

PRAISE AND PERSUASION IN GREEK HYMNS*

LARGELY because the processes of transmission have been unkind, the religious hymns sung by the Greeks during worship of a god on a public or private occasion have received less than their due attention from modern scholars. Our sources frequently mention in passing *that* hymns were sung on the way to Eleusis, for example, or at the well Kallichoron on arrival at Eleusis, or by the deputations to Delos for the Delia, but they usually fail to record the texts or contents of these hymns. Until the fourth century BC temple authorities did not normally have the texts of cult songs inscribed; and the works themselves were by a diversity of authors, some well-known, some obscure, making the collection of their 'hymns' a difficult task for the Alexandrian compilers. Some such hymns were traditional—Olen's at Delos, for example¹—handed down orally from generation to generation; others were taught to a chorus for a specific occasion and then forgotten. Nor do the surviving corpora of 'hymns'—I refer to the Homeric Hymns, Callimachus' six hymns, and the Orphic Hymns—go very far to satisfy our curiosity as to the nature of this ubiquitous hieratic poetry. The Homeric Hymns would seem to have been preludes (προοίμια) to the recitation of epic poetry; they are in the same metre and style as epic, and the singer usually announces that he is about to commence another poem on finishing the hymn.² Their content may give us authentic material about a god and his attendant myths, but the context of their performance seems distinct from worship proper³. The Homeric Hymns provided the basic model for Callimachus' hymns although it is clear that he adapted the model to permit innovations such as the mimetic mode of hymns 2, 5 and 6, which present an eye-witness account of religious ritual.⁴ Some find Callimachus' hymns lacking in true religious feeling;⁵ few seriously maintain that they were intended, or could have been used, for performance in cult.⁶ The Orphic Hymns are a special case: although reminiscent in metre and

* I express thanks to J.M. Bremer (Amsterdam) and G.W. Most (Heidelberg) for their constructive criticisms of this article.

¹ Cf. Callimachus, Hymn iv (to Delos) 304 ff.

² E.g. 5. 293 to Aphrodite: σεῦ δ' ἐγὼ ἀρξάμενος μεταβήσομαι ἄλλον ἐς ὕμνον. Or 6.21, to Aphrodite: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ σεῖο καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομαι ἄοιδῆς. Cf. T.W. Allen, W.R. Halliday, E.E. Sikes (ed.), *The Homeric Hymns* (Oxford 1936), introduction, but (xciv ff.) they question whether the longer hymns should be considered as mere preludes to epic recitation. A. Aloni, 'Prooimia, Hymnoi, Elio Aristide e i cugini bastardi', *QUCC* n.s. iv-vi (1980) 23-40, emphasizes that the hexameter prooimion (of which the Homeric hymns are examples) was a type of hymn, that used by an epic singer or rhapsode prior to epic recitation at festival games (ἀγῶνες μουσικοί).

³ J.S. Clay, *The politics of Olympus: form and meaning in the major Homeric Hymns* (Princeton 1989) in her introduction goes so far as to suggest that these hymns may have been intended for recital at banquets, like Demodokos' song of Aphrodite's adultery with Ares in *Od.* viii.

⁴ Cf. N. Hopkinson, *A Hellenistic anthology* (Cambridge 1989) 111-12.

⁵ Cf. J.U. Powell, E.A. Barber, *New chapters in the history of Greek literature* (Oxford 1921) 41: '...and the strange "Hymns" of Callimachus, laboriously compiled, it would seem, out of a handbook of mythology and a Dialect Dictionary, and containing not enough religion (to borrow the expression of a celebrated Bishop) "to save a tomtit"'. This view, however, is extreme. It is true that Callimachus' main purpose is literary rather than hieratic, but there is nothing bogus or trivial about the myths he relates. A.W. Bulloch, 'The future of a Hellenistic illusion: some observations on Callimachus and religion', *MH* xli (1984) 209-230, argues for greater depth of religious feeling, especially in the sixth hymn. On the mimetic hymns see W. Albert, *Das mimetische Gedicht in der Antike. Geschichte und Typologie von den Anfängen bis in die augusteische Zeit* (Frankfurt-am-Main 1988) 55 ff.

⁶ Cf. e.g. N. Hopkinson, *Callimachus: Hymn to Demeter* (Cambridge 1984) 37; A.W. Bulloch, *Callimachus' Fifth Hymn* (Cambridge 1985) 4 ff. Some defend the possibility that Callimachus' hymns were sung in conjunction with religious rites: E. Cahen, *Les hymnes de Callimaque* (Paris 1930) 281; P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1984) ii.b 916 f. with nn. 289-92.

form of the shorter Homeric hymns, they appear to have been works used by an Orphic community of worshippers in late antiquity.⁷ A further 'corpus' of religious hymns of a sort has come to light with the magical papyri: mainly hexameter texts not totally dissimilar from the Orphic hymns were commonly used to accompany or support a magical *praxis*. Their language often overlaps with earlier popular religion but clearly, again, they constitute a special case.⁸

So what paths remain for the study of the hieratic poetry actually used in public cult in the archaic, classical and Hellenistic periods? The situation is not completely bleak, as Bremer demonstrated in his valuable article 'Greek hymns' in 1981.⁹ A number of lyric poems by e.g. Sappho, Alkaios and Anakreon are closely modelled on cult poetry, although the poems themselves express personal concerns, or those of the hetairia. The recovery of a sizeable portion of Pindar's and Bacchylides' paeans and dithyrambs shows the sophisticated and developed nature of public cult poetry in the early fifth century. Attic tragedy and comedy is rich in lyrics cast in the mould of cult hymns. When we reach the fourth century we begin to encounter inscriptions recording the text of hymns sung at cult centres. From this point on we are relatively well supplied with genuine cult hymns sung and performed at festivals. The hymns with musical notation from Delphi are famous; those from Epidauros were accorded a separate volume by Maas;¹⁰ Powell's *Collectanea Alexandrina* contains a number of Hellenistic hymns by such authors as Ariphron, Philodamos, Aristonoos, Isyllos and Makedonikos.¹¹ The magical hymns already mentioned are collected at the end of vol. ii of *PGM*.

It is not a catalogue of texts which I aim to provide here.¹² Rather, I wish to examine some features of the available hymnic texts with a view to identifying strategies and attitudes in the verbal approaches to divinity which these texts represent. Such a study highlights both the hymn-writer's concept of the god(dess) addressed and his own attempt to win the deity's favour by effective speech. Following this I wish to consider some broader implications of the art of hymn composition for Greek religion generally. For I believe that our dearth of texts has led to an imbalance in our appreciation of the Greeks' religious ceremonial. There has been undue emphasis on ritual, in particular sacrifice,¹³ and a tendency to assert that Greek religion was a question of doing the right things on appropriate occasions. One frequently encounters statements to the effect that Greek piety was a question of honorific deed rather than belief in,

⁷ Cf. W. Quandt, *Orphei Hymni* (Berlin 1962).

⁸ Cf. K. Preisendanz, E. Heitsch, A. Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* ii (Stuttgart 1974), 237 ff. (= *PGM*); E. Heitsch, 'Zu den Zauberyhmen', *Philologus* ciii (1959) 215-36; H. Riesenfeld, 'Remarques sur les hymnes magiques', *Erano* xlvi (1946) 153-60. F. Graf, 'Prayer in magic and religious ritual', in: C.A. Faraone, D. Obbink (edd.), *Magica hiera: ancient Greek magic and religion* (New York/Oxford 1991) 188-213.

⁹ J.M. Bremer, 'Greek hymns' in: H.S. Versnel, F.T. van Straten (edd.), *Faith, hope and worship* (Leiden 1981) 193-215.

¹⁰ P. Maas, *Epidaurische Hymnen* (Halle 1933).

¹¹ Reprint Chicago 1981, originally Oxford 1925.

¹² M. Lattke, *Hymnus: Materialien zu einer Geschichte der antiken Hymnologie* (Fribourg 1991), contains a lot of rather undigested material.

¹³ I am thinking, of course, primarily of the Meuli-Burkert school exemplified by such works by W. Burkert as *Homo necans* (Berlin/New York 1972), *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epochen* (Stuttgart 1977) as well as a whole series of articles (five of which are conveniently collected in G.W. Most (ed.), *Wilder Ursprung* (Berlin 1990)), which have deservedly become canonical in their field. Burkert's recent article, 'Griechische Hymnen', in: W. Burkert, F. Stolz (edd.), *Hymnen der alten Welt im Kulturvergleich* (Göttingen 1994) 9-18, does little to rectify the imbalance.

or profound cogitation on, aspects of the sacred;¹⁴ Greek hymns tell against that position. Finally, study of the hymns permits a more focused understanding of the way in which myth featured in religious ceremonial.

