

*Greece & Rome*

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# GREEK RELIGION

BY

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- Fig. 13 Girl sacrificing at altar, Attic red-figure alabastron, Painter of Copenhagen 3830 (ca. 470 B.C.), APM inv. no. 648.
- Fig. 14 Capture of Persephone by Hades, fragment of South-Italian (Taranto) red-figure krater, near Painter of the Birth of Dionysus (ca. 380 B.C.), APM inv. no. 2588.
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## I. INTRODUCTION: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Was there ever such a thing as 'Greek religion'? It may be an odd question to start this survey with, but it should be absolutely clear from the start that Greek religion as a monolithic entity never existed. When Greece emerged from the Dark Age around 800 B.C., different communities had developed in very different social, political, and economic ways, and this development was reflected also on the religious level. Every city had its own pantheon in which some gods were more important than others and some gods not even worshipped at all. Every city also had its own mythology, its own religious calendar and its own festivals (Ch. IV.3). No Greek city, then, was a religious clone.<sup>1</sup> Yet the various city-religions overlapped sufficiently to warrant the continued use of the term 'Greek religion'. The family resemblance (to borrow Wittgenstein's famous term) of these 'religions' was strengthened by poets like Homer and Hesiod (below), who from the eighth century onwards produced a kind of religious highest common factor by inventing, combining, and systematizing individual traditions, which they then spread via performances at aristocratic courts or local and pan-Hellenic festivals (§ 3).<sup>2</sup>

Greek religion received its characteristic form in the 700 or so big and small cities, the *poleis*, which spread Greek culture from Spain to the Black Sea. The independence of these cities gradually diminished through the development of larger powers, such as Sparta and Athens, and they eventually had to cede their independence to Philip and his Macedonians. These developments brought about rapid changes in the structure of Greek religion (Ch. VII). In this survey we will concentrate on the religious practices and beliefs during the 'glory that was Greece', namely the archaic and classical periods. Given its pre-eminence in the sources, Athens will often be our most important example, but I intend to show also something of the diversity of Greek religious culture.

Before we start looking in more detail at its different aspects, it may be helpful to sketch its main qualities in broad outlines. Greek religion, then, was 'embedded'; it was public and communal rather than private and individual, and it had no strict division between sacred and profane (§ 1). It was also polytheistic and 'interconnected'; it served to maintain order and produce meaning; it was concerned with the here and now and passed down by word of mouth not through written texts (§ 2). Finally, it was male dominated (Ch. VI) and lacked a religious establishment (§ 3).<sup>3</sup>

I would like to conclude this introduction with two more observations.

First, religious historians often give a relatively static picture of the archaic and classical age, as if during this period religion remained more or less unchanged until the Hellenistic period. Admittedly, it is not easy to keep a proper balance between a synchronic system and diachronic developments. Yet a modern history should at least try to stick to a minimal diachronic perspective. Second, the table of contents of this pamphlet may suggest to the reader that the following chapters are all independent subjects, which have little to do with one another. Nothing is further from the truth. Gods and sanctuaries, myths and rituals, gender – since they are mutually supportive, they should ideally all be treated together in one close-knit treatise.<sup>4</sup> This is hardly possible, but it will be one of our challenges to show the interdependent nature of Greek religion.

### 1. *Embeddedness*

Whereas most Western countries have gradually separated church and state, the example of other societies, such as Iran and Saudi-Arabia, shows that this is not so everywhere. In ancient Greece, too, religion was totally embedded in society – no sphere of life lacked a religious aspect.<sup>5</sup> Birth, maturity, and death, war and peace, agriculture, commerce, and politics – all these events and activities were accompanied by religious rituals or subject to religious rules; even making love was named after the goddess of love, *aphrodisiazein*. Sanctuaries dominated the skylines, statues of gods stood on the corners of the streets, and the smell of sacrifice was never far away. Indeed, religion was such an integrated part of Greek life that the Greeks lacked a separate word for 'religion'.<sup>6</sup> When Herodotus wants to describe religions of the neighbouring peoples of Greece, he uses the term 'to worship the gods', *sebesthai tous theous*, and when he wants to describe the Greek nation he speaks of 'the common blood, the common language and the common sanctuaries and sacrifices' (8.144.2). In other words, for Herodotus the problem of describing foreign religions could be reduced to the question 'which (other) gods do they worship and how'.<sup>7</sup> In such an environment atheism was simply unthinkable. The term *atheos* did not originate before the fifth century and even then indicated only a lack of relations with the gods.<sup>8</sup>

Embeddedness went together with the virtual absence of private religion, since in classical Greece the notion of a private sphere was still in an early state of development. There could be individual cult acts, such as sacrifice, the dedication of an *ex-voto* (Ch. III.3), or a silent prayer (Ch. IV.2), but cult was always a public, communal activity, and worship outside

the basic groups of family, deme (commune), tribe, and city did not attain respectability before the weakening of the polis at the end of the fifth century. This public character also meant that religion was strongly tied up with social and political conditions. As life in Greece was dominated by free males, they could (and did) seriously restrict religious opportunities for women (Ch. VI.1) and slaves, whose religious position was modest, except for those festivals where the social order was temporarily suspended and they could enjoy themselves (Ch. IV.3).<sup>9</sup> The role of politics is visible, for example, in the struggle for religious authority in Sparta. There the highest magistrates in their competition for power with the kings had created alternative modes of consulting the gods in order to be independent from the seers, who were controlled by the kings.<sup>10</sup> It is also illustrated by Athens: when the city became more democratic it created priesthoods additional to those controlled by the aristocrats, and when it became more imperialistic, it started to extend the cult of its most important goddess, Athena, in other cities.<sup>11</sup>

Embeddedness also influenced the conceptualization of the sacred. In modern Western society the sacred is limited to a direct connection with the supernatural and sharply separated from the profane, but the situation was rather different in Greece. Here a variety of words existed to express our notion of the sacred. The most important term in this respect is *hieros*, which is everything that has to do with sanctuaries and the gods; for example, to sacrifice is *hiereisthai* and a priest is a *hiereus*. In short, *hieros* is 'as it were the shadow cast by divinity',<sup>12</sup> but it does not mean 'taboo', a quality often associated by anthropologists with the sacred, which is only expressed by certain verbs, *hagizo*, *enagizo* and *kathagizo*.<sup>13</sup> In addition to *hieros*, the Greeks used *hagnos*, which could be applied to humans and gods: regarding the gods and important social institutions, such as supplication and the oath, it denotes their awesomeness, but in the case of humans it refers to their ritual purity. The two notions are not easily combined, and in the late Archaic Age, when the gap between the human and the divine became enlarged, a new word, *hagios*, was introduced which is first attested for altars (Simonides fr. 519.9) and applies especially to temples, rites, and mysteries.<sup>14</sup>

Another key term in this area is *hosios*. It had a wide range with a basic meaning of 'permitted by or pleasing to the gods'. For example, *hosios* could be contrasted with *hieros* in order to contrast civic funds with those of the gods, but could also denote purity because pollution is offensive to the gods. More strongly, the notion of 'pleasing' included that of 'justice', as is illustrated by a recently published funerary epigram of a certain

Sosikrates, who died 'not in a *hosios* way but through an unjust death' (*SEG* 38.440). The Athenians often used the combination *hiera kai hosia* to indicate two types of prime importance to society: the right ritual behaviour and the correct treatment of fellow men. Even if the latter was not 'sacred', it was still felt to be parallel to and co-ordinate with the other sphere. The same goes, in a way, for important institutions of society, such as the symposium or political offices, which were marked with a certain sanctity by the wearing of garlands. So in Greece, the sacred 'appears as the intensely venerable rather than the absolutely other'.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Polytheism, piety, and pollution

Unlike Christianity and Islam, Greek religion was polytheistic. This is not just a difference in quantity. In polytheism, the pantheon constitutes a kind of system, where gods may complement one another or may be in mutual opposition (Ch. II.3). Did every Greek worship all the gods of their pantheon? We do not know, but it is unlikely. Wealthy Athens had dozens of sanctuaries, whereas excavators have found only three temples in small Priene on the west coast of modern Turkey. In some cases worshippers may have tried to remedy the lack of sanctuary of a specific deity by dedicating a figurine of one god in the sanctuary of another, but on the whole inhabitants of rich urban centres must have had many more possibilities for worship than the ordinary man in the country or in small poleis.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike God or Allah, polytheistic gods only cover a limited sphere of life. Their importance, as for example expressed in sacrifice (Ch. IV.2), depends on their specific realm. As only the totality of the gods was believed to cover the whole of life, ranging from orderly Apollo to bloodthirsty Ares, piety never meant devotion to only one god, although the closeness of a shrine may have fostered a special relationship with a god or hero (Ch. III.3). It was only in Hellenistic times that faith in one god, *pistis*, became possible (Ch. VII.3); only after the birth of Judaism and Christianity do we find conversions.<sup>17</sup> In fact, religious singlemindedness was definitely dangerous, as Euripides showed in his *Hippolytos* (428 B.C.) where the protagonist comes to a sad end through worshipping Artemis but refusing Aphrodite.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, piety did not yet include loving a god. As Aristotle bluntly states: 'it would be absurd if someone were to say that he loves Zeus' (*MM.* 1208 b 30).<sup>19</sup>

Proper Greek piety, *eusebeia*, on the other hand, was connected with a root *seb-*, 'retreat in awe', but in the classical period the element of

reverence had come to the fore and even extended to loving parents and patriotism.<sup>20</sup> The important quality of piety was to keep the ancestral customs. As Isocrates observed: 'piety consists not in expensive expenditures but in changing nothing of what our ancestors have handed down' (7.30). Impiety, or *asebeia*, came closer to our own ideas and included temple robbery, killing suppliants, entering certain temples when not permitted or holding the wrong ideas. Even though the evidence for many Athenian trials for impiety against famous philosophers is late, Socrates was executed on the charge of innovation in regard to the gods not for, say, religious theft.<sup>21</sup> Religious tolerance was not a great Greek virtue.<sup>22</sup>

Whereas the Christian world-view increasingly separates God from this world, the gods of the Greeks were not transcendent but directly involved in natural and social processes. Myths related divine visits on earth and in Homer's *Iliad* gods even participated in the fighting before Troy.<sup>23</sup> Gods also intervened in the human world in cases of moral transgressions: the myth of Oedipus relates the fatal consequences of incest, and the Spartans believed that their murder of helot suppliants in a sanctuary of Poseidon had caused the catastrophic earthquake of 462.<sup>24</sup> It is for such connections as between the human and divine spheres that a recent study has called the Greek world-view 'interconnected' against our own 'separative' cosmology.<sup>25</sup>

An important consequence of overstepping or breaking existing cosmological, social, and political boundaries was the incurring of pollution. The vocabulary of pollution and purity together with its concomitant practices was most frequently used in Greek religion to indicate proper boundaries or categories not to be mixed. Natural pollutions are to a certain extent understandable with the messiness accompanying birth and the smells arising from a decaying body. But we would not so readily use the vocabulary of pollution for the violation of temples, divine statues, and sacred equipment, which infringes the domain of the gods, or for murder, which infringes social relations, as does killing suppliants, whilst madness and other diseases infringe the wholeness of the physical person. On the other hand, incest and cannibalism were seen as monstrous polluting crimes, which confuse the boundaries between men and animals. Males who confused gender roles by practising passive homosexuality and women who transgressed boundaries of respectability by prostituting themselves were also considered to be polluted. The latter, though, were not seen as contagious or dangerous and the committers of these sexual activities did not need to purify themselves. The employment of this particular vocabulary with the corresponding rites of purification can, in one way, be

seen as an important Greek way of dealing with maintaining religious and social norms and values in times when the legal process was still under-developed.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to removing disorder, Greek religion also gave meaning and explanation to life. Dreams, waywardness of behaviour, unforeseen events such as shipwrecks, plagues and earthquakes – all could be traced to particular gods and in this way were given a recognizable and clear place in Greek world-view; if necessary, there were even anonymous gods to take the blame.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, not everything became clear through the mediation of religion and some divine actions remained inexplicable. Tragedians explored these actions, but their juxtaposition of the human and the divine in such plays as Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* or Euripides' *Bacchae* shows something of the bafflement the gods' reactions on occasion could evoke.<sup>28</sup>

Most Greek religion, though, was directed at this life not the hereafter. In Homeric times, death was still more or less the end of life, although people believed in an underworld. In the course of the Archaic Age, life after death became an issue for reflection. Aristocratic circles, probably the more intellectual amongst them, began to reflect about their personal fate and crave for an existence prolonged beyond their allotted lifespan. Salvation through leading a model life or through initiation into mysteries gradually gained in popularity (Ch. VII.1), but belief in a life after death never flourished to the extent it did in the Christian Middle Ages. There if anywhere in Greek religion, it seems that opinions differed widely.<sup>29</sup>

Such a variety of opinion is hardly surprising in a society that was oral rather than literate. Books did not play a role in Greek religion except for a few 'sects', such as the Orphics (Ch. VII.1), and children were religiously socialized by attending and practising rituals.<sup>30</sup> This meant that religious ritual played a much larger role in Greek life than in modern society. Together with the absence of a Holy Book went the absence of a creed and, consequently, of heresy. In fact, religious authority was widely fragmented because there was no Greek equivalent to Christian ministers, Jewish rabbis or Islamic mullahs. Most citizens could sacrifice by themselves; indeed, Herodotus was amazed that the Persians had to call upon a Magus to perform their sacrifices (1.132).

### 3. Religious specialists

Outside their own home, though, the Greeks could meet certain religious specialists, in particular poets, priests, and seers. Poets were undoubtedly

the main religious 'inventors' and 'reproducers'. Even if he exaggerated slightly, Herodotus was not far wrong when he stated that Homer and Hesiod defined the theogony, gave the gods their epithets, assigned their functions, and described their forms (2.53.2). Poets could exert this influence because they were supported by the aristocrats who controlled life through their religious, political, social, and cultural hegemony.<sup>31</sup> Poets also enlarged their religious capital by claiming to be in close contact with the gods. Not only did they manage to make the Greeks believe, if not unconditionally, in the divine guarantee by the Muses of the information they supplied:<sup>32</sup> they also claimed a privileged knowledge about the gods which was denied to normal humans, as for instance when Homer tells us that an owl is called *chalkis* by the gods but *kumindis* by men (*Il.* 14.290–1).<sup>33</sup>

Poets also regularly 'invented' religious traditions, if necessary by borrowing from neighbouring peoples. It was only realized in the 1950s that the myth of Kronos' castration of his father Ouranos derived from the Near East: the slow but steady decipherment of ever more clay tablets has now shown that this myth ultimately derived from the Hurrians having passed through Hittite and Phoenician intermediaries.<sup>34</sup> And less than a decade ago it became clear that the division of the world between Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades through the throwing of lots, as described in the *Iliad* (15.187–93), derives from the Akkadian epic *Atrahasis*. And when Hera, in a speech to deceive Zeus, says that she will go to Oceanus, 'origin of the gods', and Tethys, the 'mother' (*Il.* 14.201), she mentions a couple derived from the parental couple Apsu and Tiamat of the Babylonian creation epic *Enuma Elish*.<sup>35</sup>

Priests conducted larger rituals and supervised sanctuaries (Ch. III.1), but never developed into a class of their own because of the lack of an institutional framework. Consequently, they were unable to monopolize access to the divine or to develop esoteric systems, as happened with the Brahmins in India or the Druids among the Celts. On the whole, priest-hoods had no great influence except for those of certain important sanctuaries, such as the Eumolpides and Kerykes in Eleusis (Ch. VII.1) and the Branchidai at Apollo's oracle at Didyma (Ch. III.3). Despite their modest status, priests must have played an important role in the transmission of local rituals and myths, and Hellanicus, one of the earliest historians, used priestesses of Hera in Argos as his most trustworthy chronological source (*FGrH* 4 F 74–84).

