

## ALCMAN'S *PARTHENEION*: LEGEND AND CHORAL CEREMONY\*

*Und in dem »Wie«,  
da liegt der ganze Unterschied.  
Hofmannsthal*

### [I]

The papyrus text of the *Partheneion*, discovered in 1855 and now in the Louvre, consists of 101 lines in three columns. Of these the first 34 lines (column i) are badly mutilated owing to the disappearance of the left-hand side of the column, whereas lines 35–101 (columns ii and iii) can be restored with almost complete confidence. Of a fourth column nothing is legible, though a coronis opposite the fifth line of column iii shows that the poem ended only four lines after our text runs out. The lengths of the existing columns are 34 lines (i), 34 lines (ii), 33 lines (iii). If a full column of 35 lines has been lost before our column i—a pre-eminently reasonable hypothesis—the entire poem will have consisted of 140 lines. Since each strophe consists of fourteen lines, we may thus imagine the whole to have consisted of ten strophes. By a curious coincidence the part of the poem which is almost intact and which deals with the occasion consists of five strophes<sup>1</sup> or seventy lines: it seems to be the case, thus, that the lost or damaged part also consisted of five strophes or seventy lines of choral lyric and dealt with myth: what we can make out, certainly, appears to be exclusively myth and attendant moralising.

If this is the case, the symmetry is remarkable, as is the amount of time spent on the legend.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, studies of the poem have not tried to bring the two halves of the poem together. Indeed, the most penetrating of recent analyses concentrates exclusively on the second part,<sup>3</sup> whereas more comprehensive treatments that have dealt with the myth have not attempted to relate it in any particular way to the rest of the poem.<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps understandable that where so much is lost or damaged and

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<sup>1</sup> The strophe, with its metrical pattern abab abab ccddef, may also be construed as our first example of a triad, with strophe, identical antistrophe, and epode. The 14-line pattern is curiously anticipatory of the Petrarchan sonnet if the whole is read as an octave with two identical quatrains containing but two metrical patterns (a and b) followed by a sestet that introduces three new ones (c, d, and e).

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry*<sup>2</sup> (Bristol, 1982), p. 195, maintains that 'Alcman spent little time on the legend'. But half of the poem appears to deal with the legend. It might be more correct to say that there is more of the poem devoted to occasion than we find in the epinician odes of Pindar (though perhaps not in his *Partheneia*).

<sup>3</sup> M. Puelma, 'Die Selbstbeschreibung des Chores in Alkmans grossem Partheneion-Fragment', *MH* 34 (1977), 1–55, hereafter Puelma. The present article is heavily indebted to Puelma's study.

<sup>4</sup> The most exhaustive studies are those of D. L. Page, *Alcman: The Partheneion* (Oxford, 1951), hereafter Page, and C. O. Pavese, *Il grande Partenio di Alcmane* (Amsterdam, 1992), hereafter Pavese. The common view is exemplified by D. Clay, 'Alcman's *Partheneion*', *QUCC* N.S. 39.3 (1991), 53: 'There seems to be no reflection of the poem's context in the first column of the poem....'

so much obscure there should be reluctance to hazard conjectures about the possible unity of the poem. But though the task must be approached with caution and due awareness of the extreme tentativeness of hypotheses regarding a work that remains both mysterious and mutilated, it is nonetheless a worthwhile undertaking to try to consider the possible interdependence of the two sections of the poem.

The array of conjectures and constructions that purport to explain the five complete stanzas is almost endless.<sup>5</sup> And there is almost no detail of interpretation that commands unequivocal agreement. I shall state here what I believe to be the most likely reading of these stanzas.

Hagesichora and Agido occupy positions of preeminence with regard to a choir, the other members of which are named in lines 70–6. Debate continues on the issue of which of these women (both of whose names are, either accidentally or intentionally, derived from words that mean ‘lead’) is more important or more beautiful. The preference shown by individual scholars is in every case closely linked to an understanding of the occasion as a whole. But there can be little doubt that both are *fuoriserie*, i.e. stand out from the rank and file of the choir. It is therefore most attractive to take the disputed lines 57–8