First, a brief digression. There is, and was in antiquity, some confusion as to what, precisely, a 'hymn' (ὕμνος) was. When Plato says (*Rep.* x, 607a) that hymns were sung to gods and enkomia to outstanding men (ὕμνους θεοῖς καὶ ἐγκώμια τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς), we seem to be on a fairly safe ground: although 'hymn' is a general word for 'song of praise' in epic and choral lyric,¹⁵ Plato draws a clear distinction between hymns as songs of praise for gods, enkomia for men. However, Plato himself clouds the issue at *Laws* iii, 700b, when he first equates hymns with 'prayers to the gods' (εὐχαὶ πρὸς θεούς, ὄνομα δὲ ὕμνοι ἐπεκαλοῦντο), then goes on to distinguish threnoi, paeans, dithyrambs and nomos from his original category. It looks from this passage as if paeans, dithyrambs and nomos were distinct in some way from hymns, although we might have thought they were a sort of hymn to Apollo, Dionysos, Apollo respectively. Confusion grows when we examine the Alexandrian classification of Pindar's poetry. We hear of a book of hymns, then of books of paeans, dithyrambs, hyporchemata etc. Again, as in the Plato passage, these religious poems seem distinct from hymns. This state of affairs is reflected in the modern literature. Harvey came to the conclusion in 'The Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry' that there was a genre of hymn proper separate from e.g. paeon or prosodion, and that it consisted of a monostrophic poem sung to the gods by a standing chorus.¹⁶ Likewise Käppel's recent monograph on the paeon works on the assumption that a paeon was essentially distinct from a hymn.¹⁷

This requires clarification. A statement by Didymos quoted by Orion (p. 155-6 Sturz) in fact sums up the debate quite adequately: 'The hymn is distinct from enkomia, prosodia and paeans not in that these latter are not hymns, but as genus to species. For we call all forms of religious song hymns, and add a qualifying expression such as prosodion-hymn, paeon-hymn etc.'¹⁸ Similarly Proclus: 'That is the reason why one finds them (sc. previous authorities, perhaps Didymos specifically) relating the prosodion and the other genres already mentioned to the hymn as species to genus. For one can observe them writing (such expressions as) "prosodion-

¹⁴ E.g. P. Cartledge on p. 98 of P.E. Easterling and J.V. Muir (ed.), *Greek Religion and Society* (Cambridge 1985): 'One thing, though, is pretty clear. Classical Greek religion was at bottom a question of doing not of believing, of behaviour rather than faith. Or, as Finley puts it in his introduction to the *Legacy of Greece*, "Greek piety, Greek religion...appear to be a matter of rituals, festivals, processions, games, oracles, sacrifices - actions, in sum - and of stories, myths, about concrete instances in the working of the deities, not of abstract dogmas"'. Note how the actions listed under ritual do not include hymn-singing, and how myths are added later as a separate feature. In fact myths were the expression of personal and community faith in the Greek gods and formed a vital ingredient of hymns, as we shall see.

¹⁵ Cf. Wünsch, *RE* ix¹ s.v. 'Hymnos' 141-2.

¹⁶ *CQ* n.s. v (1955) 157-75.

¹⁷ L. Käppel, *Paian. Studien zur Geschichte einer Gattung* (Berlin/New York 1992) e.g. 64: 'Gerade diese auf Ansprache und Dialog hin organisierte Struktur des Paian ist es, die ihn... zum Beispiel vom Hymnos, der von der Sprechhaltung der "Anbetung" geprägt ist, unterscheidet'. Käppel wishes to distinguish between paeans and hymns by the attitude of the worshipper. The former are characterized by an attitude of supplication ('gebetshafte Sprechhaltung'), the latter by one of worship ('Anbetung': p. 83). It is true that paeans tended to be sung prayers to Apollo (e.g.) for delivery from peril (cf. Proclus *ap. Phot. Bibl.* 320a: ὁ δὲ παῖαν ... ἰδίως ἀπενέμετο τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι καὶ τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι ἐπὶ καταπαύσει λοιμῶν καὶ νόσων ἄδόμενος), but that does not, in my opinion, stop them being a type of hymn.

¹⁸ Ὑμνος ... κεχώρισται τῶν ἐγκωμίων καὶ τῶν προσοδίων καὶ παιάνων, οὐχ ὡς κάκεινων μὴ ὄντων ὕμνων, ἀλλ' ὡς γένος ἀπὸ εἶδους. πάντα γὰρ εἰς τοὺς ὑπερέχοντας γραφόμενα ὕμνους ἀποφαίνομεθα, καὶ ἐπιλέγομεν τὸ εἶδος τῷ γένει, ὕμνος προσοδίου, ὕμνος παιάνος ... οὕτω Δίδυμος ἐν τῷ περὶ λυρικῶν ποιητῶν.

hymn" or "encomion-hymn" or "paeon-hymn" and similar.¹⁹ When Proclus a little later (319b18-20) contrasts a 'hymn proper' (κυρίως ὕμνος) which was sung by a chorus standing round the altar to kithara accompaniment with a prosodion performed during the procession to the altar to flute accompaniment,²⁰ we should not be misled into assuming a sub-category 'hymn proper' within the genus of cult songs. I believe what happened was as follows: hymn was always the generic word, but when the Alexandrians came to classifying religious lyric poetry, they could identify some poems as paeans (by the refrain τῆ Ποιάν, for example, or by the addressee, Apollo) others as dithyrambs (Dionysos, prominence of myth etc.),²¹ or nomes (Apollo again), and any which were clearly addressed to a divinity but did not fit any sub-category they included under 'hymns';²² thus a false distinction emerged between hymns and other religious lyrics.

The entire strategy behind hymn-composition and performance was to attract the attention of the divinity addressed in a favorable way; ritual and choral worship combined to flatter, woo, charm and persuade a single god or a group of gods that the worshipper(s) was deserving of sympathy and aid. The relation aimed at between worshipper and deity was one of χάρις, a word with two complementary senses, like the faces of a coin. As Race has shown, *charis* denotes both the adoring worship by people of a god, and, conversely, the reciprocal grace or favour with which the people hope a god will reward them in turn.²³ Everything about the ceremony and the choice of words used in worship goes toward establishing this essential relationship of mutual *charis*. Race sums up: 'No other word epitomizes so well the relationship which the hymnist tries to establish with the god - one of reciprocal pleasure and goodwill'.²⁴

Let us witness Nikias' attempt in (?)417 BC²⁵ to further *charis* between himself and Delian Apollo through seemly hymn-singing (Plut. *Nik.* 3, 4-6). We are told that the choruses sent by city-states to sing at the Delia used to arrive at the island in some confusion and start to sing their hymns without any proper order or decorum. Nikias introduced order into the ceremony; he had a pontoon bridge constructed in Athens with which to bridge the narrow strait between Rheneia and Delos. He landed first at Rheneia with a chorus and sacrificial animals and put his (festively decorated) bridge in place by night; then, when day dawned 'he led the procession and chorus in honour of the god across the bridge; in lavish outfit, the chorus sang (*sc.* hymns)

¹⁹ Διὸ καὶ τὸ προσόδιον καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ προειρημένα φαίνονται ἀντιδιαστέλλοντες τῷ ὕμνῳ ὡς εἶδη πρὸς γένος· καὶ γὰρ ἔστιν αὐτῶν ἀκούειν γραφόντων ὕμνος προσοδίου, ὕμνος ἐγκωμίου, ὕμνος παιάνος καὶ τὰ ὅμοια.

²⁰ Ἐλέγετο δὲ τὸ προσόδιον ἐπειδὴν προσίωσι τοῖς βωμοῖς ἢ ναοῖς, καὶ ἐν τῷ προσιέναι ἦιδετο πρὸς αὐλόν· ὁ δὲ κυρίως ὕμνος πρὸς κιθάραν ἦιδετο ἐστῶτων.

²¹ Cf. schol. Bacchylides 23, p. 128 Snell-Maehler (= *POxy.* 2368 B col. i 9-20) with Käppel's discussion (n. 17) 38 ff. On the dithyramb cf. B. Zimmermann, *Dithyrambos. Geschichte einer Gattung* (Göttingen 1992).

²² The surviving fragments of Pindar's hymns are addressed to Zeus, (Zeus) Ammon, Persephone, Tyche, Apollo Ptoion; Menander Rhetor attributes an 'apopemptic' hymn to Apollo to Bacchylides (περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν 2, = Snell-Maehler 1A); and we hear of a hymn by Bacchylides to Hekate (*ibid.* 1B).

²³ W.H. Race, 'Aspects of rhetoric and form in Greek hymns', *GRBS* xxiii (1982) 5-14, esp. 8 ff. Examples: Makedonikos' paeon to Apollo and Asklepios (cf. F. Pordomingo Pardo, 'El pean de Macedonico...', *Corolla Londiniensis* iv [1984] 101-129), l. 17 σὴν δὲ δίδου σοφίαν ὑμνοῦντας ... θ[ά]λλειν, 'Grant that we may...flourish as we hymn your wisdom...'; Aristonoos' paeon to Apollo (*CA* 164) ll. 45-8: χαρεῖς ὕμνοις ἡμετέροις ... σφῶζων ἐφέποις ἡμᾶς, 'delighted by our hymns...look after and protect us!'

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 8. On p. 10 he writes: 'The rhetorical τέλος of a hymn is, then, to secure the god's pleasure by a 'pleasing' choice of names and titles... and by the 'proper' narration of his powers and exploits. And after finding a fitting ἀρχή and giving a 'pleasing' account of the god's powers, the hymnist is prepared to make his petition.'

²⁵ This is W.K. Pritchett's preferred date: *The Greek state at war* iii (Berkeley/London 1979) 331. Further discussion: S. Hornblower, *A commentary on Thucydides* vol. I (Oxford 1991) 517 ff. The episode certainly happened after the Athenian re-organization of the Delian festival in 426/5 BC (Thuc. iii 104).

as they crossed. After the sacrifice and the competition and the banqueting he devoted the bronze palm-tree as an offering to the god'. Note the emphasis in this description:²⁶ the splendid choral procession was the means Nikias chose to win Apollo's favour; the sacrifice is a relatively subordinate element of the religious performance. Clearly Nikias would not have wasted the expenditure if he did not think Apollo (and the other deputations present) would be impressed: more important than the shedding of animal blood was the pleasing spectacle Nikias aimed at producing through dignified ceremonial and hymn-singing.²⁷

The passage just quoted illustrates the importance of setting for a hymn's pleasing effect. We do not know what hymns Nikias' chorus sang although we can be sure they concentrated on the Delian 'trinity' Apollo, Artemis, Leto—and possibly Delos itself.²⁸ As an example of the genre let us turn to a cult hymn which was actually performed at a festival of Apollo in Delphi. The first of the two Delphic paeans to Apollo, discovered last century during the French excavations at Delphi, was composed for the Athenian Pythais festival in either 138 or 128 BC. I give Pöhlmann's transcription of the inscription, retaining line divisions and the curious reduplicated vowels and diphthongs which accompany the musical notation when a long syllable is divided into two notes.²⁹

Παιάν καὶ ὑπόρχημα] εἰς τὸν Θεὸν ὃ ἐ[πό]ησε ... Ἀθηναῖος.

