

ESSAY

FORGETTING DELPHI BETWEEN APOLLO AND DIONYSUS

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LET US BE CLEAR who is at fault if we are still today attracted and fascinated by the opposition between Apollonian and Dionysiac, be it in a Poussin painting or at the origins of Greek religion. It is certainly not the fault of Orpheus' first disciples, who did make use of the contrasts between Dionysus and Apollo, their master, but left behind them only fragments having no effect on the Greeks' religious discourse.¹ Nor have we cause to blame the theologian from Delphi, Plutarch, Hadrian's contemporary, who, while discoursing on the Delphic *epsilon* (that mysterious offering in the form of a letter or number), made use of speculations of other "theologians," alternating, according to a Heraclitean paradigm, the poles of Apollo and Dionysus in the coming-to-be of the world, in which may be read the contrasts between rhythms, musical forms, and characters distinct to each one of these two powers.²

All evidence points to one guilty party: Friederich Nietzsche, intoxicating himself with the rich dialectic of this contrast, quite free of any reference to Delphi or more local versions, about which he could not care less. Some twenty years after *The Birth of Tragedy*, which he had so generously defended against Wilamowitz, prince of the Philistines and Philologists,³ Erwin Rohde writes not a single footnote alluding to the Nietzschean variations when he composes *Psyche* (1894), although he writes a complete account of how the union of Apollo with Dionysus (who has "become Greek") took place in Delphi, and nowhere else.⁴

So let us forget Delphi, forget Nietzsche, no matter how pleasurable it may be to watch his drunken, voluptuous antics with the Dionysiac sublimating the Apollonian.⁵ The byways have their own charms, even if they lead neither to a quintessential opposition, nor to the secret truth of a

1. "Mort et vie d'Orphée: Entre Dionysos et Apollon." Lately, I have pursued one or the other figure; cf. M. Detienne, *L'Écriture d'Orphée* (Paris, 1989): 116–32.

2. Cf. Plutarch *De E Apud Delphos* 9 (388e–89e). In a conference organized at Johns Hopkins University by the Department of Classical Studies, in October 1993, entitled "Apollo and Dionysus: Genealogy of a Fascination," Giulia Sissa presented a new Heraclitean reading of this passage of Plutarch and its relation to certain aphorisms of Nietzsche.

3. K. Gründer, ed., *Der Streit um Nietzsches "Geburt der Tragödie" von E. Rohde, R. Wagner, U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff* (Hildesheim, 1969); M. Dixsaut, ed., *Querelle autour de "La Naissance de la tragédie,"* trans. M. Cohen-Halimi, H. Poitevin, and M. Marcuzzi (Paris, 1995).

4. E. Rohde, *Psyche*, trans. W. B. Hillis (New York, 1925), 282–303. A union at the highest level, and for Rohde essential to the history of Greek religion.

5. M. Haar, "La Joie tragique," in *Nietzsche et la métaphysique* (Paris, 1993), 221–73, is to be read above all.

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Panhellenic oracle. Our purpose here is simply to effect an archaeology of the practices of polytheism, from one site to another, throughout the whole of Greece, noting as many configurations as possible associating Apollo with Dionysus—and with other not necessarily insignificant powers as well. Nor will we neglect groupings, that is, micropantheons, in which Apollo and Dionysus are coupled, playing in concert, or practicing singular exchanges. This recourse to the byways is indeed an exploration of the practices of polytheism at their most concrete.⁶

In a system of multiple gods, in Greece as elsewhere, as soon as there are altars, sanctuaries, stories, and spontaneously “theological” speech, one notes groupings of gods, recurring associations, regular hierarchies, and others more unusual. A polytheistic system is primarily constituted by the *relations* between gods—oppositions, antithetic or complementary figures of three, four, or five elements. From the outset, the gods appear in relations, and even in a system of relations. We emphasize practices and their variety in order to foreground concrete configurations and groups of powers, that is to say, the acts, objects, and situations that contextualize the relations between divinities. The advantage of this approach is twofold: on the one hand, it allows us to do away with the model—so harmful in the case of Apollo or Dionysus—of a god always endowed with a specific “mode of action” as soon as we see him as dominant. Paradoxically, this model was inspired by Georges Dumézil and condemned us to building static pantheons inhabited by agent-gods, individually specified according to a way of acting that was unique and constant. Another advantage of our empirical and concrete approach is that it gives access to the procedures that uncover the production of distinct powers—powers no longer (or not to be) hypostasized as (or in) gods, or abstracted and converted into their singular attributes (e.g., Dionysus god of wine and *mania*, and so on).

