

**Light and Darkness  
in Ancient Greek  
Myth and Religion**

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*Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek Myth Religion* Edited by Menelaos Christopoulos, Efimia D. Karakantza, and Olga Levaniouk

# Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek Myth and Religion

Edited by  
Menelaos Christopoulos  
Efimia D. Karakantza  
Olga Levaniouk



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# Contents

Preface	ix
Introduction	xv
<b>PART 1: COLOR SEMANTICS</b>	
1 The Significance (or Insignificance) of Blackness in Mythological Names <i>Richard Buxton</i>	3
2 Dark Skin and Dark Deeds: Danaides and Aigyptioi in a Culture of Light <i>Efimia D. Karakantza</i>	14
3 Brightness and Darkness in Pindar's <i>Pythian 3</i> . Aigla-Koronis-Arsinoë and Her Coming of Age <i>Evanthia Tsitsibakou-Vasalos</i>	30
4 S-light Anomaly: Dark Brightness in Euripides' <i>Medea</i> <i>Spyros Syropoulos</i>	77
<b>PART 2: APPEARANCE AND CONCEALMENT</b>	
5 The Light Imagery of Divine Manifestation in Homer <i>Soteroula Constantinidou</i>	91
6 Trojan Night <i>Ken Dowden</i>	110

7	Tithonus and Phaon: Mythical Allegories of Light and Darkness in Sappho's Poetry <i>Avgi Maggel</i>	121
8	Erinyes as Creatures of Darkness <i>Mercedes Aguirre</i>	133
9	Journey into Light and Honors in Darkness in Hesiod and Aeschylus <i>Sebastian Anderson</i>	142
10	Hephaestus in Homer's Epics: God of Fire, God of Life <i>Isabelle Ratinaud-Lachkar</i>	153
<b>PART 3: EYE-SIGHT/INSIGHT</b>		
11	Blind People and Blindness in Ancient Greek Myths <i>Françoise Létoublon</i>	167
12	Blindness as Punishment <i>Ariadni Tatti-Gartziou</i>	181
<b>PART 4: BEING AND BEYOND</b>		
13	Light and Darkness and Archaic Greek Cosmography <i>Nanno Marinatos</i>	193
14	Mystic Light and Near-Death Experience <i>Richard Seaford</i>	201
15	Dark Winged Nyx and Bright Winged Eros in Aristophanes' "Orphic" Cosmogony: <i>The Birds</i> <i>Menelaos Christopoulos</i>	207
16	The Bright Cypress of the "Orphic" Gold Tablets: Direction and Illumination in Myths of the Underworld <i>Radcliffe G. Edmonds</i>	221
<b>PART 5: CULT</b>		
17	Light and Darkness in Dionysiac Rituals as Illustrated on Attic Vase Paintings of the 5th Century BCE <i>Dimitris Paleothodoros</i>	237
18	Light and Lighting Equipment in the Eleusinian Mysteries: Symbolism and Ritual Use <i>Ioanna Patera</i>	254

*Contents*

vii

19	Magic Lamps, Luminous Dreams: Lamps in <i>PGM</i> Recipes <i>Athanassia Zografou</i>	269
	Index	00
	About the Editors and Contributors	00





## Preface

Strangely enough, the birth of this book (or should we say its first concept?) has something in common with ancient Greek cosmogonies where usually Darkness or Chaos beget Light or Day through a complex, arbitrary and sometimes awesome procedure. It was a dark 2005 winter evening when a chaotic discussion started among the members of the newly founded Centre for the Study of Myth and Religion in Greek and Roman Antiquity at the Department of Philology of Patras University. The aim of the discussion was to detect various areas where recent scholarship appeared comparatively weak or left something to be desired in the study of Greek mythology and religion and where the new born Centre could eventually utter a clear, fresh and fairly suggestive word. It then occurred to us that one relatively less explored area was the dependence of certain rites, cults, narratives and persons upon notions of light and darkness, night and day, brightness and obscurity. In the absence of such an approach in the study of myth and religion, we organized an International Conference on Light and Darkness in Greek and Roman Mythology and Religion held at the University of Patras in Summer 2007. To our delight a number of specialists from Greece and abroad attended the Conference, significant papers were presented and important issues were touched upon. The material collected, thanks to the quality of the contributions, constituted a multiple nucleus further enriched by few specific approaches not included in the Conference and smoothly flowed into the present book whose main ambition is to partly remedy the lack of relevant studies in scholarship. Our wishes will indeed be totally fulfilled if this book becomes a useful tool for classicists, social anthropologists, historians of religion, archaeologists as well as for students in the respective fields. If, however, one

wishes to recall some relevant links to previous scholarship then he would refer to the following publications:

- the Colloquium held in Luxemburg on “Symbolisme et expérience de la lumière dans les grandes religions” (1996), mainly dealing with religious phenomena only and covering a wide spectrum of religions (Islam, Christianity etc)
- *The Light and the Dark: A Cultural History of Dualism* by Petrus F. M. Fontaine (1986), who puts forward the light-dark antithesis as a tool to interpret cultural history in general, with a specific focus on political and social history of Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries (only in Vol. II, 153–170 and mainly in a metaphorical use)
- The book by H. Musurillo, *The Light and the Darkness: Studies in the Dramatic Poetry of Sophocles* (1967), obviously focusing on Sophoclean drama
- The book by E. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods: The Role of Light in Archaic and Classical Greece* (2000), mainly exploring symbolism and cult related to light, but not to darkness
- And, last but not least, the book by E. Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light* (1990), who examines physical blindness (especially that of Oedipus in *OC*) in Greek culture with its supposed privileged relationship to light.

As for the present volume, we thought its contribution would be more tangible if the content was subordinated under some major axes corresponding to significant specifications of the ideas of light and darkness in Greek antiquity. It seemed to us that a possible classification of these major axes could follow five entities which finally became the five constitutive parts of the book:

- *Color semantics*. By reading several Greek texts and, in particular, poetry, one realizes that the interplay between darkness and light becomes extremely intricate and pregnant with meaning in contextual realizations of color semantics. Ancient authors construct their meaning by deploying lexical categories that bear autonomous or dependant semantic affiliations. Poetry conveys the heavily colored wording of previous “mainstream” literature but at the same time creates novel meanings by embedding an already accepted meaning into new context. The interplay of differences, displacements, inversions and polarities (with chief reference to light and darkness) form a platform where the power of *lexeis* and their semantic fields help to realize the poet’s intentions –since what is intentional and what is not in poetry remains a matter of ongoing debate.

- *Appearance and concealment.* Sudden and selective appearing or vanishing are, by many aspects, exclusive privileges of the gods, still the capacity itself of appearing or vanishing depends to a large extent on light and darkness. Divine appearances often occur at day light but they are not always perceived by everybody; those sharing with the gods the intimacy of such appearances may then also share the view of a special light within the light. In other cases, a specific brightness may indicate a divine manifestation, or a god may himself represent the idea of light or of darkness independently of his other attributes. On the other hand, appearances occurring at night usually create a light within the darkness unless they are embedded in a dream or a narrative. Divine appearances manifested only through sound (such as Dionysus' in the *Bacchae* 576-603) are comparatively few and usually completed also by visual experience.
- *Eye-sight/insight.* Although Greek culture has always been considered a culture that worships light, already in archaic society the blind appear to possess a privileged position as gifted poet or venerable seer. At the other end of the spectrum, one cannot deny that blindness is a physical disability and it can be the result of a terrible punishment sent by an offended deity that saw his/her realm violated and transgressed. But even then, blindness can offer a privileged insight of metaphysical matters that mortals are not able to see and understand. Thus, the blind may possess the intermediate place between the divine and the mortal worlds. Is then the blind a disabled creature or does his disability function as a metaphor for real sight?
- *Being and beyond.* Mysticism is an important dimension of ancient Greek religion and is directly related to the idea of light and darkness. The more important streams of Greek religious mysticism, namely the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Dionysiac cult and the Orphic movement, are all the three and in various ways associated with the darkness of the Underworld, not to mention the light imagery connected to the idea of salvation which remains a central aim pursued by the initiates through mystical rites and religious procedures. The Eleusinian Mysteries offered their initiates an insight to the realm of the superhuman and an opportunity to take part in the re-enactment of the doings of the gods. The Dionysiac cult released a savage urge which it recognized as part of human nature and, at the same time, claimed its share to an ecstatic enlightenment promised by Dionysus, hero of a famous descent to the Underworld in search of Semele. The Orphic movement regarded Orpheus as its founder; still Dionysus was the main god of Orphism as the Orphics had adopted a selective approach to the Dionysus myth. This was partly due to an important feature peculiar to Orphism, the fact that it was based on a sacred scripture, on canons, on dogma, whereas the rites associated with Dionysus amounted to a cult based on myth, not on dogma.

This is, perhaps, why the Orphic religious movement made so much of the ritual dimension of Dionysus, since the Orpheus myth itself had no rite of its own. Orphic principles and practices, although framed with reference to life after death, led to a set of rules concerning the proper conduct in life, which in terms of historical evolution, might represent a keener awareness of the fact that what one does in life actually matters and that, therefore, one must have a moral point of his or her life. The Pythagoreans observed similar principles although they did not claim mythical/religious approval, since their views were more or less based on the teaching of a real historical figure; in that sense, their views were in a way more “political” or more “philosophical” than those of the Orphics. In accordance to the above preliminary remarks which explain the importance of mysticism not only as a parameter of the Greek religious system but also as a motive for the initiated citizen’s everyday priorities and actions, some major issues related to mysticism are explored in this chapter aiming to better elucidate the relation between the idea of light and darkness and mysticism as a social reality in Ancient Greece.

- *Cult.* Cult is always the indisputable mark, the undeniable evidence always pursued by historians, archaeologists, philologists, anthropologists in their anxious search for the exact depiction of the ancient world; still cult is very often partly or vaguely revealed within the frame of a specific society and in a specific place and time, sometimes creating more problems than it resolves. But it appears that in regard to light and darkness, cult may also become particularly eloquent by depicting the presence of light or by indicating the precise kind of light sought in accordance to the nature of the cult itself and by so doing it may witness the existence of qualities of cultic light.

The analytical structure and the exact way these five parts are dealt with by the contributors of this volume are presented by Walter Burkert and Nanno Marinatos in the introduction of this book. But what the editors would like to stress here is that several stages of preparation, editing, consulting and co-operation preceded the final publication of the present volume and sincere thanks are owed to various persons whose competence, work and generosity was crucial in carrying out the different tasks that made this book possible. We would first like to express our gratitude to the Senatorial Board of the University of Patras for its financial contribution to the editorial needs of this volume. The whole task of this book was strongly supported by the Department of Philology of the University of Patras and we graciously recognize our thankful debts. Special thanks are owed to our post-graduate students Sotirios Karambelas and Marios Valvis-Gerogiannis for copiously correcting and adapting the contributors’ manuscripts. The texts of the contributors earned

further coherence and unity thanks to Jonathan Smith's elegant linguistic and stylistic taste. Walter Burkert's and Nanno Marinatos' authority honored our task by giving this book a meaningful and learned Introduction. As for the book itself it would had never been published without Professor Gregory Nagy's wise consulting and support; our deepest gratitude and warmest thanks are addressed to him.

Last but not least, we would like to mention two great scholars, Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, who had accepted to participate in the Conference, but their poor health betrayed their expressed wish. Their insightful numerous studies to Greek myth and religion have influenced profoundly modern perception of both areas; to their memory this book is dedicated, with gratitude for their *didaskalia*.



# Introduction

Walter Burkert and Nanno Marinatos

Light and darkness; a common enough contrast in daily life, and hence an elementary dichotomy in language; from here it is just a small metaphorical step to combining this language of opposition with the basic antinomy of life and death, and then extending the metaphor to encompass the dualism of truth and error.

As the present volume shows, however, the semiotics of light and darkness are nothing if not complex in Greek thought. The elemental antitheses mentioned do not admit of reduction to either simple dualism or unambiguous negativity; Nyx, for example, is not exclusively negative, although light is often, but not always, positive.

The concepts extend from cosmogonic spatial categories to states of the psyche; literary evidence, rituals, vase paintings, all contribute to enhancing and enlarging our understanding of the subtleties of this ambiguous polarity. Darkness may stand for ignorance, evil and the ominous, violence and barbarism, and the world beyond; light may denote vision, clairvoyance, the Olympian order, the salvation of the psyche, and the world we inhabit. However, this still leaves us with all the subtle nuances in between that the classical intellect endeavored to explore; thus eliciting transitions rather than finalities, questions rather than certainties.

## COLOR SEMANTICS

At first sight color seems to signify a straightforward distinction between good and bad; black (*melas*) usually denoting evil, light colors (*leukos*, *xan-*

*thos*) mainly standing for goodness. However, the polysemic diction of names and epithets either blurs distinctions or, alternatively, leads to subtle nuances and graduations.

Richard Buxton (The Significance (or Insignificance) of Blackness in Mythological Names) explores the significance of 'black' (*melas*) in personal names in Homer, elaborating the contrast between the clearly negative one of Melanthios and Melantho, the evil servants in the *Odyssey*, and the multiplicity of possible meanings encompassed within the seer's name, Melampous, a name not obviously negative. It seems, depending on context, that the etymology of a name can either be active or, become activated, while in another context, it can remain dormant. These semantics of blackness in literature are also discussed by Efimia D. Karakantza (Dark Skin and Dark Deeds: Danaides and Aigyptioi in a Culture of Light). In lexical contexts black (*melas*) connotes evil, sorrow and death, although it may also be applied to violent and non-Greek peoples, like the Aigyptioi of Aeschylus's the *Danaids*. It is a signifier of loss, of disorder. Order may be restored in the culture of the polis ('a culture of light') through the celebration of festivals where rituals prevail in the end in weaving a synthesis of light and darkness, Greek and non-Greek, denial and acceptance, which leads to the very nature of classical myths and the construction of the Greek self definition in a reconciliation (or simply coexistence) of opposites.

The shading of light and darkness, oscillating between beauty and resignation in Pindar's *Pythian* 3, is explored by Evanthia Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (Brightness and Darkness in Pindar's *Pythian* 3: Aigla-Coronis-Arsinoe and Her Initiatory Experience); here the author investigates chiaroscuro imagery bordering on oxymoron as blurring the boundaries between brightness/life and darkness/death along with multiple polarities, deviations from religious and societal norms, transgression of natural laws and reversals of human fate. Spyros Syropoulos (S-light Anomaly: Dark Brightness in Euripides' *Medea*) argues that Euripides' *Medea* can be seen as an exploration of the anomaly, or rather antimony, of 'dark brightness.' The granddaughter of Helios (Sun) commits one of the most heinous crimes ever: premeditated infanticide; then escapes in the chariot of Helios, the ultimate image of light, leaving the spectator in the grip of 'dark' feelings, neither enlightened nor uplifted.

## APPEARANCE AND CONCEALMENT

Light may represent an epiphany of a god, the radiance of a god, daylight, or an action carried out in the clarity of broad day light; at the other end of the spectrum lies the need to conceal a person or an action, to shroud it in the



mysterious or ominous cloak of darkness. Creatures of darkness, creatures of the pre-Olympian order need to surface or communicate their existence in the world of light. Beings that choose to ‘appear’, hence acquiring the qualities of light, or actions that we choose to conceal, invoking the negation of normality denoted by darkness.

This provides the framework for Soteroula Constantinidou (The Light Imagery of Divine Manifestation in Homer) to argue that Homeric gods have their epiphany in light, marking the superiority of divine power; their eyes gleam and their very presence is enveloped in an atmosphere of radiance. Hence even human heroes, such as Diomedes and Achilles, may be distinguished by such ‘light’ reflected in the ferocious glare of their battle stare. On the darker side, Ken Dowden (Trojan Night) explores night-battles in Homer, *nyktomachiai*, to investigate the mythology of night fighting in parallel with thoughts about the role of the moon and its distinctive light. The capture of Troy, happening at night, yet illuminated by moonlight, becomes the archetypal night-battle. Night connects, also, with initiation/trickery in *Doloneia* and with the closure of human life in the *Iliad*.

Hephaistos, the only god to work, and still a god by virtue of his power over fire, presents us with a complicated case, as argued by Isabelle Ratinaud (Hephaistos: God of Light). His workshop is a place of fire, warmth, light and creation, not the ashes, smoke and dirt usually associated with his work. However, this is the god who forges the arms of Achilles, glittering instruments of death, thus linking creation and destruction. Avgi Maggel deals with Tithonus (*Tithonus and Phaon. Mythical Allegories of Light and Darkness in Sappho's Poetry*), the hapless consort of Eos (Dawn), but throws the famous fragmentary verse about ‘love for Helios’ out of this context and leaves it as a riddle, while the love for Phaon remains legend alluding to the shading of impressions of light in Sappho’s poetic imagery and to a suggestive darkness lurking behind her poetic words.

Creatures of darkness often lurk in the cover of Night. Aeschylus puts the Erinyes, daughters of Night, on stage equipped with torches; does this mean that they operate at night? This is the question posed by Mercedes Aguirre (Erinyes as Creatures of Darkness) who teases out the literary evidence about the fearsome appearance of the black garbed Erinyes, torch bearing manifestations linked with the underworld, horror and madness.

Sebastian Anderson (Journey into Light and Honors in Darkness in Hesiod and Aeschylus) pursues another line of thought as he discusses night as a spatial realm of the cosmos in Hesiod and Aeschylus. Creatures of the deep, the Styx in Hesiod’s *Theogony* and the Erinyes in Aeschylus’s *Eumenides* mount an expedition into the realm of light, clash with creatures of light but return to their original abode when honored by Zeus.

## EYE-SIGHT/INSIGHT

Since Homer's time light has been connected with the act of seeing and of being seen; it has also been linked with esoteric vision, the gift of insight, the ability to understand (to *see* internally) which characterizes the superhuman and also those divinely blessed or punished.

Françoise Létoublon's (Blind People and Blindness in Ancient Greek Myth) literary journey of exploration concerns the theme of blindness and the role of the blind in Greek literature and myth from Homer, the archaic poetry and the mythographers, with arguments firmly anchored in linguistic data. As *aoidoi*, poets and seers, blind people seem to bear the mark of an ambiguous punishment, or compensation in the form of their exceptional gift for seeing; thus, blindness appears as a metaphor for real sight. Ariadni Gartzidou-Tatti (Blindness as Punishment) takes a different perspective on blindness as a result of divine punishment. The cases of Phineus, Teiresias, Thamyris, Oedipus etc. are examined so as to explore the correlation between the nature of their punishment and the extent of their transgression.

## BEING AND BEYOND

The fundamental question of being, and the beginning of being looms large in philosophy and religion. It also connects with the question of space: there is the world we inhabit, and the world beyond. Human beings visualize the world of beyond as having both darkness and light and remain mystified as to how it all began. Is chaos or darkness the beginning of beings? How do we find our way in the world of beyond?

Nanno Marinatos (Light and Darkness and Archaic Cosmogony) argues that primeval darkness (*erebos*) and light articulate spatial categories of the Homeric cosmos, which can be laid out in a visual map. The darkness of *erebos* coincides with Hades, and Hades is not exclusively below the earth but beyond it. The river ocean acts as a boundary, demarcating also the limits of the sun. In a yet bolder way Richard Seaford (Mystic Light and Near-Death Experience) traces the appearance of beatifying 'light' in texts of Euripides, the *Bacchae*, and Plutarch, and compares it to modern documentations of 'Near Death Experience', which speak about 'a wonderful light that transforms ignorant anxiety into a sense of certainty and profound well-being'; Seaford suggests that this was 'among the factors giving rise to mystery-cult'.

There is a seemingly strange idea in Greek thought, that darkness is the origin of all things. Menelaos Christopoulos (Dark Winged Nyx and Bright

Winged Eros in Aristophanes' "Orphic" Cosmogony: The Birds) shows that Nyx is the generator of the cosmic egg in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, and that this sequence is paralleled in Orphic cosmogonies, as confirmed by the Derveni papyrus. From the egg springs forth the bright winged Eros, the equivalent to Orphic Phanes; hence, Light springs out of darkness.

Radcliffe G. Edmonds (The Bright Cypress of the Orphic Gold Tablets: Direction and Illumination in Myths of the Underworld) insists on theory: 'white' or 'dark' are not natural signifiers but 'arbitrary signs' in the terms of de Saussure. His starting point is an apparent contradiction in the gold Bacchic tablets that give advice about how to find your way to the beyond: the 'white cypress', markers of the ways of the beyond, which shift position and meaning in the different examples drawn from these texts.

## CULT

In cult, the symbolism of light contrasted to darkness is especially obvious. Does light denote the salvation promised in antiquity by the divine in mystery cults? Or is it just a metaphysical Christian answer? Light in the imagery of ancient Greek texts, vase paintings or in testimonia for rituals may be a metaphor for the rites themselves, or allude to the blessed state of the participants or simply belong to the imagery of the god.

The use of torches in Bacchic cult is documented on the basis of vase paintings by Dimitris Paleothodoros (Light and Darkness in Dionysiac Rituals as Illustrated on Attic Vase Paintings of the 5th Century BCE). Dionysus, a god of bright shining light, is adored during nocturnal festivals by torch-bearing participants. However, 'torches must be regarded as a metaphor for the rites of Dionysus, and not as an indication of the temporal sequence of ritual'. On the other hand, the use of light and fire at Eleusis is commented upon, using as a basis the Homeric hymn, by Ioanna Patera (Light and Lighting Equipment in the Eleusinian Mysteries: Symbolism and Ritual Use), taking note also of the testimonies about 'fire' in the Telesterion, from Plutarch to Hippolytos and Himerios. The author reaches the conclusion that 'light is an image of the happiness of the initiates and of their pious behaviour'.

Lastly, Athanassia Zografou (Magic Lamps, Luminous Dreams: Lamps in PGM Recipes) explores the use of lamps, this humble medium of lighting, in cultic as well as everyday contexts. The necessity of the presence of light is proved in the widespread use of lamps in the Magical Papyri from the Hellenistic down to Roman period in pagan and Christian rituals, bearing the mark of religious syncretism.

**EPILOGUE: THE TRUTH OF NIGHT**

Walter Burkert argued many years ago (1969, “Das Prooemium des Parmenides und die Katabasis des Pythagoras,” *Phronesis* 14, pp. 1–30.) that Parmenides made Nyx, darkness, the origin of truth. In his riddling *proemoion*, the philosopher explains how he was led in a chariot by the daughters of the sun, the Heliade, into the House of Night. This frightful place was located at the edge of the world, if we understand Hesiod correctly. The gates are guarded by Justice. As the philosopher enters, he is met by a goddess who must be no other than Night herself. She reveals the truth to the now initiated Parmenides.

The collection in this volume represents the variety of approaches available to scholars today. Some will want to look at the social parameters of Greek society; others at the semeiotic structures of Greek language and philosophy; yet others at cosmogonies. Riddles remain, but a collection of such diverse papers can only lead to a better understanding of the issue of light and darkness in Greek thought.

*Part I*

## **COLOR SEMANTICS**



## Chapter One

# The Significance (or Insignificance) of Blackness in Mythological Names

Richard Buxton

The aim of this chapter is to examine certain mythological names involving the component *melas*. In order to set this enquiry into context, however, I shall first look at the general opposition between *melas* and *leukos* in Greek thought.

In his still useful dissertation *Die Bedeutung der weissen und der schwarzen Farbe in Kult und Brauch der Griechen und Römer*, Gerhard Radke conveys a message which is basically very straightforward<sup>1</sup>: in relation to the gods and their worship, black is negative, white positive. *Melas* is associated with the Underworld,<sup>2</sup> with Ate,<sup>3</sup> with death,<sup>4</sup> with mourning.<sup>5</sup> In keeping with this nexus of funereal associations, animals described as *melas* are sacrificed to powers of the Underworld and to the dead: thus at *Odyssey* 11.32–3 Odysseus promises to dedicate an οἶν παμμέλανα to Teiresias if he gets back safe to Ithaca, while in Colophon, according to Pausanias (3.14.9), they sacrifice a black bitch to Enodia, and moreover they do so at night.<sup>6</sup> *Leukos*, by contrast, is associated not just with divinities of light such as Helios and Day—in Aeschylus' *Persians* the glorious day of the victory at Salamis is a λευκόπωλος ἡμέρα (386)—but with divinities in general, especially when they are conceived of as 'favourable': the Dioscuri, those twin saviours, ride on white horses.<sup>7</sup> Again there is a correspondence in the realm of sacrificial ritual: white animals were sacrificed to several of the major Olympian deities, including Aphrodite, Apollo, Hera, Poseidon, and Zeus.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, white clothing may indicate the proper ritual condition in which mortals should approach a god: Diogenes Laertius reports that to meet Pythagoras' prescription for ritual purity στολή λευκή and στρώματα λευκά were the appropriate costume.<sup>9</sup> In all these various data from the world of ritual practice we seem to find ample confirmation of the *melas*-as-negative/*leukos*-as-positive polarity

which is also evidenced in myth—in, for example, the black sail of forgetful Theseus, which caused his father's suicide;<sup>10</sup> or in Apollo's changing of the colour of the crow from white to black, to punish it for bringing the message about Coronis' infidelity.<sup>11</sup> *Melas* negative, *leukos* positive. It seems, at first sight, so simple.

Yet as soon as we look more carefully at the evidence from cult, it is not hard to find inversions of our polarity. The colour of death is not *always* black. In a fragment from Aristophanes' *Daitales*, a *white* dog is offered to Hecate, notwithstanding the goddess's connections with the Underworld.<sup>12</sup> In the *Iliad* the dead Patroclus is covered with a white shroud (18.353). Not only Patroclus: the Messenians, according to Pausanias, dressed their great men in white cloaks before burial (4.13.2–3), while Artemidorus could interpret a dream of wearing white as a prognostic of death, since 'the dead are carried off in white clothes' (2.3).<sup>13</sup> Nor is it only divinities predominantly linked with death and night who are linked with black: Pausanias' description of Arcadia includes accounts of Demeter Melaina at Phigalia (8.42.4) and Aphrodite Melainis at Mantinea (8.6.5). Again, in relation to sacrificial offerings, Poseidon and other sea deities sometimes received sacrifices of black animals.<sup>14</sup> It seems that the link in cult between black-and-negative/white-and-positive is far from universal.

And yet with ingenuity we can find explanations to account for all our apparent exceptions. For Hecate's white dog we have no context—so, for all we know, it could have been an Aristophanic joke *παρὰ προσδοκίαν*.<sup>15</sup> The fact that the dead are sometimes associated with white might be, not an exception to the normal, symbolically positive connotation of white, but an example of it: white would in that case be apotropaic, to drive away pollution. The blackness of Demeter Melaina could stand for her state of mourning. Pausanias himself explained the blackness of Aphrodite Melainis on the ingenious ground that sex takes place mostly at night. As for marine deities, the sea can be seen as 'dark,' so a black sacrifice could be regarded as appropriate for them—a point already made in ancient scholia on Homer.<sup>16</sup> Alternatively, Radke argued that Poseidon's black sacrificial animals correspond to the 'dangerous wildness' of the sea.<sup>17</sup> With a liberal dose of ingenuity, then, the interpreter *can* restore the polarity: *melas* negative, *leukos* positive.

But how far is such ingenuity justified? In my view, we should not force all cases of the ritual use of white and black into one mould. There is no *a priori* reason why black and white should be univocal: each instance must be taken on its merits. To relate the blackness of Demeter Melaina to mourning is convincing. But to explain—or explain away—the sacrifice of black animals to Poseidon in terms either of the 'darkness' of the sea, or of the sea's 'wildness,' seems to me to be special pleading. The data from cult and ritual



is *broadly* in line with the black-as-negative/white-as-positive polarity, but there are genuine exceptions which we must simply accept as part of the complexity of ritual symbolism.

Nor is this surprising because, as soon as we step outside the sphere of cult and ritual to deal with the ‘everyday’ implications of white and black, the complexity becomes far more noticeable.<sup>18</sup> It is true that the expression λευκὸν ἡμᾶρ was proverbial for ‘a lucky day.’<sup>19</sup> But in certain contexts λευκός and its cognates can have a negative quality. Λεύκη is a disease of the skin, a kind of white eruption like leprosy. For a man, to be λευκός can be a sign of effeminacy.<sup>20</sup> To be white-livered, λευκηπατίας, or, even worse, white-arsed, λευκόπρωκτος or λευκόπυγος—these are signs of cowardice.<sup>21</sup> Although several of the passages linking whiteness with lack of manliness come from comedy, whiteness is presented negatively in other genres too. In Pindar’s 4th *Pythian* (109), Jason describes his enemy Pelias as relying on his λευκαῖς . . . φρασίν—obviously a negative quality, though commentators disagree about whether to interpret it as, for example, ‘foolish,’ ‘superficial,’ ‘cowardly,’ or ‘crazed.’<sup>22</sup>

Μέλας is no less complex. Already in Homer the epithet is applied to wine, blood, water, ships and earth. To be μελαγχροῖς, which is the appearance given by Athene to Odysseus when she renders him more handsome, is clearly a good quality in a man (*Od.* 16.175). So is the quality of being μελάμπυγος or μελαμπύγων—terms which can be used admiringly, especially in comedy, to describe a tough, Herakles-like individual.<sup>23</sup> More enigmatic is the notion of the person who feels strong emotion around his φρένες μέλαιναί. In the *Iliad* one’s φρένες can be ‘black’ when one feels grief (17.83), but also when one feels courage (17.499) and anger (1.103–4).<sup>24</sup> The quality of being *melas* is not intrinsically negative.

From what I have said so far I draw three conclusions: (1) In relation to cult and ritual *melas* is usually negative and *leukos* positive; but there are genuine exceptions. (2) In the perceptions of everyday life we find a still more complex picture, with an even less tidy match between *melas* and positive, *leukos* and negative. (3) It follows that we must always *specify the context* in which *melas* and *leukos* appear, before reaching conclusions about their signification. No signifier has an intrinsic meaning, only a meaning in context.

Against this background I want now to examine the meaning (or lack of meaning) of some mythological names involving *melas*.

First, three general points need to be made about Greek names. (1) A name, or part of a name, might not *necessarily* have been felt to be significant. In *Poetics* Aristotle observes: ‘In the word “Theodoros,” τὸ δῶρον (*sic*) οὐ σημαίνει (1457a13–14). The example which Aristotle chooses is perhaps an odd one, since in principle there would seem to be nothing objectionable

about interpreting the name ‘Theodoros’ as ‘god-given.’ But what is relevant to us is Aristotle’s general point: not every part of a name need be felt to carry meaning. (2) The interpreter, ancient or modern, has a crucial role to play in reading significance into a name. We need look no further than Plato’s *Cratylus*, the subject of which is precisely the ὁρθότης of names in relation to the character of their owner. At one point (395b) Socrates talks of the name ‘Ἀτρεΰς’: the form of his name is, says Socrates, slightly ‘deflected and hidden,’ but the connection with stubbornness (τὸ ἀτειρές) and fearlessness (τὸ ἄτρεστον) and ruinousness (τὸ ἀτηρόν) is clear *to those who understand about names*. In other words, the significance of a name does not go without saying. (3) The degree to which a name might have been felt to be meaningful varies not only according to the interpreter, but according to context within which the name appears. A name, or an element of a name, might come to semantic life in one context, but remain dormant in another.

Guided by these considerations, I shall address two questions relating to names involving *melas*. First: is the component *melas* significant in a particular name in a particular context? Second: if it is significant, *what* might it signify?

I begin with a sister-and-brother pair from the *Odyssey*: Melantho and Melanthios, children of Dolios. Melantho is Penelope’s maid who sleeps with the suitor Eurymachos and insults Odysseus; Odysseus and Penelope call her a bitch.<sup>25</sup> Melanthios (a metrical alternative is Melantheus) is the arrogant goatherd who kicks Odysseus, helps the suitors in their combat, and eventually suffers humiliating torture and mutilation at Odysseus’ hands.<sup>26</sup> Are ‘Melantho’ and ‘Melanthios’ significant names? More specifically, does the element *melas* bear meaning within these names? Significance depends on context, and one of the contexts within which these names are situated is the *Odyssey*, a poem replete with names which signify. The insolent suitor with a way with words is Antinoos son of Eupeithes (1.383); the man who willingly supplies Telemachus with his ship is one whose mind goes in the right direction, Noemon son of Phronios (2.386); the nautical way of life of the Phaeacians is expressed by the names of Nausikaa, Nausithoos, Pontonoos, and all the rest; during the Cyclops episode in Book 9 the disguised hero of the poem styles himself as ‘Outis,’ ‘Nobody,’ but at other times this grandson of Autolykos bears the name ‘Odysseus’ given to him by his grandfather, who ‘had been angry with many’ (or else who ‘had incurred the anger of many’), πολλοῖσιν . . . ὀδυσσάμενος, according to Autolykos’ explicit etymologising (19.406-9).<sup>27</sup> In this context ‘Melantho’ and ‘Melanthios’ must surely be seen as signifying names. But which aspect of *melas* do they evoke? It would seem inevitable to take the implied connotation as, in some general negative sense, ‘bad’ or ‘wicked.’ If it were to be proposed that other connotations of ‘black-

ness'—courage, for example—are relevant, I cannot disprove it. I merely suggest that it is highly improbable *in this context*.

Next I turn to the more complicated cases of Melanion and Melanthos. These two mythological figures became jointly famous in 1968, the year when Pierre Vidal-Naquet's rich and deservedly influential article on 'the Black Hunter' was first published.<sup>28</sup> The aim of Vidal-Naquet's paper was to throw light on the Athenian ephebeia by investigating a number of myths whose structure may be seen as parallel to the structure implicit in that institution. What makes Vidal-Naquet's analysis relevant to our own enquiry is the fact that blackness, or rather 'being *melas*,' is a characteristic common to several of the myths which he discusses.

Melanion *is* the Black Hunter. Vidal-Naquet introduces him by quoting a *muthos* sung in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* by the chorus of old men, who recall a story they heard in childhood (781–96):

Once upon a time there was a young man called Melanion, who fled from marriage and went into the wilderness and lived in the mountains; and he hunted hares and wove nets and had a dog, and never came back home again, because of his loathing. So much did he abhor women, as we sensible fellows do, no less than Melanion did.

For Vidal-Naquet, Melanion is an ephebe *manqué*, a lone hunter who goes out into the wilds on an exploit, but who does *not* return to the community afterwards. He is thus *partly* parallel to another *melas*-hero discussed by Vidal-Naquet: Melanthos, the mythical opponent of Xanthos.<sup>29</sup> Melanthos uses trickery to outwit his opponent in a border zone between Boeotian and Athenian territory, sometimes named as Melainai (or Melania). In some accounts, Melanthos' victory is ascribed to the intervention of Dionysos Melanaigis ('of the black goatskin').<sup>30</sup> Unlike the Aristophanic Melanion, however, Melanthos does successfully make the transition back from his marginality: he becomes king of Athens. The stories of both Melanion and Melanthos illustrate, for Vidal-Naquet, the negative quality of blackness during a period spent in the wilds, segregated from civilisation. Taken together, they stand as a kind of composite mythical prototype of the historical Athenian ephebe, whose period of military service on the confines of society preceded his eventual reintegration into the adult community.

Is all this convincing? This is not the place to go into the broader question of the institution of the Athenian ephebeia. I restrict myself to a discussion of the two mythical figures Melanthos and Melanion, and, in particular, to a consideration of their 'blackness.'

We must take each character separately. First, Melanthos. In my view Vidal-Naquet's overall analysis of the myth of Melanthos is, from the perspec-

tive which concerns us in the present article, persuasive. In particular, the threefold occurrence of names containing the element *melas*—Melanthos himself, the place Melainai, and the epithet Melanaigis<sup>31</sup>—reinforces the sense that the myth is indeed exploiting the opposition between the ‘fair’ Xanthos as opposed to the ‘dark’ Melanthos. Moreover, the nexus of deception, the wilds, and blackness does seem to mark out both the behaviour of Melanthos, and the location of his exploit, as ‘marginal’ in contrast to that which is associated with the ‘central,’ civilised citizen. Therefore I can see no objection to agreeing with Vidal-Naquet, in relation to the extant narratives about Melanthos, not only that the *melas* component of the name may legitimately be regarded as meaningful, but also that that meaning may plausibly be seen as bearing, in the context of these narratives, an ‘initiatory’ connotation, in so far as ‘being *melas*’ may designate symbolically a status which is both before and structurally antithetical to that which follows it.<sup>32</sup>

With Melanion, however, the case is quite different. After quoting the choral narrative from *Lysistrata*—the story of a lone, woman-hating hunter—Vidal-Naquet recommends that we replace this song within its mythical context. He illustrates this context by citing the association, familiar especially from Apollodorus (3.9.2), between Melanion and Atalante, another character who hunts in the wilds. By the ruse of throwing down some golden apples obtained from Aphrodite, Melanion tricked the usually fast-running Atalante into stooping, losing her race, and thus becoming his bride.<sup>33</sup> That Melanion, like Melanthos, uses trickery is certainly a feature which may encourage us to look for further parallels between the two. What is quite unclear, however, is how the Aristophanic Melanion who hated women can be equated with the Apollodoran Melanion who loved Atalante—and who even went on, with her, to *over*-value sexual intercourse rather than undervaluing it, when (again according to Apollodorus) the two of them made love in a sanctuary of Zeus, as a consequence of which transgression they were metamorphosed into lions.<sup>34</sup> A more serious difficulty stems from the fact that Vidal-Naquet fails to take due account of the dramatic context in *Lysistrata*.<sup>35</sup> In response to the men’s chorus, who sing about Melanion the *hater* of women, the women’s chorus sing about Timon, a wanderer in the wilds who—according to this chorus—hated males, *but loved women* (805–20). However, the usual story of Timon was that he hated everybody—women included.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the chorus of women have invented a largely idiosyncratic version of a traditional story in order to make a polemical point. I suggest that the men’s chorus had done precisely the same thing when they re-invented Melanion as a misogynist. To amalgamate the Aristophanic, woman-hating Melanion with the Apollodoran hero who loved Atalante surely devalues the importance of the distinctive Aristophanic context. Com-

edy is a genre in which significant names are common (Lysistrata, Kinesias, Bdelykleon, Philokleon), so in principle we should be well prepared to find significance in the *melas* component of Melanion's name in *Lysistrata*. But in the event I am not confident about ascribing such significance to this name in Aristophanes (or indeed in Apollodorus). In short, whereas I find Vidal-Naquet's account of *melas* in the name 'Melanthos' broadly convincing, I am unable to say the same of his account of the name 'Melanion.'

What we do not have, unfortunately, for either Melanthos or Melanion is a version of their myths as dramatised in a tragedy—the context par excellence for the explicitly etymologised significant name (Pentheus, Aias, Ion, Dolon, Helen).<sup>37</sup> The same absence goes for the final and most intriguing figure that I propose to discuss: Melampous. Is the 'blackness' of his 'foot' significant? If so, *what* does it signify?

Melampous is a seer who can understand the language of animals and birds.<sup>38</sup> Though based in Pylos, he travels to other parts of the Peloponnese and beyond; once he goes on a cattle raid to Thessaly.<sup>39</sup> But his most famous exploit is as a curer of physical and mental illness: according to different versions, he cures either all the women of Argos, driven mad by Dionysus, or just the daughters of Proitos, who are punished in various ways by Dionysus or Hera.<sup>40</sup> Herodotus, who alludes to the curing of the Argive women, maintains elsewhere (2.49) that Melampous introduced divination and the worship of Dionysus into Greece from Egypt. What, though, of the name 'Melampous'? To my knowledge, the only ancient interpretation of his 'blackness' occurs in a fragment by the 4th century BC historian Dieuchidas of Megara, who relates that Melampous' mother Dorippe placed the newborn baby in the shade, all except his feet, which became darker (μελανθῆναι) in the sunshine.<sup>41</sup> We have no context for this, but the story is intriguing, as it locates Melampous within a story pattern reminiscent of that which attaches to baby Achilles, whose heel was accidentally left unprotected by his mother. Dieuchidas' explanation for Melampous' name is dismissed or ignored by virtually all scholars—too hastily, perhaps, because it is an example—weak, but still just perceptible—of the mythical pattern whereby a seer's special knowledge is balanced by a physical defect.<sup>42</sup> But that is not the only way of reading Melampous' blackness. The Herodotean passage linking Melampous with Egypt would perfectly suit a hero who mediates between Egypt and Greece—being *melampodes* is a characteristic which we find elsewhere ascribed to Egyptians.<sup>43</sup> Nor is that the end of the possible interpretations. H. W. Parke saw a connection between the blackness of Melampous' feet and the Selloi, priests of Zeus at Dodona who sleep on the ground *and do not wash their feet*;<sup>44</sup> after all, didn't Melampous understand the speech of birds (we recall that one channel for Zeus's communications at Dodona was through birds)?<sup>45</sup> Nor is even *that* the end of it:

A. B. Cook suggested that ‘in primitive times’ Melampous was imagined as ‘a sacred goat’ (a suggestion less likely to carry conviction now that totemism has long since ceased to be a universal explanatory panacea).<sup>46</sup> And couldn’t one go down yet another explanatory avenue, by recalling that the daughters of Proitos, according to Hesiod, suffered from leprosy, ἀλφός, on the head?<sup>47</sup> In that case, Melampous would be acting as a kind of black antidote to a white disease, black feet mirroring and counteracting white heads. What we lack, in order to control this riot of exuberant speculations, is one or more detailed contexts—on the model of the *Odyssey*, in the case of Melanthe and Melanthios—which would allow us to be reasonably confident about the significance of the name *in that context or those contexts*. As it stands, the blackness in the name of Melampous cannot be pinned down to just one meaning.

What’s in a name? Sometimes more, sometimes less, than we might think. But it is impossible to say *how much* more or less, unless we have a context.

## NOTES

1. Berlin diss. (Jena, 1936). Pierre Vidal-Naquet called this a “catalogue consciencieux” (“Le chasseur noir et l’origine de l’éphébie athénienne,” *Annales E. S. C.* 23 (1968): 947–64; revised in *Le chasseur noir: formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec* (Paris, 1981), 151–74, at 161). Elsewhere I also cite from the 1981 version.

2. Erebus is μελαμπαῖς at Eur. *Hel.* 518.

3. Aesch. *Ag.* 770.

4. Eur. *Alc.* 843–4.

5. Thetis’ veil, as she mourned for Achilles, was κυάνεον, τοῦ δ’ οὐ τι μελάντερον ἔπλετο ἔσθος (Hom. *Il.* 24.94). Before the destruction of Corinth by the Romans, Corinthian boys used to cut their hair short and wear black in memory of the killing of Medea’s children (Paus. 2.3.7).

6. Similarly, Orestes offers a black sheep to his dead father at Eur. *El.* 513–14.

7. Pind. *Pyth.* 1.66.

8. A few examples. Aphrodite: Lucian *dial. meretr.* 7.1. Apollo: Theocr. *Epig.* 1.5. Hera: *LSAM* 41.6. Poseidon: Appian *Bell. Mithr.* 70; *LSCG* 96.5–9; Pind. *Ol.* 13.69. Zeus: *LSCG* 85.1–2; Dem. 21.53. See Radke, *Die Bedeutung*, 23–27.

9. D. L. 8.19; cf. Aeschin. *Ctes.* 77, on the wearing of λευκήν ἔσθητα by a person sacrificing.

10. Apollod. *Epit.* 1.10. Black is also the colour of the sail of Charon’s boat: Aesch. *Sept.* 857.

11. Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 3.52b; see T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore, 1993), 91.

12. *PCG* Aristophanes fr. 209.

13. One may note also that both white and black are associated with ghosts: see J. Winkler, “Lollianos and the Desperadoes,” *JHS* 100 (1980): 155–81, at 160–65.



14. Poseidon: Hom. *Od.* 3.6. Other sea deities: Porphyr. apud Euseb. *Praep. Ev.* 4.9.
15. L. Sternbach ("Beiträge zu den Fragmenten des Aristophanes," *WSt* 8 (1886): 231–61, at 257) suggested that it might refer to a *mangy* dog.
16. Eustath. 1454, 4–5, on *Od.* 3.6; other scholia ad loc.
17. Radke, *Die Bedeutung*, 30.
18. Some useful material is collected by E. Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry* (Toronto, 1974).
19. As the Persian queen says in reaction to the news that Xerxes is alive and 'sees the light': ἔμοιζ μὲν εἶπας δώμασιν φάος μέγα/ καὶ λευκὸν ἦμαρ νυκτὸς ἐκ μελαγχίμου (Aesch. *Pers.* 300–301). The explanation of the expression varied; cf. references in *LSJ* s.v. λευκός II.3.
20. Aristoph. *Th.* 191, cf. *Eccl.* 428; Xen. *HG* 3.4.19.
21. *PCG* Callias fr. 14; Alexis fr. 322. On being black-arsed, see Irwin, *Colour Terms*, 139–44. The claim to be 'white-footed' (a claim staked by the old men in the chorus of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (664), associating themselves with a fight long ago against the Athenian tyrants) involves an epithet whose significance has never been satisfactorily explained. J. Henderson (*Aristophanes: Lysistrata* (Oxford, 1987), ad loc.) sees it as an honorific way of referring to foot-soldiers, citing both *females* who are barefoot (like the bacchantes at Eur. *Cyc.* 72) and monosandalism. However (a) one cannot equate the genders over the issue of 'whiteness' and (b) monosandalism is a quite separate and distinctive phenomenon. For A. H. Sommerstein (*The Comedies of Aristophanes. Vol. 7: Lysistrata* (Warminster, 1990), ad loc.), the 'Whitefeet' are aristocrats whose feet have never become dirty or sunburnt.
22. See B. Gentili, et. al, *Pindaro: Le Pitiche* (Milan, 1995), ad loc.
23. Eubulus fr. 61 Hunter; Aristoph. *Lys.* 802–3; Archilochus 178 West.
24. See Irwin, *Colour Terms*, 135–39.
25. Hom. *Od.* 18.321–39; 19.65–95.
26. Hom. *Od.* 17.212–60, 369–73; 20.172–84, 255; 21.175–83, 265–68; 22.135–52, 159–200, 474–77.
27. See R. B. Rutherford, *Homer: Odyssey Books XIX and XX* (Cambridge, 1992), on 19.406–9.
28. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir*. My criticisms of certain aspects of this paper do not diminish my deep admiration for the work of this fine scholar and great man.
29. For the varied and mostly fragmentary sources (which sometimes give the alternative names Melanthios and Xanthios), see Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir*, 156 n. 19.
30. Cf. *Suda* s.v. 'Μελαναιγίς Διόνυσος,' reporting that Dionysos was worshipped under this epithet at Eleutherai (in the border area between Attica and Boeotia); Nonn. *Dion.* 27.301–7, with F. Vian, ed., *Nonnos de Panopolis: Les Dionysiaques*, XXV–XXIX (Paris, 1990), nn. on 27.301–3 and 304–7.
31. Cf. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir*, 160.
32. Several sources for the Melanthos myth explicitly connect it with the founding of the Apatouria (in view of the deception, ἀπάτη, practised by Melanthos). The Apatouria was an Ionian festival featuring sacrifices on the part of those making various "passages," e.g. those entering the *ephebeia*.

33. For variants of the myths about Atalante and Melanion, see Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, 335–39.
34. Cf. Sommerstein, *Lysistrata*, n. on 785.
35. The same is true of the follow-up article in which Vidal-Naquet reconsidered the argument of *The Black Hunter*, returning briefly at one point to the *Lysistrata* chorus (“The Black Hunter Revisited,” *PCPhS* 32 (1986): 126–44, at 128).
36. Aristoph. *Birds* 1548; *PCG* Phrynichus fr. 19.
37. See M. Platnauer, *Euripides: Iphigeneia in Tauris*, edition and commentary (Oxford, 1938), 32; E. R. Dodds, *Euripides: Bacchae* (Oxford, 1960), on Ba. 367 (cf. on 508).
38. Apollod. 1.9.12. On myths of Melampous, see Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, 185–88, 312–13.
39. Hom. *Od.* 11.288–97; 15.225–42.
40. Hes. fr. 37 M-W; Herodot. 9.34; Apollod. 2.2.2.
41. *FGrH* 485 F 9.
42. See R. Buxton, “Blindness and Limits: Sophokles and the Logic of Myth,” *JHS* 100 (1980): 22–37, at 26–30.
43. E.g. Apollod. 2.1.4.
44. Hom. *Il.* 16.234–35.
45. H. W. Parke, *The Oracles of Zeus* (Oxford, 1967), 8–9. Parke was followed by Erika Simon (“Melampous,” *LIMC* VI.2, 405–10, at 405), and then by Madeleine Jost, “La légende de Mélampous en Argolide et dans le Péloponnèse,” in *Polydipsion Argos. Argos de la fin des palais mycéniens à la constitution de l’État classique* (Paris, 1992), ed. M. Piérart, 173–84, at 183.
46. A. B. Cook, “Descriptive Animal Names in Greece,” *CR* 8 (1894): 381–85, at 385.
47. Fr. 133, 4 M–W.

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## Chapter Two

### Dark Skin and Dark Deeds

#### *Danaides and Aigyptioi in a Culture of Light*

Efimia D. Karakantza

The daughters of Danaos and the sons of Aigyptos have dark skin (*melan*); so says Aeschylus in his tragedy the *Suppliants*, the only surviving play of his trilogy<sup>1</sup> dealing with the story of the fifty maidens and their fifty suitors. Using the color of their skin as a starting point we explore the following major issues related to or originating from this notion of color. First, the many negative connotations generally implied by *melas* in literary texts; second, we examine the paradox of why, although sharing the same color, only the male cousins are seen by Aeschylus in an unfavourable light relating them to violence, barbarism and *otherness*. On the other hand, the Danaids—with whom we sympathize in the surviving Aeschylean tragedy<sup>2</sup>—are linked with death and decay in a complex manner involving mythical narratives and ritual; their ‘darkest’ deed is the mass slaughter of their husbands while their introduction of Thesmophoria into Greek *poleis* connects them (again) with death, decay and the Underworld. Finally, as the story of the Danaids and the Aigyptioi evolves we realize—with the help of textual sources—that the negative exoticism of the dark skinned family is wiped out as it becomes integrated into the Greek *poleis*—an attempt to dissolve symbolically the darkness into a ‘culture of light.’<sup>3</sup> The overall examination involves issues of constructing and dealing with ethnic, gender and civic identity.<sup>4</sup>

#### FAMILY HISTORY AND DARK COLOR

A short excursus into family history will help us locate the genealogical relationship of the family to a remote Greek origin *and* their parallel connection

with Egypt, Libya and Phoenicia. Io, an Argive princess, becomes an object of Zeus's desire. Hera's inevitable jealousy pursues her through Europe and Asia until, upon reaching Egypt, a mere touch by Zeus is enough for her to give birth to Epaphos. Epaphos, her nearly parthenogenetic son, becomes the king of Egypt and marries a daughter of the Nile; their daughter is Libya whose sons are Agenor and Belos; Agenor reigns over Phoenicia and Belos remains in Egypt where he marries another daughter of the Nile and begets the twins Aigyptos and Danaos. Danaos is sent by his brother to reign over Libya, while Aigyptos keeps Arabia which he names after himself, Egypt, the country that thus far was called 'the country of the dark-footed men' (*Melampodon choron*).<sup>5</sup>

This family history is far more than a simple catalogue of genealogical information. It involves several familiar preoccupations often manifested in mythical narratives: the origin of regions on the periphery of the Hellenic world (we learn how Phoenicia, Libya, Egypt found their royal houses); a specific line is drawn to link this world to a distinct Greek origin, in the form and shape of a first *parthenos*, Io, who gives birth to royal rulers; and within this narrative framework a first attempt is made to demarcate the Greek (and Greekness) from the *other* (non Greek), using the characteristic trait of a different color, *melan*, black.<sup>6</sup> The notion of color reappears in the text of Aeschylus in connection with the history of this family: the maidens, are 'a black, sun-smitten race'<sup>7</sup> (μελανθές/ ήλιόκτυπον γένος, *Supp.* 154–57); the black limbs of the sons of Aigyptos show from under their white robes (πρέπουσι δ' ἄνδρες νήιοι μελαγχίμοις γυίοισι λευκῶν ἐκ πεπλωμάτων ἰδεῖν, the men on board are plainly seen, their swart limbs showing from out their white attire, *Supp.* 719–20) and the army they have brought with them are black (μελαγχίμῳ σὺν στρατῷ *Supp.* 745). This skin color denotes difference, but not as yet racism. As Snowden<sup>8</sup> claims ancient Greeks and Romans lived in an era before color prejudice; however, difference built upon the notion of dark skin helps create one of the many constructions of *otherness* resulting in the much stated antithesis of Greeks and barbarians; an antithesis serving to create the notion of self definition for the Greeks by excluding what seems dissonant to their proper anthropogeography.<sup>9</sup> Our argument requires bearing in mind the many forms of the *other*. Resorting to the familiar Herodotean statement it is language, blood, religion, cult and *mores* (αὐτίς δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, ἐὼν ὁμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον, καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἡθεὰ τε ὁμότροπα, 8.144.14–17) that mark Greekness; to which we should add the rejection of orientalism, effeminacy, monstrosity, irrationality and political incorrectness.

## DARKNESS

Thus, dark skin is a conspicuous feature of *otherness*, but in the Aeschylean text things (as might be expected) become quite complicated. For, although both the Danaids and their cousins are dark skinned, color alone does not account for downright barbarism; the Aigyptioi alone are barbarians. They *behave* like barbarians, because they violate the rights of the maidens and resort to sheer violence to achieve their demands. Consequently, they do not share the commonly accepted Greek moral values and when asked to respect the rights of the gods they scornfully reply that those are not the gods of their homeland (*Supp.* 881–82, 910). This is interesting because both they and the maidens share a common Greek origin: the origin the Danaids appeal to when, as suppliants, they seek the help of king Pelasgos, claiming that they belong to the same *genos*.<sup>10</sup> The Aigyptioi, in contrast, seem to have erased any traces of their Greek past and exemplify what is non Greek, as they are insolent, violent, impure and impious; ‘abominable is the furious race of Aegyptos and insatiable of war’ (ἐξῶλές ἐστι μάργον Αἰγύπτου γένος μάχης τ’ ἄπληστον, *Supp.* 742–43); ‘evil minded and deceitful-purposed they are, with impure minds, like ravens not caring a whit for altars’ (οὐλόφρονες δ’ ἐκεῖνοι, δολομήτιδες/ δυσάγνοις φρεσίν, κόρακες ὥστε, βωμῶν ἀλέγοντες οὐδέν, *Supp.* 750–53); ‘maddened, with unholy rage, shameless like dogs, giving no ear to the gods’ (περίφρονες δ’ ἄγαν ἀνιέρω μένει/ μεμαργωμένοι κυνοθρασεῖς, θεῶν/ οὐδέν ἐπαίοντες, *Supp.* 757–60). The herald of the Aigyptioi threatens the Danaids with remarkable violence: ‘hair torn, brand marks, bloody cutting off of heads’ (τιλμοὶ τιλμοὶ καὶ στιγμοί,/ πολυαίμων φόνιος/ ἀποκοπὰ κρατός, *Supp.* 839–41); ‘soon you will go in the ship, willy-nilly, by force’ (σὺ δ’ ἐν ναῖ ναῖ βάσῃ/ τάχα θέλεος ἀθέλεος,/ βία βία τε πολλὰ φρουῖδα, *Supp.* 860–63). The young maidens cry out in despair: ‘he carries me to the sea, like a spider, step by step, a nightmare, a black nightmare!’ (ἄλαδ’ ἄγει,/ ἄραχνος ὥς, βάδην./ ὄναρ ὄναρ μέλαν,/ ὀτοτοτοτοῖ, *Supp.* 888–91).

At this point an interesting issue arises. Dark color may not be linked with racial prejudice but it carries with it connotations of evil, sorrow and death.<sup>11</sup> *Melas* is Hades, *melan* is the blood that is impure or springs out from fatal wound (ἀλλ’ ὁμοῦ μέλας/ ὄμβρος χαλάζης αἵματός τ’ ἐτέγγετο, Soph. *OT* 1278–79). Arrows are black especially if they are dipped in the bile of the monster of Lerna and bring death (μελαγχόλους/ ἔβαψεν ἰοὺς θρέμμα Λερναίας ὕδρας, Soph. *Tr.* 573–34, ἰὸς μέλας, Soph. *Tr.* 717); the passage to Hades is black (τὸν ἐς Ἄϊδα μελάγχρωτα πορθμὸν αἶζω τάλας;, Eur. *Hec* 1105–6:) and Hades has black hair (Ἀΐδας ὁ μελαγχαίτας θεός, Eur. *Alc.* 438–39:); the *keres* of death are black (μέλαιναν κῆρ’ ἐπ’ ὄμμασιν βαλὼν, Eur. *Ph.* 950), Eumenides are black (μελάγχρωτες Εὐμενίδες, Eur. *Or.* 321),

sorrow is black (κάρα ξυρήκες καὶ πέπλους μελαγχίμους ἔχουσιν, Eur. *Ph.* 372–73); mourning is black (Thetis when she mourns over her ill fated son ‘took a dark-hued veil, than which was no raiment more black,’<sup>12</sup> κάλυμμι’ ἔλε δῖα θεάων/ κυάνεον, τοῦ δ’ οὗ τι μελάντερον ἔπλετο ἔσθος, Hom. *Il.* 24.93–94); black animals are sacrificed to the gods of the Underworld and the offerings to the dead are black (μελάγχμιον/ σφάγιον, Eur. *El.* 513–14). In short, there are a multitude of cases where dark color is associated<sup>13</sup> with evil, be it actions, thoughts, situations, creatures, places or gods.

When considering the narratives about the Danaids from various sources, many actions surface that are registered in the deepest realm of darkness, first and foremost the slaughter en masse of the young Aegyptians. Why the young maidens were so repulsed by the idea of marriage to their cousins is a matter to which no definite answer has yet been found; violence inherent in marriage has been suggested convincingly as underlying the action of the Danaids.<sup>14</sup> So, forty eight maidens<sup>15</sup> on their wedding night murder their young grooms in their bedrooms when the latter are naked and helpless, perhaps just after consummating their marriages. The Danaids inflict a cruel, undignified death on their husbands, undeserved by any man. However, mass murder goes way beyond any individual and personal hatred and it constitutes an excess inevitably affecting a whole community. The closest parallel to this murder is the ‘Lemnian evil’, the murder of the entire male population of the island of Lemnos (including young boys) at the hands of the women of the island seeking vengeance for the sexual contempt they experienced from their husbands. As a result, the life of the community freezes; the whole island is inhabited by women only, sexual activity ceases, children are not produced and life is threatened with extinction. The unnatural social and sexual order is reflected in the new fire ritual that is celebrated every year on the island: all fires are extinguished and all forms of activity (including sexual) cease, until new fire from the holy island of Delos arrives.<sup>16</sup>

In the case of the Danaids, normality is not restored so palpably. Murder is followed by the beheading of the corpses and the burial of the severed parts in Lerna.<sup>17</sup> The bodies are given proper burial just outside Argos, or —according to Pausanias<sup>18</sup>—the heads are buried in the acropolis of Argos and the bodies at Lerna. The challenge is to resolve the topography of the burial, to consider the two opposite poles: the lake of Lerna and the civic order of the acropolis.<sup>19</sup> Why is Lerna involved in the story? Lerna is a place with long history of continuous habitation in the prehistoric times<sup>20</sup> and of the religious veneration of many deities, Athena, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Demeter and Dionysos; for the last two mysteries *in situ* are attested.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the topography of the region has a sacred precinct where Pausanias saw statues of Demeter Prosumna, of Dionysos Saotes and of Aphro-

dite; this last statue was said to be an offering of the Danaids.<sup>22</sup> The topography of the place is complemented by the spring of Amymone, the lurking place of Hydra, and the lake Alcyonian, a legendary path to the Underworld that was used by Dionysos to bring back Semele.<sup>23</sup> There is also a place, not far from the river Erasinus (one boundary of the region of Lerna) that Hades used for descending to his infernal kingdom after the rape of Kore.<sup>24</sup> This dense mythical spectrum correlates with the infernal and sinister character of the place. In harmony with this character comes the Hydra of Lerna, the hydrophilic many-headed monster for which Lerna is better known in legend. Heracles exterminated the monster that had the power to endlessly regenerate—or even multiply—its severed heads. The hero meets his own death years later by the poison of this same monster. Lerna is a marshy land associated with swamps engendering disease and death and also a symbolic passage to the Underworld.<sup>25</sup> It seems appropriate that the Danaids should bury the heads of their decapitated husbands there, an action that inevitably brings to mind the beheading of the many heads of Hydra—some even say that there were fifty of them!<sup>26</sup>

As the Lemnian evils are crystallized in the proverb *Lemnia kaka* so are the evils of Lerna in the proverb *Lerne kakon*: Zenobius records that ‘the proverb derives from a story. It is said that Danaos buried the heads of the Aigyptioi in that place; either the proverb derives from that unlawful action (*paranomematos*), or King Danaos ordered that the heads are put there so as the Aigyptioi pay for their insolence.’<sup>27</sup> Lerna, in this proverbial use, is the place where the community dumped the evils they needed to be rid of, keeping the civic centre as pure as possible. On the other hand, if we consider the tradition recorded by Pausanias of the heads being buried on the acropolis then the civic center engulfs and deals with the miasma risking, of course, a possible pollution of the community.<sup>28</sup> Either way, the Danaids oscillate between the outer and the inner space, the monstrous and the civic. We shall see that the legends built around, and the ritual connected to the Danaids exemplify this double movement that keeps the two poles separate and initiates the gradual integration of the maidens into the civic center expunging their exoticism and dark deeds.

The connection of the story of the Danaids with water as a means to connect with evil and death (through the marshy land of Lerna) may be reflected in the symbolic torture that late Antiquity attributed to the daughters of Danaos,<sup>29</sup> who after death acquire the sad privilege of inclusion in the chorus of the sinners of Antiquity; their task is to carry water throughout eternity to fill up a *tetremenon pithon* (a leaky jar);<sup>30</sup> a futile toil representing the punishment for egregious murders or the very process of purging for those crimes.<sup>31</sup>

## LIGHT AT LAST?

However, in the story of the Danaids, water also indicates the bright side of life. No civic community can be founded except near life sustaining water. In another line of the story of the Danaids (recorded in Hesiod<sup>32</sup> and Aeschylus<sup>33</sup> down to Apollodorus<sup>34</sup> and Pausanias<sup>35</sup>) King Danaos had to send his daughters to find water for Argos, since Poseidon, enraged at not being allotted the city of Argos, had dried up all the sources of fresh water. Survival is threatened. The daughters set off to find water but only Amymone (the ‘blameless’?)<sup>36</sup> managed, at the cost of her virginity, to get the much needed springs from Poseidon; in fact, the god points to the springs of Lerna, which in this version are fresh and a source of renewal of civic life.<sup>37</sup> Not only does the life of Argos continue but the union of maiden and god produces Nauplios, a culture hero who has a controversial relationship to light.<sup>38</sup> He is rated as one of the inventors of navigation and founded beacon fires to help the army returning from Troy or—according to a tradition recorded by Apollodorus<sup>39</sup>—he set false lights on Cape Kaphereus to lure the Greek ships into the breakers, taking revenge for the death of his son, Palamedes, through the machinations of Odysseus.

Returning to the Danaids, the main act of humanity that sheds a different light on the darkness of their story is that of Hypermestra, the daughter of Danaos who spares the life of Lynceus, either because he respects her virginity or because she has fallen in love with him. In either case, Lynceus is saved and takes refuge on a nearby hill to await the torch signal that will enable him to return to the city in safety;<sup>40</sup> to commemorate those events a torch ritual is established in his honor. Lynceus, in some versions of the story, kills his father-in-law but in others he reigns over Argos with him, initiating a new dynasty of Argive kings. In line with ideas of reconciliation and progress in civic life, King Danaos decides to remarry his daughters and announces a foot race to select the best from the suitors. Indeed, the daughters remarry after being cleansed by Hermes and Athena,<sup>41</sup> and engender a whole new generation that replaces the old generation of the Pelasgians, the pre-Hellenes, with the Danaoi, the proto-Hellenes. Thus, not only is civic life revived, in a parallel to the happenings on Lemnos, but Greek life finds its way through negation and *otherness* to establish itself. But because there is no linear progression in the history of culture, the Egyptian origin comes once more into foreground in an interesting piece of information provided by Herodotus: when the Danaids came to Argos they brought with them the ritual of Thesmophoria and taught it to the women of Pelasgoi;<sup>42</sup> from where the celebration spread to all Greek *poleis*.



### DARKNESS AND LIGHT

Thesmophoria is an all-female celebration in honor of Demeter in which, in all probability, only married women participated. The festival enjoyed a pan Hellenic status confirming even in far off colonies the Greek way of celebrating the goddess. Piglets, or effigies of piglets, and of male and female genitalia were thrown into a chasm as offerings to the goddess. Later, women (pure for three days) would descend and retrieve the rotten remains and place them on the altars. It is, also, said that there were snakes at the bottom of the chasm that ate most of what was thrown down. It seems obvious that women were attempting a symbolic entrance into the Underworld associated with the issues of death and decay, the unspeakable and the forbidden. It could be said that the ritual re-enacts symbolically the mythical path to the decaying, monstrous and deadly environment of the lake Lerna, where the women buried the heads of their decapitated husbands. It was believed that the rotten remains of the offerings, when mixed with the seeds for the coming sowing season, ensure the fertility of the land. The contact with the underworld, and the subsequent control of the well being of the community, gave women a powerful, privileged status transcending their designated social status. In the realm of the imaginary, powerful women pose deadly threats to men, who become the helpless victims of female hostility. The unprecedented power and hostility of women towards men is reflected in the incident of *sphaktriai* in Cyrene, their faces smeared with blood and swords in their hands, who castrated king Battos, the founder of Cyrene, for coming to spy on their secret ritual.<sup>43</sup> In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai* the kin of Euripides is threatened with death by the female congregation. Thus, in the stories related to the Danaids and the Thesmophoria men are threatened, castrated or killed and decapitated leading right to the heart of both ritual and myth. And as Versnel rightly stated, ritual and myth bear similarities in structure and atmosphere rather than in one-to-one analogy of details between narratives and actions.<sup>44</sup> And both, myth and ritual, connect to symbolic structures that pervade the edifice of the social and political life of a Greek *polis*. Burkert states that at the core of the festival Thesmophoria are the contact with the underworld, the issues of decay and death, the extreme hostility to men, the dissolution of the family, the separation of sexes and the constitution of a society of women.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, those are also the main issues in the story of the Danaids and—not surprisingly—of the Lemnian women as well.

Looking now at the last piece of evidence that contributes to our argument: in some Greek *poleis* the Thesmophoria were celebrated in remote agricultural settings; in some others, just outside the city walls, but in some *poleis* the celebration took place in the civic center (the agora or the acrop-



olis).<sup>46</sup> What constitutes the reversal of civic order represented by the festival is not excluded from the community but instead it is included and incorporated in the center of the political space of many Greek cities.<sup>47</sup> (Perhaps, now, the burial of the heads of the Aigyptioi in the acropolis of Argos makes sense!) The temporary negation of civic order inhabits this same order that it questions. In myth, the extreme negation of things (violence, murder, mutilation) turn into confirmation of the opposite in a variety of ways; the Danaids remarry, Hypermestra spares her husband, Amyone finds springs for Argos. All narrative threads point to the same idea: civic life in Argos is re-established, a new vigorous dynasty replaces the old, proto-Hellenes succeed the pre-Hellenes, and women take their traditional place within the house. In ritual, continuation of the life of the community is linked again with women, on whose power the fertility of the land depends. The introduction of Thesmophoria reaffirms in ritual what has been articulated in narratives.

### SUMMARY

To go back to where we started, the dark-skinned daughters of Danaos pursued by the much hated sons of Aigyptos, set out for the long journey to the homeland of their distant ancestress; with them they brought hatred, blood and *melana thanaton*. The evil of their deeds far exceed in scale any known action in myth save the massacre carried out by the Lemnian women. To this atmosphere of evil and death is added the sinister burial of the heads of the young men in the dark place of Lerna, a place associated with the monstrous and the deadly. This line of the story sends the Danaids into the Underworld, eternally tormented by an impossible task. However, darkness contrasts with light as the Danaids get integrated into the *polis* and become Hellenized. What in my title I named ‘the culture of light’ points to the endless Greek effort to establish a comprehensive system of life devoid of darkness—a notion that comprises mainly the *other*, the politically incorrect, the barbarous, the monstrous, the effeminate, what comes from the East, the South, from above or from below. In the myth of the Danaids the *other* is identified with the darkest realm of evil. But the pressing need to establish order and to re-constitute civic life in a Greek *polis* allows other powers to emerge ‘towards light’ bringing about a synthesis of the opposites: the sun-smitted race of the maidens from the fringes of the Nile that are paradigmatic anti-wives turn into respectable wives who produce a new line of Argive kings. The long journey of the exotic maidens ends at the heart of a Greek *polis* where darkness aims at dissolving into family life and civic order.

## NOTES

1. The *Suppliants* (probably in 463 BCE) belong to a trilogy, the other titles being the *Aigyptioi* and the *Danaides* followed by the satyr play *Amymone*. In a possible reconstruction of the plot of the other two tragedies, the *Aigyptioi* is the drama where the sons of Aigyptos are killed by their wives and the *Danaides* the drama that deals with the aftermath of the murder leading to final reestablishment of normality and family life with the intervention of Aphrodite and a new set of marriages to Greek suitors (as Pindar records in *Pythian* 9, 112–16). A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus' Supplices. Play and Trilogy* (Cambridge, 20062), 163, 223–33; R. P. Winnington-Ingram, “The Danaid Trilogy of Aeschylus”, *JHS* 81 (1961): 143; B. M. Thomas, *Negotiable Identities. The Interpretation of Color, Gender and Ethnicity in Aeschylus' Suppliants*. PhD Dissertation (Columbus Ohio, 1998), 47–59; A. Lesky, *Η Τραγική Ποίηση των Αρχαίων Ελλήνων Ιστορία*, vol. 1, transl. N. Χουρμουζιάδης (Athens, 19902), 169–84; see also A. Diamantopoulos, “The Danaid Tetralogy of Aeschylus”, *JHS* 77.2 (1957): 220–29; H. F. Johansen, *Aeschylus The Suppliants. Text, Introduction, Critical Apparatus, Translation* (Scholia by Ole Smith), *Classica et Mediaevalia Disserationes VII* (Copenhagen, 1970); P. Sandin, *Aeschylus' Supplices. Introduction and Commentaery on vv 1–523* (Lund, 2005).

2. It seems probable that, following the evolution of the story, the Danaids in the second Aeschylean play would have been unfavourably represented by the playwright to match the actions and thoughts of women about to murder their husbands.

3. Here as in the title of my paper I paraphrase the title of the book by Eleftheria Bernidaki-Aldous *Blindness in a Culture of Light* (New York, 1990) where the author explores the cases of physical blindness in the Greek culture that claims a privileged relationship to light as many textual evidence prove; light stood for life, Hades perceived as darkness itself (Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness*, 19); light is also closely associated with other very important ideas that connect to public life and public recognition (Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness*, 20–21); ‘conversely, the polluted and those who have cause to be ashamed have no right (or desire) to be in contact with the most ‘holy’ of things, the ἀγνὸν φῶς’ (Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness*, 24). Of course, many more are the categories that are connected to light and darkness as it will be shown in the course of the present paper.

4. Thomas, *Negotiable Identities*, 35, 73, 142.

5. Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.1.4; *Scholia in Iliadem* 1.42.11–30. Pieces of the ‘complete’ story are found in various texts; the wanderings of Io, for example, are related in much detail by Prometheus to Io herself in *Prometheus Bound* (700–876).

6. The notion of color is used to denote not only ethnic identity but gender identity as well; both notions construct a complex system of defining identity in the Aeschylean tragedy, Thomas, *Negotiable Identities*, 73ff, 142ff. Both identities are important in the *Suppliants* as there is a constant interplay between the two, although we gradually move away from ethnicity to focus on gender issues and the manipulation of the feminine status within society.

7. All translations from the *Suppliants* are by Johansen, *Aeschylus The Suppliants* (n. 1).

8. F. M. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge Mass, 1970), 169; also F. M. Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice. The Ancient View of the Blacks*. (Cambridge Mass, 1983), Thomas, *Negotiable Identities*, 75–86; J. Coleman and C. Walz (eds.), *Greeks and Barbarians. Essays on the Interactions between Greeks and non-Greeks in Antiquity and the Consequences for Eurocentrism* (Bethesda, Maryland, 1970), 195.

9. ‘Alterity has come to mean in particular the condition of difference and exclusion suffered by an “out” group against which a dominant group and its individual members define themselves negatively in ideally polarized opposition’, P. Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (Oxford, 1993), 2 (see also 38–41); or as Hartog puts it in the ‘Rhetoric of Otherness’ (F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, transl. by J. Lloyd, (Berkeley, 1988)): ‘to speak of the “other” is to postulate it as different, to postulate that there are two terms, a and b, and that a is not b. For example, there are Greeks and there are non-Greeks. But the difference only becomes interesting when a and b become part of a single system’: 212; see also F. Hartog, *Memories of Odysseus; Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece*, transl. by J. Lloyd (Edinburgh, 2001), 54: ‘barbarian is above all a political term’; P. Vasunia, *The Gift of the Nile. Hellenizing Egypt from Aeschylus to Alexander* (Berkeley, 2001), 6: ‘The discourse on Egypt is so wide-ranging and is implicated in so many differing intellectual, social and religious concerns that it gives the student of culture the opportunity to discern the modalities that govern ancient Greek thought on the barbarian’; E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian. Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989, paperback edition 1991), 3–13; Coleman, *Greeks and Barbarians, Interactions*, 176–78; P. Georges, *Barbarian Asia and the Greek Experience; From the Archaic Period to the Age of Xenophon* (Baltimore, 1994), xiii; R. Miles on the subject supports that: ‘identities, both individual and collective, are not a set of essential characteristics, but are the ascribed or recognized characteristics which a person or group is agreed to possess’ and ‘the construction of identity is, at its heart, a matter of an *imaginaire* rather than a fixed *reality*’ (“Introduction: Constructing Ideas in Late Antiquity” in *Constructing Ideas in Late Antiquity*, ed. R. Miles (London, 1999), 5, 4); Thomas, *Negotiable Identities*, 35, 73, 142.

10. Thomas, *Negotiable Identities*, 93–107.

11. Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice*, 82–85.

12. Translation by A. T. Murray (LCL)

13. Dark color is associated *mainly*, but not exclusively with negative ideas. R. Buxton in his paper in the present volume (pp. 00) supports the view that ‘the data from cult and ritual is *broadly* in line with the strong polarity: *melas* negative, *leukos* positive; outside the sphere of cult and ritual, though, one should bear in mind *the context* in which a name bearing the notion of *melas* is found’; he mainly refers to personal names (Melantho, Melanthios, Melanion, Melanthos, Melampous). N. Marinatos kindly suggested to me that the Apis bull, the sacred animal, is black (Herodotus 3.28.5) (here, in this ritualistic context, black is sacred) and that Herodotus also describes the Indians as black (3.101.1) –even their semen is black. Of course, this is a case of *otherness* in an ethnic context that brings us back to the argument about *melas* in the myth of Danaids in the course of the present paper. I think that the overall evi-

dence about color is overwhelmingly in favour of the association of dark (and black) with negative connotations.

14. R. Seaford, "The Tragic Wedding", *JHS* 107 (1987): 110–19; M. Detienne, "The Danaids among Themselves: Marriage Founded upon Violence" in *The Writing of Orpheus. Greek Myth in Cultural Contact*, ed. M. Detienne, transl. J. Lloyd (Baltimore, 2003), 40: 'The marriage that fills the Danaids with such horror is described in the Argive story as a limitless war, fueled by destructive sexual desire, in which the rights of males is imposed by the naked violence with which a predator treats its prey or a master his slave. It is pure physical violence, perpetrated by physical force, and made even more extreme and unbearable by the very proximity of the partners, who are parallel cousins, blood siblings: blood kin who make their own blood flow.'; also E. Benveniste ("La légende des Danaïdes", *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 136 (1949), 134–38) claims that the refusal of Danaids rests upon the prohibition of marriage between parallel cousins that the laws of exogamy considered as incest; or perhaps they are impelled by an acute feeling of misandry which links to the Amazon like character of the Danaids reported in some versions, such as in Melanippides (n. 37). The Danaids' fanatical chastity is due to the love for their father which needs to be transferred to husband (R. Caldwell, "The Psychology of Aeschylus' *Supplikes*", *Arethusa* 7.1 (1974): 63); Thomas, *Negotiable Identities*, 60–72; J. K. MacKinnon ("The Reason for the Danaids' Flight", *CQ* 28.1 (1978): 80) points to an 'enforced marriage' pursued by Aegyptus' sons as hunters or predators, which is hubristic and contrary to *themis*.

15. All maidens with the exception of Hypermestra and Amymone; the former spares her husband, the latter seems to be involved in another strand of the story that makes her the consort of Poseidon.

16. G. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths* (London, 1974), 230, 252–53; W. Burkert, "Jason, Hypsipyle and the new fire at Lemnos. A study in Myth and Ritual", *CQ* 20 (1970): 1–16; W. Burkert, *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, transl. by P. Bing (Berkeley, 1983), 190–96.

17. Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.1.5

18. 2.24.2

19. P. Sauzeau, *Les partages d'Argos. Sur les Pas des Danaïdes* (Paris, 2005), 302.

20. Sauzeau, *Les partages d'Argos*, 174.

21. Sauzeau, *Les partages d'Argos*, 202, 216, 297.

22. Pausanias 2. 37, 1–2.

23. Pausanias 2. 37, 4–5.

24. Pausanias 2. 36, 7.

25. Sauzeau, *Les partages d'Argos*, 181.

26. Palaephatus Mythographer *De incredibilibus* 38.1–4: Λέγεται καὶ περὶ τῆς ὕδρας τῆς Λερναίας ὅτι ὄφιν ἦν ἔχον πεντήκοντα κεφαλὰς, σῶμα δὲ ἓν, καὶ ἐπειδὴ αὐτῆς ἀφέλοιτο μίαν Ἡρακλῆς κεφαλὴν, δύο ἀνεφύοντο; Seazeau, *Les Partages d'Argos*, 183, 301.

27. Λέρνη κακῶν: παροιμία τίς ἐστὶν Ἀργολικὴ, ἣν ἀποδιοπομπούμενοι ἔλεγον. Τὰ γὰρ ἀποκαθάρματα εἰς τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ἐνέβαλλον, διὰ τὸ σύμμικτον εἶναι καὶ

παντοδαπὸν ὄχλον ἔχειν. Ἀκριβέστερον δ' ἂν τις τὴν παροιμίαν φαίη ἀπὸ τινος ἱστορίας διαδεδοσθαι. Δαναὸς γὰρ ἱστορεῖται τὰς τῶν Αἰγυπτιαδῶν κεφαλὰς αὐτόθι καταθεῖναι· καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ παρανομήματος ἡ παροιμία ἐλέχθη. Ἴσως δὲ καὶ εἰς ὕβριν αὐτῶν ὁ Δαναὸς ἐκελεύσατο ἐκεῖ τὰ καθάρσια βάλλεσθαι. [ἢ ἀπὸ τῆς ὕδρας τῆς πολυκεφάλου ἐν αὐτῇ γενομένης.] (Zenobius *Epitome collectionum Lucilli Tarrhaei et Didymi* 4.86.1 – 10).

28. Or perhaps the heads functioned as apotropaic, as did the head of Medusa in the agora of Argos (Sauzeau, *Les partages d'Argos*, 302).

29. R. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece. The Contexts of Mythology* (Cambridge, 1994), 111.

30. This association of the legend of the water carriers in Hades with the Danaids occurred quite late, in Imperial Roman Age. The common proverbial use of the nameless motif of the pierced pithos (Xen. *Oec* 7.40.2–4 οὐχ ὄρᾳς, ἔφην ἐγώ, οἱ εἰς τὸν τετρημένον πίθον ἀντλεῖν λεγόμενοι ὡς οἰκτίρονται, ὅτι μάτην πονεῖν δοκοῦσι;) during the classical period shows that the legend was widely spread and it stands for futile toil (ματαιοπονία). When Pausanias described the *Nekyia* of Polygnotos in Delphi he probably did not think of the Danaids as identified with the women who carried water in *tetremenoi pithoi* (E. Keuls, *The Water Carriers in Hades. A Study of Catharsis through Toil in Classical Antiquity*. (Amsterdam, 1974), 25–26, 43). See also Zenobius: Αἱ δὲ κοιμωμένους τοὺς νυμφίους ἀπέκτειναν, πλὴν Ὑπερμνήστρας. Αὕτη γὰρ Λυγκέα διέσωσε, παρθένον αὐτὴν φυλάζαντα. Λέγεται οὖν διὰ τοῦτο τὰς Δαναΐδας, ἄνευ Ὑπερμνήστρας, ἐν Αἴδου κατακριθῆναι εἰς τετρημένον πίθον ὕδωρ ἀντλεῖν (*Epitome collectionum Lucilli Tarrhaei et Didymi* 2.6.23–28).

31. Keuls, *The Water Carriers in Hades*, 71–75, 169.

32. Ἄργος ἄνυδρον ἐὼν Δανααὶ θέσαν Ἄργος ἔνυδρον./ Ἄργος ἄνυδρον ἐὼν Δαναὸς ποίησεν ἔνυδρον (Hesiod *Fragmenta* 128.1–2).

33. The satyr play of the trilogy *Amynone*.

34. *Bibl.* 2.14.2

35. 2.37.1; 2.37.4.

36. Sauzeau, *Les partages d'Argos*, 198–99.

37. Ποσειδῶνος δὲ ἐπιφανέντος ὁ Σάτυρος μὲν ἔφυγεν, Ἀμυμώνη δὲ τούτῳ συνευνάζεται, καὶ αὐτῇ Ποσειδῶν τὰς ἐν Λέρνῃ πηγὰς ἐμήνυσεν, Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.14.4–2.15.1.; Detienne, (“The Danaids among Themselves”: 41–46) states that when Danaides landed at Argolis they discovered a land in a state of drought, and not of abundance of water that the presence of the rivers Inachus, Asterion and Cephissus bear witness to the time of the origins of the city of Argos and its first man Phoroneus. Perhaps, this line of the myth is connected also with the martial Amazon-type Danaides recorded in sources such as in the fifth-century dithyramb by Melannipides of Melos (fr. 1.1–4 οὐ γὰρ ἄνθρώπων φόρευν μορφὰν ἐνεῖδος† οὐδὲ ἴταν αὐτὰν† γυναικεῖαν ἔχον, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀρμάτεσσι διφρούχοις ἐγυμνάζοντ' ἂν' εὐήλι' ἄλσεα πολλάκις θήραις φρένα τερπόμεναι, Athen. 14.651), or the post-Homeric epic *Danaïs* (fr. 1 Kinkel).

38. In Sophocles' lost tragedy *Nauplios* the hero is ranked among those who have revealed the movements of stars, helped navigators and, by using beacon fires, made hidden things evident (στρατοῦ φρυκτωρίαν ἔδειξε κἀνέφηγεν οὐ δεδειγμένα).

39. Apoll. *Epitome* 6.7–11, note 2 p. 247.

40. The name of the hero become later a cognomen of Apollo (Sauzeau, *Les part-ages d'Argos*, 226, 311)

41. Apoll. *Bibl.* 2.22.4–5 καὶ αὐτὰς ἐκάθηραν Ἀθηνᾶ τε καὶ Ἑρμῆς Διὸς κελεύσαντος.

42. When the Dorians invaded Peloponnesus the celebration vanished except among the Arcadians who preserved it because they were not forced out of their country (αἱ Δαναοῦ θυγατέρες ἦσαν αἱ τὴν τελετὴν ταύτην ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐξαγαγοῦσαι καὶ διδάσασαι τὰς Πελασγιάτιδας γυναῖκας· μετὰ δὲ ἐξαναστάσης [πάσης] Πελοποννήσου ὑπὸ Δωριέων ἐξαπώλετο ἡ τελετή, οἱ δὲ ὑπολειφθέντες Πελοποννησίων καὶ οὐκ ἐξαναστάντες Ἀρκάδες διέσφζον αὐτὴν μῶνοι, Herod. 2.171.7–12)

43. Claudius Aelianus Sophist *Fr* 44.10–15: μετὰ τῆς ἱερᾶς στολῆς ὅλαι τελοῦμεναι μυστικῶς σφάκτριαι καταλειφθεῖσαι. καὶ αἴρουσαι τὰ ξίφη γυμνὰ καὶ αὐται, καταπλέας ἔχουσαι τοῦ αἵματος τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα μέντοι (ἦσαν δὲ ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν χρισάμεναι), ἀθρόαι ὑφ' ἐνὶ συνθήματι ἐπὶ τὸν Βάττον ἦξαν, ἵνα αὐτὸν ἀφέλωται τοῦ ἔτι εἶναι ἄνδρα.

44. H. S. Versnel, “Greek Myth and Ritual: the Case of Kronos” in *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, ed. J. Bremmer (London, 1988), 147: ‘<the myth and ritual complex of Kronos and the Kronia is> an example of correspondence between myth and rite in “structure and atmosphere”, and in such a way that both “symbolic processes deal with the same type of experience in the same affective mode”... Also, Versnel, “Greek Myth and Ritual”, 122: ‘if the myth does not explain details of the ritual, it does, at any rate, translate them into words and images.’

45. Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 245; B. Goff, *Citizen Bacchae. Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, 2004), 137.

46. Cf. the piece of information given by Cole regarding the localities of the festival: ‘Pausanias mentions sanctuaries of Demeter in 51 cities of the Greek mainland; 21 of these cities had sanctuaries of Demeter inside the city (asty), either on the acropolis or in the agora, 18 had a sanctuary of Demeter in a village outside the city, and 24 had sanctuaries of Demeter deep in the countryside’ (S. G. Cole, “Demeter in the Ancient Greek City and its Countryside”, in *Placing the Gods. Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece*, ed. S. A. Alcock and R. Osborne (Oxford, 1994), 205). In the city of Athens the location of the Thesmophorion is far from certain. Aristophanes placed his women celebrating the Thesmophoria in Pnyx; this location has been seriously challenged (O. Broneer, “The Thesmophorion of Central Athens”, *Hesperia* 11.3 (1942): 253). An interesting recent archaeological survey suggests the city Eleusinion as the site of Thesmophoria (bordering the agora on the west and southwest) not far from the Acropolis, the agora and the central civic institutions of the *polis* (K. Clinton, “The Thesmophorion in Central Athens and the Celebration of Thesmophoria in Attica”, in *The Role of Religion in Early Greek Polis*. Proceedings of the 3rd International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, Athens 16–18 Oct. 1992, ed. R. Hagg (Stockholm, 1996), 120, 125). Goff, *Citizen Bacchae*, 208: ‘Whether they are outside the walls or vying with masculine establishments for the center of the city, the location of Thesmophoric sites can be seen to elaborate an uneasy relation to civic space. In Athens . . . the Thesmophoria interrupts civic time as well as space.’



47. Goff, *Citizen Bacchae*, 209: 'the Thesmophoria emerges as an institution for elaborating parallel female versions of citizenship'; F. I. Zeitlin, "La Politique d'Eros: Feminin et Masculin dans les *Suppliantes* d'Eschyle," *Metis* III 1–2 (1988): 257–59.

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### Chapter Three

## Brightness and Darkness in Pindar's *Pythian* 3

### *Aigla-Koronis-Arsinoë and Her Coming of Age*

Evanthia Tsitsibakou-Vasalos

In this ode composed for Hieron, an ailing friend, Pindar does not intend to glorify his patron for a victory, and rescue him from the darkness of anonymity, bathing him in the lustre of a substitute immortality through song.<sup>1</sup> In such a moment of crisis, Pindar aims at submitting effective models of conduct and consolation, capitalizing on the paradigms of mythical families, who were unable to profit from their bliss, and experienced a tragic downfall despite their intimate relations with the immortals. In their folly, young girls, passing through critical phases of their life, such as coming of age, marriage and child-bearing, failed to comply with the religious and social norms, and suffered fiery deaths. A similar fate is experienced by young men at the height of their powers. Their mental and moral failure and their precipitous fall reaffirm the messages addressed to Hieron: divine dispensation does not guarantee an eternal and unblemished happiness; sound judgment and discretion are key values, since immortality proves illusory. Pindar adjusts his chiaroscuro imagery to the occasion: brightness and darkness, emanating either from gold and fire,<sup>2</sup> or metaphorically from inverted vision and intellect as well as from secrecy and guile, constitute a pre-eminent binary opposition<sup>3</sup> whose function I intend to explore in the mythical paradigms of Koronis and Asklepios (1–77).

In the proemium Pindar introduces significant themes, such as mental disposition, parenthood, even if foster, and situations mediating between nature and culture; the medical *technē* is prominent (1–7, Snell-Maehler):

Ἦθελον Χίρωνά κε Φιλλυρίδαν,  
εἰ χρεὼν τοῦθ' ἀμετέρας ἀπὸ γλώσσας  
κοινὸν εὖξασθαι ἔπος,

ζῶειν τὸν ἀποιχόμενον,  
 Οὐρανίδα γόνον εὐρυμέδοντα Κρόνου,  
 βάσσαισι τ' ἄρχειν Παλίου φῆρ' ἀγρότερον  
 νόον ἔχοντ' ἀνδρῶν φίλον· οἷος ἐὼν θρέψεν ποτέ  
 τέκτονα νωδυνίας  
 ἥμερον γυιαρκέος Ἀσκλαπιόν,  
 ἦροα παντοδαπᾶν ἄλκτῆρα νούσων.

I wish that Cheiron — / if it is right for my tongue to utter / that common prayer — / were still living, the departed son of Philyra / and wide-ruling offspring of Ouranos' son Kronos, / and still reigned in Pelion's glades, that wild creature / who had a mind friendly to men. I would have him be / as he was when he once reared the gentle craftsman / of body-strengthening relief from pain, Asklepios, / the hero and protector from diseases of all sorts.