In the case of problems or inexplicable events, it was a seer who could bring help. In the Archaic Age seers were still aristocrats, who participated

in every aspect of aristocratic life, including the battlefield. But despite their expertise, their words were not definitive. People were free to accept or reject their advice, and epic and tragedy supply various examples of seers whose word was wrongly neglected, such as that of Teiresias in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*.<sup>36</sup>

In the later classical age the position of poets and seers declined through various developments, such as the rise of literacy, increasing knowledge of the world, and growing self-reliance. Even though tragedians still held an important position in the adaptation and formation of religious traditions in the fifth century, they now had to share their one-time monopoly with historians and philosophers. After the fifth century the former took over to a large extent the task of preserving religious traditions and the latter became the main 'theologians'. Moreover, at the end of the Archaic period the most important religious authority had become the polis, which now mediated and articulated all religious discourse and controlled all cultic activity. There was no creed or divine revelation and so the polis, when challenged, appealed to the traditional nature of rites, *ta nomizomena*, and customs, *ta patria* (Ch. IV.1).<sup>37</sup> Such a stress on tradition could lead to rigidity, but possible tension between conservatism and innovation was resolved by introducing new cults, not abandoning old ones.<sup>38</sup>

## NOTES

1. As was first argued, in an exemplary investigation of Aphrodite in Locri Epizephyrii, by C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Reading Greek Culture'. *Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 147–88 (= *JHS* 98, 1978, 101–21); note also S. Sherwin-White, *Ancient Cos* (Göttingen, 1978), pp. 290–373; A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia*, 3 vols (London, 1981–6); Graf, *NK*; M. Jost, *Sanctuaires et cultes d'Arcadie* (Paris, 1985); R. Parker, 'Spartan Religion', in A. Powell (ed), *Classical Sparta* (London, 1989), pp. 142–72.
2. For this influence see especially G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore, 1990) and *Greek Mythology and Poetics* (Ithaca, 1990), pp. 36–82.
3. I have profited from the stimulating short introductions to Greek religion by W. Burkert, in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 14 (Berlin and New York, 1985), pp. 235–53; R. Parker, in *The Oxford History of the Classical World* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 254–74, J.-P. Vernant, in M. Eliade (ed), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 6 (New York and London, 1987), pp. 99–118; F. Graf, in H. Poser (ed), *Handbuch der Semiotik* (Berlin and New York, 1994), Ch. 42; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, in Bremmer (ed), *Encyclopedia of Ancient Religions* (London, 1995).
4. This is rightly stressed by Bruit/Schmitt, *Religion*, p. 228.
5. The terminology is from Parker (n. 3), p. 265.
6. In fact, our concept 'religion' only developed after the Reformation, cf. J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1985), p. 170, overlooked by T. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore and London, 1993), pp. 40–3.
7. Cf. W. Burkert, 'Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen', *Entretiens Hardt* 35 (Vandoeuvres and Geneva, 1990), pp. 1–32, esp. p. 4; see also F. Mora, *Religione e religioni nelle storie di Erodoto* (Milano, 1986).
8. Cf. Bremmer, 'Literacy and the Origins and Limitations of Greek Atheism', in J. den Boeft and A. H. M. Kessels (eds), *Actus* . . . (Utrecht, 1982), pp. 43–55; the studies and bibliographical surveys by

- M. Winiarczyk, *Philologus* 128 (1984), 157–83 and 136 (1992), 306–10; *Elenchos* 10 (1989), 103–92; *Rhein. Mus.* 133 (1990), 1–15 and 135 (1992), 216–25; Ch. VII.2.
9. For slaves and Greek religion, see F. Bömer, *Untersuchungen über die Religion der Sklaven in Griechenland und Rom* (Stuttgart, 1990<sup>2</sup>).
  10. F. Jacoby on *FGH* 596 F 46; Bremmer, 'The Skins of Pherekydes and Epimenides', *Mnemosyne* IV 46 (1993), 234–6.
  11. Priesthoods: E. Kearns, 'Change and Continuity in Religious Structures after Cleisthenes', in P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey (eds), *Crux. Essays . . . presented to G. E. M. de Ste. Croix* (London, 1985), pp. 188–207. Athena: B. Smarczyk, *Untersuchungen zur Religionspolitik und politischen Propaganda Athens im Delisch-Attischen Seebund* (Munich, 1990); I. Kasper-Butz, *Die Göttin Athena im klassischen Athen* (Frankfurt, 1990).
  12. So, strikingly, Burkert, *GR*, p. 269; see also Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 151f.
  13. Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 328–31.
  14. For the vocabulary of the sacred, see Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 147–50; A. Dihle, *Jahrbuch f. Ant. und Christ. Suppl.* 11 (1985), 107–11 and *Reall. f. Ant. und Christ.* 14 (1988), 1–16; A. Motte, 'L'expression du sacré dans la religion grecque', in J. RIES (ed), *L'expression du sacré dans les grandes religions* 3 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1986), pp. 109–256; J. Nuchelmans, 'A propos de *hagios* avant l'époque hellénistique', in A. Bastiaensen et al. (eds), *Fructus centesimus. Mélanges G. J. M. Bartelink . . .* (Steenbrugge and Dordrecht, 1989), pp. 239–58.
  15. So Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 153 (also for garlands), 323, 330 (*hosios*); W. R. Connor, "'Sacred" and "Secular". *Hiera kai hestia* and the Classical Athenian Concept of the State', *Ancient Society* 19 (1988), 161–88.
  16. Cf. B. Alroth, *Greek Gods and Figurines* (Uppsala, 1989), pp. 64–105, reviewed by F. T. van Straten, *Opusc. Athen.* 19 (1992), 194f.
  17. *Pistis*: D. R. Lindsay, *Josephus and Faith* (Leiden, 1993). Conversion: R. MacMullen, *Changes in the Roman Empire* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 130–41, 322–7.
  18. Cf. B. Gladigow, 'Chresthai theois. Orientierungs- und Loyalitätskonflikte in der griechischen Religion', in C. Elsas and H. G. Kippenberg (eds), *Loyalitätskonflikte in der Religionsgeschichte* (Würzburg, 1990), pp. 237–51.
  19. For a discussion of the notion 'loving god (God)', which ranges from classical times to the early Christian period, see T. Söding, 'Das Wortfeld der Liebe im paganen und biblischen Griechisch', *Ephemerides Theol. Lovanienses* 68 (1992), 284–330.
  20. K. J. Dover, *Greek popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 246–54; C. Watkins, in P. Baldi (ed), *Linguistic Change and Reconstruction Methodology* (Berlin and New York, 1990), p. 297 (etymology).
  21. H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion 1: Ter Unus* (Leiden, 1990), pp. 123–31; D. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcements of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 203–17. Trials: K. J. Dover, *The Greeks and Their Legacy* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 135–58; W. R. Connor, 'The Other 399: Religion and the Trial of Socrates', in M. A. Flower and M. Toher (eds), *Georgica. Greek Studies in Honour of George Cawkwell* (London, 1991), pp. 49–56.
  22. Tolerance: P. Garnsey, 'Religious Toleration in Classical Antiquity', in W. J. Sheils (ed), *Persecution and Toleration* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 1–27.
  23. Visits: D. Flückiger-Guggenheim, *Göttliche Gäste. Die Einkehr von Göttern und Heroen in der griechischen Mythologie* (Berne and Frankfurt, 1984).
  24. Oedipus: Bremmer, 'Oedipus and the Greek Oedipus Complex', in Bremmer (ed), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London, 1990<sup>3</sup>), pp. 41–59. Spartans: Hdt. 1.128, cf. Parker, *Miasma*, p. 184. In general: W. Speyer, *Frühes Christentum im antiken Strahlungsfeld* (Tübingen, 1989), pp. 254–63.
  25. See the innovative study by Th. C. W. Oudemans and A. Lardinois, *Tragic Ambiguity* (Leiden, 1987), rev. by S. Goldhill, *CR* 38 (1988), 396f (too negative); R. Buxton, *JHS* 109 (1989), 216f; H. van Looy, *Ant. Class.* 58 (1989), 256–8; M. Frasco, *Mnemosyne* IV 47 (1994), 289–318.
  26. Pollution: Parker, *Miasma*; add G. Neumann, 'Katharós "rein" und seine Sippe in den ältesten griechischen Texten', in H. Froning et al. (eds), *Kotinos. Festschrift Erika Simon* (Mainz, 1992), pp. 71–5. Roman religion seems to use the idea of pollution to a much smaller extent.
  27. H. S. Versnel, 'Self-sacrifice, Compensation and the Anonymous Gods', *Entretiens Hardt* 27 (Vandoeuvres and Geneva, 1981), pp. 135–95, esp. 171–9.
  28. Cf. J. Gould, 'On making sense of Greek religion', in P. Easterling and J. Muir (eds), *Greek*

*Religion and Society* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 1–33; R. G. A. Buxton, 'Bafflement in Greek Tragedy', *Metis* 3 (1988), 41–51.

29. For the development of beliefs and attitudes regarding death, see C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'To Die and Enter the House of Hades: Homer, Before and After', in J. Whaley (ed), *Mirrors of Mortality* (London, 1981), pp. 15–39; eadem, 'A Trauma in Flux: Death in the 8th Century and After', in R. Hägg (ed), *The Greek Renaissance of the Eighth Century* (Stockholm, 1983), pp. 33–48. *Contra*: I. Morris, 'Attitudes towards Death in Archaic Greece', *Class. Ant.* 8 (1989), 296–320. Variation: Dover, *Greek Popular Morality*, pp. 261–8.

30. Bremmer, 'The Family and Other Centres of Religious Learning in Antiquity', in J. W. Drijvers and A. A. MacDonald (eds), *Centres of Learning* (Leiden, 1994).

31. Cf. J.-M. Bremer, 'Poets and Their Patrons', in H. Hofmann and M. A. Harder (eds), *Fragmenta dramatica* (Göttingen, 1991), pp. 39–60; G. Weber, 'Poesie und Poeten an den Höfen vorhellenistischer Monarchen', *Klio* 74 (1992), 25–77.

32. Cf. I. J. F. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers* (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 45–53; S. R. Slings, 'Poet's Call and Poet's Status in Archaic Greece and Other Oral Cultures', *Listy Filologické* 119 (1989), 72–9 and 'Orality and the Poet's Profession', *Acta Ant. Hung.* 33 (1990–2), 9–14; M. Finkelberg, 'A Creative Oral Poet and the Muse', *AJPh* 111 (1990), 293–303; A. Ford, *Homer. The Poetry of the Past* (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 180–97.

33. Language of the gods: C. de Lamberterie, 'Grec homérique mōly: étymologie et poétique', *LALIES* 6 (1988), 129–38; F. Bader, *La langue des dieux, ou l'hermétisme des poètes indo-européens* (Pisa, 1989); Ford, *Homer*, p. 175.

34. See most recently H. A. Hoffner, *Hittite Myths* (Atlanta, 1990), pp. 38–43; E. Neu, 'Der alte Orient: Mythen der Hethiter', in G. Binder and B. Effe (eds), *Mythos. Erzählende Weltdeutung im Spannungsfeld von Ritual, Geschichte und Rationalität* (Trier, 1990), pp. 90–117.

35. On these derivations from the Ancient Near East see the fascinating study by W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution. Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge Mass., 1992).

36. On seers see now Bremmer, 'Prophets, Seers and Politics in Greece, Israel and Early Modern Europe', *Numen* 40 (1993, 150–83), 151–9 (with full bibliography); D. Lateiner, 'The Perception of Deception and Gullibility in Specialists of the Supernatural (Primarily) in Athenian Literature', in R. Rosen and J. Farrell (eds), *Nomodeiktēs. Greek Studies in Honor of Martin Ostwald* (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 179–95.

37. Cf. J. D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill and London, 1983), pp. 96–8; H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies* 1, p. 130.

38. Cf. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What is Polis religion?', in O. Murray (ed), *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford, 1990, 295–322), p. 304; eadem, 'Further Aspects of Polis Religion', *AION* 10 (1988), 259–74.

## II. GODS

Gods have not been at the very centre of modern discussions of Greek religion.<sup>1</sup> Yet there are several questions worth asking. What did the Greeks see as important differences between themselves and the gods, and between gods and heroes? Which factors helped to define the identity of individual gods (§ 1)? How do we study the pantheon (§ 2)? What did the Greeks consider to be the sphere of influence of individual gods? What was the nature of the divine hierarchy? Last but not least, were the gods persons or powers (§ 3)?

### 1. God, gods and heroes

At an early stage of their history the Greeks replaced the Indo-European word \**deiwos* (Latin *deus*) with *theos* in order to denote the most powerful category among the supernatural beings they worshipped. *Theos* is related to Armenian *di-k*, 'gods', and Latin *fanum*, 'sanctuary', but its precise meaning remains obscure. Sometimes, though, the Greeks used a different term. Whenever they felt that a god intervened for a short time, directly and concretely in their life, they spoke of *daimon*, which only later acquired its unfavourable meaning.<sup>2</sup>

Greek gods resembled and differed from the Christian God in important aspects. Like Him, they were invisible, but they were not loving (Ch. I.2), almighty, or omnipresent; moreover, they were 'envious and disorderly' (Herodotus 1.32.1), their presence could be uncanny, sometimes horrific, and, last but not least, they were frivolously amoral. In particular the divine sense of justice in Homer is problematic, but we reach a better understanding when we consider the relationships between gods and mortals as analogous to those between princes and commoners. Although gods did uphold the rules of justice, their obligations to kin and friends had priority. This attitude reflects the absence in Homeric society of a developed legal system, and it is only natural that in a more regulated period such a lack of a divine sense of justice came to be questioned.<sup>3</sup>

Divine uncanniness comes to the fore in tragedy, as for example in Euripides' *Hippolytos*, where Poseidon despatches a bull from the sea in order to kill Hippolytos. This darkness of divinity is typical of tragedy, but its prominence in this particular genre should not lead us to make it the starting point of generalizations: approaching the gods from their role in comedy would lead to completely different results. Rather, it is typical of

46. For Dionysus in general see A. Henrichs, 'Changing Dionysiac Identities', in B. Meyer and E. Sanders (eds), *Jewish and Christian Self-definition III* (London, 1982), pp. 137–60, 213–36; C. Gasparri, *LIMC III.1* (1986), s.v.; Versnel, *Inconsistencies*, 1, 96–205; Carpenter/Faraone, *Masks of Dionysus*; *DDD*, s.v. Dionysos (F. Graf).