Furthermore, this approach has an experimental dimension somewhat analogous to qualitative analysis in chemistry. Rather than accepting the first conventional idea of such and such a power, the analyst can be attentive first to the objects, the acts, the particular situations presented by the primary data, using these as so many reagents to see what aspect of this particular divine power comes to the surface in the given configuration. Prolonging the experiment, the analyst will submit the various powers associated or contrasting with the first power to the same reagents, first in the initial configuration, then in those connected with it. Sometimes a detail—some gesture, object, or situation—from some far province or hidden corner will bring out the place in the system of some seemingly alien aspect of the power under observation. Thus the experiment identifies a range of possibilities, without which polytheism remains opaque, a dead system.

Of all the couples of Greek mythology, that of Apollo and Dionysus is the most famous, at least in the post-Nietzschean era. Paradoxically, the more (following Rohde’s *Psyche*) Apollonian versus Dionysiac became an accepted contrast, the greater the historians’ and philologists’ indifference

6. I have treated this form of analysis more extensively in “Experimenting in the Field of Polytheisms,” *Arion* 7 (1999): 127–49 and have shown its interest in *Apollon le couteau à la main* (Paris, 1998).

toward them, in a profession intimidated by the Germans. Historians of Greek religion, be they English, Italian, Spanish, German, or French, pass by this issue very quickly, particularly since Delphi proposes so many unsolved and discouraging problems:⁷ Aeschylus, placing himself at Delphi, points to a Corycian cave with Dionysus the Noisy (*Bromios*) arrived from Thebes, but when and how? Antiquarians of the fourth and third centuries tell of Dionysus buried in Apollo's temple next to the omphalos and the tripod; does he never pronounce an oracle, not even by incubation?

One needs only to step away from the well-trodden path to Delphi to find a series of sites (I count twenty so far) where Apollo and Dionysus are coupled, sometimes strongly contrasted, and sometimes trading instruments or setting, occasionally accomplishing complete exchange between themselves. It will be enough here to present two or three of these in order to reveal the complexity of the relations between Apollo and Dionysus, as well as to exemplify in their pleasant company our experimental procedures.

ICARION'S ACCOMPLICES

Let us begin in Icarion, an ancient village in Attica, known as Dionysio today. It is here that one of the oldest encounters between Apollo and Dionysus takes place. Situated on the edge of Athens, Icarion is also the home of Thespis, the first tragic author: he invents the actor and the mask, and is triumphant at the Great Dionysia of Athens, between 536 and 533. Digs undertaken by Americans between 1880 and 1948 brought to light two sanctuaries in close proximity: one of Apollo, with the threshold and the altar, the other of Dionysus, whose temple serves as a place for the public display on stone tablets of decrees issued by the Icarians.⁸ A marble statue of Dionysus two meters high represented him seated, holding in his hand the cantharus,⁹ a wine cup that he never appears to lend to his brother, even in the pictures where Apollo, enveloped in the vine and the bacchanal, appears completely Dionysiac.¹⁰ Nearby, by Pythian Apollo's altar, an inscription painted in red letters from around 525 B.C.E. associates Apollo and Dionysus in the dedication of a statue, an *agalma* offered equally to them both.¹¹ How are they here related? Does not Icarion have special memories of the Dionysus of wine? It is indeed to the village's eponym, Icarus, that Dionysus is supposed to have given vines and wine for the first

7. Eventually, a complete survey by a competent scholar will appear. For the moment, two examples: H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos: Histoire du culte de Bacchus* (Paris, 1978), 187–98; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. J. Raffan (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 223–25. Certain analyses, nevertheless, offer extremely rich material for working on complex materials already uncovered. I am thinking, on the one hand, of C. Calame, *Thésée et l'imaginaire athénien* (Lausanne, 1990), 289–396, and, on the other, of P. Brulé, *La Fille d'Athènes: La Religion des filles à Athènes à l'époque classique* (Paris, 1987), *passim*.

8. *Papers of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens 5, 1886–1890* (1892): 62–65 (for the threshold of the Pythion), 71–108 (the inscriptions published by Carl Buck). W. R. Biers and T. D. Boyd return to the site: "Ikarion in Attica: 1888–1981," *Hesperia* 51 (1982): 1–18.

