danaids who respected the marriage bond and did not murder their husbands; she is thus "one of the leading models of womanhood as defined by Greek thought, illustrating the normal female condition in which fully accepted marriage occupies a central place" (cf. Apollodorus 2.1.4; Nonnus, Dionysiaca 43.383-393). Bonnefoy, p. 401, supplies a photograph of a 3rd. c. AD mosaic showing Poseidon and the dutiful Amymone.

VI. The Cults of Poseidon

Whatever his origins and original nature, it is clear that Poseidon is an extremely ancient and important god. We have seen that the Linear B tablets show him to be the principal god of Bronze Age Pylos; the Odyssey seems to preserve a memory of this in Homer's description of a magnificent sacrifice in honor

of Poseidon on the seashore—each of nine groups of 500 men offers nine bulls to the god! Behind this tale, Burkert points out, is the traditional belief that the Ionian Greek communities of the Asia Minor coast trace their origins to Nestor's Pylos. The great panhellenic festival of historical times, the Panionia, united the citizens of the twelve Ionian Greek cities in honoring Poseidon Heliconius. The central sanctuary of the Ionians, the Panionion, was on the promontory of Mycale between Samos and Miletus; it is described by Herodotus (1.148):

The Panionion is a sacred ground in Mycale, facing north; it was set apart for Poseidon of Helicon by the joint will of the Ionians. Mycale is a western promontory of the mainland opposite Samos; the Ionians used to assemble there from their cities and keep the festival to which they gave the name of Panionia.

The original date of this joint cult is uncertain. A precinct containing an altar and council chamber dating from the sixth century BC has been found but the cult is certainly much older than this; it may date to the Ionian Greek takeover of a pre-existing local cult at the time of the original occupation of the area in the second millennium BC. As in Homer, the festival featured the sacrifice of a bull to Poseidon.

Cities such as Poteidaia on the Chalcidian peninsula and Poseidonia/Paestum in southern Italy are indications of the widespread worship of Poseidon. Poseidonia bears the god's name and he appears on its coins; nevertheless, the principal deity of the Italian city in actual cult practice was Hera (see the chapter "Hera"). The Isthmian games, held near the city of Corinth, were raised to panhellenic status in 581 BC. The site of the festival contained a Classical temple of Poseidon which replaced an Archaic temple destroyed by fire. The temple

statuary showed Poseidon together with Amphitrite. He was honored as King, Basileus, in Troizen where he became the father of Theseus, the great king of Athens and consolidator of Attica. It is hardly surprising that Poseidon was worshipped with particular enthusiasm on islands; they are, after all, surrounded by the element peculiar to him. Thasos had an especially monumental Poseidon sanctuary, dating from the fourth century BC. A statue associated with this complex of propylaea, altars, and shrine probably shows Amphitrite, the god's consort, riding on a dolphin.

Poseidon was god of the sea, and his temple often stood close to the shore. The famous and spectacularly-situated temple of Poseidon at Sounion, which Lord Byron celebrated and vandalized, was the sign of home for Athenians sailing across the Aegean. Two colossal, 3-meter kouroi were found here. The badly eroded temple frieze probably showed the battles of Gods and Giants, and of Lapiths and Centaurs, as well as the exploits of Theseus, son (by some accounts) of Poseidon. In fact, despite his widespread worship, sculptured representations of Poseidon are surprisingly rare. Among the few other possible examples cited by Ferguson is a large bronze, unfortunately armless, from about 480 BC, dredged from the sea, which he claims "declares itself to be the god. He is tall and kindly, and was perhaps holding the trident and a dolphin." Artistically speaking at least, Poseidon seems in some ways to be almost a double of Zeus; as we have seen, he can only be identified without ambiguity by his emblem, the trident, or by the presence of a dolphin.

Poseidon's connections with Athens are, as we have seen, complex. In addition to the conflict between Poseidon and Athena, the god is identified in some way with the cult on the

Acropolis of Erechtheus, the ancestral king of Athens. The same altar serves both, but temple and temenos alike remain an Erechtheum. For Burkert, the pairing of Poseidon and Erechtheus is part of the frequently-observed polarity between Olympian and chthonic deities. Statues of Zeus Chthonius and Zeus Hypsistos, Subterranean Zeus and Zeus Most High, stood side by side in Corinth (Pausanias 2.2.8). Likewise, chthonic and Olympian rituals are often seen to be bound up with each other. It is also the case, Burkert continues, that in myth gods often have a mortal double who could "almost be mistaken for the god except for the fact that he is subject to death, and indeed is killed by the god himself." Such pairings include that of Hyacinthus with Apollo, Iphigenia with Artemis, and Erechthonius with Poseidon. Just as Iphigenia is also worshipped as Artemis, likewise Erechtheus becomes Poseidon Erechtheus. Myth, Burkert concludes, "has separated into two figures what in the sacrificial ritual is present as a tension." This cult of Olympian and chthonic Poseidon is further complicated by being mingled with the worship of Athena. Burkert points out that in Athens the family of the Eteoboutadai provides both the priests of Erechtheus-Poseidon and also the priestesses of Athena Polias; thus, the central cults on the Classical Acropolis are interwoven in an immensely ancient and complex fabric of myth and tradition.

ZEUS

Introduction

Father of gods and men, as Homer frequently calls him, Zeus is the only member of the Greek pantheon whose origins and name are unambiguously Indo-European. Father Zeus, Zeus pater, is the same god as Latin Iuppiter, Sanskrit dyaus pitar, and Germanic Ziu or Tiw. The root di or zi means "sky," and is found also in Latin dies, "day." The cults of Zeus, as we shall see, establish without doubt that he is first of all a weather god, lord of both the bright and stormy sky, and master of thunder, lightning, and storms. In his monumental work, Zeus the European Sky-God, A.B. Cook documents a very large number of mountain-top shrines sacred to the god of meteorological phenomena. For the Greeks, of course, Zeus had his principal throne and residence on Mt. Olympus, the name of which may be a pre-Greek word meaning "mountain."

It is oddly appropriate that the Greek sky god who exercises supreme power over humans and the other divinities is the only one whose name is, in Burkert's phrase, "entirely transparent etymologically." Zeus is therefore the Sky Father or Bright Father, the "Cloud Gatherer" of Homer. It seems reasonable to assume that the cult of Zeus was associated particularly with mountain peaks because it is there where clouds may be observed to accumulate and where storms gather. From his mountain outposts Zeus sends rain, lightning, and thunder. It must have been, as Guthrie suggests, that Zeus most impressed himself upon the imaginations of his earliest worshippers as lord of the thunderbolt. In this role, he acquired "a magnificent series of sonorous epithets": loud-thundering, loud-sounding, lightener-

and-thunderer, high-thundering, thunderbolt wielder, delighting in thunder, lord of bright lightning.

Mount Lycaion in Arcadia, Ida on Crete, and especially Olympus in northern Greece are among the many stormy peaks sacred to the lord of the lightning which is the supreme manifestation of the power of Zeus. Thunderbolts are the means by which he imposes ultimate authority over gods and men; shrines were set up wherever lightning struck, dedicated to Zeus Kataibates or "Zeus Who Comes Down," possibly in order to ward off future strikes. The lightning of Zeus is utterly irresistible; it destroys his enemies without fail. Other gods may scheme against Zeus, even disobey him for a time, but his power is of an order of magnitude greater than all of theirs combined. His will remains supreme, subordinate only to the shadowy and inscrutable dictates of overriding Fate; Zeus' words at Iliad 8.18-27 illustrate this:

"Hang a golden rope from the sky, and hang onto it all you gods and goddesses; but you could not drag down from sky to ground Zeus the highest counsellor, not though you toil so greatly; but whenever I earnestly wished, I would drag you up and earth and sea with you."

