

Several passages in tragedy also refer to it; in Euripides' *Alcestis*, Heracles ghoulishly supposes that he will be able to find Death "near [Alcestis's tomb], drinking the *prosphagmata*."<sup>167</sup> Possibly we can reconcile the evidence about where and when it took place by supposing that it happened at the grave but before the corpse had been brought thither. What became of the animal's body once its blood had been poured out is unclear; Ps.-Plato shows that the custom went out of use by the fourth century, but the archaeological evidence of animal bones at graves is slight even before that. A *prosphagion* is clearly an offering made to the dead person or possibly the underworld powers more generally (is Death, in Heracles' imagining, drinking it by right, or by usurpation?).<sup>168</sup> Beyond that general formulation, we do not know how a *prosphagion* worked, what rituals accompanied it, and what words of invocation.<sup>169</sup> At the commemorative rituals performed for the dead in subsequent years, they were urged to "send up good things," that is to say, like the gods they were urged to make a return for the gifts brought to them,<sup>170</sup> but the offerings burned, left, or (above all) poured for them on these occasions were apparently bloodless as a rule.

167. Eur. *Alc.* 845; cf., e.g., Eur. *Hel.* 1255, which stresses its preliminary quality, Eur. *Hec.* 41, where the location is clearly the tomb itself. Solon's ban on the funerary sacrifice of an ox (smaller victims were therefore still permitted) probably refers to the *prosphagion* rather than to subsequent commemorative rites (Plut. *Sol.* 21.5).

168. Ekroth, *Sacrificial Rituals*, 229–30 argues that it was addressed to the dead person rather than to a god; the evidence from tragedy confirms this view, insofar as a specific addressee was envisaged; the possibility that it was addressed more generally to the dead or to underworld powers, but certainly not the gods, is raised by Eur. *Hel.* 1255 (plans for the fictitious sea burial of Menelaus) προσφάζεται μὲν αἷμα πρῶτα νεοτέρους; but *ibid.* 1564, the same sacrifice is σφάγια τῶι τεθνηκότι.

169. Unless we treat the killing of a human victim by Neoptolemus for his father Achilles in Eur. *Hec.* 521–82 as a model, which would be rash despite the application of *prosphagma* to it in 41 (for other allusions to the rite, see 126, 260–61, 391–93).

170. Ar. fr. 504.14 with Kassel/Austin's note. Bloodless: Ekroth, *Sacrificial Rituals*, 278; Parker, *Polytheism*, 29. On the content of libations to the dead, see Hom. *Od.* 10.518–20, Aesch. *Pers.* 611–17, Eur. *IT* 159–65; Or. 115; LSCG 97 A 8–10; Lucian *Luct.* 19.

## CHAPTER 6

### The Experience of Festivals

A speaker in one of Plutarch's dialogues remarks at one point that "during a long stay in Crete I got to know of a strange festival they performed, at which they display an image of a headless man and explain that this was Molos the father of Meriones, and that after raping a young woman he was discovered headless."<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's puzzlement may be shared by us today in relation not just to the Cretan festival of the headless man but a great number of the details that are recorded about other ancient rituals. Much here appears bizarre, fragmentary, inconsequential. One reason is the character of two main sources, Plutarch's own *Greek Questions* and Callimachus's *Aitia*, which approach the Greek festivals in the spirit of Trivial Pursuits: it is the piquant and puzzling that constitutes a Question in Plutarch's terms, or that provides a starting point for Callimachus's witty and whimsical explanations.

Only rarely are other sources any more helpful. The very few accounts of ancient festivals that extend to more than a sentence or so were given for special purposes: Plutarch in a fragment of a lost work was concerned to allegorize the Boeotian festival Daidala, the source of two anonymous scholia on Lucian that discuss a cluster of Attic festivals had similar aims, and Theophrastus offered

1. *De def. or.* 14, 417E.

an account of the Attic Bouphonia as evidence that the ancients had shared his own repugnance for the sacrifice of living beings.<sup>2</sup> Lost books with titles such as "On the Sacrifices at Sparta" tantalize us, but it is likely (one good fragment of Polycrates on the Spartan Hyacinthia notwithstanding) that they concentrated on particularities and peculiarities and provided at best cursory summaries of what happened day by day. The one thing that made ritual worth describing in detail was extravagance: the account of Ptolemy's sumptuous procession for Dionysus covers many admiring pages in Athenaeus.<sup>3</sup> As for inscriptions, the norm there too is that the traditional procedures for the conduct of a festival are taken for granted. The few exceptions where extensive ritual detail is provided require special explanation.

The sources that ideally we would need never existed, therefore. To take another illustration, the Samian festival of Tonaia honoring Hera is one about which a certain amount is known.<sup>4</sup> The ancient image of Hera was taken to the beach, purified, and wrapped in withy branches; cakes were then set before it. Modern heortologists duly set to work comparing and contrasting in an effort to extract the meanings these acts may have had for those who conducted them. But it is again Athenaeus's interest in luxury that has preserved a fragment of an old epic poem by Asios that sets the Tonaia in a different perspective:

And they [masculine] used to go down, once they had fine-combed  
their tresses,  
to the precinct of Hera, wrapped in fine robes;  
they swept the surface of the broad earth with their snowy tunics.  
There were golden clusters like grasshoppers on them,  
and their hair tossed in the wind, bound in gold,  
and there were elaborate bracelets on their arms.<sup>5</sup>

What mattered most about the Tonaia? Was it the ritual with the ancient image and the withy branches, or the opportunity it provided to

2. Plut. fr. 157.6–7 Sandbach = *FGrH* 388 F 1; Σ Lucian pp. 275.23–276.28 and 279.24–281.3 Rabe (Parker, *Polytheism*, 272, with references); Theophr. ap. Porph. *Abst.* 2.28.4–31.1 (Parker, *Polytheism*, 187–88).

3. 5, 196A–203B, quoting Callixenus of Rhodes (*FGrH* 627 F 2); so too on Antiochus Epiphanes' games at Daphne, Ath. 5, 194C–195F (= Polybius 30.25). Lost books: see A. Tresp, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Kulturschriftsteller* (Giessen, 1914). Polycrates: p. 189 below.

4. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 46–49.

5. Asios fr. 13 Davies ap. Ath. 12, 525E Athenaeus's source Douris (*FGrH* 76 F 60) took the reference to be specifically to the Tonaia. On special festival clothes, see Xen. *Oec.* 9.6, Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" 148 n. 9.

the luxurious youth of the island to swagger in their pride? Both things mattered, no doubt; and an adequate ethnographic account of the festival would take trouble to do justice to both aspects.<sup>6</sup> "Thick description" in Geertz's term is what is needed; but the descriptions we can provide tend to be very thin indeed.

The ritual with the image and the withy branches was one of the things done at the Tonaia. But there will have been many others; and it is seldom guaranteed that the scraps of information that we have relate to activities that were perceived as central. Festivals lasting any number of days up to ten are often mentioned; a decree published in 2003 even attests a "sixteenth day" of the panēgyris for Athena Ilias in the Troad (evidently a blend of fair and festival such as often occurred).<sup>7</sup> Games played at festivals are occasionally attested,<sup>8</sup> and there will have been many more such than have been preserved in our sources. Ritual roles might be assigned on the basis of playful competitions; at Elis, for instance, a male beauty contest was held, with as first prize the right to carry Athena's armor, as second to lead the sacrificial cow, as third to place certain offerings on the altar.<sup>9</sup> There is no need to seek an origin in forgotten beliefs for unusual forms such as the "amphora race" on

6. One must remember too that "what might seem a mere group of worshippers to the modern researcher was in fact a polymorphous assemblage consisting of people having different needs and reasons to participate in a festival": M.-Z. Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200* (Oxford, 2008), 101.

7. Demeter in Sicily, probably at Syracuse, ten days (Diod. Sic. 5.4.7); Karneia at Sparta, nine days (Demetrius of Scepsis ap. Ath. 4, 141F); Demeter Mysia near Pellene, seven days (Paus. 7.27.9). Athena Ilias: *SEG* 53.1373.6; for long duration of later festivals, see Wörle, *Stadt und Fest*, 245–48. Cf. C. Chandezon, "Faires et panégyries dans le monde grec classique et hellénistique," *REG* 113 (2000): 70–100 [+], who sees rural festival fairs as playing "un rôle d'irrigation économique des campagnes grecques." An abundance of goods for sale is the virtue of a market or panēgyris, not a polis, says Dem. 10.50. Tax exemptions at festival fairs are first attested in RO 73.32–35 (Artemisia at Eretria). Some revealing texts: Livy 33.32.1 (on the Isthmian games); Strabo 10.5.4, 486 on a Delian festival: ἡ τε πανήγυρις ἐμπορικὸν τι πρῶγμα ἐστὶ; Paus. 10.32.15–16 (a festival fair briefly described).

8. Karystios ap. Ath. 14, 639C: slaves play knucklebones with citizens on one day of a "many-day" festival in Troizen; for swinging and jumping on wineskins at certain Attic festivals, see Parker, *Polytheism*, 184; for telling of riddles at the Chaironeian Agrionia, Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 8.1.1, 717a.

9. Ath. 13, 565F, cf. 13, 609F–610A (Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 94). At Tanagra, the "ephebe judged fairest" carried a lamb around the walls on his shoulders at the festival of Hermes (Paus. 9.22.1). Female festival beauty contests are also attested: Lesbos, for Hera: Alcæus fr. 130 b 17–20 in the ed. of E. M. Voigt (*Sappho et Alcæus* [Amsterdam, 1971]; fr. 130.32–35 Lobel-Page), with Voigt's note ad loc.; Tenedos, unknown deity: Theophr. fr. 564 Fort. ap. Ath. 13, 610A; Basilis in Arcadia, for Demeter Eleusinia: Nikias *FGrH* 318 F 1 ap. Ath. 13, 609E–F (cf. Paus. 8.29.5); Anthelos, for Demeter Pylaia?: so L. Preller and C. Robert, *Griechische Mythologie*, 4th ed. (Berlin, 1894), 1:780 n. 1, from Hesych. π 4342 πλαιτίδες; αἱ ἐν κάλλει κρινόμεναι τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ νικῶσαι. That the winners in such contests acquired privileged ritual roles is not attested, though possible.

Aegina (the mythological model for which both Callimachus and Apollonius record): variety was the spice of festival life.<sup>10</sup>

An enormous amount of private sacrificing, entertaining, and other activities took place in the interstices of the more public program; Pindaric scholars nowadays believe that some Pindaric epinicia were performed during public festivals; later they might host oratorical displays, lectures.<sup>11</sup> They were a magnet that attracted to themselves every kind of social and holiday activity; also, the major festivals, tourists in large numbers. Martin Nilsson's still unreplaced repertory was entitled (translated) "Greek Festivals of Religious Meaning":<sup>12</sup> "of religious meaning" set aside the innumerable athletic and musical competitions associated with or actually constituting festivals. That setting aside is anachronistic and misleading: such competitions will play little part in what follows, but let their centrality within what festival meant to the Greeks be underlined at the outset. The counterpart to extension in time is proliferation of participants. The more we hear about a particular festival, the more social groups we tend to find involved. Sometimes different roles for different groups, such as men and women,<sup>13</sup> married women and maidens, are set in an expressive counterpoint; sometimes it is perhaps simply that "everyone can play" (in different ways). "All-nighters" for women, for instance, punctuate the daytime activities dominated by men at festivals in both Sparta<sup>14</sup> and Athens.

Another cautionary tale: Plutarch reports that, "imitating" an incident that occurred during the return of the Achaeans from Troy, the Aeginetans "conduct a sacrifice for Poseidon called *Thiasoi*, at which they dine by themselves in silence for sixteen days, and no slave is present. Then they conduct Aphrodisia and end the festival. From this they are called Lone-Eaters (*Monophagoi*)."<sup>15</sup> The extended austerity of that unsocial fortnight, only

10. Callim. *Ia* VIII (fr. 198 Pfeiffer); Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.1765–72. No need: *pace* Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 172–73. "Außerdem aber hatte die Götterverehrung alle Lebensfreude in den Dienst ihrer Feste genommen": Burckhardt, *Kulturgeschichte*, 454 (cf. 462, 465).

11. Private sacrificing: see S. Georgoudi, *Ktema* 23 (1998): 325–34; Parker, *Polytheism*, 44, 163 n. 30, 268 n. 66; even at Sparta, Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.61 and p. 189 below (Hyacinthia). Epinicia: for a cautious view see C. Carey in *Pindar's Poetry*, 200–202. Lectures: Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" 162; Wörle, *Stadt und Fest*, 249–50.

12. M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung* (Leipzig, 1906). Against the claim of F. Bömer that a procession is "keine Kulthandlung," see A. Kavoulaki, "The Ritual Performance of a *Pompē*," in *Δώρημα: A Tribute to the A. G. Leventis Foundation on the Occasion of Its 20th Anniversary* (Nicosia, 2000), 145–58, at 154.

13. See, e.g., Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 76–77; Parker, *Polytheism*, 166–67; Paus. 2.11.3.

14. At the Hyacinthia: Eur. *Hel.* 1469–70; and the Karneia? (Eur. *Alc.* 445–51). At Athens: Parker, *Polytheism*, 166. On the ideal of universal participation in Hellenistic festivals, Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" 157. All ages involved: see, e.g., Paus. 2.35.5–7, on the Chthonia at Hermione.

briefly relieved by the concluding Aphrodisia, is unique, and unexplained. It is with amazement then that one learns from a different source that the Cyrenaean philosopher Aristippus dallied disgracefully with the courtesan Phryne for two months each year at the Poseidonia on Aegina (two months that included the Poseidonia, we should probably interpret: the festival can scarcely have lasted so long); and that once on this occasion she stripped and entered the sea "in sight of all the Panhellenes."<sup>15</sup> To attract this louche celebrity couple and "all the Panhellenes," there must have been more to the Poseidonia than quiet *en famille* dining by the Aeginetans without their servants.

The fact needs to be faced squarely: we know and will always know much less that is really useful about Greek festivals than about almost any other aspect of Greek religion. The fragments available to us were inadequate even in terms of an older tradition of religious history that thought that festivals had clearly definable purposes and meanings; they are much less adequate still if we understand them in the modern way not as a means to an end, but as a special form of social transaction and interaction, or as a performance.<sup>16</sup> From a fragment of a technological device one can hope to infer the function of the whole; but to catch the mood and nuances of, say, the abuse exchanged between men and women at various festivals one would need a transcript and video recording.

Perhaps then, to signal a necessary break with a long tradition, this chapter ought to end at this point, on its fifth page... But the festivals constrained the Greeks—it was supposedly the need to celebrate the Karneia that prevented the Spartans from marching out in full force to defend Thermopylae, and there are many similar incidents<sup>17</sup>—and they constrain us; they were too central a part of Greek religious experience to be neglected. One possibility is to stick to the small cluster of festivals for which enough snippets of information converge to form something of a detailed picture. But that entails (for the classical period) confining the account to the much-studied festivals of Athens. As a second-best approach to achieving a larger view, one can hope to sketch some broad outlines, trace common characteristics, identify possibilities. What is essential is not to mistake the outline for a full picture; nor to take festivals that share certain common characteristics as belonging to

15. Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 44, 301 D–F; Ath. 13, 588E, 590F (which mentions similar exhibitionism by Phryne at another festival, the Attic Eleusinia).

16. Kowalzig, *Singing*, chap. 1, is a very useful introduction to recent thought from a Hellenist's perspective.

17. Hdt. 7.206.1; cf., e.g., Thuc. 8.91.1 and Parker, *Miasma*, 154 [+]. There were exceptions: C. Habicht, "Versäumter Götterdienst," *Historia* 55 (2006): 153–66.

a fixed type. Etiquetting and pigeonholing ossify a much more flexible and variable reality. Many festivals, for instance, disturb social norms in various ways, but it is a mistake to treat "festival of reversal" as an ideal type; reversal is just one among the many differing interwoven strands that make up the specificity of each festival.

A first approach might be through generalizations of the Greeks themselves about festivals, or metaphorical applications of the idea of festival. The dominant image that emerges is that they are a context of pleasure and well-being. For Pericles in Thucydides they are "relaxations from labor"; the Cynic tradition urged that to a good man "every day was a festival," since every day brings to the tranquil mind that "pleasure and refreshment" that unphilosophical man seeks from festivals;<sup>18</sup> and, in what is perhaps the most eloquent account of the comforts of religion that survives from the ancient world, Plutarch explains how the Epicureans by their godlessness deprive themselves of pleasures that are otherwise available to all mankind, even the humblest and most oppressed: "For no way of passing time delights us more than that in shrines, nor any occasions more than festivities, nor deeds or sights more than those we see or do ourselves in relation to the gods, conducting rites or dancing or attending sacrifices or ceremonies."<sup>19</sup> Strabo speaks of "festival relaxation," ἀνεσις ἑορταστική. Piety, pleasure, splendor, and utility for war are the criteria against which festivals are to be measured according to the fourth-century *Rhetoric for Alexander*. The worst one can hold against them—a few exceptional dismal occasions aside—is that they can be noisy and hectic.<sup>20</sup>

They are also a time of peace, when execution and violent legal procedures are suspended. In the Hellenistic period we hear of "truces" involving holidays for children and slaves and in some cases the release of prisoners from chains. The bonds of social division are loosened a little at these times: the delight taken in them by slaves is especially emphasized by Plutarch. Implicit

18. Thuc. 2.38.1 (cf. Pl. *Leg.* 653C–D). Cynic tradition: Plut. *De tranq. anim.* 20, 477C–F; cf. *ibid.* 4, 466E Κράτης δὲ πῆραν ἔχων καὶ τριβάνιον παίζων καὶ γελῶν ὥσπερ ἐν ἑορτῇ τῷ βίῳ διετέλεσε. See in general J. D. Mikalson, "The Heorte of Heortology," *GRBS* 23 (1982): 213–21, and the passages quoted by Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 157 n. 5, 203 n. 138.