Cheiron is a hybrid creature different from the pack of the other hybriotic and lecherous Centaurs.<sup>4</sup> He is a guardian of legitimate marriage,<sup>5</sup> the εὐρετής of lyric poetry and medicine, a connoisseur of herbs, named after him *χειρώ-νεια*,<sup>6</sup> as well as a tutor of Greek heroes, in whose coming of age and growth (θρέψεν) he plays a significant role.<sup>7</sup> The dynamics of the Cheironian family attenuates the polarity between nature and culture and the segregation of male and female.<sup>8</sup> Cheiron, known both as *Philyridas* and *Kronidas*, lives in a cave with women of three generations: his wife, his daughters (*hagnai kourai*) and his mother, the Oceanid Philyra.<sup>9</sup> Some of these women have suffered rape, *metamorphosis* and *metonomasia*.<sup>10</sup> Philyra is the nymph of φίλῡρα, i.e. *tilia*, the linden or lime tree.<sup>11</sup> This plant is connected with the cure of ulcers and the menstrual cycle of girls (ἔμμηνα ἄγει).<sup>12</sup> Thus Philyra affects the reproductive capacity of girls, their sexual growth and maturation, functioning as the analogue of Artemis *Orthia* or *Lygodesma*.<sup>13</sup> Hence, mother and son are kourotrophic, medical and cultural figures. Cheiron, in particular, is a mediator, harmonizing in himself the antinomies of *agroteros* and *hemeros*, of liminality and acculturation, of life and death. Cheiron *Philyridas* is a suitable companion of Apollo *Latoidas*, figuring in stories of coming of age, teeming with female taming, critical tensions and decisions (*Pyth.* 3, 9).<sup>14</sup>

In the next strophe we make our first contact with Koronis whose story is ironically imbued with the sinister gleam of gold and fire.<sup>15</sup> Her name is withheld, but she is identified in her dual capacity as daughter and mistress. She is embraced by two menacing and radiant male guardians: firstly her father, Φλεγύας, a Lapith king in whose name and essence are encapsulated the notions of fire (φλέγειν) and arrogance (φλεγυᾶν),<sup>16</sup> and secondly her lover in whose epithet, Φοῖβος, are embodied the contradictory qualities of radiance (<Φοῖβη the Titaness; Ais. *Eum.* 6-8) and fright (<φόβος; *Il.* 17.118).<sup>17</sup> In the interior of this ring of fire and ambiguous brightness, the poet narrates her death (8–15):

τὸν μὲν εὐίππου Φλεγύα θυγάτηρ  
 πρὶν τελέσσαι ματροπόλῳ σὺν Ἑλειθυί-  
 α, δαμῆϊσα χρυσέοις  
 τόξοισιν ὕπ' Ἀρτέμιδος  
 εἰς Αἴδα δόμον ἐν θαλάμῳ κατέβα,  
 τέχναις Ἀπόλλωνος. χόλος δ' οὐκ ἀλίθιος  
 γίνεται παιδῶν Διός. ἅ δ' ἀποφλαυρίζαισά νιν  
 ἀμπλακίαισι φρενῶν,  
 ἄλλον αἶνησεν γάμον κρύβδαν πατρός,  
 πρόσθεν ἀκερσεκόμα μιχθεῖσα Φοῖβῳ,  
 καὶ φέροισα σπέρμα θεοῦ καθαρὸν  
 (οὐκ ἔμειν' ἐλθεῖν ...)

Before the daughter of the horseman Phlegyas / could bring him to term with  
 the help of Eleithuia, / goddess of childbirth, she was overcome / by the golden  
 arrows of Artemis / in her chamber and went down to the house of Hades /  
 through Apollo's designs. The anger of Zeus' children is no vain thing. Yet she  
 made light of it / in the folly of her mind and / unknown to her father consented  
 to another union, / although she had previously lain with long-haired / Phoebus  
 and was carrying the god's pure seed.

The girl falls victim to her own impulses and the ensuing revenge of Apollo, by whose arts and wiles (τέχναις Ἀπόλλωνος, 11)<sup>18</sup> she is dispatched to the Underworld (9-12, 32-35) by a proxy, his sister Artemis. Apollo's *technai* anticipate *Loxias* (28) and his contradictory (oblique/straight) character. The passage is imbued with the semantic ambiguity of δαμάζω, which means *kill* and *tame*, and is often used of defloration in scenes of erotic pursuit and rape, thus forming part of a wider imagery in which warring and hunting are metaphors for sex.<sup>19</sup> The forms δαμῆϊσα (9) and ἐδαμάσσατο (35) point to Koronis' erotic experience and death: she is subdued in the *thamos* (δαμῆϊσα . . . ἐν θαλάμῳ, 9–11) by the lethal golden bow of Artemis, and descends to the house of the 'Unseen', εἰς Αἴδα δόμον,<sup>20</sup> as a bride of Death.<sup>21</sup> She suffers a *pro partum* death, πρὶν τελέσσαι, that is, before reaching the goal of delivering the divine foetus. The phrase recalls τὰ προτέλεια, the premarital sacrifices usually offered to Artemis, 'with the goal of protecting the bride herself from that dangerous goddess either generally or more specifically in the dangers of childbirth'.<sup>22</sup> Artemis may preside over coming of age, ushering young girls into adulthood and motherhood and assisting in their childbirth and growth, but also kills maidens and new mothers. Artemis' role in this ode is vital: as *Agrotera* and *Hemera* (see Bacch.11.37-39), she is a perfect match for the Pindaric Cheiron, the "wild animal" (φῆρ' ἀγρότερον, 4), who reared Asklepios and made him a "gentle/ civilized craftsman" (ἥμερος τέκτων, 6). She also intercepts mother-tending Eileithyia who brings children to the light (ἐς φάος),<sup>23</sup> and kills Koronis for cheating *akersekomas* Apollo -the eternal *epe-*

*bos*, who stands on the threshold of manhood, and never completes his passage to full manhood<sup>24</sup>- and for contracting a furtive affair, κρύβδαν πατρός,<sup>25</sup> with a mortal in the folly of her mind (ἀμπλακίαισι φρενῶν; cf. sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3.22c, ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις τῶν φρενῶν). The words ἀμπλακίαι (φρενῶν), ἀνάτα, or ἀμπλάκιον, in conjunction with φρήν, and δαμάζειν, recur in contexts of illicit and adulterous liaisons, and secret sexual transgression as that committed by Ixion and Klytaimnestra whose stories are also enfolded in blindness of mind, hybris, guile lies, secrecy and darkness (Pi. *Pyth.* 2.26–40, *Pyth.* 11.18–30).<sup>26</sup> Koronis defiles the sacred purity of the god's semen (σπέρμα θεοῦ καθαρὸν), which ought to be unmingled with the seed of a mortal.<sup>27</sup> Kallimachos speaks of this pollution in terms of stain: the Thriai prophesy that the milky raven which reported Koronis' infidelity to Apollo, will be transformed into black when Apollo μιερόν τι πύθηται.<sup>28</sup> Kallimachos thus adopts the Hesiodic motif of the raven that Pindar has suppressed.<sup>29</sup>

In his myth, Pindar, a poet of Dorian descent, fuses the regional and literary traditions: his Artemis not only employs her bow, sending an epidemic against sinners and innocent alike, thus functioning as a doublet of her Iliadic brother, but also intervenes in a "flagrant female sexual misconduct" on the pattern of the Peloponnesian myths.<sup>30</sup> Artemis' golden bow promotes the contextual ambiguity. Although gold is an illustrious metal, emblematic of divinity and beatitude (cf. *chrysampykōn Moisan*, 89-90), is sacred to Apollo, the Sun god (Eust.*Il.* 1.40.31-32), and is considered the child of Zeus (Pi. fr. 222), here it qualifies an instrument of violent death. Its brightness is inverted, matching the sinister gloom of Hades.

The next strophe concentrates on Koronis' deviating activities. She defies the religious customs on the observance of which rests the cohesion and continuity of the community. Light and darkness are subtly insinuated (16–23):<sup>31</sup>

οὐκ ἔμειν' ἐλθεῖν τράπεζαν νυμφίαν,  
οὐδὲ παμφώνων ἱαχὰν ὑμεναίων, ἄλικες  
οἷα παρθένοι φιλέοισιν ἐταῖραι  
ἐσπερίαις ὑποκουρίζεσθ' αἰοιδᾷς · ἀλλά τοι  
ἦρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων · οἷα καὶ πολλοὶ πάθον.  
ἔστι δὲ φῦλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισι ματαιότατον,  
ὅστις αἰσχύνων ἐπιχώρια παπταίνει τὰ πόρσω,  
μεταμῶνια θηρεύων ἀκράντοις ἐλπίσιν

But she could not wait for the marriage feast to come / or for the sound of full-voiced nuptial hymns with such / endearments as unmarried companions are wont to utter / in evening songs. No, she was in love with things remote –such longings as many others have suffered, / for there is among mankind a very foolish kind of person, / who scorns what is at hand and peers at things far away, / chasing the impossible with hopes unfulfilled.

Koronis despises the bridal feast and the evening hymeneal songs performed by coeval maidens, obviously during a *pannychis* conducted in the light of torches. The companionship of the coeval virgins plays a significant role in archaic choruses and rites of passage, such as weddings.<sup>32</sup> Indulging in a series of reversals, she refuses to change her status, and “make a new appearance,” emerging as a *nympha* in the light of the blazing torches or upon the daylight.<sup>33</sup> Pindar outlines a series of initiatory motifs, a behavioral typology symptomatic of what modern anthropologists and sociologists after Arnold van Gennep would ascribe to the liminal or marginal phase in a tripartite process that begins with the phase of separation (cf. οὐκ ἔμεινε) and concludes with the individual’s successful or aborted social reintegration.<sup>34</sup> The prenuptial rituals are summarized in ὑποκουρίζεσθαι,<sup>35</sup> the transitive form of which, κουρίζειν, occurs in Homer and Hesiod in initiatory contexts.<sup>36</sup> Graf lists this form among the ‘many local terms for rites that concern the introduction of pubescent young men and women into the adult world’.<sup>37</sup> In her delusion, Koronis fails to comply with the customs that regulate the passage from ephebic virginity to adult sexuality and motherhood. She loves what she does not have (ἤρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων),<sup>38</sup> and looks (παπταίνει) for remote things, hunting (θηρεύων)<sup>39</sup> things vain. In early poetry, παπταίνω accompanies bloodshed, frantic searching and glaring; it signifies the vision of a disturbed soul and menacing or wild looks. The case of Andromache, a woman with ambiguous name and function, is instructive: she abandons her sheltered, female environment, and trespassing her gender boundaries, she rushes in a *quasi*-maenadic fit to a marginal locus, the wall, to look around: μαινάδι ἴση ... ἔστη παπτήνας’ ἐπὶ τείχει (*Il.* 22.460-63).<sup>40</sup> Pindar uses παπταίνω of men or situations potentially dangerous and hybris-tic.<sup>41</sup> In *Pythian* 3 the wording is engaging and betrays inversion of sound vision and gender roles; from a quarry the *parthenos* becomes a hunter, and intrudes into the masculine terrain of wild periphery. Being liminal, Koronis is hunted down by the virgin huntress of the wilderness.

Pindar shifts his focus onto the mental state and the sexual transgression of Koronis, making her the foil for the omniscient and all-seeing god. With a hammering emphasis on the sensual and mental capacity of Apollo (οὐδ’ ἔλαθε σκοπόν, ἄϊεν, κοινᾷ παρ’ εὐθυτάτῳ, γνώμαν πιθών, πάντα ισάντι νόῳ, γνούς), Pindar adumbrates the power of the oracular god at *Πυθῶ*: Apollo relies not on information (πυνθάνομαι), but is persuaded (πιθών) by his most straight mind. The participle ισάντι, which derives from ἴσαμι, a formation related with εἶδω, οἶδα, fits this picture, and provides the motivation for *Ismenios*, another epithet of Apollo, which Plutarch associates with knowledge through a synonym, ἐπιστήμη (~ἴσαμι = \*εἶδω). The god in his mantic seats, *Pytho* and *Ismenos*, is associated with the power of knowledge.<sup>42</sup> In this strophe fire makes a highly suggestive entrance (24–30):

ἔσχε τοι ταύταν μεγάλην ἀνάταν  
 καλλιπέπλου λῆμα Κορωνίδος · ἐλθόν-  
 τος γὰρ εὐνάσθη ξένου  
 λέκτροισιν ἀπ' Ἀρκαδίας.  
 οὐδ' ἔλαθε σκοπόν · ἐν δ' ἄρα μηλοδόκῳ  
 Πυθῶνι τόσσαις ἄϊεν ναοῦ βασιλεὺς  
 Λοξίας, κοινᾷ παρ' εὐθυτάτῳ γνώμαν πιθών,  
 πάντα ἰσάντι νόῳ ·  
 ψευδέων δ' οὐχ ἄπτεται, κλέπτει τέ μιν  
 οὐ θεὸς οὐ βροτὸς ἔργοις οὔτε βουλαῖς.

Indeed, headstrong Koronis of the beautiful robes / fell victim to that great delusion, for she slept / in the bed of a stranger, / who came from Arcadia. / But she did not elude the watching god, for although he / was in flock-receiving Pytho as lord of his temple, / Loxias perceived it, convinced by the surest confidant, / his all-knowing mind. / He does not deal in falsehoods, and neither god / nor mortal deceives him by deeds or designs.

The poet resumes the theme of delusion (ἀνάταν, the Aeolic form of ἄτη; cf. ἀμπλακία, 13), and adds a significant *periphrasis* of wide repercussions, *kallipeplou lêma Koronidos* (25). Beautiful *peplos* may imply elegance and coquetterie,<sup>43</sup> or the privileged status of a divine wife.<sup>44</sup> But *kallipeplos* is incorporated in a story of mental and moral disarray, of betrayal, aborted childbearing and punishment. In view of this as well as Artemis' vengeance, *kallipeplos* may be explained in conjunction with a cultic practice, such as the offering of *peplos*. Textiles and garments were dedicated to Artemis, the kourotrophic deity that protected women during their labor, 'it was a common custom to dedicate clothes to her which had been worn at the time of pregnancy', while offerings to Iphigeneia signified unhappy outcomes.<sup>45</sup> Hence, *kallipeplos* may foreshadow Koronis' transition from the circle of Artemis and Eileithyia to that of Iphigeneia, *peplos* being the sign of her failed childbearing and death. It is worth recalling here that Koronis' death evokes the imagery of the Bride of Hades. As Seaford notes, wedding and death before marriage are associated with 'equivocal' elements common to the two rites of passage ...the girl is ... given special πέπλοι and a special στέφανος, among other things, and is buried in bridal attire (Eur. *Tro.* 1218-20).<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, καλλιπέπλος occurs firstly here, qualifying a girl whose name is associated with κορωνίς / κορώνη, i.e. στέφανος, as we shall see below (n.117), and secondly in Euripides (*Tro.* 338), in an ominous context when Cassandra, another Apolline bride, invites the Phrygian *korai* to sing for her wedding; mourning and fire permeate the passage, and Hephaistos carries the marriage torches. The ambiguity of *peplos* embraces these inverted weddings.

The ethography of Koronis is conveyed by a bisemantic noun, *λήμα*, which is derived from the verb *λάω*, in the sense of *yearning* and *desiring eagerly* and, perhaps ironically, in the sense of *seeing*.<sup>47</sup> Its negative connotations are unmistakable for the Pindaric Koronis, who commits acts of perverted volition or vision. Pindar contraposes Apollo's watchful eye, understanding, and straight mind to the darkness of Koronis' lies, stealth and guile (29–30), thus making *Loxias* the object of a *κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν* manipulation.<sup>48</sup> Apollo *skopos* is cheated neither by deeds nor by designs (*βουλαῖς*; cf. *λήμα*). He emerges as the embodiment of intellect<sup>49</sup> and as a foil for this 'Crow-woman' and for Ischys, the *xenos* who embodies sheer physical 'Strength,'<sup>50</sup> is the son of Elatos whose name evokes fir trees, forests and heights (cf. *Aipylos Eilatidas*, *Pi.Ol.6.33*, 36), and originates from Arkadia, a region teeming with stories of child-abuse, cannibalism, rapes of girls and coming of age.<sup>51</sup> Pindar portrays Ischys in *quasi*-centauric terms as uniting in himself contempt of hospitality, lawlessness, guile, and pursuit of illegitimate sex. The manly and guileful Ischys is contraposed to *akersekomas* Apollo of the *euthytatos noos*, and to *sophron* and *dikaioiotos* Cheiron. Interestingly, the genealogies of both Ischys and Koronis are unsettled and exhibit a high degree of conflation.<sup>52</sup>

We get a glimpse of the menacing radiance of Apollo when Pytho, the site of prophecy but also of murder and putrefaction, is qualified by the adjective *μηλοδόκος* which evokes the Delphic ritual that was notorious for its massive and fervent slaughtering of sheep (*μῆλα*).<sup>53</sup> Pytho is the receptacle of sacrificial sheep, and Arkadia, which Bacchylides calls *μηλοτρόφος*, 'raiser of sheep,'<sup>54</sup> provides one, i.e. Ischys.

The signs of brightness and darkness intensify as we move on to Apollo's revenge through the vicarious agency of his sister. Fire makes a forceful entrance (31–37):

καὶ τότε γνοῦς Ἴσχυος Εἰλατίδα  
 ξεινίαν κοῖταν ἄθεμιν τε δόλον, πέμ-  
 ψεν κασιγνήταν μένει  
 θυίοισαν ἄμαιμακέτω  
 ἐς Λακέρειαν, ἐπεὶ παρὰ Βοιβιάδος  
 κρημνοῖσιν ὄκει παρθένος · δαίμων δ' ἕτερος  
 ἐς κακὸν τρέψαις ἐδαμάσσατό νιν, καὶ γειτόνων  
 πολλοὶ ἐπαῦρον, ἀμᾶ  
 δ' ἔφθαρεν · πολλὰν δ' ὄρει πῦρ ἐξ ἐνὸς  
 σπέρματος ἐνθορὸν αἰστώσεν ὕλαν.

And at this time, when he knew of her sleeping with the / stranger Ischys, son of Elatos, and her impious deceit, / he sent his sister / raging with irresistible force / to Lakereia, for the maiden was living / by the banks of Lake Boibias. An adverse fortune / turned her to ruin and overcame her; and many neighbors /



shared her fate and perished with her. / Fire that springs from one / spark onto a mountain can destroy a great forest.

Apollo sends his raging and irresistible sister (μένει θνίοισαν ἀμαιμακέτω, 32-33) to kill the *parthenos*.<sup>55</sup> Fury and fire join forces to destroy the girl and the neighbors, alluding to the semantic ambivalence of the verb *θύω*. Artemis *θνίοισα* ‘rushes in rage’ to kill the pregnant girl, and obstructs Εἰλεί-θνια (who ‘comes in haste’), thus appropriating and resignifying the second component of her name.<sup>56</sup> The ambiguity of *θύω* permeates the passage, and Artemis vacillates between *sacrificing* (*θύω* LSJ A) and *raging, seething, storming* (*θύω* LSJ B), to be lexicographically correct.<sup>57</sup>

Brightness envelops Koronis’ residence as well: she lives at Lakereia (this echoes the Hesiodic *lakeryza koronē*), near the overhanging banks of the Thessalian lake *Boibias*, which owes its name to the radiance of *Phoibē* or *Phoibos*.<sup>58</sup> The deluded and pregnant *parthenos*, who is “trapped between categories” and the anomaly of being not a virgin any more but not a *gynē* either,<sup>59</sup> dies in a rugged, marginal, and watery locale ironically enfolded in brightness. This is a fitting ambience for initiatory myths and rituals, and suits Artemis, who presides over ephebic initiation and is fond of marginal, marshy, damp and wooded areas. So both the mental attitude and the setting are Artemisian,<sup>60</sup> while the deadly radiance of Phoibos Apollo looms large.

The fate of Koronis affects the community; many died with her, ἔφθαρεν (35–36),<sup>61</sup> says the poet, employing a verb often used of seduction and defloration (LSJ s.v. *φθείρω, φθορά*), and providing a smooth transition to the closure, ‘fire that springs from one / spark onto a mountain can destroy a great forest.’<sup>62</sup> Yet this phrase is integrated into a story of sexual offence and defilement, which profits from the ambiguity of *sperma* and *enthoron*. Apollo transforms his impregnating semen, σπέρμα ἐνθορόν,<sup>63</sup> into a seed of fire that wreaks vengeance. In an oxymoron, the generative seed is visualized as an agent of death, while its purity and potency are reaffirmed and reinstated through fire. Apollo, the caustic and intelligent god who knows and sees everything, burns guilty and innocent like timberwood, making them ‘unknown’ and ‘unseen’ (ἄϊστωσεν).<sup>64</sup>

The sexual and mortifying nuances of πῦρ, σπέρμα and ἐνθορόν interlock with λάβρον σέλας in the next stanza to suggest the ambiguity inherent in fire (38–46):

ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ τείχει θέσαν ἐν ξυλίνῳ  
 σύγγονοι κούραν, σέλας δ’ ἀμφέδραμεν  
 λάβρον Ἀφαισίου, τότε ἔειπεν Ἀπόλλων· ‘Οὐκέτι  
 τλάσομαι ψυχᾷ γένος ἀμὸν ὀλέσσαι  
 οἰκτροτάτῳ θανάτῳ ματρὸς βαρεῖα σὺν πάθῃ.’

ὥς φάτο · βάματι δ' ἐν πρώτῳ κιχὼν παῖδ' ἐκ νεκροῦ  
 ἄρπασε · καιομένα δ' αὐτῷ διέφανε πυρά.  
 καί ῥά νιν Μάγνητι φέρων πόρε Κενταύρῳ διδάξαι  
 πολυπήμονας ἀνθρώποισιν ἰᾶσθαι νόσους.

But when her relatives had placed the girl / within the pyre's wooden wall and  
 the fierce blaze / of Hephaistos ran around it, then Apollo said: 'No longer / shall  
 I endure in my soul to destroy my own offspring / by a most pitiful death along  
 with his mother's heavy / suffering.' / Thus he spoke, and with his first stride  
 came and / snatched the child / from the corpse, while the burning flame parted  
 for him. / He took him and gave him to the Magnesians Centaur / for instruction  
 in healing the diseases that plague men.

On a technical device, the wooden wall of cremation, nurturing brightness is confused with deadly darkness; life and death intermingle on the pyre. Koronis is reintegrated into her family not around the torches of marriage, but around Hephaistos' σέλας,<sup>65</sup> whose devouring aspects are corroborated by λάβρος.<sup>66</sup> Koronis' death is enveloped in a corrupted nuptial imagery; eros, bridal torches and festivities collapse into the flame of her cremation. Hephaistos, whose intervention is far from accidental,<sup>67</sup> collaborates with Apollo, another caustic and sexually frustrated god,<sup>68</sup> to punish the daughter of Φλεγύας almost homeopathically, in a manner that befits her genealogical prescriptions.

Apollo with one stride snatches his child<sup>69</sup> from the burning corpse of the mother, ἐκ νεκροῦ ἄρπασε; "snatching" by gods and death by lightning or fire are often precursors of heroization or *apotheosis*.<sup>70</sup> Fire makes way and parts for Apollo (καιομένα δ' αὐτῷ διέφανε πυρά, 44; sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3. 78), recalling his capacity as Φαναῖος (Achae.35) or Αναφαῖος (Corn. *Epidr.* 32), as well as the pertinence of δάφνη, the symbol of our caustic and oracular god, which shares his etymology and function, standing, too, for burning, prophecy, survival and renewal.<sup>71</sup> Koronis is killed and deprived of childbearing, while Apollo intervenes as a proxy midwife and 'medicates' his son's fate through fire. Asklepios is reborn in an 'extraordinary nativity'; his death coincides with his birth.<sup>72</sup> The boundaries between brightness and darkness, between life and death are blurred. Fire becomes a medium of killing, purifying and reviving. In this strophe, the polarities of life and death, of brightness and darkness intermingle in the essence of Apollo. The god acts out his contradictory powers of healing (*ἀπολύειν*, Pl.*Cra.*405b), destroying (*ἀπολλύναι*: *ὀλέσσαι*, 41) and making unseen or unknown (*ἄϊστωσεν*, 37). His *dynameis* are narrativized in this ode, while the tale that typifies the pattern called "the girl's tragedy," justifies its characterization.<sup>73</sup>

Gold, fire and intermediate chromatic modalities haunt Asklepios as he takes on the power imprinted in the name of his father's name and releases men of their pain (*λύσαις* : *Ἀπόλλων*, 50), tempering the effects of *polios*

bronze (πολιῷ χαλκῷ, 48) and of 'summer-like fire' (θερινῷ πυρί, 50). *Polios* is an ambiguous chromatic term, fluctuating between bright and white, grey and dark; it implies salvation and death.<sup>74</sup> With a comparable attenuation, fever, a reversible type of fire, establishes a contact with the condition of Hieron.<sup>75</sup> Gold is also secularized and used as a monetary commodity and a means of moral corruption.<sup>76</sup> Appearing in Asklepios' hands (ἐν χερσὶν φανείς), it changed him (ἔτραπεν, 55),<sup>77</sup> so as to resurrect a man seized by fate, a dead man (τῷ μοιριδίῳ ληφθέντα, sch.Pi. *Pyth.* 3.96) and cancel 'death, the fundamental borderline between man and god'.<sup>78</sup> Asklepios also renounces his tutelage, inverting the positive value of χεῖρ, which is embedded in the name and function of Cheiron, his foster father and instructor of μαλακόχειρα νόμον (Pi. *Nem.* 3.55). Cornutos argues that 'Cheiron is said to have .... trained (ἡσκηκέναι) him [sc.Asklepios] in the researches of healing, for they wished to suggest that the craft depends on the hands (χειρῶν) for its performance' (trans. Hays, p.116).<sup>79</sup> Asklepios incurs a fiery death at the hands of a kinsman: Zeus, his paternal grandfather, strikes him with a blazing thunderbolt (αἰθῶν κεραυνός, 58).<sup>80</sup> Asklepios' life has drawn a full cycle: his fiery death reenacts and reverses the process of his birth. A vertical beam of burning light connects the 'all-shiny' *Olympos* and the sullen and murky Underworld, obfuscating their boundaries. Asklepios eventually crosses the Chthonian-Olympian Boundary through his *apotheosis*.<sup>81</sup>

The poet once more illustrates the ambiguity of brightness in the aftermath of a contrary-to-fact wish: if wise Cheiron still lived in his cave (63), and agreed to heal Hieron, Pindar would make his own professional passage: as a poet, *xenos*, but also doctor, he would transform his poetry into a *philtron*, a token of friendship and medicine,<sup>82</sup> and cross the deep Ionian Sea. In the semblance of a light of salvation, outshining and outdistancing the celestial stars, Pindar would bring Hieron two *charites*, namely golden health (ὕγείαν χρυσέαν) and the radiance of past victories (κῶμον τ' ... αἴγλαν στεφάνοις, 72–73); the connection of *aglaos* (*splendid*) and *aglaia* with success in athletics and with celebration by poetry is common.<sup>83</sup> *Aigla* qualifies a real event, *chryseos* a precious but utopian gift. Golden health, not to mention immortality, is impossible.<sup>84</sup> Death can occasionally be a relief: even Cheiron in another version exchanged his immortality with Prometheus in order to escape from a painful and ignominious life, when he was accidentally wounded by Heracles' poisoned arrow and all his medicinal herbs failed him.<sup>85</sup>

*Pythian* 3 (12–24, 54–62, 80–86, 103–15) focuses on self-awareness, intelligent choices and decisions, endurance and realistic, practical options. Pindar's advice is unequivocal: search not for immortality, but utilize the practical means at your disposal, μή, φίλα ψυχά, βίον ἀθάνατον / σπεῦδε, τὰν δ' ἔμπρακτον ἄντλει μαχανάν (61–62). He will eventually close his ode in a

ring composition, with a complex tektonic imagery, appropriating the function and etymology of Asklepios (<ἀσκέω), and turning it into a professional manifesto: in an intelligent manner Pindar will honor / serve his fortune, treating it with his own resources, τὸν δ' ἀμφέποντ' αἰεὶ φρασὶν / δαίμον' ἀσκήσω κατ' ἑμὴν θεραπεύων μηχανάν (108–10). He does not aspire to offer illusory hopes but substitute immortality through his poetical *technē*, joining his poems in the manner of the skilled craftsmen of the past, τέκτονες οἷα σοφοὶ ἄρμωσαν (113–14).

The verb ἄρμωσαν subtly evokes Ὀμηρος, the supreme *tekton* whose name encapsulates the notions of 'chariot' (ἄρμα),<sup>86</sup> but it seems to play, too, upon Pindar's name. In the framework of a poetic tradition that recognizes 'the metaphor of comparing a well-composed song to a well-crafted chariot-wheel',<sup>87</sup> the name Πινδ-αρος exhibits a significant phonological similarity not only with the verb ἀρμόζω, but also with two rare words that belong to the vocabulary of craftsmanship, namely πίνδηρα, ἄροτρον, or πίνδακας, θραύματα σανίδων.<sup>88</sup> This linguistic overlapping insinuates the tectonic-poetic capacity imprinted in Pindar's name, although it does not necessarily invalidate its etymological attachment to *Pindos* (Πίνδος+ὄρνυμαι/ αἶρομαι). Lefkowitz argues that the poet interweaves his etymology in a passage that registers Hieron's Dorian descent and his blood connections with the Aigidai, who came from Pindos, Πινδόθεν ὀρνύμενοι (Pi. Pyth. 1. 65–66); Pindar thus 'establishes a bond' with the victor.<sup>89</sup> Besides his attachment to the Homeric tradition, the skilled poet shares the poetical as well as technical and medical capacities of the *tektones* who parade in his ode: firstly of Asklepios, who heals by means of incantations (ἐπαιδαῖς, 51); secondly of Cheiron, who is a hybrid φήρ-θήρ that partakes the adapted physique of the centaurs (ἡρμωσμένοις),<sup>90</sup> the inventor of medicine and song as well as the instructor of all ἄρμενα (Pi. Nem. 3.58), that is, of the ἀρμόδια, προσήκοντα and ἀρμωστά, by which mental images are materialized and 'fixed / built' by the work of hands (cf. πήξαιτο, πεπηγυῖας, sch. Pi. Nem. 3.98, 101a, b); and thirdly of Apollo, the ultimate author of medicine and musical ἀρμονία. Adaptation and joining, encapsulated in ἀρμόζω and ἀραρίσκω, illuminate the function of these mediating figures, and underlie the tectonic persona of Pindar the skilled poet and doctor. As such, he will be 'small in small things and big in big' (107–09), and advises Hieron to adjust to the circumstances and vagaries of life, compromising with the prospect of an everlasting fame for his athletic prowess.

The poet solidifies his messages, judiciously choosing the proper paradigms: Nestor and Sarpedon (112–15) are not 'perhaps deliberately random heroic names',<sup>91</sup> or symbols of wisdom and might, respectively,<sup>92</sup> or 'types of longevity.'<sup>93</sup> They are models for Hieron, indeed, as Sider argues, but not necessarily or merely as *quasi*-divine figures enjoying poetical immortality

and exemplifying the theme of *non omnis moriar*.<sup>94</sup> An indispensable link is missing here: these heroes may have touched divinity (*Od.* 3.246; *Il.* 12.310–28, 16.433–61), and longevity, but they function as exemplary figures for having recognized their human limitations and for acting sensibly. Nestor's epic microstory and etymology is encapsulated in *noos* and *synesis*.<sup>95</sup> Sarpedon, on the other hand, indulges in a contrary-to-fact argument about immortality, only to renounce it: aware of his mortality, he marches to the battlefield to meet an honorable death (*Il.* 12.322–28).<sup>96</sup> Both men embody and instantiate the axial values and concerns of *Pythian* 3, exhibiting measured aspirations and sound intelligence. For this and their heroic achievements, they have earned substitute immortality through poetry, the only venue open for mortals in general and for Hieron in particular. Thus Nestor and Sarpedon promote the ode's paraenetic and consolatory program.

To sum up, in verses 1–77 brightness and darkness illustrate the human vicissitudes and passages, observing the rhythm of life and its crucial phases—marriage, birth and death. Gold and fire are one step away from bliss and curse, as a single stride also separates Apollo from the fire of life and death. The ode is studded with language of knowledge and suffering,<sup>97</sup> and gives the epitome of intelligent life. Intellect, positive or negative, is a persistent and gendered theme. To the *euthytatos noos* of Apollo, the *philoteknos* biological father, and to the *philos noos* of Cheiron, the foster father of Asklepios and the son of wide-ruling Kronos (who embodies pure and unalloyed mind -*κορός νόος*- and accomplishment, *κραίνειν*, in his own name),<sup>98</sup> Pindar contraposes the deluded Koronis of the unfulfilled hopes (*ἀκράντοις ἐλπίσιν*, 23), focusing on messages of moral and intelligent nature: people must be satisfied with what is accessible (19–23); they must know their human nature and apportionment in life (59–62); only the wise and skilled, the *sophoi*, understand and know how to bear decently the god-sent *πήματα*, turning their fate inside out (80–83) and adapting to the vagaries of life (103–109). It is worth noting that brightness, darkness and intellectual capacity constitute integral parts of the girl with the significant name *Κορωνίς*. Pindar almost imperceptibly exploits her linguistic, mental and ethical similarities with *κορώνη* and *κόραξ*.<sup>99</sup>

Ancient authorities derive the noun *κορώνη* from *κάρα* (*head*), *κρώζω* (*croak*) and *καῖρον* or *γαῖρον* (*vice* or *wickedness*).<sup>100</sup> They associate *κόραξ* explicitly with *κορός* (*LSJ* A), which means *dark* and *black*, and implicitly with *κόρος* (*LSJ* A), which means *satiety* or *insolence*; this is the only plausible etymology behind the gloss, *διὰ τὸ πολλὰ ἐσθίειν*.<sup>101</sup> *Koronē* and *korax* embrace *Koronis* with their dark color (*κορός*, *LSJ* A) and their satiety or insolence (*κόρος*, *LSJ* A). The combined features of these birds spill over to *Koronis*, and invite further association with words, such as *κορωνίς*, *κορω-*

νιδῶν, κορωνόν and Κορωνός, which share the same derivation and semantics. The Pindaric Koronis shares their wickedness, arrogance, satiety and insolence.<sup>102</sup> Significantly, Κορωνός is a Lapith or resident of Dotion and a kinsman of Koronis and Kaineus, a famous Thessalian androgynous figure.<sup>103</sup> So, Pindar may have eliminated the Hesiodic bird, but has transferred the crow/raven imagery onto Koronis, into whose name and essence concentrate principal themes of the ode, such as brightness, darkness, sexual license and mental blindness. Here Pindar has blurred the boundaries between *metamorphosis* and *metonomasia*, two recurrent components of initiatory myths,<sup>104</sup> manipulating the semantics and sounds of Koronis. The Hesiodic *metamorphosis* of the raven is not therefore completely evanescent: *koronē* and *korax* represent the ambiguity of the *parthenos* with the speaking name *Koronis*. These birds as also *glaux* and *nychteris*, birds of the night, notorious for their cacophony and ugliness, signify liminality, and figure in myths of coming of age and transformation of maidens.<sup>105</sup>

Modern Greek reaffirms the above interpretation of *Koronis*: the verb κορώνω is used of the heat of fire, of the glow of burning iron, or of fervent mental and emotional states: fury and fire combine in it no differently from *Pythian* 3. Mental blindness and fury traverse the ode, making up a congruent template of motifs. It starts with Artemis, who seethes with mortifying rage and *mania* (θυόισαν), and *via* the deluded Koronis, it ushers to the Mother<sup>106</sup> and Pan,<sup>107</sup> two divinities of the wild and marginal periphery, whose nocturnal cult has been institutionalized and naturalized into Thebes where they receive songs of praise performed by girls, *kourai*, at night (77–79).<sup>108</sup> They have control over health, mental states and eroticism as well as civic order. Addressing the gods who in their city-cult neutralize perversion of intellect, illegitimate and guileful erotic indulgence, child abuse and restoration as well as manic or maenadic behavior, such recurrent themes in *Pythian* 3, Pindar builds a bridge between the two parts of his ode, and paves the way for the Kadmean daughters, who, seized by frenzy (εἰς μανίαν τραπέσσαι, sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3.173b), hurt their children. These girls bear names related to intelligence (Autonoe), radiance (Agave), might or divine whiteness (Ino-Leukothea),<sup>109</sup> and ecstatic movement or sacrificial fire (Semele-Thyone).<sup>110</sup> The last two are linked with mystical cults, and bear dual names that mark off their divine and mortal natures.<sup>111</sup> It is no accident, I believe, that Pindar pauses at Semele and employs a *hapax*, her most unusual name Θυώνη.<sup>112</sup> She forms a parallel figure of Koronis as privileged with a divine lover and suffering a fiery death, while her foetus was torn from her and supplied with a surrogate womb, Zeus' thigh. The duality of θυώ (*LSJA*, B) ties in well with the persistent motif of irrationality, *mania*, and the glow of fire that envelops the death of these divine brides and the salvation of their children. The mor-



tifying and reviving aspects of fire are reconfirmed in the case of Dionysos and Achilles (100-3), too, who is cremated here, but in another version is deified and translated to Leuke, the bright or white island of the blessed dead, which is located in the Black Sea. The contrasts of life and death, vision and color are dissolved in the vicinity of *Leuke* and her connections with *leukos* and *leussein*.<sup>113</sup>

It is no coincidence that the alternative Messenian or Laconian mother of Asklepios bears the name *Ἀρσινόη*.<sup>114</sup> Unlike Koronis, the dark and deluded daughter of the fiery, hybristic and 'well-horsed', *εὖπιπος* Φλεγύας, Arsinoë, the daughter of *Λεύκιππος*, the 'White-horsed' priest of the Sun, belongs to the sphere of dazzling whiteness and reverence. Arsinoë combines in her name the qualities that Koronis lacks, that is, *ἄρτιος νοῦς*.<sup>115</sup>

Two explicit but later attestations of *metonomasia* indicate that Koronis' name has been susceptible to such manipulations from antiquity on. The first comes from the Epidaurian poet Isyllos (ca. 300 BCE), and constitutes to the best of my knowledge our sole inscriptional reference to Koronis:<sup>116</sup>

Φλεγύας δ' [ὅς]

πατρίδ' Ἐπίδauρον ἔναιεν, | θυγατέρα Μάλου γαμ[[ε]]-  
εἷ, τὰν Ἐρατὼ γείνατο μάτηρ, Κλεοφήμα δ' ὀνομάσθη. | ἐγ  
δὲ Φλεγύα γένετο, Αἴγλα δ' ὀνομάσθη. | τόδ' ἐπώνυμον  
τὸ κάλλος δὲ Κορωνίς ἐπεκλήθη. | κατιδὼν δὲ ὁ χρυ-  
σότοξος Φοῖβος ἐμ Μαλίου δόμοις παρθενίαν ὥραν  
ἔλυσεν. | λεχέων δ' ἡμεροέντων ἐπέβας, Λατῶι κότε,  
χρυσόκομα. | σέβομαί σε· ἐν δὲ θυώδει τεμένει τέ-  
κετ' ὅ νιν Αἴγλα, γονίμαν δ' ἔλυσεν ὡδὶ | να Διὸς  
παῖς μετὰ Μοιρᾶν Λάχεσις τε μαῖα ἀγαυά. | ἐπὶ κλη-  
σιν δὲ νιν Αἴγλας ματρὸς Ἀσκληπιὸν ὀνόμαζε  
Ἀπόλλων ...

Phlegyas, who dwelt in Epidauros, his fatherland, married the daughter of Malos, whom Erato bore, and her name was Kleophema. By Phlegyas then a child was begotten and she was named Aigle; this was her name, but because of her beauty she was also called Koronis. Then Phoebus of the golden bow, beholding her in the palace of Malos, ended her maidenhood. You went into her lovely bed, O golden haired son of Leto. I revere you. Then in the perfumed temple Aigle bore the child, and the son of Zeus together with the Fates and Lachesis the noble midwife eased her birth pains. Apollo named him Asclepius from his mother's name, Aigle ... (Edelstein and Edelstein 1998: 24, 330).

The daughter born to Phlegyas (a resident of Epidauros), Isyllos says, received the name Aigla; but because of her beauty, τὸ κάλλος, she was also called Koronis (43-44). The motivation behind *Aigla* is clear, and if her beauty is the criterion for her renomination, then her two names are close

synonyms and reinforce each other. Summarily, two etymological alternatives seem to be viable here for Koronis' name: either (a) from *κορός* (*dark, black*, *LSJ A*) in antiphrasis, so 'white, illustrious,' and perhaps from *κορός* (*pure*, *LSJ B*), that is, chaste, or (b) from *κορόνη* / *κορωνίς* (*wreath, crown*), which recalls the coronation of marriageable girls. If these conjectures have a modicum of truth, then *Koronis*, as *shiny, brilliant* or *ἐστεφανωμένη*, matches perfectly the imagery inherent in Aigla, who emerges as the impersonation of brilliance and beauty.<sup>117</sup> In this poem Aigla enjoys good reputation, judging from her mother's name.<sup>118</sup> In a context bathed in the sheen of the divine gold, Apollo activates his associations with *λόω* (Pl. *Cra.* 405b): he loosens Aigla's maidenhood (*παρθενίαν ὄραν ἔλυσεν*), and her birth pangs (*γονίμην ἔλυσεν ὠδῖνα*), so much like his *Soodina* sister, with the help of the illustrious mid-wife Lachesis and the Moirai (48–50). Apollo names his son *Asklepios* after Aigla, a detail that has aroused much disputation, since some scholars were allured to discover radiance in Asklepios' name as well, even though *αἴγλα* is phonologically far from *Ἀσκληπίος*.<sup>119</sup>

The second explicit *metonomasia* is traced back to Aristeides (a historian of the second century BCE), who claims that Arsinoë, the mother of Asklepios, was named Koronis when still a *parthenos*, Ἀσκληπιὸς Ἀπόλλωνος παῖς καὶ Ἀρσινόης· αὕτη δὲ παρθένος οὖσα ὠνομάζετο Κορωνίς.<sup>120</sup> This testimony implies that upon her coming of age, the girl received an intellectual name that presumably contradicted the features of her former status: the dark, ugly, deluded and mischievous *koronē* or *korax* yield to 'sound mind'. The girl earns a name in which her newly-acquired qualities are ingrained and make her worthy of a divine husband and a deified son.

Brightness and darkness mingle not only in the name of Koronis but also in her cult. Initiatory myths and tragic deaths by fire are often accompanied by heroization and deification, and by ritual, which is not always retrievable. In the case of Koronis we are rather lucky,<sup>121</sup> although the nature of our evidence poses some limitations. She is venerated in the sanctuary of Athena at Titanē, a hilltop near Sikyon, in the vicinity of another sanctuary of Asklepios, which is of 'considerable antiquity.'<sup>122</sup> While sacrifices (*Suovetaurilien*) were offered to Asklepios, the wooden *xoanon* of Koronis was transferred from his temple to that of Athena (Paus. 2. 11.7–12.1), where she was honored with a heroic cult. Athena's image was struck, too, by a thunderbolt, κεραυνωθῆναι δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ἐλέγετο (Paus. 2.12.1).<sup>123</sup> Brightness is embedded in the names of Athena and Titanē. The former is derived from *αἴθω*, and the latter from *Titan*, the brother of Helios (Paus. 2.11.5):

ἐνταῦθα λέγουσιν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι Τιτᾶνα οἰκῆσαι πρῶτον· εἶναι δὲ αὐτὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἥλιου καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου κληθῆναι Τιτάνην τὸ χωρίον. δοκεῖν δὲ ἐμοὶ δεινὸς



ἐγένετο ὁ Τιτὰν τὰς ὥρας τοῦ ἔτους φυλάξας καὶ ὅποτε ἥλιος σπέρματα καὶ δένδρων αὔξει καὶ πεπαίνει καρπούς, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε ἀδελφὸς ἐνομίσθη τοῦ Ἥλιου.

Here [not: where] the natives say that Titan first dwelt. They add that he was the brother of Helios (*Sun*), and that after him the place got the name Titane. My own view is that he proved clever at observing the seasons of the year and the times when the sun increases and ripens seeds and fruits, and for this reason was held to be the brother of Helios (trans. Jones, Loeb).

Titan and Helios are consequently associated with the season of sunshine and fertility.<sup>124</sup> But the Sikyonian *Titanē* echoes *Titanos*, a Thessalian mountain renowned for its “white tops” (*Il.* 2.735), which the Homeric scholiasts associate with *titanos*, a *white earth*, probably *gypsum*, *chalk* or *lime* (*LSJ*).<sup>125</sup> To sum up, *Titanē* is bathed in whiteness and radiance as a result of the interaction of Athena, *Titan*, a heliacal figure, and *titanos*, the gypsum, a substance of documented cultic associations.<sup>126</sup>

The mystical signs of the cult at Titanē intensify as we move down the hill. Pausanias (2.12.1) is eloquent:

ἐκ τούτου τοῦ λόφου καταβᾶσιν - ὅκοδόμηται γὰρ ἐπὶ λόφῳ τὸ ἱερὸν-βωμός ἐστιν ἀνέμων, ἐφ' οὗ τοῖς ἀνέμοις ὁ ἱερεὺς μιᾷ νυκτὶ ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος θύει. δρᾷ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἀπόρρητα ἐς βόθρους τέσσαρας, ἡμερούμενος τῶν πνευμάτων τὸ ἄγριον, καὶ δὴ καὶ Μηδείας ὡς λέγουσιν ἐπὶ φάει.

At the bottom of the hill on the altar of the Winds, he says, nocturnal and secret rites were performed every year to four pits, *bothroi*; with these rites the priest tried to tame ‘the fierceness of the blasts’, and chanted charms of Medea, the sorceress granddaughter of Helios and his darker side.<sup>127</sup> In this story, brightness and darkness are distributed between the two poles of the hill; its upper part is bathed in lustre and whiteness, while its lower part is imbued with the darkness of its chthonic and mystical rituals. Koronis, a girl of onomastic and functional ambiguity, fits nicely in this locale which hosts diametrically opposite cults. In Athens, in the company of her son, Koronis enjoys a chthonic cult, too, and is offered sacrifices meant for deceased parents, *et tamen Athenienses scient eiusmodi deis sacrificare. Nam Aesculapio et matri inter mortuos parentant*, ‘the Athenians ... pay honors to Asclepius and his mother amongst their dead.’<sup>128</sup> It may be of some relevance that this girl originates from the Δώτιον πεδῖον, the cult site of Demeter, the Mother Earth and giver of bountiful gifts.<sup>129</sup>

To conclude, it is obvious that such scanty evidence, deriving from two independent and much later testimonies, thwarts our aspirations of tracing the cultic status of Koronis, and of drawing a coherent and comprehensible pic-

ture either at a synchronic or diachronic level. Yet, despite our uncertainties, it is clear that she embodies in her name, essence and cult the contrasting motifs that pervade the Pindaric *Pythian* 3. The Democritean *dictum* applies to a certain degree in the case of Koronis with the multiple chromatic, intellectual and cultic associations, and *mutatis mutandis*, ‘the name is the cult statue of human speech,’ ἀγάλματα φωνήεντα καὶ ταῦτά ἐστι τῶν θεῶν.<sup>130</sup>

## NOTES

1. B. Gentili, *Pindaro. Le Pitiche*, a cura di B. Gentili, P. Angeli Bernardini, E. Cingano e P. Giannini, *Scrittori Greci e Latini*, Fondazione Lorenzo Valla (Milano, 1995a), 81 with n. 7, defines this ode as ‘encomio impuro.’ See also E. Robbins, “The Gifts of the Gods: Pindar’s Third *Pythian*,” *CQ* 40 (1990): 307. Some introductory remarks are at place here regarding my notation: with *italics* I mark cognate words in contexts of etymological and hermeneutic import. For Pindar I use the translation of W. H. Race (Loeb).

2. As scholars have noted, fire pervades *Pythian* 3: D. C. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar, Mnemosyne* Suppl. 9 (Leiden, 1968), 40–43, 55; J. H. Barkhuizen, “A Note on Pindar, *Pyth.* III, 8–60,” *AClass* 13 (1970): 138–39; Gentili, *Pindaro*, 76 with n. 2; B. Gentili, “Pindarica V. Pindaro, *Pyth.* 3,” in *Studia classica Iohanni Tarditi oblata*, ed. L. Belloni, G. Milanese, and A. Porro, 2 vols. (Biblioteca di Aevum Antiquum, 1995b), 430; B. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (Oxford, 2005), 344–405. The point of contact between gold and fire may be sought in A. Bresson’s observation (*apud* M. M. Willcock, *Pindar. Victory Odes* [Cambridge, 1995], 18 n.22): gold is a symbol of the world of the gods because it “does not deteriorate with time, and has a unique brightness, caused by its not reflecting other colors, but only red.” Significantly, red is the gleam of fire.

3. In this ode there is a wide network of polarities and antinomies (Gentili, *Pindaro*, 81, *passim*) usually attested in myths of coming of age, as e.g. *physis* and culture, near and far, brightness and darkness, health and disease, wisdom and folly, chastity and lust, guile and sincerity, *philia* and enmity, good and bad *xenia*, good and rotten medicine, open and hidden or secrets, reversals of fate, suffering and happiness, realistic / possible and unrealistic / impossible options.

4. Cheiron shares the features of his ‘most just’ father, Κρόνος–Χρόνος, δικαιότατος (Plut. *Mor.* [*Quaest. Rom.*] 4.266.12F), being himself δικαιότατος Κενταύρων: *Il.* 11.832; sch. *Ap. Rh.* 1.554, 48. 3 Wendel; *Ov. Fasti* 5. 413, *iustissime Chiron*. On the biformity and wild or alien (*xenos*) yet adapted *physis* of the centaurs in general see sch. *bT Il.* 1.268a (n. 90, below); sch. *Pi. Pyth.* 2. 78c, 80a, 81a, 82a–b, 85a. On the centaurs as embodiment of rudeness, lustful and animal sexuality see *Soph. Tr.* 1095–96; *Diod. Sik.* 4. 69–70; *Apollod. Epit.* 1.20–21; *Apollod. Bibl.* 2.5.4. They do not tolerate the products of technology and civilization (wine and cooked meat), see G. S. Kirk, *Myth. Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures*, Sather Classical Lectures v. 40 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970), 152–62; H. Lloyd-

Jones, *Mythical Beasts* (London, 1980), 16; F. Zeitlin, "Configurations of Rape in Greek Myth," in *Rape*, ed. S. Tomaselli and R. Porter (Oxford and New York, 1986), 131–35. On their otherness see P. duBois, *Centaur and Amazons* (Ann Arbor, 1982), 25–48; M.J. Padgett, "Horse Men: Centaurs and Satyrs in early Greek Art," in *The Centaur's Smile. The Human Animal in Early Greek Art*, ed. M. J. Padgett (New Haven and London, 2003), 3–27; A. Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1997), 191–94.

5. In *Pyth.* 9 as a mediator and counsellor of Apollo in matters of love, Cheiron advises "the proper model of courtship in civilized society," i.e. Peitho: so Zeitlin, "Configurations," 139–40. Cf. his role in the union of Thetis and Peleus: *Pi.Nem.* 3. 56–57; *Isthm.* 8. 41–42; *Apollod. Bibl.* 3.13.5. See also H. Lloyd-Jones, *Myths of the Zodiac* (London, 1978), 83–84; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, "A Series of Erotic Pursuits: Images and Meanings," *JHS* 107 (1987): 138 with n.52. Stewart, *Art, Desire*, 168–69: Thetis' metamorphoses 'dramatize her rage at this humiliation and articulate the wild animality of the *parthenos* in narrative terms. Thetis' forced passage from nature to culture ... became a paradigm for mortal marriage'.

6. On the invention of medicine and lyric poetry by Cheiron see Hygin *Fab.* 138; sch. A(D) *Il.* 4. 219; Eust. *Il.* 1.733.5–7. The herbs he discovered were named after him *centaurion* and *cheironia*: Nic. *Ther.* 500–02: ῥίζα Κενταύρου Κρονίδαο φερώνυμον. See also Pliny *HN* 23.27, 25.33, 34, 66; R. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece. The contexts of mythology* (Cambridge, 1994), 156–57; G. Guillaume-Coirier, "Chiron Phillyride," *Kernos* 8 (1995): 120–21 with n. 35; M. Plastira-Valkanou, "The Praise of Eminent Physicians in the Greek Anthology," in *Δημητρίω στέφανος. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Δημήτρη Λυπουρλή*, ed. Α. Βασιλειάδης, Π. Κοτζιά, Α. Δ. Μανουδής, Δ. Α. Χρηστίδης (Θεσσαλονίκη, 2004), 447 n. 17.

7. On Cheiron the educator: *Pi. Pyth.* 4. 102–05, 115 (teacher of Jason); *Nem.* 3. 43–58 (teacher of Achilles, Jason and Asklepios). His pupils bear names suggestive of their medical expertise. E.g. *Iason* (<ἰασις, ἰαομαι, sch. Ap. Rh. 1. 554, 48 W.), although he 'possesses no medical or pharmacological knowledge in the ancient literary narratives' (so C.J. Mackie, "The Earliest Jason. What's in a Name?" *Greece & Rome* 48 (2001): 1–17). On *Asklepios* (<ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡπίως ἰᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναβάλλεσθαι τὴν κατὰ τὸν θάνατον γενομένην ἀπόσκλησιν; his symbols (δράκων, βᾶκτρον) complement and sustain his medical properties: Corn. *Epidr.* c. 33. 70–71; see also sch. A(D) *Il.* 4. 195; sch. EQ *Od.* 1.68; *Et.Gen.* α 1280–1281.7; *Et.Gud.* α 213.7–8; sch. Aristoph. *Plut.* 407.6–415a.1. On Achilles' tutelage by Cheiron see Eur. *IA* 709, 927; G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer. The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore and London, 1990), 70–71; Buxton, *Imaginary Greece*, 90, 137. On his medical name see *Et.Gen.* α 1516; Mackie 2001: 6–7; E. Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, *Ancient Poetic Etymology. The Pelopids: Fathers and Sons, Palingenesia – Band 89* (Stuttgart, 2007), 40–42.

8. At least in the culture of the fifth century *polis*, which P. Vidal-Naquet (*apud* duBois, *Centaur and Amazons*, 37 with n. 47), characterizes as a 'men's club'.

9. See *Pi. Pyth.* 4. 83, 102–03; *Nem.* 3. 43; cf. *Pyth.* 6. 22, *Philyras*' son. Cheiron is also called *Kronidas*: *Pi. Pyth.* 4. 115; *Nem.* 3. 47. On *Philyra*'s descent see Guillaume-Coirier, "Chiron," 115–19.

10. Philyra turns into a tree, flower or mare when raped by Kronos who was also disguised as a horse: Hygin *Fab.* 138; Ap. Rh. 2. 1231–41; sch. Ap. Rh. 1. 554, 47–48 W.; ib. 2. 1231–41a, 210–11 W.; sch. Lyk. *Alex.* 1200a 16a, 345 Scheer. See Serv. (*Comm. in Verg. Geo.* 3. 93, 283–84, Thilo): *equam, florem, arborem*. See also P.M.C. Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (Oxford, 1990), 271–72; A. Room, *NTC's Classical Dictionary: The Origins of the Names of Characters in Classical Mythology* (Chicago, 1990), s.v. *Philyra*. On the transformation of Hippo, Cheiron's daughter and her *metonomasia* see Eur fr. 481.12–22, *TrGF* vol. 5:531–32: Μελανίπη, Cheiron's granddaughter, says that Zeus transformed her mother into a winged horse, named thereafter Ἰππώ for revealing the future; similarly Ov. *Met.* 2. 633–75: Okyrhoë is transformed into a mare and receives a new name for predicting the future. Ovid suppresses the new name, unlike Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 1.15.73.4: Ἰππώ. Cf. Erat. *Cat.* 1.18. 8–19, Ἰππη, raped and impregnated by Aiolos, prays to be changed into a horse; Artemis transforms her into a star. On Hippo see Forbes, *Metamorphosis*, 78–79, 168, 210–11; A. Michalopoulos, *Ancient Etymologies in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Leeds, 2001), 135–36, Ἰππώ/Μελανίπη. The second divine mother figuring in our ode, Leto, turns into a wolf: Forbes, *Metamorphosis*, 76–77. In the Cretan *Ekdysia* Leto Phytīē is involved in the transformation of a girl into a boy (Nic. in Ant. Lib. *Met.* 17; Ov. *Met.* 9. 666–797).

11. Pindar probably plays upon *Philyra* whose sounds evoke *philos-philía*, a motif that runs through *Pyth.* 3, and justifies the composition of this ode after all (see n. 82, below). On her etymology from *philyra*, the plant, see Hygin *Fab.* 138; Room, *NTC's Classical Dictionary*, s.v. *Philyra*. T. K. Hubbard, *The Pindaric Mind. A Study of Logical Structure in Early Greek Poetry*, *Mnemosyne* Suppl. 85 (Leiden, 1985), 42 n. 89, construes her name as 'loving the lyre'. Guillaume-Coirier, "Chiron," 118–119, surveys the etymological alternatives, and submits φίλος+ῥρον [=σμήνος], a root observed in *susurrus*, the buzzing of the bees; this points to tilia as loving, attracting bees, hence Philyra is associated with a form of fertility as providing honey.

12. On the medicinal properties of the plant see Theophr. (*Hist. plant.* 1. 12. 4. 7–10; 3. 10. 4. 1–5.15), who draws a distinction between the masculine and feminine linden: the former is sterile, ἄκαρπον, and the latter fertile, κάρπιμον. The duality of the plant extends to its texture, flower and fruit, ιδιώτατον δὲ τὸ ἐπὶ φύλλῳ: the thickness, rigidity and bitterness of the male are contraposed to the flexibility, suppleness and sweetness of the female. On the gynecological properties of linden (ἔμμηνα ἄγει) see Diosk. *De Materia medica*, 1. 96.1–8. Philyra is linked with acculturation, since the white bark of her tree is used for writing, literacy being a most civilizing accomplishment. On the nourishing, medical and prophetic powers of Philyra see Guillaume-Coirier, "Chiron," 115–21; E. Aston, "The Absence of Chiron," *CQ* 56, no. 2 (2006): 357.

13. *Lygos* exhibits comparable properties on which see C. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece*, trans. D. Collins and J. Orion (Lanham, Boulder, New York and London, 1997), 163–64 with nn. 225, 226: *lygos* or *agnus castus* is linked with menstruation and the reproductive cycle, lactation and motherhood. On ἄκαρπα and ἡμερα trees, growing in the vicinity of the sanctuary of Artemis Kallistē and reflecting "the dual mode of operation of plant and goddess" see H. King, "Bound

to Bleed: Artemis and Greek Women.” in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (London, 1993), 122–23; H. King, *Hippocrates' Woman. Reading the Female Body in ancient Greece* (London and New York, 1998), 86–88.

14. Cf. J. Larson, *Greek Nymphs. Myth, Cult, Lore* (Oxford, 2001), 164: the matronymic *Philyridas* is used “presumably because the appellation ‘son of Kronos’ was reserved for Zeus”.

15. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece*, 119, notes, ‘Pindar’s poetic world is not unclouded,’ adducing *Pythian* 3 and the fate of Koronis as an example. See B. H. Fowler, “Constellations in Pindar,” *C&M* 37 (1986): 35–37 on gold, light, marriages, secrets, seeds, fire, wood, diseases, cures, song and the theme of near and far as cumulative constellations of the *Pythian* 3.

16. Phlegyas is the eponymous hero of the Phlegyans who burned down Apollo’s temple (sch. A(D) *Il.* 13.302, οὔτοι δὲ ἐνέπρησαν καὶ τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς ναὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος. ἡ ἱστορία παρὰ Φερεκύδει [*FGrHist.* 3F 41e]), and whose name is derived from φλεγυᾶν, the Phoecean word for being hybristic: sch. bT *Il.* 13. 302a ~ Scholia-D *ad loc.*, Φλεγύας μεγαλήτορας ... ὅθεν καὶ παρὰ Φωκεῦσι τὸ ὑβρίζειν φλεγυᾶν λέγεσθαι. Cf. *EM* 795.57–796.4, φλεγύας ἐστὶ ἀετὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ φλέγειν καὶ λαμπρὸς εἶναι; see also A. B. Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion*, 2 vols. (New York, 1914, 1925, repr. 1964–1965), 2: 1134 n. 9. Phlegyas burned Apollo’s temple upon discovering that the god had raped his daughter (Serv. *Comm. in Aen.* 6. 618). Phlegyas, the son of Ares and Dotis, met his death at the hands of Lykos and Nyktimos, two men of guileful and nocturnal associations (Apollod. *Bibl.* 3. 5.5); fire, guile and darkness mingle in Phlegyas’ name and life.

17. See *Il.* 22. 15, 358–62 versus 5. 344–45.

18. *Technai*, an accomplishment of civilization, may be constructive or destructive: sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 2. 58, ‘some people call the guile and evildoing *technas*’. *Et.Gen.* α 1350, τέχνη γὰρ ὁ δόλος. Ὅμηρος (θ 296–297). So J. T. Hamilton, *Soliciting Darkness. Pindar, Obscurity, and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2003), 55.

19. See E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*, Sather Lectures vol. 46 (Berkeley, 1979), 101–02, 235 nn. 22, 23; Zeitlin, “Configurations,” 137–43; Sourvinou-Inwood, “Erotic Pursuits,” 138 with nn. 50, 51; N. Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman*, trans. A. Forster (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1987), 34–37; R. Seaford, “The Tragic Weddings,” *JHS* 107 (1987): 111; Calame, *Choruses*, 145, 238–42 for marriage and female education as taming. See n. 39, below.

20. H. Grégoire, *Asklepios Apollon Smintheus et Rudra* (Bruxelles, 1950), 14 n.1, articulates *Aīdas* as *ai-īdhs*, ‘celui de la terre’ (so Cook *CR* 1902: 172).

21. This imagery ties in well with myths of maidens’ prenuptial or marriage rites. The ambiguity of *en thalamōi* is noticed by ancient and modern scholars: sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3. 18a–e; sch. e. ἐχαριεντίσατο δὲ εἰπὼν θάλαμον τὸν Ἄϊδην. See B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar. The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (London, 1907, repr. Amsterdam 1965), 270; Young, *Three Odes of Pindar*, 33 with n. 1. On *tholos*, *thalamos*, *stomion* and *loutrophoros* in funeral and wedding rituals, and the image of ‘the bride of Hades,’ see Vermeule, *Aspects of Death*, 51–56 with 222–24 nn. 18, 25: *thalamus* ~ grave (Ais. *Pers.* 624; Soph. *Ant.* 804, 806–16; 865–71; 891–94, 947, 1204–05; Eur.

*Her.* 807, *Suppl.* 990–1030). See Loraux, *Tragic Ways*, 23–42, 59, 75 n. 48, 80 nn. 24, 25; H. S. Rose, “The Bride of Hades,” *CPh* 20 (1925): 238–42; Seaford, “Tragic Weddings,” 106–30; R. Rehm, *Marriage to Death. The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Ancient Tragedy* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1994/1996), 11–29, 63, 142, 182 with n. 18; Stewart, *Art, Desire*, 168–69; C. Calame, *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece*, trans. J. Lloyd (Princeton, New Jersey, 1999), 143–45 with nn. 26, 27; G. Ferrari G., “The ‘Anodos’ of the Bride,” in *Greek Ritual Poetics*, ed. D. Yatromanolakis and P. Roilos (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2004), 245–60.

22. So C.A. Faraone, “Playing the bear and the fawn for Artemis: female initiation or substitute sacrifice?” in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives*, ed. D. B. Dodd and C. A. Faraone (London, 2003), 60 with nn. 66, 67, who adds, “there is no evidence that this *proteleia* rite ‘prepared’ young women for marriage in any initiatory fashion; it simply appeased a dangerous goddess.” On the *proteleia* as wedding and death rites: *Ais. Ag.* 227 with Fränkel 1962 (“ceremonies previous to the consummation of marriage”); the phrase has a ritual sacrificial element not yet faded. See W. Burkert, *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, trans. P. Bing (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1983), 62–63 n.20; Seaford, “Tragic Weddings,” 106, 108–10; Rehm, *Marriage to Death*, 43, 50, 121, 156 n.11, 171 n. 2.

23. Eileithyia brings children to the light (*Il.* 19.103–04; cf. *h.Ap.* 97–101); see n. 56, below. She dispenses light and the splendid-limbed Hebē, saving children from black night (ἄνευ σέθεν οὐ φάος, *Pi. Nem.* 7.1–5; *Ol.* 6. 41–44, ἐς φάος). She is often identified with Artemis on whose contradictory powers (plague / healing; virginity / childbearing) see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. J. Raffan (Cambridge, Mass.1985), 51, ‘she [Artemis] merges with Eileithyia. There is no wedding without Artemis: hers is the power to send and ward off dangers before and after this decisive turning-point in a girl’s life’. Artemis is a lion to women in labor (*Il.* 21. 483 with sch.). As *Lochia*, *Eulochia*, *Eileithyia*, *Geneteira* and *Soodina*, she presides over childbirth; as *Lysizonos* over the sexual experience associated with marriage: S. G. Cole, “Domesticating Artemis,” in *The Sacred and the Feminine in ancient Greece*, ed. S. Blundell and M. Williamson (London and New York, 1998), 34–35; Calame, *Choruses*, 166 with n. 235, 167. See King, *Hippocrates’ Woman*, 78–86, on the relation of Artemis with the reproductive cycle, defloration, menstruation, labor and parturition. These ‘stages in a woman’s life ... involve bleeding’ and Artemis’ ‘task can thus be identified with that of the male,’ says S. Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995) 44–45, adding that Artemis and Athena are capable ‘of passing over the dividing line between women and men’ (44); she observes the paradox of Artemis’ destructive and creative roles (29–31). On the evidence of the Sophilos vase, T.H. Carpenter, “The Terrible Twins in Sixth-Century Attic Art,” in *Apollo. Origins and Influences*, ed. J. Solomon (Tucson and London, 1994), 78, links the bow of Artemis with hunting, treatment of women, wedding and childbirth; she is accompanied by the Fates and Eileithyia.

24. On *akersekomas* and *ephebeia* see W. Burkert, “Apellai und Apollo,” *RhM* 118 (1975): 1–21; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 144–45; A. Stéfos, *Apollon dans Pindare* (Athènes, 1975), 221–22; G. Nagy, “The Name of Apollo: Etymology and Essence,”



in *Apollo. Origins and Influences*, ed. J. Solomon (Tucson and London, 1994), 6; D. Birge, "Sacred Groves and the Nature of Apollo," in *Apollo. Origins and Influences*, ed. J. Solomon (Tucson and London, 1994), 13–14; A. Bierl, "Apollo in Greek Tragedy: Orestes and the God of Initiation," in *Apollo. Origins and Influences*, edited by J. Solomon. Tucson and London, 1994), 84; Faraone, "Playing the bear," 48–49 with n. 38; in the Aegean-Ionian regions Apollo is a killer of men, associated with the bow and plague, while in the Peloponnese with civic organization and male initiation. On ritual hair-cutting and growing see Calame, *Choruses*, 106–07 with n. 51; D. D. Leitaο, "Adolescent hair-growing and hair-cutting rituals in ancient Greece. A sociological approach," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives*, ed. D. B. Dodd and C. A. Faraone (London and New York, 2003), 109–29. See n. 30, below.

25. On the syntax of κρύβδαν πατρός see sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3. 22d, 25a–c. Most scholars connect it with ἄλλον αἰνῆσεν γάμον, in an effort to explain the harsh punishment that Koronis and her community incurred. I would rather associate the phrase with what follows it firstly because it creates a meaningful image of darkness in contrast to the diffused brightness of the strophe, and secondly because it conforms to Pindar's fondness of the theme of first love's secrecy and shame: in *Ol.* 6. 31, Pitana hid (κρύψε) her maidenly birth pangs in the folds of her robe, while her daughter, Euadna, did not escape (οὐδ' ἔλαθ') the notice of her step father Aipyros that she was hiding (κλέπτουσα) the god's offspring (35–36); Cheiron reaffirms (*Pyth.* 9. 39–41), "Hidden are the keys (κρυπταὶ κλαῖδες) to sacred / lovemaking (φιλοτάτων) that belong to wise Persuasion, / Phoebus, and both gods and humans alike / shy from engaging openly for the first time / in sweet love (Race, Loeb). See Eur. *Ion* 72–73, 1524 (Loxias' *gamoi kryptoi*); 340 (*lathra patros*).

26. See Ixion's myth (Pi. *Pyth.* 2. 26–40, *μαινομένας φρασίν, ὕβρις εἰς αὐτὰν ὄρσεν, ἀμπλακίαι, τέχνας, μεγαλοκευθέσιν θαλάμοις, εὖναι παράτροποι, νεφέλα παρελέξατο, ψεῦδος γλυκύ, αἰδῆρις ἀνὴρ, πῆμα*), and Klytaimnestra's (*Pyth.* 11. 18–30, *ἐκ δόλου, ἑτέρῳ λέχει δαμαζομέναν, ἐννυχοὶ κοῖται, ἀμπλάκιον, καλύψαι, ἄφαντον*). Both stories teem with words attested in the story of Koronis. Ixion was the great sinner and rapist who killed his father-in-law in a pit of burning coals, and repaid Zeus' hospitality by sexually harassing his divine consort. In his mental blindness, Ixion united with Nephele, an *eidolon* fashioned by Zeus in the likeness of Hera (*Pyth.* 2. 25–48). Significantly, Ixion is Phlegyas' son (sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 2. 40a; sch. Ap. Rh. 3. 62, 218 W.= Pherekydes fr. 51b, R. Fowler), hence Koronis' brother; infatuation and sexual crimes pervade this family. For U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 2 vols. (Darmstadt, 1890, repr. 1973), 2:119–20, *amblakein* and *amblakia* signify religious sin and transgression. This may be true (Ais. *Ag.* 345), yet the presence of *atē* and *phrēn* foreground the mental aspects of *amblakiai* and the failure of intellect, as Pindar makes clear in the fate of Tlepolemos (*Ol.* 7). Cf. Klingner F. "Über Pindars drittes Pythisches Gedicht," in *Corolla Ludwig Curtius zum sechzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht* (Stuttgart, 1937), 16, "den Gesinnungsfehler der Koronis;" B. Fowler, "Constellations," 35, "derangement of wits;" B. S. Thornton, *Eros. The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality* (Boulder and Oxford, 1997), 18, "a great ruinous infatuation," and 19, "sexual passion creates a mental blindness and delusion that ignores the limits." On *amblakiai* and the Pindaric beds of deception see P. Bulman,

*Phthonos in Pindar* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, 1992), 40–41 with nn. 23, 24; Calame, *Choruses*, 35; Hamilton, *Soliciting Darkness*, 67.

27. Sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3. 27, ἀνεπίμκτον θνητοῦ σπορᾶς. For the illustrious purity and whiteness of καθαρὸς in Pindar see J. Duchemin, *Pindare. Poète et Prophète* (Paris, 1955), 200, and 158–62 for its connection with rites of passage. On the social value of *katharos* and the fifth century BC Athenian concern with “the purity and potency of its citizen stock” see Stewart, *Art, Desire*, 171.

28. Kall. *Hek.* fr. 260. 44–65 Pfeiffer = fr. 74.19 Hollis. On his indebtedness to Hes. fr. 60. 4 M.-W., see R. L. Hunter, “The Hesiodic Catalogue and Hellenistic poetry,” in *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, ed. R. Hunter (Cambridge, 2005). 243–44. Dionysios, *Ixeuticon sive de aucupio*, ch. 1. 9. 1, makes the raven an embodiment of lust, and gives an etiology for its physical peculiarities: this of all animals does not give water to its nestlings and its chin (or throat?) is broken after mating because Apollo punished it for failing to fetch water during Koronis’ child-bearing at Triikka, τοῦ κελευσθέντος ὑπεριδὼν ἐλαγνεύετο. Koronis is innocent and Apollo stands at her side.

29. On the raven motif see Hes. fr. 60 M.-W. = sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3.52b = Artemon 569F5 *FGrHist. et al.* The transformation of the *garrula cornix*, the daughter of the Phoecean *Coroneus*, into a bird of the night in answer of her prayer to Athena, and of the *loquax corvus* is dramatized by Ov. *Met.* 2. 535–50, 596–632. Forbes, *Metamorphosis*, 230, considers Athena’s interference an invention of Ovid, unsupported by a historical cult relation of Athena and the crow; the crow in the hand of her statue at Koroneia (Paus. 4. 34. 6) may refer to the name of the town. On Athena (at Korone) and the crow see A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia*, *BICS* Suppl. 38.1 (London ICS, 1981), 122 with n. 2; R. E. Bell, *Women of Classical Mythology* (Oxford, 1991) s.v. *Koronis* (2); C. Hünemörder, “Krähe,” *Der Neue Pauly* 6 (1996): 786–87. On this myth see T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth. A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*, 2 vols. (Baltimore and London, 1993), 1: 90–92. On Pindar’s mythical innovations in *Pyth.* 3, see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Isyllos von Epidauros* (Berlin, 1886), 57–61; L. R. Farnell L. R., *Critical Commentary to the Works of Pindar* (London 1932, repr. Amsterdam 1961), 138–39; A. Luppino, “Divagazioni e precisazioni sulla Pitica III di Pindaro,” *RFIC* n.s. 37 (1959): 226–27; R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar’s Pythian Odes: Essays in Interpretation* (Oxford, 1962), 83–84. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar*, 34 with nn. 1, 2, 38, argues that the rejection of this story by Pindar enhances Apollo as a great divinity, but also fits the requirements of a short lyric poem; the raven story would be an extravagant digression irrelevant to the short Koronis-myth and the purposes of the lyric poet. See Stéfou, *Apollon dans Pindare*, 68–69; Gentili, “Pindarica V,” 429 n. 4, and P. Dräger, *Untersuchungen zu den Frauenkatalogen Hesiods* (Stuttgart, 1997), 69–71. Cf. G. B. D’Alessio, “Ordered from the Catalogue: Pindar, Bacchylides, and Hesiodic genealogical poetry,” in *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, ed. R. Hunter (Cambridge, 2005), 234, “Pindar’s innovations presuppose previous knowledge of the Hesiodic version in the audience.”

30. Faraone, “Playing the bear,” 48–50, cautions against fusing Artemis’ powers: in the Aegean and Ionian cultural realm she kills females in childbirth or old age by her bow (48, 62) as a “special killer of woman;» in the Peloponnese she is mistress of



animals, huntress and interferes in "flagrant female sexual misconduct of some kind ... that links these myths with girls coming of age" unlike the Attic myths which focus on sacrifice and temple service for the safety of the city. See n. 24, above.

31. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece*, 115–17, makes a pertinent remark, "women were felt to be, in a series of fundamental ways, responsible for the *continuity* of the community," taking care of the dead, of the *oikos*, by means of weaving, turning the raw into cooked, engendering children and myth-telling.

32. See Calame, *Choruses*, 33–34; Calame, *The Poetics of Eros*, 116–17.

33. On the derivation of *nympha* see *Il.* 18. 492–93; *Or.* 107. 17, 112. 3, Sturz; *Eust. Il.* 2. 350. 10–11. P. Chantraine, "Le noms du mari et de la femme, du père et de la mère en Grec," *REG* 59–60 (1946–1947): 228, 'νύμφη est le terme propre pour designer la fiancée au moment de son mariage ou la jeune mariée'.

34. See A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago, 1960); Calame, *Choruses*, 10–15; F. Graf, "Initiation: a concept with a troubled history," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives*, ed. D. B. Dodd and C. A. Faraone (London and New York, 2003), 17, 19. I. Rutherford, "In a Virtual Wild Space: Pilgrimage and Rite de Passage from Delphi to Sarimalai," in *Greek Ritual Poetics*, ed. D. Yatromanolakis and P. Roilos (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2004), 328 with n. 25, notes that "there is no single formula, but rather an open-ended range of typical components." On women as liminal, even in the Athenian law and society see Blundell, *Women in Greece*, 19 with n. 8, 118–19. Faraone, "Playing the bear," 46 with n.21, restricts this tripartite model in the male initiation, since the female initiation focuses "on enclosure and metamorphosis *within* the community." This affects the meaning of οὐκ ἔμεινε: did Koronis not wait or did not stay? Does it imply impatience or elopement, emotional alienation or physical separation? On liminality in a metaphorical and non-spatial sense see I. Polinskaya, "Liminality as Metaphor. Initiation and frontiers of ancient Athens," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives*, ed. D. B. Dodd and C. A. Faraone (London and New York, 2003), 85–106, apropos the Athenian *ephebeia*.

35. *LSJ* s.v. ὑποκο(ν)ρίζομαι: *call by endearing names, call by a soft name, call something bad by a fair name*, and the reverse, *gloss over*, etc. The association with ὑποκοριστικόν, *a diminutive*, is resumed by Gildersleeve, *Pindar*, 271: "the bridal maids were wont to use the pet name, 'baby name' (ὑποκόρισμα) of the bride;" Farnell, *Critical Commentary*, 139, "mocking words of blandishment." *gay badinage*." Cf., however, Hsch. κ 3856, κουρίζομενος · ὑμεναιούμενος, διὰ τὸ λέγειν γαμουμέναις · σὺν κούροις καὶ κόραις · ὅπερ νῦν ἐφθαρμένως ἐκκορεῖν λέγεται. The Pindaric text solidifies this interpretation; sch. *Pi. Pyth.* 3. 32a, b, add κορώνη and εὐκορεῖ βίω, a *hapax* expression that signifies good offspring; the occasion calls for playing and dancing (ἀντὶ τοῦ παίζειν καὶ χορεύειν), on which see Calame, *Choruses*, 92 with n.71. The above words evoke the etymology of *Koronis* (nn. 99–102, below).

36. *Hom. Od.* 22. 185, κουρίζων; *Hes. Th.* 357, κουρίζουσι, on which see M. L. West, *Hesiod. Theogony* (Oxford, 1966), 263–64, 'the scholiast rightly explains, ἀνατρέφουσιν. ἄνδρας is proleptic'. West elaborates on the kourotrophic function of the nymphs and their spring-water, on hair-cutting (κουρά) upon coming of age, and the dedication of this hair to the local river or nymphs in thanksgiving for successful nurture.

37. Graf, "Initiation," 9–10, in view of the variety of terms (*krupeteia*, *ephebeia*, *arkteia*, *mallokouria*, *kourizein*, *nebrizein*, *agela*, *dromeus*, *apodromos*, (*pan*)*azostos* and *ekduomenos*), gathers that "what then follows from these facts is not so much the absence of such rites in Greece, but their high level of local variation: this is what one would expect from rites so closely tied to single communities and their identity."

38. On ἦρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων see J. H. Jr. Finley, *Pindar and Aeschylus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966) 91. Cf. A. M. Buongiovanni, "Sulla Composizione della III Pitica," *Athenaeum* 63 (1985): 329, Coronis' crime "è un peccato di troppa umanità ... l' unione con Apollo era πᾶρ ποδός, quindi no andava violata e disprezzata." Robbins, "The Gifts of the Gods," 310, argues that "acceptance of distance is ... a moral obligation and failure to accept it the root of Coronis' sin." On the differing messages of the myths of Koronis and Asklepios see G. Arrighetti, "I miti di Coronide e Asclepio nella Pitica 3 di Pindaro," in *Studi in Onore di Edda Bresciani*, ed. S. F. Bondi, S. Pernigotti, F. Serra and A. Vivian (Pisa 1985, repr. in *Poeti, Eruditi e Biografi* (Pisa, 1987), 130–32; Buongiovanni, "Sulla Composizione della III Pitica," 327–30.

39. See Zeitlin, "Configurations," 126, hunt and war are metaphors for male sexual desire. See n. 19, above.

40. On Andromache's maenadic behavior see R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual. Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford, 1994), 330–38. On her name and role see E. Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, "Ἰλιάς Ζ: Ραψωδία της νοητικής ταλάντευσης - Θεματική και γλωσσική ενότητα," in *Δημητρίῳ στέφανος. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Δημήτρη Λυπουρλή*, ed. Α. Βασιλειάδης, Π. Κοτζιά, Α. Δ. Μαυρουδής, and Δ. Α. Χρηστίδης (Θεσσαλονίκη, 2004), 52.

41. On παπταίνω see Pi. *Pyth.* 4. 96; *Ol.* 1. 114; *Isth.* 7. 44; sch. T *Il.* 4.200a<sup>1</sup>. πανταχόσε ρίπτων τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς; sch. b *Il.* 4. 200a<sup>2</sup>; sch. A *Il.* 4. 200b; sch. bT *Il.* 22.463. ἔστη παπτήνας' ἐπὶ τείχεϊ: ... ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς ταρασσομένης ἔργον τὸ αὐτόπτην ἐθέλειν γενέσθαι; the verb conveys Andromache's emotional disturbance.

42. See Plut. (*De E apud Delphos*, Steph. p. 385, B.11): [ὥς] Ἰσμήνιος δέ [ἔστι] τοῖς ἔχουσι τὴν ἐπιστήμην. See Pindar *Pyth.* 11. 3–6, Kadmos' daughters are urged to go "and join Melia at the treasure of the golden tripods, the sanctuary, which Loxias especially honored, and named Ismenion the true seat of seers, Ἰσμήνιον δὲ ὀνόμαξεν, ἀλαθέα μαντίων θῶκον. See also Sch. Eur. *Ph.* 101.2; sch. Ap. Rh. 1. 536–41b, 46 W.; Paus. 9.10. 4–6; Steph. Byz. *Ethnica*, p. 338. 21 Mein.; Hsch. ι 949. For the association of *Ismenos* with Ἰσαμι see W.D. Woodhead, *Etymologizing in Greek Literature from Homer to Philo Judaeus*, Diss. University of Chicago (University of Toronto Press, 1928), 39. See also n. 64, below.

43. Stéfos, *Apollon dans Pindare*, 59, 60, 62, sees in καλλιπέπλου λῆμα Κορωνίδος 'une jeune et belle vierge' and 'élégante'. P. Kyriakou, "Images of Women in Pindar," *MD* 32 (1994): 40, speaks of 'her manly courage coupled with references to her crooked judgment and her female coquetterie'.

44. According to J. Scheid and J. Svenbro, *The Craft of Zeus. Myths of Weaving and Fabric*, trans. C. Volk (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1996), 80, the parallel between Koronis *kallipeplos* and Kyrene *chrysothronos* (Pi. *Pyth.* 9) suggests that they "married well," and "that their vestimentary epithets symbolize their status as wives—which one ultimately betrays while the other does not."

45. So F.T.van Straaten, "Gifts for the Gods," in *Faith, Hope and Worship*, ed. H. S. Versnel (Leiden, 1981), 99 with nn. 170, 171; R. Fowler, "Greek Magic, Greek Religion," in *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion*, ed. R. Buxton (Oxford, 2000), 326–29. Iphigeneia received propitiatory gifts, πέπλων ... εὐπῆγους ὑφάς, when women died at childbirth (Eur. *IT* 1462–67), while Artemis received thanksgiving for aiding birth: see S.G. Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," in *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space. The Ancient Greek Experience* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2004), 219; Calame, *Choruses*, 196 with nn. 234, 235. *Peplos* was among the offerings for Artemis. Cole, "Domesticating Artemis," (2004), 213 with n. 94, sees a "belted *peplos*" on the Echinus relief. In sixth century Attic art, Artemis wears a *peplos*: see Carpenter, "The Terrible Twins," 69, 70, 78. On the ritual significance of naked and clothed as change of status and transition in the cult of Artemis Brauronia and Chitone (Kithone), see Cole, "Domesticating Artemis" (1998), 36–39; Cole, "Domesticating Artemis" (2004), 212–30; King, "Bound to Bleed," 114–15 with n. 12; King, *Hippocrates' Woman*, 75–88; B.Goff, *Citizen Bacchae. Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2004), 70.

46. See Seaford, "Tragic Weddings," 106–10, 113, 120–21.

47. λῆμα is glossed as θράσος, δύναμις, τόλμημα, ἀξίωμα (*EM* 563.46). On its derivation from λάω = *to yearn and desire eagerly*, see *EGen*. λ 198; *EM* 563. 41–45. It may also derive from λάω = *to see* (cf. λέων, *EGen* λ 179.1–4; R. Reitzenstein, *Geschichte der griechischen Etymologika* [Leipzig 1897, repr. Amsterdam 1964], 337–38), thus insinuating the girl's distorted *volition* and/or *vision*. The latter looks possible in view of her connection with *koronē*, a nocturnal bird of acute vision. With the telling exceptions of Medea and Iokaste, this noun is used of warriors, stubborn and manly, and is not always complimentary: Heracles (Pi.*Nem.*1.57) has ἐκνόμιον λῆμα, unlawful (cf. W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar* (Berlin, 1969), s.v. ἐκνόμιον, *extraordinary*). Odysseus' λῆμα (Eur.*Rh.* 498–500) is bold and insolent, while Pindar (*Pyth.* 8.44–45) makes λῆμα a hereditary quality, φυᾷ τὸ γενναῖον ἐπιπρέπει / ἐκ πατέρων παισὶ λῆμα. See also Gildersleeve, *Pindar*, 271, "Wilful Koronis;" Slater, *Lexicon*, s.v. λῆμα: *will, purposefulness*, and apropos Koronis: *willfulness*.

48. See Woodhead, *Etymologizing in Greek Literature*, 11, "There seems to be a hint of the conventional etymology of *Loxias* in Pindar *Pyth.* 3. 27." On *Loxias* see Corn. *Epidr.* c. 32. 67.14–16; *Et.Gud.* 373. 54; *EM* 569. 46–51.

49. On the "seherische Wissen" or the "geistigen Blick des Sehergottes" in *Pyth.* 3 and 9, see D.Bremer, *Licht und Dunkel in der frühgriechischen Dichtung* (Bonn, 1976), 296–98.

50. See Jo. Philop. *De Vocabulis Quae Diversum Significatum exhibent Secundum Differentiam Accentus*, A9 Daly: Ἴσχυς: τὸ κύριον, ὁ ἀνὴρ τῆς Κορωνίδος, παροξύνεται, ἰσχύς: τὸ προσηγορικὸν ὀξύνεται. See Gentili, *Pindaro*, 77 n. 3, "*Nomen est omen*, cfr. ἰσχύς, 'forza'." Wilamowitz, *Isyllos*, 81 n. 54, despite Cicero's "*Valens*" (*De nat. deorum* 3. 56), sees Ischomachos behind Ischys.

51. See C. Kerényi, *Asklepios. Archetypal Images of the Physician's Existence*, trans. R. Manheim, Bollingen Series 65.3 (New York, 1959), 96. On ξενία κοῖτα ἄθεμῖς τε δόλος see Arrighetti, "I miti di Coronide," 127–28; on *xenos* and *themis* see Kyriakou, "Images of Women in Pindar," 34–35.

52. In one version Koronis is of Arkadian origin; see *h.Ap.* 209, Ἀτλαντίδα κοῦρην. Wilamowitz, *Isyllos*, 80 with n. 53, considers Martin's conjecture felicitous, but not strong evidence for Koronis' Arkadian descent. Cf. T.W. Allen, W.R. Halliday and E.E. Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1936, repr. Amsterdam, 1963), 231: Arsinoë is an Atlantid (Apoll. 3. 10. 3), but has nothing to do with Ischys; hence they approve Martin's reading Ἀζανίδα, i.e. Arkadian; both this and Ἀζαντίδα, daughter or Azan, "places Koronis among the figures of early Arcadian genealogy." E. J. Edelstein and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius. Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Baltimore and London, 1998), 70 n. 10, also identify *Azantida kourēn* with Koronis. See further Dräger, *Untersuchungen zu den Frauenkatalogen*, 87–88; G.B.D' Alessio, "Ordered from the Catalogue: Pindar, Bacchylides, and Hesiodic genealogical poetry," in *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, ed. R. Hunter (Cambridge, 2005) 218–219. The conflation in the genealogies of the two lovers resurfaces in Apollod. *Bibl.* 3. 10.3: against her father's will, Koronis lived with Ischys, the brother of Kaineus, on which see Dräger, *Untersuchungen zu den Frauenkatalogen*, 92–105. This version not only translates Ischys to Thessaly, but also posits his kinship with a famous androgynous figure, Kainis–Kaineus. The story of Ischys and Kaineus ("New Gender": *Et.Gud.* κ 292.12 ~ *EM* 497.46–48, *Καινέως* διὰ τὸ καινὸν τοῦ γένους) exhibits motifs recurrent in initiatory myths, such as guile, stealth, illegitimate or pervert sex as well as tragic deaths and transformation (Kaineus was transformed into a bird: sch. Plato *Laws*, 12. 944d Greene; Ov. *Met.* 12. 459–535, esp. 525–32). On Kainis–Kaineus see Pi. *threni* fr. 6 = fr. 128f = 167; sch. Ap. Rh. 1.57–64a, 12 W.; Apollod. *Epit.* 1.22 with n. 1; Ov. *Met.* 12. 219. See also W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, Sather Classical Lectures v. 47 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1979), 29–30 with n. 6; Zeitlin, "Configurations," 133–34; L. Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence. Androgyny and Hermaphroditism in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2002), 62–63 with n. 49; Padgett, "Horse Men," 15–16; M.R. Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (Baltimore, 1986), 36–37; A. H. Griffiths, "Centaurs," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3d ed. (Oxford 1996), 308–09.

