

POSEIDON'S FESTIVAL AT THE WINTER SOLSTICE

The record shows that Poseidon was once worshipped in every part of Greece as a god of general importance to the community. In the glimpse of Mycenaean ritual afforded by the Pylos tablets Poseidon is the chief deity, and the offerings and perhaps also the custom of 'spreading the bed' point to agrarian concerns.¹ In each of the main districts of historical Greece he is rooted in tradition: Arcadia, that ancient landscape, is full of ancient cults of Poseidon; Ionia gathers to honour Poseidon *Helikônios*; 'all Boeotia is sacred to Poseidon', according to Aristarchus (Et. Magn. s. *Kypris*), and here and in Thessaly he dominates mythical genealogy; the Dorian Peloponnesus is likewise 'sacred to Poseidon' (Diod. 15. 49. 4), and at his shrine on Calauria, the seat of an early amphictyony, Mycenaean antecedents come into question – as at few other shrines in Greece. Yet much of the testimony is antiquarian and retrospective; Poseidon's pre-eminence is more of a memory than a reality. In such a well-documented city as Athens Poseidon has a very small place indeed in public festivities. In Greek literature his authority is slight and his powers are narrow, being virtually confined to earthquakes and storms at sea; he is chivvied by Zeus and flouted by Odysseus, and the reparation which Odysseus is required to make, of establishing Poseidon's worship among landmen who take an oar for a winnowing fan, is a mocking and belated tribute to his former domain.

Poseidon's ancient heritage has often been a topic of research, but the results do not seem very solid.² Too much attention is given to things obscure and incalculable – to the etymology of names; to supposed articles of belief like the chthonic horse; to ethnic ways and outlooks; to hypothetical migrations in which tribes carry their gods, as Aeneas did, in their baggage; to those elements of cult which are most bizarre and least typical. If we want to know Poseidon, or any other deity, there is a better way, which Nilsson demonstrated long ago in that compact and enduring handbook, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, 1906). We can study what people did when they turned to Poseidon and conjured up his power. It is true that straightforward descriptions of ritual are very rare in either literature or documents. We must rely on anecdotes, on aetiological myths, above all on the accumulation of incidental details which finally make a pattern. Indeed it all depends on establishing a pattern. Since Nilsson wrote *Gr. Feste*, remarkably little has been done in this way.³

The present study aims to reconstruct a festival of Poseidon which was widely celebrated at the beginning of winter – mostly in the second quarter of Poseideon,

¹ See e.g. M. Gérard-Rousseau, *Les mentions religieuses dans les tablettes mycéniennes* (Rome, 1968), pp. 181–5, 201–3. The hecatomb of bulls offered by Nestor, *Od.* 3. 4–66, does not resemble the offerings of the tablets but is often lumped with them by commentators, as if the cult of Poseidon were a local speciality of 'Pylos', Mycenaean and Homeric. Yet it must first be shown that Homer's geographic indications suit the Messenian Pylos better than the Triphylian, and this will not be easy; cf. Ernst Meyer's summary at *RE Suppl.* 15 (1978), 227–30 s. *Messenien*.

² The leading example, on a scale which has not been attempted lately for any other Greek deity, is F. Schachermeyr, *Poseidon und die Entstehung des griechischen Götterglaubens* (Bern, 1950). One of Schachermeyr's main theses is described as 'tempting' by W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (Stuttgart, 1977), p. 218; but no one who heeds M. P. Nilsson's objections in principle, *AJP* 74 (1953), 161–8, will be likely to succumb.

³ Yet Burkert's ingenious studies of a number of rites should not go unmentioned, nor those of his associate, F. Graf.

the month named after this festival, which at Athens and elsewhere corresponds to December/January. The festival falls near the winter solstice, and the ritual business, marked by jollity and licence, belongs to the general type of solstice festival known the world over. At Poseidon's festival, however, the sportive conduct has a definite purpose; this purpose arises from the fundamental agrarian background of Mediterranean society, and may bring us close to the origin of solstice festivals. It is not the only rite addressed to Poseidon in the course of the year, nor even his only major festival; Poseidon resembles Demeter, and differs from some other deities, in possessing a festival cycle which spans the seasons. But the solstice festival is a good place to start.

It has scarcely been noticed that festivals of Poseidon, more than those of any other Greek deity, fall at just this time of year; yet the evidence is extensive. The month Poseideon (*vel sim.*), which implies a festival Poseidea, is among the commonest of Ionian months, occurring also outside the Ionian domain, and always occupying about the same place in the calendar, so far as can be determined.⁴ Apart from the month-name, rites for Poseidon are attested for this time of year in various quarters – in Attica and on the Ionian islands and coast, and in several Aeolian and Dorian communities. Given our haphazard sources, this range is impressive. The festival Poseidea and some of the rites in question are often claimed for Poseidon the sea-god, but at this season sailing is furthest from one's mind, and fishing on the shore is by no means an overriding concern. Such details as we have point elsewhere, to Poseidon as the god of fresh water who fructifies Demeter's fields. We shall take the rites in the geographical order indicated above – first Attica and Ionia, then the Aeolian and Dorian domains successively. The best examples, offering the surest or fullest detail, occur sporadically. Eleusis, which comes first, is not quite typical, and elsewhere some doubts may remain.

(1) The Haloea of Poseideon 26 included a procession for Poseidon (Paus. Att. 4 76 Erbse), but since this Eleusinian festival was also, and more conspicuously, addressed to Demeter and Dionysus ([Dem.] 59 *Neaera* 116–17; *IG* 2² 949. 6–8, 34–5 as restored, 1299. 9–10, 22–4; *Him. Or.* 8. 3; schol. Luc. pp. 279–81 Rabe), its peculiar features would be hard to interpret, were it not for the analogy of other festivals of Poseidon.⁵ A festival of this name is attested nowhere but at Eleusis – here the Haloea

⁴ See A. E. Samuel, *Greek and Roman Chronology* (Munich, 1972), index of months *s. Poseideôn, Posidaïos, Posideiôn, Posidêiôn, Posideios, Posideôn, Posudeôn*. Among the cities listed thereunder Priene is not wanted (as Samuel's own discussion shows), and Dardanus should be substituted for Lesbos, and Demetrias for Pagasae; cf. J and L. Robert, *REG* 86 (1973), 69, 72. In the calendar of Demetrias the months are named after the twelve gods, so that Poseideon has not the same significance here. The various instances will be mentioned below in their proper place. The month Poseideon and also the months Geraestius and Taureon, named from other festivals of Poseidon, have been treated by J. Sarcady, *Acta Cl Debrece* 1 (1965), 13–17; 5 (1969), 14; 7 (1971), 17, and made to serve his theory that the Greek calendar was formed in the early Dark Age, when migrating peoples borrowed festivals from each other; but Poseidon's festivals have not the ethnic colour which he imagines.

⁵ For the Haloea see L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 60–7, and H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London, 1977), pp. 98–100. Both give too much to Demeter and too little to Dionysus and Poseidon. In particular, the full import of [Dem.] 59 *Neaera* 116–17 has not been grasped. The misconduct of the hierophant Archias at the Haloea is compared with the misconduct of Neaera's daughter at the Anthesteria as another outrage against 'this same god', i.e. Dionysus; cf. K. Clinton, *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (*TAPS* 64. 3, 1974), p. 17 n. 41. The passage shows that in the popular view of the Haloea, as in the learned theorizing of schol. Lucian, Dionysus was to the fore. The composite nature of the festival also gives rise to the varied explanations of the name *Ἀλωαί*; threshing-floors and vineyards both come into it.

are bracketed with two seasonal festivals of Demeter, the Chloaea and the Calamaea (*IG* 2² 949), but other Attic demes which observe the seasonal festivals of Demeter know nothing of the Haloea – nor can we point to another festival associating Demeter, Dionysus, and Poseidon.⁶ In these circumstances it is reasonable to conclude that the Haloea are a special development due to the renown of Eleusis, combining with certain rites of Demeter the local versions of two festivals widely celebrated in the month Poseideon, the rural Dionysia and the Poseidea. From the Late Archaic period Eleusinian festivals began to overshadow equivalent rites in Athens and other parts of Attica and were themselves elaborated so as to offer a wider appeal; another example is the Eleusinian Proerosia, combining a supplication of Demeter at the Rarian field and a supplication of Apollo at Daphni (*Eur. Suppl.* 28–31, 1196–1212; *Lycurg. Menesaechmus* frs. 84–5 Conomis = *FGrHist* 401 F 3, 2; *IG* 2² 1363 = *LSCG* 7 A 1–19).⁷ We are therefore justified in comparing the Haloea with festivals of Poseidon at the same season.