It is by the possession and use of raw power, and not through the possession of any abstract quality such as justice, that Zeus comes to rule the universe (cf. Hesiod, Theogony 453-506). Like the successful leader of a military coup, Zeus leads his brother and sister gods in a revolt against the Titans; victory is gained through the thunderbolts of Zeus: "In them he trusts and rules over mortals and immortals" (506). After gaining control of the universe, and again like a victorious revolutionary, Zeus divides up the spoils, assigning the government of the cosmos to his allies: the sea to Poseidon,

the Underworld to Hades, and so on. Zeus retains supreme power and control of the sky for himself. Most commonly in Greek art before Phidias, Zeus was represented as a warrior god, striding forward and brandishing his thunderbolt, the visible sign of his supremacy.

First of the main consorts of Zeus, according to Hesiod, was Metis (Theogony 886-887): "Zeus, king of the gods, made Metis his wife first, and she was wisest among gods and mortal men." Zeus swallowed Metis before their daughter Athena could be born lest Metis fulfill the prophecy that she would bear to Zeus a god who would overthrow him (897-898): ". . . afterwards she was to bear a son of overbearing spirit, king of gods and men." Next in the sequence of Zeus' mates was Themis ("Right" or "Law"), who bore the Horai (Seasons) and Moirai (Fates). Eurynome became the mother of the Charites, more familiar as the Graces, sometimes vague in number but usually represented as being three on the authority of Hesiod. Demeter bore Zeus the single daughter Kore (the Maid), or Persephone, personification of the fruitfulness of the earth (see the chapter "Demeter"). By Mnemosyne (Memory) Zeus is the father of the nine Muses. This seems clearly to be an allegorical legend conveying the importance of memory to the arts, and especially to poetry, during a period of illiteracy. Leto became the mother of Apollo and Artemis, who of course have chapters to themselves.

Many of the "marriages," or more accurately, matings, of Zeus are clearly recapitulations of the "sacred marriage" (hieros gamos) enacted first in Greek myth through the sexual embrace of Gaia by Ouranos, the primal marriage of Earth and Sky. Subsequent conjugal pairs, as Otto points out, do not bear such transparent names as heaven and earth; Zeus may appear as the

sky, and the earth might be represented by Danaë, Semele, or other human women. It is clear, though, that the same essential motif is being repeated, with the names and circumstances changed. Zeus, as lord of sky and rain, enacts again and again the archetypal story of the receptive earth inseminated and made fertile by moisture falling from the heavens. In this respect, Zeus is not merely the mountain-dwelling lord of storms, but also an authentic fertility god, responsible for the growth of crops and for the continuity of all life on earth.

Zeus in the Iliad is both ruler and father, the two ideas being naturally combined due to the almost universal pattern of male clan leadership in the ancient world. Zeus' conventional title in Homer and elsewhere is Son of Kronos, but Kronos is scarcely mentioned in the epic; banished by Zeus in the remote past, Kronos has no significance for Homer at all. Although in Homer Zeus is frequently "Father of Gods and Men," he is not a creator. Zeus is, as a member of Hesiod's third generation of cosmic rulers, rather a latecomer; in Michael Grant's phrase, "Zeus was not always there." His epithet suggests that Zeus should be understood as a divine patriarch or pater familias. As clan leader, the god protects and maintains traditional good order within his household; in this case, of course, Zeus's household corresponds to the Olympian and mortal worlds. Zeus guards the interests of suppliants as Zeus Hikesios (god of suppliants) and as Zeus Xenios (god of strangers). Zeus also protects the rights of kings and heads of families. In the historical period, when Greek kingship had ceased to exist, the king's divine protector became the supreme patron of the city as a whole; Zeus Polieus, together with his daughter Athena Polias, assured the safety and integrity of the polis. The patron god of monarchs became, by an odd irony, the guarantor of political

freedom as Zeus Eleutherios (God of Liberty) and Zeus Soter (Savior); in this context the idea expressed by the Greek word eleutheria should be taken to refer not necessarily to the political freedom of its citizens but rather to the independence of the city-state from external rulers, regardless of whether it had a democratic constitution or not.

Zeus is most often represented in art as a standing or striding warrior brandishing a lightning bolt, or else as a muscular man seated in a throne, holding a scepter or thunderbolt, or both, often accompanied by an eagle. The extreme popularity of Phidias' Classical gold and ivory statue of a throned Zeus, in the god's temple at Olympia, gave rise to a remarkable series of copies and adaptations of this image of the seated god, down to and including the statue of Abraham Lincoln in Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Zeus is also associated with the oak tree in both literature and art; there were sacred oak groves at places where Zeus was especially worshipped, at Dodona and in Arcadia.

In addition to his thunderbolt, Zeus (like his favorite Athena) bears or wears an aigis. This is generally a fringed garment worn like a short cape over the shoulders or draped on the left arm like a shield; ancient sources describe the aegis as a means of defense, but also as a weapon which terrifies the bearer's opponents (see the chapter "Athena"). The name aigis was taken in antiquity to derive from aix, goat, and to mean goatskin; however, Aeschylus (Libation Bearers 593) uses the word aigis in the sense of "whirlwind," suggesting that the true origin of the word is in the root of the verb aisso, "to move violently." Whether the aegis of Zeus is to be understood as a simple goatskin cloak or as a representation of the storm clouds which

he controls, Zeus' aegis would naturally be full of divine power.

I. Origins of Zeus

"The portion of Zeus is the broad heaven, in brightness and in cloud alike" (Iliad 15.192). Although, as we have seen, Zeus' name derives from an Indo-European root meaning "bright" or "shine," it is probable that even from his earliest origin Zeus was understood to be the lord of the sky in general, sunny or stormy, day or night. Theocritus (4.43) says that Zeus sometimes shines, but that sometimes he rains. Paradoxically, the lord of the bright and stormy sky was born underground, in a cave on Crete, where according to ancient Cretan myth he also lay dead and buried. This story of the dying god is, most scholars agree, almost certainly a Minoan religious concept, and not a Hellenic one. In this myth, Zeus is like Dionysus or Attis, the spirit of vegetation which is born and dies annually. This very ancient Cretan deity, who was probably the consort of the great goddess of the earth, was eventually identified with the supreme sky god of the Greeks. The newborn Zeus was concealed from his cannibalistic father Kronos and raised in the cave on Crete; the prevalence of cave shrines in Minoan cult make it likely that the connection to Crete is in fact a remnant of Minoan religion later linked to the Hellenic sky god.

Homer never mentions the birth of Zeus; the story first occurs in Hesiod, Theogony (453ff.): Kronos had learned of a prophecy that he was to be overthrown by one of his children; he therefore ate them as they were born. Rhea, the grieving mother

of the devoured offspring, sought the advice of her parents Gaia and Ouranos (Earth and Sky); subsequently, she bore Zeus secretly in a cave on Crete. Ancient traditions located the cave on Mt. Ida or on Dicte; sanctuaries of Zeus have been excavated on both mountains. Gaia nursed the baby, giving Kronos a stone wrapped like a baby, which he swallowed. Eventually, Kronos disgorged the stone and the rest of his children. Both Euripides (Bacchae, 119-125) and Callimachus ("Hymn to Zeus, 52ff.) tell that the infant Zeus was protected by daimons called Kuretes who danced around him clashing their spears and shields together to cover the sound of his crying:

O lair of the Kuretes, holy haunts of Crete that saw the birth of
About thee the Kuretes danced continuously their war-dance,
striking upon their arms, that Kronos might hear the clash
of the shield and not thy infant cries.

