

RITUAL PERFORMANCE AS TRAINING FOR DAUGHTERS IN ARCHAIC GREECE

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INTRODUCTION

THE PUBLICATION OF THE REVISION AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION of Claude Calame's *Les chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque* (1997) has again focused attention on the participation of girls in traditional lyric choruses. One aspect of choral activity which Calame discusses is education (1977: 1.385–420; 1997: 221–244). In this treatment Calame deals with the chorus as the place of education, the instruction given to the chorus, the metaphorical representation of education and marriage, and the homoerotic elements in the lyric chorus. Although he has much of interest to say on these matters, more can be said, especially in light of recent work on the performance of early Greek poetry.¹ Calame begins his discussion of the instruction given with the comment: "By reciting the poems composed by their masters the poets, the chorus members learn and internalize a series of myths and rules of behaviour represented by the material taught—all the more since Archaic choral poetry has to be understood as a performative art, as a set of poems representing cult acts in precise ritual contexts" (1997: 231). But rather than discussing the myths in question and how they convey their messages through performance, he looks at the aim of such instruction, which, he suggests, for Sappho was marriage preparation and in Sparta was readiness for motherhood. The purpose of this paper is to explore more fully how the "chorus members learn and internalize . . . [the] myths and rules of behaviour" through performance. It begins with the question of how instruction was carried out through performance and then examines more closely the myths found in some choral poetry sung by girls.

PAIDEUSIS THROUGH PERFORMANCE

How can involvement in the performance of ritual be considered the equivalent of education? In other words, was choral performance part of a planned system of education with clearly defined goals? Calame argues that most of the choral activity which he describes occurs in the context of initiation rites, a set of rituals marking girls' transitions from childhood to adult status (1997: 10–15, 258–263). The purpose of such rituals was to prepare the girls for their adult roles as wives and mothers and as participants in the sacral life of the community and to signify

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¹Rösler 1980; Gentili 1988; Martin 1989; Nagy 1996a, 1996b; Stehle 1997; Depew 1997; Maurizio 1997.

to them and to the community that the transition had occurred. This preparation involved deliberate instruction and was a significant element in the education of young women in many Greek communities.²

Calame and others have demonstrated that choral competition and ritual performance were part of many initiation rites (Calame 1997: 89–206; Dowden 1989; Lonsdale 1993: 169–205); and from a purely technical point of view, choruses needed to be trained and prepared for such rites. The testimony of the ancients is clear. The author of the *Problems*, attributed to Aristotle, mentions the difficulty of getting voices to sing in harmony (918b18).³ Demosthenes (21.16–18) describes months of work necessary to prepare the tribal entry for the dithyrambic contest at Athens. Obviously, the preparation of a lyric chorus for performance was a long and complex task. It involved learning the lyrics and melodies of the songs and then singing them in harmony, as well as mastering the dance steps which were part of the performance. Moreover, the special garments which the participants wore had to be prepared.

The Greeks certainly believed that instruction in a choral context went well beyond mere training for performance; for them it was equivalent to education.⁴ This view is attributed to both the Pythagoreans and Damon.⁵ Moreover, the “old education” (ἡ ἀρχαία παιδεία) described in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* (961–983) is based on choral and gymnastic training. Plato in the *Laws* prescribes choral training as education, stating: “choral activity as a whole is the whole of education” (672e). So strongly did he believe this that he argues that “the uneducated person is without choral training, while the educated person is fully trained chorally” (654a–b).⁶ Despite Aristophanes’ comic setting and Plato’s idealizing, both looked back with favour to a time when choral training was more than simply preparation for performance: it was a way of educating young people and making them ready to assume their adult responsibilities in the community.

The Greeks clearly believed that part of the purpose of this education was the formation of character and the teaching of appropriate behaviour, and that the elements of choral performance—melody, lyrics, and dance—all contributed to this purpose. Plato again provides evidence in the *Laws*, where he says that

² Much has been written on girls’ initiation rites. See Van Gennep 1960: 65–115; Jeanmaire 1939: 257–264; Kahil 1963, 1977, and 1981; Brelich 1969; Calame 1977 and 1997; Lincoln 1981; Lloyd-Jones 1983; King 1983; Cole 1984; Burkert 1985: 260–264; La Fontaine 1985; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988; Dowden 1989; Vernant 1991; Lonsdale 1993: 169–193; Cole 1998. Lincoln (1981: 106) cites a Navaho girl who states: “If you don’t do that [celebrate an initiation rite], you won’t learn how to do *anything*” (Lincoln’s italics).

³ “It was difficult for many people to sing in competitions so that the song sung among others is harmonious.”

⁴ Anderson 1966: 1–110. The whole discussion in Athenaeus 623e–633e is predicated upon this conviction.

⁵ Anderson 1966: 36–38, citing Philolaus of Tarentum fr. 44B6 and 11 (Diels) for the Pythagoreans and Damon fr. 37B4, 6 and 7.

⁶ Morrow (1960: 297–389) and Anderson (1966: 64–110) discuss Plato’s ideas about music and its role in education. Mullen (1982: 53–56) discusses music and dance in the *Laws*.

the elements of choral performance imitate character (655d). Training for choral performance, therefore, involved learning myths and songs and dances which encouraged appropriate behaviour. According to Plato (*Leg.* 802e), for boys this meant “nobility and manliness” and for girls “that which inclines to good order and temperance and chastity.” Training for choral performance also required memorizing the lyrics of songs which recounted the myths. This memorization was reinforced by the melody and dance steps, to perfect which long sessions of practice and rehearsal were necessary, and perfection was sought. To err in performance was to displease the deity being honoured. This process went well beyond the passive hearing of myths and was akin to the close reading of the script carried out by actors preparing for the performance of a play. In this way, it was a form of education.

The Spartan system of education, the *agoge*, also included choral training. Plutarch suggests that for the Spartans musical education was a major concern, and he describes the three choirs who performed at their festivals (*Lyc.* 21.1–2). Athenaeus, quoting Pratinas, states that the Spartans received an excellent musical education (Ath. 14.632f–633a = Prat. fr. 709P = 4Sn.), while Xenophon believed that Lycurgus intended choral activity and athletic contests to develop a spirit of rivalry in adolescents (*Lac.* 4.1).⁷ Finally, Xenophon describes how choruses were used as a mechanism for social control, as cowards were assigned the most ignominious place in them (*Lac.* 9.5).