Poseidon is linked in other ways with the setting and the season of the Haloea.⁸ Victims brought by the celebrants were sacrificed 'at the *eschara* in the courtyard at Eleusis' ([Dem.] 59 *Neaera* 116), and a promoter of the festival was rewarded with a statue and a stele 'in the courtyard of the sanctuary' (*IG* 2² 1299. 28, 78). Since the enclosed area round the Telesterium was not the place for the general merry-making of the Haloea, the courtyard will be the Outer Court outside the Greater Propylaea, and the *eschara* will be the large hearth-altar still existing in its Roman form. Here Poseidon *patêr* shared a temple with Artemis *propylaia* (Paus. 1. 38. 6), which is likewise to be seen in remains on the ground.⁹ A priest of the *genos* Kerykes served Poseidon under two other titles, *prosbatêrios* and *themeliouchos*, and also Zeus *horios* and Athena *horia* (Clinton, *Sacr. Officials* 50–2 lines 16–17, a decree of 20/19 B.C. honouring another member of the *genos*). It is therefore of interest that the sacrificial calendar of the deme Erchia prescribes an offering to Zeus *horios* on Poseideon 16 (*LSCG* 18 E 28–30), and that the same date in 352/1 B.C. was fixed for the beginning of deliberations about the boundaries, *horoi*, of the Eleusinian *orgas* (*IG* 2² 204 = *LSCG* 32).¹⁰ Moreover, we shall find the Delians sacrificing to Poseidon *themeliouchos* in the month Poseideon. So at Eleusis these different avatars of Poseidon – as *patêr*, *prosbatêrios*, and *themeliouchos* – very likely belong to the Haloea. The epithet *patêr* can be left aside for the moment,¹¹ but let us consider *prosbatêrios* and *themeliouchos*.

⁶ Note however Hsch. s. *προπύργια*, 'a festival of Dionysus and Poseidon'. The vintage falls in Boedromion.

⁷ The extension of Eleusinian ritual to other parts of Attica was briefly treated by Nilsson, *Eranos* 42 (1944), 70–6 = *Opuscula Selecta* 3 (Lund, 1960), 92–8, apropos of *IG* 1³ 250, the sacrificial regulations of Paeania. That the Eleusinian Proerosia fell on Pyanopsion 7 and included a supplication of Apollo seems to follow surely from Euripides, Lycurgus, and 'the sacred calendar of Eleusis', though the conclusion has not been drawn by commentators.

⁸ Poseidon's name is plausibly restored in *IG* 1³ 5 = *LSCG* 4, the list of sacrifices prescribed for the Eleusinia or, as Clinton would have it, *AJP* 100 (1979), 1–12, for the Mysteries. It is not clear whether this part of the list deals with preliminary offerings or with others belonging to the main programme; in any case it is not an important occasion for Poseidon.

⁹ For the temple and the *eschara* see G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 167–70 and pls. 61–2.

¹⁰ The coincident dates of the sacrifice at Erchia and the transaction at Eleusis are noted by Burkert *apud* J. D. Mikalson, *The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year* (Princeton, 1975), p. 92.

¹¹ The Eleusinian cult of Poseidon *patêr* is often thought to be connected with the mythical paternity of Eumolpus, eponym of the Eumolpidae. Two objections can be raised. First, the

Why is it appropriate in the month Poseideon to worship Poseidon of the 'approaches' and the 'foundations' and Zeus and Athena of the 'boundaries'?¹² Round the winter solstice, says Varro, though not for fifteen days on either side, you should dig new ditches, or clear old ones (*Rust.* 1. 35). This is indeed the time, after the autumn rains and before the heavier rains of late winter and spring, to see about the drainage of the land, to cut channels and construct embankments. Zeus *horios* will be concerned with works requiring the agreement or cooperation of neighbours; his name stands at the head of Plato's laws on agriculture, which have much to say about watercourses and the like (*Leg.* 8, 842e–846c).¹³ Poseidon *themeliouchos* will protect embankments and terrace walls. Poseidon *prosbatērios* may take his name from 'approaches' in this sense, or from the 'approach' or 'rise' of waters, a common meaning of προσβαίνω (*LSJ s. προσβαίνω* 3, πρόσβασις 1, 3). At Argos Poseidon *προσκλύστιος*, 'of the lapping water', was worshipped beside a shrine of Demeter *Pelasgis* (Paus. 1. 2. 22. 4); as we shall see, the rite of burning torches conducted at this shrine suits the solstice. The same preoccupations may be reflected in another cult title at Erchia. Zeus ἐμ Περρῇ was worshipped on the same day as Zeus *horios* (*LSCG* 18 E 24–7); Περρεὺς means 'the rocky place', i.e. a likely source of building material for stone walls and terraces.¹⁴

All our evidence depicts the Haloea as an occasion for general enjoyment. At a celebration of the late third century a general fête 'all the citizens' of Eleusis (*IG* 2² 1299. 11–14). Women, and especially hetaerae, frolicked at the festival, not without male company ([Dem.] 59 *Neaera* 116; Luc. *Dial. Meretr.* 1. 1, 7. 4; Alciphron. 2. 37. 1, 4. 6. 3, 4. 14. 8, 4. 18. 4, 17). A traditional contest was held – 'the *patrios agon* of the Haloea' (*IG* 2² 1299. 29, 77) – which may not have been a strenuous athletic performance, but another bout of merry-making. The fullest details of the ritual are furnished by a scholium on Lucian (pp. 279–81 Rabe), where they are made to serve a theoretical explanation of the festival, as exalting the procreative impulse imparted by wine and Dionysus; but they are not discredited thereby and, conforming as they do with the overall picture in other sources, may be accepted as the testimony of some ancient philosopher, possibly Theophrastus, who was well acquainted with Athenian life.¹⁵ The scholium describes 'a women's rite', τελετή τις . . . γυναικῶν. The authorities

epithet *patēr* resembles other epithets of Poseidon – *genethlios*, *genesios*, *patrogeneios* – which require a comprehensive explanation, to be considered below. Second, Eumolpus son of Poseidon is firmly tied, as the adversary of Erechtheus, to the cult of Poseidon on the Acropolis; conversely, his paternity is not explained by anything we know of Eleusinian ritual (unless we invent a ceremonial immersion of the hierophant). Now the conflict between Eumolpus and Erechtheus, as we see more clearly than ever from Pap. Sorb. 2328 = Eur. *Erechtheus* fr. 65 Austin, is the *aition* of the great sacrifice to Poseidon Erechtheus, which in the Athenian calendar can be nothing but the Scira; the Scira I take to be the festival of the threshing, its *aition* a tale of violence such as threshing always inspires, and Eumolpus and Erechtheus emblematic figures of this agricultural activity, 'Fine-singer' and 'Thresher', sprung from the two sources of the corn, the winter moisture (Poseidon and Chione) and the earth. The conventional view links the sacrifice in question with the Panathenaea; whether or not this makes sense of Erechtheus, it does not help with Eumolpus.

¹² P. Roussel, *Mélanges Bidez* 2 (Brussels, 1934), pp. 824–7, noted the 'idea of stability' implicit in these epithets, but could suggest nothing more definite.

¹³ Of course Zeus *horios* is honoured at other times and places: cf. *IG* 2² 1458 = *LSCG* 20A 11, an offering in the Tetrapolis in Scirophorion; [Dem.] 7 *Halon*. 39–40, an altar in the Thracian Chersonese. W. Peek, *AthMitt* 67 (1942), 351–2 no. 132 line 2, restores some broken letters in *IG* 2² 5172 to give 'Hera *horia*', not very plausibly, so far as one can judge.