These "crude stories," as Guthrie characterizes them, illustrate the different religious climate of the Cretan myths; the Minoan Zeus is not the Hellenic sky god at all. Rather, this Zeus is a chthonic divinity of vegetation, a sort of religious fossil of an enormously ancient pre-Hellenic cult. Guthrie attempts to reconstruct the characteristics of this Cretan god of unknown name who is called Zeus in this myth. This god stands in stark contrast to what Guthrie terms the "virile, clean-cut and prosaic religion" of the Greek speakers; rather, the Minoan god reflects "the dark and orgiastic and in some ways far more primitive cults" of the aboriginal inhabitants of Crete and Greece. The noisy and enthusiastic dance, rationalized in the myth as a device to protect the newborn god, is actually, according to Guthrie, a cultural memory of mystic or orgiastic religious practices predating and radically different from the

cults of the Olympians. The story is, he suggests, an aetiological myth which provides an explanation for an existing ritual whose real origin is lost in prehistory. This indigenous god of Crete and the Aegean was renamed Zeus; the Greek sky god was then linked to the mountain caves of Crete where his predecessor was born. As a vegetation god, the Cretan divinity died each year with the crops; thus, there was a grave of Zeus to be found in Crete. Mortality is a characteristic specifically excluded by the Homeric concept of eternal gods; hence, Callimachus ("Hymn to Zeus" 8ff.) says that the Cretans are liars because they claim that Zeus died. An inscription from Palaicastro (Inscr.Creticae 3.2.2), generally known as the "Hymn of the Curetes," dates from about 300 BC, although it contains material which is undoubtedly much older. Both the text and interpretation of the hymn are uncertain in places; nevertheless, this document seems certainly to link the young Cretan Zeus with the fertility of crops, animals, and humans:

And the seasons swelled with increase from year to year,
and mortals were swayed by justice, and peace that
consorteth with prosperity attended all creatures. Leap
for us, for our wine-jars, and leap for fleecy flocks, and
leap for our fields of crops, and for hives that bring full
increase.

Thus, Zeus has a dual character, reflecting the contrast between the Cretan religion of the fertility of the earth and the Greek cult of the sky god, dominated by the lord of thunder and lightning.

Having overthrown his father Kronos by a ruse (see section II, "Lord of the Sky," below), Zeus had a series of tasks to complete: to divide up the universe with his brothers and allies, to choose a legitimate wife, and to define the nature of

his relation to human beings. The first matter was settled by throwing dice. The sky fell to Zeus, the sea to Poseidon, and the underworld to Hades, as Homer's Poseidon somewhat resentfully recalls (Iliad 15.187-193):

"For three brethren are we, begotten of Kronos, and born of Rhea: Zeus, and myself, and the third is Hades, that is lord of the dead below. And in three-fold wise are all things divided, and unto each hath been apportioned his own domain. I verily, when the lots were shaken, won for my portion the grey sea to be my habitation for ever, and Hades won the murky darkness, while Zeus won the broad heaven amid the air and the clouds; but the earth and high Olympus remain yet common to us all."

As his legitimate wife and queen, Zeus chose his sister Hera; she reigns at his side but is always distinctly subordinate to his ultimate authority (see the chapter, "Hera"). Their pairing is yet another recapitulation of the sacred marriage (hieros gamos) between the sky father and earth mother already seen in the mating of Ouranos and Gaia, Kronos and Rhea, and many others. Since there were many goddesses in Greek religion associated with the fertility of the earth, various local legends also paired Zeus with, for example, Demeter, Persephone, and Semele. The correlation of the various stories about the sexual activity of the sky father took place quite early; it was nearly complete by Hesiod's time. Many of the goddesses who mate with Zeus are almost certainly personifications of the fertile earth, impregnated by moisture from the sky god. These local earth divinities, Guthrie suggests, would at first be the goddesses of various places, Argos maintaining that Zeus' consort was Hera, Eleusis that she was Demeter, Thebes that she was Semele, and so on. Out of this duplication arose what appeared to later ages the distressing faithlessness of Zeus. Eventually Hera was settled upon in Greek myth as the legal wife

of Zeus; the others became his lovers in a never-ending series of adulterous liaisons (cf. the chapter "Hera" for further discussion of the sacred marriage and Hera's role of earth goddess). The result in myth is a series of stories representing Zeus as grossly unfaithful to his legitimate wife and queen by whom, according to Hesiod, he has three children, Ares, and the two goddesses Hebe and Eileithuia. The daughters of Zeus and Hera are colorless and quite unimportant, the former representing no more than the principle of eternal youth, the latter childbirth. Ares is a great god, despite his being hated and feared by humans and immortals alike (see the chapter "Ares"). Zeus also has a veritable army of offspring by other females, divine and human; those children born of goddesses are divine themselves, whereas those with mortal mothers tend to be human and subject to death. Many of the human offspring of Zeus may be plausibly explained as being socially necessary for supplying very early Greece with legendary founders of the many ancient noble families who claimed descent from Zeus.

Supremacy in war and supreme sexual potency are also signs of the might of Zeus. Just as lightning is the supreme meteorological manifestation of the power of Zeus, so does military victory demonstrate the working out in human affairs of what Homer calls "the will of Zeus" (Dios . . . boule, Iliad 1.5). Trophies constructed of the spoils of defeated enemies are tantamount to images of Zeus. Aeschylus (Agamemnon 174-175) proclaims that "whoever sounds loudly the victory-song of Zeus will be acting wisely." Sexual promiscuity and the seemingly limitless ability to beget offspring are likewise expressions of the lordship of Zeus. Every heterosexual encounter of Zeus results in pregnancy; "the beds of the immortals are never unfruitful" (Odyssey 11.249-250). Zeus is the father of a great

multitude of offspring by over a hundred females, both mortal and divine. Homer's Zeus at Iliad 14.317-327 lists for Hera half a dozen of his more prominent lovers, adding chivalrously that Hera is the best of the lot. Later authors found this behavior scandalous, as they did the various disguises and tricks which Zeus resorted to in order to seduce women who had caught his eye. The father of gods and men became a bull to seduce Europa, a swan in the cases of Leda, a golden rain for Danaë. His lovers Io and Callisto were metamorphosed into a cow and a bear respectively. Disguised as an eagle, Zeus carried off the Trojan prince Ganymede to be his lover on Olympus. Zeus is the father of many great and powerful gods: Apollo and Artemis by Leto, Persephone by Demeter, Hermes by Maia, Dionysus by Semele or Persephone, and Athena by Metis. There are also a great many children of Zeus by mortal women. Mortality is apparently a dominant trait in these mixed marriages, since most of these sons and daughters are mortal; the Dioscuri, Castor and Polydeuces/Pollux, and Helen are the most important exceptions. The other children of Zeus by mortal mothers, such as Perseus by Danae, and Minos and Rhadamanthys by Europa, are all exceptional in one way or another.

In his earliest relationship with humanity, Zeus was no benefactor; rather, he kept humans in a degraded and animalistic state by withholding from them the means of civilized life, especially the secret of fire. Prometheus (the Foreseer) took up the cause of humanity against Zeus, supporting and favoring the creatures which, according to some myths at least, he had made (Pausanias 10.4.4; Horace, Odes 1.16.13ff.). Hesiod tells the story of the benevolence of Prometheus and the jealousy of Zeus (Works and Days 42-52):

For the gods keep hidden from men the means of life. Else you would easily do work enough in a day to supply you for a full year even without working; soon would you put away your rudder over the smoke, and the fields worked by ox and sturdy mule would run to waste. But Zeus in the anger of his heart hid it, because Prometheus the crafty deceived him; therefore, he planned sorrow and mischief against men. He hid fire; but that the noble son of Iapetus stole again for men from Zeus the counsellor in a hollow fennel-stalk, so that Zeus who delights in thunder did not see it.

Prometheus also taught humans other crafts and sciences; by raising mankind from its degraded condition, he drew upon himself the wrath of Zeus who, according to Aeschylus (Prometheus 233ff.) had planned to destroy the human race altogether. Prometheus also knew the secret of the marriage of Thetis: that the goddess would bear a son mightier than his father, and thus might become the mother of a god who would overthrow Zeus. Prometheus was also the author of the scheme whereby he deceived Zeus and the other gods with regard to the division of sacrificed animals; thereafter, the gods received only the inedible portions of animals offered by humans, whereas people retained the meat for themselves (Theogony 535ff.). The revenge of Zeus on humanity is the woman Pandora ("All Gifts"), sent to Prometheus' stupid brother, Epimetheus ("Afterthought") with a jar containing all the evils and diseases which plague humanity (Theogony 570ff., Works and Days 60ff.). Zeus avenged himself on Prometheus by sending Hephaestus, Cratos ("Strength"), and Bia ("Force") to chain Prometheus to a mountain peak where an eagle would tear his liver in unending torture. According to Hesiod (Theogony 526-531), Heracles released him from his torment, "not without the will of Olympian Zeus who reigns on high, that the glory of Heracles the Theban-born might be yet greater than it was before over the plenteous earth."