- 1 Κέκλυθ' Ἐλι|κῶνα βαθύδενδρον αἰ λᾶ-
 χετε Διδ|ς ἐ[ρι]βρόμουου θύγατρεις εὐῶλ[ενοι,]
 μόλετε, συνόμαιμον ἵνα Φοιοῖβον ὠίδαε[ι-]
 σι μέλψητε χρυσεοκόμαν. δς ἀνὰ δικόρυν-
 5 βα Παρνασσίδος ταάσδε πετέρας ἔδραν' ἄμ' [ά]-
 γακλυταιεῖς Δεελφίσιν Κασταλίδος
 εοὔδρου νάματ' ἐπνίσεται, Δελφὸν ἀνὰ
 [πρ]ῶνα μαντειεῖον ἐφέπων πάγον·
 [Ἐν] κλυτὰ μεγαλόπολις Ἀθθίς, εὐχαιε-
 10 [ῖ]σι φερόπλοιο ναίουσα Τριτωνίδος δά[πε-]
 δον ἄθραυστον· ἀγίοις δὲ βωμοιοῖσιν Ἄ-
 φαιστος αἰεῖθε<ι> νέων μῆρα ταούρων· ὄμου-

²⁶ Plutarch says that the ceremony had been conducted before Nikias κατ' οὐδένα κόσμον ... ἄσυντάκτως. He describes Nikias' pontoon bridge as ἐκπρεπῶς χρυσῶσσει καὶ βαφαῖς καὶ στεφάνοις καὶ αὐλαῖσι, and the procession across it κεκοσμημένον πολυτελῶς. The display was both lavish and orderly.

²⁷ Menander Rhetor II, 17 Περί Σμινθιακοῦ (ed. by D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson Oxford 1981) p. 441, says that the splendour of a festival in its various aspects (hymns, athletic competitions, sacrifice) is intended as an expression of thanks to the deity addressed for benefits received: χάριτας ἐκτίγγοντες ἀνθ' ὧν εὐ πάσχομεν. Hymns are sung to please the god through a display of intellectual and musical excellence, athletic competitions by one of physical prowess: οἱ μὲν ἐπιδείκνυνται τὰς αὐτῶν ἀρετὰς ἢ διὰ λόγων ἢ διὰ σώματος εὐεξίας. The rhetorician's speech is a model prose-hymn or eulogy of Apollo Sminthiakos designed to show imitators the best choice and order of subjects when called upon to compose such a public show-piece.

²⁸ E.g. Pindar, *Paeon* v. 37 ff. (Delian Apollo, Delos, Leto, Apollo and Artemis); Euripides, *IT* 1097 ff. (Artemis, Delos, Leto); Agathon's hymn in Aristophanes, *Thesm.* 101 ff. (Apollo, Artemis, Leto); Limenios' Delphic paean ll. 36 ff. (Powell, *CA* p. 150): Artemis and Leto round out prayer to Apollo.

²⁹ First published: H. Weil, Th. Reinach, *BCH* xvii (1893) 569-583, 584-610; xviii (1894) 345-362, 363-389; among subsequent editions see: Th. Reinach, 'Hymnes avec notes musicales', *Fouilles de Delphes* ii.2 (1909-13) 147-69 and 332 n. 1 (A. Colin); A. Fairbanks, *A study of the Greek paean* (Ithaca 1900) 119-39; Powell, *CA* 141 ff.; E. Pöhlmann, *Denkmäler altgriechischer Musik* (Nürnberg 1970) 58-67 (= Erlanger Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kunstwissenschaft, vol. xxxi); the recent volume by Annie Bélis, *Corpus des Inscriptions de Delphes*, vol. iii, *Les hymnes à Apollon* (Paris 1992), is based on fresh examination of all the fragments of stone: Bélis suggests that Ἀθηναῖος in the title is the poet's proper name, not his ethnic. For a modern 'recording' of the hymn see 'Musique de la Grèce antique', by Gregorio Paniagua, *Harmonia Mundi* no. 1015 (1978) no. 3. The metre is cretic-paemonic—possibly arranged in pentameters—up to l. 27, where, by analogy with Limenios' paean, there is likely to have been a change of metre.

οὐ δέ νιν ἄραψ ἀτμὸς ἐς [Ἔ]λ[υ]μπον ἀνακίδν[α-]
 15 ται· λιγὸ δὲ λατοδὸς βρέμων αειδόλοιοις μ[έ-]
 λεισιν ᾠδαῶν κρέκει· χρυσέα δ' ἀδύθρου[ς κί-]
 θαρὶς ὕμνοισιν ἀναμέλπεται· ὁ δὲ [τεχνι-]
 τῶν πρόπας ἐσμὸς Ἀθθίδα λαχῶ[ν τὸν κιθα-]

Col. II

ρί]σει κλυτὸν παῖδα μεγάλου [Διὸς ὕμνοῦσί σε]
 πα]ρ' ἀκρονηφῆ τόνδε πάγον, ἀμ[βροτ' ἀψευδέ:]
 20 [δ]ς πάσι θνατοιοῖς προφαίνει[εις λόγια,]
 [τρ]ίποδα μαντειεῖον ὡς εἰε[λεις, ἐχθρὸς δν ἐ-]
 φρ]οῦρει δράκων, ὅτε τε[οῖσι βέλεσιν ἐ-]
 τρ]ηησας αἰόλον ἐλικτᾶν [φυάν, ἔσθ' ὁ θήρ, συχ-]
 ν]ᾶ συρρίγμαθ' ἰεῖς ἀθώπε[υτ', ἀπέπνευσ' ὁμῶς:]
 25 [ὠς] δὲ Γαλαταῶν ἄρης [βάρβαρος, τάνδ' ὅς ἐπὶ γαῖ-]
 α]ν ἐπέρασ' ἀσέπτ[ως, χιόνος ὄλεθ' ὕγραῖς βολ-]
 αῖ]ς. Ἄλλ' ἰὼ γένναν [...
 ...]ν θάλος φιλόμ[αχον...

Titul. suppl. Pöhlmann: Ἄισμα μετὰ κιθάρας εἰς al.: Παιᾶν καὶ ὑπόρχημα] εἰς τὸν θεὸν
 δ' ἐπρόησεν Ἀθ]ήναιος Βέλις, coll. *Fouilles de Delphes* iii 2, no. 47, l. 19, ubi cantator
 Ἀθ]ήναιος Ἀθηναίου anno 128 a. C. n. memoratur. 1-27 lacc. suppl. edd. pr. 1 Ἐλικ]-
 ὦνα Βέλις. 16 τῶν lapid: [τεχνι]τῶν Reinach: [θ]ε]ω[ρ]ῶν Weil: [ν]ε]ω[ρ]ῶν Crusius:
 [χορευ]τῶν (---) possis: [τεχνι]τῶν Βέλις. 17 λαχῶ[ν Βέλις. 18 Δ[ι]ὸς Βέλις. 23-6 suppl.
 Crusius. 25 ὡς scripsi, cf. Limenii paeane v. 27 ὁμοῖως: ὡς al. 26 suppl. Pöhlmann coll.
 paeane Limenii v. 33. 28 suppl. Βέλις.

'Listen, fair-armed daughters of loud-thundering Zeus who received thickly-wooded Helikon as your lot, come here and sing of your brother Phoibos of the golden hair, who, together with the well-known Delphic women comes up Mt. Parnassus' twin-peaked rock to visit the streams of the well-supplied Kastalian Spring, up the Delphic slope to occupy his prophetic seat. Behold the (people of) great and famous Athens who joyfully reside on the unshakeable plain of the heavily armed Tritonian! (See how) on holy altars Hephaistos burns the thighs of young bulls; Arabian incense wafts up to Olympus with the flames! The reed instrument pipes its piercing strain of trilling notes; the golden sweet-voiced kithara resounds with hymns. The entire company of choristers from Athens hymns you, son of mighty Zeus, famed for your kithara-playing, beside this snow-capped place; you who provide for all mortals unerring divine prophecies since you took over the prophetic tripod which the wicked dragon used to guard. Then you pierced the gleaming serpent coils with your arrows, till the beast, emitting repeated hideous squeals, gave up the ghost at last. Likewise the barbarian horde of Gauls who sacrilegiously invaded this land died in the driving wet snow blizzard. But now, (I urge you), child...'