47. H. A. Shapiro, *Personifications in Greek Art* (Kilchberg and Zurich, 1993).

48. *Contra Bruit/Schmitt, Religion*, p. 185 (the Greek pantheon is a 'rigorously logical ensemble').

49. For this ambiguous character of some Greek gods, see also Oudemans/Lardinois, *Tragic Ambiguity*, pp. 95f.

50. P. Wathelet, 'Dionysos chez Homère ou la folie divine', *Kernos* 4 (1991), 61–82.

51. We must always be careful, though, to take context into account, since Dionysus regularly occupies a central place in drinking scenes.

52. Vases: Laurens/Lissarrague, 'Entre dieux'; Arafat, *Classical Zeus*, pp. 177f (Zeus); Ph. Bruneau, *LIMC II.1* (1984), 491 (Ares). Hermes: G. Siebert, *LIMC V.1* (1990), s.v.; C. Miquel, 'Images d'Hermès' and J.-L. Durand, 'L'Hermès multiple', in Bron/Kassapoglou, *L'image en jeu*, pp. 13–23, 25–34, respectively.

53. Cf. L. Käppel, *Paian* (Berlin and New York, 1992), pp. 206–84.

54. Graf, *NK*, 74–97, 125f.

55. Burkert, *GR*, pp. 182–9; Bruit/Schmitt, *Religion*, p. 177 ('gods were not persons so much as powers'); note also Oudemans/Lardinois, *Tragic Ambiguity*, p. 94: 'Greek gods are not clearcut individuals but focuses of divergent cosmological oppositions'.

### III. SANCTUARIES

Popular ideas about Greek places of worship are much influenced by the splendour of a few surviving temples, such as Athena's Parthenon or Poseidon's temple at Sounion. Yet these aesthetically pleasing but ruined and empty buildings give little insight into their former functions. So let us first look at sanctuaries proper (§ 1), then their locations (§ 2) and, finally, their secular and religious functions (§ 3).<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Buildings, statues, and personnel

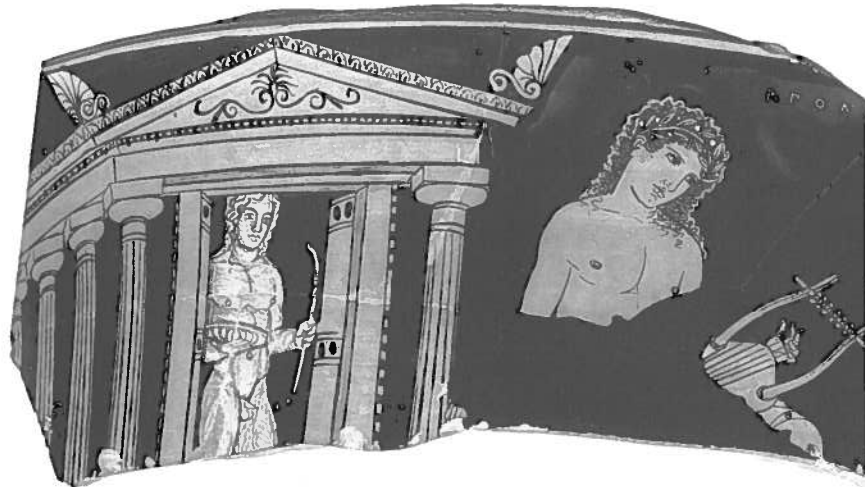
In our oldest literary source, Homer, sanctuaries with a temple, statue, and priest(ess) are already well established. Hector's mother Hecuba went to the temple of Athena on the Acropolis where the priestess Theano opened the doors, put Hecuba's valuable gift of an embroidered robe on the knees of Athena's statue and pronounced a prayer (*Il.* 6.285–311), and Zeus went to Cretan Ida, the site of 'his temenos and ... altar' (8.48). As archaeology has shown, this combination of a temenos (a piece of land set aside for gods or heroes) with altar had already emerged in the Dark Age, but it would last to the 8th century when the first temples appeared on the scene;<sup>2</sup> this late arrival precluded a standard form and, for example, some temples always remained roofless.<sup>3</sup> Typical signs of a sanctuary were water (for ritual use), a tree or grove, and a stone (to mark the place as special),<sup>4</sup> but only the altar was indispensable: some sanctuaries never acquired a temple.<sup>5</sup>

A sitting statue, such as Athena's in Troy, was normal for goddesses in Archaic Greece, whereas male gods preferred the more manly attitude of standing (fig. 6).<sup>6</sup> Other divinities, though, could have aniconic statues: Apollo Agyieus regularly appears on coins as a conic column and the famous image of Eros in Thespieae was only a rough stone.<sup>7</sup> As such statues co-existed with the more 'normal' figurative ones,<sup>8</sup> aniconism probably tended to indicate a certain 'abnormality' of the cult. And indeed, strange statues of Artemis and Hera, but also of Dionysus, were regularly associated with festivals of reversal (Ch. IV.3); sometimes these statues were considered so dangerous that they were tied up and only released once a year.<sup>9</sup>

In the sanctuaries, priests usually officiated for gods and priestesses for goddesses, but, as with sacrificial victims (Ch. IV.2), there was no iron rule: Athena regularly had a priest. Priests performed sacrifices and guarded the



treasures of the sanctuary, but in larger sanctuaries special personnel did the more menial jobs, such as preventing birds from fouling statues. In smaller, rural sanctuaries priests were not always present and here worshippers themselves could sacrifice after having called for the priest in



6. Gilded bronze statue of Apollo in temple with adjacent picture of the god himself with his lyre.

vain.<sup>10</sup> As mediators between gods and worshippers, priests distinguished themselves through their white or purple clothing, and on vases priestesses are often pictured with metal keys, some of which have been excavated; in fact, temples were usually closed to worshippers and only opened on fixed or festive days: it was the altar not the temple which was the real centre of a sanctuary.<sup>11</sup>

Rather strikingly, adolescents sometimes occupied a priestly function in initiatory cults. This shows how different Greek priests could be from ours. The occasional appearance in the outfit of their divinities is another illustration of this difference; on Attic vases Athena's priestess is sometimes difficult to distinguish from the goddess. Was this identification perhaps a priestly strategy to increase status because Greek priests were always subject to the authority of the people and never managed to develop into a ruling class, as they did in India or ancient Israel?<sup>12</sup>

There was no sharp distinction between gods and heroes in these respects. Admittedly, a sanctuary of heroes (heroön) was normally smaller than that of divinities, but some heroa were large enough to allow the squatting of

Attic refugees during the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides 2.17.1). Heroes also had a statue and were regularly portrayed in armour, as many were believed to have been great warriors. Several authors, who are all later than the 4th century B.C., distinguish between a divine (*bomos*) and heroic (*eschara*) altar, the first being rectangular, monumental, and with a projecting step or stepped base, whereas the latter would be low, hollow, circular, and standing directly on the ground. As with the distinction between Olympian and Chthonic gods (Ch. II.2), reality was more diverse, and various heroes had a divine altar.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Locations

Major sanctuaries outside the walls or situated at remote places played important roles in the rise of panhellenism, political federations, and the birth of the polis. Delphi and Olympia developed in an especially spectacular way in the ninth and eighth centuries because here the aristocracies of the surrounding places could meet and compete in games and conspicuous offerings, thus fostering panhellenism. Other sanctuaries away from major cities developed into centres of political federations, such as Poseidon's at Boeotian Onchestos and on the isle of Kalaureia, off Troizen. Finally, sanctuaries could mark the borders of a city's territory, such as those of Hera Lacinia and Apollo Aleos, respectively south and north of South-Italian Croton, or they could be used to strengthen ties with border areas, as the Peisistratids did by connecting Athens with the outlying sanctuaries of Brauron and Eleutherae. In short, the location of the sanctuary contributed to determine its social and political roles.<sup>14</sup>

Much less attention has been directed towards the question why some divine sanctuaries were located in the polis but others not.<sup>15</sup> If a sanctuary important for the religious life of the community is not situated in the heart of that community or at such a distance that citizens have to leave their familiar surroundings in order to worship, we may expect those cults to be in some ways in opposition to those which occupied a more central location. As cults co-determine the character of gods (Ch. II.1), an extra-mural cult may also point to an 'eccentric' or less central divinity.<sup>16</sup> Is this supposition true?

In the heart of the city we naturally find Zeus and Athena, who as polis gods *par excellence* had sanctuaries on the agora and the acropolis, respectively, although Zeus' origin as weather god remained visible in his sanctuaries on mountaintops.<sup>17</sup> Apollo and Demeter were more ambivalent cases. Apollo's sanctuary was often located on the agora, as in Peloponnesian

Argos, Cretan Dreros, and Crimean Olbia, but he was also worshipped away from the centre at the sea-side, especially with the epithet Delphinios, or in the 'suburbs', as in the Athenian Lykeion. The differing locations probably reflect his own ambivalent position between adolescence and adulthood (Ch. II.3).<sup>18</sup> When inside the city, Demeter's sanctuaries were nearly always away from inhabited areas and the agora, as in Corinth and Priene. As a rule, they were situated before or somewhat outside the city, often on the slope of a hill, which precludes an agricultural interpretation and fits with her 'eccentricity' (Ch. II.3).<sup>19</sup> Finally, sanctuaries of the birth-goddess Eileithyia could be found near the city gate: not because she presided over the production of future soldiers, but because there was no place in the heart of the city for a goddess closely connected with pollution.<sup>20</sup>

Outside the polis we usually find sanctuaries of Poseidon,<sup>21</sup> Dionysus,<sup>22</sup> Hera, and Artemis. The Heraion was about 6–10 kilometres away from the city centre in Argos, Croton, Paestum, and on Samos; on Paros it was situated in a hilly area. Hera's sanctuaries were connected with initiation and festivals of reversal; moreover, the rituals were often performed by women but concluded by men. Clearly, the Homeric picture of the quarrelsome wife of Zeus has overlaid a much older, more interesting cult.<sup>23</sup> Artemis' sanctuaries could also be found in mountainous regions, but their distinctive feature was the closeness of rivers and swampy places – witness her epithet Limnatis, 'of the Marshes'. This 'watery' environment was typical of Artemis, and the second-century rhetor Maximus Tyrius already noted that 'fountains of water, hollow thickets, and flowery meadows are sacred to Artemis' (8.1). Dry as Greece was, these areas connected with Artemis must have been striking for their moist, luxuriant lushness. As places of eternal spring they were particularly suited to girls in the full bloom of youth – a striking confirmation of Artemis' initiatory function.<sup>24</sup>

The location of hero-sanctuaries does not seem to have been very different from divine complexes. They could be sited on prominent hills, in the midst of mountains, such as the *temenos* of Telephos on the Arcadian mount Parthenion, or near springs, like the one at Attica where Makaria was worshipped. Heroes (not heroines), who had founded a city, were often buried in the agora and clearly closely connected with the life of the polis;<sup>25</sup> in some cities, as in Athens and Thebes, there was even a secret heroic grave on which the safety of the city depended.<sup>26</sup> Other heroes were situated near the city gates – not primarily because the gates relate to the status of the hero as a liminal category, but because they were the most vulnerable parts of the city which therefore needed support from supernatural warriors: Apollo was also often invoked as defender of the gates.<sup>27</sup>

Our analysis of the location of sanctuaries, then, has confirmed our discussion of the gods and heroes: those connected most with the political and social order also occupied central places in the Greek poleis. For a complete picture of Greek gods and heroes the location of their sanctuaries cannot be neglected.

Finally, familiarity breeds contempt, as the proverb says, but does it also promote intimacy? In other words, was it religiously important to live close to a sanctuary? For the Greeks, of all the good relationships between men, that between neighbours was considered to be best. It would hardly be surprising, therefore, if they also developed a special relationship with those gods and heroes whose shrines and sanctuaries were in their neighbourhood or even adjacent to their houses. In fact, many examples in ancient literature show that 'a hero whose shrine was near an individual house might be "domesticated" and receive regular greetings and offerings from his mortal neighbours; in return, the hero was expected to influence the fortunes of "his" family'. If, indeed, our literary evidence mainly concerns heroes, this does not mean that the closeness of a divine shrine was considered to be insignificant. On the contrary. Many Greek parents gave their children names, which were expressive of the fact that a god was their neighbour (*geiton*), such as Athanogiton (Athena), Damatrogiton (Demeter), Diogeiton (Zeus), Pythogiton (Apollo), or just Theogiton. One may even wonder whether these names were not suggestive of a more personal devotion to a specific god.<sup>28</sup>

### 3. Social and religious functions

Greek sanctuaries functioned in a much more varied way in society than modern churches, as some examples of their social, economic, and political roles may illustrate.<sup>29</sup> Excavations and literary testimonia show that many sanctuaries contained temporary and permanent buildings which were used for dining; in some cases, as in Corinth, the cooking pots and drinking-cups could still be recovered. The small Greek houses offered little possibilities for larger groups and, moreover, a sanctuary was a secure place to meet, since it was divine property.<sup>30</sup> This security was frequently made use of by slaves, criminals, and political victims for refuge through the ritual of supplication.<sup>31</sup> As in modern days, the number of suppliants could be considerable: Herodotus mentions the presence of 300 boys in a Samian sanctuary of Artemis (3.48). Not surprisingly, some sanctuaries had to set aside large tracts of land on which to keep these 'permanent pilgrims'.<sup>32</sup>

Like the medieval Church, major sanctuaries owned large estates to pay

for their upkeep and personnel, but these estates also had a wider economic function.<sup>33</sup> The land was leased and on Delos, for instance, we hear of farms, trees, barley, and vineyards. And like the medieval Church, rich estates stimulated greed. Many a sanctuary issued a sacred law to prohibit the grazing of its meadows and the cutting of its trees.<sup>34</sup> The land could be so valuable that various wars were fought over the uncultivated land of the Cirrhaean plain below Delphi; comparable wars took place in Crete even up to the end of the second century B.C.<sup>35</sup>

