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Corrected Edition

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For our teachers

JOHN V.A. FINE

AND

C. BRADFORD WELLES

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Preface to the Corrected Edition

Since its initial publication in 1979, *Sources for the Study of Greek Religion* has sold nearly 20,000 copies, marking it as an essential resource in the field of classical studies. Thirty years later, it remains a standard classroom resource, and to celebrate this anniversary, we thought it appropriate to present a corrected edition of the volume in a new, attractive, and electronic-friendly format. Beyond the correction of minor errors and use of footnotes rather than endnotes, the reader will find that the present volume remains true to the original edition. The Society of Biblical Literature is pleased to present this corrected edition of *Sources for the Study of Greek Religion* in the hopes that it will inspire a new generation of classicists and religious historians.

The Society of Biblical Literature, 2009

Preface

"It was Homer and Hesiod," wrote Herodotus (*Histories* II. 53), "who first compiled genealogies of the gods for the Greeks, gave the gods their titles, defined their honors and skills, and described their appearances." A sourcebook on Greek religion almost inevitably, therefore, begins with Homer, who reflects the civilization of Bronze Age Greece combined with features from the five centuries which intervened between the Bronze Age and his own time in the eighth century B.C., and with Hesiod, who reflects more particularly the Greece of the eighth and early seventh centuries B.C., when the map of classical Greece was beginning to emerge. The basic social unit in the centuries following Homer and Hesiod was the *polis* or city-state, usually composed of several tribal groups which were in turn composed of smaller clans and families, all of which had their own special religious traditions. In the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries, the mainland Greeks were subject to new cultural influences from the Near East through the Ionian Greeks in Asia Minor and through direct contacts with Egypt and Syria. In these same centuries the Greeks launched an extensive colonization effort toward Sicily and southern Italy, and toward the Black Sea; new techniques in political organization, such as tyranny and democracy, emerged. At the same time diplomatic relations among the states were encouraged by the growth of such religious centers as Delphi and Olympia. By the beginning of the fifth century, Athens, Sparta, and Corinth had emerged as the strongest of the Greek cities, and the pressure of foreign invasion from Persia helped to make the Greeks conscious of a Panhellenic unity: this unity was seldom expressed in political terms, but is marked in the religious exercises of the clan, the tribe, and the state, which gave citizens a feeling of harmony, well-being, and shared traditions. The end of the fifth century, however, saw serious challenges to the traditional religion: the violence of the Peloponnesian War and the collapse of Athens, the probing skepticism of the Sophists, the generally perceived decay of traditional standards and values, led many to reassess their religious attitudes. In the late-fifth century and the fourth we find some professing atheism, others constructing sophisticated philosophical systems, others embracing mysticism or superstition or the cult of some such nurturing god as Asclepius: all together exhibit a tendency toward per-

sonal choice in religion, in contrast to the group-oriented practices which seemed to dominate earlier.

Such a general summary of the religious trends of classical Greece has considerable validity, yet the sources show that common religious ceremonies continued after 400 B.C., and also that individuals expressed their private devotion to a god before 400 B.C. One of the functions of a sourcebook about the ancient Greeks is to demonstrate the complexity and immediacy of the subject by allowing the Greeks to speak for themselves. In editing this collection of sources, our intention has been to present a representative sample of familiar and unfamiliar texts illustrating the range (rather than the totality) of the Greek religious experience, from the most abstract speculations of Plato and Aristotle to the most homely domestic ritual. We have tried to provide modern, intelligible translations of the literature and documents which the ancient world has left us on this subject, and through them to demonstrate how the Greeks worshipped their gods and what they themselves said about their religious beliefs and practices.

Our primary focus is on the four centuries from Homer to Alexander the Great, although passages from later antiquity have been included freely when they cast some important light on archaic and classical Greek practices. In general, however, we have not dealt explicitly with the religious attitudes of the Hellenistic and Roman periods because this has already been done by F.C. Grant in his *Hellenistic Religions* (Indianapolis and New York, 1953) and *Ancient Roman Religion* (New York, 1957).

The very varied material has been organized into six chapters, dealing with (1) the traditional Olympian gods and (2) their chthonian counterparts represented by the heroes; with (3) public cult practices and (4) more private concerns of family and individual; with (5) the mystery cults and their promises; and with (6) death and the nature of the soul. The categories overlap to some extent, and some of the general sections and specific passages might easily have been put in a different part of the book. The index should, however, provide help for anyone who wants to pull together all the references to a single topic, as for example sacrificial regulations or the Orphics. Within each category, we have attempted to arrange the selections so as to illustrate the historical development of attitudes, beliefs and practices.

In transliterating Greek, it has seemed reasonable, if not entirely consistent, to use a Latinized spelling for names in which this has become "normal" English usage, and in other cases to follow a more literal pattern.

It is a pleasure to be able to acknowledge the help we have received in preparing this collection of sources suggestions as to content and format from Norman R. Petersen, Jr., Wayne A. Meeks, and Harold Y. McCulloch; the typing of preliminary drafts by Rosemary Lane, Louise Gilotti, Donna Chenail, and Eileen Sahady; the preparation of camera-ready copy by Marla Krystkowiak; the patient support

of Patricia Rice and Paula Carew; and grants from the Faculty Welfare Committee of St. Scholastica College and the Division I research fund of Williams College. Our special debts of training, inspiration and the fostering of our interest in the documentation of ancient Greek religion are acknowledged in the dedication.

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List of Abbreviations

Diels-Kranz	H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, rev. by W. Kranz. Berlin, 5th ed. ff., 1934 ff.
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*. Berlin, 1923–1927; Leiden, 1940–1958.
IC	M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae*. Rome, 1934 ff.
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin, 1873 ff.
LGS	L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae e Titulis Collectae*, Pars Altera. Leipzig, 1906.
LSAM	F. Sokolowski, *Lois Sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*. Paris, 1955.
LSCG	F. Sokolowski, *Lois Sacrees des Cites Grecques*, Supplment. Paris, 1962.
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden.
SIG^{3}	G. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd ed. Leipzig, 1915–1924.

Chapter 1. The Olympian Gods

A. The Divine World of Homer

It was one of the many achievements of the first poets of Greece, in particular Homer and Hesiod, to create for the Greeks and for Western man the pantheon of deities we call the gods of Olympus. The poets were not afraid to create their portraits of the gods and goddesses fully, showing in their stories not only divine power but divine frailty and weaknesses. The Greeks depicted these creations in plastic forms, in temples and shrines, on fresco and in sculpture, so that the gods not only symbolized the inexplicable forces at work in history, but became representatives of the best and worst of Greek civilization. The following passages from Homer, who lived at some point prior to 700 B.C., are selected to represent the range of poetic description of the gods; Homer functioned for the Greeks in some ways as the Bible functions for Christians, as the source and starting point for man's curiosity about the divine. For further reading see W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston, 1951); H.J. Rose, *Religion in Greece and Rome* (New York, 1959). For the Homeric poems themselves, see G.S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge, 1962); M.I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (New York, 1965). A particularly useful treatment of the intellectual history of the Greeks may be found in Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (Eng. tr., New York, 1960), especially pages 1–42.

(Homer, *Iliad* I. 493–610.)

But when the twelfth day came, then all the gods who live forever returned to Olympus, all together, and Zeus was their leader. But Thetis did not forget the commands of her son, but rose from the sea and at dawn went up to great heaven and Olympus. She found the son of Kronos, Zeus of the wide-resounding voice, sitting apart from all the rest of the gods, on the very topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus. She sat before him and held his knees with her left hand, but with her right she grasped him beneath the chin and in supplication spoke to Zeus the lordly son of Kronos. "O Father Zeus, if I ever aided you in word or deed

among the immortals, grant me this wish—give honor to my son, whose life is short beyond all other men. Now Agamemnon the leader of men has dishonored him. He has taken away his prize and now holds on to it, and the king himself has committed the robbery. But you honor him, Olympian Zeus, Counselor, and give strength to the Trojans until the Achaeans praise my son and raise him high with honor."

She finished her speech, but Zeus the cloud-gatherer made no response, but sat in silence for a long time. Just as Thetis first clasped his knees, so now she held him fast and clung to him, and spoke to him again: "Promise me right now to grant this favor and give your nod of assent, or tell me no, since you have nothing to fear, in order that I may clearly know that my status is least among all the gods."

Zeus the cloudgatherer was deeply disturbed and replied: "This is a wretched affair if you will cause me to quarrel with Hera, at the times when she provokes me with sharp words. Even now she is accustomed to insult me among the deathless gods and accuses me of aiding the Trojans in the war. You must go away, lest Hera notice anything. These things will be my concern and I will bring them to pass. As a proof I will nod my head, that you may be confident. This action of mine is the surest proof among the gods. For my word is irrevocable and true and will be fulfilled, when I nod my head."

So he spoke, and the son of Kronos nodded his dark brows, and the ambrosial locks streamed from the immortal head of the lord, and he shook great Olympus.

When the two of them had made their plans, Thetis jumped into the deep sea from shining Olympus, but Zeus went to his own home. All the gods rose from their seats to greet their father, nor did anyone dare to await his arrival, but all of them rose before him. He took his seat there on the throne. But Hera was well aware that silver-footed Thetis, the daughter of the old man of the sea, had made plans with him, and she spoke to Zeus the son of Kronos in a mocking tone, "Who then of the gods has taken counsel with you, O crafty one? It is always your pleasure to plan in secret and give your judgments apart from me; never have you been willing to tell me what you propose."

Then the father of gods and men replied, "Hera, don't expect to know all my thoughts; they will be hard for you, even though you are my wife. But if there is something you ought to know, no one among gods or men will hear it before you. But if I choose to deliberate apart from the gods, do not in any way fret or question each and every thing."

Then the ox-eyed lady Hera replied, "Most dread son of Kronos, what have you said? Before I have not fretted nor questioned, but in peace you planned all you wished. But I am very fearful lest the silver-footed Thetis, the daughter of the old man of the sea, has spoken with you. For at dawn she sat by your side and

clasped your knees. I believe you gave her a solemn promise to honor Achilles and destroy many by the Achaean ships."

Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer replied, "You wily one, you are always thinking and never do I escape you; still, you will not be able to accomplish anything; in fact, you will be farther from my heart, which will be a worse situation for you. If the matter is as you have described it, that is my business. Sit and be silent, and obey my word. For not all the gods in Olympus will protect you, when I lay my irresistible hands on you."

So he spoke, and the ox-eyed lady Hera was frightened. She took her seat unwillingly, and checked her anger, but the heavenly gods were concerned throughout the house of Zeus. Then Hephaestus the famed artisan began to speak among them, to do a kindness to his dear mother, white-armed Hera. "This business will be distasteful and unendurable if the two of you quarrel in this fashion on account of mortals, particularly if it causes the gods to wrangle among themselves. There will no longer be joy in the feast, since lesser matters triumph. I advise my mother, though she herself is wise, to be gracious to our father Zeus, in order that my father not again scold us and throw the banquet into confusion. What if the Olympian wielder of lightning should want to throw us from our seats, for he is by far the strongest. You deal with him in gentle words, then the Olympian will be gracious to us."

So he spoke, and stood up and placed in his mother's hand a two-handled cup and said to her, "Endure, my mother, and though you are angry, restrain yourself. I would not want to see you, who are dear to me, mistreated, and then I would not be able to save you, although I would be saddened by the fact. The Olympian is a formidable foe. Once before I wished to save you, and he snatched me by the foot and hurled me from the threshold of heaven and I was carried along the whole day and at dusk fell into Lemnos, and little breath was still in me. There the Sintians cared for me after my fall."

So he spoke, and the white-armed goddess Hera smiled, and with a smile took the cup from her son's hand. Then in turn Hephaestus poured wine for the other gods, beginning on the right, and ladled sweet nectar from the mixing bowl. Unquenchable laughter arose among the blessed gods, as they saw Hephaestus bustle about in the palace.

So they feasted through the day till sunset, and no one lacked his fill of the equal feast, nor of the lovely lyre that Apollo played nor of the Muses, who sang in turn with lovely voices.

But when the shining light of the sun fell, then each one went home to bed, each in the palace made for him with wondrous craftsmanship by famous Hephaestus the lame god. Zeus the Olympian, the lord of lightning, went to his own bed, where he was long accustomed to rest when sweet sleep overcame him. There he went and slept, and Hera of the golden throne lay beside him.

(*Iliad* III. 380–420. The duel between Paris and Menelaus, designed to end the conflict, has been interrupted by divine interference. The scene now shifts to Troy.)

But Aphrodite snatched Paris away easily, for she was a goddess, and cloaked him in a thick mist, and then set him down in his fragrant, vaulted chamber. Then she went to summon Helen. She found her on the high tower, surrounded by crowds of Trojan women; she grasped her by her fragrant robe and tugged it, likening her appearance to that of an old woman who dressed wool, who, while she dwelt in Lacedaemon, carded lovely wool, and who loved her most of all. In her likeness the goddess Aphrodite spoke, "Come now, Alexander [Paris] calls you to come home. He is in his chamber in the rounded bed; he is radiant in his beauty and costume. You would never expect that he had just returned from fighting a man, but you would think he was going to a dance, or was resting after just finishing a dance." Thus she spoke, and troubled the heart in Helen's breast. And as she recognized the goddess's lovely neck and seductive breasts and glittering eyes, she spoke in wonder and called her by name. "O divine one, why do you long to cajole me in this fashion? Or will you carry me farther away among well-settled cities, to somewhere in Phrygia or fair Maiona. Is some man dear to you there also? Is it because Menelaus has defeated mighty Alexander and wishes to drag me back home, though I am hateful? Is it for this reason that you stand beside me plotting treachery? You go and sit with him, give up the way of the gods, never turn your feet back to Olympus, but always snivel at his side and guard him until he makes you his wife, or slave girl. I will not go to him—it would be most shameful—nor service his bed. For all the Trojan women would henceforth mock me, all of them; I put up with a confusion of sorrows in my heart."

Then in a rage the goddess Aphrodite scolded her. "Don't cross me, wretched girl, lest in my wrath I abandon you, and just as much as I now love you beyond measure I come to hate you. I will contrive bitter hatred for you on both sides, Trojans and Greeks, and you then will perish in a wretched death."

So she spoke, and Helen, child of Zeus, was frightened and went wrapped in a shining white robe, in silence, unnoticed by all the Trojan women, for a goddess guided her.

(*Iliad* VI. 286–311.)

Hecuba entered the palace and called to her handmaidens. They in turn gathered the noble elders among the women from the city. Meanwhile she descended to a fragrant storage room. There lay richly embroidered robes, the work of Sidonian women, whom the godlike Alexander had brought back from Sidon, having sailed across the broad sea on that journey when he brought back the high-born

Helen as well. Selecting one of them, Hecuba carried it away as a gift to Athena; it was the robe which was the most attractively decorated and the largest, and it shined like a star. It lay there beneath the others. She went on her journey, and many of the elders hastened with her.

When they came to the shrine of Athena on the acropolis, Theano of the lovely cheeks opened the doors for them. She was the daughter of Kisseus and the wife of Antenor the tamer of horses. It was she whom the Trojans made priestess of Athena. All the rest then with a cry lifted their hands to Athena, but the fair-cheeked Theano took the robe, placed it on the knees of lovely-haired Athena, and in her prayer begged the daughter of mighty Zeus thus: "Mistress Athena, defense of our country, most shining of goddesses, break the spear of Diomedes and cast the man himself headlong before the Scian gates, that we may immediately offer twelve yearling heifers, unbroken, in your shrine, if you will pity the city and the Trojan wives and their innocent children." So she spoke in prayer, but Pallas Athena turned her head away.

(*Iliad* XIV. 153–351.)

Hera of the golden throne stood on the horn of Olympus and looked outwards with her eyes. She saw Poseidon her own brother and her husband's brother busy in the battle that brings glory to men, and she rejoiced in her heart. But then she spotted Zeus perched on the topmost peak of many-springed Ida, and he seemed hateful to her heart. Then the ox-eyed lady Hera debated how she might distract the mind of Zeus the aegis-bearer. This seemed to be the best device in her mind—to descend to Ida arrayed in her finest robes, so that he might somehow become eager to lie with her next to her skin in love; then she might pour over his eyes soft sleep that takes away cares and lull his crafty mind. She went into her chamber, which her son Hephaestus had made for her, and shut tight the leaves in the doorposts with a secret crossbar, which no other god could open. She went in, shut the shining doors, then first washed all the stains from her desirable body with ambrosia, then anointed herself with olive oil fragrant with ambrosia, which stood by her side filled with sweet scents. As the vial was shaken a fragrance poured from the bronze-floored house of Zeus over the earth and heavens. After she had thus anointed her body, she combed her hair and arranged the shining, lovely ambrosial locks on her immortal head and cast about her body an ambrosial robe, which Athena had woven for her, smoothed it, and worked into it many lovely figures. She pinned it across her breast with a golden brooch and wrapped around her waist a girdle with a hundred tassels. In her pierced earlobes she placed rings of carefully wrought triple drops. A marvelous radiance shone forth from her. The lovely goddess then covered her head with a lovely veil that shone white like the sun. Beneath her shining feet she fastened beautiful sandals.

When she had covered her flesh with all this beauty, she left the chamber, called Aphrodite away from the other gods and spoke to her. "Would you do my bidding, my child, or resist it, because your heart is angry since I support the Greeks, while you favor the Trojans?" Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, replied, "Hera, most revered goddess, daughter of great Kronos, tell me what you are thinking about, my heart bids me do it for you if I can and it is something that can be done." Then the lady Hera spoke to her with treachery on her mind. "Make me seductive and desirable now, with the power that overwhelms both mortals and immortals, for I am now going to the ends of the bountiful earth to see Ocean, the source of the gods' beginning, and Tethys my mother, who in their own home brought me up well and cherished me and took me from Rheia, when Zeus drove the far-seeing Kronos beneath the earth and the bitter sea. I plan to visit them and end their continuous discord. For a long time now they have stayed apart from the bed of love, since hostility has filled their hearts. If by my words I could persuade their hearts, and lead them back to mingle in love, then I would always be held dear and revered by them."

Then laughter-loving Aphrodite spoke in turn, "It is neither possible nor proper to refuse your request. For you lie in the embrace of Zeus, who is the best among us."

From her breasts she loosed the embroidered, patterned girdle; in it are woven all spells, and beauty, and passion, and the persuasive endearments which snatch reason even from the wise. This girdle she placed in her hands and called her by name and spoke, "Take this girdle and place it in your bosom; it is finely embroidered and on it are figured all things. I am sure that whatever you have in mind will not be unaccomplished."

So she spoke and the ox-eyed lady Hera smiled, and with a smile placed it in her bosom.

Aphrodite the daughter of Zeus went to her father's house, but Hera in a flash left the summit of Olympus, went across Pieria and lovely Emathia and passed over the snow-covered hills of the Thracian horsemen, over the topmost peaks, and she did not touch the ground with her feet. From Athos she crossed the swelling sea and came to Lemnos and the city of the godlike Thoas. There she found Sleep, the brother of Death, took him by the hand, called him by name, and said, "Sleep, lord over all gods and men, if ever you heeded my words before, heed them now. Then I will feel grateful to you all my days. Put to sleep the shining eyes of Zeus beneath his brows, after I have first lain with him in love. I will give you gifts, a lovely throne, indestructible forever, a golden throne. My son, Hephaestus of the strong arms, will make it for you artfully, and will make a footstool for your feet, on which you may put your shining feet whenever you feast."

Then delightful Sleep replied, "Hera, honored goddess, daughter of great Kronos, anyone of the immortal gods I would easily put to sleep, even the stream

of river Ocean, who is the source for all, but I would not come too close to Zeus, nor put him to sleep, unless he himself so ordered. Once before your command put me to grief, on that day when that high-hearted son of Zeus sailed from Ilium, having sacked the city of the Trojans. Then I drifted gently upon the mind of Zeus who wields the aegis and put it to sleep. Your mind was devising evil, and you raised the blasts of the troublesome winds over the sea, and you drove him to well-situated Kos with the loss of all his friends. Zeus awoke in a rage, and beat the gods in his house, seeking me beyond all the rest and would have buried me out of sight of the sky in the sea, had not Night, who tames both gods and men, saved me. In my flight I came to her, and he stopped his pursuit, though he was still angry, lest he do deeds displeasing to swift Night. Now you ask me to bring about yet another impossibility."

Then ox-eyed lady Hera replied, "Why do you ponder these matters in your heart, O Sleep? Or do you believe that Zeus of the wide brows will defend the Trojans with the same wrath that he displayed in the case of Heracles? Come now, I will give you one of the younger Graces to marry and be called your wife." So she spoke, and Sleep was pleased, and said, "Come now and swear to me by the unimpeachable Styx, with one hand take the prospering earth, and with the other the shining salt sea, so that all the other gods who are around Kronos may be witnesses that you will give to me one of the younger graces, Pasithea, whom I have desired all my days."

So he spoke, and the white-armed goddess Hera agreed. She swore the oath he ordered, and named all the gods who dwell under Tartarus, who are called the Titans. When she had completed her oath the two left Lemnos and the city of Imbros, clothed themselves in mist, and lightly followed their path. They came to Ida which is rich in springs, the mother of beasts, to Lektos, where they first left the sea and crossed on the dry land, and the tops of the woods shook beneath their feet. Then Sleep stopped before the eyes of Zeus spied him, and he climbed to the top of a tall pine, which then was the tallest on Ida, which broke through the air to the aether. On this he sat, concealed by pine branches, in the guise of a singing bird, which 1ives in the mountains and the gods call *chalchis*, but men *kymindis*.

But Hera quickly climbed to the peak of Gargaros on lofty Mt. Ida. Zeus the cloud-gatherer saw her, and when he saw her love so overwhelmed his wise heart, just like the time when they first joined in love and slept together with their parents none the wiser. He stood before her and called her by name, "Hera, for what reason do you come down here from Olympus? Your horses aren't here nor your chariot, in which you might come."

Then the lady Hera replied deceptively, "I am going to see the ends of the bountiful earth, and Ocean, the source of the gods, and mother Tethys; they

brought me up well in their home and cared for me. I am off to see them and I will end their quarrel, for they have stayed apart from the couch and have done so for a long time now, for anger has fallen upon their hearts. The horses stand on the lower slopes of well-watered Ida, and they will carry me over the dry land and the water. But I have come down here from Olympus on your account, lest in some fashion you be angry with me later, if I went without a word to the house of deep-flowing Ocean."

Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer replied, "Hera, there will be a later time for you to pay a visit, but now let us lie together and turn to love making, for never yet has desire for goddess or woman so filled my heart inside me and overwhelmed it, not even when I loved the wife of Ixion, who bore Perithoos, a councilor equal to the gods, nor when I bedded Danaë, the lovely-ankled daughter of Akrisione, who bore Perseus, glorious among all men, nor when I fell in love with the daughter of far-renowned Phoenix, who bore Minos and godlike Rhadamanthys, nor when I loved Semele or Alkmene in Thebes; the latter bore me the strong-hearted Heracles, but Semele bore Dionysus, who gives pleasure to men; nor when I loved queenly Demeter of the lovely hair, nor when my choice was glorious Leto, nor even yourself. So now do I desire you and sweet passion has seized me."

Then the lady Hera replied deceptively, "Most dreadful son of Kronos, what have you said? If you now long to sleep together on the peaks of Ida, everything would be seen. Then what would the situation be, if someone of the immortal gods should spy us sleeping, and told the other gods about it? I couldn't get out of bed and go back to your house; it would be improper. But, if you are really set on this course and it is your desire, there is our chamber, which my son Hephaestus made for me, and hung tight-fitting doors on the posts. Let us go there and lie down, since the couch is your desire."

Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer replied, "Hera, don't fear that god or man will see. I will gather such a golden cloud about us that not even Helios could peer through it and see us, though his light is the strongest for seeing through things."

So he spoke, and the son of Kronos caught his wife into his arms, and under them the divine earth gave birth to fresh grass, and dewy clover and crocuses and hyacinth, thick and rich, and these held them high off the ground. On this they lay and they drew around them a lovely golden cloud and the glistening dew dropped around them.

So the father slept peacefully on the peaks of Gargaros, overwhelmed by sleep and love, holding his wife in his arms. But sweet Sleep ran to the ships of the Achaeans with a message for him who encircles and shakes the earth [Poseidon]. To him he spoke winged words, "With all your heart now support the Danaans, Poseidon, and give them glory, if only for a while, while Zeus still sleeps, since I have wrapped him about in swift slumber, and Hera seduced him to sleep by her side."

(*Iliad* XV. 4—141.)

But Zeus awoke on the peaks of Ida by the side of Hera of the golden throne, and stood upright, saw the Trojans and Achaeans, the former driven in flight, the Argives pursuing them, and with the Argives the Lord Poseidon. He saw Hector lying on the plain, and about him sat his companions. He lay senseless, and breathed with difficulty, vomiting blood, since not the weakest of the Achaeans had struck him. Seeing him the father of gods and men had pity, and with a dreadful scowl spoke to Hera, "Hopeless one, deviser of evil, your treachery has driven glorious Hector from battle, Hera, and frightened his people. I don't know whether you may enjoy the first fruits of this troublesome mischief, or whether I may flog you with the lash. Don't you remember when you hung from on high, and to your feet I attached two anvils, and around your limbs I threw a golden unbreakable chain; you hung amid the air and sky. The gods throughout broad Olympus were distraught, but could not set you free, though they stood at your side. If I caught one of them, I would seize him and throw him from the threshold until he came to earth, powerless. But unceasing grief for godlike Heracles did not leave my spirit. You persuaded the storm winds with the aid of Boreas and with such help you drove him over the barren sea, with evil purpose, and then you carried him away to well-landed Kos, and I rescued him from there and brought him once again to Argos the nurse of horses, though he had endured much travail there. I will mention these things again, in order that you may once and for all give up your treachery, in order that you may learn whether or not there is any profit in love-making and the couch, whether it is profitable to make love apart from the gods and deceive me."

So he spoke, and the ox-eyed lady Hera trembled, and she spoke to him with winged words, "Let earth know this now and broad heaven above, and the downward flowing water of Styx, which is the greatest and most fearful oath among the blessed gods, and your blessed head and our marriage bed, by which I could never swear in vain. It is not by my device that Poseidon the earth-shaker troubles the Trojans and Hector, and helps the Achaeans, but rather his own heart urges and pushes him to this. He saw the Achaeans worn down beside their ships, and pitied them, but I would rather advise him that we follow the path on which you, O dark-clouded one, lead us."

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men smiled, and replied with winged words, "If ever you should sit with the immortals thinking the same as I, then Poseidon, even if he should wish otherwise, would turn his thought to follow your mind and my heart. If this is true and you speak without deception, go now among the tribes of the gods and summon Iris to come here, and Apollo, whose glory is the bow, in order that she may go among the host of the bronze-clad Achaeans and speak to Lord Poseidon, to leave the battle and to go back to

his home, and let Phoebus Apollo stir Hector again to battle, and breathe strength into him once again, and make him forget the pains which now wear out his thoughts. Let him raise strengthless fear and turn back the Achaeans, let them flee and fall back to the many-benched ships of Peleus' son Achilles. He will raise up his comrade Patroclus, whom shining Hector will kill with the spear before Ilium, after he [Patroclus] has destroyed many other lusty spearmen, among them my shining son Sarpedon. In wrath for Patroclus' destruction shall Achilles the godlike slay Hector, and from that time on I will continue their retreat from the ships, a continual retreat, until the Achaeans take sheer Ilium through the devices of Athena. I won't stop my anger before this point, nor will I let any of the other immortals aid the Danaans, until the prayer of the son of Peleus has been accomplished, as I agreed to first, and nodded my head, on that day when the goddess Thetis clasped my knees, begging me to honor Achilles, the sacker of cities."

So he spoke, nor did Hera the white-armed goddess disobey. She went back to lofty Olympus from the mountains of Ida. Just as when the mind of a man flashes, a man who has crossed much of the earth and thinks with a penetrating heart, "if only I were here, or there," and plans many things, so with eagerness did the lady Hera rapidly wing her way to sheer Olympus; she entered the house of Zeus and found the immortal gods assembled. They all saw her, rose, and saluted her with their cups. She passed the rest, but took a cup from fair-cheeked Themis, who had been the first to come running, and spoke to her with winged words, "Hera, why have you come; you look terrified; has the son of Kronos, your husband, scared you?"

The white-armed goddess Hera then replied, "Don't question me about these things, divine Themis. You yourself know how stubborn and haughty is his nature. You now begin the equal feast in the house of the gods; you with all the immortals may hear this, what sort of evil actions Zeus tells of. Nor do I think that all our hearts will be pleased, neither mortals nor gods, even if now one feasts in pleasure."

So speaking Lady Hera sat down, and the gods in the house of Zeus were troubled. Hera laughed with her lips, but her forehead above her dark brows was not at peace. In anger she spoke among them all, "Fools we were, who try to oppose the plan of Zeus thoughtlessly. Even now we think to stop him by word or force, going nearby; he sits apart nor does he care for or regard us, but says that among the immortals he is eminently the best in strength and power, therefore it is necessary for each of you to accept whatever evil he sends you. Already I believe sorrow has befallen Ares, for his son has perished in battle, the dearest of men, Askalaphos, whom mighty Ares called his son."

So she spoke, but Ares struck both thighs with the flats of his hands, and spoke in sorrow, "Now you must not blame me, you who dwell on Olympus, if I

go among the ships of the Achaeans and avenge my son's death, even if it is my fate to lie in the blood and dust among the dead, struck by Zeus' thunderbolt."

So he spoke, and ordered Fear and Rout to yoke his horses, and he himself put on his shining armor. Then might have taken place a still greater, more bitter quarrel between Zeus and the gods, had not Athena in fear for the gods jumped out to the forecourt, leaving the throne on which she was sitting, and took the helmet from his head, the shield from his shoulders, snatched the huge spear from his heavy hand and placed it aside, and then with her words soothed mighty Ares. "Madman, crazed in your wits, this is destruction. You hear with your ears, but thought and discipline have perished. Didn't you hear what the white-armed goddess Hera said, who has just now returned to Olympus from Zeus? Or would you rather return to Olympus, having accomplished many woeful tasks, reluctantly and under compulsion? You will create much sorrow for the rest of us. Soon Zeus will leave the high-hearted Trojans and Achaeans, and create havoc among us on Olympus, and will catch us in turn, the guilty and the innocent. I bid you give up your anger for your son, for already someone better in strength and hand has fallen, or will fall, and it is a hard thing to rescue all the seed and generation of men."

So speaking she set mighty Ares on his throne.

(*Iliad* XVI. 419–462, 665–683.)

When Sarpedon saw his unbelted companions slain by the hands of Patroclus the son of Menoitios, he cried out and scolded the godlike Lycians. "Shame, O Lycians! Where are you fleeing You are swift enough now! I will stand against this man that I may learn who it is that is strong and has done so much harm to the Trojans, for he has loosed the knees of many good men."

So he spoke, and leaped to the ground from his chariot with all his armor. Patroclus on the other side, when he saw him, jumped from his chariot. Like two vultures, with crooked claws and curved beaks, who fight on a high rock, screaming loudly, so did these two rush upon each other shouting loudly. When Zeus the son of crooked-counseling Kronos saw them he pitied them and spoke to Hera his sister and wife. "It grieves me that Destiny has doomed Sarpedon, the dearest of men, to fall at the hands of Patroclus the son of Menoitios. As I think on it my heart is divided—whether I shall snatch him still alive from the tearful battle and place him in the rich country of Lycia, or let him fall at the hands of the son of Menoitios."

Then the ox-eyed queen Hera replied. "Most dread son of Kronos, what word have you spoken? This man is a mortal, long doomed to death; do you wish to free him from wretched death? Let it be so, but not all the other gods will praise you. I will tell you another thing, and you ponder it in your heart. If you return

Sarpedon to his home yet living, think whether some other god might wish to send his own son out of the fierce conflict. Many sons of gods are fighting around the great city of Priam; among them you will stir up great resentment. If he is dear to you, and your heart is griefstricken, allow him to perish in the mighty conflict at the hands of Patroclus, but when the soul and life have left him, send Death and gentle Sleep to bear him away until they come to the countryside of broad Lycia. There his brothers and kinsmen will bury with a grave and marker. This is the lot of mortals." So she spoke, and the father of gods and men agreed. But he poured bloody rain over the earth, to honor his son, whom Patroclus was about to slay in deep-soiled Troy, far from his homeland.

And then Zeus the cloud-gatherer spoke to Apollo. "Come on now, dear Phoebus, go and take Sarpedon out of range of the weapons; wash away the dark blood, carry him far away and wash him in the streams of the river. Anoint him with ambrosia and put ambrosial clothes around him and send him along with two swift escorts, Sleep and Death, twin brothers, who will lay him quickly in the rich land of broad Lycia, and there his brothers and kinsmen will bury him with grave and marker, for this is the fate of men."

So he spoke, and Apollo did not disobey his father, but went down along the mountains of Ida into the dreadful melee of battle, and rescued shining Sarpedon from the weapons, carried him far away, washed him in the streams of the river, anointed him with ambrosia, dressed him in ambrosial clothing and sent him along with two swift escorts, Sleep and Death, twin brothers, who carried him away and placed him in the rich land of broad Lycia.

(*Iliad* XIX. 74–145; Agamemnon apologizes to Achilles.)

So Achilles spoke, but the well-greaved Achaeans rejoiced to hear how the great hearted son of Peleus put off his wrath. Among them then spoke Agamemnon, the leader of men. He spoke from his seat, and did not rise among them "My friends, heroic Danaans, servants of Ares, it is a fine thing to hear a speaker, but it is not fitting to interrupt him. It would be a hard thing even for one well-skilled! In the loud murmur of men who could hear or speak? A speaker, even a clear-voiced one, is stopped. I will address the son of Peleus, but all the rest of you Argives pay heed, and each of you consider my words. Very often the Achaeans have spoken words against me and criticized me. But I am not to blame, but Zeus, and Fate, and the Fury who walks unseen. In the assembly they cast fierce blindness around me, on that day when I myself snatched Achilles' prize from him. But what could I do? God brings everything to completion. Blindness is the eldest daughter of Zeus, it is she who blinds all men, she is destructive. She has delicate feet, nor does she step on the earth, but she walks over the heads of men and deceives them. She has fettered many others. Once upon a time Zeus was

blinded, though men say that he is the best of gods and men. But Hera, a woman, deceived him by her craftiness on that day when in well-crowned Thebe Alkmene was about to bring forth the mighty Heracles. Zeus in prayer spoke before all the gods. 'Hear me, all you gods and goddesses, while I speak what the heart in my chest bids me to say. Today Eileithyia, the goddess of woman's child-pains, will reveal to the light a man who will lord it over all the men dwelling about him, of the race coming from my blood.'

"Then with treacherous purpose spoke the Lady Hera. 'You will be a liar, nor will you fulfill what you say. Come now and swear a mighty oath, Olympian, that he will be the lord over all the men who dwell around him, he who shall on this day fall at the feet of a woman, and he shall lord it over the offspring of your blood.' So she spoke, and Zeus in no way recognized her treachery, but swore a great oath, and thereby was greatly blinded. Hera then darted away from the peak of Olympus, swiftly came to Achaean Argos; there she knew was the mighty wife of Sthenelos, son of Perseus. She was carrying a son, but it was only the seventh month. But Hera led him to the light and made him born out of time. But she stopped the birth of Alkmene, and held back Eileithyia. Then she went to Zeus the son of Kronos and reported, 'Father Zeus, Lord of the shining thunderbolt, I place this message in your heart. A great man is born, who will lord it over the Argives, Eurystheus, son of Sthenelos, son of Perseus, from your own seed. It is not unfitting that he should rule over the Argives.'

"So she spoke, and sharp sorrow struck deep into his heart; he snatched the goddess Blindness by the shining hair of her head in the depths of his wrath, and swore another mighty oath, that never thereafter would Blindness return again to Olympus and the stars of heaven, she who blinds all. So speaking he hurled her from starry heaven, whirling her in his hand. Soon she came to the works of men. Always thereafter Zeus groaned about her, whenever he saw his son doing the shameful tasks commanded by Eurystheus. So too I, when great Hector of the glancing helmet was destroying the Argives by the sterns of their ships, I was not able to forget Blindness, by whom I was first deluded. But since I was blinded, and Zeus snatched away my good sense, I am willing to make it up and to give unmeasurable rewards. Rise up to battle, and rouse the rest of your people. But I am the one who will provide the gifts, as many as godlike Odysseus promised yesterday in your tent. If you are willing, remain, though you are eager for battle, until my followers take the gifts from my ship, so that you may know what suitable things I will give you."

(*Iliad* XX. 47–74.)

But when the Olympians joined in the company of men, mighty Strife, the rouser of the people, burst forth, and Athena cried out, standing at one moment

beside the ditch dug outside the wall, but at another by the resounding sea, and let loose her mighty battle cry. On the other side Ares bellowed, like to a dark hurricane, now giving sharp orders to the Trojans along the top of the citadel, now running by the Fair Hill along the banks of Simoeis.

As the blessed gods stirred on their followers, they too came together, and among themselves raised a bitter quarrel. On high the father of gods and men thundered dreadfully; from deep below Poseidon shook the boundless earth and the steep mountain cliffs. All the roots of Ida with her abundant waters were shaken and her peaks, and the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Achaeans. Aidoneus, lord of the dead below, was frightened, and in his fear jumped from his throne and shrieked, fearing that Poseidon who encircles the land might open the earth above him and open the houses of the dead, which were dank and frightening both to gods and men—the gods themselves loathe them. Such was the clamor that arose when the gods clashed in Strife. Against the Lord Poseidon stood Phoebus Apollo, holding his winged arrows; against Enyalios the gray-eyed goddess Athena; against Hera stood the lady of the golden distaff, the loud-voiced huntress Artemis, the sister of the far-shooter. Against Leto stood the strong helper, Hermes; against Hephaestus stood the great, deep-eddying river which the gods call Xanthos, but men Skamandros.

(*Iliad* XXII. 167–187, 207–224.)

Among the gods the first to speak was the father of gods and men. "Alas, I see with my eyes a beloved man pursued around the walls; my heart mourns for Hector, who has burned many thighs of oxen for me on the peaks of Ida on many occasions, and at other times on the citadel of the city. But now the godlike Achilles pursues him on swift feet around the city of Priam. Come on now, you gods, take thought and consider whether to rescue this man from death, or to subdue him at the hands of Achilles son of Peleus, though he is good."

Then the goddess bright-eyed Athena spoke, "O Father, lord of the gleaming thunderbolt, dark clouded one, what have you said! This is a mortal, long doomed by fate; do you wish to preserve him from death, the bringer of woe? Do so, but all the rest of the gods shall not approve."

Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer replied, "Take heart, Thrice-born, my child. I am saying nothing with set purpose, and I wish to be gentle to you. Act now as your mind urges, hold back no more."

So he spoke, and stirred on Athena who was already eager. She went darting down the peaks of Olympus. . . .

But when for the fourth time they came to the springs, then the father raised his golden scales and in them placed two portions of long-woeful death—one for Achilles, one for Hector the tamer of horses. Taking it in the middle he held

it in balance; the fated day for Hector sank, and went down towards death, and Phoebus Apollo left him. But the bright-eyed goddess Athena came to the son of Peleus, stood near and spoke winged words. “Beloved of Zeus, glorious Achilles, now I think we two shall bring back great glory to the ships of the Achaeans, after we have killed Hector, though he is insatiable for battle. No longer does he have the means to escape, even if the far-shooter Apollo should suffer much, and roll in supplication before our father Zeus of the aegis. You now stand here and catch your breath; I will go to the man and persuade him to fight hand to hand.”

B. The Gods of Classical Greece

The *Theogony* of Hesiod

The epic poetry of Homer provides a powerful description of Greece during the Late Bronze Age. The poems, composed probably between 800 and 700 B.C., do not represent a "pure" Mycenaean tradition, however, but are rather a composite of some four hundred years of historical development. Hesiod presents a more systematic account of the generations of gods and goddesses in his Theogony. His date is usually given as a little later than Homer's, perhaps around 700 B.C., but he too seems to have included a great deal of traditional material, some of it perhaps influenced by similar tales of the civilizations of the Sumerians and Akkadians in Mesopotamia, the Hittites in Asia Minor, and the Phoenicians in Palestine. See J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, 1950), pp. 60–72, 120–126; P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East* (Cardiff, 1966); F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca, 1949), pp. 3–75. Whatever their derivation, the genealogical relationships of the gods as Hesiod defined them became a standard basis of classical Greek myth.

(Hesiod, *Theogony*, 116–210, 453–506.)

First of all was born Chaos, and then wide-breasted Gaia [Earth], to be the absolutely secure foundation of all the immortals who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus; and then divine Tartaros in the depths of the wide-pathed earth, and Eros, who is the loveliest of the immortals and weakens the strength of limbs, who overwhelms the mind in the breasts of all the gods and men and their wise counsel. From Chaos was born Erebos, the black one, and Night. From Night again Aither and Day, when Night conceived them and bore them, mingling in love with Erebos. But Gaia gave birth to one equal to herself, strong Ouranos [Heaven], in order that he might cover her completely and be an absolutely secure seat for the blessed gods. Then she bore the high hills, wild places beloved of the gods (of the nymphs, who dwell in the woody mountain glens). And she produced the barren sea, Pontos, foaming in his swell, but without sweet love. Then she lay with Ouranos and produced deep-sounding Ocean, and Kois, Krios, Hyperion, Iapetos, and Theia, Rheia, Themis and Mnemosyne, and Phoebe with the golden crown and lovely Tethys, and after them her youngest was Kronos of the crooked counsels, the most dreadful of her children; he hated his strong father. She also bore the Cyclopes, who have proud hearts, Brontes and Steropes and Arges the stubborn-hearted (who made the thunder and lightning, and gave them to Zeus). They were like the gods in all other respects, but only one eye was set in the

middle of their foreheads. (Cyclopes was their eponymous name, because of the one circular eye in their foreheads.) Strength and power and skill were present in their labors (they were raised as mortals with human voice, though born of gods). Other children were born to Gaia and Ouranos, three mighty and powerful sons, indescribable, Kottos and Briareos and Gyes, insolent children. Each of them had a hundred unapproachable arms springing from his shoulders, and on the shoulders of each grew fifty heads, hanging from their shoulders over their strong limbs. Stubborn and mighty was the strength of their huge forms. Of all the children born to Gaia and Ouranos, they were the most dreadful, and they hated their father from the beginning.

When anyone of them first began to come forth, Ouranos would push him back into the womb of Gaia, and would not allow them to come into the light, and Ouranos rejoiced in his wicked work. But great Gaia groaned within, as she was constrained, and devised a wicked, treacherous attack. She quickly created the element of gray flint, and shaped from it a great sickle, and explained it to her children. She spoke in deep distress, vexed in her heart. "My children, though also born of a sinful father, if you are willing to obey me, we will punish your father for his cruel outrage. For he was the first to devise wicked deeds." So she spoke, and fear took them all, nor did anyone speak. Then crooked-counseling Kronos took heart, and replied to his gracious mother, "Mother, I promise to undertake this deed, since I do not at all pay reverence to my shameless father. He was the first to devise treacherous deeds." So he spoke, and vast Gaia rejoiced greatly; she took him and secreted him in ambush, placed in his hands the jagged sickle, and revealed to him all her treachery. Huge Ouranos came, bringing Night; in his longing he stretched out all over Gaia and spread himself out fully. Then Kronos from his ambush seized him with his left hand and with his right hand he held the enormous sickle with its jagged teeth, swung it and sheared off the genitals of his father and cast them backwards to fall wherever they might. They did not leave his hands without effect, but all the bloody drops were gathered by Gaia and, when the seasons moved around she gave birth to the Erinyes [Furies] and the mighty, tall Giants, gleaming in their armor and holding long spears in their hands; and the nymphs, the ones who are called the Nymphs of the Ash Tree on the boundless earth. But the members themselves, when he first cut them off with the flint, he threw from the mainland into the surging sea. They were carried for a long time by the sea, and a white foam spread from the immortal flesh and in it a maiden was born. She first came near holy Cythera, and from there she came to sea-girt Cyprus; she came forth a modest, lovely goddess, and beneath her shapely feet the grass bloomed. The gods call her Aphrodite and men do too because she was nurtured in the foam;[1] they called her Cythereia because she went to Cythera,

1. Hesiod derives the name "Aphrodite" from *aphros*, meaning "foam." See. n. 3 below for another etymology.

and Cyprogeneia, because she came forth from billowing Cyprus, and Philommedea, because she came from members [*mēdea*]. With her were Eros and lovely Himeros [Desire] to be her followers, when first she was born and entered the community of the gods. This is the privilege she had from the beginning and this is the role she plays among men and deathless gods—the whispers of maidens, the smiles, the deceptions, sweet delight and love and flattery.

Then in bitterness of reproach their father Ouranos gave to the Sons which he himself had borne the name of Titans [Stretchers] for they stretched their powers outrageously and accomplished a monstrous task, and they would be punished for that deed afterwards.…

When Rheia was subdued by Kronos, she bore glorious children, Hestia and Demeter and Hera of the golden sandals and Hades the mighty, who dwells beneath the earth and has a pitiless heart; also [Poseidon] the earth shaker; and Zeus who devises counsels, the father of gods and men, and the broad earth was shaken by his thunder. These the mighty Kronos swallowed down, as each one came forth from the womb of its holy mother to her knees; Kronos thought that thus no one of the proud children of Ouranos' line would ever hold the position of king among the immortals. For he had learned from Gaia and starry Ouranos that it had been ordained that although he was strong he would be beaten by his son and through the plans of great Zeus. Therefore he was not careless, but kept watch, waited for his children and swallowed them. Insufferable woe consumed Rheia. But when she was about to give birth to the father of gods and men, Zeus, then she begged her own parents Gaia and starry Ouranos, to devise with her some plan whereby she might escape his notice when she gave birth, and the vengeance both of his father and his children be on Kronos, the children whom mighty Kronos of the crooked counsel swallowed. They listened with pleasure to their daughter and explained to her all that destiny had decreed for King Kronos and for his son powerful in spirit; they sent her to Lyktos in the fertile land of Crete, when she was about to give birth to the youngest of her children, great Zeus. Great Gaia took him inside her in wide Crete to nurture and cherish. To that place she came bearing him through the swift black night, first to Lyktos. Taking him in her arms she laid him in the cave of a cliff, beneath the depths of sacred Earth, in Mount Aigaion, thickly covered with woods. Then carrying a great stone wrapped in swaddling clothes she presented it to her mighty lord, the son of Ouranos, the former king of the gods. He took this stone in turn into his hands, and stuffed it down into his stomach, the fool. For he did not recognize that instead of the stone his son, invincible and unshakable, had been left, who was destined by force and his hands to defeat him and deprive him of his title, and then lord it over the immortals.

When the strength and shining limbs of the Lord grew powerful with the circling of the years, great Kronos, fooled by the thoughtful suggestions of Gaia,

vomited up his offspring, overwhelmed by the cleverness and strength of his son. First he vomited up the stone, having swallowed it most recently; this stone Zeus planted in the wide-wayed earth, in holy Pytho, in the hollows beneath Mount Parnassos, to be a portent and wonder thereafter for mortals.

He freed then the brothers of his father from their grievous bonds, the Sons of Ouranos, whom his father chained in his witlessness, who remembered and were grateful for his benevolence. They gave him the thunder and the lightning which smokes and the flash, which to this point great Gaia had hidden. Relying then on these he rules both men and gods.

Zeus

The awesome Zeus of Homer, the king of gods and men whose very nod could shake Olympus, was depicted by Hesiod in equally awesome terms, as the victor in a physical struggle over the earlier generation of gods. In the fifth century the nature of this greatest of gods was the subject of meditation and speculation, as shown in the following passages. Aeschylus in his hymn to Zeus in the *Agamemnon* recalls the Hesiodic account in celebrating the intellectual understanding of life's mysteries which comes from Zeus. On the other hand, in *Prometheus Bound* Aeschylus (assuming he was indeed the author) emphasizes the immaturity of a Zeus who relies on physical force to subdue his enemies in the older generation of Titans; see F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca, 1949), pp. 124–177; H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley, 1971), esp. pp. 79–103. In the 460s a great temple of Zeus was built at the panhellenic shrine of Olympia, and later in the fifth century it was equipped with a new and imposing statue of Zeus by Pheidias, the foremost sculptor of Greece, who had just completed the great statue of Athena in the Parthenon at Athens. The descriptions of the statue in Strabo and Pausanias indicate its influence, which at least to these writers of the Roman period was as much religious as artistic. Finally, a very different view of Zeus is introduced by the fourth-century Cretan Hymn of the Kouretes, in which Zeus is addressed as the "greatest Kouros [Boy]," reborn as an eternal youth; this recalls Hesiod's account of Zeus's infancy in Crete, and seems to reflect a native, non-Greek fertility cult in which a vegetation god was annually reborn and to which the name of Zeus was later attached. See J. Harrison, *Themis* (Cambridge, 1912), pp. 1–74; M.P. Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* (Lund, 1927), pp. 475–483; W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston, 1950), pp. 42–51; R.F. Willetts, *Cretan Cults and Festivals* (New York, 1962), pp. 199–220.

(Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 160–182.)

Chorus: Zeus, whoever he is, if this name pleases him when he is invoked, by this name I address him. I have reflected carefully on all things, but I am unable to compare him to anyone save Zeus, if it is necessary to cast truly this vain burden from my mind.

Not even he who before was great [Ouranos], swelling in strength, sufficient in every battle, shall be mentioned as ever having existed. But he who was born afterwards [Kronos] is gone, for he met his victor in three falls. But the man who eagerly celebrates Zeus as victor will hit understanding four-square.

It was Zeus who put me on the road to understanding, who provided the law that understanding comes through suffering. In sleep, pain flows into one's heart, a pain that brings remembrance. And discretion comes, even to those who are unwilling. There is, it seems, a grace that comes from the gods enthroned on the dread helmsman's bench, a constraining grace.

(Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 160–168, 188–193, 199–205, 528–535.)

Chorus: Who of the gods is so hard-hearted that this gives him pleasure? Who will not feel sympathy with your troubles—except, of course, Zeus. He always puts on in his wrath an inflexible mind and brings to ruin the race of Ouranos; he will not stop until either his heart has its fill, or someone with cunning hand takes from him that rule which is hard to capture.…

Prometheus: I know that he is harsh, that he keeps what is just by his own side, Zeus does. Nevertheless, his mood will soften one day, when there is alleviation of this pain. He will soften his hard anger and will come eagerly to a pact of friendship with me, equally eager.… At first, when the *daimones* began their quarrel and strife rose up among them, one faction wanted to expel Kronos from his throne, in order (I suppose) that Zeus might reign; but others were eager for the opposite, in order that Zeus might never rule over the gods. On this side I tried to give the best advice, but did not succeed in persuading the Titans, the children of Ouranos and Earth. Scorning my wily tricks, they supposed in their notions about their strength that they would win the mastery with no effort at all. My mother—not Themis alone but also Gaia, one person with many names—foretold to me how the future would come out, how those who prevailed would have to gain the power not by might or strength, but by craftiness. I explained all this, but they regarded the whole thing as worth not even a glance. So it seemed to me that in the circumstances the best at the moment was to take my mother and willingly take my stand by Zeus, equally willing. And thanks to my plans the deep, dark recess of Tartaros contains Kronos the ancient-born, attended by his allies. Even though helped in this way on my initiative, the monarch of the gods

has repaid me with these toilsome punishments. This affliction is engrained in monarchy, to put no trust in friends.

Chorus: May he who governs all things, Zeus, never put his power in opposition to my intent. May I never fail to celebrate the gods with sacred feasts, with cattle slaughtered beside the quenchless flow of Father Ocean. May I never utter a sinful word. May this rather remain in my mind, and never melt away.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* V. 11.1, an account of Pheidias' statue of Zeus at Olympia.)

The god is seated on a throne; he is made of gold and ivory. There is a crown on his head like twigs of olive. In his right hand he holds a Nike of ivory and gold; she has a ribbon and wreath on her head. In the god's left hand is a staff blossoming with all kinds of precious metals. The bird sitting on the sceptre is an eagle. The sandals of the god are made of gold and his cloak is made of the same material. On the cloak are carved animals and the blossoms of lilies.

(Strabo, *Geography* VIII. 353–354.)

It remains for me to speak about the Olympia and the transfer of everything into the hands of the Eleans. The temple is in Pisatis, less than 300 stades from Elis. In front is situated a grove of wild olives, in which is the stadium. Past the temple flows the Alphaeus, flowing from Arcadia to the Triphylian sea between the west and the south. From the beginning the temple was famed because of the oracle of Olympian Zeus, and when it failed the reputation of the temple remained no less, and in fact increased, to the extent that we know it, because of the festival assembly and the Olympic games. A crown was the prize of victory, and the games were recognized as sacred and superior to all others. The temple was made lovely by the number of the votive offerings, which were offered from all parts of Greece. Among them was the beaten-gold statue of Zeus, offered by Cypselus, the tyrant of Corinth. The greatest of them was the statue of Zeus which Pheidias the son of Charmides the Athenian made of ivory. It was of such a size that, although the temple was very large, the artist seems to have missed the symmetry. For he made Zeus seated, but nearly touching the roof with his head, so that he created the impression that if Zeus rose up and stood straight he would take off the roof of the temple. Some have recorded the measurements of the statue, and Callimachus has set them forth in iambic poetry. Panainos the painter, a nephew and collaborator of Pheidias, aided him a great deal in decorating the statue with colors, and particularly in reference to its clothing. Many wonderful paintings can be seen around the temple, and they are his work. Concerning Pheidias they recall that when Panainos asked him after what model he

would make the statue of Zeus, he replied that he would model it according to the likeness described by Homer in these words, "So he spoke, and the son of Kronos nodded his dark brows, and the ambrosial locks flowed from the immortal head of the lord, and he shook great Olympus."[2] This description seems excellent, both for other reasons and because of the brows, for the poet compels the intellect to create a mighty person and great power worthy of Zeus.

(*IC* III. 2.2, the *Hymn of the Kouretes*; a fragmentary inscription from Palaikastro, Crete, dating about 300 B.C., though its content is probably older.)

Hail, Greatest Kouros, Kronian one, receive my greeting, thou Almighty of Radiance; thou art come, leading thy *daimones*; do thou come for the year to Dikte, and rejoice in this hymn, which we pluck on the strings, blending with the flutes, and which we sing, standing about thy well-fenced altar.

Hail, Greatest Kouros, Kronian one, receive my greeting, thou Almighty of Radiance thou art come, leading thy *daimones*, do thou come for the year to Dikte, and rejoice in this hymn; for there [the Kouretes] took thee, the immortal child, from Rhea on their shields, and circling with their feet hid thee away.

[Hail, Greatest Kouros, etc. … of the] beautiful Dawn.

Hail, Greatest Kouros, Kronian one, receive my greeting, thou Almighty of Radiance; thou art come, leading thy *daimones*; do thou come for the year to Dikte, and rejoice in this hymn; the Seasons grew teeming year by year, and Justice took hold of man, and Peace the lover of prosperity took charge of all living things.

Hail, Greatest Kouros, Kronian one, receive my greeting, thou Almighty of Radiance; thou art come, leading thy *daimones*; do thou come for the year to Dikte, and rejoice in this hymn; [do thou leap into the cattle] herds, and leap into the fleece-bearing [flocks, and into the supplies] of grain leap, and also into the fruit-[bearing households.]

Hail, Greatest Kouros, Kronian one, receive my greeting, thou Almighty of Radiance; thou art come, leading thy *daimones*; do thou come for the year to Dikte, and rejoice in this hymn; do thou leap also into our cities, leap also into the sea-faring ships, leap also into the y[oung ci]tizens, leap also into Themis the fa[mous.]

Hail, Greatest Kouros, Kronian one, receive my greeting, thou Almighty of Radiance; thou art come, leading thy *daimones*; do thou come for the year to Dikte, and rejoice in this hymn.

2. Homer, *Iliad* I. 527–530. See p. 2.

C. Criticism of the Traditional Theology

The Pre-Socratics

The stories of Homer and the epic poets, the cosmology of Hesiod did not satisfy all Greeks. In Ionia Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes examined material phenomena and attempted to describe the world in completely rational terms. This strain of thought was soon challenged by the Pythagorean and Eleatic schools of thought, which were located in Italy. The Ionians had begun with dissatisfaction about the old explanations; the Italian schools were motivated by religious concerns, though it may be argued that their end results were no less materialistic than the Ionians'. Further readings on the first scientific thinkers of Greece may be found in G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1957); E.A. Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (London, 1957) and *A Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass , 1963); W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. I and II (Cambridge, 1962 and 1965).

(Xenophanes of Colophon, sixth century B.C.; fragments published in H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Berlin, 1934.)

(11) Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods all things that are shameful and a reproach: thievery, adultery, and deception of each other.
(12) They have spoken as much as possible concerning the wicked deeds of the gods: stealing, committing adultery, deceiving each other.
(14) Mortals believe that the gods were created, and have their own clothing, voice and body.
(23) There is one god, greatest among gods and men, like to men neither in body nor in soul.
(24) He sees as a whole, he knows wholly, and hears wholly.
(25) But without toil he sets all into motion, by the thought in his mind.
(26) Always he remains in the same place, not moving at all, nor is it appropriate to change his position from one place to another.
(34) In respect to the truth no man has there been or will be who knows about the gods and the things which I mention. Even if a man happened to speak the truth, nevertheless he doesn't know it. Seeming is created over everything.

(Heraclitus of Ephesus, sixth century B.C.; fragments in Diels-Kranz.)

(5) They purify themselves of blood by blood; they are crazy, as if one having stepped into mud were to wash with mud. Such a man would be thought

mad, if someone noticed him doing such a thing. Furthermore they pray to these statues as if one were to have a conversation with houses, nor do they recognize in the case of gods or heroes what sort of beings they really are.

(15) If they were not processing for Dionysus and singing the hymn to the private parts they would be acting most disgracefully; but Hades and Dionysus, for whom they are inspired and celebrate the Lenaean rites, are the same being.

(119) Character is a *daimon* for man.

(Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, c. 500–c. 428 B.C., in Simplicius, *Commentary* on Aristotle's *Physics*, 164, 24; frag. 12 in Diels-Kranz.)

Other things contain a part of everything, but mind is infinite and self-ruling and is mixed with nothing, but is alone by itself. If it were not by itself, but were mixed with something else, it would share in all things if it were mixed with anything. In everything there is a portion of everything, as we have said before. The things mixed in would hinder it, so that it could hold sway over nothing in the same way as it does being alone by itself. It is the finest of all things and the purest, and has complete knowledgeof all things, and is most powerful. All things which have a soul, both greater and lesser, are all ruled by mind. Mind ruled over the revolution of the universe, so that everything would revolve at the beginning. It began to rotate in a small area, then over a greater one, and will rotate over a still wider area. The things mixed together, and things separated off and divided, these are all known by mind. Whatever would be, and whatever existed then but does no longer, whatever exists and will exist, all of these mind arranged, and this revolution, in which now the stars, sun, moon, the air, and the aither that are cut off, this was arranged by mind. This revolution caused the separation. The dense is separated from the rare, the hot from the cold, the dry from the wet. There are many portions of many things, nothing is absolutely distinguished or separated, the one from the other, except mind. Mind is all alike, both greater and less. Nothing else is like it, but each thing is and was most clearly that which it most contained.

The Sophists

As the Greeks began the fifth century they were faced with a great challenge in foreign affairs—the Persian invasion, first of Ionia, then of Greece. Greek victories at Marathon in the first campaign (490 B.C.), at Salamis and Plataea in the second (480–479 B.C.) not only repelled the invaders but forged in the Greeks a sense of national consciousness. This consciousness was not, however, expressed in political unification, but rather in the creation of two

great alliance systems, the Spartan and the Athenian, whose quarrels were to dominate the last sixty years of the fifth century and severely cripple the city-state. Against this background of power politics took place some of the finest creations of the human intellect, notably in Athens. One has only to think of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes; of Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon; of Socrates and Plato; of the Parthenon and Erechtheum to appreciate the Greek contribution to western civilization. It was a restless time, and it is not surprising that one manifestation of this restlessness should appear in new educational theories, which challenged old beliefs, but did not often offer new beliefs to replace the old. If man truly was the measure of all things, as Protagoras contended, the fifth century shows man in both his most creative and most destructive aspects. For reading about these new educators, the Sophists, see W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. III, pt. 1 (Cambridge, 1968); E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951), pp 179–195; W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, vol. I (Oxford, 1939), pp. 283–329.

(Protagoras of Abdera, c. 485–c. 415 B.C., in Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhonism* I. 216; frag. A14 in Diels-Kranz.)

Protagoras also wants man to be the measure of all things, of existing things, that they exist, of non-existent things, that they do not exist; by "measure" he means the criterion, and by "things" the object, so that he is saying that man is the criterion of all things, of things that are that they are, of things that are not that they are not. For this reason he puts forward only what appears to each individual, and so he introduces relativity. Wherefore he seems to have some knowledge in common with the Pythagoreans, but he differs from them, and we will present the differences when we have accurately analyzed his views.

(Protagoras, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* IX. 51–52; frags. A1 and B4 in Diels-Kranz.)

Protagoras used to say that the soul was nothing without the senses (Plato also speaks thus in the Theatetus) and that everything is true. Elsewhere he begins "Concerning the gods I can not say that they exist—by human reasoning. Many things impede knowledge, the absurdity of the question and the short span of human life." For this introduction he was expelled by the Athenians; they burned his books in the marketplace after a herald's inquiry had been made of all who had them.

The Tragedians

The speculations and questionings of the philosophers and sophists found reflection in the works of several of the writers of tragedy in the late-fifth century. A fragment of the Sisyphus of Critias sets the rationalistic tone, and this is picked up in the selections from Euripides' *Trojan Women*. In the *Hippolytus*, Euripides portrays the behavior of Aphrodite toward Artemis' favorite, Hippolytus, as petty, while emphasizing the irresistibility of the erotic impulse represented by Aphrodite; and in the *Ion*, Apollo's temple attendant at Delphi questions the moral propriety of Apollo's actions, as portrayed in the myth.

(Critias, *Sisyphus*, in Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* IX. 403–404; frag. 1 in A. Nauck, *Tragicorurn Graecorum Fragmenta*. Leipzig, 1889, pp. 771–772; frag. B25 in Diels-Kranz.)

There was a time when the life of men was rude and bestial and subject to force, when there was no reward for the good, and there was no punishment for the bad. Then, it seems to me, men made laws as punishers, and justice became a tyrant, to hold wanton violence in subjection. If anyone committed an offense, he was punished. Consequently, the laws prevented them from doing violent deeds out in the open, but in secret they did commit them. So then, I believe, some smart and clever man invented the gods for mortals, so that they might serve as a terror to the bad, whenever they do or say or think anything wrong. Next the Divine was introduced, to be a *daimon* blooming with boundless life, perceptively hearing, seeing, thinking and noticing all things, assuming a divine nature, one who will hear everything said among mortals, and will be able to see everything that is done. Even if you devise some evil thing in silence, you will not evade the gods' attention, for it is their attribute to be mindful.

Then he introduced a most palatable teaching, and with words like these he used a deceitful tale to obscure the truth: in order to make the most striking impression on men, he said that the gods dwell right here, and he derived the fears that beset men (as well as the blessings which aid them in their wretched life) from the heavens, where he saw the lightning flashes, the terrible claps of thunder, the star-filled radiance of the sky—the beautiful tapestry of Chronos [Time], the skilled craftsman. Thence shines the red-hot gleam of the stars, and thence proceeds to earth the dampening rain. With such terrible fears he surrounded men; with his fancy tale he gave the *daimon* a home in a conspicuous place, and stifled lawlessness with fears.

In this way, then, I think that someone first persuaded men to believe that the race of *daimones* exists.

(Euripides, *Trojan Women*, 969–990.)

Hecuba: First I shall stand as an ally to the goddesses and I will show that this woman [Helen] does not speak justly. I don't believe that Hera and the virgin Athena could come to such a depth of folly that the former would peddle Argos to barbarians or Pallas permit Athens to be the slave of Phrygians. They came to Ida for fun and a beauty contest. Why should Hera be so concerned with the prize for beauty? To take a husband mightier than Zeus? Or has Athena sought some god for her husband, she who requested the gift of virginity from her father and flees the wedding couch? Do not make the gods appear stupid in covering over your own sin, for you will not persuade wise people. You said that Cypris [Aphrodite]—these comments make me laugh a lot—came with my son to the house of Menelaus. Could she not have remained quietly in heaven and caught up you and Amyclae and brought you to Ilium?

My son was outstanding in his handsomeness, and you at the first sight of him went Cyprian. All lust is Aphrodite for mortals, since the name of the goddess rightly begins with the name of folly.[3] . . . I am just making an argument—you gave account to men for your lawless beddings, you and Poseidon and Zeus who rules heaven, by paying the penalty for your ways you would empty your temples. You do wrong in pursuing pleasures before you take thought. No longer is it just to reproach men, if we imitate the deeds that seem acceptable to the gods, but rather those who teach this kind of behavior.

(Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 1–8, 1325–1341, 1416–1438.)

Aphrodite: I am powerful among men and not without fame, I am called the goddess Cypris, and I am mighty in heaven. All who dwell within the boundaries of Atlas and Ocean and see the light of the sun, of these the ones who revere my name I favor, but I bring down those who are proud against me. For this is the custom even among the gods, that they rejoice when honored by men.

Artemis [to Theseus, Hippolytus' father, as Hippolytus lies dying]: You have done sinful deeds, but it is still possible even for you to win pardon. Cypris wanted the matter to turn out in this way and satisfied her anger. This is the custom of the gods, that no one is willing to counter the desire of another; we always stand aloof. Know this well that, if I didn't fear Zeus, I would never have come to this depth of embarrassment, to allow the man dearest to me among mortals to perish. As regards your sin, first ignorance excuses you, secondly your wife by her death destroyed the possibility of testing her words, and so you were persuaded. These evils have shattered you most of all, Theseus, but they are grief

3. *Aphron* means "foolish," "senseless." See. n. 1 above.

to me. For the gods do not rejoice when pious people perish, but we destroy the wicked, their children and their house…

Artemis (to the dying Hippolytus): Let it be. You will not be without honor in the gloom below the earth because of the zeal of the goddess Cypris. This wrath against your body because of your piety and good heart shall cost her. With my own hand I will take vengeance upon someone of hers, who is especially dear to her, with these unerring arrows. To you, O wretched Hippolytus, in recompense for these evils I will give the greatest honors in Troezene. Unwedded maidens before their marriage will cut off their hair in memory of you; through the long ages you will reap a plentiful mourning of tears. Always will the songs of the maidens remember you, you will not fall without name, nor will the love of Phaedra for you be forgotten in silence. [*to Theseus*] You, son of old Aegeus, take your son in your arms and draw him close to you. Unwillingly you destroyed him. It is natural for men to err when the gods so decree it. I beg you, Hippolytus, do not hate your father; it was your fate to die thus.

And now, farewell; it is not proper for me to look upon the dead nor my eye to be defiled by dying gasps. I see that you are already at this point.

(Euripides, *Ion*, 433–451.)

What concern is the daughter of Erechtheus to me? None at all. I will go and pour the holy water from golden pitchers into the stoups. Yet Phoebus must be brought to account for what she suffers.[4] Imagine bedding maidens by force and then betraying them! To leave children born in secret to die, without caring! Don't do it. Rather, since you are powerful, pursue virtue. Whoever among mortals is born evil, the gods punish. How then is it just for you, who have decreed the laws for men, yourselves to incur a reputation as a breaker of the laws? But—it would be impossible, but I will say it for the sake of argument—if you had to pay the penalty in human terms for forcible seduction, you [Apollo] and Poseidon and Zeus who rules over heaven, you would have to empty out your temples to pay the fines. When you chase after pleasure and get ahead of responsible consideration, you are acting unjustly; now, if we are imitating the fine deeds of the gods, it is no longer just to reproach us men, but rather those who taught us to act this way .

4. Another translation: "Phoebus must be brought to account: what ails him?"

D. The Orphic Cosmogony

Orphism was a religious movement among the Greeks dating well back into the Archaic period. It differed from most other Greek religious expression in that it was a revealed religion, with a founder (the poet Orpheus) and a body of doctrine expressed in verse. Unfortunately these verses are lost, and much of our knowledge depends upon later sources. Thus Apollonius, a writer of the third century B.C., summarized the Orphic cosmogony as it was known to him. Earlier sources give other details—Plato's summary in the fourth century helps us understand some of the learned commentary on an Orphic text that is preserved on a papyrus of the late-fourth century, and it also suggests that the choral passage quoted from Aristophanes' *Birds* is at least partly inspired by some Orphic texts. The sources indicate that early Orphism owed some debt to Hesiod, but apparently the Orphics applied speculation and analysis in an attempt to improve the traditional account. For example, on the basis of the final selection, from Plato's *Laws*, it is usually argued that the Orphic cosmogony includes an account of the genesis of man from the ashes of the Titans who had eaten the flesh of Dionysus, which would imply that man partakes of a dual nature, sinful and divine. Other sources, such as Pindar (see p. 172–173 below), indicate that the Orphics believed in metempsychosis and had a highly developed view of the afterlife. Euripides and Aristophanes (see p. 121 below) emphasized that the Orphics refused to kill animals or eat meat, and that they participated in some sort of initiation rites. For general accounts of Orphism, see M.P. Nilsson, "Early Orphism and Kindred Religious Movements," *Harvard Theological Review* 28 (1935) 181–230; W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London, 1935) and *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston, 1950), pp. 307–332; I. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley, 1941). On the newly discovered (and only partially published) papyrus from Derveni, see S.G. Kapsomenos in the *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 2 (1964–65) 3–14; W. Burkert in *Antike und Abendland* 14 (1.968) 93–114; E. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Princeton, 1971), #51, pp. 92–93. On the passage from Aristophanes, see J.R.T. Pollard, "The 'Birds' of Aristophanes: v. The Wind Egg," *American Journal of Philology* 69 (1948) 373–376.

(Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* I. 494–511.)

And Orpheus in his left hand lifted up his lyre and made trial of his song. He sang how the earth, heaven and sea, which were formerly joined together in one form, were separated from each other after deadly strife. He sang of how stars and the moon and the paths of the sun always hold a fixed place in the sky; how

the mountains rose, how the resounding rivers with their nymphs were created, and all things that crawl. Then he sang how Ophion and Eurynome, the daughter of Ocean, first ruled the peak of snowy Olympus, how through physical force he yielded his power to Kronos, and she to Ithea, and how they then fell into the waves of Ocean; in the meantime Kronos and Rhea ruled over the blessed Titan gods, while Zeus still a child, still thinking the thoughts of a child, lived in the Diktaion cave. The earth-born Cyclops had not yet outfitted him with the bolt, the thunder and lightning. These things gave Zeus his fame.

(Plato, *Timaeus*, 40d.)

Concerning the other *daimones* it is beyond our power to know or describe their origin, but it is necessary for us to accept the accounts of those ancients who claimed to be the children of the gods, as they say, and surely they must have known who there own ancestors were. It is impossible to distrust the children of the gods, although they give their account without probable or necessary demonstrations, still, since they say that they are relating family accounts, we must follow custom and believe them. So, according to them, the generation of the gods is to be accepted and proclaimed in the following fashion. Ocean and Tethys were the children of Ge [Earth] and Ouranos [Sky]; from them came Phorkys and Eronos and Rhea, and all that generation; from Kronos and Rhea came Zeus and Hera and all that we know are called their brothers, and others who were children of these.

(Commentary on a cosmogonic poem, the "Derveni Papyrus." The phrases in quotation marks are parts of the poem, the rest is the work of the fourth-century editor.)

—"Nor does the cold rush upon the cold." By saying "rush" he shows that in the air small particles were moving and rushing about. And as they were rushing they were condensed toward each other.

—"Until this point they were rushing," i.e., until each (particle) went to its usual place.

—"Heavenly Aphrodite and Zeus" and "to aphroditize and rush" and "Peitho [Persuasionj and Harmonia." The nomenclature applies to the same god. When a man mingles with a woman he is said to "aphroditize" according to the saying, as for example "When the things which now exist have mingled with each other." Aphrodite is called Persuasion because she has yielded the things which exist to each other; "to yield" and "to persuade" is the same thing. She is called "Harmony" because she has brought into harmony many of the things which exist.

(Aristophanes, *Birds*, 688–702.)

Pay heed now to us, the immortals, always existing, heavenly, unaging, thinking eternal thoughts, that you may hear accurately from us about the heavenly bodies, the origin of birds, the birth of gods, rivers, Erebos, and Chaos.… There was Chaos first, and Night, dark Erebos and wide Tartaros there was no earth, nor air, nor sky, but Night, she of the dark wings, bore first of all a wind-egg,[5] nesting in the limitless bosom of Erebos, and in the fullness of time there hatched from it, swift as the whirlwind, Eros, he who inspires passion, on whose back glisten golden wings. He mated with winged, dark Chaos in wide Tartaros, and he hatched our race [the birds] and brought us first into the light. The race of the immortals did not exist before Eros commingled all things. But when different things had commingled with others, the sky came into being, and earth, and the immortal race of the blessed gods.

(Plato, *Laws* III. 701b–c.)

… The last stage of all is not to have any concern for oaths, pledges, or any of the gods, and to display and imitate what is called the ancient Titanic nature; they constantly revert to the same condition again, and lead a difficult life without any relief from troubles.

5. See Damascius, *On First Principles*, 55 (frag. 70 in O. Kern, *Orphicorum Fragmenta*, Berlin, 1922); "Orpheus said, 'Then great Chronos [Time] fashioned a silver egg for the divine Aether.'"

E. The Search for a Rational Theology: Plato and Aristotle

The Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.) brought into active conflict the two major alliance systems of Greece—the Spartan Alliance and the Athenian Empire. The course of that war as described by Thucydides and Xenophon is a powerful lesson in the effects of total prolonged war upon society. By the end of the war the Greek cities were bankrupt and exhausted and, while Sparta emerged the victor, the first three decades of the fourth century are marked by continual challenges to her position as hegemon or leader of the Greeks. Sparta won the war with Persian aid, and Persia was not loathe to use her financial resources to try to play the Greeks off against one another during the next century. The spirit of national confidence won at Marathon and Salamis was lost forever, and the political history of Greece in the fourth century is a dreary tale of bickering and squabbles, until Philip of Macedonia and his son Alexander the Great put an end to this strife, and in the process completed the destruction of Greek political freedom. In the intellectual realm the great creation of fifth-century tragedy and comedy did not see successors in the fourth century. Comedy in particular became comedy of manners, with none of the political invective characteristic of Aristophanic comedy. The law courts predominated in Athenian life, so the art of rhetoric became a dominant feature of the education of young Athenians. Experiments in new forms of political organization were made, but proved in almost every case to be short-lived. As Greeks found less and less stimulation in daily political adventure in their city states, they turned to literature—letters, speeches, memoir, biography and autobiography, and history as means of self expression. The pupils of Socrates also sought to memorialize their master's efforts. First Plato, then Aristotle, to mention only the most familiar figures, sought to examine in some methodologically consistent fashion the universal questions asked by humanity. In particular they sought some understanding of the role of the gods or god in the universe—the search for a rational theology to supplement or replace the old myths and rituals. The following selections are meant only as a sample of the range of their thought; see also the selections from Plato on mystic contemplation, p. 124–125 below and on the afterlife, p. 178–180 below. For further reading see W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* IV and V (Cambridge, 1975, 1978) and *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston, 1950); H.J. Rose, *Religion in Greece and Rome* (New York, 1959).

(Plato, *Laws* IV. 716c.)

Athenian Stranger: Therefore what sort of action is dear to and in conformity with God? One kind of action, which is expressed in one ancient saying, that "like

is dear to like in moderation," but immoderate things are not of value either to each other or to moderate things. God then will be in our judgment the measure of all things in the very highest degree, and much more so than any human being, as they say. That man therefore who wishes to become dear to such a god as that must become as like to that being as is possible. According to this argument the temperate man among us is dear to God, for he is like Him, and he that is intemperate is unlike Him and an enemy and unjust. So too with everything else by the same argument.

(Plato, *Laws* V. 729c.)

… If a man honors and respects his family and all who join in the worship of the family gods and all who share the same blood, that man would secure the gods of birth to bless his creation of children.

(Plato, *Laws* V. 738b–d.)

Concerning gods and temples, which temples it is necessary to set up in the state for each and to what gods or *daimones* they are to be dedicated, no man with sense will try to alter what has been proclaimed by Delphi or Dodona or Ammon or some old traditions which are persuasive where they are persuasive—stories of divine appearances or so-called divine revelation—and have led to the establishment of sacrifices and rituals, whether these are indigenous or brought from Etruria or Cyprus or from some other place, and by these sayings they consecrated oracles and statues and altars and temples, and for each of them they allotted sacred precincts. None of these provisions should be altered in the slightest degree by the lawgiver; to each district he must allot a god or a spirit or some hero; in the assignment of the land to them first he must assign precincts and whatever goes with them, so that when assemblies of each district take place at appropriate times they may provide a sufficient number of what is necessary and appropriate and the people may mingle with each other at the sacrifices and become familiar and intimate with each other. There is nothing more beneficial to the state than this mutual acquaintenance.…

(Plato, *Laws* IX. 854b–c.)

Strange fellow, the evil which now moves you to rob a temple is neither human nor divine, but is an impulse born from ancient and unexpiated crimes in men. It brings destruction and you must guard against it with all your strength. Learn now what is the way to guard against it. Whenever any such temptation seizes you, go to the rites which take away guilt, go as a supplicant to the shrines

of the gods who deliver men from curses, go into the fellowship of those reputed to be good among you, and learn by hearing, and proclaim it yourself, that it is necessary for every man to honor what is beautiful and good, but avoid the company of evil men and don't turn back. If you act in such a fashion and your desire thereby abates, very good; but if not, consider death a more noble solution and abandon life.

(Plato, *Laws* X. 909d–910d)

Let us lay down the following general law: No one is permitted to establish shrines in private houses. Whenever it occurs to anyone to perform a sacrifice, he shall go to the public shrines to perform it, and hand over the offerings to the priests and priestesses, whose duty it is to consecrate these things. Then he shall join in the prayers, and anyone he chooses shall pray along with him. The reasons for such a proceeding shall be these: it is no light thing to set up shrines and gods, and such an action requires considerable deliberation; it is customary, especially for all women, and also for all kinds of sick, endangered or troubled people, no matter what their trouble or what their good luck, to consecrate whatever is at hand, to make prayers and sacrifices, and to vow dedications to gods, *daimones* and children of gods; they see portents and dreams, and when they wake up in terror, they try to produce a cure for each of them, as they also do when they recall many visions: they build altars and shrines in open spaces or wherever anything has happened, and fill up all the houses and all the villages. So for all these reasons we must enact the aforesaid law. An additional reason is on account of sacrilegious people, to forbid them from committing their thieveries and then building shrines and altars in their own homes in the expectation of propitiating the gods with secret sacrifices and prayers; in the process they increase their wrong infinitely, and incur the gods' blame both on themselves and on those who (though they are better people) give them permission. God will not blame the lawgiver; let this be the law: "Let no one possess shrines of the gods in a private house; if anyone is shown to possess and to worship before a shrine other than the public one, and if he has done no great wrong, whether man or woman, let the one who notices the offense report it to the guardians of the law, and let them give orders that the private shrines be carried to the public ones, and let those who don't obey be punished until the shrines are taken away. If anyone is convicted of impiety not of a childish sort but that of an adult, either by dedicating a shrine on private grounds or by offering sacrifice to the gods on public grounds whatsoever, let him be punished with death for not sacrificing in a state of purity. The lawgivers shall decide what is childish behavior or not, and they will bring the defendants into the court, and they shall inflict the penalty appropriate for their impiety."

(Plato, *Timaeus*, 71d–72c.)

… Remembering the command of their father who ordered them to make mankind as good as possible, those who made us corrected the bad part of us by placing therein the organ of divination, in order that it might apprehend the truth to some extent. This is a sufficient proof that God gave the art of divination to human folly—no one achieves inspired and truthful divination when rational, but only when his rationality is fettered by sleep or by disease or is altered by some sort of divine possession. It is the practice of a clear-thinking man to recollect and reflect upon the things spoken in a dream or in a waking vision by the mantic and inspired nature, and in addition all the phantasms that were seen, and to analyze in all cases by reason in what respect they signify something and for whom they foretell good or evil in future or past or present. But it is not incumbent upon one in a state of possession and still remaining in it to judge what is seen or spoken by him; for it was well said long ago that to do and to know the things pertaining to oneself and the self is appropriate only for someone of sound mind. Hence it is the custom to assign the tribe of prophets the task of analyzing these inspired divinations. These men are called "diviners" by some who are totally unaware that they are interpreters of the dark voice and apparition, but are in no way diviners; rather, they would most correctly be called prophets of things divined.

(Plato, *Timaeus*, 29d–30c.)

Let us state for what reason the Artificer made becoming and the All. He was good, and in the good no enmity arises concerning anything. Since he was without enmity, he wished that everything resemble himself to the extent possible. If we accept this principle as the supreme originating principle of becoming and the cosmos, based on the testimony of wise men, we should be wholly correct. God wished that all be good and nothing evil, in so far as possible.When he took over all that could be perceived and realized that it was not at rest, but in disorderly and disruptive motion, he brought it into order from disorder, thinking the former situation to be entirely better than the latter. For it was not proper or possible for him who was the best to do anything but the fairest. In his reflections on all creatures visible by nature he perceived that nothing irrational would be fairer than the rational, if taken as a whole. He also realized that reason apart from the soul was not possible in anything. For this reason he created reason within soul, and soul within body, when he created the All, in order that the work he was performing might be most fair and most good. So according to the likely account it is necessary to say that the cosmos is a living being endowed with soul and reason and in truth has come into being because of the providence [forethought] of God.

(Aristotle, *Physics*, 258b10–259a13.)

Since it is necessary that motion be eternal and not cease, it is necessary that there be a prime mover, whether one or many, which is eternal and which, being unmoved, first causes movement. The belief that all unmoved movers are eternal does not pertain to our present argument, but that it is necessary that there exist something in itself not moved regarding all external change, both necessary and accidental, but is capable of moving something else, is clear to those considering as follows.

Let us hypothesize, if anyone wishes, that there are things which sometimes exist and sometimes do not exist without generation or destruction (it is necessary to believe that if something without parts at one time exists and at another does not exist, that any such thing without change is entirely such when it is and when it is not). Furthermore, of the principles which are unmoved yet cause movements let us grant that some of these at one time exist and at another time do not exist. But this is impossible in all cases. For it is clear that there must be some cause in reference to those things that move themselves, for they at one time exist, at another time are not in existence. Since nothing without parts moves, that which moves itself must have as a whole magnitude. But such a mover has not been proven by our arguments. The pure cause of generation and destruction can not be discerned from the unmoved movers which are not eternal, nor among those who produce motion in these things and others in other things. Of this continuous and eternal process neither can any one of these or all of them be the cause. That this process be such is eternal and necessary, but the totality of these movements is limitless, and all do not exist together. It is clear, therefore, that even if often some of these unmoved movers that impart motion perish, and many of the things that move themselves perish and are followed by others that come into being, and one unmoved thing moves another, and another, neverthelessthere is something that embraces all, and is apart from each of them, and is the cause of some things existing and some things not existing and the process of change. This causes the motion of those things which in turn cause the movement of other things. If therefore motion is eternal, the prime mover must be eternal also, if there is one, but if there is more than one, then there will be a plurality of eternal movements. It is necessary to believe that there is one rather than many and a limited rather than limitless number. For if the same consequences result the finite should always be assumed, for in the things of nature it is necessary that the limited and better be found, if possible. A single principle is adequate which as the first of the unmoved movers and eternal will be the source of motion for the rest.

(Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1072b25–31.)

If God always enjoys the happiness we enjoy upon occasion, this is marvelous; if His happiness is still greater, than that is even more wonderful. It is the case. Life is the beginning. For the actuality of thought is life, and life is God. The essential activity of God is life in its best and eternal form. Therefore we say that God is a being eternal and most good, so that life and continuous eternal existence belong to God, for this is God.

Chapter II. Heroes

A. The Ranks of the Gods

The Greeks did not restrict their worship to the deities of Mt. Olympus or the forces of nature. They also venerated dead men and women on the grounds that the character and quality of their life had earned for them a special, super-human status. These people could be either real or imaginary and, with the exception of Heracles, their worship tended to be a local phenomenon, usually centered at their supposed burial place.[6] While Homer does not record any hero-cults, the practice seems to have gone back to the Mycenaean period, and is frequently mentioned in classical and Hellenistic literature. One type of hero includes Theseus and Orestes; these might be people who actually lived, who were worshipped by their family, clan or tribal group, or city; or they might be characters from the epic poems, whose worship was taken over by some city in hopes that the hero might prove to be a powerful protector. Another group includes actual historical figures, such as Lysander or Brasidas among the Spartans, and the poet Sophocles among the Athenians. Other heroes, such as Asclepius, may originally have been considered actual gods, who for some reason or other had fallen to a lesser status. For further reading, see E. Rohde, *Psyche* (Eng. tr. New York, 1925); L.G. Farnell, *Greek Hero-Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, 1921); A.D. Nock, "The Cult of Heroes," *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944) 141–174.

(Epinomis, 984d–985b, from a spurious work attributed to Plato, offers an interesting analysis of the heavenly hierarchy.)

In reference to the gods—Zeus, Hera, and all the rest—let one rank them as he wishes in accordance with law, provided that he holds fast to a fixed principle. But as for the visible gods, it must be said that the greatest and most worthy of honor and most clear-sighted are the stars and the bodies that exist with them;

6. For some typical hero shrines, see H.A. Thompson, "Some Hero Shrines in Early Athens," in *Athens Comes of Age: From Solon to Salamis* (Princeton, 1978), pp. 96–108.

after them and beneath them in order are the *daimones* and the creatures of the air, which hold the third and middle place and are the source of interpretation, and it is necessary to honor them particularly in our prayers in order to secure favorable mediation. Of these living creatures, the one of aether and the one of air which is next in rank, each is wholly transparent—although they may be close to us, they cannot be seen by us. They possess a marvelous mind, for they are a race quick to learn and remember; let us say that they can know all our thoughts, and the good and beautiful in us they praise wondrously, but that which is truly evil they loathe. They experience pain, but a god who has the nature of divinity is beyond the concerns of pain and pleasure, and shares fully in wisdom and knowledge. Since the universe is full of living creatures, they all act as interpreters of all things to each other and to the highest gods, for the middle group of the living creatures can be borne over the earth and the whole universe lightly. The fifth substance, water, one might conjecture correctly that it is a demigod, and that sometimes it is visible and at other times it is invisible and conceals itself, and perplexes us by its indistinct appearance.

B. The Mythical Heroes

The following selections are designed to illustrate the category of heroes drawn from the legends of the Greeks themselves. We begin with Hesiod's account of the heroic age as background, then move to specific cases. If these heroes ever existed, they began as mortals, but mortals seen as particularly favored or appointed by the god to perform outstanding deeds.

(Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 121–126, 156–173.)

But when earth had covered this generation [the golden race], they are called through the plans of great Zeus *daimones* who dwell on the earth; they are good, they deliver men from harm, they are guardians of men, they watch over judgments and cruel deeds, they are clothed in mist and roam everywhere on the earth. They are givers of wealth—for they share this royal right.…

But when earth had covered this generation [the bronze race] Zeus the son of Kronos created another race, the fourth, on the fruitful earth, a more just and better race, a god-like race of heroic men, who are called demi-gods, the race which comes before ours on the boundless earth. Evil war and the terrible cry of battle destroyed a part of them, some before seven-gated Thebes, in the land of Cadmus, as they contended for the flocks of Oedipus; some others were brought in ships across the great gulf of the sea to Tray for the sake of fair-haired Helen. There the end of death covered some. To others Zeus the son of Kronos gave a source of income and a place to dwell apart from mortal men and settled them at the ends of the earth. Now they dwell with hearts free from care in the islands of the blessed by the deep-eddying Ocean—happy heroes, for whom the life-giving earth bears fruit sweet, as honey, which flourishes three times in one year.

Theseus

Our first example, Theseus, was honored especially in Athens as a local hero and bringer of security. Plutarch in his *Life* collects the legends about Theseus' heroic exploits and his beneficences to the Athenians, and in this excerpt he describes the recovery of the supposed bones of Theseus by the general Cimon in 476/5 B.C., their return to Athens and the establishment of a cult in Theseus' honor. See in general A.G. Ward (ed.), *The Quest for Theseus* (New York, 1970), and J. Boardman, Heracles, Peisistratos and Sons," *Revue Archeologique* (1972), pp. 57–72.

(Plutarch, *Life of Theseus*, 35–36.)

… Afterwards the Athenians chose to honor Theseus as hero. For not just a few of those who fought at Marathon against the Medes thought that they saw the ghost of Theseus in arms charging before them against the Persians.

After the wars against the Medes, in the archonship of Phaedo, when the Athenians were consulting the Delphic oracle, the priestess ordered them to take up the bones of Theseus [on the island of Siphnos] and bury them reverently and guard them. It was a problem to find the grave and collect the bones, because the Dolopians, who then inhabited the island, were unfriendly and barbarous. Cimon however took the island, as I mentioned in my account of his life, and was eager to discover the grave. He saw an eagle plucking away at a certain place with his beak and scratching at the ground with his talons. By some sort of divine providence he considered the matter, recognized the meaning, and dug at that spot. In the grave were found the coffin of an unusually large man, a bronze spear and sword lying by its side. These articles were brought back by Cimon on his trireme. The Athenians were thrilled, and received them with brilliant processions and sacrifices as if the man himself were returning to the city. Now he lies at peace in the middle of the city by the present gymnasium, and the tomb functions as a place of refuge for household slaves and the humble who fear the more powerful, for Theseus was their protector and helper and received graciously the requests of the needy. Of the sacrifices paid in his honor the chief and most solemn occurs on the eighth day of Pyanepsion, which commemorates his return from Crete with the young men. In addition, they sacrifice to him on the eighth day of each month.

Orestes

Theseus was not the only mythical hero whose relics were enshrined and venerated by a city-state. A similar story is told in the following account in Herodotus' *Histories* of how the Spartans defeated their neighbors in Tegea by gaining possession of the bones of Orestes. Such recoveries may well have involved the discovery of a tholos or chamber tomb from the Mycenaean Bronze Age, the true "heroic" age of Greece.

(Herodotus, *The Histories* I. 67–68.)

In the prior war with Tegea the Spartans were consistently and badly beaten, but in the time of Croesus and the reign of Anaxandrides and Ariston in Sparta, the Spartans had now become dominant in the war, and did so in the following fashion. Since they were always being defeated by the Tegeans, they sent messengers and inquired which god they should propitiate to gain the upper hand over the Tegeans. The Pythian priestess told them in an Oracle that they must bring

back home the bones of Orestes, son of Agamemnon. Since they were unable to find his tomb, they again sent messengers to the god to discover the place where Orestes lay. To the questions of the messengers the Pythia replied:

> There is a certain Tegea on the level plain of Arcadia
> Two winds blow there by sharp necessity
> Blow is met by blow, and grief lies upon grief
> There the fertile earth conceals the son of Agamemnon.
> Bring him home and you will be lord over Tegea.

When the Spartans heard this they were no less hampered in their search, but continued to look everywhere, until Lichas, one of the Spartiates called "Benefactors," discovered them. The Benefactors are from the citizen body, and pass out of the rank of knights, five in number each year, always the eldest. It was necessary for them during the following year in which they go out from the cavalry not to linger if dispatched on business for the Spartiate commonwealth.

Lichas, one of these men, found the tomb in Tegea, and he employed both good luck and wisdom. Since there was at that time free access to Tegea, he went to a blacksmith's shop and saw iron being worked, and wondered at what he saw being accomplished. When the smith saw how astonished he was, he stopped what he was doing and said, "O Spartan stranger, if only you had seen what I saw, then you would have something to wonder about, whereas now you are struck with wonder on seeing iron being worked. I wanted to dig a well in this courtyard, and as I was digging I hit a coffin seven cubits long. I did not believe that there had ever been men larger than us, so I opened the coffin and found within it a corpse as long as it was. I measured it and buried the corpse again." The smith thus told what he had seen, but Lichas considered what he said and decided, in light of the Oracle, that this must be Orestes. He reasoned as follows: the two bellows were the winds, the hammer and anvil were the blow and counterblow, the forged iron the woe lying on woe, for he reasoned on the basis that the discovery of iron was a source of woe for men. Having made his analysis he returned to Sparta and told the whole story to the Spartiates. They fabricated a charge and brought it against him, then banished him. He went to Tegea and told the smith about his troubles and offered to rent the courtyard from the smith. At first he wasn't willing, but in time Lichas persuaded him. He took up residence there, opened the grave, collected the bones and carried them off to Sparta. From that time on the Spartans did considerably better in battle, whenever they made trial of each other, for they had already conquered much of the Peloponnese by this time.

Thersander

The following passage gives another example of a mythical hero honored for his help in battle.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* IX. 5.7.)

The Argives captured Thebes and gave it to Thersander, the son of Polyneikes. When the soldiers of Agamemnon on their way to Troy lost their course and the disastrous battle of Mysia took place, then it also happened that Thersander perished at the hands of Telephus. He had demonstrated that he was the best Greek in battle; his tomb may be found in the city of Elaia, as you are journeying to the plain of Kaikos. It is a stone standing in the open part of the marketplace; the natives say they offer sacrifice to him as a hero.

Oedipus

At Kolonos, a village on the outskirts of Athens, was a hero-shrine to Oedipus, the famous king of Thebes. In a sequel to his tragedy about Oedipus' discovery of his parricide and incest, Sophocles describes how the blind, exiled king has come to Athens and been granted asylum by its king Theseus. The play's climax is reported in the following way by a messenger, as he describes the heroically haunting circumstances of Oedipus' death.

(Sophocles, *Oedipus at Kolonos*, 1590–1666.)

When he had come to the sheer path, planted with bronze steps in the earth, he stood still on one of the many branching paths, near the hollow bowl, at the site where Perithous and Theseus made their perpetual agreement. He took his stand in the middle, between this point and the rock of Thorikos, and sat between the hollow, wild-pear tree and the stone tomb. There he loosened his squalid clothes, then called to his daughters and commanded them to fetch some flowing water, with which he might wash and make an offering. The two of them obeyed their father's commands, went to a hill in sight, the hill of Demeter, who makes all fresh and green. In a short time they returned, and then washed and dressed him as custom dictates.

When he was satisfied that all had been done, and there was no part of his desire neglected, then Zeus of the underworld thundered, and the girls trembled as they heard it. They fell before the knees of their father and wept, and did not cease beating their breasts nor uttering mournful cries.

When he heard their bitter, sudden cry, he enfolded them in his arms and said, "Children, on this day your father will be with you no longer. Everything that belonged to me has been destroyed, and no longer need the burden of my care rest heavily on you, and I know it was heavy, children. One small word compensates for all these toils; no one loved you more than I did, and now for the rest of your days you must carry on your life without me." And so in close embrace

they all wept. But when they came to the end of their wailing, and no more cries arose, there was silence; then the voice of someone cried out loudly for him, so that all the hairs on their heads stood up in sudden fear. For god called him again and again, "Oedipus, Oedipus, why are we waiting? Your journey is long delayed." When he realized that god was calling him, he asked for Theseus, the lord of this land, to come, and when he drew near he said, "O friend, give me the pledge of your right hand for these children; you, children, give a pledge to him. Promise never to betray them willingly and to accomplish for them whatever you judge appropriate."

Theseus, as is proper for a noble man, without lament swore to accomplish these things for his friend. When he had done these things, Oedipus felt around for his children with his blind hands, and said, "Children, you must be brave in your hearts and leave this place, nor desire to see what is unlawful nor hear what should not be heard. Go as quickly as possible. Let only lord Theseus be present to bear witness to what is happening." All of us heard him speak thus, and we too groaned deeply with the maidens. When we had gone, in a short time we turned and saw that Oedipus was no longer there, but only the king with his hand thrown up to shield his eyes, as if something dreadful and not to be seen had appeared. But then not long afterwards we saw him salute both the earth and the home of the gods, Olympus, in the same prayer. By what sort of fate Oedipus perished, no one among mortals except Theseus can say. No fiery thunderbolt consumed him nor any blast from the sea stirred up at that time, but either a messenger from the gods, or else the depths of the lower world were split open for him without pain and with kindness. For the man did not pass away with lamentation nor by sickness nor in pain, but in a wondrous fashion, beyond the usual fate of man …

Heracles

The popularity of Heracles places him in a separate category from other heroes, for he was known all over the Greek world, worshipped with many different rites and remembered with many different legends. The presence of diverse cults of Heracles, some of which honored him as a hero, others as a god, confused Herodotus, who in his *Histories* attempted to resolve the confusion, with the results shown in the first selection. Next, the Hellenistic mythographers Apollodorus and Diodorus give the account of his death, immolation and heroization. Finally, from the Roman period, Pausanias describes the cult of Heracles in the Greek city of Sikyon, and Athenaeus reports a ceremony in his honor at Athens. See S. Woodford, "Cults of Heracles in Attica," in *Studies Presented to G.M.A. Hanfmann* (ed. D.G. Mitten *et al.*, Mainz, 1971), pp. 211–225.

(Herodotus, *The Histories* II. 43–45.)