ἀ δὲ δευτέρα πεδ' Ἀγιδῶ τὸ φείδος  
ἵππος Ἰβηνώι Κολαΐαιος δραμήται

as pointing to this fact. The correct construction of these lines is shown by the examples that Puelma adduces from Homer<sup>6</sup>—‘Ἀγιδῶ must be accusative in a phrase of a type that calls attention not so much to a person’s inferiority as to the fact that two people are singled out as being together in a class of their own. The horses run neck and neck, so to speak, something reinforced by the names of the horse-types, names given not because one horse is superior to the other but because both are outstanding.’<sup>7</sup> Agido and Hagesichora are apparently singled out as being of virtually equivalent worth.<sup>8</sup> Much is lost by taking the reference to the one who is deemed fit to be mentioned in the same breath as the other as referring to an unnamed member of the choir—the choir in fact busily asserts its inferiority in matters of song and beauty throughout this section of the poem.<sup>9</sup> The horse-simile,<sup>10</sup> moreover, should

<sup>5</sup> Useful discussions and bibliography will be found in Page, Puelma, Pavese, and in C. Calame, *Alcman* (Rome, 1983), hereafter Calame; see too Calame’s *Les chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque II: Alcman* (Rome, 1977). There is a useful bibliographical article by M. Vetta, ‘Studi recenti sul primo *Partenio* di Alcmane’, *QUCC* N.S. 10 (1982), 127–36. Volume I of M. Davies’ *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Oxford, 1991) also contains much relevant bibliography in the apparatus. And there are valuable observations in A. Garzya, *Alcmane: I frammenti* (Naples, 1954).

<sup>6</sup> 29–31. See also D. A. Campbell, ‘Three Notes on Alcman I P. (= 3 Calame)’, *QUCC* N.S. 26.2 (1987), 69–71.

<sup>7</sup> ἀμφοτέρω[ν διαπρε]ποντων, says the B scholiast, giving Aristarchus as his authority.

<sup>8</sup> The inability of commentators to agree, on the basis of the text, which of the two is superior is in the end the most eloquent testimony to this equivalence.

<sup>9</sup> Following Puelma we get, ‘She (= Hagesichora), second after Agido (accusative) in beauty, will run [alongside her]’. Garzya and Calame take Agido as nominative and render, ‘She, Agido, second in beauty, will run after (πεδ’ in tmesis with δραμήται) her (= Hagesichora)’. On both these interpretations the two leaders are placed together and apart from the rank and file of the choir. Most recently, O. Hansen, ‘Alcman’s Louvre-Partheneion vv: 58–9 again’, *Hermes* 121 (1993), 118–19, argues once more that Agido is nominative with πεδ’ in tmesis, but emends Ἰβηνώι to εἰβήνοις, allegedly ‘mongrels of dogs and foxes’. The purpose of the comparison is supposed to be suddenly to denigrate Agido, who was earlier praised. This construction of the passage is bizarre, and not tied to any view of the poem as a whole. But it still compares Agido and Hagesichora, the two most important girls, basically to each other.

<sup>10</sup> A simile without ὥς.

not be taken to imply that there is an actual contest in running. There is no good reason to believe that there is a footrace—the language of running is the language of contest and emphasises a point, made metaphorically, that the two leaders, while running neck and neck, outstrip the other maidens. The point of comparison is in fact given and it is beauty, not speed. The future *δραμήται*, as so often with futures in Pindar, belongs logically to a moment just before the song is sung but is actually a performative utterance.<sup>11</sup> If the two horses are Agido and Hagesichora the horse-references in the poem are confined to these two girls, since the simile at 45–9

δοκεῖ γὰρ ἤμεν αὐτὰ<sup>12</sup>  
ἐκπρεπῆς τῶς ὥπερ αἶ τις  
ἐν βότοις στάσειεν ἵππον  
παγὸν ἀεθλοφόρον καναχάποδα  
τῶν ὑποπετριδίων ὀνείρων·

must again refer either to Agido or to Hagesichora, as must the ensuing *ὁ μὲν κέλης Ἑνετικός* (49–50). This is a significant point and one to which I shall return.

Just as the language of the race is metaphorical, so too is the language of battle. There is no rival choir, as Page believed: *μάχονται* (63) is hyperbole, used by the choir to point again to the superiority of the two Peleïades, Agido and Hagesichora, who so surpass the rank and file as to defeat them and make their own unaided attempts to please the Dawn goddess (*Ὀρθρίαι* 61,<sup>13</sup> *Ἄωτι* 87, both datives) futile.<sup>14</sup> There is a simile here too—the Peleïades are said to be brilliant as Sirius in the ambrosial night (62–3). The comparison does not suggest a baleful star so much as a brilliant one (see Puelma n. 66), but combined with the metaphor of battle it suggests invincibility, as when Achilles' spearpoint, at the moment of his final descent on Hector, is compared to a splendid star in the night sky. The choir disparages its own capabilities in this simile just as it did when it placed the stallion among grazing animals.<sup>15</sup> These Spartan maidens exaggerate playfully; to take their words at face value would rob the poem of its quintessential delicacy and lightness of tone.