19. Plut. *Non posse* 21, 1101E; the whole chapter 21 is very notable. Cf. Plut. *De superst.* 9, 169D; Strabo 10.3.9, 467.

20. Strabo 10.3.9, 467; Arist. [*Rh. Al.*] 1423a 29–1424a 6. Noisy: Men. fr. 871 K/A (416 Koerte). Dismal: Plut. *De def. or.* 14, 417C ἑορτὰς δὲ καὶ θυσίας, ὥσπερ ἡμέρας ἀποφράδας καὶ σκυθρωπάς, ἐν αἷς ὠμοφαγίαι καὶ διασπασμοὶ νηστεῖαι τε καὶ κοπετοὶ πολλαχοῦ δὲ πάλιν αἰσχρολογία πρὸς ἱεροῖς 'μανία τ' ἀλαλαί τ' ὀρινομένων ριπαύχενι σὺν κλόνῳ' (Pind. *Dith.* 2.10–14 Snell/Maehler), θεῶν μὲν οὐδενὶ δαιμόνων δὲ φαύλων ἀποτροπῆς ἔνεκα φήσαιμ' ἂν τελεῖσθαι μελίχια καὶ παραμύθια. His *De Is. et Os.* contains various examples.

in most of the references to the pleasure of festivals are the pleasures of eating and drinking: they were the occasion both for meat eating from sacrifices and also for preparation and consumption of the special festival foods that were as characteristic as the Thanksgiving turkey. It hardly needs to be said that drunkenness, even if especially characteristic of Dionysiac festivals, was not confined to them.<sup>21</sup>

A limited number of special categories within the broad class of festivals were recognized by the Greeks. There were mysteries; there were orgia, rites marked by excited dancing and loud music; there were "women's festivals." *Thalysia* designated the type of offerings brought after the harvest, a typical occasion for festivals according to Aristotle. A section in Athenaeus assembles instances of festivals at which masters waited on slaves or the like. Festivals involving lamentation are mentioned as exceptions to the general tone of good cheer, and there was an awareness that some festivals enjoined striking exceptions to the general religious rule of "fair speech." "Theoxeny," god hosting, was primarily a ritual form found in the cult of the Dioscuri, but was applied to other gods too. We will meet below the rather vague notions of advent and presence. But these concepts put together form only an outline sketch, with large blank spaces, of the Greek festival landscape.<sup>22</sup>

Moderns were keen, until recently, to explain the purposes for which festivals were performed. That was not in the main the Greek way. Post-harvest festivals could be seen as expressions of thanks for goods received. But more commonly festivals were seen in relation to much more distant past events, whether as expiation for offenses or as imitations (or reminders or commemorations or simple repetitions) of noteworthy occurrences.<sup>23</sup> The need for such unending commemoration was explained, if at all, by stories of divine anger when it did not occur; and in a general way the point of performing festivals was simply to keep the gods contented. We could perhaps identify more specific aspirations linked to particular festivals if we

21. Truces, etc.: see Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" 148 nn. 7–8; for release of prisoners, cf. Ath. 14, 640A (Thessalian Peloria). Slaves' enjoyment: Plut. *Non posse* 16, 1098B; 21, 1101F–1102A. Festival food: Parker, *Polytheism*, 164–65, 184–86. For the link between abundant eating and "hymning the gods," see Plato's "city of pigs," *Resp.* 372A–D. Drunkenness: Dionysiac, e.g., Ar. *Ran.* 217–19, Pl. *Leg.* 637A–B; at a festival of Artemis, Polyb. 8.37.2.

22. On *orgia* see Strabo 10.3.7–18, 466–71. In 10.3.9 he distinguishes rites according to whether they include *enthousiasmos* or not, are accompanied by music or not, and are open or "mystical." Women's festivals: Ar. *Thesm.* 834–35; IG 2<sup>2</sup>.1177 (LSCG 36) 8–12. *Thalysia*: Theoc. *Id.* 7.3 with A.S.F. Gow's note ad loc.; Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1160a 25–28. Masters and slaves: Ath. 14, 639B–640A. Lamentations: above, n. 20 (cf. nn. 59–60). Rude speech: Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 159–60 and pp. 206–9 below. Theoxeny: p. 142. I exclude *teletai*, initiations, which are not exactly festivals.

23. Parker, *Miasma*, 272–75 (past offenses; cf. Plut. *Thes.* 18.2, for a continuing rite spoken of as a "propitiation"); Parker, *Polytheism*, 378 n. 32 (imitations, etc.).

could listen to the prayers that they certainly included. Callimachus's *Hymn to Demeter*, for instance, ends with a prayer for civic harmony, agricultural abundance (flourishing livestock as well as rich harvests), and peace ("that he who plowed may also reap"); earlier the women have uttered various "like to like" predictions that resemble prayers:

Just as the four white-haired horses draw the basket, so the great goddess, the wide-ruler, will come bringing us a white spring, a white summer and winter and autumn, and will protect us till another year; as we go through the city without sandals and headbands, so shall we have feet and heads all unharmed forever; as the basket bearers carry winnowing baskets full of gold, so shall we get gold in abundance. (120–27)

On that evidence it sounds as if almost any festival could be exploited opportunistically in search of almost every blessing. The emphasis might perhaps lie on the specific competences of the god in question (prosperity with Demeter, flourishing of the young men with Apollo, safety of the city with Athena)<sup>24</sup>, but it is not clear how a prayer to Demeter at one of her festivals would differ from one at another.

To say that festivals (in the main) lacked explicit purposes does not mean that all Greek ritual action did. The clearest counterexamples are rites performed in response to particular crises, and annually recurrent rites that reproduced their form. Greeks responded to drought and plague and extreme weather by ritual actions that had the clear intent of ending the affliction. Scapegoats were (supposedly) driven out in crises; ad hoc supplications for rain and the like are attested. The annual expulsion of scapegoats at the Thargelia in several Ionian cities continued to be understood as a way of "purifying the city"; and certain seasonally related annual rites were also assigned clear purposes.<sup>25</sup> The Hellenistic travel writer Herakleides writes that:

On the top of the mountain [Pelion] there is a cave called Cheirionion and a shrine of Zeus Akraios [Osann: Aktaios mss.], to which at the rising of the Dog Star in the intensest heat there go up conspicuous citizens in the prime of life chosen by [ὕπό Buttman: ἐπί mss.] the

24. Cf. Callim. *Hymn* 2.12–15; *Hymn* 5.142. The prayer addressed to Artemis in *LSA* 33.45–48 (for health and wealth) could have been addressed to any deity.

25. On scapegoats see p. 216 below. On crisis rites see, e.g., pp. 3–4, 74 on weather rites; *LSS* 103, Rhodes, sacrifice to be made to Zeus of Rain "when necessary"; *RO* 97 (*LSS* 115) A 4–7, Cyrene, sacrifice to be made to avert "disease or [ ] or death."

priest, wearing new triple-thickness fleeces. Such is the cold on the mountain.<sup>26</sup>

With this have often been compared the reports of sacrifices performed by the *genos* of priests of Zeus Aristaios Ikmaios on Keos to "make gentle the rising Maira [Dog Star]" and bring on the cooling Etesian winds.<sup>27</sup> A scholion even reports that "the Keans" (perhaps rather just the relevant *genos*) "each year watched for the rising of the Dog in arms and sacrificed to it," in a kind of Star War.<sup>28</sup> The rites in question are routinizations of crisis rites, and retain at least apparently the goal-directedness of these. But one might wonder whether they are properly termed "festivals." The expulsion of a scapegoat was never the whole content of a festival; the Thargelia remained purposeless, even if one element within it had a clear aim. We do not know whether the rites on Mount Pelion and on Keos stood on their own or formed part of more-extended festivals. In the former case, they are perhaps to be classified with many other rites performed by a restricted group for the general welfare<sup>29</sup> rather than as festivals (with large general involvement). In the latter, the simple purpose of controlling the weather will no longer explain the whole. It is important that, as was noted earlier, festivals were magnets that drew everything toward them. There is no reason to suppose that all the activities at a festival narrowed in to a single point of meaning.

### Festival Plots: The God Arrives

The attempt to approach the festivals through ancient concepts, categories, and statements takes us only a short way, therefore. I start again. A broad distinction that might be useful is that between things imagined, the role of the god in the festival, and things done, the actions of the celebrants. At the level of things imagined, some festivals have a plot: an event concerning gods is enacted or reenacted. Perhaps the commonest such plot was that of the god's "advent" to the city;<sup>30</sup> "advent" here is a useful cover term for phenomena

"plot"

26. F. Pfister, *Die Reisebilder des Herakleides* (Vienna, 1951), 2:8 (same numeration in the edition of A. Arenz [Munich, 2006]).

27. Callim. *Aet.* fr. 75.32–37; Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.516–28; for more sources see R. Pfeiffer's note on Callim. loc. cit., Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 6–8.

28. Σ Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.498–527 (w).

29. See Jameson, "The Spectacular and the Obscure."

30. The following discussion of advent is largely based on W. Burkert, "Katagōgia-Anagōgia and the Goddess of Knossos," in *Early Greek Cult Practice*, 81–87, and Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 151–62;

described in Greek by a variety of related words such as "visit" (ἐπιδημία—the same term as used for the visitation of a disease!), "bringing in" (καταγωγή), "reception" (ὑποδοχή),<sup>31</sup> "appearance of gods" (θεοφάνια). There is a certain difficulty in circumscribing the type, in that the invocation to gods to "come" was a standard element in hymns, and votive reliefs regularly show the deity standing behind the altar to receive the offering brought in a sacrificial procession; every sacrifice, therefore, was ideally the occasion of an advent. Plutarch indeed treats a sense of the god's presence as the central element that makes any festival magical.<sup>32</sup> But we can accept the formulation that advent festivals are those that lay special emphasis on the idea of coming or presence by ritual enactment of some kind.<sup>33</sup>

One striking enactment of the idea of presence was the Athenian ritual by which the wife of the king-archon was "given as wife" to Dionysus. This probably occurred during the three-day festival Anthesteria, and it was perhaps at the same festival that a statue of Dionysus in a ship on wheels was led in procession, as a way of representing the god's arrival from the sea. The Anthesteria was also (amid much else) the festival at which the Athenians broached the new wine, and rituals relating to drinking occurred on at least two of its three days. So here the god's advent coincided with the annual new instalment of his great gift to mankind. Festivals of the "bringing in" or "sailing in" of Dionysus are attested in other places, without further details, as is a ship-cart procession; the rituals in a broad way run in parallel with the many myths that tell of Dionysus's first arrival in this or that place. The god's marriage to a living mortal at Athens, however, has no parallel,<sup>34</sup> and no obvious mythical original that it could be thought to have imitated. We cannot enter the god's bridal chamber, and so do not know how he consorted with his new wife (did she recline with a statue? did her husband impersonate the god?). But this was the real presence of the god enacted in the most drastic and dramatic way possible.

Dionysus was also "brought in" in statue form to attend the City Dionysia at Athens; he was then set up in the theater, perhaps after a ritual of

see too for Dionysus, M. Detienne, *Dionysos à ciel ouvert* (Paris, 1986; Engl. trans. by A. Goldhammer as *Dionysos at Large* [Cambridge, Mass., 1989]), chaps. 1–2.

31. Cf. Currie, *Cult of Heroes*, 182.

32. *Non posse* 21, 1102A–B. On summoning the god to join a chorus, see S. Scullion, *CIAnt* 17 (1998): 103–4 (who cites, e.g., Ar. *Eq.* 559, *Thesm.* 1137).

33. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 151, 157. The lyric fragment PMG 929 (b), which greets Dionysus after twelve months' absence, is noteworthy here (A. Henrichs, *HSCP* 82 [1978]: 146 n. 82). Note too, e.g., Paus. 6.26.1, the Eleans claim that Dionysus attends their festival Thuia (ἐπιφοιτᾶν ἐς τῶν Θυῶν τὴν ἑορτήν).

34. For a skeptical Greek reaction to such unions, see Hdt. 1.182.

reception, to watch the plays. So he seems to have made at least two advents in Athens each year.<sup>35</sup>

In alternate years in midwinter, select groups of women from an uncertain number of Greek cities went "to the mountain," there to dance excitedly and roam, probably in a state of trance, until, in some cases, they collapsed in exhaustion.<sup>36</sup> They supposed that they were imitating the maenads of myth led to the mountain by Dionysus at the time of his first tumultuous arrival in the city;<sup>37</sup> perhaps also, the more imaginative, that the god was leading them in the present. This was, then, another kind of response to advent.

Just as Dionysus was a god who famously arrived in myth, Kore was one who came and went. Rituals of "the fetching of Kore" or the like may have had as their plot her seasonal returns, even if they do not in the form known to us refer to a "coming up" from the underworld. At the Koragia ("Kore fetching") at Mantinea a statue of Kore was, as it seems, removed from the temple, "received/entertained" by the priestess, and in due course brought back in procession; at some point it also received a new robe. At a festival of uncertain name in Lakonia, a statue of Kore was "brought up" from Helos by the sea to the Eleusinion just south of Sparta; the physical "bringing up" from the sea probably stood symbolically for Kore's mythological coming up from the underworld. Of the "bringing of Kore" in Sicily we know for sure only that it happened "when the fruit of the grain became ripe" (unfortunately we lack a date for the other two festivals), but it may be identical with a ritual at which sacrifices were made into the spring that emerged when Pluto split the earth to draw Kore down.<sup>38</sup> The sources fail to bring us closer than this, unfortunately, to the lived experience of any of these festivals. Nor can we do much with two rituals associated by ancient sources with the myth that Dionysus fetched up his mother, Semele, from the underworld: a "bringing up of Semele" at Delphi, and a summoning of Dionysus by trumpets from the waters of a lake at Lerna, preceded by offerings to "Gatekeeper" (the

35. On all this see Parker, *Polytheism*, 302–5, 318 [+]; G. Hedreen, *JHS* 124 (2004): 45–47; other Dionysiac bringings in: W. Burkert in *Early Greek Cult Practice*, 84 n. 22; the ship-cart at Smyrna: Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 268–69.

36. See J. Bremner, "Greek Maenadism Reconsidered," *ZPE* 55 (1984): 267–86.

37. A. Henrichs, "Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messalina," *HSCP* 82 (1978): 121–60, at 143, citing Diod. Sic. 4.3.2–3 (imitating the mythical maenads, the women celebrate the παρονσία and ἐπιφανεία of Dionysus).

38. Mantinea: IG 5.2.265; cf. Jost, *Arcadie*, 246–49 (who disputes any reference to Kore's underworld sojourn); Helos: Paus. 3.20.7; cf. *Early Greek Cult Practice*, 103; Sicily: Diod. Sic. 5.4.6 with 5.4.2; cf. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 161–62. An obscure Attic festival, the Procharisteria (Parker, *Polytheism*, 196–97), was celebrated in spring "because of the coming up of the goddess"; it may have mimicked the coming up in some way, but no details are known.

gatekeeper of Hades, that is). These were further advents, and, involving as they did a rescue/return from the underworld, of a very dramatic kind.<sup>39</sup> But again an adequate context is lacking.

Gods who periodically arrive must also in logic periodically depart, but perhaps understandably such departures seem not to have been ritually marked; indeed it has been argued that gods were never perceived by the faithful as being fully absent and inaccessible.<sup>40</sup> The "sending away" hymn (ἀποπεμπτικός) is the rarest of types according to Menander Rhetor, though he does claim to know some written by Bacchylides. Even the departure of Persephone, mythically famous though it was, did not generate "departure of Persephone" festivals symmetrical with those of her "fetching," whatever place laments or searches for her might play in her joint cult with Demeter. The scenes on a striking pithos urn of the ninth century from Knossos seem to provide, it is true, a significant exception.<sup>41</sup> A winged goddess on a wheeled platform is depicted on front and back: on the front she is flanked by richly growing foliage and has her arms up, wings down; on the rear the foliage is withered and she has arms down, wings up—as if ready to depart with the fading of the year. She seems to have stepped straight out of the pages of Frazer's *Golden Bough*, so close is she to the life of nature, so satisfactorily cyclical. The wheeled platform points to a ritual in which she was physically moved to and fro. But she dates from the Crete of the ninth century, and nothing much like her is known from the classical period.

In the cases discussed so far, the god's epiphany is through a statue, carried in by hand or on a wagon or chariot. At Stratonikeia in Caria the ten

39. Semele: Plutarch writes of the Delphic festival Herois, celebrated every eighth year, that "most of its elements have a mystic rationale known to the Thyiades, but from the acts performed openly one would conjecture it to be a 'bringing up of Semele'" (*Quaest. Graec.* 12, 293c). Lerna: Socrates of Argos (*FGH* 310 F 2 ap. Plut. *Is. Os.* 35, 364F; cf. *Quaest. Conv.* 4.6.2, 671E); generally identified (but see Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 194) with secret nocturnal rites performed annually for Dionysus at the Lake Alkyonia at Lerna known from Pausanias (2.37.5–6), who specifies that this was the lake through which Dionysus went down to fetch Semele. The myth that Perseus killed Dionysus by drowning him in the Lerna lake (*ΣΤ Hom. Il.* 14.319) is apparently a second aition for these rites; it is a drastic variation of the myth of Perseus's hostility to Dionysus that already appears on sixth-century vases. For discussion of these tantalizingly fragmentary traditions, see Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 190–207 [+].

40. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 159.

41. See Burkert, "Katagōgia-Anagōgia and the Goddess of Knossos," (n. 30), commenting on J. N. Coldstream, "A Protogeometric Nature Goddess from Knossos," *BICS* 31 (1984): 93–104 (*ThesCRA* 2:482 no. 583). On the partial exception of the Katagōgia-Anagōgia of Aphrodite of Eryx (*Ath.* 9.394F–395A; cf. *Ael. VH* 1.15 and *NA* 4.2) Burkert notes that the cult is only "para-Greek" and the period of Aphrodite's absence, signaled by the absence of her doves, just ten days. Menander Rhetor: p. 12.5–23 in the ed. of D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson (Oxford, 1981).

days during which Zeus Panamaros's statue was present, having been fetched from Panamara, were spoken of as "the god's visit" (ἐπιδημία).<sup>42</sup> Occasionally the deity was impersonated by a priestess or priest.<sup>43</sup> But a strong sense of presence could be created in other ways. Callimachus's *Hymn to Apollo* begins:

How Apollo's laurel branch has trembled, and how the whole shrine!  
Away, away, sinners! Phoebus is surely kicking the door with his lovely foot. Can't you see? The Delian palm tree nodded sweetly suddenly, and the swan in the air is singing beautifully. Bolts of the gates, bars of the gates, pull back of your own accord! The god is no longer far off... the boys should not keep their lyres silent nor their feet noiseless now that Phoebus has arrived.