¹⁴ The form Περρεὺς used in the Erchia calendar was identified by M. H. Jameson, *BCH* 89 (1965), 158.

¹⁵ This scholium is very like another by the same hand, probably Arethas', in which three Athenian festivals, the Thesmophoria, Scirophoria, and 'Arrhetophoria', are obscurely and

furnish the women with wine and food in abundance, including cakes shaped like *phalli* and *cunni*, and then withdraw to another gathering outside, which is evidently of men.¹⁶ The women, left to themselves, hold up *phalli* and *cunni* (whether the cakes or other objects is not clear), and exchange scurrilous banter, and are teased with suggestions of promiscuity whispered in their ears by 'the priestesses'. This τελετή probably corresponds to the παννυχίς mentioned elsewhere (Alciph'r. 4. 6. 3); it appears that the women spent the night together and then joined the men on the following day, a sequence found elsewhere, as we shall see. Vases which are thought to illustrate the Haloea show women tending *phalli*: a large *phallus* is carried by a naked woman (Berlin inv. 3206 = *ARV*² 551. 10, *Paralip.* 386), or another is set upright in the ground by two women, one naked (Rome, Villa Giulia 50404 = *ARV*² 1565. 1), or four *phalli* standing on the ground are sprinkled with something by a woman (London E 819 = *ARV*² 1137. 25, *Paralip.* 454).

Another aspect of the festival is disclosed by an item in the Eleusinian accounts of 329/8 B.C. – a very large quantity of firewood and kindling destined for the Haloea (*IG* 2² 1672. 124–6). We may infer that during the night, while the women ate and drank and jested, the men occupied themselves by lighting a great pyre, or else a number of bonfires. This makes a fire-festival, a rite appropriate to the winter solstice. The custom explains the unique name 'Haloea'. Close to the Outer Court at Eleusis Pausanias saw 'the so-called threshing floor, ἄλωϝ, of Triptolemus' (1. 38. 6). Despite Nilsson and Deubner and others, who linked the Haloea with 'cultivated fields', a well-attested meaning of the Ionic ἀλωή, the Attic festival Ἀλώια as a derivative of the Attic ἄλωϝ can mean nothing but 'threshing-floor-rites'.¹⁷ But it is not that the threshing-floor was put to its normal use; our festival came a full six months after the threshing.¹⁸ The threshing-floor was the best place for the nocturnal conflagration. In the Delphic fire-festival Septerium the wooden 'palace' meant for burning was constructed 'round the threshing-floor' (Plut. *De Def. Orac.* 15, 418a–b), i.e. the circular area opposite the Athenian Portico, which was also the starting-point for certain processions. One of the explanations of the Haloea offered by Pausanias the

tendentiously equated as expressing the same *physikos logos* about human and vegetable procreation (pp. 275–6 Rabe). The other scholium has been widely but inconclusively discussed; in my opinion the details are reliable, if we allow for some confusion and equivocation: the scholiast was confused because his source equivocated. The two scholia plainly derive from the same source, known also to Clem. *Protr.* 2. 17 and perhaps to Steph. Byz. s. *Μίλητος*; Jacoby, *FGH* III b *Suppl.* 2. 204 n. 77, thinks of Poseidonius or Apollodorus, but Theophrastus seems at least as likely. Although our scholium, unlike the other, mentions only one festival, the Haloea, the ritual details are subjoined to an aetiology that looks exclusively to Dionysus; for the festival is said to be concerned with the pruning of the vine and the tasting of new wine, and to commemorate the murder of Icarus by drunken and prurient shepherds. One might therefore ask whether the scholiast's exposition of the ritual does not contaminate the Haloea with a Dionysiac festival in which *phalli*, if not *cunni*, would be routine. Against this are the red-figure vases which Deubner adduced in the light of the scholium; these vases, showing women and *phalli* – most notably a pelike showing four *phalli* set up amid sprouting corn –, exactly suit the season and the purpose of the Haloea. And since other notices likewise speak of Dionysus, it is clear that the ritual had features of Dionysiac aspect – but perhaps not of Dionysiac origin; they may be the reason why Dionysus was brought into it in the first place. I do not think that the Haloea are depicted on the Niinnion tablet, as proposed by E. Simon, *AntK* 9 (1966), 86–92.

¹⁶ D. Gill, *HTHR* 67 (1974), 122, suggests that the food, which is heaped on tables, is an offering for the gods rather than a meal for the worshippers, but the scholiast makes it very clear that the tables are set out by the authorities for the benefit of the women.

¹⁷ Parke, *Fest. of the Ath.* (n. 5 above), p. 98, rejected both derivations, from 'threshing-floor' and from 'cultivated field', without offering anything in their place.

¹⁸ At *IG* 2² 1672. 233 'the sacred threshing-floor' receives attention of some sort during the tenth prytany, obviously in connection with the threshing.

Atticist is not so far off the mark: 'because they sported on the threshing-floors at the festival', *ἐπεὶ ἐν ἄλωσιν ἔπαιζον ἐν τῇ ἐορτῇ*.

Such was the Eleusinian version of the solstice festival. The 'procession for Poseidon' attested by Pausanias the Atticist perhaps took place at the outset, and brought the worshippers to the Outer Court and the temple of Poseidon *patēr*. The scholiast on Lucian begins his account of the women's antics with the phrase *μόναι δὲ γυναῖκες εἰσπορευόμεναι*, and thus suggests that at this stage the women entered the sanctuary enclosure, while the men remained outside. Then came the women's *teletē* or *pannychis*, and the lighting of the fire on the threshing-floor; and on the next day the mixed revelry of men and women, with sacrifice and feasting.

(2) The festival Poseidea appears in a fifth-century schedule of sacrifices which may or may not come from Marathon (*IG* 1³ 255 A 10 = *LSCG* A 8); there is no date, but the sequence allows us to think of the month Poseideon.¹⁹

(3) Another instance can probably be recognized in the fourth-century calendar of Marathon (*IG* 2² 1358 = *LSCG* 20 B 7–10). Under the month Poseideon we find the following offerings: to a god whose name is lost, an ox (or bull) worth 150 drachmas – much the most costly victim in the whole calendar – and a sheep; to *Hērōinē*, a sheep (as restored); to 'Gē in the fields', a gravid cow; and finally, *τελετῇ: σπύλια*, worth 40 drachmas. The last word is otherwise unknown, and the preceding word might mean either 'for the rite' or, less plausibly, 'for the goddess Teletē', but the implication will be the same in either case; the items of expense belong to a very special rite, most likely a secret rite. 'Gē in the fields' is much the same as Demeter, whose name does not appear in the calendar of the Tetrapolis (though we have the titles 'Ελευσινία and 'Αχαία and Χλόη).²⁰ Who is the male deity at the head of the series? The season, the principal victim, and the company suit no one better than Poseidon.

(4) In a private calendar of sacrifice inscribed at Athens in the early Imperial period a certain form of cake, shared by many deities in the calendar, is prescribed for Poseidon *χαμαίζηλος*, 'earth-bound', on Poseideon 8 (*IG* 2² 1367 = *LSCG* 52. 16–18).

(5) Our knowledge of the Ionian Poseidea comes mainly from Delos, where the festival expenses are inscribed year by year, under the month Poseideon, in the accounts of the period of independence, 314–166 B.C.²¹ The expenses refer to the sacrifice of an ox, of rams, and of other animals; to a public banquet, attended by some 1,500 people, which perhaps took place in the Hypostyle Hall; and to a contest of some kind, with small monetary prizes. The sum expended each year was 600 drachmas, which makes this an important festival. The sacrificial animals remind us of Marathon, the banquet and the contest of Eleusis. The god's titles at the festival were *asphaleios* and *orthōsios*; the first, meaning 'Steadfast', is very common, and might express any of Poseidon's powers, but is particularly apt to the god of under-earth who causes earthquakes; the second is elsewhere borne not by Poseidon but by Artemis, in the fluctuating forms *orthōsia*, *orthia*, *throsia*, which have the widest

¹⁹ So Jameson on *IG* 1³ 255. Another offering to Poseidon at line 18 comes between offerings assignable to Thargelion and to Hecatombaeon or Boedromion, and so may appertain to the Scira.