Although a section of text is missing at the end, the overall structure of the hymn is relatively easy to discern. The poet opens with an invocation to the Heliconian Muses to raise a song to Apollo (1-7) who is said to come to Delphi. Then the hymn presents the Athenian deputation who have come to Delphi to receive an official prophecy; the elements of ritual are described: the burnt offerings (9-11); the musical accompaniment to the hymn-singing (11-12), and the choir of professional singers responsible for singing the hymns (14-16). Lines 17-22 turn to praise of Apollo's prophetic powers (17-18), his defeat of the Python serpent (18-20), and the defeat of an invading army of Gauls (in 279/8 BC). Ἄλλ' ἰὼ γένναν... almost certainly marks the final section of the hymn, the direct prayer to the god asking for salvation and prosperity: Limenios' paeane has a concluding prayer which probably began with the same

words.³⁰

Thus the well-known tripartite structure of prayers and hymns defined by Ausfeld (invocatio—pars epica—precatio) is visible, but with modifications.³¹ In particular we note that Apollo is not invoked directly at the beginning, but through the mediation of the Muses, in a manner reminiscent of Hesiod's *Theogony*.³² Second, the central section contains not only an account of Apollo's exploits (the slaying of the Python) as *pars epica*, but includes a running commentary, as it were, on the ceremony itself. Another interesting element is the brief reference to the Gauls' abortive invasion of Phokis in 279/8: an historical event has been assimilated with the hieratic lore of Delphi.³³ When we recall that the Pythais festival was originally inaugurated by the Athenians to mark the Persian defeat at Plataia,³⁴ we can perhaps see that the defeat of the Gauls two hundred years later accommodated itself to the celebration by analogy with Apollo's inaugural victory over invading barbarian hordes.³⁵

Let us examine some of the tactics used by the hymn-writer to win the god's favour. First, he calls on the aid of the Muses as beings qualified by divinity, expertise in singing, and kinship (συνδύμιον), to have good relations with Apollo. The precision in naming the recipient of worship—a feature often noted by scholars³⁶—is here applied to the intermediary, the Muses: they are said to have pretty arms, to be the daughters of loud-voiced Zeus, and inhabit a wooded mountain. Since it is desired that the god be in residence to enjoy and respond to the ceremony, emphasis is placed on his 'coming. Just as the Athenian deputation (and other pilgrims) approached the Delphic oracle along the Sacred Way leading up the slope of Parnassos, so Apollo is said to visit his shrine in the company of 'the famous Delphic women' along this

³⁰ In Powell's text (CA p. 150): [' Ἄλλ', ὦ Φοῖβε,] σώζε θεόκτιστον.... Cf. Pindar, *Ol.* 2. 12, ἄλλ' ὦ Κρόνιε παῖ 'Ρέας... (interjected prayer to Zeus). Limenios' piece is entitled a 'Paeon and P(roso)dion' to Apollo, and the change of metre from paeonic to glyconic at this point (l. 36) may mark the commencement of the prosodion. Alternatively, the whole piece is a combined 'paeon and prosodion'.

³¹ K. Ausfeld, 'De Graecorum precatationibus quaestiones', *Jahrbuch für classische Philologie* xxviii (1903) 505ff.; G. Danielewicz, 'De elementis hymnicis in Sapphus Alcaei Anacreontis carminibus', *Eos* lii (1974) 23-33, citing Zieliński, *Religia starzynej Grecji* (Warsaw 1921), prefers 'invocatio - sanctio - precatio'; Bremer (n. 9) 196, suggests that the central portion of hymns and prayers might better be termed 'argument', as 'pars epica' is misleading in many cases (there is no 'epic' recitation in any hymns except the Homeric Hymns).

³² Menander Rhetor, *Sminthiakos* p. 438, advises the hymnist to invoke the Muses' help in invoking Apollo, since one is uncertain how most effectively and politely to address him. The Muses provide a bridge between the human poet and the gods' world: Hesiod's proem to the *Theogony* is addressed to the Muses as they, archetypically, sing of the gods' birth—the topic to which Hesiod has addressed himself. Pindar, *Pa.* vii b 15-20 Snell-Maehler, invokes the Muses' help in hymning Apollo as 'the minds of men are blind when one tries to fathom the path of deep wisdom without the aid of the daughters of Helikon'.

³³ Cf. G. Nachtergaele, *Les Galates en Grèce et les Sotéria de Delphes*, Acad. Roy. de Belgique, Mém. de la classe de Lettres, 2nd series, vol. lxiii/1 (Brussels 1977) 15-205.

³⁴ Plutarch, *Aristeides* 20. 4-8: Apollodorus *ap.* Strab. 9, 2, 11; *SIG* 296 f.; 696-9; 728: On the Pythais festival see: G. Colin, *Le culte d'Apollon Pythien à Athènes* (Paris 1905); A. Boethius, *Die Pythais* (Diss. Uppsala 1918); L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932) 203-4; S.V. Tracy, 'Notes on the Pythais inscriptions', *BCH* xcix (1975) 185-218. The Pythais consisted of a deputation to Delphi to offer sacrifice and worship on behalf of Athens; the hymn-singing choristers in 128/7 were professional musicians (*Paeon Delphicus* ii 19-20: Βάκχου ἐσμός τεχνιτῶν); a tripod with new fire was brought back to Athens (*SIG*³ 711 D 22; 728 I 4). The festival was irregular: Athenian officials called Pythaiastai convened it when lightning was observed over Mt. Parnes from the eschara of Zeus Astrapaiois.

³⁵ Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos* 171 ff., includes reference to the same thwarted attack on Delphi by the Gauls in order to glorify Ptolemy Philadelphos' role in defeating their army. The event is given mythical stature by comparing the Gauls with latter-day Titans (l. 174: ὄψιγονοι Τιτῆνες).

³⁶ Recognized by Plato, *Crat.* 400e: ὡς περ ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς νόμος ἐστὶν ἡμῖν εὐχεσθαι, οἱ τινές τε καὶ ὀπότεν χαίρουσιν (sc. the gods) ὀνομαζόμενοι cf. E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos. Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig/Berlin 1913) 143 ff.; K. Keyssner, *Studien zum griechischen Hymnus* (Diss. Würzburg 1931) 9 ff.; Bremer (n. 9) 194-5.

route (4-7). We note the anaphora (ἀνὰ δικόρυμβα ... ἔδρανα .. Δελφῶν ἀνὰ πρῶνα) which has the effect of a powerful invocation to the god indeed to ascend Parnassus to his temple. One may compare the splendid scene in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (514 ff.) when Apollo leads the procession of Cretans up from Krisa toward the site of his temple to shouts of 'Ie Paian'. The processional hymn celebrating the god's coming to the site is a mimetic act designed to ensure his repeated coming at subsequent festive events.³⁷

Just as the hymn's description of the god's coming induces that coming sympathetically, so our hymn praises its own performance (8-16).³⁸ The emphasis in these lines is on the worthiness of Apollo's supplicants. Athens is said to be a 'famous metropolis' (8) although it was something of a backwater at this date; the city 'delights' (εὐχαῖσι, lit. 'with celebratory prayers') to live on Athena's 'unshakeable ground' (δάπεδον ἄθραυστον). Hephaistos himself is burning the Athenian offerings (10); the pipe music is 'clear' and 'intricate' (λγῶ βρέμων; αἰόλοισ); the kithara is 'sweet-sounding' (ἀδύθρου). Powell comments on the lines 'The language is simple, and the picture is as clear as the bright air in which the rite was performed'³⁹—but there is more to it than that. The *charis* which the hymn combined with the rite attempts to produce is intended as an image on earth of the scene Apollo likes best in heaven: if he sees such an attractive celebration on earth, he is likely to want to attend it.⁴⁰ The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 187 ff. describes the scene on Olympus following Apollo's first arrival there: 'He will proceed to the abode of Zeus, to the assembly of the other gods. Immediately the gods turn to kithara-music and song. All the Muses sing... while Apollo accompanies them on the kithara, taking fine, high steps...'. Our hymn too reminds Apollo that he is famous for lyre-playing (15 τὸν κιθαρίζει κλυτόν). The hymn conjures up the scene and the activities which it believes will be irresistible to Apollo.

The mythological part of the hymn employs a different tactic. As we have seen, it touches on two subjects: one mythological (Apollo's victory over Python), one historical (the defeat of the Gauls at Delphi). It requires no leap of imagination to see that a factor common to both these stories is Apollo's victory over an adversary.⁴¹ After the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (300-374) one of the most vivid descriptions of Apollo's dragon-slaying is in Callimachus'

³⁷ Compare the Iacchos hymn sung by the Eleusinian initiates in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, 324 ff. The invocation to Iacchos to 'come dancing through this meadow to your holy revellers' (325-6) is paralleled by the procession of mystai along the Sacred Way to Eleusis. Images of the gods were frequently carried in processions, or a priest or priestess dressed up as the deity; these elements underline the point that a religious procession was intended to 'usher in' the god by persuasive action and word. Callimachus' second hymn to Apollo (1 ff.) describes the excited anticipation of the god's arrival to listen to a hymn sung in his honour: the laurel-bush shakes, a tremor runs through the temple, the doors resound to the god's footfall, the Delian palm-tree nods, the swan sings on high—all visible or audible signs of the god's advent.

³⁸ Menander Rhetor, *Sminthiakos* p. 441, likewise advises the hymnist to draw attention to the pleasing spectacle of cult as ritual framework for the hymn's performance. The god, he says, will be pleased by the spectacle of human efforts to display their excellence in various activities.

³⁹ Powell (n. 5) 45.

⁴⁰ Bélis (n. 29) 140 f. suggests a different reason for the emphasis on the excellence of the hymnodists' performance: in 134 BC, she says, there is evidence of lack of favour in the Amphictiony for the Athenian Technitai, whereas in 125 the Athenian singers seem to be preferred to the competition from the Isthmus and Nemea. She suggests that the 128 Pythais (to which she dates both paeans) served to promote the cause of the Athenian Technitai of Dionysos. But hymns' tendency to praise themselves (and hence the object of their worship, the god) is a more general phenomenon: e.g. Palaikastro hymn of the Curetes (*CA* 160-1) ll. 6-10; Limenios' paeon (*CA* 149), ll. 15 ff.; Makedonikos' paeon to Apollo and Asklepios (Pordomingo Pardo n. 23) ll. 1 ff. ἄμε[μ]τος ὕμνος (l. 5).