"Door-opening miracles" are widely attested, but what matters to us is not the mechanism but simply the possibility of the god's presence being dramatized not by an image but by clues and tokens.<sup>44</sup> At festivals of Dionysus, clusters of ripe grapes might be discovered out of season, bowls might fill up with wine spontaneously, a vine might sprout and fruit in a single day;<sup>45</sup> such abnormal events reveal the god's power at work and can plausibly be taken as having been, for the participants, tokens of his advent. "Those who lived near the Galaxion in Boeotia became aware of the god's presence (ἐπιφάνεια) through an abundance and surplus of milk," writes Plutarch; he goes on to quote lyric verses describing the miracle.<sup>46</sup> In the first lines of his *Hymn to*

42. *IStraton.* 242.16–17, cf. 222.8.

43. Polyaeus, *Strat.* 8.59, priestess of Athena in Pellene; Paus. 8.53.3, priestess of Artemis at Tegea; Paus. 8.15.3, Pheneai, the priest dons a mask of Demeter Kydaria and beats "those under the earth" with a staff; cf. Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess*, 104–8. The ephebe who carries a lamb around Tanagra on his shoulders for Hermes is a kind of embodiment of Hermes Kriophoros (Paus. 9.22.1).

44. How Apollo's advent at Delphi was ritualized, if it was, is not clear. A specific reference to a festival celebrating his *epidēmia* first occurs to my knowledge in Procopius *Ep.* 20 in Hercher, *Epistolographi Graeci*, 540 (Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 158 n. 20); scholars connect this with Plutarch's mention of special cakes, implying a festival, baked on the seventh of the spring month Bysios, supposedly the one day on which the god originally gave oracles and also his birthday (*Quaest. Graec.* 9, 292E–F).

45. Paus. 3.22.2 (Mt. Larysion above Migonion in Laconia); Theopomp. *FGH* 115 F 277, [Arist.] *Mir. ausc.* 123, Paus. 6.26.1–2 (cf. S. Scullion, *Philologus* 145 [2001]: 203–18) (Elis); Soph. fr. 255 and passages cited ad loc. by Radt (probably Aigai in Euboea, Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 153–54). For other such Dionysiac wine miracles, see, e.g., Plin. *HN* 2.231, *ibid.* 31.16 (Andros); Diod. Sic. 3.66.2 (Teos). Cf. A. Henrichs, "Changing Dionysiac Identities," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. B. F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders, 3:137–60 (London, 1982), at 148.

46. *De def. or.* 29, 409A–B: probably in fact an aition.

Demeter Callimachus speaks as master of ceremonies at a basket-carrying ritual for Demeter (perhaps one attested in Alexandria, though the poet's own role is fictional),<sup>47</sup> and urges the celebrants: "As the basket comes in, call in response, women, 'Demeter, warm greetings, nurturer of many, bringer of many bushels.'" So the carrying in of the basket was perhaps perceived as an advent. (But the supposed festival dancing of baskets [κάλαθοι] at the Gygaian lake near Sardis is corrupt; the dance was of reeds [κάλαμοι]).<sup>48</sup>

The bringing in of a statue, to suggest advent,<sup>49</sup> was perhaps the commonest form of statue manipulation, but others occur. At Aigialeia a propitiation of Apollo and Artemis by "seven youths and seven maids" apparently required them to escort images of those two gods "back" to the temple of Apollo, via a shrine of Persuasion: this bringing "back" (not "in") will have indicated successful propitiation and "persuasion."<sup>50</sup> The ad hoc creation of a statue of Dionysus from a mask and column and clothes, as shown on the much-discussed Attic "Lenaea vases," was another way, it has been argued, of creating a presence of the god.<sup>51</sup> Karl Meuli left unfinished at his death the sketch of a theory of "chained gods": gods whose statue was symbolically bound throughout the year but released at a single "great festival," at which the ancestors returned and the living too were freed from the chains of social restraint and allowed to enjoy for a while the freedoms of the age of Kronos. A partial illustration is found at Patrai, where the chest containing a celebrated image of Dionysus was brought into the open once a year only during a festival. This image, according to myth, had driven mad Eurypylos son of Euhaimos, who had actually viewed it; the effect of the ritual was perhaps not one merely of presence, but of dangerous presence, of the god. Another sinister image, that of Artemis from the land of the Taurians, was held by the priestess of Artemis Orthia Lugodesma at Sparta during the notorious whipping of ephebes at Artemis's altar; the goddess's epithet

47. Cf. Burkert in *Early Greek Cult Practice*, 85.

48. Strabo 13.4.5, 626; for the correction, from an anonymous writing *On Marvellous Waters*, see L. Robert, *Documents d'Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1987), 306–14.

49. E.g., Paus. 7.20.8: Artemis Limnatis's image is brought in from the suburb of Patrai, Mesoa, whither it first arrived in mythical time, to the temple in the center for the goddess's annual festival; *ibid.* 2.7.5–6 (images of Dionysus Bakcheios and Lysios, in Sicyon).

50. Paus. 2.7.7–8. Not all the details are clear (Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 171): the young people go to the river Suthas, which is not a surprise in a puberty rite; whether they take the images with them or find them there is not stated.

51. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 211–40: she argues that the rite illustrated is the Delphic ἐγείρειν τὸν Λικνίτην (Plut. *Is. Os.* 35, 365A), to be understood as "arousing the Liknites," i.e., a mask of Dionysus initially placed in the form of basket known as *liknon*, not, as is usually supposed, the "awakening" of a reborn baby Dionysus (*liknon* as cradle).

"withy-bound" may show that the image was bound for the rest of the year.<sup>52</sup> But there is no trace of the ancestors in either case, nor of the age of Kronos. The only actual festival that fully fits Meuli's elegant theory is, unfortunately, the Roman Saturnalia.<sup>53</sup>

The plot "the ancestors return" (an inauspicious variant on the advent of the god) is attested only once, by an entry in the Byzantine encyclopedist Photius: "Unclean day: at the Choes at Athens [day two of the Anthesteria] in the month Anthesterion, in which the souls of dead are believed to come up, they used to chew buckthorn from morning and anoint their doors with pitch" (presumably as ways of protecting themselves from the dangerous presence of the dead).<sup>54</sup> The temples too were roped off on that day.

### The God Dies or Disappears

In Athens and Argos statues of Athena were given annual baths, in the sea (probably) after a long procession at Athens, in the river Inachus at Argos. Revealingly, sources in both cases (inscriptions in the one, Callimachus in the other) speak of the goddess herself being taken out to bathe, not her image.<sup>55</sup> For Athens, we have the rare luxury of a text that illuminates the mood of the festival (the Plynteria). The disrobing of the statue prior to its carrying out received, it seems, ritual emphasis: the goddess's nakedness was hidden with a veil, and the statue was left thus veiled for a sufficient period of time to give the whole day an inauspicious character. No Athenian, Plutarch records,

52. Meuli, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1035–81. Patrai: Paus. 7.20.1; on Eurypylos, 7.19.7 Sparta: Paus. 3.16.7–11. For these (and other) partial instantiations of Meuli's theory, see Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 81–96. Statuettes from the sanctuary of Artemis Ortheia at Messene show young female votaries holding a small *xoanon*, a ritual also mentioned in an inscription of (?) the first century AD, SEG 23.220 (b) 4–5; see P. G. Themelis in *Ancient Greek Cult Practice*, 116. No hint of danger here. About the "carrying round of the image" at the Dionysia of Methymna (IG 12.2.503.10) nothing certain is known, though it is very likely (Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 282) that the image involved was the well-known Dionysos Phallen (Paus. 10.19.3). Still less is known about the Dionysophoroi (Hesych. δ 1991: mss. Διονυσιοφόροι) at Syracuse and σιοφόροι (i.e. θεοφόροι) of Poseidon at Cape Taenarum (IG 5.1.210.55, 211.51, 212.5).

53. For the loosing of Saturn from woollen bands at the Saturnalia, see Apollodorus of Athens *FGH* 244 F 118 = Macr. *Sat.* 1.8.5 (*Saturnum Apollodorus alligari ait per annum laneo vinculo et solvi ad diem sibi festum*) and Jacoby ad loc. The possibilities that Apollodorus there refers to the Greek Kronia (tentatively Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 92; contra Jacoby) or that the Roman custom comes from the Greek seem to me very slight.

54. Photius μ 439; for those who doubt the conclusion drawn here, see Parker, *Polytheism*, 294 n. 25; *ibid.*, n. 24 for closing of temples.

55. E.g., IG 2<sup>2</sup>.1011.11 (Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 307–8); Callim. *Hymn* 6 *passim*. Hera was said to recover her virginity annually by bathing in a spring at Nauplion (Paus. 2.38.2–3): this too was doubtless a statue-bath.

would embark on any serious enterprise on that day. It was therefore a very ill omen that Alcibiades happened to return to Athens from exile precisely then, when the veiled goddess seemed to spurn his presence.<sup>56</sup> The correlate, unattested, will have been a period of particularly auspicious time once the goddess was reinstalled in her temple, refreshed and re-robed. The example neatly illustrates the way in which simple manipulation of sacred objects could create a mood, a little drama. (Whether there were festivals that were unrelievedly bleak is uncertain. The Diasia, a festival of Zeus Meilichios at Athens, is said to have been conducted "with a certain grimness."<sup>57</sup> But that brief phrase need not cover the mood of the whole event.)

Worse things could happen within the festival fiction than the temporary veiling (a kind of absence) of a goddess. Disasters could occur, deaths, disappearances of deities. Festivals that included an element of mourning seem to have been recognized as a distinct type by the ancients. In a striking passage where he compares Roman cult with Greek, Dionysius of Halicarnassus accounts to the credit of the Romans that "there is no black-robed or mourning festival among them containing breast-beating and women's laments for the disappearance of gods, such as are conducted among the Greeks in relation to the rape of Persephone and the sufferings of Dionysus and other such things." Among the classes of rites that Plutarch supposes are designed "for the aversion of bad *daimones*" are those requiring "fasting and breast-beating." Aristotle already knows a pointed rejoinder supposedly made by the philosopher Xenophanes to the Eleans when they asked him "if they should sacrifice to Leukothea and lament or not": if they considered her a god they should not lament, if a mortal, not sacrifice.<sup>58</sup>

The one lamentee whose rites we know in some detail is Adonis (who did not, however, receive a public cult in Athens). Much more briefly we hear that one of the cult acts performed by the maidens of Troizen for Hippolytus was lamentation; that, in obedience to an oracle, Achilles was lamented at sunset near the start of the Olympics by the women of Elis; that the women of Croton too lamented and wore mourning for Achilles at the Heraion on Cape Lacinium; that a Tegeate hero Skephros was lamented during the festival of Apollo Agyieus; that "Mysian women" (perhaps in

56. Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.12, Plut. *Alc.* 34.1–2; cf. Pollux 8.141 (temples closed). But in Argos no such mood emerges from Callimachus's *Hymn*.

57. Σ Lucian p. 107.15 Rabe; cf. Parker, *Polytheism*, 425.

58. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.18.2; Plut. *De def. or.* 14, 417c; Arist. *Rhet.* 2.23, 1400b 6–8. Plutarch thrice has Xenophanes make the same remark to the Egyptians in respect of Osiris, and a Plutarchan work ascribes the remark to Lycurgus (in answer to the Thebans): for references see Xenophanes DK 21 A 13.

fact Greek women from Kios in Mysia) lamented Hylas.<sup>59</sup> In some further cases actual lamentations are not attested, but indications of mourning are: the Naxians maintained that they honored two separate Ariadnes, of whom they celebrated one with merriment, while the sacrifices for the other were "mixed with mourning and grimness"; the feasting on the first day of the Hyacinthia at Sparta was restrained and austere "because of grief for Hyacinthus"; the Corinthian children whose task it was to propitiate the dead children of Medea cut their hair and wore black.<sup>60</sup> Where actual lamentation is attested in a cult and its performers are identifiable, they are always women; the mimicked laments over ancient deaths at festivals follow the form of the laments over actual deaths in present time.

An obvious question to ask about ritual laments concerns the mythological career of the god or hero mourned for. Was the disaster lamented over by the participants temporary or permanent? The mourning of Good Friday would drastically change its character were it not believed that the victim of that day was to rise again in three days' time. A closely related question is that of the place of the laments within the whole festival: Easter would be different again were the Crucifixion an event in ritual but the Resurrection merely a belief, not also an event enacted within the same ritual sequence. In answer to the first question, the occurrence mourned over was a temporary affliction in some but not all the relevant mythical biographies. Persephone and Dionysus certainly recovered from their sufferings, and traditions that Achilles, Hyacinthus, and Leukothea became gods or something similar are attested early, even if they were not necessarily activated in the cults in question; Hylas too seems to have become a local god.<sup>61</sup> It can be argued that in such cases the mourning was conducted in order to stress the transformation subsequently undergone by the ex-mortal: the paradox underlined by Xenophanes in his

59. Eur. *Hipp.* 1426–27; Paus. 6.23.3 (Achilles at Elis); Paus. 8.53.3 (Skephros); Lyc. Alex. 859–65, with Σ (Achilles at Croton); Hesych. ε 4645 (Hylas: cf. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 75–76). According to Conon, the Linos song had its origin in laments for Linos and his mother, Psamathe, performed at an Argive festival (Conon *FGrH* 26 F 1 ¶ 19; cf. Paus. 1.43.7). But in its first attestations the Linos song is a lament performable on any occasion, not tied to a particular cult (Hom. *Il.* 18.570, Hes. fr. 305), and Nilsson is probably right that its association with the Argive cult, if real at all, is secondary (*Griechische Feste*, 435–38). The Lityersas song/lament too (Theocr. 10.41 with Gow's commentary) was not cultic. Whether the "tragic choruses" that honored Adrastus (Hdt. 5.67.5) were laments is unknowable.

60. Plut. *Thes.* 20.8–9 (Ariadne); Polycrates *FGrH* 588 F 1 ap. Ath. 4, 139d (Hyacinthia); Paus. 2.3.7, cf. Parmeniskos in Σ Eur. *Med.* 264 and Σ *ibid.* 1379 (πένθιμος έορτή) (children of Medea). Philostr. *Her.* 53.4 p. 67 de Lannoy speaks of Corinthian laments for Melikertes and for the children of Medea: how reliably (cf. p. 152 n. 111)?

61. Achilles: e.g., *PMG* 894, and the Black Sea cult of Achilles (p. 244 below); Hyacinthus: see below; Leukothea: Hom. *Od.* 5.334–35; Hylas: Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 329–45.

answer to the Eleans, that they were treating the same individual as both dead and divine, was precisely the point.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, Skephros and the children of Medea were heroes at best, and, if Plutarch's report is trustworthy, the Naxians blocked off the thought of a happy future for the Ariadne they mourned by treating her as a separate figure from the one they celebrated. Most strikingly, the current consensus is that there was no ritually enacted resurrection of Adonis; the festival ended with the "gardens of Adonis" being disposed of, and the only comfort for the participants was the knowledge that the beautiful youth would somehow be available to die and be mourned for again next year.<sup>63</sup>

As for dramatization of the "death/apotheosis" or "loss/recovery" sequence within a festival, the cult of Demeter and Kore probably provided the nearest Greek equivalents to a Good Friday–Easter Sunday sequence: laments for Kore are likely to have led to her recovery, as certainly at her festival the Thesmophoria the grim middle day of "Fasting" prepared for what we may presume to be the joy of the final day, "Fair Birth." The ritual for Hylas too seems to have ended with a reassurance that he had become a god; in other cases of laments for future gods (Achilles, Leukothea) we know too few details to be able to judge.<sup>64</sup> The dramatizations of the "sufferings of Dionysus" that Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions with such disapproval perhaps occurred in private mystery cults, not at public festivals at all.<sup>65</sup>

About the Spartan Hyacinthia we have a little more information. The day that was understood as one of mourning for Apollo's lovely young lover was the first. Pausanias tells us that on the altar that served as base for the great statue of Apollo of Amyclae were depicted various gods "escorting to heaven" Hyacinthus and his sister Polyboia.<sup>66</sup> The myth of the apotheosis was therefore visually presented to every visitor to the sanctuary from the sixth century onward. No source records that it was also evoked during the ritual of the subsequent days. But whether it was or not, one of the longest

62. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 125.

63. See J. L. Lightfoot, *Lucian: On the Syrian Goddess* (Oxford, 2003), 305–11. But for the suggestion that in late antiquity Adonis's annual return was interpreted as a resurrection to rival Christ's, see Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes*, 253–54.

64. Hylas: Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 352–55. Thesmophoria: for the day names see Σ Ar. *Thesm.* 80, with Parker, *Polytheism*, 272 n. 11.

65. See Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 184–85, on Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 35, 364F. Alternatively, the allegorical interpretation (e.g., Cornutus *Theol. Graec.* 30, p. 62.10–16 Lang) of the myth (originating probably in Orphic poetry/rites) of the *spanagmos* of Dionysus may already in Dionysius's time have caused elements of the public ritual to be so understood: so, e.g., Σ Clem. Al. *Protrept.* 1.2 (cited by A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2nd ed. [Oxford, 1968], 28) claims that a song on this subject was sung at the Lenaea.