²⁰ In the next month, Gamelion, 'Gē at the *manteion*' follows Daera (B 12–13), an agrarian deity related to Demeter, and in Elaphebolion she stands alone (B 17–18). *Hērōinē* appears often in the calendar of Marathon, in various company (B 4 as restored, B 16, 20, 22, 24, 25–6).

²¹ The epigraphic evidence for the Delian Poseidea has been assembled and interpreted by P. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale* (Paris, 1970), pp. 260–4, and need not be cited here. Bruneau reckons the number of banqueters as 1,500 and suggests the Hypostyle Hall as the setting.

possible distribution and must denote some aspect of Artemis' rural milieu. In the year 246 B.C. a special sacrifice was decreed in the month Poseideon for Poseidon *themeliouchos* (*I Délos* 290. 116), whom we have already encountered at Eleusis.

(6) On Myconos the following offerings are prescribed for Poseideon 12 (*SIG*³ 1024 = *LSCG* 96. 5–15): to Poseidon *temenitês*, an ungelded ram; to Poseidon *phykios*, an ungelded lamb; to Demeter *chloê*, two sows, one gravid. At the second sacrifice, to Poseidon 'Seaweed' (cf. Call. *Iamb.* fr. 194. 67 Pfeiffer), women are excluded, and the cost is defrayed from a tax on fishing. The first avatar of Poseidon will be distinct from the fisherman's god, and doubtless goes with Demeter *chloê*.²² The 'precinct' from which he takes his name lies in the countryside, for the sacrificial ram 'is not to be brought into the city', where the procession starts; this is the same victim as at Marathon and on Delos.

(7) A list of festivals on Thasos gives us the Poseideia at the proper time of year (*LSCG Suppl.* 69. 1).²³ The document in question forbids the laying of charges during the main festivals, listed in chronological order; between the Poseideia and the Anthesteria there is an unexpected temporal clause, ὅταν μο. (.) ζῶμεν. The verb has been read and interpreted as μοιρίζωμεν 'when we apportion' wine, or perhaps the vintage (Salviat), μοιὰ ἱζῶμεν 'when we set up *phalli*' (Sokolowski), μολίζωμεν 'when we prune' trees (Bousquet), μολύζωμεν 'when we eat garlic' (Sokolowski). Of these suggestions all save the second are unsatisfactory both as to form (the words being unattested) and as to sense. The second depends on Herodian's statement that μοιόν means αἰδοῖον (*Reil.* 1. 376 Lentz), but the resulting phrase is not implausible; if it describes the Poseideia, the Thasian festival resembles the Haloea. It is a pity that we cannot be sure.

(8) At Smyrna a festival of Poseidon was celebrated on Poseideon 12 (Ael. Arist. *Or.* 47. 6 Keil).

(9) At Sinope the priest of Poseidon *Helikônios* offers sacrifice on three successive days in Poseideon, from the 12th to the 14th (*SIG*³ 1017 = *LSAM* 1. 10–11).

Thus far the Attic and Ionian evidence, which is clear and uniform. Similar rites can be safely posited for a dozen more Ionian communities where we hear of the month Poseideon (*vel sim.*), as follows: Ceos, Tenos, Paros, Chios, Samos; Erythrae, Teos, Ephesus, Miletus, Magnesia-on-the-Maeander; Perinthus, Cyzicus. In many cases it is demonstrably a winter month, and in the rest it may well be so. Two further instances of the month-name, at Iasus and Halicarnassus, almost certainly show Ionian influence.

Next the Aeolian domain. Here, as at Dorian Argos and Pellene below, we shall stretch the rules of evidence so as to admit a doubtful case, the Thessalian Peloria.

(10) The festival *Πελώρια* is known only from Baton of Sinope as cited by Athenaeus (*FGrHist* 268 F 5 = Ath. 14. 45, 639d–640a), and is altogether problematic, as previous discussion shows;²⁴ yet the most puzzling features would be well accounted for if this were another festival of the solstice, addressed in part to Poseidon. As for the season, Athenaeus begins by saying that Baton's account of the Peloria 'clearly shows the festival of the Saturnalia to be very Greek'; this allows but does

²² Nilsson's comments on Poseidon *temenitês* are not quite consistent; at *Gr. Feste*, p. 83 he calls him a sea-god, but at pp. 328–9 compares the agrarian background of the Haloea.

²³ According to F. Salviat, *BCH* 82 (1958), 225–6, who published the stone, the Poseideia are a nautical rite which comes 'at the bad season... by a tradition of the Aegean'.

²⁴ See Nilsson, *Gr. Feste*, p. 37; L. Ziehen, *RE* 19. 1 (1937), 394–6 s. *Πελώρια* 2; Jacoby *ad loc.* Jacoby indeed supposes that Baton simply invented the festival, but this is not a game which ancient writers play.

not require the inference that the Peloria are celebrated at the same time of year as the Saturnalia;²⁵ the festival *aition*, which speaks of rushing waters, suits the winter season.

Of the ritual we are told that certain men of standing, as prefigured in the *aition* by Pelasgus and his associates, sacrifice to Zeus *pelôrios* and set out tables loaded with food for a general celebration, at which strangers are made welcome, prisoners are freed, and servants are waited on by their masters. These last details need have no great significance; such reversals of order are easily explained as an extension of the merry-making. It is unclear whether the preparations for the feast are left in private hands or in the hands of the authorities; if the first, we may compare the Poseidonia of Aegina, to be discussed below; if the second, the Haloea. At all events the festival on Aegina is likewise attended by outsiders. The Peloria are generally thought of as a festival of Zeus, in virtue of the sacrifice to Zeus *pelôrios*; but as others have observed, there are difficulties: neither the ritual business nor the mythical prodigy which sets the festival going is characteristic of Zeus.²⁶ Now the name Πελώρια, 'Huge (or mighty) things', is most naturally taken as designating the tables heaped with food, all the more so since the tables were first prepared, according to the *aition*, for a man named Πέλωρος who brought good news. If so, we might suppose that Zeus acquires the sacrifice and the epithet because he is the god who presides over the household stores, or over the resources of the whole community.²⁷ His role in the festival is then incidental, and we can give due weight to the *aition*, which runs as follows.

While the Pelasgians were conducting a common sacrifice, Pelasgus received joyful news from a man named Pelorus. The mountains had been split by great earthquakes, and the water of the lake had run off through the gap, bringing to light wide rich plains. Pelorus was rewarded with the table which, we may suppose, still bears his name. In other sources the cleaving of the mountains and the draining of the plain are ascribed to Poseidon (Hdt. 7. 129. 3–4; schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 4. 264a; Steph. Byz. s. *Lytai*). It seems unlikely that a festival which commemorated these events omitted to honour the god of earthquakes and rivers.²⁸

(11) At Mytilene an inscription of the early Imperial period records a contribution towards the festival Poseidea (*IG* 12. 2. 71. 6), but the season does not appear.

The months Poseideon and *Posideios* are attested for two Aeolian communities, Samothrace and Dardanus in the Troad. Since the evidence at Mytilene, Samothrace and Dardanus is all relatively late, it is possible, but not very likely, that the month-name and the festival are borrowed from Ionia.

²⁵ The Greek festivals which Athenaeus has already likened to the Saturnalia, and which he takes from other writers, are the Hermaea of Crete, with no date given; a festival of Troezen 'in the month Geraestius', and so perhaps the Geraestia as a festival of Poseidon in late autumn; the Sacaea of Babylon 'in Loos, the eleventh month', i.e. August; and a festival of Hera on Cos, with no date given. So it remains an open question why he singles out the Peloria as the best example. There is nothing to be said for Jacoby's view that it was Baton, not Athenaeus, who first compared the Peloria with the Saturnalia – or rather, who excogitated the Peloria from the Saturnalia, in order to feign that the Roman festival was instituted by migrating Pelasgians!