Temples also functioned as reserve banks. In the debate before the second Athenian expedition to Sicily, Thucydides lets Nicias warn that the Sicilians not only had considerable private means but also great wealth in the sanctuary of Selinus (6.20.4), where, as in other temples, objects of precious metal were safeguarded by countersigning them with names of gods. Indeed, the inventories of Greek sanctuaries, on which temple officials recorded the treasures and dedications (below) of the temples at the end of their service, demonstrate their considerable wealth.<sup>36</sup> Inventories also show that in times of need cities and their inhabitants happily borrowed from their gods but were not always as forthcoming in paying back. The gods were lenient creditors.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to their economic function, temples also played a role in political life. The first written laws in Greece were deposited in a sanctuary or actually inscribed on the more visible walls of the major temple of the city, such as the famous laws of Cretan Gortyn on the walls of the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios. Indeed, it usually was a sanctuary of Apollo that contained the laws, decrees, and treaties of a city, although the Athenians used the sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods, the Metroon, as their city archive. At least initially, the choice of a temple for 'publication' and preservation must have suggested inviolability and a binding character. When the Ephesian philosopher Heraclitus (*ca.* 500 B.C.) deposited his work in the temple of Artemis (Diog. Laert. 9.6), his gesture may still have presupposed this tradition.<sup>38</sup>

But what about worship? Some sanctuaries were specialized, such as those for mysteries and healing cults (Ch. VII.1,2) or those to obtain oracles. Divination has to uphold a certain amount of objectivity to remain credible and, consequently, major oracular shrines were situated at a fair distance from the territories of influential city-states: Homer knew already of the wealth of Delphi (*Il.* 9.404f) and far-away Dodona with 'the Helloi, your interpreters, with unwashed feet, sleepers on the ground' (16.234f); Olympia, too, started as an oracular shrine before giving us the Olympian Games.<sup>39</sup> But some oracles were nearer home, such as those of Amphiaraos

in Oropos, not far from Athens, Trophonios, not that far from Thebes, Didyma near Miletos, and Claros on the edge of the territories of Notion and Colophon.<sup>40</sup> There is a certain difference between these far-away and near-to-home oracles. The earlier flourished especially in the archaic period and were consulted in such matters as colonization and land distribution, the great problems in the period of Greek state-formation. The latter were more consulted in matters of potentially civic troubles. But in all cases ancient oracles assisted in making choices and setting the seal on collective decisions rather than in predicting the future. The crystal ball is a recent invention.<sup>41</sup>

The main purpose of most sanctuaries, though, was to enable worshippers to sacrifice (Ch. IV.2) and to make votive offerings. Whenever the Greeks wanted to thank the gods and/or tried to obtain a favour, they could dedicate a votive offering, which would be a more lasting testimony than a sacrifice. Even though the extremes in value (poor painted wooden panels and rich gold and silver plates) have all but disappeared, many inscriptions and votive reliefs have been preserved which allow us a unique glimpse into Greek religious practice. Through them we see who thought of the gods and why, where, and what offerings were thought suitable.<sup>42</sup>

Thanks to the possibility of using very cheap material, all sections of society could make votive offerings. Men, women, families – the gods were most hospitable. Sometimes, foreigners also made dedications to Greek gods. Herodotus mentions the many votives in gold and silver of Croesus (1.50–2, 90), but he was not the only one to do so: in Archaic times especially (see below) many traders, in particular Phoenicians but also the occasional Etruscan, enriched Greek sanctuaries.<sup>43</sup>

The 'why' of offerings is sometimes explained by the 'what'. After a victory, part of the booty could be consecrated. As here was a story to tell, local sanctuaries thus served as a kind of museum, which helped to keep collective memories alive.<sup>44</sup> A girl could dedicate her toys to Artemis on the eve of her wedding and a boy his statue (the famous *kouroi*) to Apollo on the occasion of his initiation, even if these were sometimes extremely small (fig. 7).<sup>45</sup> Healing gods received replicas of the limbs they had cured and so their sanctuaries were filled with arms and legs, vulvae and penises.<sup>46</sup> In other cases, worshippers dedicated figurines of divinities in their specific sanctuaries but also in those of other gods; once again, the gods were most hospitable.<sup>47</sup> Finally, there were costly gifts whose purpose was clearly not only to please gods but also to impress humans, such as those by Croesus; the gift of golden tripods to Delphi by Sicilian tyrants at the beginning of the fifth century was in the same vein.<sup>48</sup>



7. A kouros could also be small: this copy from Eastern Greece is only 28 cm.

People also dedicated curious objects. In the Heraion of Samos, teeth of a hippopotamus, antlers of an antelope, and eggs of an ostrich have been found. In the same sanctuary even living curiosities, peacocks, walked about.<sup>49</sup> In other words, some major sanctuaries must have looked like one big 'curiosity shop'. And what about the inside of popular temples? An inventory of the Athenian temple of Asclepius describes in great detail where the dedications were located: a gold crown, iron finger-ring and gold chain 'at the ridge beam', and a woman's face and 10 silver reliefs 'on the left as one enters. First rafter.' The inventory thus allows us to reconstruct the whole interior of the temple,<sup>50</sup> which 'must have closely resembled not the bare rooms of our drawings but the most jumbled and crowded antique store or museum store-room that most of us can imagine'.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, dedications have a history, too. In the course of the Archaic Age, striking changes took place in the major Greek sanctuaries. A good example is the dedication of bronze jewellery in Olympia. Whereas only 49 finds have been made from the period ca. 1050–750 B.C., there are 948 finds from ca. 750–450 B.C. but, again, only 77 finds from ca. 450–150 B.C. These changes, which can be paralleled in other objects such as hoplite figurines and helmets, are not easy to explain. They probably reflect the changing status of the aristocracy at the end of the Archaic Age, but other factors may also have played a role. The absence of informative texts prevents a clearer view in this respect.<sup>52</sup>

## NOTES

1. For a relatively short survey see Burkert, *GR*, pp. 84–98, to be supplemented now by his 'The Meaning and Function of the Temple', in M. V. Fox (ed), *Temple in Society* (Winona Lake, 1988), pp. 27–47 and 'Greek Temple Builders: Who, Where, and Why?', in R. Hägg (ed), *The Role of Religion in the Early Polis* (Stockholm, 1995). Two informative collections: *Le sanctuaire grec* = *Entretiens Hardt* 37 (Vandoeuvres and Geneva, 1992); Marinatos/Hägg, *Greek Sanctuaries* (good bibliography by E. Østby, 192–227).
2. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Early sanctuaries, the eighth century and ritual space', in Marinatos/Hägg, *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 1–17, esp. 8. For the vocabulary of sanctuaries see M. Casevitz, in G. Roux (ed), *Temples et sanctuaires* (Lyon, 1984), pp. 81–95.
3. J. N. Coldstream, 'Greek Temples: Why and Where?', in Easterling/Muir, *Greek Religion and Society*, pp. 67–97; R. Schmitt, *Handbuch zu den Tempeln der Griechen* (Berne, 1992). Roofless temples: M.-C. Hellmann, 'Les ouvertures des toits ou retour sur le temple hypèthre', *Rev. Arch.* 1993, 73–90.
4. Water: G. Panessa, 'Le risorse idriche dei santuari greci nei loro aspetti giuridici ed economici', *Ann. Sc. N. Pisa* III 13 (1983), 359–87; S. G. Cole, 'The uses of water in Greek sanctuaries', in Hägg, *Early Greek Cult Practice*, pp. 161–5. Tree: Burkert, *GR*, pp. 85f. Grove: J. Scheid et al., *Les bois sacrés* (Naples, 1983). Stone: Dowden, *Death and the Maiden*, pp. 138–40.
5. Altars: R. Etienne and M.-Th. le Dinahet (eds), *L'espace sacrificiel dans les civilisations méditerranéennes de l'antiquité* (Paris, 1991); R. Etienne, 'Autels et sacrifices', in *Sanctuaire grec*, pp. 291–312. No temple: Sourvinou-Inwood (n. 2), p. 16 n. 60 (e.g., no temple in the Miletan Delphinion before the Romans).
6. H. Jung, *Thronende und sitzende Götter* (Bonn, 1982); add Graf, *NK*, 44f.
7. Cf. U. Kron, 'Heilige Steine', in Froning, *Kotinos*, pp. 56–70; V. Fehrentz, 'Der antike Agyieus', *JDAI* 108 (1993), 123–96.
8. Cf. A. A. Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* (Atlanta, 1988), pp. 226f.
9. Graf, *NK*, 81–96; Versnel, *Inconsistencies 2*, index s.v. 'chained gods'. Statues are an under-researched subject, but see R. Gordon, *Art History* 2 (1979), 5–34; I. B. Romano, 'Early Greek Cult Images and Cult Practices', in Hägg, *Early Greek Cult Practice*, pp. 127–33; A. Larcher, 'Gemalte Götterstatuen. Ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie der pompejanischen Wandmalerei', in B. Otto and F. Ehrl (eds), *Echo. Festschrift J. B. Trentini* (Innsbruck, 1990), pp. 197–208; B. Alroth, 'Changing Modes in the Representation of Cult Images', in R. Hägg (ed), *The Iconography of Greek Cult in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (Athens and Liège, 1992), pp. 9–46.
10. Graf, *NK*, 40 (calling), 214 (Athena's priest). Birds: Eur., *Ion* 106–9; J. Maxmin, *JHS* 95 (1975), 175–80 (metal 'umbrellas' to protect statues); P. Danner, 'Meniskoi and Obeloi. Zum Schutz von Statuen und Bauwerken vor den Vögeln', *Jahresh. Österr. Arch. Inst. Wien* 62 (1993: Hauptblatt), 19–28.
11. Cf. A. G. Mantis, *Problemata tes eikonographias ton iereion kai ton iereon sten archaia Ellenike techne* (Athens, 1990), pp. 28–65 (keys), 82–96 (iconography of priests), 114f (catalogue of preserved keys); R. Garland, 'Priests and Power in Classical Athens', in M. Beard and J. North (eds), *Pagan Priests* (London, 1990), pp. 75–91, esp. 77–81; this volume, Ch. I.3.
12. Adolescents: Bremmer, 'The role of the temple in Greek initiatory ritual', in *Actes du VIIe Congrès de la F.I.E.C. I* (Budapest, 1983), 121–4. Identification: C. Bérard, 'Hommes, prêtres, dieux', in J. Waardenburg (ed), *L'Islam: une religion* (Geneva, 1989), pp. 95–120.
13. Cf. E. Kearns, 'Between God and Man: Status and Function of Heroes and Their Sanctuaries', in *Sanctuaire grec* (pp. 65–99), pp. 65–8. Heroes as warriors: Ar. fr. 240; Van Straten (Ch. 2 n. 23), 187–9 (also on altars).
14. For these roles see especially F. de Polignac, *La naissance de la cité grecque* (Paris, 1984); id., 'Mediation, Competition, and Sovereignty: The Evolution of Rural Sanctuaries in Geometric Greece', in S. Alcock and R. Osborne (eds), *Placing the Gods* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 3–18; C. Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles* (Cambridge, 1990); eadem, 'The origins of pan-Hellenism', in Marinatos/Hägg, *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 18–44.
15. Locations of sanctuaries in Magna Graecia: I. Edlund, *The Gods and the Place* (Stockholm, 1987); G. Pugliese Carratelli (ed), *Magna Graecia* 3 (Milano, 1988), pp. 149–58. Greece and the Aegean: A. Schachter, 'Policy, Cult, and the Placing of Greek Sanctuaries', in *Sanctuaire Grec*, pp. 1–57; Osborne/Alcock, *Placing the Gods*.

16. As is persuasively argued by F. Graf, 'Culti e credenze religiose della Magna Grecia', *Atti Taranto* 21 (Naples, 1982), 157–85, esp. 166.
17. Athena: Burkert, *GR*, p. 140; Graf, *NK*, 44. Zeus: Graf, *NK*, 182, 197, 202f (mountains); M. Langdon, *A Sanctuary of Zeus on Mount Hymettos* (Princeton, 1976); M. L. Zimmerman Munn, 'The Zeus Sanctuary on Mt Kokkygion above Hermion, Argolis', *Am. J. Arch.* 90 (1986), 192f.
18. Graf, 'Apollon Delphinios', *Mus. Helv.* 36 (1979), 2–22 (near the sea or on the agora); Graf, *NK*, 222 (A. Lykeios on agora).
19. Cf. S. G. Cole, 'Demeter in the Ancient Greek City and its Countryside', in Alcock/Osborne, *Placing the Gods*, pp. 199–216. Locations of Demeter's sanctuary on an acropolis (Thebes, Mytilene, Lepreon) may derive from the goddess's connection with political power (Ch. II.3).
20. Gate: Paus. 2. 5. 4 (Corinth), 2. 18. 3 (Argos, cf. M. Piérart, *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 106, 1982, 141–9), 2. 35. 11 (Hermione); in general, R. Olmod, *LIMC* III.1 (1986), s.v. *Contra* Kearns, 'Between God and Man', p. 74, who neglects the abnormality of the goddess's sacrificial victim (a dog: Ch. IV.2) and the regular location of birth-goddesses outside the city (Graf, *NK*, 421f).
21. Poseidon's sanctuaries are often near the sea but also in the mountains, cf. Bremmer, 'Poseidon'; R. Schumacher, 'Three related sanctuaries of Poseidon: Geraistos, Kalauria and Tainaron', in Marinatos/Hägg, *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 62–87.
22. There were no temples of Dionysus in classical times, but the name of his sanctuary in Athens, *en limnais*, or 'in the marshes', suggests locations outside the city, as does the fact that on vases Dionysus' sanctuary is often a cave, cf. C. Bérard, 'Axie taure', in *Mélanges . . . Paul Collart* (Lausanne, 1976), pp. 61–73.
23. R. Hägg, in M. Piérart (ed), *Polydipsion Argos — Bull. Corr. Hell. Suppl.* 22 (Paris, 1992), pp. 14–16 (Argos); E. Lattanzi, in *Cahiers du Centre Jean Bérard* 16 (Naples, 1991), 67–71 (Croton); K. Junker, *Der ältere Tempel im Heraion am Sele* (Cologne, 1993: Paestum); H. Kyrieleis, in Marinatos/Hägg, *Greek Sanctuaries*, p. 125 (Samos); A. Corso, *Ann. Sc. Arch. Atene* 62 (1984 [1988]), 97–101 (Paros). In general: Graf, 'Culti e credenze', 166–71.
24. Cf. A. Motte, *Prairies et jardins de la Grèce antique* (Brussels, 1973), pp. 94–104; P. Brulé, *La fille d'Athènes* (Paris, 1987), pp. 197–200.
25. W. Leschhorn, *Gründer der Stadt* (Stuttgart, 1984); I. Malkin, *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece* (Leiden, 1987), pp. 189–240; S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* 1 (Oxford, 1991), pp. 20f.
26. Faraone, *Talismans & Trojan Horses*, pp. 115f; Bremmer, 'Religious Secrets and Secrecy in Classical Greece', in H. Kippenberg and G. Stroumsa (eds), *Secrecy and Concealment in Ancient and Islamic History of Religions* (Leiden, 1994).
27. For the hero-sanctuaries see Kearns, 'Between God and Man', although I differ from her interpretation on heroes at the gates (74), cf. Graf, *NK*, 173–6 (Apollo).
28. Cf. J. S. Rusten, 'Geiton héros: Pindar's Prayer to Heracles (N. 7.86–101) and Greek Popular Religion', *HSCP* 87 (1983), 289–97, esp. 296 (quotation). Rusten has overlooked the onomastic evidence, which, curiously, was especially popular in the Megarid, cf. L. Robert, *Opera minora selecta* 5 (Amsterdam, 1989), p. 261.
29. These aspects are under-researched, but see F. Ghinatti, 'Manifestazioni votive, iscrizioni e vita economica nei santuari della Magna Grecia', *Studia Patavina* 30 (1983), 241–322.
30. Cf. F. Cooper and S. Morris, 'Dining in Round Buildings', and N. Bookidis, 'Ritual Dining in the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth: Some Questions', in O. Murray (ed), *Sympotica* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 66–85 and 86–94, respectively.
31. See most recently F. Letoublon, 'Le vocabulaire de la supplication en grec', *Lingua* 52 (1980), 325–36; Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 181–6; Mikalson, *Honor Thy Gods*, pp. 69–77.
32. K. A. Christensen, 'The Theseion: A Slave Refuge at Athens', *Am. J. Anc. Hist.* 9 (1984), 23–32; U. Sinn, 'Greek sanctuaries as places of refuge', in Marinatos/Hägg, *Greek Sanctuaries*, pp. 88–109; *Athen. Mitt.* 105 (1990), 53–116 (Heraion at Perachora), and *Ant. Welt* 23 (1992), 175–90 (Sounion).
33. Cf. R. Osborne, 'Social and economic implications of the leasing of land and property in Classical and Hellenistic Greece', *Chiron* 18 (1988), 279–323; C. Ampolo, 'The Economics of the Sanctuaries in Southern Italy and Sicily', in T. Linders and B. Alroth (eds), *Economics of Cult in the Ancient Greek World* (Uppsala, 1992), pp. 25–8; S. Isager and J. Skydsgaard, *Ancient Greek Agriculture* (London and New York, 1992), pp. 181–90.
34. Delos: M. Brunet, *Bull. Corr. Hell.* 114 (1990), 669–82. Trees: A. Henrichs, "'Thou shalt not kill a tree": Greek, Manichaean and Indian Tales', *Bull. Am. Soc. Pap.* 16 (1979), 85–108; B. Jordan and