In the case of Heracles I hear this story, that he was one of the twelve gods. But concerning the other Heracles, whom the Greeks know, I heard nothing in Egypt. And that the Egyptians did not take the name of Heracles from the Greeks, but rather the Greeks from the Egyptians, and in particular those Greeks who gave the name to the son of Amphitryon, though there have been many other proofs, they favor this one in particular, that the parents of Heracles, Amphitryon and Alkmene, were both in origin Egyptians. They do not recognize the name of Poseidon and the Dioskouroi, nor do they number these gods among their gods. If they had taken the name of any *daimon*, they would have remembered these, if indeed at that time they were making sea voyages and some of the Greeks were seafarers, as I suppose and believe. So the Egyptians would have known the names of these gods rather than that of Heracles. But nevertheless Heracles is an ancient god among the Egyptians. As they themselves say, the change from eight to twelve gods was made seventeen thousand years before the reign of Amasis, and among these gods they include Heracles.

I wanted to get clear information on these matters to the extent possible, so I sailed to Tyre in Phoenicia, because I understood that there was a holy temple to Heracles there. I saw it; it was richly furnished with a variety of other offerings, but in particular there were two *stelai* in it; one was of pure gold, another of emerald, which shone brightly in the night. In my conversations with the priests I asked how long ago the temple was built. I discovered that their story did not correspond with that of the Greeks. They said that the construction of their temple coincided with the foundation of Tyre, and Tyre was founded twenty three hundred years ago. I saw in Tyre another temple of Heracles called the Thasian. Then I went to Thasos and found there a temple to Heracles constructed by the Phoenicians who settled there while on a voyage to seek Europe. They did these things five generations before the birth of the son of Amphitryon, Heracles, in Greece. What I have now investigated clearly shows that Heracles is an ancient god, and those Greeks seem to me to have acted most correctly who established and practice two cults of Heracles; the one they worship as an immortal and call him Olympian, to the other they bring offerings as to a hero.

The Greeks tell many thoughtless tales, but particularly silly is the story told about Heracles that when he came to Egypt the Egyptians crowned him and led him in procession to sacrifice him to Zeus. For a time he followed quietly, but when they began the sacrifice at the altar he defended himself and killed them all. The Greeks who tell this tale seem to me to be totally ignorant of Egyptian nature and customs. It is thought impious for them to sacrifice domestic animals, except sheep and calves and bulls, if they are unblemished, and geese; how could they sacrifice human beings? Furthermore, if Heracles were alone and a mere man, as they

say, how then could he have destroyed a countless crowd? I am willing to go only this far in the matter, and may I have the good will from the gods and heroes!

(Apollodorus, *Library* II. 7.7, a mythological compendium of the second century B.C.)

When Heracles had put into the headland of Euboea, Kenaion, he built an altar to Zeus Kenaios. Wishing to offer sacrifice, he dispatched a herald to [his home in] Trachis to bring back fine clothing. From this man Deianeira [his wife] learned about Iole [his concubine], and feared that he might prefer her. She believed that the blood shed by Nessos was a love potion and saturated the entire tunic with it. Heracles put it on and sacrificed. But as soon as the tunic became warm, the hydra's poison [in Nessos' gift] began to consume his flesh. He snatched Likos by the feet and cast him from the headland. He tried to tear off the tunic clinging to his body, but his flesh was torn away as well. Belabored by such misfortunes he was carried on board ship for Trachis. When Deianeira realized what happened, she hung herself. Heracles then commanded Hyllos, his eldest son by Deianeira, to marry Iole, when he became a man, and he himself went to Mt. Oita, in the territory of the Trachinians. There he built a pyre, mounted it, and ordered that it be ignited. No one was willing to do this, except Poikis, who was passing by looking for his flocks. To this man he gave his bow. While the pyre was still burning, so the story goes, a cloud passed under Heracles and lifted him up to heaven with a peal of thunder. Thereafter he obtained immortality and having been reconciled with Hera he married her daughter Hebe.

(Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* IV. 38–39, of the first century B.C.)

When the companions of Iolaos came to gather up Heracles' bones, they could find no bones at all, and concluded that Heracles had been moved from among men to the company of the gods in accordance with the oracle.

These men performed the rituals for the dead as for a hero; they heaped up a funeral mound and returned to Trachis. According to their example Menoitios, son of Aktor and friend of Heracles, sacrificed a boar and a bull and a ram to him as a hero and commanded that in Opous each year he should receive the sacrifice and honors of a hero. The Thebans did pretty much the same thing, but the Athenians first of the others honored Heracles with sacrifices as a god and held up to all other men their own piety towards the god. Thereby they induced first all the Greeks and then all men in the inhabited world to worship Heracles as a god.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* II. 10.1)

In the gymnasium not far from the marketplace is located a Heracles in stone, the work of Skopas. There is also another shrine of Heracles, at the precinct

called the *Paidize* [Play-ground]. In the middle of it is the shrine, and in it is an ancient wooden image, a work of Laphaes of Phlious. Their custom is to sacrifice here in this way: they say that Phaistos came to Sikyon and discovered them offering to Heracles rites appropriate to a hero, but he insisted that instead they sacrifice to him in the manner appropriate to a god. Thus even today the Sikyonians sacrifice lambs to him and burn the thighs upon an altar; some of the meat they eat in the manner of the gods' ritual, other portions they burn and bury as is done for heroes. The first of the two days in the festival which they celebrate in Heracles' honor is called the Olympia,[7] the second is *Heracleia*.

(Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* XI. 494f.)

When the eighteen-year-old boys are about to have their long hair cut off, says Pamphilus, they offer to Heracles a large cup which they have filled with wine. They call this *oinisteria*, and after offering a libation, they give it to their companions who have congregated for this purpose.[8]

7. The text is corrupt here, but Nilsson suggested that this is the name of the first day, on which Heracles was worshipped as an Olympian god.

8. The "companions" refers to their fathers or guardians who have assembled to present their sons to the other members of the phratries. Exactly what a phratry was or did is a complicated and obscure question, but it had a religious function and membership in a phratry was obligatory for enrollment as a citizen in Athens. See. p. 104.

C. Men Who Became Heroes and Gods

The dignity and worship accorded a hero or a god were not confined to legendary characters. The following cases exemplify the situation of actual historical characters who attained some sort of divine status, usually after their death, though some, such as Alexander the Great, were a bit more eager. On the process of deification, see L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, *Le Culte des Souverains dans la Civilisation Gréco-Romaine* (Paris, 1956) and J.W. Gardner, *Leadership and the Cult of Personality* (London, 1974). We begin with the general description of the process offered by the Christian writer Theodoretus.

(Theodoretus, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* III. 24–28.)

Afterwards they deified those who had done anything well, or had demonstrated bravery in battle, or begun some kind of agriculture, or provided a wine for anybody, and even constructed temples for them. Indeed Sanchoniathon said that even Kronos was a human being.... The Greeks also made Heracles a god because he was noble and brave. And after his death they described Asclepius as a god, since he discovered the art of medicine. For the same reason the Egyptians thought Apis worthy of divine address. However the Greeks say that Heracles cremated himself due to the successful plot of Deianeira, and thus ended his life. But in the case of Asclepius, a man, who relieved many men of all sorts of diseases through his medical skill, was struck by a thunderbolt from Zeus and died. These facts, as well as others, are found in the fourth book of Diodorus' *Libraries*. Although the Greeks have learned the truth, they still persist in addressing Heracles and Asclepius as gods.

Sophocles-Dexion

(*Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. "Dexion")

Sophocles was named "Dexion" by the Athenians posthumously. They say that the Athenians, in their desire to do honor to Sophocles after his death, built a hero's shrine to him and called him Dexion, "he that receives," from his reception of Asclepius. For he took the god into his own house, and constructed an altar for him. For this reason he was called Dexion.

Lysander

(Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*, 18.)

Lysander set up in Delphi from the booty a bronze statue of himself and of

each of his admirals and golden statues of the Dioskouroi, which disappeared before the battle of Leuctra [371 B.C.]. In the treasury of Brasidas and the Acanthians a trireme was placed made of gold and ivory two cubits long, which Cyrus sent to Lysander in honor of his victory. Alexandrides of Delphi writes that a deposit of Lysander lay there, one talent of silver, and fifty-two minae and eleven staters in addition, which conflicts with the general agreement concerning his poverty. At that time Lysander seemed to be more powerful than any Greek before, and seemed also to cultivate a pride more extensive than his power. He was the first Greek, as Duris tells us, to whom the cities erected altars as to a god and made sacrifices, and he was the first to whom songs of praise were sung. One of these has been handed down and begins

We will sing the general of great Greece
Who comes from wide-spaced Sparta
O, Io, Paean.

Alexander the Great

The following passages describe some of the stages in Alexander's request to the Greek cities to be worshipped as a god. From Arrian's biography come a brief mention of Greek ambassadors who in 324 B.C. approached him as a god, and the slightly later incident in which his companion Hephaistion was honored after his death with a hero-shrine in Alexandria. Later in his career, Alexander apparently requested divine honors for himself, and the selections from Aelian and Hyperides indicate the types of reaction that the request elicited. For special studies of this episode, see C.A. Robinson, "Alexander's Deification," *American Journal of Philology* 64 (1943) 286–301; J.P.V.D. Balsdon, "The 'Divinity' of Alexander the Great," *Historia* 1 (1950) 383–388; Cerfaux and Tondriau, *Le Culte des Souverains*, pp. 125–144.

(Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* VII. 23.2.)

Embassies came from Greece and ambassadors came forward with their heads wreathed, and crowned him with golden crowns, as if they came on a sacred embassy to honor a god.

(Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* VII. 23.6.)

There came also from the oracle of Zeus at Ammon the envoys whom he had dispatched to inquire what honors it was lawful to pay to Hephaistion. They said that the oracle permitted sacrifice to be paid to him as to a hero. Alexander rejoiced in the oracle and henceforth had him honored as a hero.

To Kleomenes, an evil man who had worked much harm in Egypt, he sent a letter, and I don't find fault with the letter to the extent that it shows affection for Hephaistion even after death and a desire to remember him, but I do find fault with it in other respects. The letter ordered that a hero-shrine be built for Hephaistion in Alexandria in Egypt, both in the city itself and on the island of Pharos, where the lighthouse is located; the shrines were to be very large and be conspicuously costly. Kleomenes was to see to it that the island be named after Hephaistion, and that the name Hephaistion be inscribed on all the tokens used by the merchants in their exchanges with each other.

(Aelian, *Varia Historia* II. 19.)

When Alexander conquered Darius and acquired power over the Persians, he thought a great deal of himself and, buoyed up by the good fortune surrounding him, he proclaimed himself a god, and commanded that the Greeks pass decrees that he was a god. For what he did not have by nature he sought from men, and he profited. Some voted one way, some another, but the Spartans decreed the following: "Since Alexander wishes to be a god, let him be a god." In a Laconian answer and in a fashion typical of themselves they pointed out the stupidity of Alexander.

(Hyperides, *Against Demosthenes*, 31.)

When you [Demosthenes] thought the council would dislike those who had the gold, you became warlike and upset the city in order that you might knock out the inquiry. But when the council postponed its conclusions, saying that it had not yet come to the end of the matter, then you agreed that Alexander might be the son of Zeus and of Poseidon, if he wished.

D. The Cult of Asclepius

Asclepius the physician, son of Apollo, was already known at the time of the Homeric poems, in which he appears as the human father of the Greek physicians at Troy. Pindar (in the Third Pythian Ode) called him a hero, and in the fifth century, when medical knowledge was becoming more systematic and effective, the cult of Asclepius became more wide-spread. Besides the old shrines in Trikka and Epidauros, new cult centers were established in Athens, Kos, and elsewhere, and Asclepius was often referred to as a god. His shrines served as a sort of hospital—the sick came, prayed, consulted the priests, spent the night (in the rite of incubation), saw the god in a dream and received advice or were cured, and in the morning went away. Those who were cured often left testimonies to the god's power; and this fact emphasizes Asclepius' appeal to the individual—he was a god who produced results in the devotee's own life, and he was approached by that devotee as an individual, and not as a member of city or family. The selections given here illustrate some details of personal devotion to Asclepius in the classical age, and includes some later material which refers back to the classical period. At the end of the fourth century, a collection of testimonies was made at Epidauros; see E.J. and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonia* (Baltimore, 1945), pp. 221–237 and R.M. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions* (Indianapolis,1953), pp. 53–59.

The Myth of Asclepius

In this rather complicated passage, the Roman author Pausanias gives various versions of the story of how Asclepius was born, and how he came to be associated with Epidauros.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* II. 26.3–10.)

This is the story of how the land came to be especially sacred to Asclepius: the Epidaurians say that Phlegyas came into the Peloponnese, ostensibly to see the country, but really as a spy, to find out the number of its inhabitants and whether the people were very warlike. Phlegyas was the most belligerent person alive at that time, and each time he encountered a community he would attack and carry off crops and drive off livestock.

When he came into the Peloponnese, he was followed by his daughter, who had not let her father know that she kept secret from him the fact that she was pregnant by Apollo. In the land of the Epidaurians, she gave birth and exposed the child on the mountain which today is named Tithion [the Nipple], at that

time called Myrtium. As the child lay abandoned one of the she-goats being pastured on the mountain gave him milk, and the goatherd's dog guarded him.

Aresthanas—for that was the goatherd's name—when he discovered that one of the goats was missing and that the dog had not returned to the flock either, made a diligent search and, when he found the baby, was very eager to rescue it. As he approached, he saw a flash of lightning coming from the child, and taking it as the divine sign that it was, he turned away in reverence. In a short time the news spread over all the earth and sea that he found at his discretion cures for the sick whenever he wanted, and even that he was raising the dead.

In addition to this another version is also told: according to it Koronis, while she was pregnant with Asclepius, had illicit intercourse with Ischys the son of Elatos, and was killed by Artemis to defend Apollo's honor. The pyre had already been kindled when Hermes is supposed to have snatched the baby from the flame.

The third version, which makes Asclepius the son of Arsinoe the daughter of Leukippos, seems to be the least likely of the tales. For when Apollophanes the Arcadian went to Delphi to inquire of the god whether Asclepius was the son of Arsinoe and a citizen of Messene, he received this answer from the Pythian priestess of Apollo:

O Asclepius, great joy to all mortals,
Whom Phlegyas' daughter conceived by me and bore,
Desirable Koronis, in rocky Epidauros.

This oracle makes it perfectly clear that Asclepius was not the son of Arsinoe, but that Hesiod or one of the interpolatorsof his works fabricated the tale to please the Messenians.

Further evidence that the god was born in Epidauros is the realization that the most famous sanctuaries of Asclepius have originated from Epidauros. For example, the Athenians, saying that they included Asclepius in their initiation rite, name that day "Epidauria" and claim that Asclepius has been considered a god by them since that time. In addition Archias the son of Aristaichmos, who had sprained himself while hunting on Mount Pindasos in Asia Minor, introduced the god to Pergamum after he had been healed at Epidauria.

In our own day the sanctuary of Asclepius by the sea at Smyrna was founded from the one at Pergamum. As for the Asclepius called Iatros [Physician] at Balagrae in Cyrene, he too is from Epidaurus. And from the sanctuary at Cyrene was founded the Asclepieum at Lebene on Crete. One point of difference between the rites at Cyrene and at Epidauros is that the Cyrenaeans sacrifice goats, a practice that is not sanctioned by the Epidaurians.

Among the evidence that convinces me that Asclepius was considered a god from the beginning rather than gaining the honor in the course of time are the words in Homer spoken about Machaon by Agamemnon:

Taithybios, summon hither Machaon,
The mortal son of Asclepius.[9]

As if he means that the man is the son of a god.

Epiphanies

Asclepius exercised his divine power by appearing in dreams and by responding directly to needs and prayers. The first passage here reports a general statement about such epiphanies by Celsus, a pagan apologist of the Christian period. The second passage is ascribed to the famous fifth-century physician Hippocrates, and describes his own dream-vision of the god.

(Origen, *Against Celsus* III. 24.)

Celsus asks us to believe of Asclepius that a great many people, both Greeks and foreigners, acknowledge that they have often seen, and still continue to see, not the image, but the god himself performing cures and good deeds and foretelling the future.

(Hippocrates, *Letters*, 15.)

It seemed that I saw Asclepius himself, and he appeared very close.... Asclepius appeared, not as his statues portray him, mild and gentle, but with animated gesture, fearsome to behold. Snakes were following him, enormous specimens of serpents, speeding along in broad coils, hissing horribly, as in the desert or in forest dells. Companions came behind him with very tightly bound boxes of drugs. Then the god stretched out his hand to me; I took it joyfully and besought him to join me and not to neglect my ministrations. But he said, "At present you have no need of me, but this goddess [i.e., Truth], whom immortals and mortals share, will be your guide...." And the divinity departed.

In the following passage, Aelian tells how the fourth-century Athenian writer of comedies Theopompos was cured of tuberculosis by Asclepius.

(Aelian, frag. 99 in the edition of R. Hercher, *Leipzig*, 1864–1866.)

Asclepius healed Theopompos the Athenian, who was being worn out and drained from tuberculosis, and he urged him on to produce comedies again, since he had made him whole and safe and sound. This is proven by the relief of Theo-

9. Homer, *Iliad* IV. 193–194.

pompos in Parian marble. (The inscription identifies him by his father's name, for he was the son of Tisamenos.) The appearanceof the affliction is very visible. The bed itself is also of marble. On it, by the artist's operation, lies the image of him in his sickness. And the god stands nearby and reaches out his healing hand to him. There is also a young boy; he is also smiling.

A Night in the Temple of Asclepius

From Aristophanes' comedy *Ploutos* ["Wealth"] comes the following description of the process of incubation. It is a classic account, even if slightly distorted by Aristophanes' jokes. In the play the poor Athenian Chremylos sets out to cure Ploutos of blindness, so he can distribute his prosperity more justly, and he sends his slave Karion to attend Ploutos. The place for the cure, of course, was the temple of Asclepius, which in Athens was on the south slope of the Acropolis. See p. 58 below.

(Aristophanes, *Ploutos*, 654–695, 707–747.)

Karion: As soon as we arrived at the god with the man—pitiful in his blindness then, but now as happy and prosperous as anybody else—we took him first to the sea, and washed him.

Wife of Chremylos: Lucky old man, to bathe in the cold sea!

Karion: Then we went to the god's precinct. When cakes and offerings had been consecrated on the altar, and a cake given to the fire, we laid Ploutos down, as we were supposed to. Each of us arranged a make-shift bed.

Wife of Chremylos: Were others there too to ask healing from the god?

Karion: One was Neokleides, who is blind, but outdoes the sighted when he's stealing. There were also a lot of others with all kinds of ailments. The attendant [*propolos*] of the god extinguished the lamps and told us to go to sleep and to keep quiet if anyone heard a noise; we all lay down in good order. I wasn't able to fall asleep, but a pot of soup distracted me—it was sitting a short distance from an old woman's head and I was obsessed by a desire to sneak upon it. So I glanced up and saw the priest snatching away the cakes and figs from the holy table; after this he made the rounds of all the altars, to see if any cakes had been left behind. Those that were, he "consecrated" into a sack. I, thinking this was the pious thing to do, started up after that pot of soup.

Wife: Miserable wretch! Weren't you afraid of the god?

Karion: By the gods, afraid that he would get to the pot first, with his garlands … his priest, after all, had taught me how. The old woman, when she heard my noise, reached out her hand; I hissed and took the hand in my mouth, as if I were one of the sacred *pareias*-snakes. She immediately drew back the hand,

wrapped herself up and lay back quietly, farting for fear worse than a cat. I gulped down a lot of the soup, and when I was full, I stopped.... After this I got scared and wrapped myself up right away; the god went around examining all the afflictions in perfect order. Then an acolyte set a little stone mortar beside him, and a pestle and a box.

Wife: Was the box made out of stone?

Karion: By Zeus, of course it wasn't.

Wife: How did you see, you damned wretch, if you say you were all wrapped up?

Karion: Through my cloak. It had plenty of holes, by Zeus. First of all he set to grinding a medicinal ointment for Neokleides, tossing in three cloves of garlic from Tenos. He ground them in the mortar and mixed in acid and squill. Then he dissolved this in Sphettian vinegar, turned back the man's eyelids (to make it sting more) and smeared it on. He let out a yell and scream, jumped up and fled. The god laughed and said, "Now sit there with your ointment, so I can stop your filibustering in the assembly meetings."

Wife: So he's a patriot, the god—and a clever one too.

Karion: After this he sat down beside Ploutos; first he felt his head, then he took a clean cloth and wiped around his eyes. Panakeia dropped a red cloth over his head and his whole face. Then the god gave a low whistle, and a pair of snakes of enormous size darted out of the temple.

Wife: O dear gods!

Karion: These slid silently under the red cloth and licked his eyelids—so it seemed to me, at least. And, my lady, before you could have drunk off ten cups of wine, Ploutos stood up, and saw! I clapped my hands for joy and woke up the master. Right away the god made himself disappear, and the snakes vanished into the temple. The people lying next to him, as you'd expect, congratulated Ploutos and stayed awake all night till day dawned. I kept praising the god over and over because he had made Ploutos see right off, but made Neokleides more blind.

The Formal Worship of Asclepius

These inscriptions list certain sacrificial and ceremonial regulations for the sanctuaries of Asclepius.

(*IG* IV^2. 1.40 and 41; *SIG*^{3} 998; from Epidauros, about 400 B.C.)

To Apollo sacrifice a bull, and to the gods who share his temple a bull. On the altar of Apollo sacrifice these and a hen to Leto and another to Artemis; for the god as his portion a *medimnos* of barley, a half-*medimnos* of wheat, a twelfth-*medimnos* of wine and the leg of the first bull. The *hieromnemones* are to take

away the other leg. Of the second bull one leg is to be given to the cantors, and the other leg and the intestines to the guards.

To Asclepius sacrifice a bull; to the gods who share his temple a bull and to the goddesses a cow. On the altar of Asclepius sacrifice these things and a cock. They are to dedicate to Asclepius as his portion a *medimnos* of barley, a half-*medimnos* of wheat, and a twelfth-*medimnos* of wine. They are to lay a leg of the first bull on the altar for the god, and the *hieromnemones* are to take away the other. Of the second bull one is to be given to the cantors, the other…

(*IG* II^2. 4962; *SIG*^{3} 1040; *LGS* II. 18; from Piraeus, fourth century B.C.)

The Gods! Make the preliminary, sacrifices in this manner: to Meleas three wheat cakes; to Apollo three wheat cakes; to Hermes three wheat cakes; to Iaso three wheat cakes; to Panakeia three wheat cakes; to the dogs three wheat cakes; to the huntsmen three wheat cakes.

(*LSAM* 24 (A), lines 25–38; from Erythrai in Euboia, 380–360 B.C.)

… Whenever the city performs a sacrifice to Asclepius, the city's sacrifice is made first on behalf of all; at a festival no private person is to make the first sacrifice, but during the rest of the year one may make the first sacrifice according to the aforesaid regulations. Those who sleep in the temple, after they have incubated, when they render sacrifice to Asclepius and Apollo, or else after they render sacrifice after a prayer, when they place the sacred portion [on the altar?] are first to sing this paian around the altar of Apollo three times: "Hail Paian, O hail Paian, hail Paian; O hail Paian, hail Paian, O hail Paian, O Lord Apollo, spare the youths…."

Shrines of Asclepius

In the first two passages, Pausanias describes two sanctuaries of Asclepius, the great and famous one at Epidauros and a smaller, local one at Sikyon, as they were in the second century A.D.

Epidauros. (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* II. 27.1–3.)

The sacred grove of Asclepius is marked by boundary stones in every direction. No one dies, nor do women give birth, inside the precinct, according to the same custom that prevails at Delos. Whether one of the Epidaurians themselves or a foreigner does the sacrificing, they consume the sacrificial victims completely inside the sanctuary boundaries. I know that the same thing is done at Titane. The

statue of Asclepius is half as large as the one of Zeus Olympios at Athens, and is made of ivory and gold. An inscription states that Thrasymedes of Paros the son of Arignotos was the sculptor. He is seated on a throne holdinga staff; he holds the other hand over the head of the snake, and a dog is represented lying beside him. On the throne are portrayed the deeds of the Argives, what Bellerophon did to the Chimaira, and Perseus with the Medusa's severed head. Beyond the temple is the place where the supplicants of the god lie down to sleep. Near it stands a round building of marble called the Tholos, worth seeing. In it is a painting of Eros by Pausias: Eros has thrown away his bow and arrows and is holding up a lyre in their place. Also painted there is Methe [Drunkenness] drinking from a crystal vessel, this too the work of Pausias; in the painting you can actually see the vessel of crystal and face of the woman through it. *Stelai* used to stand inside the precinct, but in my day there are only six left. On these are inscribed the names of men and women who have been healed by Asclepius, as well as the ailment from which each suffered and how each was cured they are written in the Doric dialect.

Sikyon. (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* II. 10.2–3.)

From here the road passes on to the sanctuary of Asclepius. As you go into the precinct there is a double building on the left. In the front part lies Hypnos [Sleep], though nothing remains except his head. The inner chamber is devoted to Apollo Karneios, and only the priests are permitted to enter it. In the colonnade lies a bone of a sea monster of great size, and beyond it is a statue of Oneiros [Dream], as well as Hypnos putting a lion to sleep, which bears the epithet Epidotes [Bountiful]. As you go into the temple of Asclepius there is on one side of the entrance a seated statue of Pan, on the other one of Artemis. Inside is the god, portrayed beardless, made of gold and ivory, the work of Kalamis; he holds a scepter in one hand and in the other a cone of the domesticated pine. They say that the god, in the form of a snake, was brought here from Epidauros by a yoke of mules, and that a Sikyonian woman, Nikagora the mother of Agasikles and wife of Echetimos, was responsible for bringing him. There are small statues, also, suspended from the roof; the woman on the snake is supposed to be Aristodama, the mother of Aratos, who is himself considered a son of Asclepius.

Athens

During a lull in the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians officially introduced the cult of Asclepius into Athens while the Eleusinia were being celebrated in the fall of 420 B.C. The God's sacred snake was brought from Epidauros, and in the following years a temple was erected on the south slope of the Acropolis.

See R. Martin and B. Metzger, "Recherches d'Architecture et de Topographie a l'Asklepieion d'Athènes," *Bulletin de Correspondance Heilenique* 73 (1949) 316–350. The first inscription gives a concise and fragmentary account of the stages in the establishment of the sanctuary. The second inscription is part of a record of the annual temple inventories, for the years 341/340 and 340/339 B.C., and is useful in helping imagine the kinds of dedications that filled Asclepius' sanctuaries. Finally, an undated passage from Aelian tells by indirection several facts about the administration of the temple.

(*IG* II^2. 4960; *SIG*^{3} 88.)

The god came up during the Great Mysteries and was escorted into the Eleusinion; and from his home he summoned the snake in a chariot, and Telemachos went out to meet him. Hygieia came along, and thus was founded the whole sanctuary in the year when Astyphilos the son of Kydantides was archon [420/419 B.C.]. In the archonship of Archias [419/418 B.C.] the Heralds laid claim to the property and [prevent]ed some work. [The details of several years are missing.] In the archonship of Teisandros [414/413 B.C.] the wooden gateway was constructed and the rest of the sacred furnishings were installed. In the archonship of Kleokritos [413/412 B.C.] the planting was done and he completed the decoration of the whole precinct at his own expense.

(*IG* II^2. 1533, lines 1–18.)

Gold ring, unweighed; Xenokrates dedicated it, in a case.
Silver crown which Dion dedicated, missing.
Diopeithes on a plaque, 50 drachmas.
Kallimachos on a plaque on the wall, 40 drachmas.
Mnesarete, 10 drachmas, 3 drachmas missing; she said that Diokles of Myrrhinous should pay it; an additional drachma is lacking on the part of Telesias.
Kallisto on the lintel, 2 drachmas.
Aischylides on a ribbon, 1 drachma, 3 obols; another on a plaque, 1 drachma; a small face on the wall in the chapel.
Demonstrate (dedicated) a bronze wine jar, Hedyle a bronze wine jar, Nikias a marble conch-shell.
Enporion on a plaque, 12 drachmas.
Onasis on a ribbon, 12 drachmas; 4 lacking; this lack Polyxenos paid off on behalf of himself.
A wooden thurible, gilded, a cubit long.
Minnion, 5 drachmas; the priest, Eunikides of Halai, said these are old.

Diodote, 10 drachmas.
Also, a gilded limb; a cloak; a wooden chair.
—The following were dedicated in the year Diokles was priest and Theophrastos was archon [340/339 B.C.]—
Miscellaneous silver, weight 4 drachmas.
Pasilea, in a case by (10) the wall, 20 drachmas
Diphilos, on a plaque on the wall, a silver face, 10 drachmas
Python on a plaque by the plaque of Antigona, 40 drachmas
Hegemon of Athmonon, on a ribbon, 60 drachmas.
Klymene, on a plaque, 74 drachmas, 3 obols
Nikomachos on a plaque, 10 drachmas
Kallias son of Kallipos of Rhamnous, a silver libation bowl, in a case, unweighed; the weight is inscribed, 250 drachmas.
A libation-bowl (which) Aristophon of Azenia dedicated; unweighed; the weight is inscribed, 100 drachmas.
A libation bowl which Philon dedicated, unweighed, in a case.
Telesarchos of Cholargos, a silver drinking-cup, unweighed; the weight is inscribed, 62 drachmas, 3 obols.
(15) Where the little Nikai [figures of Victory] are: a small silver cup in a case which Theano dedicated, unweighed; which Phile dedicated, the weight is inscribed, 50 drachmas.
Oinanthe, on a ribbon, 2 drachmas.
Meletos (dedicated) a silver heart and a little snake on a plaque.
Bronzes: Philon of Phaleron, a cauldron; Pamphile, a little tripod; Timoxenos, a drinking cup.
Jasper gems, 5 drachmas.
Crystal ring.
Crystal seals, 5 drachmas.
Gray clock.

[In subsequent years, noteworthy dedication included golden eyes on a plaque, ritual offering-vessels, gazelle knuckle-bones, body-scrapers, a key, rings, seals, jugs, crown, a pair of shoes, a beaker, a flute, more eyes, a pillow.]

(Aelian, *The Nature of Animals* VII. 13.)

Into the temple of Asclepius came a robber of holy things; he waited for the middle of the night and looked out for the period of deepest sleep of those who were sleeping in the temple. Then he stole many of the offerings secretly (or so he thought). There was a good guard on duty at the time, a dog, better than the temple guards at keeping alert. This dog followed in pursuit of the man and

barked continuously, striving with all his power to announce what had happened. At first the thief and his henchmen in the unholy deed threw stones at him; finally they threw bread and cakes. Cleverly (or so he thought) he had taken these along to be dog bait. Since the dog kept barking even when the thief entered the house where he was staying and again when he came out, it was known where the dog was. The records and the spaces where the offerings were lodged indicated what was missing. The Athenians judged that this was the man, and having tortured him they discovered everything. The thief was punished in accordance with the penalties of the law, but the dog was honored by public meals and care, as a faithful guard and inferior to no one of the temple steward in his alertness.

E. Local Heroes: The Salaminioi

The following two inscriptions are illustrative of the technical operation of a local cult. Both inscriptions talk of a quarrel between two rival groups for control of the sanctuary, and the resolution of the dispute through arbitration; in addition rules are set down governing procedures and practices at the sanctuary. It is clear that the first attempt, in 363/2 B.C., did not handle all the problems, for a century later, in c. 263 B.C., a second resolution is needed. For details, see the article by W.S. Ferguson, "The Salaminioi of Heptaphylai and Sounion," in *Hesperia* 7 (1938) pp. 175.

1. [363/2 B.C.]

Gods! In the archonship of Charikleides in Athens [363/2 B.C.] the arbitrators Stephanos of Myrrhinous, Kleagoras of Acharnae, Aristogeiton of Myrrhinous, Eurykritos of Lamptrae, Kephidotus of Aithalidai settled the quarrels between the Salaminioi of Heptaphylai and the Salaminioi from Sounion on these terms. Both parties agreed that the arbitrators had decided wisely. The priesthoods shall be jointly held by both for all time, i.e., those of Athena Skiras, Heracles at Porthmos, Eurysakes, Aglauros and Pandrosos and Kourotrophos. When one of the priests or priestesses dies, a successor shall be chosen by lot from both groups meeting in common. The one selected shall serve on the same terms as those who held the priesthood before. The land of the shrine of Heracles at Porthmos and the other land [or, the land at the Hale] and the *agora* at Koile shall be divided equally and each shall take its part and mark it with boundary stones. They will sacrifice to the gods and heroes in the following manner. Whatever victims the city provides from the public treasury or from the *oskophoroi* and *deipnophoroi*, these both shall sacrifice in common and each take half of the meat raw. Whatever the Salaminioi sacrifice from rentals, these they shall sacrifice from their own funds as was the ancestral custom, each party contributing half towards the whole sacrifice.

To the priests and priestesses the following gifts are to be paid as listed: to the priest of Heracles as *hierosyna* 30 drachmas, for *pelanos* 3 drachmas, half to be contributed by each group. From the victims which he sacrifices for the community let him take of flayed animals the skin and the leg, of burnt victims the leg. From an ox nine pieces of meat and the skin. To the priests of Eurysakes as *hierosyna* 6 drachmas. For *pelanos* for both cults 7 drachmas, in place of the bone and skin of the Eurysakeion 13 drachmas; let each party contribute half. For the hero at the Hale let him take from the sacrifices the skin and leg. To the priests and priestesses in the shrines where each officiates let a portion come from each party. Let them distribute the wheat loaves in the shrine of Skiras as follows: Selecting

out from the whole number those customarily set apart according to ancestral custom. To the herald a loaf, to the priestess of Athena a loaf, to the priest of Heracles a loaf, to the priestess of Aglauros and Pandrosos a loaf, to the *kalathephoros* of Kourotrophos also a loaf, to the millers a loaf. As for the rest let them each take a half. Let them select in turn by lot from each an arch on who shall in turn select the *oschophoros* and *deipnophoros* with the priestesses and herald according to the ancestral customs. Let both sides inscribe these regulations on a common *stele* and place it in the temple of Athena Skiras.

The same man is to be priest of Eurysakes and of the Hero at the Hale. If anything needs repair in the shrines let both parties repair them, each contributing half. During the archonship of Charikleides the men from the Heptaphylai provided the *archon*. All the records shall be common to both. Let the man who has the contract till the land until the rental period elapses, and let him pay half the rental fee to each party. Let each party in turn perform the sacrifices which precede the contest and each take half of the flesh and skins. The priestly office of herald is to belong to Thrasykles according to ancient custom. All other charges, both private and public, up to the month Boedromion in the archonship of Charikleides are to be dropped.

vacat

In the archonship of Diphilos son of Diopeithes of Sounion for the Salaminioi. The following members of the Salaminioi took the oath: Diopeithes son of Phasyrkides, Philoieos son of Ameinonikos, Chalkideus son of Andromenes, Chariades son of Charikles, Theophanes son of Zophanes, Hegias son of Hegesias, Ameinias son of Philinos. In the archonship for the Salaminioi of Antisthenes son of Antigenes of Acharnai. These men for the Heptaphylai swore the oath: Thrasykies son of Thrason, of Boutadai, Stratophon son of Straton, of Agrylai, Melittios son of Exekestides, of Boutadai, Aristarchos son of Demokies, of Acharnai, Arkeon son of Euinelides, of Acharnai, Chairestratos son of Pankleides, of Epikephisia, Demon son of Demaretos, of Agrylai.

Archeleos proposed. In order that the Salaminioi may ever sacrifice to the gods and heroes according to the ancestral custom and that the terms on which the arbitrators arbitrated the dispute may become effective and to which the persons chosen took the oath, the Salaminioi decree that the archon Aristarchus inscribe all the sacrifices and the fees of the priests on the stele on which the terms for settlement are inscribed, so that as *archon* succeeds *archon* for both parties, they may know what amount of money each party must contribute for all the sacrifices from the rent of the land and be it decreed that he set up the stele in the Eurysakeion.

Mounichion. At Porthmos: to Kourotrophos a goat, 10 drachmas; to Ioleus a sheep burnt whole, 15 drachmas; to Alkmene a sheep, 12 drachmas; to Maia a sheep, 12 drachmas; to Heracles an ox, 70 drachmas; to the Hero at the Hale

a sheep, 15 drachmas; to the Hero at Antisara a suckling pig, 3 drachmas and 3 obols; to the Hero at Pyrgilion a suckling pig, 3 drachmas and 3 obols; to Ion the sacrifice of a sheep in alternate years. Wood for the sacrifices and for those sacrifices which the state gives by law, 10 drachmas. On the 18th of the month: to Eurysakes a pig, 40 drachmas; wood for the sacrifice and incidentals, 3 drachmas.

Hekatornbaion. At the Panathenaia: to Athena a pig, 40 drachmas; the wood for the sacrifices and incidentals, 3 drachmas.

Metageitnion. On the 7th of the month: to Apollo Patroos a pig, 40 drachmas; to Leto a suckling pig, 3 drachmas and 3 obols; to Artemis a suckling pig, 3 drachmas and 3 obols; to Athena Agelaa a suckling pig, 3 drachmas and 3 obols. Wood for the sacrifices and incidentals, 3 drachmas and 3 obols.

Boedromion. To Poseidon Hippodromios a pig, 40 drachmas; to the hero Phaiax a suckling pig, 3 drachmas and 3 obols; to the hero Teucer a suckling pig, 3 drachmas and 3 obols; to the hero Nauserios a suckling pig, 3 drachmas and 3 obols; wood for the sacrifice and incidentals, 3 drachmas.

Pyanepsion. On the 6th of the month: to Theseus a pig, 40 drachmas; incidentals, 3 drachmas. At the Apatouria: to Zeus Phratrios a pig, 40 drachmas; wood for the sacrifices and incidentals, 3 drachmas.

Maimakterion. To Athena Skiras a pregnant sheep, 12 drachmas to Skiros a sheep, 15 drachmas. Wood for the altar, 3 drachmas.

The total which all parties must pay for the sacrifices is 530 drachmas and 3 obols.

These sacrifices they are to make in common from the rental of the land at the shrine of Heracles at Sounion, each party contributing for all the sacrifices. If anyone proposes, or any *archon* puts a motion forward to nullify any of these provisions or to direct the money elsewhere, he shall be accountable to the whole *genos* and the priests likewise and be liable to a private action undertaken by any of the Salaminioi who wishes.

2. [C. 263 B.C.]

Good Fortune. In the archonship of Phanomachos, in Mounichion, at the festival of Heracles. The *gene* were reconciled to each other, those of Sounion and those of Heptaphylai, by those mediators selected by them, Antigenes of Semachidae and Kalliteles of Sounion, on the following terms: in respect to the precinct of Heracles the part including the altars and what extends beyond the railing to the first olive trees is sacred. The rest of the precinctis to be bounded on the north by the first stone wall, on the east by the markers that divide the fields, on the west by the *embateres*, both the one which lies by the sea and the one above; this precinct shall be open to both *gene*. The Salaminioi from Sounion shall construct

a threshing floor at their own expense in the common precinct which is to be as large as their own, and this threshing floor shall belong to the Salaminioi of Heptaphylai. The house which impinges upon the precinct shall be part of the property of the Salaminioi of Heptaphylai as the gates which lead on both sides from the sea and the boundary stones which divide the land and which stretch out in a straight line. The second house, the one to the east, shall belong as of old to the Salaminioi of Sounion as the gates which lead from the sea and the boundary markers stretching out straight. The gardens and half the well shall belong to each *genos*. The Hale and the *agora* in Koile shall be common to both *gene*; of the fields the ones lying to the east shall as of old belong to the Salaminioi from Sounion as the markers lie, while those to the west belong to the Salaminioi from Heptaphylai as of old as the markers lie, and the sacred field.

Chapter III. Public Religion

A. Ethics: Justice and the Gods

The passages from Homer that are quoted in chapter I do not show a very developed sense of religious ethics inasmuch as the gods do not generally concern themselves with the behavior of men toward other men. In the *Odyssey* Zeus and Athena do occasionally express a kind of moral disapproval over the actions of Clytemestra or of the suitors, but it is in Hesiod that we find a formal statement of the view that Zeus is concerned with Justice (Dike), punishes the wrongdoer, and rewards the righteous. On early concepts of Dike, see. W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston, 1951), pp. 123–127; H. Lloyd-Jones, *The ustice of Zeus* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 35–43. Hesiod is here addressing the nobles who administer justice, preparatory to a discussion of the virtues of hard work. Hesiod lived, probably, in the late-eighth century B.C.

(Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 220–262.)

Justice makes a clamor when it is being dragged where bribe-eating men do their business and make decisions with crooked judgments. She follows along weeping for the city and the people's abodes, wrapped in mist, bringing trouble to the men who drive her out and do not administer her aright. But those who dispense right judgments to strangers and neighbors and who do not transgress that which is just have a blossoming city, and a people flourishing in it; peace is on their land, raising children, and Zeus the far-seeing never imposes baneful war upon them. Famine never dwells among upright men, nor does Ruin; instead they tend their cultivated fields with festivities. The earth brings them long life, the oaks on the hills bear acorns at the top and honeybees in the trunk. Their wool-bearing sheep are heavy with fleece. The women bear children in their parents' image, and they continue to blossom with good things. They do not sail on ships, but rather the fertile soil bears its fruit. It is different for those who are given to violence and recalcitrant deeds—Zeus the far-seeing son of Kronos imposes justice on them. Often the whole city is involved along with the bad man

who commits offense and devises wickedness—upon them the son of Kronos hurls great war from heaven—famine and pestilence with it, and the people perish. Women do not bear, houses decline at the devising of Olympian Zeus. At one time or another he destroys their army, or deprives them of their fortifications or their ships on the sea.

O you princes, consider this Justice—the immortals are constantly present among men; they perceive those who wear others out and have no respect for the god's regard. On the abundant earth are three times ten thousand immortals, Zeus' wardens of mortal men, wrapped in mist and roaming all over the earth, who guard judgments and recalcitrant deeds. And there is Justice the virgin, begotten of Zeus, renowned and respected of the gods who dwell on Olympus, and whenever anyone causes obstruction with crooked accusations she sits by her father Zeus son of Kronos and chants the intentions of unjust men, so that the people pay for the wickedness of the princes, who with evil intent misdirect judgments with crooked decisions.

Solon, writing in Athens in the early sixth century B.C., is concerned with the social setting in which Zeus enforces justice. He confronts the problem, evident in his city, of the wicked man who prospers. The conclusion he reaches is that a man's guilt extends throughout his family; he may escape punishment, but his descendants will pay. Solon's Zeus and his interest in human morality is discussed by W. Jaeger, *Paideia* I (Oxford, 1939), pp. 134–149; H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 43–45.

(Solon, 1, lines 1–32.)

Radiant daughters of Mnemosyne [Memory] and Olympian Zeus, ye Muses of Pieria, hear my Prayer. Grant me to have prosperity from the blessed gods and a good reputation before all men: to be sweet to my friends, regarded with respect, and bitter to my enemies, regarded with fear. I desire to have money, but am unwilling to obtain it unjustly—for always Justice follows afterward. When the gods give wealth, a man finds it steadfast from deepest root to highest peak, but when men go after it with violence, it comes all disordered: induced by unjust doings, it follows along against its will. Ruin is mixed up in it immediately, and it begins, like a fire, with a little—a trifle at first, it ends in catastrophe. The deeds of violence do not last men long. Zeus, however, regards the end of all things; as when a spring gale suddenly scatters the clouds, stirs up the depths of the boundless billowing sea, ravages the fair worked fields on the grain-bearing earth, and arrives at high heaven, the seat of the gods, and makes the air clear again; the sun shines on the fair, fertile earth, and not a cloud is to be seen. Such is the retribution of Zeus. He does not, like a mortal, become angry at each thing; but the man

of sinful mind does not get away unnoticed in perpetuity. Inevitably he is found out in the end. One pays immediately, another pays later; some escape, and their due from the gods misses them themselves. Still, it does arrive: the innocent pay for their deeds, their children or their posterity.

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is a cycle of three plays exploring blood revenge and its relationship to a more civic-oriented system of justice under the protection of society's gods. The following short passage from the first play, Agamemnon, draws its contrast between the claims of position (noble birth, wealth, and prestige) and those of right behavior. Justice neglected brings ruin even to the noblest of families; Justice revered is a glorious possession even in humble surroundings. For discussion of the moral and religious attitudes of Aeschylus, see F. Soimsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca, 1949), pp. 112–123; A. Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy* (Ann Arbor, 1966), pp. 63–78.

(Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 750–781.)

The old saying has long been told among mortals, that when a man's wealth grows to greatness it produces offspring, and does not die childless; from good fortune blooms forth in turn insatiable grief. I have my own opinion, different from others: to me it is the impious deed that breeds progeny befitting its own descent; just, upright households produce in due course the blessing of beautiful children.

Old Violence inclines sooner or later to breed, when the day fixed for fruition arrives, renewed violence in the evil acts of mortals, and it breeds the incontestable, invincible *daimon* that unholy affront to homes, Ruin, black in its parents' image.

But Justice shines in smoke-filled houses, it respects the righteous life. With eyes averted it departs from halls gold-flecked with filthy hands; it approaches reverent homes; it does not honor the value of wealth struck with counterfeit praise; and it brings everything to its culmination.

The claims of two types of laws, the time-honored rituals of the gods, and the ad hoc decrees of civic authority, conflict in Sophocles' *Antigone*, written and produced near the middle of the fifth century B.C. King Kreon has forbidden the burial of Polyneikes, a son of Oedipus who had attacked his own city of Thebes. Polyneikes' sister Antigone defies Kreon's edict and buries the corpse; in the following speech she justifies her actions, arguing that following the traditional religious practices is more just than obeying a transitory, man-made law.

(Sophocles, *Antigone*, 449–470.)

Kreon: And how did you dare to violate these laws?

Antigone: It does not seem to me that Zeus proclaimed them, nor did Justice, who dwells with the gods below, proclaim such laws; I did not think *your* decrees could so prevail that a mere mortal would outstrip unwritten, unshaken usages of the gods. The usages live, not just today and yesterday, but forever—no one knows even when they first came to light. I was not about to risk paying the penalty of violating these usages, not out of fear of any man's opinion: I will die: I knew it, how could I not, even if you had not proclaimed it. If I shall die before my time, I count that as gain. Where a person lives, as I do, in the midst of many evils, how can death bring anything but gain? To me, to meet this fate is negligible pain; but if I allowed my mother's dead son to lie a corpse unburied, at that I would feel grief. But I am not grieved by what I have done, and if it seems to you that I am being foolish, perhaps the foolishness is in the eye of a fool.…

The importance of an inner sense of morality, rather than a merely external code of behavior is given classic expression in Socrates' brief prayer preserved in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Plato's own researches into the nature of justice are set forth in the *Republic*, where however the reference to the gods is superceded by a more generally humanistic concept.

(Plato, *Phaedrus*, 279b–c.)

Socrates: "O dear Pan and all ye other gods in this place, grant me to become inwardly fair, and as for everything I possess externally, may it be concordant with my inner disposition. May I consider the wise man wealthy, and may I have as much gold as only the moderate man can take and bear."

B. Delphic Piety

The oracular shrine at Delphi assumed an important role in the life of Greece as early as the seventh century B.C., and continued to prosper until the period of Roman domination. Its prestige was unmatched, and city-states, kings, and private individuals made requests of the oracle, and proved their devotion by dedicating elaborate gifts. On the history of the oracle, see H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (Oxford, 1956); W.G. Forrest, "Colonization and the Rise of Delphi," *Historia* 6 (1957), 160–175. On the archaeological excavations, see the detailed accounts in *Fouilles de Delphes* (Paris, 1906–). Briefer treatments are by A. Kalogeropoulou in *The Greek Experience* (ed. Evi Melas, New York, 1974), pp. 59–74; R.A. Tomlinson, *Greek Sanctuaries* (New York, 1976).

Croesus

One of Delphi's most enthusiastic supporters in the sixth century B.C. was Croesus, king of Lydia in Asia Minor This account of his testing of the oracles and of the elaborate dedications he made at Delphi is by Herodotus, who used the monuments at Delphi as primary documentary sources in the research for his history of the Persian Wars and their background.

(Herodotus, *The Histories* I. 46–54.)

Croesus began to consider if it would be possible to contain the growing might of the Persians before they became too powerful. With this idea in mind he set out to test the oracles of Greece and Libya, sending messengers to Delphi, to Abai in Phokis, and to Dodona, to the oracles of Amphiaraos and Trophonios, and to Branchidai at Miletus: to these Greek oracles Croesus sent his inquiries, as well as to the oracle of Ammon in Libya. He wanted to test the perceptions of the oracles; if they were found to perceive truly, he intended to send a second inquiry, whether to undertake a campaign against the Persians. (47) He gave instructions to the messengers and sent them on their trial of the oracles: on the 100th day after setting out from Sardis [Croesus' capital], they were to inquire of the oracles what Croesus, son of Alyattes, king of the Lydians, was doing; then they were to have each oracle's response written down and bring it back to him. Now the responses of the others are not recorded by anyone at all, but at Delphi as soon as the Lydians entered the sanctuary to inquire of the god, while they were still asking what they had been commanded, the Pythia gave this verse response:

I count the grains of the sand, and I measure out the sea's vastness,
I understand the mute, and I hear the man who does not speak.