53. Neoptolemos was slaughtered like a sacrificial animal: see Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 118–20. He dwelled "there as a rightful overseer of processions honoring heroes with many sacrifices" (ἡρώταις δὲ πομπαῖς / θεμισκόπον οἰκεῖν ἔοντα πολυθύτοις, Pi. *Nem.* 7. 44–47), on which see E. Suárez de la Torre, "Neoptolemos at Delphi," *Kernos* 10 (1997): 153–76, esp. 168–72. Pytho 'receives many *thymata*' (sch. *Pyth.* 3.47). Apollo had ordained this manner of sacrificing and the reception of the tribes of men (*h.Ap.* 535–39, δέδεχθε, 538; cf. -δόκος). On πομπά see *LSJ* s.v., "the flesh of sheep for sacrifice carried in procession."

54. So Bacch. 11. 93–95 (Campbell, *Greek Lyric IV*, Loeb), significantly in the myth of the Proitides, who "roamed in the shadowy forest and fled all through sheep-grazing Arcadia."

55. Ischys is killed by Apollo (sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3. 59 = Pherekydes 3F3), or by Zeus (Hygin *Fab.* 202).

56. Eileithyia "comes or rushes in haste," as her name tells, to assist mothers in childbirth: see *Et.Gud.* ε 415.15 (*additam.*): Εἰλειθυία ἀπὸ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν εἰλῆσιν τῆς πορείας θύειν, ὃ ἐστι μεθ' ὁρμῆς θύνειν. οἱ δὲ εἰς ἔλευσιν ἄγουσα τὰ βρέφη. Cf. Hsch.

ε 2025; EM 298. 40: <ἐλεύθω; EGud. β 277. 20–23; ε 415. 5–8: ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν εἰς φῶς τὰ δι' αὐτῆς τικτόμενα; sch. Pi. Pyth. 3. 15b.1–3: ματροπόλον δὲ τὴν Εἰλείθυιαν διὰ τὸ περὶ τὰς μητέρας εἰλεῖσθαι ἢ πολεῖσθαι τὰς τῶν γεννωμένων. Her components, ἐλεύθω+θύ(ν)ω, exhibit a semantic escalation. See also n. 23, above.

57. On θύω see Ais. Ag. 1235, θύουσαν Ἄιδου μητέρα; Scholia-D II.1.342, θύει: ἐνθουσιωδῶς ὁρμαῖ, ὃ ἐστὶν μαίνεται; Hsch. θ 846, θνιωθεῖς: μανεῖς, ὁρμήσας.

58. On the etymology of Boibias <Boibe, Φοῖβη see Grégoire, *Asklepios Apollon Smintheus*, 22, and Kerényi, *Asklepios. Archetypal Images*, 90–92, who sees in it the Thessalian name of Phoibē the Titaness, the divine primordial woman, the moon goddess, in whose names he discerns the different phases of the moon. See Dräger, *Untersuchungen zu den Frauenkatalogen*, 68 n. 4.

59. So King, “Bound to Bleed,” 112–13. See G. Sissa, “Maidenhood without Maidenhead: The Female Body in Ancient Greece,” in *Before Sexuality. The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler and F. I. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1990), 342, 346, on “the application of the uncooperative and ambiguous term *parthenos* to both the girl innocent of love and the unmarried mother,” which “inclines historians of virginity to see in the expression nothing but a designation of social position, of ‘civil status’.” Blundell, *Women in Greece*, 46, “the term is social rather than biological;” she quotes Sissa (*Greek Virginity*, 1990: 73–104, unavailable to me), “a *parthenos* is indeed a virgin, but in the case of the unmarried mothers the virginity is sham: there is a degree of irony ... it becomes a stigma –a mark of their shame.” See M. Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos und Megalai Ehoiai. Ein Kommentar zu den Fragmenten zweier hesiodeischer Epen* (München and Leipzig, 2004), 336: social status of a girl in marriageable age. The debate over the meaning of *parthenos* is ancient: sch. rec. Pi. Pyth. 3. 61.1–6, Boeckh: Πῶς παρθένος ... ἡ Κορωνίς, εἶπερ ὑπ’ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐφθάρη; Ἄλλ’ ἰστέον ὅτι παρὰ ποιηταῖς τὸ παρθένος οὐ μόνον τὴν μίξεως ἀπείρατον σημαίνει, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν νεάνιδα καὶ κόρην, εἰ καὶ τυχὸν ἀνδρὸς πεπείραται, ὥς ἐνταῦθα ἡ Κορωνίς.

60. See Calame, *Choruses*, 142–45; Cole, “Domesticating Artemis” (1998), 27–29; Cole, “Domesticating Artemis” (2004), 178–97, esp. 191–94. Ap. Rh. 4. 616–17, locates Asklepios’ birth near the streams of the River Amyros whose name suggests profuse humidity. On ἄμυρος see Grégoire, *Asklepios Apollon Smintheus*, 21 n. 2, 22 with n. 3 (<ἀ- aug.+μύρειν). Cf. EM 87.9–10, ἀπὸ τοῦ μυρεῖν καὶ ρεῖν.

61. Perhaps in an epidemic; Apollo and Artemis are authors of plague. Sch. Pi. Pyth. 3. 66b, *loimikon pathos*; sch. rec. Pyth. 3.14, Boeckh. On Apollo, the god of plague, healing, purification and prophecy, see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 146–48, who finds (146) Apollo’s functional ambiguity crystallized in the image of the bow and the lyre, whose unity is articulated by Heraklitos (22 B. F51, VS D.-K.) “as ‘a fitting together turned back on itself,’ παλίντροπος ἁρμονίη.” So Bierl, “Apollo in Greek Tragedy,” 82.

62. Apollo’s associations with forests are imprinted in his epithet Ὑλάτης, attested on Cyprus; the local people still explain this epithet from the neighboring ὕλη. See Hdn. *Gramm. Rhet.* 3: 864. 16; Steph. Byz. *Ethnica*, pp. 82.14; 281.6; 614. 13; 647.10 Mein.; Eust. II. 2: 176. 23. On the significance of sacred groves and wooded areas in Apollo’s cult and function see Birge, “Sacred Groves,” 9–19.



63. On *sperma* and the agricultural metaphors for the act of engendering, see duBois, *Sowing the Body. Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago and London, 1988). On the sexual connotations of *ἐνθορος*, *ἐνθορεῖν*, *θορή*, *θοραῖος*, *θορός* etc., see LSJ s.v. M.R.Lefkowitz, *The Victory Ode. An Introduction* (New Jersey, 1976), 146, notes the sexual terminology, and translates σπέρματος ἐνθορόν as “impregnated from a single seed.” B. Fowler, “Constellations,” 36, “σπέρματος here reflects the god’s pure seed ... and ἐνθορόν suggests pregnancy.” Kyriakou, “Images of Women in Pindar,” 39 with n. 21, also connects the seed with Apollo and regards *enthoron* “as implicit slander directed against Ischys and Coronis, whose sexual union started ‘the fire’.” Cf. the *double entendre* of θόρ{ν}η and αἰδοῖος, αἰδοῖον in the cosmogony of the P. Derveni, in which creation is described as “mating” involving the “respectful” Sun and/or his ‘genitals’; see A. Laks and G.W. Most, eds. *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford, 1997), 19 n. 53 (Tsantsanoglou); M.L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford, 1983), 242; T. Kouremenos, “Commentary,” in *The Derveni Papyrus*, ed. T. Kouremenos, G. Parássoglou and K. Tsantsanoglou (Firenze, 2006), 196–99, 243–49. On the associations of σπέρμα πυρός (*Od.* 5. 490) with the symbolism of rebirth, self-generation and intelligence see A. Bergren, *Weaving Truth. Essays on Language and the Female in Greek Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2008), 71.

64. Apollo’s name and essence hover behind the death by fire and the verb αἵστω-σεν (37), which means ἀφανίζω, ἀνατρέω, πορθέω, ἀπόλλυμι. As a synonym of ἀπόλλυμι, it points to Ἀπόλλων, the author of destruction, who makes things or people unseen and unknown (cf. αἵστος), thus approximating Αἰδας (11). On αἵστώω-αἵστος see: *Od.* 10. 259 with sch.; Eust. *Od.* 1: 38. 19; Hsch. α 2135; *Et.Gen.* α 278. 1–8 ~ *EM* 43. 18–22 ~ *Et.Sym.* vol.1: 188.17–20 (ἀ-priv.+ἵστω ... τὰ γὰρ μὴ ἰστάμενα ἀφανῆ εἰσι); *EM* 43.10–17 ~ *Et.Gud.* α 55.12–15 (<ἀ-priv.+ἵστω, ἵστω, ἵστω τὸ γινώσκω); Photius α 663; *Et.Sym.* vol. 1: 188, 17–20; *Lexica Segueriana* α 169. 10–12. See n. 42, above.

65. The noun σέλας exhibits a wide gamut of meanings and uses, ranging from the sinister light of destruction and monstrosity to the auspicious light of divinity, love and wedding. *Selas* is often the nocturnal and threatening light (sch. bT *Il.* 19. 17a; Or. 183.17). It accompanies Phoibos Apollo, who is “the light-bringing *selas* of life” (sch. Aristoph. *Plut.* 81.1–3), and his double-crested *selas* on Parnassos (sch. Eur. *Ph.* 227. 1–9). It flanks Typho, the monster with the Gorgonic eyes of fire (sch. Ais. *Pr.* 351a10; 351b4; 356.2); death (*Anth. Graeca* b. 9, epigr. 243), and eros (*Anth. Graeca* b. 12, epigr. 93.7–10; b.16, epigr. 77). *Selas* is the marriage torch (sch. Ap. *Rh.* 4. 808–09, 292–93 W.); the thunderbolt (Scholia-D *Il.* 8.75), the fire, the light of the moon (Photius σ 505. 11 ~ *Suda* σ 193) and the sun (*Et.Gud.* η 241.13; ib. σ 498. 18–21). It is ἀεικίνητον πῦρ (*EM* 374. 41–43; 426. 48; 709. 20–24).

66. Barkhuizen, “A Note on Pindar,” 139, argues that the consuming flame, and the *selas* that runs around the fire “emphasizes the idea of a fire *eager to destroy*.” These qualities are inherent in the etymology of λάβρος, *very heavy* (<λα-+βαρύς) and *greedy* or *devouring* (<λα-+βορά), indeed. See also sch. Oppian *Hal.* 501.1–11: it qualifies the winds, the war, mental and emotional states, such as *mania*, erotic intoxication, lewdness (Hsch. λ 19 s.v. λαβράζει), and eros (*Anth. Graeca* b. 5, epigr. 268. 2, 293.4).

67. Hephaistos participates here as a metonymy for fire; or as another cheated and resentful husband and an artisan. He functions as a male-midwife in the contrary-to-nature birth of *aneileithyia* and *amātor* Athena (Eur. *Ion* 453; *Ph.* 667), and is associated with troublesome or abnormal sexual relations, having failed to rape and impregnate the virgin Athena (Apollod. 3.14.6). He is linked with unnatural midwifery and aborted sex, being himself a son conceived without a father's help (Hes. *Th.* 927; *h. Ap.* 317). On his allegorical interpretation see sch. *Od.* 8. 267, πρὸς παρὰστασιν τοῦ πολὺ τὸ πυρῶδες εἶναι ἐν ταῖς πρὸς τὰς μίξεις ὁρμαῖς πέπλασται τοῦτο; Eust. *Il.* 1: 381. 18.

68. See N. Loraux, *The Children of Athena. Athenian Ideas about Citizenship and the Division between the Sexes*, trans. C. Levine (Princeton, New Jersey, 1993) 123–31, esp. 128; N. Loraux, *Born of the Earth. Myth and Politics in Athens*, trans. S. Stewart (Ithaca and London, 2000), 24, 29–30. See Birge, “Sacred Groves,” 15 with n. 24, “Apollo's standard persona is that of a male old enough to be sexually active but not yet an adult who produces children in the social and legal framework of marriage and fatherhood,” generally his sexual liaisons are unsuccessful ... “and his paternity is not necessarily an advantage for his offspring.” Similarly D. Lyons, *Gender and Immortality. Heroines in Ancient Greek Myth and Cult* (Princeton, 1997), 92–93, “Apollo's erotic encounters are particularly ill-starred and usually have a rather sinister outcome ... Cassandra, Koronis and Daphne, to name a few.” See also F. Graf, *Apollo* (London and New York, 2009), 105–06.

69. Paus. 2. 26.6–7, makes Hermes the author of snatching the child ἀπὸ τῆς φλογός. On Hermes' role see Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos und Megalai Ēhoiai*, 335, 336; Dräger, *Untersuchungen zu den Frauenkatalogen*, 72–76.

70. The former is explicit in *Pyth.* 3. 7 (ἥροα), but not the latter. See J. S. Burgess, “Koronis Aflame: the Gender of Mortality,” *CPh* 96 (2001): 214–25, on immortality through fire, lightning (218, 224) and seizing (220), and in the Orphic mysteries (224 with n. 39). On fire in *Pythian* 3, see Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, 354, 360–63, 381, 385 with n. 234. Cf. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar*, 40, 43, 55: fire is “an adjunct if not a symbol of death in the poem.”

71. Corn. *Epidr.* c. 32. 68. 11–69.1, the laurel tree (δάφνη <δαφονή τις οὔσα, διαφαίνεν) befits Apollo, the purest and most caustic (καυστικωτάτῳ) god of prophecy. Yet δαφονός curiously qualifies murder, bloody prey and carnivorous animals (*LSJ* s.v.; Pi. *Nem.* 3. 81). Being the symbol of the Sun god, the laurel partakes of its golden radiance (χρυσέα, Duchemin, *Pindare. Poète et Prophète*, 225–26), and is invested with appropriate derivations: *Et.Gud.* δ 335. 28–336. 20, δάφνη τὸ φυτὸν δαοφονή τις οὔσα, ἢ ἐν τῷ δαίεσθαι φωνοῦσα · ἡγεῖ γὰρ καιομένη. On δάφνη <δαίω (= καίω)+φωνεῖν, see sch. Theocr. 2. 23b; Zonaras *Lex.* δ 467.97. Eust. *Il.* 1: 40.26–29, <Daphne, the daughter of the River Ladon, or <δα-intens.+ φωνεῖν; Scholia-D *Il.* 1. 14; sch. Lyk. *Alex.* 6. 19–15 S. On etymology shared by the god and his symbol see H. Peraki-Kyriakidou, “Ζεύγη διπολικά. Η Οβιδιανή Εκδοχή,” in *Δημητρίῳ στέφανος. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Δημήτρη Λυπουρλή*, ed. A. Βασιλειάδης, Π. Κοτζιά, Αι. Δ. Μαυρουδής, Δ. Α. Χρηστίδης

(Θεσσαλονίκη, 2004), 342–68; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, *Ancient Poetic Etymology*, 54–57. Calame, *Choruses*, 101–04, argues that this plant figured in the initiatory Spring

festival of the Theban *Daphnephoria*, which followed the pattern of expiation / propitiation and meant to reassure the renewal of Nature's forces or the rebirth of the adolescents and their physical completion after the period of their initiatory death. See F. Ahl, "Apollo: Cult and Prophecy in Ovid, Lucan, and Statius," in *Apollo. Origins and Influences*, ed. J. Solomon (Tucson and London, 1994), 118, on Ov. *Fasti* 3. 135–45: *daphne* "is, in Roman tradition, a symbol of renewal as well as of survival."

72. So L. Beaumont, "Born old or never young? Femininity, childhood and the goddesses of ancient Greece," in *The Sacred and the Feminine in ancient Greece*, ed. S. Blundell and M. Williamson (London and New York, 1998), 71–95. She examines the "dichotomy between male and female divine birth," and notes (74–75) that there is only a single representation of Asklepios' birth in Classical art, on an Attic plate (ca. 420 BC), attributed to the Meidias painter: he is the only one who presents the god in his infant, rather than his adult, form; Paus. 8.25.11, 8.32.5, refers to the Arkadian cult of the Child Asklepios, and describes a cult statue of the boy-god at Megalopolis, and in 2. 26. 5, speaks of Asklepios' exposition and the lightning that flashed from the boy (ἀστραπήν ... ἐκλάμψασαν). On his birth see Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 1: 30–32; J. Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults* (Wisconsin, 1995), 61–64 with nn.12–35; Gentili, *Pindaro*, 76 ~ "Pindarica V," 430, "Asclepio, nato nella morte."

73. See Burkert, *Structure and History*, 16 with n. 11, 56–57, "the pattern called 'girl's tragedy' can be interpreted as reflecting initiation rituals; but these, in turn, are demonstrative accentuations of biologically programed crises, menstruation, defloration, pregnancy, and birth." Lyons (*apud* Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 58 n. 1) has shown that 'the heroine's story may illustrate any of several aspects of a woman's life ... such as the transition to adulthood, marriage, or the desire to avoid marriage'. Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 90, sees 'an important variation of this pattern, according which the heroine dies while the hero is still an infant'; the heroines are killed by their fathers or their divine lovers as Koronis and Semele.

74. Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, *Ancient Poetic Etymology*, 114–19.

75. Sch. Pi.*Pyth.* 3. 83a ... ἡ τῷ θερμαντικῷ πορθούμενοι καὶ κατακαίόμενοι τὸ σῶμα; ib. 87, τῷ θερμαντικῷ ἢ τῷ πυρετῷ; ib. 117, θερμῶν νόσων, ἢ ὅτι ἐπύρεττον ὁ Ἰέρων ... τὸ δὲ νόσημα τῶν διαπύρων φασί. See Gildersleeve, Pindar, 273, 'Sun-stroke, perh. summer fever'.

76. See Duchemin, *Pindare. Poète et Prophète*, 196, even in this "valeur marchande de l'or, la notion d'éclat n'est jamais absente." Bremer, "Licht und Dunkel," 233–34, sees here the attraction and value of gold as well as its radiance.

77. The verb τρέπω marks the deviating actions of mother and son. On their "sviamento" or "stravolgimento" see Buongiovanni, "Sulla Composizione della III Pitica," 328. See also *paratropos* in Ixion's story (Pi. *Pyth.* 2. 65).

78. F. Graf, "Asclepius," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3d ed. (Oxford, 1996), 188.

79. Corn. *Epidr.* c.33. 70–71, Ἀσκληπιὸν κὰν τοῖς ἱατρικῇς θεωρήμασιν ἡσκηκέ-ναι, τὴν διὰ τῶν χειρῶν ἐνέργειαν τῆς τέχνης ἐμφαίνειν αὐτῶν.

80. Sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3. 104, ὁ διάπυρος κεραυνός. In αἰθων κεραυνός the noun and its attribute are close synonyms and double each other's meaning: κεραυνός, metaphorically from the animals with horns, κέρασι, is derived from κεραῖζειν καὶ τὸ αὔειν,



ὃ ἐστὶ καίειν, οἱ παρὰ τὸ καίειν τὴν ἔραν: see Hes. fr. 51 M.-W.; *Et. Gud.* κ 316. 10–14; *EM* 504. 39–42.

81. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 208–15 (“Figures who cross the Chthonic-Olympian boundary”), discusses the duality of Asklepios (214–15), who points beyond the chthonic realm in which he is rooted. See Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, 355 n. 54. Stéfios, *Apollon dans Pindare*, 66 with n. 179, compares Asklepios with Prometheus: both trespass the natural laws and the boundaries of human race; so also P. Angeli Bernardini, *Mito e attualità nelle odi di Pindaro* (Roma, 1983), 66. Arrighetti, “I miti di Coronide,” 128, draws an analogy with Tantalos. Hamilton, *Soliciting Darkness*, 51, sees the desire of Zeus “to reimpose the proper limits between humanity and divine,” which had been jeopardized by Apollo who had imparted to Asklepios arts too great.

82. The notions of φίλος νόος, σωφροσύνη and φίλτρον pervade the ode, bridging the gap between the mythical past and the present occasion. Friendship, kinship, medicine as well as near and far unite in Hieron, Αἰτναῖος ξένος, πραῦς ἄστοις, and ξείνοις θαυμαστὸς πατήρ (69–71). See n. 11, above.

83. See e.g. Hubbard, *The Pindaric Mind*, 142 with n. 35. B. Fowler, “Constellations, 36–37, discerns in this strophe (70–76) parts of four constellations: gold, light, health, and the near and far.

84. See Gentili, *Pindaro*, 71 ~ “Pindarica V,” 431. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, 389–92, 403–05, interprets this ode in the light of mystic *teletai* and the afterlife blessings promised to initiates, such as the hierophant Hieron; the model of immortality is the inclusive one, combining the prospect of literal immortality with that of immortality in song, while “Death may be a precursor to a glorious afterlife, and the insistence on mortality is quite compatible with both a belief in heroization and in the mysteries.” On the mystical value of gold, light and color see Duchemin, *Pindare. Poète et Prophète*, 193–228.

85. Pindar suppresses this tale of renounced immortality on which see: Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.4, 2.5.11; *Soph. Tr.* 714–15; *Ov. Fasti* 5. 397–414. Aston, “The Absence of Chiron,” 351–52, 362, argues that Cheiron’s fatal flaw is that he is not sufficiently different from his wild cousins, the non-divine monsters; this explains his departure and absence. Yet it is worth noting that Heracles’ arrows are technical devices imbued with the gall and blood of a monster, Hydra, so nature and culture unite to kill Cheiron, a hybrid creature. See Kirk, *Myth*, 161, “culture means death, and there are conditions to which death is preferable.”

86. See Or. 122.1–2 (with nn. 34, 35) s.v. ὀμηρεῦσαι παρὰ τὸ ἀρῶ τὸ ἀρμόζω, ταῖς φωναῖς ἀλλήλαις ἡρμοσμέναι τε καὶ ἀρηρυῖαι; Or. 122.3: ὀμηροὶ οἱ ἐπὶ ὁμοιοῖα διδόμενοι. παρὰ τὸ ἀρῶ τὸ ἀρμόζω καὶ τὸ ὁμοῦ. *EM* 632. 47–55, Ὀμηρος: παρὰ τὸ ἀρῶ καὶ τὸ μὴ ἀπαγορευτικόν ... ἢ παρὰ τὸ πηρός, ὃ σημαίνει τὸν τυφλόν ... ἀπὸ τοῦ ἅμα ἀρῆρῆναι ... εἰς τὸ ὀμήρευσεν. Ἡσίοδος ... τουτέστι ὁμοῦ εἴρουνσαι. See also sch. VBHQ *Od.* 16. 468, and H. Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1970), s.v. ὀμηρος.

87. On the poetic traditions of the Indo-European languages and this metaphor see G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore and London, 1979), 296–300; G. Nagy, *Poetry as Performance. Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1996a), 74–76; G. Nagy, *Homeric Questions* (Austin, Texas, 1996b), 89–92.

88. Theognost. *Can.* 88.5, πινδηρα, ἄροτρον, Πίνδος, ὄρος Θεσσαλίας, πίνδακας θραύματα σανίδων. So also Ps.-Zonaras *Lex.* 1549. 7, 1549.8. Cf. Hsch. σ 1522. σπινδεῖρα ἄροτρον. On *pi-n-*, ‘Holzstück,’ its relation to *spei-*, ‘spitzes Holstück,’ and the Greek πίναξ, see J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern und München, 1959), 830; see also Frisk, *GrEW*, s.v. πίναξ.

89. Lefkowitz, *The Victory Ode*, 118 with n. 10, relying on Πινδόθεν (*Pyth.* 1. 66), derives Πίνδαρος from ‘the root *pind-* which occurs only the name *Pindos* ... *Pindar* (the poet) ... *Pindareios* ... and *Pindasos* (a dialectal variant of *Pindarus*, ‘from Pindos’) ... Names deriving from geographical sites are relatively rare’ (158–59). On Pindasos see *IG* XII, Suppl. 125.1 (Aegean Islands).

90. Sch.bT II. 1. 268a, θηρσίην, Αἰολικῶς ἢ φύηρεσιν, τοῖς τὴν φύσιν ἡρμοσμένοις. See n. 4, above.

91. So Young, *Three Odes of Pindar*, 62, following Farnell, *Critical Commentary*, 143.

92. So J. Duchemin, *Pindare. Pythiques III, IX, IV, V* (Paris, 1967), 56, “le Sage et le Vaillant.” See also D. Sider, “Sarpedon and Nestor in Pindar, *Pythian* 3,” *RhM* 134 (1991): 110 n. 3.

93. C.A.M. Fennell, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (Cambridge, 1879), 174, 184; O. Schroeder, *Pindars Pythien* (Leipzig, Berlin, 1922), 31.

94. Sider, “Sarpedon and Nestor,” 110–11.

95. See D. Frame, *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic* (New Haven and London, 1978), 83–85; E. Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, “Gradations of science. Modern Etymology versus ancient. Nestor: Comparisons and Contrasts.” *Glotta* 74 (1997/ 1998): 117–32.

96. Gentili, *Pindaro*, 80–81 ~ “Pindarica V,” 434–435, makes a sound evaluation of the passage. A. M. Miller, “Nestor and Sarpedon in Pindar, *Pythian* 3 (Again),” *RhM* 137 (1994): 383–86, convincingly argues that Pindar warns Hieron “that it is useless, foolish, and impious to long for physical immortality.” Stéfos, *Apollon dans Pindare*, 66 with n. 180, argues that Zeus, the guardian of the universal order, refuses to allow a man (Sarpedon, Asklepios, Prometheus) to exempt himself from this law. On Sarpedon’s reflection see E. Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, “Stesichorus, *Geryoneis* S 11.5–26: The Dilemma of Geryon,” *Ελληνικά* 42 (1991–1992): 251–55.

97. On intelligence / knowledge: νόος, ἀμπλακίαι φρενῶν, ἀνάτα, γνώμα, γνούς, ἰσάντι νόῳ, γνόντα, σώφρων, συνέμεν, ἐπίστα, μανθάνων οἶσθα, νήπιοι, ἀγαθοί, εὐβουλος (Νηρεὺς), εὐφροσύνα, νόῳ, φρασίν, σοφοί. On suffering: πάθα, πολυπήμονας, πῆματα, πάθαις, εὖ πασχέμεν. The theme of self-knowledge (γνῶθι σαυτόν) has dominated scholarship ever since Wilamowitz (*Pindaros* 1922): see Burton, *Pindar’s Pythian Odes*, 78–90; Barkhuizen, A Note on Pindar, 137–39; Gentili, “Pindarica V,” 431. Arrighetti, “I miti di Coronide,” 133–34, detects the true consolatory motif addressed to Hieron in verses 80–103 (συνέμεν ... νόος), in the appeal to intellect and the realistic consciousness of the limits of human joy. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, 388–92, building upon the language of knowledge, argues that secrecy on the part of the poet and understanding on the part of the addressee are typical of mystical contexts; Pindar goes beyond the metaphorical immortality offered by song to the blessings and the immortality offered by the mysteries.

98. On *Kρόνος* < *χρόνος* see Pi. *Ol.* 10. 50–55; so Pherekydes: see Probus on Verg. *Buc.* 6.31 (App. Serv. Hagen, 343); Hermias *Irr.* 12 D. 654 = A. 9, *VS* D.-K; Plut. *Mor.* [*Quaest. Rom.*] 4.266.12F. As “Pure mind,” *Kρόνος* derives from *κορός* (*LSJ* B)+*νόος*, *κορόνους*. See Pl. *Cra.* 396b: it is plausible that Zeus is the son μεγάλης τινὸς διανοίας ... κόρον γὰρ σημαίνει τὸ καθαρὸν καὶ ἀκήρατον τοῦ νοῦ. On other alternatives among which *κορόνους* see Procl. *In Plat. Cra. Comm.*, CV–CVIII, Pasq. 54–59. On *Kρόνος* the ‘Fulfiller’ < *κραίνω*, see Corn. *Epidr.* c. 7. 7–8. On *Kronos* as “The collision-causing Mind” (< *κρούω*+*νοῦς*) and a cosmological force, see P. Derveni (col. 14): C. H. Kahn, “Was Euthyphro the Author of the Derveni Papyrus?” in *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, ed. A. Laks and G. W. Most (Oxford, 1997), 62; L. Brisson, “Chronos in Column XII of the Derveni Papyrus,” in *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, 159–63; Kouremenos, “Commentary,” 201–04.

99. Modern scholars associate *Κορωνίς* with (a) *κορώνη* or *κόραξ*; (b) *ὑποκορίζεσθαι*; (c) *κόρος* and *κόρα*, and (d) with the proverb *ἐκκόρει, κόρη κορώνη* (Men. *Georg.* 53), ‘maiden, drive away the crow,’ picturing Koronis as an embodiment of sexual license and a ‘Crow woman’. This proverb is the opening of a wedding song and its nuances are ominous: so *LSJ*, the crow being a prognostic of widowhood. The primary meaning of *ἐκκορέω* is *to deflower* (cf. *διακορέω*, *διακορέω*). Yet the implications of *koronē* are not necessarily ominous or promiscuous; *koronē* may stand for a legitimate and felicitous marriage: in a poem by Phoenix of Kolophon (Athen. 8. 359e–360b), the crow is an auspicious omen of happy marriage, procreation of *κοῦρος* and *κούρη*, prosperity and chastity of the bride. M. Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion* (London and New York, 2001), 322 n.154, remarks: “on Rhodes the male *koronistai* begged for the Crow (*korone*); the blessing offered was of childbirth.” J. W. Donaldson, *Pindar's Epinician or Triumphal Odes* (London, 1841), 119, argues that “*ὑποκορίζεσθαι* may refer to the repetition of the syllable *kop-* as well as to the covert obscenity of the line.” Schroeder, *Pindar's Pythian*, 28, takes *ὑποκορίζεσθαι* and the proverb *ἐκκόρει κόρη κορώνας*, back to *Koronis*, “und alles dies in fadem Wortwitz mit den Namen der Koronis, der Krähenburgerin.” See Fennell, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes*, 159; Woodhead, *Etymologizing in Greek Literature*, 39; H. W. Stoll, “Koronis,” in W. H. Roscher, *Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 2.1 (Leipzig, 1890–1894, repr. Hildesheim 1965): 1390. 59–65, name and origin of Koronis; 1388. 23–27, the crow is a symbol of longevity and health. For J. H. Barkhuizen, *Etimologising by Pindaros* (Pretoria, 1975), 68–69, 167, nn. 285–293, it is a symbol of marital loyalty and is used ironically here. C. Lackeit, “Koronis,” *RE* 11.2 (1922): 1431, *Koronis* < *κορώνη*, but the meaning of the name is ‘ganz dunkel’. So Room, *NTC's Classical Dictionary*, s.v. *Coronis*, “We must, however, be wary of using this handy explanation [sc. the crow] too frequently for a name that is difficult to interpret!” See n. 35, above and n. 117, below.

100. On *κορώνη* see *Et. Gud.* κ 339.23–29, 340.17–18 ~ *EM* 530.17–24, *κορώνη*· παρὰ τὸ καῖρον ὃ σημαίνει τὸ κακόν ... παρὰ τὸ κρώζω. Cf. *Epim. Hom.* Il.1.170 (Dyck 1983:173) ~ *Et. Gud.* κ 340.19–21, *κορώνισιν*: ὑποκοριστικὸν ἐκ τοῦ *κορώνη*, *κορωνίς*· τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ *κάρα*, † δι’ ἧς ὑψοῦ ἀνέχειν†. ἔστι καὶ *κορώνη* ἐκ τοῦ †γαῦρον, ἐξ οὗ καὶ *κορωνός*, ὁ γαῦρος; see also *app. crit.* On *κορωνίς*-*κορώνη* < *κάρα* see also Ap. Soph. 102.27; *EM* 530.31–33. See n. 35, above.

101. On *κόραξ* see *Et. Gud.* κ 339.36–39, *κόραξ*, ὅτι *κόρος* ἐστὶ τῇ χροίᾳ· *κόρον* δὲ τὸ μαῦρον εἴρηται, ἢ διὰ τὸ τῆς κοινῆς *ρέζαι*· ἢ διὰ τὸ *κόρας* *ζύειν* παντὸς ὀρνέου καὶ ἐσθίειν· ἢ διὰ τὸ πολλὰ ἐσθίειν [i.e. <*κόρος*, *LSJ A*]; cf. *Or.* 179. 9 with n. 115, *κοινῇ vel κοινῶς κράζαι*. See *EM* 529. 30. See n. 35, above.

102. Yet another articulation of *Koronis* is also possible here: the insertion of *νόος* in this Pindaric picture of sexual incontinence and delusion seems inevitable, and *Koronis* acts out the double meanings blended into her name, i.e. *κορός* (*LSJ A*), *κόρος* (*LSJ A*) + *νόος*. See n. 35, above.

103. On *Korōnōs* and his relation with *κάρα*, *γαῶρος*, ὑψανγενῶν (*γαυριάω* = *bear oneself proudly*) see *Et. Gud.* κ 339.30–32; *EM* 530.28–38. On *κορωνιῶν*· *γαυριῶν*, *κορωνόν*· *πονηρός* see *Hsch.* κ 3749, 3750. On the names of *Korōnos* and *Koronis* see Wilamowitz, *Isyllos*, 60 with n. 32; A. Fick and F. Bechtel, *Die Griechischen Personennamen*, 2d ed. (Göttingen, 1894), 417: *Korōnos* and *Koronis* <*koronē*, die Krähe; Frisk, *GrEW*, s.v. *κορώνη*; F.H. Weissbach, “*Korōnos*,” *RE* 11. 2 (1922): 1435.19–24; K. Seeliger, “*Korōnos*,” 1390–1391 in W. H. Roscher, *Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 2.1 (Leipzig, 1890–1894, repr. Hildesheim 1965): 1391. 12–21. On *Korōnos*’ origin: *Hdn. Peri paron.* 3. 2: 893. 23–26, Δωτιεύς Λαπίθης Κόρωνος. *Kainis-Kaineus* is son of *Elatos* (*Hes. fr.* 87 M.-W. = *Phlegon, Mirab.* V p. 74 Keller; *Akusilaos FGrHist.* F1a, 2 F22. 1–19; sch. *A Il.* 1.264); son or father of *Korōnos* (sch. *Ap. Rh.* 1.57–64, 12 W.; *Apollod. Bibl.* 1. 9. 16); or his grandfather (*Eust. Il.* 1: 522.21), and brother of *Ischys* (*Apollod. Bibl.* 3.10.3).

104. *Metonomasia*, the renomination of an adolescent upon coming of age, can be either explicit (*Ligyron/Achilles*; *Nannos/Odysseus*; *Pyrrhos/Neoptolemos* etc.) or implicit and narrativized, as that of *Pelops* and *Iamos* in *Pi. Ol.* 1 and 6, respectively: the poet resignifies these names, exploiting their morphological and semantic potential: see Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, *Ancient Poetic Etymology*, 151–52; 154, 158–59.

105. In *Alcm. PMGF* 1.85–87, the *parthenoi* of the chorus make a self-deprecatory comment, likening themselves to the cacophonous owl on the beam of the roof, and contrasting themselves to *Agido* and *Hagesichora*, girls distinguished for their beauty and archegetic capacities. For the initiatory character of the story of the *Koronides* and the transformation into birds of the night (*κορώνη*, *γλαύξ*, *νυκτερίς*, *βύξα*) see Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 64 with n. 24, 174–76 with n. 28.

106. The Mother, whom the scholia identify with *Rhea*, is involved with healing (“increases or decreases diseases,” sch. *Pi. Pyth.* 3. 137a), purging from *mania* (sch. *Pi. Pyth.* 3.139b), and restoring a mangled child (*Pelops*: sch. *Pi. Ol.* 1. 40a; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, *Ancient Poetic Etymology*, 137–39). W.J. Slater, “Pindar’s *Pythian* 3: Structure and Purpose,” *QUCC* 29 (1988): 56 n. 22, prefers rather a Sicilian cult of the Mother, the authoress of healing. On the religious syncretism of divinities (*Kybele*, *Rhea*, *Demeter*) under the title “Mother” see A. Henrichs, “*Despoina Kybele*: Ein Beitrag zur religiösen Namenkunde,” *HSCPh* 80 (1976): 253–57; L. Lehnus, *L’Inno a Pan di Pindaro* (Milano, 1979), 5–55; Gentili, *Pindaro*, 417–19 ~ “Pindarica,” 431–32 n. 9. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, 353–54, relies on this syncretism to promote his thesis about the mystical aspects of the ode.

107. *Pan* is the inventor of astronomy, hence a cultural figure who puts an end to the *proselenoi* *Arkadians* (see Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 93 n. 44), but in general stands

for manic and panic ideas as well as erotic license. Arkadia is his abode, a significant detail in an ode that builds upon the lascivious and unlawful bed of Ischys. Pan is *dyserōs*, unlucky in love (as Koronis and Semele), and *lysoōn* (Nonn. *D.* 36. 449) as a grandson of Lykaon. He is a god 'whose eyesight is excellent, looks on from afar ... is often represented as an *aposkopos*, a lookout,' see P. Borgeaud, *The Cult of Pan in ancient Greece*, trans. K. Atlans and J. Redfield (Chicago and London, 1988), 99 with n. 64; this recalls Apollo *skopos* (Pi. *Pyth.* 3. 27). Pan is the author of possession (ἐνθεος; cf. ἡ τε τοῦ θεοῦ μανία, Paus. 10. 23.5–8) and consorts with magical, ecstatic and/or hunting deities (Eur. *Hipp.* 168, 209–12, 225–27); he induces madness or epilepsy, the *hiera nosos*, which folk tradition cures by purifications and incantations, καθαρμοῖσι τε χρέονται καὶ ἐπαιδιῇσιν (Hipp. 6.361–63). See Borgeaud, *The Cult of Pan*, 88–116, esp. 99 and 115–16, 'Pan's effect on mankind ... ranges from fear that repels to an intrusion that deranges ... The myth suggests ... that in Pan's case there is a close relationship between insane derangement and erotic behavior'. Zeitlin, "Configurations," 129: Pan is "the very embodiment of sexual power." D. Tsiafakis, "ἑλῶρα. Fabulous Creatures and/or Demons of Death?" in *The Centaur's Smile. The Human Animal in Early Greek Art*, ed. M.J. Padgett (New Haven and London, 2003), 96–98, includes Pan among the *pelora*, the hybrid creatures and "mediators between worlds," namely "between actual world and that of fantasy" (98).

108. See L. Lehnus, "Contributo a due frammenti Pindarici (fr. 37 e 168 Snell)," *SCO* 22 (1973): 8, the Pindaric hymns refer to Boiotian-Theban or naturalized sanctuaries and divinities. On the naturalization of the cults of Mother and Pan see Lehnus, *L'Inno a Pan di Pindaro*, 5–55 *passim*.

109. On Ino-Leukothea, her madness, infanticide and heroic cult, as well as the pattern of a "girl's tragedy," see Burkert, *Structure and History*, 58 with n. 8; Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 178–79; Lyons, *Gender and Immortality*, 64–65, 94, 122–24. On *Λευκοθέα* see sch. A(D) *Il.* 7. 86, λέγεται ... αὐτὴν προσαγορευθῆναι διὰ τὸν ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης ἀφρόν; sch. EV, BEPQT *Od.* 5. 334, *Λευκοθέα* ἐκλήθη ἡ Ἰνώ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεῶσαι, ὃ ἐστὶ δραμεῖν [*θέω LSJA*] διὰ τοῦ *Λευκοῦ* λεγομένου πεδίου τῆς Μεγαρίδος. τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς διωνυμίας ἀπέδωκεν, Ἰνώ μὲν ὅτε ἄνθρωπος ἦν, ὅτε δὲ ἀπεθεώθη, *Λευκοθέα* ... διὰ δὲ τὴν Διονύσου τροφήν ... *ἰσοθέου* τιμῆς ἔλαχε, καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα μετέβαλεν ἡ μὲν *Λευκοθέα* κληθεῖσα διὰ τὸ φυγὴν πεποιῆσθαι διὰ τοῦ *Λευκοῦ* πεδίου τῆς Μεγαρίδος.

110. Semele-Thyone, succumbing to the deception of Hera or her own sexual impulses (she falls in love with Aktaion, her nephew), is scorched to death by Zeus, while her baby is supplied with a surrogate 'womb,' his father's thigh. On Aktaion see Kall. *Hymn* 5. 108–16; Akusilaos *FGrHist.* F1a, 2 F 33 = Apollod. *Bibl.* 3. 4. 4; Paus. 9. 2. 3. 5–4; see also Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 111–14. On Semele see Lyons, *Gender and Immortality*, 120–22. Burgess, "Coronis Aflame," 214–17, discerns in the Koronis/Semele story the meditations on gender and mortality; the mortality of their infant is purged through the removal of his mother; hence there arises the homology Female: Male:: Mortality: Immortality.

111. So Kerényi, *Asklepios. Archetypal Images*, xviii–xx.

112. *Θυώνη* is a significant *hapax* in Pindar, derived from *θεῖος*, *θύω*, *ἐνθουσιάω*, *ἐνθεάζω*, *θυσία*, *Θυάς*, *θύρσος*, *θυγλή*, *θραύω*: sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3.177a1–177b.16; sch. rec.



Pi.Pyth.3.175–76. 3–6, Boeckh; sch. Ap. Rh. 1. 636a, 55 W.; sch. Lyk. *Alex.* 143, 67 S. *Θυιάδος* | Βάκχης παρὰ τὸ *θύω* τὸ ὀρμῶ; similarly *Suda* θ 596. See Diod. Sik. *Bibl.* 3. 62. 9–10; ib. 4. 25.4, καὶ γὰρ ἐκείνον [Διόνυσον] μυθολογοῦσιν ἀναγαγεῖν τὴν μητέρα Σεμέλην ἐξ ἄδου, καὶ μεταδόντα τῆς ἀθανασίας *Θυώνην* μετονομάσαι. Charax 103 F14 *FGrHist.*, Ἐκείνην μὲν οὖν ... *θείας* μοίρας λαχεῖν ᾗθησαν καὶ *Θυώνην* ὠνόμασαν. Apollod. *Bibl.* 3. 5. 3, ὁ δὲ [sc. Διόνυσος] ἀναγαγὼν ἐξ Ἄιδου τὴν μητέρα, καὶ προσαγορεύσας *Θυώνην*, μετ’ αὐτῆς εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνῆλθεν. See Pi. *Ol.* 2. 25–26: killed by the thunderbolt, Semele lives among the Olympian gods. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, 362, 365, mentions Semele’s *metonomasia* into Thyone through her deification. Lyons, *Gender and Immortality*, 120–21 with nn. 59, 60, associates Thyone “with the verb *thuein*, “to rage, rush,” and the dance of the Thyiads.

113. *Aithiopsis*: Procl. vv. 26–29, *EGF* p. 47, Davies = Allen, vol. 5: 106. 12–15; Pi. *Nem.* 4. 49–50. Cf. sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 3.178b for Thetis’ attempts to deify her son. Cf. ὁ μὴ λεύσσω, Soph. *Tr.* 828 ~ ὁ μὴ βλέπων, *he that lives no more*, *LSJ*). On *leukos* see Duchemin, *Pindare. Poète et Prophète*, 200.

114. Sch. Pi. *Pyth.* 4. 14; cf. Paus. 2. 26.7 = Hes. fr. 50 M.-W. The Thessalian and Messenian versions were current already since the sixth century BC: Graf, “Asclepius,” 187–88. For the Arsinoë version see Hes. frs. 51, 52 M.-W.; Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius, passim*. M.L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women. Its Nature, Structure, and Origins* (Oxford, 1985), 71–72, eliminates Koronis from Hes. fr. 59, proposing Dotia, her grandmother; cf. the criticism of Dräger, *Untersuchungen zu den Frauenkatalogen*, 65–107 *passim*, esp. 83–88. For the distribution of the fragments between the *Catalogue* and the *Megalai Ehoiai* see Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos und Megalai Ehoiai*, 334–38; D’Alessio, “The Megalai Ehoiai: a survey of the fragments,” and “Ordered from the Catalogue,” in *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, ed. R. Hunter (Cambridge, 2005), 208–10 and 232–33, respectively.

115. Cf. Kerényi, *Asklepios. Archetypal Images*, 92–93, ‘The first part of the name Arsinoë suggests the rising from the darkness’. We should recall here that wisdom and child-salvation are reunited in the person of another Arsinoë, the Pindaric nurse (Pi. *Pyth.* 11.16–18), who rescues Orestes from the murderous hands of his mother with the intelligent yet ironic name, *Κλυταιμ(ν)ήστρα* (<μῆδομαι); see Tsitsibakou-Vasalos, *Ancient Poetic Etymology*, 212 n. 499, and “Chance or Design? Language and Plot Management in the *Odyssey*. Klytaimnestra ἄλοχος μνηστή ἐμήσατο,” in *Narratology and Interpretation. The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature*, ed. J. Grethlein and A. Rengakos (Berlin and New York, 2009), 177–212, forthcoming.

116. Isyllos *IG* IV<sup>2</sup>, l. no. 128, iv. 40–50 = T 32, and iii. 32–iv. 56 = T 594 (Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 1: 24, 330).

117. Wilamowitz, *Isyllos*, 18–19, considers *Aigla* a “rufname” and *Koronis* a “beiname um der schönheit willen,” since *koronis* recalls the “crow” or something “curved,” the “wreath” or “crown” (Stes. *PMGF* 187) is an Italiote loanword; *Koronis* is an epithet or name indicating beauty; he sees an etymological play on *Koronis*, *korax* and *koronē* ((76, 79 n.52). See Kerényi, *Asklepios. Archetypal Images*, 28–29, ‘Isyllos stammers intentionally, because he is not allowed to utter her true name. Koronis could only be a dark-haired, dark-skinned maiden,’ for her name evokes the ‘crow’; he explains the duality of Koronis-Aigla by the different phases of the moon and the time of

Asklepios' birth (92–93), so Asklepios was begotten in the darkness when the new moon had just appeared; this explains why she was called Aigla, “‘The Luminous,’ and yet in her role of Apollo's beloved is known as the ‘Crow Maiden,’ as Koronis the dark beauty.” L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford 1921/1970), 243: Isyllos invented “Aigle, ‘Gleam,’” yet aware of the Thessalian name Koronis, he explained it “as a complimentary *sobriquet* of Aigle” (252–53). A. Wilhelm, “ΔΙΑΦΟΡΑ,” *Symbolae Osloenses* 27 (1949): 25–28, reverses the order of names proposed by Isyllos; so also L. Käppel, *Paian: Studien zur Geschichte einer Gattung* (Berlin, New York, 1992), 201. Cf. Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 2: 34 n. 44: *Koronis* may signify the “crow,” the symbol of longevity (see also 64 n. 57). For Grégoire, *Asklepios Apollon Smintheus*, 178–79, *Aigla* is the primary name of the girl, since *onoma eponymon* has a meaning that conforms to the qualities of its bearer.

118. Kerényi, *Asklepios. Archetypal Images*, 28, “*Cleophema*, ‘Proclaimer of Glory,’ another Muselike figure.”

119. Wilamowitz, *Isyllos*, 91–93, 98, associates Apollo *Aigletes* (Ap. Rh. 4. 1710–30) with Asklepios Ἀγλᾶνρ and Ἀγλαόπης (Hsch. α 1728, α 604), arguing that on Anaphe Apollo *Aigletes* was named *Asgelatas*, to which *Asklepios* corresponds phonetically. Cf. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 238–39, 255: even Asklepios' connection with the Sun god Helios at Tegea or with Apollo do not prove any kinship in nature, apart from their healing function; Asklepios may be ‘the god of the bright face,’ as delivering men from death and restoring them to the light of the sun and health. Grégoire, *Asklepios Apollon Smintheus*, 42–44, submits *askalabos*, *askalaphos* as doublets of Asklepios, “le héros-taupe.” W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution. Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, trans. M.E. Pinder and W. Burkert (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 75–79, posits an Eastern influence: *Asgelat(as)* and *Az(u)gallat(u)* (= “the great physician” in Akkadian), the epithet of Gula, the Babylonian healing goddess, sound identical. Yet see the recent critical study of J. Bremmer, “Anaphe, Aeschrology and Apollo Aigletes: Apollonius Rhodius 4. 1711–1730,” in *Beginning From Apollo. Studies in Apollonius Rhodius and the Argonautic Tradition*, ed. A. Harder and M. Cuypers (Leuven, Paris and Dudley, MA, 2005) 18–34. E. Stehle, *Performance and Gender in ancient Greece. Nondramatic Poetry in its Setting* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1997), 137, explains Apollo's namegiving, “this attitude correlates with the longing of the poem for a male lineage.” However, it is significant that the father imprints the mother's qualities in his son's name!

120. Sch. Pi.Pyth. 3.14 = Aristeides fr. 22, *FHG* 4: 324 = 444 F1, *FGrHist*.

121. Her case falls into the third subgroup in Graf's scheme in “Initiation,” 16–19. See also Burkert, *Structure and History*, 56–58 with n. 8 apropos Leukothea.

122. So Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 249–50, who argues that Koronis' cult at Titanē marks the survival of a Thessalian tradition. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 214: the sanctuary was established in the fifth century BC; so Graf, “Asclepius,” 188. On the date of this cult see A. Griffin, *Sikyon* (Oxford 1982), 25–26. M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von Religiöser Bedeutung* (Leipzig, 1906), 50–56, 410–11, compares her cult with the *Daidala* (see n. 123, below). Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 58, 62, 63–64, discerns a regular pattern: the female heroines are associated in cult with the male hero, either as a partner in sacrifices or through a shrine located near his, “Koronis is not promi-

nent as a cult figure in the major centers ... her cult has a local manifestation at Titane ... is still linked to that of her son, and her honors are dependent upon his." See E. Simon, "Koronis," *LIMC* 6.1 (1992): 103–104; K. Waldner, "Koronis," *Der Neue Pauly* 6 (1996): 757–758. On the cult of Koronis at Titanē see Paus. 2. 11. 7–12. 1.

123. No explanations are attached to this fiery mistreatment of the *xoanon* of Athena, a virgin goddess yet representative of *mētis*. Perhaps this practice may be compared with the Boiotian festival *Daidala* in which Kithairon, or an autochthonous king, Alalkomenes, by whom Athena Alalkomeneis was raised, advised Zeus how to settle his sexual difficulties with Hera through *apatē*, ruse (Paus. 9.2.7–9.3.8.9; Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 3.1.3–14). During this ritual people honor and burn a *xoanon* in the shape of a woman, fashioned by Zeus with the purpose of arousing Hera's jealousy. This cult aims at securing the appearance of the sun and fertility, but it takes the form of a wedding festival, *nymphagogein* (Plut. fr. 157.91–109). Nilsson, *Griechische Feste*, 50–56, 410–11, argues that the burning of the woodpile that serves as an altar and the massive burning of animals practiced during the *Daidala* recur in a number of other rituals, among which the offer of victims to Koronis [or Asklepios?] at Titanē. On the *Daidala* see Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia*, 245–50; Bergren, *Weaving Truth*, 51–52. But we may perhaps relate this scorching of Athena's *xoanon* with a tradition of presumably Orphic origin, on which see Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, 1: 66–67: when Athena and Artemis try to rescue Persephone, a *korē* raped against her will, Zeus intervenes and aborts their attempts (Eur. *Hel.* 1310–18; Claud. *Rapt. Pros.* 2. 204–31, with a thunderbolt in hand); art corroborates the interference of Athena and Artemis.

124. Bremer, *Licht und Dunkel*, 175–78, speaks of the "Licht-schaffen der Titanen," their emergence from the earth and the castration of Ouranos as a result of which the Hesiodic motif "Im-Dunkel-Verbergens und Nicht-ans-Licht-Hervorlassens" is broken.

125. See *Il.* 2. 735, Τῑτάνοιό τε λευκὰ κάρηνα; the adjective *leukos* explains and etymologizes *Titanos*. See sch. Ab *Il.* 2. 735a<sup>1</sup>, Τῑτάνοιο δὲ διὰ τὸ λευκόν · τίτανος γὰρ ἢ κονία καλεῖται; Scholia-D *Il.* 2. 735, Τῑτάνοιο ... κάρηνα · ἀντὶ τοῦ «λευκογέων χωρίων». τίτανος γὰρ λευκὴ ἐστὶ γῆ. So Strabo 9. 5. 18. Eust. *Il.* 1: 518. 26–519.8, connects *Titanos* and the *Titans*, Τίτανος δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ συμβεβηκότος κατὰ τὸν Γεωγράφον. Λευκόγεων ... καὶ ὅρος τὸ Τίτανον ὀνομασθὲν οὕτω καὶ αὐτὸ διὰ τὸ τιτανῶδες χρῶμα τῆς γῆς. διὸ καὶ φησι «Τίτανος λευκὰ κάρηνα». τίτανον δὲ κυρίως τὴν κονίαν φαμέν, τὸ ἰδιωτικῶς λεγόμενον ἄσβεστον, τὸ ἐν λίθοις κεκαυμένοις χνοῶδες λευκόν. ἐκλήθη δὲ οὕτως ἀπὸ τῶν μυθικῶν Τῑτάνων, οὓς ὁ τοῦ μύθου Ζεὺς κεραυνοῖς βάλλων κατέφρυγε· δι' αὐτοὺς γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἐξ ἄγαν πολλῆς καύσεως καὶ ὥς οἶον εἰπεῖν τιτανῶδους διαφρυθὲν ἐν λίθοις λεπτόν τίτανος ὀνομάσθη, οἷα ποιῆς τινος [i.e. <τίσις] Τῑτανικῆς γενομένης καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ. οἱ δὲ παλαιοὶ φασὶ «τίτανος· κόνις, γύψος;» see also Eust. 2: 577. 9–11, on the association of *Titanes*, *titainein* and *titanos*. On *Titan*, *titainō*, *tisis* see Hes. *Th.* 207–10. See also E. Meyer, "Titane," *RE* 6. A<sup>2</sup> (1937): 1488–1491, *Titane* (<*titanos*, *Titanos*). On the ties of *Titanē* with Northern Greece and the Mount *Titanos* see Griffin, *Sikyon*, 25–27.

126. Gypsum recurs in the Orphic myth of Dionysos and the cult of Athena Skiras; see Nonn. *D.* 6. 169–73; *Rhapsodies Orph.* frs. 208–14, 240; I. M. Linforth, *The Arts*



of *Orpheus* (New York, 1973), 327 (Firmicus Maternus fr. 214, O. Kern, *Orphicorum Fragmenta* (Berlin, 2d ed. 1963), 234–35); West, *The Orphic Poems*, 74, 162. White meal covers the heads of the Proitides (Hes. fr. 133 M.–W.) and the Thriai (h. *Herm.* 554). On the mystic and initiatory function of white color and gypsum see J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge 1903, repr. Princeton, New Jersey, 1991), 135, 491–94; 512–13; H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Courètes* (Lille 1939, repr. New York, 1975), 355–58, 575; Duchemin, *Pindare. Poète et Prophète*, 214 with nn. 1, 2; Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 145–46 with nn. 44, 45, 170, 174–76; F. Frontisi-Ducroux and F. Lissarrague, “From Ambiguity to Ambivalence: A Dionysiac Excursion through the ‘Anacreontic’ Vases,” in *Before Sexuality. The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler and F. I. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1990), 212–15; L. Foxhall, “Women’s ritual and men’s work in ancient Athens,” in *Women in Antiquity. New Assessments*, ed. R. Hawley and B. Levick (London and New York, 1995), 104–05; cf. N. Robertson, “Orphic Mysteries and Dionysiac Ritual,” in *Greek Mysteries. The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*, ed. M. B. Cosmopoulos (London and New York, 2003), 222–25 with n. 33: tribal initiation, death or mere deception.

127. A similar polarity is observed in the sanctuary of Asklepios and the cult of Alexanor (Asklepios’ grandson) and Euamerion: the former was honored as a hero after sunset, and the latter as a god (Paus. 2. 11. 6–7). See also the contrasting worship of Pelops and Zeus at Olympia in Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 96–101.

128. Tertullian *Ad Nationes* 2. 14 (T 103, Edelstein and Edelstein, *Asclepius*, 1: 51–52, 2: 184 n. 11). On this passage and its repercussions see Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 239–40, 249–50. See also Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults*, 63–64.

129. Koronis, and her son are genealogically associated with the Thessalian Δώτιον πεδίον, where Demeter, the Mother-Earth, was worshiped (Hes. fr. 59 M.–W.; h. *Hymn* 16.1–5). A common derivation from δίδωμι binds *Dotion* with *Demeter*, who “gives” and feeds men but is also fed by them. Pindar, insinuating the duality of Δώτιον πεδίον, makes it the scenery of hunting, death and mimetic dances and songs, attaching to it the adjective ἀνθεμόεν, which evokes the flowery but deadly meadow of the Sirens, λειμῶν’ ἀνθεμόεντα (*Od.* 12.159, 45–46). Pi. fr. 107a1–4 Mae.: Πελασγὸν ἵππον ἢ κύνα / Ἀμυκλαίαν ἀγωνίῳ / ἐλελιζόμενος ποδὶ μιμέο καμπύλον μέλος διώκων, / οἷ’ ἀνὰ Δώτιον ἀνθεμόεν πεδί- / ον πέταται θάνατον κεροέσσα / εὐρέμεν ματεῖσ’ ἐλάφῳ, ‘cicling around with contesting foot, do imitate the Pelasgian horse or the Amyklean bitch, as she runs swiftly [as she ‘flies’] over the flowery Dotian plain, seeking to find death for the horned deer’ (trans. mine). On the meadows of the Underworld see Vermeule, *Aspects of Death*, 72–74, 229–30 nn. 58, 67. The cult of Demeter was transferred by the Rhodian Triopas from Dotion to Knidos, and then to Magna Grecia by the ancestors of Hieron: Diod. Sik. *Bibl.* 5. 61. 2.1. See Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*, 346 with n.12.

130. The names of the gods are vocal images of things: Demokritos (68 B. 142, *VS D.-K.*), τί τὸ τοσοῦτον σέβας περὶ τὰ θεῶν ὀνόματα τοῦ Σωκράτους; ἢ ὅτι πάλαι καθιέρωται τοῖς οἰκείοις τὰ οἰκεῖα καὶ ἄτοπον κινεῖν τὰ ἀκίνητα ἢ ὅτι φύσει αὐτοῖς ὠκεῖωται κατὰ τὸν ἐν Κρατύλῳ λόγον ἢ ὅτι ἀγάλματα φωνήεντα καὶ ταῦτα ἐστὶ τῶν θεῶν.

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## Chapter Four

### S-light Anomaly

#### *Dark Brightness in Euripides' Medea*

Spyros Syropoulos

There is no denying that *reversal* is the cornerstone of Greek tragedy. Passion, revenge, agony, deceit, deliverance, exhilaration . . . all of these are simply decorations on a cake of reversals, of anomalies—a cake which is sometimes difficult to digest. If we were to serve a course of plays that would cause severe sentimental indigestion to their audience, then the *Medea* would be the main dish.

The biggest anomaly in the play seems to be the Euripidean twist of the infanticide. The sudden spate of this theme in Italiote vase-paintings in the 5th century BCE, the disputed chronological order of Neophron's *Medea*, information mainly from Pausanias and a *scholion* on Euripides' *Medea* line 10, has led most scholars to agree that the infanticide in Euripides' *Medea* is original, at least within the context a full analysis of her character.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the play carries the notion of reversal to the extreme; presenting a mother willing to consciously kill her children and not only escape unharmed, but also who is rescued by a divine figure, the Sun.

I propose that opposing clusters of dark and bright images evoked in the course of the play predicate the emotional framework of the action that follows, by reversing the essence of negative and positive values; specifically by reversing the essence of brightness through the imagery of gold, the use of the adjective *λευκός*, as well as the imagery of Light and the Sun.

#### LIGHT AND DARK IMAGERY: THE USE OF *ΧΡΥΣΟΣ*

The action opens with an immediate juxtaposition between light and dark; the negotiation of the *κυανέας Συμπληγάδας*, the dark Clashing Rocks (2), marks

the way to the *πάγχρυσον δέρας*, the brilliant golden-fleece (5) the Argonauts had set in search of. However, the bright imagery of gold is immediately associated with death. In line 6, the *γάρ* is strategically placed to explain that the consequence of the Argonauts' voyage for the golden fleece was the arrival of Medea at Iolkos and the murder of Pelias by his daughters, *persuaded* by Medea (9) to do so. The first five verses of the play describing the bright deliverance of the Argo from the dark Clashing Rocks are equally balanced (through the explanative *γάρ*) with the next five lines, describing the dark crime of Medea. Immediately, gold is associated with death—an association which Euripides pursues throughout the play, reaching its climax in the scene of the young bride's death.

The contradiction between gold and darkness which opens the play, strengthens the gold's association with brightness. *Χρυσός*, gold, is used fifteen times either as an adjective or noun (lines 5: *τὸ πάγχρυσον δέρας*, 480: *πάγχρυσον δέρας*, 516: *χρυσός*, 542: *χρυσόν*, 632: *golden* arrows of Aphrodite, 786: *πλόκον χρυσήλατον*, 949: *πλόκον χρυσήλατον*, 961: *χρυσός* of the palace, 965: *χρυσός* more convincing than words, 978: *χρυσέων ἀναδεσμῶν*, 1160: *χρυσοῦν στέφανον*, 1186: *χρυσοῦς πλόκος*, 1193: *ἀραρότως σύνδεσμα χρυσὸς εἶχε*, 1255: *χρυσέας γονᾶς*). An attribute reversed every single time it is mentioned, since it always precedes a description of a negative situation.

The adjective *πάγχρυσον* is used again in line 480 to describe the ram's fleece, immediately followed by Medea saying how she helped Jason kill the serpent, thus giving him the *φῶς σωτήριον*, the light of deliverance. The imagery of the golden fleece is darkened by the verb *κτάνω* (to kill), lulling Jason into a false sense of security with the 'light of deliverance'—something that the audience knows to be reversed already from line five of the play.

In line 632, the reference to Aphrodite's golden arrows is made only to stress that love can be catastrophic when it is excessive, as the Chorus has already observed in line 627 (*ἔρωτες ἄγαν*). All that glitters is certainly not gold, as Euripides reminds us in 516, when Jason complains to Zeus that he gave men signs for false gold, but not for false people. And the potentially destructive character of gold is prominent in line 961, when Jason seems totally preoccupied with the idea of the accumulated wealth in the palace, thus proving him the opportunist he has often been labeled. Medea herself says that gold is more convincing than words to men (965). She later states that she would willingly give her soul, not only gold (968), graphically equating her soul with gold; only by now the audience is convinced that gold is dark—as dark as Medea's soul.

The potentially threatening imagery of gold reaches its climax in the scene of Creusa's death as is vividly described by the messenger and the chorus in the fourth stasimon (976–81). In 978 we 'watch' Creusa wearing the golden coronet around her blonde hair and this time Euripides openly links gold with death.

The bride will receive the golden coronet,  
 Receive her merciless destroyer;  
 With her own hands she will carefully fit  
 The adornment of death round her golden hair.  
 She cannot resist such loveliness, such heavenly gleaming;  
 She will enfold herself  
 In the dress and the wreath of wrought gold,  
 Preparing her bridal beauty  
 To enter a new home—among the dead.<sup>2</sup>

The ἀμβρόσιός τ' αὐγὰ πέπλον (983), the heavenly radiance of the bridal dress will lead her to the earthly gloominess of the dead, as she will νεπτέροις δ' ἤδη πάρα νυμφοκομήσει (985).

Medea had already informed us, since lines 786–88 that, she would send the deadly presents with the children:

I'll send them to the palace bearing gifts, a dress  
 of soft weave and a coronet of beaten gold.  
 If she takes and puts on this finery, both she  
 and all who touch her will expire in agony;  
 with such a deadly poison I'll anoint my gifts.

The χρυσήλατος πλόκος of line 786 signifies death for those who wear or merely touch it. In line 1186 the χρυσοῦς πλόκος, already placed on Creusa's hair, works together with the πέπλον and immolate her alive. She shakes her head in agony and tries to remove the golden coronet (χρυσός), but it is ἀρὰ-ρότως σύνδεσμα (1192–93), irremovably attached to her head and the fire μᾶλλον δις τόσῳ ἐλάμπετο (1194) was redoubled every time she shook her head. There is no radiance more catastrophic than this. With the exception of the radiance of χρυσέας γονᾶς of the Sun, in line 1255, when, at the sixth stasimon, the chorus addresses the Earth and the Sun, reminding the Sun that from his golden race sprang the terrible, dark, infanticide. This is the last use of gold in the play, and it appropriately serves to connect not only Medea to her ancestor, the Sun, but also to combine opposites, like the Bright Lineage and the Dark Crime.

### THE USE OF ΛΕΥΚΟΣ

The adjective λευκός is used four times in the play. Twice as a simple epithet (lines 923 and 1174) and twice with the addition of παν- (πάλλευκος, all-white, lines 30 and 1164).

In line 30, the nurse describes how Medea, who already knows that she has been wronged by Jason (line 26 πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἤισθετ' ἡδίκημένη) turns her πάλλευκον δέρην (her all-white neck) from time to time crying for her father. The Medea that we are presented with here seems to be a remorseful, fragile, hurt woman, betrayed by her husband and deprived of her father in a strange country. The use of λευκὴν here might resemble the repetition of the same adjective in line 1148 and 1189, used to describe the young bride, Creusa.

The association of whiteness with fragility and especially with women is not something that Euripides ignores.<sup>3</sup> However, the use of λευκὴν here is associated not with fragility but with death, since in the course of the play it always precedes such a negative scene, as if preparing us for a reversal in emotion and action. As she laments for the lost father and the family she left behind, the audience recalls the story of Apsyrtus, the brother she willingly killed and chopped in pieces in order to delay her pursuing father. Furthermore, six lines later (36) the grave statement στυγεῖ δὲ παῖδας οὐδ' ὁρῶσ' εὐφραίνεται follows.

In 923, Jason asks Medea why she turns back her white cheeks (λευκὴν παρηίδα) in tears, only to have Medea answer that she thinks of the children (924). In *Color Terms in Greek Poetry*, Eleanor Irwin argued against the Homeric tendency to regard 'the response of the inner man to grief, danger, anger and other emotions as dark, but if for any reason he did not respond, his φρένες or whatever part of him normally showed emotion was white.' She suggested that "this 'artificial' contrast is evidence of the Greek tendency to polarize sexual characteristics; that it describes a difference not merely of skin color, but of texture as well; and that it reflects an antithesis between fine-skinned, fragile women and tougher and harder men."<sup>4</sup> Here, however, the whiteness of Medea's complexion has nothing to do with the fragility that Eleanor Irwin argued about, but it is mentioned to cause shivers in the audience who know very well what Medea means by saying that she thinks of the children. In lines 816–17 Medea has already admitted blatantly before the audience that she will dare to kill them just to hurt her husband.

Whiteness associated with weakness is used in 1164, after Creusa has worn the cursed gifts that Medea offered her as bridal presents.

Then she placed over her head in a bright coronet, and began  
To arrange her hair in a bright mirror, smiling at  
Her lifeless form reflected there. Then she stood up,  
And to and fro stepped daintily about the room  
On white bare feet, and many times she would twist back  
To see how the dress fell in clear folds to the heel.  
Then suddenly we saw a frightening thing. She changed  
Color; she staggered sideways, shook in every limb.

She was just able to collapse on to a chair,  
 Or she would have fallen flat. Then one of her attendants,  
 An old woman, thinking that perhaps the anger of Pan  
 Or some other god had struck her, chanted the cry of worship.  
 But then she saw, oozing from the girl's lips, white froth;  
 The pupils of her eyes were out of sight;  
 The blood was drained from all her skin. The old woman knew  
 Her mistake, and changed her chant to a despairing howl.<sup>5</sup>

The association of whiteness with death abounds here. The *παλλεύκωι ποδί*, the all-white feet of the princess (1164) will soon falter five lines later and will become *τρέμουσα κῶλα* (1165). Her lifeless reflection (*ἄψυχον εἰκῶ*, 1162) in the bright mirror (*λαμπρῶι κατόπτρῳι*, 1161), which makes her smile, turns into a menacing, graphical message to the audience. The latter will make the final connection of *λευκός* with death, in line 1174, in the description of the white froth emerging from her mouth, followed by blood. In the following line, the paleness of death is vividly drawn for the audience when the messenger describes how *αἷμά τ' οὐκ ἐνὸν χροί* (there was no blood in her body).

### THE USE OF ΦΑΟΣ

One thing that is taken lightly in the play is light itself. During the course of the play, the word *φάος* is used six times (contracted or not), only to prepare us for darkness. In line 482, as we have seen, Medea talks about the light of deliverance (*φάος σωτήριον*) that she offered to Jason, only to have her words followed by the description of the serpent's death at the tree where it guarded the golden fleece.

Twice *φάος* is called upon in an invocation to Justice. ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ Γᾷ καὶ φῶς, implores the despaired Medea in line 144, asking for the 'celestial flame' (*οὐρανία φλόγα*) to pass through her head, since death is more preferable than her hated life, as she declares two lines later. And the image of death immediately follows that of light.

ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ Γᾷ καὶ φῶς, implores the despairing chorus immediately afterward, in line 148, only to prepare us for their insight that *σπεύσει(ς) θανάτου τελευτάν*, the end, death, will come soon (153). Yet again, the image of death immediately follows that of light.

In 764, Medea calls upon *Ζεῦ Δίκη τε Ζηνὸς Ἥλιου τε φῶς*, (Zeus, Justice of Zeus and light of the Sun), to witness how she will take revenge upon her enemies. Only this is a complete reversal of natural and social order as we know it, since Medea considers as enemies her own kin.

But the ultimate subversion of any sense of lightness and brightness in *φάος*, comes in the sixth stasimon, that we have already examined. Where the chorus, by evoking the *παμφαῖς/ ἄκτις Ἀλίου* (the illustrious ray of the Sun, 1251–52), realizes, as if for the first time, Medea's lineage and her connection to the bright blood-line of the Sun. And the chorus continues (1258–60) in the most horrifying realization of all:

But, divine-born Light, prevent her,  
Stop her, drive out of the house the wretched murderer  
Whom Avenging Daemons turned into Erinya.

Medea has turned into the Darkest One. She has become the haunting, fearful, dark Erinya—perhaps a hint for her ultimate role, a substitute for the divine solution that the anomalous, impossible situation requires, just a few minutes before her exit in the Sun's chariot enhances even more her divine-like status. As for the *διογενὲς φῶς*, not only will it not prevent her, but it will assist her after she has committed the crime.

## CONCLUSION

This was not the first time that the Athenian audience was presented with the horror of infanticide by Euripides. Agaue killed her son Pentheus and Hercules killed his own children. So, what is so special about this infanticide? The fact is that this one is conscious. This is why it cannot be forgiven or even convincingly explained, despite the fact that Medea *gloats* over her *σοφία* throughout the play.<sup>6</sup> Even Ino, whom the chorus reminds us of in the antistrophe of lines 1282–92, killed her children only after being driven out of her mind by the gods (*Ἰνὼ μανεῖσαν ἐκ θεῶν*, 1284).

And she escapes. She stands on an equal footing with the Sun, in his chariot and she rises to heaven. She boasts to Jason that he cannot touch her in the chariot that the Sun, the father of her father gave her (1320–22) and Jason seems perplexed, unable to fathom the magnitude of the injustice. Even after he has witnessed the Sun's impartiality, five lines later he wonders how Medea dares to turn her gaze towards the Earth and the Sun (1327), after having committed such a *ἔργον . . . δυσσεβέστατον* (1328). Of course, this might be placing the Sun on too high of a pedestal. Just because he is used in invocations and called to sanctify oaths, does not necessarily make him an image of metaphorical, as well as physical brightness. The audience might recall that the Sun has agreed to participate in the upset of cosmic balance before: once when he allowed his son Phaethon to drive his chariot, and once when

he agreed not to rise for three days, in order to allow Zeus (transformed into Amphytrion) to sleep with Alcmene for three nights that felt to her like one. The Sun's ambivalent position is, in my opinion, vividly described on a white *lekythos* from the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York, which depicts him emerging between two opposites: the dark Night and the bright Eos. He turns his gaze to the right, toward Eos, but he stands between them. He makes visible the fact that nothing is only good, or only bad, but it is up to man to act according to one or the other.

In an early Lucanian *hydria* by the Policoro Painter (c. 400 BCE), Medea is alone in the divine chariot, which is just sent to her by the Sun, flying high over the heads of the grieving Creon, the dead children, the dying bride and Jason who raises his sword towards her but cannot reach her.<sup>7</sup> It is a dragon chariot, just like the one Triptolemus was given by Persephone, thus making the association of the dragon-chariot and the black netherworld even stronger.<sup>8</sup> Only this time, Medea's chariot is pulled by even stronger dragons, as the painter shows.<sup>9</sup> In this case, with the Sun being absent, Medea receives a *sine qua non* claim to divinity, as she assumes the role of *deus ex machina*, 'the protagonist integral to the whole plot who provides its resolution from without (not unlike Dionysus in the *Bacchae*).'<sup>10</sup> As she, the Dark one, stands in the stead of the Sun, the Illustrious one, she visually reminds us that every shadow is cast by a light, and this contraposition is the essence of life. As Vellacott, put it, 'it is a reminder that the universe is not on the side of civilization; and that a life combining order with happiness is something men must win for themselves in continual struggle with an unsympathetic environment.'<sup>11</sup> As other myths remind us 'the Universe is black and white and it's up to men to choose which direction they will follow.' Anyhow, Medea's ascension to the skies equates her to the bright Sun, while the Sun's involvement in the abominable crime stains him and makes him a dark figure. The ultimate imagery of the play is the total reversal of Light and Dark, through the exchange of positions by Medea and the Sun; it is a reversal that further enhances the anomaly of the play.

The play might end with a disturbing sense of cosmic imbalance, due to the celestial figure's involvement in an abominable crime, yet the scales of imagery are finely balanced by Euripides. The final exodos of Medea, her flight to the deliverance that Athens has to offer, is the antipode to the imagery that the audience was presented with at the opening of the play. The false sense of deliverance created by the passing of Argo through the *κτανέας Συμπληγάδας* (the Dark Clashing Stones) is matched by the unjust escape of Medea from the crime scene to Athens. At the end of the day, both escapes signify catastrophe, and they are both used to remind us that the reversal of cosmic order is never just, rational or justified; that is why the imagery of escape through



the Clashing Stones is used again by the chorus in line 1263, seconds before the realization of the terrible crime. Furthermore, Jason's first passage through the Clashing Stones aboard the Argo is equated with his own destruction in verses 1386–87, when Medea reminds us of another version of the myth saying that Jason will be killed by a piece of the Argo falling on his head when he lies to sleep in her shade.<sup>12</sup>

At the end, the final lines of the play make more sense than they actually sound: τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη / τῶν δ' ἄδοκῆτων πόρον ἦρε θεός (what we expected to be done, did not happen, the god found way to do the unexpected, 1417–18). A terrible crime was committed and the perpetrator escaped unharmed, not justified by the gods, only assisted by a partial god who should have been the pillar of justice. The reversal of cosmic order is bewildering. This is enhanced by the reversal of every image of Light in the play, which becomes as threatening as any image of Darkness. Medea radiates as the most illustrious dark figure in the history of literature, and this is definitely something more than s-light anomaly.

## NOTES

1. According to the tradition that Creophilus used, the Corinthians blamed their own unlawful crime on Medea. In a way, this tradition preages the elements for Medea's infanticide. Nevertheless, the purification rituals of the Corinthians in honor of Hera are a fact hinting at an unlawful crime weighing upon the city. So, Wilamowitz seems to be right (*Hermes*, XV, p. 486) in saying that Euripides—or, in a way, Attic Tragedy—created the image of the Infanticide Medea. On this, one can recall an unverified but interesting anecdote (*Schol.* on Eur. *Med.* 10) that Euripides received five talents from the Corinthians to ascribe the infanticide to Medea, and so “free” them, on the Athenian stage, from a tradition that weighed upon their shoulders. One can even see in lines 1381–83, an attempt by the poet to blend the new element with the old tradition of the Corinthian rituals.

The important issue is that Euripides was the first to introduce the infanticide into the myth. Of course there is always the problem of the *Medea* of Neophron. As was reported in the first *Hypothesis* of the *Medea*, Euripides used the work of the Sikyonian tragic poet Neophron. The scholar who wrote the *Hypothesis* (it is anonymous) calls upon the authorities of Dikaiarchos and Aristotle in *Hypomnemata*. Diogenes Laertius (II, 10, par. 134) talks about Euripides' *Medea*, “that is said to have been inspired by the Sikyonian Neophron.” The *Scholia* on *Medea*, also, refer to two extracts from Neophron's play, and a longer one is found in Stobaeus (*Anthol.*, XX, 34). However, it is still a very controversial matter whether such a work existed. The problem is that our information about Neophron (or Neophon) comes from Suidas, after the 10th century, and is not very illuminating. It is indicative that Neophron was said to have been killed by Alexander the Great (along with Callisthenes), but he seems to be



alive in the 4th century, and even to appear as a predecessor of Sophocles and Euripides. Then, he was supposed to have written 120 works, of which none survives. Aristotle does not mention him in the *Poetics*, when he talks about the *Medea* of Euripides. As for Dikaiarchos, he is not a reliable authority, and the *Hypomnemata* was not written by either Dikaiarchos or Aristotle. Then, in the *Hypothesis* by Aristophanes Byzantius, a more reliable source (ii, 35–40), it is said that neither Sophocles nor Aeschylus dealt with the myth—Neophron is not even mentioned. Even the surviving extracts of Neophron can be considered as imitations of Euripides' play.

2. The translation is from P. Vellacott, *Euripides. Medea and Other Plays*, Penguin books, London 1963, 47.

3. E. Irwin, *Color Terms in Greek Poetry*, Hakkert, Toronto 1974, 118, esp. n. 21.

4. E. Irwin, *Color Terms in Greek Poetry*, 116–17.

5. P. Vellacott, *Euripides' Medea and Other Plays*, 53.

6. 'In the *Bacchae*, a divine figure at the end of the play justifies the events, no matter how unjust or cruel they appear; and in *Heracles* a friend (who is a demigod) offers peace and forgiveness and hope for restoration. The striking difference between these two plays and the *Medea* is that in *Bacchae* and *Heracles* parents killed their own children while driven mad, out of their minds, by some divine agent. Agaue thinks that she has killed a lion, not her son; Heracles thinks that he has killed his enemies, not his children. Medea, on the other hand, committed her crime with a sound awareness of whom she was going to murder, having planned the crime in a most cold-blooded way.' S. Syropoulos, *Gender and the Social Function of the Athenian Tragedy*, B.A.R. International Series 1127, Archaeopress, Oxford 2003, 44, col. 1.

7. A. Trendall and T. Webster (edd.), *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London, 1971), 97 (Policoro, Museo Nazionale della Siritide).

8. Triptolemos, a son of Celeus and Metaneira or Polymnia, or according to others, a son of king Eleusis by Cothonea (or Cyntinea or Hyona, Serv. *ad Virg. Georg.* i. 19 ; Schol. *ad Stat. Theb.* ii. 382.) Others again describe him as a son of Oceanus and Gaea, as a younger brother or relation of Celeus, as a son of Trochilus by an Eleusinian woman, as a son of Rharus by a daughter of Amphictyon, or lastly, as a son of Dysaules. (Hygin. *Fab.* 147; Apollod. i. 5. § 2, Paus. i. 14. § 2; Hom *Hymn. in Cer.* 153.) Triptolemus was the favourite of Demeter, and the inventor of the plough and agriculture, and of civilisation, which is the result of it. He was the great hero in the Eleusinian mysteries. (Plin. *H. N.* vii. 56; Callim. *Hymn. in Cer.* 22 ; Virg. *Georg.* i. 19.) According to Apollodorus, who makes Triptolemus a son of Celeus and Metaneira, Demeter, on her arrival at Eleusis in Attica, undertook as nurse the care of Demophon, a brother of Triptolemus. who had just been born. In order to make the child immortal, Demeter at night put him into a fire, but as Metaneira on discovering the proceedings, screamed out, the child was consumed by the flames. As a compensation for this bereavement, the goddess gave Triptolemus a chariot with winged dragons and seeds of wheat. According to others Triptolemus first sowed barley in the Rharian plain, and thence spread the cultivation of grain all over the earth; and in later times an altar and threshing floor of Triptolemus were shown there. (Paus. i. 38. § 6.) In the Homeric hymn on Demeter, Triptolemus is described as one of the chief men of the country, who like other nobles is instructed by Demeter in her sacred worship

(123, 474, &c.); but no mention is made of any relationship between him and Celeus. In the tradition related by Hyginus, who makes Triptolemus a son of Eleusis, Triptolemus himself was the boy whom the goddess wished to make immortal. Eleusis, who was watching her, was discovered by her and punished with instant death. (Ov. *Trist.* iii. 8. 2.) Triptolemus, after having received the dragon-chariot, rode in it all over the earth, making man acquainted with the blessings of agriculture. (Comp. Paus. vii. 18. § 2, viii. 4. § 1; Ov. *Met.* v. 646, &c.) On his return to Attica, king Celeus wanted to kill him, but by the command of Demeter he was obliged to give up his country to Triptolemus, which he now called after his father Eleusis. He now established the worship of Demeter, and instituted the Thesmophoria. (Hygin. *Fab.* 147; comp. Dionys. Hal. i. 12; Ov. *Fast.* iv. 507, &c.) He had temples and statues both at Eleusis and Athens (Paus. i. 14. § 1. 38. § 6.) Triptolemus is represented in works of art as a youthful hero, sometimes with the petasus, in a chariot drawn by dragons, and holding in his hand a sceptre and corn ears. (See Müller, *Anc. Art. and its Rem.* § 358.)

9. K. Kerényi, *Die Mythologie der Griechen* 1966, part B; here utilized the Greek translation by D. Stathopoulos Estia editions 1074, 519.

10. M. P. O. Morford and R. J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, O.U.P., 7th ed., 2003, 600.

11. Vellacott, *Euripides' Medea and Other Plays*, Penguin Books 1963, 9.

12. Σ on Euripides' *Medea* 1387. Cf. Apollodorus Mythographer 1. 9. 28, who specifies the location as the temple of Poseidon at the Isthmus, where Jason had dedicated the Argo.

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*Part II*

**APPEARANCE AND CONCEALMENT**



## Chapter Five

# The Light Imagery of Divine Manifestation in Homer<sup>1</sup>

Soteroula Constandinidou

“Man lives for the day. What is he?  
What is he not? A shadow in a dream  
Is man; but when god sheds a brightness  
Shining light is on men, And life is as sweet as honey.” (Pindar, *P.* 8.95–7,  
trans. C.M. Bowra)

It can be argued that no other literary text garners together so many terms on light and vision as the Homeric one. These terms are mainly found in formulaic expressions, and the language of the epic often emphasizes the contrast between life, light and vision and death and the loss of sight<sup>2</sup>. A heroic situation may be reflected in the description of the ferocious, glare with which a hero accompanies his fierce attack (e.g. *Iliad* 15. 607ff.). Eyes flashing like fire, together with other elements of fire imagery, especially in the *Iliad*, in some contexts have a symbolic function as they imply future events and particularly destructive and poignant situations. For example, at the end of *Iliad* book 19 (lines 364ff.) the arming of Achilles is illustrated by light similes (a light created by fire, by the moon, by a star, by the sun), which form an impressive and splendid image dominated by an idea of brightness.

The aim of this paper, however, is to focus attention on the imagery of light associated with divine appearances in the Homeric poems. Such an imagery characterizes gods' permanent residence on Mount Olympos, a residence (ἔδος) that is not shaken by winds, nor rain wets it or snow approaches it, but only bright and cloudless air and a white radiance of sunlight is diffused about it; there, the blessed gods live in delight all their days (*Od.* 6.41, 46)<sup>3</sup>. Here light could be identified with the stability and the eternity of the divine world,



their secure and tranquil life (ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ, τέρπονται μάκαρες θεοί), the same light that illuminates the power of the gods in epiphanies and reveals divine identity<sup>4</sup>. It has been suggested that divine statues, too, reflect the brightness of the epiphany, especially those made of precious materials like the chryselephantine. The whiteness of ivory and the shining (glitter) of gold were as appropriate for evoking feelings of surprise and admiration as they were “recalling the luminous epiphanies of the gods”<sup>5</sup>.

Certain instances of divine appearance in Homer become evident by the visual forces deployed, especially by the gods’—and goddesses’—brilliant eyes that can reveal their identity even under disguise<sup>6</sup>. Such is the case of Aphrodite in *Iliad* 3, who appears to Helen as an aged wool-worker from Sparta but her eyes are those of the goddess, her ὄμματα μαρμαίροντα (3.397), “her sparkling eyes” that create the feeling of ἐκπληξίς.<sup>7</sup> Other divine features are recognizable here like Aphrodite’s “beautiful skin and her desirable breasts” (περικαλλέα δειρήν/ στήθεά θ’ ἱμερόεντα), both forces of sexual attraction that Aphrodite represents. Helen’s reaction is “amazement”: θάμβησεν (3.396–8). A similar case is that of Athena in *Iliad* book 1 (199–200) who is recognized by Achilles by the flash of her eyes<sup>8</sup>. Her epithet *oxuderkēs* (ὄξυδερκής) refers to the acuteness of her gaze, to the goddess’ ocular powers, but also to her wisdom and cleverness as the eyes are the media for acquiring knowledge of the best quality due to the *autopsia*; it is understood that visual functions are directly linked to the mental ones since eyes and their nerves directly communicate with the mind<sup>9</sup>. Even in art, Athena’s eyes are made so as to resemble her literary descriptions as well as to exhibit the specific features of her divine manifestation; such is the sparkling effect of the precious stones used for the representation of the eyes of the Parthenos chryselephantine statues in the fifth century<sup>10</sup>.

Anchises, too, reacts by turning his head aside when Aphrodite manifests her divine power in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (5.181–4).<sup>11</sup> He averts his gaze in fear at the revelation of the goddess who casts off her mortal disguise and assumes her real divine form. The signs of her recognition here are the shining (resplendence) of her beauty (174–5: κάλλος δὲ παρειάων ἀπέλαμπεν/ ἄμβροτον) and particularly her complexion—obviously its whiteness—as well as her beautiful eyes (181). Light is predominant in the seduction scene earlier in the *Hymn*, created by Aphrodite’s gleaming clothes and ornaments (lines 84–90), when she appears as an innocent maiden. Her charming appearance deceives and persuades, and the superhuman beauty described with “words for brightness and light”<sup>12</sup> overwhelms an Anchises seized with *eros* the moment he sets eyes on the goddess. Likewise, Demeter’s epiphany to Metaneira in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* presents the same characteristics of divine radiance as well as supernatural stature: ἡ δ’ ἄρ’ ἐπ’ οὐδὸν ἔβη

ποσι καὶ ῥα μελάθρου/ κῦρε κάρη, πλῆσεν δὲ θύρας σέλαος θείοιο./ τὴν δ' αἰδῶς τε σέβας τε ἰδὲ χλωρὸν δέος εἶλεν: “ ‘her head reached up to the roof-beams, and she filled the doorway with a divine light.’ Then awe and reverence and pale fear (αἰδῶς τε ἰδὲ χλωρὸν δέος) took hold of Metaneira” (187–90; cf. 275–83)<sup>13</sup>. Divine radiance is also created by the gleaming of gold which covered the island of Delos at the first steps of Apollo soon after Leto gives birth to him (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 133–8)<sup>14</sup>.

Gods live in pure realms where there is no darkness but always light, and in that glorious light they often appear to men, usually at moments of crisis. That the narrative is intensified or heightened by divine action is a matter that has been given much scholarly attention. However, this is more obvious when light imagery is involved, for it creates more intense human reaction of shock and astonishment, of ἔκπληξις, or even of fear<sup>15</sup>. For example, in the case of Achilles’ appearance in *Iliad* 18 (225–7), the charioteers were dumbfounded as they saw the terrible fire blazing above the head of the hero, a fire kindled by γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (notice here the verb ἔκπληγεν).

Lightning, accompanied by thunderbolt, is one of Zeus’ main powers with which he threatens those mortals and immortals who do not obey his orders (*Il.* 8.7–27; cf. 8.402–5, 455f.); besides, he is the supreme god to whose status and power cosmic order is connected<sup>16</sup>. When this order is threatened, the god intervenes, as in the case of Helios’ anger against all the gods and his threat to descend to the House of Hades and “shine” (φαεῖνω) among the dead rather than the living if Odysseus’ men are not punished for killing his cattle (*Od.* 12.377–83)<sup>17</sup>. But Zeus appeals to him to carry on shining on the immortals, as well as mortals, and himself will undertake the punishment of Odysseus’ crew by smashing their ship into small pieces with a thunderbolt, and burning it in the middle of the ocean<sup>18</sup>. Obviously, here, it is not only a matter of respect for Helios’ right to punish those who have offended him, but also of fear of upsetting the cosmic order of which the supreme god is guardian<sup>19</sup>. Zeus’ anxiety about Helios’ fulfilling his threat, that is depriving gods and men of light, is expressed by the imperative tone of his request: «Ἡέλι, ... σὺ ... φαεῖνε ...», “Helios...you...do shine” (12.385).

Zeus combines both qualities, Jasper Griffin points out, as the “god of the bright sky and god of the dark clouds and thunder”: *Il.* 22.178: ὦ πάτερ ἀργυρέαννε κελαϊνεφές (“O Father, Lord of the bright lightning and of the dark cloud”). He covered Ida with clouds but at the same time “he made lightning and mighty thunder and shook the mountain; and he gave victory to the Trojans and turned the Achaeans to flight” (17.594–6)<sup>20</sup>. In its context this scene is impressive, especially for the manifestation of Zeus’ power in both ways, in light and darkness, at a crucial point when Patroklos is dead. It is possible to suggest that light and darkness here correspond to the victory of the Trojans

and the fear of the Achaeans respectively<sup>21</sup>. The darkness will dispel and light will prevail when Zeus grants Aias' prayer later in the same book of the *Iliad* (17.645–7). The hero is praying for the supreme god to lift the mist he has cast over the dead Patroklos, as a sign of affection and honor. Instead Zeus creates αἶθρην, “bright air” for the Achaeans so that sight returns to their eyes; and if they have to die, Aias prays, may Zeus let them die in light: «Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἀλλὰ σὺ ῥῦσαι ἀπ' ἀέρος νῆας Ἀχαιῶν, / ποίησον δ' αἶθρην, δὲ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι / ἐν δὲ φάει καὶ ὄλεσσον, ἐπεὶ νῦ τοι εὖαδεν οὕτως»: “Father Zeus, draw free from the mist the sons of the Achaeans, / make bright the air, and give sight back to our eyes; in shining / daylight destroy us, if to destroy us be now your pleasure”<sup>22</sup>. So he spoke and Father Zeus scattered the mist and pushed the darkness away, and the sun ‘shone out and the whole battle was covered with the sudden brightness’ (ἡέλιος δ' ἀπέλαμψε, μάχη δ' ἀπὸ πᾶσα φαάνθη). ‘Aias’ prayer was much admired in antiquity<sup>23</sup> for the hero’s *ethos*, not asking for protection but for light so that he and his comrades might meet a heroic death.