66. Paus. 3.19.4.

descriptions that we possess of any Greek festival shows that the movement of the Hyacinthia was felt to be from a mood of inhibition to one of indulgence, celebration, affirmation of vitality. An otherwise unknown writer on Spartan customs, Polycrates, writes as follows:

The Laconians conduct the sacrifice of the Hyacinthia over three days and because of their mourning for Hyacinthus do not wear garlands at dinner nor do they bring in bread or serve cakes and other such things; they do not sing the paean to the god or introduce anything of the kind such as they do at their other sacrifices, but they dine in great good order and depart. [We must presume, though Polycrates does not make explicit, that these restrictions apply to the first day only.] But on the middle of the three days there is a varied spectacle and a remarkable great communal celebration (πανήγυρις). Boys in high-belted tunics play the lyre and, singing to the *aulos* while running over all the strings with their plectra, hymn the god in an anapestic rhythm with a high pitch. Others go through the theater on decorated horses. Numerous choruses of young men come in and sing some of the local poems, while dancers intermingled with them perform old-fashioned dance movements to the accompaniment of flute and song. As for the maidens, some ride on expensively decked-out *kannathra* [a kind of cart], while others compete (?) in procession on yoked chariots, and the whole city is absorbed in the movement and joy of the spectacle. On this day they sacrifice numerous animals and the citizens feast all their acquaintances and their own slaves. Nobody is absent from the sacrifice, but the whole city is emptied for the spectacle.<sup>67</sup>

A further description of the distinctive Spartan form of dinner known as a *kopis* probably concerns the Hyacinthia,<sup>68</sup> though we cannot be sure which of the three days it relates to; it is a lovely illustration of "festival food":

When they hold a *kopis*, first they set up tents beside the god, and in these ground covers made of wood, and on them they lay rugs, on

67. Ath. 4, 139D–F (Polycrates, *FGH* 588 F 1 quoted via Didymus). The link of day one with mourning for Hyacinthus is secondary interpretation, according to Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 133, and A. Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi* (Rome, 1969), 144. But see the comments of Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 122 n. 27. On the festival, see N. Richer, "The Hyacinthia of Sparta," in *Spartan Society*, ed. T. J. Figueira, 77–102 (Swansea, 2004); Ducat, *Spartan Education*, 262–67.

68. See Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 131–32, on Polemon ap. Ath. 4, 138F–139A; he supposes that it belongs to day one, but M. Pettersson, *Cults of Apollo at Sparta* (Stockholm, 1992), 14–17, puts it later.

which guests recline; they feast not just those who come from the territory but also foreigners who are present. At *kopides* they sacrifice goats and no other animal. They give portions of meat to everybody and the so-called *physikillos*, which is a small loaf resembling an oil-and-honey cake but rounder in shape. They give each of those assembled a green cheese and a slice of black sausage and as relishes dry figs and beans and green kidney beans.

Indulgence of this type was out of place where the story had no happy ending. The Adonia finished very differently: no feasting, no display of the skills and beauty of the rising generation. Its pleasures, at least if we can place reliance on the interpretation offered by Theocritus in his fifteenth *Idyll*, were of a different kind, the pleasures of lamentation itself.<sup>69</sup> Adonis was the young lover of Aphrodite who died, and the women who mourned him luxuriated self-indulgently in fantasies of a similar relationship and a similar bereavement. The pleasures of lamentation were especially intense in the case of Adonis because of the cult's strong erotic charge. But the fantasy of bereavement (or even the vicarious experience of bereavement) is as sweet as the real experience is sour, and perhaps the maidens who mourned for Hippolytus, the women who mourned for Achilles did so not without pleasure. We may presume that these festivals played tricks with time and treated the deaths in question not as events from the distant past but as recurring, like that of Adonis, each year. Plutarch is perhaps being psychologically naive in supposing that the experience of such rituals was a painful one appropriate only "for the aversion of bad *daimones*."

A lament for a lost god could easily be associated with a search. The type is not common, but a few cases are known. The most important is Lactantius's statement that at the Eleusinian Mysteries, "Proserpina is sought with lighted torches, and when she is found the whole rite concludes with celebration and throwing of torches."<sup>70</sup> We also hear from several sources that the inhabitants of the Greek city of Kios in Mysia went to the mountains each year and hunted for Hylas, the young companion of Heracles whom the amorous nymphs had dragged into a spring. A different source tells of a sacrifice performed at the spring, of a threefold invocation of Hylas by the priest, and of the echo's threefold response; the triple echo has been

69. Cf. Parker, *Polytheism*, 283–88 [+].

70. *Div. Inst. Epit.* 18.7. Similarly, Paus. 1.43.2 speaks of a reenactment of the myth by the women of Megara.

interpreted as the auditory epiphany that in the ritual proved to the faithful that the lost youth lived on, transformed into a protecting spirit.<sup>71</sup>

More enigmatic is a characteristically inconsequential-seeming brief notice in Plutarch:

Not unreasonably then among us [probably the Chaironeians] too at the Agrionia the women seek for Dionysus in the belief that he has run away. Then they stop and say that he has fled to the Muses and is hidden with them. A little later, at the end of the dinner, they set each other puzzles and riddles.<sup>72</sup>

Plutarch is impressed by this ritual because feasting and drinking are combined with exercise of the rational faculties, and the wildness of drunkenness is gently restrained by the Muses. But what of the events prior to the meal? Dionysus's flight to the Muses echoes the old myth whereby he took refuge with Thetis when Lycurgus pursued his nurses,<sup>73</sup> but in this case his need to flee is unexplained. Possibly this is an exception to the principle that a god's departure at the end of a festival is not dramatized; or perhaps, as so often, we simply know too little.

An enneateric (once in eight years) festival, or rather whole ritual sequence, at Delphi, the Septerion, was said by most ancients to have as its plot the killing of the dragon Pytho by Apollo and the god's subsequent exile to Tempe; he was purified there and returned in triumph bringing his beloved laurel. A speaker in one of Plutarch's Delphic dialogues, however, disagrees, while also giving us the fullest account of the ritual action.

For the hut that is set up there around the threshing floor every eight years seems to be an imitation not of the snake's lair but of a tyrant's or king's residence. And the silent approach to it along the so-called Dolonia, along which the Labyadai [?] escort the boy with both parents still living and, throwing fire on the hut and overturning the table, flee through the gates of the shrine without turning back; and finally the wanderings and service of the boy and the purifications performed in Tempe suggest a great pollution and crime. For it's utterly absurd, my

71. See Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 74–78, 352–55. Different source: Nicander ap Ant. Lib. Met. 26.

72. *Quaest. conv.* 8.1.1, 717a. Scraps of other evidence for Dionysus at Chaironeia do not help: Schachter, *Cults* 1:173–74.

73. Hom. *Il.* 6.130–37.

friend, that Apollo, after killing a wild beast, should flee to the limits of Greece seeking purification, and when there pour certain libations and perform the acts that men perform when expiating and appeasing the anger of powers (*daimones*) whom they call "drivers" (*alastores*) and "murderous spirits" (*palamnaioi*).<sup>74</sup>

Other sources reveal that the flight from Delphi to Thessaly was only the preliminary to a ritualized bringing of laurel from Thessaly to Delphi.<sup>75</sup> The "boy with both parents still living" was the leader of a "sacred expedition" that, after making "impressive" sacrifices in Thessaly, followed a formal route, the "sacred way" or Pythias, back to Delphi; the laurel that they brought served among other things to crown victors at the Pythian games. The festival was a diptych, therefore: destructive and polluting acts and, according to the ancient explanation, actual absence of the god prepared for an auspicious coming back. Was ordinary existence for the Delphians subjected to restrictions during the interval between the flight of the polluted god/youth and his return? This return was also a bringing in, and thus aligns the festival with others at which a valued substance (such as fire) was fetched from afar; the link between the festival and the games at which the laurel was used may have been a close one.<sup>76</sup> Such fetching establishes a linkage between a city or sanctuary and one or many others. Linkage of this type was often created by means of the dispatch of a "sacred expedition," *theōria*, from city A to attend a festival in a sanctuary controlled by city B. Here by contrast the *theōria* visits

74. *De def. or.* 15, 418A–B; for the speaker such myths and rites concern *daimones*, not gods: *ibid.* 417E–F 418C–D, cf. 21, 421C–D. For the standard aition, cf. Ephorus *FGH* 70 F 31b ap. Strabo 9.3.12, 422 (the rite commemorates the burning of the dragon's tent by the Delphians); Callim. *Aet.* fr. 86–89; Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 12, 293C (which mentions flight along the sacred way); Σ Pind. *Pyth.* p. 4.9–14 Drachmann; Ael. *VH* 3.1 (seen by editors as a paraphrase of Theopompus, whence *FGH* 115 F 80); probably already Pind. *Paeon* 10. The *Paeon* of Aristonous (Powell, *Coll. Alex.* 162–64) may have been written for the festival (Rutherford, *Paeans*, 29)—on which see Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 127–30; Rutherford, *Paeans*, 200–202 [both +].

75. Callim. *Ia.* fr. 194.34–36; Ael. *VH* 3.1 (with details of the route); Plut. [*De mus.*] 14, 1136A; Steph. Byz. s.v. Δελφινός; Σ Pind. *Pyth.* p. 4.9–14 Drachmann. For the possibility that the δαυχνάφοροι found in several Thessalian and one Perrhaebian city making dedications to Apollo under various epithets (*IG* 9.2.1027, 1234, and two inedita) attest regional involvement in the rite, see B. Helly, *JSav* (1987): 140–42; M. Mili, "Studies in Thessalian Religion" (D. Phil. diss., Oxford University, 2005), 281–84.

76. On fire fetching from Delos and Delphi, see below, p. 213. Cf. the bringing of offerings to Delphi by the Athenian Pythaïdes (Parker, *Polytheism*, 83–87); a link between the Hyperborean offerings sent to Delos and a particular festival is highly plausible, but currently indemonstrable (J. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale* [Paris, 1970], 38–48). Festival and games: the games, like the festival, were supposedly originally held every eight years; but note the caution of Rutherford, *Paeans*, 202 n. 4.

a variety of sanctuaries outside its own territory while enacting the plot of a festival sequence of its own city. The Septerion is about a god's exile and the fetching of a valued substance and the links between Delphi and an outlying region; such multidimensionality is entirely normal.

The "lost god" motif is early attested in the Hittite myth of the angry withdrawal, leading to general infertility, of the god Telepinus. It apparently ends, once Telepinus is appeased, with an allusion to a ritual: "Telepinus cared for the king. A pole was erected before Telepinus; and from this pole the fleece of a sheep was suspended; in it lay the fat of sheep, grains of corn, wine, in it lay cattle and sheep, in it lay long life and progeny." The fleece symbolized general abundance, therefore. Burkert has suggested that "abundance returns with the recovery of the lost god" provided the plot of several Greek rituals.<sup>77</sup> No instance coincides exactly with the presumptive Hittite archetype, but each contains some of the motifs "lost god," "pole/plank image/tree," "symbols of abundance," "feasting."

- (a) The cave at Phigaleia in Arcadia to which Demeter once withdrew in wrath used to contain a rare wooden horse-headed image of the goddess. In lieu of animal sacrifice, worshippers still in Pausanias's day placed on the altar in front of the cave "the produce of cultivated trees, especially grapes, honeycombs, unworked wool still full of grease"; they then poured on olive oil.<sup>78</sup>
- (b) We noted above the ritual of Hera on Samos at which foodstuffs were placed in front of the goddess's image on the beach; according to the etiological myth, the festival commemorated an occasion when pirates had tried unsuccessfully to steal the image but abandoned it (and propitiated it with food) on the shore, and the Samians had to hunt for their lost goddess. The image of Hera in question was, in its body, a plank decorated with a necklace of circular objects that were perhaps, by analogy with clearer cases, symbols of abundance.
- (c) At Ephesus, an image of Artemis was brought out on a particular day into a field by boys and girls and "feasted" on salt; if the image resembled the famous Ephesian Artemis, it was girt with the mysterious "breasts," perhaps again symbols of abundance.<sup>79</sup>

77. *Structure and History*, 123–42; Telepinus's pole, *ibid.*, 124.

78. Paus. 8.42.1–13.

79. *Etym. Magn.* 252.11–25 s.v. Daitis.

- (d) In Magna Graecia and Sicily, statuettes of Demeter or Persephone with necklaces like those of Samian Hera ([b] above) are commonplace,<sup>80</sup> though without associated rituals penetrating our rare sources for the region.
- (e) In the same area as (b) and (c), at Miletus, the city's founder, Neleus, on oracular instruction made an image of Artemis Chitone from an oak on which "all kinds of fruit" were hung.
- (f) On the mainland we find, not plank images decorated (arguably) with symbols of abundance, but poles or branches hung with them: such are the *eiresiōnai* carried by young boys in Attic rituals of Apollo, such the decorated olive branch carried in the ritual of Daphnephoria at Thebes.
- (g) A Boeotian ritual for Hera centered on rough wooden images known as *daidala*.<sup>81</sup>
- (h) He could perhaps have added the Delphic Septerion ritual discussed above.

Burkert concludes:

To sum up: in various forms, the *eiresiōnē* or laurel branch, the *daidalon*, the plank with garment and pectoral, and the Hittite *eia* tree, we have the same ritual activity of bringing in the tree adorned, which ultimately conveys a single message: the return of prosperity, the return of the god.<sup>82</sup>

For the worshipper, a sacrificial feast will have conveyed the experience of "prosperity returned" in the most agreeable fashion. And he continues with a drastic claim: "The gods may be quite different, Telepinus or Artemis, Hera, Demeter, Persephone, Apollo, Dionysus, all different in name, sex and spheres of influence; but after all, the gods are 'givers of good things' almost by definition."

I have laid out his case thus fully to reveal both its allure and the difficulties it brings. About details one can certainly quibble. Are poles and branches really equivalent to images, of however rudimentary a kind? Perhaps (f) should be bracketed off as a separate though still important type, one

80. See now Hinz, *Demeter auf Sizilien*, 38–39, and index s.v. Athena Lindia.

81. Miletus: Σ Callim. *Hymn* 1.77b, cf. Callim. *Aet.* fr. 80.17–18, *Hymn* 3.225–27. *Eiresiōnai*: Parker, *Polytheism*, 204–6. Daphnephoria: n. 168 below. Daidala: p. 221 below.

82. *Structure and History*, 136.

not based on a myth, the bringing in of symbols of prosperity. Is a meal of salt (c) a good harbinger of abundance? Can a meal served to a deity symbolize the abundance brought by that deity? And so on. But fuller information might meet most of these difficulties. What is most puzzling is how the great, grand myth of the angry god's withdrawal has disappeared completely or has been replaced by trivial substitutes: Hera had not left her temple on Samos in cosmic rage, but pilfered by Carian pirates; the rite at Ephesus commemorated a picnic casually offered to the goddess one year that she then insisted should be repeated. Were the ritual acts in themselves strong enough to give to the participants the authentic "prosperity restored" experience, even when backed by such weak myths?

### The God Weds?

"Sacred marriages" have been much talked about in the modern literature.<sup>83</sup> But as the plot of a festival the type seems seldom to occur; or, if it does, not in a context where we can make sense of its meaning for participants. Varro's statement that on Samos "the annual rites [of Juno] are celebrated in the form of a marriage" fails to find support in what else we know of Hera's festival Tonaia there; either he refers to a different festival of which we know nothing, or he errs.<sup>84</sup> The wedding of Zeus and Hera was briefly evoked during the complex Plataean festival of the Daidala, but did not provide a plot that can be traced right through the ritual sequence. The Cretans claimed that the union of Zeus and Hera occurred in the territory of Knossos near the river Theren, at the site of a sanctuary where now annual sacrifices are performed and "the marriage is imitated." How close that imitation was we have no way of judging; nor do we know anything beyond the name of the Sicilian festivals of the "Unveiling of Persephone" (sc. after marriage) or "Divine Marriage" (of Persephone again).<sup>85</sup> A union of Dionysus with a mortal woman did occur, as we have seen, during (probably) the Anthesteria at Athens. And a festival called precisely "Sacred Marriage"

83. See A. Avagianou, *Sacred Marriage in the Rituals of Greek Religion* (Bern, 1991); for a minimalist account, see I. Clark, "The Gamos of Hera: Myth and Ritual," in *Sacred and the Feminine*, 13–26.

84. *Simulacrum* (sc. *Iunonis*) in habitu nubentis figuratum et sacra eius anniversaria nuptiarum ritu celebrantur: Varro ap. Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 1.17.8; for other sources associating the mythical union of Zeus and Hera with Samos, see Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 47; on the Tonaia, pp. 172–73 above; for the possibility of a second festival Avagianou, *Sacred Marriage* (n. 83), 46–48.

85. Daidala: see p. 221. Crete: Diod. Sic. 5.72.4. Sicilian festivals: Pollux 1.37 (Theogamia); Σ rec. (to be found in A. Boeckh's edition of Pindar) *Pind. Ol.* 6.160 (Anakalypteria). I doubt in fact whether the latter festival name, attested only in one late scholion, has any authority.

was also held there, in the marriage month Gamelion; it honored the prototypical couple, that of Zeus and Hera. No ritual enactment is attested, but married men were apparently expected to spend the evening of that day at home; it may have been essentially a domestic event, a quiet celebration of human marriage.<sup>86</sup>

### "New Life," and the Seasons

A different kind of plot might be provided by the astronomical year. But it does not seem that such "cosmic" plotting was very important. The timing of many festivals was, it is true, tied to the motions of the sun and moon. In all Greek poleis, as far as we know, the sequence of festivals was regulated by a lunisolar calendar (often termed by moderns for that reason "the festival calendar") whereby they were celebrated not more than once each solar year. Within that calendar, the times of the new and full moon were especially favored, notionally at least, for festival activity.<sup>87</sup> Solar events (solstices, equinoxes) were important in time reckoning, and the new year in the city of Plato's *Laws* (767c) was to begin, probably in accord with actual practice in Athens, at the first new moon after the summer solstice. If the rare and late-attested eight-yearly (enneateric) festivals really go back to archaic times, they are based on an eight-year cycle of intercalation (three extra months each eight years); so too the much better-attested four-yearly festivals (penteteric), if they are best viewed, as apparently by some ancients, as divided *enneaterides*.<sup>88</sup> From early times, if so, the timing of certain festivals was tied to elaborate calendrical calculations. But it is one thing for a festival to be located in time by an astronomical calendar, another for its content to relate to that calendar in any significant way. As far as we can tell, the solstices and equinoxes were not more than useful time markers for the Greeks. The entry of a new set of magistrates in annual office was accompanied by "entry sacrifices" that could become elaborate, but only occasionally was this entry described as the beginning of a "new year."<sup>89</sup>

86. See I. Clark, "The Gamos of Hera," 18–19, in n. 83 above; Parker, *Polytheism*, 42 (ibid., 356–57 for a possible marriage during the Eleusinian Mysteries).