Now an aroma comes to my senses, of sturdy-shelled tortoise,
Cooking and boiling in cauldron of bronze, in a stew of young lamb's flesh,
Bronze underneath spreads out, and above is laid a bronze cover.

(48) The Lydians had the Pythia's response written, and then returned to Sardis. When the other deputations brought their oracles back, Croesus read them, but none of them came close. When however he heard what came from Delphi, he welcomed the response and uttered a prayer, recognizing the Delphic oracle as the only one because it had revealed to him what he had been doing: for when he sent out the embassies to the oracles he waited for the appointed day and then devised this plan, thinking up things which it would be next to impossible to invent or desire—by himself he chopped up a tortoise and a lamb and boiled them in a bronze cauldron, putting on a bronze cover. (49) Such was the response from Delphi. As for the answer of the oracle of Amphiaraos, I can not say what its response was to the Lydians after they had performed the customary rites there (for this is not recorded either), other than that he also recognized that it too possessed a faultless oracle.

(50) After this he made petition to the god at Delphi with magnificent sacrifices: he sacrificed all the proper animals, then piled up a great pyre with gilded and silvered couches, golden libation bowls and purple robes and cloaks, and set fire to it, hoping by this to increase the god's favor toward him. He also ordered all the Lydians to sacrifice everything they could afford. When the sacrifice was finished, he melted down an immense quantity of gold and cast 117 ingots, six palms long, three palms wide and one palm high; of these four were of pure gold, weighing 2 1/2 talents each, and the rest were of white gold, amounting to two talents. He also had made a pure gold statue of a lion, weighing ten talents. When the temple at Delphi burned down, this lion fell from the ingots [on which it had been placed]. It now stands in the Corinthian treasury—it weighs 6 1/2 talents, for 3 1/2 talents melted away in the fire. (51) In addition Croesus also sent two large wine bowls, one gold and one silver: the gold one used to stand on the right of the temple entrance, and the silver one on the left These were also moved during the fire the gold is in the treasury of Klazomenai (it weighs 8 1/2 talents and 12 minas) and the silver at the corner of the fore-temple; it contains 600 amphorai—the Delphians fill it with wine at the festival of the Theophania. The Delphians say it is the work of Theodoros of Samos, and I agree that it is an uncommonly fine work. He also sent four silver jars, which stand in the Corinthian treasury, and he dedicated two water basins, a gold and a silver (a false inscription says the gold one is a dedication of the Lacedaemonians, but it is also Croesus', and one of the Delphians added the inscription to flatter the Lacedaemonians. The child with water flowing through his hand was made by the Lacedaemonians, but neither of the water basins is.) Croesus also sent other dedications without inscriptions, including circular round basins and a three-cubit high gold statue of a woman

which the Delphians call "Croesus' baker-woman." Besides this Croesus also dedicated the necklace and belt of his own wife…

(54.2) The Delphians granted to Croesus and the Lydians the right of prior consultation, exemption from taxes, the right to a front row seat at festivals, and the right in perpetuity for any of them to become a citizen of Delphi.

The Morality of the Oracle

The prestige of the oracle at Delphi was reflected in a moral tradition summarized in the precepts "Nothing in Excess" and "Know Thyself." Delphi's moral authority is asserted in the following selections—first, Socrates yields to it the establishment of religious usages; then Plutarch summarizes the brief maxims posted near the entrance to Apollo's temple; finally an inscription lists the precepts of the seven sages, which were erected on a column in front of the temple at Delphi. On Delphi's role as moral arbiter, see M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Piety* (London, 1947), pp. 41–52.

(Plato, *Republic* IV. 427b-c.)

"We are finished with our part of the law-making," I [Socrates] said, "but the greatest, finest, most important legislation remains for Apollo of Delphi to do." "What is it?" he said. "Establishment of temples, sacrifices, and other rites of gods, *daimones*, and heroes; burial of the dead and the various duties to those in the Beyond which are necessary to propitiate them. We know nothing of such matters, and if we are sensible in founding our city we will not follow the instructions of any interpreter of divine love other than the traditional one, for he is a god who is the traditional interpreter of such things to all men, sitting on the *omphalos* [navel] to deliver the interpretation."

(Plutarch, *On Garrulity*, 511a.)

The brevity of the ancients is admired: in the temple of Pythian Apollo the Amphictyons have inscribed not the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, nor the hymns of Pindar, but "Know thyself," "Nothing in excess" and "Pledge, and do harm."

(*SIG*^{3} 1268.)

Column I.
Aid friends. Control anger. Shun unjust acts. Acknowledge sacred things. Control pleasure. Consider luck. Honor forethought. Do not use an oath. Love friendship. Hold on to learning. Pursue good repute. Praise virtue. Do just acts. Return favor.

Be well disposed to friends. Avoid enemies. Cultivate kinsmen. Keep from evil. Be common [? i.e., accessible, affable?]. Guard your property. Oblige a friend. Hate violence. Be soft-spoken. Pity suppliants. Educate sons.
Column II.
Accomplish your limit. Be kind to all. Rule your wife. Do well by yourself. Be affable. Answer at the right moment. Work with a good reputation. When you err, repent. Control your eye. Guard friendship. Consider the time. Act promptly. Dispense justice. Practice concord. Despise no one. Keep secret things hidden. Respect the prevailing power. Trust time. Do not make pleasant small talk. Worship the divine. Accept opportunity. Dissolve enmity. Do not boast in your strength. Accept old age. Use what is advantageous. Practice speaking words of good omen. Be ashamed of a lie. Shun enmity.

Consulting the Oracle

The following passage from Euripides' play *Ion* consists of the song of the temple attendant who while sweeping the front steps points out some of the sights and then outlines, in soliloquy and in a conversation with some newly arrived visitors, the process of consulting the oracle. For the procedures followed in making a request of the oracle, see H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 17–45.

(Euripides, *Ion*, 83–108, 219–228)

Ion: Those are the brilliant four-horse chariots; Helius already casts his light upon the earth, and before the ethereal flame the stars flee into the sacred night.

The untrod peaks of Parnassus, lightened, receive the rim of day's wheel for mortal men. The smoke of dry incense floats up to the roofs of Phoebus.

The Delphian woman sits on the most holy tripod, singing to the Greeks whatever sounds Apollo murmurs.

But do you go, O Delphian attendants of Apollo, to the silvery swirls of Castalia; bathe in the pure waters and proceed to the temples, guard your mouths in well-omened silence—it is good so—and reveal well-meaning speeches to those who intend to consult the oracle. My own tasks are those I have performed since childhood, with branches of laurel and sacred fillets to make Phoebus' entrance clean, and the floor moist with drops of water; and to put to flight with my arrows the flocks of birds which foul the holy dedications.

Chorus of slave women; to Ion: You there, beside the temple: is it lawful for us to tread upon the recesses of the shrine, with pure foot…

Ion: It is not, strangers.

Chorus: Might we then ask you for some information?

Ion: What is that you want?
Chorus: Does the temple of Phoebus really contain the navel of the earth?
Ion: Yes—wrapped in fillets, with Gorgons all around.
Chorus: . . . just as the story says!
Ion: If you have sacrificed a wheat cake before the temple and want to make some inquiry of Phoebus, proceed to the altar; but you must slaughter a sheep to enter the temple's inner recess.

Oracular Responses from Delphi

This selection of oracles from the seventh through the fourth centuries B.C. illustrates the range of the oracle's interest and authority. They include (A) Croesus' request for political and military advice, (B) a spontaneous rejection of an embassy on grounds of moral impurity, (C) a miraculous cure, (D) a pair of warnings to the Athenians to flee before the Persian invaders in 480 B.C., (E & F) admonitions to simple piety, (G) Socrates' advice on how to consult the oracle, (H) requests to settle inter-city rivalries, (I) advice on the establishment of a new colony, (J) an ambiguous oracle culminating in just punishment, (K) a response about proper sacrifices after an omen appeared in the sky, (L) a request from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, about a domestic matter, (M) an oracle demanding reparation from the killer of a poet, and (N) an inscription from Athens providing for an elaborate procedure to assure an impartial answer from the god.

A. (Herodotus, *The Histories* I. 53.1.) Croesus commanded the Lydians who were going to take his gifts to the shrines [of Delphi and Amphiaraos] to ask the oracles whether he should conduct a military campaign against the Persians and should add some friendly army to his own as an ally.... The responses of both oracles agreed in advising Croesus that, if he were to campaign against the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire; they also advised him to find the strongest of the Greeks and make them his allies.

B. (Aelian, *Varia Historia* III. 43.) [During a revolution at Sybaris a harp-player was killed when he sought sanctuary at an altar. Later] the Sybarites sent an embassy to Delphi, and the Pythia answered,

Go from my tripods away, for all over thy hands still is dripping
Murder vast and unchecked, and it holds thee back from my threshold.
Never to thee will I prophesy, thou who hast killed at the altar of Hera
One holy slave of the Muses; thou hast not avoided gods' vengeance.
Those who do evil must pay the full measure of justice: no mercy
And no delay may be granted, not even to great Zeus's offspring.

But fast to their own heads, and in the midst of their children,
It keeps on clinging, and grief upon grief comes upon all their households.

C. (Plutarch, *Bravery of Women*, 245c–d.) They say that Telesilla, who was of an important family, was sick in her body, and sent to the god to ask about health. The response was that she should serve the Muses. Obedient to the god she dedicated herself to musical performance and composition; she straightway recovered from her affliction, and was admired for her skill.

D. (Herodotus, *The Histories* VII. 140.) The Athenians had sent envoys to Delphi and were prepared to consult the oracle. When they had performed the traditional rites around the shrine, entered the temple chamber and taken their seats, the Pythia, whose name was Aristonike, gave this response:

Why do you sit here, you wretched ones? Go, flee away to the farthest
Ends of the earth, leave the wheel-shaped city surrounding its lofty
Citadel. Neither the head will remain intact, nor the body;
Neither the nethermost feet, nor the hands will be left, neither any
Part in between: it will all disappear, be cast down into ruin;
Fire and the Syrian chariots of Ares the fierce will destroy it.
He will demolish as well many other strong forts, not yours only.
And he will put many temples of gods to the ravishing war-fire.
Temples which now still stand, but stand all dripping and sweating,
Shaking and quaking with fear, while down from the loftiest roof-tops
Black blood pours as an omen, presaging the onset of evil.
Go now from this holy chamber, and let your mind dwell on these evils.

When the Athenian envoys heard this, they took it as disastrous news. As they were giving in to despair at the predicted catastrophe, Timon the son of Androboulos, one of the most respected of the Delphians, advised them to take olive branches and to go back a second time as suppliants to consult the oracle. The Athenians were persuaded by this and said, "O Lord, give to us some more favorable response concerning our fatherland, and respect these boughs which we bear. Otherwise, we will not depart from the sanctuary, but will remain until we gain our end."

In answer the prophetess gave this second response:
Pallas cannot now completely prevail with Zeus on Olympus
Pleading her suit with plenty of craftily compacted speeches;
But I will speak this word once again, hard as steel adamantine:
Though everything will be captured between the boundaries of Kekrops
And the recesses enclosed by the most holy mountain Kithairon,
One refuge only does Zeus grant Athena, the Trito-born goddess,
That is a wall of wood, which will benefit thee and thy children.

Now must thou not stay quiet, awaiting the onslaught of horses:
Do not delay till the infantry comes from afar—no, withdraw now
Turning thy back in flight: there will still be a day to confront him.
Salamis, thou, divine island, wilt bring death to the souls of the mothers,
Whether in season of scattering seed or of gathering harvest.

E. (Theopompus, in Porphyry, *On Abstinence* II. 16; frag. 344 in F. Jacoby, *FGrH* 115.) Theopompus reported that a rich man from Magnesia in Asia Minor arrived at Delphi. He was very wealthy, the owner of many herds of cattle... It was his habit every year to make many magnificent sacrifices on account of his prosperity, piety, and desire to please the gods. Being so religiously inclined he came to Delphi leading a procession of a hundred cattle for sacrifice to the god, and after a glorious display of honor to the god he passed into the consultation chamber in order to question the oracle. In his confidence that of all men he worshipped the gods best, he asked the Pythia to declare who worshipped the deity best and most devotedly and who made the most pleasing sacrifices—he supposed that first place would be given to him. But the priestess answered that Klearchos, a resident of Methydrion in Arcadia, worshipped the gods best of all. He was utterly amazed at this and eager to meet this man and learn how he performed his sacrifices. So he immediately went to Methydrion, noticed with disdain that it was a small and insignificant place and thought that not even the whole town, much less any of its private citizens, could honor the gods more magnificently and finely than he. Nevertheless he found the man and asked him to tell how he honored the gods. Klearchos said that he performed the sacrifices earnestly at the appropriate times, on the new moon of each month crowning and cleaning Hermes and Hecate and the other images which his ancestors had left and that he honored them with incense, barley cakes, and wheat cakes. Each year he took part in the public sacrifices, omitting none of the festivals. At these festivals he worshipped the gods not by slaughtering and butchering victims, but by sacrificing whatever he happened to have, preferably some of the available seasonal fruits which he received from the earth, and rendering first-fruits to the gods; some he would offer fresh, others as burnt offerings.

F. (Plutarch, *Letter to Apollonius*, 109a–b.) Pindar the poet says that Agamedes and Trophonios built the temple in Delphi, and when it was finished they asked Apollo for their reward; he promised to pay them in seven days; he advised them to enjoy themselves in the meantime. They did what he had commanded, and on the seventh night they lay down to sleep, and died.

The story is told that when envoys were sent by the Boeotians to the god's oracle, the poet Pindar enjoined them to inquire what the best thing for men is. The prophetess replied that he knew that perfectly well himself, at least if he really

was the author of the poem about Trophonios and Agamedes; if he wanted to learn by experience, it would become clear to him in a short time. When he heard this, he inferred that he was near death, and after a little while he died.

G. (Xenophon, *Anabasis* III. 1.5.) Socrates advised Xenophon to go to Delphi and consult with the god about his journey. So Xenophon went and asked Apollo to which god he should sacrifice and pray in order best to make the trip which he intended and to do it in health and safety. Apollo in response named the gods to whom he ought to sacrifice. When he came back, he told the oracle to Socrates, who criticized him because he had not first asked whether it would be better to make the journey or to stay at home, rather than deciding to go and then asking how best to make the journey; "Since, however," he said, "you have already asked, you must do everything that the god has commanded.!"

H. (Diodorus, *Library of History* XV. 18.1–2.) In Asia Minor … the Persian admiral Tachos founded a city on a cliff near the sea, which is called Leuke and has a sacred shrine of Apollo. A little later [383 B.C.] he died, and the people of Klazomenai and of Kymai came into conflict over this city. At first the cities tried to decide the issue by war, but someone suggested that they ask the god which of the cities ought to be in control of Leuke. The Pythia decided that it was the one which first offered sacrifice in Leuke: they were to start out, each from their own city, at sunrise on that day to which both parties would agree.

I. (Scholiast on Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* II. 11.) Karanos of Argos, the son of Poianthes, intended to send a colony to Macedonia; so he went to Delphi, and Apollo gave him this oracle:

> Noble Karanos, consider and take well to heart now my message.
> Leaving your Argos and Hellas, the home of fair, beautiful women,
> Go all the way to the source of the river that's called Haliakmon.
> There when you first see goats grazing, then that is the time it is fated:
> Dwell there in happiness, you and all of your future descendants.

J. (Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates*, 93.) Who of the old does not remember, or who of the young has not heard of, Kallistratos, whom the city condemned to death. He went into exile and heard from the god at Delphi that if he went to Athens he would gain the benefit of the law. So he went back and took refuge at the altar of the Twelve Gods; nevertheless he was put to death by the city. This was right, for in the case of criminals the benefit of the law is to get punishment.

K. (Demosthenes, *Against Macartatos*, 66.) The Athenian people inquire about the sign which has occurred in the sky, and what the Athenians should do, or

to which god they should sacrifice or pray, in order for the best result to come from the sign. Reply: Concerning the sign which has occurred in the sky, it is advantageous for the Athenians to sacrifice with good omens to Zeus Hypatos [Most High], Athena Hypate [Most High], Heracles, Apollo Soter [Savior], Lato and Artemis, to fill the streets with the aroma of sacrifices, to arrange choirs and bowls of mixed wine and to wear garlands, in the traditional manner, in honor of all the Olympian gods and goddesses, holding up right arms and left, and to bring the traditional offerings. To the founding hero whose name you bear, offer the traditional sacrifices and native gifts. If any persons die on the appointed day, any passersby are to perform the proper rites for them.

L. (Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 2–3.) A while after his marriage, Philip had a dream in which he saw himself placing a seal on his wife's womb; the figure on the seal was a lion.… After this vision Philip sent Chairon of Megalopolis to Delphi, where he is said to have received an oracle from the god commanding him to sacrifice to Ainmon and to revere that god most, adding that he would lose one of his eyes, the one with which he had spied through the chink in the door and seen the god in the form of a serpent lying with his wife.

M. (Plutarch, *The Divine Vengeance*, 560e.) The man who killed the poet Archilochus in battle was Kallondas, nicknamed Korax [the Crow]. At first he was thrown out by the Pythia, because he had killed the holy man of the Muses ["Thou who hast struck down the Muses' attendant, get out of my temple!"]. Then using various prayers and entreaties to justify himself, he was ordered to go to the dwelling of Tettix (at Tainaros) and supplicate the soul of Archilochus.

N. (*SIG*^{3} I. 204, lines 31–51; *IG* II^2 204, from 352/1 B.C.) [The Athenian people are unsure whether they may cultivate the sacred plot of the goddesses Demeter and Kore; … the alternatives are to be engraved on tin plates and the appropriate official] is to wrap each plate in wool and put them in a bronze jar in the presence of the people. The presiding officers [*prytaneis*] are to prepare these things, and the treasurers of the goddess [Athena] are immediately to bring a gold jar and a silver jar into the midst of the people. The *epistates* is to shake up the bronze jar and draw out each tin plate in turn, and put the first one into the gold jar and the other into the silver jar, then to tie them up. The *epistates* is to mark it with the public seal, and any other Athenian who wishes may put his own seal on besides. Then the treasurers are to carry the jars to the Acropolis. Next the people are to choose three men, one from the council and two from the whole citizen body, to go to Delphi and ask the god which of the written plans the Athenians should follow in regard to the sacred land, that in the gold jar or that in the silver. When they come back from consulting the god, they are to deliver the jars and both the

prophecy and the writing on both tin plates are to be read to the people: whichever writing the god indicates is more advantageous to the Athenian people, so shall it be done. . . .

C. Sacrifices

The Ceremony

The central religious act of the Greeks was the sacrifice of fruit, grain, or (most spectacularly) an animal. Two passages from Homer's *Odyssey* illustrate the details of animal sacrifice accompanied by prayer. The first describes a public festival occasion at which Nestor, king of Pylos, celebrates a solemn sacrifice to Poseidon. The second is more private; it takes place in the hut of Eumaios, the swineherd of Odysseus, and is not much more than the ritualized butchering of a pig for supper.

(Homer, *Odyssey* III. 439–463.)

Stratios and noble Echephron led an ox by the horns, and Aretos came from the chamber bringing them lustral water in a flower-decked cauldron; in the other hand he held barley meal in a basket. Thrasymedes stood by with a sharp axe in his hand to strike the ox dead. Perseus held a bowl [to receive the blood]. Old Nestor, the horseman, began to pour down the lustral water and sprinkle the barley meal. He made many prayers to Athena, setting aside as first-fruits hairs from the victim's head and tossing them in the fire. When they had prayed and sprinkled out the barley, bold Thrasymedes, Nestor's son, moved up and struck: the axe cut the neck tendons and stunned the ox. The women let out a shrill cry, Nestor's daughters, daughters-in-law and wife, Klymenos' eldest daughter Eurydike. The men raised it from the ground, and Peisistratos cut its throat. Its dark blood flowed out, its life left its bones. Straightway they quartered it, and cut off all the thigh-pieces, covered them with fat, folded them double, and placed pieces of raw flesh on them. The old man burnt them on split wood, and poured sparkling wine on it. The young men, beside him, held forked spits in their hands. When both the thighs had burned up and they had tasted the intestines, they cut the rest into smaller pieces and skewered them on spits, then took the sharp spits in their hands and roasted them.

(Homer, *Odyssey* XIV. 418–436.)

[The swineherd] cut the wood with his bronze axe, and the others brought in a fat five-year-old boar and made it stand by the hearth. The swineherd did not forget the immortals, for he had a good spirit. Setting aside as first-fruits hairs from the head of the white-toothed boar he tossed them in the fire and prayed to all the gods for Odysseus to return to his home. He raised himself up and struck with a piece of oak which he had cut, and the life left the boar. The others cut its throat

and singed its hair. Straightway they quartered it and the swineherd laid on pieces of raw flesh, starting with all the limbs and ending with the fatty tissue. They tossed these in the fire and sprinkled it with barley meal. They cut the rest into smaller pieces and skewered them on spits. They roasted them carefully and removed them, and piled them on wooden platters. The swineherd stood up to distribute it, for he had a sense of fairness. He divided it all up in seven portions—one for the Nymphs and Hermes, the son of Maia, which he set aside with a prayer,[10] and the rest he distributed to each person.

The Rationale

As the preceding passages from the *Odyssey* show, it was customary for the human participants in a sacrifice to eat the best parts of the victim. Hesiod, in the *Theogony*, gives an aetiological explanation of this custom. See J. Rudhardt, "Les mythes Grecs relatifs a l'instauration du Sacrifice," *Museum Helveticum* 27 (1970) 1–15; J.P. Vernant, "Pensée Sociale et Religieuse de la Grèce Ancienne," *Annuaire de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* (Paris), ye Sec., Sc. Relig. 81, 3 (1973–74) 259–276.

(Hesiod, *Theogony*, 535–557.)

Once when the gods and mortal men were disputing at Mekone, Prometheus divided up a large ox with careful thought and set it before them, intending to deceive Zeus. To the men he served flesh and intestines rich in fat inside a skin, covered with the ox's stomach. To Zeus in turn he served the white bones of the ox arranged with tricky craft, and he covered it with white fat.

Then the father of men and gods said to him, "Prometheus, son of Iapetos, most renowned of all sovereigns, esteemed one, what a discrepancy there is in the portions you have distributed." So spoke Zeus in mockery, for he knew about resourceful schemes.

Wily Prometheus spoke to him in answer, with a little smile as he remembered his crafty trick: "Zeus, most glorious, most great of the ever-living gods, choose whichever of these your heart urges you to take."

He said this in his craftiness, but Zeus who knew about resourceful schemes was aware of the trick. He espied trouble for mortal men and he intended to bring it about: so with both hands he selected the white fat—anger surrounded him, and wrath went through his heart, when he saw the white bones of the ox, the

10. See D. H. Gill, "Trapezomata, a Neglected Aspect of Greek Sacrifice," *Harvard Theological Review* 67 (1974) 117–137.

crafty trick. Ever since, the human race on the earth burns white bones to the immortals on smoking altars.

In spite of Hesiod's explanation, it seemed to many Greeks that sacrifices were often nothing more than excuses for a big banquet. In the following selection Knemon, the grouch-hero of one of Menander's comedies (written in the fourth century) complains about the increasing elaboration and irreverence of sacrifices.

(Menander, *Dyskolos*, 447–453.)

What sacrifices these scoundrels make! They bring their picnic boxes, their wine-jars, not for the gods, but themselves. The incense and barleycake is holy enough. The god gets all that, put there on the fire and they put on the tail bone and the bile, because they are inedible, for the gods—then they gulp down all the rest.

Sacrificial Procedure

Each month the Elean attendants at the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia conducted sacrifices at a solemn procession to a long series of altars in and around the sacred precinct. Pausanias' guidebook to Olympia details the order of the sacrifices, and concludes with the following account of the procedure. It illustrates incidentally the personnel in attendance at the ceremony.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* V. 15.10–12.)

Once each month the Eleans sacrifice on all the altars listed. They sacrifice in an ancient manner, burning incense on the altars along with wheat kneaded with honey, then lay on olive twigs and pour a libation of wine—except at the altars to the Nymphs, to the Ladies [*Despoinai*], and to all the gods in common, where it is not proper to offer wine. The sacrifices are under the supervision of the *theokolos* who holds that office for the month, the soothsayers, the libation-bearers, the *exegetes* [interpreter], the flute-player and the wood-man. They speak traditional words at the libations in the *prytaneion* and sing hymns, but it is not fitting for me to introduce them into my account. They pour libations not only to the Greek gods but also to the god in Libya [Ammon], to Hera Ammonia and to Parammon. (Parammon is an epithet of Hermes.) … The Eleans also pour libations to the heroes and the wives of heroes who are paid honor either in the district of Elis or in Aetolia. The hymns they sing in the *prytaneion* are in the Doric dialect, but they do not say who composed them.

Sacrifice and Augury

In addition to the verbal communications of the oracles, the gods were also thought to speak to men by means of the entrails of sacrificial victims. The following episode from Xenophon's account of a military expedition at the end of the fifth century shows him consulting the sacrificial victims for help in a personal decision, whether to assume sole command of the army.

(Xenophon, *Anabasis* VI. 1.17–24.)

In choosing a commander … they turned to Xenophon. The captains came to him and said that this was the army's judgment and each of them showed good will and tried to persuade him to take the command. Xenophon himself was inclined to desire the command, because he thought that he would gain more honor among his friends and a greater reputation when he came home. It might also happen that he would be the cause of some good to the army. These reflections urged him to take sole command. But on the other hand he noted that for every man the outcome of the future is unclear and for this reason there was danger that he might lose the good reputation he had already acquired, and so he was in doubt.

Since he could not decide, he thought it best to consult the gods. He brought two victims to the altar and offered sacrifice to King Zeus as was prescribed for him by the oracle at Delphi, and because he thought that from that god came the dream which he had when he took the initial step towards a share of the command. He remembered that when he was setting out from Ephesus to join Cyrus an eagle screamed on his right; however, it was sitting down, which the soothsayer who was escorting him said was a bird for the great rather than for the ordinary person, and its appearance symbolized glory, but also hard work, for other birds attack the eagle when it is sitting. The bird also did not prophecy profit, for the eagle captures its food while flying. So Xenophon offered sacrifice and the god signified clearly that he should not seek the command, not accept it if he were selected. So the matter ended.

Sometimes the gods refused to accept the sacrifices offered to them. In this passage Sophocles has the prophet Teiresias report on the bad omens he has observed both in the patterns of flying birds and in the inauspicious occurrences at sacrifices; both indicate the gods' displeasure with King Kreon, who has forbidden the burial of his nephew Polyneikes, in violation of Greek funeral custom.

(Sophocles, *Antigone*, 998–1011.)

Teiresias: You will know the trouble, when you hear the signs my art interprets. I was sitting at the old place of augury, where I observe the gathering of every sort of bird; I heard the cryptic voice of the birds, set to clamoring unintelligibly, goaded by some evil; I realized that they were tearing at each other with murderous claws; there was meaning in the flapping of wings.

With sudden fear I made trial of the burnt-offerings on the kindled altars—from the sacrifices none of Hephaestus' fire shown forth; instead the thigh portions became soggy and sodden, smoldering and sputtering. The gall bladder burst and sputtered bile, and the dripping thigh-pieces lay bared of their wrapping of fat.

The Swearing of Oaths

To swear an oath with proper solemnity and efficacy, it was necessary to call the gods to witness and implicate their divine prestige in the oath. In the Iliad, Agamemnon returns the girl Briseis to Achilles with an apology and an oath that he has not violated her. Homer appropriately surrounds the oath-taking with a scene of sacrifice—this sacrifice differs from most in that the victim is not eaten, but devoted entirely to the god, as Pausanias points out in his account of the athletes' oath to Zeus at Olympia.

(Homer, *Iliad* XIX. 252–268.)

Agamemnon drew a knife which he always wore in his sword's scabbard; setting aside as first-fruits hairs from a wild boar and raising his hands to Zeus, he prayed; and all the Argives stood silently by him in order, listening to the king. Making his prayer he looked toward broad heaven and said, "May now Zeus know first, most high and most perfect of the gods, and Earth and Sun and the Furies who under the earth punish men who swear false oaths: I have not laid a hand upon the girl Briseis, neither to sleep with her nor for any other reason. She has remained, untouched, in my tent. If any of this is falsely sworn, may the gods give me all the many pains which they give to a person who commits sin against them when he swears."

So he spoke, and slit the throat of the boar with the pitiless bronze. Taithybios spun it around and hurled it into the great expanse of the sea.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* V. 24.9–11.)

The statue of Zeus in the council-house [at Olympia] is made, more than any of his other statues, to strike wrongdoers with terror. It is called Zeus of the

Oaths, and holds a thunderbolt in each hand. It is customary for the contestants, their fathers and brothers, and even their trainers, to swear on the sacrificial flesh of a wild boar that there will be no cheating on their part in the Olympic games. The contestants swear in addition that for ten consecutive months they have perfectly followed all the training rules. Those who examine the boys and the colts which compete also take an oath to make their examination fairly and without bribes, and to keep secret the reasons for approval or rejection. I did not think to ask what it is the custom to do with the boar on which the athletes take their oath, since among the ancients custom ordained in regard to sacrifices that the victim on which an oath was made was not to be eaten by any man. Homer shows this, for the boar on which Agamemnon swore that Briseis had not shared his bed was thrown by the herald into the sea.

A Calendar of Sacrifices from Marathon

Individual localities had their annual and biennial cycle of rites, as attested by this inscription, a list of the official sacrifices held by the Athenian deme of Marathon and the cost of each. The inscription, published and discussed briefly by R.B. Richardson, "A Sacrificial Calendar from the Epakria," *American Journal of Archaology* 10 (1895) 209–226, is dated to the early-fourth century.[11]

(*IG* II^2 1358, col. ii, lines 1–53.)

[The deme-leader of the Ma]rathonians makes the following sacrifices [in the first quarter of the year: … within] ten days. To the Hero, [a pig, 3 drachmas; to the Heroine,] a pig, 3 drachmas. A table[12] for the Hero [and the Heroine, 1 drachmas.] In the month Boedromion, before the Mysteries [---] an ox, 90 drachmas, a sheep, 12 drachmas; to Kourotrophos […].

In the second quarter: in the month Posideon [---] an ox, 150 drachmas; a sheep, 12 drachmas; to the Heroine, [a sheep, 11 drachrnas, priestly portion,] 7 drachmas. To Ge [Earth] "in the Fields," a pregnant cow, 70 [drachmas, priestly portion---]. (line 10) To Telete,[13] *spylia*,[14] 40 drachmas.

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11. A similar deme calendar, from Erchia, has been published by G. Daux in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 87 (1963) 603–638, with further discussion by E. Vanderpool, ibid. 89 (1965) 21–26; M. Jameson, ibid. 154–172; S. Dow, ibid. 180–213.

12. Spread with meats and offerings. See D.H. Gill, "The Classical Greek Cult Table," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 70 (1965) 265–269.

13. A goddess of initiations, perhaps. The daughter of Dionysus and Nikaia.

14. Meaning unknown.

In the third quarter: in the month Gamelion: To Daira,[15] a pregnant ewe, 16 drachmas, priestly portion, 1 drachma. To Ge "at the Oracle," a sheep, 11 drachmas. To Zeus Hypatos [Most High], [--- drachmas]. To Ioleus, a sheep, 12 drachmas. To Kourotrophos, a pig, [3 drachmas, a ta]ble, 1 drachma, priestly portion, 2 drachmas, 1 1/2 obols. To the hero Pheraios, [a sheep, 12 drachmas]; to the Heroine, a sheep, 11 drachmas, priestly portion, 3 drachmas. In the month Elaphebolion, on the 10th: [To Ge "at the] Oracle," a completely black goat, 15 drachmas, priestly [portion, 1 drachma].

In the fourth quarter, in the month Mounichion, to Ar[---] (line 20) Nechos, an ox, 90 drachmas, a sheep, 12 drachmas, to the Heroine, a sheep, 11 drachmas, priestly [portion], 7 drachmas. To Neanias, an ox, 90 drachmas, a sheep, 12 drachmas, a pig, [3 drachmas], to the Heroine, a sheep, 11 drachmas, priestly portion, 7 drachmas, 1 1/2 obols.

The deme-leader of the Marathonians makes the following sacrifices. To the Hero "in [?]rasileia," a sheep, 12 drachmas, a table, 1 drachma; to the Heroine, a sheep, 11 drachmas. To the Hero "by the Hellotion,"[16] a sheep, 12 drachmas, a table, 1 drachma; to the Heroine, a sheep, 6 drachmas. In the month Thargelion: to Achaia,[17] a ram, 12 drachmas, a ewe, 11 drachmas, priestly portion, 3 drachmas To the Moirai [Fates], a pig, 3 drachinas, priestly portion, 1 1/2 obols.

(line 30). In the month Skirophorion, before the Skira.[18] To Hyttenios, fruits in season, a sheep, 12 drachmas. To Kourotrophos, a pig, 3 drachmas, priestly portion, 2 drachmas 1 obol. To the Tritopateres,[19] a sheep, priestly portion, 2 drachmas. To the Akamantes, a sheep, 12 drachmas, priestly portion, 2 drachmas.

The following in alternate years: first set—In Hekatombaion, to Athena Hellotis, an ox, 90 drachmas, three sheep, 33 drachinas, a pig, 3 drachmas, priestly portion, 6[+] drachmas. To Kourotrophos, a sheep, 11 drachmas, a pig, 3 drachmas, priestly portion, 1[+] drachmas. [---] boughs of laurel, 7 drachmas.

The following sacrifices are offered in alternate years beginning in the archonship in the Tetrapolis[20] of Euboulos: (line 40) second set—In Hekatombaion, to Athena Hellotis, a sheep, 11 drachmas; to Kourotrophos, a pig, 3 drachmas, priestly portion, 1 drachma, 1 1/2 obols. In Metageitnion, to the Eleusinian goddess, an ox, 90 drachmas; to Kore, a rain, 12 drachmas, three pigs, 9 drachmas,

15. An epithet of Persephone.

16. The Hellotion was probably the shrine of Athena Hellotis, an important goddess at Marathon.

17. An epithet of Demeter.

18. A festival of Demeter, held on the 12th of the month.

19. Ancestors of the clans.

20. The Tetrapolis was a vestigial religious consortium of Marathon and three neighboring demes.

priestly portion, 6 drachmas, 4 1/2 obols, 1/6 *medimnos* of barley, 4 obols, a *chous* of wine [---]; to Kourotrophos, a sheep, 11 drachmas, priestly portion, 1 drachma; to Zeus Anthaleus ["Flowering"], a sheep, 12 drachmas, priestly portion, 2 drachmas. In Anthesterion, to the Eleusinian goddess, a pregnant sow, (line 50) 20 drachmas, priestly portion, 1 drachma, 1 obol. To Chloe "beside Medylos' place," a pregnant sow, 20 drachmas, priestly portion, 1 drachma, 1/6 *medimno*s of barley, 4 obols, *chous* of wine, [---]. In Skirophorion, before the Skira, to Galios, a ram, 12 drachmas, priestly portion, 2 drachmas, from the well[?], 6 drachmas; to the Tritopateres, a table, 1 drachma.

D. Festivals

A Festival of Apollo at Delos

The *panegyris* was a major festival held regularly in honor of a god. The "Homeric" hymn to Apollo describes such a festival at the god's shrine on the island of Delos This annual festival was an occasion for Greeks from many of the Ionian cities (Athens, many of the Aegean islands and the west coast of Asia Minor) to gather and celebrate their common ancestry.[21]

(*Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, 146–164.)

Phoebus, thy heart taketh greatest delight in Delos, where the Ionians in their long tunics assemble, with their children and their modest wives. In remembrance they delight thee with boxing, with song and with dance, when they hold their assembly. One who comes upon them then, when the Ionians are gathered, might say they are immortal, ever ageless, for he would see their grace, and his heart would rejoice at the sight of the men and the fair-girded women, their swift ships and manifold possessions. Added to this is the great, amazing, imperishable glory of the Delian maidens, the servants of the far-shooting god, who first hymn Apollo, then Leto and Artemis the shooter of arrows; then they sing a hymn in remembrance of men and women of old, and they enchant the tribes of men. They know how to imitate the voices and sounds of all men, and each might say it were he himself singing, so concordant is their fair song.

The Panathenaic Festival

The greatest festival of the Athenian religious calendar was the Panathenaia; it was celebrated each year on the 28th of the month Hekatombaion (July/August), the birthday of Athena. Every fourth year the festival was celebrated in a more elaborate way, as the Greater Panathenaia. The first two selections describe the officials responsible for the administration of the sacrifices, the great procession (which is also depicted on the frieze of the Parthenon), and the athletic and musical competitions. The last two documents are decrees, one passed in 335/4 B.C. (part of the reorganization of the festival by Lycurgus) regulating the purchase of sacrificial victims and the other, from the first half of the fourth century, with a fragmentary listing of the prizes for the contests. The festival is discussed in general by J.A. Davison, "Notes on the

21. For a translation and commentary on a fourth-century Zeus festival on the island of Kos, see D.R. Smith, "The Coan Festival of Zeus Polieus," *Classical Journal* 69 (1973) 21–25.

Panathenaea," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 78 (1958) 23–42; ibid. 82 (1962) 141–142; H.A. Thompson, "The Panathenaic Festival," *Archaeologischer Anzeiger* 1961, 224–231; H.W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London and Ithaca, 1977), pp. 35–50.

(Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 54.6–7.)

The people also elect by lot ten men as *hieropoioi* [commissioners for sacred rites] charged with the expiatory sacrifices, who perform the sacrifices required by oracles and who, when it is necessary to do so, watch for good omens along with the soothsayers during sacrifices. It also elects by lot ten others who serve for a year and are charged with performing certain sacrifices and administering all the four-yearly festivals except the Panathenaia: these four-year festivals are (1) the one at Delos (there is also a five-year festival there), (2) the Brauronia, (3) the Heracleia, (4) the Eleusinia. The fifth is the Panathenaia, and it is not held in the same year as any of these others. Recently (since the year when Kephisophon was archon [329 B.C.]) the Hephaistia has been added to the list.

(Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 60.)

It also elects by lot ten men as *athlothetai*, [commissioners of the games], one from each tribe. After a hearing into their qualifications, they serve for four years, they administer the procession of the Panathenaia, the musical competition, the athletic contests and the horse race, have the *peplos* made, in cooperation with the council they have the oil-jars made, and they award the olive oil to the competitors. This oil is gathered from the sacred olive trees. The *archon* is to control the levies on the owners of the fields on which the trees are located, three half-*kotylai* from each tree.… When the *archon* has collected the oil accruing in his year of responsibility, he hands it over to the treasurers on the acropolis, and he is not allowed to move on and take his place [as a former *archon*] in the Areopagos until he has handed the whole amount over to the treasurers. The treasurers store it on the acropolis until the Panathenaia at that time they dole it out to the *athlothetai* and they in turn award it to the winners of the contests. The prizes are: silver and gold for the music competition, shields for the winner in physical fitness, olive oil for the athletic contests and horserace.

(*IG* II^2 334; *SIG*^{3} 271; *LGS* 29.)

… In order that the procession may be equipped and marshalled in the best possible way each year for Athena on behalf of the Athenian people, and that all the other necessary arrangements may be made for the festival as it is being

properly celebrated on every occasion for the goddess by the *hieropoioi*, it is voted by the people, in accordance with the resolution of the council: when the *hieropoioi* make the sacrifices, they are to distribute the portions of meat from two of them, that to Athena Hygieia and that in the old temple, performed in the traditional way, in the following proportions: five shares to the *prytaneis*, three to the nine *archons*, one to the treasurers of the goddess, one to the *hieropoioi*, three to the board of generals and division commanders, and the usual shares to the Athenians who participated in the procession and the maidens who act as *kanephoroi*; the meat from the other sacrifices they are to distribute to the Athenians. From the 41 minas which represent the rent of the sacred land, the *hieropoioi*, along with the cattle buyers, are to buy the sacrificial cattle; when they have conducted the procession, they are to sacrifice all these cattle to the goddess on the great altar of Athena, except for one which they are to choose ahead of time from the finest of the cattle and sacrifice on the altar of Nike; all the rest of the cattle bought with the 41 minas they are to sacrifice to Athena Polias and Athena Nike and distribute the meat to the Athenian people in the Kerameikos in the same fashion as in the other distributions of meat. They are to assign the portions to each deme [residential district] in proportion to the number of participants in the procession from each deme. Fifty drachmas are appropriated for the expenses of the procession, for the immolation and for the outfitting of the great altar and the other items which must be provided for the festival, and for the all-night celebration. The *hieropoioi* who administer the annual Panathenaia are to perform the night celebration in the finest manner possible and to conduct the procession at sunrise; they are to punish with the penalties of the laws anyone who does not obey their instructions. The Athenian people are to select certain men from the whole body of Athenians who shall …

(*IG* II^2 2311; *SIG*^{3} 1055.)

[For the rhapsodes: first prize,] a c[rown and -- drachmas)] second, [-- drachmas; third -- drachmas]

For the singers to the lyre: first prize, a crown of gold leaf worth 1000 drachmas and 500 silver drachmas; second, [7?]00 drachmas; third, [6?]00 drachmas; fourth, [4?]00 drachmas; fifth, 300 drachmas.

For the flute-players, male: first, 300 drachmas the worth of his crown, and 10 drachmas cash; second, 100 drachmas

For the lyre-players, male: first 500 drachmas the worth of his crown, and 300 drachmas cash; second, [?]00 drachmas; third, 100 drachmas.

For the flute-players: first, [?]00 drachmas the worth of his crown; second, -- .

For the winner of the boys' footrace, a jar of wine worth [50] drachmas; second, 10.

For the winner of the boys' pentathion: 30 jars of oil; second, 6.

For the winner of the boys' wrestling: 30 jars of oil; second, 6.
For the winner of the boys' boxing: 30 jars of oil; second, 6.
For the winner of the boys' pancration: 30; second, 8.
For the winner of the youths' footrace, 60 jars of oil; second, 12.
For the winner of the youths' pentathion: 40 jars of oil; second, 8.
For the winner of the youths' wrestling: 40 jars of oil; second, [8].
For the winner of the youths' boxing: [40 jars of] oil; [second, 8].
[For the winner of the youths' pancration: 40 jars of oil; second, 8]
F..... [men's events are missing from the stone]
For the race of pairs of foals: 140 jars of oil; second, 40.
For the race of luxury pairs of horses, 140 jars of oil; second, 40.
Military events:
For the winner on the mounted horse, 16 jars of oil; second, 4.
For the winner on pairs of horses, 30 jars of oil; second, 6.
For the winner on a processional pair, 4 jars of oil; second, 1.
For the javelin-throw from horseback, 5 jars of oil; second, 1.
Prizes for team events:
Boys' Pyrrhic dance, an ox worth 100 drachmas.
Youths' Pyrrhic dance, an ox worth 100 drachmas.
Mens' Pyrrhic dance, an ox worth 100 drachmas.
To the tribe which wins the physical fitness contest, an ox worth 100 drachmas.
To the tribe which wins --, an ox worth 100 drachmas.
To the winner of the torch race, a water-jar worth 30 drachmas.
Prizes of the ships' crews:
To the winning tribe, 300 drachmas.

E. Sanctuaries and Their Administration

The Greeks built their shrines, temples, and altars at holy places sanctified by ancient custom, by an evocative natural feature such as a spring or dramatic fissure in the earth, by the grave of a hero, or by the epiphany of some god. The area set aside for the god was called his *temenos*, literally the portion "cut off" for him from the surrounding land. On the architectural embellishment of these sanctuaries see B. Bergquist, *The Archaic Greek Temenos* (Lund, 1967); a survey of how the sanctuaries were consecrated, administered and utilized may be found in R.A. Tomlinson, *Greek Sanctuaries* (New York, 1976); see also P.E. Corbett, "Greek Temples and Greek Worshippers: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (University of London) 17 (1970) 149–158.

The Founding of the Cult of Pan in Athens

In 490 B.C., faced by invasion by a great Persian army, the Athenians sent the runner Philippides to Sparta to request military aid. Like Hesiod's meeting with the Muses (below, pp 154–155), Philippides' encounter with the rustic god Pan took place in a remote and lonely mountain. After their victory over the Persians at Marathon, the Athenians responded to Pan's request by establishing a cult in the city and by dedicating to him a cave at the site of the battle; see E. Vanderpool, "News Letter from Greece," *American Journal of Archaeology* 62 (1958) 321–322; A. Orlandos, *Ergon tis Archaiologikis Etairias 1958*, 15–22.

(Herodotus, *The Histories* VI. 105.)

While they were still in the city, the generals dispatched Philippides as a herald to Sparta. He was an Athenian man, a trained runner in very good condition. The god Pan, as Philippides himself said in his report to the Athenians, fell in with him on Mount Parthenion above Tegea: Pan called Philippides' name and commanded him to inquire of the Athenians why they paid no attention to him, even though he was well-disposed toward the Athenians, had on many occasions already proven to be good to them, and would continue to be so. The Athenians, after their affairs had been well settled, showed their faith in these events by establishing a shrine of Pan below the Acropolis; as a result of his revelation, they worship him with annual sacrifices and a torch race.

Sanctuary Regulations

These four inscriptions emphasize how the consecrated land of a precinct is set off, how certain activities are considered inappropriate within it. It is inter-

esting to note that all four documents are decrees of the citizen body or its council, illustrating the close natural concern of the city-state for its cults.

(*LGS* 95; from Amorgos, late-fifth century.)

Resolved by the council and the people, on the motion of Orthsileus: No one is to light a fire in the sanctuary of Hera at the corner of the new building [*oikos*] and the temple, nor at the Lykeion. If anyone does light one, he is to pay a fine of ten drachmas, sanctified to Hera.

(*IG* XII. 7.2; *SIG*^{3} 981; *LGS* 96; from Amorgos, on the same stone as the preceding, but inscribed a century or so later.)

Resolved by the council and the people, on the motion of Agenor, when Meliton was presiding officer: No stranger is permitted to put in at the sanctuary of Hera; the temple attendant [*neokros*] is to take care to keep them out. If he does not keep them out, he is to pay a fine of ten drachmas, sanctified to Hera, for each day. The superintendents [*neopoioi*] are to take care to inscribe this decree in front of the doors.

(*SIG*^{3} 986; from Chios, early-fourth century.)

Resolved by the council, Tellis presiding: In the sacred groves there is to be no pasturing or dumping of manure. If any one does herd sheep, pigs, or cattle, the person who sees it should report it to the authorities [*basileis*] in order to remain pure in the god's sight. The fine for the shepherd, swineherd or cowherd shall be 1/12 stater for each animal. If any one is caught dumping manure, he shall pay five staters to become pure in the god's sight. If the person who sees it does not report it he shall pay five staters, sanctified to the god …

(*IG* II^2 1362; *SIG*^{3} 984; *LGS* 34; from a shrine of Apollo "Erisatheus" near Athens, end of the fourth century.)

Gods! The priest of Apollo Erisatheus announces, on behalf of himself, the members of the deme and the Athenian people, that it is forbidden to cut wood in the sanctuary of Apollo, or to carry wood or branches, whether with leaves, without leaves or dry, out of the sanctuary. If any one is caught cutting or carrying any of the forbidden things out of the sanctuary, if it is a slave who is caught he shall be given fifty lashes and the priest shall turn him over to the king-*archon* and the council along with the name of his master, according to the decree of the council and the Athenian people. If he is a free man, the priest together with the

deme-leader shall fine him fifty drachmas and turn his name over to the king-*archon* and the council, according to the decree of the council and the Athenian people.

The Lease of a Shrine

This interesting document preserves the text of the contract by which the *orgeones* (a religious association devoted to the cult of a specific god or hero) of the hero Egretes rent out, in 306/305 B.C., the sanctuary of their patron hero. The lessee, Diognetos, agrees to perform certain tasks of maintenance and to arrange for the annual festival of the association. In addition to the few benefits specified in the text, Diognetos presumably had the use of the land belonging to the sanctuary, and would be entitled to its produce. The inscription is interesting for the details of sanctuary equipment and of the cult life of an association of orgeones, but also for its indication of how the orgeones financed their religious activities, by using the sacred land as an income-producing endowment.

(*SIG*^{3} 1097; *LGS* 43.)