Therefore, the manipulation of light is, after Helios, under the jurisdiction of Zeus although he assigns part of it to his beloved daughter Athena, who generally assists her father in the creation and management of natural phenomena: she is a projection of his meteorological powers<sup>24</sup>. My next example is taken from *Iliad* 15 (592ff.) and Hektor’s attack against the Achaeans. In accordance with Zeus’ plan, as well as his help, the hero drives the Greeks back behind the first row of ships, in a passage where the unity of action between the god and hero is emphasized. However, at the same time “their ultimate goals diverge”<sup>25</sup>, since Zeus’ plan in response to Thetis’ wish, and Hektor’s imminent death set the hero’s ferocious attack in a tragic context. At this crucial moment there is an intervention both from the mortal and the divine world. Nestor’s appeal to the Greeks to stand firm and not panic is supported by Athena’s action, who removed the mist from the Greeks’ eyes on both sides, that of the ships and that of the battle, so that they could see the peril as “the light came out hard against them on both sides”<sup>26</sup>.

Thus light should be considered as an important dimension of the experience of a divine appearance. Divine radiance prevails in other Homeric epiphanies like *Iliad* book 4.75ff., when Athena, provoked by Zeus, descends Olympus at the speed of a shooting star, showering thrown by the son of Kronos, a portent to sailors or to armies. Like this she plunged into the midst of “the Trojans and the Achaeans who looked (??) at her with amazement” (79–80: θάμβος δ' ἔχεν εἰσορόωντας Τρώας θ' ἵπποδάμους καὶ ἐυκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοῦς). Although within the context of a simile, this epiphany presents all the features of a divine manifestation, like radiance and the astonishment of the onlookers caused by the energy and force with which Athena descends

from the sky. There has been much discussion among modern scholars as to whether this bright star that the goddess resembled was a comet in space or a meteor in the atmosphere, and whether she was actually seen in the form described in the simile. Whatsoever, the idea of her comparison to a star is impressive and symbolic, since the trail of fire marking its trajectory would naturally be taken as a portent<sup>27</sup>.

Again, in a simile, Athena—or rather the cloud she is enveloped in—is compared to a rainbow as she descends from the sky, sent by Zeus to stir the Danaans fighting over Patroklos (*Iliad* 17.547–52): “As when in the sky Zeus strings for mortals the shimmering rainbow [*πορφυρέην ἴριν*], to be a portent and sign of war, or of wintry storm, when heat perishes, such a storm as stops mortals’ work upon the face of the earth, and afflicts their cattle, so Athene shrouded in the shimmering cloud [*πορφυρέῃ νεφέλῃ*] moved among the swarming Achaians, rousing every man”<sup>28</sup>. We may not have here the amazement factor, for Athena eventually assumes a human form, that of Phoinix, however her epiphany is implied by Menelaos’ address to her and his appeal to give him strength and deflect the missiles away from him: “So he spoke, and the goddess grey-eyed Athene was happy that first among all the divinities his prayer had bespoken her”<sup>29</sup>. In both similes, where she is perceived probably as a comet, or as a rainbow, Athena is associated with natural phenomena taken as portents—at least in the second case it is more obvious (see 17.548–50)—and this lies within Zeus’ mind as he sends her down to earth. It seems, therefore, that the goddess functions as her father’s amanuensis concerning nature and weather phenomena and that her action is subjected to his βουλή, “his will.” Nevertheless, Zeus reserves for himself lightning and thunderbolts<sup>30</sup>.

*Odyssey* book 19 (33ff.) provides, in my view, a striking example of light imagery in divine manifestation. Here, Telemachos feels the presence of Athena in his astonishment at the glow of the various parts of the palace, like the walls, the beams, and the columns. There are many appearances of the goddess in the previous books, like her deceptive one in 13.221ff., disguised as a young shepherd, whereas soon after in the same book (lines 286ff.) she appears as “a beautiful, tall woman, skilled in glorious tasks”; she touches Odysseus’ hand and reveals her identity by promising him support, for he had yet much suffering to endure. In *Odyssey* 16.159 Athena appears to Odysseus although invisible to Telemachos; the dogs, however, sense her presence. During this last epiphany Odysseus is transformed from a beggar into a young man by the goddess, unrecognizable even by his son who has the impression that his father is a god<sup>31</sup>. In the case of book 19 (33ff.) Athena is holding a lamp for Odysseus and Telemachos to remove the weapons and armour from the hall: “Pallas Athena made bright light before them, holding a golden lamp. Then Telemachus at once addressed his father: ‘My father, I see a great mar-

vel; to my eyes at least the walls, the main beams, the cross-beams and the pillars are bright as if with burning fire. In truth some god is here, one of those who keep the wide heaven.’ To him in answer spoke wily Odysseus: ‘Be silent and keep your thought in check and ask no questions. This is the way of the gods who dwell on Olympus’<sup>32</sup>. Although the source of light, the golden lamp, could be a real item, the φάος, “the light,” that is diffused everywhere and the impression it gives, that of fire, reveals the divine presence<sup>33</sup>. Nevertheless, this passage was taken as a late interpolation and on the basis, among other reasons, of the mention of a lamp, something not in use from the end of the Mycenaean period until the latter half of the seventh century<sup>34</sup>. The supernaturally created light here may symbolize the forthcoming victory of Odysseus, like other examples in the epic where bright radiance functions as a portent of the impending victory of a hero (see *Il.* 22.133–6 for Achilles)<sup>35</sup>.

Light is thus an important feature of Athena’s manifestation in both epics, and she manifests herself in spectacular ways (e.g. she descends from Olympus as a shooting star or like a rainbow). However, gods do not appear ἐναργεῖς, “bright” or “visible” or “clear” to all, according to *Odyssey* 16.161 (οὐ γὰρ πῶς πάντεσσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς)<sup>36</sup>. An etymology of ἀναργεῖς from ἐν and ἀργός, “white,” “bright,” involves light<sup>37</sup>. Hera’s statement in the *Iliad* (20.131) that “the gods are terrible in the appearance of their forms, in their true shape” (χαλεποὶ δὲ θεοὶ φαίνεσθαι ἐναργεῖς), suggests that the gods appear as their recognizable divine figures<sup>38</sup>. In other cases, however, in the *Odyssey* the expression *phainesthai enarges* means ‘becomes visible’ rather than “in an undisguised form”; therefore, it seems that the epithet *enarges* in divine epiphanies has not always the same, but contradictory meanings<sup>39</sup>. A very important passage, from my point of view, in the *Odyssey* (18.353ff.), could be taken as a reference to an epiphany, a sort of definition or description, presented not by the narrator but by Penelope’s suitor Eurymachos. The suitors are making fun of Odysseus and the slave Melantho mocks him in a contemptuous way. Then he, standing “by the flaring lamps, himself illuminates the room (φαεῖνων) as if he were a light, offers a forceful image, suggestive of his growing power and forthcoming triumph. This description achieves the bright clarity of an epiphany<sup>40</sup>. And indeed, as an epiphany it is ironically evaluated by the suitors, especially by Eurymachos who mocks the idea of a divine presence by saying that the light which comes from Odysseus is because his bald head: “At least our torch-light seems to come from the sheen of the man’s own head –there’s not a hair on his bald pate, not a wisp!” (lines 354–5)<sup>41</sup>. Modern commentators have emphasized the symbolic function of light here, even in the form of mockery. As Homer often emphasizes the “symbolic equation of light with victory”<sup>42</sup>, likewise the mocking of the gods’ appearances among mortals here, as well as the previous hostile en-

counter of Odysseus with Melantho, are all parts of the plan, of the impending victory of the hero who is already behaving like a master<sup>43</sup>.

Let us go back to Athena's first appearance to Achilles in *Iliad* book one (193ff.). The goddess takes the hero by his golden hair while he is contemplating whether he should kill Agamemnon or not. He recognizes her by the terrible shine of her eyes and reacts in wonder and amazement (1.199: θάμβησεν δ' Ἀχιλλεύς). The goddess' presence mollifies his anger and soothes his inner conflict. What is remarkable, however, is that Athena is identified by her gaze, by the dazzling flash of her eyes (line 200: δεινὸν δὲ οἱ ὅσσε φάανθεν). It has been argued that the intervention of a divine power is necessary here, for Achilles seems to have already decided to kill Agamemnon, his sword drawn ready. Therefore, Athena's appearance should be understood according to the structure and the economy of book one, as well as the poem as a whole<sup>44</sup>. Nevertheless, the religious character of the scene should not be underestimated. That we have a supernatural incident here is supported not only by the style but also by the content, according to Griffin<sup>45</sup>. Athena's intervention is as sudden as the hero's response (αὐτίκα δ' ἔγνω: line 199), and this is underlined by the short phrases and many verbs (στῆ, ἔλε, ὀρᾶτο, θάμβησεν, ἐτράπετ, ἔγνω, φάανθεν: 7 verbs in four verses). Δεινὸν δὲ οἱ ὅσσε φάανθεν, which is aetiological, in my view gives the supernatural color of this appearance: Achilles recognized her "for her eyes gleamed terribly"<sup>46</sup>. Moreover, the participle φαινομένη, "appearing, visible," (and she is "visible" only to the chosen here, οἷοι, and to nobody else), as well as the verb ἔγνω ("he recognized, he realized it was she"), are key-words of the semiology of this epiphany<sup>47</sup>. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that the focus is on the protagonist hero, Achilles, and the action itself; the fact that he is the subject of the four verbs (out of seven) is sufficient to assert that he is the central figure and the focus of attention. Therefore, the epiphany signs are briefly described as well as the reaction of the onlooker hero, then attention immediately shifts to the action<sup>48</sup>.

Athena's brilliant eyes, although the most distinctive, are not the only distinguishing sign of her manifestation in or outside the epic. Her appearance in myth (of her birth for example) and art, as a warrior goddess arrayed in bronze or gold armor is also associated with light and brightness<sup>49</sup>. Her warrior function links her with the awe and the fear that bronze weaponry can create in battle not only by the sound as they clash, but mainly by their dazzling glare and radiance. Thus, Athena's manifestation is usually associated with an atmosphere of brilliance and light created either by her shining eyes or the radiance that her whole appearance involves<sup>50</sup>. In *Iliad* 2 (446ff.) the dazzling presence of Athena among the Achaeans, filling them strength and bearing the *aegis* wherefrom gold tassels were hung, corresponds to the flash



of their armor reaching the sky as they advance (lines 455–8); divine intervention is in a way metaphorical here<sup>51</sup>.

Homeric heroes may also assume a godlike appearance, like Achilles in *Iliad* book 18, where the hero exhibits the features of the god who inspires his *menos*, i.e. Athena. The goddess takes up human action and crowns him with a golden cloud thus creating a supernatural atmosphere full of light and fire (18.202ff.). Mark W. Edwards<sup>52</sup> rightly argues that “In this splendid passage the “arming” of Akhilleus becomes a kind of epiphany, decorated with ornamental epithets and two vivid and apposite similes....” Indeed, not only the divine presence but also Athena’s glorifying gestures lend the scene a special divine color. Even the phrase αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς ὤρτο (line 203) and the quick shift to Athena (ἀμφὶ δ’ Ἀθήνη ... βάλ’; lines 203–4) whose epiphany is manifested via godlike Achilles, add more to the impression of a sudden and supernatural event<sup>53</sup>. The imagery of light here intermingles with the imagery of fire (notice the parechysis of Διὶ...δὲ...δῖα...δ’...δαῖε)<sup>54</sup>; Achilles’ appearance strikes fear into the Trojans and enables Patroklos’ corpse to be carried back to the Greek camp. The hero’s arms are divine too, for instead of corslet and shield Athena honors him with the *aegis* that she puts round his shoulders and in place of a helmet she crowns him with a golden cloud and makes a far-shining flame coming out of it (*Il.* 18.214)<sup>55</sup>. The whole scene of the hero’s *apotheosis* functions symbolically for the fate of Troy and is obviously linked to the narrative and the forthcoming events<sup>56</sup>. What is noteworthy here is that it is Athena who creates Achilles’ bright image, whereas the hero remains inactive during the frenetic action surrounding his metamorphosis into a godlike figure.

A similar light and fire imagery to that of *Iliad* book 18.202ff. is created in relation to Diomedes’ “surrogate arming-scene before his *aristeia* (*Iliad* 5.4–7)”<sup>57</sup>, where Athena is again involved. Here, not only does the goddess inspire Diomedes with might and confidence but she herself participates in a scene where the hero appears as a god. Her intention is to make him conspicuous among the Argives, therefore she creates the imagery of light and fire around him suggestive of *aristeia* and *kleos* (5.3: ἰδὲ κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἄπορτο); fire blazes from his shield and helmet, comparable to the autumn star which is the most bright, “for it is bathed in the ocean so that its reflection makes it brighter” (lines 5–6: ὅς τε μάλιστα/ λαμπρὸν παμφαίνησι λελουμένος Ὠκεανοῖο)<sup>58</sup>. There is a parallelism here between the enhanced power of Diomedes and the strengthening of the brightness of the star. The armor-gleaming-like-fire motif<sup>59</sup> which is common in other arming-scenes in the epic where Athena is also involved, is in my view the goddess’ sign of epiphany, the sign of her warlike character. This is a metonymic epiphany revealed by the gleaming of the objects of war<sup>60</sup>.



All these arming-scenes have shown that light imagery is associated with the *aristeia* of the Homeric heroes when they are indeed proved to be god-like<sup>61</sup>. As Homeric gods often reveal their power in an atmosphere of light, thus declaring their superiority, likewise in human action the imagery of light—that of fire too—exalts mortal status and delineates the heroes' godlike nature. The lens of the poet focuses on the centre of the action and illuminates the event so as to be seen in the perspective of heaven and not of earth. On the other hand limitations of divine power in manifestation scenes where light is involved are intended to present the power of the gods in human terms<sup>62</sup>.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, the poetic devices related to light imagery in the epic divine manifestations bring out and underline the nature and superiority of divine power<sup>63</sup>. They also create symbolic images and allegorical interpretations of the Homeric gods who are sometimes identified with natural elements. However, their details, as well as the rules which govern them, aim at bringing to completion the poet's plan these manifestations form part of. Or, we may put it in another way: the gods are interfering with and directing the plot. Light images in general seem to group themselves around leading ideas, such as those of heroism, victory or defeat, as well as around epic characters, divine or human. As such, they seem to develop as symbols of the larger movements of the poems and are organically integrated into the Homeric text<sup>64</sup>. Light imagery is a unifying theme/motif throughout the epic poems, especially the *Iliad*, either with human or divine associations: a chain which connects divine action with the plan of Zeus, and heroes with gods<sup>65</sup>; it also emphasizes their passion and energy, instruments of immediate and more effective action<sup>66</sup>.

The sudden appearance of light itself creates *ἐκπληξίς* and fear that are characteristic features of divine appearances<sup>67</sup>. I will end this paper with an interesting passage from the *Iliad* where Zeus announces to the Achaeans that their death-day was heavier than that of the Trojans in his balancing of his golden scales, with lightning that flashed over the people of the Achaeans<sup>68</sup>. Their reaction was astonishment and fear, an apt reaction to the manifestation of the power of the supreme god:

Αὐτὸς δ' ἐξ Ἰδης μεγάλ' ἔκτυπε, δαιόμενον δὲ  
ἦκε σέλας μετὰ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες  
θάμβησαν, καὶ πάντας ὑπὸ χλωρὸν δέος εἶλεν (8.75–7)  
“and he himself crashed a great stroke from Ida, and a kindling/  
flash shot over the people of the Achaeans; seeing it/ they were  
stunned, and pale terror took hold of all of them”<sup>69</sup>.

## NOTES

1. I would like to thank Evanthia Tsitsibakou-Vasalos and Stella Georgoudi for their comments at the presentation of this paper. Nanno Marinatou provoked more speculation on the meaning of ἐναργής in Homer (see her article in this volume).

2. See S. Constantinidou, “Αὐγή/αὐγαί: Some Observations on the Homeric Perception of Light and Vision,” *Δωδώνη* 22.2 (1993): 95–107; “Homeric Eyes in a Ritual Context,” *Δωδώνη* 23.2 (1994): 9–23; “The Vision of Homer: The Eyes of Heroes and Gods,” *Antichthon* 28 (1994): 1–15. A metaphoric “language of light”—I owe this expression to C.M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford, 1964), 36—is widely employed by Homer in various literal and figurative uses, as for example φάος or φώως could mean “pride” or “comfort” (*Od.* 16.23: Τηλέμαχε γλυκερὸν φάος) but also “help” or “salvation” (*Il.* 6.6: φώως δ’ ἐτάροισιν ἔθηκεν). Likewise, σκότος in its metaphorical use refers to the darkness that death brings to human beings (*Il.* 4.461: τὸν δὲ σκότος ὄσσε κάλυπεν): for the Homeric examples of light metaphors see D. Tarrant, “Greek Metaphors of Light,” *CQ* n.s. 10 (1960): 181–2. On light terms see also C. Mugler, *Dictionnaire historique de la terminologie optique des grecs: douze siècles de dialogues avec la lumière, Études et commentaire LIII* (Paris, 1964). See also J. Bechert, *Die Diathesen von ἰδεῖν und ὁρᾶν bei Homer*, vols I–II (München, 1964); D. Bremer, *Licht und Dunkel in der frühgriechischen Dichtung* (Bonn, 1976).

3. Cf. J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, 1980), 162, 167–8. See also *Il.* 18.369ff., for Hephaistos’ shining house (δόμον ... ἀστερόεντα, a formulaic expression), but also as M.W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. V: books 17–20 (Cambridge, 1991), 190, points out: “one may also think of decorative ornaments or of the stars themselves.” See also Sappho 1. 7–10 L.-P., where there is an antithesis between gods’ residence (δόμον) which is golden (χρῦσιον; cf. Pindar, *N.* 10.88: οὐρανοῦ ἐν χρυσέοις δόμοισιν) and the earth which is black (γᾶς μελαίνας). Moreover, light is what distinguishes the living from the dead as light and dark succeed each other for the living whereas the dead are in eternal darkness.

4. Apart from being a natural phenomenon, light also appears as a concept with many symbolisms and is related to Greek religious rituals and beliefs: E. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods. The Role of Light in Archaic and Classical Greek Cult* (London, 2000), esp. 162.

5. B. Sismondo Ridgway, “‘Periklean’ Cult Images and their Media,” in *Periklean Athens and its Legacy*, ed. J. M. Barringer and J. M. Hurwit (University of Texas, Austin, 2005), 113; A. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration* (New Haven and London, 1990), 36. In the scene of the besieged city on Achilles’ shield in *Iliad* book 18.516–9, Ares and Athena are represented leading the people of a city to an ambush against their besiegers. Here the two gods are gold and wear golden clothes but they are also huge and beautiful and conspicuous from afar—the rest of the people on this scene are smaller (18.516–9). In my view, this is one of the most representative divine manifestations in the epic as it refers to a double epiphany.

6. Even divine images are sometimes envisaged with remarkable powers of sight, like their divine prototypes, and the materials used by the artists, especially for the creation of the eyes, help to render the radiant look and the power of sight of their

archetypes: see D.T. Steiner, *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought* (Princeton and Oxford, 2001), 156–7, 173–8; see also P.E. Corbett, “Greek Temples and Greek Worshippers: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence,” *BICS* 17 (1970): 149–58.

7. See G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. I: books 1–4 (Cambridge, 1985), 322–3; Steiner (n.6), 168ff.

8. Cf. *Il.* 13.435, where Poseidon’s look reveals his presence and displays his power: the god intervenes and bewitches (θέλξας: 435) Alkathoös’ shining eyes (ὄσσε φαεινά: 435) putting him into a trance. The hero is paralyzed, fixed to the spot like a gravestone or a tree; Poseidon’s magical intervention here focuses on the eyes and their visual weakness. A similar impact is exercised by Apollo’s charming stare straight into the eyes of the Danaans in *Iliad* 15.318–22, thus driving terror upon them and giving glory to the Trojans and Hektor. In this case Apollo’s bewitching visual power is re-enforced by the *aegis* which he is brandishing: see Steiner (n.6), 169; see also R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. IV: books 13–16 (Cambridge, 1992), 101–2, 262.

9. On the association of vision with “perceiving and knowing” in the Homeric poems see Constantinidou, “Homeric Eyes in a Ritual Context” (n.2), 59–60. Hermes, too, was ascribed a special power of sight (see *Il.* 24.343: ὄμματα θέλγει) linked to wit. In the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* the god makes a lyre from a tortoise shell at such a speed that is compared to the beams that whirl from one’s eyes, i.e. the sparkling look which reflects intelligence (lines 43–6: “As when a swift thought pierces through the breast of a man whom dense cares whirl about, / and then beams whirl from his eyes: so did glorious Hermes devise both word and deed”: trans. J.S. Clay, *The Politics of Olympus. Form and Meaning in the major Homeric Hymns* (Bristol Classical Press, 2006<sup>2</sup>), 107). On the impressive mechanics of vision see Γ. Γραμματικάκης, *Η Αυτοβιογραφία του φωτός* (Ηράκλειο: Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης, 2005), 303–14.

10. The artistically emphasized gaze of an image—or rather of a seemingly animated image—conveys incredible powers and is capable of producing the same impact as the divine epiphany: see Steiner (n.6), 173–6.

11. Ed. T.W. Allen, ed., *Homeri Opera* V (Oxford, 1912), 64–75.

12. Clay (n.9), 173; see also *ibid.*, 170–7. *Megethos*, “grandeur,” is also involved in Aphrodite’s epiphany here (lines 173–4: εὐποιήτοιο μελάθρου/ κῦρε κάρη: “And the head of the goddess reached the ceiling of Anchises’ house.” “Grandeur and beauty,” κάλλος καὶ μέγεθος, are terms for gods’ descriptions from the Homeric poems onwards (see *Il.* 18.516–9, καλὸν καὶ μέγαλον); although they look like mortals in their form the Homeric gods differ in their size and beauty: see J. Tanner, *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 2006), 51–2; W.J. Verdenius, “κάλλος καὶ μέγεθος,” *Mnemosyne* 2 (1949): 294–8. For an emphasis on the light imagery created at the two epiphanies in the *Homeric Hymns to Aphrodite and Demeter* see M. Lefkowitz, *Greek Gods, Human Lives. What we can learn from Myths* (Yale University Press, 2003).

13. Tanner (n.12), 51–2. See also H. P. Foley, ed., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays* (Princeton, 1994), 12. This is a

typical epiphany at the arrival of the goddess with some common features with Homeric divine epiphanies. But the most important here is the divine radiance that was created, which caused the viewer's reaction of reverence, awe, and fear (line 190: τὸν δ' αἰδῶς τε σέβας τε ἰδὲ χλωρὸν δέος εἶλεν); see N.J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford, 1974), 207–10. Nevertheless, Demeter's epiphany here is sudden and lasts for a short time unlike her second epiphany in the same hymn which occurs at her departure (275ff.). During this second epiphany the following characteristics appear: a larger than life stature and supernatural appearance created not only by Demeter's rejuvenation and metamorphosis into a beautiful woman (γῆρας ἀπωσαμένη, περί τ' ἀμφί τε κάλλος ἦτο: 276), but also by the radiance her body sends out reinforced by her golden hair which flowed down her shoulders (lines 278–80: τῆλε δὲ φέγγος ἀπὸ χροὸς ἀθανάτοιο/ λάμπε θεᾶς, ξανθαὶ δὲ κόμαι κατενήνοθεν ὤμους/ αὐγῆς δ' ἐπλήσθη πυκινὸς δόμος ἀστεροπῆς ὥς); see Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 252. As in the case of *Odyssey* 19.33ff. with Athena's lamp, here too the house 'is flooded with radiance like lightning' (trans. Foley, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter: Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays*, 16). Shortly before her epiphany Demeter asked for propitiatory rites in honor of herself, and the foundation of a temple together with an altar for offering sacrifices. Thus light is a central feature of both epiphanies of Demeter whereas the word φέγγος, which is not a Homeric word but in classical Attic is used for moonlight, is used in such a way that it "seems to reflect the language of the Mysteries" (Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 26). That this light of this epiphany seems to have its parallel in the Eleusinian Mysteries is seen in the central feature of the ἐποπτεία, the final stage of the Mysteries, which 'was essentially a vision (cf. *ad Dem.* 480), and this was evidently accompanied by a great light, which is contrasted with the darkness which preceded at earlier stages of the ceremonies' (Richardson, 26).

14. Apollo jumps from the boat he was sailing on to Krisa, like a star in the middle of the day (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 441–2: ἀστέρι εἰδόμενος μέσσοι ἤματι τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ πολλὰι σπινθαρίδες πωτῶντο, σέλας δ' εἰς οὐρανὸν ἦκεν); and as he proceeded to his temple he made a firelight which covered all Krisa (ἐνθ' ἄρ' ὃ γε φλόγα δαΐε πρηνυκόμενος τὰ ἄ κῆλα,/ πᾶσαν δὲ Κρίσιν κάτεχεν σέλας). The reaction of the people of Krisa is that of a divine epiphany.

15. See D.C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1991), 52; cf. 85, for various cases of the interaction of gods with men; see also E. Kearns, "The Gods in the Homeric Epics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ed. R. Fowler (Cambridge, 2004), 64–5, 71–3. B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes. Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen* (Göttingen, 1975), 80, points out that the gods' radiance is not just a feature of their appearance to men, but it is a permanent situation for gods are permanently powerful.

16. That there is a system of divine inspection which implies that knowledge on the immortal level is fuller and more reliable, especially as far as the supreme god, Zeus, is concerned whose omniscience relies on his capacity for universal vision since he is a sky god, see Griffin (n.3), 179. See also W. Allan, "Divine Justice and Cosmic order in Early Greek Epic," *JHS* 126 (2006): 8 esp. note 35; G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. II: books 5–8 (Cambridge, 1990), 296, 334–5. For Zeus' difficulty

in controlling the family of the gods on Olympos and his challenge to a trial of strength and superiority see M.M. Willcock, *The Iliad of Homer: books I–XII. Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (London, 1978), 260.

17. See A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. II: books IX–XVI (Oxford, 1989), 139–40.

18. *Od.* 12.385–8.

19. See Allan (n.16), 23. See also Heubeck-Hoekstra (n.18), 140. On the restoration of the τιμή and confidence of the offended deity, i.e. the Sun, see A.W.H. Adkins, “Homeric Gods and the Values of Homeric Society,” *JHS* 72 (1972): 6–7.

20. Trans. Griffin (n.3), 171.

21. Such a contrast applies to Hektor too in *Iliad* 17.591ff. (shortly before the divine action): ὥς φάτο, τὸν δ' ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα,/ βῆ δὲ διὰ προμάχων κεκορυθμένος αἶθοπι χαλκῶι: “So spoke he, and a black cloud of grief enwrapped Hector, and he strode amid the foremost fighters, harnessed in flaming bronze”: trans. A.T. Murray, *Homer. The Iliad, with an English Translation*, vol. II (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1925), 275; the parallelism/analogy between the divine and the mortal action is obvious here.

22. Trans. R. Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer. Translated and with an Introduction* (Chicago and London, 1951), 371.

23. Edwards (n.3), 125; see also Griffin (n.3), 170. There is, however, a contradictory symbolism in this scene: the light that is invoked by Aias symbolizes life, whereas the hero's wish is that, if he has to die, not to die in darkness that death presupposes.

24. See Willcock's comment (n.16), 260, *ad* 8.30–40: “Athene, the favourite daughter can get round her father even when he is angry. The gods on Olympos behave like a human family.” For Athena's special relationship with her father Zeus see Ares' complaint in *Iliad* 5.875ff. For Zeus as the god of sky and of meteorological phenomena see R. Buxton, *The Complete World of Greek Mythology* (London, 2004); see also W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (Stuttgart, 1977). On the contrary, there is no early (i.e. Homeric) association of Apollo with light but instead his first appearance in the *Iliad* relates him to darkness: the god came down from the peaks of Olympos with anger in his heart, wishing to take revenge on the Achaeans, and “he came like night” (1.47: ὁ δ' ἦε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς); the god of light—this is in fact a later association—came as darkness; cf. Buxton, *The Complete World of Greek Mythology*, 75.

25. Janko (n.8), 292. See Feeney's discussion (n.15, 53–4) on Hektor's action in *Iliad* 15.637ff., where divine intervention may be interpreted as diminishing the hero's achievements or quite the opposite, Zeus' presence increases Hektor's success. This passage has many terms of light and vision as for example: line 600: σέλας ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι; lines 607–8: τὼ δέ οἱ ὅσσε λαμπέσθην βλοσυρῆισιν ὑπ' ὀφρύσιν; line 623: αὐτὰρ ὁ λαμπόμενος πυρὶ πάντοθεν ἔνθορ' ὁμίλῳι; see Mugler (n. 2), 350 and *passim*.

26. Trans. Lattimore (n. 22), 327. For other cases of lifting the mist from a hero's eyes, befogging his vision or sending darkness in favor of one side, see Janko (n. 8), 301.

27. G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. I: books 1–4 (Cambridge, 1985), 338. See also Willcock's (n.16, 223) linguistic and interpretative comments on this passage.

28. Trans. Lattimore (n.22), 369. See also Edwards (n.3), 115, for the formal and the symbolical points of comparison here. M. M. Willcock, *The Iliad of Homer: books XIII–XXIV. Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (London, 1984), 260, argues that, "It seems that Athene actually descends in a rainbow... This is a little different from the usual simile; cf. the same goddess's descent like a shooting star in IV 75." Mugler (n.2), 206, remarks that Homer appears impressed not only by the phenomenon of the rainbow but particularly by the purple color in it.

29. Lattimore (n.22), 369.

30. *Il.* 8.75–7.

31. *Od.* 16.177–9. Athena's deceptive epiphany in relation to Telemachos is transformed into an optical illusion concerning Odysseus, for whom Telemachos suspects that he is one of those gods who hold broad heaven. Therefore, we have here Odysseus' false "epiphany" by transformation of age and appearance: see P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos. Intertextual Readings in the Odyssey and the Iliad* (Ithaca and London, 1987), 94.

32. Trans. Griffin (n.3), 151.

33. However, although this epiphany is described in detail by Telemachos, himself, he has no direct acquaintance.

34. See J. Russo, M. Fernandez-Galiano, A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. III: books XVII–XXIV (Oxford, 1992), 76; Parisinou (n.4), 5–11 (where also a thorough discussion of the archaeological evidence).

35. Parisinou (n.4), 7, 11, and esp. 162. See also Russo, Fernandez-Galiano, Heubeck (n.34), 76, who point out that this epiphany has common features with Demeter's epiphany in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, like the radiant atmosphere which fills the palace.

36. On divine epiphanies in the Homeric poems see Feeney (n.15), 85; Griffin (n.3), 150ff.

37. Pucci (n.31), 110 note 1.

38. Willcock (n.28), 279, remarks that *χαλεποί* in *Iliad* 20.131 should be understood that "Gods are hard to face when they (lit., to) appear in their true shape." It is worth referring here to *Iliad* 18.516–9, where Ares and Pallas Athena, the war gods, are shown on Achilles' shield fashioned in gold, with gold dress, beautiful and tall, and as gods they were more visible than the others (ὥς τε θεῶ περ ἄμφις ἀριζήλω); ἀρίζηλος here, which means "visible" or "clear," seems to be a synonym of ἐναργής.

39. See Pucci (n.31), 110ff., esp. notes 1 and 4 (ch. 9: "More Light in the Epiphany, Less Light in the Text"), where it is suggested that *enargēs* in divine epiphanies has various meanings, even that of a god appearing in disguise and that in its five occurrences in Homer the word always refers to a divine presence (*Il.* 20.131; *Od.* 3.420, 7.201, 16.161) or to a divinely inspired and transmitted dream (*Od.* 4.481); cf. Constantinidou, "The Vision of Homer" (n.2), 11 note 36. In my view, the expression *phainesthai enarges* applies to those cases that divine power or nature becomes clear, evident, and this is a privilege for the pious and favorites, although the case of *Od.*



7.201 points to the meaning of *phainontai enargeis* as “the gods appear in full forms,” i.e. with no disguise. This is also clearly explained in book 7.206 (*ou ti katakrup-tousin*) where Alcinoos asserts that his people have the privilege of seeing their gods in full forms, without concealing themselves (see Pucci, 110 note 2). On *enargês* see also W.G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Poetry* (Baltimore, 1984), 101.

40. See Russo, Fernandez-Galiano, Heubeck (n.34), 69; cf. *ibid.*, 68 (*ad* 18.317–19).

41. Trans. R. Fagles, *Homer, The Odyssey: Translated by R. Fagles. Introduction and Notes by B. Knox* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1996), 387.

42. Russo (n.34), 70.

43. Note Odysseus’ orders to the servants in lines 313ff. but also his offer to furnish light for the suitors, as he is determined to stay until the morning if they wish, since they will not wear him down, him who has endured so many sufferings (*Od.* 18.317–9). See also Russo, Fernandez-Galiano, Heubeck (n. 34), 68.

44. J.T. Hooker, “The Visit of Athena to Achilles in *Iliad* I,” *Emerita* 58 (1990): 21–32, who also argues that Athena’s appearance here should not be explained in psychological or religious terms; see also Constantinidou, “The Vision of Homer” (n.2), 12 esp. note 37.

45. *Homer on Life and Death*, 158–9.

46. See Willcock (n.16), 191. But see Burkert (n.24), 303–4, for the possibility of a psychological interpretation of this scene, i.e. Achilles’ self-restraint appears as a divine intervention, while Athena’s dazzling eyes could be a moment of bright thought and judgment against the quarrel which darkens the mind.

47. But see Hooker’s argument (n.44), 28: “The invisibility of the goddess to all except Achilles is absolutely necessary given the situation. Athena is intent on maintaining the status of Achilles, which has been grievously undermined by Agamemnon’s threat.” See also M.M. Willcock, *A Commentary on Homer’s Iliad: books I–VI* (London, 1970), 18: “... the gods are visible only to those by whom they wish to be seen.”

48. See Kearns (n.15), 71–2. Demeter’s revelation scene in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* is compatible to epiphany scenes in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the *Homeric Hymn*, however, the focus is on the goddess and her revelation; the ritual and religious character, especially of this part of the *Hymn*, could be an explanation compared to the more literal one of the Athena case in *Iliad* I. Therefore, the abbreviated form of Athena’s appearance in the latter could also be assigned to the conventions of the Homeric epic, where various actions are subjected to the fulfillment of a plan on a large scale, the plan of the poet.

49. See S. Constantinidou, “The Importance of Bronze in Early Greek Religion,” *Δωδώνη* 21.2 (1992): 153–8; Constantinidou, “The Vision of Homer” (n.2), 12–3.

50. As M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant have put it in *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (Chicago and London, 1978), 181 (Engl. trans. of *Les ruses d’intelligence: la Metis des grecs*, (Paris, 1974)), Athena is marked by her shining eyes and the shining “eye of bronze”; see also pp. 179–83.

51. See Burkert (n.24), 301; Constantinidou, “Ἀὐγή/αὐγαί: Some Observations on the Homeric Perception of Light and Vision” (n.2), 105–6.



52. (N.3), 169.

53. Cf. *Il.* 1.194: ἦλθε δ' Ἀθήνη, “and Athene came”: Griffin (n.3), 159 note 29, and 83ff.

54. Edwards (n.3), 173 (*ad* 18.225–7). It seems that light and fire imagery is used as a symbol of power and strength as well as confidence. For light and fire imagery associated with Achilles in the *Iliad*, see C. Moulton, *Similes in the Homeric Poems* (Göttingen, 1977), 99ff., 106ff.; see also C.H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958), 128–53 (ch. VII: “Fire and other elements”).

55. ὥς ἅπ' Ἀχιλλῆος κεφαλῆς σέλας αἰθέρ' ἵκανε. For the Homeric meanings of σέλας see Mugler (n.2), 350.

56. Edwards (n.3), 170, argues that the flare(radiance??) from Achilles' head functions symbolically, i.e. the hero ‘appears like a light of hope’ for the besieged and all is described in the technique of a simile; a simile obviously linked to the narrative and to future events. See Whitman (n.54), 137. For this passage of the glorification of Achilles see also Constantinidou, “Αὐγή/αὐγαί: Some Observations on the Homeric Perception of Light and Vision” (n.2), 102.

57. Edwards (n.3), 170.

58. Athena fills Diomedes with might and the inspired hero is led to a spectacular triumph which covers the whole book and even gets into the sixth book of the *Iliad*: see Kirk (n.16), 52–4. The gleaming fire kindled by Athena (line 4: δαῖε, line 7: δαῖεν), is compared to the autumn star which becomes the most glittering as it is bathed in the ocean and its light is reflected on the water; Kirk (n.16), 53, argues that this is Sirius, the brightest star.

59. The autumnal star is not an evil but a good sign here; the fire that is coming from the helmet and the shield of Diomedes is obviously taken as a sign of divine inspiration. See Kirk (n.16), 52–4.

60. In the *Homeric Hymn to Athena*, the goddess' first appearance by her birth is marked by her gleaming armor which here is gold: lines 4–7: Τριτογενῆ, τὴν αὐτὸς ἐγείνατο μητίετα Ζεὺς/ σεμνῆς ἐκ κεφαλῆς, **πολεμήϊα τεύχε' ἔχουσιν/ χρύσεια παμφανόωντα**: σέβας δ' ἔχε πάντας ὀρώντας/ ἀθανάτους.

61. For godlike heroes in the Homeric poems see Griffin (n.3), 83ff.

62. Cf. Parisinou (n.4), 162; Kearns (n.15), 64: “Divine limitations and human excellence go together; perhaps the famous dictum of “Longinus,” that Homer made his men Gods and his Gods men, is not so far from the mark”; cf. 71. See also Thalmann (n.39), 92–6; and Janko (n.8), 2 (Introduction: 1. “The gods in Homer: further considerations”): “Again it is Griffin who has shown how Homer exploits the gods' interactions with mortals as a metaphor for, and a guide to, the response of the human audience.”

63. As Richardson (n.13), 29, points out: “It is the gods who give and take away prosperity (ὄλβος, πλοῦτος as they desire), and their condition of ageless immortality is contrasted with that of men. They live in pure regions where the light always shines: no cloud of darkness disturbs their vision, and when they appear to men, they appear in a blaze of glorious light.” See also Lefkowitz (n.12), 84ff.

64. See Moulton (n.54), 106ff., for the symbolism of fire/light similes and their association with narration. See also Whitman (n.54), 129, 132–3, 144–5.

65. Whitman (n.54), 144–5, argues that fire-light imagery prevails especially in the *Iliad* with obvious association with the war and its aftermath, like death, destruction and the forthcoming fall of Troy itself; on the other hand, in the *Odyssey* the unifying motif is the sea and its imagery; see also p. 153.

66. On the interaction of gods with men and how divine intervention supports and reinforces human action see Lefkowitz (n.12), 86–149. On “The so-called divine machinery in the *Iliad*, that is, the intervention of gods in human actions” and their motives, see W. Kullmann, “Gods and men in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,” *HSCP* 89 (1985): 1–23. On the various aspects of gods’ intervention in the *Iliad*, see M.M. Willcock, “Some Aspects of the Gods in the *Iliad*,” *BICS* 17 (1970): 1–10. See also Kirk (n.16), 1–14 (Introduction: 1. “The Homeric gods: prior considerations”); Janko (n.8), 1–7 (Introduction: 1. “The gods in Homer: further considerations”).

67. See the Homeric examples discussed throughout this paper.

68. For lightning as a sign of victory, especially associated with Hektor, see Whitman (n.54), 133–4, 136–7.

69. Trans. Lattimore (n.22), 184. See Kirk’s (n.16, 304) comment here that “‘blazing flash’ for lightning is found only here” (δαιόμενον δὲ ἦκε σέλας). See also Whitman (n.54), 133–4: “The lighting flash which dismays the Achaeans is the direct reflex of Achilles’ retirement. The action of the god and the inaction of the hero are essentially one.”

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## Chapter Six

# Trojan Night

Ken Dowden

The subject of this discussion is night battles and night expeditions in the Trojan story. Night battles in general are an actual historical phenomenon, as well as an idea in the imaginary apparatus. But they turn out to have particular significance in the Trojan material, which culminates in the final night battle in which Troy itself is captured. It is worth looking beyond Greek material and this discussion also addresses the tenth *parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, and, in so doing, raises some questions about the heroic code. Bringing all this together, we can adopt the perspective of those who sit in the Wooden Horse, like those others in history who sat quietly in ambushes, awaiting the signal with trepidation.

### NIGHT BATTLES

According to Thucydides (7.44.1), there was only one night battle of any significance in the Peloponnesian War. This was when the Athenian general Demosthenes tried to capture the fort Epipolai outside Syracuse. There was a bright moon, but that was not enough to allow recognition of others: the Athenians were in serious trouble and the obvious device of asking for a watchword, a *synthema*, was less simple as it seemed. They were unnerved by the sensory excesses of battle cries and paians: ‘l’obscurité est amplificatrice du bruit, ... elle est résonance,’ as Durand once said, paraphrasing Bachelard<sup>1</sup>. The result was that many of the Athenians became disoriented and lost.

A night battle (*nyktomachia*) is more than just a statement of circumstances: it is a genre, and indeed a chapter in the notional manual of war-

craft. Origen tells us that the στρατιώτης γενναῖος (the ‘good soldier’) knows how to νυκτομαχεῖν, τειχομαχεῖν, πεζομαχεῖν, ναυμαχεῖν, καὶ τοξεύειν, καὶ δόρυ σείειν (‘to do fighting by night, on walls, on foot, on shipboard, to shoot arrows and to shake the spear’).<sup>2</sup> However, the night battle, like fighting during the winter season, is a very rare choice by military leaders; and the examples of it in Greek literature are correspondingly few. The one instance so described<sup>3</sup> in Herodotos (1.74), if it should not be deleted, refers to the effects of an eclipse rather than a real night battle; if genuine, however, it is the first instance in Greek literature and is not newly coined.<sup>4</sup> It is part of the *imaginaire* but not at all a common occurrence. There are no instances at all of the word in Xenophon, Polybios, or Diodoros. In Cassius Dio, there is only one case (36.48), where Pompey employs night battle against Mithridates.

Night battles are therefore, like lions, a powerful idea rather than something of which Greeks have actual experience. And in Thucydides’ *ekphrasis* we can see the *imaginaire* at work: it shows the same sophistic creativity that he displays in the celebrated scene of the paradoxical sea/land-battle in the harbour. When discussing a night battle, it is obligatory also to discuss the state of the moon. One might think that in principle the moon must shine, otherwise the battle is not possible at all. Yet it can be obscured intermittently by cloud and mist, as at Polyaeus, *Strategemata* 6.5.1 (Aratos and the Akrokorinth). Indeed, an attack can be made when it has not yet risen, as Pompey did in the case of Mithridates, to stop the latter from escaping; only later did the moon rise, to the premature cheers of Mithridates’ army (Dio 36.49.6).

Decisions on battle are always undertaken for reasons. But those reasons need to be particularly compelling to justify night battle. Demosthenes (Thuc. 7.43.2) realised that he would be seen climbing up to Epipolai during the day. Night battle was therefore the only possibility, a disastrous decision as it turned out. Pompey too was ‘forced’ into the position of attacking Mithridates by night: τότε γὰρ εἰδὼς αὐτοὺς διαφεύγειν μέλλοντας ἡναγκάσθη νυκτομαχεῖν (‘at that stage, realising that they were on the point of getting away, he was compelled to do night battle,’ Dio 36.48.3). In this context a negative example is illuminating: Agrippa, facing the Pompeian fleet in the Civil War, was ready for a night battle, but his troops were not and he was persuaded not to pursue the idea (Appian, *Civil Wars* 5.108).

The example of Demosthenes illustrates how night is thought to be a great ally in gaining an unassailable site. Possibly the most celebrated historical example is Aratos’ capture of the Akrokorinth.<sup>5</sup> He learnt about a path through a cleft in the rock that led up to a point where the walls were not especially high. He proceeded up this path at night (like the Persians at Thermopylai), under so bright a moon that he worried about reflections of the moonlight

from the armour. But the moon dims and brightens at various points to assist him in his capture of the citadel.

To sum up, then, night battle is very special and only undertaken when one is faced by especially insurmountable difficulty. The moon illuminates the night battle, if available, but the faintness of its light leads to problems in recognising people or finding one's bearings: the dangers are of killing friends or becoming lost.

### TROJAN NIGHT I: SPYING, PALLADION, AND DOLONEIA

Turning from night battles to night expeditions, we can observe that these do not figure, e.g., in the Theban cycle. But they do figure in the Trojan cycle, in items (2) and (3) of the following set of incidents:

1. *Odysseus the Spy*. Following the construction of the Wooden Horse, Odysseus visits Troy in disguise to spy (as a *κατάσκοπος*), is recognised by Helen, and makes arrangements with her for the capture of the city. He kills some Trojans and returns. (Lesches, *Ilias Parva*, arg. 4; *Od.* 4.240–58).
2. *The Palladion*. Odysseus and Diomedes bring the Palladion from Troy (Lesches, *Ilias Parva*, arg. 4).
3. *The Doloneia*. Nestor seeks volunteers for a mission to go to the Trojans, kill any stragglers, and gain information about whether the Trojans intend to stay at the ships or return victorious to the city (*Iliad* 10.204–10). Diomedes volunteers and Odysseus accompanies him. They encounter Dolon, who is also a spy, gain information from him and kill him. They then, using information gained, kill Rhesus and twelve companions as they sleep, steal his horses, and return.

What relationship do these scenes bear to each other? Though they vary in intensity and significance, they can be viewed at the least as sharing common ground and indeed common personnel. From the perspective of oral poetry, these are implementations of a particular type of incident, whose special character is enhanced by the deployment of night in (2) and (3): they require a particular personal bravery, and the ability to deceive.

The first incident, *Odysseus the spy*, is the hardest to understand. Apollodoros (*Epit.* 5.13) merges this incident with the incident of the *Palladion*. Rather similarly Gantz,<sup>6</sup> trying to preserve their autonomy, argues, rather like one of the new mythographers of the 1st centuries BC and AD, that Odysseus may only have learnt from Helen that it was necessary to steal the Palladion and that he needed backup, in the form of Diomedes, to pull off the theft. The



fundamental question, though, is surely: what is the connection between the Wooden Horse and Odysseus' expedition? Was Helen, in some version, the necessary collaborator inside the city? Was Odysseus going in some way to make arrangements for the reception of the Horse? Or is there no connection and was it just a pleasing piece of bardish opportunism for Odysseus to meet Helen, while professedly bringing back 'lots of intelligence' (*Od.* 4.258)?

The *Palladion* episode is much more purposeful: the key statue is removed from Troy, an incident rather reminiscent of the beliefs behind the Roman ritual of *evocation*.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, one must admit a certain redundancy, or reinforcement, of motifs in the epic tradition: what was the key to capturing Troy? was it the arrival of Philoktetes, or of Neoptolemos, or the death of Troilos, or the killing of Rhesos, or the removal of the Palladion?

Of these three episodes the Doloneia displays the weakest individual motivation, partly because it seems to be dependent on the other two incidents. It is an inversion of the first incident—trying to gain intelligence because the Trojans are *victorious*! And maybe, as Cirio (2003) has argued, it involves stealing horses rather than imposing a wooden one. But it also calls for the personnel of the second incident, namely Diomedes and Odysseus, and it must surely recall the theft of the Palladion. Like so much of the *Iliad*, it foreshadows later events.<sup>8</sup> The analysts and neoanalysts are surprisingly reticent about making this point, presumably because of the inclination to dismiss the Doloneia altogether. But we can see it in the mind of von der Mühl,<sup>9</sup> who even suggests that the *σύν τε δὴ' ἐρχομένω* lines ('when two go together ...', *Iliad* 10.224 f.) might have come from the earlier story.

Duals like this are, however, rather interesting, serving as they do on their occasional appearances in this story, to underline the harmony of purpose and the commendable degree of co-operation between the two heroes in the *Doloneia*. This makes strange reading in the light of some things said about the expedition to steal the Palladion. The proverbial expression, *Διομήδειος ἀνάγκη* ('Diomedean compulsion'), which appears at Plato, *Republic* 493d, is explained by reference to an incident when Diomedes and Odysseus fall out on the return from Troy, a scene that figured in the *Ilias Parva* (F11 West). Odysseus, for some reason, tries to kill Diomedes by creeping up on him from behind, but Diomedes sees the shadow of his sword in the moonlight, and ties him up, forcing him to march forward by beating his back with the sword. Conon (*FGrH* 26 F1.34) gives the reason: Diomedes had been helped over the wall by Odysseus, but then left him behind, stealing the Palladion himself; when Diomedes returns, Odysseus nearly kills him but then merely drives him (Odysseus in this version driving Diomedes) into the camp.

The deceptive power of night stretches, then, to conflict between the two comrades, only one of whom (Diomedes) seems to be due, for cult reasons,<sup>10</sup>

to end up owning the statue—and his is the special relationship with Athena in the *Doloneia*, not Odysseus's. It looks as though the *Doloneia* sets up a deliberate dissonance with the *Palladion* story. It is a shame only that it takes no advantage of the night setting—unlike the shadow of the weapon in the *Palladion* story or the reflections that Aratos feared. Apart from the fact that others are sleeping, the story might as well be happening in full daylight.

### TROJAN NIGHT II: NYKTOMACHIA

In a final act of deception, Troy is captured by night. The themes therefore of the night escapade and of the night battle, come together for a final *nyktomachia*, the word with which Pausanias describes it (10.26.8, cf. 10.18.4).

The difficulty of taking Troy leads to a desperate solution, comparable to Demosthenes' motives for the night battle at Epipolai. It involves a stratagem, noted by Polyaeus 1.pr.8, and indeed Polyaeus even constructs a later capture of Ilion rewriting the Trojan Horse motif. There can be little doubt that the Wooden Horse does stand as an icon for military stratagem, however unrealistic it may be in itself. The trickery of the Horse is then doubled by the fact of the night attack: it is for good reason that the word *νύκτωρ* ('by night') occurs 99 times in Polyaeus' *Strategems*—about once every 140 words, probably the most frequent use of the word in Greek literature.

The moon too plays an interesting role in this event. According to Lesches in the *Ilias Parva*: νύξ μὲν ἔην μέσση, λαμπρὰ δ' ἐπέτελλε σελήνη ('it was midnight and the moon was rising brightly'). The moon rises at midnight on the 8th of the waning moon, the 23rd of the month, when it has reached its last quarter. What Vergil meant by *amica silentia lunae* ('the friendly silence of the moon,' *Aeneid* 2.255) is unclear,<sup>11</sup> but it looks as though the prevalent view in Greece, on the basis of which writers from Damastes onwards<sup>12</sup> calculated the date of the fall of Troy, was that the night was dark until the battle took place, when it became sufficiently illuminated for the battle to be possible. The ships sail towards Sinon's signal through the dark: like Pompey, the Greek fleet had taken advantage of the period before moonrise. But once the battle begins, lighting conditions have reverted to the norm for a Thucydidean *νυκτομαχία*, light enough to see there is someone there but not to know who it is.

It is only in Vergil that disguise is needed, by Trojans at that—to confuse a Greek called Androgeos (2.371), his name strangely borrowed from a son of Minos. In Lesches the danger lies more in not recognising others: Odysseus fortunately recognises a wounded guest-friend, Helikaon, a son of Antenor, and gets him safely out of the way in a scene depicted by Polygnotos in the Cnidian Lesche at Delphi.<sup>13</sup> But this is not wholly a night battle and indeed

there is something very odd about the expression of Pausanias, ‘the battle that the Trojans fought in the night’ (τὴν μάχην ... ἣν ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἐμαχέσαντο οἱ Τρῶες, Paus. 10.27.5): it was not exactly a *μάχη*—they were taken by surprise, in their sleep, and the object of the Greeks was a slaughter like that of the companions of Rhesos. Proclus’ summary of the *Ilioupersis* notes (arg. 2): καὶ πολλοὺς ἀνελόντες τὴν πόλιν κατὰ κράτος λαμβάνουσι—‘killing many, they took the city by force.’ Somewhere between midnight and dawn, we are to imagine, the menfolk are killed, the city looted and the women and children collected as slaves. The brutality is that of Melos and in fact it is nearer a night slaughter than a night battle. It is only a matter of a few hours.

### JUDGING GREEK HEROISM

The three Trojan night escapades, and indeed the capture of Troy, all involve Diomedes and/or Odysseus. But they are part of a wider pattern too. The same implicit trickery is found in ambush incidents. Odysseus *ambushes* Helenos and learns he must bring back Philoktetes as a result (*Ilias Parva* arg. 2). And Achilles too is not beyond isolated acts of enterprise. When and why did Achilles *ambush* Troilos?<sup>14</sup> Earlier, the capture of Lykaon, as Cirio observes (2003: 184), took place on a night expedition—Lykaon is seized from his father’s orchard by an Achilles ἐννύχιος προμολών (‘coming forth by night,’ *Iliad* 21.36–7).

And if Melos leaves a bad taste in modern mouths, should Troy also? Did Greeks not feel it was an excess? Certainly, Aeschylus could *choose* to depict it that way in the *Agamemnon*. And what did the poet of the *Doloneia* mean by putting the following words into Diomedes’ thoughts?

Αὐτὰρ ὁ μερμήριζε μένων ὃ τι κύντατον ἔρδοι,  
ἦ ὅ γε δίφρον ἐλών, ὅθι ποικίλα τεύχε’ ἔκειτο,  
ῥυμοῦ ἐξερύοι ἦ ἐκφέροι ὑψόσ’ ἀείρας,  
ἦ ἔτι τῶν πλεόνων Θρηγκῶν ἀπὸ θυμὸν ἔλοιτο.

*But he stayed back and pondered what the nastiest thing was he might do*

—seize the chariot, where the glittering armour lay,  
and heave it off by its yoke-pole—or lift it high and carry it off  
—or take away the life of yet more Thracians . . . (*Iliad* 10.503–6)

The interesting word is κύντατον (‘most doggish,’ i.e. nastiest), which on its own would be a term of extreme disgust and moral disapprobation. But, focalised through Diomedes, it appears to be a commendable act of villainy

in a situation where values are inverted. And herein lies the problem. Is any of this ‘heroic’? Is Martin Nagler justified in speaking of ‘the disgraceful conduct exhibited by Odysseus and Diomedes’ that blots the sense of heroism of the *Doloneia*?<sup>15</sup> Before we answer this question, we need to look at a different world, where values, or at least official values, are clearer.

## INDIAN NIGHT

Book 10 of the *Mahābhārata* is the *Sauptikaparvan* or ‘book of (the attack during) sleep.’ It is translated by W. J. Johnson as ‘The Massacre at Night.’ In fact it is the first half of this book, also entitled *Sauptika*, that deals with this incident.

The episode focuses on the wrath and shame (10.1.32) of the hero Aśvatthāman, son of Droṇa, the great trainer of warriors on both sides—a sort of human Cheiron. Aśvatthāman is one of the last three surviving warriors on the side of the Kauravas, all the rest now killed by the victorious Pāṇdavas, the heroes (in the modern sense) of the epic. So incensed is Aśvatthāman that he determines to kill the Pāṇdavas as they sleep, despite the urging and advice of the Brahmin Kṛpa, now talking like Phoenix to Achilles. Followed by his two colleagues, Aśvatthāman advances to the gate of the enemy camp. Two *adhyāyas* (chapters 6–7) are now visibly intruded<sup>16</sup> in which he is confronted by a demonic projection of Śiva causing him to reflect on his guilt in proceeding to this action. Then, improving intrusion over, he leaves his colleagues at the gate to kill all those who attempt to escape and sets about the killing of the sleepers, starting with the king Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna. The entire army, no less, is slain by these three warriors.

The *Mahābhārata* is an intensely moral and religious work and must, from the perspective of Indo-European epic, be regarded as overlaying its inherited materials with a new and far-reaching religiosity. The intruded passage serves to magnify this overlay. Here Aśvatthāman recognises that he is about to violate *śāstra*, the code of precepts, a sort of *fās* in Roman terms:

Bypassing the precepts of *śāstra* completely,  
He desires to kill those who should not be killed,  
And, falling from the ordained path, sets foot  
Upon an evil road.  
For a man should not bear weapons against cattle,  
Against Brahmins or kings, against a woman,  
A friend, his mother, his teacher, the old,  
Against children, the moronic, the blind,  
Against the sleeping and those rising from sleep . . .  
*Mahābhārata* 10.6.20–2, tr. W. J. Johnson

And there is a similar prescription in the *Laws of Manu*, which altogether is a statement of *śāstra* for kings:

90. When he is engaged in battle, he must never slay his enemies with weapons that are treacherous,<sup>17</sup> barbed, or laced with poison, or whose tips are ablaze with fire.

91. He must never slay a man standing on the ground<sup>18</sup>, an effeminate man, a man with joined palms, a man with loose hair, a seated man, a man declaring ‘I am yours,’

92. a sleeping man, a man without his armour, a naked man, a man without his weapons, a non-fighting spectator, a man engaging someone else,

93. a man with damaged weapons, a man in distress, a badly wounded man, a frightened man, or a man who has turned tail—recalling the Law followed by good people.

*Laws of Manu* 7.90–3, tr. Patrick Olivelle

This code seems rather ambitious for any real-life situation but it does state some ground-rules and the warriors of the *Iliad* can usefully be reviewed against it. Even though Homeric warriors in turn live in a less codified world and respond with greater freedom to events, there is an underlying level at which something like this code is recognised, if not wholly adopted. Even a late rhetorician can get to the roots of Ajax slaughtering the animals: ξιφηφόρος κατὰ τῶν ἀόπλων ἐκ φύσεως<sup>19</sup> (‘sword-bearing against those who are by nature unarmed’)—this is something that denudes him of his heroism, and it is also ἐπιβουλὴ καὶ νυκτομαχία (‘plot and night battle’). Similarly, when Achilles rejects the ‘joined palms’ of Lykaon, naked and without armour (21.50) we should perhaps raise an eyebrow and view it as part of the barbarous rage of Achilles in this area of the epic. What Achilles wants to do is kill the entire Trojan race (21.102–3), rather like Aśvatthāman and the Pāṇḍava army.

The episode therefore where Diomedes slaughters the leading Thracians, and Odysseus moves the bodies aside (comparable to the division of labour between Aśvatthāman and his two colleagues at the gates), is a deliberate contravention of the subliminal rules of war. That it takes place at night is a further contravention. Night is the time of spies like Dolon and Odysseus and all those that must act unseen, like for instance the Sikinnos of Herodotos, sent by Themistokles to the Great King. The warrior has no truck with night, and Aśvatthāman will be exiled for 3000 years as a result.

The night battle is also not a pitched battle for which both sides prepare, but an attempt to gain the advantage by surprise. One of the advantages is to attack your enemy before they have had a chance to get armed<sup>20</sup>, which is scarcely heroic and is understandably condemned by the *Laws of Manu* (above).

## CONCLUSIONS

Trojan night is an inherent part of the tradition and Aśvatthāman's massacre of the sleeping Pāṇdavas could quite probably go back to an Indo-European tradition of telling of night attacks. It would be interesting to know of other epics that tell such stories. Perhaps one should count the attack of Grendel on Hrothgar and his men as they sleep in *Beowulf*.

In Indian terms, Trojan night is unheroic and unworthy, though there are a number of exceptions to the Laws of Manu in the *Mahābhārata* and they serve to create some ambivalence around the religiosity of the work. In Greece, the sentiments that underlie the Indian analysis are not wholly absent. There is even something wrong with slaying a king, if Priam must be placed by the story at an altar to await murder. But it would be better to say that there is something special and risqué about night expeditions. In a way, they are *more* heroic because they are so difficult. Only Diomedes will volunteer and, if I am right to associate them with the ethic (rather than ethics) of ambushes, then Idomeneus' description of the *lochos* applies:

εἰ γὰρ νῦν παρὰ νηυσὶ λεγοίμεθα πάντες ἄριστοι  
 ἐς λόχον, ἔνθα μάλιστ' ἀρετὴ διαείδεται ἀνδρῶν,  
 ἔνθ' ὃ τε δειλὸς ἀνὴρ ὅς τ' ἄλκιμος ἐξεφαάνθη·  
 τοῦ μὲν γάρ τε κακοῦ τρέπεται χρῶς ἄλλυδις ἄλλη,  
 οὐδέ οἱ ἀτρέμας ἦσθαι ἐρητύετ' ἐν φρεσὶ θυμός,  
 ἀλλὰ μετοκλάζει καὶ ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρους πόδας ἵζει,  
 ἐν δέ τέ οἱ κραδίη μεγάλα στέρνοισι πατάσσει  
 κῆρας ὀϊόμενον, πάταγος δέ τε γίγνεται ὀδόντων·  
 τοῦ δ' ἀγαθοῦ οὔτ' ἄρ' τρέπεται χρῶς οὔτε τι λήην  
 ταρβεῖ, ἐπειδὴν πρῶτον ἐσίζηται λόχον ἀνδρῶν,  
 ἀρᾶται δὲ τάχιστα μιγήμεναι ἐν δαῖ λυγρῇ.

If only all we best people might be collected alongside the ships  
 for an ambush, where the excellence of men is best identified,  
 where the coward and the mighty man are revealed:  
 for the worthless man's skin changes color here and there,  
 nor does his spirit in his breast endure so that he may sit still;  
 he sits shifting from one foot to another  
 and the heart in his chest pounds greatly  
 as he sees his doom, and his teeth chatter;  
 but the good man's skin never changes nor is he much  
 afraid when first he has taken his place amidst the ambush of men,  
 and he prays to get involved as soon as possible in the baneful  
 slaughter.

*Iliad* 13.276–86

The *lochos*, with its requirement to endure stressful anticipation in silence, shows the real mettle of a warrior. This is what the likes of Odysseus and Diomedes knew as they sat in the Horse in the dark of night, waiting for the moon to rise and the slaughter to begin.

## NOTES

1. Durand, G. *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*<sup>11</sup> (Paris: 1992) : 99.
2. *Commentary on Job 2.10* (Migne, PG 17 p.64).
3. I refer in these statements to *nyktomach*—words only.
4. The verb, νυκτομαχεῖν, does not appear before Appian and must be a Hellenistic classifying conceptualisation.
5. Plutarch, *Aratos* 18–22; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 6.5.
6. Gantz, T. *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore & London, 1993): 642.
7. Wissowa, G. *Religion und Kultus der Römer*<sup>2</sup> (Munich, 1912): 383 f., cf. Pliny, *HN* 28.4.18 (in *obpugnationibus* ante omnia solitum a Romanis sacerdotibus evocari deum, cuius in tutela id oppidum esset, promittique illi eundem aut ampliorem *apud Romanos cultum*).
8. See Dowden, K. “Homer’s Sense of Text,” *JHS* 116 (1996): 47–61.
9. von der Mühl, P. *Kritisches Hypomnema zur Ilias* (Basel, 1952): 186 f.
10. Callimachus, *Hymn* 5.33–42, with scholion to line 1; Burkert, W. “Byzyge und Palladion,” *ZRGG* 22 (1970): 356–68.
11. There is merit in the article of R.V. Cram, “On a verse in Vergil *Aeneid* II.255 and the post-Homeric tradition concerning the capture of Troy,” *CPhil* 31 (1936): 253–9.
12. F7 Fowler, *FGrH* 5 F7 = Plutarch, *Camillius* 19.7.
13. Lesches, *Ilias Parva* F22 West.
14. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*: 597–602.
15. Nagler, M.N. *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley & London, 1974): 136.
16. Compare 10.6.1 with 10.8.1.
17. E.g. concealed in a wooden casing (note of Olivelle, translation of George Bühler in *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 25).
18. Because the king fights from a chariot.
19. Anon., *On the eight parts of rhetorical speech* 3.606.
20. Cf. Polyaeus, *Strat.* 4.9.2: δέισας, μὴ τῆς ὀπλίσεως τῶν στρατιωτῶν ὀξυτέρα τῶν πολεμίων ἢ ἔφοδος γένοιτο.

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## Chapter Seven

### Tithonus and Phaon

#### *Mythical Allegories of Light and Darkness in Sappho's Poetry*

Avgi Maggel

#### MYTH IN SAPPHO'S LYRICS

Sappho's poetry has reached modern scholarship in a fragmentary form, although the critical authors of antiquity reported that Sappho had written volumes of works. It is true that "*her texts, as we receive them, insist on the impossibility of recapturing the lost body.*"<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, this applies to most of the surviving parts of ancient lyric poetry, with the possible exception of Pindar's more complete work. However, this fragmentary character presents Sappho's poetry with an additional difficulty to the already attested complexity and ambiguity of her poetic art.

Over the centuries Sappho's life and poetic work have been veiled with a range of ambiguous stories about her teaching and emotional involvement with a circle of women, her motherhood of a beautiful daughter Kleis, her ambivalent sexuality and the strength of her passion inspired by the legendary figure of Phaon, the ferryman on the island of Lesbos. What we know for certain is that Sappho belonged to a long-dominant aristocracy of Mytilene in the eastern Aegean world, struggling with internecine disputes within their class. Her family faced both the threat from the emerging lower classes and from "tyrants" disputing the aristocracy's hegemony in the 7th century BC. This social framework seems to have spurred Sappho to create her own milieu of confident women challenging the dominant values of a culture mainly controlled by male attitudes.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the personal entourage that Sappho assembled in the society of Lesbos, she was not immune to the serious effects of political struggle and was finally forced into exile in Sicily for some time between 604–594.<sup>3</sup> At

that time Stesichorus, a contemporary of Sappho's living in Himaera, was famous for mythological narrative poetry in lyric meters. Although Sappho may have been aware of his poetry and reflected his influence, she did not achieve fame in antiquity on the grounds of using mythological narratives in her poetry. Nevertheless, ancient sources mention her dealing with a substantial amount of mythical subject matter. Of this, only a little of her poetry dealing with a number of myths has survived and it is either fragmentary or only mentioned in passing in the remnants from ancient scholiasts.

Meanwhile, a very impressive story came to light with the discovery of a fragment with a mythological subject which seemed to refer to the myth of Eos and Tithonus. In 1922 a very badly damaged poem was found in an Oxyrhynchus Papyrus of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. This fragment had only line-endings, where the left-hand margin was missing. In 2004 a new text was recovered from Egyptian mummy cartonnage in the University of Köln, which included parts of three Sapphic poems. The second fragment was an almost complete form of the poem 58 already known from the Oxyrhynchus papyrus of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>4</sup> The two texts have been combined with the effect of obtaining an almost complete poem of Sappho concluding with a myth about the love affair between the goddess Eos (Dawn) and the mortal Tithonus.

The new find from the Archives of the University of Köln seems to offer a new perspective for viewing a compilation of three putative poems in the old poem 58. At the same time the new poem 58 adds new elements to existing knowledge about Sappho's use of myth in her poetry. The new poem of Eos and Tithonus, when combined with the references by the scholiast to the lost poems of Selene and Endymion (fr.199) provide proof that Sappho was concerned with elaborating myths involving a number of deities and their relationships with legendary figures such as Eos and Tithonus, as well as Selene and Endymion, Aphrodite and Adonis or Aphrodite and Phaon (fr. 211a–c V).<sup>5</sup> However, the predominance of female mythical figures like Eos, Aphrodite and Selene in extant and lost Sapphic poems, evokes a poetic intention set on conjuring up a constellation of bright deities conveying allegorical meanings about the complex system of emotions and perceptions of life defining Sappho's notion of poetry.<sup>6</sup>

The following analysis pursues the aim of elaborating the idea that a number of Sapphic fragments convey the image of a poetry imbued with a depiction of light and brightness sparkling from luminous mythical figures such as Dawn, Selene, Aphrodite, and also Helen, Helios, and Hesperus. My purpose is to stress the point that in Sappho's poetry the use of myth is not only economical (as Page probably suggested<sup>7</sup>) or "at a remove from the immediate" (as Kirkwood openly remarked<sup>8</sup>), but also strongly alludes to the cosmic phenomena constituting an entire allegory for Sappho's ideal of life.

## APHRODITE, HELEN, SELENE

Aphrodite's role is crucial in Sappho's poetry: Her intervention seems to invest Sappho's poetic ideal with connotations of various myths engendering a cosmic view of the deity. Aphrodite is present in poems 1 and 2 as the goddess surrounded with luxury and bright colors. In poem 1 Sappho calls for Aphrodite's assistance<sup>9</sup> and she implores the goddess to descend to earth and intervene to bring back to her the girl who fled away. It has been said that this poem primarily reflects the relationship between Sappho and Aphrodite, the goddess closest to her passion for love. Beyond that, in this poem we may notice an abundance of epithets like the elaborate-throned and guile-weaving Aphrodite, the fair and swift sparrows, the frenzied soul of Sappho and also the vivid contrast between the "golden house" of Zeus and the "black earth" into which Aphrodite descends to meet Sappho.<sup>10</sup> The power of Sappho's description is focused on the contrast of opposite effects like "black" and "golden," and it seems that her concern is to emphasize an imagery of shining objects and brilliant places connected with Aphrodite's presence, as it is also shown in poem 2. There, Aphrodite is once again summoned to come to a place that is called *ἔναυλος*, a shelter (cf. Hesiod *Theogony* 129). The holy place is described by Sappho as an earthly paradise shadowed by roses and blossoming with spring flowers, where Aphrodite herself is depicted pouring nectar into "golden cups."<sup>11</sup> As Kirkwood says, "here the fragrance, bloom, and brilliance of the grove expand and symbolize the spirit of the goddess and of the relationship between her and her worshipper," in a way that reminds us of poems 1 and 16.<sup>12</sup>

In fr.16 Helen is chosen by Sappho as a mythical example to illustrate the power of love<sup>13</sup> and she is praised by Sappho for her willingness to follow Paris. Helen resembles the Homeric heroine in the *Iliad* who followed Paris under the influence of Aphrodite,<sup>14</sup> but in Sappho's eyes she is also the "actant" in her own life, the pursuer of the thing she loves most.<sup>15</sup> Fragment 16 serves as an allusion to Sappho's passion for Anactoria with the story of Helen who deserted her husband and sailed to Troy. Helen's radiant beauty is compared to that of Sappho's beloved Anactoria. Moreover, it seems to accord with Sappho's choice of divine exemplars of femininity with the active role they take in relation to mortal men.<sup>16</sup>

Then, with the statement "I would rather see Anactoria's lovely walk and the bright sparkle of her face than the Lydians' chariots and armed infantry," the text of the poem makes a transition from the world of legend to Sappho's contemporary world. Sappho's desire for love is reflected in the lovely walk and the bright face of the companion she has lost. By comparing her choice with Helen's choice for love, she admits that the radiance of Anactoria's face

would be a more beautiful thing to see than the brilliance of a Lydian army. The radiant figure of Helen and the brilliance of Anactoria stands in contrast with the “dark earth” (γᾶν μέλαιναν) as the basis which hosts warriors, infantry and warships.<sup>17</sup>

In poem 96 a young woman who has departed to Lydia is said to look like Selene.<sup>18</sup> The beginning and end of the poem are dominated by the figure of the absent girl who was devoted to Atthis before she left for Sardis. In the middle of the poem Sappho praises the absent girl’s beauty, comparing her with the radiance of the moon. A number of interpretations have been proposed to explain the meaning of the simile. The simile of the moon and moonlit nature standing for a woman’s beauty implies “the universality of that beauty of which Atthis’ beloved is a particular, contemporary and momentary fulfillment.”<sup>19</sup> It has also been said that the nocturnal imagery with the full moon surrounding the woman carries connotations of death<sup>20</sup> in which night is allegedly an allegory for death.<sup>21</sup> A more recent view notices that “the moon per se has also been, historically, an archetypal symbol for women because of its monthly course” and as the simile culminates in a picture of dew shed on the flowers and plants, it might also allude to “a mythological connection of Moon and Dew as goddesses of fertility who combine to produce an intensely feminine image”<sup>22</sup>. But the prominence of the simile of the moon seems also to stress the idea that Atthis’ absent girl “is envisioned as a goddess, casting a sudden, magical radiance” by possessing “the same kind of power to enchant as Aphrodite in fr. 2.”<sup>23</sup>

The moon is described as rosy-fingered, the Homeric epithet used to describe the rosy-fingered dawn. As Page explains “*ροδοδάκτυλος ἠώς* is an easily intelligible expression: the rising sun shoots rosy rays, or “fingers,” far across the sky; the moon does nothing of the kind.” It seems that Sappho attempts to depict an image of the moon spreading a red color at sunset, thus producing a shade of light which “is transferred from the clear and brilliant to the dim and confused.”<sup>24</sup>

### DAWN, TITHONUS AND PHAON

In the new poem 58 Sappho addresses her young companions as “children” (*παῖδες*) while she is treating them to a vivid description of the symptoms of old age that she is experiencing. Despite her jealous determination to stay young, she confesses that there is nothing she can do to stay the ravages of time. This universal truth is illustrated with a mythical example that Sappho brings to the end of her poem. The story of Tithonus and Dawn is one that portrays the inevitability of old age and the sorrows that it brings to the lives

of mortals. Briefly, the myth runs as follows: Dawn falls in love with the mortal hero Tithonus. She asks her father Zeus to grant him immortality but forgets to ask also for eternal youth. So Tithonus grows ever older and feebler but he will never die. At the end of the poem the emphasis rests on the Dawn-goddess, who remains young and immortal, while grey age seizes Tithonus "husband of immortal wife" (l. 12 trans. by West or "though his consort cannot die" trans. by Janko).<sup>25</sup>

In this poem Sappho resembles the ageing Tithonus, but the situation here is more complex. Sappho reverses the genders in the myth, comparing herself to Tithonus. As far as the mythological figure of Dawn is concerned the comparison can be transferred to the group of young addressees who remain unspecified as to their gender as they are called *παῖδες*. Sappho, indeed, could aim at a wider public of contemporaries who were familiar with the myth and pleased to receive a song that was "as good to a female as to a male audience."<sup>26</sup>

However, the fragment 58 of the 1922 Oxyrhynchus papyrus probably concluded with two last lines of an obscure meaning.<sup>27</sup> In a more recent account of these lines the terms *ἔρως ἀελίω* are brought together in the context of the mythological example of Tithonus' fate.<sup>28</sup> There the meaning continues as follows: Sappho feels lucky to be granted something *λαμπρόν* and *καλόν* in her life, and this seems to be the *ἔρως ἀελίω*, that is "love of the sun." *Λαμπρόν* is a word used by Sappho in fr. 16 in the verse *κάμαρυγμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω*, and as it is combined with the word *ἀμάρυγμα*: the impression is strong enough to suggest a swift and bright eye.<sup>29</sup> In this case, it seems that the meaning of *λαμπρόν* is expanded to Sappho's idea about life and art.

Matters seem to come together as we think of Sappho's choices of love: In mythical terms the expression *ἔρως ἀελίω* might allude to the love of Dawn for Tithonus. Dawn longed for an eternal love that she found in the face of Tithonus. However, Tithonus turns out to be the incarnation of inexorable old age which becomes an unbearable suffering for Dawn. On the other hand, in the context of Sappho's poetry *ἔρως ἀελίω* cannot be a longing for eternal youth or eternal life. Sappho knows very well that "one cannot become young again" (v. 18, in the 1922 papyrus, v. 8 in the new poem 58). She pursues this thought, making the transition to the legend and the contrast that is provided by the example of Tithonus: "Tithonus himself could not avoid old age, though he married an immortal."<sup>30</sup> Sappho herself experiences old age in contrast to her companions who remain young as long as the circle is renewed with new pupils. It seems that Sappho's love of the sun must be regarded as an allegory for the strong desire she feels for life and presumably the lovable youth of her companions. In this sense, the light of the sun in the example of Dawn's love for Tithonus conveys an allusion to the brightness and beauty in Sappho's ideal of life.

However, in the two last lines of poem 58 of the Oxyrynchus papyrus Sappho appears to distinguish her position from that of the other people by saying that she prefers *ἀβροσύνη*, instead of contemplating the beauty of youth. This is a word that Sappho likes to use in different contexts, e.g. in fr. 2 we saw that Aphrodite, addressed as Cypris, is summoned by the poetess to come and gracefully pour (*ἄβρωτος*) nectar into the golden cups of a festive celebration. In a fragment of dialogue (fr. 140a) the delicate Adonis (*ἄβρος Ἄδωνις*) is dead and a group of women ask Aphrodite Κυθήρηα how to start the lament.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the meaning of the word *ἀβροσύνη* is combined with a sense of grace, delicacy and gentleness, as qualities that contribute to the image of Aphrodite (and Adonis) in festive opportunities. These words could also be suggestive of Sappho's esthetic concept of life, imbued with a light coming from her love of the sun, her love of *ἀβροσύνη* and her accordance with Aphrodite's luminous intervention.<sup>32</sup>

It is possible that in verses preceding the coda in poem 58 the words of Sappho perhaps alluded to Phaon as an old man, compared with Tithonos.<sup>33</sup> It appears that Phaon was an old ferryman (*πορθμεὺς*) who was transformed into a beautiful youth by Aphrodite herself. The goddess fell in love with this handsome Phaon and hid him in a head of lettuce. Adonis too, was hidden in a head of lettuce by Aphrodite (fr. 211) as, similarly, Phaethon was also hidden by Aphrodite.<sup>34</sup> In their human shape, the three mythical figures are mortals and die, despite the effort of the goddess to preserve them, but in their symbolic image they could be allegories of a cosmic view,<sup>35</sup> especially Phaethon and Phaon, whose very names allude to someone who shines and who are invested with a solar symbolism according to which their position follows the movement of the cosmic stars. So Phaethon, Phaon and Adonis shared the love of Aphrodite and the symbolism of a luminous existence seems to approximate them to solar stars. Similarly, Aphrodite is said to plunge into the sea of Leukas out of love for Phaon, like the planet Venus follows the movement of the Evening Star, Hesperos, who sets after the sunset. This cosmic image recalls Sappho's Hesperos in fr. 104, the nuptial star that gathers in the sunset what the Dawn scattered throughout the day.

Like Aphrodite, Sappho too is said to have put an end to her life by throwing herself into the sea of Leucas (cf. Campbell, test. 3 *Suda* Σ108).<sup>36</sup> Sappho's allegorical meaning of her alleged leap from the White Rock for the sake of a passion, though it stands at the periphery of the legend, provides an explanation for her poetic ideal as it is presented in fr. 1: Sappho is a huntress of love. She is also a lover of the sun. In the sunset she pursues the sun, the morning after she will be pursued by the sun. In this respect, her choice of life is one that resembles the circle of the cosmic Aphrodite. Aphrodite plunges from the White Rock out of love for Phaon, and, presumably, Sappho does the same out of love for Phaon too.<sup>37</sup>



## FINAL REMARKS

Tithonus and Phaon are all allegories of human desires for love and life that radiates light from their contact with luminous goddesses like Dawn and Aphrodite. A similar radiance is emitted by the memory of Sappho's beloved companions who resemble the brightness of physical phenomena and semi-divine figures like Helen. Sappho's life appears to spell out the same spirit of luminosity which is reflected in the "solar" dimension of her poetry. In her reception of the poetic tradition, Sappho's artistry seems to be projected into a mythological ideal of life that produces poetical stories with goddesses of light and brilliant mortals who inspire her with "strong emotions enlarged by myth or simile or description."<sup>38</sup> By a very selective process, Sappho reconstructs the most subtle elements of the traditional myths so as to invest the "concourse of emotions"<sup>39</sup> that invade her with mythical allegories aimed at producing an aesthetic poetical result straddling different worlds: epic tradition and individualized poetry, male-female ideals of life, challenge to the aristocratic classes and political upheavals, rivalry among different artistic environments such as Alcaeus, Alcman, Stesichorus or other male and female poets.

To conclude: In fr 56 referred to by Chrysippus, Sappho declares a personal thought that combines the light of the sun (*φάος ἄλλίω*) with *σοφία*: "I do not imagine that any girl who has looked on the light of the sun will have such skill at any time in the future."<sup>40</sup> After all, Sappho remains an enigmatic poetess who still challenges the reader through the open textured nature of her poetry and invites further attempts to enlighten her obscure meanings.

## NOTES

1. See Du Bois, *Sappho is Burning*, (1995), 29. Also pp.31–38 for the "aesthetics of the fragment."

2. However, this should not to be the main reason for judging her poetic inspiration. Sappho developed a subtle artistry which was not only "an outpouring of feelings" but mainly "a high degree of emotional intensity" bound "in a formal pattern." See Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody: The History of a Poetic Type*, (1974), 131. Cf. also the meaning of the "pothos" in Du Bois, *Sappho is Burning*, (1995), 29.

3. Cicero records the presence of a statue of Sappho in the market-place of Syracuse in Sicily (Cicero, *Verres*, 2.4.125–127, cf. also Du Bois, *Sappho is Burning*, (1995), 15.

4. See West, 'The New Sappho,' *ZPE*, 151, (2005): 1–9.

5. Legendary figures from the mythical tradition appear in fragments for which there is no clear knowledge of how Sappho used the myths referred to, though, as it is acknowledged by Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody: The History of a Poetic Type*,

(1974), 146–7, “this kind of composition was not Sappho’s best.” Page (*Sappho and Alcaeus*, (1975), 130) remarks that “there is no evidence whether Sappho composed these songs with the mythological narrative for presentation at cult or ceremony or as a literary exercise to illustrate in brief her own allusions and her companions’ emotions and adventures.”

6. The kind of relationships between a strong female goddess and a weaker mortal have been interpreted as a special feature in Sappho’s artistic awareness of women because when they were singing about these relationships or listened to these songs, they were “encouraged to identify themselves with the goddesses.” See Lardinois, *Making Silence Speak*, (2001), 78 and n.18.

7. See Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, (1979), 129–130.

8. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody: The History of a Poetic Type*, (1974), 149.

9. Aphrodite is called by different names: by the actual name *Ἀφροδίτα* (in fr. 1, 33, 40, 22, 134), by the name *Κύπρις* (in fr. 5, 15b, 35, 65, 2), by the name *Κυπρογένη* (22, 134) and by the name *Κυθήρη* (in the fragment of dialogue 140a). Indeed, Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus, a deity closer to the one that features in Homer’s *Iliad*, with the capacity to combine guile with sweet smiles. But also she is a playful goddess who inspires Sappho’s life with a constant hunt for love (cf. poems 1, 2).

10. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody: The History of a Poetic Type*, (1974), 111 and 261, n. 49: “In Sappho’s use of epithets for nature, there is little to suggest a strong, direct interest in the qualities of nature, such as in some of Alcaeus’ poetry.” Kirkwood continues that “Sappho is content to call the earth black, as a rule, and when she becomes more venturesome as in rosy-armed dawn [*βροδόπαυς Ἀῶς* 58], golden-sandaled dawn [*χρυσοπéδῖλλος Ἀῶς* 103//123, and rosy-fingered moon [*βροδοδάκτυλος σελάνα* 96], the force of the epithets is more in their Homeric echoes than in their descriptive power.” Du Bois, *Sappho is Burning*, (1995), 27 points out that Sappho’s poems in their fragmentary status “confront the reader with an almost *hallucinatory luminosity*” [...] “because they are signs of the breaking apart of the Homeric poetic world.”

11. Johnson, *Sappho*, (2007), 51: This pictorial description reaches “a climax of the luxuriance and color of the sanctuary’ by means of ‘a series of images that play on the senses.”

12. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody: The History of a Poetic Type*, (1974), 115–6.

13. In mythical terms Helen herself, as a semi-divine figure, is associated with a cult practiced by a group of priestesses in Sparta called Leukippides (that is, bright horses, Pausanias 3.16.1). She also functions as a dawn-goddess, almost identical with the dawn-goddess Aotis in Alcman, *PMG* 1.87. See Nagy, ‘Phaethon, Sappho’s Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas,’ (1992), 256 and n. 125 for a common cult topic of Helen Leukippides and Dawn with radiant horses as a sacred symbol.

14. See Johnson, *Sappho*, (2007), 71 and n. 14 for Helen in Book 3 of the *Iliad*.

15. Du Bois, ‘Sappho and Helen,’ in Greene, *Reading Sappho*, (1996a), 86–87.

16. Cf. Williamson, *Sappho’s Immortal Daughters*, (1995), 169.

17. Cp. the meaning of the words *κάλλιστον* and *κάλλος*. See Du Bois, ‘Sappho and Helen’ in Greene, op. cit., (1996a) 80–81. Similar descriptions of young, marriageable

women occur in Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*, cf. Lardinois, *Making Silence Speak*, (2001), p.83 and n.35

18. Lardinois, *Making Silence Speak*, (2001), 79. In a more simple personal poetry Sappho writes a poem for her daughter Cleis who looks like 'golden flowers' (fr. 132).

19. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody: The History of a Poetic Type*, (1974) 119 and 138, where he says that "the long intervening simile functions as the "myth" of this poem, a "myth" element that expands [...] beyond the purely immediate."

20. Lardinois, *Making Silence Speak*, (2001), 87, where he contends that the Lydian woman in 96 is an example for the chorus that consists of Atthis' companions, in a similar way as Helen of Troy in fr. 16 exists as a paradigm for the speaker.

21. The image of the moon and the night is taken to symbolize the passing of time, though this interpretation is not based on textual evidence. Cf. Johnson, *Sappho*, (2007), 88–89.

22. See Johnson, *Sappho*, (2007), 89 who compares this fragment with Alcman's fr. 57 where the goddess of dew Herse is the offspring of the Moon and Zeus.

23. Williamson, *Sappho's Immortal Daughters*, (1995), 152.

24. Cf. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, (1979), 90, n. 8 for the substitution of *σελάννα* for *μήνα*. Two other fragments present a night scene: It is the fr. 34 (//30) with the moon's light as an allegory for a girl who outshone her companions in beauty and could be seen as an analogy for human beauty, just as the splendid garden in poem 2 is a symbol of Aphrodite's holy radiance. The second one is fr. 94 Diehl, where Sappho uses a night scene to suggest loneliness and disappointment, possibly at the loss of a beloved person. But there are grounds for thinking that fr. 94 is closer in form to poem 96, where the simile of the moon symbolizes the beauty of an absent girl Cf. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody: The History of a Poetic Type*, (1974), 133–135. Sappho works into other fragments the power of the moon, like, among several fragments suggesting worship at night, e.g. fr. 154 with the rising of the moon and a gathering of possibly female celebrants. See Williamson, *Sappho's Immortal Daughters*, (1995), 151.

25. Before Sappho, the tale of Tithonus and Dawn appears in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* 5.218–238 whereby the goddess tries to convince her lover Anchises that he cannot achieve immortality. There the myth concludes with Aphrodite enclosing Tithonus in a chamber with shining doors (*θύρας δ' ἐπέθηκε φαεινὰς* 236) where he chatters and crawls endlessly without relief from the burdens of an immortal old age.

26. Janko, 'Sappho Revisited' *TLS*, (2005), argues that "an ambiguously gendered poem could have had a wider appeal to performers and audiences of either or both sexes."

27. The last two lines are transmitted by Athenaeus 15. 687a–b who cites that Clearchus includes two verses by Sappho in his book *Περὶ βίων*.

28. Marzullo, *Philologus* 138.2 (1994): 189–193.

29. See Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, (1979), 54, n. 18 for the word *ἀμάρνυμα* that means more than the brightness of the eye, possibly used also of a rapid movement.

30. See Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus*, (1979), 130, n. 1 for line 18, and 21 in the 58 papyrus poem.

31. See Lardinois, *Making Silence Speak*, (2001), 77 and n. 7, for a song about Adonis which seems to be part of a public celebration of Adonia, a typical women's festival. Apart from 140a, in fr. 168 remains a mournful address for Adonis: "o that Adonis."

32. Liberman, A propos du fragment 58 Lobel-Page, Voigt de Sappho,' (1995) 46, and n. 8 who says that in the poem 58 the word probably defines the esthetic and moral concept of an aristocratic nature whose life is torn under particular social and political restrictions in the Lesbos of Pittacus' time. See also Nagy, 'Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas,' (1992), 261 who says that "the last two verses, proclaiming Sappho's "lust of the sun," amount to a personal and artistic manifesto."

33. So Wilamowitz quoted by Nagy, 'Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas,' (1992), 228, who infers that there must have existed a similar theme, which has not survived, in the poetry of Sappho. Within the framework of this theme, the female speaker must have pictured herself as driven by love for a certain Phaon, or at least so it was understood by the time New Comedy flourished.

34. Phaethon's story has survived in a wealth of testimony, like the Hesiodic *Theogony* 987ff, in *Iliad* XI 735 as the one who shines like Hyperion, both ornamental epithets of Helios, and also in the tragedy *Phaethon* by Euripides. In mythical terms Phaon is confused with Phaethon as well as with Adonis. In Apollodorus we are told of a myth (3.14.3) according to which Phaethon is son of Tithonos and Hῥῥς. Just as Phaethon was son of 'Hῥῥς, perhaps Phaon was son of the Lesbian cognate Ἀῥῥς, mentioned in the same poem 58.19. Johnson (2007), 144–5 says that in the mythical narratives Adonis too is confused with Phaon both appearing in a cult ritual in Mytilene, "with Phaon most likely being part of a festival involving Aphrodite that was unique in Lesbos." Cf. n.31 above. Sappho is known to have sung of both Adonis and Phaon, which may be a reason to explain the legend of her love for Phaon the ferryman and her subsequent suicidal leap from the Leukas rock. Thus Sappho seems to construct a mythological type of songs that explore the idea of the human contact with the divine, which, besides their cultic relevance, are a testimony to the contrast between divine and human. And these themes coalesce in poem 58, in which a human contact with the divine might symbolize for Sappho not a glimpse of erotic euphoria, but also immortality.