9. I. B. Romano, "The Archaic Statue of Dionysos from Ikarion," *Hesperia* 51 (1982): 398–409 (pls. 93–95).

10. As A.-F. Laurens notes in her iconographic analysis written for the Johns Hopkins conference cited above, n. 2.

11. D. M. Robinson, "Three New Inscriptions from the Deme of Ikaria," *Hesperia* 17 (1948): 141–43 (pl. 35–36). Cf. E. Meyer, "Pythion," *RE* (1963): 561–62.

time, a tragic wine because given without a user's guide. Icarius' guests, thinking themselves poisoned, kill him, which leads to his daughter's suicide and to complete sterility for the land of Icaria: because of the scourge (*loimos*), they rush to Delphi to consult Apollo.¹² The oracle needs no coaxing and immediately offers means to make the scourge cease. It seems that at that very moment Apollo in Delphi is preparing for Dionysus' return, this time through the gate of Eleutheria: this Dionysus will preside at the banquet, at the table of the good king Amphictyon with the city's gods as his symposiasts. We can easily hypothesize that among the gods seated at the table are those enumerated by a Delphic oracle of the fourth century B.C.E. in which the Athenians are ordered not to forget Bacchus, god of ripe fruits (*horaia*), but to form choirs in his honor, to raise kraters, and to illuminate in the streets the altars of high Zeus (*Hypsistos*), of Heracles, and of Apollo the protector god, *Prostaterios* (he who stands before the door), the *Aguieus* Apollo, god of the highways, of the civilizing roads.¹³ The scenario is a familiar one: the misunderstood and forgotten Dionysus is a privileged client of the Apollonian oracle. The god of Delphi, an expert at scourges of all sorts, intervenes for all that must be durably installed, founded, and instituted—for instance, the cult of an indispensable god or a new power.¹⁴ When the god of kraters and of the cantharus makes his entrance into the city, Apollo can also meet him "before the doors," and direct his procession amidst the burning altars. Back in Icarion, the relation is perfectly clear: the oracle is the domain of Apollo, who knows the paths, brings deliverance from scourges, establishes altars, and founds new cults. To Dionysus belongs wine, its violence as much as its convivial virtue, without any divinatory aspect, nor with any "tragedy" as inaugurated by Thespis.

BETWEEN MUSES AND FIELD RATS

The second configuration appears out at sea, on an island between the water and the sun. In Rhodes, there is neither oracle nor tragedy. Apollo and Dionysus camp side by side in the vineyard, amidst the branches and the clusters. Both are charged with a very precise, targeted mission to exterminate the field rats that attack the fruits of the vine. A single epithet defines their function: *Smintheus* (of the field rat). Dionysus is *Smintheus*, as is the Apollo of the *Iliad* when invoked by his humiliated priest; the god *Smintheus* there sends evil, killing dogs, mules, and warriors by the hundreds.¹⁵ But in Rhodes, Apollo of the field rat also asserts himself as god of first-fruits, Apollo of the Thargelia, one of the year's portals, which opens the season of fruits. This god is echoed in the Rhodian context by the Dionysus "of fruits" (*Epicarpios*), whose orchard extends beyond the vineyard.¹⁶ The

12. Cf. S. Angiolillo, "La visita di Dioniso a Ikarios nelle ceramica attica: Appunti sulla politica culturale pisistratea," *DArch* 1 (1981): 13–22. I have pursued the Dionysus of Ikarion in *Dionysos at Large*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass., 1989): 28–30.

13. Cf. Detienne, *Dionysos at Large*, 30–33.

14. I have written extensively on this in *Apollon* (n. 6 above), especially in chap. 5, "Fonder-cr  er une cit  : L'Oeuvre politique" (pp. 105–33).

15. Evidence and analysis in D. Morelli, *I culti in Rodi* (Pisa, 1959): 41–42 (Dionysus *Smintheus* and the festival of the *Sminthia* for Apollo and Dionysus), and also 122–25.

16. *Ibid.*, 40.

god of the field rat, the Dionysus of Rhodes, presents another two faces: that of the *Baccheios*, which perfects, possesses, initiates,¹⁷ and that of the *Musagetes*, which conducts and directs the Muses like Apollo, to whom this title belongs more or less officially since Homer and Hesiod. It is interesting to note that in the same place the priest of Dionysus offers sacrifices to the Muses as well as to Mnemosyne, their mother Memory, without forgetting as an object of the same cult Dionysus *Smintheus*, the god of the field rats.¹⁸

The powers protecting from field rats are so securely in place in Rhodes that they are celebrated in the so-called Sminthia festival with choruses, dances, and songs in honor of Apollo and Dionysus.¹⁹ From the organized protection of vines and from the scourge that menaces them, to the conjoined production of rhythms and harmony, the Rhodian configuration suggests a transition managed by the Muses and encountered by Archilochus on Paros, as he interrogates the lyre made by Hermes for Apollo, thereby unmasking the power of music. This transition could bring us back to Delphi and its Muses²⁰ who are between Dionysus, amusing himself in their company, and the Pythian Apollo, uttering pronouncements more oracular than musical.