It is equally clear that Spartan girls received choral training as part of their education. Plutarch says that Lycurgus, the mythical Spartan lawgiver, made the girls (*parthenoi*) exercise and compete physically like the boys and “march in processions and in certain rites dance and sing when the young men were present as spectators” (*Lyc.* 14.2–3). Moreover, at these performances, the young women “even mocked and railed good-naturedly at any youth who had erred” (*Lyc.* 14.3). These events, at which the girls were scantily clad, were intended as an incentive to marriage (*Lyc.* 15.1). From all this evidence, it is apparent that training for choral performance played a significant role in the education of Spartan youth, both male and female.

It is unlikely, at least in the early days, that literacy played much of a role in this training for performance. Choral activity drew from a long tradition which goes back to the Minoans. Homer mentions the dancing floor, the *choros*, “like the one in wide Knossos, which Daidalos built for Ariadne” (*Il.* 18.590–591). This memory of dance in Minoan life has been preserved in Homeric diction and can be supported by archaeological evidence. Figures dancing in choral formation, sometimes around a deity, have been found in Minoan sites.⁸ The archaeologist who uncovered three circular platforms near the Stratigraphical Museum in

⁷ Chrimes 1949: 119–125.

⁸ See the gold ring from Isopata with worshippers dancing around a goddess ca 1500, Herakleion Archaeological Museum, and the clay model of a lyre player and female dancers in a ring from Palaikastro ca 1200, Herakleion Archaeological Museum: Lonsdale 1993: 117–118, figs. 14 and 15.

Knossos thinks they were for dancing.⁹ This view is supported by finds of gems engraved with pictures of women dancing and engaging in ritual activity. Evidence of choral activity can also be found in Homer's language. The epithets *euruchos*, "with wide dancing floor," which is applied to nine cities, and *kallichoros*, "with beautiful choruses," which could be applied either to the performers or to the dance floor, suggest a history of choral performance old enough to be embedded in Homer's traditional language.¹⁰ Thus, both archaeological finds from Crete and Homer's language make it clear that choral activity had a long history in Greek society, even older perhaps than the Trojan saga. Choral activity is also well attested in Homer and in iconography contemporary with him.¹¹

Since writing was unavailable for most of this period, the tradition of choral activity would have been conveyed orally. As a result, instruction for choral performance would have been conducted orally as well. Once the alphabet had been invented, we know that the spread of literacy was slow.¹² Consequently, its incorporation into a system of training for choral performance that had been passed on for generations would not have been swift either.¹³

Thus, it was through their long training, rehearsal, and practice in preparation for performance and their intense focus on, and memorization of, the songs containing the myths and the morals drawn from them that the young girls

⁹ Warren 1984.

¹⁰ *Euruchos*: *Il.* 2.498; 9.474; 23.299; *Od.* 4.635; 6.4; 11.256, 265; 13.414; 15.1; 24.468; *kallichoros*: *Od.* 11.581.

¹¹ It is evident that Homeric society enjoyed almost the full range of choral performance types known from the later periods: hymns, paeans (*Il.* 1.472–474), wedding songs (hymenals) (*Il.* 18.491–496; *Od.* 23.133–134, 145, 298), virgin songs (*partheneia*) (*Il.* 16.180–183; *Od.* 6.102–108, 154–157), monodies (Linus songs) (*Il.* 18.507), hyporchems (*Od.* 8.256–265), war dances (pyrrhics) (*Il.* 7.237–241), and various dirges (*threnoi*) (*Il.* 18.50–51, 314–316, 24.746–775). Only the dithyramb and epinician seem to be missing, both of which appear to be post-Homeric developments. The dithyramb, a particular choral form created to celebrate the god Dionysus, gained great popularity in the classical period. Lonsdale (1993: 89) suggests that the dithyramb began with Archilochos, who is the first to refer to this choral form (Archil. fr. 120W), but Homer mentions the nurses of raging Dionysus (*Il.* 6.132) and compares Andromache to a maenad "dashing through the halls with her head thrown back" (*Il.* 22.460). So Dionysian dances of some kind were known before the time of Archilochos. The epinicians, odes composed in honour of the victors at the great Hellenic games, likely had to wait until the festivals reached Panhellenic stature, some time after the society which Homer portrays. For the iconography, see Wegner 1968: 32–44. Wegner (1968: 69–84) also lists 189 items, in the main pottery, most of which dates to the eighth century B.C. If the twenty-seven uncatalogued items in private collections and elsewhere are excluded, because they are not described, 162 items remain, of which 116 bear images of choral activity. Wickert-Micknat (1982: 22–30) discusses choral activity in Homer, particularly as it relates to women and images thereof on contemporary pottery, terracottas, and other material.

¹² For oral tradition, see Havelock 1963; Rösler 1980; Gentili 1988; Nagy 1990; Stehle 1997. For the slow spread of literacy, see Harris 1989: 45–111; Thomas 1989: 15–34 and *passim*; for its impact on literature, see Gentili 1988: 3–60; Nagy 1990: 17–51.

¹³ While not completely analogous, the formation of an oral bard in the epic tradition described by Albert Lord (1960: 13–29) provides an example of education for performance. And Plato's *Ion* (530a–542b) furnishes a less than perfect example, but an example nonetheless, of a person who has learned more than technique through performance.

“learned and internalized ... [the] myths and rules of behaviour ... [in] the material taught.” In other words, Calame’s suggestion that the girls learned through recitation needs to be expanded. It was not in the recitation of myths, but in the preparation for performance that the teaching and learning occurred.

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTENT OF A CHORAL PERFORMANCE

Now that we have some understanding of how *paideusis* was carried out in theory, it is time to consider a specific case of a poem sung by a chorus of girls in a ritual setting. The most complete extant example of this type of song is the so-called *Louvre Partheneion* of Alcman. Although this poem is one the best examples of the type of choral performance for which girls were trained, it is not either easy to reconstruct or to interpret.¹⁴ It is preserved on a badly mutilated papyrus fragment, and even where the text is relatively sound, it remains elliptical and obscure. As a result, it has attracted a large number of reconstructions and interpretations.¹⁵ The purpose here is neither to restore the text nor to provide a new interpretation of the poem. Rather it is to consider what role the poem might have played in the education of the young women who performed it.