35. Nagy, 'Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas,' (1992), 255. The three coincident myths allude to the themes of concealment and preservation as allegories of what is called by G. Nagy "a solar behavior."

36. In fr. 258 K by Menander Sappho spoke of herself as diving from the White Rock in Leukas Cape crazed with love for Phaon, but there is no extant fragment by Sappho referring to the myth of Phaon. Strabo (Campbell test. Str. 23, 10. 2.9.) disclaims Menander's version about Sappho's being the first to take the plunge at Leukas. See Nagy, 'Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas,' (1992), 230.

37. Nagy, 'Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas,' (1992), 259. "By diving from the White Rock, Sappho does what Aphrodite does in the form of Evening Star, diving after the sunken Sun in order to retrieve him, another morning, in the form of Morning Star. If we imagine her pursuing the Sun the night before, she will be pursued in turn the morning after."

38. Kirkwood, *Early Greek Monody: The History of a Poetic Type*, (1974), 148.
39. [Longinus], *On Sublimity* 10.1–3.
40. Campbell test.56, with σοφίαν probably meaning poetic skill.

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## Chapter Eight

# Erinyes as Creatures of Darkness

Mercedes Aguirre

From our earliest literary evidence it is clear that the Erinyes were connected with darkness. In Hesiod's *Theogony* they were born from Earth as a consequence of a brutal and nocturnal act of violence: the castration of Uranos.<sup>1</sup> In Aeschylus, however, they belong to the offspring not of Earth, but of Night.<sup>2</sup> In both cases their relationship with darkness and their dark character is a result of their origin.<sup>3</sup> As for their sphere of activity this was already determined by the time of Homer. In this poet they are avengers of any transgression of the natural order of things, the goddesses of punishment, who are in charge of reestablishing justice and cosmic order.<sup>4</sup> They are inhabitants of Hades, the world of the dead, which in Homer is a dark world of shadows, never reached by the light of the sun.<sup>5</sup>

In Aeschylus' *Eumenides* the Erinyes are presented in an even more insistent and graphic way as creatures of darkness, described as black<sup>6</sup> and as inhabitants of the darkness of the underworld.<sup>7</sup> The whole play is about the contrast between the darkness of the Erinyes and the light represented by Apollo,<sup>8</sup> a contrast between the worlds of the dead and the living.

The monstrous and fearful character of the Erinyes is remarked by the Pythia in the prologue of the tragedy, when she first calls them Gorgons, but then immediately corrects herself by saying that she cannot compare them with Gorgons because the Erinyes have no wings, are black and in some way they are even more terrible.<sup>9</sup>

A point worth exploring is whether this relationship with Night—as children of Night—would imply that they also operate at night, conceived as the natural phenomenon which follows (or precedes) the day. That is, can we attribute the Erinyes with the capacity of acting at night and—perhaps—of resting during daylight?



In Euripides' *Orestes* they act at a mental level, they are only real in Orestes' mind, and Orestes, who is the only one who can see them, says that their first appearance occurred at night, although there is no later reference to a nocturnal action.<sup>10</sup> In Euripides the Erinyes' mode of action could have been determined by the conception presented by Aeschylus. At the end of *Libation Bearers* they are also only a manifestation of Orestes' madness.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, in *Eumenides* their appearance becomes real and physical—they are the chorus of the tragedy—and, although we cannot determine with absolute certainty that Aeschylus presents them as operating only at night, we might consider as evidence of their nocturnal action the fact that according to *Libation Bearers* night—at least a symbolic night—had expanded over the palace from the time when Agamemnon was killed.<sup>12</sup> And also in *Libation Bearers* there are constant allusions to sleep and dreams, which could be an allusion to night as the normal time to sleep and dream. In *Eumenides* it is night for Orestes as a consequence of the matricide, the crimes have turned day into night.

The Erinyes are—as Homer calls them—*ἡεροφοίτιδες* (*Iliad* 9. 571, 19), an epithet which could refer to the fact that they walk in darkness, invisible, and this darkness could be the darkness of night, the realm of the invisible par excellence.<sup>13</sup>

However, when the Pythia goes to Apollo's temple to predict the future, she finds them around the omphalos—in the prologue of *Eumenides*—, exhausted and asleep. And if we deduce from line 67 that it was Apollo who put them to sleep, perhaps we might infer that it was the power of light—the Sun—which makes them sleep.<sup>14</sup> In their sleep they are visited by Clytaemestra's ghost. An angry Clytaemestra who rouses them complaining that they are asleep and neglecting their function.<sup>15</sup>

The Erinyes' mode of action is described in *Eumenides* with several horrific terms which allude to their character. And amongst those characteristics there is one which makes them truly vampire-like creatures: the fact that they drink their victims' blood.<sup>16</sup>

All the events in the palace of Argos, Agamemnon's death, the situation of Clytaemestra and Aegisthus, have provoked night as a dark veil which covers everything and everybody, which anticipates more terrible disasters. And during that night—real or imagined—the matricide is committed and the Erinyes appear, first at a mental and private level—in Orestes' mind—then at a real level, when everybody—including the audience in the theatre—can see them. They need to be seen because their hideousness is scaring. But nobody usually sees them because their world is darkness.

Finally, at the end of *Eumenides* darkness becomes light when the Erinyes are transformed into the Eumenides. The ancient goddesses will keep their

rights and will receive the honor of a place of privileged worship in Athens as a guarantee of prosperity for the city. It is the triumph of light.

One should also consider the representation of the Erinyes in Greek art and see whether it can give us some more details about their relationship with night and darkness.

Images of the Erinyes in vase-painting in the context of the myth of Orestes show in general a strong influence from dramatic performances.<sup>17</sup> Some of them seem to reflect the text of *Eumenides*, for instance, when the Pythia finds the Erinyes sleeping in Apollo's temple. An Apulian bell-crater attributed to the Judgement Painter and in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (360 BC) shows Orestes and the omphalos in the centre of the image, Apollo and Athena one on each side and two Erinyes sleeping at the bottom of the image.<sup>18</sup> On an Apulian kalyx-crater by the Konnakis Painter in the Hermitage Museum (360–350 BC) Orestes is also depicted inside Apollo's temple and the Pythia looks frightened by the sight of the five Erinyes sleeping. The Erinyes are here represented with black skin—like the description in *Eumenides*—and contrasting white robes.<sup>19</sup> In both scenes there is an opposition between the placid and relaxed Erinyes, with their eyes closed, and the image of Orestes or of the Pythia, which give the impression of agitated movement.

The usual iconography of the Erinyes presents them as women, sometimes winged (unlike the description in *Eumenides*), with snakes in their hair and in their hands. In their aspect as huntresses they can hold a short hunting javelin, but they can also appear holding one or two torches. This attribute is not documented in any literary text and it is not constant in vase-painting in scenes of the myth of Orestes. In fact, it does not appear until 380–360 BC in a red-figure Attic pelike in the National Museum of Perousia with the scene of two Erinyes menacing Orestes.

Some other later examples of the same scene are: an Apulian volute-crater in Berlin Museum (360–350 BC) which shows a winged Erinys holding a torch in her left hand and a sword in the right hand. She is in front of Apollo and Orestes and two women look frightened at the sight of her. Another Apulian volute-crater in the Hermitage Museum (360–350 BC) has on the right side one Erinys sitting and holding two torches, another one walks towards Orestes brandishing a torch. Behind her, a third one also with a torch, has her left arm raised. On a Campanian hydria in Berlin Museum (350–325 BC) a winged Erinys is depicted on the left, with a snake around her body, holding a torch with her right hand. The torch is down in a kind of resting position.

Torches are a source of artificial light which provide illumination in darkness. In ancient Greece, however, torches appear also in the world of ritual and can assume a religious and cultic meaning.<sup>20</sup>

The Erinyes are not the only characters depicted bearing torches in Greek vase-painting. Several gods are also represented in art as torch-bearers. In some cases the torch appear clearly connected with the underworld, such in the cases of Hekate, Demeter or Persephone.

The torch has an important role in the characterisation of Hekate.<sup>21</sup> Images on Attic and South Italian vases show her usually holding two torches, for instance on scenes of the anodos of Persephone in which she guides Persephone in crossing the border between two worlds, in an emergence from darkness into light. In the opposite direction she is represented guiding Hades' chariot in scenes of the abduction.<sup>22</sup>

Demeter and Persephone are also commonly represented holding one or two torches. In these cases there are different aspects which might be suggested by the use of the torch: on the one hand the darkness of Hades, on the other hand the rites of initiation of the Eleusinian Mysteries<sup>23</sup> and the ritual of the wedding and the funeral (Persephone's wedding with Hades and her relationship with the world of the dead). In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Demeter is described holding torches when she is looking for Persephone accompanied by Hekate<sup>24</sup>.

Lyssa, the personification of madness in Euripides *Herakles*, is also represented holding torches. Probably because of a similar function, her iconography is very similar to that of the Erinyes and she is depicted as a huntress in Greek vase-painting in several mythological contexts, holding one or two torches in a menacing attitude.<sup>25</sup> The way she operates in the tragedy when she induces madness in Herakles to make him kill his children is very similar to the manner of action of the Erinyes, although Lyssa acts in order to provoke the crime whereas the action of the Erinyes follows the crime. Lyssa is also considered a daughter of Night and she is able to produce terrible deeds. Although the literary evidence about Lyssa does not refer to night or darkness, her character as an underworld daimon and a huntress, and probably also the influence of the Erinyes' iconography, could have been reasons for adopting the torch as one of her attributes. Nevertheless, Lyssa is always represented only as a personification.

We should, of course, also consider a strong relationship attested between Dionysos and torches. Some literary sources allude to Dionysos holding torches.<sup>26</sup> He is called Nyktelios "nocturnal", referring probably to his nocturnal celebrations. In Euripides' *Bacchae* the god admits his preference for darkness and it is documented that Bacchic ceremonies took place at night.<sup>27</sup> Dionysos has also a chthonic aspect in relation to the Eleusinian Mysteries, he even appears as a *paredros* of Demeter (according to Pindar I 7, 3–5). Torches are depicted in representations of the worship of Dionysos in the second quarter of the 5th century and maenads holding torches appear dancing and in-

volved in a variety of activities, sometimes accompanying the god, including scenes of nocturnal banquets. We can interpret torches as a source of light, necessary for those nocturnal celebrations, but also as a symbol of Dionysos.

Torches appear also in different cults and ritual acts and they are documented as part of the cult of Demeter, Zeus, Artemis, Aphrodite, etc. They are used for light inside the temple and also in some ceremonies with different symbolic meanings.<sup>28</sup> For example, the use of torches in wedding processions is attested already in Homer<sup>29</sup> and images of wedding processions include the use of torches as part of the ceremony.<sup>30</sup> Wedding and funeral have parallel rituals and overlapping rites which take place at night. They both involve a night journey accompanied by people carrying torches, to light the way and, perhaps, to express also the idea of protection.

In Greek art there is no painting of night; vase-painters do not have the opportunity to use color when they attempt to depict the darkness of night, as we can see in later art—particularly in baroque painting<sup>31</sup>. Even the scenes which happen in a supposedly dark world—the Underworld—do not show any visual difference from scenes happening during the day.

The torch transforms darkness into light; it allows people to see and be seen. Paradoxically it belongs to the world of night, as shadows belong to the world of natural or artificial light. At the same time, the torch involves a relationship with cult and ritual—as we have already seen.

In Greek vase-painting the representations of the Erinyes could have adopted the torch as a characteristic element, symbolising their dark origin, the darkness in which they operate and in which they need light. The torch could have been inspired by performances of the *Oresteia* where, at the end of *Eumenides*—in the final procession accompanied by Athena—the torch represents the triumph of light and guides the Erinyes to their new subterranean place where they will have their new cult as Eumenides<sup>32</sup>.

Sometimes the Erinyes bear one or two javelin-like burning torches which, in these cases, suggest also a menacing weapon brandished against Orestes or—in some representations of the Erinyes in Hades—against other characters, as if they were brandishing a sword or a real javelin. In such cases the fire of the torch makes their action more frightening.<sup>33</sup> According to Aellen<sup>34</sup> we should distinguish the image of the individual and isolated Fury from the plural Erinyes in Orestes' myth. The Fury appears as a winged huntress brandishing flaming torches in some scenes of the Underworld and in some other mythological scenes in which she is not involved in literary evidence. The artists have probably developed an iconographical invention related to revenge and madness. In these scenes the Fury becomes an Underworld daimon and can be mistaken for Lyssa—who, at the same time, could have adopted the iconographical model of a Fury—when the artists do not identify her by

an inscribed name. Particularly in South Italian painting the menacing torch appears more insistently as a weapon in the hands of a Fury, used in the same way as a javelin.

Erinyes, Gorgons, Keres, Harpies, they are all monstrous and sinister creatures in Greek mythology, related to the underworld in different ways. But only in the case of the Erinyes can we deduce a strong relationship with night, not only as their origin, but also as their sphere of activity. They alone live in darkness; they alone embody the terrible and frightening darkness of night.

## NOTES

1. Hesiod, *Theogony* 183–85. They are the avengers of Ouranos in 472.
2. They invoke their mother Night in *Eumenides* 322, 821–22, 877.
3. As Earth is usually referred to as dark Earth (for instance *Iliad* 2.699) both accounts of their origin stress their darkness (See E. Irwin, *Color Terms in Greek Poetry* (Toronto, 1974)). In Pausanias (8.34.3) we find a reference that the Erinyes when they were about to make Orestes mad, appeared dark to him, and again they seemed to him to be white ‘...and he sacrificed to the white goddesses’. But according to Irwin, this is probably a later refinement that made the Eumenides dark when they were hostile and white when they were kindly disposed.
4. As goddesses of vengeance for instance in *Iliad* 9.571, 21.412. As the goddesses who punish those swearing falsely in *Iliad* 19.259 and in general about their nature and function in *Odyssey* 2.135.
5. *Odyssey* 11.15–19: ‘The bright Sun cannot look down on them with his rays. Dreadful Night spreads her mantle over the unhappy people’.
6. *Eumenides* 51–54: ‘... and they are black, utterly revolting (???) in their manner...’
7. *Eumenides* 72: ‘Their realm is the darkness of the underworld’.
8. For A. H. Sommerstein, ed., *Aeschylus Eumenides* (Cambridge, 1989: 278–279), even when Orestes goes to Delphi, home of the fire-light that is called imperishable, he is pursued by the Erinyes, the powers of darkness. But finally the sun appears in l. 906.
9. *Eumenides* 48–63.
10. *Orestes* 401: ‘When began the madness? What the day?’; 404: ‘In that night-watch for gathering of the bones’.
11. *Libation Bearers* 1061–62. Several scholars have discussed the relationship between the conception of the Erinyes in *Libation Bearers* and in *Eumenides*, the passage from fantasy to reality, from the product of Orestes’ state of mind to a visible and real presence on stage (See A.L. Brown, “The Erinyes in the Oresteia: Real life, the Supernatural and the Stage”, *JHS* 103 (1983): 13–34).
12. For example, *Libation Bearers* 52–53: ‘Blackness covers the house through the death of his master...’ 285 ff.: ‘Those below have a weapon from the dark, from men killed within their family and supplicating vengeance: it is madness and empty terror

in the night.’; 810: ‘...And he may see freedom’s brilliant light with welcoming eyes after the veil of darkness!’.

13. For B. Hainsworth (*The Iliad: A Commentary*, Cambridge 1993): 137–8) that walking in darkness may imply ‘coming unseen’ although the Erinyes normally terrify their victims by their horrendous appearance. However, the Erinys who walks in darkness enhances her menace by the obscurity of the epithet. It is supposed that a mysterious appearance in darkness can also be frightening.

14. For Sommerstein (*Aeschylus Eumenides*, 95) Apollo’s words in l.67: ‘I have promised not to be gentle to your enemies in future and as you see I am not being gentle with them now’ would imply that it is him who has brought sleep upon the Erinyes to facilitate Orestes’ escape.

15. *Eumenides* 94 ff.

16. *Eumenides* 264–266. In *Agamemnon* (1188 ff.) the Erinyes are described by Cassandra as having drunk human blood, but it is the blood of the murdered, not that of their own victims. However, in *Eumenides* (264–266) it seems that they allude to their victim’s blood when they say that blood is their food and this makes them even more terrible and frightening. For Brown (*The Erinyes in the Oresteia*, 14, 26) this idea could be an invention by Aeschylus based on the description of the Keres in Hesiod’s *Shield* (249–52) and the same time an intention to evoke other vampire-like creatures (such as Lamia) and to re-awake childish terrors in the audience.

17. For the iconography of the Erinyes see for example: H. Sarian, ‘Erinys’ in *LIMC* III,1, 825–843; Junge, M. *Untersuchungen zur Ikonographie der Erinys in der Griechischen Kunst* (1983); Prag, A.J.N.W. *The Oresteia. Iconographic and Narrative Tradition* (London, 1985); H. Sarian, ‘Refléxions sur l’iconographie des Erinyes dans le milieu grecque, italique, et étrusque’, in *Iconographie classique et identités regionales*, *BCH* 14 (1986) : 25–35; D. Knoepfler, *Les imagiers de l’Orestie* (Neuchâtel, 1993).

18. This scene seems to have been popular among South Italian vase-painters, probably because of the big impact of that particular moment in performances of the *Oresteia*. A study on this image in Vermeule, E.T. ‘More Sleeping Furies’, in *Studies in Classical Art and Archaeology. A tribute to Peter Heinrich von Blanckenhagen* (1976): 185–188.

19. For this image see Trendall A.D. and Webster, T.B.L. *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London, 1971), 1.10 (46).

20. For light and fire in ancient Greece see for instance W. D. Furley, *Studies in the Use of Fire in Ancient Greek Religion* (New York, 1981); E. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods. The Role of Light in Archaic and Classical Greek Cult* (London, 2000).

21. Several literary references allude to her as the goddess who carries torches. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (52) she accompanies Demeter in her search for Persephone holding a source of light (probably a torch): ‘Hekate met her with a light in her hand...’. Apollonios (*Argonautica* III, 1214–1216) says of her: ‘around her head was a garland of terrible snakes entwined with oak-branches, and her torches flashed out a blinding brightness...’. Hekate is called *Phosphoros* ‘torch-bearing’ and also *Nyktipolos*, ‘who walks at night’ and chthonia ‘who lives in the underworld’, all epithets alluding to her relationship with darkness.



22. For some representations of Hekate with torches and her connections with the Erinyes see Aellen, D. *À la recherche de l'ordre cosmique: forme et fonction des personnifications dans la céramique italote* (Kilberch/Zürich, 1994): 58–61. For iconography of Hekate with torches see Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 83–84.
23. Iconographical representations related to the Eleusinian Mysteries and also several literary references (for example Aristophanes, *Frogs* 313–4 or Sophocles, *Oedipous at Colonus* 1048–1052) document the torch as a distinctive element in the ritual of Eleusis. See for instance Bérard, C. 'La lumière et le Faisceau: images du rituel éleusinien', in *Recherches et documents du centre Thomas More* 48 (1985): 17–34; Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 67–71; Parker, R. *Polytheism and Society in Athens* (Oxford, 2005).
24. See Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 67–71.
25. For the iconography of Lyssa see Kossatz-Deissmann, A. "Lyssa", in *LIMC* 322–329. D. Aellen (*À la recherche de l'ordre cosmique*, 24, ff.) considers Lyssa in South Italian vase-painting as a name for a Fury, an infernal demon.
26. For instance Euripides, *Ion* 550 or Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 210.
27. Euripides, *Bacchae* 485.
28. For the use of light of torches and lamps in the worship of the gods see Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 136–161; Palaiochrassa, L. 'Beleuchtungsgeräte', in *ThesCRA V* (Los Angeles, J.P. Getty Museum, 2005): 363–76.
29. *Iliad* 18.490–6.
30. See Oakley J.H. and R. H. Sinos, R.H. *The Wedding in Ancient Athens* (Wisconsin & London, 1993); Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 54–59.
31. For the representation of night and darkness in art see Saint Girons, B. *Les marges de la nuit* (Paris, 2006).
32. *Eumenides*, 1022–1023.
33. The torch used as a weapon appears also in some images of Artemis represented as a huntress, for instance on an Attic pelike by the Herakles painter in the British Museum (c.370 BC) in which Artemis is killing a deer using a torch as a weapon, possibly using it because of the destructive power of fire and also the frightening aspect of a bright light. At the same time the idea of nocturnal hunting could be considered. If we think that Artemis is a goddess who shares some traits with Hekate—as nocturnal goddesses—and who is associated with Selene, we can deduce her nocturnal activities, which could be highlighted by the use of a torch. One or two torches are also used by Artemis as weapons to fight against the Giants in scenes of the Gigantomachy. See Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 102–103.
34. See Aellen, *À la recherche de l'ordre cosmique*, 24.

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## Chapter Nine

# Journey into Light and Honors in Darkness in Hesiod and Aeschylus<sup>1</sup>

Sebastian Anderson

The object of this chapter is to make two points. The first is to demonstrate that there is a significant parallel between Aeschylus and Hesiod. In both authors we find narratives concerned with journeys of creatures of darkness—the Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*; Styx and the Hundred-Handers in Hesiod's *Theogony*—who travel from darkness into light, and back into darkness again. The second point, closely related to the first, is that in both narratives Zeus is shown as a superb and measured ruler, dispensing justice to the primeval deities of darkness. Creatures belonging to darkness mingle in the world of men and gods in the light but have to return whence they came. Such intermingling requires a restoration of balance, which comes at the hands of Zeus and his agents.

Let us begin with the Erinyes in Aeschylus. Unquestionably, they are creatures of darkness since according to Aeschylus they are daughters of Night and live in Tartarus.<sup>2</sup> Hesiod gives a different account of their birth, saying that they are born from the blood of the castration of Ouranos and Earth (*Th.* 183–85).<sup>3</sup> The first physical descriptions of the Erinyes in the *Oresteia* are in *Libation Bearers*: Orestes likens them to Gorgons; they are packed with snakes (*Ch.* 1048–50),<sup>4</sup> and they drip a stream from their eyes (*Ch.* 1058). The priestess of Apollo is the first to see them in *Eumenides*. In her agitation, she keeps changing her description—they are women; not women, but Gorgons; but not like the Gorgons in paintings (*Eum.* 46 ff). They defy description and are clearly not of man's world: they are 'black and entirely disgusting' (μέλαιναι δ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν βδελύκτροποι, *Eum.* 52), and they snore and drip hateful tears from their eyes, and their attire is not fit to bear before the statues of gods or enter into the houses of men.<sup>5</sup> As further evidence of their other-

worldliness, the priestess has not seen the tribe this group is from, nor the land which can boast of rearing them without harm (*Eum.* 57–59). During the trial of Orestes Apollo addresses them: ‘oh all-hateful monsters, abhorrent to the gods’ (ὦ παντομισῇ κνώδαλα, στύγη θεῶν, *Eum.* 644). In appearance, they are hateful to men and gods alike. As daughters of Night, they are clearly suited to darkness; they are not to roam the area of man’s ken. This description constitutes the first stage in the narrative: the Erinyes are in darkness (see table).

In stage two, they leave the darkness and their mother, Night, and enter into the realm where light shines on gods and men. Once in the light, there is conflict, which involves the clash of the Erinyes, on the one hand, and Apollo and Orestes, on the other, culminating in Orestes’ trial: creatures of darkness against the god of light. The third stage, appeasement, involves the conferment of honors upon the Erinyes.<sup>6</sup> The second and third stages will be explored in more detail below.

The fourth and final stage of the Erinyes’ journey is the return into the darkness, in a new state of honor. Athena instructs the Chorus to follow the sacred light (φῶς ἱερὸν, *Eum.* 1005) of the escorting Athenians, saying ‘go, and, impelled by these sacred sacrifices down into earth, restrain destruction, separately’ (ἴτε καὶ σφαγίων/ τῶνδ’ ὑπὸ σεμνῶν κατὰ γῆς σύμεναι/ τὸ μὲν ἀτηρὸν χωρὶς κατέχειν, *Eum.* 1006–8)<sup>7</sup>. A few lines later, the newly honored Erinyes are described as ‘below the primal depths of Earth’ (γᾶς ὑπὸ κεύθεσιν ὠγγύοισιν, *Eum.* 1036). The Erinyes complete their journey with light-bearing attendants, surely a symbol of their newly earned honors at Athens. But the most telling feature of their new home is that it is below earth, away from the light of the sun, yet the darkness into which they return is a place of honor and joy. The four stages of the Erinyes’ journey are summarized in the table below.

We now turn to the nature of the conflict between the Erinyes and the inhabitants of the world of light (stage two, table). The most important point is this: nowhere is it stated in the *Oresteia* that the Erinyes clash with Zeus. Their opponents are Orestes and Apollo in the first place, Athena and the people of Athens in the second, but not Zeus as Hugh Lloyd-Jones and others have assumed.<sup>8</sup> For example, we see in *Libation Bearers* the Chorus calling on Zeus to send punishment from below—κάτωθεν (*Ch.* 382)—and Electra calling on Zeus and Earth and the honored ones of earth—τιμαὶ χθονίων (*Ch.* 394 ff). Finally, the Chorus of female slaves invoke Erinyes (*Ch.* 400 ff). There can be only one conclusion: the Erinyes, and other forces from below, are very much in concert with Zeus.<sup>9</sup>

Nor is it possible to detect an opposition between Zeus and the Erinyes in *Eumenides*. Apollo and the Chorus clash, but it is not evident that everything Apollo says is endorsed by Zeus. In particular, Apollo argues that there is no

inconsistency between Zeus preferring man's rights to those of a woman and Zeus' fettering of his own father, Kronos (*Eum.* 645–48). But Apollo, in his capacity as advocate for Orestes, is presenting an incomplete picture of Zeus' position. He invokes Zeus, father of men and gods, as though he had authorized the murder of Clytemnestra (*Eum.* 614–21). But the Chorus challenges this claim: 'Zeus, as you say, granted this oracle, to tell to Orestes that, in exacting payment for the murder of his father, to respect the honors of his mother not at all?' (Ζεύς, ὡς λέγεις σύ, τόνδε χρησμὸν ὥπασε,/ φράζειν Ὀρέστη τῷδε, τὸν πατρός φόνον/ πράξαντα μητρὸς μηδαμοῦ τιμὰς νέμειν; *Eum.* 622–4). Nowhere in this interrogation is there anything from which one might infer that the Chorus is questioning the authority of Zeus himself. Rather, the Chorus implicitly affirms the order and rule of Zeus by querying Apollo about Zeus' true involvement in the murder of Clytemnestra. The Chorus does not accuse Zeus of having a role in their troubles.<sup>10</sup> Apollo's response speaks volumes: he does not answer the Erinyes' question about Zeus granting the oracle, but changes the subject (*Eum.* 625 ff).

Apollo, though an Olympian, must not be conflated with Zeus himself. Apollo argues that Zeus trumps the oath of the jurors.<sup>11</sup> Christopher Collard in his translation explains that the oath meant in this passage is that taken by the jurors: "Apollo asks the jurors to set greater value on the power of Zeus and its implicit conformity with justice than on anything sworn."<sup>12</sup> But Apollo's testimony about Zeus is at odds with the prominence of the oath of the gods (sworn by the waters of Styx) in Hesiod, as discussed below. Moreover, Apollo contradicts himself with his closing statement.<sup>13</sup> In sum, the notion, propounded by Lloyd-Jones, that the Justice of Zeus is opposed to the honor of the Erinyes is not valid.<sup>14</sup>

In stage three, the Erinyes are appeased with honors. Of particular note, the Erinyes will receive a new, hidden home in Attica, with shining thrones and hearths (*Eum.* 804–7), and they will be granted the first fruits of the Athenians (*Eum.* 833–35). What is most important is the process of conferring honors. Athena does not manage to get the Chorus to set aside their anger and accept honors through threats of violence as Lloyd-Jones argues.<sup>15</sup> Rather, Athena uses Persuasion: 'you have not been conquered' (οὐ γὰρ νενίκησθ', *Eum.* 795). Once the Erinyes have relented, Athena thanks Persuasion for guiding her tongue (*Eum.* 970–1). Though Zeus does not appear, it is clear that Athena is working in his place to bring balance after the trial, for she thanks him too: 'but Zeus of the assembly was strong' (ἀλλ' ἐκράτησε Ζεὺς ἀγοραῖος, *Eum.* 973). The last lines of the play make Zeus' role clear: 'all-seeing Zeus and Moira came down to together to help' (Ζεὺς <ὁ> πανόπτα/ οὕτω Μοῖρά τε συγκατέβη, *Eum.* 1045–6).<sup>16</sup> The Erinyes have been neutralized as a threat to Athens; they have returned to their proper realm, darkness,

and the Erinyes themselves are pleased with the outcome since they have new honors. Balance and order are restored.<sup>17</sup>

Now let us consider the journey of Styx in the *Theogony*. Unfortunately, Hesiod does not make very clear the state or location of Styx before her journey to Zeus. Hesiod does, however, list her as the eldest, or preeminent, daughter of Oceanus and Tethys (*Th.* 361, 776–77). Moreover, Hesiod describes Styx as ‘a branch of Oceanus, she flows from the sacred river far below the broad-pathed earth through black night’ (πολλὸν δὲ ὑπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης/ ἐξ ἱεροῦ ποταμοῖο ῥέει διὰ νύκτα μέλαιναν,/ Ὀκεανοῖο κέρας, *Th.* 787–89).<sup>18</sup> Since she is here specified as a branch of Oceanus, she has likely held this course since her birth from Oceanus. In stage one (see table), Styx is in darkness. When Zeus calls to the gods for help in his fight against the Titans, ‘imperishable Styx then first came to Olympus’ (ἦλθε δ’ ἄρα πρώτη Στὺξ ἄφθιτος Οὐλυμπόνδε, *Th.* 397). Styx has entered into the light; this is stage two. Also, the children of Styx, Zelos, Nike, Kratos, and Bia, are involved in this stage: they join in conflict. The successful outcome of the conflict results in honors being bestowed by Zeus upon Styx’s children: they do not live apart from Zeus, but follow his path (*Th.* 386–88). But leaving aside the honor that attaches to these children who are ever at Zeus’ side, they themselves are certainly important for Zeus in his battle with the Titans.<sup>19</sup>

In stage three, Styx herself is honored by Zeus: ‘And Zeus honored her, and gave her inordinate (!) gifts. For he made her be the great oath of the gods’ (τὴν δὲ Ζεὺς τίμησε, περισσὰ δὲ δῶρα δέδωκεν./ αὐτὴν μὲν γὰρ ἔθηκε θεῶν μέγαν ἔμμεναι ὄρκον *Th.* 399–400). This gift is most emblematic of Zeus’ coming reign.<sup>20</sup> When Zeus calls for the gods to come to Olympus, he promises to maintain the honors already granted under Kronos (*Th.* 393–94), and to grant new ones to those who help him and who until then have not been honored by Kronos (*Th.* 395–96).<sup>21</sup> His promise to honor the gods is completely fulfilled when he gives such a great honor to the first god to heed his call. Styx now acquires the privilege of being the validation for oaths of the gods—she alone guarantees great punishment for any god who breaks his oath (*Th.* 775–806).<sup>22</sup> In this role, she becomes closely allied to Zeus himself, who bears the epithet *horkios* when appealed to by men who take an oath. According to Walter Burkert, Zeus *horkios* originally denoted the shining sky, which serves as an excellent witness of men’s oaths because it sees all.<sup>23</sup> In the *Theogony*, Zeus is twice called ‘broad-seeing’ (εὐρύοπα, 514, 884). Styx, who validates the oath of the gods, is precisely the opposite. She is in the netherworld, in darkness, certainly not ‘broad-seeing.’ Styx complements Zeus by acting as his counterpart and validating the oath of the gods in the infernal darkness, instead of in the light.<sup>24</sup>

In stage four Styx flows back through night, returning below the earth (*Th.* 787–89, above). From this description it was also possible to infer the beginning of the journey. Like the Erinyes, Styx returns to the darkness with new honors. No ignominy is attached to her for flowing under the earth and through the night. If she is still described as ‘a great misery to the gods’ (μέγα πῆμα θεοῖσιν, *Th.* 792), this appellation is due entirely to the new role Zeus gave her as the validation of the oath of the gods.<sup>25</sup>

Friedrich Solmsen is correct to observe that in the *Theogony* it is not divine birth that wins τιμή. Instead, it is the intrinsic worth of the god.<sup>26</sup> For this reason, the children of Styx are given unique honor by Zeus as his constant companions (*Th.* 386–88). But this method of giving honor to those who are of some special worth is not new. Kronos too granted honors to the gods,<sup>27</sup> including Hecate, who is singled out by Hesiod for mention in this regard (*Th.* 423–52).<sup>28</sup> But this is only to say that one of the defining characteristics of any (divine) ruler is the granting of honors. Zeus merely followed the model already laid down by Kronos and improved upon it to win and maintain his own rule.

Finally, let us analyze the narrative of the Hundred-Handers (*Hekatoncheires*): Briareos, Kottos, and Gyges. Stage one (see table), they live in darkness inside earth (*Th.* 157, 620–22), perhaps in Tartarus.<sup>29</sup> Stage two, Zeus, along with the other children of Kronos, releases the Hundred-Handers and brings them into the light (*Th.* 626). He seeks to persuade them to join his fight against Kronos and the Titans. He reminds them of their release from captivity in darkness: ‘you came back into the light from under cruel bondage, from under mist-shrouded darkness, through our plans’ (ἐς φάος ἄψ ἀφίκεσθε δυσηλεγέος ὑπὸ δεσμοῦ/ ἡμετέρας διὰ βουλᾶς ὑπὸ ζόφου ἡερόντος, *Th.* 652–53). The Hundred-Handers heed this appeal for their aid, and the tide of the battle is turned (*Th.* 661–86).<sup>30</sup>

Stage three, new honors are bestowed upon the Hundred-Handers. These honors are detailed twice during Hesiod’s digression on the netherworld: ‘There Gyges and Kottos and Briareos, great-hearted, dwell, the trusty guards of aegis-bearing Zeus’ (ἐνθα Γύγης Κόττος τ’ ἡδὲ βριάρεως μεγάθυμος/ ναίουσιν, φύλακες πιστοὶ Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο, *Th.* 734–35); and again, later, ‘but the famous allies of loud-thundering Zeus, Kottos and Gyges, inhabit their houses upon the foundations of Ocean’ (αὐτὰρ ἐρισμαράγοιο Διὸς κλειτοὶ ἐπικούρου/ δώματα ναιετάουσιν ἐπ’ Ὠκεανοῖο θεμέθοις, Κόττος τ’ ἡδὲ Γύγης, *Th.* 815–17).<sup>31</sup> Martin West argues against the idea that any honors were bestowed: “it is usually assumed that the Hundred-Handers are acting as prison guards...the poet does not say this—πιστοὶ φύλακες Διὸς probably refers to their help in the battle.” Further, he maintains: “we can hardly suppose, after 655–63, that they went home willingly; Zeus must have banished them,

though the poet avoids saying so.”<sup>32</sup> West avoids the obvious meaning of φύλακες in light of the alternative description, ἐπίκουροι, but the terms can hardly be taken as synonymous. The earlier word must refer (as is usually assumed) to the Hundred-Handers’ latest role—prison guards near Tartarus—and the ‘allies’ refers primarily to their help in the Titanomachy, but certainly too to their continued friendly relations with Zeus.

In stage four, the Hundred-Handers return to darkness (*Th.* 734–35, 815–17). What West cannot imagine is that these creatures would willingly return to the dark, dank unpleasantness of the netherworld, but this is precisely what has happened. Zeus gives them a dignified role as guards. West is correct to observe that “they live [in the netherworld] under Zeus as before under Kronos and Uranos; they must, for there is no place for them on Olympus,”<sup>33</sup> but he underestimates the power of τιμή which Zeus bestows. The Hundred-Handers do not return to the darkness in bondage, as before, but with the great honor of being Zeus’ trusty guardsmen. Most handily Zeus removes these mighty creatures from Olympus—they could, after all, be a threat to his power at some point—but he does it by granting honors and, we must infer, by persuasion. The three journeys detailed above are summarized in the table below.

## CONCLUSIONS

Lloyd-Jones, commenting on the famous ‘Zeus, whoever he is’ sentence in the *Agamemnon*, comes to the conclusion that “what follows shows little trace of an advanced conception; rather it recalls the crudest myths of Hesiodic cosmogony.”<sup>34</sup> Lloyd-Jones is correct that what follows is Hesiodic. It is the description of Zeus’ rise to rule after he has conquered his own father Kronos (*Ag.* 167 ff). Yet Lloyd-Jones fails to appreciate the meaning of Hesiod’s presentation of Zeus and consequently also misses the significance of the Hesiodic cosmogony in Aeschylus.

**Table 9.1**

Stages	Erinyes	Styx and children	Hundred-Handers
1. Darkness	<i>Eum.</i> 71–72, 321–22	<i>Th.</i> 776–77, 787–79	<i>Th.</i> 157, 620–22
2. Journey to light and conflict	<i>Ch.</i> 1048–50; trial of Orestes	<i>Th.</i> 397; Titanomachy	<i>Th.</i> 626, 652–53; 661–86
3. Honors bestowed	<i>Eum.</i> 804–7, 833–35	<i>Th.</i> 386–88, 399–400, 775–806	<i>Th.</i> 734–35, 815–19
4. Return to darkness	<i>Eum.</i> 1006–8, 1036	<i>Th.</i> 787–89	<i>Th.</i> 734–35, 815–17



Hesiod's Zeus is the god who achieves harmony in the universe by conferring honors, even on creatures of the netherworld. Sometimes the honorees are gods of Zeus' generation, but at other times they are primal creatures of darkness: Styx, the Hundred-Handers. In *Eumenides*, the Erinyes are given new honors and balance is restored. As Richard Seaford puts it, "the gods of the upper and lower world are emphatically differentiated so as to enable the incorporation of the latter into a new order controlled by the former."<sup>35</sup> This paper has shown that the process by which primeval deities receive honors under Zeus involves a journey from primal darkness into light and a conflict with those who dwell in the light, but—and this is important—the conflict is not with Zeus. In fact, the conflict is resolved by Zeus when he confers honors upon the dishonored, primal creatures with the result that they return to darkness where they belong. Whereas sending the Titans to dark Tartarus is punishment (*Th.* 717–18, 729–30, 813–14), and Zeus threatens to also send unruly Olympians to Tartarus (*Il.* 8.13), darkness can be honorable for primal deities such as the Erinyes or Styx. Thus, we see in Hesiod and in Aeschylus a sophisticated conception of cosmic order, one in which Zeus recognizes, accommodates, and incorporates creatures of darkness that would otherwise clash with those in the light. Darkness and the primal creatures who inhabit it are not rejected by Zeus; rather, they are given a proper role in the cosmos.

## NOTES

1. This paper had its genesis in a seminar paper written at UIC under the direction of Nanno Marinatos. I thank Professors Marinatos, Kershaw, and Ramsey for reading and commenting on earlier drafts. I alone, and not they, am responsible for any errors that remain.

2. At *Eum.* 321–22, the Chorus prays to their mother, Night. At *Eum.* 71–72, Apollo describes the Erinyes as 'inhabiting an evil darkness and Tartarus under the earth' (κακὸν/ σκότον νέμονται Τάρταρόν θ' ὑπὸ χθονός). All translations are my own.

3. F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca 1949), 180, explains that Hesiod's account causes the Erinyes to be born with the first act that requires their intervention. This intervention is recalled at *Theogony* 468 f., where Rhea seeks advice from her parents, Earth and Ouranos, so that the Erinyes of Kronos' father may be paid. See Christopoulos in this volume for analysis of the differing emphasis on the role of darkness in Aristophanes' and Hesiod's cosmogonies. Aeschylus is perhaps following a model of cosmogonic succession more akin to that of Aristophanes, with an emphasis on the contrast between light and darkness. The Erinyes, as daughters of Night, would be quite primal creatures in such a scheme. As will be shown, however, Aeschylus is indebted to Hesiod (directly or indirectly) for the narrative pattern of the journey from darkness to light and the conferment of honors.

4. For a discussion of the first sighting of the Erinyes in the *Oresteia*, see A. L. Brown, "The Erinyes in the *Oresteia*: Real Life, the Supernatural, and the Stage," *JHS* 103 (1983): 13–34.

5. *Eum.* 52–56. Cf. *Il.* 9.571, 19.87, where the Erinyes are described as walking in darkness (ἡεροφοῖτις).

6. The honors to be held by the Chorus are detailed at length: they will have a hidden abode with shining thrones next to their hearths (*Eum.* 804–7); they will share the land with Athena and have offerings of first fruits (*Eum.* 833–35); they will play a role as sources of prosperity for the Athenian people (*Eum.* 903–15, 921–26, 938–48, 956–67, 976–87).

7. Cf. *Eum.* 1041 (Σεμναί). On the equation of the Eumenides with the Semnai Theai cult at Athens (perhaps an Aeschylean innovation), see A. L. Brown, "Eumenides in Greek Tragedy," *CQ* 34.2 (1984): 260–81.

8. "The issue lies between the law of Zeus, who as the champion of Dike demands through his προφήτης Apollo that the doer shall suffer, and the ancient τιμή of the Erinyes, who pursue the slayers of their own kin" (H. Lloyd-Jones, "Zeus in Aeschylus," *JHS* 76 (1956): 64). Cf. J. D. Denniston and D. Page, eds, *Aeschylus Agamemnon* (Oxford 1957), xiv f, who argue that for Aeschylus "the ministers of the divine will are a diverse and jealous brood, and Zeus appears indifferent to the conflict of their claims. The crime of Orestes was enjoined by Apollo at the command of Zeus; who nevertheless authorized the Furies to exact retribution."

9. H. H. Bacon, "The Furies Homecoming," *Classical Philology* 96.1 (2001): 50, argues still more strongly: "The Furies are neither anarchic, primitive spirits of violence nor servants of Zeus, but Zeus' unseen collaborators as guardians and enforcers of those laws that are an essential part of the cosmic order that the father of gods and men administers."

10. During the trial the Erinyes blame Apollo for the loss of their prerogatives (*Eum.* 715–16). After the verdict, they blame the younger gods, including Athena due to her tie-breaking vote against them (*Eum.* 778–79). On Athena's tie-breaking vote, see R. Seaford, "Historicising Tragic Ambivalence: the Vote of Athena" in *History, Tragedy, Theory*, ed. B. Goff (Austin 1995).

11. 'Learn how strong this justice is, and I declare that you attend to the plan of the father, for in no way does an oath exert strength more than Zeus' (τὸ μὲν δίκαιον τοῦθ' ὅσον σθένει μαθεῖν, / βουλῇ πιφαύσκω δ' ὅμμι' ἐπισπέσθαι πατρός· ὅρκος γὰρ οὔτι Ζηνὸς ἰσχύει πλέον, *Eum.* 619–21).

12. C. Collard, *Aeschylus Oresteia* (Oxford 2002), 217.

13. You heard as you heard, strangers, and in your heart respect the oath as you bear your vote-stone' (ἡκούσαθ' ὧν ἡκούσατ', ἐν δὲ καρδίᾳ / ψῆφον φέροντες ὅρκον αἰδεῖσθε, ξένοι, *Eum.* 680–1).

14. Lloyd-Jones, *Zeus in Aeschylus*, 64.

15. Lloyd-Jones, *ibid.* H. Lloyd-Jones (*The Justice of Zeus*, Berkeley 1983) mischaracterizes Athena's efforts at appeasement, calling them a "tactful mixture of threats and bribery" (92). Cf. G. M. A. Grube, "Zeus in Aeschylus," *American Journal of Philology* 91.1 (1970): 44, who argues that Athena's threats are minimal, whereas the bulk of 780–1045 is filled with Athena's persuasion.

16. On the force of συγκατέβα, see Brown, “The Erinyes.”

17. On the resolution of opposites in *Eumenides*, see R. Seaford, “Aeschylus and the Unity of Opposites,” *JHS* 123 (2003):157–59. Aeschylus resolves the conflict of the chthonian Erinyes and Olympian gods. Seaford argues that Aeschylus is perhaps following a Pythagorean model, in which opposites retain their identity (i.e., they remain opposites) but become an ordered whole.

18. For the geography and qualities of Hades, see Marinatos in this volume. Perhaps ‘night’ and ‘Hades’ are interchangeable terms. At *Theogony* 788, ‘through night’ describes both the quality of Styx’s course—darkness—and its route—through Hades.

19. Following C. J. Rowe, “Archaic Thought in Hesiod,” *JHS* 103 (1983): 131–35, one can allegorize these children, as many scholars have done, and view them as but one way Hesiod uses to describe Zeus’ rise to power. Nevertheless, Hesiod presents them as children of Styx. He connects (and explains) Styx’s honors to the rise of Zeus, neatly incorporating into the narrative of Styx’s journey to Olympus and her resulting honors those figures essential for Zeus to prevail against the Titans.

20. D. R. Blickman, “Styx and the Justice of Zeus in Hesiod’s *Theogony*,” *Phoenix* 41.4 (1987): 350, notes that an oath is the foundation of all civil society, the divine order included.

21. ‘For so Styx, imperishable daughter of Oceanus, resolved on that day, when the Olympian lightener called all the deathless gods to tall Olympus, and said that whoever of the gods would fight along with him against the Titans would not be bereaved of his privileges and that each would hold the same honor as before among the deathless gods, and he said that whoever was not honored and was without privileges at the hands of Kronos, would enter upon honor and privileges, as was just’ (ὥς γὰρ ἐβούλευσεν Στὺξ ἄφθιτος Ὠκεανίνῃ/ ἥματι τῷ, ὅτε πάντας Ὀλύμπιος ἀστεροπητῆς/ ἀθανάτους ἐκάλεσσε θεοὺς ἐς μακρὸν Ὀλύμπον,/ εἶπε δ’, ὅς ἂν μετὰ εἰο θεῶν Τιτῆσι μάχοιτο,/ μὴ τιν’ ἀπορραΐσειν γεράων, τιμὴν δὲ ἕκαστον/ ἐξέμεν, ἦν τὸ πάρος γε μετ’ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν/ τὸν δ’ ἔφαθ’, ὅστις ἄτιμος ὑπὸ Κρόνου ἦδ’ ἀγέραςτος,/ τιμῆς καὶ γεράων ἐπιβησέμεν, ἧ θέμις ἐστίν, *Th.* 389–96).

22. W. Burkert (*Greek Religion. Archaic and Classical*, transl. by J. Raffan, Cambridge Mass. 1985, 251) cites *Iliad* 15.36–8, where Hera takes an oath before Zeus by Earth and Ouranos, in addition to the waters of Styx, to demonstrate that Styx is given undue place by modern scholars as the oath of the gods. However, *Theogony* 399–400, not to mention the lengthy description of the Stygian oath and the penalty imposed on an oath-breaking god at *Theogony* 775–806, seems rather to indicate a special emphasis on Styx as the basis for the oath sworn by the gods. Moreover, in the passage cited by Burkert, at *Iliad* 15.37–38, “and the downward-flowing water of Styx, which is the greatest and most terrible oath for the blessed gods” (καὶ τὸ κατειβόμενον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ, ὃς τε μέγιστος/ ὄρκος δεινότατός τε πέλει μακάρεσσι θεοῖσι), Styx is clearly singled out as the greatest oath a god can take, especially in an oath to Zeus, as is the case in *Iliad* 15.36–38. Hera may also swear by Earth and Ouranos (15.36), but the water of Styx provides the true guarantee of fulfillment behind the oath.

23. W. Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred* (Cambridge Mass. 1996), 171–72.

24. Note too the connection between Styx’s home and sky: although she lives apart from the gods (*Th.* 777), her house is propped up with silver pillars to sky (*Th.* 779).

25. She is a misery because she bears the power to enforce oaths. The suffering that is described as punishment for an oath-breaking god is certainly not slight (*Th.* 793–806), reasonably making Styx a potential source of misery.

26. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus*, 72. Compare Homer, *Iliad* 4.57–58, where Hera beseeches Zeus, in vain, to accede to her demand for the sack of Troy. She appeals to her position as a god, and even as of the same birth as Zeus. Such an argument holds no sway with Zeus, however. The honor he affords to Hera cannot be based on her birth because she would be of equal rank with him by such a standard of measurement.

27. See Blickman, “Styx”: 348ff.

28. Hecate receives numerous honors from Kronos (*Th.* 423–52) before receiving further honor under Zeus (*Th.* 411–22). D. Boedeker, “Hecate: A Transfunctional Goddess in the *Theogony*?,” *TAPA* 113, (1983): 81, notes how Hecate’s honors involve the three spheres visible to man: earth, sky, and sea. Interestingly, however, Hecate’s usual ‘chthonic’ characteristics, known from other sources, are absent in the *Theogony* (Boedeker, *ibid.*, 83–84). Hecate does not make a journey comparable to those of Styx or the Hundred-Handers. In Hesiod she is not a creature of darkness, and so makes no journey to the light in order to acquire her additional honors under Zeus. Boedeker (*ibid.*, 90) even speculates that Zeus has more to gain than Hecate from the conferment of honors on her in that the act allows Zeus to be viewed as a magnanimous ruler. See also J. S. Clay, “The Hecate of the *Theogony*,” *GRBS* 25 (1984): 24–38.

29. M. L. West, *Hesiod Theogony: Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary*, (Oxford 1966), 338, comments: “What Hesiod tells us of the place where they were bound indicates that it was Tartarus, but he avoids saying so outright (620–22, 652–53, 658–60, 669): Tartarus is reserved for Zeus’ enemies.” The bondage of the Hundred-Handers (and other children of Earth and Ouranos) occurs at *Theogony* 157.

30. R. Mondi, “Tradition and Innovation in the Hesiodic Titanomachy,” *TAPA* 116 (1986): 30–32, argues that the Hundred-Handers are in fact essential for the success of Zeus in the Titanomachy; their physical design indicates they are no Hesiodic innovation, but that their sole function in pre-Hesiodic myth is in the Titanomachy.

31. Briareos is given a different honor in this passage; he is wed to a daughter of Poseidon (*Th.* 817–19).

32. West, *Hesiod Theogony*, 363.

33. West, *ibid.*

34. Lloyd-Jones, *Zeus in Aeschylus*, 62.

35. Seaford, “Aeschylus and the Unity of Opposites”: 161.

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## Chapter Ten

# Hephaestus in Homer's Epics<sup>1</sup>

## *God of Fire, God of Life*

Isabelle Ratinaud-Lachkar

Hephaestus is well known among the Olympian gods, even if his cult is not as developed as many others, apart from in Athens during the historical period<sup>2</sup>. In the mythology he is especially famous for his role in the creation of Pandora, whom he modelled in clay in accordance with Zeus' orders (Hesiod, *Theogony* 571–572 and *Works and Days* 60–63 and 70–71) and as the maker of Achilles' shield (*Il.* 18. 478–608), the description of which is one of the masterpieces of the epic (130 verses).

Since the book by Marie Delcourt, *Héphaïstos ou la légende du magicien*, published in 1957, almost exactly fifty years ago, many partial papers about Hephaestus have been written, one about a single passage of the literary sources<sup>3</sup>, or others focused on a single aspect of the personality of the god (his infirmity, his work as smith, his ability to make the Olympians laugh)<sup>4</sup> or a single event of his life (his birth, his training, his fight against the Scamander in the *Iliad* or his misfortune as the husband of Aphrodite in the *Odyssey*)<sup>5</sup>. Most of these studies are influenced by the school of J.- P. Vernant and M. Detienne and its publications<sup>6</sup>. In this paper my aim is to make a statement about the person of Hephaestus, to understand the place and the consistency of the 'famous lame,' between the light and darkness of the smithy in Homer's epics, and in doing so, to work with the whole poems.

First of all, and beyond dispute, even if he is of non-Greek origin, as sometimes asserted<sup>7</sup>, Hephaestus is for the Greeks an Olympian. Like the others, he is an Immortal. This divine quality has a very concrete meaning for him: twice, he was thrown out of the Olympus. The first time by his mother at birth; then he was rescued by Thetis and Eurynome<sup>8</sup>. The second time by Zeus when, he aided his mother Hera against Zeus; this time Hephaestus falls

all day but survives although ‘little life was left in me,’ as he says (ὀλίγος δ’ἔτι θυμὸς ἐνῆεν) when the Sintiens receive him<sup>9</sup>.

He has his portion and his place in the symposiums of the gods and takes the floor when he has something to say<sup>10</sup>. In the episode of the wrath of Zeus, his attitude shows that he is particularly concerned with peace among the gods, the ending of tensions and the continuity of the *dolce vita* on the Olympus<sup>11</sup>. With his mother, Hera, he does not want the problems of mortals to spoil the relationship between the Immortals<sup>12</sup>. In the episode of his misfortune with his wife Aphrodite<sup>13</sup>, he is aided by Helios and certainly the kindness of the other Olympians, except, of course, Ares and Aphrodite. It is also possible to speak about the vocabulary of light used to designate him, like the other Olympians in the Homer’s epics<sup>14</sup>. Like the others too, he has chosen his side between the Greeks and the Trojans and takes part in the war. Hephaestus is thus perfectly integrated into the society of the gods and, in most aspects, similar to them. He is even one of the rare gods in the poems to receive a cult at Troy: he has a priest among the Trojans, Dares, and intervenes in the fight to save one of his two sons, Idaeus, while the other, Phegeus, is killed by Diomedes<sup>15</sup>.

Before becoming the well known god of the forge, Hephaestus was the god of the fire. He is distinguished from the other Olympian gods by his intimate relation with his element<sup>16</sup>: sometimes, he is fire itself. Four times in the *Iliad* and once in the *Odyssey* the name of Hephaestus is used in the sense of fire<sup>17</sup>. Hephaestus is the fire of the sacrifice to Zeus<sup>18</sup>, or the fire needed to roast the meat for an aristocratic symposium<sup>19</sup> or of the funerary pyre<sup>20</sup>. He is also the fire consuming the body of Achilles during his cremation<sup>21</sup>. In these cases, Hephaestus represents the controlled fire,, characteristic of civilisation. In a certain sense, he is civilisation: roasting meat and honoring the dead are among the practices distinguishing humans from animals<sup>22</sup>. Elsewhere, Hephaestus represents the destructive power of fire. In *Il.* 17. 88–89, Hephaestus as fire is used as a comparison to characterize Hector’s ardent love of battle, which is said to be ἄσβεστος ‘that no one may quench’ exactly like the laughter he twice provokes among the gods in the epic<sup>23</sup>.

In *Il.* 21. 342–382, Hephaestus fights the Scamander<sup>24</sup>. Announced in *Il.* 20. 73–74, this fight, described at length in the *Iliad*, has gradations. First, it is crematory, burning the bodies of all the dead warriors; then it dries the plain; both actions are beneficial. Subsequently, however, Hephaestus, in the form of fire, destroys the flora and fauna on the banks of the river and burns the trees before attacking the river itself: the fish are cooked and the Scamander implores Hephaestus to stop. But Hephaestus continues and the water of the river itself boils and the Scamander is defeated. Here Hephaestus demonstrates his power; uncontrolled, fire has power to destroy all nature. Whatever



the aspect of the fire, beneficial or destructive, Hephaestus is always the god of fire. However, we have to keep in mind that, except in the case of the comparison between the war ardour of Hector and wild fire, Hephaestus appears in his negative, excessive face only in front of other gods, and not of scared humans. In that sense, Hector's ardent love of battle, characterised as ἄσβεστος, can perhaps be understood as excessive, something like *hybris*.

The epic reveals some details about the biography of the god of fire<sup>25</sup>. At birth, he is rejected by his mother, Hera, because of his infirmity (χολὸν ἐόντα)<sup>26</sup>. So he was born crippled according to the author of the *Iliad*<sup>27</sup>. Many modern authors present Hephaestus as being born without a father. This is the Hesiodic version of the birth of Hephaestus<sup>28</sup>, not the Homeric one. In the *Odyssey*, the expression Ζεῦ πάτερ<sup>29</sup> is certainly not significant in the mouth of Hephaestus, but when he is speaking about τοκῆε δόω<sup>30</sup>, there is no possible doubt. There is nothing in the *Iliad* that could refute the fact that Hephaestus is the son of both Hera and Zeus. Expelled from Olympus, Hephaestus is brought up by Thetis and Eurynome, two divinities of the sea. By them, he has learned to forge small objects, mainly jewels demanding highly skilled workmanship, like brooches (πόρπαι), spiral armbands (γναμπταὶ ἔλικες), rosettes (κάλυκες), and necklaces (ὄρμοι)<sup>31</sup>. But it is not clearly indicated in the text of the *Iliad* whether Thetis and Eurynome were his teachers in forging. During nine years, nobody, neither mortal or immortal, except for his benefactresses, knows of his existence<sup>32</sup>. The epic is silent about the return of Hephaestus to Olympus,<sup>33</sup> but this return is effective: we have seen that Hephaestus is, for the other gods, one of their own kind.

Hephaestus is presented as married, both in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*, but not to the same wife: Charis, a Grace, in the *Iliad*<sup>34</sup>, Aphrodite in the *Odyssey*. This is one of the well known contradictions between the two poems. For Hesiod, Hephaestus is married to Aglae, one of the three Charites<sup>35</sup>. Whoever Hephaestus wife is, she is always a figure of beauty, grace and femininity, a striking contrast with the crippled god. As an adult, he maintains a relation of intimate complicity with his mother Hera. In *Iliad* 1, he is the one to speak, in spite of the wrath of Zeus. In doing so, not only does he want to defuse the situation, but also to please his mother and alleviate her suffering<sup>36</sup>. He asserts his love for his mother and she accepts him, his advice and his gifts with a smile on her lips<sup>37</sup>. At the same time, her son evokes the episode when he was expelled from Olympus by Zeus because of his taking Hera's side against Zeus<sup>38</sup>. The verses which precede the fight between Hephaestus and the Scamander, in *Iliad* 21, are also full of details and words about the intimacy between Hera and her son: confronted by the danger threatening Achilles, she turns to Hephaestus for help<sup>39</sup>. When the Scamander pleads for mercy, Hephaestus halts his incendiary rampage at the behest of his mother, not out of pity for the river<sup>40</sup>. This at-

tention, this affection between mother and son is certainly one of the distinctive aspects of the Hephaestus of the Homeric epic<sup>41</sup>.

Hephaestus presents other distinctive characteristics as a god. He is lame, the one god afflicted by clearly visible deformity. This handicap contradicts the usual picture of the Olympians' physical perfection. In a way, it is incompatible with the divinity<sup>42</sup>. But there is no doubt about his deformity. The text is very clear. Hephaestus is labelled 'crook-foot' (κυλλοποδίων)<sup>43</sup>, 'lame' (χωλός)<sup>44</sup>, 'limping' (χολεύων)<sup>45</sup>. Another picture is drawn with the expression 'but beneath him his slender legs moved nimbly' (ὕπὸ δὲ κνήμαι ῥώνοντο ἀραιαί)<sup>46</sup>. In his workshop, he needs the help of two automata to walk<sup>47</sup>. Another problem is the name ἀμφιγυήεις whose translation divides the specialists. In the epic, this name is used only for Hephaestus, eight times in the *Iliad*, always in the nominative and at the end of the verse<sup>48</sup>. Among them, it is six times accompanied by the adjective περικλυτός<sup>49</sup> and once with only κλυτός. In the *Odyssey*, only περικλυτός ἀμφιγυήεις appears, three times<sup>51</sup>. The translation as 'with robust arms/limbs' could have a realistic explanation; the craftsman god might well have over-developed arm-muscles<sup>52</sup>. But there is no equivalent in the Greek literature before one single example in Sophocles<sup>53</sup>. So it is usually assumed that ἀμφιγυήεις is another way of designating the lame god, and that it means 'famed god of the two lame legs.' But the link between the god's handicap and the word ἀμφιγυήεις never appears clearly in the epic: in fact, the contexts of use of this expression do not allow us to determine its precise meaning. We can also settle upon it being a formulaic expression whose precise meaning is overshadowed by its place in the hexameter<sup>54</sup>. There are other signs of formulas concerning Hephaestus: Ἥφαιστος κλυτοτέχνης ('the famed craftsman') is used three times in the *Iliad* and once in the *Odyssey*, in the nominative or accusative, but always at the same place in the verse<sup>55</sup>, the expression ἰδυίησι πρᾶπέδεσσι ('with cunning skill') is known only for Hephaestus, always at the end of the verse<sup>56</sup>. His works are often designated by τὸ μὲν Ἥφαιστος κάμε τεύχων ('that Hephaestus had toiled to make'), in the second half of the verse<sup>57</sup>. Like many others, mortals or gods, he is also said to be ἄναξ three times<sup>58</sup>. He is also πολύμητις ('of many wiles') and πολύφρων ('skilful'), two adjectives shared with Odysseus. But, in most instances with the name of Hephaestus, there is no formulaic character. Being apparently non-formulaic, the handicap of Hephaestus has to be considered as an intrinsic part of his figure. It is often interpreted as the part of his own self the god has to endure to possess the magical power of the smith; the god is then compared with the Greek divinities of metallurgy (Telchines, Daktyloi, Kabeiroi) or others of Indo-European origin<sup>61</sup>.

Deformed god, Hephaestus is also the only one to work on Olympus. His smithy, set up in a brazen house, is described in the scene in which Thetis

comes asking for new weapons for her son. There is in these verses a description of his handicraft too, and the objects he has forged are several times mentioned in the epic. Among them, there are the rooms of the gods<sup>62</sup>, the palace of Zeus<sup>63</sup> and Hephaestus' own house, the most beautiful one<sup>64</sup>. He has also forged objects of particular beauty or efficacy for the gods: furniture like a golden seat<sup>65</sup> and the aegis itself<sup>66</sup>. To the king of the Phaiakians, he has given a pair of dogs, made of silver and gold standing guard on either side of the palace doors<sup>67</sup>. Some of the objects forged by Hephaestus are, in the epic, in the hands of the heroes. Three of them are presented with a brief story: the sceptre of Agamemnon<sup>68</sup>, the funeral urn of Achilles<sup>69</sup> and the crater that Menelaos offers to Telemachos<sup>70</sup>. The armour of Diomedes is also presented by Hector as the result of the art of the crippled god, without any further details, but in terms of a verse that could be formulaic<sup>71</sup>. His masterpiece, however, is the shield of Achilles<sup>72</sup>, not forgetting the tripods he is forging when Thetis arrives.

Hephaestus at work is described in *Il.* 18. 372–377. He is described through the person of Thetis, who has just arrived at the smithy to be received by Charis. Other details are given a few verses later, 410–417 and 468–477<sup>73</sup>. Working at his anvil, Hephaestus is labouring away: the verb *πονῶ* is used twice<sup>74</sup>. It seems that this verb is usually used in connection with mortals. There is no god in the epics who has *ponos*, except Hephaestus. The picture of this *ponos* is drawn in the description of how the god works; when he stops, he is naked and glistening with sweat. This description, far from the world of Olympus, is startlingly vivid and couple with the realistic vocabulary of tools: anvil (*ἄκμων*), bellows (*φῦσα*), hammer (*ῥαιστήρ*) and tongs (*πυράγρη*)<sup>75</sup>.

Hephaestus at his forge, is more than a workman, he is a creator. From shapeless ingots, he fashions precious objects perfectly fitted to their function, even if this use is not directly linked to the art of the smith. Among his creations, some combine several metals, like the Sidonian vase, the dogs for Alkinoos or the shield of Achilles. Mixing metals lends colors to the crafted objects which can be understood as an illusion of life<sup>76</sup>. So Hephaestus creates living objects, or artefacts that could be considered as having a life of their own. This aspect of his work can be interpreted as magical<sup>77</sup>. This deformed god, wed to a beauty, can be understood as personifying the creative power of life, starting with a shapeless mass of material, which is given life, or the semblance of life through the *techne* and the *metis* of the smith god and the transforming power of fire<sup>78</sup>.

We can go further with the text of the *Iliad* and note that Hephaestus never forges offensive weapons, only defensive ones. He protects the warrior without killing his enemy. Achilles needs new armour after the death of Patrocles. The lost armor was also a product of Hephaestus' forge. While awaiting this

new armour, Achilles fights under the protection of Athena, who endows him with an urge for battle as if he was himself bronze and fire, exactly as he will be with his replacement armor<sup>79</sup>. Forging this marvellous armor, Hephaestus knows he is powerless to save Achilles. In fact, this armour has no *raison d'être* and changes nothing for Achilles. But it is an occasion for Hephaestus to create, on the shield, a world which is a living world, something between Achilles and his enemy, between Achilles and death, an illusion of life, since he cannot save Achilles in the way that Thetis saved him<sup>80</sup>.

God of fire, Hephaestus is also the god of the craft of the fire, forging between realism and epic amplification. Thanks to his art, he creates *daidala* in which beauty and polychromy are the result of his *techne* and his cunning skill, and gives the illusion of life, or a picture of a life. In the epic, he exercises his destructive power only against other divinities. With humans, he is a solicitous protector. In doing so, he is undoubtedly the most human of the Immortals: the discrepancy between his physical appearance and his power is the source of the gods' laughter<sup>81</sup>. Like a mortal, he suffers real heartache (with his mother, who first rejects him, and his wife Aphrodite) and in his body through his handicap and his *ponos*. He uses his power to help mortals, and sympathizes with them, albeit knowing the limits of his interventions. This is certainly the main contradiction of this figure who, as a specialist in metallic objects, we would expect to be associated with violence and dark destiny, but turns out to be on the side of life and light and, in doing so, gives the listener to the epics a lesson in humanity.

## NOTES

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2. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1985), 167–168 for a general presentation.

3. The rich literature about the shield of Achilles is generally not focused on Hephaestus; so it is for W. Burkert, 'Ares und Aphrodite,' *RhM* 103 (1960), 130–144, reprinted in W. Burkert, *Kleine Schriften I : Homerica* (Göttingen, 2001).

4. See for example C. Collobert, 'Héphaïstos, l'artisan du rire inextinguible des dieux,' in *Le rire des Grecs. Anthropologie du rire en Grèce ancienne*, M.L. Desclos éd. (Grenoble, 2000), 135–141.

5. See for example F. Bader ou P. Wathelet in *L'eau et le feu dans les religions antiques*, G. Capdeville éd. (Paris, 2004), 61–115.
6. See in particular M. Détienne & J.-P. Vernant, *Les ruses de l'intelligence. La mètis des Grecs* (Paris, 1974), and the thesis of their student, M. H. Frontisi-Ducroux, *Dédale. Mythologie de l'artisan en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1975).
7. Burkert (n.1), 167.
8. *Il.* 18. 394–399 (Appendix 2). The verb σῴζω is used twice (*Il.* 18. 395 and 405), which is an unexpected verb for a god. About the reason why Hephaestus was thrown by Hera, see *infra*.
9. *Il.* 1. 590–594.
10. *Il.* 1. 533–535 and 570–572.
11. *Il.* 1. 573–583. This episode has been studied by Collobert (n. 3).
12. *Il.* 21. 379–382.
13. *Od.* 8. 268–366.
14. See the paper of S. Constantinidou in this volume.
15. *Il.* 5. 9–24.
16. Burkert (n.1), 168.
17. *Il.* 2. 426 ; 9. 468 ; 17. 88–89 ; 23. 33 ; *Od.* 24. 71.
18. *Il.* 2. 426.
19. *Il.* 9. 468.
20. *Il.* 23. 33
21. *Od.* 24. 71.
22. See for example J.-P. Vernant, *Mythe et religion en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1990), 69–88.
23. *Il.* 1. 599 (Appendix 1) and *Od.* 8. 326.
24. Appendix 4. Episode studied, with two different interpretations, by F. Bader and P. Wathelet (n. 4). This fight is announced in *Il.* 20. 73–74.
25. Most of these elements are presented by S. Milanezi, 'La forge d'Héphaïstos ou le mal d'être dieu' in *Biographie des hommes, biographie des dieux*, M.-L. Desclos éd. (Grenoble, 2000), 13–39.
26. *Il.* 18. 395–397 (Appendix 2).
27. The expulsion of the children born deformed by the community is a well known Greek practice. See V. Dasen, 'L'accueil des nouveau-nés malformés dans l'Antiquité-2. La Grèce archaïque et classique,' *Revue internationale de Pédiatrie*, 30/294 (avril 1999), 50–53, M. Delcourt, *Stérilités mystérieuses et naissances maléfiques dans l'Antiquité classique* (Liège, 1938), 46–49 and M. Schmidt, 'Hephaestus lebt. Untersuchungen zur Frage der Behandlung behinderter Kinder in der Antike,' *Hephaestus* 5–6 (1983–4), 133–161.
28. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 927–929.
29. *Od.* 8. 306. In *Il.* 1. 578, the mention of 'Zeus pater' is more ambiguous. Cf. M. Delcourt, *Héphaïstos ou la légende du magicien* (Paris, 1957), 31–33, who explains how the misunderstanding between Hera and Zeus and the intervention of Hephaestus during the wrath of Zeus against Hera in *Iliad* 2, could have contaminated the version of the birth of Hephaestus from Hera alone.
30. *Od.* 8. 312.

31. *Il.* 18. 397–405.
32. *Il.* 18. 403–405.
33. Tradition known by representations on attic vases (J. Ziomecki, *Les représentations d'artisans sur les vases attiques* (Wrocław, 1975), 40–41) and by Alcaeus, fr. 349 (Lobel and Page).
34. *Il.* 18. 383–384.
35. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 945–946. According Pausanias (5. 11; 8), Hephaestus is represented just beside Charis on the relief showing the birth of Aphrodite, on the basis of the statue of Zeus in the temple of Olympia. In the Greek mythology, Hephaestus is the only one legal husband known of Aphrodite but the marriage remains sterile. But Aphrodite is known to have given birth to several children, all having mortals as fathers. See V. Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque* (Liège, 1994), 228–229.
36. *Il.* 1. 568–596, specially 571–572 and 586–589.
37. *Il.* 1. 587 and 595–596.
38. *Il.* 1. 590–594. Despite some modern authors, there is no indication of a link between this episode and the infirmity of Hephaestus.
39. *Il.* 21. 330–331.
40. *Il.* 21. 379–382.
41. It is possible to find other examples. In many occasions, Hera insists about her maternity and calls Hephaestus *υἱός* (for example *Il.* 14. 239 and its context).
42. Milanezi (n. 24), 13, remarks that the infirmity of the god never appears during his fight against the Scamander.
43. *Il.* 18. 371 ; 20. 270 ; 21. 331.
44. *Il.* 18. 397 ; *Od.* 8. 308 and 332. This adjective is also used for Thersites (*Il.* 2. 217).
45. *Il.* 18. 411 and 417 ; 20. 37.
46. *Il.* 18. 411.
47. *Il.* 21. 417–418.
48. *Il.* 1. 607 ; 14. 239 (*παῖς ἀμφιγύεις*) ; 18. 383, 393, 462, 587, 590 and 614.
49. *περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυήεις*: *Il.* 1. 607 ; 18. 383, 393, 462, 587 and 590.
50. *Il.* 18. 614.
51. *Od.* 8. 300, 349 and 357. *Περικλυτός* is also used, twice, alone, at the end of the verse, forming a group with *Ἡφαίστοιο* (*Od.* 8. 287 and 24. 75).
52. A. Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* (London, 1972), 72.
53. Sophocles, *Trachiniae*, 504.
54. P. Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v. *γνή*. Synthesis in Milanezi (n. 24), 18–20.
55. *Il.* 1. 571 (nominative) and 18. 143 and 391, *Od.* 8. 286 (accusative). Hephaestus is also said *κλυτοεργός* in *Od.* 8. 345. Cf. D. Pralon in *Le travail et la pensée technique dans l'Antiquité classique*, A. Balansard éd. (Aix en Provence, 2003), 107.
56. *Il.* 1. 608 ; 18. 380 and 482 ; 20. 12 and *Od.* 7. 92. Wathelet (n. 4), 71, underlines the age of this Homeric formula.
57. *Il.* 2. 101 ; 8. 195 and 19. 368.
58. *Il.* 15. 214 and 18. 137 ; *Od.* 8. 270.
59. *Il.* 21. 355.
60. *Il.* 21. 367 and *Od.* 8. 297 and 327.

61. Cf. Delcourt and Detienne. Contra, M. I. Finley, 'Metals in the ancient world,' *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Sept. 1970, p. 600–601 and Burford (n. 51), 196–198. J. Ramin (*La technique minière et métallurgique des Anciens* (Bruxelles, 1977), 33) notes that metallurgy is not the forge. Furthermore, the Telchines, Daktyloi and others are more often linked to the iron than the bronze. So it is doubtful that the Greeks have taken one for the other. In fact, Hephaestus is missing in Cyprus, island of Aphrodite, unlike Daktyloi. See V. Pirenne-Delforge (n. 34), 366.

62. *Il.* 1. 605–608 and 14. 166–167 and 338–339 (room of Hera).

63. *Il.* 20. 10–12.

64. *Il.* 18. 369–371.

65. *Il.* 14. 238–241.

66. *Il.* 15. 307–310.

67. *Od.* 7. 91–93. J. B. Hainsworth, *A commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, notes that nothing indicates that these dogs are animated.

68. *Il.* 2. 100–108. Cf. J. P. Crielaard, 'The cultural biography of material goods in Homer's epics,' *Gaia* 7 (2003), 49–62.

69. *Od.* 24. 73–75.

70. *Od.* 4. 615–619 and 15. 115–119. The mention here of Hephaestus could be metaphoric.

71. *Il.* 8. 195. Cf. *supra*.

72. It's not my aim here to discuss the signification of this shield, about which countless scientific works have been published.

73. *Il.* 18. 368–422, 468–482, *Il.* 21. 342–382.

74. *Il.* 18. 380 and 413.

75. *Il.* 18. 470 and 476–477. For many reasons, this scene sounds very realistic. The link between Hephaestus' work and reality still has to be studied.

76. F. Frontisi-Ducroux (n. 5), 68–78, notices the importance of the vocabulary of light and life around the *daidala* in general, including those forged by Hephaestus. According to this, we can understand why he is linked to Charis, grace and radiance. For her part, S. Constantinidou brings to the fore the parallels that can be done, through the Homeric vocabulary, between vision, light, bronze and life.

77. The modern scholars often insist about the so-called magical power of Hephaestus. See the title of the book which Delcourt has written on Hephaestus or, more recently, the thesis of M. Martin, *Magie et magiciens dans le monde gréco-romain* (Paris, 2005). In the epics, the magical phenomena generally kept in mind about Hephaestus are the possibility he has to animate the inanimate or to paralyze the livings. But, such powers are not the privilege of Hephaestus: the Phaiakian boats have neither pilot nor rudder but can guess the destination the Phaiakians want to reach (*Od.* 8. 556–559).

78. See the role of Hephaestus in the creation of Pandora, according Hesiod, *Theogony*, 571–572 and *Works and Days*, 70–71.

More than magic, the peculiarity of Hephaestus among the gods is his *techne* of fire linked to the *metis*, even if the difference between *techne* and magic is not always clear in the epic. Burford (n. 51), 196–198, Pralon (n. 54) and J. P. Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris, 1965), 227.



- 79. Détienne & Vernant (n. 5), 177.
- 80. Milanezi (n. 24), 35–36.
- 81. Collobert (n. 3), 139.

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*Part III*

**EYE-SIGHT/INSIGHT**



## *Chapter Eleven*

### **To See or Not to See**

#### *Blind People and Blindness in Ancient Greek Myths*

Françoise Létoublon

As with other disabilities, blindness seems to be ambiguous in Archaic Greece and later, both a disease and an advantage. Blind people are known in myths as very respected and honored persons: most often they<sup>1</sup> are poets (*aoidoi*) or soothsayers, and their blindness seems to have been given them as a *quid pro quo* for their gift, in formulas typical of an exchange rather than punishment. These professions might have been their specialties, as is still seen in countries such as Africa.

We will start with a formal analysis of the vocabulary and the formulas, this will lead to an analysis of some characters and myths, so that we might expect some results not found in other works on the same subject (Buxton 1980, Bernidaki-Aldous 1990; for a more anthropological and more general approach, Barasch 2001). Our research owes much to these earlier works as well as to extensive use of the TLG online. Buxton's article (1980) is particularly relevant to our study, quoting extensively, as it does, from Greek literature and critical works. We hope that beginning with the formulas will be useful. Since Buxton's publication (1980) and others'<sup>2</sup> have dealt in detail with Greek tragedy and especially Sophokles, we'll concentrate on archaic texts and mythical accounts, sometimes more recent. S. Constantinidou's articles (1993, 1994) appeared extremely relevant to our perspective on formulas.

#### **FORMULAIC ANALYSIS**

To 'see the light of the sun' is in Greek, from Homeric poetry and thereafter, an equivalent of 'to be living' and, conversely, 'not to see the light' an equivalent to

death<sup>3</sup>. Thus blindness is a weaker expression for death, rather than for castration, as has sometimes been suggested in a psychoanalytical context<sup>4</sup>. The formulas and even the *formulaic system*<sup>5</sup> in Homer show this clearly enough: among 18 examples of φάος ἡελίοιο, always as a verse-ending in the same order, 7 refer to the declining light of the sun and the end of the day,<sup>6</sup> while all the other examples refer to death.<sup>7</sup> Let us note in passing that the sun's light here is neither a metaphor nor a weakened expression<sup>8</sup>: it is rather the way death was represented at the time, as well as how one imagined the soul of a dead warrior leaving the body for its journey to the Underworld<sup>9</sup>. In the second group, the closeness of the forms of the verb “to live,” ζῶειν, in the same verse is striking, as well as the presence of τέθνηκε in the following verse (*Od.* 20.207-8):

εἴ που ἔτι ζῶει καὶ ὄρᾳ φάος ἡελίοιο.  
εἰ δ' ἤδη τέθνηκε καὶ εἰν Αἴδαο δόμοισιν<sup>10</sup>

To see the light (of the sun) is thus rather one of the anthropological characteristics that oppose life and death: in the same formulaic language, when somebody dies, his pupils are taken by darkness, σκότος.<sup>11</sup> So it is a testimony to the way life and death were thought of rather than a poetic way of speaking. This remark does not imply that light as a metaphor is unknown in Homer: in the *Odyssey*, Telemakhos is twice called γλυκερὸν φάος as a welcome greeting formula, as remarked S. Constantinidou (1994, 62–64): *Od.* 16.23, by Eumaeus, 17.41 by Penelope. Light is actually here an affective metaphor, without any link to the expressions for life and death.

Let us also remark that in Greek poetry of the classical period, ‘to see the light’ still means ‘to be living’ (and above all in the Tragic corpus), but φάος ἡελίοιο is most often replaced by the sole word φῶς and ὄρᾳν / λείπειν by forms of βλέπω, with frequent variations in word-order: showing how deep this link stands in Greek thinking, not only in traditional phrases fixed in poetry by metric constraints. The expression may be ‘modernised,’ the thought is still the same. See for example Eur. *Hec.* 668, δέσποινα, ὅλωλας κοῦκέτ' εἴ, βλέπουσα φῶς; *Hel.* 60 ἕως μὲν οὖν φῶς ἡλίου τόδ' ἔβλεπεν / Πρωτεύς; *IA* 1218–1219 . . . ἡδὺ γὰρ τὸ φῶς βλέπειν; *Ibid.* 1250 τὸ φῶς τόδ' ἀνθρώποιον ἡδιστον βλέπειν. See also Ἄλλ' ὅποταν ψυχὴ προλίπηι φάος ἡελίοιο in Radcliff Edmond's corpus, and Ar. ἀνήγαγεν εἰς φῶς quoted by Menelaos Christopoulos, both in the present volume.

A tendency to ‘formulaic’ association may even be observed in classical prose: notice for instance the frequent association of blindness with other kinds of disabilities, mostly τυφλός with κωφός or with χωλός, sometimes πηρός with τυφλός or κολοβοῦ καὶ τυφλοῦ. The word is used in numerous proverbial phrases in classical Greek and later on.



### ΤΥΦΛΟΣ, A HOMERIC HAPAX

The main word one thinks of is of course *tuphl* and its family, particularly the adjective τυφλός. We looked for it in the whole corpus of the TLG. It may seem surprising that τυφλ- is met only once in Homer, in *Iliad* 6, about the mythical Lycurgus<sup>12</sup>: let us briefly re-iterate the context.

Diomedes sees Glaukos advancing out in front of the battle line with hostile intent, seeking single combat with him. Given Diomedes' greater strength, this challenge seems foolish, and Diomedes first supposes his adversary could be a god (v. 128–9). Then, once he understands Glaukos to be a man, Diomedes alludes to a 'mythological paradeigma'<sup>13</sup> for such a foolish behaviour, that of Lycurgus, who dared to pursue young Dionysos' nurses on the holy mountain of Nyseion (probably a popular etymology for the god's name). The young god escaped by diving into the sea down to Thetis' cave, whereas the Nymphs used their goads (βουπλήγι) against Lycurgus. The text does not specify if this very weapon deprived Lycurgus of his sight, but his blindness is due to Zeus, as was his later death. The gods detested him, blindness and death are clearly punishments or the result of this hatred (138 ὠδύσαντο, 140 ἀπήχθετο). The myth becomes a paradigm demonstrating to Glaukos that his behavior is out of place.

#### *Il.* 6.130–143

οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ Δρύαντος υἱὸς κρατερὸς Λυκόοργος  
 δῆν ἦν, ὅς ῥα θεοῖσιν ἐπουρανίοισιν ἔριζεν·  
 ὅς ποτε μαινομένοιο Διώνυοιο τιθήνας  
 σεύε κατ' ἠγάθειον Νυκῆϊον· αἱ δ' ἅμα πᾶσαι  
 θύεθλα χαμαὶ κατέχευαν ὑπ' ἀνδροφόνοιο Λυκούργου  
 θεινόμεναι βουπλήγι· Διώνυος δὲ φοβηθεὶς  
 δύσεθ' ἄλός κατὰ κύμα, Θέτις δ' ὑπεδέξατο κόλῳ  
 δειδιότα· κρατερὸς γὰρ ἔχε τρόμος ἀνδρὸς ὁμοκλή.  
 τῷ μὲν ἔπειτ' ὠδύσαντο θεοὶ ῥεῖα ζώντες,  
 καὶ μιν τυφλὸν ἔθηκε Κρόνου πάϊς· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτι δῆν  
 ἦν, ἐπεὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀπήχθετο πᾶσι θεοῖσιν·  
 οὐδ' ἄν ἐγὼ μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἐθέλοιμι μάχεσθαι.  
 εἰ δέ τίς ἐσσι βροτῶν οἱ ἀρούρης καρπὸν ἔδουσιν,  
 ἄεσσον ἴθ' ὥς κεν θᾶεσσον ὀλέθρου πείραθ' ἵκηται.

Thus, this first and sole proper Homeric example seems without ambiguity.

But the same word τυφλός also occurs in a very famous Archaic passage, the end of the Delian part of the *Hymn to Apollo*, alluding clearly to the best of the poets (169 ἡδιστον αἰοιδῶν, 173 ἀριστεύουσιν αἰοδαί) in a context of high praise:

*hAp.* 3. 172 (Allen, T.W. Halliday, W.R. Sikes, E.E. ed.)

ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καὶ τέω τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;  
 ὑμεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθ' ἀμφ' ἡμέων·  
 τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἰκεῖ δὲ Χίῳ ἐνι παιπαλοέσῃ,  
 τοῦ πᾶσαι μετόπισθεν ἀριτεύουσιν ἀοιδαί.  
 ἡμεῖς δ' ὑμέτερον κλέος οἴκομεν ὄσσον ἐπ' αἶαν

This passage is known as the first allusion to Homer's person in Antiquity, so the birth of Homer as an author might lie there<sup>14</sup>. Of course this paper will not deal with the problem of Homer's person and historic reality. We are concerned only with the legend of the blind poet, this passage is the first witness. A proof of its traditional interpretation in Antiquity as a clear allusion to Homer is found in Thucydides 3, who explains the purification of Delos by the Athenians (beginning of § 104 τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ χειμῶνος καὶ Δήλον ἐκάθηραν), saying how the island became a meeting place for all the Ionians (μεγάλη ξύνοδος) with *agones*, games and choral competitions. He quotes successively two passages of the *Hymn to Apollo* :

Thuc. 3.104.4:

Ἄλλ' ὅτε Δήλῳ, Φοῖβε, μάλιστά γε θυμὸν ἐτέρφθης,  
 ἔνθα τοι ἐλκεχίτωνες Ἰάονες ἡγερέθονται  
 σὺν σφοῖσιν τεκέεσσι γυναιξὶ τε σὴν ἐξ ἀγυῖαν.  
 ἔνθα σε πυγμαχίῃ τε καὶ ὀρχηστῷ καὶ ἀοιδῇ  
 μνησάμενοι τέρπουσιν, ὅταν καθέσωσιν ἀγῶνα.

And continues with an introduction to the second quotation:

3.104.5 Ὅτι δὲ καὶ μουσικῆς ἀγῶν ἦν καὶ ἀγωνιούμενοι ἐφοίτων ἐν τοῖσδε αὖθις, ἃ ἐστὶν ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ προοιμίου, τὸν γὰρ Δηλιακὸν χρόνον τῶν γυναικῶν ὑμνήσας ἐτέλευτα τοῦ ἐπαίνου ἐς τὰδε τὰ ἔπη, ἐν οἷς καὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπεμνήσθη  
 [...] ἐνθάδ' ἀνείρηται ταλαπεῖριος ἄλλος ἐπελθὼν.  
 ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὕμιν ἀνὴρ ἥδιστος ἀοιδῶν  
 ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καὶ τέω τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;  
 ὑμεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθαι ἀφήμω·  
 'τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἰκεῖ δὲ Χίῳ ἐνι παιπαλοέσῃ.'  
 τοσαῦτα μὲν Ὅμηρος ἐτεκμηρίωσεν ὅτι ἦν καὶ τὸ πάλαι  
 μεγάλη ξύνοδος καὶ ἐορτὴ ἐν τῇ Δήλῳ·

In the introduction to the second passage, Thucydides mentions that Homer praised himself (ἐτέλευντα τοῦ ἐπαίνου . . . ἑαυτοῦ ἐπεμνήσθη) : so he thought the passage from *Hymn to Apollo* as Homer's self-praise, thus as a kind of *sphregis*<sup>15</sup>.

More generally, this passage shows that for learned people of the classical period, the *Hymns* were Homer's œuvre, and also that the legend of the blind poet anyhow predates the *Vitae Homeri*<sup>16</sup>. This legend of the blind poet shows the positive colour of blindness, this actually comes from Homer himself, and from some blind characters who are shown as positive or ambiguous figures.

Though τυφλός is exceptional in Homer, everybody actually knows there are several blind persons among the characters, although only men, no women: thus other expressions are used, and that is where we shall find ambiguity. Let us therefore have a look at some other idioms before coming to the Palladionmyth.

### TO TAKE SOMEBODY'S SIGHT OR DEPRIVE THEM OF THEIR EYES

The famous introduction of the blind *aoidos* at Alkinoos' court for a poetic performance in book 8 shows a notion of poetic gift as a possible compensation for his lack of sight:

*Od.* 8.62–66

κῆρυξ δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθεν ἄγων ἐρίηρον ἀοιδόν,  
τὸν περὶ Μοῦσ' ἐφίλησε, δίδου δ' ἀγαθόν τε κακόν τε·  
ὀφθαλμῶν μὲν ἄμερσε, δίδου δ' ἡδεῖαν ἀοιδήν.  
τῷ δ' ἄρα Ποντόνοος θῆκε θρόνον ἀργυρόηλον  
μέεσσι δαιτυμόνων, πρὸς κίονα μακρὸν ἐρείσας·

We note the strong opposition between the two hemistichs marked by μέν/δέ, juxtaposing and vividly contrasting the two verbal forms ἄμερσε and δίδου, with the two nouns at the beginning and the end of the verse standing in a similar contrast. As this verse is once more the sole use of ἄμερσε in Homer, no help may be found from other contexts. The balance ἄμερσε μέν, δίδου δέ seems anyhow to imply a strong emphasis on the contrast ὀφθαλμῶν / ἡδεῖαν ἀοιδήν. The amplification of the second term by the adjective produces the same result.

The notion of a kind of exchange may be stressed by another passage: in the story of the *aoidos* Thamyras in *Iliad* 2, a disability, maybe specifically blindness, but not necessarily, seems also to balance with *aoide*:

*Il.* 2, 595–600 Δώριον, ἔνθα τε Μοῦσαι  
ἀντόμεναι Θάμυριν τὸν Θρήϊκα παῦσαν ἀοιδῆς  
Οἰχαλίηθεν ἰόντα παρ' Εὐρύτου Οἰχαλιῆος·  
στεῦτο γὰρ εὐχόμενος νικηέμεν εἴ περ ἂν αὐταὶ  
Μοῦσαι ἀεῖδοιεν κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο·

αἱ δὲ χολωσάμεναι πηρὸν θέσαν, αὐτὰρ ἀοιδὴν  
θεσπεσίην ἀφέλονται καὶ ἐκλέλαθον κιθαριστύν·

This *aoidos*, coming from the same legendary Thrace as the famous Orpheus was also said to come from,<sup>17</sup> he once foolishly pretended to compete with the Muses (στεῦτο γὰρ εὐχόμενος νικησέμεν) and was punished for this pretention with a disability, πηρὸν θέσαν. He had the gift for singing before, they deprived him of this gift (ἀφέλονται). Notice the emphasis on ἀοιδὴν θεσπεσίην with the rhythmic effect produced by the enjambment, and also the strong use of the factitive ἐκλέλαθον κιθαριστύν, ‘made forget the art of the kitharis.’ Once more, the adjective πηρὸν is a *hapax* in Homer. Later on, it was used with the generic meaning of ‘disabled.’ But the parallel with Demodokos is tempting. Among the Phaeacians, menn knew the limits of mankind, and blindness and *aoide* seem to equipose, whereas Thamyras was punished for his *hubris* with both disability and the loss of his poetic gift. As a piece of evidence for interpreting this generic disability as actually being blindness, we’ll invoke Euripides’—or Ps. Eur.—*Rhesus* 924, where the *Mousai* of the Pangeion speak in the first person plural, saying they *blinded* Thamyras the Thracian<sup>18</sup>. So blindness appears here as a punishment for his pretention to compete with the goddesses.