⁴¹ Menander Rhetor, *Sminthiakos* 441, recommends including such stories as illustrations of the god's δυνάμεις. In Apollo's case he cites the slaying of Python and Tityos as illustrations of Apollo's command of τοξική. Thus the myth defines permanent qualities. On the dragon-slaying motif in Apolline myth see J. Fontenrose, *Python: A study of Delphic myth and its origins* (Los Angeles 1959).

Hymn to Apollo 97-106. Here Callimachus links the origin of the 'Ie Paian!' cry with Apollo's archery: the citizens of Delphi cried ἡ ἡ παιήον, ἕϊ βέλος, εὐθύ σε μήτηρ / γείνατ' ἄοσσητήρα 'Hie, hie Paieon, shoot an arrow! Your mother made you a helper from birth!' (103-4). Likewise, the defeat of the Gallic chieftain Brennus was partly attributed to Apollo's intervention, as severe winter weather afflicted the Gauls. Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos* 174, calls the Gauls 'latter-day Titans' which the scholiast aptly explains: 'because of (sc. the audacity of) their venture' (διὰ τὸ ἐπιχείρημα.⁴² We see how the historical episode was mythologized, and how Apollo's intervention was recognized. Thus the two episodes, the defeats of Python and of the Gauls, combine as *exempla* of the god's saving power. The paean is a hymn to Apollo praying for deliverance from adversity:⁴³ the *exempla* argue for the possibility of such deliverance by citing previous occasions when Apollo's power was granted beneficently. The regular Pythais festival—which, we recall, was initially founded to celebrate Plataia—served to keep the batteries, as it were, of divine beneficence charged.

A cult hymn such as this (and its twin, Limenios' Paean and Prosodion to Apollo, which I have omitted for brevity) serves as a useful control to see how closely authors in more literary genres adhere to conventional modes of worship. In particular, study of the preserved cult hymns shows how Attic tragic and comic poets included hymns to the gods in their plays in a fully-fledged form.⁴⁴ That is, the dramatists were (of course) fully conversant with the modes of worship practised in religious ritual and included faithful copies of hieratic poetry when a scene called for them. In so doing, they were not only making a pious bow to the god concerned, but also exploiting the audience's expectations raised by such hymns. Thus Euripides sets the Delphic scene in the *Ion* by having Ion sing a monody to Apollo and the Delphi Oracle, lines of which may be taken straight from Delphic worship (125-7 = 141-3).⁴⁵ A good example for our present purpose is the hymn sung by the chorus in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Tauris* (1234-57).⁴⁶ Dramatically, the lyrics accompany the sacrificial procession led by Iphigeneia in her guise as priestess of Artemis Tauropolos, from Thoas' palace to Artemis' sanctuary by the sea. We see the human victims, Orestes and Pylades, who are to be sacrificed to Artemis according to the barbaric local custom of the Tauri (line 1222: in fact Iphigeneia is using the sacrifice as a pretext to escape with Orestes and Pylades back to Greece), the young lambs (1223) and the torches which will be swung as the procession moves along (1224). The hymn, then, is a prosodion: choral worship on the way from residential to sacred ground. Some have complained that the hymn fits badly into the drama; that it has little to do with the proceedings. In fact it fits perfectly into the ritual background Euripides has created as setting for the dramatic plot: King Thoas is to be deceived by the pretence of sacrifice to Artemis. Fidelity to

⁴² R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus* ii³ (Oxford 1987) 70. On the divine epiphany of Apollo in the battle against Brennus see C. Auffarth, 'Gott mit uns!' Eine gallische Niederlage durch Eingreifen der Götter in der augusteischen Geschichtsschreibung (Pompeius Trogus 24, 6-8)', *Altspr. Unterricht* xxxiii.5 (1990) 14-38.

⁴³ Compare Proclus' definition of the paean (*Bibl.* 320a21ff.)— 'a type of song now sung to all gods but originally particular to Apollo and Artemis, sung for deliverance from plague and illnesses'—with Käppel's (n. 17) 28: 'In allen Fällen dient der Paian der gebetschaft-dialogischen Kommunikation mit einer als Heilsbringer gedachten Gottheit: diese Kommunikation ist geprägt von der Heilserwartung (Bitte) bzw. Heilserfahrung (Dank) des Paian-Ichs'.

⁴⁴ Cf. F. Adami, 'De poetis scaenicis graecis hymnorum sacrorum imitatoribus', *Jb. f. class. Philologie* xxvi (1901) 215-62 (mainly on Dionysos); W. Ax, 'Die Parodos des Oidipus Tyrannos', *Hermes* lxxvii (1932) 413-37; K.D. Dorsch, *Götterhymnen in Chorliedern der griechischen Tragödie* (Diss. Münster 1983); M. Mantziou, *Hymns and hymnal prayers in fifth-century Greek tragedy with special reference to Euripides* (Diss. London 1981).

⁴⁵ Cf. A.S. Owen (ed.), *Euripides: Ion*² (Oxford 1957) 78: 'These lines of molossi may be a Delphic hymn, known to Athenian visitors, a touch of local colour.'

⁴⁶ On this hymn cf. J. Harrison, *Themis* (London 1977; reprint of 1912 Cambridge edition) 393 ff.; Fontenrose (n. 41) 395 ff.; M. Platnauer (ed.), (Oxford 1956); H. Strohm (ed.) (München 1949) 177-8: 'Ein Preislied auf Apollon in der Form einer Legendenerzählung, dessen vorherrschendes Mass das Prosodiakon der alten Prozessionslieder...'

ritual detail is required by the deception being practised by Iphigeneia. The chorus cast a ritual veil, as it were, over the clandestine plot of the Argives. Let us look at the first half of the stasimon.

Str.	εὐπαις ὁ Λατοῦς γόνος,
1235	ὄν ποτε Δηλιάσιν καρποφόροις γυάλοις <ἔτικτε>, χρυσοκόμαν ἐν κιθάρα σοφόν, ἅ τ' ἐπὶ τόξων εὐστοχίᾳ γάνυται· φέρε <δ'> Ἴνιν
1240	ἀπὸ δειράδος εἰναλίαις, λοχεῖα κλεινὰ λιπούσα μά- τηρ τὰν ἀστάκτων ὑδάτων <συμ>βακχεύουσαν Διονύ- σῳ Παρνάσιον κορυφάν,
1245	ὄθι ποικιλόνωτος οἰνωπὸς δράκων, σκιερεῖ κατάχαλκος εὐφύλλῳ δάφνῳ, γᾶς πελώριον τέρας, ἄμφεπε μαντεῖον χθόνιον. ἔτι μιν ἔτι βρέφος, ἔτι φίλας
1250	ἐπὶ ματέρος ἀγκάλαισι θρόσκων ἔκανες, ὦ Φοῖβε, μαν- τείων δ' ἐπέβας ζαθέων, τρίποδι τ' ἐν χρυσέῳ θάσσεις, ἐν ἄψευδει θρόνῳ
1255	μαντείας βροτοῖς θεσφάτων νέμων ἀδύτων ὑπο, Κασταλίας ρεέθρων γείτων, μέσον γᾶς ἔχων μέλαθρον.

'It was a blessed delivery when Leto gave birth on the fruitful island of Delos: (sc. she gave birth to) the golden-haired expert on the lyre, and her whose pride is in accurate archery. She carried her offspring from the island in the sea, leaving the famous birthplace, to Mt. Parnassos' peak where abundant water flows and which dances to Dionysos' tune. There a darkly patterned dragon, scales glinting in the shade of thick laurel foliage, Earth's abominable monster, guarded her oracle. While still a baby, while still in your mother's arms, you sprang, Phoibos Apollo, killed the beast, and took control of the oracle, and now you are seated on the golden tripod, the unerring throne. There you give prophecies to men from the holy temple by the spring Kastalia, the hub of earth in your command.'

The hymn opens in straight narrative, delaying direct address of the main divinity invoked, Apollo, to line 1251.⁴⁷ The main themes of the piece tally with the hymn we have already discussed: Apollo's coming to Delphi; his killing of Python before assuming control of the Delphic oracle. How does the chorus insinuate itself into Apollo's favour in this piece? Words of worshipful adoration abound. Leto's child-bearing is said to be 'fortunate' (εὐπαις); Delos, known for its agricultural sterility,⁴⁸ becomes for the purposes of this hymn 'fruitful' (καρποφόροις); Apollo is a 'golden boy', 'skilled' in music; his sister is an 'expert archeress'; their birthplace is 'famous'; when they move to Delphi, its water is said to be 'abundantly flowing'; Apollo's mantic seat is 'infallible' (1254 ἄψευδει). The chorus' worshipful attitude emerges clearly. Their language highlights Apollo's glory; the god will surely feel flattered by (and compliant with) this praise.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ I.e. the 'er-Stil' of address changes to the 'du-Stil', in Norden's terminology (Agnostos Theos 163 ff.).

⁴⁸ Cf. *HH to Apollo* 60; Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos* 268: δυσήρατος, and *ibid.* 11 ff. generally.

⁴⁹ The motif of εὐλογία expounded upon by Norden, *Agnostos Theos* 149 ff. Note Ion's wish to praise his saviour Apollo: Eur. *Ion* 137: τὸν βόσκοντα γὰρ εὐλογῶ.