The Muses, Apollo, and Dionysus: it is this triad that Plato, without reference to popular beliefs, places in the center of his theory of celebrations and pleasure when he writes the *Laws*.²¹ According to the Athenian (who does most of the talking), one day the gods felt compassion for man, ensconced in suffering and misery. More precisely, certain divine powers—Apollo, Dionysus, and the Muses—wishing to grant a reprieve from the ills befalling humanity, gave to it festivals, that which Plato calls “festival exchanges”; they gave that which is at the heart of *paideia*, of the education of mortals: the experience of rhythm and harmony offered by song and dance—in a word, *choreia*. The three divinities who invented the festival and the exchange over time divide the educative function among themselves in three successive choirs.²² The education of children under eighteen years of age belongs to the Muses. Apollo of the Paeon guides those who are between eighteen and thirty years of age, the active age of those who constitute the assemblies in Greek cities. Lastly, Dionysus rules over the choir of men from thirty to sixty years of age, those who draw the strength and pleasure of their wisdom from the wine of collective meals and banquets. Dionysus, god of wine amidst song and dance, finds himself consecrated as patron of the highest *paideia* in the *Laws*, as if the wisdom of governing well, allopathically produced by catharsis, were more Dionysiac than Apollonian. And yet, at the end of the *Laws*, in the twelfth book,²³ when it comes to defining and enthroning the supreme authority that must

17. *Ibid.*, 39–41.

18. *Ibid.*, 162–64.

19. *Ibid.*, 125.

20. The route would be a little long for the present essay.

21. *Pl. Leg.* 653a6–654a7.

22. *Pl. Leg.* 664b–672d.

23. *Pl. Leg.* 945b–947c. Cf. P. Boyancé, *Le Culte des Muses chez les philosophes grecs* (Paris, 1972), 269–72.

guide the new city to its accomplished stature, Plato turns away from Dionysus, preferring Apollo—an Apollo narrowly associated with the Sun, Helios, deemed “the greatest of the gods.” There subsists nonetheless something of Dionysus, since the three magistrate-priests designated for the cult of Apollo and the Sun are chosen and elected from the age group placed under the aegis of Dionysus. Called the Redressers (*Euthynoi*), they will guide the city of Magnesia; the Athenian thinks of these three elders legislating, constantly correcting the direction of the political ship throughout its crossing. Named for life, when they have already reached a venerable age, the Redressers are dedicated to Apollo and to the Sun, as “living tithes and firstfruits” of the human species. After their death, they are heroized, transformed into heroes of the city of Magnesia by their funeral, thus becoming, in the city of the *Laws* founded by Plato, the object of a cult just as political as the one reserved, in most cities newly created since the eighth century B.C.E., for the colony’s founder, promoted at the end of his life to *archegetes*-hero.²⁴

To the three-term configuration (Muses, Apollo, and Dionysus) Plato proposes a reconfiguration in which Dionysus, who gives the gift of wine and its cathartic powers to older men,²⁵ sees himself supervised by a double Apollo, one who directs “political” education along with the Muses, while the second finds himself entrusted with the supreme authority of the city, at the top of the hierarchy of magistrates and priests, itself inspired by the oracle of Delphi and founded by Apollo, guide of the first Magnesians. Indeed Plato is careful to note that the city of the *Laws*, “founded right from the start, and in a desert landscape” gradually discovers, by following converging clues revealed by its legislators, that it is inhabited by Magnesians—the name of very ancient inhabitants of whom the site has kept such a discreet recollection that the three legislators will need to call upon the god of Delphi to verify this, for he is the ultimate expert on matters of foundation, the divine power deemed the Redresser and Founder of Magnesia in the last chapter of the *Laws*.²⁶

AN APOLLO OF THE WOODS, ON THE BANKS OF THE MEANDER

In our provisional experiment a third configuration, neighbor of the preceding one, provides a case of radical exchange between Dionysus and Apollo. A city of Magnesia is once again at hand, but this time it is inscribed in the historians’ history and the archeologists’ geography. These Magnesians are from the banks of the Meander, in Caria, discovered at the end of the nineteenth century by German investigators who published a rich series of inscriptions, among which was the historical chronicle of the Magnesians from

24. A reading I have laid out in *Apollon*, 220–25.

25. On wine and the purification of emotions, cf. the excellent analysis by E. Belfiore, “Wine and Catharsis of the Emotions in Plato’s *Laws*,” *CQ* 36 (1986): 421–37.