II. Lord of the Sky

Zeus not only dwells in the sky and wields his thunderbolts from it; throughout Greek history he is frequently spoken of as if he were the sky, what A.B. Cook calls "the primary and yet age-long conception of the animate sky." For Homer, Zeus is, as we have seen, the Thunderer and the Cloud-Gatherer: Zeus "flashes his lightning as he brings on a great rainstorm, or a hail incessant, or a blizzard, at such time when the snowfall scatters on plowlands" (Iliad 10.5-7; Lattimore translation). His messenger is Iris the Rainbow. Elsewhere in the Iliad, Agamemnon prays to "Zeus, most glorious, supreme, that dwellest in heaven and commandest the storm cloud" (2.412); in the Odyssey, Telemachus describes Zeus as dwelling in the Ether (15.523), even as he retains the god's older title of "Olympian." Theocritus, as we have seen, says that Zeus sometimes shines, but that sometimes he rains (4.43); Euripides (fr. 877) refers to the sky as "that which people call Zeus." For the Greeks of the Classical period, then, Zeus either is the sky itself, or else he is a divine being who lives in the heavens and controls the weather from there. Harrison follows Cook in stressing that "Zeus is the Sky in its two aspects, the Bright Sky to which belong the aether, the Sun, and Moon, and every shining constellation, the Dark Sky with the thunder, the storm cloud, and the rain."

Shrines of Zeus occupied the tops of mountains throughout Greek-speaking lands; Cook lists and describes many of these mountain-top sanctuaries (e.g. I.117-186 and II.868-987; see Section I above). Many of the god's cult-titles refer to the names of these peaks: Heliconius, Cithaeronius, Idaeus, Hymettius,

Athoïus, Cynthius on Delos, and so on. Mountaintop shrines usually consisted of an altar, with no accompanying temple. Vase paintings and relief carvings show Zeus reclining on mountain tops; some mountains have rock-cut thrones installed for the god's use. There is a representative mountain sanctuary near the summit Mt. Hymettus which Ferguson describes as fairly simple, "consisting of enclosure walls, open-air altars, and a pit for offering. Shards with dedications identify it as a sanctuary of Zeus. On one he is called Zeus Semius, but it is at least possible that this is the sanctuary of Zeus Ombrios known from Pausanias (1.32.2), Zeus as a rain god; Hymettus was recognized as an indicator of approaching rain (Theophrastus, "On Weather-signs" 1.20.24 and 3.43)." Ferguson cites many other examples and establishes Zeus' status as a rain god throughout Greek antiquity; copious literary references and archaeological data demonstrate that he was worshipped on or near mountain tops as a bringer of rain, especially at times of drought. A mountain-top sanctuary on Mt. Lycaion in Arcadia, for example was used for prayer to Zeus during droughts (Pausanias 8.38.4):

Should a drought persist for a long time, and the seeds in the earth and the trees wither, then the priest of Lycaean Zeus, after praying towards the water and making the usual sacrifices, lowers an oak branch to the surface of the spring, not letting it sink deep. When the water has been stirred up there rises a vapor, like mist; after a time the mist becomes cloud, gathers to itself other clouds, and makes rain fall on the land of the Arcadians.

Excavations on this site have disclosed a circular platform dating from the fifth and fourth centuries, probably for burnt offerings. The most elaborate hilltop sanctuary of Zeus was the great altar of Pergamum, an immense Hellenistic structure, now in the Pergamum Museum in Berlin, with a monumental frontal

staircase and a gigantic frieze of high-relief figures illustrating the Battle of Gods and Giants. Above, there is an Ionic colonnade surrounding a central court and the actual altar where sacrifice was offered. Near this megalomaniacal grandeur, on the top of the hill, are the remains of the much more modest original altar, a simple square stone structure.

The Greeks' reverence for mountain-tops, occupied as they often were by sanctuaries or thrones of Zeus, is expressed, according to Easterling, by their powerful sense of the need for purity on the part of any worshipper approaching these holy but dangerous places. A similar sense of religious dread is graphically expressed in Exodus 19:18, 20: "And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. . . .and the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain."

In addition to his meteorological and agricultural functions, Zeus has a great many other complex associations. Ancient people lived in a universe much smaller than we now understand it to be; the gods lived close enough to earth that a mountaintop sanctuary was substantially nearer to their celestial home than was the sea-level ground. Zeus lived high in the sky, of course, but was still close enough to influence the earth and to know everything which went on in it. Moreover, as Rose (Religion) observes, things fall from the sky more or less continually: rain, snow, hail, thunderbolts, and meteorites. These are manifest proof of the power and immediacy of the sky-god. Zeus was sometimes worshipped as a stone, either known or supposed to be a meteorite. Zeus took an interest in the conduct of the human beings whom he watched from

his nearby home in the sky. As Zeus Xenios, God of the Stranger, he protected the traditional rights of the foreigner and guest-friend; occasionally he visited the earth disguised as a stranger in order to reward or punish those who accepted or rejected his right to hospitality. At other times, it was sexual interest in one or another woman which brought him to earth, sometimes re-enacting the sacred marriage discussed above.

Though undisputed lord of the sky, Zeus is a usurper, having overthrown his own father. This uncomfortable fact, combined with the god's incessant and prolific sexual activity, always looms ominously in the background, as Burkert observes. All usurpers fear that they will suffer the same fate; Zeus, who overthrew his own father, fears the birth of a son greater than himself. Metis, Wisdom, was to have borne such a child; having impregnated her, Zeus had no choice, according to Hesiod (Theogony 886-900), but to swallow her (see the chapter "Athena"). Henceforth, Zeus has Wisdom within himself; Athena, the only child of Zeus and Metis, is born directly from the god's head. A similar story is told by Apollodorus (3.168) of the divine Thetis, who was married off to a mortal, Peleus, so that their child, Achilles, would be mortal and therefore no threat to the supremacy of Zeus. This is the premise behind the action of Aeschylus' Prometheus. Zeus is seriously challenged in myth only by monsters, generally the offspring of Earth, such as Typhoeus and the Giants (Hesiod, Theogony 820-868); Zeus wins all these combats, in the latter case with the help of his brother and sister Olympians. The battles between the new generation of gods and the Earth-born remnants of the previous order are favorite subjects for vase painters and sculptors.

Kronos had deposed Ouranos by force; Zeus overthrows Kronos and his allies by a war. Zeus in his turn might likewise be subject to forcible removal. The cosmic order established by any god would appear to be in constant danger of revolutionary disruption. Metis is the mythological solution to this problem; the theme of wily intelligence and alert shrewdness, Vernant suggests, "winds like a red thread all through the complex fabric of the Greek myths of sovereignty." The myths indicate that metis bestows supremacy, implying that only universal metis can result in permanent cosmic rule. Zeus must possess, "over and beyond sheer brute force, a nimble intelligence to anticipate as far ahead as possible, to lay the ground for future action, prudently to contrive the means and ends in such minute detail that when it is time to act there are no risks. Thus the future holds no surprises, as no one and nothing can catch the god off guard or come upon him when he is unarmed."

Hesiod explains how Zeus attains the state of stable lordship which had eluded his predecessors. Kronos left the wily Zeus unswallowed; later, Kronos regurgitated his other children as a result of being tricked (Theogony 468-373, 495-497). Zeus contends with the Giants, monstrous offspring of Earth, in a war of extreme violence (Theogony 678-686):

The boundless sea rang terribly around, and the earth crashed loudly: wide Heaven was shaken and groaned, and high Olympus reeled from its foundation under the charge of the undying gods, and a heavy quaking reached dim Tartarus and the deep sound of their feet in the fearful onset and of their hard missiles. So, then, they launched their grievous shafts upon one another, and the cry of both armies as they shouted reached to starry heaven; and they met together with a great battle-cry.