²⁶ The section on *Saturnalienartige Feste* which Nilsson appends to the festivals of Zeus, *Gr. Feste*, pp. 35–40, is potentially misleading; apart from our festival and apart from speculation about a festival of Cyrene, Zeus does not come into it at all.

²⁷ Both the festival and the avatar of Zeus were probably widespread in Thessaly. Baton and Athenaeus ascribe the festival to the Thessalians at large; the Pelasgians of the *aition* may have the same scope. Nilsson, *Gesch. der gr. Rel.*^{2/3} 1. 513 n. 2, adduces Zeus *pelôris* on a coin of Pharsalus, and Zeus *pelôrios* is also known to Quintus (*Posthom.* 11. 273).

²⁸ Orion, it is said, established a popular shrine of Poseidon on Cape Pelorus, after he formed the cape as a breakwater (Diod. 4. 85. 4, citing [Hes.] fr. 149 M-W), but it would be wishful to deduce a connection between Poseidon and the place-name; Pelorus is a natural place for him.

Next the Dorians. Let us remember that the Ionian worship of Poseidon was not confined to the month Poseideon. There is plenty of evidence for rites of Poseidon at other times of the year; indeed another festival of Poseidon gives the common Ionian month-name Taureon or Taureion, and yet another the Euboean month-name Hippiion; the Panionian festival honouring Poseidon *Helikônios* must have taken place in clement weather. In other parts of Greece one would expect the converse to be true: where cults and festivals of Poseidon are well attested, the rites of the winter solstice are likely to be part of it. Nowhere, as we see from Pausanias, were cults of Poseidon thicker on the ground than in the Peloponnesus – not only in Arcadia, but at the Isthmus, in the Argolid and the Acte, in Laconia, Messenia, and Achaëa; the pattern and even some individual instances go back to a time before the dialect divisions of historical Greece had emerged.²⁹ Yet Poseidon's seasonal festivals cannot here be distinguished and dated as in Ionia, for the same kind of epigraphic testimony is not to hand. Only on the Dorian island of Rhodes have we record of offerings to Poseidon near the solstice (to be adduced below), and only at Epidaurus do we find the equivalent month-name, *Posidaïos*, where it seems to fall a month later than at Athens. These instances do however reinforce the argument from probability and make it worth pressing the available evidence with some determination.

(12) In the agora of Argos Pausanias saw adjacent sanctuaries of Demeter *Pelasgis* and Poseidon *prosklystios*, 'of the lapping water'; it was the custom to throw burning torches into a pit near by (2. 22. 1, 3–4). The cults and the rite sound like the elements of our solstice festival.³⁰

Moreover, the myth implied by Demeter's epithet *Pelasgis* can be plausibly interpreted as an *aition* of the festival. It was a Pelasgian grove in the Pelasgian realm of Thessaly which, though sacred to Demeter, was invaded by Erysichthon or Triopas for the purpose of felling trees (Call. *H. Cer.* 25–6, etc.). The sanctuary at Argos was deemed an offshoot of the Thessalian, having been founded by Pelasgus son of Triopas, whose grave was shown nearby (so Pausanias). It is true that the purpose of enrolling Pelasgus, Triopas and Triopas' father Phorbas in Argive genealogy, as was done at an early date (Pherecydes, *FGrHist* 3 F66; Hellanicus *FGrHist* 4 F36a–b), was to explain and reconstruct the Homeric *Pelasgikon Argos*. But when brought to Argos Triopas and his kin kept their association with Demeter: witness this notice of Pausanias, and the derivative fiction of the Messenian *archaeologia*, in which Triopas' daughter Messene establishes the mysteries of Demeter at Andania (Paus. 4. 1. 5, 9, 4. 2. 6, 4. 26. 8), and Pelasgus' reputation as the inventor of bread (schol. Eur. *Or.* 932). Now the offence imputed to Erysichthon or Triopas, of felling trees in Demeter's grove,

²⁹ Nilsson, *Gr. Feste*, p. 67, observes that whereas the normal Dorian form is *Ποτειδάν*, the form *Ποοιδαν* attested for Helos, Thuria, and Taenarum represents the Arcadian form, though with the Laconian aspiration of medial sigma. 'All three cults are therefore pre-Laonian and belong to the same stock who were so attached to the god in Arcadia.'

³⁰ The bits of aetiology which Pausanias supplies are of little value. Poseidon's cult and epithet are traced to a conventional *lis deorum*, when Argos was awarded to Hera and Poseidon flooded the land in despite. The torches thrown into the pit are said to honour 'Kore daughter of Demeter', a perfunctory explanation which really explains nothing; this is not the normal use of torches in the cult of Demeter and Kore. Nilsson, *Gr. Feste*, pp. 361–2, was driven to suppose that the pit was a *megaron*, such as women use for the distinctive offerings of the Thesmophoria; but the open area visited by Pausanias is not the place for a *megaron*, nor is there any reason to think that women threw in torches along with slaughtered pigs and the rest. In any case the rite was not reserved for women, for it was reputedly instituted – perhaps it was somehow altered – by 'Nicostratus, a local man'; the name is common at Argos (cf. M. Mitsos, *Ἀργολικὴ Προσωπογραφία* [Athens, 1952], pp. 135–6, listing five instances in the fourth and third centuries). Pausanias also reports a 'festival of watch-fires' at Argos in which fires were lit on Lyrcëia and Larisa (2. 25. 4).

has always puzzled scholars, who rightly look for some ritual origin.³¹ Felling trees is however a necessary preparation for a fire-festival, such as we seem to find in the agora of Argos.

This interpretation of the myth and its bearing on the Argive cult of Demeter are further supported by the mythical name *Αἶθων* 'Fiery', said to be a surname of Erysichthon referring to his 'fiery' hunger ([Hes.] fr. 43a. 5–8 M-W, etc.), and sometimes used as a name in its own right, as if in place of Erysichthon ([Hes.] fr. 43a. 37, etc.). The obvious inference, which has been drawn by nearly everyone, is that *Αἶθων* was once an independent figure, who came to be identified with Erysichthon in this complex and fluctuating story.³² Yet the name cannot originate as the story says. 'Fiery' hunger is not a natural phrase in Greek (Hes. *Op.* 363 and Aeschin. 3 *Tim.* 184, the two instances outside the context of our story, can be ascribed to the influence of the story); Greek idiom does not otherwise speak of hunger as a fire in the belly. Nor is it natural that an epithet should be transferred to a person from a thing and used as a personal name. *Αἶθων* can only be a personification of fire arising from ritual;³³ the ritual also made it seem that this person was extremely hungry, so that the name could be referred to the hunger as well. In a version of the myth recorded in the *Suda* s. *Αἶθων* – perhaps deriving from some Hellenistic poet, and in any case not to be suppressed by wilful emendation – *Αἶθων* is son of *Ἥλιος*, a very suitable affiliation, doubly so if 'Fiery' personifies the bonfires at the winter turning of the 'Sun'. The solstice festival was also the occasion of extravagant feasting, and observers said that 'Fiery' was afflicted with insatiable hunger. His daughter *Μήστρα* is a perpetual bride – the name means 'She who is wooed' – providing endless bride-gifts of oxen and sheep to be eaten by her father; this may be inspired by the lewd jesting of the women. Mestra also succumbs to the god Poseidon ([Hes.] fr. 43a. 55–9, 68; Ov. *Met.* 8. 848–54); he presides at the festival, and so confers on Mestra as on other mythical favourites the magic powers of transformation which reflect his liquid nature.

³¹ See A. Henrichs, *BASP* 16 (1979), 85–92; his survey of 'tree-murder' in Manichaean and Indian sources, *ibid.* pp. 92–108, is of great interest, but does not illuminate the Erysichthon story. Burkert, *Gnomon* 46 (1974), 322–4, and again in *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1979), p. 135, thinks of a tree carried as a seasonal emblem by ritual beggars serving Demeter at the Triopium near Cnidus. Yet although ritual begging has indeed helped to form the parallel stories of Erysichthon, Triopas, and of Phorbas on Rhodes (whose reception in a private household, as recounted by Dieuchidas, *FGrHist* 485 F 7, is unmistakably the *aition* of such a practice), it is ritual begging in the cult of Apollo, the commonest sort; the Athenian setting of [Hes.] fr. 43a shows that Erysichthon himself is the eponym of the Apolline *genos* Erysichthonidae, whom the poet attaches to the Aeolid stemma, presumably for the first time, by making Triopas his father. For the rest, the violation of the grove does not at all suggest the carrying of a tree hung with tokens of plenty, and the ritual background envisaged by Burkert, and by G. Zuntz before him, is quite illusory; the Triopium is a shrine of Apollo, not Demeter (the 'Triopium' of Herodes Atticus, *IG* 14. 1389–90, does not evoke this shrine as commentators always say, but rather Demeter's grove in Thessaly, in order to deter intruders from despoiling Herodes' fields and orchards).