87. M. P. Nilsson, *Die Entstehung und religiöse Bedeutung der griechischen Kalender*, 2nd ed. (Lund, 1962), 35–44; C. Trümper, *ZPE* 121 (1998): 109–15.

88. Nilsson, *Die Entstehung* (in n. 87 above), 46–48; R. Hannah, *Greek and Roman Calendars* (London, 2005), 35–41. The Pythian Games had supposedly originally been enneateric (Censorinus, *DN* 18.6; Σ Pind. Pyth. p. 4.14–16 Drachmann).

89. New year: so, e.g., Pl. *Leg.* 767C, cf. Lys. 26.6; *SEG* 38.1462.57. Entry sacrifices: Wörle, *Stadt und Fest*, 193–94. The importance of the new year is downplayed by Parker, *Polytheism*, 194

Even, however, if Greeks lacked new-year festivals, did the idea of renewal and fresh beginning sometimes provide a plot? The useful concept of "incision ceremonies" has been introduced here.<sup>90</sup> The possibility becomes explicit in Philostratus's statement that on Lemnos (in the third century AD) all fires were quenched on the island for nine days while rites were performed for secret chthonian gods; then new fire brought in a special ship from Delos was distributed, and "they began a new life from then on."<sup>91</sup> The bright new start is ritually emphasized there by a preceding period of gloom. Perhaps the gloom that descended on Athens at the Plynteria while Athena's ancient image was veiled was followed by a sense of cleansed renewal when the newly washed image was re-robed. We noted earlier the possibility that the sequence from Septerion to laurel bringing at Delphi, supposedly mimicking Apollo's flight-purification-return, worked similarly. Purity after pollution is an easy symbol of an incision. Athens was purified by the dispatch of scapegoats at the Thargelia, a festival that had some relation to the year's new corn (another potential symbol of a new start). There was also an impure day during the Anthesteria: at this festival the year's new wine was broached, and little children (newness again) were a focus of attention in some way. Several good candidates for festivals of incision can therefore be identified in one city alone, without it ever being possible to press the case home.<sup>92</sup>

Some of these cases already show how the agricultural year could contribute to the plotting of a festival. Diodorus claims that the Sicilians, by the timing of their festivals to Demeter and Kore, indicated the nature of the gifts they had received.

For they placed the bringing in [or bringing back—*katagōgē*] of Kore at about the time at which the corn crop reached maturity, and they celebrate this sacrifice and festival with all the strictness and zeal that is natural for men to show in repaying thanks who have been granted the best of all gifts in advance of the rest of mankind. And they preferred as time for the sacrifice of Demeter that at which the sowing of the corn is begun.<sup>93</sup>

(following Nilsson against Burkert); but for an argument for the importance of the new year in the Milesian calendar, see now A. Herda, *Der Apollon-Delphinios-Kult in Milet und die Neujahrsprozession nach Didyma: Ein neuer Kommentar der sog. Molpoi-Satzung* (Milesische Forschungen 4, Mainz, 2006); note too *LSA* 33.36. Paus. 6.20.1 speaks of a sacrifice at Elis tied to the spring equinox: that is unusual.

90. See Versnel, *Transition and Reversal*, 119 n. 101.

91. Philostr. *Heroic.* 53.5–7 (p. 67 de Lannoy).

92. On all this, see Parker, *Polytheism*, 210–11.

93. Diod. Sic. 5.4.6–7.

The men of Magnesia on the Maeander resolved in 197/6 BC to "show" a beautiful bull to Zeus Sosipolis "at the beginning of the sowing in the month Kronion at the new moon," which bull was then to be fed on charitably donated fodder ("May it go better for those who donate") until sacrificed, we assume at or near harvest time, on Artemision the twelfth; prayers were to be made for all the inhabitants of the land, for the recently concluded peace, "and for wealth and yield of corn and all other crops and the livestock."<sup>94</sup> At the Attic Thesmophoria, a kind of symbolic compost of the rotten remains of earlier offerings was brought up and placed on altars, and "they think that anyone who takes some of this and mixes it in when sowing will have good crops." (In such cases we come closer than usual to explicit statements about the purpose of festivals, or parts of them.) *Thalysia* were explicitly described, admittedly by a late source, as "first offerings, that is, those given to the god after the collection of the crops to ensure that the fields flourish in future too. Some orators call them 'bringing together' offerings."<sup>95</sup>

Festivals might signal a relation to the agricultural year in their name, as with the Attic "Pre-Plowing" (Proerosia) or the Laconian "Pre-Collection" (Prologia).<sup>96</sup> As for the symbolic deployment of seasonal produce, as by the Spartan "Grape-Bunch Runners" (Staphylodromoi) or the Athenian "Vine-Branch Bearers" (Oschophoroi), instances are too numerous to catalog; the special food eaten at festivals too, which might give the event its name (e.g., Thargelia), was often seasonal and reinforced the connection with the farmer's calendar. An older tradition of scholarship supposed, in the wake of Mannhardt and Frazer, that, once such seasonal relations had been established, all that was necessary had been said about the festival in question. It was one of the great achievements of the heortology of the last forty years of the twentieth century to break with that reductive paradigm. But evidently some awareness of a relation to the agricultural cycle must have been part of the experience of participants.<sup>97</sup> The question—and the answer may have

94. Syll.<sup>3</sup> 589 (LSAM 32); Artemision unfortunately lacks a precise location (cf. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 25–26; C. Trümper, *Untersuchungen zu den altgriechischen Monatsnamen und Monatsfolgen* [Heidelberg, 1997], 110–11).

95. Eustath. ad Il. 9.534 p. 791 van der Valk: Θαλύσια δὲ αἱ ἀπαρχαὶ ἦγον αἱ μετὰ συλλογὴν τῶν καρπῶν διδόμεναι θεῷ ὑπὲρ τοῦ καὶ εἰς ἔπειτα θάλλειν τὰς ἀρούρας. Τινὲς δὲ τῶν ῥητόρων καὶ συγκομιστήρια ταῦτα καλοῦσιν. Cf. *Etym. Magn.* 442.13–15 Θαλύσια: Τὰς ὑπὲρ εὐθαλίας καὶ εὐφορίας τῶν καρπῶν διδομένας θυσίας μετὰ τὴν συγκομιδὴν τῶν καρπῶν τοῖς τε ἄλλοις θεοῖς καὶ τῇ Δημήτρῃ. Compost at the Thesmophoria: Σ Lucian p. 276.3–8 Rabe.

96. Proerosia: Parker, *Polytheism*, 429. Prologia: Hesych. π 3565 προλόγια: θυσία πρὸ τῶν καρπῶν τελουμένη, ὑπὸ Λακωνῶν.

97. Versnel's treatment of the Thesmophoria, *Transition and Reversal*, 235–60, is exemplary in its multifacetedness; see too now R. Chlup, *Kernos* 20 (2007): 69–96.

differed greatly from case to case—is of the extent to which that experience was reducible to anxious expectation of a forthcoming harvest or relaxed gratitude for a successful bringing in. Part of the symbolism of the Thesmophoria related, as we have seen, to abundant yields, but it was surely not in the fantasy of Aristophanes alone that the women at the Thesmophoria—the "women only" festival par excellence—had more on their minds than the well-being of the crops.

### The Past in the Present: Etiology

In analyzing the "plots" of festivals, ~~what is one to do with those provided by the ancients in the form of etiologies?~~ We have already equipped the Attic Anthesteria with two plots, in the sense of divine events imagined to occur during the festival: the advent of the god Dionysus, culminating in his union with an Athenian woman; and the return of the ancestors. But at least two particular rites of the Anthesteria had plots of their own: the strange unsocial drinking customs of the Choes commemorated protective measures taken when the polluted Orestes was in Athens, and the "all seed offerings" of the last day perpetuated those made from surviving rations by survivors of Deucalion's flood. The rites of the first day too probably commemorated the first arrival of Dionysus in Attica in the time of King Amphictyon.<sup>98</sup> The last example is easy, since the ancient aition is merely a narrative version of the idea of advent that provides a main plot of the festival; when gods are involved in aitia, such coincidence is not rare. But the other two have nothing to do with any divine plot of the festival, nor directly with the gods at all. How much they mattered to participants is uncertain, but it would clearly be rash, in trying to understand the experience of festivals, to set them aside altogether. They introduce a different level of plot, one relating not to the god's involvement in the festival but to human activities during it.

No one in modern time has attempted to classify or even collect festival aitia en masse,<sup>99</sup> and this abstention is probably well judged; they are too diverse to allow sorting into a set of plots. But since they regularly present a festival or a part of one as an "imitation" or a "commemoration" of a past event (or simply performed "because of" it), they underline the element of

98. See Parker, *Polytheism*, 380.

99. But for remarks on etiology, see Kowalzig, *Singing*, 24–32; the best single source is Plutarch's *Theseus* (cf. C. Calame, *Thésée et l'imaginaire athénien* [Lausanne, 1990]).

acting or make-believe or distance from normality in festival activities. The participants in festivals oscillate between being themselves and acting a role. The element of acting, as in the case of the boy who supposedly represented Apollo at the Delphic Septerion, could be very considerable. A festival may be perceived as "imitation" of a specific event or, more generally, of a different manner of life: for one observer a Sicilian festival of Demeter was "imitation of the ancient way of life," for another the Spartan Karneia "an imitation of the military life."<sup>100</sup> There is, it seems, such a thing as a lifestyle festival. At the Attic Kronia, slaves and masters dined together: the social relations of the "time of Kronos," when there was no distinction between slave and free, were therefore briefly restored.<sup>101</sup>

Related to the question of acting a role is that of the time frame of festivals. In the Orthodox Church, the faithful announce to one another on Easter Day that "Christ is risen," which evokes the response "He is risen indeed." The past event of Christ's death and resurrection is treated as recurring at the festival each year: it is not so much that the festival acts as a time capsule to translate the faithful backward, as that it suspends temporal order altogether. Such a playing of tricks with time is a characteristic festival mechanism in many cultures. Not all Greek festival plots create such a suspension of time, but some do.<sup>102</sup> The ancestors can "come up," the gods can visit a city, in the present; but a lament for Achilles or a search for Kore is, we presume, a reenactment of a mythical event that pretends that it is not a reenactment but something actually happening in the present. The young people who sailed from Athens to Delos each year in a penteconter were described by an archaic term, ἡθῆοι ("unwed young people"), that identified them with the ἡθῆοι who sailed with Theseus, in a penteconter, as tribute to the Minotaur.<sup>103</sup> A covariant with these oscillations in time is, as already suggested, the extent to which participants in festivals stayed themselves or assumed a role. But we should not suppose that the distinction was one that they were very strongly aware of. The ease of slippage is part of the special character of festivals.

100. Diod. Sic. 5.4.7; Demetrius of Scepsis ap. Ath. 4, 141E-F.

101. See Versnel, "Kronos and the Kronia," in his *Transition and Reversal*, 89-135. R. Hunter and T. Führer write in *Callimaque (Entretiens Hardt 48, Vandoeuvres, 2002)*, 154, that "the emphasis on performative re-enactment of an event in the immemorial past is typical of the Hellenistic historical sense": just Hellenistic?

102. Cf. Rutherford, *Paeans*, 412; Kowalzig, *Singing*, index s.v. "aetiology, mythical past and ritual present interacting in."

103. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 56.3; cf., e.g., Plut. *Thes.* 23.1.

## The City Celebrates Itself, and Its Young

I have discussed festival plots relating to the arrivals and disappearances of gods and the like, and the different kind of shaping given by a clear connection with the agricultural cycle. But by no means all festivals are obviously plotted in either of these ways, except in the weak sense that every festival ideally entailed some presence of the god. Though some have supposed that the Athenian Panathenaea, for instance, was a celebration of Athena's birthday, the connection is far from established. The victory of the gods over the giants was woven on the Panathenaic robe, probably with special emphasis on Athena's slaying of Enceladus (or Asterius), prototype of victories to be achieved by her citizens, but the festival was not a reenactment of the victory.<sup>104</sup> The Greater Panathenaea is a superbly elaborated form of something quite simple, the presentation to a god of gifts, in this case a new robe and sacrificial animals. The elaboration lies in the splendor of the gifts and the involvement, ideally, of the whole city in the procession that delivers them; the accompanying games are an added honor paid to the goddess.

A characteristic of Hellenistic religion, it has been argued, is the festival at which, under the guise of paying honor to the gods, the city celebrates itself: such festivals where all come together and participate and display themselves to one another are the supreme moments of self-awareness and, ideally, of pride and harmony as a group.<sup>105</sup> That festivals could function in this way is an observation of fundamental importance, but the Panathenaea shows that the phenomenon is not one confined to the Hellenistic period. And it is crucial to realize that "honoring the god" and "celebrating the community" were never perceived as goals in rivalry or tension: to make a procession "fair" or "splendid" was a constantly expressed aspiration, but a splendid performance that did the polis credit was an expression of piety, not a derogation from it. Another such festival was that at Eretria in honor of Artemis

104. See Parker, *Polytheism*, 256 (birthday); *ibid.*, 255 for the etiological association with the killing of the giant Asterius. Decoration of the peplos: Eur. *Hec.* 466-74, *IT* 222-24.

105. Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" Chaniotis is well aware of the classical precedents, but argues nonetheless (162) for a decisive shift of emphasis. I agree that there probably was some shift, but the great preponderance of evidence both literary and epigraphic for festivals after 400 (and the inevitable bias of epigraphic evidence toward showy festivals requiring organization: P. Gauthier, *BÉ* [1996] no. 135) make a comparison difficult; many traits identified by Chaniotis are already strongly present in the pre-Hellenistic fourth century. See now A. S. Chankowski, "Processions et cérémonies d'accueil: Une image de la cité de la basse époque hellénistique," in *Citoyenneté et participation à la basse époque hellénistique*, ed. P. Fröhlich and C. Müller, 185-206 (Geneva, 2005), who argues that what was new was the increased need felt by cities to emphasize their festivals of civic unity and order by elaborate epigraphic publication. "Das große Fest der Stadtgottheit, in welcher die Polis sich eigentlich selber verehrte": Burckhardt, *Kulturgeschichte*, 421.

Amarysia: an inscription of uncertain date mentioned by Strabo prescribed that three thousand hoplites, six thousand cavalry and sixty chariots were to process in honor of the goddess; an extant inscription of c. 340 adds a musical competition with the stated aim that "we may conduct the Artemisia as finely as possible and as many persons as possible may sacrifice."<sup>106</sup> The procession attested by Strabo is a military one and finds parallels both in Sparta and in generalizations by the fourth-century author of *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*.<sup>107</sup> Whether non-combatants also had an unattested role at these festivals or, in the archaic way, the fighting men were seen as in effect constituting the city by themselves, these too were occasions of civic self-display; so too very probably was the famous long procession from Argos to the Argive Heraion in which Cleobis and Biton pulled their mother's oxcart in lieu of the absent oxen, and expired on completion of the pious task.<sup>108</sup> There will have been many further cases.

A special form of self-celebration by the city at festivals is that involving young people. The instances are numerous and very varied. All the maidens of Argos have been summoned to dance at a sacrifice of Hera, according to a situation imagined in Euripides' *Electra* (171–74). A team of unmarried young men (fifteen) organized the Spartan Karneia, and supplied the important "grape-runners."<sup>109</sup> Maidens compete in racing for Hera at Olympia; at Athens, the many torch races are the special preserve of the ephebes.<sup>110</sup> At the festival of Apollo in Sicyon, seven youths and seven maidens go down to the river Suthas and fetch back the images of Apollo and Artemis (who in myth have taken fright and fled thither).<sup>111</sup> At the festival of Dionysus Aisymnetes in Patrai, "a certain number of children of the region go down to the river Melichos garlanded on their heads with ears of corn. This is how of old they adorned those they led out to sacrifice to Artemis [according to an etiological myth Pausanias has just told]. In our time they deposit the garlands of corn ears with the goddess, and after washing in the river and putting on crowns

106. Strabo 10.1.10, 448, with D. Knoepfler in *The Polis as an Urban Centre and as a Political Community*, ed. M. H. Hansen (Copenhagen, 1997), 392; RO no. 73. "Fair" or "splendid" performance: Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" 158–59.

107. Polyb. 4.35.2, a procession under arms of all men of military age to the temple of Athena Chalkioikos; Arist. [*Rh. Al.*] 1423a 2–5; 1424a 4–5: military utility is one of the factors to be adduced by an orator in discussing the scale of processions.

108. Hdt. 1.31, cf. Σ Pind. *Ol.* 7. 152d ("great procession"); Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 42–45.

109. Hesych. κ 838 Καρνεῖται and σ 1673 Σταφυλοδρόμοι.

110. Paus. 5.16.2–3; torch races: Xen. *Poroi* 4.52, Σ Patm. on Dem. 57.43 (BCH 1 [1877]: 11); cf. N. Sekunda, *ZPE* 83 (1990): 149–58.

