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GREEK RITUAL BEGGING IN AID OF WOMEN'S FERTILITY AND CHILDBIRTH

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Ritual begging is a favourite topic of folklore studies; the practice is known throughout the world, often in very similar forms. Often too it goes with seasonal and solar transitions and evokes agrarian fertility; for however much these customs owe to natural high spirits and complaisance, the givers regularly give on the principle of *do ut des*, and the begging troop promise a fine return. Each household is serenaded with assurances of wealth and abundance, of children, and of a wife for the son and a husband for the daughter; so human fertility is not forgotten either. This kind of begging is familiar to classical scholars and has been well aired in special studies, since it happens that the begging songs and emblems attested for ancient Greece offer quite remarkable parallels with modern Europe.[1] In most of the modern instances, and on ancient Samos and Rhodes, the beggars are children, who have taken over an adult custom, together with the treats. It is agreed by all that the begging was once a more responsible affair, a true *heilige Handlung* mediating supernatural power. The Bucoliastae of ancient Syracuse are such a case; more plainly still, the begging mummers of Viza in modern Thrace, active on Shrove Monday.[2]

The ritual background has not been much explored. Yet the Greek material is considerable. Besides the references to begging boys and to the Bucoliastae there are others to begging priestesses and begging women, and the cults they serve are very old. We can see in fact that the begging custom went out of favour in historical times; the best warrant of the importance which it once possessed is found in certain aetiological myths. In Aeschylus' *Xantriai* the daughters of Proetus encounter a begging priestess of Argive Hera; other versions harp on the poverty of Hera's cult.

[1] A. Dieterich, *Arch RW* 8 (1905) 82–117 = *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig 1911) 324–52; L. Radermacher, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde aus dem Gebiet der Antike* (*SBWien* 187.3, 1918) 114–26; W. R. Halliday, *Folklore Studies, Ancient and Modern* (London 1924) 116–31; K. Meuli, *Schweiz. Arch. für Volksk.* 28 (1927/28) 1–38 = *Gesammelte Schriften* (Basel 1975) 1.33–68; M. P. Nilsson, *AC* 29 (1955) 336–40 = *Opuscula Selecta* 3 (Lund 1960) 286–91.

[2] For the festivities of Shrove Monday see C. A. Romaios, *Cultes populaires de la Thrace* (Athens 1949) 121–99; for the begging and the solemn outcome see esp. 127–31.

At Athens the begging servitors of Apollo who carry the *eiresiônê* are prefigured by Erysichthon and Mestra and also by the destitute Heracleidae. Mestra, an elusive figure now much better known from a papyrus fragment of the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, sojourns on Cos as well and is there attached to another begging custom in the cult of Demeter. In these myths and in the direct evidence ritual begging has much to do with human fertility and increase, with adolescent girls and new brides. The present paper aims to show that in the minds of Greek women child-bearing and childbirth were assisted by begging and giving, and that this belief illuminates a few passages of Greek literature.

Ritual begging by and for women comes to view in several parts of the Greek world—in the Cyclades and Ionia, at Athens and Argos, and on Cos. The deities in question are those who preside locally over marriage and childbirth and child-rearing—Artemis, Hera, Demeter, and minor figures associated with them, and in one instance Athena, as the protecting and recruiting deity of the community at large. Women or girls or a priestess go from house to house begging and chanting songs in which these deities are invoked and conjured; they may also carry an emblem or rather an instrument of divine power. The purpose, which of course is never stated but follows from several indications, is to induce offspring and easy labour among newly married women.

These results are new. In so far as the begging women have been noticed at all, they are misunderstood and are thought to be concerned, like many begging children, with agrarian fertility, or to show the influence of Oriental cults which arrived late in Greece. So it will be necessary to examine the several instances carefully. They are as follows: (I) begging women in Ionian cults of Artemis; (II) a begging priestess of the Nymphs at Argos; (III) a begging priestess of Athena at Athens; and (IV) begging women, or a begging priestess, in the cult of Demeter on Cos.

I. Begging Women in Ionian Cults of Artemis

Herodotus knows of begging, chanting women on Delos and other islands and in Ionia (4.35.3). On Delos, he says, the women beg, ἀγείρειν, for Arge and Opis, "invoking their names in the hymn which Olen, a man of Lycia, composed for the women; and both islanders and Ionians have learned from them and celebrate Opis and Arge in hymns, calling out their names and begging." Arge and Opis (Herodotus is not consistent in the order of the names) are the pair of "Hyperborean Maidens" worshipped at the *thêkê* east of the Artemisium (4.35.4). The *thêkê* has been plausibly identified on the ground;[3] originating as a Mycenaean

[3] For details of the *thêkê* and the *sêma* see C. Vatin, *BCH* 89 (1965) 225–30; *Guide to Délos*[2] (Paris 1966) 94, 97–98; P. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque imperiale* (Paris 1970) 45–46.

chamber tomb, it was a place of cult from Geometric times through the Hellenistic period, when—probably in the second half of the third century, after the construction of the neighbouring Stoa of Antigonus—it was enclosed by a substantial semi-circular wall. This mark of attention suggests that the *thêkê* may have outlasted the *sêma*, the shrine of the other pair of Hyperborean Maidens known to Herodotus (4.34.2), where the archaeological remains are slight indeed, though a Mycenaean tomb is again the likely starting point. Conformably with these indications, literary sources after Herodotus speak of only one pair of Hyperborean Maidens, Hecaerge and Opis/Upis ([Pl.] *Axiochus* 371A; Paus. 1.43.4, 5.7.8) or else of a triad Upis, Loxo, and Hecaerge (Call. *H. Del.* 292–93; schol. Call. *H. Dian.* 204, whence *Et. Magn.* s.v. Upis; cf. Nonn. *Dion.* 5.489–91, 48.331–34), to whom, rather than to the pair Hyperoche and Laodice as in Herodotus, Delian adolescents offer locks of hair and other worshippers offer the Hyperborean sheaves.[4] None of these later sources mentions the begging, and Herodotus does not say much more about the purpose or the occasion than the words quoted above. But we can get a little further by considering the background of cult on Delos.[5]

Let us first recall the interpretation which has been placed on the women's begging by previous commentators. It is an agrarian custom, we are told, similar to other instances of ritual begging attested on Samos and Rhodes and deducible at Athens, in which children carrying a May-branch or a "swallow" or a "crow" went round from house to house demanding treats and chanting songs that promised fertility and abundance or threatened the opposite.[6] On Delos the Hyperborean sheaves are admittedly an emblem of agrarian fertility; but of course the origin

[4] The French excavators have not said that the *thêkê* continued in use longer than the *sêma*, but this seems a reasonable inference from the archaeological and the literary evidence. W. Sale, *HThR* 54 (1961) 75–89, imagines a rather complex development in which the *sêma* is originally sacred to Eileithyia together with Hyperoche and Laodice, and afterwards to Artemis together with Opis and Arge; at a certain moment, perhaps in 425, it was decided that the Hyperborean offerings should be brought to the latter group in place of the former, and at a different time of year. This reconstruction does not seem very probable in itself, and is hardly commended by the evidence.

[5] This is not the place to mention any of the innumerable studies dealing chiefly with the "route" of the Hyperborean offerings, a matter which according to Herodotus was from first to last a tale told by the Delians; it should be noted however that Call. *Aet.* fr. 186 seems not have entered the discussion so far. About the realities of cult much can be learned from the fine article of O. Crusius, *ML* 1.2 (1886–90) 2805–35 s.v. "Hyperboreer," something too from Daebritz, *RE* 9.1 (1914) 258–79 s.v. "Hyperboreer"; to which may be added, for the epigraphic evidence, J. Tréheux in *Studies presented to D. M. Robinson* (St. Louis, Mo. 1951–53) 2.758–74 and Bruneau, *Recherches* (above, note 3) 38–48.

[6] The leading exponent is Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig 1906) 207–9, *Greek Folk Religion* (New York 1940) 37–38, *AC* 29 (1955) 338 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) 288, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (Munich 1955, 1961^2 = 1967^3) 1.124 note 2, 534, 548–49. See also Crusius, *ML* 1.2.2832–33; Sale, *HThR* 54 (1961) 79, 85, 86–87.

and significance of these offerings have always been moot, and before taking up the question briefly we should attend to the more conventional forms of worship addressed to the so-called Hyperborean Maidens. Nilsson, who came back to the Maidens repeatedly over many years, was thorough and consistent in his interpretation of details, pointing to the supposed "branch" (actually a "sprout," χλοή) which figures in the adolescent offerings, and equating this with the May-branch known elsewhere, and explaining away the spindle, the girls' counterpart to the boys' "branch," as a later, ignorant substitution, and supposing sheaves of grain to have been carried also by the Delian and other Ionian women in their begging processions. It will be obvious at once that much of this assimilation is very forced. In fact the deities and rites in question are not concerned at all with agrarian fertility, but rather with marriage and childbirth and child-rearing. When this has been established, it will be natural to conclude that the begging women of Herodotus were promoting the fertility of their own kind, specifically of newly married women.

The deities of the *thêkê* might be conceived as either a pair or a triad—like some other female deities, e.g. the Charites at Athens (Paus. 9.35.2–3). The two names known to Herodotus were prominent in ritual songs throughout the islands and Ionia, and the Delian song that reputedly formed the model for all the others was ascribed to a Lycian. In fact all the names, Opis/Upis, Arge/Hecaerge, and Loxo, belong to a non-Greek language that was once widely spoken on the islands and in western Asia Minor and perhaps in the Greek peninsula. Schol. Call. *H. Dian.* 204 rightly compared Ἑκάεργος and Λοξίας as epithets of Apollo—epithets which, to be taken up in poetry, must once have been extremely common in real life.[7] Opis too passed current in poetry as an epithet of Artemis or as a nymph in her train;[8] the distribution of the

[7] There is a strong disposition, seen for example in the etymological dictionaries of Frisk and Chantraine, to treat these and similar names and epithets as Greek. To say that λοξός "slant" becomes Λοξίας as an epithet of the oracular Apollo is merely a bad pun, which moreover does not explain the form of the epithet; hardly better is the suggestion that Λοξώ is a nickname for λοξῶπις in the sense of "looking askance" and so refers to the evil eye as threatening childbirth. With the ἑκα-group Frisk derives the epithets of Apollo from the stem ἑκών and regards Ἑκάβη, Ἑκάτη as a shortening of these; Chantraine likewise regards them all as related Greek words, though he is less confident of the connection with ἑκών. Yet a Greek origin is quite excluded by (1) the Carian personal names formed from these divine names, a point noted long ago by Sittig and Wilamowitz, (2) the Asiatic background of the actual cults, well exemplified on Delos, and (3) the alternatives Ἄργη/Ἑκαέργη, ἑκα-/ἑκατη-/Ἑκάβη,-βολος/-βελετης, which can only represent the Greek rendering of foreign words (metrical deformations on such a scale would be unparalleled).