The scholia to the poem take the Peleïades to be Agido and Hagesichora and there seems something of a consensus now that this is the correct understanding.<sup>16</sup> Whether these Peleïades have the name of the star-cluster,<sup>17</sup> or of Doves, as did, it seems, the priestesses at Dodona, is of less importance here. Both possibilities are puzzling, for

<sup>11</sup> See W. J. Slater, 'Futures in Pindar', *CQ* 19 (1969), 86–94.

<sup>12</sup> So Page in his monograph and Puelma. The word is not accented on the papyrus. Garzya (n. 5) accents *αὔτα*. It is wrongly, or, rather, meaninglessly accented as *αὔτα* by Calame, Davies (n. 5), and Campbell (n. 6). The error appears to be tralaticious and to originate with D. L. Page's *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford, 1962): see Pavese, p. 58 n. 52.

<sup>13</sup> *Ὀρθρίαι* as Artemis Ortheia is very difficult—the intrusive *ρ* and the short *ι* militate against this identification. But recently Clay (n. 4) has argued again for the identity of the goddess with Artemis. All of Calame's argument for Helen is circumstantial; there is simply nothing in the poem that suggests her. Other candidates have been proposed: Bruno Gentili thinks that the goddess is Aphrodite (*Addendum* to Clay's article); A. P. Burnett thinks that she is Eileithyia, 'The Race with the Pleiades', *CP* 59 (1964), 30–3.

<sup>14</sup> The theory of a rival choir has today been all but abandoned: see, e.g., Charles Segal, 'Sirius and the Pleiades in Alcman's Louvre Partheneion', *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983), 262 with n. 7. Similarly there is little current support for the theory of rival half-choirs, though the idea has recently been defended again by J. Peron, 'Demi-chœurs chez Alcman, Parth. I, v. 39–59', *GB* 14 (1987), 35–53.

<sup>15</sup> A traditional metaphor for helplessness: cf. Semonides 1.4 West.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Puelma and Calame: so too Segal, *loc. cit.* (n. 14).

<sup>17</sup> Segal, *art. cit.* (n. 14), 263–4.

both seem slightly inelegant: in the one case a star-cluster is compared to a star while in the other girls whose name is understood to mean ‘doves’ are compared to stallions.<sup>18</sup>

There seems, in addition, to be considerable agreement now that lines 96–101 of the poem refer to Hagesichora.<sup>19</sup> She it is who sings as sweetly as a swan while the rank and file of themselves can do no better than a screech-owl. Hagesichora comes close to, but does not surpass, the Sirens, for they are after all goddesses (the poem is ever careful to avoid *hybris*). A problem arises with the number ten in line 99 and the likelihood that the number eleven must, on the basis of the scholia, be inserted into line 98.<sup>20</sup> Puelma and Giangrande<sup>21</sup> quite independently of each other suggested the same solution in the same year. Hagesichora sings *like* ten—the phrase is a *topos* and alludes, *inter alia*, to *Iliad* 2.489ff., where ten tongues represent the imagined acme of human singing skill. Puelma proposes  $\delta\epsilon\kappa[\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon\iota$ , Giangrande  $\delta\epsilon\kappa[\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \omicron\tau\acute{\iota} \acute{\alpha}\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon\iota$ .<sup>22</sup>

What about the number eleven? If it is restored to the text it is commonly inserted in line 98 in the phrase  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota\iota \delta\prime \acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha$  and the phrase is taken to mean ‘instead of eleven’. But, as Puelma points out, the correct translation of  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota$  is in fact ‘gegenüber’ (p. 46, n. 86). Corroboration of his view is, I think, to be found in fr. 41,

$\acute{\epsilon}\rho\pi\epsilon\iota \gamma\grave{\alpha}\rho \acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha \tau\acute{\omega} \sigma\iota\delta\acute{\alpha}\rho\omega \tau\acute{o} \kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\omega}\varsigma \kappa\iota\theta\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\delta\eta\nu,$

where the sense of  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$  is clearly ‘gegenüber’. It may well be, in fact, that  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$  is the word that originally stood in line 98 of the *Partheneion*.<sup>23</sup> If Hagesichora alone sings as a supreme singer over against a choir of eleven, we then have the number of choreuts and it is eleven.