26. Pl. *Leg.* 702d1–2, 704a4–6, 704c6, 848d, 860e, 919d. I have outlined this reading very briefly in “Qu’est-ce qu’un site?” in *Tracés de fondation*, ed. M. Detienne, Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études, Sciences religieuses, vol. 93 (Louvain, 1990), 14–15. I have returned to it in a more leisurely fashion in *Apollon*, 221–23.

the third century B.C.E. onward.²⁷ We still do not know whether the author of the *Laws* by using the same name intended to allude to the ancient city of Asia Minor whose founders explicitly pronounced themselves "dedicated to Apollo." However, ancient travelers like to point out the peculiarities of Magnesia on the Meander. In his *Description of Greece*,²⁸ Pausanias remarks that on the city's territory, in a place called Aulai, there is a rather strange Apollo: a sort of Apollo of the Woods, a cave-dwelling god. The Periegete notes this when he arrives before the so-called Corycian Cave, that deep cavity that Dionysus and the god Pan share high on the mountain overlooking Pythian Apollo's sanctuary. So, outside the city of Magnesia, of which Artemis (*Leukophryene*) is the civic divinity, Apollo lives in a cave. All around, a team of "gardeners" is busy. Their main activity seems to be taking care of the trees of Apollo's garden.²⁹ However, it sometimes happens that these peaceful horticulturists, having touched the statue of the god in the grotto, act completely differently. They begin to tear up the trees, even the highest ones; they climb up high rocks; they dash through the narrowest paths carrying the uprooted trunks. Apollo's gardeners act as if possessed: filled with Apollo's strength (*iskhus*),³⁰ they begin the mountain race that Euripides calls *oribasia* and that he stages in the *Bacchae*. There the women of Thebes, possessed by Dionysus, leap about the forest, uproot trees, and go so far as to rip into pieces randomly encountered cattle and wild beasts. But whereas the *Bacchae* abandon the houses and streets of the city, those maddened by Apollo rush toward the city of Magnesia. Their Dionysiac craze leads them to the heart of the city, to the agora where, surprisingly enough, the god Dionysus is waiting for them—a serene, smiling Dionysus, seated on the "box," the *kiste* of mysteries. Various coins represent different phases of the scenario. We know the story of this "city-center" Dionysus thanks to local chronicles engraved on stone and published by Otto Kern.³¹ One day a very violent wind rends the plane tree of the main square. Inside the tree there appears an effigy of Dionysus. The

27. The record on Apollo and Dionysus in Magnesia on the Meander was the subject of an initial essay of mine published under the rather general title, "Apollo und Dionysos in der griechischen Religion," in *Die Restauration der Götter: Antike Religion und Neo-Paganismus*, ed. R. Farber and R. Schlesier (Königshausen, 1986), 124–32. A second version would not be unwelcome. Here I shall confine myself to a certain number of traits and minimal references.

28. Paus. 10.32.6, ed. M. H. Rocha-Pereira (Leipzig, 1981), who has included the correction proposed by Wilamowitz. The two most important studies have been published by L. Robert ("Le Dendrophore de Magnésie," in "Documents d'Asie Mineure [No 2]," *BCH* 101 [1977]: 77–88, and "Retour à Magnésie avec Artemidore," *BCH* 102 [1978]: 538–43), who reports the realia, lays out the facts, and shows no curiosity about the question of polytheism (i.e., the system of relations between Apollo and Dionysus at Magnesia on the Meander and in a series of sites). *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*—but what a shoemaker!

29. It is worth recalling that the "Gardeners of Apollo" are known through an epigraphic document, a "letter of Darius" (522–486 B.C.E.), published in the collection of R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1975), 20–22, no. 12. The authenticity of the letter has recently been defended by the excellent arguments of L. Buffo, "La lettera di Dario a Gadata: I privilegi del tempio di Apollo a Magnesia sul Meandro," *Bollettino dell'Istituto di Diritto Romano* (1987): 207–303.

30. Which it would be appropriate to analyze with regard to the *dynamis* of Dionysus and the condition of the *automaton*; cf. M. Detienne, "The Heart of Dionysos Bared," the final chapter of *Dionysos at Large* (n. 12 above), 57–64.