Other hieratic modes are also present. The description of Apollo's original advent in Delphi serves, as in the Delphic paean, sympathetically to invoke the god's presence on this occasion. This 'advent' motif is even more pronounced in the second Delphic paean, and in Aristonoos' paean to Apollo.⁵⁰ Note how Parnassus is said to 'dance with Dionysos' (1243 f. *συμβακχεύουσιν*⁵¹ Διονύσῳ). This refers to the Phanai, or torch-lit Bacchic revels on Parnassus;⁵² in hieratic terms, the reference confirms the strong alliance of Apollo and Dionysos at Delphi and is descriptive of the ritual: by a transference of epithet, the mountain is said to dance, whereas really it is the worshippers of Dionysos; thus the hymn describes accompanying ritual in the self-referential manner we observed in the Delphic inscription. In a central mythical section the combat between the young Apollo and Python is foregrounded. The dragon becomes emphatically menacing in appearance and habit; the god triumphs over him and is then enthroned in resplendent majesty. The short mythical narrative establishes Apollo's credentials as saviour of mankind, and sets a precedent for beneficent works. The strophe closes with an explicit statement of Apollo's concern for mankind (1255).

As a third step let us consider a text from the magical papyri, a hymn to Apollo to be sung by someone wishing to receive prophetic vision by night. I give the text printed by Preisendanz-Heitsch-Henrichs in volume ii of *Papyri Graecae Magicae*.⁵³

Δάφνη, μαντοσύνης ἱερὸν φυτὸν Ἄπολλωνος,
 ἧς ποτε γευσάμενος πετάλων ἀνέφηγεν ἀοιδάς,
 αὐτός, ἀναξ σκηπτούχος, Ἰήιε, κύδιμε Παιάν,
 ναίων ἐν Κολοφῶνι, ἱερῆς ἐπάκουσον ἀοιδῆς·
 5 ἔλθε τάχος δ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν <μοι> ὁμιλῶν
 ἀμβροσίῳν στομάτων τε σταθεῖς ἔμπνευσον ἀοιδάς,
 αὐτός, ἀναξ μολπῆς μόλε, μολπῆς κύδιμ' ἀνάκτωρ·
 κλύθι, μάκαρ, βαρύμητι, κραταιόφρων, κλύε, Τιτάν,
 ἡμετέρης φωνῆς νῦν, ἄφθιτε, μὴ παρακούσης.
 10 στήθι <δὲ>, μαντοσύνην <μοι> ἀπ' ἀμβροσίου στομάτοιο
 ἔννεπε σὺ ἰκέτη, πανακήρατε, θάττον, Ἄπολλον.

'Daphne, sacred plant of Apollo's prophetic gift, whose leaves he tasted once and revealed (prophetic) songs—sceptre-holding King, Ieios, famous Paean, who lives in Kolophon, listen in person to (my) sacred song. Come quickly down to earth from heaven and associate with me; stand by me and breathe into me songs (sc. of prophecy) from your immortal mouth. Come in person, King of song, famous Lord of song! Hear me, blessed god of heavy wrath and mighty spirit, hear me, Titan! Do not ignore my voice now, immortal one! Stand by me and utter prophecy from your immortal mouth to your supplicant, quickly, most pure Apollo!'

The practitioner held a branch of laurel in his own hand (cf. *Hymn* 13. 14-15) and uttered this prayer to Apollo in the hope of receiving prophetic inspiration. The hymn-prayer

⁵⁰ Powell CA 149 ff. and 162 ff. respectively. Limenios' paean describes Apollo's birth on Delos and then traces his first coming to Athens amid musical celebrations, before calling on the god to come to Delphi, where the present hymn is being sung. Thus Apollo 'accompanies' the Athenians, as it were, from Athens to Delphi. Aristonoos' hymn (17 ff.) traces Apollo's movements from his ritual purification at Tempe back to Delphi escorted by Athena, whereupon he 'persuades' Gaia and Themis to let him take over the oracle. The god's departure to, and return from, Tempe had its ritual counterpart in the S(t)epteria festival.

⁵¹ *συμβακχεύουσιν* is Diggle's proposal for *βακχεύουσιν* in the mss.

⁵² Cf. Aristonoos' paean to Apollo 37 (CA p. 163) on the gifts of other gods to Apollo: *τριετέσιν φαναῖς Βρόμιος* (sc. *δωρεῖται σε*).

⁵³ P. 245, hymn no. 11. The lines quoted are followed in the papyrus by further hexameters invoking Apollo-Helios; the cletic message continues loud and clear, but the character of Apollo changes from that of Delphic prophet to astrological divinity typical of the later conception of Apollo (and Artemis = Selene).

commences with a mythical reference designed to establish the ritual efficacy of laurel as a plant with divinatory properties: the magician reminds Apollo that he received divine inspiration after tasting laurel leaves once (*sc.* at Delphi). The message which is spelled out more than plainly in the following lines is that Apollo should come quickly to assist the magician. The entreaty is threefold: listen! (ἐπάκουσον, κλύε, μὴ παρακούσης); come! (έλθὲ τάχος, μόλε, ὀμιλῶν, στήθι), speak! (ἔμπνευσον ἀοιδάς, ἔννεπε μαντοσύνην). Repetition and anaphora underline the request, which never tends toward coercion of a subject spirit, but remains a heartfelt entreaty. Repetition of sound patterns in line 7 is reminiscent of magical spells, which operate with repeated sounds as much as semantic meaning (ἀναξ μολπής, μόλε, μολπής ... ἀνάκτωρ). There is an element of sympathetic attraction in that the speaker invites Apollo to listen to his sacred invocation (4, 9) because Apollo is the originator and lord of holy chants (1-2, 7). Apollo is praised and flattered in a multitude of ways: his mythical power is hinted at in the epithets βαρῦμηνι, κραταιόφρων; they constitute a submissive acknowledgement of the god's superior powers.

All this is closely analogous to public hymns such as the Delphic paeans to Apollo.⁵⁴ The magical text entreats the god to come in person to assist the ceremony; it refers to its own performance and the accompanying ritual, exactly as the Delphic paeans do; it touches on a number of mythical points as persuasive arguments designed to secure divine favour; the posture of the speaker is that of deferential worshipper; the point of the ceremony is to link human performance with divine power. I have selected this text from the magical hymns because its reference points are more or less congruent with the texts previously discussed; other magical hymns differ in addressing other, sometimes late and syncretistic conceptions of Greek divinities, but their *modus operandi* is not radically different. The *vores magicae*—sometimes unintelligible strings of syllables—constitute the only real formal difference between these hymns and non-magical texts.⁵⁵

Let us now look more closely at the way mythical narrative supports the purpose of the hymn-singer(s). We have seen how in the Delphic paeans to Apollo the combat myth—Apollo's heroic defeat of Python, and in the second paeon, of Tityos—marks both an inaugural act establishing the god's credentials at Delphi, and serves as a precedent for subsequent acts of goodwill toward mankind. Myth, of course, is a many-faceted phenomenon with various applications and significances. Here we are concerned only with myths included in hymns of worship addressed to personal deities.⁵⁶ No doubt the myths the Greeks told about their gods had entertainment value: the story of Hermes' theft of Apollo's cattle in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, for example, is a lively and humorous story by any standard; but these entertaining stories also have a defining quality. As Jenny Strauss Clay has argued in her recent book on the *Homeric Hymns*, these pieces establish personalities, that is, a system of Olympian 'politics', whereby individual deities are accorded roles and types within a unified pantheon.⁵⁷ The *Hymn to Apollo* traces Apollo's supremacy at the two cult centres of Delos and Delphi by describing events early in his life; the *Hymn to Demeter* tells a divine narrative in whose course the Eleusinian Mysteries are established; the *Hymn to Aphrodite* treats the question of Aphrodite's status relative to other gods through the mythical narrative of her encounter with Anchises. These myths praise the gods for their unique powers but they also delineate these

⁵⁴ This is the main point made by Graf (n. 8).

⁵⁵ Cf. C.C. McCown, 'The Ephesia Grammata in popular belief', *TAPA* liv (1923) 128-40.

⁵⁶ This aspect of myth is a significant omission in J. Bremmer's otherwise useful collection of papers on myth, *Interpretations of Greek mythology* (London and Sydney 1987).

⁵⁷ Clay (n. 3).

powers within the Olympian system. No god, not even Zeus, is all-powerful. Their powers are circumscribed according to mythical relations with fellow deities. Narrative serves a conceptual purpose: what happened once in mythical time remains paradigmatically true throughout subsequent time. A good example of myth's function in establishing power relations comes in *Iliad* i (560 ff.). Zeus advises Hera not to oppose his plan to support Achilles' rebellion against Agamemnon. Hephaistos urges his mother to obey as he, Hephaistos, could not intervene on her behalf. 'On a previous occasion', he relates, 'Zeus hurled me from heaven when I wanted to intervene, and I landed, badly winded, on Lemnos' (590 ff.). The brief narrative explains Hephaistos' estimate of Zeus' superior strength, and points to a sensible course of action in present time (bowing to Zeus' will).

Such tales of the gods may seem a little abstract; indeed, to many, Homer and the Homeric Hymns appear to describe a low level of divinity. By reducing the gods' motives to human jealousies and passions, and their actions to squabbles and rivalries, the divine myths of epic seem to strip gods of all the qualities which might entitle them to respectful worship. Many Greeks themselves expressed frustration with these myths.⁵⁸ But before we attempt either to render myth more intellectually satisfying (to us) by seeking meta-levels of meaning, or by assuming a divorce between true Greek religion (ritual combined with local myths) and the stories of the poets, let us consider more closely the role of myth in direct supplication or worship of the gods - that is, in hymns both literary and sub-literary.