I accept Puelma’s argument that the stanza from 64 to 77 is devoted entirely to the rank and file of the choir. The rhetorical transition from the previous stanza is then easy and natural. The superiority of the two coursers is first proclaimed and the agonistic metaphor established. It continues in  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\iota$  (65).<sup>24</sup> Eight girls are named directly and their claims to beauty mentioned in a passage that culminates again in a revelation of the superiority of Hagesichora. In addition to Nanno, Areta, Thylacis, Cleesithera, Astaphis, Philylla, Damareta, and Vianthemis there are three unnamed girls, referred to obliquely by elements of their costume—purple robes, an intricate brooch of solid gold, a Lydian mitre. The complete catalogue of the girls’ advantages includes the rich adornments of three (those whose chief claim these luxury items are,

<sup>18</sup> A. F. Garvie, ‘A Note on the Deity of Alcman’s *Partheneion*’, *CQ* 15 (1965), 185–7, following a suggestion of Bowra’s, thinks that Agido and Hagesichora may in fact be  $\pi\acute{\omega}\lambda\omicron\iota$ , or ‘foals’, a ritual title.

<sup>19</sup> Puelma, Calame: see also Vetta (n. 5), 130–1.

<sup>20</sup> Though Davies (n. 5) does not do so.

<sup>21</sup> G. Giangrande, ‘On Alcman’s *Partheneion*’, *MPhL* 2 (1977), 151–4.

<sup>22</sup> Davies (n. 5) prints  $\delta\epsilon\kappa[\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\delta\delta\prime \acute{\alpha}\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon\iota$ , following Page. This will be a self-reference on the part of a choir of ten maidens. But if this is the case  $\phi\theta\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$  in the following line (there is no change of subject) will also have to refer to the choir of ten and the same girls who were screech-owls in line 87 are now swans!

<sup>23</sup> The scholiast’s  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota$  is, then, not a lemma but an interpretation in his own prose, in which the word  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$  does not exist.

<sup>24</sup> We find some of the same language in 88–90. The antagonism of the eleven to the two is only playful pretence. In this vein, rivalry is resolved with achievement of the success (or peace) for which the choir strives, and if the choir pleases the goddess it is thanks to the beauty of Hagesichora.  $\acute{\iota}\delta\tau\omega\rho$  and  $\pi\acute{\omicron}\nu\omega\nu$  may simply be a continuation of the metaphorical language and point to a resolution that is successful accomplishment of a religious ritual. But this does not exclude its also pointing to a genuine and heartfelt sense that the goddess is beneficent to her devotees. We do not know what services the choir felt she performed for them in their daily lives: the choir is both graceful and grateful.

the girls themselves being, presumably, not physically attractive enough to warrant reference to their beauty) and the sex appeal of eight others.<sup>25</sup> But all of this is as nothing in comparison to the charms of Hagesichora.

The picture that emerges on this reading is, to sum up, the following: a choir of eleven girls that claims to be the cousin of Hagesichora (52) sings in graceful and erotic language of its own desire but fundamental inadequacy satisfactorily to perform a ceremony for the goddess of the Dawn. Set playfully against the eleven is a brace of beauties, virtual twins in excellence, whose pre-eminence, far from redounding to the ultimate discomfiture of those with whom the banter puts them in apparent opposition, will make the ceremony in which all are engaged a success. The two are referred to as horses—but as stallions, not as fillies.

## [II]

The surviving part of the beginning of the poem (i.e. column i) begins with the name of Pollux followed by a catalogue of eleven other names. These eleven names seem to be given in a *praeteritio* which begins in line 2 οὐκ ἐγὼ]ν Λύκαισον ἐν καμοῦσιν ἀλέγω, 'I do not mention Lycaethus among the dead' and ends in line 12 with παρήσομες, 'we omit them' after the last name.<sup>26</sup> Between the verbs ἀλέγω and παρήσομες there will have been ten names, as Page carefully and confidently shows (26–30): Enarsphorus and Thebrus in line 3, one name apiece in lines 4 and 5, Euteiches (from a quotation) and Areïus in line 6, a seventh name in line 7, Eurytus and one further name in lines 8 and 9,<sup>27</sup> with a tenth name in line 11.<sup>28</sup> A few of the names in these lines may be restored with some degree of certainty because of lists of the Hippocoontidae in Pausanias and Apollodorus, but accurate prosopography is not crucial here. What is significant is that this list of eleven, given through disavowal, shows a formal similarity to the list of the eleven of the choir, for all the entries there are introduced by a similar repudiation (repeated οὔτε and οὔδε in lines 64–76). Moreover, the catalogue of the eleven choir-members ends with the name of the person who defeats them all, Hagesichora, while the catalogue of the slain warriors is preceded by the name of him who overcame them, Pollux.<sup>29</sup> And while the names of the latter list are