Nevertheless, the myths tell us that this was not merely a conflict of opposing forces. Previously, and like a crafty

warlord preparing for battle, Zeus had made alliances with renegade Titans who then came over to his side and fought against their kinsmen (Theogony 616ff.). Most importantly, the Cyclopes and the Hecatoncheires ("Hundred-Hands") gave essential assistance to Zeus, the former supplying the irresistible thunderbolts which enable Zeus to conquer and rule (139-141), the latter being valuable as a sort of many-armed artillery battery (674-675). Force seems to be necessary, but not sufficient, for Zeus to triumph and to retain power. Aeschylus points out that, by the decree of Fate, victory belongs to that one "who would win not by force and violence, but by ruse" (Prometheus Bound 212-213). The superior intelligence of Zeus is assured by his marriage to Metis ("Shrewd Intelligence"), patroness of prudent strategy and "wisest of gods or mortal men" (Theogony 887). This union, Vernant suggests, "merely recognizes the service that has been rendered him by the wily intelligence that brought him to the throne." The problem which immediately arises, though, is that any sons of such parents could not fail to be superior to their father; they would surely overthrow him in his turn. To avoid this, Zeus resorts to a stratagem far cleverer than that employed by his own father Kronos who had attempted to avoid displacement by swallowing his children. Kronos had made the mistake of leaving unswallowed Zeus who was craftier than himself. Threatened in turn by his potential offspring by Metis, Zeus outwits Craft herself, swallowing her while still pregnant with Athena (Theogony 888-893). Thus Zeus exercises foresight and precludes the possibility that Metis might bear the son more powerful than its father. Since Metis is now part of the substance of Zeus, no subsequent power can employ it against him. Zeus is now sovereignty itself as the constant possessor of Metis, ultimate craftiness; he can never be outwitted or surprised.

III. Worship of Zeus: Justice and Monotheism

From the time of Homer and Hesiod, Zeus has been worshipped and addressed as the divine protector of law and fundamental morality. In the Odyssey (5.22ff.), Zeus endorses the plan of Athena guaranteeing the safe return to Ithaca of both Odysseus and Telemachus, and assuring the final punishment of the suitors. At the end of the epic (24.478ff.), it is Zeus who ends the incipient blood feud between Odysseus and the surviving relatives of the slain suitors, decreeing that everyone "love one another as before" and that "love and peace" shall prevail (485-486). Hesiod praises Zeus as the ultimate arbiter of justice and fairness among humans (Works and Days 5-8):

For easily he makes strong, and easily he brings the strong man low; easily he humbles the proud and raises the obscure, and easily he straightens the crooked and blasts the proud—Zeus who thunders aloft and has his dwelling most high.

Hesiod's Zeus, with Dike (Justice) at his side, monitors human behavior, dispensing rewards and punishments, with particular attention to the deeds of unjust rulers and judges (Works and Days 252-262):

For upon the bounteous earth Zeus has thrice ten thousand spirits, watchers of mortal men, and these keep watch on judgements and deeds of wrong as they roam, clothed in mist, all over the earth. And there is virgin Justice, the daughter of Zeus, who is honored and revered among the gods who dwell on Olympus, and whenever anyone hurts her with lying slander, she sits beside her father, Zeus the son of Kronos, and tells him of men's wicked heart, until the people pay for the mad folly of their princes who,

evilly minded, pervert judgement and give sentence crookedly.

With characteristic shrewdness, Hesiod notices that it is the general population and not, as we might wish, the corrupt judges themselves, who pay the price for rulers' malfeasance in office. Zeus is the pre-eminent protector and enforcer of oaths. As Zeus Horkios, he embodies religion, morality, and the bonds of trust which make organized society possible. In an illiterate society, lacking written contracts, an oath is the only way to guarantee that a promise or a statement is absolutely binding or true. Despite the fact that it is rarely observed to occur, Aristophanes (Clouds 397) indicates that ordinary Greeks believed that the swearer of a false oath would be punished by the thunderbolts of Zeus.

Zeus was most conspicuously worshipped at panhellenic sites such as Olympia and Dodona. The cult of Zeus at Olympia, with its accompanying oracle of Zeus and athletic contests, is the most famous manifestation of the worship of the god both among modern students and to the ancient Greeks themselves. The temple of Zeus at Olympia was built in the 460s BC near the city of Elis; Olympia itself was never an actual town, but rather it remained a cult center revered by all Greeks. The panhellenic cult of Zeus here was one of the strongest forces for cultural unity among the fragmented and fractious Greek city-states. Common worship of Zeus served as a centripetal counterforce to the near-constant intercity warfare of the Greek-speaking world. The temple of Hera dominated the central part of the sacred area; the Classical temple of Zeus, one of the largest on the Greek mainland, contained Phidias' famous gold and ivory statue of the enthroned god. Although the original was lost or destroyed in late antiquity, we know many details of its

appearance from contemporary written descriptions and from images on coins. One ancient visitor commented that the statue was so large that it was crowded inside the temple cella and observed that if the god were to stand up, he would remove the roof of the temple. Another ancient visitor to the statue remarked that no-one who had seen it could ever be completely unhappy.

Despite ancient (and modern) emphasis on the athletic events at Olympia, it is important to remember that religion was the primary attraction which drew Greeks in very large numbers. Every four years, heralds announced the sacred truce which allowed representatives of warring states, theoretically at least, to attend the rites in honor of Zeus without danger of violence. In fact, the truce was seldom violated. Five days of prayer, sacrifice, and athletic contests were climaxed by the offering of a hundred oxen to Zeus and the crowning of the victors with wreaths of olive from the sacred grove. Typical of the archaeological finds which give us a sense of the meaning of the contests to the Greeks are a jumping-weight from about 500 BC, cited by Ferguson, which was offered as a dedication commemorating the victory in the long jump of a Spartan named Acmatidas. A bronze statuette of a runner, poised to begin a foot race, bears the inscription "I belong to Zeus." Ferguson attempts to reconstruct the religious significance of the games, considering the possible link between athletic contests and death in Greek mythology as, for example, in the funeral games of Patroclus: "We should also consider the agon or contest as representing the struggle between death and life, chaos and order, evil and good, darkness and light, winter and summer, night and day, and all other dichotomies with which human beings are faced. . . . There is a kind of sympathetic magic in the

enactment of such contests in other fields, especially where the best man—by definition—wins.”

Dodona, in the northwestern Greek region of Epirus, was likewise an oracular site of enormous, probably pre-hellenic, antiquity. Ferguson cites the accumulation of pottery, stone axeheads, and knives which are most likely votive offerings dating as far back as the middle of the third millennium BC. According to myth, Zeus took the site from an older divine occupant, as Apollo did at Delphi. Archaeological and literary evidence suggests that the site of Dodona may have been sacred as an oracle of the Earth. At Iliad 16.233-235, Achilles prays to Zeus:

“Zeus, thou king, Dodonaean, Pelasgian, thou that dwellest afar, ruling over wintry Dodona—and about thee dwell the Selli, thine interpreters, men with unwashed feet that couch on the ground.”

These “Selli,” who sleep on the Earth and do not wash, look very much like a brotherhood of prophets; it seems plausible that their unappealing ascetic observances may be much older than the Hellenic cult of the sky god Zeus.

The supreme power of Zeus is, as we have seen (see Introduction, above), of an entirely greater order of magnitude than the strength of all the other gods combined. Similarly, before the might of deathless Zeus human beings are of no real account at all; they are utterly without strength or resource before him, creatures of an altogether lower order. As head of a family of often unruly and resentful anthropomorphic divinities, Homer’s “Father of Gods and Men” establishes with his siblings and offspring a matrix of relationships which provide, as Gould suggests, a kind of ultimate cosmic unity, “contained within the solidarity of the group and guaranteed in the person of Zeus the

Father whose authority embodies the demand for an underlying unity, not chaos, in experience." This model ought not to be dismissed as a mere literary fiction; rather, Gould continues, it succeeds quite well in explaining the contradictions and paradoxes of human life. The sometimes uneasy patriarchal rule of Zeus helps humans to understand divinity as the source of both order and disorder in the world and, in extreme cases such as the battle of gods and giants, as the ultimate bulwark against the chaos which might otherwise overwhelm the universe. Otto sees the role of Zeus as patriarch as inseparable from the concept of Zeus as universal deity. Contradictions and conflict among the gods, he argues are the divine analogues of the tensions which we observe among the elements of the world: "The mythic conception of a family under the leadership of a royal father permits the tensions to persist and yet at the same time provides a symbolic image of harmony. Harmony becomes unity in the person of Zeus, who not only stands above the gods as supreme power and directs great destinies according to his will, but also appears as exponent of divine sway in general, so that it is he who is effective in all and to whom all prayers rise."