The parodos of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* is a long prayer-hymn (a paean, in fact) addressed to a plurality of gods, but focusing on Delphic Apollo, for salvation from a plague which is afflicting Thebes.⁵⁹ A divine embassy has inquired of Delphi what is causing the plague and the answer given is the polluting presence of a tainted individual (Oedipus, as it turns out). First the chorus apostrophize Phatis/Phama, that is, the message from Delphi, asking whether the oracular response gives them reason to hope (151-7). Then they invoke a trio of gods—Athena, Artemis, Apollo—as saviours in need (164 ἀλεξίμοροι προφάνητέ μοι).⁶⁰ The next pair of strophes describes Thebes' sufferings—a blight on crops, still-born children, the population decimated by plague. Lines 184-5 describe the prayers and paean-singing which seek to avert the pestilence: these lines are thus self-referential (since this piece is one of the paeans being sung by the distressed populace) in a manner familiar from our previous examples.

The next move in the piece is to dramatize the conflict of good and evil as a mythical combat between avenging deities and saviour gods. Ares is identified as the burning attacker of Thebes (190 f. Ἄρεά τε τὸν μαλερόν, ὃς νῦν ἄχαλκος ἀσπίδων / φλέγει με περιβόητος ἀντιάζων). The chorus implores Zeus to destroy Ares with his thunderbolt; similarly, Apollo, Artemis and Dionysos are called upon to join in the battle against the 'dishonourable among the gods', Ares (215 τὸν ἀπότιμον ἐν θεοῖς θεόν). The identification of Ares with Thebes' affliction is a bold innovation by Sophocles. True, he was building on Homeric theology, whereby Zeus admitted disliking Ares as the tumultuous war-god (*Il.* v, 589-898), and on Homeric theomachies (*Il.* v and xx-xxi), but it remains surprising that Ares becomes the plague

⁵⁸ Nowhere more forcefully than in Eur. *Her.* 1340ff. H. Yunis, *A new creed: fundamental religious beliefs in the Athenian polis and Euripidean drama* (Göttingen 1988) esp. 155 ff., seems to me, however, to go too far when he takes such passages as evidence of Euripides' adherence to a new 'moral' theology (p. 159: 'Heracles...is concerned with...a philosophical understanding of divinity').

⁵⁹ For a formal analysis of the parodos as a paean-hymn, see W. Ax, 'Die Parodos des Oidipus Tyrannos', *Hermes* lxxvii (1932) 413-37; see further: J.D. Mikalson, *Honour thy gods: popular religion in Greek tragedy* (Chapel Hill NC 1991) 58; R.D. Dawe (ed.) (Oxford 1982); R.W.B. Burton, *The chorus in Sophocles' tragedies* (Oxford 1990) 138-48.

⁶⁰ Note similar apotropaic epithets in magical texts: Zeus ἀλεξίκακος in an incantation to ward off physical affliction: M. Guarducci, *IC* ii 19. 7 line 3 (Rome 1939).

god in this piece.⁶¹

What interests me here is the transference of a very real social problem to the conceptual plane of myth; Zeus, Apollo, Athena, Artemis and Dionysos are to do battle with Ares: if they rout him, the argument seems to be, the plague will also cease. An aspect of this transference is the medium through which the combat is envisaged: fire. Ares ‘burns’ Thebes with pestilence (176 ἀμαιμακέτου πυρός, 166 φλόγα πῆματος, 192 φλέγει με); the ‘good’ gods are to combat Ares with fire (202 φθίσσον κεραυνῶ, 206 πυρφόρους αἴγλας, 213-4 φλέγοντα πεύκω). Thus the chorus identify the gods involved in the fray, and they equip them with arms for combat. Here we have, not a narrative from the mythical past relating how these gods once combated plague, and therefore can do so again,⁶² but an example of myth-making as a mode of expression. First the relevant gods are invoked to the scene in classic cletic style (158ff.), then they are invited to act. We have seen how the magician proceeded in a comparable manner: first he entreated Apollo to come equipped with prophetic power, then to impart this power to his servant.

A touch-stone for the interpretation of the concepts in operation in Sophocles’ parodos is another magical text, this time an incantation (ἐπωδή) used in healing illness. I give the text as printed in *PGM* II (p. 265):

...]ας Σύρας Γαδαρηνῆς [ἐπαοιδῆ] πρὸς πᾶν κατάκαυμα

[<σεμνοτάτης δὲ> θεᾶς παῖς μ]υστοδόκος κατεκαύθη,
ἀκροτάτῳ δ’ ἐν ὄρει κατεκαύθη· <πύρ δ’ ἐλάφυξεν>
ἐπτὰ λύκων κρήνας, ἑπτ’ ἄρκτων, ἐπτὰ λεόντων·
ἐπτὰ δὲ παρθενικαῖ κυανώπιδες ἤρυσαν ὕδωρ
κάλλισι κυανέαις καὶ ἐκοίμισαν ἀκάματον πύρ.

‘An incantation of the Syrian woman from Gadara against all inflammation: [The son of the most majestic goddess] was set aflame as an initiate—was set aflame on the highest mountain peak—[and fire did greedily gulp] seven springs of wolves, seven of bears, seven of lions. But seven dark-eyed maidens with dark urns drew water and becalmed the restless fire (trans. E.N. O’Neil).

This incantation is one of a collection of medicinal incantations of which we possess a fragment known as the Philinna papyrus.⁶³ In a recent treatment of such incantations Kotansky writes of this text: ‘Employing some sort of "sympathetic magic", it briefly describes an initiate to a mystery religion who is set aflame on a mountaintop and subsequently doused with water... Despite the obscure references to initiation and predatory animals, the nature of the incantation is fairly straightforward: just as the immolated mystodokos is subsequently doused with water, so too will the bodily inflammation of the patient be extinguished.’⁶⁴

⁶¹ Cf. Mikalson (n. 59) 58. Dawe *ad loc.* suggests that the plague had become so closely associated with war in the minds of Athenians during the early years of the Archidamian War, that Ares might be thought to be responsible for war *and* plague.

⁶² As is the case, for example, in the Epidaurian hymn to Telesphoros, lines 23ff. (Maas [n. 10] 152 ff.): Κεκροπίδαϊ δ’ ἔδουσι Τελέσφορον, ἐξότε γαίη / νοῦσον ἀπωσάμενος πυροφθόρον ἐς τέλος αὐτοῖς / εὐτοκίην ταχέως λαθηκηδέα, δαίμον, ἔθηκας.

⁶³ Cf. P. Maas, ‘The Philinna papyrus’, *JHS* lxii (1942) 33-8; P. Maas, L. Koenen, ‘Der brennende Horusknabe: zu einem Zauberspruch des Philinna-Papyrus’, *Chron. d’ Égypte* xxxvii (1962) 167-174; A. Henrichs, ‘Zum Text einiger Zauberpapyri’, *ZPE* vi (1970) 193-212; H.D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek magical papyri in translation, including the demotic spells* (Chicago 1986) 258 f. (with bibliography).

⁶⁴ R. Kotansky, ‘Incantations and prayers for salvation on inscribed Greek amulets’, *Magika Hiera* 107-37, p. 112 with notes. Cf. my paper ‘Besprechung und Behandlung: Zur Form und Funktion von ΕΠΩΙΔΑΙ in der griechischen Zaubermagie’ in: *Festschrift A. Dihle* (Göttingen 1993) 80-104.

The relevance of the piece to Sophocles is apparent. Someone suffering from a bodily ‘inflammation’ is treated by relating to the patient a short mythical narrative (a *historiola*) in which a sacred figure is set on fire and healed when the fire is doused. The inflammation of the patient is expressed as a combat between destructive elements (fire, wild animals) and soothing agents (water, pretty girls). The Sophoclean chorus wished that burning Ares could be banished to the watery wastes (191 ff.), and that his fire would be extinguished by kind deities. The wild-beast imagery of the incantation is matched in Sophocles by Ares’ epithet *μαλερός*, ‘devouring’ (line 190).

The mythical section of hymnic composition, then, must be viewed as an element of the worshipper’s attempt to secure divine favour and guide it in a direction or channel beneficial to himself. Frequently the attempt uses familiar mythical narrative from the past with a view to extracting similar favours now or in the future (similar to the ‘*da quia dedisti*’ type of argument in prayer);⁶⁵ or, as in Sophocles, it can involve a direct appeal to the deity invoked to act now, to solve a problem. Hymn-singing involves belief in, and accurate naming of, divine powers; the myths used in supplicatory address show these powers in action as a model for present expectations. Just as kings like to hear tales about other kings (which the minstrel can cleverly tailor so as both to please the sovereign and project his own ideal of monarchy) so divine myths in hymns are sung to please the deity addressed and suggest suitable ways for him/her to act. It is this ‘supplicatory’ function of myth which has slipped to the back of our minds in recent work. As a final text which illustrates this well let us look at a hymn to the Mother of the Gods found at Epidaurus and published by Paul Maas.⁶⁶

[]ς θεαί,
 δεῦρ' ἔλθετ' ἀπ' ὠρανῶ
 καὶ μοι συναείσατε
 τὰν Ματέρα τῶν θεῶν,
 5 ὡς ἦλθε πλανωμένα
 κατ' ὄρεα καὶ νάπας
 †συρουσαρπα []τα[]κομαν†
 †κατωρημενα† φρένας.
 ὁ Ζεὺς δ' ἐσιδὼν ἀναξ
 10 τὰν Ματέρα τῶν θεῶν
 κεραυνὸν ἐβαλλε καὶ
 τὰ τύμπαν' ἐλάμβανε
 πέτρας διέρησσε, καὶ
 τὰ τύμπαν' ἐλάμβανε.
 15 "Μάτηρ ἀπιθ' εἰς θεοῦς
 καὶ μὴ κατ' ὄρη πλαν[ῶ].
 μὴ σ' ἦ χαροποιὶ λέον-
 τεσ ἦ πολιοὶ λύκοι

 "Καὶ οὐκ ἀπειμι εἰς θεοῦς,
 20 ἄν μὴ τὰ μέρη λάβω,
 τὸ μὲν ἡμισυ οὐρανῶ,
 τὸ δ' ἡμισυ γαίας <καί>

⁶⁵ Cf. Bremer (n. 9) 196.