- J. Perlin, 'On the Protection of Sacred Groves', in *Studies Presented to Sterling Dow* (Durham NC, 1984), pp. 153–9.
35. Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 160–6; A. Chaniotis, 'Habgierige Götter, habgierige Städte. Heiligtumsbesitz und Gebietsanspruch in den kretischen Staatsverträgen', *Ktema* 13 (1988 [1992]), 21–39.
36. It was not until the fourth century that these treasures, which the inviolability of sanctuaries had always protected, became the object of looting, cf. Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 170–6; W. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* 5 (Berkeley etc., 1991), pp. 160–8.
37. Selinus: *SEG* 34. 970. Temples as banks: Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 170–5; C. Ampolo, 'Fra economia, religione e politica: tesori e offerte nei santuari greci', *Scienze dell'Antichità* (henceforth *SA*) 3–4 (1989–90), 271–9; T. Linders, 'Sacred Finances: Some Observations', in Linders/Alroth, *Economics of Cult*, pp. 9–13.
38. R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition & Written record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 38–40 (Metroon); K.-J. Hölkeskamp, 'Written Law in Archaic Greece', *PCPhS* 38 (1992), 87–117, esp. 99–102.
39. Dodona: F. T. van Straten, 'Twee orakels in Epirus', *Lampas* 15 (1982), 195–230 (also on the Epirote nekyomanteion); R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary* IV (Cambridge, 1992), p. 350, makes a strong case for Helloi instead of Selloi, although Archilochus heard Selloi (fr. 183: the seer Selloi), cf. F. Bossi, *Studi su Archiloco* (Bari, 1990), pp. 207–10. Delphi: Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles*. Olympia: U. Sinn, 'Die Stellung der Wettkämpfe im Kult des Zeus Olympios', *Nikephoros* 4 (1991), 31–54.
40. Amphiarion: P. Roesch, in Roux, *Temples et sanctuaires*, pp. 173–84. Trophoneion: P. and M. Bonnechère, *Les Et. Class.* 57 (1989), 289–302. Didyma and Claros: H. W. Parke, *The Sanctuaries of Apollo in Asia Minor* (London, 1985); J. Fontenrose, *Didyma. Apollo's Oracle, Cult and Companions* (Berkeley etc., 1988), with the reviews by R. Parker, *CR* 39 (1989), 270f and C. Morgan, *Hermathena* 146 (1989), 64–9; L. and J. Robert, *Claros I* (Paris, 1989); J. de la Genière, 'Le sanctuaire d'Apollon à Claros; nouvelles découvertes', *REG* 103 (1990), 95–110; K. Tuchelt, *Branchidai — Didyma* (Mainz, 1992).
41. Cf. R. Parker, 'Greek States & Greek Oracles', in P. Cartledge and F. Harvey (eds), *Crux. Essays . . . G. E. M. de Ste. Croix* (London, 1985), pp. 298–326; C. Morgan, 'Divination and Society at Delphi and Didyma', *Hermathena* 147 (1989), 17–42.
42. The most important studies are by F. T. van Straten: 'Gifts for the Gods', in H. S. Versnel (ed), *Faith Hope and Worship* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 65–151; 'Unclassical Religion in Classical Greece: The Archaeological Angle', *Proc. XIIIth Congr. Arch.* 4 (Athens, 1988), 288–92; 'Votives and Votaries in Greek Sanctuaries', in *Sanctuaire grec*, pp. 247–84. Painted votives: M. Nowicka, 'Les portraits votifs peints dans la Grèce antique', *Eos* 78 (1990), 133–6. Formulas of votives: M. L. Lazzarini, 'Iscrizioni votive greche', *SA* 3–4 (1989–90), 845–59.
43. Phoenicians: I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, 'Fremde Weihungen in griechischen Heiligtümern von 8. bis zum Beginn des 7. Jahrhunderts', *Jahrb. Röm.-Germ. Zentralmus.* 32 (1985), 215–54. Etruscan: A. Johnston, *Arch. Anz.* 1993, 597f.
44. Cf. A. H. Jackson, 'Hoplites and the Gods: The Dedication of Captured Arms and Armour', in V. D. Hanson (ed), *Hoplites. The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London, 1991), pp. 228–49.
45. *Greek Anthology* 6.280 (girl); W. Martini, *Die archaische Plastik der Griechen* (Darmstadt, 1990).
46. For anatomical votives see most recently B. Forsén and E. Sironen, *ZPE* 87 (1991), 173–5.
47. Cf. Alroth, *Greek gods and figurines*; eadem, 'Visiting gods', *SA* 3–4 (1989–90), 301–10.
48. R. Krumeich, 'Zu den goldenen Dreifüsse der Deinomeniden in Delphi', *JDAI* 106 (1991), 37–62.
49. Cf. J. Boessneck and A. von den Driesch, *Athen. Mitt.* 96 (1981), 245–8 and 98 (1983), 21–4. Peacocks: Antiphanes, fr. 173; Menedotus *FGH* 541 F 2.
50. On inventories see D. Knoepfler (ed), *Comptes et inventaires dans la cité grecque* (Neuchâtel and Geneva, 1988); T. Linders, 'Inscriptions and Orality', *Symb. Osl.* 67 (1992), 27–40.
51. S. B. Aleshire, *The Athenian Asklepieion* (Amsterdam, 1989), pp. 177–248 (inventory) and *Asklepios at Athens* (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 41–6 (quote, p. 46).
52. On the changes see A. Snodgrass, 'The Economics of Dedication at Greek Sanctuaries', *SA* 3–4 (1989–90), 287–94.

#### IV. RITUAL

In his handbook, Burkert considers ritual to be the cornerstone of Greek religion and, accordingly, starts his analysis with a chapter called 'Ritual and sanctuary'.<sup>1</sup> As he uses the term 'ritual' as self-evident,<sup>2</sup> we will start with some introductory observations on the use of the term and on the possibilities for studying ancient ritual (§ 1). Subsequently we analyse important ritual acts, such as prayer, procession and, in particular, sacrifice (§ 2). We conclude the chapter with a discussion of various larger ritual complexes (§ 3).

##### 1. What is ritual?

Considering the importance attached to ritual in modern studies of Greek religion,<sup>3</sup> it is rather surprising to notice that the Greeks did not have an all-embracing category called 'ritual'.<sup>4</sup> They approached ritual acts and processes from at least three different angles. First, they called many of their ritual activities *ta nomizomena*, 'what is customary' (Ch. I.3); modern scholarship of ritual also stresses the importance for rites to look traditional, even if they are recent constructions or innovations.<sup>5</sup> Second, they often named rituals after their central, most striking act: the Athenian festival Anthesteria was often called Choes from its most striking day (§ 3) and the *sphagia*, a type of sacrifice which was not followed by a banquet, was named after its most striking act, the 'piercing of the throat'.<sup>6</sup> Third, many elaborate rituals were called *heortai*, a term associated with good food, good company, and good entertainment.<sup>7</sup> The *heorte* was an important way of celebrating the gods, which provided a pleasant interruption to the routines of everyday life. As the philosopher Democritus observed, 'a life without *heortai* is like a road without inns' (B 230).<sup>8</sup>

This fragmentation of the vocabulary of what nowadays is called 'ritual' is not a purely Greek phenomenon. In fact, it is only since the turn of this century that anthropologists and historians of religion have started to use 'ritual' as the standard term for repetitive, representational behaviour that often has to be decoded.<sup>9</sup> In other words, by introducing a new classification based on only one aspect of a mass of heterogeneous phenomena, viz. its prescribed and repetitive character, they could reduce both single rites, such as prayer (§ 2), and extended rituals, like initiation (§ 3), to one common denominator. We follow the modern categorization but keep in mind that 'ritual' is not a native category.

It is not easy to analyse ancient ritual, since the evidence usually stems from different periods, places, and genres. Moreover, the nature of the evidence rarely enables us to integrate the opinions of the participants or to describe a ritual in all its details, since ancient authors focussed on the unusual and considered the usual too well-known to be mentioned. Necessarily but regrettably, our descriptions, then, often have to focus on the structure of the ritual and to be short on its psychological impact.

##### 2. Prayer, procession, and sacrifice

The more elaborate Greek festivals were made up of a limited number of basic ritual acts: dances,<sup>10</sup> musical and athletic contests,<sup>11</sup> prayers and hymns, processions and, most important of all, animal sacrifices. Prayers usually followed a structure of invocation, claim for attention, and request, as when Achilles prays to Zeus (*Il.* 16.233–48). Striking differences from Christian prayer were the lack of a feeling of gratitude (instead, the Greeks offered expressions of praise and honour), the posture (Greeks did not kneel but prayed with hands raised [see Appendix], the loudness (silent prayer became more usual only in Late Antiquity), and the regular singing of prayers in the form of hymns;<sup>12</sup> the latter sometimes developed into a special genre for a particular god: paeans for Apollo and dithyrambs for Dionysus.<sup>13</sup>

Processions were part and parcel of Greek life.<sup>14</sup> The sacrificial procession paraded the value of the sacrificial victim and the piety of the sacrificers (fig. 8). The wedding procession advertised the official nature of a wedding, and for more than half a millennium a yearly procession kept the



8. Sacrificial procession

memory alive of those who had fallen at the battle of Plataea in 479 B.C. Processions with a divine statue were often part of festivals of reversal (§ 3) but could also stress the existing order, as when, once a year, Miletan aristocrats, the Molpoi, travelled in procession to Didyma singing paeans at all the sanctuaries along the road. Processions could even symbolize the restoration of the old order, as when Thrasybulus solemnized the restoration of Athenian democracy in 403 B.C. with a march from the Piraeus to the Acropolis. In short, the functions of processions were manifold.<sup>15</sup>

Processions were particularly suited to make symbolic statements about power relations, since they often drew large audiences. For example, during the sacrificial procession of the Panathenaea Athenian colonies and allies had to parade a cow and panoply, the daughters of Athenian metics carried parasols for female citizens, and adult metics carried sacrificial equipment; colonies also had to contribute a phallus to the procession of the Great Dionysia.<sup>16</sup> Whereas processions thus demonstrated Athenian superiority, they could also demonstrate modesty. During the Spartan Hyacinthia festival, adolescent girls rode down in a procession to Amyclae, showing themselves off to the community after, probably, an initiatory seclusion at the border area. Some aristocratic girls rode in race-carts, others in carriages with the shape of griffins or goat-stags. The daughter of the Spartan king Agesilaus went in one of the latter vehicles, a public one, which was 'no more elaborate than that of any other maiden'. Evidently, the Hyacinthia procession normally demonstrated that some Spartans were more equal than others, although Spartan ideology claimed otherwise.<sup>17</sup>

All these elements were important, but the pivot of Greek ritual was undoubtedly animal sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> Both Burkert and Vernant (with his Parisian *équipe*) have devoted much of their scholarly efforts to the meaning of sacrifice and its place in Greek society – although drawing very different conclusions. We still miss studies focusing on local practices,<sup>19</sup> but two developments, especially, enable us now to evaluate these studies in a more satisfactory way than a decade ago. The school of Vernant has demonstrated that Attic vases are an important source for sacrificial representations.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, biologists have started to analyse faunal remains of excavated altars, which now allows a glimpse of the realities of Greek sacrificial practice.<sup>21</sup> Instead of a step-by-step analysis of normative Greek animal sacrifice, sacrifices at the beginning of battle, at the crossing of rivers, at the conclusion of oaths,<sup>22</sup> and human sacrifice,<sup>23</sup> space limits us to two questions.