111. Paus. 2.7.8

of ivy, they go to the shrine of Aisymnetes."<sup>112</sup> At a festival of Artemis on Samos, choruses of maidens and youths carried sesame-and-honey cakes, which other youngsters apparently sought to snatch from them.<sup>113</sup> In the fourth century, Spartan ephebes were likewise required to steal cheeses from the altar of Artemis Orthia, at the risk of a whipping if caught. Thence grew, apparently, the deadly "competition in endurance" below whips of the Roman period.<sup>114</sup> This is only a modest selection of the ritual roles assigned to young people of both sexes. As for choruses, particularly of girls, they are ubiquitous. The evidence on these topics can fill, indeed has filled, large books.<sup>115</sup>

The concept of initiation has often been introduced in this context, and it is certainly possible that festivals could have marked important stages in the process of culturally "growing" children into adulthood.<sup>116</sup> But clear cases are rather uncommon. One, in a sense, is the Ionian festival of Apatouria, which at Athens at least was the context in which male children were introduced to their fathers' phratries and thus made eligible for citizenship. The festival, however, was not an occasion for display by the new citizens-to-be; for them it was a registration more than a performance. Another is the Ekdysia, "taking off," known from Phaistos in Crete. There was a Cretan age-class of ἐκδυόμενοι, "takers off," and it looks as if the festival celebrated the moment at which they removed adolescent garb (or an assumed female garb) for the last time; the aition for the festival spoke drastically of a girl who actually changed into a boy Leucippus at this stage in her life.<sup>117</sup> Here then is a festival that took its name from a rite of passage; and we may assume that a young Phaistan who missed the Ekdysia failed to become a man. The festival Periblemata, "Putting On," of another Cretan city, Lyttos, may reflect the same transition viewed from the other side.

These rigorous criteria, however,—that the festival be built around a rite of passage undergone by all the members of an age-class—appear not to be

112. Paus. 7.20.1–2.

113. Hdt. 3.48.3; cf. Ducat, *Spartan Education*, 256–59.

114. Xen. *Lac.* 2.9; cf. Ducat, *Spartan Education*, 249–60.

115. H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et courètes* (Lille, 1939); A. Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi* (Rome, 1969); C. Calame, *Les choeurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque* (Rome, 1977).

116. See of late D. B. Dodd and C. A. Faraone, eds., *Initiation in Ancient Greek Narratives and Rituals* (London, 2003).

117. Nicander ap. Ant. Lib. *Met.* 17: for references on the Cretan festivals, see an admirable study by D. D. Leitaos, "The Perils of Leukippos," *ClAnt* 14 (1995): 130–63, at 130–36; he compares the Argive Endymatia ([Plut.] *De mus.* 9, 1134C). In other Cretan cities the youths "graduate" at "Gods' Feast," Theodaisia, so at a more comprehensive polis festival (ibid., 136). Apatouria: Parker, *Polytheism*, 458–61.

met in any other case. The Attic Brauronia (and perhaps the ill-known Mounichia) come close, because they probably brought to a festive end the period of seclusion undergone by the little girls who served Artemis as "bears." At an ideal level, perhaps, all Athenian girls went through bearhood; but in reality probably only a modest proportion did. About many other festivals, such as the Attic Oschophoria or the Theban Daphnephoria or the Delphic Septerion, we can say with some confidence that the main ritual roles went to young people.<sup>118</sup> But not all young people underwent them, and not as a required transition. The main actors at the Oschophoria were, it is true, two youths dressed as maidens, and the detail seems to cry aloud that this rite, like the Ekdysia, had something to do with the growth of "boys with the look of a girl" into true men. But the most that can be said of such rites is that they dramatize crucial experiences of adolescence in the person of select individuals; the ages involved too are very various. They are not initiations; for, as has been well said, "I cannot be initiated for someone else any more than another can take a bath for me."<sup>119</sup>

Often the young were just one group of persons among many active at a festival. The description of the Spartan Hyacinthia quoted above stresses the prominent role of "boys in high-belted tunics" and "numerous choruses of young men." But from a different source we happen to hear of an occasion when King Agesilaus, a mature man, "took the place where the chorus leader put him" to sing the paeon at the festival. Another great Spartan festival, the Gymnopaïdai, was similarly comprehensive. A festival mentioned above that the Magnesians established for Zeus Sosipolis in 197/6 BC is revealing.<sup>120</sup> They resolved that the prayers accompanying the "showing" of the bull should be uttered not just by a variety of sacred and civil officials, but also by nine boys with both parents living and nine girls with both parents living. The festival is being created before our eyes; this is no initiatory survival, even if groups of nine youths and maidens may well have had roles before this in Magnesian cult. The flourishing children are indispensable because they stand for hope, for the future of the city.

According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, young men were given a prominent role in a great Roman procession derived (he believes) from a Greek original "in order that visitors might see how fine in numbers and beauty the

118. Oschophoria: see Parker, *Polytheism*, 211–17; bears: *ibid.*, 232–48 (and general remarks on initiation, 209–10, 227–28). Daphnephoria: n. 168 below. Septerion: p. 192 above.

119. Redfield, *Locrian Maidens*, 91.

120. See above, n. 94. Spartan festivals: Ducat, *Spartan Education*, 262–74; Agesilaus: Xen. *Ages.* 2.17.

flower of the city growing to manhood was." When the city celebrates itself, it displays what it judges most valuable. Hoplites, chariots and cavalry matter, as do gold processional vessels; no less important are children. Their importance is far from decreasing with time, as the initiatory hypothesis might cause one to predict. It was in the Hellenistic period that the participation of the ephebes became an indispensable part of almost every Athenian festival; and pressure is applied on the young to participate in the festivals of other Hellenistic cities.<sup>121</sup> Such participation is a crucial part of their integration into the life and traditions of the city; but these are festivals, and traditions, that they share with other citizens, not exclusive to themselves.

### Festivals Disorderly and Rude

An elaborate sacrificial procession was typically at the center of a festival of self-celebration. The importance of the sacrificial animals could be emphasized, as we saw in the chapter on sacrifice, by elaborate ritualization of the process of selection, by special arrangements for feeding of the chosen beasts, and by the attention directed toward them during the procession. Two festivals of Zeus in Caria had recurrent goat-miracles attached to them: at one the animal would detach itself from the herd and go spontaneously to the altar; at the other it would march steadily ahead of the priest through the pious crowds a distance of seventy stades to the sanctuary.<sup>122</sup> Such elaborations underlined the splendor of the sacrificial gift, or its acceptability to the deity, in an unproblematic way. But the effect must have been very different on those rare occasions when abnormal modes of sacrifice were adopted. Pausanias offers a detailed description of the annual festival Chthonia in the celebrated cult of Demeter Chthonia in Hermione. A succession of frisky cows were brought, roped and resisting, to the temple; they were then released to go inside spontaneously, where they were killed behind closed doors by four old women, cutting their throats from below with sickles;<sup>123</sup>

121. Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" 161. Dionysius: 7.72.1.

122. Apollonios *Mir.* c. 13 p. 107 Westermann; [Arist.] *Mir. ausc.* 137. Strabo reports another festival animal miracle from Caria, 14.1.44, 650: ephebes bring a bull to the Charonion cave; it advances a little, then falls lifeless.

123. Paus. 2.35.6–7. Aelian *NA* 11.4 and the poet Aristokles, whom he quotes, speak of "full-grown cows" (Aelian)/a bull (Aristokles) being led to the altar by a single priestess (Aelian)/old woman (Aristokles); they say nothing of the mode of sacrifice, laying all emphasis on the miraculous power of the woman over the animal. On the cult, see F. Ferrari and L. Prauscello, *ZPE* 162 (2007): 197–98 [+].

Pausanias reports as a "second marvel" that all the victims fell in death on the same side.

In terms of Greek sacrificial norms, everything here, except the brief hint of the well-omened "self-offering victim," is bizarre: killing indoors (no mention of an altar) by old women with a sickle.<sup>124</sup> One norm still observed at Hermione was that of the designated sacrificer. Even this was breached in wild events such as the Laphria (discussed in chap. 5), ruled by a horrible ethos of "everybody must kill." Very occasionally, the act of sacrifice was treated as a polluting killing. At Athens at the Bouphonia a trial was held to establish responsibility for the sacrifice of a plowing ox; on Lindos the sacrifice of a pair of plowing oxen was accompanied by curses against the sacrificer.<sup>125</sup> Why on these few occasions the normal protocols of sacrifice were so outrageously reversed, or sacrifice itself was treated as problematic, is very hard to discern. The cult at Hermione had a mystic tinge apparently relating both to agriculture and the underworld: women (in Greek ritual logic) and sickles perhaps evoke agriculture,<sup>126</sup> while the strange killing behind closed doors certainly has the strangeness of mystic experience even if it is not formally an unrevealable mystery. The Attic and Lindian rites dramatized not sacrificial killing *tout court* but the very special emotions evoked by the killing of a particular animal, the plowing ox: a killing that the rites nonetheless ended by justifying, in their own way. But beyond these vague generalities we cannot guess what sense the participants made of the particularities of the rites.

With a different set of divergences from the standard template we can do a little better. At festivals of self-celebration such as the Panathenaea, everything is decorous, ordered, hierarchical. But in other festival contexts very different forms of behavior were permitted or even *de rigueur*. The paradox, well known to the Greeks themselves,<sup>127</sup> is not simply that the normal religious requirement of "fair speech" was so drastically violated at certain festivals, but also that festivals were the privileged context for such violation. They were the natural home for gross obscenity. Attempting to ban "foul speech" and obscene images from the well-ordered society, Aristotle is obliged to make an exception, in the case of images, for "certain gods to whom custom also assigns ritual abuse (*τῶθασμός*)," though even these gods

124. M. Detienne, in *Cuisine of Sacrifice*, 140–42 (203–6 in the Fr. ed.).

125. Laphria: see p. 167. Bouphonia: see p. 129. Lindos: Callim. *Aet.* frs. 22–23 Pfeiffer, with Pfeiffer's notes.

126. Pirenne-Delforge, *Pausanias*, 204.

127. Heraclitus fr. 15 DK; cf. Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 201–2. I rely heavily on Halliwell's thorough and acute discussion, *ibid.*, 155–206.

are to be worshipped by none but mature males "on behalf of themselves, their children, and wives." He goes on to exclude boys below the age of participation in symposia from watching comedy and iamboi, thus implying a continuity between "ritual abuse" and these literary or protoliterary genres.<sup>128</sup> Where the lines are to be drawn between abuse and obscenity, where between rude words and rude gestures, where between these and carrying phalluses in procession, eating vagina-shaped cakes, and the like, is seldom clear; the various modalities of rudeness often flow into one another.

The phenomena Aristotle has in mind no doubt extend from the "jests from the carts" hurled by young men at Dionysiac festivals and the joshing (*τῶθασμός*) of old by young before the Eleusinian Mysteries to phallic processions accompanied by song and abuse of spectators.<sup>129</sup> The "abusers" involved are therefore predominantly and perhaps exclusively young men. But the uttering of obscenities, and handling of lewd objects, by women on their own at festivals of Demeter (Thesmophoria and Stenia) is also well attested;<sup>130</sup> at a festival of Apollo (unexpectedly) on Anaphe and of Demeter Mysia near Pellene in Achaia we find reciprocal mockery between the sexes; and Herodotus speaks in a revealingly taken-for-granted way of formally orchestrated "abusive female choruses" in the cult of Damia and Auxesia on Aegina that "spoke ill of no man, but of the women of the country."<sup>131</sup> That "presentation by negation" of Herodotus may imply that one would have expected the women to abuse men, as at Anaphe and Pellene, not other women. Ritual abuse can often be seen (but with the Aeginetan case as an unexplained exception) as a playing out of the tensions between young men and their seniors, and between the sexes. During the seven-day festival of Demeter Mysia at Pellene, the day on which men and women abused each other was preceded by one on which all male creatures, even dogs, were excluded from the shrine.<sup>132</sup> Gender opposition was evidently a dominant theme.

It was a dominant theme also at the festival Hybristika in Argos (honorand uncertain, perhaps Ares), celebrated at the new moon of the month Hermaios, at which, we are told, "they dress women in male tunics and cloaks, and men in women's dresses and veils." The festival's name, "Outrageous

128. *Pol.* 1336b 2–23.

129. Phot. (and Suda) s.v. τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀμαξῶν; Ar. *Vesp.* 1361–63; Semos of Delos in Ath. 14, 622A–D (items F6b, F1b, and F6c in Halliwell's catalog, *Greek Laughter*, 161–91).

130. Various sources: Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 174–77, F3 and F4.

131. Anaphe: Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4. 1719–30, Callim. *Aet.* fr. 21, etc. (Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 184 F 8); Pellene: Paus. 7.27.9–10 (Halliwell, 177 F5); Aegina: Hdt. 5.83.3: same rites in the same cult at Epidaurus, Herodotus notes, and adds that they (the Aeginetans? both?) also had secret rites.

132. Paus. 7.27.9–10.

Acts," suggests that, in this context where symmetrical cross-dressing so stressed, if paradoxically, the idea of sexual difference, rude words and perhaps rude deeds too may have been exchanged between the two groups.<sup>133</sup> The rite was explained etiologically by the supposed exploit of the women of Argos, led by the poetess Telesilla, in beating off a Spartan army from the city's walls when the male defenders had failed. In a wild spirit, one could guess that the Hybristika was a military festival at which women goaded men to valor by shame and insults: "Are you planning to go back in there?" said the Spartan woman, pointing to her vagina, to her cowardly sons. But it is not easy to envisage how such a festival could have arisen or been tolerated. Plutarch does, however, claim that, at certain unspecified festivals in Sparta, choruses of young women mocked young men in public for their inadequacies.<sup>134</sup> This is the negative side, only occasionally apparent, of the festival as society's showcase: the festival as a place of shaming, of social control.

To revert to a festival of assured obscenity: at the Thesmophoria, women were rude with no men present. But it is an attractive suggestion that even here the women will have directed much of their rudeness against the male outsider; that the mock phalluses and female genitalia so much manipulated encouraged a mood of uninhibited jesting about the absurdities of husbands and of sexuality; that shared indulgence in uninhibited dirty talk was a vehicle of bonding between citizen wives at festivals the "women-only" character of which was so strongly emphasized.<sup>135</sup> That explanation is not necessarily incompatible with the practice's mythic origin, whereby grieving, fasting Demeter was brought to laugh by Iambe's no doubt lewd jests or even by Baubo's indecent self-display.<sup>136</sup> Bringing the obsessively interesting but largely tabooed and highly embarrassing topic of sexuality into the open

133. Socrates of Argos *FGH* 310 F 6 ap. Plut. *De mul. vir.* 4, 245C-E; cf. Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, 154-60 [+]. [Lucian] *Erotes* 30, stating that the incident caused Ares to be accounted a women's goddess in Argos, may give the honorand. The rudeness of the festival is not assured: Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 161 n. 14. But note that a similar myth of female valor explained the statue of "Ares Gynaikothoinas" ("feaster of women" or "feasted by women") in the agora of Tegea, and that in that myth the women were led by "Marpessa known as Chora" (Paus. 8.48.4-5), whose nickname irresistibly suggests *choiros*, the standard slang term for vagina (cf. "Perimeda known as Chora" in a related legend, Deinias of Argos *FGH* 306 F 4; M. Moggi, "Marpessa detta Chora e Ares Gynaikothoinas," in *Ancient Arcadia*, ed. E. Østby, 139-50 [Athens, 2005]).

134. Plut. *Lyc.* 14.4-6. "Get back in there": Plut. *Apophthegmata Laconica* 241B; cf. Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 165 n. 26. Clearchus of Soli fr. 73 Wehrli ap. Ath. 13, 555C-D, claims that at an unspecified Spartan festival bachelors were dragged around an altar by women and whipped. On shaming practices in Greece, cf. Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 179 n. 83.

135. Winkler, "Laughter of the Oppressed"; A. C. Brumfield, *The Attic Festivals of Demeter and Their Relation to the Agricultural Year* (Salem, NH, 1981), 122-26.

136. E.g., *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 198-205, "Orph." fr. 395 Bernabé; Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 160-66, with 204 on Iambe and Baubo as "life-affirming."

generates laughter, relieves tension, reaffirms life amid mourning. Even the discredited old theory that obscenity has to do with "fertility" (but fertility of what or whom?) can be reclaimed in some measure. The third day of the Thesmophoria was Kalligeneia, Fair Birth. Women at the Thesmophoria thought about procreation and so inevitably about sex. So in this context where sex was a serious matter it was also a sportive one; innuendo and ribaldry are guests at weddings, ancient and modern, for the same reason.<sup>137</sup>

Sexuality was fundamental to some aspects of Dionysiac cult too, though with the emphasis on potency or virility more than on procreation. The ever-lusty satyrs who accompany Dionysus prove that all the phalluses of Dionysiac cult do indeed have something to do with sexual desire and performance.<sup>138</sup> (I merely note the problem that rites of Aphrodite seem to be free from smut, though they might involve actual sexual indulgence.)

There existed also a whole world of dirty dancing—or rather of dancing judged by some observers, not necessarily native to the poleis in question, to be dirty. But it is a largely lost world: we glimpse it through sparse and often corrupt notices in lexicographers, and through the iconography of the two thousand or so vases and other artifacts (the largest group is Corinthian) that depict "padded dancers" or komasts.<sup>139</sup> These last are as vivid as one could wish and of manifest lewdness in some cases, but take for granted in the viewer a knowledge of the context of which we are deprived. It is debated whether the padded dancers are human or semidivine, or perhaps human imitating semidivine (like men dressed as satyrs); and, if they are human, whether they are performing in a private context or at a festival; and, if at a festival, of which god, and at what point on the spectrum from "ritual dance" to "protodramatic performance." A small number of instances that juxtapose padded dancers with ordinary, decorous male or female choruses may point to a festival context, and an intriguingly mixed one.<sup>140</sup> Some

137. Cf. P. Leigh Fermor, *Roumeli: Travels in Northern Greece* (London, 1966), 25: "The Sarakatsánissas, usually so silent in the presence of men, look forward to weddings as their only chances of fun. The talk, as though preordained, takes on a bawdy turn of hair-raising frankness. None of the exciting, comic or absurd aspects of sex are left unexplored. . . . All this goes on beyond male earshot, while, at a distance, their husbands and fathers and descendants smile indulgently at the seasonable ribaldry." On ribaldry at Greek weddings, Halliwell, *Greek Laughter*, 198 n. 125; updating of the fertility paradigm, *ibid.*, 196-99.