We leave aside here the episode of the *Kyklopeia* for several reasons,<sup>19</sup> but let us mention the terms used by Polyphemus recalling Telemos’s prophecy : *Od.* 9.507–521, where we shall choose the most significant words, showing that he complains about the little man who *took his sight*:

511–2 . . . ὅς μοι ἔφη  
χειρῶν ἐξ Ὀδυσῆος ἀμαρτήεσθαι ὁπωπῆς  
and thereafter particularly  
516 ὀφθαλμοῦ ἀλάωσεν, . . . with the singular ὀφθαλμοῦ.

For a provisional conclusion, the formal analysis shows that the adjective *tuphlos* still exists in Homeric poetry, but is very rarely used, whereas the poet has a lot of other means for expressing the loss of sight, be it violent as in the case of Polyphemus or by an accident. At the time it was understood by humans as the will of the gods, be it a punishment or a mere caprice of them, and a sign of the limits of humanity, as R. Buxton well put it in his paper published in 1980.

### THE PALLADION MYTH, OR SIGHT LOST AND RECOVERED

The Palladion myth, though not mentioned in Homer, is an important piece in the legend of the Trojan War<sup>20</sup>. The most detailed and best known tale is found

in the *Bibliotheca* attributed to Apollodorus<sup>21</sup> : no mention of blindness may be found there. Apart from genealogy and geographical details, the main events told show a parallel with Cadmos and the foundation of Thebai in Boiotia, he also received a prophecy leading him to follow a cow and to found a city where the cow laid down. Though the tale occurs late in literature, it could be ancient since several vase paintings show it was known early, particularly the theft by Odysseus and Diomedes<sup>22</sup>. But we encounter an interesting variant in Plutarchus' *Minor Parallels* : Ilos, one of the founders of Ilion- Troy, took the statue (ἥρπασε: probably violently) from the *naos* of Athena and *became blind* (ἐτυφλώθη: did it happen suddenly ?) Plutarchus gives the reason for this : οὐ γάρ ἐξῆν ὕπ' ἀνδρὸς βλέπεσθαι<sup>23</sup>. This is the version he gives as Derkullos' one. Then he gives another one, attributed to Aristeides of Miletos, who said the *temenos* was burning (καϊόμενον) ; so Ilos may have tried to put the statue in a safe place, but he became blind all the same. This detail could explain why he recovered his sight afterwards (ὥστερον δ' ἐξυλασάμενος ἀνέβλεψεν, same wording in a different order<sup>24</sup>). For the theme of sight loss (as a punishment for a transgression, the 'overstepping of human limits,' see Buxton), Ilos seems there *parallel* to Antylus or Metellus who took the Palladion from the temple of Vesta in Rome, whence the inclusion by Plutarchus in his *Parallels*.<sup>25</sup>

The Palladion first fell from the sky (δευτερεῖς in Apollodorus), at the time of Dardanos: it is by no way an ordinary statue, it had magic powers<sup>26</sup> (Virgil mentions this in the *En.* 2.171–179 <sup>27</sup>). The magic power of the statue apparently prevented it from being seen by humans, and blinded them in case of transgression.

The whole story seems to have been told in the *Little Iliad*, and some details, apart from Ilos's blindness and recovery of sight, may be relevant for us <sup>28</sup>: a prophesy, known as well by the Achaeans as the Trojans, said the town—the Sacred city<sup>29</sup>—could not fall if this talisman stayed in its shrine. So Odysseus and Diomedes paired up for a nocturnal expedition to steal this talisman, an essential requirement for victory by the Argive army over Ilion, according to the prophesy of the soothsayer Helenus. Odysseus showed both his *metis* and some clumsiness<sup>30</sup>: once they had both escaped with the statue, he had the idea of slaying his companion with a sword so that he might return alone with the statue. However Diomedes saw the shadow of the sword, or glimpsed its brightness, and thus evaded death, which marvellously illustrates the role of night, darkness, light in the dark, and shadow. The Trojan night is not only the night when Troy went up in flames, but also the night of book 10 with Rhesus's murder, and the night of the theft of the Palladion, though neither is related in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. May we suggest that Odysseus and Diomedes were aware that they had to avoid looking at the statue during their expedition and thus chose a very dark night?

Anyway, after the fall of Troy, several cities in the Ancient world claimed ownership of the sacred statue of Pallas and had to keep it hidden in a secret shrine, precisely because of the perils of humans casting eyes on it. In Greece, Argos<sup>31</sup> and Athens,<sup>32</sup> in Italy Rome<sup>33</sup> and other cities had such complicated legends that explained how the sacred statue came from Troy to them. The statue had been taken away, they said, either by Odysseus and Diomedes who stole it from Athena's shrine, or by Aeneas or other less known heroes: some traditions suppose there were several or two Palladia, a true one and a false one, so that every city claiming it owned it thought the others had only the copy whereas they hosted the original.

From the beginnings with Dardanos and Ilos to the end with the Fall of Troy, this mysterious statue is linked to shadow, secrecy, magic powers such as blinding humans who see it. As an image of the goddess, it is a double or surrogate for her, and it seems to draw the doubling with itself everywhere it may be conveyed. Apollodorus seems even to have believed that the name *Pallas* came from a girl—the daughter of the god Triton—who used to play with Athena as a child. Both girls were competing against one another in wargames and happened to quarrel. When Pallas was about to strike, Zeus intervened to protect his daughter and Pallas, afraid of the *aigis*, was wounded and died. Athena made a statue resembling Pallas, and covered it with the *aigis* which had occasioned her death. So Pallas was already a kind of double of Athena, and the statue became a substitute for both Athena and Pallas.

Through several aspects, this myth about a statue seems to confirm the idea of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships developed by Richard Buxton about 'Blindness and limits.'<sup>34</sup> If we try to show the variants in the repetition of the fundamental schemes, beginning with the possible epic episodes:

- Ilos took the Palladion away from the shrine → became blind
- Roman heroes →
- Odysseus and Diomedes took the Palladion in the dark of the night; they nearly killed each other, but the light of the moon or the brightness of the weapon gleaming in the darkness prevented the murder.

The Palladion is often said to have existed in at least two copies, and both themes of doubling and of overstepping the limits are found in the very mythical beginning; Pallas is both a double and a danger for Athena; she overstepped the limits and died. Athena loved her and made an image of the girl: the statue is an image to be looked at, but should not be seen by humans because it was the very symbol of Pallas' transgression. Those who happened to see it in sun light became blind.

The whole story of the Palladion, though nowhere clearly told in its entirety, looks like an apology for the methods of structuralism, showing once more how often myths seem to be repeated with several variants. This is maybe due to oral traditions kept by various authors who did not try to make them coherent, as is generally done by authors of global mythological tales.

Let me come back to the question of ambiguity we began with, and to the myth of blind poets as well: after examining the variants of other mythical tales, we could now ask ourselves why seers such as Tiresias and *aoidoi* as Demodokos, or Homer himself, are so often said to be blind. If blinding appears as the direct consequence—not necessarily a punishment—of having seen a god or an image forbidden to human eyes, we may suggest that the *aoidos*, the poet and the seer, did see a supra-human part of the world, strictly forbidden to ordinary humans. To this world, the Muses are supposed to give a specific access to poets, as long as they do not try to compete with them as Thamyras did.

## NOTES

1. E. A. Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light. Especially the Case of Oedipus at Colonus of Sophocles* (Frankfurt, 1990) and A. Gartziou-Tatti, “Blindness as Punishment” (paper presented at the Conference for Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek and Roman Mythology and Religion, Patras, 6–8 April 2007).

2. S. Constantinidou, ‘ΑΥΓΗ/ ΑΥΤΑΙ: Some observations on the Homeric perception of light and vision,’ *ΔΩΔΩΝΗ ΚΒ* (1993): 98–9, with references to R. Garland, *The Greek way of death* (London, 1985), J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, 1980), Schein (1984), and C. Sourvinou-Inwood, ‘To Die and Enter the House of Hades: Homer, Before and After,’ in *Mirrors of Mortality. Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. J. Whaley. (London, 1981), 15–39 especially. See Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, 90–94 on the process of the dying of the ‘god-like hero’ in the *Iliad*.

3. G. Devereux, ‘The Self-Blinding of Oedipus in Sophocles: *Oedipous Tyrannos*,’ *JHS* 93 (1973): 36–49, discussed by R. G.A. Buxton, “Blindness and Limits: Sophocles and the Logic of Myth,” *JHS* 100 (1980): 22–37.

4. A. B. Lord, *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* (Ithaca, 1991), 25.

5. *Il.* 1.605 Ἀὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατέδω λαμπρὸν φάος ἡελίοιο

8.465 ἐν δ’ ἔπεε’ Ὠκεανῷ λαμπρὸν φάος ἡελίοιο

23.154 καὶ νύ κ’ ὀδυρομένοισιν ἔδω φάος ἡελίοιο, (= *Od.* 16.220 = 21.226)

*Od.* 13.33 (first term of a simile) ἀσπασίως δ’ ἄρα τῷ κατέδω φάος ἡελίοιο

35 (second term of the simile) ὥς Ὀδυσῆϊ ἀσπαστὸν ἔδω φάος ἡελίοιο.

We see once the second formulaic hemistich λαμπρὸν φάος ἡελίοιο, while (κατ-) ἔδω φάος ἡελίοιο form the second hemistich 7 times.



6. *Il.* 5.120 οὐδέ μέ φησι  
 δηρὸν ἔτ' ὄψεσθαι λαμπρὸν φάος ἡελίοιο.  
 18.11 χερσὶν ὑπο Τρώων λείπειν φάος ἡελίοιο  
 18.61= 442 ὄφρα δέ μοι ζώει καὶ ὄρᾳ φάος ἡελίοιο  
 24.558 αὐτόν τε ζώειν καὶ ὄρᾳ φάος ἡελίοιο.  
*Od.* 4.540 = 10.498 ἦθελ' ἔτι ζώειν καὶ ὄρᾳ φάος ἡελίοιο.  
 4.833 ἦ που ἔτι ζώει καὶ ὄρᾳ φάος ἡελίοιο,  
 11.93 τίπτ' αὖτ', ὦ δύστηνε, λιπὼν φάος ἡελίοιο  
 ἦλυθε,  
 14.44 = 20.207 εἴ που ἔτι ζώει καὶ ὄρᾳ φάος ἡελίοιο.

See the note by G. S. Kirk (ed.), *The Iliad: a Commentary*, II, books 5–8 (Cambridge, 1990), 68 to *Il.* 5.120 : “ ‘Seeing the light of the sun’ to imply ‘living’ is formulaic (with φάος ἡελίοιο), 3 x *Il.*, 5 x *Od.* It is an ancient I.-E. figurative expression, also in the *Rgveda*, cf. M.L. West, *JHS* 108 (1988) 154.”

7. For the meaning of such phrases in Homer, see F. Létoublon, ‘Ce qui n’a plus de nom dans aucune langue,’ *RPh* 66 (1992): 397–417: the use of οἶχομαι implies in Homer neither an euphemism nor a metaphor.

8. J.N. *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton, 1983).

9. Cf. also *Od.* 11.488 ff. and S. Constantinidou’s comment in “ΑΥΓΗ/ ΑΥΓΑΙ,” 98.

10. In the formula σκότος ὅσσε κάλυψε for instance (*Il.* 4.461, 526 ; 6.11), and its variants, cf. Constantinidou, “ΑΥΓΗ/ ΑΥΓΑΙ,” 98.

11. See Kirk, *The Iliad* II, 173–5., who mentions Chantraine’s careful remarks on the etymological mysteries in the vocabulary of disability, and the possibility of linguistic *taboo*.

12. See M. M. Willcock, “Mythological Paradeigma in the *Iliad*,” *CQ* 14 (1964): 141–154 and ‘Ad Hoc Invention in the *Iliad*,” *HSCP* 18 (1977): 41–53, the discussion by G. Nagy, “Mythological exemplum in Homer,” in *Innovations of Antiquity*, ed. R. Hexter and D. Selden (London, 1992), 311–331 and more recently M. Alden, *Homer Beside Himself. Para-Narratives in the Iliad* (Oxford, 2000): 128–131 on this passage particularly.

13. B. Graziosi, *Inventing Homer: The Early Reception of Epic* (Cambridge, 2002), 13–40, ‘The birth of Homer,’ 125–163, ‘Blindness, poverty and closeness to the gods’ particularly.

14. We are thinking of the *sphregis* apposed on his poems by Theognis, see the main critical references: J. Svenbro, *La Parole et le Marbre. Aux origines de la poétique grecque* (Lund, 1976); A. L. Ford, ‘The Politics of Authorship in Archaic Greece,’ in *Theognis of Megara. Poetry and the Polis*, ed. T.J. Figueira and G. Nagy (Baltimore, 1985): 82–95; L. Edmunds, ‘The Seal of Theognis,’ in L. Edmunds and R.W. Wallace, *Poet, Public, and Performance in Archaic Greece* (Baltimore, 1997): 29–48.

15. On the traditions of the *Vitae*, see G. Nagy, ‘L’aède épique en auteur: les *Vies d’Homère*,’ in *Identités d’auteur dans l’Antiquité et la tradition européenne*, ed. Claude Calame & Roger Chartier (Grenoble, 2004): 41–67, on the ‘Resonance’ of the blind poet in Antiquity, B. Graziosi, & J. Haubold, *Homer: The Resonance of Epic* (London, 2005): 23–24.

16. G. S. Kirk, ed., *The Iliad: a Commentary*, I, books 1–4 (Cambridge, 1985), 216 specifies the geographical context in this passage of the Catalogue, implying Thamyras was an itinerant aoidos, and the relation to Hesiod's *Ehoiai*. He also asks why this 'diversion' takes place here: 'the closest parallel is the tale of Niobe at 24.602–9, with Meleagros as another improving example in 9.52ff..' He thinks the expression of a 'professional singer's pride' not excluded.

17. [Eur.] *Rhes*. 921–925 ὅτ' ἤλθομεν γῆς χρυσόβωλον ἐς λέπας  
Πάγγαιον ὀργάνοισιν ἐξησκημέναι  
Μοῦσαι μεγίστην εἰς ἔριν μελωιδείας  
κλεινῶι σοφιστῇι Θρηικὶ κάτυφλώσαμεν  
Θάμυριν, ὅς ἡμῶν πόλλ' ἐδέκνασεν τέχνην.

18. The name *Kuklops* may also refer to the eye(s) with the word composed with -οψ, but does not explicitly imply that the giants had only one eye in the tale. The poet actually never says the *Kuklops* was earlier *monophthalmos*, but he constantly uses the singular *ophthalmos* throughout the passage, never the archaic dual *osse* mostly used Homer, neither a plural form.

19. The *Chrestomathia* by Proclus mentions the episode of the theft of the Palladion in the *Little Iliad*: 'Ὀδυσσεύς τε αἰκισάμενος ἑαυτὸν κατάσκοπος εἰς Ἴλιον παραγίνεται καὶ ἀναγνωρισθεὶς ὑφ' Ἑλένης περὶ τῆς ἀλώσεως τῆς πόλεως συντίθεται, κτείνας τέ τινας τῶν Τρώων ἐπὶ τὰς ναῦς ἀφικνεῖται. Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα σὺν Διομήδει τὸ παλλάδιον ἐκκομίζει ἐκ τῆς Ἰλίου. See T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth. A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore, 1993); J. S. Burgess, *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer & the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore, 2001): 142; M. J. Anderson, *The Fall of Troy in Early Greek Poetry and Art* (Oxford, 1997): 18–20.

20. Cf. Ps. Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 142–146:

Ἴλος δὲ εἰς Φρυγίαν ἀφικόμενος καὶ καταλαβὼν ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτόθι τεθειμένον ἀγῶνα νικᾷ πάλην· καὶ λαβὼν ἄθλον πεντήκοντα κόρους καὶ κόρας τὰς ἑαυτοῦ, δόντος αὐτῷ τοῦ βασιλέως κατὰ χρησμὸν καὶ βοῦν ποικίλην, καὶ φράσαντος ἐν ᾧ περ ἂν αὐτὴ κλιθῇ τόπῳ πόλιν κτίσῃ, εἶπετο τῇ βοί. ἡ δὲ ἀφικομένη ἐπὶ τὸν λεγόμενον τῆς Φρυγίας Ἄτης λόφον κλίνεται· ἔνθα πόλιν κτίσας Ἴλος ταύτην μὲν Ἴλιον ἐκάλεσε, τῷ δὲ Διὶ κημεῖον εὐξάμενος αὐτῷ τι φανῆναι, μεθ' ἡμέραν τὸ διυπετὲς παλλάδιον πρὸ τῆς σκηνῆς κείμενον ἐθεάσατο. ἦν δὲ τῷ μεγέθει τρίπηχυ, τοῖς δὲ ποσὶ συμβεβηκός, καὶ τῇ μὲν δεξιᾷ δόρυ διηρμένον ἔχον τῇ δὲ ἐτέρᾳ ἡλακάτην καὶ ἄτρακτον.

[ἱστορία δὲ ἡ περὶ τοῦ παλλαδίου τοιάδε φέρεται·  
φασὶ γεννηθεῖσαν τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν παρὰ Τρίτωνι τρέφεσθαι, ᾧ θυγάτηρ ἦν Παλλὰς·  
ἀμφοτέραι δὲ ἀκούσας τὰ κατὰ πόλεμον εἰς φιλονεικίαν ποτὲ προελθεῖν.  
μελλούσης δὲ πλήττειν τῆς Παλλάδος τὸν Δία φοβηθέντα τὴν αἰγίδα προτείνειν,  
τὴν δὲ εὐλαβηθεῖσαν ἀναβλέψαι, καὶ οὕτως ὑπὸ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς τρωθεῖσαν πεσεῖν. Ἀθηνᾶν δὲ περιλυπὸν ἐπ' αὐτῇ γενομένην, ξόανον ἐκείνης ὅμοιον κατασκευάσαι, καὶ περιθεῖναι τοῖς ἐτέρνοισι ἦν ἔδειξεν αἰγίδα, καὶ τιμᾶν ἰδρυσαμένην παρὰ τῷ Δίῳ. ὕστερον δὲ Ἡλέκτρας κατὰ τὴν φθορὰν τούτῳ προσ-φυγούσης, Δία ρῖψαι μετ' αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ παλλάδιον εἰς τὴν Ἰλιάδα χώραν, Ἴλον δὲ τούτῳ ναὸν κατασκευάσαντα τιμᾶν. καὶ περὶ μὲν τοῦ παλλαδίου ταῦτα λέγεται.]

and the *Epitome* 9a–10a.

21. P. Demargne, "Athéna," *LIMC* II (Zurich-Munich, 1984), A 7c, 968 : two vases from the Archaic period, four from the classical, one from the Hellenistic time. Several paintings show two Palladia brought, one by Diomedes, the other by Odysseus.

22. As R. Buxton well shows, it seems to reflect the importance of the forbidden sight in Greek myths, many examples are known.

23. We propose to interpret the participle ἐξίλασάμενος as a word-game about the proper name Ilos.

24. Buxton, "Blindness and Limits," 30.

25. C. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses. Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (Oxford, 1992) : 94–96 about 'the Trojan Horse, Pandora and the Talismanic Statue' does not omit the Palladion, but he seems to underscore it, compared to the Wooden Horse.

26. Nec dubiis ea signa dedit Tritonia monstis.

Vix positum castris simulacrum, arsere coruscae  
luminibus flammae arrectis, salsusque per artus  
sudor iit, terque ipsa solo—mirabile dictu—  
emicuit, parmamque ferens hastamque trementem.  
'Extemplo temptanda fuga canit aequora Calchas,  
nec posse Argolicis exscindi Pergama telis,  
omina ni repetant Argis, numenque reducant,  
quod pelago et curuis secum auxere carinis.

Servius' commentary to *En.* VI, 166 mentions that Odysseus and Diomedes went into the city through the sewer system.

27. Some of them are mentioned in K. Dowden, 'Trojan Night' (in this volume).

28. In his *Homer and the Sacred City* (Ithaca 1990): 36–38 S. Scully is rather skeptical about the role of the Palladion and he is right, as far as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are concerned. We think nevertheless that the Epic Cycle and its sequels must be taken into account on this point.

29. The 'adaptability' of the mythical figure of Odysseus has been shown by W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme. A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Oxford, 1968), passim. On Odysseus' role in the theft of the Palladion, see sch. b to *Il* 6.311, and Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*: 642–646.

30. [Ap.], *Ep.* 5.13 : see K. Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology* (London, 1992):143.

31. Paus. 1.28 ; Polyæn 1.5. In his *Parallels*, Plutarch says even that the episode of Ilos' blinding for taking the Palladion away from Athena's shrine was repeated in Rome with Antylus or Metellus who took it from the temple of Vesta : Buxton, 'Blindness and Limits': 30. The legend about the poet Stesichorus, who went blind when he composed a song against Helen, and recovered his sight after his Palinody, is another parallel (Buxton, 'Blindness and Limits': 32).

32. Verg. *Aen.* 2, cf. n. 25 ; D. H. 1.79.

33. See Buxton, 'Blindness and Limits,' 33–35, who claims an inspiration from Lévi-Strauss' *Savage Mind* (1966 for the translation in English).

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## *Chapter Twelve*

### **Blindness as Punishment\***

Ariadni Tatti-Gartzou

In Callimachus' hymn to Athena known as «Bath of Pallas», after Teiresias' transgression of appearing before the naked goddess, the poet presents Athena defending his blindness to his mother:

Ἐγὼ δὲ οὗτοι τέκνον ἔθηκα ἀλαόν.  
οὐ γὰρ Ἀθηναίᾳ γλυκερὸν πέλει ὄμματα παίδων  
ἄρπάζειν· Κρόνοιοι δὲ λέγονται νόμοι·  
ὅς κε τιν' ἀθανάτων, ὅκα μὴ θεὸς αὐτὸς ἔληται,  
ἀθρήσῃ, μισθῷ τοῦτον ἰδεῖν μεγάλῳ (lines 98–102).

It was not I who blinded your son  
It is not Athena's pleasure to snatch children's eyes  
This is what Cronos' laws ordain:  
Whosoever gazes upon an immortal without the god choosing  
This man pays a terrible price for seeing the god<sup>1</sup>.

With these words, Athena justifies her decision, unpleasant as it is, even to herself. Her action, according to her line of reasoning, is founded on ancient laws going back to the time of Cronos<sup>2</sup>. The reference to the laws of Cronos links, in an automatic way, the issue of punishment with a certain kind of law, which, indeed, is rooted in a very ancient era characterized by both justice and cruelty.<sup>3</sup>

And if the laws of Cronos (simultaneously harsh and just), determine Teiresias' fate in Callimachus, one wonders what happens in other occasions.

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\* I am indebted to my son Alexios Tattis, and to my friends Soteroula Constantinidou and Christos Pistofidis for their help in adapting this text into English.

This is exactly the question that I will attempt to answer. To be more exact, my question is whether the deprivation of vision is part of a system of justice, and whether this mention by Callimachus has a particular significance within the framework of the hymn. To the extent that blindness appears as punishment, was there in existence a legal system regulating the imposition and enforcement of this particular punishment? Who was responsible for the execution of the punishment and what were the conditions or the norms that delineated the whole framework?

Since we do not come across the concept of blindness as punishment in a real, historical level, in other words as a legal act<sup>4</sup>, with the exception of the Lokroi<sup>5</sup>, it seems to me that it is interesting to examine how the mythical thought has conceptualized the institutional framework and the rules that determine the imposition of this particular punishment.

There is no reason to repeat that within a culture of light, as was the ancient Greek, the deprivation of vision signifies the loss of life and that within the same culture, blindness is a complex state, since blind (*τυφλός*) is both he who does not see but also he who is not visible, he who cannot be seen<sup>6</sup>. Accordingly, the deprivation of vision constitutes a very severe punishment, which refers to the total relationship of the ancient Greek with the world that surrounds him. On the other hand, it would be wrong to claim that the institutionalization of such a punishment implies a negative stance or attitude of the ancient Greek society towards blindness. As Rose has insisted, blind people were far from exceptional<sup>7</sup>. Diseases of the eyes, due to pathological causes like old age, war wounds etc., were very common.

A first category, which has already been studied by R. Buxton<sup>8</sup>, and E. Bernidaki-Aldous<sup>9</sup> includes seers and poets.<sup>10</sup> As in the case of Demodokos (*Od.* 7. 62 ff.) the Muse deprived him of eyesight, but bestowed upon him the gift of sweet song. I will simply underline that in all these cases blindness is nothing more than a etiological myth explaining the source of the specialized knowledge that these individuals gained or were given in a reciprocal sense. In this category, what is important is not the transgression and its punishment, but rather the gained gift in reference to which there are rules that determine what is allowed to be revealed.

In a second category belong those who have crossed the limits of human behavior in relation to the divine powers. In the *Iliad*, Lykourgos is blinded by Zeus due to his impious behavior towards the gods and because he was hated by all (*Il.* 6. 138–140: Καί μιν τυφλὸν ἔθηκε Κρόνου πάϊς). The Muses, daughters of Zeus, punished Thamyris in the course of a song contest due to his attempt to challenge their musical skills (*Il.* 2. 599): αἱ δὲ χολωσάμεναι πηρὸν θέσαν<sup>11</sup>. Aepytos, the son of Hippothous entered the sanctuary of Poseidon at Mantinea, into which no mortal was allowed to pass: on entering he was



struck blind and shortly after this calamity he died (Paus. 8. 5.4–5). Phineus was punished with blindness by the gods, because he revealed their secrets to the humans (Apoll. Rh. *Arg.* 2. 180–81, 212–246–47, 311–316, 342–343, 390–391). This punishment was enforced either by Poseidon because Phineus showed the correct way to Frixos (Hes. fr. 157 M.-W.) or by Helios, because he chose a long life instead of the light of the sun (Hes. fr. 157 M.-W., Schol. in Ap. Rhod. 2. 178–182 b), or by the Voreades because he had blinded their sons (Orf. *Arg.* 671–676, Apoll. 3. 15. 3 ).<sup>12</sup> Erymanthos was blinded because he saw Aphrodite while bathing (Ptol. Heph. in *Phot. Bibl. cod.* 190, 146–147). Ilos was blinded because he stole the Palladion as did Metellus in Rome (both stories in Plut. *Parall. Greac. et Rom.* 17 = *Moralia* 309 F–310). Anchises, after having boasted about his union with Aphrodite, was struck by a thunderbolt and was blinded (Serv. *Aen.* 2. 35, 687, Hyginus, *Fab.* 94).

In all these cases, those punished had crossed the allowed limits of getting involved with the divine world and broke the divine laws.<sup>13</sup> Blindness is an appropriate penalty for seeing what is not *themis* for mortals to see. Yet, what interests us, namely who and in what way administers the punishment is quite intriguing. It becomes instantly apparent that the punishment is imposed by Zeus, Hera, Artemis, Aphrodite, Poseidon the Muses etc., namely by this divine ‘generation’ that appeared after or simultaneously with the domination of Zeus, who put order in place and determined the borderline between the divine and the human world. Let us recall the punishment of Sisyphus, Tantalus and others through which Zeus delineated the distance between men and gods. Accordingly, through blindness as punishment, norms are put in place, limits in relation to human deeds are determined and the stance of men towards the gods is clarified and sealed within a divine framework.

At the same time, the power of the gods in imposing justice in all human activities becomes obvious, a power rooted on the force, the omnipotence of their own gaze as is stressed by the phrase θεῶν ὅτιν οὐκ ἀλέγοντες, translated as not being able to face the view, the eyes of the gods and where the term «*opis*» has become synonymous with divine revenge and punishment.<sup>14</sup>

The omnipotence of the gods explains, in a sense, the fact that in all these examples the way that blindness is actually imposed is unclear. Only in the case of Teiresias it is well known that Athena was the one who committed the act of blinding (Apoll. 3.6.7: Τὴν δὲ ταῖς χερσὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ καταλαβομένην πηρὸν ποιῆσαι) and Hera (κατανύζει αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς καὶ ποιῆσαι τυφλόν, Hesiod, fr. 275 M.-W.)

A third category of blindness as punishment is related to the framework of *oikos*. Amphissa or Metope is blinded by her father for her sexual union with a man and she is put in a ‘dark hut.’ Melanippe is blinded and imprisoned with a small amount of food and water in a tomb by her father (Hyg. *Fab.* 186).<sup>15</sup>

An unknown youth was accused of falsely seeking the favors of his father's concubine and was blinded and imprisoned (Σούδα s.v. Αναγυράσιος). Eidothea, Phineus' second wife, took out her stepsons' eyes when they spun her sexual advances (Sophocles, *Antigone* 966 ff.). The punishment of Phoenix seems also similar. He was blinded and exiled due to incest with his father's concubine (Apoll. 3.175). In the same category belong several variations of the myth of Phineus, as it becomes apparent in Sophoclean *Antigone*, where Phineus' sons were blinded by their stepmother.

The individual responsible for the administration of the punishment in these examples is usually the father or the victim of the sexual assault. Since the punishment of blindness is often linked with imprisonment or stoning<sup>16</sup> (when Daphnis rejects the love of the Nymph Nomia she punishes him by blinding and by transforming him into stone, Ov. *Met.* 4. 276 ff.), it is obvious that we are dealing with the administration of a human system of law. We would even agree with Deborah Steiner that through this punishment, what is achieved is to exile the perpetrator from the community.<sup>17</sup> The isolation has a double effect: the perpetrator is punished and he is also expelled from the polis as a 'miasma,' so that other individuals cannot become infected by his presence.

The clearest example of this category, leaving aside its particularities due to its dramaturgical exploitation by the poets of tragedy, is Oedipus. According to the Aeschylus' version, Oedipus, being a miasma himself due to his marriage decided to work a twofold ill (*The Seven*, 782 ff.). He blinded himself and he put a curse to his sons. In other words, he erased both himself and his sons from the Lavdakides. According to Sophocles (in *Oedipus Rex*, 1268 ff.), Oedipus blinds himself with Iocasta's dress-pins, because he no longer wants to be seen by others or to look upon his crimes (lines 12171 ff.: ὁθύνεκ' οὐκ ὄψοιντό νιν / οὔθ' οἷ' ἔπασχεν οὔθ' ὅποια ἔδρα κακά, / ἀλλ' ἐν σκότῳ τὸ λοιπὸν οὗς μὲν οὐκ ἔδει/ ὀψοίαθ' οὗς δὲ ἔχρηζεν οὐ γνωσοίατο).<sup>18</sup>

He also states that he would prefer to be expelled from the boundaries of the land (1340, 1436) and be hidden from the sight of men, or to be put in a place where he would not see those he should not see, since he is no longer able to face his mother, the city, the towers and the statues of the gods (lines 1371 ff.: ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ οἶδ' ὄμμασιν ποίοις βλέπων/ πατέρα ποτ' ἄν προσεῖδον εἰς Ἄιδου μολών, / Οὐδ' αὖ τάλαιναι μῆτερ'....).<sup>19</sup>

Consequently, through his own decision Oedipus blinds himself, punishes himself into blindness in both terms of the word. He wants to go away from the oikos in order not to be seen and also not to see his fellow citizens. What sets the case of Oedipus apart from other cases of the same category is that he carries out the execution of his own punishment and decides to be blinded and removed from the oikos of Thebes. Given that blindness, patricide and

incest are inscribed in the context of shame and pollution (1440–42, 1436–37), Oedipus personally undertakes deliverance from his heavy sins.

However, if the whole of an *oikos* imposes rules according to which its members should be isolated with the punishment of blindness, the mythical thought of ancient Greeks has imposed the same punishment to those who ignore the rules of a social group (fourth category).

To use an example from Euripides' *Hecuba*: Polymestor is punished with blindness because he did not respect the rules of hospitality (803–804, 1234–1235).<sup>20</sup> Snatching the pins from their garments<sup>21</sup>, the Queen's servants attack the eyes of Polymestor and made them turn full of blood (1169 ff).

Even more obvious is the case of Cyclops in the homonymus satyr play of Euripides, where Odysseus uses a concept of Athenian law telling Polyphemus that he is punished because of his unholy banquet (line 693: δώσσειν δ' ἔμελλες ἀνοσίου δαιτὸς δίκας). The blindness of the main character in a context of justice stresses the importance of the institutions that must be respected by both parties. The answer of Cyclops (line 699: δίκας ὑφέξειν ἀντὶ τῶν δ' ἐθέσπισεν) that Odysseus will be punished and suffer at sea for his wrongdoings, is inscribed in a judicial context.

This scheme is already present in the *Odyssey*. Here, the lack of norms and of respect for the laws of hospitality, constitutes the reasons for Odysseus blinding Polyphemus (*Od.* 10. 477–479). This is a very particular scene that is rendered in many details. It is probably the only scene in ancient literature where the exact process of piercing the eyes is described: 16 verses for the description itself and 10 verses for the cries, the pain and the bloodshed that follows (*Od.* 9. 382 ff.).<sup>22</sup> Certainly, in Homeric times, human acts are dictated by the will of gods; it is thus stated very clearly at the end, that the administration of justice is a work of Zeus and other gods (*Od.* 9. 479: τῷ σε Ζεὺς τίσατο καὶ θεοὶ ἄλλοι).

Another social example is the case of a Thracian king who blinds his sons when they break faith with their father's prohibition of not becoming allies with Xerxes' armies (*Hdt.* 8. 116. 2–117.1: Ἐξώρυξεν αὐτῶν ὁ πατὴρ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ... καὶ οὗτοι μὲν τοῦτον τὸν μισθὸν ἔλαβον). A certain Telesphorus was punished by the king Lysimachus with blindness (Plutarch *Moralia* 606 B), cutting off the nose, the tongue and the ears as a result of treason (Athenaeus 16. 616 c tells that Telesphorus is punished for jesting about Lysimachus' wife). According to Apollodorus (2. 168), Yllos beheaded Eurystheus and Alcmene gouged out his eyes with weaving pins.

The last myth that I want to mention is that of the shepherd Euenius. According to Herodotus (9. 92–95), one night Euenius fell asleep during his watch and wolves slipped past him into the cave and killed about sixty of the sheep of the flock. This event was not hidden from the people of Apollonia,

and when it came to their knowledge they hold him to judgment and condemned him to lose his eyesight for sleeping during his watch (καὶ οὐ γὰρ ἔλαθε τοὺς Ἀπολωνιήτας ταῦτα γενόμενα, ἀλλὰ ὥς ἐπύθοντο, ὑπαγαγόντες μιν ὑπὸ δικαστήριον κατέκρινον, ὥς τὴν φυλακὴν κατακοιμίσαντα, τῆς ὄψιος στερηθῆναι).<sup>23</sup> After they blinded him, because the sheep stopped giving birth and the earth ceased to deliver fruit, they asked the oracle of Dodone and Delphes about it and were given the answer that they had done unjustly in blinding Evenius (ἐπεῖτε δὲ τὸν Εὐήνιον ἐξετύφλωσαν, αὐτίκα μετὰ ταῦτα οὔτε πρόβατά σφι ἔτικτε οὔτε γῇ ἔφερε ὁμοίως καρπὸν. πρόφαντα δὲ σφι ἔν τε Δωδώνῃ καὶ ἐν Δελφοῖσι ἐγίνετο, ...ὅτι ἀδίκως τὸν φύλακον τῶν ἱρῶν προβάτων Εὐήνιον τῆς ὄψιος ἐστέρησαν).

And they said that they are not going to cease from avenging him until he stands trial and defends himself (οὐ πρότερόν τε παύσασθαι τιμωρέοντες ἐκείνῳ πρὶν ἢ δίκας δῶσι τῶν ἐποίησαν ταύτας τὰς ἂν αὐτὸς ἔληται καὶ δικαιοῖ... ταύτῃ δὲ ὑπάγοντες εἰρώτων τίνα δίκην ἂν ἔλοιτο, εἰ ἐθέλοιεν Ἀπολλωνιῆται δίκας ὑποστήναι δώσειν τῶν ἐποίησαν).

What is very interesting is the fact that the whole procedure related to blindness in these examples follows a typical judicial setting. Also, the conceptual matrix in use is that of the legal system of a city that collectively regulates the wrongs of the citizens. Of course, Euenius, who failed in what was his main duty (to remain awake), was ultimately held innocent by the gods. The ambiguity between human and divine law is more than obvious.<sup>24</sup> The inclusion of the punishment of Euenius in the judicial system of the city, marks a change of policy: problems are now tackled with social institutions.

In summarizing the categories presented so far, it is easy to conclude that the punishment of blindness is a symbolic means for stating the isolation of the perpetrators either from the divine or the human society. One can observe a very wide range of cases, where, depending on the circumstances, either the divine or the human laws are applied, and the punishment is administered by gods or even by humans within a precise institutional framework. The example of Phineus is very useful, since the relevant mythological variations cover both cases.

A last observation takes us back to our initial question, namely how is it possible to conceptualise the laws of Cronos referred to by Callimachus. It seems, therefore, that the poet has formulated his own system for administering the punishment of blinding, borrowing elements from almost all the previous categories. From the moment that Teiresias crosses the limit by looking the naked body of the goddess, his natural punisher would be Athena, as in older versions. The poet, however, resorts to a kind of law, a characteristic of the other categories, thus making the callimachian punishment of Teiresias an

extraordinary case. Taking the blame off Athena, who abides by the laws of primordial deity, Cronus, the poet merges all the previous categories by referring them back to the remotest past.

It is known that the era of Cronos, an ambiguous era (referred to as the golden era), precedes that of Zeus in which the rules of distinguishing gods and men are put in place. It is also known that the mythical figure of Teiresias is famous for sex transformations and as a mediator par excellence.

If in the preceding tradition Athena, or Hera, or Zeus were the punishers of Teiresias, here Athena becomes free of any responsibility. Accordingly, what comes to the forefront is the positive power of the goddess who will provide the ultimate forgiveness<sup>25</sup> by presenting blindness as a gift and transforming Teiresias into a mediator of the wishes of the gods. The Blinding of Teiresias is the greatest gift to the son of Chariclo (lines 101–102):

ὅς κε τιν' ἀθανάτων, ὅκα μὴ αὐτὸς ἔληται,  
 ἀθρήσῃ, μισθῷ τοῦτον ἰδεῖν μεγάλῳ  
 Whosoever look upon one of the gods, when the god does not  
 choose,  
 Will see the god at a great price.<sup>26</sup>

Praising both Athena for her ability to look sharply<sup>27</sup> and Teiresias for seeing despite being blind (τυφλὸν ἰδέσθαι 109)<sup>28</sup>, the poet leads to a literary trick more complex than a simple game of looking/not looking. Placing the facts in a very ancient era he incorporates the elements of the myth into his own aim. By describing the secret ritual of Athena's Bath the poet brings to light the invisible. Through this trick, Callimachus demands for himself his induction to the realm of the great poets, the blind poets.

## NOTES

1. Text and Translation, A.W. Bulloch, *Callimachus. The Fifth Hymn. Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

2. In Pherecydes' version Athena was physically responsible for Teiresias' blinding (*FGrHist* 3 F 92). For all the versions, see L. Brisson, *Le mythe de Tirésias. Essais d'analyse structurale* (Leiden, 1976), K. Zimmerman, *LIMC*, VIII, 1 (Suppl.) s.v. Teiresias (1997), 1288 ff. Cl. Calame, 'Tirésias dans un hymne alexandrin,' in *Poétique des mythes dans la Grèce antique* (Paris 2000): 169–205. N. Loraux, 'Ce que vit Tirésias,' *Les expériences de Tirésias. Le féminin et l'homme grec* (Paris 1989): 253–271. E. Σιστάκου, «Το παιχνίδι των αισθήσεων στον Ύμνο της Παλλάδος του Καλλιμάχου,» *Ξένη Σκαρτσή, Η ποίηση των ύμνων, Πρακτικά εικοστού τέταρτου Συμποσίου ποίησης, Πανεπιστήμιο Πατρών 2–4 Ιουλίου 2004* (Patras 2005): 62–75.

3. K.J.Mc Kay, *The Poet at Play, Kallimachos, the Bath of Pallas, Mnemosyne* Suppl. 6 (Leiden, 1962), 43 ff., 75 argues that this law belongs to a cruel age. Bulloch, *Callimachus. The Fifth Hym*, 212 refers to the ancient laws. But the age of Cronos is ambiguous. See Plato, *Laws* 4, 713b-e for the age of justice and Aristophanes' *Nubes*, 398 and Plato's *Eythudymos*, 287b 2–3 for an age of decadence. For the age of Cronos, see H.S. Versnel, 'Kronos and the Kronia,' in *Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual, Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion II*, ed. H. S. Versnel (Leiden, New York, Köln 1994): 89–135, E.D. Serbeti, *LIMC*, VI, 1, s.v. Kronos, (1992), 142 ff.

4. For the system of punishment in ancient Greece, see D.S. Allen, *The World of Prometheus. The Politics of Punishing in Democratic Athens* (Princeton, New York, 2000), E. Cantarella, *I supplici capitali in Grecia e a Roma* (Milano, 1991) [French Translation: N. Gallet, *Les Peines de mort en Grèce et à Rome. Origines et fonctions des supplices capitaux dans l'Antiquité*, (Paris, 1991, 1996)].

5. The earliest record of Greek judicial blinding was by Zaleukos in Lokroi in the seventh century for punishing adultery (Val. Max. 6.5.7) and by Charondas, cf. E.M. Tetlow, *Women, Crime, and Punishment in Ancient Law and Society*, in *Ancient Greece* Vol. II (London, 2005), 19 'he assigned penalties of gorral mutilation, such as amputation of one or both eyes in case of assault or violence.'

6. For the way of seeing in ancient Greece and the fundamental role of vision, see G. Simon, *Le regard, l'être et l'apparence dans l'Optique de l'Antiquité* (Paris, 1988)· E. Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light. Especially the Case of Oedipus at Colonus of Sophocles*, (New York, Bern, Frankfurt, Paris, Md.: American University Studies, Series xvii, 1990), 11ff· *Études sur la vision dans l'Antiquité classique*, ed. L. Villard (Md.: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2005)· S. Constantinidou, 'The Vision of Homer: The Eyes of Heroes and Gods,' *Antichthon* 28 (1994): 1–15· S. Constantinidou, 'Homeric Eyes in a Ritual Context,' *Δωδώνη* 23 (1994): 59–65· Ch. Darbo-Peschanski, 'La folie pour un regard. Oreste et les divinités de l'échnage (Érinnyes, Euménides, Charites),' *Mètis*, (N.S. 2006): 13–28, esp. 22 note 34.

7. M.L. Rose, *The Staff of Oedipus. Transforming Disability in Ancient Greece* (Ann Arbor, Md.: The University of Michigan Press, 2003, 2006<sup>4</sup>).

8. R.G.A. Buxton, 'Blindness and Limits: Sophokles and the Logic of Myth,' *JHS* 100 (1980): 22–37.

9. A. Esser, *Das Anlitz der Blintheit in der Antike* (Leiden, 1961<sup>2</sup>), 56–72· G. Devereux, 'The Self-Blinding of Oedipus in Sophocles: Oidipus Tyrannos,' *JHS* 93 (1973): 36–49 for blindness as punishment especially for sexual crimes, Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light*, 60 ff.

10. See also, Fr. Létoublon, in this volume.

11. A. Necessian, *LIMC*, VII, s.v. Thamyris, Thamyras (1994), 903 ff.

12. For Phineus, who was also blinded by the Argonauts according to Apollodorus 1. 9.21, Diodorus 4.44.4, see Sophocles, fr. 704–719, Radt 4, D. Bouvier, Ph. Moreau, 'Phinée ou le père aveugle et la marâtre aveuglante,' *RBPhH* 61 (1983): 5–19, A. Kossatz-Deissmann, *LIMC*, VII, 1, s.v. Phineus I, (1994), 387 ff., Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light*, 61 ff., Buxton, *Blindness and Limits*, 28 ff.

13. Bernidaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light*, 71.



14. On the contrary W. Burkert, 'ΘΕΩΝ ΟΠΙΝ ΟΥΚ ΑΛΕΓΟΝΤΕΣ. Götterfurch und Leumannsches Missverständniss,' *MH* 38 (1981): 195–204 [= *Kleine Schriften I, Homérica*, Her. von Christofer Riedweg, et al., *Hypomnemata Suppl.-Reihe*; Bd 2 (Göttingen, 2001), 95–104] thinks that the phrase θεῶν ὅπιν οὐκ ἀλέγοντες (*Il.* 16, 388, *Od.* 14, 88, etc.), is not connected with ὅψις but with ὀπισθεν.
15. R. Seaford, 'The Imprisonment of Women in Greek Tragedy,' *JHS* 90 (1990): 76–90, esp. 84.
16. For stoning, see J.V. Rosivach, 'Execution by Stoning in Athens,' *CA* 6 (1987): 232–49; D.T. Steiner, 'Stoning and Sight: A Structural Equivalence in Greek Mythology,' *CA* 14 (1995): 194–211.
17. Steiner, 'Stoning and Sight,' 205.
18. Steiner, 'Stoning and Sight,' 205, 207.
19. Text A.C. Pearson, *Sophocles Fabulae* (Oxford 1924, 1971<sup>11</sup>).
20. A.M. Mesturini, 'Tracce di torie ottiche nell' Ecuba euripidea,' *SIFC* 4 (1986): 207–209; R. Meridor, 'The Function of Polymestor's Crime in the *Hecuba* of Euripides,' *Eranos* 81 (1983): 13–20; C. Collard, 'Euripides' *Hecuba* 1056–1106: Monody of the Blinded Polymestor,' in *Estudios actuales sobre textos griegos, II jornadas internacionales, UNED, 25–28 Octubre 1989*, ed. J. A. López Férez (Madrid 1991), 161–173.
21. For the use of the pins, see J. Gregory, *Euripides: Hecuba. Introduction, Text and Commentary*, (Atlanta, Md.: American Philological Association, 1999), 183 ad 1170 (πόρπαξ).
22. Depiction of the blinding of Cyclops is preserved on some vases from the seventh and fifth centuries, see N. Icard-Gianolio, *LIMC*, VI, 1, s.v. Kyklops, Kyklopes, (1992), 154 ff., ns 17–20. According to M. Buchan, *The Limits of Heroism. Homer and the Ethics of Reading* (Ann Arbor, Md.: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 21 'the removal of his central eye destroys his wholeness and introduces him to a world beyond his previous self-sufficiency.'
23. Text C. Hude, *Herodoti Historiae* (Oxford 1988, 1966<sup>11</sup>).
24. C. Grottanelli, 'L'Événios d'Hérodote, ix 92–95, mauvais pasterur, fameux devin,' *Métis* 9–10 (1994–1995): 79–98.
25. J. R. Heath, 'The Blessing of Epiphany in Callimachus' Bath of Pallas,' *CA* 19 (1988): 72–90, 90 ff.
26. For the use of μισθῶ in the context of punishment, cf. Hdt. 8. 117.1.
27. A.D. Morrison, 'Sexual Ambiguity and the Identity of Narrator in Callimachus' Hymn to Athena,' *BICS* 48 (2005): 27–46, esp. 44.
28. Cl. Calame, 'Tirésias dans un hymne alexandrin,' 190.

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*Part IV*

**BEING AND BEYOND**



## *Chapter Thirteen*

# **Light and Darkness and Archaic Greek Cosmography**

Nanno Marinatos

### **COSMOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The object of this chapter is to address the issue of light and darkness and its relationship to the topography and cosmology of Homer, Hesiod and Mimnermus. It will be argued that there are three ways to describe light or its absence: sun-light, night (defined as absence of sunlight), and darkness as a quality of the beyond. The latter differs from the other two and receives a different name as *erebos* and *zophos*. We shall see that, despite some slight variations in our texts, a fairly coherent cosmography may be reconstructed (see figure 13.2).

### **ODYSSEUS' JOURNEY TO HADES**

Odysseus's journey to the afterworld is described twice. First Circe announces to him that he must cross the river ocean by ship and leave the world of the living behind. Then, she says, he will come to the opposite bank, at the grove of Persephone where he will leave his ship. Next, he will proceed on foot to Hades until he reaches a spot where two rivers, Kokytos and Pyriphlegethon, meet and flow into Acheron. The confluence of the two rivers is marked by a stone; at this spot he is to dig a pit and invoke the dead from under the earth (see figure 13.1).

The second description of this journey stems from Odysseus himself (11. 1–22). He and his men sailed to the end of the ocean and arrived at the *demos* of the Kimmerians, a community enveloped in a cloud of perpetual mist,

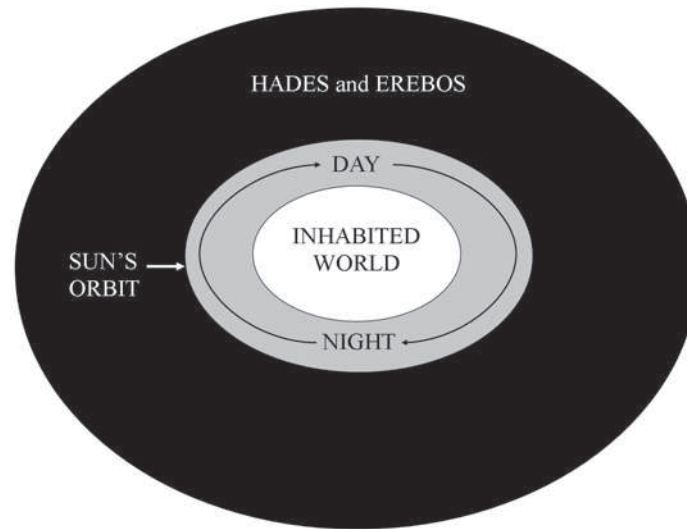


Figure 13.1. Hades and Erebus

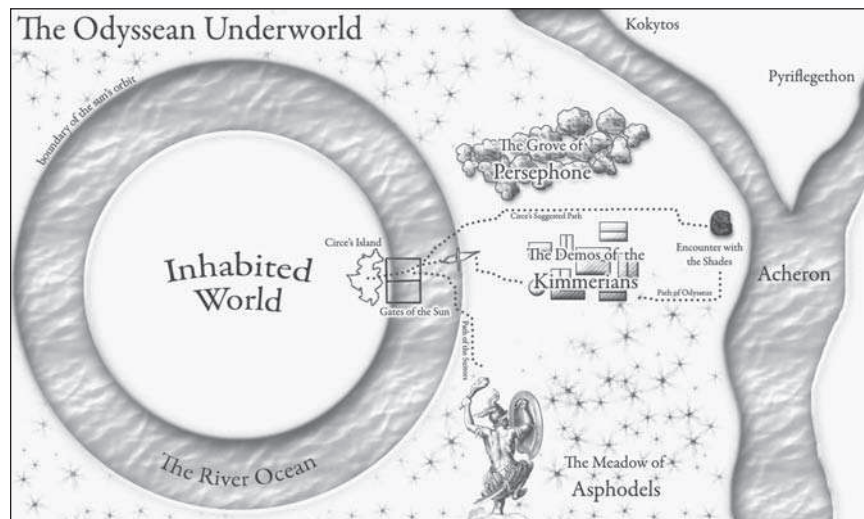


Figure 13.2. Odyssey Underworld Map Routes

never penetrated by the sun's rays. The Kimmerians, according to this story, are not located at the north, as already some later ancient authors seemed to have thought (cf. Hdt. 4. 11), but *on the other side* of the cosmic river ocean.<sup>1</sup> It is important to note already here that the region beyond the ocean river is

not illuminated by the sun, since the latter has been left behind. Consequently, some kind of twilight illuminates Odysseus's steps ahead. As we shall see, this is the *erebos* of Hades. Finally, the party walked along the banks of the river and reached the spot where they met the shades.

In both descriptions, the journey is imagined as taking place on a *horizontal* level and *not* as a descent. Three basic steps are involved. Step one entails the crossing of the ocean; step two involves a walk along the banks of the ocean; step three is the arrival at the confluence of two rivers. Step four involves digging a pit. Of all the steps, the first one is the most crucial since it requires the crossing of the river, the boundary between the living and the dead.

We get a third description of the journey in the last book of the *Odyssey*. This time the travelers are the souls (*psychai*) of the murdered suitors led by Hermes. They too walk along the bank of the river ocean, pass by a white rock, then come to the gates of the sun, pass the demos of dreams and finally arrive at meadow of asphodels (24. 10–14).<sup>2</sup> These series of landmarks differ from those described by Circe, and yet they do not contradict her narrative since in all cases the river ocean is the boundary. Here too there is no mention of descent.

A map of the Odyssean afterworld has been reconstructed on the basis of these narratives on figure 13.1. The river ocean is the great boundary between the living and the other world. Parallels may be found in Near Eastern literature.<sup>3</sup>

We also see that the ocean is at the edges of the inhabited world, according to Hesiod and Homer (Hes. *Th.* 242; Hom. *Il.* 14. 200–1). Along its banks we find not only the dead, but also the blessed dead. This means that the ocean is the end of one world; at the same time, it is the beginning of another.

## THE GATES OF THE SUN

What is the space occupied by the sun in these two worlds? It will be argued that the sun exists only within the created universe, contained within the boundaries circumscribed by ocean. The latter is the boundary of the sun's orbit. Therefore the sun does not go to Hades according to Archaic cosmology; note however that this changes already with Pindar, who mentions that the sun shines in afterworld (*Olympian* 2. 110).

In the last book of the *Odyssey*, the souls of the suitors travel along the banks of the ocean and pass by the gate of the sun (*Od.* 24. 12), which means that the boundaries of the inhabited universe were marked by the sun-gate. There is no mention of the sun crossing of the ocean. But there is even stronger evidence that he does not go to Hades. The key is a passage in the *Odyssey* in which the sun expresses his displeasure with the gods because Odysseus's

men have killed his cows. He threatens to go on strike and shine among the dead. Zeus is worried and sees to it that the order of the universe is maintained immediately by granting the sun his wishes (12. 377–88). It is thus clear that the sun's presence in Hades is a sign of cosmic disorder.

Next Circe's island will be discussed; it will be shown that it is a kind of gate of the sun because it is close to sunrise and sunset. That the west and east points may collapse into one single location is counter-intuitive; nevertheless this is made clear in the text. Odysseus is disorientated on Circe's island because he cannot discern where the sun rises and where it sets. 'My friends,' he says, 'we do not know where East is, nor where the bright sun goes down under the earth' (10. 190–92; transl. E. V. Rieu). It follows from this passage that east and west are very close together; so close, in fact, that Odysseus cannot tell them apart. This puzzle is solved, if we envisage Circe's isle as an interface between the inhabited world and Hades. It is a conceptual scheme by which the passage of the sun is imagined as a double gate and not as a geographical polarity. Two pieces of evidence support this view. Firstly, Hesiod talks about the House of Night as being very close to the House of Day and describes the paths of day and night as contiguous (*Th.* 750–56). Secondly, the Egyptians imagined the passage of the dead and the sun as passing through a double gate.

It is thus comprehensible that Homer saw Circe's island as a passage for the sun's course from day to night and as the boundary of the inhabited universe beyond which lies the beyond. This makes Circe a kind of guardian of the boundary. She deters anybody from passing through her island to Hades; but if anyone passes, as Odysseus and his men do, they must return there before they go on with their journey (see figure 13.1).

There is more evidence that the sun does not cross the ocean. When Odysseus and his men sail away from the island of Circe, the sun sets and does not rise again until the return of the company from the beyond (12. 8). Thus, Odysseus seems to have moved *beyond* the realm of the sun's orbit when he sails across the ocean to Hades.<sup>4</sup>

With this scheme we understand why Circe's island is named the house of dawn and the rising sun (12. 3–4), or the 'ground of the dances of dawn.' Circe herself is a progeny of the sun (10. 138).

We conclude that the expression 'gates of the sun' in the *Odyssey* (24. 12) affirms that the boundaries of the sun's orbit are by the river ocean. But now another question arises: If the sun does not go to Hades where does he go at night?

A fragment of Mimnermus supplies us with the answer. The sun sleeps in a golden chamber by the banks of the ocean (Mimnermus, *fr.* 7, Edmonds). We are further told that the sun sleeps at night in a winged barque made by



Hephaistus himself. He travels along the ocean from the west, the land of Hesperides, to the east, the land of the Ethiopians. In short, the sun travels along the river from west to east and then climbs upwards. It is important to stress that in no case does he *cross* the ocean; he travels along it and climbs up the vault of heaven (*fr.* 10, Edmonds). The universe is envisaged as three dimensional in Mimnermus.

By combining the narrative of the *Odyssey* with Hesiod and the fragment of Mimnermus, we have reached three important conclusions. First, that the beyond is imagined as lying on the other side of a boundary. Second, that there is also a vertical dimension to the cosmos as is clear from Mimnermus. Third, Hades is a sunless universe.

### TARTAROS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE UNIVERSE

Now we move to Tartaros, a puzzling place. Where is it located? On the one hand, it is clearly imagined in the bottom of a universe. It is an abominable place, a pit extremely broad and deep. 'Broad Tartaros is deep' says Zeus to Hera in the *Iliad* (8. 477–81). In another passage, it is specified that Tartaros is as deep below Hades as the sky is high above the earth (*Il.* 8. 13–16 cf. also 8. 478–81; 14. 279). Hesiod modifies this spatial description just a little, saying that it is located as far below the earth as the earth is below the sky. He divides the vertical stretch into nine units, corresponding to nine nights and days. If an anvil fell from heaven, he writes, it would arrive in Tartaros on the tenth (*Th.* 719–21). Thus, both Homer and Hesiod posit a vertical dimension of the universe with Tartaros at its bottom. Pindar describes it as deep (*bathys*; *Paian* 4. 40).

On the other hand, Hesiod says it is at the *ends of the earth* (*esxata gaies*), which might be taken to imply a horizontal, flat universe (*Th.* 731, 807–14). In one passage, Hesiod describes both a horizontal and a vertical axis simultaneously: *under* the earth and at its *edges*, at its *limits* (*hypo chthoni, ep eschatie megales en peirasi gaies*, *Th.* 617–23). Homer in the *Iliad* locates Tartaros at the edges of the earth (*peirata gaies*) (*Il.* 8. 478–81).

There can be only one possible conclusion: the vertical and the horizontal models are not incompatible but complementary. The universe is three dimensional.

Consider also an additional passage which has to do with the location of Thetis's home in the *Iliad*. We get a description of both her upward journey from a cave at the bottom of the sea to the heights of heaven, and the other way around, from the depths of the sea to the heights of Olympus (*Il.* 1. 496–97, 24. 95–99). This is clearly a vertical journey. However, we also get the information from Hephaistos's mouth that her habitat is situated *next* to

the river Ocean, by its ineffable streams (*Il.* 18. 402–5). Since the Ocean is located at the edges of the universe, we may ask the question how can Thetis live both *under* and *beyond*?

Again, the answer must be that the inhabited universe is three dimensional, and that it is imagined as a sphere, perhaps like an onion with many layers. The ocean would surround the inhabited world like the outer layer of an onion. It would contain and surround the orbit of the sun, in the sense that the sun moves only within this sphere. But there is an additional layer outside the ocean, this is Hades and Erebos and Zofos, to which we shall turn next. One more question must be asked before that, however. Is Tartaros limited or limitless? Despite the fact that it is deep and broad, Hesiod does suggest that it is confined within walls of bronze; night pours around him; above it is the bottom of the earth and sea. (*Th.* 726–28).

### NYX, EREBOS, ZOPHOS

Erebos is a very interesting concept. In the unabridged version of Liddell -Scott it is defined as a path from Hades. In the abridged version (1994) it is ‘a place of nether darkness, above the still deeper Hades.’

None of these definitions can be right. Erebos is nowhere a path, nor is it above Hades. West’s definition is much more precise. He says that erebos is a region of darkness as opposed to the realm of light. He notes that *erebos* as well as *zofos* are Semitic loanwords derived from ereb and s.bi (sps= zfs=zofos) signifying the going down of the sun.<sup>5</sup> This is a good starting point. Erebos may be defined as the ‘complete absence of sunlight’ to be distinguished from night (*nyx*) which bears within herself the potential of day.

This differentiation matches very well the genealogy of lineage in the deities in Hesiod’s *Theogony*. Erebos is one of the primeval deities born directly from Chaos (*Th.* 123).<sup>6</sup> It is clearly distinguished from Nyx, its sister and consort. Erebos, then, may be defined as primeval perpetual darkness as is also Nyx, although the latter is female and gives birth to day (*Th.* 125).

The primeval darkness may be equated with both Hades and Tartaros. Hesiod mentions that an insolent man is thrown into *erebos* (*Th.* 515); this clearly means netherworld here. It is not clear, however, as West notes, whether Hesiod means Hades or Tartaros; perhaps it is not so significant.<sup>7</sup>

In the *Odyssey* *erebos* designates the location from which the dead come to speak to Odysseus (*hypex’erebeus*, 11. 35). It is also used to designate direction, namely the sunset of the west (*Od.* 10. 528). Persephone is sent and brought out of *erebos* in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (*Hymn Dem.* 335, 349, 409). In Sophocles’s *Antigone*, Erebos is located under the sea (587) and

in *Oedipus at Colonus*, the hero prays to the erebos of Tartaros, as though they are the same (1390).

It is clear from the above that *erebos* became another term for the spatial designation of Hades. And although the two have different nuances, they have one important factor in common: *they are both outside the inhabited universe*. We conclude that *erebos* qualifies the region where *the sun does not reach* and which eventually becomes synonymous with Hades. If we use the analogy of the onion, *erebos* designates its outmost layer. Note that Hesiod calls it *eschatie*, the edge (*Eschatie pros Nyktos*, Th. 275)

*Zophos* means much the same. Persephone goes under at shadowy *zophos* (*Hymn Dem.* 80). ‘How have you come to shadow-like *zophos*’? Odysseus asks Elpenor, implying that *zofos* is not only a quality of light but a place as well. We also find the expression ‘turned towards *Zofos*.’<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion, light and darkness can be tied to Archaic Greek cosmology. Absence of sunlight and complete absence of light have been shown here to be two different concepts differentiated in Greek by the words *erebos/zophos* and *nyx*.

## NOTES

1. W. B. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer. Edited with General and Grammatical Introduction, Commentary and Indexes* (London, 1964); N. Marinatos, “The Cosmic Journey of Odysseus,” *Numen* 48 (2000): 383–416; S. Alexiou, “Από τον Κόσμο του Ομήρου. Θρύλος και Αλήθεια στην Γεωγραφία της Οδύσσειας,” *Nea Estia* 163 (2008): 64–76.
2. N. Marinatos, “The So-called Hell and Sinners in the *Odyssey* and Homeric Cosmology,” *Numen* 56 (2009): 185–97.
3. N. Wyatt, *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Ancient Near East. The Biblical Seminar* 85. (Sheffield, 2001), 143.
4. Marinatos, “Cosmic Journey,” 383–416.
5. M. L. West. *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Early Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997), 159.
6. West, *The East Face of Helicon*, 197.
7. M. L. West, *Hesiod Theogony: Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary* (Oxford, 1966), 308.
8. West, *The East Face of Helicon*, 153

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## Chapter Fourteen

# Mystic Light and Near-Death Experience

Richard Seaford

The closest access we have to the subjective experience of mystic initiation is the famous account preserved by Plutarch (fr. 178).

The soul on the point of death . . . has an experience like those being initiated into the great mysteries . . . At first wanderings and exhausting runnings around and certain anxious uncompleted journeys through darkness, and then before the consummation itself all the terrible things, shuddering and trembling and sweat and amazement. But after this he is met by a wonderful light ( $\phi\omega\alpha\nu\delta\varsigma$ ) received into pure places and meadows, with voices and dancing . . . now completely initiated . . . he keeps company with holy and pure men, and surveys the impure, uninitiated mass of the living as they trample on each other [i.e. on the ground]

Another crucial passage is from Euripides' *Bacchae* (605–35). It occurs just after thunderbolt and earthquake have destroyed Pentheus' house, from which Dionysos emerges.

DIONYSOS: Barbarian women, thus astounded by fear have you fallen to the ground? You felt, it seems, Dionysos shaking apart the house of Pentheus. But raise up your bodies and take courage, putting trembling from your flesh.

CHORUS: O greatest light ( $\phi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$ ) for us of the joyful-crying bacchanals, how gladly I looked on you in my isolated desolation.

DIONYSOS: Did you become faint-hearted, when I was being sent in, thinking that I would fall into the dark enclosures of Pentheus?

CHORUS: How could I not? For who would be my protector, if you met with disaster? But how were you freed, after encountering an impure man?

DIONYSOS: I save myself easily, without effort.

CHORUS: But did he not tie up your hands?

DIONYSOS: This was just how I humiliated him: thinking that he was tying me up he failed to get hold of me, but fed on hopes. And finding a bull at the manger, where he led me and imprisoned me, he tied it up, panting out his energy, dripping sweat from his body, biting his lips. But I calmly sat close by and watched. During this time Dionysos came and shook up the house and on the tomb of his mother ignited fire. And Pentheus when he saw this, thinking that the house was on fire, ruled this way and that, telling the servants to bring water . . . And abandoning this toil, thinking that I had fled, he rushed with a sword into the dark<sup>1</sup> house. And then Dionysos, as it seemed to me – made a light (φῶς) in the courtyard. And Pentheus, charging against it, rushed and stabbed the shining image as if slaughtering me . . . . . Through exhaustion he dropped the sword and collapsed.

This is just one of the very large numbers of passages in *Bacchae* that evoke the mystic initiation. What happens to the chorus of Asian maenads and Pentheus here is inexplicable as mere narrative, but makes perfect sense as a projection of mystic initiation. The correspondences with the mystic initiation described in the Plutarch passage are indicated by my underlinings in both passages. These correspondences are all the more striking given that the Plutarch passage is derived (entirely or partly) from the Eleusinian and the Euripidean (entirely or partly) from the Dionysiac mysteries.<sup>2</sup>

I have argued all this in detail elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> My concern here is confined to the *light* that appears at the culmination of both passages.

It is necessary, as a preliminary, to repair the damage done by the modern editors, who at *Bacchae* 630 accept the conjecture φᾶσμα (Jacobs). The manuscripts have φῶς. The attraction of φᾶσμα, ‘phantom,’ is that Pentheus is said to attack it, thinking that it is Dionysos. One can mistake a phantom for a person, but one cannot (it seems) mistake a light for a person. However, in this mystic context the reading of the manuscripts, φῶς makes excellent sense. The editors fail to see this because they have not recognised the multiple evocation here of mystic ritual. If the reading of the manuscripts had been φᾶσμα there would have been a very good case for emending it to the *lectio difficilior*, φῶς. As it is, we can be certain that Euripides wrote φῶς. How so?

Dionysos is, in the very same passage, identified as light. The chorus, whose experiences reflect the experience of being initiated, welcome him, in their suffering, as ‘greatest light’ (compare the ‘wonderful’ light that saves the suffering initiands in the Plutarch). The experiences of Pentheus also reflect the experience of being initiated, and he too identifies Dionysos with light. But so far from welcoming the light, as the chorus do, he attacks it. Whereas the chorus embody the mystic transition from anxiety to eternal joy described in the Plutarch, Pentheus embodies the (horrific) *rejection* of the transition.

But is not calling Dionysos ‘greatest light’ a mere metaphor? In this context, certainly not. This will be made even clearer by what follows.

In Aeschylus’ lost *Bassarai* Orpheus, as a result of what he had seen on his visit to the underworld, transferred his loyalty from Dionysos to Helios (the Sun), whom he considered to be the greatest of the gods and addressed as Apollo.<sup>4</sup> Orpheus was - more than any other individual - associated with mystery-cult. His descent to the darkness of the underworld, and seeing something there that made him worship the sun, reflect – I suggest - a mythical projection of the illumination of the darkness (imagined as the darkness of the underworld) in mystic initiation, as described in various texts, including our passage of Plutarch. In a much later text, describing the mystic ritual of Isis, the initiand reaches the boundary of death and sees the sun shining brightly in the middle of the night (Ap. *Met.* 11. 23).

The salvific light that suddenly appeared in the darkness must have been torchlight (as in the Greek Easter ceremony). In Aristophanes’ *Frogs* this mystic torchlight was imagined as the light of the sun, which in the underworld is only for pious initiates.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly Pindar, in a passage full of mystic allusions, claims that after death the ‘good’ have sun by night as well as by day; and Cleanthes (331–232 BCE) claims that the gods are mystic (μυστικά) forms and sacred names, the cosmos a mystery (μυστήριον), and the sun a torchbearer.<sup>6</sup>

The identification of the sun with Apollo occurs in various fifth-century BCE texts,<sup>7</sup> and is associated by much later authors with mystic doctrine.<sup>8</sup> Dionysos too is identified with the sun in mystic doctrine,<sup>9</sup> as well as with starlight. In Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (343–44) Iakchos (the Eleusinian Dionysos) is called by the Eleusinian mystic initiates ‘light-bearing star of the night-time mystic ritual (τελετή),’ and the description of Dionysos-Iakchos in Sophocles as ‘chorus-leader of the stars’<sup>10</sup> is said by the scholiast to be ‘according to a mystic formula.’ Eumolpos, the imagined first priest of the Eleusinian mysteries, was said to have described Dionysos as ‘shining like a star . . . fiery in rays.’<sup>11</sup> Iakchos was identified at Eleusis with Ploutos, who is called by Pindar ‘conspicuous star, truest light for mortals’ in an eschatological (and mystic) context.<sup>12</sup>

The *Bacchae* is not the only tragedy in which the powerful associations of the mystic light are evoked. Another instance is Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*.<sup>13</sup> And in Sophocles’ *Elektra* Orestes says that he will ‘after dying in words (i.e. the fiction of his own death) be saved by action’ (59–60), and ‘coming to life, shine like a star on my enemies’ (66). Further, when he reveals himself to his sister, who has supposed him dead, she calls him ‘dearest light’ (φῶς, 1224) Now the identification of someone with light is not uncommon, and does not always



evoke the mystic light. But these passages of *Elektra* are in fact, as I have shown elsewhere,<sup>14</sup> embedded in a whole complex of ideas that surrounded the transition to joy in mystic initiation: fictive death, lamentation, the return from death, the birth of a child, salvation, release from suffering, the chariot race.

These occurrences of it in tragedy would have evoked, for the numerous members of the audience who had been initiated,<sup>15</sup> the powerful emotions of the transition to joy in mystic initiation. But why did the identification of the god with light occur in mystery-cult?

Mystic initiation was a rehearsal of death, and designed to remove the fear of death. Moreover it has—I suggest—numerous similarities with the typical set of features (core experience) of the so-called ‘Near-Death Experiences’ (NDEs) that have been extensively recorded and studied in recent years.<sup>16</sup> This is not the place to demonstrate the full range of these similarities, striking though it is, but rather to focus on a central feature of the NDE, the appearance in the darkness, at the end of a journey, of a wonderful *light* that transforms ignorant anxiety into a sense of certainty and profound well-being.<sup>17</sup> Though very bright, and ‘often compared to the light of the sun,’<sup>18</sup> it is not dazzling. And – even more surprisingly – it is frequently imagined as a *person*, the so-called ‘being of light,’ who conveys love, peace, enlightenment, and salvation, and so is sometimes identified as a divine figure, e.g. by Christians as Christ. We should also note that NDEs have been shown to exhibit much similarity across cultures.

NDEs have also been used to illuminate documents from the distant past.<sup>19</sup> I suggest that among the factors giving rise to Greek mystery-cult was the NDE. The process through which this occurred is irrecoverable, but it probably involved the NDEs of numerous people over a long period. Mystic initiation incorporated the power of the NDE to remove the fear of death<sup>20</sup> by dramatising the NDE in a frightening ritual that culminates in the appearance of a wonderful light bringing knowledge, peace, and joy and identified with a (divine) person.

Finally, we return to the passage of Plutarch with which we started, and which provides the last two pieces of the jigsaw. Firstly the appearance of the light marks a transition not only from ignorant anxiety to joy, but also from blind conflict, in which individuals trample on each other, to the perfect solidarity of the initiated group (‘he keeps company with holy and pure men’). Similarly in the *Bacchae* passage the epiphany of Dionysos as ‘greatest light’ brings each of the Asian maenads out of her ‘isolated desolation’ on the ground, so as to restore the perfect solidarity of the *thiasos* that they have praised as a blessing of initiation (75) and that the Theban maenads exhibit on the mountainside (693, 725, 748). Pentheus, by contrast, in attacking the light retains the ignorant aggression of the uninitiated.

The second and final piece in the jigsaw is that the Plutarch passage compares the experience of the soul at death with the experience of mystic initiation. Inasmuch as the former is most likely derived from NDE, this confirms my suggestion that it was among the factors giving rise to mystery-cult.

## NOTES

1. This translates the emendation *κελαινώ* (Verrall) for *ms.κελαινὸν* R. Seaford, *Euripides Bacchae* (Warminster, 1996), 201–2.
2. The two cults (and accounts of them) may have influenced each other (Persephone and Dionysos are found together in mystery-cult). A famous passage of Plato's *Phaedrus* (249–54) combines elements derived from the Eleusinian with elements derived from the Dionysiac mysteries: C. Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*. (Berlin, 1987), 44–5.
3. Seaford, R. *Euripides Bacchae*, 39–44, 195–203.
4. Ps. Eratosthenes *Catasterismoi* 24; *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* III (ed. S. Radt) 138; M. L. West, *Studies in Aeschylus* (Teubner, 1990), 26–50; R. Seaford, 'Mystic Light in Aeschylus' *Bassarai*,' *CQ* 55 (2005): 602–606. The transfer of loyalty may reflect rivalry between mystery-cults.
5. Ar. *Frogs* 454–6 (cf. 446–7, 313–4, 340, 350); and cf. 154–5 with 312–4; Seaford, 'Mystic Light,' 603.
6. *Ol.* 2. 61–3; cf. fr. 129 Snell; Cleanthes: *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (von Arnim) 1. 538.
7. Parmenides (DK 28A20); Empedokles (DK 31A23); cf. Aesch. *Septem* 859, *Suppl.* 213–4.
8. 'Heraclitus,' *Homeric Questions* 6. 6; Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1. 18. Already in the Derveni papyrus (4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) mystic doctrine interprets Olympian deities as riddlingly equivalent to cosmological elements: cf. E. *Phaethon* 225–6; Seaford, 'Mystic Light,' 603–4.
9. Cleanthes, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (von Arnim) 1. 546; Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1. 18; M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford, 1983), 206.
10. Ant. 1147; cf. E. *Ion* 1074–81.
11. D. S. 1. 11 .3 ἀστροφαῖ Διόνυσον ἐν ἀκτίνεσσι πυρῶπον.
12. *Ol.* 2. 53–83; mystic context: H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Pindar and the Afterlife,' *Entretiens Hardt* 31 (1985): 245–83.
13. e.g. Thomson (1966) ad *Cho.* 935–71.
14. Argued in detail by R. Seaford, Sophokles and the Mysteries," *Hermes* 122 (1994): 275–88.
15. See e.g. Hdt. 8. 65.
16. especially in *The Journal of Near-Death Studies*.
17. For this, and other characterisations in this paragraph, see e.g. S. Blackmore, *Dying to Live. Near-Death Experiences* (Buffalo NY, 1993): 67–93. P. Fenwick and E. Fenwick, *The Truth in the Light* (London, 1995) investigate over 300 near-death

experiences, in 72% of which the light was a predominant feature (and its qualities always positive).

18. M. B. Sabom, *Recollections of Death*. (New York, 1982), 43.

19. e.g. J. Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London, 2002), 90–6: the myth of Er in Plato's *Republic*.

20. Loss of the fear of death is a very common result of the NDE. For mystic initiation see e.g. *IG* II/III<sup>2</sup> 3661.6.

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## Chapter Fifteen

# Dark Winged Nyx and the Bright Winged Eros In Aristophanes' "Orphic" Cosmogony

## *The Birds*

Menelaos Christopoulos

Aristophanes presented *The Birds* in the Great Dionysia of 414 BCE διὰ Καλλιστράτου, i.e. with the help of Callistratus, the same director he had used for the *Acharnians* (Lenaia 425 BCE, first prize) and used later for *Lysistrata* (Lenaia 411 BCE). The *Birds*, so popular today, was awarded, as it is known, second prize, after Ameipsias' *Κομασταί* (Revellers) and before Phrynichus' *Μονότροπος*. It should also be remembered that, being a comedy with an animal chorus, the Aristophanic *Birds* had the same title as a comedy by Magnes, while being an 'escapist' drama it took a precedent from Pherecrates' *Ἄγριοι* (=Savages), a play with two heroes who set out in search of primitive life.

These antecedent thematic patterns are to be borne in mind when studying the parabasis of *The Birds* and, in particular, the cosmogonic data—parodied or not—that Aristophanes presents in the Anapaests (especially in verses 693–703). The mythographic and religious material included—or alluded to—in these verses will be presented in six short chapters and analysed in turn. The first of these chapters deals with the nature of Nyx, the second with the significance of the egg in this context, the third chapter studies the unexpected function of the wind in the cosmogonic procedure described, the fourth chapter studies the idea of the sprout, the fifth chapter tries to establish a more precise relationship between the Aristophanic passage in question and the relevant ideas of the Orphics in general while the sixth chapter explores some distant echoes of the passage Plato's *Symposium* (189c–193e).<sup>1</sup>

## NYX

In the cosmogonic succession that Aristophanes presents,<sup>2</sup> Nyx appears in the forefront from the beginning (together with Chaos, Erebus and Tartarus) and lays the famous egg from which Eros will emerge. Aristophanes (in all probability like his ‘orphyic’ models) differs in this way from Hesiod,<sup>3</sup> nevertheless through this differentiation he demonstrates how closely he follows him; as we know, in Hesiod Nyx is born out of Chaos, is the sister of Erebus and by Erebus gives birth to Aether and Hemere: from a dark generation (Nyx, Erebus) arises a luminous one (Hemere, Aether). Initially, however, the emphasis is not placed on the contrast between light and darkness. This is because the first beings mentioned in the Hesiodic cosmogony (Chaos, Gaia, Tartarus) do not conform to such a contrasting pattern but rather are used to ensure—in a horizontal structure of the world—the stable ground of the earth. Given the rural priorities of the Boetian poet, such a structure is not entirely surprising. On the other hand, Aristophanes’ priority, no matter how ‘orphyic’ it may be—or because it wants to be ‘orphyic’—most clearly underlines the dark elements of the first beings of creation which are arrayed temporally: they are defined in terms of time rather than in terms of space. All four of them are hesiodean (Chaos, Nyx, Erebus, Tartarus) but in Hesiod they belong to different generations. Those who have in mind the fecundity of the Hesiodic Gaia (*Theogony* 126ff) should now discard it and, with it, Ouranos and Aer. Verse 694 makes it explicitly clear. From the beginning, only Nyx can enable the birth of the world. One reason possibly explaining the importance of such a dark element as Nyx in the orphyic cosmologic succession is perhaps the fact that Orpheus’ name itself is associated with darkness (ὄρφνη), as Maass previously indicated in 1895,<sup>4</sup> and this association, although etymologically contested,<sup>5</sup> would have validity in the ears of a poet or his audience.

## THE EGG

The birth of the world will arise from the egg laid by Nyx in the bosom of Erebus. It is generally accepted that in promoting Nyx’ role, Aristophanes uses a basic theme of the Orphyic cosmogonic tradition,<sup>6</sup> something more or less confirmed with the recently published official edition of the Derveni cosmogony (col. 11 and col. 13 are eloquent examples). In many of the salvaged fragments outlining the Orphyic perceptions it is Chronos (often identified with Kronos)—and not Nyx—who produces the egg of creation. In fragment 70 (Kern=114 I–V Bernabé) it is mentioned that Chronos created in divine Aether a silver egg: ἔπειτα δ’ ἔτευξε μέγας Χρόνος Αἰθέρι δίῳ ὠὶόν ἀργύρεον. Damascius,<sup>7</sup> who

preserves the fragment, comments that the verb ἔτευξε signifies something that was made and not born and that this product is full of at least two things: ὕλη and εἶδος.<sup>8</sup> Damascius himself<sup>9</sup> wonders in what way the egg is connected with ontological birth and also in what way the god who emerges from this process is praised. The most comprehensive answer is, perhaps, that the egg is used in these cosmologic narrations as a depiction of the world. In such a depiction the shell of the egg corresponds to the sky, the membrane on the inside of the shell corresponds to aether, while the whole shape of the world is perceived by some as conical, by some others as spherical and by others—the Orphics—as ovoid,<sup>10</sup> In the Aristophanic version of the Orphic cosmogony, though, the egg, which is called upon to play such a pivotal role in the birth of beings, has a surprising peculiarity: it is not fertilised.

### THE WIND

In Aristophanes' text the egg laid by Nyx is characterised as ὑπηνέμιον. The word means: something which is windblown, something which is full of wind and, metaphorically, something or someone that is empty, futile, false.<sup>11</sup> Ὡτιόν ὑπηνέμιον is an egg produced without intercourse and, consequently, is not expected to produce offspring. An ancient scholion on verse 695 explains that ὑπηνέμια καλεῖται τα δίχα συνουσίας καὶ μίξεως. The same scholion attributes this name to the story of the Dioscouroi, who were also born from an egg and tend to say unsubstantiated things.<sup>12</sup> Aristotle<sup>13</sup> analytically refers to the categories of ὑπηνέμια ὡιά and describes on which occasions these eggs become fertile. Aristotle's natural explanation (that the ὑπηνέμιον egg becomes fertile if the hen copulates with a rooster before the egg turns from yellow to white) fits, as to the basic semantic field of the word ὑπηνέμιον, the perception that ascribes fertilising power to the wind.<sup>14</sup> Aristotle explains<sup>15</sup> that these unfertilised eggs are also named ζεφύρια, because in spring the female birds seem as if they are receiving the winds—τὰ πνεύματα. At this point we will once again allude to verses of later Orphic literature. A verse which is preserved in a scholion on Apollonius Rhodius<sup>16</sup> describes Eros and the winds being born together from Chronos. Some other verses of Orphic poetry, unexpectedly sensitive, preserved by Proclus in his commentary on Plato's *Republic*, suggest another link between coming into being and the wind by telling us what will become of *The Birds*' souls when *The Birds* die. When the animals and *The Birds* die and their soul departs their body, there is no one to lead them to Hades, as happens with humans, so their soul flies here and there aimlessly, without destination, until another bird (or animal) seizes it, mixed as it is with the eddies of wind.<sup>17</sup>

## THE SPROUT

Verse 694 of the text mentions that, with the turning of the seasons, from the egg laid by Nyx in the bosom of Erebos, Eros ‘sprouted.’ His characteristics are stated clearly, yet they are not justified clearly. Eros is: 1) desired by all (ποθεινός); 2) he has on his back two golden wings that make him shine (στίλβων νῶτον πτερύγοιν χρυσαῖν); 3) he looks like a swirling wind, a maelstrom, (εἰκὼς ἀνεμώκεσι δίναις). That Eros is desirable need not be justified, at a first level of reading, but it must be stated that Eros here substitutes for Protogonos/Phanes of the Orphic cosmogonic tradition, who cannot be automatically presumed equally ποθεινός.<sup>18</sup> At any rate, he is considered equally winged. Thus, Eros’ second characteristic, the two golden wings, are justified both by the traditional image of the substitute (Eros) but also by the Orphic concept of the original (Phanes). These wings are also justified—within the text—by the (black) wings of Nyx (Νύξ ἡ μελανόπτερος, 695) and here we have a significant shift from dark wings to bright wings. At this point it should be noted that the glow emanating from Eros’ wings is the first notion of light in this cosmogony leading to the birth of *The Birds* and thus indirectly yet most explicitly connecting wings with the birth of light.<sup>19</sup> Eros’ third characteristic, his resemblance to a whirlwind, should, I believe, be connected with the wind, and more especially with the word ὑπηνέμιον of verse 695, namely with a notion that refers to the initial state and the initial word defining the egg Eros comes from. It should also be linked with the idea of speed which characterises the whirlwind and which the word ἀνεμώκης itself contains (ἄνεμος + ὥκός). And, finally, it should be associated with the idea of circularity that characterises the whirlwind, the recycling of the seasons (περιτελλομέναις ὥραις) and the very shape of the egg. In the image of the whirlwind many scholars try, justifiably so, to also see the influence of philosophical cosmogonic ideas that ascribe to the circular motion the ability to give birth, and such is the case of the whirlwind in Anaxagoras’ νοῦς.<sup>20</sup> The verbal combination of the elements that are included in this Aristophanic cosmogony goes, perhaps, even further. Of the four initial beings (Chaos, Nyx, Erebos, Tartarus) Nyx, being the only female entity<sup>21</sup>, gives birth (to the egg), not with the sexual participation of Erebos, as in Hesiod, but still using Erebos as an environment (Ἐρέβους ἐν ἀπείροσι κόλποις). Also as an environment, Tartaros will be used by Eros in the creation of the bird species (γένος), while Chaos will be the only one of the four primary beings that appears in a sexual relationship (with Eros), from which the bird species will arise. Aristophanes strangely insists on using all four of the primary beings we know from Hesiod, even if this is not necessary. We saw, when talking



about Eros' wings and the sense of the swirl of the wind, that in this Aristophanic cosmogony some verbal or conceptual reminder always evokes the earlier situation or the parents of the beings that are created. Since the egg whence Eros will emerge is laid in the bosom of Erebos, one tends to see a verbal, paretymological game with the stem—er (ἐρ-), that characterizes both Erebos and Eros.

It remains now to observe the actual process though which Eros emerges into the world. The verb used is ἔβλασεν, a verb which, metaphorically, often denotes birth. At any rate, its use here is surprising, since there is not a proper birth, but a hatching. Another verb Aristophanes uses to signify the creation of the generation that will come from Eros is the verb ἐνεόττευσεν which refers directly to the image of the chick, the young bird. The time for *The Birds* to be born has come, since the elements directly connected with them have been cosmologically stored; namely, the wings with which they fly, the wind which bears them aloft and which is the basic component of life. For what reason then should we find ourselves on earth again with the verb ἔβλασεν? In a text such as this, where the words are very carefully selected, one seeks special denotations<sup>22</sup> which are most likely to be found in an 'Orphic' context. In later Orphic literature as in the 'Orphic' *Argonautics* we have the verb ἐλόχευσε<sup>23</sup> that is directly connected with parturition, while in Damascius<sup>24</sup> we have the verb ἐκθρόσκει (spring out). Why ἔβλασεν here? Most likely, to signify the sense of seed, of sperm, that is emphatically presented in most Orphic texts.<sup>25</sup> Eros as an offshoot consequently acquires a spermatric ability which he would not possess had he been a mere newborn infant. The importance of this spermatric ability is clearly stated in all Orphic cosmologic poems and, in particular, by the text of the Derveni papyrus, where Zeus, by swallowing Protogonos or Protogonos' genitals, acquires the genetic power allowing him to rule over a newly born world.<sup>26</sup> In most texts of Orphic literature this spermatric ability is also supplemented by a characteristic faculty that is attributed to Protogonos/Phanes: he is considered dual (διφυής), endowed with both male and female genital characteristics and even so with the feminine vulva placed on the buttocks, in the πυγή.<sup>27</sup> The Eros of the Aristophanic cosmogony, however, has only two golden wings that shine at the back of his body: στίλβων νῶτον πτερύγων χρυσαῖν.<sup>28</sup> Nothing more is stated about his nature, either single or double. But if the bird-metaphor of Eros is pursued a little bit further, then one realizes that it would be easy to associate the κατάποσις of Protogonos/Phanes by Zeus, an important orphic cosmologic instance as we have seen, with a comically analogous swallowing of Protogonos' bird-like winged substitute (=Eros), since the idea of eating winged birds is invoked several times in the play (387–92, 522–38, 1072–87, 1579–1892).

## THE ORPHICS

When one reads not only the Parabasis but the whole play and takes into account the wider social and religious environment of Athenian contemporary life, the thought arises that the 'Orphic' ideas may not be limited to these verses of the Parabasis, but they generally meet other dimensions of this comedy. We know, for example, the Orphic religious perceptions, apart from the belief in the posthumous wandering of the soul—the idea of wandering is, anyway, totally congruous with the central theme of the play—discourage the eating of meat and the animal sacrifice,<sup>29</sup> something that Aristophanes reminds us of in the *Frogs*.<sup>30</sup> At any rate, eating meat and the act of sacrifice preoccupy Aristophanes in *The Birds*. The seeds mentioned in verses 159–60 (λευκά σήσαμα καὶ μύρτα καὶ μήκωνα καὶ σισύμβρια) are, naturally, seeds that normally constitute birdfeed, yet at the same time they state a category of food that is removed from meat-eating. The same is implied by the dietary habits of the various birds mentioned in Epops' calling (228–62), while the attack of *The Birds* on the two Athenians in a parody of battle and the Athenians' defence (336–50) by using a meat spit instead of a lance (387–92), are based on the fact that birds feed people with their meat. This is exactly what Pisthetairos will remind *The Birds* (522–38) in order to persuade them to found their city and lay claims to power. In the second Parabasis, the advice of the chorus to the audience condemns certain tortures the humans inflict on birds (1072–87) in order to eat them. Finally, the famous scene where *The Birds* that wanted to overthrow the democratic order of Nephelokokkygia are roasted by Pisthetairos as an exemplary form of punishment (1579–1692), underlines the elements of meat eating that will trigger Hercules' gluttony, while at the same time signifying the self-negation of the utopia and the return to the subject of the final revelry, with which the play will end.<sup>31</sup> In this delicate subject of eating meat is probably also included one more element supporting the fundamental objection of the Orphics to meat eating: it is the idea of cannibalism, connected in Orphic mythical tradition with the consumption of Dionysius' body by the Titans. In the Aristophanic *Birds*, the allusion to this issue is made through the person of Tereus, an involuntary perpetrator, as we know, of a cannibalistic act, namely the consumption of his son's flesh (Itys), whom Procne had killed to avenge her sister's rape by Tereus. The choice of the character of Tereus by Aristophanes is based on this precise mythical precedent, since Tereus was transformed by the gods into a hoopoe after committing this act (as Procne was transformed into a swallow). The mythical prehistory of Tereus is, perhaps, implied in verses 75–78, when his servant states that his master's previous human nature makes him want fish from Phaleron, which the slave is called upon to provide him with.