Zeus represents the deification of the patriarchal family order which, in Burkert's words, "permits the dominant male all freedom—except effeminacy; there is the wish-fulfillment fantasy of inexhaustible virility." The incessant sexuality which accompanies Zeus' role as supreme patriarch exists uneasily, as we have seen, alongside the belief that he is the personification of righteousness. Harrison terms the sexual Zeus "shamelessly licentious" and asserts that he "scarcely commands admiration." In this connection, Homer's epithet for Zeus, Father of Gods and Men, takes on overtones not devoid of

irony. He is the pater familias in whose presence the gods rise (e.g. Iliad 1.533-534) and the gods, even those who are not his offspring, call him "father." Zeus is also addressed as father in people's prayers. The absolute power and righteousness of Father Zeus is always informed by knowledge and the wisdom which is signified by his swallowing Metis. Burkert points out that the nous, or planning mind, of Zeus is mentioned again and again in the Homeric epics. "This nous is always stronger than that of man; what his plans are is often still concealed, but Zeus has his goal and will attain it." At Iliad 16.688, Homer asserts, "ever is the intent (nous) of Zeus stronger than that of men"; the poet repeats the claim in the words of Hector at 17.176, "but ever is the nous of Zeus that bears the aegis strongest." Aeschylus claims that Zeus is the final solution to all difficulties and all uncertainty (Agamemnon 160ff. and Prometheus Bound 551):

"Zeus, whatever he may be, if this name pleases him in invocation, thus I call upon him. I have pondered everything yet I cannot find a way, only Zeus, to cast this dead weight of ignorance finally from out my brain."

"So the plans of man shall never pass the ordered law of Zeus."

The sovereignty and the justice of Zeus are inseparable from the very beginning. We have seen that Justice sits beside the enthroned Zeus and advises him of injustices on earth needing redress (Works and Days 259). Originally, dike, which is only approximately to be rendered as "justice," consisted of custom, doing what one's station in the world as slave, king, or god established as suitable and acceptable. The gods, however, as Guthrie observes, "being the highest class, are also the most free." Dike, then, is originally what the gods will; for that reason alone it is right, however much this might clash with

human notions of justice. Homer's image of the impartiality and inexorability of the justice of Zeus is universally known: as Achilles pursues Hector around the walled city of Troy, Zeus raises his golden balance (Iliad 22.209-213). On one pan is the doom of Achilles, on the other that of Hector, "and down sank the day of doom of Hector, and departed unto Hades." Zeus feels sympathy for Hector, but the hero's death is ordained; the god acts in this instance only as the recorder of the decree of fate. The apparent conflict between the predestination of fate and the free will of the gods might seem to create an insoluble problem. Burkert argues that, for the Iliad at least, it is not a paradox at all, but rather "a conflict which must be fought out, just as the whole of life is marked by conflicts. Moirai, aisa is not a person, not a god or a power, but a fact: the word means portion, and proclaims that the world is apportioned, that boundaries are drawn in space and time. For man, the most important and painful boundary is death: this is his limited portion. It is not impossible to overstep these bounds, but the consequences are dire; Zeus would have the power to act differently, but the other gods do not applaud this (Iliad 16.443, 22.181), and therefore he does not do so, just as a good and wise ruler does not use his real power to encroach on the limits set by custom."

In both the Iliad and the Odyssey, Zeus is the giver of all things, good and bad, to human beings; as such, he is very close to being indistinguishable from fate or destiny. At Iliad 24.527ff., Zeus distributes from two pithoi, or large jars, evil things and blessings, apparently without reference to what the human recipients may deserve; in the Odyssey (1.348-349), Telemachus remarks that Zeus is to blame for human ills, for he "gives to men that live by toil, to each one as he will." At

the opening of the Iliad (1.5), the poet attributes the many deaths which Achilles' wrath will bring about to the will of Zeus, and not to fate. Later, a Trojan hero named Lycaon, having escaped from Achilles in the past, once again falls into his power; he protests (21.82-84) that "now again cursed Moira has put me into your hands; I think I must be hated by Zeus the father who has given me once more to you." Likewise, when Hector sees that he is doomed, he too identifies the will of Zeus with fate or destiny (22.297, 301-303):

"Here at last the gods have summoned me to death. . . . So it must long since have been pleasing to Zeus and his son who strikes from afar. Before this they defended me gladly, but now Moira attacks me."

Odysseus in the Underworld excuses himself to the angry ghost of Ajax for the hero's death (Odyssey 11.558-560): "None other was to blame, but Zeus was angry with the Greek host and upon you laid the fate (moira) of death."

However we might resolve the paradox for ourselves, it is apparent that for the Greeks the sovereignty of Zeus was not diminished by his co-operation with the overriding decrees of fate. Human sovereignty originates in Zeus. Kings in Homer are "nourished by Zeus"; thus, they are smaller, local, mortal versions of their divine model and patron. As Zeus Polias and Zeus Boulaios, the god is also the protector of the Classical polis and council; as the source of law, he is present in justice, order, and social stability.

The Greeks never conceived of Zeus as an exclusively unique, all-embracing god of the universe in the Jewish-Christian-Muslim sense of almighty God; nevertheless, Zeus was worshipped and addressed in a manner without parallel in the cults of the other

Olympian gods. Zeus was never portrayed on the tragic stage as were the other gods such as Hera, Athena, Apollo, and Dionysus. Aeschylus, as we have seen, stresses the supreme power and transcendent wisdom of Zeus. At Suppliants 524-526, the tragedian addresses Zeus as something approaching a universal, monotheistic divinity:

Lord of lords, most blessed among the blessed, power most perfect among the perfect, O blessed Zeus.

Burkert points out that one of the lost tragedies of Aeschylus praises Zeus as lord of the universe (fr. 70): "Zeus is aether, Zeus is earth, Zeus is sky, Zeus is everything and what is still higher than this." Burkert observes that the priestesses at Dodona sang, "Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus will be: O great Zeus." From the Hellenistic period on, Stoic philosophers imagined Zeus to be a useful name for the sentient, divine fire which permeated the cosmos; Zeus was understood to be co-extensive with the physical universe and in effect the only true god. Even the Stoics, though, never claimed that Zeus was the creator of the universe. The Biblical God creates a cosmos outside of himself and thus has a nature and existence completely apart from and independent of the visible universe. However reminiscent of Biblical terminology ("lord of lords, most blessed of the blessed," etc.) pagan texts may occasionally be, it is important to remain aware of the fundamental incompatibility between the Greek and Jewish concepts of God.

IV. Zeus in Literature and Art

Poets' descriptions and works of art document the efforts of the Greeks to convey their sense of awe and mystery in the felt presence of Zeus. A frequent theme in literature is the

impenetrability of the mind of Zeus and the mystery surrounding his meting out rewards and punishments. Aeschylus (Suppliants 93-95) claims that "the pathways of his understanding stretch dark and tangled, beyond comprehension." The image of the sudden storm is often used to suggest the violence and immediacy of the wrath of Zeus (cf. Iliad 16.384-392 and Solon 13.16-25). On the other hand, literature of the Classical period contains examples of the skepticism toward traditional beliefs which was a product of the teaching of the Sophists. In Aristophanes' Clouds, Strepsiades realizes that the new learning can reverse all traditional values; therefore, he decides to become expert in it in order to avoid paying his debts. Strepsiades seeks the assistance of Socrates, caricatured as a proponent of those teachings of Sophists which most infuriated conservative Athenians. The play mocks contemporary rationalist and materialist arguments about the gods and traditional beliefs (245-8; 366-7; 379-81; 816-19):

Strepsiades: I'll swear by the gods that I'll deposit whatever fee you ask of me.

Socrates: What kind of gods will you swear by? To start
 . . .

Str.: Come now, by Earth, don't you believe that
 Olympian Zeus is a god?