Bearing in mind our attention to the hierarchy within the Greek

pantheon (Ch. II.3 and III.2), we will first briefly look at the choice of sacrificial victims. Did all divinities receive the same animals or did some fare better than others? Although cattle constituted the most valued victims, the preferred victims for all major gods were sheep and goats.<sup>24</sup> The main exceptions to this rule were Hestia (the goddess of the [city] hearth), who customarily received a preliminary, usually cheap, sacrifice, and Demeter, who traditionally received a pig(let); on Attic vases Dionysus was also regularly associated with a pig sacrifice.<sup>25</sup> Polluted Eileithyia (Ch. III.2), cruel Ares (§ 3) and spooky Hekate received dogs, lovely Aphrodite birds, and randy Priapus fish.<sup>26</sup> Admittedly, excavations have demonstrated the sacrifice of dogs to Apollo in Didyma, but this is probably due to influence from Asia Minor: Hittites and Lydians happily consumed dog meat.<sup>27</sup> Most gods, then, received cattle, sheep, and goats, whereas inedible or very cheap animals were offered to those divinities, who were connected with impurity and/or situated at the margin of the social order. The 'eccentric' position of Demeter and Dionysus, which we already noticed during our discussion of the gods (Ch. II.3) and the locations of sanctuaries (Ch. III.3), is confirmed by the 'eccentricity' of their victims, the pigs, whose rooting, digging habits made them less suitable for densely populated areas.<sup>28</sup> Evidently, the choice of sacrificial victims reflected and helped to reinforce the divine pecking order.

The question of sacrificial hierarchy has hardly received attention in recent times, but the second question goes to the heart of the current debate on Greek sacrifice: what was the significance of the ritual surrounding the killing of the sacrificial victim? Following the views of Karl Meuli (1891–1968) that Greek sacrifice eventually derived from hunting practices and that hunters, feeling guilty for having killed their game, regularly tried to disclaim their responsibility,<sup>29</sup> Burkert has made this feeling of guilt the focus of his sacrificial theory.<sup>30</sup> His crown witness is the Dipolieia, an Athenian festival during which an ox was sacrificed because it had tasted sacrificial cakes. Subsequently the sacrificial knife was condemned and expelled from the city, but the ox ritually re-erected, yoked to a plough. In the aetiological myth the killer of the ox eased his conscience by suggesting that everybody should partake in the killing of the sacrificial victim.<sup>31</sup> Burkert takes this 'comedy of innocence' to be paradigmatic for every sacrifice: humans experience *Angst* when actually killing the animals and have feelings of guilt over the blood which they have shed.

However, Burkert's observations cannot be accepted in their totality, since there are virtually no testimonies of actual fear and guilt among the Greeks. On the contrary, Attic vases constantly connect sacrifice with ideas

of festivity, celebrations, and blessings.<sup>32</sup> The ritual of the Dipolieia cannot make up for this absence: it had only limited circulation,<sup>33</sup> and it already presupposed the developed Attic rules of justice.<sup>34</sup> Its protagonist was a plough-ox, which, reportedly, it had once been a crime to kill at Athens.<sup>35</sup> Meuli considered the plough a latecomer in the ritual, but it was its vital position in Athenian society and its closeness to the farmer that made the killing of the plough-ox the subject of an elaborate ritual: Theophrastus explicitly notes that the ritual was inaugurated to enable people to eat the ox (fr. 584A).

The expansion of the Athenian state, however, which required the sacrifice of numerous oxen in order to feed the people at the banquets accompanying state-festivals – Isocrates mentions sacrificial processions of three hundred oxen (*Ar.* 29) – removed the original tie which the farmers of an earlier, smaller Athens will have felt with their plough-ox. It is no wonder, then, that already Aristophanes in his *Clouds* considers the Bouphonia an archaic affair (984f). Consequently, we should not generalize from this particular sacrificial ritual to a general view of killing in Greek sacrifice.

Finally, in explicit opposition to Meuli and Burkert, Jean-Pierre Vernant has argued that (1) Greek sacrificial rites should not be compared with hunting rituals but resituated within their proper religious, Greek system and that (2) the killing of the victim does not constitute the centre of gravity of sacrifice,<sup>36</sup> although he explicitly notes that rituals, myths, and representations are all painfully careful in avoiding any reference to the actual killing of the sacrificial victim. He even uses the expression *mensonge* ('lie!') *par omission* for this hiding of an apparently unpalatable truth.<sup>37</sup> In this way, according to Vernant, the Greeks wanted to exclude the elements of violence and *sauvagerie* from their sacrifice in order to differentiate it from murder.

Vernant is certainly right in questioning Meuli's and Burkert's all too strong accentuation of the influence of hunting traditions: Meuli totally overlooked the influence of Syro-Palestine,<sup>38</sup> and unlike hunters (and the Jews), the Greeks broke the bones to extract marrow, as excavations in Samos, Didyma, and Kalapodi have shown.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the differentiation between sacrifice and murder does indicate an underlying feeling of unease with the ritual, as is confirmed by other indications. In the myth of the Dipolieia the killer of the ox is a foreigner; the sacrificial knife is hidden as long as possible;<sup>40</sup> the Greeks employed the euphemism 'to do' for sacrificing, and without the existence of some mixed feelings about sacrificial killing, it remains hard to explain why Orphics, Pythagoreans,

and Empedocles rejected animal sacrifice altogether.<sup>41</sup> Killing for sacrifice, then, did not generate fear and *Angst*, but it certainly generated feelings of unease.

Finally, whereas the Greeks themselves did represent gods in the act of sacrifice (fig. 9), the protagonists in the modern debates feel apparently ill



9. Sacrificing Nike

at ease with the religious functions of sacrifice and approach the subject in a strikingly secular manner. For Meuli, it was nothing but ritual slaughter; for Burkert the shared aggression of the sacrificial killing primarily leads to the founding of a community, and for Vernant sacrifice is, fundamentally, killing for eating.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, though, this act, which stands at the centre of Greek ritual, is much richer than these reductive formulas suggest. We need more investigations into its religious, literary,<sup>43</sup> social, economic, and cultural significance, but these researches will have to take into consideration all available kinds of evidence. Future studies of sacrifice will be satisfactory only if they are based on literary, epigraphical, iconographical, and archaeological evidence.<sup>44</sup>



### 3. Initiation and festivals

Regarding more elaborate rituals, modern anthropology often distinguishes between rites of transition, like initiation, and cyclical rites, such as New Year. We will conclude this chapter with a discussion of both types, paying special attention to their function, symbols and logic. We start with initiation, which has become an increasingly popular issue among classical scholars in the last decade.<sup>45</sup> Instead of the more often discussed rites of Athens and Sparta,<sup>46</sup> we will concentrate on Crete, about which the fourth-century historian Ephorus has left us a detailed, contemporary report.<sup>47</sup> As was the case with 'ritual' (§ 1), the Greeks had no term for 'initiation', but Minoans and early Indo-Europeans practised it,<sup>48</sup> the Spartans called their initiatory process *agoge* ('the leading of a horse by the hand': see below on *agela*), and the names of various initiatory festivals have survived. We, the outsiders, construct a whole, whereas the insiders focused more on the different parts.<sup>49</sup>

Cretan political power was in the hands of an aristocratic elite which dominated both the serfs (the native Cretans) and the less privileged free. The aristocrats were organized in clubs and dined in 'men's houses' (*andreia*), where young Cretan boys, summer and winter dressed in the same dirty garment, waited on the adults. They received little food and drink, and their main activity was fighting. At seventeen, the boys who were 'most conspicuous and also most influential' – surely the sons of the elite – collected as many boys as possible around them into an *agela*, or 'herd of horses': apparently, the youths were seen as unruly foals that had to be domesticated.<sup>50</sup>

The 'herds' were supervised by the fathers of these boys, who also directed their most important activities: running, hunting, dancing in choruses, marching over steep roads, and fighting in gymnasia 'with the fist and with clubs, as was prescribed by law' (Heraclides Lembus fr. 15). On certain appointed days, the *agelai* fought against each other, 'marching rhythmically into battle, to the tune of *aulos* and lyre, as is their custom in actual war'. In addition to these physical activities, the boys also had to learn their letters and songs, 'prescribed by the laws', which consisted of laws, hymns to the gods, and praises of brave men, although Plato, who still knew them, rated their quality rather low (*Laws* 666D).

The final stage of Cretan education began with a ceremonial casting off of the dirty garment: in fact, in various Cretan cities the technical term for leaving the *agela* was 'to undress'. The change is firmly located in an initiatory setting by the aetiological myth of the Ekdysia ('Undressing')

festival at Phaistos for Leto, an initiatory goddess (Ch. II.3): a girl who had been brought up as a boy actually changed into a real boy the moment she became an adolescent. Further details are absent, but both the names 'nude ones' and 'very nude ones' for adolescents near maturation, and the existence of a 'Festival of the Garment' (*Periblemaia*) at Lyttos, strongly suggest that the order of the final stage of initiation was: undressing, being nude and donning the new adult garment. The focus on the garment during the 'graduation' is hardly surprising, since Ephoros tells us that the elite were characterized by a distinctive dress. Clearly, the transition from dirty garment to adult dress was too great to be made in one step. It had to be eased and dramatized by a series of festivals.<sup>51</sup> In Sparta, where the difference between youths and adults was even more strongly marked, initiation was also concluded with a series of festivals, but in Athens, where the difference was much less strong, a concluding festival no longer existed.

In addition to nudity, the contrast with the future status was also expressed in a different way. Ephoros tells us that shortly before official adulthood the aristocratic boys were 'kidnapped' for a short homosexual relationship; in fact, in more or less formalized ways pederasty was widely spread in the Greek world. As, ideologically, the boys could only play a passive role in the relationship, this part of the ritual stressed their non-manhood before they became real males.<sup>52</sup>

The physical side of Cretan initiation, then, prepared the boys for a life in which fighting was of the utmost importance, whereas songs helped to instil the corresponding ideology. At the same time, the initiatory process had been manipulated to reflect the political situation of Crete. The prominent position of the elite's sons and the focus on the garment impressed the domination of the aristocrats on their inferiors but, by incorporating the latter into the *agela*, feudal ties were promoted which helped to support the political system. As Burkert often stresses continuity in ritual, it is equally important to note its innovative powers and flexibility. This is shown by the introduction of literacy in the training, which will not predate the fifth century, and the stress on running, which was absent from Athenian and Spartan initiation. Crete is very mountainous and without the ability to run Cretans could hardly have survived as soldiers. In fact, running was so important that the Cretan term for adult was *dromeus*, or 'runner': even ecology can be a factor in the shaping of a particular ritual.

Contrasts not only played a role in the logic of rites of transition; we also find them in cyclical rituals, as a Theban festival may illustrate. Xenophon tells us in his contemporary *Hellenica* (5.4.4–6) that Theban polemarchs (generals) customarily celebrated a festival of Aphrodite at the

end of their office. In the winter of 379 the pro-Spartan polemarchs were promised a night with women and wine, but the veiled women turned out to be conspirators in disguise, who efficiently disposed of their opponents and liberated the town from the Spartans. How do we explain this connection of the military with the goddess of love?

The connection is less surprising than might at first sight be expected, since Aphrodite was associated with the god of war, Ares, in literature (witness Homer's delightful story of their liaison), in art (witness the representation of Ares assisting with Aphrodite's birth), and in cult (witness their communal temples and altars). Moreover, Aphrodite was widely associated with magistrates, civilian and military, whose harmonious cooperation she was believed to promote. Yet the goddess was also sometimes contrasted with Ares because in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* Athena states that she took no pleasure 'in the works of golden Aphrodite but liked wars and the work of Ares' (9–10). So how do we approach the Theban case?<sup>53</sup>

The answer is found on Aegina, the island from which Plutarch explains the otherwise unknown ritual of the 'solitary eaters' in his *Greek Questions* (301E–F). The Aeginetans celebrated a festival of Poseidon by isolating themselves in their homes and by feasting in silence without the presence of non-kinsmen and slaves for sixteen days. The festival shows all the signs of a disturbance of the social order: normally the Greeks feasted uproariously in the company of family and friends. Interestingly, the festival was terminated with the Aphrodisia before the return of normal life. Since Poseidon was also a macho god (Ch. III.3), he was in various ways comparable to Ares. So in both cases the transition from the sphere of war and virility to peace was eased by passing through the opposition to war: love. At the same time we may assume that the juxtaposition of the two festivals put their contrasting contents in sharper relief: the significance of individual parts of a more elaborate ritual cannot be separated from their position within the ritual.

We now turn to more elaborate festivals, of which the analysis has made much progress in recent decades: Burkert's *Homo necans* (1983) and Graf's *Nordionische Kulte* (1985) provide outstanding examples; yet only two decades ago the former's combination of structuralism, functionalism, and ethology was deemed so revolutionary that the original German edition (1972) was not reviewed in the major classical journals.<sup>54</sup> We will build upon their insights in an analysis of perhaps the most complex Greek festival that we have, the Athenian Anthesteria. As is often the case with Greek festivals, we partially depend on later sources for our reconstruction and not all events are securely attested.<sup>55</sup>

The festival took place on three successive days in the month Anthesterion, roughly the end of February, which were called Pithoigia, Choes, and Chytroi. The first day, 'The opening of the wine jars', dramatized the opening of the festival, as did the first day of the Thesmophoria (Ch. VI.3). On that day the farmers of Attica brought their jars with new wine to the sanctuary of the god of the wine, Dionysus 'in the marshes' (Ch. III.2), to have the wine ceremoniously opened, mixed with water, and tasted for the first time. This was also the moment of celebrating the god. As a fourth-century eyewitness noted, 'delighted then with the mixture, the people celebrated Dionysus in song, dancing, and calling upon him as Flowery, Dithyrambos (§ 2), the Frenzied One, and the Roarer' (Phanodemus *FGrH* 325 F 12). Wine mixed with water was the main drink in Greece and an indispensable part of libations. It is therefore not surprising that the advent of new wine was a matter of general concern and controlled by the community.

But as with the Cretan 'graduation', the advent of such an important drink as new wine had to be extended in time. The next day, the Choes ('Jugs'), which often gave its name to the whole festival (§ 1), started with the chewing of leaves of buckthorn (a rather unappetizing plant). Doors were smeared with pitch, temples were closed (with the exception of that of Dionysus), and men on wagons reviled passers-by. This dissolution of the social order preceded a strange drinking contest in the late afternoon, which was held both centrally, supervised by the highest magistrate, and locally in the various Attic demes (districts and villages). Contrary to custom, the Athenians brought unmixed wine, their own jug (*chous*) and were seated at separate tables, whereas normally guests were regaled, drunk mixed wine from cups, and reclined together on couches. Crowned with ivy, the plant dear to Dionysus, the banqueters awaited the sign of a trumpet, seen as an uncanny instrument by the Greeks, before trying to drain their three litres (!) as quickly as possible in complete silence.<sup>56</sup>

The ritual shows a clear resemblance to that of the Aeginetan 'solitary eaters' and illustrates how the Greeks shaped a 'negative' (part of a) ritual by a reversal of normal practices. Other means would be the absence of wreaths; libations of unmixed wine, water or oil instead of mixed wine;<sup>57</sup> or the dark colour and/or holocaust of the sacrificial victim instead of a sacrifice ending in a banquet.<sup>58</sup> It was the presence and intensity of these ritual markers which determined the nature, positive or negative, of a ritual.