³² See e.g. Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung* 2 (Berlin, 1924), pp. 39–41; K. J. McKay, *Erysichthon. A Callimachean Comedy* (Leiden, 1962), pp. 8–26. Opinion is divided or reserved over *Aithōn* as a fictitious identity of Odysseus (*Od.* 19. 193) and as the title of a satyr play by Achaëus (*TrGF* min. 20 F 5a–11). Since Odysseus is a famished beggar, and his rightful substance is being depleted by continual feasting, Homer may well have his eye on the Erysichthon story. Achaëus' subject may be either Erysichthon or Odysseus or, if he could use the name as freely as Homer, some trencherman like Heracles.

³³ A ritual origin can also be deduced for *Αἰθουσα* daughter of Poseidon, consort of Apollo, and mother of Eleuther eponym of Eleutherae, himself the father of Iasius or Iasion, 'Healer' (Apollod. *Bibl.* 3 [111] 10. 1. 2; Paus. 1. 20. 1; cf. [Hes.] fr. 185 M–W) – perhaps the celebrated ritual of Eleutherae which stands behind Plutarch, *Quaest. Gr.* 39, 300a–b.

Now the name *Αἰθων* is attested for Argos by the Argive phratry *Αἰθωνίδα* known from a single inscription (W. Vollgraff, *BCH* 27 [1903] 270; cf. *Suda s. Αἰθωνίδης-ὄνομα κύριον*). To be sure, the thirty-odd phratry names found at Argos are mostly quite obscure, and also diverse in kind;³⁴ it cannot be assumed, still less proved, that they originate in cult. Yet the *Αἰθων* in question is likely to be a local figure; it is in the nature of phratries to exalt local ties, and the last thing we should expect is a name drawn from the general store of myth. And the local name is likely to derive from ritual, for the reasons already given, even though the phratry which perpetuates the name need not be concerned with the ritual.

(13) Some way from Pellene, at a sanctuary of Demeter *Mysia* called the *Mysaion*, Pausanias describes a festival of protracted merry-making in a rural setting (7. 27. 9–10). Had he mentioned Poseidon as well as Demeter, it would have been obvious that the festival belongs in our series. Perhaps Poseidon has indeed been omitted; at all events, the occasion is quite unlike the usual worship of Demeter. Within the *Mysaion* is a grove with trees of all sorts and abundant springs of water; here the festival takes place and goes on for seven days. On the third day the men are excluded from the sanctuary, and in the night the women perform secret rites; on the following day the men return and exchange scurrilities with the women.

This festival is not to be aligned with the Thesmophoria, as Nilsson would have it.³⁵ The entire ritual of the Thesmophoria turns on the seclusion of women; here men play a large part. The setting – some seven miles from Pellene – is much more rustic than an ordinary Thesmophorium, which is just far enough from the main area of settlement to give space and privacy.³⁶ And though the Thesmophoria are said to have lasted ten days at Syracuse, a longer span is not more typical of the Thesmophoria than of other important festivals. At Sinope the celebration in Poseideon lasted three days, and on Aegina, as we shall see, the Poseidonia went on for an unconscionable time. Here the sequence of women's *pannychis* and of men and women conjoined in revelry reminds us of the Haloea. The abundant springs as a feature of the landscape call for some deity concerned with water, whether Poseidon or another. So we may provisionally add this festival of Pellene to our tally.

(14) It is a relief to turn from these doubts and guesses to the Poseidonia of Aegina, a famous holiday at which Aristippus took his pleasure and Phryne was ogled by Panhellenic crowds (Plut. *Quaest. Gr.* 44, 301d–f; Ath. 13. 55, 588e, 13. 59, 590f). The date of the festival has been overlooked or misconceived, but Plutarch's *aition* is clear on this point.³⁷ When the Aeginetan contingent returned from Troy, the survivors were welcomed at joyful banquets, which however were conducted away

³⁴ For the other phratry names see M. Wörle, *Untersuchungen zur Verfassungsgeschichte von Argos im 5. Jahrhundert vor Christus* (Munich, 1964), p. 17 n. 32; M. Piérart, *BCH* 105 (1981), 611–13. The *Aithônidae* were linked with Erysichthon of Thessaly by Vollgraff and, doubtfully, by M. Guarducci, *L'istituzione della fratria 2 (MemLinc*⁸ 8. 2, 1938), 88; with Odysseus by Hiller von Gaertringen in *SIG*³ 735.

³⁵ *Gr. Feste*, p. 327.

³⁶ Demeter *Mysia* is also worshipped at a rural shrine near Argos (Paus. 2. 18. 3), and Hesychius has the entry *Μύσης· κώμη Ἀργείας*. This place-name resembles *Μύσαιον*, the sanctuary near Pellene; the epithet *Mysia* derives from these, and also *Mysios* as the name of Demeter's mythical host at Argos (Paus. 2. 18. 3, 2. 35. 4, 7. 2. 79; *IG* 4. 664) or of a man of Hermione (*IG* 4. 732 col. 4. 4, perhaps the brother of *Damatrios*, *ibid.*); the common view that *Mysios* personifies the 'mysteries' of Demeter is plainly misguided. The festivities at the *Musaion* lend some interest to Hesychius' gloss *μυσάλμαι· πολὺ πεινῶντες καὶ ἐσθίωντες*.

³⁷ Nilsson, *Gr. Feste*, pp. 73–4, does not suggest a date, unless autumn is implied by the fancied resemblance to the Apaturia. W. R. Halliday, *The Greek Questions of Plutarch* (Oxford, 1928), p. 185, proposes 'early spring' in view of the fancied resemblance to the Anthesteria.

from the public eye, so as not to offend those who were bereaved; 'many had died in the fighting, but even more on the voyage home, in the storm'. From Homer onwards it is always said that the Greek fleet sailed home in the stormy season, to be wrecked or scattered. By one account Troy fell just 'at the setting of the Pleiades' (Aesch. *Ag.* 826), i.e. at the very onset of stormy weather in Pyanopsion.³⁸ The date of Agamemnon's death, Gamelion 13 (Deinias of Argos *FGrHist* 306 F 2), seems to put his homecoming a little later than the Aeginetans'. So the Poseidonia of Aegina and the Ionian Poseidea correspond in point of season.³⁹ Almost nothing is known of the Aeginetan calendar; it may have included a month *Posidaios*, as did the Epidaurian, and the festival-name 'Poseidonia' which we find in Athenaeus may be the literary rendering of a Doric form *Posidaia* or the like.

Plutarch gives some details of the festival business. There are sixteen days of feasting; 'then after enacting *aphrodisia* they conclude the festival'. In the phrase *ποιήσαντες Ἀφροδίσια* the noun very likely has its common secondary sense of 'sexual pleasures' (*LSJ s. 'Ἀφροδίσιος* II. 1);⁴⁰ if it meant 'rites of Aphrodite', we should expect rather *ἄγοντες Ἀφροδίσια*. But a tribute to the goddess Aphrodite would have the same significance in this context. The feasting led up to a final day or night of sexual licence, or at least to talk or mimicry of sexual licence, as at Eleusis and Pellene. Sixteen days is a very long festival; Athenaeus makes it even longer, in saying that Aristippus dallied at the Poseidonia for two months each year. The length is unimportant from the antiquarian point of view, and merely shows that the festival became ever more popular and was correspondingly prolonged, like the Roman Saturnalia.