31. Without reviewing the record, let us recall at least the document published by O. Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Meander* (Berlin, 1900), no. 17.

oracle is consulted, that of Delphi of course, because Apollo is the founder of the city of Magnesia, the *archegetes* who rules in Magnesia on Meander as the high god along with Artemis *Leukophryene*, the civic goddess. Apollo's oracle reminds the Magnesians, "they who had been dedicated to the Pythian," that in building their city they forgot a god who "was already there," on the site marked by an ancient oracle. This god, Dionysus lodged in the plane tree, must immediately be recognized, given a temple, offered *thiasoi*; his mysteries must be installed under the direction of the maenads; these must be taken for healing immediately to Thebes, the mother city of Dionysus that once experienced ignorance of this great god.

This time the cave-dwelling Apollo of Magnesia borrows from Dionysus his apparently most specific trait: *mania*, the power that flings one outside of oneself and drags one far away from familiar places, be it wild nature or an invaded city. If delirium, furious folly, and enthusiasm are no strangers to Apollo, those whom he seizes, whether women or men, most often act as diviners and prophets. Those whom Apollo maddens do not form *thiasoi*; they are not possessed as a group and then released by him, as are Dionysus' people, the *Bacchoi*. Conversely, the maenads, those maddened by Dionysus, practice neither prophecy nor divination, nor does anyone possessed by him. The force that Apollo of the woods and the cave bestows upon his faithful gardeners of Magnesia shows itself to be at the service of a Dionysus who is of the tree, indeed, but also of the public square, awaiting the arrival of these Magnesians "dedicated to Apollo" and walking the paths of the Pythian's words. Several Dionysuses answer to Apollo's complexity in this configuration on the Meander: the Dionysus of mysteries at the heart of the initiation taken on by the three *thiasoi* of Theban origin—the domain of "teletic" as Greeks call it, which Dionysus shares with other gods but seemingly not with Apollo—is added onto the "dendrite" (under-the-tree's-bark) power, and to the god publicly recognized by Delphi.

WINE AS REAGENT

It is not enough to note that the Magnesians of Caria came from Delphi, according to their written traditions, only to decide immediately to return toward Parnassus. The three preceding configurations are deployed to offer the experimentalist the opportunity of a series of reagents in order to practice a differential microanalysis of a fragment of polytheism. Wine, like a red cord running between Icarion and Rhodes, presents a first reagent from which Apollo, first of all, cannot hide, ever since we caught him in the company of Dionysus protecting the vineyard against a scourge. Wine is the liquid with which Dionysus is so completely associated that he is sometimes identified with it: "We pour him as a libation to the gods, he, a god himself."³² This transubstantiation does not threaten Apollo at all, no more than most of the other divine powers. What does this drink, so rich in *dynamis*, represent for a god such as Apollo? What of Apollo, if the force of

32. Eur. *Bacch.* 248. It would be quite useful to consider the signification of wine and its place in sacrificial ritual and thereby return to the question of the *nephalia* (wineless rites).

wine is like lightning, if when one absorbs it nearly pure the trance courses through one's veins, if "it is *bacchie* itself," as Archilochus cries out from Paros (frag. 194 W)? For Apollo too is the god of possession, an expert in *mania*, whose diviner in the *Odyssey* notably behaves as if hallucinating; Theoclymenus prophesies red death at the banquet when he sees black blood running from the suitors' jaws while they devour, as they do every day, the chunks of meat for their evening meal. Apollo, so present in sacrificial ceremonies, is no stranger to wine. For instance at Naucratis, a Greek city founded around 650 in Egyptian territory, one of whose numerous temples is a sanctuary dedicated to Hestia, called *Prytanis*,³³ thus designating it as the place for a group aware of its autonomy to exercise sovereignty. On her festival day, which appears to be the birthdate of the city, Hestia receives Dionysus' priest and Apollo's priest at the same time. On that day, they both get a double serving of wine. What is this Apollo who is invited into Hestia's house, he who was an unhappy suitor of hers, just like Poseidon? He is firstly the Pythian, the god of Delphi, more or less Founder, even if we do not know him clothed as *Archegetes*. Next, he is the Apollo of the Banquet (*Komaïos*), the god of *komos*, of the banquet of serious drinking. In addition, we know that on the day of Hestia's festival, the flute players were invited into the Prytaneion, a space from which women are carefully excluded on other days. Nothing allows us to think that Apollo's priest would leave immediately after having taken his double ration of wine. We have therefore a slightly tottering Apollo, at least in the representation of his priest; this is easily supported first of all with a reminder that he takes pleasure in inebriating the Erinyes (Aesch. *Eum.* 727–28), those old divinities of spilt blood who complained of the young god's insolence when he slyly served them an unknown beverage, which they took for their usual potion of honey cut with water and lapped up. If we are to believe the pictures on Attic vases, Apollo is quite at ease amidst the satyrs and maenads while wine flows abundantly. However, as A.-F. Laurens notes,³⁴ Apollo apparently never holds the cantharus (drinking cup), which Dionysus jealously keeps to himself. Reciprocally, in the same imagery, Apollo's lyre never gets into Dionysus' hands though he is passionate about music and such a willing lyre player. In the musical area where they meet between Muses and maenads, instruments are also excellent reagents defining segments of the boundaries between Dionysus and Apollo.