<sup>25</sup> This leaves out Aenesimbrotia as a possible member of the choir. But she is clearly not present in any case. I accept West's suggestion ('Alcmanica', *CQ* 15 [1965], 200), further argued by Puelma, that Aenesimbrotia is best explained as a local *φάρμακεύτρια* to whose talents one might appeal in trying to win a love-object.

<sup>26</sup> Calame quite rightly points out (p. 317) that this is a form of ring composition and that, with regard to παρήσομες, 'cette forme verbale n'est pas forcément accompagnée... d'une négation comme l'ont supposé la plupart des interprètes de ce passage'. So too Pavese.

<sup>27</sup> A genitive plural ending in ]ν and preceded by a connective in line 8 is one possibility—this will put the two names in line 9. A connective plus a name ending in ]ν in line 8 will put the necessary genitive accompanying ἀγρόταν in line 9.

<sup>28</sup> The phrase in line 10 remains puzzling and there is no convincing supplement. But the line will not have contained a name—the missing cretic at the beginning probably belongs with ]τῶρω, which appears to be part of a word in the genitive depending on κλόνον: see Page *ad loc.*

Pavese, pp. 17–20, seeks to put twelve names where Page says there can be only ten. He must posit an unwelcome and unparalleled asyndeton in line 9 in order to get two names in addition to that of Eurytus into lines 8 and 9 (see previous note). And he must accept πῶρω as a self-contained noun in line 10. But, as Page points out, there is no reason to believe that such a word ever existed. Page's analysis remains, accordingly, the most convincing.

<sup>29</sup> Calame, *loc. cit.* (n. 26), says that the names which the choir declares its intention of omitting are those of the heroes (τῶς ἀπίστως) opposed to the Hippocoontidae (i.e. the names in the preceding catalogue). I do not understand this.

in the antepenultimate strophe, the names of the first list occupy a generally symmetrical position if the reconstruction proposed above is the correct one, for most of the names (eight of the eleven) will be in the third strophe of the poem.

The eleven slain warriors are generally understood to be sons of the Spartan Hippocoon. The name of Lycaethus is slightly problematic, for he may be son of one Derites, not of Hippocoon, although Apollodorus lists him as one of the sons of Hippocoon.<sup>30</sup> Our text begins with the name of Pollux. We may believe that his brother Castor was at his side—the twins are ever inseparable—and that the two Tyndaridae were the antagonists who vanquished the eleven Hippocoontidae. Tyndareus was expelled from Sparta by his brother Hippocoon but later regained his throne. There is no source which gives a story that can be equated exactly with the one of which we see the skeleton in the *Partheneion*. Pausanias (3.15.3) and Apollodorus (3.10.5) relate that it was Heracles who killed Hippocoon and his sons and regained the throne for Tyndareus, but they make no mention of any participation of Castor and Pollux in the battle. In addition, Clement of Alexandria (*Protr.* 2.36.2 Stählin) says that Sosibius relates that Heracles was wounded in the hand by the Hippocoontidae; the scholiast on this passage adds that this was mentioned in a poem in the first book of Alcman. While commentators wish to believe that the reference is to our poem, the fact remains that we have in what remains no word about Heracles or his wound and have instead, with the mention of Pollux, reference to a story that does *not* correspond to the battle mentioned by Pausanias and Apollodorus. It is hardly rash to say that the legend recounted in our poem must be a legend having to do with the names that we actually find in our text, broken as it may be. Given the probability that Alcman drew repeatedly on Laconian legend, as Pindar turned with regularity to local Theban stories, he is likely to have turned more than once to stories of the Hippocoontidae.<sup>31</sup> All that we may assert with reasonable confidence is that in our existing long *Partheneion*-fragment we have to do with a quarrel between the two Tyndaridae and their cousins the eleven Hippocoontidae.<sup>32</sup> It was a serious quarrel and it led to the death of the eleven. The parallel with the mock battle between cousins in the rivalry of the ceremonial occasion is striking.