Another element that we should note, always in relation to the Orphics, is, as mentioned, the issue of sacrifice. In verse 848 of the play preparation begins for a sacrifice which will not be completed. This sacrifice involves blood (προβάτιον, 854; τράγου, 959) and will be repeatedly interrupted before being finally cancelled, the priest and the χρησμολόγος—namely the most suitable ones to handle a sacrifice—being responsible for this. The priest's inability to perform the sacrifice is precisely due to the nature of the divine beings to which the sacrifice itself is directed, namely, *The Birds* (863–90). What has been noted<sup>32</sup> is the relationship of the invocation in the sacrifice of *The Birds* with invocations that we know of from other ritual contexts, comic or not, and especially with verses 295 et sq. from the *Thesmophoriazusae*. Let it be remembered that the Thesmophoria are an example of a ceremony where blood sacrifice and meat eating are for the most part avoided. Prometheus refers to it to emphasise the absence of the sacrifices of live victims that Zeus was deprived of, due to the city of *The Birds*.<sup>33</sup> The refusal to eat meat and the abolition of sacrifice are, therefore, elements that pervade in various ways the whole play and, to the extent that this is possible within the frameworks of a comedy, respond to the priorities that would be recognised and appreciated by those in Aristophanes' audience who are accustomed to the Orphic ideas.

One comes to suspect that the allusion to many issues that echo Orphic ideas in *The Birds* may be connected with an effort by Aristophanes to win over a section of the audience—and perhaps of the judges—who are either maintain or are called upon to abide by the austere self-restraint stemming from these ideas. But some of these issues might equally be due to a more general questioning or speculation of Aristophanes reflecting the intellectual and social milieu, 'Orphic' or not 'Orphic,' from which he draws on selectively. One tends then to look for instances of influence received from or exercised on other works connected to *The Birds*; these influences should, in this case, be sought in facts and events which are chronologically close to *The Birds*.

### THE SYMPOSIUM

The dramatic poet Agathon won first tragedy prize in the Lenaia<sup>34</sup> festival of 416 BCE. The event was celebrated at Agathon's house with the participation of distinguished guests (Socrates, Agathon, Aristophanes, Eryximachus, Phaedros, Alcibiades among others) and it was recorded by Plato in about 385 BCE (perhaps after Aristophanes' death) as an indirect narrative related by Apollodorus and deliberately placed around 400 BCE. The historical, then, event of the Platonic *Symposium* is placed in 416 BCE, approximately

a year before the creation of *The Birds*, and includes among the guests—if we are to trust Plato—Aristophanes, who was called to participate in a discussion regarding Eros. This Eros is understood, according to Aristophanes' speech in the Platonic *Symposium* (189c—193e), as a desire from and a memory of an earlier human biological status defined by the dual character (189e) of human beings, as well as by the placement of the genitalia on the external (= back) part of the body (191b—191d), a state that alludes, as to its two defining elements, to the Orphic image of Phanes/Eros. These thematic choices most likely meet with some other dimensions that appear in common in the Parabasis of *The Birds* and Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium* and are to do with: (a) the general thematic attitude of both passages towards the issue of Eros, (b) the cosmogonic elements that are connected with Prodicus<sup>35</sup> and (c) the ancientness of Eros as a god, something which is assessed as a positive condition in both *The Birds* and the *Symposium*. The myth of hermaphrodite beings able to reproduce on their own, the image of dual creatures that reproduce, and the request to acknowledge Eros as the most ancient god (*Symp.* 178b) constitute ideas that seem to correspond to a common ground of inspiration in the Platonic *Symposium* and Aristophanes' *Birds*. Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium* is peopled—or haunted—by a 'species' of human being bearing many similarities to the Orphic image of Phanes/Eros. This concept, which we find in the cosmogony of *The Birds*, denotes a possible relation of this comedy to the Platonic *Symposium*: in many ways, the images that are presented in these two works interpretatively refer to the same areas of inspiration as to the first ὄν of the Aristophanic 'Orphic' cosmogony and as to the being that expresses the 'protogonic,' dual existence of a human with genitalia on the back part of the body in the Platonic *Symposium*. This description is attributed to the same person—Aristophanes—and pertains to the same subject of questioning: Eros. Could then the platonic description of this 'protogonic' human creature have some 'Orphic' soundings? The correlation which is here suggested between the Platonic *Symposium* and the Aristophanic *Birds*, based on the evidence mentioned above, appears plausible from an historical and chronological point of view, and likely enough from a thematic and philological point of view. All things considered then, a surprising suggestion, and an attractive one too, is conveyed through these two texts, when read in parallel, and seems to be gradually inserted into the reader's consideration: that if, in the early fourth century BCE, an author like Plato was looking for a virtual historical figure to evoke some ideas on the birth of Eros and the beginning of human life strongly or vaguely reminiscent of Orphic cosmologic doctrines, he might find it natural to choose, of all Athenian people, Aristophanes as the most suitable herald for these ideas.

## NOTES

1. I attempted a first approach to this passage in 1994, on the occasion of a conference on the *Birds* organised at the University of Cyprus [Acts in A. Tsakmakis (Τσακμάκης)-M. Christopoulos (Χριστόπουλος), eds., *Όρνιθες. Όψεις και αναγνώσεις μιας αριστοφανικής κωμωδίας* (Athens, 1997)]. Since then, several contributions on this subject have seen the light including N. Dunbar's extensive commentary on *Aristophanes' Birds* (Oxford, 1995) followed by Halliwell's (Oxford, 1997) and Henderson's (Oxford, 2003) shorter commentaries, B. Zimmermann's general survey on *Die griechische Komödie* (Frankfurt, 2006), A. Bernabé's "La théogonie orphique et le papyrus de Derveni," *Kernos* 15 (2002): 91–127, G. Betegh's *The Derveni Papyrus. Theology, Cosmology and Interpretation* (Cambridge, 2004), the edition of the *Derveni Papyrus* by Th. Kouremenos, K. Tsantsanoglou and G. Parasoglou, *The Derveni Papyrus* (Firenze, 2006), J. Jouanna's "L'oeuf, le vent et éros. Sens de «ύπηνέμιον ωϊόν (Aristophane, *Oiseaux*, 695)" in *Φιλολογία. Mélanges offerts à Michel Casewitz*, ed. P. Brillet-Dubois - É. Parmentier (Lyon, 2006), 99–108. Under the light of these and other publications a second approach seemed necessary. I thank P. Brillet-Dubois, R. Buxton, R. Edmonds, Th. I. Kakridis, S. Rangos, I. Ratinaud, A. Tsakmakis for discussing with me several aspects of this paper and J. Smith for his valuable suggestions on my text.

2. Aristophanes, *Birds* 693–703

Χάος ἦν καὶ Νύξ Ἐρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς  
 Γῆ δ' οὐδ' Ἀἴρ δ' οὐδ' Οὐρανός ἦν. Ἐρέβους δ' ἐν ἀπείροσι κόλποις  
 τίκτει πρῶτιστον ὑπηνέμιον Νύξ ἡ μελανόπτερος ωϊόν,  
 ἐξ οὗ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις ἔβλασταν Ἐρως ὁ ποθεινός,  
 στίλβων νῶτον περυγῶν χρυσαῖν, εἰκῶς ἀνέμωκεσι δίναις.  
 Οὗτος δὲ Χάει περόνεντι μίγεις κατὰ Τάρταρον εὐρὺν  
 ἐνεόττευσεν γένος ἡμέτερον καὶ πρῶτον ἀνήγαγεν εἰς φῶς.  
 Πρῶτερον δ' οὐκ ἦν γένος ἀθανάτων, πρὶν Ἐρως ξυνέμειξεν ἅπαντα  
 Ξυμμειγνυμένων δ' ἐτέρων ἐτέροις γένετ' Οὐρανὸς Ωκεανὸς τε  
 καὶ Γῆ πάντων τε θεῶν μακάρων γένος ἄφθιτον. Ὡδε μὲν ἔσμεν  
 πολὺ πρεσβύτατοι πάντων μακάρων ἡμεῖς. Ὡς δ' ἔσμεν Ἐρωτος  
 πολλοῖς δῆλον.

3. *Theogony* 116–28.

Ἦτοι μὲν πρῶτιστα Χάος ἐγένετ' αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα  
 Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ  
 ἀθανάτων οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ολύμπου,  
 Τάρταρα τ' ἠερόεντα μυχῶι χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης,  
 ἡδ' Ἐρος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,  
 λυσιμελής, πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων  
 δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.  
 Ἐκ δὲ Χάος δ' Ἐρεβός τε μέλαινα τε Νύξ ἐγένοντο.  
 Νυκτός δ' αὖτ' Αἰθήρ τε καὶ Ἡμέρη ἐξεγένοντο,  
 οὓς τέκε κυσαμένη Ἐρέβει φιλότῃ μιγείσα.

Γαῖα δε τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγείνατο ἴσον ἑωυτῇ  
 Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόενθ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτοι,  
 ὄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ.

4. E. Maass, *Orpheus. Untersuchungen zur griechischen, römischen, altchristlichen Jenseitsdichtung* (München, 1895).

5. Among others by W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London, 1935), 44.

6. See L. Brisson, "La figure de Chronos dans la théogonie orphique et ses antécédants iraniens" in *Mythe et représentations du temps*, ed. D. Tiffeneau (Paris, 1985), 37–55 and "Orphée et Orphisme à l'époque impériale. Témoignages et interprétations philosophiques, de Plutarque jusqu'à Jamblique," *ANRW* II 36.4 (1990): 2867–3933; M. L. West, "Ab Ovo. Orpheus, Sanchuniathon and the Origins of the Ionian World Model," *CQ* 44 (1994): 289–307.

7. Περὶ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν 55: τὸ γὰρ ἔτευξε δηλοῖ τι τεχνητόν, ἀλλ' οὐ γέννημα. Τὸ δὲ τεχνητόν ἀλλ' οὐ γέννημα πάμμικτόν ἐστι ἐκ δυοῖν τοῦλάχιστον, ὕλης καὶ εἶδους ἢ τῶν τούτοις ἀναλογούντων.

8. See M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford, 1983), 199–200.

9. West, *The Orphic Poems*, 111: εἰ δὲ παρ' Ὀρφεῖ πρωτόγονος θεὸς ὁ πάντων σπέρμα φέρων τῶν θεῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὠιοῦ πρῶτος ἐξέθορε καὶ ἀνέδραμε, τίς μηχανὴ τὸ μὲν ὠϊὸν ἐξηγεῖσθαι τὸ ὄν, τὸν δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος ἐκθορόντα πρωτόγονον θεὸν ἀνυμνεῖν; (Kern 85, Bernabé 140 I–240 II).

10. This interpretation is found in the commentary of Achilles (3d century AD) on Aratus' *Phaenomena* 4.33, 17 (Maass): τὴν δὲ τάξιν ἣν ἐδώκαμεν τῷ σφαιρώματι, οἱ Ὀρφικοὶ λέγουσι παραπλησίαν εἶναι τῇ ἐν τοῖς ὠιοῖς. ὃν γὰρ ἔχει λόγον τὸ λέπυρον ἐν τῷ ὠϊῳ, τοῦτον ἐν τῷ παντὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ ὡς ἐξήρτηται τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κυκλοτερῶς ὁ αἰθήρ, οὕτω τοῦ λεπύρου ὁ ὕμην. 6.37,8: σχῆμα δὲ κόσμου οἱ μὲν κωνοειδές, οἱ δὲ σφαιροειδές, οἱ δὲ ὠιοειδές, ἥς δόξης ἔχονται οἱ τὰ Ὀρφικά μυστήρια τελούντες. Σαφηνείας δὲ ἔνεκα πιθανῆς παρελήφθη τοῦ ὠιοῦ ἢ εἰκῶν. (Kern 70, Bernabé 114 I–V). On the aristophanic perception of the egg, the possibility of Epimenides' influence on Aristophanes' passage and the oriental origin of the egg-theme, see Dunbar, *Aristophanes' Birds*, 441–443 and West, *The Orphic Poems*, 201.

11. Cf. Plat. *Theaetetus* 151e: γόνιμον ἀνεμιαῖον τυγχάνει, 160e: ...μὴ λάθῃ ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἄξιον ὃν τροφῆς τὸ γιγνόμενον, ἀλλὰ ἀνεμιαῖον τε καὶ ψεῦδος, always in relation with the concept of fertility, though not of an egg but of the fertility that is to do with the birth of a child. Cf also, Aristophanes *Daedalus*, 194 (Kassel-Austin) and Araros, *Kaineus*, II (Meineke): ἀνεμιαῖον ὠϊόν, in unknown context. For an analysis see Jouanna, "L'oeuf," in particular 99–101, 104–8, Dunbar, *Aristophanes' Birds*, 441–42, cf. also F. Montanari, *Vocabolario de la lingua greca* (Torino, 2004 [1995]), s.v. ὑπηνέμιον.

12. Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ οὐχ ὡς ἔτυχεν αὐτῷ προσέρριπται, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ἱστορίας τῆς κατὰ τοὺς Διοσκούρους. Φασὶ γὰρ ἐξ ὠιοῦ αὐτοὺς γεγονέναι. Καὶ ὅτι σύνηθες αὐτοῖς μᾶλλον ἀνεμιαῖον λέγειν. Aristophanes uses the word again in *Daedalus* (IV, V Meineke, 194 Kassel-Austin: Ὡτιόν μέγιστον τέτοκεν ὡς ἀλεκτρυόν. {Ἔν ἴστε: (Meineke) or} Ἐνίστε (Kassel-Austin) πολλὰ τῶν ἀλεκτρυόνων βία ὑπηνέμια τίκτουσιν ὡς πολλάκις.

13. *Hist. anim.* 560a and *De generat. anim.* 750b.



14. On this fertilising power of the wind in the birth of Eros see also, long before Aristophanes, Alcaeus, 327 (Lobel-Page) where the love-god is said to be born by Iris and Zephyros. Dunbar (*Aristophanes' Birds*, 441) observes that Iris, Zephyros and Eros are, all the three, winged creatures, which might offer an explanation for Alcaeus' unique genealogy. On Hera begetting Hephaistos as a ὑπηνέμιον child, without union to a male consort, cf Lucian, *De sacrif.*, 6. On the relation of the wind to dark entities such as Tartaros see again Dunbar, *Aristophanes' Birds*, 441–443 and G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1983), 28.

15. 560a: ζεφύρια δὲ καλεῖται τὰ ὑπηνέμια ὑπὸ τινων, ὅτι ὑπὸ τὴν ἑαρινὴν ὥραν φαίνονται δεχόμενα τὰ πνεύματα αἱ ὀρνίθες.

16. Sch. 3.26: αὐτὰρ Ἔρωτα Χρόνος καὶ πνεύματα πάντ' ἐτέκνωσε.

17. Kern 223, Bernabé 339:

αἱ μὲν δὴ θηρῶν τε καὶ οἰωνῶν πετροέντων  
ψυχὰι ὅτ' αἰζῶσι, λίπη δὲ μιν ἱερὸς αἰὼν,  
τῶν οὐ τις ψυχὴν παράγει δόμον εἰς Αἴδαο,  
ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ πεπότηται ἐτώσιον, εἰς ὃ κεν αὐτὴν  
ἄλλο ἀφαρπάξῃ μίγδην ἀνέμοιο πνοῇσιν.

18. See Brisson, “Chronos,” 38 and “Orphée et Orphisme,” 2876–2877; J. S. Rusten, “Phanes-Eros in the Theogony of ‘Orpheus’ in P. Derveni,” in *Atti del XVII Convegno di Papirologia* (Napoli, 1983), 333–35, (vol. 2); Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus*, 148–49. In the Greek mythographic tradition preceding Aristophanes, the only person who is born by an egg and could reasonably claim to the property of ποθεινὴ would be Helen.

19. On the relation of the wings with phallic fertility and the political dimension of Eros in Aristophanes' *Birds*, see W. Arrowsmith, “Aristophanes' *Birds*: The Fantasy Politics of Eros,” *Arion* NS 1 (1973): 119–67.

20. See Dunbar, *Aristophanes' Birds*, 438–445; Jouanna, “L'oeuf,” 106–8.

21. The female factor seems, however, drastically underrated in the Orphic cosmologic tradition in comparison to other Greek mythological narratives; even the theme of the κατάποσις according to which Zeus swallows a female entity (Metis) in the hesiodean cosmogony, when it appears in the Orphic cosmologic context it enacts exclusively male agents (Protogonos/Phanes/Ouranos). Whether this male predominance should be associated with the pederastic dimensions often spotted in the Orpheus myth or with a more general ‘misogynistic element’ as detected by W.K.C. Guthrie in *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London, 1935), 49, is a subject of further specific research which cannot be undertaken here in details. See F. Graf, “A Poet among Men” in *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, ed. J. Bremmer (London, 1987), 80–106; J. Bremmer, “Greek Pederasty and Modern Homosexuality” in *From Sappho to De Sade*, ed. J. Bremmer (London, 1989), 1–14; J. Bremmer “Orpheus: From Guru to Gay,” in *Orphisme et Orphée*, ed. Ph. Borgeaud (Genève, 1991), 13–30.

22. See West, *The Orphic Poems*, 110 – 11.

23. 13 – 15 : Χρόνον ὡς ἐλόχευσε ἀπειρεσίους ὑπὸ κόλποις Αἰθέρα καὶ διφυῇ περιωπέα κυδρὸν Ἔρωτα Νυκτὸς ἀειγνήτης πατέρα κλυτόν, ὃν ῥα Φάνητα ὀπλότεροι καλέουσι βροτοί (Kern, 224).



24. West, *The Orphic Poems*, 123 (=Kern 60, Bernabé 90, 96, 109 VIII, 111 V, 114 VIII, 120 III, 121 I, 139 I, 677 I): τὸ κύον ὦϊόν τὸν θεόν, ἢ τὸν ἀργῆτα χιτῶνα, ἢ τὴν νεφέλην, ὅτι ἐκ τούτων ἐκθρώσκει ὁ Φάνης.

25. Indicatively I mention the verses: δαίμονα σεμνόν, Μῆτιν σπέρμα φέροντα θεῶν κλυτόν, ὃν τε Φάνητα πρωτόγονον μάκαρες κάλεον κατὰ μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον (Kern, 85, Bernabé 140 I–XI, 240 II) and σὲ Φάνητα κικλήσκω ... μάκαρ, πολύμητι, πολυσπόρε, βαῖνε γεγηθώς (Kern 87, Bernabé 143), where Phanes' action in producing offspring is stressed.

26. According to whether one takes the genitive αἰδοίου (col. XVI) and the accusative αἰδοῖον (col. XIII) as an adjective or as a noun in the Derveni papyrus, the meaning becomes consequently 'the reverend one' or 'the genitals.' W. Burkert (*Die Griechen und der Orient* (München 2003), 98) and G. Betegh (*The Derveni Papyrus*, 163) read it as a noun, L. Brisson ("Sky, Sex and Sun. The meaning of αἰδοῖος/αἰδοῖον in the Derveni Papyrus," *ZPE* 144 (2003): 19–29) takes it to be an adjective. For the discussion, see Kouremenos, G. Parasoglou, K. Tsantsanoglou, *The Derveni Papyrus*, 26–28. In both readings, however, the aim of the κατάποσις remains the acquisition of Protogonos' genetic force.

27. Indicatively see Proclus' comment on Plato's *Timaeus* 30c – 31a: ... ὥς τὸ ζῶιον ἤδη διηρημένως ἔχει ὅσα ἦν ἐν τῷι ωῖδι σπερματικῶς, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ὅδε προάγει το ἄρρητον καὶ ἄληπτον τῶν πρώτων αἰτίων εἰς τὸ ἐμφανές. Θῆλυς καὶ γενέτωρ ὁ Φάνης ἀνυμνεῖται (Kern, 81); also, Hymn 6: Πρωτόγονον καλέω, διφυῆ, μέγαν, αἰθερόπλαγκτον ... ἀφ' οὗ σε Φάνητα κικλήσκω (Kern, 87); cf also the Suda, s.v. Φάνης: ... τὸν Φάνητα εἰσφέρει αἰδοῖον ἔχοντα ὀπίσω περὶ τὴν πυγὴν (Kern, 80).

28. The verb στίλβω denotes the shine of a surface which is polished or bright. In the *Birds*, Aristophanes has already used it in verse 139 to make the name (appellative or main) Στίλβωνίδης. Sommerstein, in his edition of the *Birds* ([1991], 208) considers that the audience did not perceive the name as main, because the hero's name (Εὐελπίδης) is stated and confusion would be created. On this, though, one would note that the form Στίλβωνίδης follows the form of the patronymic names and as such it would not create confusion. It is difficult for one to decide whether Aristophanes extends some particular meaning to the word Στίλβωνίδης and even more difficult for one to assume some correlation between verse 139 and 697. On a pederastic allusion that the use of the verb στίλβω (>Στίλβωνίδης) may acquire in the particular context of verse 139, see the edition of the *Birds* by I. F. Kakridis (I. Θ. Κακριδής, *Αριστοφάνους Ὀρνιθεῖς* (Αθήνα-Ιωάννινα, 1987), 48. Στίλβω is used of Phanes in other Orphic fragments (78 Kern = 136 I, 172 I–II Bernabé, 86 Kern = 123 I–VI Bernabé); Dunbar, *Aristophanes' Birds*, 444) believes that these fragments may have been composed under the influence of Aristophanes' *Birds* 697.

29. Indicatively see Kern, t. 212, t. 215, t. 216 (=Bernabé 625 I, 629, 43, 45, 650).

30. 1042: Ὀρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετάς θ' ἡμῖν κατέδειξεν, φόνων τ' ἀπέχεσθαι.

31. On the use of these elements as to the idea of founding a city and the belying of the initial aims that are stated with the establishment of the city of the birds, as well as on the subject of the cannibalism of Tereus, see A. M. Bowie, *Aristophanes, Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge 1993), 151–77.

32. See Kakridis, *Αριστοφάνους Ὀρνιθεῖς*, 168–69.
33. *Birds*, 1515–20.
34. Athenaeus 217a.
35. Aristoph. *Birds*, 692, Pl. *Symp.* 177b. See also Th. K. Hubbard, *The Mask of Comedy* (Ithaca and London, 1991), 166; H. Hoffmann, *Mythos und Komödie: Untersuchungen zu den Vögeln des Aristophanes* (Hildesheim, 1976), 181.

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## *Chapter Sixteen*

# **The Bright Cypress of the “Orphic” Gold Tablets**

## *Direction and Illumination in Myths of the Underworld*

Radcliffe G. Edmonds

*You will find in the halls of Hades a spring on the left, and standing by it,  
a glowing white cypress tree.<sup>1</sup>*

This memorable image of the soul’s vision of a bright tree glowing in the gloom of the underworld appears on a number of the so-called Orphic gold tablets, tiny scraps of gold foil found buried in graves in Magna Grecia, Thessaly and Crete with instructions for the deceased in the afterlife. In both the long and short versions of these so-called B tablets (there are several other types but the B text is the most common), the deceased must proclaim her identity to the unnamed guardians in the Halls of Hades. While there are a number of individual variations among the 12 tablets of the B type, the most significant division is between the long tablets (B1, B10, & B11 from Magna Grecia and B2 from Thessaly) and the short tablets (B3-8a from Eleutherna in Crete and B9 from Thessaly). The short tablets contain only the essential details of the longer text in the other tablets—the proclamation of identity and the reference to the cypress by the spring.

I am parched with thirst and I perish. But give me to drink from the ever-flowing  
spring on the right, where the cypress is. “Who are you? From where are you?”  
I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven.<sup>2</sup>

These enigmatic tablets present many puzzles to the interpreter, since there is no mention of them anywhere in the literary record and their fragmentary texts barely sketch the narrative of the soul’s journey to the underworld. Interpreters have therefore sought to elucidate the meaning of every feature of these tablets with recourse to parallels and conjectures, at times ignoring the

text and context of the tablets for plausible hypotheses. I have argued elsewhere that a careful analysis of the way the tablets' narrative works shows the central importance in these texts of marking the deceased as extra-ordinary and helps us understand the social and theological context of these texts.<sup>3</sup> Here I want to focus on one element of these tablets relevant to the theme of this volume, the bright cypress tree in the dark underworld.

The apparent contrast between the light of the white cypress tree and the dark of the shadowy halls of Hades seems to set up a clear distinction between positive light and negative darkness. However, such expectations are in fact confounded by the text. The light that shines in the darkness does not, in fact, betoken salvation or even relief from the perils of the underworld. The white cypress is merely a recognizable point in the darkness; the expected valuation of light over dark is not operative here. In these tablet texts, the tree serves as a marker of the important choice of paths in the underworld—the actual choice (right or left) is less important than the fact that knowing the correct path is the key. The unexpected meaning of the bright tree in the underworld illustrates the importance of the principle of the arbitrariness of the sign in interpreting Greek mythological materials. The significance of a traditional mythological element is determined by its deployment within the structure of the narrative, and we must be cautious about importing meaning from our limited selection of other examples of the element.

The white cypress of the gold tablets, glowing brightly perhaps in the shadowy gloom of the Halls of Hades, would seem to be a straightforward case of the familiar contrast between light and darkness, in which light is good, associated with life, divinity, and salvation, and darkness is bad, associated with death, mortality, and destruction. Numerous parallels in the Greek mythological tradition attest to this contrast and this significance. The underworld to which souls go after death is nearly always dark and gloomy.<sup>4</sup> So familiar is this absence of light from the underworld that Lucian can sarcastically comment that, although the underworld is traditionally dark, none of the visitors in myth ever seem to have any trouble seeing their way around; there must be enough light for them to see by.<sup>5</sup>

The contrast of light and dark marks not only the difference between life and death, but between the fates of the dead in the afterlife. The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* warns that those who are uninitiate in the Eleusinian mysteries will never have good things when they go down into the dark gloom, whereas the chorus of initiates in Aristophanes *Frogs* boasts that they alone have light in the realm of the dead.<sup>6</sup> The imagery of a bright and beautiful realm for the specially privileged dead appears also in Pindar, whose blessed souls enjoy the sunshine perpetually.<sup>7</sup> Plato develops the contrast even further in his myth of the afterlife in the *Phaedo*, contrasting the dark places of pun-

ishment for ordinary folk with the clear and bright divine realms for those who have lived philosophic lives, and Virgil too contrasts the afterlife of light for the blessed with the gloomy realm in which the others dwell.

To associate darkness with death and light with life and happiness in the tablets thus seems obvious. The underworld to which the soul travels in the tablets is certainly dark and gloomy in all the tablets that include any description. The Petelia tablet, B1, has a fragmentary line on the margin that refers to the darkness covering around as it describes what the deceased will find in the Halls of Hades.<sup>8</sup> In the Hipponion tablet, B10, the guardians of the water of Memory ask the deceased what she is seeking in the shadowy gloom of Hades.<sup>9</sup> The afterlife of all of the so-called Orphic gold tablets, not only those with the spring and the cypress but also the other types from Thurii and Pelinna, seems to be the familiar dark and shadowy realm of the dead beneath the earth.<sup>10</sup> Despite the fragmentary nature of these texts, then, it is clear that the realm of the dead is one of darkness, even for the privileged, not of blessed light.

What then of the bright cypress that glows in the shadowy gloom? Various interpreters have taken for granted that its whiteness and brightness must represent light, life, and hope in contrast to its surrounding darkness. In her discussion of the whiteness of the cypress, for example, Guarducci refers to laws in various states that prescribe white burial garments to provide the deceased with a symbol of light as they cross over into the dark place. For similar reasons, things sacrificed to underworld powers are often white, such as the white poppies and white sacrificial animals for Despoina at Lykosura.<sup>11</sup> Whiteness is often associated, naturally enough, with purity and thus sanctity. The white-clad chorus of Euripides' *Cretans*, who proclaim the purity of their life, can serve as a parallel, while those who want to associate the tablets' imagery with the supposedly Orphic story of the Titans' murder of Dionysos Zagreus can adduce the white gypsum (*titanos*) used to whiten the faces of certain participants in rituals.<sup>12</sup> Whiteness, the argument goes, is not just simply associated with light and life in the realm of death, but this association is a particularly Orphic thing and thus especially appropriate for these gold tablets that are considered Orphic.

Zuntz, who vehemently denies any Orphic associations with these tablets, sees the brightness of the tree in the underworld as parallel to the radiance of the underworld tree of life in the Mesopotamian tradition.<sup>13</sup> He reads the λευκή of the tablets as referring to this kind of dark radiance rather than a bright whiteness, but the nature of the contrast is still basically the same; the bright tree represents light and life shining in the midst of darkness and death. Giangrande has pointed to other places in which the term λευκή means, not white, but the bright green of flourishing plant growth, but the contrast is still the same—a sign of life in the midst of death.<sup>14</sup>

Zuntz also brings up parallels to the white cypress in the Egyptian tradition of the so-called Book of the Dead, a topic treated more recently by Merkelbach. In various spells of the Egyptian mortuary texts of “Coming Forth by Day,” there is a scene of the deceased near a tree and/or a pool, being refreshed with food or water, and the similarity to the scene in the B tablets has been noted since the end of the 19th century.<sup>15</sup> Some of the scenes involve a goddess providing liquid refreshment for the deceased from within the tree, pouring out a stream of water into the hands of the deceased, while others have an arm coming from the tree that performs this service. The motif of the thirst of the dead, while apparently a human universal, is nevertheless strongly marked in the Egyptian mortuary texts, and the various Books of Coming Forth by Day provide a number of spells for obtaining water in this fashion, often accompanied by illustrations. In the Egyptian texts, the tree, usually a sycamore or dom-palm rather than a cypress, is directly responsible for providing this life-giving substance in the afterlife. The tree is either a deity itself or the agent of divine power that provides the substance of life—again, a power of life in the realm of death.

Interpreters have pointed to the idea of the Tree of Life that is found in a variety of cultural traditions to explain the white cypress of the gold tablets. Lopez-Ruiz points to the pairing of tree and rock in a number of Near Eastern traditions (from Mesopotamia and Ugarit to Hesiod and Homer) in which the tree seems to represent a primordial power of life and fertility, like the *asherah* against whose worship the Biblical prophets fulminated.<sup>16</sup> In one of his earlier works, Lincoln looks to the Indo-European tradition of the tree of life, coupled with the water of life, as a way of understanding the imagery of the cypress and the spring in the gold tablets. The world tree Yggdrasill in the Norse tradition, grows over the waters of Mimir’s spring. Mimir is a divine entity connected with wisdom and memory, whose name may even be related etymologically to the Mnemosyne whose waters the deceased in the tablet desires so ardently. The spring from which he drinks flows near the gates of Hel, the Norse underworld, at the point where the roots of the world-tree Yggdrasill reach down to that netherworld.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, the world-tree Yggdrasill represents life in a different way than does the Near Eastern *asherah* or the Egyptian sycamore; it is the force that sustains the whole cosmos, rather than a fertility symbol or the provider of life-giving refreshment. In all of these comparisons, however, the tree that parallels the white cypress of the tablet symbolizes the powers of life and light, of wisdom and refreshment in the realm of the dead.

As specious as all these comparisons may be, however, in making the bright cypress the symbol of light and life, they neglect a crucial element of the text of the tablets. For the deceased is explicitly instructed in the longer



versions of the B tablets to avoid the white cypress, not even to go near it: “Do not approach this spring at all.”<sup>18</sup> The white tree that glows in the murky gloom of the underworld is not here a beacon of life and hope, but rather a sign of danger to be avoided. The spring that flows from it does indeed provide refreshing water to the thirsty dead, but the properly instructed soul must go further along the path to find the spring associated with Mnemosyne. The spring marked by the cypress is where the souls of the ignorant go: “there the descending souls of the dead refresh themselves.”<sup>19</sup> The tablet text plays off the word for souls (*ψυχαί*) and for refreshment (*ψύχονται*), suggesting that the *animas* are reanimated by the waters of the cypress-marked spring, but, in these long tablets, this refreshment is not actually what is desirable; only the water from the lake of Memory will do.

The issue is confused by the differences between the long versions of the B text, found in Magna Grecia and Thessaly, and the shorter version, found mostly in Crete. In the short versions, the cypress does mark the correct spring: “But give me to drink from the ever-flowing spring on the right, where the cypress is.”<sup>20</sup> This cypress is not, peculiarly enough, described as bright white, except for the single example of the short text from outside of the cluster from Eleutherna in Crete. So, the strange brightness and whiteness of the cypress only characterizes the tree in the longer tablets, where it marks the tree to be avoided.

To further complicate matters, different tablets put the tree on different sides. While most have the tree to the right, a few have it on the left. However, we can’t conclude that the tree on the sinister left side is the one to be shunned while the tree on the positive right side should be sought, because the examples of left and right are both equally divided between whether that tree should be avoided or sought.

Table 16.1

B1 ἐπ’ ἀριστερά -	B5 ἐπὶ δεξιά +	B8a ἐπ’ ἀριστερά +
B2 ἐνδεξιά -	B6 ἐπὶ δεξιά +	B9 ἐπὶ δεξιά +
B3 ἐπὶ δεξιά +	B7 ἐπὶ δεξιά +	B10 ἐπὶ δεξιά -
B4 ἐπὶ δεξιά +	B8 ἐπὶ δεξιά +	B11 ἐπὶ δεξιά -

The assumption that the white tree must always indicate life or salvation has led some interpreters to postulate a shift or even a schism, with a later group rejecting the instructions of the earlier and imagining a second spring that is for the real initiates (in contrast to the spring for every thirsty soul). Such conjectures, however, fly in the face of the fact that the longer versions (which instruct the deceased to avoid the spring by the cypress) are all older, by at least a century, than the short ones from Crete. In contrast to the straightforward instruction in tablet A4 to go to the right, the cypress and spring are not unequivocally and necessarily the marker of the path to life and salvation in the afterlife.<sup>21</sup>

What then *is* the significance of the white cypress, if its glow does not betoken the light of life and hope in the gloomy afterlife? As Zuntz, always one of the most careful readers of the tablet texts themselves, concluded: “The Greek cypress seems to have no other function than to serve as a landmark.”<sup>22</sup> The white cypress serves to mark the place where the action happens in the narrative of the gold tablets, where the deceased needs to perform the action crucial to her enjoyment of a happy afterlife. Rather than looking for special significance in the light color of the tree in order to understand the function of the cypress in the text, we should look instead, as Wilamowitz long ago suggested, to the common motif in epigrams of describing a special place, especially a spring, by reference to the tree that grows there.<sup>23</sup> Cypressess, which thrive in water, often appear in pastoral poetry marking springs, which often have the same poetic epithet that appears in the tablets, ever-flowing—*ἀέναον* or *αἰετόον*.<sup>24</sup> The cypress tree serves to distinguish the special place for the passerby, whether in this world or the underworld.

In the dark underworld, however, notable objects must be somehow visible in the gloom, since only a satirist like Lucian assumes that there will be enough light to see one’s way. As Guarducci notes, many prominent features of underworld geography are white (*λευκή*), sufficiently bright that they stand out in the gloom. The famous White Rock of the *Odyssey* seems, like the tablets’ cypress, to serve only as a marker of place in the underworld, and Hesiod describes the silvery shining columns of the palace of Styx, a detail that can only function to mark their visibility, not to associate the dread goddess with life or light.<sup>25</sup> The whiteness of the cypress, then, need not have any special meaning beyond its function within the narrative to direct the traveler to the right (or wrong) place; it is the X that marks the spot, not the beacon of life and hope that shines in the darkness of death.

The meaning of the cypress, then, to use the jargon of linguistics, comes primarily from its use in the syntagmatic structure of the text, not from an inherent meaning of the symbol but from where and how it fits. Within the structure of these texts, the cypress cannot signify life and hope; it serves

instead to alert the journeying soul that she has reached the place where she must demonstrate her special qualifications. Similarly, the choice of this particular element instead of other possible paradigmatic substitutions within the structure also has significance; that is, the very fact that the glowing white cypress is the means of finding one's way in the underworld instead of something else is meaningful, especially when considered in contrast to the other possibilities found within the mythic tradition.<sup>26</sup> In Plato's *Phaedo*, for example, no soul can find its way without the guidance of its guardian daimon. For Plato, every soul has its own personal divine guide assigned at birth, who tries to direct properly the individual's choices of path, in life and after. Vergil's Aeneas does not have a personal daimon, but the sibyl guides his steps through the underworld, providing commentary on the various regions and their significance as they go. Plutarch's Timarchus is guided by an disembodied voice that gives a good middle Platonic exegesis of the various regions of the world beyond.<sup>27</sup> Even Aristophanes' Dionysos in the *Frogs* needs to turn to guides, asking the chorus of Eleusinian initiates where the gates of Hades might be (that they respond, "It's right over there, you can't miss it" is a typically Aristophanic joke). The soul in the tablets, by contrast, follows no mystagogue or personal guiding spirit; she is alone on her journey. This traveler to the underworld must rely on a recognizable landmark instead of a local guide or experienced fellow-traveler, so the religious context of the tablets, we may deduce, did not include such a guide in its world view, an important consideration when we try to reconstruct a ritual context for the creation and use of these tablets. Their vision of the afterlife is a solo journey, in which the deceased must find her own way by recognizing the luminescent tree that shines in the underworld darkness.

Of course, the significance of the tree itself does differ between the short texts, in which it marks the right spot, and the long texts, in which it marks the wrong spot. In the longer texts, the cypress marks the place where most souls give in to their terrible, parching thirst and seek refreshment—and no doubt find oblivion. The contrast set up by the white cypress is between those who can endure their thirst until they reach the spring flowing from the lake of Memory farther down the path and those who cannot. Whether the exceptional endurance in the tablets comes about through ascetic training or simply through special knowledge is unclear, but Plato uses the same sort of distinction in his myth at the end of the *Republic*.<sup>28</sup> There the souls headed for reincarnation must march across a dusty plain, after which they come to the river of Ameles (forgetfulness). The heedless souls drink deeply to quench the thirst raised by the dusty journey and forget everything about the afterlife, while those who have trained themselves philosophically to moderate their desires can drink with restraint and enter their new lives with the ability to

recollect something of the true nature of existence. It is unlikely that philosophic living is also the solution to the problem in the tablets, but the bright cypress and the two springs mark some contrast between ordinary folk and the special deceased who enter the underworld with the tablet's instructions, just as other features of the tablets' narratives serve to highlight the exceptional nature of the deceased.

A cypress, then, would be an appropriate tree to mark a significant place in the underworld, and a bright version of this normally dark tree would stand out all the better in the underworld gloom. But the bright cypress of the underworld, as it is described in the gold tablets, confounds the expectation that its brightness will carry with it the expected meanings of life and light. On the contrary, this bright object that stands out in the gloom of Hades is a tree linked with death, that often marks a place of danger and destruction.<sup>29</sup> If even the contrast of light and dark has no fixed meaning or valence in a mythic narrative, we need to take all the more seriously the idea that such traditional elements of the myths are, like phonemes in structural linguistics, arbitrary signs whose meaning can only be determined by its position in the structure of the syntactic unit.

The principle of the arbitrariness of the sign, although central to Saussurean linguistics, has always been difficult to apply in the study of Greek myth, despite the many interpreters who draw on Saussure and his followers for inspiration. Applied at the level of sounds or syllables, the principle is clear; despite the games Plato plays in the *Cratylus*, most people would agree that the meaning of a word resides not in the particular sounds that make it up, but rather in the word as a whole, the way the sounds are put together. Even at the level of words and sentences, it is clear that the mere presence of a similar set of words in several sentences does not indicate that those sentences will share similar meanings. If one takes the words "boy," "girl," "gave" and "rose," for example, the order and function of those words is crucial to determining the meaning; the mere collection of words will not suffice. "The boy gave the rose to the girl" differs not only from "the girl gave the rose to the boy" but also from "the rose gave off a lovely smell for the boy and girl" or even "the girl rose up and gave the boy a slap." In these four sentences, the fact that they all share four words does not necessitate that the sentences are variant expressions of the same idea, have the same meaning, or come from the same source. However, when it comes to the significance of traditional names or patterns of action within a mythic narrative, interpreters are more reluctant to give up the idea that myths that share traditional elements may also share a common meaning or origin beyond the whole Greek mythological tradition.

The example of the cypress in the gold tablets shows, however, that such traditional mythic elements are inherently multivalent and that their meaning

can only be adequately determined by their function within the individual text. Not only does the meaning of the white cypress shining in the darkness of the underworld differ from other things that present similar contrasts between light and darkness, but the meaning differs from text to text in each individual tablet—in the long texts, the cypress marks the spring to avoid; in the short, the one to find. A recently discovered short B text from the same region of Eleutherna in Crete that the others have been found suggests that the variations in meaning may even go beyond the long-short distinction. Tzifopoulos reads in this tablet a reference to the spring of Saoros near the Idaean cave, a site associated with Eleutherna, the town from which the Cretan tablets all seem to come. “But give me to drink from the spring of Sauros on the left of the cypress.”<sup>30</sup> Saoros was the nymph of the spring who provided the older name of Eleutherna.<sup>31</sup> This spring of Saoros, Theophrastus tells us, was ringed with black poplars, and one of the other Cretan tablets may indeed refer to the spring of the black poplars, κράνας αἰγείρων, instead of κράνας αἰεπόω, the ever-flowing spring found on the other examples from this area.<sup>32</sup> This kind of minor variation, tied to the specific locale in which the tablets were produced, shows the continual process of readaptation and dynamic shifts of meaning as the traditional mythic elements are given new meaning in their particular texts.

The water of memory provides another example of the arbitrariness of the sign, the way that its meaning is not fixed but dependent on the way it is used in the text. In the tablets, of course, the water of memory is what the deceased is seeking, either at the spring by the cypress or at the further spring. Why the deceased wants this water, apart from quenching her thirst, is never made clear in the tablet texts, but interpreters have often drawn the parallel with Plato’s imagery of the plain of Lethe and the river of Ameles in his myth in the *Republic*, which prevent the unphilosophic from recollecting the true nature of reality after they are once again incarnated. However, in Pausanias’ description of the oracle of Trophonius at Lebedea, the water from the spring of memory (and from the accompanying spring of Lethe) has a different function. Anyone who seeks to consult the oracle, Pausanias tells us, must drink first of Lethe to forget all of his current concerns and then of Mnemosyne to be able to recall all that he experiences during his consultation.<sup>33</sup> Zuntz waxes sarcastic about what he sees as a perversion of the concept found in the tablets, “How lucky that the waters had so specific an effect!... This is not myth, but allegory materialized and exploited; a device by smart priests aiming to refurbish the waning lustre of their patrimony.”<sup>34</sup> Zuntz interprets the difference in the meaning of the traditional mythic element in these three contexts as an indication that one meaning must be invalid or inauthentic, but there is no reason to treat one or the other as illegitimate; Plato, the tablets and the

tradition of the oracle all make use of the image in a way that has meaning in that particular context.

The same principle holds, not just for one single mythic element, but even for a cluster of elements. Just as the collection *boy, girl, rose, and gave* doesn't always imply the same sense, so too a collection such as *shepherd, mountain, and divine epiphany* may signify very different things, depending on how the elements are strung together. The judgement of Paris, Anchises' encounter with Aphrodite, and Hesiod's acquisition of poetic inspiration from the Muses all have the same pieces, but very different significances. Sticking to this principle is more difficult, however, when the evidence provides only fragmentary or allusive texts that attest to the myth, instead of full narratives in which the meaning of the pieces can be clearly seen. The constellation of Dionysos, the Titans, and killing, which appears mostly in allusions, rather than complete tellings, provides an example of a grouping whose meaning has often been presumed to be the same, regardless of the way the elements are put together in the context. On the contrary, depending on the way the story was told, those elements could combine to create a tale whose message was a rejection of sacrifice or even meat-eating altogether (as Detienne has suggested) or a tale about the grape harvest and the making of wine (as Cornutus, Diodorus, and other ancient sources suggest) or even about the cosmic procession of One to Many (as the Neoplatonists told it).<sup>35</sup> It was not always about wine-making, nor always about sacrifice (and it was almost never about the creation of humanity); the meaning of the tale varied as the elements were given different significance in each telling.

Just as the bright cypress of the gold tablets confounds our expectation, based on the familiar dichotomy of light and darkness, that it will represent life and salvation in the realm of death, so too other elements familiar in the Greek mythic tradition may confound our expectations and presuppositions about their meanings if we ignore the texts and contexts in which they are found. We may never fully grasp the import of some of these traditional elements, especially those like the cypress that appear only in enigmatic and fragmentary texts like the gold tablets. Nevertheless, by putting aside our presuppositions about their meaning and analyzing the significance of these symbols within their particular textual context, we can begin to shed light on some of these dark mysteries.

## NOTES

1. B1.1-2 = OF 476. Εὐρήσ{σ}εις δ' Αἶδαο δόμων ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ κρήνην, πὰρ δ' αὐτῇ λευκὴν ἐστηκυῖαν κυπάρισσον· Texts and translations of the tablets come from

R. Edmonds, ed., *The Orphic Gold Tablets and Greek Religion*, (Cambridge forthcoming). OF refers to the numbering in A. Bernabé, *Poetae Epici Graeci II: Orphicorum Graecorum testimonia et fragmenta*, (fasc I 2004; fasc. II 2005).

2. B3 = OF478. Δίψαι αὖτος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ πιένῃ μοι κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιᾷ, τῇ(ν) κυφάρισσος. τίς δ' ἐσσί; πῶ δ' ἐσσί; Γᾷς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος.

3. See R. Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets* (Cambridge 2004), as well as several forthcoming papers.

4. When Odysseus asks his companion Elpenor how he died and reached the underworld before them, he asks “Elpenor, how did you travel down to the world of darkness?” (Ἐλπῆνορ, πῶς ἦλθες ὑπὸ ζόφον ἡερόεντα; xi.57) When an Iliadic hero dies, he leaves the light of the sun for the darkness of death (λείπειν φάος Ἡελίοιο *Iliad* XVIII.11 ≈ Hesiod *W&D* 155). Homer’s famous description of the realm of the dead indeed explicitly removes the light of the sun even from the Cimmerians who live in the vicinity (Od. xi.15–19).

5. *de luctu* 2. In one of his own descriptions of the underworld, Lucian plays off this familiar theme by having the way out of the shadowy underworld be marked by a clearly visible beam of light shining down from the upper world at the Trophonius shrine (*Menippus* 22).

6. *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 480–3; Aristophanes *Frogs* 455–9.

7. Pindar *Olympian* II.61–3.

8. σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας B1.margin, cp. B11.3.

9. ὅτ(τ)ι δὴ ἐξερέεις Ἄϊδος σκότος ὀρφ(ν)ήεντος B10.9, cp. B11.11.

10. One of the Pelinna tablets refers to the other blessed dead beneath the earth (καὶ σὺ μὲν εἷς ὑπὸ γῆν τελέσας ἅπερ ὀλβιοὶ ἄλλοι. D1.7), while the tablets from the smaller tumulus in Thurii greet Persephone as Queen of those below the earth (χθονί(ων) βασιλεία A1.1 = A2.1 = A3.1). The tablet from the larger tumulus starts the deceased’s journey to the underworld with the familiar line, when the soul has left the light of the sun (A4.1 Ἀλλ’ ὅπ(ο)ταν ψυχὴ προλίπη φάος ἀελίοιο).

11. “L’ansioso desiderio di luce e di candore oltre le soglie del l’al di là si manifesta anche in certe disposizioni rituali circa il colore delle vesti e delle vittime.” M. Guarducci, ‘Il cipresso dell’ oltretomba,’ *Rivista di filologia* 100 (1972), p. 327. She cites IG XII 5.593 Sokolowski 97a for 5th c. for a Kean law prescribing white himatia for the dead, cp. Sokolowski 77c6 for Labiadi at Delphi; Pausanias 4.13.3 for Messenian leaders buried in white garments; Sokolowski 68 3rd c. Arcadian temple to Despoina at Lykosura.

12. Euripides *Cretans* fr. 472=Porphyry *De Abst.* 4.56. cp., Harpocration *Lexicon in decem oratores Atticos* 48 Ἀπομάττων.

13. G. Zuntz, *Persephone: Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia*, (Oxford 1971), pp. 387–8, citing Cuneiform Texts in the British Mus. xvi. Pl. 46, p. 183ff.

14. G. Giangrande, ‘La lamina orfica di Hipponion,’ *Orfeo e l’orfismo: Atti del Seminario Nazionale*, ed. A. Masaracchia (Roma 1993), p. 238.

15. Zuntz (n.13), pp. 370–6, who cites U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der glaube der Hellenen*, (Berlin 1931–32), p. 200 and E. Rohde, *Psyche: Seelencult und*



*Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, (Leipzig 1894) p. 391, n.1. R. Merkelbach, ‘Die Goldenen Totenpässe: Ägyptisch, Orphisch, Bakchisch,’ *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 128 (1999) 1–13, has recently used this parallel, along with Herodotus’ claim (II.81) that certain things labeled Orphic were in reality Egyptian, to argue for an Egyptian origin of the Orphic motifs.

16. C. Lopez-Ruiz, *Greek Cosmogonies and their Northwest Semitic Background* (unpublished dissertation), p. 60.

17. Gylfaginning 15 And under that root [of the world-tree Yggdrasil] which turns toward the frost giants is Mimir’s Spring, in which knowledge and understanding are hidden. He who owns that spring is called Mimir, and he is full of wisdom, because he drinks from that spring out of the Gjallarhorn. B. Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice*, (Chicago 1991), p. 54.

18. B1.3 ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐμπελάσειας. Cp. B2.3, B11.7; B10.5 ταύτας τὰς κρίνας μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐγγύθεν ἔλθῃς.

19. B10.4 ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυχαὶ νεκῶν ψύχονται.

20. B3.1–2 ἀλλὰ πῖε(ν) μοι κρίνας αἰετρόω ἐπὶ δεξιᾷ, τῇ(ν) κυφάρισσος.

21. A4.1–2 = OF 487 Ἀλλ’ ὅποταν ψυχὴ προλίπη φάος ἀελίοιο, δεξιὸν Ε.ΘΙΑΣ δ’ ἐξιέναι πεφυλαγμένον εὔ μάλα πάντα. But when the soul leaves the light of the sun, go straight to the right, having kept watch on all things very well. This instruction cannot be combined with the geography of the B tablets to produce a choice of paths before the cypress, as F. Graf and S. I. Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*, (Routledge, 2007), pp. 99–114, suggest.

22. Zuntz (n. 13), p. 372. C. Calame, *Pratiques poétiques de la mémoire*, (Paris 2006), p. 240, also understands the cypress as a landmark, dismissing other fantastic explanations.

23. “Tell the stranger, O citizen, who founded this gymnasium here, and the ever-flowing spring and the tall-tipped tree.” (Τῷ ξένῳ εἰπεῖ πολῖτα, τίς ἔκτισε γυμνάδα τάνδε | κρίναν τ’ ἀέναν δένδρεα θ’ ὑψικόμα IG XII 3,203.1–2. Wilamowitz (n. 25) ii, 200, where Wilamowitz cites Hellenistische Dichtung ii. 102–3. There he quotes Planudea 254; A.P. IX 324; Leonidas Planud. 230, Geffken 56.

24. Cp. Theocritus Idyll 22. 37–41; Geoponica 11.5.5 and Theophrastus History of Plants 2.7.1.

25. Homer *Odyssey* xxiv.11–14; Hesiod *Theog.* 775–80.

26. “A linguistic unit sustains a paradigmatic relationship with all other units that could be conceivably substituted for it in the same context.” J. Peradotto, ‘Oedipus and Erichthonius: some observations of paradigmatic and syntagmatic order’ in *Oedipus: a folklore casebook*, ed. Dundes & Edmunds (New York 1984), p. 181.

27. Plato, *Phaedo* 107d–108b. cp. Virgil, *Aeneid* 6; Plutarch *de genio* 22.

28. Plato, *Republic* 621a.

29. contra Zuntz (n. 13). Cp. Pliny NH XVI 60, Servius Aen. iii. 681, Paus. iv.33.4, Thucydides 2.34.3.

30. “from the spring of Sauros on the left of the cypress” κρίνας <Σ>αύρου ἐπ’ {α} ἄρι(σ)τερὰ τὰς κυφα(σ)ρίσσω. B8a = OF 484a. See Y. Tzifopoulos, ‘Centre, Periphery, or Peripheral Centre: a Cretan Connection for the Gold Lamellae of Crete,’ in *The Orphic Gold Tablets and Greek Religion*, ed. Edmonds (Cambridge forthcoming).

31. cp., Stephanos Byzantios, *Ethnica* s.v. Σάτρα and s.v. Ἐλευθεραί; Herodianos s.v. Ἐλευθεραί; s.v. Ἄωρος; and s.v. Ἀώρα.
32. Tzifopoulos (n.30). B6 = OF 481 κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιᾷ, τῇκῷ κυπάρισσος. For αἰειρόω, the lamella has αἰγιδῶ, which Tzifopoulos reads as αἰγείρων. B8a = OF 484a κράνας <Σ>αύρου ἐπ' {α} ἀρικ<σ>τερὰ τᾶς κυφα{σ}ρίσσω. Cp., Theophrastus, *Historia plantarum* 3.3.4.
33. Pausanias IX.39.7–8, 13.
34. Zuntz (n. 13), p. 379.
35. M. Detienne, *Dionysos Slain* (Baltimore 1979); Cornutus 30 = OF 59iv, Diodorus 3.62.3–8. For NeoPlatonists, see I. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley 1941), pp. 315–24, and particularly R. Edmonds, 'A Curious Concoction: Tradition and Innovation in Olympiodorus' Creation of Mankind,' *American Journal of Philology* (forthcoming).

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*Part V*

**CULT**



## Chapter Seventeen

# Light and Darkness in Dionysiac Rituals as Illustrated on Attic Vase Paintings of the 5th Century BCE

Dimitris Paleothodoros

*“Let There Be Light.”*

—Genesis, I, 3

*“Let There Be More Light.”*

—Pink Floyd, *A Saucerful of Secrets*

The association of Dionysos with nocturnal dances and blazing torches is a persistent motif of Athenian drama<sup>1</sup>. The god is born by the fire of Zeus’ lightning that strikes his mother, Semele<sup>2</sup>. Dionysos is described as ‘holding up the blazing flame of the pine-torch, like the smoke of Syrian frankincense and rushing with the fennel rod,’ ‘as leaping on the Delphic rocks with pine-torches over the twin-peaked plateau, brandishing and shaking the bacchic branch,’ and as ‘swiftly leaping onwards among his frenzied followers with flaming torch held high in the night.’<sup>3</sup> Upon his ordering the Theban women to punish the impious Pentheus, ‘a light of holy fire towered between heaven and earth.’<sup>4</sup> In a famous passage in the *Bacchae*, the chorus of barbarian Lydian maenads, released from the anxiety and the terror caused by Pentheus unsuccessful attempt to imprison Dionysos, sing: ‘O most radiant light for us of the joyful-crying bacchanal, how gladly I looked on you in my desolation!’<sup>5</sup>

There is no doubt that similar perceptions are anchored to ritual and mythological perceptions of the god. In later literature, like the Orphic Hymns, Oppian’s *Cynegetica* and Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*, Dionysos is called πυρίπνοος, πυριφεγγής, πυρίπαις, πυρισθενής, πυρίσπορος, πυριτρεφής, πυρογενής and πυρόεις.<sup>6</sup> Walter Burkert has aptly commented that ‘fire miracles are spoken of only in the Dionysos cult.’<sup>7</sup> the Thracian Crestoni had a fire-oracle of

Dionysos;<sup>8</sup> the house of the Skythian king Skyles was destroyed by lightning when he expressed his desire to be initiated into the mysteries of Dionysos.<sup>9</sup> The maenads of Dionysos carry fire on their heads without being harmed.<sup>10</sup> Cult epithets of Dionysos include νυκτέλιος, φανστήριος, λαμπτήρ and his festivals, ‘held in the darkness of night amid the flickering and uncertain light of torches,’ in the eloquent phrasing of Erwin Rohde,<sup>11</sup> are often called παννυχίς and νυκτέλια. Nocturnal rites are often associated with the cult of Dionysos, because ‘darkness possesses solemnity.’<sup>12</sup>

The aim of this paper is to put these poetic and cultic descriptions in the context of 5<sup>th</sup> century Athenian religion, reviewing, in the absence of what Barbara Goff has called the ‘hard’ evidence (epigraphic and archaeological data),<sup>13</sup> the richest source of well-dated material about the Dionysian cult, Attic vase-paintings. I will not venture myself to a formal and strictly typological analysis of the available imagery, a task already undertaken in the recent book of Eva Parisinou,<sup>14</sup> and one which frankly, I do not consider to be a particularly rewarding approach. I have chosen instead to concentrate upon a number of images displaying a rich variety of situations of torch-bearing within the framework of dionysiac imagery.

Dionysos is, more than any other god, thought to be present among his worshippers, and indeed is the only god to be constantly given a retinue of mythic or mortal followers. Inevitably, then, human ritual behavior is formed following the paradigm of the god.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the first images in Athenian iconography in which light is connected to dionysiac ritual and myth imply the god himself.<sup>16</sup>

The first image of Dionysos holding torches is also the most famous and intriguing one: it appears on a small neck-amphora in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris, dating close to 500 BCE. Zeus is seated, holding a sceptre and a thunderbolt, while a boy, with two torches in his hands, stands on his knees. To the right, a woman addresses herself to the protagonists on the left, while lifting the edge of her dress (see photospread).

Inscriptions accompany all the figures: besides Zeus is written *KALOS*, ‘beautiful.’ The boy is identified as *DIOSPHOS*, a word that led the German scholar Andreas Rumpf to coin the somewhat misleading name of the Diosphos Painter to identify the anonymous artist. The woman is easily identified as Hera (*HERA*).<sup>17</sup>

While the identifying the figures as Zeus, Dionysos and Hera has never really caused any trouble,<sup>18</sup> this has not been so regarding the interpretation of the inscriptions. The earlier discussions have been summarized by John Beazley: ‘the inscriptions can hardly be meant for nonsense ... *Diosphos* ... may be either 1) Διὸς φῶς, 2) δῖος φῶς or 3) Διὸς φῶς; these would all be unusual and poetic expressions.’<sup>19</sup> Already in 1890, Paul Kretschmer, in a once famous, yet



now largely forgotten essay entitled *Dionysos und Semele*, proposed the first reading, Διὸς φῶς, with φῶς meaning ‘man.’<sup>20</sup> This reading was widespread in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> The second reading, δῖος φῶς (divine man), was a suggestion of Beazley himself, noting as parallel the Homeric ἰσόθεος φῶς. The third reading, Διὸς φῶς (Light of Zeus), was first advocated by Giulio Minervini, when he published the amphora back in 1852.<sup>22</sup> Since Giovanni Becatti’s analysis of the image, in 1951, the reading ‘Light of Zeus’ is almost universally accepted, inasmuch as the god is holding torches, mistaken for *thyrsi* by Kretschmer but correctly identified by Minervini.<sup>23</sup>

Eva Parisinou, in a detailed presentation of the amphora in the Cabinet des Médailles, stresses the connection between the motif of the birth of Dionysos and Zeus’ lightning that struck down Semele.<sup>24</sup> This view stems from William Furley’s account of the duality of the celebrations of Dionysos’ birth and Semele’s death.<sup>25</sup> It would be superfluous to recite the whole body of evidence on the importance of Semele in the rituals of Dionysos. In Athens proper, an important ritual-act of the dramatic contest of the Lenaia was when the *dadouchos*, no doubt the homonymous Eleusinian official, holding a lighted torch, exhorted the people ‘Invoke the god,’ whereupon the whole congregation cried aloud ‘Iacchos, son of Semele, the giver of wealth.’<sup>26</sup>

The problem with this interpretation is that instead of Semele and the first birth of Dionysos from the thunder-smitten womb of his mother, the painter has presented a particular and quite unusual cultic triad, Zeus, Hera and Dionysos. But, although Dionysos and Hera are antagonists on both the mythological level, in which Hera incarnates the archetype of the wicked stepmother,<sup>27</sup> and the cultic level (at least in Athens),<sup>28</sup> the two divinities are virtually complementary on the symbolic level as deities who bring madness and destruction to their opponents.<sup>29</sup> However, Dionysos and Hera betray strong cultic connections in Lesbos, where Dionysos *Omestes*, Zeus and Aeolian Hera formed a triad already venerated from the time of Alcaeus and Sappho.<sup>30</sup> Alternatively, the presence of Hera may be taken as an allusion to an unknown version of the myth, where the two opponents (Dionysos and Hera) were reconciled by the formal adoption of the son by the stepmother.<sup>31</sup>

Since Otto Jahn’s passing reference to the vase in 1854, scholars are almost unanimous in considering its image as the first instance of Dionysos’ birth from Zeus’ thigh in ancient art. However, it is preferable to follow Giovanni Becatti’s opinion that the aim of the painter was not to present a narrative, but to celebrate Dionysos’ divinity and his glorious descent from the god of light.<sup>32</sup>

The archaeological context of the amphora in the Cabinet des Médailles can be reconstructed with a fair amount of confidence, thanks to an important study by Rita Benassai. The amphora was found in 1847 in a rectangular grave made up of tufa slabs (the so-called ‘tomba a cubo’ type), in the SW section of

the necropolis of Santa Maria di Capua in Campania. Besides the amphora, the tomb also contained a bronze *dinos*, used as a cinerary urn—the famous Barone *lebes* now in the British Museum—that stood on a tripod stand, as well as a red-figured cup by the Euergides Painter and a ram-head *rhyton* which has not yet been localised.<sup>33</sup>

The Barone *lebes* is one of the earliest and certainly the finest of the series of 25 bronze *dinoi* used as cinerary urns in that part of the cemetery of Capua. The lid is decorated with a group of a satyr lifting a woman and a circle of four archers in Scythian garb mounted on small horses. Exceptionally for this class of objects, incised motifs appear also as decoration on the body of the vase: figures include felines devouring their prey, Herakles with Cacus and Geryones' cattle, a chariot-race, boxers and wrestlers.<sup>34</sup> The iconography on the cup by the Euergides Painter is equally complex: on the tondo we see a woman playing *crottala*, almost certainly a maenad. The obverse shows an athlete amidst two trainers and two sphinxes and the reverse a youth leading two horses, again between sphinxes.<sup>35</sup>

According to the interesting analysis of Luca Cerchiali, the person who collected the items put in the tomb laid special emphasis on the education of young Campanians, centred upon the motifs of horse-riding, sports and archery. Cerchiali's analysis focused on the Etruscan and Campanian reading of the image and revealed the paradigmatic nature of the figure of Herakles for the local youth.<sup>36</sup> More recently, Natacha Lubtchansky has reinforced the connection between *technē hippikē* and Campanian *juventus*, by pointing to other *dinoi* from the aforementioned series with similar subjects.<sup>37</sup> While there can be no doubt about this connection, which is supported by historical sources detailing the activity of Campanian *neaniai* in the cavalry (Aristodemos of Cumae being the most famous example),<sup>38</sup> one should also note the persistent use of dionysiac motifs: a satyr and a woman on the *lebes*, a maenad dancing on the cup, and the infant Dionysos on the amphora; the entire Dionysiac thiasos with its ritual activities and mythic *logos* is put on stage here.<sup>39</sup> So the Capuan aristocrat whose cremated remains were collected into the Barone *lebes* might also be regarded as a member of the local Etruscan elite which was particularly versed in dionysiac rituals. He was perhaps a *mystes* himself.

Mystic overtones are recurrent in Campanian versions of Dionysism. One should not forget that we are not that far in time and place from the famous graveyard of Cumae, where a group of bacchic *mystai* claimed the right to be buried in a separate plot, according to a famous inscription of the mid-fifth century found in 1903.<sup>40</sup> Campanian early classical tombs *a cubo* contain Athenian red-figured stamnoi used as cinerary urns and representing Eleusinian and Dionysiac rituals.<sup>41</sup> Twenty years ago, Juliette de la Genière argued for a specific connection of this ritual iconography to local, dionysiac mysteries.<sup>42</sup>

Apart from the amphora in the Cabinet des Médailles and its Campanian overtones, there is surprisingly little evidence on the iconography of Dionysos bearing one or two torches. The evidence was reviewed 70 years ago by John Beazley<sup>43</sup> and little more can be added today, as the only secure image remains a single, very fine red-figured *lekythos* in Würzburg; dated to 460 BCE<sup>44</sup>. Dionysos is dancing before a *kantharos*, a torch in his left hand; the inscription states that Dionysos is beautiful (*KALOS*) (see photospread).

Mystic light has already been the subject of a careful study by Richard Seaford.<sup>45</sup> On the iconographic level, it is tempting to link mystic initiations with the image on a remarkable red-figured *skyphos*, once in the possession of Oskar Kokochka<sup>46</sup> (see photospread). We see a satyr in short garment, fawnskin and Thracian boots holding two torches and showing the way to a majestic woman wrapped in her mantle. The reverse bears the image of a satyr dressed in masculine garb inviting a thyrsus-bearing maenad to follow him. Erika Simon, in an essay originally published in 1963, thought that the obverse shows the escorting of the wife of the Archon Basileus, the *Basilinna* to the *Bukoleion*, where the sacred marriage with Dionysos was about to take place.<sup>47</sup> Similar interpretations have become increasingly unfashionable today, as the majority of scholars are now moving from arbitrary ritualistic interpretations to post-modern and symbolic readings of Athenian images. Instead, the male protagonist of the scene might be regarded as a ministrant of the mystic cult of Dionysos who partly underwent a psychic transformation to a satyr via his initiation into the ritual. The logic of the construction of the image requires that the woman has not yet achieved access to the state of being *entheos*, of being possessed by the god.<sup>48</sup>

Thomas Carpenter, and more recently E. Parisinou and G. Fahlbusch, have asserted that torches first appear in ritual contexts on vases from around 460–450 BCE.<sup>49</sup> This is not a classical case of misinterpretation of the available evidence, since the image of the torch-bearing maenad appears much earlier in iconography. To my knowledge, there are at least five vases dating from the late 6<sup>th</sup> century to the first decade of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, where torches are integral part of a scene involving female votaries of Dionysos. The earliest vase is a black-figured *lekythos* in Amsterdam<sup>50</sup> [FIGURE 17.4]. It shows three women dancing between Dionysos who is seated and a sexually aroused satyr, who is approaching from the left. The second woman is holding two flaming torches. The context is cultic; the painter has depicted the highest moment of dionysiac ritual: the frenzied women and the satyr are experiencing the god's epiphany. The second vase is a neck-amphora in London by the Eucharides Painter [FIGURE 17.5]. The reverse shows a majestic woman bearing a torch and a jug about to pour wine into the *kantharos* held by Dionysos, who appears on the obverse.<sup>51</sup> The third vase is another amphora by the same

painter in the Louvre; it features the very popular motif of the sexual assault of a satyr on a maenad holding a torch.<sup>52</sup> The fourth vase is a white-ground *lekythos* by Douris in Malibu [FIGURE 17.6].<sup>53</sup> The maenad is running, a torch and a thyrsus in her hands, while looking back, as if pursued by an invisible threatening satyr. The last vase is a cup from Vulci by the Colmar Painter, showing the ‘hippy convoy’ of the Dionysiac thiasos leading the drunken smith-god, Hephaistos, who reclines on the back of an ithyphallic mule, back to Olympus. The procession is headed by a maenad with loose hair holding two torches.<sup>54</sup> Again, this image might reflect a cultic reality, since, according to a recent interpretation, the mythical episode of ‘the return of Hephaistos is structured like the so-called epiphanic processions in honor of Dionysus at Athens, in which the god is conveyed bodily, triumphantly, into the city by his worshippers for his festival.’<sup>55</sup> Torches disappear from the imagery of the Return of Hephaistos until about the third quarter of the century, but this disparity may in fact be due to a gap in our documentation (see photospread).<sup>56</sup>

There are several hundred instances of generic dionysiac processions including satyrs and maenads holding torches. My very rapid survey has revealed the existence of more than 200 hundred such documents, covering for the most part the second and the third quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Two motifs are most representative: that of a maenad with torch and jug, ready to serve Dionysos,<sup>57</sup> and that of the maenad conversing with the god or with her fellow-bacchantes.<sup>58</sup> Less widespread but remarkable is the motif of the maenad brandishing two torches while rushing forth.<sup>59</sup> This image explains a passage in Euripides’ *Trojan Women*: Cassandra enters in a frenzied state, holding two nuptial torches and singing a parody of a nuptial song. Her attitude provokes Hecuba’s reaction: ‘give me the light; for you are not holding the torches straight, as you’re rushing like a maenad.’<sup>60</sup>

Torches appear also in iconographic contexts usually recognized as referring to the official, civic cult of Dionysos, such as a cup in Florence,<sup>61</sup> dating from about 450 BCE. There is a semantic coherence between the three decorative surfaces of the cup, which encourages the idea of a unitary interpretation. On the medallion, Dionysos is seated, while a woman pours wine into his *kantharos*. On one of the exterior faces, we find a group of eight girls dancing. Finally, on the other exterior face, the painter, a follower of the Penthesileia Painter known as the Painter of Bologna 417, has represented a group of men and women involved in various cultic activities: to the left, a group of men dancing an orgiastic dance and making music, with a girl in between; to the right, a group of women bearing offerings and preparing to sacrifice on an altar. The presence of the torches in the hands of the last woman, to the right of the altar, is astonishing in the context of sacrifice. Other deviances from the normal iconography are even more notable: the

sacrifice is not of the ordinary Greek bloody sacrifice, since there is no victim and the priests are all women [FIGURE 17.8]. All these elements point to the Anthesteria; I would tentatively venture the hypothesis that the women beyond the altar to the right of the exterior belong to the college of 14 *Gerarai*, 'The Venerable Ones.'<sup>62</sup>

In any case, the festival shown on the Florence cup involves the epiphany of Dionysos, choral dances, a *komos* and a group of women making offerings at an altar. Shall we deduce from the presence of the torches that these complex or ritual actions take place during the night? Is there a temporal or rather a thematic sequence of the three images, as was suggested above?

We cannot give a definite response to these questions. The device of the torch is sometimes used by the vase-painters in perplexing ways. A *pelike* in Amsterdam<sup>63</sup> shows on one side a woman running, holding a torch and an ivy branch (see photospread). On the other side, Dionysos is depicted in a hieratic pose in front of a closed door, which may be taken as an allusion either to the *gynaikonitis*, or more generally to the *oikos*. These paintings must allude to a dionysiac ritual brought to light recently thanks to the ingenious work of Benedetto Bravo. The Italian scholar has suggested, admittedly on quite scant evidence, that during the night of the *Choes*, the second day of the Anthesteria, Athenian women danced in honor of Dionysos, in front of their male relatives, in a domestic setting.<sup>64</sup> Both time and place are clearly indicated, as well as the frenzied state of the dancer, who is experiencing the epiphany of Dionysos. In other cases, however, the torches become attributes of the Dionysiac cult, without necessarily denoting specific nocturnal rites. On the so-called 'Lenaia vases,' women are pouring wine into large jars, in front of a dionysiac idol.<sup>65</sup> On a *stamnos* in Naples,<sup>66</sup> torches are used by a maenad to the right of the idol, and by the ecstatic women dancing on the reverse. But what about the image on the reverse of a Lenaia *stamnos* in Boston,<sup>67</sup> where a woman holding a parasol is included? Are we to suppose a temporal evolution, from day (parasol) to night (torches) or rather must we conclude that torch-light appears in conjunction with day-light, assuming a symbolic rather than a practical role?

Matthew Dillon wrote recently that 'in looking at women and Dionysos on vases, it appears impossible to discern historical periods, or a change in the perception of maenads.'<sup>68</sup> Similar statements frequently occur in the work of historians of religion, who approach the available iconographic material irrespective of its own logic of change and evolution, as if there is a stagnant and monolithic perception of ritual iconography during the whole of the classical period in Ancient Athens. Changes in the perception of dionysiac symbols are important and must be taken into account when recording the historical evolution of dionysiac rituals.<sup>69</sup> But a warning must be sounded against the trend to

equate changes in artistic currents with changes in the evolution of ritual. To give just an example, thyrsi appear in imagery around 520–515 BCE.<sup>70</sup> Most scholars deny the status of maenad to women appearing on earlier vases, who lack the thyrsus and other paraphernalia of the dionysiac cult (fawnskins, pantherskins, ivy-branches, shaking of small animals and handling of snakes). Consequently, one might argue with Michael Edwards and Albert Henrichs, that before 520 BCE, the ritual activity that we label ‘maenadism’ was simply unknown in Attica.<sup>71</sup> But the word *thysthla*, which is equivalent to the thyrsus, appears already in Homer, where, in any case, we encounter the maenad for the first time, as a ‘well-known phenomenon, so familiar in men’s minds, that the word could be used in a simile to explain the meaning of something else’<sup>72</sup> (Andromache’s anxiety about the fate of Hector, for example).

Robin Osborne has warned against the dangers of the ‘visibility principle,’ by calling upon a statistical approach to imagery. Otherwise, the use of images to write a history of religious experience is bound to fail. Osborne’s contention is that an argument from silence (i.e. from the absence of maenadic symbols in images before the last part of the 6th century), that might be hazarded is perhaps that female worship of Dionysos was not an issue high on the agenda in Athens, at least not high on the agenda of those who painted pots.<sup>73</sup> We might conclude in a similar manner: whether torches denote nocturnal rituals or not, they are not regarded as essential in the visual construction of the Dionysiac experience, until about the second quarter of the 5th century, even if they already appear for some time earlier in imagery. The range of cultic activities connected to torches in dionysiac imagery is very broad: mythic and generic processions, initiations, mystic symbolism, night long private festivities and civic festivals.

Torches must be regarded as a metaphor for the rites of Dionysos, and not as an indication of the temporal sequence of ritual.<sup>74</sup> In other words, torches appear because they are part of the dionysiac imagery, and not because the scenery is to be located at night.<sup>75</sup>

## NOTES

1. I would like to express my thanks to the organizers of the conference for the invitation. For help with the English, and various other illuminating comments, thanks are due to Dr. Christos Zappeiropoulos. Abbreviations: *ABL*= C. H. E. Haspels, *Attic Black-Figure Lekythoi* (Paris, 1936). *ABV*= J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956). *Add*<sup>2</sup>= T. H. Carpenter (ed.), *Beazley Addenda*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1989). *ARV*<sup>2</sup>= J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figured Vase-Painters*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1963). *LIMC*=*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, volumes 1–8 (Zurich, 1981–1997).



2. Eur. *Ba.* 1–9 and 88–93; *Orph. H.* 44.4–11; Paus. ix. 12, 3–4.
3. Eur. *Ba.* 144–8 and 306–8 respectively; Eur. *Ion* 714–18.
4. Eur. *Ba.* 1082–85.
5. Eur. *Ba.* 608–09.
6. Πυρίπνοος: *Orph. H.* 52, 3; πυριφεγγής: *Orph. H.* 52, 9; πυρίπαις: Opp. *Cyn.* 4, 287; πυρισθενής: Nonn. *D.* 24, 6; πυρίσπορος: *Orph. H.* 45, 1; πυριτρεφής: Nonn. *D.* 24, 13; πυρογενής: *Anth. App. Ep.* III 153, 3 Cougny; πυρόεις: Nonn. *D.* 21, 220. Cf. C. F. H. Bruchman, *Epitheta Deorum quae apud poetas graecos leguntur* (Leipzig, 1893), 92.
7. W. Burkert, *Ancient Greek Religion, Archaic and Classical*, tr. J. Raffan, (Oxford, 1985), 61.
8. [Arist.] *Mir. Ausc.* 842 A 15–24.
9. Her. 4, 79, 1. See recently D. Braund, “Palace and polis: Dionysus, Scythia and Plutarch’s Alexander,” in *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millenium B.C. Regional Development and Cultural Interchange between East and West*, Monographs of the Danish Institute of Athens, Vol. IV, ed. I. Nielsen (Athens, 2001), 21–24.
10. Eur. *Ba.* 757–58. See the careful discussion of J. Bremmer, “Greek Maenadism Reconsidered,” *ZPE* 55 (1984): 269–72.
11. E. Rohde, *Psyche. The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Ancient Greeks*, tr. W. B. Hills (London & New York, 1925), 257.
12. Eur. *Ba.* 485. Nocturnal rites: Plut. *Quest. Rom.* 291A and *Quest. Conv.* 714C; Tzetzes, schol. Lyc. *Alex.* 212 (on Dionysos φανστήριος); Paus. ii 7, 5 (Sicyon); Paus. vii 27, 3 (Dionysos Λαμπτήρ of Pallene); Plut. *De Is. Et Os.* 364F and Paus. ii. 37.6 (Lerna); Paus. ix. 9, 20, 4–21, 1 (*Nyktelia Hiera* in Tanagra); Paus. x 4, 3 (festival of Daidophoria); Virg. *Aen.* 301–3 (Cithaeron). Dionysos is called νυκτέλιος in Megara (Paus. i 40, 6) and elsewhere (Plut. *De Is. E Os.* 378E, Ov. *Met.* 4, 11). See also W.D. Furley, *Studies in the Use of Fire in Ancient Greek Religion* (Salem, 1981), 92–96 and 100–06.
13. B. Goff, *Citizen Bacchae. Women’s Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, 2004), 272.
14. E. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods. The Role of Light in Archaic and Classical Greek Cult* (London, 2003), 120–23 and 221–22.
15. On this aspect of Dionysiac iconography, see C. Isler-Kerényi, *Dionysos nella Grecia arcaica. Il contributo delle immagini* (Pisa, and Rome, 2001), 223.
16. The same also applies to the ritual of *sparagmos*, the act of tearing apart small sacrificial animals in order to proceed to ritual *omophagia*, the eating of raw-meat: the earliest such image concerns the god himself, on a *stamnos* in the British Museum (E439): *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 298, 1643; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 211; *LIMC* 3 (1986), pl. 312, Dionysos 151.
17. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 219: *ABL* 238.120; *ABV* 509.120; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 127; Parisinou (n. 14), pl. 7. The reverse shows Herakles leading the Cretan bull, in the company of Athena.
18. G. Minervini, *Monumenti antichi inediti posseduti da Raffaele Barone* (Napoli, 1850), 1–7, has mistaken the infant Dionysos for Artemis φωσφόρος. O. Jahn, *Beschreibung des Vasensammlung König Ludwigs in der Pinakothek zu München* (Münich,



1854), lxi, n. 402, first interpreted the scene 'as the birth of Dionysos.' C. Gaspari, C. and A. Veneri, "Dionysos," in *LIMC* 3 (1986), 481 and 504, think that the boy might be Hephaistos rather than Dionysos. C. Reusser, *Vasen für Etrurien. Verbreitung und Funktionen Attischer Keramik im Etrurien des 6. und 5K Jahrhunderts vor Christus* (Zürich, 2002), I, 164, also questioned the identification of the boy with Dionysos.

19. J.D. Beazley in *ABL* 96–97.

20. P. Kretschmer, "Dionysos und Semele," in *Aus der Anomia, Archäologische Beiträge Carl Robert dargebracht* (Berlin, 1890), 17–29 (especially 29).

21. Accepted by O. Kern, "Dionysos," in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Vol. 5, ed. P. Wissowa, (Stuttgart, 1903), col. 1011; A. De Ridder, *Catalogue des vases peints de la Bibliothèque National* (Paris, 1904), 127 and A.B. Cook, *Zeus. A Study in Ancient Religion*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1924), 273.

22. Minervini (n. 18), 1–7.

23. G. Becatti, "Rilievo con la nascita di Dionysos e aspetti mistici di Ostia pagana," *Boll. d'Arte* 36 (1951): 9. This reading is accepted by such scholars as C. Kerényi, *Dionysos, Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life* (Princeton, 1976), 279 and Parisinou (n. 14), 165.

24. Parisinou (n. 14), 163 and 165.

25. Furley (n. 12), 92–4.

26. Schol. Ar. *Ran.* 479. This well-known passage has been more recently treated in length by N. Spineto, *Dionysos a teatro* (Rome, 2005), 148–53. However, the specific mention of the Lenaia contest proves that the ritual is not nocturnal.

27. R. Seaford, "Dionysos Destroyer of the Household," in *Masks of Dionysus*, ed. T. H. Carpenter and C. A. Faraone (Ithaca, and London, 1993), 135, aptly comments: 'Dionysus and Hera are of course natural enemies.'

28. Plut. *Mor.* fr. 157.2 (F.H. Sandbach, *Plutarch's Moralia XV. Fragments*, Harvard 1969), apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelii* 3, 1, 2: '...it is said that the priestesses of the two divinities at Athens do not speak to one another if they meet....'

29. See the penetrating comments of H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos. Histoire du culte de Bacchus* (Paris, 1951), 198–216.

30. C. Picard, "La triade Zeus-Héra-Dionysos dans l'Orient hellénique d'après les nouveaux fragments d'Alcée," *BCH* 70 (1946): 455–73; E. Will, "Autour des fragments d'Alcée récemment retrouvés: trois notes à propos d'un culte de Lesbos," *Revue Archéologique* 39 (1952): 156–69. Note, however, that Dionysos is not Hera's son in this context, since he is explicitly called the son of Thyone by Sappho (fr. 28, 9).

31. The analogous case of Herakles' adoption by Hera, a myth prominent in Italy, but virtually absent in Greece, can be brought in support of such a suggestion: see recently T. Rasmussen, "Herakles' Apotheosis in Etruria and Greece," *AK* 48 (2005): 30–39.

32. Jahn (n. 18), lxi, n. 402; Becatti (n. 23), 9.

33. R. Benassai, "Sui dinoi bronzei capuani," in *Studi sulla Campania preromana* (Roma, 1995), 175–76. See also L. Cerchiai, "Le tombe 'a cubo' di età tardoarcaica della Campania settentrionale," in *Il Mare, La Morte, L'Amore. Gli Etruschi, i Greci e l'immagine*, ed. B. D'Agostino and L. Cerchiai, (Napoli, 1999), 163–70; Reusser (n. 18), 163–64, n° 30 and M. Martelli, "Arete ed eusebeia: le anfore attiche nelle necropoli del Etruria campana," in *Il greco, il barbaro e la ceramica attica. Immaginario del di-*

verso, processi di scambio e autorappresentazione degli indigeni. *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi 14–19 maggio 2001, Catania, Caltanissetta, Gela, Camarina, Vittoria, Siracusa*, Vol. 3, ed. F. Giudice and R. Panvini, (Rome, 2006), 10 and 14.

34. London, The British Museum 560. On the *lebes*, see Benassai (n. 33) 161–62 and Cerchiai (n. 33), 166–68, pl. 90–91.

35. London, the British Museum 1920.6–13.1: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 88.1, 1625; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 170; Cerchiai (n. 33), pl. 92–3.

36. Cerchiai (n. 33), *passim*.

37. N. Lubtchansky, *Le cavalier tyrrhénien. Représentations équestres dans l'Italie archaïque*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 320 (Rome, 2005), 94–102.

38. Dion. Hal. *Ant Rom.* VII, 2.

39. The dionysiac connection is also stressed by Martelli (n. 33), 14.

40. R. Turcan, “Bacchoi oi Bacchants? De la dissidence des vivants à la segregation des morts,” in *L'Association dionysiaque dans les Sociétés anciennes. Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'École française de Rome, Rome 24–25 mai 1984* (Rome, 1986), 227–46, with earlier bibliography.

41. Collected and discussed by M. Rendelli, “Rituali e immagini: gli stamnoi attici di Capua,” *Prospettiva* 72 (1993): 2–16.

42. J. De La Genière, “Vases des Lénéennes?,” *MEFRA* 99 (1987): 43–61.

43. J.D. Beazley, “Prometheus Fire-Lighter,” *AJA* 43 (1939): 628–29.

44. Würzburg, Martin-von Wagner Museum H 4906, from Selinunt, once in the Giudice collection in Agrigento and then in the Jacob Hirsch collection in Zurich: Beazley (n. 43), 627, fig. 7; *LIMC* 3 (1986), pl. 312, Dionysos 149 (the vase is listed twice, [440, nos 149–150], once in its former and once in its present location).

45. R. Seaford, “Mystic Light in Aeschylus' *Bassaraï*,” *CQ* 55 (2005), 602–6. See also his paper in this volume.

46. Actually in a private collection in Switzerland: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1676.37; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 310; E. Simon, “Ein Anthesterien-Skyphos des Polygnotos,” in *Ausgewählte Schriften. Band I, Griechische Kunst*, ed. E. Simon (Mainz, 1998; originally published in *AK* 6 [1963]), 136–37, fig. 12.1–3; Kerényi (n. 23), fig. 97; E. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus. Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (New York, 1985), 374, fig. 315.

47. Simon (n. 46), 136–37. This identification has been largely adopted: see for instance Kerényi (n. 23), 313; Keuls (n. 46), 374; A. Avagianou, *Sacred Marriage in the Rituals of Greek Religion* (Bern, Berlin, New York, Paris, and Vienna, 1990), 185. On the ritual of the sacred marriage see especially W. Burkert, *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1983), 230–8; Avagianou *Sacred Marriage in the Rituals of Greek Religion*, 177–97; S. Humphreys, *The Strangeness of Gods. Historical Perspective on the Interpretation of Athenian Religion* (Oxford, 2004), 252–53 and 270–71; R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford, 2005), 303–5 and Spineto (n. 26), 76–86.

48. On the various stages of initiation in imagery, see C. Bron, “Porteurs du thyrsos ou bachants,” in *Images et Société en Grèce ancienne. L'iconographie comme méthode d'analyse. Actes du Colloque international, Lausanne 8–11 février 1984*, ed. C. Bérard, C. Bron and A. Pomari (Lausanne, 1987), 145–53.

49. T.H. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery in Fifth Century Athens* (Oxford, 1997), 33–34; Parisinou (n. 14), 118 and G. Fahlbusch, *Die Frauen im Gefolge des Dionysos auf attischen Vasenbildern des 6. und 5. Jhs. V. Chr. Als Spiegel des weiblichen Idealbildes* (Oxford, 2004), 14.

50. Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 14107 (once in the Scheurleer collection in the Hague): *ABL* 55; *ABV* 345; W. D. J. Van de Put, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum The Netherlands, Fascicule 9, Amsterdam Fascicule 3, Allard Pierson Museum, University of Amsterdam. Black-Figure, Pattern and Six-Technique Lekythoi* (Amsterdam, 2006), 5–8, pl. 146–47.

51. The British Museum E 279. *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 226.1; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 199; J.D. Beazley, “The Master of the Eucharides-Stamnos in Copenhagen,” *BSA* 18 (1911–1912), pl. XI–XII; *LIMC* 3 (1986), pl. 535, Dionysos 478. Beazley called the woman Ariadne, because of her dignity.

52. Paris, Louvre G 202: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 226.4; Beazley (n. 51), 222, fig. 4.

53. Malibu, The J.P. Getty Museum 84.AE.770: D.C. Kurtz, “Two Athenian White-ground Lekythoi,” in *Greek Vases in the Getty Museum, 4, Occasional Papers on Antiquities*, 5 (Malibu, 1989), 114–18, fig. 1a–e.

54. Paris, Louvre G 135: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 355.45. On the notion of the dionysiac *thiasos* as a New Age ‘hippy convoy,’ see J. Gould, “Dionysus and the Hippy Convoy: Ritual, Myth, and Metaphor in the Cult of Dionysus,” in *Myth, Ritual, memory and Exchange. Essays in Greek Literature and Culture*, ed. J. Gould (Oxford, 2001), 269–82.

55. G. M. Hedreen, “The Return of Hephaistos, Dionysiac Processional Ritual and the Creation of a Visual Narrative,” *JHS* 124 (2004): 42 (who adds further: ‘... I envision Athenian vase-painters constructing visual representations of the Return of Hephaistos by extracting elements of spectacle from Athenian religious life and employing them in the vase-paintings in order to give recognizable form to the principal themes of the myth’).

56. M. Halm-Tisserant, “La représentation du retour d’Héphaïstos dans l’Olympe,” *AK* 29 (1986): 13.

57. The motif appears often in the repertoire of the Christie Painter: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1047.10–6.

58. See for example *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 484.11, 487.62, 495.4, 511.5, 512.8; 518.13, 525.41, 668.24, 953.46, 992.74, 1048.41, 1151.1, 1188.3.

59. Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 45698, calyx-krater from Spina, tomb 112 D of the Valle Pega necropolis, by the Mykonos Painter: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 515.9bis; *Dionysos. Mito e Mistero*, ed. F. Berti, & C. Gasparri (Bologna, 1989), 27–28, n° 1 (450 BCE). See also a column krater by the Orchard Painter at Gela, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 40384 (450 BCE): *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 525.32; R. Panvini, *Ceramiche attiche figurate del Museo Archeologico di Gela: Selectio Vasorum* (Venice, 2003), 93, n° 11.26.

60. Eur. *Trojan Women* 348–9. See Seaford (n. 27), 128. Torches are held upright by a male dancer on a red-figured salt-cellar in Bonn University, inv. 994: J.H. Oakley and R.H. Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens* (Madison, 1992), 94, fig. 79.

61. Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 3950 and Greifswald 340: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 914.142; J. Neils, “Looking for the Images: Representations of Girls’ Rituals on Ancient

Athens,” in *Finding Persephone. Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. M. Parca and A. Tzanetou (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2007), 67–9, fig. 3.6a–c.