⁶⁶ Maas (n. 10) 134 ff. Cf. *PMG* 935; M.L. West, ‘The Epidaurian Hymn to the Mother of the Gods’, *CQ* n.s. xx (1970) 212-15 (I have omitted some of West’s more drastic emendations and supplements). Page and West concur in dating the hymn to the 4th or 3rd c. BC, whilst Maas believed it might have been by Telesilla herself. Page believes it is composed basically of stichic telesilleans (with anomalies), whilst West following Maas detects sequences of three telesilleans followed by a reizianum (being, acc. to Maas, a ‘catalectic’ version of the telesillean).

25 πόντω τὸ τρίτον μέρος·
 χούτως ἀπελεύσομαι."
 χαῖρ' ὦ μεγάλα ἄνασ-
 σα Μᾶτερ Ὀλύμπω.

1 Πιμπληιάδε] Peek, West. 7-8 σύρουσα ῥυτὰ[ν] κόμαν / φρένας <τ'άλυουσα West: σύρουσ' ἄρπα[κ]τα[ν] κόμαν, / κ[δ]ῶτωι ἄρημένα† φρένας Maas: sensum 'filiam raptam lamentata' latere docet Eur. *Hel.* 1301 sqq.: fort. ἀποχομέναν κόραν / θυμωσαμένα φρένας cf. Eur. *Hel.* 1305 et 1343. 17 μη σε χαρ- lap., corr. Kalinka: μη σοῖ West. 18 post hunc v. lacunam statuit Page.

'Divine Muses, come here from heaven and sing with me of the Mother of the Gods, how she wandered through mountains and glades (?angry in her mind (?at the loss of her daughter. Zeus the ruler saw the Mother of the Gods and threw a thunderbolt and made to take her drums; he split the rocks and made to take her drums: "Mother, off to the gods with you! Do not wander in the mountains, lest fawning lions and grey wolves...you...". "I will not return to the gods unless I receive my share: half of heaven, half of earth and thirdly (half)⁶⁷ of the sea. Then I will return." Praises to you, O great ruling Mother of Olympus!'

The hymn commences with an invocation to the Muses to help the singer's performance in the manner of the Delphic Paean to Apollo. Then it launches straight into a mythical narrative relating how the Mother once wandered the earth (?in dejection at the loss of her daughter). One is reminded of the Demeter and Kore myth, in particular of Euripides, *Hel.* 1301-1368, which collates the Mountain Mother's disconsolate wanderings on earth with the Eleusinian rape myth (cf. κόρυς 1307, Deo, 1343).⁶⁸ Zeus then threatens the Mother and commands her to rejoin the company of the gods; she refuses unless she may keep her rightful portion of divine honours. The hymn leads one to understand that Zeus agrees and the Mother is re-instated with the honours she demands (26: Μᾶτερ Ὀλύμπω). It closes with a simple bow to the goddess' might.

In this piece mythical narrative serves to define divine status; an original dispute between gods as to prerogatives is settled finally, restoring the full complement of deities to Olympus and establishing the terms on which the gods involved are to be worshipped by mortals in future.⁶⁹ There is another theme which lurks beneath the surface narrative; in the myth the Mother of the Gods is angry and rebellious; this in turn provokes a mood of punitive wrath from Zeus, who maltreats earth itself. Thus the quarrel between the gods involves earth and those who live on it. The Eleusinian parallel shows just how disastrous such strife among the gods can be for humans: Demeter's disconsolate mood results in total crop failure and hence famine on earth.⁷⁰ It is only when a compromise is reached between the divine parties to the dispute that human society can function normally. In a similar way the hymn from Epidauros

⁶⁷ As West *ad loc.* says, not 'a third of the sea'.

⁶⁸ Our hymn picks up many of the points in the Euripidean stasimon: the woody mountainous scenery (1303), the castanets or cymbals (1308 and 1347), Zeus looking down from heaven (1317 ff.), Zeus' instructions that the Great Mother should desist from her anger (1339 f.). On the syncretism of the Great Mother with Demeter from the 5th. c. on, see Nilsson, *GGR* i 725-8.

⁶⁹ This, of course, is the essential theme of Hesiod's *Theogony*. Theogonies play a major role in hymn-writing. Makedonikos' paean to Apollo and Asklepios (*CA* 138-9) or the anonymous Hellenistic theogonic hymn to Demeter (*Supplementum Hellenisticum* p. 990), are good examples. Part of the purpose is undoubtedly to 'map out' divine territory accurately, the more effectively to invoke a god; but there is an incantatory element as well. Herodotus i 132, says that Persian magi recite their theogony at sacrifice as an ἐπαοιδή, that is, incantation to summon up the deity addressed. Herodotus reports this as a foreign custom, but many Greek hymns have similar elements.

⁷⁰ Equally clear in the *Helena* stasimon, where the Mother's displeasure results in agricultural sterility, famine and an end of Olympian worship. Zeus' position is reconciliatory: rather than blasting earth in anger at the Mother's wilful behaviour, he seeks to appease her using music-playing go-betweens (the Graces and Muses).

sketches the conditions necessary for human well-being: the Mother of the Gods must receive her share, she must be reconciled with Zeus and return to Olympus. The myth postulates a rift among the gods in order to suggest that resolution of the quarrel is beneficial to all concerned. The narrative is intended to be effective.

It has been my intention to identify certain strategies of persuasion typically employed in Greek hieratic poetry: previous work has concentrated on the formal expression of hymns and prayers, pointing to the role of detailed invocation, syntactical patterns used to elaborate on a god's powers and attributes, and the formal structure commonly revealed by hymns. I have emphasized the underlining unity of purpose which characterizes these sacred texts, from honorific invocation through mythical narrative to direct appeal for help at the end.⁷¹ I have only touched on what I hope is a representative sample of the range of texts available for study: examples of the various features could be multiplied indefinitely.

When we stand back from these texts and consider their relevance to an appreciation of ancient Greek religion as a whole, I think a number of important points emerge. First, the hymns make it clear from their references to accompanying ritual that both are conceived as an attractive celebration meant to fill the attendant god's heart with joy. Much recent work on Greek religion has focused on ritual as an indication of the essential primitivism of the sacrificial rite and attendant ceremonies. We have been told that the ritual spilling of animal blood points to a connection with man's hunting ancestors; that the women's cry of *όλολυγή* at the moment of the animal's death is an expression of horror, but also joy, in killing; our attention has been repeatedly drawn to the dark side of the gods' character, and to the ominous nature of ritual lurking just beneath the bright surface of Greek culture. Religion has been viewed as the ritual channelling of aggressions and tensions inherent in society, an ordering of imminent chaos.⁷² This position was a necessary corrective to an earlier, equally one-sided picture of the Greeks as devotees of philosophy and mathematics who relegated gods to the 'pretty tales of poets'. But we must not lose sight of what the Greeks *thought* they were offering the gods through sacrifice. Their hymns show more clearly than their rituals that worship entailed subtle and linguistically refined communication with deities, whose real efficacy was taken for granted by the worshippers. Hymn-singing combined with ritual sacrifice (animal and other) was the means—refined and developed over centuries—thought to give the gods pleasure and therefore have the best chance of securing benefits for humans. Of course violence and disaster were always likely to break out, precipitated perhaps by a god's displeasure with humans. The hymns were the most subtle and persuasive means available to the Greeks to avert disaster by securing *charis* from the gods. Thus the aesthetic beauty of the spectacle of religious service, which the hymns constantly evoke and avow, can be taken as two-sided: it was designed to please the gods, and thus stem disaster. Festivals did not offer relief from daily life by lifting restrictions and permitting bloodshed and revelry, but rather relief in the form of escape from the everyday violence of war and the struggle for survival.⁷³ Our sacred texts place no emphasis on the element of bloodshed in sacrifice; there is no mention of any horrified shudder or mute awe when the animal's life is taken. We may find animal sacrifice a dark *mysterium* pointing to the killer instinct in man ('homo necans'), but there is very little evidence that the Greeks saw it like that. Everywhere in the hieratic poetry which accompanied

⁷¹ Thus my argument is analogous to E.L. Bundy's in *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1962) where he analyses the elements and structure of a sample of Pindar's epinicians (*Ol.* 11 and *I.* 1) as coherent in terms of the overriding encomiastic purpose.

⁷² See above n. 13.

⁷³ Generally, in Perikles' words (Thuc. ii 38), sacrifices and festivals offer spiritual relaxation from labours (τῶν πόνων ... ἀναπαύλας τῆ γνῶμη).

ritual—even magic ritual, which was frequently gruesome—the emphasis is on the *charis* which song and action together sought to promote.

Next, hymns of worship alert us to a dimension of myth which sometimes escapes notice. The telling of a tale may not be mere entertainment, but may seek to make things happen: it may establish a precedent, or it may seek to work actively, as in the *historiolae* we have mentioned in a magico-medical context. Above all, the defining quality of religious myths should be borne in mind. A quarrel between gods is not just a good story, it is also the articulation through narrative of relations within the pantheon. Myth, which is at home in hymns to the gods, should not be divorced from cult; hieratic texts point to the unity of purpose behind tales about the gods and worship of the gods through ritual which the myth-and-ritual school of religious interpretation has always assumed. Although the vast majority of ancient Greek hymns has disappeared, what survives must be extrapolated in principle wherever the gods were worshipped. Sometimes our sources record myths current at sites from which no hieratic texts survive. We can be sure that such poetry once existed, and that it drew on these myths as one fund of praise for the local divinity.

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