While the *Partheneion* was clearly meant for performance, the occasion has generated much discussion centred on rival choruses and the identity of the goddess invoked.¹⁶ Diane Rayor (1987) argues that the ceremony at which this work was performed was intended for the community at large, and Eva Stehle (1997: 32–33) suggests that one purpose of the *partheneion* as a genre was the presentation of marriageable young women to the community.¹⁷ This suggestion ties in with the evidence from Plutarch (*De mul. vir.* 249d–e) of a custom on the island of Keos, where the *parthenoi* went together to public festivals and danced and sang under the eyes of their suitors.¹⁸ It seems most likely that Alcman’s *Partheneion* was sung by *parthenoi* but performed for the community.

¹⁴ Calame argued (1977: 2.147–176) that the genre of *partheneion* was likely the creation of the Alexandrian editors and meant little more than songs sung by choruses of girls, a point he reiterates in the revised translation (1997: 2–3).

¹⁵ The mutilated state and obscurity of meaning of this poem have given rise to a number of conjectures. Page (1951: 1–23) thoroughly discusses the text. Exhaustive studies have been done by Puelma (1977) and Calame (1977: vol. 2; 1983). For recent discussions with bibliography, see Robbins 1994; Stehle 1997: 30–39, 73–88; Segal 1998: 25–41.

¹⁶ Page (1951: 52–57) proposes a rival choir and argues that the deity in question is Artemis Ortheia (69–82). Less probably, Griffiths (1972) thinks the poem is an *epithalamion*. Gentili (1988: 72–77) agrees, but thinks the marriage is between Hagesichora and Agido. For sensible recent discussions, see Robbins 1994 and Stehle 1997: 30–39, 73–88.

¹⁷ Stehle (1997: 79–88) thinks that the poem is part of a ceremony which has two purposes: first, preparation for harvest and second, showing off young women ready for marriage. She adduces Plutarch’s comment that Spartan *parthenoi* performed in public, even praising and blaming young men (*Lyc.* 14.4–6).

¹⁸ Three stories in post-Hellenistic romances also start with girls dancing at a festival of Artemis, where they arouse the desire of their suitors: Habrocomes and Anthia in Xenophon Ephesios 1.2–3; Hermochares and Ktesylla in Ant. Lib. *Met.* 1.1; and Akontios and Kydippe in Aristaenetos 1.10.

The poem falls into two major parts. The first part contains one or two myths with their attendant morals; the second part parallels the first and enacts the ritual ceremony.¹⁹ The first myth describes a conflict between Castor and Polydeuces and their cousins, the sons of Hippocoön. While what remains is hardly more than a list of combatants, Pausanias tells of a conflict between the sons of Hippocoön and Heracles which ended when Heracles killed them and restored Tyndareus, the father of Castor and Polydeuces, to the throne of Sparta (3.15.3).²⁰ Page points out that a scholiast calls the sons of Hippocoön the rival suitors (*antimnesteres*) of Castor and Polydeuces.²¹ Moreover, Plutarch mentions that Enarsphoros, one of the Hippocoöntids, had tried forcibly to abduct Helen, the sister of Castor and Polydeuces, when she was still a child (*Thes.* 31.1). These two references point to a mythic tradition of conflict between Castor and Polydeuces and the Hippocoöntids, and that conflict appears to have been over women. The myth apparently described the Hippocoöntids either seeking inappropriate brides or trying to abduct them, actions which earned the enmity of Heracles and the Tyndarids, who killed them. At the same time, it contains a message both for the girls who are performing it and for the young men of the community watching the performance. The myth appears to deal with male competition and conflict over women, out of which comes the foundation of the existing political order.²²

A number of lessons emerge from this myth which would be valuable for young women being presented to the community as eligible and potential marriage partners. In all probability these young women have recently completed the transition from childhood to adult status. As *parthenoi*, they are ready for marriage: beautiful and desirable and able to feel and engender desire in a suitor. Their desirability is reflected in the second part of the poem, which refers to the beauty of Hagesichora and Agido (57–59), the beauty of their clothing and ornament (64–70), and their attachments to one another (71–77).²³ The first important lesson is that their very desirability, their sexuality, is a powerful force capable of unleashing destructive and divisive forces in the community. While they cannot always prevent such forces, they should do what they can to ensure that they are not unleashed. For their part, the young women must

¹⁹ Robbins 1994: 14–15, arguing that only one myth was contained in the first part. The question is immaterial for our purposes. Since the lost myth is unrecoverable, nothing can be said about its educational function.

²⁰ Other versions of this myth have been preserved in Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.7.3, 3.10.5; Strabo 10.461; Diod. Sic. 4.33.5. The matter is discussed fully in Page 1951: 26–33.

²¹ The scholiast to Clem. Al. *Protr.* 36 notes that Euphorion, in his work entitled *Thraz*, mentioned that the children of Hippocoön were rival suitors to the Dioskouroi.

²² Women's involvement in foundation myths is widespread. It is well represented in Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* and the ritual context for hymns incorporating such myths is found in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*.

²³ Rayor (unpublished: 4–5) says, "the *song* is designed to provoke the admiration of the audience for the chorus [T]he desire is directed outward—the chorus is addressing and instructing the audience."

control their sexuality. If they fail to control it, it may engender conflicts among men which could have dire consequences for the polis. On the other hand, appropriately controlled, it can lead to marriage and the production of offspring who will guarantee the continuation of the polis. This lesson about the impact of their sexuality would empower the adolescent girls for whom it was intended.

A second lesson relates to the restoration of Tyndareus to the Spartan throne, a reference to the constitutional order in the state. Calame (1977: 2.52–59) argues that the myth of the conflict between the Tyndarids, Castor and Polydeuces, and the Hippocoönids found in the fragment had both political and erotic meanings. The defeat of Hippocoön brought Tyndareus to the throne, and in this way the myth legitimized the political order in Sparta. While women may have had no direct say in affairs of state, it was important for them, as wives and mothers, to understand the genesis of the political structure, even as it was expressed in mythical terms. To this end, the focus on the Tyndarids and the Hippocoöntids, all of whom were worshipped as heroes in Sparta, would serve to reinforce the constitutional arrangements of the day by stressing their divine origin.

A third lesson is expressed in the moral drawn from the myth's narrative. It states: "Let no man fly to heaven and attempt to marry Aphrodite . . . or a daughter of Porkos . . ." Besides illustrating the error of the Hippocoöntids, the moral suggests that the girls should not aim too high in seeking a marriage partner. In their romantic yearnings for an ideal mate, they should be realistic and not expect to find a god. Eva Stehle (1997: 31–32), moreover, thinks that this lesson may also be intended for the young men watching this performance. They are thus cautioned to seek earthly brides and encouraged to assess the girls they see before them as potential marriage partners.