We also learn from Plutarch that the feasting was conducted 'in silence', with no slave present, by 'the so-called *thiasoi*'; the members of the separate groups were known as *monophagoi*, 'those who eat alone'. These arrangements have inspired the mythical *aition*. When the soldiers returned after the war and after the storm, the losses in their ranks forbade a single collective celebration; instead the survivors were entertained by their respective families, who 'themselves waited upon fathers and kinsmen and brothers and dear ones, no one outside the group being admitted'. The *thiasoi* of the festival, in other words, stand for the family reunions of the myth. Plutarch's account has been subject to a persistent misunderstanding which distorts both the ritual and its significance. We are asked to regard the Poseidonia as a gathering of kinship groups, a *Geschlechtsfeier* or *Gentilfeier*, comparable in most

³⁸ The mention of the season rings a suitably ominous note in Agamemnon's speech. Some commentators refuse to allow the meaning which attaches to 'the setting of the Pleiades' everywhere else in ancient literature, but G. Thomson, *Aeschylus. Oresteia*² 2 (Amsterdam/Prague, 1966), pp. 68–9, argues well for the seasonal connotation. A tradition found in Hellanicus *et al.*, doubtless aetiological, gave a date in summer for the sack of Troy – early or late Thargelion, late Scirophorion, late Panemus – which could be reconciled without much difficulty with the winter homecoming; for the details see C. Robert, *Die griechische Heldensage* (Berlin, 1920–6), p. 1289, and for a discussion of the aetiology, Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berlin, 1972), pp. 178–81.

³⁹ Phryne's voluptuous figure was revealed to the crowd at the Eleusinian Mysteries and again at the Poseidonia – obviously the Aeginetan festival – when 'she removed her mantle, unbound her hair, and waded into the sea' (Ath. 13. 59, 590f). 'The story of Phryne', says Halliday (n. 37 above), 'shows that it was then warm enough to bathe, but the bathing season begins early in Greece.' Until recently the Greeks did not go in for recreational bathing, and Phryne was performing her ritual duties: at a certain stage of the Mysteries the initiates bathed in the sea, and the mythical heroines who encounter Poseidon within his element prefigure an act of ritual immersion. Since ritual bathing may be required at any time, the story has no bearing on the season.

⁴⁰ So Halliday (n. 37 above); 'no real Aphrodite festival, but only a great carouse', says Nilsson, *Gr. Feste*, p. 375, in similar vein; but he also, p. 74, thinks of Aphrodite's role in the Ionian Apaturia and as a sea-goddess.

respects to the Apaturia (so Nilsson), and also, in virtue of the mingled joy and gloom, to the family customs of the Anthesteria (so Halliday). All this must be given up.

In Plutarch the family groups belong to the mythical occasion, not to the abiding custom. The *thiasoi* are not said to be kinship groups, real or fictive, and there is no likelihood that they were. The Attic *thiasoi* as components of Attic phratries are a unique and short-lived development;⁴¹ at all other times and places the *thiasoi* are simply bands of worshippers serving a particular deity, often in festive style; the *thiasoi* of Dionysus and Heracles are the best known. They are indeed a means of organizing banquets and dances and the like – obviously so on Aegina. Had the Poseidonia been a gathering of kinship groups, it would not have attracted crowds of pleasure-seekers from all over Greece. It follows that Poseidon has no special standing as a patron of kinship groups, a *Geschlechtsgott*; epithets like *genethlios* and *genesios* testify to his interest in procreation, not in kinship, which has a different range of cult titles.⁴² Nor is there anything in our festival that resembles the taboos and bugbears of the Anthesteria. The *aition* speaks of the bereavement of some to explain the private auspices of the feasting, not to intimate that the mood of joy is somehow tempered with anxiety. Plutarch does indeed say that the feasting is done 'in silence', a detail which suits the *aition* better than it does the general rejoicing of the festival; no doubt the *thiasoi* feasted indoors, as the season demands, and so were unheard by others, if not silent among themselves.

(15) At Lindus a brief but informative sacrificial statute is headed by the date *Theudaisios* 6 (*IG* 12. 1. 905 = *SIG*³ 1030 = *LSCG* 140). The Rhodian calendar is among the best known outside Athens; the sequence of month-names in various inscriptions and the seasonal fluctuation in the number of dated amphora handles allow all the months to be placed in order and in season; *Theudaisios* corresponds to Poseideon.⁴³ 'A grown pig' is to be offered to Poseidon *phytalmios*. Then comes the notation 'feasting', *θωιῆται*, showing that a number of worshippers will gather at the sanctuary and share the meat. Poseidon's epithet *phytalmios* can tell us a little more.

Poseidon *phytalmios* receives sacrifice from 'practically all Greeks', says Plutarch, a satisfactory witness in such a matter (*Quaest. Conv.* 5. 3. 1, 675f). On Rhodes he appears also at Cameirus (*Clara Rhodos* 6/7. 386), and again in the kindred Dorian cities of Megara (Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 8. 8. 4, 730d) and Troezen, where the sanctuary lay 'outside the city-wall' (Paus. 2. 32. 8); otherwise at Athens (*IG* 2² 5051 = Maass, *Prohedrie* p. 123, a front-row seat in the theatre) and Erythrae (*SIG*³ 1014 = *LSAM* 25. 93 = *IvErythrai* 201a47). The victim at Lindus and the setting at Troezen point to the agrarian milieu, and any doubts are removed by Plutarch, who brackets Poseidon *phytalmios* with Zeus *ombrios* and Demeter *proërosia* as typical deities of agriculture (*VII Sap. Conv.* 15, 158d; at *Virt. Mor.* 12, 451c the word evokes Dionysus and the cognate realm of viticulture). So the epithet *phytalmios* is generally cited by scholars, together with a mass of other evidence, as attesting Poseidon's concern with natural fertility;⁴⁴ but this does not exhaust its significance. The word

⁴¹ cf. A. Andrewes, *JHS* 81 (1961), 9–12.

⁴² Of course phratries at large worshipped all manner of gods and heroes, and it comes as no surprise that the statutes of the Labyadae, *CIDelph* 1 *Lois sacrées*, 9 B 13–14, name Poseidon *phratrios* between Apollo and Zeus *patrôos* – an exception to prove the rule. At Sparta Poseidon *dômatitas* has to do with kinship groups, to judge from the company he keeps in *IG* 5. 1. 497 (Carneius *oiketas* and Heracles *genarchas* among others, all served by a hereditary priest).

⁴³ cf. Samuel, *Gr. and Rom. Chron.* (n. 4 above), pp. 107–10.

⁴⁴ Wilamowitz, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*^{2/3} 1 (Basel 1955, 1959), p. 209 n. 1, regarding Poseidon's agrarian function as quite secondary, dismisses out of hand the agrarian interpretation of

is also used as an adjective in the high style of tragedy, and here it always refers to human procreation (Aesch. *Ag.* 339; Soph. *Oed. Col.* 151, fr. 788 Pearson/Radt; [Eur.] *Rhes.* 920). The usage of tragedy may or may not be directly derived from the worship of Poseidon *phyalmios*, but in any case will not be inconsistent with this worship, universal as it was. The epithet then means 'procreative' in a double sense, of crops and of human offspring – as we might expect of an adjective formed from *φύω*, which means 'create', 'produce', any kind of life. *Phyalmios* shows us how to understand several less common epithets of Poseidon – *genethlios* and *genesios* 'begetting', *pater* 'father', and *patrogeneios* 'begetting as a father'.⁴⁵ In the cult of Poseidon, as in that of Demeter, human fertility is linked with the fertility of the fields, and indeed the roles of the god and goddess, and of their male and female worshippers, are complementary. This is not in origin a poetic or philosophic notion, as it is for Plutarch; we shall soon see that it entails a drastic form of sympathetic magic.

On this showing the statute of Lindus includes the two elements so prominent at Eleusis, Pellene, and Aegina – feasting and a commingling of the sexes.

(16) At Cameirus a sacrificial calendar prescribes the following offerings to Poseidon under *Theudaisios* 1: 'a bull no younger than a year, a yearling ram, a porker' (*LSCG Suppl.* 94. 1–7). The bull and the ram remind us of Marathon and Delos, the ram alone of Myconos, the porker of Lindus.