ON THE MEDICAL VOCATION

Protecting vines against scourges that menace them does not imply that Apollo is their inventor, or that he grants this gift to humanity. Presiding at the banquet and enjoying the company of the maenads does not make Apollo a god of the cantharus or of flowing wine barrels. He is, however,

33. Cf. M. Detienne, "Hestia misogynne: La Cité en son autonomie," *QS* 11 (1985): 59–78, taken up again in *L'Écriture* (n. 1 above), 85–98, esp. 96–98. The important text is that of Herméias *On the Gryneian Apollo*—Athenaeus 4.149d = F. 112 Tresp.

34. In the same presentation to the Johns Hopkins conference (see above, n. 2 and n. 10).

linked to another aspect of wine: its medicinal qualities.³⁵ Apollo and Dionysus are both well-known doctors. Wine has long possessed therapeutic virtues abundantly described from Hippocrates to Galen. God of wine, Dionysus has a medical vocation: he is called Doctor (*Iatros*). This becomes even more comprehensible when we adjust the lens, focusing on the medical aspect of a Dionysus of wine. Let us consult the fourth-century doctors. Mnesitheus, for example, an excellent dietician and author of a "Letter on Drinking Much," specifies that the Pythian priestess had advised some not to call Dionysus Doctor (*Iatros*), but rather Dispenser of Health (*Hygiates*).³⁶ This distinction reveals the distance from Apollo, who is also a doctor (*iatros*), but who is not immediately drawn toward the field of health or diet. The health, not of the individual body but of the political body of the whole city, is the domain of Apollo the Doctor. It is to Delphi, to Apollo's oracle, that people flock to ask what is to be done when a scourge crops up, when the city is struck by disease (*nosos*), be it evil births, monsters vomited forth by the earth, civil war, or horrible dissension between citizens. Most often the Pythian priestess invites the supplicant to view the scourge or the collective illness as the symptom of an impurity or an ancient mistake. This political practice of medicine is situated at the intersection of the virtues of the founder god and the protector god, of the *Archegetes* Apollo, and of the *Prostaterios* Apollo.³⁷ The Doctor Apollo cannot be equated with Dionysus of good wine. Analysis would profit from questioning the relations between Doctor Apollo and his son Asclepius and from asking what form of health *Hygeia* Athena, who is also "a dispenser of health," allows us to distinguish; and why Poseidon appears as a doctor at Tenos while elsewhere it is Artemis. Religious representations of the medical field would benefit from this as much as would the complexity of each divine power tested under these circumstances.

A scourge (*loimos*) or an illness (*nosos*), with the collective dimension of both, also offers an excellent reagent to distinguish Apollo from Dionysus from the point of view of impurity and purification as well as divination, much in demand in the case of epidemics, and of which, let us be reminded, both seem to be guarantors at Delphi. An epidemic, in the nonmedical Greek sense of an ill befalling a large number of people, is not Apollo's exclusive domain. When all the women of the land suddenly become wild and throw themselves into a frenzied race, when all the males of a region are stricken with satyriasis and find themselves in a painful state of erection without being able to end it, it is Dionysus who is showing himself. And what does one do in this case? The same thing as in the preceding case: the oracle at Delphi is again consulted. It might seem that Dionysus could seize this occasion to render an oracle in the sanctuary he is said to share with his brother. Yet the god of wine, of folly, or of permanent erections never

35. A body of evidence established by J. Jouanna, "Le Vin et la médecine dans la Grèce ancienne," *REG* 109 (1996): 410–34.

36. Mnesitheus frags. 41 and 42, ed. J. Bertier; cf. Detienne, *Dionysos at Large*, 38–39.

37. Apollo the doctor and the seer who responds to plagues that strike the city is outlined in Detienne, *Apollon*.

speaks out at Delphi to say what must be done. If there is a scourge, an epidemic, or a collective ill, it is Apollo's affair. From the *Iliad* to the end of antiquity the scourge as a symptom belongs to the Pythian's domain. When it is time to say that an epidemic of folly was provoked by the anger of an ignored god and that it is urgent to build him a temple, Dionysus again allows Apollo to act. Let us note in passing that in the sanctuary, Dionysus makes his appearance when his brother leaves the oracle. He is only there in passing. He is hibernating, such that a squadron of Bubbling Women, the Thyiades, is apparently specifically charged with waking him, pulling him from his winter sleep. But whether Dionysus is awake or asleep, not a single oracular word springs from his mouth, at least at Delphi. Let us briefly say before coming back to it more at length elsewhere that Dionysus has nothing to do with all that is lastingly set up, at once founded and created by the oracular words and by the founding god of all that must be founded. Perhaps there is here a fairly clear dividing line between Apollo and Dionysus in general.