Gods! The *orgeones* rent the sanctuary of Egretes to Diognetos, son of Arkesilos from the deme Melite, for ten years, at the rate of 200 drachmas each year; he is to manage the sanctuary and the buildings constructed in it as a sanctuary; Diognetos shall whitewash the walls which need it, and shall construct and arrange whatever else he wants. At the expiration of the ten-year period, he shall take away with him the woodwork, the roof-tiles and the doors and posts; but he shall remove none of the other furnishings. He shall tend the trees growing in the sanctuary; if any dies, he shall replace it and hand on the same number. Diognetos shall pay the rent money to the treasurer of the *orgeones* in office each year, one half (that is, 100 drachmas) on the first day of Elaphebolion. When the *orgeones* sacrifice to the hero in Boedromion, Diognetos is to have open the structure where the shrine is, as well as the shed, the kitchen, and the couches and tables for two dining rooms. If Diognetos does not pay the rent at the times specified, or does not fulfill the other specifications of the lease, the lease is to be void and he is to be deprived of the woodwork, the roof-tiles and the doors and posts, and the *orgeones* are free to rent to whomever they wish. If any tax is assessed, it is to be deducted from the fee to the *orgeones*. Diognetos is to inscribe this lease on the stone which stands in the sanctuary. The term of the lease begins in the year when Koroibos is *archon*.

Assessments and Contributions to a Cult

This document provides for the financial needs of the shrine at Lindos, on the island of Rhodes, of Enyalios. This is a common cult-name of Ares, god of war, and this decree (again, made by the citizen body of the city-state) assesses certain contributions to the cult by the soldiers in the armies of Lindos, and also by any individual Lindians who go to war on their own, presumably as mercenaries. The inscription incidentally gives interesting details of the sacrifices and processions with which the god was worshipped.

(*SEG* IV. 171; *LSCG* 85; late-fifth century B.C.)

Resolved by the council and the people; on the motion of Agatharchos: Any soldier from Lindos who goes on public or private campaign shall contribute the sixtieth part of his wages to Enyalios; the general shall collect the amount and convey it to the priest. The fees paid by others are to be conveyed to the priest by the individuals themselves. Each year the priest is to report to the council and convey [the treasury] to the incoming priest. The *epistatai* are to record the sums which the generals and the others on campaign had. The *prytaneis* on duty in the month Artimition are to make sacrifice to Enyalios; they shall sacrifice to Enyalios a wild boar, a dog, and a kid. The council is to arrange the procession: the hoplites are to come after the priests whom the council will appoint. A shelter shall be built for Enyalios; when the money is donated by private individuals at Lindos, the council shall collect it. If the generals do not collect the money from the soldiers let it be a sacrilege against the god and let him [i.e., the general] be liable likewise in the case of private individuals who go on campaign. Both the generals and the private individuals shall come and deposit the money with the priest within a month. The decree shall be recorded on stone and deposited beside the altar of Enyalios.

Duties of a Priest

The oracular shrine of Amphiaraos was located on the coast of Attica about 50 km north of Athens, near the town of Oropos. The oracle enjoyed considerable prestige, as Herodotus knew (see p. 72 above), and this inscription lists the sacred laws requiring that the priest spend some time each month in the sanctuary, to be available for those who wanted to sacrifice or spend the night ("incubate") there.

(*IG* VII. 235; *SIG*^{3} 1004; *LGS* 65.)

Gods! From the onset of winter until the spring plowing season the priest of

Amphiaraos is to go into the sanctuary when winter arrives and until the sowing season with no greater interval than three days between visits, and he is to be in residence there not less than ten days in each month. He is to require the *neokoros* [temple attendant] to care for the sanctuary in accordance with the law and also for those who visit the sanctuary. If anyone commits a crime in the sanctuary, whether stranger or member of the deme, the priest has authority to fine him up to a maximum of five drachmas, and he is to require security from the person so fined. Should he pay the fine, he is to deposit it in the treasury in the presence of the priest. If anyone suffers some private injury in the sanctuary, whether stranger or member of the deme, the priest is to give judgment up to a maximum of three drachmas; as for larger sums, the judgments provided in the laws for each victim are to be in effect here also. Any summons arising from an offense in the sanctuary must be issued on the same day. If the defendant does not make restitution, a trial is to be held on the next day.

When a person comes to be healed by the god, he is to donate a first-fruit offering of at least nine obols[22] of silver, and deposit it in the treasury in the presence of the *neokoros*. When he is present, the priest is to say the prayers over the sacrifices and place the victim on the altar; when he is not present the person making the sacrifice is to do this. During the public sacrifice each person is to say the prayers for himself, but the priest is to say them over the public sacrifices, and he is to receive the skin of all the victims sacrificed within the sanctuary. Each person may offer whatever sacrifices he wishes. No portions of meat are to be carried out of the precinct. Sacrificers are to donate the shoulder-portion of each victim to the priest except during a festival; at that time he is to receive the shoulder portion only from the public victims. . . .

Rules for incubation: the *neokoros* is to record the name and city of the incubator when he deposits his money, and to display it on a bulletin board for anyone to read. In the sleeping-hall men and women are to lie separately, the men to the east of the altar, the women to the west

The Purchase of a Priesthood

Few Greek cults had a professional priesthood. Instead ordinary citizens served—in some cases they were elected, in others appointed; in still other cults the priesthood and its prestige and perquisites were sold. This inscription lists the duties and privileges of the man who purchased a certain priesthood on the island of Chios.

22. The amount was originally one drachma [6 obols], but this has been erased and the higher fee inserted.

(*LSCG* 77.)

The man who purchases the priesthood shall exercise it for life, provided he continues to live in the city. He is to be exempt from all taxes and receive for himself the first portions from the one who makes a sacrifice, of entrails, shanks, knees, tongue, two double portions of meat, Hermes-cakes, the offerings of which anyone makes burnt-sacrifices. And, in addition, an appropriate share of the banquet. If the city holds a banquet, he is to receive 1/12 gold stater. If outsiders sacrifice, [he receives the same share as in the case of a Chian, but] the sacrificer [adds in addition …]

F. Rural. Cults and Customs

Reverence for the forces of nature permeated much of Greek religion. Every river had its deity, every tree and spring its nymph; along streets and crossroads were small shrines of Hecate, Apollo, and Hermes. The cycle of agriculture was observed in sowing festivals each autumn, and harvest festivals in spring, including processions with May boughs rich with fertility symbolism. For a discussion of the cults of the Greek countryside, see M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion* (New York, 1940), ch. 2.

The World of Nature Spirits

Hesiod's collection of ritualistic prescriptions tells how to avoid giving offence to the immortals; it is clear testimony to faith in river gods, wood nymphs and other ubiquitous nature divinities. In the next passage the geographer Strabo describes the countryside of Elis in the western Peloponnese, full from end to end with shrines of the gods of nature.

(Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 724–741)

After daybreak, never with unwashed hands pour sparkling wine as a libation to Zeus or to the other immortals. Do not urinate standing, turned to face the sun, but be mindful to do it after it sets, and toward its rising; do not urinate either on the road, or off the road as you travel, or uncovered; nights, you see, belong to the gods. The godly man who is prudent does it sitting, or else facing the wall of an enclosed courtyard.

At home, do not approach the earth and expose yourself when your genitals are stained with semen; avoid this. Do not beget children after returning from an inauspicious burial, but do it after a feast of the immortals. Never cross the fair water of ever-flowing rivers on foot before you have looked into the clear stream, washed your hands in the lovely bright water, and said a prayer. Whoever crosses without washing his hand is stained by evil: the gods despise him and give him grief in return.

(Strabo, *Geography* VIII. 343.)

The Alpheios River flows through Phrixa, Pisatis, and Triphylia, past Olympia itself and into the Sicilian Sea between Pheia and Epitalion. Near its mouth is the sacred grove of Artemis Alpheionia or Alpheiousa (both forms are used), 80 stades from Olympia. A festival is also celebrated every year in Olympia in honor of this goddess, as well as to Artemis under the names Elaphia and Daphnia. This

whole land is full of shrines of Artemis, Aphrodite and the Nymphs, most of them in well-watered, flowering groves. It is also thick with shrines of Hermes along the roads, and of Poseidon on the shore.

Wayside Gods: Hecate, Apollo Agyieus, Herms

This series of short passages shows how commonly shrines were located along streets and roads. At crossroads in the country Hecate was worshipped with small offerings of food. In cities Apollo had his altars outside each house, and Thucydides and Timaeus reflect the local importance of the Herms, square pillars outfitted with human heads and genitals. See M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion*^{2} I (Munich, 1955), p. 203.

(Plato, *Laws* XI. 914b.)

If a person leaves any of his possessions behind, whether deliberately or accidentally, anyone who happens on them is to let them lie, in the belief that the Wayside *Daimon* guards such things which are consecrated to the goddess by the law.

(Ancient Scholiast on this passage.) By wayside *Daimon* Plato means Artemis, or the Moon [Hecate], since both she and Apollo Agyieus ["of the Streets"] fill the roads with light, he, as the Sun, during the day, she during the night. Hence they place them along the roads. They also call Hermes the "Wayside Leader," to acknowledge how necessary his guidance is in business affairs. For this reason they also erect columns by the roadside to represent him.

(Aristophanes, *Ploutos*, 594–597.)

You can inquire of Hecate whether it is better to be rich or poor. She says the wealthy send dinner out to her every month, but the poor grab it up before it ever gets deposited.

(Ancient Scholiast on this passage.) It was the custom for the rich to dedicate bread and other things to Hecate, and for the poor to take some of them. They sacrifice to Hecate on the thirtieth. The poor live off the sacrifices.

(Helladius in Photius, *Library*, 535b, ed. J. Bekker.)

They used to worship the Loxias [i.e., the Apollo] which each person places in front of his door; they build a round altar beside it; passersby stop and crown it with myrtle wreaths. They call this altar Loxias Agyieus.

(Ancient Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Ploutos*, 1153)

"Pivot-god" [or "Hinge-god"] is an epithet of Hermes in that he is placed beside doors to protect against other thieves.

(Thucydides, *History* VI. 27.)

In the meantime most of the stone images of Hermes in Athens had their faces hacked off in a single night: these, according to local custom, are squared off and many are at the doors of private houses and in sanctuaries.

(Timaeus in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* X. 437b; frag. 158 in *FGrH* 566.)

Dionysios the tyrant on the festival of the *Choes* promised a golden wreath to the first man to drain the pitcher dry. When Xenokrates the philosopher drained it and received the golden wreath, he untwined it and placed it on the Hermes located in the courtyard. It was his custom to do this each evening when he returned home with his wreathes of flowers. For this he was admired.

Water Nymphs

The rites of propitiation to the nymph-spirits of springs and of the sea are described in these selections. Both Pausanias and Polemon are late authors, but they preserve ceremonies reflecting very ancient usages.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* III. 23.8.)

As you go on from Epidauros Limera about two stades, on the right is the "Water of Ino," about as large as a small lake, but going deeper into the earth. They throw barley-cakes into this water on the festival of Ino. If the water keeps them submerged, it is auspicious for the person who threw them in; but if it returns them to the surface, it is judged a bad omen.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* VIII. 38.4.)

On Mount Lykaion is the spring of Hagno. It is like the River Danube in that it produces the same amount of water in winter and in summer. If a drought lasts a long time and seeds in the earth and the trees are beginning to dry up, on such occasions the priest of Zeus Lykaios addresses a prayer to the water, makes the customary sacrifices and lets an oak-branch down onto the surface of the spring, but not deeply into it. When the water has been stirred a steam-like mist rises; in

a short while the mist gathers other clouds to itself and causes rain to fall on the land of the Arcadians.

(Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* XI. 462b–c.)

Polemon in his book about Morychos says that in Syracuse, at the very tip of the island, there is a hearth outside the city-wall next to the sanctuary of Olympian Ge [Earth]. He says that sailors, when they set out to sea, take a cup from this hearth and convey it until they can no longer see the shield on the temple of Athena. At that point they let down into the sea an earthenware cup, after they have put into it flowers, honeycomb, lumps of frankincense and with them certain other fragrant herbs.

Harvest Festivals

Feasting and thank-offerings followed naturally enough on the gathering of the harvest. Aristotle emphasizes the fertility imagery and the revelry of leisure time in such traditional harvest festivals. The following selections present testimonies for examples of such agricultural ceremonies as rustic singing contests, and the decoration and carrying of the maypole and similar shrubs. See also the phallic procession in honor of Dionysus, pp. 154–155 below. See M.P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 164–165, 199–200.

(Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII. 1160a, 19–20, 23–28.)

Some kinds of associations seem to be formed for the purpose of enjoyment, such as those devoted to religious revels [*thiasoi*] and to feasting [*eranoi*]; these exist for the sake of sacrifice and fellowship: they hold their sacrifices and meetings, portioning out honors to the gods, and providing themselves with pleasurable refreshment. In ancient times, for instance, sacrifices and meetings were held as a kind of first-fruits following the gathering of the crops, since they had the most leisure at those seasons.

The Thalysia at Syracuse. (Prolegomena to Theocritus, *Bucolicorum Graecorum … Reliquiae* II, p. 5, ed. H.L. Ahrens, 1859.)

There was at one time civil unrest in Syracuse, and many citizens died. When the citizens gathered to make reconciliation they determined that Artemis had been responsible for the discord. So the farmers brought gifts and sang a joyful hymn to the goddess. Later they set aside a place and made these rustic songs into a customary event. They say that as they sang they had draped over themselves

(1) a loaf of bread with the figures of wild beasts on it, (2) a purse full of every type of seed, and (3) a goat-skin with wine; they poured out libations for all those they met, wore a garland and deer antlers, and carried a shepherd's rabbit-prod in their hands. The one who wins receives the bread of the defeated. The winner stays in the city of Syracuse, but the defeated ones go into the hinterland to gather their own food. They also sing certain other songs of a playful, funny nature, first saying in reverent tones,

Receive good fortune, receive good health
Which we bring from the goddess, by which she gave her command.

The Daphnephoria at Thebes. (Proclus in Photius, *Library*, p. 321b, ed. J. Bekker.)

The so-called Parthenia [Maiden-festival] is characterized by choruses of maidens; it belongs to the same type as the Daphnephoria [Carrying of the Laurel]; for instance in Boeotia the priests bear laurel branches over an eight-year period to the rites of Apollo, and they have a chorus of maidens sing hymns to him. At the Daphnephoria they twine laurel branches and fresh flowers around a pole of olive wood. At the tip a bronze ball is attached, and they fit other smaller balls on to it. Then they decorate the middle of the pole with purple garlands which are smaller than the ball at the tip, and they wrap the bottom of the pole in a saffron cloth. The ball at the top signifies the sun, by which they also mean Apollo; the lower one means the moon, and the smaller ones attached mean the stars, and the garlands symbolize the course of the year, for they make 365 of them. A child who has both parents living leads the procession [as "laurel-bearer"] and his closest relative carries the decorated pole, which they call *kopo*. The laurel-bearer comes after it, holding the laurel, with his hair unbound, wearing a golden crown, a bright long gown, and Iphicrates-style shoes. The chorus comes after him, holding out branches for the chants of supplication. The procession is conducted all the way to the sanctuary of Apollo, Ismenios, and Chalazios.

The Pyanepsia at Athens. (Pausanias in Eustathius, *Commentary on the Iliad* XXII. 495.)

The *eiresione* is a branch of olive wrapped in wool, on which various fruits of the earth are hung. A child who has both his parents living carries it and places it before the doors of the sanctuary of Apollo at the Pyanepsia. According to tradition Theseus, when he was sailing to Crete, landed at the island of Delos during a storm, and prayed to Apollo that he would deck him with olive branches and hold a sacrifice, if he killed the Minotaur and got back safe. And so he decked out this branch as a sign of supplication, cooked up pots of broth and gruel, and established an altar. The rite is called the "pyanepsia" [Cooking of the Beans];

beans used to be called *pyanoi*. They also used to conduct these rites in order to avert a famine. The children sang this song:

> The *eiresione* brings figs and rich bread,
> Honey in a pot and olive oil to mix in,
> And a cup of strong wine, so that she may
> Get drunk and go to sleep.

After the festival they put them outside the fields next to the doors. Krates says that once when Athens was suffering a drought they wrapped branches in wool and dedicated them to Apollo as a sign of supplication. Others report that a white wreath and a purple one were hung on the branch, that a supplication was offered to Apollo on the day on which Theseus' companions were rescued, and that they poured libations of sauces and a cup of mixed wine on that day, and sang the foregoing song.

Chapter IV. Private Religion

A. Family Religion

From a modern perspective, the cult practices "writ large" in the cults of the city-state are most easy to see and understand. To a citizen of an ancient city-state, however, there were other relatively more intimate areas of religious activity which would have come more immediately into focus. Each citizen could claim his citizenship, as a general rule, because he was a member of a group called a "phratry"; this was in actuality or legal fiction a kinship group based on common descent from an often legendary ancestor. Another constituent of the tribes which made up the state was the *genos*, a word cognate with the English words "gene," "generation" and "genesis," and meaning something like "clan"; each *genos* had its own sacrifices and other observances. Classical literature has many allusions to the way in which the religious and also the political life of the city-state was rooted in kinship groups; and the following brief passage shows how crucial Plato considered the family gods to be in his utopian society

(Plato, *Laws* V 729c.)

When a person honors and respects the family relationship and the whole community of his kindred gods [*homognioi theoi*] which shares the same descent and blood, he would, correspondingly, enjoy the favor of the familial gods [*genethlioi theoi*], who will be well disposed toward his own begetting of children.

The following selection from Aristotle shows how the gods of the clan and of the family were considered touchstones of true and legitimate descent within one of the families which made up the city-state.

(Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 55.2.)

The nine archons undergo a scrutiny first in the Council of 500, and then

again in a court hearing; their secretary, like the other magistrates, undergoes it only in a court hearing; but all, both those chosen by lot and those elected by a show of hands, submit to a scrutiny before they serve their term. In former times anyone whom the Council rejected was ineligible to serve, but now there is the right of appeal to a court hearing, and the outcome of its scrutiny always prevails. During the scrutiny the first question they ask is, "Who is your father, and from which deme, who is your father's father, who is your mother, who is your mother's father, and from which deme?" After this they ask whether he has an Apollo Patroos "of the Ancestors" and Zeus Herkeios ["of the Enclosure"], and where these shrines are then whether he has family tombs and where they are then whether he treats his parents well, and pays his taxes, and has performed his military service

Rites of the Phratry

The following inscription, of the early-fourth century B.C., was found at Dekeleia in Attica. It records the regulations of the phratry of the Demotionidai. It establishes criteria for membership in the phratry and procedures for screening applicants based on the legitimacy of their claims to kinship. One indication of the importance of the phratry as a kinship group is the pair of sacrifices mentioned in the inscription: the *meion* was offered by fathers of sons born during the preceding year; the *koureion* was offered when a son reached military age and became a full member of phratry and city. On the phratry (and this inscription in particular), see A. Andrewes, "Philochoros on Phratries," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 81 (1961) 1–15; W.K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (London and Ithaca, N.Y., 1968), pp. 92–96. For a document of a genos cult, see the Salaminioi decrees, above pp. 81–85.

(*IG* II^2 1237; *SIG*^{3} 921; *LGS* 17.)

Theodoros the son of Euphantides, the priest of Zeus Phratrios, carved and erected this inscription. The following parts of sacrificial victims are to be given to the priest: from the *meion*, a thigh, a flank, an ear, and three obols of silver; from the *koureion*, a thigh, a flank, an ear, a pancake made from a *choinix* of flour, half, a *chous* of wine, a drachma of silver.

Resolved by the members of the phratry during the archonship at Athens of Phormion [396/5 B.C.], when Pantakles of Ion was leader of the phratry: Hierokles moved: Concerning all those who have not yet been voted on according to the rules of the Demotionidai, the members of the phratry are to vote immediately, submitting to Zeus Phratrios and carrying the ballots from the altar. If it is determined that someone has been introduced without being a member of the phratry, the priest and the leader of the phratry shall erase his name from the

roster, both the one at the place of the Demotionidai and the copy. The person who introduced the rejected candidate shall owe a hundred drachmas, sacred to Zeus Phratrios. The priest and the leader of the phratry shall check this sum of money, or else be liable for it themselves. From now on the balloting shall take place in the year following that in which the *koureion* is offered, on the "Koureotis" [the third day of the festival] of the Apatouria. They shall carry the ballots from the altar. If one of those who is voted down wishes to appeal to the Demotionidai, it shall be allowed. The "house" of the Dekeleians[23] shall choose five men over thirty years of age as advocates on their behalf, the leader of the phratry shall administer the oath to them, and the priest shall plead the cause of justice and not permit anyone who is not a member to conduct the business of the phratry. Of those who appeal, any whom the Demotionidai vote down shall owe a thousand drachmas, sacred to Zeus Phratrios, and the priest of the house of the Dekeleians shall check the money, or else be liable for it himself. Any other member of the phratry besides who wishes to may check it. These regulations were passed in the archonship of Phormion. Now the leader of the phratry is to put to the vote the decision about those who must be voted on each year. If he fails to do this, he shall owe five hundred drachmas, sacred to Zeus Phratrios; and the priest and any one else who wishes shall check this money for the community. From now on they shall celebrate both types of sacrifices at the altar in Dekeleia, and if he does not sacrifice at the altar, he shall owe fifty drachmas, sacred to Zeus Phratrios, and the priest shall check the money or else shall be liable for it himself, unless some plague or war is occurring; if such a case prevents it, then they shall celebrate both types of sacrifices wherever the priest prescribes. He shall publish it five days before the "Dorpia" [the first day of the Apaturia] on a whitened board at least one span in width, at the place where the Dekeleians congregate in the city. The priest shall inscribe this decree and the sacrificial regulations on a stone tablet in front of the altar of the Dekeleians at his own expense.

Nikodemos moved: The foregoing provisions about the introduction of children and the voting are to continue in effect; and three witnesses which are provided at the preliminary examination from the members of the examinees' own *thiasos* shall witness the questions and swear by Zeus Phratrios; and the witnesses shall witness and swear while holding on to the altar; if in this *thiasos* there are not enough men, they are to be provided from the other members of the phratry. When the voting takes place, the leader of the phratry shall not put the vote about the children to all the members of the phratry until the members of the *thiasos* of the candidate vote, taking the ballots secretly from the altar. The leader of the phratry shall count these ballots in the presence of the whole membership

23. Whether the "house" refers to the whole phratry or to some smaller group within it is unclear; see Andrewes, "Philochoros on Phratries," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 81 (1961), p. 4.

in the market place and shall announce the result. If the members of the *thiasos* vote to admit him to membership, but the others vote him down, the members of the *thiasos* shall owe a hundred drachmas, sacred to Zeus Phratrios, except for those who were opposed to him in the debate. If the members of the *thiasos* vote him down, and he appeals to the whole membership, and they all vote to admit him to membership, then he shall be registered in the common roster. If the whole membership also votes him down, he shall owe a hundred drachmas, sacred to Zeus Phratrios. If the members of the *thiasos* vote him down and he does not appeal to the whole membership, the vote of the *thiasos* shall stand. The members of the *thiasos* shall vote about the children from their own *thiasos* separately from the other members of the phratry. The priest shall add this resolution to the inscription on the stone tablet. Oath of the witnesses at the induction of the children: "I bear witness that the child is the legitimate son of the man who is introducing him, born of a wedded wife. This is true by Zeus Phratrios. If this oath is true, may all good come to me, if it is false, the opposite."

Menexenos moved: Resolved by the members of the Phratry: the above provisions concerning the introduction of the children shall stand, but in order that the members of the phratry may be sure of those who are about to be inducted, in the year immediately following the *koureion* sacrifice, the name of the father, his deme, mother's father and his deme shall be registered with the leader of the phratry, and he is to publish it where the Dekeleians congregate, and the priest is to write it on a whitened board in the shrine of Leto.

Rites of the Household

The domestic worship of the family is not as explicitly documented in ancient literature as the more spectacular ceremonies of the city-state; the reason for this is probably that it was so common as to be taken for granted. The following brief passages do cast some light on the homely rites offered to the divinities of hearth (Hestia), protecting enclosure wall (Zeus Herkeios), and family possessions (Zeus Ktesios).

(Diodorus, *Library of History* V. 68.1.)

It is said that Hestia [hearth] invented the establishment of houses, and because of this blessing she has been among almost all peoples installed in every house, receiving her share of worship and sacrifices.

(Scholiast on Plato, *Euthydemus*, 302d.)

The Athenians call their homes "enclosures" [*herkē*] hence they have a "Zeus Herkeios"; they install him in their houses for protection.

(Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* XI. 473b–c.)

Philemon says that a *kadiskos* is a kind of drinking cup. It is also a vase in which they set the figures of Zeus Ktesios, as Autokleides says in his book of interpretations: "The figures of Zeus Ktesios should be installed in this way: take a new two-handled, lidded *kadiskos* and garland its handles with white wool, with a fillet [hanging] from the right shoulder and brow [of the officiant?], and into it anything you find, and pour in *ambrosia*. This *ambrosia* is a mixture of pure water, olive oil, and all kinds of fruit; put them in."

(Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Ploutos*, 768.)

In the case of newly purchased slaves, when they first enter the house, or in general of any persons about whom they desire to have good auspices, for example, a person newly married, it was their custom to shower sweetmeats at the hearth as a symbol of good seasons. The "showers" consisted of dates, sweet cakes, candied fruit, figs, and nuts which the other slaves would snatch up.

The following passage is from a speech delivered in a private lawsuit during the fourth century B.C.; the plaintiff claims a share of Kiron's estate, and seeks to prove she was a part of the family on the grounds that she was allowed to participate in the intimate rites celebrated in honor of the familial gods.

(Isaeus, *Orations* VIII. 15–16.)

… We also have other evidence that we are offspring of Kiron's daughter. He treated us as children of his own daughter, in that he never performed a sacrifice of any kind without us; instead whether the sacrifice was small or great, we were always at his side joining in the sacrifice. Furthermore not only were we invited on such occasions, but he also always took us to the country for the Dionysia, and we used to sit at his side at the performances, and we celebrated all the festivals at his house. When he sacrificed to Zeus Ktesios, a rite to which he was especially devoted, he never admitted slaves or free strangers; rather he performed all the rites himself, and we shared in them and joined in handling the victims, placing offerings on the altar, and performing the rest; and he prayed that we would receive health and prosperity, as was proper for a grandfather.

The next selection describes a domestic celebration in honor of Zeus Ktesios, with its offerings, family meal and the comfortable presence of a good friend. It presents a vivid picture of the rites to which the preceding selections have alluded, but it was not written just to illustrate Greek domestic cults: it forms

part of a speech in which the speaker accuses his stepmother of poisoning his father; it would have been delivered before the Athenian homicide court of the Areopagos near the end of the fifth century B.C.

(Antiphon, *Orations* I. 14–20.)

There is a room upstairs in our house which Philoneos occupied when he spent any time in the city; he was a good man, a gentleman and our father's friend. Philoneos had a concubine, but he intended to put her away in a brothel. Now my brother's mother made friends with her. (15) When she learned that she was going to be wronged by Philoneos, she sent for the concubine, and when she came, she told her that she too had been wronged by our father: if she were willing to cooperate she said that she was ready to win Philoneos for the concubine, and our father for herself [with a love-potion]. She added that her own task was to find a way, and the concubine's was to assist. (16) So she asked if she would be willing to help, and she promptly, as I suppose, promised to do it. Later, it happened that Philoneos had a shrine of Zeus Ktesios in Peiraeus; my father was about to sail to Naxos, so it seemed best to Philoneos, since my father was his friend, to go to Peiraeus along with him, and at the same time to perform the sacrifices and share a meal with him. Philoneos' concubine went along to help with the sacrifice. (17) When they were in Peiraeus, he made the sacrifices as was proper. When he was finished, the woman considered whether to administer the (supposed) potion to them before or after dinner. She decided it would be better to do it after dinner, thus attending to the suggestion of that Clytemnestra. (18) It would take a long time to tell all the details, but I will try to explain briefly how she administered the potion. After they had dined, Philoneos, as was proper, sacrificed to Zeus Ktesios and received his friend, while he in turn, on the point of sailing and enjoying the hospitality of his friend, poured libations and put incense on them. (19) Philoneos' concubine, as she was preparing the libation with which they would say prayers which were not to be fulfilled, put in the potion. She thought it would be smart to give more to Philoneos, perhaps so that, by giving him more, she would be more beloved by Philoneos—she did not yet know that she had been deceived by my step-mother, until she was in the midst of the evil. For our father she put in less. (20) Then, when they had poured a few drops as a libation, they took their own death in hand and drank their last draught. Philoneos died right away, but our father became sick, and died twenty days later.

B. Personal Piety

Prayers

The Homeric poems convey a sense of relatively easy intimacy between gods and men—at least the men of heroic stature who dominate the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Sometimes the gods appear to men in the form of some human or animal (see pp. 116–117 below), and often mortals make prayers to the gods which ask for help of a personal nature. In this as in so much else Homer provides a model for behavior, and the three prayers quoted here form a model for later expressions of personal devotion. In the first example, the elderly Chryses prays to Apollo to punish the Greeks (Danaans) with a plague, since their general Agamemnon has refused to give up his concubine, Chryses' daughter. In the second, Achilles prays to Zeus to protect his friend Patroclus, who is going out in Achilles' place to fight the Trojans. Finally, Penelope in frustration and grief prays to Athena for the return of her husband Odysseus.

(Homer, *Iliad* I. 33–43.)

The old man was afraid [at Agamemnon's speech] and went quietly along the shore of the loud-roaring sea; going a long way off the old man prayed to the lord Apollo, whom fair-haired Leto bore: "Hear me, O Lord of the silver bow, you who protect sacred Killa and rule Tenedos in your strength, O Smintheus, if ever I have built you a pleasing temple, or if ever I have burned for you the fat thighs of bulls and goats, grant me this wish: may the Danaans pay for my tears at the mercy of your arrows."

(Homer, *Iliad* XVI. 220–256.)

Achilles went to his tent and opened the lid of a beautifully wrought chest which Thetis of the silver feet [his mother] had put on his ship for him to take along, filling it with tunics, wind-proof cloaks and woolen fleeces. He had there a well-wrought cup; no other man ever drank wine from it, nor did he ever use it to pour a libation to any god except to Father Zeus. He took it from the chest. First he purified it with sulfur, then he washed it in streams of fresh water, washed his hands and ladled gleaming wine into it. Then he prayed, standing in the middle of the enclosure. He poured the wine—offering, and gazed up toward heaven; and Zeus who revels in the thunder paid heed to him:

"O Zeus, Lord of Dodona, Pelasgian one, who dwellest afar and carest for storm-blasted Dodona; where dwell about thee as interpreters the Selloi, who wash not their feet and sleep upon the ground: if ever when I have prayed thou hast heard my word and honored me at the expense of the Achaian host, even so

now fulfill this request for me. I myself shall remain here at the ships, but shall send my comrade, with many Myrmidons, to fight; grant to him glory, O Zeus of the broad gaze, embolden the heart in his breast, so that Hector may realize whether our comrade know how to fight alone, or whether the hands he wieldeth be invincible only when I too go into the crush of battle. But when he hath held off the crash of battle from the ships, then do thou let him come back to the ships unharmed, with all his armor and his attendants in combat."

He uttered this prayer, and Zeus of the counsels heard him: one prayer the Father granted him; the other he refused; he granted him to thrust war and battle back from the ships, but refused safe return from battle.

When Achilles had made his libation and prayer to Father Zeus he returned to his tent and put the cup back in the chest. Then he went outside and stood in front of the tent. In his heart he still wished to look upon the terrible combat of Trojans and Achaians.

(Homer, *Odyssey* IV. 759–767.)

When she had washed, she put clean clothes on her body and went to her upstairs room with her attendant women; then she put the barley for sprinkling in a basket and prayed to Athena:

"Hear me, child of Zeus of the Aegis, Atrytone, if ever resourceful Odysseus burned for thee in his house rich thighs of oxen or sheep, now remember this on my behalf, and protect my dear son, and keep at bay the suitors in their evil haughtiness."

So she spoke, uttering a cry, and the goddess heard her prayer.

In the *Hippolytus*, Euripides presents a picture of a young man exclusively devoted to Artemis, chaste goddess of the hunt. His neglect of Aphrodite and her determination to punish him are the main themes of the tragedy, but in the following passage the playwright gives a vignette of intense personal devotion to one particular god. See A.J. Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks* (Berkeley, 1960), ch. 1.

(Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 63–87.)

Chorus: Mistress, Mistress most majestic, offspring of Zeus, hail, hail O Artemis, daughter of Zeus and Leto, by far most benevolent of mistresses, thou who dost dwell in the heavens in thy noble father's court, the all-golden house of Zeus. Greetings, O most beautiful of all in Olympus. Hail, Artemis.

Hippolytus: I bring thee this woven crown, which I have plucked in thy pure meadow. There no shepherd would dare to feed his flocks, nor would an iron

plough ever come there; only the bees of spring pass through the untouched meadow. Reverence doth cultivate it with pure water from the rivers. For those who are untutored, but are wise by nature, to them alone is it permitted to gather here; for the wicked, however, it is wrong. Now, O beloved Mistress, receive from a pious hand this crown for thy golden hair. This privilege is mine alone among mortals, to be with thee and to converse with thee. I hear thy voice, but do not see thy face. At the end of life may I round the turning point as I have begun.

Dedications

An important and characteristic type of personal devotion is expressed in the dedications which individuals make to a god or goddess to express thanksgiving for past favors, hope for future favors, or a more generalized piety.

The Acropolis at Athens

The following examples all come from the Acropolis in Athens. Many of them were carved on the bases of the female statues called *korai* [girls], in honor of Athena, the patron deity of Athens to whom the Acropolis was sacred. They show men and women of many occupations expressing their aspirations and their private devotion to Athena in this public way. See A.E. Raubitchek, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), *passim*.

(*IG* I^2 408, on a statue base.) Aischines the son of Chares dedicated (this) as first-fruit to Athena.

(*IG* I^2 422, on a statue base.) Kapanis dedicated (this) as a tithe to Athena.

(*IG* I^2 436, on the handle of a vase.) Polykies the fuller dedicated (this) to Athena.

(*IG* I^2 444, on a shield decorated with a gorgon.) Phrygia the bread seller dedicated me to Athena.

(*IG* I^2 467, on a *stele*.) Chairion the son of Kleodikos dedicated (this) to Athena during his term as treasurer.

(*IG* I^2 473, on the base of a water basin.) Smikythe the washer-woman dedicated (this) as a tithe.

(*IG* I^2 485, on a statue base.) Nearchos the potter dedicated (this) to Athena as first-fruit of his work. Antenorthe son of Eumares made the statue.

(*IG* I^2 487, on a statue base.) Archemeros the Chian made (me). Iphidike dedicated me to Athena Poliouchos [Guardian of the City].

(*IG* I^2 499, on a statue base.) Lyson dedicated (this) to Pallas Athena as first—fruit of his possessions and as a delight for the goddess. Thebades the son of [---] made this statue.

(*IG* I^2 503, on a statue base.) Timarchos dedicated me to the mighty-hearted daughter of Zeus, after he had prayed for an oracle of measured understanding. Onatas made (the statue).

(*IG* I^2 606, on a statue base.) Kallias the son of Didymios dedicated (this). His victories [in the *pankration*]: Olympic; Pythian, twice; Isthmian, five times; Nemean, four times; Great Panathenaia.

(*IG* I^2 643, on a votive column.) Lady Athena Poliouche [Guardian of the City], may this city have this as a monument of Smikros and his boys and their flourishing business.

(*IG* I^2 625, on a statue base.) Having achieved his prayer Menandros dedicated this first-fruit to thee, Mistress, repaying thy favor; he is the son of Demetrios, from the deme Aigialeia; do thou, O daughter of Zeus, preserve this wealth which thou hast given.

(*IG* I^2 631, on a votive pillar.) Vouchsafe great wealth to him, O daughter of Zeus, and make grateful return for these (dedications). He who dedicated me to Hermes, Oinobios the herald, did it in thanksgiving for his skill, because of his memory.

(*IG* I^2 650, on a votive column.) Maiden, on the Acropolis Telesinos of Kettos dedicated the statue; mayest thou delight in it and grant him to dedicate another.

(*IG* I^2 658, on a votive column) Philon dedicated this little tripod to Athena, having won by a surprise.

(*IG* I^2 684, on a votive tablet.) Diophanes dedicated me to Athena Poliouchos, as a tithe of his estate, in fulfillment of his son's prayer.

(*IG* I^2 706, on a statue base.) [—]lochos dedicated this *kore*-statue as first-fruit of his catch: this one boon the Lord of the Sea with his golden trident granted.

A Shrine at Phaleron

Around 400 B.C. a shrine was erected at Athens' old port of Phaleron to the river-god Kephisos by a woman, apparently in thanksgiving for the education of her son Xeniades. The first inscription records the dedication; it was accompanied by a sculptured relief. The second was inscribed on an altar in the shrine and lists Hestia in her usual first place, then the god of the shrine, the three gods of Delphi, Eileithyia the goddess of birth, two other water divinities (Acheloos and Kallirhoe) and a not-yet-identified Rhapso, perhaps a patron of seamstresses. See *LSCG*, pp. 44–45.

(*IG* II^2 4548.) Xenokrateia constructed and dedicated this shrine of Kephisos to him and the gods who share his altar as an offering for the blessing of chil-

dren;[24] she is the daughter of (one) Xeniades and the mother (of another), from the deme of Cholleidai. Anyone who wishes to sacrifice may do so on payment of the appropriate fees.

(*IG* II^2 4547.) To Hestia, Kephisos, Pythian Apollo, Leto, Artemis Lochia, Ileithyia, Acheloos, Kallirhoe, the familial [*genethliai*] Nymphs of Geraistos, Rhapso.

The Vani Cave

In the foothills of Mount Hymettos southeast of Athens a cave had been considered sacred to Pan and the Nymphs ever since the sixth century. The cult was a private one, and these documents illustrate the pious activity of Archedamos, an alien from Thera who resided in Athens around 400 B.C. He furnished the cave with representations of the Nymphs and, among others, the following three inscriptions. For a report on the excavations of the cave, see C.H. Weller *et al.*, "The Cave at Van," *American Journal of Archaeology* 7 (1903) 263–349.

(*IG* I^2 784.) Archedamos of Thera planted this garden to the Nymphs.

(*IG* I^2 785.) Archedamos of Thera also erected a dancing floor to the dancing Nymph.

(*IG* I^2 788.) Archedamos of Thera, the Nymph-raptured one, outfitted the cave at the admonition of the Nymphs.

Xenophon's Shrine at Skillous

This passage neatly summarizes the appearance of such privately dedicated sanctuaries, and the ways they were used in the early-fourth century. (Xenophon, as an Athenian exile for pro-Spartan sentiments and activity, went to Skillous shortly after 394 B.C. For another example of his personal piety, see p. 84 above.) This particular sanctuary was a large stretch of park land, appropriate to Artemis as goddess of the hunt.

(Xenophon, *Anabasis* V. 3.7–13.)

When Xenophon was in exile and living in Skillous, near Olympia, where the Lacedaemonians had established him as a colonist, Megabazus visited Olympia to see the games and return to him his deposit. Xenophon took the money and with it purchased a plot of land for the goddess where the oracle of Apollo directed.

24. Perhaps the phrase should be translated "for instruction."

It happened by chance that a river named Selinos flowed through the grounds; at Ephesus too a Selinos river flows past the temple of Artemis. In both streams were fish and mussels; in the plot of land at Skillous may be found many wild animals to be hunted. Here Xenophon constructed an altar and a temple from the sacred money; from that time on he would take ten per cent of the crops and with it offer sacrifice to the goddess. All the citizens and the men and women in the neighborhood shared in the festivities. The goddess provided for the worshippers barley meal, bread, wine, and dried fruit, and a portion of the sacrificial victims from the sacred land and a portion of the animals captured in the hunt. The children of Xenophon and of the other citizens used to hold a hunt during the festival time, and all the men who wished would participate. They captured some animals in the sacred precinct and some on Mount Pholoe, wild boars and roes and deer.

The place is located on the road from Sparta to Olympia and is about twenty stades [about 2 1/2 miles] from the temple of Zeus in Olympia. Within the sacred precinct there is a meadow and hills covered with trees—suitable for raising pigs, goats, cattle, and horses, so that even the beasts of burden belonging to those who attend the festival may be well fed. Around the temple itself is a grove of cultivated trees which produces dessert fruits in season. The temple is like the temple at Ephesus, though small in comparison with that large one; the image of the goddess is carved from cypress wood and is like the image in Ephesus, although that one is made of gold. By the temple stands a *stele* with the following inscription:

> This place is sacred to Artemis. He who owns it and enjoys its produce must offer a tenth each year, and from the excess must keep the temple in good condition. If someone fails to do these things the goddess will take care of it.

Epiphanies

Appearances of a god to a mortal, either in disguise or in divine form, are reported with some frequency. In myth and in epic, gods often appear to their favorites, and a short passage from the *Odyssey* offers a typical example: Athena, disguised as the mortal Mentor, appears in order to encourage Odysseus in his battle with the suitors. Her final manifestation as a bird is characteristic. The next two selections differ in that they report specific encounters of real, historical individuals with a particular god. The historicity of any of these may well be open to doubt, but together they demonstrate that such epiphanies were an authentic feature of Greek religious experience. See also the appearance of Pan to Philippides, p. 93 above.

(Homer, *Odyssey* XXII. 205–210, 236–240.)

Zeus's daughter Athena came close beside them, in the form and voice of Mentor. Odysseus rejoiced to see her, and said, "Mentor, drive calamity away and

remember your dear comrade who has always offered you good things—you are my contemporary." So he spoke, realizing that it was Athena, who encourages the host.... Athena spoke, but did not yet completely grant decisive victories, but instead made trial of the strength and might of Odysseus and his glorious son. She herself darted up and sat on a rafter of the sooty hail, in the shape of a swallow.

The Muses Inspire Hesiod

In the prologue to his genealogical history of the gods, Hesiod (late-eighth century B.C.) tells how, tending sheep alone on Mount Helicon, he had a vision of the nine Muses. The goddesses in effect ordain him their priest, and commission him as an epic poet. A hymn-like catalogue precedes the first-person testimony; the whole passage seems full of reverent devotion.

(Hesiod, *Theogony*, 1–34.)

Let us begin to sing of the Heliconian Muses who occupy the great sacred mountain of Helicon and dance with dainty feet around the violet spring and the altar of the mighty son of Kronos [Zeus].

Bathing their delicate bodies at Permessos or Hippokrene or sacred Olmeion, they implant their dances—their beautiful, lovely dances—on the peaks of Helicon, and they move their feet mightily. Starting thence, wrapped in thick mist, they came by night, raising their beauteous voices, singing of Zeus of the Aegis, and Hera the Mistress of Argos who treadeth on slippers of gold, of gray-eyed Athena the daughter of Zeus of the Aegis, of Phoebus Apollo and Artemis who rejoiceth in arrows, of Earthshaker Poseidon who upholdeth the earth, of Themis the Modest and Aphrodite of the arched brows, of gold-crowned Hebe and fair Dione, of Leto and Iapetos and Kronos the crooked of counsel, of Dawn and the great Sun and the bright Moon, of Earth and great Ocean and dark Night, of the holy race of the other immortals, living forever.

Once they taught Hesiod their fair song, as he was pasturing his sheep below sacred Helicon. First the goddesses, the Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus of the Aegis, addressed this word to me:

"Shepherds of the fields, poor excuses, disembodied bellies, we know how to make lies in profusion seem like the truth, and we know how, when we want, to utter what is true."

So spoke the articulate daughters of great Zeus; and they plucked a branch of spectacular flowering laurel and gave it to me as a staff. And they breathed a divine song into me, that I might sing what will be and what has been before. And they bade me chant the race of the blessed ones, living forever, but always to sing first and last of them.

The Dioskouroi Visit Phormion's House

The divine twins Kastor and Polydeukes, known as the Dioskouroi, were born in Amyklai, a township of Sparta, and in this passage they appear in disguise to a man living in Amyklai. Cyrene, a colony in northern Africa, had close relations with Sparta in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. The herb silphion was its major product for export.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* III. 16.2–3.)

[In Amyklai is a house in which] the sons of Tyndareus originally lived, but later Phormion, a Spartan citizen, acquired it. The Dioskouroi arrived at his door disguised as strangers, claiming that they had come from Cyrene. They requested lodging with him, and asked for the room which they had enjoyed most when they were living among men. He encouraged them to lodge anywhere they pleased in the rest of the house, but he declined to let them have that particular room, since his maiden daughter happened to be living in it. On the next day the maiden and everything that belonged to the child had disappeared, but in the room were found statues of the Dioskouroi, and a table with silphion on it.

Superstition and the Excesses of Religiosity

In the fifth and fourth centuries private individuals were consulting seers and soothsayers for advice, in a manner similar to that in which the oracles had long been consulted. The seers produced their own oracles, which responded to personal needs and problems; associated with the name Orpheus, these seers were known as early as the sixth century. But the evidence suggests that they became more conspicuous in the last half of the fifth century. Oracle-mongers appear in Aristophanes (e.g., *Birds*, 959–991) and are alluded to in Thucydides (II. 54) as present in Athens during the terrible days of the Peloponnesian War. These two passages of Plato illustrate some of the directions toward private devotion and the superstitious manifestations which reflect a fear of eternal punishment. The first sketches the techniques of these "Orphic" seers and oracle-mongers; the second represents an attempt to thwart such charlatans and dealers in "indulgences" by outlawing private cults altogether in the ideal city visualized in the Laws. For Plato generally, religious rites were primarily public expressions of civic life; for him, personal religion was contemplative rather than ceremonial. See p. 124 below.

(Plato, *Republic* II. 364b–365a.)

The most amazing tales are told about the gods and virtue, for instance that

the gods have ordained troubles and an evil life for many good men, and the opposite for the opposite kind of men. So begging priests and soothsayers go to the doors of the rich and convince them that they [the soothsayers] possess, vouchsafed of the gods, the power to use sacrifices and incantations along with enjoyable festivals to cure any wrong committed by an individual or his forebears; and if he wants to make an enemy suffer, they claim the power to harm, at slight expense, just and unjust alike; and they claim that by means of certain spells and charms they constrain the gods to serve them. They adduce the poets as evidence for these tales. They present the easiness of evil, such as:

Trouble and evil a man may discover and choose in abundance
Quite easily: For the way will be smooth, close at hand, very easy.
But as for virtue, the gods have put sweat and much labor before it.[25]

—as well as a long uphill road Others cite Homer for the way gods are led on by men, since he said:

… By prayer even gods can be moved
Men can divert them by sacrifice, praying in meek supplication,
Offering incense and pouring libations, whenever they trespass.[26]

And they produce a pile of books by Musaeus and Orpheus, descendants (they say) of the Moon and of the Muses. They follow these books in their sacrificial rites, convincing cities as well as individuals that there really are deliverancesand purifications from unjust deeds through sacrifices and enjoyable diversions, both for the living and the dead. These latter they call initiations, which deliver us from the evils of the beyond, while terrible things await those who have not made the sacrifices.

The kind of religiosity that Plato criticized is illustrated by a character in a fourth-century comedy by Menander.

(Menander, *Dyskolos*, 260–263.)

My mother is going to make a sacrifice to some god or other—she does this every day, and she wanders around in a circuit, sacrificing through the whole deme.

Among the "Character Sketches" composed by Theophrastus at the end of the fourth century B.C. is this description of the man who carries religious devotion and scruples to ridiculous extremes. The word translated "superstitious" means literally "afraid of spirits (*daimones*)," and although Theophrastus sketches

25. Hesiod, *Works* and *Days*, 287–289.
26. Paraphrased from Homer, *Iliad* IX. 497–500.

broadly, the devotional acts his spirit-fearer performs are typical of classical Greek piety and can be paralleled as early as Hesiod (see p. 99 above). See M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion* (New York, 1961), pp. 102–142.

(Theophrastus, *Character Sketches*, 16.)

Now superstition might seem to be timidity with respect to divinity, and the superstitious man one who [when he sees a bad omen[27]] washes his hands, sprinkles himself with holy water from a shrine, and walks around all day with bay-leaf in his mouth. If a cat runs across the road, he will not go on until someone passes by or until he throws three stones across the road. If he sees a snake in his house and it is a *pareias*, he calls on Sabazios; if it is the sacred kind, he installs a hero-shrine then and there. If he passes one of the "anointing stones" at a crossroads he pours olive oil from his jar, falls on his knees and worships, and then takes his leave. If a mouse gnaws into his bag of barley meal, he goes to the soothsayer to ask what he should do; and if his response is that he should give it to the leather-worker to fix, he pays no attention to the advice, but goes off to make propitiatory sacrifices. He is constantly purifying the household on the assumption that it has come under the spell of Hecate. If owls hoot while he is walking along, he is upset and says "Mighty Athena" before going on. He is not willing to step on a grave, or approach a corpse or a woman in childbirth, on the grounds that it is better for him to avoid the pollution. On the fourth and the seventh of the month he orders the domestics to boil wine while he goes out to buy myrtle wreathes, incense, and sacrificial cakes,[28] then he comes back inside and spends the whole day putting garlands on the statues of Hermaphrodite. When he sees a dream, he goes to the dream-interpreters, to the seers, or to the specialists, in bird augury, to ask them to which god or goddess he ought to pray. Every month he goes to the masters of the Orphic mysteries to be initiated, and he takes along his wife (if his wife is too busy, he takes the nurse) and his children. He is so diligent in sprinkling himself with holy water that he looks as if he has been for a dip in the sea. If he notices that one of the crossroad gods is garlanded with garlic, he goes off and washes his head, then calls the priestesses and bids them purify him with squill.[29] If he sees a madman or an epileptic he shudders and spits into his breast.