[8] It should be mentioned as a curiosity that W. Fauth, *Beitr. zur Namenforschung* 4 (1969) 148–71, regards Opis as an Asiatic divine name of the form *U(m)p/b-* which is also seen, he thinks, in Omphale, Op the congener of Zeus Dolichenus, Upelluri, and Humbaba; the argument is a mere juggling of Greek and cuneiform names, and takes no account of the realities.

epithet in actual worship spans the main dialect divisions of Greek—like some other epithets of Artemis, notably Orthia/Orthosia/Throsia—and therefore goes back to the non-Greek population.[9] Although the *thêkê* lay outside Artemis' sanctuary on Delos, it was closely linked with her worship, for the custom of sprinkling on the *thêkê* the ashes of victims burnt on the *bômos*, *scil.* of the Artemisium (Hdt. 4.35.4), is a means of sharing the victims between Artemis and the deities of the *thêkê*.

Thus the Delian worship of Arge and Opis fits into a larger pattern, as indeed Herodotus already intimates in his account of the begging women. Elsewhere these deities assist in childbirth and child-rearing. According to schol. Call. *H. Dian.* 204, Artemis took the name Upis "because women in childbirth dread her," ὀπίζεσθαι, "or because she nurtured Upis," a Nymph. Since the goddess of childbirth can be fierce and dangerous, "a lion among women," slaying with her arrows, we see why Upis is called "strong-bow" (Antimachus fr. 174 Wyss) or "shooter of arrows" (Alex. Aet. fr. 4.3 Powell) and is a fit companion for Camilla (Verg. *Aen.* 11.532, 836, with Serv. on 532 and Macrob. *Sat.* 5.22.1–6), and why Upis becomes a sobriquet of Nemesis (*IG* 14.1389 II 2) or the *interpretatio Graeca* of a Thracian goddess (schol. Lyc. *Alex.* 936).[10] At Iulis on Ceos a deity variously known as Hecaerge Ctesylla or Aphrodite Ctesylla was said to have been a girl named Ctesylla who died after childbirth (Ant. Lib. *Met.* 1).

On Delos too Opis and Arge have to do with childbirth. Whereas the later pair of Hyperborean Maidens, says Herodotus, brought offerings to Eileithyia in anticipation of easy labour, Arge and Opis are said "to have arrived together with the gods themselves" (4.35.2), i.e. they came to deliver Leto of Artemis and Apollo.[11] And, Herodotus continues, the Delians also say that these Maidens who delivered Leto receive other

[9] Artemis was invoked as Opis/Upis not only in Ephesus (Call. *H. Dian.* 240; Macr. *Sat.* 5.22.4, citing Alex. Aet. fr. 4 Powell = Timoth. fr. 778 Page), but also in Crete (id. 204), and in the Greek peninsula—at Troezen (schol. Apoll. Rhod. 1.972), at Sparta (Palaeph. *De Incred.* 32), and at Messene (*SEG* 23.208, 215–16: Οὐπησία). One might conjecture that οὔπιγγος as "a hymn for Artemis at Troezen" (schol. Apoll. Rhod.) was a begging song like ours on Delos. Orthia/Orthosia/Throsia was perhaps the most widespread of all the old distinctive epithets, being attested at Larisa in Thessaly and at Thebes; in Attica in the Cerameicus, the Peiraeus and Pallene; at Megara and its colony Byzantium; in the Dorian Peloponnesus at Epidaurus, Mt. Lycone near Argos, Sparta, the Dentheliatis, and Messene; at Elis; in Arcadia at Phigaleia and on Mt. Orthion or Orthosion; and on Tenos and Thera.

[10] Upis' name was restored in the papyrus fragment of Antimachus by K. Deichgräber, *Hermes* 71 (1936) 240. It is just conceivable that the poet or scholar who spoke of "Upis among the Thracians" (schol. Lyc.) had his eye on Hdt. 4.33.5, where the Hyperborean offerings are likened to those which Thracian and Paeonian women make to Artemis.

[11] This, the natural meaning of the words, is disputed by Sale, *HThR* 54 (1961) 82–84, who here discerns an altogether different view of the nativity of Artemis and Apollo, in which the twins together with Opis and Arge come to Delos from abroad.

ritual honours from their (the Delians') hands—i.e. other honours than the hair offerings addressed to Hyperoche and Laodice—notably the begging and the chanting. The passage runs as follows:

> τὴν δὲ Ἄργην τε καὶ τὴν Ὦπιν ἅμα αὐτοῖσι τοῖσι θεοῖσι ἀπικέσθαι λέγουσι καί σφι τιμὰς ἄλλας δεδόσθαι πρὸς σφέων· καὶ γὰρ ἀγείρειν σφι τὰς γυναῖκας, ἐπονομαζούσας τὰ οὐνόματα κτλ.

The ritual honours, in other words, are regarded as a consequence or a commemoration of the mythical event. In reality, of course, the mythical event was deduced from the ritual honours as an *aition*. So we infer that the begging, chanting women were concerned with pregnancy and childbirth: perhaps the songs promised husbands or offspring or safe delivery to those who gave alms.

This interpretation is supported by the parallel case of Eileithyia. She too had a shrine on Delos, probably in or near the Artemisium; and it was doubtless at the festival Eileithyaea, celebrated in mid-winter, that the Delians invoked this goddess in a hymn likewise ascribed to Olen of Lycia (Paus. 1.18.5, 8.21.3, 9.27.2; cf. Call. *H. Del.* 255–57).[12] The hymn known to Pausanias was evidently a literary composition, perhaps of the Hellenistic period, but inspired by some earlier model;[13] Herodotus says that Olen was the author of all the old hymns sung on Delos (4.35.3; whence Paus. 8.21.3, 9.27.2). The cult certainly goes back to Archaic times, for in the Athenian temple of Eileithyia the oldest *xoanon* of all was traced to Delos (Paus. 1.18.5), and the reason must be that such images existed there. So the cult and especially the hymn, which according to Callimachus was sung by the Nymphs at Apollo's birth, will stand behind *Hom. H. Ap.* 97–116, where Eileithyia comes to Delos to assist Leto.[14] The similar but contrasting stories of Herodotus and the *Homeric Hymn* should not be taken to express separate and independent views of Apollo's nativity; they are merely two Delian *aitia* of two Delian cults, and the *aitia* like the cults can co-exist without discomfort.

Thus Opis and Arge, like Eileithyia and indeed like Artemis herself, are ancient Aegean deities of childbirth; in this quality they are invoked by begging women on the islands and in Ionia. On Delos it so happens that these deities are conceived as dead maidens of long ago (for their worship is attached to a Mycenaean chamber tomb, and they are spoken of as Hyperboreans, no doubt deceased during their visit to Delos, and in a myth which plainly antedates the Hyperborean connection Opis is

[12] For the cult of Eileithyia see Bruneau, *Recherches* (above, note 3) 212–19.

[13] Similarly, U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (Basel 1955, 1959$^{2/3}$) 1.353, note 1.

[14] F. Wehrli, *RE Suppl.* 5 (1931) 569 s.v. Leto, explains Eileithyia's role in the *Hymn* from her worship elsewhere in the Cyclades, which he usefully documents; but it is rather the cult on Delos that should be thus explained or illustrated.

assaulted on Delos by Orion, a very old and very faded figure),[15] but this too is a natural twist; Opis and Arge express the darker side of Artemis and childbirth, just as Iphigeneia does at Brauron and Aulis.

Did the singing and begging take place at a festival? Some have thought so,[16] but this is not the most natural interpretation of Herodotus. Islanders and Ionians, he says, have adopted this Delian custom; if the custom were part of a festival that also recurred at many places, one would expect him to say as much. At any rate, since the song for Arge and Opis is sung by mature women, γυναῖκες, it cannot be equated either with the strange entrancing song sung by Delian girls in the *Homeric Hymn* (lines 156–64) or with the song of Olen sung by boys and danced by girls in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* (lines 304–6). And although rather elaborate poems were fathered on Olen in the course of time (as we see from Callimachus and Pausanias), the begging song may have been only a short traditional refrain; the Samian *eiresiônê*, after all, was ascribed to Homer (*carm. pop.* 1 Diehl).

Perhaps the Ionian custom can be recognized in the begging attested at Miletus by a decree of c. 230 B.C. (*LSAM* 47). The people of Miletus conduct the begging, αἱ ἀγέρσεις, for Artemis βουληφόρος σκιρίς; it is now a question, to be decided by the Assembly after consultation of Apollo's oracle at Didyma, whether the begging should go on as before or as recommended by the Σκιρίδαι. The epithet σκιρίς and the like-named exegetes of the cult are not otherwise known, but this is plainly a civic institution of some importance and no doubt of long standing. Accordingly the begging here cannot be equated with the begging for Artemis of Perge, a native goddess adopted by the Greeks.[17] The terms of the decree, especially the phrase τῶι δήμωι . . . συντελοῦντι τὰς ἀγέρσεις (lines 1–3, 11–13), suggest that the actual begging was done neither by the Sciridae nor by the priestess of Artemis, but by the devout women of Miletus. If so, this may well be an instance of the custom known to Herodotus.

We may turn now to the Hyperborean offerings, the mainstay of the agrarian interpretation noticed above. Herodotus links these offerings with Hyperoche and Laodice, the Maidens worshipped at the *sêma*, later writers with Opis and Arge. If, as suggested above, the offerings were transferred at some date between Herodotus and Callimachus when the cult at the *sêma* lapsed, the transference is a reason for supposing that these offerings were not deeply rooted in Delian custom. Hyperoche and Laodice, be it noted, also have to to with marriage and child-bearing, but

[15] The assault is mentioned by schol. *Od.* 5.121, citing Euphorion fr. 103 Powell, 106 van Groningen; and by Apld. *Bibl.* 1.27 (4.5).

[16] E.g. Sale, *HThR* 54 (1961) 79, 88.