The first myth and its moral are followed by roughly fifteen verses so mutilated that no real reconstruction is possible. When the text resumes, it looks back, commenting: "And unforgettably they suffered, having plotted evil deeds. There is a certain vengeance of the gods. That man is fortunate who cheerfully weaves through his day without tears." While it is possible that these words refer to the Hippocoöntids, many commentators believe that the mutilated verses related a second myth. Calame's suggestion (1983: 320) that the verses narrated Otus' and Ephialtes' assault either on heaven or, more likely, on the goddess Artemis is attractive. Girls passing through the transition from childhood to adult status were normally under Artemis' care, and the rites performed were often explained by myths where Artemis wreaks vengeance for wrongs committed against her.²⁴

Be that as it may, the two lessons that the moral expresses are straightforward enough: fate always wins in the end and evil will bring destruction. While these lessons themselves may be straightforward, it is important not to lose sight of the context in which they are conveyed. In a community ceremony, the young women

²⁴ For a discussion of this type of myth, see below, 9.

are on the brink of entering adult life. There can be no question of the suitability of these lessons for the audience and occasion.²⁵

At this point the chorus changes its focus and begins to sing the praises of its leaders:²⁶

And I sing of the light of Agido: I see her like the sun whose light Agido calls as a witness.²⁷ But our famous chorus-leader does not allow me in any way to praise her or to fault her, for she herself seems outstanding, as if someone were to place a horse among grazing herds, a thunderous, hooved prize-winner, of those in rock-sheltered dreams. Don't you see? The race-horse is Venetic, but the hair of my cousin Hagesichora blooms undefiled gold and her face is silver. Why do I speak openly? Hagesichora is here; and the second in beauty after Agido will run like a Colaxaeon horse against an Ibenean; for the Pleiades, as we carry a φάρος through the ambrosial night rising like Sirius the star, fight against us (39–63).

This passage bristles with difficulties, but the meaning remains clear: the chorus's leaders are outstandingly beautiful.²⁸ While the relative position of Hagesichora and Agido has puzzled commentators, there seems to be some agreement that Hagesichora is the leader (ἡ κλεννὴ χοραγός), based largely on her name rather than the text, which is ambiguous, while Agido's role is to enact the ritual.²⁹

At the end of this section, the chorus looks forward to the next, in which it tries unsuccessfully to contend with its leaders in beauty.³⁰ The reference to the Pleiades is problematic. As Stehle notes, the word means "doves."³¹ While some commentators have argued that it refers to a rival chorus³² or to the star cluster,³³ Segal notes that both scholiasts, followed by a majority of recent critics, take "the Pleiades" to refer to Hagesichora and Agido.³⁴ The

²⁵ Another lesson which the performance taught was the value of cooperation in a competitive environment.

²⁶ Stehle (1997: 31) remarks on the chorus' abrupt change in focus, as does Herington (1985: 21).

²⁷ See Puelma 1977: 16–19 on the sun's light as a witness.

²⁸ Segal (1998: 25) notes that commentators have regarded this passage as the most difficult crux in the poem.

²⁹ So Puelma 1977: 13–19; Stehle 1997: 30, n. 17; Segal 1998: 28–31.

³⁰ The notion of fighting has puzzled commentators. Rayor (unpublished: 3), following Calame (1983: 331–332), interprets it to mean that the Pleiades fight "with" or "for" the chorus, since she thinks fighting "against" the chorus makes no sense. On the other hand, Puelma (1977: 36, n. 66), Robbins (1994: 13–14), and Segal (1998: 1) rightly believe that Hagesichora and Agido fight "against" the chorus. The rivalry is over beauty and the chorus loses. Stehle (1997: 79–84) interprets the Pleiades to be the constellation whose rising is inimical as it marks the beginning of the summer heat and harvest.

³¹ Gentili (1988: 258, n. 6) notes that if the *peleades* are to be interpreted as "doves," then this is a clear reference to Aphrodite, since doves are her birds.

³² For example, Page 1951: 52–57.

³³ For example, Burnett 1964: 32; Stehle 1997: 79–87.

³⁴ Calame 1977: 2.72; Puelma 1977: 33–35; Robbins 1994: 9; Segal 1998: 26. Rayor (unpublished: 6) notes that "Pleiades" means both the constellation and doves. In the myth, the Pleiades, sisters fleeing an attempted rape by Orion, were changed into doves and then set among the stars (Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.4.3–4). The *scholia* are conveniently collected and translated by Campbell (1988: 371–377).

Pleiades carry an additional meaning for this choir and this performance, as their mention is a clear allusion to a myth relevant to the young women performing this rite. According to one version of this myth, the Pleiades are nymphs who are dancing in a chorus to Artemis when Orion attempts to rape them. To escape they leap into the sea.³⁵ This is one of several abduction myths associated with the worship of Artemis and with rites marking the transition of girls to adulthood.³⁶

We have already seen one possible example of such a myth in Calame's suggestion for the second legend in the poem. Abduction myths provided a number of useful lessons. First, such a myth again reminds the girls that their sexuality is a form of power capable of arousing violent desire in a man, and that they must be careful in the exercise of this power. As already noted, given inappropriate expression, this power can lead to grief; handled properly, however, it can lead to marriage and children. Second, they must learn that in sexual matters, men have the upper hand. Third, notions of rape and abduction speak to the emotions that the girl and her family feel about her departure from home to take up residence in her husband's household.³⁷

Despite the difficulties of this passage, two points seem clear: the chorus contends with its leaders as Castor and Polydeuces fought with their cousins, the Hippocoonids, and it does so while bearing a ritual object, the *φόρος*. The word *φόρος* normally means "large piece of cloth" or "sleeveless cloak or mantle" (see LSJ s.v.). One scholiast offers the meaning "plough," a meaning also found in Plutarch, where it relates to marriage.³⁸ Both objects are appropriate offerings in this context. Offerings of cloth are frequently attested, for example, at Brauron.³⁹ A plough in this context could have more than one meaning. If the ceremony was being performed to promote the fertility of the community, both in agricultural and in human terms, the plough fits perfectly. Not only does it relate to actual ploughing, but it is also a frequent metaphor for the yoke of marriage and sowing seed through sexual intercourse.⁴⁰

³⁵ Hes. *Op.* 619–620.

³⁶ Some others are Polymele (*Il.* 16.179–186), Helen (Plut. *Thes.* 31), and Kallisto (Hyg. *Poet. astr.* 2.1; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.8.2).