There is only one story known to us that opposes the Tyndaridae to the sons of Hippocoon. The scholiast on Clement tells us further in the passage referred to above that the Hippocoontidae were ἀντιμνηστήρες, rival suitors, of the Tyndaridae. Though he does not say directly that Alcman told the story (he mentions that Euphorion did),<sup>33</sup> he is providing for us, through this story of rival courtship, not only the hostile link of the sort we need between the actors we know were in our story

<sup>30</sup> For the evidence, see Page, pp. 30–3. The scholia appear to be confused here, with one notice maintaining that the chorus does not include Lycaethus among the Hippocoontidae and another saying that not only Lycaethus but the other sons of Derites are named (does this commentator think that all those mentioned were in fact sons of Derites?). Garzya (n. 5, *ad loc.*), thinks that the scholiast is simply erroneous in introducing the name of Derites. Either the scholiast or Apollodorus is wrong, certainly, on the basis of what we can make out, and since the scholia are both badly broken and unclear, it is best to follow Apollodorus and believe that we are dealing solely with Hippocoontidae.

<sup>31</sup> Or the reference to Heracles, if it was in this poem, may have been a parenthetical reference, of the sort common in Pindar, to an earlier conflict.

<sup>32</sup> Hippocoon and Tyndareus were sons of Oebalus and so their own sons are first cousins. Derites is a brother of Oebalus, hence in the (unlikely) case that all the slain are Deritidae we still have to do with consanguinity, though the cousins are no longer first cousins.

<sup>33</sup> J. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina* (Oxford, 1925), p. 35, n. 29.

but also the sort of story for which the gnomic utterance of lines 16 and 17 is appropriate, for it is a caveat against attempting to marry above one's station:

μή τις ἀνθ]ρώπων ἐς ὠρανὸν ποτήσθω  
μηδὲ πη]ρήτω γαμῆν τὰν Ἀφροδίταν

This must, then, be the story that was told. Again, it seems to be a local variant of a more familiar legend, for it does not correspond to the version we find in Apollodorus. We learn there (3.11.2) that Castor and Pollux carried off the Leucippides, Phoebe and Hilaeira, from their wedding feast when they were about to be married to the sons of Aphareus, Idas and Lynceus. It was these two who later fought with the twins who had abducted their prospective brides—the reason for the quarrel was the division of the spoils in a cattle-rustling expedition that they had undertaken in common—and this quarrel led to the death of the mortal Castor and of both Idas and Lynceus. The story of the fight over the cattle is the common one: it is mentioned in Proclus' résumé of the *Cypria* and in the myth of the Tenth *Nemean* of Pindar. But the earlier rape of the daughters of Leucippus by the Tyndaridae was a favourite subject in art.<sup>34</sup>

The local (and patriotic) version followed by Alcman would seem to have the following elements, all of them to be found individually elsewhere but in no one place exactly as it was told here: the quarrel was over women rather than over cattle, it led to the death of the rivals, and the sons of Hippocoon, not the sons of Aphareus,<sup>35</sup> were these rival suitors killed for their presumption to compete with the divine twins. It seems to follow that the story can hardly have been one in which the Dioscuri raped the Leucippides, for the moralising gnomes of the end of the first complete stanza seem to oppose χάρις or grace to ἀλκά or force. The valour referred to is that of the defeated, i.e. the Hippocoontidae, for it is 'without foundation'.<sup>36</sup> The Hippocoontidae, rather, will have been the ones who tried to rape the maidens, who in turn will have been won by the Tyndaridae, presumably by less violent wooing. For grace, not strength, opens the gates of heaven (20–1). Castor and Pollux must here play their familiar role of helpers of the distressed.<sup>37</sup> This role, which includes the rescue of their sister Helen from abductors, was perhaps the motif emphasised by Alcman in the story of wooing. In any case he would seem to have stood the better-known story on its head: the violent were the Hippocoontidae, the gallant, indeed the persuasive, the Tyndaridae.

The reworking is interesting. And a myth of this cast admirably suits the movement of the less lacunose portion of the poem. There too cousins are in competition, in this case playful competition, with a pair of closely matched girls clearly superior to a larger company of eleven. The language purports to be the language of battle, thus echoing the myth, and the triumph is clearly that of grace and beauty, as the moralising gnomes would have it.

The two girls Agido and Hagesichora, moreover, are repeatedly compared to horses, as we have seen. This is something that further likens them to the Dioscuri,

<sup>34</sup> See Pausanias 1.18.1, 3.17.3, 3.18.11, 4.31.9.