Soc.: What Zeus? Don't talk rubbish. Zeus
 doesn't exist.

. . .

Str.: But who is it who makes the clouds move?
 Isn't it Zeus?

Soc.: Not at all; it's the celestial vortex.

Str.: Vortex? I'd missed this altogether—that
 Zeus no longer exists but in his place Vortex now is
 king.

. . .

Pheidippides: My god, what's happened to you, father? By
Str.: There you are, there you are—Olympian Zeus!
How stupid! To believe in that Zeus of yours at your
age.

Oly

When Strepsiades asks about the thunderbolts with which Zeus is supposed to punish wrongdoers, Socrates mentions three prominent perjurers who deserve divine chastisement but have escaped it; moreover, Socrates adds, if Zeus exists, why does he occasionally strike his own oak trees and temples with lightning?

In art, Zeus is a powerful bearded figure, often shown standing and brandishing a thunderbolt. Sometimes he is depicted in conflict with a snaky-tailed monster who is either Typhon or one of the other earth-born creatures whom he defeats in myth. Frequently, the thunderbolt-wielding Zeus is shown accompanied by Nike (Victory), sometimes in pursuit of a young woman. There are a great many nude figures of the god brandishing a thunderbolt, sometimes with an eagle resting on his outstretched left hand. One of the greatest representations of Zeus is the magnificent bronze found in the sea near Artemisium which is to be seen in the national archaeological museum in Athens. Another main type shows the god seated upon a throne. Ferguson cites one from Mt. Lycaion, datable to the sixth century, which shows the god seated with a thunderbolt in his left hand and a scepter in his right. The greatest of the throned statues of Zeus was, as we have seen, that of Phidias at Olympus, long since lost but carefully described by Pausanias (5.11). The god held a staff or large scepter in his left hand and supported a golden image of Nike on the palm of his outstretched right hand. The statue appeared on coins of Elis, but they are of course incapable of conveying the imposing scale and majesty of the

original which, as Quintilian said (12.10.9) "added something to revealed religion." This statue was probably the most famous of all ancient cult images; it exercised great influence over later representations of the god. This colossal Zeus was recognized by the Classical Greeks as Phidias' masterpiece and as the supreme expression in the visual arts of the idea of divine supremacy. Phidias was said to have claimed that his inspiration was the scene in the Iliad in which Thetis gains the consent to her request of the father of gods and men (1.528-530):

He spoke; and with blue-black brows the son of Kronos
nodded,
and the ambrosial locks of the ruler flowed, waving
from his immortal head; he shook great Olympus.

Burkert characterizes this literary picture of Zeus as "an epitome of all-surpassing divine power—execution and decision are one; over destiny rules the contour of a divine countenance." Harrison claims that the great chryselephantine statue "embodied the ideals of the age of Aeschylus." Dio Chrysostom (12.14) describes the aesthetic and spiritual effect of this statue on the mind of the visitor seeking insight into the nature of divinity:

Our Zeus is peaceful and altogether mild, as the guardian of Hellas when she is of one mind and not distraught with faction, an image gentle and august in perfect form, one who is the giver of life and breath and every good gift, the common father and saviour and guardian of mankind. . . . If there be any of mortals whatsoever that is heavy-laden in spirit, having suffered sorely many sorrows and calamities in his life, nor yet winning for himself sweet sleep, even such a one, methinks, standing before the image of the god would forget all things in his mortal life which were hard to endure, so wondrously hast thou, Phidias, conceived and wrought it and such grace and light shine upon it from thine art.

Harrison concludes that the great Phidian image of Zeus "brings us to the very core or kernel of our debt to Greek mythology. This debt is two-fold. We owe to Greek mythology, first, the heritage of a matchless imagery, an imagery which has haunted the minds of poets and artists down to the present day, second, a thing, as we shall see, intimately connected with this imagery, the release of the human spirit in part at least from the baneful obsession of fear."

From Alexander on, Greek kings attempted to aggrandize themselves by assuming a similarity to Zeus, and in this way reiterating in their own persons the ancient Homeric and Hesiodic image of Zeus as patron and archetype of kings. The fourth century BC painter Apelles portrayed Alexander holding the thunderbolt of Zeus. Hellenistic monarchs following Alexander claimed and were granted divine honors from their Greek and Asian subjects. In the place of the gods frequently found on Classical Greek coins, the successors of Alexander put their own likenesses. One of the greatest post-Classical projects in honor of Zeus was the completion of the Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens. Begun in the sixth century BC and then abandoned, presumably due to the excessive cost of the grandiose structure, the temple was restarted by the notorious Antiochus IV of Syria in about 170 BC. This king went by the dynastic title Epiphanes (the Manifest God); his zeal on behalf of his fellow divinity, Zeus, led to his disastrous attempt to place an image of Zeus in the Temple of Jerusalem which triggered the Maccabaeen revolt of the Jews against Greek Syrian rule. The temple of Zeus in Athens was finally completed by Hadrian in about AD 130. It stood on a platform which measured about 108 by 41 meters; the cella, which may never have been roofed, was

75 by 17 meters and contained a colossal gold and ivory image of Zeus. One modern commentator points out that propaganda of the reign of Hadrian identified the emperor with Olympian Zeus and suggests wryly that the old name of the temple, the Palace of Hadrian, "was not a complete misnomer."

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Aphrodite

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Homer's Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus and the obscure Dione, is a significant and engaging literary figure, but she is less important for the study of myth and religion. In the Iliad, Aphrodite appears mainly as the patron and protector of Paris (e.g., 3.380ff.) and as the unsuccessful opponent of the Greek hero Diomedes (5.330ff.); in the Odyssey, Aphrodite's only significant appearance is as the adulterous lover of Ares in the farcical tale sung by the Phaeacian poet Demodocus (8.266ff.). Hesiod's Theogony (154-206) records the origin of Aphrodite as a primal force, born directly from the severed penis of Ouranos, the Sky. This is Aphrodite Ourania, "Queen of Heaven," who predates by a full cosmic generation the births of the Olympian gods. Aphrodite Ourania is no doubt closely related to Middle Eastern mother goddesses of the Ishtar/Astarte type who were also worshipped as Queen of Heaven. Herodotus furnishes information which makes it clear that the Greeks themselves understood Aphrodite as a goddess of eastern, perhaps Palestinian, origin (e.g., 1.105. 131; 4.59); Hebrew scripture confirms the power of the cult of the Queen of Heaven, as well as its attractiveness (Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:17-19). Euripides' Hippolytus uses the vengeful and deadly anger of Aphrodite with the young man who rejects her as a dreadful illustration of the universal and inescapable power of the goddess. Venus in Ovid's Metamorphoses is mainly the lover of Adonis (10.524ff.) and patroness of the hero Aeneas, along with his supposed descendants Caesar and Augustus; Ovid uses the goddess' name frequently as a mere synonym for sexual passion.

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Apollo

Primary Sources

Plutarch was priest of Apollo at Delphi during the second century AD and is therefore a valuable contemporary source. His works other than the famous Lives are collected under the general title Moralia, or "moral writings," and are a valuable source of information on the oracle at Delphi; particularly useful are two essays, "The Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse" and "The Obsolescence of Oracles." The Homeric Hymn to Apollo contains extended descriptions of the oracle at Delphi. Pausanias also is a valuable source of information on the appearance and function of the site during approximately the same period during which Plutarch wrote. Herodotus (4.32-35) describes the arrival at Delos of the "Hyperborean" offerings to Apollo. In Book 1, Herodotus describes various occasions on which the oracle at Delphi influenced Greek and barbarian public affairs. Many of the oracles of Apollo at Delphi survive and supply valuable insight into the functioning and the importance to Greek personal, religious and political matters. of the god's responses; see the works of H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell, and also of Simon Price, cited below, for the text and extensive commentary.