³⁷ The theme of abduction is frequent in iconographic portrayals of marriage. See Oakley and Sinos 1993: 12–13, 30–31; Sourvinou-Inwood 1987; 1991: 29–98. Dowden (1989: 23, 37) suggests that myth exaggerates. Abduction thus exaggerates the violence of the girl's departure from her *oikos* and her family's sense of loss. Others have seen abduction myths as reflective of male fear of female sexuality. See, for example, Walcot 1996, with bibliography.

³⁸ Plutarch (*Praec. coniug.* 42 = *Mor.* 144b) speaks of the γαμήλιος φόρος. Gentili (1988: 140) also mentions the votive ploughs found in the Temple of Hera at Gravisca.

³⁹ For a discussion of these offerings, see Cole 1998: 36–42.

⁴⁰ The formula used at the betrothal, the ἐγγύη, attested in Menander, makes this clear: "I [the father of the bride] give [the bride] to you [the groom] for the ploughing (ἐπ' ἀρότῳ) of legitimate children" (Men. *Pk.* 1013–14 and *Dys.* 842). For further bibliography, see Oakley and Sinos 1993: 132, n. 6.

The chorus next describes the weapons it has attempted to use against Hagesichora and Agido:

Not even is an abundance of purple enough to protect nor an intricate snake of pure gold, nor a Lydian headband, a decoration for dark-eyed girls, nor Nanno's hair, and not even the godlike Areta nor Thylacis and Kleësthera, nor going to Aenesimbrotas and saying, "If only Astaphis were mine. If only Philylla were to look my way and Damareta and lovely Wianthemis." No. Hagesichora wears me down.⁴¹

In the next verses, the chorus focuses on its leaders and the ritual:

For is not lovely-ankled Hagesichora present here? Does she not remain by Agido and praise our festival. But, oh gods, receive our prayers; fulfilment and accomplishment belong to the gods. Chorus-leader, if I may speak, I myself, only a girl, screech in vain from a rafter like an owl. But I long to please Aotis most of all; for she is the healer of our sufferings. From Hagesichora the girls trod the path of lovely peace. For like a trace-horse . . . and in a ship too one must obey the helmsman most of all. She is not more melodious than the Sirens, for they are goddesses. But this our choir of ten sings as well as eleven girls. It sings as well as a swan on the waters of Xanthus. Her lovely blond hair . . .

Here the poem breaks off, missing the final four verses.

Calame has examined the poet's use of metaphor in his pedagogy and suggests that Alcman, following tradition, represents the education of the young girl as the image of a wild horse needing to be broken (Calame 1997: 238–244; 1977: 2.67–72). The comparison of the leading figures, Hagesichora and Agido, with horses is surely significant.⁴² In this case, however, the horses are tamed but spirited race-horses. Later, Hagesichora is compared to a trace-horse which the members of the chorus must obey.⁴³ Hagesichora, as the leader of the chorus, is a girl who has made the transition to marriage and is leading the chorus to its destiny, the state of marriage. The equine imagery evokes the Greek notion of the adolescent girl who must be tamed prior to marriage (Calame 1997: 238–244). Another related image is the plough, which, as already noted, can be taken as a symbol of marital fertility. The plough also entails submitting to a yoke, a frequent image for marriage.⁴⁴

⁴¹The verses where the chorus members appear to express their desire for one another have received much attention as an example of female homoerotic discourse. Calame (1997: 244–455), for example, citing Plutarch's comment (*Lyc.* 18.9) that homoerotic love was so approved among the Spartans that even the girls loved good and noble women, regards such comments as a reflection of a pseudo-homosexuality through which young people passed on their way to adulthood. In this he follows Devereux (1968). Dover (1978: 181) believes that female homoeroticism represented a female "subculture" in which women provided that which "segregation and monogamy denied them from men." A curious statement; cf. Hallett 1979. More reasonable is the view of Rayer (unpublished) and Stehle (1997: 85–86) that the chorus is presenting its own desirability to the community and in particular to the young male spectators.

⁴²Hagesichora at 45–49 and Agido at 58–59 (Campbell 1988: 364).

⁴³Campbell (1988: 369) notes that Hagesichora guides the chorus as a trace-horse directs a chariot.

⁴⁴Cf. Eur. *Med.* 673, 804; Aesch. *Pers.* 542; *Cho.* 599; Ar. *Ran.* 4, 1191.

A final issue is the nature of the ceremony at which the girls performed. Several possibilities exist. Griffiths (1972) and Gentili (1988: 75–76) think a wedding ceremony was involved. Calame (1977: 1.251–304) believes that Alcman's poem was performed as part of the initiation ritual executed by young Spartan girls. Stehle (1997: 79–88) considers this issue in some detail. Like Diane Rayor (1987), she believes that the poem was intended to display marriageable young girls to the community and, more importantly, to potential suitors. She also believes that the Pleiades refers to the star cluster whose heliacal rising in May is the precursor of summer's heat and harvest. Adducing Hesiod's *Works and Days* (571–581), she suggests that the occasion is a pre-harvest ceremony honouring the goddess of dawn, who would help with the harvest by aiding the farmer to overcome the effects of the heat. The presentation of beautiful girls to the goddess is one means employed to win her favour, while the notion of marriage and human fertility are obviously linked (1997: 79–85). Stehle (1997: 87–88), however, denies that this ceremony is part of an initiatory ritual, as Calame had argued. Calame contended that the chorus's expression of "homoerotic" desire was part of that ritual. As noted above, Stehle is surely correct in seeing this expression as intended for the audience. But there is no need to deny that this ceremony was part of a set of rituals marking the girls' transition from childhood to adult status. Van Gennep (1960: 65–114) described three stages through which young people pass in this transition: rites of separation, rites of transition, and rites of reincorporation. The performance of Alcman's *Partheneion* would serve perfectly for a rite of reincorporation. Having completed their rites of separation and transition in location on the boundary of the polis, the normal site for Artemis' worship,⁴⁵ the girls are returned to the community for their rites of reincorporation. At this ceremony, they introduced in their new status, eligible for marriage, the first step in their adult life.