The resemblance with Aegina extended to the level of myth. The Aeginetans explained their festival as recalling the return of the survivors

of the Trojan War. Since they had no wish to hurt the feelings of those whose relatives had not returned, they feasted separately and secretly. In a comparable way, the Athenian custom of silent drinking was explained by the arrival of the matricide Orestes, whom Athenians did not want to entertain except in silence and at a separate table. A different, perhaps later, aetiology connected the strange features with the Athenian murder of Aetolians who had brought them the wine. These myths can be used as a substitute for the unknown reactions of participants, since they tell us how the atmosphere was perceived. We have another indication as well of the sombre mood: we are told that at the time of the Choes Sophocles had choked on an unripe grape. Since at that time of year grapevines could hardly have finished blossoming, the anecdote is most likely not historical – the more so since Anacreon reportedly also choked on a grape. Yet it is important to note that the sad event was said to have occurred during the Choes, thus fitting the sombre atmosphere of the ritual.<sup>59</sup> The myth of Orestes focused on the strange nature of the contest, which can only have lasted a few minutes. Afterwards everybody indulged in a copious dinner and even a misanthrope would have at least one table companion. The picture of the banquet in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* is a happy one and that obviously is how the Athenians abroad remembered the festival (below).<sup>60</sup>

So far one could have thought that the festival was only for Athenian male citizens, but nothing would be further from the truth. A few texts and certain small jugs, confusingly called *choes*, show that three-year-old children received such jugs as toys and probably were the centre of special attention on this day. Slaves, too, had a good time and their licence was explained by the great number of Karian slaves or the one-time Karian ownership of a part of Attica: the stress on Karians seems to suggest mumming by the slaves. Another explanation spoke of the Keres, spirits of the dead. It is hard to choose from these explanations and probably unnecessary, since both (ancestral) Karians and spirits of the dead are structurally equivalent: entities normally absent from ordered Athenian life.<sup>61</sup>

The licence of the slaves was one more sign of the dissolution of the social order. Their inclusion in the general atmosphere of merriment may well have contributed to better relations with their owners, since such festivals of reversal could work as a safety-valve, as American ex-slave testimony confirms. But did they also have a legitimizing function as has been suggested recently? Perhaps in the eyes of the ruling class but hardly from the point of view of the slaves. Such a view could only be sustained if Athens had been a relatively static society. Athenian slaves, however, had

often been imported during their own lifetimes and their massive flight during the Peloponnesian War shows their refusal to accept the existing order. In fact, several of these festivals of reversal became the scene of revolution, which is hard to explain if they really helped to legitimize the existing order.<sup>62</sup>

The recent find of a sacrificial calendar in Thorikos, which dates from the 430s or 420s, shows that during the Choes this deme sacrificed a small, tawny (or perhaps black) kid that lacked milk teeth to Dionysus. The dark colour fitted the character of the day and the small size of the kid seems to suggest the absence of a public banquet: such a goat could hardly have fed many stomachs. Apparently, the Attic demes contributed a modest public supplement to the many private festivities.<sup>63</sup>

Yet society cannot live in permanent disorder and at the end of the Choes a herald announced the third day of the festival, the Chytroi ('Pots'). The return to order seems to have been celebrated by a symbolic wedding between the wife of the highest magistrate and the god, although our evidence for this event having taken place at the Anthesteria is not unequivocal.<sup>64</sup> It was certainly celebrated by remembering the Flood. People ate a stew of all kinds of vegetables and sacrificed to Dionysus and Hermes Chthonios, the god associated with the victims of the Flood. Aristophanes' *Frogs* mentions a procession with drunken people on the Chytroi (211–19) and, thus, the festival seems to have been officially concluded with choruses at the place where it had all begun: the sanctuary of Dionysus.

For the Athenians themselves one of the most striking features of the festival must have been the licence accorded to the slaves and it is therefore not surprising that their return to normality had to be dramatized. So at the end of the festival the owners, presumably, said: 'To the door Karians/Keres. (It's) no longer Anthesteria.' Similarly, the enormous phallus which had been carried round Athens during the Dionysia was ceremoniously burned at the end of that festival.<sup>65</sup>

On the third day, another feast also took place. Girls commemorated the maiden Erigone, who hanged herself after the murder of her father Ikarios for introducing wine to Attica, by swinging. This feast, the Aiora, is not found in non-Athenian Anthesteria festivals and is not attested in literature as part of the Anthesteria before the Hellenistic era; the artistic evidence for the corresponding myth is only found during Roman times. Although the myth fits the Dionysiac themes of the festival and the special place of the girls fits that of young children and slaves, this part seems to be a later addition from a particular local festival: one more testimony to the flexibility of ritual.<sup>66</sup>

Of all their festivals, the Anthesteria lay closest to the Athenians' hearts. As a political refugee, Themistocles introduced it to Magnesia, which he had received as a fiefdom from the Persian king. It was also celebrated at the court of the Sicilian tyrant Dionysius, where it may well have been organized for, or perhaps by, Plato during his stay in Sicily. This feeling lasted into the third century, since the followers of Epicurus countered accusations of atheism against their master with the argument that he had celebrated the Choes and had advised his pupils to do likewise. And Callimachus mentions an Athenian who celebrated the Anthesteria in Egypt. Clearly, the festival had become part and parcel of Athenian identity, like Christmas for European colonists or Passover for Jews.<sup>67</sup>

The Anthesteria displays the typical signs of *la grande festa*, as ethnologists have called the type of festival which all over the world dramatized the advent of the new harvest/fruit/wine by a sharp break with the existing order. The festival, then, resembled a New Year celebration, and this may explain why teachers were paid during the festival (Eubulides, fr. 1). Yet its New Year character was naturally stressed less than that of the official Athenian New Year. This was celebrated in Hekatombaion, a month marked by two official New Year festivals, Synoikia and Panathenaea (§ 2), and preceded by two festivals characterized by the dissolution of the social order, Kronia (Ch. V.3) and Skira.<sup>68</sup>

As was customary, the Anthesteria had given its name to the month in which it was celebrated: Anthesterion. It was an old Ionian month, which went back to the period before the Ionian colonization, as Thucydides already realized; we may thus safely assume that the Anthesteria was one of the oldest Greek festivals. Greek calendars are under-researched, but they are important for determining the connotations attached to a festival and for the varying positions of divinities in Greek cities. Yet here, too, we have to be careful. The month Anthesterion, like other months, did not occupy the same place in the year in the calendar of every Ionian city: evidently, names of months were moved around and changed in the course of the centuries.<sup>69</sup>

It is time to come to a close. We have seen that the study of smaller and larger rituals has to take into account many aspects: the calendrical order, the spatial organization, gender, social groups and relations, systems of classification, psychological and emotional aspects, power aspects, the place of divinities, local peculiarities, the internal logic, and commentaries of participants. The fragmentary state of our tradition often makes it impossible to pay attention to all these aspects, but we should at least try. In a way, the study of Greek ritual has only just begun.

## NOTES

1. As do Bruit/Schmitt, *Religion*, but J. Rudhardt, *Notions fondamentales de la pensée religieuse . . .*, 1958<sup>1</sup> (Paris, 1992<sup>2</sup>), begins with the vocabulary of the sacred, and Jost, *Aspects*, with the gods.
2. But note his *Structure and History*, pp. 35–58.
3. For a (not quite satisfactory) historical survey see I. Morris, 'Poetics of Power. The Interpretation of Ritual Action in Archaic Greece', in Dougherty/Kurke, *Cultural Poetics*, pp. 15–45.
4. As is observed by C. Calame, "'Mythe" et "rite" en Grèce: des catégories indigènes?' *Kernos* 4 (1991), 179–204, esp. 196–203.
5. Cf. E. Hobsbawn and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983).
6. Cf. C. Calame, 'Morfologia e funzione della festa nell' Antichità', *AION* 4–5 (1982–3), 3–23; J. Rudhardt, 'Remarques sur le geste rituel . . .', in A.-M. Blondeau and K. Schipper (eds), *Essais sur le rituel* 2 (Louvain and Paris, 1988), pp. 1–13.
7. The usual translation by 'festival' hardly covers the variety of ancient festivities or the presence of sombre aspects amongst them.
8. J. Mikalson, 'The *Heorte* of Heortology', *GRBS* 23 (1982), 213–21; Calame (n. 4), 196f. In general: Burkert, 'Die antike Stadt als Festgemeinschaft', in P. Hügger (ed), *Stadt und Fest* (Unterägeri and Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 25–44; C. Meier, 'Zur Funktion der Feste in Athen im 5. Jahrhundert vor Christus', in W. Haug and R. Warning (eds), *Das Fest* (Munich, 1989), pp. 569–91.
9. Cf. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, pp. 55–79. The opposition sacred/profane originated at exactly the same time, cf. F.-A. Isambert, *Le sens du sacré* (Paris, 1982), pp. 215–45. This coincidence requires further study.
10. S. H. Lonsdale, *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion* (Baltimore and London, 1993).
11. H. Kotsidu, *Die musischen Agone in archaischer und klassischer Zeit* (Munich, 1991); H. A. Shapiro, 'Mousikoi Agones: Music and Poetry at the Panathenaea' and D. Kyle, 'The Panathenaea Games: Sacred and Civic Athletics', in J. Neils (ed), *Goddess and Polis. The Panathenaea Festival in Ancient Athens* (Hanover and Princeton, 1992), pp. 53–75, 77–101, respectively.
12. See, respectively, H. S. Versnel, 'Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer', in Versnel, *Faith*, pp. 1–64; P. W. van der Horst, 'Silent Prayer in Antiquity', *Numen* 41 (1994), 1–25; J. M. Bremer, 'Greek Hymns', in Versnel, *Faith*, pp. 193–215. In general: J. D. Mikalson, 'Unanswered Prayers in Greek Tragedy', *JHS* 109 (1989), 81–98; D. Aubriot-Sévin, *Prière et conceptions religieuses en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1992).
13. Käppel, *Paian*; B. Zimmermann, *Dithyrambos* (Göttingen, 1992).
14. Burkert, *GR*, pp. 102f; W. R. Connor, 'Tribes, Festivals and Processions', *JHS* 107 (1987), 40–50; Bruit/Schmitt, *Religion*, pp. 105–7.
15. Plataea: Burkert, *Homo necans*, 1972<sup>1</sup> (Berkeley etc., 1983), pp. 56f. Molpoi: K. Gödecken, 'Beobachtungen und Funde an der Heiligen Strasse zwischen Milet und Didyma, 1984', *ZPE* 66 (1986), 217–53. Thrasybulus: B. Strauss, 'Ritual, Social Drama and Politics in Classical Athens', *Am. J. Anc. Hist.* 10 (1985 [1992]), 67–83.
16. *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 34.42, 46.15f, 71.57 (cow, phallus, and panoply); Ael. *VH* 6.1 (equipment); M. C. Miller, 'The Parasol: An Oriental Status-Symbol in Late-Archaic and Classical Athens', *JHS* 112 (1992), 91–105, esp. 103–5; Neils, *Goddess and Polis* (beautifully produced); S. G. Cole, 'Procession and Celebration at the Dionysia', in R. Scodel (ed), *Theater and Society in the Classical World* (Ann Arbor, 1993), pp. 25–38.
17. Xen. *Ag.* 8.7 (quote); C. Calame, *Les choeurs de jeunes filles* 1, pp. 306f.
18. For good surveys see now M. H. Jameson, 'Sacrifice and Ritual: Greece', in M. Grant and R. Kitzinger (eds), *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean. Greece and Rome* 2 (New York, 1988), pp. 959–79; M. Lambert, 'Ancient Greek and Zulu Sacrificial Ritual', *Numen* 40 (1993), 293–318.
19. But see now V. Rosivach, *The System of Public Sacrifice in Fourth-Century Athens* (Atlanta, 1993).
20. Cf. J.-L. Durand, *Sacrifice et labour en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1986); see also F. T. van Straten, 'Greek Sacrificial Representations: Livestock Prices and Religious Mentality', in T. Linders and G. Nordquist, *Gifts to the Gods* (Uppsala, 1987), pp. 159–70 and, especially, S. Peirce, 'Death, Revelry, and *Thysia*', *Class. Ant.* 12 (1993), 219–66.
21. See more recently J. Boessneck and A. von den Driesch, 'Tierknochenfunde aus Didyma', *Arch. Anz.* 1983, 611–51; id., *Knochenabfall von Opfernahlen und Weihgaben aus dem Heraion von Samos*

(Munich, 1988); J. Boessneck and J. Schäffer, 'Tierknochenfunde aus Didyma II', *Arch. Anz.* 1986, 251–301; D. Reese, 'Faunal Remains from the Altar of Aphrodite Ourania, Athens', *Hesperia* 58 (1989), 63–70; M. Stanzel, *Die Tierreste aus dem Artemis-/Apollon-Heiligtum bei Kalapodi in Böotien/Griechenland* (Diss. Munich, 1991); K. Tuchelt, 'Tieropfer in Didyma – Ein Nachtrag', *Arch. Anz.* 1992, 61–81.

22. Battle: M. Jameson, 'Sacrifice before Battle', in Hanson, *Hoplites*, pp. 197–227; F. Jouan, 'Comment partir en guerre en Grèce antique en ayant les dieux pour soi', *Revue de la société Ernest Renan* 40 (1990–1), 25–42 (also on crossing rivers); Peirce, 'Death', 253f. Oath: C. Faraone, 'Molten Wax . . .', *JHS* 113 (1993), 60–80.

23. A. Henrichs, 'Human Sacrifice in Greek Religion', *Entretiens Hardt* 27 (Vandoeuvres and Geneva, 1981), 195–235; Bremmer, 'Scapegoat Rituals in Ancient Greece', *HSCP* 87 (1983), 299–320; D. Hughes, *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece* (London and New York, 1991), rev. Burkert, *Gnomon* 66 (1994), 97–100.

24. Cf. M. Jameson, 'Sacrifice and Animal Husbandry in Classical Greece', in C. R. Whitaker (ed), *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity = PCPhS*, Suppl. 14 (1988), 87–119, esp. 94.

25. Hestia: Eupolis fr. 301; Graf, *NK*, 363; M. Detienne, *L'écriture d'Orphée* (Paris, 1989), pp. 89–98. Demeter: Jameson, 'Sacrifice', 92; E. G. Pemberton, *Corinth. The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore*, vol. 18.1 (Princeton, 1989), p. 96 (pigs and goats); D. Ruscillo, 'Faunal Remains from the Acropolis Site, Mytilene', *Class. Views* 37 (1993), 201–10. Dionysus: Peirce, 'Death', 255f.

26. Dogs: Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 357f; Graf, *NK*, 422. Birds: Lydus, *Mens.* 4.64. Fish: *Anthol. Graeca* 10.9, 14, 16; L. Robert, *Hellenica* 9 (1950), 82.