62. On the Gerarai, see Burkert (n. 47), 232, n. 8, Humphreys (n. 47), 233–6, Parker (n. 47), 304–6 and Spineto (n. 26), 77–9. Neils (n. 61), 67–9, thinks that the seated male figure on the *tondo* might be the *Archon Basileus* at the Anthesteria. However, she does not connect the scene on the exterior with the Anthesteria, since she makes the questionable assumption that the girl on the left side of the vase is a dwarf and that the torches held by the woman to the right are sticks. Consequently, she connects the scene to the cult of Demeter, where ritual whipping is attested in ancient sources. Of course, there can be no doubt that the woman is holding a pair of short torches and not sticks; compare with the torches illustrated on London, British Museum E 279 [Figure 17.3] and Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum, inv. 14107 [Figure 17.4]. As for the dwarfishness of the girl to the left, it might be simply an indication of its small age, since, according to Aristotle (*Parts of Animals* 4, 10, 686b 6–9, 11), “all children are dwarfs.” On this aspect of child imagery, see V. Dasen, “‘All Children are Dwarfs.’ Medical Discourse and Iconography of Children’s Bodies,” *OJA* 27 (2008): 49–62.

63. Allard Pierson Museum 8921: *Sotheby's* 3.12.1973, n° 154.

64. B. Bravo, *Pannychis e simposio. Feste private notturne di donne e uomini nei testi letterari e nel culto* (Pisa-Rome, 1997).

65. For a full recent treatment, see R. Hamilton, “Lenaia Vases in Context,” in *Poetry, Theory, Praxis. The Social Life of Myth, Word and Image in Ancient Greece. Essays in Honor of William J. Slater*, ed. E. Csapo, E. and M.C. Miller (Oxford, 2003), 48–68. Note also the cautious analysis in Parker (n. 47), 306–12.

66. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 2419: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1151.2; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 336; Kerényi (n. 23), fig. 85; *LIMC* 3 (1986), pl. 298, Dionysos 33; Carpenter (n. 49), pl. 25B.

67. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 90.155: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 621.34; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 270; Parker (n. 47), 310–11, fig. 21a–b.

68. M. Dillon, *Girls and Women in Greek Religion* (London & New York, 2001), 148.

69. See Humphreys (n. 47), 223–75, for an analysis of the Anthesteria along similar lines.

70. The painter Epiktetos was the first who showed thyrsi on his vases; see for example the cup in Paris, Louvre G6: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 72.21; D. Paleothodoros, *Épictétos* (Leuven, Namur, Boston, and Duddley, 2004), 154, n° 50, pl. XVII.1–3.

71. M. Edwards, “Representations of Maenads on Archaic Red-Figure Vases,” *JHS* 80 (1960): 80; A. Henrichs, “Myth Visualized, Dionysos and his Circle in Sixth-Century Attic Vase-Painting,” in *Papers on the Amasis Painter and his World*, ed. M. True (Malibu, 1987), 100–3.

72. The quotation is from Rohde (n. 11) 256. *Thysthla*: Homer, *Il.* 6, 133–5. For the meaning ‘thyrsus,’ see a third century satyr drama published by D.F. Sutton, *Papyrological Studies in Dionysiac Literature* (Illinois, 1987), 65 and 75. In general, Paleothodoros (n. 70), 81–82.

73. R. Osborne, “The Ecstasy and the Tragedy: Varieties of Religious Experience in Art, Drama, and Society,” in *Tragedy and the Historian*, ed. C. Pelling (Oxford, 1997), 198.

74. This has been perceived intuitively by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema who painted the *Dedication to Dionysus* (Hamburg Kunsthalle) in 1889: Bacchants are shown holding blazing torches, while the blue color of the sky shows that the ritual takes place during daytime.

75. This fact is best shown on a splendid giant Apulian *skyphos* in the Gnathia (Bonn 1201): a huge vine branch frames a three-legged table with two *kantharoi* and an egg to either side of a torch: J.R. Green, *Gnathia Pottery in the Akademische Kunstmuseum, Bonn* (Mainz, 1976), 17–18, pl. 1–2. This vase has been used as an ash-container in a grave of the mid-4th century excavated at Bacoli near Naples in 1852.

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## Chapter Eighteen

# Light and Lighting Equipment in the Eleusinian Mysteries

## *Symbolism and Ritual Use*

Ioanna Patera

διαφέρει ὁ δᾶδας ἔχων ἀπλῶς  
καὶ ὁ ἐν τοῖς κατ' Ἐλευσίνα μυστηρίοις δαδοῦχος

—Eustathius, *ad. Il. A*, 279

The role of light and lighting equipment in the festivals of Demeter, especially in the Eleusinian Mysteries, is usually deduced from the importance of light in the *Homeric Hymn* dedicated to the goddess, in contrast to the dark realm of Hades. Light has therefore been interpreted through an eschatological projection on the Mysteries, partly originating in the late sources on the subject, such as Christian polemicist writers or philosophers using the initiation into the Mysteries as a metaphor for the initiation into philosophy. Methodological problems arise with the interpretation of the *Hymn* as the aetiological myth of the Mysteries. To resolve this problematic relationship some scholars have associated the poem with the Thesmophoria. They assume the greater antiquity of this cult<sup>1</sup> and an evolution of the Mysteries giving the precedence first to Kore and then to Demeter.<sup>2</sup> These constructions necessarily lead to the tricky connection of myth with rite, whose theoretical frames lie beyond our scope.

Regarding the association regularly assumed between the *Hymn* and the ritual, various sequences of the poem have often been considered as an *aition*, and as an illustration of the Mysteries, more particularly of the preliminary stages of the festival that were publicly performed.<sup>3</sup> The search for Demeter's daughter in the light of torches (47–48) has been related to a 'mystic drama.' The 'epiphanies' of the goddess, when she first arrives in the palace of Keleos and later, when she reveals her divine nature to Metaneira (188–90 and

275–80), could be an allusion to the grades of the initiation.<sup>4</sup> The attempt to immortalize Demophon is believed to correspond to the foundation myth of the mystic initiation.<sup>5</sup> Further, some details that may not be relative to the narrative, such as the motivation for Demeter's journey to Eleusis or the Demophon episode, are explained by a close relationship to the ritual practice. As Jenny Strauss Clay states, one passage of the poem appears to be clearly aetiological (192–211).<sup>6</sup> Demeter's silence, her fasting, her sitting on a stool covered with a fleece, drinking the *kukeon*, each gesture of the goddess in the myth seems to be repeated by the initiates. The speech becomes indirect (ἐφασκε, 207) and the action seems veiled; later on, the poem returns to the epic mode of narration<sup>7</sup>. Even though we are able to recognize an aetiological part in the *Hymn*, it is a construction insufficient to assert that what was true for the *Hymn* was necessarily true for the ritual. Besides, the prohibition against revealing the Mysteries is expressed and therefore respected (478–79). Consequently, it is useless to try to discover the secret of the Mysteries in the poem. Even if the *Hymn* culminates in the setting of the Mysteries,<sup>8</sup> it is far from being their 'official story' as it is sometimes considered.<sup>9</sup> We must recall the episodes concerning various images of light in the *Hymn* and try to determine if they precisely coincide with any known ritual. We also have to take into account other sources thought to reflect the ritual, as well as some of the archaeological findings of ritual objects or offerings that may show the issue from another angle.

In the *Hymn*, darkness is related to the realm of death and to the sorrow of the goddess. When Demeter becomes aware that her daughter has been abducted, she manifests signs of human mourning: she tears the veil over her hair and throws a dark (κυανός) cloak on her shoulders<sup>10</sup> that she will keep later on, while remaining in her newly constructed temple (319). The dark cloth (442) contrasts to Hekate (438) and Rhea (458) 'of the bright headband.'<sup>11</sup> As Kore plucked the narcissus, a marvellous and bright flower (θαυμαστὸν γανόωντα, 10), 'the ground gaped from beneath' (429–30) and Hades, the 'Dark-haired' (κυανοχαῖτα, 347) appeared and carried her away 'below the earth' (431), 'into the misty darkness' (ὕπὸ ζόφον ἡερόεντα, 80),<sup>12</sup> 'into the depths of the earth' (340).<sup>13</sup> In contrast, while Kore returns to her mother and to the upper world, Hermes leads her back 'into the daylight' (ἐς φάος, 338). Light is commonly associated with the gods and with divine epiphanies without any mystic connotation. When Demeter reveals her true nature changing her appearance from an old woman to that of a divinity (278–80), light (φέγγος) shone from her skin and the house filled with a brilliance (αὐγῇ) like lightning (ἀστεροπῆς ὥς). The first time she steps into the palace of Keleos, 'she filled the doorway with divine light' (σέλαος θείοιο, 189). Metaneira, although impressed, does not suspect her to be a goddess,<sup>14</sup>

but she recognizes in her a 'godlike' person (θεοείκελος, 159), a 'nobly born' woman, with 'dignity and charm' (αἰδῶς καὶ χάρις, 214–15). Although gods are noticeably associated with brightness, they may also be portrayed in dark colors, as is Zeus 'with his dark clouds' (κελαινεφής, 91).<sup>15</sup>

Lighting equipment in the *Hymn* has been broadly commented upon. The role of torches in the Eleusinian Mysteries does not come into question but their regular interpretation through the mystic paradigm needs to be reconsidered.<sup>16</sup> In the poem, they are held by the goddesses. As no one answered Demeter when she asks about her daughter, 'then for nine days mighty Deo wandered over the earth, holding burning torches (αἰθομένας δαΐδας) in her hands' (47–48). She did not eat, drink or bathe; 'but when the tenth enlightening dawn had come (ἐπήλυθε φαινόλις Ἡώς), Hekate met her holding a light (σέλας) in her hands' (51–53). Some scholars linked Demeter's nine-day abstinence from food and washing with the Eleusinian ritual, even though any mention of these practices is entirely lacking.<sup>17</sup> Those nine days could represent a period of transition signifying a change on the tenth day,<sup>18</sup> or may otherwise be purely poetical.<sup>19</sup> Contrary to what Eva Parisinou thinks, torches in the *Hymn* are not exactly a 'mortal' characteristic or 'a reflection of the limited knowledge and vulnerability of gods, who, in this particular myth, can neither predict nor prevent death.'<sup>20</sup> The appearance of light denotes a progression in the narrative: after Demeter continuously searching night and day,<sup>21</sup> Hekate's approach 'holding a light' introduces the next step in the progressive discovery of her daughter.<sup>22</sup>

One of the key moments relating to fire and to the image of torches is Demophon's nursing:<sup>23</sup> 'at night, she (Demeter) would bury him like a brand in the fire's might' (κρύπτεσκε πυρὸς μένει ἥϊτε δαλόν, 239–40). Hiding in fire is part of the process that rendered the child immortal: Demeter anointed him with ambrosia, breathed sweetly upon him and held him close to her bosom. Fire is intended in this instance to purge, to 'burn off mortality.'<sup>24</sup> As Jenny Strauss Clay remarks, Demeter's adoption of a mortal child defies the authority of Zeus separating mortals from gods.<sup>25</sup> On the other side, this episode leads to the epiphany of Demeter. After the failure of the immortality process, rites and honors are attributed to Demophon,<sup>26</sup> the goddess gives instructions for the celebration of her cult and institutes the rites alleviating death.

Many parallels have been sought in the Eleusinian ritual for the torches carried by Demeter during her search.<sup>27</sup> Their ritual significance is assured by the fact that the Dadouchos was named after their use.<sup>28</sup> Light seems important throughout the preliminary rites, from the torchlight procession leading to Eleusis until the following *pannuchis*.<sup>29</sup> The procession described in the *Frogs*, where the celebration of the Mysteries and their ideal projection in a mystic meadow seem to interfere with each other,<sup>30</sup> is not the one of the candidates

for initiation, but rather that of the dead initiate continuing to celebrate the Mysteries in the afterlife.<sup>31</sup> Iacchos heads the procession as a bright star (φωσφόρος ἀστήρ, 342), holding ‘shining torches’ (λαμπάδι φέγγων, 351), and the candidates walk in a ‘brightly blazing meadow’ (φλογὶ φέγγεται δὲ λειμών, 344).

Clement refers to a ritual re-enactment, a mystic drama celebrating the wandering, the abduction and the mourning with torches.<sup>32</sup> Even though his assertions must be taken with caution, the initiates are supposed to imitate the experiences of the goddess. Lactantius as well claims that ‘during the night they search for Persephone with torches lit, and when they find her the whole ritual ends with celebration and waving of torches.’<sup>33</sup> Thus torches seem to intervene at various moments, during the search and at the end of the ceremony. That this search belongs to the drama is uncertain,<sup>34</sup> although other late authors refer to the ‘imitation’ of the goddess’s deeds.<sup>35</sup> The question of the reliability of these sources remains open and the mystic drama, so called only by Clement, a much-disputed question. Despite these uncertainties, modern scholars assert that ‘surely every initiate had a torch, mourned, wandered, searched.’<sup>36</sup>

Although the purifying power of torches is not clearly attested,<sup>37</sup> other interpretations of their use pertain to the purifying qualities attributed to fire.<sup>38</sup> The gesture of shaking torches, as Iacchos does leading the procession,<sup>39</sup> has been interpreted as a means of purification.<sup>40</sup> Otherwise, it has been connected with a fertility rite.<sup>41</sup> The latter interpretation is based on the numerous red figure vases illustrating the departure of Triptolemos bringing agriculture to mankind: a goddess pours a libation while torches shed light on the scene.<sup>42</sup> In some cases, two torches are held, one upright and the other lowered towards the ground. This up-and-down gesture performed by Hekate, Persephone and Demeter could be connected to the prosperity of the earth.<sup>43</sup> The Dadouchos acts similarly. If we consider the procession to Eleusis as being essentially a re-enactment of the wandering of Demeter, funerary connotations are attributed to the gesture. In a circular reasoning this latter is associated with purificatory and apotropaic practices, repelling pollution from death.<sup>44</sup> However, the procession is joyful, even comical if one thinks of the insults against important citizens,<sup>45</sup> and the shaking of torches sometimes appears as taking place at the happy ending, when Persephone is found.<sup>46</sup> A close connection obviously appears between happiness and light in the torch-dances, the music of flutes and songs.<sup>47</sup> The initiates of the *Frogs* form a happy thiasos dancing on their way to Eleusis (326–27, 335–36). In fact, Herakles tells Dionysos that the guilty remain plunged in filth and dung while the initiates enjoy the breath of flutes and light and myrtle-groves and revel in the underworld.<sup>48</sup> Another obvious association is the one between happiness and initiation: ‘happy (ὄλβιος) is the mortal on earth who has seen them,

but the uninitiated in the rites or the one who has no share in them never has the same lot once dead in the nether world darkness.<sup>49</sup> In the *Frogs*, ἐποπτεύειν once appears in the sense of ‘being entranced’ (745), and the sun shines over those who have been initiated and behave piously.<sup>50</sup> Plato also explains this happy state as a metaphor for ‘virtuous.’<sup>51</sup> Two different criteria appear thus to be necessary to attain happiness, initiation and piety.<sup>52</sup>

Torches as lighting implements are related to the emergence of light and to the mystic illumination in darkness.<sup>53</sup> Plutarch alludes to this contrast as he compares the initiation of a young philosopher to that of a Myste, their mood changing as they see a great light (μέγα φῶς).<sup>54</sup> In a fragment usually connected with the search of Kore, Plutarch states that at the moment of death, the soul (*psuchê*) suffers in the same way as do the initiated in the Mysteries. After wanderings through the darkness, ‘a marvellous light (φῶς τι θαυμάσιον) meets the wanderer.’<sup>55</sup> Light appears during the wandering. In the same way, Lucian shows two men commenting on the obscurity in Hades (ζόφος), where everything is ‘invisible (ἀφανῆ) and submerged in the same darkness (σκότος).’<sup>56</sup> One of them, initiated in the Mysteries, compares them to Hades; they then see the apparition of a torch-bearing woman. This would suggest torch-bearing figures, perhaps religious officials, meeting the initiates in the darkness.<sup>57</sup>

Although the particular moment when light intervened is unknown, the great fire is usually identified with the torch flare at the climax of the ceremony,<sup>58</sup> referring to the white, bright nights when the *anaktoron* was opened.<sup>59</sup> It implies the final revelation and the showing of the sacred objects as part of the vision of the mysteries while light irrupts in the Telesterion.<sup>60</sup> Leaving aside the obvious problem of the so-called sacred objects, even though τὰ ἱερά should sometimes be translated as ‘rites,’ and the question of their presence or exhibition during the key moments of the festival,<sup>61</sup> the importance of light is clearly stated, wherever it came and whatever it showed.<sup>62</sup>

To turn to a different kind of evidence, marble torches that may be considered as offerings or as parts of sculptural decoration have been found both at Athens and Eleusis.<sup>63</sup> As for the torches in the inventories, it is impossible to settle their nature. They might be listed among dining or cult equipment,<sup>64</sup> and some sources mention the offering of torches during the Mysteries.<sup>65</sup> Others seem to belong to the sanctuary: a law from the Athenian Eleusinion concerning the Mysteries states, among other prohibitions, that it is not permitted to take the torches away.<sup>66</sup>

Torches are the only lighting equipment appearing in the *Hymn*, and the actual ritual instruments are those held by the goddess.<sup>67</sup> On vase paintings<sup>68</sup> and Eleusinian monuments<sup>69</sup> both goddesses may carry them. There is, however, no exclusive relationship between torches and the two goddesses, since other deities hold them as well.<sup>70</sup> Lamps, that Athenaeus declared to be a

recent invention compared to torches,<sup>71</sup> could be part of the temple furniture, illuminating the cult statue.<sup>72</sup> They are not mentioned in the texts referring to Demeter's rituals. To explain their particular frequency in her sanctuaries,<sup>73</sup> their function has been likened to that of torches, as being 'another manifestation of this connexion of fire and light with the cult of Demeter.'<sup>74</sup> We may notice however that they appear in various contexts, religious and secular,<sup>75</sup> but not in that of the Mysteries. Moreover, they do not appear in vase paintings nor are they held by the figurines found in sanctuaries.

As for the ritual use of lamps, some types (one- or two-nozzled lamps) could have been fitted onto a stick and carried lit in processions,<sup>76</sup> although this is a practice unknown in Eleusis. Otherwise, they are often found in fills and deposits from the sanctuaries along with various types of objects. They are usually considered as necessary equipment for nocturnal rites, and illumination is the only explanation of their great quantity found in sanctuaries.<sup>77</sup> According to Eva Parisinou, the absence of appropriate shapes for this lighting device indicates that the offering was the light effect rather than the container.<sup>78</sup> Some terracotta lamps indeed show traces of use, as would be expected if light was the main concern. The great number of lamps that do not bear these traces<sup>79</sup> indicates that they did not necessarily have a lighting purpose. Merely their presence was sufficient to fulfil the role assigned to them, whatever this could be. Eva Parisinou attributes, on the other hand, a particular significance to multi-nozzled lamps because of their circular shape, suggesting that they had a cult purpose.<sup>80</sup> However, in Eleusis where light has a noteworthy role, the most common type consists of the simple single-nozzled lamps,<sup>81</sup> some bearing dedicatory graffiti.<sup>82</sup> In addition, considering the variety of materials and shapes, from simple to multiple-nozzled lamps, the container appears to be significant.

Lamps have been found in ritual contexts, for example at San Biagio near Agrigento and at the 'Santuario ctonio,' in and around hollow altars.<sup>83</sup> At Iasos, one and two-nozzled lamps have been found in a hearth altar together with other offerings.<sup>84</sup> At Eleusis, lamps had been thrown and thus consecrated in the pyres situated near the gates of the temple terrace.<sup>85</sup>

The lamps in the hollow altars were found along with a quantity of other material and thus did not have a specific position of their own. Their recurrent presence among sacrificial remains, banquet pottery and knives suggests their use during sacrifices and dinners.<sup>86</sup> The lamps used to illuminate or required for the accomplishment of the rite<sup>87</sup> were probably left in the sanctuary with other remains.<sup>88</sup> Their ritual function can thus be equated with that of other finds, and their use did not solely consist in illumination.

The importance of light in the Mysteries is clearly stated in the sources even though we cannot precisely settle the moments of its appearance. But its



explanation through aetiological and late sources leads to a tricky paradigm. The various forms of light in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* are mostly associated with the gods or with the progression of the plot, and cannot be used to denote the importance of light in the ritual. The use of the same myth for the aetiology of the Thesmophoria proves that it must be considered as a construction and used with caution. Although our sources are not sufficient to reconstruct the ritual, the luminous part of the ceremony inspired a mystic interpretation of the lighting equipment in the sanctuaries of Demeter. Torches convey an imaginary dimension, and their recurrent presence in the Mysteries rendered them a characteristic implement producing the distinctive flare of the festival. This dimension is presumably not comparable to that of lamps. Light is an image of the happiness of the initiates and of their pious behavior. Its symbolism is closely associated with the ‘most mystic air of torches’<sup>89</sup> commemorating the goddesses’ deeds and does not seem to extend to other implements or festivals.

## NOTES

1. K. Clinton, *Myth and Cult. The Iconography of the Eleusinian Mysteries. The M.P. Nilsson Lectures on Greek Religion, delivered 19–21 November 1990 at the Swedish Institute at Athens* (Stockholm, 1992), 28ff.
2. A. Suter, *The Narcissus and the Pomegranate. An Archaeology of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Ann Arbor, 2002), 5.
3. N.J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford, 1974), 22–23. For a summary, cf. C. Calame, “L’hymne homérique à Déméter comme offrande: regard rétrospectif sur quelques catégories de l’anthropologie de la religion grecque,” *Kernos* 10 (1997): 120; J. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus. Form and meaning in the major homeric hymns* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1989), 203ff.
4. Richardson, *Demeter*, 207, 252.
5. Richardson, *Demeter*, 232ff.
6. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 233ff.
7. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 236.
8. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 261.
9. T.W. Allen, W.R. Halliday, and E.E. Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns* (Oxford, 1936, repr. 1980), 118, consider the *Hymn* as ‘the most ancient document bearing on the Eleusinian mysteries.’ Also, Richardson, *Demeter*, 165, followed by A.C. Brumfield, *The Attic Festivals of Demeter and their Relation to the agricultural Year* (New York, 1981), 200. *Contra*, K. Clinton, “The Author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*,” *OAth* 16 (1986): 43, whose expression I use here. He notices that the *Hymn* does not even mention the name of the Mysteries, or those of the deities such as used by the Athenians, and that it does not assign Triptolemos, Eumolpos and the Kerykes the particular role and status they have in other sources. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of*

*Olympus*, 231, explains these treatments as a means of deemphasizing of local cult in the interest of a broader Pan-Hellenic perspective.

10. *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 40–42. Also 182–83, 319, 360, 442. As H.P. Foley (ed.), *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter. Translation, Commentary and Interpretive Essays* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1994), 37, observes, ‘dark clothing was not exclusively associated with mourning the dead... it may suggest vengeful wrath as well.’

11. Hekate: 25, 438; Rhea: 459. For the motif of the κρήδεμνον, cf. C. Segal, “Orality, Repetition and Formulaic Artistry in the Homeric ‘Hymn to Demeter’,” in *I poemi epici rapsodici non omerici e la tradizione orale. Atti del convegno di Venezia 28–30 settembre 1977*, ed. C. Brillante, M. Cantilena and C.O. Pavese (Padova, 1981), 135ff.

12. Segal, “Orality, Repetition,” 337, 402, 446, 464.

13. Segal, “Orality, Repetition,” 398, 415.

14. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 232.

15. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 396, 468.

16. For example, a place on the Eleusinian bay was called ‘Torches’ (Soph. *O.C.* 1048). Could the name really ‘allude to the procession with torches,’ as J.C. Kamerbeek, *The Plays of Sophocles*, VII. *The Oedipus Coloneus* (Leiden, 1984), 149, confirms? One should also notice that the French translation of P. Mazon (*CUF*) refers to the ‘torches saintes.’

17. Richardson, *Demeter*, 165–67.

18. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 217, n. 60, for examples in the epic. Foley, *Demeter*, 37, associates the duration with rites of transition.

19. Richardson, *Demeter*, 166 for instances of ἐννῆμαρ μὲν... δεκάτη δέ.

20. E. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods. The Role of Light in Archaic and Classical Greek Cult* (Duckworth, 2000), 61.

21. Apollod. *Bibl.* I. iv. 5.

22. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 217.

23. For the association of light with fire, cf. C. Mugler, “La lumière et la vision dans la poésie grecque,” *REG* 73 (1960): 44.

24. The expression concerns Achilles in Apollon. Rh. *Argon.* IV. 869–70 and Apollod. *Bibl.* III. 13. 6. Cf. also the story of Isis nursing the son of the king of Byblos, Plut. *Isid.* 357 a, and the death of Herakles on the pyre at Oeta, cf. Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* IV. 38. 3ff. Fire could release the divine part in man, cf. Iamb. *Myst.* 5. 12. 4.

25. Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 226.

26. *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 263 (τιμὴ ἄφθιτος).

27. For example Richardson, *Demeter*, 165–68.

28. G.E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1961), 232; K. Clinton, *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (*TAPhS*, 64, 3, Philadelphia, 1974), 68. Another official was called *purphoros*, ‘bearer of fire’; cf. Clinton, *The Sacred Officials*, 94–95; P. Roussel, “Un nouveau document concernant le génos des Κήρυκες,” *AIPhO* 2 (1934): 819–34. His function was probably to maintain the sacrificial fire of altars and hearths.

29. Aristoph. *Frogs* 340–52, 445–46; Eurip. *Ion* 1074–80. As Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus*, 203 notices, it is unlikely that the all-night vigil held by the

women of the house of Keleos to propitiate the angry goddess is related to the *pan-nuchis* at Eleusis (cf. Richardson, *Demeter*, 256).

30. A. Motte, "Nuit et lumière dans les Mystères d'Éleusis," in *Symbolisme et expérience de la lumière dans les grandes religions. Actes du colloque tenu à Luxembourg du 29 au 31 mars 1996*, ed. J. Ries and C.-M. Ternes (*Homo Religiosus* II 1, 2002), 92.

31. A.M. Bowie, *Aristophanes. Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge, 1993), 229.

32. Clem. Al. *Protr.* II. 12. 2. In another passage (II. 20. 1) he refers to the prohibition against the initiates of imitating the goddess by sitting at a well.

33. Lact. *Epit.* 18. 7. Elsewhere (*Inst.* I. 21. 24), he points out the fact that because Ceres, after having her torches lit by Aetna, sought for her daughter in Sicily (cf. also Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* V. 4. 3), her mysteries are celebrated by waving lit torches.

34. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, "Festival and Mysteries. Aspects of the Eleusinian Cult," in *Greek Mysteries. The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*, ed. M.B. Cosmopoulos (London, and New York, 2003), 31.

35. Ovid, *Fasti* IV. 493–494, states explicitly the connection between Demeter's torch in the myth and the use of torches in rituals. Tert. *Nat.* II. 7, refers to the abduction of the priestess of Ceres, 'because Ceres suffered the same thing.' If he is suggesting imitation, it is because he accuses pagans of putting faith in the poets and arranging their rituals according to the poems. Cf. also Greg. Naz. *Or.* 39. 4.

36. K. Dowden, "Grades in the Eleusinian Mysteries," *RHR* 197 (1980): 426.

37. L. Moulinier, *Le pur et l'impur dans la pensée et la sensibilité des Grecs jusqu'à la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> s. av. J.-C.* (Paris, 1950), 131.

38. E. Parisinou, "Artificial Illumination in Greek Cult Practice of the Archaic and the Classical Periods: Mere Practical Necessity?," *Thetis* 4 (1997): 102; S. Eitrem, *Opferritus und Voropfer der Griechen und Römer* (Hildesheim, New York, 1915, repr. 1977), 178ff; L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin, 1932), 78. Indeed the 'purifying fire' was part of many ceremonies, cf. Eurip. *Hel.* 869; *Herak.* 937.

39. Aristoph. *Frogs* 340.

40. The preliminary purification rites are identified on the Torre Nova sarcophagus. The central scene shows presumably Herakles, barefoot, seated on a stool over which a lion's skin is draped, his head covered by a cloak, and a female figure standing behind him with lowered torches, cf. Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 207, fig. 84; D. Jordan, "Two descriptions of *myēsis*," in *Myth and Symbol*, II. *Symbolic phenomena in ancient Greek culture*, ed. Synnøve des Bouvrie. Papers from the second and third international symposia on symbolism at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, September 21–24, 2000 and September 19–22, 2002 (Bergen, 2004), 243, for the Lovatelli urn. Although the scene is always recognized as representing the purification ritual, we may also consider it as the admission of the candidate to a new status 'by raising him up from his humble posture,' cf. R. Parker, *Miasma. Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1983), 285.

41. Allen, Halliday, and Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns*, 137, *ad dem* 48, think of stimulating the warmth necessary for the crops by the use of fire.

42. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 124ff.

43. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 62ff.
44. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 65.
45. Hesych. s.v. γεφυρίς, γεφυρισταί.
46. Lact. *Epit.* 18 (23). 7. Cf. Foley 1994, 38.
47. Aristoph. *Frogs* 154, 312. Torchlight dances took also place during the Thesmophoria, cf. *Thesm.* 101–103, 280–81, 1150–52.
48. Aristoph. *Frogs* 145–58.
49. *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 480–82. For the translation of ὀλβιος as ‘happy,’ cf. P. Lévêque, “Ὀλβιος et la félicité des initiés,” in *Rayonnement grec. Hommages à Charles Delvoye*, ed. L. Hadermann-Misguich and G. Raepsaet (Bruxelles, 1982), 113–26.
50. *Frogs* 455–57. For the association of the happy with the virtuous, cf. K. Dover, “The limits of allegory and allusion in Aristophanes,” in *Law, Rhetoric, and Comedy in Classical Athens. Essays in Honor of Douglas M. MacDowell*, ed. D. L. Cairns and R. A. Knox (Swansea, 2004), 247. Cf. also Diod. Sic. *Bibl.* I. 96. 5.
51. Plato, *Phaedo* 69 c.
52. The importance of ritual can be inferred from the objections brought against initiation by Diogenes the Cynic, cf. Diog. Laert. *Lives of em. phil.* VI. 39.
53. Foley, *Demeter*, 38, asserts that all three associations, illumination, fertility rite and purification are possible in the case of the *Hymn*.
54. Plut. *Progress in virtue* 81 E.
55. Plut. fr. 178 (Sandbach). According to Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 265, the fragment should not be connected with the Eleusinian Mysteries, since we cannot know where assumption ends and where reality begins. F. Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten*, 33, Berlin, and New York, 1974), 135, argues convincingly that there is no comparison between the dead and the initiates, but rather a description of the dead using the Eleusinian imagery.
56. Lucian, *Kataplous* 22.
57. Sourvinou-Inwood, “Festival and Mysteries,” 33–34.
58. Richardson, *Demeter*, 27. The Thesmophoria also include light and revelation of *orgia*. Aristophanes pictures the devotion of the Athenian women raising the *orgia* (*Thesm.* 948) shown by the light of torches (1150–52), once qualified as *hierai* (101). *Orgia* may also mean ‘sacred objects,’ cf. A. Motte and V. Pirenne-Delforge, “Le mot et les rites. Aperçu des significations de Ὀργία et de quelques dérivés,” *Kernos* 5 (1992): 124ff.
59. *IG II2*, 3811, l. 1–2 (A.D. 215–220; Clinton, *Eleusis*, n° 637); cf. also Clinton, *Eleusis*, n° 585.
60. Cf. Clem. Al. *Protr.* II. 22. 7.
61. C. Brechet, “À la recherche des objets sacrés d’Éleusis: langage et mystères,” in *Objets sacrés, objets magiques de l’Antiquité au Moyen Age*, ed. C. Delattre (Paris, 2007), 30, points out the difficulty of considering τὰ ἱερά, in most literary testimonia, as objects, and the improbable character of the construction concerning the hierophant showing these objects at the climax of the festival.
62. For the displayed *mustêrion* being an ear of corn, cf. Hippol. *Ref. omn. haer.* V. 8. 39ff, or a phallos, cf. Tert. *Valent.* 1. Clem. Al. *Protr.* II. 22. 4, describes the secret

objects contained in the mystic *kistai*, various cakes and food along with the symbols of Themis.

63. M. M. Miles, *The City Eleusinion (The Athenian Agora*, 31, Princeton, New Jersey, 1998), 68; Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 204. The terracotta torches and torch-holders found at Troizen were probably offerings, found among various objects and small lamps, some of which bear traces of use, cf. Ph.-E. Legrand, "Antiquités de Trézène. Notes de topographie," *BCH* 29 (1905): 302; V. Hinz, *Der Kult von Demeter und Kore auf Sizilien und in der Magna Graecia (Palilia*, 4, Wiesbaden, 1998), 32, n. 134, n. 198, n. 1178, about crossed torches of sheet bronze at Santa Maria d'Anglona, with a dedicatory inscription to Demeter. Hinz, *Der Kult von Demeter*, 197, n. 1164, for crossed torches painted on vases at Oria near Tarant.

64. *IG* II2, 1541 (356/5), a torch-holder (l. 15: λαμπαδεῖον) appears among baskets (l. 8: κανᾶ'), strainers and small pots (l. 9: ἡθμοί, χυτρίδια μικρά), a bowl for the blood (l. 11: σφαγεῖον), iron lamps (l. 18: λυχνεῖα σιδηρᾶ), small spits (l. 19: ὀβελίσκοι). *IG* II2, 1543 (337/6), is a list with the same types of objects, among which a torch-holder (l. 17). A cult calendar from Miletus, dated before 500, mentions a λαμπάς and a δᾶδα among the offerings, probably destined to Dionysus (?), cf. *LSAM*, 41, l. 4–5. According to Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 137, the term λαμπάς must have described torches of a solid type, set into a form of stand, or more simply a torch-holder. Δαῖς would have been a simpler variety.

65. Theophr. *Char.* iii. 4: δᾶδα ἔστησεν.

66. K. Clinton, "A law in the City Eleusinion concerning the Mysteries," *Hesperia* 49 (1980): 265, B a, l. 10 (Clinton, *Eleusis*, n° 138): μ[ή]δ' ἐλεῖν ἐξεῖναι δᾶιδ[α]. Clinton (*Eleusis*, 286) comments that the initiates carried torches during the festival, but the prohibition probably pertains to the sanctuary possessions. At the Thesmophoria torches appear also as cult implements, for instance at Cholargos where the two *archousai* give to the priestess various food ingredients and a torch (δᾶιδ[α]; cf. *IG* II2, 1184 (= *LSS*, 124, middle of the 4th c. B.C.), l. 15.

67. Paus. *Per.* II. 22. 3 notes that lit torches were thrown into a *bothros* in honor of Kore at Argos.

68. Cf. H. Metzger, "Sur la valeur de l'attribut dans l'interprétation de certaines figures du monde éleusinien," in *ΕΙΔΩΛΟΠΟΙΙΑ. Actes du colloque sur les problèmes de l'image dans le monde méditerranéen classique*, ed. E. Giraud (Rome, 1985), 173–178.

69. Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 167.

70. Parisinou, "Artificial illuminations," 102, mentions Artemis, Hekate and Themis.

71. Athen. *Deipn.* XV. 700 E.

72. Parisinou, "Artificial Illumination," 17ff. It is especially the case of marble lamps.

73. Parisinou, "Artificial Illumination," 13ff and 139–45 mentions the sanctuaries of Eleusis, Acrocorinth, Malophoros, Predio Sola and Bitalemi at Gela, Agrigento; cf. also C.G. Simon, *The Archaic Votive Offerings and Cults of Ionia*, Ph. D. (University of California, 1986), 337ff.

74. Simon, *Ionia*, 337. M.P. Nilsson, "Lampen und Kerzen im Kult der Antike,"

*Opusc. archaeol.* 6 (1950): 110, concluding this article, the first one to demonstrate the extensive use of lighting in cult, wrote that in the classical period lamps were only offerings; he related their great number in the sanctuaries of Demeter to the cultural significance of light in her festivals. He also called attention to other fire-carriers, such as *kernoi* and *amphiphontes*. Even though the main use of *kernoi* was not illumination, a *scholion* to Nicander (*Alex.* 217) seems to have influenced these interpretations (for example R.H. Howland, *Greek Lamps and their Survivals* [*The Athenian Agora*, 4, Princeton, New Jersey, 1958], 52, n° 191).

75. Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazousae* opens with a hymn to the lamp Praxagora is carrying. The 'bright eye' fit the sun seeing everything, model for the eye (Aristoph. *Thesm.* 17), and v. 5 is explicit: 'you perform the bright duties of the sun.' These verses refer to an erotic interior and have no mystic or religious connexion. Cf. Bowie, *Aristophanes*, 255.

76. Parisinou, "Artificial illuminations," 100; Howland, *Greek Lamps*, 24.

77. Parisinou, "Artificial illuminations," 95–96.

78. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 19, 140.

79. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 140, 143.

80. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 196, n. 20. She also assigns strong solar connotations to circular radiant lamps although she does not speak directly of sun-symbolism. These lamps are conventionally called 'sanctuary lamps,' defining thus a specific type, the oversize corona with multiple nozzles (Howland, *Greek Lamps*, 128ff, type 41), rather than describing a ritual purpose.

81. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 141.

82. K. Κόκκου Βυριδῆ, Πρώιμες πυρές θυσίων στὸ Τελεστήριο τῆς Ἐλευσίνος (Αθήνα, 1999), 93; G 27–28.

83. San Biagio (miniature and multiple-nozzled lamps): P. Marconi, *Agrigento arcaica. Il santuario delle divinità ctonie e il tempio detto di Vulcano* (Rome, 1933), 66–67; "Santuario ctonio": Hinz, *Der Kult von Demeter*, 84.

84. D. Levi, "Gli scavi di Iasos," *ASAA* 45–46 (1967–1968): 569, fig. 39.

85. One of them bore traces of use. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 149, notices that 'a limited number of fragments seem to bear traces of burning on their broken sides, while some single-nozzled plain flat-based lamps from the site are burnt on their undersides, suggesting that they were placed on hot ashes, possibly after use.' For the ritual held at the pyres, cf. I. Patera, "Offrandes et rituel sacrificiel: le cas des *purai* d'Éleusis" (forthcoming).

86. On Acrocorinth for example, lamps have been found in the banqueting halls and in the sacrificial area. Lamps from the Eleusinian inventories seem to be listed with items belonging to dining rooms, cf. M.B. Cavanaugh, *Eleusis and Athens. Documents in Finance, Religion and Politics in the Fifth Century B.C.* (Atlanta, 1996), 185, for *IG* I3, 386 (408/7), col. III, l. 142; *IG* I3, 387 (407/4), col. III, l. 167: *λυχ[νεῖο σιδερό]*; cf. also *IG* II2, 1541 (356/5), l. 18.

87. The sacred law of the sanctuary of Despoina at Lykosoura requires a lamp for the sacrificial ritual (*IG* V 2, 514 = *LSCG*, 68, l. 16: *λυχνίους*).

88. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 145, 198, n. 53.

89. Aristoph. *Frogs* 313–14.



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## Chapter Nineteen

# Magic Lamps, Luminous Dreams

## *Lamps in PGM Recipes*

Athanassia Zografou

Usage of lamps in a religious context is present throughout pagan antiquity. According to Atheneus, the lamp was a recent invention in Greece—οὐ παλαιὸν δ' εὔρημα λύχνος—as the ancients only used torches<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the presence of torches in the hands of divinities and their priests is almost exclusive in archaic and classical literary sources and iconography, and torches would never lose their solemn role in religion in spite of the fast spreading use of lamps. Torches borne by divine figures will eventually find their correspondence in lamps, sometimes ornate but mostly humble, that worshipers dedicate to sanctuaries or carry during processions and other rites<sup>2</sup>. The purely ritual function of lamps —carried during processions, linked to the altar, suspended in temples, burning day and night in front of divine images<sup>3</sup>— starts gathering momentum around the end of the Hellenistic period, according to M. Nilsson under oriental, mostly Egyptian, influence.<sup>4</sup>

Cheaper and handier than the torch for interior lighting, the lamp (λύχνος) was destined to play a major role in Roman domestic cults. Along with the portable altar and the censer, the lamp will become part of a religious setting, a readily available private sacred space comparable to Christian iconostases with everlasting oil lamps. In fact, impressive deposits of lamps were discovered in the domestic sanctuaries of *Lares* at Pompey.<sup>5</sup> Be it niches, *ædiculae* or suitably arranged houserooms, the *Lararia* constitute model miniature temples with *arulae*, figurines and, obviously, lamps.

In the years of Pausanias in Greece, an arrangement combining a censer and bronze lamps before the statue of Hermes *Agoraios* in Pharae, was involved in an oracular technique: the petitioner no longer needed the mediation of oracles

and priests, while sacrifice itself was replaced by lighting of lamps and offerings of incense.<sup>6</sup>

Transposing the solemn piety of great sanctuaries into an everyday context, the lamp eventually finds its place within more or less marginal circles, at the heart of solitary rituals considered «magic». In 2nd c. AD, Apuleius, curious about everything like Lucius, the hero of his *Metamorphoses*, not only depicts processions reminiscent of *PGM* rites, but ends up being accused of practicing magic himself.<sup>7</sup> In order to defend himself, Apuleius goes through all incriminating evidence and mentions, among others, the usage of a lamp: ‘they alleged that a boy had been enchanted by my incantations, away of any control, in a secret place before a small altar and a lamp, and a few complicit witnesses— *secreto loco, arula et lucerna et paucis consciis testibus*.’<sup>8</sup>

Lamps are omnipresent in *PGM* recipes. Given that these are syncretic texts stemming largely from Egyptian beliefs and practices, the widespread usage of lamps in Egyptian religious contexts of all times, is worth reminding. It is most probably not without a reason that Clement of Alexandria held the Egyptians as inventors of the lamp.<sup>9</sup>

## EGYPTIAN LAMPS

In fact, not only offering lamps was of capital importance, but also lighting the lamp has always been the first act of every ceremonial day at the Egyptian temple: that is how the priest illuminated his way to the entrance of the sanctuary to reveal the face of the gods when the sun was crossing the horizon.<sup>10</sup> The roots of oracular usage of lamps can be traced back to the New Empire: in a report dating to the reign of Ramses IX, there’s a brief reference to a lamp divination practice by a cemetery worker. In any case, written lamp divination procedures, such as those abundant in the magical papyri of the Greco-Roman period, in Demotic and Greek, will not be found for another 1300 years.<sup>11</sup>

By 2nd c. AD it is certain that lamps were involved in dream divination: an inscription from Athens coming from an environment of Isis worshipers mentions a woman being called at the same time *λυχνάπτρια* and *ὄνειροκρίτις*.<sup>12</sup> In Roman times lamps (often foot-shaped) had a more specific role in incubation rituals.<sup>13</sup> Still, in Egypt, although the interpretation of dreams (first for pharaohs, then for common mortals) has been an important way of communication with the gods since the most ancient times, and despite the fact that worshipers—since the New Empire—were occasionally allowed to spend the night in sacred space, all evidence is that the proper practice of incubation (dream divination through ritual sleep) emerged much later.<sup>14</sup>

Several examples of nocturnal festivities in the frame of Isis cults involving the burning of lamps are known, such as Νυκτέλιον, Λυχναψία and Λαμπαδεία; the task of lamp lighting in the temples of Isis and Sarapis was assured each day by special auxiliary staff, the λυχνάπται, who, as in the grand Sarapeion of Memphis, could even be stationed in a special chapel, the λυχνάπτιον.<sup>15</sup> Everlasting lamps such as the golden lamp of Athena Polias on the Acropolis were used to suggest continuous worship. The λυχναψία, ‘illumination of the temple’ of Jupiter at Arsinoe, mentioned often in the 3rd c. AD register of accounts of the temple (be it in honor of a prefect or in commemoration of the emperor’s victories),<sup>16</sup> provides evidence of inter-relation between Egyptian and emperor-worshipping rites.

Documentation about the Λυχνοκαΐη, ‘lamp-burning’ festival is of particular interest in that it demonstrates the central role of lamps in small-scale replication of public cults. Hieroglyphic texts from the temple of Esna in Upper Egypt suggest that this festival was held on the occasion of the arrival of Neith, a divinity identified with Isis and Athena, as well as her installation among burning torches at her Sais temple.<sup>17</sup> A very interesting text by Herodotus reports that lamps, corresponding to the light sources used in the temple, were lit around private houses—Ἐς Σάιν δὲ πόλιν ἔπεάν συλλεχθέωσι, τῆς θυσίης ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ λύχνα καίουσι πάντες πολλὰ ὑπαίθρια περὶ τὰ δώματα κύκλῳ (...) Καὶ τῇ ὁρτῇ οὕνομα κεῖται Λυχνοκαΐη And this was happening not only in Sais but everywhere in Egypt, thus rendering remote participation possible for the physically absent: Οἱ δ’ ἂν μὴ ἔλθωσι τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἐς τὴν πανήγυριν ταύτην, φυλάσσοντες τὴν νύκτα τῆς θυσίης καίουσι καὶ αὐτοὶ πάντες τὰ λύχνα, καὶ οὕτω οὐκ ἐν Σαῖ μόνῃ καίεται ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνὰ πᾶσαν Αἴγυπτον.<sup>18</sup>

Domestic usage of lamps gains importance during the Roman occupation. The financial difficulties plaguing Egyptian priests and sanctuaries more or less, contribute, as D. Frankfurter demonstrates, to centrifugal tendencies towards village sanctuaries and domestic altars.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, alongside their presence in grand sanctuaries, lamps in that time’s Egypt were used extensively at small local sanctuaries, private chapels and domestic niches: ‘...the domestic cults of Roman Egypt (...) involved all manner of paraphernalia, often miniature or cheaper (wood, terra-cotta) versions of temple paraphernalia. Lamps and incense-burners in the shape of temples, miniature altars, and even the miniature cippi of Horus represent a process of domestication-through-miniaturisation of temple cult and, perhaps, an increasing importance of domestic cults in the Roman period.’<sup>20</sup>

Whereas debating on the composition of «Magical Greek Papyri» (*PGM*) or the public addressed by this corpus<sup>21</sup> falls beyond the scope of this paper, the transformation suggested by D. Frankfurter sounds appropriate to the religiousness

expressed in *PGM* recipes: private space instead of grand sanctuaries, and an abundance of written formulæ instead of ancient ritual procedures.

### “MAGIC” LAMPS

*PGM* ritual recipes generally prescribe that practitioners use λύχνοι ἀμίλτωτοι<sup>22</sup> (not painted with minium), i.e. new and therefore without trace of red color that might evoke Seth-Typhon.<sup>23</sup> It is equally prescribed that the λύχνοι be ‘non engraved,’ ἄγραφοι,<sup>24</sup> in particular ‘pure,’ καθαροί,<sup>25</sup> or even ‘brand new,’ καινοί.<sup>26</sup> Purity is emphatically required throughout the magical operation: purity of the operator, the place, the altar, and of all instruments used. Purity is a prerequisite for encountering superhuman forces as they can only be attracted to something similar to them. While this is perfectly in conformity with the spirit of the Egyptian religion, it is even better understood when the creation of an *ad hoc* sacred space is at stake.<sup>27</sup> It is nevertheless interesting that the opposite can happen too: it is ‘the lamp used daily’—λύχνος καθημερινός—that must be used.<sup>28</sup>

Candelabra, λυχνίαι, enabling better distribution of light are rarely prescribed,<sup>29</sup> but it may be requested that lamps be placed on various supports: a window, a wolf head, or a reed tripod, always in close proximity to the altar. Recipes are very precise on this ...καὶ βωμὸν ὠμὸν/ στησάμενος ἐγγὺς τῆς κεφαλῆς καὶ τοῦ λύχνου/ (...) ὅλα ποιῆσαι ἐγγὺς τοῦ λύχνου.<sup>30</sup> Lamps are mostly placed near the altar, on both sides, next to the victims of the sacrifice or on top of structures equivalent to an altar such as bricks or offerings tables: ...καὶ ἄψον λύχνους ἐπτὰ ἐπάνω πλίνθων ζ’/ ὠμῶν καὶ θῶσον...<sup>31</sup> Lamps may also be part of non-bloody offerings accompanying the sacrifice—καὶ θύσεις ἀλέκτορα λευκόν. παρακεῖ-/ σθω δέ αὐτῷ πόπανα ζ’, πλακοῦντες ζ’./ λύχνοι ζ’...<sup>32</sup> without further explanation of their function.

Regardless of origin, the oil used to fill the lamp must be ‘of good quality, pure and limpid,’ ἔλαιον χρηστὸν, καθαρὸν, λευκόν,<sup>33</sup> while there’s even a wealth of unusual procedures for enhancing its efficiency: in a case of dream divination, if the procedure fails and the ritual must be repeated, the oil must first be versed on the body of a virgin boy in the gymnasium, then collected to fill the lamp.<sup>34</sup>

It is important that in many occasions lamps assume the role of altar or, more precisely, that of censer, given that *PGM*-prescribed sacrifices are mostly fumigations. Thus, either a piece of incense is placed on the wick or the chosen fuel— ‘cedar oil’ κεδρία, ‘rose oil’ ἔλαιον ῥόδινον, ‘nard oil’ νάρδινον— produces itself an odoriferous effect.<sup>35</sup>

In *PGM* suitable choice of oil turns the lamp into an altar substitute. By suitable preparation of the wick, ἐλλύχνιον, the lamp is also transformed into a

‘postal envelope,’ thus involving writing, an element of capital importance in *PGM*. The wick, mostly made from a piece of tissue, *ράκος*, often of fine linen, *βύσσινον*,<sup>36</sup> clean or once belonging to a prematurely deceased,<sup>37</sup> or even of papyrus or other materials through very diverse processing,<sup>38</sup> usually bears a written formula addressed to the powers concerned.<sup>39</sup> This formula is actually made up of obscure *ephesia grammata* encoding sacred names. In dream transmission (*ὄνειροπομποί*) the practitioner may write on the wick the dream to be imposed on the victim. The term *ἐλλυχνιάζειν* ‘to put a wick in the lamp,’ assumes therefore the additional meaning of communicating by means of light; practitioners may use this meaning to refer to the knowledge they expect to receive from the divinity: *ἵνα μὲ ἐρατῶν πρὸς σὲ τὴν γνῶσιν/ ἐλλυχνιάσης...* ‘to illuminate me with the knowledge of things dear to you.’<sup>40</sup>

The message written on the wick may be accompanied or even replaced by formulæ addressed to the lamp orally. Spoken formulæ include repeated secret names that appear in the written message, invocations of divinities, or requests to the lamp itself. Such *ἐπικλήσεις* or *ἐπιλαλήματα* may be repeated obstinately and oppressively *ἐπάκις*, *πολλάκις* or even until extinction of the lamp.<sup>41</sup>

### MULTIFUNCTION LAMPS

Multifunction lamps are not an innovation of *PGM*. In Greece the lamp is closely linked to the altar and the offerings spatially, as well as functionally. It is worth noting that the very first archaic lamp found (sanctuary of Apollo and Artemis in Dreros, Crete) is supposed to have been placed on the altar (*Keraton*),<sup>42</sup> whereas lamps could be included in sacrificial supplies lists.<sup>43</sup> In addition, Scholia on Nicander suggested that *kernoi*, the famous utensils of the offerings, could be used as a kind of lamp support—*κέρνους γάρ φασι τοὺς μυστικούς κρατῆρας, ἐφ’ ὧν λύχνους τιθέασι*—<sup>44</sup> as supported by an archaeological find in Crete.<sup>45</sup> Finally, it should be added that lamps in the small sanctuary of Hermes in Pharae, mentioned earlier, were soldered to the altar: *κεῖται δὲ πρὸ τοῦ ἀγάλματος ἐστία, λίθου καὶ αὐτή, μολίβδῳ δὲ πρὸς τὴν ἐστίαν προσέχονται λύχνοι*.<sup>46</sup>

In Roman Egypt a large number of temple- or chapel-shaped lamps bearing one or more nozzles<sup>47</sup> were found, whose function was to create compact, readily available sacred spaces. Such lamps are often associated with the Sais festival mentioned earlier, mainly due to the figure of Athena-Neith that appears on the interior.<sup>48</sup> These miniature temples were thought to reproduce the ambience of the festival at home, and to keep it alive beyond time and space limits by articulating, as D. Frankfurter notes in commenting on the usage of



figurines, ‘the relationship between the domestic altar and the temple altar throughout and beyond the festival.’<sup>49</sup>

Finally, the lamp-altar link is very well attested by Roman lamps often decorated (on their concave disc) with scenes of worship hinting at the eventual ritual usage of the lamp, close to the altar and the divine image.<sup>50</sup> A study by P. Stewart shows that the arrangement of decorative elements around the nozzle—where the flame comes from—is regularly mimicking a small sanctuary: the flame of the lamp assumes the role of altar fire. Iconographic suggestion is supported by real-world usage of Roman lamps: to start with, the possibility of bypassing the altar thanks to lamps filled with nard or incense oil, as described in *PGM*, is attested by certain epigraphic documents related with funeral cults;<sup>51</sup> further, the fusion of *lychnos* and altar is implemented in a type of lamp attached to a miniature altar serving most probably as censer.<sup>52</sup>

In *PGM*, as well as in some of the usages mentioned above (chapel lamps, lamps soldered to a small altar/censer), it appears, that the smaller the scale (local or domestic cult, private space and personalized rite), the heavier the semantic and functional load imposed on each participating element.

### SEEING AND DREAMING THROUGH THE GLEAMING LAMP

Back to *PGM*, besides the presence near the altar of lamp offerings aiming at attracting the divine, same as flowers and perfumes (A), lamps are mostly utilized in divinatory rites<sup>53</sup> (B). The following distinctions can be made: (B1) dream requests or transmissions, (B2) αὐτοπτοι συστάσεις, ‘encounters’<sup>54</sup> with the divinity in some kind of vision, (B3) deduction of signs by observing the flame (attested once only in the frame of an ‘attraction charm’). In order to make the list almost exhaustive, we would have to mention a small number of recipes regarding demonstrations of magical tricks (C) as well as a unique case of lamp usage in a ἀγρυπνητικόν, a recipe for inhibiting sleep where the lamp is addressed as ‘child of Hestia and Hephaistos.’<sup>55</sup>

The majority of recipes in (B) are spells inducing a dream or causing someone else to have a dream (ὄνειραιτητά or ὄνειροπομποί). Less frequent yet central in grasping the role of the lamp are cases where the practitioner (in person or through a sexually pure boy serving as *medium*) tries to obtain αὐτοπτος σύστασις with the divinity: not in dream but in *some kind* of reality. Therefore, the delineation of dream visions, epiphanies and states of possession, is not an easy task in *PGM* recipes,<sup>56</sup> this fact being stressed in the recipes themselves: in a dream request involving Egyptian god Bes, a state between awake and sleep is described: καὶ σχεδὸν σου ἐγρηγοροῦντος ἦξει/ὁ θεὸς κ[α]ὶ λέξει σοι.<sup>57</sup>

Deities involved in lamp divination are generally associated with the Sun, a power omnipresent in the *PGM* and the preeminent source of divine light:<sup>58</sup> Apollo, Greek god of divination identified with Helios, was thought to descend to the underworld in a boat, much like the Egyptian solar god (Re);<sup>59</sup> Sarapis is identified with a series of deities including Helios—ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε, Ζεῦ, Ἥλιε, Μίθρα, Σά-/ραπι, ἀνίκητε, Μελιούχε, Μελικέρ-/τα, Μελιγενέτωρ, αβρααλ βαχα-/μβηχι· βαιβειζωθ...<sup>60</sup>—, Horus-Harpocrates can also be found in Re's solar boat ἡνιοχῶν καὶ κυβερνῶν οἶακα.<sup>61</sup> Finally, Hermes may occasionally preside such a ritual in his capacity as ὄνειροπομπός, but also identified with Thoth, lunar god and messenger of the gods; he is therefore called κύκλος Σελήνης.<sup>62</sup>

The characteristics attributed to gods persistently emphasize their «luminous essence.» Gods are addressed to as ‘fiery, invisible begetter of light’—τὸν θεὸν τὸν (...) πυριφεγγῇ, ἀόρατον φωτὸς γεννήτορα—<sup>63</sup>, ‘holy light, holy brightness’—ἱερὸν φῶς, ἱερὰ αὐγή—<sup>64</sup>, ‘who enlighten the universe and by his own power illuminate the whole world’—τὸν τὰ πάντα φωτίζοντα καὶ διαυγάζοντα τῇ ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει τὸν σύμπαντα/κόσμον—<sup>65</sup>, ‘riding upon immaculate light’—ἐπὶ τῷ ἀχράντῳ/φωτὶ ὀχοῦμενος.<sup>66</sup> Not surprisingly, in a recipe for ‘direct encounter,’ the light-bringing charm (φωταγωγία) is followed by a god-bringing spell (θεαγωγός λόγος), both addressed to divinities.<sup>67</sup>

The divinity's own light is invited to appear ‘in the light,’<sup>68</sup> to merge with the light of the lamp, thus reproducing the divine splendor in its entirety: εἴσελθε ἐν τῷ πυρὶ τούτῳ/καὶ ἐνπνευμάτωσον αὐτὸν θείου πνεύ-/ματος καὶ δεῖξόν μοι σου τὴν ἀλκὴν, καὶ/ἀνοιγήτω μοι ὁ οἶκος τοῦ παντοκράτορος/θεοῦ Αλβαλαλ, ὁ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ τούτῳ/καὶ γενέσθω φῶς πλάτος, βάθος, μῆκος,/ὕψος, αὐγή, καὶ διαλαμπγάτω ὁ ἔσωθεν,/ὁ κύριος Βουήλ.<sup>69</sup>

Producing more images than a crystal ball, the lamp may disappear altogether to make place for an extraordinary spectacle; magic formula recitation is associated with a play of closing and reopening of the eyes that amplifies surprise: ... μετὰ τὸ εἰπεῖν τὴν φωτα-/γωγίαν ἀνυξον τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ὄψῃ/τὸ φῶς τοῦ λύχνου καμοροειδὲς γινόμε-/νον· εἴτα κλειόμενος λέγε ..., καὶ ἀνοίξας ὄψῃ πάντα ἀχανῇ/καὶ μεγίστην αὐγὴν ἔσω, τὸν δὲ λύχνον/οὐδαμοῦ φαινόμενον. τὸν δὲ θεὸν ὄψῃ/ἐπὶ κιβωρίου καθήμενον,/ἀκτινωτόν...<sup>70</sup>

The aim of this operation is not just a luminous spectacle, but also the reception of divine words, the ‘illumination’ of the practitioner, the entry into the light: ...φύλαξον ἅπαν δέμας ἄρτιον ἐς φάος ἐλθεῖν.<sup>71</sup> In this respect certain recipes come very close to theurgic practices also aiming at communion with the divine, described as ‘illumination,’ ἔλλαμνις, in this context a term for both the target state of the practitioner, and the divine halo surrounding the statues manufactured for telestic purposes.<sup>72</sup>

### DIVINE LIGHTS AND LAMP FLAMES

The ancient tendency to imagine the divinity in a flame returns in the rituals prescribed in *PGM*. Further exploration of the role of luminous phenomena in apparitions as recorded by Greek authors of all times, is beyond the scope of this paper. Supernatural glow, flashes of lightning and torches appearing miraculously in the sky, are regular features of divine epiphanies\*. Lamps, starting with that of Homeric Athena, are equally part of this context: their function of light provider to divine statues has reinforced their relation with epiphanies, and their flame seemed to animate the figurines placed on them. Temple lamps are also mentioned among the miracles depicted in a narration of the providential intervention of Zeus of Panamara in 1st c. BC (tempest, howling of dogs), for keeping burning throughout the siege of the city.<sup>73</sup>

In *PGM* recipes, lamps are described as being nourished by divine presence even when their ritual function is not central. For this reason, the practitioner is often advised not to refill them with oil, as their flame will be revived by divine entry: καὶ μηκέτι/ ἐπιχέης· εἰσελθόντος γὰρ τοῦ θεοῦ περισσότερον ἔξα-/ φθήσονται.<sup>74</sup> Lamp flames are considered consubstantial with the divine, a point of view affirmed by the practitioner who addresses formulae *to the lamp*— πρὸς τὸν/ (...) λύχνον<sup>75</sup>—while standing facing the lamp—σταθεὶς (...) ἐναντίον τοῦ λύχνου.<sup>76</sup>

In certain cases of lamp divination lamps may function as substitutes of the sun: the practitioner is instructed to orientate lamps and candelabra towards the South or the East, ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀπηνιωτικοῦ μέρους,<sup>77</sup> while a ‘direct encounter’ recipe prescribes that the magical formula be addressed first to the rising sun, then to the lamp—πρῶτον λέγεις πρὸς/ ἀνατολὴν ἡλίου, εἶτα ἐπὶ τοῦ λύχνου...<sup>78</sup>

The image of the lamp as ‘small sun’ is already present in Greek literature and parodied by Aristophanes: Ὡ λαμπρὸν ὄμμα τοῦ τροχλάτου λύχνου,/ (...) μυκτῆρσι λαμπρὰς ἡλίου τιμὰς ἔχεις-/ ὄρμα φλογὸς σημεῖα τὰ ξυγκείμενα.<sup>79</sup> The lamp thus corresponds to the all-seeing eye of the sun, silent witness of everything happening indoors and, subsequently, of the most intimate aspects of feminine life.

In fact, thanks to sympathy links, the humble flame of the lamp paves the way for heavenly light, which, in late antiquity, is invested with divine power. A philosophical explanation of lamp divination found in Apuleius, explicitly associates the lamp with a celestial, creator fire: ‘neither is it any marvel, for although this light is modest and made by the hands of men, yet it keeps memory, as of its parent, of that great and heavenly light—*memorem tamen illius maioris et caelestis ignis velut sui parentis*— that

knows by divine prescience and reveals to us what is being prepared in the skies above.’<sup>80</sup>

### EVERYDAY LAMPS AND MAGIC BANQUETS

Whereas ‘encounter’ operations (B2) have always been solemn and grave, the form of dream requests (B3) can be simpler. In fact, this group also includes short recipes involving everyday lamps. In four cases, lamp divination may revolve around a very popular scheme, used widely in Egypt during the 2nd and 3rd c. AD: the god is invited to react by ‘choosing’ among encoded lots.<sup>81</sup> Thanks to *PGM* recipes, no temple is necessary; the practitioner may go ahead and ask his everyday lamp for an oracular dream, whose possible outcomes are predefined and, thus, readily interpretable: Ὀνειραιτητόν, ὃ ἀεὶ κέχρηται. λόγος ὁ λεγόμενος πρὸς τὸν/ καθημερινὸν λύχνον· (...) / χρημάτισόν μοι περὶ τοῦ δεῖνα πράγματος. ἐάν ναί, δεῖ[ξόν μ]οι/ φυτὸν καὶ ὕδωρ, εἰ δὲ μήγε, πῦρ καὶ σίδηρον, ἤδη [ἤδη, ταχύ] ταχύ.<sup>82</sup> The lack of long preparations agrees with the usage of very simple objects and procedures. Besides the everyday lamp, the last mouthful of food taken by the practitioner is implicated in a dream request of this type: [λα]βὼν σου τὸν ἔσχατον ψωμὸν δ[είκ] ν[υε τῷ] λύχνῳ καὶ δεικνύων λέγε καὶ εἴπας διαμάσ[η]σαι καὶ πίε ἐπάνω οἶνον καὶ κοιμῶ μη[δε]νὶ λαλήσας.<sup>83</sup>

Despite apparent triviality, it is worth noting that in this type of requests the lamp is personified, if not deified. Even though of lower rank than almighty divinities, the lamp is still addressed as a friendly spirit (κύριε, ὑγίαινε, λύχνε), equated to a divine helper that can serve the practicing mortal in much the same way as Osiris or Archangel Michael: κύριε, ὑγίαινε, λύχνε/ ὁ παρεμφαινὼν τῷ Ὀσίριδι καὶ παρεμφαινὼν τῷ Ὀσιρκεντεχθα καὶ τῷ κυρίῳ μου, τῷ ἀρχαγγέλῳ Μιχαήλ.<sup>84</sup>

The third type of recipes (C), moderately attested in *PGM*, could also be linked to lamp divinations involving dreams or visions. It is about magical tricks executed during banquets, which, although not as prestigious as ‘encounters’ with gods, still build on the ‘hallucinogenic’ power of the lamp. The lamp’s indispensable presence on the table has catalyzed, no doubt, its assuming a starring role in magical ‘shows.’ We thus learn that in one case table guests may appear donkey-headed, ὀνόρυγχοι, to external observers, thanks to a wick soaked in donkey blood.<sup>85</sup> This kind of παίγνια might occasionally cross the limits of simple entertainment. We know that very similar wonders and gimmicks of that kind were performed during private banquets of the imperial times where *magoi* were trying to demonstrate their powers and perhaps initiate other people.<sup>86</sup> The lamp has therefore become

an emblem of the power to twist the appearance of things, to play with the luminous apparitions of stars and gods.

### LAMPS AND DREAMS

In *PGM*, lamp divination often overlaps with dream divination. What is the base for such an adjacency? In times when public Egyptian sanctuaries are either fading or threatened with impoverishment,<sup>87</sup> and a new cosmography distancing the gods from earth keeps spreading over the Greco-Roman world, *PGM* lamps and dreams are offering to mortals a means of communication with gods. Lamps, as we have seen, constitute complex cultic devices supplying practitioners with a small altar with fire, a censer, an oil vessel, a support for writing and a source of light at the material level; at the imaginary level these compact ‘pocket sanctuaries’ can, thanks to sympathy links, encapsulate the astral world in the gleam of their flame. Their light becomes oneiric matter and is subsequently equated to dreams.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, dreaming of gods, even though practiced at incubation halls within sanctuaries, does not require special infrastructure.<sup>89</sup> As in direct visions (ἐμβηθι/ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν),<sup>90</sup> gods could be invited through dreaming «inside» the practitioner (...‘ὀρκίζω σὲ τὸν ὑπ<v>αφέ-/ την, ὅτι ἐγὼ σε θέλω εἰσπορευθῆναι εἰς ἐμὲ/ καὶ δεῖξαί μοι περὶ τοῦ δεινὸς πράγματος),<sup>91</sup> where they could appear in splendor superior to that of temple statues, and in closest proximity to mortals.

### THE ALL-SEEING LAMP IN LOVE AFFAIRS

Certain of our recipes implicate the flame of the lamp in love life. In a B1 case, the practitioner may sneak his own image in the dream of the woman whose love he seeks: Ἐάν τινι ἐθέλης [ἐ]μφανῆναι διὰ νυκτὸς ἐν ὀνείροις/ λέγε πρὸς τὸν λύχνον τὸν καθημερινόν.<sup>92</sup>

The sole occurrence of a B3 type includes prediction by the flicker of the flames of a seven-nozzle lamp (fitted with seven wicks each bearing a different formula), in the frame of an attraction ritual entitled ἀγωγὴ ἀσχέτου, ‘fetching charm for an unmanageable woman’: λαβὼν [λύχνο]ν ἐπ[τάμ]υξον/ ἀμίλτωτον ποιήσον ἐλλύχνιον [ἀπ]ὸ πλοίου/νεναυαγηκότος καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν τ[ο] ὕ [α’]/ἐλλυχνίου/ γράφε ζμύρνη Ἰάω:, ἐπὶ τοῦ β’ Ἀδωνάι, ἐπὶ τοῦ γ’ (...ἐάν μὲν ὁ π[ρ]ῶτος λύχνος παρῇ, γνῶ, ὅτι εἴλημπται/ ὑπὸ τοῦ δαίμονος. ἐάν δὲ ὁ β’, ἐξῆλθεν. ἐάν δὲ ὁ γ’, περι-/ πατεῖ. ἐάν δὲ ὁ δ’, ἤκει, ἐάν δὲ ὁ ε’, ἤκει εἰς τὸν πυλῶνα/ ὁ ζ’, εἰς τὸν πεσσόν. ὁ ζ’, ἤκει εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν.<sup>93</sup>

Prediction by flame observation had to be ancient knowledge in the Greco-Roman world. In Virgil for example, wool spinners perceive bad weather

coming by watching ‘in the clay of the burning lamp the oil sparkle and the wick become carbonized and covered with mushrooms.’<sup>94</sup>

The pattern of the lamp-witness of love plays and pains found already in Aristophanes, becomes very common in the love poetry of the Palatine Anthology: thus, the predictive power of a tripod lamp nourishes the lover’s hope: Ἦδη, φίλτατε λύχνε, τρίς ἑπταρες. ἦ τάχα τερπνὴν/ ἐς θαλάμους ἦξειν Ἀντιγόνην προλέγεις;/ εἰ γάρ, ἄναξ, εἴη τόδ’ ἐτήτυμον, οἷος Ἀπόλλων/ θνητοῖς μάντις ἔσῃ καὶ σὺ παρὰ τρίποδι.<sup>95</sup> The verb *πταίρειν*, ‘to flicker,’ refers to the *PGM* procedure mentioned earlier, while the comparison with the apollonian tripod reminds of the role of Apollo in *PGM* lamp divinations. Finally, the friendly address, φίλτατε λύχνε, reveals the same level of intimacy as that existing between a *PGM* practitioner and his *λύχνος καθημερινός*.

Addressing the lamp is very common in Hellenistic love poetry.<sup>96</sup> The lamp is invoked as witness of vows and frolics of love, often compared to secret ceremonies; the lamp is asked to watch over the loved one; it serves as accomplice and confidant that can also be invoked as deity. In a 3rd c. AD epigram by Asclepiades a lover speaks to the lamp: Λύχνε, σὲ γὰρ παρευούσα τρίς ὤμοσεν Ἡράκλεια/ ἦξειν κοῦχ ἤκει· λύχνε, σὺ δ, εἰ θεὸς εἶ, τὴν δολίην ἀπάμυνον...<sup>97</sup> More than a set of purely literary patterns, these elements refer to the actual participation of the lamp in private, even intimate life, and help us better understand its role in certain *PGM* rituals.

In conclusion, if light is an indisputable *medium* in religion, the lamp is in antiquity light’s handiest and most widespread vehicle. The longevity of the lamp as ritual object is partly due to its adaptability to the needs of small private cults and solitary rites. These attributes of lamps are exploited to the furthest extent in *PGM* recipes. When Shenoute, the abbot of Atripe, who described the indigenous religion in late Egypt, curses pagan demon worshippers, he refers to the most persistent practices of those who ‘burn lamps about empty things while offering incense in the name of ghosts.’<sup>98</sup> In 3rd c. Egypt, however, polytheistic rituals and beliefs including lamps still survive in Christian practices.<sup>99</sup> Finally, in Greece there’s an amazing abundance of Christian lamps dating from early Christian centuries, found in caves and other places involved or not with older cults.<sup>100</sup>

## NOTES

1. Ath. 15, 700E. Cf. the characterization *unique* for a lamp in Homer (the very first reference to a lamp in Greek literature): Hom. *Od.*, 19, 54. On the absence of lamps among finds of votive deposits of the geometric period, see E. Parisinou,



*The Light of the Gods. The Role of Light in Archaic and Classical Greek Cult* (London, 2000), 15.

2. Σ. Πινγιάτογλου, *Δίον. Το ιερό της Δήμητρος. Οι λύχνοι* (Θεσσαλονίκη, 2005), 76, 81. On the role of light in ancient Greek religion, see also Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, *passim*.

3. Ever-burning lamps in antiquity: Paus., 1, 26, 6–1, 27, 1: Kallimachos' lamp in the Erechtheion cf. Parisinou, *The Light of the God.*, 20 ff. The fact that the lamp went out during the siege of Sylla was perceived as sign of doom (Plut., *Syll.*, 13). More examples in T. tam Tinh and M.-O. Jentel, *Corpus des lampes à sujets isiaques du musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie* (Québec, 1993), 27, n. 83.

4. See M. P. Nilsson, "Lampen und Kerzen im Kult der Antike," *OpArch* 6 (1950): 96–110, notably 103ff asserting that the function of lamps in the classical and archaic periods is purely dedicatory; Πινγιάτογλου, *Δίον*, 84.

5. L. Chrzanowski, *Lumière! L'éclairage dans l'antiquité* (Milano, 2006), 20; G. K. Boyce, *Corpus of the Lararia of Pompei*, MAAR 14 (Rome, 1937): 102 (index); Nilsson, "Lampen und Kerzen," 210 ff.; J. Bakker, *Living and Working with the Gods. Studies for Private Religion and its material environment in the city of Ostia (100–500 AD)* (Amsterdam, 1994), 14; P. Stewart, "Cult Images on Roman Lamps," *Hephaistos* 8 (2000): 10 ff.

6. Strictly speaking, divination in this case is a kind of cledonomanancy (cledon=chance word taken as omen). The worshiper burns incense in the entrance hall, refills and lights the lamps, places a coin on the altar, then confides his problem to the statue and plugs his own ears. As soon as he leaves the agora, he unplugs his ears and receives the god's oracle in the first word that he hears. See Paus., 7, 22, 2–3 who considers this technique to be of Egyptian origin. Cf. C. Romaïos, "A popular Cult in Ancient Achaia" in *Πρακτικά του Β' Τοπικού Συνεδρίου Αρχαϊκών Σπουδών - Καλάβρυτα*, 24–27 Ιουνίου 1983 (Αθήνα, 1986), 155ff. and Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 78.

7. H. E. Butler and A. S. Owen, eds., *Apulei apologia sive Pro se de magia liber* (Oxford, 1914), 101.

8. The trial of Apuleius has taken place around AD 158 see Apul., *Mag.*, 42, 3.

9. This information reflects the knowledge of the author, not historical facts: Clem., *Str.*, 1, 16, 74, 2.

10. J. Gee, "The Structure of Lamp Divination," in *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23–27 August 1999*, ed. K. Ryholt (Copenhagen, 2002), 216.

11. R. K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago, 1993), 215 and Gee, "The Structure of Lamp Divination," 217ff.

12. *IG* II2 4771. Cf. F. Dunand, *Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée*, I–III, *EPRO* 26 (Leyde, 1973): III, 155.

13. On the usage of Roman lamps in incubation rituals, see W. Deonna, "L'ornementation des lampes romaines," *RA* 26 (1927): 244ff. On foot-shaped lamps, see also tam Tin & Jentel, *Corpus des lampes*, 28 as well as F. Santoro L'hoir, "Three Sandalled Foot Lamps. Their Apotropaic Potentiality in the Cult of Sarapis," *AA* 98 (1983): 226.



14. S. Sauneron, "Les songes et leur interprétation dans l'Égypte Ancienne" in *Les songes et leur interprétation. Sources orientales 2* (Paris, 1959), 40ff. Cf. F. Dunand et C. Zivie-Coche, *Dieux et Hommes en Égypte* (Paris, 1991), 304–5.
15. Dunand, *Le culte d'Isis*, I, 222; II, 24, 104–5; III, 149–50, 220, 238–39 ; Dunand & Zivie-Coche, *Dieux et Hommes en Égypte*, 299; tam Tinh and Jentel, *Corpus des lampes*, 27.
16. U. Wilcken, "Arsinoitische Tempelrechnungen," *Hermès* 20(1885): 431–43 and 457.
17. S. Sauneron, *Les fêtes religieuses d'Esna. Aux derniers siècles du paganisme* (Le Caire, 1962): 247 ff.
18. Hrdt., 2, 6. See also F. Dunand, "Lanternes gréco-romaines d'Égypte," *DHA* 188 (1976): 80–82 and Dunand, *Le culte d'Isis*, III, 238; Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 196, n. 2.
19. D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt. Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, and New Jersey, 1998), 134–35.
20. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 135.
21. The debate is coarsely outlined by J. Z. Smith and R. K. Ritner. Cf. attempts of reconciliation by I. Moyer, "Thessalos of Tralles" in *Prayer, Magic and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, ed. S. Noegel, J. Walker, and B. Wheeler (Pennsylvania, 2003), 39–56.
22. *PGM* (K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Græcæ Magicae* I–II, Stuttgart, 1973–1974) I, 277, 293; II, 57; IV 2372, 3191; VII 542, 594; VIII 87; XII 27, 131; LXII, 1. In a case (*PGM* IV, 1090) it is prescribed to use a λύχνος καλλάινος, of Egyptian faience (of turquoise blue color).
23. On the value of the red color: Ritner, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, 147ff and G. Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1994), 81. See also the usage of the μύλτος of Typhon in the preparation of 'Typhon ink' (XII, 98) cf. VII, 653 or 'Typhon blood' meaning donkey blood, (λαβὼν αἷμα μελάνης βοῦς ἢ αἰγὸς ἢ τυφωνίου... γράφε).
24. *PGM* XII, 131.
25. *PGM* XIII, 317.
26. E.g., *PGM* IV, 66–67.
27. More than a reproduction of conditions for accessing the Egyptian temple (which according to Gee, "The Structure of Lamp Divination," 215ff. would prove that the ritual takes place in a temple), this extreme preoccupation with purity, according to J. Z. Smith, "Here, There, and Anywhere" in *Prayer, Magic and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, ed. S. Noegel, J. Walker, and B. Wheeler (Pennsylvania, 2003), 34–35, can be understood as 'a concern for boundaries' or 'a highly developed sense of clusion/exclusion.'
28. *PGM* VII, 250–251, 255–256 and 407–408, XXIIb, 27–28 and indisputably 32ff. In these cases too the lamp is personified and addressed as a divinity.
29. *PGM* II, 57 and VII, 541.
30. *PGM*, I 262–347.
31. *PGM* III, 1–64.
32. *PGM* IV, 2191–2.

33. See, among others *PGM* VII 1094, LXII, 1 (χρηστόν) ; II 46, IV 1391 (καθαρόν); XII 25 (λευκόν).
34. *PGM* II, 55.
35. See, for example, *PGM* XII 132, LXII, 1; I 278.
36. *PGM* I, 277, VIII, 86.
37. *PGM* II, 145.
38. E.g., *PGM* VII 594–595 (ἐλλύχνιον ἀπὸ πλοίου νεναυαγηκότος).
39. Exceptionally the role of the wick can be assumed by a written πιττάκιον placed under the lamp (*PGM* VII, 725 ).
40. *PGM* III, 585.
41. *PGM*, VII 667; VII 408 ; XXIIb, 27.
42. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, passim, 15 and fig. 4.
43. See for example Ditt. *Syll3* III 999 (inscription of the 2nd c. BC from Lykosoura concerning the sacrifices to Δέσποινα) cf. Πινγιάτογλου, *Δίον*, 82 and Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, passim.
44. Schol. Nic., *Alex.*, 217b. Cf. Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods*, 197 and G. Bakalakis, “Les kernoï éleusiniens,” *Kernos* 4 (1991): 108 .
45. It is about a *kernos* containing a lamp: S. Xanthoudides, “Cretan Kernoï,” *BSA* 12 (1905–1906): 19. Cf. Πινγιάτογλου, *Δίον*, 78, n. 139.
46. See n. 6.
47. Dunand, “Lanternes gréco-romaines d’Égypte,” 75 and 88–89, nn. 34 and 35 with references.
48. The convincing demonstration of F. Dunand shows that certain lanterns of this type (with opening in the back) were used in processions, whereas other lamps and lanterns of small size were probably used both as offerings as well as in the remote participation witnessed by Herodotus. Dunand, “Lanternes gréco-romaines d’Égypte,” 82; M. Fjeldhagen, *Graeco-Roman Terracottas from Egypt. NY Carlsberg Glyptotek* (NY Carlsberg, 1995), 89–90. About the festival see also Dunand, *Le culte d’Isis*, III, 56–57 (cf. previous note). In any case, it should be noted that in the time of Herodotus and by his own testimony, the lamps used in the festival consisted in flat saucers filled with a mixture of oil and salt, on the top of which the wick floats (II, 62). Cf. F. W. Robins “The Lamps of Ancient Egypt,” *JEA* 25 (1939): 185.
49. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, 55.
50. This does not imply that their usage was necessarily ritual. See Stewart, “Cult Images on Roman Lamps,” 11.
51. *CIL* 6, 30102 on the commemoration of a deceased *et semper vigilet lucerna nardo* and *CIL* 610248 where it is asked to light a lamp and burn incense on it on Kalends, Nones and Ides (*lucerna lucens sibi ponatur incenso inposito*) cf. G. McN. Rushforth, “Funeral Lights in Roman Sepulchral Monuments,” *JRS* 5 (1915): 149–164. On the association of scented smoke and the flash of lightning see also F. Cu-mont, *Lux Perpetua* (Paris, 1949), 50–51.
52. See for example D. M. Bailey, *A Catalogue of Lamps in the British Museum* 2 (London, 1980), Q125, 252ff. and D. M. Bailey, *A Catalogue of Lamps in the British Museum* 3 (London, 1988), 205, Q1853.

53. This paper will not exhaust all aspects of lamp divination found in *PGM* (usage of bricks, tripods, role of *mediums*, etc), in order to focus on the role of lamps. A complete study should take into systematic consideration the Leyden Papyrus—P. Mag. in *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, I–III, ed. F. Ll. Griffith & H. Thompson (London, 1904–1909), that includes spells in Demotic very similar to those in Greek, which also demonstrates the close relationship between lecanomancy and lamp divination cf. F. Cuné, “Lampe et coupe magiques *PGM*, V, 1–52,” *S.O.* 36 (1960): 65–71. A usage of lamps similar to the one described in *PGM* is suggested by M. Πετρόπουλος, *Τα εργαστήρια των ρωμαϊκών λυχναρίων της Πάτρας και το λυχνομαντείο* (Αθήνα, 1999), 136ff. in his study of a Roman building in Patras identified by the author as oracle of lamps. Finally, late antiquity literature contains, in its own manner, scenes of lamp divination: in Apul., *Met.*, V, 20, 2 ; 22, 2 ; 22, 5) the unveiling of Eros by Psyche alludes to lamp-assisted encounters, while in Ps.-Callisth. -*Le Roman d’Alexandre* (Les Belles Lettres, 1992) 2, 5–6-, Nectanebo, the last pharaoh, transmits dreams to queen Olympias by means of a juice of dream-inducing plants poured into the lamps. Cf. S. Lancel, “*Curiositas*” et préoccupations spirituelles chez Apulée,” *RHR* 160 (1961): 38–44 and S. H. Aufrère, “Quelques aspects du dernier Nectanébo et les échos de la magie égyptienne dans le *Roman d’Alexandre*” in *La Magie - Actes du colloque international de Montpellier*, 25–27 mars, 1999, 1–4, ed. A. Moreau and J. C. Turpin (Montpellier, 2000), 1, 113.

54. The corresponding Egyptian term is translated as ‘god’s arrival.’

55. *PGM* VII, 377–79.

56. On this confusion see R. Gordon, “Reporting the Marvellous: Private Divination in the Greek Magical Papyri” in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, ed. P. Schäfer and H. G. Kippenberg (Leiden, 1997), 83–84.

57. *PGM* VII, 228.

58. On the Sun’s omniscience and omnipotence in the *PGM* as well as among theurgy practitioners, see S. Eitrem, “La théurgie chez les néoplatoniciens et dans les papyrus magiques,” *SO* 22 (1942): 54ff. for comments, among others, on an excerpt from the Demotic Leyden Papyrus where the light of the lamp and that of the sun are actually working together. Greek Helios is traditionally the all-seeing deity: *h. Cer.*, 62.

59. *PGM* I, 343–347: I adjure the fire which first shone in the void (...) him who destroys e’en in Hades/ that you depart, returning to your ship. See also the commentary by H. D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation. Including Demotic Spells* (Chicago, 1986), 57, n. 138. On Apollo’s divination in the *PGM* see also S. Eitrem, “Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual,” in *Magika Hiera*, ed. C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (N. Y. - Oxford, 1991), 176ff.

60. *PGM* V, 4–5.

61. *PGM* IV, 994.

62. *PGM* VII, 669.

63. *PGM* IV, 960.

64. *PGM* IV, 978.

65. *PGM* IV, 991.

66. *PGM* VII, 570–571.

67. *PGM* IV, 956 and 986 respectively.

68. *PGM* VII, 576.
69. *PGM* IV 965–972.
70. *PGM* IV 1103–1109. On *Boel* see *PDM (Papyri Demoticæ Magicæ)* XIV 489–515: ‘Boel Boel ... the first servant of the great god, he who gives light exceedingly/ the companion of the flame, in whose mouth is the flame, he of the flame which is never extinguished ... he who sits in the flame in the midst of the flame.’ Cf. M. Totti, “ΚΑΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ ΑΣΤΡΟΜΑΝΤΙΣ und die ΛΥΧΝΟΜΑΝΤΕΙΑ,” *ZPE* 73 (1998): 300 and Gee, “The Structure of Lamp Divination,” 209.
71. *PGM* I, 323.
72. S. Eitrem, “Die σύστασις und der Lichtzauber in der Magie,” *S.O.* 8(1929): 49ff.
73. P. Roussel, “Le miracle de Zeus Panamaros,” *BCH* 55 (1931): 85 and 110.
74. *PGM*, XIII, 11 cf. 126, 366, 681. Same phenomenon in Apul., *Met.*, 5, 22, 2: ...*cuus aspectu* (sc. *Cupidinis*) *lucernæ quoque lumen hilaratum increbruit*.
75. *PGM* VII, 250–251.
76. *PGM* IV 957–957.
77. *PGM* VII, 540–578 cf. IV 3194 (east) ; VII, 600 (south).
78. *PGM* IV, 930–931.
79. Ar., *Eccl.* 1–5.
80. Apul., *Met.*, 2, 12, 2.
81. R. Lane Fox, *Paiens et Chrétiens. La religion et la vie religieuse dans l’empire romaine de la mort de Commode au concile de Nicée*, Fr. tr. (Paris, 1997, 19861), 226.
82. *PGM* VII, 250–254.
83. *PGM* XXIIb, 32–35.
84. *PGM* VII, 255ff. cf. XXIIb 27ff. (similar address to the lamp) as well as LXII, 5ff where the context is different.
85. *PGM*, XIb. Cf. the presence of lamps in *PGM* I, 96ff listing the powers of the assisting demon (πάρεδρος), as well as in *PGM* VII, 167–185 (recipes of a pseudo-Democritus to be used as table gimmicks). Let us remind the miraculous lighting of the torches of a statue of Hecate by theurgist Maximus of Ephesus (Eun., *VS*, 7, 2, 6–10), in the frame of a ἐπίδειξις of his powers. See also the participation of the lamp in the transformation of Pamphilus into an owl (Apul., *Met.*, 3, 21).
86. The same recipe (for causing diners to appear donkey-headed) is available in *Cyran.*, 2, 31, p. 164 Kaimakis cf. 2, 40, p. 176 where diners appear in the likeness of the animal whose fat was mixed into the lamp oil. A. Mastrocinque, “Dinners with the Magus,” *MHNH* 3 (2003): 75–94 provides a lot of similar cases and discusses their relation with mithraic rituals.
87. The image, surely subjective, of a declining Egyptian religion is reflected in the predictions of the famous Oracle of the Potter, see G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: a historical approach to the late pagan mind* (Cambridge, 1986), 38–44.
88. P. Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1994), 120.
89. Cf. C. Stewart, “Ritual Dreams and Historical Orders: Incubation Between Paganism and Christianity” in *Greek Ritual Poetics*, ed. D. Yatromanolakis and P. Roilos (Cambridge–Massachusetts–London, 2004), 342 ff.

90. *PGM* VII, 561–563.
91. *PGM* IV, 3203–3205.
92. *PGM* VII, 407ff.
93. *PGM*, VII 593–616.
94. Virg., *G.*, 1, 390–392.
95. *AP* 6, 333 (Marc. Arg.).
96. See the examples given by E. Parisinou, “Lighting” the World of Women: Lamps and Torches in the Hands of Women in the Late Archaic and Classical Periods, *G&R* 47 (2000): 27ff.
97. *AP* 5, 7 (Asclep.). Cf. M. Marcovich, *Studies in Graeco-Roman Religions and Gnosticism* (Leiden–New York–København–Köln, 1988), 1ff.
98. Shenoute, *Discours* 4, The Lord Thundered codex DU, p. 45 (Amélineau 1909: 379).
99. We learn from the *Vie* of Macarius of Egypt (*Histoire des Monastères de la Basse Égypte*, coptic text and translation by E. Amélineau (Paris, 1984), 91–92 and 101–4) that Macarius, in order to heal a deaf and speech-impaired, poured water on his ears and mouth, then oil coming from the lamp of the sanctuary. Cf. F. Dunand, “Miracles et guérisons en Égypte tardive,” in *Mélanges Etienne Bernand*, ed. N. Fick & J. C. Carrière (Paris, 1991), 249.
100. See, among others, K. Ρωμαίος, “Ευρήματα ανασκαφής του επί της Πάρνηθος άντρου,” *EA* (1905): 109ff; A. N. Σκιός, “Το παρά την Φυλήν άντρον του Πανός,” *EA* (1918): 14 ff; D. Jordan, “Inscribed Lamps from a Cult at Corinth in Late Antiquity,” *HTHR* 2 (1994): 223–229 (citing previous bibliography for the Fountain of the Lamps at Corinth). Cf. Πετρόπουλος, *Τα εργαστήρια των ρωμαϊκών λυχναριών της Πάτρας*, 139.

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Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 219, black-figured neck-amphora by the Diosphos painter. After Minervini 1850, p1. 1.



Würzburg, Martin-von Wagner-Museum H 4905, red-figured lekythos.  
After Beazley 1939, 627, fig. 7.



*Swiss, private collection, red-figured skyphos by the Lewis painter. After Kerényi 1976, fig. 97.*



Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 14107, black-figured lekythos.  
After Van de Put 2006, pl. 147.3. Courtesy of the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam.



*London, the British Museum E279, red-figured neck-amphora by the Eucharides painter. After Beazley 1911–1912, p1. XII.*





*Malibu, the J. P. Getty Museum, 84.AE.770, white-ground lekythos by Douris. After Kurtz 1989, 118, fig. 1e.*



*Ferrara, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 45698, red-figured calyx-krater by the Mykonos painter. After Berti and Gasparri 1989, 28.*





*Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 3950, red-figured cup by  
the painter of Bologna 417: After CVA Firenze 3, p1. 109.1.*



*Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 8209. After Sotheby's 2.12.1973, n154.  
Courtesy of the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam.*

# Index





## **About the Editors and Contributors**