To sum up, in Sparta we find Alcman using choral lyric as means to train young girls for their future roles in society. Through their preparation for performance and through the execution of the actual choral dance and the ritual in a public ceremony, the girls learned a number of significant lessons, which prepared them for their future roles in society. However difficult it may be to reconstruct and understand this poem, it clearly was performed by young women who were being introduced to the community in their new state as *parthenoi*, potential brides who would marry and bear future members of the polis. Preparing for performance made them focus on the myths, metaphors, and imagery of this poem which conveyed a number of significant messages. The first myth unites the themes of female sexuality and male violence with the foundation of the political order and warns against unrealistic romantic ideas. The second myth, if it was in fact part of the poem, again shows the power of female sexuality and the negative

⁴⁵For girls' transition rites in Sparta, see Calame 1997: 142–206. For girls' transition rites elsewhere, see Dowden 1989: *passim* and for a good discussion of Artemis' role, see Cole 1998.

consequences it can produce. The same theme is again sounded in the allusion to the Pleiades, whose beauty aroused the ardour of Orion. Amidst these warnings and negative images, the latter half of the poem presents the beauty of the chorus to the community. At the same time, the metaphors of horses and ploughs carry connotations of tamed sexuality for the purpose of childbearing.

PAIDEUSIS THROUGH MYTH

It is difficult to examine other myths treated in poetry performed by young women as part of their educational experience because there is very little material that we can be certain young women performed. For example, the other fragment of Alcman which was clearly intended to be sung by young women contains no myth (fr. 3). The same is true of Pindar's *daphnephorikon* (fr. 94b SM). The best place to find songs sung by young women is in the works of Sappho and other female poets who appear to have composed hymns and ceremonial poetry for young women to perform.

Holt Parker's recent paper, "Sappho Schoolmistress," should make us wary of suggesting that Sappho was a teacher on the basis of the biographical information which remains (Parker 1993).⁴⁶ Parker maintains that much of the biographical tradition is derived from the comic poets and, therefore, needs to be treated with considerable scepticism. Nevertheless, even if we had no biographical evidence of Sappho's teaching role, it is clear from her poetry that she composed hymns and other ceremonial works for choruses of young girls to perform and, as a poet, must have prepared them for performance.⁴⁷ Certainly, three fragments which are from ceremonial poetry contain references to young girls. The first is a prayer to Hera in which interestingly the word *παρθένος* appears (Campbell 17). The second is the famous fragment of a poem on the marriage of Hector and Andromache, where again *παρθέναι* are described as singing (Campbell 44.25). The third is a prayer to Aphrodite at the death of Adonis (Campbell 140), and again girls (*κόραι*) are mentioned. In addition, fragment 2 (Campbell) is part of a hymn to Aphrodite which mentions *θαλίαι*, festivities, no doubt religious in nature.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Stehle (1997: 262–278) also critically discusses earlier views of Sappho as a teacher of a circle of girls, a position taken by Calame (1977: 1.367–372, 390–391) and later repeated with slight modification (1997: 210–212, 231–233).

⁴⁷ Calame (1997: 225–231), Williamson (1995: 75–78), Wilson (1996: 117–128), and Stehle (1997: 263–278) all think that Sappho composed ceremonial poetry and may well have trained choruses of girls. Lardinois (1994) argues that Sappho's poetry was choral, based on her frequent references to girls.

⁴⁸ Wilson (1996: 117–128) thinks Sappho operated within a circle of women who sang, danced, loved, and worshipped together. Her evidence ranges from fr. 102, which she sees as "a good-natured exchange between child and mother, or a young women and female god, that offers an excuse for a welcome escape from weaving, in addition to beginning the movement from childhood to the experience of eroticism" (119) to fr. 94, whose "final broken fragments hint at other socio-communal activities such as singing and dancing at shrines and groves . . . and seem again to include all members of the circle" (128).

Three goddess are prominent in Sappho's poetry: Artemis, Aphrodite, and Hera. Significantly, these are the goddesses who oversee, respectively, the young girl prior to her marriage, the girl who comes to feel sexual desire and awakens desire in her suitors, and the girl who marries.⁴⁹ In addition, much of her poetry is concerned with expressions of desire, romantic feelings, and romantic situations, somewhat reminiscent of Alcman's *Partheneion*.⁵⁰

Besides the evidence from Sappho's verse, there is testimony from those who knew her work that she composed ceremonial poetry. An epigram of Dioskourides in the *Palatine Anthology* (7.407) praises Sappho for three kinds of poetry: love poetry, wedding poetry, and songs for the Adonia, i.e., ceremonial work. Pausanias (9.28.8) too says that Sappho "sang of Adonis" ("Ἀδωνιν . . . ᾄσεν). Finally, Philostratos, a novelist who dates to the end of the second and beginning of the third century c.e., says that a certain Damophyla, a student of Sappho (Σαπφῶι τε ὁμιλῆσαι λέγεται), composed love poems and hymns in the manner of Sappho, adding that her hymns to Artemis were derivative and copied from Sappho (*Vita Apollonii* 1.30 = Test. 21 Campbell). While much of Sappho's work was monodic and likely performed privately, these sources taken together with the evidence of her own poetry make it clear that she did compose hymns and other ceremonial pieces, such as *epithalamia*, for young women to perform in ritual settings.

Calame (1997: 231–233) argues that through preparation for choral performance Sappho taught aristocratic girls lessons of comportment and behaviour appropriate to young women of their social station. In this light, the transformation of Atthis, whom Sappho calls a small, graceless child and whom Plutarch (*Amat.* 5 = *Mor.* 751d) describes as still too young for marriage, into a young woman full of grace (*charis*) and ripe for marriage is suggestive.

In my view, a more fruitful approach is to examine the myths which Sappho relates in her ceremonial poetry and through which her teaching would have been conveyed. With this in mind, let us return to her hymn to Hera (fr. 17). Here the poet mentions the Atreidai, who, having accomplished much around Ilium, were unable to leave Lesbos until they called upon Hera, Zeus, and Dionysus.⁵¹ This passage should be compared with the story Nestor relates in the *Odyssey* about the difficulties the Greeks had leaving Troy, and in particular the quarrel between Agamemnon and Menelaos (*Od.* 3.130–183). Athena caused the quarrel, outraged at the fact that Ajax, son of Oïleus, had raped Cassandra in her sanctuary. Athena held the Greeks responsible because they did not punish Ajax and Poseidon raised a storm at her request (*Od.* 4.485–511). In Homer's version, Agamemnon and

⁴⁹ For good discussions of the role of these goddesses, see Clark 1998 (Hera) and Cole 1998 (Artemis). Williamson (1995: 113–116) and Wilson (1996: 21–42) discuss Aphrodite specifically in relation to Sappho.

⁵⁰ Rayer (unpublished: 5–6) contrasts Sappho and Alcman in this regard.