27. The Greek text is unintelligible at this point.
28. The text says "pictures."
29. The text adds "or with a puppy."

C. The Orphic Way of Life

The presence of Orphic initiations and an Orphic "way of life" which included sexual purity, abstinence from meat, and holy writings are attested in the fifth century by the following brief passages. On Orphism generally see M. P. Nilsson, "Early Orphism and Kindred Religious Movements," *Harvard Theological Review* 28 (1935) 181–230; W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London, 1935) and *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston, 1950), pp. 307–332; I. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley, 1941).

(Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 948–954.)

Are *you* the one who, like some paragon, consorts with gods? Are *you* the chaste one, all undefiled by evil? I'll never let your pretensions mislead me into thinking the gods are all that ignorant. No—go ahead and exult; play the salesman with a vegetarian diet; call Orpheus your lord; play the Bacchant; worship the smoky writings of all your texts!

(Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1030–1036.)

Consider how helpful the more noble poets have been, from the very beginning: Orpheus showed us initiations and abstention from slaughter; Musaeus oracles and ways to cure diseases; Hesiod agriculture and seasons for harveesting and ploughing; and the divine Homer, wasn't the source of his honor and fame exactly this, that he taught useful things, how to fight a battle, be a brave man, outfit a warrior?

D. The Pythagorean Way of Life

A specialized form of personal devotion was that adopted by the Pythagoreans, who conducted their lives with monastic rigor in communities in several Greek cities of southern Italy in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Much of our information about Pythagoras and his disciples comes from later sources (such as Diogenes Laertius), but Plato's comment suggests that Diogenes gives a basically accurate picture of their high sense of justice and brotherhood, their dietary restrictions, and their devotional procedures. On the sources for the Pythagoreans of the classical age, see K. von Fritz, *Pythagorean Politics in Southern Italy* (New York, 1940); most recently, see P. Gorman, *Pythagoras, A Life* (London, 1979).

(Plato, *Republic* X. 600b.)

Is there any tradition that while Homer was still alive he became a guide to any who enjoyed his company and who handed on to their successors some "Homeric way of life"? Pythagoras, for instance, was particularly revered in this way, and his successors even today name their way of life "Pythagorean" and are quite conspicuous among men.

(Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* VIII. 22–24, 33.)

It is said that Pythagoras exhorted his disciples to say this each time they came back home: "Where did I trespass? What did I accomplish? What was left undone that I ought to have done?" He ordered them not to offer blood sacrifices to the gods, but to direct their worship only to a bloodless altar; nor to swear by the gods, for one should strive to present himself as trustworthy; to respect their elders, in the belief that what has precedence in time is more worthy of respect (in the world, for example, sunrise has precedence over sunset, in a life beginning has precedence over death, and in nature generation has precedence over destruction); (23) to respect gods before *daimones*, heroes before men, and parents before other men; to deal with each other so as not to make friends into enemies, but to turn enemies into friends; to consider nothing one's own; to support the law, and fight against lawlessness; not to kill or damage a cultivated plant, nor any animal which does not injure men; to be modest and reserved, given neither to levity nor to gloom; to avoid the excesses of the flesh; when traveling to make exertion and also take rest; to exercise the memory; not to say or do anything in anger; to respect all divination; (24) to sing songs to the lyre and to give proper thanks with hymns to gods and good men; to abstain from beans because they cause flatulence and so share in the breath of life (besides which the stom-

ach is kept in better shape if they are not ingested); furthermore with abstinence dreams also become more benign and calm.… (33) not to offer the same honors to gods and to heroes—to gods at any time, with holy silence, dressed in white, in a condition of purity; to heroes only after the middle of the day. Purity is gained through washing, bathing, sprinkling, through keeping clean from mourning, childbirth and every sort of pollution, and through abstaining from the meat of dead animals, mullets, gurnards, eggs, animals hatched from eggs, beans and the other things which are enjoined by the priests who celebrate the rites in the sanctuaries.

E. Platonic Mysticism

Plato represents a refined type of personal religiosity, directed toward a mystical contemplation of the abstract reality of the truly Beautiful. This passage from the *Symposium* is ascribed to Diotima, the wise woman of Mantinea. It offers a kind of "discipline," a sequence of steps for attaining the spiritual disposition necessary for knowledge and contemplative worship of the Beautiful. Diotima uses the vocabulary of the mysteries (see chapter V) in her discussion, and she alludes at the end to the power of the Beautiful to transform a person's life and make it more virtuous. Plato's mysticism is discussed in P.E. More, *The Religion of Plato* (Princeton, 1921) and A.J. Festugière, *Personal Religion among the Greeks* (Berkeley, 1954), pp. 42–52.

(Plato, *Symposium*, 209e–212c.)

Diotima: These then, O Socrates, are the mysteries of love into which even you might be initiated. But in reference to the complete and highest mysteries, for the sake of which these others exist, even if one were to proceed correctly, I do not know whether you are capable of attaining them. But I will explain them to you, she said, and I will spare no efforts. Try to follow my presentation, if you can.

It is necessary, she said, for the man who would proceed correctly to this end to begin as a young man to pay heed to beautiful bodies, and first, if the guide directs him properly, he will fall in love with one beautiful person and there produce noble thoughts; then he will understand that beauty in any one body resembles beauty in another and, if it is necessary to pursue the beautiful in its observable form, it is great folly not to recognize that the beauty in all bodies is one and the same. When he has made this analysis he must become a lover of all bodies and relax his fixation on one individual, because he realizes that such a passion is beneath him and of little value. Next he must realize that beauty of soul is worth more than beauty of body, so that if someone is capable in soul but has only a small bloom of beauty, he will be happy to love and nurture it, and produce and seek those kinds of thought which will make the young better in order that he may be compelled to perceive beauty in daily pursuits and laws and realize that each and every thing is like itself, so that he will understand that physical beauty is a small thing. After daily pursuits it is necessary to lead him to the sciences, in order that he may contemplate their beauty in turn so that he looks to beauty in the widest sense rather than to an individual instance, like a slave who loves the beauty of a boy or some man or some daily pursuit and because of that slavery is base and petty; rather he must be drawn to the great ocean of beauty and think and bring forth many beautiful and magnificent sentiments and thoughts

through abundant love of wisdom, until he becomes strengthened and increased and catches sight of one special science which is connected with the beauty I will describe. Try to pay as close attention as possible.

The man who has been educated to this point in respect to matters of love and who has observed the examples of beauty in an orderly and correct fashion, as he comes to the end of his examination of love will see a wondrous thing—beauty in itself. This is the goal, Socrates, of all his former efforts. First of all it is eternal and neither comes into being nor decays, it does not increase or decrease. It is not in one instance beautiful and in another ugly, nor at one moment beautiful and at another not so, nor in reference to one thing beautiful, but in reference to another not so, nor beautiful here but ugly there, or to some beautiful but to others ugly. This beauty will not resemble the beauty of a face or hands or any other part of the body, nor like that of a thought or of a science, nor like beauty in something else, such as in a living thing or the earth or the heavens or something else, but absolute, always existing with itself; all other beautiful things partake of it in such a fashion that while they come into being and decay, it becomes neither less nor more nor suffers change.

When a man, starting from these things through a right use of pederasty begins to see this beauty, he is close to attaining his goal. This is the correct way to enter on erotic matters, or to be lead there by another, beginning from examples of beauty in this world to ascend always to that beauty as if mounting a staircase, from one to two, from two to all beautiful bodies, from the beauty of bodies to moral beauty, from moral beauty to beauty of knowledge, and from knowledge to that final knowledge, which is concerned with nothing else than knowledge of that perfect beauty. At last the initiate knows what is the Beautiful.

O dear Socrates, said the woman from Mantineia, this is the area above any other where a man should live his life—in the contemplation of absolute beauty. If you have seen it, it will not seem good to you by the definition of gold or clothing or beautiful boys and young men whom you and others like you are so ready to observe and by whom you are carried away, so that if you could see your beloved and always be with them you would pass by food and drink to be with them and admire them. What then, said she, do we think about the man who could see perfect beauty in its essence, pure, unmixed, instead of fixing upon human flesh and colors and other such human rubbish, but could contemplate divine beauty alone and apart? Do you think, said she, that that is a poor life for a man who has his attention fixed there and contemplates it in the proper way and lives with it? Do you not see, said she, that it will be possible for him there, contemplating beauty by the appropriate means, to bring forth not the appearances of virtue, because he is not touching appearances, but true virtue, because he is touching true virtue? When he has given birth to and nurtured true virtue he will become a friend of god and to the extent possible for a man immortal himself.

Chapter V. Mystery Cults

A. The Mysteries at Phlya

At Phlya, on the east coast of Attica, was a local cult of the Earth Goddess tended by the clan of the Lykomedai. It continued through the classical period and still was known in the second century A.D. when Pausanias wrote, though by then the old traditional rituals had been supplemented by so-called Orphic hymns. The following selections represent nearly everything that is known about the mystery cult at Phlya, and they are included to illustrate a local fertility cult which never gained great prestige but maintained ties with other shrines of the Earth goddesses.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* I. 31.4.)

At Phlya and Myrrhinos are altars of Apollo Dionysodotos, Artemis Selasphoros [Bringer of Radiance], Dionysus Anthios [Of the Flowers], the Ismenian Nymphs, and Earth, whom they call the Great Goddess. Another temple has altars of Demeter Anesidora [Who Sends Up Gifts], Zeus Ktesios, Tithrone Athena, Kore Protogona [First-Born], and the goddesses called Semnai [Reverend].

(Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* V. 20.5.)

The rites [*orgia*] of the so-called Great Goddess at Phlias are prior to the Eleusinian mysteries.

(Plutarch, *Life of Themistocles*, 1.4.)

It is clear that Themistocles belonged to the clan of the Lykomedai: when the initiation-hall at Phlya, which was the common property of the Lykomedai, had been burned by the barbarians [in 480 B.C.], he repaired it himself and decorated it with paintings, as Simonides says.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* IX. 30.12.)

Whoever has done research on poetry knows that each of the hymns of Orpheus is very short and that the total is not a very large number. The Lykomedai know them and chant them at their ceremonies.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* IV. 1.5, 7.)

The Athenians say that Phlyos himself was the son of Earth. The hymn to Demeter which was written for the Lykomedai by Musaeus, agrees with them. . . . (7) Methapos was an Athenian by race, an official and founder of all sorts of rites [*orgia*]. He established the initiation rite of the Kabeiroi at Thebes, and in the chapel of the Lykomedai he dedicated a statue with an inscription which lends conviction to my account: "I sanctified houses of Hermes and paths of Sacred Demeter and Kore Protogona where they say Messene established a festival competition for the Great Goddesses, instructed by Kaukon the descendent of glorious Phlyos' son. I wondered that Lykos, the man of Pandion set the holy acts of Attica in precious Andania."[30]

30. For the mysteries of Andania in Messenia, see Pausanias, *Description of Greece* IV. 26–27 and *SIG*^{3} 736; *LGS* 62; quoted in part in F. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions*, pp. 31–32.

B. The Eleusinian Mysteries

The Homeric Hymn to Demeter

The most prestigious of the mystery cults was at Eleusis, and it attracted Athenians and foreigners, kings (even Roman emperors, in time), and slaves to be initiated. Before Eleusis became a part of the Athenian city-state in the sixth century B.C., it was the site of a local agricultural cult which probably resembled the cult of the Lykomedai at Phlya. Certain secret rituals commemorated the annual rebirth of the grain and other fruits of the earth, and associated the annual vegetation cycle with the myth of the rape of Persephone (or Kore, "the daughter") by Hades (also called Aidoneus, "the unseen one" or Plouton, "the wealthy one") and the subsequent sorrow of the girl's mother, the goddess Demeter (or Deo). This sacred legend is preserved in the so-called Homeric Hymn to Demeter, composed probably in the first half of the sixth century. It is a sacred text of great importance, and we have included a translation of the whole hymn because it not only gives the official version of the founding of the mystery cult at Eleusis by Demeter herself, but also contains many allusions to the ritual and customs of the sanctuary. There is extensive scholarship on the shrine and its cult, but among important works in English we may note M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion* (New York, 1961), pp. 42–64; G. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton, 1961); N.J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford, 1974); F.R. Walton, "Athens, Eleusis and the Homeric Hymn to Demeter," *Harvard Theological Review* 45 (1952) 105–114.

(*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*.)

I begin my song of the holy goddess, fair-haired Demeter, and of her slim-ankled daughter whom Aidoneus snatched away; and Zeus the loud-crashing, the wide-voiced one, granted it. She was playing with the deep-bosomed daughters of Ocean, away from Demeter of the golden weapon and glorious fruit, and she was gathering flowers throughout the luxuriant meadow—roses, saffron, violets, iris, hyacinth, and a narcissus which was a trap planted for the blossoming maiden by Earth in accord with Zeus's plans, a favor to Hades the receiver of many guests; it was radiantly wonderful, inspiring awe in all who saw it, whether immortal god or mortal man; a hundred stems grew from its root; and the whole wide heaven above, the whole earth, and the salt surge of the sea smiled for joy at its fragrance. The girl was charmed by it, and reached out both hands to pluck the pretty plaything—suddenly, the earth split open wide along the plain and from it the lord host of many, Kronos' son of many names, darted out on his immortal horses.

(19) He grabbed her, resisting and screaming, and took her away in his golden chariot. She lifted her voice in a cry, calling upon father Zeus, the almighty and good. But no one, god or mortal, heard her voice, not even the glorious-fruited olive-trees, except the childish daughter of Perses, Hecate of the glistening veil, who—from her cave—heard, and so did Lord Helios the glorious son of Hyperion, as the maiden calling upon father Zeus, though he was sitting, removed from the other gods, in his much-besought temple, receiving fine sacrifices from mortal men.

(30) Her, all unwilling, with the approval of Zeus, he took away on his immortal horses, Kronos' son of many names, brother of her father, designator of many, host of many. As long as the goddess could see the earth and the starry sky, the flowing, fish-filled sea and the rays of the sun, she still had hope that her holy mother and the race of the immortal gods would see her, and there was still much hope in her heart in spite of her distress.... The peaks of the mountains and the depths of the sea echoed back the immortal voice, and her blessed mother heard her. (40) Then sharp grief seized the mother's heart; she tore the headdress upon her ambrosial hair, and threw her dark veil down from both her shoulders; and like a bird she darted over land and sea, searching. None of the gods or of mortal men would give her a true report, nor would any of the birds come to her as a true messenger.

(47) For nine days then lady Deo wandered the earth, holding blazing torches in her hands; in her grief she touched neither ambrosia nor the sweetness of nectar, nor did she bathe her body with water. (51) But when the tenth day dawned Hecate, bearing light in her hands, encountered her and spoke to her this message: (54) "Lady Demeter, bringer of seasons and glorious gifts, who of the gods of heaven or of mortal men has taken Persephone and pained your own heart? I heard her voice, but did not see who it was. I am telling you everything promptly, and accurately."

(59) So spoke Hecate. The daughter of fair-haired Rheia did not answer a word, but she immediately darted off with her, holding blazing torches in her hands, and they came to Helios, the viewer of gods and men. They stood before his horses and the divine goddess said, (64) "Helios, as a god, respect me, as a goddess, if ever in word or deed, I have warmed your heart. The maiden whom I bore—sweetest blossom—beautiful—I heard her voice, sobbing, as if she were being raped, but I did not see her. But you survey from the bright heaven all the earth and the sea with your rays; tell me accurately whether you have seen who of gods or mortal men has forced her and taken her away, all unwillingly, in my absence."

(74) So she spoke, and the son of Hyperion answered her: "Lady Demeter, daughter of fair-haired Rheia, you will know all: I have great respect for you and pity you in your grief for your slim-ankled child: none of the immortals is

responsible except Zeus the cloud-gatherer, who has granted to Hades his own brother that she be called his tender wife; and he has taken her, screaming a loud cry, away on his horses down into the misty darkness. (82) So, goddess, stop your loud lament; you should not rashly hold on to this boundless anger; Aidoneus, the designator of many, is after all not an unsuitable son-in-law for you, since you have the same mother and father; and his honor he gained when at the beginning a division into three parts was made; and he dwells with those over whom the lot made him king." When he had said this he called to his horses, and at his command they bore the swift chariot like broad-winged birds.

(90) Then grief still more horrible and oppressive came upon her heart, and in her anger at Zeus, shrouded in clouds, she deserted the gatherings of the gods and went far from Olympus to the cities and farms of men and for a long time disguised her appearance. No man, no woman who saw her recognized her, until she arrived at the home of clever Keleos, who was the king of fragrant Eleusis at the time. (98) At the Spring Parthenion where the citizens draw water in the shade of a towering olive tree she sat by the side of the road in the guise of an old woman, one who is beyond the age of childbearing and the gifts of Aphrodite who bears the garland of love, one who might be a nurse of royal children or governess of important households. The daughters of Keleos of Eleusis saw her as they came to draw water and carry it in bronze vessels to their father's house. There were four of them, like goddesses in youthful bloom—Kallidike, Klesidike, lovely Demo, and Kallithoe, the eldest of them all. They did not recognize her, for gods are hard for mortals to see. (112) They approached her and said, "Old woman, who are you? Why have you kept away from the city and not approached the settlement? There in the dusky houses there are women as old as you and younger, who would treat you kindly in word and deed."

(118) So they spoke, and the goddess mistress said in answer, "Dear children, daughters of womanly mothers, be of good cheer, and I will tell you, for it is right to tell you the truth. The name my lady mother gave to me is Doso. I have just come across the sea from Crete, forced by pirate men who abducted me against my will. They brought their swift ship to shore at Thorikos, and a crowd of women came on board from the land and they all prepared their dinner by the ship's stern-cables. But my heart had no desire for a pleasant supper; instead I got up secretly and escaped those arrogant overlords across the dark countryside, so that they might not enjoy any profit from selling me. I wandered about until I arrived here; but I do not know what land it is nor which people dwell here. May all the gods who dwell on Olympus grant you vigorous husbands and all the progeny they want; but pity me, maidens; dear children, help me come propitiously to some home of a man and woman where I may provide the services of an aged woman for them: I could hold their infant child in my arms and nurse it well, I could keep house, make the master's bed in the inmost chamber, and instruct the women in their tasks."

(145) So said the goddess, and the maiden Kallidike, most beautiful of Keleos' daughters, answered her, "Mother, we humans endure the gifts of the gods, even under grievous compulsion, for they are much mightier. I will explain it all to you clearly, and tell you the men who hold the power of authority here, and who stand out in the government and direct the defense of the city with their counsels and decisions. There are Triptolemos the clever, Dioklos, Polyxeinos, Eumolpos the blameless, Dolichos, and our father the manly one. Their wives manage everything in their households, and not one of them would dishonor you at first sight by making you depart from their houses. They will receive you, for you are godlike. If you wish, wait here while we go to our father's house and tell Metaneira our deep-belted mother all these things, and see whether she bids you come to our house and not search for another's. A favorite son, born to her late, is being nursed in the strongly built palace; she prayed much for him, and rejoiced in him. If you would nurse him and he would reach adolescence, any woman would envy the sight of you, for she [Metaneira] would give you so great a reward for nursing him."

(169) So she spoke, and she nodded her head, and then they filled their shining jugs with water and carried them proudly. Soon they reached their father's great house, and quickly told their mother what they had seen and heard. She told them to go quickly and bid her come, at a vast wage. As deer or heifers frolic across the meadow eating to their heart's content, so they darted along the road down the gulley, holding up the folds of their lovely gowns, and their hair streamed along their shoulders like saffron blossoms. They reached the spot near the road where they had left the glorious goddess, and they led her to their father's house. She, grieved at heart, walked behind them with her head veiled, and the dark robe trailed along around the slender feet of the goddess.

(184) Soon they reached the house of Zeus-descended Keleos, and went through the portico to the place where their lady mother was sitting beside a column of the carefully made chamber, holding her new baby in her lap. The girls ran to her, but Demeter trod upon the threshold, and her head reached the roof-beam, and she filled the doorway with a divine radiance. At this awe, reverence and pale fear seized the woman. She rose from her chair and urged her to be seated, but Demeter the bringer of seasons and glorious gifts did not wish to be seated on the gleaming chair, but silently cast down her beautiful eyes and waited until Iambe understood and set a jointed stool out for her, and threw a shining white fleece upon it. She sat down, holding her veil in front with her hands. For a long time she sat there on the stool sorrowfully, without speaking; and made no contact with anyone in word or gesture. Without smiling, without touching food or drink she sat, consumed with yearning for her daughter, until Iambe understood and made plenty of jokes and jests and made the holy Lady smile with kindly heart, and ever afterward she continues to delight her spirit. Then

Metaneira filled a cup of sweet wine and offered it to her, but she refused it, for she said it was not right for her to drink red wine. Instead, she asked her to give her barley groats and water mixed with crusted pennyroyal to drink. She made the compound, the *kykeon*, as she commanded, and offered it to the goddess. Deo the greatly revered accepted it for the sake of the ceremony.… (212) Fair-belted Metaneira begin with these words, "Be of good cheer, woman; I do not expect that you are sprung from base stock, but from good; dignity and grace are manifest in your eyes, like those of kings, stewards of the right. But we humans endure the gifts of the gods, even under grievous compulsion, for a yoke lies upon our neck. But now that you have come here, all that is mine shall be yours. Nurse this child for me, whom the immortals have given me, late-born and unexpected, but much prayed for. If you would nurse him and he would reach adolescence, any woman would envy the sight of you, for I would give you so great a reward for nursing him."

(224) Then Demeter of the fair crown said to her, "May you also be of good cheer, woman, and may the gods grant you all good things; I willingly accept the child, as you bid me. I will nurse him, and I do not expect that he will be injured by nurse's incompetence, supernatural attacks nor magical cuttings, for I know an antidote more mighty than the woodcutter, and I know a fine preventative against malignant attacks.

(231) When she had said this she received him with her immortal hands in her fragrant lap, and the mother's heart rejoiced. So she nursed the glorious son of clever Keleos, Demophon, whom fair-belted Metaneira bore, and he grew like a god, eating no food, being suckled on no milk, for Demeter would [feed and] anoint him with *ambrosia*, like the progeny of a god, and she breathed sweetly on him and held him in her lap. At night she would hide him like a fire-brand within the might of the flame, without his parents' knowledge. It made them wonder greatly how he was so precocious, and why his appearance was like the gods'. She would have made him ageless and deathless, if it had not been that fair-belted Metaneira foolishly kept watch one night and watched her from her fragrant bedchamber. She screamed and struck both her thighs in fear for her child and in a frenzy of mindlessness. Wailing, she said, "My child Demophon, the stranger woman is hiding you in the blazing fire, and is making grief and bitter sorrow for me."

(250) So she spoke, lamenting, and the divine goddess heard her. Demeter of the beautiful crown was amazed at her; with her immortal hands she put from her the dear child whom [Metaneira] had borne, all unexpected, in the palace, and threw him at her feet, drawing him out of the fire, terribly angry at heart, and at the same time she said to fair-belted Metaneira, "Humans are short-sighted, stupid, ignorant of the share of good or evil which is coming to them. You by your foolishness have hurt him beyond curing. Let my witness be the oath of the

gods sworn by the intractable water of Styx, that I would have made your son deathless and ageless all his days, and given him imperishable honor. But now it is not possible to ward off death and destruction. Still he will have imperishable honor forever, since he stood on my knees and slept in my arms; in due season, as the years pass around, the children of the Eleusinians will conduct in his honor war (games) and the terrible battle-cry with each other for ever and ever. I am Demeter, the Venerable, ready as the greatest boon and joy for immortals and mortals. So now, let the whole people build me a great temple, and an altar beneath it, below the city and the towering wall, above Kallirhoe on the ridge which juts forth. I myself will establish rites so that henceforth you may celebrate them purely and propitiate my mind."

(275) With these words the goddess altered size and form and sloughed off old age; beauty wafted about her. A lovely fresh smell radiated from her lovely gown and the radiance from the skin of the immortal goddess shone afar. Her blonde hair flowed down over her shoulders, and the sturdy house was filled with light like a flash of lightning. She went out through the palace. As for the other, her knees gave way, and for a long time she was speechless. She did not even remember the child, her favorite, to pick him up from the floor. His sisters heard his piteous crying, and they leapt down from their well-covered beds. Then one of them took the child in her hands and put him in her lap, one kindled a fire, and another hurried on gentle feet to rouse her mother out of the fragrant chamber. Crowding around they washed him, covering him with love as he squirmed; his heart was not comforted, however, for less skillful nurse and nurse maids were holding him now.

(292) All night long the women, quaking with fear, propitiated the glorious goddess. As soon as dawn appeared they gave a full report to wide-ruling Keleos, as Demeter of the beautiful garlands commanded. He summoned the people from their many boundaries and ordered them to build an elaborate temple to fair-haired Demeter and an altar on the ridge which juts forth. They obeyed him straightway, and hearkened to him as he spoke, and started to build as he commanded. And it grew at the dispensation of the divinity. When they finished and ceased from their toil, each person went back to his home. Blonde Demeter stayed there, seated far from all the blessed gods, wasting with grief for her deep-belted daughter.

(305) She made the most terrible, most oppressive year for men upon the nourishing land, and the earth sent up no seed, as fair-garlanded Demeter hid it. Cattle drew the many curved plows in vain over the fields, and much white barley seed fell useless on the earth. By now she would have destroyed the entire race of men by grievous famine, and deprived those who dwell on Olympus of the glorious honor of offerings and sacrifices, if Zeus had not taken notice and taken counsel with his mind. First he roused gold-winged Iris to summon fair-haired

Demeter, of the very desirable beauty. So he spoke, and she obeyed Zeus wrapped in clouds, the son of Kronos. She rushed down the middle and arrived at the citadel of fragrant Eleusis. In the temple she found Demeter dark-clad, and addressed her with winged words. "Demeter, father Zeus who understands imperishable things summons you to come among the race of the immortal gods. So come, and let my message from Zeus not be fruitless."

(324) So she spoke in supplication, but Her heart was not persuaded. Therefore the Father sent out the blessed, ever-living gods one after another, and they went in turn and implored her, and offered her many fine gifts and whatever honors she might choose among the immortal gods. None, however, was able to persuade the heart and mind of the angry goddess. She rejected their speeches firmly, and claimed that she would never set foot upon fragrant Olympus, nor allow any fruit to grow on the earth, until she saw with her eyes the beautiful face of her daughter.

(334) When Zeus the loud-crashing, the wide-voiced one, heard this he sent Hermes the slayer of Argos with his golden wand to Erebos, to use smooth words on Hades and lead pure Persephone out of the misty darkness into the light to join the deities, in order that her mother might see her with her eyes and turn from her anger. Hermes obeyed, and eagerly rushed down under the recesses of the earth, leaving the seat of Olympus. He found the Lord inside his house, seated on couches with his modest and very unwilling wife, yearning for her mother.

(346) The mighty slayer of Argos came near and said, "Dark-haired Hades, ruler of the departed, Father Zeus has ordered me to lead glorious Persephone out of Erebos to join them, in order that her mother might see her with her eyes and cease from her anger and terrible wrath, since she is contriving a tremendous deed, to destroy the fragile race of earth-born men, hiding the seed under the earth and obliterating the honors of the immortals. Her anger is terrible, she has no contact with the gods, but sits apart inside her fragrant temple, holding the rocky citadel of Eleusis."

(357) So he spoke, and Aidoneus the lord of the underworld smiled with his brows, and did not disobey the injunctions of Zeus the king. Promptly he gave the command to diligent Persephone: "Go, Persephone, to your dark-clad mother, and, keep gentle the strength and heart in your breast. Do not be despondent to excess beyond all others. I shall not be an inappropriate husband for you among the immortals; I am a brother of Father Zeus. Being there, you will rule over all that lives and moves, enjoying the greatest honors among the immortals. And there shall be punishment forever on those who act unjustly and who do not propitiate your might with sacrifices, performing the pious acts and offering appropriate gifts."

(370) So he spoke, and Persephone the discreet was glad, and swiftly leapt up for joy. But he gave her a honey-sweet pomegranate seed to eat, having secretly

passed it around [himself?], so that she might not stay forever there by modest dark-clad Demeter. Aidoneus, designator of many, harnessed the immortal horses in front of the golden chariot, and she stepped on the chariot; beside her the mighty slayer of Argos took the reins and a whip in his hands and drove out of the palace. The pair of horses flew willingly. They finished the long journey quickly. Neither sea nor rivers nor grassy glens nor mountain peaks held back the rush of the immortal horses; they went above them, and cut through the high air. He drove them where Demeter of the fair crown waited in front of her fragrant temple, and he stopped them there. Seeing them, she darted up like a maenad in the woods on a thick- shaded mountain.

[(387) Demeter asked Persephone if she had eaten anything in the underworld. If not,] (395) "you will come up and dwell with me and Zeus of the dark clouds, and be honored by all the immortals. But if you have tasted anything, then you shall go back down and dwell there for the third part of the season, and for the other two, here with me and the other immortals. Whenever the earth blossoms with all the sweet-smelling flowers of spring, then you will come back up from the misty darkness, a great wonder to gods and to mortal men. But what trick did the powerful host of many use to deceive you?"

(405) Persephone, the exceedingly beautiful, gave her this response: "I will tell you, Mother, everything accurately. When the swift slayer of Argos came to me from Father Zeus and the others in heaven with the message to come out of Erebos, so that seeing me with your eyes you might cease from your anger and terrible wrath, I leapt up for joy. But he secretly insinuated a pomegranate seed, honey-sweet food, and though I was unwilling, he compelled me by force to taste it. How he snatched me away through the clever plan of Zeus and carried me off, down into the recesses of the earth, I will tell you and I will go through it all as you ask. We were all there in the lovely meadow—Leukippe, Phaino, Elektre, Ianthe, Melite, Iache, Rhodeia, Kallirhoe, Melobosis, Tyche, Okyrhoe of the flowering face, Chryseis, Ianeira, Akaste, Admete, Rhodope, Plouto, charming Kalypso, Styx, Ouranie, lovely Galaxaure, Pallas the inciter of battles, Artemis the shooter of arrows—playing and picking the lovely flowers, a profusion of gentle saffron blossoms, iris, hyacinth, rose birds, and lilies, a marvel to see, and narcissus, which the broad land grew like saffron. Full of joy, I was picking them, but the earth under me moved, and the powerful Lord, the host of many, leapt out. And he took me under the earth on his golden chariot, against my will, and I screamed loudly with my voice. Grieved though I am, I am telling you the whole truth."

(434) Then with minds in concord they spent the whole day warming their hearts and minds, showering much love on each other, and her mind found respite from its griefs, as they gave and received joys from each other. And there came near them Hecate of the glistening veil, and she also showered much love

on the daughter of holy Demeter, and ever since she has been her attendant and Lady-in-waiting.

(441) Zeus the land-crashing, the wide-voiced one, sent fair-haired Rheia as a messenger to them, to bring dark-gowned Demeter among the race of the gods; he promised to give her whatever honors she might choose among the immortal gods. He granted that her daughter should spend the third portion of the year in its cycle down in the misty darkness, but the other two with her mother and the other immortals.

(448) So he spoke, and the goddess obeyed the biddings of Zeus. Promptly she darted along the peaks of Olympus, and came to the Rarian plain, the life-bringing udder of plough-land formerly, but at that time not life-bringing at all, as it stood all barren and leafless. The white barley was concealed according to the plans of fair-ankled Demeter, but at this time it was about to grow shaggy with waves of grain as it became spring. In the field the rich furrows were to be loaded with the grain, and they were to be bound in sheaves. Here she first alighted from the boundless aether, and they saw each other gladly, and rejoiced in their hearts.

(459) Rheia of the glistening veil said to her, "Come here, child. Zeus the loud-crashing, the wide-voiced one, summons you to come among the race of the immortal gods, and he has promised to give whatever honors you might choose among the immortal gods. He has granted that your daughter will spend the third portion of the year in its cycle down in the misty darkness, but the other two with you and the other immortals. So has he promised, and nodded his head in affirmation. Go, now, my child, and obey; do not be obdurately angry at Zeus of the dark clouds but give prompt increase to the fruit, bringer of life to men."

(470) So she spoke, and Demeter of the fair crown Obeyed. Promptly she sent up fruit on the rich-soiled fields, and the whole broad land was loaded with leaves and flowers. She went to the royal stewards of the right and to Triptolemos, Diokles the driver of horses, mighty Eumolpos and Keleos the leader of the people. She showed the tendance of the holy things and explicated the rites to them all, to Triptolemos, to Polyxeinos and to Diokles—sacred rites, which it is forbidden to transgress, to inquire into, or to speak about, for great reverence of the gods constrains their voice. Blessed of earth-bound men is he who has seen these things, but he who dies without fulfilling the holy things, and he who is without a share of them, has no claim ever on such blessings, even when departed down to the moldy darkness.

(483) When the divine goddess had ordained all this, she went to Olympus among the assembly of the other gods. And there they dwell, sacred and reverent, with Zeus who revels in thunder. Greatly blessed of earthbound men is he whom they propitiously love: to him they promptly send to the hearth of his great house Ploutos [Wealth], who gives abundance to mortal men.

(490) Now, ye that hold the people of fragrant Eleusis, and sea-girt Paros and rocky Antron, Lady mistress Deo, bringer of seasons and glorious gifts, thou thyself

and Persephone, the exceedingly beautiful, do ye bestow a heart-warming livelihood in exchange for my song. Now I shall recall thee, and also another song.

Cult Regulations

The Homeric Hymn provides the mythological framework of the Mysteries. The inscriptions quoted here give information about their administration in the fifth century. The first is dated about 460 B.C. Part A, not included because it is too fragmentary to translate, concerns penalties for impieties. Part B sets the timetable for the sacred truce which accompanied the celebration of the Greater Mysteries (which lasted from the 15th to the 23rd of the month Boedromion) and the preparatory Lesser Mysteries (in the month Anthesterion). The reference to other cities shows that by the fifth century the Eleusinian cult's appeal reached farther than Attica. Part C contains information about cult personnel (especially the Heralds [*Kerykes*] and Eumolpidai, the two noble families which had charge of the sanctuary and its mysteries and the *hieropoioi*, sacred agents), about financial arrangements, and about initiation procedures.

(*IG* I^2 6, B and C.)

B. (5) There is to be a truce for the initiates, the *epoptai*, and the attendants and [possessions] of all the foreigners and Athenians. The period of the truce is to begin at the middle of the month Metageitnion and last through Boedromion until the 20th of Pyanepsion. The truce is to be in effect in all the cities which make use of the sanctuary, and also for the Athenians there in the same cities. For the Lesser Mysteries the truce is to last from the middle of the month of Gamelion and through Anthesterion until the 20th of Elaphebolion.

C. . . . The sacred herald receives a half obol each day from each initiate. The priestess of Demeter is to receive at the Lesser Mysteries an obol from each initiate and at the Greater Mysteries an obol from each initiate. All the obols are for the Two Goddesses except for 1600 drachmas. From this sum the priestess is to pay the expense as long as it lasts. The Eumolpidai and Heralds are to receive from each initiate all the parts from the sacrificial victims; they are not to initiate any underage male or female initiate except for one who was initiated a[t the hearth(?)]; the heralds are to initiate each of the initiates separately, and the same is true of the Eumolpidai; if they do several, they are to be liable for a thousand drachmas. Those of the Heralds and Eumolpidai who are chosen by lot are to perform the initiations.

It is allowed to the Athenians to control the expenditure of the sacred funds, as long as they wish, as they do the funds of Athena in the city. The *hieropoioi* are to be custodians of the funds in the shrine inside the city.

The Eumolpidai are to hold the [certification (?)] of the orphans, and the orphan children and the initiates are each to make a preliminary sacrifice, the initiates sacrificing at Eleusis in the courtyard and inside the sanctuary, and the others sacrificing in the Eleusinion in the city.

The priest stationed at the altar, th[e cleaner] of the Two Goddesses, and th[e sacrosanct] priest is to receive [as payment] from each of these [a half obol from] each initiate, sacr[ed to the Two Goddesses.]

The Athenian state controlled Eleusis in the fifth century, as shown in this document ordering the reorganization of the sanctuary and providing for a regular payment of grain to support the sanctuary. The date is in the second half of the century, though experts disagree as to the exact year (448, 422, and 418 have been suggested). The cities mentioned are the subject-allies of Athens, members of her empire.

(*IG* I^2 76.1–46.)

Resolved by the council and the people…, on the proposal of the drafting committee: that the Athenians give first-fruits of the grain to the Two Goddesses according to ancestral custom and the oracle of Delphi—from every hundred *medimnoi* of barley, not less than 1/6 *medimnos*; from every hundred *medimnoi* of wheat, not less than 1/12 *medimnos*. If any produces more or less grain, he is to give first-fruits in the same proportion. The deme-leaders in each deme are to collect it and convey it to the *hieropoioi* from Eleusis at Eleusis. They are to construct from the funds of the Two Goddesses three silos according to ancestral custom at Eleusis wherever seems convenient to the *hieropoioi* and the builder. There they are to deposit the grain which they receive from the deme-leaders. (14) The allies are also to give first-fruits in the same way: the cities are to select collection agents for the grain that the grain may be collected in the best way. When it is collected, they are to send it to Athens, and they are to take it and convey it to the *hieropoioi* from Eleusis at Eleusis. If they do not receive it within five days after the proclamation is made, the *hieropoioi* are to be liable, for a thousand drachmas each, and they are to receive it from the deme-leaders in the same way. The council is to choose heralds and send them to the cities to announce the present vote of the people, in the present case immediately and for the future whenever the council decides; and the hierophant and the torch bearer are to order the Greeks to give first-fruits of the grain to the mysteries according to ancestral custom and the oracle of Delphi, and are to inscribe on a tablet the amount of grain from the deme leaders listed by each deme and that from the cities listed by each city and they are to place it in the Eleusinion at Eleusis and in the council chamber. (30) The council is also to make a proclamation to all the other Greek cities in

whatever way seems feasible to it, telling them how the Athenians and the allies are giving first-fruits and requesting, but not requiring, them, if they wish, to give first-fruits according to ancestral custom and the oracle of Delphi; and the *hieropoioi* are to receive them from the cities in the same way, if any makes a contribution. (36) The sacrifices: from the *pelanos*, as the family of the Eumolpidai explicates; a triple sacrifice, the first victim an ox with gilded horns, to each of the Two Goddesses some of the barley and the wheat, and a perfect victim each to Triptolemos, to the god [Plouton] and the goddess [Persephone] and to Euboulos; and to Athena an ox with gilded horns. The *hieropoioi* are to dedicate the rest of the donated barley and wheat to. the Two Goddesses, in whatever form the people of the Athenians resolves, and they are to inscribe on the dedications that they were dedicated from the first-fruits of the grain, the offering of the Greeks. (44) May there be many good things and an abundance of grain of good quality to those who do this, whoever does not act unjustly toward the Athenians, the city of the Athenians, or the Two Goddesses…

The Meaning and Blessings of Initiation

The happiness of Eleusinian initiates is the basis for the following selection from Aristophanes' *Frogs*. This is a comedy, and in general full of raucous name-calling, slapstick, and obscenity. Yet this choral, passage, which is sung by initiates in the underworld, celebrating their happiness amid the gloom, is remarkably (if not completely) free of vilification and comic trenchancy. The hymn is addressed primarily to Iakchos, the divine personification of the initiates' cry of enthusiasm (*iakche*).

(Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 324–336, 340–353, 369–413, 440–459.)

Chorus of initiates: O highly honored Iakchos, whose dwelling-place is here, Iakchos, O Iakchos, come and dance through this meadow to thy devout members of the *thiasos*, shaking the fruit-laden crown of myrtle swelling around thy head, and treading with bold foot the measure of the uninhibited, playful rite, with its full measure of the Graces, the dance which is pure, holy to the sacred initiates.…

Raise the blazing torches in your hands. Come among us, Iakchos, O Iakchos, light-bringing star of the nocturnal initiations. The meadow is ablaze with flame, the old man's limbs are leaping, they shake off their griefs and the lengthy spans of their aged years through the holy rites. Do thou shine radiant with thy torch and lead us forth to the flowering, marshy field where, blessed one, dances and youthfulness bloom.

[To the doers of evil] I declare; and again I declare, and again the third time I declare, stand aside from our initiate choirs. But do ye waken your song and our nightlong revels which befit our festival.

Come now everyone bravely into the flowery breast of the meadows, stamping and jeering and playing and mocking. (There's been enough eating.)

But come that thou mayest raise thy voice in noble song to exalt the Savior-goddess, who doth claim to save this land for all seasons (even if Thorykion doesn't like it).

Come now, shout out another kind of hymn to the grain-bearing Queen, the goddess Demeter, adorning it with sacred song.

Demeter, Lady of pure rites, be present among us, and save thine own choir. Grant me in security to play and dance all the day.

And grant me to say many witty things, many serious and, having played a jester worthy of thy festival, to wear the victor's crown.

And now, with chants invoke hither the god of ripeness, the fellow-pilgrim of our choral dance.

Much-honored Iakchos, who hast discovered the sweetest part of the festival, accompany us toward the goddess and reveal how thou dost accomplish thy long journey without toil. Iakchos, who lovest the dance, be thou my escort and guide.

For thou (for a laugh and economy's sake) hast ripped my poor little sandal and these rags I wear, and hast found a way for us to play and dance cheaply. Iakchos, who lovest the dance, be thou my escort and guide.

Now have I caught sight of a young girl's—a beautiful playmate's—nipple peeking out through a burst seam in her dress. Iakchos, who lovest the dance, be thou my escort and guide.

Proceed now along the holy circle of the goddess, along the flowering grove, and play, ye who take part in the festival favored of the goddess. I with the maids and the women shall go where they celebrate the goddess all night long, and shall carry the holy blaze. Let us proceed to the flowering, rose-filled meadows, playing in our special way, with the most beautiful dancing, which the Fates, who bring prosperity, do lead.

The sun and its holy blaze exist for us alone, who have experienced initiation and have dealt in a respectful way with strangers and private individuals.

By the end of the classical period, the Mysteries had become famous throughout the Hellenic world. They were so prestigious in the fourth century that the orator Isocrates, speaking in extravagant praise of Athens' accomplishments, uses the presence of the Mysteries in Attica as evidence that Athens was the inventor of agriculture and all its attendant blessings.

(Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 28–29.)

That which in the first place our nature required was provided by our city Even if the story is mythical, nevertheless it is appropriate for it to be told now again. When Demeter wandered about after the abduction of Kore she arrived in this country; she was well disposed toward our ancestors by reason of good deeds which may not be heard by anyone except the initiates, and she gave those twin gifts, the greatest which exist, the grains which caused us to live a life no longer bestial and the initiation which gives its participants pleasant hopes about the consummation of life and eternity. (29) Our city showed its love not only for the gods but also for our fellow men in that being in possession of such good things it did not begrudge them to others, but it gave to all of that which it had received. And even today each year we reveal the rites; it has also, in summary, taught the uses of grains, their cultivation and the benefits which come from them.

The following passage shows how, in the last decade of the fourth century, a foreign king was so eager to receive initiation (for whatever reasons) as to force the Athenians to accommodate him in spite of the calendar and ancestral custom. The passage also shows the weakened political standing of Athens at the time, as well as a clear statement of the schedule of the mysteries.

(Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 26.)

At that time he was marching back to Athens, and he wrote that he wished, as soon as he arrived, to be initiated and to receive the whole set of ceremonies from the Lesser to the *epoptika*. But this was not proper, and had never been done before: the Lesser Mysteries were celebrated in the month of Anthesterion, and the Greater in the month of Boedromion, and they only conducted the *epoptika* after an interval of at least a year. When his letter was read, only Pythodoros the torch bearer dared to oppose it, but he accomplished nothing. Instead, Stratokies moved, and it was voted, to call Mounychion (the current month) Anthesterion and consider it as such. Then they held the initiation ceremonies at Agra for Demetrius. After this Mounychion became Boedromion in place of Anthesterion, and he received the rest of the initiation, including besides the *epopteia*.

The next four passages suggest the moral and spiritual impact of the Eleusinian cult. First is a paraphrase from Hermippos, an Athenian philosopher of the late-fourth century, which gives the three moral and ritual admonitions ascribed to Triptolemos, the legendary founder of the Eleusinian cult. Next is Aristotle's analysis of the value of the cult as a ceremony rather than a fixed

body of doctrine. This is followed by two short quotations from fifth-century authors singing of the rewards in the afterlife which initiates can expect.

(Porphyry, *On Abstinence* IV. 22.)

We understand that Triptolemos is the most ancient of the Athenian lawgivers. Hermippos, in his second book on lawgivers writes about him thus: "They say that Triptolemos gave laws to the Athenians, and Xenokrates the philosopher says that these three laws of his still survived at Eleusis—'Honor your parents; honor the gods with grain; do no harm to animals.'"

(Aristotle, in Synesius, *Dio*, 10; frag. 15 in V. Rose, *Aristotelis … Fragmenta*, Leipzig, 1886.)

Initiates do not need to understand anything; rather, they undergo an experience and a disposition—become, that is, deserving.

(Sophocles, in Plutarch, *How to Study Poetry*, 21f; frag. 837 in A.C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Sophocles*, Cambridge, 1917.)

Thrice blessed of mortals are those who go to Hades after beholding these rites. To them alone is it given to live there; to others everything there is evil.

(Pindar, in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* III. 3.17; frag. 121 in C.M. Bowra, *Pindari Carmina*, Oxford, 1935; frag. 137 in B. Snell and H. Maehler, *Pindarus*, Leipzig, 1975.)

Blessed is he who goes under the earth after seeing these things. He knows the consummation of life; he knows its Zeus-given beginnings.

Rites and Ceremonies

What went on in the Eleusinian mysteries, and what (if anything) was revealed as the climax of the initiation ceremony was never revealed by any initiate, and the mystery continues to puzzle scholars. Our only ancient sources are not very reliable. They are very late, and are nearly all Christian, polemical writings attacking the pagan cults. Several passages are included here, because modern interpretations of the Mysteries have been influenced by them. The Plato scholiast explicates the two sets of Lesser and Greater Mysteries, and preserves a ritual formula. Lactantius seems to be describing a feature of a sort of ceremonial passion play recalling the abduction of Persephone; his reference to lights is elaborated by Dio Chrysostom. Clement cites another ritual

formula and "reveals" the contents of the sacred, secret chests [*kistai*], and Tertullian and Hippolytus both triumphantly expose the content of the great beholding [*epopteia*], the apparent climax of the initiation ceremony. They do not agree, however, whether the great mystery is the phallus or an ear of grain. See Mylonas, *Eleusis*, pp. 258–278, and K. Clinton, *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 64, 3: Philadelphia, 1974).

(Scholiast on Plato, *Gorgias*, 497c.)

There were two sets of mysteries among the Athenians. One was called "Lesser," celebrated inside the city. The other was the "Greater," held at Eleusis. It was necessary to be initiated first into the Lesser, and then into the Greater; otherwise it was not proper to participate in the Greater. These were celebrated in honor of Deo and Kore, because Plouton carried off Kore, and Zeus slept with Deo. Many base things were done in them, and these words were spoken on the part of those being initiated: "I have eaten from the drum, I have drunk from the cymbal, I have carried the offering dish [*kernos*], I have gone down into the (bridal) chamber [*pastos*]."

(Lactantius, *Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 23.7.)

Similar to the other mysteries is that of Ceres [Demeter]; in it Proserpina [Persephone] is sought with lighted torches through the night, and when she has been found the whole rite ends with expressions of joy and brandishing of torches.

(Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* XII. 33.)

… It is as if someone would hand over a man, Greek or barbarian, to be initiated in some inner sanctum of exceptional beauty and size. He would see many mystical sights, and hear many mystical voices Darkness and light would appear to him in alteration, and thousands of other things would happen. It is furthermore like the initiating personnel who, in the so-called "Enthronement," seat the initiands and dance around them in a circle.

(Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* II. 21–22; pp. 16–17 in the edition of O. Stählin, Leipzig, 1905)

The sacred formula of the Eleusinian mysteries is "I have fasted, I have drunk the *kykeon*, I have taken from the chest, I have done my task and placed in the basket and from the basket into the chest." … The mystic chests are such

as these—for I must strip their sanctities naked and speak aloud their ineffabilities—: are their contents not sesame sweets, cakes shaped like pyramids and balls, or covered with navels, lumps of salt, and a serpent, the ritual sign of Dionysus Bassaros? And are there not pomegranates in addition, and sprigs of fig, fennel and ivy, and also cheese cakes and poppies? These are their sanctities!

(Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians*, 1.)

Even the famous Eleusinia, that heresy of Attic superstition, is a shameful thing about which they keep quiet, in fact they impose torture before they certify the admission [of an initiate]. They start the *epoptai* off five years before so that they may build up their expectation by withholding knowledge and so that they may seem to reveal something of a grandeur equivalent to the greed which they have heaped up. Following this there is an obligation of silence. This is kept assiduously because it is learned at a late stage. However, the entire godhead in the innermost sanctuary, the entire source of breathless adulation in the *epoptai*, the entire secret token of their tongues, is revealed to be an image of the male organ.

(Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* V. 8.39.)

The Athenians, when they conduct the Eleusinian mysteries, reveal in silence to the *epoptai* the great, wonderful, most perfect initiation mystery, the *epoptikon*, an ear of grain. This ear of grain is for the Athenians the great initiatory lightbringer from that which is unformed [*acharakteriston*], as when the hierophant himself … at night in Eleusis beneath a huge fire, celebrating the great and unspeakable mysteries, cries aloud, "The Lady Brimo has brought forth a holy son, Brimos."

C. The Cults of Dionysus

Ecstatic Worship of Dionysus

The classic treatment of Dionysiac religion is Euripides' tragedy the *Bacchae* ["Bacchant Women"]. It portrays the power of the secret rites in which the devout danced in Dionysus' honor, often in winter or mountain heights, and tore animals apart in order to consume their raw flesh and blood. Euripides' play conveys the abhorrence with which much of respectable society viewed these seemingly barbaric practices, but it also conveys the compelling appeal of this religion, especially to women—its promise of blessed happiness, of contact with elemental forces, of ecstasy, of possession by the gods. (The word enthousiasmos is often used to denote the indwelling of the god in his devotees.) On Dionysiac religion see M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion*; W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston, 1950), pp. 145–182; E.R. Dodds' edition of *Euripides' Bacchae*[2] (Oxford, 1960), esp. the Introduction. The following passage from the Bacchae is a hymn of praise sung in honor of Dionysus Bromios ["Roarer"] by the chorus of Bacchant women, who congregate in a sacred band known as a *thiasos*.

(Euripides, *Bacchae* 64–168.)

From Asian land, passing by sacred Tmolos, I quickly ply for Bromios my pleasant toil, my easy-labored labor shouting *eua*! to Bacchus.

Who is on the road? Who is on the road? Who is in the palace? Let everyone come away, let every one consecrate his mouth with holy silence. For I shall sing a traditional hymn of Dionysus.

(72) O happy is he who with the god's blessing and knowledge of the rites of the gods leads a pious life and joins his soul to *thiasos* and Bacchic revels in the mountains with devoted purifications, observing the ceremonies of the Great Mother Kybele, brandishing the *thyrsos*, and crowned with ivy, serves Dionysus.

Go, Bacchants; go, Bacchants, and bring Dionysus Bromios, divine son of God, back out of the Phrygian mountains into the broad streets of Greece. Bromios!

(88) He it is whom his mother carried and bore in compulsive pangs of childbirth, casting him from her womb when the lightning bolt of Zeus came flying at her, and she departed the world at the stroke of the thunder. But then Zeus the son of Kronos immediately received him in his birthing chamber, and enclosed him in his thigh and fastened it with golden needles, to hide him from Hera. And he bore, when the Fates brought him to term, the bull-horned god, and he crowned him with crowns of serpents, which is the reason the maenads festoon their hair with their beast-bred prey.

(105) O Theban nurses of Semele, crown yourselves with ivy! Be laden with green bryony with its beautiful berries. Play the Bacchant with branches of oak or pine, and deck your garments of dappled fawn-skin with fillets of white wool be reverent in wielding the violent wands Soon all the earth will dance—he is Bromios, whoever leads the *thiasos* [or "whenever Bromios leads the *thiasos*]—to the mountain, to the mountain, where the crowd of women waits, goaded from their looms and shuttles by Dionysus.

(120) O inner chamber of the Kouretes, O divine haunts of Crete which gave birth to Zeus, where the Korybantes with their triple crowns discovered in the caves this my round drum of stretched hide. And in the tense strained Bacchic dance they mixed it with the, sweet-voiced breath of Phrygian flutes, and they put it into Rhea's hand, an accompaniment to the *eua*-song of the Bacchants. The raving Satyrs got it from the goddess mother, and they attached it to the biennial dances in which Dionysus rejoices.

(135) He is pleasant on the mountains, when he falls to the ground out of the swift-running *thiasoi*, wearing his holy fawn-skin, tracking down the blood of the slaughtered goat, the joy of flesh eaten raw, yearning for the Phrygian mountains, the Lydian, and Bromios is the leader, *euoi!*

(142) The plain flows with milk, it flows with wine, it flows with the nectar of bees; the Bacchic one holds up the pine torch bright blazing like the smoke of Syrian incense from his staff, and he darts at a run, with dances rousing the stragglers and urging them on with his cries, tossing his delicate locks in the air.

(151) And at the same time he roars out, with shouts of *eua*!, thus: "O Bacchants, go; Bacchants, go! with the glitter of Tmolos flowing with gold sing Dionysus to the sound of deep-roaring drums, glorifying with *eua!* the god of the *eua*-cry, in Phrygian shouts and cries, whenever the sacred melodious flute plays its roaring sacred song, joining the pilgrimage to the mountain, to the mountain. Joyfully, then, like a colt at the manger with its mother, the Bacchant moves her limbs in quick swift leaps.

This sort of nocturnal *oreibasia* ["Mountain-Processions"] is also attested as early as the seventh century B.C. (though it is not specifically Dionysiac) in the following fragment.

(Alcman, in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* XI 498f—499a frag 56 in D Page, *Poetae Melici. Graeci*, Oxford, 1962.)

Often on the tops of the mountains when the gods took delight in the festival with many torches you carried a large (wooden) cup, like the ones shepherds carry, all golden, and with your own hands you filled it with the milk of a lioness, and you made a cheese, large, unbroken, to [Hermes] the slayer of Argos.

The orgiastic nature of the Dionysiac rites is typified by the musical instruments which accompanied the dance—in this passage the geographer Strabo (who wrote in the late-first century B.C.) associates the cult of Dionysus with similar cults in Phrygia (in Asia Minor) and Thrace (northeast of Greece). Thrace was widely considered the land from which Dionysus entered Greece.[31]

(Strabo, *Geography* X. 470–471.)

Among the Thracians (among whom the Orphic rites have priority) the Kotyteia and the Bendideia are like the Phrygian rites. Aeschylus in his tragedy "The Edonians" mentions Kotyto and the instruments which accompany her, "they who keep the sacred rites of Kotys [and her instruments]"; he then alludes immediately to those who accompany Dionysus, "The one holds in his hands bass flutes, worked on a lathe, and fills it with fingered melody which brings on the incitement of madness; the other clashes bronze-bound hollow cymbals." Again he says, "The lyre raises its cry, the awesome bull-voiced mimes roar from some hidden place, and the likeness of a drum, like subterranean thunder, comes bearing deep-seated terror." These are like the Phrygian ones, and it is not unlikely that, since the Phrygians are colonists of the Thracians, they also transferred their sacred rites there. In addition, by associating Dionysus and Lycurgus the Edonian, they intimate the similarity of their rites.

One of the gods from Thrace and Asia Minor whose cult entered Greece in the fifth century and whose worship resembled that of Dionysus was Sabazios. The following excerpt is from a speech in which Demosthenes attacks his opponent by emphasizing the degeneracy of the rites in which he has participated. This passage alludes to some of the cult practices, and also illustrates the suspicion with which "respectable" elements regarded them.

(Demosthenes, *On the Crown*, 258–260.)

But you—the respectable man, spitting on everybody else—consider the kind of fortune you have enjoyed.... [As a child you did menial service at your father's grammar school], (259) and when you became a man you used to read the texts and attend to the rest of the paraphernalia at the initiation rites your mother conducted—preparing fawn skins, mixing wine, purifying the initiates and wiping them off with clay and bran, then after the purification bidding them rise and say "I have escaped the evil, I have found the better," and you thought it respectable that no one ever gave out the shout as well as you.... (260) During the

31. Cf also the mysteries of Thracian gods on Samothrace, pp. 210–216.

days you led your pretty *thiasoi*, garlanded with fennel and white poplar, through the streets, and you would squeeze the *pareias*-snakes and toss them above your head, and shout *Euoi Saboi*, and dance around to *Hyes Attes! Attes Hyes!* greeted by the old women as *Exarchos* [Leader], *Prohegemon* [Instrutor], *Kittophoros* [Bearer of the Ivy], *Liknophoros* [Bearer of the Winnowing-Fan], and such like, and you would get as payment pastries—crumbled, twisted, and fresh-ground.

When the Dionysiac mysteries became popular in Rome in the second century B.C., the Romans translated their reactions against the cult into a general suppression of it. The parts of Livy's account given here cast some light on cult practices and the social class of the participants, though the viewpoint is clearly that of a thoroughly hostile witness.

(Livy, *History of Rome* XXXIX. 9.4, 10.5–7, 13.8–14.)

The mother told the young man that she had made a vow on his behalf when he was sick, that as soon as he began to recover she would have him initiated into the Bacchic rites, and that she now wished to discharge the vow, as she was obliged to do by the generosity of the gods. He must maintain chastity for ten days; on the tenth day he would partake of a banquet and be washed with pure water, and then she would conduct him into the sanctuary.…

(10.5) [Then his mistress Hispala told him] that while she was a slave she entered that sanctuary as an attendant to her mistress, but as a free woman she had never gone near it. She knew that it was the work-shop of every kind of corruption, and it was well-known that for two years now no one had been initiated there who was more than twenty years old; as soon as a person was inducted, he was treated as a victim for the priests. They would conduct him to a place which resounded with screeches, chanting, music, and the crash of cymbals and drums, so that the voice of the initiate could not be heard while the shameful act was perpetrated upon him with violence.…

(13.8) Hispala then expounded to the consul the origin of the rites. At first that sanctuary belonged to the women, and it was customary not to admit any man. They had three days fixed each year in which initiations were held for the Bacchants during the day. By custom the matrons were made priestesses in turn. Paculla Annia of Campania changed everything when she was priestess, in spite of a warning from the gods. She was the first to initiate men, her sons Minius Cerrinius and Herennius Cerrinius. Of the daytime rite she made a nocturnal one; and for the three days each year she established five initiation days each month. As a result, the rites were in a state of promiscuity: men mingled with women; the night added permissiveness; no crime, no vice was neglected there. There was more debauchery on the part of the men among themselves than with

the women. If some were less tolerant of the shame and more reluctant to commit the crime, they were slaughtered as sacrificial victims. To believe that nothing was illicit, among them this was the most exalted faith. Men, as if their minds had been taken from them, prophesied with frenzied tossings of their bodies; women in the vestments of Bacchants, hair in disarray, ran down to the Tiber with burning torches, submerged the torches in the water and (because live sulfur and lime were applied to them) brought them out with flame still burning. People were reported to have been carried off by the gods, when actually they had been tied to machines which carried them out of sight into hidden caverns—these were the ones who had refused to take the oath or take part in the crimes or tolerate the abuse. They were an immense group, and were now almost a second nation; several men and women of the nobility were among the number. For the last two years it had been the policy that no one over the age of twenty be initiated—those of younger ages could be got hold of and were more tolerant of error and vice.

Rites of Dionysus in Sikyon

This short passage describes the temple and worship of Dionysus at Sikyon in the northern Peloponnese. The secrecy of the Bacchic cult is here combined with a temple accessible to the public.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* II. 7.5–6.)

After the theater is a temple of Dionysus. The god is of gold and ivory, and beside him are Bacchants of marble. They say that these women are sacred to the god and go into a frenzy in his honor. There are other statues, but the Sikyonians keep them in secret: these they bring on one night a year into the Dionysion from the so-called *kosmeterion* ["vestry"], and they bring it accompanied by lighted torches and native hymns; the one which they call Bakcheios goes first—Andromadas the son of Phlias made it for them—followed by the one called Lysios ["Releaser"], which Phanes of Thebes brought from Thebes at the command of the Delphic oracle.

The Anthesteria

The spring festival of the Anthesteria provides an example of several types of rituals, public and private, addressed to Dionysus. A fragment of the Hellenistic historian Apollodorus gives the names of each of the three days of the festival, celebrated on the 11th, 12th, and 13th of the month Anthesterion. See the discussion in M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion* (New York, 1962), pp. 32–36.

(Apollodorus of Athens, in the Scholia to Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 961; frag. 133 in *FGrH* 244.)

The whole festival held for Dionysus is called "Anthesteria" its parts are *Pithoigia* ["Opening of the Wine Jars"], *Choes* ["Pitchers"], and *Chytroi* ["Pots"].

The ceremonies of the first day, *Pithoigia*, are briefly described by Plutarch and by Phanodemus, a historian of the fourth century B.C.

(Plutarch, *Table-Talk*, 655e.)

At Athens they inaugurate the new wine on the eleventh of the month, and they call the day *Pithoigia*.

(Phanodemus, in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* XI. 465a; frag. 12 in *FGrH* 325.)

At the temple of Dionysus in Limnai ["The Marshes"] the Athenians bring the new wine from the jars and mix it in honor of the god and then they drink it themselves. Because of this custom Dionysus is called Limnaios, because the wine was mixed with water and then for the first time drunk diluted.

The second day of the festival, "Pitchers," was also observed at the sanctuary of Dionysus in the Marshes. The participants who conducted the rites in secrecy were a group of priestesses called *gerarai*, the *Hierokeryx* [Sacred Herald], and the *Basilinna*, the wife of the annual magistrate who was called the "King" because the office included the priestly duties associated in very early times with the king of Athens. The source for all this is a speech in which Neaira, the wife of the "King" in one of the years in the late 340s B.C., is accused of having profaned the secret rites because she was not a full-blooded Athenian, and had even been a prostitute before marrying her husband. The passage also includes a reference to the ceremony, held later in the day, in which the "Queen" became the bride of Dionysus. The short selection from Aristotle describes the location of this sacred mating, the Boukoleion in the Athenia agora. On the Demosthenes passages see H.W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London and Ithaca, 1977), pp. 110–113.

(Demosthenes, *Against Neaira*, 73–76, 78.)

And this woman offered for you on behalf of the city the unspeakably holy rites, and she saw what it was inappropriate for her, being a foreigner, to see; and being a foreigner she entered where no other of all the Athenians except the wife

of the king enters; she administered the oath to the *gerarai*[32] who serve at the rites, and she was given to Dionysus as his bride, and she performed on behalf of the city the traditional acts, many sacred and ineffable ones, toward the gods. These are things which may not be heard by everyone; how then is it pious for a passerby to do them, let alone for such a woman and one who has perpetrated such acts?

(74) … In ancient times, Athenians, there was monarchy in our city, and the kingship belonged to those who in turn were outstanding because of being aboriginals. The king used to make all the sacrifices, and his wife used to perform those which were most holy and ineffable—and appropriately, since she was queen. (75) But when Theseus centralized the city and created a democracy, and the city became populous, the people continued no less than before to select the king, electing him from among the most distinguished in noble qualities. And they passed a law that his wife should be an Athenian who has never had intercourse with another man, but that he should marry a virgin, in order that according to ancestral custom she might offer the ineffably holy rites on behalf of the city, and that the customary observances might be done for the gods piously, and that nothing might be neglected or altered. (76) They inscribed this law on a *stele* and set it beside the altar in the sanctuary of Dionysus in Limnai. This *stele* is still standing today, displaying the inscription in worn Attic letters. Thus the people bore witness about their own piety toward the god and left a testament for their successors that we require her who will be given to the god as his bride and will perform the sacred rites to be that kind of woman. For these reasons they set it in the most ancient and holy temple of Dionysus in Limnai, so that most people could not see the inscription. For it is opened once each year, on the twelfth of the month Anthesterion.

(78) Now I wish to summon the sacred herald, who attends the wife of the king when she administers the oath to the *gerarai* with their baskets at the altar, before touching the sacrificial victims, in order that you may hear the oath and the formulas spoken, insofar as it is possible to hear them, and that you may see how solemn and sacred and ancient the traditional rites are:

Oath of the *Gerarai*: "I live a holy life and am wholly pure from others who do not live a pure life and from relations with a man; I serve as *gerara* at the Theoinia [feast of the wine god] and the Iobakcheia to Dionysus in accordance with ancestral custom and at the appropriate times."

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32. The late lexicographer Pollux (*Onomastikon* VIII. 108) gives the following definition of the *gerarai*: "These offered to Dionysus the ineffably holy sacrifices, along with other sacred functions. There are fourteen of them, appointed by the basileus." And the *Etymologicum Magnum* quotes Dionysius of Halicarnassos: "The *gerairai* are holy women among the Athenians, whom the basileus appoints in equal numbers to the altars for the purpose of honoring [*gerairein*] the god."

(Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 3.5.)

Not all the magistrates live together. The "King" kept what is now called the Boukoleion near the *prytaneion* [townhall]. The evidence is that even now the mating and marriage of the wife of the "King" with Dionysus takes place there.

In addition to these official ceremonies, private drinking parties were held. In his comedy *The Acharnians*, Aristophanes shows us a man preparing to celebrate the advent of peace by observing the pitcher-banquet. At this banquet the host provided dessert, but each guest brought his own wine and pitcher. The fragment of Phanodemus gives an aetiological myth to explain this custom, as well as the custom of taking the wreaths to the temple of Dionysus after the party.

(Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 1085–1093.)

Come quickly to dinner, bringing your hamper and your pitcher, for the priest of Dionysus summons you. Hop to it now—you've been holding up the banqueting long enough. All the rest has been prepared—couches, tables, cushions, spreads, wreaths, myrrh, sweets, whores, all kinds of cakes (whole-wheat, flat, sesame, sesame-and-honey), and dancing girls, beautiful ones, the darlings of Harmodios. But hurry as fast as you can.

(Phanodemus, in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* X. 437c–d; frag. 11 in *FGrH* 325.)

Demophon the King instituted the festival of the Pitchers [*Choes*] at Athens. When Orestes arrived at Athens [after killing his mother] Demophon wanted to receive him, but was not willing to let him approach the sacred rites nor share the libations, since he had not yet been put on trial. So he ordered the sacred things to be locked up and a separate pitcher of wine to be set beside each person, saying that a flat cake would be given as a prize to the one who drained his first. He also ordered them, when they had stopped drinking, not to put the wreathes with which they were crowned on the sacred objects, because they had been under the same roof with Orestes. Rather, each one was to twine them around his own pitcher and take the wreathes to the priestess at the precinct in Limnai, and then to perform the rest of the sacrifice in the sanctuary. The festival has been called *Choes* ever since.

The third day Chytroi ["Pots"] was a day of relative solemnity. Pots of food were set out for Hermes (as the guide of the dead to the underworld). Theopompus, who wrote in the fourth century, describes the ceremony and gives an aetiological explanation for it.

(Theopompus, in the Scholia to Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 1076; frag. 347 in *FGrH* 115.)

Those who had survived the great deluge [of Deukalion] boiled pots of every kind of seed, and from this the festival gets its name. It is their custom to sacrifice to Hermes Chthonios [Of the Underworld]. No one tastes the pot. The survivors did this in propitiation to Hermes on behalf of those who had died.

The Chytroi ended with a ritual cry usually interpreted as an order to the souls of the departed to leave the land of the living. Our source for the cry is a Christian writer of the ninth century A.D., who gives another explanation (see L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* [Berlin, 1932], pp. 94–96, 113–114).[33]

(Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. "Thyraze Kares.")

"To the doors, Kares, it is no longer Anthesteria": some authorities contend that this is what is said to the crowd of Karian slaves, since at the Anthesteria they join in the feast and do not do any work. Therefore, when the festival is over, they send them back out to work with the words, "To the doors, Kares, it is no longer Anthesteria." But others contend that the proverb goes: "To the doors, Keres, it is no longer Anthesteria," since the souls [*keres*] wander about through the city at the Anthesteria.

The Rural Dionysia

Many of the *demes* of Attica had their own festivals of Dionysus, held in the winter month of Poseideon. Our chief source is this passage from Aristophanes' comedy the *Acharnians*, in which Dikaiopolis makes a private peace treaty with the Spartans, then celebrates with the bawdy revelry of a phallic procession with the rest of his family.

(Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 243–279.)

Dikaiopolis: Keep holy silence, holy silence! *Chorus*: Quiet, everybody. Did you men hear that "holy silence"? This is the one, the person we've been looking for. Everybody out of the way—it looks as if the man is coming out to make a sacrifice.

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33. See also R. Ganszyniec, "Thyraze Kares," *Eranos* 1947, 100–113; M. van der Valk, "Thyraze Kares or Keres," *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 76 (1963) 418–420; J. ter Vrugt-Lenz, "Thyraze Keres," *Mnemosyne* 15 (1962) 238–247.

Dikaiopolis: Keep holy silence, holy silence! Girl, be the Basket-bearer, come forward a little—Xanthias, hold the phallus up straight. Now put the basket down, daughter, so we can start.

Daughter: Here, mother, hand me the sauce-boat, so I can pour the sauce on this cake.

Dikaiopolis: Well, that's fine. O Lord Dionysus, may it be well-pleasing to you, that I conduct this procession, make sacrifice with my household, and celebrate auspiciously the country Dionysia, to observe my release from army duty. And may my thirty-year truce be well concluded. Daughter, be nice—and careful to carry the basket nicely—you look like you've had a dose of bitter herbs. It'll be a lucky man who marries you, and when he gets up, produces little polecats that smell just as bad as you. Go on, and be very careful in the crowd that nobody sneaks a nibble at your baubles. Xanthias, you two hold the phallus up straight and follow the Basket-bearer. I'll come along and sing the phallus-song. Wife, you watch me from the roof. Let's go O Phales, comrade of Bacchus, wanderer in the night, adulterer, pederast: it has been six years since I have come in joy to my deme to address you, to pour libations to make a treaty for myself, discharged from business and battle and Lamachos. Much more pleasant it is, O Phales, Phales, to find that ripe and ready thieving wood-gathering Thracian slave-girl of Strymodoros, the one from Phelleus, to grab her waist, lift her up, toss her down, and get down to business, O Phales, Phales. If you join our drinking-party, at dawn the morning after you will gulp down a cup of peace; and the shield will hang on the fireplace.

The City Dionysia

The great Attic festival of Dionysus was held in the spring month of Elaphebolion. After a procession on the first day escorting the god's statue to the theater precinct, the festival included three days of choral performances and the production of tragedies and comedies. In the first passage, Demosthenes the orator who as *choregos* or sponsor of the boys' dithyrambic chorus in 349 B.C. was assaulted by his enemy Meidias in the theater, here accuses Meidias of sacrilege. In the process he cites some of the laws and oracles regulating the festival.

(Demosthenes, *Against Meidias*, 51–54.)

Surely you know that you perform all these choral dances and hymns to the god in accordance not only with the laws concerning the Dionysia, but also with the oracles both from Delphi and from Dodona, in all of which you will find it enjoined upon the city to organize choruses according to ancestral custom, to fill

the streets with sacrificial savor and to wear garlands. (52) Please take them and read the oracles themselves.

"Now I address you, the sons of Erechtheus, all who do dwell in
Pandion's city, whose festivals follow the ancestral customs.
Be ever mindful of Bacchus, and throughout the broad spacious roadways
Set up the thanksgiving dances to Bromios for all the seasons,
Cover your heads with thick garlands, set sweet smelling savor on altars."

"For good health, sacrifice and pray to Zeus Hypatos [the Highest], and Apollo Prostaterios [the Guardian]. For good fortune, to Apollo Agyieus [of the Streets], Lato, Artemis; in the streets set bowls of wine and dances, and wear garlands according to ancestral custom for all the Olympian gods and goddesses, raising right arms and left; and remember your donations."

(53) Oracle from Dodona: "The man of Zeus declares to the Athenian people: whereas you have let pass the times of sacrifice and the sacred embassy, he commands you to send nine delegated envoys, and with dispatch. Make an auspicious offering to Zeus Naios of three oxen and with each ox two sheep, and to Dione an ox, and a bronze table for the dedication which the Athenian people have dedicated.

"The man of Zeus declares in Dodona: conduct a public sacrifice to Dionysus, mix a bowl of wine and set up choruses; sacrifice an ox to Apollo Apotropaios [the Averter]; both free and slave are to wear garlands, and to be at leisure for one day. A white bull to Zeus Ktesios."

(54) Athenians, these and many other fine oracles are in the city's keeping. What then should you take to heart out of them?—that they order us to offer sacrifices to the gods indicated by each oracle, but in addition they also enjoin us to set up choruses and to wear garlands according to ancestral custom and all the oracles which come to us.

The following short passages illustrate the procession with the statue of Dionysus from the suburban Academy to the temple in the theater precinct, and also the conduct of the performances themselves. For a detailed account of the festival, see A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 57–125; more briefly in Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London and Ithaca, 1977) , pp. 125–136.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* I. 29.2.)

The Athenians also have shrines of gods and heroes and tombs of men outside the city in the denies and along the roads. The nearest is the Academy; it was once one man's private property, but in my day is a gymnasium.… There is a temple there, not large, into which they bring the statue of Dionysus Eleuthereus every year on certain fixed days.

(Alciphron, *Letters* IV. 18.16.)

May I always have the opportunity to garland myself with Attic ivy and sing hymns to Dionysus each year at the Hearth.

(*IG* II^2 1006, lines 12–14.)

[The youths of the city] accompanied Dionysus from the Hearth to the theater with torches, and they sent to the Dionysia a bull worthy of the god which they sacrificed to the god at the procession.

(Philochorus, in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* XI. 464f; frag. 171 in *FGrH* 328.)

The Athenians, at the Dionysiac competitions, first had breakfast and drank, and when they had finished they went to the show. They wore wreathes to watch it, and during the whole competition wine was poured for them and sweets were brought around. They would pour out something for the choruses to drink at their entrances, and when they were through with the competition and were proceeding out, they would pour some more for them.

D. The Mysteries of the Kabeiroi at Samothrace

On the island of Samothrace, off the coast of Thrace in the northern Aegean Sea, was an ancient cult of Thracian gods which became well-known to the Greeks. A mystery cult with initiation and some secret knowledge or experience is attested in the fifth century, and frequently alluded to in ancient literature. As with the Eleusinian and Dionysiac mysteries, the most explicit documents are from a very late period and are not necessarily very reliable. One such is the first selection, a list of the Thracian gods who were worshipped at the sanctuary, and the Greek gods with which they were at some point identified. The sanctuary on Samothrace has been excavated by the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University; the complete excavation report Samothrace edited by Karl Lehmann, is published in the Bollingen Series and includes as vol. I (New York, 1958), a complete collection of ancient testimonies edited by Naphtali Lewis.

(Ancient "Laurentine" Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* I. 917.)

On Samothrace there are held initiations to the Kabeiroi, as Mnaseas says. Their names, four in number, are Axieros, Axiokersa, Axiokersos. Axieros is Demeter, Axiokersa is Persephone, and Axiokersos is Hades. Kasmilos, added as the fourth, is Hermes, as Dionysodorus relates. Athenion says that Iasion and Dardanos were born of Zeus and Electra. The title "Kabeiroi" seems to come from the Kabeira mountains in Phrygia, since they were transferred from there. Others say there are two Kabeiroi, the elder Zeus, and the younger Dionysus.

The historian Diodorus (first century B.C.) gives an account of the visit to Samothrace by the Argonauts. It connects Orpheus (himself a Thracian) with the cult, and presents a mythological prototype for the belief that the Samothracian gods protected their initiates from shipwreck.

(Diodorus, *Library of History* IV. 43.1–2.)

A great storm had come up and the leaders had despaired of safety, but they say that Orpheus, the only one of the Argonauts who had participated in the initiation rites, made prayers for safety to the Samothracian gods. And as the wind immediately subsided and twin stars fell above the heads of the Dioskouroi [Kastor and Polydeukes], they were all amazed at the unexpected event, and understood that they had been rescued from their dangers by the gods' providence. For this reason this reversal of fortune has been handed on to succeeding generations, so that when in a storm sailors offer prayers to the

Samothracian gods, and they ascribe the presence of the stars to the epiphany of the Dioskouroi.

In the next passage Diodorus gives the legendary account of the origin of the mysteries. It constitutes a sacred tale which may have functioned similarly to the Hymn to Demeter at Eleusis (p. 129 above).

(Diodorus, *Library of History* V. 47.2–3, 48.2–49.4.)

Some say it [the island], called Saonnesos in ancient times, was named Samothrace because of the settlers from Samos and Thrace. The aboriginals had their own ancient language, and many expressions from it have been preserved until now in the sacrifices.... (48.2) They say that among the Samothracians were born three children of Zeus and Electra, one of the daughters of Atlas—they were Dardanos, Iasion, and Harmonia. Of these Dardanos proved to be especially ambitious; he was the first to reach Asia on a raft, and his first action was to found the city of Dardanos and to establish what was later called Troy.... But Zeus wanted his other son also to attain some honor, and so he revealed to him the initiation rite of the mysteries, which had long been on the island and were at that time handed on—though it is not proper for anyone to hear them except the initiates.He is supposed to be the first to initiate foreigners and by this means to make the initiations prestigious.

After this Cadmus the son of Antenor arrived among them during his quest for Europa. He participated in the initiation and married Harmonia, the sister of Iasion (and not, as the Greeks tell the tale, the daughter of Ares). (49) This marriage was the first at which the gods provided the banquet: Demeter fell in love with Iasion and contributed the fruit of the grain, Hermes gave a lyre, Athena the far-famed necklace, a gown and flutes, and Electra the rites of the Great Mother (as she is called) with their cymbals, kettle-drums and ecstatic celebrants. Also, Apollo played the lyre, the Muses the flute, and the other gods gave their blessings and increase to the marriage.

Iasion married Kybele and fathered Korybas. After Iasion departed for the gods, Dardanos, Kybele, and Korybas conveyed the rites of the Mother of the Gods into Asia and took them away into Phrygia.... Korybas called those who in the rites of the Mother are inspired Korybantes, after himself, and he married Thebe the daughter of Kilix. The flutes were similarly transferred into Phrygia from there, and the lyre of Hermes was taken to Lyrnessos.... The myths say that Ploutos [Wealth] was born of Iasion and Demeter, though in fact it is the wealth of the grain, given at the wedding of Harmonia because of her [Demeter's] relationship with Iasion....

The details of the initiation are kept as one of the ineffable things and are divulged only to the initiates. But the epiphany of these gods is widely known, as is also the unexpected help in dangers to those initiates who invoke them. They say that those who have been in communion with the mysteries become more reverent, more just, and in general better than they had been. For this reason the most important of the ancient heroes and demigods were very eager to take part in the initiation. Jason and the Dioskouroi, as well as Heracles and Orpheus after they were initiated succeeded in all their campaigns, as a result of the epiphany of these gods.

(Strabo, *Geography* X. 466.)

Some declare that the following are the same as the Kouretes: the Korybantes, Kabeiroi, Daktyloi of Mount Ida, and Telchines. Others say that they are relatives of each other and make small distinctions among them. To speak roughly and generally, during the ceremonies they are all inspired and Bacchic and, vested as serving attendants strike terror by means of war dances with the din and clash of cymbals, kettle drums and weapons; as well as of flutes and shouts. Thus these rites are in some way identified, as are also those of the Samothracians, those in Lemnos and several others, because their attendants are called the same.

Herodotus, who wrote in the fifth century B.C. and was apparently an initiate of the Samothracian mysteries, here hints at the symbolism and ritual of the initiation ceremony, but without violating their secrecy. He is more concerned with proving the antiquity of the cult, ascribing it to the Pelasgians, who for him are the aboriginal, pre-Greek inhabitants of Greece.

(Herodotus, *The Histories* II. 51.)

The Greeks learned to make statues of Hermes with an erect phallus not from the Egyptians, but from the Pelasgians; the Athenians were the first Greeks to take them over, and the others took them over from them. The Athenians had already long been counted as Greeks when the Pelasgians settled with them in their country, and therefore they also began to be considered as Greeks. Whoever has been initiated into the rites of the Kabeiroi which the Samothracians celebrate, having taken them over from the Pelasgians, that man knows what I mean. For these Pelasgians who settled with the Athenians used to inhabit Samothrace, and the Samothracians took over their rites from them. Therefore the Athenians were the first Greeks to make statues of Hermes with an erect phallus, having learned it from the Pelasgians. The Pelasgians told a sacred account about it, which is revealed in the mysteries at Samothrace.

Another fifth-century source is this passage from Aristophanes, which shows that Samothracian initiates expected the continuing protection of the gods. The passage from Aristophanes is followed by a commentary on it compiled in later antiquity, which makes explicit the rewards of initiation.

(Aristophanes, *Peace*, 276–279, 285–286.)

Gentlemen, what's going to happen to us? Now the fight gets serious. If any of you happens to have been initiated at Samothrace, now's the time to make a good prayer to turn aside the onslaught of—the guy's two feet … [after the prayer is answered:] Well done, well done, Dioskouroi! Maybe it will come out all right Take courage mortals!

(Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Peace*, 277–278.)

In Samothrace were certain rites of initiation which seem to have been celebrated as a kind of prophylactic charm against dangers. In Samothrace were the mysteries of the Korybantes and those of Hecate. The cave Zerinthos was also renowned: there, it is said, they held ecstatic rites to Hecate, and certain initiations in her honor, and sacrificed dogs. The poet of the "Alexandra" mentions it: "Leaving the cave Zerinthos of the dog-slaying goddess and Saos the stronghold foundation of the Kyrbantes." When they are in danger they invoke the *daimones* to whom they are supposed to be initiated, to make an epiphany and to ward it off. Those who are initiated into the mysteries of the Kabeiroi are supposed to be just and to be saved from terrors and storms.

The following passage, attributed in various versions to several important Spartans of the classical period, attests that moral purity and a confession of sin were part of the rites at the sanctuary.[34]

(Plutarch, *Laconic Sayings*, 217c–d.)

When Antalkidas was being initiated at Samothrace he was asked by the priest what was the most terrible thing he had done in his life. He said, "If such a thing has been done by me, the gods will know by themselves."

34. See Plutarch, *Laconic Sayings*, 229d, and in N. Lewis' collection, *op. cit.*, #239 and #240.

The Christian writer Hippolytus gives his version of the secret doctrine taught in the Samothracian cult. As usual, this late and biased testimony must be used with caution.

(Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* V. 8.9–10.)

This is the great and unspeakable mystery of the Samothracians, which it is permitted only to us initiates, he says, to know. For the Samothracians explicitly convey to those undergoing initiation that Adam is among them the primal man. Two statues stand in the *Anaktoron* [Palace] at Samothrace, of nude men holding both arms stretched up to heaven, and their pudenda turned up, as does the statue of Hermes on Kyllene. The statues just mentioned are images of the primal man and of the regenerating spirit consubstantial in every way with that man.

Chapter VI. Death and Afterlife

A. Views of Death; Burial Rites

The following selections demonstrate the range of Greek views on the important question of human mortality. Like contemporary man, the Greeks had a wide variety of opinions on the subject. The selections are arranged in approximately chronological order, to illustrate how these views developed, became more complex, and were affected by changes in the political and social fabric of Greek civilization. For further reading, see H. Wagenvoort, "The Journey of the Souls of the Dead to the Isles of the Blest," *Mnemosyne* 24 (1971) 113–161; B.C. Dieterich, Death, *Fate and the Gods* (London, 1965); J. Boardman and D. Kurtz, *Greek and Roman Burial Customs* (Ithaca, 1971); W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London, 1935) , pp. 148–193; M.P. Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* (Lund, 1950).

Homer's Iliad

This passage describes, at the conclusion of the *Iliad*, the funeral of the Trojan hero Hector. His body has just been begged from Achilles by Hector's father Priam, and as the episode opens Priam returns with the body inside the walls of Troy. As so often, Homer provides a prototypical account of an important Greek institution, in this case an elaborate funeral of a distinguished person.

(Homer, *Iliad* XXIV. 707–745, 776–804.)

No man was left there in the city, nor woman either, for an unbearable grief came upon them all. Near the gates they met Priam as he carried home the corpse. First Hector's wife and lady mother wailed as they hurled themselves on the light-running wagon and touched his head. Around them the crowd milled and wept. And now for the whole day until the setting of the sun they would have shed tears of lament for Hector before the gates, had not the old man spoken from his chariot amid the crowd, "Let the mules pass through; you may fill yourselves with weeping, when I have brought him home."

So he spoke, but they stood apart and yielded to the wagon. When the others had brought him to his glorious house, then they placed him on a corded bed, and by his side sat singers, leaders of the dirge, who sang the lament. The man chanted the dirge, and the women responded with the lament. Among them white-armed Andromache led the wailing, holding in her hands the head of man-slaying Hector, "Husband, you are young to have perished, and you leave me a widow in the palace, and your child is still an infant, the son which we bore, you and I, in our misery. I don't think he will reach adulthood, for this city will be utterly destroyed before then. You have perished, its guardian, you who defended it and protected its noble wives and helpless children. They will soon be riding in the hollow ships, and I with them. But you, my child, either will follow me to a place where you must perform. unfitting tasks and toil for an ungentle master, or some Achaean will snatch you by the arm and hurl you from the tower, a woeful death, in his anger because Hector killed his brother or father or son, since very many of the Achaeans have bitten the vast earth with their teeth at the hands of Hector. For your father was not a gentle man in grievous war. The folk now wail for him in the city and unspeakable grief and pain have you brought to your parents, Hector; for me especially shall grievous woes be left. For when you died you didn't stretch out your hands to me from the bed, nor speak to me any wise word, upon which I might have pondered night and day as I shed my tears."

But old Priam said to the people, "Come on now, Trojans, bring wood, and do not in your hearts fear any clever ambush of the Argives. For Achilles sent me from the black ships with this promise, that he would not harm us until the twelfth dawn came."

So he spoke, and they yoked oxen and mules, and then quickly gathered before the city. For nine days they gathered countless amounts of wood, but when the tenth dawn arose, giving light to mortals, then they carried out bold Hector, shed tears, and placed the corpse on the top of the pyre, and cast fire on it.

When early-born, rosy-fingered dawn appeared, the people gathered around the pyre of glorious Hector. When they were assembled together, first they quenched the pyre with fiery wine, all of it, as far as the strength of the fire had reached. His brothers and his companions gathered the white bones, mourning and shedding warm tears down their cheeks. They took the bones and placed them in a golden urn and covered it with soft purple robes. They placed the bones in a hollow grave and covered it over with great close-set stones. Then they heaped up the mound and watches were placed all around, lest the well-greaved Achaeans should attack before the appointed time. When they had piled the mound they went back and gathered together and enjoyed a glorious feast in the house of Priam, the Zeus-nurtured king. So they were busy about the funeral of Hector, the tamer of horses.

Homer's Odyssey

In the course of his travels, Odysseus went, at Circe's instructions, to the entrance of the underworld to consult the dead, specifically the seer Teiresias, about his return home. The picture of the dead given here agrees with that in the *Iliad*: they are weak, wavering phantoms, unable to speak without drinking the blood of the animals Odysseus sacrifices on their behalf. The sacrificial procedure is described in detail; apparently its ceremonies were also practiced at an oracle of the dead at Ephyra in Thesprotia, northwestern Greece, as late as the second century B.C. See S.I. Dakaris, "The Dark Palace of Hades," *Archaeology* 15 (1962) 85–93. For a fifth-century painting inspired by this passage in Homer, see p. 174 below.

(Homer, *Odyssey* XI. 21–50, 139–149.)

We went along the stream of Ocean until we reached the land of which Circe had spoken. There Perimedes and Eurylochos took hold of the sacrificial victims, and I drew a sharp sword from my thigh and dug a trough about a cubit long on this side and that. Around it I poured a libation to all the dead, first with a mixture of honey and milk, then with sweet wine, and third with water. Then I sprinkled white barley on top. Repeatedly I besought the wavering heads of the dead, promising to offer them, on my return to Ithaca, a barren cow, the best of the herd, and to fill up the altar-pyre with good things for them, and also to offer separately to Teiresias a black sheep, an outstanding one among our flock. When I had prayed to the tribes of the dead with prayers and supplications, I took the sheep and slit their throats; into the trough the dark blood flowed, and the souls of the departed dead flocked up from Erebos—brides, god-like youths, old men who had endured much, innocent maidens who had only just put on grief, and many wearing the wounds of bronze spears, men slain of Ares, with armor all gory. Many of them roamed one by one about the trough with much loud screaming, and pale fear seized me. Then I urged and commanded my companions to flay and burn the sheep which had been slaughtered with pitiless bronze and were lying there, and I told them to pray to the gods, mighty Hades and awesome Persephone. I drew the sharp sword from my thigh and sat down, to keep the wavering heads of the dead from coming close to the blood before I had made my inquiry of Teiresias.… [Before Teiresias comes Elpenor, a companion of Odysseus who has just died; since his body has not yet been cremated, he can speak without drinking the blood in the trough, and he asks for a proper burial. Then Odysseus sees his mother's ghost, but keeps her away from the blood until Teiresias approaches and tells him of his future adventures and return home. Odysseus then addresses him.] "Teiresias, the gods themselves have decreed it

so. But now tell me this: I see the soul of my deceased mother, and she is sitting silently near the blood, and dares neither to look her son in the face nor to speak to him. Tell me, sir, how may she know who I am?" So I spoke, and he replied, "I will tell you this easily, and let you know. Any one of the departed dead whom you allow to come near the blood, he will speak to you clearly. Any whom you deny, he will go back again."

Odysseus then speaks to his mother, Antikleia, then to a series of heroic women; later, he encounters several heroes of the Trojan War, several ghosts who are being punished, and Heracles. Among the heroes is Achilles, and the following excerpt includes, after Odysseus' summary of the traditional Greek view of heroic glory, a much more gloomy and skeptical comment from Achilles on the lot of the dead.

(Homer, *Odyssey* XI. 478–491.)

"Achilles, son of Peleus, by far the mightiest of the Achaeans, I come because I have need of Teiresias, if he would tell me some way to return to rugged Ithaca. I have not yet come anywhere near Achaea, nor yet have I come to my land, but I always have difficulties. Still, no man before was more blessed than you, Achilles, nor shall be in the future. When you were alive we honored you like the gods, we Argives, and now here you rule mightily among the dead. Do not be sad, Achilles, because you are dead."

So I spoke, but he in turn replied, "Do not speak lightly to me of death, shining Odysseus; I would be willing, if I could live on earth, to serve another man, a man without an estate of his own, who had no great livelihood, rather than to be the lord over all the departed dead."

The Lyric Poets

Mimnermus of Colophon (fl. 632–629 B.C.) and Simonides of Ceos (c. 556–468 B.C.) offer in their elegiac poetry powerful witness to the transitory nature of human life and the imminence of death.

(Mimnermus, in Stobaeus, *Eciogae* IV. 34.12; frag. 2 in M.L. West, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci* II, Oxford, 1972.)

We are like the leaves that the hour of spring, rich in flowers, shoots forth, which suddenly bloom in the rays of the sun. Like them we take our pleasure in our span of youth, not knowing whether evil or good shall come from God. For dark Fates stand beside us, the one contains the end of painful old age, the other

the end of death. For the bloom of youth is short lived, so long as the sun spreads over the earth. And when this hour passes by, then death is better than life. Many woes are born for the soul. At one time a household is worn out, and the painful works of poverty appear. Another man longs for children, and though he longs for them he goes beneath the earth to Hades. Another has pain which destroys the soul. There is no man for whom Zeus does not have many woes.

(Simonides, in Stobaeus, *Eclogae* IV. 41.9; frag. 16 in D. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Oxford, 1962.)

If you are a mortal, never talk about what may happen tomorrow, nor when you see a happy man talk about how long he will be so. Change is swift, nor is the change in the course of a wide-winged fly so swift.

(Simonides, in Plutarch, *Letter to Apollonius*, 107b; frag. 15 in Page.)

Little is the strength of men, and his duties unavailing. Toil upon toil in a short life. Death hovers about nevertheless, a death that cannot be avoided. Both good and bad men take an equal share of it.

(Simonides, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* I. 89; frag. 76 in Page.)

Kleoboulos composed poems and riddles to the total of three thousand lines. Some say that he composed the epitaph for Midas, "I am a brass marker, and I live on the tomb of Midas. So long as water flows, and tall trees grow green, the sun rises and shines, the moon gives light, rivers flow and the sea washes the shore, I will remain on this much-lamented tomb and tell those who pass by that Midas is buried here." A poem of Simonides supports this identification, where he says, "Who, relying on his understanding, would praise Kleoboulos, the native of Lindos, who placed the might of a gravestone against the ever-flowing rivers, the flowers of spring, the flame of the sun, the golden moon and the wave of the sea? All these are less than the gods, but a stone even mortal hands may shatter. This is the wisdom of a fool."

Death and the Family

In their tragedies, the fifth-century dramatists frequently treated death and its aftermath, especially in its domestic impact. The first two passages portray the usual rites which relatives paid to the dead after the burial, though in each of these cases the emotional force is heightened by the tragic circumstances of

the plot. In Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* [Choephoroe], Electra brings offerings to the tomb of her father Agamemnon, recently murdered by her own mother Clytemnestra in collusion with Aigisthos, Clytemnestra's paramour, and she prays that her brother Orestes will return to avenge the murder.

(Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers*, 123–149.)

Electra: O thou most great herald of those above and those below, Hermes Chthonios [Of the Underworld], make proclamation for me to the *daimones* below the earth, the guardians of my ancestral home, to heed my prayers, and also to Earth herself, who giveth birth and breeding to all things, and taketh their yield again. I, pouring these lustral waters to the dead, call upon my father: "Take pity on me, and kindle thine own Orestes as a light to the house. For we have now been sold, and sent to wander by our mother, who hath exchanged us for her man Aigisthos, him who had his share in thy murder. I am even as a slave, and Orestes is an exile from his possessions, while they go vaunting in the luxury thy labor hath earned. I beseech thee, may Orestes come back here with some good stroke of luck, and do thou hear me, father. Grant to me to be much more reverent than my mother, and to have a more respectful hand.

"These are my prayers for us; for our enemies, I ask that thy champion appear, father, and that those who killed thee die in justice for their crime. In the central place I put these words of a curse, uttering it upon them. For us, however, let there be a procession of blessings from below, in company with the gods, with Earth and with Justice the bringer of victory." To such prayers as these, I add the pouring of libations.

By the opening of Euripides' *Orestes*, Clytemnestra has been killed by Orestes, and Clytemnestra's sister Helen here sends her daughter to perform the ritual libations at her tomb.

(Euripides, *Orestes*, 112–123.)

Helen [to her daughter Hermione]: Now do exactly what I say. Take this libation and these clippings of hair, and go to Clytemnestra's grave. Stand there and pour this mixture of honey, milk and wine over the grave and, as you pour, repeat these words: "Your loving sister Helen, prevented by fear of the Argives from coming to your grave in person, sends you these gifts." Then implore her to be gracious to us all, to my husband and me and these poor children whom Apollo has destroyed. Promise her besides that I will labor to perform, like a good sister, all the dues and rites of the gods below.

One of the ways in which the extended Greek family, so important in the political and social fabric of the city-state, demonstrated its coherence and identity was by a common burial plot on its ancestral lands. This passage from Demosthenes describes the burial plot of the clan of the Bouselidai.

(Demosthenes, *Against Macartatos*, 79.)

There is a burial place common to all those who are descended from Bouselos. It is called the burial place of the Bouselidai, a large area, enclosed, as the ancients prescribed. In this burial place all the other descendants of Bouselos, for example Hagnias and Euboulides and Polemon, lie, and all the others who similarly are kinsmen, and descended from Bouselos. All hold in common this place of burial.

The necessity of burying the dead, and its crucial importance to the family of the deceased, forms the basis of Sophocles' *Antigone*. In the following brief excerpt, the blind seer Teiresias describes in brilliant detail the effect that Kreon's refusal to bury Polyneikes has had upon the state religion.

(Sophocles, *Antigone*, 1016–1030.)

Teiresias: For our altars and hearths have been completely infected by the birds and the dogs with the carrion from the wretched fallen child of Oedipus. Therefore no longer do the gods receive prayers and sacrifices from us, nor the flames of thigh-bones. Nor does a bird shriek forth clear cries, happy, clear cries, for it has glutted itself with the blood and flesh of the slain man.… Be gracious to the dead, do not stab the dead. What glory is it to kill the dead again?

Euripides in the *Alcestis* offers an eloquent testimonial to the love of a wife for a husband, even an unworthy one. Alcestis is willing to die for him, yet this sacrifice is made more poignant in the scapegoat's awareness of what her actions will cost her. Life is still the most precious commodity for a Greek.