<sup>35</sup> It is interesting that the sons of Aphareus, like the sons of Hippocoon, are cousins of the Tyndaridae: Tyndareus is son of Perieres and brother of Aphareus in some versions (Apollodorus 1.9.5), son of Oebalus and brother of Hippocoon in others (Apollodorus 3.10.4).

<sup>36</sup> See Campbell's discussion of the passage, *art. cit.* (n. 6), pp. 67–9. ἀπ]έδιλος, 'without sandals', is a curious word and has been much discussed. There seems to be no other possible supplement, however. It is hard to resist a pun here in English translation: 'their valour was bootless'.

<sup>37</sup> W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Eng. tr. J. Raffan [Cambridge, MA, 1985]), p. 213.

who are preeminently horsemen in myth. It has been suggested that the two chorus-leaders of the *Partheneion* may have been the priestess of Phoebe and Hilaeira, the Leucippides, and that this would give point to the comparison of these maidens to horses, since the priestesses of the Leucippides at Sparta were in fact called *πῶλοι*.<sup>38</sup> This is tantamount to maintaining that the divinity of the *Partheneion* is Phoebe and that Phoebe is to be identified with the Dawn. Phoebe is indeed a divinity at Sparta, though there seems to be little hard evidence for equating her with the Dawn. What seems likely to be of importance in the poem is the structural parallel between the two chorus leaders, both horses, and the Dioscuri, who are elsewhere called *εὐπποῖ* or *λευκοπῶλοι* (Pindar, *Ol.* 3.39, *Pyth.* 1.66).<sup>39</sup> The two maidens serve Aotis (the Goddess at the Dawn) or Orthria (the Goddess of the morning twilight) and in so doing are in friendly rivalry with a choir that wishes to serve her too but that finds itself outclassed by the superiority of the pair. The two Dioscuri woo a pair of twins whose names both, certainly, suggest celestial light. And in so doing they vanquish, but lethally, not playfully, the Hippocoontidae. It seems to me quite possible that the myth concentrated in fact on Pollux and Phoebe (for indeed Phoebe became the bride of Pollux), leaving Castor and Hilaeira aside. This would create a neater parallel, with a single divine luminary the object of the strife both in the myth and in the ritual. There is some illogicality to account for in Alcman's myth in any case: eleven are the rivals of two for a prize that cannot have been more than two. That there was such an imbalance suggests that Alcman may in fact have arranged his story to give honour to one bride in particular and that Phoebe was that bride.<sup>40</sup>

If it is not possible to establish with full certainty identification of Phoebe with the Dawn, it is nonetheless tantalising to remember that the Dioscuri are Greek avatars of an Indo-European pair of divine twins, best known as the *Aśvins* in Vedic myth (Grk *ἵππος* = Skrt *aśva*).<sup>41</sup> These twin horsemen serve and follow the Dawn, or *Uṣas* (= Grk *ἠώς*). Indeed they may themselves represent the twilight.<sup>42</sup> This lends some resonance to the idea that both Dioscuri are in the poem essentially at the service of a single goddess, as is often the case,<sup>43</sup> and that Alcman, though presenting them as the rival suitors of the Hippocoontidae for the two Leucippides, may in fact be chiefly interested in Phoebe, the bride of Pollux.

### [III]

Where does this get us?

The poem on this understanding would be a diptych, with its parts having an important thematic connection. The first seventy lines recount a legend, giving a moral; the second seventy lines, devoted to the ceremony, follow the outlines of the

<sup>38</sup> Garvie, *art. cit.* (n. 18).

<sup>39</sup> That Alcman thought of the name *Πωλυδεύκης* (the *ω* is anomalous and peculiar to Laconian) as connected with *πῶλος* seems to be indicated by fragment 2 (a *schema Alcmanicum*): *Κάστωρ τε πῶλων ὠκέων δματῆρες ἵππῳται σοφοί/ καὶ Πωλυδεύκης κυδρός*.

<sup>40</sup> In Indian mythology both twins woo a single maiden, the Daughter of the Sun: see M. L. West, *Immortal Helen* (London, 1975), p. 9, on this *ménage à trois*.

<sup>41</sup> See G. Zeller, *Die Vedischen Zwillingsgötter* (Wiesbaden, 1990). The connection between the Dioscuri and the *Aśvins* is emphasised by Burkert, *op. cit.* (n. 37), and by M. L. West, *op. cit.* (n. 40), pp. 7–9.