⁵¹ See Page (1955: 59–62) and compare Test. 59 Campbell = *Anth. Pal.* 9.189. For the shrine of the three gods, see Alcaeus fr. 129 (Campbell 1982).

Menelaos left Troy separately and the latter came to Lesbos, where he caught up with Nestor. The two chieftains then asked for a sign from heaven, which they received, and set out across the Aegean. In Sappho's version, Agamemnon also visited Lesbos, where he and his brother prayed to the Lesbian trinity of Zeus, Hera, and Dionysus. Because the text goes no further we do not know whether Sappho said more about the Atreidai or not. But this brief fragment is enough to sound themes which we already encountered in Alcman. Female sexuality again engenders male strife and, since Agamemnon was the grandfather of Penthiolos, the mythical founder of the Lesbian ruling aristocracy, that strife is related to the foundation of political order in Lesbos. Indeed, it is difficult not to interpret the change which Sappho makes to the myth as intended to link it to the political situation in Lesbos.

The only other choral piece by Sappho which may contain a myth is the famous fragment describing the marriage of Hector and Andromache (Campbell fr. 44). This fragment is usually taken as part of marriage song, but it could also be the mythical portion of a hymn. The wedding theme is appropriate for a group of girls who are eligible to marry, but the myth sounds a note of tragedy. However joyous and beautiful the wedding may have been, the audience knows that it ended in the tragedy of Hector's death, brought on by Helen's infidelity and the aggression of the sons of Atreus.

Thus, it can be argued that Sappho did compose ceremonial poetry, which she trained choruses of young women to perform. In this way she provided an educational experience to them. The two fragments of ceremonial poetry which contain myths refer to the aftermath of the Trojan war and are a complex of stories dealing with male conflict and violence in relation to women. These myths would have been appropriate vehicles of instruction for young women on the verge of marriage.

Another female poet is Telesilla, an Argive from the first half of the fifth century.⁵² Only scraps remain of her works, but these contain suggestive indications that she may have been involved in the education of girls for choral performance. Her first fragment (717 PMG) refers to Alpheios' attack on Artemis and apostrophizes κόραι, maidens.⁵³ Pausanias (6.22.9) tells the story of Alpheios' attempted rape of Artemis. This story is another example of maidens who are abducted while dancing in honour of Artemis.⁵⁴ In this case, since the goddess

⁵²Eusebius puts her at Ol. 82.2 (451/0). She is also supposed to have led a defence against an attack by a Spartan king which has been dated to ca 494 B.C.E. Maas (1934: 385) doubts the value of this source, but Graf (1984: 247-250) argues that Telesilla's military exploits are an *aition* for the cult of warrior Aphrodite.

⁵³On the basis of this fragment, Dowden (1989: 103) states: "Telesilla is directing maidens in this poem, for whom the tale is specially appropriate: the maidens are nymphs to Telesilla's Artemis, because like Sappho or Tyrtaios, she is evidently poet-educator to the (initiatory) age-class: indeed it may be that the anomalous existence of women poets in Greece (notably in Boiotia, Argos, Lesbos, but not Athens) is a relic of their initiatory function."

⁵⁴See above, n. 36.

and her nymphs smeared themselves with mud so that Alpheios was unable to identify Artemis and carry out his plan, we are clearly dealing with an *aition*, a myth which explains a ritual act performed at the shrine of Artemis Alpheionia. Moreover, the ritual is easy to reconstruct. As part of their transition rites, young women no doubt went down to the bank of the river and covered themselves with mud, which was subsequently washed off, revealing them in their new status, beautiful and ready for marriage.⁵⁵ As an admonitory myth, this legend again brings out the themes of female sexuality and male lust. Susan Cole adds another dimension. Sanctuaries of Artemis were often placed at the boundaries of communities. While some might relate this location to the necessity of removing young people undergoing transition rites from the centre of the city (Vernant 1991: 209), Cole has argued that the safety of the state corresponded directly to the safety of the young women worshipping Artemis (1998: 27–32). Myths telling of violence done to young women serving Artemis underline the risk and significance of Artemis' rites. It is also important to observe that themes noted above run through this tale: female sexuality, male violence in response to female sexuality, and again, because Alpheios is mentioned, the foundation of some rite or institution which the myth explains.

There is more evidence that Telesilla wrote ceremonial works for girls to perform. Pausanias (2.28.2) states that Telesilla mentions a temple of Artemis, the usual location of rites involving young girls. He also records (2.35.2), as part of his description of the three temples to Apollo in Hermione, that Telesilla told the story of the arrival of Pythaios, the son of Apollo, who built the first temple to his father in Argos. As Calame has noted, Apollo was also associated with girls' transition rituals (1997: 101–113). More often he was involved in boys' rites, paralleling the function of his sister, but where he is the predominant deity, such as at Delos, he may take over some of Artemis' function.

The final myth which Telesilla related was that of Niobe (Apollocl. *Bibl.* 3.46), in which she recorded that the two children spared were Amyclas and Meliboea. Pausanias (2.21.9) tells us that Meliboea was the original name of Chloris. This Chloris subsequently turns up as the first winner of the famous girls' footrace organized by sixteen women of Elis at the Heraia and celebrated in the Olympic stadium (Paus. 5.16.4, 6; 6.20.7). In addition to the footrace, the sixteen women also organized two choral performances: one was dedicated to Hippodameia and the other to Physkoa, a woman raped by Dionysus.

The cult of Hippodameia is of course associated with Hera at Olympia.⁵⁶ Her myth contains a number of elements of interest to young girls seeking suitors: an overprotective father who dies in the effort of preventing her marriage; a girl

⁵⁵ This ritual is discussed by Dowden (1989: 102–105) and Burkert (1983: 170, n. 11).