138. Cf. above all E. Csapo, "Riding the Phallus for Dionysus," *Phoenix* 51 (1997): 253-95.

139. See above all the general introduction and the essays in part 1, "Komasts and Predramatic Ritual," in E. Csapo and M. C. Miller, eds., *The Origins of Theatre in Ancient Greece and Beyond* (Cambridge, 2007).

140. See especially Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung Inv. 4856 (Csapo and Miller, *Origins of Theatre*, figs. 8-9, in n. 139 above), with the comments of Csapo and Miller, *Origins of Theatre*, 17.

connection with protocomedies and thus with the cult of Dionysus is very plausible, but the details refuse to come clear.

Of the dirty dances found in texts, least ill-known is the *kordax*, occasionally mentioned as a lewd dance by Aristophanes but also embedded in the cult of Artemis Kordaka in Elis; who danced it there, however, we do not know. We also hear, for instance, of a dance called *kallibas* or *kal(l)abis*, again associated with Artemis and involving an "indecorous" drawing apart of the thighs; of Brullichistai who wore "comically ugly female masks" and female clothes; of "Lombai: the women who initiate sacrifices to Artemis, so called from the equipment used in sport: for it (*lombai*) is a name for phalluses."<sup>141</sup> But what is one to do with dances of varying degrees of lewdness performed by dancers whose sex and age are often uncertain and whose social status is so always, in honor of often indeterminable gods at an unspecified point in usually unidentified festivals?

"Fertility" was the catchall explanation of the past (with startling implications, not rejected, for the nature of Artemis in whose Peloponnesian cult such practices seem to have been particularly common). Today we might be more inclined to think of conscious violation of decorous norms and the various implications such violation might have. In some contexts bawdy perhaps stands simply for festival relaxation, for a certain kind of holiday, like the lewd seaside postcard.<sup>142</sup> But there must be many other possibilities. We are told that the Spartiates used to humiliate their helots by forcing them to perform shameful dances when drunk. According to an elegant theory, young Spartiates at a certain stage in their training were required to perform similar dances, as an acknowledgment that they were not yet full equals, but also as a kind of inoculation against sharing the lumpish pleasures of their inferiors.<sup>143</sup> The theory is indemonstrable, but points up the possibility that social differentiation might be an issue in such a case. That approach lays stress on the comic/shameful side of such dances. But in lascivious dances can there not be also something, well, lascivious? To judge that possibility we

141. Artemis Kordaka: Paus. 6.22.1. *Kallibas*: Eupolis fr. 176 K/A with notes ad loc.; Brullichistai: Hesych. β 1245 and a chaos of other lexicographical notices (Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 186). Lombai: Hesych. λ 257. Cf. in general *ThesCRA* 2:325–27. W. R. Halliday, *BSA* 16 (1909–10): 218–19, detects symmetrical cross-dressing beneath these notices.

142. Leigh Fermor, *Roumeli*, in n. 137, 42–43, describes the carnival mumming, some of it transvestite and obscene, performed by the Sarakatsani of northern Greece, a people in daily life observing ferocious standards of decorum. "These goings on are said to drive away drought and guarantee an abundance of leaves and grass for the flock," he comments: he clearly detects a gap between the stated purpose and actual ethos of the "goings on."

143. Plut. *Lyc.* 28.8–9; J. P. Vernant, *L'individu, la mort, l'amour* (Paris, 1989), 181–90 (English in his *Mortals and Immortals*, 225–31).

would need to be able to observe the dances themselves and the reactions of spectators to them. (And what spectators? What dances by girls did men watch?) The deficiencies in our evidence cannot be overcome. The best that can be done is to emphasize how much is here missing in our picture of the festival world.

## Social Reversal

Norms not of decorum but of social hierarchy were breached at other festivals. Athenaeus has two pages on festivals at which servants waited on masters; his aim, and perhaps that of his sources, is to show that there existed a Greek equivalent to the much more famous Roman Saturnalia.<sup>144</sup> He cites instances from Crete (the Hermaia), Troizen (an unnamed festival, perhaps, to judge from the month-name, a festival of Poseidon), and Thessaly (the Peloria, for Zeus Pelorios), as well as one from Babylon; less extreme was the Attic custom whereby at two festivals (Anthesteria, Kronia) masters dined or drank with slaves, a practice also found at the Spartan Hyacinthia.<sup>145</sup> Though the reversal is a different one, the Argive Hybristika (mentioned above), with symmetrical cross-dressing of the two sexes, perhaps belongs hereabouts too.<sup>146</sup> Explanations range from the commonsensical to the cosmic: at one pole, we are dealing with no more than the "authentic human need to loosen the reins from time to time," at the other with festivals of total renewal at which the order of the world is dissolved in order to be remade.<sup>147</sup>

The cosmic approach works best with the Thessalian Peloria; this was a major festival that supposedly had its origin in a feast that followed a crucial primeval event, the emergence of the Thessalian plain, without which the Thessaly known in historical times would not have existed. One can also note that the "white day for slaves" at the Attic Anthesteria was one of many reversals of normality occurring at that festival, and that the joint carousing of masters and slaves at the Kronia was doubtless seen as a reversion to the easy social relations of the time of Kronos. Both Kronia and Anthesteria occurred

144. 14, 639B–640A. A festival Eleutheria at Smyrna, at which maids and mistresses changed clothes, is known only, and doubtfully, from one of the invented authorities ("Dositheus" *Lydiaka*: FGrH 290 F 5) of [Plut.] *Parallela Minora* 30A, 312E–313A.

145. Parker, *Polytheism*, 202, 294; Hyacinthia: p. 189 above.

146. So W. R. Halliday, *BSA* 16 (1909–10), 212–19.

147. Commonsensical: e.g., Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 36, citing A. Lang; Halliday (in n. 146 above), 217 on "the sentiment of unity" at these festivals. Cosmic: see Versnel, *Transition and Reversal*, 119–21, on Eliade and Lanternari; Meuli's theory of "tied gods" (p. 184 above) is related.

at important incisions in the agricultural year (harvest and new wine), incisions that could easily be perceived as moments of transition or renewal. And one of the various aitia attached to practices of the Anthesteria related it to the aftermath of Deucalion's flood, a world-defining event.<sup>148</sup> But not just slaves but strangers too were entertained at the Thessalian Peloria, and we find the same pairing at the Spartan Hyacinthia (which has etiological associations of a different type); the emphasis placed by our sources in both cases is on "overflowing hospitality" more than on disruption of the normal social order. Like the Peloria and Hyacinthia, the Attic Anthesteria was perhaps the most popular festival of the community in question; at Hyacinthia and Anthesteria (as also at the nameless Troizenian festival) the feasting of slaves was just one element in a much more complex festival program. Certainly, no single template underlies these various festivals honoring various gods. The cosmic approach may over-mythologize, therefore, what was just a special application of the general ideal of festivals as a time of community. We noted earlier the Hellenistic festival truces that released slaves and schoolchildren from their tasks, and prisoners from their bonds.

One does not imagine that a master usually found the prospect of the Anthesteria very alarming. Did festivals ever reverse the established order in a genuinely disturbing way?<sup>149</sup> Maenadism in myth was as disruptive of masculine order as any behavior could possibly be, and it looks as if in some cases the maenads' disruptiveness could be reenacted and repressed within a festival.<sup>150</sup> But that was ritual, and it was priests who did the symbolic repressing; the doings of the historical maenads were viewed by the actual male civic authorities with complaisance. Dazzled by the largely mythical secessions of small numbers of women to the mountains in the cult of Dionysus, one should not forget the actual annual secession of potentially the entire married female population for three days at the Thesmophoria. This was the most drastic possible dissolution of the social order, and occurred in

148. Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F 347 (a) and (b); cf. Parker, *Polytheism*, 295–96. On the epoch-defining role of the flood in Meuli's thought, see, e.g., his *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1032–33; cf. G. A. Caduff, *Antike Sinflutsagen* (Göttingen, 1985). It might be pedantic to insist that the relation to primeval time is slightly different in Kronia (reversion to the "age of Kronos," before the present condition of the world) and Peloria and Anthesteria (immediate aftermath of the flood, i.e., emergence of the new world).

149. For an excellent discussion, and answer in the negative, see Versnel, *Transition and Reversal*, 115–21.

150. See below, p. 214. The *dendrophoroi* of Magnesia are a species of male bacchants (though serving Apollo Aulaites), men who in frenzy uprooted trees and ran with them amid precipices (Paus. 10.32.6, and much numismatic evidence: L. Robert, *Documents d'Asie Mineure* [Paris, 1987], 35–44, 237–39). But we know nothing of the social or festival context.

most Greek states. But it was expected and licensed and accepted without audible complaint.

The Thesmophoria aside, there are isolated cases. The fifteen-day austerities of the Aeginetan Poseidonia (dining at home without servants) were mentioned earlier, with some wonderment. We saw too that on Lemnos in the third century AD, if we trust Philostratus, all fires were quenched on the island for nine days in preparation for the arrival of new fire from Delos.<sup>151</sup> How often this happened unfortunately is obscured by textual corruption. Fireless life for nine days cannot have been very comfortable, and this may have been the context in which, according to a different source, "there is till now a certain day each year, on which the women [of Lemnos] keep away husbands and sons because of their [the women's] bad smell." No sex then as well as no hot meals, for one day at least. Myth and ritual stand, for once, in a significant relationship: in myth the Lemnian women murder their husbands, while the ritual too imposes an abnormal pattern of life for an extended period. This is an extreme case, however. New fire was ritually brought to Athens too, but without, to our knowledge, such a period of preparatory firelessness.<sup>152</sup> The isolated island, favored resort of the god of fire himself, nurtured rare traditions. Another rare tradition was that of "certain festivals at Kydonia [in Crete], at which free men do not enter the city, but the slaves control everything and have power to whip the free."<sup>153</sup> That case represents the *non plus ultra* of festivals of reversal, an extreme to which it is very surprising to learn that any Greek city went. Specific factors that might explain the rare case elude us, as usual.

### Awe and Terror?

The "competition in endurance" in the festival of Artemis Orthia, at which ephebes allowed themselves to be whipped to death, "proudly and cheerfully competing for victory," was a popular spectacle in Roman Sparta. But this nostalgic recreation of an imagined ancient machismo, partly geared to the tourist trade, is no safe guide to the festival culture of the classical city. A similar caution applies to the competition in the same city in which

151. Philostr. *Her.* 53.5–7 (p. 67 de Lannoy).

152. See W. Burkert's celebrated article, "Jason, Hypsipyle and New Fire on Lemnos: A Study in Myth and Ritual," *CQ* 20 (1970): 1–16 (= *Oxford Readings*, 227–49). Bad smell: Myrsilos of Methymna, *FGrH* 477 F 1a. New fire at Athens: Parker, *Polytheism*, 84 n. 17 (the association with the Thargelia, accepted by Parker, *Miasma*, 26 n. 37, is wrong).

153. Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F 29 ap. Ath. 6, 263F.

Roman visitors watched teams of ephebes "fighting with unbelievable passion with punches, kicks, scratching, even biting, readier to be killed than admit defeat."<sup>154</sup> Predominantly, we have seen, festivals were fun, for participants as well as for spectators. Were there exceptions? Mock battles and ritual chases are occasionally mentioned in our sources, usually too briefly for their mood to be at all clear.<sup>155</sup> One of the few specific rites that we know within the long program of the great Dorian festival of Karneia was the pursuit of a heavily garlanded figure (perhaps called the "Garland-Man," Stemmatias) by the young "Grape-Cluster Runners"; if he was caught, this counted as a good omen for the coming year. This chase of the lone individual by a pack could no doubt have been experienced, at the imaginative level, as something grim and terrifying.<sup>156</sup> But the Garland-Man invoked blessings on the city as he ran: this was not the hunting down of an enemy to the city, and it is possible to imagine the event as quite cheerful.

The clear exception is Plutarch's remarkable report that in Boeotian Orchomenos "every other year at the Agrionia they [the supposed descendants of the murderous daughters of Minyas] flee and are chased by the priest with a sword. Anyone he catches he may kill, and in our time Zoilos the priest killed one."<sup>157</sup> But the event turned out badly, Plutarch continues; Zoilos fell ill and died, and the Orchomenians, subjected to public suits and fines, removed the priesthood from Zoilos's family and made it open instead. Zoilos was out of order, it is clear: the ritual license to kill does not mean that one may kill in fact. (It is interesting both that prosecutions were brought, and that they were, in a mysterious way, directed against the Orchomenians rather than against the killer himself.) It is suggested that the pursuit must have been motivated by an act on the part of the women, a symbolic reenactment perhaps of the child slaying perpetrated by their ancestors. The ritual was supposed to present a drama of women hurtling out of control but recalled

154. Orthia: Plut. *Apophthegmata Laconica* 40, 239C-D; for the context, see P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta*, 2nd ed. (London, 2002), 205-11. Biting, etc.: Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 5.77; on the Platanistas competition referred to, see Paus. 3.14.8-10 and in brief Ducat, *Spartan Education*, 208. From Plato's allusion to "terrific endurance" at the Spartan Gymnopaideiai, as "they fight in (or against) the baking heat" (Pl. *Leg.* 633C), it has been concluded that Spartan festival culture already then set a premium on toughness; but Ducat, *Spartan Education*, 273-74, argues that the ordeal was an attendant circumstance, not design.

155. Battles: the Balletys at Eleusis (*Hymn. Hom. Dem.* 265-67, with N. J. Richardson's note ad loc.); the "stone throwing" at Troizen in the cult of Damia and Auxesia (Paus. 2.32.2). Chases: Hesych. δ 2036 with Suda χ 43 (Thesmophoria); Paus. 8.53.3 (the priestess of Artemis reenacts the mythical pursuit of Leimon by Artemis, which ended in death).

156. So Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 234-36, with the sources: most important is *Anecd. Bekk.* 1.305.25-30 s.v. σταφυλοδρόμοι.

157. Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 38, 299F On what follows, see Hughes, *Human Sacrifice*, 130-33 [+].

to order by a man with a sword; through zealotry or simple accident, the ritual drama became actuality. On either view, we must suppose that the play was acted with some intensity. At a biennial festival of Dionysus in Alea, "in accord with an oracle from Delphi women are whipped," Pausanias briefly and blandly records. A way of purifying them or rendering them fertile?<sup>158</sup> Or a further way of bringing them back to order?

Alongside the Orchomenian Agrionia we may set a rite at Halai Araphenides in Attica, as founded by Artemis in Euripides.<sup>159</sup> She instructs Orestes, just rescued from being sacrificed, to set up there the image he has stolen from the Taurian land, and goes on: "And establish this custom. When the people hold festival, as compensation for your sacrifice let someone hold a knife at a man's throat and cause blood to flow, as a token of piety and that the goddess may receive honor." This is the ritual drama that did not, to our knowledge, go wrong, where the knife did not slip. It is generally supposed that the rite had something to do with initiation and that the "man" was a young one and underwent mock sacrifice on behalf of his age-group (problematic though the concepts are of "representative initiation" and, in an Attic context, of male initiation itself). But no other source mentions the practice, and we are shooting largely in the dark. Comparable if less intense must have been the experience of participants in cults in which an original human sacrifice had supposedly been replaced by that of an animal or mitigated in some other way.<sup>160</sup> At a rite on Tenedos, the idea of substitution was very vividly dramatized. Aelian tells us that

they rear a pregnant cow for Dionysus the manslayer, and when it has given birth they treat it like a new mother. As for the newborn baby, they put buskins on it and sacrifice it. The individual who has struck it with the ax is pelted with stones by all present, and flees to the sea.<sup>161</sup>

This rite has often been aligned with others that supposedly illustrate guilt experienced about sacrifice. But, at the level of religious idea, it is not a

158. See the opinions cited in Jost, *Arcadie*, 434. The sole source is Paus. 8.23.1. On two late antique festivals involving bloodletting, see Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 416-17. "Whipping the gods under the earth," Paus. 8.15.3 (priest of Demeter Kydaria at Pheneos), is surely quite a different thing.

159. *IT* 1449-61; cf. Hughes, *Human Sacrifice*, 81 [+].

160. E.g., Paus. 7.19.8 with 20.1; 9.8.1-2.

161. Ael. *NA* 12.34: Τενέδιοι δὲ τῷ ἀνθρωπορραίστῃ Διονύσῳ τρέφουσι κούουσιν βοῦν, τεκοῦσαν δὲ ἄρα αὐτὴν οἷα δῆπου λεχῶ θεραπεύουσι. τὸ δὲ ἀρτιγενὲς βρέφος καταθύουσιν ὑποδήσαντες κοθόρνους, ὃ γε μὴν πατάξας αὐτὸ τῷ πελέκει λίθοις βάλλεται δημοσίᾳ, καὶ ἔσται ἐπὶ τὴν θάλατταν φεύγει.

sacrifice at all but an act of child killing: its place is with all the other evocations of child killing in Dionysiac myth. And a belief that human victims had once been sacrificed to Dionysus Omadios on the island (and on Chios) is duly attested.<sup>162</sup>

One may wonder also about those attending the festival of Zeus on Mount Lykaion, about which Plato reports the story that "he who tastes of the piece of human entrails that has been cut up along with others from other victims must necessarily become a wolf." Despite Arcadia's reputation for isolation, this was no obscure local rite, but an important athletic festival that attracted participants and spectators from much of Greece, the central focus indeed of Arcadian identity. Did the assembled Panhellenes subject themselves to this Arcadian version of Russian roulette? Or, if the sacrifice in question was shared only by a restricted group, an Arcadian *genos* perhaps, did the other Greeks nonetheless cheerfully attend a festival at which human sacrifice was believed to be practiced? Or was this conflation of Arcadian werewolf legends with the old myth of Lykaon, who served up his son to Zeus, just a story told by those who had never visited Mount Lykaion and never intended to?<sup>163</sup>

The sending out of pairs of scapegoats, *pharmakoi*, "cures/drugs," was not a story, though there were many stories relating to the practice; it must certainly be mentioned in any study of grim and sadistic elements in Greek festivals.<sup>164</sup> The sources claim that *pharmakoi* were originally dispatched ad hoc, in response to crises, but the practice also became embedded in festivals, the Ionian Thargelia in particular, and we have evidence for it only in its calendrical and not its ad hoc form. The Thargelia was a festival of Apollo that had some relation to the ripening corn, and scholars used to see the dispatch of scapegoats as an agricultural prophylactic measure: one purifies the city at a time when the crop is at an especially delicate stage, or perhaps the *pharmakoi* (who were whipped with plants on the genitals) were themselves corn spirits undergoing purification. These points may not be wholly invalid (for rituals can operate at many levels), but since the late twentieth century, studies have stressed that the practice is, above all, a form of scapegoating in

162. Euelpis of Carystus ap. Porph. *Abst.* 2.55.3. The details do not fit entirely: the god's epithet differs slightly, and Euelpis speaks of "tearing apart" (ἐθύνον... διασπῶντες), which is not reflected in Aelian's rite. But as reported, Euelpis's primary focus was on Chios, with Tenedos added en passant.