[17] As it is by Nilsson, *Gr. Feste* (above, note 6) 256, note 4, and *Gesch. der gr. Rel.* (above, note 6) 1.498, note 1 ("a form of the mother-goddess").

the worshippers are nubile girls, not married women; before marriage Delian girls cut off some locks and wind them round a spindle and lay it on the *sêma* (Hdt. 4.34.1). Hair offerings as a pre-nuptial rite are too common to need illustration. The spindle probably represents the girlhood which is left behind, for spinning is often a task for girls, as weaving is for women; and boys worshipping at the *sêma* wind their locks round a green sprout (Hdt. 4.34.2), evidently an image of their boyhood.[18]

Now Herodotus, who is sceptical of Hyperboreans in general and who rehearses the Delian story of Hyperborean offerings not as gospel, but merely as the fullest report available (4.33.1), indicates quite unmistakably that the offerings were an eccentric element in the cult of Hyperoche and Laodice. After describing the actual hair offerings at the *sêma*, he comes back to the reputed visits of Hyperborean Maidens and gives it as the Delian view that Hyperoche and Laodice, as maidens hoping for easy labour, brought to Eileithyia "a tribute of their own devising," *ταύτας μέν νυν τῇι Εἰλειθυίηι ἀποφερούσας ἀντὶ τοῦ ὠκυτόκου τὸν ἐτάξαντο φόρον ἀπικέσθαι* (4.35.2). Commentators have failed to catch the irony of the phrase *τὸν ἐτάξαντο φόρον*: these bundles bound with wheat straw were an unexpected offering from maidens concerned with child-bearing. By every token, then, the Hyperborean offerings are intrusive in Delian ritual. And it is not hard to guess how they came to intrude.

Hyperborean offerings also figure in a ritual *aition* at Athens, and here they are quite appropriate to the cult in question. When a great plague overtook the whole earth, Apollo ordered the Athenians to supplicate Demeter and others to bring first-fruits from all quarters (Harp. s.v. *Ἄβαρις*; Suda s.v. *εἰρεσιώνη*; etc.); Abaris the Hyperborean joined the conflux (Harpocration, citing Pindar fr. 270 Snell-Maehler, Lycurgus fr. 85 Conomis, Hippostratus *FGrH* 568 F 4, and others unnamed).[19] This *aition* refers to two distinct festivals of Demeter at two great junctures of the agricultural year. The Proerosia or "pre-ploughing" festival, named in the Suda, was a time of anxious supplication (cf. Eur. *Suppl.* 28–34 and *passim*), whence the theme of plague (or famine, as in the equivalent *aition* at *Hom H. Cer.* 305–11, 450–56, 471–73). The first-fruits however, mentioned in both the Suda and related sources, belong to the harvest

[18] At Athens an olive crown or a flock of wool was placed before the house-door to signal the birth of a male or a female child respectively (Hsch. s.v. *στέφανον ἐπιφέρειν*; cf. Ath. 9.10 [370C], citing Ephippus fr. 3 Kock); the wool stands for spinning, says Hesychius.

[19] The oracle known to Lycurgus and perhaps to Pindar, who certainly spoke of Abaris at Athens, must be in some sense the same as the oracle so proudly cited in the Athenian first-fruits decree of the later fifth century, *GHI*^{2} 73 lines 4–5, 26, 34. This is the opinion of H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (Oxford 1956) 2.72, contradicted by J. Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle* (Berkeley 1978) 162–63, 295.

festival in Thargelion, which is probably to be identified with the Καλαμαῖα of several Attic inscriptions and also with a notable sacrifice to Demeter Chloe on Thargelion 6 (Philochorus *FGrH* 328 F 61); her ancient shrine below the Acropolis vied with Eleusis as the site of the first crops of all and of portentous ritual at seed-time and harvest (*IG* 2^2 5006; Plut. *Conj. Praec.* 42, 144A). The harvest offerings for Demeter Chloe were sheaves bound together into a large bundle sometimes called ἴουλος or οὖλος (Semus *FGrH* 396 F 23); the straw binding, καλάμη, doubtless gave its name to the festival Καλαμαῖα. These offerings to Demeter answer to Herodotus' description of the Hyperborean offerings (4.33.1, 4–5; cf. Call. *H. Del.* 278–79, 283–84, *Aet.* fr. 186.3–4; Paus. 1.31.2).[20]

Both occasions, the seed-time and the harvest, were also marked by Apolline festivals, the Pyanopsia and the Thargelia respectively, which were seemingly intended to purify the community at large. This conjunction has helped to form the *aition*, for the Hyperboreans are Apollo's people, inhabiting the balmy northern land where, at least in Delphic myth, he sojourns in the winter months; the Hyperboreans gave Greece the olive tree (Pind. *Ol.* 3.13–16, etc.), and their offerings to Demeter must have been the lushest of all. The upshot is that Hyperborean offerings are attested at Athens earlier than on Delos (in virtue of Pind. fr. 270) and are far more integral to Athenian cult than to Delian. Attica, not Delos, is the centre of agriculture and the proper destination of cereal offerings; and the connection between Demeter and Apollo which is conspicuous in Athenian myth and ritual does not exist on Delos.[21]

[20] Herodotus himself knew of similar bundles offered by women in Thrace and Paeonia to Artemis Basileia, i.e. Bendis (4.33.5, cf. 5.7). These too are plainly harvest offerings; cf. L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932) 220, apropos of the Athenian Bendideia on Thargelion 19, and note the ritual of the same date at Erchia, *LSCG* 18Δ52–55, as expounded by M. H. Jameson, *BCH* 89 (1965) 158–59. Why, one might ask, did Herodotus speak of Bendis when bundles like the Hyperboreans' were offered to Demeter at Greek harvest festivals? (Semus' account is quoted by Athenaeus from the book *On Paeans*, and certainly refers to general practice, not to Delos; but even in the latter case the question would remain.) First, because Thrace lay in the direction of the Hyperboreans. Second, because Thracian harvests were important to Greek commerce and Athens' livelihood when Herodotus was writing; M. P. Nilsson, *From the Collections of Ny Carlsberg* 3 (1942) 169–88 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) 55–80, illustrates the celebrity of Bendis at this time. And third, perhaps because Herodotus was not sufficiently acquainted with the worship of Demeter as conducted by women; his statement, which subserves his Pelasgian theory, that the Thesmophoria were unknown in the Dorian Peloponnesus (2.171.3), is hard to reconcile with a mass of other evidence.

[21] "Mit dem Ackerbau," said Wilamowitz, *Glaube* (above, note 13) 1.100, note 2, of the Hyperborean offerings on Delos, "kann das Ganze nichts zu tun haben, weil es den auf Delos nicht geben kann"; the Delians lived by fishing and by pasturing sheep on Rheneia. The traces of agriculture on Delos are discussed by W. Deonna, *La Vie privée des Déliens* (Paris 1948) 89–100.

So the question is: how and when were Hyperborean offerings projected from Athens to Delos? The answer will be somewhat as follows. Athens took control of Delos in the time of Peisistratus and again in the fifth century, from 478 onwards. Thucydides says with peculiar emphasis that the Delia as a fourth-yearly agonistic festival were held for the first time in 425 (3.104.2, 6), but one would expect the Athenians to have sponsored some version of the festivities, perhaps a yearly celebration without games, long before this, especially as Theseus was said to have founded the Delia to signalize the adventure in Crete (Plut. *Thes.* 21–3)—a view which, as we shall see in a moment, goes back as far as Pherecydes. Now Athenian pietists who looked for reflections of this adventure in the festival calendar found Theseus' departure commemorated in early Munichion and his return in early Pyanopsion (Plut. *Thes.* 18.1–2, 22.2–23.5), but we need not suppose that the Delia conveniently fell in autumn, just before Theseus' homecoming—an unlikely date for a festival which drew worshippers from overseas.[22] On the contrary, Theseus is expressly said to have stopped at Delos on the outward voyage in order to promise offerings in the event of success (Macr. 1.17.21, citing Pherecydes *FGrH* 3 F 149, where Delos is to be presumed as the setting; Eustath. *Il.* 10.495, citing Paus. Att. ϵ 17 Erbse, cf. Suda s.v. εἰρεσιώνη); this can only be the *aition* of a rite at the corresponding time of year, say Thargelion. And Theseus' vow was addressed to Apollo and Artemis jointly, according to Pherecydes, who thus points to Thargelion 6–7, the days on which Delian tradition placed the birth of these two deities (Diog. Laert. 2.44, 3.2; *Vit. Plat.* p. 6 Didot)—and which are of course the fitting moment for the festival. Moreover, this is also the season of the widespread Ionian festival Thargelia, entailing an often drastic purification such as the Athenians conducted on Delos just before the first agonistic festival (Thuc. 3.104.2); Peisistratus had done the same (ibid. and Hdt. 1.64.2). Here then is the perfect opportunity for the Athenians to import a striking feature of Athenian myth and ritual attached to the same date, namely the Hyperborean offerings.

There is more to be pondered and debated in the matter of the Hyperborean offerings, but enough has been said to suggest the line of

[22] The old question of the date of the Delia is taken up again by Bruneau, *Recherches* (above, note 3) 87–91, who concludes, *non liquet*; but his objections to Thargelion 6–7 are misguided. The Delphians, who put Apollo's birthday on Bysius 7 (= Hierus on Delos, Anthesterion at Athens), were not concerned with Artemis; on Delos the two birthdays must come together, and no alternative to Thargelion 6–7 is known. Athenian chauvinists would say that Theseus founded the festival whether it came early or late in the season, and Bruneau like others overlooks the tradition of Theseus' visit during the outward voyage. It is a reasonable assumption, argued by Tréheux in *Stud. pres. to Robinson* (above, note 5) 2.766–70 and adopted by Bruneau p. 44, that the Delia were the occasion of the Hyperborean offerings.

explanation to which we are directed by the realities of cult at the *sêma* and the *thêkê*. Returning to the begging women, we may summarize the results as follows. (1) The two cults which Herodotus describes both have to do with marriage and child-bearing, but nubile girls worship at the *sêma*, married women at the *thêkê*. (2) The begging women who invoke Opis and Arge in their traditional songs are probably concerned with the safe delivery of newly married women, whose condition is prefigured by Leto's in the myth. (3) The alms-givers seek the favour of Opis and Arge for themselves and are perhaps especially nubile girls who have not reached the stage of child-bearing.