(Euripides, *Alcestis*, 152–197.)

Handmaiden: How is she not most excellent? Who will deny it? What must the woman become who would surpass her? How could anyone show greater honor to her husband than to be willing to die on his behalf? The whole city knows these things. You will be amazed to hear what she has done in the house. When she realized that the fated day had come, she washed her white skin with water from the river; from her cedar chests she took clothes and adorned herself handsomely, then stood before the hearth and prayed: "Mistress, I now go

beneath the earth, and for the last time do I prostrate myself before you in supplication. Take care of my children To my son join a loving wife, to my daughter a noble husband. May they not die before their time, as I who nurtured them do, but happy in their fatherland may they fill out a happy life."

Then she went to all the altars which are in the house of Admetus, and decked them with garlands, and prayed before them, cutting off tufts of myrtle from the branches, not crying or groaning, nor did the incipient danger change the natural beauty of her skin. Then she went back to her chamber, fell on the bed, and there cried and spoke as follows: "O Bed, where I gave up my virginity to this man, for whom now I perish, farewell. I don't hate you, but you have slain me alone. I hesitated to betray you and my husband, so I die. You some other woman will have, no wiser, perhaps, but luckier."

Falling forward on the bed she kissed it; all the spread was moist from the flood of her tears. But when she had had enough crying, she fell back from the bed and walked out, face down. Again and again she left the room, then turned around and fell again upon her marriage bed. The children clung to their mother's gown and were crying. She took them into her arms and embraced one and then the other, as a dying woman would. The entire household staff were crying throughout the house, in pity for their mistress. She gave to each her right hand. There was no one too low whom she did not call and speak to and receive a reply. Such are the woes in the house of Admetus, and he would have escaped them, if he died, but by escaping death he has gained this pain which surely he will not forget.

Death and the State: Thucydides

Thucydides the son of Olorus wrote a masterful account of the Second Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.). His writings are among the most precious legacies of Greek thought, and have long inspired scholars, politicians and statesmen. Perhaps Thucydides' greatest achievement was to portray the effects of prolonged, total war upon society. The following selections describe the Athenian custom of celebrating those who had fallen in defense of their country; Pericles was chosen to give the oration over the dead, and we have selected that portion of the speech which seems best to explain how this kind of death might be seen as a perfect sacrifice for civic virtue. We follow with Thucydides' description of the plague which afflicted Athens in the early years of the War, and the breakdown in morality and virtue that it caused.

(Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* II. 34, 43, 52.)

(34) In the same winter [431 B.C.] the Athenians followed the customs of their fathers and buried at public expense those who had first died in the war. The

ceremony was as follows: the bones of the departed are displayed for three days in a tent made for this purpose, and each person brings to his own dead whatever he might wish. When it is time for the funeral, wagons bring up cypress coffins, one for each tribe, and the bones of each man rest in the coffin of his tribe. One bier is left empty, and is carried covered in the procession. This is a memorial for those missing who could not be found for interment. Anyone who wishes, citizen or alien, may join in the procession, and the women related to the dead are present and sing songs of lamentation. They place the coffins in the public gravesite, which is located in the most beautiful quarter of the city [the outer Kerameikos, outside the Dipylon gate]. There the Athenians bury all those who have fallen in battle except for the men at Marathon, whose valor they judged to be so extraordinary that they buried them on the spot where they fell. When they have covered the bodies with earth, then a man selected by the city, whose judgment seems best and who is most highly esteemed, speaks the appropriate praise for the dead. After this they go home. So they bury the dead, and they employed this practice throughout the war, whenever the opportunity arose. . . .

(43) "And these men were of such a character as to benefit the city. It is necessary for the rest of you to pray, to be sure, for a safer conclusion, but with a purpose no less fixed to meet the enemy; you must analyze the benefit of such an attitude not merely by the words of a speaker, for a speaker could spend no little time in enumerating the benefits of defeating the enemy to you who know it clearly yourselves. Rather you must day by day contemplate the power of this city and become her lovers, and when you have thoroughly digested her greatness, become mindful that men who were bold and knew what was necessary and in the execution of deeds were moved by a sense of honor—these were the men who acquired this city. If they failed in an attempt, they thought it right that the city should claim their bravery, and sacrificed to her their fairest offering. They gave their bodies to the state and for themselves won a praise which is ageless and the most distinguished of tombs, not the one in which they are in fact buried, but the one in which their glory survives forever and is commemorated on every occasion of speech or deed. For the whole world is the tomb of famous men, and the epitaph of the *stele* in their own land not only commemorates them, but also in foreign lands for each man there is an unwritten memorial of them planted in the mind rather than written on a tombstone. Seek to emulate these men, judge freedom to be happiness, and courage to be freedom, and do not be too concerned about the dangers of war. It is not the wretched who have the best justification for tossing away their lives, for they have no hope of improvement; but rather those in the opposite condition, who might lose all if they live and those for whom it is very important whether or not they suffer a loss. To a man with spirit the embarrassment associated with cowardice is more bitter than death when it comes unanticipated, in the middle of the fight and when the hopes of the people are still high." . . .

(52) Over and above the troubles already pressing upon them, the Athenians suffered because people from the country crowded into the city. This situation particularly affected the refugees. There was no housing available for them, but they had to live in huts that were stifling in the summer; there they perished chaotically. Body lay on body, and half-dead people rolled in the streets and near all the fountains, for they longed for water. The temples in which they stayed were full of corpses of those who had died there; so overwhelming was the disaster that men, not knowing what might happen, became neglectful of divine and human law equally. All the customs they had formerly followed were thrown into chaos, and each buried his dead as he could. Many turned to disgraceful modes of burial because they lacked proper materials, for so many of their kinsmen had already perished. They used the pyres of other people, sometimes anticipating the builders, and would place their own dead on them and light the fire. Others would hurl the body they were carrying onto an already lighted pyre and go away.

The Orphic View of the Afterlife

The following passages constitute our major sources on the ideas of the Orphic teachers about death and the afterlife. Pindar and Plato, writing in the early-fifth and mid-fourth centuries respectively, offer the chief early testimony to a belief in post-mortem punishment and rewards, and in some sort of metempsychosis, as well as to a view of the soul as imprisoned in the body. More systematically, the late Hellenistic writer Diodorus describes the role of Orpheus in forming Greek beliefs about the geography of the underworld.

(Pindar, *Olympian* II 63–88)

… If the man who has it [wealth studded with virtues] knew the future—that the hearts of the dead who act recklessly *here* straightway undergo their punishment but the sins committed in this realm of Zeus receive sentence in the underworld from one who renders his sentence in accord with dreadful necessity. Good men receive a life without toil, with ever-equal rights, enjoying equal sun in their days; they never disturb the earth with strength of arm, nor water of the sea for hollow livelihood; rather, those who have taken pleasure in oaths well kept live out an age without tears in company with the honored of the gods. The others—they endure toil which is terrible to behold.

As for those who have managed to endure three cycles in both places without making their souls partake of crime, they complete the way of Zeus and arrive at Kronos' bastion, where the breezes, born of Ocean, blow over the island of the Blessed: the golden flowers blaze, both on shining trees on land, or nourished by the water; they entwine their arms with garlands and crowds, to the just designs

of Rhadamanthys—he it is whom the great father, the spouse of Rhea who holds the highest seat of all, keeps ready in his place beside him. Peleus and Kadmos are among them, and Achilles, whom his mother brought when she had persuaded Zeus with her supplications.

(Pindar, in Plato, *Meno*, 81b; frag. 127 in C.M. Bowra, *Pindari Carmina*, Oxford, 1935; frag. 133 in B. Snell and H. Maehler, *Pindarus*, Leipzig, 1975.)

For some Persephone will accept the punishment of ancient sorrow; their souls she sends back in the ninth year, to the sunlight above, and there from noble kings, mighty in strength, most great in wisdom, take their increase; for the rest of time they are called saintly heroes by men.

(Plato, *Cratylus*, 400b–c.)

[On the word *soma*, "body"]: It can be analyzed in a number of ways, if one changes it a bit, even a very little bit. Some say that the body (*soma*) is the tomb (*sema*) of the soul, as if the soul were buried in the present time. And because the soul indicates by means of the body whatever it means, for this reason it is called "sign" (*sema*). However, it seems most likely that the Orphic poets give this name on the grounds that the soul was making reparations for past misdeeds. The soul has an enclosure in order that it might be safe (*sozetai*) like a prison—and that is, as the name itself suggests, the safe (*soma*) of the soul until it pays back the penalty; and not even a letter of the word needs to be changed.

(Diodorus, *Library of History* I. 96.4–6.)

Orpheus brought back from Egypt most of his mystic rituals, the orgiastic rites concerning his own journey and the mythic account of his adventures in Hades. The rite of Osiris is the same as that of Dionysus, that of Isis similar to that of Demeter; only the names were changed. The punishments of the wicked in Hades and the Fields of the Pious and the fantastic imaginings common to the many, all were introduced by Orpheus in imitation of the funeral rites of Egypt. Hermes, the conductor of souls, according to ancient Egyptian custom brings up the body of the Apis to a certain point and gives it to one wearing the mask of Cerberus. After Orpheus introduced this insight among the Greeks, Homer totally followed it when he composed the lines,

Cyllenian Hermes called forth the souls
Of the suitors; he had his wand in his hand.[35]

35. Homer, *Odyssey* XXIV. 1–2.

And a little later he sings,

They went past the stream of Ocean and the Leucadian Rock,
And by the gates of the sun and the land of dreams,
And now they have come to the meadow of Asphodel.
There dwell the souls, the shades of worn-out men.[36]

Polygnotus' Picture of the Underworld

A foremost artist of the fifth century was the painter Polygnotus, who in the middle of the century was commissioned by the people of Cnidus to decorate a clubhouse they were constructing in the sanctuary at Delphi. The theme of one of these paintings was the visit of Odysseus to the underworld (see p. 165 above), and in the following description of the mural as seen by Pausanias, we can reconstruct a fifth-century view of the topography of the realm of the dead. Orphic influences may be present, and there are explicit references to the Eleusinian mysteries as a means to a happy afterlife. See C. Robert, "Die Neikyia des Polygnot," *Hallisches Winckelmannsprogram* 1892; W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London, 1934), pp. 162–163, 187–190.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* X. 28-31.)

Half the painting shows Odysseus after his descent into Hades in order to ask the soul of Teiresias about the safety of his homecoming. The scenes in the painting are as follows. There is water, clearly the river Acheron; reeds grow in it, with obscure forms of fish which resemble shadows more than fish. There is also a boat in the river, with the ferryman at the oars. Polygnotus, it seems, has followed the poem called the *Minyad*, which says of Theseus and Peirithous that "they did not find the boat which carried the dead, which the old ferryman Charon steered, within its mooring." On the same basis Polygnotus has painted Charon as an old man already at an advanced age. The passengers on the boat are not particularly well known: Tellis is shown as a young man, and Kleoboia is still a maiden; she holds on her knees a chest of the sort they usually make for Demeter. I have heard of Tellis that the poet Archilochus was his grandson; of Kleoboia they say that she introduced the rites of Demeter to Thasos.

On the bank of the Acheron it is especially noteworthy that beneath the boat of Charon is a man who had been unjust to his father: he is being strangled by his father, for in those days they valued their parents very highly.... Near the man who behaved outrageously to his father and as a result has his fill of woe in Hades,

36. Homer, *Odyssey* XXIV. 11–14.

there is a man who has violated sacred things and has suffered the consequences; the woman who is punishing him is expert in agony-producing drugs. Men were then still strongly devoted to piety, as the Athenians demonstrated when they captured the sanctuary of Olympian Zeus at Syracuse and removed none of the dedications, but let the Syracusan priest stay to guard them. Datis the Persian showed the same thing in his speech to the Delians and also in his actions when, having discovered a statue of Apollo in one of his Phoenician ships, he returned it to the Tanagraeans at Delion. At that time, then, all men held the divinity in such reverence, and for this reason Polygnotus has included the vignette of the violator of sacred things.

Above what has been described there is Eurynomos. The guides at Delphi say that Eurynomos is one of the *daimones* in Hades, and that he devours the flesh of the dead, leaving them only their bones. Now, the poems of Homer, as well as the *Minyad* and the *Returns* (which mention Hades and the horrors there) do not know of any *daimon* Eurynomos. Nevertheless, I will describe Eurynomos and the way he has been represented: his complexion is between blue and black, like that of the flies which gather around meat; he shows his teeth, and a vulture's skin is spread for him to sit upon.

Immediately after Eurynomos are Auge of Arcadia and Iphimedeia: Auge came to the house of Teuthras in Mysia; they say that of all the women with whom Heracles slept, she bore the son who most resembled his father. As for Iphimedeia, she has received great honors from the Carians in Mylasa.

(29) Above the figures I have already discussed, Perimedes and Eurylochos, Odysseus' companions, are carrying sacrificial victims. Behind them a man is seated, and a label says that he is Oknos. He is represented plaiting a cord, but a she-ass standing beside him keeps eating the part of the cord he has plaited. This Oknos was, they say, a diligent man, with a spendthrift wife, and as much as he earned by his work, she would spend without much delay. Thus, they maintain that Polygnotus symbolized the wife of Oknos in this vignette.… Right next to the man twisting the string is Ariadne. She sits upon a rock and looks toward her sister Phaedra, who is using a rope as a swing, holding the rope in each hand. The design, though it is very gracefully executed, makes us recall the manner of Phaedra's death.… Below Phaedra is Chloris, reclining on the knees of Thyia. It would be accurate to say that these women, as long as they were alive, had great affection for each other. Chloris was from Orchomenos in Boeotia, Thyia was a daughter of Kastalios from Parnassos.… Poseidon had intercourse with Thyia, and Chloris married Neleus, the son of Poseidon.

Next to Thyia stands Prokris the daughter of Erechtheus; with her is Klymene, who turns her back to her. According to the poem *Returns*, Klymene is a daughter of Minyas; she married Kephalos the son of Deion; their son was Iphiklos. Everybody tells the tale of Prokris, and how she was kill by her husband.

More toward the middle of the painting you will see Megara, who was from Thebes. Heracles took this woman and in time divorced her, alleging that he had lost the children she had borne him and that he believed he had married her under an unfavorable *daimon*.

Above the heads of the women I have discussed is the daughter of Salmoneus sitting upon a rock, and Eriphyle standing beside her. She is extending her fingers along the neck of her dress and in the folds she is presumably holding the famous necklace.

Above Eriphyle he has painted Elpenor, then Odysseus crouching down, holding his sword over the trench. Teiresias the seer is approaching. Behind Teiresias, on a rock, is Odysseus' mother Antikleia. In place of clothing, Elpenor wears a kind of mat, the usual garb of sailors. Further down than Odysseus, sitting on chairs, are Theseus, holding his own and Peirithous' swords in both hands, and Peirithous, looking at the swords, presumably grieving over the uselessness of the swords and the fact that they had been no help in their exploits. . . .

(30) Next, Polygnotus has painted the daughters of Pandareos. According to Homer, in one of Penelope's speeches,[37] while they were still maidens their parents were killed by the wrath of the gods; orphaned, they were brought up by Aphrodite, and from other goddesses also received gifts: from Hera intelligence and beauty, from Artemis stature, and from Athena women's skills; Aphrodite went up to heaven, intending to find a happy marriage for the girls with Zeus' help, but while she was gone the girls were seized by the Harpies and given to the Furies. Such is their story as Homer tells it; Polygnotus has painted the girls crowned with flowers and playing at knucklebones, and identified them as Kameiro and Klytie. . . . After the daughters of Pandareos is Antilochos; one foot is on a rock, and he holds his face and head in his hands. Behind Antilochos is Agamemnon; he is leaning on a scepter under his left shoulder, and is holding up a staff. Protesilaos is sitting there, looking toward Achilles. . . . Beyond Achilles stands Patroclus. These, except for Agamemnon, do not have beards.

Painted above them are Phokos as a young boy and Iaseus with a full beard; he is removing a ring from the left hand Phokos. The story goes like this: Phokos (the son of Aiakos) crossed from Aegina to what is now Phokis, intending to gain power over the population on the mainland and to dwell there; when he arrived Iaseus developed a very great affection for him and among other gifts gave him, as was appropriate, a ring-seal set in gold. A little later Phokos returned to Aegina, where Peleus started to plot to kill him. To commemorate this affection Iaseus in the painting is shown desiring to look at the seal, and Phokos is letting him take it.

Above these is Maira, seated upon a rock. According to *Returns*, she was still a maiden when she died, a daughter of Thersander and granddaughter of

37. Homer, *Odyssey* XX. 66–78.

Sisyphus. Next is Aktaion … and his mother, holding in their hands a fawn and seated upon the skin of a fawn; a hunting dog lies beside them, attesting Aktaion's life and how he died.

As you look back at the lower parts of the painting, next to Patroclus there is Orpheus seated upon a ridge; he holds a harp in the left hand, and touches a willow tree with the other. It is the branches that he touches, as he leans back against the tree. The grove is apparently that of Persephone, where black poplars and willows grow, according to Homer.[38] Orpheus is represented as a Greek; neither his clothing nor his cap is Thracian. Leaning up against the other side of the tree is Promedon. Some authorities think that Promedon's name is an innovation of Polygnotus', but others think he was a Greek who loved music, especially the singing of Orpheus. In this part of the painting is Schedios, the leader of the Phokian forces at Troy. After him is Pelias seated in a chair; his hair and beard are white, and he is looking at Orpheus. Schedios holds a dagger and wears a crown of long grass. Thamyris is sitting near Pelias; his eyes have been destroyed, and he is represented in total dejection, with long hair and beard; a lyre lies fallen at his feet, its horns and strings broken. Above him is Marsyas, seated upon a rock, and Olympus is beside him, represented as a handsome youth learning to play the flute.…

(31) If you look back again to the upper part of the painting, there is, next to Aktaion, Ajax (the Salaminian) and also Palamedes and Thersites playing dice, the invention of Palamedes. The other Ajax [the son of Oileus} is watching them play; his complexion is like that of a man who has been shipwrecked, with the salt still encrusting his skin. Polygnotus has deliberately gathered the enemies of Odysseus into one place.… Meleager the son of Oileus is higher up in the painting than Ajax the son of Oileus, and he seems to be looking at Ajax. All of these have beards, except Palamedes.… In the lower part of the painting, after Thamyris of Thrace, Hector is seated. He holds both his hands around his left knee, displaying the appearance of someone in grief. After him is Memnon, seated on a rock, and Sarpedon right next to Memnon. Sarpedon has buried his face in both hands, and one of Memnon's hands is resting on Sarpedon's shoulder. All these have beards. Memnon's cloak has birds embroidered on it.… Beside Memnon a nude Ethiopian boy is represented, because Memnon was king of the Ethiopian race.

Above Sarpedon and Memnon is Paris, without a beard. He is clapping his hands, as if he were a farmhand, and it looks as if he is calling Pentheseleia with the clapping. Pentheseleia is there, too, looking at Paris, but the position of her head seems to show her disdain for him, and her lack of respect. Pentheseleia is

38. Homer, *Odyssey* X. 510.

represented as a maiden with a bow like the Scythian ones, and with a leopard skin on her shoulders.

The female figures above Pentheseleia are carrying water in broken pots. One still has a fresh appearance, but the other is already getting on in years. Individually these women have no inscription, but both together are identified as representatives of women who have not been initiated. Above them is Kallisto the daughter of Lykaon, and Nomia, and also Pero the daughter of Neleus. Kallisto is using a bearskin for a pallet, and has her feet resting on the knees of Nomia. The Arcadians contend that Nomia is one of their local nymphs. The poets' version about them is that the nymphs live a great many years, but are not completely immune to death.

After Kallisto and the women with her is the representation of a cliff, and Sisyphus the son of Aiolos, straining to push the rock to the cliff. There is also a storage jar in the painting, and an old man, a child, a young woman under the rock, and another woman beside the old man, apparently the same age as he. The others are carrying water, but you can see that the old woman's jug has broken, and the water that is left in the sherd she is pouring back into the jar. The evidence suggested to us that these also were among those who neglected the ceremonies at Eleusis. In earlier times the Greeks considered the Eleusinian initiation to be more honorable than any other, as much so as gods are more eminent than heroes. Under this jar is Tantalus, with all the sufferings which Homer has given him in his poetry,[39] and besides these there is also the terror of the stone hanging above him. Clearly Polygnotus has followed the version of Archilochus, I am not sure whether he learned the part about the stone from others or whether he introduced it into the tale himself.

Plato on the Afterlife

The following selections, including allusions to Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines, demonstrate the range of Plato's thinking on the questions of death and the afterlife.

(Plato, *Phaedo*, 107d–l08c.)

The tale is as follows. When someone dies, his *daimon*, who took charge of him while he was alive, tries to lead him to a place where it is necessary for them to be brought together and offer their cases for judgment. Then they must go to the house of Hades with that spirit as guide who has the assignment of conveying them from here to there. When they have been there as long as necessary and

39. Homer, *Odyssey* XI. 582.

experienced what they experienced, another guide brings them back after many long passages of time.

This journey is not as Aeschylus' Telephos describes it. He says that the path to the house of Hades is straight, but it is not so in my judgment nor is it even a single path. For otherwise there would be no need of a guide. No one would lose his way if there were only one road. It seems more likely that it has many forks and crossroads, and I cite as my evidence the ceremonies and rituals of this world. The wise and disciplined soul follows its guide and is aware of its environment, but the soul which clings closely to the body, as I said before, and hovers around it and the visible world for a long time, and resists much and suffers much, is at last and only by force led away by its guardian spirit. When it comes to the place where the rest of the souls are gathered, the soul which is impure and has done an impure deed, either by perpetrating an unjust murder or some other such deed, which are kindred crimes and the work of kindred souls, then all the others flee and shun this soul, and none wish to be its companion or guide it. It wanders in utter confusion until some time passes; when that time has passed it is carried off by necessity to the place proper to it. But the soul which has lived its life purely and moderately enjoys the company and guidance of the gods, and each dwells in its proper place. There are many wonderful regions in the earth, and the earth is itself neither of the quality nor of the size supposed by the geographers.

(Plato, *Republic* II. 363c–e.)

Musaeus and his son [Eumolpos] have a more positive view of the blessings that the gods give the just. They lead them to the House of Hades in their song and make them recline and arrange a drinking party for the holy ones and cover them with wreaths. They use the rest of the time for drinking, thinking that the lovliest payment for justice is eternal drunkenness. Others extend the rewards of the gods still further. For they say that the children of the children of the pious man who keeps his oaths, and his race thereafter, survive successfully. Such and such are the praises they give to justice. But the impious and unjust they bury in the mud in the House of Hades and compel them to carry water in a sieve and bring them into bad repute while they still live and all the things which Glaukon enumerated as mistreatments for the just who are thought to be unjust; all these very things they attribute to the unjust, but have nothing more to say. Such is the praise and blame for just and unjust.

(Plato, *Phaedo*, 113d–114c.)

When the dead reach the place where their *daimon* conducts each one, first they are judged, both those who lived a good and holy life, and those who did

not. Those who are judged to have lived moderately proceed straight to Acheron, and embark on the vessels waiting for them there, and then go down to the lake, and there they dwell and are purified of their sins, if they have done anything wrong, and receive their rewards for good deeds, according to each's merits. But those who seem to be incurable because of the greatness of their sins, whether many great sacrileges or unjust murders or violations and any other such unjust acts, these their own appropriate destiny hurls into Tartaros, from which they never return.

Others have been judged guilty of sins which, while great, are curable, such as offering violence to father or mother in a passionate state, but have spent the rest of their life in repentance, or have committed acts of manslaughter in some such fashion. These will fall down into Tartaros by necessity, but when they have fallen down and been there for a year, then the wave hurls them out, the manslayers by Kokytos and the parricides and matricides by Pyriphlegethon. While they are being carried along and when they come by the Acherusian Lake, then they will call out and cry out, some to those they have killed, others to those they have mistreated, and as they call out they beg and plead for permission to leave the stream and come into the lake and be received. If they persuade them, then they come out and put an end to their troubles; if not they are conveyed back into Tartaros and then back into the rivers, and they cannot put an end to this endless circle until they convince those whom they have wronged, for this is the punishment passed on them by the judges.

But those who are judged to have lived a life outstanding in its holiness, these are released from these places in the earth and are set free as from a prison. These pass up to their pure home and dwell on the surface of the earth. Of these the ones who have purified themselves sufficiently by philosophy live thereafter without bodies, and come to still more beautiful places, which are more difficult to describe, and which time does not permit. But on what grounds we must direct our lives to leave nothing undone which might help us attain virtue and wisdom, O Simmias, is clear. For the prize is lovely and the hope great.

Epitaphs

As we do, the Greeks often chose to commemorate the deceased with an identifying marker, a stele, which was the equivalent of our gravestone. It is our custom to give the name of the departed, dates of birth and death and, occasionally, a scriptural verse or other quotation alluding to some unusually positive feature of the individual's life. Greek practice varied; the grave inscription might be limited to the name of the deceased; or the words on the stone might speak of the nature of death or the afterlife, in terms ranging from simple faith to aggressive scepticism. Often the stone itself would speak to passersby and call upon them to read and learn. Occasionally the deceased

would speak in the first person to a loved one. The first example given here is the epitaph composed by the great poet Simonides on behalf of the three hundred Spartans who died defending the pass of Thermopylae against the Persian invaders in 480 B.C. This is followed by a longer encomium on these same Spartans, and by four other epitaphs, also by Simonides: on the Athenian dead at the battle of Plataea (also against the Persians, in 479 B.C.), on the Spartan dead at the same battle, on a crusty old Timocreon of Rhodes and a merchant from Crete. All the other examples date from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and have been selected from R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana, Ill., 1962).

(Simonides, in Herodotus, *The Histories* VII. 228; frag. 22 in E. Diehi, *Anthologia Graeca* II, Leipzig, 1924.)

Stranger, announce to the Lacedaemonians that here
We lie, obedient to their commands.

(Simonides, in Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* XI 11.6 frag. 26 in D Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Oxford, 1962.)

To those who died at Thermopylae is a glorious fortune and a wondrous destiny. Their grave is an altar. Instead of lamentations, they have remembrance. Their wine is praise. Such a burial neither mold makes obscure nor time, which conquers all things. This shrine of brave men has taken as its guardian the glory of Greece. Leonidas the king of Sparta offers witness, for he has left behind a great ornament of courage and perpetual glory.

(Simonides, in the *Palatine Anthology* VII. 253; frag. 118 in Diehl.)

If dying well is the greatest part of virtue,
Fate has apportioned it to us of all men.
For we, hastening to bestow freedom upon Hellas,
Lie here enjoying a good repute that will never grow old.

(Simonides, in the *Palatine Anthology* VII. 251; frag. 121 in Diehl.)

These men bestowed unquenchable glory upon their dear country
And took upon themselves the dark mist of death.
They have died, but are not dead, since their virtue
Glorifies them and leads them up out of Hades' home.

(Simonides, in the *Palatine Anthology* VII. 348; frag. 99 in Diehl.)

I've drunk much, and eaten much, and said much that was bad
About men; and I lie here, Timokreon of Rhodes.

(Simonides, in the *Palatine Anthology* VII. 254a; frag. 138 in Diehl.)

A Cretan by birth, I, Brotachos of Gortyn, lie here;
I came for merchandise, not for this!

(F. Preisigke and F. Bilabel, *Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten*, Strassburg, 1915–, #4314; Lattimore, p. 176; from Alexandria, third century B.C.)

No longer does your mother take you in her hands, Philoxenos,
And cast them lingeringly about your lovely neck.
Nor do you go to the famous city with the young men,
Or rejoice in the shaded hall of the gymnasium.
Your father Kaunos brought your strong bones here and buried them,
When he touched the flesh with the fire that consumes everything.

(*IG* XII. 1.141, lines 1–6; Lattimore, p. 51; from Rhodes, second century B.C.)

A secretary. This man taught for fifty years
And two more in addition. Now the plain of the Pious holds him,
For Plouton and Kore have given him a place to dwell;
Hermes and Hecate the torch bearer have made him beloved
Of all, and supervisor of the mysteries,
Because of his faithfulness.

(*IG* XII. 5.310; Lattimore, p. 270; from Paros, second century B.C.)

Neikandros was my father, Paros my country.
My name is Sokrateia. When I died Parmenion
My husband buried me, granting me this gift,
That it be a memory of a seemly life, and that it be
At hand even to men of the future. The Fury
Of Childbirth (which cannot be guarded against)
Destroyed my pleasant life through a hemorrhage.
By my pains I could not bring the child into the light,
But he lives among the dead in my own womb.

(G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca*, Berlin, 1878, #67; Lattimore, p. 211; from Athens, Hellenistic.)

Under the walls of this tomb the earth conceals Kydimachos,
Who was rich and well along in years before he sailed into the harbor.
He saw his grandchildren, and his old age was free of care.
Now, dead, he shares our common fate.

(J. Geffcken, *Griechische Epigramme*, Heidelberg, 1916, #209 Lattimore, p. 129; from Astypalaea, late Hellenistic.)

Do not bring me anything to drink; when I was alive I drank.
Do not bring me anything to eat; I have enough. All is nonsense
If for the sake of remembrance of the life I lived with you
You bring saffron or frankincense as a gift, friends,
You give these things appropriately to those who have received me.
These things belong to the gods below. Dead have nothing to do with the living

(*IG* XII. 8.449, lines 12–14; Lattimore, p. 58; from Thasos.)

I pray you, husband, I will receive you
Even when late, Theodoros, and we shall both
Share this bed and forget our misfortunes.

(*IG* IX. 2.640, lines 8–9; Lattimore, p. 77; from Larisa.)

There is nothing more—nothing remains to the dead—
Than to afflict the mind of passersby. There is nothing else.

(Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca*, #648, lines 9–12; Lattimore, p. 36; from Rome.)

This plain must surely be the isles of the blessed. Here
Pious men live, most just and gentle.
While they lived they treated all men
With decency, wisdom, justice, and respect.

(*IG* XII. 9.1179; Lattimore, p. 116; from Chalcis, second century A.D.)

I proclaim to those who become owners of the property: Let him who shall not spare this work or image which has been set up, and who shall dishonor it or move it from one place to another or in outrage defile it or injure it or break

it either in whole or in part or overturn it and scatter it and obscure it; this man may God attack with distress, fever, chills, itch, blight, madness, blindness, and disorder of his mind. May his possessions disappear, may he not walk on the land or sail on the sea or beget children. May his house not increase; may he not enjoy produce of his house, nor light, nor the use and possession of anything. May he have the Furies as his protectors. If anyone tends me or guards me and helps to protect me, may he fare very well and be praised by his people. May his house increase by the number of his children and by the benefit of crops. May grace and health protect him.

(Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca*, #243, lines 5–6; Lattimore, p. 29; from Pergamum, second century A.D.)

Your soul has flown from the bones to other *daimones*
And now you dwell in the plain of the blessed ones.

(Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca*, #646a; Lattimore, p. 75; from Rome, third or fourth century A.D.)

Do not pass by my epitaph, wayfarer,
But stand, listen, and when you have heard, go on your way.
There is no boat in Hades, no ferryman Charon,
No Aiakos, keeper of the keys, no dog Cerberus.
All of us who have died and gone below
Are bones and ashes, nothing else.
I have spoken to you truthfully. Go away, traveler,
Lest I appear to you, though dead, to be an idle talker.

B. The Nature of the Soul: Ghosts

The Greeks were concerned from earliest times with the question of the nature of the soul. Homer in Book XXIII of the *Iliad* describes the soul as a sort of double, similar in all physical manifestations, e.g., height, eyes, voice, and dressed in the same garments that the person might have worn during life. This notion survived in Greek thought until the fourth century, as can be seen in Plato's *Phaedo*. The following selections offer a representative sample of Greek attitudes towards apparitions of the dead and, if we may believe Pliny, the ancients, both Greek and Roman, loved a good ghost story.

(Homer, *Iliad* XXIII. 62–107.)

When Sleep seized Achilles and loosened the concerns of his heart and poured around him sweetly—for his shining limbs were weary from chasing Hector to windy Ilium—then the spirit of unlucky Patroclus came to him, in everything like to himself in height, in fair eyes and in voice, and similar clothes covered his skin. He stood by Achilles' head and said to him: "You sleep, and have forgotten me, Achilles; you did not neglect me when I was alive, but you do so now that I am dead. Bury me quickly, so that I may enter the gates of Hades. The spirits keep me far away, the phantoms of men who are exhausted, they will not allow me to join them beyond the river. But I wander just as I am through the house of the dead Give me your hand, I beg you, for never again shall I come out from Hades, when you have given me what I desire from the fire. Never more in life will we sit apart from our comrades making plans, but for me bitter fate has opened her jaws, which was my lot since birth. And you too have a doom, Achilles like to the gods, to die by the wall of the wealthy Trojans. But I will tell another thing and I will give you a task, if you are willing. Do not put my bones away from yours, but together, as we were brought up in your home, when Menoitios brought me from Opoeis to your country when I was still a child, driven by the grief over manslaughter, on the day when I killed the son of Amphidamos in my folly, unwillingly, over the dice. There the horseman Peleus received me into his home, reared me kindly and named me your squire. So let one coffer hold our bones, a golden one with twin handles, the one your queenly mother gave you."

Then in answer spoke swift-footed Achilles: "Why, my dear head, do you come here and give me orders about each of these matters? I will complete these tasks, and I will do as you say. Stand nearer. Let us embrace if only for a moment and take our fill of bitter tears."

So he spoke and reached out with his hands. But he could not hold him. The spirit like smoke passed beneath the earth with a faint cry. Achilles jumped up in amazement, clapped his hands, and spoke a mournful word: "Alas, even in the

house of Hades there is a spirit and phantom, although there is no mind at all. All night long the spirit of wretched Patroclus has stood over me, weeping and wailing and giving commands about each and every thing, and it was wonderfully like him."

(Aeschylus, *The Persians*, 607–632, 681–692.)

Atossa: … For this reason I direct my path here from my house again, without my chariot and without my former luxury, bringing propitiating offerings to the father of my son, gifts which soothe the dead, white sweet milk from an unblemished cow, and bright honey, honey from the bee who works in the flowers, with lustral water from a virgin spring, and an unmixed drink from an ancient vine, its rustic mother. There is at hand the fragrant fruit of the pale-green olive, which always lives in the thick foliage, and flowers made into garlands, the children of fruitful earth.

But, my friends, chant the hymns while I offer these libations to the dead, and call forth the *daimon* of Darius, while I send ahead these offerings to the gods below which the earth will drink.

Chorus: Royal Lady, Queen of the Persians, send these libations to the chambers beneath the earth; we by our hymns will request the conductors of the dead beneath the earth to hear our prayers favorably.

Holy *daimones* of the world below, Earth and Hermes and you, O Lord of the Dead, send from below a spirit [*psyche*] to the light. If he knows of some remedy for our misfortunes, he alone of mortals can say how to do it.

Ghost of Darius: O Faithful ones among the faithful, comrades of my youth, elders of Persia, what trial tries the state? It groans, the ground is struck, and gapes open. I am alarmed to see my wife near the tomb, and yet I receive her kindly offerings. But you stand by my tomb and groan and with cries and shrieks to rouse the dead you call upon me pitifully. It is not an easy ascent from the land of the dead, most importantly because the gods beneath the earth are better able to take than to release. Nevertheless, because I rule among them, I have come. Hurry up, so that I may incur no blame for the time I spend here. What unanticipated misfortune burdens the Persians?

(Herodotus, *The Histories* IV. 14.)

I will tell a story concerning Aristeas which I heard at Prokonnesos and Cyzicus. They say that Aristeas, being of no less nobility than his fellow townsmen, went into a fuller's shop and died; the fuller shut his workshop and went to tell the kinsfolk of the man what had happened. The story was now spreading through the city that Aristeas was dead when a man from Cyzicus, who had just arrived from the town of Artaca challenged those who were reporting his death.

He said that he had stumbled upon him as he was going to Cyzicus and spoken to him. The man was absolutely insistent on the story, but in the meantime the relatives of the deceased had come to the fuller's shop with all the appropriate equipment to prepare him for burial; when the shop was opened, no Aristeas, either dead or alive! In the seventh year after this he appeared at Prokonnesos and composed the poem which the Greeks call "The Tale of the Arimaspians" and vanished again.

(Herodotus, *The Histories* VI. 117.)

At the battle of Marathon six thousand four hundred Persians fell, one hundred and ninety-two Athenians. These are the numbers which fell on both sides. A marvelous event took place: a certain Athenian, Epizelos the son of Kouphagoras, while fighting in the encounter and acquitting himself well, lost the sight in his eyes, though he was not wounded or stabbed in any part of the body. He remained blind for the rest of his days. I heard that he told this tale about his misfortune: it seemed to him that a large hoplite stood before him, whose beard covered his whole shield; this apparition went past him, but slew the man standing next to him. This was Epizelos' tale as I learned it.

The following is an epigram on the Athenians who died fighting at Potidaea in 432 B.C. Its reference to the soul [*psyche*] returning to the aether, the fiery upper air is explained by E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1956), p. 174, n. 112: "It seems to be based on the simple idea that *psyche* is breath or warm air…, which will tend to float upwards when released at death into the atmosphere."

(*IG* I^2 945; *SEG* X. 414; Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca*, #21, lines 6–9.)

The aether has received their souls, the earth their bodies;
They were undone at the gates of Potidaea.
Of their enemies, some have their portion of the grave, while others fled
And reckoned the wall their surest hope for life.

This same notion of the soul as an airy substance imprisoned in the body (see p. 173 above) also lies behind the following passage from Plato, with its speculations on the results of metempsychosis.

(Plato, *Phaedo*, 81c–d.)

Socrates: My friend, it is necessary to believe that the corporeal is heavy and weighty and earthly and visible. The soul having such a quality is weighed down

and dragged back into the visible world from fear of the unseen or Hades, as is said, and hovers around tombs and graveyards; concerning whatever shadowy phantasms which have been seen, they are the manifestations of such souls, souls which have not yet completely disappeared but retain part of the visible, and therefore can be seen.

Cebes: That seems likely, Socrates.

Socrates: Yes, Cebes. These are not the souls of the good, but of the wicked, and are compelled to wander about these places to give recompense for their former bad actions. They wander until out of zeal for the corporeal, which seeks after them constantly, they are imprisoned again in a body. As is fitting, they cling to the same sort of natures which they developed during life.

Cebes: What do you mean, Socrates?

Socrates: For example, those who were gluttons or selfish or drunkards, and who cultivated these vices rather than try to avoid them, they are likely to become donkeys or some other such animal, don't you agree?

Cebes: Yes indeed!

Socrates: Those who preferred injustice and tyranny and robbery should become wolves and hawks and kites, unless we can suggest more suitable beasts for them to become?

Cebes: Indeed these are just right.

Socrates: Therefore it is easy to imagine into what sort of animals all the other souls will go, in accordance with the kind of actions they pursued during life.

(Pausanias, *Description of Greece* VI. 6.7–10.)

They say that Odysseus was wandering after the capture of Troy and was carried by the winds to a number of cities in Italy and Sicily, and he came with his ships to Temesa. One of his sailors got drunk and raped a maiden, and as a punishment for this crime was stoned to death by the citizens. Odysseus did not care at all about his loss and sailed away, but the ghost of the stoned man took every opportunity to kill without distinction the people of Temesa, and he preyed on all age groups, until the Pythian priestess forbade them to leave Italy, as they had resolved to do, but ordered them to propitiate the Hero and assign him a sanctuary and build him a temple and give to him each year the loveliest of the maidens in Temesa to wed. They did as the god commanded and there was no further terror from the ghost. Euthymos happened to come to Temesa at the time when the people were placating the ghost as usual and learned what was going on. He wished to enter the temple and also take a look at the girl. When he saw her he at first pitied her, then came to love her. The girl swore to marry him if he saved her, and Euthymos put his armor on and waited for the ghost to come. He conquered him in battle, and the Hero was driven from the land, dove into the sea

and disappeared. Euthymos had a glorious wedding and the citizens were free of the ghost from that time on.

(Pliny the Younger, *Letters* VII. 27, to Licinius Sura.)

Leisure provides time for me to learn from you, and you to instruct me. Therefore I am very eager to know whether you think that ghosts exist and have their appropriate shape and some sort of power, or whether they have no substance or reality and take shape only from our fears. I am inclined to believe that they do exist, chiefly on the basis of what I heard happened to Curtius Rufus. He was still new and unknown, and was attached to the staff of the governor of Africa. One afternoon he was walking in the portico of his home when there appeared to him the figure of a woman, who was in size and beauty beyond the normal. He was terrified, but she told him that she was the guardian spirit of Africa and had come to reveal his future. She said that he would return to Rome and hold further offices, and would return again to this same province with supreme power, and there die. Everything came true. Furthermore, when he came to Carthage and was disembarking from his ship, the same figure is said to have accosted him on the shore. He himself, when he fell ill, interpreted his future by his past, and misfortune by previous successes, and gave up all hope of recovery, although none of his staff expected the worst.

The following story, which I will tell you as I heard it, seems more terrifying and no less marvelous, don't you agree? There was in Athens a large and comfortable house, but with the reputation of causing danger to anyone who lived there. In the silence of the night one could hear the sound of iron and, if you paid special attention, the rattle of chains, at first far away, and then close at hand. Soon there appeared a ghost, an old man worn out and filthy, with a long flowing beard and hair standing on end; around his legs were chains, and he wore chains on his wrists and shook them. The inhabitants passed fearful nights, for they lay awake in terror; disease followed the lack of sleep and as fear grew death soon followed. For even during the day, when the image was absent, the recollection of it flashed before their eyes, and the terror remained longer than the cause of the terror. The house was deserted and abandoned to emptiness and entirely left to the disposal of the monster; nevertheless it was advertised in case someone unaware of its evil reputation might want to buy it or rent it.

The philosopher Athenodorus came to Athens. He read the advertisement and when he learned the price, became suspicious. On inquiring he learned the whole story, but he was no less eager to rent it, in fact, more so. When it began to grow dark he ordered that a couch be prepared for him in the front part of the house, and asked for notebooks, pen, and a lamp. He sent all his servants into the inner rooms of the house, he concentrated mind, eyes, and hands upon his

writing, lest an idle mind invent the ghost or other imaginary fears. At first there was only the usual nightime silence, then he heard iron rattling and chains being dragged along. He did not lift his eyes or stop writing, but strengthened his mind and shut his ears. Then the noise grew louder, came nearer, was in the doorway, then was heard within the room. He looked about and saw and recognized the ghost described to him. It stood and beckoned to him as if calling him. He on the other hand indicated by a sign that it should wait a little and he bent again to his tablet and pen. The ghost shook its chains over his head while he wrote. Then he turned around and saw it beckoning as before; he did not delay but picked up his lamp and followed. It stalked along with a slow gait as if weighed down by chains. After it turned off into the courtyard it suddenly disappeared and abandoned its companion. He plucked some leaves and plants to mark the spot. Next day he went to the magistrates and urged them to order that the spot be excavated. They found bones trussed with chains, which the body, rotted away by time and the earth, had left bare and corroded by the chains. The bones were collected and buried at public expense. After the ghost had been properly laid to rest the house was free of it.

These stories I believe on the evidence of others; this story I can support myself. One of my freedmen, an educated man, was sleeping in the same bed as his younger brother. The latter seemed to see someone sitting on the bed and applying shears to his head and cutting off some hairs from the top of his head. When it grew light, he found his hair shorn at the top and the hairs lying on the floor. A short time passed and a similar occurrence confirmed the first one. A slave boy was sleeping with others in the young slaves' quarters. Two men clad in white came through the windows (so he said), cut his hair as he lay in bed, and departed in the same way they had come. Daylight revealed that this boy's hair had been cut and the hairs scattered about. Nothing worthy of note followed, save the fact that I was not summoned to trial, which would have been the case had [the emperor] Domitian lived longer, in whose reign these things happened. In his desk was found a charge laid against me by Carus; from this it could be conjectured, because it is the custom of the accused to let their hair grow, that the cutting of my slaves' hair was a sign that my imminent danger was removed.

I beg you to apply your knowledge to this matter, for I think it is worth your long and careful reflection, nor am I an unworthy beneficiary of your expertise. If you choose to argue both sides of the question in your typical fashion, that is quite acceptable, but I hope you will put your most persuasive arguments on one side, lest you should leave me in suspense and confused, although I am consulting you to remove my doubts. Farewell.

Glossary of Transliterated Words and Technical Terms

agora — a public market place.
ambrosia — traditionally, the food of the gods; as an offering to Zeus Ktesios, it was made of water, oil, and fruit.
Anthesterion — see: months.
archon — lit. "ruler"; one of the ten chief magistrates at Athens
athlothetai — commissioners in charge of competitions
bastieus, pl. *basileis* — lit "king" at Athens, the archon with jurisdiction over the state religious observances elsewhere, certain other kinds of chief magistrates
Boedromion — see: months.
choinix — a dry measure, 4 *kotylai*
chous, pl. *choes* — a liquid measure, 12 *kotylai*
daimon, pl. *daimones* — a spirit or divinity, a more general word than *theos*, which is here translated "god"
deipnophoroi – lit. "dinner-bearers"; cult officials.
deme — one of the local administrative units of the Athenian city-state
drachma — monetary unit, worth six obols; in the fifth century B.C., it was the equivalent of a day's pay for a skilled workman.
Eleusinion — a shrine of the Eleusinian deities near the *agora* in Athens.
embateres — pastures (? — meaning doubtful).
epistates, pl. *epistatai* — official; at Athens, the presiding officer of the council and the assembly.
epoptes, pl. *epoptai* — an initiate into the highest grade of the Eleusinian mysteries; the word refers to one who has "beheld" the sacred things.
eranos, pl. *eranoi* — sacred banquet; also, an association devoted to sacred meals.
eua!, euoi! — cry of Bacchic enthusiasm.
exegetes — lit. "interpreter"; a cult official who interprets the omens.
genos, pl. *gene* — kinship group, clan.
gerara, pl. *gerarai* — priestesses of Dionysus at Athens; see note 32.
Hekatombaion — see: months.

hieromnemones — lit. "sacred recallers"; cult officials at Epidauros.
hieropoioi — lit. "sacred doers"; commissioners of the Athenian state cults.
hierosyna — honorarium to an officiating priest.
kalathephoroi — lit. "basket-bearers"; participants in a sacrificial procession.
kanephoroi — lit. "basket-bearers"; participants in a sacrificial procession.
kore — lit. "girl," "daughter"; Kore is the proper name of Persephone's daughter.
kotyle, pl. *kotylai* — a dry and liquid measure, about a cup (1/4 liter).
koureion — a sacrifice to commemorate a son's coming of age.
kykeon — the sacred porridge drunk by Eleusinian initiates; made of barley, water, and pennyroyal.
libation — a liquid offering poured to the gods.
Maimakterion — see: months.
medimnos, pl. *medimnoi* — a dry measure (192 *kotylai*), about 12 gallons (45 liters).
meion — lit. "lesser"; a sacrifice to commemorate a son's birth.
mina — monetary unit, worth 100 drachmas.
Metageitnion — see: months.
months — the Athenian year began about midsummer with the month Hekatombaion, which included the Panathenaic festival; it was followed in order by Metageitnion, Boedromior, and Pyanepsion; the winter months (approximately coinciding with November, December, and January) were Maimakterion, Posideon, and Gamelion; the early Greek spring began in Anthesterion ("month of flowers"), followed by Elaphebolion, Mounichion, Thargelion, and Skiraphorion.
Mounichion — see: months.
neokoros — temple attendant.
neopoioi — superintendants of temple administration.
obol — monetary unit, 1/6 drachma.
oreibasia — lit. "mountain treading"; nocturnal ceremony of the Bacchic women.
orgeones — members of a cult association.
orgia — general term for sacred rites, often with special reference to secret rites.
oschophoroi — lit. "vine-bearers"; participants in a sacrificial procession.
pareias — a snake sacred to Sabazios.
pelanos — a porridge of barley and wheat flour.
peplos — a woolen dress worn by women and girls; a new *peplos* was woven every year by a special team of maidens and presented to Athena at the Panathenaia.
prytaneion — town hall; the headquarters of the *prytaneis* during their term of office, and the central hearth-shrine of the city-state.
prytaneis — executive board of a city-state's council and assembly.
stade — a measure of distance, about 1/7 mile (200 meters).

stater — a coin, often worth two or four drachmas.
stele, pl. *stelai* — a stone slab displaying a commemorative inscription or relief sculpture.
talent — as a monetary unit, worth 6000 drachmas; as a measure of weight, equivalent to about 55 pounds (25 kilograms).
theokolos — lit. "god-tender"; a cult official.
thiasos, pl. *thiasoi* — an association for religious purposes.
thyrsos — a staff or wand topped with a pine cone and decked with fillets.

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