Let us once again forget Delphi in order to suggest another discontinuity that brings us back, through folly, to impurity and to the purification—more precisely, the folly that is *mania*, which both gods experience personally, in their individual histories. Because he is Semele's son, the child Dionysus is a victim of Hera's anger. She infects him with folly, a *mania* of which Dionysus will be cured and purified only when Rhea, wife of Cronus, initiates him to his own Bacchic mysteries by giving him the Bacchant costume, the vestment-mask which Dionysus in turn has his initiates put on, who thus become "Bacchants" in his image.³⁸ Much like a scourge, folly is perceived as an illness, and this illness is marked by impurity. The impurity of the scourge that is folly, either murderous or possessed, demands purification that delivers and frees from the impure.

Parallel to Dionysus, Apollo existentially knows demons and tastes furious folly in his own way. This happens at Sicyon, the ancient Mekone, where Hesiod situates the division between men and gods. Apollo spilled the Python serpent's blood and the powers of murder take hold of him, drive him to madness, push him to flee to the heart of Crete to obtain the help of an incomparable purifier, Carmanor. This impure god was cured of his folly and entertains close relations with a series of murderers come to the oracle at Delphi; he will entrust them with the founding of new cities under the patronage of *Archegetes* Apollo. They are thus "dedicated" to this Apollo while they are also purified of their impurity and of their folly.³⁹

The "impurity-purification" reagent is particularly interesting when it demonstrates the different modes of action of Dionysus and Apollo. The furious Dionysus who puts on the mask of delivery and purification chooses the road of initiation, whether it is for mortals to be introduced to the pleasure of wine, or to be led to recognize the power of an unrecognized god, or

38. Following the account of the *Bibliotheca* of Apollodorus (3.5.1), the importance of which for understanding the *mania* of Dionysus has not diminished, in my opinion; see my *Dionysos at Large*, 21–22.

39. The major evidence is Paus. 2.7.7–9. One suspects that the "impure" god, the Apollo of Murderers, plays a greater role than necessary in the work cited; see n. 6 above.

suddenly to see the god face-to-face by becoming his initiate, by having access to his mysteries. But the Handsome Homicide of Delphi, to whom one comes for advice on deliverance from a scourge or the purification of an ancient fault, invites the impure to give himself a regenerated space, to go away toward the unknown, to cut out a new territory and become a Founder, completely separated from his past, two orientations that seem radically different and that show two lines or two activities that are not shared or traded between Dionysus and Apollo. As for the pleasure of founding and being *archegetes*, Dionysus does not really seem to appreciate it.

Other analyses open out from these. Where there is *mania*, furious folly, several gods are immediately available: Ares, the furious lunatic; Lyssa, Rage; Artemis; the Nymphs; as well as Hera, who scrambles the mind of more than one mortal. If we wish to start from murder in relation to various gods, we must first confront the Zeus of Murderers,⁴⁰ who simultaneously pursues them and insures their ritual purification, with his son Apollo, impure and murderous god, rising up against his father's authority, with Dionysus in mind, who does not advertise himself as a murderer but contents himself with inciting certain of his possessed to slit the throats of their own children or tear them up. Or, even though it may require a larger context, the experimentalist will learn from a comparison of the respective choices of the Pythagoreans, in all appearance exclusive devotees of Apollo, and of Orpheus' disciples, so attentive to Dionysus, or at least to certain aspects of this god. This route proposes from the onset a series of reagents: music, its modes, its instruments; sacrifice, its refusal, its modalities in relation to war, murder, and "vegetarianism"; political foundation and reform; asceticism and models of initiation or of lifestyle. So we collect an ensemble of manipulations and experimental approaches that allow the progressive discovery of the complex texture of a polytheistic system where each god is first of all *in the plural*.

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40. The so-called sacred law of Selinous invites one to examine more closely the Zeus of murderers and suppliants. Cf. M. H. Jameson, D. R. Jordan, R. D. Kotansky, *A lex sacra from Selinous*, Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Monographs 11 (Durham, N.C., 1993).