II. A Begging Priestess of the Nymphs at Argos

The goddess Hera was brought on stage by Aeschylus disguised as a begging priestess who serves the Inachid Nymphs at Argos. Two lines or so spoken by Hera are quoted as a curiosity by several ancient sources, beginning with Plato (*Resp.* 2.381D), and were assigned by Asclepiades, author of the *Tragoedumena*, to the "Women carding wool," *Xantriai*, a play about frenzied Bacchants (frs. 168–72 Nauck[2]; 355, 366–72 Mette). A fortunate papyrus discovery places the lines in context, after a choral song about Semele, Hera, and Zeus, and at the beginning of an extended speech by Hera (P. Oxy. 18.2164; Aesch. fr. 355 Mette; Pack, *Gr. and Lat. Lit. Texts*[2] no. 44). Hera addresses the nymphs as follows:

> νύμφαι ναμερτεῖς, κ[υδραὶ θεα]ί, αἷσιν ἀγείρω
> Ἰνάχου Ἀργείου ποταμοῦ παισὶν βιοδώροις
> αἵ τε [π]αρίστανται κτλ.

Yet the interpretation of the passage has not been easy or straightforward. Current opinion, as represented by the comments of Latte and Nilsson and the editions of Lloyd-Jones (in the Loeb Aeschylus) and Mette, has set aside Asclepiades' testimony and ascribes the fragment instead to the *Semele or Hydrophori*, another Dionysiac play which is presumed to belong to the same trilogy.[23] Latte holds that the begging was more of a practical than a ritual matter, and merely aimed at supplementing the slender resources of a rural cult. Nilsson postulates a form of rain magic which might then be bracketed with other agrarian customs. Since the significance of the begging depends on the context, we must consider the interpretation of the fragment as a whole.

The *Semele or Hydrophori* obviously dealt with preparations for Semele's delivery and so with her destruction, and is therefore plausibly regarded as the first play of a Dionysiac trilogy (cf. fr. 358 Mette,

[23] See K. Latte, *Philologus* 97 (1948) 48–56 = *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1968) 477–84, and Nilsson, *AC* 29 (1955) 336–40 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) 286–91. E. R. Dodds, *Euripides' Bacchae* (Oxford 1960[2]) xxx–xxxi, dissents. Other comment is cited by Pack.

Semele's marvellous pregnancy as depicted by Aeschylus in an unnamed play);[24] whereafter, if the trilogy included the *Xantriai*, Madness personified addressed a band of women revelling for Dionysus and spoke of the rending of a victim, whether animal or human (fr. 368 Mette), and the *Pentheus* treated the same events as Euripides' *Bacchae* (fr. 364 Mette, Aristophanes of Byzantium). Now since the *Xantriai* also mentioned Cithaeron as the scene of Pentheus' death (fr. 367 Mette), Latte supposes that Pentheus was the subject of the *Xantriai*, and Dodds that the events leading up to Pentheus' death were divided between the *Xantriai* and the *Pentheus*. Neither view makes for a plausible trilogy, and both fly against Aristophanes of Byzantium, who said, *tout court*, that Aeschylus treated the Pentheus story in the *Pentheus*. The mention of Cithaeron in the *Xantriai* was very likely incidental and retrospective;[25] our source, schol. Aesch. *Eum.* 26, notes that the *Pentheus* and the *Xantriai* (in this order) are inconsistent in situating Pentheus' death on Parnassus and Cithaeron respectively. In any case, whether our fragment is assigned to the *Xantriai* or the *Semele or Hydrophori*, it has been generally assumed that Hera as a begging priestess somehow worked mischief at Thebes; yet the most natural inference from the mention of the Inachid Nymphs, which appears to be strengthened by the papyrus discovery, is that the begging was done at or near Argos.[26]

Moreover, when Hera tempted Semele to her doom, she was disguised not as a begging priestess but as a fond old nurse, Beroe by name (Ov. *Met.* 3.273–88; Hyg. *Fab.* 167, 179; Nonn. *Dion.* 8.178–266).[27] By some accounts Hera's opposition continued after the birth of Dionysus, and brought the downfall of Ino and Athamas, and caused Zeus to remove Dionysus to Nysa (Apld. *Bibl.* 3.26–29 [4.3.1–7]; cf. Hyg. *Fab.* 179); but we still do not hear of a begging priestess, nor does Hera come into the Pentheus story. Nilsson holds that the begging and the action of the *Semele or Hydrophori* took

[24] That the Hydrophori bring water to wash the new-born infant is accepted by Latte, Lloyd-Jones, and Dodds; against the notion of a fire brigade responding to Zeus' lightning see Dodds, *Eur. Bacch.* (above, note 23) xxx, note 1. Nilsson thinks of Nymphs practicing rain magic (below, note 34).

[25] Latte, *Philologus* 97 (1948) 51 = *Kl. Schr.* (above, note 23) 480, rightly discounted the possibility of a forward reference to a future event.

[26] This inference, which Lloyd-Jones calls "unsafe" without saying why (*Aeschylus*, Loeb ed., 2.568), was firmly drawn by Nilsson, *AC* 29 (1955) 337–38 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) 287–88. Latte, *Philologus* 97 (1948) 56 = *Kl. Schr.* (above, note 23) 484, had said that the displacement of the priestess from Argos to Thebes was simply a license: "neque poeta neque spectatores, qui deam agnoscerent, veri speciem in tali re multum curabant." But the whole purpose of the disguise is to give Hera a realistic means of interfering!

[27] Latte, *Philologus* 97 (1948) 53–54 = *Kl. Schr.* (above, note 23) 482, holds that the nurse was substituted for the priestess by Hellenistic poets; yet one would hardly expect them to suppress a striking aetiological detail, the begging priestess, in favour of something as conventional as the nurse.

place at Argos before Dionysus' birth and "probably" treated "the apotheosis of Semele"; but he does not explain how this *mise-en-scène* might be fitted into the myth as we know it.[28]

Mette, who with Latte and Nilsson ascribes our fragment to the *Semele or Hydrophori*, constructs a better trilogy by leaving Pentheus out of the *Xantriai*, and taking it as the third play. The title, he thinks, describes the daughters of Minyas, who also, at least in Ovid's version (*Met.* 4.1–42, 389–415), scorn the worship of Dionysus at Thebes and stay at home to spin and weave. This is a very long shot: the wool-working described by Ovid is commonplace and suits his story, of which the immediate source was certainly not a tragedy. And if our papyrus fragment is admitted in evidence, the Argive setting rules out this suggestion like the others.

We seem then to require an Argive story featuring someone who resists Dionysus and is also embroiled with Hera. If so, we need look no further than the Hesiodic *Catalogue* and *Melampodia* and the infamous daughters of Proetus ([Hes.] frs. 129–33 Merkelbach-West, cf. fr. 37.12–15).[29] On the likeliest reading of the Hesiodic fragments the *Catalogue* spoke only of Hera, the *Melampodia* only or mainly of Dionysus;[30] later the story was varied or extended in respect of the offense and the punishment and the remedy, and the king's daughters are even joined by other Argive women; we must postulate more than one epic treatment after [Hes.] and before the fluctuating versions of Acusilaus, Pherecydes, Bacchylides, Aeschylus,

[28] Nilsson indeed, *AC* 29 (1955) 337 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) 287, refers to Paus. 2.37.5, apropos of the Mysteries at Lerna: "the people of Argos say" that it was here, at the Alcyonian Lake, that "Dionysus went to Hades to bring back Semele." One is tempted to cite Nilsson against himself, for in another context, at *Gr. Feste* (above, note 6) 287–90, he dismissed this Argive story as very late and adventitious; but it is fairer to admit that, for all we know, the local story may well be early and true to the realities of cult. The question is whether the story entered the mainstream literary tradition, and the answer, which emerges from this very passage of Pausanias, is that it did not.

[29] C. Robert, *Die griechische Heldensage* (Berlin 1920–26) 1.244, 250, note 2, and in his earlier revision of L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie* 1 (Berlin 1894[4]) 691, note 3, half anticipated the view taken here by suggesting that a related episode, Dionysus afflicting the women of Argos, was the subject of the *Xantriai*; but his suggestion has gone unnoticed. For the daughters of Proetus see Robert, *Gr. Heldens.* 1.246–52; R. Pfeiffer, *Philologus* 92 (1937) 6–9 = *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Munich 1960) 30–33; J. Schwartz, *Pseudo-Hesiodeia* (Leiden 1960) 369–77; F. Vian, *REA* 67 (1965) 25–30; Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berlin 1972) 189–94; A. Henrichs, *ZPE* 15 (1974) 297–301; C. Calame, *Les Choeurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque* (Rome 1977) 1.214–20.

[30] A papyrus scrap of Philodemus agrees in detail with [Hes.] fr. 133 M–W and shows the offended deity of the *Catalogue* to be Hera, not Dionysus; so Hera will likewise be in view at fr. 37.15 M–W; in fr. 131 M–W the notices of Apollodorus and Probus must be dissevered, and the former, speaking of Dionysus, assigned to the Melampodia, the latter, speaking of Hera, to the *Catalogue*. Cf. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (above, note 29) 191; Henrichs, *ZPE* 15 (1974) 299–301.

Sophocles, and later mythography.[31] However we conceive the development, this subject matches all the indications of the fragments, abolishes the difficulties already noted, and, as we shall see in a moment, gives special point to the title *Xantriai* and to the begging priestess.[32] Nor does it matter whether we regard the *Xantriai* as the third play of a Dionysiac trilogy, following the *Semele or Hydrophori* and the *Pentheus*, or as one of the Aeschylean tragedies which were not linked in subject with others produced on the same occasion. This last alternative is particularly welcome because ancient citations and the Medicean catalogue give us titles enough to make a Dionysiac trilogy without the *Xantriai* (and apart from the Lycurgus trilogy): there is also the *Bacchae* (frs. 51–52 Mette), which according to the views canvassed above must be either equated with e.g. the *Bassarae* or regarded as a tragedy outside the Dionysiac trilogies. Furthermore, if the *Pentheus* and the *Xantriai* did not belong to the same trilogy, it is not at all surprising that they gave contradictory reports of the setting of Pentheus' death.