⁵⁶ Pausanias (5.10.6–7) describes the portrayal of this myth on the pediments of the temple to Zeus in Olympia and on screens in the temple (5.11.5). Hippodameia is also portrayed on the chest of Kypselos which the Corinthians are said to have dedicated at Olympia (5.17.7). Isabelle Clark (1998: 20–22) places this myth in the context of the preparation of girls for marriage.

reluctant to marry; a girl who falls in love and causes her father's death; a rivalry between the suitors Pelops and Myrtilos. It is likely that a chorus of *parthenoi* performed the songs and dances related to this myth and learned the admonitory tales it contained. Again, the theme of male violence in response to female sexuality recurs, but with the additions of both a reluctant girl and a reluctant father. One lesson this myth provided the young women who sang it was the futility of any opposition to marriage. Indeed, this myth dealt with significant emotions that would have attended any marriage. Marriage brought about major changes in the life of a girl and was doubtless the cause of some anxiety on the part of both the bride and her family. The myth of Hippodameia touches on those feelings, but still focuses on the necessity of marriage.⁵⁷

Corinna of Tanagra in Boeotia appears to have provided choral training to girls as well.⁵⁸ Her date is disputed; she has traditionally been dated to the fifth century through testimonia linking her with Pindar. On the other hand, E. Lobel (1930) and M. L. West (1970 and 1990) have suggested a Hellenistic date based on her first fragment (655 *PMG*), a view which has not found wide acceptance.⁵⁹ If fragment 655 (*PMG*) is not Hellenistic, it ties her directly to the choral training of girls.⁶⁰ She speaks of "adorning stories from our fathers for the *parthenoi*" (λόγια δ' ἐπ πατέρων[ν] / κοσμείσασα . . . / παρθ[έ]νυσι). If the next word, κατά[ρχομη], partially restored by some editors, is correct, it describes the essential function of the chorus leader, that of "leading off" the chorus.⁶¹ The fragment then recounts a myth about Kephisos, a Boeotian river god, whom she calls "ancestor" ([ἀρχ]αγόν). It mentions Orion's intercourse with nymphs and the fifty strong children they bore. Although the rest of the poem is lost, the reference to the ancestor and to sexual activity suggests another foundation myth being performed by a chorus of *parthenoi*.

While there is no evidence of violence in what remains of this fragment, a second fragment of Corinna (fr. 654, col. 2, lines 11–12) tells how Zeus, Poseidon, and Hermes raped the nine daughters of Asopos and boasts that one day they would give birth to a race of half-divine heroes. The speaker, Akraiphen, the eponymous hero of Akraiphia, a Boeotian town, bids Asopos to cease from grief since he is a father-in-law to gods. Once more we encounter the themes of female sexuality and male violence and foundation myths united. Moreover, this myth

⁵⁷ Calame (1997: 242–244) draws attention to the metaphor of horse-taming in Hippodameia's name and her abduction by the skilled horseman Pelops. This is part of his larger discussion of the metaphors for marriage in the lyric material which remains.

⁵⁸ Again the most complete treatment is Page 1953. Stehle (1997: 100–104) refers to the more recent bibliography.

⁵⁹ For a fuller discussions, see Page 1953: 65–84; Davies 1988; Snyder 1989: 41–44; Rayor 1993; Stehle 1997: 100–104; Segal 1998: 315–326.

⁶⁰ Rayor (1993: 222) argues that Corinna was a "women-identified" poet, i.e., she "focuses on women's experience, repossesses tradition, and addresses a female audience." If she is right, Corinna may well have composed for and taught girls' choruses.

⁶¹ Proposed by Lobel in *PMG* and accepted, for example, by Campbell (1992: 36).

gives greater prominence to the father's grief at the loss of his offspring, again touching on emotions which would have been felt by both parents and child at the wedding.

Three other testimonia make Corinna the author of poems dealing with daughters. Although no fragments remain, Antoninus Liberalis (*Met.* 25) says that Corinna told the story of Metioche and Menippe. From Ovid (*Met.* 13.685–701) we learn that these were daughters of Orion who sacrificed themselves to divert a plague from their city.⁶² From fragment 655 (*PMG*) we know that Orion was the son of the river god, Kephisos, an important founding figure in Boeotian myth.⁶³ Apollonius Dyscolus (*Pron.* 136b) attributes a work entitled *Daughters of Euonymos* to Corinna. Euonymos is the son of Kephisos and father of Aulis. Although we know nothing else about this work, it sounds like another foundation myth relevant to young women, again appropriate for performance by a chorus of maidens. Finally, Antoninus Liberalis (*Met.* 10) testifies that Corinna told of the daughters of Minyas, who were reluctant worshippers of Dionysus and who suffered a fate similar to Agave and her sister in the *Bacchae*.⁶⁴ Minyas was the founder of Orchomenos (Paus. 9.36.3) and the myth of his daughters was the *aition* for the Agrionia festival in that city.⁶⁵

Although relatively little remains of Corinna's work, there can be no doubt that she composed poetry dealing with the themes of female sexuality, male violence, and foundations. These themes are present in the tradition transmitted by Corinna's fellow Boeotian, Hesiod (*Cat.*). Such material would have been appropriate for choral performance by a group of *parthenoi* and suitable for the instruction of young women about to marry.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to provide a better understanding of the education of girls through choral performance. We have considered the magnitude and complexity of the training exercise, which would have forced the girls to focus closely on the poems being performed. Indeed, the Greeks themselves believed that preparation for choral performance went well beyond the simple training for competition, as it taught behaviour and formed character. Finally, the whole process was largely oral in nature. Turning to content, I have argued that the myths found in the *Louvre Partheneion* of Alcman, the ceremonial poetry of Sappho, and the fragments of Telesilla and Corinna were used in the instruction

⁶² See Dowden 1989: 168, n. 3 on the aetiological nature of this story.

⁶³ Orion also has connections with Artemis. According to Homer (*Od.* 5.123–124), Artemis killed him; in other versions he was killed by a scorpion sent by Artemis, who was angry that he had pursued the Pleiades. There is enough here to suggest the usual pattern of male violence in response to female sexuality leading to the foundation of some rite.

⁶⁴ *Ov. Met.* 4.1–40, 399–415; *Ael. VH* 3.42; *Plut. Quaest. Graec.* 37–38 = *Mor.* 299e–f.

⁶⁵ For the discrepancy between Minyas' daughters as *parthenoi* and the women who worship Dionysus, see Dowden 1989: 80–85. For the Agrionia, see Burkert 1983: 168–179.

of the young aristocratic girls who prepared to perform them as part of a choral presentation. Although there is some variation, virtually all of these myths share themes of male violence in response to female sexuality and this is related to the foundation of some religious rite or political institution. While some might see the teaching conveyed by albeit mostly female teachers as merely acceptance of the prevailing social and political order, other messages are there. First, the young women would be learning something about the power of their sexuality in the community. Not only were they capable of creating conflict among men, but they were also able through marriage to ensure the continuation and even survival of the polis. Similarly, their celebration of the rites at which the poems were performed may have been their first such experience and may have helped them understand the significant role they would play in future in the religious life of the community. These surely are messages of empowerment. Through preparation for choral performance and the myths involved, the poets taught aristocratic young women about their place in the community as they prepared for their adult roles as wives, mothers, and participants in the sacral life of their polis.

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