The foregoing instances are all that can be usefully mentioned. In many cults of Poseidon an odd detail is suggestive, but the argument will not be served by possibilities. We also expect the festival to be imprinted in myth, since Greek myths are predominantly aetiological (whatever may be said to the contrary in general works on the topic of 'myth'). It was suggested above that Aethon son of Helios and his daughter Mestra are projections of our festival – of the season, the bonfires, the feasting, and the women's purposive lewdness. There are similar cases. Augeas the rich and insolent king of Elis is by most accounts a son of Helios, and his own name means 'Shining' (< *αὐγή* 'ray of the sun'); his daughter Agamede or Perimede is as weird as Mestra, and likewise succumbs to Poseidon.⁴⁶ A certain Phorbas also passes for a son of Helios (Steph. Byz. *s. Dexamenai*, citing Arist. fr. 477 Rose²), and since his daughter Ambracia, eponym of the city, may be equally a daughter of Augeas (Steph. Byz. *s. Ambrakia*, citing Phileas), she too was probably endowed with magic powers; it is the same Phorbas, moreover, – called a 'Thesprotian', as the eponym Ambrax is said to be a son of Thesprotus – who 'lusted for Demeter and assaulted the goddess and was struck down by Zeus with his lightning' (Anon. *Mythogr.* p. 347 Westermann). But in order to be convincing a study of the myths would need to collect and analyse the material much more fully than is feasible here.

We may conclude by reviewing and assessing the common features disclosed by our survey. Poseidon's winter festival is concerned with agrarian fertility; the setting, the

phyalmios – and flies in the face of the evidence. The wide distribution of the epithet is enough to show that it need not be connected with the Attic *genos* Phyalidae, a view of Toepffer which has had some success.

⁴⁵ In a display of hieratic learning Plutarch speaks first of Poseidon *phyalmios* at Megara, and then says that 'the descendants of ancient Hellen also sacrifice to Poseidon *patrogeneios*' (*Quaest. Conv.* 8. 8. 4, 730d); this must be another local cult which was traced aetiologically to Hellen. Pausanias' notice of Poseidon *genesios* near Lerna is somewhat to our purpose (2. 38. 4). He has a small shrine by the shore, at a place called *genesion*; next to it is another place called *apobathmoi*, where Danaus and his daughters first disembarked. Perhaps *apobathmoi* was the site of ritual bathing, and perhaps the nubile Danaids stand for comparable women at a festival of Poseidon.

⁴⁶ For this family see Robert, *Heldensage* (n. 38 above), p. 453 n. 6.

victims, the god's titles, above all his recurring partnership with Demeter, leave no room for doubt. The feasting, often described as opulent and prolonged, goes well beyond the norm for public festivals (cf. Eleusis, Delos, Thessaly, Pellene, Aegina, Lindus). Fires were lighted at Eleusis and Argos, but not everywhere, certainly not on Delos, else the accounts would mention firewood; bonfires are a natural but not a necessary adjunct. What is most remarkable is the mixing of men and women, and the suggestion of lewdness. At Eleusis and Pellene the women first kept apart for a night; perhaps also at Marathon, where 40 drachmas are set down for the *teletè*. At Eleusis they sported with *cunni* and *phalli*, and possibly on Thasos. The women might banter each other, as at Eleusis, where they were also teased by the priestesses; afterwards scurrilities were exchanged between the sexes, as at Pellene and no doubt on Aegina, where Plutarch discreetly speaks of *aphrodisia*. Such occasions were a fine opportunity for a city man to have some fun with hetaerae, who figure prominently in reports of the Haloea and the Poseidonia of Aegina. Of course in earlier days, *cum colerent prisci studiosius agros*, the farmer's wife and daughter took their part; but in a larger community such simplicity was neither possible nor desirable. This development is implicit in a passage of Aristotle (*Pol.* 7, 1336b 17–19). Whereas scurrility, *τωθασμός*, prevails in the ritual of certain deities, 'the law permits those who have reached the proper age to honour the gods both on their own behalf and on behalf of their children and wives'; i.e. although the latter once attended together with the head of the household, they are now dispensed from doing so. It is not the normal women's worship of Demeter which is envisaged by the law (for here a man could not act for his wife), but rather such mixed festivities as ours.⁴⁷

In sum, the celebrants feast to satiety, then turn to lascivious teasing. What is the ritual purpose of such conduct? It obviously suits Poseidon's mythical reputation as the most lustful of gods, who far surpasses Apollo and Zeus in the number of his liaisons and his offspring. Poseidon the seducer is the god of springs and rivers; his women typically succumb while bathing or drawing water; the type of the river god is a rampant bull. But the ritual likewise treats Poseidon as a procreant force; witness the epithets *phyalmios*, *genesios*, *patēr*, etc., as interpreted above. The myths and the ritual reflect the same belief. The rushing waters are a prepotent male power, just as the fields which they fertilize are a prolific female. Both the water and the fields, both Poseidon and Demeter, can be made to operate by sympathetic magic. The rites of our winter festival rouse Poseidon and bring the rushing waters. It will be useful to consider briefly the complementary rites in the cult of Demeter.

A piece of fertility magic familiar to readers of Mannhardt and Frazer, in which a chosen man and woman copulate in a ploughed field, is shown to have existed in Greece by the myth of Demeter and Iasion, and perhaps by a few other myths.⁴⁸ The place for it is at a ploughing festival such as the Attic Proerosia; yet it was certainly very rare in the historical period. A rite much closer in spirit to ours formed the culmination of Demeter's commonest festival, the Thesmophoria, which also marks the ploughing and sowing. Here the women of child-bearing age, secluded from the rest of the community, directed all their efforts upon Mother Earth. They infused her with new fertility, filling the *megaron* with butchered, bleeding pigs; then fasted and

⁴⁷ H. Fluck, *Skurrile Riten in griechischen Kulte* (Endingen, 1931), pp. 11–12, rightly sets Aristotle beside schol. Lucian on the Haloea, but he is not at pains to distinguish scurrilous rites conducted by men and women jointly from those conducted by women alone (cf. his p. 23 on the festival of Pellene).

⁴⁸ For this inference see e.g. M. L. West on Hes. *Theog.* 971.

sat upon the ground; and finally, in the rite of Calligeneia, 'Fine-offspring', made a show of giving birth. This last rite, the mimic childbirth, is depicted by figurines and described in an Orphic poem which gave Clement and Arnobius their best example of the vile indecency of pagan ritual (*Orph. fr. 52* Kern). Baubo, who stands for the celebrants at large, undergoes the same preparation until she is ready to give birth; then she exposes her genitals, smacks them with her hands, and forms a seeming child; afterward she pretends to nurse the child.⁴⁹ Sympathetic magic could not work more plainly.

The collective mimicry of the Thesmophoria is much more typical of Greek ritual than the select performance in the ploughland, and there is no doubt that the procedure in our festival was of this kind. Everyone joined in, as the evidence abundantly shows. There was jesting and teasing, but also, as at the Thesmophoria, a culminating gesture, which in this instance was of submission to Poseidon. Consider Phryne, who 'removed her mantle and unbound her hair and waded into the sea' (so Athenaeus on the Poseidonia of Aegina); consider Iphimedeia daughter of Triopas, 'who fell in love with Poseidon, and going often to the sea, would scoop up the waves in her hands and pour them into her lap' (Apollod. *Bibl.* 1 [53] 7. 4. 2).

Brock University, St Catharines, Ontario

NOEL ROBERTSON

⁴⁹ The general sense of the Baubo episode was explained by H. Diels in *Miscellanea A. Salinas* (Palermo, 1907), pp. 3-14, and again by Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Berlin, 1974), pp. 168-71, 194-9; it has not however been set in its proper context at the Thesmophoria. The agrarian purpose and the magical procedure of this festival are badly obscured in some recent accounts, which speak of initiation rites and of the fellowship of matrons and so on; yet refutation is hardly needed, for there is no lack of evidence to show the single focus of both the Thesmophoria and all the other seasonal festivals of Demeter.