Turning now to the text of our fragment, we find the chorus singing of Hera, Semele, and Zeus (lines 1–15); our editions present the following at lines 9–11: [Σ]*εμέλας δ' ε*[*ὐ*] | *χόμεθ' εἶναι διὰ πᾶν* | *εὐθύπορον λά*[*χος αἰοῦς vel ὄλβου* (Latte, Lloyd-Jones respectively), "we pray that Semele may have through all a clear-sailing share of life," or "of prosperity." Either supplement presupposes that Semele is now alive; whence the prevailing ascription to the *Semele or Hydrophori*, in defiance of Asclepiades. But these supplements cannot stand. Though lines 1–15 are lacunose in places, the general sense is not in doubt: the chorus evokes the liaison between Zeus and Semele, and also Hera's anger, and names all the principals straightforwardly ("Hera," "Cadmus," "Zeus," and "Semele" twice). It is then a single, passing, compendious reference, which is unthinkable in a play devoted to this very subject. In the *Xantriai* we are concerned not with Semele but with persons of a later

[31] As to the development of the story no probable results have ever been obtained; a few points touching the ritual background will be discussed below. Robert, *Gr. Heldens.* (above, note 29) 1.247–58, thought that Dionysus is implicit in the version in which Melampus purifies the girls at the sacred spring of Lusi in Arcadia, inasmuch as the scourings from the purification are said (in the paradoxographic tradition) to have imparted to the spring the power of turning people against wine; and this version he was inclined to ascribe to the *Melampodia*. But the earliest and fullest witness to the Lusi setting, Bacchylides, has the girls punished by Hera (11.40–58, 82–84, 92–112); and it is far more likely in any case that the power of the spring is a later accretion; "drunkenness has taken the place of madness," as Wilamowitz put it at *SBBerl* 1925.61, note 1 = *Kleine Schriften* 5.2 (Berlin 1939) 83, note 1.

[32] Though Proetus' city is Tiryns, not Argos, I shall continue to speak of Argos for convenience, as representing the whole area. Aeschylus doubtless knew the begging priestess as a contemporary institution, and his knowledge is more likely to have been of Argos or the Argive plain than of Tiryns in particular.

time who can hark back to both Semele and Pentheus (as in fr. 367 Mette). Knowing what has happened to Semele, such persons do not wish her health or prosperity, but rather undying fame; e.g. λά[χος εὐκλείας.[33]

After the choral song we have a speech of Hera in lyric hexameters, of which fifteen lines are partly preserved in the papyrus, beginning with the lines already known from literary sources. This is evidently Hera's first appearance as the begging priestess, and the invocation of the Inachid Nymphs establishes her identity.[34] The Nymphs are described as "the life-giving children of Inachus, the Argive river, who assist at all the works of human kind, at [marriage feasts?] and sweet marriage songs, and who [initiate?] maidens to marriage and to the conjugal bed" (lines 17–20); then follow lines about the modesty that becomes a bride (lines 21–23); "and fruitful of children grows the family to whom these come propitious with a kindly heart" (lines 24–25), sometimes making labour easy, but also potent to help when labour is hard and painful (lines 26–27, which are very broken); the next lines, 28–30, come back to the theme of marriage. Thus the Inachid Nymphs, like Nymphs everywhere, are patrons of marriage, childbirth, and child-rearing, and when the priestess begs on their behalf (line 16) the purpose is surely to promote the fertility of women. Nothing in these lines points to rain magic as a means of inducing agrarian fertility.[35]

As already said, ritual begging commonly operates on the principle of *do ut des*; the donors expect a substantial return for their token offerings. The begging boys who carry round the *eiresiônê* doubtless solicit everyone, for everyone is concerned with the prosperity of his own household and with the general fertility of the land; but the priestess of the Nymphs solicits women, especially young women or nubile girls who have yet to face the pain and danger of child-bearing. And these include the *Xantriai*, for carding wool like spinning is a task for the younger women of the household.

[33] Dodds, *Eur. Bacch.* (above, note 23) xxx, note 2, suggests εὐθύπορον λα[τρείαν in the sense of "continuing worship" at Semele's tomb in Thebes; but it would be hard to find a parallel for the idea or the expression, and a chorus at Argos will not be concerned with a cult at Thebes.

[34] Nilsson, *AC* 29 (1955) 337–38, 340 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) 287–88, 290, regards the priestess, Hera in disguise, as the *choregos* and the Nymphs whom she invokes as the chorus, who are called *Hydrophori* because they carry water drawn from sacred springs in a rite of rain-making. Some of the objections to this "bold hypothesis" (as Nilsson describes it) will be clear enough already; it may be added that a seeming priestess might lead a band of worshippers, real or seeming, but surely not a band of Nymphs addressed as such.

[35] Nilsson himself acknowledged, *AC* 29 (1955) 340 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) 290, that the custom which he envisaged "is not known in ancient Greece"; his analogues come from modern Balkan lands, where "young men lead a boy covered with green branches and finally throw him in the water, or else a little girl is led and water is poured upon her." It is not easy to see a connection with Aeschylus' Nymphs and begging priestess.

The descriptive title, "Women carding wool," will refer as usual to the chorus as they appear in the opening scene of the play; therefore the encounter with Hera belongs to the opening scene, as we should expect from its celebrity. Such an opening is exactly right for a tragedy dealing with the daughters of Proetus, who were at home in their father's "lovely halls" when Hera somehow afflicted them with madness (Bacch. 11.43–46). They were moreover at just the stage of life to think about marriage and child-bearing, and so to be approached by the begging priestess of the Nymphs. "As soon as they were grown up they went mad," says Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 2.26 [2.2.2], citing "Hesiod" and Acusilaus; and according to Bacchylides the insult that drew Hera's anger was uttered by the girls during a visit to her sanctuary, as if to pray for suitable husbands and to make pre-nuptial offerings: παρθενίαι γὰρ ἔτι ψυχᾶι κίον ἐς τέμενος πορφυροζώνοιο θεᾶς, "for still in maiden spirit they went to the precinct of the red-belted goddess" (11.47–49). The red belt is perhaps an emblem of Hera Τελεία, goddess of marriage;[36] the word for "growing up" in Apollodorus is ἐτελειώθησαν.

If the play began with the encounter between the begging priestess and the women, or rather girls, carding wool, it follows that the girls rebuffed the priestess and brought misfortune on themselves. A slight of this kind is not unlike the offense that is elsewhere imputed to the daughters of Proetus, of mocking Hera's shrine or statue as poor and shabby. While visiting the sanctuary they boasted that their father was richer than the goddess (Bacch. 11.50–52; cf. schol. *Od.* 14.225);[37] or they disparaged the *xoanon* (Apld. *Bibl.* 2.26 [2.2.2], citing Acusilaus *FGrH* 2 F 28).[38] Other late reports are more general or more conventional—they despised Hera's power (Prob. Verg. *Ecl.* 6.48), or counted themselves lovelier than the goddess, or dared to remove the gold from her garment for their own use (Serv. auct. ibid.)—and are easily explained as variants of the mockery which is common to Bacchylides and Acusilaus. To scorn the poverty of the cult is much the same as to

[36] E. Westermarck, *A Short History of Marriage* (London 1926) 192, remarks that the colour red is "frequently used in marriage rites"; he thinks of it as "a means of ensuring defloration."

[37] According to the Homeric scholium they boasted that their father's palace was grander than the goddess' temple. Although the scholium cites Pherecydes *FGrH* 3 F 114, it was observed by Robert, and is generally accepted, that some details, including the boast, are taken straight from Bacchylides, so that only the residual matter (at most) can be ascribed to Pherecydes.

[38] This was doubtless the small seated statue of pear-tree wood which was later to be seen at the Heraeum and reputed to be the oldest statue in Greece; cf. Robert, *Gr. Heldens.* (above, note 29) 249, 254; Jacoby on Acusilaus F 28; Burkert, *Homo Necans* (above, note 29) 189; Meuli, *Ges. Schr.* (above, note 1) 2.1065 (Jacoby is surely right to distinguish the seated statue from the "pillar" of the *Phoronis*). The statue, together with the begging custom, might well give the appearance of poverty.

rebuff the begging priestess. Aeschylus may have mentioned the mockery as well; perhaps it brought Hera to the palace in disguise, or perhaps it was now directed at the begging priestess.

The story of the daughters of Proetus originates in the worship of Hera as goddess of marriage and of pre-nuptial rites. The ritual background of the story has been misunderstood by commentators, even by those who rightly discount the Dionysiac elements as secondary.[39] Yet the indications of the Hesiodic account are clear and uniform. The girls had suitors from every quarter ([Hes.] *Cat.* fr. 130 M–W), but must have scorned them all, as they scorned the goddess Hera; this contempt for marriage and for its ritual auspices is the "hateful lewdness" for which Hera punished them (fr. 132 M–W). The punishment is condign. It was later assimilated to the Dionysiac madness which overtakes so many royal households; but in the Hesiodic *Catalogue* it is described quite differently, as consisting of "foolishness", ἠλοσύνη (fr. 37.15 M–W, a passing reference), and of ugliness caused by a loathsome disease (frs. 132–33 M–W, the fuller account).[40] Hera "destroyed their dainty bloom"

[39] Both Robert and Burkert do so, in the fullest studies of the question; but a word is needed here about the correlation between our story and Dionysiac ritual. Hesychius has the entries Ἀγράνια, "a festival at Argos for one of the daughters of Proetus," and Ἀγριάνια, "rites for the dead among the Argives, and games at Thebes." Robert, *Gr. Heldens.* (above, note 29) 1.250, notes 3–4, very aptly compared Apollodorus' account of the daughters of Proetus, in which one of the three, Iphinoe, expires during the pursuit; the pursuit, moreover, was conducted by Melampus and a troop of young men "with ululation and a sort of frenzied dancing," obviously a ritual trait (*Bibl.* 2.29 [2.2.7–8]). Since the pursuit leads to Sicyon, the festival in question here will belong not to Argos but to Sicyon, where Iphinoe was indeed commemorated by a monument in the Classical agora—see *SEG* 15.195 and A. Griffin, *Sikyon* (Oxford 1982) 14–15; but we should expect the festivals of Argos and Sicyon to be very much alike and to assist the transposition of our story. It may be added that the wild pursuit and the death of Iphinoe are rather like the mythical events that reflect the closing rites of the Attic Anthesteria, namely a murderous revel of drunken peasants and the death of Erigone. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (above, note 29) 191–200, now aligns the case of Iphinoe with still other Dionysiac pursuit stories and with Plutarch's account of Dionysiac ritual at Boeotian Orchomenus; this gives an interpretation of the widespread festival Agriania, Agrionia, Agerrania, which improves markedly on Nilsson's at *Gr. Feste* (above, note 6) 271–74. Yet the Dionysiac *aition* of Apollodorus, in singling out one daughter, is a departure from the original story of the girls who slighted Hera. According to Burkert, *Homo Necans* 191, "The Dionysiac element is here not something radically different, but only a slight re-accenting of the structures which also exist in the non-Dionysiac ritual: the dissolution of the order," etc. This I regard as allegory, like the general scheme of *Auflösung* and *neue Begrundung* into which Burkert fits so many festivals. The significance of the story is quite transformed by Dionysiac ritual.