<sup>42</sup> If one is the Morning Star and the other the Evening Star we have a good explanation of the half-life/half-light in which the Dioscuri are condemned to live in Greek myth.

<sup>43</sup> As they frequently are: see F. Chapouthier, *Les Dioscures au service d'une déesse*, Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 137 (Paris, 1935).

myth closely and put the moral into practice. It is more likely, if this is the case, that the first section of the poem told only one myth and not two. It has been supposed that lines 22 to 35 of the poem recount a story other than that of the Dioscuri and the Hippocoontidae.<sup>44</sup> But there is nothing to recommend this, and the reading I am suggesting goes against it. It looks as though the evil-doers of these lines were more than one, for one seems to have been despatched with a missile, another with a millstone.<sup>45</sup> But there is reason to believe, as we have seen, that Alcman is introducing features of the story of the battle of the Dioscuri with the Apharetidae into his story of a battle between the Dioscuri and the Hippocoontidae, and we note that Pindar's account of the final battle between the Dioscuri and the Apharetidae includes, within the space of three lines, mention of both a large stone and a javelin (*Nem.* 10.67–9).<sup>46</sup> In Pindar the stone is in fact the weapon hurled by Lynceus against Pollux. ἰώλεσ' ἦβα (27) is especially appropriate to suitors cut off in the prime of life. If the myth began with the battle and death, including a list of the victims, to return to this at the end, and if it included in its progress moralising on the nature of the offence, it would follow a pattern we recognise in Pindar: the first half of another diptych-poem,<sup>47</sup> the Third *Pythian*, contains the story of Coronis, which begins and ends with her death at Apollo's instigation (9–10, 38ff.) and contains moralising over the nature of her offence (20–3)—moralising which, moreover, is directly applicable to the occasion of the poem.<sup>48</sup>

Both sections of the poem set out a battle. The first is in deadly earnest. Two twins are pitted in a fight to the death against eleven rivals. The rivals are doomed, as the gnomes seem to make clear, because they aspire beyond their station and because they use force. The object of all the striving seems to be the divine Phoebe. The second half of the poem—and it appears to be exactly half—shows us a battle in which two 'twins' are pitted against a chorus of eleven. It is not a fight to the death, for the battle is metaphoric, not real. One of the rivals is said to wear down (τείρει, 76, the last word of the catalogue-strophe) those against whom she and her companion fight (μάχονται, 63, immediately before the catalogue). The language is the language of war (cf. *Iliad* 8.102, τεύρουσι μαχηταῖ), but τείρει also belongs to the language of love: the rivals of the ceremony are in reality united in striving for peace and joy and the contest is one in which the superiority of χάρις is understood. The choir, earnest in its hope to finish the web of its day without tears (38–9), will do just this because it has made its own the lesson it sang in the myth and now greets the goddess of the Dawn with grace, good humour, and love.

If this, or something like this, is at heart of the exquisite poem, it has not only a profound structural and moral unity but offers us what is perhaps the first instance in Greek literature of something that will become one of that literature's most enduring themes. With their well-known fondness for polarities the Greeks regularly set βία against πειθώ.<sup>49</sup> Alcman in opposing ἀλκά to the Χάριτες gives us the same juxtaposition. His presentation of the contrast is found not only in the gnomic

<sup>44</sup> See Calame *ad loc.*: suggestions include the Giants, Otus and Ephialtes, Orion, Icarus.

<sup>45</sup> A regular weapon in the heroic arsenal: cf. *Iliad* 7.270, 12.161.

<sup>46</sup> In addition *Nem.* 10.64–5, μέγα ἔργον ἐμήσαντ' ὠκέως/καὶ πάθον δεινόν (of the Apharetidae) seems to echo lines 34–5 of the *Partheneion*, ἄλαστα δὲ/ἔργα πάσον κακὰ μυσάμενοι.

<sup>47</sup> See my 'The Gifts of the Gods: Pindar's Third *Pythian*', *CQ* 40 (1990), 307–18.

<sup>48</sup> Coronis' story is not unlike that of the Hippocoontidae: in both cases there are rival suitors and punishment.

<sup>49</sup> This is the normal disjunction, but it is not exclusive. δόλος may be set against either πειθώ or βία: the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles is a study in the application of these three possibilities.

statements within the legend. The poem as a whole is an enactment of the idea that force cedes to grace, for the carnage of the legend gives way in performance to manifestation of the truth that heaven is taken not by storm but by the gentle arts.

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