163. So roughly Hughes, *Human Sacrifice*, 96–107 [+], at 106 (on Pl. *Resp.* 565D). Arcadian identity: T. H. Nielsen in *Defining Ancient Arkadia*, ed. T. H. Nielsen and J. Roy (Copenhagen, 1999), 27–29.

164. See Burkert, *Structure and History*, chap. 3; J. N. Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals in Ancient Greece," *HSCP* 87 (1983): 299–320 = *Oxford Readings*, 271–93 [+].

the modern sense, of reinforcing group solidarity by victimizing weak individuals onto whom collective ills are loaded. The luckless persons chosen, of the lowest status, might be fed at public expense for a period in advance, and normally suffered no permanent harm (they seem to have been driven beyond the boundaries, not killed):<sup>165</sup> to this degree only was the cruelty of the practice mitigated. As usual, we observe events from a distance; a close-up view of the social dynamics of the institution escapes us. Nor do we know when if at all it fell into disuse.

### Festivals and Role Ascription

In a rough way, the discussion has had two parts: first the plots of festivals, occurrences at the imagined level such as the advent or disappearance of gods; then doings at the human level such as gift bringing to the gods, role reversals and ritual abuse, scapegoating and the rest. The two levels constantly intersect, since occurrences at the imagined level are regularly simulated through actions at the human level: the god arrives in the city when humans carry in his statue. The inventory of human actions has been far from covering all the festival activities known to us, which are in turn a tiny selection of all those that actually occurred (think of a thousand or so poleis, each with a full festival calendar, and all their subgroups...). Lysimache, long-serving priestess of Athena Polias at Athens, refused the mule drivers who had brought the sacred vessels a drink, "for I fear it will become ancestral tradition."<sup>166</sup> Almost anything could get into a ritual. But these twin levels of analysis, things imagined and things done, fail to capture much of what actually happens (one might say) at a festival. "Women at the Thesmophoria learn about, enact, and partially resist their role as citizen wives" is a proposition that goes beyond a mere description of what they do at the festival. But the perspective that it embodies is close to being a truism among contemporary students of ritual: "Communal religions... consist of ritually-enforced role-ascription, of a kind of religious orchestration of a social organisation," wrote Ernst Gellner.<sup>167</sup>

165. This was shown by the publication of the diegesis to Call. *Aet.* fr. 90.

166. Plutarch, *De vitioso pudore* 14, 534B–C, an anecdote activated by J. Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion* (Chicago, 1982), 53–54.

167. Plough, *Sword and Book* (London, 1988), 98; "Community-oriented traditional religions... used ritual, not script, and were primarily concerned to underwrite and fortify communal organisation and the rhythm of communal life," *ibid.*, 75. Not a particularly recent insight: cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (London, 1952), 157, summarizing a conclusion of his thesis of 1908: "Rites can be seen to be the regulated symbolic expressions of certain sentiments. Rites can therefore be shown to have a specific social function when, and to the extent

Much of what precedes has implicitly looked at "things done" in that perspective. At this level there is inevitably a political dimension to festivals. If festivals are showcases in which society displays what it regards as being most valuable, the decision about what to display in the showcase cannot but be political. Civic/military processions give prominence to cavalry and hoplites, not to light-armed troops and oarsmen; thus they reinforce the perception that the rich, who provide their own mounts and armor, contribute most to the defense of the state. A remarkable poem written by Pindar for the Theban Daphnephoria shows how a civic festival might be exploited to celebrate, much as in an epinician, the whole family of the well-born youth who took the principal ritual role;<sup>168</sup> we have already noted that actual epinicia could also apparently find a niche for performance at civic festivals. The poetic inscription that Isyllus of Epidauros dedicated to Apollo Maleatas and Asclepius in his homeland late in the fourth century begins with frank praise of aristocracy and goes on to describe his successful proposals for processions in honor of the two gods; "The best men of this city of Epidauros, those who have city-protecting courage and shame in their breasts," are to be selected and to process "with their hair long" and make prayers on behalf of the citizen body at large; their prayers are to be for health, lawfulness (*eunomia*), peace, blameless wealth, and permanent nobility (*kalokagathia*).<sup>169</sup> At Epidauros, as at Athens, long hair was probably a badge of the rich; "lawfulness" and "nobility" were oligarchic code words. The common people of Epidauros are likely to have attended and enjoyed the festivals in question too, but that was precisely the point: to go along with such tiered inclusiveness in festivals was to accept the whole social order. Festivals existed that one can perhaps classify as "nonhierarchic," but whether any can be described as antihierarchic is very doubtful.

## Festivals and History

This discussion has been static, but the world of festivals was far from being so. The whole character of festivals changed, it has been argued, in the late classical and Hellenistic period: they became less rumbustious and

that, they have for their effect to regulate, maintain and transmit from one generation to another sentiments on which the constitution of society depends."

168. *Partheneion* 2 = fr. 94b Snell-Maehler, on which see L. Kurke in *Visualizing the Tragic*, ed. C. Kraus et al., 63–101 (Oxford, 2007). Epinicia: n. 11 above.

169. Powell, *Coll. Alex.*, 132–33, A and B; A. Kolde, *Politique et religion chez Isyllus d'Épidaure* (Basel, 2003).

spontaneous, more an orchestrated and orderly performance, a self-display by the city (or a monarch).<sup>170</sup> Whatever the validity of that general thesis, there was certainly innovation at the level of individual festivals. The power of Hellenistic monarchs to write new festival programs was unique: "When Ptolemy [Philopator] was establishing all sorts of festivals and sacrifices, particularly concerning Dionysus," begins an anecdote by his contemporary Eratosthenes.<sup>171</sup> But constant changes occurred other than at the whim of monarchs, in ways that help explain what the festivals meant to the celebrating communities. New festivals were created or existing festivals expanded to celebrate historical events: the Hellenistic evidence is abundant<sup>172</sup>—the paradigm example is the creation of the Delphic Soteria, which celebrated the repulse of the Gauls from Greece in 279 BC—but there is no reason to doubt that the underlying thought pattern is older. "To this day the Athenians celebrate in a festival the battle at Marathon, and the Thebans that at Leuctra, and we that of Daiphantus at Hyampolis, as you know, and Phocis is full of festivals and honorific rites," writes Plutarch. The Klazomenians established a festival Prophthasia ("Getting in First") to commemorate the trick by which they secured possession of the town Leuke, disputed between them and Kyme, in 383 BC. The Eretrian Artemisia and Dionysia seem both to have been redesigned to commemorate particular moments in the city's troubled history in the second half of the fourth century.<sup>173</sup>

Even without being redesigned, existing festivals could be associated with great historical events and thus acquire an added meaning that might become dominant. It is a striking detail that the date of the battle of Salamis came to be identified, quite unhistorically as it seems, as Mounichion 16, the day of the festival of Artemis Mounichia: this is just one example of the multiple ways in which the Athenian festival program came to commemorate the great victories of the Persian wars.<sup>174</sup> Odd ritual practices of the kind

170. See n. 105 above; to similar effect, J. Köhler, *Pompai: Untersuchungen zur hellenistischen Festkultur* (Frankfurt, 1996). Among Hellenistic festivals, Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" 161, also distinguishes those organized by cities, requiring participation, and by monarchs, requiring admiring spectatorship (on participants and spectators, cf. Köhler, *Pompai*, 147–53).

171. *FGrH* 241 F 16 ap. Ath. 7, 276A–C; cf. P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972), 1:203–4.

172. For seventeen epigraphic examples, see Chaniotis, "Sich selbst feiern?" 151 n. 33, summarizing his "Gedenktage der Griechen," in *Das Fest und das Heilige*, ed. J. Assmann, 123–45 (Gütersloh, 1991); two obscure literary examples are in Paus. 8.47.4, Ath. 13, 561F.

173. Plutarch: *Non posse* 18, 1109E–F Leuke: Diod. Sic. 15.18.2–4, accepted as historical by Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 175, and Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 385. Eretria: RO no. 73, with commentary.

174. See Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 187: a key passage on Athenian commemorative festivals (on which see W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* [Berkeley, 1979], 3:168–84) is Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 7, 349E–350A.

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usually explained with reference to myth occasionally receive pseudohistorical explanations, creditable to the community concerned, which have probably replaced aitia of the commoner type. Why does one group of young people snatch food from another in a festival on Samos? Herodotus gives the answer: certain Corcyraean youths who had been sent by the wicked Corinthian tyrant Periander to be castrated took sanctuary in the temple of Artemis on Samos, and to feed them the pious Samians caused choruses (!) of their own young people to file past bearing food that could be seized.<sup>175</sup>

The primary source of legitimation for festivals remains the legendary past. But festivals are also the most natural of all vehicles to commemorate great events or noble deeds (real or imaginary) in a city's history. The age of heroes and great historical feats both embody that elevation above the mundane and transitory that is one part of the meaning of the festivals.

Another aspect of the relation of history to festivals is more controversial. The search for "survivals," the argument that ritual acts understood in one way by their agents, or not understood at all, "originally" meant something quite different, the attempt to get back from a murky and mysterious present of rituals to a past when all would have been clear and comprehensible—all this is methodologically thoroughly discredited. There is no pure and pristine state of rituals to be got back to;<sup>176</sup> and the essential postulate in studying rituals is that they made a kind of sense to those who performed them, even if not one that they could readily formulate in words; that they were not numbly going through a succession of meaningless acts in mindless obedience to tradition. All the same, Levi-Strauss's notion of bricolage needs to be attended to. This is the idea that mythmakers and ritual makers do not fashion new myths and rituals from whole cloth, ordered specially for the purpose. Rather, like handymen, they put together the materials they find ready to hand in their workshops, left over perhaps from quite different projects. When the Athenians designed a new ritual for the new goddess Bendis, the element "torch race," one might say, was one that they found ready fashioned for other ritual purposes. But they adapted it by making it in this case a torch race on horseback, appropriate to the "horse-loving Thracians."

175. Hdt. 3.48; cf. p. 28 above. Dionysus's ship-cart at Smyrna was explained by reference to a sea battle against the Chians, Aristid. Or. 21.4 Keil; a festival "Fast" at Tarentum is explained by a siege situation in Ael. VH 5.20. For a nice early modern parallel, see W. R. Halliday, *BSA* 16 (1909–10): 213–14.

176. See J. Z. Smith in *Take Judaism, for Example*, ed. J. Neusner (Chicago, 1983), 223–24: "In culture, there is no text, it is all commentary; there is no primordium, it is all history; all is application." Wittgenstein's critique of Frazer, as discussed by S. J. Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge, 1990), 54–64, is relevant.

And obedience to tradition is not necessarily mindless, because local tradition means also local identity: the foreigner who questioned the Boeotian custom of sacrificing Kopaic eels was told that it was an ancestral custom, and one that needed no defense before outsiders.<sup>177</sup>

Perhaps the most bizarre of Greek rituals, though paradoxically one of the most fully described, is the ritual of Daidala, which according to Pausanias existed in two forms or two parts, the Small Daidala conducted at uncertain intervals by the Plataeans, the Great Daidala by the Boeotians collectively every sixtieth year (!).<sup>178</sup> A *daidalon* was a wooden image of roughly female shape, cut at the Small Daidala from an oak tree at Alalkomenai that was picked out by an elaborate ritual procedure. At the Great Daidala, fourteen *daidala* prepared at successive celebrations of the lesser rite were distributed among different Boeotian cities or groups of cities. But apparently one of these *daidala* was "chief *daidalon*" and played the chief ritual role. It was dressed as a bride and accompanied by a bride attendant and given a bridal bath in the Asopos. According to the myth, it commemorated a make-believe wooden bride whom Zeus had pretended to marry in order to arouse Hera's jealousy at a time of estrangement; on discovering the deception, Hera laughed and cheerfully assumed the role of bridesmaid. The *daidala* were then taken in a procession—the participating groups cast lots to determine their place in it—to the summit of Mount Kithairon; there, on an elaborately constructed wooden altar, sacrificial victims, publicly and privately brought, and the *daidala* were all burned together, in the most spectacular bonfire known to Pausanias.

It is as if elements from several different rituals have become blended together in a confused dream. A complicated ritual process is applied to select the precise oak tree from which a *daidalon* is to be made. But the *daidalon* serves in the end only to be burned. The festival honors the goddess of marriage, Hera, who is honored under epithets that evoke marriage; but the marriage in question is a simulated one and is never consummated. The combination of the motifs "deity's anger" and "wooden image" suggests the constellation of themes associated by Burkert with Telepinus; but

177. Agatharchides *FGrH* 86 F 5 ap. Ath. 7, 297D, cited in this context by A. Chanotis in *Kykeon*, 42. Note, however, the defensiveness of this: he might well in a different context have had a story to tell about the custom. Bendis: Pl. *Resp.* 328A.

178. What followed is based, with many refinements and complications omitted, on two innovative studies: A. Chanotis, "Ritual Dynamics: The Boiotian Festival of the Daidala," in *Kykeon*, 23–48, and D. Knoepfler, "La fête des *Daidala* de Platées chez Pausanias: Une clef pour l'histoire de la Béotie hellénistique," in Knoepfler and M. Piérart, *Éditer, traduire, commenter Pausanias en l'an 2000* (Geneva, 2001), 343–74. The sources are Plut. fr. 157.6–7 Sandbach = *FGrH* 388 F 1; Paus. 9.2.7–9.3.8.

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the theme "prosperity restored" seems to be missing. All ends in a frenzy of destruction. Much here sounds archaic, and has often been treated as such. But the vicissitudes that the festival must have undergone are evident even from Pausanias, who explains its sixty-year periodicity (unpersuasively) by reference to the Plataeans' "exile" from their own city (two such exiles occurred, neither lasting sixty years). The festival as we know it is Pamboeotian; even at the Small Daidala the Plataeans leave their own territory to cut the wood at Alalkomenai, in the central area where two Boeotian federal sanctuaries were located. The fourteen *daidala* for fourteen groups should reflect the organization of Hellenistic or possibly even Roman Boeotia.<sup>179</sup> Perhaps the bizarre amalgam that we observe was product of a Pamboeotian bricolage, the creation in or after the Hellenistic period of a federal festival that put together elements from various local Boeotian practices.<sup>180</sup> It made sense because it spoke of Boeotian cooperation, a pooling of Boeotian ritual resources. The Pamboeotian element was so strong that the inconsequentiality of the amalgam created by bricolage was not felt to be problematic. Even the aition telling of the reconciliation of Zeus and Hera may have been emblematic. No history of the Daidala can claim to be true, but something on these lines may well be like the truth.

Divine advents and disappearances; the city celebrating itself; hierarchical processions leading magnificent sacrificial animals; human scapegoats; masters waiting on slaves; dirty dancing; special food; fasting; laments for dead heroes; nubile maidens carrying baskets; old women wielding sickles; Aristippus at dalliance with Phryne; the scrap of human flesh in the casserole—generalization about Greek festivals is clearly somewhat hazardous (though one should note that the most exotic items in the preceding list are by a long way the least common). I eschew it therefore, and end instead with something unique, an account of a Greek festival by its creator, Xenophon. He is describing the land he bought at Skillous in the Peloponnese with a tithe of spoils "taken out" for Ephesian Artemis.

He [Xenophon] built an altar and temple from the sacred money, and afterward he always tithed the seasonal products of the estate and held a sacrifice for the goddess, and all the local citizens and men and women

179. Knoepfler, "La fête des *Daidala*" (n. 178 above), argues strongly for "Hellenistic," but Albert Schachter has kindly shown me an unpublished lecture in which he makes a case for the second century AD.

180. For a similar, rather speculative argument in relation to the Theban Daphnephoria, see Kurke, in *Visualizing the Tragic* (n. 168).

of the region took part in the festival. The goddess supplied them as they camped there with barley meal, loaves, wine, dried fruits, and a portion both of what was sacrificed and of what was caught from the sacred land. For Xenophon's sons and those of the other citizens conducted a hunt for the festival, and such adults as wished hunted too. And game was caught from the sacred estate itself and also from Pholoe, pigs, gazelle and deer. . . . In the sacred estate there are a meadow and wooded hills, capable of feeding pigs and goats and cattle and horses, so that the pack animals of those attending the festival could eat well too. Around the temple itself was planted a grove of cultivated trees such as provide edible food in season. (*Anab.* 5.3.9–12)

This idyllic and idealized picture of a *fête champêtre* differs somewhat from most of what has been discussed hitherto, though there are familiar elements: the broad participation, the integration into the preparations of the enjoyable activity of hunting, and the stress on food. Where normally the deity is summoned to attend the festival, here she acts as hostess; but some credit evidently redounds on Xenophon himself (festival as patronage, a topic not touched on here). What is typical of the Greek festival, or at any rate not untypical, is the relaxed blend of piety with evident relish for the simpler good things of this world.