[40] That ἠλοσύνη means not "madness" but "foolishness" is shown by its use at Theocr. 30.12, of a philanderer past his prime, and at Nic. *Al.* 420, of a toddler eating henbane. It is therefore another humiliating punishment for adolescent self-conceit. Commentators have hitherto equated it with the later μανία; yet even madness may be the instrument of Hera just as well as Dionysus, as Henrichs, *ZPE* 15 (1974) 300, note 13, remarks against Pfeiffer. In classifying words for "madness" J. Mattes, *Der Wahnsinn im griechischen*

(fr. 132 M–W) and brought unsightly skin eruptions—scab and blotches, κνύος and ἀλφός, and loss of hair (fr. 133.3–5 M–W). Just before these details comes the phrase "over the boundless earth" (fr. 133.2 M–W), showing that in the *Catalogue* as in later accounts the girls flee from home and roam abroad; Hera sent first the foolishness, then the disfigurement, to judge from a scrap of Philodemus *De Pietate* which gives just this sequence: "and on the daughters of Proetus Hera inflicted first madness and then skin blemishes," ἀλφοί (P. Herc. 1609 VIII, as newly deciphered by A. Henrichs).[41]

Apart from Philodemus no later source mentions the disfigurement; the story comes to exemplify Dionysiac madness and is a favourite on that account. Yet there is some indirect evidence to show that the disfigurement was important to the original version, and that even more important than the disfigurement was the means by which Melampus effected a cure. In view of the celebrity of the story the cure was located at various places, not only in the Argolid (Soph. *Iph.* fr. 288 Nauck², 309 Pearson/Radt), but at Sicyon (Apld. *Bibl.* 2.29 [2.2.7]; Paus. 2.7.8), at Lusi in Arcadia (Bacch. 11.40–42, 95–112; etc.), and at Samicum in Elis (Str. 8.3.19 [346–47]; cf. Paus. 5.5.11). At Samicum Melampus washed the girls in the waters of the river Anigrus, which have the power of curing skin disease, ἀλφοί, λεῦκαι, λειχῆνες (Str. *loc. cit.*); Pausanias gives a vivid description of the therapeutic practice attached to the local cult of the Nymphs (whom Strabo mentions incidentally); after praying to the Nymphs the patient afflicted with ἀλφός or λεύκη bathed in the river and left his uncleanness in it.[42] At Lusi too the girls were washed in the like-named spring, sacred to both Artemis and the Nymphs (Ov. *Met.* 15.325–28; Vitr. 8.3.21; Isigonus in Westermann, *Paradoxogr. Gr.* 186; Steph. Byz s.v. Ἀζανία, Λουσοί); to these famous waters the literary tradition ascribes only fabulous virtues, but we may safely assume that they also had the more mundane power of healing skin disease.[43] At Sicyon the healing perhaps took place at the river Sythas, the setting of certain purification rites in the cult of Apollo which Proetus founded in gratitude (Paus. 2.7.8).

Baths in running water are not a normal cure for madness; conversely, skin disease is no part of madness as conventionally portrayed, and so in two later cases where we hear of such disfigurement it is very

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Mythos und in der Dichtung (Heidelberg 1970) 107, puts ἠλοσύνη and ἠλεός under the head of mental "wandering," as if from "the stem ἀλ-"; this is not warranted by ancient usage, and modern opinion is divided.

[41] See *ZPE* 15 (1974) 297–301.

[42] There are sulphur springs at the site, and Frazer on Paus. 5.5.11 reports their use by modern patients, perhaps suffering from skin disease, though he does not say so.

[43] The spring and the cult of Artemis at Lusi are discussed by R. Stiglitz, *Die grossen Göttinnen Arkadiens* (Vienna 1967) 101–9.

likely borrowed from the story of Proetus' daughters. In Aeschylus' *Choephori* the horrifying threats by which Apollo compels Orestes to kill his mother (lines 276–96) include not only madness and outcasting but also diseases that gnaw the flesh (lines 279–80), λειχῆνες (281), and λεῦκαι (282, reading λεύκας κόρσαις with Lobel). In a very late and derivative tale Artemis sends ἀλφὸς μετὰ μανίας on the hunter Teuthras, and a stone occurring on the mountain named after him heals ἀλφοί and λέπραι ([Plut.] *De Fluv.* 21.4, citing [Ctesias] *FGrH* 688 F 73); since Teuthras' mother is said to be Lysippe, otherwise a daughter of Proetus, the borrowing is patent.

Such a conspicuous element of the story must derive from ritual. Yet it is hardly satisfactory to adduce ritual masks formed by daubing the face with mud or white barley-meal or chalk or gypsum.[44] Masks would not much resemble the sores and scabs and blotches of skin disease; they are not associated with Argive Hera or any near congener; to explain the original form of the story we may not look to Dionysiac worship, where whitened and blackened faces are well attested. The girls' punishment can be understood in the light of the remedy, a bath in running water. Melampus washed away their affliction with the purifying waters which Nymphs or other deities supply. In the versions surveyed above the waters are found at Sicyon or Lusi or Samicum, but the original story undoubtedly spoke of some river or spring near Tiryns. Argos abounded in rivers and springs (Str. 8.6.7–8 [370–71]), and these rivers and springs had a large place in ritual, especially in the ritual of Hera. To mention only the leading instances, the Palladium of Argos was bathed each year in the river Inachus (Call. *Lav. Pall.*); at Nauplia a statue to Hera was probably washed in the spring Canathus, as the "secret rite" behind the story that Hera renewed her virginity through a yearly bath (Paus. 2.38.2–3); the same custom may have obtained at the Heraeum, where the brook Eleutherium was used for "purifications" and "secret rites" (Paus. 2.17.1), for certain "girls" or "priestesses" at Argos had the task of drawing Hera's bath (Hsch., Et. Magn. s.v. Ἡρεσίδες).[45]

Every *aition* sets out to answer obvious questions that are posed by ritual. Why do women at Argos bathe at certain times in purifying waters? Because once the king's daughters bathed in these waters, under the direction of the famous seer Melampus. Why did he direct them to do so? Because they suffered from the disorder which of all things most requires purifying waters, a nasty skin disease. Why were they thus

[44] So Burkert, *Homo Necans* (above, note 29) 190–91; Henrichs, *ZPE* 15 (1974) 301, note 18.

[45] E. Diehl, *Die Hydria* (Mainz 1964) 176–79, looks for further evidence of ritual baths in the Argive cult of Hera.

afflicted? Because they mocked Hera, the very goddess who has ordained ritual baths for women.

Aeschylus knew the Argive cult at first hand, since he was able to add the begging priestess, a role more suited to the stage than to epic narrative, but entirely consonant with other versions, which hold up the seeming poverty of the cult. Just how the frenzied Bacchants came into it is hard to say; perhaps the outcast girls were joined by the Argive women whom Dionysus had driven forth, as in the systemizing version of Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 2.28 [2.2.5], cf. 3.37 [4.5.3]). At all events Hera and frenzied Bacchants *do* appear together in the *Xantriai*, as they appear together in the reports of Proetus' daughters; in the present context we cannot pause to explore the general development and to isolate Aeschylus' contribution.

For us the main result is that Aeschylus' *Xantriai* showed in its opening scene the daughters of Proetus carding wool in their father's palace and a priestess, actually Hera, begging alms from them on behalf of the Nymphs who preside over marriage and childbirth. This interpretation of the papyrus fragment and of the play is as secure as such things can be. The points of resemblance with Delian cult are the following. (1) The Inachid Nymphs in the train of Hera, like Opis and Arge in the train of Artemis, are concerned with childbirth. (2) The begging priestess at Argos answers to the begging women on Delos and elsewhere; the priestess too will be a mature woman, since she is impersonated by Hera. (3) As the priestess goes round she invokes the Inachid Nymphs in a traditional song, just as the Delian and other women do with Opis and Arge; for the long formal invocation of our papyrus fragment must reproduce an element of cult. (4) At Argos as on Delos the deities of childbirth are implored by girls before marriage; the daughters of Proetus answer to Hyperoche and Laodice. (5) Wool-making as a domestic duty is again allied with child-bearing; at Argos girls are carding wool as the priestess approaches, and on Delos girls dedicate their spindles at the *sêma*.

III. A Begging Priestess of Athena at Athens

A form of ritual begging is attested for Athens by a notice recurring in the Suda s.v. *αἰγίς* and in the paroemiographers s.v. *αἰγὶς περὶ πόλιν*. The fullest version—which alone preserves the word for "begging"—appears in cod. Gr. 676 of the Bibliothèque Nationale, as transcribed by L. Cohen, *Zu den Paroemiographen* (*Breslauer philol. Abh.* 2.2, 1887) 65 = *Corp. Paroemiogr. Gr. Suppl.* (Hildesheim 1961) 1.65.[46]

[46] The version of the Paris codex is adduced by Nilsson in *Hommages à J. Bidez et F. Cumont* (Brussels 1949) 223–24 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) and again in *Προσφορὰ εἰς Στ. Κυριακίδην* (Athens 1953) 511–12 = *Op. Sel.* 3.246–47; by K. Kerenyi, *Die Jungfrau und Mutter der griechischen Religion* (Zurich 1952) 72, note 293; and by Burkert,

αἰγὶς περὶ πόλιν· αἰγὶς λέγεται τὸ ἐκ τῶν στεμμάτων δίκτυον· ἡ δὲ ἱέρεια Ἀθήνησι τὴν ἱερὰν αἰγίδα φέρουσα ἀγείρει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκροπόλεως ἀρξαμένη πρὸς τὰ ἱερὰ καὶ πρὸς τὰς νεογάμους· ἔστι δὲ καὶ αὕτη θυσία τῶν ἀρχαίων. τάττεται δὲ ἡ παροιμία ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνέδην περιιόντων.