27. Cf. Boessneck and Schäffer, 'Didyma II', 285–94, 300; B. J. Collins, 'The Puppy in Hittite Ritual', *J. Cuneiform Stud.* 42 (1990), 211–26.

28. Cf. Jameson, 'Sacrifice', 98f. W. Houston, *Purity and Monotheism* (Sheffield, 1993), pp. 82, 85f, also points out that pigs need shade and water, neither of which was continuously available in most places in ancient Greece.

29. K. Meuli: *Gesammelte Schriften* II (Basle, 1975), pp. 907–1021 (1946<sup>1</sup>). On Meuli see especially A. Henrichs, 'Gott, Mensch und Tier: Antike Daseinsstruktur und religiöses Verhalten im Denken Karl Meulis', in F. Graf (ed), *Klassische Antike und Neue Wege der Kulturwissenschaften. Symposium Karl Meuli* (Basle, 1992), pp. 129–67.

30. For Burkert's views see most recently: 'Opferritual bei Sophokles. Pragmatik – Symbolik – Theater', *Der altsprachliche Unterricht* 27 (1985), 5–20; 'The Problem of Ritual Killing', in R. G. Hamerton-Kelly (ed), *Violent Origins* (Stanford, 1987), pp. 149–76, 177–88 (discussion); 'Offerings in perspective: surrender, distribution, exchange', in Linders/Nordquist, *Gifts to the Gods*, pp. 43–50.

31. Burkert, *Homo necans*, pp. 136–43; Durand, *Sacrifice et labour*, pp. 43–87 (representations in black-figure vase painting).

32. This is rightly stressed by Peirce, 'Death'.

33. The month Bouphionion, 'Ox-killing' only occurs on Euboea, its colonies, and adjacent islands: Karystos (*IG* XII.9.207), Chalkidike (*SEG* 38.671), Delos (*IG* XL2.203 A; *SEG* 35.882), and Tenos (*IG* XII.5.842).

34. So, rightly, D. Obbink, 'The Origin of Greek Sacrifice: Theophrastus on Religion and Cultural History', in W. W. Fortenbaugh and R. W. Sharples (eds), *Theophrastean Studies* (New Brunswick and London, 1988), pp. 272–95; Henrichs, 'Gott, Mensch, Tier', pp. 153–8; M. A. Katz, 'Buphonia and Goring Ox: Homicide, Animal sacrifice, and Judicial Process', in Rosen/Farrell, *Nomodeiktis*, pp. 155–78.

35. Aristoxenus fr. 29 Wehrli (Pythagoras avoided eating plough-oxen); Ael. *VH* 5.14; Varro, *De re rustica* 2.5.3; Columella 6 praef. 7; Schol. *Od.* 12.353; see also Aratus 131f; Ovid, *Met.* 15.120–42, 470; Rosivach, *Public Sacrifice in Fourth-Century Athens*, pp. 161–3.

36. M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (eds), *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, 1979<sup>1</sup> (Chicago, 1989); Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals*, pp. 290–302 (Vernant's opposition to Meuli and Burkert: pp. 291f).

37. Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals*, 296, translated, less lapidarily, as 'overt and falsifying omission'.

38. Burkert, 'Opfer als Tötungsritual. Eine Konstante der menschlichen Kulturgeschichte?', in Graf, *Klassische Antike*, pp. 169–89.

39. Samos: Boessneck and Von den Driesch, *Knochenabfall*, 6. Didyma: id., 'Didyma II', 257. Kalapodi: Stanzel, *Tierreste aus Kalapodi*, p. 45.

40. Peirce, 'Death', 256f has overlooked the fact that from her few exceptions Busiris' attempt to sacrifice Heracles is a typical case of a 'perverted' sacrifice, which supports rather than undermines the 'taboo' on the presence of the knife, cf. J.-L. Durand and F. Lissarrague, 'Héros cru ou hôte cuit: histoire quasi cannibale d'Héraklès chez Busiris', in Lissarrague and F. Thelamon (eds), *Image et céramique grecque* (Rouen, 1983), pp. 153–67.

41. Parker, *Miasma*, pp. 299f.

42. Cf. Meuli, *Gesammelte Schriften* II, p. 948: 'das Olympische Opfer nichts anderes sei als ein rituelles Schlachten'; Burkert, *Homo necans*, pp. 35–48; Vernant, in *Entretiens Hardt* 27 (1981), 26: 'Sacrifier, c'est fondamentalement tuer pour manger'.

43. See, most recently, R. Seaford, 'Homeric and Tragic Sacrifice', *TAPhA* 119 (1989), 87–95; J. Jouanna, 'Libations et sacrifices dans la tragédie grecque', *REG* 105 (1992), 406–34.

44. For example, Peirce, 'Death', bases her views of sacrifice mainly on the iconographical evidence with its strong Dionysiac bias. Such a view is as skewed as that of Greek religion based solely on tragedy (Ch. II.1); on the difference between 'icon and text', R. Hamilton, *Choes & Anthesteria* (Ann Arbor, 1992), pp. 123–46.

45. Burkert, *GR*, pp. 260–4, 448f; A. Moreau, 'Initiation en Grèce antique', *Dial. d'Hist. Anc.* 18 (1992), 191–244; Versnel, *Inconsistencies* 2, pp. 48–60 (extensive bibliographies); F. Graf, 'Initiations-riten in der antiken Mittelmeerwelt', *Der altsprachliche Unterricht* 36.2 (1993), 29–40.

46. Sparta: see now M. Pettersson, *Cults of Apollo at Sparta. The Hyakinthia, the Gymnopaediai and the Karneia* (Stockholm, 1992). Athens: P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le Chasseur noir* (Paris, 1983<sup>2</sup>), pp. 151–75 (1968<sup>1</sup>: a classic); see now also his 'The Black Hunter Revisited', *PCPhS* 212 (1986), 126–44 ~ 'Retour au chasseur noir', in *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque* II (Paris, 1989), pp. 387–411.

47. Ephoros *FGrH* 70 F 149 (= Strabo 10.4.16–20: all quotes); M. Laurencic, 'Andreion', *Tyche* 3 (1988), 147–61.

48. N. Marinatos, *Minoan Religion* (New York, 1993), pp. 201–20; J. Bremmer and N. Horsfall, *Roman Myth and Mythography* (London, 1987), pp. 38–43, 53–6 (Bremmer: Indo-Europeans).

49. Anthropologists, such as C. Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (New York, 1983), pp. 56–8, have stressed that these views are two, necessary, sides of the same coin. This is a more constructive attitude than that of Rudhardt and Vernant *cum suis*, who sometimes seem to suggest that we can look at Greek practices as if we ourselves were Greeks.

50. For this important metaphor in Greek initiation see Calame, *Les choeurs de jeunes filles* 1, pp. 374f; this volume, Ch. VI.1.

51. Ekdysia: Nicander *apud* Ant. Lib. 17, cf. Bremmer, 'Dionysos travesti', 194. 'To undress': *IC* Lix (Dreiros).1.A.99f; Lix (Malla).1.17f, etc. 'Nude ones': *IC* Lix (Dreiros).1.D.140f (*azostoi*), cf. Hsch. s.v. *azostos*. 'Very nude ones': *IC* Lix (Dreiros).1 A.11f (*Panazostoi*). Periblemaia: *IC* Lix (Malla).19.1.

52. See my 'Greek Pederasty and Modern Homosexuality', in Bremmer (ed), *From Sappho to De Sade* (London, 1991<sup>2</sup>), pp. 1–14; C. Calame, *I Greci e l'Eros* (Bari, 1992), pp. 65–81. For (unpersuasive) objections to the initiatory interpretation see K. J. Dover, *The Greeks and their Legacy* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 115–34; D. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (London, 1990), pp. 54–61. 'Kidnap': Bremmer/Horsfall, *Roman Myth*, pp. 105–11 (Bremmer).

53. Ares and Aphrodite: *LIMC* II.1 (1984), 123–5 (A. Delivorrias), 482f (Ph. Bruneau); Graf, *NK*, 264 (magistrates). Ares: P. Wathélet, 'Arès le mal aimé', *Les Et. Class.* 60 (1992), 113–28; *DDD*, s.v. (Bremmer). Aphrodite: V. Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque* (Athens and Liège, 1994).

54. See Bremmer, *CR* 35 (1985), 312f and *Mnemosyne* IV 43 (1989), 260–3, respectively.

55. Cf. Burkert, *Homo necans*, pp. 213–43; Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton, 1983), pp. 108–22; E. Simon, *Festivals of Attica* (Madison, 1983), pp. 92–9; C. Auffarth, *Der drohende Untergang. "Schöpfung" in Mythos und Ritual im Alten Orient und in Griechenland* (Berlin and New York, 1991), pp. 202–72; Hamilton, *Choes* (the most systematic, if rather sceptical, discussion of the sources); A. Bowie, *Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 35–9, 147–50 and 'Religion and Politics in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*', *CQ* 43 (1993), 10–31, esp. 22–4.

56. Trumpet: Graf, *NK*, 245; P. Krentz, 'The Salpinx in Greek Warfare', in Hanson, *Hoplites*, pp. 110–20.

57. Cf. Graf, *NK*, 28 (wreaths, libations); A. Henrichs, 'The Eumenides and Wineless Libations in the Derveni Papyrus', *Atti XVII Congr. Int. Papir.* II (Naples, 1984), 255–68.

58. Whereas Burkert in his *Homo necans* overvalues sacrifice, painting it always in dark colours, sacrifice is virtually absent in Graf's *Nordionische Kulte*. In my view sacrifice is an important element in determining the nature of Greek rituals but usually not as sombre as Burkert suggests.

59. Sad or glad events were often remembered on ominous or felicitous days, cf. A. Grafton and N. Sverdlow, 'Calendar Dates and Ominous Days in Ancient Historiography', *J. Warburg and Courtauld Inst.* 51 (1988), 14–42; A. Chianotis, 'Gedenktage der Griechen', in J. Assmann (ed), *Das Fest und das Heilige* (Gütersloh, 1991), pp. 123–45.

60. R. Buxton, *Sophocles* (Oxford, 1984), p. 4; Val. Max. 9.8 (Anacreon). *Achamians*: N. Fisher, 'Multiple Personalities and Dionysiac Festivals: Dicaeopolis in Aristophanes' *Achamians*', *G & R* 40 (1993), 31–47. *Misanthrope*: Plut. *Ant.* 70.

61. *Choes*: Hamilton, *Choes*, pp. 63–121. Kares/Keres: Bremmer, *Soul*, pp. 113–18.

62. *Contra Versnel*, *Inconsistencies* 2, pp. 116f (cf. Bremmer/Horsfall, *Roman Myth*, pp. 86f), although his observations on festivals of reversal are of great interest (pp. 115–21).

63. Thorikos: *SEG* 33.147, cf. R. Parker, 'Festivals of the Attic Demes', in Linders/Nordquist, *Gifts to the Gods*, pp. 137–47, esp. 142; A. Henrichs, 'Between Country and City: Cultic Dimensions of Dionysus in Athens and Attica', in M. Griffith and D. Mastronarde (eds), *Cabinet of the Muses* (Atlanta, 1990), pp. 257–77, esp. 262f.

64. As is persuasively argued by Hamilton, *Choes*, pp. 55f. In any case, Burkert, *Homo necans*, p. 235, mistakenly suggests that Aristotle speaks of a sexual act, cf. P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 104f. In general: A. Avagianou, *Sacred Marriage in the Rituals of Greek Religion* (Berne, 1991); Janko, *Commentary*, p. 171.

65. *Choruses*: Hamilton, *Choes*, pp. 38–42. Phallus: *Com. Ant. Fragm.* III 398f, no. 7 Kock; Dio Chr. 33.63.

66. E. Pochmarski, *LIMC* III.1 (1986), s.v. Erigone I; D. Gondicas, *LIMC* V.1 (1990), s.v. Ikarios I.

67. See, respectively, Possis *FGrH* 480 F 1; Diog. Laert. 4.8; Philodemus, *De pietate* 806–8, 865–9 Obbink (Epicurus: to be added to the sources in Hamilton, *Choes*); Call. fr. 178.

68. *La grande festa*: Versnel, *Inconsistencies* 2, pp. 127f. Synoikia: Graf, *NK*, 167; Hornblower, *Commentary*, p. 265. Skira: Burkert, *Homo necans*, pp. 143–9.

69. Thucydides: 2.14.4, but see Hornblower, *Commentary*, pp. 266f. Names: J. Sarkady, 'A Problem in the History of the Greek Calendar (The Date of the Origin of the Months' Names)', *Acta Class. Debrecen* 21 (1985), 3–17; Burkert, 'Athenian Cults and Festivals', *Camb. Anc. Hist.* IV<sup>2</sup> (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 245–67.

## V. MYTHOLOGY

Myth played an important role in Greek religion: it illustrated and defined the roles of gods and heroes (Ch. II.1); it explained aspects of rituals (Ch. IV.3), showed correct or deviant patterns of behaviour, and reflected on human behaviour and the cosmos.<sup>1</sup> Since, of all aspects of Greek religion, myth has probably drawn the greatest attention and the largest number of different approaches,<sup>2</sup> we start with a short historical survey of these approaches and a discussion of recent definitions (§ 1). Then we analyse origins and uses of myth (§ 2) and study the relations between myth and ritual (§ 3). We conclude by looking at some changes in the popularity of myths, as reflected by the visual arts, and the nature of myth itself (§ 4).<sup>3</sup>

### 1. A mini-history and a definition<sup>4</sup>

After the allegoric interpretation of the Renaissance, as exemplified by the hugely successful handbook of Natale Conti (*ca.* 1520–1600), and the a-historical use of Greek mythology as material for literature in the seventeenth century, modern research started at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Pioneers were the Frenchmen Bernard de Fontenelle (1657–1757) and Nicolas Fréret (1688–1749), of whom the first postulated a kind of 'primitive' mentality, initiated comparative mythology, reflected about the transmission of myths and, last but not least, recognized the fatal influence of writing on mythology – all this in a small treatise. The latter saw mythology as the expression of the culture, customs, and social order of a specific community.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this promising start there was insufficient philological expertise in France to develop these ideas. The situation was different in Germany, where the Göttingen professor of Greek, Christian G. Heyne (1729–1812), introduced the term *mythus* to stress that he was not dealing with a *fabula*, the invention or fiction of a poet. According to Heyne, myth was the expression of a specific *Volksgeist*, it explained the admirable or frightening aspects of nature and, although less marked in his work, was a means to preserve the memories of great exploits.<sup>7</sup> In the nineteenth century two Müllers (no relation) further developed Heyne's insights. The first, Karl Otfried (1797–1840), stressed that myth was the reflection of a national (= tribal) identity and various historical periods. The second, Friedrich Max (1823–1900), directed his attention to the connection between myth and nature and saw an important clue in the use of etymologies. The