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Ares

Primary Sources

There is no extensive mythical or literary tradition involving Ares. Not surprisingly, Homer refers to the god of war often in the Iliad, terming the Argives "attendants of Ares," comparing one hero or another to the god of war, and so forth. See the article, above, for a summary of the appearances of Ares in this epic. In the Odyssey, Ares is found in the comical and mildly erotic tale of his being trapped in adultery with Aphrodite by the jealous Hephaestus (8.266-366). Even here, though, the god of war functions as little more than a generic adulterous lover; he has little more to say in the narrative than, "Let us go to bed" (292). Ares serves only as the occasion for Aphrodite's indulgence of her lust ("a welcome thing it seemed to her," 295), and in order to introduce the stratagem whereby Hephaestus traps the lovers. Elsewhere in the Odyssey, the name of Ares is

little more than a synonym for war. The god of war is even less attractive to Hesiod, merely being identified in the Theogony as son of Zeus and father of Fear and Terror. The Homeric Hymn to Ares addresses him optimistically as "savior of cities" (2) and asks for strength in war (11), but only in due measure in order to "abide within the harmless laws of peace" (16).

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Artemis

Primary Sources

Artemis plays a minor, even ludicrous, role in Homer; she is more fully and respectfully described in the Homeric Hymns. In each case, Artemis is the familiar chaste huntress of virtually all subsequent Greek literary and artistic portrayals. She is most fully characterized as the austere virgin of Euripides' Hippolytus. The problem for modern students of Greek religion is that this Homeric and Classical portrait is not consistent with the role of Artemis in cult. That is, already in Homer we find not the first but the last point in the history of the development of the character of the goddess. Greek literature gives us the civilized Artemis, virgin goddess of the hunt and

of the wilderness; in cult, we find practices which derive from a much earlier and comparatively savage stage of social evolution, such as holocausts of live animals and even hints of human sacrifice. In other words, with Artemis, more than with any of the other Olympians, the disjunction between myth, art and literature on the one hand and cultic practice on the other is so great that the literary portraits of the goddess are relatively unimportant, compared to written and archaeological evidence for religious practice, in reaching an understanding of her role in the religious life of ancient Greek people.

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Athena

Primary Sources

Athena appears frequently in both Homeric epics. In the Iliad, as the adversary of Ares and the patroness and adviser of Odysseus she represents the opposition between unreasoning violence and prudent, circumspect action. In the Odyssey, Athena is the protector and divine counselor of Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemachus. The Homeric Hymn to Athena recounts briefly, but in magnificent language, the birth of the goddess. Hesiod's Theogony briefly describes the circumstances of Athena's birth (886ff.) and as the adorer of the poet's deadly Pandora (573ff.). Aeschylus in Eumenides supplies the grandest literary picture of the goddess as proponent of legal due process, reason, and Olympian light over chthonic darkness. She is frequently portrayed, of course, by Athenian vase painters and sculptors.

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Demeter

Primary Sources

The principal text is, of course, the Homeric Hymn to Demeter which recounts the story of the goddess's loss and reclaiming of her daughter Kore/Persephone. The Hymn has generally been understood as an allegorical or aetiological account of the origins of the Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis, but see Section III, above, and Secondary Sources below for Clinton's recent reinterpretation of the tale. See Section III also for an

attempt to account for the surprisingly little attention paid by Homer to a goddess whose prestigious cult was so universal and of such great antiquity. Post-Homeric authors, perhaps with the exception of Aristophanes in Frogs, likewise seldom treat Demeter or her cult at the length, or with the seriousness, which we might expect. As with Hera (see the chapter "Hera"), Demeter's very great importance in religious practice—and particularly the cult observances of women—is belied by our main literary sources. Guthrie (see Section IV B, above) suggests that the cult of Demeter was part of "the religion of the ordinary citizen"; this may suggest a reason why Homer in particular, with his aristocratic cast of characters and audience, displays little interest in the goddess.

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Dionysus

Primary Sources

The earliest of the main ancient sources on Dionysus is, of course, Homeric Hymn 7, "To Dionysus," which tells the story of the god's miraculous salvation from pirates and his triumphant progress to Greece. Homer apparently knows Dionysus well enough to refer to his legends in an extended metaphor (Iliad 6.130ff.; see Section IV, above); on the other hand, as numerous scholars have pointed out, Homer seems little interested in the god's cult, even though it must have been well established by the time of the composition of the Homeric epics. The chief Classical text illustrating the god's exploits and reception is Euripides' Bacchae, as discussed above. Dionysus was an extremely common subject for vase painters of Classical Greece; he was shown, sometimes young, sometimes older and bearded, with a wine cup or

drinking horn, often in the company of maenads, satyrs or silenoi. In later antiquity, he is often depicted on sarcophagi arriving in triumph or raising Ariadne to immortality, most likely conveying aspirations for eternal life through his intercession.

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Hephaestus

Primary sources

There is no extensive mythical or literary tradition involving Hephaestus. See the chapter for a summary of the appearances of Hephaestus in the Homeric epics. For Homer, the smith god is, from time to time, cupbearer to the gods (a sort of grotesque, hobbling Ganymede), peacemaker between Zeus and Hera, personification of the fires of war and of the funeral pyre as well as that of the metalworker, and crafter of the sublime shield of Achilles. The Homeric Hymn to Hephaestus, only eight lines long, describes the god as a Promethean benefactor through whose arts human beings, who formerly existed like animals, now "live a peaceful life in their own houses the whole year round." Apollodorus (3.14.6) records the story of Hephaestus' becoming the father of the earth-born Athenian hero and king Erichthonius through a frustrated sexual encounter with Athena.

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Hera

Primary Sources

Homer's Iliad and Odyssey and the Theogony of Hesiod are indispensable to any student of Greek mythology. It was after all Homer and Hesiod, as Herodotus points out (2.53), who composed the Greeks' theogonies, described the gods, and gave them their titles, offices and powers.

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Hermes

Primary Sources

The Homeric Hymn to Hermes provides the fullest ancient account of the god's birth, exploits and nature. The Hymn to Hermes is different from all the others in its air of comedy and familiarity; the unknown author chooses to stress the young god's cunning, virtually from the moment of birth, and his open, utterly shameless amorality. Hermes makes several significant appearances in the Homeric epics. In the Iliad (24.317ff.), he is the guide on Priam's perilous night journey to the tent of Achilles. In the fifth book of the Odyssey (28ff.), Hermes conveys from Olympus to earth the decree of Zeus that Odysseus will return home and take vengeance on the suitors. Hermes also assists Odysseus along the way, most especially at Odyssey 10.277ff. where he supplies the hero with the magical assistance needed to defeat the witch Circe.

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Jean-Pierre Mahé, "Hermes Trismegistos," pp. 287-293.

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Poseidon

Primary Sources

Poseidon's name appears on Bronze Age clay tablets from Pylos which predate 1200 B.C.; references to the god here seem to place him in an older order of Greek religion in which he outranked even Zeus. In the Homeric epics, Poseidon is a majestic and imperious figure. In the Iliad, he is an enthusiastic partisan who loses no opportunity to harm the Trojans and help the Greeks; at one point (Iliad 20 68ff.), his enormous strength threatens to split the earth open down to the depth of Hades. Poseidon's hatred of Odysseus is one of the primary motives of the first half of the Odyssey; he stirs up storms and places various other obstacles in the hero's way. In only seven lines, the Homeric Hymn to Poseidon manages to mention virtually all of the god's roles as mover of the earth and sea, tamer of horses, and savior of ships. Aside from frequent references to him in sources such as Apollodorus and Pausanias, Poseidon appears not to have struck later Greek authors as an attractive figure; he receives no large-scale post-Homeric literary treatment.

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Jane Ellen Harrison, Mythology (New York, 1924), chapter 2, "Poseidon, pp. 12-43.

Zeus

Primary Sources

Zeus is ubiquitous in the Homeric epics as the poet's Cloud Gatherer and all-powerful, sky-dwelling Father of Gods and Men, lord of thunder and lightning. Homer never mentions the birth of Zeus; the story first occurs in Hesiod, Theogony (453ff.). In post-Homeric literature, Zeus is the standard of justice and righteousness, except for the atypical portrayal of the god as tyrannical and unjust in Aeschylus, Prometheus. The god is as omnipresent in art as he is in literature, being shown most often as a lordly figure, either standing or enthroned, holding the symbol of his power, the thunderbolt.

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