The second sentence is slightly defective; since the two πρός phrases are left hanging, a verb or participle is lost. It can be supplied from the Suda, which gives a much abridged version: ἡ δὲ ἱέρεια τὴν ἱερὰν αἰγίδα φέρουσα πρὸς τὰς νεογάμους εἰσήρχετο. In our version, add καὶ εἰσιοῦσα or εἰσέρχεται δέ before the πρός phrases, and the sense is complete, and we see how the abridged version arose.

"Those who go round helter-skelter" prompt the derisive remark, αἰγὶς περὶ πόλιν, which refers to a begging custom, ἀγείρει. The begging has to do with "new brides," τὰς νεογάμους. Rather surprisingly, the begging priestess appears to serve Athena, inasmuch as she "starts from the Acropolis" and "carries the *aigis*"; if any other deity were in view, the explanation would say so.[47] Since the Acropolis is the starting point, it seems rather likely that πόλις is used in the old sense, and that the begging was done "round the Acropolis" rather than "throughout the city"—though the distinction is merely verbal.

If the priestess' conduct is proverbially frantic or helter-skelter, ἀνέδην, it must be that she not only carries but also shakes the *aigis*, just as Zeus does in the *Iliad*, and also Apollo and Athena. The *aigis* which she uses is defined as "the network of woollen fillets." A like definition is given by Harpocration for the plural form αἰγίδας which he found in Lycurgus' speech περὶ τῆς διοικήσεως (fr. 24 Conomis)—and which happens also to be preserved on stone in a series of ritual provisions enacted by Lycurgus in c. 334 B.C. (*IG* 2^2 333 c11). The definition is further ascribed by Eustathius both to Aelius Dionysius (a 48 Erbse) and to Pausanias Atticista (a 40 Erbse). The traditional *aigis* of Athenian ritual was therefore a "network of woollen fillets." The priestess of Athena went round swinging and flapping the *aigis* and so became a byword for turbulent activity. This evidence for the *aigis* has not been much attended to by scholars. The familiar *aigis* of art and literature is a piece of hide, perhaps a goat-skin, with a Gorgon's head medallion and a fringe of snakes; therefore, we are told, the priestess'

Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche (Stuttgart 1977) 166–67. Others operate with the shorter versions and are therefore unaware of the begging. Kerenyi, to be sure, dismisses the Paris version as a Byzantine elaboration, but this is wilful and inconsequent; the shorter versions presuppose the longer.

[47] Nilsson (above, note 46) denies that the priestess and the *aigis* are Athena's; they are late and adventitious, and the proverb shows the usual Greek contempt for Oriental mendicants like the *metragyrtai* and the votaries of Pergaean Artemis. This is far off the mark. The proverb is not aimed at begging as such; and in later days, when mendicants were common and disreputable, this priestess could hardly typify the practice to the point of being proverbial; and what would the *aigis* then be, and what would it signify?

aigis is only a substitute, or another article altogether. But the familiar *aigis* is clearly a departure from the Homeric *aigis*, and the priestess' *aigis* agrees remarkably with the Homeric, which is "tasselled" (its formular epithet) and is strenuously shaken.

It is obvious and acknowledged that the purpose of accosting new brides with the *aigis* was to make them fertile.[48] It is however far from obvious why the *aigis* and the priestess of Athena should have this power. The piquant notion of Athena as a "mother goddess," still urged upon us from time to time, would not help much even if it were credible; the *aigis* makes this a special case. The explanation is to be sought in the cult partnership of Zeus and Athena; for just as the *aigis* passes from Zeus to Athena in poetry, so it must have done in ritual, where these two deities are more commonly conjoined than any other Olympian pair. In such cults, typically found on the citadel, Zeus is often the weather god, and Athena is often a goddess of woman's work, concerned also with maturity and marriage as the inception of woman's work. As everyone knows, in the *Iliad* the *aigis* is an attribute of Zeus as the weather god; this attribute, or rather instrument, might then pass to the cult partner of the weather god, to be turned to other use. Certain instruments, such as the "fleece of Zeus," appear to be used for both weather and fertility magic. In the present context this is as far as we can go in addressing a complicated subject which is not well understood.

The following points may be noted for comparison with other instances. (1) The begging is done by a priestess, again a mature woman. (2) Instead of singing a song which conjures fertility, she makes use of the *aigis*. (3) Athena, otherwise remote from fertility and marriage, acquires these concerns while presiding over the recruitment of the community; her case somewhat resembles Apollo's, another patron of ritual begging.

IV. Begging Women, or a Begging Priestess, in the Cult of Demeter on Cos

Ritual begging was practiced in a cult of Demeter at Antimacheia on Cos which ministered to women when they married and when they were betrothed. An inscription giving rules for the priestess, of the late fourth or the early third century, mentions rites for ταῖς δὲ τελευμέναις καὶ ταῖς ἐπινυμφευομέναις and again for ταῖς τελευμέναις alone (*SIG*^{3} 1006 = *LSCG* 175, lines 4–5, 9). The two juxtaposed categories have been variously interpreted, but much the likeliest rendering, both on general grounds and in view of the analogies which can be cited, is "those who are marrying and

[48] So e.g. L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932) 16; Kerenyi, *Jungfrau* (above, note 46) 62; Burkert, *Hermes* 94 (1966) 20, and *Gr. Rel.* (above, note 46) 166.

those who are being betrothed."[49] Plutarch knows of Demeter as a traditional goddess of marriage whose priestess sings to the groom and bride as they retire to the nuptial chamber (*Conj. Praec.* 1.138B). (ἐπι)*νυμφεύειν* means either to "betroth" or to "marry" a woman, and *τελεῖν* "fulfill" might easily be used in the latter sense, as we see from the poetic phrases *τελεῖν γάμον*, *τέλος γάμοιο*. Hera, another goddess of marriage, was worshipped at Plataea under the title Τελεία and Νυμφευομένη (Paus. 9.2.7), i.e. as a mature woman and as a new bride. Thus both categories can be taken to refer to literal marriage, and there is no reason to suppose that the cult initiated women into Demeter's mysteries, either in consequence of marriage or as a figurative marriage.

Since the cult is chiefly or exclusively concerned with the marriage and the betrothal of women, it is significant that "the begging," *τ[οῦ] δὲ ἀγερμοῦ*, is mentioned as a source of revenue (line 12). Rules are given, just where the inscription breaks off, for dividing the proceeds "of the begging and of the offertory-boxes(?) and of all the sacrificial perquisites" (lines 12–13). Part of the proceeds must have gone to the priestess, the rest perhaps for ritual needs.[50] Though nothing is said about the manner of begging, we can take it that the priestess either begged herself or led or organized a band of begging women.[51]

[49] So Paton and Hicks, the first editors, and Hiller von Gaertringen on *SIG*[3] 1006, who cites the parallels; the compound form *ἐπινυμφεύειν* is otherwise found only in Eumathius (s. xi, in Hercher, *Erot. Scr. Gr.* 593), where it means "betroth." "Those who are marrying and those who are *re*-marrying" (*LSJ* s.vv. *τελέω* III 4 and *ἐπινυμφεύω*) is a much less likely variant. Other interpretations—for which see, besides the commentaries of Hiller and Sokolowski, Nilsson, *Gr. Feste* (above, note 6) 327–28 and *AC* 29 (1955) 339 = *Op. Sel.* 3 (above, note 1) 289, and S. M. Sherwin-White, *Ancient Cos* (Göttingen 1978) 306—are "those who are being initiated and those who are marrying," *scil.* within the sanctuary (Sokolowski, Sherwin-White), or those who are being initiated as citizens and those who are being initiated in virtue of marriage to a Coan (Nilsson), or simply two grades of initiate (Usener, Ziehen). Of these the first and second associate initiation with marriage, perhaps as a preliminary and a sequel respectively, and in the third the second grade of initiation takes its name from either betrothal or marriage. On any view, therefore, the cult has much to do with marriage.

[50] Sokolowski prints Herzog's restorations, which are adventurous. In particular there is no reason to think that a rather odd provision found in another Coan *lex sacra*, LSCG 166 lines 23–34, gives the means of completing the *ταῖς δ[ὲ]* clause at the end of line 13. At this same point Hiller brings in "the goddesses," i.e. Demeter and Persephone, to share the proceeds, but Persephone is not wanted here, for in the heading of the inscription the priestess serves Demeter alone (line 1). More likely the priestess was to minister from the proceeds to one of our categories, e.g. *ταῖς δ[ὲ]* | *[τελουμέναις τὴν ἱέρειαν παρέχειν* or *παρασκευάξαι ἐκ τούτων κτλ.*

[51] Another epigraphic instance of *ἀγείρειν* in a rather promising context is not to our purpose. A Messenian calendar of the period before 191 B.C. regulates certain festivities falling on Agrianius 12, as it seems (*IG* 5.1.1447 = *LSCG* 64, lines 7–18). In lines 14–16, which like the rest are very fragmentary, the female attendant called *thoinarmostria* is to "collect," *ἀγερεῖ*, "five drachmas" or something worth five drachmas and also "clay mixed

There is reason to think that this begging custom was conspicuous enough to be reflected in myth. Though Cos makes little stir in political history until the Hellenistic period, the island contributes a notable store of myth to epic and later poetry; much of it is plainly aetiological, and some of it concerns Demeter.

Demeter's worship was deeply rooted on Cos.[52] It is attested archaeologically at several places from the Archaic period onwards, and was reputedly founded by the two sons of king Eurypylus, Chalcon and Antagoras, who welcomed the goddess as she roamed in search of Kore (schol. Theocr. *Id.* 7.5). Certain Coan families traced their line to Chalcon and Antagoras, among them the family celebrated by Theocritus in his harvest idyll, which describes the festivities in honour of Demeter at the family farm (*Id.* 7.1–9, 31–34, 131–57); these families doubtless conducted hereditary cults of the goddess. A new fragment of the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, containing the story of Mestra daughter of Erysichthon, includes a brief episode in which Mestra is abducted from Athens to Cos by Poseidon, and we hear in quick succession of Mestra's offspring Eurypylus, and of his sons Chalcon and Antagoras, and of Heracles' sack of Cos (fr. 43a M–W lines 55–65). Eurypylus and Heracles' sack were already well known to Homer;[53] why was Mestra of Athens brought into such famous and exotic company? Since the Hesiodic episode gives a prominent place to Chalcon and Antagoras, and since these figures are associated with the Coan worship of Demeter, we look for a ritual *aition*.

It is therefore significant that a Coan *aition* reported by Plutarch makes play with the same persons and events as the *Catalogue*—with the struggle between Antagoras and Heracles—and addresses two customs of Antimacheia which like the cult of Demeter attested epigraphically have to do with women and marriage (*Quaest. Gr.* 58.304C–E).[54]

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with chaff," evidently fees and materials needed for a banquet. Sokolowski in his commentary interprets and restores the passage so that it becomes a regular "quête," but this is quite unwarranted.

[52] See P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972) 2.916–17, note 290, and Sherwin-White, *Anc. Cos* (above, note 49) 305–12. Two items of evidence must be discounted, however. D. Fehling, *RhM* 115 (1972) 185–96, has shown that the putative folktale about Dimitroula, recorded on Cos at the end of the nineteenth century, is unlikely to be an authentic survival. Nor does Callimachus envisage a Coan setting in his *Hymn to Demeter*; the festival at which he rehearses the Erysichthon story as an aretalogy has no real connection with the story and certainly does not take place on Cos; Wilamowitz showed long ago that Callimachus intends a typical picture of a widespread festival.

[53] Apld. *Bibl.* 2.138 (7.1.2) gives Eurypylus' parents as Poseidon and the eponym Astypalaea; the mother is not named elsewhere.

[54] For these customs see Nilsson, *Gr. Feste* (above, note 6) 451–53; E. Fehrle, *Die kultische Keuschheit im Altertum* (Giessen 1910) 91–92; W. R. Halliday, *The Greek Questions of Plutarch* (Oxford 1928) 212–19. Nilsson, followed by Fehrle and with some hesitation by Halliday, speaks of Heracles as a "god of marriage," and though the argument is not wholly convincing, other evidence to this effect can be adduced. There is the

Being worsted by Antagoras and the Coans, Heracles concealed himself by wearing a woman's dress; so it is that the priest of Heracles offers sacrifice while wearing a woman's dress and headband. Afterwards, on gaining the victory, Heracles was purified and married Chalciope and again wore a flowered dress for the occasion; so it is that bridegrooms wear women's dress when they welcome their brides. The second custom shows that at Antimacheia, as in some other instances, the cult of Heracles is linked with marriage and especially with the wedding night. Heracles and Demeter may even have presided jointly over marriage.[55] For our purpose it suffices that a cult of Antimacheia close in spirit to Demeter's was traced back to Antagoras and Heracles.[56] This analogy supports the inference that Mestra is brought to Cos to provide an *aition* relating to Demeter.

What aspect of the Coan cult of Demeter does Mestra evoke? Burkert has suggested lately that Mestra's father Erysichthon evokes a form of ritual begging distinctive of the Triopium promontory near Cos,

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cult partnership of Heracles and Demeter, and the nuptial rite at Thespiae (below, note 55), and the story of Heracles and Omphale. The last offers a close parallel to the first half of the Coan *aition*: Heracles adopts female dress in serving Omphale as he does at Antimacheia in taking refuge with "a Thracian woman." This part of the Omphale story is not attested before the Hellenistic period, but may well be early; cf. H. Herter in *Wege zur Buchwissenschaft* (Bonn 1966) 39 = *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1975) 543.

[55] Heracles and Demeter are worshipped together in the homeland—at Megalopolis and at a rural shrine not far away (Paus. 8.31.3, 35.2), and at Mycalessus (Paus. 9.19.4) and at Thespiae (Athens, Nat. Mus. 2795 = W. Schild-Xenidou, *Boiotische Grab- und Weihreliefs archaischer und klassischer Zeit* [Munich 1972] 54 no. 62, a votive relief of c. 375–350 B.C. depicting the pair with their worshippers; *Deltion* 3 [1917] 353, note 4, a dedication of Roman date associating Demeter with the festival Heracleia); Paus. 9.27.8 compares the cults at Thespiae and Mycalessus. At Thespiae Heracles was served by a virgin priestess, and his liaison with the fifty daughters of Thespius reflects some ritual observance on the wedding night, as at Antimacheia. At Megalopolis, Mycalessus, and Thespiae Pausanias says it is not the familiar Heracles but Heracles the Idaean Dactyl; cf. B. Hemberg, *Eranos* 50 (1952) 55–59, who observes that these instances recall the usual association between the Dactyls and a maternal goddess.

[56] Plutarch's immediate source was doubtless a Hellenistic antiquarian (the only names that offer are Macareus *FGrH* 456 and [Arist.] *Kôiôn Pol.*), but his story need not be dismissed as late and secondary—Robert, *Gr. Heldens.* (above, note 29) 563, calls it a "compromise" between versions favourable and unfavourable to Heracles, reflecting Dorian and non-Dorian views. On the contrary, the *aition*—in which Heracles and a few shipwrecked companions are roughly handled by the Coans—accords with the prevailing tradition. In Homer it is an ill wind sent by Hera that blows Heracles to Cos, "far from all his friends," and Zeus must rescue him (*Il.* 14.250–56, 15.25–30); Hera's intervention may well have been feigned by Homer, but presupposes that Heracles met with a reverse on Cos; Apld. *Bibl.* 2.137–38 (7.1.1–2) gives details of the reverse. In the epic *Meropis* (Pap. Col. 5604 lines 17–88) Athena delivers Heracles from certain death at the hands of a giant Asterus. So Heracles' faltering is an early and constant element, contradicted only by a few enthusiasts (cf. Pind. frs. 33a, 51 Snell-Maehler), and like so many other features of the Heracles cycle it probably derives from peculiarities of his local worship.

a form in which a sacred tree hung with tokens of plenty was carried round in honour of Demeter.[57] The strange and fluctuating story of Erysichthon and Mestra, of the famished father and the dexterous daughter, may well remind us of ritual begging.[58] In the *Catalogue* Mestra is a perpetual bride eliciting bride-gifts for Erysichthon (fr. 43a M–W lines 2–54, 66–69). In Callimachus we do not hear of Mestra at all, and Erysichthon is a lad living at home with his parents, who at the last is driven to begging at the crossroads (*H. Cer.* 113–15). According to Antoninus Liberalis "Hypermestra" could appear in either gender, with the same result: "when sold as a wife she brought a price, and when changed to a man she provided sustenance for her father Aithon" (*Met.* 17.5). Moreover, in certain versions Erysichthon is displaced by Triopas, otherwise his father; after offending Demeter in Thessaly Triopas arrives destitute, a virtual beggar, at the Triopium promontory or sanctuary (Diod. 5.61.1–2 = *FGrH* 533 [Rhodos, Anhang] F 11; Marc. Sid. *IG* 14.1389 II 36–37; Hyg. *Astr.* 2.14). A parallel figure, Phorbas, said to be either father or son of Triopas, arrives destitute on Rhodes—and the lad and his sister are entertained in a hospitable household, an avowed *aition*, obviously of a begging rite (Dieuchidas *FGrH* 485 F 7 = Piccirilli, *Megarika* 2 F 10).

Burkert's perceptive suggestion needs to be amended in some respects. The Triopium, where Triopas originates, is a shrine of Apollo, not of Demeter.[59] Triopas and Phorbas, moreover, are linked in genealogy with Apollo; the Rhodian beggars who sing the swallow-song and the crow-song serve Apollo; so do the Erysichthonidae at Athens, and the *Catalogue* now reveals that the hungry Erysichthon is indeed the Athenian eponym.[60] And

[57] So *Gnomon* 46 (1974) 322–23, and *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1979) 135. However we reconstruct the ritual background of the Erysichthon story, doubt will remain about the larger context in which Burkert sets this instance.

[58] The story is discussed from other points of view by Fehling, *RhM* 115 (1972) 173–96; F. Bömer, *Ovid, Metamorphosen VIII–IX* (Heidelberg 1977) 232–39; Henrichs, *BASP* 16 (1979) 85–92.

[59] That Demeter somehow goes with the Triopium is a prevailing misconception. The civic sanctuary of Demeter at (New) Cnidus—which much resembles, in its setting and its furnishings, the Demeter sanctuaries excavated at Thasos, Corinth, Gela, and Cyrene—is far from the Triopium and was quite unknown to fame until Newton brought Demeter's statue to the British Museum. Here it must suffice to observe that the Cnidian cult is not said or implied to derive from Triopas, except perhaps by the addled commentators on Lyc. *Alex.* 1391–92 (whence Et. Magn. 548.8), who provide the only mention, quite unwitting, of this cult in ancient literature; that the fantastic rigmarole of schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 2.27b is merely improvised from Hdt. 7.153; and that the Triopium of Herodes Atticus, a large plantation in danger of despoilment by intruders, was named premonitorily from Demeter's grove in Thessaly, not from her cult in Cnidus.

[60] Athens is shown to be Erysichthon's home by the closing lines of the story (the opening lines are too broken to be of help): Mestra returns from Cos "to her native land," "to

since the name Ἐρυσίχθων means "Protect-the-land," it is natural to suppose that this Apolline *genos* has to do with Apollo's "protecting" bough, εἰρεσιώνη or εἰρυσιώνη, and so with ritual begging. Thus far then the principals of the story are projections of ritual begging in the cult of Apollo, the most familiar form of such begging. Demeter comes into it only when Triopas is transplanted to Thessaly—as he is already in the *Catalogue*, which by making Triopas father of Erysichthon attaches the Athenian hero to the stemma of the Aeolidae.

Other elements of the Erysichthon story are too diverse to be considered here. The foregoing exposition, which is all that space allows, merely suggests how the story bears on the present case. The custom of ritual begging common to Athens and Cos appears to account for the treatment of Mestra in the Hesiodic *Catalogue*—for both her conduct at home and her abduction abroad.

To sum up, details of the Coan custom are scarce, but the following points may be mentioned. (1) Demeter presides over marriage and betrothal at Antimacheia, like Hera at Argos and Artemis on Delos. (2) If the begging is done by the priestess, she resembles the priestesses at Argos and Athens; if it is done by the worshippers, they resemble the begging women of Ionia and the islands.

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the hill of holy Athens," and there resumes the task of caring for Erysichthon (fr. 43a M-W lines 66–69). K. J. McKay, *Erysichthon. A Callimachean Comedy* (Leiden 1962) 27, thinks that Poseidon may have gone to Athens, but Mestra to some other homeland; space and syntax, however, do not allow a supplement in this sense. Moreover, the dispute that arises between Sisyphus and Erysichthon over the defaulted marriage contract is seemingly settled by Athena and might be interpreted as the *aition* of an Athenian law of sale; see M. L. West, *Gnomon* 35 (1963) 754–55. Finally, the next *Eoea* after Mestra's brings us to Megara (ibid. lines 70–91).